

SEALIFT

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command

December 2001

That others may live: Remembering a hero

Right: Two F-15E jets from the 333rd Fighter Squadron from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in Goldsborough, N.C., fly over MV A1C William H. Pitsenbarger during the ship's naming ceremony Nov. 28 in Charleston, S.C.
Below: Alice Pitsenbarger, the namesake's stepmother (left), and William F. Pitsenbarger, the namesake's father (right), listen during the ship naming ceremony.



Barry Lake photo

Staff Sgt. Mike Buyas photo

By Cristina McGlew
Military Sealift Command, the U.S. Air Force and Navy-contractor RR & VO L.L.C. joined forces to honor the legacy of Air Force war hero and Medal of Honor recipient Airman 1st Class William H. Pitsenbarger during a ship naming

ceremony Nov. 28 at Detyens Shipyard in Charleston, S.C. Pitsenbarger's name now graces one of the newest ships in MSC's fleet, MV A1C William H. Pitsenbarger.

The civilian-crewed, 621-foot container ship is owned by RR & VO L.L.C. and operated for MSC by Red River Shipping Corporation of Rockville, Md.

"I am proud to be here today," said Rear Adm. David L. Brewer III, USN, Commander, MSC, "proud to help in the naming of this great ship for a true patriot and hero."

On April 11, 1966, 21-year-old Airman 1st Class Pitsenbarger was lowered from a hovering helicopter through the dense jungles near Cam My, Republic of Vietnam, into the midst of heavy gunfire. A pararescuer of the 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, Pitsenbarger volunteered to board this rescue helicopter to evacuate U.S. Army casualties. The young enlisted man, affectionately known as "Pits," was nearing his 300th combat mission.

When the rescue helicopter was shot by enemy fire, Pits had a choice — to climb into the litter basket to depart with the helicopter or stay behind. He chose to stay behind and assist the wounded. He treated the wounded and joined the infantrymen with a rifle to hold off the enemy. Despite being wounded three times, Pitsenbarger continued to simultane-

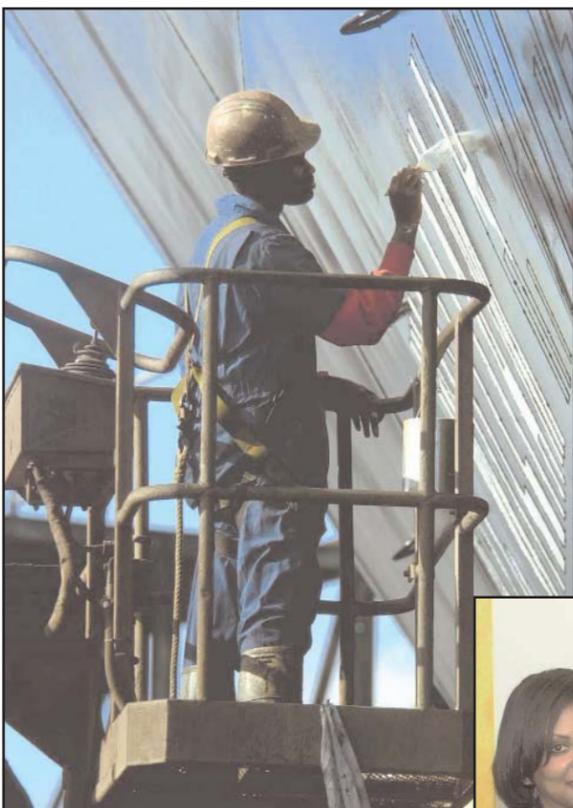
ously treat the wounded and ward off the enemy until he succumbed to the bullet of a sniper. When his body was recovered the following day, one hand still held a medical kit and the other, a rifle.

Following Pitsenbarger's heroic sacrifice, Army Sgt. Fred Navarro detailed Pitsenbarger's actions in a taped statement for the Air Force and recommended him for the Medal of Honor. Through the award process, the recommendation was downgraded to the Air Force Cross, the second highest Air Force Award. Pitsenbarger's parents received the award on his behalf on Sept. 22, 1966 — making him the first Air Force enlisted man to receive that award.

Over time, Pitsenbarger's valiant actions became Air Force legend for embodying the pararescue motto — "that others may live." After numerous private citizens and federal officials campaigned to have Pitsenbarger's story revisited in the 1990s, his award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor. Pitsenbarger's father accepted the Medal of Honor Dec. 8, 2000, on behalf of his son at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in his home state of Ohio — 34 years after his courageous actions in the jungles of Vietnam.

"MV A1C William H. Pitsenbarger will live up to the heroic example of her namesake, going in harm's way, if necessary, to deliver the ammunition and other supplies the Air Force

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Staff Sgt. Mike Buyas photo

Above: A worker paints the name onto MV A1C William H. Pitsenbarger Nov. 27 in Charleston, S.C., in preparation for the ship naming ceremony.

Right: Richardene Brewer, wife of Rear Adm. David L. Brewer III, USN, Commander, Military Sealift Command, and the ship's sponsor, presents Capt. John Baron, master of MV A1C William H. Pitsenbarger, with a framed print of the ceremony program.



Barry Lake photo

Commander's comments

Close the loop: It's professional and it's effective



forget to pass it on, pass it up or pass it back. But doing that — closing the loop — is more than just being professional; it's being effective!

Lack of communication can cost any organization time and money. Studies have shown that up to 14 percent of every 40-hour work week is wasted due to inadequate or garbled communication. That's almost seven weeks every year!

As we move toward the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet, we'll see more connectivity and easier cross-communication with supervisors, peers and subordinates, as well as other organizations that fall

under the NMCI umbrella. That means it will be easier for everyone to share information, plan in real time and make sure all the stakeholders in any operation are singing from the same page of music. BUT, that only works if we continue to close the loop when we communicate. It's a professional courtesy that is effective.

Answer e-mails within a reasonable period of time, even if it's only to say that you're pressed for time right now and will provide more information at a later date. By the same token, it's professional courtesy to limit the e-mails you send to business-related matters.

You know how many messages you get each day, and how many are in your in box when you return from travel or leave. It takes time and effort to wade

through junk. I personally receive an average of 30 - 50 emails per day. It's a challenge!

Voice mail can be an effective screening device if you're working on a

said?

Did they understand your goals with this project?

If the answer to both of these questions is "yes," then you've closed the loop.

Finally, when the project is complete or the mission has been executed, do you let the people involved know the results? This is the final professional courtesy — passing out the results, and the praise if it's due, to the people who made it happen.

Now it's time to

close this loop. Very shortly, we're being visited by the Navy Inspector General. I know that many of you have been working very hard to make this event take place with as little disturbance to daily operations as possible. When all is said and done, and the IG is finished and gone, I'll close the loop here by letting you know what happened, how we fared and what we need to work on as we move into 2002.

Thanks for your hard work, dedication and professionalism.

My wife, Deanie, and I wish you all the happiest of holidays and the best for the year ahead.

God Bless,

D.L. Brewer III
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Military Sealift Command

"Accuracy, brevity and clarity are the ABCs of good communication."

**Rear Adm. David L. Brewer
Commander, Military Sealift Command**

hot project. Sometimes, though, it can lead to telephone tag. Are you really busy, or could you answer the phone and maybe save everyone involved some time and trouble? This, of course, presupposes that the caller is organized, to the point and focusing on business matters — just like you would be if you called them, right?

Accuracy, brevity and clarity are the ABCs of good communication, and good communication is a sign of professionalism. That's especially true with the people who work for you. The only mind reader in vogue right now is a television psychic, who shall remain nameless.

