

January 2009

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Lewis and Clark

keeping the fleet active in Central Command

Article and photos
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INSIDE — Grasp, Grapple participate in salvage exercise • MSC supports Chilean Navy

Looking toward a new year

2009 items from the commander's 'wheel book'

As is the case each month, our public affairs staff puts together the next issue of *Sealift* and sends it to the printers about three weeks prior to its distribution to the fleet. And, I have my crack team of journalists firmly reminding me that as of this date, Dec. 18, 2008, I am woefully behind in providing my Commander's perspective.

However, given all of the events of the past six weeks, I thought it very appropriate that instead of discussing one particular topic this issue, I cover a number of important items that will be shaping the way MSC executes its mission during the upcoming year. These are issues listed in my wheel book, that memo pad, pocket calendar or personal data assistant that leaders and managers always have on their person when exercising the art of MBWA – management by walking around. And while I don't have the privilege of moving about any of our ships and talking with MSC shipmates nearly as much as I would like, my wheel book currently contains a number of strategic, operational and business issues having significant bearing on how I believe 2009 will unfold for this dynamic organization. Here are but a few of them.

The economy

I predict that the next non-fiction best seller in the book world will be the one that best describes the road the United States (and in tandem, the world) economy travelled down the past six months (or longer). All of us are affected in one way or another in this recession, and the transportation industry is no exception. It also didn't help being subjected to skyrocketing fuel costs this past year, both at work and at home. As I write this column, the jury is still out on what sort of government assistance, if any, will be provided to American automobile manufacturers.

As I listened to talk radio while driving into work the other morning, a noted Harvard economist was answering a question posed by a caller as to why our national banking institutions hadn't done much with the \$700 billion in government loans provided to these companies in the past few weeks, since it appeared that this action was supposed to assist the home mortgage industry and provide funds for lending purposes. And, why was credit still so tight?

His answer was that these financial institutions needed funds to guarantee that there were sufficient assets in the vault to support the everyday transactional processes, the buying and selling of goods and the handling of cash transactions and insuring that individuals still had the ability to maintain their personal financial portfolios (or in some cases, what was left of one's financial portfolio), without the country transitioning from a time of recession to a depression.

The new administration

Change is certain when the new administration assumes its leadership role with the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama on Jan. 20. However, we still have a leadership role in the world as it pertains to events on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan. I do not envision MSC's operational requirements changing in the near term, and no one has told me to be prepared to ratchet back in terms of the support we provide to the warfighter.

As events unfold associated with the arrival of the senior leaders who will be chosen to lead the Department of Defense, those new leaders will be vetted by the administration, and several will go before the Senate for confirmation. As this new team takes charge, Navy, U.S. Fleet Forces Command and U.S. Transportation Command leaders will continue briefings started with President-elect Obama's transition team in December designed to familiarize the president-elect with the national security challenges evident on the global landscape, including Navy and U.S. Transportation Command logistics operations in progress around the world.

One strategic topic of discussion involves the withdrawal of U.S. combat capability from Iraq for return to the United States or redeployment to Afghanistan. Another topic will be assessing the impact of this global economic recession and its effect on industrialized nations, our trading partners and countries already challenged by local strife, poverty or disease. Some of the decisions emerging from these discussions have the potential to influence MSC operations — where, when and to what extent we perform our mission.

My sense is that this process may take months, if not a year, to translate into definitive operational changes. Some sort of trigger event, like an environmental, weather-related disaster or politically driven incident could very well be a significant catalyst for change. It seems to me that the world has had its fair share of these events in the last couple of years, so we will just have to wait and see.

Our MSC workforce

Notwithstanding the above, MSC still has plenty of activity going on around the world. This includes continuing to accept delivery of new dry cargo/ammunition ships, decommissioning our legacy ammunition and combat stores ships and working with U.S. Fleet Forces Command to address the global force management of the rescue and salvage ships. We're also planning and executing more hospital ship deployments, continuing high-speed-vessel operations, working high-visibility ocean surveillance and survey ship operations in the Western Pacific and supporting prepo-

sitioning and strategic sealift sustainment operations.

These enduring missions mean that I must do everything in my power to sustain this organization during our nation's economic downturn while proactively posturing MSC for future change, given these uncertain times. And one thing is for certain — you can't sustain an organization if you embark down a path involving significant changes to your workforce without considerable thought and attention to detail. So, my strategic guidance to MSC senior leadership regarding this topic is simple. I do not intend to embark on any personnel workforce initiatives that involve having to lay off MSC employees.

Sometimes, this is known as a personnel RIF, or reduction in force. Whatever it is called, I'm not going to go there. I believe we can manage our personnel numbers across the organization by carefully monitoring normal attrition patterns (usually associated with retirement, or occasionally when an employee finds a better opportunity outside of MSC that he or she wishes to pursue).

