



31st MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT PRESS RELEASE



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31ST MEU PREPARES FOR DEPLOYMENT TO ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

CAMP HANSEN, OKINAWA, Japan (Jan. 24, 2011) – Marines and Sailors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit are preparing to board Navy ships of Amphibious Squadron 11 and are scheduled to depart within days to begin a patrol of the Asia-Pacific region.

During this upcoming patrol, the 31st MEU is scheduled to participate in the bilateral exercise Cobra Gold 2012 with partner nation military forces in Thailand.

"The 31st MEU looks forward to continuing the enduring partnership with Thailand during Cobra Gold 2012," said Col. Andrew MacMannis, commanding officer, 31st MEU. "We have always enjoyed participating in this exercise. We look forward to improving our bilateral interoperability with the armed forces of Thailand."

The 31st MEU includes more than 2,200 Marines and Sailors, and is comprised of four elements: the Command Element; Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 4th Marines; Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (Reinforced) and Combat Logistics Battalion 31.

The majority of Marines and Sailors of the 31st MEU are scheduled to load aboard USS Essex (LHD 2), with some also boarding USS Germantown (LSD 42) and USS Tortuga (LSD 46). The embarkation is scheduled to take place at the Naval Facility White Beach.

Media are invited to view the 31st MEU boarding the USS Essex at 12:00 noon, Monday, January 30th, 2011. Media will have opportunity to view the service members and equipment boarding, capture photos and video of the event, and interview leadership about the upcoming deployment.

Media should meet at the front gate of Naval Facility White Beach by **11:30 a.m.** Monday, Jan. 30. Please send the full names of everyone attending, as well as the vehicle plate number that will need access to confirm your attendance by **4:00 p.m.** Thursday, Jan. 26. The information should be sent to email: Okinawapao@usmc.mil or by phone to 098-970-0790.

The 31st MEU provides a forward-deployed, flexible sea-based force capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response and limited contingency operations in the Asia-Pacific area. Always ready to respond, the 31st MEU is also prepared to provide humanitarian aid and disaster relief when directed. The 31st MEU is the only continually forward-deployed MEU, and remains the nation's force-in-readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

For more information about the deployment of the 31st MEU, follow the MEU on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/31stMEU or visit the webpage at: www.marines.mil/unit/31stmeu.