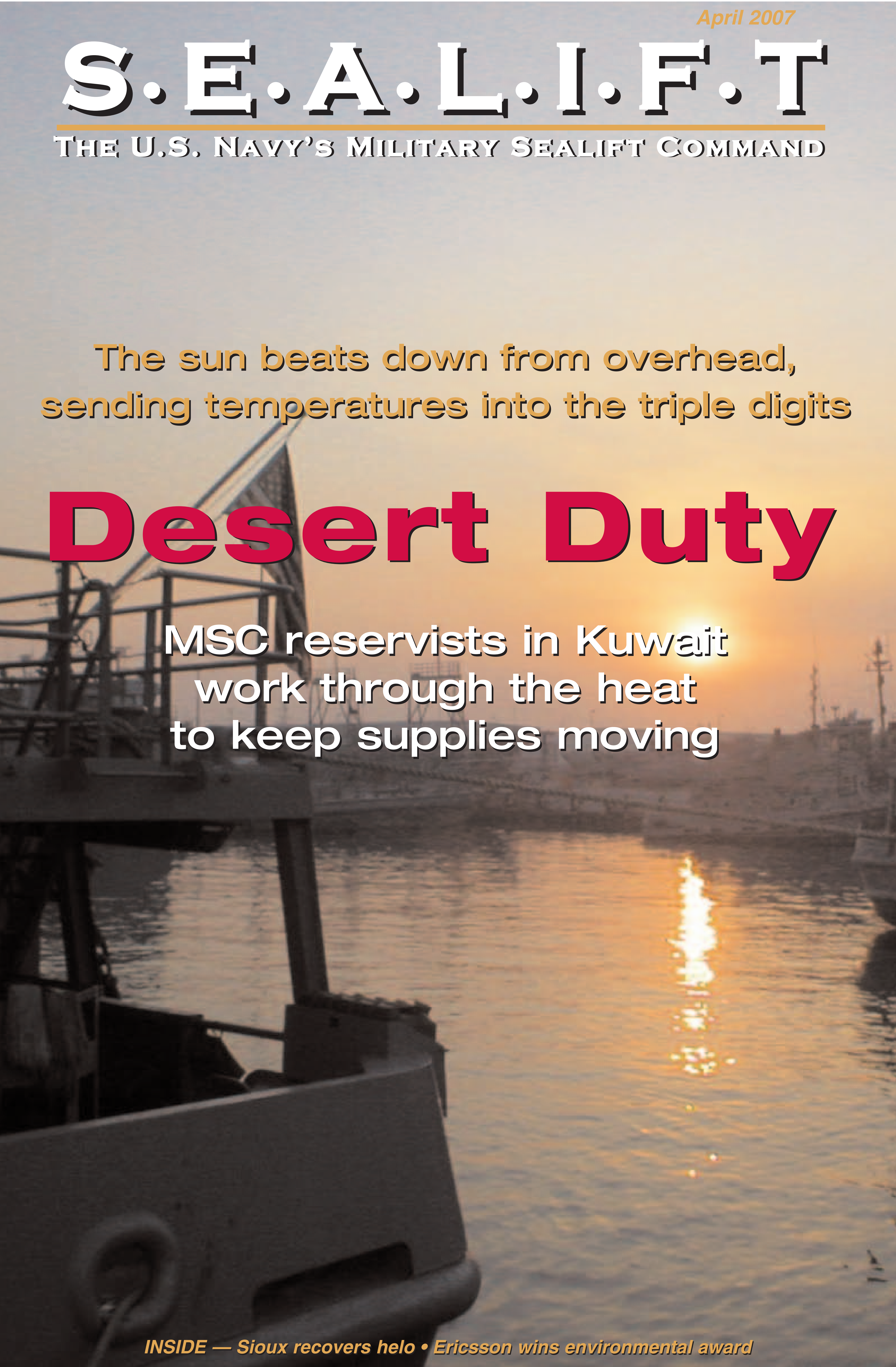
April 2007

S.E.A.L.I.F.T

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command



The sun beats down from overhead, sending temperatures into the triple digits

Desert Duty

MSC reservists in Kuwait work through the heat to keep supplies moving

INSIDE — Sioux recovers helo • Ericsson wins environmental award

Commander's perspective

All hands responsible for network security

We all live very busy lives these days, whether ashore or at sea, and our recreational moments are few. This is certainly the case at the Reilly household, where I am occasionally reminded by my good wife to make eye contact with my three daughters so that they at least remember what I look like these days.

One weekend activity our family enjoys involves a trip to the local DVD rental center to grab a movie off the shelf for Saturday night. However, it is always a difficult errand for me as I have seen plenty of movies, particularly at sea.

Today's digital animation technology has Hollywood turning out movies with incredible special effects. One of my favorite series is the Matrix trilogy. The Matrix movies take you to a future state where mankind fights for individual freedoms against a massive demigod-like computer system, which has taken over the world. These future freedom fighters fight the network from deep in the bowels of the earth aboard their mother ship, constantly on the move to avoid detection and annihilation.

We have our own cyber "mother ship" at MSC. It is our networks operations center. And while the threat is not as perverse as the one portrayed in the Matrix movies, we are still under attack these days from a variety of threats. And every one of you sitting at a computer terminal is on the forward edge of that battle space. Just as everyone at sea is responsible for maintaining watertight integrity, preserving fresh water, fighting fires and delivering the goods, so are we all responsible for shipboard (and MSC network) cyber-defense. It is that important.

I provided an update on my first year at MSC in March's issue of *Sealift*, including a brief discussion on our information technology security challenges. This facet of IT is referred to as information assurance, and its scope and complexity are increasing dramatically. It is happening in the military, across the government, in the commercial sector and at home.

