



Navy League of the United States Siam Council, Thailand

USS George Washington (CVN-73) and Escorts visit Pattaya, Thailand

Executive Summary:

On August 6, 2011, the USS George Washington (CVN-73), the USS Mustin (DDG-89), the USS Cowpens (CG-63) and the USS John McCain (DDG-56) moored at Laem Chabang port in Pattaya, Thailand for some much deserved liberty. All in all it was an exciting and extensive visit that included 15 COMRELS, six sporting events, a cooking competition at the Benihana Restaurant, and a Thai cooking class onboard the USS George Washington. It was a great opportunity for the Officers, Chiefs, and Sailors from the carrier group to learn a bit about Thailand, as well a chance for the Thai people to learn about the importance of the United States Navy. Navy League Siam was delighted to support our visiting service members and provide some hospitality.



Onboard Reception: [pics](#)

On the evening of August 6th, a reception was held onboard the USS George Washington with many dignitaries and friends of the United States in attendance. Rear Admiral Chaiyot Sundaranaga from the Royal Thai Navy and US Ambassador to Thailand, Kristie Kenney, were some of the guests of honor. The skipper of the USS George Washington, Capt. David A. Lausman, gave a toast that commemorated the longstanding ties between the United States and Thailand, particularly in regards to strategic affairs.



COMRELS

On August 7th, the GW Sailors were able to partake in some athletic activities. They played a soft ball game against the Pattaya Sports Club team, and a rugby match against the Pattaya Panthers.



The Mechai Bamboo School is a school for the underprivileged located in rural northeastern Thailand. On August 8th, the students and teachers had the unique opportunity to visit the USS George Washington and meet with the Officers, Chiefs, and Sailors. The

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students from rural Thailand learned about all the effort, teamwork, and leadership that it takes to run a ship of this size and complexity. CMSgt Paul Marvin from the United States Embassy Defense Attache's office also joined and helped organize the ship's tour. [\[pics\]](#)

On August 8th, the carrier group was able to perform a COMREL with the students of Ban Kau Din School. The Royal Thai Navy took part in these community activities as well. Some of the Thai naval personnel present were Chaplain Capt. Dhammanoor Wisessingha from the Chaplain Division, Education Department and eight other Royal Thai Navy Chaplains. They rendezvoused with the visiting Chaplains from the US Navy who included:



- Capt. Phillip Gwaltney, the Pacific Fleet Chaplain
- Commander Brian Haley, USS George Washington Chaplain.
- Lieutenant Commander William M. Stewart, CDS-15 Command Chaplain
- Lieutenant Darin D. Dunham, Command Chaplain COMLOG WESTPAC Singapore
- Lieutenant Daniel Clark, USS John McCain Chaplain



The GW visitors painted two small buildings at the school and joined a game of soccer against the students. The GW visitors lost 3-1; however, the sailors showed great sportsmanship throughout the match. The students were all given candy, and the teachers were given athletic equipment and school supplies to improve the extracurricular activities for the students at their school. The COMREL leader presented a picture of the USS George Washington to the headmaster as a souvenir, which was

signed by the ship's skipper. [\[pics\]](#)

Simultaneously on August 8th, other COMREL teams from the USS George Washington visited the Camillian Social Center in Rayong for Thai adults and children living with HIV, the Fountain of Life Children's Center for underprivileged children in Pattaya, and the Pattaya School for the Blind.

On August 9th, four separate COMREL teams from the carrier group engaged in activities that were tremendously beneficial to the local Thai community to include a visit to the Wat Hua Yai School, a visit to the Karunwet Homage Center, a visit to the Thung La Han School, and a special COMREL to meet the families of Thai Rotarians in Chantaburi province.

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On August 10th, the USS Mustin (DDG-89) COMREL team went to the Banglamung School, where they played a friendly game of basketball and other sports with the 240 students. The Mustin sailors also donated some much-needed kitchenware to the school, so that the students would have a bowl to eat their much cherished ice cream. Additionally the Banglamung School was presented with a picture of the Mustin. [\[pics\]](#)



On August 10th, the USS John McCain (DDG-56) visited the Thai retirees at the Banglamung Home of the Aged, which is operated by the Thai government. The sailors helped clean up the grounds and spent quality time with its 180 residents. [\[pics\]](#)



Also on August 10th, the USS Cowpens (CG-63) team arrived at the Ban Thung Krad School. There were 44 sailors on this team, which is a quite an impressive number. The team immediately went to work, and the canteen for the students was painted in short order. The sailors formed teams to play basketball, volleyball, and soccer with the students. Additionally, some of the sailors taught the young students English, a much desired area of instruction in Thailand.

