

Philippines phase leads CARAT 2000



PHI (NAO) Spike Call photo

USS Reuben James (FFG 57) pulls into Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines June 14 to prepare for the exercise CARAT 2000. The Philippine navy also sent four ships from Manila to Subic Bay for CARAT 2000. The event marked the first time in four years that a phase of CARAT has taken place in the

By Lt. Leslie Hull-Ryde
COMMANDER TASK FORCE 712 PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SUBIC BAY, Philippines (NWS) — Naval leaders from the United States and the Philippines launched the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)

Exercise 2000 in an opening ceremony here June 14.

"I believe these exercises are beneficial for all participants because they promote strategic understanding of the challenges we all face in the Asia-Pacific and particularly here in Southeast Asia," said Rear Adm. Stephen R. Loeffler, the Logistics Group

Western Pacific commander, headquartered in Singapore.

In his hat as Task Force 712 commander, Loeffler is responsible for organizing the annual CARAT series.

Commodore (Capt.) Joseph Natale, Destroyer Squadron 9 commander, homeported in Everett, Wash., leads the CARAT 2000 Task Group. Crews aboard USS Germantown (LSD 42) forward-deployed to Sasebo, Japan; USS Mount Vernon (LSD 39) and USS Sides (FFG 14), both from San Diego, Calif.; and USS Reuben James (FFG 57), out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, pulled into Subic Bay to prepare for the exercise. USS Safeguard (ARS 50), also forward deployed to Sasebo but now in Cavite, Philippines, will support the salvage exercises during CARAT.

The Philippine navy also sent four ships from Manila to Subic Bay for CARAT 2000. This marks the first time in four years that a phase of CARAT has taken place in the Philippines.

Passage of the Visiting Forces Agreement last year has made it possible to expand the scope of the exercise to include events ashore.

"Exercise CARAT 2000 is actually a continuation of a decades-long tradition of cooperation be-

tween the United States Navy and the Philippine navy," said Capt. Mariano S. Sontillanosa, exercise director for the Filipino participants.

The 1,700 U.S. Sailors and Marines will work in tandem with 1,500 of their Filipino counterparts. These international shipmates will partner on land and at sea to improve their abilities to work together.

Both navies expect CARAT to promote interoperability between the United States and Philippine forces in the areas of operational planning, command and control, tactics and community relations projects.

"Working side by side — Filipinos and Americans — shows us that, should another threat to regional security arise as it did only 60 years ago, cooperative engagement among regional friends and allies is essential to be victorious," remarked Loeffler.

The ships get underway soon for four days of afloat training. While the crews of CARAT Task Group ships and their Filipino partners are at sea, a number of humanitarian, salvage and maritime patrol exercises will continue ashore.

"CARAT allows us to foster the strong relationships necessary to work together under many differ-

ent circumstances — from peacekeeping and disaster relief to humanitarian assistance such as our countries are supporting in East Timor today," said Loeffler.

During CARAT, local businesses can expect approximately \$2 million more American dollars flowing through the economy. Leaders say the big pay-offs will be the lessons learned and friendships formed during CARAT 2000.

"The camaraderie you share in port and at sea will manifest itself in personal and professional friendships that can last a lifetime," Loeffler said to members of the crews participating in CARAT 2000.

"It is this combination of personal and professional interaction that allows us to continue to build on our past history together to make a new and bright future," he added.

CARAT Philippines sets the stage as the first phase in a series of bilateral exercises the U.S. task group will conduct through September. Follow-on phases will be conducted with Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore.

For more information about exercise CARAT 2000, go to <http://www.clwp.navy.mil/carat.ht>

VP-9 completes successful WESTPAC deployment

By Lt. Todd Copeland
PATROL SQUADRON NINE PUBLIC AFFAIRS

United States Navy Patrol Squadron Nine (VP-9), commanded by Cmdr. Earl Hampton Jr., returned to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii June 8 after a successful six-month deployment to Japan.

The deployment consisted of two main sites and several other detachment sites where VP-9 operated with ten P-3 Orion aircraft.

The squadron of approximately 380 men and women was split between Misawa Air Base, located in northern Honshu, Japan and Kadena Air Base, located on the island of Okinawa. While operating out of these two sites, the squadron also had the opportunity to operate out of the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea and for the first time on a regular basis Hong Kong.

During VP-9's six-month deployment, the squadron continued to uphold its high standards by proving its proficiency in both submarine and surface warfare while setting a new standard for the community with its successful Search and Rescue operations.

VP-9 began its deployment to Japan in early December 1999. The squadron was immediately challenged with operating in the cold and snowy environment of northern Japan. Cmdr. Hampton commented, "I knew that coming from Hawaii and following a desert deployment, the snow and ice would be a challenge. I commend the aircrew and maintainers for the way they were able to adapt and operate with no mishaps in a winter that brought almost 20 feet of snow."

The snowy winter did not stop VP-9 from establishing a reputation of excellence in the search and rescue arena. While the P-3 was

designed and is maintained for submarine and surface warfare, the aircraft's radar and experienced crew proved to be quite effective while aiding the Coast Guard in search and rescue operations.

The squadron was launched from a one-hour alert status six times to search for missing ships. Using the P-3's radar and highly experienced radar operators as well as the sharp eyes of the aircrew, the squadron located and rescued 19 missing people. While most of the missing people were lost at sea in fishing boats, four of those found were on an uninhabited island 300 miles from Guam and were seen as they waved to the P-3 and wrote S.O.S. in the sand.

Radar operator Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator 2nd Class Mark Swyngman said, "We are fortunate that the 'Sensor 3's' (radar operators) are so well trained. We are used to looking for a needle in a haystack in submarine warfare and it is no surprise to me that our squadron has done so well conducting Search and Rescue."

VP-9 was able to share its success in search and rescue by conducting symposiums with other search and Rescue assets. One such symposium took place during BALIKATAN 2000 in the Philippines. This exercise consisted of platforms from several nations conducting missions ranging from surface warfare to search and rescue. As well as sharing its success with the Philippines, VP-9 conducted search and rescue symposiums with the Japanese and South Korean militaries.

In the summer of 1998, VP-9 was the first patrol squadron to deploy with the Antisubmarine Warfare Improvement Program (AIP). While again bringing AIP to the western Pacific, VP-9 added another first to its already impressive list of accomplish-

ments. Only days after the new millennium began, a crew from VP-9 flew a P-3 into Hong Kong. This day trip, while appearing to be a routine three-hour flight, proved to be a significant event on the national and international levels.

VP-9's visit to Hong Kong marked the first time a U.S. military aircraft was allowed to land in Hong Kong in several months. Cmdr. Hampton said of the event, "Being the first squadron to land in Hong Kong in the millennium is an honor. Our flight into Hong Kong demonstrated the progress that is being made between the United States and Hong Kong, China both diplomatically and politically." VP-9 continued its flights to Hong Kong throughout the deployment, making it a monthly event and therefore expanding the squadron's capabilities to include that of diplomat as well.

Operationally, VP-9 flew over 1,100 sorties and over 5,700 hours. The squadron conducted surface and submarine warfare operations in the Sea of Japan, the western Pacific, off the coast of Guam and the South China Sea. VP-9 also operated in the Yellow Sea and the Philippine Sea. The squadron conducted coordinated operations with surface combatants and submarines from the United States, South Korea, Australia and the Philippines.

These operations allowed VP-9 to again demonstrate their professionalism and commitment while deploying tactics for surface and subsurface warfare. VP-9 participated in joint operations in all areas of the western Pacific including, Adelaide, Australia; Osan, South Korea; Guam; Manila and an early deployment detachment to Corpus Christi, Texas, to support the Coast Guard in counter-drug enforcement operations.

VP-9's tactical success came as the result of a rigorous pre-deployment training cycle.

The success of this 12-month training cycle was realized when the Golden Eagles were able to simultaneously conduct all the missions of the P-3 Orion.

In the first month of deployment, VP-9 demonstrated its ability to effectively locate and track submarines, conduct coordinated operations with surface combatants from other countries, and aid the Coast Guard in both counter-narcotic operations and search and rescue.

The operational tempo of the squadron was maintained at a high pace and supported by the top notch Golden Eagle Maintenance Department which worked around the clock to repair and maintain the 10 aircraft.

VP-9's new Maintenance Officer, Lt. Cmdr. Steve Kennedy said of the maintainers, "I was blessed to have such a hard working group of maintainers. From the chief's mess down, the maintenance department has worked long hours in sometimes inclement conditions to get the job done."

While VP-9 has had an exciting and rewarding deployment, most Sailors agree that the best part will be landing in Hawaii and seeing their loved ones. Going on deployment, as any Sailor can attest, truly tests the courage and commitment of everyone from the junior airmen to the senior officers. VP-9's deployment was no different.

While days off were few and far between and holidays were often synonymous with workdays, the Golden Eagles of VP-9 worked hard, flew safe and got the mission accomplished. Cmdr. Earl Hampton comments, "We return to Kaneohe with our heads held high. Each and every member of the squadron contributed to the success of the

Russell celebrates five years of excellence at end of deployment

By Lt. j.g. Orrin Johnson
USS RUSSELL PUBLIC AFFAIRS

On May 20, as her third successful deployment to the Arabian Gulf was nearing an end, the crew of USS Russell (DDG 59) celebrated the ship's fifth birthday. There are many older ships in the United States fleet, but there are few that have accomplished as much.

Pre-Commissioning Unit Russell became United States Ship Russell on May 20, 1995, under the command of Cmdr. Peter H. Daly. Only a few weeks earlier, the majority of the crew moved aboard, breathing real life into what had been a very expensive hunk of steel.

"It is for this reason," said Russell's current Captain, Cmdr. Robert W. Winsor, Jr., "that we celebrate our birthday on the day we were commissioned instead of the day the keel was first laid down. It is the people that make Russell what she has been, and what she is today."

Russell sailed to Pearl Harbor to make her new home, quickly earning the reputation as one of the jewels of the Pacific Fleet. The crew performed superbly and only eight months after commissioning, the ship was underway for her first deployment, an almost unheard of accomplishment.

If there were any doubts that Russell could perform as well in a "real" environment as she had during the training cycle that preceded the trip, they were quickly put to rest as she sailed towards the Middle East. At the time, tensions were flaring again in the area, as Iraqi troops once again began to mass along the southern border, threatening Kuwait.

When Operation Desert Strike was put into place to stop this renewed threat to the stability of the region, the Navy's newest destroyer steamed into action and took part through the launching of Tomahawk missiles. One of CNN's most widely used pieces of missile launch footage to this day was taken during that operation by one of the ship's Interior Communication Electricians.

The crew was also kept busy enforcing sanctions violators, and Russell's presence in the Gulf that spring commanded respect from everyone.

Russell excelled in other tasking as well. In

port visits from Australia to San Diego during her second work-up cycle, her crew earned the reputation as true ambassadors of the United States and the Navy.

"Showing the flag" is one of the most often overlooked missions of the Navy, but perhaps the most influential and important. Russell's Sailors excelled, were welcomed wherever they went, and were asked to return when it came time to sail on to other destinations.

The second deployment was no less eventful, or any less successful. Now under the command of Cmdr. Scott T. Anhalt, the ship was stationed to observe the growing conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and the testing of their new nuclear weapons that underscored the fighting. Its presence was a vital part of the diplomacy that helped to return stability to the region.

More than ever before, the Sailors who kept Russell in fighting trim every day understood that they were part of something larger than simply a job - they were helping shape history their children would read about years later.

Prior to the ship's return from her second deployment, Russell's new CO, Cmdr. Edward M. Boorda embarked on some of the most aggressive quality of life initiatives the Navy had ever seen.

Making full use of new work reduction directives by the CNO, and tossing the book of "That's the way it's done" out the window, the crew trained and cross-trained until they were able to go to 10 inport duty sections, a new record for a destroyer. Then the crew trained some more and went to 12 sections... and then ultimately to 15.

At sea the engineers achieved seven section watch rotations. After Russell proved it could be done, other ships throughout the Navy began to follow suit. As a result, crewmembers had more time to spend with their families or on liberty, study, and work towards more advanced qualifications.

The success of these initiatives resulted not only in a higher quality of life for the entire crew, but far higher qualification and advancement rates than are the norm in the rest of the fleet.

The groundwork was thus set for Russell's current deployment, perhaps the most success-



U.S. Navy photo

USS Russell (DDG 59)

ful yet. Working with the navies of five other nations, Russell conducted several complex and demanding exercises. Additionally the ship participated heavily in Maritime Interception Operations to enforce United Nations economic sanctions against Iraq.

With smuggling operations reaching an all time high, the pace of sanctions enforcement rose to meet the challenge. With two Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats and two exceptionally trained boarding teams, Russell conducted almost two-and-a-half months of continuous boarding duty.

The crew also devoted countless hours guarding and repairing smuggling vessels to ensure their safe navigation and diversion into United Nations' custody. Her crew found time to once again enjoy the culturally enhancing port visits of the area without ever forgetting their roles as ambassadors.

On May 20, while at sea in the Arabian Gulf, Ship's Serviceman 1st Class (SW) Antonio Pamintuan, Operations Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Antwan Lewis, and Engineman 3rd Class David Newcomb, the ship's remaining plankowners, Chief Gunner's Mate (SW) Gary Dickerson, Russell's oldest Sailor, Seaman Recruit Clifford Clay, the youngest, and Information Systems Technician Seaman Jeremiah Canady, Russell's newest Sailor all held the sword to cut the cake celebrating five years of Russell excellence.

Cmdr. Winsor congratulated them specifically and then the crew at large. "I am honored to have served with all of you, and to be part of legacy this ship and this crew have been creating since 1995," he said. "It has indeed been a remarkable five years, and no doubt there will be many more to come."