This will require a careful balancing act between recruitment, retention, attrition and our changing force structure (in with the new ships, out with the old, plus manning the submarine tenders). Is it a zero-sum game? No, particularly when our budget is certain to be subjected to cuts in the future. This is one of the reasons why in 2009 we will be taking a hard look at how we expend funds allocated for overtime and premium payments. I am willing to take some risk in this area, rather than have to ask individuals to seek employment elsewhere.

At MSCHQ, and with support from Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, we closely track the costs of providing our services to our warfighting customers. We measure this in terms of ready-for-tasking days, both in port and underway. The numbers vary between ship classes, but I can tell you that the demand signal for our services has gone up while we continue to hold the line on costs. I will also tell you that in discussions with U.S. Fleet Forces Command our fleet operators face upwards of a \$1.8 billion funding shortfall this fiscal year across the Navy.

What this means is that MSC will be asked to tee up methods by which we can reduce the fleet's bill for our services. This includes everything from fuel, to maintenance and repair, to personnel costs. We have worked hard the last three years to become more efficient, monitor our operating habits and be innovative in the way we operate our ships. My direction to the staff is to continue this approach and find ways to share more of our numbers, be it financial data, maintenance accomplishment information, port costs, or whatever else helps. The more we collectively educate ourselves, the better off we are in the long run.

Our Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute afloat survey

This past year I sent a survey to our afloat workforce to solicit feedback on working conditions and personnel processes and to allow you to voice your concerns. I believe we have wrapped up collecting these surveys, and I must confess I was disappointed with the number of responses received. My understanding is that our return rate was around 20 percent, which is statistically at the extreme lower bounds of what would constitute a valid baseline from which to make conclusions. I welcome any feedback from the deck plates on this subject in terms of how the survey process was executed. I realize that this undertaking has its challenges, given the dispersion of the MSC fleet and the constant turnover of our crews, but I want to ensure that the next time we do a survey, we improve the process. I will also ensure that the results are shared with you as soon as possible.

The buddy rule

This month we reached a settlement prior to heading into arbitration hearings associated with upwards of 90 grievances associated with the buddy rule.

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MSC, MDSU 2 use real-life scenario to prep for salvage ops

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Paul Williams
NECC Public Affairs

The crews of rescue and salvage ships USNS Grapple and USNS Grasp along with Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2 participated in a two-week de-beaching exercise that ended Nov. 26 in Anzio Beach at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Va.

The annual salvage training exercise provided a real-life training environment for the crews of Grapple and Grasp and MDSU 2 sailors who practiced removing former U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender *Salvia* from a beached position.

Chief Warrant Officer James Dertilis, assigned to MDSU 2 and the liaison between the two ship's civil service masters and MDSU 2 operations, explained that the exercise was not as cut and dry as they anticipated.

"In the past, when MDSU would conduct this type of training, we would have [*Salvia*] out by the next day," said Dertilis.

This time, however, when the *Salvia* was beached during a high spring tide, an intervening low tide caused *Salvia* to rest between a sand bar and the water's edge. After several more days of bad weather, including winds in excess of 45 knots, *Salvia* swung around 180 degrees, and the old World War II ship settled in the sand 30 feet farther up the beach than was intended.

By the time the winds subsided, more than 216 tons of force was required to remove *Salvia* from the beach.

"A lot more of her was aground than Grapple could pull," said Dertilis. "That is why we requested help from Grasp as well."

With a Thanksgiving Day deadline bearing down on the crews, they wasted no time laying four legs of a salvage anchoring system known as beach gear, which



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

U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender *Salvia* (left) is de-beached by Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ships USNS Grasp and USNS Grapple at Anzio Beach near Little Creek, Va., Nov. 26.

comprises a 6,000-pound salvage anchor, 90 feet of anchor chain, wire rope and buoys. The beach gear provided anchoring stability to the two rescue and salvage ships while they pulled the stranded vessel free.

"Before deploying beach gear, MDSU 2 divers surveyed the area seaward of the stranded vessel and placed buoys in locations calculated to drop the [beach gear] legs, said Capt. Douglas Casavant Jr., Grapple's, civil service master. "After the gear was deployed, the salvage ships positioned themselves to recover the wire ends of the beach gear legs."

After the wire rope was passed to the stranded *Salvia* from the rear of Grapple and Grasp, hydraulic

wire pulled against the beach gear salvage anchors, generating the required 216 tons of freeing force to release *Salvia* from the sand.

Finally, after sunrise Nov. 26, *Salvia* came loose from the sand, was taken in tow by Grasp, and the training was essentially complete.

"This was one of the most challenging de-beaching training evolutions in my recent memory," said Casavant. "It fully tested the skills and abilities of all concerned. We proved that the combination of Military Sealift Command and Navy divers can work together in challenging conditions and provide the U.S. Navy with a fully capable salvage platform."

