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SEARCH AND RESCUE

WHAT RESCUE SWIMMERS ENDURE SO OTHERS MAY LIVE

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Magazine of the USS America

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TIMES OF AMERICA

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TIMES OF AMERICA

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CAPTAIN'S CORNER

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Warfighters,

June was an absolutely jam-packed month on AMERICA. As we departed Okinawa, we quickly got to work—executing flight operations with the Air Combat Element to get them qualified to execute the missions ahead. We also worked through the challenges of extended emissions control (EMCON) periods testing a core capability of what we would be called to do in a confrontation with adversarial forces. The Team flexed all of our training teams as we worked to sharpen our edge on readiness.

While operations remain in focus, we put a pause on the daily operational cycle that comes with being a warship at sea, as we approached the equator last month by ceremoniously Crossing the Line into King Neptune's domain. After a day of 'testing and trials,' we turned more than 1500 Wogs into shiny Shellbacks. Now that everyone has crossed the equator, we are all proud Shellbacks transiting to our next mission set!

We have had the opportunity to test and shape the use of our new CATNIP system, which provides Wifi to everyone. This amazing system has the capability provide service to all of our 2,500 warfighters, as long as we are using it responsibly. Going back through the years to my first ship where there were only a handful of computers and a limited capability to send an email, it is amazing how the capabilities have changed and how we can now stay connected to our families. We need to continue to use this system responsibly.

I continue to be impressed everyday how the Team of Teams continues to power through material challenges ensuring our propulsion, power generation, communications, combat systems, and countless other systems remain fit to fight. Our team has conducted multiple depot level repairs such as repairing circuit cards, pulling apart antenna domes for repair, overhauling our big diesels, to repairing our support equipment for the flight deck. I could not be more proud of what our amazing tech-wizards accomplish every day. Keep up the great work!

The planning continues as we continue to move down track towards our new home port of San Diego. I have seen many BAH and advanced dependent Travel request go across my desk as well as other correspondence necessary to set us up – keep it coming. Continue to plan forward to ensure that you are ready for the transition to living in a new city. Ask questions if you are unsure, as there is still plenty of time to ensure you are taken care of.

I hope that everyone found our port visit to Sydney Australia to be as amazing as I did. We accomplished so much during that port visit and our professional crew of warfighters left such a good impression on the Australians. I thank everyone for their professionalism. In closing, I want you to enjoy the port visits we have on the horizon and stay focused on the many taskings in our future. Liberty itself is a mission and your conduct as part of these port visits is a direct reflection of not just yourself, but the ship that bears our country's name and all who serve aboard—Sailor and Marine alike. We have a great team of teams here, representing multiple commands, and I'm consistently impressed with your ability to welcome newcomers into the AMERICA fold.

Let's continue to KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING and TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER!

Semper Fortis and Semper Fidelis!



With utmost respect and admiration,
CAPT Ethan M. Rule
Commanding Officer, USS AMERICA

WHAT OUR SAILORS & MARINES ARE LISTENING TO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MCSN DOUGLASS



LEFT TO RIGHT: Leach - Super Heaven, Man in the Box - Alice in Chains | Rosemary - Deftones, One Last Breath - Creed | I'll follow you - Shinedown, Beautiful things - Benson Boone | Crash Enemy - Dave Matthews Band, God Complex - Violent Vets | The summoning - Slipknot, Hate that I love you - Dax | Beautiful People - Chris Brown, Higher Power (Tiesto Remix) - Coldplay | Nova Candy - Post Malone, Classic hearts - Miley Cyrus | Be quiet and Drive - Deftones, Christian Women - Type O Negative | Daylight - Watchhouse, Jersey Giant - Evan Pomeroy & Julia Digratia | Slow roll it - Love Doctor, If you think you're lonely now - Bobby Womack | Good Days - SZA, Mult - Leon Thomas On This hill - T-Pain, Say it Ain't So - Weezer



LEFT TO RIGHT: Nectar - Jogi, Romance - Luis Moguel | 100 Shots - Young Dolph, Puppet - Tyler the Creator | Zaho - Un Pau Beaucoup, Tough Crowd - Jason Aldean Wind Up Mxsin You - Tucker Wetmore, Two Dozen Roses - Shenandoah | Crazy Story pt III - King Von, Stacy's Mom - Fountains of Wayne | Now up to my neck with offas - Suicide Boys, Feels Like Summer - Childish Gambino | DTMF - Bad Bunny, Por La Noches - Peso Pluma | Air on a G String - Bach, La Pistolera y El Corazon - Los Lobos Till that Day - Emma Nissen, Naughty - Christina Aguilera | Candle Light - Chante Moore, Selcy Boys 3 - Big Scarr | Lose Yourself - Eminem, Die with a smile - Lady Gaga | War Pigs - Black Sabbath, Nobody Does it Better - Carly Simon | No one Knows - Brent Faiyaz, Opposita - Taylor Swift | Can't Stop - Red Hot Chili Peppers, That's Life - Frank Sinatra

RUGBY COMREL LEARNING FROM A PREMIER TEAM

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY MCSN DOUGLASS

On the morning of Monday, June 10th, 2025, the blue and green crew departed the docks of HMS Kuttatub for the Belmore Stadium for a rugby clinic COMREL (community relations), home to the Sydney Bulldogs. Roughly 80 Sailors and Marines from USS America learned National Rugby League (NRL) rules, fundamentals of the sport including catching, kicking and throwing during a non-contact clinic. After the practice, participants came together for a group photo with players from the premier team and other distinguished guests. Participants were then treated to light refreshments and exclusive access to the team's store where jerseys and accessories were available for purchase. The National Rugby League is the fastest growing and one of the most popular sports in Australia. Special thanks to Religious Program Specialist 1st Class Clancy Hopper and RP2 Chavarry for putting together the event.



HSC-25'S SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION

WHAT RESCUE SWIMMERS ENDURE SO OTHERS MAY LIVE

WRITTEN BY MC2 MULLINS

Embarked aboard the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWO FIVE (HSC-25) Detachment 6 trains hard to carry out one of the Navy's most demanding and essential missions: Search and Rescue (SAR). Whether someone is lost at sea, injured on land, or caught in a life-threatening situation, HSC-25 is trained and ready to respond at a moment's notice.

SAR missions require more than just skill—they demand constant teamwork, intense physical and mental preparation, and well-maintained aircraft that can perform under pressure.

Aircrew assigned to HSC-25 regularly conduct mock recovery missions to prepare for real emergencies. These drills can involve rescuing a swimmer lost at sea, recovering someone who's fallen overboard, or locating a missing hiker. But training isn't just about practicing known scenarios—it's about preparing for the unexpected.

Naval Aircrewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class Gabriel Andaya, DET 6 Operations lead petty officer, is a crew chief, rescue swimmer, and door gunner with HSC-25. He explains that being a rescue swimmer is both physically and mentally demanding. Swimmers must be ready to swim in 20-foot waves for at least 30 minutes, all while managing equipment, staying aware of their environment, and helping someone who may be panicked, unconscious, or injured.

"A rescue swimmer is expected to know the aircraft systems to help locate a survivor and set up the cabin for rescue," said Andaya. "Once on scene, we assess the situation—are they entangled? Do they have flotation? Are they conscious or unconscious? Everything changes based on the survivor's condition."

A typical day of training can quickly go from calm to intense. One moment, it's a routine flight. The next, there's a call on the radio: a vessel is capsizing nearby. From that moment, Andaya explained, "You have two minutes to change out of flight gear and into swimmer gear to begin the search." Aircraft issues or changing conditions often force swimmers to adapt their plan mid-mission. Even in training, survivors may lack flotation and accidentally put the swimmer at risk as they try to stay above water.

Staying calm under pressure is key. "Your job is to take control of the situation. But it's not over once the survivor is safe. The rescue swimmer and crew chief are also responsible for providing care during the flight back," he said.

While training is essential, the real impact of HSC-25's mission comes into focus during live rescues.

Andaya recalled a particularly memorable mission that shows



the heart behind SAR. "On a Sunday afternoon in Guam, I got a call about a man on a remote island, 104 nautical miles away, who had a broken pelvis and was bleeding internally. The local hospital was too small to treat him, and he had about four hours before his condition would become critical."

The landing zone? A small parking lot, with just 40 feet of rotor clearance. Fuel was limited, and there was no nearby refueling option, giving the team only 20 minutes on the ground. On top of that, the sun had set—the entire operation had to be conducted with night vision goggles.

Andaya and his team landed safely, retrieved the patient, and provided in-flight care as the SAR Medical Technician administered medicine. After a 2 hour and 15 minute flight, they arrived at a hospital with advanced care. The next day, they were told the patient's surgery was successful and he had stabilized. "It wasn't the craziest flight I've ever had," Andaya said, "but I definitely slept better that night, knowing I helped someone when they were at their lowest."

Every successful mission depends on more than just the crew in the air. The MH-60S Seahawk, also known as the Knighthawk, helicopter is a complex aircraft requiring constant care. The maintenance crew performs daily inspections and emergency repairs to ensure it's always mission-ready.

In the cockpit, pilots handle communication and maintain a stable hover. The crew chief deploys swimmers and communicates conditions in the water, while the rescue swimmer secures and assists the survivor.

Behind every flight is a unified goal: save lives—fast and safely. Since its formation in 1984, HSC-25 has launched 2,445 missions, resulting in 762 medical evacuations and 475 lives saved from the waters and jungles across the Pacific island chains.

HSC-25 also supports a wide range of missions beyond SAR, including Helicopter Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS), Maritime Interdiction, Non-Traditional Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (NTISR), VERTREP (Vertical Replenishment), and Close Air Support using Hellfire missiles, rockets, and crew-served weapons.

None of this would be possible without the coordination between skilled aviators, rescue swimmers, maintainers, and mission planners.

HSC-25 is the Navy's only forward-deployed MH-60S expeditionary squadron, flying missions across the U.S. 7th Fleet. They support the USS America (LHA-6) and all ships connected to the America Strike Group under Commander Task Force 76, providing anti-surface warfare, special operations support, combat logistics, SAR, and humanitarian aid capabilities. HSC-25 remains ready to protect lives—anywhere, anytime, under any conditions.

America, lead ship of the America Amphibious Ready Group is underway conducting routine integrated operations in U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with Allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.





ARG-MEU INTEGRATED TRAINING

For the last month, Sailors and Marines trained together to execute amphibious operations, such as tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, visit, board, search and seizure, search and rescue operations, mass casualty care and dive operations. Safe and successful execution required close collaboration, teamwork and communication between all Sailors and Marines across the America Strike Group.



MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS THE BLUE-GREEN MASS CASUALTY TEAM

WRITTEN BY MCSN MCNEELY

U.S. Sailors and Marines aboard the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) are carrying out routine operations while at sea. Then, unexpectedly the intercom grabs the attention of 2,500 service members.

"SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 120 ... SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 120."

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps leadership rush to action to quickly determine the severity of the situation. The alert force commander rushes to get updates. Marines and Sailors grab their rifles. Ammunition is being staged for the response force.

"SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 60 ... SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 60."

Time is of essence and every second can mean life or death. A group of specialized U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsmen and U.S. Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) assemble in the hangar bay, preparing their ammo, conducting communication checks, and staging essential gear.

"SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 30 ... SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 30."

The time for inbound casualties is imminently approaching. Leadership aboard the USS America and the 31st MEU have come to a decision point, orders are delivered and briefed, and the mass casualty (MASSCAS) response team assembles to conduct a pre-mission checklist and prepares medical supplies.

The ship's medical team ready medical beds, equipment, personnel, the operating room, and life-saving materials.

"SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 15 ... SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 15."

The MASSCAS team, now fully equipped and ready, assemble on the flight ramp and wait for the order.

"SET, MASSCAS, ALERT 5 ... SET MASSCAS, ALERT 5."

The MASSCAS team boards aircraft as they respond in the provision with critical care. The MASSCAS response mission is a contingency mission that requires rapid response to a casualty to effectively recover and triage military or civilian casualties by supplementing the medical resources at the scene. This critical mission is conducted as an immediate reaction to reach victims of an attack, natural disaster, or other emergent events in which local medical and reaction forces capabilities are overwhelmed or unable to provide proper medical care to the affected.

"MASSCAS is designed to respond to any medical event where casualties are happening at an overwhelming rate."

Said Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Parker, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit's Surgeon. The MASSCAS team can provide casualty care in three phases: at the objective using basic lifesaving intervention, during flight operations with En route Care (ERC) to higher level medical facilities, and aboard the USS America with the shipboard triage and treatment section.

The first step at the objective, takes place in a field or forward environment where casualties are identified and treated with basic lifesaving interventions. In this environment, casualties are identified by U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsmen and U.S. Marines with the 31st MEU who are Combat Life Saver (CLS) qualified. CLS qualified Hospital Corpsman and Marines on the MASSCAS team conduct walk through simulations created by the MEU Surgeon and his team during integrated training.

"For integrated training, we conduct practice runs as a MASSCAS team," said Parker. "Since those scenarios are typically written by my team, we try to build those in a way that would be most realistic for actual events."

Corpsmen make transporting a casualty priority when providing care. The second of the three steps is utilizing ERC. ERC is identified by the type of care provided, who is providing it and where it is being provided. It focuses on stabilizing the casualty and keeping them alive.

"If a casualty's blood pressure drops, we give them blood from our blood bank," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Umar Ahmad, Command Element, 31st MEU. "Our mission is to keep casualties alive."

When in transit to the ship for the final step of MASSCAS, casualties are treated exclusively by Corpsmen, every part of ERC requires a higher skill set than CLS provides. When transitioning from a field or forward environment to ERC, CLS qualified Corpsman and Marines bring the casualty to the point of contact, where they are turned over to a special team of Corpsman. These Corpsmen are specifically chosen for ERC and are capable to conduct medical treatment in the air. Due to complications of providing treatment in the air, Corpsman need to be extremely qualified in what they do and how to do it. Ensuring the casualty stays stable while transiting through the air.

During the third and final step of MASSCAS, casualties are brought onboard the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) to begin triage and treatment. They are brought from the flight deck elevator and descend straight into the ship's medical facilities. During triage casualties are treated based on severity of injury, once a casualty is assessed and assigned to a provider, they are moved to a bed to begin treatment. During treatment a provider and four Corpsmen run through a series of vitals checks. These checks are designed to treat a casualty swiftly and effectively. In the event a casualty is beyond the care of a traditional provider, the ship is equipped with an Operating Room to aid casualties and increase their chances of recovery.

These three steps of MASSCAS is the result of hard work and expert medical care put forward by the MASSCAS team. Through all the phases, all of the participants of MASSCAS work fervently to promote malleability in all of the missions the Amphibious Ready Group carries out.

"I believe our biggest attribute is the ability to flex and augment the abilities we have when overwhelmed," said Parker.

Whether Navy or Marine Corps personnel, all involved play a life-saving role and shipboard diligence. Integrated training captures that diligence and prepares the USS America and the 31st MEU to conduct medical operations with proficiency.

"The experience that we have built up, and the training program we have for our team does an exceptional job preparing us for integrated training," said Parker. "Our personnel that we have on the MASSCAS team put in a tremendous amount of training with medical personnel to ensure that we can conduct MASSCAS evolutions safely and effectively."

"STAND DOWN, MASSCAS ... STAND DOWN, MASSCAS."



AMERICA'S FLIGHT DECK HITS RECORD LAUNCHES

WRITTEN BY MC2 PURSLEY

They go up, they come down. USS America (LHA 6) hit a major milestone conducting over 1,000 successful aircraft launches in the first month of patrol—all while conducting integrated Navy and Marine Corps training.

"Integrated training is highly adaptive," said Lt. Durante Cousins, Aircraft Handling Officer (Handler) aboard America. "It tests the blue and green team's abilities to perform in a controlled, but stressful environment, at a high operational tempo."

America's flight deck is one of the busiest and most integral parts of her capabilities when it comes to operations, especially during integrated training.

"My day is extremely busy, but whose day isn't," said Handler. "I spend the majority of my time in Flight Deck control balancing maintenance requests with the execution of the Air Plan while also facilitating scheduled requests to transport Sailors and Marines across the Amphibious Ready Group and ashore."

"Flight Deck Control is the epicenter for flight operations aboard the ship. Without our ability to facilitate or drive maintenance requests and re-spotting the flight deck, the execution of the Air Plan would not happen," said Handler. "Our role in integrated training is just as important as the Pilots', the Marine Maintainers', Culinary Specialists' and the countless Sailors and Marines that ensure we, as a ship are able to do our job – it really is a team-of-teams!"

On the flight deck, Handler has the opportunity to lead and support flight operations and the crew that conducts these operations, whether it's flights or movements of aircraft and supplies.

"I have the privilege of leading the best Aviation Boatswain's Mate professionals during the synchronization of flight operations," said Handler. "I am directly involved with the safe movement of all aircraft and associated Ground Support Equipment (GSE) on the flight deck and hangar decks. Additionally, I plan and coordinate aircraft moves to ensure the accomplishment and execution of the air plan."

Handler applies a variety of aircraft to complete flight operations. Most of the aircraft belong to our amphibious counterparts—the U.S. Marine Corps: F-35B Lightning II aircraft assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 242, MV-22B Osprey assigned to Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 262 (Rein.), CH-53E Super Stallion assigned to Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265 (Rein.). All are part of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit's air combat element. These aircraft are utilized for amphibious operations and are launched by America's flight deck crew, including Marines assigned to Combat Cargo.

"Integrated training is the opportunity for both blue-green to integrate together and practice all requirements to be an effective Amphibious Ready Group Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG-MEU)," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Donald Carlson, Combat Cargo Officer, assigned to USS America. "The overarching goals are to support contingency operations, crisis response, humanity assistance and embassy reinforcement."

As Combat Cargo Officer, Carlson plays a major role in the integrated training process.

"I am responsible for the embarkation/debarkation of all personnel and equipment on USS America," said Carlson.

Flight Operations is Carlson's lifeline to support the 31st MEU and America by receiving and sending resources and personnel for combined mission success.

"My role in integrated training is to ensure there is unhindered support to the 31st MEU and ensuring timely embarkation and debarkation of personnel and equipment," said Carlson. "That includes being part of the planning process and ensuring I have a full understanding of what is required in support of their missions."

Carlson further explains the process that he and his crew conduct daily for integrated training during flight operations.

"My day starts with a morning sync with my team to ensure we have a clear understanding of all the requirements for the movement of people, material and cargo for missions throughout the day," said Carlson. "In between planning meetings, I ensure there is seamless support to the flight plan and support all of the embarkation on the flight deck. That includes the loading and unloading of air craft on the flight deck, moving Marines throughout the ship, and supporting movement of equipment throughout various storage compartments."

"After completion of flight quarters my team syncs back up to ensure validation of all movement parts that happened throughout the day. Then we rest and get ready for the next day."

After our joint amphibious training secured, Handler had a message for the Sailors and Marines who supported him for his last patrol with USS America.

"As my last patrol concludes, I would like to thank all Ship's Company, Marine Squadrons, and all of Air Department (V1-V8) that I have the privilege to lead," said Handler. "Integrated training is always a challenge for the blue and green team and we continually dominate all challenges because we are truly a team, which I am grateful to be a part of – thank you!"



SPEED IS CRITICAL THE 90FT DROP TO SUCCESS

WRITTEN BY MC3 LORD

The whirring of a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter fills the air as the wind tugs and pulls at Marines awaiting their turn to fast rope onto their next mission set. The view below is a 90-foot drop to the flight deck with a singular rope between the aircraft and the ground. A Marine tightly grasps the rope, jumps, and zips down until boots meet the deck.

While on deployment aboard the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), U.S. Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) conduct a wide variety of training to ensure they are ready for every mission.

Fast roping trains Marines to transfer from aircraft to their mission location as fast as possible. In a combat environment, speed is critical, as hovering for an extended period of time can leave aircraft vulnerable to enemy fire.

Fast roping is most commonly intended for land scenarios, except for when it is utilized in Visit, Board, Search and Seizure exercises to enhance and sustain the Marines' ability to quickly insert onto a moving vessel.

"The main objective for fast roping is to get Marines in places where aircraft can't land," said Cpl. Nathan Arnold, a Multi-purpose Anti-tank Anti-personnel Weapons System (MAAWS) Gunner with Animal Company, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion 7th Marine Regiment, 31st MEU. "So if there's a building, a lot of trees, or just a tight landing zone, we can get where we need to go. It's just another asset to use."

With long days filled with training exercises like Mass Casualty (MASSCAS) response, Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP), and Chemical, Biological, Radial and Nuclear (CBRN) response, Arnold looks forward to the fast-paced, adrenaline pumping fast rope.

Safety is also a top priority for Marines when jumping out of a flying aircraft.

"It's pretty dangerous," said Arnold. "I mean just think about it, there's nothing holding you down and you're sliding down a rope at full speed, but if you practice as a unit, you can get a whole squad into a very confined space."

As a Fast Rope Master, Arnold is responsible for ensuring all participants follow correct safety measures to ensure that the evolution goes smoothly.

"Basically, I'm in charge of the fast rope itself," said Arnold. "That involves making sure I have my Marines and all of the corpsmen, and verifying they all have the right personal protective equipment to conduct a safe evolution."

Fast roping plays a vital role in multiple Marine training evolutions, and enhances the Marines' amphibious capabilities. With this tool, Marines can complete the mission, land or sea.



THE TRAP MISSION WHEN THE CLOCK STARTS TICKING

WRITTEN BY MC3 MELSETH

When military aircraft go down, the clock starts ticking. Every moment matters to rescue the aircrew and secure classified equipment. To prepare for this critical mission, U.S. Sailors and 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Marines train extensively in the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP), a mission designed specifically for recovering downed aircrews, aircraft, and sensitive materials.

The TRAP mission set enables the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and 31st MEU to rapidly plan and execute recovery operations in Indo-Pacific region.

The USS America amphibious assault ship supports the Air TRAP team by providing logistical platforms, data informing the ship's position, and Command and Control direction for the 31st MEU's Battalion Landing Team.

Once the ARG/MEU leaders determine the mission parameters, a specially trained team launches swiftly from the flight deck of the USS America in a Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265 (Rein.) To reach the crash site.

"TRAP is a U.S. Marine Corps mission performed by any combination of aviation, ground, or waterborne assets," said U.S. Marine Corps 1stLt John Arndorfer, TRAP Force Commander. "These assets are designed to aid in the recovery of personnel, equipment, and aircraft when the tactical situation precludes search and rescue assets from responding when survivors and their location have been confirmed."

Safely recovering aircraft and isolated personnel requires coordinated actions and efforts at all levels of the chain of command, including partner militaries and agencies. The mission reaches its completion point when personnel and assets are recovered under the custody of a friendly organization.

For these Marines, a TRAP mission is about speed and time: insert fast and accomplish the objective.

"TRAP is important," said U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Trent Hau, the Assistant Air Trap Force Commander. "It allows the MEU to conduct its own recovery missions in the event an aircraft goes down in a friendly or hostile environment."

In a typical training scenario conducted while embarked on the USS America, Marines and Sailors aboard aircraft from the VMM-265 (Rein.) fly inland. After landing, the assault force infiltrates the objective to locate the target. Working methodically, they recover the sensitive equipment, personnel and withdraw to the landing zone for extraction.

Operating from the USS America gives TRAP teams a flexible, sea-based launch point, enabling them to project power ashore at a moment's notice. These high-risk missions ensure no Marine, Sailor, Airmen, Soldier, or any vital information is left behind, reflecting the unwavering commitment to protecting lives and national security.



NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL AND THE COST OF VICTORY

WRITTEN BY MC3 MELSETH POSTER BY NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND

The Naval Battle of Guadalcanal, fought from November 12-15, 1942, was a ferocious fight to protect Soldiers and Marines holding ground on the island. In a desperate bid to retake Guadalcanal, the Japanese dispatched a massive convoy carrying 7,000 troops, determined to annihilate Henderson Field, the airfield that kept Japanese ships under constant attack.

On November 12, as Rear Admiral Richmond K. Turner's transports unloaded supplies, Japanese bombers from Rabaul struck with deadly force. The cruiser *San Francisco* was mauled by a crashing plane, while the destroyer *Buchanan* was hit by friendly fire. But worse was yet to come.

That night, Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan led his outnumbered force—two heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and eight destroyers into Iron bottom Sound. There, they collided with Vice Admiral Hiroaki Abe's mighty bombardment group, including two battleships. In the darkness, ships fired point-blank, their guns blazing and torpedoes ripping through the waves. Chaos reigned as vessels were struck again and again. *Atlanta* and *San Francisco* suffered catastrophic damage. Both Admirals Daniel J. Callaghan and Norman Scott were killed on their bridges. Yet the Americans refused to yield. Officers and sailors fought to keep their ships afloat, including Lt. Cmdr. Bruce McCandless and Lt. Cmdr. Herbert Schonland, who took command of the battered *San Francisco*, and Boatswain's Mate Reinhardt Keppler, who fought fires until he collapsed. All three were awarded the Medal of Honor.

When dawn came, Hiroaki Abe withdrew without bombarding Henderson Field—an error that handed the U.S. a vital reprieve. Two nights later, Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee prepared a last-ditch defense. His Task Force 64, built around the battleships *Washington* and *South Dakota*, integrated training silently near Savo Island. Some of his ships lacked radar, but Lee was an expert in gunnery and radar tactics. As Japanese Admiral Nobutake Kondo's forces advanced, American radar detected them first. The guns of *Washington* erupted, hurling 16-inch shells into the night.

In the confusion, *South Dakota* suffered electrical failures, her systems blinking out as she drifted into searchlights. Japanese shells hammered her hull, tearing through her decks. But while the enemy focused their fire on the crippled battleship, *Washington* slipped undetected to within 9,000 yards of the battleship *Kirishima*. With a thunderous broadside, she fired again and again, blasting *Kirishima* into a burning wreck. Unable to locate *Washington* in the darkness, Kondo ordered a retreat.

The cost was staggering: the U.S. lost two light cruisers, four destroyers, and dozens of aircraft. The Japanese lost two battleships, a heavy cruiser, and most of their transports. Most importantly, they

failed to destroy Henderson Field or retake the island. From this point on, the Allies seized the initiative in the Pacific.

Among the ships lost was the light cruiser *USS Juneau*, torpedoed while withdrawing from battle on November 13. Aboard her were five brothers from Waterloo, Iowa. George, Francis, Joseph, Madison, and Albert Sullivan. All five were killed when *Juneau* went down. Their sacrifice became one of the war's most tragic and powerful stories, reminding the nation of the terrible cost of victory. After that the navy reinstated the policy of separating family members onto deferent ships.



THE NAVAL BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL

NOVEMBER 11-15, 1942



CRUISER NIGHT ACTION (NOV 12-13)



HIGHLIGHTS

1815: Task Force "TARE" begins approach.

0155-0156: *Barton* blows up. *Portland* and *Juneau* are torpedoed.

0200: *Laffey* blows up. *San Francisco* damaged.

1101: (not shown on map) *Juneau*, traveling with *San Francisco* to San Cristobal, blows up.

2015: *Atlanta* is scuttled. Later, Japanese battleship *Hiei* is scuttled.

- Although heavy cruiser *San Francisco* takes 45 hits and loses 77 Sailors, she escapes the night action severely damaged and later receives the Presidential Unit Citation for her role during the Guadalcanal campaign.

- Navy Medal of Honor recipients from the battle:

• Rear Adm. Daniel J. Callaghan	• Lt. Cmdr. Bruce McCandless
• Rear Adm. Norman Scott	• Boatswain's Mate First Class Reinhardt J. Keppler
• Lt. Cmdr. Herbert E. Schonland	

SPIRITUAL READINESS FOR COMBAT READINESS

WRITTEN BY LT HARPER

From H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, to police boxes and flux capacitors, science fiction is filled with time travel. Let's look at a few common trends among these travels: witness history in real time, correct past events, and sneak-peaks of the future.

We cannot travel to the past and witness events firsthand, but we can celebrate heritage today. Take birthdays, for instance. A personal birthday celebrates our lineage and family. This month we celebrate our nation with Independence Day, and VMFA-242 started July with a celebration of their unit. Soon we will celebrate 250 years of the Navy, and live history today. Here's to many more years!

We cannot fix past mistakes with time travel, but we can set a good course forward. As a chaplain, I've seen regrets in broken relationships and disciplinary issues up to Captain's Mast. It sounds simple to go back in time and undo a mistake, if only we could. And if we could, should we? Sci-Fi contemplates undoing an event, and it typically does not work well for one's life or our world. So let's not create a time paradox that might destroy the entire universe. In another tactic, *About Face* is one program that moves us forward, even learning from leaders who have grown through mistakes to be successful today. Our religious ministry team also works hard to help our Sailors and Marines mend broken relationships or build a foundation where one was never established. We cannot undo actions, but we can grow along a positive new course.

We cannot travel to the future, but we can inspire minds and build a better tomorrow. We already work in the midst of technologies unthinkable in years past. For our personnel who constantly improve our capabilities, the next stage of creativity in their minds may very well be the future of technology, our missions, and world relations.

We are not in heaven, but we can anticipate this reality by our integrated training today. In heaven, there integrated trainings a different experience of time unbound by the linear progression we know. Until then, we do well to live every moment with a positive growth toward things to come. To a Christian, must one travel back to walk the shores of Galilee with the Lord? Or must this relationship integrated training until we behold God face-to-face? Certainly not! Perhaps the Latin expression *Carpe Diem* or "seize the day" best sums up our approach. Celebrating our heritage, heals the wounds of the past... and while we anticipate tomorrow, let's strive for all good things pleasing in God's sight!



THE BAT'S BIG BIRTHDAY CELEBRATING 82 YEARS OF VMFA-242

WRITTEN BY MCSN ANDRE

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242 (VMFA 242) also known as the "Bats", with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), have a long-standing history, ranging from taking part in the Battle of Iwo Jima, providing support in Operation Iraqi Freedom, to more recently winning the Robert M. Hanson award for Marine Fighter Attack Squadron of the Year. July 1, 2025, they celebrated the 82nd birthday of the squadron with a flyover of the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), commemorating the past and looking forward for what is to come in the future of the squadron.

"To know that our squadron history starts at a pivotal point in not just in Marine Corps history, not just U.S. Military history, not just United States history, but world history," said Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242, Air Combat Element Powerline Chief, GySgt Aaron Olson. "We were activated, and started the fight right away and that stands out to me because that is part of the mentality VMFA 242 has."

The squadron known now as VMFA-242 initially started as a torpedo squadron known as Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 242 (VMTB-242) during World War II, participating in the Battle of Saipan, Battle of Tinian, and lastly the Battle of Iwo Jima. Shortly after the end of World War II, the squadron would be deactivated in November 23, 1945.

"There are only two things that have remained the same over all these years and that is the numerical designator 242 and the word Marine," said Senior Enlisted Leader of VMFA 242, Sgt. Maj. Mark Mangio. "We were a Marine torpedo bombing squadron in the beginning and 82 years later, we are Marine Fighter Attack Squadron, and you will see the designator has evolved, but only those two remain the same."

One thing that has come to define the Marines of the 242 squadron from the beginning, continuing into today, is the camaraderie and interconnectedness of each and every person attached to it. Working together day in and day out, they grow closer to each other to make the squadron a family with the ability to overcome anything together.

"My favorite part about being a Bat is definitely the camaraderie because there are a lot of good people in VMFA 242," said Powerline Mechanic for Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242, LCpl. James Miller.

As a squadron, the Marines of 242 train and work hard to make sure that their skills are sharp and lethal as ever, especially as one of the two permanently forward deployed F-35B Marine Fighter Attack Squadrons. Alongside their sister squadron, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121, the Bats are vital to rapid response should the call ever be made in the Pacific region.

"I think we are the tip of the spear because with us being forward deployed, it means everyone trusts us to be the first one to respond to anything that happens," Miller said. "Our mission on the USS America is to be a deterrent to any adversaries, show them what we are made of, and make them think twice."

Over time, the squadron's identity has shifted from the historical beginnings of World War II to a more modern purpose that has been tasked to them in current day, yet they remain rooted in the privilege of being the Marines that represent one of the mightiest squadrons there are. As Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 242 celebrates their birthday on the first of July, they take pride and honor in observing their rich history and look forward to the expanding future that lays ahead of the squadron and the many future Marines to come that will all call each other Bats in the ever growing family that is VMFA 242.

"The pilots are of the highest pedigree, very well trained, very well educated, and our Marines are some of the most qualified and intelligent you can find in the Marine Corps," Mangio said. "The position that I am entrusted with as senior enlisted leader [of VMFA 242], I consider an accomplishment of a lifetime, and the fact that I am trusted to take care of this squadron, I would say there is no other comparison."




INDEPENDENCE DAY 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MCSN MCNEELY & MCSN DOUGLASS



MWR JULY CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>America Social Night</i> <i>Chess Club</i>	2 <i>Cookie Decorating</i>	3	4  4TH OF JULY	5 <i>Karaoke & Ice Cream</i>
6 <i>Jump Rope Contest</i>	7 <i>Trivia</i>	8 <i>America Social Night</i> <i>Chess Club</i>	9	10	11	12
				Brisbane Tours!!!		
13	14 <i>UFC Tournament</i>	15 <i>America Social Night</i> <i>Chess Club</i>	16 <i>Texas Hold'em Tournament</i>	17 <i>Texas Hold'em Tournament</i>	18 <i>Find The Rock</i>	19 <i>BINGO</i>
20 <i>Plank Contest</i>	21 <i>Paracord Bracelet Making</i>	22 <i>America Social Night</i> <i>Soap Making</i> <i>Chess Club</i>	23 <i>Mario Kart Tournament</i>	24 <i>Music Trivia Challenge</i>	25 <i>Find The Rock</i>	26 <i>Talent Show</i>
27 <i>1K/500 lb. club contest</i>	28	29	30	31	MWR Meeting: Tuesday 1900 Rec Room (Starting July 8th) Everyone is Welcome	
		Brisbane Tours!!!				

America's Social Night: Mess Deck 2000-2200. Come play Board Games, D&D, Yu-Gi-Oh, Magic the Gathering, Video Games or Arts & Crafts. Chess Club: Mess Deck 2000. Learn how to play, Cookie Decorating: Mess Deck 2000. 4th of July Celebration: Get ready for all the fun to happen through the day. More to follow. Karaoke and Ice Cream Social: 2000 Mess Decks. Trivia: Mess Deck 2000 with teams of 4. UFC Tournament: 2000 Mess Decks Chess Tournament: Mess Deck 2000. Texas Hold'em Tournament: Mess Deck 2000. Find the Rock: Clues will be posted by 1300. BINGO: 2000 CCTV. Tickets will be sold during lunch and dinner 17th-19th. Paracord Bracelet Making: Mess Deck 2000. Soap Making: Mess Deck 2000. Mario Kart Tournament: Mess Deck 2000-2200. Registration is taken at 2000. Do not be late! Music Trivia Challenge: Mess Deck 2000. Talent Show: Location TBD 2000. *Freedom 5K Run 0800-0930, Jump Rope Contest 1300-1400/1900-2000, Plank Contest 1300-1400/1900-2000, 1K/500 lb club contest 1400-1600/1900-2100



FACES OF AMERICA

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAILORS OF THE AMERICA





FACES OF THE 31st MEU

U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTOS BY 31ST MEU COMMSTRAT



TALISMAN SABRE



PURPOSE: Talisman Sabre 25 (TS25) is a bilateral exercise with multinational participation with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

OBJECTIVE: The Talisman Sabre series is the principle Australian-U.S. bilateral military training activity focused on mid intensity, high-end warfighting.

WHO: Countries participating include Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom.

WHEN: Scheduled from 13 July - 4th of August 2025



CO'S VIRTUAL SUGGESTION BOX

This virtual Suggestion Box is your opportunity to share your thoughts and concerns with leadership at your command.

https://usnavy.gov/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9FiQbwnfgRgFXR?UIC=20103



Need to Talk?

If you've been sexually assaulted, anonymous help is available.

safehelpline.org
877-995-5247



SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT

DAPA@LHA6.NAVY.MIL | AOCS Shackleford dial: 2850

SPEAK WITH A CHAPLAIN

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