Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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CFAY opens its gates to community, celebrates Spring Festival

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

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) held its annual Spring Festival open base event, March 25, and invited off-base community members to enjoy a day of friendship, fun and food.

"It's part of our cooperation and outreach to the city of Yokosuka, we do it in conjunction with them," said CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen. "We enjoy letting the citizens come on base and see what we are about, enjoy our food, see some of our culture. We get a lot out of it too, getting to see them and greet them. We really like do this."

This was the first Spring Festival held since the March 11 earthquake and tsunami that struck Northern Japan. Out of respect, the event was cancelled. Owen took time during his opening remarks to honor those lost.

"I know there are still many people who are suffering from this devastating occurrence. Yokosuka's Spring Festival has been a long time symbol of the great friendship between the two nations here in Yokosuka and thus I would like to dedicate this event to all the people of Japan who are striving hard to recover from the Great East Japan Earthquake," said Owen.

Commands on base like Security, Navy Exchange and Morale, Welfare and Recreation through CFAY cooperate with organizations off-base like the Yokosuka Sight Seeing Association, Yokosuka City Council, Yokosuka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and others work together to make the event happen.

"The U.S.-Japan Spring Festival has served for many years to bring together both people from within Yokosuka city and from with out and continues to be a lively international event," said Yuto Yoshida, Yokosuka City mayor, during his opening remarks. "Let us now enjoy ourselves on this wonderful spring day in Yokosuka."

About 38,000 visitors made it on base for the the 19th Annual COmmander FLeet Activities Spring Festival, Mar. 25. The event drew 38,000 visitors to the base and allowed them to sample American culture and interact with the U.S. military community.

Visitors ate ribs, burgers, steaks, pizza and other foods while taking in entertainment like dancers, a 7th Fleet Band concert, a football game between the base team the Seahawks, and the National Defense Academy of Japan team, Commander Naval Region Japan Fire Department's interactive fire safety displays and other events.

Unfortunately, the cherry blossoms, one of the main attractions of the Spring Festival had yet to bloom.

"I wanted to see the [blossoms] but I still had fun," said Hikari Tanaka, from Tokyo who was visiting the base with friend. "I came here two years ago. It was fun so I wanted to come back again."

The event ended in the afternoon. About 38,000 visitors made it on base for the day.

The organizers said they plan to continue the annual festival for many more years to come. This is the 19th year CFAY has put on the event.

CFAY emergency summit, helps keep community prepared

Story and photo by MC2 (SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Emergency Management Office (EMO) and supporting departments held an Emergency Preparedness Summit at Benny Decker Theater March 22.

The Emergency Preparedness Summit included presentations covering all departments and commands at CFAY that play an integral role in an emergency situation and base life.

Also information about local communities around the base was put out.

"Currently, right now, we are working on our memorandum of understanding and agreements with the cities of Yokosuka, Zushi and Yokohama," said Jeff Lindaman, CFAY emergency management officer. "These are agreements of how they are going to support us and how we are going to support them in case of a disaster. Currently, they are in the review stage and I hope to have them signed in the near future and will get this information out to everyone."

The theme of the summit dealt with the preparations that must be taken before a disaster occurs.

ITC Thomas Greer, assigned to U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility, Yokosuka, asks a question at the Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka (CFAY) Emergency Preparedness Summit in the base theater March 22. Durning the CFAY Emergency Preparedness Summit Sailors, dependents and DoD civilians were informed of how to prepare and what to do in case of a natural disaster.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Jordan T. Buttolph

"We are stationed in an environment where we have known events - earthquakes, typhoons. Preparing for these events is necessary to keep our families safe," said Capt. David Owen, CFAY commanding officer. "While it is impossible to plan or prepare for every contingency, ensuring you have a plan to include emergency kits and knowing where to find information is essential."

Waiting for a disaster to occur or waiting to hear word from the command that a potentially disastrous situation is coming is too late.

"During the early stages of an emergency there will be chaos and uncertainty with many first reports having inaccuracies," said Owen. "Being prepared will reduce the fear and anxiety that accompany an emergency and help people make better, informed decisions."

CFAY uses many media outlets such as CFAY's CNIC website and computer desktop notification system (CDNS), American Forces Network's Ch annel 15, Eagle 810 AM radio, CFAY's Facebook page to get information out to help communicate with the community.

Even with all these tools, it is possible that information is delayed.

"In an emergency people are searching for information anywhere it can be found," said Michelle Stewart, CFAY public affairs officer. "While it is important to get out information quickly, it is more important to give out correct information. In the latter instance, depending on the information, it may have to be cleared through higher headquarters. That delays the information but is a necessary step."

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INSIDE

***George Washington* hosts Spring Festival Open House**

The *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) crew welcomed aboard more than 11,000 guests during the annual CFAY Spring Festival March 25.

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Spouses 'learn the ropes' of U.S. Navy history, lifestyle

New Navy spouses attended a three day class offered by Fleet and Family Services designed to teach them about the history of the Navy as well as give them insight into the Navy way of life.

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