

September 2010

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

RIMPAC 2010

Bridge - Guadalupe - Navajo - Sioux - Yukon



Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon conducts a replenishment at sea with aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan in Hawaii in July as part of Rim of the Pacific 2010. RIMPAC is the biggest multinational exercise in the world.



INSIDE — Trio of MSC rescues • Annual Pacer Goose operation resupplies Thule Air Force Base

Luckiest admiral in the Navy

That's what I've been told, and that's how I feel just about every day since I joined MSC in October. The reason: I'm part of an outfit that leads the Navy in efficiency, effectiveness and getting the job done no matter what, thanks to an amazing group of folks afloat and ashore who make the impossible seem routine ... every day. Damn right, I'm lucky!

I've actually been in a right fine mood lately and as I reflect on it a bit, I can quickly come up with a bunch of reasons why this is so. I could probably fill an entire page on "why," but since Meghan (Sealift Editor) gets cross when I go over 600 words, I'll just give you a few highlights:

Generators are crashing all over the fleet!

August has been an amazing month for generator casualties – just ask the engineers on Mount Whitney, Joshua Humphreys, Big Horn, Cape Jacob and Alan Shepard. So what's to be happy about? It's the way those engineers – supported by the port engineers and MSFSC staff ashore – quickly rallied the repair effort and got the ships back on mission with nary a missed beat. It was really impressive to see how quickly and professionally you tackled those mission-impacting casualties, and in the case of Mount Whitney, two at once! The rest of the Navy is quite jealous of your level of self-sufficiency and well, they should be. It sure was impressive to watch from here. Well done, gang!

Mercy rescue saves the day!

Well into her Pacific Partnership 2010 deployment, Mercy was inport Ambon, Indonesia, when MSC mariners noticed a civilian ferry, MV Wetar, belching smoke and flames while moored outboard another vessel. Capt. Dave Bradshaw quickly noted that local vessels were not making any headway against the fire and dispatched a Mercy RHIB with Chief Mate Matt Bush, Cargo Mate Grant Begley, BM Cromwell Rafol and A/B Anthony Jones to assist. For more than two hours, the Mercy crew fought the fire from the RHIB with a P-100 and a 1.5-inch hose, getting the fire under control and saving the vessel. All in a day's work.

ATFs delivering an even strain

Our fleet ocean tugs were even busier than usual in July with East Coast ship Apache conducting tows of ex-Forrestal and ex-Mount Baker to Philadelphia from Newport and Charleston respectively. Out West, Navajo

and Sioux were busy supporting the massive Rim of the Pacific exercise around the Hawaiian islands, and way out West, Catawba remained active in the Persian Gulf. By the way, we will be installing a prototype commercial satellite hook up for CAT in the near future to test the "internet café" concept for possible future application in other ships to ease the bandwidth issues.

The Fleet says thanks...

A lot of Bravo Zulus have been coming in lately for outstanding mission performance while deployed (Patuxent, Supply), for professionally executing a demanding high-value unit tow (Apache) and rescuing mariners in distress on the high seas (Ericsson, Swift). This is just the most recent batch of thank yous that I get to see on a regular basis and it doesn't even count the emails that also call out the great work that goes on every day out there.

A people initiatives' win

I received word back from NEX Command that our request to grant MSC CIVMARs full access to all NEX facilities both in CONUS and OCONUS was approved. Next time you see SEALOGPAC Commodore Hamel, thank him: he did the legwork to get this effort moved forward. By the time you read this, the administrative steps required to notify all the NEX stores should be nearly complete, and you should be able to enjoy this new privilege. Our next goal: commissary privileges.

New ships headed our way

I attended the keel-laying ceremony for JHSV-1 Spearhead at Austal shipyard in Mobile, Ala. This hull goes to the Army, the next comes to the Navy for MSC operation. As the shipyard builds the 10 JHSVs, we'll build our experience level by crewing the first two with CIVMARs, then use operating companies and contract mariners to crew the remaining three. The Army JHSV is scheduled to deliver to the 7th Sustainment Brigade in fiscal year 2012. The first Navy JHSV, USNS Vigilant, should deliver to MSC in 2013.

... And maybe other ships headed our way, too

The Washington and Norfolk staffs are working on a study to answer a Fleet Forces Command tasker to look into the details of using MSC CIVMARs as part of a hybrid crew to man certain Navy amphibious ships, much as we do with command ships and submarine tenders. This is not a "done-deal" by any means, but if adopted, there would be huge implications and opportunities for MSC across the board. I think it says a lot about the trust that the Navy leadership has developed in your ability to deliver capability that this course of action is even

being considered. We'll keep you posted as this goes forward.

Achievement afloat and ashore

Our people are doing great things afloat and ashore. In August, we offered congratulations to Medical Services Officer Chris Hudson, who received the Mariner Award of Excellence and was named MSFSC Mariner of the Year. MSO Alfonso Miciano received the Distinguished Career Achievement Award at the same ceremony in Norfolk. Out in San Diego, MSC Senior Owners Representative Art Diaz received the Navy Superior Civilian Service Medal for his remarkable work in getting the T-AKEs out of the shipyard and into the fleet so beautifully – 11 and counting. I also presented medals and spot awards to almost half the crew of Joshua Humphreys for the remarkable job they did activating their ship from layup and sailing her on her current deployment. Doing a better job of recognizing your great work is high on my and Mr. Jack Taylor's priority list.

So, as you can see ...

There is a lot of "good" going on in our outfit. Perfect? Heck no, and we have a ways to go to get there, but I know that there are a vast majority of you out there who enjoy serving as a part of this team and are striving to make it better every day. I like being around that kind of professional – they deliver. That's why I'm the luckiest admiral in the Navy.

Sail safe and yours aye,

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

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Annual meeting reaffirms critical ties to Korean peninsula

By Adrian Schulte, MSC Public Affairs

A contingent of Americans and South Koreans met at a Korean navy hotel on Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, June 13-15, for the 2010 Annual Korean Flag Shipping Working Group Conference. The group of representatives had fewer than 20 members, and the meeting lasted only a few days. However, the implications for supporting the deployment of U.S. forces to the Korean peninsula, should a conflict arise, are significant.

