

NASSG Re-Enters the Sixth Fleet Area of Operations

From Nassau Strike Group Public Affairs Office



STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR (June 27, 2008) – *Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sean Stafford provides photographic coverage aboard amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) while Seaman Rey Valle (below) stands topside lookout as the ship transits the Straits of Gibraltar leaving the Mediterranean Sea. U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rustum Rivera. (RELEASED)*



USS NASSAU, At Sea – The ships of the Nassau Strike Group (NASSG) re-entered the Mediterranean Gulf on June 18 to conduct maritime security operations (MSO) in regional waters and theater security cooperation efforts.

The ships entered the region as part of an ongoing rotation of forces, demonstrating the United States' continued resolve toward enhancing regional security and promoting long-term stability.

Commanded by Capt. Robert G. Lineberry, commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX, the NASSG is comprised of amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4); amphibious transport dock ship USS Nashville (LPD 13); amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48); guided-missile destroyers USS Ross (DDG 71) and USS Bulkeley (DDG 84); guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), and the fast-attack submarine USS Albany (SSN 753).

While in the area, the NASSG will assist Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CNE) conduct the full range of maritime operations and theater security cooperation in concert with coalition, joint, interagency and other partners in order to advance security and stability in Europe and Africa.

The NASSG will also support the 2008 CNE Operational Objectives to improve maritime safety and security in Europe and Africa; be prepared for any contingency; provide exceptional stewardship to the regional workforce and their families; advance the art and science of maritime operations;

>>>Continued on page 3

In This Issue

NASSG Re-Enters the Sixth Fleet Area of Operations	page 1
Commodore's Corner	page 2
Ombudsman's Corner	page 3
President George H.W. Bush Visits USS Ashland	page 4
Midshipmen Spend Summer Cruise Onboard USS Ross	page 5
USS Ross Holds Change of Command	page 5
TACRON 21 Det Puts Emphasis on Fitness	page 6
What did you accomplish during 2008 Med/Gulf Deployment?	page 7 & 11
Philippine Sea Visits Aksaz, Turkey	page 8
Any Day in the NASSG	page 9
June 15; Happy Father's Day	page 10
USS Nassau Retention Honor Roll	page 12



COMMODORE'S CORNER

Dear Families and Friends,

This will be our last and best NASSG Times, as the NASSAU, PHILLIPINE SEA, NASHVILLE, BULKELEY, ASHLAND and ROSS have started our transit across the Atlantic Ocean and our 2,800 Sailors and Marines are extremely excited about our return that is scheduled for 11 JULY.



The NASSAU Strike Group visited 18 countries, conducted numerous operations and exercises in support of the 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation. The team has executed our Maritime Strategy core capabilities effectively, with precision and pride. Throughout the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf we have maintained maritime security, ensured our regional partners of our commitment and confronted terrorism head-on.

We have professional counselors from the FLEET and FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER making rounds to all the ships discussing Return and Reunion subjects such as Returning to Children, Intimacy, Car Buying, Money Management and New Parents. We also have a Virginia State Trooper aboard that is discussing safe driving tips and avoiding common tendencies for drivers returning home from deployment. Our mission is not over until we have all our Sailors and Marines safely home and reacquainted with their families and environment.

Thanks to the great NASSG team for their outstanding leadership and steadfast dedication to the U.S. Navy and their country. We thank you for your unlimited support and encouragement to successfully accomplish our mission. Best wishes to all our families and friends for a treasured homecoming.

*Respectfully,
CAPT Bob Lineberry*



Nassau Strike Group(NASSG) Times

This is an unofficial US Navy newsletter approved for release by the Commander, Nassau Strike Group. News and information within are intended solely for its crew and family members. Any questions regarding its content may be directed to NASSG Public Affairs Office at nassgpao@lha4.navy.mil.

