

PEL ARG PUBLIC AFFAIRS
PRESENTS

IN VIEW: EXERCISE CROCODILO



PELELIU AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP AND 15TH MEU ARRIVE FOR EXERCISE CROCODILO

By Commander Amphibious Squadron Three Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) and the amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) will be in the Savu Sea and visible from the coast June 19, in preparation for the military exercise hosted by the Falintil-Forças Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL).

Soldiers from the F-FDTL and the International Stability Force (ISF) will train with U.S. Marines from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) throughout Timor-Leste during the week-long Crocodilo Exercise.

“The Marines and Sailors of the 15th MEU and Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group (PEL ARG) are looking forward to the training opportunities in Timor Leste. In conjunction with our partners in this region, we will be able to conduct a broad range of realistic training in a challenging tropical environment,” said Col. Roy Osborn, commanding officer of the 15th MEU. “We are honored to be here and are excited about the potential for future operations.”

In addition to military training, medical and dental professionals from the PEL ARG and 15th MEU will be coming ashore to assist local healthcare workers in providing care to local residents.

“The healing arts are a way to demonstrate the United States’ commitment to the support and development of the nation of Timor-Leste,” said Cmdr. George Linville, amphibious task force surgeon. “The PEL ARG and 15th MEU’s efforts to bring first class medical and dental care to the citizens of Timor-Leste represent the finest tradition of the Navy and Marine Corps health care

team.”

U.S. Marines and Sailors will be visiting Dili and partnering with local government in various service activities. Sailors will be visiting the Santa Dominican Orphanage and the Santa Bakhita

Orphanage in Dili, as well as providing school supplies to a local school.

One activity that is open to the public is a soccer game between U.S. Forces and the



Photo by MC2 Edwardo Proaño

F-FDTL at Dili Stadium. This event is scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, at 1630 hours.

“Participating in these multilateral exercises is a terrific opportunity for us to make a positive contribution to Timorese society, even as we develop a closer military relationship with the F-FDTL,” said Jonathan Henick, the Charge d’ Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Timor-Leste. The exercises and community events are coordinated through the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy.

This is the second time U.S. Navy and Marine Corps have conducted multilateral training. Last year, U.S. Marines and Sailors from the USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) participated in similar exercises.

The PEL ARG’s third ship, amphibious transport dock ship USS Dubuque (LPD 8) is participating in separate military exercises in neighboring Indonesia.

Other elements of the PELARG include the command element, Commander, Amphibious Squadron 3; Fleet Surgical Team 1; Tactical Air Control Squadron 11; Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23, Detachment Five; Assault Craft Unit 1, Detachment F; Assault Craft Unit 5, Detachment B and Beachmaster Unit 1, Detachment D. While in 7th Fleet, PEL ARG reports to Commander, Amphibious Force 7th Fleet, Rear Adm. Richard Landolt, who is headquartered in Okinawa, Japan.

PEL ARG AND 15TH MEU VISIT ORPHANAGE

Story and Photos by MC2 Edward Proaño

Sailors and Marines from the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group (PEL ARG) participated in a community relations project at the Santa Bakhita Orphanage outside Dili June 20.

The ship's chaplain, Cmdr. Gary Clore, led the mission, which provided school supplies, candy, music and games to the orphans.

The ship's mascot, The Peleliu Gator, came along with the team and pantomimed a local fairy tale in front of the kids, as the chaplain read the story. The tale was about a crocodile that became the mountains and hills of Timor Leste.

Throughout the day, Sailors and Marines interacted with children by playing, singing, dancing and giving out candy.

"It's important to contribute to the upkeep of the orphanage because we can make a positive impact in the lives of these kids," said Clore. "We bring them hope by showing that we care."

Clore said community relations projects such as this

contribute to strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and Timor Leste on a grass roots level.

