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Seahawk 海鷹 Umitaka

U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

Vol. LX, No. 46 www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka Nov. 20, 2009

CFAY Veterans Day ceremony honors all who served

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) observed Veterans Day with a ceremony in the CFAY headquarters C-2 auditorium Nov. 11.

"We are gathered here today to remember one of the shining sectors of our great American society, our American veterans," CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed said during his remarks. "No matter the challenge, the location or the time, they have served us. They have suffered through the bitter pangs of loneliness, isolation and fatigue. Despite the ravages of war, they have maintained their human dignity, persevered in the face of adversity, and struggled in the name of liberty and freedom."

In addition to active duty Army, Navy and Marine Corps personnel at the ceremony, there were many veterans and family members in attendance.

"We are fortunate to spend time together as a proud people, to recognize our veterans," said Weed." We are honored to have in our midst great Americans who have faithfully and honorably served their country. Their service remains as a tribute to American ideals that have served us well."

In November 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Nov. 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day. The holiday has evolved since Wilson's first proclamation, even changing its name to reflect those who have served and sacrificed in conflicts all over the globe since World War I. What hasn't changed; however, is the gratitude and respect the nation has for its veterans and active duty members.

"On Veterans Day, we honor the heroes we have lost, and we rededicate ourselves to the next generation of veterans by supporting our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen as they return home from duty. Our grateful nation must keep our solemn promises to these brave men and women and their families," said President Barack Obama in his 2009 Veterans Day proclamation. "They have given their unwavering devotion to the American people, and we must keep our covenant."

(Left) Former John C. Parker Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1054 Post Commander and retired FCCM(SW) Michael Lutman, Japan District Veterinary Command Sgt. Giovanni Diaz, FAST Gunnery Sgt. Tony Smith, 7th Fleet Band MU3(SW) Nina Church and CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed pose for a photo prior to cutting the cake following the CFAY Veterans Day ceremony held Nov. 11.

According to Former John C. Parker Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1054 Post Commander and retired Master Chief Fire Controlman (SW) Michael Lutman, who served as the guest speaker for the ceremony, we all owe a debt to those who serve and have served.

"[Veterans] are people of character, representing all that is good about being an American and representing all that is good about freedom and democracy all around the world," said Lutman. "In war or peace, to give a portion of one's lifetime in the service of their country can be no greater calling. Freedom is not free. A veteran is someone who, at one point in his or her life, wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America 'for the amount of, up to, and including my life.'"

"Now that is quite an investment in the United States of America," Lutman added.

Throughout history many people have given their lives for their beliefs in and allegiances to the United States. Still, to this day people fight and die for the same beliefs as those before them.

"As long as we have our country, with naval and Marine Corps men and women to defend it, we will always have veterans," said Weed. "Despite bonafide hardships and dangers, they will continue to defend us under the blanket of freedom, keeping us safe. We owe them a great debt of gratitude."

U.S., Japan begin combined-training exercise ANNUALEX 21G

By MC2(SW) John J. Mike, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

USS George Washington (*GW*) (CVN 73) and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 began their participation in the annual exercise ANNUALEX 21G Nov. 10.

A yearly, combined-training exercise between the U.S. military and Japan Self-Defense Force, ANNUALEX fosters interoperability and teamwork between the two nations.

Sailors walk through a smoke filled space during a general quarters drill aboard the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (GW) (CVN 73) Nov 10. *GW*, the Navy's only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier, is participating in ANNUALEX 21G, a yearly, bilateral exercise between the U.S. Navy and the JSDF.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Christopher S. Harte

According to *GW* Operations Officer Cmdr. Anthony Calandra, participation of the carrier is important because it is permanently forward-deployed to Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY).

"One of the reasons *GW* operates from Japan is to aid in their defense," Calandra said. "Through exercises like ANNUALEX, our countries can learn from each other and operate better as a team."

GW will be involved in multiple scenarios that include anti-submarine, air-to-surface and air-to-air warfare training.

"ANNUALEX runs the gamut as an exercise, and in the end, practicing these procedures will help us interoperate with the Japanese to maintain peace in the Pacific region," Calandra said.

As part of ANNUALEX, CVW 5 will work closely with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) by practicing strike training in the Okinawa and Okino Daito Jima region.

"We learn valuable lessons working with each other, which allows us to operate at our full potential during a time of conflict," said CVW 5 Commander Capt. Ross Myers.

"Having JASDF pilots on board helps us gain a greater understanding of each other's capabilities and increase the interoperability between our two great countries," Myers said.

GW is participating in its second ANNUALEX since becoming the Navy's only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier in 2008. Other U.S. Navy units including elements operating from CFAY, Fleet Activities Sasebo and Naval Air Facility Atsugi participating include *USS Essex*, *USS Defender*, *USS Cowpens*, *USS Tortuga*, *USS City of Corpus Christi*, *USS Key West*, *USS Crommelin*, *USS Curtis Wilbur*, *USS Denver*, *USNS Alan Shepard*, *USS Lassen*, *USS Mustin*, *USS O' Kane*, *USS Shiloh*, *USNS Rappahannock* and *USNS Victorious*, as well as Commander Task Force 70, Destroyer Squadron 15 and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Rear Adm. Kevin Donegan, commander, Battle Force 7th Fleet, will command U.S. naval forces in the exercise.