Capt. Robert Lineberry
Commander, Nassau Strike Group

Cmdr. Bradley Borden
NASSG Chief Staff Officer

MMCM(SW) Herbert Broughton
NASSG Senior Enlisted Advisor

Lt.j.g. Anthony Falvo
NASSG Public Affairs Officer

NASSG Public Affairs Staff
MC1(SW/AW) Rustum Rivera
MC3 David Wyssaver
MC3 Coleman Thompson
MC3 Mandy Hunsucker
MC3 Cory Rose
MCSN Ryan Steinhour

MCC(SW/AW) Christopher Hoffpauir
USS Nassau Public Affairs Officer

USS Nassau Public Affairs Staff
MC1(SW) Charmin Covington
MC1 Mary Popejoy
MC2(SW) Michael Cortez
MC2 Sean Stafford
MC2 Amanda Clayton
MCSN Jonathan Pankau

NASSG Re-enters 6th Fleet

>>>Continued from page 1

advance awareness of the harmony of partner and U.S. interests and activities; and support U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and other Navy Component Commanders.

The NASSG and its 2,800 Sailors and Marines were first in the region from Feb. 25-Apr. 24, where they visited nine different countries and conducted several community relations projects. The strike group's operations in 6th Fleet was highlighted by its participation in Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08), a two-week maritime exercise designed to increase the interoperability and collective maritime proficiencies of participating nations. In total, 3,100 service members from 11 nations participated in the U.S.-hosted, multinational exercise.

"Our Sailors and Marines really enjoyed the chance to learn from our many multinational partners and contribute to the team effort in the region," said Lineberry. "PE 08 provided an excellent opportunity for all participants to share their ideas on maintaining safety and security, while building relationships and enhancing our interoperability."

Continuing its deployment into 2008, the NASSG will look to continue to execute its mission of providing the joint or combined force commander with a scalable maritime force capable of a full range of military options that is flexible, agile and quick to respond when called upon. The NASSG will further support the other tenets of the Navy's Maritime Strategy, which include forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, and humanitarian assistance/disaster response. The Maritime Strategy represents a new vision for the 21st century and establishes new capabilities to codify longstanding challenges, while maintaining focus on enduring naval missions.

"We are very pleased with our many

accomplishments and milestones that we have achieved thus far during this deployment," said Lineberry. "The team is ready as we continue to perform our many missions and take each day and challenge as they come."

MSO help set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment and complement the counterterrorism and security efforts in regional nations' littoral waters. ■

OMBUDSMAN'S CORNER

Hello All,

I'm sure this letter will find everyone filled with excitement anticipating the arrival of our spouses. There are a few things we have planned before they arrive.

I know this is late notice, but there is a homecoming meeting I hope to see you at on July 1, 2008. Also, there is a homecoming party on July 5, 2008 at the Fleet Rec Park, across from Gate 5, by Naval Station Norfolk. The time is from 12-5, and there will be lots of food and fun for the adults and the kids. There will be doorprizes, and the first hug and kiss will be given away at the end if you bought tickets. If you need any more information or you haven't received the directions please let me know.

Also, just a few reminders about homecoming day. Even though, we will all be very excited to have our Sailors home and we will want them off the ship ASAP, there is a waiting process. Once the ship is secured, it will be at least 1-2 hours if not longer before your Sailor will be let off the ship. The most important thing to remember on homecoming day is SAFETY & PATIENCE.

It will be very hot on homecoming day, so please remember to stay hydrated. Also remember that we will be right at the water and it would be very easy for children to fall into the water. There is also construction going on around the piers. Please be very careful and keep your children with you and away from this construction. We want everyone to have a fun time, so please remember to be SAFE!!!

Just another reminder that pets and balloons are not allowed on the pier. Also, it will be hot so please do not leave your pets in your vehicle.

The wonderful joyous time our ships return is almost here! Enjoy the homecoming, I hope to see you at the party, and please let me know if you need anything in the meantime.

*Sincerely,
Ashley Lawrence*

President George H.W. Bush Visits USS Ashland

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mandy Hunsucker

RHODES, Greece – Former President of the United States George H.W. Bush visited amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) to say thank you for the crew's service, June 15.

