

Phoenix Express 2008 Successfully Wraps in Augusta Bay

From Nassau Strike Group Public Affairs Office

AUGUSTA BAY, Sicily – Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08) successfully closed April 22, during a wrap-up conference aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) while in port Augusta Bay, Sicily.

PE 08 was 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 that began on April 8. Along with Nassau, the Nassau Strike Group's (NASSG) amphibious transport dock USS Nashville (LPD 13); the frigate

USS John L. Hall (FFG 32) and the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201), represented the United States. Eight other ships also participated, to include the Algerian training ship ATS La Soummam (937); the French salvage ship FS Acheron (A 613); the Greek auxiliary ship HS Evros (A 415); the Greek frigate HS Spetsai (F 453); the Moroccan frigate Mohammed V (611); the Portuguese frigate NRP Corte Real (F 332); the Spanish corvette SPS Infanta Elena (P 76) and the

Turkish frigate TCG Gelibolu (F 493).

The PE 08 exercise concept was derived through a series of pre-exercise conferences and from a common understanding of the safety and security concerns in the maritime environment, to include illegal immigration, criminal activity, narcotics trafficking and weapons trafficking. In order to best achieve the training objectives developed at these conferences, PE 08 was comprised of two large phases, inport and at sea, and included communications drills, search-and-rescue operations (SAR), division tactics, medical training and ashore maritime coordination.

>>>Page 3



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (April 17, 2008) Visit, board, search and seizure team members from the guided-missile frigate USS John L. Hall (FFG 32) take control of Landing Craft Utility (LCU 1661) after boarding the vessel by rigid hull inflatable boat. Phoenix Express (PE) 2008 is the third annual exercise in a long-term effort to improve regional cooperation and maritime security. The principal aim is to increase interoperability by developing individual and collective maritime proficiencies of participating nations, as well as promoting friendship, mutual understanding and cooperation. Exercises like PE-08 enable participants to advance information sharing which is crucial to maintaining a region free from transnational threats, as well as enhance capability to conduct multinational peacekeeping missions. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Amanda Clayton (Released)

In This Issue

PE 08 Successfully Wraps in Augusta Bay	page 1
Commodore's Corner Ombudsman's Corner	page 2
Nassau Works Together to Complete PE 08	page 3
PE 08 Tests Multinational MIO Capabilities	page 4
USS Nashville Hosts PE 08 Senior Enlisted Roundtable	page 6
USS Ashland is First U.S. Navy Ship to Visit Reunion in 47 Years	page 7
USS Ashland Builds Maritime Partnership in Mauritius	page 7
NASSG Celebrates 115 Years of the Chief Petty Officer	page 8
CPR-6 Awards Sailor and Bluejacket of the Quarter	page 8
NASSG Ships Help Souda Bay Community	page 9
USS Nashville Pair Among Strike Group Quarterly Winner	page 10
Sailors of the Quarter	page 11
What Makes a Great Chief?	page 11
Any Day in the NASSG	page 12

Commodore's Corner

Dear Families and Friends

Hello from the Fifth Fleet where the temperatures are high and so are our spirits, as we do our part to provide security and stability to this region. While here, we will be involved with the LINCOLN Strike Group that is deployed from the West coast in numerous operations to demonstrate our ability to operate as an Expeditionary Strike Force.

I am thrilled to announce our newest CPR-6 Sailors of the Quarter for JAN-MAR 2008. ISI Kris Meaney is our Senior Sailor; he provides the entire strike group with intelligence information to ensure everyone knows and understands what challenges and threats we might face while deployed. Our Junior Sailor of the Quarter is HM2 Antoinette Peterson; she works with our Fleet Surgical Team in medical taking care of our shipmates, and making sure we are ready for contingency operations that may require our medical capability. And OSSA Christina Garza, Blue Jacket of the Quarter; she does a superb job in our command center keeping track on all air, surface and subsurface contacts. Congratulations to all three for the outstanding efforts, and we thank them for their service to their country.

As of 1 MAY, the NASSG was half way through our scheduled deployment; and as a team, we have achieved many successful milestones thus far. Schedule remains solid for a July return, so see you soon. Our Ombudsman, Mrs. Ashley Lawrence, coordinated two family events: a kid's ice skating event and a spouse's luncheon onboard Spirit of Norfolk. We thank her for her magnificent support to our families and friends.



*Respectfully,
CAPT Bob Lineberry*

Ombudsman's Corner

Hello Everyone,

I hope this letter finds everyone doing great. We are coming up on our half-way parties. Just a reminder, the children's half-way party will be held at Chilled Ponds Ice Skating Rink in Chesapeake, VA on Saturday, 3 May 2008, 1:40pm - 4:50pm. This will be a fun time for all, and will include skate rental, pizza, and drinks. There will be time for skating, time in a party room to get together and then more time on the ice. Also, coming up is the adult half-way party on the Spirit of Norfolk cruise line. We will be going on the lunch cruise on 10 May 2008 which boards at 11:00am, and cruises around the harbor from 11:30am - 1:30pm. It will include a lunch aboard the ship, and coffee, water, or tea. The cost of the cruise is \$35 plus all the taxes and fees which will bring the total up to \$53. If you can get your tickets from the MWR on base, they do not charge the taxes or fees and the price will be only \$35. If you go to the MWR, please give them reservation #463404; it's under Susan Lineberry.

