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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND



MSC delivers mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles

LMSRs carried more than 350 MRAPs to the Middle East to protect U.S. troops from improvised explosive devices.

*Article and photos
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INSIDE — Fast combat support ship aids in Persian Gulf rescue

Force protection vital to MSC mission

Way back in 1997, Vice Adm. Jim Perkins, then commander of MSC, first talked about force protection. He spoke of the bombing of Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, calling it a tragic reminder that our nation's service members are threatened by terrorist acts around the world.

Army Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had recently pointed out that terrorism will continue to be a challenge for all leaders in the future.

Both of them were right on the money.

An MSC force protection working group was formed then to take a hard look at how we could better protect our people, our ships and our worldwide infrastructure from terrorist acts.

Three key issues were raised, and all three still apply. We need to supply our people, especially those afloat, with pertinent threat information for their area. We need to improve communications so all of our people, anywhere, ashore or afloat, can call for help when needed. And, we need to focus on what actions we can take "inside the lifelines" to protect ourselves when necessary.

As MSC worked on the problem, our people became more aware of the issue and, as a result, more observant whenever and wherever they were. For instance, a threat condition assessment was sent to oceanographic surveillance ship USNS Asservive as it headed for a port visit in Chinhae, Republic of Korea. The THREATCON notice said there was an elevated level of concern in that port. This led the ship's master to double the roving watch while in port. The increased awareness on the part of the crew was responsible for the roving patrol finding and chasing off an intruder who was attempting to hide aboard ship. Force protection training was beginning to pay off.

Then, in October 2000, terrorists once again proved that the unexpected can always happen as 17 crew members died in the bombing attack on USS Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen. This attack showed that ships in transit and in port were targets in and around the Middle East. And that included MSC ships.

Situational awareness became the front-line weapon in force protection for MSC. From the master down to the ordinary seaman, everyone had to be on their toes whenever in port or when approached at sea by another vessel. And crew members had to communicate anything they observed with each other so the risk could be evaluated.

On Sept. 11, 2001, we learned that everyone, everywhere, was on the front lines in the war on terrorism. Mission continuity planning became paramount. MSC had to create or update plans to continue the mission even if we were



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kelvin Surgener

A soldier scans the terrain while standing security watch in Kuwait in January. Her unit is responsible for providing anti-terrorism and force protection for Camp Patriot while deployed supporting the global war on terrorism.

denied our facilities, whether because of terrorist attack or natural disaster. Homeland security was added to our lexicon. Operational security, communications security and the old World War II phrase, "loose lips sink ships," came back into vogue. And they needed to become an important part of our daily thinking as we battled an elusive enemy.

Aboard our ships, we began upgrading perimeter hull lighting to enable our crews to better see potential danger coming at them. This, coupled with better communications so our crews could call for assistance when needed, added to our force protection capabilities.

After I arrived at MSC in 2006, we began expanding our situational awareness and disaster recovery efforts to include our employees and their families. Personal and family readiness is key to mission continuity. We need to be able to account for all our people. We urged our shore employees to have emergency procedures for their families and themselves, much as our shipboard crews do in the event of an emergency at sea.

But, some say, things have settled down to a kind of normalcy for MSC. And that's dangerous because normal routine stuff can make us lose our focus and situational awareness. Then something happens like the Strait of Hormuz incident.

Three U.S. Navy vessels took evasive actions in January after five Iranian boats buzzed the ships while they were transiting the Strait of Hormuz. While the incident only lasted about 20 minutes, the aggressive maneuvers of the Iranian boats demonstrated potentially hostile intent and could have led to them being fired upon by the U.S. ships. All this took place while the U.S. ships were operating in international waters.

Now, here's the unsettling part. USNS Pililaau, one of MSC's large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships, was scheduled to transit the Strait shortly after this incident took place. Now you can understand why force protection is such an incredibly important aspect of our lives at MSC. Our ships travel in harm's way. They have to in order to complete their missions.

I recently briefed Adm. Jonathan Greenert, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, about our work in aligning with the surface warfare enterprise and FFC. Force protection was a big part of the discussion, and Adm. Greenert wants MSC's active input on force posture and protection for the MSC fleet. He is particularly interested in observation and feedback from our ships' masters on evolving force protection concerns and issues.