Bush and some of his family members were on vacation in Greece when they found out that Ashland would be visiting Rhodes, Greece while the ship was returning from the Arabian Gulf. He quickly adjusted his schedule and made a detour just to stop by and talk with the crew.

"I want you all to know it is a joy for us to see this ship, to be onboard and be able to show the respect that we have for the Navy and those who serve there in," said Bush.

Bush presented eight awards and re-enlisted two Ashland Sailors during his visit.

"To be re-enlisted by former President

Bush was an unbelievable experience," said Damage Controlman 1st Class (SW/AW) Tim Taylor. "I was extremely honored to have this opportunity. It's definitely a once in a life time experience."

"It was very kind of former President Bush and his family to take time out of their vacation to watch the ship moor and then come onboard to talk to the crew and thank them for their service," said Cmdr. Jeffrey Ward, Ashland's commanding officer. "It meant a lot to the crew to be able to talk to Mr. and

Mrs. Bush, shake hands, and pose for pictures. It was a great start to our visit to Rhodes, and it is a day the Sailors will never forget."

After the ceremony, Bush and his wife, former First Lady Barbara Bush, sat down with some Sailors and enjoyed refreshments while the rest of his family toured the ship.

"Mr. Bush was very down to earth and he had a great sense of humor. He joked with us and his wife made us all laugh," said Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Jivette Taylor. "It was really neat that he came to the Ashland. It meant a lot to the crew."

At the conclusion of the family's visit, Mr. and Mrs. Bush posed with numerous Sailors and Mr. Bush gave out several prized autographs.

"It was an honor to have the former President of the United States visit our ship and address the crew," said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Chris Ebert, who got his pocket copy of the U.S. Constitution signed by Bush. "It really re-affirms our mission as a just cause, and it boosted the spirit of our Sailors."

Ashland is part of the Nassau Strike Group, currently operating in the Navy's 6th Fleet area of responsibility to support maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts. 🇺🇸



RHODES, Greece (June 15, 2008) – While on vacation in Greece, Former President George H. W. Bush and some of his family members adjusted their schedule and made a detour to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48) just to stop by and talk with the crew. U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mandy Hunsucker. (RELEASED)



Midshipmen Spend Summer Cruise Onboard USS Ross

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cory Rose

USS ROSS, at Sea – Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy and from college Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs around the country recently joined the crew of the guided missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) for their three-week summer cruise underway period.

Summer cruises are designed to give Midshipmen an understanding of what ship life is like for officers and enlisted Sailors during a deployment. Expectations can be high for those that are going to be on a naval ship for the first time.

"Since this was my first time on a ship, I finally got to see first-hand what my instructors in my unit are describing which leads to a full encompassing understanding of the experience," said Midshipman 2nd Class Erica Coburn from Norwich University.

Although the Midshipmen will eventually be commissioned as officers, they also train and work with enlisted Sailors in order to better understand the full spectrum of duties and responsibilities aboard ship.

"I have learned a lot about how the fleet operates while underway, and how the crew lives and operates," said Midshipman 2nd Class Matthew Barrett from Rochester Polytechnic Institute. "It definitely took some time getting used to life onboard the ship as compared to life at an ROTC unit."

Spending time on a ship learning how things work during a deployment can help mold the future leaders of our Navy. By immersing themselves in Navy culture, the Midshipmen get a clear understanding of challenges and hard work that goes into a safe and successful deployment.

"We've put together a pretty good program, spearheaded by our Navigator and Training Officer, which allows the Midshipmen to see a little bit of life in every department, from Engineering to Operations to Combat Systems," said Cmdr. Douglas McGoff, commanding officer, USS Ross. "We've rotated them through various watch stations, and had them conduct special evolutions such as man overboard and general quarters drills."

"I really enjoyed my stay here on the Ross and the time I got to spend with her crew," said Midshipman 2nd Class Zachary Clark. "The memories and experiences I gained while on cruise will be very useful to me both when I return to school and when I gain my commission."

