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PELELIU NEWS



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FROM THE DECK PLATES



By CMDCM
(SW/AW/SS)
Brent Williams

FROM THE DECK PLATES "THE LAST WEEK"

I would like to start out this week's article by stating that this will be my last column in the PeleNews this deployment, and the last article as your Command Master Chief. It has been a true honor to serve with and for all of you. I have seen so many of you accomplish some pretty amazing things; promotions, qualifications, getting married, and making the first big purchase. I am very proud to have been apart of this ship and your careers.

As we head home this last week, it is important to remember all that we have been through over the past year, not just the deployment. It took a lot of work to get this ship where she is today. The one lesson that we need to take away is that no matter where we are, the Iron Nickel will be a part of us. As we have taken care of her, she has taken care to ensure we were able to accomplish every mission on time and in rare fashion. And yes, after your time off as you walk down the pier in San Diego, she will be waiting on your return. The only thing that is really over is

the long time away from home.

After a few days back in San Diego, I hope that you look back on what we have done over the past several months. You should understand that what we were doing protected all that you will be enjoying in the very near future. You are different now, you have experienced something unique, you have been through more in last year that many will ever experience in a lifetime.

You've heard this a hundred times, but your service to this country and this Navy is admirable. Please continue to support the mission, each other, and the core values we hold dear. The work will not go away; the time at sea will be somewhat less but the importance of what you do will never change. I will say this: enjoy every challenge, because before you know, it will be over. My 25 years has screamed by; trust me, it goes by very quickly.

So to all of our Tigers "Welcome Aboard" a great ship. To the crew, thank you for the continued support and chance to serve. To the Chief's mess, keep doing what you do, a true mess, and as I have said many times, the best CPO MESS afloat. Your support and guidance has been priceless. To the Wardroom, thank you for the constant support and keeping this ship on course. You made it a point to empower the CPO's and your Sailors, and that doesn't happen a lot anymore.

Have a fantastic Holiday Season, a great homecoming, and a wonderful New Year!!!

On the Cover

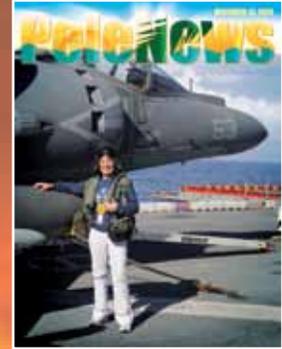


Photo by MC2 Andrew Dunlap
A tiger poses for a photo in front of an AV-8B Harrier.

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FRG UPDATE

The day we have all been waiting for is almost here and we can soon get back to the life we put on hold back in May. Information about the return was sent out last week. If you did not receive it, please contact the ombudsmen at peleliu.ombudsman@gmail.com.

Our day-before party is slated for Friday the Dec. 17 from 2-5 p.m. at Point Loma Grill and Pub the address is: h2750 Dewey Road, San Diego, CA 92101

If you did not receive the e-vite, send us an email so we can add you.

Thank you to all the Sailors and Marines on board that participated on the shoe box auctions, and congratulations to those of you that won! Many thanks also go to those of you at home that donated items for the boxes, as well as everyone that worked tirelessly to put the boxes together.

There are still a limited quantity and sizes of homecoming T-shirts for sale, get them now before they sell out, email

us at peleliufrg@gmail.com for more information. If you have paid for shirts and still need to pick them up you may do so at the day-before party or the morning of homecoming. If you would like to get them sooner, please email us to make arrangements.

The Sheraton Harbor Island here in San Diego, has graciously extended a "welcome home USS Peleliu" rate for anyone wanting to stay there during the homecoming period.

Fair winds and following seas, we can't wait to welcome you home USS PELELIU!



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Those who plan to transfer prior to March 1, 2011 should bring a forwarding address and shipping box (from the post office).



Peleliu ARG Embarks Tigers

By MC3 (SW) Foster Bamford

The Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group, consisting of amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5), amphibious transport dock ship USS Dubuque (LPD 8) and amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) began embarking passengers for their “tiger” cruise, Dec. 9. The passengers, or tigers, are civilian passengers that come aboard for the last leg of the deployment.

“It’s an opportunity for friends and family members of the Sailors and embarked Marines to ride the ship from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to Camp Pendleton or San Diego,” said Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist (SW) Dan Smithyman, one of several tiger cruise coordinators on Peleliu. “It’s a taste of what it’s like to be underway on a United States warship. Live like we live, eat where we eat, work, dream, have fun, everything.”

The ship’s Chaplain, Cmdr. Gary Clore, was also integral in preparing for the tigers’ arrival.

“They are going to find themselves with a wonderful experience,” said Clore. “I don’t know how this is going to compare to other tiger cruises, but we’ve done our best to make the best experience possible for our tigers.”

The activities were planned to make this an enjoyable experience for the ship’s guests and are aimed to give them an idea of what life is like in the amphibious Navy.