If you want something done correctly and quickly, the clearer the explanation you give, the better off everyone involved is — be succinct. And you can close the loop here by soliciting feedback after you've given out the assignment.

Did your people really hear what you

About that e-mail you got yesterday letting you know that the awards ceremony tomorrow is postponed one week: Did you pass it on to your people? Or the telephone call regarding the change in meeting place for the conference planning session: Did you let your boss know you'd be in the Purser's office instead of the deck 5 lounge? Not to mention that fax with the critical phone number you needed for the hot project you're working: Did you let the provider know that you appreciate getting the data?

The information we get on a daily basis — e-mails, telephone calls, faxes, web contacts, face-to-face conversations — can overwhelm us sometimes. We get and process a great deal of data. So it's only human that sometimes we

Master Chief's musings

Stay safe this holiday season

By CNOMC(SW) Michael Oldknow, USN

As we move into the holiday season, I'd like to talk about safety. This time of year brings with it some unique safety challenges. We face these challenges at work, on the road and at home. While command leadership addresses the safety concerns at work and on the road on a regular basis, we often forget the home front.

The holiday season brings with it more home fires, more accidents with toys and more falls. Here are a few tips on how to keep yourself and your family safe this winter while enjoying the holidays.

First make sure you have the following safety devices: smoke and carbon monoxide detectors — these detectors will supply you with the warning you need to save your family; a fire extinguisher — the risk of fire in the home is highest during the winter months, so make sure all members of your family know where the extinguisher is and how to use it; if you live in an area that gets ice and snow, make sure you have sand or salt on hand to prevent injuries from slipping.

Something else to consider: have you had your furnace cleaned and

checked by a professional?

If you use portable heaters, keep them away from curtains and furniture and make sure they have automatic shutoffs. As you decorate for the holidays, make sure your electrical cords and wires are not frayed or broken and ensure that you do not place them in walkways where they can become a trip hazard. If they are not in good working order, replace them. If you use a fireplace, make sure you use andirons and that your fireplace has either a glass or screen front. Never leave your fireplace unattended and do not burn gift-wrap, tissue or evergreens in your fireplace.

For those of you that put up a real, as opposed to artificial, Christmas tree, buy the freshest tree you can find. Check this by bending a few of the needles in half. If they bend, but don't break, it's probably fresh. When you get ready to put the tree up, make a fresh diagonal cut one inch above the original cut and check the water level daily.



Barry Lake photo

Above all else, take time to plan your activities this winter, watch the weather and know your limits. Use the five steps of operational risk management: identify hazards, assess hazards, make risk decisions, implement controls and supervise. Using this five-step process will reduce unnecessary risks.

Be safe, and enjoy the holiday season. Happy holidays!

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Military Sealift Command reports to the Commander in Chief, U.S. Transportation Command for defense transportation matters, to the Chief of Naval Operations for Navy-unique matters and to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition for procurement policy and oversight matters.



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Above: A Navy tug is loaded aboard Condock III, a smaller float-on/float-off ship than American Cormorant. Military Sealift Command chartered this smaller ship to finish the lift of the tug to Sardinia.

By Edward Baxter
Military Sealift Command-chartered heavy lift ship MV American Cormorant returned to Diego Garcia in mid-November. She wrapped up a marathon five-month journey to the United Kingdom and the United States to carry additional watercraft cargo and for maintenance.

American Cormorant, also known as “Big Red” because of her massive size — more than 730 feet in length — and

Big Red gets back to business

brightly painted red hull, arrived at the southern British port of Southampton in June.

“The ship comes through about every two years in order to discharge cargo for scheduled maintenance,” said Paul Kelleher, MSC Europe’s liaison officer to the commander-in-chief of U.S. Naval Forces Europe.

The 70,000-plus ton American Cormorant carries U.S. Army watercraft, including LCU-2000 and LCU-8 landing craft, a fuel barge, a

crane barge and large port tugs. This equipment is used by the U.S. Army to open a sea port where normal facilities may have been damaged or destroyed. American Cormorant is deployed in Diego Garcia as part of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two.

The heavy lift ship submerges below the waterline so that the smaller watercraft can simply float on and float-off, or flo/flo. Once the smaller watercraft float off, they sail the short distance to

the U.S. Army’s Combat Equipment Battalion located at Hythe, United Kingdom, for maintenance.

“No sooner had the crew aboard American Cormorant caught their breath, when MSC decided to take advantage of the ship’s unique flo/flo capability. She returned to Norfolk, Va., to pick up some additional U.S. Army watercraft and one U.S. Navy tug, all destined for Europe,” Kelleher said.

In Norfolk, American Cormorant loaded two LCU-2000s, three LCM-8’s, one large tug, two standard tugs and a U.S. Navy tugboat then returned to Hythe to off-load the cargo.

The Navy tug, however, was destined for La Maddalena, Sardinia, Italy. In order to save additional sailing time to the Mediterranean, MSC chartered a smaller flo/flo ship, MV Condock III, to complete the mission.

Sailing from Germany, Condock III rendezvoused with American Cormorant Oct. 14 off the coast of Southampton, United Kingdom. Due to

heavy seas at the time, American Cormorant shifted to a more sheltered position between the Isle of Wight and the English mainland to transfer the Navy tug. Once the crew secured the tug aboard, Condock III set sail the following day for Sardinia.

American Cormorant had under two weeks to catch up on scheduled maintenance and repairs. On Oct. 29, American Cormorant shifted back to deep-water anchorage from her layberth and commenced to ballast down to reload her cargo the next morning. It took just five hours to back load all the watercraft, including three LCU-2000s, seven LCM-8s, two large tugs, one warping tug, two standard tugs and one fuel barge.

After taking fuel, American Cormorant began the long journey around the Cape of Good Hope to the central Indian Ocean where she performs her repositioning duty.



Right: The Navy tug floats on to Condock III’s cargo hold.

Holidays aboard MSC ships — reliving childhood

By Terri T. Cheng
The holidays are here! Civilian mariners like myself can tell which holiday is around the corner by our environment, even if we are out to sea. Much of this is due to the good work of our steward utility workers.

Being haze gray and underway, there’s not much out here to remind you of the changing seasons. Seaweed doesn’t change color in the fall like aspen or maple. When it snows out at sea, it’s not cozy and pretty like Christmas in a cabin by the lake. On a ship, snow is dangerous and terribly harsh to work in, and steel decks are extremely uninviting for cold toes inside steel-toed boots.

At least on the outside of a ship the weather varies. Inside a ship, almost nothing ever changes. Night only comes if we darken the ship. Overhead white florescent lights are turned off, and dim yellow lights are turned on. It’s not quite as romantic as the light of a full moon, but it does cast a pretty, delicate silhouette of the emergency fire extinguishers in the passageways.

The weather outside and the environment inside a ship does not give a CIVMAR much in the way of clues as to which holiday is around the corner. CIVMARS however, have the steward utility workers to thank for remembering and celebrating holidays.

For Thanksgiving, tissue streamers in fall colors hang festively from the ceilings. Pictures of pilgrims and Indians adorn the walls. A good Thanksgiving dinner is always served with all the trim-

mings. On most MSC ships, the baker makes pumpkin and pecan pies and creates a special holiday treat for Thanksgiving such as a frosted single layer cake with orange and red sprinkles.

Christmas is my favorite time of year on an MSC ship. The steward utility workers decorate the mess decks with pictures of snowmen, reindeer, Santa Claus and rose-cheeked children. Tissue streamers in gold, red and green are laced throughout the mess decks with dishes of hard candy and roasted nuts for the taking. There will be eggnog to drink and special holiday treats.

