

May 2007

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

## Good neighbors

MSC ships support humanitarian mission in Latin America

By Bill Cook



INSIDE — MSC participates in exercise off Korea • Food service awards presented

Yeoman 3rd Class Jessica L. Bidwell, photo

# Navy Enterprise Alignment, Fleet Forces Command and MSC

In 2000, Adm. Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations, developed a vision of how the Navy could organize, integrate and transform into a fighting force for the 21st century. The result was Navy Enterprise Alignment, a process for improving organizational alignment, refining requirements and reinvesting savings to help the Navy recapitalize and transform.

The enterprise alignment process provides a way to scrutinize the Navy's spending practices from top to bottom. The goal of the alignment process is to deliver the right force, at the right place, at the right time, at the right cost. It isn't going to be easy. In fact, it's going to require all of us to adapt to one degree or another.

Adaptation in a competitive and rapidly changing world is an absolute requirement, and that means challenging some basic notions that we've held for a long time.

Many of us have always assumed that past practice guarantees future success, that people are a free commodity and that more money is available. Many of us have never really believed there was incentive for improvement.

The incentive for improvement is the need to provide a proper defense for our nation, now and in the years to come. It's a bottom line that cannot be ignored. That became obvious on Sept. 11, 2001.

Navy Enterprise Alignment's goal is to optimize our existing resources and manage all elements of cost to achieve required readiness levels and save operating funds to recapitalize the future Navy. The desired end state is to have warships ready for tasking at a reduced cost.

So, how does Military Sealift Command fit into Navy Enterprise Alignment, and what role do we play in Fleet Forces Command?

When we discussed MSC's role in Navy Enterprise Alignment with Fleet Forces Command recently, we got a very warm reception and some probing questions. The warm reception had to do with MSC being recognized as a "Force" and our mission being to align with the Force Readiness Enterprise. The discussion that came out of that meeting emphasized the importance of our sharing information and expertise with several other Navy enterprises that we support or with whom we share common issues, one of which was the Surface Warfare Enterprise.

We've been applying Lean Six Sigma practices to our processes in recent years, and we'll expand our usage of this concept to reap more benefits in the future. Newly formed cross-functional teams will reevaluate what we do and how we do it. They will perform detailed, execution-based analyses of our cost drivers, the environments in which they operate and the processes that drive them. That kind of self-evaluation and self-improvement is essential if we intend to

remain the responsive sea transportation provider that we've been in the past.

MSC adds value to the Force Readiness Enterprise collaboration process through a clear readiness model, an understanding of our five primary cost drivers and the visibility of our costs. It goes back to my third operating axiom — everything has a cost, and every dollar counts. The money we

Surface Warfare Enterprise.

A composite of ashore personnel, facilities and infrastructure is the fourth cost driver. Although it's only seven percent of our budget at about \$238 million, it's an area that bears scrutiny. Salaries, wages and benefits are pretty much set by law, but we'll analyze our employee structure to make sure we have the people we need. With the advent of on-line train-

measure readiness as a function of cost. In many ways, we've got an edge over other enterprises because our operating model is a simple one, and we have good cost visibility.

Key subject matter experts throughout the command are diving in to take a new look at key cost areas across the MSC business model. Everyone in MSC can expect to contribute to the effort, re-evaluating how we do our jobs.

We want to serve our customers better and save them money. As consumers ourselves, we understand the need for good service at a fair price. But there is a more urgent reality at work here. We are at war. We absolutely must discover how to do the best job we can for the right price.

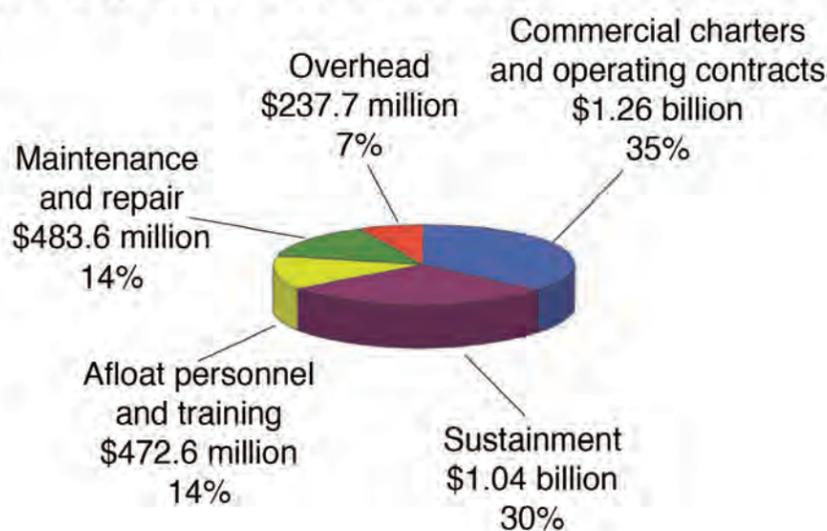
The evaluation process and the cross-functional teams will touch everyone in MSC, ashore and afloat, military and civilian. It will be a combined top-down and bottom-up approach that will allow participation by all MSC employees.

Through it all, we'll remain focused on the prize — alignment and the capability to help deliver the right force, at the right place, at the right time, at the right cost.

Keep the faith,

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

## MSC expenses fiscal 2006 — \$3.5 billion



save can be used to upgrade the fleet and modernize our processes as well.

Our first cost driver is afloat personnel and training, which consists of payroll and training costs of civil service mariners and military personnel. This driver comprises almost 14 percent of our annual budget, or more than \$472 million. We're looking at ways to drive down costs in both training and the new-hire process.

