

Peleliu News

July 29, 2012

Peleliu ARG conducts NEO exercise



Photo by Cpl. John Robbart III

Marines from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit land on Red Beach at Camp Pendleton, Calif., before establishing an evacuation control center during a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise.

Story by MCSN Jasmine N. Sheard
Peleliu staff writer

PACIFIC OCEAN – The Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group conducted a non-combatant evacuation operation exercise July 24, off the coast of Southern California.

The NEO exercise is designed to demonstrate the Peleliu ARG's ability to evacuate civilians as part of humanitarian relief operations. The drill involved 36 Marines from Kilo Company 2nd Platoon from 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and approximately 25 simulated non-combatants ashore.

"The Navy has some unique capabilities that allow us to conduct NEO operations," said Lt. Cmdr. Bradley Coletti, Amphibious Squadron Three operations officer. "We have the ability to come in from both the sea and air which gives us an opportunity to leverage both our Navy and Marine assets. Working together with the 15th MEU will allow us future opportunities to protect American citizens abroad and to remove people from harms way."

Peleliu's part in the exercise involved its medical staff preparing to receive casualties. The ship's aviation squadrons transported Marines via helicopter from Peleliu and other ARG ships. Four utility landing craft carried equipment, vehicles and personnel assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 15. Among the Marines who were sent to Camp Pendleton was Staff Sgt. Luis Maceira, platoon sergeant for Kilo Company 2nd Platoon.

"My platoon works security for combat logistics battalion and our mission is to evacuate citizens from an unsafe environment," said Maceira. "We secure the town and let the CLB pull out American citizens, while other Marines secure the air field and get those citizens processed."

Simulated evacuees were processed through security check points and transported to another designated area. Those requiring medical attention would have possibly been brought to Peleliu.

"Our role is to prepare to receive casualties that we may encounter

throughout our expedition around the world and provide humanitarian assistance when needed," said Lt. Cmdr. Cari Matthews, emergency physician, 15th MEU. "We are level two trauma center and can provide surgical care and give blood. This is a very robust hospital capability that is actually amazing."

This exercise tested the overall ARG's teamwork and multiple layers support.

"Overall the NEO exercise was considered to be successful," said Coletti. "We were able to safely evacuate all of the American citizens and to recover all of the Marines and equipment back to ARG shipping in a timely manner."

The ARG consists of the 15th MEU, embarked aboard Peleliu, the amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5), the amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47) and amphibious transport dock ship USS Green Bay (LPD 20) and is currently underway conducting composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX) in the Pacific Ocean.

Peleliu Hosts State Department During COMPTUEX



Photo by MC3 Derek Stroop

Capt. Mark Sakaguchi, commodore, Amphibious Squadron Three, speaks with guests from the State Department on a tour of amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5)

Story by MC3 Derek S. Stroop
Peleliu Staff Writer

PACIFIC OCEAN – Amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) highlighted its mission capabilities for U.S. Department of State distinguished guests with a tour during composite training exercise (COMPTUEX), July 23.

Guest visits help the American public and officials see the Navy's mission and the dedication of its Sailors serving aboard each ship.

"It is important that the State Department, as well as any government agency, understand what we do, how we do it and how it affects their mission," said Cmdr. Jay M. Steingold, executive officer, USS Peleliu. "It gives them the chance to see the abilities and capabilities that the Peleliu can bring to their fight."

Members of the State Department flew aboard Peleliu via CH-46E Sea Knight to tour the ship and experience its capabilities firsthand.

"My experience has been fantastic," said Vasilli A. Alafogiannis, supervisory special agent conflict and stabilization operations. "One of the things that strikes me is the responsiveness that you have. Peleliu's ability to respond quickly in so many different types of crisis and situations is amazing."

Several State Department members will participate alongside Navy and Marine Corps personnel in an upcoming non-combatant evacuation drill as part of COMPTUEX.

They observed well deck operations, watch standers on the bridge and toured medical spaces.

According to Alafogiannis they role-play as embassy officials during the simulated evacuation of a U.S. embassy in a foreign country, conducted in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

At the end of the tour, the guests left with a feeling of confidence and pride in the ship.

"Peleliu has enormous dedication to the mission," said Alafogiannis. "It feels good to know we have you guys looking out for us, and that we can count on you when the occasion arises."