The Nassau Strike Group is currently operating in the Navy's 6th Fleet area of operation to support maritime security operations (MSO) and theater security cooperation (TSC) efforts. ■

USS Ross Holds Change of Command

By Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory Rose

MANAMA, Bahrain – Cmdr. Douglas A. McGoff relieved Cmdr. Paul Stader as commanding officer of the guided missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) during a change of command ceremony June 3 while import Manama, Bahrain.

"I would like to thank you for the work that you have done in order to get the ship ready to deploy, all that you have done so far, and all that you will continue to do," said Stader addressing his crew for the last time as their commanding officer.

McGoff, graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1990 and received a Bachelor of Science in Operational Analysis and earned a Graduate Degree in Operational Logistics from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif.

"I would like to thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to teach me about Ross," said McGoff. "I look forward to sailing with all of you. In the past few days of being on the ship, I have seen that you are at the top of

your game," explained McGoff. "You have put your training, experience and work to good use and made Ross the exceptional ship that she is."

According to Capt. Robert G. Lineberry, commander, Nassau Strike Group, McGoff becomes the latest in a long line of great leaders aboard the guided missile destroyer while honoring the work that Stader had completed prior to the change of command.

"We are extremely fortunate to have such outstanding leadership and total commitment from our Sailors onboard the USS Ross," Lineberry said. "During this deployment, Cmdr. Stader and his team have conducted flawless operations in support of our fleet commanders and I am very pleased with their many accomplishments."

McGoff is taking command of his first vessel and in doing so becomes Ross' eighth commanding officer since the ship's commissioning in 1997. Stader has accepted an assignment at the Naval Personnel Command Millington, Tenn. ■



MANAMA, Bahrain (June 3, 2008) - Cmdr. Paul Stader (right) is relieved as commanding officer of USS Ross (DDG 71) by Cmdr. Douglas McGoff during a Change of Command ceremony on the forecandle of Ross. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cory Rose (RELEASED)

TACRON 21 Det Puts Emphasis on Fitness

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rustum Rivera

USS NASSAU, at Sea – As the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) continues its deployment, Tactical Air Control Squadron TWO ONE (TACRON 21) is emphasizing physical training (PT) by setting individual goals, keeping physically active, staying in shape, and having fun at the same time.

According to Chief Air Controller (AW/SW) Shane R. Edwards, TACRON 21's Command Fitness Leader (CFL), the "Blackjacks" are an extremely active detachment when it comes to great physical conditioning and team building.

"When I took over the program, I was tasked to develop a PT program that would keep the detachment motivated and that they will enjoy at the same time," he explained. "So along with my assistant CFLs, we polled the detachment and we came up with new ideas."

Besides the basic 'three times a week PT', TACRON CFLs issued different challenges through out the deployment. One was the '20x20 Challenge', which was initiated by the detachment's Marine Liaison Officer (MARLO) and Tactical Air Control Center's (TACC) Senior Watch Officer, Marine Corps Maj. Brian N. Pinckard. The challenge is a 20-day training completing 20 miles a day, which involves a five-mile run followed by 15-mile bike ride. At the end of the challenge on June 20, each participant would have had completed 400 miles.

"Our PT program is promoted from the senior leadership and down. Part of being successful in the expeditionary role is being physically fit. You can't support the Sailors and Marines ashore if you can't keep up with them physically," explained Pinckard.

Another challenge was Lt. Cmdr. Mark K. Rakestraw's 100-mile Bike Ride in one day. Dubbed the 'Rakestraw 100,' members from the detachment joined him in motivational support by riding next to him in 15-minute increments. Rakestraw completed the ride on June 15 in five-and-a-half hours.



USS NASSAU, at Sea (June 15, 2008) – Lt. Cmdr. Mark K. Rakestraw rides the bike to complete 100 miles in a day. As a motivational support, several members of the detachment ride next to him in 15-minute increments. Photo by Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class (AW) Curt Mason. (RELEASED)

"Everybody (TACRON) came up with his or her own professional, physical, and personal goals before the deployment. This was my goal; I trained for it and completed a 100-mile bike ride in less than six hours," said Rakestraw. "Remember, physical fitness is a way of life; it should not be a 'twice-a-year' deal."