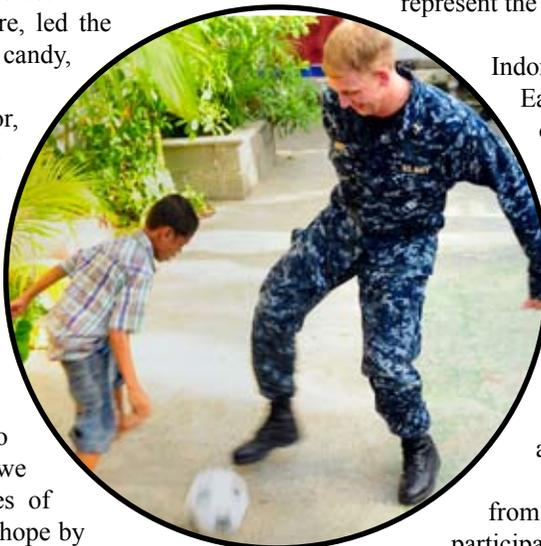
"The goal of this project is to do some cultural interactions with these children," said Clore. "It's also to let them know that we represent the U.S. Navy and we think they are special."

After years as the 27th province of Indonesia, Timor Leste, previously known as East Timor, became the first sovereign state of the 21st century May 20, 2002.

Since their independence, the PEL ARG is one of many U.S. military groups which have helped the developing nation and its people.

"It feels good to reach out to these kids," said Ensign Timothy Tacl, Peleliu's First Division Officer. "I played soccer with them, and it means a lot to see how happy they were. It was awesome."

The PEL ARG and embarked Marines from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit are participating in Exercise Crocodilo, a multilateral exercise that promotes partnership through civil programs and training with the Timor Leste and Australian militaries.



This magazine was published and printed on board by the USS Peleliu (LHA 5) Media Division. This newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. Government. The Media Division reserves the right to edit submissions.

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SAILORS CONDUCT PORT SECURITY TRAINING WITH TIMORESE

Story and photo by
MC2 (EXW) Andrew Dunlap

Sailors from the amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) and dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52) trained port security operations to the Timorese Maritime Police in the Port of Dili June 22.

The two-day course focused on port patrolling, ship escorting, communicating with inbound ships and maneuvering non-compliant vessels away from the pier.

“The training is good for our country’s future,” said Nelson Sousa Soares, a member of the Dili Maritime Police. “As our country grows, the port will become busier, we must have the ability to take control and execute the proper procedures.”

The largest port in Timor L e s t e , located

close to Dili’s business and government center, it provides the interface between sea and road transport.

An island nation, the 150,000 Timorese rely on the Port of Dili for more than 200,000 tons of imported goods a year.

Port of Dili has been controlled by the Timorese since 1999, when the United Nations ordered Indonesia to relinquish control of the territory.

A territory previously known as East Timor, Timor Leste became the first sovereign state of the 21st century on May 20, 2002.

Today was the first time the Dili Maritime Police were trained by U.S. Navy Sailors, however they have partnered with the U.S Coast Guard in the past, concentrating

mainly on water navigation and GPS technology.

With the Peleliu and Pearl Harbor anchored outside the Port of Dili, the water-based training will not only improve the procedures used for the Timorese own benefit, but also the partnership between a host nation and a visiting naval vessel.

“We want to familiarize them with our security measures whether its maritime security or port security,” said Senior Chief Boatswain Mate(SW/EXW/AW) Daniel

Avila, lead instructor. “This will help them aid in the security of ships, not only Navy, but for local imports and cargo ships.”





PEL ARG, 15TH MEU SCORE WITH TIMOR LESTE PARTNERSHIP

Story by MC3 Omar Dominquez

Sailors and Marines from USS Peleliu (LHA 5) played a goodwill soccer match against the Timor Leste Defense Force soccer team at the Dili National Stadium, June 22.

In a packed stadium filled with the Secretary of State for Defense of Timor c Leste, American servicemembers and local Timorese, the teams faced off in the country's most popular sport.

"The game was very surreal," said Chief Information Systems Technician (SW/AW) Joseph Fernandez. "Playing on an international stage against an international team was great to see."

Prior to the game, both teams and the color guards gathered at the center of the field to observe the playing of both national anthems.

"The best part about conducting goodwill engagements like this is being a good ambassador," said Fernandez. "It's also good for our Sailors and Marines to get away from operational work to enjoy a nice friendly competition of soccer."

The game lasted more than two hours and ended in a 1-1 tie.

