



January 10, 2003

NAF Atsugi Sailors help Guam recoup from typhoon

Story and photo by
JOC(SW/AW) Michael Raney

CNFFJ Public Affairs

Two weeks following the wrath of Super Typhoon Pongsona, Sailors and their families on Guam were still reeling from the impact of the storm, trying their best to recover from the damage. Still without potable water and electricity in their homes, many family's plans for holiday cheer and festivities were put on the back-burner, as recovery efforts became priority one.

That is why Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan's (CNFJ) Regional Master Chief, CNOCM Mike Driscoll was the driving force behind organizing *Operation Save the Holidays*. "We wanted to bring these Sailors a little relief and to show them that we care," Driscoll said. "These warriors and their families deserve this," he said sincerely. "It's not a matter of why should we do this, but how can we do this, and pull it off in short notice?"

The logistics of pulling off *Operation Save the Holidays* was nothing more than the U.S. Navy doing something it takes great pride in... taking care of its own. After receiving a telephone call from Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, asking if CNFJ could put something together, the call for help went out. "The response to help out was overwhelming," Driscoll said.

A huge pool of volunteers from Yokosuka, Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Naval Air Facility Misawa, sixty-two Sailors, family members and Department of Defense civilians, ranging from a Family Nurse Practitioner to an undesignated airman, stepped to the plate to provide help.

Small commands like Atsugi's Naval Mobile Construction Battalion THREE,

large commands like the Navy's only forward deployed aircraft carrier USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63), and just about all others in between were represented in this project.

One Sailor cancelled his flight back to Ohio, where he planned to spend Christmas with his family.

"I wanted to help somebody else have a good Christmas," said Construction Electrician Constructionman Chris Pamfil, a Seabee stationed at Atsugi. "Home is where you make it and so is Christmas," added the recently selected Junior Sailor of the Quarter. "I'm willing to celebrate the holidays later, so I can help make the families in Guam happier for a day."

In all, nineteen personnel from Atsugi had jumped at the opportunity to help their fellow servicemembers weather this hardship. "I'd hope that someone would do this for me if I was in that situation," said Builder Constructionman Christopher Hammack, also a Seabee stationed in Atsugi. "I think anyone should do this."

"I'd do it again," added Aviation Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Larry Thomas from Atsugi's Air Operations Department.

Just two days after the initial phone call from Hawaii, Driscoll left Japan with these highly motivated volunteers and all of the food and supplies necessary to feed an entire community.

It was time to get to work and put *Operation Save the Holidays* into action. This required volunteers to transport all of the food and supplies from a refrigerated truck on the pier, to the Galley of USS FRANK CABLE (AS 40), where the meal would be prepared.

After receiving more than 3,000 pounds of turkey, one-half ton of both ham and beef, as well as enough ingredients for traditional

holiday meal side dishes to feed more than 3,000 people, it was time to find a workforce to pull off the meal.

"It's nice to see the master chiefs, chiefs and officers here in the trenches, sweating and cooking like everybody else," said Airman Brandon Escobar of Naval Air Facility, Atsugi. "It's awesome to see the Navy spirit as we've all come together to get the job done," he said.

In order to feed more than 3,000 people beginning at 11:00 Sunday morning, the cooks and a handful of kitchen volunteers began cooking at about 6:00 the evening before.

"The hardest part was staggering the turkeys and ham," said Mess Specialist 1st Class Timothy Saxon. After pointing out that USS FRANK CABLE's galley is equipped to cook for a group only half the size of what they were shooting for, he said a lot of planning and timing went into ensuring all the food was cooked and ready for the first seating.

Sailors and their families stationed on Guam steadily flowed through the meal site, enjoying good food, great conversation and perfect weather. "The food tastes great and we really appreciate it," said Machinist Mate 2nd Class Gary Crossfield, who is attached to USS CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI (SSN 705). "We wouldn't be able to do something like this at home right now," he con-

tinued. "Without electricity and water, if you can't cook it on the Bar-B-Q or eat it out of a can, you can't eat it," he said.

"It means a lot to know that people in other parts of the world are concerned about us," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Rodney Johnson of Naval Hospital Guam. "We've been trying to make the best of a bad situation here and this meal helps bring the Christmas spirit back to the island."



CMDCM (SW) Joe "Pat" Halton of Naval Air Facility Atsugi, transfers ham from the thaw box to the galley onboard USS Frank Cable (AS 40) while preparing a Christmas dinner for Sailors and their families stationed on Guam.

The volunteers also took away not only memories that will last a lifetime, but a deeper understanding of themselves. "I found out that I'd never have a problem helping somebody in need again," reflected Thomas.

And Hammack's revelation? "I'm just glad I'm not an MS. Cooking for 3,000 people is a bit of a task."

AIMD Sailor gets re-up lift

Story by CWO3 Raymon Lemque

AIMD

As a long-standing tradition in the reenlistment process, Sailors are given the opportunity to request where they want the reenlistment ceremony to be conducted.

Typically Sailors desire to be reenlisted within command spaces. Occasionally, Sailors want the ceremony to take place at a golf course, on top of Mt. Fuji, at the big Buddha at Kamakura, and many other locations.

Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Christopher Campbell, from Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment (AIMD), Atsugi requested to be reenlisted on board a helicopter within full view of Mt. Fuji.

Campbell said it was "Just a request." Campbell's request became a reality, Dec.

11, 2002.

One week prior to the flight, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Raymon Lemque of AIMD initiated contact with LT Clayton Shane of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 51 (HSL 51) Operations Department.

HSL 51's Commanding Officer CDR Daniel Fillion, who authorized the reenlistment evolution as part of an already scheduled event, approved the flight.

Prior to the flight, Lemque, the reenlisting officer, and Campbell received a pre-flight briefing before being fitted with helmets to facilitate communications during the ceremony.

Then the dream trip was underway. Once in full view of Mt. Fuji, the reenlistment ceremony was a memorable success.

"I did not think it would happen," said Campbell. "I'm really happy that it did, thanks to HSL 51."



Courtesy photo

An HSL 51 SH 60B flies past Mt. Fuji.



7th Fleet speaks to spouses

March 21, 2003



Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet VADM Robert F. Willard, spoke at an Officer's Spouses Association luncheon on Mar. 17, at Naval Air Facility (NAF), Atsugi.

Willard spoke frankly with the spouses about current world events and what kind of role he estimated that their husbands and wives would play. "The readiness and capabilities of the Kitty Hawk Battle Group is a bit more than that of another carrier battle group," said Willard. With Carrier Air Wing FIVE, USS KITTLY HAWK (CV 63) and its battle group forward deployed, they are always training, ready to go and the easiest to get to the areas of concern, he said.

He fielded questions about a variety of concerns ranging from the safety of deployed military members and travel advise, to foreign countries and even health-related questions.

He concluded by saying, "I've come here to pass on messages for the senior spouses to pass on to junior spouses.

Willard explained that the senior spouses should continue to monitor the news and keep the enlisted spouses and families new to the military lifestyle apprised of current events and what to expect from their seasoned perspective.

April 4, 2003

Base community kids sign special postcard

Shirley Lanham Elementary School children write their messages of support on 'Postcard 2 Sea'



Story and Photos by Brian Naranjo

NAF Atsugi PAO

As part of Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi Morale, Welfare and Recreation's Postcard 2 Sea photo contest, the NAF Atsugi community is sending out two mega-postcards to the deployed Sailors on board USS KITTYPHAWK (CV 63).