Many often shrink back in horror at the thought of spending their holidays aboard ship. Speaking for myself, if I can’t be with those I love, I don’t mind being aboard ship. I’m sure not everyone wants to see the same familiar faces in the same familiar clothes doing the same familiar things during the holidays. But, I feel like a kid again when I am aboard ship for the holidays.

Once upon a time, we all clumsily drew pumpkins, turkeys and Christmas trees on thick construction paper. Our teachers would hang them on the walls. We would look forward all day to the

classroom party.

Room mothers made their rounds to each desk passing out colored napkins and white styrofoam cups with fruit punch.

When every child in the class got their napkin, cake and punch, we would keep our hands neatly folded in front of us. The teacher would then walk to the front of the classroom and ask, “What do we say to our room mothers?” We would chorus the answer THANK YOU and then, the teacher would say, “You may begin.”

THANK YOU, steward department.

Ship named for Air Force Hero



A member of the 437th Airlift Wing honor guard stands during the naming ceremony of MV A1C William H. Pitsenbarger Nov. 28 in Charleston, S.C.

Continued from page 1
 needs to carry out its worldwide mission,” said Rear Adm. Brewer.

The ship will reposition Air Force

ammunition at sea near potential war or contingency sites, adding greatly to the U.S. military’s combat readiness. Pitsenbarger will operate from the Diego Garcia area in the Indian Ocean.

Richardene Brewer, wife of Rear Adm.

Brewer and the ship’s sponsor, broke the ceremonial

bottle of champagne, officially naming the ship. Air Force Gen. John W. Handy, Commander in Chief, U.S. Transportation Command, and Com-

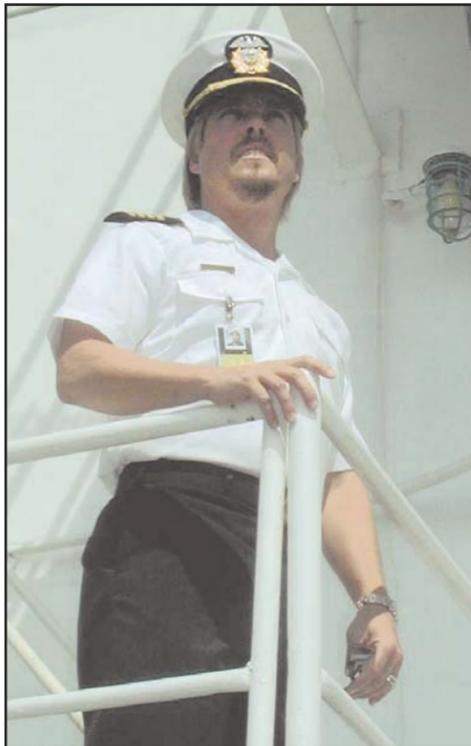
mander, Air Mobility Command, was the keynote speaker for the ceremony.

Pitsenbarger will carry Air Force containerized ammunition. The ship can carry about 885 container equivalents — 720 under deck and 135 in a cocoon above deck. Both cargo areas will be air-conditioned and dehumidified to protect the ammunition.

Pitsenbarger has five cranes on her deck that allow the ship to on-load and off-load her ammunition without shoreside cranes. This critical feature gives Pitsenbarger the flexibility to off-load in undeveloped ports.

Pitsenbarger will join a fleet of more than 35 afloat prepositioning ships under MSC’s operational control. At-sea prepositioning of combat equipment has become increasingly important as U.S. bases overseas continue to close.

MSC temporary masters: Tough job in fishbowl



Left: Capt. Randall Rockwood surveys the deck of USNS Hayes in Port Canaveral, Fla., shortly after taking temporary command of that vessel. Rockwood recently became the temporary master of USNS Henry J. Kaiser.

Below: Capt. Jose Delfaus will skipper USNS Apache to Spain on his next mission. Right: Capt. Nate Reybold, temporary master of USNS Spica.



Bill Cook photos

By Bill Cook

For three Military Sealift Command temporary captains, being a ship's master is a great reward for hard work, but it's not without a good deal of stress along the way.

"There is no room for error when you are under this much scrutiny — you are doing your job in a fishbowl," explained USNS Henry J. Kaiser's temporary master, Capt. Randall Rockwood. "It's sort of like moving up at the same time as moving down. I went from being a senior chief mate to being a junior master."

Capt. Rockwood, a native of New Hartford, N.Y., is a graduate of the State University of New York Maritime Academy at Fort Schuyler, N.Y.

"Fort Schuyler is the oldest maritime academy in the country, established in 1874," Capt. Rockwood proudly pointed out. He began working for MSC in 1983.

A longtime permanent chief mate, Rockwood is also licensed as an ammunition cargo chief mate.

Citing his intense and rigorous training, Rockwood said, "If you can chief mate an ammo ship, you can chief mate anything."

Another Fort Schuyler graduate is in the same boat, figuratively speaking. USNS Apache's temporary master, Capt. Jose Delfaus, has been with MSC since 1980 and has had his master's license since 1991.

Echoing Rockwood's assessment, the multi-talented Delfaus cited the feeling of increased pressure to perform.

"When they say jump, you have to jump," said Delfaus, who also pilots airplanes. He was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and moved to the United States when he was nine.

According to Delfaus, a military career was his dream, but a medical condition kept him out.

"I was disappointed, but then I saw the maritime academy as the next best thing," mused Delfaus. "I also realized that a life at sea wasn't so bad."

Capt. Nate Reybold, USNS Spica's temporary master, received his master's license in 1998. Spica is Reybold's third assignment as master, but he has

sailed on almost all the ship classes in MSC's fleet. In his free time, Reybold just can't stay off the water — he can be found at the helm of his 32-foot sailboat "Papagris," enjoying the great waters of the Chesapeake Bay.

Reybold agreed with Rockwood's sentiments, "All it takes is one screw up — every move is watched. The good thing about the system though is that there are many good people supporting me, not just as master, but on every ship and at every level I have served since joining MSC in 1989."

Reybold is a friendly competitor of Rockwood and Delfaus, having graduated in 1983 from Fort Schuyler's rival, the nearby Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, N.Y. From the eighth grade on, Reybold knew he wanted to attend that academy and afterwards pursue a maritime career.

Rockwood knew from an early age he was destined to become a mariner; he took a career propensity test in high school that steered him toward the maritime industry.

After Fort Schuyler, Delfaus was commissioned an ensign with the U.S. Coast Guard, where he served for three years. After that, he sailed on commercial ships and also sailed on a dredging barge for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Maneuvering that barge was the most intense ship handling I have ever had to do — it was great training for all that followed in my career," Delfaus explained. "I was only a young third mate then, yet the skipper trusted me. Docking that 475-foot dredge was a thrill close to that of soloing a plane for the first time."

"Tugboats like Apache are my favorite; they afford plenty of pre-

cise handling capabilities," stated Delfaus. "That's the good thing about MSC — it offers exposure to many different types of ships. I have mastered on every class vessel and every type operation MSC offers except Zeus, and I am certain I can handle that too."

"One of the fabulous charms of sailing for MSC is the ability to visit far away places like the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea," added Rockwood.

All three agree that a temporary master is always on the spot to perform flawlessly. "The pressure is great because there is no room for error; any bonehead mistake could bring my career to a stop," said Rockwood.

"Any mistake could cause us to go back to being first mate," Delfaus cautioned. "The ship's officers know I am always available to lend a hand if they need it. It doesn't make any difference who makes a mistake because it reflects on me as much as if I had made the error myself."

Rockwood quickly learned what he called the foundation of any great mariner, "Pay attention and trust the crew to do their jobs. Let the core

people do what they do, and don't fiddle with it."