The KFS program began in 1981 when a memorandum of agreement was signed between the commander of U.S. Pacific Command and the ROK chief of naval operations. The agreement was tied to the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and ROK. The goal was to strengthen ties with ROK allies and to maintain peace through readiness.

Due to the decline of the American merchant fleet in 1981, the KFS agreement was established to ensure that an adequate number of ROK merchant ships could augment the available U.S. fleet to transport military equipment and supplies to Korea in a timely manner should they be needed, said Pat Tully, deputy director of Military Sealift Command joint plans, strategic studies and wargames.

The agreement states that upon the ROK government declaring national mobilization, MSC could have access to specific Korean merchant ships as identified by the ROK Navy and MSC, Tully said. The ships are combinations of container, container break-bulk, dry cargo, break-bulk, roll-on/roll-off and petroleum-product tankers.

While MSC and the Maritime Administration maintain a fleet of ships in reduced operating status, and MSC operates other ships under charter, the agreement allows MSC to expand that capability with merchant Korean vessels, Tully explained.

The KFS meeting, which is held annually at various locations in South Korea and the United States, allows the working group members to hash out new initiatives to the program and make changes to the ship inventory to better serve the needs of sealift support. Alternating the conferences between U.S. and ROK locations allows the members to visit supporting headquarters and seaports that are instrumental in the effective implementation of the KFS program. The meetings also allow members to get to

know their counterparts from various units within the U.S. military and South Korean government.

This year's conference featured representatives on the U.S. side from MSC headquarters; Sealift Logistics Command Far East; MSC Office Korea; Defense Energy Support Center; Surface Deployment and Distribution Center, U.S. Forces Korea and U.S. Transportation Command. The Koreans brought representatives from the ROK navy, ROK Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Land Transport and Maritime Affairs and ROK Transportation Command.

Navy Capt. Chip Denman, SEALOGFE commodore, co-chaired the working group with ROK navy Capt. Jung Ha Kyoan, ROK navy deputy chief of navy operations for logistics.

This annual meeting brings partners together and helps foster a relationship between the two sides, Denman said. Traveling over great distances to meet face-to-face also helps to foster relationships. This is very important because the personnel in the key positions change on a regular basis. That face-to-face meeting has always been effective to get to know each other and to develop some friendships and that can be very important.

"I won't be some unknown if I have to call Capt. Jung and say it's a go," Denman said. "He'll know whom he's talking to, and I have the comfort that he knows why we need it."

Among this year's highlights, both sides agreed to adjust the recommendation of ships available to MSC based on the current active inventories of Korean-flagged ships in service. Both sides also proposed the idea of including an active Korean-flagged ship to support a future joint exercise wherein the Korean ship would be activated and would transport Department of Defense cargo to the exercise port.

After the official business was concluded, the Koreans provided their American counterparts a cultural tour of Jeju Island and introduced them to authentic Korean cuisine.

"The highlight was that it was a successful working group, and we're moving forward," said Denman. "That was the mission, and we accomplished the mission, but their hospitality was certainly noteworthy."

Next year's conference is scheduled to be held in San Diego.

MSC heroes: Ericsson, Swift and Mercy to the rescue(s)

By Meghan Patrick and James Marconi, MSC Public Affairs

In the line of duty, Military Sealift Command's civil service mariners and civilian contract mariners routinely face risks inherent to life at sea. Their hard-earned skills help them successfully complete their missions and bring them safely back to port. This July, these mariners ensured that several other, less fortunate sea goers made it home, too. Spanning the globe from Guatemala to the Philippines, MSC crews were instrumental in several life-saving operations at sea. The crews of MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson, MSC-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift and MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy all distinguished themselves by their heroism in responding ably to those in distress.

Civil service mariners aboard Ericsson rescued five Filipino fishermen from the South China Sea 10 miles off the coast of Subic Bay, Philippines, July 14, nine hours after their boat capsized in rough seas as Typhoon Conson passed over the island of Luzon.

Ericsson had departed the port at Subic Bay July 13 to avoid the storm, and was conducting regular operations when Able Seaman Charles Wright spotted the fishermen clinging to their overturned boat and waving a yellow flag.

Moments later, Ericsson's mariners lowered the ship's rigid-hull, inflatable boat into the sea. Within 10 minutes, the five fishermen were assisted safely onto Ericsson's deck, where they were promptly examined by a physician.

"The fishermen were a bit shaken up because the seas were rough, but otherwise they were in good health and happy to be on our ship," said Tiffany Brockman, Ericsson's chief mate. "We gave them fresh clothing, new socks and boots, and a nice meal."

Ericsson brought the fishermen to shore a few hours after their rescue and turned their care over to the Philippines Coast Guard.

"The crew was excited to have played a role in helping these fishermen," Brockman added, noting that Ericsson had several Tagalog-speaking members on its crew, which made communication easy. "At first, nobody was happy that we had

to sortie due to the typhoon, but being able to help these mariners in need made it all worth it."

A few days before the Ericsson rescue, sailors and merchant mariners from Swift rescued seven Guatemalan special forces sailors from their capsized boat off the coast of Puerto

Quetzal, Guatemala. The Guatemalan vessel capsized during a Guatemalan drug interdiction operation July 10 as it became entangled with a sinking semi-submersible drug boat.



Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy Able Seaman Anthony Jones, left, and First Officer Matthew Bush use a P-100 pump to extinguish a fire on Indonesian passenger ferry boat MV Wetar in the Port of Ambon, Indonesia, July 29.

U.S. Navy photo by Second Officer Grant Begley

Quetzal, Guatemala.

The Guatemalan vessel capsized during a Guatemalan drug interdiction operation July 10 as it became entangled with a sinking semi-submersible drug boat.

Upon arrival at the scene, Swift's crew transferred the Guatemalan sailors, who were suffering from exposure, aboard the ship. The four personnel who were aboard the drug

boat were transferred to a Guatemalan coast guard vessel.

