April 2009

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

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command

MSC aids

Mariners in need

Article and photos Pg. 4

U.S. Navy photo by Mass communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason R. Zalasky

Controlling costs can help balance the budget

Three things were pretty consistent in President Obama's address to Congress and the nation in February. First, there is hope for our economy. Second, we're not over the rough spots quite yet. Third, it will take some belt tightening to work our way through this.

Since then, the president has unveiled his budget, and soon we'll see the particulars down at our level. But, one thing is sure from the onset: We've got to control costs while still meeting the mission, no matter what the bottom line is on the budget.

MSC cost-control initiatives

We're looking across the command at all our functions to see where we can drive costs down, whether it's fuel, maintenance, contracting or personnel. Let me give you some examples.

Fuel

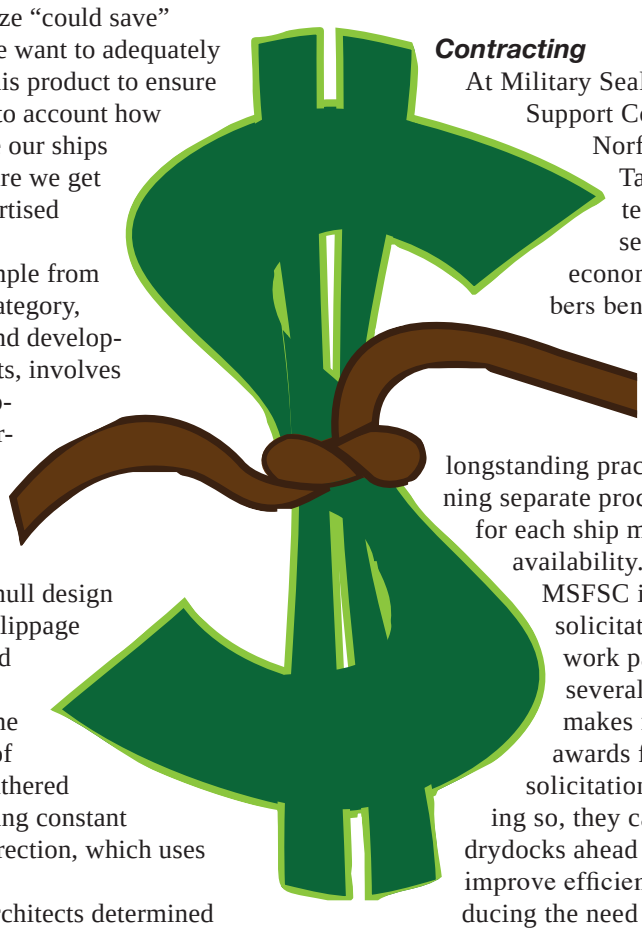
Since fuel is the biggest cost driver in our budget after personnel, that's a place we're concentrating our efforts. Rene Fry, our "fuel czar," has been working with a Navy-appointed task force to look at all the fuel initiatives in the Navy and MSC — more than 400 altogether. The task force divided them into three categories: quick wins (the low-hanging fruit); those requiring a moderate investment, but with a quick return on that investment; and those requiring research and development that will generate good returns over the life cycle of our ships.

Obviously, we're looking at the quick wins first. These are small changes to our business processes that require little or no investment and reduce costs immediately. For instance, when we buy fuel using our SeaCards (credit card program), we're now using a Web-based fuel ordering system that helps us monitor where our fuel purchases are made and helps us make sure all our calculations are made correctly.

This sounds mundane, I know, but here's what it does for us. When fuel rises above 60 degrees Fahrenheit, it expands. Since we buy most of our fuel by volume, and mostly in places where the average temperature is above 60 degrees, if the amounts delivered aren't temperature corrected, we get less fuel than we order. When you're buying several million gallons at a time, that adds up quickly to potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars. By making sure the delivery amounts are temperature corrected, we save significantly.

The second category, requiring moderate investments but generating quick returns, is aimed at efficiencies we can gain through software or hardware changes. Some of the money we're trying to gain to make those investments will come from the Chief of Naval Operation's Task Force Energy Program to reduce Navy's carbon signature by improving fuel efficiency.

One of our efforts in this category is the use of Intersleek 900 hull coating to reduce drag and improve fuel efficiency. Based on the manufacturer's claim of six percent fuel savings, we've evaluated that our fleet replenishment oilers would take 10-12 months to amortize the cost of the coating. Over the 10-year life cycle of the coating, we could realize savings between $17.5 million and $32 million. (I emphasize "could save" because we want to adequately research this product to ensure we take into account how we operate our ships to make sure we get those advertised savings.)



An example from the third category, research and development efforts, involves our oceanographic survey ships. The relatively flat-bottomed hull design results in slippage in wind and currents, reducing the precision of the data gathered and requiring constant course correction, which uses more fuel.

Naval architects determined that adding a skeg to the keel (kind of like adding winglets to the tips of airliner wings) results in a much more stable platform that doesn't wander off course. Now, we're getting more accurate mission data. We're also saving fuel and reducing wear and tear on the steering and propulsion systems. That reduces maintenance costs.

We're also looking to see if the new dry cargo/ammunition ship hull form, which also shows some course slippage in winds and currents, would benefit from a skeg.