"The game was very exciting," said Lt. Jose Pinto, an officer in the Timor Leste Defense Force. "This exercise is the best exercise we

have had since we became an independent country. It's good to have events like this to build relationships with each other."

Pinto added that bilateral relationships are built on a variety of events including military exercises, friendly competition and civic programs, where people can meet and exchange ideas.

The PEL ARG and embarked Marines from the

15th Marine Expeditionary Unit are participating in Exercise Crocodilo, a multicultural exercise promoting partnership through civil programs and training with the Timor-Leste and Australian militaries.

Photo Illustration by MC3 Foster Bamford



Photos by MC3 Foster Bamford

Photo by MC3 Omar Dominquez



Photo by MC2 Eduardo Proaño



From the Water



Photo by MC2 Michael Russell

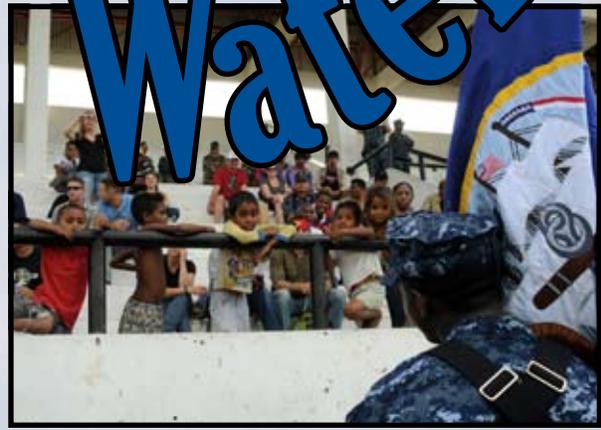


Photo by MC3 Foster Bamford



Photo by MC2 (EXW) Andrew Dunlap



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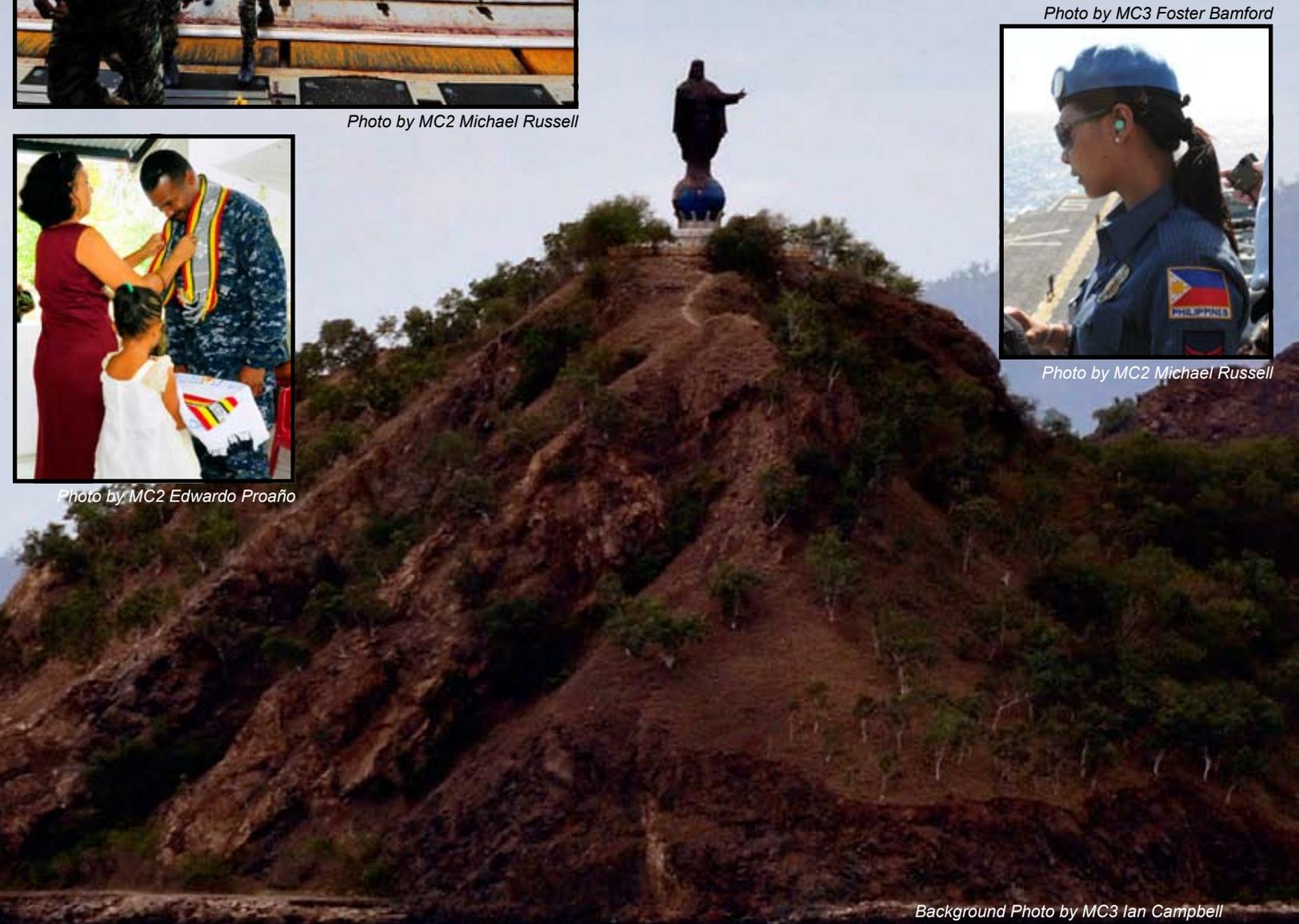
Photo by MC3 Foster Bamford



