Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Yokosuka community celebrates Navy's 235th birthday

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Cool weather and unyielding rain could not deter the mass of people who turned out to help celebrate the 235th birthday of the U.S. Navy, during the annual Yokosuka Navy Ball held here in the George I. Purdy Fitness Center Oct. 9.

According to U.S. Naval Historical Archives, the U.S. Navy can trace its origins to the Continental Navy, which the Continental Congress established on Oct. 13, 1775.

USNH Yokosuka Executive Officer Capt. Kevin Knoop, as the oldest Sailor, passes a piece of the ceremonial cake to the youngest Sailor CSSN Joshua Watkins, while Commander Submarine Group 7 Rear Adm. Robert L. Thomas Jr., looks on, during the Yokosuka Navy Ball held here at the George I. Purdy Fitness Center Oct. 9. As a Navy tradition, the passing of cake from oldest to youngest symbolizes the passing of knowledge.

In 1972, then Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt authorized recognition of Oct. 13 as the Navy's birthday. Since 1972, each CNO has encouraged a Navywide celebration of the occasion in order to enhance a greater appreciation of U.S. Navy heritage, and provide a positive influence toward pride and professionalism in the naval service.

"As the Navy celebrates 235 years of service to the nation, it is important to reflect on the vital work our Sailors do and how sea power of our Navy protects our way of life and provides for security and prosperity around the world," said CNO Adm. Gary Roughead, in his 2010 Navy birthday message to the fleet.

According to Roughhead, it's the Sailors who have made and continue to make the U.S. Navy the organization that it is today.

"Since our nation's founding, Sailors have embodied our Navy Corps values of 'Honor, Courage and Commitment,'" said Roughead. "This proud heritage was built upon the daring, versatility, and capability of our Sailors. Today those attributes ensure that we remain the most powerful and influential Navy ever to sail the world's oceans."

During the event, two Sailors were chosen to take part in the time honored Navy Ball tradition of passing a piece ceremonial cake from the oldest to the youngest Sailor in attendance to symbolize the passing of knowledge between them.

"That tradition embodies a tremendous history that is so relevant today," said U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Executive Officer Capt. Kevin Knoop, who was the oldest Sailor in attendance. "With so many new, younger people coming into the Navy, to have the opportunity to pass on knowledge to the younger generation is an honorable tradition."

Though it was a surprise to the oldest and youngest Sailors, due to them being singled out from the crowd, it was a pleasant surprise.

"It's actually an honor," said Culinary Specialist Seaman Joshua Watkins, who has been in the Navy for approximately six month and, at age 19, was the youngest Sailor in attendance. "I was not aware that was going to take place. It was an honor for me to be lucky enough for that to happen to me."

Prior to the dinner portion of the evening, entertainment was provided in the form of a live dramatization, of Samurai facing-off against each other, provided by Shibasaki Action Project.

George Washington Carrier Strike Group arrives in Thailand

By MCSN Justin E. Yarborough, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

USS George Washington (CVN 73) (*GW*) arrived in Laem Chabang, Thailand, Oct. 2 for a five- day port visit in the coastal city of Pattaya, following the ship's completion of exercise Valiant Shield 2010.

This is the fourth port call for *GW* during its 2010 summer patrol and its first ever visit to the partner nation of Thailand since its arrival to the 7th Fleet in 2008.

During the visit, more than 250 Sailors will participate in seven community service (COMSERV) projects and have the opportunity to experience the Thai culture through 16 tours offered by the *GW* Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program. *GW* will also welcome aboard local military and public officials as well as members of the media and provide them with guided tours of the ship. The tours will give those a first hand look at the inner workings of the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier.

"Port visits like this aren't just good for the local economy and the crew's morale, the bigger benefit here is the opportunity for two friendly nations to come together and expand on their relationship which in turn benefits the regional security," said Capt. David A. Lausman, *GW* commanding officer.

During the COMSERV projects, activities will range from Sailors teaching English and participating in sporting events with more than 150 students at a local school to planting flowers and interacting with more than 250 residents at a local home for the elderly.

"This is my first time I've been to Thailand and while I'm excited to get out there and see the country, I've always enjoyed doing COMSERV projects," said Electrician's Mate 3rd Class (SW) Adam Ford. "I have participated in a COMSERV project in every port this cruise and I am sure that in Thailand I will enjoy myself. I signed up to go over to the school to play sports with the kids; I'm really looking forward to it."

CTF 70 Rear Adm. Dan Cloyd receives a gift from Lt. Gen. Wilas Aroonsri, assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence for the Royal Thai navy, after a tour aboard *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Oct. 7.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Rachel N. Hatch

When *GW* Sailor's are not busy with COMSERV projects, they will have the opportunity to experience Thailand through the numerous tours that showcasing the country's culture and landscape.

MWR Tours feature a variety of options including an overnight trip to Bangkok to experience the Damnernsaduak floating market, golfing and an elephant ride through the countryside. For most Sailors, it is their first time visiting Thailand and said they are looking forward to experiencing everything Thailand has to offer.

"Elephants, elephants, elephants, that's all I've heard about since the tours became available and that is the tour I was able to sign up for," said Yeoman Seaman Walter Jackson. "This will be my first time ever seeing an elephant in person, I can foresee a lot of pictures being taken and sent home to my parents."

Even with the many activities the port visit has to offer, Lausman noted the importance of knowing the role Sailors will play while enjoying their time in Thailand.

"Our Sailors are representatives of the United States," said Lausman. "When someone sees us at a school, on a tour or in a market, they think of the United States. In each port they've represented our country proudly and I know they'll do the same in Thailand."

INSIDE

Navy League hosts culinary competition for FDNF Sailors

***USS George Washington* (CVN 73), *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85) and *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) Sailors competed in a culinary competition in Thailand, Oct. 4.**

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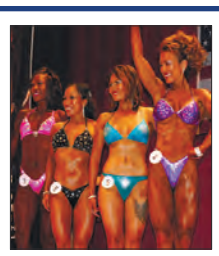

Locals flex their muscles at MWR bodybuilding competition

More than 200 people crowded into the Fleet Theater to see local men and women show off their physiques at the 2010 Yokosuka Bodybuilding and Figure Championships Oct. 3.

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