

PELENEWS

December 9, 2012

Expeditionary Unit selects Sailors of the Year



15th MEU's Sailors of the Year: Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Spencer C. McCartney, Bluejacket Sailor of the Year, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Wendell Tabios, Junior Sailor of the Year and Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ryan G. Hachez, Senior Sailor of the Year.

Photos and story by Cpl. John Robbart III
15th MEU Staff Writer

Corpsman up! Many Marines don't realize the hard work their unit's corpsmen put in day in and day out. Three Sailors with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit were recently recognized for their superior achievement over the past year as hospital corpsmen.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ryan G. Hachez, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Wendell Tabios and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Spencer C. McCartney, have all been recognized as the 15th MEU's Sailors of the Year. On a Sailor of the Year board, the categories are divided into three levels: bluejacket, for ranks of seaman recruit through seaman; junior Sailor, for ranks of petty officer third class and petty officer second class; and senior Sailor, for the rank of petty officer first class. Six competed, and each of their packages were carefully reviewed by the Navy senior enlisted leaders within the MEU.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ryan G. Hachez, leading petty officer, Health Services Detachment, Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 15th MEU, is a nine-year veteran of the Navy and sets the example for his 20 junior corpsmen every day.

"I was really happy when I found out about the award," said Hachez, a 30-year-old native of Vista, Calif. "The award has a lot to do with my Sailors. They have a lot of initiative and dedication, and me being submitted as one of the MEU's Sailors of the year is really a reflection of their hard work."

Hachez is notorious in his detachment for pushing his Sailors hard, but he is also known for

pushing himself even harder.

"There's an old saying in the Navy," said Hachez with a smile. "Last Person Out is what LPO really stands for," he added in reference to the acronym for his billet of leading petty officer.

He takes full responsibility for training his Sailors as corpsmen and ensuring they earn their Navy qualifications. One of the many goals he has for them is for them to all earn their Fleet Marine Force, Air Warfare and Surface Warfare qualifications, an achievement that will make his Sailors more competitive for promotion as they progress in rank.

Hachez holds many collateral duties such as command assistant substance abuse and control officer, uniformed victim advocate, career development team leader and fitness leader. As the fitness leader, he is the only Sailor in the command qualified to monitor a physical readiness test and measure individuals who don't meet weight standards. Additionally, the UVA and assistant SACO are typically roles held by staff non-commissioned officers in the Marine Corps, which demonstrate Hachez's versatility as a senior Sailor.

"Hachez is an awesome [petty officer first class]," said Chief Petty Officer Hadrian V. Wei, leading chief petty officer, HSD, CLB-15, 15th MEU. "I am very lucky he came to the unit. As soon as he came here, he got to work right away looking out for his Sailors and the HSD's mission," added the 38-year-old native of Daly City, Calif.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Wendell Tabios, hospital corpsman, Command Element, 15th

MEU, was named the junior Sailor of the Year award for the MEU. A father of two, Tabios said he wished his family could have been with him when he received the news.

"I am truly grateful for the leaders who have recognized the hard work the 15th MEU medical team and I have put in over the past year," he said.

Tabios, currently on his fifth deployment, has involved himself in his command and community as much as he is involved as a corpsman. He served as the senior medical department representative during a four-month gap of the senior enlisted leader and continues to serve as the MEU's medical readiness coordinator.

"Tabios is a rare breed," said Senior Chief Petty Officer James D. Helt, medical planner and Navy senior enlisted leader, Command Element, 15th MEU. "He's the giver. He truly cares for his Marines. You can see it through his daily contributions of his character, influence and professionalism. Those contributions to the Navy-Marine Corps team are our guiding principles," added the 41-year-old native of Des Moines, Iowa.

In addition to being a well-rounded Sailor, Tabios, an eight-year veteran of the Navy, was recently awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for the immediate response he took when responding to a head-on collision on Camp Pendleton in July.

