George Washington Sailors celebrate Thanksgiving

From *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

After returning to their forward-operating port of Yokosuka, Japan, the crew of *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) took time to celebrate Thanksgiving Nov. 24, giving thanks for the past year even though many are far away from their families overseas.

"This is my first Thanksgiving away from home so I'm getting my mind ready to not to be with my family," said Airman Spencer Neil. "But I'm thankful for everything this year because all these things I have this year weren't here last year, so I'm joyous and thankful."

Last year's operational commitments required *George Washington* to return to sea, having the crew enjoying a Thanksgiving feast underway without their families. This year brought a welcomed change with those not on duty able to spend the holidays with family or friends.

But, those working aboard the ship were not forgotten as Sailors working in the ship's galleys spent weeks planning a traditional Thanksgiving with all the tastes of a home-cooked meal: turkey, spiral ham, prime rib, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, cornbread dressing, green beans, buttered corn, potato salad, dinner rolls, pumpkin pies, apple pies, cherry pies, pecan pies, and assorted cheesecakes.

"I'd rather work on Thanksgiving, to be around the atmosphere, around the people because for right now and the next few years while I'm serving out my contract, this is my family," added Neil, who works as a food service attendant in the aft galley.

MM2 Jeremy Poore from Greenwood, Del. enjoys Thanksgiving dinner with his wife and two children on the aft mess decks of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Nov. 24.
U.S. Navy Photo by MCSN Erin Devenberg

Culinary Specialists and Food Service Attendants working in the ship's galley, chief's mess, and wardroom spent nearly 8 hours cooking, serving and cleaning up after the Thanksgiving meal. More than 600 pounds of turkey, 500 pounds of prime rib and nearly 400 pounds of ham were prepared to feed the nearly 1,500 personnel and their families who were aboard the carrier for the meal.

"When I walk by and I see people eating it makes me happy because they're actually enjoying the meal," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Brooke Barnes. "Everyone put their little hearts and souls into the meal."

Senior enlisted members of the crew directed chow lines on both sides of the galley, ensuring Sailors didn't have to wait long in order to enjoy their meal.

"The food was fantastic, I was surprised how good it was," said Interior Communications Specialist 3rd Class Sean Gehrold. "It really made me feel a lot better about being on duty."

Lassen Sailors continue Thailand flood relief efforts

Story and photos by MC1 Johnie Hickmon, *USS Lassen* Public Affairs

LOP BURI, Thailand – Sailors from the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) continued providing flood relief assistance and disaster relief to Thailand during a combined services project at Watsanamchai Temple School on.

Since arriving on the 16th, Sailors have been providing assistance to victims of flooding that began in late July, claimed hundreds of lives and left many without food, water and basic supplies.

Twenty Sailors from *Lassen* combined forces with personnel from the U.S. Marines, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and the Royal Thai Army to help rehabilitate the school. The school suffered heavy water damage inside and on the surrounding compound. Flood water still surrounded the entire town as the team approached their destination.

During the day, the team helped students and faculty members of the school remove water damaged furniture and equipment from the school's cafeteria.

The floors and walls were then scrubbed down, as the team worked to remove stains and watermarks. The grounds of the school were also raked free of debris and major obstacles such as fallen trees.

Although they had participated in other community service projects supporting the flood victims, for many of the Sailors, this was their first time seeing the full extent of flooding damage left on the community. "We saw water up to four feet in some areas," said Lt. Nicholas Fleming.

Many Sailors said they were encouraged by the results of their hard work after the event. Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Sebastian Kayser said it was a great feeling knowing they did something positive for people who needed help.

"It was definitely one of the most satisfying things I've done since I've been in the Navy," he said. "I felt like I really made a difference in someone's life."

Sailors from *USS Lassen* (DDG 82) sweep mud and debris from a cafeteria during a community service project at Watsanamchai Temple School Nov. 20.

Lassen Sailors continue their relief efforts and building upon the positive relationship between the U.S. and Thailand.