And while I cannot go into classified details on this topic for obvious reasons, let there be no doubt in anyone's mind — we are under attack. This threat is as much a concern to our unclassified systems as on our classified war-fighting networks. And the threat can come from anywhere on the World Wide Web.

It is not all about "spying" on our networks. True, this is a big part of cyber defense, the need to prevent an adversary from infiltrating your system and downloading proprietary information. But we have just as big a challenge keeping our networks running properly in our constrained, MSC operational IT environment: namely, limited satellite bandwidth connectivity at sea.

Viruses, worms and the use of unauthorized applications and programs on our networks can not only bring about speed degradations, they can bring our network to a grinding halt.

The "nuts and bolts" side to protecting our networks includes lifecycle management of the operating systems and the numerous software applications we run. This has also become an ever-increasing challenge as this threat — from the IT-savvy teenage hacker to sophisticated, state-sponsored cyber-warfare organizations — looks to exploit security flaws in our networks and software codes. Similarly, IT software companies are constantly introducing maintenance and security patches to their customers. This is an integral part of network operations supporting what we call our information assurance vulnerability assessment (IAVA) process.

When we get these new IAVA software patches, MSC's IT experts must first test them under computer laboratory conditions to ensure that installing each particular fix to a software application doesn't cause problems to other parts of the network. Then the upgrades have to be copied and distributed across the MSC fleet. This is a time-sensitive, time-consuming undertaking, made all the more challenging when we average more than 100 ships at sea operating across 22 time zones each day. This requirement has increased four-fold during the 2000-2006 timeframe. Today, on average, we get a new IAVA requirement every three to four days.

I also know the word is out across the fleet that I was recently compelled to pull the Internet plug on one of our forward-deployed ships. Let me make something absolutely clear in that last statement — I made the call. Why? Because we had specific evidence that the ship's internal network infrastructure had been compromised, the ship was significantly behind the power curve in terms of its IAVA patches and to keep it on the MSC network was a risk I was no longer willing to take. Just as in the case of a spreading fire or progressive flooding, it was time to set boundaries and call out the damage control party. When I made this decision, we tried to give the ship some time to prepare for the outage, but I have no doubt that there was certainly a personal impact to the crew.

Looking at this one ship's particular IA posture also yielded a list of upwards of 25 additional ships whose shipboard network infrastructure approached the level of degradation similar to the ship we temporarily disconnected. If we don't do a better job of protecting our networks, more ships will need to be taken off the network to have their systems scrubbed, any malicious code or damaging applications removed and all IAVA patches installed.

Is this just a problem for our communications technicians and networks administrators? No, it's bigger than that. In past years when our communication staffs only had to concern themselves with maintaining radio circuits and there were a limited number of terminals aboard ship, this was easy; make sure the radio was dialed up on the right frequency, and the circuit patched from the antenna to the handset. And, rarely were these circuits used for anything other than primarily operational traffic. Radio circuits devoted to the Navy message system relied on transmitting formatted messages with brevity in mind, designed to update previously promulgated warfare conditions, pass schedule changes, order repair parts and make sure there was a brow on the pier the next time the ship made port.

Compare those times to today, where we count on our network for nearly everything, including reach-back maintenance support, telemedicine, travel arrangements and time-sensitive, comprehensive updates to operational plans. We also count on the ability to maintain better contact with our families ashore for quality-of-life purposes. However, all of this incredible capability is not free, including the significant costs associated with military and commercial satellite access. Unlike Internet service provider market conditions ashore, we don't have unlimited network access for a competitive, relatively cheap monthly fee. And, I wonder what it would be like if we had to pay for Internet access on a time-based basis, like cellular phone service. Is that day coming?

Early during my tenure at MSC, I was approached by a company interested in providing Internet service through a commercial satellite system to airline and cruise ship passengers. Their business concept involved charging customers for Internet hookups from their airline seats or ship cabins. Their plan included user charges based on the number of data bytes sent/received, and I was quoted an initial estimated cost of $1.25 per megabyte of data. (For comparison purposes, I download music from the internet at home for 99 cents a song, some of the tunes being upwards of 30MBs.)

I immediately thought of my daughters and their Web-surfing practices where they easily exchange gigabytes of information in a session. One dollar and 25 cents per megabyte equals $1,250.00 per gigabyte. Any notion of a contract quickly became unaffordable, even for MSC official business requirements. How much are we spending these days for our current MSC IT infrastructure? It is in the tens of millions of dollars a year.

Given these facts of life, we are investigating new technology and operating protocols designed to better maintain, rapidly reconfigure and accurately upgrade our networks in our operational environment. We currently also have the ability to scan and monitor user activity across the network to detect intrusion attempts across our firewall boundaries, along with individual user practices potentially dangerous to security. This includes identifying Web sites that users are visiting, even down to the specific computer client aboard a ship, or in an office ashore.

We also receive alerts from the Navy's Computer Incident Response Team and the Defense Information Support Agency Joint Task Force for Global Network Operations when there is a problem on our network. They routinely scan our network infrastructure and also monitor MSC activity on the Web. Just like scenes from the Matrix movies, once an intrusion, worm or virus is detected, operational message traffic is sent out to the commands under attack. We are then required to isolate the corrupted portion of our network, take any computer workstations off line immediately and conduct extensive post-incident damage analysis in due course.

Sound complicated? You bet. Unfortunately, many sites on the Web are not investing money in upgrading their security. Some offer you the opportunity for free e-mail accounts and building your own Web page, but with no guarantee of service reliability or information assurance. After all, you are getting the service for free, but at your own risk.

Unfortunately, problems surface when MSC personnel unknowingly visit Web sites with poor security that hackers target to exploit DOD networks, like ours.

