

May 2008

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

## Sea basing comes to life



**MSC** prepo  
ships take part  
in exercise to  
showcase  
sea basing

Article and photos  
Page 4

A Navy Sailor coordinates lighterage operations with Military Sealift Command prepositioning ship USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo, which is poised for at-sea loading near Monrovia, Liberia, March 24.

**INSIDE — Grasp recovers crashed F-15s • Safeguard clears waterway in Saipan**

# Strategic priorities feed mission, vision

If you enter the word 'priorities' in a popular Web-search engine, you'll get more than 35.4 million hits that will show you how to generate win-win scenarios, negotiate a pay raise, improve your health, build a better business plan or overcome an opponent. It makes it pretty obvious that having priorities is a key element in any endeavor.

Last month, I wrote about our Strategic Communications Plan and the one-page guiding document on MSC's mission, vision, priorities and values. I said the purpose of the document was to help give context to the many things that take place at MSC every day, around the globe.

It's a big-picture document that helps center us and bring us back to our roots. Our people are out there, supporting our nation by delivering supplies and conducting specialized missions across the world's oceans. That's our mission. And our vision is to execute our mission while being the leader in providing innovative and cost-effective maritime solutions to the challenges we face for our customers every day.

That's where our priorities enter the equation. This month, I want to take a closer look at them.

### 1. ASSIST IN WINNING THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

MSC provides the warfighter, afloat and ashore, the necessary resources where and when they are required. Our Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships deliver supplies to Navy combatants at sea every day. At the same time, chartered commercial ships are taking mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles to the Persian Gulf for our Army and Marine forces. Other chartered and government-owned ships are lifting humanitarian aid supplies and equipment to those in need, such as the Seabee

gear we just delivered to Liberia for infrastructure repairs or the recent deployments of both hospital ships.

Our Special Mission Program ships are out there constantly, providing the Navy fleet with real-time data to support efforts in the global war on terrorism.

### 2. HELP CUSTOMERS EFFICIENTLY MEET THEIR OBJECTIVES

MSC listens to customer needs and desired outcomes, and then we provide a match between available ships and those needs. We're listening to the Navy and helping return Sailors to warfighting billets by taking responsibility for more Navy missions, such as submarine tenders. We're also looking at flexible stationing on our NFAF ships and rotating the ships to provide just the right level of service to match customer needs, without wasting effort or material. We're also developing innovative methods to meet existing and new demands like the new offshore petroleum distribution system ship, MV Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler, which is capable of pumping fuel ashore from twice the old distance in a wider range of sea conditions.

### 3. DEVELOP AND CARE FOR OUR WORKFORCE

Our workforce, afloat and ashore, is key to MSC's success. We need to make sure all our people continue to develop professionally and personally so they can play active roles at MSC.

We're expanding our use of Navy Knowledge Online for our Sailors and our civilians, offering everyone the opportunity to brush up on current skills or learn new ones. We'll continue to expand those training opportunities in the future. It's a two-way street, as well. When we take care of our people, they take care of us. Our suggestion

program is an example. Afloat, we've recently given cash awards to three civil service mariners who saved time and money and increased the quality of our shipboard maintenance programs. These individuals did this by inventing a foreign-object trap device for vacuum toilets aboard ships, revitalizing ammunition storage sprinkler systems and counter-measure wash-down systems, and reinventing the way thermocouples are wired in main engine exhaust indicating systems. Overall, these employees saved us millions of dollars and untold hours of maintenance.

### 4. USE SMART BUSINESS PRACTICES TO PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES AT THE BEST VALUE

As we meet our mission goals, we're taking different perspectives that allow us to see not only how all our pieces of the puzzle fit together but how our pieces integrate into the larger Navy picture so we can make sure it's the best fit possible.

For instance, we're actively sharing our expertise in marine diesel-engine maintenance and ship overhaul with the rest of the Navy. We're also conducting a balanced review of customer demands and the costs of providing services to meet those demands.

Then we're looking for alternative approaches that can save us time, effort and money. The new offshore petroleum distribution system ship I mentioned is an example of this approach.

### 5. ENSURE THAT MSC HAS THE RIGHT SHIPS TO CONDUCT FUTURE MISSIONS

While not an easy job, we're constantly looking at today's ships, tomorrow's missions and the capabilities we'll have to develop to meet those mission requirements. Concurrently, we're developing new business prac-

tices to improve those capabilities in the most cost-efficient manner. We're also reviewing and adjusting our crewing structure aboard ships in reduced operating status. And throughout the command, we're developing new measures of ship usage, missions and processes. We are not resting on our laurels.

The future will bring new support to bridge programs such as HSV-3 in the joint high-speed vessel program. We'll be part of the development process for new ship types like the sea-based X-band radar ship, or SBX. We'll also increase our participation in Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) and the Mobile Landing Platform program, advancing our part of the nation's warfighting capabilities.

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You are part of the solution.

You've heard that before, but it's still true. We're talking about continuing change in a world-class, worldwide organization. The smoothness and the velocity of that change depend on you and your understanding of what we're about. MSC needs you to find ways to support our five strategic priorities in your own part of the MSC world.

Whether you're aboard ship or serving ashore, you're a critical part of MSC. We're building on our success and preparing the way for our future. I know you'll help MSC deliver!

Keep the faith,

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

## SEALOGFE changes command

By Edward Baxter  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's Singapore-based Sealift Logistics Command Far East changed leadership March 21 as Navy Capt. Jim Romano relieved Navy Capt. Susan Dunlap. The change of command ceremony, held near SEALOGFE's headquarters office at Sembawang Wharves, was the command's first since it moved to its current location from Japan in July 2006.

