

September 2007

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

**High-tempo, scorching heat
no problem for oiler crew**



*Rappahannock refuels
coalition warships in
Persian Gulf*

*Articles and photos by
Gillian Brigham*

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INSIDE — MSC ships deliver life-sustaining supplies to Greenland • IA returns from Africa

Cross-functional teams: our newest tool

In May, I talked about my third operating axiom — everything has a cost, and every dollar counts. As I said then, the money we save can be used to upgrade the fleet and modernize our processes as well.

So, we've started looking at our cost drivers, those strategic areas of business that define our mission costs and affect our readiness. There are five primary cost drivers for MSC.

Afloat Personnel — payroll and training costs of civil service mariners. This driver comprises almost 14 percent of our annual budget, or more than \$472 million.

Sustainment — fuel, force protection, ship husbanding and port charges. At 30 percent of the budget, this costs us just over \$1 billion a year.

Maintenance, Repair and Modernization — overhauls, repairs and savings to allow fleet modernization. This costs more than \$483 million annually, or more than 14 percent of the budget.

Operating Contracts and Commercial Charters — Maritime Prepositioning Ship charters and other long-term ship charters, hiring operating companies for our government-owned, contractor-operated ships and time and voyage charters. It's our biggest budget area at almost \$1.3 billion annually, or about 35 percent.

Ashore Personnel, Infrastructure and Information Technology — primarily employee wages, salaries and benefits, building/facility upkeep costs and information technology costs. This driver only accounts for 7 percent of our budget at \$238 million, but we need to look at everything.

Process review

We're aligning with the rest of the Navy as we review, revise and improve our processes and optimize our resources against our mission requirements and costs.

However, as we began forming teams to take this deep look into our business processes, we discovered that nothing is simple. Indeed, many of the processes we began to identify crossed over from one strategic area to another. So, the concept of cross-functional teams came into being.

There are still five basic teams, but the team members possess skills in all the areas. Each team can touch the part of any process that affects their area and make recommendations to the other teams where the process crosses lines. To facilitate this cross-functional activity, the teams each meet weekly to cover their specific tasking. Then the team leaders meet to identify cross-over issues and discuss overall process improvement ideas.

I've received two briefings from the leadership team so far, and we're definitely making progress. We'll be reporting regularly to Fleet Forces Command and the Chief of Naval Operations staff in our continuing work to improve our processes and serve our customers.

Here's a look at the specifics of the five cross-functional teams.

Afloat Personnel

The Afloat Personnel Team has been looking at the length of the pipeline

for acquiring a new civil service mariner, from recruitment to actual placement afloat.

Civilian substitution for current military jobs, known as CIVSUB, is another area being examined, as well as what generates overtime and how overtime is used. The team also is examining ways to reduce the time that CIVMARs spend waiting for assignment in San Diego or Norfolk.

I anticipate issuing a policy shortly that will allow some CIVMARs to complete required computer-based training at home. The policy will allow those CIVMARs to spend a bit more time at home, rather than awaiting assignment in the pools or at a training center.

Currently, the team is preparing to execute bottom-up manning scale reviews of MSC's fleet replenishment oilers and fast combat support ships. It has been a number of years since the last comprehensive reviews. The review teams are composed of CIVMARs and subject matter experts from headquarters and Military Sealift Fleet Support Command.

Sustainment

The Sustainment Team is investigating efficient use of fuel, port and force protection costs, ship husbanding, spare parts costs and afloat supply processes.

The team is also pursuing customer education: showing our customers the cost impact of their requests so future requests will be more cost effective.

Right now, the Sustainment Team is developing information briefings on how mission costs are determined and what drives them.

The team is setting up the reporting process to collect fuel usage data from all of our government-owned ships.

The data will be used to record and report fuel expenses, compare methods of operation, determine the most economical operational and cruising speeds and see if there are techniques that can be shared to maximize fuel efficiency while still achieving the mission.

The team is working to establish the core force protection requirements for our ships, eliminating duplicate services when two or more ships are transiting or tied up at a pier together.

Other port costs are also being reviewed to establish and standardize the cost per type of ship, eliminating overcharges and saving money.

Spare parts always drive costs in terms of both storage space and money for the material and its shipping and handling.

The Sustainment Team is exploring ways to eliminate the need to stockpile by tracking spare parts availability and equipment importance or redundancy more closely, resulting in fewer spare parts on every ship.

We're also combining our excess spare parts system with the rest of the Navy, cross-feeding needed parts and supplies and saving both MSC and the rest of the Navy money.

Finally, the Sustainment Team is planning to incorporate a distance-support concept where ship supply work can be accomplished remotely ashore,

freeing up the ship's supply crew for mission duties.

Maintenance, Repair and Modernization

The Maintenance, Repair and Modernization Team is looking at how we purchase maintenance for our ships, including potential process improvements in preparing indefinite-type contracts to reduce the time to turn on urgent work.

The team is gathering data on how often our ships go into the shipyard and how long they normally stay there in an effort to save time and money and increase readiness by returning a ship to duty in a shorter time.

So far, the team has identified potential excessive time in the yard indicated by growth in work not requiring additional time.

The patterns of these time periods will allow us to contract for shorter yard periods in the future.

The team is exploring how to determine the right amount of maintenance for our equipment and how to find faster replacement for problem equipment.

