Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Volunteers ready to assist as VITA opens for tax season

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

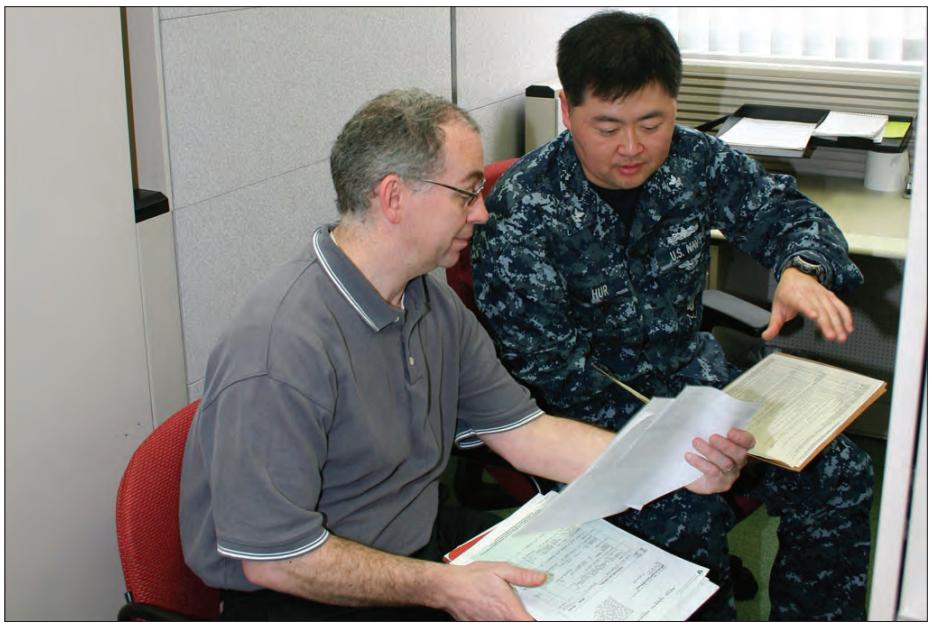
Navy Legal Service Office (NLSO) Pacific Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Center on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) began serving community customers immediately following a grand opening ceremony Feb. 8.

The VITA program is a cooperative effort by the Internal Revenue Service to provide income tax assistance to service members, low-income individuals, the handicapped and elderly. The program uses IRS-trained volunteers from the community to help prepare basic tax returns for free. The VITA Center offers free electronic tax filing.

"The IRS and the U.S. armed forces participate in the VITA program, which provides free tax advice, tax preparation, return filing and other tax assistance to all Status of Forces Agreement sponsored personnel," said Detroit native Chief Warrant Officer Francisco Jusino, assistant VITA site coordinator.

The VITA Center provides help preparing the following forms:

- 1040EZ
- 1040A with Schedules 1, 2, 3 and Earned Income Credit (EIC)
- 1040 with Schedules A, B, C-EZ, EIC and R
- 1040V (Payment Voucher)
- 1040ES (Individual Estimated Tax Payment)
- 2441 (Child and Dependent Care Credit)
- 8863 (Educational Credits)
- 8812 (Additional Child Tax Credits)
- WI Form 1, 1A and WI-Z



(Left) Kevin Stickley, a field computer specialist at NCIS Yokosuka, receives assistance from VITA volunteer ET2 Kyoung Hur, from CFAY TPU, following the VITA Center grand opening Feb. 8. VITA is located on the 3rd floor of the Community Readiness Center to provide free assistance to SOFA sponsored personnel during the tax season.

- WI Homestead Credit (household income must be less than $24,680)

Customers must bring in their Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statements, information on other sources of income and any deductions, along with Social Security cards for the taxpayers and family members.

Kevin Stickley, a field computer specialist at Naval Criminal Investigative Service Yokosuka, was one of the first customers to use the center after the grand opening ceremony concluded. Stickley chose to use VITA because of its professional staff and for its convenience.

"I used VITA back in 2009 after reading about it in the local newspapers on base and I would recommend using it to other people. Accurate tax reporting for both years at VITA is my bottom line," said Stickley, who has been in Japan for four years now and originally hails from Cumberland, Md. "With its volunteer staff, VITA is similar in description of a neighbor helping neighbor situation."

According to Lt. j.g. Erin Janofski, a defense attorney at NLSO Pacific and the VITA site coordinator, the center would not exist without the help from volunteers.

"Being overseas, we want to ensure that our Sailors and their families have access to responsible and accurate tax preparation services," Janofski said. "We can't do that without the help of our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers."

The Vita Center, which is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., except for recognized federal holidays, is located on the third floor of the Community Readiness Center, and accepts customers on a first come, first serve basis.

George Washington celebrates Black History Month

By MC3 Kaitlyn R. Breitkreutz, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

Sailors aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) celebrated Black History Month by hosting a command ceremony in the ship's main wardroom Feb. 15.

Capt. David Lausman (center), Commanding Officer aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73), and Sailors who participated in a Black History Month observance Feb. 15 cut a cake at the conclusion of the observance. The observance focused on the importance of black women in American culture and history like civil rights activist Rosa Parks, songstress Etta James and slave abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Brian H. Abel

More than 100 Sailors reflected on the achievements of African-Americans who helped shape the world during a 2-hour long ceremony sponsored by *George Washington*'s Heritage Team.

This year's main theme was Black Women in American History and Culture.

"We have a lot of people to recognize both in and out of the military," said Cmdr. Brian Haley, *George Washington*'s command chaplain. "This month is a time to look back and follow the positive examples of those that have impacted our culture and our country."

The celebration officially marked the 36th year of Black History Month and featured key speaker Chief Warrant Officer Anthony Lee along with several presentations that included a cake cutting ceremony, and a soulful tribute of "I'd Rather Go Blind" sung by Quartermaster 3rd Class Leslie Bullon in honor of Etta James and a traditional and modern African dance performed by other *George Washington* Sailors.

"It's a very interesting way to understand and celebrate the most important thing about this ship, the Navy and this country – and that's diversity," said Capt. David A. Lausman, commanding officer of *George Washington*.

Diverstiy is something that has developed over time, according to Chief Ship's Serviceman Charles McQueen

"The ceremony highlights our diversity and shows how much things have changed," said McQueen. "It's a time to unite."

The *George Washington* wardroom displayed several colorful and detailed posters to reflect this year's theme and highlight some of the more prominent icons such as Etta James, civil rights activist Rosa Parks, Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun and slave abolitionist Harriet Tubman.

George Washington returned to her forward-operating port of Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Nov. 22, after navigating more than 50,000 nautical miles across the western Pacific to operate with more than a dozen different nations during her nine-week patrol.

George Washington is the Navy's only full-time forward-deployed aircraft carrier ensuring security and stability in the western Pacific Ocean.

INSIDE

CFAY celebrates African American History Month

CFAY Multicultural Heritage Committee celebrated National African American History Month with a presentation held here at the Chapel of Hope Feb. 15.

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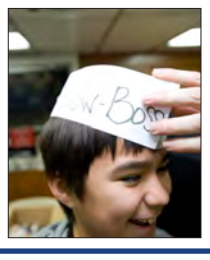

Yokosuka Middle School students visit *USS Blue Ridge*

When you call a U.S. Navy ship your office and often, your home, it is easy to forget not only how massive ships can be but also how exciting it was to walk onto a ship the first time you did it.

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