

Behind the scenes of the 4th of July celebration

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CELEBRATIONS

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan – Every year, residents of Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi participate in the 4th of July celebration. The celebration is also an open base event with record numbers of the local Japanese turning out to participate. Last year's event had over 3,000 participants.

For a festival of this scale to be arranged seamlessly, it takes proper planning and collaboration by various departments around the base. There are many different aspects to consider and prepare for before the event can actually take place that go beyond the scope of food, games, and live entertainment.

There's a lot of logistics that come into play, said Ron Murashige, community activities director. There must be coordination between those who are helping with the set up of the festival, such as public works, security and the fire department.

“Public works does a lot of the set up of events,” said Ensign William Fletcher, assistant director of the NAF Atsugi public works department. “They set up all the booths that you’ll see, the sound stage, and the mixing stage. They also do things like the porta-potty rentals and the trash clean-up.”

In accommodating a very large crowd, security and safety become major concerns.

“We go out and assist with the set-ups,” said Freddie Thompson, Jr., installation fire chief of NAF Atsugi. “Making sure that all booths are spaced properly, their fire extinguishers in place, and for those who are cooking, their appliances are in great shape. We make sure that the set-up is done properly.”

For security, it’s not only about keeping the base secure, but also keeping track of the host nationals which will be allowed on base after 3:00 p.m.

According to Master-at-arm Senior Chief Nick Francis, chief of police for NAF Atsugi, the main concern for security is not only to make sure all is well with the base, but to also keep track of the host nationals who will joining in with the festivities.

“We’re just trying to make sure that the event is safe for everyone coming to the event.” said Francis.

The communication and coordination utilized by these different departments come together to make the 4th of July festival seem

effortless, which is instrumental to the spirit of the event.

“It’s a fun event,” said Fletcher. “Have fun. It always good to have off base folks come on and join in the event with the sailors and families.”

The 4th of July festival is scheduled to begin at 11:30 a.m. at Reid/Taylor Field. There will be food, games, and live entertainment headlined by Bowling For Soup. The event will end with fireworks beginning at 8 p.m.