Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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CFAY community celebrates Independence Day

By MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) sponsored an Independence Day celebration on July 4.

The day's events included the Captain's Cup Firecracker Four on the Fourth Fun Run, Firecracker Softball Tournament, Horseshoe tournament, Independence Day Fun in the Sun waterskiing, tubing and boat rides, a single Sailor Give Me Liberty Celebration, Potomac pool parties, the CFAY Independence Day Youth Bike Parade and Ice Cream Social, a county fair setting of games, air toys and petting zoo, and live performances by Safety Suit, Natalie Stovall and Bowling for Soup emceed by Dennis Haskins.

The recording group Bowling for Soup performs for attendees of the CFAY Independence Day Celebration July 4.

Photo by John Sullivan

"This is my fourth summer that I have done the Fourth of July celebration here in Yokosuka," said Jarod Bailey, CFAY school-age care coordinator. "It's always a great event, and I feel they do it even bigger here than some of the celebrations I have been to in the states."

New to this year's Independence Day celebration is the CFAY Independence Day Youth Bike Parade and Ice Cream Social. This event invited kids to decorate their bikes, wagons and scooters in Fourth of July fashion and parade around the base. Afterwards, the kids were given scoops of ice cream.

"It's great to get the kids involved," said CFAY Safety Officer Kordeen Kor. "This gives them a feeling of participation in our Fourth of July celebration here at CFAY."

"The event was a success considering it was the first of its kind here," said Michelle Stewart CFAY Independence Day Youth Bike Parade and Ice Cream Social event coordinator. "The idea came from a community member who unfortunately didn't get to see the final results. From start to finish everyone jumped right in to make the event a success."

Celebrating Independence Day overseas can be a unique experience for some.

"Being part of the military and being on a military base, The Fourth of July takes on a more personal meaning for me," said Bailey.

"The interesting thing about being in Japan for the Fourth is that we are here celebrating, yet the local community doesn't realize just how special this day is for Americans," said Kor.

The main event was the live performances by Safety Suit, Natalie Stovall and Bowling for Soup.

"It's been exciting to be here in Japan for the past four days," said Jaret Reddick lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist for Bowling for Soup. "It's been pretty fun meeting the Sailors and their families, playing some rock 'n' roll and putting smiles on peoples' faces."

The forward-deployed U.S. military community is fairly small compared to those of the host country. Couple that with the fact that many Americans are far from home, and it makes coming together to celebrate events even more special.

"CFAY is a family community and events like this help solidify how close we are and how willing everyone is to assist in projects, events that makes this a fun place to live and work," said Stewart.

New leadership assumes command of NAVFAC Far East

From NAVFAC FE Public Affairs

Capt. Don R. Chandler relieved Capt. Robert A. McLean as Regional Engineer for Commander, Navy Region Japan; Commander, Navy Region Korea; Commander, Singapore Area Coordinator, and as Commanding Officer, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Far East (NAVFAC FE) at a change of command ceremony at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka's Fleet Theater July 8.

McLean led a NAVFAC FE team of more than 2,000 military, U.S. civilian and host nation employees dispersed over 7,000 miles in Japan, Korea, Singapore and Diego Garcia, from June 2009 to July 2011; successfully managed a Regional Facilities Engineering program of $250 million per year for Navy installations in the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans, programming critical infrastructure upgrades for barracks for homeport ashore berthing of Sailors in Sasebo and Yokosuka, and the relocation of the submarine tender *Emory S. Land* (AS 39) to Diego Garcia.

"The last two years have not always been easy," said McLean. "We suffered tragic personal loss within our command and with our contractors and we have had to work through some challenging acquisition issues. And of course, we experienced the tragedy of March 11 here in Japan. A tremendous tragedy, but I believe one positive outcome is that the coordinated response displayed the strength of our alliance, and most importantly our friendship."

McLean's personal engagement in host nation negotiations contributed to agreements with the Government of Japan for major relocations including ordnance facilities, family housing, Navy aircraft to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni and increased recapitalization of utility systems at Navy installations. Additionally, he led a robust regional energy program, exceeding Navy conservation goals and initiating numerous projects for renewable energy development. Recently, he skillfully led the initial Navy engineering efforts in response to the Japan earthquake and tsunami.

"For me, it also once again and with great clarity displayed the character of the people in this command," McLean said. "We took care of our families and stayed together, we focused on the mission, and we were able to rapidly address recovery requirements and support increased operations. We quickly deployed personnel and equipment from five different offices including Korea and had many, many volunteers to do even more if asked. What is perhaps the most compelling story for me is that none of this happened because of any special leadership or call to action; it was simply because of the inherent dedication and professionalism of the work force here at Far East. We have a great team and I am forever grateful to have spent the last two years serving with them."

Capt. Don R. Chandler walks through the sideboys after relieving Capt. Robert A. McLean and assuming command of NAVFAC FE during a change of command ceremony at Commander, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka's Fleet Theater July 8.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass MC3 Charles Oki

NAVFAC Pacific Vice Commander Capt. Paul T. Fuligni flew in from Pearl Harbor and awarded McLean his fifth Legion of Merit award during the ceremony in recognition of his superb performance. McLean will assume duties as director, Shore Readiness Division (OPNAV N46) at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Chandler reports from a tour as Guam program management officer at NAVFAC Pacific, from 2009 to 2011, where he oversaw the $10 billion planning, environmental, and construction program to develop a new Marine Corps Base in Guam for Marines relocating from Okinawa.

"To the outstanding team of NAVFAC Far East, today is also a celebration of your accomplishments over the past two years," said Chandler. "And you certainly have had a lot going on! Your superb reputation is well known throughout the Pacific. And your stellar performance during the recent natural disasters has only amplified your well-earned reputation for excellence. I am honored to join such an impressive group of superior professionals, and I look forward serving with each of you."

INSIDE

USS Blue Ridge arrives in Brisbane

The U.S. 7th Fleet command ship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) arrives in Brisbane, Australia July 8 in support of exercise Talisman Sabre 2011 (TS11).

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JSDF medical staff supports Pacific Partnership 2011

Medical officers from the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) provides support at a medical civic action project in support of Pacific Partnership 2011 July 8.

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