FISC executes forward-deployed Thanksgiving logistics

Story and photo by Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

Many Americans will shop for their Thanksgiving meal this week. However, a different purchasing schedule is needed to prepare the $650,000 holiday feast for the more than 10,000 service members who comprise forward-deployed naval forces (FDNF) afloat in Yokosuka.

The U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka Provision Team, Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP) and the Japan subsistence prime vendor met to begin planning the first holiday food order around the time most Americans grilled hotdogs and hamburgers in celebration of the Fourth of July.

"Support for special holiday meals is always a risky proposition. We began months ago based on input from the fleet, historical data, voyage scheduling of shipping from the United States, customs clearance and delivery in Japan," said Japan Subsistence Prime Vendor Director Jerry Hicks. "The logistical planning is just a mammoth tasking. We not only have to plan for sourcing from the various food companies, we have to order the food into our Stockton, Calif.-based warehouse; then we must plan the shipping lead-time to deliver overseas to Japan."

(Right) Lance Cpl. Preston Scott serves holiday ham to Lance Cpls. Jonathan Yeager and Daniel Brooks. FISC, DSCP and the Japan prime vendor work together arranging the logistics of substance for Thanksgiving Day and every day to Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Military Sealift Command and Coast Guard forces in the Western Pacific.

Once the food reaches Japan, after its long journey, it is warehoused locally.

"It takes an average of 45 to 60 days to source and ship products over to Yokohama," said Hicks. "As an added precaution, we also have the U.S. Army Veterinary Service inspect all food destined for the troops."

Not knowing where to ultimately deliver the more than 70 tons of holiday hams, turkeys, potatoes and trimmings also poses a logistics challenge.

"While the majority of Yokosuka-based FDNF ships are expected to be back in homeport this year for Thanksgiving, the ever-changing and often fluid-paced operational commitment to the U.S.-Japan security alliance means that change can happen instantaneously," said FISC Logistics Support Supervisor Ray Denny. "We simply plan for the ship to be underway and hope for the best."

FISC Customer Service Officer Lt. Al Francisco said the large number of "turkey day" dinners is another challenge. "Putting together these orders is challenging, particularly when supplying ships like *USS George Washington* (CVN 73), because the holiday meal will be served to an estimated 6,000 Sailors and their families," said Francisco. "Menu items will vary from ship to ship and may include a variety of fresh fruits, salads, vegetable dishes, eggnog and of course baked goods such as apple and pumpkin pie."

DSCP provides all the food for U.S. military personnel worldwide, 365 days a year.

"The key to success of the holiday meal starts with the availability of food," said DCSP Contract Officer Representative Amy Runde. "It's very important to us to give our Sailors a taste of home during the holidays; so we start planning early to ensure the goods arrive in a timely manner. If not, then DSCP must do everything possible to expedite the product to Japan even if it means costly, last-minute airlifts. We will do what we need to ensure that our troops get a taste of home and enjoy the holidays."

DSCP even has a contract to plan for dessert, ordering $7,000 of eggnog and arranging for the delivery of $22,000 in fresh holiday pies and cakes baked by Army and Air Force Exchange Service bakeries at Yokota Air Base.

This coordination involved in supplying the FDNF with a Thanksgiving meal illustrates the existing partnership between FISC, DSCP and the Japan prime vendor, which provides Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Military Sealift Command and Coast Guard forces in the Western Pacific with a variety of logistics, acquisition and subsistence services.

"People may not give much thought to how their food arrives," said Denny. "So, this year when you sit at the dinner table on Thanksgiving Day, take a moment to think about how far your meal has traveled because of the dedicated logistics professionals who worked to guarantee it was safe and available."

Yokosuka Marines gather at FISC, celebrate 234th birthday

Story and photo by Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

Marines from the U.S. Fleet and Industrial Supply Center (FISC) Yokosuka, Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team and Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) gathered Nov. 12 on the FISC patio to observe and celebrate the 234th birthday of the Marine Corps, Nov 10.

Maj. Trevor Moss, from NCIS Yokosuka, said a few words as the guest of honor.

"The main thing that I want to leave with the Marines, especially the young Marines serving now, is take the time to improve yourself, enjoy your time, enjoy your fellow Marines on your left and on your right, because that is what makes this organization great," said Moss.

"We work as a unit, we work as a team, and we push forward with dedication no matter how large or how small the task is – that is what makes what you are doing count," said Moss. "Some of the things you will be most proud of doing in your life, you will do while wearing this uniform."

The event included the traditional birthday cake-cutting ceremony where the first piece of cake is given to the guest of honor and the second to the oldest Marine present showing a respect for seniority. The oldest Marine then proceeds to pass this piece to the youngest Marine present, symbolizing experienced Marines watching over young Marines.

During the ceremony it was also explained that the cake is cut with a sword because Marines are a band of warriors fighting to protect the United States.

Gunnery Sgt. Javier Andino was the oldest Marine present at the ceremony.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Allan Cayabyab; Maj. Trevor Moss, guest of honor; Gunnery Sgt. Javier Andino, the oldest Marine present; and Sgt. Ato Waithe, the youngest Marine present participate in the 234th Marine Corps Birthday cake-cutting ceremony on the FISC patio Nov. 12.

"No matter how long a Marine has been in – three months or 20 years – the birthday of the Marine Corps still has the same meaning," said Andino. "It is a renewal of our commitment to serve and it is also a moment to pause and acknowledge the Marines who are on the battlefield and cannot celebrate.

"We have a small command at FISC," said Andino. "So, this is the first time that I have been able to participate in the birthday ceremony as the oldest Marine at a command and it is a great honor."

Sgt. Ato Waithe was the youngest Marine present.

"For me this symbolizes how I look up to more experienced Marines and how much I have learned from them," said Waithe.

Post office accepting holiday mailing appointments

By Blake Vives, CFAY Public Affairs

The post office is now accepting appointments for customers mailing four or more packages during the holiday season.

Customers with appointments will be assisted immediately upon their timely arrival.

Appointments are limited and may only be scheduled from Nov. 23 – Dec. 18. No weekend appointments.

Boxes must be properly packed and wrapped and customs forms filled out completely before the appointment.

Feel free to browse www.usps.com for weight and size limits and approximate value for postage for domestic and international mail.

Payment methods accepted include; cash, checks, or credit card (Visa, MasterCard and Discover).

For more information or to make an appointment contact:

For Yokosuka:
LS1 Roll or LS1 Andrews
243-9740/ 5486

For Ikego:
LS2 Schrum
246-8024/ 8051

For Negishi:
LS3 Smith
242-4114