Upon returning to Puerto Quetzal, Swift's crew and the rescued sailors received a hero's welcome from Brig. Gen. Juan Jose Ruiz Morales, chief of staff of national defense in Guatemala, and a receiving line of Guatemalan service mem-

bers. Morales personally thanked the crew members for their aid in the rescue.

Swift is deployed for Southern Partnership Station 2010, a five-month deployment consisting of various specialty platforms to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility in the Caribbean and Central America. The primary goal of the mission, which is scheduled to end Sept. 30, is information exchanging with navies, coast guards and civilian services

throughout these regions. Mercy also responded to a rescue and assist situation when four crew members took the lead in firefighting operations for MV Wetar, a small Indonesian passenger ferry, in Indonesia July 29.

Mercy's First Officer Matthew Bush was working on the bridge when he noticed a large cloud of smoke coming from nearly two miles away at the Port of Ambon. Upon closer inspection with binoculars, Bush saw that Wetar's hull was on fire. Under the direction of Mercy's master, Capt. David Bradshaw, Bush quickly assembled a firefighting team and dispatched one of Mercy's rigid-hull, inflatable boats to the scene.

When the team of Bush, Second Officer Grant Begley, Boatswain's Mate Cromwell Rafol and Able Seaman Anthony Jones arrived at Wetar, which had suffered an engine room fire while moored outboard of another vessel in port, the CIVMARs began to help as soon as they saw that local firefighting measures were inadequate. Although Wetar's crew abandoned their vessel while pierside, Bush, Begley, Rafol and Jones fought the fire from the RHIB for more than two hours, providing the primary source of firefighting capabilities amid a small flotilla of local vessels.

"Once visible signs of fire were extinguished along Wetar's starboard main deck and 01 level, the fire broke out from Wetar's wheelhouse and we proceeded to concentrate our efforts there until no visible signs of fire were present," said Bush.

The efforts of Mercy's four crew members, who rotated through the four positions on the boat as coxswain, nozzle man, pumpman and hose tender, allowed Wetar to be taken under tow, contained the fire and bought time for a better-equipped responder to arrive on scene to extinguish the fire permanently. By that evening Wetar was back at a berth with major damage, but still afloat.

"Second Officer Begley is to be commended for his extraordinary boat handling skills as lead coxswain maintaining station off Wetar," said Boatswain's Mate Rafol and Able Seaman Jones performed brilliantly during every phase of the response and served as nozzle men during the majority of the incident."

Mercy, one of MSC's two hospital ships, visited Indonesia as part of Pacific Partnership 2010, a five-month humanitarian and civic assistance mission to Southeast Asia.

Earhart supports target tasking for CARAT 2010

By MC1 Kim McLendon
CARAT Public Affairs

Like its pioneering namesake, Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Amelia Earhart executed a challenging new role in mid-July – one well outside the usual mission.

The civil service-crewed ship typically delivers food, fuel and other supplies to Navy ships at sea served as the launch platform for surface and air targets in support of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training 2010 in Singapore. In its 16th year, CARAT is a series of bilateral exercises held annually in Southeast Asia to strengthen relationships and enhance force readiness.

Sailors from Commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa, Japan, comprised a targets detachment and embarked aboard Earhart to launch a variety of drones and surface targets. These were to be destroyed by six ships from the U.S. and Singapore navies in three live-fire exercises beginning July 13.

Though the targets detachment has operated aboard other USNS ships, including MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard, this is the first time the detachment has operated aboard a T-AKE.

"The T-AKE is ideal for this type of operation," said Chief Warrant Officer Melinda Chambers, mission com-



A BQM-74E drone is launched with jet assisted takeoff packs from the flight deck of Military Sealift Command dry cargo ship USNS Amelia Earhart for an air gunnery exercise in the South China Sea in July, part of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training 2010.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Kim McLendon

mander for the targets detachment. "The large platform is very well suited to launch and retrieve our types of equipment."

Earhart is equipped with several cranes and davits used to launch the remotely activated drones that position the surface targets at sea. In addition, Earhart has different radar systems than Navy combatant ships ordinarily used to launch targets, so sailors steering the remotely activated drones experienced less disruptive radar interference.

The targets detachment aboard Earhart launched both surface and air targets.

For surface gunfire exercises, the targets detachment launched a low-

cost towable target, or LCTT. That target was towed by a remote controlled jet-ski, called a RoboSki, which towed the LCTT to within firing range of U.S. and Singaporean ships.

For air exercises, the targets detachment fired an air-launched BQM-74E drone off Earhart's deck. Resembling a cruise missile in size, appearance and flight characteristics, the targets team flew an aggressive profile toward the CARAT ships. Participating ships then decided upon and executed the most appropriate way to defend themselves using a combination of ship's guns and missiles.

Earhart's crew of 124 civil service mariners working for MSC were instrumental in assisting the targets detachment to launch and recover the LCTT and RoboSki. Earhart's crew also includes 11 sailors who provide supply coordination.

Earhart's crew expressed pride about being on the leading edge of supporting an important mission.

"It is an interesting opportunity for operations that we wouldn't normally find ourselves conducting, but certainly not beyond our capabilities to safely innovate," said Earhart's civil service master Capt. John Pope.

Rim of the Pacific



Five MSC ships serve as backbone in world's largest maritime exercise

By Sarah E. Burford, SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

Tourists flock to Hawaii to enjoy its bright blue waters and white-sand beaches. They also take time to visit the USS Arizona Memorial to remember the day that the United States was attacked and thrust into the second World War, a solemn reminder of the impact of human conflict. From June 23 to Aug. 1, this beautiful and historical setting was the backdrop as 14 navies, including the U.S. Navy, trained together in preparation for future conflict in the world's largest multinational maritime exercise, the biennial Rim of the Pacific, also called RIMPAC.



Singapore navy photo

A Singapore navy navigating officer makes calculations to maintain separation between Military Sealift Command fast combat support ship USNS Bridge and Singapore navy frigate RSS Supreme during an UNREP.

Thirty-two ships, five submarines, 170 aircraft and more than 20,000 military personnel spent one week in port and three weeks underway conducting operations at sea and on land to simulate the aggression and defense of fictitious navies.

