



A Message From Jack's Collar

PCU BOUGAINVILLE (LHA 8) ISSUE 7 - OCT 2025

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Care For Sailors - Care For Families - Build Warfighters

Captain's Corner



Capt. Harry Marsh
Commanding Officer

Fighting EIGHT.

Let me start by offering my heartfelt congratulations to our new Chief Petty Officers. From this day forward, you will be someone's first Chief — a leader who will have a profound impact on your Sailor's careers. You are now entrusted with the responsibility of shaping the next generation of Sailors and ensuring the continued success of our Navy. Becoming a Chief Petty Officer requires the utmost commitment and dedication. The Chief will rise early, stay late, and face every challenge

with the unwavering support of their families and their fellow Chiefs. As we've done throughout our nation's history, the Navy will be ready — ready to fight and win our nation's wars. And when the call comes, we will rely on the strength and resilience of the Chief Petty Officer's Mess.

CMDCM Bazile, thank you for your inspiring leadership and the deep care you showed every Sailor. Your words reflect the strength and unity you helped build in this crew. We've made tremendous progress in assembling and developing a crew that will be ready to operate the Navy's newest amphibious assault ship and confidently take her to sea. What was once a small and determined team has grown into a highly capable and mission-focused unit, unified by a shared purpose, and strengthened by relentless training, operational readiness, and commitment to excellence. Serving alongside you has been an honor we will never forget. Your legacy will sail with us in every mission and every milestone ahead. With gratitude and respect — you'll always be part of Bougainville's heart.

Finally, let us also recognize our Ombudsman — Kassia Bee, Estelle Carpenter, and Chris Hogan. On behalf of the entire LHA 8 Bougainville team, we want to extend my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support to our Sailors and families over the past year and continuing today. Your dedication truly embodies the spirit

of the Ombudsman program and the Navy family. Your work in Pascagoula, Norfolk, and beyond has made an immeasurable difference. Whether supporting families already here, welcoming those who are joining our command, or ensuring Sailors loved ones are cared for during transitions, you have ensured that no family and no Sailor is ever overlooked.

Like channel buoys, you illuminate the safest path forward, helping us navigate the complexities of both military life and personal growth. Your encouragement, patience, and strength empower us to face the unknown with confidence and purpose. It is through your love, understanding, and steadfast belief in our mission that we can rise each day with the resolve to serve. You are an integral part of this journey, and your support is woven into every success we achieve. Thank you for standing by our Sailors and families — past, present, and future. Your impact on the Bougainville family will continue to be felt for years to come.

Our priorities remain clear: Take care of our Sailors. Take care of our families. Build warfighters.

As we move forward in the days, weeks, and months ahead, we will continue to stand ready—united as one team—to face any challenge and accomplish the mission.

Thank you for everything you do!

Very Respectfully
CAPT Harry Marsh

Department Feature: Supply



Cdr. Matt Duncan
Supply Officer

Fighting EIGHT.

As we near the end of 2025, BOUGAINVILLE's delivery is now a year away. The critical months between delivery and commissioning will feature key milestones such as Crew Move Aboard (CMA) and Sail Away. Among these complex evolutions, the Coordinated Shipboard Allowance List (COSAL) Onload represents the most significant logistical undertaking. This comprehensive effort encompasses

the loading of Onboard Repair Parts (ORPs), Maintenance Assist Modules (MAMs), test equipment, special tools, mattresses, general use consumables, and countless other essential items. In essence, COSAL provides the complete logistics backbone necessary to operate and maintain all shipboard systems, ensuring LHA 8 remains mission-ready and combat-effective.

Material comprising the ship's COSAL is ordered in seven increments, with six of seven already procured, and the seventh to be executed this September. This means that nearly all of our material requirements will be ready for inventory by early 2026. Currently, 450 of an estimated 2,000 tri-walls have been inventoried and sealed, so we've already completed nearly a quarter of our overall inventory. Your exceptional efforts to date have ensured that we're keeping pace, and at times exceeding pace, with Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) inventory teams (responsible for packing the tri-walls). However, there is still more work to be done over the next year, and the most demanding is yet to come.

Inventory accuracy is paramount

to mission success. We have one opportunity to verify that all required materials are accounted for before loading begins, and there is no margin for error. The recent relocation of COSAL warehouse materials from Hill's main shipyard compound to the offsite location in Gulfport has added complexity to this challenge. While the new facilities represent a significant upgrade over the previous infrastructure, the 45-minute drive from the shipyard makes precise inventory management even more critical. During trials and pre-move aboard operations, we'll need immediate access to specific materials on short notice. Therefore, maintaining detailed knowledge of the contents for each tri-wall and their exact location is not just important — it is mission-essential.

Your continued support in achieving a complete and accurate COSAL inventory is vital to our success. While the inventory and onload phases will be demanding, this meticulous preparation will ensure BOUGAINVILLE is ready to excel on day one. We can't succeed without you!

