



# PHIBRON FORWARD

## NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7

SEPTEMBER 2016

# USS Boxer Makes First Stop in U.S. During 2016 Deployment

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Matthew N. Jackson, USS Boxer (LHD 4) Public Affairs (August 29, 2016)

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\* USS Boxer Completes South China Sea Patrol

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U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jesse Monford

PEARL HARBOR – Amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), with embarked units from Amphibious Squadron One and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), arrived at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Aug. 29 for their first port visit in the U.S. since leaving their home-port in San Diego for a seven-month deployment Feb. 12.

“The Sailors and Marines aboard Boxer did an outstanding job carrying out each mission we conducted throughout 5th and 7th Fleet,” said Capt. Mike Ruth, Boxer’s commanding officer. “They are proud and excited to return to the U.S., and look forward to enjoying some well-deserved liberty here in Hawaii.”

While deployed, Boxer supported Operation Inherent Resolve and conducted community relations projects during port visits to Hong Kong, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Singapore, Oman, and Malaysia.

The port visit also marks the first reunion of Boxer Sailors and Marines with family and friends as many journeyed to Hawaii to meet their service member.

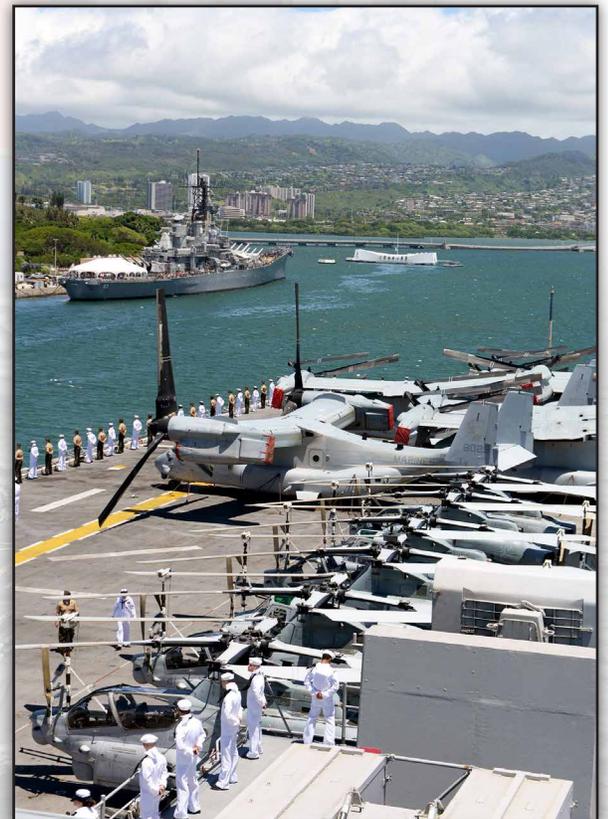
“One year after we had our first baby Zebryna Rose, I was deployed, and returning to her was a feeling I have never felt, seeing her on the pier waiting for me, it was incredible,” said Chief Information Systems Technician Zebulon Brackman. “Now two years later, we’ve had our second girl Audriana Quinn while I was deployed, and today I will be able to meet her. This trumps that previous feeling, I never thought I’d miss the

birth of my child, and now I can get that back by holding her for the first time, here in Hawaii where we had our first child. I can’t describe how I feel without tears.”

USS Boxer (LHD 4), flagship of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group, with amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18), amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) and the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, is operating in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations.

U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary for an effective global Navy.

For more news from USS Boxer (LHD 4), visit [www.navy.mil/local/lhd4/](http://www.navy.mil/local/lhd4/).



U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Brian Caracci

# USS Boxer Completes South China Sea Patrol

Stories by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Matthew N. Jackson, USS Boxer Public Affairs (August 6, 2016)



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brett Anderson

**SOUTH CHINA SEA** – The amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) completed a routine patrol in international waters of the South China Sea Aug. 6.