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Photo by MC2 Michael Russell

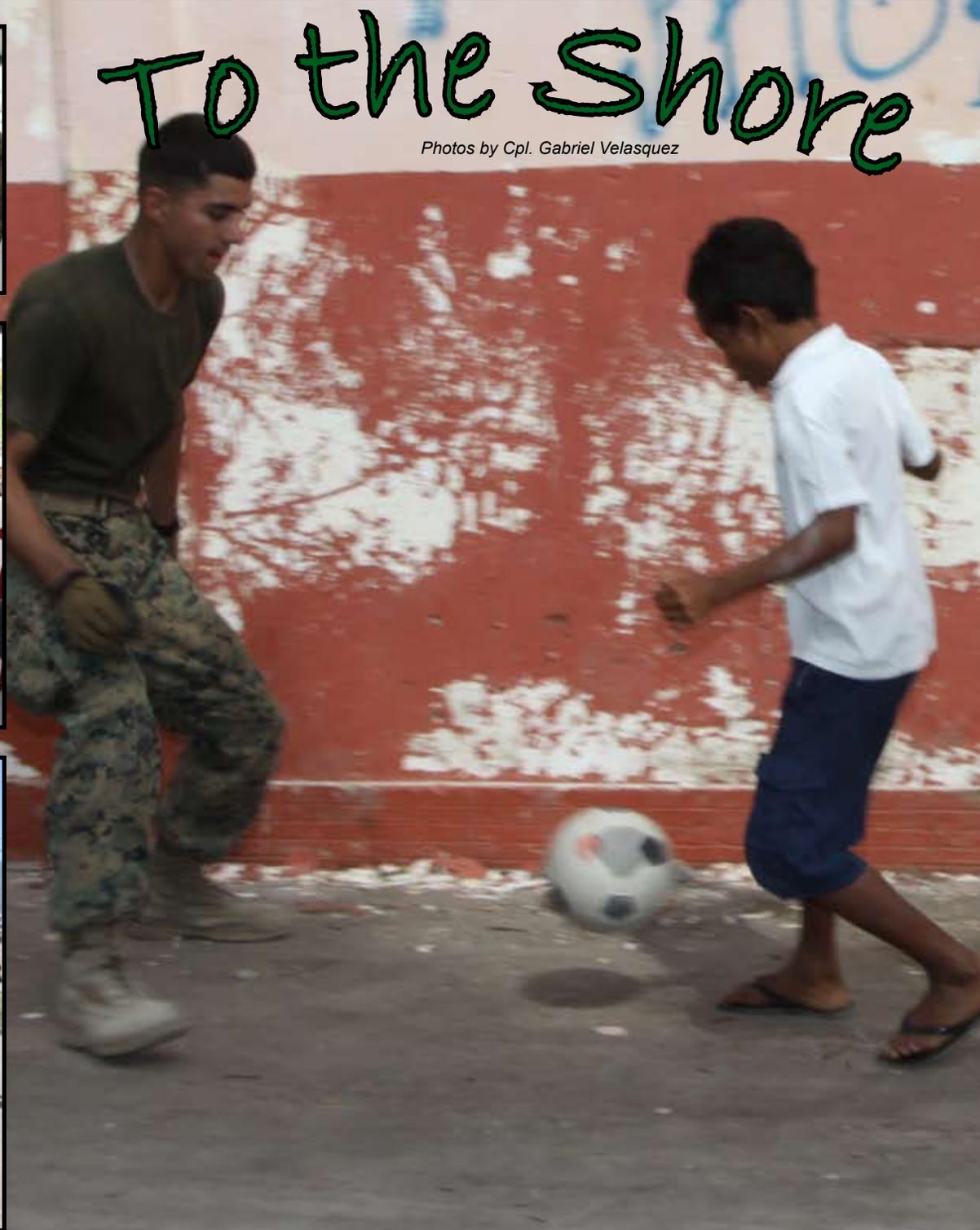


Background Photo by MC3 Ian Campbell



To the Shore

Photos by Cpl. Gabriel Velasquez





15th MEU Helps Community in Timor Leste

Children from the small village in Suco now have a place where they can have fun and learn, thanks to the efforts of Seabees and Marines.

Sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11, with the help of Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) completed construction of a community center here this week.

"We painted the center, inside and out, and helped lay down some of the concrete," said Lance Cpl. Ryan Ritthaler, motor transport operator, CLB-15.

"We even helped the Seabees finish some of the tiling they had done the day

before," added Ritthaler, the 20-year-old Fraser, Mich. native.

With the Marines finishing all their work at the community center, they found another place they could lend a helping hand.

"The Marines completed all the work they could at the community center, so we found a local school that was being renovated," said 1st Lt. Briana Carter, assistant operations officer, CLB-15. "The project will be completed by Pacific Partnership 2010 in August, so we just helped give them a head start," explained the 23-year-old Phoenix, Ariz. native.

Working in extreme temperatures, Marines hammered away at the concrete center with nothing but brute force. Whenever a stubborn portion of concrete would not budge, a jackhammer was used to pry it from the ground.

"When we arrived at the school, we had to remove the concrete floor so they could repave it," explained Ritthaler. "It was hard work and it was really hot, but it felt great to be helping make this school better," he said with a smile.

