In the Line of Fire

Destination Japan
22 Destination Japan

Many Sailors taking orders to Japan feel dazed and confused in such an environment. As a result, Sailors sometimes restrict themselves to the safe confines of the base, never realizing the real reason for taking orders to Japan is found off the ships and beyond the base’s gates.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

14 In the Line of Fire
Decommissioned more than 40 years ago, ex-USS Shadwell (LSD 15) continues to serve the fleet as a naval research laboratory dedicated to the study of shipboard fire.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

32 A Home for Heroes
Monthly contributions from today’s enlisted service members help provide a home for yesterday’s heroes.

Photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

[Departments]

Speaking with Sailors — 6
Focus on Service — 40
Eye on the Fleet — 42
Eye on History — 46
The Final Word — 48
USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), the Navy’s newest Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, sails by the Star of India in San Diego Bay, on her way to her homeport, Naval Air Station North Island, San Diego. USS Ronald Reagan departed Norfolk in May and was underway for nearly two months while traveling around the tip of South America. During the transit, bilateral training and air engagement exercises were conducted with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay in support of Summer Pulse ’04. The crew also enjoyed port visits in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Valparaiso, Chile; and Callao, Peru. The Star of India, a late 1800s cargo ship, is the world’s oldest active ship. It is one of five historic ships belonging to the Maritime Museum of San Diego.

PHOTO BY MM2(SW) STEVEN P. SMITH
Nguyen Phi Hung, director of the Village of Hope Disadvantaged Youth Center in Da Nang, Vietnam, leads Sailors and children in group songs and dances. Sailors, assigned to USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54), volunteered their time to visit with the children at the center and deliver Project Handclasp items. The Arleigh Burke-class destroyer visited Da Nang during a scheduled port visit. Curtis Wilbur is the second U.S. Navy ship to visit Vietnam, and the first to visit Da Nang since 1975, symbolizing the continuation of normalized relations between the United States and Vietnam.
This question came from a discussion with Sailors at a recent All Hands call.

Q: I’m coming up on my EAOS, and I’m curious about this “blue to green” program, where I might be able to transfer to the Army. Can you tell me more about it?

A: Operation Blue to Green can be a great opportunity for individuals who strongly desire to stay on active duty, but are leaving the Navy. This initiative also benefits DoD in retaining manpower within DoD and also assists the Army in meeting increases in end-strength. We would prefer that separating Sailors consider the Naval Reserve, but this is a good option for those who wish to serve their country full-time on active duty.

It is a completely voluntary program, offering qualified Sailors and naval officers the opportunity to transfer into the Army.

To clarify, Blue to Green is not a conversion program. Sailors with obligated service under an enlistment contract can opt to join the Army only after they have fulfilled their Navy enlistment.

In addition, we have a short period of eligibility for Sailors scheduled to leave active duty before the end of FY05 to request early release from their unit commanding officer. The CO in this instance has the final approval authority, because he or she is in the best position to determine whether their unit’s manning can afford the advantage of the educational opportunities the Army offers and be in the best position possible to transfer when they do become eligible.

The Army is especially interested in Sailors with skills that translate easily to Army jobs, including cryptography, fire control, air traffic control and mechanics. A complete list of Navy ratings and Navy Enlisted Classification codes of that translate easily to Army jobs, including cryptology, fire control, air traffic control and mechanics. A complete list of Navy ratings and Navy Enlisted Classification codes of

Other requirements of the program include:
- Must be physically fit
- Must meet Army height and weight standards
- Eight-year service obligation still applies
- Maximum term of service is three years
- Must have approved DD Form 416

Sailors who don’t initially qualify but are interested should sustain their superior performance in the Navy, take advantage of the educational opportunities the Navy offers and be in the best position possible to transfer when they do become eligible.

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I think Operation Blue to Green shows great promise, and Navy leadership is working hard to support it. That means making sure both the Army and our separating Sailors have enough information about each other to make good decisions. As with any major career move, I want Sailors to be as well informed as possible before making any decision.
Significant changes to the Navy Uniform Regulations were recently approved by Chief of Naval Operations ADM Vern Clark.

These changes are among the first initiatives resulting from a result of Task Force Uniform. The uniform regulation changes were made based on fleet input from interviews with Sailors, command site visits, comprehensive research and data collected from a Navywide uniform survey. The survey collected feedback from more than 40,000 survey respondents to help develop proper uniform guidance and further details on how to wear these devices in a fleetwide context.

NAVMIN 2109/04 serves as the interim change to the Navy Uniform Regulations. For related news, visit the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Navy NewsStand page at www.news.navy.mil/local/mcpon.

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Task Force Uniform.

Around the Fleet

Task Force Uniform Announces Changes in Uniform Regulations

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Ask a lot of detailed questions and received some very detailed responses in return,” said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/AW) Terry Scott, who oversaw the massive effort. “We were very pleased with the level of participation in the survey and the feedback.

