

# PeleleNEWS

November 4, 2012

## Peleliu ARG Arrives in U.S. 5th Fleet



*Photo by MC3 Derek Stroop*

The Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group steams in formation. The ARG consists of USS Green Bay (LPD 20) (left) USS Peleliu (LHA 5) (center) and USS Rushmore (LSD 47) with the 15th MEU embarked through out the three ships.

**Story by MC2 Daniel Viramontes**  
*Peleliu Staff Writer*

The Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) arrived in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, Oct. 30.

While in the U.S. 5th Fleet, the ARG will demonstrate forward presence, conduct maritime security operations and participate in theater security cooperation events.

Commanded by Capt. Mark Sakaguchi, commander, Amphibious Squadron Three, the ARG will also participate in routine scheduled exercises and engagements with coalition and regional partners

During the past year, the ARG trained for a wide range of contingency situations through weeks of underway exercises while also conducting engineering, general quarters and damage control drills.

The ARG completed its composite

training unit exercise and certification exercise, in August 2012, testing its capabilities to conduct amphibious operations at sea and ashore.

The 15th MEU, commanded by Col. Scott D. Campbell, is comprised of approximately 2,400 Marines and Sailors, and serves as the nation's rapid-response sea-based Marine Air Ground Task Force for their Western Pacific deployment of 2012.

Amphibious ships deliver embarked Marine landing forces ashore to provide humanitarian assistance, civil support, non-combatant evacuations, peace operations, recovery operations, disaster reliefs and counter-piracy.

Peleliu ARG and 15th MEU departed their home port of San Diego, and Camp Pendleton respectively on Sept. 17 for a scheduled deployment. The three ships of the ARG entered the U.S.

7th Fleet area of operations in last September, completed Exercise Crocodilo in Timor-Leste and conducted port visits to Phuket, Thailand, Darwin, Australia and Bali, Indonesia.

Peleliu ARG consists of the Amphibious Squadron Three staff, amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5), amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore (LSD 47) and amphibious transport dock ship USS Green Bay (LPD 20), with 15th MEU embarked throughout the three ships.

The 5th Fleet's area of operations encompasses 2.5 million square miles of water and includes the Arabian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman and parts of the Indian Ocean.

The ARG and embarked 15th MEU are deployed in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

## 5th Fleet Offers Benefits to Deployed Sailors, Marines

### SAPR CORNER

#### PELELIU SAPR POC:

**NCCS SUSAN GARROW Ext 7567**

If you have been sexually assaulted, contact any of the following personnel BEFORE you speak to anyone else:  
Any Chaplain; Victim Advocates:

#### PELELIU VICTIM ADVOCATES

Lt. Nicole Schwegman

Lt. j. g. Andrea Goldstein

HMC Jody Lacefield

AO1 Jennifer Martin

AO1 Benjamin Callen

LS1 Vernita Foster

AE1 Jeffery Ritchie

ABH2 Donnell Viree

HM2 Janice Sapaden

OS2 Canon Deimerly

PR2 Cassandra Cox

HM1 Ryan Hachez

MSgt John Lee

GySgt Jennifer Antoine

Capt Joseph Babajan

Capt Karla Cumbie

or

Call stateside, use 24-hour crisis hotline at 877-995-5247 or text your location to 55247.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING OPTIONS

There are two types of reporting options for victims of sexual assault: Restricted and Unrestricted.

**Unrestricted:** An option that allows a military service member to disclose to the chain of command, victim advocate, SARC, medical provider, friend, that they were a victim of sexual assault. Unrestricted reporting ensures the widest range of rights and protections to the victim and command assistance regarding safety and assignment to include; Military Protective Orders-MPOs, separation from offender, deferred collateral misconduct, accountability of perpetrator. Victims receive medical treatment, including emergency care and counseling, and assignment of a victim advocate. This type of reporting initiates an investigation until final disposition of the case.

#### Some limitations of Unrestricted Reporting:

- Cannot change to Restricted Reporting.
- Victim may consider investigation or legal process too intrusive.
- Assault will be known and discussed among those with a need to know.
- Investigation and court proceedings may be lengthy (approximately 6-18 months).
- Offender(s) may not be convicted.



Sailors and Marines sort mail and care packages in the hangar bay of amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) during an underway replenishment at sea. Photo by MC2 Daniel Viramontes

#### Story by MC3 Derek Stroop

*Peleliu Staff Writer*

Sailors and Marines aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) entered the 5th Fleet area of operation Oct. 30 with unique benefits not commonly found in any other U.S. Fleets.

