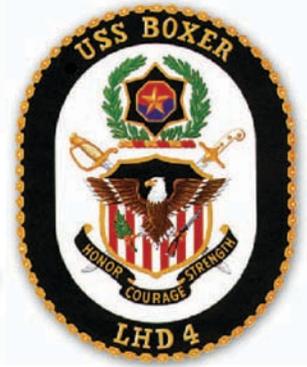




BARK OF THE **BOXER**

AMERICA'S GOLDEN GATOR



VOLUME: XVI ISSUE: 7

EARLY JUNE 2011

Asian-Pacific culture takes center stage

By MC3 Anna Kiner

USS Boxer celebrated Asian-Pacific American heritage month by recognizing the many achievements of Asian-Pacific crewmembers and providing demonstrations of their various cultures in the ship's foc'sle May 20.

The Diversity Team on board Boxer directed and performed a program to honor the occasion and followed it up with a special dinner of Asian foods on the mess decks.

"It was fun and we got to see different aspects of the Asian cultures," said Chief Boatswain's Mate Ricardo Collantes. "The people who did it really put their heads together to make up a really good presentation of the Asian heritage and representing the countries. It was a nice presentation—one of the best ones. The Diversity Team keeps getting better and better."

The celebration began with a recitation of the Sailor's Creed in a combination of Tagalog, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese. The achievements of several Asian-Pacific crewmembers were then recognized through a reading of short biographies followed by a speech on Asian-Pacific Heritage by the ship's Food Service Officer, Chief Warrant Officer William Duka, a native of the Republic of the Philippines.

The grand finale to the program was a performance by the Diversity Team combining Hawaiian tribal dances with the traditional hula. The dancing got several members of the audience involved, including Boxer's Commanding Officer, Capt. Frank Michael, and Boxer's Command Master Chief, Master Chief Douglas Lattimer.

"It's always very motivating and feels good to help the ship's



Members of Boxer's Diversity Team perform a traditional Hawaiian dance in the ship's foc'sle as part of a celebration honoring the heritages of Asian-Pacific Americans. Photo by MC3 Anna Kiner.

morale by participating with the Diversity Team," said Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Christina Park, a member of the Diversity Team. "All the hard work everyone put in made it feel especially worthwhile when the commanding officer asked for another good performance like that before he leaves."

Immediately following the program was an Asian-themed dinner featuring chicken adobo and roast pork and capped by a cake with a tropical island design made by the ship's bake shop.



Blue Lights/ Green Well

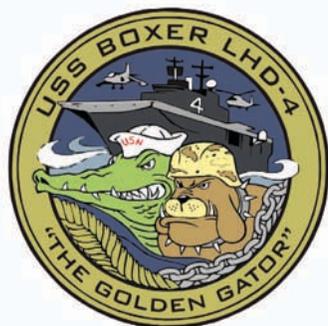
Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) 76 enters Boxer's dimly-lit well deck during night time LCAC operations.

During night ops, the well deck is lit by blue lights to reduce the brightness for the LCAC operators who pilot their craft into the dark using light-sensitive night-vision goggles.

Photo by MC3(SW/AW) Trevor Welsh



BOXER PROFILES



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Name: Jacob W. Long

Rate: Aviation Boatsain's Mate (Handling)
Airman

Hometown: Godfrey, Ill.

Time in the Navy: 2 years

Previous Assignment: Boxer is my first command

Describe your rate: ABs operate, maintain and repair aircraft catapults, arresting gear and barricades; operate and maintain fuel and lube oil transfer systems; direct aircraft on the flight deck and in the hangar bay during launch and recovery; use tow tractors to position planes and operate support equipment used to start aircraft.

Tell us about your job: As a "yellow shirt" ABH, I handle the aircraft during the start-up, launch and recovery phases of flight operations. I use hand signals to provide visual communications to the pilots of aircraft on the flight deck and when they land and take off. It's a fast paced job that never gets old.

Goals while in the Navy: I want to get my Surface Warfare pin. I also want to finish my degree in the medical field.

Favorite activities Underway: I'd have to say I love to sleep the most; I have to be rested and alert when I'm on the flight deck. I like going to the gym and staying in shape.

Hobbies or interests: I like golfing and going to the beach.