The 6' X 8' postcards, which will be adorned with a photo taken by a soon-to-be announced winner of the photo contest, have been taken around to different areas on base, gaining written messages and signatures from Atsugi community members with each stop.

On March 27, the second postcard (the first was already filled up with signatures) was set up at Shirley Lanham Elementary School, so that local children could have their chance to spread messages of good will.

The kids' messages ranged from impersonal words, like "Good luck," or "Stay Safe," to brief yet poignant messages like the one pictured below.

Some of the children who signed the giant postcard have a parent who is serving away from home. Some don't,

but still seemed to sense the gravity of world events, and the important role shipboard men and women are playing.

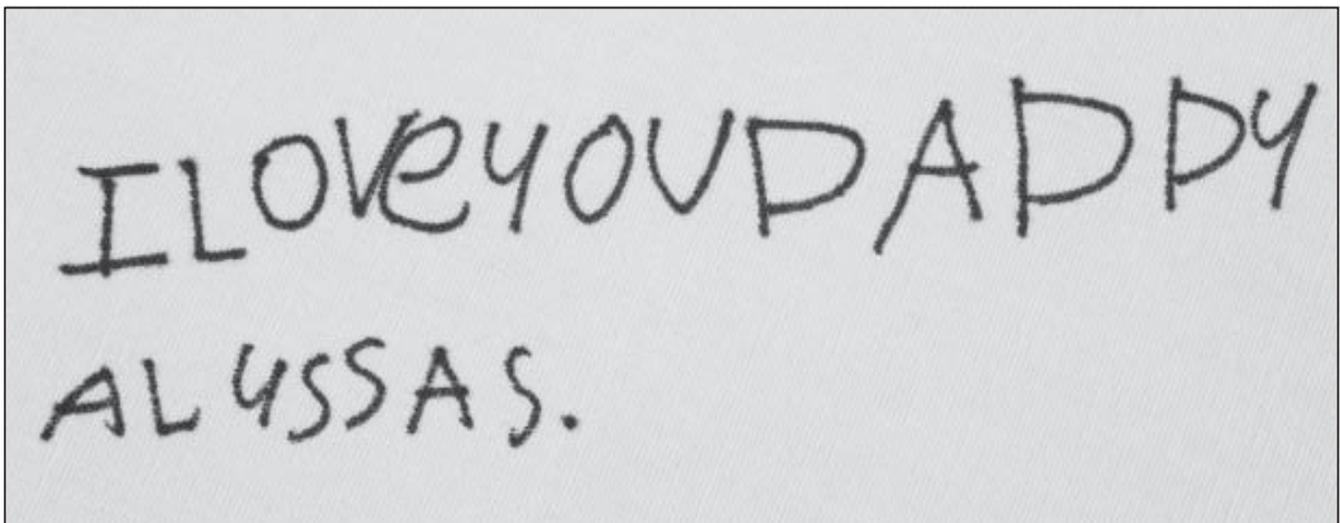
At far left, 8-year-old Stacy McCurdy, who has no family members on board KITTYPHAWK, nonetheless carefully drew a heart around her message "Good luke to all the Salers in the Navy (original spelling preserved)."

Some children signed the card alongside a friend who knew firsthand what the other was going through.

Above, from left, 5-year-old classmates from Atsugi community members Dylan Cilla and Tristan Verley concentrate as they draft personal messages using their best penmanship.

Dylan's father, Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Nick Cillo, is deployed with Strike Fighter Squadron 154. Tristan's mother, Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Minerva Verley, is deployed with Electronic Attack Squadron 136.

The postcards, each with a copy of the winning picture, will be mailed out to KITTYPHAWK by April 14.



Skywriter



April 18, 2003

Base community supports spirited 'Yellow Ribbon Day'

Story by Brian Naranjo

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs Officer

The weather forecast for April 12, was grim.

Heavy lead-colored clouds gathered in the sky, threatening rain.

But before the downpour hit late in the afternoon, there was a flood on and around Reid Field.

The flood was not of water, but of people, animals, bicycles and wagons, most draped in yellow, showing the Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi community's collective support for deployed men and women.

Commander, Carrier Air Wing FIVE, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 51 and Commander, Task Force 72 and 57 all have personnel deployed on operational taskings. Additionally, other Sailors are temporarily assigned to other deployed units on various missions.

Following rousing renditions of the American and Japanese national anthems, an estimated 1,000 friends and family members of deployed NAF-based personnel marched in a Yellow Ribbon Day parade (pictured at left), complete with American flags, a yellow Corvette, yellow banners, shirts, and even a couple of exuberant yellow Labrador retrievers.

Kids and adults alike showed their patriotic spirit. Some children not only adorned themselves in red, white and blue, but dressed up their dolls as well (pictured below).

Following the parade, the crowd converged onto Reid Field, forming the shape of a giant yellow heart.

The rainy drizzle falling from the sky did nothing to squelch the patriotic, festive atmosphere of

the day.

NAF's Morale Welfare and Recreation department provided hamburgers, hot dogs and assorted beverages, while the Top-40 eighties band, Prism, performed.

Children played a variety of games, adults gathered and socialized and enjoyed each other's company. Some NAF community members took the opportunity to tape video greetings that were sent out to their deployed friends and family members.

The rain was held at bay until late in the afternoon, as Yellow Ribbon Day came to a close.





June 13, 2003

NAPRA keeps aircraft flying throughout Pacific region

Story and photo by JO2 Johnie Hickmon

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs

Of all the commands on board NAF Atsugi, Naval Air Pacific Repair Activity (NAPRA) may well be one of the least known.

The command is located on the main side of the flight line near the golf course. However, it's relatively obscure location is no indicator on how far-reaching NAPRA's mission is.

"NAPRA is all about keeping the fighter planes flying," said Senior Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Ron Harris NAPRA's production senior chief.

NAPRA's mission is to maintain and perform repairs on weapon systems, support equipment and associated components in support of Navy and Marine Corps aircraft in their area of responsibility, which spans from Guam to the Arabian Gulf.

NAPRA repairs both ship-based and land-based aircraft and helicopters. Some of the aircraft they repair include the P-3B, EA-6B, C-2A aircraft, and the UH-1N and HH-46D helicopters.

"The reason we are out here, is to do the repairs on aircraft because, it's too far for Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW 5) or the Marines to send their aircraft back to the states," said NAPRA Commanding Officer CDR Richard Dorn.

"Logistically, that's hard, so we have these contracts with commercial businesses to do the repairs, and we oversee the management of it," he added.

"We work with Japan Aircraft Company, Korean Airlines, and Singapore Aerospace Industries along with about a dozen contractors in the Australian and New Zealand area," said Dorn.

"Here at NAPRA headquarters, we have an operations department, which is our planning department, estimators, schedulers, an engineering department and our own comptroller department, which takes care of about \$75 million dollars a year for our expenditures," said Harris.

"We also have a Support Equipment Repair Facility

(SERF), who maintains all the ground support equipment."

According to Harris, NAPRA has nearly 200 personnel detached throughout the Pacific.

"We have 71 U.S. civil service personnel, 87 Japanese master labor contractors (MLC) and 41 military that make up all the detachments, including those in Australia, Singapore and Korea," he said.

"We'll also be setting up a detachment in Guam in the future."

