

August 2010

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND



Civil service mariner Able Seaman Gabriel Maceda lifts a Cambodian child aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy for life-altering surgery. A utility boat was used to shuttle patients between ship and shore during the Cambodian portion of Pacific Partnership 2010.

U.S. Navy photo by Meghan Patrick

## MERCY CIVIMARS



# Key support in Pacific Partnership



Article by Meghan Patrick  
Pg. 4

INSIDE — Mercy returns 1,000-year-old antiquities to Cambodia • McDonnell maps Malaccan Strait

# Progress report: putting people first

In previous issues of Sealift, I told you that I had established a task force – N00H – to help identify, coordinate and execute actions which will directly contribute to how we as an organization treat our workforce. We're about three months into the effort, and I want to report the progress we've made so far.

Capt. Peter Long, a licensed MSC ship's master with a Ph.D., was our first leader of the N00H team. He did a great job getting the team up and running and setting the tone for positive movement on the issues that have been identified as being extremely important to you. This month, Capt. Long will rotate back to sea, and Chief Engineer Ray Blanchet will take over, bringing his energy, leadership and unique perspective to the job.

The other team members: Dr. Don Belanus, Donna Looney, Robin Roggenkamp and Boatswain's Mate William "Billy" Bushey, MSC unlicensed CIVMAR, remain on task directly advising me on the way ahead and facilitating the action. They'll also monitor progress for me and let me know when they find bottlenecks or road blocks.

Throughout the past few months, we've done a lot of research; confirmed that we're getting the mission done; and confirmed that most of us think MSC is a pretty good place to work. But there are many things we can do better to take care of our people. In some cases, we can do a lot better.

We've been seeking your input and feedback, and we've developed nearly 100 ideas and areas to attack that were surfaced at our Leadership Summit; sent in by you to the N00H team; and raised at my visits around the fleet. We are in the process of sharing these ideas with the maritime unions. We'll continue to do that.

To give this effort some structure, we've grouped our efforts into five areas. We have selected 10 issues of initial focus in each of the areas, which gives us 50 actionable items to begin working. We're already making progress in many of the most important areas,

such as providing on-time reliefs to CIVMARs afloat – a top priority.

Here are the five areas and some of the issues that we'll report on to let you know how we're doing. As new issues are being worked, we'll add them to the monthly "report card."

## Afloat work continuum

SEALOGPAC and N00H worked to surface the issue of securing Navy Exchange privileges for CIVMARs in the continental United States, similar to National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration mariners. I signed out that letter to NEXCOM during the first part of July and we're eagerly awaiting the answer. I expect a positive response.

We're in the process of converting the existing CIVMAR payroll system to one supported by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, providing greater flexibility, including the option to withhold state income tax.

I have directed the hiring of an increased number of placement officers at MSFSC to better handle your issues when you call in or email. We're in the process of hiring six more people, providing additional training for existing placement officers and making those placement officers more accessible outside of Norfolk working hours. Much more to come on this topic.

## Diversity and women's issues

We are doing more research in this area, with the intent to soon launch a mentoring network, an afloat diversity plan and special emphasis programs. We are also reviewing all the directives and procedures associated with sexual harassment and discrimination to find the right way forward for correcting our deficiencies.

## Employee quality of life

MSC is now on Facebook, allowing command-wide conversations among shipmates and opportunities to answer each other's questions. It is monitored on a daily basis and will

be a place to share news and information about MSC and our people. As I write this, our page has been up three weeks and we're picking up about 100 fans each week. We've also recorded nearly 1,700 site visits.

Our sailors here at headquarters are meeting regularly for professional development and one-on-one mentoring. We're expanding that to all MSC shore locations.

We also hear you concerning the use of an alternate travel provider. I have directed a cost-benefit analysis leading to a decision in the next 90 days.

We are also working to maximize our existing recognition programs and expanding them to ensure the good work that many of you do is properly acknowledged.

## Training and professional development

In an effort to keep the MSC staff folks properly connected with the mariners they support, I have directed that all mid- and upper-level managers get to sea at least once a year, and all other MSC employees at least once every five years. Get ready for some company out there!

For those in customer service positions, primarily handling CIVMAR issues, I'm instituting initial and refresher training, as well as workshops and coaching, on developing 'can-do' attitudes and the initiative to resolve issues with a positive outcome.

## Health and wellness

All CIVMAR ships have fitness equipment aboard. Not all of the equipment is in the best shape. We're developing a process that will lead to regular reviews and upgrades for all of our fitness equipment. Ashore, most of our locations have fitness centers, but our people don't always have access. We're working that, too.

We're also working toward healthier menu planning and eliminating the shortage of medical service officers aboard ship.

## Work in progress

Remember, the issues I've just covered include what is already moving forward – the low-hanging fruit. These are only 10 items out of the top 50. There is a lot more "meat" to follow. There are another 50 that will take more research and more time to deal with, but they are on my action list, and I'll be updated weekly on progress. Next month, after we've finished vetting the "Top 50" list with the unions, we'll run them all for you to see in Sealift, and also post them on Facebook and the MSC website. As you review the action items, I invite you to make input on issues you think need to be changed or reprioritized. We are going to make this happen.

## CMDMC Green to retire

Command Master Chief Kenneth Green will retire July 23. He will be relieved by Master Chief Miguel-Juan Reyes, who comes to MSC from USS Blue Ridge, where he served as Command Master Chief.

Master Chief Green has been an exceptional leader and a great source of advice to me and the MSC leadership. He has been a tireless advocate for both sailors and mariners, especially in the area of equal opportunity and personal development. We congratulate Master Chief Green on his 32 years of outstanding service, and wish him and Marilyn fair winds and a following sea.

Yours aye,

Mark H. "Buz" Buzby  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Commander, Military Sealift Command

*Sealift* is an authorized publication for members and employees of the Navy's Military Sealift Command. Contents of this publication are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy. *Sealift* is published monthly by the Military Sealift Command Office of Public Affairs as authorized under NAVPUBINST 5600.42A. Submission of articles and letters should be addressed to Editor, *Sealift*, Military Sealift Command, 914 Charles Morris Court, S.E., Washington Navy Yard, D.C. 20398-5540; phone (202) 685-5055 or DSN 325-5055; fax (202) 685-5067; or via e-mail to sealift.editor@navy.mil. All photographic submissions must be sent via e-mail, express mail or parcel service.

**COMSC** Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, USN  
**Director, Public Affairs** Timothy Boulay  
**Editor** Meghan Patrick  
**Writers** Edward Baxter, Singapore  
Bill Cook, Norfolk, Va.  
Susan Melow, Norfolk, Va.  
Laura Seal, Washington  
Adrian Schulte, Washington  
Sarah Burford, San Diego  
Kim Dixon, Naples  
**Art Director** Dale Allen, Washington  
**Graphics** Susan Thomas, Washington

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



Printed on recycled paper



## Land forward-deploys with first submarine tender hybrid crew

### MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command submarine tender USS Emory S. Land made a brief port stop in Hawaii June 22 after getting underway from its former homeport in Bremerton, Wash., a few days earlier. The stop at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam was the first on a 10,000 mile-long, two-month journey to the ship's new homeport in Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory.

Prior to the ship's departure from Washington state, Land completed a one-year shipyard availability period and a rigorous conversion process that enables military and MSC civil service crew members to serve aboard the ship together under the leadership of a U.S. Navy captain. During the transition to hybrid crewing, the ship underwent habitability modifications and other changes necessary to accommodate the new crew.