This will be a fun time for all and a great way to celebrate our husbands being halfway home! As for other news, things seem to be going great on the home front. We will have a meeting or a get together soon after the halfway parties to start planning for the homecoming. If you have any ideas for homecoming, please let me know. If you have any problems or concerns please feel free to give me a call, or send me an e-mail and I will be happy to assist you. Hope to see everyone soon at the parties!

*Sincerely,
Ashley Lawrence*



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
MCSN Cory Rose
MCSN Ryan Steinhour
MCSN Mandy Hunsucker

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

USS Nassau Public Affairs Staff
MC1(SW) Charmin Covington
MC2(SW) Michael Cortez
MC2 Andrew King
MC2 Sean Stafford
MC2 Amanda Clayton
MC3 Steven Smith
MCSA Jonathan Pankau

Nassau Works Together to Complete Phoenix Express 2008

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

USS NASSAU, at Sea – For two weeks of training, Sailors and Marines onboard the amphibious ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) worked together executing different roles in support of Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08), a U.S.-hosted, multinational exercise designed to strengthen regional maritime partnership, April 8-22.

Nassau crew provided their service and assistance; conducted training with Sailors from 10 different countries including Spain, Turkey, Greece, Portugal, Italy, France, Malta, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

PE 08 kicked off with a welcoming luncheon, Apr. 8, onboard while in port Naval Base Souda Bay, Crete. "It was a five-star reception," said Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) Alieithia A. Young, S-2 Division's leading chief petty officer (LCPO), Supply Department. "I think this year, the whole check-in process was smoother; everyone understood what was going on, and the whole operation was done professionally."

According to Young, the roles that her department executed were taking care of board and lodging for the participants; from berthing to providing three square meals, keeping the participants full of energy for all their exercises, onboard or on the field.

Capt. James R. Boorujy, Nassau's commanding officer (CO) explained, "We had a number of roles... We helped them (participants) with communications, and provided them with intelligence support; we also helped them with the medical and damage control (DC) training...we were very much the center of the operation," added Boorujy.

During DC demonstrations, Sailors from participating countries interacted by discussing different fire fighting techniques and different gears from their ships; performed hands-on trainings such as pipe patching, dewatering and everything that is associated with fire fighting and damage control.

"It was very informative; we shared a lot

of DC knowledge," said Senior Chief Damage Controlman (SW) John P. Holler, Nassau's fire marshall and Repair Division's LCPO. "We also conducted DC Olympics, and it was a unique chance to interact with different navies and cultures."

The Medical and Dental Department took the participants around their spaces; did presentations on medical and dental emergencies, and on services that they perform onboard.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Pamela O. Mason, Nassau's registered dental hygienist and Dental Dept. leading

petty officer (LPO), characterized them as very polite and interesting people. "Most were very amazed of the type and quality of dental care that we are able to perform aboard the ship, and other were impressed with the idea of dental care aboard the ship," said Mason.

The Nassau also provided deck landing qualification support using the ship's helicopters, and deployed landing craft utilities (LCU) a number of times as target ships for maritime interdiction operations (MIO) boarding.

"We executed MIO team boarding, training the visit, board, search and

>>>Page 6

Phoenix Express 2008 Wraps in Augusta Bay...

Continued from page 1

Throughout the exercise, it was clear that a heavy emphasis was placed on the combined maritime forces' ability to successfully and professionally conduct maritime interdiction operations (MIO) and visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) operations.

These operations are how multinational navies confront possible threats from other craft that are encountered while at sea. For the U.S. Navy, MIO operations are handled by each ship's VBSS team while focusing on the importance of Maritime Security Operations (MSO). MSO helps set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment and complements the counterterrorism and security efforts on the high seas and in nations' littoral waters.

"MIO and VBSS are both dynamic products, it's a dynamic skill that changes year-by-year," said Lt.j.g. Reynel Saa, VBSS officer, Nassau Strike Group. "As a collective VBSS team with other countries, it's important to continue to train in order to maintain that continuity of operations and professionalism across the coalition. That says a lot - if there's one thing that's really truly important when you're conducting VBSS it is professionalism."

MIO and VBSS exercises saw 13 teams from nine countries successfully

and safely execute 23 boarding scenarios. Specifically, teams from Algeria, Greece, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the U.S. all utilized the exercise as an opportunity to hone their collective skills both individually and as multinational teams in unilateral scenarios. Teams completed boardings via helicopter insertion, rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) insertion and fast-roping from a helicopter.

With an eye towards PE 09, participants in the wrap-up conference discussed planning dates, potential future objectives and considerations. PE 08 saw the list of participants and ships grow from 2007 and exercise planners are hoping that trend continues into 2009. PE 09 hopes to feature simultaneous regional operations to reflect real world scenario as well as a continued increase on focus and realism.

