October 2009

S·E·A·L·I·F·T

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command

U.S. Navy photo by Howard Rosenberg

Cover: Able Seaman Frank Umbrecht hauls in a line as MSC fleet support ship USNS Mosopelea leaves the Washington Navy Yard in Sept. 1974. The crew of Mosopelea spent a day at port in Washington, D.C., after towing a barge loaded with scientific equipment for the Naval Oceanographic Office. Though some of the crew had a chance to see the sights in the nation's capital, many used the day in port to paint and spruce up the ship and perform routine maintenance tasks. Said one able seaman painting the deck: "It's a constant battle between me and the rusting sea and the sea always seems to win."

INSIDE: MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND TURNS 60

Bravo Zulu, and thank you

At the MSC change of command ceremony in March 2006, I mentioned the movie, "Standing in the Shadows of Motown." It's the story of the Fabulous Funk Brothers, the backup group that performed in almost every Motown hit during their time. I said that MSC, plus "U" (you – MSC's 10,000 people) would continue to be the band, and "I" would be your tireless advocate, and together we would generate the MUSIC that is MSC's enduring covenant to our warfighters.

When I arrived, the MSC torch was burning very brightly because of your hard work. Throughout my tenure, you've never let up your innovation, expertise and dedication, which have helped lead MSC to new heights. I want to take this opportunity to recap some of the amazing things you have accomplished the past 42 months and offer my profound thanks and appreciation for a job truly well done by all hands.

U.S. Navy service

Let's start with MSC's service to the Navy through U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

We finished a once-in-a-generation worldwide reorganization, consolidating crewing, training, equipping and maintaining functions for our government-owned/government-operated ships in a single subordinate unit Military Sealift Fleet Support Command in Norfolk, Va. In doing so, we improved our efficiency and offered better service to the Fleet. Our tooth-to-tail ratio increased from 83 percent to 85 percent, which means we're almost totally operational. We did this on budget and without any service interruption.

We shouldered more of the Navy mission, taking over operation of the rescue and salvage ships. USNS Grapple, USNS Grasp, USNS Safeguard and USNS Salvor are now available for tasking 270 days a year, freeing more than 400 military personnel billets for other Navy priorities. In addition, our fleet ocean tugs towed more than 30 ex-USS ships to their final disposition and expanded their mission to include submarine rescue operations, saving the Navy more than $111 million over five years.

At the end of September, we undocked submarine tender USS Emory S. Land after an extensive, year-long dry-dock period and planned maintenance availability, and added it to the MSC fleet. Emory S. Land and her sister ship USS Frank Cable (which will undergo a similar maintenance period) will operate with hybrid crews of civil service mariners and Navy technical crews under the command of a Navy captain, similar to the operating model for the command ship USS Mount Whitney. Taking over operation of the submarine tenders will also free more than 400 military billets for other Navy priorities.

We have introduced the T-AKE dry cargo/ammunition ships to the fleet in half the time we originally projected, helping to make the program arguably the most successful new Navy ship construction program today. MSC's hospital ships and high-speed vessel Swift have taken on additional Humanitarian Assistance to Civil Authorities (HCA) missions, further exampling MSC's strong support of our combatant commanders.

MSC has shared its extensive experience across the Navy with its energy improvement efforts, which oversees several hundred energy-saving initiatives. From cutting back on shore power usage to improving hull coatings and propeller efficiency, we help save approximately six percent of MSC's at-sea fuel consumption, totaling $60 million annually.

We've shared commercial best practices with the surface warfare community, including the Shipboard Automated Maintenance Management (SAMM) program, the reciprocating engine analysis distance support system, the Kittewake onboard oil testing system and the diesel reliability system. We have embedded teams of our CIVMAR engineers in amphibious ship training classrooms to observe, evaluate and assist our Navy uniformed engineering staffs. All of these reflect MSC's expertise and experience in serving our Navy in bigger and better ways.

We've helped put commercial helicopter detachments aboard our fleet logistics ships, saving money and active duty billets. In the course of 20 years, the commercial helicopters will save the Navy $700 million in cost avoidance and free up military air frames and personnel to do the heavy lifting the nation requires in our overseas theaters of operation.

Finally, we've accepted the risks and the challenges of assisting in U.S. and coalition anti-piracy efforts. USNS Lewis and Clark served as flagship for the anti-piracy task force and as a floating brig for captured pirates. We've also spearheaded the development and fielding of a U.S. government interagency Anti-Pirate Assessment Team (APAT), which supports our U.S.-flag commercial partners to help them protect their ships against pirate attacks.

U.S. Transportation Command service

We've delivered combat equipment, supplies and fuel to U.S. and coalition warfighters in Iraq and Afghanistan totaling 20 million square feet of cargo and 8 billion gallons of fuel. We have maintained our strategic sealift surge fleet readiness at more than 95 percent. We have helped deliver more than 3,000 Mine-Resistant, Ambush-Protected vehicles (MRAPs) to the Middle East to help counter the improvised explosive device threat in Iraq and Afghanistan. And we have done this with a 98 percent on-time delivery record.

We have supported joint exercises in every command area of responsibility around the world, as well as annual deliveries to Antarctica and Thule, Greenland. We did all of this while cutting costs – saving nearly $100 million with better cargo management, better use of available ships and better market timing on the purchase of bunker fuel.

Navy acquisition service

While MSC has a relatively small contracting staff worldwide, it executed more than 21,000 contracting actions totaling $6.3 billion between 2006 and 2009. There were only 22 formal complaints in all of these actions and only one that ended in a decision unfavorable to the government. One in 21,000! We achieved a 94 percent competition rate, the highest of 11 Navy Head of Contracting Activities. Our actions won the Secretary's Cup Award for the Department of the Navy Outstanding Small Business Program for fiscal year 2007, and we also won nine other major awards, including the Secretary of the Navy Environmental Quality Award, the Chief of Naval Operations Environmental Quality Award, the Department of the Navy Safety Excellence Award and the Department of the Navy Competition and Procurement Excellence Award.

Our people

The preceding paragraphs give a host of examples of where we have provided increased service levels and saved our Navy and DOD customers millions of dollars – precious resources our military and the nation need to sustain our warfighters.