When these Web sites are identified as bad actors, information security procedures mandate that they be blocked from the network. These cyber-defense actions are performed every day by our Network Operations Center watch standers, but it is a never-ending battle.

How can we all support this effort to ensure we have safe, reliable network connectivity? First, I have provided guidance to my IT workforce to tighten up the IAVA process. We will develop better procedures for tracking, testing and pushing IAVA patches throughout the fleet. This includes prioritizing cyber-defense actions based upon the severity of the threat and include more sophisticated information control conditions designed to tighten down the network in the event of attack. This may include denial-of-service under certain conditions, together with a notification process designed to give users time to react. We'll get the entire MSC ashore infrastructure involved in supporting the timely delivery of IAVA updates to the fleet through improved, visible tracking methods. We will continue to block suspicious and malicious Web sites and fully comply with similar guidance from higher authority to do our part to protect DOD networks.

How can you help? Adherence to DOD computer-user operations and security policies is a must. Remember that there is no expectation of privacy when using DOD network resources. Do your part to support the timely and effective installation of IAVA patches and security upgrades. Recognize, and plan accordingly, for temporary outages if we must "dog down the hatches" due to a cyber security incident or discover a significant IA vulnerability. This is an all-hands responsibility, and I will count on everyone, from master, down to the newest junior shipmate, to support. It's that important.

Sail safe and keep the faith,

Robert D. Reilly Jr.
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Military Sealift Command

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Lewis and Clark moves ordnance in record time

By Bill Cook
MSFSC Public Affairs

Seaman Kevin T. Murray Jr., photo

Navy Operations Specialist 3rd Class Jeana Mullen talks on a sound-powered telephone as dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark begins transferring ordnance to aircraft carrier USS

USNS Lewis and Clark conducted its first live ordnance mission by uploading USS Harry S. Truman on Feb. 7 in freezing temperatures during a snowstorm off the Virginia Capes and then taking USS Theodore Roosevelt alongside to commence their ordnance down-load.

According to Lewis and Clark's civil service master, Capt. Randall Rockwood, "Given the tools, MSC civil service mariners excel at executing the mission. Given a brand new ship, those same mariners executed their first-ever, live ordnance operation safely, efficiently and ahead of schedule."

The operation, taking about one-third of the time that was expected, was completed by 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 8, and Lewis and Clark returned to Earle Naval Weapons Station, N.J., two days early.

"MSC's newest ship uploaded and downloaded 1,318 pallets in a little more than one day in the snow using underway replenishment and vertical replenishment," said Frank Cunningham, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command class manager for Lewis and Clark. "As the crew becomes more familiar and proficient with the [underway replenishment] capabilities of the ship, Lewis and Clark continues to be impressive. With the large elevator platforms, clearway and helo deck, the aircraft carriers could not keep up. This evolution could have been done in one day."

The T-AKE cargo handling design allows for extensive pre-staging for uploads and ease of transfer during downloads. A wide open main deck, huge state-of-the-art, high-speed cargo weapons elevators and magazines with 10-foot overheads are ideal for handling high volumes of ordnance.

Lewis and Clark had just completed a successful final contract trial and in-service inspection and was preparing for a 90-day post-shakedown availability.

"The highly trained and motivated officers and crew of Lewis and Clark had also recently completed the required post-delivery test and trials operational evaluation in December," said Rockwood. "In that timed evaluation operation, the ship transferred more with four replenishment stations than it was required to transfer with five stations.

According to Lewis and Clark Chief Mate Robert Baus, the ship's massive flight deck more than handled all the cargo staging. "The only respite the helicopter pilots had from moving loads of cargo was caused by the time it took Roosevelt's crew to restage its own flight deck," related Baus.

While the two carrier events had not been previously scheduled for Lewis and Clark, they came together with only a week of planning. Rockwood praised Cargo Mate Timothy Lockwood, stating he was key to completing operations on the two ships safely and significantly ahead of schedule. "He maintained constant communication with the carriers, ensuring that all preparations led to and ensured a first-ever, historic execution. As all good operations are due to good planning, Mr. Lockwood's efforts at choreographing this huge logistical operation were instrumental in using all of Lewis and Clark design advantages," said Rockwood.

Rockwood was proud of the ship's crew as they braved the freezing temperatures and snow-covered decks to conduct their first 'real' mission. He noted that many had been assigned since Lewis and Clark was delivered in June 2006, and just eight months later they were actively engaged in supporting two of the Navy's biggest carriers in this one evolution.

Moving ammo around after months of trials and training showed the operational advantages and design efficiencies of this new vessel.

According to Rockwood, all reports, e-mail and comments from the carriers' commanding officers were positive and appreciative

"Frankly," stated Rockwood, "The most efficient aircraft carrier could not keep up with USNS Lewis and Clark's ammo handling proficiency."

Ericsson wins CNO environmental award

By James Jackson
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

Photo courtesy Australian Department of Defence

Australian navy ship HMAS Manoora, right, conducts an underway replenishment with Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson during Rim-of-the-Pacific Exercise 2006. Ericsson recently received a Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Quality Small Ship Award.

Military Sealift Command's civil service-crewed fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson was selected as the first MSC ship to receive a prestigious Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Quality Small Ship Award.

The CNO Environmental Awards recognize ships, installations and individuals or teams for their environmental stewardship. As a result of this selection, Ericsson will now compete in the Secretary of the Navy Environmental Awards competition.

In his remarks to this year's recipients, Rear Adm. James A. Symonds, director of the CNO Environmental Division, extended his personal congratulations and said the winners have demonstrated that the U.S. Navy has one of the finest environmental programs in the world. The award will be presented at a ceremony in June in Washington.

