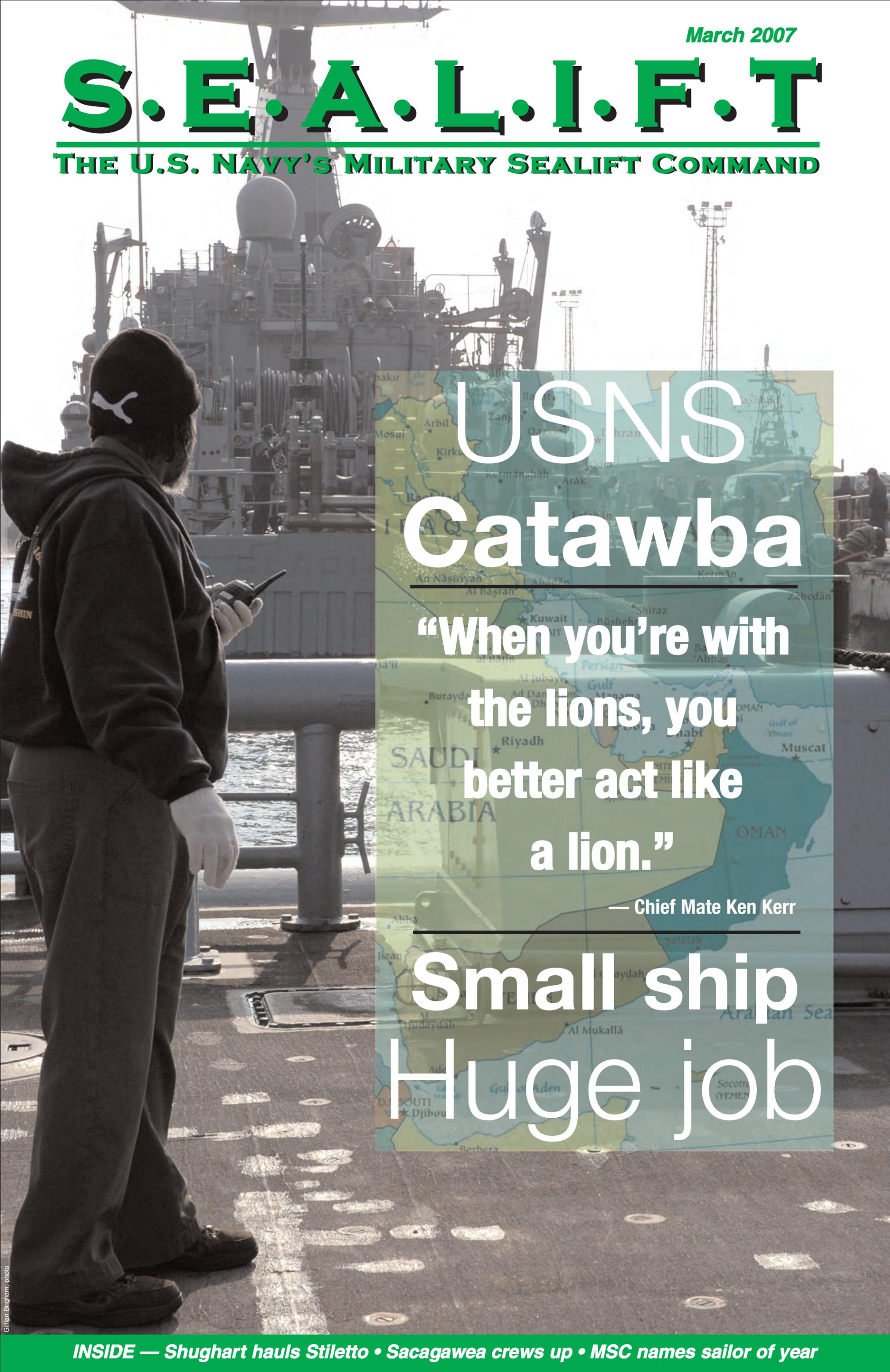


March 2007

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND



## USNS Catawba

“When you’re with  
the lions, you  
better act like  
a lion.”

— Chief Mate Ken Kerr

## Small ship Huge job

INSIDE — Shughart hauls Stiletto • Sacagawea crews up • MSC names sailor of year

# My operating axioms - one year anniversary

It's been a year since I came aboard Military Sealift Command: a year and a lifetime of experience. When I arrived, one of my first moves was to let all of you know what my operating axioms were, so you'd know where I was coming from and what I wanted to achieve. Now it's time to see some of the progress we've made.

## People are our #1 priority

People are still our #1 strategic priority – across the board, everywhere, 24/7, 365 days a year. People and their families are important. Family readiness is important. In August 2006, I signed out COMSC instruction 1770.1. Under this directive, MSC commanders and officers-in-charge at all levels are designating a casualty assistance calls officer, or CACO, to assist families if it is ever necessary to notify next of kin about an MSC employee's serious injury or death. This applies to civilians, military members and contractors. The instruction describes the role and responsibilities of the Casualty Assistance Officer in helping the family to adjust to new life conditions. Depending on the need and circumstances, assistance may include helping with funeral arrangements, benefits counseling, condolences and grief support.