While the simulated 'war' raged on, civil service mariners working on five Military Sealift Command ships provided crucial replenishment and logistics support to RIMPAC ships at sea and in port. MSC ships included fast combat support ship USNS Bridge, fleet replenishment oilers USNS Guadalupe and USNS Yukon, and fleet ocean tugs USNS Sioux and USNS Navajo.

RIMPAC 2010, with the theme 'Combined Agility, Synergy and Support,' is the 22nd exercise to take place since it began in 1971. The exercise is divided into three phases, focusing on inport planning and logistics; tactical war games; maritime operations and communications. This year's exercise included the United States, Canada, France, Australia, Japan, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Netherlands, Peru, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand. Brazil, India and New Zealand attended as observers.

A Day in the Life

On July 20, at 4 a.m. while tourists in Waikiki Beach hotels slept, the day was already beginning for CIVMARs working on MSC fast combat support ship USNS Bridge at sea off Oahu preparing for the six at-sea replenishments scheduled that day.

Under the still-dark sky, Bridge's CIVMARs began the cargo breakout, working with forklifts to move pallets of frozen food, dry stores, fruits and vegetables, and cans of soda into staging areas on the deck of the ship. This food would later provide nourishment for sailors and personnel participating in the exercise. In a movement as fluid as ballet, crew members organized the items for delivery to U.S. and allied navy ships participating in RIMPAC and placed cargo netting around the stacked pallets, readying them for cross-deck transfer by helicopter, which would begin at daybreak. Before Bridge's CIVMARs ate their own breakfast, pallets covered in webbing lined the cargo and flight decks with ship names like USS Chosin, USS Bonhomme Richard and Singapore navy ship RSS Supreme identifying the pallets' final destinations.

Sunrises on a tropical sea are postcard perfect, but dawn went almost unnoticed as the first ship, amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard, arrived on scene and pulled alongside Bridge. On the horizon, other ships began to appear, setting the operational tempo for the day. At 6:30 a.m., flight operations began when one of Bridge's embarked helicopters transferred 162 pallets to Bonhomme Richard and 11 pallets to Australian navy frigate HMAS Newcastle. While these vertical replenishments were taking place, Bridge also extended its huge fuel hoses to transfer 10,000 gallons of JP-5 aviation fuel and 327,000 gallons of diesel fuel to the other RIMPAC participants. As the massive, gray combat ships pulled away, Bridge's crew had 30 minutes to provide underway replenishment for two more ships, which were already navigating toward Bridge.

"Doing operations on a scale like we do for RIMPAC is all about coordination and planning," explained CIVMAR Andrew Strosahl, Bridge's cargo mate. "Crew members have to be in their places and know their jobs. Working together is really the key to our success. Doing this many UNREPs makes for a long, but very exciting day."

Of course, UNREPs are nothing new to MSC. Bridge normally conducts more than 150 UNREPs for U.S. Navy ships in a calendar year. But, RIMPAC differs in the sheer numbers of UNREPs conducted daily and in the support to the foreign navy ships, which on July 20 included Japan, Australia and Singapore.

"Doing UNREPs with the foreign navy ships is always interesting," said Capt. Steven Perdue, Bridge's civil service master. "Each one of them has their own idiosyncrasies. I think one of the biggest things we have to deal with is the language barriers that we have with some of the non-English-speaking countries like Japan. To compensate for this, we can use universal methods of communications, like hand signals, to talk to each other throughout the operation."

As the aroma of lunch wafted up from the mess decks, the last ship, RSS Supreme, pulled away. Bridge had replenished six ships within six hours, transferring a total of 219 pallets of stores via air and connected replenishment operations, and 681,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 11,000 gallons of JP-5 aviation fuel via hose lines.

"Supplying ships is what we do, and we do it very well," said civil service mariner John Drew, Bridge's assistant cargo mate. "We might not nor-



MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Navajo tows decommissioned dock landing ship USS Anchorage out to sea for a Rim of the Pacific 2010 sinking exercise, July 15.

U.S. Navy

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe refuels amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard, left, and Royal Australian Navy amphibious ship HMAS Kanimbla during Rim of the Pacific 2010 July 13 off Hawaii.

the Pacific



World's largest multinational maritime exercise

usually conduct as many a day as we're doing out here for RIMPAC, but our crews are professional and good at what they do, and they can be proud of what they have done."

While Bridge was conducting its operations, other MSC ships actively supported RIMPAC. MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe conducted UNREPs with five ships, moving nearly 300,000 gallons of diesel and 3,000 gallons of JP-5 aviation fuel.

While MSC's three other ships were conducting at-sea replenishments, Navajo and Sioux towed three ship hulks for sinking exercises, and acted as diving and salvage platforms for U.S. and foreign navy divers.

On July 20, miles from the refueling lanes, Navajo provided a diving platform for salvage divers from Mobile Deep Submergence Unit One. On Navajo, MSC-assigned Reservists provided manpower to Cargo Afloat Rig Teams aboard two of the three MSC ships conducting replenishments. Other Reservists, from Sealift Logistics Command Pacific and Expeditionary Port Unit 115, provided maritime logistics planning and shore support to Commander Task Group 173.1 as watch standers at the Pacific Warfighting Center in Pearl Harbor.

The 18-hour day came to a close near midnight, as Navy frigate USS McClusky pulled away from MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon after receiving seven pallets, 57,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 5,000 gallons of JP-5 aviation fuel during a connected replenishment.

RIMPAC 2010 Support

From the first days of RIMPAC's in-port phase in late June, to the end of the exercise's underway portion when the last of the RIMPAC ships returned to port Aug. 1, MSC ships provided vital support. While RIMPAC's 32 ships were divided into attacker and defender ships for the purpose of the exercise, there were no lines drawn in the sand for MSC. Nearly every RIMPAC ship received supplies or fuel from an MSC ship. For some ship participants, there were several deliveries by MSC ships.

"For us, there are no 'good guys' or 'bad guys,'" said Capt. Michael Murphy, Yukon's civil service master. "It's a lot of thirsty ships and a lot of busy customers that need to get back out there, and back to the task at hand."

