Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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CFAY hosts 63rd Red Rooster Firefighting Competition

Photo and story by MC2 (SW/AW) John S. Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

Eleven teams of firefighters from the Yokosuka City Fire Bureau area competed for the honor of 'Red Rooster' at the 63rd annual Red Rooster Competition sponsored by Commander Naval Region Japan (CNRJ) Fire Department held at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) June 21.

The opening ceremony begins with the winning teams from 2011's event returning the Red Rooster pennant and plaque to CFAY's commanding officer, Capt. David Owen, the title's official caretaker.

"Today's event pays tribute to the deep and lasting friendship between the United States Navy and the proud people of Yokosuka City, and as well as the excellent professional relationship within our outstanding firefighting community." said Owen. "Through friendly competition and good-hearted association, we continue to build upon our future solidarity and trust as partners with the common goal of protecting our citizens from the hazards of fires and other potential disasters."

Yokosuka City firefighters race around the course during the 2012 Red Rooster Competition held at CNRJ Fire Station on board CFAY June 21. The competition showcases the skills of the best firefighters in Yokosuka City area all competing for the title of 'red rooster.'

The first Red Rooster competition was held in 1949, when Capt. Benton "Benny" Decker honored the naval tradition of 'coaling evolutions' to build "esprit de corps" among the Japanese and American firemen of Yokosuka.

"Since that time, the Red Rooster flag has come to represent excellence in ability to demonstrate outstanding firefighting speed and capabilities amongst the Yokosuka City Fire Bureau, which is the purpose for our event today," said Owen.

Every year, the scenarios change for the competition. In previous years, they had situations that included different challenges like rescues. This year, the focus of the scenario is firefighting.

Yuuhei Hino, CNRJ Fire Department drill master and observer of the competition said that even though the weather's down, the spirits of the competitors seem to be high.

The teams competing this year were ready for the challenges.

Taku Yoshida, one of the competitors from South Fire Department, Uraga Branch, 3rd Group, won a spot on his team by beating out other firefighters from his branch.

Yoshida said that he is very grateful to be apart of this competition, and that it is encouraging to him to be here competing against teams that have worked so hard to be here.

This is Yoshida's second time attending the Red Rooster competition and says that he will try his best to be here next year and the years to come.

U.S., JMSDF midshipmen partake in cultural exchange

Story and photo by MC2 Devon Dow, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

ETAJIMA, Japan – Approximately 20 Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps participated in a cultural exchange at the Japan Maritime Officer Candidate School June 23.

The Midshipmen were each paired with a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) counterpart from the Japan Maritime Officer Candidate School and bonded through cultural events, further demonstrating the mutual friendship the navies share due to the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The day began with a greeting from Rear Adm. Ryuzo Sakato, the school's superintendent, for the U.S. Midshipmen. The midshipmen then took part in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony and a calligraphy course where JMSDF Midshipmen guided their U.S. counterparts.

During the class Midshipman Ashley Wires, from Cape Cod, Mass., said she has dreamt to become a member of the U.S. Navy since she was five-years old. Wires comes from a family with deep military roots. Her grandfather served in the U.S. Navy during WWII and took part in The Battle of Midway.

"While he is not here with us today, I am sure if he saw what I am doing today he would be so shocked and happy," she said. "Since arriving in Japan for this exchange I have had nothing but great experiences and met great Sailors from the JMSDF and U.S. Navy. Today is definitely an eye-opener for me and it shows me how much cooperation goes on between the U.S. and Japan navies; I love it."

Following the class, the Midshipmen were treated to JMSDF Midshipmen martial arts demonstrations and given the chance to learn techniques that they were shown.

(Left) U.S. Midshipman Gerold Haumschild receives traditional Japanese green tea during a cultural exchange event at the Japan Maritime Officer Candidate School June 23. Nearly 20 U.S. Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps midshipmen participated with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force midshipmen in the events, and further demonstrate the mutual friendship the navies share as part of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The Midshipmen had a panel discussion where they provided background information about the JMSDF Officer Candidates School's history, the local area and the significance of the U.S. Japan Alliance. The discussion was followed by a reception concluding the days' events.

The U.S. Midshipmen all agreed that the event was an experience that they would never forget.

"Being here today has been unbelievable," said Midshipman Westin Giles, a native for Pensacola, Fla. "I could not ask for more. I have been really impressed by the people and Sailors of Japan and their hospitality. I am gracious to have the chance to learn about how the U.S. and Japan navies work together here in Asia."

"I had a blast today, I will recommend this to others at my university," said Midshipman Timothy Oliver, from Louisville, Ky. "I loved the martial arts demonstrations today and the fact that I was able to meet an actual Admiral of the JMSDF was incredible. I simply cannot believe the opportunity for the experience I have had here today."

"I could not take enough photos today, the officers candidate school was amazing and the JMDSF midshipmen were so great to us," said Midshipman Jeremiah Henderson, from Callahan, Co. "It is been a great experience getting to know the other Midshipmen from around the U.S. during this visit to Japan as well. I am definitely looking forward to the opportunity to become a member and serve in the U.S. Navy."

INSIDE

George Washington completes successful trilateral exercise

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and Republic of Korea Navy leaders visited the *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) at the end of a two-day, trilateral exercise June 22.

Pg. 4

'Fit 4 Life' helps teach children to make healthy decisions

CFAY MWR Navy Fitness program is currently conducting its children's summer fitness and nutrition camp, 'Fit 4 Life', at the Purdy Fitness Center and the Community Readiness Center.

Pg. 9