Maintenance/repair is the second cost driver. Overhauls, repair material and technical assistance cost more than \$483 million annually, or more than 14 percent of the budget. We're sharing our predictive maintenance practices, supply-chain management expertise and use of the maritime industrial base with the combatant fleet because we can help reduce costs and improve efficiency.

The third cost driver is sustainment, composed of fuel, force protection, ship husbanding and port charges, and afloat information technology. At 30 percent of the budget, or just over \$1 billion, we'd like to see some cost reductions here. We're working on this by analyzing how our fuel is being used. Can our ships be better positioned so they have shorter distances to travel? Are there modifications we can make to make our ships more fuel efficient?

We're also looking at how our force protection dollars are being spent with an eye toward getting the best increase in capabilities the fastest way possible at the lowest cost. Ditto for afloat information technology structures and processes and our ship husbandry and port charges. At the same time, we're sharing our expertise in all these areas with Fleet Forces Command and the

ing, we've been able to reduce our training and travel costs at the same time. We'll continue to look at this area. Information technology and communications ashore will undergo the same scrutiny as IT afloat.

The last cost driver is commercial charters and operating contracts, our biggest budget area at almost \$1.3 billion. That's more than a third of our annual budget. It covers the Maritime Prepositioning Ships and other ship charters and hiring operating companies for our government-owned, contractor-operated ships. Our analyses here focus on acquisition processes and government practices.

We're looking not only at our own processes but those that may affect elements of the Surface Warfare Enterprise as well. We'll look at, revise, improve or totally redevelop processes as needed when our newly formed cross-functional teams report. The desired end-state is integration with all the related Navy warfare enterprises through the Fleet Readiness Program.

Fleet Forces Command has likened our participation in the Fleet Readiness Program to a journey. We are currently in the discovery stage of that journey; identifying cost drivers and targets and defining our baseline readiness, which must be maintained while we drive our costs down.

As we participate in the Fleet Readiness Enterprise and collaborate with Surface Warfare and other Navy enterprises, we've got to answer those tough questions I mentioned: How much readiness is required for MSC? What is the right readiness at the right cost at the right time?

Once we answer these questions, we need to develop the metrics that will

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# MSC practices defending South Korea



Edward Baxter, photo

Navy Cmdr. Ron Oswald, left, commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Korea, and Navy Cmdr. Patrick Mayo, right, of Naval Reserve Sealift Logistics Command Far East Unit 102, staff the MSC crisis action team command center at Pier Eight in Pusan, Korea, during bilateral Exercise Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration 2007.

By Edward Baxter  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Technically, they are still at war. They face one another on the most heavily fortified border on earth. Even when they do hold formal talks, the

conference table has a white line clearly separating one side from the other.

Under a fragile armistice agreement, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, more commonly known as North Korea, and the Republic of Korea, or South Korea, remain separated at the Demilitarized Zone, or DMZ

from the United States and the Republic of Korea.

More than 60 Military Sealift Command civilians and uniformed personnel participated in the March 25-31 exercise this year — along with other branches of the U.S. military, the U.S. Coast Guard and their South Korean

— a land-mined strip of terrain some four kilometers wide that roughly splits the Korean peninsula in half.

Every year, thousands of U.S. and Republic of Korea forces gather in an exercise designed to defend South Korea: Exercise Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration. It is one of two major Korea-defense exercises conducted each year.

The exercise is held concurrently with Foal Eagle — a series of joint field training exercises. Both exercises include up to 7,000 military personnel

counterparts — simulating a massive influx of sealift ships at the ports of Pusan, Gwangyang, Mokpo and Pohang. The exercise has been held every year since 1994, and MSC has always been a vital player.

"In planning for the exercise, we built a very strong relationship with our Korean colleagues," said MSC Office Korea Commanding Officer Navy Cmdr. Ron Oswald. "The exercise was the culmination of months of outstanding dialog and coordination."

More than 40 MSC personnel were on site at MSCO Korea in Pusan, staffing a crisis action team, which responded to challenging maritime scenarios. "The exercise is a dedicated time when MSC pulls key players together to think about one very important mission," said Oswald.

Eight additional MSC personnel staffed a forward-deployed headquarters in Yokohama, Japan, which would command and control MSC ships going into and out of South Korea. Fifteen other personnel crewed a mobile sealift operations command van, which can independently coordinate ship arrivals and offloads when port facilities have been damaged or destroyed.

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## SEALOGCENT: Keeping an MSC presence in the Middle East

By Gillian Brigham  
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

Pick a day, any day. Walk into the operations office at Sealift Logistics Command Central, and you will be overcome by the sound of constantly ringing phones and furiously clacking computer keys. Chaos it is not. Welcome to the nerve center of U.S. Navy logistics operations in the Middle East.

SEALOGCENT is Military Sealift Command's 5th Fleet-based area command. It is responsible for moving millions of tons of U.S. military combat equipment in and out of the region in support of U.S. forces engaged in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and the global war on terrorism.

The command was initially established as Military Sealift Command Southwest Asia in 1992 after the first Gulf War proved the value of having MSC logisticians permanently based in the Middle East.

Fifteen years later, SEALOGCENT has gone through a variety of name and organizational changes though its mission remains the same — to provide logistics support to U.S. and coalition forces operating in this increasingly turbulent global hotspot.

Today, the command is housed in a couple of trailers and a dust-colored stucco bunker at U.S. Naval Support Activity in the Kingdom of Bahrain. SEALOGCENT is also co-located with Commander, Task Force-53. CTF-53 handles all of 5th Fleet's logistics aircraft as well as MSC's oilers, tugs and other re-supply vessels refueling combatant ships in theater. The two commands work in tandem under a single commander, Navy Capt. Glen Sears II, sharing office space and the incredible task of keeping the supply

chain running in the U.S. Navy's busiest theater of operations.

