Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Far East chiefs embrace heritage with 117th birthday

By MC1 Brock A. Taylor, NPASE Japan

As early morning traffic pulsed through the gates of Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) April 1, the local chief petty officer (CPO) community stood proud, the first in the fleet to celebrate the 117th CPO birthday.

While the base paused for morning colors, members of the Far East CPO Mess gathered in their khaki uniforms and combination covers to render honors to the national flags of the U.S. and Japan, showing their presence and unity as leaders in the community.

At first glance, a civilian in a black jacket seemed to be lost in the sea of CPO khaki. However, closer inspection revealed a special guest and fellow "anchor" in the group.

Retired Master Chief Boatswain's Mate and Navy SEAL Rudy Boesch, known for being the gruff, yet likeable season one finalist on the hit television show "Survivor," joined Yokosuka chiefs for their special day.

According to CFAY Command Master Chief Gregory Vidaurri, Boesch's visit to Yokosuka is more than just displaying a celebrity; it is about honoring past and present Sailors who have served in the CPO community.

"He's a celebrity in our chief's community," Vidaurri said. "He is the only master chief petty officer that I know who served 45 years and three months and that says a lot. When you look at a man who joined the Navy in 1945 and retired in 1990 – think about that! Think about that commitment. I'm proud to be wearing the same uniform as Mr. Boesch."

Rudy served as a Navy SEAL team leader, completing two combat deployments to Vietnam. He was presented the Bronze Star medal for heroic action during more than 45 combat operations. Boesch later earned the coveted title of "Bullfrog," the official designation of the longest continually serving SEAL.

EODC Daniel Martin and Gunnery Sgt. Tony Smith, chat with retired BMCM(SEAL) Rudy Boesch during the Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Dining Out April 1. Boesch visited Yokosuka to help celebrate the 117th birthday with the CPO Mess. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Charles Oki

Nearly two decades since he retired from active duty, Boesch hasn't forgotten the importance of CPO leadership.

"The chief is in charge, there's no doubt about it," Boesch said. "He's dressed different than the average Sailor and with that he presents authority. It's a valuable mess and it's good that we have it."

According to Vidaurri, the CPO legacy as deckplate leaders is just as relevant today as it was when Rudy served. He said it is important for all chiefs to take time to reflect on what being a CPO leader is all about.

"The common theme that I would like to send to all chief petty officers out there is commitment," Vidaurri said. "I'd like to use this day as a time for chiefs to take a look at ourselves just like when we put on that khaki uniform for the very first time."

Vidaurri says chiefs in the Yokosuka community are actively engaged and continue to live up to the standards expected of the rank by writing instructions and enforcing the rules. Chiefs lead from the deckplates of the forward-deployed ships to the streets outside Yokosuka base. Today, as Vidaurri explained, is a chance for chiefs to "Anchor up" and show the community that April 1 is a celebration not only for chief petty officers, but for every rank.

"It's a celebration for our entire Navy, because our chief petty officers for the last 117 years have been providing that deckplate style leadership that is needed," Vidaurri said. We are the middle man between our senior officers and junior Sailors and with that we help guide and shape the future of our Navy."

Overseas Housing Allowance online survey begins April 15

Story and photo by MC3 Dominique Pineiro, CNFJ Public Affairs

The annual Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) Utility and Move-In Housing Allowance (MIHA) survey for service members in Japan is scheduled to begin April 15 and continuing through May 14.

IT2 Lisa Boutxaynho, explains the features of the online Defense Management Travel Office (DTMO) Web site to LS2 Sorviel Sinsin March 25. The annual Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) Utility and Move-In Housing Allowance (MIHA) online survey will be available for access on the DTMO Web site starting April 15 and running through May 14 for service members in Japan.

The survey will be available to all uniformed service members who reside in privately leased quarters throughout Japan and receive OHA.

Information Systems Technician 1st Class Theresa Chavira, assigned to Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ), has been living overseas for more than two years and stated the OHA is directly affected by how people answer the survey.

"It either goes up or down, and I think everybody who lives out in town needs to fill it out," said Chavira. "People need to state their opinions and give proper feedback about how much they pay for utilities because when some people start paying out of pocket that's unacceptable."

Personnel Support Detachments throughout the region will make official notification to command personnel coordinators (CPC) when the online survey becomes active to ensure that as many service members as possible have the chance to fill it out.

Yeoman 1st Class Karen Cypriensmith, the CPC for CNFJ, stressed the importance of filling out the surveys.

"The survey is input driven," said Cypriensmith. "The more people who fill out the survey, the better feedback the Navy will get and it could possibly lead to us getting more money."

The OHA portion of the survey will ask service members to report their average monthly utility and routine maintenance costs. To prepare for the utility portion, service members receiving OHA should collect their actual bills or records of utility and maintenance expenses for the last 12 months.

To prepare for the MIHA portion, service members should collect all receipts for expenses incurred when initially moving into their private leases. This includes refrigerators, non-refundable hook-up costs for electricity, et cetera.

According to the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) Web site, OHA is paid to more than 56,000 service members in 129 countries and current annual expenditure is around $1.4 billion. Currency fluctuations impact annual payment, and on average each eligible service member is paid $25,000 per year.

The online OHA survey, https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/oha/survey/aprumemie1.html, will be available for access on the DTMO Web site, starting April 15 and running through May 14.

INSIDE

New drugs, same Navy policy – zero tolerance

With the emerging popularity of designer drugs, the Navy has underscored its zero tolerance drug policy by establishing new guidelines released March 25.

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Food Network celebrity Chef Tyler Florence visits Yokosuka

Food Network celebrity Chef Tyler Florence visited Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) March 31 to prepare a dinner for Sailors and to sign autographs for his fans.

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