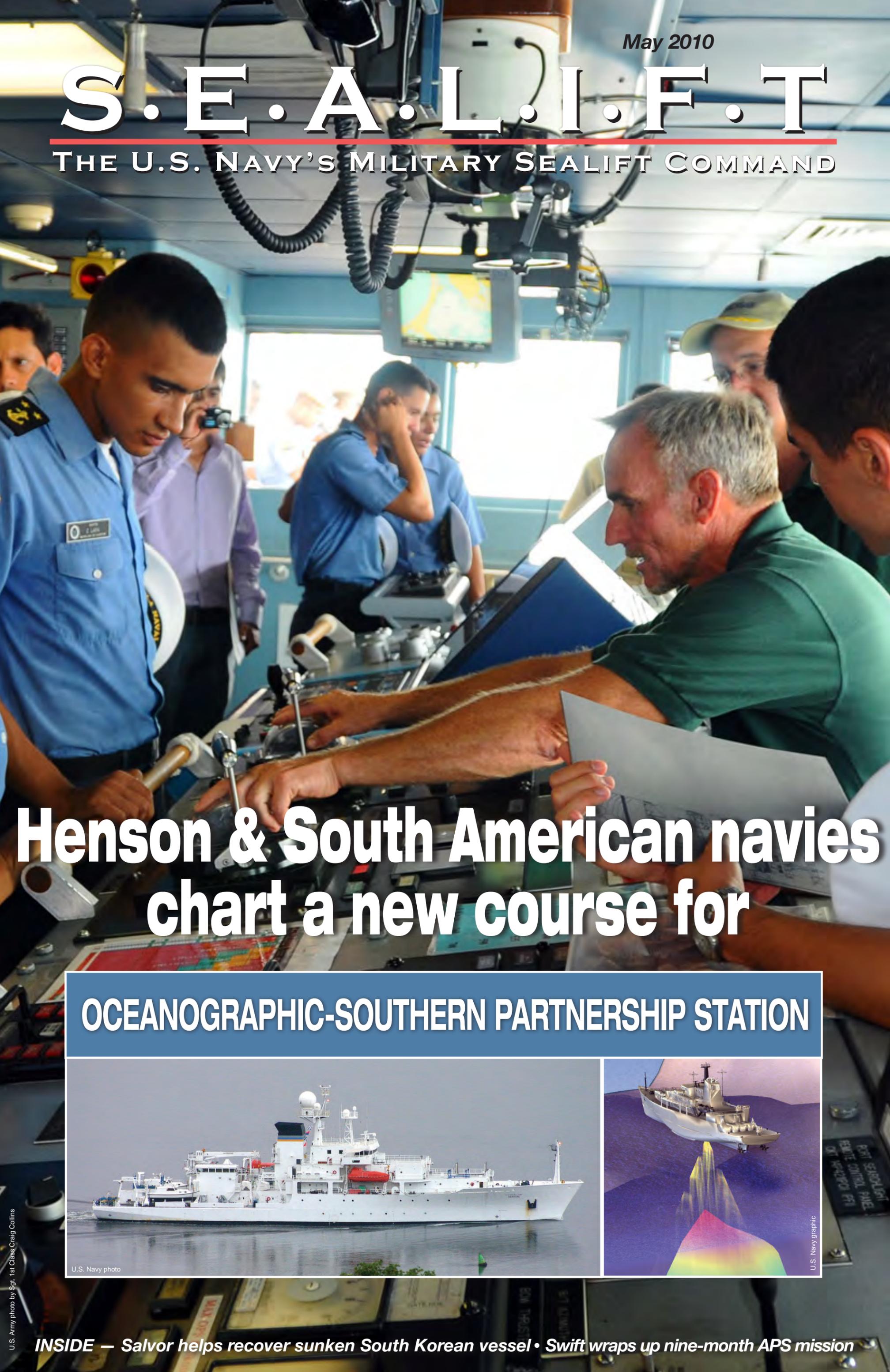


May 2010

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND



Henson & South American navies chart a new course for

OCEANOGRAPHIC-SOUTHERN PARTNERSHIP STATION



U.S. Navy photo



U.S. Navy graphic

INSIDE — Salvor helps recover sunken South Korean vessel • Swift wraps up nine-month APS mission

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Craig Collins

Thoughts on seeing MSC in action

First off, congratulations to all of the chief mates and first assistant engineers selected for permanent or temporary promotions to master and chief engineer! Competition for these coveted billets was exceptionally keen among a very highly qualified group of professional mariners. Well done!

Secondly, congratulations to the Sealift staff, led by Editor Meghan Patrick, for their second consecutive award – this time honorable mention – in the annual CHINFO Merit Awards – in the tabloid newspaper category. I think they turn out a terrific product every month, and I am happy to see that the Chief of Information thinks so, too. Nice job, gang!

Europe and the Middle East

As I write my comments for this month, I am underway in the Persian Gulf aboard dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary getting a first-hand view of some of your fellow mariners in action executing the business of MSC – supporting the fleet. You know, one of the distinct downsides of being “the admiral” is that it tends to anchor me to the beach and away from the “pointy end” of our business. I like to take the opportunity whenever I can break away from headquarters to get out and meet you – afloat or ashore – to hear how things are going and to pass on what I am thinking about in Washington to see if it makes sense to those of you who are going to have to actually make it happen. Thankfully, you all have been very open and candid in sharing your thoughts, concerns and comments. I appreciate that. By the way, I hear all of you loud and clear on the lack of bandwidth issue! I’m working some angles.

My time here in the Gulf, hosted by SEALOGCENT Commodore Don Hodge, is the first stop in a 10-day swing through CENTCOM and EU-COM. I visited MSC “Desert Cat” tug Catawba yesterday and after leaving

Peary I have stops to visit MSCO Kuwait; to spend time with Commodore Jim Tranoris’ CTF-63 staff in Naples, Italy; to visit U.S. 6th Fleet flagship USS Mount Whitney in Gaeta, Italy; and to look in on MPSRON One ship SS PFC Eugene A. Obregon in Rota, Spain, before heading back to headquarters in Washington. I hope to do it again in the fall.

