Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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New check-in process set to save Sailors time

Story and photos by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) has implemented a new check-in process that affects everyone checking on board including all of its tenant commands.

The new process streamlines the check-in process and will facilitate the smooth and timely transition of service members and their families into the community and their commands.

The new process is the result of a five-month-long lean six sigma project headed up by CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, who served as the black belt for the project, and Family Assistance Support Team Division Officer Lt. Jaclyn Fischer, who served as the project champion.

"We mapped out the process in its entirety for anyone who was coming aboard Fleet Activities Yokosuka," said Morale, Welfare and Recreation Administration Officer Jason Symak, who served as one of the team members on the project. "One of the areas we found was that, initially, the check-in processes that existed were not unified or standardized. So, we had service members and families who were possibly going to other areas that they maybe didn't even need to go check into. They were spending a lot of transportation time just going to other places where they really had no reason or purpose going to because it was an area that was not applicable to them."

Check-in/check-out desk Customer Service Clerk FC2 Lindy Catalina helps a customer, EMC (SW) Edward Beams, on the fourth deck of the Community Readiness Center June 10. A new check-in process was implemented June 7 for service members and their families checking aboard CFAY.

The new check-in procedure standardizes the process; it provides a chronological order to check in based on the needs of each individual. Once they arrive, newly reporting personnel must now go to the fourth deck of the Community Readiness Center and consult with one of the customer service clerks at the check-in, check-out desk. The clerks will note each individual's particular circumstances and map out the correct path service and family members need to take in order to complete the process efficiently and effectively. The only parts of the process that are now mandated for everyone, whether single or married, are going to the Community Readiness Center, where check-in sheets are issued and individuals are signed up for AOB/ICR, and getting registered in DBIDS (Defense Biometrics Identification System).

"The other benefit to this project is that it is not just identifying where people need to check in, but it's trying to do it systematically in a way that will allow that member and family to check in the most 'concise' way possible while covering all areas and allowing that service member to report to duty as soon as possible," said Symak.

The extra time spent trying to get situated on the base proved to be not only stressful and counter-productive for incoming Sailors and their families, it also proved to be an inefficient use of command resources. The lean six sigma team looked at a number of areas to improve the efficiency of the process, especially the financial impact of having Sailors and families living in temporary quarters.

"As far as data, we looked at money specifically regarding temporary living allowance (TLA) and found that there was a cost of $1.3 million that was spent on TLA expenditures last year, the majority of that being from TLA extensions," said Fischer.

However, even more important than the financial impact of the new process, the ability to integrate new families and service members into the community will help establish a more positive, effective and enjoyable experience for everyone checking on board the base.

"We measured time spent checking in and number of locations," said Fischer. "We also looked at customer satisfaction, and found that on a scale from one to five, one being the worst and five the best, the average customer satisfaction score was 3.7, which left us with a lot of room for improvement."

As with all new programs, there may be some angst towards doing something differently among Sailors who have never seen a standardized, base-wide check in process. But according to Fire Controlman 2nd Class Lindy Catalina, the new process will soon prove its worth to customers.

"A lot of people, honestly, say, 'why do I have to do this,' you know, 'why I am I coming here,'" said Catalina. "I think in the end though, people will find the process really helpful and useful."

CFAY natural resources program selected as USFJ's best

By Ronald Inman,
NAVFAC Far East Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Public Works Department Environmental Division's efforts to protect the community's natural resources have been recognized as the best in Japan with the selection of CFAY in the Natural Resource Protection category of the 2009 Headquarters, United States Forces Japan (USFJ) Installation Environmental Excellence Awards May 26.

"Much of what we do as an environmental department comes down to protecting our natural resources," said CFAY Environmental Director, Charles Schulz.

CFAY was recognized for its efforts as a leader in environmental protection, including the installation of low-illumination light bulbs to protect its threatened firefly population and its role in the 2009 Earth Day celebration.

During the event, CFAY teamed up with base units, the Kanagawa Prefectural Fisheries Technology Center and 150 Yokosuka Elementary School students to plant eel grass and release 400 young marbled flounder into the marina and bay surrounding the base to increase the marina population.

CFAY held the event again this month, this time inviting Girl Scouts from the local community to participate.

In addition, the award recognized CFAY's effort to enhance Yokosuka City's cultural and historical resources program through its donation of more than 50 items to the Yokosuka City Museum which resulted in an exhibit dedicated solely to relics from Yokosuka.

CFAY also started an adopt-a-monument program designed to stimulate greater familiarity and awareness of the 19 monuments located on Yokosuka Naval Base and provided over 2,200 opportunities in 2009 for cultural interaction by conducting and sponsoring cultural volunteer activities between American and Japanese families.

"The USFJ Environmental Excellence Awards recognize the outstanding achievement in environmental management by USFJ Service Components," said Air Force Major Rodney C. Harris, U.S. Forces Japan Logistics in a USFJ press release. "As part of the U.S. - Japan Alliance, USFJ Service Components sustain military readiness, training and operational capabilities; while at the same time they conserve and sustain the natural and cultural resources of facilities and areas entrusted to them."

The ceremony was in conjunction with the annual Japan Joint Environmental Conference at Camp Foster, Okinawa.

(Left) CFAY Environmental Director Charles Schulz, CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed and CFAY Environmental Natural and Cultural Resources Program Manager Ryouko Araki accept the United States Forces Japan 2009 Environmental Excellence Award for Natural Resources Protection from Commander Navy Region Japan Executive Director Susan Carey and Commander Naval Forces Japan Chief of Staff Capt. Peter Rush, June 15.
Photo by Yasuko Nakamura

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Local elementary students help clean Zushi Beach

Students from Ikego Elementary School and students from Zushi Elementary School to clean up garbage and other natural debris on Zushi Beach June 9.

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JMSDF, U.S. Ships assist in Vietnam

The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the United States Navy came together to provide medical care as part of Pacific Partnership 2010.

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