"We have spent several years building our environmental program, working with our ships, ensuring that they are equipped, manned and trained properly in order to meet environmental requirements wherever they go. So for the Ericsson to win such a prestigious award on our first attempt in competition with the rest of the Navy is truly cause for pride and celebration, especially for the ship's master and crew," said Dr. John Austin, MSC's director of environmental programs.

"We are extremely pleased to be recognized for our environmental efforts and to receive the CNO's Environmental Award," said Capt. Robert T. Wiley, the ship's civil service master. "Every mariner that reports on board receives additional training on our environmental program, which is to prevent pollution, ensure response readiness, conserve resources and comply with regulatory requirements."

According to Wiley, it was the efforts of Cargo Mate Art Davis, the ship's afloat environmental protection coordinator, Chief Officer Steven Rose, Ericsson's garbage management plan administrator and Supply Officer Larry Harris, the certified hazardous material coordinator, who ensured Ericsson measured up to the high standards required to win this award.

USNS Ericsson and its crew of 81 civil service mariners and military department of four active duty Navy sailors are currently operating out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The ship, one of 14 Kaiser-class oilers operated by MSC, provides fuel and cargo to Navy ships while underway.

In a two-year period, Ericsson transferred almost 82 million gallons of fuel in 353 separate replenishments at sea without a significant mishap.

"MSC ships, like the active-duty fleet, have taken large strides in complying with newer and increasingly strict environmental requirements," said Austin. "Ericsson was the first Kaiser-class ship to use the Safety Management System, and the first to pass the MSC safety management system audit, which was conducted by the American Bureau of Shipping. The fact Ericsson is being recognized for its efforts leads me to believe MSC is not only headed in the right direction with our environmental and safety program, but leading the way toward the future."

Offloading ships in a sandstorm

MSCO Kuwait reservists work in one of Earth's harshest environments

By Gillian Brigham
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

You are standing at the edge of a pier watching the outline of a ship slowly sharpen as it sails towards you through summer haze, which hangs like a curtain over the water. Your fatigues are caked in dust, and the sun is bearing down on you with an almost physical force. You stopped looking at thermometers earlier this morning when the temperature rose above 120 degrees. In any case, the sweat running in rivulets down your back is only partially from the heat. A mixture of excitement, anxiety and expectation of the unknown fuels the rest.

A 1,000-foot Navy ship loaded to the gills with Humvees, tanks, military hardware and heavy equipment bound for U.S. troops in Iraq is arriving any minute. You happen to be responsible for overseeing the complex operation of unloading this cargo and getting the ship back out to sea on time.

You also happen to have never actually done this before.

This is the scenario a group of Military Sealift Command reservists found themselves in last year when they arrived at the Port of Ash Shuaybah in Kuwait, as the new staff of Military Sealift Command Office Kuwait.

Plucked from six MSC reserve Expeditionary Port Units, these 10 reservists were mobilized for one year to run MSCO Kuwait, the office that handles almost 90 percent of all military cargo being delivered to the Middle East for use by U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq. Although the pace has slowed since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, on average, the staff deals with the arrival and off-loading of two ships each week.

On the ground in Ash Shuaybah, the staff functions as facilitators. They organize the ships' schedules, working with the Army stevedores who are responsible for physically off-loading the cargo and the military units who are receiving the equipment. They coordinate the harbor tugs and pilots who help navigate ships in and out of the port, arrange force protection, negotiate for additional pier space when it is needed and maintain a 24-hour watch while ships are in port, overseeing loading operations.

"Day-to-day, we're making arrangements, aligning schedules, working with the Army and keeping all the players up-to-date" said Capt. Steven DeLong, former commander of the first group of reservists to run MSCO Kuwait and, in his civilian life, an MSC employee at the command's headquarters in Washington, D.C. "There is a lot involved with getting ships in here."

After a quiet initial two months on the job without any ships in port, Navy Lt. Michael Holmes vividly remembers the June day he spent standing on the dock watching MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Pomeroy arrive. Pomeroy was the first ship that he and many of his fellow reservists ever had a hand in off-loading.

"It was kind of daunting," said Holmes, "watching her pull in. But at that point you can either freak out or chalk it up to a learning opportunity."

The story of how Lt. Holmes found himself in a war zone in one of the busiest ports in the Middle East begins in 2005. For years prior, MSC's prepositioning squadron staffs took turns going ashore for a year and running operations in Kuwait. However, in 2005 while the staff of the now-disbanded Afloat Prepositioning Squadron Four was serving their final year of duty in Ash Shuaybah, MSC looked for a new answer to this staffing issue.

The solution? Mobilizing reservists from MSC's 16 different Expeditionary Port Units, or EPUs, to take on the job.

"This is what EPUs were initially created to do, so they mobilized us to come out here and take over the mission," said DeLong.

In February 2006, after months of rumors, DeLong, Holmes and eight other reservists were formally given their orders to mobilize. A month later, they headed down to the U.S. Army's Fort Jackson in Jacksonville, Fla., for two weeks of warrior-skills training.

"The Navy set up this program with Army instructors so naval personnel working ashore in the Middle East could take a course in land navigation and convoy protection and gain additional weapons and the rudimentary 'this is how you enter and clear a building' skills," said DeLong.

Gillian Brigham, photo

Military Sealift Command-chartered ship MV Virginian off-loads containers of ammunition in Kuwait. During Capt. Steven DeLong's year running MSCO Kuwait, Virginian was a frequent visitor.

Their stay at Fort Jackson gave the reservists another important opportunity — some time to get to know each other. Of the new staff members, five people were reporting from EPU 108 in Atlanta while the other half were coming from EPUs in Jacksonville, Syracuse, N.Y., Quincy, Mass., and Mareno Valley and Alameda, Calif.

Among their ranks: a postal worker, an engineer, a telephone company employee, a bookkeeper, a homebuilding supplies buyer and a former civilian mariner. Lucky for them, launching hand grenades and slogging together through the mud is a great way to build quick camaraderie. Faced with spending the next year living and working together in a desert halfway around the world, they would certainly need it.

