

FLEET FOCUS

Ens. Scott Shenk: Reuben James' newest officer

By Ens. Scott Kozink
USS REUBEN JAMES

Operations Specialist (SW) Scott N. Shenk was commissioned an ensign aboard USS Reuben James (FFG 57) May 25. Shenk has been a member of the Reuben James crew for almost five years.

During that time he participated in three deployments to the Persian Gulf, South America and Western Pacific. His duties aboard Reuben James included standing AS-TAC (Anti Submarine Tactical Air Controller) watch supervisor and Combat Information Center (CIC) watch officer. He was also the only enlisted person to qualify as an Officer of the Deck (OOD) underway.

Aside from watch standing, he was an integral member of the operations department serving as the OC05 leading petty officer, schools coordinator for the ship, Physical Readiness Training coordinator and training officer. As training officer he spearheaded the revitalization of the training and PQS program aboard Reuben James.

"The mentorship from the chief's mess was integral in my success and furthered my decision to seek a commission," said Shenk. "The Reuben James is without question the best ship I have had the privilege to serve on. Her crews have been the hardest working and most flexible I have served with. I

will greatly miss the Reuben James team," added Shenk.

"Ensign Shenk epitomizes the Navy's Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment," said Cmdr. Carl Cramb, Commanding Officer, USS Reuben James. "His success story is one to be emulated by everyone. In addition to being an outstanding Sailor, he is a terrific husband and father. I suspect we will be hearing many more success stories about Ens. Shenk as he continues his Navy career as an officer," added Cramb.

Ensign Shenk will depart Hawaii for his next duty assignment, USS Preble in the near future. After attending several schools in Virginia including the AEGIS Combat System curriculum, he will meet his new ship in Pascagoula, Miss. Following a commissioning in the fall, Preble will make the maiden voyage to its new home in San Diego, Calif.

Shank is an avid surfer and has been in the islands for 10 years. Cherie, his wife is a native Hawaiian, born in Hilo, whom met and married in 1997. They have two children, a boy and a girl.

"It is going to be tough to leave the islands. I hope to come back and be stationed here again as soon as I can," said Shenk. "What I am going to miss the most is the year round perfect surf."



USS Reuben James photo

Left to right: Ens. Scott Shenk, his son, wife and Cmdr. Carl Cramb, Commanding Officer USS Reuben James, cut the ceremonial cake after Shenk's commissioning May 25.

Frederick participates in Operation Balikatan in Philippines

By Ens. Erin K. Bailey
USS FREDERICK PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Last month USS Frederick (LST-1184) and 3rd Battalion, 7 Marines Division (BLT 37) participated in Operation Balikatan, a cross training exercise with the Philippine Navy and 1st Provisional Philippine Marine Company.

Balikatan translates in Tagalog as "shoulder to shoulder." Operation

Balikatan is an annual operation exemplifying teamwork between the United States and Philippine militaries. It is an exchange of amphibious demonstrations and training with their respective counterparts.

The specific objectives of Balikatan are not only to acquire knowledge and skill in tin systems of modern amphibious naval warfare, but to improve interoperability between the combined Philippine and US

forces. It also serves the purpose of validating naval warfare doctrines and to prepare reservists in the event of a conflict.

The opening ceremonies were held on the morning of April 29 on Frederick's flight deck. The exchange of greetings marked the beginning of an intensive nine days of Navy and Marine Corps cross training.

The operation culminated in a full-scale amphibious assault comprised of two waves of Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs) on two separate beaches, all orchestrated by the Commander, Amphibious Task Force Frederick's commanding officer, Cmdr. Roger Perkins.

Exercise Balikatan started with the embarkation and movement of over 275 Marines and support equipment from Okinawa, Japan.

Four days later, in Ternate, Cavite, the Marines went ashore via AAVs to begin cross training with their Philippine counterparts. The following morning 50 Philippine Navy Sailors embarked Frederick to begin shipboard training.

From April 29 through May 30, each department onboard Frederick conducted various briefs and practical instruction, preparing for the amphibious assault training areas. They included navigation, medical management bow ramp and stern gate, chemical, biological, radiological warfare (CBR) defense, small arms operations and close in weapons systems operations. Frederick also conducted flight deck training covering both deck operations and casualty control procedures.

The conclusion of the cross-training phase marked the beginning of the exercise at-sea phase of the operation. Frederick got underway on May to conduct helicopter landings with the

Philippine BP-105 helicopters. Frederick's flight deck team completed more than 50 successful landings, demonstrating Medevac procedures and flight quarters responsibilities.

The amphibious rehearsal was executed on the morning of May 6. Frederick got underway from anchorage to deploy two waves of eight AAVs. Meticulously maintaining track and speed, Frederick dropped her stern gate to launch Philippine and American Marines ashore. The exercise simulated an amphibious assault between two adversarial companies of Philippine and U.S. Marines. Escorting the AAV's ashore was a Marine light attack squadron comprised of CH-53s, CH46s and CH53Es. An AH-1 Whiskey Cobra and the UH-1 Huey also assisted the ship-to-shore movement.

The exercise culminated in an amphibious assault upon Ternate beach on May 7 at H-hour, Frederick delivered the AAVs to the drop point and immediately went to anchorage. Escorted by Frederick's two safety boats, the AAVs proceeded ashore. By land, air and sea Philippine and U.S. military forces jointly demonstrated the power of amphibious warfare.

Exercise Balikatan concluded on the evening of May 7 with the closing ceremonies onboard Frederick's flight deck. Hosted by Frederick's wardroom and catered by her talented mess specialist staff the successful exercise was celebrated with a band, an elaborate cake and the exchange of plaques. The benefits of combined forces training was exemplified in Operation Balikatan.

In accordance with previous Balikatan exercises, the operation continues to be an annual solidification of the strong relationship between the United States and Philippine militaries.



File photo

USS Frederick (LST-1184) during a previous underway period. Frederick and 3rd Battalion, 7 Marines Division (BLT 317) participated in Operation Balikatan, a cross training exercise with the Philippine Navy and 1 Provisional Philippine Marine Company. The exercise's opening ceremonies, held April 29 on Frederick's flight deck, marked the beginning of an intensive nine days of Naval and Marine Corps cross training.

La Jolla changes command

Sawyer relieves McLaughlin in traditional change of command

By J02 McClain Shewman
SUBPAC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

USS La Jolla (SSN 701) recently held a change of command ceremony as Cmdr. Phillip Sawyer relieved Capt. (sel) Michael McLaughlin topside of the fast-attack submarine.

"It has been a glorious three years filled with everything a submariner could want," said McLaughlin. "Challenge, reward, and a feeling that in the end, the ship completed her assigned mission as best possible. I know that I will never be able to find another job with the same rewards," he added.

In August 1998, USS La Jolla transited the Panama Canal and transferred from the Pacific Fleet to Atlantic Fleet for an overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, New Hampshire.

In December 2000 the submarine completed the overhaul, arriving in Pearl Harbor on Dec. 23, 2000 for service under Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

"When I look at this ship and the savvy innovation of the La Jolla crew, I marvel at the transformation the Navy is leading for not only our Naval Service but also our Unified Commander and the Department of Defense," said Rear Adm. Kenneth Fisher, Deputy and Chief of Staff, U.S. Pacific Fleet, guest speaker for the ceremony.

"I'm taking command of a great warship manned by a superb group of Sailors, Chiefs and Officers. And I get to work and live in Hawaii, which doesn't get much better," said Sawyer.

USS La Jolla, a Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine, is a member of Submarine Squadron One based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and was commissioned in October 1981. The submarine is named after La Jolla, Calif., and was the first 688 submarine homeported in San Diego.



J02 McClain Shewman photo

Cmdr. Phillip Sawyer, new commanding officer of USS La Jolla (SSN 701) salutes sideboys after a change of command ceremony held topside of the fast-attack submarine. Sawyer relieved Capt. (sel) Michael McLaughlin.



PH2 Jay Pearson, VP-4 photo

Two new additions to Patrol Squadron FOUR (VP-4) Ltjg. Beth Gray (Left) and Lt. j.g. Jason King are promoted by commanding officer Cmdr. Doug Yancey (not pictured) to their new rank of Lt. j.g., just days after checking into the squadron.

'Skinny Dragons' promote two

By Lt. Mark Brummett
VP-4 PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Two recent additions to Patrol Squadron Four (VP 4) received promotions from ensign to lieutenant junior grade.

Both Lt. j.g. Beth Gray and Lt. j.g. Jason King will perform navigation and communication (NAVCOMM) duties aboard the P-3 Orion aircraft.

Gray and King joined VP-4 after successful completion of patrol and reconnaissance navigation training in Jacksonville, Fla. at VP-30, the P-3 fleet replacement squadron.

The two new NAVCOMM's have already been assigned to Combat Aircrews (CAC) and have begun working with their new crews during VP-4's busy Inter

Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC) in preparation for their next deployment.

Beth Gray is a native of Rochester, N.Y. and received a bachelor degree from the Northwestern University.

Jason King is from Seattle, Wash. and received a bachelor degree from the University of Washington, Seattle.