Hawaii and the Far East

In late March, I made a similar swing through the Far East making stops in Pearl Harbor, Guam, Singapore and Yokohama. Along the way I was able to visit crews aboard MSC ships USNS Sioux, USNS Navajo, USNS Yukon, MV C-Commando, USNS Amelia Earhart, USS Frank Cable, MV VADM K.M. Wheeler, USNS Richard E. Byrd, USNS Impeccable and the “grand dame” of the fleet – USNS Observation Island – which is still going strong after 57 years. While in Singapore, I was able to participate in the SEALOGFE change of command between Capt. Jim Romano and Capt. Chip Denman. By the time you read this, Capt. Romano will have reported to MSC headquarters to serve as my chief of staff.

May marks my seventh month in command of MSC and so far I have enjoyed it immensely. The thing that makes this the best job ever for me is doing just what I described above – meeting the professional men and women of MSC who make this outfit tick. Getting out and about among you inspires me to try to make MSC an even better place to serve. So if we bump into each other during one of my visits to your ship or to your office ashore, don’t be shy about saying, “Hi.” I want to meet you and thank you for serving alongside me as we serve our country together. Until next month, sail safe, shipmates!

Yours aye,

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



Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command, visits with Capt. Allie Milligan, commanding officer, MSC Office Kuwait, and the MSCO Kuwait staff in mid-April.

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MSC ships win CNO Afloat Safety Awards

By Adrian Schulte, MSC Public Affairs

Three Military Sealift Command ships were recognized April 2 with 2009 Chief of Naval Operations Afloat Safety Awards.

Ammunition ship USNS Kiska, submarine tender USS Frank Cable and tanker USNS Paul Buck were recognized for safety achievements, each earning the right to display the Navy’s green safety “S” on the ship’s bulwark until the next competitive cycle.

“This award recognizes outstanding contributions to fleet readiness, efficiency and economical use of resources through safety,” said Navy Rear Adm. Arthur Johnson, commander, Naval Safety Center. “In addition to having an outstanding safety record, this year’s winners also demonstrated an aggressive safety program that actively contributed to increased mishap prevention efforts through active reporting of hazards, near-misses and lessons learned.”

During the 2009 calendar year, the 38-year-old Kiska safely transferred more than 25,000 pieces of ordnance. Nearly 7,000 pieces were transferred by underway replenishment.

“Kiska’s master, Captain Mark Cook, provides quality leadership that drives the crew to efficiently maintain the

vessel’s material readiness and fosters hazard mitigation,” said Kevin Kohlmann, MSC safety manager. “Kiska’s flawless operations resulted in no injuries or accidents, which exemplifies the safety culture found on board.”

Cable, which won its second consecutive CNO award, aggressively tracks its own mishaps in order to identify trends on board. This resulted in a 27 percent reduction of mishaps in 2009, said Kohlmann. Cable’s crew credits much of its safety success to the ship’s training program. All reporting personnel are required to attend training that covers an introduction to Navy occupational, safety and health; operational risk management; safety warning signs and markings; emergency responses and other areas of safety.

Buck, which is crewed by commercial mariners working for a company under contract to MSC, has had no lost-time injuries on board since January 2006. In addition, no environmental incidents have occurred in more than six years. Buck submits monthly safety reports to its operating company, and those suggestions are shared with MSC’s other T-5 tankers to further promote safety, said Kohlmann.

The winners will receive a plaque and a CNO citation, and will compete in the Secretary of the Navy Safety Excellence Awards competition later this year.

Salvor supports recovery of South Korean navy ship

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

At the request of the Republic of Korea government, 16 civil service mariners assigned to Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor joined U.S. divers in support of South Korea's search, recovery and salvage of a South Korean navy ship, that sank March 26 in the Yellow Sea, leaving nearly half of its 104 crew members unaccounted for. The cause of the incident remains under investigation.

The 1,200-ton South Korean patrol vessel Cheonan broke into two large pieces about one mile off South Korea's Baengnyeong Island just south of the Northern Limit Line – a United Nations-mandated, de-facto maritime boundary dividing South and North Korea. Fifty-eight of Cheonan's crew members were rescued by Republic of Korea rescue teams from the bow of the ship as it started sinking.

Sixteen sailors from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, based out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; a six-person team from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Five, based out of Sasebo, Japan; and nearly 20 divers from Republic of Korea's Sea Salvage and Rescue Unit were embarked on Salvor to support Republic of Korea dive operations.

"Everyone aboard Salvor fully understood the significance and importance of this operation," said

Salvor's civil service master, Capt. William Wiggins. Salvor, guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh and guided-missile destroyers USS Curtis Wilbur and USS Lassen arrived on scene March 27, joining an armada of 15 South Korean navy ships. The U.S. ships were operating nearby, having just completed Korean peninsula defense Exercise Key Resolve/Foal Eagle, a bilateral, at-sea exercise with the Republic of Korea navy. Amphibious dock-landing ship USS Harpers Ferry, which served as the command and control ship for U.S. support of the search, recovery and salvage operation, arrived on scene April 2.

Cheonan's bow was located in about 66 feet of water, while the stern was located in 430 feet of water. Smaller pieces of wreckage were moved by strong underwater currents and were scattered throughout a four-mile debris field.

On April 7, U.S. and Republic of Korea divers went to work conducting side-scan sonar operations from a rigid-hull inflatable boat and performed surface-supplied dives at nine designated sites in the debris field. Salvor's civil service mariners were involved in launching, recov-

ering and operating the embarked RHIBs. Salvor remained on-site throughout the operation to assist wherever needed.