These benefits include imminent danger pay (IDP), family separation allowance (FSA), tax exclusion and postage-free mail sponsored by the United States Postal Service.

IDP is paid when service members serve on official duty within a specified area of operation.

“We are paid on a per diem-basis,” said Personnel Specialist 2nd Class Paul Umali. “It’s \$7.50 per day, which turns out to be \$225 for a full month while in 5th Fleet.”

A new policy came into effect in December 2011, which required the Department of Defense to prorate IDP payments into individual days served in an IDP specified area, rather than a lump sum for the months served in the area.

Another benefit is the FSA. According to the Defense Financial and Accounting Service, FSA is payable to any service member, with dependents, who is on duty aboard a ship that is away from its homeport continuously for 30 days in the amount of \$250 per month.

“FSA is also payable to both spouses if they are both in the military, no matter what branch,” said Umali.

Pay earned while in the 5th Fleet is not taxed. The tax advantage is 100 percent for enlisted members and warrant officers, and is limited to \$7368.30 for all other officers. This tax advantage is not prorated, so if at least one day is spent in the combat zone or designated area, the whole month is tax free, according to militarypay.defense.gov, website for the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness.

Sailors and Marines on board Peleliu can also take advantage of the “free mail” opportunity.

According to Chief Logistics Specialist William Taylor, this option is only offered to service members mailing from designated areas, like U.S. 5th Fleet, back to the United States or any of its territories like Guam or Puerto Rico. The program is not for loved ones back home mailing to the ship.

Service members can mail letters, postcards, sound recordings or any personal correspondence from an Armed Services Post Office to any place in the United States.

“Free mail must have a complete APO or FPO return, the word ‘free’ in the upper right hand corner with an APO or FPO postmark and complete delivery information,” said Taylor.

For more information about free mail contact the ship’s post office at extension 5262. For more information on pay benefits, contact the personnel office aboard Peleliu or go to the DFAS website, <http://www.dfas.mil>.

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## Peleliu Sailors, Marines Begin Savings Deposit Program

Story by MCSN Michael Duran  
Peleliu Staff Writer

Having entered U.S. fifth fleet area of responsibility, Oct. 30, Sailors and Marines aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) are eligible for the Department of Defense Savings Deposit Program (SDP), guaranteeing a 10 percent annual interest rate on funds.

Administered by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, SDP is only eligible to service members who have deployed longer than 30 days and are operating in designated hazardous duty zones. Originating during the Vietnam War, SDP returned during Operation Desert Storm and further expanded into what it is today.

“The Savings Deposit Program was established to help service members who are deployed save some extra money while away from home,” said Ensign Kenneth Anderson from Red Bluff, Calif., Peleliu’s disbursing officer. “Many service members do not have the ability to start other types of savings programs such as [certificates of deposit], stocks, bonds, etc. The SDP allows us to earn a little extra money in the absence of other savings options that we would have back home.”

To make a deposit, Sailor and Marines must contact their respective disbursing offices to open an account. Deposits can be made in cash, personal check, or allotments through the myPay website. Although members can put in as much money as they like, interest is only earned on balances up to \$10,000 with dividends paid quarterly.

“The program is extremely beneficial to Sailors and Marines because the return

on your investment is very good,” said Anderson. “Members who participate in the program earn 2.5 percent per quarter on their investment. So for example, if you deposited \$1,000 to the program, after six months, you would make 5 percent, or \$50. Compared to most bank savings accounts, that return rate is much better.”

Withdrawing funds prior to leaving the hazardous duty zone is not authorized, unless in the event of an emergency. Once the member has returned from hazardous duty, the member can choose to close their accounts; however interest will continue to accrue for an additional 90 days after departure. If the account accrues more than the maximum \$10,000, the extra funds can be withdrawn quarterly upon dividend earnings.

All SDP accounts will close automatically 120 days after leaving the hazardous duty zone to a direct deposit into the account of the member’s choosing.

“The biggest thing for me is that you can set money aside that you can’t touch until after deployment,” said Yeoman 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Joshua Nyhaug from Chesapeake, Va. who is interested in the program. “Even though it may not seem like a whole bunch, you’re still making a little bit off of it you didn’t have before. And you don’t want to come back empty-handed.”

Peleliu is the flagship for the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group and along with the embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit are deployed in support of maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

## CMC’s Corner



YO, Shipmate! What’s up?

Great, now that I have your attention, most of you are aware that there is a new “sheriff” in town! I am QMCM(SW/AW) Barber, and I have the privilege of being your Command Master Chief, until our permanent one arrives. So, what does this mean for you?