Chilean navy embarks on MSC oiler

By Meghan Patrick
MSC Public Affairs

The crew of Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon hosted four members of the Chilean navy Dec. 1-12 for a familiarization cruise. Chile is slated to receive the deactivated USNS Andrew J. Higgins, which sailed with MSC from 1987-1996 and is a sister ship to Yukon.

Since 1996, ex-Higgins has been part of the Maritime Administration's National Defense Reserve Fleet berthed at Suisun Bay, Calif. The ship is scheduled to transfer to Chile in late 2009 in a Foreign Assistance Act grant transfer. These transfers of excess defense equipment are approved by the Department of the Navy, Department of State and other agencies, and require legislative approval by Congress.

"Ship transfers like this directly support security cooperation objectives and the U.S. maritime strategy and help build partnership capacity to conduct

peace and stability operations," said Navy Cmdr. Steve Poppe, branch head of ship transfers at the Navy International Programs Office. "It is a win-win for both navies."

The ex-Higgins will replace Chile's sole oiler, the 42-year-old *Araucano*, which was built in 1966 and has served the Chilean navy for its entire sea-going career.

Twenty years newer and a different class than the *Araucano*, the ex-Higgins contains several structural and operational differences that its new crew will need to understand before taking the vessel to sea next year.

During the Chileans' time aboard Yukon, they worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Yukon's crew, observing and participating in a wide range of operations, including 14 underway replenishments, a major vertical replenishment during which 169 pallets were transferred, deck loading qualifications for Navy and Coast Guard helicopters, a cargo fuel load out and two port arrivals and departures.

Yukon's civil service master Capt.

William Helton matched each Chilean crew member with a Yukon crew member who had similar responsibilities, to teach the Chileans specifics of the day-to-day operations. The four Chileans aboard Yukon are slated to be part of the ex-Higgins' crew when the ship transfer is complete. This includes the prospective commanding officer, Chilean Capt. Guillermo Gunckel.

"The crews worked very well together, and there was considerable genuine bonding between Captain Gunckel and myself," said Helton.

Helton guided Gunckel in maneuvering the ship during multiple evolutions, including sailing in and out of port, completing a man overboard drill and changing course while conducting a dual underway replenishment.

"I encouraged him to get a feel of the ship," said Helton. "After seeing his expert handling of Yukon during these evolutions, I can see that Captain Gunckel is now definitely familiar with the class of ship."

Gunckel agrees.

"It was useful for me to feel the ship in my hands," said Gunckel. "We really appreciated this opportunity, and we are very grateful to all of the crew for their help."

While Gunckel worked with Helton, the other Chilean sailors learned from their U.S. counterparts, taking voluminous notes in their books as Yukon's crew members gave tours and answered questions. While the Chileans could speak English, three MSC Spanish-speaking representatives, two from the crew and one from MSC headquarters, were available to translate when necessary.

Chilean navy Lt. Cristobal Romero, the transfer project manager, spent time with Chief Engineer Dave Johnson in the engine room getting a feel for what happens in the engineering spaces during underway replenishments and when



Chilean navy Capt. Guillermo Gunckel, left, and Capt. William Helton, civil service master of fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon, take a break before conducting an underway replenishment with amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans (background).

entering and leaving ports. Chilean Petty Officer Alejandro Alarcon was matched with Yukon Pumpman Art Spencer and surveyed the hoses and pumps during underway replenishment to ensure that the equipment functioned properly. Chief Petty Officer Jose Miguel Ferrada shadowed Rod Kiebiak, Yukon's ship's boatswain, on deck during underway replenishment, operating winches, launching messenger lines for the fuel hoses and conducting other deck operations.

"It has been a very intense and satisfying experience for all of us," said Helton. "In addition to all the events and demonstrations, we had numerous discussions at the 'long table' [where Helton and the department heads sit] on a wide variety of topics."

"The positive Chilean and U.S. interactions aboard the Yukon exemplify how the ship transfers help to foster stronger bonds with American allies," said Poppe. "Connecting with other countries through these ship transfers invokes trust and cooperation. When crisis happens, these already established relationships help us execute as a team."



Chilean navy Chief Boatswain's Mate Jose Miguel Ferrada gets some hands-on experience in Yukon's winch control box.

Replenishin

Lewis and Clark supports CENTCOM

By Gillian Brigham
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

It's 8 a.m. on a windy, china-blue November day in the Persian Gulf. Capt. James White, master of Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark, stands on the ship's starboard bridge wing, binoculars in hand. The sun shines down brightly on a horizon dotted with wooden fishing dhows, commercial container ship traffic and plumes of smoke rising from the oil platforms in the distance. White's attention, however, is focused on USS Ramage, the guided missile destroyer kicking up a wake as it maneuvers to catch up with his ship.

The steady whir and thump of helicopter blades fills the air as Lewis and Clark's two commercial helicopters circle overhead. For the next few hours they will dart between three flight decks, carrying pallets of cargo in giant nets suspended beneath the aircraft. Lewis and Clark is delivering supplies to Ramage and to MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply, which is fast approaching over the horizon.