During the course of RIMPAC 2010, MSC ships delivered 1,510 pallets of food and supplies and 3,000 pounds of U.S. mail via 28 vertical and 23 connected replenishments. More than 12 million gallons of diesel fuel and nearly 6 million gallons of JP-5 aviation fuel were transferred during 115 refuelings at sea. Each challenging and potentially hazardous, close-quarter, maneuvering, logistics operation was completed safely and without incident.

"MSC ships provided at-sea logistics with speed and agility for a very large surface force during RIMPAC," said Navy Vice Adm. Richard Hunt, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet. From prompt fuel delivery, to providing critical 'lily pad' operations and HSC-8 air logistics for customers ranging to more than 200 nautical miles, MSC's time-sensitive logistics for this multi-country, multi-unit exercise is a testament to MSC's support to both U.S. and coalition fleets."

In addition to the MSC Reservists serving aboard ships and as shoreside watch standers, MSC Reservists coordinated assignment of berthing spaces for in-port ships; facilitated the loading of fuel and stores; and scheduled ship rendezvous locations and times.

"Our mission was really the everyday planning – the putting together of all the pieces that made up the RIMPAC logistics puzzle," said Navy Capt. Kyle Freitas, commander, SEALOGPAC headquarters detachment.

"Being a part of RIMPAC has really been great for me," said Bridge Able Seaman Mike Haddack. "Working for MSC lets me serve my country in my own way, and this exercise has brought me close to what it's like to be a part of a real wartime operation. RIMPAC has let me work with foreign navies and our NATO partners. What other job, outside of the military, would let me do that?"

MSC cart teams play key role in RIMPAC 2010

By MSC Public Affairs

As Rim of the Pacific 2010, the world's largest multinational maritime exercise, got underway off Hawaii this summer, U.S. Navy Reservists assigned to Military Sealift Command helped provide critical logistics and supplies to 32 ships. Their specialized training and experience in underway replenishments made them especially valuable.

Three teams of MSC Reservists, called Cargo Afloat Rig Teams, or CART teams, exist nationwide, each consisting of approximately 80 Reservists. Within the teams, detachments of about 13 people train together yearly so they can augment MSC's civil service mariner crews on MSC combat logistics force ships when needed. That includes times when the ships' operational tempo picks up during RIMPAC, other exercises, or in wartime. Each Reservist detachment trains with the purpose of becoming and staying proficient in conducting UNREPs, including fuel delivery equipment operations, vertical replenishment, ammunition handling and deck-equipment maintenance.

"CART teams exist to provide surge capability," said Navy Capt. Sybil Bradley, MSC's director of Reserve Programs. When CART teams are assigned to a ship in times of need, the civil service master of the ship will decide whether to use them as separate rig teams or to integrate them into the ship's crew. CART teams can embark with or without Navy departments aboard, with the latter typically being the case.

"When we were underway, we integrated with the CIVMARs on board and at all of the UNREP stations," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Nikki Phelps, commanding officer of CART Team Three. "It was fast-paced, but we got in a lot of training in a short amount of time."

"We always benefit when the CART teams are on board," said CIVMAR Yukon Chief Mate Daniel Glazier. "Having the CART teams working with the CIVMARs, sharing their different ways of doing things and working together, really brings a different dynamic to the missions. We all have things we can teach each other. Having the CART teams here for RIMPAC was definitely a bonus."

In addition to supporting UNREPs, the CART team on board Guadalupe provided the honor guard for the burial at sea of civil service Capt. Robert Holley, former master of hospital ship USNS Comfort and longtime MSC employee, who died suddenly in April.



U.S. Navy photo by Sarah Burford

Capt. Michael Murphy, civil service master of MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon and Daniel Glazier, Yukon's chief mate, observe the refueling at sea of a Canadian ship during RIMPAC.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Brett Morton



HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters recognized 35 members of the workforce July 20 for their length of government service and extraordinary performance. **Harold Elliott**, office of the comptroller, was recognized for 40 years of service. **John Beauchesne**, Sealift Program; **Frank Buckley**, office of the comptroller; **Edmond French**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; **Linda Handschumacher**, office of the commander; **Donald Petska**, office of the comptroller; **John Kuczynski** and **Richard Lurix**, office of the comptroller; were recognized for 35 years of service. **Cheryl Brown**, office of the comptroller; **Gary Frantz**, comptroller; **David Julian**, contracts and business management; **Sandra Royal**, strategic planning; **William Connolly**, Sealift Program; **Charles Hudson**, joint plans, strategic studies and wargaming; and **Sheila White**,

contracts and business management; were recognized for 30 years of service. **Brian Kenney**, engineering; **Michael Neuhardt**, Prepositioning Program; **Kenny Toy**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Michael Alston**, Prepositioning Program; **Robert Golsby**, logistics; **John Newman**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Kelly Richards**, Special Mission Program; and **Michael Souza**, engineering; were recognized for 25 years of service. **Arthur Clark**, Sealift Program; **John Joerger**, Sealift Program; and **Ginger Garbarini**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force, were recognized for 15 years of service. **Jeffery King**, joint plans, strategic studies, and wargaming; **Richard Myers**, Prepositioning Program; **Larry Ross**, office of the comptroller; **Harry Elliott**, office of counsel; **Charles Fisenne**, Special Mission

Program; and **John Quandt**, strategic planning; were recognized for 10 years of service. **Janine Cowell**, engineering, was recognized as the MSC Civilian of the Quarter during the ceremony.

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command; **Joan Divens**, who is pending appointment as Sealift Program technical director in September; Army **Col. Joel Weeks**, director, joint plans, strategic studies and wargaming; and Navy **Capt. Sybil Bradley**, director, Reserve Programs, visited the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., Aug. 1-6 for Sealift 2010, a biennial humanitarian and disaster relief exercise.

Fleet Standards Branch Head **Jim Fernan** completed a three week assignment July 5-23 with the office of the Supervisor of Salvage and Diving in Gulfport, Miss., to gain field experience in oil spill response. Assignments included development of booming strategies for oil containment with BP representatives and visits to SUPSALV skimmers operating in the Mississippi Delta and Louisiana coastal area.