When needed, NAPRA will dispatch personnel to ships to get their mission accomplished.

"We send people from here and our detachment in Okinawa (based at Marine Corps Air Station, Futenma) to where the fleet goes," said Dorn.

Harris added, "When a ship comes through, our detachment in Okinawa will place about three people on board. It's not uncommon for a person to be in Iwakuni one day, then Misawa the next day. And at the same time, another person will depart here and go to Thailand or out to a ship to repair a helo. That happens all the time."

NAPRA's heavy involvement in Operation IRAQIFREEDOM, has left a detachment in Bahrain that is finally getting ready to stand down.

"They were there throughout the whole conflict," said Harris.

"We had engineers,

one of our officers and a couple of mechanics there. Their job was to make sure all the Navy and Marine Corps aircraft in that theater were ready to go at anytime."

With a limited amount of personnel, Harris said NAPRA's manpower was stretched to the limit.

"When there were five aircraft carriers in the Gulf, we put three people on each ship, which took our detachment over in Okinawa down to almost nobody," he said.

"We had to call the depots back in the states to send people TAD out here to support the effort for the aircraft that were still in our theater because they (the aircraft) still had to be ready to go.

"Wherever the aircraft may be broken, we're there. From the Arabian Gulf to Guam, we provide depot support where and whenever it's needed," said Dorn.



Tadashi Fukushima (left) and Hiroshi Shishido, of NAPRA's Support Equipment Rework Facility, work on a 4000A, a mobile device which is used to extract engines out of aircraft.



July 11, 2003

NATEC: providing training, assistance for the fleet

Story and photo by JO2 Johnie Hickmon

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs Office

An aircraft carrier steams through the Arabian Gulf on a routine mission. One of the carrier air wing's aircraft is performing erratically and in need of maintenance.

Although trained to fix these birds of war, aviation mechanics on board the ship need a little help understanding the complexities of this particular aircraft.

That's when the men and women of Naval Aviation Technical Data & Engineering Service Command (NATEC) are called upon.

NATEC is the part of Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) responsible for the aircraft and support equipment training, and emergency repairs on all military aircraft and equipment.

"We train Sailors on aircraft and related systems," said NATEC Officer In Charge LCDR McDonald Thomas. "We possess an experienced cadre of personnel who are able to provide superb technical assistance to the Navy and Marine Corps when they experience difficulties that exceed the scope of their technicians."

"NATEC is funded through NAVAIR to support the fleet," he continued. "The units requesting the help do not have to pay for training or maintenance. We provide the people and make all the travel arrangements."

NATEC is headquartered out of Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego, with 30 de-

tachments throughout the world.

"We have detachments in Sigonella, Hawaii, and Japan," said Thomas. "The rest are in the Continental United States (CONUS). We cover the entire globe. We send people as far south as Australia and Taiwan. "This detachment (in NAF) covers the area from Guam to the (Arabian) Gulf."

There are two sides of NATEC. One side is aviation, where they make the parts and distribute them. The other side is divided into two areas.

According to Thomas, there is the technical data side, which provides the repair manuals for aircraft and related systems. And the other side provides engineering and training on aviation systems and repairs.

Giving a general scenario of what they do, Thomas said, "Basically, when a ship or squadron is in the area, and have either airplanes, support equipment, or even ground support equipment that they cannot fix, then they come to us. Our guys go out there and show the technicians how to fix them. We also provide training, like corrosion control and how to fix airplanes that are broken to guys in the fleet."

The staff at this NATEC detachment consists of 35 employees.

"We have 33 civilians and two military personnel, Chief Aviation Machinist's Mate William Lundgren (the assistant officer in charge) and myself," said Thomas.

NATEC was just one of the many tenants

from NAF that were involved in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

"We had 18 people on USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63) and the other carriers and small ships throughout the Gulf that provided training and repaired aircraft and equipment for the troops," said Thomas. "We also sent support to the Marines in Kuwait."

Thomas said he is proud of the men and women of NATEC for the hard work they do day in and day out.

"We have never said 'no' to a valid request in the three years that I have been here," said Thomas proudly. "Units requesting help come to us and we have had technicians on an aircraft to help within 12 hours."



Roosevelt Anderson, of NATEC (left) and Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class Zeldy Brill, of AIMD, look over the diagrams for the flight control circuits of an F/A 18.

Skywriter



July 11, 2003



Photo by Kwanza Bailey

Remembering a shipmate

(Left) Strike Fighter Squadron 195 (VFA 195) Commanding Officer, CDR Mike Vance and Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW 5) Deputy Commander CAPT Joseph Aucoin (center) accept a certificate of thanks from Fleet Air Wing 4, Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) Rear Admiral Takao Nakai on June 27. The certificate says thanks for LT Nathan White's service and sacrifice. This and a check were presented for a college fund for the fallen aviator's children.

New townhouse construction underway



Courtesy photo

NAF Atsugi Executive Officer CDR David Tiller assists with a ground breaking ceremony for the construction of a new ten-unit townhouse along the Saratoga-loop near Shirley Lanham Elementary School June 27. Four single house units, built in the mid 50's, were demolished to make way for the new units. The ceremony is a

tradition in Japan, with a Buddhist Priest who cleanses the area, blesses the ground for a safe working environment, and prays for a happy experience for those that will live there in the future. The construction has already begun with a completion date estimated sometime in June 2004.

Skywriter



July 25, 2003

Clinics focus more on active duty readiness

Story and photo by Brian Naranjo

NAF Atsugi PAO

Is it possible for a small, often understaffed group of professionals to meet the needs of thousands of customers on a daily basis?

Yes it is, as proven by the staff at the NAF

Atsugi Branch Dental Clinic, which includes the flight line and Kamiseya dental clinics.

However, this can only be accomplished with a delicate balance of hard work, patience and professionalism.

Recently, that delicate balance got a bit harder to maintain.

A new Secretary of the Navy instruction,

released in June, puts a more stringent dental health requirement on active duty deployable forces.

Jumping 15 points from an overall mandatory dental readiness of 85 percent, means that all active duty Sailors who belong to deployable forces like NAF-based Carrier Air Wing FIVE and Helicopter Anti-Submarine Light 51, must be fully-ready to accomplish their mission, without any dental problems that may get in the way.

Currently, the more than two thousand Sailors attached to deployable units onboard NAF Atsugi are averaging just below 95 percent dental readiness.

According to Atsugi Clinic Director CDR Gayle Shaffer, her staff has always strived to maintain this high readiness level for their active duty deployable customers; this means that it won't be as hard to get into compliance, as it would be if this group of Sailors were at an overall 85 percent rating.

However, this new instruction will have an effect on non-active duty patient health care.

"In order for Dental to meet this new requirement, priority will be given to all Active Duty Deployable Units until further notice," Shaffer said. "We must maximize our resources to ensure our deployable forces are combat ready."

For all other patients, like eligible civilian employees and family members, this means

that routine, minor, or cosmetic types of treatment will be temporarily put on hold. However, Shaffer quickly pointed out, "Dental will continue to see family members and other beneficiaries for all urgent care."

Additionally, Shaffer said, patients with ongoing treatment needs will be allowed to maintain their treatment schedule. Appointment will be honored for those routine patients who were already scheduled through mid-August.

Shaffer stressed how important it is that active duty patients show up for scheduled appointments; if they have to cancel, she said, they shouldn't do so at the last minute, if at all possible.