Lewis and Clark pulls alongside Supply to refuel as Ramage hangs back in the distance, waiting to receive fuel from Supply, all while the helicopters continue their loop around the ships, picking up cargo from one deck and delivering it to another. It's a complicated operation with lots of moving pieces.

The noise of an unfamiliar engine sounds overhead and sailors from all three ships peer up into the sun-saturated sky. A patrol craft flies in low and quick, assessing the action below. It is an Iranian surveillance plane. Its presence is unexpected but not, in fact, surprising. This refueling operation is taking place 45 miles off the coast of Iran.

Lewis and Clark is in the thick of a 10-month deployment to the Persian Gulf, supporting U.S. Navy and coalition ships conducting oil platform security missions, anti-piracy patrols and other operations in a theater that covers more than 2.5-million square miles.

"We have a lot of real estate out here," said Capt. Stephen H. Kelley, commander of MSC's Bahrain-based 5th Fleet area command — Sealift Logistics

Command Central. "I don't think people realize how big the area is. We have a lot of ground to cover. For instance, the distance from Djibouti to the bottom edge of Somalia's coastline is about the distance from New York City to Miami. And the distance from Kuwait to Somalia is like the distance from New York to Los Angeles."

Lewis and Clark left Norfolk, Va., Sept. 22 on its second deployment. It arrived in the 5th Fleet area of operations Oct. 18.

The first of the 14-ship class of the Navy's new dry cargo/ammunition ships, Lewis and Clark is giving its crew and the logisticians at SEALOGCENT the opportunity to figure out the best way to use this dynamic new member of MSC's fleet.

Navy Lt. Mike Bell, the assistant officer in charge of the ship's 10-member military detachment, says the crew has gotten creative with putting the ship's cavernous cargo holds to good use.

"We did some unique deployment planning this time and used a new concept," said Bell. "Because we have so much storage space, before we left we went out to the ships in the expeditionary groups

we're supporting and asked if we could store anything extra for them while deployed. A lot of our combatant customers are small ships and don't have room to store things like spare parts or special food or other stuff they might not get during normal replenishment operations. Eleven of the 12 ships we asked came back to us with things to store for them.

"It's a 'warehousing' concept. Now when one of these ships needs one of the items we're storing for them, they just shoot us an e-mail, and we deliver the items along with their regularly scheduled supplies the next time we meet up with them."

To keep track of the dozens of ships and the thousands of pounds of supplies to be delivered to each one, Lewis and Clark's crew established a special labeling system to keep track of who gets what. The labels are color- and shape-coded. USS Ramage's supplies, for instance, are tagged with stickers that have brown stars on them. Fellow MSC ship fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe, on the other hand, is represented by pink diamonds.

With this system, said Bell "only one pallet in the history of the ship has gone somewhere unintended. And we got it back."

White, the master in charge of Lewis and Clark's 125-member civil service mariner crew, said the ship has settled into a steady routine thus far in their deployment. "We're in and out of port every week to pick up fresh fruits and vegetables for the coalition ships at sea. We'll service three to eight ships with supplies and go back into port to re-stock."

Despite the semblance of routine, duty at sea, especially in the Persian Gulf, is never predictable.

"There is a lot of turbulence in tactical, real-world operations," said Kelley.

"We have to react very quickly to changing events and the ships have to be ready to respond to those changes. Our goal is to let combatants worry about their mission, not about where their next meal is coming from."

Right: A civil service mariner aboard dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark handles a shot line during an underway replenishment with Royal Navy Frigate HMS Lancaster Nov. 16. Lewis and Clark is on a 10-month deployment supporting U.S. and coalition ships in U.S. 5th Fleet.

Below: Lewis and Clark refuels Royal Navy mine hunter HMS Ramsey during a deployment to the Persian Gulf.

Cover: A watch stander on Lewis and Clark keeps tabs on MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply as Lewis and Clark's helicopters conducts a vertical replenishment operation with the ship.



U.S. Navy photo by Gillian Brigham



Photo by Royal Navy Lt. Cmdr. John Craig

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U.S. Departme

Secretary of the Navy announced the names of Clark-class dry cargo/ammunition ships as T-AKEs, Dec. 2. Matthew Washington Chambers and four other namesakes of the four new General Dynamics NASSCO ships, San Diego, Calif. Currently, MSC has 14 T-AKEs. In total, 14 are expeditionary combat logistics and at-sea

ng the fleet



One of Lewis and Clark's two embarked commercial helicopters flies past guided missile destroyer USS Ramage during vertical replenishment operations.

U.S. Navy photo by Gillian Bringham



A sailor from Lewis and Clark's 11-member military department observes the ship's refueling operation with MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply as guided missile destroyer USS Ramage waits its turn for fuel in the background.

