Blue Ridge completes port visit departs Tomakomai

By MC3 Fidel C. Hart, *USS Blue Ridge* Public Affairs

TOMAKOMAI, Japan – More than 1,200 Sailors and Marines from 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), embarked 7th Fleet staff and Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Pacific (FASTPAC) completed a port visit to Tomakomai, Japan Feb. 8.

The crew experienced the culture and sights of the city, and participated in tours and community service events (COMSERVS) in Tomakomai and the surrounding area.

"This was a tremendous port visit for the crew of *USS Blue Ridge,* with opportunities to see the Sapporo Snow and Ice Festival and participating in the Tomakomai Ice Skate Festival," said *Blue Ridge* Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Ralston. "It is great to see our Sailors and Marines out in town strengthening bonds during community service projects, building friendships on liberty and sharing the differences and similarities in our intertwined cultures."

The ship's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) committee provided a variety of tours to the nearby city of Sapporo, which was holding the 63rd Annual Sapporo Snow and Ice Festival.

Several Sailors participated in COMSERV projects at the Tomakomai Ice Skate Festival, assisting local children onto a snow slide and pushing a giant sled. *Blue Ridge* Chaplain Lt. Donald Baker said that it was a unique way for the Sailors and the citizens of Tomakomai to interact.

"I've done more than 100 COMSERV projects and this is the most fun I have had on one," said Baker. "There is great energy and excitement from both the Sailors and the citizens. The energy is contagious and has rubbed off on every one involved. This is exactly what you want a community service event to be."

Many Sailors were not only experiencing Tomakomai for the first time, they were also enjoying their first port visit as *Blue Ridge* Sailors.

Residents welcome U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) as the ship moors in Tomakomai, Japan Feb. 3. *Blue Ridge* is in Tomakomai for a goodwill port visit that coincides with the nearby Annual Sapporo Snow and Ice Festival.
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Class Mel Orr

"I am enjoying myself and have never seen anything like this before," said Yeoman 3rd Class Brittnea Noe. Noe, on her first port visit with *Blue Ridge,* said the sea mammals snow sculpture depicting detailed carvings of a blue whale, walrus, dolphins and sea lions, was her favorite. "I would love to return and visit because I know the snow sculptures change every year and they are amazing."

SECNAV names 2012 food service Ney Award winners

By Debbie Dortch,
Naval Supply Systems Command
Corporate Communications

MECHANICSBURG, Pa. – Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced the 2012 winners of the Navy Captain Edward F. Ney Memorial Awards for outstanding food service Feb. 3.

"My personal congratulations to all the outstanding food service teams," Mabus wrote in an ALNAV message.

Captain Edward F. Ney Afloat results, representing the Navy's undersea enterprise, surface warfare enterprise, and naval aviation enterprise include:

Submarine Category:
First Place: *USS Michigan* (Gold) (SSGN 727)
Runner Up: *USS New Hampshire* (SSN 778)
Honorable Mention: *USS Newport News* (SSN 750)

Small Afloat Category:
First Place: *USS Rentz* (FFG 46)
Runner Up: *USS Carr* (FFG 52)

Medium Afloat Category:
First Place: *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG 62)
Runner Up: *USS Port Royal* (CG 73)
Honorable Mention: *USS The Sullivans* (DDG 68)

Large Afloat Category:
First Place: *USS Makin Island* (LHD 8)
Runner Up: *USS Bataan* (LHD 5)

Aircraft Carrier Category:
First Place: *USS Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72)
Runner Up: *USS Enterprise* (CVN 65)

Captain Edward F. Ney Ashore General Mess Results, representing Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) include:

CONUS General Mess Category:
First Place: Naval Base Coronado, Coronado, California
Runner Up: Naval Base Kitsap, Bangor, Washington

OCONUS General Mess Category:
First Place: Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Yokosuka, Japan
Runner-Up: Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

These annual awards, co-sponsored by the International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA), encourage excellence in Navy Food Service programs with the objective of improving the quality of life for Navy personnel.

First place winners and runners-up will be recognized during the IFSEA conference Saturday, March 31, in San Diego, Calif. Awards will be presented during the Joint Military and IFSEA Excellence in Food Service Awards ceremony Saturday evening.

"I commend the Navy Undersea Enterprise, Surface Warfare Enterprise, Naval Aviation Enterprise, CNIC, and individual commands for their hard work and commitment to excellence," Mabus said.

According to Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Navy Food Service Director Cmdr. Danny King, food contibutes to keeping Sailors happy.

"Nothing impacts Sailors on a day-to-day basis more than the food culinary specialists (CSs) prepare for them. These top-quality meals contribute directly to Sailor quality of life and morale of the ship," said King. "These awards represent the best of the best and I am proud to be leading our food service professionals now as we incorporate more scratch cooking into our menus, increase training, and ensure appropriate manning levels.

"Our goals make certain culinary specialists stay proficient in their training, guaranteeing Sailors receive nourishing, high-quality food prepared fresh every day by CSs who take seriously their impact on Sailors' health, morale, and fleet readiness. Today's CSs have greater culinary instruction than ever before–with even more advanced training on the way. Sailors, both afloat and ashore, can look forward to even healthier and better-tasting meals in the near future."

The Navy's more than 7,300 culinary specialists, deployed around the globe feed on average more than 92.5 million wholesome and nutritious meals per year.

This ensures the Navy's fighting forces operate at peak performance and are ready to respond to threats worldwide at a moments notice.

"Congratulations and my very best wishes to the 2012 Captain Edward F. Ney Memorial Award winners, runner-ups, and honorable mention commands," said Roxanne Hauman, Ney program manager. "They have worked very hard during the 2012 Ney competition and deserve the recognition of the most prestigious food service award in the Navy.

"The Ney Award is a quality of life program, as it affects the health, morale, and retention of all Navy Sailors. The annual Ney food service awards foster excellence in food service across the Navy enterprise while improving the quality of life for our Navy personnel.

"Thanks to all the 2012 Ney finalists who participated in this year's Ney Program. They all did a wonderful job and are to be commended," King added.

The Navy awards are named in honor of Capt. Edward F. Ney, Supply Corps, U.S. Navy, head of the subsistence division of the Bureau of Supplies and Account from 1940-1945.