

November 2007

S·E·A·L·I·F·T

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Comfort ■ *4 months*
returns *12 countries*
98,000 patients

Mission accomplished

Hospital ship returns from Latin America and the Caribbean
See article and photos on Page 4



INSIDE — Wheeler joins MSC fleet • MSC lieutenant earns Bronze Star Medal

Thanksgiving—giving thanks and giving back

We are an extraordinary nation. That's been the case since the Jamestown settlement in Virginia, which celebrated its 400th birthday this year, and the pilgrims who landed in Plymouth, Mass., in November 1620.

The freedoms we enjoy — freedom of choice, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and so many others — are a guiding light in our world that calls to the downtrodden and dispossessed everywhere. So, there's good reason for all of us to celebrate Thanksgiving.

And, there's good reason to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice over the 231 years of our nation's history.

Sometimes, in our haste to fully take advantage of a well-earned holiday weekend, we forget the reason for the holiday.

Veterans Day holds even more meaning in this decade of the global war on terrorism. We all know family members, shipmates or friends who are serving, and we take the time to honor their lives as citizens, patriots, war fighters and peace keepers.

The inscription on the wall of the Korean War Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C., reminds us that, "Freedom is not free." We all know that. And we know that even as we talk about this, our shipmates are out there, around the world, going in harms' way because they know, like we do, that it is the reason we serve our nation — proudly, quietly and passionately.

But there's more to Veterans Day and Thanksgiving than just giving thanks. It's a time when we all need to think about giving back — to our families, to our shipmates, to our communities and to our world.

USNS Comfort just returned from a four-month humanitarian assistance mission to Latin America and the Caribbean. Our mariners and Sailors aboard ship 'shared America' with our brothers and sisters in 12 countries in the region, providing medical assistance, infrastructure help and goodwill, from building sidewalks and wheelchair ramps at a school in



Civil service mariner Capt. Ed Nanartowich, master of hospital ship USNS Comfort, greets a Haitian girl after giving her a pair of shoes while the ship was in her country in September.

Ecuador to performing magic tricks in local hospitals. And there were some spirited basketball games with the local kids that made lifelong impressions for many children.

Closer to home, MSC headquarters has a relationship with a local elementary school where our staffers tutor and provide mentoring to kids who sometimes have to struggle to stay in school.

Some of our people have been performing this community service for 20 years or more. Those who participate say it's a life-changing experience for them, not to mention for the kids.

There are, no doubt, programs at all of our MSC sealift logistics commands and other, more remote, operating locations around the world that offer the chance to give back to the community. It's just a matter of seeking them out and getting involved.

And let's not forget our families, especially the families of our shipmates and friends who are deployed.

In his first letter to America's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and their families, our new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and former Chief of Naval Operations) Adm. Mike Mullen, said, "Whether you serve in Baghdad or Bagram, Kabul or Kuwait — whether you find yourself at sea in the Pacific, flying support missions over Europe, on the ground in Africa or working every day at stateside bases — you are making a difference, and so is every person in your family. Your service matters. And I do not take it for granted."

I echo Admiral Mullen's statement. Each and every one of you in MSC is making a difference daily. And the families who stand behind you are critical to your well being and capabilities as members of the U.S. defense team.

You may recall that my number one operating axiom is that people are MSC's number one strategic priority. That includes our families.

It's not just because you are critical to the mission. It's also because you

show the rest of the world the heart and soul of MSC — what we're made of and what we can do as a team — what we bring to the table as part of the national defense strategy.

Today, we're more than 9,000 strong as we work at sea and ashore around the world.

As Admiral Mullen says, "The enemies we face, from radical jihadists to regional powers with nuclear ambitions, directly and irrefutably threaten our vital national interests. They threaten our very way of life. You stand between these dangers and the American people. You are the sentinels of freedom."

Wherever you are on this Veterans Day and Thanksgiving, take a moment to thank those around you, those who preceded you, those who will follow after and those who have fallen in the struggle.

We're part of the ring of freedom that protects

the greatest nation the world has ever known. We are MSC, and we deliver!

Keep the faith,

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

Adm. Greenert assumes command of U.S. Fleet Forces

By U.S. Fleet Forces Command Public Affairs



Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert assumed command of U.S. Fleet Forces Command from Adm. Gary Roughead, during an informal ceremony held in the Pentagon, Sept. 29.

Roughead assumed duties as the 29th chief of Naval operations at the same ceremony. Greenert, a naval submarine officer and a 1975 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, most recently served as deputy chief of Naval operations for integration of capabilities and resources.

He has served in a variety of command positions afloat and ashore, including command of submarine USS Honolulu and commander, Submarine Squadron 11; commander, U.S. Naval Forces Marianas; and commander, U.S. 7th Fleet.