The U.S. Navy conducts lawful and routine patrols throughout the Western Pacific year round. Another ship from the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group, dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), completed a similar patrol Aug. 4.

“Our routine presence here helps promote the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace guaranteed to all countries,” said Capt. Patrick Foege, commander of Amphibious Squadron One. “The crew of Boxer conducted the transit

professionally and without incident, and we were grateful for the opportunity to do our part to ensure these critical waterways remain open to everyone.”

The patrol followed Boxer’s port visit to Singapore during which Sailors and Marines participated in military-to-military subject matter expert exchanges with the Singapore Navy, Aug. 2. The exchanges allowed Sailors and Marines to share tactics and capabilities with their Singaporean counterparts.

USS Boxer (LHD 4), flagship of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group, with amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18), amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) and the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, is operating in the Western Pacific in support of security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

While in 7th Fleet, the Boxer ARG and 13th MEU and assigned to Commander, Amphibious Force U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy’s only forward-deployed amphibious force, headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa.

For more on the Boxer, please visit [www.navy.mil/local/lhd4](http://www.navy.mil/local/lhd4)



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Debra Daco



U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Eric Burgett

## USS Harpers Ferry Arrives in Hawaii

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Zachary Eshleman, Navy Public Affairs Support Element West (August 29, 2016)



**PEARL HARBOR** - Amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) moored at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Aug. 29.

This is the first stop in the U.S. since Harpers Ferry departed its homeport of San Diego for a seven-month deployment Feb. 12.

“Hawaii provides an opportunity for Harpers Ferry Sailors to rest and relax, bring aboard needed supplies, and embark friends and family for our upcoming Tiger Cruise,” said the ship’s Executive Officer, Cmdr. John Ryan.

Since departing San Diego 199 days ago Harpers Ferry has covered 34,510 nautical miles and operated in the 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation.

“On this deployment the Marines were able to build relations and operational efficiency with the Korean and Jordanian militaries, which are both very important allies in those regions,” said Echo Company 1st Sgt. James Horr.

The ship participated in exercises Ssang Yong 16 in South Korea, Eager Lion 16 in Jordan, and conducted maritime security operations in the Gulf of Oman as well as patrols in the South China Sea.

While on deployment, Harpers Ferry conducted 24 amphibious operations; 299 aircraft landings; six visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) boardings; 145 small boat operations; and supplied 387 volunteer hours of work during eight port visits. In addition, 520,000 meals have been served, 12,840 gallons of coffee and 153,360 eggs have been consumed, 24,851 rounds of ammunition

were expended, and the movie “Groundhog Day” has played 213 times.

“I feel like our ship was very successful this deployment in improving relations with the locals in all the ports we have visited; these COMRELS (community relations) really paint a picture to the locals of what we’re trying to do in those countries and bridge a gap between us,” said Religious Program Specialist 1st Class Carlos Hall regarding the volunteer events conducted this deployment.

Harpers Ferry, part of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group with amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), amphibious transport dock USS New Orleans (LPD 18) and the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, is operating in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations.

For more information, visit <http://www.navy.mil>, <http://www.facebook.com/usnavy>, or <http://www.twitter.com/usnavy>.

For more news from Commander, Amphibious Squadron 1, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/CPR1/>.

# Boxer ARG, 13th MEU Team Departs 7th Fleet, Returns to 3rd Fleet

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Debra Daco, USS Boxer Public Affairs (August 25, 2016)



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael Eckelbecker

PACIFIC OCEAN - The Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) team completed operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations (AOO) and entered the U.S. 3rd Fleet AOO, Aug. 25.

The ARG/MEU team is returning to the U.S. following a deployment that saw their forces operate in the 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet AOOs in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, theater security cooperation, and marine interdiction operations while providing combatant commanders with a sea-based theater reserve force ready to conduct missions across the range of military operations.