"It's not fair to those waiting to get an appointment, when a person already scheduled doesn't show up. And we don't want to have any slots left unfilled, because a person cancelled at the last minute," she said.

Despite the new temporary push for active duty dental readiness, Shaffer said that things will soon be back to normal.

"We will return to business as usual," she predicted, "and we will focus on all of our patients, regardless of status."

"While it's very important that we meet our obligation to our active duty deployable units, we remain very strongly committed to our other beneficiaries," Shaffer said. "We really hope people will bear with us during this difficult time."



DN Majd Almaz helps Becky Hale at NAF Atsugi's Branch Dental Clinic.



July 25, 2003

A Navy legacy continues within an Atsugi-based family

Story by JOC(SW) James Junior

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs

Author Clarence B. Kelland once said, "My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."

The same can be said for the grown children of Master Chief Aircraft Maintenance Technician Joe Nieto of Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 115 (VAW 115).

Nieto is being honored with a retirement ceremony today, celebrating his 30 years of faithful and honorable service.

His rich, fulfilling career is one that anyone would be proud of.

However, there's more to this story than that.

It's a story that shows the powerful, positive influence a father can have over his children.

For every living breath his kids have taken, Joe Nieto has been in the U.S. Navy.

Following in their father's footsteps, the two young men are now each petty officers in their father's organization.

This is truly a Navy family.

What makes the story more remarkable is that both Nieto and his sons are assigned to squadrons from Carrier Air Wing FIVE.

Aviation Structural Mechanic Equipment 2nd Class Frank Nieto, who at 27 is the eldest of the two sons, is stationed at Sea Control Squadron 21 (VS 21). Aviation Warfare Systems Operator 3rd Class Tony Nieto, 22, is attached to Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 14 (HS 14).

All three of these Sailors' squadrons share the same hangar.

"I never pressed either of them to join the military, I just wanted them to make their own decisions and do their own thing," Joe said.

"Both of them chose to join the Navy, and I am proud to see them both succeeding on their own," Joe said.

Tony who has been in the Navy almost two years, said one of the primary reasons he joined the Navy was the example his fa-

ther had set for him.

"My dad never pushed me to join the Navy," Tony said. "He let us do our own thing. When I told him what I was going to do, he just supported me."

He went on to explain that growing up in

Japan with his family prompted him to seek orders to return.

"I offered both of them college," the master chief said. "Frank said no, he'd figure something out." "(But) Tony took me up and went to college for two years," he said.

Frank, a Navy veteran of almost three years, didn't want to compete with his father, so when he joined the Navy he picked a different rating (job specialty) than his dad, Joe said.

Tony originally wanted to be a Marine, but Joe put his foot down and said no. In hindsight, Tony realizes he made the

right decision.

Joe's wife of 28 years, Beatriz said, "I enjoy having my boys together with us again for this memorable occasion. I wish that they never left to begin with."

Today, Navy detailers make every effort to accommodate the wishes of Sailors and their families when filling billets. However when Joe graduated from "A" school in the 1970's, his wish-list was summarily ignored by the detailers.

Instead of Italy, Spain, Hawaii or Japan, which Joe had requested, they sent him to Training Squadron 25 (VT 25) at Naval Air Station, Chase Field, Texas. Fortunately, this change in plans worked out for the best.

While at VT 25, he met his bride, who was in the Navy, stationed at Patrol Squadron 24 (VP 24). The rest is history.

After a career that spans more than 30 years, Joe looks back and says, "The first 20 years or so really dragged out, but the last 10 went by quick."

"I would like to stick around for another three or four years to finish things up, but rules are rules," he concluded.

Advice that Joe would give to not only his sons, but to any young Sailor, is to focus on the good things.

"Bad things are going to happen, that's the way it is, but the good times are what's important and carry you through," Joe said.

This attitude is what has carried the master chief and his family through three decades of wind, rain and sunny days.

But as the sun sets on his Navy career, Nieto and his wife can justifiably take pride in the job they did of raising their boys.

The family has proven that in the U.S. Navy and parenthood alike, it is always best to lead by example.

Today, when the master chief retires, his wife Beatriz and other ceremony attendees will witness the passing of the torch, as a veteran Sailor walks away, and his sons carry on the family's U.S. Navy legacy.



Photo by PH3(AW) John E. Woods

AFCEM Joe Nieto, VAW 115, (right), his wife Beatriz and one of their two sons, Antonio, an AW3 with HS 14, pose for a portrait. His other son, Frank, an AME2 with VS 21, was on leave when the picture was taken.



August 8, 2003

Carrier Air Wing FIVE remembers fallen aviator

by LTj.g. Nicole Kratzer

CVW 5 PAO

On a rainy summer day, friends and colleagues of LT Nathan "OJ" White gathered at NAF Atsugi's Whispering Pines golf course to participate in a charity golf tournament benefiting the fallen aviator's family.



Photo by AEAN Christopher Enos

LCDR Keith Henry watches his drive as his teammate, LCDR Mark Lind, both from Strike Fighter Squadron 195 (VFA 195), looks on.

White was killed in combat when his F/A-18C Hornet was shot down during a night close air support mission on April 2, in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. He is survived by his wife, Akiko, and their three children, Courtney, Austin and Zach.

According to LT Dan Cochran, one of White's close friends from his squadron, the "Dambusters" of Strike Fighter Squadron 195 (VFA 195) and his roommate when embarked on board USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63), the tournament had a three-fold purpose.

"Our goals for the tournament were to raise as much money as possible for the children's college fund, make the tournament fun for everyone who participated in it, and build a solid foundation of support so that we can continue the tournament on an annual basis."

"Because of OJ's love for the game of golf, it was immediately obvious to us that the best way to honor our friend and raise money for his children would be to host a charity golf tournament," added LT Brandon Sellers, another close friend and pilot with VFA 195.

In all, 36 teams of four competed in the tournament, raising more than \$10,000 for the children's college education.

"Callaway and Ping Japan, Titleist USA, John Murphy of the Country Club of Farmington Connecticut, IACE Travel, Hale Koa Hotel, NAF's Defense Commissary Agency and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department all went out of their way to provide wonderful prizes so that all the money collected was available for the fund," "Dambusters" Executive Officer, CDR Mike Wettlaufer, said.

The amount of money raised would not have

been possible without donations from these companies and organizations, he said.

CDR Rinehart Wilke, LCDRs Brady Bartosh, Dave Culpepper, and Aviation Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Joe Musselwhite from the "Black Knights" of Fighter Squadron 154 (VF 154) were the overall team winners of the tournament.

"The Chippies did an outstanding job putting this tournament together and if I were to ever win one, this was the one I'd pick," noted Bartosh.

Participation was not just limited to the NAF community and those who knew White.

"Destroyer Squadron 15 (DESRON 15) assembled five teams that traveled up from Yokosuka Naval Base to play in the 6:30 a.m. go (start)," Sellers said. "That's 20 people, getting up at an awfully early hour to come pay respects to someone that they didn't even personally know. That defines the Navy family for me."

CAPT Patrick Driscoll, commander, Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW 5), agreed that the sense of community and family prevalent throughout the day was the tournament's highlight.

"Nate was an exceptional family man and a superb pilot, who is missed by everyone in CVW 5 and the NAF Atsugi community.