Delfaus and Rockwood sailed as masters for the first time in 1999, Reybold in 2000. USNS Hayes was Delfaus' first ship while Rockwood and Reybold's first ship was USNS Henry J. Kaiser.

"I saw Kaiser from the airplane when we were landing at Augusta Bay, Sicily," said Rockwood. "I knew then the days of thinking 'the captain will do this, and the captain will take care of that' were over."

"When we were leaving port and I was standing on the bridge, force of habit made me look over for orders from the captain — then I realized I was the captain!" Rockwood recounted.

"As an individual, I knew it would be an enormous step; I was still surprised at the height of that step the first time I took that position."

All three look forward to the day when they become permanent masters, but equally know it probably won't be anytime soon.

According to Capt. Gregory Horner, port captain for MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force East in Virginia Beach, Va., the master and chief engineer promotion board meets once a year whether there are any actual permanent slots available or not.

"This year we selected 18 names for the most qualified list," Horner recalled. "Of those 18, three were selected for permanent eligible and of those three, two were actually promoted to permanent master."

"Those two promotions filled the last of the masters billets we are allowed, so further promotions right now will inevitably be slow," added Horner. "It should be a little faster a few years from now as more of our ship's captains retire."

Until then, Rockwood, Delfaus and Reybold remain upbeat, continue to do their best, work hard, train and diligently pour over the stacks of Professional Mariner, Marine Log, American Tugboat Review and other important trade magazines piled high on their desks.

Aloha, USNS Yukon



Larry Crutchfield photo

At sea off the Hawaiian coast, members of USNS Yukon's crew pose for a photo immediately after an impromptu award and reenlistment ceremony. From left to right, Able Seaman Felix Acebedo; Lt. Larry G. Krull, USN, the military department officer in charge; YNSK Sam Rosen, USN; IT2 Kelly Taylor, USN; Boatswain Mate Bruce Regan; Night Cook Galyon Steenburgh; Assistant Cook Joe Pizzaro; Third Asst. Engineer Frank James; Chief Cook Vevencio Cerillo, and Second Cook Florentino Legaspi all pose for a picture. Capt. Pat Heutter, ship's master, presented civilian mariners with on-the-spot awards. IT2 Taylor re-enlisted for another six years.

Lewis and Clark-class: Let the journey begin

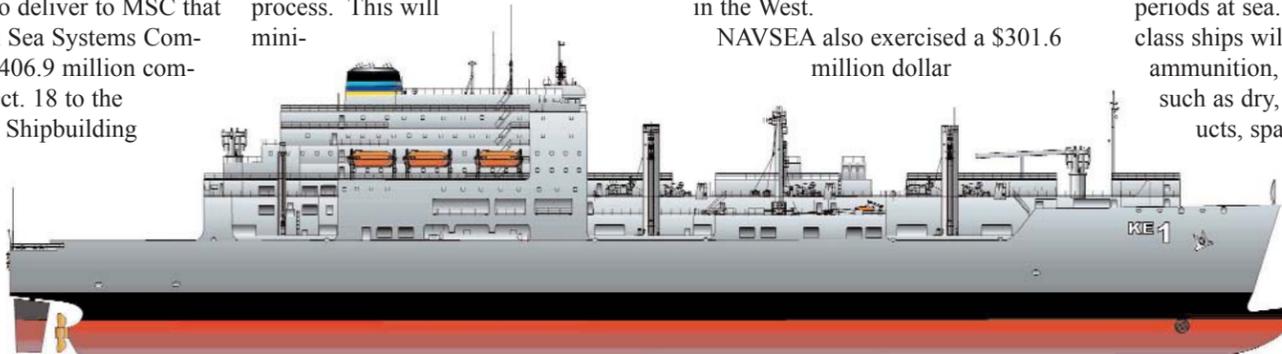
By Cristina McGlew
A new era will begin for the Navy's Military Sealift Command and the combat logistics fleet in March of 2005. The first of a new class of T-AKE auxiliary cargo and ammunition ships is expected to deliver to MSC that spring. The Naval Sea Systems Command awarded a \$406.9 million competitive contract Oct. 18 to the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company of San Diego, Calif.

Ship design dimensions put the new ship class at 689 feet long, with a beam of

105.6 feet and a draft of 29.9 feet. The ship will carry almost 7,000 tons of dry cargo and ammunition and 23,000 barrels of marine diesel fuel and jet fuel. She will have a crew of 123 civilians and 13 Navy personnel in addition to a 36-member aviation detachment.

The ship will be built to commercial standards incorporating the latest in

marine propulsion, ship safety, navigation and environmental control systems. The ships will be built with improved cargo handling efficiency, which means the ships are designed to ease the loading and unloading process. This will mini-



Artist render a new T-AKE-class ship, courtesy of the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company of San Diego.

mize the costs of operations and maintenance over each ship's expected 40-year life span.

The first ship will bear the name Lewis and Clark in honor of two legendary American explorers, Army Capt. Meriwether Lewis and Army Lt. William Clark. Lewis and Clark were commissioned by President Thomas

Jefferson to explore and map the Louisiana Purchase as well as the uncharted territories west to the Pacific Ocean. Their two-year long journey yielded geographical information that allowed American expansion in the West.

NAVSEA also exercised a \$301.6 million dollar

option in the contract for the construction of the second ship of the class. The second ship, Sacagawea, is named for the Native American woman who assisted the expedition as a translator and through her knowledge of the terrain and sources of food and shelter. Sacagawea once saved the expedition's journals and documentation — a year's

worth of mapping work — when Lewis and Clark's canoe capsized in the Missouri River. Sacagawea's image now graces the U.S. one-dollar coin.

The T-AKE ships will be designed to operate independently for extended periods at sea. The Lewis and Clark-class ships will be able to handle ammunition, as well as combat stores such as dry, frozen and chilled products, spare parts and consumables

to replenish Navy and NATO ships. The new ship class will replace MSC's aging Kilauea-class ammunition ships and Mars- and Sirius-class combat stores ships. The T-

AKE ships are scheduled to deliver to MSC from fiscal year 2005 through fiscal year 2010. Acquiring the 12 Lewis and Clark-class ships will update the combat logistics force fleet and allow the Navy to eventually retire older ships including the ammunition ships and the combat stores ships.

Uniting country, past and present

By Dub Allen
National ensigns, the stars and stripes, Old Glory or whatever you call them, American flags are flying proudly across the United States.

For those stationed overseas — Japan for example — each base, post, station and facility flies a flag. Flags abound in every size, shape and material in military housing.

Shortly after the events of Sept. 11, a photographer took a picture of New York City firemen raising the U.S. flag over where the World Trade Center once stood.

This picture was quickly compared to what may be the most famous flag raising in history — when five Marines and a Navy pharmacist mate raised the U.S. flag on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, Japan.

The picture won the Pulitzer Prize; the largest bronze statue in the world was modeled after it and now symbolizes the Marine Corps.

Marines and Sailors jump at a chance

to visit Iwo Jima — an island where the most Medals of Honor were given for a single action, 27.

Cmdr. Tony Smith, USN, the chief staff officer of MSC Far East, got to help raise a U.S. flag atop Mount Suribachi.

"I wanted to fly a flag for my father," Smith said. "He had an uncle who fought there, came home and brought my father a souvenir — a Japanese rifle and bayonet. He still has the rifle."

Iwo Jima was returned to the Japanese in 1968 and is now a Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force base. Since 1993, the Navy has also used the island for night-landing practice.

Four times a year the Japanese allow American flags to be raised at the monument atop Iwo Jima: on Feb. 19, known as invasion day, May 28, July 4 and Nov. 11.