"Everyone is excited that we are getting closer to home and will soon be reunited with family and friends," said Capt. Patrick Foege, commodore, Amphibious Squadron 1. "Our Sailors and Marines did incredible work throughout this deployment, from conducting strikes in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in 5th Fleet to promoting maritime security and freedom of the seas in 7th Fleet."

"This Western Pacific 16-1 deployment has demonstrated a significant high operational tempo," said Col. Anthony Henderson, commanding officer of the 13th MEU. "We struck [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] (ISIL) militants in Iraq, trained with partner nations in nearly every time zone between Hawaii and Djibouti, Africa, conducted maritime security operations in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Gulf, and we have had the opportunity to experience

foreign cultures in 10 different countries during port calls."

"The Marines and Sailors of the 'Fighting 13th' performed terrifically throughout the last seven months," added Henderson. "While we stand ready to support any potential mission, we anxiously anticipate reuniting with our friends, families, and the San Diego community that have supported us throughout the duration of this deployment."

The Boxer ARG/13th MEU team entered 7th Fleet July 23 and conducted theater security cooperation exercises with Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, helping to enhance maritime partnerships and improve military cooperation throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

"These exercises help strengthen ties with our regional allies and build our capacity for coalition and joint operations," said Lt. Col. Philip Waggoner, 13th MEU operations officer.

While operating in 7th Fleet, Boxer conducted approximately 285 hours of flight operations, including 1,182 launches and recoveries encompassing 214 sorties and traveled approximately 9,511 nautical miles.

"I couldn't be prouder of how well the Boxer crew performed while in 7th Fleet," said Capt. Mike Ruth, commanding officer of amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4). "Both on liberty and while executing missions and operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, Boxer's Sailors and Marines once again knocked it out of the park! I look forward to finishing strong in 3rd Fleet, with a safe return to San Diego."

During their time in 7th Fleet, Sailors

and Marines from the ARG/MEU team conducted port visits in Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Malaysia where they attended Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) sponsored tours and had the opportunity to volunteer their free time to participate in cultural exchange and community service events, like interacting with students in Genesis School for special education and serving food to senior citizens at Willing Hearts Soup Kitchen.

"COMRELS [community relations projects] in Singapore, or any location, are intended to help people better understand different cultures, removing the mystery of 'who' the other person is," said Cmdr. Charles Hodges, Boxer's chaplain. "Through this exchange, the two groups come to realize that we are not much different from each other."

While in 7th Fleet, the ARG/MEU team was assigned to Commander, Amphibious Force U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious force, headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa.

U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary for an effective global Navy.

Boxer ARG is comprised of Amphibious Squadron (COMPHIBRON) 1, Boxer, amphibious transport dock USS New Orleans (LPD 18) and amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49).

For more information, visit [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil), [www.facebook.com/usnavy](https://www.facebook.com/usnavy), or [www.twitter.com/usnavy](https://www.twitter.com/usnavy).

# AWARDS & WARFARE PINS CONGRATULATIONS!





# Boxer Departs Singapore

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Eric Burgett, USS Boxer Public Affairs (August 4, 2016)



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Debra Daco

SINGAPORE - Continuing their ongoing mission in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (13th MEU) departed Singapore after a six day port visit, August 4.

The port visit represented the first stop for Boxer after its departure from the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations last month.

While in port Boxer's crew participated in sporting events, Morale, Welfare and Recreation tours, and conducted ship familiarization tours aboard Boxer for hundreds of people from local civic organizations. The Religious Ministries department also arranged several cultural exchange projects throughout the Singapore community.

"This was a great opportunity to visit a culturally-rich country and enhance the relationship between our two navies," said Capt. Mike Ruth, Boxer's commanding officer. "Boxer Sailors and Marines really enjoyed the visit and represented the United States admirably. They stayed busy participating in military-to-military exchanges, cultural exchange projects and outstanding MWR tours. As we head back to sea, the crew is prepared to conduct operations in the Indo-Asia Pacific region and participate in theater security cooperation engagements to strengthen ties and improve interoperability with allies and partners in the U.S. 7th Fleet."

Boxer Sailors and Marines were able to volunteer while in-port by participating in community exchange projects that included interacting with children at the Genesis School for Special Education and serving meals to senior citizens at Willing Hearts Soup Kitchen.

"I enjoy doing any type of volunteer work because it allows us to get out into the community" said Marine Capt. Kimberley Julka. "It's a great way to see the community, to see the world, differences in culture, and differences in language."

"I am into volunteering" said Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Max

Delpivo. "I have never worked with special needs children so it was new for me. It was interesting to see how the staff interacts with children, and gets them engaged. I would have never figured that out on my own."

At another community service event, Sailors and Marines provided meal preparation and service at a soup kitchen.

Many of those who participated in the event said that they had taken part in something both important and special, an event not only valuable to them but to the mission of the Boxer as well.

"It was important to me personally because I am the type of person who grew up not really having a whole lot, and I think being able to give back puts my heart at peace," said Personnel Specialist 3rd Class Markel Carter. "I think it's important for the mission of the Navy because people have their own perceptions of what the military is about, so hopefully our efforts show that we are just out here trying to do right by the people we are trying to protect. It gives a better perspective of the military and Boxer."

Others spoke of how the cultural exchange offered fellowship for the crewmembers and allowed them to make Singaporean friends.

"We didn't think of it as just work, because we were there with friends and got to meet new friends and got to experience things we may not have otherwise," said Religious Programs Specialist Tyriq Turner.

Boxer, the flagship for Boxer Amphibious Ready Group, with the embarked 13th MEU, is operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael Eckelbecker

# August Birthdays



# Commodore's Corner



## Family & Friends,

Exciting times! You can be justifiably proud of the incredible performance of your sailors and Marines these past 6 months. We finished strong in the 7th Fleet Area of Operations and are thrilled to be back in our "home" eastern Pacific waters of 3rd Fleet.

During the month of August the ARG ships enjoyed well earned liberty in ports across Asia. From white water rafting and mountain biking, to shopping in open air markets and trying exotic foods, Sailors and Marines across the ARG provided extremely positive feedback on their port visit experiences. New Orleans started with a visit to the friendly city of Colombo, Sri Lanka and then the beautiful resort city of Bali, Indonesia. Boxer made a port call to the ultra modern city of Singapore, followed by a visit to the up and coming port of Kota Kenabalu, Malaysia with its many outdoor offerings. Harpers Ferry made stops in Kota Kinabalu and then the American island territory of Guam, where they could spend real U.S. dollars.

The ships, with the embarked Marine forces, also conducted important operations in August. Our work included Freedom of the Seas transits through the contested waters of the South China Sea, Jet air control exercises with our Malaysian Partners, Amphibious Tactics training with Indonesian and Singaporean military friends, and Humanitarian Assistance training with Sri Lankans.

Finally, we are all enjoying our final port of call in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii as August ends and our final deployment month of September begins. Our return and reunion with family and friends has everyone anxious and energized! I can promise you that we are focused on getting home safely. We appreciate the great work being done for our homecoming. I'll end this month's update with a huge THANK YOU to all our loved ones. Your support and encouragement makes our work aboard these fine ships possible. See y'all soon!

All the best, Commodore Foege

# SEL Note



## Family and friends of Team ONE,

August was an eventful month for the Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). Liberty was indeed a mission with each ship stopping at multiple ports in the Western Pacific on their way out of 7th Fleet. Boxer Sailors and Marines explored Singapore and Malaysia. War fighters aboard New Orleans got to see Sri Lanka and Indonesia while Harpers Ferry's crew enjoyed stops in Malaysia and Guam. All three ships pulled into Hawaii for one last port visit before transiting back to California.