"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 Capt. Robert G. Lineberry, commander, NASSG. "This exercise provides an excellent opportunity for all participants to share their ideas on maintaining safety and security, while building relationships and enhancing our interoperability." ■



U.S. Navy Lt. Erik S. Figueroa speaks to international naval officers on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) during the Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08) exercise, April 14.



A servicemember from a Spanish maritime interdiction operations (MIO) team sets an overwatch shortly after performing a fast rope descent at the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) in Souda Bay, Crete, April 10.



Servicemembers from an Algerian maritime interdiction operations (MIO) team practice proper ways to take down personnel at the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC) in Souda Bay, Crete, April 10.

U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Coleman Thompson (RELEASED)

PE 08 Tests Multinational MIO Capabilities

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Coleman Thompson

USS NASSAU, At Sea – During the two-week Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08) exercise that began on Apr. 8, servicemembers from 11 different nations came together in an effort to improve their collective abilities to perform maritime interdiction operations (MIO).

Altogether, 13 teams from nine countries participated in the MIO events. Specifically, teams from Algeria, Greece, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the U.S. all utilized the exercise as an opportunity to hone their collective skills both individually and as multinational teams in unilateral scenarios.

These operations are how multinational navies confront possible threats from other craft that are encountered while out at sea. For the U.S. Navy, MIO operations are handled by each ship's visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) teams while helping to ensure mission readiness while focusing on the importance of Maritime

Security Operations (MSO). MSO helps set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment and complements the counterterrorism and security efforts on the high seas and in nations' littoral waters.

"The mission of a VBSS team is to board a ship, whether it is compliant or non-compliant, and find out whether there are any extra personnel aboard the ship or any cargo they're not supposed to have, such as any contraband or weapons," said Marine Corps Capt. Nicholas K. Zetz, Marine Corps Security Forces Company, Rota, Spain.

The teams from each country practiced MIO throughout the PE 08 exercise, which was broken up into two phases, inport and at-sea. While inport Souda Bay, Crete, the teams worked with the newly established North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre (NMIOTC), which provided a practical training environment for the teams. There, teams were able to hone

skills in small arms training, fast rope insertion, tactical sweeps, crew control and multiple threat scenarios.

"The mission of our center is to conduct training necessary for NATO forces to better execute surface, sub-surface and aerial surveillance and special operational activities in support of maritime interdiction operations," said Hellenic Navy Commodore Konstantine Ifantis, commanding officer, NMIOTC. "The center has the potential to not only train Naval units in MIO, but also to provide proposals for new doctrines, tactics, methods and equipment in this growing field of maritime security operations."

The center offered a unique opportunity for the servicemembers from each of the participating nations to view and compare tactics on a first-hand basis.

"It's a good learning exercise, you get to learn what others know from the experiences that they have in their countries or other countries that they have had experience dealing with in their combat situations," said Marine Corps Cpl. John Young, squad leader

PE 08 Multinational MIO...

Continued from page 4

for the Supreme Allied Command's Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team (SACFAST), 6th Platoon.

"MIO and VBSS are both dynamic products, it's a dynamic skill that changes year-by-year," said Lt.j.g. Reynel Saa, VBSS officer, Nassau Strike Group. "As a collective VBSS team with other countries, it's important to continue to train, because we can't do all the boardings. So as a coalition, if we can have some of the other countries helping out with those boardings, it makes our lives a lot easier."

The second phase of the exercise was performed at sea and offered the MIO teams several different chances and ways to board simulated suspicious craft. With some of the naval vessels acting as boarding platforms, teams were offered multiple opportunities for practical training in an open, littoral environment.

"During the exercise we conducted fast-rope exercises and traditional RHIB embarkations," said Saa. "We also conducted helo-deck landings as well."

The simulated target vessels for these training exercise were often the amphibious transport dock ship USS Nashville (LPD 13) and the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201). Landing Craft Utilities (LCU) from the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) were also used as target craft in several scenarios. Nassau herself was utilized as a central hub for the exercise, hosting many liaison naval officers from the other participating countries.

"We served as essentially a hotel and command center for about a 150 people from 10 different nations," said Capt. James R. Boorujy, commanding officer, USS Nassau. "We carried a number of the boarding teams from several of the countries that participated, so we were very much the center of the operation."

Two helicopters from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28 (HSC 28)

provided transportation from Nassau's flight deck to the target vessels, often taking foreign teams who had never flown in an American helicopter.

While not performing boarding exercises, the multinational teams also found other ways to improve their collective skills, including friendly competitions and small arms firing.

"The small arms training that we did aboard the ship was really a way to do a weapons exchange with other countries," said Zetz. "We gave them an opportunity to fire some of our weapons like the Mossberg shotgun or our Beretta 9mm's, and the Maltese let us fire their MP5s."

The at-sea phase of PE 08 came to a close Apr. 19, 2008, in Augusta Bay, Sicily, where the participating countries met to discuss the outcome of the exercise. The post-ex phase will close on Apr. 22 where many of the countries will return to sea and head off in their own directions until next year.

