

# BATARG BEACON



Issue 2

January 26, 2020

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Olympics

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Maintainers keep Harriers in the fight



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# COMMANDERS'



**M**any of you have undoubtedly seen or read news reports about current events in the world. Your friends and family back home may be asking whether these headlines affect your deployment.

Scuttlebutt around the ship, that we may go to this place or that place, is hard to avoid. And it's natural to wonder where we will go and what we will do next. We're all excited to see the world and do our part to serve our country.

However, the world is an uncertain place, and we can't know for sure what will happen tomorrow or the next day or next week. It can be difficult not knowing where we will go next, but it's crucial that we remain open-minded about our future and flexible enough to accomplish any mission we are tasked with.

I encourage you all to think about the full range of possibilities for this deployment, and to think about what you need to do to be ready – mentally, physically, professionally and spiritually – for all different scenarios.

It may be unsatisfying to hear “Be ready for anything” when you want to be able to focus on a certain mission or make plans to visit a particular port.

But we are truly worldwide deployable and we should feel tremendous pride in that. The incredible agility of the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group/26th Marine Expeditionary Unit is what makes our team such an elite team.

The work we do every day to stay ready is incredibly important, because when we are at our best, we are an extremely effective deterrent to those who might otherwise threaten regional or global safety. Serving as an effective deterrent is a crucial job in a world with so many uncertainties, and we must lean into that job with vigor.

I am excited about being a part of it and honored to be “getting ready for anything” alongside all of you.

- Capt. Lance Leshner,  
Amphibious Squadron 8



# CORNER



# MASS CASUALTY DRILL



**Clockwise from top left:**

Lt. Brad McNeal, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), checks the vitals of a simulated patient in the medical bay. Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Jose Nieves-Rios, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), checks over a simulated patient on the flight deck. Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

Simulated patients lay on stretchers during a mass casualty exercise on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5). Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

Sailors and Marines aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) carry a simulated patient on a stretcher during a mass casualty drill on the flight deck. Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Darriel Steedman, assigned to Fleet Surgical Team 4, and Lt. Jedson Liggett, with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 365 (Reinforced), treat a simulated patient in the medical bay of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) during a mass casualty drill. Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

**Cover Photo:**

Sailors assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), man a fire hose during damage control training. Photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting.

# DAMAGE CONTROL OLYMPICS

Story and photos by: MC3 Griffin Kersting

Sailors assigned to the USS Oak Hill conducted Damage Control (DC) training Olympics on the ship's flight deck from Jan. 6 - 10, 2020.

Oak Hill performed DC Olympics in order to ensure that the crew is prepared and possesses the knowledge to handle any situation thrown their way.

DC Olympics included several types of drills, such as shipboard firefighting, ruptured pipe patching, removing water from flooded spaces, situational medical training and how to properly use a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) tank.

The main purpose of DC training is to ensure any ship's crew is able to respond to emergencies to keep the ship operating normally.

"Damage control is a must-know basic skill for everyone in the Navy," said Lt. j.g. Maclan Campbell, the assistant damage control assistant aboard Oak Hill. "We can't ever give up the ship and we need to be able to keep going and be able to fight."

Every Sailor in the Navy is expected to know the basics of damage control aboard a ship and be able to jump into any scenario and help.

"DC Olympics' main purpose is to refresh or enhance everyone's knowledge when it comes to damage control," said Chief Warrant Officer Eric Aguirre, the damage control assistant aboard Oak Hill. "Anytime you have a chance to have a training like this with the entire crew, you should take it."





# GENERAL QUARTERS GENERAL QUARTERS

*Photo and story by: MC2 Lyle Wilkie*

It's every Sailor's job to be ready to defend their ship. Sailors aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) train for every damage control scenario possible in order to be ready if the time calls.

"General quarters [GQ] is one of the primary functions we use to ensure the survivability of the ship in times of battle or when danger is near," said Cmdr. Daniel Hollingshead, the executive officer of New York. "It puts the ship in the most heightened state of being able to make sure that the ship and her crew remain afloat and in the fight. By running general quarters drills, we make sure that every Sailor is trained to do their part as a team."

The New York is fully equipped to respond to emergencies and damage. They do this by training Sailors on how to prevent the spread of damages.

