

July 2011

PeleNews



-Peleliu Hosts Midshipmen

-Force Master Chief Visits

-Cleaning the Streets

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



By Capt. James T. Cox

Looking back on the month of June the “Iron Nickel” continued to rack up an impressive record of successful mission accomplishment and safe day-to-day operations. The crew got our mighty warship underway on time, every time in support of summer training for hundreds of Midshipmen, as well as critical flight deck qualifications for both jets and helicopters. We even had a rare opportunity to host

the U.S. Pacific Fleet Force Master Chief, Eric Page for three days underway.

The month of July marks a significant transition for the crew as we prepare to enter a major maintenance period. This transition will require many changes in our daily routine which in turn will naturally create a degree of stress. This is a normal part of our job in the Navy but it’s important to recognize the symptoms of excessive stress and don’t hesitate to ask for help if needed. Remember; “Mission First - Sailors Always.”

In the months to come our mission will be to complete all the required ship maintenance to the highest possible standards in a safe and timely manner. I can’t overemphasize the importance of safety, both on and off the job. The industrial environment we will soon enter presents many new hazards that must be identified and mitigated. Likewise, summer is statistically a high risk season as people engage in more outdoor activities, go on vacation, and generally expose themselves to new potential hazards. Remember to practice “Operational Risk Management” in everything you do both on the ship and while on leave or liberty. A healthy dose of common sense goes a long way. If that voice inside your head tells you, “this probably isn’t a good idea” then it’s time to stop and reconsider. As members of the Navy we have a responsibility to protect both ourselves and our shipmates. You are all essential to our mission and I trust that all PELELIU Sailor’s will continue to exercise good judgment and do the right thing.



On the Cover

Midshipmen 3rd Clas Matthew Harvey, 19, of Virginia Military Institute zeros in on a target down range aboard Peleliu.

Photo Illustration by MC2 Andrew Dunlap

FAMILY READINESS GROUP UPDATE

“Somewhere beyond the sea...” July is the first month of some much needed at home time for our service members, enjoy the next few months together with no days at sea.

Peleliu’s Family Readiness Group is going to start having monthly meetings in conjunction with the new family indoc’s held at Murphy Canyon Chapel. Stay tuned to our group page on Facebook. You can also get on our email list by emailing us at peleliufrg@gmail.com, and you

can always ask your service member for more details on dates and times for the meetings.

Just as we did during deployment, we will work on securing babysitting through the Fleet and Family Support Center for the meetings. FFSC will provide free babysitting for the meetings as long as we have a speaker come to talk for 15 minutes on a topic that is relevant to our families. FFSC is a great resource; if you would like to see some of the

things they offer, check them out online at www.cnrsw.navy.mil/fsc. The FRG meetings are also a good place to hear from command leadership as well as meet other spouses. As always, let’s remember to support our service members by supporting the mission.

We hope you are having a safe and enjoyable summer and look forward to seeing you at a future FRG meeting.

Your command spouse leadership team.



CONGRATULATIONS 2010 NAVY & MARINE ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

LIEUTENANT DAMON SUMERALL

**MASTER CHIEF HOSPITAL CORPSMAN (SW/AW)
JEFFERY DELL**

**HOSPITAL CORPSMAN FIRST CLASS (SW/FMF/AW)
FERNANDA VELAZQUEZ**

CONGRATULATIONS 2010 THOMPSON-RAVITZ AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN NAVY PUBLIC AFFAIRS AWARD RECIPIENT

**SENIOR CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST (SW)
DAN SMITHYMAN
ENLISTED PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER OF THE YEAR**



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Midshipmen Begin Su



Photo by MC2 John Shepherd
Midshipmen conduct a 9mm live-fire exercise on the flight deck of Peleliu.

Summer Training Aboard Peleliu

Story by MCCS Dan Smithyman

Peleliu hosted 81 midshipmen as part of the familiarization training they receive during the summer.

The group of NROTC midshipman represented colleges from around the country, and both Navy and Marine Corps officer candidates. Career Orientation and Training for Midshipmen, or CORTRAMID, provides several options for these students to experience shipboard life first hand.

Peleliu's junior officers acted as "running mates" for the second-year midshipman. These running mates toured the midshipmen and explained the many functions of the amphibious Navy.

"Having the middies onboard for two days underway was a lot of fun," said Lt. j.g. Kara Heubi, Assistant Damage Control Assistant. "We kept them busy all over the ship from start to finish."