### Multitude of Missions

"We've got three wars going on right now," said Sears of his commands' burgeoning workload. The 'three wars' are operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom and the far ranging, many-fronted global war on terrorism.

Here's a snapshot of what some of MSC's operations in the Middle East and in these conflicts looks like today:

- In the North Arabian and Red Seas, MSC's re-supply ships are supporting U.S. and coalition combatant forces conducting maritime security operations. These operations help set the conditions for security and stability in the maritime environment, as well as complement the counter-terrorism and security efforts of regional nations. They deny international terrorists use of the maritime environment as a venue for attack or to transport personnel, weapons or other material.

- Off the coast of Iraq, MSC ships deliver equipment and supplies to the U.S. servicemen and women guarding Iraq's two off-shore oil platforms, which generate a significant portion of the country's income.

- MSC ships ferry food, mail and spare parts to the USS Eisenhower and USS John C. Stennis carrier strike groups operating in the Persian Gulf.

- Ninety percent of all the combat equipment being used in Iraq and Afghanistan comes into theater on MSC strategic sealift ships.

Meeting the Department of Defense's logistics needs in each of these situations requires speed, flexibility and great multi-tasking skills — for the ships in theater and the shoreside personnel coordinating their movements.

In this vein, SEALOGCENT's close

partnership with CTF-53 has significantly aided the overall coordination of U.S. Navy logistics in the Middle East.

"I can sit here as head of both organizations, look at the theater's air and sea logistics assets and figure out how they link up with each other to make sure our customers get what they need on time," said Sears.

"For example, I have the ability to make sure my CTF-53 aircraft link up and deliver cargo and stores to USNS [John] Lenthall during the small window of time the ship is scheduled to be in, say, Djibouti, before she heads out to refuel the combatants at sea that have been waiting for supplies. To have that kind of oversight is a real benefit."

### Challenging Geography

The 5th Fleet area of operations covers 7.5 million square miles, 27 countries and three critical choke points at the Suez Canal, the Straits of Hormuz and the Strait of Bab al Mandeb off the southern coast of Yemen. These narrow waterways are flanked by land on each side, which increases a ship's vulnerability to attack.

"The big challenge with this AOR is that our customers [combatant ships]



Outlined in black is the SEALOGCENT area of responsibility. Red circles identify the important shipping choke points, where narrow waterways are flanked on both sides by land, increasing a ship's vulnerability.

are distributed over what, on the surface, is not a big geographical area, but one that has a lot of branches," said Cmdr. Bert Yordy, SEALOGCENT's operations officer. "The day-to-day business of keeping things moving through these choke points and branches takes a lot of coordination."

This coordination includes the deployment of security teams aboard MSC ships making their way through the region. This effort, dubbed Operation Vigilant Mariner, was ordered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in February 2003 and has kept MSC's ships, mariners and sailors safe as they navigate the region's choke points ever since.

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# MSC off-loads humanitarian cargo

Three ships under the control of Military Sealift Command were the centerpieces of a months-long, cargo-off-loading exercise held off the coast of Central America from January through March. The cavernous 950-foot-long USNS Soderman, one of MSC's large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships participated, as well as two ships from the U.S. Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force: the barge carrier SS Cape Mohican and the crane ship SS Flickertail State.

Twenty-eight U.S. Navy reservists and civilian employees from Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic, headquartered in Norfolk, Va., were among the 1,300 Navy, Army and Air Force personnel who took part in the exercise. Participants faced the challenging task of off-loading MSC's mammoth ships without the benefit of sophisticated shoreside infrastructure.

In order to practice off-loading out-sized military cargo, a joint-logistics-over-the-shore exercise was planned. JLOTS is used to deliver military equipment and supplies to U.S. war fighters when ports are war-torn, too primitive or where water adjacent to shore is too shallow to use for off-loading of ships. Instead, cargo ships are anchored off-shore, while barges and smaller vessels called lighterages transport the cargo from ship to shore.

Although testing JLOTS capabilities was the initial focus of the exercise, planning evolved into delivering humanitarian aid as well, and the operation was renamed Humanitarian Support Over the Shore.

SEALOGLANT's personnel were some of the very first to arrive on scene in late January at Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala, for the exercise.

Because of the new focus

on humanitarian support, the ships transported much more than the normal exercise cargo. HSOTS 2007 involved the delivery of engineering equipment and materials ashore for humanitarian projects in Guatemala and Belize. In addition, more than two tons of medical supplies, food, toys and educational materials were carried and off-loaded from MSC ships.

"With the additional aspect of humanitarian relief, the exercise grew in scope to become a simulated disaster relief assistance response," said Rick Caldwell, supervisory marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT. "More than 250 pieces of humanitarian assistance equipment were brought ashore and used in rural areas of the region where schools and clinics were being built."

Navy Cmdr. Hugo Polanco from SEALOGLANT Headquarters Unit 106 was among the first group of reservists to arrive in Guatemala for the exercise. He was the officer in charge of six reservists and one active duty sailor assigned to the advance group there. Two more groups of reservists would eventually arrive to provide uninterrupted support for the duration of the humanitarian operation.

According to Polanco, the reservists, along with other SEALOGLANT personnel, acted as MSC representatives for everything the ships needed. Polanco also acted as liaison between the humanitarian support commander and MSC.

"This exercise was an eye-opener. After primarily dealing with MSC's [Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force], it was a great experience seeing the big picture of a joint operation between MSC, other U.S. Navy commands, the U.S. Army, the

U.S. Air Force and, of course, the U.S. Transportation Command," said Polanco. "Observing the cooperation between commands to make the mission a success was a first for me."

The exercise started slowly for the MSC staff, but things accelerated quickly.