"Looking at the reports, one of the common trends was the level of professionalism," said Saa. "That says a lot. If there's one thing that's really truly important when you're conducting VBSS it is professionalism. That may be the first time that that vessel's master ever meets an American, and you never get a second chance at a first impression. So you really need to show that you're a professional and you're not there to harm them. That's the message that we need to put out there every time we do this."

"One of the successes that Nassau can take away is that we can operate with many different countries," said Boorujy. "We can bring their helicopters in, we can bring the boarding teams in and they can work from this very capable platform."

PE 08 is the third annual exercise in a long-term effort to improve regional cooperation and maritime security. The principal aim is to increase interoperability by developing individual and collective maritime proficiencies of participating nations, as well as promoting friendship, mutual understanding and cooperation. ☐



▲ Service members from Algeria as well as 10 other nations, including the United States, receive training to develop skills in taking down a hostile vessel onboard a mock ship at the NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Centre (NMIOTC) in Souda Bay, Crete as part of a training evolution held during exercise Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08) on April 11.

▼ Sailors from the Spanish Navy descend from the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) amid choppy seas, to a Rigid Inflatable Boat on April 15, 2008 in order to practice techniques used as part of boarding operations of potentially hostile vessels. US Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David R. Quillen. (RELEASED)



USS Nashville Hosts PE 08 Senior Enlisted Roundtable

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Charles L. Ludwig

SOUDA BAY, Crete – Forty-five top enlisted representatives from six countries participated in a Leadership Roundtable held onboard the amphibious transport dock USS Nashville (LPD 13) as part of the in-port phase of exercise Phoenix Express 08 (PE 08) on Apr. 9-10.

While onboard, Nashville's Command Master Chief Anthony Josey, provided all participants with a unique opportunity to experience how Nashville and other U.S. Navy ships handle leadership responsibilities on a day to day basis.

"This was basically a chance for everyone here to see how different Chiefs' Messes operate around the world," said Josey. "Each of the world's Navies are very different, but at the same time, leadership remains the bedrock upon which a great command is built, no matter where you are. Having the chance to see how everyone handles that leadership is an opportunity we wanted to take advantage of."

Nassau Together for PE 08...

Continued from page 3

seizure (VBSS) teams, coordinated a live fire range and weapons exchange; Marines from my platoon assisted as evaluators for other countries conducting MIO boarding also," said Marine Corps Capt. Nicholas K. Zetz, platoon commander of 2nd Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team (FAST), Marine Corps Forces Europe. "We relayed with other countries, so we can learn a little bit more about their tactics and pass on our tactics to them... it's a worthwhile training with a great opportunity to interact with other countries."

With deck landing qualifications, air department conducted series of integrated flight operations using the universal language, the hand signal.

"The Crash and Salvage Team had to familiarize themselves with participating countries' air controller also. Just in case of any type of emergency, ensuring that everybody is

International senior enlisted leadership representatives from Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria and Spain were on hand for the event, along with those from the frigate USS John L. Hall (FFG 32), and the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4). During their time onboard, they toured some of the ship's vital operational centers – including the well deck and foc'sle, all the while discussing the value of shipboard interaction.

"We held discussions on how everyone's messes are set up, and how they interact with their chains of command," Josey said. "For the Command Master Chiefs, we wanted to get an idea of the different perspectives we each had on relationships with the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer on a ship."

According to Josey, the visit was an important one for all countries involved.

"It was important because we were all able to share different views of how a

prepared to assist our allies as if they are our own," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate Handling 1st Class (AW/SW) Jerry L. Pryuer, Crash & Salvage LPO, Air Department.

"I believe PE 08 is a positive learning experience. Everyone played a part in it, something new and something that we can continue to learn from," he added.

Sailors and Marines onboard Nassau served, trained and befriended about 150 people from 10 different nations; collaborated together and worked as one cohesive unit.

"PE 08 is all about building that relationship with our allies. We came in building that trust, that confidence in each other... each country, each team, each ship brought its own unique capability," said Capt. Robert G. Lineberry, commander, Nassau Strike Group. "We shared those ideas. We shared those thoughts. We shared those capabilities. We formed up a



Navy command functions," he said, "and it allowed us to improve communication between our Navy and the Navies of the Mediterranean region."

At the end of the event, Josey said he believed the visitors went away impressed with the U.S. Navy.

"They left with an excellent understanding of our mission and of our capabilities throughout the Navy, and especially onboard Nashville," he said. "They also got to see how a U.S. Chiefs' mess operates. Lessons were learned on all sides." 📺

team that can go out there, and provide stability and security to the region," added Lineberry.

On the ship's public announcement system, Apr. 22, with appreciation to the crew, Booruji concluded the exercise saying it was a success and everyone took a part on it, one way or another.

"It's a good experience, very good training; our first time onboard, and we hope to be part of PE 09," confirmed Tunisian Adjutant Ben Slama Tarek, a member of Tunisian Navy's medical team on the success of the PE 08.