Air Controller 2nd Class (AW) Michael D. Hooten, one of TACRON's assistant CFLs, explained that physical readiness or being physically fit is one of the building blocks to their mission's success.

"We (CFLs) will ensure that our Sailors and Marines are physically prepared to support our mission with the Marines and the Navy in any way necessary," said Hooten. "At the same time, we are promoting healthy lifestyle, which benefits our Sailors and Marines one way or another.

"In addition to our programs, we are also training now for the Rock 'n Roll Half Marathon that will be held on Labor Day weekend in Virginia Beach," added Hooten.

Regarding the detachment's energy towards physical fitness, Edwards emphasized that it is a necessary part of their job; it was an adapted climate instilled by TACRON's commanding officer, Cmdr. Craig M. Wevley, and their executive officer/officer-in-charge, Cmdr. Jeffrey T. Jatczak.

"Being physically fit helps Sailors to function at their peak levels; it enables them to integrate and accompany Marines ashore setting up airfields and control landing zones. One must be in top physical condition as many of these operations are not for the faint at heart," explained Edwards.

>>>Continued on Page 7

"...A solid physical fitness program promotes camaraderie and esprit de corps..."

What did you accomplish during 2008 Med/Gulf Deployment?

Tactical Air Control Squadron TWO ONE (TACRON 21)



“The Blackjacks”

Professional Qualifications

Tactical Air Direction Controller - 7
 Tactical Air Traffic Controller - 7
 Tactical Air Control Supervisor- 3
 Work Center Supervisor - 3
 Fire Team Leader - 3

3M - 15
 CPR - 15
 Basic DC - 15
 Advance DC - 3
 RPPO - 3

Advancement

Petty Officer 2nd Class - 5
 Petty Officer 3rd Class - 1

Warfare Qualifications

Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist -15

TACRON PT Emphasis

>>>Continued from page 6



With the success of the Blackjacks' PT Program, Jatczak gratefully expressed, “Chief Edwards and his assistants CFLs have done an exceptional job. His leadership encouraged members of the detachment to go above the minimum actively improving their physical fitness.”

“Chief Edwards summed up the benefits of what a good physical fitness can do for people individually and as a team. Dedication to people through leadership and a solid physical fitness program promotes camaraderie and esprit de corps.”

TACRON 21 is based at Naval Air Base Little Creek, Va. and is embarked aboard Nassau to oversee the ship's TACC, which is the principal air operation installation where all aircraft and air warning functions are controlled during tactical air operations in the amphibious objective area (AOA).

USS Nassau is deployed as the flagship of the Nassau Strike Group (NASSG) and operating in the Navy's 6th Fleet area of operations to conduct maritime security operations (MSO) in regional waters and theater security cooperation efforts. 📺

USS NASSAU, At Sea (June 15, 2008) – Lt. Cmdr. Mark A. Rakestraw completed 100-mile bike ride in five-and-a-half hours. Photo by Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class (AW) Curt Mason. (RELEASED)

Philippine Sea Visits Aksaz, Turkey

Phil-Sea Offers Tours, Conducts COMREL in Marmaris, Turkey

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Ryan Steinhour



MARMARIS, Turkey (June 17, 2008) – Cmdr. David Renberg, Naval Attache Ankara, Turkey, along with Cryptological Technician (Technical) Seaman Briana Trujillo of guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG-58) present books to the founder of the Marmaris House of Peace library Mr. Kamil Durust during a community relations project. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Ryan Steinhour.

AKSAZ, Turkey – Guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58) visited Aksaz, Turkey, June 15-18, following three months in the Navy's 5th Fleet area of operations in support of theater security cooperation objectives (TSC) and maritime security operations (MSO).

Philippine Sea's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) organized several tours for the Sailors, which gave them the opportunity to see the remarkable surroundings of Turkey that many Sailors visiting would not have the opportunity to see.

