Navy League hosts culinary competition for Sailors in Thailand

Story and photo by MCSN Christopher S. Harte, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

Culinary specialists from *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) (*GW*), *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) and *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) competed in the Black Box Culinary Competition at the Mariott Resort and Spa Hotel in Pattaya City, Thailand, Oct. 4, hosted by the Thailand chapter of the Navy League of the United States.

"The Navy League invited us out with the help of the Mariott," said *GW* Supply Officer Cmdr. Patrick McClanahan. "It was all their idea and we just were honored to get the invitation."

The competition consisted of four teams; two teams from *GW*, one from *McCampbell* and one from *Cowpens*.

"Our guys jumped at the chance, even with all their friends going on liberty, jumped at the chance to demonstrate with they can do," added McClanahan.

The teams from *GW* were hand picked based on their culinary skills, work ethic and experience. Among the Sailors picked to represent the ship was Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Stacy Reynolds.

"Well, first my heart dropped, because I'm like a cooking competition! And then I just was over taken with joy, it was great news," said Reynolds.

The Sailors were given a big black box filled with fruits, vegetables, meat and spices. Each team had to use everything in the box to create an appetizer, main course and desert for four judges.

"They gave us a lot of food, they gave us enough for seven courses and we only needed to make three," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Timothy Beeson. "I kind of didn't know what to do with it all so we did as much as we could."

The Sailors were judged on hygiene, taste, creativity and presentation.

"The presentation was gorgeous and I was very impressed with what they put out today," said *GW* Food Service Officer Chief Warrant Officer Teresa Cullipher.

The competition started off slow for some of the Sailors, "This being our first tournament together, we were trying to do our own thing, but overall I think we did well," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Morgan White. "I'm praying to God we take first, but we'll take second or third."

CSSN Timothy Beeson of *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) describes the main course he prepared for the judges during the Thailand chapter of the Navy League of the United States hosted Black Box Culinary Competition at Mariott's Resort and Spa Hotel in Pattaya City, Thailand Oct. 4.

Four and half hours later, time was up and the winners were soon to be announced.

"It was fun, it was a lot of fun," said Reynolds. "I wasn't really here to win, but if I do, it's a blessing. I was just here for the experience, to cook and it was a great experience."

Sailors from *McCampbell* took fourth place, while third and second place went to the *GW* teams. The team from *Cowpens* took first place in the competition.

"I congratulate them, they're a good team but next year we'll be back," said Culinary Specialist Chief Joy Nicolas.

Other Sailors just enjoyed being able to compete with fellow shipmates.

"Me and Reynolds have worked together in the CO's [commanding officer's] galley, so it was like meeting up with my brother here," said White. "He's a CS [culinary specialist] too so it's like we mesh so well together. That's why we were put together."

Navy League Chapter President Peter Thorand presented the awards to the Sailors giving out trophies and rental cars with private drivers.

"Thank you to all the ships coming and participating in this event," Thorand said. "Hopefully we will see you again next year."

Yokosuka Combined Federal Campaign-Overseas program begins

By CFAY CFC-O Community-Area Project Officer

This year's annual Combined Federal Campaign-Overseas (CFC-O) program for Yokosuka ashore and afloat commands has kicked off and will continue through Dec. 3.

"Contributors can donate to thousands of charitable national, international or local organizations," said Chief Master-at-Arms Jerry Tullos, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Ashore CFC-O Community-Area Project officer (CAPO). "Anyone serving the U.S. government overseas can donate. Department of Defense (DoD) contractors and foreign national employees are also welcome to donate."

CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 300 campaigns throughout the United States and overseas to help raise millions of dollars each year, according to the CFC website. Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season support eligible nonprofit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world. It is the only authorized solicitation of federal employees in their workplaces on behalf of approved charitable organizations.

The CFC-O program alone raised more than $15.6 million during its 2009 campaign.

According to Tullos, each unit or organization has a CFC-O representative who can assist donors in filling out their pledge cards. Pledge cards can be filled out manually and given to the unit representative or completed online with the "Online Pledge Assistant," which helps participants identify charities by name. Pledge cards filled out online must still be printed and given to your local CAPO.

Payment can be made by cash, check, credit or debit transaction or by payroll deduction.

When making donations, contributors can designate that their pledges go to support specific charities. Overseas donors can also contribute to one special program - the Family Support and Youth Programs (FSYP) initiative.

One hundred percent of donations made to FSYP go directly to overseas military communities to help fund child care, emergency assistance, recreation, community education and other quality of life programs and facilities, and enable overseas locations to offer free or reduced-cost programs.

According to CFC-O website, the U.S. Navy community in the Pacific Command donated more than $600,000, which was returned to overseas military communities to support these programs.

"This is a chance to give to many different charity agencies or to our own community by donating to the Family Support and Youth Programs initiative," Tullos added. "Donating to FSYP means supporting our Sailors and families by improving the experience of living abroad or helping in the transition."

For more information on the CFC-O, visit www.cfcoverseas.org or contact the Yokosuka Ashore CFC-O CAPO at 243-9973 or Master-at-Arms 1st Class Shavar Reynolds at 243-9972, or the Yokosuka Afloat CFC-O CAPO Chief Logistics Specialist Daniel Miller at 243-8991 or Information Systems Technician 1st Class Theresa Chavira at 243-3180.