Dunlap, SEALOGFE's first Singapore-based commodore, led the charge to establish a permanent MSC footprint on the city-state island nation. SEALOGFE operates an average of 50 ships in the eastern Pacific and Indian oceans, delivering fuel and supplies to U.S. Navy forces at sea, transporting military cargo between ports, responding to humanitarian crises and conducting other special operations. MSC relocated to Singapore in order to collocate with Commander, Task Force 73, the primary command that MSC supports in the U.S. Seventh Fleet area of responsibility.

"What began with a staff of just four personnel here at Sembawang Wharves has emerged into an efficient and responsive staff of 23 that expertly manages the MSC logistics mission and has greatly enhanced our ability to support the fleet in this part of the world," said Rear Adm. Nora Tyson, commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific and commander of Task Force 73. Tyson was the ceremony's principal speaker.

Tyson also highlighted several high-profile operations that SEALOGFE participated in during Dunlap's command. These included the transport of Indonesian military



Capt. Jim Romano

equipment for the United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, support for humanitarian operations in Bangladesh following the devastating Tropical Cyclone Sidr and the dispatch of an oceanographic survey ship to locate the wreckage of a commercial jet that crashed in waters off Indonesia's Sulawesi Island.

During her remarks, Dunlap thanked SEALOGFE staff members for their hard work and dedication in standing up the command, "This speech is dedicated to recognize them," said Dunlap. Romano first enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1971 and was commissioned a limited duty officer in 1982. A veteran of the Vietnam War, his shipboard assignments include USS Joseph Hewes, USS Forrestal, USS Los Alamos, USS Opportune, USS John F. Kennedy and USS Kearsarge. Romano's most recent assignment was at the Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tenn., where he served as director of enlisted detailing. He also served with MSC as chief staff officer in Naples, Italy.

"It was immediately obvious to me that it will take my very best leadership and managerial skills to fill the void created by Capt. Dunlap's departure," said Romano.

Dunlap reported as the commanding officer of the Navy's Training Support Center in San Diego April 14.

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# Grasp recovers downed Air Force fighter jets

By Bill Cook  
SEALOGLANT Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp completed recovery operations for two U.S. Air Force F-15C fighter jets in the Gulf of Mexico March 22. The jets crashed mid-air over the gulf approximately 50 miles from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., Feb. 20.

The first aircraft was recovered March 12, and the second, more-difficult-to-locate aircraft, was recovered March 22. Salvage operations, which could normally have been conducted within a week, were delayed by severe weather conditions that twice sent the ship back to port. Grasp originally arrived in the general vicinity of the crash site March 1 and located the first debris two days later.

The first aircraft was lifted from a depth of 177 feet, and the second aircraft was lifted from a depth of 185 feet. According to U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two, based at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va., and aboard Grasp for the salvage operation, more than half of both aircraft were recovered. This included their engines, flight recorders, data input hardware and main computers.

The salvaged aircraft parts and equipment were returned to the Air Force and are vital to the ongoing investigation into the cause of the crash. The jets were assigned to the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base according to a statement from the base. The crash claimed the life of one of the two pilots.

"Grasp is a very capable ship," said Navy Cmdr. Judy Lee, Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic operations officer, explaining that the operation went well despite the bad weather. "When operated by her civil service mariner crew, teamed with Navy divers, there is a very high percentage of success with any salvage mission we are tasked to support."

The salvage operations were conducted jointly by Grasp's crew of 28 civil service mariners and 20 Sailors from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two. The Navy dive unit is not permanently assigned to Grasp, which also carries a detachment of three Sailors to perform communications functions. Four Air Force personnel, including a wreckage photogra-



Crew members aboard Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp use the ship's 40-ton boom to lift the first engine and attached parts of an Air Force F-15C fighter jet from the ocean floor as part of salvage operations in the Gulf of Mexico. Grasp recovered wreckage of two F-15Cs that crashed mid-air over the gulf.

pher, were aboard during the salvage operations to conduct the initial research and data analysis about the crash.

Since the exact position of the wreckage was unknown, the ship's crew worked in cooperation with dive and salvage Sailors to locate the debris by combining the ship's navigational information with data obtained from the dive unit's locating equipment.

Upon arrival at each site, Grasp's mariners anchored the ship directly above the wreckage, and the divers submerged to prepare the debris for recovery. The ship's 40-ton boom then lifted the wreckage out of the water using a cable that was attached by the divers.

"This recovery operation was extremely difficult," said Grasp's civil service master Capt. Jose Delfaus. "The wreckage was scattered across a wide area, and the divers had to overcome dangerous depths and

diving conditions. Some of the wreckage was so entangled that it took several dives to complete the mission."

Mark Helmkamp, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's class manager for these vessels and a former Navy diver, explained that there's no such thing as a typical salvage operation. Everyone has unique challenges, he said.

"Usually, the most time consuming part is finding the wreckage on the sea floor; the faster part is securing it with straps and lifting it up," explained Helmkamp. "That's not to say there are no dangers — ocean currents and depths, cold water, sharp metal, explosives, hazardous materials — this operation had all of those. It's by no means as easy as picking up trash and putting it in a basket. This mission was difficult but still successful."

## Safeguard clears obstruction from harbor, finds wreckage of Navy EA-6B Prowler

By Edward Baxter  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Wrapping up a month-long deployment to the Northern Marianas Islands in March, U.S. Navy divers and civil service mariners from Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard cleared dangerous rocks from the entrance to a commercial port and located the wreckage of a Navy EA-6B Prowler jet.