First, let me begin by telling you how proud I am of every single one of you! Your behavior in our last port visit was outstanding! For the most part, everyone did what the command asked you to do. You are by far the greatest Sailors in the fleet, and without you, and I mean every single one of you, we couldn’t do the things we do. We couldn’t accomplish with excellence the things that we have. Every single one of you matters!

Everything you do matters! Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise!

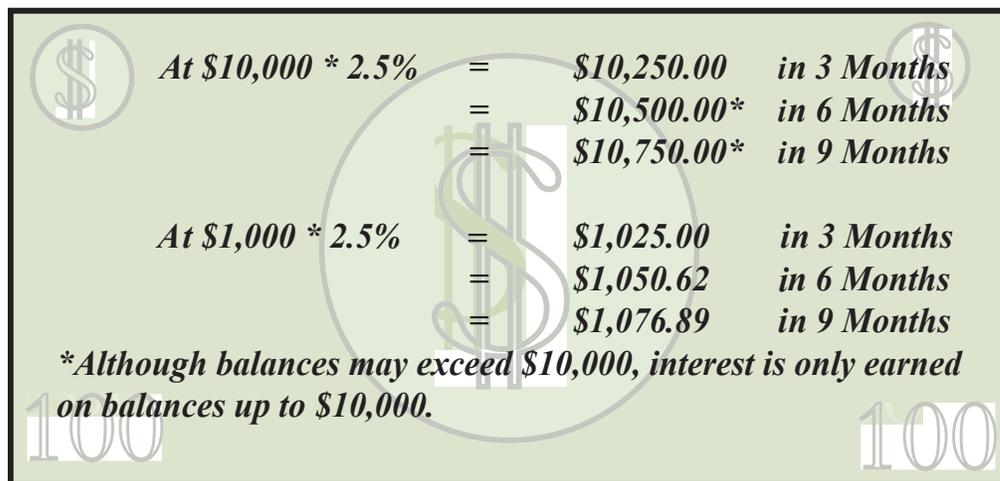
Although I am proud of all of you, I want everyone to be aware that I have no tolerance in disrespecting your fellow shipmate. I am a firm believer in treating people with respect. Just because I am a master chief and you may be a seaman, airman, or fireman, I believe you deserve to be treated with the same respect as the next person. Therefore, I intend to treat everyone with respect and as an adult. My expectation of all of you is that you act like a mature adult, and remember that you are in the United States Navy; not Home Depot, not McDonalds, not even Exxon Mobile Corp. We have rules, regulations and standards in our Navy for a reason. They are there to make life simple, and so that we serve our country and your shipmates right.

Play by the rules and life will be good! If you don’t play by the rules, you will come see the “sheriff”, and I will hold you accountable as an adult.

That is my promise to you.

I look forward to the time ahead as your command master chief. Thank you so much for your time, and keep making me and Peleliu proud.

CMC



## Peleliu, 15th MEU Volunteer In Thailand



Sixty-three Sailors and Marines assigned to USS Peleliu (LHA 5) and embarked 15th MEU, participate in community service (COMSERV)

**Photo and Story by MCSN Jasmine Sheard**  
*Peleliu Staff Writer*

More than 60 Sailors and Marines assigned to amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5) and embarked 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit participated in community service projects during a port visit Oct. 23-24.

The community service projects involved the canal upkeep near Home and Life Orphanage Foundation and the painting of Ban Ao Makham School, both located in Phang Nga province, north of the island of Phuket.

"I think that community service projects afford Sailors and Marines an opportunity to interact with the people of our host nation in a unique way," said Cmdr. Shaun Brown, Peleliu's command chaplain. "These projects allow us to interact informally and broaden our horizons."

Service members helped moved rocks and dirt to a caged wall to prevent land erosion at the orphanage, where a river threatens several buildings on the campus near the Sarasin Bridge. The orphanage is home to 26 tsunami-affected or underprivileged children.

"It was important for me to participate in the [community service] because it gave me a chance to do some good in the world and to help out kids that really needed it, so that they can continue living in a safe environment," said Marine Sgt. Fernando Picazo.

Other volunteers included the Royal Thai Navy, U.S. Navy League - Phuket and other local organizations. This project also marked the 100th community service project conducted and sponsored by the U.S. Navy League in the Phuket-Phang Nga region. Local media from Phuket were also present to cover the milestone.

"Given the fact that this was the biggest turnout that the [community service projects] has had and being the 100th time it has done this, has made me even more proud to be a part of this," Picazo said. "I strongly recommend to anyone that if they ever get a chance to do this in the future, take advantage of it.

