



Phibron Forward

VOLUME I ISSUE VI

APRIL 2014

Around the world and back

By OSSN Mercedes Meadows



Since leaving for deployment August 2013, we have seen over nine countries, took part in a number of exercises and military exchanges and sharpened our skills with a dedication to training. We were fortunate enough to get the chance to mingle with locals in many countries through community relation events and on liberty where we experienced local cultures. It took months to complete this journey, but we did it. Now, we are making our last “pit stop” of deployment before coming back home to San Diego in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to pick up our Tigers.



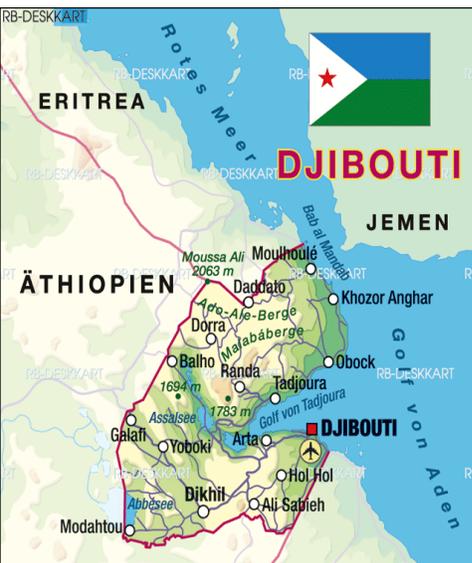
Tigers are families and friends of Sailors and Marines that ride on the ship with us back to our homeport. Having the Tigers aboard will be a pleasure for the families, and the service heartwarming to see all of the children's pride in parents' faces, as well as those of us that bring hope they have a once-in-a-lifetime



The Tigers will tour spaces around the ship, learn “boat talk,” and get a chance to experience firsthand what it’s like to be here on a daily basis. I’m glad we have the Tiger Cruise program. I don’t know about you but, nothing makes me feel better than the support and presence of my loved ones.



We find that families and friends are so proud and taken aback by what it is that we do out at sea. Something to look forward to is seeing an aircraft demonstration, viewing sea and anchor detail and eating delicious food on the mess decks.



The Tigers are proud of their Sailors and Marines, happy to say thank you for their service and to see for themselves what the sacrifice is all about. We can't wait to host them. In closing, it's been a pleasure designing this newsletter and wish all of you well as we transition back to San Diego and take some much-needed time to relax and enjoy time with our families and friends.



Happy Birthday to the Navy Chiefs



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The designer behind PHIBRON Forward.

Get to know OASN (SW/AW) Mercedes Meadows

Quick learner and creative wizard. OASN Meadows admits she doesn't have any design experience—although you can't tell by looking at the monthly newsletter.

I don't have any experience with designing a newsletter, I just love being creative. I wanted to help build deployment morale, and create a life long memory of a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Lessons learned and challenges. I learned that you should always put yourself in the readers shoes, and imagine how your writing can be perceived. The biggest challenge was making my thoughts make sense. Sometimes I get too excited and have a hard time conveying my thoughts into reality.

Biggest highlight of deployment. Getting the opportunity to write and create the newsletter for CPR1. It really made me feel like I contributed to the deployment in a positive manner, and for that I'm grateful.

Back in San Diego. I look forward to going to college and beginning my degree in marketing and advertisement. The Phibron Forward opened my eyes to a new world of creativity, and I want to get more involved in being creative.



Tiger Tips

- No unescorted Tigers below the 1st deck and above the O2 level.
- No handling of live weapons.
- Tigers between 12 and 17 must be actively escorted in the gym at all times by a parent, guardian or sponsor. Tigers cannot be passed to another crewmember while in the gym.
- Tigers are not allowed to loiter in the gym. Children between the ages of 8 and 11 are not allowed in the gym.
- Running on the flight deck is only allowed if they are accompanied by their sponsor.
- Tigers are not allowed to operate any equipment.
- No Tiger will be left unattended at any computer system.
- Flight operations may only be viewed from "Vulture's Row."

Starboxer hours: (Coffee Shop)

Monday - Saturday:

0600-0700
0800-1130
1300-1630
1800-2000

Sunday/Holidays:

0700-1200
1700-2000

Ship's Store hours:

Monday - Saturday:

0900-1700
1800-2200

Sunday/Holidays:

0700-1200
1700-2000

Chow hours:

Breakfast:

0500-0700

Lunch:

1100-1300

Dinner:

1700-1900

TV Channels:

3 & 4: Command Information
10, 11 & 12: Movies

SUNDAY

Breakfast

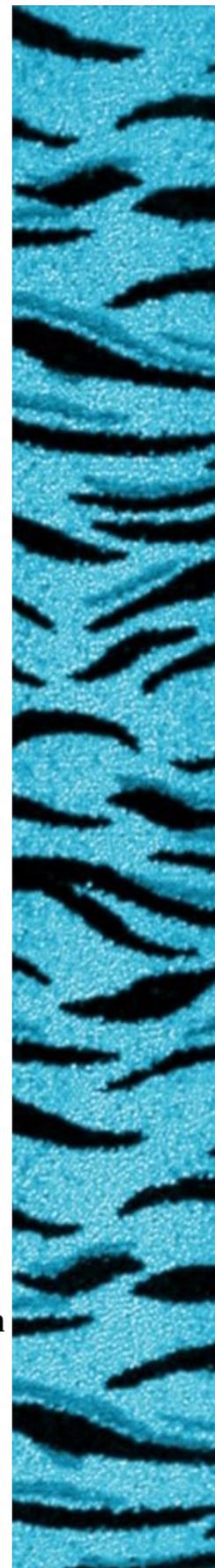
0700-0800

Brunch:

1000-1200

Dinner:

1700-1900





Lt. Theresa Donnelly, CPR1 PAO

She's served the Navy for eighteen years with prior experience as a Aviation Electrician's Mate (AE) working on the P-3 Orion and S-3B Viking aircraft. Upon commissioning in 2006, she qualified as a Surface Warfare Officer and three years later, laterally transferred to public affairs. In her off duty time, she enjoys working out, public speaking, mentoring others, working with and advocating for animals, advancing women's causes and exploring new places.

Taking on the challenge of Battle Watch Captain. I had previous experience qualifying as a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO), but no practical time as a tactician executing the concepts taught to SWOs. As soon as I received my pin, I was sent on temporary duty to a public affairs billet so I saw qualifying as a unique challenge since my hope was to stand the watch without another qualified Battle Watch Captain. And, a public affairs officer that is well versed in the language and processes of the operators is better able to tell the Navy story.



The most challenging part. Getting over my doubts that I couldn't adequately grasp the material. I had insecurities regarding my ability to understand complex navigational fundamentals and quick math calculations. But once I started practicing concepts that at first seemed so foreign, I realized that although it may take me longer than some to soak in the knowledge, it was an achievable goal.

Growing from the experience. I learned that you must have an inner spirit that drives you to excel. I believe that's something that comes natural to me and this experience cemented that. I can't be reliant on the feedback of others, but instead need the ability to self assess my progress. I learned how to tune out the feelings of self doubt and instead laser focus on standing a taut watch and absorb what we were learning in the daily Battle Watch Captain training sessions.

The hard work pays off. I'm proud of myself, but more importantly I'm grateful for the staff members that believed in me and stood by my side throughout this journey. There were times I considered giving up, but I knew that this was worth struggling through. I wouldn't have this qualification if certain individuals had not taken the extra time that they did to understand the problems I was facing and help me work my way through them.

Supportive Chain of Command. I'm thankful that we have the leadership we have at the PHIBRON as they created a fair training program that challenged me and educated the watch standers so they were better prepared to coordinate operations. It was refreshing since not all commands implement training in such an equitable fashion.

