Blue Ridge

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WHAT'S INSIDE

VIETNAM

USS BLUE RIDGE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

THE LAST DAYS OF SAIGON

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Executive Officer
Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Ralston
Command Master Chief
CMDCM (SW/SS) David Unnone
Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Clinton Beaird
LCPO / Chief Editor
MCC (SW) Katherine Strom
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MCC (SW/AW) Allen Onstott
Lead Magazine Designer
MC2 Timmy Wakefield
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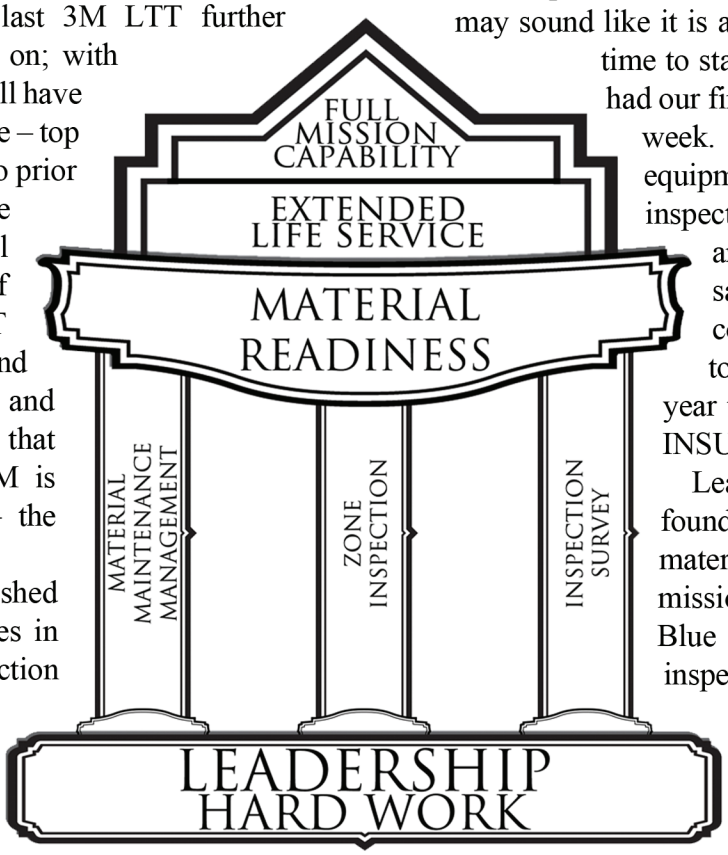
Blue Ridge

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
LT. CMDR. KEVIN RALSTON

Shipmates,

Thank you for your efforts to bring our 3M program to the highest standards! The last 3M LTT further identified areas to concentrate on; with dedication and hard work we will have our program where it needs to be – top notch. We still have much to do prior to our 3M MCA, ensuring the ship is in compliance with all aspects of COMNAVSURFPACNST 4790.1F. The goal is to build and maintain a robust 3M program and promote a culture onboard that values material readiness. 3M is something we do everyday – the right way.

BLUE RIDGE has just finished inspecting our 11th of 13 zones in the Ship-wide Zone Inspection program. It's been great getting around the ship and evaluating the material condition of each division's spaces. I've seen the best and the worst the ship has to offer. It's critical to identify, document and correct all noted discrepancies. We should strive to make those corrections as quickly as possible. Considerable time and effort has been put into this program from the leadership down to the deck plates and we'll continue to seek out ways to improve our material



The Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) will be here to inspect BLUE RIDGE in May of 2013. That date may sound like it is a long way off – but it's not; the time to start preparing is now. In fact, we had our first of many weekly meetings last week. Essentially every piece of equipment and every space will be inspected for safety, damage control, and system compliance to ensure safety of crew and verification of combat readiness. We are going to work diligently over the next year to meet our goal of a successful INSURV inspection.

Leadership and hard work are the foundation for the three pillars of material readiness supporting full mission capability. Navy 3M System, Blue Ridge's ship-wide zone inspection program, and INSURV readiness are key to staying fully mission capable and meeting or exceeding the required service life extension for this warship.

Keep up the great work, and I'll see you around the ship!

