

PELELIU NEWS

January 06, 2013

Peleliu Celebrates the New Year



Marine Capt. Martin Lindig, left, and Navy Lt. Mike Dasch prepare hot dogs during New Year's Day steel beach picnic.

Photo by MC2 (SW) Daniel Viramontes

Story by MC3 Alex Van'tLeven
Peleliu Staff Writer

Sailors and Marines aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) celebrated the new year with a festive pizza night and steel beach picnic Dec. 31 – Jan. 1.

The festivities began with a New Year's Eve celebration in the ship's hangar bay, where the crew played games, sang karaoke and danced while counting down to the new year.

"It's important to provide these guys an outlet so they're not sitting in their racks thinking about home. If you get them out and about together, laughing and having a good time, it takes away the stress," said Information Systems Technician 1st Class Amy L. Tucker, from Carrollton, Ohio, a member of the ship's morale welfare and recreation (MWR) committee. "We try to do things like this to take their mind off of where they are, and what they're doing."

Officers and chief petty officers prepared and served 350 12-inch pizza pies to the crew.

"The chiefs and officers decided to do the

pizza this New Year's Eve to give back to the troops," said Lt. Dee L. Barnes, from East Orange, N. J. "They work hard for us everyday so why not give back to them on one night?"

For some, it was a new experience to spend the holidays away from friends and family.

"Spending the new year away from home is different," said Fire Controlman 3rd Class Joshua E. Miller, from Long Island, N.Y. "We're all like a big family here, we can't really replace the families we were born to, but they make it easier with events like these."

The night concluded with a final countdown to the midnight hour as a makeshift ball was lowered from the hangar bay's overhead.

The following day, the crew relaxed with a New Year's Day steel beach picnic held on the flight deck. The event was hosted by the Mustang Association with help from Marine Corps officers to grill and serve hotdogs and hamburgers.

"People definitely had a good time," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuel) Airman Brad

W. Porter, from Louisville, Ky. "They played football, hung out, and ate. It's a great break from our normal routine."

The time off also helped ease the stress of being deployed during the major holidays.

"Normally it's a 12-to-14 hour day through flight quarters, but today we were given the day off, good food and we got to hang out with people we don't normally get to see on a regular basis," added Porter.

During the steel beach, Capt. John D. Deehr, Peleliu's commanding officer, counted down the last ten seconds of San Diego's New Year's Eve, where Peleliu is homeported.

The crew enjoyed the rest of the day by playing sports, sumo wrestling and relaxing under the sun, a break that some leaders felt was good for the crew.

"It's a way to show appreciation to all hands, enlisted and officers, E-1 through O-6," added Barnes. "It's a great way to get together, do something good, and forget about where we are, for a few hours."

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
HMC Jody Laceyfield
AO1 Jennifer Martin
LS1 Verita Foster
AE1 Jeffrey Ritchie
ABH2 Donnell Viree
HM2 Janice Sapaden
OS2 Canon Deimerly
PR2 Cassandra Cox

ZERO TOLERANCE

What does Navy leadership think about sexual assault?

Sexual assault is wrong. It is a criminal act. It is corrosive to our morale, to our readiness and to our combat ability. The Navy has ZERO tolerance within all ranks for sexual assault.

We expect to achieve zero tolerance and irradiate sexual assault from our ranks through strong leadership and by holding perpetrators accountable.

What is sexual assault?

Intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Sexual assault includes rape, forcible sodomy (oral or anal sex), and other unwanted sexual contact that is aggravated, abusive, or wrongful (inappropriate sexual contact), or attempts to commit these acts.

What is consent?

Freely given words or overt acts indicating an agreement to the sexual activity by a competent person. IT IS NOT... submission due to force or fear, implied due to dress or a previous sexual relationship. Consent is not possible if someone is substantially impaired due to drugs, alcohol, or unconsciousness.