Another measure we took early on was identifying the places to call in the event of a major regional disaster so our employees and their families could be accounted for. Those toll-free phone numbers were 1-877-414-5358 for the Navy Emergency Coordination Center if you or your family live in the United States and (fill in dialing code for the United States from your overseas location) 202-685-5155 for the MSC Global Command Information Center if you or your family live overseas.

We have also pushed for increases in safety. From the success aboard our fleet tugs in implementing MSC's Safety Management System, we have expanded the system to our oilers and will continue until all of our government-owned and -operated ships are included. As a result of a January 2007 Shipboard Materiel Assessment Readiness Testing Improvement Conference, we'll be looking at revising test plans and inspection procedures, including those focused on safety. I've been requiring root cause analyses for major safety mishaps to ensure that systematic problems can be identified, resolved and not repeated.

Unfortunately, despite this focus, MSC lost two good people this past year in Guam, needlessly. These deaths may have been avoided by using standard man-lift safety procedures.

## We are a nation at war

When I said we were still at war a year ago, we were in the middle of increasing our force protection capabilities. Since that time, I've reinstated the quarterly force protection roundtable, a forum for readiness issues and a frank and open discussion among senior MSC management about all areas of force protection.

We've installed new shipboard security modules on 18 of our ships, and two of them have been modified to meet arms, ammunition and explosive requirements. We've mounted hull perimeter lighting on 11 additional ships, the first part of the security module. Shipboard security modules give our crews increased intrusion

detection and deterrence capabilities. That means we've improved force protection for about one-third of the MSC fleet. Work continues.

We've also placed M20A1 simplified collective protective equipment aboard 25 ships. These tent-like enclosures with air locks can accommodate up to 10 people in a chemical, biological or radiological environment. Thirteen additional units have been sent out to MSC locations worldwide to provide for training.

We continue to purchase new gear, train people in its use, then test that training to make sure it worked. Our area commands are providing excellent support in this effort.

## Everything has a cost

As is the case in any war, everything has a cost, and every dollar counts. For the past year, we've made concerted efforts to analyze and refine our functional and financial processes, including how we estimate budgets and how we ensure that budget execution does not exceed authority. Fiscal years 2008-2011 funding requirements were reduced from the 2007 baseline by more than \$700 million, freeing up \$500 million to fund new requirements such as new dry cargo/ammunition ships and transfer of submarine tenders to MSC operation and \$200 million to fund chief of naval operations priority programs. Such cost reductions resulted from civil service mariner, or CIVMAR, reduced overtime; improvements in the CIVMAR hiring process and a delay in the wage parity initiative. Favorable schedule changes for the new dry cargo/ammunition ship and accelerated decommissioning of the ships being replaced; reduced contract services; revised force protection budget estimates; and reduced overhead also contributed to the savings.

We saved \$15 million in 2006 as a result of other CIVMAR initiatives. We've saved \$400,000 in processing costs by deploying the new, automated, on-line defense travel system used by federal employees to plan, execute and document official travel.

We've also improved our accounting processes, ensuring more stability in our customer rates and better use of their funds.

We'll continue to drill down into our business cost drivers – personnel, maintenance and repair, sustainment, overhead and commercial charter and operating contracts – with an eye toward gaining even more efficiencies. Why? To support Navy enterprise alignment and to maximize Navy's investment opportunities for the future.

## Metrics count

It's pretty obvious that if you can't measure something, you can't manage it, whether it's a process or a program. Our inspector general's office measures MSC against the expectations of the taxpayer's trust. The Inspector General is our insurance that our business practices are sound and that we're doing the best we can to protect ourselves from fraud, waste, abuse, inefficiency and any other issues involving ethics and performance. Our IG folks do this through three principal methods: investigations, assessments and facilitation of outside audits. Since March 2006, the investigation section has worked issues such as preventing compro-

mise of personal protected information; protection of copyrighted material; prevention of travel claim abuse, afloat time and attendance abuse; and implementation of safety management systems and international safety management afloat. The assessment and evaluation section closely monitored the manager's internal control program, which yields flow charts and risk assessments for all work processes through the MSC enterprise. This assessment action has resulted in streamlining many of our processes, eliminating wasteful or unnecessary steps. The audit section has assisted with 20 external audits from the Department of Defense, the Inspector General of the Navy, U.S. Transportation Command and Fleet Forces Command, among others.

## We operate in a joint arena

MSC has an enduring relationship as U.S. Transportation Command's Navy component. Without doubt, we at MSC continue to have a key role on the defense transportation team. In fiscal year 2006, we delivered more than 8.7 million square feet of combat cargo and 2.3 billion gallons of fuel to war fighters from every service. In July 2006, while we were conducting the Sealift '06 exercise working jointly with members of the U.S. Coast Guard, the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command and the U.S. Maritime Administration — we quickly arranged for three chartered ships that rescued more than 6,700 Americans stranded in Lebanon.

Now, we are gearing up to support a joint deployment distribution operations center, also called JDDOC, by providing marine transportation specialists and Navy officers to staff a detachment at TRANSCOM side-by-side with our Air Mobility Command and SDDC partners. This effort supports the joint deployment and distribution enterprise, also called JDDE, an integrated system capable of providing prospective joint force commanders with the ability to rapidly and effectively move and sustain joint forces in support of major combat operations or other joint operations.