"We had nearly 200 Sailors sign up for Turkey tours, the most popular being white-water rafting, Turkish night and Pamukkale," said Lt.j.g. Larry Gulliver, the MWR officer on Philippine Sea. "Everyone had an extremely good time despite the long bus rides."

Participating in the tours gives Sailors an opportunity to experience parts of the host nation that they may not otherwise see if traveling on their own. It also gives them an opportunity to

spend their liberty hours experiencing the lifestyle, culture and customs of their host nation.

"The Sailors get to experience the culture and see the country with some guidance," explained Gulliver. "Many of the Sailors I got a chance to talk with said this was the best port we've visited."

In addition to tours, USS Philippine Sea's Chaplain, Lt. Deidre Green, organized a community relations (COMREL) project at the Marmaris House of Peace, a home for the elderly. While there, the Sailors took time to sit down and talk with those living at the home, and helped out the neighborhood by planting trees.

"The Turkish people were extremely welcoming everywhere," explained Green. "This COMREL project was different from the others we have done

in the past. The Turkish people were interested in showing us the depth of their hospitality rather than letting the Sailors just do physical labor."

Turkish media was in full force during the two hours of work, which took the majority of the 12 participants by surprise. Looking to share their generosity with those in need, the Sailors quickly became ambassadors of their ship and the U.S. Navy.

"I was surprised by the amount of media that were there," said Engineman Fireman Tom Wroblewski. "Our helping out really didn't seem like a big deal to me."

"Sailors at first were shocked by the amount of media present, as was I, but they quickly realized that they were involved in something a little more special, equally as important, but different from COMREL projects in the past," said Green.

The event was highlighted by the presentation of gifts of the ship to the residents of the home. The group's youngest volunteer, Cryptologic Technician Seaman Briana Trujillo, 19, presented a stack of books to the eldest member of the home.

"It was an honor to be able to present the books," said Trujillo. "I feel they were truly happy to receive the gifts that Chaplain Green prepared."

"All the participants found themselves involved in diplomatic relations involving two world nations," explained Green. "They paved the way for future Sailors to visit and interact with the Turkish community. I'm very proud of them."

Philippine Sea is one of six vessels in the Nassau Strike Group currently deployed in the Navy's 6th Fleet area of operations supporting Maritime Security Operations (MSO). MSO help develop security in the maritime environment, which promotes stability and global prosperity. 🇺🇸

"They paved the way for future Sailors to visit and interact with the Turkish community."

Any Day in the NASSG



RED SEA (June 2, 2008) – Midshipmen currently embarked on amphibious dock landing ship, USS Ashland (LSD 48) participate in a gun shoot to receive qualification for the 9mm pistol, June 2. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Mandy Hunsucker. (RELEASED)



MANAMA, Bahrain (June 3, 2008) – Cmdr. Paul Stader, commander, USS Ross (DDG 71), takes position during the guided missile destroyer's Change of Command ceremony. During the ceremony, Stader was relieved by Cmdr. Douglas A. McGoff. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cory Rose (RELEASED)



GULF OF OMAN (June 3, 2008) – Members of amphibious assault ship USS Nassau's (LHA 4) visit, board, search and seizure team set themselves into position during a boarding exercise aboard Landing Craft Utility (LCU) 1661 during a training exercise. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Coleman Thompson. (RELEASED)



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (June 8, 2008) – Seaman Blake Petenbrink tries to drive around a defender during a steel beach picnic aboard the amphibious transport dock USS Nashville (LPD 13). U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Charles L. Ludwig. (RELEASED)



SOUDABAY, Greece (June 6, 2008) – Sailors stationed aboard guided missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG-84) conducted their physical readiness test (PRT) during their port visit to Souda Bay, Greece. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Wycaver. (RELEASED)

Bulkeley Sailors Conduct COMREL in Lisbon, Portugal

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Wycaver

LISBON, Portugal – Sailors stationed aboard the guided missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) conducted a one-day community relations (COMREL) project June 26 at the Banco Alimentar Food Bank of Europe in Lisbon, Portugal during their port visit.

