Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Vol. LXI, No. 46 www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka Nov. 19, 2010

Kinnick JROTC Veterans Day ceremony honors sacrifices

By Alexa Lazar,
Seahawk contributor

Nile C. Kinnick High School Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) conducted a ceremony observing Veterans Day in the Kinnick school courtyard Nov. 10.

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1054 District Commander Homer Kemper served as the guest speaker for the event. Kevin Mode, a retired U.S. Navy lieutenant commander and retired Photographers Mate 1st Class Omar Hasan, planned and led the ceremony.

The Kinnick High School Band, under the direction of Jonathan Parker, and the show choir, under the direction of Jan Nelson, also took part in the ceremony.

Present at the ceremony were other members of the local VFW post, members of the Fleet Reserve Association Post 103, active duty military members and many parents of the students and cadets.

The event consisted of an honor guard and a flag detail escorted by the armed drill team. Cadet Petty Officer 2nd Class Juan Sese attended the ceremony and believes that it is important for everyone, not just NJROTC cadets, to remember the sacrifices American fighting men and women have made throughout the country's history.

"The intent of today's observance was to commemorate the men and women throughout the decades that have volunteered to risk their lives and help establish freedom in our country," said Sese. "We want the students and the audience to realize how fortunate we are to be living in a land with freedom and justice and want them to understand that the military secures that blessing."

During his remarks, Kemper spoke passionately on the importance of Veterans Day, detailing its history and imploring those in attendance to continue the tradition of remembering America's fallen heroes.

"Veterans Day is a day set aside to honor all of the many veterans who throughout our nation's history have unselfishly committed their lives for the cause of freedom," said Kemper. "Far too often, the freedoms we all enjoy are taken for granted, but those freedoms were paid for with the lives of our fellow veterans. The freedom enjoyed by our country has been, and will continue to be defended through the sacrifices of brave men and women. How easy it is for our nation to forget the many sacrifices made by the veteran."

Veterans Day was instituted after the first world war as Armistice day with a proclamation from President Woodrow Wilson which stated, "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations."

On June 1, 1954 Armistice Day officially became Veterans Day with the signing of legislation by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to recognize not only the veterans of World War I, but of all those who have served the wars that required the commitment, courage and patriotism of our nation's finest.

The ceremony struck a chord with many in attendance who were moved by the sincerity and heartfelt emotion Kemper expressed in his words.

"His speech obviously came from a place of deep respect and pride - as he himself is a veteran," said Cadet Senior Chief Petty Officer Lorey-Eileen Geary.

Kemper was also impressed with the flawless execution of the ceremony presented by the school's JROTC program.

"I've been coming to this one on and off for seven years and I don't think that anybody puts a better program on than Kinnick High School JROTC," Kemper said. "I'm very impressed and this is probably the best one I've seen throughout my military career."

Nile C. Kinnick High School NJROTC cadets stand at parade rest during the Veterans Day ceremony held in the school courtyard Nov. 10. The event was led by the KHS NJROTC and featured District Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1054 Homer Kemper as guest speaker.

Photo by Dan Bowen

USS Stethem makes Okinawa port visit for White Beach Festival

The guided-missile destroyer *USS Stethem* (DDG 63) is assisted pier side by local tugboats while Navy security department personnel observe as the ship pulls into White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, Japan Nov. 11.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Roadell Hickman

By *USS Stethem* Public Affairs

The guided-missile destroyer *USS Stethem* (DDG 63) arrived in Okinawa, Japan to participate in the 2010 White Beach Festival Nov. 12. Her arrival in White Beach marks the first U.S. Navy ship to visit during the festival in a decade.

As part of the festival, *Stethem* provided open ship tours to community service projects, as well as an opportunity for the crew to explore Okinawa.

"This weekend's visit is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate our commitment and support to Japan," said Cmdr. Henry Adams, *Stethem* commanding officer. "By providing opportunities for the local community and our crew to interact directly, through ship tours, local service projects, and friendly sports competitions, we are also facilitating important cultural exchange between our Sailors and the Japanese people."

Stethem Sailors conducted open ship tours on both days of the White Beach Festival. In addition to a beach clean-up community relations project, *Stethem* strengthened bonds with local Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force sailors through several sports competitions.

Stethem Command Master Chief Kelvin Coleman said this is a return visit to a well-loved duty station.

"I met my wife here," said Coleman. "So this visit is of personal importance to me. I am honored to have the opportunity to reinforce the friendship that is shared between our two nations, and am looking forward to returning to a port that will always remain very special to me."

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Making the most of social media websites

CFAY residents learn how to use the internet, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other free tools available to enhance their image at the Branding 101 class Oct. 28.

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The Sullivans School hosts Katoh Kindergarten exchange

The Sullivans Elementary School hosted more than 50 Japanese kindergarten students and teachers from the Katoh Elementary School in Shizuoka Prefecture.

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