The project to support the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Port Authority got underway Feb. 27, when divers from Mobile Salvage and Diving Unit One began work to remove large rocks at the entrance to Saipan's harbor. In less than 40 feet of water, the rocks presented a danger to larger ships entering the port.

Divers attached wire slings to four boulders. Next, using Safeguard's 40-ton boom crane, the boulders were then lifted until the wires created enough pressure to crush the rocks. The largest boulder, weighing more than a ton, was winched to the surface and relocated to deeper water.

"Due to strong currents, visibility was reduced and diving conditions were diffi-

cult," said Navy Chief Warrant Officer 3rd Class Gary Hakes, the dive unit's officer-in-charge. The channel clearing mission was completed on Feb. 29.

On March 4, Safeguard quickly shifted gears to conduct a deep-ocean search operation for an EA-6B Prowler aircraft that crashed off Guam. All four crew members aboard the EA-6B, which was embarked aboard USS Kitty Hawk, ejected safely before the jet plunged into the Pacific Ocean Feb. 12. The aircraft was conducting a routine training mission at the time, and the cause of the crash is currently under investigation.

In more than 8,000 feet of water, Safeguard deployed a towed-pinger locator, which is an advanced hydrophone system, to detect the ping from the aircraft's black box about 28 miles off the northeastern coast of Guam. Next, Safeguard used a side-scan sonar system to pinpoint the wreckage and map out the debris field. Safeguard completed its mission March 11 and returned to routine operations. Navy officials are deciding whether or not to attempt to salvage the wreckage.



Navy divers embarked aboard Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard use the ship's aft 40-ton crane to winch a 1-ton boulder to the surface near the entrance to the commercial port of Saipan Feb. 28.

# Sea basing comes to

**By Rosemary Heiss  
MSC Public Affairs**

**M**ilitary Sealift Command Maritime Prepositioning Ships USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo and USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat completed a sea-basing exercise in Monrovia, Liberia, April 6.

The exercise tested an operational capability that, until now, has existed only in concept – using floating platforms to establish an at-sea base for Marines to project and sustain forces ashore.

“This exercise took a PowerPoint presentation and turned it into a reality,” said Navy Capt. Dennis O’Meara, from MSC’s Prepositioning Program.

Led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe, three commands – Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One, Naval Beach Group Two and Amphibious Construction Battalion Two – worked with the ships.

Beginning March 20, Bobo and Wheat dropped anchor about six miles off the coast of Monrovia and began off-loading platforms, ferries and barges.

The platforms, which floated alongside the ships, were connected to enable loading and off-loading of cargo far from shore. This at-sea capability is important to warfighters, especially where only primitive or war-torn ports exist.

The concept of using floating platforms, also called lighterage, at sea is not new. It dates back to World War II, when the Navy was faced with the

problem of landing and supplying large forces where conventional harbor facilities were occupied by the enemy.

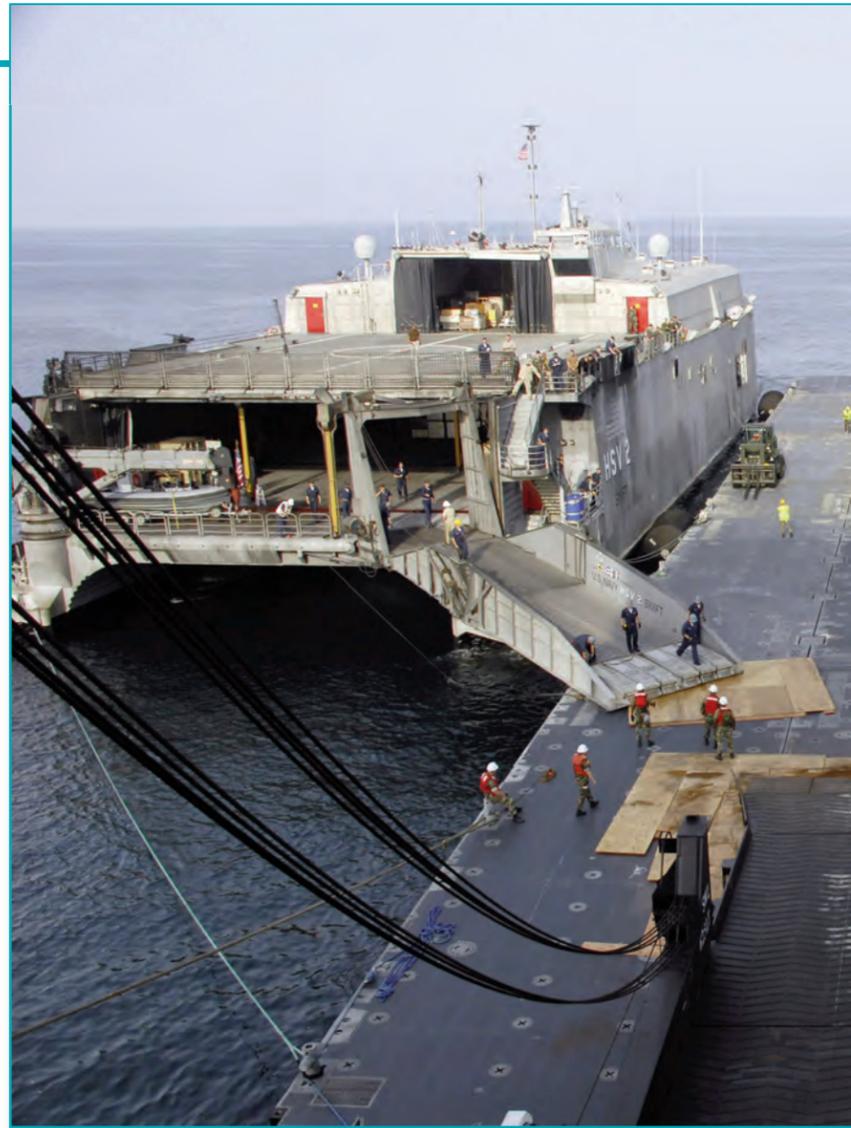
The platforms of old were essentially hollow boxes made from sheets of steel. The earlier design was not rigid enough, and the stabilizing engines did not provide enough power for the platforms to be safely used in most sea conditions. A ground swell of less than three feet could make the platform unstable in the water – threatening anything that sat on top of it. Regardless, these floating platforms were used successfully in the Pacific and European theaters.

