

February 2010

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

PRE-DEPLOYMENT PREPS



*A helicopter assigned to fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser departs the ship with supplies destined for Navy amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard, the flagship for its amphibious ready group. Vertical replenishments at sea are key to fleet readiness – both prior to and during deployments.*

## All in a day's work for SEALOGPAC

INSIDE — Swift Kicks off APS East • Safeguard clears rock and coral in Saipan Channel

# Responding to disaster = MSC core value

When disaster strikes, MSC delivers. It's that simple. As I write this, it's been three days since one of the largest natural disasters we've seen in a long time began to unfold in Haiti. But MSC is involved and is moving forward quickly.

MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort sailed from Baltimore the morning of Jan. 16 – two days earlier than the book says is possible – with the medical personnel and supplies to be an on-site hospital with all its inherent capabilities. The early departure was a phenomenal effort by a lot of people who pulled together quickly to support Comfort's civil service master Capt. Robert Holley and his crew. At the same time, MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn and MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Saccagawea are headed for the Caribbean to provide fleet logistics support for all of the Navy ships responding to the disaster. The responding ships include MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp and an embarked U.S. Army dive crew, which were redirected to Haiti from a U.S. Southern Command partnership mission.

MSC oceanographic survey ships USNS Henson and USNS Sumner have been tasked to survey the harbor at Port au Prince to determine if there have been major changes to the ocean floor, or if any debris from the earthquake is hidden where it could damage ships delivering relief supplies.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus is offloading prepositioning cargo in Florida in preparation for loading humanitarian assistance/disaster response cargo, and possibly supplies and equipment for nongovernmental organizations going to Haiti.

The delivery schedule for MV Houston, a commercial tanker on charter to MSC that delivers fuel around the Caribbean, has been altered to put the Navy base at Guantanamo Bay at the

top of the list in case the facility is used in response to the disaster. We're also expecting that Maritime Ready Reserve Force crane ship MV Gopher State and offshore petroleum discharge ship SS Petersburg will be activated under MSC operational control to provide independent port load and off-load capabilities, and to fuel delivery for disaster response forces ashore in Haiti.

MSC is also sending two marine transportation specialists from Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic and a translator from MSC headquarters to work with the U.S. and international disaster response force that is working to save lives, restore infrastructure and help keep peace in Haiti as you read this.

This is an "all hands on deck" effort, and MSC is on the leading edge, right where we always are. MSC delivers – it's a core value.

### Cultural diversity is another core value

Shipmates are shipmates. We depend on each other for everything from a simple assist with a hatch or door to potentially life-threatening activities such as those involved in underway replenishment or the disaster response efforts in Haiti. Where we come from doesn't matter. What does matter is how good we are at our jobs. In fact, it seems that things work better if we're all not exactly alike. That's why diversity is a core value of MSC and one of the bases of our success.

MSC is a microcosm of American society. For more than 230 years, the melting pot that is the United States of America has been growing, improving and producing some of the best ideas the world has ever seen, fueled by the diverse cultures, ideas and belief systems of the United States' almost 310 million citizens.

At MSC, we need to find and recruit the best of the best as we continue to provide the logistics services essential to our war fighters and the federal government.

Diversity goes way beyond equal

opportunity, race, gender or religion. It means understanding of how each of us brings different skills, talents and experience to the mission – and valuing those differences. That's what creates an environment of excellence and continuous improvement. And that's what MSC has been doing for more than 60 years.

Since our inception as the Military Sea Transportation Service in 1949, MSC has provided a host of innovative solutions to the myriad maritime challenges faced by our nation.

MSC's current workforce of more than 9,000 people around the globe includes people from all walks of life and all areas of expertise.

As far as expertise goes, our skills range from administration to management, from operations to research, from science and technology to writing and speaking. We have leaders, thinkers, workers and observers. If there's anything that needs to be done in the maritime world, we have someone who knows how to do it, and several people who have an idea of how to do it better, faster and more cost-effectively.

### Celebrating our citizens

In January, we celebrated the life and mission of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This month, MSC and the nation celebrate the contributions of African-American citizens to the leadership, innovation and accomplishments we have witnessed throughout American history. Across the command, we'll set aside time in the coming days to recognize people such as noted scholar Carter G. Woodson, the founder of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History. His work led to our celebration of Black History Month today.

Our school-age kids may also study the life of merchant mariner sea captain Paul Cuffe, an activist who in 1780 petitioned the Massachusetts state government to give voting rights to African-Americans and American Indians, or stop taxing them. His actions led to an

addition to the Massachusetts state constitution, which gives equal rights to all citizens of the state.

Every day, those of us who serve ashore drive past one of the most common items in our 21st century lives: a traffic signal. Garrett Augustus Morgan, born in Kentucky in 1877, invented and patented a traffic signal that featured automated STOP and GO signs. His invention was later improved by changing the mechanical arms to traffic lights. Morgan also invented and patented a gas mask that was used to protect U.S. soldiers from chlorine fumes during World War I.

The list goes on and is as far reaching as the abilities of MSC's people. Cultural diversity, a wide array of capabilities, a multiplicity of ways to look at any problem and a sea of experience: That's MSC.

Yours, aye!

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

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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

Art Director Dale Allen, Washington

Graphics Susan Thomas, Washington

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## New SES to oversee PM1 and PM2

By Adrian Schulte  
MSC Public Affairs

Eileen Roberson has been selected as Military Sealift Command's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force and Special Mission director, a new Senior Executive Service position created to oversee two of MSC's four major ship-operating programs within the command.

Roberson's position was created in response to growth throughout the past few years in both the NFAF and Special Mission programs, said MSC Executive Director Rick Haynes. The programs' missions have expanded due to the addition of submarine tenders, salvage ships and the new Lewis and Clark-class of dry cargo/ammunition ships.

Roberson, who joined the headquarters staff Jan. 25, reports to the commander of MSC, oversees the operations of 67 ships and directly manages a \$2 billion budget. Two technical



U.S. Navy photo

directors, the current heads of NFAF and the Special Mission Program, report to Roberson.

As the director of the NFAF and Special Mission programs, Roberson will serve as the senior advisor on policy, budgeting and strategic planning matters related to the two programs. In addition, Roberson will establish policies related to the maintenance, repair and overhaul of all the programs' assets.

"I'm looking forward to working with

her," said Haynes. "Her merchant marine background and many years of service to the Navy are tremendous assets to our organization."