We have made MSC a more efficient and responsive organization. We've seen where we could take more intelligent business risks and manage operations more effectively, but still deliver the goods. Our civil service mariner attrition rate is down to 7 percent – the lowest level we have seen since we started keeping records. Our civil service employee vacancy rate has remained steady at 12 percent. We have surveyed both our ashore and afloat workforce to take a fix on workplace organizational climate, environmental issues and equal opportunity. The results show that MSC is a great place to work. Can we strive to make it better?

You bet!

We will continue to improve our CIVMAR evaluation system, giving our afloat personnel more options to document and recognize good performers. We will continue to modernize our shore infrastructure to improve working conditions for those 15 percent of our workforce who keep MSC's engine running. We will continue to promote opportunity for personal growth in such programs as our Unlicensed-to-Licensed Mariner Maritime Academy College Program. The first two students in this program, which I hope will eventually bring MSC mariners to every federal and state-sponsored maritime academy class, are starting college as I write this.

Bottom line - MSC delivers

Forty-two months ago, MSC was issued a mandate when we aligned our organization under U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Our reputation for delivering the goods was strong then; it is stronger now. However, the mandate was to look at our "top line" (our budget) and prove to our clients that they are getting best value for their precious resources.

We have. We have aligned MSC closer to an increased customer base, met every operational mission with stellar results, kept faith with our shipmates and we are returning nearly $1 billion to the Navy budget by 2013 – critical resources the Navy needs for the future. What beautiful music from an incredible organization.

So, thank you for the honor, privilege and pleasure of working with you the past 42 months. MSC is my fourth Navy command, and I am absolutely blessed to have my best command tour be my last one.

There is no other job in the Navy that even comes close to MSC, so it is time for me to pack my sea bag and cross the brow. I do so with an inexhaustible supply of incredibly fond memories that I will cherish forever.

Thank you for your service to our military and the nation.

With abiding respect,

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

Bottom Line

MSC delivers

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MSC ships act in SEACAT 2009

By Rosemary Heiss
MSC Public Affairs

U.S. Navy photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Troy Roat

In a role-playing exercise on board Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard in the South China Sea, Philippine navy special forces sailors seize U.S. sailors portraying crew members. The ship hosted Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism (SEACAT) 2009, Aug. 13-20 near the Philippines. SEACAT is a week-long annual role-playing exercise that highlights the value of information sharing, multinational naval coordination and maritime interception training.

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard and Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams were center stage for an at-sea, week-long exercise that ended Aug. 20 off the coast of the Philippines. The ships simulated 'vessels of interest' during the eighth annual Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism Maritime Security exercise, which focused on maritime-interception training and related information-sharing between military officers from the United States and six Southeast Asia nations.

Guided-missile frigate USS Crommelin also played a vessel of interest while military personnel and civilians from the United States, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei and Thailand watched the exercise unfold from USS Harpers Ferry, acting as the command ship for the SEACAT task group.

Participating navies tracked the three simulated vessels of interest and took action appropriate for each scenario as the ships passed through international and territorial waters.

The civil-service-crewed Safeguard was the scene of three Philippine navy ship boardings during its time as a platform for SEACAT training.

For the exercise, Filipino coastwatchers (similar to the U.S. Coast Guard) and Philippine aircraft and naval vessels tracked Safeguard, which was cast in the role of MV Big Balut, a ship smuggling immigrants, arms and drugs into the Philippines. Ten role players acted as ship's crew and illegal immigrants for the scenarios.

The boarding teams consisted of eight Philippine special operations forces, similar to U.S. Navy SEALs, and six naval personnel, all of whom arrived via rigid-hull, inflatable boat. The teams practiced one compliant boarding, in which Big Balut obediently stopped when asked by the boarding team. Another boarding scenario challenged the participants when Big Balut would not stop. The boarding team had to forcibly bring the non-compliant ship to a halt.

"The role players did a good job," said Capt. Peter Long, Safeguard master. "The exercise went well, and the boarding teams got excellent training."

While Safeguard was being used for compliant and noncompliant boarding practice in the exercise, Williams was infiltrated by two would-be terrorists posing as crew members. Because the Maritime Prepositioning Ship closely resembles a merchant vessel, Williams fulfilled the requirement for a high-value unit for boarding events. The multinational forces aboard the 673-foot-long ship benefited from the opportunity to practice on a commercial ship, which is loaded with cargo.

The contract crew aboard Williams also performed well during the exercise. "Using the Williams in this scenario exposed the boarding team to the enormous challenges and difficulties of stopping and inspecting a merchant ship whether in territorial waters, coastal waters or on the high seas," said Williams master Capt. Donald Tierney. "It's never as easy as it looks on paper."

In the exercise scenario, the terrorists bribed Williams' captain to smuggle them into Singapore, where they planned to conduct an attack.

Multiple navies practiced increasingly difficult boarding scenarios during the five-day period. The scenarios started when Brunei forces boarded Williams in their own coastal waters. The Brunei navy identified the crew members. For the next scenario, U.S. Navy sailors boarded in the South China Sea and interrogated the ship's crew. For the final scenario, the Singapore navy boarded near Changi and then detained the crew.

"Williams' master used the exercise as an opportunity to train his crew on anti-piracy measures, thus maximizing his ship's role during SEACAT," said Navy. Capt James Romano, commander of Sealift Logistics Command Far East.

Exercise participants from each nation were able to communicate with their liaison officers aboard Harpers Ferry, and throughout the week information was shared among participating countries, including planning considerations for maritime interception operations.

"The scenarios we used in SEACAT didn't easily lend themselves to right or wrong solutions," said Navy Capt. Richard L. Clemmons Jr., Commander, Task Group 73.5 and head of SEACAT. "SEACAT is a great opportunity to see how each of those solutions takes shape."

"MSC ships continue to support this strategic exercise every year," said Navy Cmdr. Mike Snoderly, SEALOGFE operations officer. "Doing SEACAT yearly provides us first-hand knowledge of how countries in our 50-million-square-mile area respond to scenarios. The more we know about our neighbors and the more frequently we interact with them in peacetime, the better we're able to work together in crises and contingencies."

SEACAT, which began in 2002, continues to serve as a model for how navies can cooperate to address issues of shared concern, including transnational crimes at sea.