"We found out that the current was rougher than we expected, but we were well prepared," said Navy Diver 1st Class Quentin Felderman, assistant lead petty officer for MDSU-1.

Republic of Korea navy Chief Jong Suk Kang was grateful for the opportunity to work with MDSU-1. "I have done many dives, but I have worked with U.S. divers only once before. I am glad to have them help with our diving operations."

Salvor's civil service mariners conducted ship-to-ship cargo operations with a landing craft unit deployed from Harpers Ferry to ensure that Salvor had enough provisions to support the additional persons on board for the mission.

"Meal hours were extended so everyone on board had adequate time to get a hot meal," Wiggins said.

The South Korean navy brought in a commercial, heavy-lift 4,000-ton capacity crane to lift large pieces of the wreckage to the surface.

Salvor is one of four rescue and salvage ships operated by MSC to render assistance to disabled ships and provide towing, salvage, diving, firefighting and heavy lift capabilities to the fleet. As April drew to a close, the ship continued to act as U.S. 7th fleet's rescue and salvage ship while permanently-assigned MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard underwent repairs in the Philippines. Safeguard's work is expected to be completed in early May.

MC2 Byron C. Linder, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Detachment Japan, contributed to this story.



U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Denver Applehans



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Byron C. Linder

Above: Salvor rests at anchor in the Yellow Sea before starting another day of salvage operations with amphibious dock-landing ship USS Harpers Ferry and guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur April 11. A South Korean commercial, heavy-lift, 4,000-ton capacity crane, seen in the background, was used to recover the hull fragments, which spread over a four-mile debris field.

Left: Dive tenders recover Jong Suk Kang, a diver assigned to the Republic of Korea Sea Salvage and Rescue Unit, and Navy Lt. Matthew Lindsey, diving officer and company commander of Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1, aboard Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor during a joint dive April 9 in the Yellow Sea. U.S. and South Korean divers embarked on Salvor to conduct salvage and recovery operations after South Korean navy patrol boat Cheonan sank in the Yellow Sea near the western sea border with North Korea.

USNS Grapple recovers Marine Corps jet

By Bill Cook
SEALOGLANT Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple was dispatched from Norfolk to recover the wreckage of an F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet assigned to U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., March 22. The jet crashed into the ocean while it was on a training mission approximately 30 miles from the air station March 10.

While both of the jet's crew members – a pilot of-

ficier and a weapons officer – were ejected safely, the jet left a large debris field in the nearly 100-foot deep waters, posing a risk for recreational divers.

A detachment of divers from the U.S. Navy's Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two, which is assigned to Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Virginia Beach, Va., embarked on Grapple to assist the ship in lifting the debris from the ocean floor.

Grapple's crew of 26 civil service mariners worked with the Navy divers to locate the jet parts in the debris field March 24. The crew then recovered the

jet's two engines, a partial wing, several large pieces of the jet's fuselage and many smaller pieces of debris from the ocean floor.

"It was a routine operation – nothing unusual for Grapple's crew," said Grapple's civil service master, Capt. Curt Smith. Grapple conducts hundreds of rescue and salvage operations each year.

Grapple's crew offloaded the remains of the jet for delivery back to the Marine Corps in Charleston, S.C., March 26.

An oceanographic focus for **HENSON** & partner navies



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Craig Collins

Partnering for safe navigation

Above: Navy Aerographer's Mate 3rd Class Tonja Boyle, Fleet Survey Team, demonstrates shallow water military survey techniques using a jet ski to Colombian navy PH3 Diego Nossa from the Colombian Center of Investigation of Oceanography and Hydrography. The jet skis, or expeditionary survey vehicles, are outfitted with a single-beam echo sounder and survey grade Global Positioning System equipment and specialize in very shallow water environments. ESVs provide direct support to naval operations by conducting rapid environmental assessments for beach landings, short-notice check surveys to ensure safe navigation, and other coastal and riverine uses.

Background: Henson participates in Oceanographic-Southern Partnership Station 2010 off the coast of Cartagena, Columbia.

Cover: Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Henson crew members Able Seaman Don Hutchens and master Capt. Greg Gillette demonstrate the controls on Henson's bridge to Colombian sailors and Colombian naval academy cadets. Henson (below) is one of MSC's seven oceanographic survey ships.

Cover diagram: MSC oceanographic survey ships use state-of-the-art technology to conduct underwater mapping of the ocean floor, which aids in the navigation of ships worldwide.

By Adrian Schulte
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Henson visited Columbia and Brazil in March as part of Oceanographic-Southern Partnership Station 2010, an exercise focused on the exchange of information and practices between hydrographic experts from U.S. Southern Command partner navies.

Southern Partnership Station is an annual deployment conducted by U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet. The mission's primary goal is information sharing with foreign navies, coast guards and civilian services throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.

This is the first year that U.S. Southern Command has selected oceanography as the theme for the mission. This new focus allowed for the partner nations to exchange ideas and observe new capabilities in physical oceanographic collection and hydrography. Hydrographic surveys determine water depth, map the sea floor, chart the coastline and identify wrecks and obstructions that are navigational hazards. These surveys also measure tides and currents – information routinely used to aid the navigation of navy ships.

The aim of O-SPS was to generate long-lasting, positive and strategic relationships between the U.S. Navy and the Colombian and Brazilian navies. The mission paved the way for future engagements and information sharing between the U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office and Fleet Survey Team, and both the Colombian Center of Investigation of Oceanography and Hydrography and Brazil's Directorate of Hydrography and Navigation.

Henson is one of seven MSC oceanographic survey ships operated by MSC for the commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command. Scientific survey teams from NAVOCEANO conduct the collection and subsequent analysis of

data. The 329-foot ship is equipped with two 34-foot hydrographic survey launches that are capable of surveying in water less than 33 feet deep. For O-SPS, Henson was also augmented temporarily with two FST expeditionary survey vehicles, which are specially fitted jet skis used to survey in very shallow water.