"Prior to the arrival of the ships, we took a backseat in the command briefings," said Polanco. "As the ships arrived however, the exercise commanders quickly realized the value of having MSC representatives who could communicate with the ships far better and faster than they could. This fostered an even closer working relationship than before and caused the exercise to run much more smoothly — despite initial issues with the weather that dogged the off-load operation for a short time."

According to Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jeffrey Helfrich, SEALOGLANT reserve program officer, one of the reservists' major duties was the set up and operation of the Mobile Sealift Operations Center — a 20-foot shipping container that holds a complete communications suite, including the bandwidth efficient satellite transmission system.

"The MSOC allows us to set up an MSC office in places we don't normally go," said Helfrich. "This allows us to have an aggressive communications presence over the beach or over the shore between headquarters, the expeditionary port unit and other support units necessary for successful port operations and mission completion."

Charles LeBlanc, operations manager of SEALOGLANT's Beaumont, Texas, office, was involved in the operation even earlier than other MSC participants.

He began work with a port survey and planning meetings in November 2006.

LeBlanc and

Jack Davis, a marine transportation specialist also from the Beaumont office, arrived in Guatemala in January to get things set up prior to the arrival of SS Flickertail State and SS Cape Mohican. Both SEALOGLANT representatives assisted and monitored the off-loading of materials and cargo used to build and repair schools and hospitals.

After the Guatemalan humanitarian operation ended March 7, LeBlanc and Davis traveled to Panama to coordinate the off-loading of equipment for another humanitarian exercise in the region, New Horizons 2007, which was held in late March.

This operation involved sending humanitarian supplies from Beaumont, Texas, to Panama and Honduras aboard two barges. And the off-loads occurred in a considerably harsher environment than Guatemala.

"Our area was extremely remote, with the jungle encroaching right up to the water's edge. We were able to find rooms in a small hotel above a hardware store for the grand sum of \$22.75 a night total, but food was a different story," LeBlanc explained.

"We could not find any place we felt comfortable eating in, so for almost two weeks we lived on canned tuna fish on crackers with mustard. We both lost weight."

The first barge from Beaumont arrived, and off-loading went smoothly; the second barge was a different



# in Latin America

story.

“That barge presented problems almost immediately,” said LeBlanc. “All the equipment was supposed to be roll-on/roll-off, but it was packed so tightly it had to be lifted off.”

“It took 24 hours to get the barge unloaded, and we worked around the clock to

get it done. We were careful and managed to complete the job with no injuries. Our satisfaction came from knowing the mission was accomplished very successfully,” LeBlanc said.

Although all SEALOGLANT participants have returned home, the cargo they off-loaded will continue to be used by U.S.

military forces stationed in the region. The materials are being used to construct new classrooms and medical clinics. Military construction crews are also digging wells and constructing several new roads for rural areas that currently have limited or no access.



## HSOTS phase 2 held in San Diego

By James Jackson  
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

Although the largest portion of the exercise was held hundreds of miles away in Guatemala, for one ship, the exercise didn't end there.

SS Cape Mohican participated in the second phase of the Humanitarian-Support-Over-the-Shore exercise, in San Diego March 9-14.

The first phase of the exercise — in Guatemala Jan. 18 to March 7 — focused on delivering humanitarian and medical supplies to Central American countries. The second and final phase of the exercise focused on the logistical challenges of moving equipment from ships to shore.

Cape Mohican is assigned to the U.S. Maritime Administration's 47-ship Ready Reserve Force. RRF ships are normally kept pier-side in reduced operating status, and come under Military Sealift Command operational control when activated.

“The HSOTS '07 exercise proved to be a great training opportunity for Cape Mohican, as the crew once again demonstrated its ability to bring her special cargo-loading capabilities to a major exercise when called upon,” said civilian master Capt. Jack Cunningham.

The mission during phase two of the exercise was to demonstrate the ship's ability to safely load six amphibious landing craft units with their crews on board Cape Mohican in support of an amphibious operation. Although the test wasn't held offshore like other Joint-Logistics-Over-the-Shore exercises, it did

demonstrate a capability that would be instrumental to any future over-the-shore operation.

“They call; we haul,” Cunningham said. “Cape Mohican brought a unique capability to this year's exercise. We are one of only two Maritime Administration ships capable of performing this kind of sea-to-ship lift. We are not an amphibious ship like an LHA or the new LHD, which flood their well decks to allow landing craft units and landing craft air cushion vehicles to enter and depart. However, our specialized elevator gives us similar amphibious-like capabilities.”

Cape Mohican was originally designed as a vehicle cargo ship with a specially designed elevator that can be lowered to eight feet below the water line. This provides enough depth to allow landing craft units and other amphibious vehicles to drive onto the elevator for a smooth lift to the main deck of the 853-foot-long ship. Once the craft are on the elevator, they are secured with chains and with the use of a deck shuttle system, the craft can be moved to the forward portion of the ship, creating enough space to load crews and six landing craft safely on board.

The test was a complete success according to Navy Cmdr. Chris Landis, commanding officer of Assault Craft Unit One.

“The ship's ability to carry six landing craft could be very useful in support of future amphibious operations,” said Landis. “Senior Navy leadership was very interested in the outcome of this exercise. We are always looking at alternate methods to accomplish our mission and exercises like this are great learning tools for us.”