XO

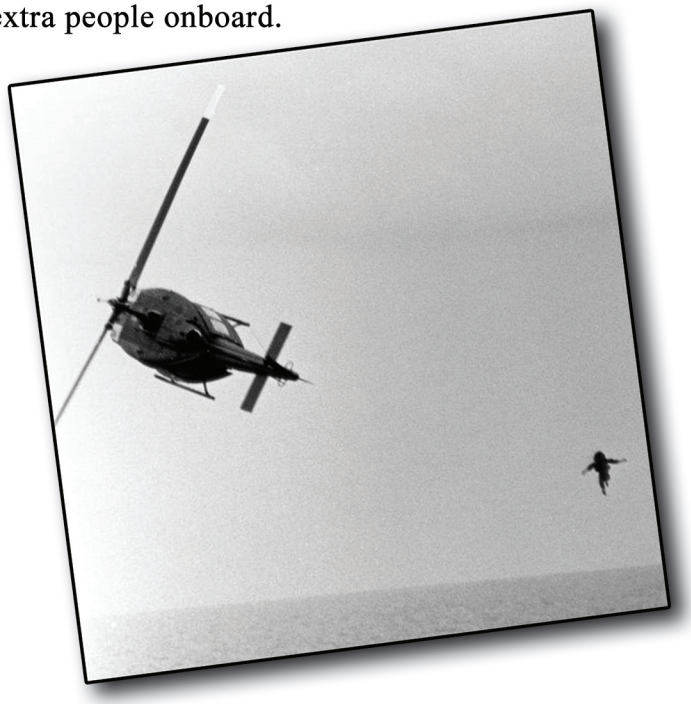
Reflections
Of A Blue Ridge Veteran

Photos by Bill Elmore

The following is an excerpt from an e-mail conversation between Mr. Bill Elmore, a Blue Ridge veteran (Photographer's Mate), and Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Kelby Sanders. Elmore served aboard Blue Ridge during Operation Frequent Wind, in which the ship played a vital role in evacuating Vietnamese refugees from Saigon in the closing days of the Vietnam War in 1975.

Question. Mr. Elmore, I'd like to get a real, true understanding of the Sailors' as well the evacuees' mood at the time. Could you perhaps tell me what the crewmembers' expectations were going into the operation outside Saigon?

Answer. The mood as I recall, was somber and fulfilling; we felt we had a job to do. Helping people is what the Navy is all about. I had just arrived on board Blue Ridge days earlier and did not know anyone very well. I also had no assigned job or even a rack. The Chief just told me "Shoot (photos) and help when you can". The crew reacted to each challenge with courage and respect for the Vietnamese. I felt that I had been assigned to a ship that was indeed the finest in the fleet. Not one complaint was made about long hours, hard work, or even the hardship of having that many extra people onboard.



Q. Do you remember any conversations you had with any of the Vietnamese people? Can you tell me anything interesting about some of them?

A. I did not have much time to talk with the Vietnamese coming on board. They were below deck and being helped as needed.

Q. What was it like to see pilots jumping into the sea and jettisoning their Helos?

A. That was something you just don't see every day. When the first helo was ditched, I had not seen it leave the flight deck and thought he crashed. But I soon realized what was happening and I thought, "these guys are nuts!" The boat crews (as you can see in some of the photos) were very close to the helos when they ditched.

The Sailors on those boats showed great courage and dedication, not once, but time and time again.

Q. Was there any fear of running out of supplies (i.e. food), because of all the extra people onboard?

A. Not too much as far as I could tell. The command may have, but the crew had other things to think about.

Q. Describe your general feelings about the role Blue Ridge played in the war.

A. The Blue Ridge did her job, and did it very well I might add. As for her role in that war as a command ship it was pivotal to say the least. However, I think in April 1975 she was the heart of Operations Frequent Wind and Eagle Pull.

Q. Would you like to say anything to the young Sailors in today's Navy?

A. Yes, kindly I would. The Navy, like the world, is much different now than when I was in. Is it better? I think most of the changes have been for the good. My son is an FC2 and is an instructor at Great Lakes. He has served on the USS Abraham Lincoln CVN-72 in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2008. When he returned home I was able to meet the ship. The Sailors I met that day were as full of pride in the job they did as we were when we returned from Vietnam. The Navy may change but her Sailors remain the same. You all should know that you are doing something only a few people will ever have the chance to do. Defending this country and serving people in need.

