

USS RONALD REAGAN

DECEMBER 2017

SEVENTY SIXER

392 Days

Naval Heritage:
Catalysts of War: The History That
Led to The Pearl Harbor Attack

Wanderlust:
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Wanderlust: Christmas in Tokyo

20-23





ABEAN EDDIE BACHARACH

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



"ASHTON KUTCHER
IS MY ROLE MODEL"

"MY FAVORITE MUSIC
ARTIST IS SNOOP DOGG"

"I LIKE EXPLORING,
WORKING OUT AND
SNOWBOARDING"

"I WANT TO STUDY MICROBIOLOGY"

392 Days

Story by MC2 Janweb B. Lagazo, USS Ronald Reagan Public Affairs

It hit me hard. Leg-sweep hard. It was one of those cliché moments: a near-death encounter I'm only supposed to experience sitting on a couch watching an action movie with surround sound blaring combined with the visceral stimulus hitting my corneas.

It happened last October within a period of seven days. My ship, guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87), was charged with defending guided-missile destroyer USS Nitze (DDG 94), amphibious transport dock USS San Antonio (LPD 17), afloat forward staging base USS Ponce (AFSB 15), and other merchant ships steaming with us from land-based cruise missile attack. I was the helmsman for several of the attacks as we took evasive actions to place Mason between the missiles and the other ships.

"Left full rudder," shouted the conning officer. "Starboard engine ahead flank! Port engine back one-third!"

For a moment, you pause. Your heart races. Everything around you is shaky. You realize that it's your legs. No. It's coming from your toes. Wrong again. It's the ship. They tell you the ship is a shield. Every order, no matter how diluted with the curses of Sailors around you, is to be heard and followed with exactness. You falter.

Then the order punches you in the face. You fumble the repeat back in your mind. Then your training kicks in. It jars you into action. You shoot the repeat backs out fast and clear. The ship shudders. It veers to the ordered course. Then you realize what you've done. You put yourself and all your friends in the way of hostile fire.

You'll vividly remember the smells and sounds of those moments. There's the suffocating smoke from Aegis launchers smothering Sailors running from the missile decks. The screeching of metal as countermeasures launched and the force jolted the space around you. The black ash-like particles covered the bridge wing creating a bizarre transition to dusk. Explosions – too close for comfort. Every second is a flood of detail. Your needless excitement complicated those moments. It was a rush and the crash was inevitable.

After 210 days on a deployment, now wearing a combat action ribbon, I found myself with my family for 90 days to enjoy the New Year's holiday and catch up on missed time.

Those days were the hardest of my life.

It was all because of me.

Think about that for a second.

The day after coming home, your two-year-old daughter approaches you banging her toy pots and pans – Christmas gifts. She innocently says "hi, Daddy" with that grin of hers.

Your adrenaline rushes to your head.

The bashing metal indents itself into your brain.

Emotion, unbridled and unwarranted, surfaces. You don't know from where. It is

MC3 Janweb B. Lagazo holds his newborn baby for the first time during a homecoming celebration for the guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87).
(Photo by MC3 Maria I. Alvarez)

terrifying to control. You stop sleeping well that night. You stop sleeping well.

Your newborn son cries – the lungs on that kid.

He was born on day 186 of the deployment.

You feel guilty. I suspect you will always feel guilty for that.

You try to comfort him. Take some of the burden from your wife. It never works. Abrupt anger and fast frustration became the norm. So you distance yourself.

My wife was the greatest support for me. We talked a lot about family and the future. We talked about the kids. We talked about what to eat. We talked about an impending transfer. We talked about things. It helped ease the inner brawls that played out in my mind.

The stigma of talking about your problems stops you from expressing what you felt. You fill your daily life with menial tasks; convincing yourself they were neglected while you were away. The adjustment was just not happening. You are in self-inflicted exile – your body was home but your heart and mind were elsewhere.

“That hyper-vigilance after being in the moment when someone is trying to kill you and then coming home is very surreal,” said Lt. Jason Owen, a chaplain aboard Ronald Reagan and an Afghanistan combat veteran. “It’s like two different environments. You go from the ship, or mountain, or desert to home and all the sudden you’re surrounded by carpet, tiles, walls, paint, and kids. You don’t really hear children’s voices out at sea, in Afghanistan, or wherever people go.