The staff touched down in Kuwait on April 25, 2006, just as the summer heat was settling over the country's spare, desolate landscape where telephone poles and oceans of dust stretch to the horizon line and beyond.

MSCO Kuwait is located at the Port of Ash Shuaybah, a vast industrial complex of piers, factories and huge mountains of sand belonging to a busy cement plant on site. A couple of revamped 20-foot shipping containers and a Mobile Sealift Operations Center van huddled together behind a handful of concrete barriers on a pier is MSCO Kuwait's footprint at the port. It is an austere environment, to put it mildly.

For the reservists, it is also one of only two places they are allowed to go in all of Kuwait.

Security measures restrict the majority of U.S. military personnel to the base where they work and the base where they live. Kuwaiti Naval Base lies 20 miles south of Ash Shuaybah. The base is home to Camp Patriot, a 1,500-person contingent of U.S. military personnel working in or transiting through Kuwait. The MSC staff shares dorm-style living quarters on the first floor of one of the only actual buildings on base. Most everyone else lives in large white tents that also house the mess hall, the exchange, the gym and other support facilities. Despite difficult conditions and their lack of liberty, the staff is enthusiastic as they reflect on their year in the Gulf.

> "Day-to-day, we're making arrangements, aligning schedules, working with the Army and keeping all the players up-to-date."
>
> Capt. Steven DeLong, former MSCO Kuwait commander

"The rewards far outweigh the cost," said Navy Chief Petty Officer Roberta Chinetti, the self-proclaimed mom of the group, infamous for teaching her unit to play cribbage in order to help wile away the often-tedious off-hours spent restricted to the base.

"I'm glad I got this opportunity," continued Chinetti. "This is something I've trained to do and here I actually got the chance to do it."

DeLong, familiar with Kuwait from his days sailing as master aboard MSC sealift ships during the first Gulf War, said the workload and environment was what he expected.

What impressed him about the experience was his staff.

"The fact that people from six different organizations came together so smoothly and so effectively is what I've been most pleased with. This is a great team," said the captain.

Among his unit, the appreciation is mutual. The staff attributes much of their success to their leadership — Delong and his executive officer Navy Cmdr. Jim Hajj.

"They are two of the best COs and XOs I've ever worked for," noted Holmes. "As a group, we felt empowered to do our jobs. When the first ships were here, the captain would stay all night, live here at the port. But, as we started to get the hang of it, he let us step up and handle things. He empowered us to use our authority so we weren't afraid of making decisions."

This opportunity to make decisions and be involved in operations that affect what is going on in Iraq and that support troops serving there is hailed by the staff as the most rewarding part of their tour.

"Knowing that you are a part of important things going on in the world today and that you are an active part in helping make them better," said Chinetti, "now, that is exciting."

During their notable year at the helm of MSCO Kuwait, DeLong and his crew coordinated more than 100 missions that deployed more than 8 million square feet of cargo and 5 million pounds of ammunition to U.S. and coalition forces in the region.

In February, they stepped back as a new set of reservists, members of EPU 104 from Syracuse, N.Y. led by Navy Capt. Pete Johansen, assumed responsibility of the operation during a change of command ceremony presided over by Navy Capt. Glen R. Sears II, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Central.

"I'm looking forward to continuing the great record of performance that Captain DeLong established during his tenure here," said MSCO Kuwait's new commander. "I've got a great crew, and they are more than able to meet any challenge that may come."

Since taking over in Kuwait, the new unit has offloaded 777, 678 square feet of cargo from 12 ships.

File photo

Thousands of tanks, trucks, trailers and other military vehicles line a staging area at the U.S. Army's Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. Most of the vehicles and combat equipment that are off-loaded from MSC ships at the Port of Ash Shuaybah make a stop at Camp Arifjan before being routed to their final destination in the Middle East.

Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Brittin sits pierside in Ash Shuaybah, Kuwait, during a sandstorm.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

After 20 years of service, **Navy Cmdr. Thomas McDowell Jr**. retired from the Navy on March 9 in a ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial. McDowell served as flag secretary to commander, Military Sealift Command since July 2004. In his new civilian life, McDowell will be a project manager at Agility, a global logistics company.

Jay Lee, a systems accountant in MSC's Comptroller Directorate, passed the American Society of Military Comptrollers' certified defense financial manager examination in February. This rigorous exam tested the financial professional's knowledge in resource management, budgeting and cost analysis, accounting and finance and acquisition.

At the beginning of this month, **Griff Hume** shifted from his current position as the Prepositioning Program's Navy, Defense Logistics Agency and Air Force project officer to become the command's director of force protection. Hume began his career at MSC in 1992 as the force protection officer for what is now Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic. After a year in that position, Hume came to headquarters, where he served in various capacities supporting sealift operations until he took the lead of NDAF in 2000. Hume's previous position has not yet been filled.

Storekeeper 2nd Class Calvin Lewis re-enlisted for four years in a March 6 ceremony at headquarters. Lewis has been in the Navy for seven years and joined MSC in April 2004.

MSC hosted the U.S. Transportation Command's quarterly component commander conference on March 5. Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, **Air Force Gen. Norton Schwartz** presided over the meeting of 25 attendees.

MSC welcomes **Christopher Velzis**, Engineering Directorate; **Francis Pelosi**, Special Mission Program; and **Robert Duncan**, Comptroller's Office.

MSC bids farewell to **Ronald Tucker**, Operations and Plans Directorate; **Jody Anderson**, Command, Control Communications and Computer Systems Directorate; and **George Myers**, Administrative Support Center.