Peleliu CFC Contribution Tops Goal by 50 Percent

Story by MC3 Alex Van'tLeven

Peleliu Staff Writer

Sailors aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) contributed \$107,000 to the 2012 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Sept. 1 – Dec. 15.

During the annual campaign, federal employees were offered the opportunity to donate any amount of money to support different charities. Peleliu's crew exceeded the intended goal of \$70,000 as a command, an approximate 53 percent increase.

"It's unbelievable. I'm incredibly touched by the generosity of this crew," said Capt. John D. Deehr, Peleliu's commanding officer. "We set a very high goal for ourselves as a command."

The amount raised this year by Peleliu was the largest sum of money witnessed in recent history on board.

"I think Peleliu's contribution to the CFC this year was the best so far that I have seen," said Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Markel D. Ancrum, from Charleston S.C., Deck department's CFC representative. "I know Deck department raised way more than we had before. It seemed like everyone was willing to donate this year."

This year's contributions highlighted the character of the crew, and their willingness to give to respective causes.

"Not only are they hard working, they're exceedingly generous," said Deehr. "Even in these tough financial times, they're willing to give a portion of their income to a deserving organization or cause."

According to the command CFC coordinator, Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Michael Ridgeway, CFC is the only authorized solicitation of federal employees in their workplaces on behalf of more than 4,000 pre-approved charitable organizations.

Peleliu volunteers represented CFC in their respective departments and divisions. This allowed for the dissemination of information about the campaign to all personnel.

"The responses were quite overwhelming," said Ridgeway. "I was really surprised at how many people wanted to participate."

The representatives explained what the campaign is and the step-by-step procedures on choosing and donating to the selected organization.

The motivations behind donating are different for many Sailors.

"I feel like I'm a very fortunate person to have a steady job in the Armed Forces. It's our duty to serve so why not take care of people back home by giving a little to those in need," said Intelligence Specialist 3rd Class John J. Carmody, from Chesapeake, Va., who donated toward CFC.

The wide range of charities listed by CFC offer service members the opportunity to find a group or cause that they can relate to.

"I tell Sailors that if they take a few moments to look through the CFC book, they will find an organization that has impacted their life on a personal level. Maybe they have a relative or friend who has passed away from cancer, or who has Alzheimer's. Or maybe there is an environmental cause or charity organization that is important to them," said Deehr. "I encourage them to find those organizations and give whatever amount they feel comfortable giving. It's not the amount that is important, it's the fact that they are giving to an organization or cause that is important to them on a personal level."

Service members decide how much they are willing to donate. Their donations can be made in one sum payment or by allotment.

"You can give as little as a dollar a paycheck, which equals out to 24 dollars a year," said Carmody. "People spend more than that on useless stuff, so why not take that extra money and give it toward something like helping people."

For more information on the Combined Federal Campaign and how you can donate please visit <http://www.opm.gov/cfc/>

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Peleliu CSADD Sponsors Holiday Celebration



Members of the Diversity Team and Second Class Association sing in a choir during a holiday play.

Photo and Story by MC3 Derek Stroop
Peleliu Staff Writer

Members of amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu's (LHA 5) Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions (CSADD) organization sponsored a holiday celebration in the hangar bay entitled "A Global Celebration," Dec. 22.

The celebration featured a play "Petty Officer Scrooge and the Ghosts of Sailor's Past," a choir with members of the Diversity Team and Second Class Association and a slide show presentation of how other cultures celebrate the holidays.

"We've been planning this event since October," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuel) Airman Liz Camacho, Peleliu's CSADD co-chairman. "This is a lot of Sailors' first deployment, and we didn't want them to be alone for the holidays. Everyone is family here."

The story plot consisted of Sailors trying to convince Scrooge feel the holiday spirit.

"It's been a great experience working on this play," said Seaman Shawn Wolfe, an actor in the play. "It was fun, and I think we did a great job."

In between acts, CSADD presented slides describing how other cultures celebrate the holiday season. The slides included Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, holiday celebrations in India, Latin America and European Christmas origins.

