

# **Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group**

November 17, 2010



# **U.S. Fifth Fleet**

# Peleliu ARG, 15th MEU Showcase Flexibility During 5th Fleet Deployment

By MC2 (EXW) Andrew Dunlap  
USS *Peleliu*

An Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) are strategically paired for deployments to provide the combatant commander a versatile sea-based force which can be tailored to a variety of missions. One of these missions is to provide maritime quick reaction response for natural disasters which can occur anywhere in the world.

The *Peleliu* ARG and 15th MEU team showcased the unique flexibility of the “Blue – Green Team” while conducting a regularly scheduled deployment in the 5th Fleet Area of Responsibility. When monsoon rains flooded the country of Pakistan, Sailors and Marines went to work, executing a range of missions over the course of several months.

“Once we heard the extent of the devastation in Pakistan, we knew the best available asset to provide support was the *Peleliu* ARG and 15th MEU,” said Capt. Dale Fuller, Commander of the *Peleliu* Amphibious Ready Group.

Before the Government of Pakistan requested aid, *Peleliu* was directed to transit to the Indian Ocean and take station off the coast of Karachi, Pakistan. She, along with her embarked helicopters of Marine Medium

Helicopter Squadron 165 (HMM-165) were the first Navy and Marine Corps assets on station.

After arriving on station, *Peleliu* became a logistical afloat staging base, as well as the command and control ship for Commander,

Combined Task Force (CTF) 59. Rear Adm. Sinclair Harris, Commander of Expeditionary Strike Group Five and CTF-59, embarked *Peleliu* to coordinate ship-to-shore operations. For the Sailors and Marines on *Peleliu*, the mission was simple: provide the government of Pakistan with whatever assistance was necessary to alleviate human suffering. To that end, 8 CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters, 4 CH-53E Sea Stallion helicopters and 3 MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopters were sent in country with *Peleliu* remaining on station for more than 10 weeks.

Normally, the relief efforts in Pakistan alone would have been a significant deployment

accomplishment. However, the ARG-MEU team must also be capable of executing multiple missions simultaneously.

In addition to the humanitarian relief operations, *Peleliu* was launching AV-8B Harriers in support of Operation



Enduring Freedom. The Harriers of Marine Attack Squadron 311 provided close air support for U.S. military ground forces in Afghanistan.

“In this region of the world because of our logistical proximity to Operation Enduring Freedom, utilizing our Harrier assets to protect our brethren on the ground embodies the flexibility of what an ARG/MEU team can do,” said Col. Roy Osborn, commanding officer of 15th MEU. The ARG-MEU also has the ability to conduct split operations, allowing for the execution of multiple missions in parallel throughout the 5th Fleet AOR.

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USMC Photo by Capt. Paul Duncan

A Marine Corp CH-46 Sea Knight from HMM-165 (REIN), 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit performs a main mount hover on a road too narrow for a full landing in the southern province of Sindh, Pakistan to deliver relief supplies during humanitarian assistance operations.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Edwardo Proano

Rear Adm. Sinclair Harris, Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 5, chats with Sailors on the Mess Decks in July. Harris ultimately embarked Peleliu as the command and control ship leading HA/DR missions in Pakistan.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC3 Omar Dominguez

U.S. Consul General to Pakistan, William Martin, addresses a group of Pakistani media on the flight deck the day of the commencement of the HA/DR mission.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 John W. Shepherd, II

Vice Adm. Michael LeFever, Commander, Office of the Defense Representative – Pakistan, leads Capt. Mark Cedrun and other U.S. Naval Academy graduates in a "Go Navy – Beat Army" spirit spot for CBS Sports. LeFever visited Peleliu at the conclusion of their relief operations.



# Dubuque

## U.S., Turkish Forces Free Crew of Pirated Vessel in Gulf of Aden

By MC1 David McKee  
*USS Dubuque*

USS Dubuque (LPD 8), guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59), and Turkish frigate TCG Gokceada (F-494) stopped a hijacking by pirates on motor vessel (M/V) Magellan Star on Sept 9.

