Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Black Ship Festival strengthens bond between two great allies

Story and photos by CFAY Public Affairs and Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Sailors from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka joined the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces (JMSDF) and hundreds of visitors from Japan and the United States May 14-16 to celebrate the 71st annual Black Ship Festival in Shimoda, Japan, a small fishing town located at the Southern tip of the Izu Peninsula.

The *USS Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54) and the *JDS Shirayuki* (DD 123) arrived in Shimoda May 13 from Yokosuka to join in the festivities and represent the U.S. Navy and JMSDF at the festival.

The festival commemorates the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry to Shimoda, and the establishment of the first U.S. consulate in Japan at the Gyokusen-Ji temple.

It was here in 1854 that the two countries ironed out the Treaty of Peace and Amity that led to ending the centuries old Sakoku, Japan's self-imposed isolationist policy that forbade any Japanese to travel outside the country, foreigners from traveling to Japan and restricted trade with foreign countries to the port of Nagasaki on the island of Kyushu.

CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed greets the hundreds of spectators who lined the street during the 71st annual Black Ship Festival Parade in Shimoda May 15. The festival commemorates the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and the establishment of the first U.S. consulate in Japan at the Gyokusen-Ji temple.

Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Rear Adm. Richard Wren gave opening remarks at the festival commencement ceremony and help put the historical significance of Shimoda into perspective.

"This year marks the 50th anniversary of the treaty of mutual cooperation and security between Japan and the United States. But, our relationship goes back much further than that, all the way back to here, Shimoda, where Americans and Japanese first got to know one another and began the long and warm friendship that binds us together today," said Wren.

That friendship was in full display the entire weekend at a variety of events that brought the two nations closer together through friendly sporting competitions, tours and a parade featuring Sailors from the *Curtis Wilbur*, the *Shirayuki*, the 7th Fleet Band as well as performances from a collection of local and Nile C. Kinnick High School students.

The officers and crew of the *Shirayuki* provided the competition for U.S. Sailors during sports day which culminated with an upset win over two outmatched U.S. tug-of-war teams.

Shirayuki Commanding Officer Capt. Hiro Kitamikado, speaking prior to the tug-of–war match, reminded everyone in attendance about the long and proud tradition the two navies share and how important it is they continue to grow and reinforce their friendship.

Senior Navy leaders pay respects at the Gyokusen-ji temple to fallen Sailors who died around the time Japan opened its doors to the West during the 71st annual Black Ship Festival in Shimoda May 14.

"We once fought a terrible fight across the Pacific Ocean, but now it is one of the widest and deepest relations among many navies in the world," said Kitamikado.

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Mental, physical mettle tested during Yokosuka MWR triathlon

Story and photo by MCSN Mike Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Members of the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) community tested their mental and physical mettle during a triathlon hosted by the Yokosuka Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Fitness team May 8.

More than 25 participants tackled the daunting task of racing in the 70.3 mile triathlon, which kicked off at 7 a.m. at Green Bay Marina.

The triathlon tested the strength and endurance of competitors with a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bicycle ride and 13.1-mile run.

"We're out here today to promote Navy fitness," said Emily Smith, a triathlon volunteer and marathon runner. "This event creates a healthy environment and overall, it's just fun to get out here with everyone and see how much you can push your limits."

Participants wearing wet suits and swimming caps prepped for the first leg of the race – a 1.2- mile open-water swim toward Sarushima or Monkey Island and back. For many participants, swimming through the chilly waters of Green Bay was the most challenging part of the race.

"The swim is definitely going to be the hardest part for me," said Senior Chief Legalman (SW/SCWS/AW) Catherine Sauter, of Portland, Ore., prior to the start. "I can swim. I just can't swim that fast, so I don't know how well I'll do."

A participant strokes through the CFAY Green Bay Marina during the 1.2 mile swim leg of the MWR hosted 70.3 mile triathlon May 8. The event also included a 56 mile bike ride and a 13.1 mile run.

Approximately one hour into the race, the final wave of participants climbed out of the water to a transition area where they quickly took off wet suits and swim caps and geared up for the cycling portion of the race. After mounting their bikes, participants made their way to the gates of the base and headed toward the nearby Shonan Coast for an out and back 56-mile ride.

Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW/AW) Broward Maryan, a *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) Sailor from Darien, Conn., said he felt confident about his cycling abilities thanks to logging two to three long distance rides a week leading up to the race.

Maryan and other racers wrapped up their bike rides and rolled into the final leg of the race – a half-marathon run, which capped off a day of high-endurance tests and successes.

"Fitness really is an all encompassing activity," Matyan said. "Not only are you in better shape and fitness by being active, but you eat better, your morale is higher from feeling better and you can perform at your job at a higher capacity."

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The Sullivans School hosts 8th annual MiMe festival

The Sullivans School hosted their 8th annual MiMe festival May 7, showcasing cultural, artistic, scientific and kinesthetic activities designed to inspire students.

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Japanese medical interns break new ground with team training

USNH Yokosuka Japanese medical interns broke new ground as the first intern class to learn Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety (TeamSTEPPS).

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