



Navy League of the United States Siam Council, Thailand

CARAT 2012

Executive Summary:

CARAT is a series of bilateral exercises between navies, and it is held once a year in Southeast Asia. During CARAT 2012, Navy League Siam was pleased to present concerts from Thai and US military bands and to coordinate numerous COMSERV projects at various locations throughout the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand. As always the public concerts performed by the Royal Thai Navy Band and the United States 7th Fleet Band, "Orient Express", were huge crowd-pleasers. The COMSERV projects endeavor to foster strong US-Thai relations.

Having support from the Royal Thai Navy and United States Navy made a tremendous difference for the spectators, since songs were played in both Thai and English. Navy League Siam also hosted a reception for the CARAT 2012 participants as a small token of appreciation. Navy League Siam's contributions to supporting our sea services were recognized by CDR Carol McKenzie, CO of the USS Germantown (LSD-42), who noted, "*Many thanks for your dedication to our crew and the commitment to building relationships.*"



COMSERV at Banglamung Home for the Aged - [pics]



An important part of CARAT 2012 is performing community relations project for those less fortunate. Officers, chiefs, and sailors from USS Lassen (DDG-82), USS Germantown (LSD-42), USCGC Woesche (WMSL-751), HTMS Saiburi, along with the 7th Fleet Band (the Orient Express) helped to brighten the day of seniors at the Banglamung Home for the Aged. The skipper of the USS Germantown, CDR Carol McKenzie, was able to partake in the activities. She visited the COMSERV to see first-hand the great work being accomplished under the guidance of chaplains CDR Ronald Tomlin and LT Robert Hecox.

The Orient Express played some great tunes, and the Home's residents even got up and danced. Furthermore, Chaplain Hecox wowed the crowd with his Karaoke skills, much to the delight of the elderly residents. The COMSERV team worked hard to clean up the yard together with staff from the Marriott Resort & Spa.

COMSERV at Camilian Center - [pics]

The Camilian Social Center Rayong offers assistance to children living with HIV/AIDS. All ships that took part in CARAT 2012 were able to participate in a COMSERV dedicated to providing some happiness and well-wishes for the children at the Camilian Center. The Royal Thai Navy and US Navy did a great job sprucing up the grounds of the center, along with playing games with the children. The Orient Express put on a wonderful show for the kids. Admiral Carney, COMLOG WESTPAC, and Admiral Paitoon, CO of the Royal Thai Navy's Frigate Squadron 2, and their staffs got involved, as did the Marines from LSD-42. It

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was a great turnout for both the US and Thai navies, showing their strong commitment to supporting the community.

Chaplains CDR Tomlin and LT Robert Hecox organized an impromptu singing event, by lining up the COMSERV participants to give a performance of "Anchors Aweigh" and the Marine Corps hymn, which truly impressed the children of the Camilian Center. After the sailors finished playing with the kids in the morning, a delicious lunch was hosted by the center for all participants.



On the way back from the COMSERV, the sailors were treated to a photo opportunity at the famous Chi Chan Buddha image and feed bananas to a 60-year old elephant, with Navy League Siam Council as the unofficial tour guides. The US sailors even had the chance to try Thailand's famous durian fruit. Despite its notorious, pungent stench, many of the sailors agreed that it was delicious.

The crew from the USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) was also to take part in a separate COMSERV at the Camilian Social Center Rayong under the leadership of Chaplain Baker. The children at the center were very grateful for the kind visit from the USS Blue Ridge.

COMSERV Project by the USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) at the Pattaya Orphanage and Child Development Center - [pics]



On May 25th, 20 crewmembers from the USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19), along with Chaplain Baker, boarded busses for a short ride to the Pattaya Orphanage. Upon arrival the group was greeted by Ms. Toy, the administrator of the children section. She gave a brief presentation on the history of the Pattaya Orphanage and all the less fortunate children it helps on a daily basis. The COMSERV involved working with deaf students at the orphanage. The visitors from the Blue Ridge brought candy with them, which the children very much appreciated.

Following the COMSERV at the Pattaya Orphanage, the crewmembers from the USS Blue Ridge traveled to the Child Development Center in Hua Yai district. Upon arrival the sailors were greeted by the staff and children at the center. It did not take long for great friendships to be formed, especially when Chaplain Baker started playing the guitar.

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Central Festival Concert - [pics]

Setting up a public concert in Pattaya is no small task, and Navy League Siam was proud to help make this event a success for both the Royal Thai Navy Band and the 7th Fleet band - Orient Express. Unfortunately, heavy rain came and caused a power outage for the electrical equipment during the scheduled performance at the Central mall in Pattaya. To improvise the band used wind and acoustic instruments to play some classical Dixie music. The crowd enjoyed the music, despite the lack of electrical equipment.



Royal Garden Mall Concert - [pics]



Not to be dismayed by the rain at the Central Festival event, the Royal Thai Navy band and Orient Express vowed to put on a great show at the Royal Garden Mall. At 7:00pm, the show started, and the Thai Navy Band started out with Thai songs to get the crowd warmed up. This was followed by the Orient Express, who put on an unbelievable performance, receiving a tremendous round of applause from all spectators. Many senior officers were present to see the bands perform, including Admiral Paitoon, CO of the Royal Thai Navy's Frigate Squadron 2, and his family, along with staff officers from COMLOG WESTPAC. Unsurprisingly, many of the spectators rushed

up to have their pictures taken with the band members so they could share with their friends on Facebook.

