

December 5, 2010

# PELIGNEWS

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# FROM THE DECK PLATES



By CMDCM  
(SW/AW/SS)  
Brent Williams

“ALOHA”

Can you believe it, we are almost mission complete, only a few more things to get done. The ship is looking great and there is a lot of preservation and painting getting done as well. I'm sure the Tigers will be impressed. Let's keep the press on and keep it safe and moving in the right direction.

Over the past several days, we have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to have three Fleet and Family Support Center counselors onboard providing some great information concerning our return to home port. I would like to thank Ernesto, Kerra, and Tammie for the super flexibility and support they have provided to the crew.

As all of you look back over the past seven months, I think first, you should be very proud of the ship and all of her accomplishments. The achievements of this crew have been amazing; you have excelled in all areas. As you prepare to reintegrate yourselves back into the home port mode, please do not lose sight of the progress that has been made out here.

Let's all get back, relax, and look forward to the next chapters of our lives and our

careers. As I have stated in the past, always have a plan, think before you get out there and make a poor decision that could greatly tarnish all that we have accomplished. Prepare yourself for some frustrations, setbacks, and complications. The completion of a seven month deployment doesn't mean that life has changed. Before you know it, the routine will begin again and we'll face the next series of challenges such as the 3M assessment, ULTRA-S and other things. Start getting ready now.

I wish you all a safe and steady journey home. Best of luck to all of you. Now bring on the Tigers!!!

## On the Cover



Peleliu plows through high seas as it transits across the south Pacific at the conclusion of a Western Pacific deployment. Photo by Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class (AW) David Turnham.



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# MCPON Sends 2010

## Holiday Message to the Fleet

Special from Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/SW) Rick D. West



WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)(SS/SW) Rick D. West released the following Holiday message to the fleet Dec. 1:

“Shipmates and Navy Families,

In anticipation of the holiday season, I would like to take a few minutes to wish you ‘happy holidays’ and to thank you and our Navy families for the outstanding service and support that you provide our great Navy and nation every day. I could not be more proud of you!

As you know I’m a competitor, and this holiday season I have a challenge for each of you. Are you up for it? The challenge is simple. Be mindful of your shipmates’ holiday plans and don’t leave any shipmate behind. Take the time to find out what plans your shipmates have over the holidays. No one should be left alone sitting aboard a ship, in the barracks or at home. You’ve worked hard all year and so have they. Just as our nation supports

