Spectrum Lounge, VITA Center team up, help Sailors do taxes

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Moral, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Division and CFAY Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Center teamed up to help Sailors do their taxes with a Pizza and Taxes event at the Spectrum Lounge in the James D. Kelly Fleet Recreation Center March 4.

The event was coordinated by CFAY MWR Spectrum Lounge staff with the idea that serving free pizza and sodas would help alleviate some of the burden of doing taxes, according to Single Sailor Support Coordinator David Moses, who was one of the event coordinators.

(Right) VITA Center Tax Officer Lt. Cmdr. Robert Moore assists Sailors with electronic filing of taxes during a Pizza and Taxes event at the Spectrum Lounge in the James D. Kelly Fleet Recreation Center March 4.

"We are here to make things as easy as we can for the Sailors," said Moses. "For a lot of Sailors, it's their first time filing taxes here, so they are not sure exactly what they have to do and the assistance from the tax center makes things that much easier for them."

Once the venue was set and the pizzas were ordered, VITA Center tax preparers stepped in to lend their expertise. They helped Sailors get acquainted with online tax programs that walk them through the process of filing taxes.

"Military OneSource is available on any computer, but a lot of Sailors are hesitant to do it by themselves," VITA Center Tax Officer Lt. Cmdr. Robert Moore said. "As certified tax preparers, we are able to sit down with them and show them step-by-step how to do [taxes], to make them feel comfortable with doing taxes. [Doing] taxes is not too complicated, but it does scare a lot of young Sailors."

Another reason for the idea for holding the event was the fact that some Sailors cannot get time off from work to file their taxes.

"I think it was significant because, our (VITA) hours of operation are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and a lot of Sailors, during their work hours, cannot come here to do VITA taxes, and [the event] gave them a chance, after working hours, from [6 to 9 p.m.], to actually come down and get their taxes done," said Moore. "So, I think that was beneficial."

However, events like Pizza and Taxes offer much more than just a more convenient time for Sailors to file their taxes.

"The first benefit is, because [our services] are free. The second benefit is, we have certified tax preparers to assist you on your own taxes," said Moore. "We do have tax preparers who can prepare taxes for you, but if you have a W2 [form] and an interest, it's beneficial for you to learn the tax process and Military OneSource has a good program to allow you to do your taxes by yourself."

According to Moses and Moore, the event, which helped to assist more than 60 Sailors with filing their taxes, was a great success.

"This event was basically to make things as convenient as we can for the Sailors," said Moses. "Hopefully this [type of] event will catch on worldwide throughout all the Single Sailor Centers."

Additionally, Moore stated that there are plans in the works to hold another Pizza and Taxes event during the last week of tax season.

Contact the Spectrum Lounge at 243-7346 for information on upcoming Pizza and Taxes events, and, for more information regarding tax services, contact the VITA Center at 243-6465.

Chief of Civil Engineers visits Yokosuka

By NAVFAC Far East Public Affairs

Commander Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) and Chief of Civil Engineers Rear Adm. W. Greg Shear visited NAVFAC Far East sites in Japan including Yokosuka, Atsugi and Sasebo, March 4-6.

Shear, who will retire this summer after commanding NAVFAC and the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps since October 2006, was in the area as part of a tour of NAVFAC facilities engineering commands in the Pacific. While in Yokosuka, he visited Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Public Works Department to meet with employees, toured the Cogeneration Plant and attended an awards ceremony at NAVFAC Far East headquarters.

During the awards ceremony, Shear cited the forward deployment of *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) in 2008 as an example of the spirit of innovation and hard work that exists at NAVFAC Far East, CFAY and other U.S. Navy and Marine Corps installations throughout the region.

"You're on the leading edge," Shear told the awards ceremony audience. "Your workforce is second to none; you've got a great reputation and we can count on you to get the mission done every time."

After departing Yokosuka, Shear went on to visit Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo, where he toured facilities and was the guest speaker for two Seabee Balls celebrating the 168th birthday of Naval Facilities Engineering Command, the 143rd anniversary of the Civil Engineer Corps and the 68th anniversary of the U.S. Navy Seabees.

(Right) CFAY Public Works Department Officer Lt. Cmdr. Kristian Barton briefs NAVFAC Commander and Chief of Civil Engineers Rear Adm. W. Greg Shear on the operation of the SCADA room during a tour of NAVFAC facilities March 4.
Photo by Yasuko Nakamura

Rear Adm. Christopher J. Mossey, has been named as the next NAVFAC commander.

Annual road tax, 2010 decal issuance

Annual road tax for your vehicle is paid every spring. Payments, which must be made in yen, can be made at the Kanagawa Tax Office for regular sized cars and trucks. Payments for motorcycles and mini-cars can be made at the local city office, starting April 1.

Road tax will be collected at the Fleet Theater, March 23, 25 and 26 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2:30 p.m. and April 12 and 13 from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2:30 p.m. This service on board Yokosuka is also intended for Ikego residents. Road tax collection for vehicles registered in Negishi will be at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation classroom, Bldg. 19045, in Negishi Housing April 15 from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The amount of road tax to be paid depends on the type of vehicle, determined by the number shown on the top of the license plate as follows:

- 40/400Y and 50/500Y plates 7,500 yen
- 33/300Y plates 4.5L and below 19,000 yen
  4.6L and above 22,000 yen
- 11Y, 100Y plates 32,000 yen

Base decals must be affixed to the top center of the front windshield, next to the Japanese inspection sticker. Contact the Vehicle Registration office at 243-5011/5896 for more information.

Religious offerings in 2009 top 660K for Navy Region Japan

By MC3 Dominique Pineiro,
Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan
Public Affairs

Installation chapel communities in Navy Region Japan collected more than $660,000 to be contributed to their Religious Offering Funds (ROF) in 2009.

Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Force Chaplain Cmdr. John Swanson expressed his gratitude to the volunteers across the region in the various chapel programs who made last year's ROF successful.

"The contribution of one's time and talent often goes unnoticed but is just as important," said Swanson. "We have many volunteers who make the various chapel programs so effective. Their God-given talents and gifts of time are very much appreciated."

According to Swanson, more than $530,000 of the ROF was sent to non-profit organizations and charities that serve the homeless and the poor, such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

"In general, the lion's shares of religious offerings are sent to non-profit organizations and charities," commented Swanson. "Stewardship is also giving back our time, talents and treasure to make the world a better place, the place God intended it to be."

In addition to normal ROF, faith groups can request to collect what is called a designated offering.

Commanding officers (CO) must approve in writing all designated offerings prior to the event.

Once a designated offering has been approved by a CO, 100 percent of the offerings collected will go toward the designated organization or charity.

A recent example of how designated offerings were used was in response to disaster relief.

Navy Region Japan chapels collected more than $51,000 for people directly affected by the recent 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti.

Of the overall total of ROF contributions in 2009, members assigned to Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka collected more than $430,000 and gave more than $360,000 to charity.