"The Chippies of VFA 195 put on a great event that gave us all an opportunity to come together and share our fond memories of Nate," he continued. "While at the same time giving us a chance to give back to his family."

For those wishing to make a contribution to the White family, please mail checks payable to the White's Children's College Fund, account number 243104278, Community Bank, PSC 477 Box 30, FPO AP 96306.



August 22, 2003

Bon Odori the 'coup de grace' of Japanese Obon season

Story by Jeff Kraftchak

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs

Pounding drums, colorful summer kimonos (yukatas) and hanging lanterns are sure indications that the Japanese Obon season is underway.

Bon Odori (bone-oh-dough-ree) is one of the most recognizable and colorful of Japanese festivals, and a favorite starting point for U.S. service members serving in Japan to become familiar with their host nation.

The Obon, or Feast of Lanterns, is a traditional Buddhist holiday celebrated in Japan throughout the months of July and August. It is the period of praying for the repose of the souls of one's ancestors.

Celebrants believe that their ancestors' spirits return to their homes to be reunited with their family during Obon, similar to All Saints Day in America.

First mentioned in Japanese history in late 15th-century literature, it is now a widespread national custom. Many businesses close for up to a week during this time to allow employees to return to their hometowns to celebrate.

Nearly every township hosts a Bon Odori during the Obon season. Bon Odori are folk dance festivals usually held around neighborhood shrines, temples or parks.

Pleasantly traditional aromas of yakitori (grilled chicken), yakisoba (fried noodles) and to-morokoshi (grilled corn on-the-cob) mix with the more familiar sights of cotton candy and candied apples, as children test their skills at capturing goldfish using paper scoops (kingyosukui) and bounce water balloon yo-yos (yoyo tsuru).

The centerpiece of each festival is the

seven to 10-foot high square stage (Yagura) decorated with red and white streamers and paper lanterns (Chouchin).

Dancers wearing brightly colored Yukatas circle the Yagura while performing highly choreographed dance steps to the rhythm

of chanted songs and pounding drums (Taiko).

'Taiko', literally translated, means 'fat drum', although they come in a wide range of shapes and sizes.

Although originally played singly for most of its nearly 2,000 year history, the style of Taiko performed today found its origin with Japanese jazz drummer Daihachi Oguchi in 1951.

In creating an ensemble of various sizes of Taiko, he was able to create a variety of musical voices. By 'jazzing up' many of the more traditional pieces, Oguchi developed a style that was an instant hit, and is used at nearly every Bon Odori festival today.

For nearly half a century, NAF has been hosting an annual open base Bon Odori celebration, and this year is no exception. The daylong event will kick off tomorrow with an American Festival, starting at noon, and running through 5 p.m.

There will be static aircraft displays, live bands and enough hot dogs and hamburgers to ensure everyone has a good time.

Then, as the sun sets, the sounds of frolicking and rock & roll will be replaced by the driving beat of Taiko drums and the insistent call of Obon music as the Bon Odori takes center stage from 6-9 p.m.

Dancers, experienced or not are invited to join the processions of local dance troupes as they dip and sway in synchronized splendor around the Yagura set up on Reid Field.

Bon Odori is a centuries-old tradition in Japan, full of beauty and merriment. It is also one of the most accessible and enjoyable festival events U.S. service members are likely to encounter during their tour in Japan.



Courtesy photo

Dancers dressed in traditional Yukatas (summer kimonos) dance around the Yagura during a Bon Odori event.

Mustangs Association offer bonus for higher education

Story by JO2 Johnnie Hickmon

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs

There are many organizations at NAF Atsugi that offer educational assistance.

Sailors and Marines have the opportunity to apply for the Tuition Assistance (TA) program, the Navy's educational financial assistance program. It provides funding to active duty personnel for tuition costs on courses taken at an accredited college, university, or vocational/technical institution.

One of the least known may be the Carrier Air Wing FIVE (CVW 5)/Atsugi Mustang Association.

The Mustang Association is a social and professional organization for active duty and retired Navy and Marines officers who have served three or more years as an enlisted service member.

They offer eligible Sailors and Marines educational assistance through the Enlisted Education Fund (EEF).

The EEF is a scholarship fund originally created to provide supplemental tuition assistance for E-6 and below personnel assigned to NAF, CVW 5 and other tenant commands who received a final grade of "A" in a course.

Until earlier this year, TA covered 75 percent of an eligible service member's tuition.

"The EEF covered the 25 percent difference to make it (tuition cost) 100 percent free for the Sailors," said the Mustang Association's Treasurer, LT Tan Quintin, aircraft division officer for Commander Fleet Air, Western Pacific. "When the 100 percent TA was enacted, the EEF shifted to recognizing academic excellence (those receiving a final grade of "A") to all Sailors, E-6 and below, with a \$25 certificate for each course completed (a maxi-

mum of two courses per school term)."

"Once they receive their final grade of "A", they fill out a reimbursement form at Navy Campus and turn (it) over to the Mustang Association," said Quintin.

The Mustang Association receives their money through fund-raising activities, such as car washes and sale booths during on base events such as Bon Odori, and other organizations, such as the Atsugi Officers Spouse Association and Atsugi Enlisted Spouses Association.

"We believe that an educated Sailor is a valuable asset to his or her command," said Quintin. "A Mustang's mission is to help ensure that the Navy stays strong through development of Sailors and Marines and selection of those who possess strong leadership qualities and potential to join our ranks."

To find out more about the Mustang Association, call Quintin at 264-3165/4849.



NAF remembers victims of 9-11-01, war casualties



A Sailor from Defense Contract Management Agency, Japan, bows his head in respect and honor for those who were lost during the 9-11 terrorist attacks on America and those who gave their lives in support of freedom since, at NAF Atsugi's Chapel of the Good Shepherd, on Sept. 11. Military members, their families and friends gathered at the chapel to remember not only those who died in the horrific attacks, but also those who have perished in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM.

The guest speaker NAF Executive Officer, CDR David Tiller, summed up the occasion during his speech when he said, "We must keep them fresh in our minds, as we continue to honor them by fighting for freedom from tyranny and fear.

"We must never forget the events of Sept. 11, 2001, for it is within that memory, that our greatest common strength resides."

Photo by AN Justin Sokolowski



September 19, 2003

Ombudsmen offer a wealth of knowledge for families

Story by Jeff Kraftchak

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs

According to NAF Atsugi Ombudsman Coordinator Natsuko Lovell, being the family member of a military service member can be an exciting and rewarding experience. The opportunity to travel the world, make new friends and build lasting memories, are just a few of the potential benefits.

However, lengthy deployments, military lifestyles and regular transfers to new bases can sometimes take their toll. Some family members may find these unique situations a bit overwhelming, especially when the pressures of being stationed in a foreign country are added in.

She feels that it is this unique mix of benefits and challenges that make a command's ombudsman such an important tool for both the family member and their command.

“We are the communications link between the command and the service member's family,” Lovell said. “We're here for support if they need us.”

“Every command should have an ombudsman, and most do,” she continued. “But, since this is a volunteer position, some of the commands have a difficult time filling it.”

Although she only recently took over the coordinator position, Lovell has been an ombudsman for the past year, and more importantly, a Navy spouse for more than 13 years.

“I knew NAF didn't have an ombudsman for a long time,” she explains, “and I wanted to help those families who were coming overseas for the first time.”