## Information technology is a tool

It has been a tough year for information technology security. We have seen an increasing number of intrusions and attacks from both common criminals and actual enemies from outside of the United States, and as a result, we need to change the way we look at computer security issues. Our shipboard network architecture is modest, but it meets our needs. We must balance security and access, recognizing that quality of life must be taken into account, but that operational security absolutely must have priority. It's important that mariners at sea be able to use an e-mail lifeline to check on their families and ensure that their pay gets into their bank accounts. However, access to the very unsecured and very public World Wide Web may be limited, disrupted or disconnected for operational security reasons. The Navy's position is that computer networks should be considered a weapons system. It's important to be vigilant.

## Proactive beats reactive

MSC has leaned forward. Our CIVMARs aboard USNS Mercy proactively arranged for the transfer of utility boats to their care. These boats proved vital in

shuttling patients to and from the ship as it anchored off the coast of numerous Western Pacific nations during its 2006 humanitarian mission.

In 2006, a contract was awarded for the use of up to three small shallow-draft Japanese tankers. This contract allows ship owners to use the ships in normal commercial trade and remain on call to MSC, if needed, in exchange for an annual fee. If a ship or ships are needed, they are taken out of commercial service and come under MSC charter at a pre-negotiated rate. By utilizing this contract, three aging T-1 tankers – each more than 30 years old – were scrapped and replaced with modern vessels, saving millions of dollars.

We've also been recognized for our proactive work. In February, Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter announced that MSC won a 2006 Navy Competition and Procurement Excellence Award for chartering ships to rescue Americans stranded in Lebanon.

## Job satisfaction can be fun

Despite the seriousness of all this, my last axiom still holds true – if you aren't having at least a little bit of fun, you aren't doing right by yourself and your shipmates. Your job at MSC is serious. The mission is serious. All of us sometimes make sacrifices for the mission. But we can all take a certain amount of satisfaction from doing the job well and knowing that what we do really counts. So, take advantage of your leave periods. Take the time to relax from the day-to-day worries and tasks, especially when everything seems to be going faster than light. You'll do a better, safer job when you're refreshed.

Keep the faith!

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

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# Shughart sails with Stiletto

By MSC Public Affairs

It was supposed to be a routine supply mission. USNS Shughart was to steam from Alaska to Beaumont, Texas, loaded with cargo for the Army Materiel Command, before eventually making its way back to its layberth in Philadelphia. The cargo movement was the kind of thing that Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships had done dozens of times before, carrying the military rolling stock and combat equipment the ships are accustomed to hauling.

But when the Navy's Office of Force Transformation needed something special moved from San Diego to Norfolk, Va., Shughart was unexpectedly called upon to help out.

On Feb. 4, Shughart pulled into San Diego to pick up the Navy's experimental "M-ship," Stiletto, a ship so revolutionary, few had ever even seen it up close, let alone knew how to move it.

Stiletto is an 88-foot long tri-maran designed by the Navy to test the way riverine and coastal operations are conducted. It is the first and largest carbon fiber ship built in the United States. The ship is considered too small to make the transoceanic journey on its own power.

"The [Office of Force Transformation] came to us when they learned the move would cost them about \$2 million to hire a commercial ship to move Stiletto," said Tim Pickering of MSC's Sealift Program. "Well, the [Force Transformation Office] didn't have that kind of money, and we already had a ship going from the West Coast to the East Coast, so we said we could help out."

The help wouldn't come for free, but at just under \$250,000, it came at an impressive savings. At least half of this total cost came from designing and constructing the supports needed to lift and secure the uniquely-shaped ship.

Stiletto's M-shaped hull allows it to ride high in the water, giving it a very



A crane aboard Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Shughart lifts the U.S. Navy's experimental "M-ship," Stiletto. Shughart carried the revolutionary tri-maran from San Diego to Norfolk, Va., because Stiletto is considered too small to make the voyage under its own power.

smooth ride. However, because of this unique design, MSC needed to build specially designed supports and fasteners to hold the ship in place for its transit through the Panama Canal to Norfolk.

"This was the first time an MSC ship has been tasked to lift an M-hull ship on board for transporting. Needless to say, our number one mission was to do the lift safely without causing any damage to the hull," said Shughart's civilian mariner master Capt. Albert Earl Bergeron.

"We ended up building six sets of cribbing, which is what the ship actually sits on," said MSC naval architect and project engineer James Kent.

MSC also had to build a spreader bar to link Shughart's two on-board

cranes. Weighing in at more than 60 tons, Stiletto exceeded the individual 50-ton weight limits on Shughart's cranes. However, the specially designed spreader bars allowed the simultaneous use of both of the ship's 50-ton cranes paired together to lift Stiletto safely on board.

Although the operation was quite complex, it only took MSC's experts a little more than 90 minutes to move Stiletto from the water to Shughart's rooomy deck.

By Feb. 5, Shughart and its alien-looking cargo were on their way to Norfolk, where they were expected to arrive by the end of February.