The show also featured a choir comprised of the ship's diversity team and Second Class Association. They sang songs such as "Winter Wonderland," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "Deck the Halls." Ship's Serviceman 3rd Class Joseph Sawyer sang a solo of "O Holy Night."

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class George Busto, vice president of the diversity team and choir coordinator, was pleased with the choir's work.

"I am so happy with the work they've done to put on the show," said Busto. "The fact that they commit their off-time and many hours to

practice is amazing. They make it easy for me to work with them."

This event served as a way for many Sailors to connect, whether first-deployers or seasoned seafarers, in a time from family, relatives and friends.

"We are just trying the spread the holiday message, and help the Sailors and Marines feel more at home," said Aviation Support Equipment Technician 3rd Class Maurice Williams, a CSADD member. "This is our first Christmas away from home for a lot of us, and we just want to bring everyone together."

The show had an impact on the audience as well.

"It put me in the Christmas spirit," said Yeoman 2nd Class Nicholas Jones. "It's great that CSADD takes an interest in how we feel around the holidays being away from home."

Peleliu's CSADD team recently won Navy Region Southwest's Best Sea Chapter of the Year and received an honorable mention on the national chapter level.



Members of Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions group perform in a holiday play.

CMC's Corner



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

Yo, What's Up?

Before I begin this week's article I want to thank everyone for your good behavior during our last port visit. You all deserved some down time and a chance to recharge your batteries. I hope you all had a good time and also a chance to talk to your families during the holiday. We had a good week, started off with Pizza Night, with the officers, CPOs and SNCOs making homemade pizza while games and karaoke were going on in the hangar bay on New Year's Eve. We followed that up with a flight deck cookout hosted by the Mustang Association and the officers from the MEU BLT. We continued the week with flight operations and ended the week with replenishment-at-sea.

So this week, I want to talk about rumors. I received a CO's suggestion box letter that talked about rumors. In the letter, it was mentioned that this person was tired of hearing things via rumor on the mess decks to only have it confirmed two weeks later by the CO on the 1MC. The person felt they were being left in the dark and went on to ask why it is we are never informed about what is going on. There was more to the letter but these are the key points I want to address.

The CO gets on the 1MC every Saturday to announce the Sailor of the Week and update the crew on what he knows. He and I together build the list of topics to cover on the 1MC. There is no information that the CO is withholding from the crew, when he knows, he informs the crew. Rumors are exactly that - rumors.

I took the letter to the CO and after reading it his first question to me was "Master Chief, why didn't they sign this letter?" He went on to say, "this is the type of letter I would really like to discuss in person with the Sailor that wrote it." Sadly, I had to answer with "Sir, I don't know." Again I ask you to sign your letters to the CO so he can address your concerns directly.

Keep up all the good work!

CMC

Commandant of the Marine Corps Visits



Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Jennifer M. Antoine
General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, addresses Marines and Sailors with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group in the hangar bay.

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

Leaders at the helm of the Marine Corps spent their holiday and shared gratitude with the Marines and Sailors of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group, Dec. 28.

The 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen James F. Amos; the First Lady of the Marine Corps, Mrs. Bonnie Amos and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Maj. Michael Barrett flew aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) via helicopter to the deployed ship. Deputy Commandant of Plans, Policy and Operations, Lt. Gen. Richard Tryon, and Deputy Commandant of Installations and Logistics, Lt. Gen. William Faulkner, along with other members of the Commandant's staff, made up the remainder of the entourage. The group chose to spend their holidays throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

The official party arrived via two CH-46 Sea Knights assigned to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (Rein.) and proceeded to an all-hands call in the ship's hangar bay.

The event began with the awarding of a Bronze Star medal with "V" Device for distinguished combat service to Sgt. Royce R. Hughie, a team leader with Scout Sniper Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 3/5, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. Hughie received the award for his actions during 3/5's last deployment to Sangin Province, Afghanistan from 2010-2011.