Land's CIVMARs are responsible for the ship's deck department, navigation, engineering plant, galley and steward services and also have primary responsibility for communications and ship supply functions. The uniformed personnel assigned as crew members operate the shipboard information systems, maintain defensive weapons systems and coordinate supply functions with CIVMARs.

"The ship looks terrific and has operated

very well, and our new hybrid crew has performed exceptionally well, despite having little sailing time together," said Cmdr. Christopher Carter, Land's executive officer. "The way the crew has operated the ship during this transit to Pearl is a true testament to the high qual-



Military Sealift Command submarine tender USS Emory S. Land renders honors as it passes the USS Arizona Memorial upon arrival for a port visit at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam June 22. Land is conducting a homeport shift from Bremerton, Wash., to Diego Garcia.

ity seamanship of our civilian mariners and professionalism of our sailors. Together we are quickly becoming a formidable team, eager to take our mission forward."

Land, formerly crewed by Navy personnel only, transferred to MSC in 2008. Land is the Navy's first submarine tender to complete conversion to hybrid crewing. Although this innovative concept is new for Land, it's not new for the Navy. Navy command ship USS Mount Whitney converted to hybrid crewing while keeping its commissioned warship status when it transferred to MSC in 2004.

While in Hawaii, Land underwent two major inspections, including an Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection certification inspection administered by the staff of Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The second inspection was a Ship Material Assessment and Readiness Testing, or SMART, which was performed July 1 by inspectors from MSC with support provided by the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey. Land received satisfactory ratings in all inspection categories.

"Considering everything that Land has been through, this was equivalent to passing with flying colors and a testament to the hard work of the entire crew," said Rusty Bishop, MSC Special Mission Program technical director.

"I congratulate the crew for all the hard work, sweat and tears they have put into this hybrid project to make it successful," said Chief Interior Communications Specialist Cody Owings. "It's always nice to say that we were the first to do it, and make it work. We have worked our tails off to get to this point, and it's very rewarding to see our hard work pay off."

When Land reaches Diego Garcia in mid-August, the 694-foot ship will provide an expeditionary maintenance capability to fast-attack submarines and guided missile submarines in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

# Mercy helps repatriate Cambodian antiquities

By Meghan Patrick  
MSC Public Affairs

Some of the world's greatest and most ancient art treasures were returned to their homeland in the Far East thanks to the Military Sealift Command crew of hospital ship USNS Mercy. Members of the civil service crew helped complete the repatriation of several antiquities of historical and religious significance to the Royal Government of Cambodia June 17 as part of Pacific Partnership 2010, the ship's five-month humanitarian and civic assistance mission to Southeast Asia.

The 1,000-year-old artifacts, which had been smuggled from Cambodia to Thailand, were recovered from the black market by U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement agents in 2008. Some of the items had been looted from Angkor Wat, a Buddhist temple located northwest of Cambodia's capital city of Phnom Penh that is also the largest religious structure in the world.

The artifacts were stored in California until April when ICE worked with the Navy, State Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation to arrange the artifacts' return to Cambodia via Mercy during the ship's mission stop June 14-28.

The precious art included several sandstone and bronze statues of the Buddha and a sandstone relief sculpture. All were transferred to Cambodian officials during a pierside ceremony in Sihanoukville, Cambodia. Capt. Lisa Franchetti, Pacific Partnership 2010 mission commander, attended the ceremony, along with First Officer Matthew Bush, one of Mercy's 65 civil service mariners who work for MSC and are responsible for the ship's operation and navigation, and representatives from the Cambodian government, including Cambodian Ministry of Culture Director Khim Sarith.

Five Buddhist monks approached the shipping crates, which held the relics of their religious heritage, as the ceremony commenced. While Cambodians unwrapped the

antiquities one by one, the monks bowed their heads in an acknowledgement of each artifact's return and eventually led the crowd of 60 people in a prayer of thankfulness.

Franchetti and Sarith then signed a document signifying the transfer of custody from the United States to Cambodia.



U.S. Navy photos by Meghan Patrick

Bush, who facilitated the loading of the artifacts onto Mercy and secured them for their transit to Cambodia before the ship departed San Diego May 1, felt honored to be a part of the "final leg of a long journey home."

"The most rewarding part of today's experience was sharing in the joy of the Cambodians," said Bush. "You could see on their faces, especially on the face of the senior monk, how much the Cambodian nationals respect and appreciate these items and how they are prized possessions of their country."

"Today was also special for me," Bush continued, "because the role of mariners is usually behind the scenes. It was nice to see the

fruits of our labor and seeing how I contributed in my own small way to the larger mission at hand and the United States' greater relationship with Cambodia.

For Mercy to return the artifacts to their rightful owners, in a token of goodwill, truly fulfills the goal of this mission, which is to strengthen the relationship between the two nations."

As the ceremony came to a close, Sarith expressed his gratitude.

"As a Cambodian, I was very happy to learn of the return of these artifacts," Sarith said. "On behalf of myself and the Cambodian people, I would like to thank the U.S. government for its commitment to the Cambodian people. On behalf of the Ministry of Culture, this is indeed a great contribution to Cambodian culture."



Left: Cambodian Buddhist monks lead a prayer of thanks for the return of precious Cambodian antiquities in a repatriation ceremony held pierside in Sihanoukville, Cambodia, June 17. Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy returned the artifacts, which were recovered from the black market, to their rightful owners as part of Pacific Partnership 2010's humanitarian and civic assistance mission to Southeast Asia.

Above: A Cambodian unwraps a Buddha head and other antiquities estimated to be 1,000 years old.

Right: Mercy First Officer Matthew Bush stands with members of the Cambodian Ministry of Culture as they watch the unwrapping of the artifacts.



# McDonnell joint survey mission maps Malaccan Strait

By Ed Baxter  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS John McDonnell conducted a joint survey mission with the Indonesian navy May 22 to June 15, mapping about 300 square miles of previously unsurveyed seabed off the coast of northern Sumatra.

Four officers from the Indonesian navy's oceanographic survey command, Dinas Hidro Okeanografi, embarked McDonnell for the mission at the port of Belawan, Indonesia, joining nine civilian surveyors and two technicians from the Naval Oceanographic Office, or NAVOCEANO, already aboard the ship.

The mission began when McDonnell departed Belawan May 22 for a target survey area selected by the Indonesians just off the coast of the northern Sumatra port. McDonnell's shipboard multi-beam and side-scan sonar, capable of surveying at depths of more than 3,000 feet, collected the data, which was reviewed and analyzed by the shipboard surveyors and technicians.

The data will be shared by the U.S. and Indonesian navies and used to support safe navigation in the Malacca Strait, through which more than 50,000 commercial and military ships pass each year.

This mission proved valuable not only because of the data's great benefit for marine navigation in the area, it also strengthened ties between the United States and Indonesia.

"We were able to learn from each other and

share ideas and techniques," said Calvin Martin, naval oceanography representative in Singapore for the U.S. Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command.

Planning for the survey mission began in August 2009 and came together through a series of bilateral conferences.

"Let me emphasize that McDonnell's visit here and survey mission are very important to us," said Indonesian Commodore Syarif Husein, commandant of Main Naval Base One, Belawan, when he visited McDonnell in port May 21. "Thank you for making time for friendship."