Jurkowski earns SECNAV award

Bill Cook, photo

Military Sealift Command Comptroller Gary Frantz, left, and MSC Commander Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., right, present Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Comptroller Joyce Jurkowski with an Assistant Secretary of the Navy Comptroller Award for saving $240,000 during the MSC transformation.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

On Feb 18, fleet ocean tug USNS Navajo and U.S. Coast Guard cutter Kittiwake responded to a sailing vessel distress call while conducting routine operations in the Hawaiian Islands area of operations. Ordered to make best speed by Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, Navajo was the first to arrive on the scene. The sailing vessel Barefoot in Paradise had lost its rudder and was adrift at sea approximately 300 miles northeast of Hilo, Hawaii. Navajo established ship-to-ship communications with the vessel and stayed with it until Kittiwake arrived. Due to rough sea conditions, Navajo was unable to safely tow the fiberglass-hull boat back to port. However, the three crew members were returned safely to shore aboard Kittiwake.

USNS Sacagawea completed its acceptance sea trials off the coast of Southern California Feb 2. The second ship in the T-AKE-class was delivered to Military Sealift Command Feb. 27. After additional sea trials off the California coast, Sacagawea will transfer to its home port in Norfolk, Va., in April 2007.

Civil service **Capt. Steven M. Perdue** relieved civil service **Capt. Edward W. Dickerson** as master aboard USNS Catawba on Feb. 7, 2007.

On Feb. 17, USNS Mercy played host to the San Diego Imperial Council of Girl Scouts. More than 1,000 girls were on board for an annual award ceremony. In addition to receiving annual awards, the girls received a brief on Mercy's mission and a tour of the ship's medical facilities.

Welcome aboard to **Navy Personnel Specialist 1st Class Kinal Dilipkumer Patel**, **Navy Information Systems Technician 1st Class Jimmy C. Martin II**, **Navy Storekeeper 1st Class Rashee Peterson**, **Navy Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Denise A. Ortiz**, **Navy Operations Specialist Seaman Charles Phillip Lloyd** and **Navy Information Systems Technician Seaman Apprentice Michael Edward Stacker**, all of whom reported for duty aboard USNS Niagara Falls. **Navy Storekeeper 2nd Class Mantas Rysevas** and **Navy Information Specialist Seaman Apprentice Nicole Ramona Saunders** joined the USNS San Jose team. USNS Yukon welcomed aboard **Navy Operations Specialist 2nd Class Darin Leonard Tate** and **Navy Electronics Technician 3rd Class Jon Eric Zawkenburg** reported for duty on board USNS Sioux.

Navy Storekeeper 2nd Class Xavier Medina, assigned to USNS Mercy, will receive the 2006 Medical Logistician award for his outstanding support during Mercy's five-month humanitarian mission to Southeast Asia.

Navy Information Systems Technician 1st Class Denise Brannen was selected as SEALOGPAC's Sailor of the Year.

The California Regional Occupational Program of San Diego Sweetwater Union School District presented a certificate of appreciation to Sealift Logistics Command Pacific on Feb 22. Gerald Chavez, the school's program director, presented the award to **Tim McCully**, deputy SEALOGPAC commander, in recognition of the command's continuing participation in the partnership. SEALOGPAC's Maritime Apprentice Program, currently active at the Mar Vista High School in San Diego, offers students enrolled in a maritime occupations course of study the opportunity to gain hands-on experience by sailing as apprentices on board MSC oilers operating out of San Diego and Hawaii.

SEALOGPAC says farewell to **Robert Griffin**, the command's deputy comptroller, who retired after spending more than 20 years with Military Sealift Command. Griffin began his career with MSC Oakland in 1987 and was a key participant when MSC Oakland relocated to San Diego in 1998. Griffin and his family will continue to reside in San Diego.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic named **Melvina Lewis** as the command's civilian of the year in a ceremony held March 15. Lewis, SEALOGLANT's assistant operational support officer, was nominated for running the Reserve Programs Office while her supervisor was deployed to Kuwait. Lewis has earned the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

In the same ceremony, supervisory marine transportation specialist **Rick Caldwell** was named SEALOGLANT Supervisor of the Year. Caldwell supervises all sealift and prepositioning ships operating in the SEALOGLANT area.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command combat stores Ship USNS Spica departed the Persian Gulf following a successful deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, the global war on terrorism and maritime interdiction operations. Spica provided support to the Enterprise and Eisenhower carrier strike groups and Iwo Jima and Boxer expeditionary strike groups as well as naval forces from Germany, France, Italy, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Spica always exceeded expectations by safely and efficiently conducting 64 underway and 19 inport replenishment events, transferring 600,000 gallons of fuel oil, delivering more than 5,235 metric tons of cargo and filling more than 3,000 requisitions. Spica's commercial helicopter detachment provided stellar performance, safely conducting more than 112 flight hours and transferring more than 5,000 pallets of mission-essential cargo, food and supplies.

Task Force 53 welcomes combat stores ship USNS Concord, fast combat support ship USNS Bridge and combat stores ship USNS Saturn to 5th Fleet. Their performance in the high-tempo U.S. Central Command operational environment will be instrumental to the success of coalition and maritime logistics operations.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy Capt. Susan Dunlap, commander of Sealift Logistics Command Far East, attended the Reserve Commanding Officers and Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration pre-exercise conference in Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 24-25 which was hosted by **Navy Capt. Luke McCollum**, commanding officer of SEALOGFE Naval Reserve Unit 102.

Navy Chief Boatswain's Mate Kenneth Wassermann reported to MSCO Korea, replacing Command Chief **David Sowards**.

During a ceremony held at Busan's Pier Eight, MSCO Korea commanding officer **Navy Cmdr. Ron Oswald** presented Sowards with a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal recognizing his outstanding tour with the command. Immediately after the presentation, Sowards was commissioned a chief warrant officer.