Maintenance

MSC's maintenance philosophy is to furnish the necessary tools to the professional, experienced and licensed career marine engineers aboard our ships to enable them to make appropriate maintenance decisions. Kevin Baetsen, head of our headquarters Engineering Directorate, and his staff set our maintenance policies. Shipboard maintenance programs support those policies.

All MSC ships have sophisticated on-board maintenance-management systems that provide empirical data to the ship's engineers. This enables them to be objective about equipment conditions and maintenance requirements. It's a proactive approach that allows MSC to focus on reducing the total maintenance required through the systematic prediction of the sources of equipment failure before it happens. Preventive maintenance always costs less than reactive maintenance in the long run.

The shipboard automated maintenance-management system, or SAMM, is a computerized, menu-driven program for the ship's engineering department daily maintenance, record keeping and reporting functions. Modules include vibration analysis, lubrication oil analysis and boiler water and feed water testing and treatment. These automated procedures improve efficiency by eliminating time-consuming and costly "open and inspect" investigations.

Contracting

At Military Sealift Fleet Support Command in Norfolk, Jack Taylor and his team have researched the economy-of-numbers benefits that we could achieve if we revised our longstanding practice of running separate procurements for each ship maintenance availability. Instead, MSFSC issues a solicitation for work packages for several ships and makes multiple awards from that solicitation. In doing so, they can lock in drydocks ahead of time and improve efficiency by reducing the need for multiple government negotiations, evaluations and discussions on individual ship overhauls. This approach also reduces the proposal-preparation time for the maritime industry.

The first multi-ship solicitation for the East Coast was issued in February 2008 for two of our fleet replenishment oilers, USNS Kanawha and USNS Patuxent. A single contract was awarded to one shipyard. MSC saved more than $150,000 by combining the overhauls. That doesn't count time and money that would have been spent on multiple negotiations, evaluations and discussions had the contracts been for several individual ship overhauls.

The first West Coast multi-ship solicitation was for two dry cargo/ammunition ships, USNS Amelia Earhart and USNS Carl Brashear, in January 2009. That contract saved MSC more than $50,000.

Another solicitation for two dry cargo/ammunition ships on the East Coast, USNS Lewis and Clark and USNS Sacagawea, should have gone out as this edition was delivered. We expect to realize similar savings on this solicitation.

In 2008, MSFSC developed and implemented the use of 21 standardized general requirement work items across multiple ship classes. This provides timely incorporation of best practices, promotes lower bids for maintenance and repair solicitations, reduces potential financial risks to the command and lets shipyards know what to expect, reducing the cost of uncertainty and lowering bids.

Personnel

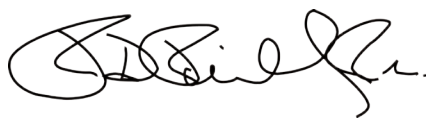
Afloat, for instance, we're looking at the crew requirements aboard our fast combat support ships, dry cargo/ammunition ships and fleet replenishment oilers. We're going to determine the conditions under which a rig team could be reduced and those when a full complement is required. If we can tailor the rig teams, based on the mission being performed on that deployment, we may be able to generate some cost savings.

Ashore, we're examining the possibility of moving the civil service mariner payroll under the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, which pays all other Department of Defense civilians. This would standardize civilian payroll processes, improve internal controls, reduce overall system costs and minimize the risk of CIVMAR payroll interruptions.

You can help

Driving down costs isn't easy when you're pretty lean to begin with. That's why we're looking everywhere for ways to cut costs. If you've got an idea, send it up your chain of command. Every idea helps. Every dollar saved is a step forward. Together, we can deliver.

Keep the faith,



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

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Lewis and Clark serves as anti-piracy platform

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Monique K. Hilley

While supporting Combined Task Force 151, Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark boatswain Kien Williams signals a helicopter to take off Feb. 6 in the Gulf of Aden.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Patrick M. Johnson-Campbell

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark completed a unique role in early March after supporting Combined Task Force 151, a command gaining international media attention for its anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. MSC's civil service mariner-crewed ship joined guided-missile destroyer USS Mahan and guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf for the mission.

Lewis and Clark served as an afloat staging base and a very visible at-sea holding facility for suspected pirates.

Piracy, which increased drastically off the coast of Africa in the past few years, drew international response. Lewis and Clark and other members of the task force worked closely with navies from more than 14 nations to counter the threat.

"USNS Lewis and Clark is an incredibly flexible and adaptable platform and was perfectly suited for this mission, as the ship possesses the necessary capabilities to launch and recover aircraft and temporarily house suspected pirates," said Capt. Bill McCarthy, master of Lewis and Clark.

CTF-151 is a multinational task force conducting anti-piracy operations to detect and deter piracy in and around the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Red Sea.

Embarked Marines ensured suspected pirates received safe and humane care.

"Suspected pirates received three meals each day, clean clothes, the opportunity to shower and medical treatment if necessary," said McCarthy. "In addition, suspected pirates' religious rights were respected. They had the opportunity to observe their faith-based practices."

Lewis and Clark was a readily available asset, as it was already operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, providing logistics support to U.S. and coalition ships in theater, when it was tasked to join the anti-piracy mission.

The ship — the first in its class — is one of the newest logistics vessels in the fleet and provides underway replenishment of food, ammunition, fuel and other supplies to U.S. Navy and coalition ships at sea.

"Although the crew of Lewis and Clark only had a short time to prepare for this mission, my crew proudly stepped up to the challenge and opportunity to be a part of this very important mission that has global impact," said McCarthy.

