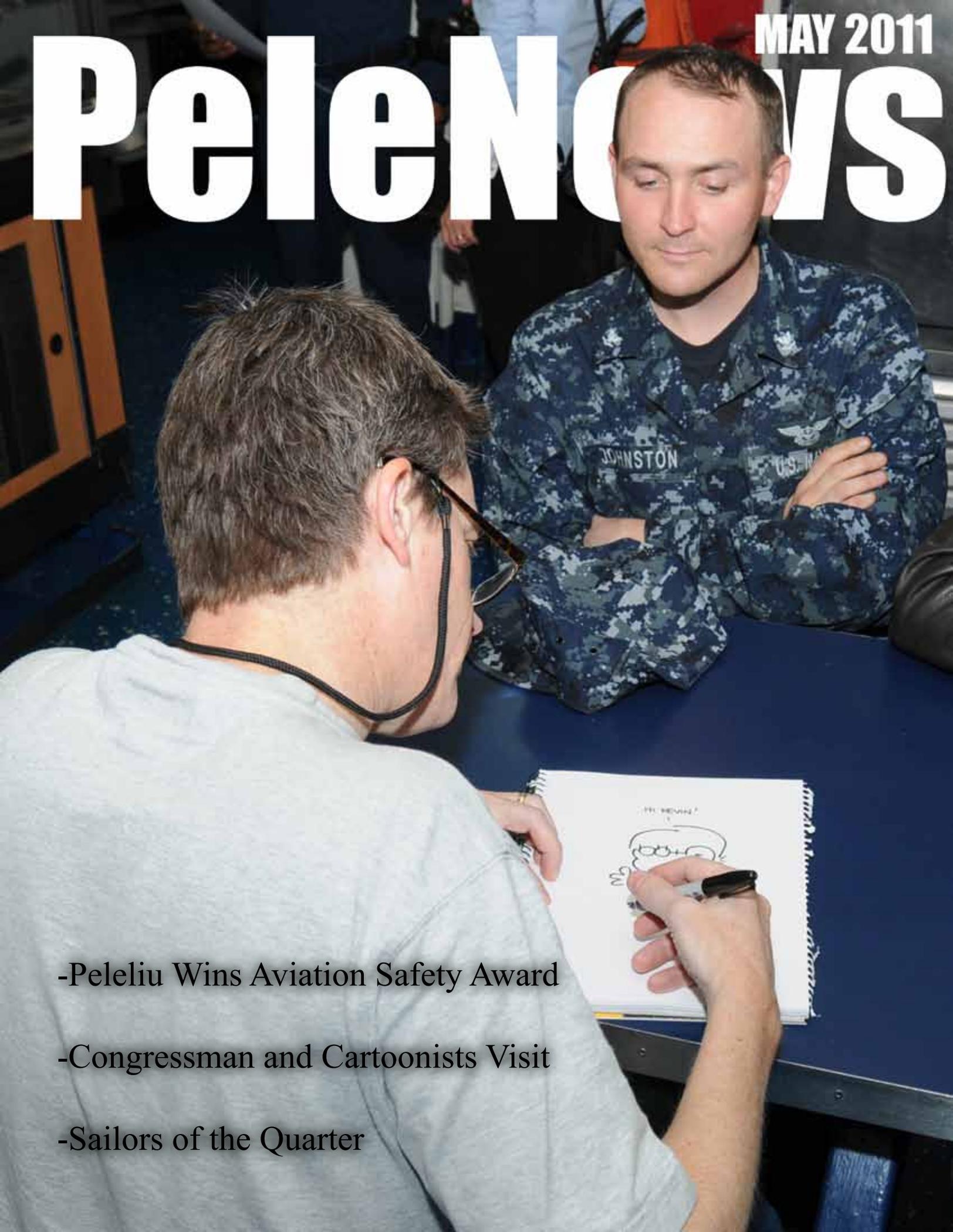


MAY 2011

# PELELIU NEWS



- Peleliu Wins Aviation Safety Award
- Congressman and Cartoonists Visit
- Sailors of the Quarter

# VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



By Capt. James T. Cox

The month of April just seemed to fly by didn't it? The crew of the Iron Nickel has been very busy training and performing maintenance on the ship. Not surprisingly they have done a great job on both. The ship has never looked or performed better than it does right now.

