Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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CFAY Veterans Day ceremony honors those who serve, served

Story and photo by Jeffrey C. Doepp, CFAY Public Affairs

Gray skies and a steady rain didn't discourage the crowd from attending Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Veterans Day ceremony held in the CFAY headquarters auditorium Nov. 11.

This year's event featured a flag folding ceremony by Marines of Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Pacific and musical performances by the Nile C. Kinnick High School Show Choir and Yeoman Seaman William Howard of CFAY Administrative Department. CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen provided opening remarks.

"Originally called Armistic Day, it was changed to Veterans Day and proclaimed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954 as a day for Americans everywhere to reeducate themselves to the cause of peace," Owen said. "This day has been established to thank and honor all those who served in wartime and peacetime. There are 24 million veterans who have served in the U.S. military who have reintegrated into our society and many more will join those numbers in the future. It is for these veterans that we take the time this morning to pay recognition and also to use this opportunity for our own reflection."

Yokosuka Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1054 Commander Homer Kemper, a retired U.S. Navy chief machinist mate and currently a production specialist at Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) Yokosuka, was guest speaker.

Kemper, in his speech, spoke of the opportunity that Veterans Day gives us to express our gratitude to the men and women who have answered the nations call to duty through military service.

"Every American, no matter where they live or what they do, reaps the benefits of their services," Kemper said. "From our earliest days of pledging our nation, it was clear that our pursuit of liberty and democracy would come at a great price through service and sacrifice for the greater good. Even then, volunteers swelled the ranks of the Continental Army to ensure freedom would prevail over tyranny. Through the years millions of men and women have donned their uniform of the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Air Force and Coast Guard, to bravely and tenaciously defend and preserve our way of life.

"Today across the nation in similar gatherings as this one, patriotic Americans are paying tribute to our nation's veterans and our country. In celebrating Veterans Day, we honor the guiding principles of our founding fathers and to contemplate the courage of those who swore to protect them," Kemper added.

Yokosuka VFW Post 1054 Commander Homer Kemper provides remarks as guest speaker during the CFAY Veterans Day ceremony held in the C2 auditorium Nov. 11. CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen, CFAY Chief Staff Officer Capt. Donna Kaspar and CFAY Command Master Chief CMDCM Gregory Viduarri were among those who attended the event.

Jerry Walsh, a contractor at SRF-JRMC and a life-time member of the VFW, attended the ceremony with his wife Keiko to do exactly what the holiday is intended for, honor veterans both past and present.

"I think it's great that all these people took time out of their day to pause and honor veterans by putting on this ceremony," Walsh said. "I really enjoyed the speeches and the musical performances gave me goose bumps. I especially enjoyed the flag-folding ceremony performed by the Marines. It made me feel very proud to have served in the U.S. Navy."

George Washington Carrier Strike Group returns to Hong Kong

By ABE3 Sandip K. Dhesi, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

HONG KONG – The *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group, centered around the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, arrived in Hong Kong for a routine port visit Nov. 9.

While in port, the ship will host a reception for more than 600 local dignitaries and numerous public tours for another 1,000 more.

"The diverse nature of Hong Kong offers each and every crew member a wide range of events, venues and options to pursue, as well as provide a well deserved mental and physical break from the day-to-day routine of operations at sea," said Capt. David A. Lausman, *George Washington*'s commanding officer.

USS George Washington Sailor, SN Morris Ng, a native of Hong Kong, introduces himself to 47 Chinese journalists during a news conference held in the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier's hangar bay. USS George Washington is currently making a port visit to Hong Kong.

U.S. Navy Photo by MCSN Alysia R. Hernandez

Annually, the U.S. Navy makes an average of 40 port visits to Hong Kong.

"This is *George Washington*'s second time in Hong Kong since being assigned as the Navy's forward-deployed aircraft carrier," said Lausman. "We have a great opportunity to provide the citizens a taste of what America really is all about. All of our Sailors are true ambassadors, representing the humanity and compassion of our country."

During this visit *George Washington* will be accompanied by the guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) and the guided-missile destroyers, *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) and *USS Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54).

Besides taking time to explore the rich cultural opportunities a port visit to Hong Kong offers, Sailors will be participating in 10 different community service projects. These projects range from assembling and repairing shelters for the Hong Kong Dog Rescue to accompanying the handicapped during a visit to Disneyland.

"I feel like I'm winning twice," said Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Airman Sierra Goldenwire from Savannah, Ga. "Not only do I get to experience Disneyland in a new and exciting way, I get to give back while I'm doing it."

"I like that I have a chance to help people do things they normally can't do by themselves," said Damage Controlman Fireman Michelle Lehman from St. Petersburg, Fla., who will spend a day of her liberty at the Fu Hong Society making arts and crafts with adults who are learning disabled.

Since *George Washington* pulled out of her forward operating port of Yokosuka, Japan on Sept. 19, Sailors from the aircraft carrier have volunteered a total of 1,730 hours towards community service projects across the western Pacific. Fourteen sightseeing opportunities have also been organized by *George Washington*'s Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) team. These tours include trips to TaiMo Shan Lookout, Tsing Ma Bridge and Macau.

"This is my twelfth time to Hong Kong and I'm excited for the crew because this port visit continues to remain one of the crown jewels of liberty ports offering great food, shopping and tourist attractions that I know they'll always remember," said Lausman.

INSIDE

GW CSADD Sailors volunteer at Society for Protection of Children

***USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Sailor participated in a community service project working with the local Society for the Protection of Children (SPC) in Hong Kong Nov. 12.**

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First Thanksgiving celebrated to commemorate harvest

Across America and on Navy bases and ships throughout the world, families, friends, colleagues and co-workers gather together on the last Thursday of November to enjoy each other's company.

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