During their visit, they observed getting underway and transit through the San Diego Bay from the flight deck, signal bridge and fantail. They also had familiarization tours through the engineering spaces, combat information

center, medical, repair lockers, bridge and well deck.

"Having 81 midshipmen onboard Peleliu has been a great experience for the young future of our Navy and my crew," said Capt. James T. Cox, commanding officer. "We rewarded their curiosity with an engaging, fun, and safe schedule of events that left them awe struck at the pride and professionalism of our Navy-Marine Corps team."

The middies departed the ship by boat to Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base to continue their summer training.

"My favorite part was spending time on the bridge and steering the ship. I also spent some time with two female African American officers, and they shared their perspective of what it's [serving on a ship] like for them," said Midshipman 3rd Class Brianna Spearman.

The middies also participated in damage control training, observed helicopter flight operations, and spent some quality time with junior officers who provided mentorship and advice.



Photo by MC2 John Shepherd

Teams of midshipmen compete in a contest of donning of a fire fighting ensemble and self contained breathing apparatus during damage control olympics aboard Peleliu.



Photo by MC2 John Shepherd

Midshipmen don a fire fighting ensemble and self contained breathing apparatus during damage control olympics aboard Peleliu.

Force Master Chief Page Gets Underway With Peleliu



Photo by MC2 Andrew Dunlap

Force Master Chief Page discusses the Navy's manning and personnel issues with Engineers in the ship's forward main machinery room.

Story by MCCA Dan Smithyman

Naval Surface Forces Command Master Chief Eric Page embarked USS Peleliu June 27-29 for a three-day underway period to gather information and deliver some too.

He is interested in ascertaining the level of understanding on several topics that affect Sailors.

"I wanted to come out and spend time on the deckplate and in their environment," Page said. "I want to take a litmus test about what Sailors think about some programs such as PTS, ERB and the recent Don't Ask, Don't Tell training."

Page said he discovered a lack of knowledge about some of the programs that can be easily fixed with some education and communication. He spent time with Sailors, the Chiefs Mess and Wardroom explaining these programs, but said this is a job for the Chiefs and First Class Petty Officers who know best how and when to communicate with their

Sailors.

The most confusion and frustration stems primarily with PTS and ERB, or Perform to Serve and Enlisted Retention Board, respectively. These force shaping tools are responsible for most of the involuntary separations the Navy has implemented.

"The information is there. If someone is in a target group for separation or conversion, all they need to do is call their enlisted community manager - who can give realistic career advice about remaining on active duty - and get the options for accomplishing that," Page said.

Page said the unexpectedly high retention rates coupled with a smaller budget has forced leadership at the highest levels of the Navy to have to make hard decisions in shaping the force end strength.

"The Navy is working to maximize manning in a responsible way," Page said. "Education and foresight, along with planning will considerably reduce the surprises we now see when Sailors are selected for involuntary separation. We have the management tools to better track career progression and plan for reenlistment, conversion or separation."

Sailors can avoid confusion by knowing more about PTS and ERB. According to Page, it's the responsibility of the Sailor to ask questions if they are unsure, and the Chiefs and First Class Petty Officers are obligated, as their frontline leaders, to answer them accurately.

The Master Chief plans to make more visits to ships during the summer as the opportunities arise. He said the Peleliu embark was his first underway in nearly four years.

"This is a great ship," he said. "I can see the pride and professionalism in the crew. I was pleasantly surprised to see how well maintained some of the spaces are, especially the JP-5 pump room. It was immaculate!"

Page was impressed with how Iron Nickel Sailors conduct their daily business and hopes they keep up the good work.



Photo by MC2 Andrew Dunlap

Force Master Chief Page discusses the Navy's manning and personnel issues with Engineers in the ship's forward main machinery room.



Photo by MC2 Andrew Dunlap

Force Master Chief Page discusses the Navy's manning and personnel issues with Engineers in the ship's aft main machinery room.

More than 70 Peleliu Sailors, which included friends and family members of the crew participated in a Naval Base 32nd Street cleanup June 11. Peleliu had the most volunteer participants of all the commands. *Photos by MC2 John Shepherd.*



Congratulations to Peleliu's Sailors of the Quarter



*Senior Sailor of the Quarter
Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class
Jennifer Martin*

*Sailor of the Quarter
Aviation Support Equipment
Technician 2nd Class
Jimmy Ballard*



*Junior Sailor of the Quarter
Logistics Specialist 3rd Class
Manuel Estrada*



*Blue Jacket of the Quarter
Aviation Support Equipment
Technician Airman
Brady Hopkins*