Time has brought progress. Bobo and Wheat deployed the Improved Navy Lighterage System, a redesigned version of the World War II-era platforms. The new system is composed of platforms, ferries and barges. The platforms are much more rigid and powerful and include bow thrusters that make the platform a great deal more maneuverable, said Bobo’s civilian master Capt. Don Pigott.

#### **Assembling a floating platform**

The improved platforms used during the exercise consisted of 11 interlocking pieces. When connected, the parts formed a 400-foot-long, 72-foot-wide, roll-on, roll-off discharge facility.

The Navy’s Cargo Handling Battalion One used shipboard cranes on Bobo and Wheat to lift the system, section by section, off the decks of the ships.



This was the first time the pieces were put together in open water, according to Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mickey Walker, the chief staff officer from MPS Squadron One. In a previous exercise in October 2007 in Split, Croatia, the platforms were assembled pierside.

“On the pier, you have no pitch and roll,” said a Battalion One Sailor, Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Antoine Salik, who operated Bobo’s cranes, explaining the challenges of deploying such a large system at sea.

Each section weighed more than 70 tons, so when a piece was lifted and suspended in air, it was similar to having a huge pendant swaying above the ship, said Navy Capt. Clay Saunders, commander of MPS Squadron One.

Since the same people had worked together in the October pierside assembly, the offshore system was assembled in just two days without any incidents.

“One of the big benefits of the October exercise was the chance to get to know the players,” said Pigott. “Having those connections made this exercise a lot easier.”

#### **Ship-to-ship cargo transfer**

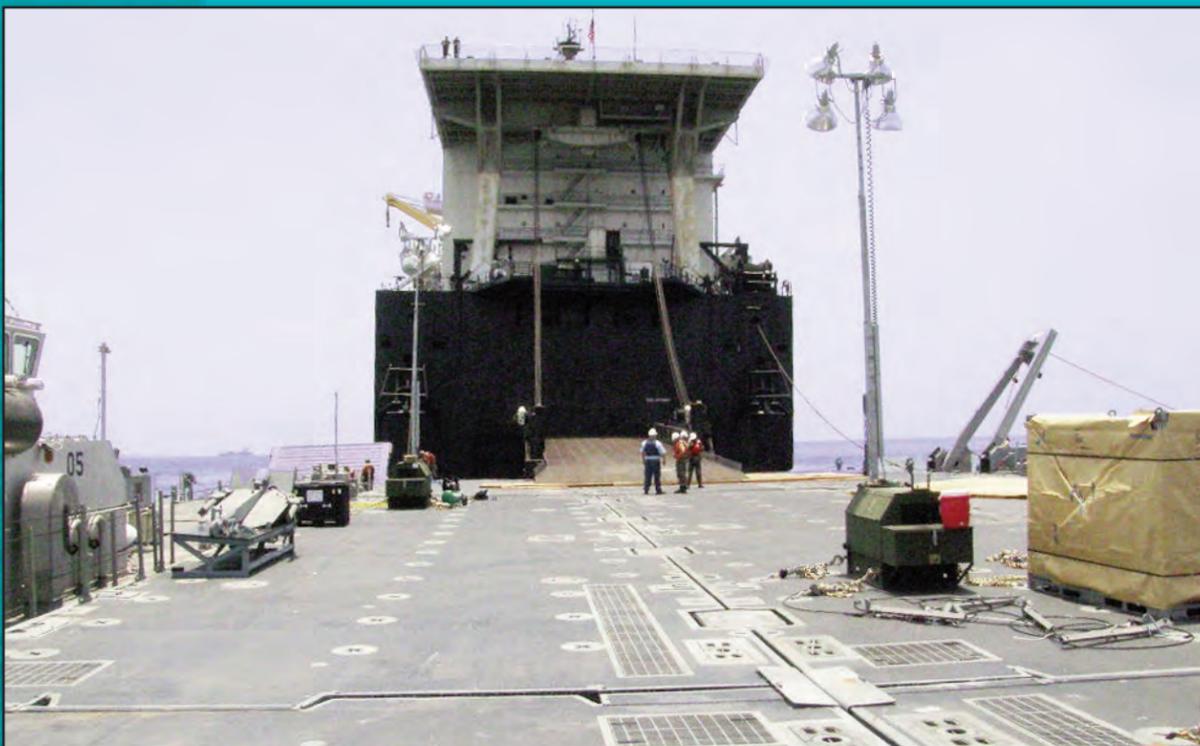
For the next five days, exercise participants moved vehicles and cargo to shore and experimented with configuring the platforms.

“We’d never used all the pieces together before,” said Walker. “We wanted to know what it could do.”

One thing they wanted to learn was how the huge floating platform would perform in open water. The exercise point – six miles off Liberia’s coast – gave ample opportunity.

To test the capabilities, participants also used the shipboard cranes to offload Marine trucks and Humvees onto a barge ferry.

After the ferry was loaded, it moved to the well deck of nearby amphibious dock landing ship USS



U.S. Navy photo

Top right: During the April sea-basing exercise off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, Military Sealift Command-chartered vessel HSV-2 Swift sits beside a floating platform ready to receive vehicles from its stern ramp.

Above: MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo’s stern ramp is lowered onto the same platform during the exercise.

# life off coast of Africa



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Elizabeth Merriam

Fort McHenry, where the vehicles were driven off and loaded with humanitarian supplies bound for Liberia. The vehicles were then driven back onto the ferry and moved to the floating platform.

Both Fort McHenry and HSV-2 Swift, an MSC-chartered high-speed vessel, were taking part in the real-world Africa Partnership Station deployment, an international effort to enhance regional and maritime safety and security in West and Central Africa. When the vehicles from Fort McHenry were offloaded onto the floating platform, they drove up the stern ramp of Swift, which then carried them to shore for use at Liberian schools and medical clinics.

## Packing up

As the at-sea portion of the exercise ended, the most challenging part began. The platform was taken apart, and each 80-foot-long, 24-foot-wide section was craned out of the water and placed onto the decks of Bobo and Wheat.

“In getting the pieces off the ship, we only had to get the sections lifted over the side. We had room to

work with, but in taking it from the water to the deck, we had a small margin for error,” said Saunders. “We learned that we’ll need to figure out how we can better control cargo that’s suspended from cranes in adverse weather.”

## Future

Sea basing will eventually give joint forces the capability to project power rapidly, directly where it is needed without requiring access to friendly ports. The sea bases will also allow for sustainment of operations for as long as needed using offshore assembly spaces and cargo maintenance facilities.

MSC is fielding the improved technology in all three of its maritime prepositioning squadrons, which include a total of 16 ships.

This exercise revealed numerous lessons but the experiment confirmed that the concept can work.

“We can move vehicles from one platform to another, sustaining forces at sea,” said Marine Lt. Col. Roy Edmonds, Marine Forces Europe. “This gives us a robust capability to operate off shore.”



USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat



USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

MSC welcomes **David Muller** and **Paul Howe**, command, control, communications and computer systems; **Roberto Florida** and Navy **Capt. Michael Casey**, logistics; **Wendy Derrickson** and **William Smith**, comptroller's office; and **William Johnson**, security office.

MSC bids farewell to **Hannah Huynh**, comptroller's office; Navy **Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Barbara Jeanine**, security office; Navy **Information Systems Tech-**

**nician 2nd Class Michael Farineau**, command, control, communications and computer systems; and **Sue Tayman**, operations.

Army **Col. Mary Franklin**, director of strategic studies and wargaming, marked her retirement after a 30-year Army career in a ceremony April 4 at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Arlington, Va. During the ceremony, she received a third Legion of Merit for her contributions to the national defense.

## Right person right job



U.S. Navy photo by Sarah E. Burford

Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., commander, Military Sealift Command, presents a letter of commendation to Larry Larsson, Sealift Logistics Command Pacific cargo exercise manager, April 8, for his work in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2008.

From Jan. 14 through Feb. 19, Larsson was deployed to McMurdo Station Antarctica as the MSC representative to ODF. While there, Larsson coordinated the operations of MSC-chartered ships USNS Lawrence H. Gianella and MV American Tern. Larsson oversaw MSC cargo loading and discharge operations at the McMurdo ice pier, as well as the successful delivery of 6 million gallons of fuel and 12 million pounds of equipment and supplies, all vital for polar exploration and study by the National Science Foundation.

Larsson was also instrumental in coordinating fuel support to Swedish icebreaker MV Oden, a ship which, due to the extraordinary ice-pack conditions, was instrumental in ensuring the timely transit of MSC ships.

"The real success for us comes when we plug the right people into the right jobs," said Reilly. "The work Larry Larsson did during ODF is a great example for this, and he should be commended."

## COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command Mariner Award of Excellence for 2007 awardees were recently announced. Civil service mariners honored as the most outstanding in their respective departments were: **1st Officer William McDermott**, **1st Officer Matthew Bush**, **Carpenter Michael Nanartowich**, **Boatswain Stephen Bingham**, **Chief Engineer Brian Muir**, **2nd Assistant Engineer Kenneth Allen**, **Deck Machinist Christopher Bounds**, **Engine Utilityman Keith Randall**, **Supply Officer John Fletcher**, **Yeoman/Storekeeper Colleen Espinosa**, **Medical Services Officer Francis Corder**, **Purser Rhenda Beal**, **Ship's Communications Officer Gary Glassman**, **Chief Radio Electronics Technician Daniel Burlock** and **Chief Radio Electronics Technician Steven Skelton**.

The 2007 MSFSC Shipmate of the Year recognizes civil service mariners for demonstrated ability and skill in assisting, developing and providing on-the-job training to one or more MSFSC employees. The following unlicensed civil service mariners received the award in March: **Able Seaman Armando Carbungco**, **Boatswain's Mate Jermome Cruz**, **Wiper Rolando Deasis**, **Boatswain James Gibbs**, **Boatswain Khalid Muhammed**, **Chief Radio Electronics Technician Julie Parker** and **Deck Machinist Harold Schaum**.

Force Medical Officer Navy **Capt. Garry Rudolph** received the Vice

Adm. Richard Nelson award during the 47th Annual Navy Occupational Health and Preventative Medicine Conference, held in Portsmouth, Va.

Special Achievement Award recipient **Jonathan Olmsted** was recognized for his outstanding professionalism as master on USNS Catawba and as first officer from 2001 to 2007.

**Peggy Lawhorn**, a human resources specialist, was recognized for 40 years of government service. "Working with, meeting with, assisting with giving awards and advice, when needed, to the civilian mariners in all positions has brought pleasure and total satisfaction to what I do," she said. "I love coming to work every day."

Fair winds and following seas to the following civil service mariners as they enter the retirement rolls: **Assistant Cook Eduardo Aguilar**, **Able Seaman Alfred Bonga**, **Deck Machinist Jun Gragera**, **Able Seaman Robert Harding**, **Chief Engineer Loren Massey**, **Engine Utilityman Rogelio Maza**, **Wiper David McComas**, **Able Seaman Angel Obana**, **2nd Cook/Baker Pepito Obedicen**, **2nd Officer Julien Pantin**, **Able Seaman Daniel Rives** and **Unlicensed Junior Engineer Marthan Walker**. Of note, Bonga retired with 46 years of government service.

For more news of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command and civil service mariners, visit the Web site and online newsletter at [www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc](http://www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc).

## EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command-chartered ship MV Global Producer sailed from Durban, South Africa, March 10 with a load of RG-31 mine-resistant vehicles. These heavily armored vehicles are being used by U.S. military personnel in the Middle East supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent conducted an underway replenishment operation with Africa Partnership Station platform USS Fort McHenry March 18. APS, which has been deployed to West Africa since October 2007, is a joint, multinational effort that is providing intensive maritime training to African naval personnel in the Gulf of Guinea. As part of that training, Nigerian sailors embarked aboard Fort McHenry learned about underway replenish-

ment operations during Patuxent's refueling of the amphibious ship.

MSC hydrographic survey ship USNS Pathfinder entered U.S. 6th Fleet's area of operations March 21. The ship will spend several months in Europe conducting survey operations in the Norwegian and Baltic Seas.

Sealift Logistics Command Europe Commander Navy **Capt. Nicholas H. Holman** attended the Joint Logistics Symposium at the Pentagon March 24-27. At the symposium, Holman presented a briefing entitled, "The Last Nautical Mile: Logistics in U.S. 6th Fleet," about the command's operations in Europe and Africa.

SEALOGEUR's operations department welcomes **Greg Robinson** as the command's new reserve coordinator.

## CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea, fast combat support ship USNS Arctic, fleet replenishment oilers USNS Walter S. Diehl and USNS Kanawha, and fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba continued supporting maritime security operations, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring

Freedom in the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet area of operations in March and April. The ships supported the USS Harry S. Truman carrier strike group, the USS Tarawa expeditionary strike group and other naval forces in the area.

In March, Sealift Logistics Command Central coordinated seven dry-cargo operations, delivering more

than 350,000 square feet of combat equipment. Additionally, the command moved more than 52 million gallons of fuel.

Following an extensive overhaul period, fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba underwent a Shipboard Materiel Assessment and Readiness Testing inspection. Primarily a safety inspection, the SMART inspection's primary goal is to improve the efficiency and consistency of safety data

collection, make the data electronically accessible and to reduce costs.

The command welcomes Navy **Cmdr. Robert Ballenger**, incoming requirements officer, and bids farewell to Navy **Cmdr. Michael Thomas**, outgoing requirements officer. SEALOGCENT also bids farewell to Navy **Lt. j.g. Ryan Monroe**, routing officer, and Navy **Chief Warrant Officer Darrell Champion**, administrative officer.

## ATLANTIC • LINES

Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic honored four of its employees for exemplary service during a March ceremony. **Richard Bolduc**, SEALOGLANT representative in Jacksonville, Fla., received the Outport Civilian of the Year award; **Phyllis Stewart-Ruffin**, the command's legal counsel, was named Civilian of the Year; **Bruce Moon**, command security manager, was honored as Supervisor of the Year; and **Mike Menchaca**, SEALOGLANT port services officer, received the Civilian of the Quarter award.

Also in March, SEALOGLANT held a successful outport conference with attendees from the representative offices in Beaumont, Texas; Jacksonville and Port Canaveral, Fla.; and Sunny Point, N.C. Attendees received briefings on anti-terrorism and force protection, legal issues, and the Positioning and Sealift programs. Attendees also participated in a human resources question-and-answer session.

**Jack Davis**, Beaumont marine transportation specialist, oversaw the loading of Military Sealift Com-

mand-chartered vessel Westward Venture March 21. The ship loaded U.S. Army cargo in Beaumont and then went to Charleston, S.C.

During the port stop, with the help of **Tom D'Agostino**, SEALOGLANT Charleston marine transportation specialist, the ship took on more cargo, including 90 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles for delivery to combat forces participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

D'Agostino also oversaw the load of MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on, roll-off ship USNS Mendonca with 152,000 square feet of cargo plus 515 MRAPs — the most ever

loaded on an MSC-controlled ship — March 4-6.

Also in Charleston, **Mary Ann Nobles**, marine transportation specialist, coordinated the shift of the two moored training submarines and associated barges within the weapons station on behalf of the Navy Nuclear Power Training Unit. The movement will allow for dredging at the submarines' layberths.

**Bolduc** and **Allen Dickerson**, SEALOGLANT Jacksonville representatives, finished the loading coordination of Navy lighterage on MSC Maritime Positioning Ship SS PFC Eugene A. Obregon, destined for Diego Garcia.

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

April 14, National Steel and Shipbuilding Company laid the keel for dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Wally Schirra, the eighth in Military Sealift Command's Lewis and Clark class. The ship's namesake was a Navy captain and NASA pioneer. Schirra is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in the third quarter of 2009.

MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Navajo towed ammunition ship USNS Kilauea from Alameda, Calif., to Port Hueneme, Calif., March 27-28. Kilauea is slated to deactivate this summer and will stay in Port Hueneme until an official date has been determined. Following deactivation, Kilauea will go to Pearl Harbor.

Fleet replenishment oilers USNS Guadalupe and USNS Yukon participated in Navy aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan's composite training unit exercise March 29 to April 5. While underway, the oilers provided approximately 1 million gallons of fuel and conducted a vertical replenishment of dry goods to Reagan. In addition to replenishment duties, Yukon acted as aggressors as part of a visit, board, search and seizure exercise.

MSC's newest dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Amelia Earhart was christened in San Diego April 6. While in San Diego for the ceremony, Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., MSC commander, visited MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy, ocean surveillance ship USNS Able, fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux and dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd April 5-7.

Navy **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Tamara L. Fowler** received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for professional achievement while serving as security and facilities leading petty officer for SEALOGPAC from January to March 2008. While working in that position, Fowler processed 96 visitor requests and supported more than 350 people in maintaining MSC facilities and ships.

Welcome aboard, **Rashanda Smith**, Customer Support Unit West, and **Leona Babb**, contracting department.

Fair winds and following seas to **Bill Parry**, SEALOGPAC operations department, and **Ed Teeple**, information technology specialist, as they retire.

## FAR • EAST • HAILS

Army Gen. B.B. Bell, commander, United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces, Korea, sent a letter of appreciation to the commander and staff of Sealift Logistics Command Far East for the command's support of Korean-defense exercise Key Resolve 2008.

Military Sealift Command offshore petroleum distribution system ship MV Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler and Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus — with the embarked staff from Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three — participated in the March exercise, along with assigned MSC reservists and active duty and civilian personnel from SEALOGFE and Military Sealift Command Office Korea. "With your support, we have taken an important step in transferring wartime operational control of Republic of Korea forces to the ROK military by 2012," Bell wrote.

Rear Adm. Carol Pottenger, Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group Seven, Task Force 76, also sent a

"Bravo Zulu" message to SEALOGFE and MPS Squadron Three, recognizing the commands' support of the exercise. "Your efforts made a strategic difference in the understanding of what is possible in logistics over the shore in this dynamic region," Pottenger wrote.

Navy **Capt. Ulysses Zalamea**, Commander, MPS Squadron Three, and Lummus' civilian master **Capt. Rich Horne** hosted ROK Air Force Maj. Gen. Sung Ju Han, commander, ROK Transportation Command, along with 80 of his staff members, aboard the ship March 20. Four days later, a group of 80 students from the ROK's transportation school toured the ship.

Navy **Cmdr. Ron Oswald**, commanding officer, MSCO Korea, attended the inauguration ceremony for incoming Korea Maritime University president, Goe Don Oh, March 11 in Busan.

Oswald also attended a change of command ceremony April 4 in Busan, when Vice Adm. Chon-Hwa Park took command as the ROK navy's new fleet commander.



U.S. Navy photo by Bill Cook

Military Sealift Command civil service mariners Steward/Cook Jerry Latin, USNS Grasp; Supply Officer Tyrone Trotman, USNS Laramie; Chief Steward Victorino Damasco, USNS Yukon; and Chief Steward Lito Vasquez, Laramie, accept the Capt. David M. Cook Food Service Excellence Award from Navy Capt. Michael Casey (left), MSC logistics deputy director, and Rear Adm. Robert Wray, MSC deputy commander (right).

## Food service awards go to Laramie, Yukon, Grasp

By Bill Cook  
MSFSC Public Affairs

This year, fleet replenishment oilers USNS Laramie and USNS Yukon and rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp have proven that where food is concerned, they get it. These three ships won the MSC 2008 Capt. David M. Cook Food Service Excellence Award. Laramie won the award in the East Coast large ship category. Yukon took the honor for West Coast large ship, and Grasp won the award for small ship overall category.

Rear Adm. Robert Wray, MSC deputy commander, presented the awards at the International Food Service Executives Association Joint Military Awards Conference and Banquet in Denver April 5. On hand to accept the awards were Chief Steward Lito Vasquez and Supply Officer Tyrone Trotman from Laramie, Chief Steward Victorino Damasco from Yukon and Steward/Cook Jerry Latin from Grasp.

This is the second consecutive year that Yukon has won the award, and Latin has twice been part of a winning crew.

"To be crowned the best means providing the highest level of quality food service consistently to the officers and crew members of the win-

ning ship," said Roberta Jio, chief of MSC's food service policy and procedures.

Jio further noted that the competition was open to all of MSC's 40-plus government-owned, government-operated ships for nomination in the competition's three categories. The two large ship categories cover vessels with crews of more than 75, while the small ship category covers those with a crew of less than 75.

This award is an important one. The exceptional efforts of MSC's food service personnel are essential in keeping morale, health and quality of life at peak levels for the more than 5,100 civil service mariners they serve.

MSC has singled out East and West Coast ships annually since 1992 for excellence in food service operations. And for nine years, honors for the winning ships in the Capt. David M. Cook competition have been part of the prestigious IFSEA Joint Military Food Service Awards program.

The award is named in honor of the late Navy Capt. David M. Cook, former MSC director of logistics from 1995 to 1998. Cook was a visionary and catalyst in improving all aspects of the food service operations aboard MSC ships.

# MSC charter delivers humanitarian aid to Liberia

By Gillian Brigham  
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command-chartered ship SS Cleveland arrived in Monrovia, Liberia, March 24 carrying equipment and supplies for a contingent of U.S. Navy Seabee's in the Gulf of Guinea conducting humanitarian aid projects.

The equipment delivered by SS Cleveland, including a dump truck, bulldozers and generators, was used by members of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 on four construction sites. Africa Partnership Station is a U.S. Naval Forces Europe initiative that provides maritime training and humanitarian assistance to West and Central African nations.

"Military Sealift Command is proud to be supporting APS and all of the great work the U.S. Navy and our multinational and non-governmental organization partners are doing on the continent of Africa," said Capt. Nicholas H. Holman, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Europe.

Before arriving in Liberia, SS Cleveland loaded supplies in Rota, Spain, and picked up additional equipment in Tema, Ghana, where the Seabees were wrapping up a handful of construction projects.

In Liberia, the Seabees renovated two medical clinics, giving them electricity and running water as well as making structural improvements and roof repairs.

The detachment also repaired a road that led to one of the medical clinics so that it is more easily accessible to the local population. One of the largest high schools in Monrovia also received a new electrical system, new windows and doors, new roofing and a paint job courtesy of the Seabees.

"Whether we're delivering aid supplies ashore or refueling APS platform ships like USS Fort McHenry, MSC's efforts contribute to the goal of building regional maritime security which, in turn, promotes economic prosperity and stability in Africa and around the globe," said Holman.



The students of Monrovia Demonstration School in Monrovia, Liberia, study in the dark because their school does not have electricity. The construction equipment delivered by Military Sealift Command-chartered ship SS Cleveland was used by Navy Seabees to install an electrical system in the school, as well as to repaint the building and repair the roof, broken windows and doors.

## IA returns from Iraq: Experience improves leadership

By Anna Hancock  
MSC Public Affairs

"Iraq has been a life-changing experience, and I'm glad I had the opportunity to deploy," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jacquie Butler, Military Sealift Command's deputy director of command, control, communications and computer systems. Butler returned from Baghdad in March after serving as an individual augmentee deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Since June 2006, MSC has provided eight activity duty officers as individual augmentees in response to requests from Fleet Forces Command. Typically, supply corps officers, particularly those with contracting backgrounds, fill these positions. But this time, the Navy called for a computer systems and communications expert, and with two degrees from the North Carolina Wesleyan College and about 19 years in the Navy, Butler's professional qualifications made her perfect for the job.

"I didn't know what to expect. I was going into the hotbed of the fight," said Butler. Excited about the assignment, but

nervous about the unknown, Butler headed into the start of her first wartime deployment.

"I knew I would be gone for a year, but I didn't know the details of my job. I kept a positive attitude because I knew that once I got there, I would learn the job immediately," said Butler.

Butler arrived at Fort Jackson Army Base in Fort Jackson, S.C., Jan. 28, 2007, to undergo a two-week training period in weapons and convoy operations. Fourteen days later, she was in Kuwait for live-fire weapons and convoy exercises, and in just a week, Butler's boots were on the ground in Iraq. She arrived at Baghdad International Airport, minutes from Camp Slayer, the place she would call home for the next year.

Camp Slayer is one of six military bases within the Victory Base Complex residing in the southeastern corner of the Baghdad International Airport, which is surrounded by lakes, man-made canals and a number of permanent mounds of dirt used by U.S. Army communications teams. The area's abandoned prisons, palaces and former Baath-party headquarters made for a disconcerting set-

ting. Wild fruit trees sometimes muted the nearby sounds of war.

"I was surprised by the landscape in the area. There were date trees growing all around and an abandoned date farm within the complex," said Butler.

Butler reported for duty at one of the many former Hussein palaces, now transformed military office buildings. Named after the perfume that is thought to still lurk in the halls from Uday Hussein's underground brothel, the Perfume Palace now serves as a coalition military headquarters. Here, Butler got off to a rolling start.

Upon check-in, she learned that her position as information technology systems chief had expanded dramatically. She became responsible for logistics, information technology development work, contracts, personnel and support, computer networking, Web-site development, facilities and property management, and military and civilian award processing. Her duties ran the gamut.



The Perfume Palace, formerly belonging to Uday Hussein, now serves as a coalition military headquarters, and it was the office for Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jacquie Butler, Military Sealift Command deputy director of command, control, communications and computer systems, during her one-year deployment to Baghdad, Iraq.

Under her new assignment, she worked directly for the Multi-National Force-Iraq, deputy chief of staff for intelligence.

"The position was very complex," said Butler, who had no previous experience in engineering or facilities maintenance. "For example, it was about 137 degrees during the summer of 2007, and the air conditioning in the palace completely crashed. My people coordinated the building's system repair."

The quick repair ensured the intelligence support computer systems, which are susceptible to crashing in extreme temperatures, continued working without fail.

Butler and her team also conducted a full overhaul of the building's electrical system to reduce the amount of electrical shorts that occurred because of the extreme temperatures.

Butler was also responsible for ensuring her command of about 800 joint military and civilian personnel was properly staffed with the right skill sets, experience and time remaining on duty necessary to accomplish the command's mission. This, she noted, was one of her biggest obstacles.

Often, Butler would be called upon by the intelligence community for computer work. She and her team created a data system that tracked the number of violent incidents stemming from ethnic and religious conflicts. Information from this system is still being used in reports to Congress by Gen. David H. Petraeus, Multi-National Force-Iraq commander.

By the end of her deployment, Butler had administered more than \$20 million in information technology services contracts; developed multiple databases and Web applications; serviced about 1,800 user terminals for computer networking; managed about \$70 million of property throughout Victory Base Complex; processed more than 600 military awards; and conducted major facilities maintenance and repair.

"The environment was challenging and demanding. I grew personally and in my ability to lead and manage people and processes. If I had the chance, I would do it over again," said Butler.