"It's exciting when you are the first to execute something that hasn't been done before," Bergeron said.

Although this was the first time a ship like Stiletto has been lifted, it was not the first time MSC has moved a ship on the deck of another vessel. However, MSC's Stiletto mission is believed to be one of only a few times that the command has coordinated a move using specially designed cradles.

The best-known operation of this type was the transport of guided-missile destroyer USS Cole from Yemen on board MV Blue Marlin in 2000. The ship was transported to Norfolk, Va., after a terrorist attack blew a 40-by-40-foot hole in the ship, killing 17 sailors.

Three months ago, MSC coordinated the transport of two Navy mine countermeasures ships, USS Gladiator and USS Scout, from Ingleside, Texas, to Bahrain.

# Reaching out to mariners

By Anne Dougherty  
U.S. Maritime Administration

The U.S. Maritime Administration is actively encouraging all U.S. mariners to participate in the Mariner Outreach System, known as MOS, and formerly known as the Mariner Tracking System. The new system is intended to improve communication between MARAD and the thousands of U.S. mariners who serve or are available to serve aboard U.S.-flag ships around the world.

The outreach system is supported by a new, secure Web site introduced by MARAD last June. The site allows mariners to register on-line for MOS; to review their U.S. Coast Guard qualifications and sea service; and to provide updated and more detailed contact information. In turn, the system's par-

ticipants receive e-mail updates on policy matters and other topics of interest to all U.S. merchant seamen.

Should normal crewing practices ever prove to be inadequate, the system could also be used as a tool to assist those in need of mariners. However, mariners' participation in the system does not obligate them in any way to sail if they are contacted.

More than 27,000 U.S. licensed and unlicensed mariners worldwide have already enrolled in MOS by completing the Mariner Tracking System section of the U.S. Coast Guard's application for license or merchant mariners document. MARAD is working with the Coast Guard to update the form and to identify the system by its new name.

To learn more about MOS, or to register, visit the MARAD Web site at <https://mos.marad.dot.gov>.



## Croatian ambassador tours Wheat

U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Robert Bradtke (left) gets a tour of Military Sealift Command roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Lance Cpl. Roy M. Wheat from the ship's civilian master Capt. David Scott in Dubrovnik, Croatia, Feb. 2. USNS Wheat is one of three ships that belong to Maritime Prepositioning Squadron One, which is forward-deployed year-round to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. The squadron strategically stages U.S. military cargo at sea for rapid response in a military or humanitarian crisis. should

# ‘It’s dangerous, but you like it’

## Catawba’s crew always on call as the Gulf’s 911 service

By Gillian Brigham  
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs



In August 1990, following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the United Nations imposed strict economic sanctions on Iraq in the hopes of eroding Saddam Hussein’s chokehold on the region. These sanctions, in place for 13 years until the U.S.-led toppling of Hussein’s regime in 2003, severely limited the flow of trade in and out of the country and banned the export of Iraq’s greatest economic asset — oil.

Almost immediately after the embargo was imposed, an aggressive oil-smuggling campaign arose. Iraqi blockade-runners sought to break the sanctions and ferry oil out of their country past the watchful eyes of U.S. and coalition ships tasked with intercepting them. Oftentimes during these interception operations, smugglers would sabotage their engines, hoping the Navy crews would not have the equipment or expertise to wrangle a tanker adrift at sea. What these smugglers didn’t know is that the Navy had USNS Catawba.

Catawba is one of six fleet ocean tugs owned and operated by Military Sealift Command that provides towing and salvage services to the U.S. Navy. The ship is also used as a platform for diving operations.

Catawba’s home base is the port of Mina Salman in Bahrain, a few miles away from the U.S. 5th Fleet headquarters.

Operated by 17 civil service mariners and four active-duty Navy sailors, Catawba has been a fixture in the Middle East for more than a decade. During this time, the ship was frequently called upon to tow illegal tankers apprehended by combatant forces to nearby ports where the ships and their cargo would be confiscated and put up for auction.

These exploits are only a piece of Catawba’s storied legacy in the Gulf.

“We’re the fire truck around here, the rescue ship, the immediate responder,” said Able Seaman Bill McMaster, a retired Navy master chief who has spent his entire 13-year MSC career aboard Catawba. “If anyone needs us, we go. They rely on us out here.”

The “they” McMaster is referring to is not only the U.S. Navy, but also the region’s commercial maritime traffic and a host of organizations Catawba has aided in a time of need.

McMaster recalls an incident in 2000 when a commercial airline flight taking off from the Bahrain International Airport plummeted into the ocean seconds after lifting off from the runway. Catawba was called up to assist in the recovery effort.

“We went out there right away,” said McMaster. “We were retrieving personal effects, bringing human remains on board, doing everything we could to help in the situation.”

Capt. Ed Dickerson ticked off a long list of the ship’s rescue ef-



U.S. Navy special forces conduct a night-time exercise recovering rigid hull inflatable boats aboard Catawba off the coast of Qatar in December 2006.

orts — towing disabled commercial vessels adrift at sea; putting out ship-board fires; saving ships that had lost their power plants and were in danger of running aground in shallow water.