U.S. Navy photo by Gillian Bringham

new T-AKEs named

nt of Defense

Donald Winter announced four new Lewis and Clark-class ammunition ships, known as the Perry, Charles Drew, and William McLean. These ships are pioneers and will be the first of their kind. They are being built by the Naval Shipyard in San Diego and will have five operational T-ACEs to support MSC's various positioning roles

and are scheduled for delivery to MSC by 2014. The selection of Matthew Perry, designated T-AKE 9, honors Navy commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794 - 1858), who led a squadron of ships to Japan in 1853 with the aim of opening that nation to trade. He served during the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War and was sent to suppress piracy and the slave trade in the West Indies. Charles Drew, designated T-AKE 10, honors Dr. Charles R. Drew (1904-1950), a physician and medical researcher whose pioneering work in the late 1930s and early 1940s led to the discovery that blood could be separated into

plasma. The model for blood and plasma storage developed by Drew has saved untold lives and is the same process used today by the Red Cross. In 1943, he became the first African-American surgeon to serve as an examiner on the American Board of Surgery. Washington Chambers will be T-AKE 11, which honors Navy Capt. Washington Irving Chambers (1856-1934), a pioneer in naval aviation. Responsible for the Navy's nascent aviation activities, Chambers arranged the world's first airplane flight from a warship. The Nov. 14, 1910, flight by aviator Eugene Ely on

the light cruiser USS Birmingham confirmed the potential of carrier-based naval aviation. The selection of William McLean for T-AKE 12 honors William Burdette McLean (1914-1976) who conceived and developed the heat-seeking Sidewinder air-to-air missile while serving as a physicist for the Navy. During World War II, McLean worked on ordnance equipment and testing at the National Bureau of Standards in Washington, D.C. Following the war, he moved to the Naval Ordnance Test Station in China Lake, Calif., where he led the project team developing the Sidewinder missile.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Getting our sea legs



U.S. Navy photo by Jennie Kopelson

Employees from Military Sealift Command headquarters talk to Capt. George McCarthy, civil service master of dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea, during a one-day underway Dec. 2. More than 20 employees got underway for the familiarization tour. The normally shoreside employees met the crew, toured the ship, saw helicopter operations and got to stand at the helm during the nine-hour sail around the Norfolk area.

Three Navy ensigns who recently graduated from supply corps officer training visited MSC in December to



Francia

meet with representatives from each program office and to learn about the role of headquarters. After visiting MSC's Washington, D.C.-based offices, the ensigns, **Casey Hebert**,



Hebert

David Francia and

Michael Molnar, reported to Maritime Prepositioning Ship squadrons Two, Three and One respectively. This was believed to be the first time supply officers have visited MSC prior to joining one of the command's worldwide locations.



Molnar

Military Sealift Command welcomes **Matthew Bialas**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; Navy **Operations Specialist 1st Class Antonio Herring**, **Michael Esposito** and **Lance Murray**, operations; Navy **Senior Chief Information Systems Technician Judi Farmer**, Navy **Information Systems Technician Aleja Ubiera** and **Christopher Cole**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Charles Brophy**, **Carolyn Murray** and **Sara Parkin**, engineering; **Talishia Turner**, comptroller's office; and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. David Zook**, flag secretary.

The command bids farewell to **Joel Weger**, legal; **Catrina Freeman**, administrative support center; Navy **Personnel Specialist 1st Class Felicia Brown** and **Michelle Whitehead**, maritime forces and manpower management; **Eric Johnson**, logistics; **Mary Avery**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Wellie Tabios**, engineering; **Thomas Hurd**, Sealift Program; Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Marie Jordan**, command master chief's office; and Navy **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Shavonda Famble**, operations.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard made a port call at Belawan, Indonesia, a port city on the northeast coast of Sumatra Island, Nov. 19-22. Civil service mariners and embarked divers from Hawaii-based Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One hosted a group of Indonesian navy divers along with representatives from the U.S. Consulate, local police, port officials, and children from a local school and a nearby orphanage for a tour of the ship.

Navy **Capt. Jim Romano**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Far East, visited high-speed vessel MV Westpac Express at Naha in Okinawa, Japan, Dec. 18. Ship's master civilian **Capt. George Baker** escorted Romano on a tour of the ship.

Navy **Cmdr. Chris Cruz**, Military Sealift Command Office Korea's commanding officer, along with operations officer **Xavier Monroy**, attended U.S. Pacific Command's noncombatant evacuation operations conference in Hawaii, Nov. 4-6. Representatives from the Department of State and Department of Defense attended the conference, which focused on planning for the evacuation and repatriation of U.S. citizens in the event of a crisis on the Korean peninsula.

Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Alexander Soe**, MSCO Okinawa commanding officer, and his staff hosted more than 100 guests at an annual appreciation luncheon Dec. 4 at Okinawa's United

Seamen's Service Center in honor of local commands and local government agencies who support MSC operations on Okinawa.

During a ceremony held in Busan, Republic of Korea, Nov. 19, Cruz presented command chief and senior enlisted advisor Navy **Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Scott Wasserman** with the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medal, marking his end of tour and superior service to the command.