According to the award citation, "after arriving on scene, he immediately took charge and began initial assessment and treatment. Using his training

Continued Sailors of the Year, page 5.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

PELELIU SAPR POC:

NCCS SUSAN GARROW Ext 7567

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:

Any Chaplain; Victim Advocates (VA):

Lt. Nicole Schwegman
Lt. j.g. Andrea Goldstein
HMC Jody Lacefield
AO1 Jennifer Martin
AO1 Benjamin Callen
LS1 Vermita Foster
AE1 Jeffrey Ritchie
ABH2 Donell Viree
HM2 Janice Sapaden
OS2 Canon Deimerly
PR2 Cassandra Cox

Someone I Care About Has Been Sexually Assaulted

Ensure the victim is at a safe location away from the perpetrator. If not, ask if they would like you to take them to a safe place. If they feel there is an immediate threat to their safety, ask if they'd like you to contact military law enforcement or local police. Be aware that contacting law enforcement impacts the victim's reporting options.

Ask if they'd like to seek medical care. If the victim requires less than emergency care, help them get to a medical provider as soon as possible.

Encourage the victim to report the incident to the 24/7 SAPR Hotline or Safe Helpline. It might also be helpful to familiarize yourself with available reporting options.

If asking questions, stick to safety and health-related questions. Refrain from asking for details about the incident. Avoid using "why" questions, which can sound judgmental.

Be aware of self-destructive ways of coping, which are sometimes warning signs that your friend should consider seeking professional assistance: alcohol abuse, drug use, suicidal statements

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to recover from a sexual assault. However, don't be afraid to suggest to the victim that they might benefit from contacting a trained professional to help them develop healthier and more productive coping strategies.

Rushmore Holds Change of Command



Cmdr. Brian Finman passes through ceremonial sideboys after being relieved as commanding officer of USS Rushmore (LSD 47) Dec. 1.

Photo and Story by MC3 (SW/AW) Shawnte Bryan
Rushmore Public Affairs

Amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47) welcomed a new commander during a change of command ceremony held on the ship's flight deck, Dec. 1.

Cmdr. Tate Robinson relieved Cmdr. Brian Finman as commanding officer.

"My relief, Cmdr. Tate Robinson, is a very accomplished surface warfare officer," said Finman. "I will leave the ship feeling deeply honored to have had the opportunity to command this fantastic crew and a strong sense of confidence in Rushmore's future. It's a great ship with strong momentum in the right direction."

Robinson, a Murfreesboro, Tenn. native, graduated from Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island in 1991. He attended the University of Memphis where he graduated with a mathematics degree and received his commission in May 1996. In January 2008, he was selected to attend the Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC). While assigned to CGSC, he earned a Master's Degree in Military Arts and Science (Military History). He recently served as executive

officer aboard USS Green Bay (LPD 20) from November 2011 to November 2012.

"Thank you, Cmdr. Finman, for your hard work in leading this crew out of the mid-life upgrade, through [Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey] INSURV, workups and finally an excellent start to this deployment," said Robinson. "For the officers, chief petty officers, and crew of the Rushmore, I look forward to working with you as we continue to conquer all tasks and trials."

Finman will soon report to the staff of commander, Amphibious Squadron Three, aboard the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) flagship, amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5). He will serve as the acting deputy commodore until the end of deployment. After deployment, he will transfer to shore duty at Expeditionary Strike Group Seven in Okinawa, Japan as the operations officer.

"Since I will be reporting to staff, I will remain somewhat in proximity to my favorite ship in the Navy," said Finman. "I look forward to our paths crossing again at some point in the future. Until then, fair winds to all of the Rushmore Sailors, families, and friends."

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Peleliu Sailors, Marines learn Capoeira



Sailors and Marines participate in a Brazilian martial art known as Capoeira in the hangar bay of USS Peleliu.

Photo and Story by MC3 Alex Van'tLeven
Peleliu Staff Writer

Students gather under the orange glow of the hangar bay lights and take their place on the makeshift dojo floor laid down on the non-skid.

Although similar, it's not the usual afternoon scene of Marines practicing take downs or disarming mock enemies.

Sailors and Marines aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) had a unique opportunity to participate in Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art, that combines dances with fighting styles. This martial art provides another way of fitness while learning a new skill.

With mats laid out, a group in mix-matched physical training apparel stretches as another group stands ready. Next the music starts and the dance begins.

"What draws most people initially is the fanciness and acrobatics they see on TV and in movies," said Aviation Support Equipment Technician 2nd Class Juan Diaz, one of the two instructors on board. "We don't go as far as to teach all of that. But what usually keeps people interested is the same thing that kept me interested. It is the history behind it and the real reasons why Capoeira exists and it brings people together."