The Blue Ridge crew would like to thank Mr. Elmore for his service and his enduring dedication to the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

USS BLUE RIDGE

VIETNAM The LAST DAYS of SAIGON

The following article is the complete text of an "Immediate Release" filed from the USS Blue Ridge by YN1 (JO) Rick Miller.
Photos by Bill Elmore

ABOARD THE USS BLUE RIDGE, South China Sea – It all started in the early morning hours of Apr. 28, 1975 when an American-made Chinook helicopter came streaking over the horizon from the doomed city of Saigon.

The chopper circled Blue Ridge a couple of times desperately looking for a place to land. The pilot had never landed on a ship before, and to make things worse it was in the dead of night. However this was not to stop the determined pilot from doing what he knew he had to do, save the lives of his family and the family of his copilot. He slowly lowered the huge aircraft to the seemingly small deck of this amphibious command ship. Fearful of hitting communications antennas, he rested the helo as far aft of the ship as he could go, leaving only inches to spare. Thus began the human drama which was about to unfold before Blue Ridge and her crew.

Apr. 30, 1975 was to be the setting for spectacular events which were about to take place. All eyes were once again turned to the horizon. Two more helos were making their way to Blue Ridge. They were Air America Helicopters, full of women, children and what few belongings they could gather before fleeing Saigon. In order to make more room the helicopter was lifted off the main deck and flown a couple hundred feet from Blue Ridge where it was ditched. Boat crews picked up the pilot and brought him safely aboard the ship.
Suddenly, the sky seemed to be full of helicopters. All of them were crammed with terror-stricken people, knowing they would have to return to Saigon if they could not find a place to land.

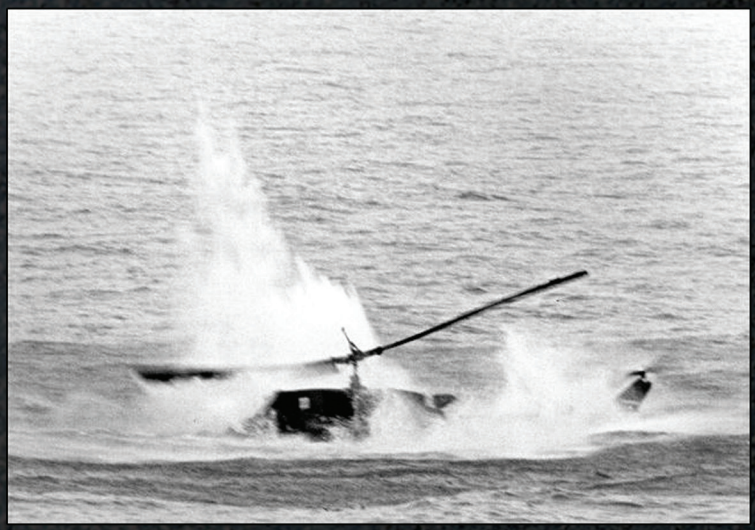
With rotors turning, the second Air America helo was preparing to return to Saigon for more evacuees. One South Vietnamese helo, hovering only a few feet away, disregarded a flight deck crewman's orders to move away. The pilot was coming in spite of the frantically waving crewman's arms trying to ward him off. At the last possible moment, men started heading for cover. Knowing what was going to happen, people were yelling, "Hit the deck!" and everyone dove for the deck, covering their heads for protection. Sailors threw themselves on Vietnamese children, protecting them with their bodies. The South Vietnamese craft set down on the very edge of the port side, but there was still not enough room. Rotor blades slashed together and exploded into thousands of flying pieces. The helo jumped and twisted viscously as pieces of the blades hit the flight deck.

Teetering precariously on the edge of the ship, refugees started jumping from the aircraft even before the blades had stopped turning.

At least thirty Blue Ridge crewmen jumped up from the main deck and ran to the battered craft where they started carrying children and helpingterror-stricken people to safety.From then on the helos battled for air space, trying to get noticed so they could discharge their human cargoes. As soon as the helicopters were unloaded, they were flown off the ship and ditched in the sea. There was no room to keep the helos aboard. Their doors were chopped off to allow the pilot an easy exit.