The Indonesian officers debarked McDonnell at sea June 14 and returned to Belawan via small boat while McDonnell continued on to Singapore.

McDonnell is crewed by 23 civilian mariners who work for a private company under contract to MSC. While the technicians collect and analyze data, the mariners operate and navigate the ship.

"This mission, like all survey missions, is a team effort between our surveyors and the mariners," said embarked senior NAVOCEANO representative, Shirley Dorsey. "The mariners get the ship where we need it so we are then able to focus on the technical aspects of the mission."

The mariners enjoyed working with their Indonesian partners. "The four Indonesian officers were an important part of the team," said Capt. Patrick Thompson, McDonnell's civilian master. "The goodwill generated by these joint missions leaves a lasting impression on our host nations."

McDonnell is one of seven MSC oceanographic survey ships, some of which have conducted similar missions with international partners in previous years. For example, USNS Pathfinder worked in 2009 with the Estonian navy to search for a crashed World War II Finnish airplane. In March 2010, USNS Henson was the platform for U.S. Southern Command's Oceanographic Southern Partnership Station mission during

Four Indonesian navy captains embark Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS John McDonnell for a joint survey mission off the coast of Sumatra May 22 to June 15. The team mapped 300 square miles of unsurveyed seabed.



U.S. Navy photo

which officers from the Brazilian and Colombian navies embarked the ship to conduct survey demonstrations. In 2007, eight Vietnamese hydrographers embarked USNS Bruce C. Heezen's hydrographic survey launch to chart an area near Da Nang, Vietnam.

McDonnell is scheduled to deactivate in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in August.



# Putting a *face* on compassion



## team brings hope to Cambodia

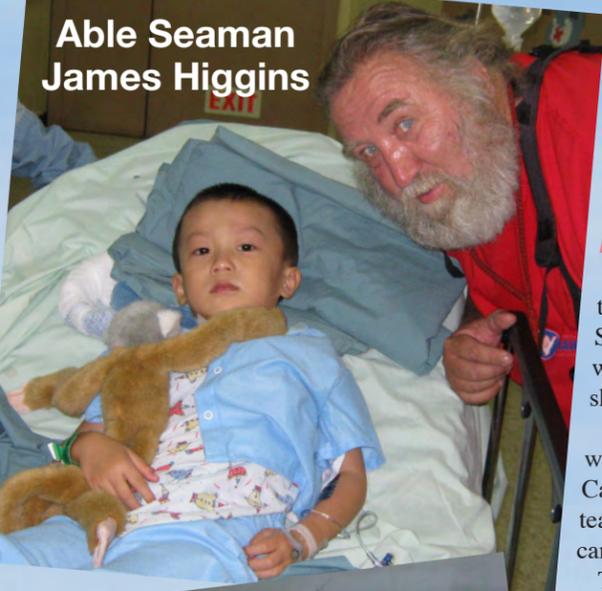
By Meghan Patrick, MSC Public Affairs

Ten-year-old Theam is afraid of boats, and the choppy swells characteristic of Cambodia's monsoon season do little to settle his nerves. But Theam knows he must overcome his fear; board a small boat that will offer little relief from the rocky seas; and travel to a mysterious white hospital ship anchored two miles into the Gulf of Thailand in order to get the hernia surgery he desperately needs. He is hopeful that the surgery will allow him to play soccer with his friends again.



Theam

Able Seaman James Higgins



A Military Sealift Command civil service mariner tending the 33-foot boat at the pier offers Theam his hand and says, "Here we go buddy, I've gotcha." Theam knows little English, but Boatswain's Mate Cory Clark's easy smile, Yonkers-accent and comforting gaze are the reassurance Theam needs. He inhales a quick breath and accepts Clark's open hand to board the boat. Clark will transport Theam, his mother and 19 other Cambodians in need of life-changing medical procedures from the coast of Sihanoukville, Cambodia, to MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy.

### Mercy: the centerpiece for Pacific Partnership 2010

Mercy, a striking white ship with an afloat medical facility the length of three football fields and painted with large red crosses, is the main platform for Pacific Partnership 2010, U.S. Pacific Fleet's multi-ship, five-month humanitarian and civic assistance mission to Southeast Asia. This year, Mercy is taking medical, dental, veterinary and engineering services to Vietnam, Indonesia and Timor Leste, where relationships were developed during previous similar missions, and to Cambodia, where new relationships were fostered when the ship stopped there for the first time June 14-28.

About 1,000 U.S. government and non-government medical personnel staff the shipboard hospital – a show of compassion to a region with millions in need. By mid-July, the Mercy team had delivered medical and dental care to nearly 30,000 people while anchored in Cambodia alone. Among these patients, 29,248 were served by medical personnel working at sites ashore, and 536 were served by medical teams aboard the ship. Nearly half of the patients brought aboard ship underwent surgery. In addition, 1,059 animals received veterinary care; more than \$129,000 of Cambodia's biomedical equipment was repaired; and 12,900 pairs of eye glasses were distributed.

The medical team's impressive medical accomplishments, however, could not have been accomplished without the 24/7 work of Clark and the 64 other MSC CIVMARs who crew Mercy for the Pacific Partnership deployment.

Besides operating utility boats to shuttle patients between ship and shore, CIVMARs are responsible for the ship's navigation, engineering and general upkeep. The utility boats, nicknamed 'Band-Aid boats,' are necessary because Mercy is too large to pull pierside at any of the scheduled port stops.

### Care, compassion and expert seamanship – CIVMARs deliver

"Mate on watch, this is Band-Aid One, we're about 30 minutes out. We have 20 patients on board, mostly kids, and we'll need one wheelchair," Clark communicates the boat's status to the bridge as Able Seaman Eduardo Vargas pushes the boat away from the edge of the pier and double-checks that the passengers are safely seated.

"Cory, the bridge copies," Third Officer Jennifer Dago responds from her watch position.

Dago reexamines the ship's radar, which moments before Clark's call alerted her that the weather is rapidly changing, a common occurrence during monsoon season. Dago confirms heavy rain and strong winds through her binoculars and reaches for her radio again.

"Band-Aid One, another squall is on its way, I'm going to twist the ship to give you a lee," Dago says over the radio, simultaneously reaching for the phone to call the team working in the stern of the ship.

"Engine room, this is the bridge. Bring up the steam; I'll need 15 RPMs when you can give them to me. Another squall's coming in," says Dago.

"Engine room copies," says 2nd Assistant Engineer Nick Washington, quickly understanding Dago's implication. Turning 'up' the steam plant – meaning turning on the main engine of the ship's propulsion system that is not on when the ship is at anchor – will allow Dago to shift the ship to starboard. This, in turn, helps block the incoming winds, temporarily creating a lee and sheltering the 30-foot gangway from the ocean swells. This skilled maneuvering is essential for the safe embarkation of the passengers.

As Clark draws close to the metal gangway, Vargas tosses the boat's ropes to Able Seamen Jason Merry and Anthony Jones, who work quickly to secure it. Merry reaches into the ship and lifts Theam onto the gangway, making sure the small plastic bag carrying the few possessions he has packed for his 48-hour stay on the ship – a small container of rice and a pair of pajamas – goes with him. His mother is assisted onto the ship moments later, and the young boy wipes sweat from his brow, relieved that he is finally where he needs to be.

As Theam walks up the gangway toward the large entrance to the giant ship, he stops to show his gratitude to Second Officer Grant Begley, who has smiled at the child in greeting.