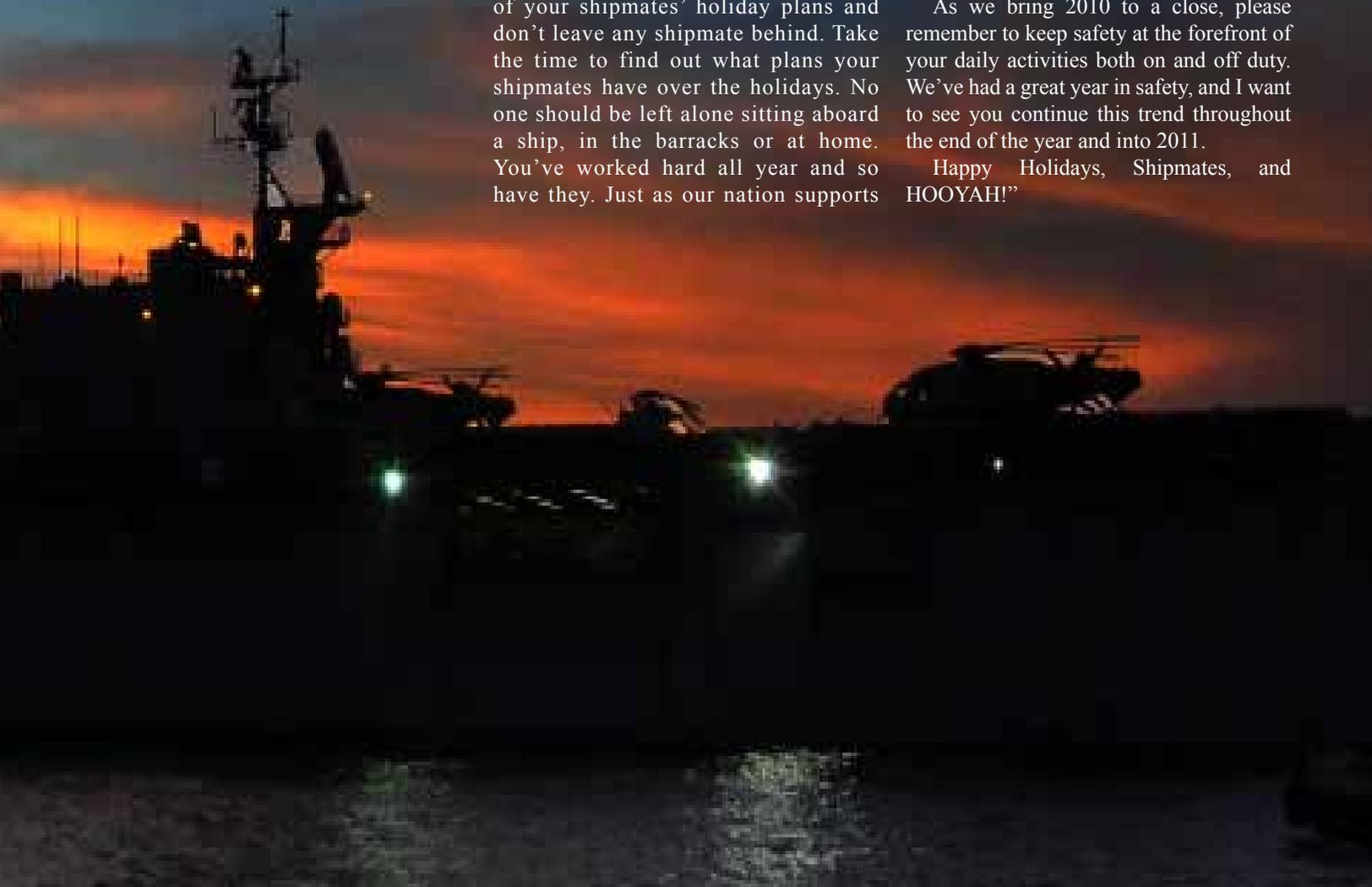
us and our Navy, let’s support each other by making this season one where we are providing our shipmates with the best holiday memories that we can as a Navy family.

Take on this challenge and you’ll receive the gift of pride knowing that we each contributed towards making this a memorable and joyous holiday season for our entire Navy family.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention and thank those out doing the job. Today, thousands of our shipmates are deployed around the world vigilantly keeping the watch and ready to answer our nation’s call. Thank you for working hard for our nation’s freedom.

As we bring 2010 to a close, please remember to keep safety at the forefront of your daily activities both on and off duty. We’ve had a great year in safety, and I want to see you continue this trend throughout the end of the year and into 2011.

Happy Holidays, Shipmates, and HOOYAH!”



# Ceremony Marks End of Pakistan Flood

By Jim Garamone, *American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 2010 – U.S. troops supporting the humanitarian relief effort to flood-stricken Pakistan ended their mission today.

Pakistani officials hosted a ceremony marking the occasion in Islamabad, the country's capital.

At the end of operations, 18 U.S. military helicopters and about 350 U.S. servicemembers were conducting airlift missions.

"This was not the beginning, and it was not the end. This is a continuation of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship," said Lt. Gen. Asif Yasin Malik, commander of the Pakistan army's 11th Corps.

At the effort's peak, the United States deployed 26 helicopters, multiple C-130 and C-17 cargo aircraft and several hundred servicemembers working in close partnership with Pakistani military forces. The floods affected more than 20 million people in Pakistan beginning in July.

"We have been honored to partner with the military forces of Pakistan to bring aid and comfort for those in need," said Army Brig. Gen. Michael Nagata, deputy commander of Office of the Defense Representative to Pakistan and the deployed Task Force commander. "The support, camaraderie and spirit of cooperation and

shared effort have been extraordinary."

U.S. officials stressed that while the military humanitarian effort is ending, the United States will continue financial relief. The U.S. government is providing more than \$571 million to assist Pakistan with relief and recovery efforts for flood victims.