Prior to coming to MSC, Roberson served as the administrative assistant to the undersecretary of the Navy and also served as associate administrator for the Maritime Administration at the Department of Transportation. Roberson retired as a captain in the Navy Reserve after 23 years of service. She holds a Master of Science degree in Management Information Systems and a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

"I am genuinely honored to be joining the Military Sealift Command," Roberson said. "This is a tremendous opportunity to directly support our current warfighting operations, as MSC's mission is critical to our country's maritime strategy. With little exception, my entire career has been associated with MSC ships and programs. I am pleased to join an organization with the reputation of professionalism and dedication that MSC represents."

# Swift kicks off APS East

By Adrian Schulte,  
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift is center stage in the Africa Partnership East mission that kicked off Jan. 5 when the ship pulled into Djibouti, with Navy frigate USS Nicholas. APS East is an international security cooperation exercise that is under the direction of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa and supported by Sealift Logistics Command Europe.

The deployment began on Dec. 29 and will continue through mid-March. SEALOGEUR commodore Navy Capt. Jim Tranoris, who also serves as commander, Task Force 363, is the APS East mission commander. CTF-363 is responsible for theater security cooperation activities in south and east Africa.

Other MSC participants include Swift's crew of 19 civilian mariners, who work for a private company under contract to MSC, and Swift's 20-person embarked military detachment.

"APS is about strengthening partnerships and enhancing long-standing relationships to improve partner-nations' maritime safety and security," said Tranoris. "Our visit to Djibouti and the training that will be conducted between our maritime services is a continuation of that lasting relationship. With our partners in the region ... we will work to improve their maritime capabilities and capacity."

Swift and Nicholas are visiting additional ports in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros. During these visits, Swift and Nicholas will also embark African navy personnel in order to conduct professional exchanges on damage control, engineering, medical procedures, navigation and watch standing.

Both ships are carrying teams of maritime experts from the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps that will provide training and participate in exercises with their African counterparts. Classrooms aboard Swift are being used to host training sessions on various subjects to include port security; law of war; visit, board, search and seizure; and combat lifesaving operations.

"Swift's participation is integral to strengthening maritime partnerships and other collaborative activities in order to improve safety and security in this region of Africa," Tranoris said. "Because of her shallow draft, speed and ability to carry large loads and offer space for training, Swift is an ideal platform for this type of mission."

Swift is carrying 80,000 pounds of relief supplies that will be offloaded in Kenya and transported to those in need within Somalia. Swift has performed similar missions in Africa and South America in the past, Tranoris said.

This deployment is the third APS mission to the east coast of Africa since 2008, though this is the first mission involving two ocean-going platforms and the first mission executed by an embarked international staff. The staff consists of members from Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania and the United States.

Swift is not the first MSC ship to participate in theater security cooperation activities under the banner of APS East. MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple, and its embarked mobile diving salvage unit, conducted training with maritime partner nations Kenya, Tanzania and Seychelles in November and December.

"The key to the success of Africa Partnership Station is the men and women aboard these ships," said Navy Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris, deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Africa. "Our U.S. naval forces, the civilian mariners and the African international staff who are embarked, carry forward the face of U.S. Africa Command. APS is about partnering. We work with our friends in developing solutions or improvements that will benefit the region as a whole."

The aim is to bolster maritime safety and security throughout the region so that forces may combat trafficking, ensure energy and resource security, and fight piracy, Harris said.

"In turn, we can hope for improved peace and prosperity within the region," he said.

APS East is offering those involved in the mission a chance to



U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Jason Morris

Navy Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Marc Gomez salutes the U.S. flag during the shifting of colors after Military Sealift Command high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift moors in Djibouti Jan. 5. Swift and guided-missile frigate USS Nicholas were in the area as part of a scheduled deployment within the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility supporting Africa Partnership Station East. After the ships' stop in Djibouti, Swift and Nicholas deployed to East Africa to visit ports in Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros. Africa Partnership Station, originally a U.S. Navy initiative, is now an international effort aimed at improving maritime safety and security for the African continent through training and other collaborative activities with African partner countries.

work with a wide range of individuals and organizations through shipboard training and community-relations events.

"I like having the opportunity to work with many organizations, [non-governmental organizations] and people from all over," said Navy Infor-

mation Systems Technician 1st Class Jeremy Katzenstein aboard Swift, who also deployed with APS in 2008. "The work is extremely meaningful, and I get a great sense of accomplishment."

MCC Jason Morris, APS East Public Affairs, contributed to this story

## Buy-out option exercised on chartered prepo ship

By MSC Public Affairs

Since the mid-1980s, the U.S. Marine Corps' rapid response to crises has been strengthened by the use of Military Sealift Command-chartered ships designed to strategically store combat gear at sea for fast delivery ashore. On Jan. 15 – nearly a quarter of a century later – SS PFC Eugene A. Obregon became the eighth and final of these formerly chartered Maritime Prepositioning Ships to be purchased by MSC, thanks to a buy-out clause contained in the original charter contracts.

With the change to government-owned status, Obregon, named for a Medal of Honor recipient and Korean War hero, acquired a USNS prefix, officially making it a United States Naval Ship. Despite the new designation, the ship continues its prepositioning service to the Marine Corps under the command of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One in the Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Atlantic for the U.S. European Command.

MSC's buy-out of Obregon and seven other MPS in recent years affirms the value that the Marine Corps continues to place on at-sea prepositioning of combat gear – a concept that was put in motion nearly three decades ago with the establishment of the Near Term

Prepositioning Force, or NTPF. At the time, seven MSC-operated ships – both government-owned and chartered – sailed for Diego Garcia as part of this new, Department of Defense-directed force.

With the establishment of the NTPF, the Navy realized the cost and time savings of rapidly deploying ships with modern commercial features along with installed military capabilities. Only a few years later, a new fleet of Maritime Prepositioning Ships was introduced on time and within budget, replacing the NTPF. Chartering the MPS instead of purchasing commercial industrial capability provided flexibility – ensuring a good match of ships against requirements, especially as missions and cargoes changed over time.

Throughout the years, MSC's Prepositioning Program has grown in both size and capability, evolving to meet DOD's ever-emerging requirements.