MSC bids farewell to Navy **Master**

Chief Petty Officer Kenneth Green, MSC Force Command Master Chief; **Nicholas Roy**, Special Mission Program; and **David Clark**, logistics, who are all retiring.

MSC also bids farewell to Navy **Intelligence Specialist 1st Class Stephanie Crawford**, command administration; **Erica Geiser**, office of counsel; **Brooke Picillo**, engineering; **Douglas Phung**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Paige Watkins**, office of the comptroller; and **Kathryn Weinstein**, contracts and business management.

MSC welcomes **Margaret Edwards**, engineering; Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Thomas Maginley**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Ronel Aguilar**, office of the comptroller, **Viphalac Chanthaphone**, contracts and business management, **Michael Robinson**, logistics, **Lauren Rummel**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Forrest Browne**, contracts and business management; and **Charles Reeves**, contracts and business management.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Todd Malaki**, Sealift Logistics Command Far East's logistics officer, was promoted to his current rank during a July 30 ceremony held at the famous Merlion statue near Marina Bay in downtown Singapore. SEALOGFE's commander Navy **Capt. Chip Denman** administered the oath of office, and Malaki's family members placed the black and gold boards of a lieutenant commander onto Malaki's shoulders. The Merlion is the national symbol of Singapore, which combines a lion's head with the shape of a mermaid.

During an award ceremony held July 27 at SEALOGFE's headquarters at Singapore's Sembawang Wharves, Denman presented Reserve support officer Navy **Lt. Chris Cassano** with a Navy Achievement Medal. Cassano earned the award for filling in as acting commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Okinawa for a one-week period while the permanent commanding officer was called away on emergency leave.

Coast Guard **Capt. John Koster**, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Activities Far East, paid a visit to SEALOGFE headquarters Aug. 3, meeting with Denman as well as the command's operational staff members.

SEALOGFE welcomed command counsel **Phil Ketner** in July. Ketner, who previously served as Sealift Logistics Command Europe's counsel, replaces **Lis Young**, who fills the new position of command counsel for Sealift Logistics Command Central in Bahrain.

From the Korean peninsula, Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Juan Gutierrez** relieved Navy **Lt.**

Cmdr. Jon Marlar July 28 as executive officer of MSC Office Korea. Gutierrez worked previously at MSC headquarters' operations directorate. MSCO Korea's commanding officer, Navy **Cmdr. David Bartell**, presented Marine Transportation Specialists **U Hong Chon** and **Chae Yong Chong** with certificates and plaques marking 25 years of loyal service to MSC for each.

From Guam and Saipan, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three's commander Navy **Capt. Herman Awai** presented Force Protection Officer Navy **Lt. David Blas** with both the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Outstanding Volunteer Medal marking the conclusion of his tour with the command. The ceremony was held July 30 on board squadron flagship Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus. Reporting next to the staff of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, Blas was commended for volunteering with local youth programs on the island of Guam.

The staff of MPS Squadron Three volunteered to help elementary and high school children at a U.S. National Park Service-sponsored educational event at Saipan's American Memorial Park, July 19-23. The staff participated in nature walks and community and beach clean-ups. "The future of Saipan's ecological balance will be led by these young citizens, and it's great to see their eyes light up with knowledge," Awai said.

Navy **Rear Adm. Ron Horton** relieved Navy **Rear Adm. Nora Tyson** as commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific, and Commander, Task Force 73, during a July 23 change of command ceremony held at Singapore's Sembawang Wharves. Prior to the ceremony, Horton paid a visit to SEALOGFE's headquarters office July 19, where he met with Denman and command staff members.

USNS Charles Drew delivers to MSC

By Sarah Burford
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

The Lewis and Clark-class of dry cargo/ammunition ships – the Navy's newest class of logistics ships, also called T-AKEs – grew July 14 when Military Sealift Command accepted delivery of the 10th ship in the class, USNS Charles Drew.

The currently deployed T-AKEs operate as part of MSC's combat logistics force – allowing Navy ships to stay at sea, on station and combat ready for extended periods of time.

"As our 10th ship in the T-AKE class, USNS Charles Drew is another milestone for MSC," said Capt. Jerome Hamel, commander, Sealift

Logistics Command Pacific, MSC's office in San Diego. "The T-AKE program is an example of MSC's continued commitment to support the Navy."

Drew is expected to begin conducting missions for MSC in spring 2011 and will operate in the Pacific.

"Taking command of a ship is always excit-

ing, but being in command of a brand new ship in a class like the T-AKE takes the excitement level even higher," said Capt. Dan LaPorte, Drew's civil service master. "I've got an extremely professional and motivated crew, and we're really looking forward to getting underway on our first mission."

Drew is crewed by 124 civil service mariners and 10 U.S. Navy sailors who provide supply coordination.

Drew was christened and launched Feb. 27 at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego. Later the ship underwent a series of tests and trials prior to its delivery to MSC.

Drew is named for Dr. Charles Drew, the American

physician regarded as the father of the blood bank who researched and developed methods of blood collection, plasma processing and storage. Drew's research in blood storage first benefitted soldiers in the field during World War II, but has continued to save the lives millions of people worldwide. His blood bank design is still the model for modern hospitals and organizations such as the American Red Cross.



Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Charles Drew undergoes sea trials June 18 off the coast of San Diego. MSC accepted Drew – the 10th ship in the Navy's newest class of logistics ships – from its builder General Dynamics NASSCO July 14.

Photo by General Dynamics NASSCO

EUROPE • AFRICA • NEWS

Military Sealift Command Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility have kept operations in the region steaming along. While on its way to U.S. 5th Fleet, MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark and MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Joshua Humphreys provided replenishment and refueling to guided-missile destroyer USS McFaul, guided-missile frigate USS Kauffman and guided-missile cruiser USS San Jacinto. Humphreys took on fuel from the departing MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent, which also conducted vertical and connected replenishments with aircraft carrier USS Eisenhower and guided-missile cruiser USS Hue City, before Patuxent returned to the U.S. 2nd Fleet area of responsibility. MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary also provided replenishment after departing on an eight-month deployment in the Gulf of Aden in support of counter-piracy operations.