*Background: Equipment rolls down the stern ramp of Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Soderman and onto the Improved Navy Lighterage System during Humanitarian Support Over the Shore 2007. The exercise, held January through March, was a simulated disaster relief assistance response involving the movement of humanitarian equipment to Guatemala.*

*Left: The Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force barge carrier SS Cape Mohican offloads an amphibious landing craft during HSOTS 2007. The exercise tested the ship's ability to on-load and off-load small landing craft. RRF ships come under MSC's operational control when they are activated.*

*Cover: Navy sailors assigned to Amphibious Construction Battalion One unhook landing craft from the deck of RRF barge carrier SS Cape Mohican while off the coast of Guatemala during the HSOTS exercise.*

James Jackson photo

Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Omar A. Dominguez, photo

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters celebrated Women's History Month in March with a roundtable discussion led by MSC joint plans director **Army Col. Mary Franklin**. More than 20 attendees discussed the increasing opportunities for women in the workplace, military and among the ranks of business owners.

MSC headquarters held an April 10 all-hands meeting on the command's Oct. 28 transition to the National Security Personnel System, the new performance-based pay system. All MSCHQ civil service staff members will be affected by this transition. At the meeting, Shirley Scott, a representative from the Department of Defense human resources office provided an overview of NSPS, and MSC's acting director for Maritime Forces, Manpower and Management, **Perry Picoriello**, provided more specific information on how this transition will affect MSC employees. During the next few months, Picoriello's staff will visit

headquarters departmental staff meetings to further explain the transition and answer questions.

More than 30 senior leaders from Military Sealift Command met in Fairfax, Va., April 11-12 to launch a six-month initiative that will improve the command's service, maximize readiness and decrease costs to customers. Six cross-functional teams under the overall leadership of **Dave Martyn**, program manager for MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force, will focus on five cost categories: afloat personnel; sustainment; maintenance/modernization; commercial charters and operating contracts; and ashore personnel, facilities and infrastructure. New business initiatives are expected to be introduced by Oct. 1.

**Force Master Chief David Shaffer** retired after 25 years in the Navy in a March 30 ceremony. Shaffer joined MSC in February 2004 and spent the last years of his career advising the MSC commander on enlisted issues.

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Commander, Sealift Logistics Command Pacific, **Navy Capt. Leland Sebring** addressed the local chapter of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, N.Y., California-San Diego Alumni Chapter on March 7, and the Point Loma Rotary Club on March 16. Sebring gave the groups an overview of the mission of Military Sealift Command and its continued support of the global war on terrorism.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser participated in the USS Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group Joint Task Force Exercise. During the month-long exercise, Kaiser delivered more than 1.6 million gallons of fuel in support of Expeditionary Strike Group 5.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson won the fiscal 2006 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Quality Small Ship award.

Ericsson received the same award from the Chief of Naval Operations in

February and will compete in the Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards later this year.

At SEALOGPAC headquarters, **Navy Chief Operations Specialist Jeremy Cornell** and **Navy Yeoman 1st Class Harry Kinchin** both re-enlisted for four years.

SEALOGPAC welcomes **Navy Electronics Technician 1st Class Christopher W. Conn**, **Navy Information Technician 2nd Class Robert Wesley**, **Navy Information Technician 3rd Class Kent S. Boyd** and **Navy Electronics Technician 3rd Class Taishan Lin**, who all reported to USNS Rainier for duty. Combat stores ship USNS Niagara Falls welcomed **Navy Storekeeper 1st Class Trena L. Fletcher**, **Navy Information Technician 1st Class Greg A. Davis**, **Navy Personnel Specialist 1st Class Kunal Patel**, **Navy Operations Specialist 3rd Class Brandon C. Ryan** and **Navy Information Technician Seaman**

Sealift transportation specialist **Art Clark** left headquarters in April to prepare for a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan. Clark, a captain in the U.S. Navy Reserve, volunteered to deploy to Bagram Air Base where he will serve as part of the International Security Assistance Force. Clark will return to his civilian duties at MSC headquarters in December.

**Juanita Broennimann** was named acting project officer for the Prepositioning Program's Navy, Defense Logistics Agency and Air Force ships, relieving **Griff Hume**, who became the command's director of force protection.

**Julie Humphries** retired in April following 33 years of federal service — all at MSC headquarters. Humphries reported to MSC in 1974, as a clerk/typist. Over the years, Humphries worked her way up to her current position in the Comptroller Directorate as a financial specialist for the Sealift Program. Humphries plans to remain in the area and find part-time work after taking some time off.

Contracting specialist **Cheryl Johnson** also retired in April after 37 years of federal service. Johnson has been at

MSC for one year. She worked for DoD for all but the first nine years of her career, which she spent at the Department of Labor.

**Sean Carney** left MSC after more than three years as the headquarters assistant security manager. Carney moved to a new position at the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, where he will write security information policy for the Department of the Navy. Security specialist **Lisa Maples-Williams** will perform Carney's duties until a replacement is hired.

MSC welcomes **Clement Ludd**, **Todd McGill** and **Brenda Jones**, Administrative Support Center; **Rosemary Heiss**, Public Affairs; and **George Hunt**, Maritime Forces and Manpower Management Directorate. MSC also welcomes **Christina Zarate-Byers**, who returns to headquarters after a short stint at Military Sealift Fleet Support Command.

MSC bids farewell to **Navy Cmdr. Buck McDermott**, Force Protection Office; **George Myers**, Administrative Support Center; **Shah Abbas** and **Christine Stewart**, Contracts and Business Management; and **Chris Johnson**, Public Affairs.

**Zachary B. Heap**, **Navy Personnel Specialist 1st Class Stevie L. Lloyd**, **Navy Storekeeper 1st Class Celestino G. Manahan** and **Navy Electronics Technician Seaman Apprentice Kelvin B. Burroughs** reported for duty on board combat stores ship USNS San Jose. Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe welcomed **Navy Chief Operations Specialist**

**Gerald D. Stanker** and **Navy Operations Specialist 2nd Class Paul Cordova**.

SEALOGPAC bid farewell to **Navy Cmdr. Arno Sist**, SEALOGPAC's director of logistics, who retired from active duty after 24 years of service. Sist spent the last 24 months leading the SEALOGPAC logistics team through the final stages of transformation.