The Islamabad ceremony was a chance to thank the combined and joint task force of U.S. and Pakistani military and civilian aid agencies, who provided food, shelter and aerial evacuation for tens of thousands of Pakistanis affected by the floods.

American helicopters delivered humanitarian aid to villages cut off by the flooding of the Indus River. Choppers also rescued more than 40,000 Pakistanis during the past five months of operations. Air Force C-130s and C-17 cargo aircraft delivered bulk goods to distribution sites around the country.

U.S. aircraft delivered more than 25 million pounds of relief supplies during the operation.

When the floods struck, Army helicopters from neighboring Afghanistan were among the first international aircraft on the scene. Marine helicopters from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the USS Peleliu replaced the Army helicopters by the end of September. Helicopters from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit joined the effort in September.

The U.S. military humanitarian effort worked closely with



# Relief Operations

Pakistani military and civilian authorities to ensure the aid got where it was needed, when it was needed, Defense Department officials said. Servicemembers also worked closely with international aid organizations to transport goods and people.

Unusually heavy monsoon rains triggered the floods through the Swat River Valley -- an area that was a key battleground against the Pakistani Taliban last year. Flooding proceeded downstream, spilling out of the country's tribal areas to its more populous provinces.

The effort now shifts to recovery and reconstruction, and U.S. embassy officials promised to help in the tasks that lie ahead.



Photo by MC3(SW) Ian Campbell

Marines assigned to Combat Cargo load Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) supplies, bound for Pakistan, into a MH-60S Seahawk aboard Peleliu.

# Kill That Track, If It Flies, It Dies

Story by MC2 Edwardo Proano

“Kill that track” is a common command given aboard Peleliu whenever the Air Defense Kings classify an air contact as hostile. It means destroy the contact.

The Air Defense Kings are a team of senior Sailors aboard the ship in charge of defending the ship from airborne enemies. The team is composed of Senior Chief Fire Controlman (SW/AW) Ray “Woodpecker” Watson, Senior Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Roderick “Haka” Florentino, Senior Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Joseph “Pretty Joe” Fernandez, Chief Fire Controlman Michael “Moody” Jacobs and Information Systems Technician 1st Class (SW/AW) Anthony “Beef Cake” Melton.

They use information gathered from radars and intelligence to analyze and determine if air contacts’ intentions are friendly or hostile. If the

intentions look hostile, the ship’s weapon’s coordinator informs the Tactical Action Officer (TAO), who gives the order to attack.

“We are the liaison between the raw data and the TAO, and our primary duty is to defend the ship from any hostile air contact,” said Florentino. “We gather, disseminate and process the information to determine the contacts’ intentions.”

When it comes to preventing an attack from the enemy, the Air Defense Kings don’t hesitate to strike first, using the ship’s defensive weapons systems like the Close-In Weapon System or Rolling Airframe Missile.

“We cannot afford to take a hit,” said Watson. “All confirmed hostile contacts must be destroyed when release authority is given.”

To make sure the information collected is correct, it is compared to the information gathered from the other ships in the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group, USS Dubuque (LPD 8) and USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52). Peleliu is the air defense commander for the other ships and maintains communications with them. Peleliu has access to all the information gathered by Dubuque and Pearl Harbor.

“What is so unique about us, is that we are the ship’s air defense commander and we are also in charge of the other ships,” said

Fernandez. We gather their information and match it with ours to better classify air contacts.”

The challenge of classifying contacts is finding the right information. The enemy could be mistakenly considered friendly, and then the ship could be attacked by surprise.

“One of the challenges we face in our job is classifying contacts. To prevent mistakes, we gather information from all the sensors, radars and intel before we determine if they are enemies,” Fernandez said.

The title of Air Defense Kings was originated in 2008, when Florentino and Watson thought it sounded right for the team since they are the senior Sailors in charge of defending the ship from airborne threats. They like to say, referring to enemy contacts, “If it flies, it dies.”



Photo by MC2 Edwardo Proano

Peleliu's Air Kings, from left to right, back row: FCC Michael “Moody” Jacobs, FCCS Ray “Woodpecker” Watson, ITCS Roderick “Haka” Florentino, front row: ITCS Joseph “Pretty Joe” Fernandez and IT1 Anthony “Beef Cake” Melton.