Sealift Logistics Command Europe welcomes fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall back to serve as the U.S. 6th Fleet duty oiler for the next few months.

Maintaining readiness is also a priority for the crew of MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat, which sailed to Jacksonville, Fla., in July for cargo refurbishment and replacement, as well as maintenance. Wheat will return to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility in late 2010.

The command welcomes Navy **Cmdr. Shane Guthrie** as chief staff officer for commander, SEALOGEUR/Task Force 63, relieving Navy **Cmdr. Mark Hegarty**. The command also welcomes **Ken Rye** to the SEALOGEUR team as the new counsel on staff; he arrived from MSFSC in Norfolk, Va. SEALOGEUR bids farewell to Navy **Cmdr. Dan Redmond**, operations officer, who departed to begin duty at MSC Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Wheat's civilian crew donates thousands to fund for injured Marines and sailors

By James Marconi, MSC Public Affairs

The civilian contract crew and other civilian contractors working aboard Military Sealift Command Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat donated \$8,575 July 27 to assist Marines and Navy sailors wounded in the line of duty. The ship operating company that employs the crew also contributed.

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund will receive the money. Semper Fi is a nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance and support to Marines and sailors injured in the line of duty since Sept. 11, 2001, and their families.

Wheat – a noncombatant prepositioning ship – strategically places combat cargo at sea in support of the Marine Corps and is typically deployed in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea carrying food, fuel, tanks and a range of other equipment and supplies ready for rapid delivery to Marines ashore when needed.

Wheat's crew of 27 civilian mariners works for a private ship operating company under contract to MSC. An additional five contractors working for the Marine Corps are also assigned to Wheat to maintain the Marine Corps equipment carried in the ship's cargo holds.

"Wheat is a special ship, and there is a special bond between the crew and the Marine Corps," said Capt. John Mattfeld, Wheat's civilian master. "This

donation is to show support for our troops fighting overseas and to demonstrate our gratitude for their service."

Individual donations from Wheat's crew and contract-maintenance department accounted for nearly \$2,200, and the ship-operating company matched those funds with more donations. The crew also gave more than \$1,200 from the ship's welfare and recreation fund that could have been used to purchase entertainment equipment on board plus a \$3,000 bonus which was awarded by the ship operating company for three years without a pollution incident.

"Their gracious decision to donate these funds to help wounded service members and their families is not only indicative of their professionalism and dedication, but is also very much in line with the spirit of their ship's namesake Lance Cpl. Roy Wheat," said Marine Corps Col. Steven Peters, commander, Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island in Jacksonville, Fla. The checks were symbolically presented to Peters in a small ceremony July 27.

Wheat's crew members have donated their wages to the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund in previous years, most recently in 2007. The crews of MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ships USNS 1ST LT Harry L. Martin and USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus have also made similar contributions.

Wheat is named in honor of Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Roy M. Wheat, who died in 1967 during the Vietnam War and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for sacrificing himself to save the lives of three other Marines.

Wheat is undergoing a maintenance period in Mobile, Ala., as of Sept. 1.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Tom D'Agostino, senior marine transportation specialist at Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic's office in Charleston, S.C., assisted OSG Navigator and Barge 252, an articulated tug and barge combination, in the discharge of nearly 200,000 barrels of fuel July 16 before departing the following day. The articulated tug Dublin Sea and barge DBL 185 similarly dispatched more than 100,000 barrels of fuel July 24 and departed the next day.

Mary Ann Nobles, a marine transportation specialist in Charleston, provided port call and logistical support to MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Apache July 28 while it was in port preparing to tow former MSC ammunition ship ex-USNS Mount Baker, which was deactivated in Philadelphia Aug. 2, to the U.S. Navy's Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility in Philadelphia, Pa., July 30.

Dean Doolittle, a marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT's office in Jacksonville, Fla., assisted OSG Navigator and Barge 252 discharge more than 36,000 barrels of fuel July 14-16. MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman loaded more than 96,000 barrels of fuel July 17-18.

Richard Bolduc, senior marine transportation specialist at MSC's office in Jacksonville, and Doolittle assisted Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS 1ST LT Harry L. Martin load nearly 900 pieces of an estimated 85,000 square feet of cargo and nearly

4,000 barrels of fuel June 26 to July 20.

Bolduc and **Doolittle** assisted MPF ship USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat discharge nearly 900 pieces of equipment comprising more than 173,000 square feet July 20-28. MPF ship USNS 2ND LT John P. Bobo arrived at its layberth in Jacksonville July 29.

SEALOGLANT's assistant gunner, **Chief Petty Officer Matthew Carlo**, was promoted to senior chief petty officer in a ceremony held at the command July 21. Carlo, a Union, N.J., native, coordinates ammunition loads in support of major operations and deployments. He has served in the Navy 18 years and has been with the command since February.

Alphonso Chapman, operations readiness officer, was named SEALOGLANT Civilian of the Quarter, April to June 2010. Chapman aids the command by cross training in critical positions, providing the command with enhanced flexibility and operational readiness.

SEALOGLANT welcomes MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply, which returned to Naval Weapons Station, Earle, N.J., July 27, and MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent, which returned to Norfolk, Va., July 29. Both ships concluded successful seven-month deployments supporting U.S. and coalition combatant vessels in both U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility.

COMPASS • HEADING

Navy **Cmdr. Robert Williams** relieved Navy **Cmdr. Ernie Harden** July 20 aboard MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Carl Brashear as officer in charge of the military department.

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command welcomes ashore new Port Captain West civil service master **Capt. Robert Seabrook** and new Port Chief Engineer East **Chief Engineer James Sullivan**.

Further personnel changes ashore include **Britt Skogstad**, head of civil service mariner workforce development; **Chris Wahler**, CIVMAR marine placement division director; and **Hal Lane**, deputy, command, control, communications and computer systems directorate.