Commander, Task Group 73.5 Public Affairs contributed to this article.

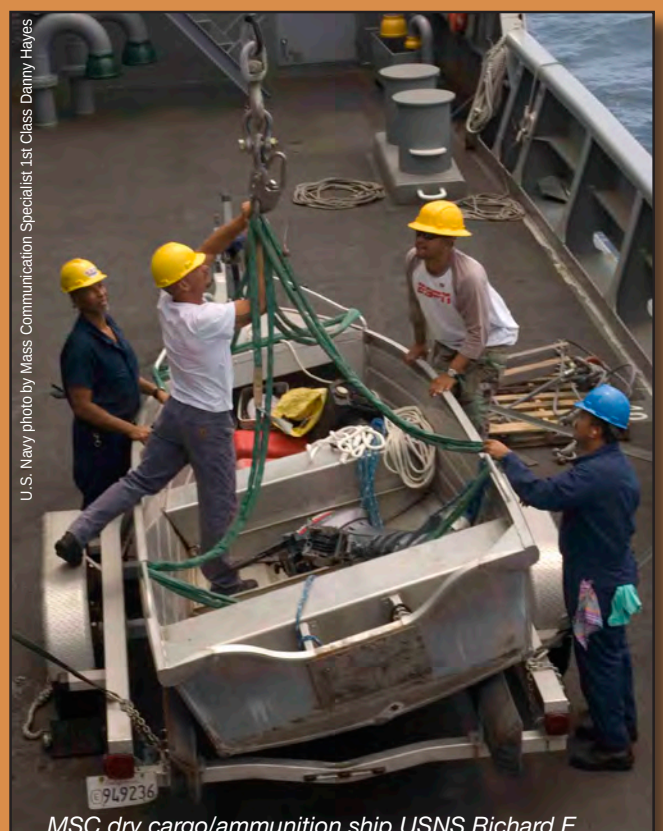
Byrd returns Kiribati fishing boat to fishermen

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

For residents of the Republic of Kiribati, an equatorial Pacific Ocean island nation, fishing boats are central to their livelihood. So when three fishermen were forced to abandon their boat off the coast of the Solomon Islands earlier this year, Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd came to the rescue and transported the boat nearly 1,200 miles back to its owners.

On Sept. 3, Byrd returned the small fishing vessel to Kiribati – a nation consisting of 33 coral atolls, islands of coral that circle a lagoon – in support of U.S. Pacific Command's four-month humanitarian and civic assistance mission Pacific Partnership 2009. The Kiribati boat and its three passengers were rescued in the Solomon Islands after an engine failure caused them to go adrift at sea for one month. The fishermen, who survived despite scarce provisions, drifted 1,000 miles from the Kiribati island of Tabiteuea, the site where they went missing.

While the fishermen were returned home shortly after their rescue, they were forced to leave their boat behind because they lacked the means to transport it. The government of Kiribati asked the crew of Byrd to carry the nine-foot-long craft and its 15-horsepower engine to the Oceanic nation's capital city of Tarawa, when Byrd transited between the two countries, its third and fourth of five scheduled Pacific Partnership stops.


U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Danny Hayes

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd boatswains mates Sam Wilson, Jerod Jones, Scott McCormick and Richard Dagsaan prepare to offload a small Kiribati fishing boat near the Pacific island nation's capital city, Tarawa, Sept. 3. The small vessel and its owners were adrift at sea earlier this year and were recovered in the Solomon Islands.

Byrd civil service mariners Able Seaman Will Stailey, Able Seaman Phil Knight, Boatswain's Mate Robert Melendez and Deck Machinist Alfredo Ng, used one of Byrd's rigid-hull inflatable boats to tow the small craft to the Tarawa shore. In a brief hand-over ceremony, Inspector Bwamwaere Tira, Tarawa's assistant superintendent of police, thanked the crew of Byrd for returning the fully intact fishing boat and equipment to the people of Tarawa.

"We appreciate what Byrd has done," Tira said. "We are looking forward to our future cooperation."

The transport of the small craft marks the first time a lost Kiribati vessel has been returned by a U.S. naval ship, according to Tessie Lambourne, Kiribati's foreign secretary.

"In the spirit which typifies our work throughout Pacific Partnership, the crew of Richard E. Byrd was very pleased to return the fishing craft to its owners," said Byrd's civil service master Capt. Jonathan Olmsted. "We hope the fishermen can return to work soon because we know fishing is such a vital industry here on Kiribati."

Pacific Partnership 2009 is an annual humanitarian and civic assistance mission conducted by, with and through partner nations, non-governmental organizations and other U.S. government agencies. Byrd's five-country Oceania tour kicked off with a mission in Samoa, then continued to Tonga, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati, and ended in the Marshall Islands.

MSC: 60 years s

By Salvatore R. Mercogliano, Ph.D.

World wars divided the globe into two armed camps twice in the 20th century. U.S. military force intervention stemmed the tide and snatched victory from the jaws of defeat both times. When the Cold War and the accompanying threat of nuclear combat emerged in the late 1940s, all branches of the new Department of Defense prepared for a possible hot war with the Soviets by adopting a strategy of maintaining a large-standing military force during peacetime, a first in U.S. history.

On Oct. 1, 1949, the Department of the Navy officially established the Military Sea Transportation Service (previously the Army Transportation Corps), then located at Navy headquarters on Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. The Cold War eventually subsided, but the organization it birthed – re-named Military Sealift Command during the Vietnam War – has played a significant role in nearly every major U.S. military operation then and since.

Sixty years later, MSC still bears the marks of the early days of MSTS and the foundational decisions its first commander, Vice Adm. William M. Callaghan, made in order to form the unique command.

Like the ships in MSC's inventory today, the ships that MSTS operated in 1949 were managed and crewed by various entities.

First, MSTS received a fleet of 37 commissioned naval auxiliaries, complete with Navy crews, from the old Naval Transportation Service. Then MSTS incorporated a fleet of 57 government-owned tankers, operated by four commercial shipping firms and crewed by licensed merchant mariners, into the command. Lastly, the organization acquired government-owned vessels from the Army Transportation Corps, crewed by merchant mariners. Callaghan began to establish an administrative network for the command, which evolved into today's Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, which crews, trains, equips and maintains MSC's government-owned and government-operated ships; and MSC's Sealift Logistics Commands – globally located, operationally focused, subordinate commands that provide MSC-unique expertise and operational perspective to Navy fleet commanders worldwide.