The Ban Thung Krad School put on a great lunch for all the visiting sailors, and the Thai food was enjoyed by all. At the end of the COMREL, Chaplain Kim presented the headmaster with a picture of the Cowpens, along with ship's ball caps and coins. The George Washington sailors also were hosted for a similar COMREL at the Banglamung Boys Home. [\[pics\]](#)



On that afternoon, the USS George Washington organized a soccer match against the Banglamung Police department. The score will remain a secret to prevent embarrassing the friendly visitors from the George Washington, but a good time was had by all. Other sporting events included a soccer match between the Tepravit FC and the Cowpens Sailors. The match was a real nail-biter, which the Cowpens team lost in a 2-3 penalty shootout. There was also a women's basketball match between the GW sailors and Bangsean University. [\[pics\]](#)

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Also in the afternoon, a COMREL was organized at the Wat Djitapawand Buddhist temple for the George Washington sailors. 34 sailors made merit by performing the difficult task of helping to clear grass and shrubs from the grounds. After an hour of this hard work, the group was invited inside the temple by the monks for some fresh fruit. The head monk, Phra Phunsab, presented all the visitors with Buddha amulets from one of the most famous temples in Bangkok. These amulets are believed to help obtain goals and bring good luck to its owner. [\[pics\]](#)

Teppanyaki Cooking Competition [\[pics\]](#)

As always when a carrier group visits the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand, Navy League Siam and Marriott Resort & Spa prepare special events for the sailors to show off their culinary skills. A Teppanyaki Cooking Competition was hosted for the entire carrier group on August 8th. The event started at 1:00p.m. on the premises of Benihana Restaurant, the famous Japanese franchise. Each participating team was provided identical ingredients to prepare two dishes. It did not take long before the teams were showing off their cooking talent.



After 90 minutes of cooking, everyone was finished with their masterpieces and ready to be judged. The judges were the Thai executive chefs from the Marriott Hotel, and they conducted a taste-test and asked the cooks numerous questions. The contestants were judged based on the presentation and knowledge of the dishes they just created.

The winning teams were:

- 1st Place: CS3 Beeson & CS3 White – USS George Washington (CVN-73)
- 2nd Place: CS3 Aaron Quiambao & CSSN Charles Adul – USS Cowpens (CG-63)
- 3rd Place: CSSN Williams & CS3 ANAH VU – USS Mustin (DDG-89)
- 4th Place: CSSN Dossett & CS2 Donathan – USS George Washington (CVN-73)
- 5th Place: CS1 Nicholas Young & CSSN Latrice Walker – USS Cowpens (CG-63)
- 6th Place: CS2 Quiapo & CSSN Batenhorst – USS George Washington (CVN-73)
- 7th Place: CSSN Salgado & CSSN Duran – USS George Washington (CVN-73)

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Every participant received a certificate from the Marriott Hotel, and the 4th-7th place teams were given a specially-made beer glass from Navy League Siam to enjoy their liberty and not feel upset about losing the competition. The 3rd place team received a crystal elephant trophy and two complimentary bottles of wine from the Wine Cellar. The 2nd place team received a large crystal elephant trophy and three complimentary bottles of wine from the Wine Cellar. Finally, the winner was presented with a large crystal elephant trophy and a 1-day voucher from Budget Rent-a-Car for a 9-seater van, which included a driver and free gas.



Thai Cooking Class Onboard the USS George Washington

On early morning August 10th, the executive chefs from the Marriott Resort & Spa traveled with the Navy League Siam President, Peter Thorand, to the George Washington to organize a Thai cooking class. They were greeted onboard by approximately 100 Culinary Specialists. The sailors were given hands-on training for the preparation of a three-course Thai gourmet meal. The executive chefs brought all the necessary ingredients for this event, and the sailors thoroughly enjoyed learning the secrets of this interesting cuisine. Each Culinary Specialist received a certificate for participating in this activity.

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