In addition to all that the crew has accomplished, we also found time to host numerous ship visits and tours for various groups. One of these was a visit from Congressman John Culberson from the 7<sup>th</sup> District of Texas who had an opportunity to tour our fine warship, discuss its capabilities, and have lunch with members of the

crew from the state of Texas. Before he departed, he personally expressed to me how impressed he was by both the ship and by every member of our crew he met. The pride that each and every Sailor felt for their ship was clearly evident and together they made a lasting and positive impression on the congressman.

In addition, the ship was awarded the Admiral Flatley Memorial Award for Aviation Safety. This coveted award is only given to one large-deck amphibious ship each year and is a testament to the hard work and professionalism of the Air Department as well as the entire PELELIU team. Well done to all!

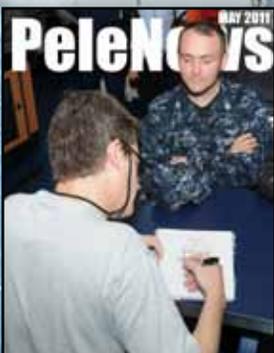
May is already shaping up to be another great month for us all. I hope you enjoy the quality time we have at home with family and friends and had the opportunity to come to the PELELIU's 31<sup>st</sup> birthday celebration and picnic at SeaWorld.

Thank you all again for your selfless service to our Navy and our Nation!



Photo by MC2 John Shepherd

Foreground: From left to right, Seaman Recruit Jordan Goedderz and Capt. Andre Santos cut the birthday cake celebrating PELELIU's 31st birthday. Background: From left to right, Command Master Chief David Dearie, Commanding Officer, Capt. James Cox and Executive Officer, Capt. John Deehr. It is Navy tradition for the youngest and oldest sailor at the command to cut the cake.



## On the Cover

Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Clayton Johnston poses while a cartoonists draws a cartoon for him.

Photo by MC2 John Shepherd

# FROM THE DECK PLATES



By CMDMCM  
(SW/AW)  
David Dearie

Thirty one years ago on May 3, USS PELELIU was commissioned the fifth and final in the TARAWA class LHA. We celebrated her birthday by spending the day at SeaWorld with the crew and our families. More than 600 crew members together with their immediate families and friends joined for a great day at SeaWorld for FREE. Over 1,700 people participated! This included FREE parking and FREE food! Throughout the day walking the park, I saw several HUGE stuffed animals won by our Sailors. Where the single Sailors who live on board will store these creatures I have no idea.

Another exciting event that took place on May 10 was our first of many future Family Indoctrination programs. The event is designed with the young, married crew member's spouse in mind. The average age of the Sailors on PELELIU is 20 years old, and many of these young adults are married and living away from home for the first time. This event provides an opportunity to the spouses of these Sailors to meet me, the Command Master Chief, our Command

Ombudsman, the Family Readiness Group, and Command Career Counselor. We had a good turnout for this first one and hope to increase the showing as we continue.

Each of these groups share what their roles are and how they provide support to our PELELIU families. Additionally, I spent a few minutes discussing the ships mission as well as our upcoming command events from the availability period to our future training workups. This event takes place at Murphy Canyon Chapel from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Plenty of time for the service member to get home from work and watch the children so the spouse can attend this brief. If you missed this one, there will be another in the near future. The date will be advertised through our Plan of the Day as well as our Facebook page. Although the main audience for this indoctrination is our newly married and new to the command families, if a seasoned spouse would like to attend, please feel free!