According to www.state.gov, the U.S. Department of State's mission to shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere.

PeleNews is published and printed on board by the USS Peleliu (LHA 5) Media Division. This newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. Government. PeleNews reserves the right to edit submissions. Submission deadline is Thursday by noon to pao@lha5.navy.mil

Commanding Officer

Capt. John D. Deehr

Executive Officer

Cmdr. Jay M. Steingold

Command Master Chief

CMDCM (SW/AW)

David Dearie

Public Affairs Officer

Lt. Nicole Schwegman

Manager Editor

MCC (SW/EXW) Jeremy Wood

Leading Petty Officer

MC1 (SW/AW) George G. DeLeon

Designer/Editor

MCSN Alex Van'tLeven

Staff

MC3(AW) Valerie M. Grayson

MC3 Derek S. Stroop

MCSN Jasmine N. Sheard

MCSN Dustin M. Knight

MCSN Michael I. Duran

MCSN Alex Van'tLeven



Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Marl L. Gonzales adds seasoning for a meal he is preparing in the ship's galley for the Marines and Sailors. Photo by Cpl. John Robbatt III

Green-Blue team work as one to feed crew

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

USS PELELIU — The blue-green team mindset is a part of every section aboard the Iron Nickel. The cooks on the ship are no exception, as they put in long hours, day in and day out, to ensure their Marines and sailors are properly fed.

Preparing food may not be their favorite part of their job, but taking care of the servicemembers who have been working tirelessly is.

“Seeing people’s faces after seeing the meals we prepared boosts their morale and mine,” said Sgt. Refugio Gil, food service specialist, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. “This is the best job in the Marine Corps,” added the 28-year-old native of Nipomo, Calif.

Gil’s day starts at 7 a.m., when he makes his way into the galley, or kitchen. Breakfast has already been served and his crew is about to clean their workspace in preparation for lunch and dinner. A stereo plays music in the background to motivate the hard-working cooks. Morale is high.

The mess men, a temporary duty assigned to Marines and sailors to assist the food service specialists who prepare the meals for the Marines and sailors of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group, are responsible for the neat appearance of the

area where the Marines and sailors will eat. Additionally, some serve the food and others clean the trays and silverware.

“Some of the mess men really do a great job,” said Gil. “It gives them a chance to get out of their regular jobs and learn some new skills. Especially if they get a chance to feed their Marines, it gives them some extra insight on what cooks do.”

Outside of the kitchen, certain jobs require Marines and sailors to work a graveyard shift. For those troops, they have midnight rations or “midrats,” so they can eat even during late hours. Those meals are prepared by the night crew.

“Having the Marines around is a big help,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Allan I. Stephens, culinary specialist, USS Peleliu. “We show them some of our techniques, but all-in-all we look out for one and other,” added the 22-year-old native of El Paso, Texas.

Service is a common theme, regardless of which uniform the servicemember wears.

“I love being here to serve others,” said Sgt. Victor M. Pachecoperez, food service specialist, Command Element, 15th MEU. “Maintaining a high standard of food quality and ensuring meals are prepared in a timely manner is one of our top priorities,” added the 25-year-old native of Kenilworth, N.J.

The two sergeants work together with

the Navy to make sure they accomplish their mission aboard ship.

“This is the Navy’s house, we are here to assist them,” he said. “They run the galley, and [the Marines] are glad to work with a different branch of service. They are really good cooks, more familiar with the environment, and are in turn able to help us out.”

While each service may do things a bit differently, one thing is always the same: sanitation.

“Sanitation is such a huge part of our job,” said Pachecoperez. “We get inspected daily by the ship’s food service chief.”

The food service chiefs, both Navy and Marine Corps, work hand-in-hand to accomplish a common mission of supporting the warfighter.

“The work these Marines and sailors put in drive the morale of the ship,” said Senior Chief Petty Officer Joshua A. Smith, food service leading chief petty officer, USS Peleliu. “We’re here to support both Marines and sailors. Hopefully by us doing our job better, they can do theirs better too,” added the 37-year-old native of Reading, Pa.

When asked about his favorite part about his job, Smith didn’t hesitate when he said the Marines and sailors.

