

13th MEU in the news

[Link to External News](#)

27 Feb – 25 Mar 2009

[Link to Internal News](#)

Exercise Sea Soldier Media Roll-up:

No external media coverage due to host nation requests.

Coverage Totals

Internal Articles: One – Released to DVIDS and posted on Blogsite

Photos taken: appx. 200+ -- Photos approved for release: 6

Analysis: Due to host nation sensitivities, external coverage of our operations was prohibited. We were able to release a generic internal article on our exercise with “regional friends and partners” to include six Marine-only photos. Internal photos (not released) made significant impact on DoS Country Team throughout the exercise.


13th MEU Blogspot: 2,781 total site visits, 94 average per day

www.13thmeu.blogspot.com

Comments on Blogspot:

[traita](#) said...


Thank you for this site. I have not heard from my son in 2 weeks and did not know where he was. Thank you. Tracy

March 7, 2009 3:31 AM 

[famayes](#) said...

Thanks for writing this and sending us news starved moms some info about what been going on with the 13th!

Garbly

March 2, 2009 10:27 PM 

[Luis Portugal](#) said...

Hello

It has a nice blog.

Sorry not write more, but my English is bad writing.

A hug from my country, Portugal

EXTERNAL NEWS

[Boxer ICs Maintain Ship's Communications](#)

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Boxer ICs Maintain Ship's Communications

Story Number: NNS090323-04

Release Date: 3/23/2009 2:45:00 PM

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matthew Jackson, USS Boxer (LHD 4) Public Affairs

GULF OF ADEN (NNS) -- USS Boxer (LHD 4) interior communications electricians work to keep Boxer's many communications systems running smoothly while deployed to the Gulf of Aden in support of maritime security operations (MSO).

Interior communications (IC) division's nine Sailors are charged with preserving mission essential communication systems. Boxer's MSO mission requires an efficient information flow to ensure the safety and preparedness of all Sailors and Marines aboard.

"Interior communications electricians have a large role aboard Boxer," said Ensign Christine Casey, IC division officer. "We support every department in different ways. Vertical Short Takeoff and Landing (VSTOL) aids the Marine Corps' Harrier jets during landing, our alarms and sensors help engineering determine when a system is not operating properly. Electronic indicators help the bridge know where we're steering, and Secure Video Distribution System (SVDS) helps the command and control elements of the ship make tactical decisions."

Boxer's communications systems are an important priority for many operations and basic functions.

"Whenever a mishap is evaluated aboard Boxer, communication is always something that gets mentioned," Casey said. "Without the ability to execute communications, even with something as simple as sound-powered phones, the Navy would not be able to successfully continue its daily operations."

Boxer's IC electricians learn their way around the ship quickly because their trouble calls take them to many spaces.

"We maintain and troubleshoot all audio and visual systems, alarms and warning systems, telephones, televisions, liquid level indicators, and announcing systems such as the 1MC," said Interior Communications Electrician 2nd Class (SW) Daniel Svoboda, "but our most frequent repair calls are for telephones not working."

During Svoboda's three and a half years as an interior communications electrician, he has been shocked before and stressed the importance of Sailor safety when dealing with electronics.

"Safety and operational risk management are always on my mind when I conduct maintenance

or trouble calls on equipment," said Svoboda.

Casey spoke about the rewards she gets from working with the IC division.

"It's rewarding to work among some of the most talented Sailors in the fleet. With their services in high demand, they are able to provide continuous support throughout the ship. I truly think I have the best division on the ship, and I enjoy working with such intelligent and skilled technicians," Casey said.

Boxer is deployed as part of Boxer Amphibious Readiness Group/13th Marine Expeditionary Unit supporting MSO in the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet area of operations. MSO help develop security in the maritime environment and compliment the counterterrorism and security efforts of regional nations. From security arises stability that results in global economic prosperity. These operations seek to disrupt violent extremists' use of the maritime environment to transport personnel and weapons or serve as a venue for attack.

U.S. Navy vessels in Bahrain for evaluation after collision

(CNN) -- A U.S. Navy submarine and a Navy amphibious ship that collided Friday in the Strait of Hormuz south of Iran have arrived in Bahrain to be assessed for damage, the Navy said.

The submarine USS Hartford and amphibious ship USS New Orleans are shown in Navy photos.



The submarine USS Hartford and amphibious ship USS New Orleans arrived Saturday in Mina Salman pier to "to further assess and evaluate the damage that resulted from their collision at sea," the service said in a written statement.

Fifteen sailors were slightly hurt aboard the Hartford in the collision, which occurred early Friday morning.

On Friday, Navy officials in Washington told CNN that there was significant damage to the sail, or tower-like structure on the topside of the submarine. On Saturday, the Navy said there was no damage to the submarine's propulsion unit.

No injuries were reported aboard the New Orleans. The ship's fuel tank ruptured, spilling 25,000 gallons of marine diesel fuel in the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. Navy said in the Saturday statement.

"Aerial searches of the area where the fuel spill occurred were conducted yesterday, and revealed no indication of any remaining fuel on the ocean's surface," the Navy said. "The quick dissipation of the fuel is likely due to the type of fuel, and various environmental factors to include air and water temperatures, winds and seas."

When the collision occurred, both vessels were headed to ports in the Persian Gulf to stock up on provisions and allow for some recreation, Navy spokesman Lt. Nate Christensen said Friday.

Christensen said there were about 200 sailors in the sub and 1,000 sailors and Marines aboard the ship.

The Strait of Hormuz is located between the United Arab Emirates and Iran, linking the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. It is heavily used by oil tankers.

Both vessels are on regularly scheduled deployments to the U.S. Navy Central Command area of responsibility, and conduct Maritime Security Operations.

Related Websites:

http://www.arabianbusiness.com/index2.php?option=com_gallery&id=550205&ln=en

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123755596577095301.html>

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,509919,00.html>

Boxer becomes piracy task force flagship

Marine Corps Times/Navy Times

Staff report

Posted : Tuesday Mar 10, 2009 15:48:31 EDT

The flag for Combined Task Force 151, the Navy's counterpiracy flotilla, has moved to the amphibious assault ship Boxer, now operating in the waters of the Middle East.

CTF 151 stood up in January following a rapid spike in pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden that began in August. It originally was made up of U.S. forces, but naval forces from the United Kingdom, Denmark and Turkey now participate.

Previous flagships have been the cruisers Monterey and Vella Gulf, and the amphibious transport dock San Antonio.

Along with a Navy helicopter detachment, Boxer also has embarked Marines from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which includes several types of combat aircraft from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (reinforced).

The task force is commanded by Rear Adm. Terry McKnight.

Boxer and six ships of its expeditionary strike group deployed Jan. 9 from San Diego.

Suspected Pirates Apprehended, Released in the Gulf of Aden

Navy.mil

From Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs

Gulf of Aden (NNS) -- The guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64) apprehended six suspected pirates in the Gulf of Aden yesterday after responding to a distress call from two nearby merchant vessels.

At approximately 4:30 a.m., the Philippines-flagged Motor Vessel Bison Express sent a distress call to all ships in the area reporting they were being pursued by a small skiff containing six heavily-armed suspected pirates.

Gettysburg closed immediately on the motor vessel's location and intercepted a skiff matching the description given by the crew of the motor vessel. An SH-60B helicopter assigned to Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light (HSL) 46 embarked aboard Gettysburg, flew overhead the skiff and reported seeing objects being thrown overboard.

A Gettysburg visit, board, search and seizure team (VBSS) subsequently conducted a consensual boarding along with members of U.S. Coast Guard Legal Detachment (LEDET) 409 and apprehended the six suspected pirates. They were transferred onto the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4), the flagship and afloat staging base (AFSB) for Combined Task Force (CTF) 151.

After evaluating the situation, CTF 151 determined there was not sufficient evidence to hold the suspects for prosecution and released them back to their small boat.

The attack on Bison Express was the second attack by yesterday on commercial shipping vessels in the Gulf of Aden. Earlier this morning, suspected pirates attacked Motor Vessel Sea Green. The motor vessel fired several warning flares at the suspected pirates as they approached, and successfully warded off the attack.

CTF 151 is a multinational task force that conducts counter-piracy operations in and around the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and was established to create a lawful maritime order and develop security in the maritime environment.

Related Sites:

http://www.mayportmirror.com/stories/032609/may_ussgettysburg_001.xml.shtml

<http://english.horseedmedia.net/news/12431.shtml>

<http://thetension.blogspot.com/2009/03/us-navy-deters-suspected-pirate-attack.html>

CH-53s from 13th MEU fly support in Iraq

Marine Corps Times

By [Gidget Fuentes](#) - Staff writer

Posted : Friday Mar 6, 2009 19:10:18 EST

OCEANSIDE, Calif. — Marines with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit's detachment of CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters left their ship at sea earlier this week and are flying combat support missions in Iraq.

The mission came on a request by U.S. Central Command for additional aviation units to support operations in Iraq, the 13th MEU said in a news release issued March 6.

The Super Stallion helicopters flew off the deck of San Diego-based amphibious assault ship Boxer and arrived at Asad Air Base, where they are providing additional heavy lift for Marine Aircraft Group 26 with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing.

The detachment is part of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (Reinforced) 163, the air combat element for the Camp Pendleton-based 13th MEU.

The 13th MEU is part of the Boxer Expeditionary Strike Group, which is deployed in the Persian Gulf region supporting the U.S. 5th Fleet as well as operations in Iraq and maritime security operations. The MEU, commanded by Col. David Coffman, includes Battalion Landing Team 1/1 and Combat Logistics Battalion 13 and deployed from California aboard Boxer, amphibious dock landing ship Comstock and amphibious transport dock New Orleans.

INTERNAL NEWS

[Tae Kwon Do Instructor to United States Marine
13th Marine Expeditionary Unit Conducts Exercise Sea Soldier
Marines stepping it up with Corporal's Course on the USS Boxer
USS Boxer Becomes Flagship for CTF 151
Super Stallion detachment leaves 13th MEU for Iraq](#)

Tae Kwon Do Instructor to United States Marine

Story by Lance Cpl. Megan Sindelar

Photos by Lance Cpl. Megan Sindelar/Lance Cpl. Jesse Leger



Kicking and punching his way to five international martial-arts championships, Justin now continues his training in the Marine Corps.

Lance Cpl. Justin T. Stewart has 13 years of training in Korean martial-arts and just about two years as a United States Marine.

Stewart, 20, was born in Augusta, Ga., but moved to Jackson, Miss. only two years later because his mother was a traveling nurse, whose contract bound them into moving often.

“I was always into Batman, Ninja-Turtles and of course the Power Rangers, so my parents thought [martial-arts] would be good for me,” said Stewart.

When Stewart turned five he went to his first martial-arts class.

“Little did I know then, that it would be a huge part in my life,” he said.

Tae Kwon Do is the martial-arts path he followed, which translated means, ‘the art of kicking and punching.’

In 2001, he moved to Meridian, Miss. where he found the International Tae Kwon Do Alliance (ITA).

He trained with the ITA and traveled to Houston, Texas where he became a certified martial-arts instructor.

Though he studied with multiple Tae Kwon Do federations as he moved around with his mother, his passion for martial-arts never faded. By the time he was 16, Stewart had already become a 2nd degree black-belt and traveled to Seoul, South Korea with one of his instructors to train with the World Tae Kwon Do Federation.

After returning from Seoul, his mother’s contract sent them to Riverside, Calif. “I stayed in the ITA, I just trained with a different instructor because the organization has schools all over the country,” said Stewart.

He trained with that instructor for only six months before he was able to test for his 3rd degree black-belt.

At 17 years old and a senior in high school, his mother’s contract moved them to Rio Rancho, N.M. where, since there was no ITA school around, he trained with the Action International Martial-Arts Association until his early graduation in December 2006.

After graduating he moved to Corona, Calif. on his own to start teaching full-time at a studio where he used to train.

Working at the studio for almost a year, Stewart decided he wanted to see the world. After a few encouraging words from his brother who is in the Marine Corps, he decided to join the service as an infantryman. He now serves as part of Scout



Sniper Platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1/1, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

“He is very good [at Tae Kwon Do] and gets as much support from his parents as he does from the platoon,” said Sgt. Jonathan F. Herrera, assistant team leader, Scout Sniper Platoon, BLT 1/1, 13th MEU.

“The Marine Corps has challenged me both mentally and physically which, in turn, has made me a better martial-artist,” said Stewart.

He spends his time working out on his own to refresh his techniques and also practices Tae Kwon Do by teaching the art to his peers.

“He has become a valuable addition to our platoon,” said Herrera. “He has shown us a few of the basic fundamentals of Tae Kwon Do, which we can mix in with MCMAP (Marine Corps Martial Arts Program).”

Though Stewart is an asset to his platoon and the Marine Corps, he does not plan to make it a career.

“I will not reenlist because of the fact I’m a martial-artist at heart and miss it too much, but I will continue to better myself and my techniques in the Marine Corps until that time comes,” said Stewart.

Developed by his passion and heart, Stewart said his inspiration to succeed, in both Tae Kwon Do and the Marine Corps, comes from a famous Chuck Norris quote.

“There are no limits for the person who refuses to accept them.”

13th Marine Expeditionary Unit Conducts Exercise Sea Soldier

Story by Staff Sgt. Matthew Holly

Photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Holly and Lance Cpl. Jesse Leger



Elements from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, conducted bilateral training with regional partners, March 5-17, to strengthen relationships and improve interoperability. The exercise included military operations in urban terrain training, urban tactics, techniques and procedures training and tactical vehicle capabilities demonstrations.

“The exercise provided us with a valuable training opportunity and was our first exercise since arriving to the region,” said Staff Sgt. Guadalupe Pineda, platoon sergeant for the Combat Engineer platoon, Battalion Landing Team 1/1, 13th MEU. “We had the chance to hang out with, train and learn from our new friends during this exercise.”

In addition to bilateral training it was an opportunity for the 13th MEU to enhance their operating skills. The exercise not only consisted of military training, but presented an opportunity to test the interoperability between the regional civilian medical facility and the MEU’s casualty evacuation capabilities.



“It’s important to ensure we’re tied in with different civilian medical systems,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Reginald A. Demapelis, assigned to Headquarters and Support Company, BLT 1/1 and a Chula Vista, Calif. resident.



“I was very impressed with the knowledge they had and care they’re able to provide,” added Petty Officer 2nd Class Curtis L. Null, assigned to Headquarters and Support Company, BLT 1/1 and a Knoxville, Iowa native. “They kept me updated throughout the whole process - in the event of a real casualty I’m confident they would be able to provide appropriate care to our Marines and Sailors.”

During the training, there was plenty of time for Marines and their new friends to interact. Whether it was through conversation, food or fellowship they were constantly taking the time to get to know one another.

“A great deal of friendship has been built up very quickly between us and them,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Andres Velasco. “We share a mutual admiration and have gained a parallel trust between our regional partners.”

The 13th MEU is embarked aboard Boxer Expeditionary Strike Group ships deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to conduct Maritime Security Operations. MSO help develop security in the maritime environment and complement the counterterrorism and security efforts of regional nations. From security arises stability that results in global economic prosperity. These operations seek to disrupt violent extremists' use of the maritime environment to transport personnel and weapons or serve as a venue for attack.

Marines stepping it up with Corporal's Course on the USS Boxer

Story and photos by Lance Cpl. Megan Sindelar

About 30 Marines from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the USS Boxer spent the last month learning and improving the skills needed to become more efficient noncommissioned officers during Corporal's Course; receiving their diplomas March 11.



The course is a little over three weeks long and the Marines were able to learn and succeed in the development of their leadership skills, said Staff Sgt. Oscar S. Ornelas, Corporal's Course guest speaker and platoon sergeant with Company C, Battalion Landing Team 1/1, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

"The instructors gave us the right information with the right instruction," said Cpl. Robert L. Thatcher, honor-graduate of Corporal's Course and squad leader with Company C, BLT 1/1, 13th MEU.



Marines received many classes over counseling, war gaming, hip-pocket training and leadership, just to name a few. They also practiced sword manual and trained in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program once to twice a week, with the last week training everyday, said Thatcher, a Huntington Beach, Calif. native.

Picking the guest speaker is something the students of Corporal's Course enjoyed.

“We picked Staff Sgt. Ornelas because he made an impact,” said Thatcher.

Ornelas taught only one class, Marine Corps Customs and Courtesies, but the Marines took to his motivation and passion so well, they chose him as their guest speaker.



“I was very passionate and I meant everything I told them,” said Ornelas. “I motivated them and if something I say has an effect on an NCO and they learn something, that is great.”

The Marines, and now graduated members of Corporal’s Course, will be able to put their skills to use, said Thatcher.

Corporal’s Course gave these Marines the ability and knowledge needed to become first-class leaders; following and enforcing customs and courtesies of the traditional Marine Corps - the Marine Corps that has captured America’s hearts and minds for the past 233 years.



USS Boxer Becomes Flagship for CTF 151

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class T.S. Hall
Combined Task Force 151 Public Affairs

USS BOXER, At sea - USS Boxer (LHD 4), home ported in San Diego, Calif., assumed the role as flagship for Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151), March 8, after arriving in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations as part of a regularly-scheduled deployment.

Established in early January, CTF 151’s mandate is to deter and disrupt piracy in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and currently includes naval forces from the U.S., UK, Denmark and Turkey.

“We’ve had a great deal of success in deterring piracy to this point,” said Rear Adm. Terence McKnight, commander, CTF 151. “We’ve conducted counter-piracy operations on the amphibious transport dock ship USS San Antonio, two guided-missile cruisers, USS Vella Gulf and USS Monterey and now we’re going to continue our mission on Boxer, which continues our line of extremely flexible platforms. Boxer has a lot to offer in the fight against piracy.”

McKnight said that CTF151 has coordinated with many nations to help thwart piracy in the region.

“Piracy isn’t a problem that affects one or two nations,” he said. “It’s a problem that affects the whole world and the free flow of commerce in the world’s waterways. Piracy requires an international solution.”

Capt. Mark Cedrun, Boxer’s commanding officer, said amphibious assault ship provides an exceptional and diverse array of options to commanders in tracking, identifying and deterring piracy at sea.

“We bring unique and very effective tools to the theatre to accomplish any mission or assignment,” he said. “Whether it’s humanitarian assistance or counter-piracy operations, we’re ready.”

Boxer’s embarked units include the Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 5, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 21 Detachment 3, Naval Beach Group (NBG) 1, Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 5, ACU 1, Beach Master Unit (BMU) 1, Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 5 and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).

The 13th MEU is comprised of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 163 (Reinforced), Combat Logistics Battalion 13 and Battalion Landing Team 1/1.

Links to external articles:

THE TENSION - <http://thetension.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.military.com/news/article/navy-news/uss-boxer-becomes-flagship-for-ctf-151.html?col=1186032311124>

<http://www.eaglespeak.us/2009/03/somali-pirates-uss-boxer-now-ctf-151.html>

FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2009

Super Stallion detachment leaves 13th MEU for Iraq

Story by Lance Cpl. Megan Sindelar

USS BOXER, At sea (March 3, 2009)

- The CH-53E detachment of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (Reinforced), with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit left for Al Asad, Iraq March 3 to aid in missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in response to a request from United States Central Command to augment air forces in the region.



Once attached to Marine Aircraft Group 26 of the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) at Al Asad Airbase, the detachment will be used for heavy lifting missions, moving combat gear, escorting foreign officials and moving the quick reaction force, in addition to other operations as needed.

“This is bittersweet. Bitter because we fight with them and we don’t want to give them up, but sweet because for those Marines to actually get in a combat theater, is an honor,” said Sgt. Maj. Enrique X. Hines, sergeant major of the 13th MEU.



OIF is a dynamic environment; the situation is constantly changing and will be a good learning and positive experience for every Marine in the detachment, said Maj. Timothy A. Sheyda, Operations Officer for HMM-163 (Rein) and CH-53E detachment officer in charge.

“The Marines in the MEU are envious but full of pride for those Marines to be the first out,” said Hines.

Sgt. Elizabeth L. Wigger, the HMM-163 (Rein.) Intelligence Chief, said that she is sad but jealous to see them go, and wishes she could accompany her friends on their mission.

“They are going to go out there and do great things,” said Wigger.

The detachment will be working 12-14 hour shifts per day, seven days a week while they are in Al Asad, but everyone is confident and excited to employ the training they have received, said Sheyda.

As they left on March 3, the powerful Super Stallions flew past the ship and over onlookers on the flight deck in a side-by-side formation, filling the USS Boxer with their thunderous rotor sounds as the detachment’s ‘farewell fly-by’.

In the meantime, the 13th MEU continues current operations in US Central Command in support of regional security and stability, and looks forward to the CH-53E detachment’s return.