The Food Banks of Europe have 13 locations throughout the continent and are responsible for the transport of food collected, sorting and storage, quality control, and inventory management. Volunteer associations, humanitarian and charity organizations that fight hunger carry out the distribution of food. The Food Bank distribution facilities were in need of some assistance and repair and Bulkeley's Sailors were glad to lend a helping hand.

"We went to the local food bank in Lisbon, which is the largest in Europe, to help with various tasks that the organization needed. My group was responsible for painting the outside of the building," said Information

Technician 2nd Class (SW) Leigh Ann Smith, COMREL project participant.

"We separated into two groups, one was responsible for refurbishing and the other group helped move and organize non-consumable goods such as clothing, computers, and other equipment," said Fire Controlman 1st Class (SW) Jody Brown, AEGIS administrator onboard USS Bulkeley.

When conducting COMREL projects, Sailors get a chance to both offer their services to the community and interact with those who they are helping.

Brown said, "It was awesome to give back during the COMREL. There were a couple of college students who were earning credit while working with us, which was nice. Overall a good time was had by everyone."

Smith added, "Participating in this COMREL project was very rewarding for me. It felt good personally to help others just like I would if I were back home."

*"It was very rewarding...,
It felt good personally
to help others..."*

While port visits are often a time for Sailors to break away from their everyday duties and enjoy the sights, it's important to remember many people can benefit from the methods of giving back many Sailors demonstrated during this COMREL project in Lisbon. As Smith explained, while it is nice to 'see the world,' there is also a responsibility to lend assistance to those in need.

Smith said, "Words can't really describe the things you take away when you see someone else who works day in and day out helping others and for once you get the chance to make their load a little easier."

Bulkeley is a one of six vessels in the NASSG, currently deployed in the Navy's 6th Fleet area of operations supporting Maritime Security Operations (MSO) and Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) efforts. 🇺🇸

June 15, 2008

You're the Greatest, Dad!



"My father was a major part of my life growing up; even though my parents were divorced, he always instilled in my siblings and myself to strive for excellence at all times. Discipline and respect was a major part of his teachings. It has all paid off in the end; I am a stronger and a more independent person."

- ABFAN Gillian B. Zamora
USS Nassau (LHA 4)

"My father is the greatest; he loves us no matter what. He's always around to support you with your decisions and your goals. I'll be a good father just like him."

Happy Father's Day, Dad!"

- SK3 Jarmaine Lukban
USS Nassau (LHA 4)



"On Father's Day, I called my children and got the opportunity to speak with them which was totally awesome!"

It's never easy being away from your children, especially when they are old enough to know you're gone."

- FC1(SW) Jason Hayes
USS Bulkeley (DDG 84)



What did you accomplish during 2008 Med/Gulf Deployment?



"Overall this has been a good deployment for me.

I got promoted to 2nd Class, accomplished a lot of in-rate qualifications and finished my FSA tour."

Sonar Technician (Collection) 2nd Class
Jerrod Mann
USS Bulkeley (DDG 84)



"As far as qualifications, I have everything covered except for my Air pin (EAWS).

That's my goal for this deployment and I have accomplished it; I'm now EAWS qualified."

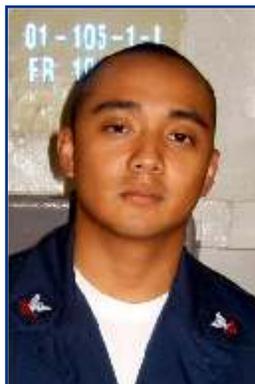
Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class(AW)
West Bynum
TACRON TWO ONE



"My goals for this deployment were to get both my EAWS and my ESWs, then to advance to 2nd Class.

Now, I'm a 2nd and EAWS qualified; and getting ready for my ESWs board."

Air Traffic Controller 2nd Class(AW)
Charles Harper
TACRON TWO ONE



"I have both of my warfare pins already, so my goals were to make 2nd and to really have fun this deployment.

Sure enough, I got advanced and I enjoyed all the ports that we visited."