Very Respectfully,
CDR Matt Duncan

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Do you have a story to tell? We would love to feature you or your department in a future edition. Contact the Jack's Collar editorial staff by email at: LHA8_Media@us.navy.mil

On The Front Cover



CPO covers and vessels are displayed at the FY26 CPO Pinning Ceremony. For more photos of the Chief pinning, see page 4-5.



CMDCM Edward Bazile

Fighting EIGHT.

As I conclude my tour as your Command Master Chief, I want to express my deepest pride and gratitude for the incredible work each of you has done to shape Pre-Commissioning Unit Bougainville (LHA 8) into the strong, capable, and mission-ready command it is today.

Bougainville's First Command Master Chief Prepares to Depart

When I reported aboard in May 2023, this crew numbered only a handful of Sailors — united by vision, drive, and purpose. Together, we grew into a cohesive team that embodied the Bougainville spirit: toughness, resilience, and pride. Over these two and a half years, you accomplished what few Sailors have the opportunity to experience — building a warship from the keel up and preparing her to join the Fleet.

Under your leadership and dedication, Bougainville achieved several historic milestones — the launch on 30 September 2023 at Huntington Ingalls Industries in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and the christening on 2 December 2023, sponsored by Mrs. Ellyn Dunford. Through countless inspections, certifications, and trials, you ensured every space, system, and Sailor was ready for the next phase of our journey toward crew move-aboard and ship delivery.

Equally impressive has been our performance in professional development and advancement. Through your determination, mentorship, and teamwork, Bougainville's Sailor advancement rates — from E-6 and below through Senior Enlisted ranks, as well as our commissioned officers — have consistently exceeded Navy averages. This speaks volumes about

the caliber of leadership, commitment, and readiness that defines this crew. You have built a culture where excellence is the standard and success is shared across every department.

Your outstanding support to Fleet operations in the 7th, 5th, and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility has also been a hallmark of this command. Whether through individual augmentees, TADs, or mission support, Bougainville Sailors have already made their mark across the globe — demonstrating to the Navy and the nation that this ship and her crew will be a force multiplier wherever she sails.

As I prepare to turn over the watch, I leave with absolute confidence in this team and in the ship's bright future. You have proven that Bougainville is more than steel and systems — she is a reflection of the pride, professionalism, and heart of her crew. Continue to lead with integrity, stay ready, and take care of each other as you carry this ship forward to delivery and beyond.

It has been the greatest honor of my career to serve alongside you as your Command Master Chief.

Fair winds and following seas, shipmates. BOUGAINVILLE STRONG!

New Command Master Chief Gets Ready to Take the Helm

Command Master Chief Byrd is a native of Citronelle, Alabama. He enlisted in the Navy on July 1, 1997 and attended Recruit Training at RTC Great Lakes, Illinois. He attended Naval Technical Training Center (NTTC), Corry Station, Pensacola, Florida for Electronic Warfare "A" School and graduated with honors in December of 1998. In 2005, he received a degree in Applied Science from Excelsior College, and is a graduate of the Senior Enlisted Academy Class 148 (Green Group) and CMC/COB course 206.

In January 1999, he reported to his first sea command aboard USS Decatur (DDG 73), serving as AN/SLQ-32A(V)3 Technician and Operator. In June 2006, he reported to USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) as the Leading Chief Petty Officer of Operations Tactical Division. Under his leadership, Roosevelt's highly effective Passive Countermeasures Maintenance System (PCMS) was nominated by Southeast Regional Maintenance Center and COMDESRON 24 as the 2006 and 2007 PCMS Ship of the Year and was lauded in trade publications for its effectiveness. In November 2013, he accepted orders to Commander, Carrier Strike Group 12 (CCSG 12) and served as CCSG 12 Senior Enlisted Leader and N6/N39 LCPO. He led CCSG 12 through a demanding training cycle, culminating in an around-the-world deployment aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).

His leadership was directly responsible

for integrating Electromagnetic Maneuver Warfare principles into an operational environment, resulting in TRCSG producing more Tactical Electronic Intelligence (TACELINT) Reports in one deployment than any strike group in history. Following two tours serving in the role of Command Senior Enlisted Leader/Advisor he decided to join the CSEL program officially. After selection, he joined the pre-commissioning crew of USS HERSHEL "WOODY" WILLIAMS (ESB 4), where he served as Command Master Chief until his departure in February 2021. After 23 years in the surface community, CMDCM Byrd joined the aviation community as the CMC of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWO SIX in March of 2021. He then served as the CMC of USS Philippine Sea (CG 58) before his selection as the next CMC for PCU Bougainville.