These changes to the uniform regulations are just the first in a number of initiatives being produced by TFU. In addition to streamlining and simplifying the uniform regulations, TFU is developing concept uniforms for a working uniform for E-1 through O-10, as well as a year-round service uniform for E-6 and below. TFU plans to announce the uniform concepts in the coming weeks, and an announcement about specifics of the wear testing dates and areas to follow.

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Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Task Force Uniform.

Changes in Uniform Regulations

Task Force Uniform has announced that women Sailors may now wear civilian handbags while in uniform, but must meet specific criteria and wear them in the manner prescribed in NAVADMIN 209/04. Women’s uniform handbags are now an optional uniform item, and will no longer be prescribed.

Women who desire to wear a skirt will still be able to purchase them through the Navy Uniform Shop.

There is also a new guidance regarding silver breast insignia and identification badges. Specifications are outlined in the NAVADMIN.

“The fleetwide survey, we asked a lot of detailed questions and received some very detailed responses in return,” said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/AW) Terry Scott, who oversaw the massive effort. “We were very pleased with the level of participation in the survey and the feedback.

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Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Task Force Uniform.
petty officers; 76 second class selected, as were 77 first class.
Nine chief petty officers were selected, including four E-8s. Three senior chiefs and one chief petty officer were selected, refer to NAVADMIN 163/04 available on the Web at www.bupers.navy.mil/navdcs/navcompo/nayo/navapo.etl.©

“Connecting people to people and knowledge is just incredible,” said Kramer. “But we expected that it would be. The talent throughout the CT community is just incredible.” The CTN rating, which became effective Feb. 6, is the first new rating of the 21st century. It was created to develop a skilled work force to meet naval information warfare requirements in computer network operations. Selectees came from a cross-section of all six existing CT ratings and represent pay grades E-1 to E-8. Three senior chiefs and nine chief petty officers were selected, as were 77 first class petty officers, 76 second class petty officers, and 54 third class petty officers. More than 20 E-3s round out the picks.

“We are taking a very deliberate approach,” said Kramer. “We want the community to have enough people at all experience and skill levels, so that it can start to function right away, but we also want to allow for healthy growth and advancement opportunity in the future.”

The rating change for selected Sailors took effect Oct. 1, 2004. Conversion is still limited to personnel already designated as cryptologic technicians. Those not selected this year may re-apply for the FY05 board, which will convene in April 2005. A third CTN selection board will be held sometime in FY06. After that, the community will be maintained through accessions and the normal lateral conversion process.

For a complete list of selectees, refer to NAVADMIN 163/04 available on the Web at www.bupers.navy.mil/navdcs/navcompo/nayo/navapo.etl.©

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.

NKO Transitions, Updates to Phase II

The Navy’s centralized portal for information, Navy Knowledge Online (NKO), is currently transitioning to its second phase. Along with adding new features to the existing communication and professional development tools, the update will restore the NKO library, leaving only valid files for Sailors and administrators to use.

Chief of Naval Reserve VADM John Cotton said NKO is the central location for exchanging the best ideas and practices, which can perpetuate positive changes in the Navy.

“This is the first place to go for Navy resources. We want Sailors to contribute; we want them to take ownership of their own Navy. We want them to have the ability to make suggestions to help improve the Navy,” said Cotton. “The active component and the Reserve component have had different Web pages. We’re putting them in a central repository, so it’s one Web site you can visit to find out anything about the Navy.”

With more than 300,000 registered users, and instant access to the knowledge and experience of their peers across the globe, NKO has quickly become the Navy’s premier tool to accelerate learning and growth, as it becomes more of a learning organization. Through virtual communities, Sailors are able to prepare for advancement, obtain a wealth of career information, network and utilize an array of helpful options using NKO.

“Connecting people to people and knowledge creates a learning environment,” Cotton said. “People begin to trust their counterparts no matter if they are active or Reserve. We are all Sailors serving in one Navy, learning from each other.”

The NKO Library migrated valid file content from Personal and Teams areas through Aug. 31, 2004.

Personal and Teams file content that is no longer valid or relevant was deleted from NKO Phase II.

“Going into Navy Knowledge Online is so important for the future,” Cotton said. “For the first time, we’re gathering all of these resources together – a place for Sailors to go. … We want their input. We want them to have the ability to make suggestions. Through NKO, this is how we can bring our knowledge together, which can be better than any single idea.”

Photo by PHAN Jason D. Landon

Story by JO2 Kimberly Rodgers who is assigned to Navy News Service

This month we look back in the All Hands archive to see what was going on in the month of November.

1964 – 40 Years Ago

The “Safety and Survival at Sea” issue was a complete “how to” guide on maneuvering techniques during emergency situations such as swimming through fires, rescuing others and administering first-aid. We reported the exclusive story on USS Franklin (CV 13), which was preparing for air strikes in Japan when two Japanese bombs hit the ship. In spite of heavy casualties, the ship’s crew fought until the fires were checked, steerageway was regained and the ship triumphantly pulled in to port without sinking.