During Greenert's first meeting with the USFF headquarters staff, he discussed his priorities and USFF's continued focus on warfighting, force posture and building regional relationships.

"I believe America needs a strong military and the Navy is the centerpiece of that," Greenert said. "Sailors and our civilian employees are the difference that we have over everybody else. My experience in the fleet has been that it's an amazing team and an amazing synergy when brought together. I really believe that we need to dwell on our strengths and what we can do together."

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MSC accepts new OPDS platform — improves ability to support U.S. troops ashore

OPDS ship namesake
Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler

June 1918 — April 2002



U.S. Navy photo

Vice Adm. Kenneth R. Wheeler was a former supply corps officer whose role in the Navy was much like that of the ship that bears his name — to ensure that warfighters have what they need, when and where they need it.

As a prisoner of war for 42 months during World War II, Wheeler faced some of life's greatest adversities, but overcame them to craft a brilliant Navy career that culminated in his assignment as the 31st chief of the supply corps and vice chief of Naval material from 1970-1973.

Among his military awards were the Distinguished Service Medal, three Bronze Star Medals, two Legion of Merit Medals, the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Unit Citations. In addition, he received the George Washington Honor Medal from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

After retirement, the admiral continued his close association with the Navy as an influential member of the boards of directors of both the Navy Supply Corps Association and the Navy Supply Corps Foundation.

By Laura M. Seal
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command took delivery of its newest ship at the Santa Rosa Island test range off the coast of Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., Sept. 20. This addition greatly improves the command's ability to deliver fuel to soldiers and Marines operating ashore where port facilities are inadequate or non-existent.

MV Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler, a commercial ship under charter to MSC for up to five years, was delivered to the command by the ship's builder and owner, Edison Chouest Offshore, following six days of acceptance trials. Wheeler is the platform for a new offshore petroleum distribution system, or OPDS, that can pump fuel ashore from up to eight miles off the coast — twice the distance as existing MSC ships.

Wheeler doesn't carry fuel, but rather works as an at-sea pumping system to transfer fuel ashore from commercial and military tankers.

Following delivery, Wheeler continued on to Norfolk, where it conducted two days of demonstrations for about 70 senior military leaders and government officials off the coast of Fort Story, Va., and hosted the ship namesake's family for a tour in port. By early October, Wheeler got underway to Guam where it will operate as part of MSC's Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three.

"This new system allows us to do more in less time with fewer resources," said Tim McLaughlin, one of MSC's lead project officers in charge of Wheeler's development and delivery. "To really support our troops, we needed to improve greatly upon the existing OPDS tankers' capabilities."

The nearly 349-foot-long, 70-foot-wide Wheeler carries eight miles of flexible pipe, which is wrapped around five, 35-foot-tall spools mounted on the ship's weather deck. The specially designed pipe is eight inches in diameter and comprises nine layers of protective materials.

In less than 48 hours, Wheeler's crew can run the full length of pipe ashore, connect the pipe to the ship's bow discharge unit, run a float hose to a tanker

from the ship's stern, and be ready to pump fuel at a rate of about 1,400 gallons per minute — upwards of 2 million gallons of fuel a day.

Wheeler operates with the assistance of a light, amphibious, resupply, cargo vessel — called a LARC — which beaches and anchors itself ashore in order to pull the pipe to shore. The LARC also carries to shore the beach terminal unit — a piece of equipment that receives the fuel and transfers it to the Army or Marine Corps onshore fuel facilities.

Then, Wheeler's 165-foot tender vessel, Fast Tempo, runs a float hose from Wheeler to a tanker. Once all hoses and pipes are secure, the tanker begins pumping fuel, which passes through holding tanks aboard Wheeler before running through the pipe to shore.

"It's very exciting to be part of Wheeler's crew," said Capt. Robert Verret, the ship's civilian master, who works for the private company under contract to MSC. "It's got all the bells and whistles that other ships don't have."

Wheeler's capabilities expand greatly on those of the three existing offshore petroleum discharge tankers that are periodically activated from the Maritime Administration's government-owned Ready Reserve Force. These ships include SS Potomac, SS Chesapeake and SS Petersburg. Chesapeake transferred from MSC's fleet back to the RRF in September 2006, and Petersburg will do the same later this year. Chesapeake and Petersburg will both ultimately become part of the National Defense Reserve Fleet, joining Potomac which transferred to NDRF in 2006.

Unlike its predecessors, Wheeler is not a tanker — hence its designation as an offshore petroleum *distribution* (rather than *discharge*) system. Because of this, Wheeler is not limited to pumping fuel carried in its own tanks, but rather can hook-up to any commercial or military tanker.

Wheeler's improved capabilities also include the ability to pump 500,000 gallons more fuel per day, operate in more difficult environmental conditions including surface currents of up to three knots and winds of up to 40 knots, and install pipe over an ocean bottom of rock and shell in addition to mud, sand and coral.