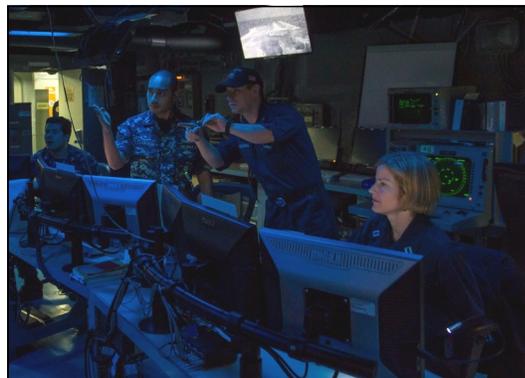
PHIBRON FORWARD

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Photos by Boxer Media Division



CPR1 Standardizes Battle Watch Captain Training

By LTJG Andrew Legayada and LT Theresa Donnelly

With eight months at sea on an extended deployment in the Asia Pacific and Middle East, many Sailors and Marines assigned to the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group (BOXARG) were productive and pushed themselves in challenging ways.

Some achieved personal goals, such as improving physical fitness, taking up college classes or learning a foreign language. Others put their focus on their professional career aspirations and unit qualifications in an effort to improve their skills while carrying out required duties.

Halfway through deployment, nearly 15 officers and chiefs assigned to the staff of Commander, Amphibious Squadron One (CPR1) participated in an innovative training program for Force Tactical Action Officer (FTAO), also referred to as Battle Watch Captain (BWC).

It is a watch position that bears significant accountability and involves a keen working knowledge of maritime and expeditionary operations in a joint and multinational environment.

According to Lt. Charles Bonafilia, assistant operations officer and lead BWC trainer, the purpose of the watch serves two distinct roles.

“Firstly and foremost, the BWC is a communicator. The watch stander is responsible for taking in mass amounts of information from a variety of sources, being able to decipher and pass on what is critical to the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and higher headquarters; ensuring clear concise information and guidance is passed on and understood clearly without loss of meaning,” he said.

Although many watch standers can quickly grasp the communicator role while standing watch in CPR1’s Joint Operations Center, the baseline level of knowledge this duty demands was what led to a

different approach to training. As Bonafilia explains, the tactical aspect of this watch is vital for carrying out the role of a BWC.

“Secondly, the BWC is a tactician. While the BWC is a theater coordinator of amphibious operations, they must have the prerequisite tactical knowledge required of all ship's tactical action officers. Having a sound grasp of the ARG's multiple ships and their war fighting capabilities is the foundation that all BWCs need,” he said.

At the beginning of the deployment CPR1’s Operations Officer (N3), Lt. Cmdr. Eric Atienza, instituted the formalized training program designed to educate the least experienced warfighter to the most seasoned Surface Warfare Officer (SWO), creating a common understanding among all those standing watch as BWC.

To accomplish this objective, the N3 department put together a detailed, nine-week syllabus breaking down each line item in the 123 sections that make up the Job Qualification Requirement (JQR).

Bonafilia taught most of the courses, administered weekly tests, omitted lengthy presentations and used scenario-based discussions. Qualified BWCs then signed trainees’ line items after a weekly test which verified knowledge retention. Subject areas emphasized included navigation, maritime interdiction operations, weather fundamentals and rules of engagement.

Since the program’s inception, test scores have increased by approximately 75 program, validating the importance of formalized instruction.

The CPR1 training greatly enhanced the individual’s diligence in executing an effective self-study regimen. Students had clear standards for a successful oral board and more importantly, executing the duties of the watch, leaving candidates a baseline for what could be built upon once qualified.

“It is the responsibility of those earning the qualification to put forth the time and effort required, and it is the command’s responsibility to facilitate the environment for that watch stander so they can then accomplish and excel at it,” said Atienza. 



Deployment Photo Recap