From the Indian Ocean, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two's commander Navy **Capt. Tony Martin** presented outgoing force protection officer Navy **Lt. j.g. Jose Munoz-Morales** with a Navy Achievement Medal marking his outstanding tour with the command. Navy **Lt. j.g. William Burgess** relieves Munoz-Morales.

From Guam and Saipan, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three bids fair winds and following seas to operations officer Navy **Chief Warrant Officer Timothy Ratliff**. Navy **Chief Warrant Officer Willie McCullen** replaces Ratliff. Navy **Storekeeper 2nd Class Antoinette Banks** relieved Navy **Storekeeper 1st Class Chris Baxter**.

MSCO Okinawa welcomes **Naomi Yasumoto** as the command's new budget technician. Yasumoto replaces **Takako Hayashi**, who departed the command in November.

COMPASS • HEADING

In November, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's senior leadership conducted a review of the organization's business plan for 2009. In addition to the day-to-day fleet support provided by the headquarters staff, MSFSC will work on initiatives enumerated within the business plan to streamline processes.

MSFSC hosted its first Healthcare Benefits Fair in November at its new Breezy Point headquarters complex. Open to both civil service mariners and ashore staff, the fair offered information on changes to health insurance programs for 2009 along with an in-depth presentation on long-term health care and TRICARE benefits.

Chief Engineer **Joseph Watts** relieved MSFSC Port Chief Engineer

West **Jim Shirley**, who completed his ashore assignment in November. Watts joins East Chief Engineer **Ray Blanchet**, Port Captain West **Roland Bellfi** and Port Captain East **Randall Rockwood** as CIVMAR subject matter experts to MSFSC's front-office leadership.

Fair winds and following seas to the following civil service mariners as they retire: Assistant Cook **Reynaldo Bello**, Yeoman Storekeeper **Rudy Hubilla**, 2nd Officer **Andres Echevarria**, Able Seaman **William Meagher**, Engine Utilityman **Melvyn Mills**, Ordinary Seaman **Maximilian Salazar** and 2nd Assistant Engineer **Harry Paradine Jr.**

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

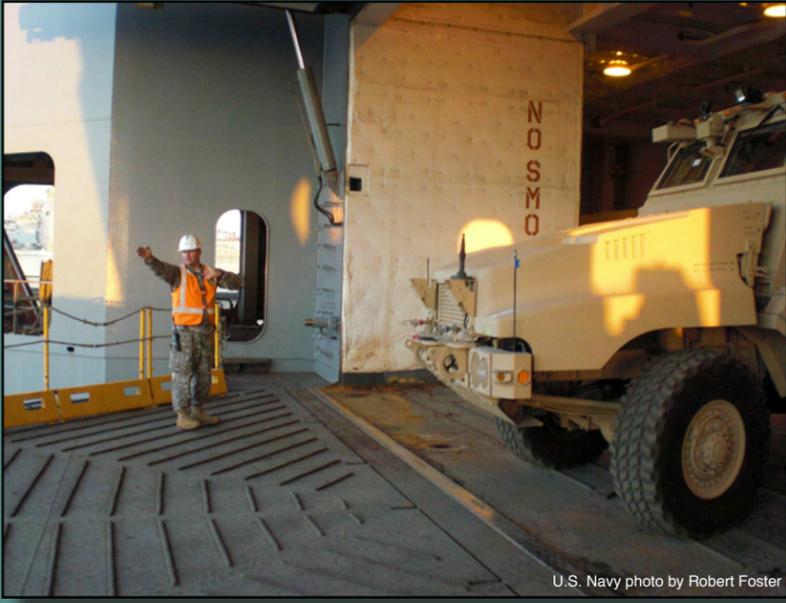
CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark, fast combat support ship USNS Supply, and fleet replenishment oilers USNS Laramie and USNS Tippecanoe supported the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group, the USS Iwo Jima expeditionary strike group, and other U.S.

and coalition ships deployed to U.S. 5th Fleet. The MSC ships in the area conducted 60 underway replenishments and more than 15 in-port replenishments, and the ships transferred more than 8 million gallons of fuel.

Fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba supported anti-piracy operations off the east coast of Somalia.

Directing traffic



U.S. Navy photo by Robert Foster

A soldier from the U.S. Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command directs a mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicle down the stern ramp of large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez in Rota, Spain, in November.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Sealift Logistics Command Pacific hosted the commanding officers of Military Sealift Command's Pacific and Far East Reserve units in November for two days of training and exercise coordination for 2009. Topics of note included Reserve issues in Korea, the Pacific Command and the Pacific Fleet areas of operation. Detailed plans were laid for Reserve resourcing proposals in support of exercises in the Pacific area of operation.

MSC fast combat support ship USNS Bridge welcomed family members aboard for a tiger cruise Nov. 20-25. Family members rode the ship from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to San Diego on the last leg of the ship's six-month Western Pacific deployment in support of the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group.