One brave Vietnamese pilot repeatedly faced death as he climbed into the cockpit and dropped himself and five different choppers into the sea. Each time, he was picked up by boat crews and returned to the ship. The ditching was spectacular. Some pilots settled their aircraft into the sea while others jumped with their helo still in the air. One pilot bailed out of his helo while it was still about 100 feet in the air. Ditching the aircraft this way caused potential danger to waiting boat crews. There was no way to tell which way the helo would go once the pilot had bailed out.

In still another instance, a pilot seemed to be having difficulty controlling his chopper just before ditching. He was coming drastically close to the ship and everyone feared he would collide with it. In a last



minute decision, he jumped out of the helo. When it hit the water, the rotor blades exploded and debris slammed into the side of the ship. A piece of the blades flew from the front of the ship, over the top of it and landed near the back of the flight deck. Again, no one was injured.
An Air America helo, its pilot in the water, swooped around the bow of the ship and crashed into the forward starboard side. It missed an open hatch into a mooring station by scant feet; again, no injuries.

A U.S. Marine helicopter loaded with evacuees radioed Blue Ridge it was nearly out of fuel. The flight deck was already occupied by another helo at the time. The helo crash alarm began screaming the alert of a coming disaster as the aircraft began losing altitude. All hope for a shipboard landing was thought to be lost when the chopper packed with newsmen and other evacuees, began settling into the water. The pilot quickly switched to emergency fuel as he began to descend. Water was pouring into the helo drenching its passengers. Finally, when the engines received the last pit of fuel, there was hope for getting the chopper aboard.

Flight deck crews rushed to the helo already in the main deck and tipped it over the side hoping to allow enough room for the incoming aircraft. With an air of relief, the huge twin-rotored helo settled on the flight deck with out incident with only inches to spare. Crewmen immediately began unloading the frightened people.

Through all the frantic landings and ditching, the Commanding Officer, Captain William D. Hart came over the general announcing system with calming words: "You're doing a marvelous job. I'm proud of you all. Just remember, be careful – watch yourselves and stay cool."

These events were just the introduction to the main event – "Operation Frequent Wind", so named because of the blowing effect caused by the helicopters' rotor blades. More than 40 ships and 70 helicopters took part in the world's largest helicopter evacuation. Supporting the Commander of the operation, Rear Admiral Donald B. Whitmire, Blue Ridge was the hub of the massive airlift. Thousands of Vietnamese and Americans were brought out of the beleaguered city of Saigon in 595 sorties.

EMBRY-RIDDLE
AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY
VOLLEYBALL

Blue Ridge

MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME

Layout by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Kelby Sanders

COMMAND CYBER READINESS INSPECTION

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Cale Hatch

COMMAND PROMPT

Cyber Forces Command, Norfolk, Va., will conduct a Command Cyber Readiness Inspection (CCRI) onboard 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) Sept. 17-21 to make sure the Navy's networks are safe.

According to Blue Ridge's Information Assurance Manager, Chief Warrant Officer Scott LaFountain, the CCRI is a relatively new program that's been put into place to ensure Navy networks are meeting safety standards.

"Cyber Forces Command will inspect the command to ensure that the networks are secure and in compliance with DoD policy," said LaFountain. "Eventually every command on the Global Information Grid will be inspected."

The inspection will be comprised of four areas: program administration, network configuration, computer network defense activities, and operations behavior. The Communications department is already focused on accomplishing the inspection's goals, said LaFountain.

"Right now we're training, building qualifications, scanning networks and testing passwords," said LaFountain. "We do a daily scan to check vulnerabilities and see what our adversaries can do."

The inspection is not just limited to the Information Systems department.

"For communications security to work, it's up to all Sailors and contractors who have been entrusted by the United States government to safeguard our information," said Blue Ridge Communications Officer Cmdr. George Davis. "Even those without clearances are just as responsible for safeguarding our information."

For those who may only use the network to send and receive e-mails, the responsibility of good cyber security is still very crucial to information security and the success of the upcoming CCRI.

