

February 2015



USS BENFOLD (DDG 65)

Seal Beach Visit, Ammunition Onload, INSURV Preparations

ARRIVALS

SHSA Chantella King
CS1 Patrick Rapada
PSSR Jeysica Petershough

DEPARTURES

LTJG Brett Hasson
SN Andrew Garrett
GSM3 James Flaherty
STG2 Aliesha Vaccaro
FCC Sean Mizner
BM3 Geraldine Grajeda
CS3 Kevin Mejia

PROMOTIONS

CTT3 Michael Nelson

REENLISTMENTS

OS2 Kelly Piper
BM3 Jeremy Morehead



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First Division prepares to drop the anchor as USS BENFOLD exits the San Diego Channel.

February marked another groundbreaking month for the USS BENFOLD and her outstanding crew as they embarked on their longest underway to date and executed their tasking professionally and precisely.

Getting Underway to Seal Beach

After returning from a hard-earned holiday leave period, the BENFOLD crew came back to their beloved ship with renewed focus and excitement for the future. With each underway comes the opportunity for every crew member to hone their technical expertise in an operational setting, and team BENFOLD did just that from February 9th to February 20th.

On the Sunday prior to getting underway the crew gathered on the ship to finalize preparations for what was sure to be the most challenging underway they had yet to experience as a team. This early muster also afforded everyone more time to rest and ensured the bridge team's alertness for a harbor transit through dense fog.



BM3 Rigoberto Espinozahernandez passes the word during a General Quarters drill while LTJG Brett Hasson looks on.

However, exiting the harbor did not signal relief, as the same watchstanders transitioned into a precision anchorage in the same omnipresent fog. A precision anchorage requires delicate coordination between the bridge team and the Boatswain's Mates on the forecandle to ensure the anchor is dropped on a specific charted point with a limited margin of error. This exercise is always a challenge, but even more so in inclement weather. Regardless, First Division and the bridge team remained unfazed and performed an outstanding precision anchorage.

The Daily Grind

By the end of the first day at sea the San Diego coastline became a series of faint lights on the horizon and all attention shifted to the myriad of tasks at hand. While the focus of the underway was the continuation of testing on BENFOLD's new combat systems upgrades, every department took full advantage of the opportunity for at-sea training and material preparation for upcoming inspections.

Each day marked the start of more damage control drills, gun shoots, and seamanship training, alongside the constant battery of testing on BENFOLD's radars, communications, and missile systems.

The underway also included a healthy amount of recreation provided by the Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) team, who hosted a Steel Beach Picnic on the flight deck, crazy hat day, jersey raffle, and a spades tournament.



ENS Max Randolph and the ship's Navigator, LTJG Ian Thomas, give expert steering directions to SN Torin Chavez.

Seal Beach Ammunition Onload

One of the primary reasons for the February underway was to transit to Seal Beach and onload ammunition and missiles to complete testing prior to the homeport shift to Yokosuka, Japan. BENFOLD pulled into Long Beach Harbor and moored at Seal Beach on Tuesday morning, February 17th, and immediately began taking on ammunition via cranes. While most of the crew spent the first day removing trash from the ship and cleaning off salt from the week at sea, Weapons Department wasted no time in filling BENFOLD's magazines with all of the ammunition required to certify her prior to transitioning to a forward deployed vessel. The hard work of Weapons Department personnel did not go unnoticed as the Seal Beach staff praised team BENFOLD as "one of the most professional crews to ever take on ammo at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach".

For many BENFOLD crew members Seal Beach was their first port visit, and everyone enjoyed taking liberty after work and exploring the local eateries and bars. During the day, sailors could even be found running down the beach for PT.

Return to San Diego



SN Richard Vu leads a team of linehandlers during an underway replenishment.

After two days of loading ammunition, BENFOLD took in all lines and began the transit south to San Diego. The crew continued to demonstrate their professionalism as they successfully transited two harbors with heavy traffic and safely returned their ship to Naval Base San Diego. There was obvious excitement in the air as the brow was lowered and sailors began to head home to reunite with family and rest over the weekend, each of them sharing a sense of pride from their underway accomplishments and anticipation to return to sea.

Captain's Corner

“The BENFOLD family never ceases to amaze me. With a packed schedule of damage control drills, seamanship training, combat systems testing, ammo onload, and a virtually brand new crew, all of you pulled together and accomplished our longest underway to date - safely and professionally. I couldn't be more proud of all of you, and I am more excited than ever to return to sea and watch Team BENFOLD in a fully operational setting. Maintain this positive momentum as we continue to press through our training cycle.”

ONWARD WITH VALOR

M. M. Day
CDR USN



A Navy SH-60B helicopter takes off from USS BENFOLD after refueling.

Saved Rounds

As USS BENFOLD begins her transition to Yokosuka, Japan, it is important that all hands and their families remain informed. Please forward any questions regarding the homeport shift to Japan@ddg65.navy.mil.

Further support for families is available through the Yokosuka Enhanced Spouse Sponsorship Program (YESS), which is designed for military spouses to link up with a volunteer sponsor in Yokosuka that has already completed a similar homeport shift. Visit <https://yessyokosuka.wordpress.com/> to learn more.

Information regarding schools in Japan can be found at:

<http://www.dodea.edu/Pacific/Japan/JDSO/Parents/registration.cfm> .

Contact PAO@ddg65.navy.mil to submit photos or stories you would like to see in the next edition of the USS BENFOLD Newsletter.