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USO Yokosuka Center opens Wounded Warrior Room

Story and photo by Jeffrey C. Doepp, CFAY Public Affairs

The USO Yokosuka Center, on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) and located on the second floor of Club Alliance, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 9, to officially open their new Wounded Warrior room.

According to USO Japan Programs and Marketing Director Jewell Willett, the Wounded Warrior room is a relaxing space within the USO, dedicated to local wounded warriors and those who work to improve their lives.

"This room gives our troops a quite, relaxing place to get away from it all," Willett said. "The room provides an opportunity to unwind in silence, read a book, call home for free using Skype, connect to the internet on our free Wi-Fi or kick back and play some video games or watch a movie."

U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Stephen Pachuta was on hand to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony with USO Yokosuka Center Operations Manager Jason Rouse.

"On behalf of U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, I would like to thank the USO for their strong support of the command and our service members who are deployed in harms way," Pachuta said during brief remarks. "We especially want to also thank them for their support of our caregivers who ensure the wellbeing of our troops and the family members who hold down the home front while their loved ones are deployed."

According to USO Japan Director Juliet Bucayu-Domingo, late in 2011 the USO received funding from the Wounded Warrior Program to create a special area within the USO Yokosuka Center dedicated toward the hospital staff and corpsmen and those who have been stationed throughout Southwest Asia and other regions as individual augmentees.

"USO corporate office selected one center from every region to support a day project. USO centers were to provide a proposal as to why their center was deserving of the funding," said Bucayu-Domingo. "Although Yokosuka does not have wounded warriors, we wanted to honor those service members who care for our wounded."

According to Willett, not all USO centers have Wounded Warrior rooms but the centers are equipped with the comforts and programs required by their specific demographics to support service members.

(Left) USNH Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Stephen Pachuta and USO Yokosuka Center Operations Manager Jason Rouse cut the ribbon to officially open the Wounded Warrior room at the USO Yokosuka Center Jan. 9. The new addition to the center was made possible through funding provided by the Wounded Warrior Program.

"The mission of the USO is to support our service members and the Wounded Warrior Program is an extension of this mission," Willett said. "Our service members make daily sacrifices to serve our country and the USO ensures our wounded warriors are cared for."

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George Washington hosts ceremony for Martin Luther King Day

Story and photo by MC3 David A. Cox, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

USS George Washington (CVN 73) Multinational Heritage Committee held a commemoration ceremony in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King aboard the nuclear-powered forward-deployed aircraft carrier Jan. 13.

(Left) Capt. Kenneth Reynard, executive officer aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington (CVN 73)* applauds as Sailors cut a cake during a commemoration ceremony honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The event, which was two weeks in the making, involved more than 20 Sailors, who worked after hours to ensure the ceremony went smoothly.

During the ceremony, *George Washington* Sailors spoke about the influence of King and the enduring effect he has had on the integration of American culture and the progress Americans have made towards peace and equality.

"It's important that we celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." said Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Kendall Kershaw. "We need to remember why our community is where it is today and how it got there, without events like this to remind us, who knows where we would be right now as a nation, or as a people."

Chief Aviation Ordnanceman, Mattie Hackney said that she was amazed to find out details about King's life that she never knew before.

"I learned that Rosa Parks had given birth days before her famous bus protest and that King was the spearhead in the movement along with Parks to change the rules and regulations in regards to how people of color are treated on buses." said Hackney. "I also learned that King made sure to accomplish something significant every year of his life from the age of 15 until the day he died."

Ship's Serviceman 1st Class Cornelius Jones who is from Atlanta, King's birthplace, said that he was proud to be from a region that experienced significant change. He also said that King had set the milestone for others to follow in regards to measuring one self and that he had done so in the most dignified manner, without violence.

"King highlighted the burdens that he endured through the lack of progression, social change and economic challenges," said Jones. "He obtained 15 degrees in his lifetime, all the while watching over his family and his extended family, which included everyone, not just people of the same color."

The event's last speaker was Lt. Freddie Koonce who was inspired by King to pursue his dream of becoming a naval officer.

"If one man was able to create so much change in the world, imagine what several individuals bent on doing so could do," said Koonce.

"Anybody can create change, anybody can make an impact on lives, and this is what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was so adamant on showing; that if we all worked together, regardless of what background we came from, we can achieve our goals, together," Koonce added.

The ceremony ended on the aft mess decks with the cake cutting between the ship's national heritage committee and *George Washington* Executive Officer Capt. Kenneth Reynard.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. day has had a long and difficult road to acceptance, starting in 1968 after his death; it took 32 years for the last state, South Carolina to recognize the day as a holiday on May 2, 2000.

INSIDE

'Feeling good' may be best New Year's resolution

Too many people have previously made the decision to start exercising, eat right and lose weight as a resolution but have failed... ask yourself what went wrong.

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KHS wrestlers take gold at Beast of the East

Nile C. Kinnick High School, on board CFAY hosted the "Beast of the East" high school wrestling competition Jan. 7.

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