“It’s also the most challenging part of my job too,” he added with a chuckle, as he described bringing together 147 Marines and sailors and working with his Marine counterpart to motivate them toward the accomplishment of their mission.

Smith works with Gunnery Sgt. Corey O. Wright, the 15th MEU’s mess chief. Together, they are responsible for the sanitation, food service preparation, accounting and logistical planning that is involved before at-sea periods and deployment.

“I love being around Marines, that’s what makes this job so great,” said Wright. “Everyone has to eat at some point so I always get a chance to interact with them when they come by,” added the 38-year-old native of Xenia, Ohio.

The relationship Wright and Smith have helps make their operation successful.

“When I met senior chief, we immediately agreed on a ‘one team, one fight’ mindset,” said Wright. “Trying to please everyone isn’t easy, but we try our best.”

Peleliu administers anthrax vaccinations



Photo by MCSN Michael I. Duran

Story by MCSN Michael I. Duran
Peleliu Staff Writer

PACIFIC OCEAN – Sailors aboard USS Peleliu (LHA 5) began anthrax vaccinations July 23 as part of a mandatory immunization program to protect its fighting force.

Peleliu's medical department coordinated the immunizations, ordering 1,300 doses of the anthrax vaccine for the ship's crew to be administered over the following two weeks.

"Pre-exposure immunizations to our sailors are very important because an anthrax scare or bio-terrorism scare can affect our mission," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Roseann Robles of Monterey, Calif. "It's especially important for our newest shipmates to be caught up on the required immunizations for our area of responsibility."

A disease normally associated with livestock and plant-eating animals, anthrax has been recognized for centuries. It is caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis* and symptoms include fever, cough, weakness, breathing problems, shock, and death. Anthrax can be used as a biological weapon with a 99 percent fatality rate to those who become infected.

Because of its ease of production, anthrax



Anthrax bacteria

is a very real threat to Peleliu's service members.

"We need to verify the Department of Defense requirement when we go forward into a danger zone or known war zone," said Command Master Chief David Dearie. "Everybody has to receive their immunizations; their anthrax; their booster shots. There is a time requirement we must meet before we can go into theatres that may have biological weapons involved."

The anthrax vaccine is a formalin-inactivated vaccine and contains no living organisms. The vaccine has been licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration since 1970 and has since been safely and routinely administered to military personnel as well as veterinarians, laboratory workers, and livestock handlers. Civilian medical organizations such as the Center for Disease Control and Institute of Medicine agree the vaccine is safe and effective.

"Some people are afraid of the vaccine because they don't really understand why they need to be pre-immunized before exposure," Robles said. "The immunization elicits a response from the body that creates a barrier against the disease. The ship needs to maintain at least 95 percent immunization in the event of a scare, so we can still continue the mission."

Some Sailors aboard Peleliu are glad to receive the immunizations.

"Honestly, I think it's great that we get the anthrax shot," said Seaman Hunter Sortore, from the southern Los Angeles area. "I'd hate to be deployed in a situation where I need it but don't have it."

Man on the Street

By MC3(AW) Valerie M. Grayson

The 2012 Olympics have arrived in London! The U.S. has always been a major contender in many Olympic events. This week's question was asked to highlight one of those events.

Question:

"What year was the greatest U.S. basketball team assembled for the Olympics?"

Answers:

Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Abrishon Lovett, Supply/S-5, Long Branch, N.J.



"The reason why I think 2008 is the best team, since the Dream Team, is because that's the only team that went undefeated since 1992. Dwayne

Wade was in his prime, LeBron James was a couple of years out of high school, Michael Redd and Chris Paul were clutch players. Wade and Kobe Bryant shot killer 3-pointers when they were down by Puerto Rico. Bryant sealed the deal with clutch free throws at the end of the game."

Lt. Cmdr. Corey Doolittle, Fleet Surgical Team 1, Medical Regulating Control Officer, Pine Bluff, Ark.

"The Dream Team was the best just because of the amount of Hall of Famers they had on the team. That's a dream team. Current dream teams, in my opinion, are All Star teams. But, '92 was an actual dream team."



Logistics Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Gloria Pearson, AIMD, Birmingham, Ala.

"The Dream Team, 1992, is the best because they're the first to do it. And it's the way they did it. They embarrassed people. Everybody after them is just following what's already been done."