Flags are sent by people from all over the world to the Iwo Jima Coordinator's office at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan. Flags are flown over

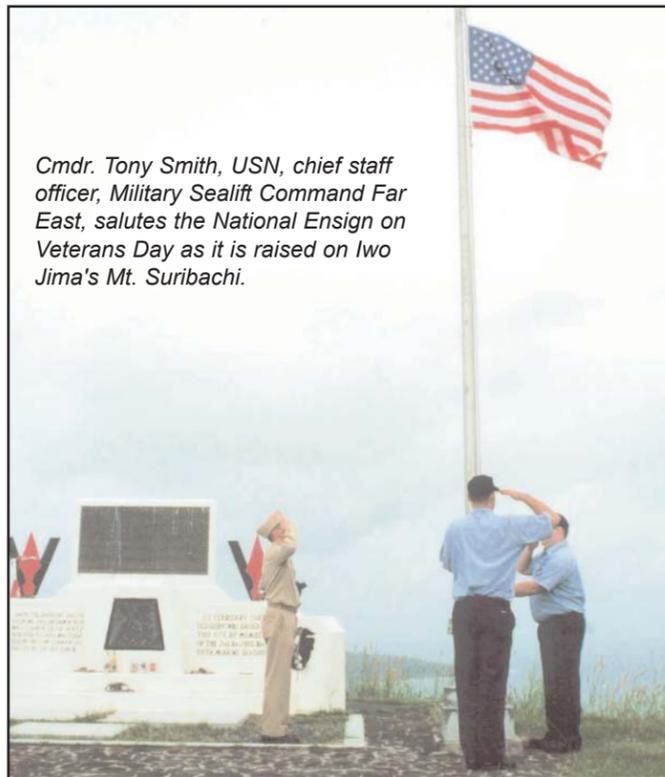
Iwo Jima and returned with a certificate.

"I had a flag at home and a friend gave me another, which had flown over USNS Kilauea," Smith said.

Armed with his two flags, Smith boarded a Navy C-12 on Veterans Day for the three-hour flight to Iwo Jima.

"It rained on us the whole way," said Smith.

As they approached and were preparing to land, however, the clouds broke and bright sunlight shone on the island.



Cmdr. Tony Smith, USN, chief staff officer, Military Sealift Command Far East, salutes the National Ensign on Veterans Day as it is raised on Iwo Jima's Mt. Suribachi.

"It was awe inspiring to see Iwo Jima," Smith said. "We could see Mount Suribachi, the black landing beaches, the whole island."

An interpreter and driver met the C-12 and transported all visitors to the top of the 550-foot dormant volcano, Mount Suribachi.

Two Sailors from the coordinator's office began to raise and lower 94 different U.S. flags. Smith joined in on the task to raise and lower his two flags.

"Just as we were finishing up with the 94 flags, the wind kicked up, and in came the rain," he said. "It was like a signal that our time on Mount Suribachi was up."

Smith's certificates will read: "This Ceremonial American Flag was flown atop Mount Suribachi on the Island of Iwo Jima for: Cmdr. Anthony Smith/Carl Smith on Nov. 12, 2001, in commemoration of Veterans Day."

"I think this will really make my father very happy," Smith said.

New commander takes APSRON Four helm

By Lt. Todd Hathaway, USN
On Nov. 29, Capt. Phillip Lamonica, USN, Commander, Afloat Prepositioning Ships Squadron Four was relieved by Capt. Edward C. Zurey Jr., USN, aboard USNS Red Cloud while the ship was in a maintenance availability in Singapore.

"It was my distinct honor and pleasure to serve as commander of APSRON Four," said Capt. Lamonica who served as commander for the past 13 months. "While I thoroughly enjoyed my tour, the past four months have been especially gratifying, because I was able to serve during Operation Enduring Freedom."

In his remarks, Capt. Lamonica emphasized the importance of the

Afloat Prepositioning Force to our national military strategy and the critical role it plays in U.S. national security.

"I would like to personally thank each and every merchant mariner who served APSRON Four during my tour," said Capt. Lamonica. "Your dedicated efforts and loyal devotion to duty has ensured that our nation is ready to meet any crisis and win."

Capt. Lamonica also praised his staff for enduring the hardships and sacrifices that come with serving in a forward-deployed billet for one year in a remote duty station such as Diego Garcia. Capt. Lamonica thanked his family for the sacrifices they made during his tour at Diego Garcia. His next tour

will be the director of training at Fleet Anti-Submarine Warfare Pacific located in San Diego, Calif.

Capt. Zurey, who assumed command of APSRON Four, has had an impressive and challenging career. Previous sea tours include command of USS Peterson and his most recent assignment as Executive Officer aboard USS Nassau.

Capt. Lamonica received the Legion of Merit from the Secretary of the Navy, Gordon England, for his stellar performance as the commander of APSRON Four and the execution of his duties as senior officer present afloat at Diego Garcia during Operation Enduring Freedom.

FAR EAST HAILS

Navy Sailors attached to Military Sealift Command ships in the MSC Far East area of responsibility have been working hard to earn their enlisted surface warfare pins.

Capt. Doug Harris, USN, Commander, Military Sealift Command Far East, had the pleasure of designating the following Sailors as enlisted surface warfare specialists: **OS2 Jeremy M. Sutton, USN, IT2 Angela D. Nembhard, USN, ET3 Timothy T. Reul, USN** and **ET3 Katrina M. Burns, USN**, of ammunition ship

USNS Kiska; OS2 Lashaunda D. Shelton, USN, YN2 Andrea L. Chism, USN, SM3 Roger J. Moore, USN, and **SM3 Ricardo E. Ortega Jr., USN**, of ammunition ship **USNS Flint; IT1 Sharon K. Caldwell, USN**, and **OS2 Javan L. Winfree, USN**, of fleet oiler **USNS Rappahannock; SMSA Jason T. Dickison, USN**, and **SMSA Aaron G. Queen, USN**, of combat stores ship **USNS Concord**; and **YN1 Brooks M. Lynch, USN, SK2 Sylvia F. Biggs, USN**, and **SK3 Yanyan M. Xiao, USN**, of combat stores ship **USNS San Jose**.

MSC Far East bid farewell and following seas to **Cmdr. Tony Smith, USN**, the outgoing MSC Far East chief staff officer who detached mid-December for language school in Monterey, Calif. MSC Far East welcomed **Cmdr. John P. Anderson, USN**, as the new MSC Far East chief staff officer. Cmdr. Anderson comes from the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

ITC(SW) Toni Hickson, USN, Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate, retired from the U.S. Navy after more than 20 years of service in a ceremony Dec. 12 at the Negishi Heights, Yokohama, Community Club.

Lt. Jen Greeley, USN, Operations and Plans Directorate, departed MSC Far East to become the officer in charge of Kami Seya Detachment, part of Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan.

SK1 Rodenas B. Paguio, USN, was selected as **MSC Office Okinawa** and MSC Far East Sailor of the Quarter. He received two letters of commendation and an MSC Far East Sailor of the Quarter plaque at a recent awards ceremony.

MSC Office Okinawa bid farewell to **YN1 Jose Salgado, USN**, who left Dec. 6 after three years of duty on Okinawa. Salgado transferred to USS Essex, which is forward deployed at Sasebo, Japan.

EUROPE NEWS

Paul Kelleher, the liaison officer to the commander-in-chief of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, gave the Military Sealift Command Europe brief Nov. 6 at the Royal Army Logistics Corps' Joint Service Movement Staff Course at Camberly, United Kingdom. Sponsored by the Defense Logistics Office at the U.K. Ministry of Defense, class attendees include officers from the U.K. army, navy and air force as well as other NATO nations. Kelleher presented a lecture on MSC operations over the past nine years in the European theater of operations.

Combat stores ship **USNS Sirius** and her crew received bravo zulus from the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group and USS McFaul.

Fair winds and following seas to the skipper and crew of **USNS Leroy Grumman** who provided vital logistics services to the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet and NATO warships during her deployment. Grumman pumped more than four million gallons of diesel and aviation fuel in the month of October.

USNS Sirius and her crew recently completed the annual shipboard Combined Federal Campaign drive.

According to **Cmdr. Mike Robinson, USN**, Sirius' officer-in-charge, the ship's crew donated more than twice the ship's target for contributions. Special thanks to the ship's CFC coordinator, **SM2(SW) Craig Norman, USN**. The crew also donated more than a thousand dollars to the American Red Cross for the Sept. 11 fund.

Lt. Cmdr. Christine Buswell, USN, MSC Europe's operations director for Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force and Special Mission ships, and **Lt. Miranda Powers, USN**, director for MSC Europe's prepositioning operations, both received letters of commendation from Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, USN, Commander, Fleet Air Mediterranean, Naples, Italy, for service as income tax assistants with the local Naval Legal Service Office, Europe and Southwest Asia in Naples, Italy.

ITSN Sarah Chaney, USN, received a citation from Vice Adm. John J. Grossenbacher, Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, for service as communications watch officer from June 1999 to May 2001 at Joint Maritime Facility, St. Mawgan, United Kingdom.

ITSA Andrea Gramer, USN, received a letter of commendation from Rear Adm. Charles Munns, USN, Commander, Submarine Group Eight, for service with the United Services Organization's Gala held last June aboard USS Wasp at the port of Naples.

Port Engineer **Michael Alston** received a special act award for coordinating and executing five fleet oiler voyage repairs in the European theater and overseeing more than half a million dollars worth of maintenance work.

IT1 Alfonso R. Sample, USN, of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One, received a Navy Achievement Medal as well as a Good Conduct Medal for service with the squadron. **ITC Charles W. Wright, USN**, also received a Navy Achievement Medal marking his end of tour.

Congratulations to **ET3 Michael Perkins, USN**, of **USNS Leroy Grumman**, who was recently promoted to his current rank.

Military Sealift Command Atlantic changed its organizational structure by bringing functional directorates, or "N codes," under MSC Atlantic operational control. Counsel, contracting, comptroller and communications, among others, will now report to MSC Atlantic instead of reporting directly to MSC headquarters. The reorganization does not affect program management functions within MSC Atlantic's area of responsibility.

Capt. J. A. Carlton, USN, Commander, MSC Atlantic, and **Capt. Gary Roemmich, USN, Deputy Commander, MSC Atlantic**, continue to discuss the merger of MSC Atlantic, **Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force-East** and **Combat Logistics Squadron Two**. This merger will make MSC the true logistics provider of the Atlantic.

Capt. Roemmich is planning the consolidation of much of MSC's personnel throughout Virginia's Hampton Roads area into one physical location. Working with the public works center, Capt.



Military Sealift Command Europe's sealift operations director, Canadian Lt. Cmdr. Luc Morin, honored Canadian veterans in a recent ceremony held in Italy.

Capt. Michael Mahoney relieved **Capt. Donald Piggott** as master of MPSRON One's **MV 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo**.

Command Chief **YNC(AW) Earl Gray, USN**, left MSC Europe in November, heading for Afloat Training Group, Yokosuka, Japan.

The Operations and Plans Directorate welcomed operations support assistant **Emmanuel Dockter**.

A number of reservists from MSC

Europe reserve units reported aboard in November and may be with the command for up to a year, including: **Lt. Cmdr. James Blake, USNR; Lt. Cmdr. Mary Hallam, USNR; Lt. Cmdr. Tom Womble, USNR; Lt. Cmdr. Heath Rasmussen, USNR; and IT1 Lucille Linary, USNR**.

Visit MSC Europe's new website. Use the MSC web address of www.msc.navy.mil, then click on area commands and choose Europe.

ATLANTIC LINES

Roemmich is designing space within three large buildings at the Norfolk Naval Station referred to as "Breezy Point." This consolidation is a plus to many of the headquarters staff who must commute approximately 30 miles to attend meetings at the Norfolk Naval Station or Camp Pendleton. The move is also welcomed by civilian mariners since it brings the payroll, detailing and human resource offices closer to many of the customers the Afloat Personnel Management Center supports.

Fair winds and following seas to **USNS Kanawha** and **USNS Apache** as they head across the Atlantic on deployment.

MSC Atlantic welcomes aboard two new members of the staff: **Capt. Steven Robertson, USNR**, is currently on active duty as the command force protection officer. **Lt. Cmdr. Paschal Dawson, USN**, reported aboard in October as command chaplain. Chaplain Dawson is available via email at LCDR.Dawson@msc.navy.mil.

Cmdr. Bess Harrahill, USN, officer-in-charge of the medical treatment facility aboard **USNS Comfort**, was interviewed by Irina Burgener of Voice of America for the "Salute to Veterans and the Military" program. During the one-hour program, Cmdr. Harrahill highlighted MSC's hospital ship program, USNS Comfort's history and the unique civilian mariner/military crew.

MSC Office Beaumont, Texas, bid farewell to **YN1 Bert Bradley, USN**, who retired. Bradley had been assigned to MSC Office Panama and supported its closing in 1999. He transferred to Beaumont and helped establish MSC's new regional office there. Bradley retires to sunny Tampa.

While security aboard ships has increased as a result of the tragic events of Sept. 11, MSC staffers ashore are also feeling the effects. Access to MSC facilities, piers and offices has been tightened. Every individual must now show a government identification card or military ID before being admitted. MSC personnel, particularly our civilian mariners whose dependents generally don't have such identification cards, are encouraged to bear this in mind when arranging trips to and from work.

HQ HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters held an awards ceremony Dec. 3 to recognize a number of command employees. **Rear Adm. David L. Brewer III, USN, Commander, MSC**, presented certificates of appreciation to **Gregory Bodrick** and **Mark Delventhal, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program**; **Achille Broennimann, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**; and **Armand Ridolfi, Strategic and Corporate Planning Directorate**, for their work with a recent contract. **Laura Olesen-Berge, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**; **George Brezna, Office of Counsel**; **William Carty, Strategic and Corporate Planning Directorate**; and **David Ranowsky, Office of Counsel**, were absent but also received certificates of appreciation.

Rear Adm. Brewer presented **YNC(SW) Lori Myers, USN, Maritime Forces and Manpower Management Directorate**, a plaque of appreciation on behalf of the Charles County Police Department.

Mary Lee Ammons, Command,

Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate, received MSC headquarters' Civilian of the Quarter award. **SK2 Maya Doren, USN, Logistics Directorate**, received the Sailor of the Quarter award.

Rear Adm. Brewer presented length of service awards to **Achille E. Broennimann, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**, and **Owen C. Wilson, Office of Counsel**, for ten years of government service; to **Ross Camardella**, the manager of the **Prepositioning Program**, and **Charles R. Daggs, Sealift Program**, for 20 years of service; to **Edward C. Barrett, Inspector General**; **Virgelene V. Braswell, Logistics Directorate**; and **Jesse G. Garcia, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**, for 30 years of service; and to **Frances Gapp, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**; **Donald H. Moore, Sealift Program**; **Barron C. Nelson, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program**; and **Marva Riley, Maritime Forces and Manpower Management Directorate**, for 35 years of service.

Some honorees were unable to attend

the ceremony: **Judy G. Delventhal, Engineering Directorate**, received a Meritorious Civilian Service Award. **John P. Hepp, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program**; **Bruce Salgado, Special Missions Program**; and **Brendan R. Thompson, Engineering Directorate**, each had ten years of service; **Rasheed Khan, Sealift Program**; **Lisa C. Murtha, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**; and **J. Gordon Spicer III, Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate**, each had 15 years of service; **Jerri Salyers, Prepositioning Program**, and **John J. Burkhardt, Engineering Directorate**, each had 20 years of service; and **Brenda Hunter, Comptroller Directorate**; **David Ranowsky, Office of Counsel**; and **Gerald M. Voynik, Prepositioning Program**, each had 25 years of service.

Gen. John W. Handy, USAF, Commander in Chief, U.S. Transportation Command, visited MSC headquarters Dec. 6 for the first time since taking the helm at TRANSCOM in early November. Rear Adm. Brewer welcomed the general, and **Cmdr. Shawn Cali, USN, Operations and Plans Directorate**, briefed Gen. Handy on MSC missions and current operations. This was something of a refresher course for Gen. Handy, as the general was formerly the

director of operations and logistics at TRANSCOM. He comes to TRANSCOM from his most recent position as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Cmdr. Martin Bodrog, USN, briefed Gen. Handy on MSC's latest force protection challenges and initiatives; **John Henry, Sealift Program Manager**, highlighted current sealift goals; and **Ross Camardella, Prepositioning Program Manager**, outlined key issues on the prepositioning scope. At the end of his visit, Gen. Handy praised MSC for the command's outstanding work and dedication, especially since the events of Sept. 11.

MSC headquarters bid farewell and following seas to **Pamela Hall, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program**; **Mark Chadwick, Steve Lucianetti** and **Lisa C. Murtha** of the **Contracts and Business Management Directorate**; and **David Bedford, Operations and Plans Directorate**.

MSC headquarters welcomes **Marvin Wagner, Inspector General Office**; **Karen J. Donald, Contracts and Business Management Directorate**; **Debra Jennings, Maritime Forces and Manpower Management Directorate**; and **Kevin E. Kohlmann, Sealift Program**.

Military Sealift Command takes over Las Vegas

By Dub Allen

Las Vegas, Nev. — the convention and conference capital of the world was changed to a Military Sealift Command office when MSC Far East sponsored its annual reserve commanding and executive officers conference there.

The conference brought **Capt. Doug Harris, USN**, the new commander of Military Sealift Command Far East, Yokohama, Japan, face-to-face with his reserve commanding and executive officers for the first time.

Harris set the tone of the conference during his opening remarks when he stressed the importance of supporting each unit and training all Sailors to "go anywhere in our [MSC Far East] area of responsibility and go to work immediately upon arrival."

"I need to know how best to prepare your units to do your missions," Harris said.

The MSC Far East reserve units, attend weekend drills in the heartland of America and Southern California, and train for deployment to Japan, Korea and other western Pacific areas.

As each commanding officer provided a unit update, participants quickly noted that no two units were the same.

Though many solutions were different, the central theme was training; not only training all Sailors in all required reserve qualifications, but training in host country language and customs as well.

Due to the different locations, each commanding officer uses different approaches to develop support systems in each location. One commanding officer uses the local National Guard for weapons training, another uses a U.S. Army base. Another unit takes advantage of local university professors to teach Korean or Japanese political and social current events. Still another unit uses local Coast Guard

facilities for command and control training and damage control training.

"The MSC Republic of Korea reserve unit in Kansas City, Mo., will be deployed to a Korean port for annual training during an exercise," said **Capt. Terry Conner, USNR**, commanding officer of MSC reserve unit 218.

"Korea is in a unique situation due to an armistice vice a treaty. Because my unit Sailors will be mobilized in Korea, weapons qualifications prior to mobilization are a critical survival skill."

"In the past, my unit has completed annual training in every location where we would be assigned if we were mobilized," said **Cmdr. Steve Musser**,

USNR, commanding officer of MSC Western Pacific Unit 119. "We've been to Australia, Thailand and other places for exercises gaining valuable experience."

"Our mobilization assignments are Guam and Singapore. Those areas are already very well covered with MSC representation, so we train as the expeditionary MSC Far East unit," **Cmdr. Musser** explained. "My Sailors and unit are trained to go anywhere, anytime assigned."

"Training is the most important element in our lives as Navy reservists," said **Capt. Reginald McKamie, USNR**, commanding officer of Military Sealift

Command Office Korea 111 in Dallas.

"My goal is to get MSC reservists out of the reserve center for some valuable hands-on training with real ships in real ports."

"We intend to get this hands-on training by visiting and training at the Military Sealift Command office at the port of Houston," **Capt. McKamie** stated.

Participants discussed their needs on the final day of their conference. There are always needs; some call them wish lists. Regardless of their needs and training methods, MSC Far East reserve commanding and executive officers are training with one goal in mind — to be ready whenever called.

CENTRAL CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command Central continues to support Fifth Fleet operations for Operations Enduring Freedom and Southern Watch. As more ships are deployed to the Fifth Fleet area of responsibility the demands on MSC ships increase apace. Nevertheless, MSC ships continue to provide superb service to U.S. forces and coalition partners in the Fifth Fleet.

Oiler **USNS John Ericsson** and combat stores ship **USNS Niagara Falls** continue to support Fifth Fleet assets in the North Arabian Sea while oiler **USNS Rappahannock** replenishes U.S. and coalition forces in the Persian Gulf that are conducting Operation Southern Watch.

Combat stores ship **USNS Saturn** arrived in the Fifth Fleet making her first port call in Bahrain. Following the usual briefing conducted by MSC Central, she loaded stores and proceeded to conduct logistic services in the

Gulf of Oman and the North Arabian Sea.

Fleet ocean tug **USNS Catawba** completed another multinational maritime interception operation, escorting vessels from the holding area in the northern Persian Gulf to the southern Persian Gulf. She also found time to complete her U.S. Coast Guard annual inspection.

Tanker **MV Lawrence H. Gianella** has been shuttling a wide variety of fuels through the Fifth Fleet. She also completed a ship-to-ship transfer of fuel to **MT Sanmar Sonata**, an MSC-chartered ship supporting facilities in Oman. Both vessels conducted the operation with professionalism and skill. In addition, a variety of chartered tankers have been moving fuels within the Fifth Fleet to support MSC and Defense Energy Support Center customers.

MSC Central active duty and reserve

personnel participated in the redeployment of cargo from exercise Early Victor in Aqaba, Jordan, and also finished up the redeployment of cargo from exercise Bright Star in Dekheila, Egypt. **SS Green Island** took the Early Victor cargo while **Maritime Prepositioning Ships MV Cpl. Louis J. Huage Jr.** and **SS Maj. Stephen W. Pless**, and large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships **USNS Seay**, **USNS Fisher** and **USNS Mendonca** handled the Bright Star cargo. These ships loaded more than 3,700 pieces of cargo. MSC Central personnel also managed the final cargo operation associated with Bright Star, the Harvest Falcon lift from Egypt to Oman, wrapping up another successful Bright Star.

MSC Central continues to make progress on the construction of its new building. Workers completed the foundation and have begun constructing the walls. The target date is May 2002.

MSC's smallest area command is now handling approximately one-third of all cargo operations MSC wide — making sealift happen at the tip of the spear!

When called, the Mighty Falls does it all

By Third Mate Sammy J. Jurmanovich,
aboard USNS Niagara Falls

I don't think anyone really knew what I was in store for USNS Niagara Falls when she weighed anchor, set the compass on a westerly course and departed the lovely Thai island of Phuket on Sept. 4.

It was looking like a standard Persian Gulf tour, (albeit a relatively short one at a little over three months) until the Sept. 11 events in New York City and Washington, D.C., that rocked the United States and sent shock waves around the globe.

A few of the crewmembers aboard Niagara Falls had friends and family in the areas hit by the terrorists, and many of us shared their sorrow. The tears were short lived however, because we knew that we had a major role in operation Enduring Freedom. The only Military Sealift Command combat stores ship in the theater at that time, it was soon apparent that we needed to roll up our sleeves and get to the job at hand — namely re-supplying the ever increasing number of ships that flooded the area.

Our statistics are indeed impressive since we entered the Fifth Fleet the second week of September and stayed through the middle of November. During that time, Niagara Falls logged more than 18,226 nautical miles and serviced some 78 customers. In the world of combat stores ships, moving cargo is the name of the game, and in less than two months, Niagara Falls has handled and delivered a total of 8,487 pallets (about 6,672,948 pounds) of cargo to the fleet. By contrast, on a typical Gulf deployment of four to six months, we might handle 5,000 to 6,000 pallets. So, whether it's by vertical replenishment or by connected replenishment, the "Mighty Falls" has once again shown that it has certainly lived up to its motto — "Mighty Falls does it all" — and does it safely.

The supply departments — both civilian and military — really had their hands full trying to keep up with the huge volume of orders being put through the system. According to the officer in charge of the military department, the supply pipeline from the east has been overwhelmed by supplying the fleet with consumable items, what the commander likes to call "rags, bags and tags."

The civilian mariner supply department and the deck department are tasked with the actual handling of all the cargo that comes and goes. That includes palletizing, identifying, weighing, wrapping and stowing. Load-out days at the dock are a flurry of activity with pallet counts routinely reaching the 800 to 1,000 range. Crewmembers have put in more than a few 20-hour days, but everyone that I've talked to remains dedicated to the job at hand, and spirits remain high overall. That's pretty incredible since there has been no liberty for the crew. That seems to be the number one complaint with most people.

I asked the cargo mate to give me his thoughts on the operation so far, and he summed it up by saying, "This has been a lot of work!"

The steward department has been working hard as well: up many a night providing the crew with a hot meal, or taking time on their Saturday night off to make pizza. It's an all-hands effort, and these folks are right there alongside the rest of the crew doing what they can to get the job done.

The rest of the crew's efforts are closely followed by the engine department, which keeps the ship running. The temperatures aboard ship are often excessive, and that means extra stress on all things mechanical. It's not as simple as just keeping the propeller

turning. There are thousands of mechanical systems aboard the ship. In a relentless operating tempo, it takes a superior level of dedication and professionalism from each and every engineer to make it work. Niagara Falls' engineers have achieved nothing but 100 percent success.

The ship's helicopter detachment has also put up some impressive numbers with a total of 318 flight hours, approximately 4,800,000 pounds of cargo transferred and 178 passengers transferred. It takes an incredible amount of time and effort to keep up with the preventative maintenance system on the aircraft, especially with the sand and dust of the Fifth Fleet environment. They are to be commended on doing an

outstanding job on the flight deck with minimal down time affecting operations.

I think that after talking to many of the crewmembers aboard Niagara Falls, we are ALL very proud to be called Americans and to support operation Enduring Freedom. It gives all of us a sense of pride knowing that what we do out here really counts for something — no matter what each individual's job might be.

Everyone looks forward to the end of this deployment, but our job here is not quite finished yet. Unknown quantities of cargo still have to be loaded and delivered to our customers, before we can set the compass on an easterly course and head for home.

Once again, Sioux comes through

By George Kaplan

Darkness prevailed early in the morning of Oct. 19. Fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux was a few miles from the San Diego sea buoy, getting ready to enter port for refueling. At 5:00 a.m., however, the U.S. Coast Guard Group San Diego received an urgent distress call from fishing vessel Southern Light. The stranded vessel was taking on water rapidly and sinking about 17 miles west of San Diego.

Sioux, along with USS Jarrett and USS Camden, had also copied the fishing vessel's mayday, and all three vessels responded to the scene to assist. The Coast Guard dispatched USCG Cutter Tybee to the scene as well.

USS Camden and USS Jarrett arrived first. They deployed rescue and assistance teams to the stricken vessel. Upon boarding, the teams discovered a failed check valve in Southern Light's engine room, which they promptly repaired. After bailing the water Southern Light had taken on, Jarrett's and Camden's crews departed the scene to return to their assigned duties. When Tybee saw that all was under control, she returned to her assigned duties.

USNS Sioux then moved in to tow the vessel and deliver her crew safely to San Diego. Chief Mate David Bradshaw, assisted by ET3 Ryan R. Gordon, USN, piloted Sioux's rigid-hull inflatable boat to bring the fishing boat's two-man crew to Sioux. Both the fishing master of Southern Light, Chris Wasowicz, of Santa Clara, Calif., and his crewmember, Gabriel

Freitas, of San Diego, embarked Sioux and were checked for injuries. Chief Mate Bradshaw found no injuries or other medical problems. Crewmembers aboard Sioux treated the stranded mariners to Sioux-style hospitality for the return voyage to San Diego.

Meanwhile, Sioux's crew prepared to tow the fishing vessel back to port. The crew rigged a suitable bridle and hawser, or large rope, to get the fishing vessel back to port.

The crew rigged the bridle and hawser under the direction of Able Seaman Jerome Dauffenbach and with the assistance of Engine Utility David S. Carroll to get the fishing vessel back to port. Both Dauffenbach and Carroll rode the 39-foot fishing vessel from the scene back to the San Diego sea buoy, a voyage of about 17 miles.

Upon arriving at the San Diego channel entrance just after noon, Southern Light and her crew were delivered to the FV Shelagh B, which finished towing Southern Light back to port.

"Well done Camden, Jarrett and Sioux," wrote Vice Adm. Tim LaFleur, USN, Commander, Naval Surface Forces Pacific, in a message. "The assistance you provided FV Southern Light while operating in the San Diego [area]... reflects the time honored tradition of those who go to sea in ships rendering assistance to those in distress whenever and wherever needed."

This was the second rescue this year for USNS Sioux. In May, the ship saved two elderly mariners from their badly damaged and sinking vessel in Bahia de Magdalena, Mexico.

"We don't go looking for mariners in trouble, and we always hope that those who put to sea do so safely and without incident," said Capt. William M. Brown, Sioux's master, "but, if and when we can, we are there to assist as needed. We are simply being professional and responsible seamen when we help out those in distress."



Charles Bogle photos

Foreground, from left to right: Able Seaman Marvin Guyon, AB Bernard Ejdownski, Ordinary Seaman Alexander Wilk, ET3 Patrick A. Stevenson, USN, and Third Mate Raymond Barnett prepare to tow Southern Light. Aboard the rigid-hull inflatable boat from left to right: ET3 Ryan R. Gordon, USN, and Chief Mate David Bradshaw pass the tow hawser, or large rope, to AB Jerome Dauffenbach (left aboard Southern Light) and Engine Utility David S. Carroll (right aboard Southern Light).



From left to right: ET3 Ryan R. Gordon, USN; Southern Light Crewman Gabriel F. Freitas; Fishing Master Chris Wasowicz; Able Seaman Samuel H. Hart Jr.; Ordinary Seaman Curtis E. Isaac, and Capt. William M. Brown, master of the USNS Sioux, stand in the ship's bridge.