Sealift Logistics Command, Far East, welcomed deputy logistics officer **Andrew Armacost**.

EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command oiler USNS Laramie departed the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in April after sailing 10 of the past 14 months in support of U.S., NATO and coalition naval forces in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. During this lengthy deployment, Laramie participated in Exercise Brilliant Midas, supported the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group and the Bataan Expeditionary Strike Group and refueled U.S. and NATO ships in Africa's Gulf of Guinea.

"Your participation in Joint Task Force Lebanon is worthy of special mention," said **Navy Capt. Nick Holman**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Europe, in a bravo zulu message to the ship. Laramie provided underway replenishment of food, fuel and supplies to numerous U.S. and coalition ships involved in the international response to the fighting that broke out between Israel and Lebanon in July 2006. "Your responsiveness, professionalism and willingness to work long hours greatly contributed to the success of JTF Lebanon and the deescalation of violence in the region," said Holman. "I thank you once again for your exemplary service to the U.S. 6th Fleet, the U.S. Navy and your country. Sail safe."

Sealift Logistics Command Europe continues to support the rotation of troops and cargo into and out of Afghanistan. Feb. 15, Ready Reserve Force roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cape Washington pulled into Naval Station Rota, Spain, to load 24,000 square feet of cargo including 38 Blackhawk helicopters. This cargo, which was being redeployed to the United States after duty on the front lines of the global war on terrorism in Afghanistan, belongs to the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division. The ship also loaded cargo for redeployment to the United States in Ash Shuaybah, Kuwait, prior to the ship's stop in Rota. The Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force ships come under MSC's operational control when they are activated.

SEALOGEUR personnel took part in Exercise Neptune Response in Naples, Italy, Feb. 21-23. Neptune Response was a consequence-management exercise designed to test the emergency evacuation plans for U.S. military personnel and other Americans living in Naples and Sigonella under the shadow of active volcanoes. Naval Support Activity Naples is located a mere 12 miles from Mt. Vesuvius, while Naval Air Station Sigonella is located in close proximity to Europe's most active volcano, Mt. Etna.

Cape Washington rotates OEF

Robert Foster, photo

Thirty-eight Army Blackhawk helicopters are loaded aboard Ready Reserve Force roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cape Washington in Rota, Spain, Feb. 15-18. The helicopters, along with other cargo, are being sent back to the United States after being used in Operation Enduring Freedom. When RRF ships are activated, they come under Military Sealift Command operational control.

COMPASS • HEADING

Each year, a small number of civil service mariners from around Military Sealift Command are selected to receive special recognition in one of two categories: Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Shipmate of the Year and MSFSC Mariner Award of Excellence.

The MSFSC Shipmate of the Year recognizes and honors unlicensed civil service mariners for demonstrated ability and skill in assisting, developing and providing on-the-job training to one or more MSFSC employees. For 2006, MSFSC Shipmates of the Year are **Able Seaman Gary Alunday**, **Boatswain Stephen Bingham**, **Wiper Donald Burns**, **Purser Rodrigo H. De Jesus**, **Utilityman Forencio R. Ebanculla**, **Deck Engineer Machinist Emilito B. Kabalican**, **Chief Cook Rudy Matel**, **Chief Refrigeration Engineer Noel S. Pangilinan** and **Yeoman Storekeeper Samuel Silveri**.

The MSFSC Mariner Award of Excellence recognizes and honors MSC's civil service mariners who are considered the most outstanding in their departments during the year. For 2006, awardees are: **1st Assistant Engineer David D. Potter**, **2nd Assistant Engineer Steven B. Johnson**, **Refrigeration Engineer Eduardo Ignacio**, **Refrigeration Engineer Eddie B. Uy**, **1st Officer Thomas J. Giudice**, **1st Officer Michael Keller**, **Able Seaman David Jackson Jr**., **Supply Officer Ernesto B. Riodique Jr.**, **Supply Officer Elvin Pecery**, **Yeoman/Storekeeper Glenda J. Bell**, **Chief Cook Jess B. Viray**, **Medical Services Officer Danilo Y. Banag**, **Medical Services Officer Lonnie Hawkins**, **Purser Rolando C. Artugue**, **Purser David P. Juco** and **Chief Radio Electronics Technician Edwin Perez**.

The 2006 MSC Marine Employee of the Year is USNS Guadalupe's **Chief Cook Jess B. Viray**. He received congratulations for the prestigious award from MSFSC Executive Director **Jack Taylor.**

It's official: The refurbishment contract for the Breezy Point project, a cluster of three buildings, which will eventually house MSFSC's headquarters staff in Norfolk, has been awarded. A preconstruction meeting was held on Feb. 21 with the contractor, Archer Western. Work is scheduled to commence on March 15 and will initially encompass the removal of asbestos. A work schedule, to include milestones, is due by March 15, and a planned initial move-in date of March 2008 is envisioned. The Breezy Point project is expected to be completed in August 2008.

MSFSC thanks **Engine Utilityman Clement Agboola**, **Able Seaman Joseph Brown**, **Able Seaman Ovidio Barongan**, **Yeoman/Storekeeper Ricardo Casimiro**, **Assistant Storekeeper Manuel Felipe**, **Utilityman Michael French**, **2nd Officer Ricardo Lopez**, and **Able Seaman Wayne Martin**. These civil service mariners entered onto the retirement rolls in January.

MSFSC's internet newsletter can be found at www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter

Cargo ships visit Virginia

During a rare port call, six of Military Sealift Command's 19 large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships are tied up at Newport News, Va. The massive ships, all prime movers of military cargo during the global war on terrorism, made a stop in Newport News in March. From left to right: USNS Pomeroy, USNS Sisler, USNS Red Cloud, USNS Watkins, USNS Gilliland and USNS Gordon.