SEALOGPAC welcomes Noel Maghirang to the operations department as a marine transportation specialist.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Tom D'Agostino, Sealift Logistic Command Atlantic's representative in Charleston, S.C., helped large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Bob Hope discharge nearly 800 pieces of cargo from Operation Iraqi Freedom Nov. 5-9. Also in November, tanker USNS Richard G. Matthiesen discharged 235,000 barrels of fuel, and LMSR USNS

Benavidez loaded more than 700 pieces of cargo for a total of 148,000 square feet bound for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The cargo included more than 300 mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles.

SEALOGLANT welcomes William Woodrum to antiterrorism force protection.

EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent refueled four ships south of the Azores Nov. 22. Guided missile frigates USS Klakring, USS Hawes, USS Doyle and guided missile destroyer USS Mitscher received fuel from Patuxent on their way back to

the United States after participating in the multinational military exercise Joint Warrior 2008 off the coast of Scotland. MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman also refueled ships of participating nations.

In November, MSC-chartered cargo ship

MV Spica loaded cargo in Nordenham, Germany, and delivered this cargo to MSC-chartered dry cargo ship MV Virginian in Eemshaven, The Netherlands. The cargo was destined for further transport to the United States. Spica also loaded cargo from Virginian for further transport to Nordenham and Szczecin, Poland.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One ships USNS LCPL Roy

M. Wheat and USNS 2nd LT John P. Bobo were refueled in late November off the coast of Greece by Hellenic navy supply ship Zeus.

In December, MSC-chartered ship MV May arrived in the West African island nation of Sao Tome to pick up Naval Mobile Construction Battalion equipment used for construction and humanitarian aid projects on the island.

Commander, from Page 2

This included signing a new memorandum of understanding spelling out the conditions under which MSC will adhere to buddy-rule provisions when implemented by our Navy numbered fleet commanders under the direction of the DOD's combatant commanders.

Please note my use of the word "when" regarding the buddy rule, as opposed to "if." The hard work on the part of both our maritime unions and MSC management to articulate this process took into account the strategic need for me, our theater military leadership and our government to safeguard the lives and well being of our employees in overseas locations where threat conditions can change in a heartbeat. I also believe that our collective efforts have built upon the 1998 agreement between the Navy, MSC and our maritime unions that recognizes that there are certain times when the presence of soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, CIVMARs and DOD employees in overseas public venues must be curtailed due to strategic, government-to-government reasons.

Prior to the commencement of arbitration hearings I specifically corresponded with the senior-most Navy operational commanders in each combatant command area of responsibility to ensure my actions were in keeping with their commander's intent, which is reflected in the agreement I signed on Dec. 15,

2008. I also believe that the current guidance promulgated by MSFSC, informed where appropriate by the provisions of this latest agreement, adequately frames the combatant commanders' expectations pertaining to MSC's adherence to their buddy rule guidance. I also highly recommend that anyone having any questions concerning this policy tender them up the chain of command for resolution.

The cyber war

Throughout the course of my tenure at MSC I have repeatedly stressed the need to protect our ashore and afloat networks against attack. I will also tell you that we have been driven to reprogram additional resources and take definitive, defensive actions in response to repeated attempts by outsiders to gain access to our networks. I know that some of these actions have come with little to no notice and have been disruptive and inconvenient and have at times impacted our ability to communicate between ship and shore.

MSC is but one of any number of DOD organizations having faced these cyber-readiness issues over the past few years. We are not alone. Unfortunately, conditions are not getting any better. As a result, we will be toughening up controls and reprogramming more resources to improve our network security posture, placing more emphasis on the timely installation of software security updates and increasing the monitoring of our networks in an effort to look for

additional penetration attempts.

No, this doesn't amount to someone in a dark room reading someone's e-mail just for fun. Rather, it's looking for activities associated with unauthorized Web sites, improper/unauthorized equipment configuration changes and use of prohibited devices such as thumb drives, etc. It also means that anyone failing to complete annual training or other administrative requirements associated with use of government networks should be prepared to have their accounts locked out with little advance warning.

We also are engaged in Navywide discussions and activities associated with planned upgrades of future Navy Enterprise systems such as Next Generation and Consolidated Afloat Network Enterprise Services. My sense is that the increase in cyber attacks on DOD networks means that Navy will accelerate the rollout of these new networks, and our MSC network experts will be very busy this upcoming year.

Piracy

Last, but not least, is the recent upsurge of piracy activity in the Gulf of Aden and in waters east of Somalia and Kenya. I feel very comfortable with the support we receive from the Naval Expeditionary Combat Command and our theater force protection organizations when it comes to employing expeditionary security teams aboard our ships. However, I have directed our MSCHQ force protection shop to work with all of our fellow force-protection stakehold-

ers to recheck our force-protection procedures aboard ships and ashore, where appropriate.