## Cortez named FFC sailor of year

**N**avy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Edward B. Cortez, assigned to USNS Mercy, was awarded the Direct Reporting Activity Afloat Sailor of the Year for U.S. Fleet Forces Command by Vice Adm. Melvin Williams Jr., Fleet Forces Command deputy commander, during a March 16 ceremony held in Portsmouth, Va.

According to Navy Capt. Joseph Moore, Mercy's commanding officer, Cortez earned the award for numerous reasons. He directly supervised 27 junior enlisted personnel and was selected as Mercy's senior sailor of the quarter during the ship's humanitarian assistance operation in 2006. He led the pharmacy staff in processing more than 60,000 prescriptions during the mission. Also, he provided strong guidance and leadership in the conduct of 11 successful medical and dental civic action programs, which significantly improved 10,000 patients' lives in Southeast Asia.

According to Navy Capt. Fred McKenna, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's acting deputy director, Cortez advanced to this competition after being named MSFSC Afloat Sailor of the Year. "Needless to say, Petty Officer Cortez is pure gold material and is the epitome of what we look for in a sailor," McKenna said.

Cortez says he couldn't have achieved the honor without the help of his junior sailors.

"I can also attribute my success to time spent with young sailors who needed a role model to look up to," said Cortez. "Throughout my career in



*Fleet Forces Command Direct Reporting Activity Afloat Sailor of the Year is Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Edward B. Cortez.*

the Navy, I have served in different capacities to uplift the quality of personal and professional lives of our younger sailors. Our success should be measured in terms of what we have done for them to advance their careers and improve the quality of their lives. When we take care of our people, we strengthen the security and defenses of our nation."

## CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Commander, Military Sealift Command, **Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr.** visited the commander of Navy Logistics Forces Central Command from March 19-24. During his visit, he discussed his operating axioms with the Combined Task Force 53 leadership; toured combat stores ship USNS Saturn in Bahrain and met with the ship's civil service master **Capt. Richard Cicchetti** and officer in charge of the military department **Navy Cmdr. Randall Onders**; toured fast combat support ship USNS Bridge and met with the ship's civil service master **Capt. Jeffrey Siepert** in the port of Jebel Ali in United Arab Emirates; and visited fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl, operating in the Persian Gulf, the

ship's civilian master, **Capt. L.D. Carley** and the crew.

Oiler USNS John Lenthall departed the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations following a successful deployment in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Lenthall provided support to the USS Eisenhower and USS John C. Stennis carrier strike groups, USS Boxer and USS Bataan expeditionary strike groups, as well as coalition naval forces. Lenthall conducted 41 underway replenishments, transferring more than 9.2 million gallons of fuel, delivering more than 7.4 tons of cargo and filling more than 1,700 requisitions. The crew safely moved 62 passengers and transferred more than 967 pallets of mission-essential cargo, food and supplies.

## EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha headed back to the United States after a month in Sealift Logistics Command Europe's theater following its deployment to the U.S. Central Command's area of operations. MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent arrived in theater March 21 to support U.S. 6th Fleet operations.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One MV 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo sailed to the Greek island of Corfu off the coast of Albania in the

Ionian Sea in May for a hull inspection that was held March 12-17. Meanwhile, fellow MPS Squadron One USNS Lance Cpl. Roy Wheat made history as the first U.S. ship to use a new pier opened by the Greek Navy in Souda Bay, Crete.

Wheat berthed at the pier, named K9, from March 8-16.

Cypriot-flagged tanker MV Moskaluo was put on hire March 19 to carry more than 235 million gallons of fuel from Algeciras, Spain, to Craney Island, Va.

## COMPASS • HEADING

**Jonathan Kaskin**, director of strategic mobility and combat logistics with the office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, D.C., paid a visit to Military Sealift Fleet Support Command and received the organization's executive brief on March 20. The purpose of Kaskin's visit was to add to his understanding of how all of the organizations associated with operating and managing MSC's combat logistics fleet work together.

The military department of fast combat support ship USNS Supply lent helping hands to Habitat for Humanity in March. **Navy Lt. Stephen Cox, Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Willie Barnhill, Navy Petty Officers Wing Chung, Jacqueline Portela, Jonathan Sabel, Antoinette Manning, Seth Shapiro, Vanessa Horton, Neal Chauhan, Mark Hauser and Andrew Rought** all took part in helping to build a new home for a needy family in Norfolk.

"This project was chosen by the crew, and the overwhelming support to participate was outstanding," said Barnhill. "They wanted to do something good

while the ship was in the yards, and providing adequate shelter for those individuals who can't afford a home just goes to show how USNS Supply's military department will band together as a team to get the job done."

The crew of dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea, located in San Diego, has moved aboard, and the ship is in the fitting-out availability period. At this point, the crew receives further training in areas specific to the T-AKE class, and the vessel is outfitted in preparation for its transit to Norfolk.

MSFSC says farewell to supervisory health systems specialist **Dennis "Mitch" Long** of MSFSC's force medical office. Long has 43 years of government service: 23 years in the U.S. Navy and 20 years as a civil service employee of Military Sealift Command. Also retiring after 43 years of service is **Carter Gilmer**, head of MSFSC's Communications Security Division, Information Technology Department.

For more information about MSFSC, visit the Internet newsletter at [www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter](http://www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter).

## FAR • EAST • HAILS

**Navy Capt. Dennis O'Meara**, commander of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three, attended a wreath-laying ceremony to honor World War II veterans who fought at Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima islands. The March 8 ceremony was held on Saipan.