The civil service mariners on Lewis and Clark were responsible for the safe operation and navigation of the ship in its duties as a staging platform for CTF-151.

"The integration of the civilian mariners and embarked Navy and Marine Corps units was extremely smooth," said McCarthy.

"Everyone knew his or her responsibilities and worked closely together to ensure safe and effective mission accomplishment," he added. "Each day, we learned more about one another and our capabilities to enhance our interoperability."

The ship continued to provide underway replenishments to task force ships during the mission.

Lewis and Clark's support of CTF-151 anti-piracy operations as related to the broader role of noncombatant ships in the U.S. Navy is not new. U.S. merchant mariners have a long and storied history of providing direct support to U.S. military operations around the globe. From resupplying Navy ships at sea to delivering combat cargo to deployed troops in war zones, mariners have played an integral logistics support role in U.S. military operations for centuries.

"By providing an afloat staging base for CTF-151, the embarked Navy and Marine Corps units were able to maintain a forward presence," said McCarthy. "Together, we are all working to maintain security and stability in the maritime environment so legitimate trade and commerce can continue to safely transit this very important corridor."

Safeguard completes salvage operation in Palau

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

U.S. Navy photo by Navy Diver 2nd Class Mariano Lorde

Divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One gather on the stern of Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard in Palau, a tiny island nation in the Western Pacific in late February. The divers salvaged two 1930s-era anchors that presented a danger to navigation in Palau's port. They also salvaged 1,600 feet of heavy chain and a 30,000-pound buoy.

On Feb. 27, U.S. Navy divers and civil service mariners from rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard completed a dive and salvage operation that recovered an 85-year-old Japanese anchor from the sea floor in the Republic of Palau.

Safeguard arrived at Malakal, Palau, 500 miles southeast of the Philippines, Feb. 13. Divers from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii-based Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 18, went to work right away salvaging a sunken anchor and buoy, both of which presented a hazard to navigation.

Fifteen divers spent more than 10 hours at depths up to 115 feet over five days to complete the mission. When the first anchor was found, divers discovered a large steel ring with a large chain attached, which led to a second anchor.

"This was a total surprise to our divers," said Chief Warrant Officer Randy Duncan, MDSU One's officer in charge. Each anchor weighed about 14,000 pounds.

"At least 80 percent of the anchors were buried deep in about 12 feet of clay on the seabed," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charles Ehnes, U.S. 7th Fleet's dive and salvage officer who was embarked on Safeguard for the mission.

One of Safeguard's linear pullers — a hydraulic device used to pull debris loose from the ocean floor — worked for four hours before the anchors were freed. Then, the ship's 40-ton boom crane lifted them on board. Cleaning off debris from the anchors revealed they were Japanese and dated back to 1935. Safeguard's Third Officer Patrick Peck, who can read Japanese, translated what was written on the anchor.

"Writing on the anchors indicate that they were made when Emperor Hirohito was in power," Pek said.

Divers recovered 1,600 feet of large chains, weighing more than 100,000 pounds. Part of the chain was attached to the 30,000-pound sunken buoy.

The buoy, anchors and chains were used as a deep-water mooring system for large ships during World War II.

Divers also identified a temporary causeway, connecting two islands and a partially submerged Japanese trawler for possible future salvage operations.

The anchors, chains and buoy — some of which could be used for public display or future marine projects — were all turned over to the government of Palau's Bureau of Marine Enforcement.

Mariners Help

Catawba assists MV Faina du

By Gillian Brigham
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

Some of the Somali pirates who captured the crew of MV Faina stand on the deck of the ship holding weapons.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass communication Specialist 2nd Class Jason R. Zalasky

Twice a day for four months the crew of USNS Catawba heard the voice of acting Capt. Viktor Nikolsky crackle over the radio waves to the U.S. Navy ships nearby watching his vessel. He talked about food, about medicine and about the pirates that were holding him and his crew hostage. His voice was weak and tired but, despite the circumstances, unflappably positive. Every night he ended his transmission with the same farewell: "Good night, good dreams to you, your crew and your captain."

Catawba Third Mate Robert Tenenholz listened in on these calls each day.

"Even though it was tough for him, he was always very respectful and very thankful," said Tenenholz. "It is a true testament to why his crew was able to make it through more than four months in captivity."

Nikolsky was the first mate aboard the Ukrainian-owned, Belize-flagged cargo ship MV Faina when it was captured by Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean on Sept. 25. The ship's captain reportedly died of a heart attack shortly after the ship was captured, leaving Nikolsky and Faina's remaining 19 crew members at the mercy of the Somali pirates.

> "It really wasn't about Ukrainians, Russians or Americans anymore. It was about merchant mariners lending a hand to those we share an ocean with."

The ship, which was carrying 33 Soviet-made tanks and other ammunition, was quickly surrounded by U.S. Navy ships in the region because of concerns that the sensitive cargo would fall into the wrong hands.

Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba, led by civil service master Capt. Charles Rodriguez, was one of the ships U.S. 5th Fleet sent to keep watch over Faina during the long months the ship's ransom was being negotiated.

Of the 134 days Faina's crew spent in captivity, Catawba was present for 110 of them, arriving on-scene in mid-October a couple weeks after the ship was captured.

While the pirates were on board, Faina was kept anchored eight miles off the coast of Hobyo, Somalia. Catawba joined guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf and guided-missile destroyers USS Mason and USS Mahan near Faina's position.

During Catawba's time on station, the crew acted as though they were out at sea on a routine mission. They ran weekly fire and boat drills. They conducted basic training and the daily upkeep of the vessel. But they also prepared for the threats and contingency plans associated with their mission. Catawba frequently drilled with the other U.S. Navy ships in the vicinity and let visit, board, search and seizure teams practice boarding and searching Catawba.

Catawba and the U.S. Navy combatants assigned to keep watch over Faina were also re-supplied multiple times by MSC fleet replenishment oilers USNS Laramie, USNS Patuxent and USNS Tippecanoe.

After four months of eyeing the pirates from a distance, circling Faina and listening to Nikolsky's nightly battle to remain hopeful in the face of mounting despair, there was a breakthrough.

On Feb. 5, a helicopter flying over the deck of Faina dropped a package containing the $3.2-million ransom needed to free the ship from its captors. The pirates soon made their escape.

Catawba's crew immediately began making preparations to get Faina underway. The tug tied up alongside the cargo ship and sent Chief Mate Richard Satter and Third Assistant Engineer Bryan Villanova aboard after U.S. Navy security teams conducted a safety sweep of the vessel.

While aboard the freed ship, Satter and Villanova supervised as Faina received the necessary fuel from Catawba to get underway.

"From an engineering standpoint, the T-ATF class of tugs is not designed to refuel ships at sea," said Villanova. "But with a bit of ingenuity we were able to rig a two-and-a-half inch hose that we normally use to refuel ourselves from T-AOs. We gave them about 6,500 gallons of fuel, which took about an hour of pumping time."

The two mariners also prepped the ship to be towed by Catawba although, ultimately, Faina was able to sail into port on its own power.

Before getting underway,

Spread: Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba provides fuel and fresh water to MV Faina following the cargo ship's release by Somali pirates Feb. 5 after Faina's crew had been captive for more than four months. The U.S. Navy remained within visual range of Faina and maintained a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week presence. The ship was attacked on Sept. 25 and forced to proceed to anchorage off the Somali coast.

Cover: Nov. 9, the crew of MV Faina stands on the deck after a U.S. Navy request to check on their health and welfare. The Belize-flagged cargo ship was seized by pirates Sept. 25 and forced to proceed to anchorage off the Somali Coast. Catawba assisted Faina's crew during their time held captive.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael R. McCormick

oing Mariners

uring 4-month pirate captivity

Catawba's crew filled up their ship's five-gallon jugs with water for Faina's mariners. The tug crew donated shoes, shirts, coveralls, socks, underwear, shampoo, soap, Gatorade and food. In a final act of generosity, the civil service mariners aboard Catawba personally gave more than $2,100 to help Faina's crew get back on their feet.

"It really wasn't about Ukrainians, Russians or Americans anymore," said Tenenholz. "It was about merchant mariners lending a hand to those we share an ocean with. There was nothing more rewarding than being able to help put a smile on the face of our fellow mariners after their five months in captivity."

Villanova even exchanged e-mail addresses with one of Faina's engineers so they could keep in touch.

"I will remember this for the rest of my life," said Villanova. "I'm glad I was here and able to help, honored even to be asked to represent my country in aid to this ship."

At midnight on Feb. 7, Faina finally set sail and was escorted by Catawba and Mason to Mombasa, Kenya, where the ship's crew disembarked and flew home to the Ukraine.

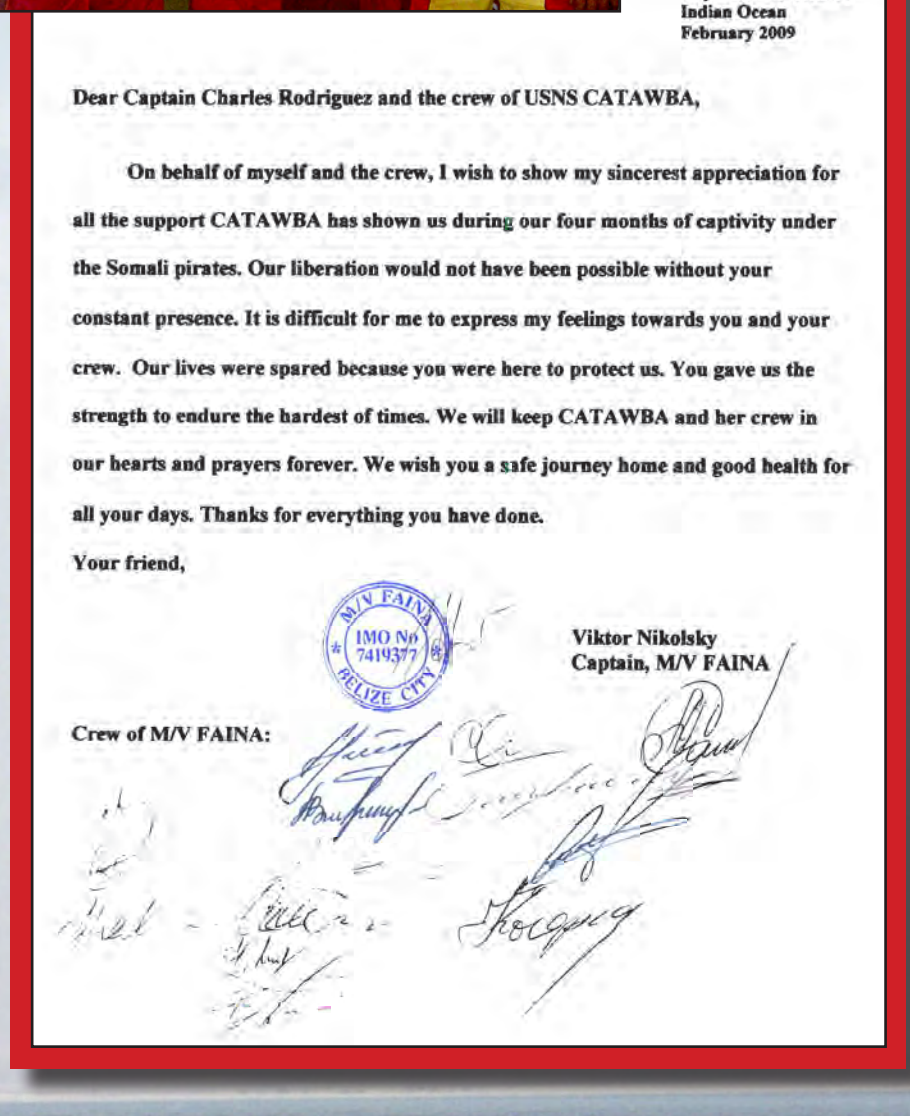
Prior to Faina's arrival in Kenya, Nikolsky and his crew sent a letter to Rodriguez and the other mariners aboard Catawba. In the note, Nikolsky thanked Catawba's crew for saving their lives.