1994 – 10 Years Ago

This issue’s cover reminded our readership that the Navy’s Intramural Football season was in full swing. Navy ships get their first taste of television when the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets installed televisions for the crews’ entertainment. The battleship USS Missouri (BB 63) joined the Fleet Reserve after 10 years of continuous active service. Also spotlighted, was the submarine rescue vessel USS Pigeon (ASR 6), which earned two Presidential Unit Citations during World War II.

1954 – 50 Years Ago

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1974 – 30 Years Ago

This issue took a look into the lives of courageous and adventurous Sailors who spent time on and off duty ocean racing, mountain climbing, parachute jumping, island hopping and boat building. The causes, characteristics and treatment of alcoholism were also a part of the month’s focus.

1950 – 60 Years Ago

This issue covered the battleship USS Missouri (BB 63) joining the Fleet Reserve after 10 years of continuous active service. Also spotlighted, was the submarine rescue vessel USS Pigeon (ASR 6), which earned two Presidential Unit Citations during World War II.

1965 – 50 Years Ago

This issue covered the battleship USS Missouri (BB 63) joining the Fleet Reserve after 10 years of continuous active service. Also spotlighted, was the submarine rescue vessel USS Pigeon (ASR 6), which earned two Presidential Unit Citations during World War II.
New Program Aims to Help Military Spouses Interested in Teaching

T he Virginia National Guard recently launched a new program called the Virginia Tobacco Targeting Program (TTP) designed to help military spouses overcome obstacles to quitting smokeless tobacco. The new program is based on the Virginia Tobacco Targeting Program, which has been in operation since 1994. For more information on the TTP Web site, visit www.tttva.net.

Senior Enlisted Academy Expands, Accommodates Spouses

A fter a successful pilot program, the Senior Enlisted Academy is expanding its efforts to accommodate military spouses interested in teaching. The Academy offers two courses, the resident and non-resident courses. The non-resident course, which is open to active-duty and Reserve component spouses, will be offered online through a Distance Learning program. For more information, contact the Senior Enlisted Academy at NavyEnlisted@naco.osd.mil.
Decommissioned more than 40 years ago, ex-USS Shadwell continues to serve the fleet as a naval research laboratory dedicated to the study of shipboard fire.

When fire breaks out at sea, there’s nowhere to run. Far from land, far from help, a fire at sea is like no other fire on earth. But the firefighters of ex-USS Shadwell (LSD 15) are learning from the maritime fires of the past to save Sailors’ lives in the future. From the latest in innovative technologies to new doctrines and techniques for those who go into the flames, the scientific studies conducted on the former warship keep the U.S. Navy at the forefront of shipboard firefighting.

Once a World War II amphibious assault ship, Shadwell now sits aground on a small sandbar off the coast of Mobile Bay, Ala., as a working laboratory for Naval Research Laboratories (NRL), where fire is always the plan of the day.
Far from the salty dogs who once roamed Shadwell’s passageways, a small, specialized team of doctors, engineers, student interns, contractors, Naval Reservists and temporary additional duty (TAD) active-duty Sailors now make up Shadwell’s crew. They come to study the latest technologies, techniques and doctrines in maritime firefighting.

Only a shadow of her former self, Shadwell, rusted from bow to stern, now "sits" at an exaggerated two-degree list to starboard. The ship is now a platform that hosts numerous tests to determine exactly how fire behaves at sea and how best to combat the demon. The results of the testing are sent to Navy ships and also shared with civilian ships and firefighting agencies around the world.

"Of course, there are several safety measures in place, but once the match is put to the fuel, it’s on the fire fighting team to extinguish the flames," said fire test engineer Chelbi Cole, one of two engineers assigned to ignite test fires and observe efforts at the scene. "On Shadwell there is no cut-off valve."

Sailors training aboard Shadwell quickly find out that the main source of fire isn’t their only problem. As they blindly make their way through smoke-filled spaces searching for flames, they find that secondary fires can flare up because of heat convection. In less than five minutes time, a metal hull, super-heated from nearby fire, may cause flammable materials, such as chairs, books, clothes or toiletries, in nearby rooms to ignite. During this particular training evolution, it takes most fire parties about seven minutes just to report to the repair lockers and get dressed out. By the time the damage control team reports to the scene, 10 minutes have gone by — more than double the time needed to ignite secondary fires.

Additionally, Sailors aboard Shadwell quickly learn about personal physical limitations. The simple act of making their way toward the staging area of a fire drenches each Sailor in sweat before they even enter the scene. Once inside, the intense heat build-up within the compartments turns the moisture held inside the protective suits to steam. Once AFFF or water vapor systems are activated, the steam intensifies and any part of the skin not properly covered can be burned.

"Heat is one thing. I can take the heat and fire any day," said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Jerrail Ramsey, a Reservist aboard Shadwell. "But steam. I just won’t mess around with steam — it hurts."