We're reviewing our force-protection doctrine, ensuring that ships receive updated theater threat information in a timely manner, and we're making sure that our training and material readiness maximizes our force-protection posture. It also means standing attentive bridge watches, conducting alert radar sweeps, taking early action in response to approaching surface contacts, rehearsing pre-planned responses and message/voice reporting procedures and understanding the evolving nature of the threat.

The message to our civilian industry partners concerning piracy is a simple one — stay plugged into the net for intelligence updates and notices to mariners; stay alert at sea; have an onboard security capability ready to respond on short notice, and keep your speed up and constant when transiting contested waters.

These are force protection practices that are familiar to MSC vessels and crews; let's not let complacency set in.

These are, indeed, interesting times!

Keep the faith and all the best,

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

Obregon embark strengthens community ties

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military staff members from Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two, along with U.S. merchant mariners from private companies under contract to Military Sealift Command, joined together to host more than 50 U.S. military members, British personnel and others for a one-day embark aboard Maritime Prepositioning Ship SS PFC Eugene A. Obregon, Nov. 8, at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The underway experience was designed to teach attendees about the role of MPS Squadron Two, which anchors up to nine large cargo vessels in the six-mile-wide scenic lagoon.

MSC's prepositioning ships have a large presence around the island. However with high turnover rates among the Naval Support Facility, its 10 tenant commands, and U.S. Air Force and contract personnel, many are unfamiliar with the ships, according to squadron commander, Navy Capt. Tony Martin.

"Some people spend their whole tours out here without knowing what these ships really do," said Mass Communications Specialist 1st Class Brian Biller, who works for the Naval Media Center on Diego Garcia.

To better educate people on the mission of MPS Squadron Two, just after 9 a.m., shrouded in mist and under cloudy and rainy skies, tug boats assisted the 51,600-ton container and roll-on/roll off ship and its riders toward the lagoon's narrow exit. Guests split into three groups and toured the living spaces, cargo holds and bridge.

Harold Del Risco, a contractor responsible for keeping Obregon's equipment working and ready to roll off the ship, gave guests a close look at some of the heavy armored military equipment carefully stowed in the cargo holds.

"I was amazed," said Navy Lt. William Dorwart, a chaplain assigned the Naval Support Facility on Diego Garcia. "I thought this ship carried more general supplies and mostly containers, so I was surprised to see the wheeled and tracked vehicles on board."

"What a great asset to have in your inventory," said Royal Marine Maj. Peter Carr, executive officer for the British Representative on Diego Garcia as he

inspected an armored personnel carrier in Obregon's cargo hold.

During the tour, the ship travelled south along the eastern side of the island about 25 miles before turning around and heading back.

As Obregon slowed her engines at the entrance to the lagoon in the late afternoon sunshine, civilian master Capt. Wilbur Dahn ordered the ship's 800-horsepower bow thrusters to be activated, and the 800-foot-long ship slipped back into the lagoon.

"Talk to your buddies on the island, and tell them what you experienced out here," said Martin to the group of visitors. "I hope you

learned what the mission of this ship is and how important our U.S. merchant mariners are to our national security. We can't go to war without these ships."



Top: Navy Lt. Cmdr. John Adams, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two chief staff officer, briefs 50 people assigned to Diego Garcia on safety procedures for their one-day sail aboard Maritime Prepositioning Ship SS PFC Eugene A. Obregon. The trip was designed to familiarize U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, British and contract personnel on the squadron's mission.

Above: Navy Chief Gunner's Mate Harold Williams of MPS Squadron Two talks to British Royal Marine Maj. Peter Carr (left) British representative on Diego Garcia, and Royal Marine Warrant Officer Martin Broughton, Royal Marine Regiment Diego Garcia. Williams explained how Obregon's stern ramp is deployed to unload cargo.

ALL TOGETHER NOW



Photo by Chief Gunner's Mate Harold Williams

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two vessels — MV CAPT Steven L. Bennett (front), an Air Force container ship; USNS Sisler (middle), a large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship; and MV LTC John U.D. Page (rear), an Army container ship — sail in close formation during a sortie in the Indian Ocean north of Diego Garcia Nov. 20. All the MPS Squadron Two ships, including MV 1ST LT Baldomero Lopez and MV SSG Edward A. Carter (not pictured) got underway for the training, which was initiated by squadron commander Navy Capt. Tony Martin, to practice sailing in formation in response to a crisis. "The

sortie is designed to enhance operational readiness and increase proficiency," Martin said. Later the ships broke away from their single-file formation and were assigned sectors around the Diego Garcia atoll where they steamed throughout the night. The next day, all the ships returned to the Diego Garcia lagoon. "As merchant mariners, we are not used to sailing in such close proximity to other ships, so it was very valuable training," said Capt. George Hines, Sisler's civilian master. "The sortie was very well executed by all ships," said Capt. Wilbur Dahn, Obregon's master.