"Ar kun," says Theam, pressing his hands together in a prayer position at the base of chin to symbolize his respect before bowing his head slightly in the traditional greeting of the Khmer people. "Thank you."

### Two departments, one goal: patient care

Mercy's CIVMAR crew comprises two key departments: the deck and engineering departments. Each has separate responsibilities aboard the ship, but each is dependent on the other and is vital to the mission of the ship.

"There are many challenges in operating a ship with this capability and with a mission of this size," said Mercy's civil service master Capt. David Bradshaw, who is sailing on a hospital ship for the first time in his 26-year career, 19 years of which have been with MSC. "But supporting the medical people makes it very rewarding."

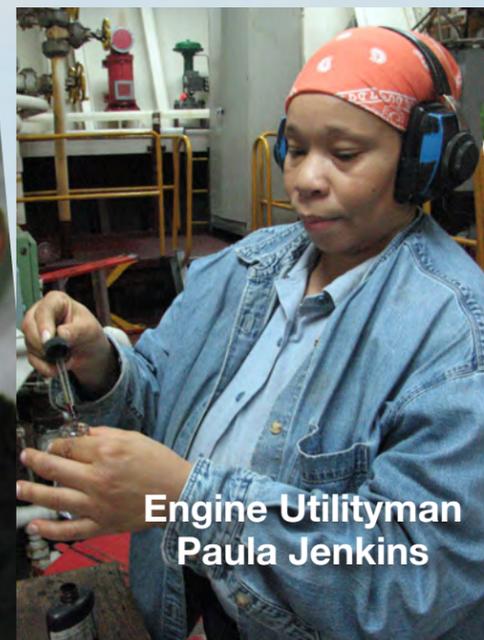
He explained, "One day, Chief Engineer Joe Watts and I were standing in the casualty receiving area when someone pushing a woman who was post-operation walked through. Everyone got out of her way, like they were parting the Red Sea. CHENG [the chief engineer] looked at me and said, 'that's what this is all about.' Each of the mariners has an individual hand in that support, and I'm so proud of how they've come together as a team."



Third Officer Albert Said



Boatswain's Mate Cory Clark



Engine Utilityman Paula Jenkins



**Third Officer  
Jennifer Dago**



**Second Officer  
Grant Begley**



### Care-taking never ends

Third Officer Albert Said, who is a part of Mercy’s deck department and has sailed with MSC since he graduated from the State University of New York Maritime Academy in 2007, says he’s learned more about his CIVMAR job from his time on Mercy than he has from other previous missions. That’s mostly because of the sheer responsibility of ensuring safety on a ship with so many people and moving parts.

“Here we have the same navigational watch schedule as we do on other ships, but you’re never really off duty on Mercy because there is so much going on,” said Said. “When I’m walking from my room back to the mess deck, off-duty, and I see something, I need to correct it as soon as I see it. It’s always in the back of my head that there are 1,000 people on board.”

Mercy’s Third Assistant Engineer Briede Charbonnet, who sailed on Comfort when it deployed to Haiti for hurricane-relief, emphasized the impact of the ship size on the responsibilities for those assigned to the engine department.

The engine room has four water distillers, each with the capability of making 75,000 gallons per day. The distilled water has a number of purposes, including fueling the steam plant. This plant provides the electricity that supports all ship and hospital operations – including operation of the galleys and laundry facilities; instrument sterilization; heating and air conditioning; and sustainment of the plant in the boiler room.

The engine room also has six generators, three of which provide power for the hospital, two of which support the ship; and one of which is a back-up. In addition, the engine room responds to all trouble calls – which amounted to 2,000 calls in seven weeks of operation – each requiring response to issues ranging from lights burned out; to clogged toilets; to repairing vital mission equipment such as boat cranes and life support systems.

“Many people on the ship don’t know we’re here, but that means we’re doing our job,” said Charbonnet, who began sailing with MSC when he graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King’s Point in 2007.

“The reason everything is going up there is because everything down here is going. An analogy that explains our role well is that a duck in a pond looks like it’s gliding effortlessly, but the reason it is moving is because below the surface its feet are motoring it really fast. Our job is to maintain that illusion. We make sure that a person under anesthesia on an operating table isn’t ever at risk.”

### Non-traditional sea duty

Able Seaman James Higgins of Mercy’s deck department misses his young grandchildren when he deploys. But, the jolly, white-bearded mariner – nicknamed ‘Santa Claus’ – has learned to find the bright side of any situation during his 31-year sailing career.

On this mission, Higgins’ first deployment on a hospital ship, the upside is finding ways to make the patients – especially the children – laugh and smile. Higgins’ day-to-day job is heading up the ship’s sewing repairs, such as patching up tears in the Band Aid boat covers and stitching cloth scales so doctors can calibrate the right dose of medication for patients. However, whenever he has a moment to break from his work in the ship’s sail locker, he stuffs his pockets with candy and trinkets and heads to the hospital deck to visit with patients while they are eating meals and recovering.

Higgins, who “plays with the kids and lets them pull [his] beard, because it makes them laugh,” quickly became a hit with both the patients and the medical personnel, who refer to Higgins’ ability to provide levity as his “gift.” Higgins finds the experience equally rewarding, especially when he meets children who board the ship to have cleft palate and lip repair surgeries.

“When I see a kid with his lip split, and then later see him walk away with it fixed, it’s really special,” said Higgins.

During this deployment, Higgins’ distinctive looks earned him a new nickname.

“Some of the patients say I look like Buddha,” he said.

Able Seaman Ivan Washburne, who goes by ‘Elvis’ and is known as one of the crew’s “jack-of-all-trades,” operates at high-speed all of the time. In the span of an evening, Washburne, who has worked for MSC since 1997, operated a shipboard crane to offload 10 tri-walls, or 1,060 cubic feet, of trash onto a boat; repaired a door hinge in a berthing area; shaved down a blade for an optometrist who needed the tool to adjust a patient’s eyeglasses; and ended his night by playing his guitar with several Navy enlisted personnel who also had musical instruments on board.

Despite his busy lifestyle, Washburne remains perpetually upbeat and positive about life and the ship’s mission. He partially credits his positive attitude to being a cancer survivor.

“I love being at sea,” he said. “This is the best job in the entire world.”

“[Washburne] exemplifies the spirit of cooperation that this mission needs to get the job done,” said Navy Cmdr. Trent Douglas, Mercy’s director for surgical services.

### Satisfaction: a reason to keep coming back

Third Assistant Engineer Spencer Pierce, who sailed on Mercy’s 2008 Pacific Partnership deployment and is a permanent member of the ship crew when the ship is inactive and pier-side in reduced operating status, said the missions have been “humbling at times.”

“They give me another appreciation for how I grew up, and they make me question what I really need,” said Pierce. “While I work mainly aboard, I take as many opportunities as I can to venture into town and experience the local culture. There are few comparisons to be made with [the American] way of life. I’ve seen smiles and appreciation come from so little.”

Engine Utilityman Paula Jenkins spent most of the past decade on MSC’s hospital ships, now sailing on Mercy after working on its sister ship USNS Comfort for seven deployments — ranging from rescue and humanitarian assistance training in the Baltic States in 2002, to casualty support in the Persian Gulf for Iraqi Freedom in 2003, to most recently supporting Operation Unified Response earthquake relief in Haiti.

Some of Jenkins’ experiences were more sobering than others, but she says that there’s been a consistent thread throughout all of them.

“Each mission has portrayed the United States in a positive light because we’ve shown the people in the countries we’ve visited that the true nature of Americans is the desire to help others,” said Jenkins. “I feel fortunate to be a part of that.”

One of the best parts of working on the hospital ship for Chief Engineer Watts is his ability to convey the meaning behind the mission to his school-age children. Watts, who has been sailing with MSC for 29 years and has led the engineering department on Mercy in every mission since the ship deployed to Indonesia for tsunami-relief in 2005, considers sailing on Mercy the “most profound experience” of his career.

“I’ve been on security ships, oilers and ammo ships – all of which offer something unique. But, the hospital ship delivers a message of hope to the entire world. Being able to explain that to my kids is priceless. And, I’m not the only one who feels that way. There are 14 mariners currently on the ship who are also doing their fourth missions since the tsunami. Extra sacrifices are made on this ship, but there’s a higher level of pride. There’s a reason why we do this, a reason why people keep coming back for more.”



## FAR • EAST • HAILS

During an award ceremony held at Sealift Logistics Command Far East's headquarters at Singapore's Sembawang Wharves June 17, SEALOGFE's commander Navy **Capt. Chip Denman** presented command counsel **Lis Young** with the Department of the Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Award, marking the end of her tour with the command. Young had served as Military Sealift Command's attorney in the Far East since September 2006 and is a 'plank owner' of SEALOGFE, which relocated to Singapore from Japan in early 2006. Young was cited for providing sound and practical legal advice on complex sovereign immunity issues, operations for four different ship programs and numerous admiralty claims.

"We support the uniformed service members who routinely put themselves in danger," Young said. "I am so honored to be recognized just like a uniformed member with this medal." Young will continue to serve MSC as the new counsel for Sealift Logistics Command Central.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three commander Navy **Capt. Herman Awai** visited SEALOGFE headquarters June 1-3 to meet with Denman and command staff members, and Navy Capt. Matthew Garside, chief of staff for Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific and Commander, Task Force 73.

MPS Squadron Three's staff completed their shift from current flagship MPS USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless to MPS USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus near Saipan June 11.

MSC's operations hub on the Korean peninsula changed hands June 25 when Navy **Cmdr. David Bartell** relieved Navy **Cmdr. Christopher Cruz** as commanding officer of MSC Office Korea in a unique, joint Army/Navy change of command ceremony aboard large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Watson at Pier Eight in Busan, Republic of Korea. Cruz received the Meritorious Service Medal at the ceremony for his service with the command.

MSCO Korea bid fair winds and following seas to Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Jon Marlar**, who departed the command

July 19. Marlar, who served as the command's executive officer for the past year, heads to Naval Air Station Kingsville, Texas, where he will serve as a flight instructor.

From MPS Squadron Two, Navy **Capt. Fred Harr** and the squadron staff hosted Navy **Capt. Anthony Chatman**, commanding officer, Naval Support Facility, Diego Garcia, on a tour of the ship. The ship's master, **Capt. Dave Eddy**, led Chatman on the tour.

Also from MPS Squadron Two, Gunners Mate **Chief Harold Williams** departed the squadron June 16. Williams, who spent more than two years as the squadron's assistant force protection officer and weapons officer retired from active duty after a 24-year Navy career. For his efforts, Williams received the Navy Commendation Medal from Harr during a ceremony.

Denman paid a visit to MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy at Sembawang Wharves in Singapore July 3. Mercy's civil service master **Capt. David Bradshaw** and **Chief Engineer Joe Watts** led the commodore on a tour of the ship. Mercy was making a short port visit to Singapore for supplies and crew rest before heading to Indonesia for further medical and engineering missions in support of Pacific Partnership 2010.

Navy Rear Adm. Nora Tyson, commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific, visited SEALOGFE headquarters July 2 to meet with Denman and his staff members. The visit was Tyson's final meeting with the staff before heading to her next assignment. In late July, Navy Capt. Ronald Horton will relieve Tyson as the senior naval officer in Singapore.

Four special mission ship masters visited SEALOGFE headquarters July 6 for an orientation brief. **Capt. Kent Howell**, master of MSC missile range instrumentation ship USNS Invincible; **Capt. Steve Gilkey**, prospective master of Invincible; **Capt. Andrew Laska** and **Capt. Henry Naeger**, respective masters of MSC ocean surveillance ships USNS Effective and USNS Able, met with the SEALOGFE staff and were briefed on SEALOGFE and U.S. 7th Fleet procedures.

## COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser civil service mariners **Second Officer Airica Dryden** and **Supply Officer Julia Green** attended the 2010 Sea Service Women's Leadership Symposium June 2-3 in Washington, D.C. More than 900 women representing the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard attended the symposium, which was hosted by the Sea Service Leadership Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing professional development for women Sea Service officers through education, mentoring and networking.

"My presence, with MSFSC on my name tag, was an opportunity to influence the perceptions of others from junior ranks to that of flag officers," said Dryden. "Just getting to rub shoulders with the attendees gave MSC due exposure."

**Wanda Watson-Mays**, deputy equal employment opportunity officer, has been selected by U.S. Fleet Forces Command to serve as a barrier analysis "train-the-trainer" for Hampton Roads EEO/human resources practitioners. Barrier analysis seeks out – with the goal of eliminating – impediments to free and open competition in the workplace.

Congratulations to **Chief Engineer**

**David Every**, who graduated from the U.S. Naval War College June 11 after completing a 10-month master's degree program in National Security and Strategic Studies. Each year, MSC selects one licensed civil service mariner with nine to 15 years of service from a pool of very competitive applicants to complete the Newport, R.I., course. The nomination process begins in May, and selections are announced in June. **Capt. Craig Upton** was selected as the MSC representative for fiscal year 2011. To learn more about the degree program, please contact **Patricia Dibiaso** at [patricia.dibiaso@navy.mil](mailto:patricia.dibiaso@navy.mil).

Fair winds and following seas to **Chief Steward Aurel Andrade**, **Able Seaman Felipe De La Cruz** and **Mary O'Connell**, **Third Assistant Engineer Lorento Gallardo**, **Utilityman Romualdo Villanueva**, **Supervisory Contract Specialists Catherine Giella** and **Mari Kane**, and **Human Resources Specialist Jay Sue Jeffries** as they retire. Thank you for your service.

MSFSC sends its condolences to the family of **Engine Utilityman William Adkins**, who passed away in June.

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

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe departed San Diego June 4 for British Columbia, Canada, to support the International Canadian Fleet Review. This event was the main part of the Canadian navy's centennial celebration, which was held in Victoria, British Columbia, June 9-14. Along the way, Guadalupe provided logistical services to aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. Following the fleet review, Guadalupe supported the International Flotilla as it transited from Canada to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to take part in the 2010 Rim of the Pacific Exercise, July 5-30.

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Matthew Perry became the first MSC ship to dock at the newly upgraded Deperming Pier at Naval Base

Point Loma, Calif., June 14. The pier's upgrade, which included extending the draft and the mooring distance to allow for bigger ships to be serviced at the pier, was completed in early May.

Nine student apprentices from Mar Vista High School's Regional Occupational Program Maritime Academy in Imperial Beach, Calif., reported June 14 for summer internships aboard MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser. The students lived aboard the ship and worked in the engineering and deck departments through July 15. MSC has supported the Mar Vista program since 2002. More than 300 students have participated in the classroom portion of the training curriculum and 189 have participated in maritime apprenticeships aboard MSC ships.

## EUROPE • AFRICA • NEWS

In June, Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon participated in Exercise Baltic Operations 2010 in Ventspils, Latvia. The exercise was designed to promote mutual understanding, confidence, cooperation and interoperability among participating nations in the Baltic Sea. Military equipment was offloaded from Obregon while the ship was anchored offshore using Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore operations. An Improved Navy Lighterage System that had been offloaded from Obregon at sea served as a causeway ferry to transport essential equipment to shore. The ship then moved pierside to conduct roll-on/roll-off operations, enabling the offload of the remaining equipment to shore via Obregon's stern ramp directly to the pier. The ship demonstrated its Maritime Prepositioning Force operations to observers, including U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Tracy Garrett, commanding general, 4th Marine Logistics Group; Latvian President Valdis Zatlers; and Latvian Minister of Defense Imants Liegis.

Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Sumner visited Walvis Bay, Namibia, in June. Even though the visit was brief and focused primarily on provisions and bunkering, it helped to strengthen ties between the United States and Namibia, potentially paving the way for future visits by U.S. warships and amphibious vessels. This visit adds another culturally interesting port visit to the Africa Command area of operations.

Congratulations to Navy **Logistics Specialist First Class Jeffrey Poon**, of MPS Squadron One, who was promoted to his current rank through the Command Advancement Program, known as 'capping' in the U.S. Navy. Capping, a rare honor, allows commanding officers to promote exceptional sailors who miss promotion by a few points on the exam but who demonstrate that they are ready for more responsibilities.

SEALOGFEUR bids farewell to the command's attorney, **Phil Ketner**, who is heading east to report to Sealift Logistics Command Far East in Singapore, and to **Greg Robinson**, Reserve coordinator, who managed support from SEALOGFEUR's four Reserve units.

## MPS Squadron One changes command

By **Kim Dixon**, SEALOGFEUR Public Affairs

The leadership of Military Sealift Command's four-ship Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One, or MPS Squadron One, changed hands June 25 in Torquay, United Kingdom. Navy Capt. Michael F. Ott relieved Navy Capt. Kenneth L. Williams during a ceremony held aboard the squadron's flagship, Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon.

The U.S. 6th Fleet-based MPS Squadron One ships are forward deployed year-round in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea areas of operations. The ships strategically place military equipment and supplies at sea to enable quick delivery to warfighters ashore.

All MPS Squadron One ships are noncombatant cargo ships crewed by U.S. merchant mariners. The squadron is commanded by a Navy captain who is embarked with his staff aboard Obregon.

The change of command marked the end of Williams' decades of service in the U.S. Navy. "I cannot think of a better way to end my 27 years in the Navy than working together with multi-faceted groups of people to accomplish the Maritime Prepositioning Force mission," said Williams. "It has been a wonderful experience working with my staff and maritime professionals."

During the ceremony, Navy Capt. Jim Tranoris, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Europe, praised Williams for "raising the bar for MPS Squadron One commanders" to come. Williams has accepted a civilian job at Booz Allen Hamilton in Virginia.

Ott comes to MPS Squadron One from Norfolk, Va., where he was director of the Surface Warfare Division for Commander Operational Test and Evaluation Force.

In addition to the squadron's primary mission of prepositioning military gear at sea, the ships of MPS Squadron One, Obregon, USNS 2ND LT John P. Bobo, USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat and USNS Sisler, participate in a number of U.S. and NATO exercises throughout the year.

# Navy christens USNS Howard O. Lorenzen

U.S. Department of Defense Press Release

The U.S. Navy christened missile range instrumentation ship USNS Howard O. Lorenzen June 26, during a ceremony at VT Halter Marine in Pascagoula, Miss. The ship is destined to become a part of Military Sealift Command's Special Mission Program following delivery, which is currently scheduled for December.

The ship honors the late Naval Research Laboratory electrical engineer who was instrumental in the creation of the United States' electronic intelligence capabilities. Lorenzen is the second Navy ship named after a NRL scientist. The first, acoustic survey ship USNS Hayes, was launched in 1970 and honors ocean acoustic researcher Harvey C. Hayes.

Vice Adm. David J. Dorsett, deputy chief, Naval Operations for Information Dominance, delivered the ceremony's principal address. Susan Lorenzen Black, daughter of the ship's namesake, is the ship's sponsor. In accordance with Navy tradition, Black broke a bottle of ceremonial champagne across the bow to formally christen the ship, which she managed "on the first whack," said Rusty Bishop, Military Sealift Command Special Mission Program technical director.

"At first I was puzzled at the choice of the name for the ship," Bishop said. "But after hearing about Lorenzen's accomplishments and his professional life, I realized the Lorenzen name was the perfect choice."

VT Halter Marine photo by Leslie Rose



Missile range instrumentation ship USNS Howard O. Lorenzen is launched sideways from VT Halter Marine in Pascagoula, Miss., June 30. Lorenzen is the namesake of the Naval Research Laboratory scientist known as the "Father of Electronic Warfare." Military Sealift Command is scheduled to take charge of Lorenzen Dec. 18, at Pascagoula.

Considered by many to be the "Father of Electronic Warfare," Lorenzen's accomplishments include developments in radar, electronic countermeasures systems and intelligence satellite designs. Lorenzen led the Galactic Radiation and Background – or GRAB – Program, the earliest successful reconnaissance satellite program and the first electronic intelligence satellite. NRL began the classified GRAB Program shortly after the 1960 U-2 incident to obtain information on Soviet air defense radars that could not be observed by military aircraft.

Designated T-AGM 25, Lorenzen will provide a platform for monitoring missile launches and collecting data that can be used to improve missile efficiency and accuracy. Like the Navy's two current missile range instrumentation ships, MSC-owned USNS Observation Island and USNS Invincible, Lorenzen will be operated by MSC and conduct missions sponsored by the Air Force. Lorenzen is slated to replace the aging Observation Island, which was launched in 1953.

Built by VT Halter Marine Inc., in Pascagoula, the 12,575-ton ship is 534 feet in length, with a beam of 89 feet. Lorenzen is designated

as a U.S. Naval Ship and will have a combined crew of civilian mariners who will operate and navigate the ship and military and civilian technicians from other government agencies who will operate shipboard monitoring equipment.

James Marconi, MSC Public Affairs, contributed to this story.

## ATLANTIC • LINES

Navy Capt. David Weiss relieved Navy Capt. James Ware as commanding officer of hospital ship USNS Comfort's Medical Treatment Facility during a shipboard ceremony July 8 at the ship's layberth in Baltimore. Military Sealift Command Chief of Staff Capt. James Romano presided over the ceremony on behalf of the MSC commander, the type commander for the MTFs aboard Comfort and its sister ship USNS Mercy. Ware led Comfort's MTF on two high visibility international missions: a four-month U.S. Southern Command humanitarian and civic assistance mission, treating more than 100,000 people in seven Latin American and Caribbean countries; and Operation Unified Response in Haiti, where Comfort's MTF treated 871 victims of the Jan. 12 earthquake. Weiss takes over Comfort's shipboard hospital as preparations are underway for the next planned humanitarian and civic assistance mission, Continuing Promise 2011.

MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Apache towed aircraft carrier ex-USS Forrestal from its temporary retirement layberth in Newport, R.I., June 15 to arrive at Philadelphia's Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility June 17.

En route to Virginia Beach, Va., MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Mendonca participated in Frontier Sentinel, a U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy and Canadian Maritime Forces hostile-vessel boarding

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

More than 400 employees and their family members attended the annual Military Sealift Command headquarters picnic at Bolling Air Force Base June 30. Thanks to grill masters Keith Bauer, Navy Capt. Dennis O'Meara and Joan Galleher from the Prepositioning Program, who expertly grilled hundreds of hotdogs and hamburgers for the hungry crowd. Thanks also to picnic coordinator Navy Lt. Matthew Hage and many other enthusiastic volunteers who were instrumental in planning and executing the highly successful event. Gary Rensing, counsel, and Command Force Master Chief Kenneth Green, both made big splashes as they took their turns in the ever-popular dunk tank.

Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command, hosted the MSC Former Commanders Conference at MSC headquarters July 9. Buzby and former MSC commanders retired Navy Vice Adm. Gordon Holder and retired Navy Rear Adm. Robert Reilly discussed the current status of the command, including the transfer of Navy submarine tenders to MSC, piracy and future developments like the arrival of the Navy's joint high-speed vessels.

Kyrm Hickman, maritime forces, manpower and management, attended a June 22-23 meeting for the NATO Planning Board for Ocean Shipping at the request of a senior MARAD official. During the meeting, Hickman gave a presentation on the protection of commercial ships and crew from a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attack or release other than attack.

MSC bids farewell to Angrean Barham, command administration; Carole Wiszesek, contracts and business management; Robert Florida, Jr., maritime forces, manpower and management; Tim McLaughlin, Prepositioning Program; Alan Mendelsohn, office of counsel; David Clark, logistics; Nicholas Roy, Special Mission Program; and Jeffrey Fugate, contracts and business management.

MSC welcomes Navy Capt. Donald Williams, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program.

exercise held June 9-10 in the Chesapeake Bay.

Tom D'Agostino, senior marine transportation specialist in Charleston, S.C., assisted with the June 15 tow of MSC ammunition ship USNS Mount Baker from its Charleston layberth to a local shipyard in preparation for the ship's eventual deactivation.

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Wally Schirra loaded 161 pallets of relief humanitarian assistance cargo for Project Handclasp June 4-7 in support of U.S. 4th Fleet, said Richard Bolduc, senior marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT's office in Jacksonville, Fla. Bolduc also assisted in the discharge of 135,300 barrels of fuel from MSC tanker USNS Paul Buck June 7-9.

SEALOGLANT bids farewell to Al Dickerson, marine transportation specialist in the command's Jacksonville office, who retired June 30. Dickerson began his MSC career in Guam in 1995.

SEALOGLANT welcomes Jeff Batey to the command's anti-terrorism/force protection team and Kathi Acosta, who rejoins the AT/FP team in his second year as a student summer hire.

## CENTRAL • CURRENTS

In June, Sealift Logistics Command Central and Combined Task Force 53 bid fair winds to Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oilers USNS Patuxent and USNS Yukon after the ships' successful stints in U.S. 5th Fleet. While in theater, Patuxent and Yukon provided outstanding support for the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, USS Bonhomme Richard and USS Nassau amphibious ready groups, and numerous coalition naval combatants. Patuxent conducted 76 underway replenishments, transferred 10.5 million gallons of F76 fuel and 592,000 gallons of F44 fuel, and delivered 3,396 pallets of cargo and provisions. Yukon conducted 26 underway replenishments, transferred 4.1 million gallons of F76 fuel and 219,000 gallons of F44 fuel, and delivered 133 pallets of cargo and provisions. Both Patuxent and Yukon received Bravo Zulus from SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 for their efforts.

The command welcomes MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea and MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn to the theater in support of the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group.

The high pace of operations in SEALOGCENT continued in July with Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships delivering 14,173,740 gallons of fuel, 820 tons of cargo, and 238 tons of mail to an average of 66 U.S. and coalition ships supporting U.S. 5th Fleet operations each day.

After a maintenance period in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Catawba returned to duty with Combined Task Force-Iraqi Maritime. The ship temporarily relieved a Royal Fleet Auxiliary amphibious assault vessel while it underwent repairs. Catawba civil service master Capt. Charlie Rodriguez and his crew deployed to the Northern Persian Gulf to provide a refueling platform in support of Iraqi defender boats training.

SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 welcomes its newest staff members: Navy Lt. Cmdr. Sean Andrews, deputy requirements officer, joint plans, strategic studies and wargaming; and Navy Lt. Tim Walker, operations air routing officer.

The command bids farewell to Navy Lt. Cmdr. Ronnie Trahan, deputy requirements officer, joint plans, strategic studies and wargaming; Navy Lt. Melissa Flynn, assistant replenishment officer; and Navy Lt. Charlie Diebler, Air Terminal Operations Center officer.

# One-of-a-kind Wheeler trains to deliver fuel to shore

By Ed Baxter  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

The crew of Military Sealift Command offshore petroleum distribution system ship MV Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler trained to do something that no other ship in the world can do: pump fuel to shore from a tanker as far as eight miles out to sea.

The training took place June 21–26 off the coast of Pohang, Republic of Korea, and gave the ship's crew, operators and shoreside support personnel an opportunity to practice the first and final phases of a complex evolution that allows the unique, MSC-chartered Wheeler to quickly and efficiently deliver fuel to soldiers and Marines operating ashore where port facilities are inadequate or non-existent.

The 349-foot long ship is designed to operate as an at-sea pumping station, receiving fuel pumped to it from a commercial or military tanker at sea, and in turn, pumping that fuel to shore.

The exercise provided an opportunity to practice deploying and re-deploying the eight miles of yellow, flexible pipe that Wheeler carries aboard its weatherdeck wrapped around five, 35-foot-tall spools. No liquid was pumped during the training exercise.

Forty-four people participated in the evolution, which required close coordination from a diverse group of civilian and military partners. Wheeler's 26 civilian mariners – who work for a private ship company under contract to MSC – operate and navigate the ship, while eight civilian technicians assigned to Wheeler manage the petroleum distribution system. For this exercise, Military Sealift Command Office Korea, along with 10 sailors from two MSC Reserve units oversaw the shore-side fuel reception infrastructure.

"Our units have never supported Wheeler or a mission like this before," said Navy Lt. Sal Lopez of MSC's Fort Worth, Texas-based Expeditionary Port Unit 113,

one of the two MSC Reserve units participating in the exercise. "This is a great opportunity to train in something completely new." Sailors from EPU 109, which is based in Jacksonville, Fla., also participated.

"We sharpen our skills and become more proficient by

*Military Sealift Command-chartered offshore petroleum distribution system ship MV Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler quickly and efficiently deploys all eight miles of yellow, flexible pipe to the seabed off the coast of Pohang, Republic of Korea, June 23, during an exercise that tests the ship's ability to transfer fuel to shore from a tanker at sea to challenging port facilities.*



U.S. Navy photo by Ed Baxter

doing this type of hands-on training," said Rick Bower, one of the eight contract personnel assigned to Wheeler whose sole mission is to manage the offshore petroleum distribution system. "We can more effectively deliver fuel ashore to our Soldiers and Marines when they need it."

The exercise enabled the crew to inspect and perform routine maintenance on the nine layers of metal-lined, flexible-fuel pipe valued at more than \$25 million.

The first step in getting the pipe to shore was to run a line between Wheeler and the beach that would serve as a guide for the pipe. Upon the ship's arrival in the Sea of Japan June 21, Wheeler's crew launched one of the ship's two, 45-foot, amphibious watercraft, called LARC, and positioned it on the beach to serve as the shoreside anchor for that guiding line. The next day, the line was taken to shore in one of Wheeler's small boats and secured to the LARC's winch. The other end of the line was then secured to the pipe still aboard Wheeler, and the LARC used its winch to bring in about 3,000 feet of Wheeler's pipe onto the beach. There the pipe was attached to a receiving device called a beach terminal unit that delivers fuel to nearby storage facilities and is stored aboard Wheeler.

Over the next three days, Wheeler steadily deployed its pipe to shore at a rate of approximately 60 feet per minute. At the same time, the ship slowly moved forward at a speed less than one knot as the pipe was deployed to the seabed in about 70-100 feet of water.

By the afternoon of June 24, all eight miles of the pipe had been deployed, and Wheeler immediately began to retrieve the pipe. By June 26, the entire pipe was back on board the ship.

In a real-world scenario, Wheeler's crew can run the full length of pipe ashore, run a float hose to a tanker 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.

Wheeler, part of MSC's Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three and normally located in Guam or Saipan,

## Mendonca participates in JLOTS; uses lessons learned in Haiti

By Bill Cook  
SEALOGLANT Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Mendonca was the primary at-sea platform for a Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore exercise June 16-20, off the coast of Virginia Beach, Va. During the exercise, 550 military personnel demonstrated the U.S. military's ability to transport warfighting equipment and supplies to shore from a cargo ship at sea, without the benefit of port facilities.

The exercise took place on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story.

Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore, or JLOTS, is a method of transporting rolling stock such as tanks and trucks, in addition to containerized military or humanitarian relief cargo from a ship at sea to shore. Army and Navy motorized and non-motorized barges, called lighterage, are used to stage the cargo at sea and transport it ashore. In addition to motorized lighterage, Army watercraft including landing craft utilities and logistics support vessels, are used to transport cargo between ship and shore.

The U.S. Army's 7th Sustainment Brigade, located at Fort Eustis, Va., was the exercise's host command. Other involved units include the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command's 597th Transportation Battalion and the U.S. Navy's Cargo Han-

dling Battalion One from Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va., Cheatham Annex.

During the five-day exercise, participants safely and efficiently uploaded and discharged 179 pieces of rolling stock and containers to and from Mendonca via lighterage, the vessels used for transfer to shore. The cargo was driven off the ship onto the lighterage using Mendonca's roll-on/roll-off capabilities or lifted by the ship's cranes directly onto the lighterage.

According to civilian Capt. Michael Murphy, Mendonca's master, the Army and Navy cargo handling experts did a "superb job" safely and efficiently transporting cargo to and from the ship.

"At the height of cargo operations, high winds and rain provided a challenging environment, but the 31 Army and 23 Navy professionals assigned aboard the ship did an excellent job moving cargo quickly and safely down the ramp to the waiting discharge facility," said Murphy. "Mendonca's crew members also played an important role. They assisted on the bridge and on the deck plates to ensure a successful outcome." The 950-foot long Mendonca is operated by a crew of 30 civilian mariners working for a private company under contract to MSC.

The value of JLOTS operations was recently demonstrated during the international humanitarian response to the January 12 earthquake in Haiti that not only leveled the capital of Port-au-Prince, but

also the port infrastructure.

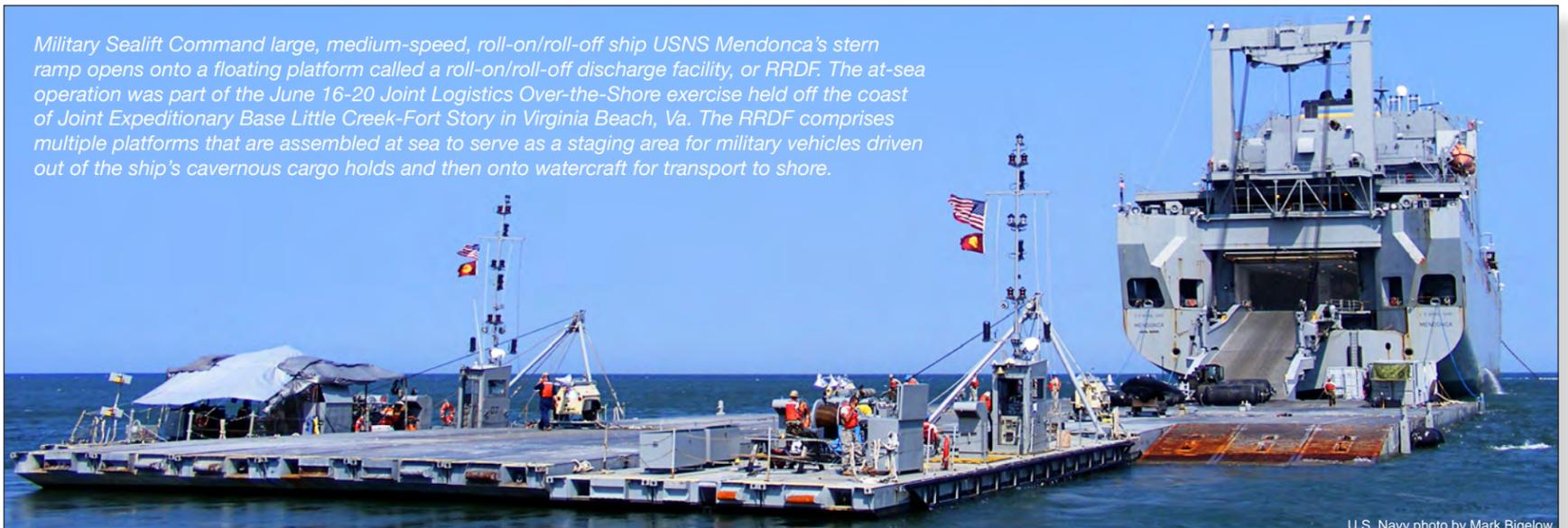
After the disaster, the need for medical and humanitarian supplies, food, water and heavy construction equipment was overwhelming, and the most efficient way to move the vast amounts of cargo and equipment to the shore was via JLOTS. Ten MSC-operated vessels supported JLOTS operations in Haiti, including two Maritime Prepositioning Ships, both owned by MSC. Two ships were activated from the Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force and under MSC's operational control. Other MSC-operated ships included a MARAD high-speed ferry and five chartered vessels.

In less than one month, more than 1,000 20-foot containers of cargo and more than 170 military vehicles plus food, water and fuel were delivered to Haiti to sustain the emergency responders and civilians on shore – all delivered by JLOTS.

The experience gained in Haiti was extremely valuable during the recent JLOTS exercise, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Heather Smith, operations officer for Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One and 37-day veteran of the Haiti relief operation.

"We were able to incorporate many lessons learned from the humanitarian mission in Haiti," Smith said. "Proper planning, training, and most of all, communication, are keys to ensuring the accomplishment of our vision."

*Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Mendonca's stern ramp opens onto a floating platform called a roll-on/roll-off discharge facility, or RRDF. The at-sea operation was part of the June 16-20 Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore exercise held off the coast of Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Va. The RRDF comprises multiple platforms that are assembled at sea to serve as a staging area for military vehicles driven out of the ship's cavernous cargo holds and then onto watercraft for transport to shore.*



U.S. Navy photo by Mark Bigelow