Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Yokosuka community relations event benefits Japanese children

Story and photo by Ben Avey, USNH Yokosuka Public Affairs

Joining forces to support the local Japanese community, Sailors from U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka and *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) came together Aug. 21 for a community relations (COMREL) project to benefit children currently living at Misono Orphanage in Fujisawa City.

More than 100 Sailors and civilians volunteered for the COMREL in which approximately 70 children 3-9 years of age were transported on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) for a day of bowling, playing in the park, air toys and an American style barbecue.

The Sailors taught the children how to bowl, played outdoor games and introduced many to American culinary classics like the hot dog for the very first time.

"The kids were having a blast, especially in the bowling alley," said USNH Yokosuka Command Chaplain and co-organizer Lt. j.g. Michael Anderson. "Every few minutes you would see a Sailor chasing a kid, who was chasing a bowling ball down the lane. It was priceless… It was a great opportunity for the kids to let off some steam and also for our Sailors to develop positive relationships with them."

While the children were the focus and main beneficiaries of the event, others on hand were positively affected as well.

"It's a really good feeling to know that I'm helping out the kids," said USNH Yokosuka Hospitalman Sarah Deal who volunteered at the event. "I've never done this before; it really does give you a good feeling inside."

Cowpens Chaplain and event co-organizer Lt. Kermit Jones was pleased with how many Sailors volunteered and was glad to see the impact the children had on those who came out.

"You can tell [Sailors] they are ambassadors, but for them to actually meet and interact with these kids, having a good time, they learn from that and take a lot of that away and they know they have accomplished something good."

***USS Cowpens* (CG 63) YN3 Chris Lassiter helps children from the Fujisawa City Misono Orphanage climb into a bounce house during a community relations event sponsored by USNH Yokosuka and *Cowpens* Aug. 21. More than 70 children ranging from 3-10 years of age enjoyed a day of bowling, playing in the park and American style barbecue on board CFAY with more than 100 command volunteers.**

This is the first of three COMREL events *Cowpens* and USNH Yokosuka are coordinating. Plans are in the works for a holiday program at the orphanage and a pool party at CFAY this spring said Jones.

"It's good for sea commands and shore commands to work together for the benefit of the community," said Jones. "We both have different strengths that we bring to the table and together we can do really great things for the kids."

While the hospital and *Cowpens* were the primary sponsors, many other organizations pitched in to make the event a success. The USNH Yokosuka First Class Petty Officers Association manned the grills for lunch, the Pediatrics Department donated bags of toys and the co-op preschool donated more than $4,000 worth of educational supplies directly to the orphanage.

"The outpouring of support for these kids is really heartwarming," said Anderson. "The community should be proud."

USS Stethem holds honorary master chief frocking for namesake

Story and photo by MC1 Geronimo Aquino, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

USS Stethem (DDG 63) honored the ship's namesake with a posthumous frocking ceremony Aug. 24.

Steelworker 2nd Class (SW/DV) Robert Dean Stethem was frocked to the honorary rank of master chief petty officer, 25 years after he was killed during the hijacking of Trans World Airlines (TWA) flight 847 in June 1985.

(Center) Retired BMC (SEAL) Kenneth J. Stethem receives a bronzed master chief cover from ISC Dan Mayfield and CTTC Jeff Kuhlman, both assigned to *USS Stethem* (DDG 63), during a ceremony to celebrate his brother and ship namesake, Robert D. Stethem's, honorary frocking to the rank of master chief petty officer Aug. 24.

Stethem was singled out by Lebanese hijackers because of his military status and was badly beaten and ultimately murdered after their demands were not met. Throughout his ordeal Stethem did not yield; instead, he acted with fortitude and courage and helped his fellow passengers endure by his example.

"The idea is simple," said Cmdr. Hank Adams, *USS Stethem* commanding officer. "If 'Robbie' had lived and stayed in the Navy, surely 25 years later, he would have risen through the ranks to become a master chief."

When the *Stethem* chief petty officer (CPO) mess presented the idea to Adams, he said he wholeheartedly agreed, signed a request for the promotion and forwarded it to the office of the master chief petty officer of the Navy (MCPON). A few months later, the request was approved and a heroic Sailor was honored.

"The strength and character that he demonstrated in TWA flight 847 allowed him to face extreme adversity with rarely good grace," said Adams. "With that strength and character he would have been propelled to the ranks of master chief, over the course of 25 years career, and during those times just think of how many Sailors he would have positively influenced along the way."

Stethem's brother, retired Chief Boatswain's Mate (SEAL/EOD) Kenneth J. Stethem, attended the ceremony and served as honorary guest speaker.

Kenneth thanked all of those in attendance and the command for making his brother's promotion a reality. He then read the "Chief Petty Officer's Creed," as he and the area chief petty officers welcomed his brother to the mess. Kenneth received Robbie's master chief anchors, a bronzed master chief combination cover and the certificate of appointment from the office of the MCPON on behalf of the Stethem family.

"I believe that we should be steadfast and courageous in the face of our enemies," Kenneth said. "I believe that we should always remember that the greatest enemy we will ever face is not a man, or missile, or ship, or submarines or a combination of all of them; the greatest enemy we will ever face is our own ignorance, which prevents us from overcoming our adversaries and accomplishing our mission."

Chief Fire Controlman (SW) Daniel Watts concluded the ceremony by rendering honors to the command's newest master chief, announcing his arrival through an all-CPO honors sideboys team.

"Master Chief Construction (DV) Robert Dean Stethem arriving," Watts said.

INSIDE

Continuation board keeps best Sailors in the fleet

The fiscal year 2011 continuation board will convene Sept. 20 to review senior active and reserve enlisted personnel with more than 19 years of service.

Pg. 4

Summer safety, Labor Day weekend update

The Labor Day weekend is here and time to enjoy one last blast of summer. Whether you spend it at the beach, in the mountains, or just relaxing, practice risk management.

Pg. 9