“That vigilance over there is healthy because it keeps you alive and keeps your head on the swivel. It tells you there’s danger and you have to be courageous and focused to do your job.

“Coming home it’s hard to switch that off. While you’re happy to be home with your kids and family, there’s a part of you that’s longing to still be out there.”

After a brief month, I was back to work and duty. The monotony and routine of work was bearable. I went to a training school in Maryland two months later. I

spent another 90 days separated from my family before transferring to the Navy’s forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). I had to learn new skills. Planning a military move while I was away from home brought its own anxieties. It complicated things. Made it difficult to focus on school, on training, and on keeping stable. It wasn’t my first military move but the stress was there.

Japan offered a more predictable schedule but my timing was off. The schedule forced me to leave my family again. Fifteen days after arriving to Japan, I left for my first scheduled patrol – this patrol. Three hundred and ninety-two days in the last two years and counting, I’ve been gone from my family.

I managed to create family in the Navy, when I’m underway, and, especially, during stressful times. It’s close but it’s not the same.

Picture for an instant, that you have these delinquent thoughts: thoughts about losing yourself, thoughts about losing your family, and thoughts about losing everything you’ve

worked hard for because of something you might do. You’d think these thoughts would eventually resolve themselves.

You become scared of what others might think of them. You talk to people – the right people. You bear your bare self. If left alone, you start drowning. You wallow in doubt. You stagger in the dark. You clutch for any measure of safety.

Then you find light.

You realize that there’s value to reaching out for help.

Returning home, transitioning back, I didn’t do very well the first time away or even the second time. I’m hoping the third time will be better.

I’m seeking the help I know I need.

“A lot of people come to me because they’re having problems and hard times adjusting to home, to being 18, to being overseas and having all these restrictions but you have to reach out for help,” said Xhosa Burford, a deployed resiliency counselor from Fleet and Family Services.

Burford told me service members



Friends and family members of Sailors aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87) wait on the pier as the ship returns to homeport. (Photo by MC3 Maria I. Alvarez)

should help themselves first, then they become better able to affect the environment and people around them. She said to treat it as if I’m a passenger on a crashing airplane. Should I put my oxygen mask on first or should I help my wife next to me? My instincts say my wife but I should fix myself first.

“Service members make mistakes all the time that they think they can never recover from,” said Burford, “but resiliency isn’t just about strength. It’s about vulnerability and really embracing that to make yourself better.”

Sometimes, our weaknesses highlight our strengths. My vulnerabilities showed me where to focus my efforts – where I was broken and what I need to mend.

Resiliency is taking shape again.

Picture I’m a plastic bottle. Someone pours out all the liquid from me and crushes me.

I can never be the same again.

However, what if air was pumped into me and I was filled with liquid again – better stuff. I’m still a bottle. I may have dents but I still fulfill my purpose.

The process of reshaping that bottle and

filling it again with a more nourishing beverage is resiliency. It’s not about avoiding the process but making it work for me.

It’s not easy letting someone into the deepest recesses of my mind but I had to for my sanity and my family.

“One important thing to remember when you’re coming back from deployment is expectation management,” said Lt. James Larsen, the ship’s psychologist. “A lot of people come back from a deployment imagining that their life is going to be exactly like what it was before they left or with a specific picture of what they think life is going to be like when they get home. It’s really hard to have an accurate picture of what that’s going to be like. Your family changes, your friends change and your situation changes with each deployment.”

Larsen said most people come home from deployment to something different. Communication was the key for me. The chaplain, deployed resiliency counselor, and psychologist were all on the same page.

“It’s very important to talk openly with your family members, your friends, or

whoever your support network may be,” said Larsen. “It helps set mutual expectations so everyone is on the same page.”

I talked. I talked a lot. I talked to my wife. I talked to my kids. I talked a lot to people who knew what they were talking about – professionals. Communication unlocked the cage of emotion brewing inside me. It led to outlets and resources to express myself. I grew from that experience.

“Post-traumatic growth is the idea that when people go through a really difficult or traumatic situation, there may be some way for them to grow or learn from that experience,” said Larsen. “When we go through these really difficult stages in our life, like a deployment, as hard as it is to be away from family, as long as the hours are, as hard as the work is, or as burnt out as you may feel in the end, there are things you can learn about yourself in the end – your limits, your capabilities, and your ability to push yourself. That will benefit you for the rest of your life.”

I gravitated to that concept. It’s something I already believed in or knew. I just failed to apply it to my own life.

