

Amphibious Combat Vehicles Conduct Egress Training, Mark First Time Ashore Overseas in Okinawa



From the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

OKINAWA, Japan (June 24, 2024) – The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted the first overseas ship-to-shore operations with Amphibious Combat Vehicles June 24, 2024, at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, Japan.

Elements of the 15th MEU, embarked aboard the amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), arrived at White Beach June 18 for a port visit and to conduct sustainment training.

During the training June 24, the Marines and Sailors of Alpha Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/5, 15th MEU, embarked the ACVs as they splashed from the well deck of Harpers Ferry. Safety boats assigned to 3rd Expeditionary Operations Training Group then pulled alongside the ACVs to transfer personnel to their boats and back to the pier, simulating a situation that required personnel to execute safety egress procedures.

Following the transfer of all embarked personnel, the ACV Platoon then transited through the nearby boat basin to come ashore at the White Beach area to conduct maintenance.

“This was fairly standard training for us, but I’m proud it also represented the first overseas ship-to-shore employment of ACVs,” said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Nick Freeman, commanding officer of BLT 1/5, 15th MEU. “We’ll continue to train at other locations in the months ahead, using a

deliberate approach, capturing useful data and lessons learned, and ultimately sharpening our understanding of how to best employ the ACV in its intended environment – embarked with our forward-deployed ARG/MEUs.”

In the days prior to the ACV amphibious operations, commanders from III Marine Expeditionary Force, 3rd Marine Division, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Task Force 76, and Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade of the Japanese Self Defense Force and other commands visited 15th MEU aboard Harpers Ferry on June 20. This visit included a tour of the amphibious combat vehicles staged aboard Harpers Ferry, the ship’s well deck, the ACV simulator, and a demonstration of an unmanned hydrographic sensor. [See imagery of this visit on DVIDS here.](#) Some of the VIPs also returned to observe the ACV egress training.

Marines and Sailors of Alpha Company, BLT 1/5, are scheduled to host Marines of Battalion Landing Team 1/4, their counterpart unit assigned to the 31st MEU, at White Beach for a subject matter expert exchange about expeditionary ACV operations. The hands-on exchange will include topics such as well deck operations, vehicle handling, maintenance, embarked troops and amphibious operations.

The 15th MEU’s Reconnaissance Company is also scheduled to pair with other U.S. military units in the area in the coming days to conduct integrated maritime interdiction operations. The teams will plan, rehearse and execute a simulated visit, board, search and seizure mission using small boats to climb aboard Harpers Ferry and clear key objective areas together to improve their ability to conduct these types of specialized missions.

“Although this was a routinely-scheduled port visit, both Harpers Ferry and the 15th MEU took advantage of the time to conduct sustainment training to enhance their readiness and cross-train with other Navy and Marine Corps units to

strengthen our force,” said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Chris Stone, commander, Task Force 76 and Expeditionary Strike Group 7. “It was incredible to see the ACVs in operation, as they truly are a force multiplier in this area of operations.”

The 15th MEU is under the command and control of Commander, Task Force 76, which the U.S. 7th Fleet employs to cooperate with allies and partners to preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As the U.S. 7th Fleet’s primary Navy advisor on amphibious matters in the 7th Fleet area of operations, CTF 76 is responsible for conducting expeditionary warfare operations to support a full range of theater contingencies, ranging from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations to full combat operations.