The "buddy rule" aids in force protection in foreign ports. It's always good to have a buddy watching your back when you're in a strange place, especially if the force protection condition is elevated. That's force protection in action. We are obligated to implement such measures if the combat commander or Navy component commander directs buddy rule implementation in response to the force protection conditions in the port. However, we also recognize the inconvenience that these measures may create.

Force protection begins at the deck plates and is everyone's responsibility, but teamwork plays into the equation, too, and teaming with FFC works to both our advantages. That's another reason why alignment is important.

We're constantly seeking new ideas to improve the force protection capabilities aboard our ships and at our shore facilities. We're always working toward better communication and intelligence sharing up and down the chain. We're

always focused on keeping our crews, ships and cargo safe from harm. Now, more than ever, it is time to guard against complacency. The war continues, and we're in it.

Keep the faith,

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

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Arctic assists in rescue at sea

By Rosemary Heiss
MSC Public Affairs

It was a typical morning in the Persian Gulf for a Military Sealift Command combat logistics ship. Fast combat support ship USNS Arctic had connected its replenishment station lines to aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman and had begun transferring fuel and cargo to the carrier.

Arctic's two embarked MH-60 helicopters had begun a vertical replenishment. The crew on Arctic's bridge had done this hundreds of times. One of the ship's mates was monitoring the heading; another, the speed; and another, the radar.

It was just another December morning at sea – except the large dot on the radar that seemed to be moving erratically.

That erratic dot was the British-flagged petroleum carrier MV British Courage.

“Our lookouts noted a ship dead ahead, which showed no inclination to get out of the way per the international rules of the road,” said Able Seaman Thomas Epps. “I was on the bridge preparing to take the helm when we made radio contact with this apparent miscreant.”

The crew discovered that British Courage was maneuvering to recover seven mariners who were left adrift in a life raft after their dhow sank two days earlier.

“MV British Courage was doing the best she could to rescue the seamen, but the weather was making things tricky,” said Arctic master Capt. Jon Mellow.



U. S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Moore

Shipwreck survivors stand by for medical treatment on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman after being rescued at sea by helicopters from Military Sealift Command fast combat support ship USNS Arctic, Dec. 23 in the Persian Gulf. Seven mariners were recovered after their dhow sank in rough seas.

Because of the wind and rough seas, helicopters were the best way to reach the stranded mariners.

Arctic and Truman executed emergency breakaway procedures. Arctic launched a helicopter to visually observe the scene from the air. When the Arctic master received confirmation that the stranded mariners needed their help, both Arctic helicopters began rescue operations.

“The helos made quick work of [the rescue],” said Mellow.

A rescue swimmer aboard one helicopter went into the water to hoist the four Pakistani and three Indian mariners.

The men, who had been stranded without provisions in the small boat, were taken by helicopter to Truman, where they received medical care, food and water.

The next day the rescued mariners were transported to Jebel Ali in the United Arab Emirates.

“Sometimes you get bogged down in the administrative aspects of the job and think you’ve become just a floating office building,” said Mellow. “Then something like this happens, and you realize again you’re in a pretty unique profession with some admirable traditions.”

Coalition cooperation



U.S. Navy photo by Bram de Jong

Polish coalition army equipment is unloaded from Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Fisher and loaded onto cargo ship MS Geise in Germany for transport to Poland Dec. 21, 2007. The 65 pieces of Polish equipment along with 850 pieces of equipment from the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, was returning from Southwest Asia. The equipment was moved with the assistance of personnel from Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command's 950th Transportation Company.

Right: More than 200 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles sit pierside in Charleston, where Army personnel loaded them onto Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Pillilau, Dec. 12. MRAPs have effectively protected troops against armor-piercing roadside bombs.

Cover: A cargo handler in Charleston drives an MRAP up the ramp of LMSR USNS Pillilau during the Dec. 12 load.



U.S. Navy photo by Tom D'Agostino

MSC delivers life-saving

In December, Military Sealift Command joined the Herculean Department of Defense effort to protect troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan from improvised explosive devices. Large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships USNS Pillilau and USNS Seay carried more than 350 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles from Charleston to Kuwait for delivery to warfighters on the front lines. The MSC ships were responsible for two of the largest single MRAP shipments to date.