O'Meara and ship's master **Capt. Thomas Tankersley** co-hosted Air Force Maj. Gen. Stephen T. Sargeant, deputy chief of staff for United Nations Command/U.S. Forces, Korea and Vice Adm. In Young Park, vice chairman of the Republic of Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, aboard roll-on/roll-off ship MV 1st Lt. Alex Bonnyman near Saipan on March 9.

March 10, David Wiseman, Mariana Islands superior court associate judge and Saipan Chamber of Commerce Armed Services Committee chair, toured roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cpl. Louis J. Hauge, Jr., hosted again by O'Meara and ship's master **Capt. Glen Bond**.

Republic of Korea 3rd Fleet commander Rear Adm. Won Tae Hoe visited **Navy Cmdr. Ron Oswald**, commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Korea in Pusan on March 29. The admiral toured the Pier Eight facility and was briefed on MSC operations on the Korean peninsula.

During a port visit to Japan's northern port city of Muroran, March 30, **Capt. Robert Glover**, master of USNS Observation Island and **Air Force Maj. Darryl Baldeosingh**, the ship's mission commander, paid courtesy calls on Masashi Shingu, mayor of Muroran, as well as Capt. Kouji Tsutsumi, superintendent of the Japanese Coast Guard.

**Capt. Robert Burke** relieved **Capt. Joseph Souza** as master of MPS Squadron Three SS Maj. Steven W. Pless in early April.

Sealift Logistics Command, Far East, welcomed **Navy Yeoman Seaman Recruit Joseph Ayala**, the command's new administrative assistant.



Civilian mariners Victorino Damasco, center, and Tyrone Trotman, right, accept the Capt. David L. Cook awards for food service excellence on behalf of fellow crew members from USNS Yukon and USNS Laramie, respectively. Presenting the award is Navy Capt. William Brown, Fleet Forces Command director of logistics.

## Yukon, Laramie win food service award

By Bill Cook  
MSFSC Public Affairs

Two Military Sealift Command ships received Capt. David L. Cook Awards for exceptional food service on March 31. The awards were presented at a black-tie gala in Kansas City, Kan.

This year, the awards went to fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie in the large ship East Coast category and to fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon in the large ship West Coast category. The award is named for the late Navy Capt. David L. Cook, former MSC director of logistics from 1995 to 1998, who was a catalyst in improving all aspects of the food service operations aboard MSC ships.

The food service award is an important one. The health and morale of MSC's approximately 5,000 civil service mariners hinges in large part on the quality of the meals prepared for them by their ship's food service team.

Accepting the awards this year on behalf of their ships were Tyrone Trotman, supply officer aboard Laramie, and Victorino Damasco, chief steward aboard Yukon. The winners received their awards during the March 31 ceremony, with hundreds of military guests attending.

Damasco, who has been with MSC since 1994, had 28 years of prior food service experience in the U.S. Navy.

"During all my years in the Navy, none of my ships ever won the Navy's

food service excellence award," said Damasco. "My first objective when I joined MSC was to win its award — and now we have!"

According to Roberta Jio, chief of MSC's food service policy and procedures, competition for the award was intense. "The problem in selecting the best was compounded by the fact that all of our food service teams are good," said Jio. "But to be the best means that the winning teams really had to exhibit stellar performance in their food service programs."

To win the annual award, MSC civil service mariner-crewed ships submitted a nomination package describing its food service programs to a Military Sealift Fleet Support Command committee. Once the nominations were reviewed, MSFSC sent five nominations to a team of judges. This year's judges — Jio, International Food Service Executive Association executive chef Nydia Eckstrom and Navy medical officer Lt. Mary Graves — then visited the finalists to determine the winner. The judges spent a full day on each of the ships, looking at food preparation, administration, management, safety, facilities, equipment and utensils, training, sanitation and shipboard waste management.

In addition to the public recognition received during the awards ceremony, winning food service teams will receive cash bonuses and will have the opportunity to participate in advanced culinary training.

## MSC reservists train in Korea

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The van was deployed first to the port of Gwangyang, where the crisis action team identified exercise scenarios to which the van crew would respond. The crew was also rated in its ability to quickly break down the van and redeploy it to an alternate port — moving next to Mokpo and then to Pusan.

"In a real world emergency, we would have to hit the ground running," said Navy Capt. Luke McCollum, Commander of Navy Reserve Sealift Logistics Command Far East Unit 102. "Our training and familiarization of Korean ports was essential, so we can be ready to carry out our mission."

To maintain a realistic training envi-

ronment, the computer-simulated exercise included virtual MSC ships, such as fast sealift ships USNS Bellatrix and USNS Regulus, Ready Reserve Force ship MV Cape Washington and common use tankers USNS Lawrence H. Gianella and USNS Richard G. Matthiesen.

"We worked closely with our Korean counterparts to coordinate simulated ship arrivals, departures and other requirements," said MSC's liaison officer to the Combined and Joint Seaport Control Center, Navy Lt. Andre Butler of SEALOGFE 102. "The bi-lateral cooperation between U.S. and Republic of Korea militaries was highly effective," said Army Col. Cedric Jasmin, U.S. co-chair of the control center.

Bill Cook photo

# End of an era for Spica and Saturn

By Lt. j.g. Jose Gorritz  
USNS Saturn Public Affairs

They've been Navy workhorses since the 1980s, but now Military Sealift Command's veteran combat stores ships USNS Saturn and USNS Spica have completed their final underway replenishment missions, and a new generation of underway replenishment ships are joining the fleet.

Two of an expected 11 civil service-crewed Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo/ammunition ships were delivered to MSC since last June and are replacing Saturn, Spica and other underway replenishment ships that have completed or are nearing the end of their service lives.