PE 08 is the third annual exercise in a long-term effort to improve regional cooperation and maritime security. The principal aim is to increase interoperability by developing individual and collective maritime proficiencies of participating nations, as well as promoting friendship, mutual understanding and cooperation. 📺

USS Ashland is First U.S. Navy Ship to Visit Reunion in 47 Years

By Gillian Brigham, CTF-363 Public Affairs Office

PORT EST, Reunion -- USS Ashland (LSD 48) wrapped up a two-day port visit to the French island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean, Saturday, April 12.

Reunion is about 900 miles off the coast of mainland Africa, east of Madagascar. It was discovered, uninhabited, by European explorers in the 1500s. Ashland called on Reunion as part of U.S. Naval Forces Europe's Southeast Africa Task Group which is tasked with promoting maritime safety and security initiatives in the region. The last U.S. Navy ship to visit the island was USS Spiegel Grove in 1961.

While in Reunion, Southeast Africa Task Force commander Capt. Nicholas Holman and Ashland's commanding officer Cmdr. Jeff Ward visited the island's naval base and met with General de brigade Bruno de Bourdone de Saint Salvy, commander of all French forces in the Indian Ocean.

"We aren't going to wait another 47 years to return to Reunion," said Capt. Holman. "For the past couple years, the U.S. and French navies have been collaborating in the Gulf of Guinea. We're looking forward to increasing our interaction with them on the other side of Africa as we begin to work together to promote regional maritime awareness and help build the naval capabilities of our partners in Southeast Africa."

During the ship's two days in port Ashland Sailors squared off against French sailors during a soccer match while the U.S. Naval Forces Europe's brass quintet entertained local residents at a town fair. The ship also hosted nearly 200 local officials and French military personnel aboard for a shipboard reception. 📺



Ashland Sailors squared off against French sailors. Photo by Gillian Brigham. (RELEASED)

USS Ashland Builds Maritime Partnership in Mauritius

By Gillian Brigham, CTF-363 Public Affairs Office

PORT LOUIS, Mauritius -- USS Ashland (LSD 48) arrived in Port Louis, Mauritius, April 8, the first U.S. Navy ship to visit the Indian Ocean island this year.

"I'm excited to continue the U.S. Navy's partnership with Mauritius," said CTF-363 Commander, Capt. Nick Holman. "Last September, USS Normandy (CG 60) visited Port Lewis and was greeted with hospitality and warmth by the Mauritians. With Ashland's visit this week we are continuing the relationship between our two countries."

Ashland is visiting Mauritius as part of Commander, Task Force (CTF) 363 Southeast Africa. CTF-363 belongs to U.S. Naval Forces Europe and is tasked with promoting maritime safety and security initiatives in the region.

"For nearly four years, the U.S. Navy has been actively supporting West and Central African nations in their efforts to increase maritime safety and security in their region," said Holman. "We want to provide the same kind of active

support to Southeast Africa and port visits like the Ashland's to Port Louis are a great place to start."

While in Port Louis, Ashland and her crew will participate in military information exchanges with the Mauritian Coast Guard, practicing damage control and maritime interdiction operation techniques.

Ashland will host a shipboard reception for Mauritian military and government officials and her crew will participate in

activities such as sporting events and community relations projects.

The U.S. Naval Forces Europe brass quintet will also perform for local school children and participate in a musical exchange with students from the Francois Mitterand Conservatory.

This is the second deployment of CTF-363's Southeast Africa Task Force. In 2007, CTF-363-assigned assets USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98) and USS Normandy (CG 60) visited eight Southeast African nations. For many of these countries, it was the first time a U.S. Navy ship had visited in more than 40 years. 📺



U.S. and Malagasy Navy sailors practice damage control and firefighting techniques aboard the dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48). U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Mandy L. Hunsucker (Released)

Nassau Strike Group Celebrates 115 Years of the Chief Petty Officer

From Nassau Strike Group Public Affairs

On April 1, the Commands and Sailors of the Nassau Strike Group celebrated the Chief Petty Officer and their 115 years of heritage and commitment to the United States Navy.

Every year since 1893, the Navy takes time out to recognize this special day and what it truly means not only to the past but also to the present. The rank of Chief Petty Officer exemplifies excellence and leadership while ensuring they follow the path laid by those who have served before and began the tradition.

"Today is an opportunity to honor the history, heritage and traditions of the Navy Chief. It's the most unique enlisted rank in all the American Armed Forces," said Intelligence Specialist Chief (SW/AW) Eric Emory, independent duty intelligence specialist onboard USS Bulkeley. "It is the only enlisted rank all the Armed Services where the individual goes through a time-honored process of acceptance and trust in order to become the greatest leaders in the U.S. military and lead the greatest Sailors in the world."

On the guided missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), the crew celebrated on the mess decks with cake, ice cream and refreshments.



Nassau's CPO community posing on the ship's forecastle. U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Jonathan Pankau. (RELEASED)

Aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4), crewmembers awoke to a bugle calling Reveille, followed by Anchors Away in the ship's announcing system and then heard a reading by Nassau 3M Assistant Senior Chief Damage Controlman (SW) John Billhimer. Later in the day Nassau's Chiefs gathered on the ship's Foc'sle for their annual group photo, which is displayed throughout the year as a symbol of unity.

On the guided missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), the day started off with a run, where Philippine Sea Chiefs teamed up to tackle a 115-lap run of Philippine Sea's weather deck, which is approximately a 16.5 mile run. The run signified the dedication that the Chiefs of the Navy display everyday. Throughout the day, Philippine Sea Chiefs wore their khaki uniforms, a uniform that sets them apart from the other enlisted ranks.

Along with celebrating, displaying their most distinctive uniforms, and

participating in activities with their shipmates, the strike group's Chiefs wanted to give something back to their respective ships and Sailors.

"The majority of the Chiefs cycled through the food serving line to serve the crew a special meal," said Philippine Sea's Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Christopher Thompson. "We realize that without them running a ship is impossible."

"CPO Birthday celebrations in the past have been traditionally held in the Chiefs' Mess," said Nassau's Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Stan Kopiczak. "This year, we held our celebration in the Hangar Bay to let the crew know we appreciate the hard work they do on a daily basis. It is their hard work and dedication that makes the Chief's job a success." ■

Editor's Note:

MC3 David Wycaver, MCSN Ryan Steinhour and MCSA Jonathan Pankau all contributed to this story.

CPR-6 Awards Sailor and Bluejacket of the Quarter

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Coleman Thompson

SOUDA BAY, Crete – Two Sailors from Commander, Amphibious Squadron 6 (CPR-6) were given honors as Sailor and Bluejacket of the Quarter onboard the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA4).

Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Kristopher A. Meaney (SW/AW) received Sailor of the Quarter, and Operational Specialist Seaman Apprentice Christina Garza received Bluejacket of the Quarter.

The award is given each quarter to those Sailors who stand out from the rest for their professional accomplishments, commitment to their job, and military bearing. The Sailors were presented their awards by Capt. Robert G. Lineberry, commanding officer, CPR-6 and commander, Nassau Strike Group, while Nassau was visiting Souda Bay, Crete, for the Phoenix Express 2008 (PE 08) exercise.

"It felt good, it was a big honor," said Meaney. "I couldn't have done it without

the help of my chain of command as well as the junior sailors that I have working for me everyday."

Meaney also said it was determination and motivation, as well as volunteering both in the work place and in his community that helped him win the award.

Garza, who has been with CPR-6 for only two months, attributes the honor to her dedication to duty and professional appearance. "I was absolutely speechless when the Commodore gave the award," she said. "He asked me to give a few words in front of everybody but I couldn't."

"She deserved the award because she's an outstanding Sailor," said Operational Specialist 1st Class (SW) Velvet L. Parker, Garza's supervisor. "It felt really good nominating her for it. She deserves the recognition, other people outside of our division need to know that she's an outstanding Sailor." ■

NASSG Ships Help Souda Bay Community

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

SOUDA BAY, Crete -- Sailors from the Nassau Expeditionary Strike Group's (NAS ESG) amphibious assault ship, USS Nassau (LHA 4), and amphibious transport dock ship, USS Nashville (LPD 13), participated in community relations projects while in port Naval Support Activity (NSA), Souda Bay, April 9-10.

More than 120 Sailors from both ships were dispersed in three teams accomplishing three different projects: the Chania Senior Citizens Home, building a fence for a local woman and repairs at NSA Souda Bay's Base Chapel.

At the Chania Senior Citizens Home, home to 125 elderly residents, volunteers painted three common areas, the front gate and the fence.

"This project is a good opportunity for me to help the town, and it helps the Navy at the same time," said Nassau volunteer Air Traffic Controller 3rd Class Christine Kanakis, who also acted as a translator. "I don't really get the chance to use my language skill; I speak Greek which made this project more fun."

Another group of volunteers helped an elderly widow, who has been assisted by NSA on prior occasions, by putting up a fence and tiling an area where she can turn into a patio garden.

"She was very glad to see us and was very happy with the fence that we put up," said Nassau volunteer, Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class (AW) Christopher Hanson. "We have the ability and time to help, and we are improving people's perception of the United States in a very positive way."

The biggest project was the base chapel where Sailors assisted in relocating the chapel and its offices to another location on base. The project took a day of preparation and another for painting and moving office furniture, shelves, chairs and more.

"It's a tremendous help; the volunteers did two months worth of work in only two days," said Religious Program

At the Chania Senior Citizens Home, where 125 elderly people reside, volunteers from USS Nassau (LHA 4) and USS Nashville (LPD 13) painted three common areas, the front gate and the fence, April 9.



U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rustum Rivera. (RELEASED)

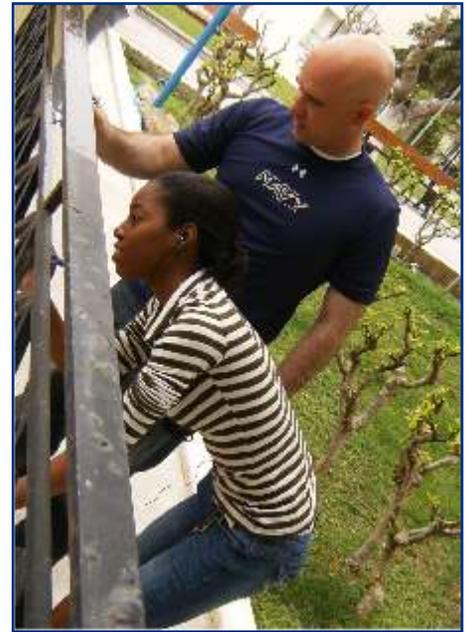


Specialist 3rd Class Cody Mitts, the chapel's religious program specialist.

The relocation allowed the chapel to expand their services, with a bigger place to worship and adding rooms to accommodate children's Sunday school.

"Being in this building... we will be able to put visuals on the walls," said Melissa Edmonson, a resident of the base who uses the chapel. "We'll be able to have a room dedicated to the children that will be 'their space' where they can go every Sunday and more."

Edmonson showed her appreciation by bringing lunch for the volunteers including Greece's famous pastry, the baklava. "We could've not done it without you [Sailors]; you made it possible and easy for us," she added.



Lt. Edward Bass, Nashville's chaplain, explained the chapel is not just about worship services; it is also about what happens every day of the week: the classes held, Boys and Girls Scout meetings, the different groups that meet in the chapel – it allows the whole community to come together, which is a tremendous strength to Souda Bay.

"It is really a blessing, we [Nassau and Nashville Sailors] came together to help them out, giving our Sailors the chance to serve rather than to be served," said Bass.

Nashville volunteer, Machinist's Mate Fireman James Nilsson expressed that this is the best way to celebrate his first year in the Navy, saying that, "COMREL (community relations) gives us a good name, and I always believe in helping out," said Nilsson. >>>Page 9

USS Nashville Pair Among Strike Group Quarterly Award Winners

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Charles L. Ludwig

USS NASHVILLE, At Sea -- A pair of USS Nashville (LPD 13) Sailors picked up honors April 14, as they were named the Nassau Expeditionary Strike Group (NAS ESG) Senior and Junior Sailors of the quarter for the first quarter of 2008.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate 1st Class (SW) Leonard Starr and Gunner's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Adan Macias were named the NAS ESG Senior and Junior Sailors of the Quarter, respectively. The competition was stiff, spanning across the other five ships in the strike group, to include the amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4), the amphibious dock landing ship USS Ashland (LSD 48), the guided missile destroyers USS Ross (DDG 71) and USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), and the guided missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea (CG 58)

For Nashville's Command Master Chief (SW/AW) Anthony Josey, the awards put a spotlight on the quality of the Sailors who are stationed on the transport landing dock ship, currently deployed in the 6th Fleet area of operation. "This showcases the caliber

of Sailors we have onboard," he said. "ABH1 (Starr) and GM2 (Macias) were able to shine through their hard work and dedication in helping Nashville perform its mission on an outstanding level on a day-to-day basis."

Starr said the award means more to him with the ship away from its homeport of Norfolk, Va. "Winning this award means a lot to me and makes the stress of deployment and the everyday tempo easier to deal with," he said. "Knowing that you are being recognized for what you do makes everything a little easier."

Starr, the leading petty officer of the Air Department, and the president of the ship's First Class Petty Officer Association, led his team in the successful completion of more than 47 mishap-free flight hours, along with 362 flight deck evolutions and the safe transfer and onload of more than 10,000 gallons of JP-5 during the quarter. Additionally, his hard work and dedication allowed Nashville to be the first Austin-Class LPD to certify for MV-22B operations.

Macias is Nashville's Weapons' Division leading petty officer and as the command's ammunition accountability expert, he ensured the safe handling of more than two million rounds of ammunition while maintaining zero discrepancies. Additionally, as one of Nashville's small arms instructors, he qualified over 180 crewmembers in the use of various types of small arms and crew-served weapons.

Macias explained that winning the award gives other Nashville Sailors a positive example to emulate. "I am thankful that my chain of command nominated me for the award," he said. "I believe the award alone gives Sailors something extra to strive towards. People here can see that hard work is recognized and rewarded."

In the future, both awardees said they wouldn't be surprised to see other Nashville Sailors repeat their success.

"I think overall Nashville has a motivated crew that will accept any challenge," Starr said. "We always pull together as a team to produce outstanding results." 📷

Souda Bay COMREL...

Continued from page 9

The base commanding officer, Capt. Thomas McDonough, Jr., and executive officer, Cmdr. Mark Nowicki, came by to look at the new chapel. "The commanding officer was very impressed with what you've done," said Lt. Cmdr. Steve Hicks, one of the base chaplains. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Lt. Cmdr. Michael Gore, Nassau's chaplain, also addressed the volunteers. "We did a tremendous amount of work; yet, we're still leaving them with a tremendous amount of work. They did not build the temple in one day; but because of your help, they will be able to hold their first service in the new chapel on Sunday, April 13."

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



Sailors from USS Nassau (LHA 4) and USS Nashville (LPD 13) team up to relocate Naval Support Activity Souda Bay chapel and its offices to a bigger location on base which took a day of preparation and another for painting and moving office furniture. U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rustum Rivera. (RELEASED)

NASSAU STRIKE GROUP
Sailors of the Quarter

USS NASSAU (LHA 4)

Senior Sailor of the Quarter
ABH1(AW/SW) Jerry Pryuer
Sailor of the Quarter
IS2(SW) Aubrey Murman
Junior Sailor of the Quarter
IT3(SW/AW) Ryan Hodge

USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)

Sailor of the Quarter
ABH1(SW) Leonard Starr ☆
Junior Sailor of the Quarter
GM2(SW) Adan Macias ☆

USS BULKELEY (DDG 84)

Sailor of the Quarter
STG1 (SW) Alex Szlamas
Junior Sailor of the Quarter
STG3 Sandra Flowers
Bluejacket of the Quarter
YNSN Lewis Breland

USS ROSS (DDG 71)

Sailor of the Quarter
GSM1(SW) Bobby J. Davis
Junior Sailor of the Quarter
CS3 Derek A. Lyons
Bluejacket of the Quarter
SKSN Adam C. Wolfe ☆

USS ASHLAND (LSD 48)

Sailor of the Quarter
EN1 (SW) KiaKiwana Dunn
Junior Sailor of the Quarter
YN3 (SW) Terry Thomas
Bluejacket of the Quarter
SN Kelli Dalby

COMPHIBRON SIX

Sailor of the Quarter
IS1(SW/AW) Kristopher Meaney
Junior Sailor of the Quarter
HM2 Antoinette Peterson
Bluejacket of the Quarter
OSSA Christina Garza

FLTPACENLANT

Bluejacket of the Quarter
MCSN Mandy Hunsucker

☆ Indicates overall NASSG SOQs

Congratulations!

April 1 is CPO's Birthday;
What Makes a Great Chief?



"Knowing his people, and being able to work with them makes a great Chief."

Storekeeper 2nd Class (AW/SW) Mary Renzelman
USS Nassau (LHA 4)

"Chief Emory has been a good example of a Chief to me because he's caring, has the ability to multi-task well, and is very approachable. He has helped me out a lot, and he looks out for me."



Yeoman 2nd Class
Brooke Peed
USS Bulkeley (DDG 84)



"...A great Chief knows what to say at the right time, and somebody who follow the rules."

"I enjoy working for ETC Wynn, my current Chief."

Electronics Technician
3rd Class Patrick Huynh
USS Ashland (LSD 48)



"...If a Chief can give you constructive criticism, then I think they're a great Chief. Once, I had a Chief pointed out something that I was doing wrong, and told me how to correct it. I really appreciated that."

Storekeeper 3rd Class Linda Gully
USS Ashland (LSD 48)



"A great Chief is someone who takes care of his people; someone who has been through difficult times in their past, and stands for positive change. FCCS Parker, thank you for being a great Chief."

Operations Specialist
3rd Class Terrance Bellock
COMPHIBRON SIX (CPR-6)



"BMC Holden, he's the man!!! He is always there to give good advice, and point Sailors in the right direction."

Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Charles Davis
USS Bulkeley (DDG 84)

Any Day *in the* NASSG



▲ Capt. Michael A. Strano, commander, Destroyer Squadron 26 (COMDESRON 26) and Cmdr. Paul Stader, commanding officer, USS Ross (DDG 71) stand with the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) committee as they present the ESWS Pennant that will be flown from the mast April 7. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory Rose. (RELEASED)

▼ Members of the amphibious transport dock USS Nashville's (LPD 13) color guard parade the colors during an underway change of command on Apr. 2. Capt. Tushar R. Tembe relieved Capt. Dewolfe H. Miller and became the ship's 27th commanding officer. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication 3rd Class Coleman Thompson (RELEASED).



▲ Rear Adm. Mark Fox, commander, Carrier Strike Group 10 is briefed on the guided-missile cruiser USS Philippine Sea's (CG-58) navigational chart by Capt. Gary Parriot, commanding officer, Philippine Sea, Apr. 24. U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Ryan Steinhour. (RELEASED)



▼ USS Nassau's Staff First Class Petty Officers pose with Capt. Lineberry, Commander, Nassau Strike Group, during Staff's picnic in Souda Bay, Crete, April 12. U.S. Navy photo by Lt.j.g. Anthony Falvo. (RELEASED)

▼ Amphibious dock landing ship, USS Ashland (LSD 48) Sailors pose in front of Mother Augustine Home after completing a community relations project, April 9. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Mandy Hunsucker. (RELEASED)



▼ Members of guided missile destroyer USS Bulkeley's (DDG 84) boat team lower down a Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) in preparation for Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations on Apr. 3. U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class David Wycaver. (RELEASED)



▲ USS Ross (DDG 71) receives cargo from a Canadian SH-124 Sea King during flight quarters Apr. 3. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Cory Rose (RELEASED).