As the engineers and Sailors walk into the flames, safety observers on the scene and test engineers in the main control room closely monitor everything throughout the ship, from rooms that have long sat undisturbed to the rooms currently ablaze. Additionally, sensors and airflow monitors report the temperature throughout the trainer. Even the blazing pyres are tracked, often reaching temperatures close to 1,000 degrees.
If you play with fire, you’ll get burned. And Shadwell is no exception. Remarkably, though, injuries are minimal on this ship. On the latest test series, the Shadwell crew, supplemented by TAD Sailors from Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) San Antonio (LPD 17), sought to establish a well deck fire fighting doctrine for the latest class of amphibious assault ships. As usual for Shadwell, things got hot fast.

As the fire party waited to enter the enclosed space of Shadwell’s well deck from the catwalk, smoke poured from every gap. The crew disappeared into the wall of black for no more than three minutes before they raced out, smoke and steam rolling from their personal protective equipment. Helmet face shields melted like candy. Self-contained Breathing Apparatus face shields warped and cracked. Voice amplifiers were inoperable. A radio that had dropped to the catwalk deck melted to the glove that picked it up. Even the nozzle and Y-gate of the hose – situated along the catwalk well above the flames below – had melted to the walkway grate.

The only thing that could have been more realistic was an actual shipboard fire. This type of training provides a sobering reminder of why Sailors must be well-trained on what to expect and how to react to fire at sea.

At the post-fire brief, the group discussed lessons learned.

“If I could have charged the hose, I think we would have been able to fight the fire,” said Engineman 1st Class (SW) Theodore Trevino glancing at his burnt fingers. “I’ve been on fire teams for a long time now, and I’ve never seen a protective glove smoke like that before!”

Some San Antonio Sailors were so shaken by the reality of the experience that they couldn’t continue participating in the tests.

“If everyone has their breaking point,” said Aviation Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class (AW) James Jenkins, whose steaming gear was peeled off of him to reveal first-degree burns down both arms and hands. “Turns out mine is 754 degrees.”

“It got intense in there quick,” continued Jenkins’s shipmate, Damage Controlman 1st Class Michael Schweikert. “I’ve taken almost every fire-fighting training available in the fleet, and this is the most realistic situation I’ve ever been in – bar none. It really made me think about what would happen if well deck vehicles caught on fire during a deployment. Every Sailor should experience training like this.”

Fire test engineer John Farley, also at the scene of every Shadwell fire as an igniter/observer, recognized the Sailors’ anxieties, but reminded them that fire often changes the rules of engagement. “Things obviously got hotter than we had expected, but that is the nature of fire,” said Farley. “Under current doctrines, if this had been an actual shipboard fire, you probably would have faced similar problems. But that’s why we’re here, to look at current procedures and address what changes should be made.”

Although varied in their roles aboard the former warship, everyone who boards Shadwell, whether TAD personnel, Navy Reservist or civilian contractor, doggedly shares a common goal: saving Sailors’ lives.
90+ degree heat. After nearly 17 years aboard Shadwell, Krueger can’t help but glance longingly at the fisherman relaxing in a small, shaded boat just off Shadwell’s stern. “But what we do here is important, and if we can save Sailors’ lives, it’s worth a few aches and pains."

Along the bulkheads of the area once reserved for officer berthing, hang small plates engraved with the names of ships that have had shipboard fires—from World War I to the present. The number of casualties are also listed. But those small, symbolic plates may well become a thing of the past, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Shadwell’s crew.

Nothing would make them happier than improving naval fire fighting fleetwide.

“As Reservists, we volunteered to serve our drill time aboard Shadwell,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class John Dalton. “Most of us lose money—and sometimes a little skin—by traveling here, but what we do aboard Shadwell has an important impact on today’s fleet.”

With one series almost behind them, Shadwell’s crew cleaned up the mess from the day’s fire and began to install new configurations. Everything had to be replaced: water systems, sensors, camera protective binding, fuel lines and bulkheads. Building and welding the new test sections was grueling work under a sun that felt almost as fierce as Shadwell’s fires. Yet taxing as their tasks are, Shadwell’s crew tackles each project with steadfast tenacity.

“My body is telling me it’s time to go,” said Carl Krueger, a retired Coast Guard Sailor turned Shadwell contractor as he pauses from welding sheet metal to mop the sweat from his leathery brow in sticky, sticky heat.
Destination Japan

Western influence is reflected throughout the streets in Tokyo. The crowds in Tokyo’s Akihabara rival the crowds in New York City’s Times Square.
Visiting Japan for the first time can be somewhat overwhelming. At first glance, the streets are ablaze with colors strung across an endless canvas of neon signs with undecipherable writing. People are everywhere—thousands of them flow effortlessly through the city streets in seemingly splendid harmony with one another.

Many Sailors taking orders to Japan may feel daunted and confused in such an environment. As a result, many Sailors restrict themselves to the safe confines of their base, never realizing the real reason for taking orders to Japan is found off the ships and beyond the base’s gates.