Catawba maintains a four-hour standby policy 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week. This means that at any given

time, the ship and its crew must be ready to set sail and respond to an

emergency within four hours of being called. The ship is called all the time, even on holidays.

In fact, last Christmas, Catawba was asked to deliver some urgently needed spare parts to a Navy combatant ship conducting critical

### Bill McMaster, able seaman



“We’ve got a lot of pride here. We get called at weird times, but ain’t nobody crying the blues.”



Above: USNS Catawba, bottom right, is berthed astern of Military Sealift Command combat stores ship USNS Spica, left, and fast combat support ship USNS Supply. Catawba is one of MSC’s smallest ships, but it’s capable of towing distressed oil tankers.

Opposite: USNS Catawba’s Chief Mate Ken Kerr. The Trinidad and Tobago native has been an MSC civil service mariner since 1977. He’s served on board Catawba for 15 years.

ship repairs.

“No airplanes were available to fly the parts to them so they called us,” said McMaster. “It was Christmas Eve, and everyone was out at parties and such. We got the call, and the crew came running. The ship was ready to go within 45 minutes. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“We’ve got a lot of pride here,” continued McMaster. “We get called at weird times but ain’t nobody crying the blues. We’ll do it.”

The mariners aboard Catawba universally attribute their stellar reputation for service and can-do mentality to good leadership, a tight-knit crew and a handful of inspiring old salts on board known for their love of tug work and technical expertise.

One of these old salts is Chief Mate Ken Kerr.

A native of Trinidad and Tobago, Kerr felt the lure of the sea as a young kid visiting his uncle down at the docks where he worked.

“I would go out to the pier and look at the ships sailing where the water met the horizon,” said Kerr. “There was just something about it ...”

After a short stint in the Navy and a few years sailing in the commercial world, Kerr saw an MSC job posting at a union hall and applied for a position as an able seaman.

That was in 1977. Since then, Kerr has logged more than 15 years of sea time aboard Catawba, working his way up from able seaman to chief mate. During his 30 years with MSC, Kerr has sailed on almost every type of ship in the MSC’s inventory. But he keeps coming back to Catawba. His dream is to one day be Catawba’s master.

“I really enjoy the type of work this ship does,” said Kerr. “It’s challenging, and it’s dangerous at times, but you get to like it.”

Kerr points to the salvage of two British helicopters in the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom as one of his most memorable experiences aboard Catawba.

“We were doing a salvage operation in Umm Qasr, Iraq, at the beginning of the war. Two British helicopters collided head-on, and we went to pick up the pieces. We had a diving crew on here, and there was a British salvage ship helping as well. They recovered the bodies, and we recovered the helicopters. And from where we were off the coast of Iraq, the whole time we could see Tomahawk missiles flying overhead.”

Working in a war zone as an unarmed noncombatant might seem daunting to some, but Kerr and his crew see it as an opportunity to do what they do best.

“We may be small, but we don’t get scared,” said Kerr. “It’s like I always say, ‘when you’re with the lions, you’d better act

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Navy Lt. **Mary Brown** was promoted to lieutenant commander in a ceremony at MSC headquarters Feb. 1. Brown joined MSC in December 2005 and currently serves as the director of MSC's new command administration office in the Maritime Forces, Manpower and Management Directorate.

MSC's three Shore Sailors of the Year selected from commands worldwide were honored at a ceremony on Feb. 2. Sealift Logistics Command Pacific's Shore Sailor of the Year, **Navy Information Systems Technician 1st Class Denise R. Brannen**, and MSC headquarters' Shore Sailor of the Year,

**Navy Information Systems Technician 1st Class Ray Ellison**, each received Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals. **Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Mario Mannarino**, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's Shore Sailor of the Year, was chosen as MSC's Shore Sailor of the Year. Mannarino is now in the running to become Chief of Naval Operations' Sailor of the Year. MSC welcomes **Lee McCray**, **Mark Butler** and **John Hartke**, Comptroller Directorate; **Kyle Kneisly**, Prepositioning

Program; **Raegan Kirk**, Engineering Directorate; and **Navy Information Systems Technician 1st Class Damien J. Moore**, Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate. MSC bids farewell to **Andrew Traugh**, Engineering Directorate; **Harry Clark**, Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate; and **Navy Operations Specialist 1st Class Darrell Compton** and **Navy Operations Specialist 2nd Class Jonathon Cobb**, Operations Directorate.

## MSC names sailor of year



Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class **Mario Mannarino** of Ship Support Unit Guam is named Military Sealift Command Shore Sailor of the Year during a ceremony held at MSC headquarters Feb. 2. Mannarino was also named as Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's Shore Sailor of the Year.

## Cortez MSFSC Sea Sailor of Year



USNS Mercy's Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class **Edward Cortez** is named Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Sea Sailor of the Year by MSFSC Executive Director **Jack Taylor** in a ceremony held Jan. 24.

## COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command is pleased to announce the command's 2006 Sea and Shore Sailor of the Year awardees: **Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st class Edward Cortez** and **Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st class Mario Mannarino**. Cortez is currently stationed aboard hospital ship USNS Mercy, and Mannarino is stationed at Ship Support Unit Guam. **MSFSC Executive Director Jack Taylor** stated in a message to the fleet, "[The selectees] are congratulated for the diligent professionalism, exceptional initiative, teamwork, and contributions to their command. These attributes were clearly apparent and were key to their nominations. Competition was tough and, as always, the selection board was challenged in

their deliberations and their recommendations."

MSFSC is being proactive in its approach to the National Security Personnel System, a pay for performance system currently affecting those MSFSC shoreside staffers who are not in nor eligible to join bargaining units, Taylor designated NSPS project officer **Kevin Cassidy** to develop and implement NSPS milestones for the transition to NSPS in October 2007. To help keep affected staffers informed through the transition process, e-mails will be tailored and transmitted to the target audience, and an MSFSC NSPS mailbox will be available for question-and-answer exchanges.

On Jan. 16, MSFC welcomed **Navy Cmdr. William Hayes**, who is assum-

ing the duties as dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea's officer-in-charge of the military department. MSFSC said farewell to **Navy Chief Petty Officer Donald Harrison** and **Navy Petty Officer 1st class Kimberly Moore**. Harrison and Moore will report to Amphibious Construction Battalion 2 and aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, respectively. Also recognized at the event was MSFSC Sailor of the Quarter **Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Imamuddin Muhammad**.

The command, in January, said farewell to **Navy Petty Officer 1st class Marcus Lambert**. Lambert, who had been assigned to MSC in Norfolk since August 2002, will report to aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman.

The MSC Retirees' Association, headquartered in Merritt Island, Fla., is open to new members and those who wish to renew their memberships. The association produces a bi-monthly newsletter, which features photos and articles from MSC's past, as well as

information to help organize picnics and an annual holiday party that bring together MSC personnel. Membership is open to all who serve or have served MSC. For more information call (321) 255-5901.

Another MSC group planning to get together are the Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate personnel from around the globe. Now retired former area command directors **Bob Manns** (Bayonne), **Ralph Lanham** (Far East), **Carlo Lunsford** (Europe) and **Tony De Venuta** (Oakland) have started to plan for a tentative April reunion in Washington, D.C. For more information, email them at [Tony@cyberteck.net](mailto:Tony@cyberteck.net)

Farewell to the following retiring civil service mariners: **2nd Officer Nelson Bertram**, **Medical Services Officer Jerome Kebbell**, **Boatswain's Mate Lloyd Kelly**, **3rd Cook John Lewis** and **Utilityman Charles Spears**.

traffic, regardless of nationality or purpose," said Deputy Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Rear Adm. Scott Swift in response to Gladiator's arrival in theater. "Gladiator contributes to an important defensive capability for the coalition maritime force in our efforts to help safeguard the region's vital links to the global economy."

The command bids farewell to fleet service officer, **Navy Lt. Cmdr. John Gasser**; commodities officer, **Navy Lt.**

**Brian Shons**; and budgeting officer, **Navy Lt. Steve Strayer**, after completing their one-year forward deployed tours in Bahrain. Sealift Logistics Command Central Commander **Navy Capt. Glen R. Sears II** presented all three officers with Navy Commendation Medals.

The command welcomes aboard **Navy Lt. Cmdr. James Strauss**, **Navy Lt. Alexander Kaczur** and **Navy Lt.j.g. Ian Illif**.

## EUROPE • NEWS

The U.S. Ambassador to Croatia the Honorable Robert Bradtke visited Maritime Prepositioning Squadron One roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Lance Cpl. Roy M. Wheat in Dubrovnik, Croatia, Feb. 2. Bradtke toured the ship and ate lunch aboard with Wheat's civilian master **Capt. David Scott**.

"Wheat was described to me as a supply ship, but those words do not evoke the size and complexity of what I'm seeing here," said the ambassador dur-

ing his tour.

"The U.S. Navy and related vessels have had a history of visits to this country," said Bradtke. "Everyone in Croatia is glad to have the Wheat here. Enjoy your stay."

Sealift Logistics Command Europe and Ship Support Unit Naples bid farewell to a longtime member of the staff last month. **Lee McCray** joined the then-named Military Sealift Command Europe as the comptroller in June



## MSC sends supertanker to Med.

A harbor patrol boat cruises past Military Sealift Command-chartered ship *MT High Century* near the Greek island of Crete on Jan. 24. *High Century* is performing strategic tanker duties in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations, loading and discharging fuel at Department of Defense terminals, refineries and other logistics support sites throughout the Mediterranean Sea. Originally chartered in December 2006, the ship will be in use until the end of March.

## FAR • EAST • HAILS

**Navy Capt. Dennis O'Meara**, commander of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three and **Capt. Paul Zubaly**, civilian master of MV Cpl. Louis J. Hauge Jr., hosted Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular Affairs and U.S. Representative to the Pacific Community David B. Cohen aboard the ship on Jan. 5.

Cohen oversees the federal government's relationship with U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Capt. O'Meara presented Cohen with a command brief while Capt. Zubaly provided a tour of the vessel.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock received a "bravo zulu" from Rear Adm. William Burke, commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific, for the ship's effort in rescuing three Filipino fisherman on Dec. 19.