The commandant then drew in the crowd and told them of an anecdote from a previous Christmas with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.

"This was a Christmas about two years ago," said Amos. "Sangin was a bad neighborhood. 3/5 had lost over 20 and had 80 severely wounded; it was probably the toughest fight we've had in Afghanistan. That night, a bunch of Marines had got their hands on wood that built this raging fire. We stayed out there that night. We told stories, took pictures and talked. It was the best Christmas I've had in my life. My point was Christmas deployed with your brothers and your sisters up in an area that was arguably the most dangerous part of all of Afghanistan; we were altogether on Christmas night."

Barrett expressed how difficult it may have been for some, but reminded them of the brother and sisterhood they shared with the others within the ARG.

"This is your family for the holidays," said Barrett. "I know that there is nowhere else you'd rather be than forward-deployed serving your nation in whatever capacity you've been directed to do. I am humbled and blown away that I get to serve alongside the CMC and serve you in this capacity."

After four years of requesting to make the holiday visit, the first lady had her opportunity to show her support as well.

"We really are honored to be here with all of you today," said Mrs. Amos. "I'm proud to serve as your advocate within the halls of the Pentagon for programs that support the families. I'd like to wish each of you a belated Merry Christmas and a happy New Year."

Afterwards, the commandant addressed senior officers of the Marine Corps' role in current events.

#LOOSE LIPS

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class **Part 15**
(SG) T. Grout, *PeleNews* contributor

Rus woke earlier than usual on Monday, anxious to leave home after a typical weekend filled with loud cries, cold shoulders, dirty diapers, and too numerous to count sing-along. It wouldn't be so bad if he and Veronica chose to work together. After eleven years of marriage, the only "work" focused on her wants and desires. At first he counted it to shifting times from just the two of them to adding children. They talked about kids and Mother Nature decided when they'd start having kids and how many. For Veronica, who grew up Catholic, birth control was not an option. At times Rus wondered why people, when adults, identify in name only to a religion from childhood, but still conform to certain rules.

How much is a man expected to put up with: the constant remarks about every little thing, whether it's how the diaper is changed, where the car is parked, what hook the towel is hung, or calling home with an ETA, nothing could be done to her satisfaction. He considered asking her to participate in counseling but thought twice knowing that too would solicit a negative response. The only things that brought any happiness to Rus' life were his kids and his job, and of late, not in that order. The kids reminded him of what is no longer perfect in his life.

When home became a battlefield, which seemed to be an hourly occurrence this weekend, Rus drifted to his brief phone call with that girl from Rubio's. There was something about her voice, her chuckle, her name. Stupid. Truth is, it's the thought of winning something. Sad, the most exciting thing in a man's life is winning a free lunch for him and his office staff. Unfortunately, that pretty much sums up the life of Rus Stevens. By Sunday he allowed himself longer moments to mediate on his "lottery" and even found himself excited for Monday.

And Monday arrived.

By 4:40 a.m., Rus arrived to his office at SURFPAC. He started the coffee, reviewed morning message traffic, listened to three voice messages, checked his email, and responded to everyone by 5:30. He looked at the clock listing six time zones across the Pacific theater. Honing in on his current zone.

Six more hours.

Rus returned from the morning meeting to a text message: "Hi! This is Patricia from Rubio's. I hope you had a good weekend. Is 11:00 still good time that I could bring the food? And how do I find you?"

His fingers shook a little and his heart raced as he responded. Why are you so nervous he thought? It's free food. It doesn't matter the last time a girl asked about his weekend was years ago.

A few minutes later the reply, "Great. See you at 11:00. I'll be driving red Dodge Charger."

Dodge Charger! "That's my dream car!" Rus said jealously under his breath.

Peleliu, CPR-3 Select Senior Sailor of the Year



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Amber Reyes instructs a Sailor on proper defensive techniques while impaired by oleoresin capsicum during a Naval Security Forces Sentry course.

Photo and Story by MC3(AW) Valerie Grayson
Peleliu Staff Writer

Amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) and Commander, Amphibious Squadron Three selected Master-at-Arms 1st Class Amber Reyes as Senior Sailor of the Year 2012.

Reyes reported aboard Peleliu May 18, 2010 with goals and high expectations to further her career. She became the leading petty officer of 26 Sailors and Marines for the Security division and the leading anti-terrorism force protection training supervisor. She also heads the command urinalysis program, investigates cases and runs the Navy Security Force Sentry course where she instructs more than 30 students at a time on defensive and takedown techniques in the hangar bay.

Her collateral duties included being the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) coordinator for 18 months and assistant command fitness leader for Executive department.

In two and a half years on board, Reyes received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, two Senior Sailor of the Quarter awards and a Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. Reyes serves as a mentor of three Sailors including Quartermaster 2nd Class Christina Harrison

For 10 months, the Stockton, Calif. native helped Harrison focus on professional and personal goals. The protégé describes her mentor as a strong female Sailor that she strives to be like everyday.

"MA1 Reyes helped me reach each goal I set for myself," said Harrison. "I received my EAWS [enlisted air warfare specialist] pin, advanced to 2nd Class, and started college courses."

Master Chief Master-at-Arms Richard Gonzales has worked with Reyes for only three months, but heard nothing but good things before meeting her.

"She's solid. She's definitely in her position for

a reason," said Gonzales. "She's a leader that all Sailors want to follow and want to work for."

Ecstatic about her accomplishment, Reyes attributes her success to her junior Sailors' hard work and dedication. She pushes her Sailors to excel past her accomplishments and a strong believer in Sailors first, self second.

Prior to enlisting in the Navy, Reyes dreamed of being a police officer in her hometown. She first took part with the junior cadets and then wanted to continue on to the police academy.

"You had to be 21 years old to join the academy," said Reyes. "I joined the Navy to get a few years of training so I could return to the police academy back home."

In March 2002, her oldest sister, an undesignated airman at the time, brought Reyes to a recruiting office. After reviewing her options, she chose to join the Navy as a master-at-arms through the delayed entry program. In November, Reyes reported to Recruit Training Command – Great Lakes, Ill.

A few years turned into 10 and a "love for the Navy." During her career, Reyes served at Command Fleet Activity Yokosuka, Japan, Naval Station Pearl Harbor, and multipurpose amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8) where she advanced to petty officer 1st class and cross-decked to Peleliu.

This summer, Reyes expected reported to Riverine Training Unit Two in Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek – Fort Story, Va. with goals to learn the expeditionary side of her rating, achieve her Enlisted Expeditionary Warfare Specialist qualification and master training specialist.

The SSOY is awarded to the pay grade E-6, who demonstrates initiative in performance, exemplary personal conduct and military bearing, and outstanding achievements.

Man on the Street

By MC2(SW) Daniel Viramontes

Happy New Year Peleliu, 2013 is finally here! With the new year comes the opportunity for change and many Sailors and Marines will set goals and stop bad habits.

What is your New Year's resolution?

Sgt. Joshua Kelso from Stockton, Calif.



"My New Year's resolution is to be a better father to my daughter and a better husband. I also would like to get to a good weight and maintain it."

Quartermaster 1st Class Tim Clark from Houston



"For 2013, I would like to learn more because you never stop learning. 'Knowledge is power!'"

Machinery Repairman 3rd Class Krystle Donato from Honolulu



"My New Year's resolution is to gain muscle and weight by eating healthy food."

Lt. Dee L. Barnes from East Orange, N.J.



"My new year's resolution is to be more aggressive with life: mentally, physically and spiritually. Meaning no more of the 'I wish I could have, I should have, I would have and the famous I almost have.' For 2013, it will be 'I did, I am, I have and I will.'"