Annual symposium helps bring change to Army community

By Esther Dacanay
Torii Editor

Nearly 60 Camp Zama community members gathered for a three-day annual symposium held March 12 – 14 to discuss viable plans and resolutions for some of the top issues concerning the Army Family community at the Camp Zama Community Club.

The Army Family Action Plan symposium consisted of breakout sessions among smaller teams during the first two days, followed by a whole group session on the third day.

A majority of the teams mentioned that the following services were the community's core strengths: Army-Air Force Exchange Service; Defense Commissary Agency; the medical / dental services; and Family, Morale, Welfare & Recreation.

However, there is always room for improvement. A few of the community-wide issues discussed during the symposium include: the need for awareness and practice of non-chemical means of pest control; the need for a laundromat on post; and the need for more support for single parents in the community.

Photo by Yuichi Imada, Visual Information Directorate

Col. Robert M. Waltemeyer, commander of U.S. Army Garrison Japan, reviews a few top community issues with delegates during the annual Army Family Action Plan symposium held March 12 – 14 at the Camp Zama Community Club.

"I know the AFAP process is difficult, but it's valuable," Col. Robert M. Waltemeyer, commander of U.S. Army Garrison Japan, said as he addressed the crowd. "Forums like this helps spare us from the guesswork, but the issues need to be tracked, empowering us to move through the chain of command."

Although much progress can be made at the regional level, some of the top local issues still have yet to be resolved at the Department of Army level to include: transferring GI Bill benefits to dependents; adjusting the child care fee categories for multiple children in the same family; and creating a convicted sex offenders registry.

"I think this is a fantastic program and it allows individuals to express some of their concerns about the community," said Chief Warrant Officer Scott Spurling from the 35th Combat Support & Sustainment Battalion of U.S. Army Japan. "These issues eventually get sent to higher-levels of the Army, making this community a better place."

To voice your concerns about the Camp Zama community, visit *www.mwrjapan.jp.pac.army.mil/acs/*. For AFAP, visit *www.myarmylifetoo.com.*