Ships and programs – then and now

In 1949, the MSTS fleet was divided into three components: freighters, tankers and troop ships. Six decades later, these components combined are considered only one of modern MSC's four programs, which were introduced in a reinvention in 1996.

MSTS's premiere assets – which became MSC's current Sealift Program – consisted of 10,000-ton, 15-knot Victory-class freighters, ex-Army freight-supply ships and ex-Navy landing ship tanks to provide intra-theater lift and T-2 tankers to move petroleum. Today, a Victory Ship – assembly-line ships built at the end of World War II, with the purpose of quickly ferrying supplies and troops into theater – pales in comparison to MSC's nineteen 50,000-ton, 24-knot large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships. Joint High-Speed Vessels, which are scheduled for delivery to the Navy and MSC in 2012, are direct descendents of freight-supply ships and landing ship tanks. The vast fleet of T-2 tankers has faded to a quartet of T-5 Champion-class tankers, one shallow draft tanker and numerous short-term chartered commercial tankers. The Champion-class tankers are slated to be retired in Oct. 2010 and are to be replaced in part by two new time-chartered U.S. flag tankers. While the troop ships have gone away, the other missions remain, with the means to perform them faster, safer and more efficiently than ever.

In 1957, the Soviets shocked the world with the launch of Sputnik and its first nuclear-powered submarine. MSTS responded with an innocuously-named ship, USNS Chain, which signaled the birth of modern oceanographic surveys in support of the Navy's nuclear submarine program. Chain, and the ships that followed, were instrumental in providing an understanding of the three-dimensional battle picture of the world's oceans. Today, USNS John McDonnell and ships of the Pathfinder-class perform this function and many others across the globe.

With the successful orbiting of Sputnik, the Navy and Air Force fielded competing fleets to watch the skies. In 1964, in order to streamline costs and operations, the Air Force transferred its fleet to MSTS. Included in this flotilla was USNS General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, which was featured in the news in May when the decommissioned military missile-tracking ship was sunk and turned into an artificial reef off Key West, Fla. Vandenberg, a new tourist attraction for recreational divers, and the other ships in its fleet are predecessors of today's 25-ship Special Mission Program.

MSC's third mission area can be traced back to 1972 to a series of tests, code-named the Charger Logs, to see if civilians could provide the at-sea logistics support that had been provided by uniformed-Navy-crewed ships. Tests demonstrated that civilian mariners could perform these support functions successfully and cost-effectively. In May 1972, fleet oiler USNS Taluga became the first underway replenishment ship turned over by the U.S. Navy for civil service mariner operation, marking the birth of MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force. Taluga was followed by other tankers transferred from the active Navy, and sixteen purpose-built oilers of the Henry J. Kaiser-class. Other types and classes followed. The Powhatan-class fleet ocean tugs and Safeguard-class rescue and salvage ships owe their existence to MSC fleet support ship USNS Mosopelea and her three sisters. USNS Rigel and USNS Kilauea led to the acquisition and transfer of three Sirius-class and six Mars-class stores ships and six subsequent ammunition vessels. The end result is the design of the Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo/ammunition ships.

Tensions in the Middle East in the late 1970s led to the creation of MSC's modern Prepositioning Program. Instability in Libya, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan caused DOD to consider options of responding quickly, if necessary, to protect U.S. strategic interests in crisis areas. Afloat prepositioning was one response. The seven-ship Near-Term Prepositioning Force – later renamed the Afloat Prepositioning Force and expanded to 25 ships – was first used when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. Today, all U.S. military services rely on the afloat prepositioning of war-reserve material. Today, MSC's Prepositioning Program forward deploys 31 ships worldwide.

Perhaps the darkest moment in the annals of MSTS/MSC came early in its existence. In 1950, during the outbreak of war in Korea, MSTS outfitted two hospital ships – USS Benevolence and USNS Repose – to meet the Navy's medical needs, but tragedy struck. While on sea trials, hospital ship USS Benevolence was rammed by a commercial freighter off the Golden Gate Bridge and sank with the loss of 23 crew members.

Impact

Throughout its history, the command has been tested from the beleaguered days of the Pusan Perimeter in Korea, to the gunfire-swept region of the Rung Sat in Vietnam, to the contested waters of the Persian Gulf, and to modern-day threats that manifest themselves in the guise of Al Qaeda and Somali pirates. The

U.S. Navy photo by Linda M. Quinones

U.S. Navy photo by David Fraker

A rigger installs weight-handling gear used to lift heavy equipment, machinery and supply items on cargo ship Pioneer Moon at the Port of Hueneme, Calif. in January 1979. The need for skilled riggers – a physically demanding and often dangerous job – began to decline with the advent of container ships, the barge carriers, roll-on/roll-off ships and other specialized carriers. This photograph ran on the cover of the January 1979 edition of Sealift.

strong

history of MSTS/MSC can not be solely measured in the names of the 571 ships that have been designated as U.S. Naval Ships, by the 12 USNS vessels sunk in MSTS/MSC service, or by the total tonnage of material shipped every year. MSTS assisted U.S. troops involved in the divide between East and West Germany and the Korean Demilitarized Zone. Today MSC ships are supporting troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and sailors at sea by delivering more than 108 million square feet of dry cargo and 14.5 billion gallons of fuel and other petroleum products – enough fuel to fill a man-made circular lake one-mile across and 88 feet deep and enough combat cargo to fill a supply train that would stretch from New York City to Las Vegas – since 2001. Much of U.S. history since 1949 has involved the efforts of the mariners, sailors and civilians of MSC.

Salvatore Mercogliano, Ph.D., is a professor of history at Central Carolina Community College in Sanford, N.C.; a visiting lecturer at UNC-Chapel Hill, and an adjunct professor at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. He specializes in maritime history. Dr. Mercogliano sailed as a second mate and worked as a marine transportation specialist at Military Sealift Command from 1989 to 1995. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Transportation from SUNY Maritime College; Master of Arts degrees in Maritime History and Nautical Archeology from East Carolina University; and a doctorate in Military and Naval History from the University of Alabama.

