



CNFIJ NOW!

Issue 4

May 2021



U.S. Naval Forces Japan Desert Challenge Results

Petty Officer 3rd Class Jillian Grady

On March 11, 2011, the United States' ally, Japan, suffered a magnitude 9.1 earthquake. It was the fourth most powerful in recorded history, creating a tsunami with waves towering 133 feet and traveling 435 miles per hour, six miles inland. The tsunami triggered meltdowns of three nuclear reactors at Japan's Fukushima facility. In the wake of devastation, all four branches of the United States Armed Forces launched humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts in the form of Operation Tomodachi.

Tomodachi, which translates to "friends," was truly an all-hands effort on the part of the U.S. military and Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) following a catastrophe the likes of which neither had previously witnessed.

Now, a decade later, Ronald Reagan is forward-deployed to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, operating continuously in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations and returning periodically to Japan throughout the year. The distant memory of the 2011 tsunami on Japan's eastern coastline remains a constant reminder of the importance of the partnership between the United States and Japan. Several crew members on the Ronald Reagan today remember the impact this humanitarian mission had and still has on the fleet, the region and the world.

Capt. Matthew Ventimiglia, Ronald Reagan's executive officer, addressed the crew via the ship's 1MC announcement system on March 11, 2021, offering a moment of silence.

"Ten years ago on this day, we strengthened our bond with our Japanese partners even more, and, today, we continue to strengthen our bond as we beat the current pandemic and participate in joint training and exercises, such as Keen Sword. Our friendship is unshakeable and, as we operate forward in the Indo-Pacific region, USS Ronald Reagan will continue to proudly serve alongside our Japanese allies," said Ventimiglia.

Many of Ronald Reagan's current crewmembers served and assisted during Operation Tomodachi. Chief Hospital Corpsman Juliet Elangos, deployed aboard amphibious assault ship USS Essex (LHD 2) as part of Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 7 in 2011, reflected on her team's efforts during Operation Tomodachi.

"We responded to Operation Tomodachi when the powerful earthquake

and tsunami devastated the northeast coast of Japan in 2011," said Elangos. "It was an opportunity to aid our partners in the region after a terrible natural disaster. There was a lot of destruction and devastation"

More than 24,000 U.S. service members, 189 aircraft and 24 ships from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps rendered aid during the operation. Ronald Reagan was instrumental in refueling JSDF ships, transporting U.S. Marines and JSDF troops to provide assistance ashore, and providing food, water and hygienic supplies to affected communities. In addition, Ronald Reagan's airborne assets flew reconnaissance missions involving those displaced by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

Chief Electrician's Mate Raoul Simms, then attached to Assault Craft Unit 1 West Pacific Detachment, remembers providing ground support and assistance.

"My unit conducted a joint effort between the Essex Amphibious Ready Group and the JSDF. Landing craft utilities were used to transfer needed utility emergency equipment and supplies to Oshima Island to restore power," said Simms.

"We wanted to help however we could, because we saw firsthand the incredibly massive task the Japanese people had ahead of them. There was a great sense of camaraderie and friendship there that still exists today!"

U.S. 7th Fleet spearheaded further assistance by flying 160 missions, delivering 260 tons of relief supplies and clearing the ports of Hachinohe, Miyako and Kesenuma. Clearing the ports and reopening them was critical to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Despite the devastation that occurred in the wake of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, the bond between the U.S. and Japan remains strong and unwavering. Today, as the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 5, Ronald Reagan provides a combat-ready force that protects and defends the United States, as well as the collective maritime interests of its allies in the Indo-Pacific region. The ship and its crew continue to prove that presence matters, not only in the execution of national tasking abroad, but also in the strengthening of partnerships that have endured for decades.



Rear Adm. Brian P. Fort

Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan

Commander, Navy Region Japan

Commander's Corner

Greetings and aloha!

It's hard to believe we are approaching the halfway mark of 2021 and we've been in the global pandemic fight for more than a year!

While COVID-19 continues to limit and make face-to-face interactions challenging, our Navy team has shown a tremendous ability to adapt and think of innovative ways to stay engaged. While we played defense for all of 2020, the arrival of vaccines at the beginning of 2021 gave us the opportunity to finally go on the offensive against this virus. Here in Japan, we are continuing the safe administration of vaccines on all of our installations.

In fact, Region Japan is leading the entire United States Navy in administered vaccines. I am so proud that we have taken care of everyone's health, minimized the spread of this virus, and maintained such a high state of force readiness for our forward deployed naval forces and families. While the fight is not over yet, we are finally starting to see hope of returning to some semblance of normalcy in the very near future.

In the Fleet, Yokosuka warmly welcomed the guided missile destroyer, USS Rafael Peralta this February. We look forward to her contributions, as the Navy continues to bring the most capable and modern ships into the Western Pacific. We also look forward to new relationships that will develop not only from the future exercises and training between the Japan Maritime Defense Force (JMSDF) and other allied nations here in the Indo-Pacific, but the new personal relationships the Sailors of Rafael Peralta will make with our amazing hosts here in Yokosuka. As always, we are committed to maintaining the peace, security and stability in this important region. As of March, Japan and the U.S. have already joined forces on five different exercises this year. The relationships we have developed between our two navies will continue to propel us beyond any obstacle we face together.

At sea, USN and JMSDF ships continue to increase interoperability, including a night replenishment at sea between USS Barry and JMSDF JS Towada, and Mine Warfare Exercise 1JA 2021 off the coast of southeastern Japan in February. Integrated operations like these not only help us stay prepared for unexpected contingencies, but also deepen the bonds between our USN and JMSDF Sailors. On March 11, we also took time to reflect on the 10-year anniversary of the terrible earthquake and tsunami, that devastated large parts of eastern Japan, and whose effects are still being felt today by those who lost loved ones and so much more.

In conclusion, I cannot overstate how incredibly proud I am of our entire team. I'm also incredibly honored and humbled to be here right now serving with our team alongside our hosts here in Japan.

CTF-72 Concludes Sea Dragon 2021



Petty Officer 1st Class Glenn Slaughter Commander Task Force 72

The U.S. Navy and several maritime partner nations successfully completed operations for the multilateral exercise Sea Dragon 2021 in Guam on Jan. 27.

For two weeks, over 190 personnel from five nations conducted over 250 hours of ground and classroom training, culminating in high-level exercises to track a real-world U.S. Navy submarine.

Commander Task Force 72, based out of Misawa, Japan, detached two P-8A Poseidon Maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft from Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 and 8 to train with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF), Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), in the annual Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) exercise.

Now in its third year, the goal of Sea Dragon is twofold: to demonstrate advanced ASW tactics, while at the same time continuing to build on multinational participation with U.S. allies and partners, as well as commitment to the security of the Pacific region.

VP-5 pilot Lt. Reed Arce was excited to compete with, but also to learn from the other aircrews.

"VP-5 was certainly looking forward to the opportunity to flex our ASW muscles and enjoy some friendly competition with our allied partners during Exercise Sea Dragon," said Arce. "We learned so much when comparing tactics between aircrews, and the ability to constantly improve our warfighting skills. We hope to leave Guam with all participants being at their peak performance in prosecuting sub-surface threats

anywhere in the world," he said.

The final days of Sea Dragon consisted of a tracking exercise with the Los Angeles-class submarine, USS Providence (SSN-719) acting as the adversary. The nations worked in shifts to find and track the elusive submarine.

VP-8 pilot Lt. Joseph Moralesvargas found the exercise to be a unique occasion for sharing perspectives on the technically challenging process of ASW.

"Sea Dragon 2021 has given VP-8 the chance to coordinate and be on station with other crews and other countries, which has proved invaluable," said Moralesvargas. "The opportunity to speak with other operators and hear their philosophy and insight on ASW has given me new perspective. I can't think of any other exercise that would give us this chance," he said.

The nations were scored individually for the competitive portion of the exercise. The highest points were awarded to the Royal Canadian Air Force 407 Squadron, which earned them the coveted Dragon Belt.

Canada, India, Japan, Australia, and the U.S. are natural maritime partners, sharing common values and seafaring traditions. Exercises such as Sea Dragon are vital in strengthening relationships and maritime security.

As the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet employs 50 to 70 ships and submarines across the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans. U.S. 7th Fleet routinely operates and interacts with 35 maritime nations while conducting missions to preserve and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

USS Ronald Reagan Second Round COVID-19 Vaccinations



Petty Officer 2nd Class Cameron Edy USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76)

Sailors assigned to the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), began receiving the second shot of the COVID-19 vaccination Feb. 2, on Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY).

The second round of shots follows Ronald Reagan's initial vaccinations, which started on Jan. 7. The vaccines are provided to Sailors as soon as the shipments are received, with subsequent doses coming incrementally over the next several months.

Lt. Joe Vahaly, the ship's nurse and on-site lead for Ronald Reagan's vaccine distribution, emphasized how finishing the vaccinations for the crew is a milestone for the ship.

"Much like other 'series' vaccines, the initial vaccine will only immunize you up to 80 percent," said Vahaly. "It's the booster shot – the second vaccination – that takes you up to 95 percent immunity. This vaccine teaches your body how to fight [COVID-19], and the second shot helps in that fight."

The reactions to the second

vaccination can be more severe than the initial shot, with common symptoms like fatigue, slight swelling at the injection sight, or a mild fever. The similarity of these symptoms to COVID-19 create a logistical obstacle for the Ronald Reagan medical team.

"We estimate around 80 percent of those who received the second dose will have [COVID-related] symptoms afterwards, compared to the 55 percent accompanying the first shot," said Vahaly. "[Vaccine reactions] do mirror COVID-19 symptoms, so what you would call an 'influenza-like-illness' response is what you could experience with the vaccine. To mitigate this [calling away a medical response], we're going to be talking with symptomatic individuals remotely, talking through when they got the vaccine, if any of the symptoms are different than a regular flu or cold, or if the symptoms persist more than 48 hours."

Chief Machinery Repairman Francisco Barrera received the second vaccination Feb. 3, and explained why the vaccine

was important to him and how COVID-19 has affected him.

"I tell people 'you don't really get it, until it happens to you,'" said Barrera. "You're not going to feel it until it happens to you, and you're going to feel it. That's when I felt it, when I had my uncle die of COVID-19 a few months back. We might not see the [impact of the] vaccination right away, but we have to trust the scientists, and everyone who has devoted their lives to make this vaccine happen. Every day we live and serve, we're making history, and right now everyone here [getting the shot] is making history."

The vaccination efforts by Ronald Reagan have also extended to the CFAY waterfront as a whole, with other ships and crews being vaccinated by Ronald Reagan's medical team.

"We've been vaccinating not just the ship, but the entire waterfront – and we're happy to do so," said Vahaly. "We've even vaccinated some 'bubble ships,' [meaning U.S. Navy ships currently COVID-19 free for operational purposes]. This

means we don our protective suits, N-95 masks and face shields, and have had personnel from clean 'bubble ships' come through, receive their vaccine, and return to the ship while staying COVID-19 free."

As members of the crew receive the vaccine, masks and physical distancing continue to be necessary until the vaccine is proven to provide long-term protection.

"It's great being able to look at the medical world right now, during [the COVID-19 pandemic], and be able to say we vaccinated a majority of the crew," said Vahaly. "There are more people on this ship than in my hometown. It's absolutely amazing, and we did it all in a few weeks."





NICE TO MEET YOU

AWO2 (NAC/AW/SW) Brandon Perry
Commander Task Force 72 Patrol Squadron Eight (VP-8)



Speak Like a Sailor: “Geedunk”

To most sailors the word “geedunk” means ice cream, candy, potato chips and other assorted snacks, or even the place where they can be purchased. No one, however, knows for certain where the term originated. One theory is that it may be derived from the German word “tunk” meaning to dip or sop either in gravy or coffee. Dunking was a common practice in days when bread, not always obtained fresh, needed a bit of “tunking” to soften it. The “ge” is a German unaccented prefix denoting repetition. In time it may have changed from getunk to geedunk. Some say “Geedunk” is a sound made by a vending machine when it dispenses a soft drink in a cup. Whatever theory we use to explain geedunk’s origin, it doesn’t alter the fact that Navy people are glad it all got started!

What are your primary responsibilities? How does it contribute to the overall mission?

I currently work in the training department [of Patrol Squadron Eight (VP-8)]. As an anti-submarine warfare operator, I produce intelligence products for aircrews in support of operations and tactical missions worldwide: detect, analyze, classify and track surface and subsurface contacts. This contributes to the overall mission and allows VP-8 to build an accurate and detailed tactical picture of 7th fleet.

How has your role been impacted by COVID-19?

Due to COVID-19, you have a ROM policy now that keeps you away from work for long periods of time which takes away from actual flight hours and makes it more difficult to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance around the world.

How long have you been in Japan?

I have been in Japan 5 months.

What are some of your favorite things about serving in Japan?

One of my favorite things about serving in Japan is being able to practice my Japanese, and being able to experience the culture.

What is your favorite Japanese food?

My favorite food is sushi.

What is your favorite place in Japan that you have visited?

My favorite place in Japan is Kyoto: visiting the castles in Kyoto gives you a chance to experience Japan as it was during the Edo period.

What is the first thing you would like to do after the pandemic is over?

Continue family vacations to different states (prefectures in Japan).



CNFJ NOW!

Staff

Rear Adm. Brian P. Fort,
Commander, U.S. Naval Forces
Japan / Navy Region Japan

CDR Katie Cerezo
Public Affairs Officer

Nikolas Donley
Editor

MC2 Ashley M.C. Estrella
Layout & Design

MCC Matthew Bradley
MC1 Aidan Campbell
Contributors

For questions contact CNFJPAO@fe.navy.mil.

The editorial content of this newspaper is edited and approved by the public affairs office of CNFJ/CNRJ. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the U.S. Navy and do not imply endorsement thereof.



@CNFJ



@CNFJPAO

P-8 Poseidon Aircraft



Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Samuel Weldin

The Navy’s replacement platform for the P-3C, the P-8A Poseidon, is designed to secure the Navy’s future in long-range maritime patrol capability, while transforming how the Navy’s maritime patrol and reconnaissance force will man, train, operate and deploy. The P-8A provides more combat capability from a smaller force and less infrastructure while focusing on worldwide responsiveness

and interoperability with traditional manned forces and evolving unmanned sensors. The P-8 is truly a multi-mission maritime patrol aircraft, excelling at anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and search and rescue. It can fly higher (up to 41,000 ft.) and get to the fight faster (490 knots). P-8 is also designed for low

Length: 129.5 feet (39.47 meters)

Height: 42.1 feet (12.83 meters)

Wings: 123.6 feet (37.64 meters)

Weight: 189,200 lbs. (85,820 kg)

Nine-person crew: dual-pilot cockpit, five mission crew (plus relief pilot and in-flight technician)



altitude missions and has already proven its abilities supporting humanitarian and search and rescue missions. CTF 72 leads patrol, reconnaissance and surveillance forces in support of U.S. Seventh Fleet and seeks close interoperability with allied forces, friendly nations, and other U.S. military services in execution of this mission.