Today, 15 prepositioning ships are assigned to theater commanders supporting the Marine Corps. A special subset of prepositioning ships, referred to as the Maritime Prepositioning Force, or MPF, includes eight of the original MPS that were chartered 25 years ago and other government-owned and chartered ships that operate in three squadrons to support Marine Corps first-responders around the world. These civilian-crewed, noncombatant ships

strategically place approximately 2 million square feet of Marine Corps equipment and supplies at sea, enabling warfighting equipment to be moved ashore quickly as Marines are flown into theaters of operation. Each squadron includes five or six ships that carry enough equipment and supplies to support a Marine Expeditionary Brigade numbering more than 16,000 Marines, in addition to a lesser number of Naval Support Element and other personnel for 30 days of combat operations.

In 2006 and 2007, MSC exercised options to buy USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams, USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus, USNS 1ST LT Baldomero Lopez and USNS 2nd LT John P. Bobo. In January 2009, MSC exercised options to buy USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless, USNS SGT Matej Kocak and USNS SGT William R. Button. The contract buy-out of Obregon completes the MPS buy-out plan.

"Purchase of the MPS is a part of a larger success story," said Keith Bauer, MSC's prepositioning technical director. "The purchases are the foundation of a restructuring plan that will save the U.S. government about \$80 million and will ensure that the original MPS, with their continuing strategic utility, remain available to the Department of Defense. The restructuring plan is also introducing new ships to the Maritime Prepositioning Force."

# SEALOG PAC SHIPS

prepare combatants for deployment

By Sarah E. Burford, SEALOG PAC Public Affairs  
and Meghan Patrick, MSC Public Affairs

On any given day, just out of range from the hustle and bustle of San Diego and Los Angeles, as many as five Sealift Logistics Command Pacific ships are hard at work helping U.S. Navy carrier and expeditionary strike groups prepare for deployments around the world. The civil service mariner crews on board Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oilers USNS Guadalupe, USNS Yukon and USNS Henry J. Kaiser may be practicing underway replenishment with the crew of an aircraft carrier. CIVMARs on MSC fast combat support ships USNS Rainier and USNS Bridge may be delivering supplies via helicopter to one of the carrier's escorts. In February, due to required yard periods for two of the five ships, three are on duty to prepare West Coast fleet combatants for deployment.

## Preparing to deploy takes time

Readiness is key to the success of any military operation, and MSC's pre-deployment support to Navy's fleet combatants is no exception. In fact, as much as 40 percent of SEALOG PAC's 12-ship force is dedicated to pre-deployment exercises to prepare U.S. 3rd Fleet ships for deployment.

Most people can quickly conjure up an image of a ship leaving for overseas deployment: a big, gray hull – with its flags flying high – gliding slowly away from port, while crew members in dress uniforms man the rails and wave goodbye to loved ones on shore. However, deployments do not begin on departure day. Captains and crews, and the ships that comprise a strike group, spend several months together, training rigorously for the environment they are about to enter.

In the time leading up to a deployment, strike group ships assigned to U.S. 3rd Fleet must complete a series of three exercises, called pre-deployment work-ups, which are ordered by the fleet commander to prepare the strike group for the forward-deployed operations.

First, the strike group engages in several weeks of core training called composite training unit exercises. During this phase, individual ships focus on preparations for their own unique missions within the strike group, such as anti-submarine warfare or anti-surface warfare. Later, each ship joins forces with others in the strike group to work together to practice the possible scenarios they may face in the operating area to which they will deploy, for example, force protection in the Persian Gulf or pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden.

The final phase of pre-deployment preparations is a certification, which like a final exam, tests the strike group's ability to work together as a team in the scenarios they have been practicing. Many of the tested actions are assisted by MSC ships, including helicopter deck landings and visit, board, search and seizure operations – the term for maritime operations used to accomplish a range of ship-boarding tasks, from customs and safety inspections to combating terrorism and piracy.

"MSC ships are very important in sustaining combat logistics for U.S. 3rd Fleet," said Navy Cmdr. Leonard Santiago, U.S. 3rd Fleet's deputy materials and logistics officer. "We are maximizing MSC assets across our entire area of operation – from Southern California all the way across to the international date line. We have tasked them to be a sustainable sea-logistics asset for our underway exercises."

## Fleet replenishment oilers and fast combat support ships: Key to preps

U.S. 3rd Fleet's pre-deployment exercises could not be successfully completed without the help of SEALOG PAC's eastern-Pacific assigned fleet replenishment oilers Guadalupe, Henry J. Kaiser and Yukon, and fast combat support ships Rainier and Bridge. The ships assist training strike groups in various capacities.

In 2009, MSC's eastern Pacific-assigned oilers and fast combat support ships supported two San Diego-based Navy strike groups centered on aircraft carriers USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan, and two amphibious readiness groups centered on amphibious assault ships USS Boxer and USS Bonhomme Richard. Both carrier strike groups and expeditionary strike groups contained approximately five to six ships. MSC ships delivered more than 6 million gallons of fuel and 1,600 pallets of supplies during this support. In addition, MSC ships provided large training platforms for evolutions such as flight deck fast-rope-drills from helicopters; visit, boarding, search and seizure; and a multitude of underway replenishment and supply transfer operations. In addition, MSC ships contributed to the Navy and U.S. Coast Guard helicopter squadrons' deck landing day and night qualifications by providing landing platforms.

"Using MSC ships for force protection and security exercises can really provide a nearly real world scenario for the ships and units participating," explained Navy Lt. Cmdr. Doug Patterson, SEALOG PAC/Commander Task Force 33 scheduling officer. "Oilers look a lot like tanker ships sitting in the water, and oilers offer training units a unique opportunity to plan, train and execute maneuvers they most likely will be using while deployed, especially helo ops and ship boarding scenarios."

Preparing the Navy's warfighters for deployment is only one of the benefits of MSC's participation in these exercises. The training environments give MSC crews and Navy combatant-ship crews the opportunity to train together at sea – letting each group become familiar with the way the other does business. Underway replenishments and working with MSC are an inevitable and important part of every sailor's life. Thus, collaborative pre-deployment exercises are critical to successful deployments. The training environment allows Navy sailors to learn from MSC's more seasoned CIVMARs, who have spent years performing underway replenishments with a variety of different ships in a wide range of conditions.

"UNREPs are like a team sport," explained Eric Ness, Guadalupe's cargo mate. "The more you practice, the better you get. When we get out to sea with other Navy ships, we can really work with these guys to understand the way we do things with a high level of experience that our crew has. It takes a lot of guesswork out of things down the road and makes the missions easier and more efficient for everyone."

MSC civil service Capt. Dan LaPorte, Guadalupe's master, credits Ness, who runs operations on the deck, with the ship's continued success in supporting U.S. 3rd Fleet pre-deployment exercises.

