Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Ikego opens gates for 16th annual Friendship Day

Story and photo by Emma Damsky, Seahawk contributor

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) hosted the 16th annual Ikego Friendship Day on board Ikego Housing Detachment May 12.

Approximately, 3,500 Japanese and American citizens participated in the event.

During the opening ceremony, Ikego Officer-In-Charge Chief Master-at-Arms Ronald Jones praised Zushi City Mayor Ryuichi Hirai.

"As neighbors we believe that fostering friendship and goodwill relations between the citizens of Zushi and the residents of Ikego Hills is extremely important. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you one of the great leaders in that effort," said Jones.

According to Hirai, he expects Zushi citizens and families of U.S. forces to continue friendly exchanges and goodwill efforts to further expand the friendship in the community.

"Currently various friendly exchange programs such as sports and cultural exchange programs have been actively organized throughout the year in Ikego Hills," said Hirai. "I hope this day will be an enjoyable and memorable day for all of Zushi citizens and residents of Ikego Hills."

According to CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen, who was guest speaker for the event, the relationship with the local communities, outside the confines of the installations is the key to success for the U.S. Navy mission.

"Today we celebrate our friendship with the city of Zushi and you, our ever gracious hosts in Japan. I consider our relationship with you, citizens of Japan and the City of Zushi to be the cornerstone of our success here," said Owen. "The citizens of Zushi City, Navy family members and civilians of CFAY have interacted in more than a hundred events annually from baseball events to track and field meets to clean up projects. The residents here in Ikego indeed feel part of the Zushi community. Our relationship today is getting stronger and closer every year and this event here today plays a key role in keeping such a relationship."

Attendees of the 16th annual Ikego Friendship Day visit kiosks set up as part of the entertaiment for the event May 12. Approximately, 3,500 Japanese and American citizens visited and participated in the event.

Other distinguished guests on stage for the opening ceremony were Kanagawa Prefecture Assembly Member Daisuke Kondo and Zushi City officials Masatusugu Mashita, council chairperson; Takeshi Takano, council vice chairperson; Suzuko Oda, vice mayor; and Eiichi Fukuoka, Zushi Police chief.

Events kicked off early in the morning with a 2K and 4K run around Ikego Hills followed by a roller-derby scrimmage by Yokosuka Sushi Rollers.

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U.S., Japan bond honored at 73rd Shimoda Black Ship Festival

Story and Photo by MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

SHIMODA, Japan -- The people of Shimoda quietly begin their day as they would any other, but for many of these citizens, today is the fruition of months of preparation and hard work. On this day, May 18, this city, known as the home of marine therapy, with its white-sandy beaches, hot springs and seafood delights, opens its port and welcomes the U.S. Sailors of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer *USS McCampbell* (DDG 85).

This day starts the 73rd Shimoda Black Ship Festival, an annual festival that brings to life the events that helped end Japan's national seclusion policy and opened Japan to the West. The three-day festival from May 18-20 commemorates the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and the beginning of the long-standing relationship between the United States and Japan.

"It is my great honor, privilege and pleasure to be here to commemorate the conclusion of the first Treaty of Peace and Amity between Japan and the United States," said Rear Adm. Dan Cloyd, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan. "That document, signed 158 years ago, was the beginning of what has grown to be a priceless relationship between our two nations and its people. A relationship that I believe that is stronger and more significant than any of the original negotiators could have ever imagined."

Representatives from the U.S. and Japan came together in Shimoda to show their support of this historic event that this festival showcases.

"I spend a lot of time talking about the importance of the security alliance between Japan and the United States, and it has certainly been the cornerstone for peace and prosperity in this region of the world," said John Roos, U.S. ambassador to Japan. "But fundamentally, I think we all recognize that the relationship between our two countries comes down to the depth and breadth of the people to people ties that is demonstrated here."

The Gyokusen-ji Temple, a small Buddhist temple located in Shimoda, was the site used by the shogunate to negotiate terms of peace for foreign treaties and later housed the first American consulate in Japan. It is here where the bodies of five U.S. Sailors who died as crew members of Perry's "black ships" are buried.

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(Left) Norifumi Ide, commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency touches his glass with Stephen Waluk, Mayor of Newport, R.I., Shimoda's sister city in the U.S., in toast at a luncheon during the 73rd Shimoda Black Ship Festival May 18-20 at Shimoda Tokyu Hotel in Shimoda, Japan.

INSIDE

Blue Ridge culinary specialists defend 'Iron Chef' title

Culinary specialists aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship *USS Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) competed in a cooking contest May 20 for the opportunity to compete in an "Iron Chef" competition.

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CFAY celebrates Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

Sailors, Marines, Department of Defense civilians and family members gathered to enjoy food and cultural presentations in celebration of Asian-American Heritage Month May 16.

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