Sailors are resilient.

I recovered and learned from my experiences. I learned my family and friends should have been my first line of defense. They know me better than anyone else. I also know that the Navy has given me resources. Chaplains, deployed resiliency counselors, and the ship’s psychologist are within reach with offices on board. The Fleet and Family Support Center regularly hosts classes and trainings to help reintegrate with partners and children. They also teach about stress and time management and how to be a new parent.

All you need to do is ask.

Three hundred and ninety-two days and counting has never been easy. It never will be. This holiday will be different because I’m different – better at transitioning but by no means an expert. Three hundred and ninety-two days’ worth of growth will be made to good use.⑩



The guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87) returns to homeport at Naval Station Norfolk. (Photo by MC3 Maria I. Alvarez)

The History That Led to the Pearl Harbor Attack

Story Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

On Dec. 7, 1941, a date that President Franklin D. Roosevelt claimed would “live in infamy,” the Imperial Japanese Navy conducted a surprise aerial assault on Pearl Harbor. This unprovoked attack brought the United States into World War II, as it immediately declared war on Japan.

Pearl Harbor was, and still is, the most important American naval base in the Pacific and home to the U.S. Pacific Fleet. It is located on the Hawaiian island of Oahu.

Since the 1930s, the Japanese government had increasingly come under the influence of right-wing military leaders seeking to create a larger Japanese empire on the Pacific Rim. The United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of China, represented significant obstacles to this expansion.

Japanese aggression began with the seizure of Manchuria from China in September 1931. The following year, this conquered territory was transformed into a Japanese puppet state, Manchukuo (1932-1945), under the nominal leadership of the last emperor of China, Pu Yi. The League of Nations carried out an investigation of the incident and concluded that Japan had, without a declaration of war, forcibly seized and occupied a large section of Chinese territory. It urged Japanese troops to withdraw from the occupied lands. In response, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in March 1933. Neither the League of Nations nor the United States recognized the allegedly independent state.

In the mid-1930s, the Japanese military began to exert more authority in foreign and domestic policy. Japan withdrew from participation in international naval conferences that had limited the size of the country’s fleet. Naval construction dramatically increased so that the

Japanese possessed the third largest navy in the world by 1941. In the Pacific, the Japanese navy surpassed the combined power of the British and American fleets. The army rapidly expanded as well, doubling in size between 1936 and 1941. At the same time, Japan drew closer to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, signing the Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936 and the Tripartite Pact in September 1940, becoming one of the Axis Powers.

In July 1937 fighting erupted between Japanese and Chinese forces and escalated into a full-fledged war that lasted

Vector rendering of “The Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor with charcoal and chalk” illustrated by Cmdr. Griffith Bailey Coale, USNR, official U.S. Navy combat artist, 1944.

until 1945.

Japanese aggression triggered widespread condemnation in the United States and elsewhere. On Oct. 5, 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt warned that the “very foundations of civilization” were being “seriously threatened.” Although he did not single out any particular nations, the warning aimed to raise American concerns about Japanese actions in China and German and Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War. A “quarantine” was necessary to halt the spread of the “epidemic of world lawlessness.” Roosevelt feared that Japanese expansionism would not end in China, but spread to Hong Kong, Indochina, and the Philippines, representing a threat to the United States.

Although the League of Nations condemned Japan’s actions in China, diplomatic efforts aimed at halting the fighting failed. Roosevelt considered a joint Anglo-American naval blockade of Japan, particularly in December 1937 after Japanese aircraft attacked

and sank several American vessels, including the patrol boat, the USS Panay, as well as some British ships in China. Isolationism at home and appeasement abroad put an end to such efforts.

Following the outbreak of war on the European continent, Japan took advantage of the situation to occupy territory in Asia. After France’s defeat by Nazi Germany, the Imperial Japanese government pressured the Vichy regime into cutting off military supplies to China from Indochina and then permitting the Japanese military to house its troops there. In fall 1940, the U.S. government offered to provide the embattled Chinese republic with aircraft and loans, which were then followed by economic sanctions against Japan that banned the export of aviation gasoline and scrap metals, including iron and steel. In summer-fall 1941, the United States froze Japanese assets and placed an embargo on oil exports to Japan.

As U.S. policy and sanctions became more aggressive, Japanese planners determined to attack American positions in the Pacific: specifically, the Philippines, Guam and Wake Islands, and the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor.

The dilemma faced by Japanese planners was how to counter the greater American naval power and economic potential.

The plan that emerged called for a surprise attack that would destroy the entire U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, while at the same time eliminating the other U.S. forward positions. The strategic goal was to so cripple U.S. naval power in the Pacific that the United States would be unable to interfere with Japanese conquests.

Japanese planners hoped that by the time the United States had recovered and rearmed it would face an imposing defensive perimeter that it would be unable or unwilling to defeat. A large naval strike force set sail from Japan operating under strict radio silence and avoiding shipping lanes to escape detection.



View looking toward the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard from Ford Island, with a dredge in the middle distance, Dec. 7, 1941. (Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.)

At 7:55 am on Dec. 7, 1941, the first of two waves of Japanese naval aircraft launched from six aircraft carriers attacked Pearl Harbor, catching U.S. forces completely by surprise. Two thousand four hundred U.S. Sailors and soldiers were killed and 1,200 wounded. Well over half of the military aircraft were damaged or destroyed, almost all on the ground.

Of the U.S. battleships present, all were hit and two, the Arizona and Oklahoma completely destroyed. Japanese air commanders requested a third strike, but Adm. Nagumo, in charge of the attacking force declined, preferring to avoid greater losses and presuming that the raid had been a success.

On its face, the attack on Pearl Harbor may indeed have seemed a brilliant strike. The U.S. Pacific Fleet was effectively eliminated as an offensive force and would be unable to intervene in Japanese expansion for the foreseeable future. In addition, the attack had only cost 29 Japanese planes. However, on closer inspection and in strategic terms, the assault failed:

Most significantly, the most important ships in the U.S. fleet, the aircraft carriers, were away on maneuvers and not present during the attack.

Second, U.S. oil supplies, submarine fleet, and repair facilities remained undamaged.

Third, while the all-important battleships had sustained heavy damage, all but two were eventually refloated, repaired, and returned to service.

Finally, the attack galvanized a previously disinterested U.S. public in support of the war. ④



View from Pier 1010, looking toward the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard’s drydocks, with USS Shaw (DD-373) in floating drydock YFD-2 and USS Nevada (BB-36) burning at right, Dec. 7, 1941. (Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.)



Ship wreckage gathered in a dry dock at Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. (Official U.S. Navy photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.)



Illustrations by MC3 Charles Scudella III,
USS Ronald Reagan Public Affairs

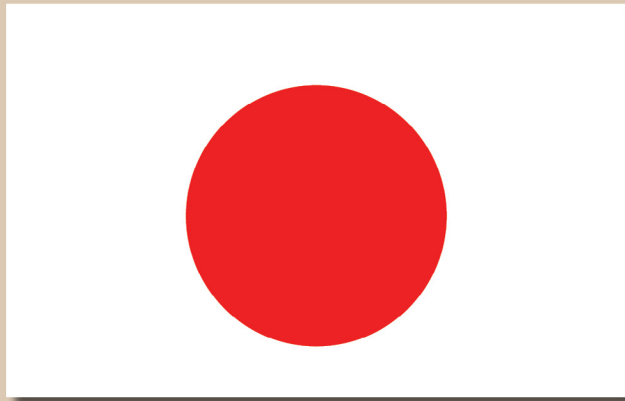
During the three-month patrol, our ship has picked up a few new Sailors, and as we get ready to pull back in to Yokosuka, those Sailors looking forward to exploring somewhere new may feel overwhelmed in their new surroundings, but even seasoned, forward-deployed Sailors can benefit from the services and activities on base.



- 1: **USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76)** — America's Flagship
- 2: **Club Alliance** — Three floors of food and drinks, including Sharkey's Wings and a full-service bar.
- 3: **Purdy Gym** — A 24/7 gym with two floors of machines and free weights. It includes several specialized fitness rooms, racketball courts, massage rooms, basketball courts and a full-sized lap swimming pool.
- 4: **Fleet Rec Center** — A community center with five floors. It houses the Single Sailor Liberty Center on the first floor, the Fleet NEX on the second floor, a 24/7 Mean Gene Express food court on the third, and two floors of the gyms and basketball courts on the fourth and fifth floors.
- 5: **Berkley Sports Complex** — The home of military baseball, your Reagan Reapers and all other outdoor intramural sports on base. It includes two softball/baseball fields, a full-sized football field, a running track and even a roller hockey rink.
- 6: **Main Street USA** — Houses several choices of fast food, including Subway, A&W, Popeye's, Manchu Wok and Cinnabon.
- 7: **Volleyball Courts** — Adjacent to a park area with open grills and benches.
- 8: **Fleet Theatre** — A full-service movie theater playing three to five movies a day and offering free admission to all movies for E4 and below.
- 9: **Benny Decker Theatre** — This larger theater plays movies all day and usually costs between two and four dollars per person.
- 10: **Chili's** — This American classic restaurant has a Tex-mex menu and full bar, including its line of speciality margaritas.

