

BATARG BEACON

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Aviation Acrobatics
on New York

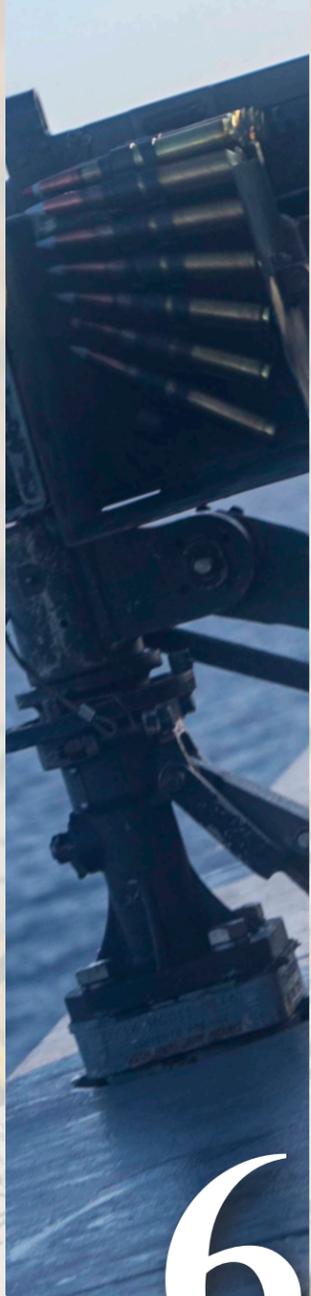
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SRF-B Course

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Protects the Ship



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The official magazine for the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group

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ABFAN Stuart Price, right, acts as a safety as ABFAN Tyler Strohl, both assigned to the New York, connects pallets to an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter, attached to the Dragon Whales of HSC 28, on the flight deck aboard New York during a replenishment-at-sea, Feb. 26, 2020. Photo by MC2 Lyle Wilkie



Oak Hill Sailors Complete Security Reaction Force-B

Story and photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting

Sailors assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) completed a Security Reaction Force-Basic (SRF-B) course aboard Oak Hill, Feb. 1, 2020.

Sailors completed SRF-B in order to be qualified to stand in-port watch stations, as well as learn how to defend themselves in case of any emergency or threat to themselves

or the ship.

A part of completing the SRF-B course is going through the standard oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray self-defense course, which can be done in port or while underway.

Oak Hill Sailors completed the OC spray course while on the flight deck of Oak Hill, which was the last step of completing the SRF-B course.

“It is imperative that Sailors become familiar with not just how to use OC spray on a threat, but how the spray actually effects someone,” said Chief Gunner’s Mate Jason Stokes, a member of the Oak Hill safety team from the course. “Getting through the self-defense course is something no Sailor will forget, and will prepare them for real-life situations.”

During the duration of the SRF-B course, Sailors will learn self-defense tactics, use of the force continuum, proper watch standing and specific combat takedowns and strikes.

“Everything you learn in SRF-B all serves a very important purpose,” said Yeoman 2nd Class Calvin Moubray, the class leader of the SRF-B class. “Proper watch standing

and knowing what to do in any given situation is the main focus of the course and every Sailor should go through it.”

Sailors who successfully complete the course earn the SRF-B qualification and will then be able to stand armed watches in port.

Oak Hill, a part of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group and with

the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points.



New York's Small Craft Action Team

Story and photo by MC2 Lyle Wilkie

Aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), a small group is trained to defend the ship in an emergency situation.

This group of Sailors, the Small Craft Action Team (SCAT), provides a surge capability for reacting to an emergency security situation within the defensive perimeter of the ship, and has earned high-level praise for its integration with the Marines of the embarked 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

"SCAT is a team consisting of crew-served weapons machine gun operators that provide 360 degree coverage of the ship, an anti-terrorism tactical watch officer and a gunnery liaison officer," said Lt. j.g. Frank Smeeks, New York's anti-terrorism officer (ATO). "They are called away as a pre-planned response to threats the ship may face like a small boat attack or low slow flyer."

To be part of SCAT, a Sailor has to be a part of the ship's Security Reaction Force (SRF). They must also be qualified in all gun mounts aboard the ship.

"A SCAT member has to be qualified to shoot both the M240 and M2HB machine guns," said Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Adam Gilbert, a SCAT watch stander. "They must know how to properly identify contacts and how to properly report them."

New York puts SCAT members through rigorous training to ensure they are ready for any situation.

"They must receive extensive training on many topics to include use of force and rules of engagement, warning shots, contact reporting and tracking, and how to clear machine guns of any malfunctions or stoppages," said Smeeks.

This training was put to test during Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), a pre-deployment exercise during which embarked assessors from Carrier Strike Group 4 gave New York's SCAT the highest tier grade.

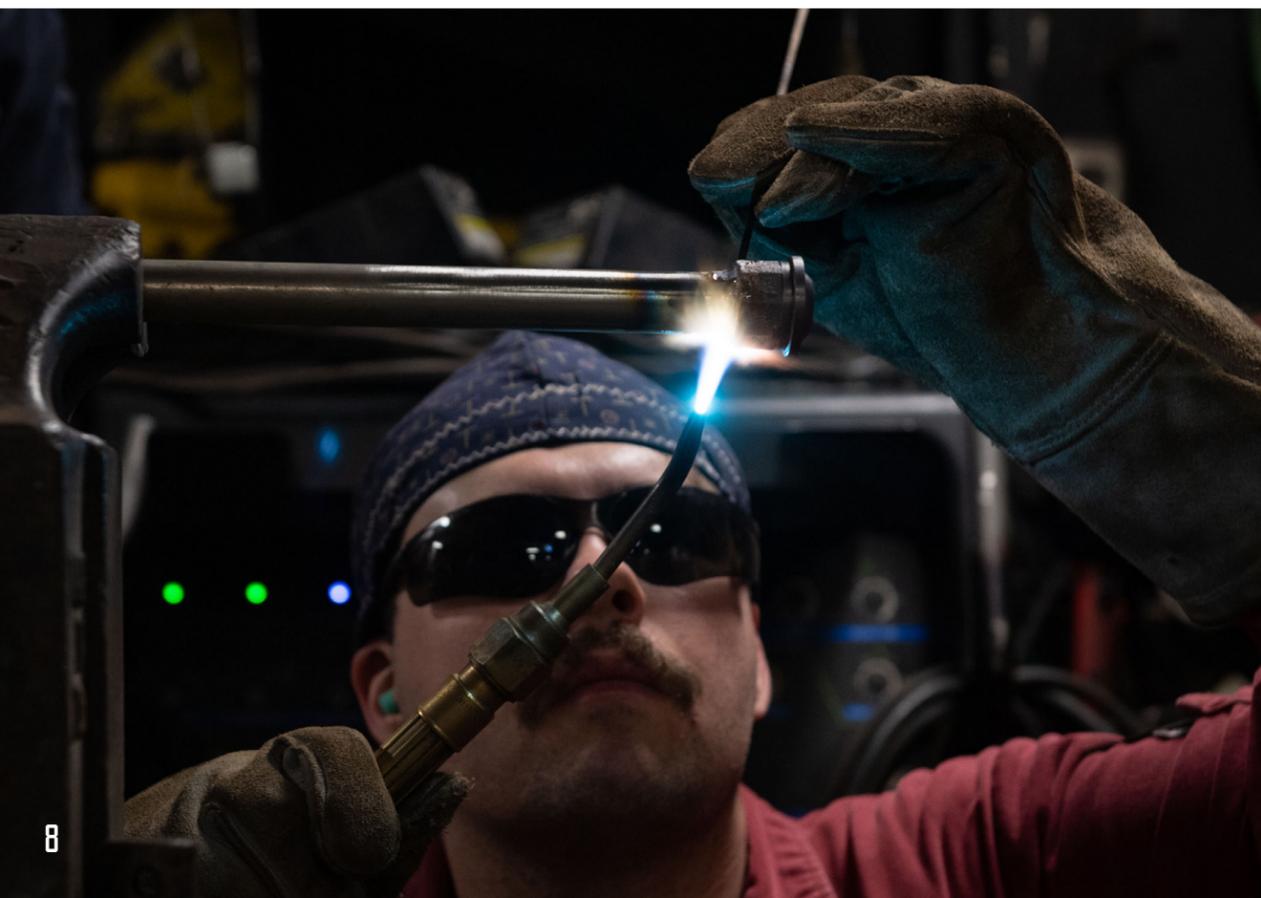
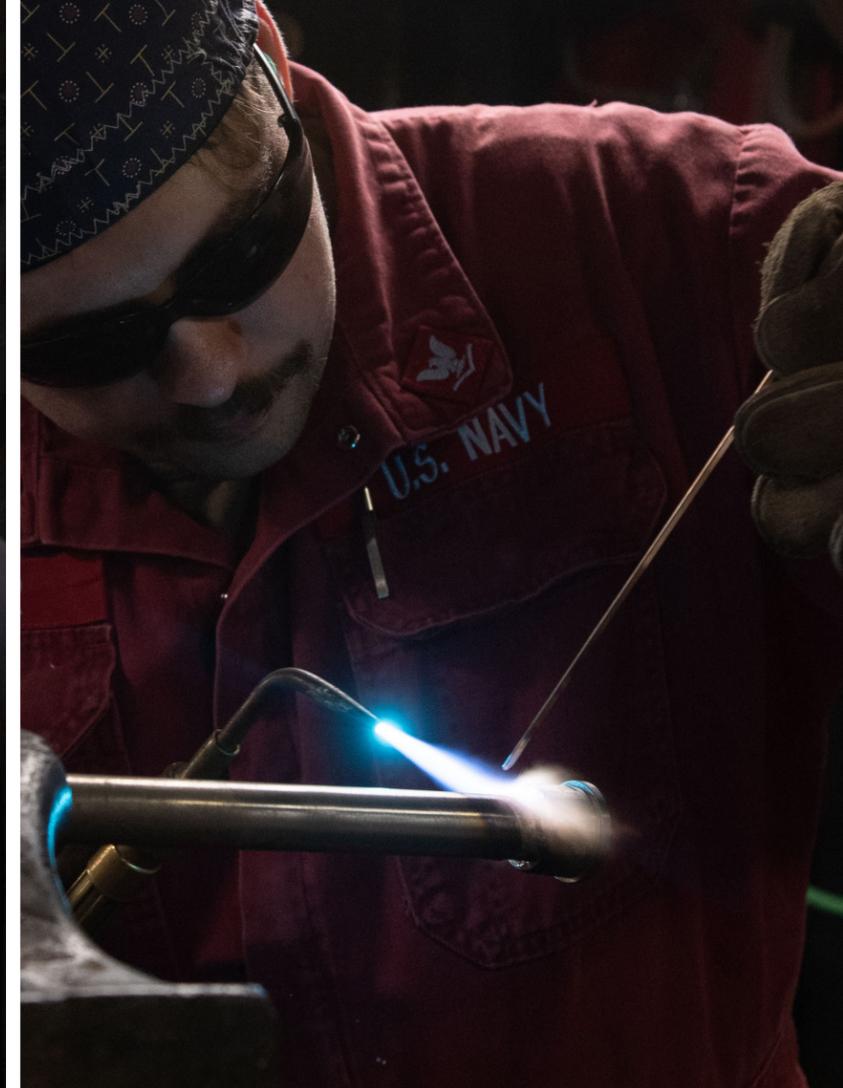
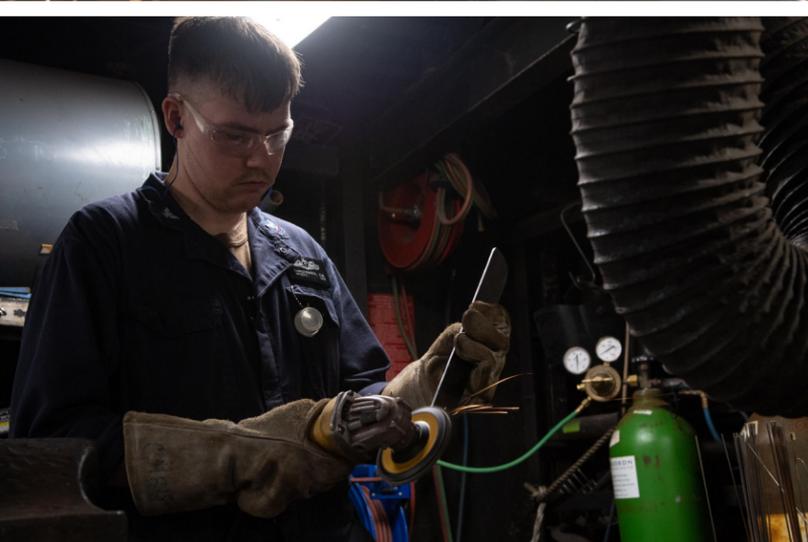
"During our training cycle, our SCAT performed extremely well," said Smeeks. "Our integration with green side was noted as being one of the best Carrier Strike Group 4 has seen on an amphibious ship."

Chief Gunner's Mate Sierra Karatali said the Sailors and Marines onboard "have one common goal: Defend the ship."

"Training together allowed us to get to know one another and share techniques to make us better," she said. "We became one team, in one fight."

SCAT is an integral part of many evolutions aboard the ship.

"If the ship is conducting a sea-and-anchor transit or a strait transit anywhere in the world, the SCAT team is employed during the entire transit, if not longer," said Gilbert. "It is a 24/7 reaction force, day or night. The amount of precision SCAT member has to effectively employ our crew-served weapons as a team is amazing and I am proud to be a member of the team."



Clockwise from top left:

Hull Maintenance Technician 3rd Class Franklin Trinh, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), repairs a table, Feb. 24, 2020. Photo by MCSA Darren Newell.

Hull Maintenance Technician Fireman Hunter Smith, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), repairs a table, Feb. 24, 2020. Photo by MCSA Darren Newell.

Hull Maintenance Technician 3rd Class Brett Nicar, assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), brazes a pipe during maintenance repair, Feb. 20, 2020. Photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting.

Hull Maintenance Technician Fireman Hunter Smith, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), repairs a table, Feb. 24, 2020. Photo by MCSA Darren Newell.

Hull Maintenance Technician 3rd Class Brett Nicar, assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), brazes a pipe during maintenance repair, Feb. 20, 2020. Photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting.

Hull Maintenance Technician 3rd Class Christopher Christensen, assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), sands down a piece of metal, Feb. 20, 2020. Photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting.



Aviation Acrobatics:

New York's Air Team assists Blue/Green Mission

Story and photos by MC2 Lyle Wilkie

The amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) is known for moving troops from ship-to-shore using Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC), but flight operations play just as big of a role in that movement.

New York is able to launch or land up to two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters or two MV-22 Osprey, attached to Blue Knights Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 365 (Reinforced), or launch or land up to four of the VMM's AH-1W Super Cobra or UH-1Y Huey helicopters, or four MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters, attached to the Dragon Whales of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28 in addition to the ship's two LCACs.

"On an LPD, we provide a safe and efficient flight deck operation for all embarked and transient helicopter onboard," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuel) Junior Rodriguez, air department leading chief petty officer. "We provide support to expeditionary landing forces for a variety of U. S. combat missions. We set up the flight deck, launch and recover various types of aircraft while transporting personnel and

cont.



Left:

Cpl. Jacob Leonard, assigned to CLB 26, 26th MEU, connects pallets to a MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter, assigned to the Dragon Whales of HSC 28, on the flight deck aboard New York during a replenishment-at-sea Feb. 26, 2020.

Top:

ABH2 Benjamin Kimbrough, assigned to the New York, signals to an AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter, attached to the Blue Knights of VMM 365, to land on the ship's flight deck, Feb. 5, 2020.

equipment during ship-to-ship or ground-to-ship air operations safely in support for all requested operations.

Required missions can include medical evacuation [MEDEVAC] and vertical replenishment [VERTREP] operations.”

The Sailors who direct the helicopters to take off or land are called Landing Signalman Enlisted (LSE). The ones on New York are some of the most junior Sailors aboard and are given the hefty responsibility.

“I’m an LSE,” said Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Lorenzo Moreno, “I’m in charge of overall safety of launching and recovering aircraft on the flight

deck. I literally have the lives of my shipmates in my hands. It’s my responsibility to ensure they have eyes on them at all times to be sure that they execute evolutions safely and efficiently.”

In order to execute air operations safely, air department had to devote a lot of time and effort to become one cohesive unit with the embarked VMM 365 and HSC 28.

“It is a lot of coordination between the ship and the embarked squadrons,” said Lt Cmdr. Matthew Swartz, New York’s air boss. “Communications are important to make sure flight operations run smoothly. We work hand in hand with the squadrons daily to ensure

flight ops are conducted safely.”

This time and effort started a long time ago during the pre-deployment training cycle, including Amphibious Ready Group, Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise (ARGMEUX) and Composite Training Unit Exercise. . Although the blue and green team may make it look easy, they know what’s at stake every time they fly.

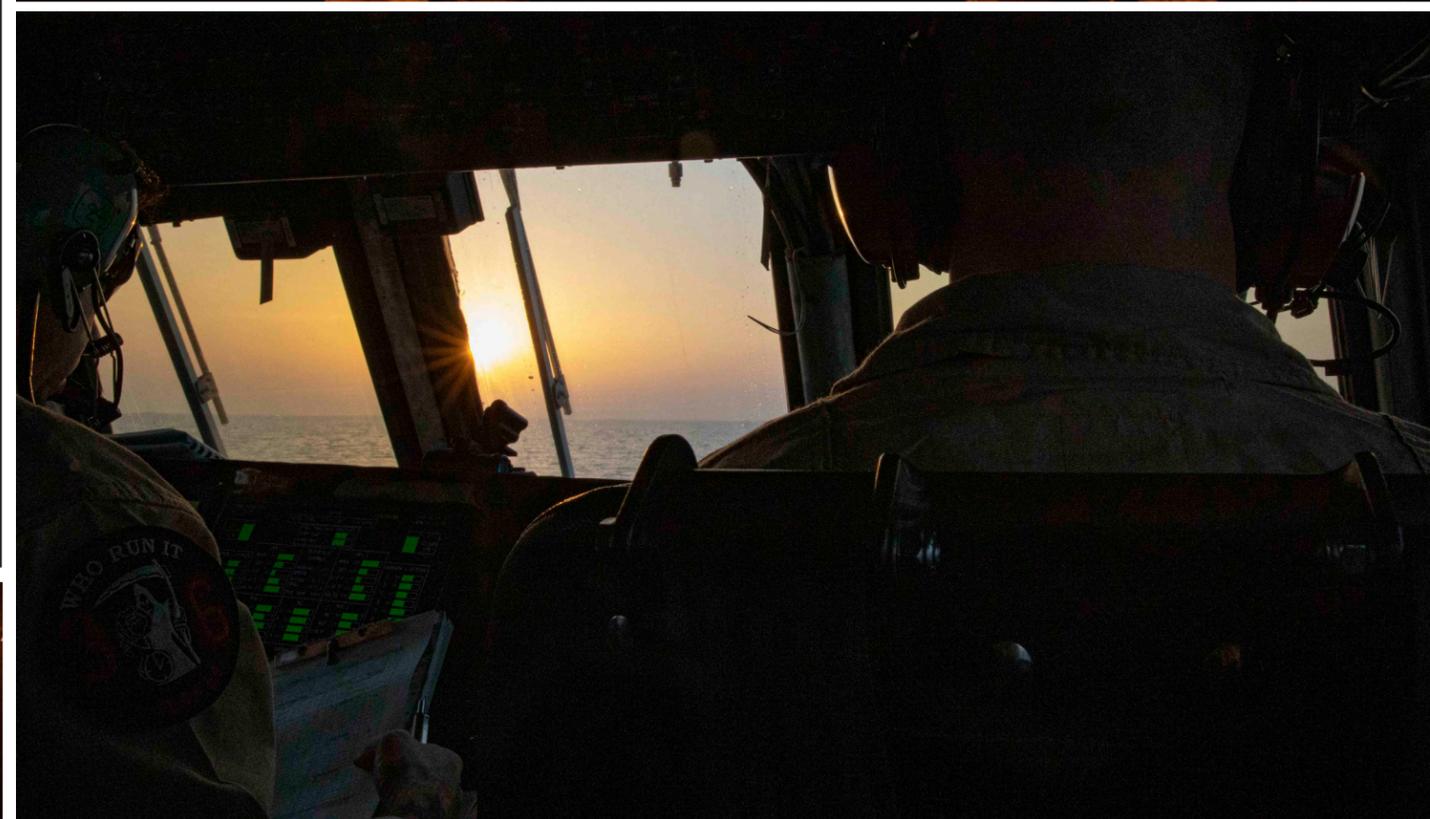
“It can be a stressful job at times, but again, it’s a huge responsibility that I am proud to have,” said Aviation Boatswain’s Mate Airman Shamus Fraser, an air department Sailor.

“Every day I get better at my job and I get more consistent. I do

the best I can do and it’s all about keeping an eye out for misplaced things and staying as safe as possible.”

The dedication of New York’s air department Sailors does not go unnoticed by the boss

“I’m honored to be part of air department,” said Swartz. “This is a special group that operates day in and day out in a dynamic environment. I couldn’t be more proud of the professionalism, dedication to craft, and teamwork that I see from them on a daily basis.”



LCAC

Clockwise from top left:

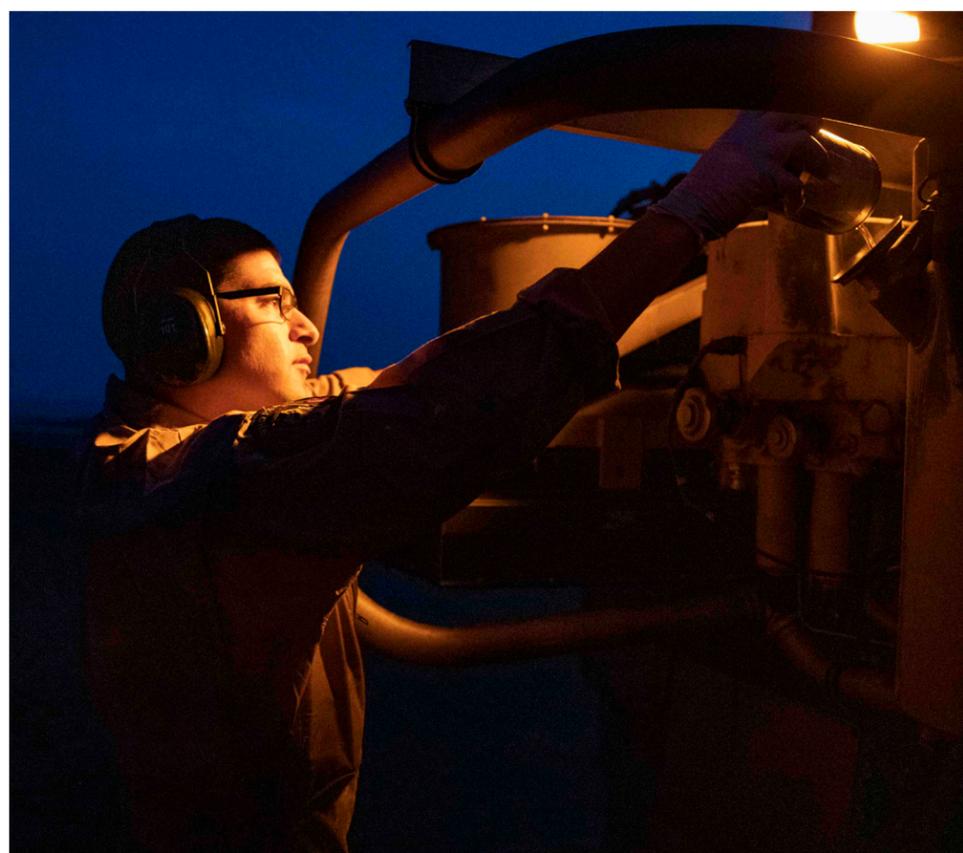
Chief Operations Specialist Michael Morgan, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 4, performs preflight checks on Landing Craft, Air Cushion 36 in the well deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Feb. 23, 2020. Photo by MC1 Zachary Anderson.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Rio Ray, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 4, directs vehicles onto Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 36 during LCAC operations from the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Feb. 23, 2020. Photo by MC1 Zachary Anderson.

Master Chief Gas Turbine System Technician Scott Weifert (right) and Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Joshua Willborn (left), assigned to Assault Craft Unit 4, pilot Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 36 during LCAC operations from the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Feb. 23, 2020. Photo by MC1 Zachary Anderson.

A landing craft, air cushion, attached to Assault Craft Unit 4, exits the well deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Feb. 23, 2020. Photo by MC2 Kaitlin Rowell.

Gas Turbine System Technician (Electrical) 2nd Class Alex Burgos, assigned to Assault Craft Unit 4, makes a repair to Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) 36 during LCAC operations from the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Feb. 23, 2020. Photo by MC1 Zachary Anderson.



Father and Son Reunite at sea aboard Bataan

Story by Bataan Amphibious Ready Group Public Affairs

For the second time in a month, the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) hosted a family reunion at sea.

U.S. Navy Capt. (ret.) Philippe Grandjean, now working as a civilian in Kuwait, flew to Bataan on Feb. 23 as part of a group of distinguished visitors, including Brig. Gen. Edrees Alabdullatif, deputy commander of the Kuwait Naval Forces.

His son, Ensign Jake Grandjean, is deployed on Bataan.

“I think I’m pretty fortunate that [my parents] live in this area now and he has a job that allows him to get out to the fleet,” Ensign Grandjean said.

On Jan. 23., Cryptologic Technician (Technical) 3rd Class Corbin Bassingthwaite’s mother visited the ship alongside Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., commanding general of U.S. Central Command. Senior Chief Yeoman Karen Bassingthwaite is a part of McKenzie’s staff and was traveling with the general, while her son is embarked on Bataan with Amphibious Squadron 8.

Ensign Grandjean said he last saw his father before he embarked on Bataan about a month and a half ago, but said he did not expect to see him again until sometime after the deployment is completed in several months.

“It’s really great to see him,” he said. “I’m super lucky to be able to see my father while I’m deployed at sea. It’s a morale booster.”

Bataan is the flagship of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), which also includes the amphibious transport dock USS New York (LPD 21) and the dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51). Embarked aboard the ARG ships is the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Philippe Grandjean said he is “very proud” of the work his son is doing on Bataan.

“I’ve done a lot of cool things in the Navy, but flying on an [MV-22B] Osprey and seeing my son out here at work on Bataan, it was the highlight of my life,” he said.

The Bataan ARG and 26th MEU are operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, which encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse includes 20 nations and three critical choke points for global commerce, at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

The ARG and MEU are operating in support of maritime security operations to reassure allies and partners and preserve the freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in the region.





USS New York doctors visit Duqm medical facilities during port visit in Oman

Written by: Bataan Amphibious Ready Group Public Affairs

Senior medical leaders on amphibious transport dock USS New York (LPD 21) visited three Duqm medical facilities during a port visit in Oman on Feb. 2, working to strengthen relationships with local partners.

The visits came during a stretch of four days in which New York and dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) each visited Duqm. New York and Oak Hill, along with the flagship amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), are part of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group (ARG).

The ARG is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations with the embarked 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

While New York was in port, Cmdr. Joseph Ayers, officer in charge of the Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 4 detachment onboard, and the ship's Senior Medical Officer Lt. Cmdr. Travis Landry invited Dr. Alan A. Baslio, medical director of Rusayl Health Care, to tour the ship's medical facilities.

Ayers, Landry and Baslio then visited the nearby Renaissance Village Clinic, the Port of Duqm Clinic and A'Duqm Hospital.

"This was a valuable opportunity to share experiences with a local doctor, discuss best practices and visit medical facilities while in port in Duqm," said Landry. "Visits like these continue strengthening our personal and professional relationships in Oman."

Cmdr. Arriel Atienza, FST 4 officer in charge, embarked on Bataan, said the New York doctors were able to "share goodwill with local professionals and make it easier for us to work with our medical partners in Oman."

The Bataan ARG and 26th MEU are operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, which encompasses about 2.5 million square miles of water area and includes the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean. The expanse includes 20 nations and three critical choke points for global commerce, at the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and strait of Bab al Mandeb at the southern tip of Yemen.

"The USS New York conducted a much needed port call in Duqm, Oman, to conduct maintenance and on-load supplies," said Capt. James P. Kennedy, commanding officer of New York. "The people of Oman were gracious hosts and ensured that New York were well taken care of. We are very grateful of the country of Oman's continued logistical support for the United States Navy as we work together to ensure enduring regional security."

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