The team is also exploring the use of single-source/multiple-award contracts.

Both have the potential to increase competition for our maintenance business, thereby lowering our costs.

A group from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, our British counterparts, is coming here in November to show us what they've learned about maintenance process improvement.

Contracts and Charters

The Contracts and Charters Team is looking closely at training requirements for our commercial mariners and outsourcing our layberth contracts to the U.S. Maritime Administration.

Currently, streamlined training requirements for contract mariners have been incorporated into our most recent operating contract requests for proposal and will be included in future operating contracts.

At the same time, the team is working with MARAD to identify and catalog potential barriers to outsourcing layberths, as well as to quantify actual costs so they can be analyzed for potential savings.

Ashore Personnel, Infrastructure and Information Technology

The Ashore Personnel, Infrastructure and Information Technology Team is looking at MSC's manning structure for redundancies and functions that are not aligned with our mission.

The team is also exploring infrastructure maintenance and acquisition costs and processes and the growth of information technology costs.

We know the costs will continue to grow, but we'd like to control how fast that happens wherever possible.

Currently, the team is coordinating with pre-existing efforts to oversee ashore personnel management through the Civilian Leadership Board process and information technology investments through the Capital Planning and Investment Control process.

Future paths

Through the cross-functional teams, we're looking at both one-time opportunities to save and systematic business process changes that will lead to permanent savings and more efficient service. At the same time, all of our programs and codes are looking at their own areas, independent of the cross-functional teams.

This work is about looking for ways to improve what we do. The ultimate goal is to give our people the resources they need to be effective in their jobs, increasing our customer service capabilities and leading to increased readiness for the Navy.

Transparency is key to all this, so I'll be reporting to you from time to time. As I said, we've made progress. We now have specific, reachable goals for the next three years:

—Make savings in execution of the mission in fiscal 2008.

—Generate a reduction in costs in fiscal 2009.

—Identify budget reductions in fiscal 2010.

That's where we're headed. I'm relying on all my shipmates to keep us on course and steaming full ahead.

Keep the faith!

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

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P a c e r • G o o s e • 0 7

Global sealift experts deliver through fog, ice

By Bill Cook
SEALOGLANT Public Affairs

Seven hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle and through seas covered by four feet of ice, civilian mariners aboard Military Sealift Command-chartered ships delivered 1.5 million pounds of cargo and more than 9 million gallons of fuel to Thule Air Base, Greenland, July 21 to 27.

The 521-foot ice-classed dry cargo and container ship MV American Tern and the multi-flagged, Russian-crewed, ice-classed tanker MV Marvea completed the vital resupply mission, termed Operation Pacer Goose, escorted by Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker CCGS Henry Larson.

This yearly operation takes advantage of a three-month window beginning in July when the ice around Thule thins enough to be broken up, allowing vessels to pull into port.

During the window, ships deliver a year's worth of supplies to the more than 800 people stationed at the largest and northernmost unit of eight worldwide satellite-tracking stations in the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

This year's weather was cold and foggy for all but two days of operations at the port, according to Brian Hill, a marine transportation specialist with Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic, who coordinated the off-load in Greenland.

"The job had to get done despite the conditions. Sometimes the fog was so thick you could cut it with a knife," said Hill, who worked with 22 Danish stevedores for 12-plus hours per day to complete the mission.

American Tern, which loaded its cargo in Norfolk, Va., carried 40-foot containers, flat racks, refrigerated units, three tank trucks, a bulldozer,



Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Marie L. Meihls

A thick fog blankets Military Sealift Command-chartered dry cargo and container ship MV American Tern, piersonside during an off-load of about 1.5 million pounds of cargo in Thule, Greenland, July 21 to 27.

break-bulk cargo and other general cargo.

The supplies provide the air base with dry goods, commissary and base exchange supplies, vehicles, medical

supplies, and sensitive satellite and radar equipment.

"As soon as American Tern tied up, it was off-loading cargo within 30 minutes," Hill noted. "The ship's

cranes were lifting containers from the ship to waiting trucks while we were simultaneously getting the tanker positioned. This was teamwork at its best."

Once the ship was off-loaded, it was reloaded with the non-repairable equipment, excess vehicles, and hazardous and solid waste produced during the previous year for disposal or reuse when the ship returned to Norfolk.

Because the pier could only accommodate one ship due to length and water depth, Marvea was anchored 50 feet from the pier. Both anchors held the bow in place and four sets of lines held the stern while fuel was pumped from the ship to land through hoses.

"It was extremely challenging, but we made it happen," said Hill.

Marvea delivered 8.8 million gallons of JP-8 diesel fuel and 80,000 gallons of unleaded fuel, which will be used by all of Thule's operating systems, from vehicles to generators to the heating plant. The base relies primarily on JP-8 to provide electrical power and heating.

The annual operation to resupply Thule began in 1952 using U.S. Navy combatant ships to get the goods to and from the base. In 1969, MSC took over the role.

The closest habitation to Thule is the Inuit village of Qaanaaq, 75 miles northwest of the base with a population of about 640 people. The rest of the desolate landscape is filled with ice caps and miles of rock.

"Remember, Thule is 500 miles too far north to see the Northern Lights, but on the few occasions they do see them, they are called the 'Southern Lights,'" Hill mused. "That should give some idea of how alien the climate can be in Greenland."

SEALOGFE officer improves life for East Africans

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

In late 2006, a Sealift Logistics Command Far East officer traded in his khakis for desert cammies, underwent two weeks of intensive training at a U.S. Army camp and, three days later, touched down on a dusty airfield in the Republic of Djibouti.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mike Johnson, SEALOGFE logistics officer, just returned from a six-month deployment as an individual augmentee in Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonier near Djibouti's airport.

Though the primary mission of the task force is to detect, disrupt and ultimately defeat terrorists in Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Yemen, Johnson wasn't running combat patrols. Instead, the logistics officer spent most of his deployment winning the hearts and minds of the local population.

"We sought out ways to fund projects for local communities," said Johnson, who was one of more than 40 Navy individual augmentees. "We helped them drill wells for fresh water, make renovations to schools and clinics, and make improvements to bridges and roads." Johnson also taught English to local Djiboutians and volunteered at a local orphanage. According to Johnson, teams also conducted bilateral training with host-nation military forces.

To prepare himself for unique mission requirements and potential danger, Johnson attended pre-

deployment training at Camp McGrady in South Carolina six weeks after he reported to SEALOGFE in October and just before heading to Djibouti. During the training, he learned desert survival techniques and qualified as a marksman with an M-9 before deploying.

"Sailors took a crash course to learn to be soldiers, but our primary mission was to promote regional peace and security in the area," said Johnson.

Johnson, who began his work in Africa as a logistics officer supporting work in Ethiopia, saw his duties grow to include the countries of Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Comoros Islands, Djibouti and Yemen, serving the needs of the countries' poor in addition to providing support for the military.

"When we arrived in a local village, children would rush up to our vehicle asking for food, water or anything we could spare. Once out of the vehicle, they would swarm around us. We recognized that these were very poor people," said Johnson.

He often traveled for hours through potentially hostile areas — in SUVs or minivans with armed escorts — to pay for host-nation construction and renovation projects by Navy Seabees.

As a logistics officer, Johnson's job was to be a lifeline to troops in the field — providing food,



U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Tahmika Jackson

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mike Johnson, (right) Sealift Logistics Command Far East's logistics officer, talks with locals from the Ngorro tribe in Tanzania.

water, transportation and money to pay for local contractors.

Though Johnson's living accommodations were modest — an 8-foot by 8-foot dedicated space in a tent with make-shift wooden walls — he said he would like to go back again.

"I hope to return one day to see how much the people have progressed," he said. "I think we are making a real impact in the daily lives of many people in these countries."

R

Rappahannock crew thrives on

It's 9 p.m., 40 miles off the coast of Iraq. A coalition warship cuts quickly through the ocean under a night sky thick with humidity and the light of a thousand stars.

Aboard USNS Rappahannock, civil service Capt. Robert Seabrook and Chief Mate Sheila Maude stand on the bridge wing, radios in hand, sizing up the ship's silent approach.

On the deck below, Cargo Mate Julien Pantin directs traffic, handing out gear, checking equipment and giving orders to the crew.

The Australian frigate HMAS Anzac breaks away from its normal duties patrolling the waters near Iraq's oil fields for a late-night refueling courtesy of Rappahannock, the U.S. 5th Fleet duty oiler, responsible for at-sea replenishment of the region's U.S. Navy and coalition ships.

As Anzac pulls alongside the 677-foot tanker, Rappahannock's crew fires shot lines rigged with glow-in-the-dark weights over to Anzac's deck. The shot falls short, and they try again, re-gauging their aim in the darkness. The shot lines make it over this time.

Two hours later, the fueling is done, and the pumping hoses snake back across the lines to the rigs on Rappahannock's deck.

As the frigate breaks away from Rappahannock, an AC/DC song blasts out of Anzac's speakers. The captain, Maude and the other watchstanders on the bridge rock along to the song as it signals the close of their 16-hour day. One by one, they head below deck. The music echoes across the ship's wake as it sails into the night.

August in the Persian Gulf is sweltering. On any given day, it's easily 106 degrees. Step outside, and the fierce and unrelenting heat hits like a furnace blast. Rappahannock is in its third month of deployment to the Middle East, and the crew is learning to live with these punishing conditions as they work around the clock to support military operations.

About 45 U.S. and coalition ships operate in the U.S. 5th Fleet area on a daily basis. These warships are primarily involved in conducting maritime security operations, complementing the Gulf countries' counter-terrorism activities. The day-to-day duties of these ships include pa-

trolling 2.5 million square miles of international waters; assisting mariners in distress; carrying out visit, board, search and seizure operations; and protecting key infrastructure in the Northern Persian Gulf including Iraqi oil terminals.

In order to support the myriad of ships and missions being carried out in the region, Rappahannock has a packed schedule sailing up and down the Gulf, keeping the vessels operational.

"We'd rather be busy," said Seabrook about his ship's workhorse mentality.

Seabrook is a 1981 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy who has been sailing as master aboard MSC ships for about 15 years. From fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl where he escorted heavy-lift ship MV Blue Marlin as it carried the crippled USS Cole back to the United States to being at the helm of fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe as one of the first on-scene responders to the December 2004 tsunami that devastated Indonesia, Seabrook is a veteran of high-tempo military operations and a man dedicated to mission.

The 81-member crew aboard Rappahannock shares Seabrook's enthusiasm and professionalism.

Chief Engineer Girma Ayele is one of Rappahannock's plank owners, part of the ship's inaugural crew when it was delivered to MSC in 1995. He runs a tight shop in the engine room, and he's a stickler for perfection.

"You have to be well maintained coming out here," he said. "The temperature of the ocean water is 98 de-



Kidnapped at sea, wounded in combat...

...No adversity too great for civil service mariner

Julien Pantin did not choose a life at sea. He was shanghaied into it — literally. At age 18, he was running the streets of his native Trinidad and Tobago, a poor kid looking for ways to make a quick buck.

One night Pantin and two of his friends were stopped on the docks and offered cash for an hour's work delivering supplies to a ship anchored off the coast. When they arrived at the ship, the crew invited them aboard for a drink.

They spent a couple hours carousing before they realized the ship had pulled anchor and was making a getaway.

"The captain told us to get to work or he'd put us in chains," said Pantin. "So we got to work. I was sick for the first five days, but by the time we got to South Africa weeks later, I was a full-blooded seaman."

Pantin's two friends escaped the ship in Cape Town and rounded up some authorities to rescue him. But the young man who was seeing a world outside of his tiny island home for the first time decided to stay with his captors. When the authorities came to rescue him, he lied and told them he was part of the original crew — anything to stay at sea.

More than four years, countless ports and a handful of ships later, his life took another dramatic turn when Pantin took a vacation to visit his sister in New York.

The day after he arrived, he was walking around Queens and saw a string of military recruiting offices on a street corner.

"There were signs for Army, Navy and Air Force, and I just went into the first door and sat down among a bunch of guys," he said. "A man in uniform walked in and told us all to stand up and raise our right hand. I didn't really realize what was going on, but five minutes later, I was in the Army. That afternoon, I was on a bus to Jacksonville, Florida."

Pantin was unfazed by the split-second, 180-degree turn his life had taken. After all, the first time he stumbled into a new life he knew nothing about, it turned out pretty well.

"I was a naïve 23-year old, and it all happened so fast. I thought, 'heck, I'm in this situation now. I might as well enjoy it.'"

Little did he know, in seven months he would find himself fighting in the jungles of Cambodia at the height of the Vietnam War. He was innocent no more.

"I got to be a man pretty fast," he said. Fourteen months later, he was sent back to the United States after surviving a rocket-propelled grenade attack during a jungle battle, for which he was also awarded a Bronze Star.

Pantin spent two years in and out of the Manhattan Veteran's hospital, recovering from his injuries. It was this hospital that referred him to Military Sealift Command when he was well enough to work again.

"MSC hired me as an able seaman in 1975," said Pantin. "The money was good, but I had a family and wanted more. I decided to become a mate. I thought, 'how hard could it be?'"

So, I spent \$300 on books and signed up for a class at the Seaman's Institute of New York."

The class was not exactly what Pantin expected.

"I stopped going to school when I was 13. That's just the way things were in my country. It was so poor you had to get out and work," he said.

"So, I could barely read or do equations. When I sat down in this class and heard them talking about sines, cosines, tangents and all this trigonometry stuff, I thought they were speaking another language. I was so ashamed that I snuck out during the first coffee break."

That shame was quickly replaced with determination. Pantin went back to sea but used every spare minute of his time aboard ship to study.

"I taught myself to read, to write and to do math. I studied everything you needed to know to be a mate. Three years later, I went back to that class, took the mate's exam and passed."

Now, Pantin is USNS Rappahannock's cargo mate and a 32-year veteran of MSC. He's unashamed of his love of the organization and of his belief that he was destined to be a part of it.

"MSC is a family. Sometime it's good, sometimes it's bad, but it always takes care of you. I was a man with nothing, and MSC put my kids through college and put several houses in my hands," he said. "Everything in my life, the whole series of things that happened, it was all just to get me here where I am today. My family and I have everything we ever wanted. I might as well be a millionaire."



Julien Pantin
USNS Rappahannock
cargo mate

high-stakes, high-tempo missions

grees. Down in the engine room things are hot. Everything out here is pushed to the max – our air conditioning, our engines, everything.”

Even Rappahannock’s new crew members are inspired by the mission and by their co-workers aboard ship.

Utilityman Lynn Graham signed on as a civil service mariner with MSC in March 2006, egged on by a cousin who had been sailing aboard MSC ships for years. Prior to joining, she worked as a delivery specialist at Sears. Graham doesn’t miss it.

“I want to make this my career, absolutely,” she said. “Rappahannock is my first ship, and I love it. I’m glad to make it my first home at sea. We serve each other well.”

Rappahannock’s refueling of Anzac came in the middle of a busy five-day underway period, during which time the oiler resupplied eight ships, including USS Milius, USS Mount Rushmore, USS Bonhomme Richard, USS Denver, USS Chung-Hoon, HMS Enterprise and HMS Richmond, transferring 1 million gallons of fuel and 321 pallets of cargo.

Though it may sound otherworldly to most, for Rappahannock, sailing past fire-spitting oil platforms on the southern tip of Iraq while simultaneously pumping fuel to warships steaming along both sides is just another day at the office. And the crew wouldn’t have it any other way.

“We’re out here to support the fleet,” said Seabrook, embodying the gung-ho spirit that characterizes the ship. “We just want to go for it.”

Center spread: Utilityman Lynn Graham awaits flight quarters to be called as dock landing ship USS Mount Rushmore pulls alongside MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock for refueling July 30. During the operation, Rappahannock’s crew also delivered supplies to Rushmore, as helicopters transferred palletized cargo from the oiler to the warship.

Cover: A helicopter from USS Bonhomme Richard picks up cargo from USNS Rappahannock’s flight deck during a vertical replenishment operation.



HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command strategic planning specialist, **David Hatcher**, was selected in July for the Executive Leadership Development Program. Each year the highly competitive program accepts about 50 Department of Defense employees who exhibit outstanding leadership potential, initiative, professional excellence, community involvement, a commitment to public service and integrity.

Hatcher will participate in program activities — such as one-week deployments each month and high-level briefings on military issues — for a year beginning in September.

MSC welcomes **Chief Master at Arms Derek Holman**, force protection; **Paul Kang** and **Leland McNabb**, contracts and business manage-

ment; **Bianca Young**, **David Mincey** and **King Merendino**, maritime forces and manpower management; **Andrew Traugh**, engineering; **David Bassett**, operations and plans; and **Sara Landry**, Special Mission Program.

The command bids farewell to the following summer interns: **John Pedro**, public affairs; **Nicole Young** and **TaQuasha Wallace**, maritime forces and manpower management; **Christopher Adams**, **Jake Bauer**, **William Bertholf**, **Raymond Boehling**, **Janelle Boncal**, **Andrej Cerni**, **James Lambeth**, **Thong Nguyen**, **Daniel Ross**, **Robert Sweeney** and **Justin Wesselhoft**, engineering; and **Breanne Mabe**, contracts and business management.

COMPASS • HEADING

Navy **Capt. George Teufel**, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's acting chief of staff, retired July 12. Navy **Capt. Anthony Krueger** is the new chief of staff.

Navy **Cmdr. John Eckardt**, commander, MSFSC Ship Support Unit Guam, relinquished command to Navy **Cmdr. Delbert Yordy**. The guest speaker at the ceremony was Navy **Capt. Robert Wray Jr.**, who will report as deputy commander of Military Sealift Command in October.

Eckardt heads to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces National Defense University in Washington, D.C. Yordy recently served as operations officer at the Navy's Commander Task Force 53 in Bahrain.

In Eckardt's farewell message, he wrote, "It has been a distinct honor and pleasure to work for and with all of

you in support of our MSC ships and CIVMARs at sea."

Rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor completed a rigorous material and operational inspection in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in July.

MSFSC welcomed **Chief Engineer Raymond Blanchet** to the headquarters staff and **Claudio Azzaro** and **Dave Allen** to class manager positions in July.

MSFSC bids farewell to the following mariners as they retire: **Chief Engineer William Gibson**, **Engine Utilityman Edward Criss**, **Wiper Moshen El-Kayfe**, **Chief Steward Robert Las-trap**, **Utilityman Shirley Packard**, **Engine Utilityman Gloria Thornton**, **Cargo Boatswain Richard Collins**, **Chief Cook Eduardo Medina**, **Wiper Julio Tapia**, **Boatswain's Mate Daniel Turner** and **Assistant Damage Control Officer Harrison Williams**.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Despite their ship's high operational tempo, three junior Navy officers aboard combat stores ship USNS Niagara Falls earned their Surface Warfare Supply Corps Officer pin: **Lt. j.g. Garrett Stone**, **Lt. j.g. Dustin Freeman** and **Ensign Enrique Asuncion**. Stone qualified in April, while Freeman and Asuncion qualified in June and July, respectively.

Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., commander, Military Sealift Command, visited the Far East, July 28 to Aug. 3, making special calls on MSC personnel at ship and shore units, as

well as several U.S. and foreign officials in the region.

Reilly visited fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl and was hosted by civil service master **Capt. Larry Carley**.

Civil service master **Capt. Dan LaPorte** and the crew of combat stores ship USNS Niagara Falls also hosted Reilly. The next day, the ship conducted more than 500 lifts of fleet cargo to fast combat support ship USNS Rainier in less than three hours.

In addition, Niagara Falls hosted Singapore naval officers participating in Co-

operation Afloat Readiness and Training 2007, a series of maritime training exercises between the United States and six Southeast Asia nations designed to build relationships and enhance the operational readiness of the participating forces.

Sealift Logistics Command, Far East commander Navy **Capt. Susan Dunlap** hosted the command's second commanders/commanding officer conference.

Navy **Capt. Ulysses Zalamea**, commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three; Navy **Capt. Scott Anderson**, commander, Maritime Prepositioning Two; Navy **Cmdr. Ron Oswald**, commanding officer, MSCO Korea; Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Greg Haynes**, commanding officer, MSCO Diego

Garcia; and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Alexander Soe**, commanding officer, MSCO Okinawa each presented the admiral with their respective command briefs. Reilly also held an all-hands call with the SEALOGFE staff.

The admiral also toured the nearby Sembawang Shipyard, led by Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Quentin Burns**, commanding officer, Ship Support Unit Singapore and port engineer **B.J. Goines**. Sembawang shipyard provides repairs to numerous MSC ships each year.

SEALOGFE welcomed boarding officer **Boatswain's Chief Gary Bruder** to the command. Bruder's arrival brought SEALOGFE to its full staff of 23.



Military personnel and civil service mariners from combat stores ship USNS Niagara Falls helped restore a basketball court at the St. Clare School for Special Education in Singapore in July. The school for autistic and special needs children opened Aug. 1. The team joined hands with the school to sweep and trim grass on and around the court to make it playable for the new school year.

Since it was the rainy season, the team was engulfed in several downpours which made work challenging but not impossible, according to the ship's stock control officer Navy Lt. j.g. Garrett Stone. Covered with ponchos made from plastic trash bags, the crew worked hard and enjoyed themselves knowing that their work would benefit the children of the St. Clare School.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command fast combat support ships USNS Bridge and USNS Rainier and combat stores ship USNS Concord departed the U.S. 5th Fleet operating area following successful deployments in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the global war on terrorism and maritime security operations.

The ships provided support to carrier strike groups USS John C. Stennis and USS Nimitz as well as expeditionary strike group USS Bonhomme Richard.

The flexibility that the MSC ships demonstrated was critical to their support of the many short-fused scheduling changes, which supported anti-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia.

Bridge conducted 97 underway replenishments and 22 port replenishments; transferred more than 33.6 million gallons of fuel; and delivered more than 19,300 pallets of mission-essential cargo, food and supplies.

Rainier conducted 62 underway replenishments and 10 port replenishments; transferred more than 16.3 million gallons of fuel; moved 32 passengers; and delivered more than 5,165 pallets of mission-essential cargo, food and supplies.

Concord conducted 57 underway replenishments and 104 port replenishments; transferred more than 192 thousand gallons of fuel; moved 83 passengers; and delivered more than 5,817 pallets of mission-essential cargo, food and supplies.

Sealift Logistics Command Central welcomes dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark and fast combat support ship USNS Supply to U.S. 5th Fleet.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic staff members sent five boxes of donated clothes, school supplies, toys and candy to a reserve unit in Afghanistan that requested donations in June. The boxes were sent in July and will be distributed to needy children around Afghanistan.

John Gregov, SEALOGLANT representative in Port Canaveral, Fla., received an award of appreciation in August from the U.S. Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command office there.

Gregov was lauded by SDDC's Army Lt. Col. Manuel Meno for providing outstand-

ing support and cooperation between the two offices.

A 65-foot Naval Expeditionary Combat Command diving boat was loaded aboard large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Seay in Norfolk, Va., and transported to Hawaii.

Tom D'Agostino, SEALOGLANT representative in Charleston, S.C., arranged for the off-load and storage of Navy mobile information system equipment that belongs to Military Sealift Command's Special Mission Program. The equipment was stored in Charleston at no cost to the government.



U.S. Navy photo by civil service master Capt. Robert Lee

MSC tanker rescues 13

While in the Gulf of Mexico Aug. 2, Military Sealift Command tanker USNS Lawrence H. Gianella rescued 13 Cubans adrift in a small boat after crew members aboard Gianella spotted the craft and its occupants signaling distress. The nine men and four women who were rescued appeared to be in good health despite some minor medical needs. They were given warm clothes, water and food. The rescued Cubans had been at sea for 13 days and ran out of water after three days, when unexpected storms and other problems interfered with their plans to sail to the Yucatan Peninsula. The Gianella crew transferred the Cubans to the U.S. Coast Guard.

EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command-chartered cargo ship CEC Endeavor delivered U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion equipment to the West African island nation of Sao Tome and Principe, July 13.

This equipment, including forklifts and construction supplies, is being used for two building projects being conducted by Navy Seabees deployed to the region, members of NMCB 133 and Underwater Construction Team One.

CEC Endeavor loaded the Seabee equipment in Rota, Spain, June 30, before making the two-week transit to Africa's Gulf of Guinea region.

The equipment, delivered by Endeavor, is being used to renovate the

boat ramp at the city of Sao Tome's coast guard base. At the time, the base's only boat ramp was unable to launch patrol boats due to the ramp's erosion and shallow slope into the water. During the three-month project, the Seabees will widen and steepen the slope of the ramp, enabling the Coast Guard to once again launch patrol boats from their base. While in Sao Tome, the Seabees will also build a guard house for the base.

Both building projects are aimed at strengthening Sao Tome and Principe's ability to contribute to maritime security and safety in the region. Increasing regional maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is one of the U.S. Navy's top

priorities in their growing engagement with Africa.

"MSC ships are a vital piece of the U.S. Navy's ongoing mission in Africa," said Navy **Capt. Nick Holman**, commander of Sealift Logistics Command Europe and Commander Task Force 63, who oversees logistics in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. "Every piece of equipment or gallon of fuel our ships deliver contributes to the greater work of establishing freedom and security on the seas around Africa and elsewhere in the world."

Congratulations to MSC's Rotterdam (Europe) port representative, **Joe Guivas**, who received a commendation letter from Army Col. Janet Cobb, commander, 598th Transportation Terminal Group, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. The colonel noted that Guivas' efforts during a load

of Army Stryker vehicles to large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez, was critical to maintaining the schedule of the "high-profile" deployment of the vehicles. "He is one of your best," Cobb said.

SEALOGEUR's front office says good-bye to **Beth Johnson**, personnel and travel officer. The operations department bids farewell to Navy **Lt. Ashley Pankop**, who returns stateside to attend department head school before reporting aboard guided missile destroyer USS Gonzalez as chief engineer.

Ship Support Unit Naples welcomes comptroller **Sharon Curtis**, who reports to the command from MSC headquarters in Washington, D.C.

SEALOGEUR also welcomes **Marsha Neely**, personnel and travel officer and **Paul Augustine**, force protection assistant.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

The third ship of the new dry cargo/ammunition ship class was delivered to Military Sealift Command, July 27. In a ceremony held at NASSCO Shipyard, San Diego, USNS Alan Shepard was welcomed into the MSC fleet.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser spent most of July as the Southern California duty oiler in support of U.S. Navy ships operating in the area. The ship embarked 12 maritime apprentices from Mar Vista High School in Imperial Beach, Calif., a school that MSC partners with encouraging students to consider seagoing careers — particularly with MSC.

The apprentices were aboard to gain U.S. Coast Guard ordinary seaman and wiper qualifications and to evaluate their motivation for employment in the U.S. merchant marine.

The apprentices were transferred to fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon, the Southern California duty oiler that relieved Kaiser.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson spent the beginning of July in Hawaii for in-port maintenance and then got underway to provide logistics support for ships in the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet.

Fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux began July underway for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, with the decommissioned frigate ex-Knox in tow. In the middle of the month, Sioux rendezvoused with fleet ocean tug USNS Navajo off Oahu, Hawaii, and passed the tow. Sioux entered port in Pearl Harbor to conduct a pre-tow inspection and, after a five-day in-port period, got underway for Guam with the decommissioned cruiser ex-Jouett in tow. Both ex-Navy hulks were scheduled for use as surface targets as part of Exercise Valiant Shield 2007, to be sunk about 130 miles off the coast of Guam.

Rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor arrived in Pearl Harbor the third week of July. The ship spent the remainder of the month there obtaining certification for its divers' life support equipment and helo deck and loading ammunition for follow-on operations in support of mobile diving teams.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe arrived in Pearl Harbor in late July for a maintenance period.

Ammunition ship USNS Flint began July in Todd Shipyard Seattle, then loaded ammunition at Naval Magazine Indian Island, Wash., and got underway

to shuttle ammunition to the 7th Fleet area of operations.

Navigation test support ship USNS Waters was underway in the U.S. Navy's 3rd Fleet operations area and in-port in Port Hueneme, Calif., in support of sponsor navigation subsystem testing.

Roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cape Henry entered the 3rd Fleet's operations area from 7th Fleet in July and arrived in San Diego to off-load two Mark V small boats and retrograde cargo from operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Upon completion of the off-load, the ship returned to reduced operating status in Alameda, Calif.

MSC-chartered container and roll-on/roll-off ship MV Global Patriot returned from the 7th Fleet operations area to Naval Magazine Indian Island in July to off-load turbo containerized ammunition distribution systems.

Modular cargo delivery systems ship SS Cape Gibson was activated in Alameda in July to support Cargo Afloat Rig Team training in the Southern California operations area. During the period of the ship's activation, Cape Gibson conducted connected and vertical replenishment operations with several 3rd Fleet ships. In addition, the ship served as a platform for security training and for testing of replenishment rigs aboard amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans.

Sealift Logistics Command Pacific congratulates **Information Systems Technician 1st Class Denise Brannen** on her selection to chief petty officer.

SEALOGPAC welcomed **Information Systems Technician 3rd Class Kent Boyd**, USNS Rainier; **Operations Specialist 3rd Class Latasha Steele**, USNS San Jose; **Information Systems Technician 1st Class Starci Tobin**, USNS Salvor; **Chief Information Systems Technician Ernest Adams**, USNS Navajo; **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Nahyira Soriano**, USNS Richard E. Byrd; **Storekeeper 1st Class Trenda Fletcher**, USNS Niagara Falls; **Chief Operations Specialist Gerald Stanker**, USNS Tippecanoe; **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Bridgette Jackson**, USNS Richard E. Byrd; **Chief Information Systems Technician Walter Wall**, USNS Concord; and **Ensign Rayfield Golden**, USNS Concord.

The command bid farewell to **Storekeeper 2nd Class Angela Corveu**, who left USNS Bridge and reported to USS Emory S. Land; **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Rozmond Bellard**, who transferred from USNS Shasta to USS Russell; and **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Kenya William** from USNS Kiska, who reported as a student to Fleet Combat Training Center Pacific in San Diego.

Ammo ship delivers small-scale explosives

By Rosemary Heiss
MSC Public Affairs



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Maebel Tinoko

Civil service Capt. Robert C. Holley, master of MSC ammunition ship USNS Flint, checks the inventory list of popcorn before it is loaded aboard at Naval Magazine Indian Island, Wash., in July.

A Military Sealift Command ship that routinely carries ordnance to Navy ships delivered a very different type of explosive cargo in July.

Ammunition ship USNS Flint distributed 250,000 bags of donated microwaveable popcorn.