“Even though I was skeptical at first on how to use the trains, I quickly realized that the people actually know enough English and are willing to help out; all you have to do is ask,” said Aviation Boatsman’s Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Isaac Paddock, assigned to USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63).

After reassuring himself that he wasn’t intimidated by being in a foreign country, Paddock discovered Japan offers a variety of recreational options, especially during the warm weather months.

“Summer is incredible in Japan. I never realized that Japan had so many great beaches. I’ve done everything from surfing the beaches. I’ve done every-thing my phone does. Everywhere you go there seems to be something different, new and adventuresome experience, I feel like I am on vacation living here.”

There are also plenty of locations throughout Japan for Sailors to relax. The Japanese gardens - better known in America as parks - exude a feeling of serenity. These gardens are one of the country’s most distinctive features, and they add a special dimension to a visitor’s enjoyment of Japan.

“The parks are a great place to relax and just get away,” said Airman Sean Whitt, also assigned to Kitty Hawk. “I think it’s good to feel like I’m on vacation so that my job on the ship is less stressful.”

In stark contrast to the peaceful atmosphere in the Japanese Gardens are the crowded streets of the Akihabara district in Tokyo. Japan is one of the world’s leaders in innovative gadgets and technological advances, and Sailors can find almost any gizmo they need in the Akihabara.

“I’m amazed by the technology,” said Paddock. “I have yet to understand everything my phone does. Everywhere you go there seems to be something different, new or high tech staring you in the face. It’s all over.”

Whether a Sailor wants to experience the quiet of the Japanese gardens or dive into the technological maelstrom in the streets of Tokyo, the experience is there. Sailors just have to know how to take advantage of it. And according to Paddock, they need to begin is right on base.

“If you want to really get out and see Japan, the best thing to do to get started is to go to the MWR [Morale, Welfare and Recreation] and ITT [Information, Tours and Travel] on base. I didn’t come all this way to stay on the Navy base,” he said.

Sailors assigned to USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) enjoy a relaxing afternoon at one of Japan’s many beautiful beaches.

AB1c Isaac Paddock waits for a train at Yokosuka’s Chuo Station. “It took me a couple of days to get up the courage, but I didn’t come all this way to stay on the Navy base,” he said.

CTR1 Joseph Barnes (right) helps CTRSM Jeremy Smith through the streets of Yoshikusa toward his new duty station on Yokosuka Naval Base.

Akihabara district in Tokyo.

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Buddha is a significant figure in Japan. Buddhism, the most practiced religion in Japan, teaches and encourages treating everyone with the utmost respect and kindness.

Some Japanese temples can be found nestled among the trees and hydrangea bushes on the outskirts of the city. The temples reflect the history and culture of Japan.

“Some Japanese temples can be found nestled among the trees and hydrangea bushes on the outskirts of the city. The temples reflect the history and culture of Japan.”

Stephen Brown, a former Sailor aboard Kitty Hawk, suggests trying it all to get the most out of a tour in Japan. He spent four years in Japan before getting out of the Navy. Later, he came back as a civilian.

“Japan will grow on you,” said Brown.

“The people, the food and everything about this land has an addictive quality about it. After four years of being here, I didn’t feel like I had fully experienced what Japan had to offer, and now I’m back doing what I can to soak it up. I would advise anyone who comes to Japan to get off the base and see as much as possible.”

But Japan is more than just crowded cities, busy streets and fancy gadgets. Ancient temples secluded among bold trees and colorful flowers rest on the outskirts of these busy streets and hold the secrets to Japan’s ancient history.

“When I first visited the temples, it was completely different from being in the city,” said LT Kimberly Musa, assigned to U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka. “There was something peaceful about being out there that you can’t get in the city.”

In time, Sailors become accustomed to the foreign atmosphere and find themselves at ease with everything around them, having lost their initial fear. The country’s low crime rate and kind nature of its people are key to this.

According to the Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2000, Japan has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. The kind treatment of visitors to Japan is in part due to the teachings of Buddhism, which most Japanese people practice as their religion. All travelers are to be treated with the utmost respect and kindness. Under these precepts, the Japanese have been schooled in the “Good Samaritan” concept for more than a thousand years.

“I’m amazed at how comfortable I feel traveling around the country alone,” said Musa. “Everyone is so friendly and always willing to help out. There always seems to be some sort of celebration – it is like Mardi Gras every weekend in Japan.”

Sailors stationed in Japan have an opportunity to experience these celebrations. There are many local festivals throughout the year, usually centered around neighborhood shrines and Buddhist temples. These festivals (0-matsuri) are celebrations of the changing seasons, planting and harvesting.

The festivals may also offer prayers for family health, good fortune and prosperity, and they often include folk dancing.
The combination of traditional Japanese culture and today’s modern influences make Japan one of the most intriguing countries in Asia.
A curious Japanese boy peers into the crowd looking for a friend. The youth of Japan are trained at a young age to deal with the traffic and crowds in metropolitan areas.