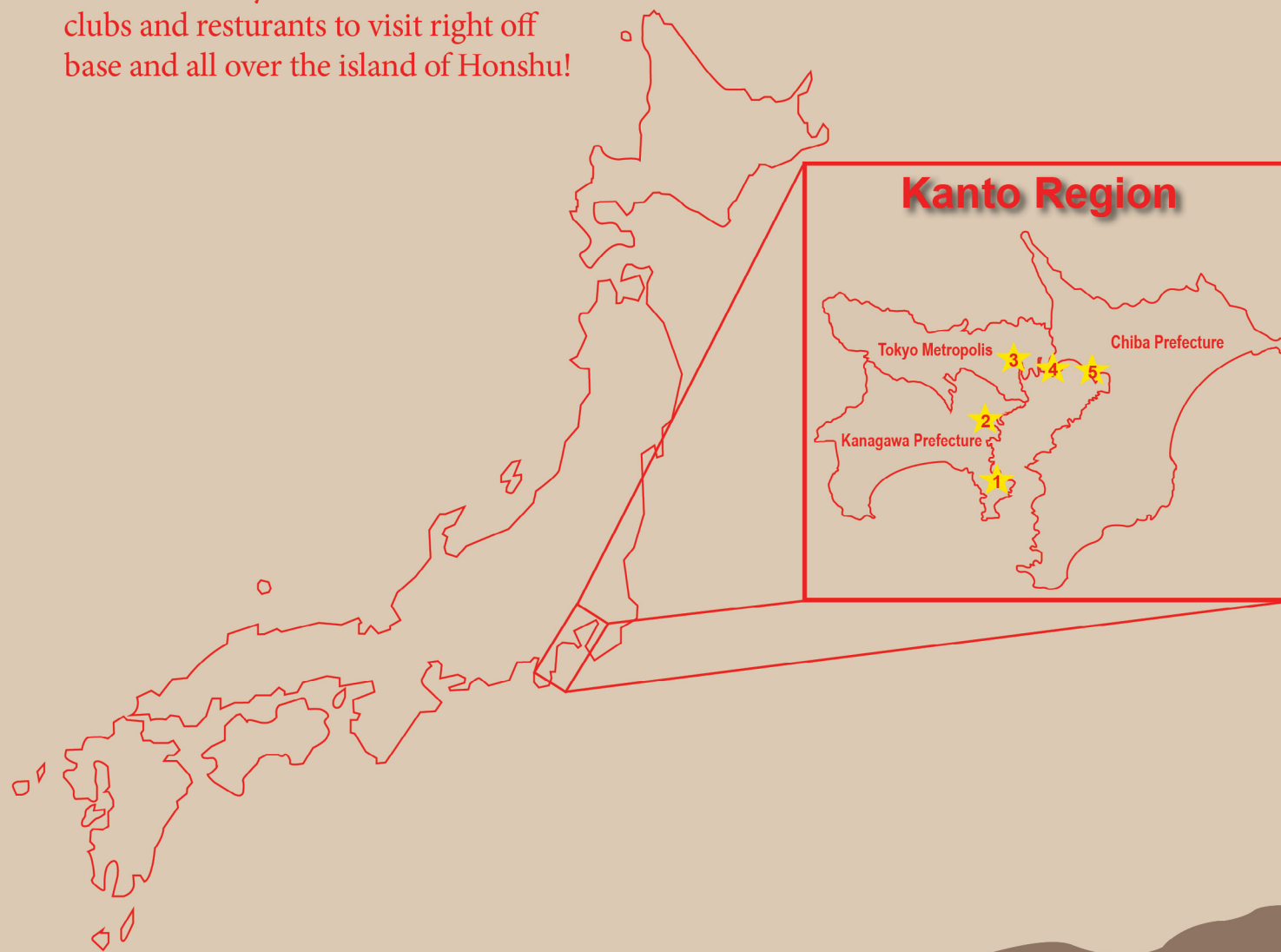
Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka





What to do: Off base

Fun doesn't stop at the main gate. There are many cities, towns, stores, clubs and restaurants to visit right off base and all over the island of Honshu!



1: **Yokosuka** — In addition to the base, Yokosuka has many shops, malls, restaurants and bars and there are many places to visit on the waterfront, including the Yokosuka Fish Market and Yokosuka Verna Park.

2: **Yokohama** — The closest metro city to Yokosuka, Yokohama is a sprawling city on the river and has several points of interest including the Yokohama Business Tower, the Red Brick Building area, and Yokohama Stadium, home of the DeNa Baystars baseball team.

3: **Tokyo** — The most populous metro area in the world, Tokyo takes up more than 5,240 square miles, a reason why it's governed as both a city and a prefecture. The sheer size might make it seem daunting, but you can narrow it down by checking out areas like Ginza, a popular shopping area; Shibuya, home of the famous crossing from the movie "Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift"; as well as Harajuku, an up-and-coming fashion and entertainment district and home to the famous Jingu Bashi, a bridge between Harajuku station and the Meiji shrine that has become an exhibition area for cosplay and Japanese street fashion alike.

4: **Tokyo Disneyland/DisneySea** — The first Disney park to be opened outside the United States, Tokyo Disneyland and its partner park, DisneySea, are some of the largest in the Disney system of theme parks, with more than 400 acres of land between the two. These parks not only match the Disney experience offered in the states, they intertwine Japanese influence into them as well.

5: **Chiba** — The capital city in the prefecture of the same name, this coastal city is one of the largest seaports in Japan and also one of the up-and-coming entertainment districts in the Kanto plain. Makuhari Messe is the prime waterfront business and entertainment venue in the city and the Chiba Urban Monorail, the largest suspended monorail in the world, runs through Chiba to its city center. Inage Beach, the first artificial beach in the country can also be found here.

Christmas in 東京

Story and Photos by MC1 James Kimber,
USS Ronald Reagan Public Affairs

In the upscale hills of Tokyo, a quaint Christmas village springs up every December. Some years, the theme takes on a German tone. Other years, it's more Belgian. But it is always a generically tony, picturesque European village in the heart of Roppongi Hills.

When thinking of Christmas and the holiday season surrounding it, most Sailors may think of children excited for the gifts lovingly wrapped under a tree. Or returning home to find family reunited and excited to see their Sailor outfitted in a dapper peacoat lightly dusted with snow.

In Japan, however, most people see Christmas as a romantic holiday. Young couples fill the streets of the posh districts of Roppongi and Shibuya. Young women are often seen tightly clutching their boyfriend's arms window shopping with cups of hot coffee and shopping bags from boutiques like a scene from a Hugh Grant-led Hollywood love story dutifully churned out every winter.

In keeping with that scene, rustically upscale shops pop up between the country's celebrity-owned multi-million dollar condos in Roppongi Hills. The stores sell everything one would expect to find at a stereotypical European Christmas market. Artisan bread, Christmas cakes and very adult egg nogs are often found for sale among the trinkets and tabletop ornaments.

Roppongi Hills is easily accessible by train for Yokosuka Sailors. From Yokosuka-Chuo Station, take the Keiyo Line to Shinagawa. Transfer to the Yamanote Line to Roppongi and follow the signs. ㊦

Krümelchen

ドイツ陶器
クレメルヒェン



Christmas in Tokyo often resembles a Hollywood interpretation of a holiday love story. Instead of toys under the tree and family get-togethers, the holiday is more of an opportunity for young couples to escape into the type of love story Hollywood releases every holiday season and fashionable young people to window shop novelty souvenirs and trinkets.



Snow-capped knick-knacks and imported German craft beers (left) are among the items available at the Roppongi Hills Christmas Market.



Small European cottages pop up in Roppongi Hills every winter selling everything from nutcrackers to wreaths and egg nog to pretzels.



IN MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN SHIPMATES
YOU WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN



SEVENTYSIXER
USS RONALD REAGAN

Sailors gather for a memorial service in honor of ABEAN Matthew Chialastri, Lt. Steven Combs and AOAA Bryan Grosso in the hangar bay. (Photo by MC2 Kenneth Abbate)