Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

SEAHAWK 海鷹 UMITAKA

Serving Yokosuka Base for more than 50 years

Vol. LXII, No. 43 www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka Nov. 4, 2011

Sesame Street performs for CFAY community

Story and Photo by Paul Long, CFAY Public Affairs

Grover, Cookie Monster, Elmo, Katie, Rosita, and the Purple Honker of Sesame Street visited Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka Oct. 27 and 28 to perform for the children of military families living here and bring them a special message.

According to USO Tour Manager Lonnie Cooper, the show is a 30-minute musical geared toward kids.

The song and dance routines focus on Katie, a military child in the show, whose family is about to move to a new base.

"The other characters help her understand that this is a part of military life," he said. "There are ways to keep your old friends, how to make new friends; all those things that are concrete to help her understand how to deal with that."

According to Cooper, the idea for the show began about three years ago.

"Sesame had done the Talk, Listen, and Connect program, where Elmo followed military families and talked to them about their experiences," he said.

The Sesame Workshop and the USO decided to expand on that theme and bring that subject matter to military children.

"We get very appreciative families," Cooper said. "I had a woman today who stopped me on the way out (after the show). She said that they just moved here a week ago and that her daughter is going through everything that Katie is going through in the show."

LaShawn Griffen brought her two daughters, London and Taylor, with her to see the show. "I came today to have my daughters see their first show. My daughters enjoy Sesame Street," she said.

According to Taylor, the show was about kids helping each other.

"When someone leaves, they can always have friends," Taylor said.

The USO gave away the Talk, Listen, & Connect DVDs, USO bandanas, picture books, magnets, notepads and a lighted twirling toy. "It's our way of letting people know what we're here to support them," Cooper said.

Griffen said the USO show is essential to family members. "It's important because when the other spouse is out to sea or deployed overseas, the remaining spouse has the support of the other families."

According to Cooper, this particular show has performed at all bases throughout Japan and will be performed at stateside installations next year.

Cookie Monster greets a toddler during a performance at Yokosuka's Benny Decker Theater Oct. 27. Cookie Monster and other Sesame Street characters performed four shows for kids over a two day period.

US Secretary of Defense visits *USS Blue Ridge*

By MC3 Mel Orr, USS Blue Ridge Public Affairs

Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta visited U.S. 7th Fleet command flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) Oct. 26 during his first tour of Asia-Pacific countries since becoming secretary of defense.

Panetta spoke with 150 Sailors from the 7th Fleet staff, *USS Blue Ridge*, *USS Shiloh* (CG 67), *USS John S. McCain* (DDG 56), *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85), and Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka on the *Blue Ridge* flight deck thanking them for their combined efforts during Operation Tomodachi in March 2011 and for their commitment and sacrifice in the Navy.

Capt. Daniel Grieco, commanding officer of the U.S. 7th Fleet command ship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), says farewell to Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) the honorable Leon Panetta as he departs the ship Oct. 26.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Fidel C. Hart

"You've put your lives on the line; you've been deployed time and time again," said Panetta. "We've made commitments to you and your families, and we're going to stick to those commitments."

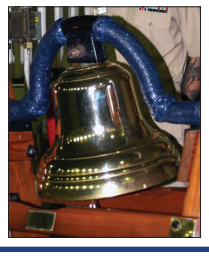
Blue Ridge transported humanitarian assistance/disaster relief materials following the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on March 11. The embarked U.S. 7th Fleet staff oversaw command-and-control of the operation, and directed the mobilized force of U.S. Navy ships and helicopters while aiding the citizens of Japan. "I really do appreciate your service, I appreciate your sacrifice, I appreciate what your families have done," said Panetta.

Panetta's trip to the Pacific Region is designed to reinforce the U.S. commitment to a strong military presence in Asia, meeting not only with allies in Japan, but in Indonesia and South Korea as well.

U.S. Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Leon Panetta speaks with Sailors on board the U.S 7th Fleet command ship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC19) during a tour of the Asia Pacific region Oct. 26. Panetta thanked them for their efforts during Operation Tomadach folllowing a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan. This is his first tour of Asian countries in the Pacific Region since becoming the SECDEF.

U.S Navy photo by MC3 Alexandra Y. Arroyo

INSIDE



Local master chief retires in blaze of glory

After more than 30 years service to the Navy, DCCM (SW/AW) David D. Singer retired during a ceremony held at the Center for Naval Engineering Learning Site here Oct. 21.

Pg. 9

Fire Department recognizes "Friendship, collaboration"

Commander Navy Region Japan's (CNRJ) Regional Fire Department hosted its 14th annual friendship dinner at the New Sanno Hotel Oct. 21.

Pg. 10