It is common to see Tokyo street vendors selling cooked meat on skewers to passers-by.

(USS Kitty Hawk CV 63) Sailor AN Shaun Witt, and his girlfriend Motoka Fumiyama enjoy one of Japan’s many parks. “The parks are a great place to sit and reflect on where I am and what’s going on in my life,” said Witt.

A curious Japanese boy peers into the crowd looking for a friend. The youth of Japan are trained at a young age to deal with the traffic and crowds in metropolitan areas.

It is common to see Tokyo street vendors selling cooked meat on skewers to passers-by.

Sasebo
Fast Facts

Sasebo’s facilities support forward-deployed units and visiting operating forces of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and designated tenant activities.

Location: Sasebo Bay, on the northwest corner of the island of Kyushu; 30 miles northwest of Nagasaki.

Major commands: Commander Amphibious Squadron 11; USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3); Commander, U.S. Fleet Activities Sasebo; Fleet Industrial Supply Center; U.S. Naval Pacific Meteorology & Oceanography Det.

Population: 5,000.

Housing: High-rise apartments, duplexes and town houses; Standard waiting list is 12 to 24 months.

Facilities: Bowling alley, restaurants, gas station, all hands club, gyms, medical/dental clinics, commissary, Exchange, chapel, post office, banks, DODD school.

Special Interest: Sailing and Outdoor Adventure Center offers everything from Sea Kayaking to Basic Sailing classes. Hiking, fishing and scuba trips, are also available.

“COLA is very important, especially when you are not dealing with the U.S. dollar as the primary currency. If you live off base, COLA gives you that peace of mind that your rent and bills are going to be paid without problem.”

HN Neely F. Nelson
Branch Medical Clinic Sasebo

Internet: Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo
(http://www.cfas.navy.mil)

Appreciation of Japanese culture is one of the most unique things a Sailor can take from a tour in Japan. The cultural lessons of the Japanese way of life may be far more rewarding than all the cars, cameras, video games and other products the country exports.

“I’ve done all I can to experience the culture of Japan, such as taking trips with MWR, visiting temples, and I even saw the famous ‘Big Buddha’ in Kamakura – all of which has helped me understand the Japanese people more and gain a respect for their heritage,” said Musa. “I am so happy that I have gotten out and learned something about their history. I believe it has made me a better person, and I definitely am making the best of my duty in Japan.”

Frontam is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.
Monthly contributions from today’s enlisted service members help provide a home for yesterday’s heroes.

Unlike the typical church stain-glass windows, the windows of the Armed Forces Retirement Home Chapel, Gulfport, Miss., depict various naval emblems, vessels and battles.
Tuggle's stories of his military service are incredible and almost unbelievable—stories of fierce battles against insurmountable odds. Yet Tuggle isn't the only one with a story to tell here, because he resides at the Washington, D.C., Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH)—a home for heroes.

The first veterans' retirement facility was originally established in 1834 as the United States Naval Home in Philadelphia. The Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Home in Washington, D.C., followed in 1851. In 1976, when maintenance and refurbishing costs for the Philadelphia home grew too exorbitant, the Naval Home was relocated to newer facilities in Gulfport, Miss.

In 1990, the two homes were combined by an act of Congress and designated as the Armed Forces Retirement Homes, allowing veterans of all services to reside at either location.

A majority of today's Sailors are not aware of these special homes, yet John Tuggle is a little tired today. Long ago he fought as part of a small guerrilla unit against the Japanese invasion during World War II in the jungles of the Philippine Island of Mindanao. But this afternoon he settles back comfortably in a well-worn recliner, visibly winded from a few hours of ballroom dancing earlier, to tell a young Sailor about days gone by.

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A majority of today’s Sailors are not aware of these special homes, yet...
the two retirement complexes are largely supported by 50-cent contributions deducted monthly from each enlisted service member’s base pay.

Two quarters might seem inconsequential individually, but collectively, they add up. And, when added to the fines and forfeitures garnished for military infractions the homes also receive, these funds provide an operational budget that keeps residents’ fees substantially lower than alternative civilian retirement communities.

In 2003 alone, AFRH received a total of $46 million from the enlisted community ($7 million from monthly deductions and a staggering $39 million from fines).

Armed Forces Retirement Homes provide residents with much more than just a place to hang their hat. Medical care is available 24-hours-a-day from on-site medical personnel. Enlisted contributions also support a multitude of programs, services and amenities to keep residents active and engaged within the community.

While the grounds, services and quality of care provided at these homes are impressive; the most amazing feature of these facilities is their residents.

The active residents enjoy social clubs, bowling, swimming, golfing, dancing, gardening, sculpting, painting, woodworking, biking, bingo, athletic competitions and card tournaments—all conveniently located on the grounds. Other activities include various Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored tours and outings. Additionally, each home has its own gym, theater, post office, library, auto-body hobby shop, bank, pub, beauty- and barbershop, and small Exchange shops, essentially offering the
services veterans are accustomed to receiving on military bases.