Aviation Maintenance Administrationman
2nd Class (AW/SW)
Christian Manongdo
USS Nassau (LHA 4)



La Catedral de Palma



PALMA, Spain (June 24, 2008) – Amphibious assault ship *USS Nassau's* (LHA 4) Sailors and Marines tour "La Seu" Palma Cathedral and Bellver Castle during their port visit in Palma, Spain, June 23-26. U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rustum Rivera. (RELEASED)



Bellver Castle

USS Nassau Retention Honor Roll

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW) Charmin Covington
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS NASSAU, at Sea – U.S. Fleet Forces Command announced June 5 that USS Nassau (LHA 4) earned the Retention Honor Roll Pennant.

Nassau Command Career Counselor Chief Navy Counselor Ron (SW/AW) Campbell explained the earned the pennant by achieving Navy-wide goals in retention and attrition rates during the second quarter of fiscal year 2008.

"In order to receive the award, ship's attrition cannot exceed 6.2 percent, and the Navy's goal is zero," Campbell said. He said the reason most ships don't reach their retention goals is due to high attrition. Attrition occurs when first-term Sailors separate from the Navy prior to their end of obligated service.

Campbell said there are ways the career counselors can decrease attrition. Aboard Nassau, newly-arrived Sailors go through a career development board during the ship's indoctrination course. The career counselors also conduct a career development team course.

"This isn't exclusive to Nassau," Campbell said. "Every command you go to should be doing it."

Campbell said he believes nobody comes into the military to fail, however he said they loose focus of their goals and let others influence them. The career counselors help combat this by asking first-term Sailor at the beginning of the ship's indoctrination course if they are planning to get out of the Navy.

Campbell said most of their hands go up. He said that when asked the same question at the end of the course only half of those Sailors raise their hands again.

"We have a first-termers' success workshop, which is required," he said. "The course is basically preventative maintenance. It lets them know how much they are worth to the Navy. Should they decide to separate, they'll have a game plan or road map for success for their civilian future."

This is done by comparing the Sailor's pay to civilian pay along with the benefits.

"Health care is a big thing," Campbell said. "They don't typically realize all the benefits of retirement, medical and dental until about a year from separation. That's when we repeat our career development boards."

Navy Career Counselor 1st Class (SW/AW) Willie Allen said Nassau's Retention Team is made up of himself, Campbell and 43 department and division career counselors. He said the team is an integral part of being the command's success.

"As command career counselor, my task is to be a manager and train the Retention Team so they can get the information out to all the Sailors, junior and senior, at the deckplates," Allen said. "These folks get the paperwork moving up to Chief Campbell and me so we can assure it's routed properly and the Sailors' requests are completed."

Allen said the team deserves much of the credit for the ship's success.

"For any command career counselor to be successful you need an engaged

team that is excited about helping Sailors," he said. "We couldn't do our jobs with out their support."

Allen said that Nassau has reenlisted 87 Sailors since deploying in February, with Selective Reenlistment Bonuses totaling \$1,333,351.40. He said \$1,120,435.58 of those bonuses were paid to Sailors reenlisting while in tax free zones.

Campbell explained that earning the Retention Honor Roll Pennant puts Nassau in the running for the Retention Excellence Award, better known as the Gold Anchor. When a ship meets retention and attrition goals for two quarters in the same fiscal year it earns the right to fly the pennant and paint its anchor gold for one year.

Campbell said that for a command to achieve retention excellence, it ultimately comes down to caring about the Sailors.

"It's through proper guidance early in their careers and having a fully engaged chain of command," he said. "The sincere desire to want to see your people succeed, because when you retire those are the people who will take your place. I take career counseling very personally." ■



USS Nassau, at Sea (June 29, 2008) – Cryptologic Technician (Collection) 2nd Class Rebecca Blumer reenlists on June 29 to take advantage of USS Nassau's tax-free status for the month of June by Capt. Robert Lineberry, Commander, Nassau Strike Group. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rustum Rivera. (RELEASED)