In September 2002, he transferred to the Center for Cryptology, Corry Station, Pensacola, Florida for duty as an EW "A" and "C" School instructor. Within this successful tour, he was designated a Master Training Specialist, and in September 2005 was selected to Chief Petty Officer. Following a successful sea tour, he transferred to Afloat Training Group Mayport as the lead Electronic Warfare Assessor. In this capacity, he spearheaded a revolution in Electronic Warfare training for ATG under the new Surface Force Readiness Manual, resulting in a streamlined training cycle



CMDCM Jeremy Byrd

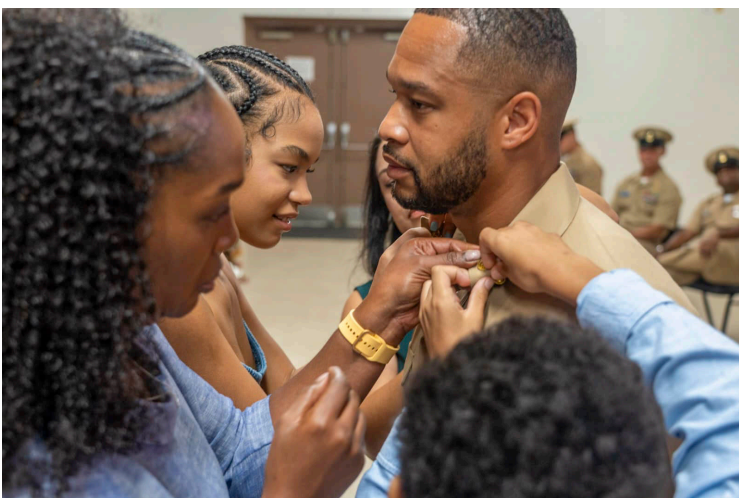
and improved EW readiness for all surface ships. In September 2016, he reported to Joint Forces Staff College as the Command Senior Enlisted Leader and faculty for the Joint Command and Control Information Operations School.

He earned his Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist, Enlisted Information Warfare Specialist, and Aviation Warfare Specialist designations. Decorations include the Joint Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendations Medal (2 Awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (3 Awards), and various unit and campaign awards.

Chief Pinning at PCU and PCD Bougainville



Photos by MCC Carpenter, MC1 Kinnee & MC2 Hardy



LHA 8 Sailors Enjoy Summer at Command Picnics



Photos by MCC Carpenter, MC1 Kinee & MC2 Skyles





The Day Bougainville's War Finally Ended

On the morning of 8 September 1945, a humid stillness hung over the Torokina airstrip on Bougainville. Three years of brutal jungle fighting had ended elsewhere with Japan's surrender aboard the USS Missouri six days earlier, but for the thousands of Allied troops and islanders here, the war's final act was just beginning.

Shortly after 10 a.m., a small procession emerged from the treeline. At its head walked Lieutenant General Masatane Kanda, commander of the Imperial Japanese Army's 17th Army. Beside him was Vice Admiral Sampei Kusaka, representing Japan's naval forces in the Solomons. Behind them trailed aides carrying neat leather cases, a striking contrast to the gaunt soldiers still scattered across Bougainville's jungles. Their destination was a wooden table beneath an Australian flag, where Lieutenant General Stanley Savage of the Australian II Corps waited to accept their surrender.

The scene was both formal and surreal. Kanda wore a crisp uniform despite months of near-starvation in the interior, his sword polished to a mirror finish. He bowed slightly before handing the weapon to Savage, a quiet

but unmistakable symbol of defeat. Then, with deliberate strokes, the Japanese leaders signed documents ordering some 23,000 troops to lay down their arms, the largest single surrender in the entire South Pacific campaign.

The numbers concealed years of hardship. Cut off by Allied landings in late 1943, Kanda's forces had survived on jungle gardens and whatever they could forage. Malaria and malnutrition had thinned their ranks, yet they remained capable of organized resistance. Many Allied soldiers watching that day knew that if the surrender had not come, these men could have made one last, desperate fight.

Instead, the ceremony passed with quiet dignity. Australian witnesses later remarked on the mutual respect between former enemies. There were no cheers, only the rustle of paper and the soft clink of a sword laid across a table. For Bougainville's local population, who had endured occupation, forced labor, and the terror of crossfire, the moment marked a long-awaited release.

By afternoon, orders went out for

Japanese units to move into designated camps and surrender their weapons. Piles of rifles, machine guns, and mortars soon grew along the beach, mute testimony to what might have been. Within weeks, the soldiers were processed for repatriation to a homeland they had not seen in years.

Although the surrender brought peace, the aftermath posed new challenges. Thousands of Japanese soldiers required food, medical attention, and transportation, straining limited Allied supplies. Local villagers, many of whom had secretly aided coastwatchers and Allied patrols, now faced the slow task of rebuilding homes, gardens, and schools after years of occupation and bombardment. The ceremony at Torokina closed the war, but the recovery of Bougainville would take far longer.

The world remembers Tokyo Bay as the stage for Japan's capitulation. But on Bougainville, 8 September 1945 was the true day of peace. In a clearing on a remote Solomon Island, a war that had devoured thousands of lives ended not with a final battle, but with the quiet scratch of pens and the lowering of a sword.

Story by MC2 Nicholas Skyles