The raid was led by Force Reconnaissance Marines assigned to the 15th MEU, with support from Dubuque's Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) team.

The Marines boarded the hijacked vessel from Navy Special Warfare rigid-hull inflatable boats. Snipers from Marine Corps Battalion Landing Team 1/4 provided protection from their position on the Dubuque; helicopters from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (Reinforced) also provided aerial support.

The suspected pirates requested money for the vessel, and attempted to mechanically disable the M/V Magellan Star, but the raid force still captured the vessel relatively unharmed.

The M/V Magellan Star's crew, though confined to the hot engineering space without food, water, or a bathroom, was not powerless

against the attackers. They responded by cutting the power to the ship, which left it dead in the water.

The suspected pirates were arrested and taken to the Princeton. The 11 rescued crew members resumed control of the German-owned vessel, flagged from Antigua and Barbuda.

"The evolution to gain control of the M/V Magellan Star from suspected pirates is a tremendous example of what an international Coalition Task Force can accomplish when united in purpose," said Captain Christopher Bolt, Dubuque's commanding officer.

Dubuque was operating under Combined Task Force 151, a multinational task force established to conduct counterpiracy operations and actively deter, disrupt and suppress piracy in order to protect global maritime security and secure freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations.



The crew of the Magellan Star was rescued by 15th MEU Marines Sept. 9. U.S. Navy Photo



U.S. Navy Photo by Cmdr. Christopher Nodine

Marines assigned to the U.S. 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Maritime Raid Force, embarked aboard U.S. Navy amphibious transport dock ship USS Dubuque (LPD 8), board the motor vessel M/V Magellan Star during a board and seizure operation. The Marines took nine suspected pirates into custody and transferred them to the guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59). The ship's eleven crew members resumed control of Magellan Star. Pirates took control of the ship Sept. 8.

## Dubuque Earns Safety Award

By MC1 David McKee  
USS Dubuque

USS Dubuque (LPD 8) was recognized as one of 21 recipients of the 2010 Secretary of the Navy Safety Excellence Award for the amphibious class of warships.

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus congratulated the commands who received the awards in a message released Sept. 10.

“What you have accomplished in the last year is proof-positive of your ‘mission first, safety always’ command culture and your commitment to each other, safety excellence, the nation, and the advent of the Department of the Navy as a world class safety organization,” Mabus said.

“Safety is an all-hands process and we use all our tools effectively to do everything we do safely,” said Dubuque’s safety officer, Lt. Cmdr. Doyle Flannery. “We have safety observers on station for all evolutions and having leadership involved goes a long way in maintaining safety.”

Recipients have the right to fly the SECNAV Safety Excellence flag for one year.

Earlier this year, Dubuque also earned the Chief of Naval Operations Safety Award for the fourth consecutive year.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC1 David McKee  
Kuwaiti Assistant Undersecretary for Border and Security Affairs, Maj. Gen. Mohamed Al-Sabah, OMC-Kuwait Chief Air Force Brig. Gen. Gregory Touhill, Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 5, Rear Adm. Sinclair Harris and Head of Operations Department, Kuwait Coast Guard Capt. Sheik Mubarak Al-Sabah tour enlisted berthing spaces on USS Dubuque (LPD 8) Aug. 2.

# PEARL HARBOR

## Skiff Capsizes

*Combined Maritime Forces Public Affairs*

USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), assigned to Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, identified a skiff drifting in the Gulf of Aden Sept. 26.

The skiff was carrying approximately 85 passengers, consisting of 10 Somalis and 75 Ethiopians.

Once on station, CTF 151 commander, Turkish navy Rear Adm. Sinan Ertugrul, directed Winston S. Churchill to render assistance to the skiff. Using a rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB), Churchill crew members boarded the skiff and immediately rendered assistance, providing food and water to the skiff's passengers.