The civil-service-crewed Saturn is now completing what may be one of its last overseas missions. The ship crossed paths with its sister ship, Spica, in the Red Sea on Feb. 14, marking the final chapter in a long history of cargo and fuel transfers. Saturn is expected to return to the United States in May, and is currently scheduled to make one final deployment before being deactivated in 2009.

The turnover almost definitely marked the end for Spica's deployments however. Although the ship will continue performing helicopter landing qualifications and routine replenishments in the Virginia Capes area, Spica will begin its deactivation process in October.

During the combat stores ships' last deployment to the 5th Fleet area of operations, Spica turned over its inventory of provisions and general stocks to Saturn, which had arrived in the region as part of the USS Iwo Jima Expeditionary Strike Group. Spica, through careful long-term planning and inventory management, had only 150 pallets of cargo to turn over, and positioned 80 pallets ashore for Saturn to load later if needed.

Civil service mariners and the embarked military departments on board both ships prepared, transferred, received and stowed the frozen, chilled and dry cargo that Saturn will supply to the Navy ships stationed in the U.S. 5th and 6th fleet areas of operations through May.

Saturn's civil service mariner junior cargo supply officer, Ron McCann, has served on several MSC ships, including Spica. "I've come full circle



Above: Military Sealift Command combat stores ship USNS Spica, top, and combat stores ship USNS Saturn sail side by side as they prepare to turn over for the final time in the Red Sea. Both Saturn and Spica are being replaced by the incoming Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo/ammunition ships.

Right: USNS Richard E. Byrd, MSC's newest Lewis and Clark-class ship now under construction, sits in dry dock at General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego.

from my first ship, Spica, as assistant storekeeper, to 10 years later be back on board as an officer." While serving on Saturn, McCann was a key player in the stock transfers between the two ships.

Built in the still-active slipway at the Swan Hunter shipyard in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, Spica, originally named RFA Tarbatness, and Saturn, originally called RFA Stromness, were named for locations in Scotland. The ships were commissioned into the British Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the 1960s and were purchased by the U.S. Navy in the early 1980s. Their durable construction ensured that the ships were able to give decades of service to MSC in addition to their long careers in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, where they participated in events such as the British strategic withdrawal from east of Suez and the Falklands campaign. Both of these ships supported dozens of U.S. Navy combat-

ant deployments and recently participated in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

As they plied the seven seas, the single-screw ships were propelled by reliable Sulzer diesel engines with a fuel efficiency that is the envy of shipping executives throughout the world. The ships were modernized throughout their MSC careers but retained many unique features, such as wooden deck sheathing, a pub-like bar in the officers' lounge and bathtubs in several staterooms.

Replacing the venerable Spica, Saturn and other underway replenishment ships is the incoming USNS Lewis and Clark-class of dry cargo/ammunition ships, also called the T-AKE-class. This new class of ships is intended to replace the T-AE 26 Kilauea-class ammunition ships, T-AFS 1 Mars-class and T-AFS 8 Sirius-class combat stores ships

and, when operating with T-AO 187 Henry J. Kaiser-class oilers, the AOE 1 Sacramento-class fast combat support ships, which have already been deactivated. These ships are on average 40 years old and near the end of their service lives.

The new T-AKEs are specially designed to operate independently for extended periods at sea, and transfer ammunition, food, limited quantities of fuel, repair parts, ship store items and expendable supplies and material to U.S., NATO and other allied ships while at sea.

The first two T-AKE-class ships, Lewis and Clark and USNS Sacagawea have already been accepted by MSC, and four of up to 11 total T-AKEs are currently under construction at General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego.

## SEALOGCENT looks toward busy future

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### Rapid Pace

Working in an AOR prone to fast-breaking regional crises and having to adapt their missions accordingly is another challenge faced by the command on a regular basis. Last summer's Israeli-Lebanon conflict, the current violence in Somalia, Iran's increased nuclear posturing: These situations significantly affected and continue to affect the issues SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 staffers deal with at the office every day.

"The velocity of change here is incredible," said Yordy. "For instance, a few months ago the aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower was in the Arabian Sea supporting air operations over

Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Then, the ship got called to the Horn of Africa and our whole scheme of how we were moving supplies to her had to be adjusted by thousands of miles overnight.

"Our schedules and the schemes of maneuver in how we route ships, airplanes, supplies, fuel and parts change daily and change dramatically. It's a very dynamic environment."

"It's definitely edge-of-your-seat logistics out here," agreed Cmdr. Jim Smart, SEALOGCENT/CTF-53's deputy commander.

SEALOGCENT maintains a seven-day workweek to keep up with the pace. For the command, this means that weekends are not marked by days off

but by military personnel working in civilian clothes instead of their uniforms and the staff indulging in an extra hour or two of sleep before showing up at the office.

It is a punishing pace. Still, morale is high.

"Everyone recognizes the importance of the mission," said Smart. "It's on the news. It hits you in the face everyday. The staff knows the support they are giving is the support they'd want to get if they were out there on the ships. So, it's that rush of adrenaline and sense of 'mission accomplished' that keeps us going."

### The Road Ahead

The command's workload doesn't

look like it will be lightening any time soon. In fact, it will be just the opposite.

"Looking toward the events of the future," said Sears, "with the second carrier strike group arriving and the president sending 20,000 more troops, we are getting even busier."

How exactly it will all play out and what new missions SEALOGCENT will be called to support are questions yet to be answered — not that Sears and his staff have any time to worry about it beforehand.

"What's going to happen next?" asked Sears. "We don't know. We take each mission as it comes. The important thing is this: We're here, and we're ready to respond."