Gulfport resident Dorothy “Gigi” Martin served two years in the Army Air Corps during World War II. Although she was forced to leave at the end of the war, as women were not permitted to serve full-time, she fondly recalls her time in service.

“It’s funny now, but I still remember the day high-heeled shoes were first issued as part of the uniform. Supply told me my flats weren’t worn down enough to qualify for a new pair of shoes. But I’ve always been a high-heel kook, so I spent every evening for a week rubbing my flats on the cement sidewalk outside of my dorm until I could get my heels. They were lovely,” said Malone.

Ask D.C. resident Harris Bircher about his military experience, and he will share a copy of his hometown newspaper detailing his funeral service after he “died” in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Thumbing through the crinkled, yellowed pages of his photo album, he lands on the full-page obituary and casually relates how he swam to nearby land when his ship was bombed.

“Everything was so chaotic after the bombing that it took the Navy two weeks to realize that I hadn’t actually died,” he said. In the meantime, his family had already conducted his funeral service with the Navy’s assurance that his remains would be sent home if ever recovered and identified.

While the enlisted communities’ monetary contributions help provide for AFRH residents’ physical needs, visits are equally appreciated and important.

In Gulfport or D.C., behind every resident door, fox trotting across the dance floors, tinkling the ivories of a grand piano in the reception hall or quietly snoozing in lobby armchairs you’ll find another amazing piece of history waiting to be shared. All one has to do is ask.

Darby is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

AFRH Residency Admissions Criteria

Considering residency at one of the Armed Forces Retirement Homes? If so, applicants must be:

1. Veterans who - (A) are 60 years of age or over; and (B) were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions after 20 or more years of active service.

2. Veterans who are determined under rules prescribed by the chief operating officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of a service-connected disability incurred in the line of duty in the armed forces.

3. Veterans who - (A) served in a war theater during a time of war declared by Congress or were eligible for hostile fire special pay under U.S.C. Title 37, section 310; (B) were discharged or released from service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions; and (C) are determined under rules prescribed by the chief operating officer to be incapable of earning a livelihood because of injuries, disease or disability.

4. Female veterans who - (A) served in the women’s component of the Armed Forces before June 12, 1948; and (B) are determined under rules prescribed by the chief operating officer to be eligible for admission because of compelling personal circumstances.

**Please note:** Couples are always welcome to reside together at either location, but both persons MUST qualify for admission individually.

For more information or if you are interested in residing at the Gulfport, Miss., home, contact their admissions office at (228) 897-4021, toll-free (800) 332-3527 or by e-mail at ADEMISSIONS@AFRH.GOV. Those interested in Washington, D.C., area should call (202) 730-5337, toll-free (800) 422-9988, or e-mail ADEMISSIONS@AFRH.GOV.
Focus on Service

These days, Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class (AW) Luciana Erdmann could be considered a rarity.

In an era where college graduates increasingly leave school without deciding on a career, Erdmann, a mechanic for Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA)-15 out of Naval Air Station Oceana, Va., knew from an early age where her career was bringing her.

“The Navy was something that came later, but I was always into working as a mechanic,” Erdmann said. “I worked on a bunch of cars in high school. I always enjoyed doing it. It’s been a very gratifying job.”

For Erdmann and her fellow Sailors with VFA-15, that gratification comes from the upkeep of their fleet of 12 jets. With a staff of only seven mechanics, it can be a very stressful endeavor.

“It is an important job that requires more than just mechanical ability, Erdmann noted. “We have to have a good relationship with the pilots,” she said, “to make sure we’re able to do everything required of us. We talk to them before and after every flight to make sure there are no problems.”

The mechanics take the feedback from the pilots and then go into action, making sure everything is repaired and ready to go for the plane’s next scheduled flight.

The job will not change much when Erdmann eventually deploys with USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71). “On the ship, things are just more intense,” Erdmann said. “Equipment breaks more often, but it’s nothing we can’t handle. The way I see it, no one else can do this.”

And that’s what she says makes her job in the Navy important. “Jets won’t fly around here without us,” she said. “We better do our job, and do our job right.”

Ludwig is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

Story by JO2 Charles Ludwig, photo by PH3 Antoine Themistocleous

Jets Getting in the Air
Eye on the Fleet is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Chief of Information Navy Visual News Service. We are looking for high impact, quality photography from Sailors in the fleet to showcase the American Sailor in action.

To be considered, forward your high resolution (5”x7” at 300 dpi) images with full credit and cutline information, including full name, rank and duty station. Name all identifiable people within the photo and include important information about what is happening, where the photo was taken and the date.

Commands with digital photo capability can send attached .jpg files to: navyvisualnews@navy.mil

Mail your submissions to:
Navy Visual News Service
1200 Navy Pentagon, Rm. 4B 514, Washington, D.C. 20350-1200

For a new Eye on the Fleet every day, click on the Navy NewsStand’s home page, www.news.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.
Eye on the Fleet

Blu2 Patrick King, a range coach from the 31st Seabee Readiness Group, demonstrates the M136 AT-4 rocket launcher to the Seabees Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40.

Photo by PHAN John P. Curtis

A young boy is fitted into an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) suit by a member of EOD Mobile Unit (EODMU) 8 at the 21st Annual National Night Out event held at the Marian Housing Community Center, Naval Air Station Sigonella, Italy.

Photo by JO2 Allison Pittam

High Speed Vessel (HSV) Swift (HSV 2) moors in Pearl Harbor after participating in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2004. RIMPAC is the largest international maritime exercise in the waters around the Hawaiian Islands.

Photo by JOSN Ryan C. McGinley

BU2 Patrick King, a range coach from the 31st Seabee Readiness Group, demonstrates the M136 AT-4 rocket launcher to the Seabees Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40.

Photo by PHAN John P. Curtis

Seabees, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 23, familiarize themselves with Humvee operations as part of their mobilization training in Port Hueneme, Calif., prior to driving the vehicle.

Photo by JO2 Leslie A. Shively

An Jose Tello smooths out the paint on the rudder of an F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 115 aboard the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74).

Photo by Photo by PHAN Ron Reeves
Eye on History

Eye on History is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Naval Historical Center.

For more photos pertaining to naval history, go to www.history.navy.mil.

1948
In the British sector of Berlin, a petty officer takes a picture of a Russian soldier standing guard at a monument erected in honor of Soviets killed during World War II.

1952
Survivors from the fleet tug USS Sarsi (ATF 111) are brought into Sasebo, Japan, after Sarsi struck a mine and sank off of the east coast of Korea.

1965
Recruits at Naval Training Center, San Diego learn safety procedures for firing rifles.

1943
A Sailor and his family visit the bond booth at U.S. Naval Air Station, Seattle.

1952
Air Crews at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Fla., use the hull of a sunken Naval Patrol bomber for drills.

U.S. Navy Photos Courtesy of the Naval Historical Center
Old Man and Me

Story and photo by PH3 Todd Frantom

When I’m 96 years old, I plan on just trying to get by from day to day. I really can’t see myself working. I will more than likely be sitting in a retirement home, enjoying a peaceful game of scrabble, fishing with my great-grandson or writing stories about my life. Work would be the last thing on my mind.

That wasn’t the case with my tailor while I was stationed in Japan. With an obvious disregard for retirement, at 96 he continues to take care of Sailors’ sewing needs, as he once did for me. The “old man’s” shop isn’t hard to find. I found him while I was stationed on Yokosuka Naval Base four years ago.

On my first visit, it was easy to tell his shop had been there for a very long time. He was sitting on an old wooden stool, meticulously laboring away on a rusted, antique 1950 Singer sewing machine in a work area the size of a large closet. His shop was decorated with many Japanese and American items, but the walls were dominated by the petty officer patches and rockers on the walls representing all the ships of the U.S. 7th Fleet, and even some ships that no longer exist. There were also many Japanese manuscripts written in Kanji (Japanese writing) adorning the walls.

Although I was skeptical about his skills and his knowledge of where to put the patches, I entrusted him with my uniforms. To my surprise, when I returned to the shop a day later to pick up my uniforms, my order was placed and sewn perfectly. The old man had recruited a faithful customer for the rest of my stay in Yokosuka, Japan.

I never realized how interesting the old man was until I went back to visit him while working on assignment for All Hands magazine. During the visit, the old man warmed up to me as he never did when I was a customer. This time he stopped his work and moved a pile of Navy uniforms out of the way to reveal an old dusty box of photographs under the workbench.

I realized then that there was much more to this man than I originally thought. He had a story to tell. Some of the photos dated prior to World War II. Because he couldn’t speak English, he gave me a smile of pride. Even with that simple gesture you could tell he was pleased with his life’s work.

The photographs represented the quilted history of his life. He had numerous pictures of family members and his father working in the same trade. As he shared more of his photos with me it became apparent that he had several generations of tailors in his family. Japanese traditions and family expectations are strong, and Kiyoshi Watanabi had spent his lifetime fine-tuning his profession to pass it down to Takao, his son and assistant at the shop.

This man is older than most of our grandfathers. Heck, he’s older than many of our great-grandfathers! Yet, day after day he continues to toil away on his 1950 Singer sewing machine, in the same location for 67 years. His passion for tailoring must sustain his happiness. He’s an inspiration to us all.

Kiyoshi Watanabi, better known to me as the “Old Man,” gives me hope. Hope that I can find a trade I feel passionately enough about to work at until I am 96. But, more than likely, you’ll find me at a fishing pond or on a couch.

Frantom is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.
To vacation in Japan for one year...

Airfare: $2,437.90  
Hotel: $67,284.00  
Meals: $26,344.00

One year Navy tour: All-Inclusive

Costs figured from 2004 per diem rates for Tokyo, Japan