Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Miami Marlins visit Yokosuka, practice with local teams

Story and photo by Joe Schmitt, CFAY Public Affairs

Members of Major League Baseball (MLB) team Miami Marlins visited Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) as part of an Armed Forces Entertainment sponsored tour to the area Dec. 5. The team took time to visit with local Sailors and community members.

Miami Marlins Catcher Brett Hayes talks with Charlie Cruz [left] and Seth Scrambling [right] about throwing and catching techniques on the baseball diamond behind the Purdy Fitness Complex Dec. 5. Hayes and other Marlins players visited Yokosuka as part of a tour to the area where they put on baseball clinics, signed autographs and interacted with the local military communities.

"This is the third year that members from our team has gone out to visit U.S. military installations around the world," said Joel Mael, vice president and general counsel. "The reception has been incredible. We've met Floridians who are happy to meet someone from their hometown and people who don't even know the team end up having a great time with us."

Catcher Brett Hayes and Outfielders Mike Stanton and Bryan Petersen put on a baseball clinic with players from the Nile C. Kinnick High School baseball and softball teams, Yokosuka Middle school baseball and softball teams, and service members from *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) baseball team.

According to Patrick Jones, a Yokosuka Middle School baseball player, the MLB players were putting them through drills to help them develop better skills. "It was encouraging just to have them here," said Jones. "They taught us, if you make a mistake you have to try again and get it right."

The practice was held on the Morale, Welfare and Recreation baseball diamond behind the Purdy Fitness Complex where many of the local teams have played before. While the location and actions were familiar, the players expressed excitement to be playing the game with the professionals they had seen on TV and in stateside ball parks.

"It was great to get some actual experience with real players from the major leagues," said Seth Scrambling. "That's really unique, to get their point of views and hear their experiences. When I was in the states I got to see some of them play but I didn't get to meet them. Like he [Bret Hayes] showed me how to gain power in my swing. That was a really unique experience."

After getting some batting practice in with all the local players at the diamond the players took time with the Miami Mermaids, the Marlin's dance team. The Mermaids signed autographs and met with more service and community members at James Kelly Fleet Recreation Center.

"I think it's as important to us to come out here as it is to the U.S. military because the reason we play baseball is because the freedoms are ensured by the military protecting those freedoms around the world," said Mael.

The team has several more stops in the region before completing their tour and heading back to the states.

USO helps spread holiday cheer with annual Cookie Caravan

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

The Yokosuka United Service Organizations (USO) Cookie Caravan hit the road Dec. 7 helping to spread a little holiday cheer by distributing bags of freshly baked cookies to single and unaccompanied military personnel on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY).

According to USO Yokosuka Center Operations Manager Jason Rouse, the USO Cookie Caravan program is designed to give "a taste of home" to Yokosuka Sailors who are not able to go home for the holidays.

"This is our fourth year doing the Cookie Caravan here in Yokosuka," Rouse said. "It is done annually in December by USO Yokosuka and USO Sasebo and is for those Sailors who may otherwise miss out on home-made goodies during the holiday season."

Volunteers from the base community help bake and bag the cookies.

Then, USO staff and volunteers help distribute the bags of cookies to Sailors assigned to ship and shore commands here on Yokosuka base.

"The cookie mix was donated to the USO by Betty Crocker via the Yokosuka commissary, this is the second year Betty Crocker provided the mix," Rouse said. "Volunteer bakers from all over the base including students from Yokosuka Middle School bake and bag the cookies for us to distribute."

According to Louise Mueller, a seventh-grade teacher at Yokosuka Middle School, this is the third year in a row her and her students have volunteered to help bake cookies for the USO.

"I strongly believe in volunteering and supporting the community where I live and I feel it should be part of a way of life for each of us," said Mueller. "I teach a life skills class and volunteering to make the cookies and explaining to the students the value of the deed fits perfectly in the course."

Mueller and her students goal was to bake 2,000 cookies this year, but thanks in part to the help they received from USS Shiloh (CG 63) Sailors, Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Petty Officers Jean Jasmin and Christopher Moore, they baked 6,000 cookies.

"We are here to promote our Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions and to extend our hand to the students to help bake cookies for the Sailors overseas. They are doing a good deed, so we should help them do a good deed," said Jasmin, who has been stationed in Japan for about a year now. "This is a good thing the USO and these students are doing. It helps raise spirits and is one more thing Sailors stationed overseas can look forward to when they can't go home for the holiday."

(Second from left) USO Yokosuka Center Operations Manager Jason Rouse offers bags of freshly baked cookies to Sailors at the Post Office on base as part of the annual USO Cookie Caravan Dec. 7. The USO will be distributing the cookies, baked by volunteers of the Yokosuka base community, to Sailors during the holiday season.

According to Rouse, lifting the spirits of military personnel who are stationed far from home during the holidays is what the USO Cookie Caravan is all about.

"Nothing says 'home' quite like a home-made treat," Rouse exclaimed.

In addition to their Cookie Caravan, the Yokosuka USO will hold their annual Steak and Eggs Christmas Breakfast for single and unaccompanied military personnel in the third floor ballroom of Club Alliance Dec. 25 at 7:30 a.m. Free, worldwide phone calls and internet access will be available at the USO Center to help Sailors get in touch with family and friends back home.

For more information about upcoming Yokosuka USO events or for more information about volunteering, send an e-mail to jrouse@uso.org or visit the websites http://www.usovolunteer.org and http://affiliates.uso.org/japan/.

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Mustin Sailors celebrate centennial of naval aviation

Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer *USS Mustin* (DDG 89) celebrated 100 years of naval aviation with a ceremony honoring one of the ship's namesakes Dec. 7.

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Student 2 Student program helps attendees adjust to situations

The Military Child Education Coalition brought it's Student 2 Student program to Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) to teach life skills to students and adults Dec. 1.

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