August had its fair share of awards to include warfare pinning for the following Sailors: AC2 Jones(EAWS), AC2 O'Toole (EAWS), HM1 Diggs (ESWS), AC1 Slezak (EIWS), CRT2 Allen (EIWS), IS3 Barron (EIWS), CTT3 Bowens (EIWS), IS3 Dowling (EIWS), CTR2 Wade (EAWS), IS2 Hernandez (EAWS), OS2 Briefman (EAWS), HM3 Hamilton (EAWS), HM2 Johnson (EAWS), HM2 Quilty (EAWS), CTR2 Wilcoxon (EAWS), IS3 Roebuck (ESWS). Congratulations to those Sailors on their achievements.

I believe this to be the last edition of the 2016 PHIBRON Forward newsletter as we are closing in on our return to home port. Soon your loved ones will resume their day to day lives at home and tell you all about their deployment experience. It's been a long and eventful deployment but you should all be extremely proud of your Sailors and Marines as they contributed to the success of every mission asked of them. These men and women left everything behind to deploy to some of the most volatile regions in the world and performed magnificently

Our families back home should also be recognized for their part in this deployment. The hardship and struggles that families endure during deployments can be overwhelming but you've all managed everything we left behind and provided encouragement throughout the entire deployment

Thank you all and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Semper Fidelis,  
MSGt Ramiro Hurtado

# New Orleans Anchors in Bali

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Third  
Class Brandon Cyr, USS New Orleans Public Affairs  
(August 12, 2016)



BALI, Indonesia - Sailors and Marines from 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (LPD 18) anchored off the coast of Bali, Indonesia Aug. 7-12.

"Bali was a fantastic port visit. The crew had been looking forward to this particular visit for quite some time, and the culture, hospitality, and liberty opportunities far exceeded expectations— I know many, including myself, hope to return in the future," said Captain Glenn Jamison, the New Orleans commanding officer. "This also marked New Orleans' final overseas port call for deployment, and we are eager to get back on mission, finish strong and return home safely to our families and friends."

Many of the Sailors and Marines took this opportunity to surf, snorkel, and enjoy some of Bali's world renowned waterfalls.

"One of our days of liberty, myself and a few friends traveled to Tegenungan, a waterfall in the heart of Bali," said Gunners Mate 2nd Class Gregory Quagliano. "It was an amazing experience to see a huge waterfall and swim underneath it."

Other Sailors and Marines traveled around the island to shop for hand crafted souvenirs and enjoy the local Balinese cuisine.

"I enjoyed trying the local cuisine of Bali," said Ens. Jaqueline White. "I also was excited to find some local art and paintings that I bought to bring home to San Diego."

The crew was recharged after a very relaxing time in Bali and was ready to continue on with their western Pacific deployment.

USS New Orleans (LPD 18), part of the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group, with amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) and the embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, is operating in the Western Pacific in support of security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

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# BOXER AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP PHOTOS OF THE MONTH



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jose Jaen



U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Brian Caracci



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jesse Monford

## USS BOXER (LHD 4)



U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Brian Caracci



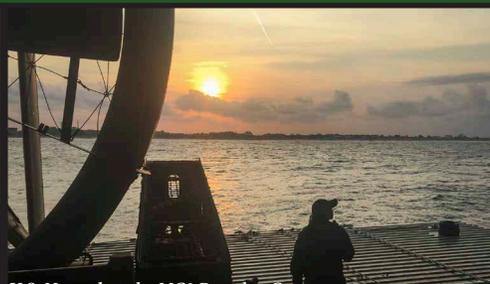
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael Eckelbecker



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Michael Eckelbecker



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Chelsea Daily



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brandon Cyr



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brandon Cyr

## USS NEW ORLEANS (LPD 18)



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Chelsea Daily



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brandon Cyr



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Chelsea Daily



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Zachary Eshleman



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Zachary Eshleman



## USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)