The strain of living in a foreign country is something Lovell could relate to.

A native of Japan, she followed her husband to America, where they lived for 11 years. It was there that she discovered the benefits of utilizing this time-honored program.

“Using the ombudsman program was great,” she said. “Whenever I had a question, they were there to help me. Several times, they hosted programs and meetings for all the spouses to get together, and I was able to see that I was not the

only one going through the problems of (having a spouse on) deployment. I could see that so many other spouses were experiencing the same thing, and that made a big difference.”

The Command Family Ombudsman program has been helping spouses to cope with the particulars of military life for over 30 years. It was established in 1970, when then-Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Elmo Zumwalt, acknowledged that Navy families are faced with uniquely complex concerns.

The current Navy Family Ombudsman program is based on similar civilian ombudsman programs, but tailored to address the Navy's unique concerns.

The Navy even appointed September 14 as the official Ombudsman Appreciation Day to ensure that the hard work these special volun-

teers do for the Navy community is acknowledged.

According to Lovell, ombudsmen are all volunteers appointed by the Commanding Officer (CO) of their command.

In fact, each command is responsible for their individual ombudsman program. Each one is tailored to the CO's perception of the needs of their command.

“Although each program is run differently,” she said, “every ombudsman program is shaped by a strict set of guidelines and basic training.”

Navy ombudsmen are trained to be information and referral specialists, and to disseminate timely and critical information regarding the activities of the command to family members.

They also provide support to family members seeking professional assistance by refer-

ring them to the appropriate organizations.

“We are not counselors,” Lovell explains, “but we know who to refer them to, and that is usually all they are looking for.”

Keeping families informed of where their military spouse is, and what they are doing, is another big part of the position.

However, it can be a difficult situation when guesswork and rumors are so prevalent during many deployments.

The details of ship deployment schedules and port calls are often classified prior to the event, and according to Lovell, that can lead to many contradicting, and false rumors.

“We don't work in rumors,” she emphasized. “We like to get the information out to families as quickly as possible, but we only do that once it is confirmed and official.”

In addition to these responsibilities, command ombudsmen are there to answer the simple questions, too.

“When their spouses are deployed,” she said, “many family members need help with even basic things, like understanding their spouse's LESs.”

It is this kind of all-encompassing assistance that makes the Navy Family Ombudsman program such a unique organization.

Through the support of the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), ombudsmen receive training, certification and support through Ombudsman Basic Training that covers communication, information and referral, deployment support, relationships with the command, and confidentiality.

“Most of my contact with families is done over the phone, so we usually don't get to really know each other on a personal basis,” she continued. “Maintaining their (the family's) confidence is a key part of this job. If they don't trust us, and don't come to us for help, we cannot help them. I can't just go up to someone and offer my services. They have to come to me.”

“We try to be the key to helping families in any way we can,” she explained. “But, I don't think a lot of families know about us. The bottom line is: we are here for you.”



Photo by JO2 Johnie Hickmon

NAF Atsugi's Ombudsman and Ombudsmen Coordinator Natsuko Lovell, talks to a Navy spouse about the various services offered by Fleet and Family Support Center.



September 19, 2003

FASO: keeping Sailors throughout the region trained

Story and photo by JO2 Johnie Hickmon

NAF Atsugi Public Affairs

A basic part of military life is training, training and more training. While it's true that most Sailors receive their training at one of the Navy's accredited "A" or "C" schools, or in the fleet while on the job, the Fleet Aviation Specialized Operational Training Group Pacific Fleet (FASO) Detachment at NAF Atsugi ensures that Sailors in the Pacific theatre continue to receive additional, skill specific training, so they will be ready when it's time to go into action.

FASO headquarters is located at Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island in San Diego. FASO has detachments located at NAS Lemoore Calif., Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Kaneohe, Hawaii, MCAS Miramar, Calif., NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., and here at NAF Atsugi report to HQ.

FASO Atsugi has a total of 24 military personnel assigned to its detachment.

These personnel provide training courses in the latest procedures for all aspects of Aviation Maintenance Administration Management Training (AMAMT), and various aspects of Undersea and Surface-Submarine Warfare (USW/SUW), which are available to all applicable Western Pacific Sailors and Marines. Their territory covers the entire Seventh Fleet area of responsibility, which stretches from the East horn of Africa to Hawaii.

"We help keep personnel up to date with the latest techniques used, and the most recent changes in managing aviation maintenance and administration programs, as well as providing training support to our local USW/SUW community (Helicopter Anti Submarine Squadron Light 51, Sea



Chief Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Steven Fernandes, one of the instructors at Fleet Aviation Specialized Operational Training Group Pacific Fleet (FASO) teaches a class on aviation mechanics.

Control Squadron 21 and Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron 14)" said detachment Senior Enlisted Advisor, Senior Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Keith Kaufman.

Classes can be as short as two days or as long as three weeks.

FASO provides training in aviation maintenance administration and management, acoustic analysis, Naval Aviation Logistics Command Management Information System (NALCOMIS) and SERE (Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape), although SERE is only taught at the San Diego Headquarters location.

AMAMT provides information and training to personnel on their responsibilities and proper procedures in regards to such subjects as Technical Publications Libraries, Quality Assurance, Weight and Bal-

ance, Support Equipment Asset Management, and Individual Material Readiness Listings. All courses of instruction are based on the procedures dictated by the Naval Aviation Maintenance Program (NAMP).

Part of the AMAMT curriculum also involves the use of NALCOMIS, a computerized system that allows users throughout the Navy to properly document work and management actions they perform within the aviation maintenance field.

These are courses in the various NALCOMIS applications, including Basic Documentation for Organizational and Intermediate Level Activities, Logs and Records, Material Control, Work Center Management, Production Control, Maintenance and Material Control.

FASO Detachment Atsugi generally teaches between one and three classes a week, averaging about 170 classes annually. Last year, they exceeded that amount and graduated more than 2,000 students.

Sometimes, a command can be short on money, but the training still needs to be done.

That's when FASO's Mobile Training Team (MTT) goes into action.

A command may have a large number of Sailors or Marines who need training. Instead of sending the whole group Temporary Assigned Duty (TAD) to Atsugi, they will request that FASO send a team of instructors to their base to provide the required training.

"There are usually two to three instructors on any given MTT," said Kaufman. "They'll travel to the command that requires training, which can save (the sponsoring command) thousands of dollars in TAD costs.

"Usually, the Atsugi detachment will send out three or four MTTs each year to provide training. In the last year, we completed 4 MTT visits, for a total of 56 days, to commands located in Guam, Okinawa, and throughout Mainland Japan instructing 19 courses, graduating 164 students, and saving hosting commands \$116,000 in TAD funds," he added.

Although their detachment is small, Kaufman said FASO plays a big role in the Navy.

"We're small, but we serve a very big and important role in making sure the fleet reaches its peak efficiency through training in the latest procedures, techniques and policies regarding aviation maintenance administration and management, and Undersea Warfare."

STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, March 27, 2003

• STARS AND STRIPES •

UTAH/PHOTO J PAGE 15



MICHAEL A. DAMRON/Courtesy of U.S. Navy

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry D. Scott reads the dog tags of U.S. servicemembers that have visited the monument built to honor the Marines who died during the battle of Iwo Jima in Japan.

Top sailor urges patience with Navy

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan — Fighting a global war on terror doesn't come cheap.