It is well worth the effort and time, just to see those kids smiling and laughing will change your look on the world forever."

An estimated 12 tons of material and rocks were moved by the service members.

The other project was the painting of Baan Ao Makham School, a Muslim school attended by more than 90 children between the ages of 4-12. This was the first ever community service project at the school.

Brad Kenny, member and a director for U.S. Navy League Thailand Southern Seaboard council, coordinated the projects.

"The reactions I see from locals and other people who know about the COMSERV projects are really astonishing," said Kenny. "I think it gives a big lift to the image to the Navy and Marines."

After completing the projects, the service members were treated with Thai lunch sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Phang Nga, Andaman Phang Nga and the U.S. Navy League - Phuket. The food was prepared and served by the children and their parents.

"I think it was a win-win situation," said Lt. Mark Won, chaplain aboard Peleliu. "I saw a couple of our Sailors and Marines weeping as we left and overheard a few of them saying, 'I'm nobody in America, but here, I'm somebody.' Even though it was a small thing for us to just paint their walls, it was very humbling and gratifying. It's that kind of appreciation and value that we take from this experience."

At the end of the day, the Sailors and Marines spent a moment to interact through some fun games, soccer with a Thai boxing exhibition and dancing from the children

"It was big for us, but bigger for the children," added Won. "Having military personnel from America come and see them, play with them and spend time with them meant a great deal to them. It's hard to say how far that will go in affecting their lives, but I'm sure among the list of things they will do this year, it will be toward the top of the list."

# #LOOSE LIPS

Story by Petty Officer 2nd Class **Part 8**  
(SG) T. Grout, *PeleNews* contributor

Blake reclined in his chair as the posts refreshed. Stephanie wrote, "Skyping with momma makes me miss home. Seeing Jack in the background doesn't help. But I'll be there soon!"

Several minutes later Stephanie's high school friend quips, "Can't wait to see you. We'll do Waffle House like the old days... but with different results than the old days."

Blake sends another FRIEND Request. Over the next hour FRIEND Requests from Blake's account entered the family and friends account of Stephanie Sharp. "How I enjoy this game," Blake smiled within.

Meanwhile, Stephanie finished her call, tuned Pandora to a country station, and prepared a simple meal of chicken, brown rice, and steamed spinach. Her George Forman worked wonders and eliminated much of a mess. After her meal and dressing in shorts and SDSU sweatshirt, she admired the Facebook comments, herself responding sporadically here and there.

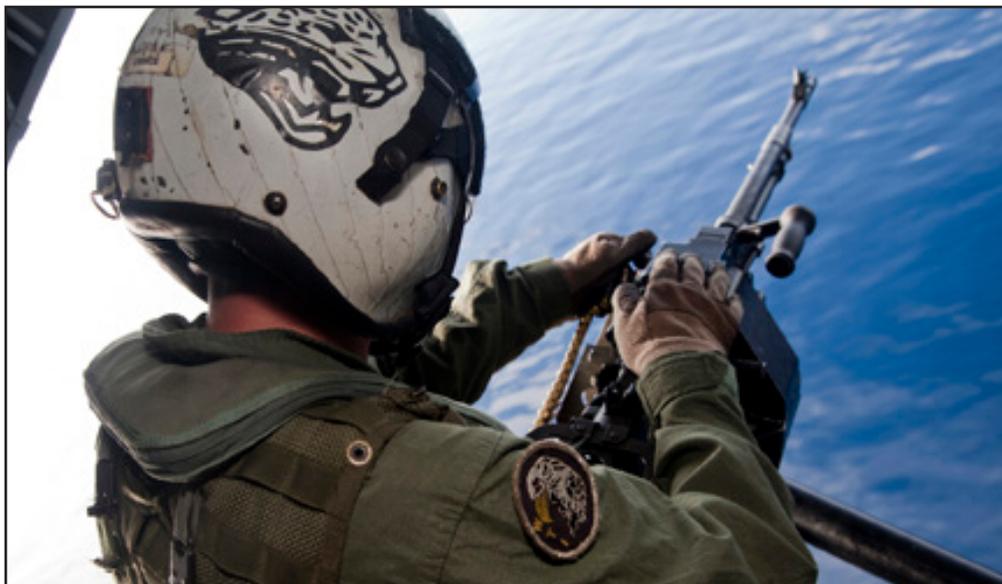
He opened a new browser and logged in to a new Facebook account under a new name. Having already friended his "Blake" account he could now see the others. It was a tedious process using multiple browsers and multiple accounts all to coordinate on one lead, but the potentially rich payoff overshadowed the inconvenience. After some time and just under a dozen requests from five different accounts sent, he returned to his Blake account and wrote, "The next 24 hours will seem like 24 days. It's been a while since I could simply talk to a woman. Pain hurts but recovery sometimes makes the pain worthwhile."