U.S. Navy photo by Linda E. McDaniel

Left: *Longshoremen move bombs from an MSC ship in Sattahip, Thailand, where MSC had a temporary office during the Vietnam War. Much of the cargo that moved through Thailand was ammunition to be used for air strikes in South Vietnam or for transshipment to Cambodia.*

Right: *Crew members rig lines and hoses for an underway replenishment with units of the Navy's 7th Fleet on MSC fleet oiler USNS Taluga, the first MSC ship crewed by civil service mariners, in 1976. The replenishment was Taluga's 875th since beginning operation in support of 7th Fleet nearly three and a half years earlier. Taluga transferred to MSC in May 1972 as part of Charger Log II, a test to evaluate capability of MSC mariners to operate a Navy fleet oiler in direct support of fleet ships. Performance of Taluga's crew confirmed that civil service mariners could handle arduous fleet support tasks and that civilian-crewed oilers could support fleet ships while saving Navy dollars.*

Below: *MSC roll-on/roll-off ship Adm. Wm. M. Callaghan, named for the first admiral of Military Sea Transportation Service – the organization that became MSC during the Vietnam War – at sea in 1978.*

U.S. Navy photo

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

The Military Sealift Command engineering directorate hosted a joint MSC and Royal Fleet Auxiliary engineering seminar Sept. 22-25 in Washington, D.C. The seminar helped both organizations understand the other's engineering models and to share best practices in maintenance and equipment. The RFA team was led by U.K. navy Commodore Dave Preston, director of Afloat Support Directorate. He is responsible for maintenance of the afloat support fleet, including the RFA, and procurement of the United Kingdom's new support shipping.

Kyrm Hickman, MSC maritime forces and manpower management, met with the State University of New York Maritime administrators Aug. 24 to provide a briefing on MSC's Unlicensed to Licensed Degree Program. Hickman's office is meeting with the nation's leading maritime academies to discuss the program, which offers MSC's unlicensed civil service mariners the opportunity to attend maritime academies while maintaining their base pay. While at SUNY Maritime, Hickman met **Stefanie Viddle**, one of MSC's two civil service mariners who are beginning an academy education in the new program. "She is a fine example of who we want to be representing MSC to her peers," said Hickman.

Luke Wisniewski, an environmental engineer in the MSC engineering office, attended an annual oil spill table-top exercise hosted by a private maritime company in Norfolk, Aug. 18. The exercise highlighted opportunities to improve the management of spill responses based on the National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. The simulated spill familiarized participants with regulatory requirements, response protocol and roles that local, state and federal agencies would perform in a spill. "It's a great venue to view the capabilities, assets and resources the company utilizes to support the vessel and shore-based response," said Wisniewski.

In early September, MSC staff sent CDs to Sealift Logistics Commands, MSFSC, masters of civil service mariner-crewed ships and union representatives. The CDs contain additional information on the results of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute survey conducted in the fall of 2008. **Rear Adm. Robert O. Wray, Jr.**, deputy commander of MSC, requests that masters instruct department heads to brief their crews on the contents, print out the contents in hard copy and make the hard copies available in crew spaces.

The first of several climate survey focus group meetings with crew members on MSC ships was held aboard fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie the week of Aug. 24. A team is planning to visit several Pacific-based ships in early October for additional focus group meetings. The crew feedback obtained will assist MSC address issues identified in the recent climate survey.

MSC welcomes Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Juan Gutierrez**, Navy **Lt. Kurt Davis**, Navy **Lt. j.g. Matthew Hage** and Navy **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Winston Virden**, operations; Navy **Cmdr. Scott McCain**, joint plans, strategic studies and wargaming; **Erin Grantt** and **Elizabeth Workman**, engineering; **Bokyung Ross**, comptroller's office; **Craig Miller** and **Kathryn Weinstein**, contracts and business management; **Matthew Sweeney**, Navy **Cmdr. Joseph Osazuwa** and U.K. navy **Chief Officer Gary Shattock**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; Navy **Yeomen 1st Class Amy Broadus** and **Jose Rojas**, command administration; Navy **Capt. James Rice**, command medical office; and Navy **Lt. Mark Atkinson**, Reserve Programs.

The command bids farewell to Navy **Capt. Bill Hardy**, U.K. navy **Chief Officer Karl Woodfield**, Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Abdul Memon**, Navy **Lt. Bob Hanson**, Navy **Lt. Lauren Zapf**, Navy **Operations Specialist 1st Class Kevin Cammie** and Navy **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Carol Halstead**, operations; Navy **Cmdr. Melvin Shafer**, joint plans, strategic studies and wargaming; **Paul Devoe**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program; Navy **Capt. Dwight Fulton**, command medical office; Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Jason Small**, reserve programs; and **Rosemary Heiss**, public affairs.

COMPASS • HEADING

MSFSC welcomes its new chaplain, Navy **Lt. Jeff Mason**. Mason is a 1995 graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and served in congregations in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland for more than 13 years before joining the Navy earlier this year. Mason's contact information can be found in the contact section of www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc.

Congratulations to civil service master **Capt. Thomas Finger** and **Chief Engineer James Shirley**, who received Meritorious Civilian Service Awards on Aug. 3 in a ceremony held aboard MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort. MSFSC Director **Jack Taylor** presented the awards, noting Finger and Shirley's distinguished performance of duties during the ship's recent humanitarian and civic assistance mission to Latin America and the Caribbean, Continuing Promise 2009.

MSFSC's mariner advancement program informational/training video is now available to the fleet. The training tool is designed to help civil service mariners understand the steps involved in navigating MSFSC's new, automated civil-service-mariner-evaluation system. In late September, MSFSC's port captains **Randall Rockwood** and **Robert Holley** began visiting and delivering the program to all civil service mariner-crewed ships, a process that is expected to be completed by mid-October. The port captains are providing subject matter expertise and training to civil service mariners as each ship goes live on the system. The training video is available for viewing at http://www.msc.navy.mil/civmar/map.htm.

Deb Greene, a health care specialist in MSFSC's force medical office, had a successful five-day assist visit to MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba and MSC's Ship Support Unit in Bahrain. While overseas, Greene provided medical training to civil service mariners and third mates including the proper use of water quality test kits and the identification of heat stress warning signs.