During O-SPS, the ship's survey and data-sharing missions were executed by a combined team of civilian and military surveyors from NAVOCEANO and FST. This embarked rapid-response team can conduct quick-turnaround hydrographic surveys anywhere in the world, ensuring vital supplies or emergency equipment can get into a damaged port.

While scientists and sailors from the three participating countries were busy exchanging ideas and fostering a positive maritime relationship, the civilian mariners operating Henson worked behind the scenes to ensure the mission went off without a hitch.

Twenty-four U.S. civilian mariners under contract with MSC operate Henson. During O-SPS, they helped conduct the deck operations demonstrations and operated the hydrographic survey launches.

"The crew has greatly enjoyed having the Colombian and Brazilian nationals aboard for these two exercises," said Henson's master, Capt. Greg Gillette. "Despite any preconceived notions the crew might have, they always discover that they share a lot in common with their seafaring counterparts from other nations."

Charting the ocean floor with Colombia

On a gray Sunday morning March 7, Henson and Colombian naval hydrographic survey ship ARC Providencia slipped out of the Bay of Cartagena into a restless southern Caribbean Sea to conduct their first joint at-sea survey demonstration in waters selected by the Colombian navy. The data collected by the Colombian and American surveyors was used in a variety of workshops.

For the next week, hydrographers and Henson's contract mariners continued to carry out surveys and workshops. A Colombian research buoy was located during a survey, and Colombian coast guard

EXPLORING



authorities were notified so that divers could later recover the buoy.

FST members spent significant time on expeditionary survey vehicles throughout the week to demonstrate the capabilities of the vehicle to a group of Colombian hydrographers. The white skyline of Cartagena was the backdrop as Aerographer's Mate 2nd Class Nicholas Wissler and Aerographer's Mate 3rd Class Tonia Boyle conducted a survey in the bay's choppy waters, taking along Colombian hydrographers for a close-up look at how the system worked at operational speeds.

"Our Colombian counterparts jumped right in alongside us to wire the [survey vehicles], put them in the water and survey," said Wissler. "When complications or challenges arose, the Columbians didn't criticize or complain, but instead shared examples of challenges they had faced and how they overcame them."

Henson, NAVOCEANO and FST personnel departed Cartagena March 13 for Brazil, where they would begin the second leg of the mission.

Working with the Brazilian navy

Henson arrived in Fortaleza, Brazil, to work with the Brazilian navy March 23. Henson stopped briefly at the Port of Fortaleza to pick up nine Brazilian sailors before setting sail to begin at-sea exercises.

While in Brazil, there were exchanges between subject matter experts from the Fleet Numerical Meteorology Oceanography Center, NAVOCEANO, FST and Brazil's Directorate of Hydrography and Navigation. Topics ranged from remote sensing, fleet support and numerical modeling, ocean and coastal modeling, bathymetry, magnetometry, geodesy and tides.

Members of the expeditionary division of FST also demonstrated a pier-clearance survey near Fortaleza March 26-27, using two expeditionary survey vehicles. The four-member team constructed a natural disaster response scenario around a partially submerged wreck and shoal area. Their objective was to search for containers and sunken vessels within the vicinity of the port.

"The exchange was amazing," said Aerographics Mate 3rd Class Tonja Boyle, assistant hydrographic

technician for FST. "The language barrier wasn't as difficult as I was expecting it to be. The Brazilians were very receptive to experience firsthand our expeditionary survey capabilities, and it was easy to demonstrate since they have similar software and equipment."

Henson hosted a closing ceremony for O-SPS March 30 aboard the ship.

"The culmination of this week's engagement with the Brazilian and U.S. Navy hydrographic offices proved to be a successful exchange of hydrographic science and ideas between our two nations," said Navy Capt. Brian Brown, commanding officer, Naval Oceanographic Office.

Brazilian navy Capt. Marcos Almeida, director, Brazilian Navy's Hydrographic and Meteorological Center added, "This engagement demonstrated the strength of our partnership, and I look forward to future cooperation between our navies."

The information gathered and discussed was invaluable, said Navy Cmdr. Oscar Monterrosa, mission commander for O-SPS. New data can provide military commanders with detailed descriptions of the environmental conditions they could face while at sea and improve the safety and efficiency of seagoing operations.

"We value our strong relationship with Colombia and Brazil, and seek to continue to expand our partnership through navy-to-navy, face-to-face, hands-on oceanographic activities," said Monterrosa.

On April 12 in Washington, D.C., Brazilian Minister of Defense Nelson Jobim and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates signed an agreement on defense cooperation between the governments of Brazil and the United States that includes cooperation in the fields of research and development, and combined-military training and education.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Craig Collins, 70th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, and Navy MC2 Lily Daniels, U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs, contributed to this story.

Getting Launched

Henson crew members lower a 34-foot hydrographic survey launch, which is capable of surveying in water less than 33-feet deep, into the waters off Cartagena, Columbia. Henson visited Columbia and Brazil as part of Oceanographic-Southern Partnership Station 2010.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lily Daniels

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, visited Sealift Logistics Command Far East in Singapore, March 25-28. Buzby and **Jack Taylor**, director, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, held an all-hands call with officer-in-charge Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Mike Little** and command staff members from Ship Support Unit Singapore March 25.

Buzby visited three MSC ships while in Singapore. He and Taylor first visited dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd March 25 at nearby Sembawang Wharves. The admiral received a tour of the ship by Byrd's civil service master **Capt. Robert Jaeger**. Buzby then visited ocean surveillance ship USNS Impeccable at Keppel Gul shipyard March 26, where ship's master **Capt. Mark Paine** and chief engineer **Thomas Matella** gave him a tour. The following day, Buzby visited missile range instrumentation ship USNS Observation Island at Sembawang Wharves, where ship's master **Capt. Gus Malihoutsakis** led the admiral, Denman and Taylor on a tour.

Denman hosted a leadership summit March 29-30, which was attended by commanders and commanding officers from SEALOGFE's Maritime Prepositioning Ship squadrons and MSC offices. Navy **Capt. Fred Harr**, commander, MPS Squadron Two; Navy **Capt. Geoffrey Pack**, commander, MPS Squadron Three; Navy **Cmdr. Chris Cruz**, commanding officer, MSC Office Korea; Navy **Cmdr. Bill Ellis**, commanding officer, MSCO Okinawa; and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Paul Springer**, commanding officer, MSCO Diego Garcia; participated in the conference and presented briefings on their respective squadron and office missions.

Harr presented two staff members with Navy Commendation Medals during a March 19 ceremony in the central Indian Ocean held on board MPS USNS SGT William R. Button. Navy **Chief Warrant Officer Charles Briggs** and Navy **Operations Specialist Chief William Pride** received medals marking the conclusion of their successful tours with the command. Replacing Briggs as the squadron's operations officer is Navy **Chief Warrant Officer John Rawls**.

Harr hosted British Royal navy Cmdr. Christopher Moorey for a tour of MPS flagship USNS SGT William R. Button March 9 at Diego Garcia's lagoon. Moorey reported to Diego Garcia as the senior British Representative on the British-owned island March 3.

On March 13, Button hosted 17 sailors from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion One's Diego Garcia detachment for a tour of the ship. On March 24, Harr hosted Nira Desai, country director for India from the Office of the Secretary of Defense's policy section for South and Southeast Asia, for a tour of Button and a briefing on Maritime Prepositioning Force capabilities in the Indian Ocean. Desai, who was accompanied by Naval Support Facility commanding officer Navy Capt. Mike Flanagan, was conducting a familiarization tour of Diego Garcia.

MSCO Korea joined the local Busan Foreign School to co-sponsor a fund-raising dinner for the Busan Sung Ae Won orphanage and local chapter of Habitat for Humanity March 5. Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization that helps to build affordable homes for low-income families.

"The fundraiser was a huge success with over 400 people in attendance, which raised nine million Korean won, or about \$8,000 for these charities," Cruz said.

The event was held at a Busan hotel grand ballroom and attended by the director of Sung Ae Won, the principal of the Busan Foreign School and representatives from the U.S. Consulate, Busan International Women's Association, Korean American Busan Association, People to People International and the Busan Veterans hospital.

During an awards ceremony held at SEALOGFE headquarters March 31, Denman presented Springer with a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, marking his outstanding tenure as MSCO Diego Garcia's commanding officer. Springer, who began serving on the Indian Ocean atoll in December 2008, was credited for providing outstanding logistical support to assigned MPS Squadron Two ships and for overseeing the delivery of more than 50 million gallons of fuel and thousands of metric tons of provisions and supplies to the island. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Robert Rosales relieved Springer as the office's commanding officer April 6.

MSCO Diego Garcia welcomes operations officer Navy **Boatswain's Mate Chief Robert Gibbs** to the command. Navy **Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Aisha Green** earned a Navy Achievement Medal March 23, which marked the end of her outstanding tour with the command.

SEALOGFE changes command



Navy Capt. Charles Denman speaks during a change of command ceremony March 26 in Singapore, where he took command of Sealift Logistics Command Far East from Navy Capt. Jim Romano, who will become chief of staff at Military Sealift Command headquarters in May.

U.S. Navy photo by Ed Baxter

By Edward Baxter, SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's leadership in the Far East changed hands March 26 when Navy Capt. Charles C. "Chip" Denman relieved Navy Capt. Jim O. Romano as commander of Singapore-based Sealift Logistics Command Far East.

SEALOGFE operates up to 48 MSC-controlled ships to provide services to support U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. 7th Fleet Navy ships in its vast area of responsibility, which encompasses more than 52 million square miles of the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

During the ceremony, Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander of MSC, presented Romano with the Legion of Merit Medal to recognize his achievements over the past two years.

"The contents of this award recognize the hard work and success of my staff, not only me," Romano told the audience of more than 100 guests.

Romano, who reported as SEALOGFE's commander in March of 2008, is SEALOGFE's second commander since the command moved to Singapore from Yokohama, Japan, in 2006. SEALOGFE is co-located with commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific and Commander, Task Force 73.

Romano, a native of West Lebanon, N.H., has served his country for nearly four decades. He enlisted in the Navy in 1971 and completed a tour in Vietnam, earning a combat action ribbon. Romano advanced to the grade of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class when he earned his commission through the Limited Duty Officer program in 1982. Romano was promoted to captain in June 2004. Romano's next assignment will be his third with MSC. Romano reports to Military Sealift Command headquarters May 1, where he will serve as chief of staff. Romano also served as MSC Sealift Logistics Command Europe's chief staff officer from 2003 to 2004.

"Commodore Romano has a great reputation, and I was told to expect to find SEALOGFE in great condition," Denman said. "Indeed, Jim, you have made this command stand out from the rest."

Denman's last assignment was legislative advisor to the Chief of Naval Personnel. Denman also served as a strategist on the staff of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), completed two Office of the Chief of Naval Operations action officer tours and served as a congressional fellow on the staff of U.S. Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama.

At sea, Denman served on board Navy destroyer USS Hewitt, guided-missile cruiser USS California, frigate USS Ouellet, landing craft repair ship USS Sphinx and amphibious assault ship USS Guadalcanal. He commanded destroyer USS Barry, deploying to the North Arabian Sea in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Denman is a 1985 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and earned a master's degree in strategy from the Army's Command and General Staff College in 1996. He has also completed Joint Professional Military Education Phases I and II.

"One doesn't earn command through seniority, but through a proven record of excellence," said the ceremony's guest speaker, Logistics Group Western Pacific Commander Navy Rear Adm. Nora Tyson. "That is certainly the case of our incoming commodore, Capt. Chip Denman. You have a great team, and I have every confidence that you will continue to build upon the superb foundation Jim has left for you."

Romano reports to Military Sealift Command headquarters in May.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

March was another busy month on the front lines of logistics support to the U.S. 5th Fleet. Sealift Logistics Command Central/Commander Task Force 53 said goodbye to one of its outstanding Military Sealift Command contributors to U.S. 5th Fleet readiness, MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos. While in theater, Pecos provided support for Navy strike groups centered on aircraft carriers USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan, two amphibious readiness groups centered on amphibious assault ships USS Nassau and USS Bonhomme Richard and numerous coalition naval combatants. Pecos' crew safely and efficiently conducted 52 underway replenishments; transferred 4.6 million gallons of F76 fuel and 185,000 gallons of F44 fuel; and delivered 2,224 pallets of cargo and provisions. The crew of USNS Pecos received a Bravo Zulu message from CTF-53 for the crew's outstanding efforts. In late March, SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 welcomed MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock, whose crew continues MSC's tradition of providing crucial services to U.S. and coalition forces in the Central Command area of responsibility.

Fair winds and following seas to CTF-53's HSC-26 Detachment One "Desert Hawk" officer-in-charge Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Zayac** and Air Logistics Department Cargo Of-

ficer Navy **Lt. Ryan Wodele**. Zayac and Wodele were awarded Navy Commendation Medals for their outstanding performance while attached to CTF-53 and SEALOGCENT. Zayac was relieved by Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Alan Copeland** as the new "Desert Hawk" office-in-charge, and Wodele was relieved by Navy **Lt. j.g. Chaye Kabbelliya**.

SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 warmly welcomes Navy **Cmdr. Tom Fifer**, operations officer, who returns to Bahrain after a tour at the Naval War College where he received a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies.

In late-February, Navy **Capt. Don Hodge**, commodore, SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 and **Linda Harman**, SEALOGCENT operational support officer, attended the inaugural SEALOGCENT Reserve Integration Conference in Tampa, Fla. The event was hosted by Navy **Capt. Jim Leach** and Reserve unit SEALOGCENT 101 staff members. Leaders from the four Expeditionary Port Units assigned to SEALOGCENT were also in attendance. The event's focus was unifying and strengthening the relationship between the active and Reserve components that encompass SEALOGCENT's team. Discussion topics included developing a monthly communication battle rhythm and aligning EPU commanding officer annual training with SEALOGCENT events. Other topics included a long-range training plan and the operational tempo of the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Navy **Capt. Sybil Bradley** presented an MSC headquarters Reserve overview.

EUROPE • AFRICA • NEWS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha completed its last replenishment at sea before leaving the eastern Mediterranean theater by replenishing NATO British Frigate HMS Monmouth, guided-missile destroyer USS Ramage and guided-missile frigate USS Curtts. During Kanawha's final port visit to Rota, Spain, the ship provided a platform for dive and anti-limpet mine training for Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 8 Detachment Rota and for Visit, Board, Search and Seizure Level II training for the U.S. Marine Corps Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Company. While in Rota, Kanawha also received cargo destined to support the Navy's

Opportune Lift program in Norfolk, Va. SEALOGEUR/CTF-63 bids fair winds and following seas to Navy **Cmdr. Stan Crozier** upon his retirement. Crozier served as the CTF-63 fleet logistics operation chief and was responsible for coordinating logistics efforts for Navy ships operating in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

SEALOGEUR wishes **Nastassia Rigg-Burke**, front office administrative assistant, "buona fortuna" as she leaves the command to transfer to Great Lakes, Ill., with her husband.

SEALOGEUR welcomes its new Reserve component: Navy **Capt. Kim Martin**, Navy **Lt. Kelly Braun** and Navy **Lt. Josh Rall**.

COMPASS • HEADING

March saw the start of renovation work on three Breezy Point buildings destined to become offices for Military Sealift Fleet Support Command as the command phases out its presence at the Virginia State Military Reservation at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, Va. Buildings 15, 16 and 30, which are immediately north of MSFSC's headquarters complex, are currently scheduled for occupancy early next year.

Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort arrived at her Baltimore layberth March 19 after a successful humanitarian relief mission in Haiti. Comfort's civil service mariners were busy in the days immediately following the ship's return. They supported U.S. Coast Guard and American Bureau of Shipping annual inspections, removed temporary package generators and secured the ship's propulsion and auxiliary generators as Comfort prepared to return to reduced operating status March 28.

MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy arrived back at its layberth in San Diego, Calif., in late March. As of April, the ship was undergoing preparations for deployment in support of U.S. Pacific Command's Pacific Partnership 2010.

Congratulations to MSFSC employees who participated in the command's annual 'Crews into Shape' challenge, which was sponsored by the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center in conjunction with National Nutrition Month. MSFSC's public health educator **Christine McGrath** administered the voluntary program, which promoted workplace-focused, team-oriented physical activity and increased fruit and vegetable intake. McGrath was recognized for her leadership and commitment to encouraging command-wide good health

in conjunction with the Navy Surgeon General's "Blue H" health-promotion and wellness award.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Joshua Humphreys was transferred from Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility Philadelphia to MSC March 18. The ship's primary mission is to provide fuel to U.S. Navy ships at sea and jet fuel to aircraft. The ship's short-fused reactivation is in support of U.S. 5th Fleet operations. The ship was deactivated in October 2006 after nearly 10 years of service to MSC. Humphreys reactivated one other time in 2005-2006.

MSFSC welcomes **Wanda Watson-Mays**, deputy equal employment opportunity officer, who replaced **Laudess Scales** March 29. Previously, Mays served as EEO officer at MSC headquarters from 1991 to 1997, and again from 2000 to 2006.

Fair winds and following seas to several retirees, including **Boatswain's Mate Chester Blue**, who is retiring after 48 years of government service; **Purser Reynaldo Calderon**; **Chief Engineer Terrance Campbell**; **Able Seaman Stephen Forest**, **Boatswain's Mate Frank Gray Jr.**; **Engine Utilityman Ramon Josue**; **Utilityman Edwin Norman Jr.**; **Second Electrician Alan Pancipanci**; **Purser Honesto Ramos**; **Assistant Cooks James Actipis** and **Phillip Williams**; **Logistics Management Specialist Raymond Hieber**; and **Comptroller Joyce Jurkowski**. Thank you for your service.

MSFSC sends its condolences to the family of **3rd Assistant Engineer James Bradshaw**, who passed away March 7.

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

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, visited the MSC Office Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, March 19-20. Buzby toured MSC fleet ocean tugs USNS Navajo and USNS Sioux, MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon and MSC-chartered submarine and special warfare support ship MV C-Commando while he was in Pearl Harbor.

Sealift Logistics Command

Pacific recognized two members of its workforce in March for their length of government service.

Thomas M. Brown, marine transportation specialist, SEALOGPAC Operations Department, received recognition for 40 years of government service. **Francisco N. Villarín**, management assistant, Ship Support Unit San Diego Manpower Department, received recognition for 30 years of government service.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp departed Haiti March 29 after completing its humanitarian and disaster relief efforts in the area. U.S. Army divers embarked on Grasp completed reconstruction of the south pier at Port-au-Prince, ending the mission that began shortly after the January earthquake struck.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams, which was instrumental in the early support and relief efforts in Haiti, departed the Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic area of responsibility April 1, to return to U.S. Marine Corps prepositioning support in Guam.

MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple returned to Norfolk March 18 after a nearly six-month deployment in support of U.S. Central and Europe Sealift Logistics Commands. While deployed, Grapple participated in training exercises with partner nations. In addition, Grapple provided a platform for diver training and dive capability assessment tests in Kenya, Tanzania, Seychelles and Tunisia. The ship also quickly responded to recovery efforts following the crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 409.

When MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort concluded its humanitarian mission in Haiti March 10, Navy Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead lauded Comfort's medical teams and civil service mariners for their efforts helping Haiti's stricken residents.

"The tragedy that struck Haiti mobilized a worldwide response to relieve the suffering of the Haitian people," said Roughead. "Our Navy stepped in from the outset, delivering assistance in many forms. "During your time on station, you were the face of America to the grateful Haitian people. Your actions made our entire nation proud and showcased Navy flexibility and responsiveness in the best possible way."

Tom D'Agostino, SEALOGLANT senior marine transportation specialist in Charleston, S. C., assisted with cargo operations for five ships in March. MSC cable laying/repair ship USNS Zeus and MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS Sumner arrived March 15, joining MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall, MPS USNS 1st LT Jack Lummus and MPS USNS 2nd LT John P. Bobo at Detyen's Shipyard for repairs. **Mary Ann Nobles**, also a marine transportation specialist in the SEALOGLANT Charleston office, coordinated the port calls.

MSC tanker USNS Paul Buck discharged a total of 364,000 barrels of fuel during two port visits March 20 and 27. Large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Watson arrived March 23 to receive almost 252,000 square feet of prepositioning cargo. On March 26, Army Lt. Gen. Mitchell Stevenson, U.S. Army deputy chief of staff for logistics, received a tour of Watson by ship's master **Capt. Chris Larkin**.

Richard Bolduc, senior marine transportation specialist at the SEALOGLANT office in Jacksonville, Fla., assisted with cargo operations for five ships in March. MPS USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams offloaded nearly 18,000 square feet of returning Haitian disaster relief cargo February to March 2. More than 174,000 square feet of prepositioning cargo was loaded onto the ship March 15-24. MPS USNS 2nd LT John P. Bobo offloaded more than 202,000 square feet of cargo March 3-13. MSC-chartered tug Dublin Sea discharged more than 90,000 barrels of fuel March 13-14. Bolduc oversaw the loading of more than 800 pallets of goods onto MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark March 4-6. The ship took on more than 15,000 barrels of fuel in Jacksonville, which was destined for relief operations in Haiti March 13-17.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Navy Adm. John C. Harvey, commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, commended MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort in a Bravo Zulu message that highlighted the ship's outstanding contributions to the Haiti relief effort during the ship's seven-week deployment there following the devastating earthquake in January.

"USNS Comfort getting underway just three days from a reduced operating status ... was in the finest traditions of our Navy," Harvey said to the Bravo Zulu recipients. "You had an immediate impact. You made a real difference in the lives of thousands, and while you delivered much food, water and aid, you gave the people of Haiti the most important gift of all, hope."

Military Sealift Command headquarters marked Women's History Month March 17 with a special observance that included remarks by **Eileen Roberson**, MSC Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force and Special Mission director. Roberson spoke about the influence of strong women in all positions in society and thanked the women who have impacted her own life.

MSC's command newspaper Sealift, produced by the MSC public affairs office, received an honorable mention for being one of the Navy's best tabloid-format newspapers in the 2009 Chief of Information Merit Awards competition.

Navy **Capt. Jim Romano** replaces Navy **Capt. David Wright** as MSC chief of staff in early May. Romano comes to MSC headquarters from Sealift Logistics Command Far East, where he served as commodore.

MSC bids farewell to **Zophie Burnett**, maritime forces, manpower and management; **Chantal Rosales**, contracts and business management; and **Glenn Marshall**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force.

MSC welcomes **Doris Hughes**, office of the comptroller; **Robert Walz**, command, control, communication and computer systems; and **Jonathan Berman**, engineering.

Swift completes nine-month deployment to U.S. 6th Fleet

By Kim Dixon
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift and Navy guided-missile frigate USS Nicholas concluded an international cooperative initiative aimed at strengthening maritime safety and security in Africa, March 12, in Mombasa, Kenya.

In the nearly nine months Swift was deployed to U.S. 6th Fleet, the ship sailed from Mauritania to Mauritius, and just about everywhere in between. During Swift's mission, the ship took on many roles, including training platform, mobile classroom and provider of humanitarian aid.

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

Swift departed its port in Norfolk in June 2009 with a combination of civilian and military crew members. Nineteen civilian mariners who work for a private ship operating company under contract to MSC operate and navigate the ship. In addition, 20 Navy sailors comprise Swift's military department.

"The combination of military and contract mariners, [also called CONMARs], provides a unique synergy that is found nowhere else in the military world," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Simmons, one of the ship's two rotating officers-in-charge. "The CONMARs focus on day-to-day operation of the vessel. These operations include maintaining the engineering and deck equipment, providing meals and conducting the safe operation of the vessel through navigation and deck-watch standing. The military is responsible for the communications suite and conducting the mission and planning operations."

Swift arrived in theater in July 2009 and immediately went to work supporting APS West. The crew grew by 49 when Swift embarked partners from Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Togo and Benin for six weeks of training. Under the guidance of 10 embarked U.S. Navy training team members from the Navy Expeditionary Training Command in Little Creek, Va., the West African sailors trained daily in maritime safety and security operations tailored specifically to operations in their home waters in the Gulf of Guinea.

"There were many highlights for me on both deployments, but especially the West Coast deployment because I spent time with two Nigerian



Military Sealift Command-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift was one of the primary platforms for Africa Partnership Station, an international initiative to improve maritime safety and security in West and Central Africa.

officers who were fascinating to me," said Navy Logistics Specialist Second Class Dale Holbrook. "The highlights for me were getting to know their culture and their perspective on Africa as a whole ... It was amazing how much we are all so alike."

After weeks of teaching the embarked sailors about small-boat operations; Visit, Board, Search and Seizure; seamanship; and navigation training, Swift switched gears to conduct a series of theater security cooperation engagements in Ghana, Cameroon, Gabon, Togo, Liberia and Gambia. A commercial ferry by design, Swift was well-suited to meet its mission in theater.

"Swift can carry a mix of people and cargo," said Navy Capt. James Tranoris, commander, Sealift Logistics Command Europe and Combined Task Force 63, Swift's operational commander in theater. "Swift can carry 400 passengers, and she is relatively fast. The vessel can support a helicopter landing and taking off from its deck."

Upon completing APS West in September 2009, Swift continued supporting U.S. theater security cooperation goals within U.S. Africa Command by providing intra-theater sealift services for a Navy mobile construction battalion in West Africa. In addition, Swift frequently hosted U.S. and foreign dignitaries on board.

Swift started the second half of its APS deployment Dec. 29, this time a three-month mission to seven Eastern African nations including Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Mauritius, Seychelles and Comoros. During these visits, Swift embarked African navy personnel in order to conduct professional exchanges on damage control, engineering, medical procedures, navigation and watch standing.

Swift's involvement in back-to-back APS missions reflects the ship's history of contributions to U.S. Navy theater security cooperation goals.

"We have been doing these types of deploy-

ments for a while now, and they just keep getting better," said Swift's civilian master Capt. Joseph Sohlberg. "Preparation, coordination and execution between the military and civilian personnel is better than ever. As merchant mariners, we bring a flexibility to bear that is built on a wealth of practical and operational experience operating in these locations. This 'can do' – 'will do' attitude pays dividends in day-to-day operations."

The military also felt the combined crew brought unique capabilities to bear.

"The combination of various individuals with diverse backgrounds leads to a better overall result with higher efficiency," said Simmons. "In addition, it helps to build partnerships and strengthen relationships when you can present a civilian and military side to operations. It enables the vessel to interact with more than one subset of the host population."

The military members also found that being embarked on an MSC ship brought as many similarities as it did differences from life on a U.S. Navy ship.

"Cleaning spaces and preparing for dignitary visits was the same," said crew member Navy Chief Warrant Officer 3 William Alexander. "What was different was having the ship crewed by civilians, getting to port a lot faster and having chow that was sometimes better."

Swift's civilian crew offered a unique perspective on the international maritime environment to APS East participants. Sohlberg shared his civilian mariner experiences with students at the School of Nautica, a training institution for both navy and civilian mariners in Mozambique.

"In reaching out to the students at the School of Nautica, we were engaging the next generation of maritime professionals in Mozambique," said Sohlberg. "I think that spoke to the most basic aspects of APS – setting the spark that will grow into relationships that may facilitate a safer and more secure maritime environment off the coasts of Africa. The majority of the students at the school were entering the merchant marine. As a member of this international fraternity, it was a pleasure to discuss the industry as a whole and the opportunities that exist in the international maritime fleets."

"Maritime problems are global concerns that no one nation can tackle alone," said Tranoris. "Africa Partnership Station East 2010 demonstrated both the capability and the promise of lasting cooperative maritime partnerships."

Swift concluded APS March 12. As the ship returned home to prepare for its new tasking, the crew and military detachment were confident in the value of their contributions.

"Our continued contribution to MSC's mission is evident daily as we support our assigned task and our customer's objective," Sohlberg said.

Top leaders honor defense transportation team



Secretary of Defense Robert Gates presented the Joint Meritorious Unit Award to U.S. Transportation Command and its three components, one of which is Military Sealift Command, April 1 at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. The award was given for deploying combat troops and supplies to Iraq and Afghanistan, while simultaneously providing to the ongoing relief efforts taking place in Haiti. According to Gates, the award is the first and only one he has "personally initiated in the more than three years" he has held his position. Army Gen. David Petraeus, commander, U.S. Central Command, also addressed the audience. "The members of TRANSCOM are normally the unsung heroes of the U.S. military. That is not the case today."

Left: Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, MSC, stands with some of the more than 20 representatives from MSC that attended the event, including three licensed mariners from MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort's deployment to Haiti.