

MERLION STAR

Serving the Sembawang Community

July 8, 2011

Volume 20

Issue 12

DON'T FORGET

- ✦ MWR Bali Trip, July 14-17
- ✦ SRRC Chicken & Rice Sale, July 20
- ✦ Newcomers Orientation, July 27

INSIDE



2

Chief of Naval Personnel discusses force balance and the upcoming Enlisted Retention Board



3

Joint U.S., Vietnam Oceanographic Survey Complete



5

A crowd of 6,000 people gathered for Sembawang's annual Independence Day celebration



U.S., PHILIPPINE NAVIES JOIN FOR CARAT EXERCISE IN PALAWAN

PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines (Jun 28, 2011) The Philippine Air Force 57th Composite Tactical Wing Band performs for Sailors manning the rails of USS Chung-Hoon (DDG-93) as the ship arrives in Puerto Princesa to participate in Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Philippines 2011. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Robert Clowney.

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY,

By: LT. CMDR.
MIKE MORLEY,
TASK FORCE 73
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Republic of the Philippines -- Three U.S. Navy ships

arrived in Puerto Princesa June 28th to launch the 17th Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Philippines.

The guided missile destroyers USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93), USS Howard (DDG 83) and the diving and salvage ship USNS Safeguard (T-ARS 50) are the U.S. Navy's centerpieces for the exercise, which features 11 days of training exchanges with the Philippine Navy, both ashore and at sea.

This year marks the second time in recent years that CARAT has been held in Palawan. The exercise was held in Puerto Princesa in 2008; in 2009, the exercise was held in Cebu, and in 2010 at Subic Bay.

Ashore training includes such specialties as Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) exercises; diver training; salvage operations; joint medical, dental and civic action projects, and aircrew familiarization exchanges. Additionally, there will be symposia on operations planning, search and rescue practices, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions, interagency cooperation and public affairs.

The at-sea phase of CARAT focuses on developing maritime security capabilities in areas such as maritime interdiction, information sharing, combined operations at sea, patrol operations and gunnery exercises, plus anti-piracy and anti-smuggling exercises.

"The U.S. and Philippine navies have a long history of working

— **Continued page 4**

Merlion

Star

Commander,
Logistics Group Western Pacific
Rear Adm. Tom Carney

Chief of Staff
Capt. Matthew Garside

Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Cmdr. Mike Morley

Assistant Public Affairs Officer
Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class
Jessica Bidwell

Commanding Officer,
Navy Region Center, Singapore
Capt. Paul Foster

Commander,
Military Sealift Command Far East
Capt. Charles "Chip" Denman

Commander,
497th Combat Training Squadron
Lt. Col. Norman B. Dimond

Commander,
Defense Contract Management Agency
Lt. Col. Greg Scougall

Commander,
United States Air Force, 730th AMS/Det 2
Capt. Daniel Nigolian

Site Director,
Fleet Logistics Center Site Singapore
Cmdr. Jerry King

Officer in Charge,
Military Sealift Fleet Support Command,
Ship Support Unit, Singapore
Lt. Cmdr. Michael Little

Supervisor,
United States Coast Guard, Singapore
Lt. Cmdr. Ken Phillips

Special Agent in Charge,
U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service,
Singapore Field Office
Greg Bachman

Merlion Star is an authorized publication for the members of the Sembawang military community, published by Logistics Group Western Pacific's public affairs office. Contents herein are not necessarily the views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Navy or the Commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific. All items for publication in Merlion Star must be submitted to the editor (jessica.bidwell@fe.navy.mil) (6750-2431) by noon Friday the week prior to publication.

CNP TALKS ABOUT BALANCED FORCE



MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The Chief of Naval Personnel, Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson, met with

By: MC1 LaTunya Howard,
NAVY PERSONNEL COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Navy personnel leadership to discuss force balance and the upcoming Enlisted Retention Board which convenes Aug. 22.

The chief of naval personnel (CNP) began his briefing by commending the officers, enlisted detailers, enlisted community managers and Navy Personnel Command support personnel for their diligence and hard work this year. He also noted that current over manning in certain enlisted ratings was not just a Navy concern.

"The fiscal pressures we are under, and the projected transition period of moving out of Iraq and Afghanistan are affecting all the services," said Ferguson. "Each service is taking a slightly different approach to manning."

Navy policies and programs work optimally under a retention rate of 55-60 percent. The Navy is currently operating at 71 percent retention. "We have more people wanting to stay in the Navy than we presently have billets," said Ferguson.

Overages in the Navy's end strength drove the decision to conduct the Enlisted Retention

Board, commencing in August. Four years ago, the opposite was the norm with the Navy competing to keep skilled Sailors in the service.

"We saw our retention numbers turn in 2008, so we took actions over time to get ahead of this trend. For example, we expanded Perform-to-Serve in 2009, which allowed us to start shaping the force. For officers, we are trying to prevent over manning this year, so we are conducting a selective early retirement board. We are presently projected to be overmanned in commanders and captains in the unrestricted line," said Ferguson. "On the enlisted side, we are operating at sustained high retention levels unprecedented in the history of the all-volunteer force."

CNP allowed time for questions from Navy Personnel Command detailers and community managers. He expressed a desire to know what manning issues they encounter, and welcomed their suggestions.

"This issue of balance is a tough one," said Ferguson. "Each of you play a crucial role in manning the Navy and shaping our future. You wrestle with that balance of an individual's needs, the command's needs and the needs of the Navy. Thank you for your dedication to our Sailors and our Navy."

Bowditch Completes U.S./Vietnam Oceanographic Survey Mission

DANANG, Vietnam -Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Bowditch (T-AGS 62)

By: EDWARD BAXTER,
MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

marked the conclusion of a month long, bilateral survey mission in Vietnam by hosting Vietnamese military and government officials in Da Nang, Vietnam, June 21.

The reception was co-hosted by Navy Rear Adm. Jonathan White, commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and Bowditch's civilian master, Capt. Mike Farrell.

"This joint U.S.-Vietnam mission to investigate underwater crash sites is using one of naval oceanography's world-class survey ships to augment the efforts of JPAC," said White. "The level of cooperation is a great example of the strengthening relationship between our two nations."

Guests at the reception included representatives from the Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam Department of Survey and Mapping, Vietnam Administration for Seas and Islands, and the Vietnam People's Navy.

With its embarked team of 12 oceanographers and hydrographers from the Naval Oceanographic Office, Bowditch conducts a wide range of survey operations covering the disciplines of physical oceanography, hydrography and bathymetry, acoustics, and geophysics. The Hawaii-based JPAC focuses on continued efforts to locate, recover and identify U.S. service members unaccounted for

from past conflicts.

Bowditch is operated and navigated by 24 merchant mariners who work for a private company under contract to MSC.

Bowditch surveyed pre-determined sites off Vietnam's coast May 20 - June 20, looking for U.S. military losses from the Vietnam conflict in underwater environments.

"For the crew of Bowditch, it has been a rewarding experience working with the JPAC and Vietnamese liaisons to complete a mission that has so much meaning to the American people," Farrell said.

Bowditch completed 15 survey missions off the coast of Da Nang City, Quang Nam, Thua Thien-Hue and Quang Tri provinces in deep and shallow waters.

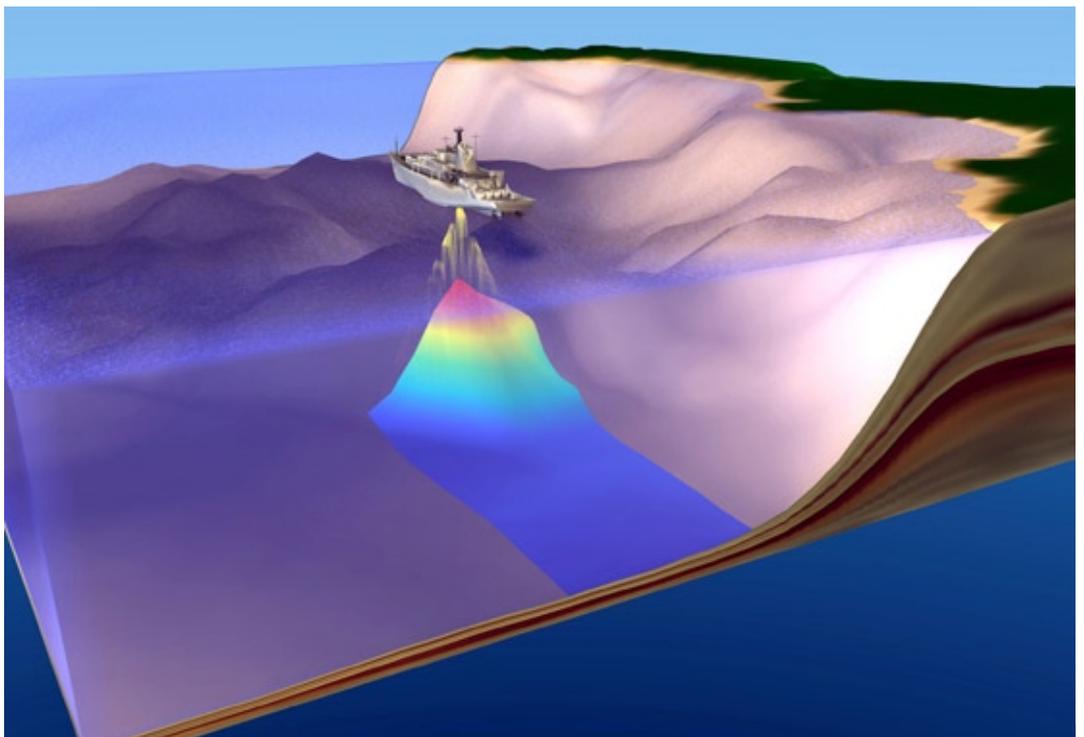
Bowditch's embarked



Navy file photo of the T-AGS 60 Class Oceanographic Survey Ship, USNS Bowditch.

Hydrographic Survey Launch; a 34-foot, 15,000-pound craft that resembles a commercial yacht but carries state-of-the-art survey equipment, was deployed to survey waters close to shore. Three

JPAC personnel and five of their counterparts from the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons embarked Bowditch for the mission and provided the data collected from underwater surveys to the government of Vietnam.



File Photo -- An illustration depicting the underwater mapping capability of USNS Bowditch (T-AGS 62) and other ships of her class. T-AGS 60 Class Oceanographic Survey ships conduct sampling and data collection of surface, midwater and ocean floor parameters; launch and recovery of hydrographic survey launches (HSLs); the launching, recovering and towing of scientific packages (both tethered and autonomous), including the handling, monitoring and servicing of remotely operated vehicles (ROVs); shipboard oceanographic data processing and sample analysis; and precise navigation, trackline maneuvering and station keeping to support deep-ocean and coastal surveys. There are 5 ships in this class. U.S. Navy Graphic Illustration

U.S. and Philippine Navies work together in CARAT Exercise 2011

Continued from page 1 -

together, and exercises like CARAT provide a great venue for us to hone our skills and increase our interoperability,” said Capt. David Welch, Commander, Task Group 73.1 and the Commander for the exercise.

Approximately 800 U.S. Navy personnel are participating in CARAT Philippines 2011. In addition to the three ships, other participants include U.S. Navy Seabees, A U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST), U.S. Navy Mobile Security Squadron, U.S. Navy Riverine Forces, Medical Support personnel, and P-3C Orion and SH-60 Seahawk aircraft.

CARAT is a series of bilateral military exercises between the U.S. Navy and the Armed Forces of Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.



TOP: PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines (July 1, 2011) Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class Lonnie McDade, left, Aviation Machinist's Mate Airman Zach Mace and Philippine Navy sailors prepare personal hygiene products for donation at Santa Lourdes Elementary School during a community service project for Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Philippines 2011. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Katerine Noll.

MIDDLE: PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines (June 30, 2011) Gas Turbine Systems Technician (Mechanical) 1st Class Benjamin Regalario gives a tour of Main Engine Room One to Philippine Navy sailors during an engineering Subject Matter Expert Exchange aboard USS Chung-Hoon (DDG 93) for Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Philippines 2011. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Katerine Noll.

BOTTOM: PUERTO PRINCESA, Philippines (July 4, 2011) Philippine Navy Aviators complete their familiarization flight aboard a U.S. Navy P-3C aircraft during Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Philippines 2011. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Robert Clowney.

For More Photos please visit:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/carat-clwp/>

Independence Day Celebrations

An estimated 6,000 Americans and Singaporeans gathered on the Terror Club sports field for the Independence Day Celebration. The celebration is an annual event sponsored by the American Association of Singapore and supported by Navy Region Center, Singapore. Photos by Kenny Hopkins

