Serving Yokosuka for 50 years

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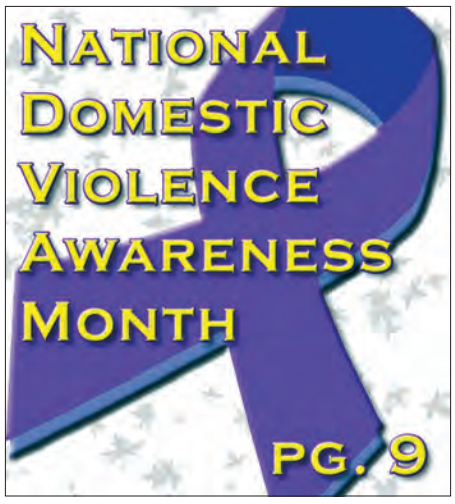

Navy Ball focuses on "Honoring Tradition, Embracing Change"

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) celebrated the 234th birthday of the U.S. Navy during its annual Navy Ball held in the George I. Purdy Fitness Center Oct. 3.

Authorized in 1972 by former Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, the Navy birthday is intended as an internal activity for members of the active forces and reserves, as well as retirees and dependents to enhance a greater appreciation of U.S. Navy heritage, and to provide a positive influence toward pride and professionalism in the naval service.

During the event attendees were treated to food, entertainment and door prizes throughout the evening.

One of the various forms of entertainment was a geisha performance of traditional Japanese music and dance featuring Sayuki of Asakusa, Tokyo. Sayuki, which is her performance and preferred name, is an Australian woman and first westerner to be accepted as a geisha.

In addition to the traditional Japanese entertainment, there was also a live band and disc jockey playing dance music until 1 a.m.

"I think the whole evening is good for me… you know, great prizes, great guest speakers and great performances," said Master-At-Arms 2nd Class Anthony Seaman, of CFAY Security Training Division.

Sailors coming together to celebrate the official birthday of the Navy is not something new, but for some, like Seaman, it was a first-time experience.

"This is the first one that I've been able to go to and, actually, my wife said it would be a [memorable experience] and I agree with her," Seaman said. "It's the Navy's birthday… I needed to go celebrate it."

In addition to the U.S. Sailors and Marines who attended the celebration of the Navy's birthday, sailors from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) were also on hand to join in the celebration.

"[A thank you] also goes to our JMSDF warriors who have worked together with us so closely over the last 64 years to protect and defend the country of Japan," said CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, during his remarks. "Your professionalism and expertise are the cornerstone of a firm and fruitful relationship which have endured many challenges and emerged stronger than ever before."

(Left) The youngest Sailor, ITSN Benjamin Osborne from NIOC Yokosuka, along with the oldest Sailor, Capt. Gerald Wilks from USNH Yokosuka, take part in the traditional cake-cutting ceremony during the CFAY Navy Ball held in the George I. Purdy Fitness Center Oct. 3. Wilks was born Feb. 2, 1940 and joined the Navy in 1963. Osborne was born May 18, 1990 and enlisted in the Navy in 2008.

The theme for the 2009 Navy Ball was "Honoring Tradition, Embracing Change," which is what some Sailors feel the Navy Ball stands for.

"I think it's important to celebrate the Navy because it gives a chance for our Sailors, and the Sailor's family members to celebrate our [naval] heritage," said Morale Welfare and Recreation Fitness Instructor Sabrina Flowers, who attended the ball with her husband.

According to Flowers, Navy balls are celebrations that everyone should experience.

"It's a great opportunity, even if you only do it one time; it's something you're going to take with you for the rest of your life," she said.

Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains Rear Adm. Tidd visits Yokosuka

Story and photo by MCSN Dominique Pineiro, CNFJ Public Affairs

The Chaplain of the Marine Corps/Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains Rear Adm. Mark Tidd visited Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), Oct. 2 to discuss the Chaplain Corps and to meet service members in the region.

Tidd spoke at the CFAY Chapel of Hope with religious program teams from tenant and afloat commands.

"My priority is to support the chaplains and RPs (religious program specialists)," said Tidd, while addressing the group. "In one way or another you guys are supporting people who are in operations around the world in support of our national security objectives."

Tidd stressed the importance of mentorship as well.

"Each one of us needs a mentor," said Tidd. "Someone to help us navigate being in the Navy, as well as someone who can take us under their wing… someone to give us an appreciation serving in the Navy as a chaplain or RP."

Tidd also addressed some challenges that Sailors in the religious ministry have to deal with when deployed to a combat zone.

"Walking through the experience of a combat zone is a difficult walk…it's the most intense ministry you'll provide," he said. "It may involve dealing with the grief of Marines or Sailors who lost their best friend, it may involve holding the hand of a dying Marine. These experiences change you; there are times when your own faith can be shaken."

Lt. William Stewart, a Navy chaplain who was stationed in Al-Anbar province during some of the most intense violence of the Iraq war said that Tidd "hit the nail on the head."

"Faith tends to grow or fall apart," Stewart said. "It's your faith that brings you through the difficult times and some of the terrible things witnessed. When it's over, often times you find yourself with a stronger faith… but some people go through too many traumatic events and they eventually lose sight of their faith."

Among other topics discussed during the event was the Navy's focus on sexual assault prevention and how religious ministries can assist in that goal.

Tidd said that sexual assault was something that needed to be "stamped out."

"This is an issue that is such a fundamental betrayal of our core value that hits at the heart of our military," he said. "We need to get more involved in this in terms of training. We are key resources to people coordinating sexual assault prevention programs."

Tidd concluded his visit to Yokosuka Base by going to the Officer's Club for dinner with members of religious program teams from tenant and afloat commands.

The Chaplain of the Marine Corps/Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains Rear Adm. Mark Tidd speaks to Sailors during a visit to CFAY Oct. 2.