The 564-foot Flint, which supports the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet, supplied the popcorn to Navy ships at sea and passed a portion of its edible cargo to other MSC ships that will help deliver it to thousands of Sailors and Marines aboard other Navy ships around the world. Termed Operation Popcorn, delivery of 3,000 cases of the buttery treat — in addition to already-planned ammunition — was made by Flint's civil service mariners.

The donation was a result of a coordinated effort between the Boy Scouts of America, Support Our Troops organiza-

tion and Weaver Popcorn Co., which gave the \$70,000 worth of popcorn for Sailors and Marines serving far from home.

"Our ship received 82 pallets of microwave popcorn," said civil service Capt. Robert C. Holley, master of Flint. "I think it is great to be part of a project this huge."

The ammunition and cases of butter, butter light and kettle corn popcorn were loaded at Naval Magazine Indian Island, Wash.

Each year, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts across America sell popcorn door to door to raise money for their organizations, and this year they provided a portion of their donations to support the military service members.

"I think it is excellent to see what the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts of America are doing for us. We appreciate their great efforts to continue to support our troops," said Chief Operations Specialist William Small, assigned to Flint.

SEALOGCENT changes leadership

By Gillian Brigham
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

The command responsible for providing air and sea logistics to the U.S. Navy in the Middle East changed leadership at U.S. Naval Forces Central Command headquarters in Manama, Bahrain July 19.

Navy Capt. Anthony Dropp assumed command of Sealift Logistics Command Central from outgoing commodore Navy Capt. Glen Sears II.

The SEALOGCENT commander also serves as commander of Navy's Commander Task Force 53 and Commander Logistics Forces U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

SEALOGCENT provides at-sea logistics and strategic sealift services to U.S. and coalition troops operating throughout the U.S. Central Command theater.

In their strategic sealift capacity, the command is responsible for overseeing the delivery of nearly 90 percent of all cargo being used by U.S. troops operating in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East. The commander of SEALOGCENT, wearing his other hats, is also responsible for coordinating the air and sea delivery of people, parts, fuel, ammunition and mail to a fleet of 40-plus U.S. and coalition ships operating in the Middle East.

During Sears' year-long tenure as commodore, the command oversaw the distribution of more than 100 million gallons of fuel to ships in theater as well as nearly 500 million gallons of fuel to Department of

Defense distribution depots. The command also supported 1,100 air logistics missions and managed a daily average of 12 ships and eight aircraft in theater.

"The last year has been inspiring and humbling. I have been privileged to observe from the deck plate and the waterfront a logistics and sealift capability that no other nation can match," said Sears. "Several times in the last year the world was watching as events unfolded in this region. Each time, the world saw that our Navy was there. Our Navy was there because MSC ships made it happen. It has been a professional highlight and a personal honor to be associated with the mariners, Sailors and civilians who support MSC's efforts at the tip of the spear."

Sears will attend the National War College in Washington, D.C.

Dropp reported to SEALOGCENT from the office of the chief of naval operations, where he served as the future ships branch head and then as the executive assistant to the director of warfare integration and assessments.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Aaron Pineda

Navy Capt. Anthony Dropp, incoming commander of Sealift Logistics Command Central, salutes Navy Capt. Glen Sears II, the command's outgoing commander, during the change of command ceremony in Bahrain, July 19.

"I am thrilled to join the Military Sealift Command team," said Dropp. "As a career naval surface warfare officer I know only too well the critical importance logistics has on enabling our Navy's warfighting commanders to effectively and decisively conduct operations wherever and whenever required."

Comfort's CIVMARs score goodwill on basketball court

By Laura Seal
MSC Public Affairs

Civil service mariners from Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort befriended locals in Acajutla, El Salvador, in July over a few evening games of pick-up basketball.

Getting a little downtime for a game of basketball hasn't always been easy for MSC's civil service mariners on this deployment — given the hectic pace of their 24/7 responsibilities like operating the mammoth ship in and out of ports, shuttling patients and medical staff back and forth between ship and shore, and maintaining a myriad of shipboard systems that provide water, electricity, heating, ventilating, air conditioning and communications to support the sophisticated hospital equipment aboard the ship, as well as the operation of the entire ship.

The unusual opportunity for rest and relaxation arose while the ship was in port in Acajutla conducting humanitarian operations as part of a four-



Photo by Laura Seal

Children gather at a park in El Salvador to watch one of the basketball games between Comfort's civil service mariners and the locals.

month mission to Latin America and the Caribbean.

On Comfort's second evening in port, a group of about 10 CIVMARs went to a park near the ship to play basketball, and rather than just play each other, struck up a game with some of the locals.

"We were over there playing ball. Then some of the locals called us over, and we started playing with them," said Boatswain's Mate William Ramos, who speaks Spanish and served as a translator.

"Sunday, our second night playing, it was so crowded. There were at least 100 people in and around the park watching us play and having fun with us," said Ramos. "At first they were cheering for their own people, but after the third game, they started cheering for us, too." On their last night playing, one young boy even brought a small American flag.

Some of the people in the crowd had been treated on the hospital ship and recognized the crew. The CIVMARs took sports drinks, water, snacks and even a soccer ball to share with the other players and the many children who gathered to watch the games.

Three of the CIVMARs even gave some of their expensive athletic shoes away to their new friends. "I just really like these people," said ordinary seaman John Rogers, who gave a pair of Air Jordan tennis shoes to one of the players.