After a minute he switched to one of the other accounts where "Blake's" post appeared and Blake commented on himself under one of his other names, "I'm so happy for you Bro. It's good to see you come back to the person I grew up with." Then the next account, "What! When did this happen???" Call me..." and again, "Dude don't get too head over heels man, she's just after your money." Spacing his comments appropriately apart. And he waited.

Stephanie also followed the post. She smiled. She blushed. She dreamed.

An hour later more comments, a few from the new "FRIENDS" and then finally, a message from Stephanie.

# Phrog Spends Time Behind Trigger



Sergeant Kyle M. Crance, weapons and tactics instructor and CH-46E Sea Knight crew chief, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (Rein.), 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, loads 7.62mm rounds into a M240D machine gun while flying over the Indian Ocean

**Photo and Story by Cpl. John Robbart III**  
15th MEU Staff Writer

Crewmembers in two CH-46E Sea Knights traded their tools for an afternoon in the sky behind the triggers of some heavy machine guns, Oct. 25.

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (Rein.), 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, conducted aerial gunnery and tail gunnery training to refresh the skills of eight of the unit's crew chiefs as well as aerial tail gunnery qualifications for two of their aerial observers.

"Aerial gunnery training enables us to effectively engage targets from the air in a combat environment," said Sgt. Kyle M. Crance, CH-46E crew chief and weapons and tactics instructor, HMM-364 (Rein.), 15th MEU. "Additionally, conducting this training will help us stay current and proficient on our qualifications."

The two Sea Knights expended more than 6,000 rounds in support of the day and night training.

"It's always a lot of fun to go out and shoot," said Cpl. Heriberto Velazquez II, CH-46E Sea Knight aerial observer and mechanic, HMM-364 (Rein.), 15th MEU. "Shooting in the sky made it that much more fun," added the 22-year-old native of Newport News, Va.

The Marines acquired targets with the M240D machine gun and the .50-caliber heavy machine gun from up to 1500 meters away while flying approximately 200 feet above the water.

"I was really looking forward to shooting the M240D," said Sgt. John H. Kirk VI,

aerial gunner, observer and CH-46E Sea Knight mechanic, HMM-364 (Rein.), 15th MEU. "This was my first time shooting from the tail of the helicopter," added the 25-year-old native of Ramona, Calif.

The training also helped qualify two mechanics for air combat missions – a more advanced qualification reserved for more experienced crewmembers.

"Qualifying these Marines is important because without qualified crews we have less aircraft to support the fight," said Sgt. Ryan M. St. Antoine, CH-46E crew chief and weapons and tactics instructor, HMM-364 (Rein.), 15th MEU. "The training also enabled our Marines the opportunity to practice engaging targets from the sky," added the 30-year-old native of Highland, Ind.

The Marines created targets out of wood pallets and glow sticks to enable the Marines to conduct the night portion of their training.

"As Marines, we own the night," said Crance. "Many missions are conducted at night in order to have the upper hand. We must be prepared for missions day or night, which is what makes this training so important."

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (Rein.) serves as the aviation combat element for the 15th MEU.

The 15th MEU is comprised of approximately 2,400 Marines and sailors and is currently deployed with the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group as a theater reserve and crisis response force throughout U.S. Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

## Man on the Street

By MCSN Jasmine Sheard

Now that Thailand is behind us, we have lasting memories that we take with us to share with our family and friends. With so much to do in Phuket with little time, our man on the street would like to know what some of our shipmates experienced and enjoyed most about their visit.

**Logistics Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Omar Gallardo - Supply Dept. from Newark, N.J.**



"I really enjoyed the food! It was great! It was better than I expected it to be. I got to eat octopus, their fish and watermelon water."

**Cpl. Alec Schreiber from Oakley, Calif.**



"My best experience in Thailand was seeing the snake shows. I got to watch a guy kiss a cobra and I got to play with a pit viper."

**Senior Chief Machinist's Mate (SW/AW) Michael Conners - Engineering Dept. from Jacksonville, Fla.**



"My best experience in Thailand was seeing different ethnic backgrounds and different cultures, and having that chance to experience new things and meet new people."

**Cpl. Edna Kinney from Fresno, Calif.**



"My best experience was the elephant tour. My tour guide let me sit on the front of the elephant and take a lot of photos."