# Information Super Highway Traffic Jam

By MC3 Foster Bamford

Ding-ding, ding-ding, ding-ding. "Ship's work."

www.facebook.com ... enter ...

"Anyone notice how slow the Internet is lately?"

Believe it or not, it was worse on the ship's last deployment.

"For the last week, we've been experiencing connectivity problems," said Chief Information Systems Technician (SW) Steve Hill. "All the tests that we've done in-house, show that it's not us."

Hill said his people have done everything they can to fix the problem.

"It's hard because it's not something we can control here all the time. A lot of times, it's a problem on shore," he said. "At least 80 percent of the time this deployment, it's been something we can't control. Last deployment was a-whole-nother story."

In 2008, the ship's Internet service ran on about a quarter of the bandwidth that it has this time around.

"Right now, we're operating at about 8 megabytes per second (mbps). Last deployment we peaked at 2mbps," said Hill. "The funny thing is, some of the people who were here in '08 are complaining about the speed now."

The speed problems plaguing the network lately started around the time we chopped back into 7th Fleet. According to Hill, we were running at the same speed while in 5th Fleet, but for some reason, the satellite keeps resetting our connection, and that is what's causing the lack of speed. That, paired with the amount of users can cause a bit of a traffic jam.

"We literally have 2000 customers," said Hill. Hence, the ship secures Facebook during working hours to improve connectivity for mission and work-related communication.

According to Hill, Facebook takes up a large portion of the ship's bandwidth. He realizes the impact it and other Web sites have on the crew's morale.

"Giving everyone the ability to e-mail, Facebook, do

their banking, all that stuff is one of the most important things we do," he said.

Hill and Senior Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Joseph Fernandez both pointed out that their folks work hard to make sure everyone can stay online.

"No one likes to be disconnected, especially ITs," said Fernandez.

The ability to stay connected on deployment is a luxury that, while often taken for granted now, wasn't always available.

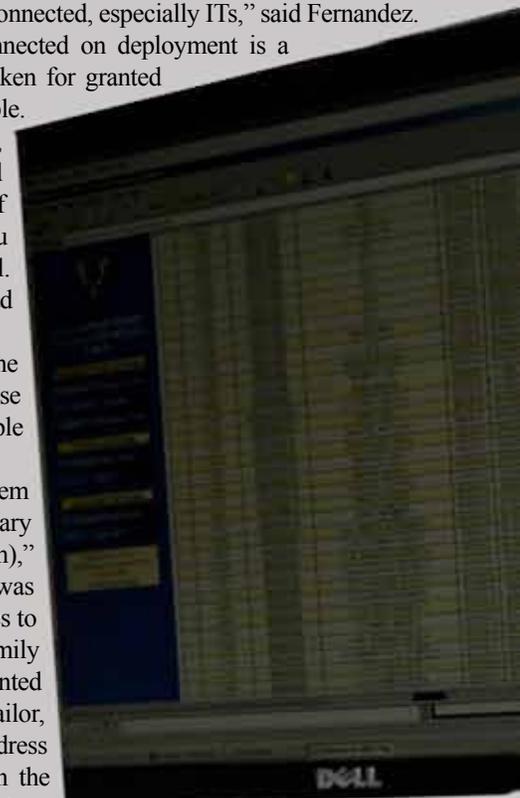
"Back in the day, internet usage was limited to certain paygrades. So if you were a blue-shirt you didn't have internet at all. Only E-7 and above had internet," said Fernandez.

Hill said that even in the early days, they tried to use the Internet to keep people connected.

