Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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War Cemetery Memorial Day service remembers fallen patriots

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), District II Japan, commemorated the sacrifice made by service members, who have laid down their lives in defense of their country, at a Memorial Day service in the Yokohama War Cemetery May 30.

The service took place outside the Yokohama Creation Memorial in the cemetery. The memorial is a shrine that houses an urn containing the ashes of 335 Sailors, soldiers and airmen of the United States and other WWII allied nations who died as Japanese prisoners of war.

Commander Veterans of Foreign Wars District II Japan Bernie Kenna spoke at the service and was pleased with the service itself, but would like to see more participation from his fellow service members, both active and retired, next year.

"I think this year's Memorial Day ceremony set a new standard, which I would like to see bettered next year and every year hereafter," said Kenna. Since we are not in the [United States], some distance has to be traveled to find a cemetery where U.S. servicemen are buried; so, a real effort has to be made to commemorate the sacrifice made by those individuals."

MMCM (SW/AW) Shane Lazio and ENC Timothy Wilson bow their heads during the opening prayer at the Memorial Day service held in the Yokohama War Cemetery May 30. The service took place outside the Yokohama Creation Memorial in the cemetery. The memorial is a shrine that houses an urn containing the ashes of 335 Sailors, soldiers and airmen of the United States and other WWII allied nations who died as Japanese prisoners of war.

According to one attendee of the event, Chief Engineman Timothy Wilson from Afloat Training Group Yokosuka, making that effort is something he'd like to see more people make during Memorial Day, instead of just viewing it as another day off.

"They need to come next year," said Wilson. "It's a really great thing to do. I think Memorial Day weekend has turned into a weekend for vacations instead of what it should be, and that's to remember our fallen comrades."

Memorial Day was created May 5, 1868 with the issuance of General Order No. 11 by General John Logan, the Commander-in-Chief of the all-volunteer Grand Army of the Republic.

Logan's order set the date of May 30 as Memorial Day and, with some minor variations, established the traditions Americans have been practicing since.

However, many in the community lament the fact that the holiday isn't observed with the same fervor it was when it was first instituted.

According to Kenna, it is especially important for veterans to teach those in the community about the sacrifices veterans have made in our history.

"Service members, retired service members and former service members alike have the responsibility to get involved with ceremonies like Memorial Day and Veterans Day," said Kenna. "These dates, and there are only two, are especially important to all servicemen and women. They commemorate the sacrifice made by all members of the U.S. Armed Services to secure our freedom, our way of life and our ability to choose how we want to live our lives. I believe that our schools also have an obligation to educate and make young people aware of the sacrifices made by our service men and women, which in many cases meant giving their lives."

Navy chiefs' 117-hour run shows commitment, solidarity

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Chiefs from commands on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) completed a 117-hour run, which ended at the CFAY Memorial Day Ceremony May 31, in an effort to raise funds for the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS).

According to Chief Personnel Specialist Luis Saldana who ran five times, or the equivalent of 37 miles during the run, the event was a perfect way for chiefs to show solidarity with not only each other, but all Sailors.

"We decided to run to help earn donations for the NMCRS, primarily for the Millington disaster," said Saldana. "The response was amazing, immediate. Once the list was sent out with the open spots, all of the open time slots were filled up within just a few days. It helps; not only to show the togetherness of the chiefs, but it also helps the NMCRS, which helps all the Sailors."

The majority of the run was conducted at the taxi stand near the front gate on treadmills giving individuals the chance to stop by, cheer the chiefs and give them the opportunity to donate to NMCRS.

"The morale was incredible," said Yokosuka NMCRS Director Amy Lacaria. "Every time we went down there it was fun, they had energy and knew they were doing it for a good cause. They all were doing it with an open heart knowing they were supporting their own comrades and peers, at a time when Sailors need the NMCRS. With the floods going on in Millington now, unfortunately, almost all Navy housing in Millington is affected so this couldn't have come at a better time."

Naval Support Activity Mid-South in Millington, Tenn., suffered severe flooding after more than 14 inches of rain was dumped on the area in early May, causing a levee to become overrun. The base was subsequently closed to all non-essential personnel and approximately 300 families and military personnel were evacuated. Naval Support Activity Mid-South hosts several commands, including Navy Personnel Command and Commander, Navy Recruiting Command.

Master Chief Operations Specialist Michael Bauman (SW/EXW) organized the event and was thrilled with the support received from the community. The run helped to generate more than $7,800 in donations for the NMCRS, in large part to donations from Americable, Navy Exchange and Subway who pledged "per mile" donations.

"I want to thank the Sailors, Americable, the NEX and Subway, all of the individual contributors and all of the CPO messes out there," said Bauman during the check presentation at Berkey Field. "When we started this, there were people who told me, 'If you get $1,500, consider it a good drive, something to be proud of.' We just watched it skyrocket. It was really a worthwhile event and it's definitely going to help a lot of Sailors."

EODC Daniel Martin, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5, runs on a treadmill to raise money for the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) during the Yokosuka Far East Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Association 117 hour run. The event took place over six days, ending on Memorial Day.

Photo by MC3 Dominique Pineiro

INSIDE

VFA-115 Eagles join *GW*,CVW-5

When Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 embarked *George Washington* May 18, they brought a new partner, the Eagles of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 115.

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CFAY holds annual Safety, Environmental, Health Fair

CFAY Safety Department, MWR Division and NAVFAC FE came together to hold the Annual Safety, Environmental and Health Fair in the CFAY Commissary red brick area May 27.

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