That's why sailors need to be patient with current funding constraints, the Navy's top enlisted leader told 600 sailors Monday.

"Where's your Navy today with respect to that campaign?" asked Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry D. Scott, during an all-hands call at the base theater.

A sailor mumbled, "Everywhere." "Exactly," Scott said.

Since Oct. 7, 2001, when combat operations rolled out after the Sept. 11 attacks, "we've been en-

gaged just about everywhere, and most recently, starting on Wednesday," Scott added, referring to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"This is going to go on a while, and we're going to have some challenges out in front of us, but I know that every one of you is up to the challenge. So if you're not there today, you'll be there tomorrow."

Of the Navy's 305 ships, 221 are at sea, and 167 are forward-deployed, Scott said. More than 75,000 sailors are deployed.

The current ops tempo is costing a lot of money, in steaming and flight hours, forcing the Navy to make some tough decisions when it comes to funding various programs, Scott said.

The Navy has an extra 6,500 sailors on active duty — for which it's not programmed — along with 7,200 reservists called up, he said.

Most sailors appeared somber at talk of the war, but they had other issues on their minds, too.

For instance, Petty Officer 2nd Class Glendon Turner, a cook in the galley, asked whether the Navy had any plans to make its tuition-assistance program equitable with other services.

"I'm a strong user of the Navy college system, and I was counting on tuition assistance," he said.

Said Scott, "There's no more money to add to it at this moment," but "hopefully, we're going to see a time where we're going to be able to increase the tuition-assistance benefit."

The Navy chose to fund a "12-hour cap versus a monetary cap," Scott said, because "we also want to make sure it's an equitable program across all of the Navy."

Scott said the Navy is also experiencing some funding constraints for permanent changes of station.

"If you're negotiating with the detailee for orders right now, you're going to see we have some difficulties," he said. "We're having to prioritize billets with the available resources that we have."

There may be some relief in sight, Scott said: The Bush administration is asking Congress for supplemental budget increases.

But, he said, "We're in a war. We have to make sure the first priority is getting the mission done."

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at svan@stripes.osd.mil

STARS AND STRIPES®

April 4, 2003

That's one big greeting card



JIM SCHULTZ/Stars and Stripes

From left, Petty Officer 3rd Class Juan Tavarez, Airman Brian Soreng, Petty Officer 3rd Class Binod Gurung and Airman Anna Wytaske of Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department at Atsugi Naval Air Facility, Japan, write messages on a banner to friends taking part in Operation Iraqi Freedom aboard the USS Kitty Hawk.

STARS AND STRIPES®

April 15, 2003

Atsugi parades for its airmen



JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Family and friends of deployed Navy airmen paraded Saturday at Atsugi Naval Air Facility to honor their loved ones deployed in the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. They planned to dress in yellow and form a giant yellow ribbon.

STARS AND STRIPES®

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SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2003

50¢



Above: One-year-old Cristina Accoin waves flags as Carrier Air Wing 5 returns Thursday to Atsugi Naval Air Facility, Japan.

Left: Lt. Jake Parsons is met by his wife, Glory, as he returns from duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

SPRING CALL: Courtesy of USAF News



A pilot from Strike Fighter Squadron 195 hugs his children upon his arrival home Thursday at Atsugi Naval Air Facility, Japan.

JIM DONALD
Staff and Staff

Happy to be home

Carrier Air Wing 5 pilots greeted with open arms at Atsugi

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STARS AND STRIPES®

May 4, 2003

Return and Reunion programs aim to ease transition

BY JULIANA GETTLER
AND JOSEPH GIORDANO

Stars and Stripes

When Navy Lt. Cmdr. Scott Wilmet left aboard the USS Kitty Hawk last year for Iraq, his 6-year-old daughter, Melissa, wasn't allowed to touch the kitchen knives.

Melissa, said mother Jodi Wilmet, now can make her own peanut butter sandwiches — using a knife.

It's a small difference, but one of many to which Scott Wilmet will need to adapt when he returns to his family this week.

In the final days before the USS Kitty Hawk and its air wing and escort ships — some 6,000 people — return, Fleet and

Family Support centers at the Yokosuka and Atsugi Navy bases have been holding workshops to help families prepare for the homecoming.

Return and Reunion programs remind servicemembers and spouses that there might be some readjustment in either after the welcome-home kisses.

"Even for the most seasoned spouse, it helps to refresh the idea: We all need to be patient with each other a little while and communicate really well," said Kim Ottmers-Orman, who heads the Return and Reunion committee at Atsugi Naval Air Facility.

Small changes, such as a child learning to use a knife, may not have been communi-

cated. And the family workload probably has shifted.

"They have to kind of rebalance," Ottmers-Orman said. "Usually the servicemember wants to feel involved. There's a readjustment."

Small children might not remember or might resent a parent who has been absent. A teenager may now have a driver's license or a new boyfriend or shagging green hair.

Return and Reunion programs are created to help servicemembers gradually return to normal lives, said Cathy Adams-Bomar, director of Yokosuka's Fleet and Family Support Center.

"We want to make sure that it isn't a 'change of command' at home when the de-

ployed sailor returns," Adams-Bomar said. "It's about getting that absent parent or partner back into the family in a healthy way."

Becky Tan has played the roles of mother and father during her husband's deployments before. This is the sixth since she married Petty Officer 1st Class Tom Tan, an aviation mechanic.

"I have to do all the discipline," she said. "I'm wearing the pants right now."

Becky is prepping her two children for their father's return. She'll give him some space when he returns to catch up, she said. She's also using tips from the brochures from the support center to watch for trouble signs from her kids.

SEE PROGRAM ON PAGE 5

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Stars and Stripes

STARS AND STRIPES

Friday, May 4, 2003

Phone call links mom, husband during birth

BY JULIANA GETTLER
Stars and Stripes

With her husband floating aboard the USS Kitty Hawk off the coast of Iraq last month, a pregnant Sarah Crowder braced herself for a delivery without him.

She and her husband, Lt. Cmdr. Josh Crowder — a helicopter pilot with Anti-Submarine Squadron 14 — had been through some of the usual expectant parent rituals, including learning how to breathe together during delivery.

But nearly two-thirds into her pregnancy, Josh shipped out for Operation Iraqi Freedom, leaving Sarah at the capable hands of her visiting mother and a crew of fellow Navy wives at Atsugi Naval Air Facility.

When the initial pangs of labor began, she headed to the hospital — after first calling the wife of her husband's commander to try to get a message to the ship. Across the Asian continent, that came in loud and clear.

Josh rushed to call his wife. During heavy combat operations and a flurry of fighter jet flights, he tried. And tried. And tried again.

He finally reached her on the fourth call. By then, the labor had been going on half a day.



IN SCHULE/Stars and Stripes

Grandmother Ransua Bose holds Hannah Crowder during a reunion orientation briefing held April 25 at Atsugi Naval Air Facility. Hannah was born while her father, Lt. Cmdr. Josh Crowder, was deployed with the USS Kitty Hawk during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Josh coached his wife through the breathing and delivery for 40 minutes. And he was on the phone to hear his new daughter's first cries.

"We went through the breathing process," Sarah recalls, a beautiful infant purring in her arms. "He was on the phone with me when I had her."

"It was as good as it could be

without him there."

