



Japanese, American Sailors join together to commemorate anniversary of historic sea battle

By Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

Honoring the past and highlighting the friendships that have been forged in its wake, Japanese and American Sailors came together to mark the 67th anniversary of the Battle of Midway at a ceremony aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) June 4.

Remarking on the bonds that have formed between the two nations since the battle, CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed noted that mutual progress in the face of past differences has created a stronger alliance.

"Some people thought it was unusual that we would remember a conflict, and remember a period in our history when the United States and Japan were not the best of friends," said Weed. "But I realized, it was our joint effort together, good, bad, positive and negative that shows how much we have grown, how strong our friendship is and how great our alliance is throughout the world."

CFAY Base Operations Coordinator Chief Master-at-Arms Parnell Cross, who organized the event, felt it was a great opportunity for Sailors to learn about naval history and better understand the role they play in the ongoing relationship between the navies of Japan and the United States.

"It's not everyday where you get the opportunity to be a part of an event of this magnitude," said Cross. "To be a part of an event where two nations come together, who were once enemies, and are now together, brothers in arms, it's definitely a wonderful experience."

The ceremony, held in Kosano Park, was a solemn occasion which gave visitors from both nations the opportunity to honor those who laid down their lives in the service of their countries.

In addition to remarks by Weed, guests watched as a

ceremonial wreath was placed in Tokyo Bay by Sailors of the Japanese and United States navies, observed moments of silence and prayer, and were given a brief lesson on the events of the battle by CFAY Chaplain Lt. Scott Shafer. Music, including the national anthems of both nations, "Taps" and a mosaic of patriotic songs, was provided by the U.S. 7th Fleet Band.

According to the Department of the Navy's Naval History and Heritage Command, the Battle of Midway was considered to be the turning point in naval battles in the Pacific during World War II. The battle was fought over and near the tiny U.S. mid-Pacific base at Midway atoll. Before this battle, the Japanese Navy was considered to possess general naval superiority. At the conclusion of the battle, the Navies were equal and the United States had gained the momentum at sea.

The Battle of Midway, which occurred from June 4-7, 1942, was commemorated by Sailors of the United States Navy around the world, on land and at sea.



CSCS David Deadwiley and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Senior Chief Petty Officer Masami Kawamonzen prepare to lay a wreath during a commemoration ceremony for the 67th anniversary of the Battle of Midway held at Fleet Activities Yokosuka Kosano Park June 4.

Photo by MC3 Charles Oki, Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, Japan

CFAY, JMSDF Sailors strengthen ties at special movie viewing

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

The Fleet Theater hosted a special viewing of the feature film "Battle Under Orion" aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) for the U.S. Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF) June 3. The movie helped educate the Sailors in the audience about how the war was fought, and served to strengthen the alliance between the U.S. and Japan by developing a better understanding of past events.

The film, which depicts the struggles and sacrifices made by the men and women at home and at war during the closing days of WWII, is centered on a battle pitting a Japanese submarine against an American destroyer.

CFAY Capt. Daniel Weed provided opening remarks to the more than 600 service and family members in attendance prior to the start of the movie. "The movie you are about to witness today portrays men and women pitched in moral conflict during the war in the Pacific," said Weed. "It directly addresses one of the most sensitive and historical issues between the United States and Japan and does so with great compassion and finesse. The movie also superbly displays professionalism of our navies, whether you are proud warriors of the U.S. Navy or the mighty *kaijō jietai* (JMSDF) who serve with pride, honor, courage and commitment."

The Japan - U.S. alliance is stronger now than it has ever been. The movie, and the Sailors' reaction to it, is indicative of how far both nations have come in learning to trust each other and work together. Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who served from 2001 to 2006, often spoke about the special quality of the relationship between the two nations.

Speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City in 2002, he summed up the importance of the alliance. "Our two countries, which fought a war only half a century ago, have built an exemplary alliance, based on the Japan - U.S. Security Treaty," said Koizumi. "The alliance today is the cornerstone for the peace and prosperity of not only the Asia Pacific region, but the entire world."

For many in the audience it was the first chance they had to take part in an event with their counterparts in the JMSDF. It was a good opportunity for everyone involved to help put not only WWII in perspective; but also, how special and valuable the alliance between the U.S. and Japan truly is.

Personnel Specialist Seaman Apprentice Chris Wagner of CFAY Personnel Support



Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Rear Adm. Richard Wren and Commander Fleet Submarine Force Vice Adm. Mikio Nagata stand with the "Battle under Orion" leading actress Keiko Kitagawa and leading actor Hiroshi Tamaki at a special viewing of the film at the Fleet Theater June 3.

Photo by Yuji Kawabe, CFAY Public Affairs

Detachment was especially grateful for the opportunity to take part in such a historic event. "It is a perfect setting because that's the kind of movie it was," said Wagner. "It showed compassion towards both sides of the war and it was good to view it with those who used to be the enemy but are now our allies."

Personnel Specialist Seaman Sherrie Downing, who has been aboard CFAY since November, was also happy to be able to be included in the event and looks forward to more opportunities to partake in bilateral activities. "I wish we could do more stuff with the Japanese Navy, it'd be nice to come together with our allies more often," said Downing.