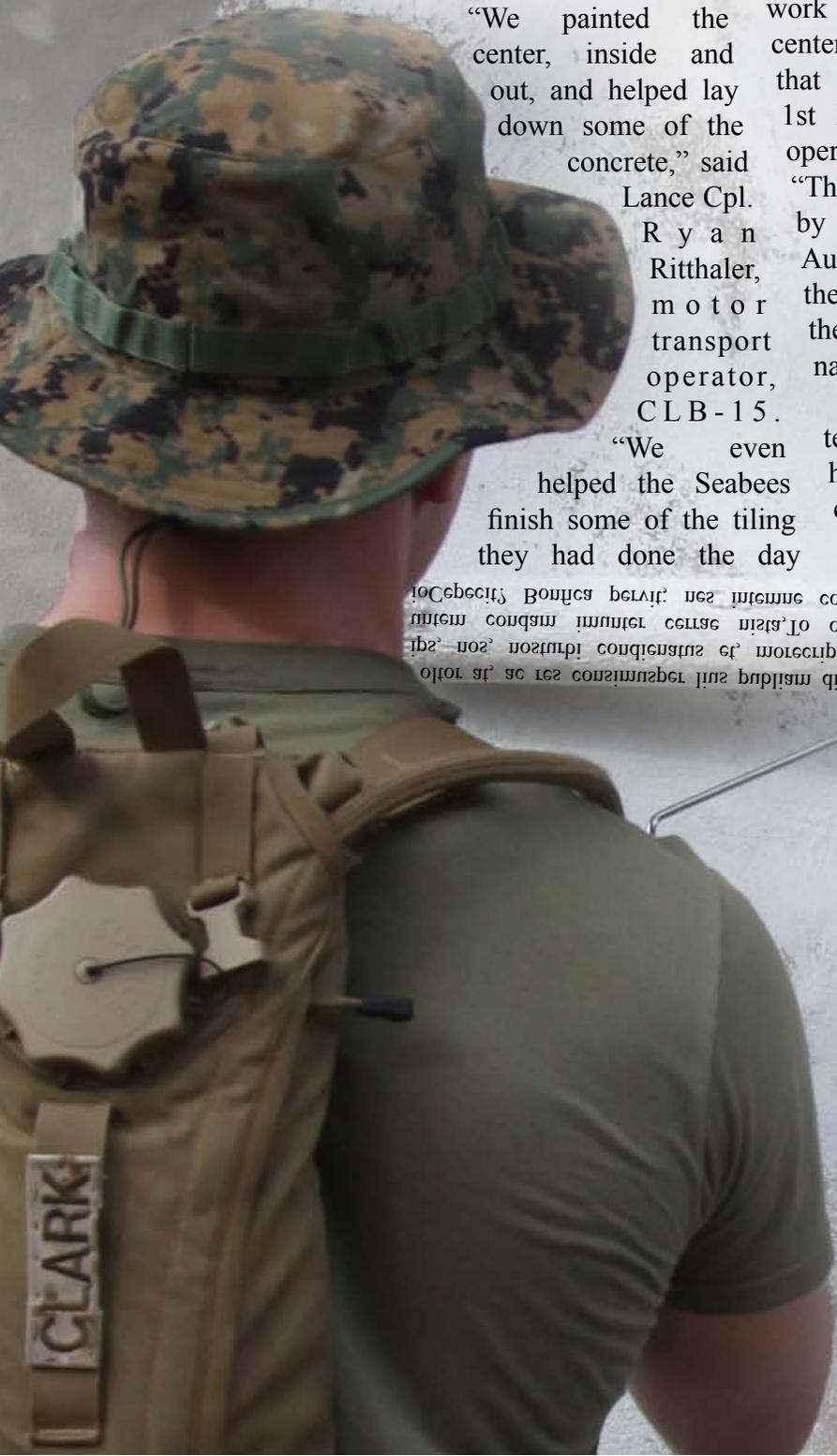
Story and Photo
by Cpl. Gabriel
Velasquez

When recess broke for the kids, the Marines rested too. The children stood in awe at the strangers until a soccer ball was brought out and a make shift game ensued.

"It was fun getting out there and playing with the kids," said Lance Cpl. Juan C. Valencia-Martinez, bulk fuel specialist, CLB-15. "I showed them how to dribble the ball and tried to get all of them involved by having a contest on who could dribble the most," added Valencia-Martinez, the 19-year-old Wasco, Calif. native.

Though the work was grueling and the heat intense, the Marines knew why they were there.

"It's all about helping the community and the kids," said Sgt. Arthur Hardy, combat engineer, CLB-15. "At the end of the day, that's what makes you feel good about what you're doing here," added the 23-year-old Selma, Ala. native.



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CLB-15 Medical Detachment Provides Care in Timor Leste

Story and photo by
Cpl. Gabriel Velasquez

The blistering heat did not sway the local villagers of Timor Leste this week as they waited in long lines to receive medical care.

Doctors and corpsmen from Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), provided health care services to local residents at various sites in Timor Leste this week.

The team of doctors and corpsmen were split between three different sites and treated a variety of illnesses.

“We saw 1,173 people between all three sites,” said Chief Petty Officer Troy Moravec, medical detachment chief, CLB-15. “Their ailments ranged from upper respiratory infections to common aches and pains,” added Moravec.

At the main site, a local clinic, the caregivers were greeted with smiles and appreciation.

“The people were very happy and weren’t shy,” said Moravec. “They mingled with us and we felt very welcome,” he added.

For every patient seen, a routine diagnostic procedure was performed by the caregivers.