Ombudsmen's Corner

A Common Sense Guide to Protecting Yourself - Part 1

The Family Readiness Group recently had a meeting under the topic of safety. Here are some tips for keeping yourself safe both during and after deployment:

AT HOME:

- Get to know your neighbors.
- Always close and lock the doors before leaving. If you leave out of a garage, watch the garage door shut completely before leaving.
- Never leave valuable articles on window sills or in plain view from a window.
- Keep grass cut and shrubbery trimmed near doors and windows.
- Never hide a key outside your home or apartment. Leave it with a trusted neighbor instead.
- If your children are old enough to be left alone, instruct them to never open the door unless they know who is on the other side.

WHILE OUT AND ABOUT:

- Always be aware of the possibility that you could be attacked, day or night, while out walking.
- Carry your keys on a ring in your hand with the key points protruding out between your fingers and your fist closed.
- If you are walking and you are being followed by a person or a car, turn around and walk the other way.
- Never walk close to high shrubbery, dark buildings, parked cars or unlit passage ways.

FIND GATOR!



We've hidden GATOR somewhere in this issue. The first three readers who find him and send an e-mail to the editor with the page number and location win a prize from MWR.



Taking steps and raising spirits

Two Sailors make time to help their crewmates fill their deployment with uplifting activity

By MCSN Brian Jeffries

The groundhog days of deployment are here, and as the repetition of days sets in, many Sailors and Marines have begun searching for a good use of their down-time. For a couple of junior Sailors aboard Boxer, that search has come to an end.

Not content with finding an isolated spot or opportunity to get away from it all, though, Machinist's Mate Fireman Ameshia Bryant and Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Rayjuan Horton have gathered like-minded groups of fellow Sailors and Marines to unwind together doing something they love.

Horton has taken his love of dance to pull together a step squad while Bryant heads up the ship's gospel choir. Not only have the two increased the morale of the participants, but their performances at services and special events have improved morale across the ship.

"I ran a step squad at my last command and it was very effective," Horton said. "Keeping everyone, especially the junior Sailors, in good spirits helps the overall complexion of the ship."

The first challenge was finding the time to put all the work into what had started off as a form of relaxation. In Bryant's case, in addition to conducting the choir, she also sings and was even the resident accompanist until someone joined up who could take her spot at the keyboard.

"God's will," she said.

Those are the words Bryant uses to describe what compels her



Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Rayjuan Horton (left) heads up a step dance squad on Boxer which has performed for the crew at a number of events such as at this celebration for African American History Month. Photo by MC1(SW) Fletcher Gibson

to squeeze the ship's gospel choir in with her busy watch schedule. Five hours on watch in addition to her normal work day only leaves Bryant with just a few hours to herself, but she does whatever it takes to not miss a single practice or Sunday service.

While Bryant seeks to raise spirits through divine performance, Horton said his goal is to keep his shipmates engaged through popular social activity. Horton has been in the Navy for more than five years and has seen his fair shares of ups and downs. Step squad is his way of getting face time with other junior Sailors.

"As a junior guy, it is really easy to lose your way, especially on deployment, because you get lost in the monotony of each day being the same," Horton said. "That's how it was for me when I first joined."

But while Horton's primary focus is junior Sailors, Bryant's choir is for all ranks aboard Boxer, both as audience members and as performers. The group includes a few officers and senior enlisted who all follow her lead as she directs.

"Rank has no bearing," she said. "All rank is checked at the door. We come to rehearsal and the service to help find our path by singing the Lord's praises. "That's all that matters."

One of the greatest things that can be seen in both Bryant's and Horton's roles in the command is that both saw a hole in the needs of the crew and, rather than just talking about it, acted on it. Both performance teams are founded on a labor of love, but the impact each has extends far beyond the individuals who guide them and the members who participate in them. And as junior-ranking members of the Boxer crew, Horton and Bryant have made it clear there's no minimum rank to invoke positive change.

Both the gospel choir and step squad are open to any member of the crew interested in joining.



Machinist's Mate Fireman Ameshia Bryant (left) conducts the ship's gospel choir. Although primarily a religious gathering, performing at weekend chapel services and religious ceremonies, the choir has also been asked to perform at a number of events around the ship. Photo by MC1(SW) Fletcher Gibson

HONOR · COURAGE · STRENGTH



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