"Information is all about sharing, but when we in the military share information we have to protect it, because if it falls into the wrong hands there could be very detrimental consequences," said Davis. "Communication security is all about protecting all paths and avenues through which information is let out."

Blue Ridge needs all Sailors to follow some simple rules for network use in order to help keep everyone proactive in safeguarding information:

-Remove Common Access Cards (CAC) when they are not in use.
-Digitally sign e-mails sent to off-ship DoD members.
-Log off NIPR and SIPR computers at the end of the workday so security updates can be installed properly.
-Follow proper password requirements, don't ever give out a password, and create a password that nobody else knows.
-Do not visit unauthorized websites on a DoD computer.

"These are all things that have been agreed to in a system authorization access request," said LaFountain. "It's common business practice for a DoD network."

In addition to preventing network threats, network users should keep themselves apprised of threats to network security.

"Network Security Division sends out cyber advisories with information about phishing and intrusion techniques that can affect not just DoD networks, but also personal accounts," said LaFountain. "We want people to pay attention to what they're opening and who it's from."

Cyber security is not just Information Systems' responsibility, it's a responsibility everyone on the ship bears equally. The enemy only needs to find one vulnerability for our security to be compromised.

"Information is like a puzzle, you get a piece here, a piece there, and another piece here and the whole picture comes together," said Davis.

STUDY NOW ADVANCE LATER

Written by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Timmy Wakefield

The September Navy-wide advancement exams are just around the corner. You may think September is in the distant future and you shouldn't worry about studying. May, June, July and August will come creeping up on you. It's at this point you realize it's too late to study and you have no Delorean and flux capacitor to take you back in time. You begin to cram in all the information you may have lost over the months or years. The late nights of cramming begin to take its toll on your concentration. Test day rolls around and you stare back and forth between the test and multiple-choice dots unable to make a proper decision. It's a messy, unorganized situation you don't want to be in. After all, you want to be successful and advance, right?

The cause of the cramming pitfall is caused by the "stability bias," which means that people rely too much on current memory to predict how well they will learn and remember something in the future.

I personally know cramming isn't worth losing an exam cycle.

The way I achieved second class petty officer so early was taking my studying in different direction.

My first course of action was learning how to study more efficiently. Anything I didn't understand, I made sure I learned what the text was trying to teach.

The August issue of Current Directions in Psychology completed experiments on proper studying. In the experiment, psychologists Doug Rohrer and Hal Pashler examined different studying techniques.

"Cramming on a single topic into a single session reduces long-term retention. It's better to leave it alone for a while and then return to it. Rohrer and Pashler also wanted to see if the duration of study breaks might make a difference in learning. It did. When two study sessions were separated by breaks ranging from five minutes to six months, with a final test given six months later, students did much better if their break lasted at least a month. So, rather than distribute their study of some material across just a few days, as millions of school children do when given a different list of vocabulary words each week, students would be better off seeing the same words throughout the school year."

Once my exam bibliography came out, I studied a little bit of a section each day. I didn't return back to sections I had studied until a week had past. If you study about a half hour a day, you'll be better prepared for the advancement exam. The biggest thing about memory retention is to always revert back to what you have studied and don't study too much at one time.

Another good thing to remember is sleep. I can honestly say enough sleep helps me out in multiple ways. I feel better throughout the day, I can focus on tasks and I can accomplish more and more efficiently. Have you ever taken an exam while sleepy? You're more focused on trying not to fall asleep than the actual test. It's really distracting.

Dr. Bruce McNaughton and Dr. Matthew Wilson conducted studies at the University of Arizona, on how deep sleep linked to memory.

"When you're asleep, the brain is processing information accumulated when you were awake. It's no longer storing new input; it's organizing information," explains Dr. McNaughton. "Your brain is like a cluttered desktop at the end of the day. At night, when you're asleep and no more information can be put on the desk – or in your brain – your brain can then file away the information."

According to Dr. Wilson, sleep is essential for memory formation. When a person is sleep-deprived, the brain's ability to move information from temporary memory to long-term stores is impaired. As a result, the information is lost or forgotten.

Why put yourself through the stress of cramming and being sleep deprived when you have the tools and resources to help you gain success in your career? Remember to look through your bibliography and study a little bit day by day. If you maintain a regular study schedule and maintain adequate sleep, you will set yourself up for success.