The three-month course occurs twice a week for approximately one to two hours to anyone who would like to learn, or improve their current skills.

"I felt really slow at first like I was crawling and just learning to stand up. Even though it's just basic, it still requires a lot of thought," said Fireman Ana Parada, a Capoeira student. "I haven't notice any improvement, but I do feel like I'm catching up and learning more each session."

The students learn combat defensive moves

in a form of rhythm and dance. As they progress, participants use the techniques through sparring.

"I wasn't really hesitant. I've wanted to do it for a while, ever since I stopped boxing when I was 16. I love the sport and learning martial arts was next on my list," said Parada. "I felt really excited and pumped up when we started because I love learning new moves and seeing how far I can push my body into doing something new."

The art of Capoeira originates from a colonial Brazilian society that prohibited slaves and other citizens from practicing martial arts. Founders created the dance form to conceal its real purpose as a hand-to-hand combat skill.

"The slavery that existed in Brazil in its colonial days was about three times greater than it was in the United States," said Diaz. "Learning the history, learning how to play the music, and learning Capoeira gave me so much more respect for life itself. For me to be able to teach it gives me a great sense of satisfaction."

For some of the students attending the bi-weekly training sessions this is not the first experience they have had with the Capoeira.

"I use to do this when I was five years old, way back in the day, and I always intended to do it again. I saw the flyer and thought, wow I really need to jump on this," said Staff Sgt. Hernany O. Conceicao, originally from São Paulo, Brazil. "It is fun, and it brings in culture from my home country with the music and the atmosphere."

The dance requires constant movement with hand-to-eye coordination as well as a heightened mental attitude.

"Capoeira helps to balance your mind. It's not just a martial art. It's kind of like you're playing chess inside the game," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Andre Tyree, the second instructor. "It helps relieve stress and it teaches you things that you never thought you could do before."

The training involved can also improve other aspects of their lives.

"I have definitely seen the positive impacts in general on how I take my day-to-day routine," added Parada, "I feel more focused and calm when I study and I can think quicker ahead of time when a situation comes up."

Instructors feel that Capoeira has additional benefits to Peleliu's everyday routines while deployed.

"It's a really great way to pass time, and it's a fun way to stay in shape. You work on cardio, but since you're having so much fun you don't realize it," said Diaz. "It's a great way to build camaraderie, everybody starts to have fun, and socialize. It's really a great atmosphere."

For more information and schedules about the class, contact Diaz at extension 7317.

CMC's Corner



QMCM (SW/AW) Robert Barber
Command Master Chief, USS Peleliu (LHA 5)

Yo! What's Up?

This week I thought we would talk a little bit about the CO's suggestion box. First let's talk about what it is for. The CO's suggestion box is an avenue for you to address your concerns directly with the commanding officer. There are two located on the ship, one is outside my office, and the other one is located on the port side just below the ladder well leading to the gym on the 01 level. I make it a habit to check these at least once a week.

What happens to your suggestions? That is an awesome question. Once I remove your letter or note from the box I read the suggestion and then take them directly to the commanding officer. I read each one so I can begin the process of determining what we, the chain of command, can do regarding your suggestion. At this point I begin to develop a plan that I brief to the CO once I present your letter or note to him.

The CO and I will discuss what options are available and develop a solution. Once the CO has made his decision, I begin the process of addressing your suggestion. The CO will also directly respond to you, provided you have signed your suggestion. If you did not sign your suggestion, then there is a strong possibility that no action will be taken. However, this is not always the case. For example, I had a nameless suggestion to get Facebook turned on for limited times frames. As you will soon discover this suggestion has been considered.

In closing, you don't have to sign your suggestion, but if you want to guarantee that your it is addressed by the commanding officer, then I suggest you sign it. And why not, you took the effort to put in the suggestion, why not take credit for it?

Keep up all the great work you are doing!

CMC

Sailors, Marines Spin aboard Peleliu



Quartermaster 2nd Class Nicholas Goyeneche leads a spin class aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5).

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

Sailors and Marines will now be able to join the new spin class aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5). Quartermaster 2nd Class Nicholas Goyeneche, who has been spinning since 2007 to train for triathlons, leads the class.

Spinning is another form of stationary cycling where a variety of music tempos and beats drive participants to match with speed, resistance and intensity for a 45-minute session. The intervals fit the pace of the selected song, based on rhythm or changing melody, similar to a choreographed dance.