“We have an air power demonstration,” said Smithyman. “Marines are going to be fast-rope out of helicopters.

We are going to be shooting the giant killer tomato (inflatable target), off the side of the ship. We’ll be dropping practice bombs on it and shooting it out of the doors of the helicopters. We’re going to line up all three ships, and Pearl Harbor is going to put an LCAC (Landing Craft Air Cushion) in the water, and it’s going to come screaming up alongside all three ships. So that all three ships will have the benefit of seeing what an LCAC looks like and how fast it is. It’ll be very cool. Peleliu will send out its AV-8B Harriers, and they will do passes alongside all three ships so that the passengers aboard will get to see what they can do and how loud they are.”

The tiger cruise was designed with three options for passengers. They can go from Pearl Harbor all the way back to San Diego, or for the Marines and their Tigers, the trip can end at Camp Pendleton where the Marines disembark the ship. The final option is for some tigers who were unable to spend the entire week at sea, they will get on the ship at Camp Pendleton and take a one day cruise down to San Diego.



The Ente

By MC1 (SW/AW) R. David Valdez

Some people dream of becoming an entertainer of some sort. Young men and women will have an ambition to become professional singers, comedians, or actors. Sometimes, those people demonstrate their talents at the right place and time, and they get started on a path toward fame and fortune.

On the other hand, there are people who never plan on being entertainers at all. A combination of fortunate events along with an interest in performing arts just happen to lead a person toward a career they'd never even considered, and that's what brought Dan Larosa from Middletown, Conn. to the Iron Nickel.

"I used to work at a drug and alcohol treatment center," Larosa said. "After I saw the revolving door of people coming in for treatment, relapsing and coming back in for treatment, the stress started to get to me, so I started playing guitar as a form of stress relief."

One of Larosa's friends was a bass

player, and the duo began playing for the patients at the center. Eventually, they got a singer, who happened to do a little acting on the side. A nurse at the center asked Larosa's band if they might be willing to play at a party she was throwing, and after the party, a bar owner asked if the band would be willing to play at his bar.

"We never planned on being professional musicians," Larosa said. "We were just a couple of guys who liked to jam for the patients, and all of a sudden, we were playing gigs in bars and clubs."

Along the way, the band started doing comedy, and Larosa developed an interest in hypnotism. During one of the shows, Larosa broke a guitar string, and while he changed it out, the singer did an impersonation of Lon Chaney Jr. At a later performance, someone in the audience called out a request for 'the monsters,' and the band decided to start combining their music and comedy.

"I saw a hypnotist show, and I was just fascinated by what this guy was doing, so I asked him if he would teach me," Larosa

said. However, the hypnotist refused, claiming trade secrets. Eventually, he found a teacher and studied hypnotism for two years, but he didn't really care for where his career as a hypnotist began.

"I got my start with one of the people I was studying with," Larosa said. "We did shows at a bar, but it was all rated-R kind of stuff, and I wasn't very happy with that. I was working this club outside of the submarine base in Groton, and I didn't feel good about what I was doing. It wasn't a good feeling to have a person come out of a session afraid of what they might have done while they were under."

Larosa changed his routine to incorporate more family-friendly themes and an element of educational value. By his estimation, 70 percent of the show is still entertainment, but he values his ability to inform as well as entertain.

"My entire show is about the imagination at work," Larosa said. "I've done shows at high schools and colleges, where I've had my subjects age from infants to 90 or 100 years old, and their faces will change right along with their bodies. Our imaginations can



rtainer

either heal us or slay us.”

Larosa didn't plan on entertaining military audiences either, but a series of circumstances beyond his control brought him and his act to military audiences all over the world.

“My agent booked me for a campground,” Larosa said, “but it turned out that it wasn't like a summer camp or something like that. Instead, it was a mobile home campground, and most of the people there were in their fifties or sixties at the time. When my agent found out, he knew I wouldn't be happy with it because older crowds tend to not want to participate, but I gave it a try and decided to make friends with the audience. It turned out to be a great show.”

After the show, a representative from MWR in Naples asked Larosa if he'd be interested in performing for the military, and that introduced him to the military audience.

“I've had the opportunity to do my act at Aviano, Naples, Sigonella, and La Maddalena,”

Larosa said. “I do this show for the military for three reasons. First, my father came to the United States from Italy right before World War Two, and he got a bullet and a Purple Heart in France. He taught us to love this country and respect the people who defend it because freedom does come at a price. Second, it's just awesome to be a civilian on board a U.S. Navy vessel. I have friends who are performers, and they ask me what it's like to be on a ship, and you can describe it, but it's like describing what it's like to go skydiving. Words just don't do it justice.”

Larosa's third reason may be considered a little light-hearted. He smiled as he said: “Who wouldn't want to spend a few days in Hawaii.”

Dan Larosa expressed his admiration for the military audience and their families during his show.

“I've done over 3,000 of these shows all over the world,” he said. “I know what sacrifices you and your families make, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you do for our country.”



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