"We had the opportunity to do something that, in the end, was really, really, significant," said Rodriguez of the tug's mission. "Captain Nikolsky's letter brought it home to each of us. He let us know how truly significant our seemingly endless routine of standing by to provide assistance had been."

"The letter sent by the captain of MV Faina was the best letter I have received in my entire life," agreed Catawba's supply officer Efren Apostol. "I feel so proud of being a member of MSC."

Crew members from MV Faina join crew members from Catawba after being freed from four months in captivity.

U.S. Navy photo



Viktor Nikolsky
Captain, M/V FAINA
Indian Ocean
February 2009

Dear Captain Charles Rodriguez and the crew of USNS CATAWBA,

On behalf of myself and the crew, I wish to show my sincerest appreciation for all the support CATAWBA has shown us during our four months of captivity under the Somali pirates. Our liberation would not have been possible without your constant presence. It is difficult for me to express my feelings towards you and your crew. Our lives were spared because you were here to protect us. You gave us the strength to endure the hardest of times. We will keep CATAWBA and her crew in our hearts and prayers forever. We wish you a safe journey home and good health for all your days. Thanks for everything you have done.

Your friend,

M/V FAINA IMO No 7419377 BELIZE CITY

Viktor Nikolsky
Captain, M/V FAINA

Crew of M/V FAINA:

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters celebrated Black History Month throughout the month of February. The events focused on the theme, the quest for black citizenship in the Americas. A special observance on Feb. 17 at the Washington Navy Yard featured guest speaker Barry Black, chaplain of the U.S. Senate. He spoke on the importance of celebrating the contributions made by black Americans in order to continue moving forward from the civil rights movement. The event concluded with an ethnic food sampling. Headquarters also held two brown-bag lunches, one featuring the PBS documentary "Eyes on the Prize," a film highlighting the obstacles black Americans faced regarding voting rights during the civil rights movement and the film "African American War Heroes: Patriotism and Valor."

MSC welcomes **Wayne Reece**, operations; **Gregory Russell**, comptroller's office; **Carol Scott**, strategic planning; **David Rall**, Sealift Program; **Robert Kenney**, engineering; and **Jim Tran**, command, control, communication and computer systems.

MSC bids farewell to **Tomas Tarr**, command, control, communication and computer systems; and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Jacqueline Butler**, deputy director, command, control, communication and computer systems, who retired after 20 years in the Navy.

COMPASS • HEADING

In February, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command recognized employees for their outstanding performance. Able Seaman-Maintenance **Michael Hales** received MSFSC's Marine Employee of the Year Award; MSFSC Mariner Award of Excellence was bestowed upon 2nd Officer **Ronald Bylsma**, 1st Assistant Engineers **Richard Garrison** and **Samuel Elliott**, Medical Services Officers **Paul Manning** and **Querubin Tagulao**, Pursers **Honesto Ramos** and **Carla Rush**, 1st Radio Electronics Technician **Colin Strong**, Chief Steward **Robert Prades**, Junior Supply Officer **Kevin Williams**, Able Seamen-Maintenance **Michael Hales** and **Christopher Jones**, Deck Machinist **Alfredo Ng**, 2nd Electrician **Roldan Aljentera** and Yeoman Storekeeper **Arturo Alcantara**. The MSFSC Shipmate of the Year Awards went to Chief Radio Electronics Technician **Douglas Banks**, Deck Machinist **James Benko**; Wipers **Carlos Credo Jr.** and **Calvin Fear**; Able Seamen-Maintenance **Mary Hipolito**, **Eugenia Yarbrough** and **Christopher Jones**; Engine Utilitymen **Angel Menes** and **Rynan Sulla**; and Purser **Antonio Sereno**. Navy **Information Systems Technician 1st Class Ronald McClarin** received the MSFSC Shore Sailor of the Year, and MSFSC Sea Sailor of the Year went to Navy **Electronics Technician 1st Class Matthew Courser**.

In February, **Capt. Jason Kennedy** and the crew of fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn provided a ship tour to Fleet Forces Command liaison officers Capt. Francisco Ponce from Mexico, Capt. Rafael Poveda from Ecuador, Cmdr. Carlos Leitao from Brazil and Cmdr. Marcos Henson from Argentina.

Fair winds and following seas to Chief Electrician **Cesar Flores**, Boatswain's Mate **Manuel Sepulveda**, and Engine Utilityman **Truman Grant** as they enter onto the retirement rolls. Also retiring is **Freddie Obleada** who leaves the federal government after 47 years of service.

For more MSFSC and civil service mariner news, visit the online newsletter at www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc.

EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command-chartered ship MV Ocean Titan arrived in Poti, Georgia, March 9 to offload Georgian military cargo that had been loaded in the Middle East where Georgian troops are among the coalition forces deployed to the region.

From mid-February through early March, the central Mediterranean had several MSC-chartered tankers ferrying various types of fuel throughout the theater. MT Maersk Michigan and MT NS Point delivered fuel to Mersin, Turkey, while MT Port Louis and MT Seychelles Progress sailed from St. Theodore, Greece, to delivery fuel to Naval Station Rota, Spain. Finally, MT Overseas Antigmar carried fuel from St. Theodore to U.S. forces stationed in Djibouti.

Sealift Logistics Command Europe's operations department welcomes aboard Navy **Boatswain's Mate First Class Zane Allen**. SEALOGEUR bids farewell to **Gillian Brigham,** public affairs specialist.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux provided a standby emergency-launch platform for a submarine rescue vehicle from March 15-17 in support of the nuclear submarine USS Olympia's sea trials off the coast of Hawaii. Olympia underwent a major systems overhaul during the months leading up to the sea trials. Sioux was equipped to launch the deep submersible rescue vehicle from its deck to provide an emergency escape for submarine crew members.

Rear Adm. Robert O. Wray Jr., deputy commander of Military Sealift Command, visited Sealift Logistics Command Pacific and the Ship Support Unit San Diego Feb. 26 and 27. While in San Diego, Wray held an all-hands meeting with the staff of SEALOGPAC and SSUSD. He also held an admiral's call with civil service mariners at MSC's Customer Support Unit West and met with the master and crew of MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser.

Eight SEALOGPAC and SSUSD members served as MSC representatives at the annual Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Convention, an event that attracted more than 2,000 attendees, Feb. 11-13, at the San Diego Convention Center.

Welcome aboard Navy **Lt. Bok Beato**, SEALOGPAC's new logistics officer and **Sergio Martines**, SSUSD supply specialist. SEALOGPAC welcomes back **Tom Brown**, marine transportation specialist, returning from Sealift Logistics Command Europe to the SEALOGPAC operations department. Farewell to Navy **Lt. j.g. Fadi Sacre**, who leaves SEALOGPAC logistics for his new assignment as supply officer of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 3.

Newest ship in the fleet

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jose Lopez, Jr.

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Wally Schirra — named after the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo astronaut and Navy captain — slides into San Diego bay after its christening and launch March 8. Schirra is the eighth ship of the Lewis and Clark-class operated by MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force. MSC accepted delivery of sister ship USNS Carl Brashear four days earlier. Brashear was launched and christened at NASSCO's shipyard Sept. 18, 2008, and underwent a series of tests and trials prior to delivery.

U.S. Navy photo by Bill Cook

U.S. Air Force Gen. Duncan J. McNabb (left), U.S. Transportation Command commander, visited large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Watkins in Newport News, Va., March 11 for a familiarization tour hosted by Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr., MSC commander. After the tour, which included visits to the bridge, the cargo spaces, the engine room and key points in between, the general presented Watkins master, Capt. Alex Ryan (center), and USNS Dahl master, Capt. Kurt Kleinschmidt (right), with commander's coins as tokens of his appreciation for the excellent tour.

"Everything I have seen aboard this ship reflects your patriotism," McNabb said to the ship masters. "Your contributions to the warfighter are obvious with every voyage and delivery of military equipment to its place of business. The job could not get done without your effort and that of your crew." Watkins and Dahl are MSC-owned ships operated by mariners who work for a private ship-operating company under contract to MSC.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Richard Bolduc, Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic representative in Jacksonville, Fla., gave a tour of large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Gordon and a Military Sealift Command briefing to about 30 people who attended a maritime prepositioning force planning course in February.

Feb. 20-21, **Al Dickerson**, also of the Jacksonville office, assisted with MSC tanker USNS Paul Buck's discharge of 230,000 barrels of fuel.

MSC combat stores ship USNS Saturn discharged 21 pallets of high-value contraband in Port Everglades, Fla., Feb. 23. The cargo was seized by U.S. forces operating in the Southern Command area of responsibility. **John Gregov**, SEALOGLANT representative in Port Canaveral, Fla., oversaw the cargo discharge. Saturn returned to Norfolk after the three-month deployment supporting SOUTHCOM. In addition to delivering 700,000 gallons of fuel and 262 pallets of supplies to U.S. combatants during 12 underway replenishment events, Saturn's crew collected and donated $900 to an orphanage in San Jose, Guatemala, and participated in ongoing community relations projects with Project Handclasp. The ship's return to Norfolk marked the end of the ship's 42-year career and the beginning of its deactivation.

Also at Port Canaveral, Gregov provided an MSC overview at a U.S. Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command briefing for Army Maj. Gen. James Hodge, SDDC commander Feb. 25.

On Feb. 19, **Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr.**, MSC commander, visited SEALOGLANT's office in Beaumont, Texas, and met with Marine Transportation Specialists **Joe Guivas**, **Lyndon Flynn** and **Jack Davis**. While in Beaumont, the admiral also visited the port authority as well as SDDC, and the U.S. Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force ship MV Cape Vincent, which is layberthed in Beaumont.

Reilly took the opportunity while at the Beaumont office to present Davis with the 2008 SEALOGLANT Outport Employee of the Year award. Davis was recognized for his work during numerous operations over the course of the year.

Feb. 6, dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary became a fully operational SEALOGLANT asset, joining USNS Lewis and Clark and USNS Sacagawea.

SEALOGLANT lost a valued employee and friend on March 2 with the untimely death of **Terry Smith**, a marine transportation specialist at its Port Canaveral, Fla., office. The command wishes to convey its sympathy and sense of loss to the Smith family.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Feb. 23-25, several groups in Thailand toured Military Sealift Command prepositioning ship USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless while it was pierside at Laem Chabang. Pless's Second Mate **Cornelius O'Malley** and Able Seaman **Manny Wilson** escorted 40 Royal Thai Marine Corps officer recruits Feb. 23. The group toured the cargo holds, stern ramp and main deck areas. The following day, Navy **Capt. Tony Martin**, commander of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two, and Pless' master **Capt. Joe Souza** hosted Thailand's Rear Adm. Pangpon Sirisangshcai, special admiral, Royal Thai Fleet Command. The admiral received a briefing on maritime prepositioning force operations and then toured the ship with Souza. Souza also led a group of children from the Melissa Cosgrove Children's Foundation — a Bangkok orphanage — along with their teachers, on a tour of the ship Feb. 25. The children ate ice cream in the galley before each received a Pless ballcap from Souza. "I think the kids' biggest thrill was looking through the binoculars on the bridge," Souza said.

On Feb. 27, Rear Adm. Nora Tyson, commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific and Task Force 73, visited missile range instrumentation ship USNS Observation Island at the nearby Sembawang commercial repair facility Feb. 27. Ship master **Capt. Thomas J. Pearse-Drance** and U.S. Air Force mission commander Maj. Darryl Baldeosingh led the admiral on a tour of the vessel.

On Feb. 6, a chemical response training exercise was held at Pier Eight, Busan. As the anti-terrorism commander for all Department of Defense facilities in Busan, Navy **Cmdr. Chris Cruz**, commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Korea and his staff provided overall coordination for the exercise. The main participants included the Republic of Korea 53rd Homeland Defense Battalion, U.S. Army's 837th Transportation Battalion, Busan Storage Facility Fire Department and the South Korean National Police. "This successful exercise, which received significant local media attention, highlighted the great working relationship between the U.S. military forces and many host nation agencies that comprise the team of first responders to any incidents that may occur in Busan," Cruz said.

Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Tasia Brick** received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal Feb. 6 for her outstanding performance while deployed to Cobra Gold 2009. Brick was instrumental in setting up and running MSC's mobile sealift operation command center, a mobile communications facility designed to operate where a port's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed.

On Feb. 18, Cruz met with retired Korean Army Brig. Gen. Sung-Ik Hong, director of the Republic of Korea's Second Supply Depot and a neighbor of MSCO Korea on Pier 8. The two discussed Pier 8 issues, including operations and anti-terrorism initiatives.

On Feb. 26, Cruz and Army Lt. Col. Tripp Blanton, commanding officer of 837th Transportation Battalion, attended a lunch and executive meeting hosted by Korean Maj. Gen. Han-Sun Kim, commander of 53rd Homeland Defense Battalion. The 19th Expeditionary Command, Material Support Command, Korea and the Korean Service Corps also attended.

From the Indian Ocean, SS PFC Eugene A. Obregon, USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams, MV LTC John U.D. Page, MV CAPT Steven L. Bennett, and USNS SGT William R. Button, with Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two staff embarked, took part in a group sail, Feb. 9-10, exercising the ability of the squadron ships to sail in formation. After conducting close-in maneuvers, the ships sailed around Diego Garcia during the night, returning to Diego Garcia's lagoon the following morning. This was MPS Squadron Two's second group sail, the first being held in November 2008.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea joined sister ship USNS Lewis and Clark to support U.S. 5th Fleet operations in March. Fleet replenishment oilers USNS Big Horn and USNS Walter S. Diehl also joined Sealift Logistics Command Central operations in March. The Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships provided support to the recently arrived USS Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group and amphibious assault ship USS Boxer.

The command says farewell to MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply, which was in the area of operations supporting the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group. Supply departs SEALOGCENT following a six-month deployment.

USNS Salvor debeaches ship grounded in Hawaii

By Meghan Patrick
MSC Public Affairs

Three days and four rescue attempts after the U.S. Navy's 567-foot-long guided-missile cruiser USS Port Royal ran aground on a rock and sand shoal off the shore of Honolulu, Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor and other vessels helped to successfully free the grounded ship, Feb. 9.

Salvor's civil service crew members and divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Pearl Harbor Company, provided assistance to the beached ship throughout the operation.

Eric Frank, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command towing and salvage specialist and retired U.S. Navy master diver, returned to his hotel room the evening of Feb. 5 to pack his bag after spending two weeks with Salvor's crew and MDSU 1 divers. He had been assisting in a debeaching exercise and had just finished helping with the routine offloading of Salvor's salvage equipment earlier that day. At 10 p.m., Frank answered a phone call from a local master diver, who notified him that the previous week's exercise had come to life.

"A USS ship is aground," reported the master diver. "Salvor may be tasked to assist." Frank was shocked. In 32 years of salvage and rescue, he had never witnessed the grounding of a commissioned Navy ship.

After authenticating the report, Frank woke up Salvor's master, Capt. John Sargent, with a call. In Sargent's 26-year career, this was also a first.

"You think it's valid?" Sargent asked.

"You're going to get a call," Frank predicted. "I'm on my way over."

Frank checked out of his hotel, and minutes into his drive, Sargent called back.

"Salvor's tasking isn't confirmed, but Pacific Fleet wants to know how long it would take for us to get underway," said Sargent. "I told them six hours."

The men did not waste any time; they immediately recalled the shoreside civil service mariners back to the ship and called Pearl Harbor's fleet and industrial company to arrange for a crane to assist Salvor in reloading the pieces of salvage equipment needed for the task at hand. Frank canceled his plane ticket home.

At midnight the tasking was confirmed by David Carmody, MSC's representative in Pearl Harbor, and by 7:20 a.m., Salvor was underway with 26 crew members and 14 Navy divers. The ship soon arrived on scene, where Port Royal was aground the length of its hull, in 17- to 22-foot deep water.

Sargent positioned buoys at specific depths for shallow-water reference points and waited for further instruction from the operation team aboard Port Royal, and a large ocean tug, which has twice the pulling strength of Salvor, arrived on scene.

Over the next three days, the assisting ships made three attempts to free Port Royal. The daily window of opportunity was narrow because the debeaching attempts were most effective when made during high tide.

Rescuers learned in their first and second attempts that the ship could not be pivoted off of the reef. Because of Port Royal's position, the ship needed to be pulled laterally off the shoal. MDSU divers, who were tasked to harness the rescue ships to Port Royal, performed area surveys with side-scan sonar equipment after every attempt to inform the operational commanders of the underwater damage and positioning of the ship.

Civil service mariners on the deck of Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor work to debeach the grounded USS Port Royal.

"Fifty percent of salvage is diving," said Frank, who noted that the MDSU divers faced the dangers of low visibility and tumbling on the sharp reef by shallow-water swells.

Norfolk-based Mark Helmkamp, rescue and salvage and fleet ocean tug class manager of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, helped advise the divers throughout the operation.

"Time is of the essence in salvage," said Helmkamp. "With salvage there is no rest. You're in it until it's over. The ocean doesn't stop pushing the ship up on the rock."

At 2:30 a.m. on Feb. 9, Salvor and the other vessels successfully freed Port Royal during the rescue team's fourth attempt.

"Everyone was elated," said Sargent. "The experience was unique and interesting. I certainly learned a few tricks. Because salvage ships function as team players, it's always useful to observe how the pot of soup is stirred. Every rescue situation gives me a better understanding of how salvage ship responsibilities fit into the big picture."

Port Royal, bearing damage, was towed to shore. Salvor's crew stayed at the scene for two extra days to recover Port Royal's anchors and 1,800 feet of chain, which were removed, along with many crew members, to lighten the load during the salvage effort.

"Salvage teams stay out of the limelight most of the time," said Frank. "But when situations like the Interstate-35 bridge collapse in Minnesota, Hurricane Katrina or the Trans-World Airlines Flight 800 disaster occur, they appear and shock the world with their capabilities."

Salvor is currently supporting U.S. 3rd Fleet operations.

Operation Deep Freeze

Above: Military Sealift Command dry cargo ship MV American Tern participates in Operation Deep Freeze, the annual mission to replenish the National Science Foundation's McMurdo Station in Antarctica. The annual mission is held in the southern hemisphere's summer months of January and February. Since 1955, MSC ships have transported fuel and supplies for McMurdo's community of scientists, military personnel and support staff that ranges from 200 in winter to 1,200 in summer. American Tern endured unpredictable travails to deliver more than 7 million pounds of cargo to McMurdo and sail away with a nearly equal weight of the station's waste.

"Every year brings a different set of challenges to the strategic sealift mission while operating in one of the world's most austere environments," said Rick Appling from Sealift Logistics Command Pacific. "Last year the strategic sealift ships encountered dense ice fields further north in the Antarctic Circle than they'd experienced in recent history. This year the ice fields were minimal, but American Tern encountered a low pressure system generating extreme wind and seas in the southern-most latitudes of the Antarctic Circle, a region historically promising moderate winds and calm seas."

Right: Swedish ice breaker MV Oden cuts a path through ice to McMurdo for MSC tanker USNS Lawrence H. Gianella. The tanker delivered more than 5 million gallons of fuel this year, including the supply used to fuel Oden during the mission.

This year, MSC embedded representatives in the forward-deployed Joint Task Force-Support Forces Antarctica staff. Larry Larsson, SEALOGPAC, and Appling, respectively, sailed on Gianella and Tern during the operation.