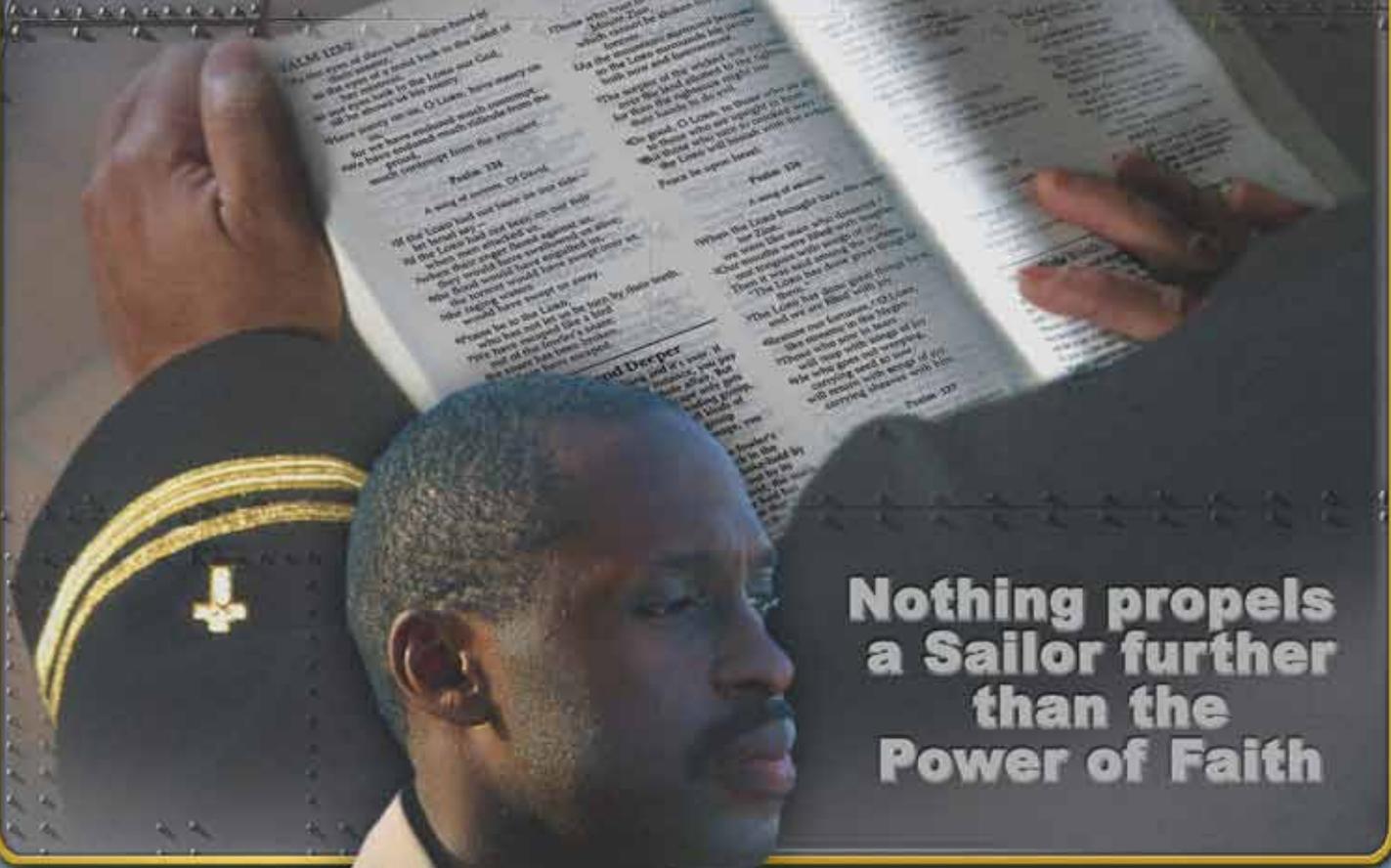
"We used to have a system called MARS (military affiliate radio system)," he said, "where there was basically one e-mail address to the ship, and friends and family back on the shore that wanted to correspond with their Sailor, could e-mail them, and address it like a letter. Our job on the ship was printing all of those e-mails up and find out who they're supposed to go to and route them to their division or department."

Fernandez recognizes the importance of both sides of his job.

"No one likes to miss a birthday or an anniversary. No one likes to miss a child's birth. Being able to stay connected helps soften that. It's a big thing to keep families connected," said Fernandez, "But we also have our mission. From a tactical standpoint, we keep everyone connected so that they can share the same data, so that everything is consistent. From Engineering to Supply to Admin to Operations, everything depends on the Internet now."



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