

Atsugi celebrates Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

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NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, JAPAN- On May 10, Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi celebrated Asian-Pacific American Heritage month at the Far Side Galley on base with food from the different Asian countries and demonstrations such as martial arts sparring, tea ceremonies and traditional dances.

“Today we’re celebrating Asian Pacific Heritage Month and what we’re doing is celebrating the specific cultures of each Asian country,” said Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Handling Chief Demetrius Cleveland, NAF Atsugi’s Heritage Committee Chairman.

“This is all about the Asian culture and celebrating their history.”

Members of the Asian Pacific community came out and helped show the audience at the galley why they find it important to honor their history and culture.

“It’s very important to me as far as being Asian and celebrating Asian Pacific Heritage month because I take a lot of pride in all the accomplishments my ancestors have done,” said Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Handling First Class Carlo Abalos, Leading Petty Officer at the Transient Line. “With all the different backgrounds and different ethnicities throughout the world, it’s important for us to get recognition to show what we do and what we’re proud of.”

Every race and country has their own culture and heritage. The month of May was proclaimed Asian Pacific Heritage month in the United States to honor the Asian Pacific American citizens.

According to <http://asianpacificheritage.gov/> Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was originated to celebrate the immigration of the first Japanese citizens in America on May 7, 1843 and the celebration of the American transcontinental railroad completion on May 10, 1869. Because many of the workers who laid out the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Events like this allow the community on base to experience the different cultures that they may not have known much about.

“As the heritage committee chairman, I feel like I’m bringing unity throughout the command,” said Cleveland. “It’s very important that we celebrate each culture and each race in the command. I just want to people to enjoy the celebration and learn something about each culture.”

For more information about Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month go to <http://asianpacificheritage.gov/>.