A further advantage is that for all of these improved capabilities, Wheeler requires far fewer people to deploy its distribution system than its predecessors, which required about 150 people.

Wheeler's crew is made up of 30 civilians working for private companies under contract to MSC. Sixteen civilian mariners operate and navigate the ship, and eight systems operators, six of whom join the ship only during fueling evolutions, operate and deploy the distribution system. In addition, a crew of six mariners operate Wheeler's tender vessel, Fast Tempo.

"This is an extremely important capability," said Keith Bauer, program manager for MSC's Prepositioning Program. "This new system increases the flexibility of the U.S. military by expanding our capability to support ground operations in coastal areas that are undeveloped, destroyed by natural disaster, or otherwise unable to support arrival of a tanker to distribute fuel."



U.S. Navy photo by Bill Cook



U.S. Navy photo

Marilyn Wheeler, widow of Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler, namesake of Military Sealift Command's new offshore petroleum distribution system ship, sat in the captain's chair on the ship's bridge during a ship tour led by civilian master Capt. Robert Verret while the ship was in Norfolk, Oct. 2.

While in port, the ship also demonstrated its fuel distribution capabilities to government officials and military leaders.

Wheeler will operate in MSC's Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three in Guam.

CIVMARS Provide

By Laura M. Seal
MSC Public Affairs

In the early morning hours of Oct. 7, Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort raised anchor off the coast of Suriname and began steaming north to the United States, marking the end of a four-month humanitarian assistance mission to Latin America and the Caribbean. Comfort's crew of civil service mariners, uniformed and civilian medical professionals and operations and support personnel worked together to provide medical assistance to more than 98,000 people in 12 countries.

Over the course of the deployment, which began when Comfort departed Norfolk, Va., June 15, and officially ended when the ship returned to Baltimore on Oct. 19, the floating symbol of goodwill has come to mean something different to each person touched by the mission – patients and crew members alike.

To Luiz Cortez, a 17-year old from Colombia, Comfort means the ability to walk and, perhaps, one day play soccer following life-changing surgery.

To the students at Puerto Barrios Children's Hospital in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Comfort means new playground equipment, repaired plumbing in the bathrooms and new ceiling fans in the operating rooms.

To civil service mariner Joseph Kranz, Comfort means the hardest he's worked in 18 years at sea, and the most inspired he's ever been by his job.

"This is, to me, the greatest thing I've ever seen happen on board a ship," said Capt. Ed Nanartowich, Comfort's civil service master, who has commanded more than 20 ships during his 32-year career with MSC. "Most of the ships that I've worked on have delivered oil or fuel or ammunition. This ship delivered goodwill and compassion, which is the essence of America."

Nanartowich and his crew of about 70 CIVMARS working for MSC were an integral component of the mission – navigating the ship safely to each port, providing a constant supply of fresh water and electricity to the hospital and transporting patients, mission personnel and equipment between ship and shore in two 33-foot utility boats.

Nanartowich coordinated closely each day with the commanding officer of the ship's hospital and the mission commander, both U.S. Navy captains, to ensure that humanitarian operations went smoothly in all of the countries visited – Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, El Salvador, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname.

The CIVMARS made it possible for the medical personnel to provide extensive medical care including more than 1,000 surgeries, 24,000 pairs of eyeglasses, 32,000 immunizations and 122,000 pharmaceuticals.

In addition, Comfort's CIVMARS assisted Seabees from Mobile Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 202 who performed repairs in more than 20 schools and medical facilities. In Ecuador, Carpenter Michael Nanartowich and Chief Electrician Conrad Folk went ashore to assist in constructing two handicap ramps and installing 18 ceiling fans at a school.

Do you want to dance?

At 105 feet 9 inches wide, Comfort barely eked through the Panama Canal, falling just within the limit of 106-foot set by the Panama Canal Authority. But "the ditch" didn't even come close to posing the

894-foot long Comfort's most complicated navigational challenges in a region where shallow coastal waters, fragile coral reefs and small ports tax even smaller, more maneuverable ships.

"It's almost like trying to get somebody that doesn't want to dance to dance," said Capt. Nanartowich on maneuvering the converted supertanker that he affectionately likens to a floating bathtub. "We are trying to get it to do things that it's not intended to do."

Comfort's medical personnel needed to treat as many people as possible, and if the ship wasn't able to get into port – or at least close enough to transfer people by boat or helicopter – the mission simply could not succeed.

The challenges began with the first mission stop – Belize. "We had to navigate a circuitous route through



U.S. Navy photo by Laura M. Seal



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joan Kretschmer

Left: Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort Cargo Mate David Lieberman entertains a 5-year-old boy before the child goes in for surgery aboard the ship in Ecuador.