Concert at BIG C - North Pattaya - [pics]

Another performance by both the Royal Thai Navy band the Orient Express took place at the Big C shopping center in North Pattaya. The Royal Thai Navy, under the leadership of LCDR Charoen Rattanahiran, provided great oversight and assistance during this event to ensure that it was an enjoyable experience for the audience. Rear Admiral Carney from COMLOG WESTPAC, along with his staff, also attended the event. As in previous performances by the bands, the audience was tremendously delighted. Many young Thai women wanted to make sure that they could get a picture with the bands, and the bands were happy to be gracious celebrities for the day.



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CARAT Band Rocks Out at Darasamatur Catholic School - [pics]



On May 22nd, the CARAT Band performed at the Darasamatur Catholic School in Sriracha. This performance was highly anticipated, and took part in front of the biggest crowd in 14 years. Four thousand students, ages 7-17, were present to cheer on the band and enjoy the music. Luckily, many teachers and chaperones were present to help keep these young students under control, because they all wanted to rush the band to get their pictures taken with them. The school reciprocated for this outstanding performance by providing the band members a delicious lunch.

On the lighter side, a little boy of about eight rushed the stage, danced, and even played the drums, much to the enjoyment of the bands and audience. The CARAT Bands are tremendous goodwill Ambassadors, showing that the US military can do great things with local communities.

Showing the Band around Thailand - [pics]

Despite a rigorous performance schedule, the Orient Express was able to enjoy some time off to see some of the great things Thailand has to offer. The Navy League Siam Council took the band members to a dinner at an Italian Restaurant, treated them to Hefeweissbeer at the Nong Apartment, allowed them to swim with dolphins, visit elephants, and even took them on a fishing trip. They definitely deserved some rest and relaxation for all the outstanding entertainment they were providing.



Navy League Teppanyaki Competition 2012 - [pics]



The Executive Chef from the Marriott Resort & Spa invited the Culinary Specialists from the visiting CARAT 2012 ships to a cooking competition at the Benihana Restaurant in Pattaya. Five teams came to participate in a heated competition to see which ship had the best chefs. Selecting the winner was a difficult task for the Executive Chef, and results were based on outstanding taste, presentation, and technique.

Navy League Siam Council is pleased to announce the following winners of the Teppanyaki Competition 2012:

- 1st place from USS Lassen (DDG-82) - LT Ben Banaszewski/CS1 Isaak Cabalero
- 2nd place from USCGC Waesche (WMSL-751) - FS3 D J Diederich/FSS Austin Dor
- 3rd place from USS Germantown (LSD-42) and USCGC Waesche (WMSL-751) - CSSN Vargas Humberto/FSI John Hagenmayer

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- 4th place from USS Germantown (LSD-42) - CS2(SW) Lanuza Ronaldo/CSSN Calmicker
- 5th Place from USS Lassen (DDG-82) - CS2 Amoyan/CSSN Skeen Shannon

Navy League Siam Council would like to recognize the outstanding cooking skills of all teams who took part in this friendly competition.

Thai Cooking Class Onboard the USS Germantown - [pics]



Early in the morning at the Fighting Gator Café onboard the USS Germantown (LSD-42), an Executive Chef from the Pattaya Marriot Resort & Spa taught the Culinary Specialists onboard how to prepare a delicious Thai meal. Besides the Culinary Specialists from the USS Germantown (LSD-42), crewmembers from the USS Lassen (DDG-82) and the USCGC Waesche (WMSL-751) joined this fun and educational session. The challenge was to prepare a meal with Jasmine rice, Thai pork salad, Tom Yam Gung (shrimp salad), Green Curry, and banana in coconut milk as the desert. All the dishes were finished just in time for lunch. Everyone very much enjoyed the food, including the

Commodore of DESRON 31, and the CO and XO of the Germantown. Navy League Siam is always proud to be able to organize some new and exciting food for our visiting sailors.

Navy League Reception for CARAT 2012 Participants - [pics]

Navy League Siam, once again, hosted a reception a Dicey Reilly's Pub at the Pattaya Marriot Resort & Spa as a small token of appreciation for the hard-working people who keep us safe. Those invited included the officers, chiefs, and crewmembers from USS Lassen (DDG-82), USS Germantown (LSD-42), USCGC Waesche (WMSL-751), USNS Safeguard, and members from DESRON 31. Rear Admiral Carney, COMLOG WESTPAC in Singapore, and Vice Admiral Paitoon, Commanding Officer of the Royal Thai Navy's Frigate Squadron 2, and his staff were able to join as well. The pub was full and all participants of CARAT 2012 enjoyed the food and beer.



Over the course of the evening, plaques were exchanged between the USCGC Waesche (WMSL-751) and the HTMS Taksin to recognize the achievements of outstanding sailors:

HTMS Taksin Blue Jacket of the Quarter:

- Gunner's Mate CPO1 Manop Suksotthi - Sailor of the Quarter
- Quartermaster PO1 Weerapong Pormchaiya - NCO of the Quarter

Royal Thai Marines of the Quarter:

- Petty Officer 1st Class Tongton Sangham

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- Petty Officer 1st Class Danai Rodpai

USCGC Waesche (WMSL-751) Recognition:

- EM2 Ariel Vega - Sailor of the Quarter

Fast Marine Team Recognition:

- CPL Robert Gatens - NCO of the Quarter
- PFC Courtney Cook - Marine of the Quarter

During the remainder of the evening, the group enjoyed great friendship, along with some excellent door prizes. A big thank you is in order to sponsors of the reception: Royal Garden Mall, Marriott Resort & Spa, Nova Hotel, World Gems, and Blue Bird Massage.

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