**By Rosemary Heiss
MSC Public Affairs**

It was Army Capt. Andrew Ruiz's last day patrolling the streets of Iraq at the end of a 14-month deployment. He and the six other U.S. members of his military transition team were showing their replacements the ropes.

The most important skill that Ruiz and his team needed to teach the new arrivals was how to sweep the roads for improvised explosive devices, called IEDs. These roadside bombs are responsible for a reported 70 percent of all the casualties in Iraq.

It wasn't a fun job, but Ruiz and his soldiers had gotten good at it. As they searched, they found a line of copper wire stretched across the road. They followed the wire to its end, which was buried under a mound of dirt.

This was an IED.

They carefully secured the area, and the new team got a hands-on lesson in how to identify and disable the huge threat.

Fortunately, Ruiz's team found the IED before an unsuspecting vehicle detonated it, which would have sent armor-piercing shrapnel through the vehicle, even if it were an up-armored Humvee.

The major threat and widespread use of these unsophisticated, but deadly, terrorist devices,

mobilized an effort to provide field commanders with safer vehicles than Humvees.

"We used Humvees during our deployment; we were lucky that we all returned safely," said Ruiz of his deployment with Military Transition Team 229 from December 2005 to January 2007. "As an officer responsible for soldiers' lives, luck isn't enough when there's an alternative."

MRAPs

The alternative, which is rolling into the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, is the mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle, or MRAP. The vehicles, which are heavier and larger than Humvees, are up to five times more effective against IEDs, in part because of their V-shaped hulls that help deflect the upward blast of a low-lying explosive.

There are three categories of MRAPs. Category I vehicles are designed for urban combat operations and can each transport a small number of people. Category II vehicles have multi-mission capabilities, including convoy lead, troop transport, ambulance, explosive ordnance disposal and combat engineering, and can each transport a larger number of troops. Category III vehicles perform mine and improvised-explosive-device clearance operations and explosive ordnance disposal and can each transport a smaller number of people.

In December 2007, Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships began delivering the multi-purpose, life-saving vehicles to military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan.

DOD's 2007 Delivery Goal

The large loads of MRAPs delivered by sea helped U.S. Transportation Command meet the Department of Defense goal of sending 1,500 vehicles to the Middle East by the end of 2007.

"From the beginning, we understood our transportation mission would save lives," said Army Lt. Col. John Hanson, TRANSCOM operations and plans directorate and head of the MRAP End-to-End Distribution team. "It's a team effort of U.S. TRANSCOM, its component commands and commercial partners making a huge difference in the lives of those on the front lines."

MSC was one of the three commands that helped U.S. TRANSCOM meet the goal and continues to share the objective of getting vehicles to the Middle East. The Air Force's

Army Sgt. Sean Bundy, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, searches for improvised explosive devices near Al Muradia village, Iraq, in 2007, while a controlled detonation of one of the devices happens nearby.



Salvation by sea

vehicles to Middle East

Air Mobility Command provides airlift, and the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command secures liner service on commercial cargo ships and manages loading operations at the Port of Charleston.

In February 2007, the Air Force began flying MRAPs into theater to get them there as quickly as possible, at the direction of the secretary of defense. The command uses three types of aircraft to transport MRAPs: the largest Air Force cargo aircraft, the C-5 Galaxy with a 270,000-pound load capability; the C-17 Globemaster III with a 170,000-pound capacity; and the AN-124 Condor, a Russian-built aircraft with a top payload of 331,000 pounds.

MSC Delivery

Even the largest aircraft can only carry six small MRAPs, so in November 2007, after a significant ramp-up in production of the vehicles, sealift became the most efficient means of transporting the larger shipments of MRAPs.

"In one load, ships can carry what takes almost a month to deliver by air," said Tom D'Agostino, director of ship operations in the Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic office in Charleston.

An MSC LMSR can carry 380,000 square feet of cargo — the size of eight football fields — accessible by steel-reinforced ramps between each deck to allow MRAPs to be driven aboard prior to being lashed down for transit.

"These ships were designed for just such tasks," said D'Agostino. "LMSRs are helping us put these critically needed vehicles in the warfighters' hands at the right place, at the right time, for the right price."

LMSRs were built in the 1990s after a Congressionally mandated study highlighted the need for more sealift. MSC's 19 LMSRs added 5 million square feet to U.S. cargo capacity.

LMSRs USNS Pililaa and USNS Seay, which belong to MSC's Sealift Program, cumulatively loaded more than 350 MRAPs in Charleston in December and delivered them to the Middle East in January.

The MRAPs were driven aboard via a stern ramp, into a 15.5-foot-high deck. They were lashed down with equipment capable of holding an MRAP in place in hurricane sea conditions.

"MRAPs have proven their effectiveness against explosives devices and are saving troops' lives," said Pililaa's civilian master Capt. Richard Malloy. "We are honored to be part of this mission."

Road Ahead

The DOD has contracted for more than 11,800 MRAPs to be manufactured and completed by this summer. The total acquisition objective for all services is 15,374.

"When I go back to Iraq I won't have to rely on luck," said Ruiz, who will return to the country in August for another 14-month deployment with a military transition team. "The MRAPs that MSC is shipping into theater are going to keep my men safe."

Staff writer Bill Cook, SEALOGLANT Public Affairs, contributed to this article.



"The MRAPs that MSC is shipping into theater are going to keep my men safe."

Army Capt. Andrew Ruiz

RRAP

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters staff exceeded its Combined Federal Campaign contribution goal of \$87,000 by donating or pledging more than \$91,000 to the 3,600 charities represented during the annual fund-raising drive. Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Mark Lukken**, flag secretary, was this year's campaign manager. Along with the help of his assistant manager, Navy **Storekeeper 1st Class Aaron Gilmore**, logistics, they distributed and collected contribution forms, held a silent auction, sold raffle tickets and held other fund-raising events.

According to Lukken, the campaign wouldn't have reached 105 percent of its goal without the help of the command's key workers. They are Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Dru Maclin**, flag writer; **Maureen Conlin**, administrative support center; **Sherri Jennings**, inspector general's office; **Harry Elliott**, counsel; **Sandra Graham**, public affairs; Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Shontay Bond**, Reserve programs; **Shavonda Famble** and **David Lyle**, operations and plans; **David Anderson** and **Richard Evans**, logistics; Navy **Information Systems Technician 1st Class Damien Moore**, command, control, communications and computer systems; **Bob Scofield**, engineering; **Talishia Turner**, comptroller's office; **John Quandt**, strategic planning; **Rajendra Soni**, contracts and

business management; **Sandra Ortega**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; **Donald Shelton**, Special Mission Program; **Brian Kenney**, Prepositioning Program; and **Jean Muse**, Sealift Program.

Jim George, formerly MSC's director of logistics, was promoted to Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force program manager, a position held by **Dave Martyn** until he retired Jan. 3.

Susan Roy officially became director of MSC's strategic plans office. She has been acting director since January 2007 when then-director **Chris Thayer** was promoted to director of the Sealift and Prepositioning programs.

MSC welcomes **Jake Bauer**, **Raymond Boehling** and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Frangos**, engineering; **Phillip Brannon**, **Margaret Seward** and **TaQuasha Wallace**, maritime forces and manpower management; **Marvin Hatcher**, operations and plans; **Robert McCabe** and **William Smith**, comptroller; and **Kelley Wall**, contracts and business management.

MSC bids farewell to **Cara Conlin**, counsel; **David Field**, Special Mission Program; Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Jackson**, maritime forces and manpower management; **Monica Mongold**, operations and plans; and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Kent Keller** and Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Shontay Bond**, Reserve programs.

EUROPE • NEWS

Sealift Logistics Command Europe continues to support Commander, Naval Forces Europe's inaugural African Partnership Station in the Gulf of Guinea. Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie — acting as the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet duty oiler — is providing the partnership with

much needed fuel, mail and cargo in a region with limited infrastructure ashore to support routine day-to-day U.S. operations.

SEALOGEUR bids farewell to **Al Dickerson**, marine transportation specialist. He will stay with MSC as he transfers to be its representative in Jacksonville, Fla.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark, fast combat support ship USNS Arctic, and fleet replenishment oilers USNS John Lenthall and USNS Tippecanoe continued to support USS Harry Truman carrier strike group, USS Kearsarge expeditionary strike group and a host of other U.S. and Coalition ships deployed to the 5th Fleet area of operation in December.

Fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba provided critical heavy-lift capability to mid-Atlantic Regional Mainte-

nance Center detachment Bahrain. Catawba transported four main-propulsion engines from patrol boat USS Sirocco from Jebel Ali to Bahrain, where they were shipped to California for repair.

In December 2007, SEALOGCENT coordinated seven dry cargo operations delivering 1.8 million square feet of combat equipment and four additional operations moving more than 46 million gallons of fuel in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Celebrating heritage — Black History Month

By Frank Randall
MSC Public Affairs

February is Black History Month in the United States. This year, as we celebrate the multicultural diversity of our nation, there are 40.2 million African-American citizens who comprise 13.4 percent of the U.S. population. Almost 2.5 million serve in the U.S. military. More than 10,000 own businesses with receipts of more than \$1 million annually. Altogether, African-American firms generate more than \$88 billion in revenue each year.

At MSC, African Americans constitute about 25 percent of the civil service workforce, both afloat and ashore.

Five MSC ships are named for African Americans — four Congressional Medal of Honor recipients and one famous explorer.

Medal of Honor Recipients

MV Pfc. James Anderson Jr., a Maritime Prepositioning Ship, serves the U.S. Marine Corps. The ship's namesake received the Medal of Honor for his gallantry in Vietnam. During a fierce battle with the enemy, a grenade landed near Anderson's team. With complete disre-

gard for his own personal safety, he reached out, grasped the grenade, pulled it to his chest and curled around it as it went off. Anderson's body absorbed the major force of the explosion. In this heroic act, Anderson saved his comrades from serious injury and possible death.

MV SSgt. Edward A. Carter Jr., a container ship, prepositions combat equipment for the U.S. Army. Carter



Carter

was on patrol near Speyer, Germany, in March 1945 when the tank he was riding on came under heavy bazooka and small arms fire. Carter, after being wounded five times during the battle, killed six surrounding enemies and captured two — from whom he obtained valuable information concerning the disposition of enemy troops.



Anderson

USNS Charlton, a large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship supporting Army prepositioning needs, was named after Army Sgt. Cornelius H. Charlton. Despite a severe chest wound from shrapnel in a 1951 Korea battle, Charlton charged up the crest of a hill to an entrenched enemy position. He eliminated the position and routed the enemy with his one-man attack.



Charlton



Watson

USNS Watson, another large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship supporting Army prepositioning, was named after Army Pvt. George Watson. Watson was aboard a ship in Porloch Harbor, New Guinea, in March 1943 when the ship was attacked by enemy bombers. All aboard began abandoning ship. Watson, instead of seeking to save himself, remained in the

water assisting several soldiers who could not swim to reach the safety of a raft. Although he was able to save several of his comrades, his weakened condition led to his being dragged down by the suction of the sinking ship.

Explorer

The fifth MSC ship named for an African American is oceanographic survey ship USNS Henson.



Henson

Matthew Alexander Henson, born in August 1866, was an American explorer and long-time colleague of Robert E. Peary. Among various expeditions, their most famous was a 1909 expedition that claimed to be the first to reach the geographic North Pole. Henson's skills included seamanship, mastery of the Eskimo language, sled building and sled-dog training. In 1944, Congress awarded Henson a duplicate of the silver medal given to Peary for his achievements. Henson was also honored by Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Tom D'Agostino, Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic Charleston port representative, oversaw an active schedule of cargo operations at his local port in December and January – all in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This included fuel discharged from Military Sealift Command tanker USNS Samuel L. Cobb; 150,000 square feet of cargo discharged from large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Yano; 50,000 square feet of cargo aboard LMSR USNS Pililau and more than 45,000 square feet of cargo loaded aboard LMSR USNS Seay.

The second ship in MSC's new dry cargo/ammunition class, USNS Sacagawea, got underway for its first operational deployment to the 5th Fleet area of responsibility on Dec. 11, 2007, with Capt. George McCarthy as its master. The first ship of the class, USNS Lewis and Clark, completed its first deployment in 5th Fleet and returned to Norfolk in January.

MSC combat stores ship USNS Saturn arrived in Norfolk Jan. 12 after a five-month deployment to the Southern Command area of responsibility, providing logistics support to counter-narcotics operations.

COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Executive Director **Jack Taylor** welcomes new deputy, **Fred McKenna**. McKenna returns to the deputy position, which he held as "acting deputy" before he retired as a Navy captain from the U.S. Navy after 27 years.

With McKenna's arrival, Navy **Capt. Al Woods** assumed the duties of chief of staff, and Navy **Capt. Tony Krueger** became operations officer.

Sadly, the following civil service mariners, who were actively serving aboard MSC ships, have passed away: **Engine Utilityman Keith Adams** of ammunition ship USNS Mount Baker

and **Utilityman Edward Tenhulzen** of dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea.

Fair winds and following seas to these civil service mariners as they retire: **Capt. Patrick Huetter**, **Able Seaman Ivory Mason**, **Utilityman Alphonse Hunter**, **Supply Officer William Mott**, **Boatswain Everett Mumbower**, **Electrician John Petras**, **Utilityman Norman Scarbrough**, **Yeoman/Storekeeper Robert Smith**, **Wiper Julio Tapia** and **Supply Officer Chester Weatheroy**.

For more news of MSFSC and civil service mariners, go to www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Military Sealift Command fast combat support ship USNS Rainier conducted a tiger cruise for the crew's family members Jan. 5. Families enjoyed a day at sea and a steel-beach picnic on the deck. Tiger cruises offer friends and family members

of MSC ships' crews an up-close look at how MSC ships operate and support the Navy.

Sealift Logistics Command Pacific bids fair winds and following seas to **Robert Pleas**, SEALOGPAC representative in Seattle.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Squadron commander Navy **Capt. John Arbter**, along with his staff from Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two, completed a move from MPS flagship MV Sgt. William R. Button to the squadron's alternate flagship, MV Pvt. Franklin J. Phillips, Dec. 13 at Diego Garcia.

Prepositioning ship USNS 1st Lt. Harry L. Martin's master **Capt. Gary Ford**, along with **3rd Mate Mike McFeely** and **Deck Cadet Judith Jaime**, visited Kagman Elementary School in Saipan Dec. 13 and 18. They addressed third- through fifth-grade students about life aboard ship, careers at sea, the importance of education and staying in school.

In a ceremony held Dec. 19 at Sembawang Wharves in Singapore, Sealift Logistics Command Far East chief staff officer Navy **Cmdr. Curtis Lenderman** pre-

sented plans and policy officer **Douglas Robison** with a certificate marking 20 years of service with the federal government.

Completing a special assignment with SEALOGFE, Navy **Lt. j.g. Kent Su** received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medal from Lenderman for his work with the command's logistics department from October to December 2007. Su, currently assigned at the Naval Supply Corps School in Athens, Ga., was recognized for his management of facilities upgrades as well as logistical support to the command's outposts.

Navy **Cmdr. Ron Oswald**, Military Sealift Command Office Korea's commanding officer, attended a dinner hosted by the Busan Korean-American Association, Dec. 13 — commemorating the association's first anniversary in Busan.

Under construction



U.S. Navy photo by Bill Cook

Construction continues on the headquarters complex for Military Sealift Fleet Support Command. Facility manager Marvin Mullins and his team are working to have the first of three buildings ready for occupancy by some of the more than 400 members of MSFSC's staff beginning in May. The complex will house office spaces for currently dislocated members, some of whom are in small satellite offices more than 60 miles away from their Naval Station Norfolk-based command.

In 2007, the contractors completed a number of significant milestones. They removed asbestos and lead, which were standard in construction material when the buildings were constructed more than 50 years ago. In addition to adding new roofs and replacing more than 250 windows, the front entrances have been completely revamped. They now have handicap access and climate- and security-controlled vestibules. The contractors have also added elevator shafts to the buildings, and in 2008, elevators will be installed.

With progress under Mullins' supervision, MSFSC will complete its move into the new headquarters complex this year.

MSC supports Bangladesh relief efforts

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Shawn Lane examines a Bangladeshi child's injured foot. Playfully, the USS Kearsarge Sailor pokes the child on her side and is able to garner a smile. This young girl is one of the lucky ones.

Thousands weren't so fortunate when Tropical Cyclone Sidr ripped through the South Asian nation on Nov. 15 — leaving death and destruction in its wake. The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital city, estimates the storm killed more than 3,300 people and left hundreds of thousands homeless. With 155 mph winds, Sidr is the worst cyclone to hit Bangladesh in 100 years.

In response to a request for humanitarian assistance from the Bangladesh government, Military

Sealift Command combat stores ship USNS Concord and fleet replenishment oilers USNS Walter S. Diehl and USNS John Ericsson were diverted immediately to support amphibious assault ships USS Kearsarge and USS Tarawa with the efforts.

Concord, originally scheduled to make a 10-day port visit to Singapore, loaded relief supplies on Nov. 20 and set sail the following day.

"The crew's reaction was positive, with a great deal of curiosity as to the role we would play in support of the relief operation," said Navy Cmdr. Mike Murphy, Concord's military detachment officer in charge.

U.S. military relief efforts — formally

named Operation Sea Angel — began Nov. 23, when 700 gallons of potable water were delivered to a small airfield in the town of Barisal.

All three MSC ships provided urgently needed supplies and fuel to Kearsarge and Tarawa to assist the storm-battered country and its people. The combat logistics ships provided bottled water, medical supplies and water bladders — collapsi-

ble plastic tanks that can be deployed quickly and used to distribute fresh drinking water — in addition to the fuel they provided that enabled Kearsarge and Tarawa to remain on station providing support.

Concord delivered a total of 549 pallets of provisions and cargo, and Diehl and Ericsson transferred about 2.3 million gallons of aviation and diesel fuel during the operation.

By mid-December, nearly 115 metric tons of goods, more than 14,000 gallons of water and 2,000 prescription drugs reached the Bangladeshi people.

"I have a solid group of professionals on board," said Diehl's civil service master Capt. J.W. Sergeant. "This was truly a group effort as is the case with all our missions."



U.S. Navy photo by Cmdr. Mike Murphy



U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Catherine Pace

Above: Pallets of water-storage bladders and other supplies are lifted from the deck of Military Sealift Command combat stores ship USNS Concord by an SH-60 Seahawk helicopter from USS Kearsarge in the Bay of Bengal, Dec. 7. Concord, along with MSC fleet replenishment oilers USNS John Ericsson and USNS Walter S. Diehl deployed near the coast of Bangladesh in late November and early December to support ongoing humanitarian relief operations. Bangladesh was hit by a tropical cyclone Nov. 15, which caused thousands of deaths in the impoverished South Asian nation.

Left: Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl transfers cargo and fuel to USS Kearsarge in the Bay of Bengal on Nov. 30.

Oiler conducts replenishment training with Singapore navy

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson completed a three-day underway replenishment training exercise with the Singapore navy on Jan. 12.

This was the first time the two participating Singapore frigates, RSN Steadfast and RSN Stalwart, and their crews had ever practiced underway refueling operations, as their country doesn't have a fleet oiler in its inventory.

This summer, Steadfast will conduct a refueling at sea with an MSC oiler as part of the Rim of the Pacific, or RIMPAC, multi-national naval exercise off the coast of Hawaii.

"The Singapore navy was extremely well prepared for the exercise and was very responsive," said Capt. Robert Wiley, Ericsson's civil service master.

The exercise began Jan. 10 with a series of dry runs conducted pierside at the Republic of Singapore's



U.S. Navy photo by Edward Baxter

A fuel probe from Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson attaches to Republic of Singapore navy frigate RSN Stalwart at Changi Naval Base, Jan. 10. The pierside training evolution in Singapore was a dry run before attempting an at-sea refueling.

Changi Naval Base. For these evolutions, Ericsson was positioned directly across the concrete pier from Stalwart. With civil service mariners from Ericsson's crew aboard the frigate to assist, Stalwart's crew practiced hooking up lines and hoses.

On Jan. 11 and 12 Ericsson and Steadfast conducted four at-sea evolutions, including one practice emergency breakaway and one actual fueling. Crew members from Stalwart, which was originally scheduled to do the underway training but experienced engine problems, and a third frigate from Singapore's fleet were aboard Steadfast to observe the evolution.

"The Singapore naval personnel showed superb seamanship and learned very quickly," said Art Davis, Ericsson's cargo mate. Davis and two other civil service mariners from Ericsson were aboard Steadfast, carefully instructing their Singapore counterparts on safety procedures, communications, line handling and signaling.

"We learned a great deal from the U.S. Navy, and from this confidence-building exercise, we added a new capability in terms of operations," said Singapore navy Capt. Kin Ho, Steadfast's communications officer.