"Your entire crew performed brilliantly and displayed outstanding leadership, hard work, and above all, superior service," Burke wrote in a message to the ship's master and crew. Rappahannock rescued the fishermen from the stormy waters of the South China Sea after their boat capsized.

**Navy Lt. Cmdr. Greg Davis**, commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Diego Garcia, presented certificates of appreciation to the United Seamen's Service Center, Diego

Garcia, for its outstanding customer service to both Military Sealift command personnel and mariners under contract to MSC. The center serves as a home away from home for U.S. merchant mariners throughout the world.

**Navy Lt. Jim Kalista** received the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medal in recognition of his outstanding 15-month tour as MPS Squadron Three operations officer. The squadron also welcomed Kalista's relief, **Navy Chief Warrant Officer Jamie Kunsman**.

**Navy Chief Yeoman Howard Wilburn** received a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medal for his superior service to the squadron. **Navy Chief Yeoman Willie James** reports as Wilburn's relief.

MPS Squadron Three welcomed **Navy Lt. j.g. Elizabeth Harris** as the squadron's new materiel officer and **Navy Ensign Ben Murphy**, who assumes duties as the supply officer.

**Navy Storekeeper 1st Class Chris Lapid** reported to MSC Office Korea as **Navy Storekeeper 1st Class Jessli-no Oconer's** relief. Oconer was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

**Capt. Joseph Souza** relieved **Capt. Robert Burke** as master of SS Maj. Steven W. Pless on Jan. 7. Also, **Ed Handy** relieved **John Davis** as the ship's chief engineer.

1998. During her eight-and-a-half-year tenure at the command, McCray and her staff oversaw the processing of more than \$66 million of funding for MSC ships and operations in the European theater.

"In an era where the Navy's fiscal responsibility and accountability has had the highest level of scrutiny, Ms. McCray has set the example for financial management," said SEALOGEUR Commander **Navy Capt. Nick Holman**.

SEALOGEUR wishes McCray the best of luck as she heads to her next assignment at the MSC headquarters comptroller's office in Washington,

D.C.

SEALOGEUR also says a fond farewell to **Navy Yeoman 2nd Class Jaime Damboise**, who leaves the command and Ship Support Unit Naples to join the staff of Strike Force NATO, also headquartered in Naples, Italy. Damboise served as the command's lead administrative petty officer for the majority of her three year tour.

SEALOGEUR welcomes aboard three new additions to the command this month. The front office hails **Navy Yeoman 1st Class Kevin Harden** and administrative support assistant **Beth Johnson**. SSU Naples welcomes aboard financial technician **Dionne Newby**.

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

On Feb. 1, Sealift Logistics Command Pacific Commodore **Capt. Hart Sebring** was the host of a ceremony on board hospital ship USNS Mercy as Adm. Gary Roughead, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, presented the Legion of Merit to **Navy Capt. Brad Martin**, task unit commander and to **Navy Capt. Joe Moore**, commanding officer of Mercy's Medical Treatment Facility team during Mercy's humanitarian assistance mission in 2006. Mercy's civil service master **Capt. Robert Wiley** received a Special Act Award from Commander, Military Sealift Command **Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr.** on behalf of Adm. Roughead in October 2006.

**Richard Duff**, director of CIVMAR Support Unit West; and **James**

**Jackson, Rick Appling**, **Navy Operations Specialist 2nd Class Tamara Fowler** and **Navy Operations Specialist 2nd Class Melvin Clay** of the SEALOPAC staff participated in the annual Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association conference at the San Diego Convention Center. The conference provided an opportunity to tell the MSC story to defense industry partners and to meet prospective MSC civil service mariners.

SEALOPAC welcomes **Navy Operation Specialists 3rd Class Nicole R. Sanders** to USNS San Jose; **Navy Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Francis J. Bartoszak** to USNS Niagara Falls; and **Navy Storekeeper 2nd Class Augustus Baker IV** to USNS Concord.

## ATLANTIC • LINES

Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic welcomes **Navy Master Chief Donald J. Dennis** as its new diving, towing and salvage specialist, as well as command master chief. Dennis enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1982 and has a long history with Navy rescue and salvage vessels starting in 1993, when he was assigned to then USS Grasp. Among his credentials are diving and salvage supervisor and towing specialist, quality assurance supervisor, master training specialist and senior enlisted advisor.

Twenty-eight SEALOGLANT civilian and U.S. Navy Reserve personnel are currently participating in the Joint Logistics Over the Shore 2007 exercise taking place in Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala. The Jan. 18 through March

7 exercise is a great training opportunity. MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Soderman is participating, as well as two activated Ready Reserve Force ships under MSC operational control — SS Flickertail State and SS Cape Mohican.

Those supporting MSC in Guatemala are marine transportation specialists **Brian Hill** of Norfolk, Va., and **Charles LeBlanc**, **Lyndon Flynn** and **Jack Davis**, all of Beaumont, Texas.

U.S. Navy Reservists assigned to the headquarters reserve unit, the Houston Expeditionary Port Unit, the Jacksonville Expeditionary Port Unit and the SEALOGLANT reserve unit are participating in the exercise.