“I would take their blood pressure, check their respiration, and check

their pulse,” said Petty Officer Third Class Samuel Nickols, corpsmen, CLB-15. “I would then write up a diagnosis and either hand the patient off to one of the doctors or give them some medicine that would ease their symptoms,” he added.

For the ailments the team couldn’t treat, referrals were given so patients could receive care.

“Most of the illnesses we got were not very serious, and we could treat with the medicine on hand,” explained Cmdr. Randy L. Baldwin, MEU surgeon, CLB-15. “The ailments that we didn’t have the equipment for, like cases of tuberculosis and acute hepatitis, we referred the patients to a local hospital,” he said.

Of all the challenges faced during the week, the hardest part wasn’t medically related.

“I think the language barrier was the most difficult aspect of the mission,” said Baldwin. “The Timor Leste military really helped out by providing translators that made everything run much smoother,” he added.

Each new challenge provided the team with opportunities to build cohesion within the unit as they developed ways to accomplish their mission.

“I was impressed with the team,” said Moravec. “I wasn’t finding myself telling them what to do, they pulled together and took the initiative to get the job done.”

Coping with challenges is nothing new to a medical professional. And helping people, especially those in need, makes it all worth while.

“This is what I signed up for,” said Nickols. “Providing health care for the sick and injured, it felt great.”



Dubuque Particip

Story by
MC1 David McKee

USS Dubuque (LPD 8) wrapped up a bi-lateral exercise promoting cooperation through Civic Action Programs and training with Indonesia June 26.

Marine Exercise 2010 (MAREX 10) was designed to enhance interoperability between the U.S. and Indonesian Marines (KORMAR) and included training the Marines in jungle and urban warfare environments.

The exercise began June 19 when Marines departed Dubuque via CH-46E Sea Knights and Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV) to conduct a mock amphibious assault on the Indonesian Island of Java.

“The Marines are a naval force, and they can’t get to their place of combat without the Dubuque. So we’re the chauffer that gets the striking force ashore,” said the Commanding Officer of Dubuque, Capt. Christopher Bolt. “Our job is to get

them on shore safely and exactly on time in exactly the right location, so they’re set up for success for any kind of operation they are tasked to do.”

According to Marine Capt. Christopher Congre with HMM-165, the jungle training provided the Marines with a rare opportunity considering the focus in recent years being on the arid regions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We are focused on the desert, so we don’t get a lot of instruction on jungle warfare,” said Congre.

The primary mission for Congre and HMM-165 was logistics including transportation of passengers, food and ammunition for the Battalion Landing Team and sustaining a 24-hour-a-day casualty evacuation standby. Without Dubuque as

a forward-staging platform from which to conduct the operation and its facilities to sustain the crew and helicopters, the exercise would not have been possible.

“For the ACE (Air Combat Element), the Dubuque team is part of our heart and soul. We can’t operate without them,” said Congre. “Here at MAREX, we are in a foreign country, and we have very little resources ashore. From the start of the day to the end of the day, the ship provides fuel and food for the air crew.”

The exercise



ates in MAREX-10

provided interaction between the KORMAR and U.S. Marines and was an important diplomatic opportunity. The idea was for 600 Marines and Sailors from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to show the Indonesians that people from the United States are just people like them, but from a different country.

On the first day of the exercise, Dubuque offered senior members of the Indonesian military a tour of the ship and a chance to see an amphibious ship first-

hand. The ship is also hosting Indonesian Midshipmen following the exercise to give a broader perspective of the U.S. Navy and the way it works.

The Fleet Surgical Team extended its role of diplomacy into the civilian population by conducting medical and dental Civic Action Projects (MEDCAP/DENCAP). Marines rebuilt a roof on a local school and built desks for the school's students.

"When we perform community service projects the recipients get to say, 'wow, we're spending some of our treasure and our energy on some of their needs as part of the world's community,'" Bolt said. "When they are allowed to work alongside us day in and day out for eight straight days, they see that our rhetoric is not just an act - it's the truth."

Congre's sentiments about the Marines on the ground echoed Bolt's.

"The sentiment pretty much has gone around between the Marines that the KORMAR have been awesome to work with," Congre said.