Above: In Ecuador, Comfort Carpenter Michael Nanartowich builds a sidewalk that will improve building access for the handicapped.

Right: Guatemalan children watch as military dentists and technicians, attached to the hospital ship, provide dental care to patients at Puerto Barrios National Hospital.

Far right: Able Seaman Guy Traynham stands ready to assist in the transfer of passengers onto one of Comfort's lifeboats, which was lowered to serve as an elevator that will bring passengers up to the deck.

Cover: Tugs guide Comfort away from the pier in Trinidad and Tobago as the ship pulls out of port Sept. 22.

Comfort to others

the world's second largest barrier reef to get to our anchorage," said Nanartowich. The margin for error was so small and the maneuver so complicated, that Nanartowich and his crew transposed Belize's channel onto a chart of the Virginia Capes and did a practice run before departing for the mission.

Each following port and anchorage posed its own challenges. Comfort was the largest ship to ever pull into port in Acajutla, El Salvador. "Getting into that port was a tricky maneuver – we had to go less than a mile, but it took two-and-a-half hours to do it safely because the ship is so big," said Nanartowich.

The ship also broke size records at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, where Comfort is the longest vessel to ever pull into port. The primary difficulty was posed by the ship's draft. Usually Comfort has a draft of around 33-feet, but Comfort had to de-ballast to 26.5 feet to meet the port's requirements.

De-ballasting too far, however, can be a dangerous proposition.

"You have stability requirements for in port and at sea," said Nanartowich. "At sea, the requirements are more stringent to ensure the safety of the ship, so our de-ballasting plan was an 'on time' event where we finished de-ballasting just as we were able to apply the less stringent harbor standards for stability."

Small boat operations

A big contribution that CIVMARs made to the mission was operating two 33-foot utility boats to transport patients, mission personnel and equipment between ship and shore in those locations where Comfort was unable to pull into port. The boats, called Hospitality 1 and Hospitality 2, were painted in Comfort's likeness – white with red crosses.

"Without the small boat operations ... we'd have seen fewer patients and had much less of an impact," said Capt. Bruce Boynton, the commanding officer of Comfort's medical treatment facility.

In all, Comfort's CIVMARs conducted more than 15,000 transfers of people in Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Colombia and Haiti. Helicopters and catamarans were used in other ports.

Navigating small boats safely in the region's characteristically choppy waters took great skill, but Comfort's highly-experienced CIVMARs were up for it.

"The biggest challenge is getting the passengers on or off the boat safely and transferring them to the ship," said Able Seaman Don Steele, who was specifically asked to join this mission because he has more than 20 years of experience operating small boats.

But the challenge wasn't just in maneuvering the boats, it was also in getting passengers into them. The

original plan was to place a pontoon on the water outside the ship's gangway and connect the gangway and pontoon with a metal ramp. Passengers leaving the ship would go down the ramp to the pontoon and then into the waiting boat.

However, "In the Pacific, the waters are so rough that the transfers became hazardous," said Boynton. "So the mariners came up with an ingenious solution."

"We decided to use the lifeboats like elevators to lower passengers from the weatherdeck down to the water," said Chief Mate Les Waddington. Once the lifeboat reached the water, the hospitality boat pulled-up alongside, tied-up to the lifeboat and CIVMARs helped transfer passengers between the two.

The CIVMARs operating the boats served as ambassadors to patients traveling to and from Comfort.

"One trip I brought back in Guatemala, the people who were getting off the boat were hugging me with tears in their eyes – it choked me up, they were just so grateful," said Steele.

"The children light up when they see us," said Third Mate Joseph Kranz. "When you see those smiles it makes you feel good, and if we got to just one kid, that's enough."

For Comfort's medical crew who took the boats to shore every day, the skill and disposition of the CIVMARs was also greatly appreciated. "The CIVMARs are a very professional group of boat operators," said Lt. Cmdr. Lisa Starnes, a U.S. Public Health Service dental hygienist. "I appreciate their constant vigil to keep us safe so that we can continue to achieve our mission."

No pressure

The 30 CIVMARs who make up Comfort's engineering department are not as well-known as their deck department counterparts to the rest of the crew, but if the engineers weren't performing all their duties perfectly, everyone would know.

Comfort's master and mates can't maneuver the ship without coordinating closely with the engineers, doctors can't perform operations without the electricity that is generated in Comfort's auxiliary machinery room, the galley crews can't prepare food without fresh water and helicopters can't fly without being refueled – all duties of the engine department.

No pressure.

Comfort's watch engineers spend more than eight hours a day in the ship's sweltering (100-degree plus) engine room monitoring and maintaining the steam plant that propels the ship and generators, evaporators and auxiliary machinery that provide power, fresh water and air conditioning to the ship's hospital.

Without it the hospital's operating rooms, CAT scan, examination rooms and laboratory could not function.

"The engineering department goes out of their way to fix things right away in the operating room," said Lt. Cmdr. Tracey Kunkel. "The first engineer Matt Clark comes through and checks that everything is running smoothly, and if it isn't, they fix it immediately."

Not all engineers are confined to the engine room. Comfort's Chief Electrician Conrad Folk and two CIV-



U.S. Navy photo by Laura M. Seal

MARs working for him monitor all of Comfort's electrical equipment.

"We do a walk around most every day and we have an engine room alarm system in case something goes down," said Folk. "Basically we just go through the ship and look and listen because we know our machinery and the sounds it should be making, so if we don't hear the sounds, we know the machinery is down."

"If I missed something everything would shut down," said engine utility Javon Gordon. "Something could happen to one of the patients if they are on machines, so it's very important to keep up the machinery and make sure that everything is working well."

Where did all these smiles come from?

Here's something you don't see every day – a young boy getting ready to go into surgery ... giggling. But 5-year-old Adrian Alcivar was doing just that aboard Comfort when it was piersonside in Manta, Ecuador. The source of the smiles? Cargo Mate David Lieberman, who took a break from grueling boat operations to visit the hospital and lift the spirits of some nervous patients.

"I walked over to his bunk and started blowing bubbles – he jumped right on top of the gurney trying to grab the bubbles," said Lieberman. "This went on for the next 90 minutes. He blew so many bubbles that he was soaking wet."

While their days were filled with the many activities necessary to operate the ship and keep the mission running on track, Comfort's CIVMARs found the time and energy to spread some cheer to the patients.

Able Seaman Ed Muncy, a former professional clown, always had a pocket full of balloons and coins that he would use to entertain crowds of adults and children alike.

"I've seen Ed down in the wards making balloon animals and pulling coins from children's ears," said Boynton. "It's not much fun being sick or waiting in line and those little things you can do to show you care are very much appreciated by people."

"Once in awhile you've got to stop and realize that it's a big world out there and everybody needs help at some time," said Boatswain's Mate William Ramos. "And that everybody together can make a difference."



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Steven King

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

MSC Deputy Commander



U.S. Navy photo

Military Sealift Command welcomed Navy Reserve Rear Adm. Robert O. Wray aboard as deputy commander Oct. 19. Wray served as a commanding officer at Naval Forces Europe before coming to MSC.

In his civilian career, Wray has a broad entrepreneurial background, having founded and run companies in manufacturing, construction, services, energy and information technology.

Rear Adm. Robert O. Wray

Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., Military Sealift Command commander, hosted commanders and senior staff from MSC locations worldwide for the MSC Leadership Summit 2007 Oct. 10-12 at the Washington Navy Yard. Through presentations and discussions, attendees reviewed enterprise alignment, assessed MSC's transformation journey and discussed current and future strategic initiatives and issues. Attendees recorded and assigned numerous actions for further analysis and follow-up.

George Escobar, Washington, D.C. mayor's deputy director for Latino affairs, spoke to more than 100 MSC headquarters employees during an Oct. 9 ceremony that marked Hispanic Heritage Month — Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 — during

which time nine Latin countries celebrate independence days. After Escobar's comments, MSC employees enjoyed Latin music and a dance performance by professional Latin ballroom dancers.

MSC welcomes Navy **Cmdr. Gregory Breen**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; **Bruce Belden** and Navy **Lt. Robert Hanson**, operations and plans; **Michael Brown** and **Jitesh Kerai**, engineering; **Fred Colston**, logistics; **Christina Cochrane**, contracts and business management; and **Carolyn Davis**, office administrator.

MSC bids farewell to **Charles Metzger**, **Lance Nyman** and **Glenda Isaacs** from contracts and business management; and **Andria Davis** and **Scott Dickinson** from the Prepositioning Program.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Information Systems Technician 1st Class Andrew J. Thudium** received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal from Navy **Capt. David Kiehl**, commander of Sealift Logistics Command Pacific, Oct. 5. Thudium received the award, in part, for his achievement as Mobile Sealift Operations Center supervisor for the

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command. Thudium demonstrated superior technical ability while providing internal communications for joint logistics over-the-shore/humanitarian support over-the-shore in Guatemala.

Fast combat support ship USNS **Rainier** returned from a seven-month deployment to the Western Pacific.

While underway, **Rainier** transferred more than 43 million gallons of fuel, 580 pallets of ordnance, 6,684 pallets of frozen stores and 3,316 pallets of dry stores in support of the fleet. In addition, **Rainier's** helicopter detachment flew more than 55 hours during 801 sorties to transfer 648 personnel, 3,535 tons of cargo and 6 tons of mail.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS **Henry J. Kaiser** was featured as one of the ships in the annual San Diego Fleet Week Parade of Ships in Sep-

tember. In addition to **Kaiser**, the parade featured other Navy and Coast Guard ships and demonstrations by Navy special warfare, explosive ordnance disposal and amphibious cushioned landing craft units.

SEALOGPAC welcomes Navy **Cmdr. Quentin Burns**, operations, and **Sarah Burford**, public affairs.

SEALOGPAC bids farewell to Navy **Command Master Chief Fred A. Cetnar**, who has begun terminal leave before retiring from the Navy in December.



U.S. Navy photo by Susan Thomas

DON 2007 Safety Award

Tug and salvage ship class manager Mark Helmkamp, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command; Kevin Baetsen, Military Sealift Command engineering director; Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., MSC commander; and Joan Divens, MSC environmental and safety policy director, showcase the Department of the Navy 2007 Safety Excellence Award. Rescue/salvage ship USNS Grapple received the award Oct. 16. Helmkamp accepted it on behalf of the ship's crew.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Brian Hill, a marine transportation specialist from SEALOGLANT, provided coverage for tanker USNS **Lawrence H. Gianella** during its port call in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico. This was the first time in more than 18 months that an MSC tanker had visited that port. Hill evaluated the terminal's operation.

Anthony Clark, an antiterrorism and force protection specialist also from SEALOGLANT, was on site to provide AT/FP training to Gianella's crew and a review of the terminal from the AT/FP perspective.

Tom D'Agostino, SEALOGLANT representative in Charleston, S.C., supported the load of U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Division cargo on large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS **Bob Hope** in Savannah, Ga., Sept. 24. More than 1,600 pieces of cargo — a total of 250,000 square feet were loaded on the ship destined for Iraq.

Sept. 18, the U.S. Army Field Support Battalion in Charleston presented D'Agostino with a plaque showing the Army's appreciation for the logistical coordination provided by the Charleston SEALOGLANT office.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS **Lewis and Clark**, fast combat support ship USNS **Supply**, and fleet replenishment oilers USNS **Leroy Grumman** and USNS **Tippecanoe** are supporting carrier strike group USS **Enterprise**, expeditionary strike groups USS **Bonhomme Richard** and USS **Kearsarge**, and myriad other U.S. and coalition ships deployed to the Central Command region. The four

Military Sealift Command ships conducted more than 70 replenishments and transferred more than 11 million gallons of fuel in September.

Fleet ocean tug USNS **Catawba** provided logistics support to Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS **Anzac** by delivering their newly repaired rigid-hull, inflatable boat from Bahrain — where the repairs took place — to the North Persian Gulf.

COMPASS • HEADING

Civil service master **Capt. Rollin J. Bellfi** assumed the duties of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command port captain, west in late September. Departing the position, **Capt. Thomas Schwinn** remarked, "I would like to express a universal thank you to everyone, ashore and afloat, for the steady stream of support and critical feedback on literally hundreds of issues. I know you will continue to provide that same support to Capt. Bellfi."

Ship Support Unit Naples has announced the upcoming departure of three staff members: Director **Louis Smith**, who leaves Naples for a position in the continental United States with Military Sealift Fleet Support Command; **Pat Gridley**, departing an information technology job at the SSU for a position with Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Naples; and **Emerita Hooker**, who vacates a position within the comptroller directorate for a job with

Navy Recruiting Command. Acting Director **Michael Ragonese** will assume Smith's duties until a permanent replacement is selected.

Commander Logistics Group Western Pacific/Commander, Task Force 73 Navy Rear Adm. Nora W. Tyson recognized the crew of rescue/salvage ship USNS Salvor. "I went to see Salvor, her crew and her embarked [mobile diving and salvage unit] team here in Singapore last week and can tell you that they are a great group of professionals. We are excited about having them out here in the [area of operation]."

MSFSC bids fair winds and following seas to **Assistant Storekeeper Bayani Bongolan**, **Boatswain's Mate Richard Collins**, **Chief Steward Travis Smith**, **Deck Engineer Machinist Walter Taylor Jr.**, **Chief Electrician Troy Ward** and **Chief Cook Wilbert Wilson** as they retire.

John R. 'Jack' Taylor



John R. 'Jack' Taylor, officially took the helm as executive director of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, Oct. 9. Having worked for Military Sealift Command in Washington, D.C., and MSFSC in Norfolk, much of the time as acting executive director, Taylor has an extensive background in marine engineering and project management.

"It's an honor to be selected to serve as MSFSC's executive director. As we take on new and challenging roles, I know that MSFSC will be successful — due to the talent, dedication and professionalism found throughout the organization. To all at MSC, I sincerely thank you and look forward to serving you."

MSFSC Executive Director

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Rescue/salvage ship USNS Salvor, under the command of civil service master **Capt. Wade Armstrong**, along with its embarked Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Detachment Seven, visited Malaysia's Borneo Island, Sept. 17-19. While there, Salvor not only made it's maiden port call to Sandakan, the ship also broke new ground as the first USS or USNS ship to dock at the KD Sri Sandakan naval base.

"In the past, we had to go to the Sandakan commercial port or have the ship anchor out," said U.S. Naval Attaché to Malaysia Navy Capt. Claudia Risner. "Bringing Salvor alongside the Malaysian navy base pier means that professional engagement is more productive and associated port costs are much less."

Salvor conducted ship tours for more than 40 Royal Malaysian Navy personnel over three days, and hosted 22 members of the local Sandakan Rotary Club as well as journalists from the English-language Borneo Post.

In other news from the Far East, Navy **Capt. John Arbter** relieved Navy **Capt. Scott Anderson** as commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two during a change of command aboard the squadron's flagship Prepositioning Ship MV Sgt. William R. Button, Sept. 17.

Navy **Cmdr. Ron Oswald**, Military Sealift Command Office Korea's commanding officer, attended the 2007 Daedong Scholarship ceremony — at the invitation of the Scholarship Association's President Jeom-Yong Sohn — where 19 Busan-area students received academic scholarships. Representatives from the city of Busan, as well as local consulate officials from Japan and Taiwan attended. "This was a great opportunity to recognize impressive students and to build camaraderie and fraternity with local Busan community leaders

and diplomatic representatives," Oswald said.

On Sept. 18, MSC-chartered MV American Tern arrived at MSCO Korea's Pier Eight supporting annual exercise Trident Arch 2007.

American Tern discharged 322 pieces and loaded 135 pieces of equipment. The exercise was completed on Sept. 22. Trident Arch 2007 is a combined effort between Naval Expeditionary Hospital Command, Naval Logistics Expeditionary Command, Commander Naval Forces Korea, Commander Pacific Fleet and elements from the U.S. Army to maintain a 250-bed field hospital in the Korea theater.

Navy Rear Adm. Nora Tyson relieved Navy Rear Adm. William Burke as Commander Logistics Group Western Pacific/Commander, Task Force 73, during a Sept. 10 ceremony held at the Terror Club in Singapore. Navy **Capt. Susan Dunlap**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Far East, attended the ceremony and later met individually with Tyson, providing a detailed brief on SEALOGFE's mission. Task Force 73 is the operational commander for MSC's combat logistics forces operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility and is collocated with SEALOGFE in Singapore.

Navy **Capt. Ulysses Zalamea**, commander, MPS Squadron Three hosted officials from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands ports authority aboard Prepositioning Ship USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus, Oct. 4. Later that day, local elementary students toured the ship and had lunch there.

Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Alexander Soe**, commanding officer, MSCO Okinawa, attended a bilateral Japan Maritime Self Defense Force and U.S. Navy luncheon, Sept. 12 at Camp Shields, Okinawa, Japan. The guest of honor was Japanese Rear Adm. Kenji Noi, commander, Fleet Air Wing Five, Japan Maritime Self Defense Force.

San Jose adopts Philippine school



Capt. Dan O'Brien (left), combat stores ship USNS San Jose's alternate regular master, Capt. Mike Flanagan, current master, and Mayor of Olongopo, Philippines, Bong Gordon, discuss ongoing renovations at Gordon Heights Elementary School in Olongopo, Philippines.

Sailors and civil service mariners from San Jose made an impact on the Philippine community Sept. 24 by helping renovate the local school during a port call in Subic Bay.

The ship's Yeoman Storekeeper Colleen Espinosa led the charge — organizing a crew of 25 to paint classrooms and make minor repairs at Gordon Heights, which has more than 1,200 students.

Able Seaman and an Olongopo-native Carl Cosby said, "I was very happy to give time and support back to the community from which I was raised."

Flanagan was part of the team that painted five classrooms, and despite being on leave at the time at his residence in Manila, Philippines, O'Brien, drove to Olongopo to help out.

San Jose's crew treated students and teachers to a lunch of hamburgers, pizza and chicken.

Before leaving, the crew also donated more than \$1,700 dollars, which the school used to buy pens, pencils, coloring books, crayons and toys for the youngest students.

USNS Safeguard joins MSC fleet

By Susan Melow
MSFSC Public Affairs

USS Safeguard, the last of four rescue/salvage ships crewed by active-duty Navy Sailors, was decommissioned and transferred to Military Sealift Command during a Sept. 26 ceremony held at Sasebo Naval Station, Japan, nestled between volcanic peaks on the island of Kyushu in western Japan.

The end of one era was marked by the start of another as the ship's command was passed from commanding officer of the Navy crew to an incoming civil service master.

Executive Director Jack Taylor, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, accepted the vessel from Navy Rear Adm. Carol Pottenger, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 7 /Task Force 76.

Greeting the assembled guests in Japanese, Taylor thanked Lt. Cmdr. Doyle Hodges and the departing crew for their service and praised the civil service master, Capt. Edward Dickerson, and his crew of 26 civil service mariners for their hard work that facilitated the smooth transfer of the vessel.

"Today marks another milestone in the 35 years since Military Sealift Command accepted and began operating its first combat logistics force ship, fleet replenishment oiler USNS Taluga," Taylor said. "Safeguard is the newest addition to the best fleet logistics force in the world."

Boatswain Ernest Baker removed the bunting from the ship's stack, revealing MSC's distinctive black, gray, blue and gold stripes. Chief Mate William Woodman, along with members of the



Civil service mariner Boatswain Ernest Baker removes bunting from rescue/salvage ship USS Safeguard, unveiling Military Sealift Command's distinctive stack stripes at a decommissioning ceremony in Japan, Sept. 26. The ship's designation changed to 'USNS' during the ceremony when the ship transferred to the MSC fleet.

deck department, climbed USNS Safeguard's brow and manned the rail as the transfer ceremony came to an end.

During the 22 years Safeguard supported the Navy as a commissioned ship, the vessel completed nine Republic of Korea Navy salvage exercises and five Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training/Western Pacific deployments.

Among the ship's milestones, Safeguard completed the first salvage exercise between the U.S. and Indian navies in 2005, which salvaged a Seahawk air-

craft – undiscovered for at least 30 years – in 165 feet of water.

USS Safeguard was crewed by 110 Navy personnel during the more than two decades of Navy service. MSC's 26 civil service mariners have relieved them – freeing the uniformed sailors for critical jobs in the combatant fleet.

When the ship's modifications are finished over the next two months, Safeguard will begin a training phase for the civil service mariner crew and the mobile diving and salvage unit that will embark. The training will test all

of the ship's capabilities, including freeing grounded ships, off-ship fire fighting, heavy lift operations, towing, and diving and salvage.

Safeguard will remain in Sasebo and will have the same missions and operational capabilities. These missions will support the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet.

The civil service crew will be complemented by a four-person military detachment of Navy sailors for communications support and up to 20 Navy divers as the mission requires.

MSC officer receives Bronze Star for reducing IED threat to soldiers

By Rosemary Heiss
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command lieutenant received a Bronze Star Medal Oct. 1 for helping reduce the threat of improvised explosive devices for U.S. Army soldiers near Tikrit, Iraq.

Lt. Perry A. "Pete" Summers, a strategic plans and special projects officer for MSC, served as an individual augmentee in a Navy squadron designed to aid the Army from March 2006 to March 2007. During that time, he applied his expertise in electronic warfare to the combat environment in Iraq where radio-controlled IEDs have become a top threat.

"His contributions saved the lives of my soldiers," said Army Lt. Col. W.H. Adams, commander of the 134th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, one of the two battalions Summers supported with hardware and training.

Because of Summers' initiative and dedication, radio-controlled IED strikes – previously 70 percent of the IED threat to the battalion – were fully eliminated during his deployment, according to Adams.

After 25 years in the Navy, Summers is an expert in electronic warfare, but advanced infantry, convoy operations and some of the other deployment-specific skills he needed were 'Greek' to him before he went to Iraq, he said.

To prepare for the year of desert duty, Summers completed a month of stateside training and a month

of in-country training that included 'greening,' or introducing Navy personnel to Army operations, weapons qualifications, tactics and convoy operations.

When Summers finally arrived at his deployed base – Forward Operating Base Speicher, less than three miles from Tikrit – he realized his training wasn't over.

"It was more than a learning curve, it was a learning cliff," he said of his first few weeks with the battalion he was supporting. "For a while, I spent 18-20 hours a day in the operations center just learning the

He also helped the Army modify tactics, techniques and procedures to avoid IED threats.

Summers returned to MSC headquarters in Washington, D.C., in March and since then has used his free time to talk to individual augmentees who will deploy to positions like the one he held.

During his briefing, he uses an anecdote to explain why their job is so important: "There's nothing like having a big, ol' Army staff sergeant who just came off a mission give you a hug and tell you, 'Your equipment saved our butts out there.'"



Military Sealift Command strategic plans and special projects officer, Navy Lt. Perry A. "Pete" Summers receives the Bronze Star Medal from Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., MSC commander, during an informal ceremony Oct. 1 in Washington, D.C.



Army culture and vernacular."

Though Summers demurs at the praise he has received as a result of the contributions he made after the training, the work he did during his deployment was significant.

He installed counter-

IED equipment in 90 percent of the 284 battalion vehicles and taught the soldiers how to use it. The equipment he installed helped soldiers identify 38 IEDs before they could pose a threat to the soldiers.