MSC's incoming commander, Navy **Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby**, paid a visit to MSFSC Aug. 11. Buzby, who is currently deputy chief of staff for Global Force Management and Joint Operations at U.S. Fleet Forces Command, took the opportunity to meet senior members of the staff. Buzby has maintained close ties to the merchant marine world since he graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in 1979. Buzby continues to maintain a valid U.S. Coast Guard third mate's license.

Former MSC combat stores ship ex-USNS Concord was deactivated Aug. 18 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Fair winds and following seas to **Laundryman Jesus Garcia**, **Assistant Cook Mary Sawyer** and **Unlicensed Junior Engineer Francisco Clotter**, as they enter into retirement roles. Thank you for your service.

MSFSC regretfully reports the death of **Able Seaman Tim Nemeti**.

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

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman departed the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility following a successful deployment in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, Partnership-Strength-Presence, Struggle Against Violent Extremism and Maritime Security Operations. Grumman provided unmatched support to USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and USS Boxer strike groups and other coalition naval forces. The crew also supported critical missions off the Horn of Africa and in the Persian Gulf. Navy **Capt. Steve Kelley**, former commander of Sealift Logistics Command Central, recognized the crew members of Grumman with a Bravo Zulu for their detailed personal attention and dedication to the readiness of 5th Fleet combat forces. Grumman safely and efficiently conducted 70 incident-free underway replenishments, transferred more than 10.6 million gallons of fuel and delivered 1,171 pallets of dry cargo.

The crew of MSC fleet replenishment oilers USNS Walter S. Diehl and USNS John Lenthall, MSC fast combat support ship USNS Rainier and MSC combat stores ship USNS San Jose have stepped in to pick up the action in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility. The ships' logistics performance in the high-operational tempo of U.S. Central Command will be instrumental to the success of U.S. and coalition maritime operations.

EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman supported the helicopter detachment from command ship USS Mount Whitney in August, providing a ready deck for air crew deck-landing qualification requirements. During the event, Grumman's civil service master, **Capt. Roger Lagrone**, received accolades from the helicopter detachment officer in charge for impressive professionalism.

MSC-chartered dry cargo ship MV American Tern loaded Navy Seabee equipment in Rota, Spain, in August and delivered it to Douala, Cameroon, in September. The lift was a West Africa Training Cruise to support ongoing Navy theater security cooperation efforts in the Gulf of Guinea.

In September, Maritime Prepositioning Ships USNS 2ND LT John P. Bobo, USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat and USNS 1ST LT Baldomero Lopez participated in Exercise Loyal Midas 2009 in Souda Bay, Greece. For the exercise, designated Marine and Navy forces offloaded supplies and equipment from Lopez and Wheat. Bobo served as a command and control ship and provided billeting for exercise participants. The exercise helped determine the impact of heavy armor on the loading and processing of equipment.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Capt. Jerome Hamel**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Pacific, commended the crew of Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe with a Bravo Zulu for doing an outstanding job as the ship was being activated from reduced operating status to serve a rotation as the southern Californian duty oiler. The crew of Guadalupe successfully completed all of the ships' return qualifications and sea trials during a seven-day period before its official re-activation Aug. 24. Guadalupe lost no time returning to its tasks – the crew loaded fuel hours after the ship reactivated and sailed to San Diego a day later, for an at-sea refueling operation.

Hamel paid a visit to MSC representatives in Pearl Harbor Aug. 4-8 as part of his orientation as SEALOGPAC's new commander. While in Hawaii, Hamel toured MSC fast combat support ship USNS Bridge, which is currently deployed in support of the Navy aircraft carrier USS Nimitz strike group; MSC ammunition ship USNS Kiska, which is preparing to do an ammunition rollback from Korea; and the recently deactivated ex-USNS Concord.

Larry Larsson, a military transportation specialist in SEALOGPAC's operations department, represented MSC as a supporting member of the TRANSCOM Augmentee Team to Pacific Command exercise ULCHI Freedom Guardian 2009 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Aug. 12-26. Larsson served as a subject-matter expert in the Deployment and Distribution Operations Center/Joint Operations Center. He worked on the surface desk and ensured that the mission received the appropriate SEALOGPAC operational support.

Navy **Personnelman 3rd Class Andrew Lopez**, who is currently serving at MSC's Ship Support Unit in San Diego, received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for professional achievement as military pay clerk for SSU San Diego from June 2008 to June 2009. Capt. Hamel presented Lopez with the award.

Congratulations to **David Carmody** and **Malisa Simpson**, both of MSC's office in Pearl Harbor, for receiving civilian length-of-tour awards. Carmody and Simpson were recognized for 20 years and 10 years of government service, respectively.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic and Military Sealift Fleet Support Command jointly hosted a civil service ship masters' conference on Sept. 3. Staff members from Military Sealift Command headquarters, MSFSC, Sealift Logistics Command Pacific and SEALOGLANT, and 11 civil service mariner masters attended the event. Topics included long-range schedules, anti-piracy and anti-terrorism/force protection procedures, MSFSC's new mariner-evaluation system and oily-water-separator policy.

"In my opinion, the greatest benefit of the conference was having so many representatives from different MSC commands and ship masters in the same room," said Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Brian Hudson**, SEALOGLANT diving officer. "The venue provided an opportunity for many excellent sidebar discussions in addition to those in the formal agenda."

Tom D'Agostino, SEALOGLANT's representative in Charleston, S.C., assisted MSC-chartered tanker MV Houston during the ship's Aug. 12-13 local port call to discharge 163,000 barrels of fuel. In the month of August, D'Agostino assisted with the demilitarization of more than 825 flat racks that formerly belonged to MSC. Flatracks are steel-framed, cargo racks with a high-loading capacity with end walls stable enough to allow several of the racks to be stacked on top of one another.

Congratulations to **Randall Dixon** for being named SEALOGLANT Civilian of the Quarter. Dixon's award lauded him for increasing the productivity of the command by coordinating SEALOGLANT's transition to its new defense-messaging system and for introducing the command to the Defense Connectivity Online Collaboration Tool.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

U.S. Air Force Gen. Duncan McNabb, commander of U.S. Transportation Command, paid a visit to Sealift Logistics Command Far East offices in Korea, Diego Garcia and Singapore to meet with Military Sealift Command staff members. Navy **Cmdr. Chris Cruz**, commanding officer, MSCO Korea, met with McNabb at Osan Air Force Base near the capital city of Seoul, Aug. 26. McNabb then traveled to Diego Garcia Aug. 30-31, to visit with commanding officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Paul Springer** and his staff. McNabb also met with Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two commander Navy **Capt. Tony Martin** and his staff members on board MPS Squadron Two flagship Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS SGT William R. Button. After McNabb was briefed on Maritime Prepositioning Force operations in the Indian Ocean, he toured the ship and spent time inside one of Button's embarked M1-A1 Abrams tanks. McNabb visited Singapore Sept. 1-2 where he met with U.S. Embassy Charges D'Affaires Dan Shields; Chief of the Singapore air force, Maj. Gen. Chee Khern Ng; and Navy **Capt. Jim Romano**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Far East. The general also visited Hawaii, Japan, Guam and the Philippines during his visit to the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Rear Adm. Robert O. Wray, Jr., deputy commander, MSC, paid a visit to Diego Garcia, Aug. 12-14. Wray, accompanied by Romano, visited with Martin on board Button. Wray then visited the crews of prepositioning ships MV LTC John U.D. Page and MV CAPT Steven L. Bennett. Wray also met with Navy Capt. Mike Flanagan, commanding officer, Naval Support Facility, Diego Garcia, and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Paul Springer**, commanding officer, MSCO Diego Garcia.

Romano traveled to MSCO Korea Aug. 18-21 to meet with Navy **Cmdr. Chris Cruz**, MSCO Korea's commanding officer, and Reservists deployed in support of exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian, one of two major Korean peninsula defense exercises held each year. More than 40 MSC Navy Reserve personnel joined MSCO Korea in the exercise, which tested both the United States and South Korean militaries' ability to quickly deploy personnel and bring massive amounts of cargo to shore in the event of a real-world crisis on the Korean peninsula.

While in Busan Aug. 19-20, Romano visited MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Pomeroy and MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS Bowditch in tours hosted by the ships' civil service masters **Capt. Paul Davis** and **Capt. Dan Ziemer**, respectively.

MSCO Korea teamed up with Busan's United Seamen's Service center to co-sponsor an annual summer event for 60 children living at the local Miewon Orphanage, with which MSCO Korea has enjoyed a long-standing relationship since the early 1950s. MSCO Korea and USS hosted the children in the scenic city of Namhae, South Korea, for a four-day visit, Aug. 3-7. The children enjoyed good food, camping and hiking.

On Aug. 6, MSCO Korea's Navy **Information Technology 2nd Class Tasia Brick** was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal, marking the conclusion of her tour at MSCO Korea. Brick was also awarded the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for donating many hours of her personal time to the Busan community. In addition, the director of Busan Veterans Hospital presented Brick with the hospital's outstanding volunteer award for her hours spent visiting patients and teaching English to war veterans. Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Sylvia Vance** departed MSCO Diego Garcia for Navy Mobile Construction Battalion Seven, in Gulfport, Miss. Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Sandra Manning** replaced Vance as the command's administrative officer.

In MPS Squadron Two, Navy **Chief Warrant Officer Charles Briggs**, operations officer, was selected for promotion to his current rank.

Ship's master **Capt. H. Patrick McGroggan** and the crew of tanker MT Maersk Rhode Island hosted SEALOG staff members for a tour of the vessel while docked at Sembawang Wharves, Aug. 4. The tour, which was initiated by SEALOGFE tanker officer Thad Reap, gave SEALOG staff members a first-hand look at tanker loading procedures. Maersk Rhode Island **Third Mate Dave Perron** also gave guests a tour of the ship's bridge and engine room.

Photos courtesy of General Dynamics NASSCO.

T-AKE two

Military Sealift Command's newest dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Wally Schirra steams underway for the first time off the coast of San Diego, Sept. 1. Schirra is the eighth ship in the Lewis and Clark-class of underway replenishment ships. Schirra is scheduled to begin conducting missions for MSC in May 2010.

Dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Matthew Perry slides into the water for the first time during an evening christening and launch ceremony Aug. 16 at the NASSCO shipyard in San Diego. Perry is the Navy's ninth dry cargo/ammunition ship. Perry is scheduled to be delivered to MSC in early 2010.

MSC delivers... unique service

By Ed Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

U.S. Navy photos by Ed Baxter

Two Military Sealift Command ships conducted a training exercise off the coast of Yeosu, South Korea, Aug. 17-18, where they rehearsed the U.S. military's unique capability to deliver fuel to ground forces ashore from a tanker anchored up to eight miles from the coast.

The cornerstone of this capability is offshore petroleum distribution system ship MV VADM K.R. Wheeler – a uniquely designed ship, which completed construction in 2007 and has been under charter to MSC ever since. Wheeler works as an at-sea pumping station to transfer fuel ashore from commercial and military tankers. The tanker pumps fuel to Wheeler, which in turn pumps the fuel to shore.

For the exercise, Wheeler operated in concert with MSC tanker USNS Lawrence A. Gianella to practice the highly complex operation of running a fuel transfer hose between Wheeler and Gianella and then maintaining the ships' connected at-sea position for nearly an hour.

In less than 48 hours, during regular operations, Wheeler's crew can run the full length of pipe ashore, run a float hose to a tanker from the ship's stern and be ready to pump fuel at a rate of about 1,400 gallons per minute – up to 1.7 million gallons in 20 hours.

The training was designed to sharpen skills, according to Wheeler's civilian master Capt. Jon Skoglund.

"This real world training is invaluable for the entire crew," said Skoglund. "We make sure that all the equipment is operational and validate that we are prepared to execute our mission." Both Wheeler and Gianella are crewed by civilian mariners who work for private companies under contract to MSC.

The mission got underway Aug. 17, when Wheeler and its support ship MV Fast Tempo left the port at Busan, South Korea. The 165-foot Fast Tempo is a powerful tow and tug boat designed to support Wheeler in real-world operations. After making the seven-hour voyage, Wheeler stopped five miles off the coast of Yeosu, South Korea.

An hour later, Gianella anchored about a mile from Wheeler's stern, and both ships waited out the night. "Wheeler is a one-of-a-kind ship. There is no equivalent in the U.S. Navy or the commercial sector," said Rick Bower, one of eight contract personnel assigned to Wheeler whose sole mission is to manage the offshore petroleum distribution system.

The training mission kicked off the following day when Fast Tempo secured a tow line to Gianella's stern. Once secured, Fast Tempo used two of its four powerful engines to gently tug on Gianella's stern. "Fast Tempo acts as a brake, tugging on Gianella so it can safely maintain its position," said Wheeler's Chief Mate John Souza.

Next, Wheeler positioned itself off of Gianella's bow. Using its sophisticated, computer-controlled dynamic positioning system, with multiple thrusters, two of which can rotate 360 degrees, Wheeler inched backwards to within 30 feet of Gianella's bow. Next, a tow cable was attached and secured to Gianella, which then weighed anchor.

With the two vessels safely linked by a tow line, one of Wheeler's two embarked work boats secured a line to a floating pipe section deployed from the ship's stern. The small boat dragged the float hose some 800 feet toward Gianella, where waiting mariners used the ship's side crane to hoist the hose aboard. In turn, the hose was secured to the ship's receiving manifest. The hose remained connected during the one hour to test Wheeler and Gianella's ability to maintain their position.

The hose was then disconnected, and the crews of Fast Tempo and Wheeler released the tow lines from Gianella, completing the mission. Wheeler then returned to Busan for a routine port call, while Gianella sailed to Diego Garcia, where it is currently part of MSC's Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two.

In a follow-on exercise in September, Wheeler's crew members successfully conducted the second half of their OPDS deployment training exercise off Pohang, Republic of Korea. In this phase, Wheeler and support craft MV Fast Tempo simulated pumping fuel to shore using eight miles of flexible pipe stored on the ship's weather deck and wrapped around five, 35-foot-tall spools.

Top: *MSC offshore petroleum distribution ship MV VADM K.R. Wheeler's Third Mate Hulsey Bray and Defense Support Services' Everett Hopper secure the line connecting a fuel pipe to a working boat. The floating pipe section was towed 800 feet before it was hoisted aboard MSC tanker USNS Lawrence H. Gianella off the coast of Yeosu, South Korea, Aug. 18.*

Right: *Wheeler and Gianella practice running a float hose between them. Wheeler is uniquely capable of receiving fuel from a commercial or military tanker and then pumping the fuel ashore using the eight miles of flexible pipe Wheeler carries aboard its weather deck.*

Swift training for West African sailors

By Meghan Patrick and Laura Seal
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift served as an educational platform for 49 sailors from six West African countries this summer.

For six weeks beginning July 13, incremental groups totaling nearly 45 sailors from Ghana, Nigeria, Gabon, Benin, Cameroon and Togo lived and trained on board 331-foot-long Swift. Under the guidance of 10 embarked U.S. Navy training team members from the Navy Expeditionary Training Command in Little Creek, Va., the West African sailors trained daily in maritime safety and security operations tailored specifically to operations in their home waters in the Gulf of Guinea.

During the training, five courses of instruction covered a range of operations including: visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS); small boat operations; seamanship; and navigation. Most of the training took place while the ship was underway, but some evolutions were conducted as Swift visited the partner nations' homeports.

Swift's mission was part of African Partnership Station, or APS, a multinational initiative started in 2007 by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Africa. During a series of maritime conferences held in West and Central Africa in 2006, African leaders stated their desire to improve maritime governance and foster a stable maritime environment. APS aims to work cooperatively with U.S. and international partners to help coastal nations in West and Central Africa achieve maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Swift's unique mission as an APS platform required an equally distinctive crewing structure designed especially to ensure that the ship's complement is easily tailored to support multiple missions.

Seventeen civilian mariners who work for a private ship operating company under contract to MSC operate and navigate the ship. In addition, 21 Navy sailors comprise Swift's military department and are responsible for Swift's interface with the Navy fleet, providing the ship's command and control functions, and performing communication and supply functions. These sailors are part of MSC's Military Sealift Fleet Support Command and are based in Norfolk.

For each APS Swift mission, a mission commander and staff embark aboard Swift to direct all mission-specific activities. For the most recent APS mission, the mission commander was Cmdr. John Tolg, who also serves as the Chief Staff Officer for the Naples, Italy-based Destroyer Squadron 60/Combined Task Force 65/365. Swift's core crew was supplemented with subject matter experts responsible for conducting the mission-related activities. For this training deployment, Swift embarked 10 training professionals from the Navy Expeditionary Training Command who designed and conducted the training evolutions with the West African sailors.

While Swift's on-board team seemed like a diverse group of personnel during the July to September training mission, the entire crew quickly bonded not only with each other, but also with the nearly four dozen West African sailors. Translators helped to cross the French/English language barrier.

The newly formed team shared a responsibility which followed every sailor back to his or her home country, explained Swift's embarked training team supervisor, Chief Boatswain's Mate Willie J. Donald, after 11 of the African sailors graduated in a ceremony aboard Swift in August.

"The relationships formed during APS training are the relationships necessary to work together to create theater security in the Gulf of Guinea," Donald said.

Joseph Gura, a sub-lieutenant and navigational officer in Ghana's navy is thankful for his new skills and how they might help him in future roles.

"In [Ghana's] navy, any of us can be called on to be a boarding officer. With the recent discovery and exploitation of oil in the waters just off the coast, there is an increase in Ghana's maritime traffic," said Gura. "This training equipped me to be able to enhance my ship's ability to board and search other vessels as needed."

At the conclusion of Swift's July to September training evolution, the Navy Expeditionary Training Command trainers debarked and were replaced with more than 20 medical, dental and veterinary professionals from the Navy and Army as well as the nonprofit organization Project HOPE. With this new medical team aboard, Swift spent the month of September in Monrovia, Liberia, where the embarked medical personnel assisted Liberians in medical and dental treatment and care. While in Liberia, Swift also delivered more than 20 pallets of donated materials, including medical and hygiene supplies.

Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Dan Meaney contributed to this story.