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA LIBERTY GUIDE

Photo by MC3 Fidel C. Hart

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Fidel Che Hart

Officially known as the Kingdom of Cambodia, this country located in the southern portion of the Indochina Peninsula is bordered by Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. The kingdom is a constitutional monarchy with King Norodom Sihamoni, a monarch chosen by the Royal Throne Council, as head of state. The head of government is Mr. Hun Sen, who has ruled Cambodia for 25 years.

The two official currencies of Cambodia are the Riel and U.S. Dollar. Most small purchases are made in Cambodian Riel, and larger amounts (over a few dollars) are made in U.S. currency.

Cambodia is a Buddhist country. Monks walk around in the morning, collecting food and money to maintain the Wats (Buddhist Temples). The Cambodian people are generally very polite and respectful, and expect the same in return. They are also known to joke a lot.

If you have any problem or disagreement here, best to smile and speak quietly and politely. Showing anger or disrespect is only likely to cause more trouble.

Khmer is the official language of Cambodia. Most of all the students here learn English. Many tourist places in Sihanoukville have English speakers.

The Khmer Empire was Southeast Asia's largest empire during the 12th century and remained powerful for nearly three centuries. Angkor was the empire's center of power, and was the world's largest pre-industrial city. The ruins of Angkor are located in modern-day Siem Reap. More than two million people visit Angkor Park annually.

If you think of the historic wonders of Angkor Wat when you hear "Cambodia," then Sihanoukville is the complete opposite.

Sihanoukville is only 50 years old. A coastal city on the Gulf of Thailand, it was dubbed by the New York Times as "Asia's next trendsetting beach." Scuba diving, snorkeling, boating and island hopping are typical activities to do here.

After a day of soaking in the sun and playing on the beach, Sihanoukville still has things to offer. Tour around town and go shopping or have a food trip. You can find great food every where, and depending on your taste for the exotic, you can have familiar Western food, or "exotic" like grilled dog or fried spiders. Bon appetit!

Photo by MC3 Fidel C. Hart

Photo by MC3 Fidel C. Hart

SIHANOUKVILLE'S TOP 4 BEACHES

Sihanoukville's location makes it a prime spot for numerous beach resorts in the area. While most are open to the public, some are privately reserved for their resort guests. Some beaches may be rocky and not ideal for swimming, but most have an abundance of white sand.

Most travelers frequent the beaches nearest town, i.e., Victory, Serendipity, Independence, Sokha and Ochheuteal. The big beaches are full of grass hut bars and restaurants and a number of small shacks offering barbeque food and cold drinks. Beach umbrellas are a common sight and at night, the beaches are alive with night parties.

1 Ochheuteal Beach is the most popular. Beach stands and chairs dot the 2-km long stretch and there are always a lot of people lounging around. Best for budget conscious travelers.

2 Serendipity- called the Western Beach- is filled with Western restaurants, hence its moniker. It is located north of Ochhueteal Beach.

3 Victory Beach is known as having the best view of the sunset. It is also known for the Russian plane that is now a restaurant.

4 Sokha has been called Sihanoukville's nicest beach. It has shallow waters perfect for floating and lazing around.

10 M BELOW: SIHANOUKVILLE'S BEST DIVING LOCATIONS

Photo by Alexandra Baackes (API)

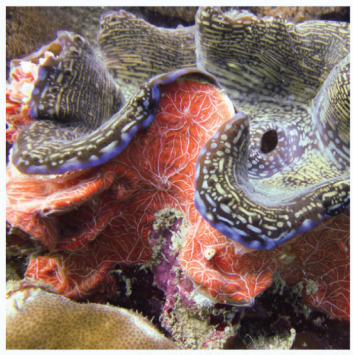


Photo by Alexandra Baackes (API)

Photo by Alexandra Baackes (API)

Photo by Alexandra Baackes (API)

Hile dtuk kroam mahasamaut- "swimming under the water" in Khmer, the language of Cambodia. Divers and snorkelers visit the prestine sites here that offer a wide variety of marine flora and fauna.
Some of the most popular dive sites around Sihanoukville are:

Koh Koun- Includes dive sites: Corner Bar, Vietnamese Bay and The Corral. The latter is the main seahorse breeding ground, hence the name. Corner Bar is where you can find sawblade shrimp, nudibranches, and large schools of batfish and barracuda.

Koh Tang- Host to eight dive sites and offers and abundance of marine life from soft corals to gardens of stag horn coral. The visibility can range anywhere from 10m-30m with an average of 15m.

Koh Prins- This is where to go for the big stuff. Whale sharks, marlin and giant barracuda are all here. This is an exclusive dive and you can most likely be free from crowds of divers. The visibility and depth are similar to Koh Tang and offer an amazing dive.

Koh Pulawei- The most remote dive location, close to Vietnamese waters. The island is covered in jungle, but here the diving has the most pristine reefs and the fish you find here will be the largest Cambodia has to offer.

CAMBODIA HEALTH PROTECTION

Provided by U.S. 7th Fleet Staff Surgeon and USS Blue Ridge Medical Department

Vector-borne (Insect-carrying) and Zoonotic (Animal-carrying) Diseases

Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes that bite during the morning and night. There is intermediate to high risk throughout the region and a high risk exists in the Kaoh Kong province, north of Sihanoukville.
Dengue is transmitted by mosquitoes that bite during the day, and presents significant risk in urban and rural areas.
Rabies is a high risk throughout the country and vaccines are given in post exposure situations so you should avoid contact with stray animals.

Communicable Diseases

Tuberculosis has over 100 cases reported every year for every 100,000 people (One of the highest in Asia). Avoid crowded public places & people actively coughing or visibly sick.
Influenza (Seasonal & Avian) is a concern, but all Blue Ridge personnel should have received a seasonal vaccine. Avian flu risk is minimal, but avoid bird markets and contact with bird droppings.
STDs have high rates of in Cambodia to include HIV. Please avoid the local sex trade & casual sexual encounters with locals.

Personal Protection Against Vector-borneDiseases

One bottle of insect repellant will be provided to you by your chain of command after arrival. Medical strongly recommends to use insect repellant around the clock in small amounts, unless you are inside the ship or in an air-conditioned hotel room with the windows closed. If your hotel provides bed nets, use them.

Food and Water-borne Diseases

There is a high risk of diarrheal illnesses throughout the country, so take precautions with ingesting food and liquids.

Personal Protection Against Food and Water-borne Diseases

Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer if possible. Do not utilize street-side vendors. Eat cooked or steamed foods in established restaurants. Drink and use bottled water instead of tap which includes not using using ice in your drinks. Avoid fresh vegetables if knowinly washed in tap water. Peel it, cook it, clean it, or don't eat it!

Accident and Injury Prevention

Wear your seatbelt while using public transportation. Use suncreen when you're outdoors and wear a hat if applicable.

Prevention & Response

Story by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Kelby Sanders

Aware, informed and vigilant. Today's Navy is leading the charge against sexual assault, and Blue Ridge is doing its part by making Sailors aware of the statistics surrounding sexual assault, informing them of what can be done to report the crimes, and encouraging them to act vigilantly to prevent sexual crimes from occurring.

April is nationally recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, SAAM. The Navy is highlighting sexual assault training this month in an effort to educate Sailors on the many ways sexual assault damages an individual and their command, how victims can get support, and how Sailors can play a part in prevention.

Chief Damage Controlman (SW) Ernest W. Thomas is Blue Ridge's command Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) officer. The SAPR program is designed to offer training and other resources to Sailors to help increase awareness of sexual assault and to help prevent such incidents from occurring.

"SAPR's main responsibilities are to train Sailors on how to respond and to provide support for the victims of sexual assault crimes," said Thomas.

The Blue Ridge SAPR program is posting flyers, Plan-of-the-Day notes, and other displays throughout the ship and SAPR advocates are giving training on the subject as well. Ship's Information Training and Entertainment (SITE) TV is also airing presentations each day.

"Prevention and intervention is everyone's duty. We all have a responsibility to look out for each other, because if you say something you just might prevent a crime."

-Chief Damage Controlman Ernest W. Thomas

But what exactly is sexual assault? Here's the official Department of Defense's definition:

Sexual assault is intentional sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent.

Sexual assault can be physical or verbal in nature, and the Navy has a zero-tolerance policy for dealing with it. You sexually assault someone, and you're out of the Navy.

When you know a sexual assault has been committed, or when you are the victim of the crime yourself, there are specific ways you can handle the situation, which include going to the proper command authorities.

On average 207,754 people over the age of 12 are sexually assaulted every year according to the Department of Justice's (DoJ) National Crime Victimization Survey. If you do the math you'll see that that means a sexual assault occurs every 2 ½ seconds.

Also, according to the DoJ, more than 70 percent of sexual assaults are committed by someone whom the victim knows, and more than half of sexual assaults go unreported.

In the military alone, 3,191 sexual assaults were reported in 2011 but the actual number may be nearly 19,000, said Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

The information is out there for every Sailor to see, and the resources are available to communicate with the proper personnel.

NAVLEAD

Story and Photo Illustration by MC3 Cale Hatch

Thirteen Sailors aboard U.S. 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) graduated from the ship's Petty Officer Second Class Selectee Leadership course, April 19.

The class is one of three courses comprised in the ship's Navy Leader Development (NAVLEAD) program. The two others are the Petty Officer Selectee and the Petty Officer First Class Leadership Courses.

NAVLEAD courses, which are held aboard Blue Ridge several times each quarter and when advancement results are released, include an average of 20 students and seven to 10 volunteer facilitators.

The three-day program is designed to prepare and develop Sailors for future leadership roles.

According to Chief Fire Controlman (SW/AW) Tim Esler, Blue Ridge's NAVLEAD program coordinator, the success of the course aboard Blue Ridge can be attributed to the volunteer facilitators and the hands-on scenario-based learning incorporated into the program.

"In my opinion, the best leadership training doesn't take place in the classroom; it happens on the deckplates," Esler said.

"That's why a great deal of the instruction includes real life situations and issues built into the scenarios that require the students to use critical thinking skills to solve them," Esler said.

"The petty officers who volunteer to facilitate the courses really are the backbone of the program," Esler added. "They care about the subjects and schedules to ensure our Sailors get the right tools to help them grow into future leaders."

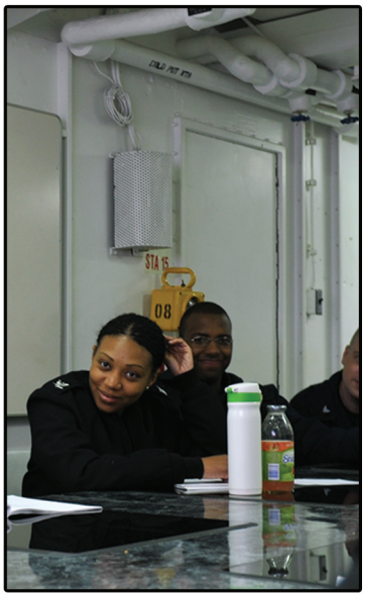
Some of the topics covered in NAVLEAD include professionalism, teamwork, command climate, communication, diversity and of course, leadership.

Boatswain's Mate Petty Officer 1st Class (SW) George Glover, Assistant NAVLEAD Coordinator, said the scenario-based training helps students hone in on their own leadership style.

"Having students act out real situations to see how they'll handle them brings out their leadership talents and gives them an opportunity to explore how they want to approach leadership on a more personal level," Glover said.

For one graduate of this most recent class, the curriculum taught him how to use his new leadership skills to tackle leadership issues and helped him develop new skills and ideas for future leadership roles.

"The class gave everyone different perspectives on how to deal with situations," said Culinary Specialist Petty Officer 2nd Class (SW) Kevin Carey, a student. "It taught me different ways to approach and solve problems and gave me new insights on how to handle being in a leadership position," he added.



Every DROP counts

Tips for Conserving Water

1) Don't wash clothes that aren't dirty.

2) Be mindful of the time you take while showering.

3) Use hand sanitizer instead of washing your hands in a sink.

4) Only use the necessary amount of water when cleaning your space.

5) Turn the water off while you brush your teeth.

6) Use paper or plastic eating utensils.

Photo courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration