

January 2008

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

## TUGS



## *Tow the Line*

*Fleet ocean tugs, CIVMARs  
get missions done*

Pg. 4

**INSIDE — Rappahannock helps jilted ships • MSC delivers special vehicles to Iraq troops**

Photo by Sarah E. Burford

# MSC and Fleet Forces Command alignment update

It's been a little over a year since Military Sealift Command began aligning under U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Formed by the Chief of Naval Operations in 2001, FFC was empowered in 2006 to serve as primary advocate for fleet personnel, training, requirements, maintenance and operational issues, reporting administratively to the CNO as an Echelon 2 command.

Since MSC came under the FFC umbrella, along with 17 other Navy commands, we've been focused on FFC's mission: providing integrated carrier, expeditionary and surface strike groups with ready air, surface and submarine units along with expeditionary, network and fleet logistics support. Obviously, our part of the pie is fleet logistics. Not so obviously, we provide much more than that to FFC.

Here's our "one-year report card."

First, let me say, without equivocation, that MSC, our people and our ships, continue to meet our readiness goals and deliver the food, fuel, ammo and spare parts needed by our warfighters, wherever and whenever. That's not to say that we're resting on our laurels.

## Managing ships

Under the heading of Force Management — Vessels, every Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo/ammunition ship delivered to MSC allows us to gain further efficiencies in providing underway replenishment service to FFC. Soon we'll manage submarine tenders for the fleet. Hybrid crews of civil service mariners for deck, engineering, navigation, laundry and galley services and uniformed Navy personnel for mission duties, will operate under the command of a Navy captain.

At the same time, we've learned lessons from our hospital ship deployments for humanitarian assistance and partnership missions. We're sharing that experience with FFC as future humanitarian assistance missions are developed that may involve large-deck amphibious ships.

## Driving down costs

Under Navy enterprise alignment, one of FFC's aims is to provide Navy warships with the right readiness at the right cost. MSC is focusing on increasing the awareness of all our stakeholders — including those fleet customers we replenish at sea — on what drives our costs and how we're constantly looking to be more efficient and more effective at the same time. We're helping them understand how costs roll into our rate structure, which opens discussion about how to reduce stakeholder costs.

As we continue to align with FFC, we're not only helping Navy understand MSC's capabilities and cost drivers, we're also proposing cost saving initiatives to the fleet and sharing our expertise.

Across the Navy, enterprise alignment aims at best use of existing resources and managing all elements of



cost to achieve required readiness levels and save operating funds. The goal is to have warships ready for tasking at a reduced cost. That's what we're part of. That's what we're helping FFC aim for and reach.

## Adding value

MSC adds value to the FFC collaboration process through our model of understanding what our primary cost drivers are and keeping costs firmly in sight and under control.

I've spoken about our cost drivers before. They are:

- Afloat personnel and training;
- Maintenance and repairs;
- Sustainment, which means fuel, force protection, ship husbanding and port charges and afloat information technology;
- Ashore personnel, facilities and infrastructure; and,
- Commercial charters and operating contracts.

Those cost drivers are part of our almost \$3 billion annual budget. Any savings we generate will be used for other important Navy programs as we sustain and grow the fleet.

In aligning with FFC, we're focusing not only on MSC readiness, but fleet readiness as well.

## Balancing readiness and cost

How much readiness is required for MSC? What is the right readiness at the right cost at the right time?

Obviously, our stakeholders and their mission requirements generate some of the readiness answers for us. But it's not easy balancing readiness and cost. In fact, we have been developing metrics that are measuring readiness as a function of cost to help us track and control all of our cost drivers. In many ways, we've got an edge over other enterprises because I believe our operating model is a simple one, and we have good cost visibility. In other words, we are able to track what we're doing and how much it costs with an eye toward reducing those costs.

## Providing expertise

When it comes to Navy warfighting capabilities, MSC is helping the fleet

understand what the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) will need for operations, maintenance and repair. We're also involved in discussions associated with the maintenance, repair and operation strategies for the future Joint High-Speed Vessel (JHSV) program.

What we bring to these planning efforts is a workforce and corporate knowledge base in maritime labor issues, private shipyard repair, ship chartering, maritime law, marine engineering and naval architecture.

Anti-terrorism and force protection are also part of the Navy's warfighting capabilities. Since MSC's requirements in these areas vary by ship type and theater of operations, we're working to help standardize requirements for all MSC ships, including Ready Reserve Force ships from the Maritime Administration (MARAD) and commercial ships that we charter. Once again, we're focusing on cost drivers standardizing procedures and processes, and communicating any issues and their potential impact to Navy.

## Facing future challenges

Fiscal year 2007 was a good year for MSC. Our efforts resulted in a budget surplus of \$103 million. These savings were generated by a combination of prior year credits, cost avoidance, lower operating tempo, better management of port costs and a lower incidence of unplanned maintenance.

However, in FY 2008 we face challenges such as increasing maintenance and repair costs, increasing fuel costs, potentially unfavorable foreign currency exchange rates and other unprogrammed costs.

Two initiatives will help to meet those challenges: refining our financial, operational and personnel measures and automating our data collection. We want to be able to provide decision makers with real-time data and trend analysis to inform the decision-making process and improve the budgeting and execution process across the entire MSC enterprise.

The yield from process improvement and refined metrics will be reduced shipyard time for repairs and maintenance,

a reduction in the number of CIVMARs in the hiring/training pipeline (which means more CIVMARs serving at sea) and an opportunity to look again at ship crewing levels to validate actual requirements.

## Serving our customers

We want to serve our customers better and save them money in doing so. As consumers ourselves, we understand the need for good service at a fair price.

Our alignment under Fleet Forces Command is yielding results, all good. We are sending and receiving a more consistent message to and from the Navy fleets because we've clarified the demand signals of our stakeholders while providing them with a better understanding of our costs and what drives them.

We've identified areas of excellence that we can export to the rest of the Navy, and we've identified cost-reduction opportunities across the MSC enterprise.

So, bottom line, I think we can be proud of our achievements, and I look forward to continual collaboration and successes in the future.

Keep the faith!

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

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Military Sealift Command reports to the Commander, U.S. Transportation Command for defense transportation matters, to the Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command for Navy-unique matters and to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition for procurement policy and oversight matters.



# Rappahannock saves day for mine countermeasures ships

By Edward Baxter  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

With low tanks in international waters, mine countermeasures ships USS Patriot and USS Guardian, planned a brief stop to take on fuel in Hong Kong. Just as important, the ships also sought refuge from an approaching typhoon.

Neither happened on Nov. 20, however, when the People's Republic of China refused to grant Patriot or Guardian permission to enter Hong Kong's harbor. The following day, China turned away aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk and its supporting ships.

The decision by China to refuse diplomatic clearance to the U.S. Navy ships over the Thanksgiving holiday took U.S. officials by surprise. U.S. Navy ship visits to Hong Kong are common with more than 50 such port calls every year.

With low fuel levels, Patriot and Guardian were in limbo. Fortunately, Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock was nearby, having just completed an underway replenishment operation with the Kitty Hawk strike group.

"The weather and sea conditions in the area were rough and getting worse," said Rappahannock's civil service master Capt. Robert Seabrook. "We were en route to our reload port of Sasebo, Japan, when we received emergent orders to turn around in seas near our limits and head for the minesweepers. Our direction was to do whatever it took to refuel them."

The 677-foot, 41,000-ton Rappahannock steamed 275 nautical miles at best speed and rendezvoused with the minesweepers on Thanksgiving Day. With eight- to 10-foot seas and 35-knot winds, Patriot lined up in column formation behind Guardian. The decision was made to conduct an astern refueling operation due to the heavy weather and because the 224-foot minesweepers are so much smaller and slower than Rappahannock. Astern refueling required the ships to approach within 200 feet of the replenishment ship's stern.

Rappahannock maneuvered to station in front of the minesweepers in a technique known as a 'delivery boy' approach. The oiler's crew placed a fuel hose into the water over the ship's stern from the flight deck. The hose floated on the surface, and the receiving ship's crew recovered and connected it to the fuel 'riser' on their bows.

Each mine countermeasures ship received more than 300 barrels of fuel from Rappahannock. "The

weather was ferocious, but the ship handling by the MCMs (mine countermeasures ships) was exceptional," Seabrook said. "We practice astern refueling procedures with MCMs frequently, and it sure paid off on Thanksgiving Day. I've never seen it performed better."

Rappahannock's Boatswain Angel Ortiz, Cargo Boatswain Danilo Santiago and Boatswain's Mates Robert Melendez and John Springfield directed the safe deployment of the gear as Rappahannock took station in front of Guardian and Patriot. Cargo Officer Andrea Liebl maintained a close eye as safety officer while coordinating the transfer of fuel together with Cargo Engineer Rick Rhoades.

After the refueling operation, both minesweepers were able to ride out the storm without damage or injuries while making way for homeport.

"This was a great Thanksgiving delivery today ... and just in the nick of time," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Steve Moss, USS Guardian's commanding officer.

Rappahannock began its voyage back to Sasebo — transiting the Taiwan Straits in company with the USS Kitty Hawk strike group.

"It is always reassuring to have the great ships of MSC by our side," said Kitty Hawk's commanding officer Navy Capt. T.A. Zecchin.

Rappahannock arrived at Sasebo on Nov. 25, for a quick turn around reload of her cargo tanks and to take on provisions.

As Rappahannock sailed past Sasebo's Kogo Saki lighthouse, Nov. 28, en route for new logistical sup-

port missions, the oiler passed the two MCMs as they entered Sasebo's port.

"The crew felt a sense of deep satisfaction knowing we had played a vital role in making sure these crews returned to their families safely for the Christmas holiday season," Seabrook said. "In the ancient tradition of the sea, we will always be ready to aid fellow mariners in need, regardless of the flags they fly."



Mine countermeasures ships USS Guardian and USS Patriot line up to begin refueling from the stern of Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock (not shown).

# MSC transports critical Army vehicles

By Gillian Brigham  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command-chartered ship ITB Thunder/Lightning loaded heavily armored mine-resistant vehicles Dec. 3-4 in Durban, South Africa, destined for use by U.S. troops operating in Iraq.

RG-31s, the vehicles loaded in South Africa, are armored personnel carriers designed for use in urban combat environments and have several of the same protection characteristics as mine-resistant, ambush-protected, or MRAP, vehicles. This load was significant because it was one of the first sealift shipments of this type of blast-resistant vehicles to the Middle East. Previously, U.S. Central Command relied solely on airlift assets to deliver such vehicles to warfighters on the ground.

ITB Thunder/Lightning is a nearly 600-foot-long, U.S.-flagged integrated tug/barge chartered by MSC to carry



out the strategic sealift mission of delivering more than 50 RG-31s and other combat equipment to U.S. forces in the Middle East. Thunder/Lightning

is a unique ship with tug and barge components, designed to operate independently of each other and together as a single vessel.

"Both Thunder, a tug, and Lightning, a barge, can operate alone," said Sealift Logistics Command Europe cargo operations specialist Chief Pawel Oscik. "However, to carry out big cargo missions, the bow of Thunder locks into the stern of the barge, so the two can operate as one ship."

For this operation, the tug and the barge components were connected and worked together to deliver this important cargo.

"These types of vehicles have proven one of the most effective protections against [improvised explosive devices] and other explosive devices," said SEALOGFE commander Navy Capt. Nicholas H. Holman. "These vehicles are saving lives. At MSC, we take great pride in ensuring that this vital equipment is delivered in the quickest most efficient manner possible. Our ultimate mission is always to support the troops, and we take that very seriously."

# Fleet ocean tugs:

By Sarah E. Burford  
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

If tugboats are considered the workhorses of the Navy, then fleet ocean tugs can be regarded as the Clydesdales.

When it comes to MSC's fleet ocean tugs, put away the images of Tubby the Tugboat from children's books, merrily guiding big ships out of the harbor. Think bigger, because unlike standard tugs like Tubby – familiar sights in any port – MSC fleet ocean tugs are larger and more powerful. They can tow ships as large as retired aircraft carriers through open ocean.

MSC has four 226-foot-long fleet ocean tugs: USNS Navajo, USNS Sioux, USNS Catawba and USNS Apache. All serve as dive platforms for exercises and salvage operations, in addition to their day-to-day work.

"I've towed everything from an aircraft carrier to floating barges and everything in between," said Capt. Brad Smith, San Diego-based USNS Sioux's civil service master.

"I've worked on salvage operations and even deployed and picked up mines during exercises like RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific)."

Smith has spent 25 years working on MSC ships. From oilers to supply ships,



U.S. Navy photo by Catawba Chief Engineer Joe Semon

Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba recovers a downed Navy helicopter in the northern Persian Gulf. The helicopter was on a mission for Operation Enduring Freedom. All seven people aboard escaped serious injury in the crash.

he happily admits that the tugs are his favorites.

"The crews on tugs are small. Guys like me who like tugs come back around, and we become a real family," Smith explained.

Crews on the fleet ocean tugs are substantially smaller than on the Navy's larger ships. On Sioux, the crew comprises 16 civil service mariners and four Sailors, who work hand-in-hand with civil service mariners to meet mission requirements.

"I was really surprised when I checked on board and found out pretty much everyone on the crew was a civilian," said Navy Interior Communications Specialist 1st Class Mike Lueduke, Sioux crew member. "It took a while to get used to, but everyone here is very professional and easy to work with. Capt.

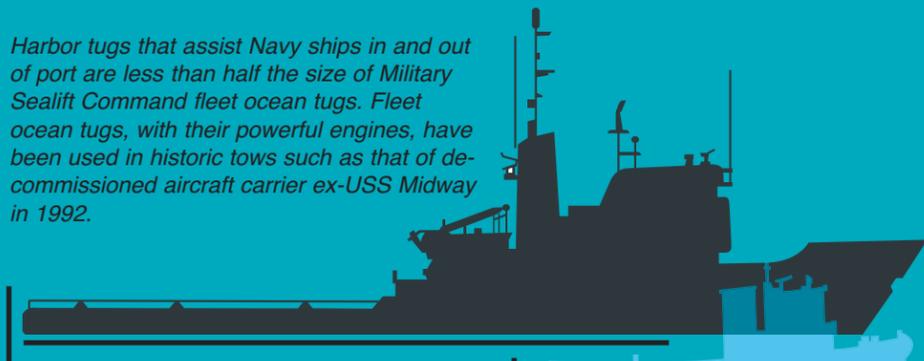
Smith has been around for a long time and really knows his stuff, so I feel like I'm learning something while I'm here."

"On this boat everyone knows everyone, and everyone is dependent on everyone else to get the job done," said Shaun Shiraishi, Sioux's chief mate. "There are a lot of ships' crews out there who will say that, but on a tug, it is really the way we do business."

The tug's small crew creates closeness and familiarity. That allows Smith to get to know the strengths and weaknesses of those who serve under him, and allows him to work closely with mariners and Sailors to develop them.

## Big tug, big mission

Harbor tugs that assist Navy ships in and out of port are less than half the size of Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tugs. Fleet ocean tugs, with their powerful engines, have been used in historic tows such as that of decommissioned aircraft carrier ex-USS Midway in 1992.



226 Feet • 7,200 Horsepower

92 Feet • 4,200 Horsepower



# Enough horsepower for any mission

“In a situation this small, I’m in a position where I can work with the younger crew members and really teach them something,” explained Smith during a loss-of-steering drill.

That hands-on training is always focused on getting the mission done. MSC’s fleet ocean tugs are set apart from the more traditional tugs by horsepower, longevity and seaworthiness. Unlike their smaller counterparts that are about 90 feet long and have up to 4,200 horsepower, fleet ocean tugs are 226 feet long and have a 7,200-horsepower power plant. They can tow at speeds of more than 14 knots and have the capacity to tow at least 60,000 tons, the equivalent of 14 Perry-class frigates.

The fleet ocean tugs’ range is equally impressive.

“We’re long legged,” he said. “We can carry enough supplies to be out for 30 days and are prepared to tow anything we can as far as needed.”

These missions can take place as close to home as the ship’s own pier or far out at sea. Fleet ocean tugs have been at the forefront of significant missions, including back-to-back tows in 1992 of the decommissioned battleship ex-USS Missouri from Long Beach, Calif., to Bremerton, Wash., and decommissioned aircraft carrier ex-USS Midway from San Diego to Bremerton. Both ships are now museums — Missouri in Pearl Harbor and Midway in San Diego.

In addition to the towing missions in which they often participate, the fleet

ocean tugs also serve as platforms for Navy divers participating in salvage missions.

“Most of the missions we do are off our fantail, either towing something or giving divers a platform to work from,” said Smith. “People, like the divers, like to work off of us because of our flat fantail.”

In January, Sioux is scheduled to assist in recovering the wreckage of a Navy H-60 helicopter that crashed into the Pacific Ocean near San Diego in November. In May 2003, Catawba’s crew performed a similar operation — recovering a Navy helicopter downed

in the Persian Gulf during a mission for Operation Enduring Freedom.

As a seasoned tug captain, Smith has participated in numerous missions.

“Sioux always seems to be in the right place at the right time when it comes to recovery operations,” said Smith.

Hampered only by weather conditions, fleet ocean tugs may be the unsung heroes of the Navy and MSC, but they continue to be mission oriented and

ready for any challenge that comes their way. What does the future hold for these ships? Whatever the Navy mission needs.

“I love these tugs and think they are more fun to command than anything out there,” said Smith. “They are so versatile. More versatile than anything, and we are ready to prove it. Just give us a mission, and we’ll make it happen.”



U.S. Navy photo by Sarah E. Burford  
**USNS Sioux Master Capt. Brad Smith**



U.S. Navy photo by Bill Cook

Contract-mariner operated ocean surveillance ship USNS Able sits beside fellow Military Sealift Command ship civil service-mariner-crewed fleet ocean tug USNS Apache in November.

## MSC crews work together

**Tug, rescue and salvage ship crews assist contract mariners during ship conversion**

In addition to providing support to the Navy, fleet ocean tug crews also look after other Military Sealift Command mariners.

The crew of MSC ocean surveillance ship USNS Able learned this when they arrived at the St. Helena piers in Norfolk in November. They pulled alongside fleet ocean tug USNS Apache and rescue and salvage ships USNS Grasp and USNS Grapple.

Able was in Norfolk to complete its reactivation and conversion after being taken out of service in 2004.

“Personnel aboard Grasp, Grapple and Apache have made it very clear they are more than willing to provide whatever support they can to make our stay here as pleasant and successful as possible,” said civilian Capt. Greg Gillotte, master of Able.

The ships have very different missions and crews. Fleet ocean tugs and rescue and salvage ships lift heavy objects and often deploy divers, while ocean surveillance ships use sonar arrays to detect and track undersea threats. In addition, Apache, Grasp and Grapple have civil service mariners who are U.S. Navy federal civilian employees, while Able is crewed by U.S. merchant mariners working for an operating company under contract to MSC.

Regardless of the differences, Able felt welcomed.

“We have received an impressive amount of helpful support from the rescue and salvage ships and fleet ocean tug located here at St. Helena,” said Gillotte. “They have both offered to send our classified message traffic for us until we have our own systems up and running and USNS Grapple has made ample space available for us to use its warehouse bay.”

Center spread: Fleet ocean tug USNS Navajo (left) tows amphibious assault ship ex-USS Belleau Wood out to open waters in July 2006.

Cover: Fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux 3rd Mate Michelle Thompson plots a course for the tug during a November mission near San Diego.

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

MSC welcomes Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Marie Jordan** to the force master chief's office; Navy **Yeoman 2nd Class Josh Cochran** to Reserve programs; **Michelle Guy** to command, control, communications and computer systems; **Wellie Tabios** to engineering; and **Prince Boateng** and **Rebecca Hoyt** to the Prepositioning Program.

The command bids farewell to Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Kent Keller** from Reserve

programs; Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Jackson** and **Linda Schultz** from maritime forces and manpower management; **Phillip Carmichael** from operations and plans; **Sharron Roberts** from the comptroller's office; **Glenda Isaacs** and **Fran Mitchell** from contracts and business management; **David Martyn** from Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; and **Denis Rumbaugh** from the Sealift Program.

## EUROPE • NEWS

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One hosted the Governor of Mallorca, Ramon Socias, and various government officials aboard Prepositioning Ship USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, Nov. 21. MPS Squadron One Commander Navy **Capt. Clay Saunders** and his staff and the ship's civilian master **Capt. Michael Faraday** and his crew hosted Socias, representatives from the U.S. Embassy and members of the Spanish police force for a ship tour and explanation of the ship's mission.

Sealift Logistics Command Europe Commander Navy **Capt. Nicholas H. Holman** was a featured speaker at the Military Airlift and Rapid Reaction Operations Conference in Rome, Italy, Dec. 5-6.

Holman's brief, "Military Sealift Command: Managing Contingency Operations," outlined MSC's response to recent military and humanitarian contingencies and discussed MSC's emerging role in Africa — supporting the U.S. Navy's promotion of mar-

itime security and safety initiatives on the continent.

Marine transportation specialist **Joe Guivas** received two certificates of appreciation by the U.S. Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command's 838th Transportation Battalion at a ceremony in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, Nov. 20. Guivas was recognized for his contributions to U.S. Army Stryker Brigade equipment off-loads in Bremerhaven, Germany.

Marine transportation specialist **Mike Cunningham** received a Department of the Navy Civilian Meritorious Service Award for creating a database to manage nearly every aspect of SEALOGEUR tactical operations.

"Mr. Cunningham's breakthrough design reflected a thorough understanding of the mission and a clear vision for simplified productivity," said Holman. "This innovative software package enabled SEALOGEUR to successfully emerge from transformation with significantly fewer personnel and improved mission performance and consistency."

## COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command is preparing to assume responsibilities for submarine tender USS Emory S. Land. The ship is disembarking its military personnel as civil service mariners move aboard. Eventually, the ship will be crewed by both civil service mariners and Navy personnel under the leadership of a U.S. Navy captain. Responsibilities to crew, train, equip and maintain the vessel will transfer to MSFSC in February.

MSFSC medical officer Navy **Capt. Garry Rudolph** and MSFSC's medical team are working to get required certifications from the World Health Organization that confirm no rats are present on MSFSC ships. Top priority for the recertification is being given to ships with upcoming foreign port visits.

Congratulations to MSFSC dry cargo/ammunition ship class manager **Frank Cunningham** and his team along with the crew of USNS Sacagawea. Sacagawea was deemed ready for operational tasking on Nov. 27, on schedule to prepare for the ship's first deployment.

MSFSC bids farewell to **Bill Ingram**, director of process and resources, in November.

Fair winds and following seas to the following civil service mariners as they end their at-sea careers: **Chief Steward William Wegener**, **Able Seaman Michael Goodwin**, **Night Cook/Baker Reynaldo Malong**, **2nd Cook/Baker Pablito Ramirez** and **Utilityman Benjamin Velsaco**.

For more civil service mariner news, read the MSFSC newsletter at [www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter](http://www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter).

## CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman and fast combat support ship USNS Supply departed the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet area of operations.

Leroy Grumman and Supply both supported USS Enterprise Carrier Strike Group, USS Kearsarge Expeditionary Strike Group and other coalition naval forces.

Leroy Grumman conducted 43 underway replenishments and 17 in-port replenishments, transferring more than 7 million gallons of fuel. Supply conducted 55 underway replenishments and 24 in-port replenishments, transferring more than 20

million gallons of fuel to U.S. Navy ships at sea.

In November, Sealift Logistics Command Central coordinated seven dry cargo operations, delivering 1.5 million square feet of combat equipment, and three wet cargo operations, moving more than 34 million gallons of fuel, in support of operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

Navy **Capt. Anthony Dropp**, commander of SEALOGCENT, welcomed fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall and fast combat support ship USNS Arctic to 5th Fleet.

## Big Horn concludes Med mission



U.S. Navy photo by Sidy Niang

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn capped off a five-month deployment to the U.S. European Command theater of operations with an on-board reception for government officials in Ponta Delgada, Portugal, in early November.

During Big Horn's deployment, the ship delivered more than 10 million gallons of fuel during 50 underway replenishments with U.S. and NATO ships. The oiler also participated in multinational military exercise Noble Midas and visited Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal.

From left to right: American Consul Jean Elizabeth Manes, Ponta Delgada Mayor Dr. Berta Cabral and her husband Leonel Cabral, and Big Horn's master **Capt. Stephen W. Ferguson**.

## ATLANTIC • LINES

Maritime Prepositioning Force Ship USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat — a container, roll-on/roll-off ship — received praise from Navy **Capt. Don Chandler**, commanding officer of the U.S. Navy Amphibious Construction Battalion 2, for a job well done during the vessel's discharge of seven causeway sections near Virginia Beach in November.

Wheat was scheduled to depart Jacksonville, Fla., for the Boston Shipyard to undergo routine maintenance. The more than 143,000 square feet of available cargo space on the empty ship made it possible to move the mammoth causeway sections from Jacksonville to Norfolk, a port stop en route to Boston, without chartering or activating additional sealift ships.

"Thank you, your superb crew and MSC for the great support," said Chandler. "You've helped save the Navy a boatload of money in transportation costs and once again allowed us to get valuable training

working with an MPF ship. It was our pleasure working with your team, and we look forward to future opportunities."

**Rich Bolduc**, marine transportation specialist at the Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic Jacksonville office, assisted with loading Wheat, while **Jimmy Boy Dial**, marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT headquarters in Norfolk, assisted with the off-load at the anchorage point.

Rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp towed ocean surveillance ship USNS Able from Charleston, S.C., to Norfolk in November so Able could continue its reactivation process. "What made this operation unique is that our office in Charleston acted as husbanding agent for both vessels," said **Tom D'Agostino**, marine transportation specialist at the SEALOGLANT office in Charleston. "By not retaining a commercial agent, we saved the Navy more than \$13,000 in agency fees."

# T-AKE crew aids San Diego wildfire evacuees

By Operations Specialist 2nd Class Mark Mahan  
USNS Alan Shepard

The crew of dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Alan Shepard responded quickly to the recent southern California wildfires by distributing food, blankets, drinks and other supplies to thousands of evacuees sent to Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego.

About 10,000 of the estimated 250,000 evacuees from the area found shelter at the stadium after fires destroyed more than 500 homes and 100 businesses in San Diego County.

To the volunteers, the evacuation was reminiscent of Hurricane Katrina, where victims sought sanctuary in the Louisiana Superdome two years ago.

"Many, reminded of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina, were glad for the chance

to help in an active capacity this time," said the ship's team coordinator, Navy Chief Petty Officer Gary Clark.

The volunteers demonstrated the Navy's core values of honor, courage and commitment to the San Diego community and gained a sense of pride while doing so.

"It was heartwarming to see the people of San Diego and our Sailors helping each other and working as a team," said Navy Cmdr. Polly Wolf, officer in charge of the ship's military department. "It was a great feeling to see the close bond between the community and the Navy — so much stronger here and in this time of tragedy than is often found in many other communities."

## Pakistani support



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael Zeltakals

Crew members aboard Pakistani navy ship Babur prepare for an underway refueling with Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall in the Arabian Sea. Babur is deployed to the Central Command area of responsibility as part of Combined Task Force 150. CTF 150 is responsible for maritime security operations in the Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, North Arabian Sea and parts of the Indian Ocean.

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Fleet ocean tugs USNS Navajo and USNS Sioux recently participated in the advanced deployable system at sea test for the chief of naval operations in November. The test, conducted off the coast of San Diego, demonstrated rapid installation of acoustic arrays and a gateway processing/radio frequency communication buoy.

Navajo and Sioux participated in the test along with Coast Guard and other Navy assets and were instrumental in the deployment of the system.

Hospital Ship USNS Mercy played host for the 51st National City Salute

to Military reception Nov. 15. Members of the National City Chamber of Commerce paid tribute to the efforts of Mercy's crew and the medical team that have participated and will participate in humanitarian missions throughout the Pacific area of operation. Navy **Capt. David Kiehl**, Sealift Logistics Command Pacific commander, spoke at the event.

Kiehl traveled to the Pacific Northwest region Nov. 28-Dec. 1. While in the Seattle area, Kiehl spent time with the Naval Reserve unit EPU 116 and met with the senior staff of Navy Region Northwest.

## FAR • EAST • HAILS

During a Nov. 30-Dec. 3 port call in Kuching, Malaysia, civil service mariners assigned to rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor, along with embarked divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1, volunteered to help at local homes for sick and orphaned children and the elderly.

Eight volunteers painted rooms at the Cheshire Home for the incurably sick and handicapped while seven headed to the Rumah Seri Kenangan retirement home to talk with local residents. Crew members brought toys, games and clothes for children at the Salvation Army children's home. The crew also painted a classroom at the school. Salvor's volunteers contributed more than 125 total man-hours at the three facilities.

Navy **Cmdr. Ron Oswald**, Military Sealift Command Office Korea's commanding officer, spoke at the 63rd annual memorial service honoring American airmen who perished during a crash on South Korea's Namhae Island during World War II. The Nov. 30 ceremony was hosted by

Duk Hyung Kim, director of the Republic of Korea's War Memorial Activities Association.

In August 1945, Japanese anti-aircraft guns shot down a U.S. B-24 bomber over the island 75 miles west of Busan. All 11 aboard were killed. Kim was one of several locals who recovered the remains of the U.S. servicemen and, when the island was liberated, ensured they were returned home to their families.

Navy **Capt. Susan Dunlap**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Far East, visited survey ship USNS John McDonnell at the Tuas Shipyard in Singapore Dec. 3. SEALOGFE bids fair winds and following seas to chief staff officer Navy **Cmdr. Nannette Roberts**. Dunlap recognized Roberts for her outstanding service to the command by presenting her with the Meritorious Service Medal. Roberts, who served with the command since March 2006, was relieved by Navy **Cmdr. Curtis Lenderman**, formerly SEALOGFE's operations officer.

## CIVMARs, divers help out in Malaysia



U.S. Navy photo by USNS Salvor Able Seaman David Chase

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor civil service mariners and divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1 paint a room at the Cheshire Home for the incurably sick and handicapped in Kuching, Malaysia. Salvor visited Malaysia's Sarawak provincial port on Borneo Island, Nov. 30-Dec. 3. Volunteers spent a total of 125 man-hours at three homes supporting the sick, orphaned children and the elderly.

# MSC Reservist gives up politics to deploy

By Gillian Brigham  
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

Capt. John Cochrane comes from a long line of public servants. His grandmother, a cable operator during World War I, was one of the first female chiefs in the U.S. Navy. Both his father and grandfather are retired naval officers and inspired Cochrane and his brother to follow in their footsteps. For the Cochranes, making the sacrifices required of a life spent in service to their country is tradition.

So it wasn't an unlikely event when the captain, commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Expeditionary Port Unit 106 in Baltimore, deployed in October to take the reigns of MSC Office Kuwait for a year.

He and his unit of nine reservists left the United States to take up residence in the dusty port of Ash Shuaybah, Kuwait, to oversee the delivery of combat cargo into the world's busiest military theater of operations. Last year, MSCO Kuwait oversaw the delivery of 1 million barrels of fuel and 7.7 million square feet of cargo.

Reservists are accustomed to the abrupt leaving behind of their lives and families – it comes with the territory. At home in Bay Shore, N.Y., Cochrane left a wife, two kids and a business that his father and wife are managing in his absence. What he hadn't expected to leave behind, however, was a political campaign.

Political service, like military service, is not a new thing for the Cochranes. Cochrane's father got into politics when he got out of the Navy.

"He was a politician for a part of my childhood," said Cochrane. "But it was never something I wanted to do. I never thought I'd run for any kind of office."

A lifelong resident of New York, in 2006 Cochrane decided it was time to get involved.

"In the course of running my business, I ran into a lot of corrupt politicians in the local area," he said. "There was an extreme lack of leadership. That fired me up."

The captain had his eye on a county legislature's seat in Islip, the 350,000-person township that his Bay Shore neighborhood belonged to.

He formed an exploratory commission and started having meetings.

Then, in April, while the captain was attending the MSC Commanding Officer Conference in Washington, D.C., he got a call from a political party commission saying that they would like to screen him for nomination as a candidate.

He flew home from the conference early for the one-day interview with party officials. Then, he hopped back on a plane and headed across the At-



U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Drew Glassing

Navy Capt. John Cochrane, Expeditionary Port Unit 106, accepts command of Military Sealift Command Office Kuwait during a Nov. 16 ceremony. Outgoing commander Navy Capt. Peter Johansen and his unit, EPU 104, spent 10 months in Kuwait. They oversaw the movement of 1 million barrels of fuel and 7.7 million square feet of cargo. EPU 106 is scheduled to be in Kuwait until August.

lantic to serve his two-week reserve commitment at Sealift Logistics Command Europe headquarters in Naples, Italy.

Cochrane was upbeat about his chances of securing the nomination for a seat on the county legislature.

"Nobody else had the business background and the military leadership experience like I did," said the captain. "We get spoiled in the Navy. They expect us to be leaders and train us accordingly. It's not always like that in the civilian world."

On April 29, Cochrane's father picked him up from the airport after his flight back from Italy and came bearing good news: The captain had secured the nomination for office.

But not just for county legislature – for town supervisor, equivalent to a mayor.

"Literally, my heart stopped," said Cochrane.

However, two days later, Cochrane got an e-mail announcing that his reserve unit was being activated for a 10-month tour of duty in Kuwait, beginning in October, the height of the campaign season.

His reaction was immediate and final.

"I knew right away, politics comes second," said Cochrane. "My duty is to my country and to my unit, to serve and represent MSC and the Navy."

"I lost my best friend in 9/11. I was holding my newborn and watching the news when the plane hit

[the Twin Towers]. Going over to Kuwait with my team is my calling, and I'll do whatever it takes."

Cochrane declined the nomination.

"It was painful," he said. "I really wanted to serve my community, but I know I did the right thing."

Cochrane and his unit arrived in Kuwait Nov. 2. Since then, the pace has been nonstop. From working the port every day to arranging about three off-loads a week and adjusting to life in the desert, Cochrane hasn't had much time to dwell on the mayoral campaign he might have been waging back home.

Instead, he's focused on the mission, the nine people serving under him and the troops they support in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"After 20 years in the Navy, it's great to be out here," he said, "watching my people mature and work together as a team."

Cochrane may have given up the opportunity to shepherd 350,000 people, but he cares just as deeply about the nine.

"The same principles apply. My goal is always to be a good leader and do something positive, whether it's for the military or the public."

"To be out here with my team, I feel like a proud dad."

# MSC oilers aid battle group during exercise

By Sarah E. Burford  
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

Sealift Logistics Command Pacific completed a two-week Composite Training Unit Exercise with the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln Battle Group Nov. 15.

During the exercise, fleet replenishment oilers USNS Henry J. Kaiser and USNS Yukon and fast combat support ship USNS Rainier provided underway fueling operations and delivered 250 pallets of frozen and dry stores via vertical replenishment. While replenishments at sea are not uncommon, the Abraham Lincoln Battle Group replenishment was a monumental undertaking for all the ships and personnel due to the sheer volume of stores moved. A normal vertical replenishment consists of 20-24 pallets of stores — one-tenth the size of this one.

"The amount of planning that had to go into a [vertical replenishment] of this size was amazing," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Hilary Albers, SEALOGPAC assistant operations officer. "Our success with this operation is really a credit to our teamwork with the ship's crews and our operations team."

"Exercises like this show how much we support the Navy's mission, and it is a great way for us to build unity, both within our ranks and with the ships' crews we support," said Navy Cmdr. Quentin Burns, SEALOGPAC operations officer.

This exercise is normally conducted six to eight weeks before a carrier battle group's deployment. It focuses on training the carrier air wing and culminates in a three-day simulated battle problem. Successfully completing the exercise certifies the carrier and its air wing as qualified for open-ocean operations.



U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Hilary Albers

Civil service mariners aboard fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser assist a Navy helicopter to move a pallet during a vertical replenishment that was part of the Composite Training Unit Exercise Nov. 15, off the coast of San Diego.