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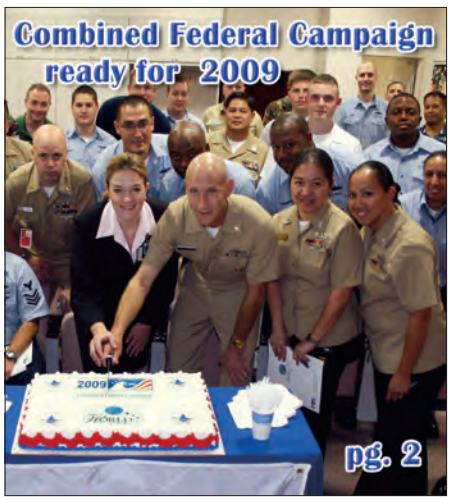

CFAY CPO pinning ceremony welcomes chiefs

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Friends, family and fellow chiefs filled an emotionally charged Fleet Theater aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka to take part in one of the proudest days of 33 Sailors' professional careers as they received their fouled anchors, the emblem of the rank of chief petty officer (CPO) in the U.S. Navy, at the CPO pinning ceremony Sept. 16.

"We are here to witness the most important ceremony in the careers of 33 first class petty officers who today take on the title, responsibilities, authority, respect and aura of chief petty officer," said Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Rear Adm. Richard Wren, who served as the special guest speaker. "Today's ceremony represents the culmination of years of work and dedication... and it marks the commencement of a newer and a more important phase of their careers."

Although the chief selectees had been working their entire careers to be accepted into the chief community, they spent the weeks prior to the pinning ceremony working closely with mentors, their chief sponsors, volunteering at base events and, of course, running together to further instill the values and ethic demanded of the CPO mess.

"For the last six weeks they have busted their tails; it was beautiful the way they performed," said guest speaker Master Chief Engineman (SW) Michael O'Brien. "I cannot tell you the pride I have with the way they worked together and the way they came together as a team, as a mess – for us and with us."

Pride, determination and commitment were evident on each new chief's face as they made a dramatic entrance into the theater, marching in step while roaring "Anchors Aweigh" to begin the ceremony.

After remarks by Wren, O'Brien, Chief Personnel Specialist (SW/AW) Lou Saldana and Senior Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) Randall Clift, the chiefs lined up in the front of the theater in groups of three to have their anchors pinned on their uniforms and their covers placed on their heads by friends, family members and their chief sponsors.

The chief petty officers have been providing deck plate leadership for more than 116 years. Their technical expertise, commitment to achieving and maintaining the highest levels of training, operational readiness and personnel readiness within their commands has helped forge the U.S. Navy into the most formidable naval fighting force the world has ever seen. The newest chiefs aboard CFAY have a proud tradition to take strength from, and were selected to help instill that tradition of leadership and responsibility into their "people," ensuring the Navy remains strong in the 21st century and beyond.

Fiscal year 2010 chiefs recite the CPO creed after receiving their anchors during the CPO pinning ceremony held at the Fleet Theater Sept. 16.

Photos by Yuji Kawabe

USO Japan honors CFAY personnel at annual gala

Story and photo by Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

The United Service Organization (USO) honored a Sailor and civilian from Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) for their contributions to the Navy and USO at their annual Japan Gala at Yokota Air Force Base Sept. 12.

CFAY Security Watch Supervisor Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Charles Nailon and USO volunteer Gabriel De Los Santos were among those honored at the gala, which had representatives from all four military services.

"Tonight, we're here to honor and recognize ten outstanding service members who embody the meaning of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps," said USO Japan Country Director Juliet Bucayu Domingo when introducing the military honorees. "These honorees have demonstrated top job performance, leadership qualities and are positive representatives of the military."

Following a VIP reception in which the honorees were able to meet Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan Rear Adm. Richard Wren and Vice Commander 5th Air Force and Deputy Commander 13th Air Force Yokota Air Base Japan Brigadier Gen. Salvatore Angelella, honorees were treated to dinner and a keynote address by Angelella in which he thanked the USO on behalf of all service members for what they do.

"I'd like to personally thank you for taking care of us," said Angelella. "The USO has stood shoulder to shoulder with service members and their families. You could say they were in the trenches, foxholes, bunkers, airfields, if not literally, certainly in the hearts and minds of those soldiers, Sailors, airmen and Marines doing the fighting to keep us all free."

(Right) CFAY MA2 Charles Nailon, CNFJ Rear Adm. Richard Wren, Mrs. Diane Wren and American Belles' Heather Parcells and Stacey Harris enjoy the a VIP reception prior to the start of the 2009 USO Japan Gala at Yokota Air Base Sept. 12. Nailon was honored at the gala for his outstanding service to the Navy.

The evenings entertainment was provide by The American Belles, a travelling performance troupe whose specialties include American patriotic themes songs. The trio of performers, affectionately referred to as "the Belles," have preformed around the world and are a staple of USO events to honor service members.

Prior to dinner and the show, commenting on being an honoree, both Nailon and De Los Santos were humble and expressed their appreciation for being recognized.

"I feel very honored for this," said Nailon. "This seems like a once in a lifetime type of thing."

De Los Santos, who was honored by the USO Pacific Region as the Volunteer of the quarter in February, said at the time that he volunteered to give back to an organization that has given so much to him and his family.

"I [volunteer] here because I feel who I owe it back," said De Los Santos. "I want to provide that service for the [people] that are in the service now… I served 20 years in the Air Force, I've been to many different countries on [temporary duty assignment] as a part of my work and taken my family as a part of [permanent change of station] and almost every time, the USO was there to help me out. It's an invaluable service."

USO Yokosuka is located on the second floor of Club Alliance and can be reached at 241-3030.