## SECNAV awards MSC contract team

By **Laura Seal**  
MSC Public Affairs

Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter announced that a Military Sealift Command contracting team won a 2006 Navy Competition and Procurement Excellence Award for chartering ships to rescue Americans stranded in Lebanon last year.

The team — Sealift Program's Ken Allen and Tim Pickering, the Contracting Office's Lee Anderson, Olivia Bradley and Lance Nyman and the

Legal Office's Dan Wentzell — worked with companies and brokers from around the world to ensure that more than 6,700 Americans were rescued and moved from war-torn Lebanon to safety in Cyprus during the July 2006 Israeli offensive against Hezbollah militants. Though U.S. military ships also took part in the effort that eventually rescued more than 13,000 people, the MSC-chartered cruise ship Orient Queen was the first to arrive in Lebanon. MSC chartered a total of three ships for the operation.

# S

# acagawea prepares for sea

## New CIVMAR crew trains on state-of-the-art ship

Story and photos  
by James Jackson  
SEALOGPAC  
Public Affairs

This winter, shipyard workers at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego made final preparations to deliver USNS Sacagawea, the Navy's newest dry cargo/ammunition ship, to Military Sealift Command. At the same time, the ship's skeleton crew expanded to a full complement of 123 civil service mariners with a military department of 49 active duty sailors.

"The crewing of a new vessel of this class has been a tremendous challenge for us," said Sacagawea's civil service master, Capt. George McCarthy. Sacagawea is only the second ship of its class, and its predecessor, USNS Lewis and Clark, has just finished its operational evaluations.

"Sacagawea is one of the largest man-made moving objects in the world," said McCarthy. "The crew has brought life to her cold steel, metal, machinery and electronics."

like sharing my previous training with my crewmates," Baorga said.

### Priority #2: Training

McCarthy's second priority was additional training for the crew. He felt fortunate that the mariners were identified early to give them a head start on advanced training requirements that began in June 2006.

Sacagawea has numerous upgraded

new systems.

Third Engineer Robert Piquion, who spent more than 20 years working aboard Navy ships, said, "Because the system was designed in the U.K., the training we received has helped us adjust our approach to engineering." He went on to explain that many of the British ways of doing things were different from U.S. norms, such as turning control knobs and valves to the right to turn on equipment,

tive-duty Navy personnel.

### Priority: #3 Living

The last step was to secure all the things the crew would need to survive on board Sacagawea for extended periods of underway time.

"Finally, we tasked our chief steward to make the ship livable: to get food, dry stores, bedding, office supplies and all the other items needed to enable the crew to



Above: Shipyard workers at National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego make final preparations to Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea before the ship got underway for sea trials in February. Left: Civil service mariners assigned to Sacagawea receive hands on training of the ship's new propulsion plant. Lewis-and-Clark-class ships have a state-of-the-art electric propulsion system unlike any other in the MSC fleet.

### Priority #1: Crewing

"We had three priorities. First was the crewing requirement, which was based on USNS Lewis & Clark's crewing matrix. Though most of the CIVMARs on board were assigned from our existing MSC personnel pool as part of their normal rotation, we do have several mariners who volunteered for duty on Sacagawea, including one who has also served on USNS Lewis and Clark," McCarthy said.

Civil service mariner Deck Machinist Hector Baorga is that volunteer.

"I was extremely happy when I heard that I would be a part of the Sacagawea crew. My training on Lewis and Clark has prepared me for this assignment and I

systems, including state-of-the-art navigation aids, cargo handling gear, automated bridge controls, supply management systems and an electric main propulsion drive. Sacagawea and Lewis and Clark are the first Navy ships with integrated electric-drive propulsion systems.

To familiarize the entire crew with Sacagawea's next-generation computer network, communications channels, electrical system, fiber optics and digital controls, every member of the crew is receiving additional classroom training in their areas of expertise.

For example, several members of the engineering team spent three months in the United Kingdom at the Michael Faraday School of Engineering to train on the

and to the left to secure it.

"Despite many years working as an engineer on MSC ships, the Faraday School provided an excellent opportunity in both classroom and hands-on training in the proper procedures and safety requirements," said Chief Engineer Ray Blanchard. "The old saying that 'an engine is an engine' does not apply. The training we received will definitely aid us in our ability to safely operate the technology on the ship."

As a result of the upgrades to the bridge's ship control equipment, the navigation team also received additional training on the seven local area network systems which will be staffed by both CIVMAR radar electronic technicians and ac-

live and work on board," McCarthy concluded.

With MSC's official acceptance of Sacagawea on Feb. 27, the ship became the second of up to 11 civil-service-crewed Lewis and Clark-class ships expected to join MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force over the next few years. The new ship class will replace the aging Kilauea-class ammunition ships and the Mars- and Sirius-classes of combat stores ships, all of which are nearing the end of their service lives.

Sacagawea will deliver food, dry stores, repair parts and ordnance to combatant ships at sea, including Navy aircraft carrier and amphibious strike groups.

After completing its sea trials and crew training in San Diego in March, Sacagawea will transfer to her new operating area off the Atlantic Coast for continued evaluations and become fully operational in the fall of 2007.