Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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CFAY helps provide fresh water to Fukushima power plant

By Joe Schmitt, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) began transferring fresh water to two fuel barges, which will be used to support cooling efforts at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, March 25.

U.S. Navy Barge YON-287, filled with 851,000 litres (225,000 gallons) of fresh water, departs Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka March 26 to support cooling efforts at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. YON 287 is the second barge of two supplied by the U.S. Navy at the request of the Japanese government to aid in the cooling efforts. The two barges supplied a total of 1.89 million litres (500,000 gallons) of fresh water.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 John Smolinski

A total of 1.89 million litres (500,000 gallons) are being distributed between the barges that have been cleaned of fuel to support fresh water. The first Barge YOGN-115 departed CFAY and was escorted by Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) multipurpose support ship *JS Hiuchi* (AMS 4302). The second barge was scheduled to leave within the following 24 to 48 hours. The water will eventually be used to replace the seawater currently being used in cooling efforts at the plant.

"We have two barges here," said CFAY Operations Officer Lt. Cmdr. Michael Weatherford. "They can both hold up to approximately 300,000 gallons of fresh water each. But the max capacity is reduced to make the barges seaworthy for ocean travel. The request was for one million gallons, so when I told them we could get 500,000 gallons we started working on getting these barges released from our custody over to the [JMSDF]."

JMSDF officers were present on the pier to watch workers finish the final preparations before the barges left.

"This method was planned by the Japanese government after holding a council with Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) and others," said Capt. Fumiyuki Kitagawa, JMSDF officer. "After having a discussion with other ministries and agencies, [the Japanese government] decided to have Japan Maritime Self-Defense carry the barges to Fukushima this time."

"Once it leaves Yokosuka, we figure about seven knots travel speed because it's going to be towed by the JMSDF in the open ocean," said Weatherford. "We're estimating that it should reach its destination about 50 kilometers south of Fukushima within 35 hours from departure."

After watching the barge leave, Kitagawa had a personal message for the people that had helped make this event happen.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Americans and the U.S. Navy personnel who provided us with prompt response in the wake of the earthquake," said Kitagawa. "Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Naval ships off the coast of Sanriku are still searching for the missing people and delivering foods to the victims in the shelters together. The hearts of the U.S. Sailors have been reaching Japanese people. I really appreciate it and am very proud that JMSDF and the U.S. Navy once again can work together. Thank you all, again."

PACOM addresses concerns during Yokosuka town hall meeting

From CFAY Public Affairs

The U.S. military's top Pacific leader spent several hours at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) March 22 to answer questions and address concerns regarding events in the wake of the 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that devastated northeastern Japan March 11.

Commander U.S. Pacific Command Adm. Robert Willard, along with his wife Donna, addressed the community on the current situation with the Fukushima nuclear-power plant, voluntary departure of family members, and thanked families for their support to their Sailors who are fully engaged in Operation Tomodachi.

"The purpose of my visit to Japan was multi-faceted," said Willard. "I needed to talk to my forces out here that are conducting the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operation, in northern Honshu, to help the Japanese. So, I'm working the disaster side of this, but while we're here, Donna and I both wanted the opportunity to visit the sites, interact with the families, and perhaps share some information that would be helpful under these circumstances."

Willard began the meeting reassuring the community that leadership at all levels has the safety of service members and their families as their top priority. He also put the conditions of northeastern Japan into perspective.

"Just imagine 440,000 people who are in an area where infrastructure is pretty much destroyed, and more than 1,000 roads are gone. There's no power, no water and people are relying on relief efforts that we are assisting in," Willard told the crowd of approximately 700 people.

Commander U.S. Pacific Command Adm. Robert Willard, and his wife Donna, listen to a question from a resident during a town hall meeting here at the Benny Decker March 22. More than 700 base residents attended the town hall meeting.

Photo by Joe Schmitt

To help share information during the meeting, Willard held a question and answer session with community members to address community concerns.

"We couldn't have been happier with the turnout and with the questions. I learned a lot and I hope they got a lot out of it as well," said Willard. "Their safety is paramount on our minds. My responsibility is to manage that safety, look out for any future contingency that could occur, and to keep them informed."

Willard reiterated to the local commanders the importance of communications in keeping the community assured by keeping them informed.

"For the leaders that are here, keep leading keep supplying the information that's required as we go about this great humanitarian assistance and disaster response effort," said Willard. "To the families here, we're very, very proud of what they're doing, the courage they're showing, and the help that they are affording one another."

Though Willard addressed the Yokosuka community concerns, he also, in addition, spoke of the catastrophes that the Japanese people are enduring.

"The Japanese people, I think, have shown just wonderful resilience and fortitude under the worst circumstances," Willard expressed. "I know I speak for every American and every military member that we are very sorry for this great disaster that they've been subjected to."

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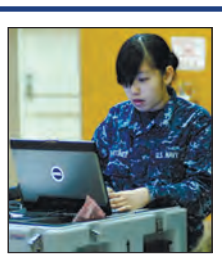

CFAY wraps up majority of voluntary departures

The last large group of DoD family members departed Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka March 24, as authorized by the voluntary military-assisted departure.

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