

PELELIU NEWS

September 23, 2012

Peleliu ARG Deploys to Western Pacific



Photo by MCSN Alex Van'tLeven

Sailors and Marines aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) say farewell to their friends and families before leaving for deployment.

Story by MC3 (AW) Valerie M. Grayson
Peleliu Public Affairs

The Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) departed from Naval Base San Diego for deployment to the Western Pacific Sept. 17.

The ARG's deployment supports the Navy's overall mission to protect maritime freedom, enhance global security, and foster and sustain cooperative relationships with its allies and international partners.

Peleliu ARG completed numerous evaluated exercises to be fully ready for deployment. Composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX) and certification exercise (CERTEX) were performed during weeks of underway time. These exercises tested the ARG's capabilities to conduct military and amphibious operations at sea and ashore. Additionally, ammunition was loaded aboard all ships, making the ARG fully equipped and mission ready.

"The Sailors in the ARG are trained and ready to support a wide range of military operations during this regularly scheduled deployment," said Capt. Mark Sakaguchi, commander, Amphibious Squadron Three. "This deployment is the culmination of months of shipboard unit level and integrated training and is an opportunity for

our Sailors and Marines to execute missions that support and defend our nation's maritime freedom."

During the past year, Peleliu ARG trained for real-life situations that the ships could encounter while operating overseas. Engineering, general quarters and damage control drills were some pre-deployment workups needed for readiness.

"It's very important to conduct damage control drills before deployment because we do not have a fire department," said Damage Controlman 1st Class David Favors, scene leader for the flying squad. "The ship is the fire department. We have to be able to combat all casualties alone."

Damage Controlman 2nd Class Demetrick Westbrook adds, "How you train is how you fight. When you're overseas, there's no one to rely on but the ship. Peleliu is up to par when it comes to its damage control knowledge and fighting casualties."

Sailors and Marines also spent time mentally preparing for this deployment in addition to the exercises and certifications needed for mission readiness.

Corporal Matthew Zeiler, from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (rein) forced with the 15th MEU described how he prepared for his first deployment.

"I packed all my gear and checked it multiple times. With all the workups, I know exactly what to

expect and I'm looking forward to it."

While some Sailors and Marines are not leaving families and friends for the first time, departing for deployment never gets easy. Ship's Serviceman 2nd Class Anderson Jean-Baptiste explained how this deployment will be the hardest of all six.

"The first two times I didn't have my children, it was just me and my wife. This deployment, my daughter is older and can ask questions now, where before she was too young to know any better," he said. "My wife and I try to explain why I have to leave and that it's part of my job."

Peleliu ARG is expected to conduct theater security operations in the 7th and 5th Fleet areas of operations. The mission of amphibious ships is to deliver embarked Marine landing forces to locations ashore and provide humanitarian assistance, civil support, non-combatant evacuations, peace operations, recovery operations, disaster reliefs and counter-piracy.

Peleliu ARG consists of a command element, Amphibious Squadron Three, amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5), amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47), and amphibious transport dock ship USS Green Bay (LPD 20) and has the 15th MEU embarked throughout the three ships.

15th MEU sets sail for Western Pacific Deployment



Marines and Sailors with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and USS Peleliu man the rails

Photo by Lance Cpl. Timothy Childers

Story by Cpl. John Robbart III
15th MEU Staff Writer

Tears streamed down the faces of family members as they said goodbye to their loved ones who were preparing to leave on a journey around the world.

The Marines and Sailors of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked the ships of the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group and pulled away from San Diego for their deployment to the Western Pacific, Sept. 17.

The MEU is the smallest size Marine Air Ground Task Force, which is a unit comprised of ground, air and logistic elements, all under one commander. Because of this composition, the MEU can quickly react to numerous difficult situations to providing a forward-deployed, flexible sea-based capability in a forward operating environment.

The MEU brings with them amphibious assault vehicles, tanks, crew-served weapons, aircraft, and landing craft vehicles, all which are needed to get the unit from ship to shore.

Training for this type of deployment is no small feat. The MEU Command Element gained operational control of the three subordinate elements in February, and the Marines and Sailors haven't stopped preparing for even a moment.

Muscle memory is the key to successful mission accomplishment, and that is what the pre-deployment training is focused on over the past seven months. The Marines honed skills during the simulated missions in everything from conducting maritime operations in shipping lanes to safely

and expediently evacuating non-combatants from deteriorating environments in countries around the world to full-scale combat operations.

The training was demanding, but the 15th MEU command element wanted to ensure the Marines and Sailors were facing as many obstacles as they could to prepare them for any unforeseen circumstances. It was not uncommon for training to take place at night, in the dark and over the water.

The unit had three at-sea periods, Realistic Urban Training, both maritime and ground, as well as "in the field" training. All of these evolutions were opportunities to gain brilliance in the basics and develop the skill sets needed for any requirement asked of them.

In addition, the MEU staff conducted two iterations of Rapid Response Planning Process to equip them for planning missions from humanitarian aid to combat quickly, efficiently and effectively.

The Marine Air-Ground Task Force is comprised of Battalion Landing Team 3/5, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (rein) and Combat Logistics Battalion 15, the ground, air and logistics elements, respectively.

The MEU is stationed aboard the ships of the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group, which are the USS Peleliu, the USS Rushmore and the USS Green Bay. The Marine Corps partners with the Navy to project power from the sea and provides the President and the Unified Combatant Commanders with a forward-deployed, flexible, sea-based MAGTF.

SAPR CORNER

If you have been sexually assaulted, call the 24 hour crisis hotline at 877-995-5247, text your location to 55247 (INCONUS), or contact any of the following personnel BEFORE you speak to anyone else:

Chaplains Victim Advocates (VA):

PELELIU SAPR POC:

NCCS Susan Garrow

PELELIU/MEU VICTIM ADVOCATES

Lt. Nicole Schwegman

Lt. j.g. Andrea Goldstein

HMC Jody Lacefield

AO1 Jennifer Martin

AO1 Benjamin Callen

LS1 Vernita Foster

ABH2 Donnell Viree

HM2 Janice Sapaden

OS2 Canon Deimerly

MSgt Lee John

GySgt Jennifer Antoine

HM1 Ryan Hachez

Capt. Joseph Babajan

Capt. Karla Cumbie

FACTS & MYTHS

FACT: Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted. (SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, *National Crime Victimization Survey*.)

Myth: Sexual assault is a crime of passion and lust.

Fact: Sexual assault is a crime of violence.

Assailants seek to dominate, humiliate and punish their victims. (SOURCE: Common Myths and the Facts that Dispel Them, (ND).)

Myth: There is no one to contact for help.

Fact: Wrong. You can contact —Safe Helpline — they are a call, click or text away! You can call the Safe Helpline for live, one-on-one advice, support, information, and assistance that is anonymous, secure, and available 24/7 at 877-995-5247 (phone number is the same inside the U.S. or via the DSN) or go to <http://www.SafeHelpline.org>. They can also connect you with the SARC on your installation or base, and other military and civilian resources in your area. (SOURCE: World Health Organization, 2002.)

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Peleliu Conducts Burial-at-Sea



Sailors and Marines honor 25 deceased on the port side elevator

Photo by MC3 Derek S. Strop

Story by MC3 (AW) Valerie M. Grayson
Peleliu Staff Writer

Amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) conducted a burial-at-sea for 24 deceased former military members and one military spouse Sept. 19.

Burials-at-sea became tradition originating from ancient times. The Navy did not have the means for a proper burial so bodies and remains were buried at sea. Now, the ceremony is a sacred honor requested by the military member, their family, or dependents. This tradition demonstrates honor and commitment to service and their country beyond a military member's life.

"Burials-at-sea are important because it helps us recognize the service of those people that went before us and that the country still values their service," said Cmdr. Shaun Brown, Peleliu's command chaplain. "We understand that we owe them and their families the debt of gratitude for their service and their sacrifices."

Each department aboard Peleliu played a role in conducting the burial-at-sea. Sailors and Marines volunteered

to carry the remains of each fallen servicemember and dependent.

Lance Cpl. Devin Elliot, from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, expressed his honor and gratitude to have the opportunity to participate in a burial at sea. "It keeps us connected to who we are, all of our ancestors, and what they fought and died for," he said. "I never thought I'd be able to participate in a Navy tradition."

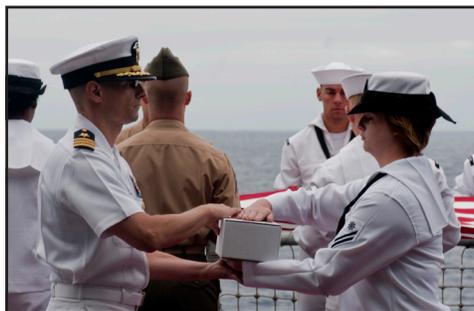
Elliot was one of the many Sailors and Marines who participated for the first time. Boatswain's Mate Seaman Kyle Beckman volunteered to be Honor Boatswain's Mate for the ceremony. "I love the tradition of the Boatswain's Mate, so I volunteered to be Honor Boatswain's for the first time."

Burials-at-sea are conducted to render honors to fallen military members who are retired, honorably discharged, active duty and family members. The crew of Peleliu honored members of the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and an Army dependent with a seven-man gun salute and piping from the Honor Boatswain's Mate.



Sailors and Marines honor 25 deceased on the port side elevator.