We are very excited to spend this summer at home with our loved ones. We hope to have many events that we can enjoy together while still accomplishing our command goals. As we approach the summer time, I ask you to carefully plan your leave. Whatever you do, please do it safely and have fun.

## FAMILY READINESS GROUP UPDATE!

Join us on May 18 from 4:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Coyote Café in Old Town San Diego! We will have a section reserved so just ask for the USS Peleliu FRG when you get there. The prices are very reasonable and it is kid friendly so everyone is welcome! Come out and meet new friends as well as see old ones. Here is the link if you would like to check it out; we have also posted it on the events section of our Facebook page. <http://www.cafecoyoteoldtown.com/>

With the upcoming underway schedule, we want to have some events to keep us busy, as well as an opportunity to make connections for the longer underways, and eventually, the next deployment.

We will also be setting up diners' nights again for a once-a-month fundraiser to raise money for future FRG events. Our first one is on May 23 at the Rubios in Murphy Canyon. All you have to do bring in the flyer or mention you are there for the USS Peleliu FRG fundraiser, and a portion of your bill will go back to the FRG. If you have any questions you can always email the FRG at [peleliufrg@gmail.com](mailto:peleliufrg@gmail.com)

Join us on Facebook, we have a group page so for those of you that have an account, log in and request to be part of the USS PELELILU FRG page. There you will find updates, events, and other information regarding the FRG, and the events and activities we are coordinating, as well as other great resources for you and your families.

Have a great month and we look forward to seeing lots of new faces at our upcoming events!

Your command spouse leadership team

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**Executive Officer**  
Capt. John Deehr  
**Command Master Chief**  
CMDMCM(SW/AW)  
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# Peleliu Earns Admiral

Story by MC2 Andrew Dunlap, Staff Writer

The amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) and 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) were named the recipients of the 2010 Admiral Flatley Award, April 8.

Capt. James Cox, Peleliu's commanding officer, announced to the crew that the 'Iron Nickel' had won the award.

The Admiral Flatley Memorial Award for aviation safety is based on a comprehensive evaluation of contributions toward aviation safety throughout a one-year period. The award is presented to an aircraft carrier, an associated carrier air wing and one amphibious assault ship and associated Marine expeditionary unit.

"The 160 Sailors in the Peleliu Air Department are the hardest working group of men and women I have ever worked with," said Lt. Dave Ayotte, Peleliu's Mini Air Boss. "Their dedication to their job and awareness of safety during 16-hour days for nine months of deployment and workups is impressive."

Peleliu spent most of 2010 underway completing a Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) in February, then embarking the 15th MEU to complete a Composite Unit Training Exercise and Certification Exercise prior to leaving on a seven-month deployment conducting maritime security operations in the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of responsibility.

During deployment, Peleliu operated off the coast of Pakistan

*Photo by MC3 Omar Dominquez*  
Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Stephen Serisola stands by with an engine water wash bottle as two MH-53E "Sea Dragon" helicopters land on the flight deck.



# Flatley Memorial Award

for 10 weeks providing heavy-lift helicopters for humanitarian aid in the wake of natural disaster.

In addition to the humanitarian relief operations, Peleliu concurrently launched AV-8B Harriers in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“These Sailors completed more than 10,750 aircraft launch and recovery evolutions, 3,443 aircraft moves and 2450 hours of flight quarters,” said Ayotte.

Since assuming command, Capt. Cox made safety the foundation of his command philosophy, ensuring the crew thinks about safety before every task.

“Working on the flight deck is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world,” said Aviation Boatswains Mate (Handling) 1st Class Andre Hardin. “Our leadership is adamant about each person being trained on safety procedures and we take it very seriously.”



Photo by MC3 Foster Bamford

An Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) directs an Navy MH-60S Seahawk helicopter toward the flight deck to drop off a pallet of cargo.

# Congressman visits Iron Nickel



Photo by MC2 John Shepherd

Representative John Culberson (R-Tx) gets his photo taken on the Iron Nickel's quarterdeck with Captain James Cox.