During the classes Goyeneche demonstrate the proper posture and safety precautions for spinning to new and veteran cyclists, or “spinnners.”

“Body posture is very important,” said Goyeneche. “This is a lower body exercise, so you have to make sure your upper body is relaxed.”

He also guides the class through a high intensity and quick recovery style workouts with rest intervals to trigger different leg muscles. While challenging, the workout is low impact on body joints.

Many people aboard Peleliu listen to music in the gym for motivation, but spin class takes it to another level. The workouts use old and new music, from “Burn Baby

Burn” by Ash and Michael Jackson’s “Don’t Stop Til You Get Enough” to “Glad You Came” by The Wanted, to drive the tempo and intensity. The workouts require cyclists to change pedal resistance and revolutions per minute. Through slower tempos and build-ups to higher tempos, the spinners increase the resistance to simulate cycling up a hill. Typically, Goyeneche can be heard calling out “Don’t give up! We’re almost to the top!”

Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Fuel) 1st Class Sean Soledad prefers cardio on the bicycle while underway.

“I don’t like to run while at sea with all the rocking and rolling of the ship. The spin class allows me to get a cardio workout,” said Soledad. “It’s fast-paced, you sweat, and it’s overall a great workout.”

One of the benefits of spin class is that it can cause a release of endorphins known as a “runner’s high.” According to the Webster’s dictionary, endorphins are “any of a group of hormones with tranquilizing and pain-killing capabilities that are secreted by the brain.” In short spinning can provide another way for a deployed Sailor or Marine to reduce stress, frustration, and aggression.

Spin classes are in the gym on Sundays at noon and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact Goyeneche at ext. 5770.

#LOOSE LIPS

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class *Part 12*
(SG) T. Grout, *PeleNews contributor*

Blake sent a quick tweet as Stephanie walked to his table. “I wasn’t sure if you’d show up. I saw your message and felt so embarrassed I couldn’t respond.”

“I wasn’t going to show up. But you didn’t respond and I felt bad just not showing up. What if we ran into each other at the gym? ‘Awkward’.”

“Can I get you something?” Blake asked expecting Stephanie to say no.

“Sure. How about an upside down nonfat two pump caramel macchiato? Oh, and a piece of pumpkin bread, if it’s not too much.” said Stephanie.

Meanwhile outside of Stephanie’s apartment was Blake’s team “VACANCY1,” waiting for his tweet that said “CLEAR.” Upon receipt, two girls in their thirties sporting JanSport backpacks and wearing iPod earphones chatted while they walked to Stephanie’s front door and knocked. After a moment, one removed a small device from her pocket and within four seconds both were standing inside the foyer. It took less than ten minutes to place the devices in each room and inside the computer. As quickly and quietly as they arrived, they departed.

As Blake walked back carrying drinks - and the bread - to where he and Stephanie were sitting his phone vibrated. He set the food down and viewed his cell as Stephanie took her first sip. “COMPLETE” it read. He placed the phone facedown on the table.

“I’m sorry if I startled you with my Facebook post the other day. It’s just that I feel like I’ve known you for years. You’re so easy to talk to and I was excited to meet with you again.” Blake said.

“I’m flattered but it took me aback a little. I guess I didn’t expect it” Stephanie said. “I didn’t know how to process it. I don’t know if I told you before but I’ll be deploying in like three weeks. I’m going home next week to see my family and then I’m only back a few days before I leave. I didn’t plan on having a relationship. It sounded like you were looking for more than what I am willing to give.”

“Stephanie,” Blake said, the softness of his eyes matching his voice, “me more than anyone can relate to deployment relationships. I can’t blame my wife on my failed marriage. I had a part to play. I was younger and more foolish. It sucks that I met you now of all times. And I respect your fears and concerns. And the truth of the matter is I just want to spend time with you. If something grows then great. If not, well, sure I’ll be bummed, but from where I sit you’re worth the risk of my heart being hurt. How about we just see how things go?” Blake thought it sounded pretty good. Just enough to keep her intrigued but not too much to scare her away. Her pause and twinge of a smile appeared promising.

“I...”

Sailors of the Year, continued from page 1.

and experience, he applied a c-collar to one incapacitated victim, assessed four other injuries, and with the assistance of two Marines, carefully extracted the patient from the burning vehicle.”

