

the Almanac

"I have not yet begun to fight!" USS BONHOMME RICHARD LHD 6

15 January 2012

Cloudy With a Chance of Washdown

Story and photos by MC3 Marcus L. Stanley

Checking the local weather, the forecast is cloudy skies with no chance of rain on the coast of San Diego, California. Just off the coast, USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6) is steaming with the sun peeking down through the clouds on its 844-foot long, 106 feet wide steel frame. The skies continue to clear, and yet a few Sailors can be seen on the flight deck of the "Revolutionary Gator" donning foul weather suits.

They know they are going to get wet, they even know when it will happen.

As they finish dressing, their Chief gives the go ahead, "Start zone one." After a five second countdown over handheld radios, rows of nozzles resemble home sprinklers erupting in geysers on the deck. Those few Sailors who, seconds ago stood dry as a Southern California summer day, are now drenched from head to toe.

Instantly they scatter, running to the source of the eruptions, not trying to escape the mechanical monsoon. A Sailor shouts, "This one's not working!" trying to be heard over the sound of roaring water. Another Sailor moves toward him holding a large metal board and grease pencil. She scans the board, makes a notation with her grease pencil just as another Sailor yells, "There's another one over here!"

They continue checking every sprinkler embedded in the 2.4 acres of flight deck and for very good reason.

"This is not your ordinary sprinkler system used to water grass, this is part of the ship's self-defense against some pretty nasty stuff," said Damage Controlman Fireman Dan Michael Luna. "If we were ever exposed to airborne agents; chemical, biological, radiological, we can counter that with the washdown system."

See "Washdown" on pg. 4



↑ Sailors aboard USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6) test the ship's counter-measure wash down system. The counter-measure washdown system is used to minimize the affects of chemical, biological and radiological exposure.



“...I have to say this was the most successful washdown I have ever been apart of in my four years onboard.”

- DCC Willie Cordova

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“Washdown” *...continued from page 1*

The system is made up of approximately 500 sprinkler heads, and when activated will wash the ship’s exterior in its entirety.

Before activating the washdown system, there were pre-maintenance checks that had to be completed. The firemain had to be completely flushed so that maximum flow of water could go through each sprinkler. Aside from maintenance, all the aircraft and vehicles on the flight deck had to be stowed due to the corrosiveness of salt-water.

This was a complete team effort,” said Damage Controlman Chief Petty Officer Willie A. Cordova.

“My guys planned for this all week, coordinating with other departments to make sure everything was ready to go. They were up late last night doing pre-maintenance checks, and I have to say this was the most successful washdown I have ever been apart of in my four years onboard.”

As BHR sails today, there is no threat of exposure to any substance that could harm the crew. The Sailors being drenched by the washdown are doing routine maintenance, and will check every sprinkler head for damage that could prove detrimental in an emergency.

“It’s not a fun job, it’s cold, wet and takes a long time to complete the checks but the safety of the crew depends on it,” said Luna.

KBHR MOVIE SCHEDULE SUNDAY 1/15

TIMES	CH 3	CH 4	CH 8
0600-0800	THE RITE	127 HOURS	ZOMBIELAND
0800-1000	RESIDENT EVIL AFTERLIFE	VEGAS VACATION	FIGHT CLUB
1000-1200	VAN HELSING	Harry Potter Deathly Hollows	BOOK OF ELI
1200-1400	BLADE	Harry Potter Deathly Hallows 2	AVATAR
1400-1600	DAYBREAKERS	OLD DOGS	DESPICABLE ME
1600-1800	UNDERWORLD 3	YOUR HIGHNESS	EASY A
1800-2000	THE WOLFMAN	127 HOURS	ZOMBIELAND
2000-2200	NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD	VEGAS VACATION	FIGHT CLUB
2200-0000	DAWN OF THE DEAD	Harry Potter Deathly Hallows	BOOK OF ELI
0000-0200	CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD	Harry Potter Deathly Hallows 2	AVATAR
0200-0400	DAYBREAKERS	OLD DOGS	

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