Story by Peleliu Public Affairs

Representative John Culberson (R-Tx) paid visit to USS Peleliu (LHA 5) April 21 as part of an exploratory visit of military bases that included facilities in Hawaii and San Diego.

Culberson, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is responsible for military contracts and the future of new construction in the military.

“He hasn't seen this part of the military,” explained Sarah Young, Culberson's aide. “Representative Culberson wanted go to California and Hawaii to visit Navy sites and facilities (ships, submarines, aviation, and special operations training areas) to gain an increased understanding of Navy capabilities across the warfare spectrum with an emphasis on military programs and priorities.”

Culberson visited submarines in Hawaii, Peleliu and NASSCO shipyards in San Diego along with a flyover of the region's Navy infrastructure including barracks, piers and special warfare facilities.

“Congressman Culberson was very pleased with what he saw on Peleliu,” said Capt. James Cox, Peleliu's commanding officer. “Before he left the ship, the last thing he said to me was how impressed he was with the caliber and motivation of each Sailor he met, and every Sailor he met, he personally shook their hand and thanked them for their service.”

The congressman had lunch with fellow Texans in the Mess Decks' First Class Mess. He spent time talking with constituents from his district (Houston) along with others from the Lone Star State, then toured Peleliu showing particular interest in the aviation and engineering areas.

# Iron Nickel hosts Cartoonists

Story and photos by MC2 John W. Shepherd II

Iron Nickel Sailors got the opportunity to meet various cartoonists from around the nation April 27.

The group was highlighted by Jeff Bacon of the Navy Times "Broadside" comic and Bill Janocha of "Beetle Bailey."

"Mad Magazine's" Ray Alma, comic strip author Bill Amend, along with political cartoonists Michael Ramirez

and Daryl Cagle, among others, joined the group visiting Sailors on the mess decks.

The cartoonists drew caricatures of Sailors or personalized a drawing for them. The artists were grateful to be on board and thankful for the service of the Sailors in protecting the nation. After visiting Peleliu, the group also visited wounded warriors at Naval Medical Center Balboa.



From left to right: Sailors interact with cartoonists, Aviation Boatswain's Mate 3rd Classes Zachary Mandeville and Shaun Palaoro and Machinist's Mate Fireman Hosea Jackson.



From left to right: Boatswain's Mate Seaman Christopher Cunningham, Damage Control Fireman Magdalena Vargas and Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Charell May Garcia.



From left to right: Aviation Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Hantz Frage, Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Andre Donanpalma and Quartermaster Seaman Edward McKinney.

# Congratulations to Peleliu's Sailors of the Quarter

Photos by MC3 Ian Campbell



*Senior Sailor of the Quarter  
Hospital Corpsman 1st Class  
Fernanda Velazquez*

*Sailor of the Quarter  
Aviation Electronics  
Technician 2nd Class  
Jerrod Jenkins*



*Junior Sailor of the Quarter  
Yeoman Third Class  
John Magee*



*Blue Jacket of the Quarter  
Aviation Support Equipment  
Technician Airman  
Brett Nary*



# Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month

多样性  
领导力  
和超越

環太平洋アングラ系アメリカ人伝統文化月間

Pagkakaiba Pamumuno Pagbibigay  
ng Kapangyarihan at Lampas Pa  
keanekaragaman  
kepemimpinan  
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विविधिता  
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और पेरे

ĐA DẠNG  
TIÊN PHONG  
CHỦ ĐỘNG  
VA HƠN THỂ NỮA

เดือนที่ระลึกชาวอเมริกันเชื้อสายเอเชียแปซิฟิก

다양성 지도력 역량강화 그리고 그 이상

O tagata soifua  
una ua saoloto lo  
latou fananau  
mai, ma e tutusa  
o latou ulaga  
aloaia faapua  
a latou dia tatou

All human beings are  
born free and equal  
in dignity and rights.

**Diversity  
Leadership  
Empowerment  
and Beyond**