"GQ drills can be as simple as setting [zone boundaries] throughout the ship as quickly as possible," said Lt. j.g. William Kimberl, New York's integrated training team coordinator. "Other times, we want to flex our damage control lockers and test our resolve in a whole-ship survivability exercise. It is equally important to tie in our Marine team and exploit the many talents they bring to the fight. We bring our warfare leads into the mix and 'table top' different scenarios with real current events and likely threats."

These scenarios help Sailors learn how to save the ship should they need to. "We understand and know we are not invincible, so we have to train to that," said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Andrew Chubb, a medical training team lead. "We emphasize to the most junior Sailor onboard [that they] may have to make a life-or-death decision at their level, so we have to do what we can to prepare them with both the knowledge and the skills to make that call when the time comes."

The New York runs general quarters drills for Sailors to continually hone skills in their specific positions within the repair locker and ensure they are able to respond to any threats.

"Damage Control is an all hands responsibility," said Chief Damage Controlman Jared Olah, New York's fire marshal. "We need to take every effort to ensure in the time of need, the repair lockers are able to fight fires, flooding, or structural damage and win. One of the objectives is to get the Sailors to have to think on their toes and to be able to react instantly. They are the last resort in the effort to keep our warship afloat."

Despite the arduous challenges Sailors may encounter during the drills, Hollingshead is confident that the New York crew is ready for whatever comes their way.

"I am very proud of the team that we have onboard New York," said Hollingshead. "They have worked very hard and have come together as a family. They are ready for whatever the world places in front of them and they will succeed."



*Clockwise from top left:*

Boatswain's Mate Seaman Jakorrian McConico, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), directs a landing craft, air cushion in the well deck. Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

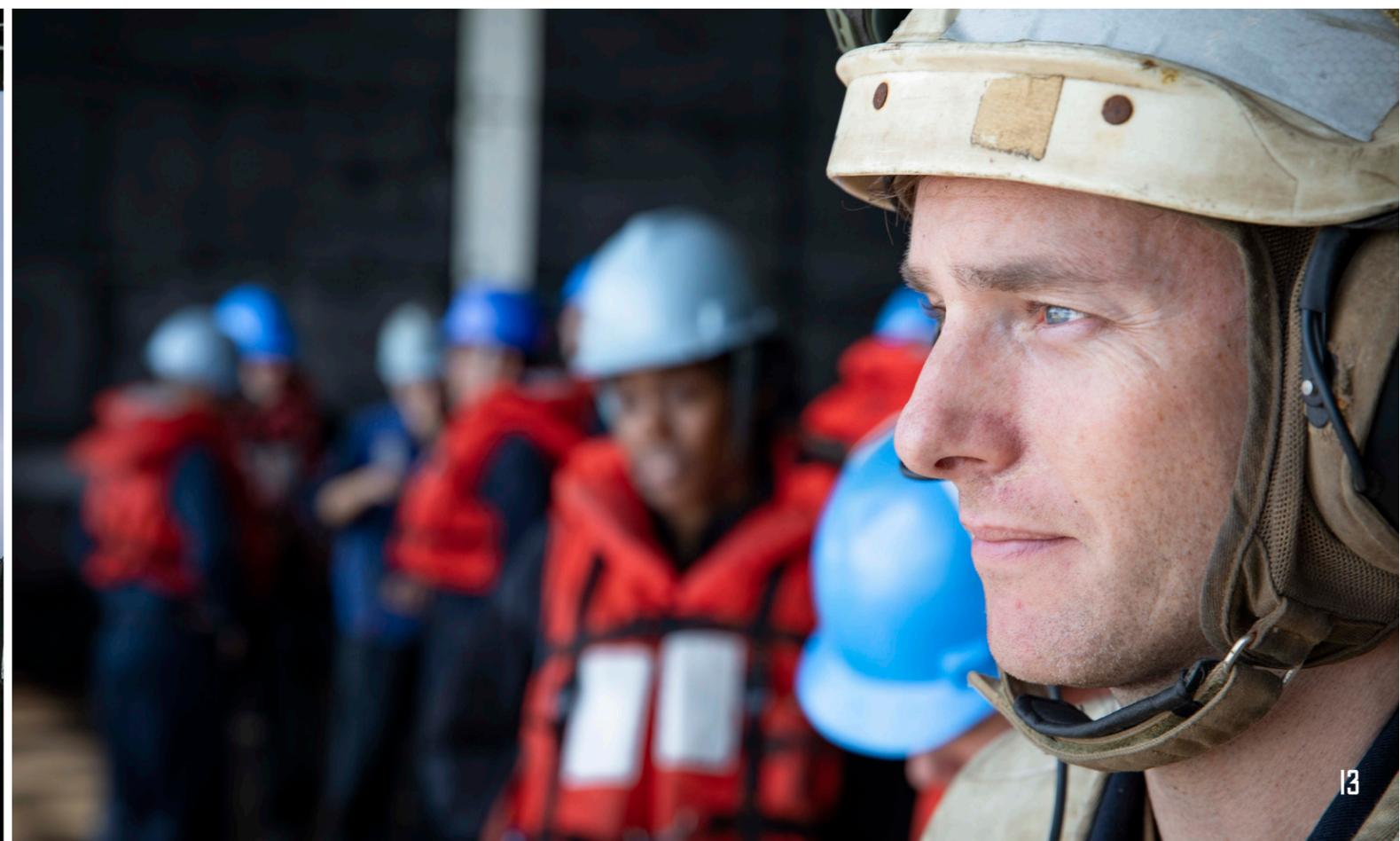
Marines, with the Maritime Raid Force, depart the well deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5). Photo by MC3 Levi Decker

Landing Craft, Utility 1655, assigned to Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 2, prepares to enter the well deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5). Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys

Sailors, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), conduct small boat operations on the boat deck. Photo by MC3 Alan Robertson.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class John Howard, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), watches combat rubber reconnaissance crafts approach the well deck. Photo by MC3 Levi Decker.

A landing craft, air cushion (LCAC), assigned to Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 4, returns to the well deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5). Photo by MCSA Darren Newell





# Clear for Takeoff

*Written by: Cpl. Nathan Reyes*

U.S. Marines with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD-5) are continuing to refine their skills while underway.

AV-8B Harrier maintainers with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 365 (reinforced) work day and night to ensure aircraft stay in the fight.

“My job is to perform daily inspections on the aircraft,” said Sgt. Kyle Robinson, powerline mechanic with the 26th MEU. “If we find any discrepancies, we fix them.”

One of the ways powerline mechanics make sure Harriers are safe for take off is by conducting low and high-power safety checks while on the ground or flight deck.

According to Staff Sgt. Joshua Rogalske, low and high-power instructor with the 26th MEU, a low-power check is when a mechanic enters the Harrier cockpit and starts the aircraft. A high-power check is when the Marine in the cockpit powers the aircraft to 120 percent, creating 23,000 pounds of thrust.

The deployable mission rehearsal

trainer aboard the USS Bataan allows Marines to simulate high and low-power safety checks, as if they were at a Marine Corps air station.

“This is the first time I have seen a portable simulator,” said Robinson. “It is pretty accurate to the one back at (Marine Corps Air Station) Cherry Point.”

Simulating the checks allows for deficiencies to be corrected without the risk of real-life mistakes.

“The simulator is safer for Marines,” said Robinson. “It builds confidence before they get into an

actual aircraft and perform a check.”

Job proficiency in garrison or deployed is key for a Marine to achieve mission success.

“The simulator helps the mission of the MEU because it still allows Marines to progress even though we are deployed,” said Robinson. “Just because we are deployed doesn’t mean Marines can’t excel in their MOS.”



*Top photo: MC2 Kaitlin Rowell  
Bottom photo: Cpl. Tanner Seims*

# USS Oak Hill's *Sailor of the Year*

Story and photos by: MC3 Griffin Kersting

Culinary Specialist 1st Class Andrew Laroe, assigned to USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), was named the ship's Sailor of the Year (SOY) for his dedication to his work and the command.

"It was an absolute honor to be selected as the Oak Hill SOY and it's not something I take lightly," said Laroe. "I try to live up to that title every single day and be a role model for other Sailors."

Not only is Laroe the leading petty officer (LPO) of the food service division aboard Oak Hill, he is the command financial specialist, attack warfare officer qualified, and he is a member of the damage control team and small-caliber action team. "After I became the Sailor of the Year I knew that wasn't the time to slack or fall off," said Laroe. "It's not time to relax and settle down and I need to show every day why I was chosen to be the SOY."

Laroe is in charge of leading Sailors in the food service division aboard Oak Hill on a daily basis, making sure the ship is supplied with enough food to feed the ship's Sailors and Marines every day, and that food service operates smoothly.

"CS1 has great character and is my go-to guy in the division," said Senior Chief Culinary Specialist Marius Eaddy. "He turned his work ethic up to another level and earned that SOY award and there is no question about it."

Laroe's future plans for his Navy career are to promote to chief petty officer and continue to uphold his standard of being the best Sailor he can be.

"I just try to stay hungry every single day and do as much as I can. Picking up the SOY award was definitely a step in the right direction for me," said Laroe.



# BATAAN HOSTS

## Regional Security Education Program

Written by: Cpl. Nathan Reyes

The amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) welcomed aboard three partners of the Naval Post-graduate School. As the Bataan sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, the three instructors briefed Marines and Sailors about various areas of operation through the Regional Security Education Program.

According to Michael Rubin, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, Iran, Syria and Arabian Gulf subject matter expert, the Regional Security Education Program emerged as a result of the bombing of the Arleigh Burke-class Aegis-equipped guided missile destroyer USS Cole (DDG-67) in 2000. The Cole was refueling in the Gulf of Aden when it was attacked by a suicide bomber.

“The reason this program was started up was to bring subject matter experts in to give a more holistic picture of the operational environment to the U.S. military,” said Rubin.

The training includes valuable information Marines and Sailors are interested in learning beyond the tactical lessons through other instruction. The Naval Post-graduate School appoints faculty or brings in academic experts who have significant time in their field.

“I’ve taught in universities, and I’ve taught on ships,” said Rubin. “The questions I get on ships are much more relevant and much more incisive than those I would get teaching at an Ivy League university.”

Marines and Sailors of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit appreciate the fact that the material, which is provided to them, has real-world application.

“Here I get questions, and I understand that the information will help someone in the real world,” said Mikhail Alexseev, professor at San Diego State University, Russian and Eurasia subject matter expert.

All three instructors have various reasons why they are motivated to inform Marines and Sailors about the foreign countries they may find themselves in, but they can all agree that they teach in order to give the men and women on the ground an edge.

“For me, it is taking the understanding we have of the context and support the decision making leaders make in the field,” said Katherine Zimmerman, resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, Yemen and Africa subject matter expert. “Working with the U.S. military you have to understand how much we are asking of individuals’ skillsets and their understanding of the context in which they operate.”



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# USS DORIS MILLER (CVN 81)

*Honoring a U.S. Navy Hero*



## Doris Miller's Service

- Doris "Dorie" Miller was born on October 12, 1919, in Waco, Texas.
- On September 16, 1939, Doris Miller enlisted in the Navy.
- Following basic training, Miller was assigned to USS Pyro (AE 1) and transferred to USS West Virginia (BB 48) in 1940.
- During the attack on Pearl Harbor, Miller bravely performed beyond the call of duty aboard West Virginia.
- For distinguished heroism during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Miller was awarded the Navy Cross in March 1942.
- In the spring of 1943, Miller was assigned to USS Liscome Bay (CVE 56).
- Miller served aboard Liscome Bay during Operation Galvanic, which sought control of Makin and Tarawa atolls.

## CVN 81 Quick Facts:

Name: USS Doris Miller (CVN 81)      Class: Gerald R. Ford  
Length: 1,092 feet      Speed: 30+ knots  
Crew: 4,359      Aircraft: 75+

**Mission:** USS Doris Miller (CVN 81) will be the premier forward asset for crisis response and early decisive striking power in a major combat operation. Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers and carrier strike groups will provide the core capabilities of forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security and humanitarian assistance.



(Pictured: USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), the Navy's first Ford-class carrier)



## Distinguished Devotion to Duty

Petty Officer Miller's selfless actions on USS West Virginia (BB 48) and throughout his naval career exemplify the Navy's core values of honor, courage and commitment.

**HONOR** – Disregarding his own personal safety during the attack on the fleet in Pearl Harbor, Miller, despite enemy strafing and bombing, assisted in moving his captain, who had been mortally wounded, to a place of greater safety.

**COURAGE** – During the attack on Pearl Harbor, Miller continued to help his shipmates to safety and engaged enemy aircraft from a .50-caliber anti-aircraft machine gun until he was ordered to abandon ship.

**COMMITMENT** – Miller continued to serve and fight, giving his life for his country. He stationed on USS Liscome Bay (CVE 56) when it was struck by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine in the Gilbert Islands. The resulting damage rapidly sank the ship. Among the missing, Miller was officially presumed dead on November 25, 1944.