



George Washington major attraction at CFAY Grand Illumination

By MC2 Carlos Gomez,
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USS George Washington (GW) (CVN 73) opened its doors to more than 27,000 Japanese visitors during Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka 3rd annual Grand Illumination open base event Dec. 5.

This is the second time GW was opened to the general public since assuming responsibility as the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier in late 2008.

"This is our neighborhood and our community now as well," said GW Executive Officer Capt. Daniel C. Grieco, during a meeting with Japanese media on the carrier's flight deck.

"And as good neighbors, we wanted to take the opportunity to open the ship up and give back to the community."

While on board, visitors toured the ship's hangar bay and flight deck while GW Sailors presented various displays including weapons, aircraft ordnance, firefighting equipment and an F-18 aircraft.

Guests were transported to the hangar bay via the ship's aircraft elevators; each capable of carrying up to two fully-loaded F-18 fighter jets at 40,000 pounds each.

"We enjoyed the whole ship," said Maria Miyakawa about her first time aboard GW.

Miyakawa learned much about the capabilities of GW and its cooperation with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force gaining an appreciation for the American and Japanese alliance.

"The navies are working hard for both countries and they do a really good job," Miyakawa said. "They deserve to enjoy their time in port."

GW Sailors answered questions about their jobs and life out at sea and posed with guests for photographs.



Japanese visitors wait in line to tour USS George Washington (CVN 73) during Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka 3rd annual Grand Illumination open base event Dec. 5. More than 27,000 guests toured the ship.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Rachel N. Hatch

Sailors also sold ship's merchandise and memorabilia while giving their Japanese guests a glimpse into American culture with the ship's holiday decorations.

"I think it's a good opportunity for our Japanese hosts

to experience some of our culture, as we do the same thing when we go outside the gate," said GW Command Master Chief CMDCM(AW/SW) Jeffrey R. Clark Sr.

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Harlem Ambassadors perform, conduct clinic during CFAY visit

Story and photo by MC3 Charles Oki, NPASE Japan

The Yokosuka Seahawks basketball team put their basketball skills to the test against the Harlem Ambassadors during a basketball game at the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Purdy Gym Dec. 6.

Prior to the game, the Ambassadors conducted a youth basketball clinic to help young players build on their skills, as well as talk to kids about the importance of staying in school, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting along with their peers and making the right decisions for themselves.

Lade Majic, the coach, player and vice-president of the Harlem Ambassadors, says she enjoys conducting the basketball clinics, especially for forward-deployed service members and their families, because it offers a chance for her to use her talents to bring a smile to the faces of those stationed overseas.

"The bases in particular are our role models," said Majic. "The men and women stationed here are doing an outstanding job for us and making a lot of sacrifices to do so. They're away from their families doing what they can to make sure we're all safe. I definitely commend them for the job they are doing."

Following the basketball clinic, the Ambassadors competed against the Seahawks in an entertaining mix of basketball game

and comedy routine. The intense game displayed acrobatic slam dunks and elaborate dribbling that wowed spectators. Between quarters and at random times during the game, Majic and the rest of the Ambassadors performed comedy skits involving spectators, the referees and last but not least, the opposing Seahawk players.

Through dancing, on-court pranks and embarrassing fans and players alike, Majic said that it's all about making people smile that brings her to the court.

"[Working with] The young people is my favorite thing about this," said Majic. "The expressions the kids have on their faces after the game really makes it worth it. It makes me realize that I've done my job as an Ambassador."

After an intense fourth quarter, the Ambassadors came out on top. Win, lose or draw, every player and fan was smiling as friendly exchanges and high-fives were shared. Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Brian Lynn said that the experience was the biggest part of the game.

"It wasn't just the young kids that were having a good time; it was everyone who was here," said Lynn. "Everybody got involved and everybody was having a good time. Everyone participated and it was great. We really appreciate these guys for coming out and we really hope they can come out more. We didn't luck out and win, but it was still a lot of fun. It was a great experience just to be on the same court as these guys."



Lade Majic, coach, player and vice-president of the Harlem Ambassadors basketball team demonstrates proper passing techniques to children during a basketball clinic sponsored by CFAY MWR Youth Sports Dec. 6. The Ambassadors visited the base during a tour of U.S. military facilities in Japan where they are conducting shows and clinics.