USNS Sioux recovers helicopter wreckage,

By James Jackson
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux recently recovered a downed Navy MH-60 Knighthawk helicopter that crashed off the San Diego coast on Jan. 26.

The helicopter, which had four crew members aboard, was conducting routine training operations with Navy Expeditionary Strike Group 5, embarked aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard. The body of one sailor was found shortly after the helicopter went down, but the other three sailors and the aircraft were missing at sea.

Following an extensive search for the wreckage, 3rd Fleet tasked Sioux to depart Naval Station San Diego on the morning of Feb. 15 with an unmanned deep submergible robotic drone on board. The drone was configured to support salvage operations.

James Jackson, photo

Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux sits pierside in San Diego before getting underway Feb. 15 to recover the wreckage of a Navy MH-60 Knighthawk helicopter. The Knighthawk went down off the San Diego coast Jan. 26, killing all four crew members.

"We arrived on scene late in the evening of Feb. 15," said Capt. Amy Esqueda, Sioux's civil service master. "However, because we didn't have a dynamic positioning system on board, and visibility was low, we stayed about 200 yards off station to avoid disturbing the site."

The crew of 20 civil service mariners and their four-person military communications detachment were joined by Navy salvage and diving specialists from Naval Sea Systems Command and 10 members from Phoenix International, the operators of the unmanned drone. The team spent the first night at sea finalizing preparations for operations the next day.

"We began salvage operations at first daylight on the morning of Feb. 16, and managed to recover a large portion of the aircraft on our first attempt, including recovering the remains of the three missing crew members," Esqueda said. "Finding the missing sailors was on the minds of the entire crew. It was a big relief being able to bring them on board early in the operations."

The wreckage was located at a depth of 3,700 feet on the ocean floor, and despite a few days of bad weather during the recovery phase, Sioux managed to bring up more than 8,500 pounds of the wreckage, including the aircraft black boxes, according to Esqueda. "All my able bodied seamen who operated our cranes lowered the [unmanned drone] to the exact location each and every time, enabling us to complete the recovery operations a full week ahead of schedule," said Esqueda.

"Although our primary mission is towing, we have the capabilities to assist in deep recovery operations like this one," added Sioux Chief Mate Barry Mortensen. "This was a very challenging mission for us and the crew performed extremely well."

Capt. John Hardison, commodore of Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Pacific said, "It was very important for the Navy to recover the aircraft as we attempt to determine the cause of this mishap. Recovering our shipmates will help bring some closure for their families."

Sioux returned to Naval Air Station North Island on Feb. 22 and, in keeping with military traditions, the crew gave final honors to their fallen shipmates as they were piped ashore for the last time.

USNS Mount Baker CIVMARs augment quality work of ship-

By Bill Cook
MSFSC Public Affairs

When MSC's government-owned, government-operated vessels enter shipyards for repairs, a contingent of the ship's civil service mariners usually accompany the ships. These CIVMARs assist shipyard personnel with needed repairs and continue routine maintenance procedures such as chipping and painting. For those mariners, living away from a ship and working on board can be an odd experience.

In early January, when ammunition ship USNS Mount Baker started its 45-day yard period at Detyens Shipyards, Inc., in Charleston, S.C., 40 civil service mariners stayed with the ship.

Second Mate Gary Wanzor noted that life in a hotel is a bit less convenient than living aboard the vessel. "I'm a watch stander. I usually get out of bed, walk 20 feet and I'm on the job," explained Wanzor. "Now I've got to commute for 20 minutes."

All the mariners from Mount Baker stayed at the same hotel and shuttled together back and forth for the ride to and from the shipyard. The ship didn't offer the hospitable living and working environment it normally does when underway. While in the yard, the ship had limited heat, had no water and provided portapotties for the crew.

According to Wanzor, Detyens was a very responsive shipyard, and their employees were top notch. But still, the civil service mariners had a lot of work to do, such as operating and weight-testing the booms, running the winches, doing all the rigging and rust-removal, plus cleaning — lots of cleaning.

Despite the hard work, the crew chose to stay with Mount Baker long term. "The key personnel and many of the crew members have been on this ship for many years, and they do an outstanding job," said Wanzor.

Boatswain's Mate Nick Baker has been on Mount Baker since 1997. Baker is a native of Barnegat, N.J., and has been with MSC for 19 years. According to Baker, the mariners sometimes take for granted the amenities the ship offers when underway. "Now with a long commute, no kitchen facilities at the hotel and eating fast food every night, we can't wait to get back on board and underway," said Baker. "It will be nice not to be cold all the time."

Bill Cook, photos

Above: Military Sealift Command civil service mariner Ken Barry grabs a wrench while performing maintenance aboard ammunition ship USNS Mount Baker. Barry was one of about 40 CIVMARs to remain on board the ship while in a Charleston, S.C., shipyard for routine maintenance.
Right: Boatswain's Mate Nick Baker also remained on board Mount Baker during the yard period.

Able Seaman Ken Barry hails from New Smyrna Beach, Fla., and has been with MSC six years. Neither Baker nor Barry complains much, and both stressed the positive aspects of working on the ship. "We can focus on individual projects without having to stop for operations," Barry mentioned. "Now, when I start a maintenance project, I can work right through to completion on it."

"There are great officers on board, and that makes the work here worthwhile, if not always enjoyable because of the cold," said Barry. "They treat us with respect."

Overwhelmingly, the crew cited the leadership of the ship's civil service master, Capt. Tom Hartley, as a prime reason Mount Baker is such a great ship on which to work.

Mount Baker got underway and left Detyens in late February, much to the joy of the 40 men who saw the ship through the yard period. They can once again walk to work and eat more than just fast food.