While transferring humanitarian supplies to the skiff, the passengers rushed to one side and the skiff began taking on water, quickly capsizing and sinking rapidly, leaving all 85 passengers in the water.

Winston S. Churchill immediately began conducting search and rescue operations using an additional RHIB assisted by an Australian maritime patrol aircraft.

Despite the effort, approximately 13 passengers drowned, while 62 passengers were rescued and brought safely on board Winston S. Churchill.

The rescued persons were transferred to USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) on Sept. 29. The amphibious dock landing ship's larger size made the Pearl Harbor better-equipped to accommodate the large group. While the rescued persons were onboard, Sailors and Marines worked tirelessly providing support throughout their stay. The crew ensured their safety, provided medical care, and prepared meals and activities for these displaced persons.

In a display of compassion and generosity, Sailors and Marines donated clothing items. The rescued persons were safely transferred ashore on Nov. 5, after 38 days on Pearl Harbor.



*U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Michael Russell*  
Cmdr. David K. Guluzian, left, and Cmdr. Homer R. Denius III salute the ensign as the national anthem is played during their change of command ceremony aboard USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52).



# Midshipmen Learn About Life at Sea Aboard Pearl Harbor

Story and photos by MC2 Michael Russell  
USS Pearl Harbor

U.S. Naval Academy midshipmen embarked amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) July 29 to familiarize themselves with life at sea aboard a U.S. Navy ship.

Every summer, midshipmen embark ships to experience life at sea, learning day to day routine and about Navy life. They receive hands-on training, stand watches around the ship, and learn about shipboard organization, administration, ship systems and standard naval safety procedures.

Midshipman 3rd Class Kyle Burdick, of Los Angeles, noted the incredible amounts of responsibility young Sailors are given in comparison to their civilian counterparts.

“The junior guys onboard have a lot of responsibility for being brand new [to the Navy],” said Burdick. “I was very impressed by how much responsibility young Sailors who just got out of boot camp have on this ship.”

While she was a midshipman, Lt.j.g. Elizabeth Adkins, Pearl Harbor’s training officer, completed her summer training on USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49).

She credits the training with helping her understand what life would be like as a Surface Warfare Officer.

“This summer, the midshipmen are learning about enlisted Sailors and once commissioned, they will be able to take what they have learned from this training and apply it when they become a division officer,” said Adkins.

Having just completed their plebe year at the Naval Academy, the midshipmen are anxious to see what the Navy is really like.

“They seem really excited and eager to learn,” said Adkins. “They are showing up to their watches and various evolutions with a great attitude and staying engaged at all times.”

The Pearl Harbor midshipmen are also learning the importance of military courtesies, smartness, and discipline in addition to familiarizing themselves with many aspects of Navy ships, including Damage Control Central and Preventative Maintenance System

(PMS).

After spending a few days observing the different departments on Pearl Harbor, Midshipman 3rd Class Ryan Ewanchew, of Miami found the engineering department most impressive.

“Of all the spaces we have been in so far, I have a lot of respect for the engineers on this ship. They work in really hot spaces and the work they do is fantastic,” said Ewanchew.

The midshipmen will train on Pearl Harbor for approximately two weeks before returning to the U.S. Naval Academy.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Michael Russell

Hull Technician 1st Class Gregory Ellis, left, teaches midshipmen about the importance of damage control, from damage control central aboard amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52). Midshipmen are undergoing summer training aboard Pearl Harbor to familiarize themselves with life at sea aboard a U.S. Navy ship.



U.S. Navy Photo by MC2 Michael Russell

Operations Specialist Seaman Cortney Jackson, right, demonstrates how to plot a course on a chart for Midshipman 3rd Class Ryan Ewanchew aboard USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52).

5th Fleet's Area of Responsibility encompasses 2.5 million square miles of water and includes the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman and parts of the Indian Ocean