"Moving fuel and supplies across the decks is a chess game," explained LaPorte. "It's a real workout for our cargo mate. He really has to be aware of what we have, what we need, what we must do and where we'll be doing it. I think he really likes these kinds of operations because they make him think a little more and work a little harder."

The Navy has a long history of deploying an MSC oiler or fast combat support ship with each strike group. MSC ships travel with the strike group, providing diesel fuel for Navy combatant



READY

# PAC

# Deployment

## SEALOGPAC ships usually designated for pre-deployment preps

Status as of Feb. 1:

**USNS BRIDGE** (fast combat support ship)

Support to Navy ships in the Central Command area of operations.

**USNS GUADALUPE** (fleet replenishment oiler)

Regular overhaul, Cascade General Shipyard, Portland, Ore. Expected to return to service at the end of February.

**USNS HENRY J. KAISER** (fleet replenishment oiler)

Southern California pre-deployment preps with Navy ships, homeported in San Diego with U.S. 3rd Fleet.

**USNS RAINIER** (fast combat support ship)

Mid-term availability, Cascade General Shipyard, Portland, Ore. Expected to return to service in mid-February.

**USNS YUKON** (fleet replenishment oiler)

Mid-Pacific pre-deployment preps with cruisers and destroyers, homeported in Hawaii with Naval Surface Group Mid-Pacific.

ships, in addition to providing aviation fuel for their aircraft. MSC ships also transfer food, ammunition and other dry cargo supplies to ships at sea. The MSC and other Navy ships that deploy together are the same ships that the strike groups have trained and exercised with as part of the pre-deployment preparations, fostering a level of trust and familiarity that carries through during the months of the deployment.

“Our guys are working up and training right along with the carrier and the strike group they are deploying with,” said Patterson. “When deployment comes, they are really a part of the group and that team dynamic increases the mission ability of the strike group. This wouldn’t happen to the level it does without the pre-deployment exercises that bring everyone together.”

### Planning is key

While MSC’s mission has always been support to the fleet and its exercising and deploying ships, in 2009 support grew to include full integration of SEALOGPAC’s Operations Department, operating as CTF-33, with U.S. 3rd Fleet’s Maritime Operations Center. In preparation for Nimitz’s Western Pacific deployment in August 2009, SEALOGPAC/CTF-33 participated in deployment logistics planning, in addition to participating in real world-based mission scenarios.

During the pre-deployment exercises, SEALOGPAC/CTF-33 staff members were tasked with planning and scheduling underway replenishments and vertical replenishments to sustain the Nimitz strike group ships, in addition to delivering fuel as the duty oiler in the area would normally do. This organization shift required the strike group and SEALOGPAC/CTF-33/U.S. 3rd Fleet teams to coordinate fueling timelines to coincide with the operations tempo of the exercise, in addition to factoring in the ships’ locations, weather conditions and actual fuel and supply needs.

“We briefed the 3rd Fleet commander and operations officer in the same way we would in a contingency,” said Patterson. “We weren’t just showing up and delivering fuel, but really planning and executing how things would happen if we were in a real operation. All of this is new for our SEALOGPAC staff as CTF-33 with the Nimitz deployment. It’s an exciting part of our developing deployment support to the Fleet.”

### Becoming more efficient

In 2009, business at MSC meant becoming even more efficient. CIVMAR crew staffing on some MSC ships was adjusted to more effectively meet mission requirements. In continuing to meet the mission while saving costs, the MSC ships’ crews are proud of the work they are doing and the challenges they have overcome. For CIVMARs, pre-deployment exercises with the fleet offer the chance to do things they do not normally get to do in their regular underway replenishment and vertical replenishment missions, such as using a variety of fuel rig set-ups.

“On the West Coast, we are all about giving good bang for the buck,” said LaPorte. “We provide a cost savings along with a wealth of experience and a level of professionalism that we pass on to the Navy. When we go out, we know exactly where we’re going and how to get the job done. Supporting these ships is what we do. It’s our primary mission, and we do it very well and with a lot of pride.”



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sarah E. Bitter

Fuel hoses from MSC Sealift Logistics Command Pacific fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe extend to amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard, foreground, in the Pacific Ocean. Guadalupe is one of three SEALOGPAC oilers that provide fuel, food, ammunition and other supplies to U.S. 3rd Fleet ships as they prepare for deployment.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matthew Patton

Pallets of supplies from Sealift Logistics Command Pacific fast combat support ship USNS Bridge are delivered to sailors aboard Navy aircraft carrier USS Nimitz in the Gulf of Oman during a replenishment at sea in November 2009. Bridge, unlike other SEALOGPAC supply ships, frequently deploys with and supports carrier strike groups in operating areas outside the U.S. 3rd Fleet.

Background: The profile of fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe, foreground, is dwarfed by aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan as the ships pass each other off the coast of San Diego. Guadalupe’s at-sea replenishment services are pivotal as carrier strike groups prepare for deployment and get underway.



# Key to fleet LINESSS

## COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Command combat stores ship USNS San Jose marked the close of 39 years of service to the Navy fleet in a shipboard ceremony Dec. 18 in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The event paid tribute to the ship and the hundreds of sailors and civil service mariners who have served as its crew over the past three decades, ensuring that San Jose played its part in keeping the U.S. Navy fleet at sea, on station and combat ready by delivering vital supplies to deployed warships worldwide.

San Jose was officially deactivated from the Navy on Jan. 27 and is the last of eight combat stores ships to deactivate from MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force. These ships delivered food, spare parts, mail, fuel and other supplies to U.S. Navy ships at sea. San Jose and five other combat stores ships were originally crewed by sailors until they were transferred to MSC in the 1990s and shifted to civil service mariner crewing. The combat stores ships came directly to MSC from the

British Royal Fleet Auxiliary in the early 1980s.

San Jose transferred to MSC in October 1993. During its service with MSC, San Jose conducted countless underway replenishments with Navy combatant ships operating in support of missions, most recently in providing logistics support to Navy ships in the Arabian Gulf supporting both Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

MSFSC Director **Jack Taylor** said in a message to the ship's crew marking the event, "Your voyage to Hawaii closes this chapter. Each of you is an integral part of this historic moment. Remember this voyage, for you are the last crew of the last T-AFS. I'm envious of your place in our maritime history."

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command is pleased to announce its sailors of the year. In the shore category, Navy **Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Shannon J. Taylor** was honored as the senior selectee and Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd**

**Class Shaqeeva K. Jeffers** earned the junior award. The sea category's senior selectee was Navy **Logistics Specialist 1st Class Cesar A. Vargas**, and the junior selectee was Navy **Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Edward B. Verdadero**.

On Dec. 7, marking the 68th anniversary of the bombing at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, MSFSC's first class petty officers' mess honored the memory of U.S. Navy personnel who were attacked by Japanese forces in 1941. The mess, consisting of Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Tracy Jackson**, Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Jason Patterson**, Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Eddie Williams**, Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Ronald McClarin**, Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Shaqeeva Jeffers**, Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Manuel Ortiz**, Navy **Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Marcus Fernandes**, Navy **Personnel Specialist 1st Class Jason Miller**, Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Calvin Day** and Navy **Yeoman 1st**

**Class Charles Harmon**, prepared a statement and synopsis of the events of the Sunday the harbor was attacked. Silence was observed as the statement was broadcast over MSFSC's speaker system.

MSFSC's CIVMARs, sailors and ashore civil service personnel came together Dec. 18 to celebrate the holiday season. Organized by MSFSC's morale, welfare and recreation committee, the luncheon event included a disc jockey, door prizes and words from MSFSC Director **Jack Taylor** and **Rear Adm. Robert Wray**, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command.

Fair winds and following seas to **Cook Baker**, **Gordon Doe**, **Able Seaman Eddie Holdren**, **Second Cook Florentino Legaspi**, **Laundryman Marcos Onofre**, **Chief Engineer Douglas Puritis**, **Boatswain's Mate Guillermo Reyes Jr.**, **Able Seaman Ronald Sheridan**, and **Able Seaman John Salamon** as they retire. Thank you for your service.

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

## 2009 CIVMAR Promotions

By Susan Melow  
MSFSC Public Affairs

When recruiting for civil service mariners, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's mantra is, "Take command of your career." Those who are self-motivated and willing to take advantage of career opportunities, diverse assignments and training will have opportunities to advance to positions of greater responsibility and pay. Nearly 300 CIVMAR promotions in 2009 are proof that when CIVMARs take command of their careers, they will advance.

All shipboard departments, with the exception of the medical services office, saw CIVMARs advance into positions of leadership within their respective areas of expertise.

**David Bradshaw**, **Michael Flanagan**, **Garth Kirk**, **William McCarthy** and **Jonathan Olmsted** were named permanent masters.

Within the deck department, the following billets were filled through permanent promotions: second officer (7), third officer (5), boatswain's mate (2), able seaman (32) and ordinary seaman (22).

Shipboard communications shack personnel advancement included: chief radio electronics technician (7), first radio electronics technician (9), second

radio electronics technician (9), and Head Ship Communications Officers **Michael Butler** and **Allan Hargett**.

The engine department welcomed the advancement of new permanent Chief Engineers **Blaine Darling**, **David Every**, **James Goodheart**, **Edward Hall**, **Jonathan Hjort**, **Timothy Nesbitt** and **Thomas Smith**.

Other advancements within the engine department included: first assistant engineer (7), second assistant engineer (11), third assistant engineer (4), electrician (3), refrigeration engineer (5), deck engineer machinist (14), unlicensed junior engineer (5), pumpman (2), electronics technician (2), second electrician (4) and wipers (6).

New permanent supply officers are **Reginald Lewis**, **Vincent Montague**, and **Felix Rosado**. Other billets filled by permanent promotion included: Steward Cooks **Robert Prades** and **Noemi Reyes**, cook baker (10), assistant cook (13), yeoman/storekeeper (6) and laundryman (4).

Newly promoted pursers are **Paul Fuller**, **Janet Puritis**, **Antonio Sereno**, and **Milagros Tano**. Ashore ten permanent assignments were made within the damage control officer ranks to include **Damage Control Leader Hugo Polanco**.

"Each and every CIVMAR worked to earn their permanent promotion through diligence, commitment and sacrifice," said **Mike Mobley**, supervisory human resource specialist in MSFSC's marine employment division. "Congratulations to them all."

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters employees exceeded their goal of raising \$100,000 for this year's Combined Federal Campaign – the federal government's annual drive to raise funds for charity. Employees pledged and donated \$100,783 to their choice of charities sponsored by the campaign. Campaign manager Navy **Chief Master-at-Arms Derek Holman** and assistant campaign manager Navy **Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Stephanie Crawford** and Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Daronda Rochelle** worked with representatives from each headquarters office to distribute and collect contribution forms. Special thanks go to the CFC committee representatives in each headquarters office: **Jim Beliveau**, Special Mission Program; **Rodney Brown**, command, control, communication and computer systems;

**Sandra Graham**, public affairs; **Wayne Hudson**, engineering; **Sherri Jennings**, inspector general's office; **Brian Kenney**, Prepositioning Program; **Andrew Lefebvre**, maritime forces, manpower, and management; **Jean Muse**, Sealift Program; **Hilda Ponder**, logistics; **Jose Rojas**, command administration; **Susan Roy**, strategic planning; **Cora Salaveria**, comptroller's office; **Alfons Skudlarek**, contracts and business; **Sebastian Vaneria**, office of counsel; **Elizabeth Workman**, engineering; and **Sandra Ortega**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program.

MSC bids farewell to **Alfons Skudlarek Jr.**, office of contracts and business management; and **Ronald Wesley**, logistics.

MSC welcomes **Janice Hedges**, office of contracts and business management; and **Everett Hollingsworth**, office of strategic planning.

## Congressman visits Soderman



On Dec. 6, U.S. Congressman Solomon Ortiz visited Military Sealift Command large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Soderman in Corpus Christi, Texas. Ortiz represents the 27th District of Texas and serves as chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee on the House Armed Services Committee and also on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Soderman is currently involved in research and development exercises pertaining to advanced roll-on/roll-off capabilities for MSC and Naval Sea Systems Command. Pictured from left to right: First Assistant Engineer Russell Crane, Chief Mate Brent Acuff, Third Assistant Engineer Matthew Davis, U.S. Congressman Solomon Ortiz, Electronics Officer John Hunt, Chief Engineer John Fleming and Third Mate Angela Slavic.

## FAR • EAST • HAILS

On Dec. 17 U.S. Navy **Capt. Jim O. Romano**, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Far East, presented Logistics Officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Michael Johnson** with the Navy Commendation Medal marking his outstanding tour with the command at the command's Sembawang Wharves headquarters office in Singapore. Navy **Lt. Todd Malaki** relieved Johnson as he heads to his next post at U.S. European Command headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany.

In another ceremony held Dec. 30, SEALOGFE's Administrative Officer Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Roger Fry** was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy by Romano. Fry, who served as the command's administrative officer since November of 2006, received his commission as part of the Navy's Limited Duty Officer program. Romano also presented Fry with a Navy Commendation Medal to recognize his outstanding tour with the command. Relieving Fry was Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Stacy Olivas**, who reported from the Office of Military Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City, Kuwait. Fry reported next to USS George H.W. Bush, which is homeported in Norfolk.

Navy **Capt. Deanna Dennis**, civilian master of oceanographic survey ship USNS John McDonnell, visited SEALOGFE on Dec. 4, to meet with Romano and command staff members during a one-day orientation visit to the command at Sembawang Wharves.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three Commander Navy **Capt. Jeff Pack** and the squadron's military staff members transitioned to their alternate

flagships in early December. The staff relocated from Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus to Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless, where the staff will remain until early summer while Lummus undergoes a mandatory maintenance period in the United States. Pack also visited SEALOGFE headquarters Dec. 17-18 to meet with Romano and command staff members.

On Dec. 9, Military Sealift Command Office Korea Commanding Officer Navy **Cmdr. Chris Cruz** spoke at the internationally attended People to People's year-end ceremony in Busan, South Korea. People to People is an organization founded by President Eisenhower in the 1950s with the hope that world peace could be achieved by promoting person-to-person conversation across international borders. "This great organization also makes generous donations to migrants who have fled North Korea, several of whom were present at the event that evening," Cruz said.

MSCO Korea hosted two holiday parties for Busan area orphanages in late December. On Dec. 18, MSCO Korea, the Busan International Women's Association and the Busan Foreign School, held a holiday party at the Sung Ae Won orphanage in Busan. On Dec. 19, children from the Miewon Orphanage enjoyed a holiday party at the Pier Eight United Seamen's Service center. "In addition to great food and desserts for the children, there was a magician and face painting, and each of the children received a gift that made for a very special night," said Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Chris Marlar**, MSCO Korea's executive officer.

## ATLANTIC • LINES

**Joe Guivas**, senior marine transportation specialist at Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic's Beaumont, Texas, office, assisted with the discharge of approximately 115 pieces of Army retrograde cargo from Military Sealift Command-chartered ship MV Liberty Dec. 30. The offloaded cargo consisted of military vans, container boxes and non-operational vehicles. After unloading, the crew loaded approximately 230 pieces of cargo that included vehicles, tanks and military vans on to the ship, bound for Kuwait.

**Tom D'Agostino**, senior marine transportation specialist in the SEALOGLANT Charleston, S.C., office, assisted large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Pomeroy with the discharge of Army prepositioned cargo Nov. 30 to Dec. 3. The cargo consisted of more than 1,000 pieces that displaced 215,000 square feet.

SEALOGLANT's Anti-terrorism/Force Protection Directorate wrapped up calendar year 2009, having completed 48 AT/FP spot checks and assist visits on board MSC ships from all program manager classes operating throughout SEALOGLANT's area of responsibility. The spot checks included an assessment of program administration, material condition of force protection equipment, inventory of the force protection authorized equipment list, anti-piracy training and observation of a force protection drill to evaluate the ship's reaction forces. The AT/FP

spot-check program was launched in March 2009 and is required every six months.

Additionally, the AT/FP Directorate provided guidance and assistance for the Navy Criminal Investigative Service security training and the assessment team's 21 individual MSC ship assessments, which are required once every three years. The objective of the individual ship assessments is to identify weaknesses in security plans, programs, operations and equipment. Based on the findings of the AT/FP spot checks and the individual ship assessments, recommendations are developed to increase the effectiveness of the ship's reaction force in day-to-day operations, including incident control, crisis response and resolution.

The AT/FP Directorate also coordinated 36 choke-point transits of the Panama Canal, including brief stops for fuel and passengers.

SEALOGLANT bade farewell to Navy **Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Scaife**, the command's current operations cell assistant who departed the command in mid-December. The command welcomed his replacement, Navy **Petty Officer 1st Class Sean Chatman**. Also joining the command in December was Navy **Lt. Lavaughn Kelly Jr.**, who assumed the responsibilities of assistant scheduling officer. Two new marine transportation specialists also joined SEALOGLANT in December — **Mark Bigelow** in Norfolk, and **Dean Doolittle** in Jacksonville, Fla.

## CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Diego Garcia-based Military Sealift Command Maritime Prepositioning Ships USNS SGT Matej Kocak and USNS 1ST LT Baldomero Lopez completed a two-week deployment to the Persian Gulf in support of the U.S. Marine Corps' participation in U.S. Central Command-sponsored exercise Shamal 10-1, just before the holiday season. The purpose of the deployment was to familiarize U.S. military leaders and logisticians with the capabilities of a Maritime Prepositioning Force ship and to familiarize merchant mariners working for ship operating companies with vital ports in the Middle East.

During the ships' deployment, Kocak and Lopez practiced voyage planning, pier work, line handling and contact management operations in the Central Command area of operations. After a two-day port call in Bahrain, Kocak and Lopez made the short transit north towards Ash Shuaybah, Kuwait, visiting the port Dec. 13-14. The ships then headed south again where they made port calls at Jebel Ali, Dec. 18-19 and in Fujairah, Dec. 21-22, both in the United Arab Emirates. The ships demonstrated each port's ability to support and berth container ships.

A highlight of Kocak's port visit in Bahrain was an official visit by Navy Rear Adm. Sinclair Harris, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group 5 and Combined Task Force 51. Harris visited Kocak for an MPS capabilities brief and was given a tour of the ship's spaces, including its lighterage and combat cargo decks.

Kocak's ability to function as an alternate flagship for MPS Squadron Two was also tested during the two-week deployment. **Leo Schieffelin**, Kocak's radio officer, transferred all

secret and unclassified communication capability from MPS Squadron Two flagship USNS SGT William R. Button, to Kocak. This transfer provided Navy **Capt. Fred Harr**, commander, MPS Squadron Two, and his staff the ability to commence all operations and communications on the first day.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos completed a replenishment at sea on Christmas morning for aircraft carrier USS Bonhomme Richard. Less than 24 hours before meeting up with the combatant ship, Pecos had diverted from its original course to meet MSC fast combat support ship USNS Bridge in the Northern Arabian Sea. Bridge transferred more than 150 pallets of mail, cargo and provisions to Pecos. The masters and crew of Pecos and Bridge were able to make the combatant's time on station a little merrier by distributing mail and gifts from home.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha provided support to Combined Task Force 151 U.S. and coalition warships in their effort to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Horn of Africa. In addition to the ship's standard logistics cycle from the Red Sea to the Somali Basin, Kanawha demonstrated great flexibility and resolve by delivering vital fuel, mail, cargo and provisions to guided missile frigate USS DeWert and CTF-151 flagship USS Chosin, which were suddenly tasked to combat piracy that had extended east into the Indian Ocean in the vicinity of the Seychelles. Kanawha's support of CTF-151 and coalition partners contributed to a continuing effort to keep the sea lines of communication secure for merchant vessels and their crews.

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Military Sealift Command-chartered dry cargo ship MV American Tern completed the offload of 620 pieces of military equipment for the Army's 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Dec. 1. The equipment was being returned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sealift Logistics Command Pacific hosted the Pacific Masters and Chief Engineers Conference Dec. 9-10 in San Diego. The conference provided an opportunity for masters, chief engineers, area commands and Military Sealift

Fleet Support Command to engage in discussions in the areas of operations, scheduling, readiness and force protection. The conference included opening remarks from Navy Vice Adm. Richard Hunt, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet; a video teleconference with **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, MSC; and **Jack Taylor**, director, MSFSC.

Best wishes to Navy **Operations Specialist 2nd Class Tamara Fowler** as she leaves SEALOGPAC for continued Navy service on the destroyer USS Howard, homeported in San Diego.

## EUROPE • AFRICA • NEWS

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple conducted theater security cooperation operations in Mombasa, Kenya; Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania; and Port Victoria, Seychelles. While in Seychelles, the ship sortied on short notice, following a request by the government of Seychelles to support a search and rescue mission for a lost recreational diver offshore. The diver was not found. However, Grapple's performance and professionalism in the

mission was widely commended.

MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS Sumner made a brief two-week return to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility for survey operations in the southern Atlantic Ocean. The ship has since returned to Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic/U.S. 4th Fleet. MSC tanker USNS Samuel L. Cobb departed Sealift Logistics Command Europe for the continental United States after serving in theater for five months.

# Safeguard dives to clear Saipan Harbor

By Edward Baxter,  
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

As January drew to a close, Military Sealift Command's civil-service crewed rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard continued work on clearing the Saipan Channel, a passageway obstructed by massive rocks and dead coral formations that pose a navigational hazard to Saipan, an island that many consider one of the most beautiful locations in the central Pacific.

Beginning Nov. 30, Safeguard's civil service mariners joined 17 San Diego-based Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 17, to clear, crush and degrade five large obstructions on the Saipan Channel's seabed, in a project requested by the Port Authority of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, where Saipan is the largest of the commonwealth's 15 islands. Two months later, more obstructions remain to be removed before the project is complete.

Safeguard's mission in Saipan is the third of its kind since February 2008. The ship's second mission took place in January 2009. The embarked divers and crew of Safeguard, the only ship engaged in this particular project, have removed, crushed or degraded 29 obstructions from the channel throughout the past two years, the largest of which weighed more than 100,000 pounds.

Removing obstructions from the channel – a narrow strait that separates the south coast of Saipan with the north coast of Tinian Island and eventually leads out to the Philippine Sea – will eventually allow the harbor to accommodate classes of Navy ships that are currently too large to sail safely through the channel, including destroyers and guided-missile cruisers. The U.S. Navy, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and several other nations will benefit from this improvement.

Saipan has long been a destination for U.S. Navy military members on rest and recreation who are attracted to the U.S. territory because of its safe location and natural beauty. Saipan also attracts tourists from Japan, Korea, China and Russia.

Creating a safe draft of at least 36 feet at the port's entrance could allow for more military and commercial ships to make port stays and visit the island.

Naval Oceanographic Office's Fleet Survey Team provided Safeguard's divers with global positioning system coordinates and multi-beam images of the obstructions, referred to as Dangers to Navigation, or DTONs, targeted for removal. Divers then attached underwater buoys to those obstructions identified for removal.

In an effort to remove DTONs, Navy divers attached a one- and 3/4-inch-steel wire to each obstruction. Then Safeguard's civil service mariners used Safeguard's capstan – a rotating winch device – to slowly break the DTON loose from the seabed. Civil service mariners then winched the DTON to the surface of the water using Safeguard's 40-ton capacity crane. Later, CIVMARs used the crane again to relocate the DTON in deeper waters.

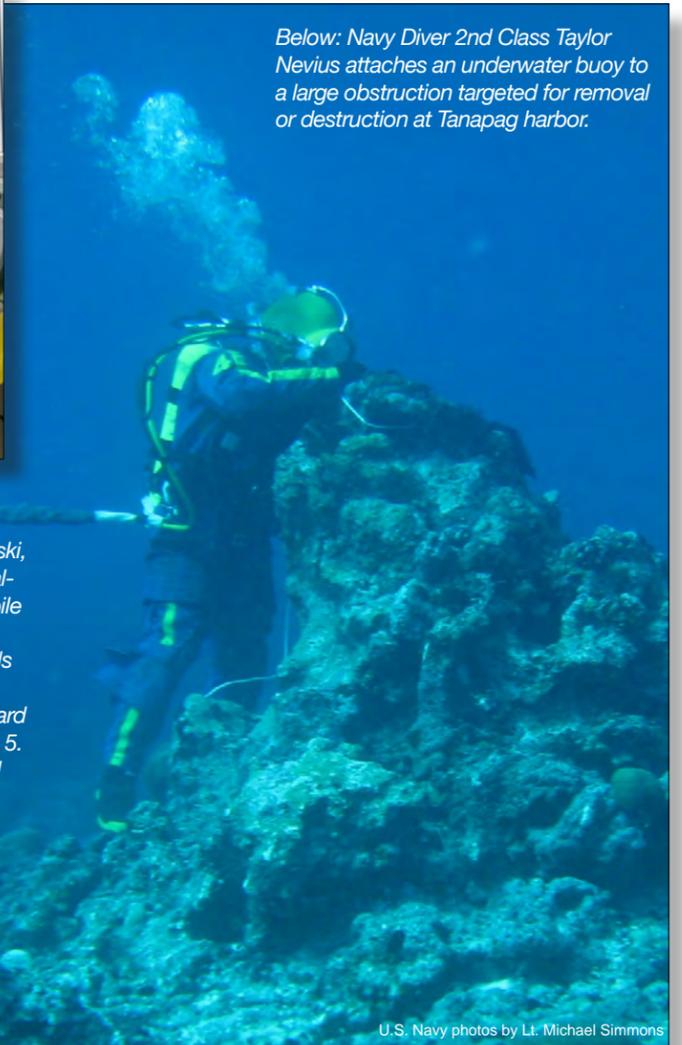
The biggest rock removed between November 2009 and January 2010 weighed more than 10 tons, or nearly 20,000 pounds. Some of the rocks were so large, the crew was forced to chisel away up to 18 inches from the rock's width before attempting to bring the rock to the surface.

Other obstructions were so deeply embedded in the seabed, divers and CIVMARs were unable to chisel them down. To overcome the obstacle, MSC CIVMARs used a different approach.

Safeguard's civil service master Capt. Ed Dickerson



Above: Navy Diver 1st Class Jacob Tarajkowski, from Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard's embarked Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 17, teaches a student how to operate the controls of the diver's air console – which is used to supply oxygen to divers underwater – on board Safeguard at Tanapag Harbor in Saipan, Jan. 5. Nearly 180 students from Saipan's Hopwood Junior High School toured the ship.



Below: Navy Diver 2nd Class Taylor Nevius attaches an underwater buoy to a large obstruction targeted for removal or destruction at Tanapag harbor.

U.S. Navy photos by Lt. Michael Simmons

placed the ship in a precision two-point mooring directly above the larger obstructions. Safeguard's CIVMARs then repeatedly dropped the ship's 9,000 pound anchor onto the obstruction until it broke apart.

"The largest DTON, measuring some 30 feet in length and rising six feet above the sea floor, received over 70 precision hits with the anchor before the obstruction finally broke apart," said Navy Lt. Michael Simmons, MDSU One, Company 17's officer-in-charge.

Dive conditions were favorable, but the weather and underwater currents still provided the MDSU One divers with challenges.

"We found a constant steady current leaving the channel due to the surf spilling into the harbor from the outer coral reef," said Navy Master Diver Senior Chief Randy Saunders. "We had two days where we experienced swells from eight to 10 feet. Underwater visibility was generally good throughout most of the operation, however, ranging from 75 to 100 feet."

Daily operations were constrained by time.

"The Port Authority determined that we could only work during the daytime, so that our operations didn't interfere with commercial traffic at night," said Simmons.

During the DTON-removal operation, Safeguard provided urgent medical assistance to a local recreation diver who experienced decompression sickness on New Year's Day. Decompression sickness, also called "the bends," is caused by nitrogen bubbles forming in the bloodstream and tissues of the body. The bubbles occur when divers ascend too quickly from deep water to the surface, where the surrounding pressure is lower.

A 43-year-old man, after experiencing numbness in his legs following a dive, was taken to a local

emergency room. Doctors evaluated the patient and contacted a recompression chamber facility on nearby Guam to assist.

In order to save time, however, doctors made the decision to contact the nearby Safeguard to request the use of its embarked recompression chamber. Safeguard sent Saunders and the squadron's dive medical technician, Navy Hospital Corpsman Chief Garth Sinclair, to the local hospital to evaluate the patient's condition. After diagnosing him with decompression sickness, the patient was transported to Safeguard.

"The patient was conscious when we met up with him, but he had severe pain around his mid-section and was very weak in his lower extremities," Saunders said. According to Saunders, decompression sickness can affect the neurological or cardiopulmonary systems as well as the inner ear. The patient was suffering neurological symptoms.

The patient received hyperbaric recompression therapy on board Safeguard. After his symptoms subsided, he was taken back to a local Saipan hospital where he remained under observation for 24 hours. The recreational diver has since made a full recovery.

"Safeguard's actions clearly made a difference in saving the life of the stricken diver and helped to strengthen the bond between the U.S. Navy and the local community," said Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command in a Bravo Zulu message to the ship.

In another effort to reach out to the local community, Jan. 5, the crew of Safeguard hosted a group of students from a Saipan junior high school for a tour of the ship and a demonstration of the dive equipment on board.

## SECNAV diversity officer goes underway with MSC

By Sarah E. Burford  
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs Officer

Monica E. Emerson, the Secretary of the U.S. Navy's diversity officer, received an up-close and personal look at Military Sealift Command's operations as she was welcomed aboard MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon Dec. 18, for a four-hour familiarization sail while the ship was at sea off the coast of San Diego.

Emerson was flown from U.S. Naval Air Station North Island to Yukon in a helicopter from North Island-based Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 85. The day was a series of firsts for the diversity officer, who started her position with the Secretary of the Navy in August 2009. The day included Emerson's first helicopter flight, her first landing on a ship's deck, her first time being underway on a ship and her first experience with MSC operations. The ship was chosen for Emerson's first experience at sea because of its proximity to San Diego, where Emerson attended a conference early in the week.

"It was really great to have Ms. Emerson visit the ship so she can get an idea of our working and living conditions underway," said civil service mariner Clarence Vick, Yukon's chief engineer. "We met earlier this year at a diversity conference, and I'm personally proud to show her the way that Military Sealift Command has enabled me to

rise from a kid in a North Carolina housing project to chief engineer on this ship."

The diversity within MSC's workforce makes sailing on an MSC ship an appropriate starting point for a diversity officer. As of the most recent results collected by MSC's Diversity Office in September 2009, 37.2 percent of MSC's 5,072 afloat civil service mariners are Caucasian; 26.3 percent are black or African American; 28.9 percent are Asian; 4.8 percent are Hispanic or Latino; 1.8 percent are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; 0.6 percent are American Indian or Alaska Native; and 0.4 percent are two or more races.

While aboard Yukon, Emerson toured the ship with civil service Capt. Mike Murphy, Yukon's master. Emerson visited with Yukon's civil service mariners and toured areas including the ship's bridge, main engineering control, engine room, sick bay, wardroom, mess decks, galley and the crew's living quarters.

"This has been a tremendous experience for me," said Emerson. "It has really given me a feel for just how many different jobs and skills are required to keep a ship like Yukon underway and performing its mission. It's made me personally aware that there are plenty of great opportunities for young people who are interested in a career at sea."

Yukon departed San Diego Jan. 4 to sail to the coast of Hawaii in support of U.S. 3rd Fleet operations.