CFAY celebrates Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

Story and photo by MC3 Andrew Ryan Smith, Navy Public Affairs Support Element, Japan

Sailors, Marines, Department of Defense civilians and family members gathered at the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Commodore Matthew C. Perry General Mess to enjoy food and cultural presentations from Pacific region countries in celebration of Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month May 16.

The CFAY-sponsored event is one of the many held during May to recognize Asian-Pacific cultural influence, contributions made by Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and to showcase the diverse workforce of the U.S. armed forces.

"It is very important for us to remember where we are from and celebrate our heritage," said Lt. Cmdr. Jed Espiritu, Officer-in-Charge, Personnel Support Detachment Far East and the keynote speaker at the event. "This event is a great way to honor the heritage of our local Asian-Pacific community members, and give them a chance to share part of who they are."

As attendees ate their lunch of traditional Asian cuisine, they were treated to live cultural presentations from Sailors with Asian-Pacific backgrounds. Speeches, dance performances and historical information about the countries were the main attraction for the audience.

"In a culturally diverse organization like the Navy, it is important to share our individual heritages," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Edwin Fiesta, leading petty officer for Commodore Matthew C. Perry General Mess. "Today we have traditional foods and events which represent countries from the many Asian nations."

Sailors said they enjoyed the event and the chance to learn more about service members who have cultural ties to Asian American community.

"This was a great event," said Chief Aerographer's Mate (AW) Aisha McDuffie, assigned to Naval Oceanographic Antisubmarine Warfare Center Yokosuka. "The Asian food was fantastic and it was the first time I have seen a traditional Tahitian dance performance. Seeing the presenter's share their culture through dance was a great learning experience."

"The military is so diverse, with people from so many different back grounds," said Chief Navy Counselor (SW/AW) Tasha Wright, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka's Navy Counselor. "It is good to see the level of participation here today."

Members of the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) community demonstrate a traditional Tahitian dance during an Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month luncheon at the CFAY Commodore Matthew C. Perry galley May 16. Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month is held in May to celebrate the contributions Asians and Pacific Islanders have made in the United States.

Web-based Housing Early Application Tool available soon for Navy region Japan

From Commander, Navy Installations Command Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) announced the phased Navy-wide release of the Housing Early Application Tool (HEAT) beginning in May.

This web-based tool will allow Sailors and their families to apply for housing online from any computer.

"HEAT makes the Navy house hunting process smoother and less stressful for our Sailors and their families. By providing the early housing application online, Sailors and their spouses can use HEAT to review housing and community information, and make an informed decision on a home before receiving their permanent change of station (PSC) orders," said Vice Adm. William French, commander, Navy Installations Command.

HEAT utilizes authoritative systems to reduce the amount of personal information and to streamline the online process.

HEAT can be securely accessed from any computer with an internet connection. Service members or their spouses can use HEAT prior to receiving permanent change of station (PCS) orders to request information about community housing or check on their eligibility for military and privatized housing.

Like other Navy processes, the service member's Social Security number and last name are used to access the record. In addition, they will need to provide the applicant's best contact phone number and email address. They may also submit HEAT requests to multiple Installations if they are not sure where they may be stationed next.

A Navy Housing Service Center (HSC) representitive will contact them within one business day to get the process started. However, note that some HSCs have limited staffing. If information is not received from the HSC in a reasonable amount of time, contact them directly.

Position on the housing wait list is determined by regulations based on a service member's housing priority and detachment date from current duty station. HEAT allows service member's to make earlier contact, complete their application and, after receiving orders, be placed on the wait list.

"Our goal with HEAT is to reach out to Sailors early in the PCS process to reduce stress and provide proactive support when moving from one duty station to another," said Corky Vazquez, CNIC housing program manager. "With HEAT, Sailors and their families are able to make contact with our Navy Housing Service Centers and Privatization Partners to discuss their housing needs and learn about their housing options at any time. HEAT makes it easy to connect with our housing professionals and make informed decisions before even having orders."

HEAT will be deployed Navy-wide by Navy Region according to the following schedule:

- Naval District Washington, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic and Navy Region Midwest began May 1.
- Navy Region Southwest began May 8,
- Navy Region Southeast began May 15,
- Navy Region Europe, Africa, Asia began May 22
- Navy Region Hawaii beginning May 29,
- Navy Region Japan, Navy Region Korea and Singapore Area Coordinator beginning June 8,
- Joint Region Marianas beginning June 15.

HEAT will be implemented by region and will be Navy-wide by June 30.

To access HEAT and for more information about when your base will have HEAT, visit http://www.cnic.navy.mil/HEAT.