“I was just doing my job,” said Tabios. “I saw some people who needed help, so I stopped and helped.”

The 36-year-old Sailor’s commitment to continued education and life-long learning is evident in his attainment of a bachelor’s degree in health science and is carried over to educating his Sailors. Training the stretcher bearers aboard Peleliu on treating of sucking chest wounds, controlling bleeding and monitoring airways are examples periods of instruction Tabios conduct regularly to ensure they medical professionals aboard Peleliu remain sharp. He also provided administrative training to the MEU’s junior corpsmen on their medical readiness reporting system.

“He’s the go-to-guy,” said Helt. “He’d give you the shirt off his back, and to me, that’s rare these days.”

Twenty-two-year-old Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Spencer C. McCartney is the 15th MEU’s Blue Jacket Sailor of the Year and serves as the corpsman for the 81mm Mortar/Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel Platoon, Weapons Company, Battalion Landing Team 3/5, 15th MEU.

“I am very excited to be selected as the bluejacket Sailor of the Year,” said McCartney. “It’s been a hectic [pre-deployment], and I’m glad to see my hard work pay off,” added the native of Sandpoint, Idaho.

McCartney is known in his command for putting forth extra effort and taking a leadership role. His determined dedication to duty contributed to Weapons Company currently having the highest medical readiness in the BLT.

“McCartney is a hard-worker and has maintained Weapons Company’s medical readiness as the highest in the BLT,” said

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Nicholas J. Ullrich, preventative medicine technician, BLT 3/5, 15th MEU.

It wasn’t hard for McCartney’s leadership to decide to nominate him for such a prestigious award.

“The SOY is for well-rounded Sailors with extensive command and community involvement, demonstrating superior professionalism,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Jeff M. Rollman, independent duty corpsman and leading petty officer, BLT 3/5, 15th MEU. “I can’t think of a Sailor that fits that description better than McCartney,” added the 28-year-old native of Bullhead City, Ariz.

McCartney is also a combat life-saver instructor and has set a goal to become an instructor at Field Medical Training Battalion, where corpsmen are indoctrinated into Marine Corps tradition.

“He’s an extremely dedicated Sailor who is always staying up late to study for further qualifications,” said Rollman. “He continues to ask me for questions on anything he is unsure of.”

In his off hours, McCartney is involved with the Junior Enlisted Association on base, a group of Sailors who plan events such as the Navy Ball and the Corpsman Ball. On ship, he is involved in the Coalition for Sailors Against Destructive Decisions.

“McCartney has the quiet confidence you want to see when you’re assigning a corpsman to a platoon of Marines,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Matthew Hanley, assistant leading petty officer, BLT 3/5, 15th MEU. “I was the corpsman for [McCartney’s current platoon] last deployment, and I can’t think of a better Sailor to step up and fill that role,” added the 27-year-old native of Los Angeles.

If there was one quality that Rollman and Hanley both felt described McCartney accurately it was initiative.

“You never have to ask him to do anything,” said Hanley. “He requires little to no guidance with never any correction,” added the six-year veteran of the Navy.

Man on the Street

By MC3 Derek Stroop

We are three months into deployment. Needless to say, some of us are getting a little homesick. A lot of us may have a comfort food that makes us feel better or makes us think of fond memories.

So Peleliu, what is your favorite comfort food?

Chief Culinary Specialist Jason Kugler, from Carson, Calif.



“My comfort food is Chicken Tinola Soup because my wife makes it for me and it reminds me of her.”

Damage Controlman Fireman Brener Dib, from San Ramon, Calif.



“My mom makes the best Mousse de Maracuja (Passion Fruit Mousse), so I would say that is my comfort food because it reminds me of my mom.”

Yeoman 3rd Class Dominique Good, from Port Gibson, Miss.



“My comfort food is definitely lasagna. No one makes it better than my mom, and it makes me want to go to sleep.”

Quartermaster Seaman Aleace Reason, from Edmond, Okla.



“Popcorn and Raisinets are my favorite comfort foods. They remind me of being in a movie theater, which makes me happy.”

Peleliu Idol

Enter for your chance to win
an all expense paid vacation
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AUDITIONS

9 Dec. 12 or

23 Dec. 12

Time: 1900

Place: Troop Barbershop

Sign up via email:

Pel.idol@lha5.navy.mil