Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Annual CFAY celebration extends hand of friendship to host city

By Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Japanese and Americans came together for a celebration of camaraderie during the 34th annual Navy Friendship Day on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Aug. 7.

"We are grateful to you, our hosts here in the wonderful city of Yokosuka, for the hospitality you continually show," said CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen, in his opening remarks during the official ceremony. "Our open house today is just one small token of the great appreciation we feel for the generosity you show us."

Although the weather was hot and humid, nearly 56,000 people showed up to enjoy the festivities.

During the event, there were numerous kiosks offering American and Japanese foods, souvenirs and carnival-style games.

There were air toys and Commander Navy Region Japan Fire Department displays for children.

In fact, the fire department even set up a decontamination station, which was squirting cool water, and box fans, which were blowing water mist, in order to allow children to get relief from the heat and humidity.

The entertainment for the event included a disc jockey, *taiko* drummers, dancers and live-music performances, sporting events and an International Federation of Competitive Eating sponsored hot dog eating contest, which featured professional eaters Bob "Notorious B.O.B." Shoudt, "Eater X" Tim Janus and "Crazy Legs" Conti paired with CFAY and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) personnel in two-man teams competing for trophies.

The event culminated with a Yokosuka City sponsored fireworks display over Green Bay Marina.

At his first Navy Friendship Day was Shingo Ikuta, who decided to attend because his friend told him about the event and invited him along.

"I really enjoy the many kinds of foods and souvenirs that they are selling," said Ikuta.

In addition to the annual Navy Friendship Day in Yokosuka, CFAY holds friendship day events at its Negishi and Ikego housing detachments, as well as other events throughout each year to help foster positive relations between the U.S. Navy and its host country of Japan.

"The city and the Navy's friendship have indeed grown," said Owen. "Who would have imagined that the friendship of the base, the city and our naval brothers, the JMSDF, would be what it is today.

"The success of our friendships can be summed up in a quote from Dale Carnegie, an American writer and proponent of self-improvement who said 'You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you,'" Owen added.

Visitors at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka 34th annual Friendship Day celebration wrap up an eventful day by viewing a fireworks show Aug. 7. During the event, the base opens its gates to the public, allowing visitors to tour ships, sample American fare and watch an American football game.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Andrew Ryan Smith

Traditional ship's bell baptism ceremony held aboard *Cowpens*

By Lt. j.g. Maxwell Schmidt, *USS Cowpens* Public Affairs

USS Cowpens (CG 63) Sailors witnessed one of the Navy's oldest traditions when they gathered on the ship's forecastle July 30, to celebrate the baptism of the 8-month-old son of one of their shipmates.

Presiding over the ceremony was *Cowpens* Command Chaplain Lt. Kermit Jones, Jr. The rite of baptism was performed by Lt. Norbert Karava, a Roman Catholic chaplain stationed at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Chapel of Hope. The *Cowpens*' color guard presented the colors during the ceremony.

Bells have a centuries-long tradition of varied use in the navies and merchant fleets of the world. Signaling, keeping time and sounding alarms are important in a ship's routine and readiness. Their functional and ceremonial uses have made them a symbol of considerable significance to the U.S. Navy.

Regarding religious ceremonies connected to the Navy, Karava expressed, "For believers, this reinforces and affirms a fundamental religious identity that begins before military service, hopefully continues after it, and indeed, does not negate military service, but strengthens it by transcending it in importance." The ceremony was Karava's second baptism performed using a ship's bell.

The bell's connection to religious origins is longstanding. Originating in the British Royal Navy, it is a custom to baptize a child under the ship's bell or to use the bell as a christening bowl, filled with water for the ceremony. Once the baptism is completed, the child's name may be inscribed in the ship's bell.

"We actually upheld both versions of the tradition. The ceremony took place under the large forecastle bell with the bridge/quarterdeck bell being used as the christening bowl," said Jones. "The child's name will be the third name to be engraved in the large bell."

"My husband witnessed a baptism on his first ship and said he wanted to have our kids baptized like that," said the child's mother, Dorinda Cash of Farmington, N.M. "I agreed with him, thinking it would be great for our kids to have a small piece to do with the ship their dad was on. I really loved the ceremony!"

Bells remain the permanent property of the United States government and the Department of the Navy, even after the decommissioning of the Navy vessel. In this way, an invisible tie is created between the country, the ship and its citizens.

"It is an honor to be the commanding officer when ceremonies like this happen, as they are somewhat rare and yet they help to remind us of our long standing Navy traditions," said *Cowpens* Commanding Officer Capt. R.G. Marin.

Chaplain Norbert Karava from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Chapel of Hope performs the Rite of Baptism July 30 for Ken James-Steven Cash aboard *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) using the ship's bell as a christening bowl while his father, EN3 Nicholas Cash and mother, Dorinda, observe.

U.S. Navy photo by RP3 Keeshaun Coffey

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An oath of honor, courage, commitment at 12,400 feet

On July 30, ENC(SW) David Young tackled the daunting task of reaching the summit of Mount Fuji, rededicating himself to the oath of defending America.

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Navy prepares Sailors, families for upcoming flu season

The flu season is quickly approaching and Navy leadership are urging all to be aware of the risks of seasonal flu and to receive their scheduled vaccinations.

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