The days until Josh comes home are quickly becoming hours. Both can barely wait until the reunion, though, Sarah says, he'll likely have more of a home-

coming than he's expecting.

"I just want the day to get here," she said, adding, "he's going to have a lot to learn."

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STARS AND STRIPES®

June 23, 2003

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航空修理施設

• STARS AND STRIPE

NAPRA answers call for repairs

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI, Japan — Its weapons are sheet metal and a tool kit.

Naval Air Pacific Repair Activity, a little-known command at this base near Tokyo, keeps 26 different models of Navy and Marine Corps aircraft in the air and off the tarmac.

The only forward-deployed Navy aviation depot, NAPRA coordinates maintenance and repair of all land- and sea-based aircraft operating in the Pacific theater, from Guam to the Persian Gulf.

"If something breaks, you call NAPRA," said Lt. Cmdr. Ed Graves, NAPRA logistics officer, "and we'll either get it done or get somebody out there to get it done."

NAPRA's primary customer is Carrier Air Wing 5, which is attached to the Kitty Hawk and based at Atsugi. NAPRA also does repairs for the Marines at Futenma Air Station, Okinawa, and Iwakuni, as well as for the Navy on Guam.

"The reason we are out here is to do the repairs on aircraft because it's too far for Carrier Air Wing 5 or the Marines to send their aircraft back to the States," said Cmdr. Richard Dorn, NAPRA's commanding officer.

The Navy has three aviation depots in the United States.

Much of NAPRA's work overseas is contracted out to Japan Aircraft Company, Korean Airlines and Singapore Aerospace Industries, along with a dozen contractors in Australia and New Zealand.

Aircraft slated for routine maintenance or repairs is either delivered to NAPRA's detachments or contractors throughout the Pacific, or if a plane or helicopter can't be flown from a ship, the outfit



JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

At Naval Air Pacific Repair Activity, Akihiro Hosogane works on a spotting dolly for the USS Essex. NAPRA is the only depot level repair facility dedicated to forward-deployed Navy and Marine Corps air units.

of 16 artisans — sheet metal mechanics, aircraft mechanics, machinists — works in small teams aboard any ship with aircraft steaming in the Pacific theater and can deploy on short notice, NAPRA officials said.

Since NAPRA is charged with repairing any aircraft operating in its theater — regardless of home base — the war on terrorism, including Operation Iraqi Freedom, has stretched NAPRA personnel to their limit, officials said.

"When there were five aircraft carriers in the Gulf, we put three people on each ship, which took our detachment over in Okinawa down to almost nobody," said Senior Chief Aviation Structural Mechanic Ron Harris, NAPRA's production senior chief.

NAPRA's contribution to the war on terrorism so far: support of aircraft on 27 ships and repairs to 340 aircraft, from the F/A-18 to the EP-3, Graves said.

To keep up with demand, NAPRA for the first time set up two field detachments during the Iraq war in Bahrain and Kuwait.

Gulf, "we had people on site to repair the aircraft, whether it be on a ship, the local area or in that country," said Marine Corps Capt. Shawn Hughes, officer-in-charge of NAPRA detachment Bahrain.

NAPRA was able to produce a team to assess and repair aircraft in Operation Iraqi Freedom within 3-4 hours, Hughes said.

The teams didn't see any bullet holes in airframes, mainly just wear and tear from combat and a severe environment of heat and sandstorms, since they mostly worked with fixed-wing aircraft that flew at high altitudes.

"We saw airframe cracks, wing-support structural cracks and erosion, and a couple of helicopters had pylon-support damage," Hughes said last week from Bahrain. "There were a large variety of things that we worked on."

Reservists and Navy aviation workers from the United States assisted NAPRA during the war.

The Bahrain detachment is staying put a little longer, Hughes said. "There's still a number of ships in the area, a number of aircraft in theater."

STARS AND STRIPES®

Like father, like sons at Atsugi

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL AIR FACILITY
ATSUGI, Japan

By the time the sun sets on a second military career, a family from Atsugi may contribute more than 60 years of service to the U.S. Navy.

Joe Nieto retired as a master chief petty officer during a ceremony Friday at this base near Tokyo. In attendance were his wife, Beatriz, and, dressed in their Navy dress whites, Nieto's two sons. Until Friday, all three Nieto men were assigned to squadrons from Carrier Air Wing FIVE and worked in the same hangar.

Joe Nieto, 50, was the chief maintainer for Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 115 (VAW-115). A native of Coahuila, Mexico, he signed up for the Navy the year after the draft ended in 1973, when Richard Nixon was president.

But Nieto's ties to the Navy will remain strong through his sons: Petty Officer 2nd Class Frank Nieto, 27, is part of Sea Control Squadron (VS 21), while younger brother, Antonio, 22, is attached to Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 14 (HS 14), where he's a rescue swimmer and a petty officer 3rd class.

The senior Nieto says he didn't



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

From left: Petty Officer 3rd Class Antonio Nieto, retired Master Chief Joe Nieto, Beatriz Nieto and Petty Officer 2nd Class Frank Nieto. Nieto retired after 30 years of service on Friday, but his two sons, Frank and Antonio, will continue their Navy careers at Atsugi.

try to influence his sons to go Navy — but his sons say he led by example.

Antonio said he was enticed to consider the military by "all the respect my dad gets from everybody and still gets. He couldn't set a better example for me or my brother."

Joe Nieto said he offered both of his sons the chance to go to college.

Frank, though, wasn't interested in pursuing a degree. He started to think about the Navy while cutting lawns at Atsugi, where the Nieto family has lived since 1986. "I needed a better job," he said, figuring he'll be in for at most 10 years.

Antonio tried college for two

years before sitting down with military recruiters. His plan was to join the Marine Corps but the recruiters "pretty much shrugged me off and said I wasn't what they were looking for. I wanted to be an air crewman."

Antonio wanted to jump from planes, and the Navy made it happen, he said. With just two years of service under his belt, he plans to follow in his father's footsteps: "I have no intent of getting out. As far as I see it, I have 28 years left."

Joe Nieto said he gave his sons "a bit of advice" before they went to boot camp but some things they have to learn for themselves.

"I just told them to pay attention, follow the rules and try not to get caught up with the wrong crowd — because there's always a wrong crowd," Nieto said. "I told them to have fun. There's going to be rough days, there's going to be days you wish you hadn't joined, but it will all work out in the end."

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“I just told them to pay attention, follow the rules and try not to get caught up with the wrong crowd.”

Joe Nieto
retired as a master chief petty officer

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, August 26, 2003

STARS AND STRIPES

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JOHN E. WOODS/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Dancers perform on Reid Field at Atsugi Naval Air Facility, Japan, shortly after sunset Saturday during the annual Bon Odori Festival.

Atsugi revelers forge friendships at Bon Odori Festival



SPENCER CALL/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Above: Capt. Reed Eckstrom, Atsugi's commanding officer, plays a traditional taiko drum at the festival, which brings Japanese and Americans together to dance and enjoy food.



JOHN E. WOODS/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Right: Tawnie Miller, 12, plays a traditional Japanese taiko drum. Tawnie is the daughter of Petty Officer 1st Class Ronald Miller of Strike Fighter Squadron One-Nine Five (VFA-195).



Petty Officer 3rd Class Brook Tester, center, poses with her fellow Bon Odori dancers before performing in front of military personnel and members of the surrounding community.

JOHN E. WOODS/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy