Meeting the new XO and CMC  PG. 8
As the Recreation Director for MWR at NAF Atsugi, I am responsible for our MWR programs. The goal of these programs is to enhance the lives of the service members, their families, and our other eligible patrons. We provide recreation opportunities including sightseeing trips around Japan, outdoor gear rental, fitness, sports, special events, concerts, movies, bowling, golfing, and more.

As Atsugi has changed over the past year, we have also had to change. We are still committed to providing these support and leisure opportunities, but we have had to do so in a more financially conscious way. Not only did we lose a large number of our eligible customers, all MWRs over the world are facing a tighter budget. Even with these, and other financial hurdles, our staff continues running our programs and operations at a higher output than what is required by our program standards. We will continue offering trips all across Japan out of our Tours & Travel office. In addition, over the last few months we have added a few additional tours on weekdays which are perfect for customers of all ages. We have great things on the horizon at the Atsugi Golf Course. Once the irrigation project is complete, the nicest golf course in the area will be in even better shape. Our free clinics will continue and we’re kicking off an awesome tournament series in November. ‘First Run’ movies will continue to be shown at Cinema 77 and you can expect entertainers in future months from Armed Forces Entertainment and Navy Entertainment. Sports, fitness events, group exercise classes and incentive programs are here to stay at our fitness centers. And you and your families can continue to enjoy events like the Harvest Festival Pumpkin Patch, Cinco de Mayo, and Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. We are committed to maximizing our resources to provide these as well as new services and programs to our Atsugi Community.

I am located in BLDG 978, the same building as Outdoor Gear Rental and Tours & Travel. Feel free to stop by and chat when you are renting a tent or signing up for a trip. My phone number is DSN: 264-4651 and my email is John.Benningfield@fe.navy.mil.
Located south of tranquil Kamakura and surrounded by steep hills and palm trees lies a small city that sits on the head of Miura Peninsula. Facing Sagami Bay in Kanagawa prefecture, this city has become a summer getaway for people living in the Tokyo Metropolitan area. Known for its beaches, marinas and the various events celebrating the summer months, this bustling beachside city is Zushi.

Modern day Zushi, as we know it today, was first established during the Meiji Restoration, when the government began to consolidate and create new villages, towns and cities as part of an initiative to modernize the nation. Zushi originally went by the name Tagoe Village and was created from six other hamlets in the area. Development of the area was encouraged with the building of the Yokosuka Line railway. Tagoe Village changed its name to Zushi Village on April 1, 1924. After several years of the village being annexed, it was given municipal independence, expanded and Zushi gained city status in 1954. The city was further developed as a beach resort destination for the Kanagawa and Tokyo prefectural areas.

Travelers can reach Zushi by taking the Yokosuka line on the JR railway from Yokohama station. After arriving at Zushi station, visitors will exit the station from the east exit. The area around the train station is filled with shops, convenience stores (combinis), restaurants and hotels. Beach towels, bathing suits, sunglasses and other items are available for purchase for the unprepared traveler. Because Zushi lies by Sagami Bay, fresh seafood
is available daily from the fish mongers (sengyo gyōshō) in the city. Traveling further east from the station will lead travelers to Zushi Beach. The summer months can be very crowded so it’s best to show up as early as possible in order to get a good spot on the beach. Zushi itself has several rules for the beach. These include no grilling or cooking of food on the beach, no alcohol in non-approved areas, no loud music, no throwing trash on the beach and lastly, as tattoos are still somewhat taboo in Japan’s culture, they ask that tattoos be covered up. These rules are in place, not to ruin anyone’s good time, but to create an environment where people of all ages can enjoy the beach.

Located directly on the beach is a row of shops, restaurants, izakyas and bars that have different themes to make them more unique from one another. These shops are open only during the summer. There are also lounges for guests to get out of the sun and showers for washing off sand and at night many of the store fronts become night clubs. The summer also brings beach parties, fireworks displays and Shoryu Okuri, or the sending off of spirits, which happens on Aug. 15 or 16.

Adventurous travelers can try out windsurfing, scuba diving, paddleboarding and boating. Rental shops can provide gear and lessons. Another popular activity is a boat tour into the Pacific ocean past Sagami Bay.

While the beach is the main attraction in Zushi, the city has plenty of sites to explore. Zushi is home to many shrines and gardens. While these places aren’t as famous as those found in the city’s neighbor of Kamakura, they are still worthy of a visit. Ganden-Ji Temple is one of the more notable temples. It is over 1,300 years old and located atop one of the cliffs on Zushi beach. The higher up a visitor climbs the more of Sagamai Bay and the city can be seen.

With several beach and resort areas on the shores of Kanagawa Prefecture, Zushi stands out among them due to its popularity and close proximity to Tokyo. The city offers many sites to see, things to do and delicious food to eat for any visitor looking to get out and explore, even for a quick day trip. Zushi stands as one of the most laid back and relaxing places in the area and is a must for anyone looking to take a break from the hustle and bustle of Tokyo and Yokohama.
Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the Honorable Richard V. Spencer talks with Sailors assigned to Naval Air Facility Atsugi and its tenant commands during an All Hands call held at Cinema 77. SECNAV uses visits such as these as a listening and learning mechanism to engage with Sailors on his priorities; people, processes and capabilities.
STEP by STEP

PHOTOS BY MC2 MATTHEW C. DUNCKER

Naval Air Facility Atsugi’s Bon Odori Dance Team practices a series of traditional Japanese dances in preparation for the base’s Bon Odori Festival to be held on Aug. 18.
Can you tell us about yourself and your career?

I am originally from a small town in upstate New York. I went to the Naval Academy and then to flight school. After flight school, I did my first fleet tour in San Diego at HC-11 flying the CH-46. I stayed there for nine years for shore at COMHSMWINGPAC and sea duty at HSC-21. When I left San Diego for my department head tour, I went to Guam and was with the “Island Knights” of HSC-25. From there I went to the U.S. Naval War College, then spent some time at Patuxent River, Md., with Naval Air Systems Command. In 2013 I transferred to the USS George Washington (CVN 73) in Yokosuka — I was the Combat Direction Center Officer (CDCO). Most recently I came from Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) Unit, Tulane University. So in my time in the Navy, I’ve had lots of different jobs - in the fleet with squadrons and at sea, to the war college, NAVAIR doing acquisitions, to NROTC working on the professional development of midshipmen. And now I am here on the installation side.

This is not your first time in Japan, what are some things you enjoy about serving here?

I was on George Washington right before she swapped out with Ronald Reagan. I was the CDC Officer there and spent a couple of years down in Yokosuka. I like Japan. I like the people. I like the Japanese sense of community. I like the people we work with in Japan and the community that the Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) Sailors have here. I like the food. I like the culture and the opportunity to travel Japan — to have those experiences. Overall, I just enjoy Japan. (We had this) opportunity to come back to Japan and my family and I were happy to take it. We are happy to be here.

You have had multiple positions during your time in the Navy. How has your mission changed from your previous duty stations to your current job as XO here at NAF Atsugi? What challenges do you face here?
The mission really hasn’t changed. Coming out of the Naval Academy as a junior officer, my mission has always been the same -- to support and defend the constitution, to do my part in accomplishing the Navy’s mission to defend the nation. So, that really hasn’t changed. The one thing that has changed is the scope of responsibilities. At each new level you progress to, you are given increased responsibilities. What has also changed is the job and role I’ve been asked to perform. I have been asked to do things that I never imagined I would have to do. I wanted to be a pilot and serve our nation. I have done that, but I have always been asked to do more and serve where the Navy needed me. I would say the challenges I face here are the same challenges that everyone else faces in the FDNF. Its great duty, but it’s also a challenging duty. There are a lot of responsibilities that you take on when you come out to FDNF regardless of your job or your rank. It will always be a challenge to do a good job and balance your work and family life. It’s no different from myself, the skipper, or a Sailor new to the Navy on their first enlistment. You have to do all those things and none of them have changed in my 20-plus year navy career.

**What are your expectations of NAFA and the Sailors and civilians serving here?**

What is your role in the mission? Understand that and it will help you understand what you need to do to accomplish that job. The next is to just take care of each other. In FDNF, there are great rewards, but also great challenges both for your job and your family. If everyone does those two things, I think we can do great work here at NAF Atsugi.

**What are your goals and plans for your tour here and how will you work toward achieving them?**

I try to keep it simple. For any new job, I want to make it better than when I got here. I want to make this job, this position, and this command better before I leave—to continually improve. Whatever it takes to accomplish that, I will do it. If you focus on the mission, if you focus on your people, you will always make that command better. My personal goal is to enjoy my time left in the Navy and in Japan. I am coming toward the end of my career and I want to enjoy the time with my family. I want to have the opportunity to experience Japan just one more time.

**How would you describe your leadership style?**

First and foremost, my leadership has a moral foundation with ethical decision making. It is mission focused -- so I am task orientated. I focus on taking care of people -- making sure that they have what they need to accomplish their job, to take care of themselves and their families. I focus on building that team that I am a part of.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

I am happy to have this opportunity to come out here and continue to serve. The service to the nation, service to the Navy, service to your shipmates and the service to your community is really important to me. I am happy to have the opportunity to learn more and to serve the Navy one more time.
Could you tell us a little about yourself and your career?
I am a military brat. My dad was in the Air Force, so we moved all around the world. We eventually landed in Colorado Springs, which I call home. I spent my last 17 years there before joining the Navy, which I joined a little bit late - three days before my 21st birthday. I started my career here at NAF Atsugi in 1996 with VRC 30 Det. 5. I spent four years there then I transferred to Hawaii working on P3s for two and a half years. I went back to VRC 30 Det. 5 in 2004 for another three years. I made Chief leaving there and went to Great Lakes to be a recruit division commander. A few years later I went to Lemoore, Calif., to be on the maintenance team of VFA 192. During that tour, as a Senior Chief, I picked up Command Senior Chief and transferred to VFA 41 as to fill that role. I subsequently picked up Master Chief and went from VFA 41 to be the CMC of (Fleet Activities) Okinawa. I spent a little over two years there then continued on to Singapore working for Admiral Gabrielson at Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (COMLOG WESTPAC) where I was also the region CMC. Now I’m back here at Atsugi, and glad to be here.

How has the Navy influenced you personally and professionally?
I joined the Navy—probably not on the best of terms. I made a few less than ideal decisions in my younger days and realized I needed a change, so I joined the Navy. Personally, it helped me get focused and gain some direction in my life. I met my wife during my first tour here which was awesome. She’s my foundation and really helped me straighten out. I learned a trade, and I earned a bunch of certifications and civilian sector licenses under my belt. I also got my degrees. Honestly, I think the Navy saved my life.

What are some of your favorite aspects about serving in Japan?
Serving in the Navy here in Japan is amazing, plus they pay for us to live here! The history, making new friends, and building those alliances here in Japan is strategic - and, I don’t mean that in a political sense, but because of what is going on in this area of responsibility (AOR). We need to be here because of our treaty with Japan and to help provide for the mutual defense of our host nation. It has always been, throughout time, a very challenging environment. We have competitors who are
trying to spread their influence here in the region. We are here to protect the sea lanes and to make sure that everybody has the right use the sea lanes as they need. Being able to be serve in the Forward Deployed Naval Forces as an ambassador to the U.S, and for our Navy is a tremendous privilege. Not to mention the career benefits, where statistics routinely show higher advancement rates for Japan based Sailors. And don't get me started on all the great food and travel opportunities!

Why is a Sailor's performance here, on and off duty, so important?
It matters. Every time there is an incident in this AOR it the negative light shines on all of us in this uniform. One person can really hinder the relationships we’ve worked so hard to cultivate. For the 99.9 percent of us that get it right, the one person who gets it wrong, can undo all that goodwill. We had a string of incidents a few years back that eventually led to former president Barack Obama visiting Japan to offer his apologies as well. So, it is that important that we all act accordingly. There is nothing wrong with having a good time, but we need to be mindful of what’s acceptable behavior and look out for our shipmates. One Sailor’s mistake can have far-reaching implications. When I was here before, there was a rash of DUIs, which resulted in the chain of command securing the driving privileges for SOFA status members. You either had to ride a bicycle or walk to work. One or two liberty incidents can force the hand of leadership to implement restrictions that impact us all.

What are your goals and plans for your tour here and how do you plan to achieve them?
First and foremost, I believe that I am here to advocate for the Sailors. I am here to support what they want to do. I want what’s best for the command, the mission, and families here at Atsugi. I’ve noticed some changes since the departure of CVW 5’s fixed wing assets, but that’s to be expected. I am excited to see what the future brings to Atsugi. I do believe that this place is going to grow because of the strategic value of the runway and land that we have. I do not believe Atsugi is going away, so I look forward to developing and shaping the future of the installation. My biggest concerns are the Sailors and families. This is a great community. There are a lot of great programs here. I want to make sure we continue those and we build upon what the Sailors and families need.

Do you have any advice you would like to share with Sailors?
My best advice is to do what you are told by responsible authority, maintain your military bearing and conduct, and make the right decisions. I say that as I have made some poor decisions in my life before the Navy. That being said, learn from your mistakes. This isn’t a zero-defect Navy. To advance, you have to study. You’ve got to work hard and treat people with dignity and respect. We are all human beings whether we are civilians, dependents, MLCs, or Sailors. Everybody is a human being and deserves to be treated as such.

Do you have anything else you would like to add?
I am honored to be serving as Command Master Chief here at Atsugi because of my history and the roots that I have here. This is my third tour at Atsugi and fourth tour in Japan. I love this place. I grew up here early in my Navy career, so I have a lot of fond memories. It really is an honor and privilege to serve here on the base and I look forward to working with everybody.
As many Sailors are starting to hear, the days of walking to your local Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) to talk with Personnel Specialists are numbered.

PSDs around the Navy are being consolidated and the services your local PSD would have previously provided are shifting to Command Pay Personnel Administrators (CPPA).

“Currently PSD Atsugi has not yet been placed on the PSD consolidation list,” said Lt. Bekim Austin, Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi PSD officer in charge. “All PSDs, both CONUS and OCONUS, will eventually transition to two My Navy Career Centers (MNCC) located in Norfolk, Virginia, and Millington, Tenn. All tasks and functions a normal PSD would handle will be taken care of there.”

Austin also remarked that OCONUS PSDs will be some of the last to be consolidated due to their location and the extra efforts required to ensure Sailors face no gap in services.

Currently there are 12 PSDs that are set to close by the end of fiscal year 2018 and early fiscal year 2019. All of those PSDs have long since been notified along with the commands and communities they service. As far as an order to which PSDs will be consolidating, only the Chief of Naval Personnel will make that decision, but rest assured that no consolidation ever occurs without communication between the PSD and the base/local community. Transition is always difficult - we are experiencing some of those difficulties with the fixed-wing squadrons going to Iwakuni - but we will work through them.”

While this change may not affect everyone now, it is something that Sailors may find themselves having to quickly adapt to if they PCS to a base where the PSD has already been consolidated.

“So, this is where I get a chance to speak about the CPPA program. This is not a new program, it used to be called Pass Liaison Coordinator or Command Pass Coordinator. The biggest difference is that the CPPA is more involved in the pay and administration
of their command than ever before. They are the critical link between the individual Sailor, the command and PSD.”

“With PSDs eventually consolidated, the pipeline will be between the CPPA of the command and the MNCC, which is why it’s extremely important for a command’s CPPA to be trained and stay connected to their servicing PSD to know about any changes in policy or procedures that can affect that Sailor.”

NAF Atsugi and some of its tenant commands already have CPPAs designated, training and preparing for the eventual consolidation of PSD Atsugi.

“Some people are still coming here to PSD and asking questions, when they should really be talking to their CPPA,” said Personnel Specialist 1st Class Boonyarit Panavaravatn, CPPA coordinator for NAF Atsugi, Iwakuni and Singapore. “If their CPPA doesn’t know the answer to their Sailors’ questions, that is when the CPPA should contact us to get help. It serves two purposes, first, preparing Sailors for the eventual departure of PSDs. Secondly, it helps highlight areas of improvement where we can help train CPPAs.”

PSD Atsugi hosts training once a month for CPPAs and that training is open to everyone interested in learning about the role of CPPAs.

Panavaravatn went on to say that certain rates’ missions and duties align with some of the responsibilities of CPPAs and those rates are the preferred rates to become CPPAs.

“Preferably the CPPA who is designated by their command should be a Yeoman, a Personnel Specialist, or a Navy Counselor. Those are the main rates, but we do have commands out there that do not have those rates billeted to them.”

“I cannot over emphasize the importance of the CPPA, command and PSD relationship,” said Austin. “We are all one team and when there is a breakdown from anyone of those three entities, everyone suffers, especially the individual Sailor. Communication is vital and it must be done on a continuous basis.”
Davy Jones Locker
Open Tuesdays and Thursdays
1630 - 1830

“Its a place that can give back to the community through good items that are still workable for a cheap price. We are using the money generated to give back to the community through events that the Chief’s Mess hosts. Our store is being run by volunteers from various organizations around the base, but the thrift store is primarily run by the Chiefs’ Mess. Camp Zama and Yokosuka both have thrift stores, so its great to have one of our own here at Atsugi.”

- Senior Chief Master-at-Arms Charlie Ortiz, Davy Jones Manager
How would you describe your Department’s primary mission?

Transportation Branch Atsugi provides essential transportation resources in support of NAF Atsugi and tenant commands mission requirements. Our team of highly skilled professionals includes drivers, operators and mechanics. In addition, we provide crane expertise to ensure all facility Weight Handling Program (WHP) equipment on NAFA, including locally contracted equipment that is cleared to operate on the installation, are maintained in accordance with Navy standards and operated safely, effectively and efficiently. Our Transportation Specialists and Dispatch Office representatives provide “second-to-none” quality of service to a high volume of internal and external customers on a daily basis.

What primary services do you provide and who are your primary customers?

We provide the capability required to support and sustain people and operations, and we do that in a variety of ways. Services include vehicle and heavy equipment support for NAFA and tenants, vehicle and heavy equipment maintenance, vehicle rental with operator services upon request; Distinguished Visitor (DV) transportation services, Weight Handling Equipment (WHE) crane maintenance, testing and certification, maintenance of crane rigging equipment. We’re also responsible for street sweeping and grass cutting services for our base and airfield, generator maintenance, dispatching and towing services and emergency snow removal services. In addition, we provide Narita IAP Shuttle, Haneda IAP and inter- and intra-installation transportation and medical transport services, DoDEA bus services for elementary school students and U.S. Mail services.

How do the services you provide support the command’s mission?

In keeping with the PWD mantra, the Transportation Branch Atsugi supports the FLEET, enables the FIGHTER, and takes care of the FAMILY. To date (FY18 reporting period October to June), we have driven 1.8 million kilometers transporting in excess of 39,000 passengers to/from destinations safely and on-time. Our routes and destinations include the Narita and Haneda international airports, Yokota AB Air Terminal including daily base shuttle and on assignment transportation to/from US Navy Hospital, Yokosuka. We also support official requests to/from a myriad of off-base locations to include community morale building and school outing and sporting events. On occasion we are tasked to support JCS/command-directed military training initiatives with transportation requirements.

What can you tell us about your department that others may not know?

I am extremely honored to have the pleasure of leading a local national MLC workforce of 45 talented and dedicated men and women. There is no task too great, no challenge too hard for the transportation team of professionals who consistently provide selfless support in areas of customer service and keeping a fleet in excess of 320 vehicles and construction equipment in a state of readiness to support the NAF Atsugi mission on a moment’s notice. Of equal importance, the transportation services we provide supports not only the warfighter but is shared by family members of America’s greatest and valiant warriors.

How can your customers reach you?

Customers may contact our Dispatch Office at 264-3563/3900. Office hours: 0800-1600 daily; Monday – Friday (closed on weekends and US Holidays).
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