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Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) Arrives for the Shimoda Black Ship Festival



Story Number: NNS180518-11Release Date: 5/18/2018 12:23:00 PM

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tracey Bannister, USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) Public Affairs

SHIMODA, Japan (NNS) -- The forward-deployed, Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG 54) arrived in Shimoda, Shizuoka, Japan, May 17, to participate in the 79th Annual Shimoda Black Ship Festival.

The festival commemorates the 164th anniversary of the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and the signing of the Japan-American Treaty of Trade and Amity June 17, 1854, which opened trade opportunities with Japan.



"It is my second visit to Shimoda and I'm very excited," said Cmdr. Simon McKeon, commanding officer of Curtis Wilbur. "The people of Shimoda were very nice and welcoming on the first visit, and we look forward to continuing the relations we've established in the past."

The Black Ship Festival is hosted by Shimoda each year in May and brings tourists in from all around Japan. The festival promotes peaceful relations between the Japanese and American people.

The festival's activities will include a parade and a memorial ceremony to honor the five Sailors lost during the first arrival to Shimoda.

The term "black ship" was the name given to western boats that started arriving in Japan in the 16th and 19th centuries. The four ships of the Perry Expedition arrived in Uraga Harbor July 14, 1853, to start trade relations with Japan.

This is Curtis Wilbur's fourth visit to Shimoda. Sailors will participate in community service activities such as visits to local elementary schools and sporting events, to include beach volleyball and a tug-of-war contest.

Curtis Wilbur is on a regularly scheduled deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operation in support of security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

For more news from Commander, Task Force 70, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/ctf70/>.

Webmaster's Note:

USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG-54) is the fourth *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer. *Curtis Wilbur* was named for Curtis D. Wilbur, forty-third Secretary of the Navy, who served under President Calvin Coolidge. In 2016 she was based at Yokosuka, Japan, as part of Destroyer Squadron 15.

The **Black Ships** (in Japanese: 黒船, **kurofune**, Edo-period term) was the name given to Western vessels arriving in Japan in the 16th and 19th centuries.

In 1543 Portuguese initiated the first contacts, establishing a trade route linking Goa to Nagasaki.

In particular, kurofune refers to the *Mississippi*, *Plymouth*, *Saratoga*, and *Susquehanna* of the Commodore Matthew Perry Expedition for the opening of Japan, 1852–1854, that arrived on July 14, 1853, at Uraga Harbor (part of present-day Yokosuka) in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan under the command of United States Commodore Matthew Perry. *Black* refers to the black color of the older sailing vessels, and the black smoke from the coal-fired steam engines of the American ships. In this sense, the kurofune became a symbol of the ending of isolation.