Photo by MCSN Derek S. Strop



Executive Officer, Cmdr. Jay M. Steingold, receives remains from Quarter Master Seaman Apprentice Sarah Higginbotham

Photo by MCSN Alex Van'tLeven

#LOOSE LIPS

Part 4

Story by Petty Officer 2nd Class (SG) T. Grout
PeleNews contributor

After Quarters, Petty Officer 3rd Class Stephanie Sharp joined another Sailor from OI Division as compartment cleaner for female berthing. On her way, OS3 Sharp stopped by the Learning Resource Center to check her email. The new Zumwalt Class Destroyers have only a few public computers available. USS HEWITT (DDX 47) is no exception. Plus her Chief constantly kicks people off the computer during working hours.

Anxious yet hopeful, within moments a smile emerged.

"Thanks for dinner" the Facebook message said. "I felt so comfortable with you. I hope you didn't mind me sharing probably more than I should. If you didn't, maybe we can have coffee later this week? If you did, maybe I can apologize by treating you to coffee later this week?"

No amount of cleaning, maintenance, even training (there's an oxymoron, training from those who think they know the topic but clearly, do not) could overshadow her joy. At least not today.

She replied, "Call me tomorrow. I have duty today with the balls to four watch. But yes, I'd love to have coffee with you. CUS." Hit send. Back to work.

"He's so cute!" Stephanie told her friend, OSSN Jenny Lowe. "It's been a few months since John and I broke up. I'm glad too. He was so immature, which I really didn't notice until now, after meeting Blake."

"I liked John. I didn't think he was that bad. Certainly had a nice a\$\$." remarked Jenny. Both girls laughed.

"Reason enough to stay with him sure! But shallow. I can't do shallow. If I want shallow I'll go out with half the guys on board."

"Does he know we're deploying in a month? And that you're going home for two weeks beforehand?"

"Not yet" replied Stephanie, "I'll see how coffee goes." And if it goes well, well, we'll see . . .

RSEP briefs held on board



Photo by MCSN Jasmine N. Sheard

RSEP instructor gives brief to the Peleliu and MEU leadership in the Ward room of amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5)

Story by MCSN Derek S. Stroop
Peleliu Staff Writer

Amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) hosted five regional security education program (RSEP) instructors from the Naval Postgraduate School from Sept. 17

“Our program is designed to prepare deploying amphibious ready groups and carrier strike groups by providing regionally specific graduate level education tailored to a ship’s mission overseas,” said Cmdr. Bernie Wang, Associate Dean, School of International Graduate Studies, Naval Postgraduate School. “This is an extremely important program for each of these deploying units.”

The RSEP program is administered by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, Calif.

“The whole reason for the RSEP program derived from the USS Cole bombing in 2001,” said Wang. “Part of what we need to do in a mission is make sure that everyone deploying understands the underlying geo-political, ethnic and cultural issues related to the regions they will deploy to, so they can be better aware of the underlying factors that can affect them.”

NPS sent five RSEP instructors to the Peleliu for a week to hold a variety of seminars on regions such as the Horn of Africa, Persian Gulf and Timor-Leste.

“I thought the Horn of Africa seminar was really good,” said Lt. Cmdr. Adrian Dy, assigned to Amphibious Squadron Three. “We were able to see why it’s such an unstable region, and why it’s important, from a national policy point of view.”

All commissioned officers were encouraged to attend these regionally specific seminars.

“These seminars are a great opportunity to get background on a lot of regions,” said Dy. “They provide a strategic, big picture point of view, while providing historical context on the areas we could be deploying to.”

RSEP instructors teach their seminars about 8-10 times per year and are comprised of faculty from NPS.

“The mission of NPS is to educate officers from each service in a variety of disciplines, anywhere from engineering to international and regional studies,” said Wang.

Man on the Street

By MCSN Alex Van'tLeven

The National Football League kicked off its season while football fans on board Peleliu are on deployment. Despite the mission on hand, fans will continue to support their teams. Let’s find out from these fans who they think will win the Super Bowl.

Question:

What NFL team do you think is going to take it all the way this season?

Answers:

**Aviation Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class (AW)
Colon K. Aukai, from Big Island Hawaii**



“Packers guaranteed. They are the best team in the league hands down. Right now they’re getting everything together. They have their offense straightened out and defense is coming along nicely. By the end of the season, all cylinders will be clicking.”

Ensign Devin J. Quinn, second division officer, from Barrington Rd.



“Being from New England I’m going to have to say the Patriots I like to support my Boston area sports teams.”

**Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class (SW/AW)
Steven L. Bryant, from Gainesville Georgia.**



“Atlanta Falcons, because they got Matty Ice for one, they have a tremendous receiving core Rodney White; Julio Jones, Henry Douglas, a tight end the phenomenal Tony Gonzales, we have a good running game we can pound it in with Michael Turner, over all we have a good passing and rushing offense. The defensive line has stepped up the last few games and I really feel we’re going to be able to take it all the way.”