Fair winds and following seas to **Chief Engineer John Burns**, Utility-

man **Sheila Harrell**, Wiper **Louis Garner**, Electronics Technician **Francisco Collazos**, Able Seaman **Raymond Harvell**, Yeoman **Storekeeper Bonnie Langnehs**, Deck Engineer **Machinist William Perkovich**, Supply Officer **Walton Wilson**, Marine Surveyor **Anthony McManaman** and Equal Employment Specialist **Judy Baczek** as they retire.

MSFSC regrets to report the deaths of **Assistant Cook Reynario Obis**, **Steward Utilityman Michael Young**, **Chief Radio Electronics Technician Arthur Jocson** and **Able Seaman Daniel Kilgore**. Sincere wishes of condolence to their families.

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

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Navy **Capt. Ronald Carr**, deputy commander of Sealift Logistics Command Central and Commander Task Force 53 deputy commander, and six additional staff members from Bahrain and forward-logistics sites in Jebel Ali and Al-Minhad Air Base, United Arab Emirates, witnessed the final link in a major supply chain at sea. From June 29 to July 6, while aboard Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea and MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie, the team observed underway replenishment by both ships. Carr conducted a promotion for Sacagawea acting officer in charge of the military department, Navy **Lt. Cole Seibel**, who was promoted to lieutenant commander. While on Sacagawea, the staff participated in replenishments at sea with aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman, guided missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill, and an ammunition transfer to MSC ammunition ship USNS Flint. Later, the SEALOGLANT/CTF-53 staff was transferred via SH-60B helicopter to Laramie for one final day at sea. Following the Strait of Hormuz transit, the ship arrived the next

morning in Jebel Ali.

In July, SEALOGLANT/CTF-53 bid fair winds to MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary after successful operations in U.S. 5th Fleet. While in theater, Peary provided support for the Bonhomme Richard, Nassau and Peleliu amphibious ready groups, in addition to many U.S. and coalition naval combatants. Peary and her crew conducted 143 underway replenishments, transferred 12.5 million gallons of F76 fuel and 334,000 gallons of F44 fuel, and delivered 6,932 pallets of cargo and provisions. Peary received a Bravo Zulu from SEALOGLANT/CTF-53.

The pace of operations in July for SEALOGLANT/CTF-53 continued at a steady rate, with Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships delivering 228 million gallons of fuel; 1,455 tons of cargo; and 402 tons of mail to a daily average of 66 U.S. and coalition ships in theater. These ships supported U.S. 5th Fleet's Partnership Strength Presence, maritime security operations, Struggle Against Violent Extremists, and operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Chris Thayer, Military Sealift Command Strategic Sealift and Prepositioning Program director, met with Navy **Capt. Rick Williamson**, commanding officer of Naval Base San Diego, to confirm future large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off layberth support in San Diego.

Sealift Logistics Command Pacific welcomed **Eileen Roberson**, MSC Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force and Special Mission Program director, July 26-27. While in San Diego, Roberson visited MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser and embarked the ship as it transited from Naval Station North Island to the La Playa fuel pier at Naval Base Point Loma. She also met with civil service mariners at Customer Service Unit West, and with members of SEALOGLANT and Ship Support Unit San Diego. Following her visit to San Diego, Roberson traveled to Pearl Harbor to meet with members of the Pacific Fleet staff and to observe Rim of the Pacific exercises. Accompanying Roberson was **Jim George**, MSC Naval Fleet

Auxiliary Force technical director, and **Rusty Bishop**, MSC Special Mission Program technical director.

MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor successfully completed the salvage of sailboat SV Grendel from a sensitive coral reef off the coast of Kure Atoll in Hawaii. In addition to the recovery of the sail boat, Salvor collected and transported 6,000 pounds of fishnet, line and debris.

The command welcomes **Yeoman Chief Petty Officer Marcus Sanders**, SEALOGLANT administrative officer, and **Caleb Brunell**, SSU San Diego contracts office's Student Training and Education program intern.

Fair winds and following seas to **Yeoman 1st Class Sam Allen** as he retires from his 20-year Navy career. Allen plans to relocate to Singapore. Best of luck to **Richard Duff**, director of CSU West, who has accepted the position of supply placement coordinator for Military Sealift Fleet Support Command in Norfolk. Duff has worked at CSU West since 2005.

Russian navy conducts flight training aboard Mount Whitney

By MC2 Class Sylvia Nealy
USS Mount Whitney Public Affairs

A moment of historic international cooperation at sea took place aboard Military Sealift Command command ship USS Mount Whitney while the ship was participating in multinational exercise FRUKUS 2010. FRUKUS, which stands for the participating countries – France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – is a naval exercise focusing on strengthening maritime partnerships and improving interoperability and overall communication between the nations.

A Russian Navy KA-26 “Helix” helicopter from the Udaloy I-class Russian destroyer RS Severomorsk conducted interoperability deck-landing training on board Mount Whitney July 22.

“I wanted to give both the Russian air crew and Mount Whitney flight deck crew an experience with each other’s procedures and equipment,” said Mount Whitney’s commanding officer, Navy Capt. Karl Thomas. “As we continue to work closer together, this type of cross-training

Military Sealift Command Boatswain’s Mate Anthony Brooks, a landing signal enlisted flight crewman, directs a Soviet navy helicopter aboard MSC command ship USS Mount Whitney during exercise FRUKUS 2010.



U.S. Navy photo by CWO Jeffery Lund

will make us a stronger cohesive team.”

Mount Whitney, the U.S. 6th Fleet flagship homeported in Gaeta, Italy, operates with a hybrid crew of 146 MSC civil service mariners and 157 U.S. Navy sailors. The ship has several qualified landing signal officers within its crew of CIVMARs and sailors, as well as members of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28 Detachment 1.

“This was a great opportunity and experience,” said Anthony Brooks, a

CIVMAR boatswain’s mate and an LSO flight crewman. “Even though this was my first encounter with this country [Russia] and this type of helicopter platform, I am fortunate to bring four years of experience to the deck plates to help make it a smooth evolution. International partnerships like these are vital in today’s military mission, and readiness is always essential.”

“I am glad many members of the crew took advantage of the opportunity to witness this unique helicopter, and its

very nimble and capable flight characteristics,” said Thomas. “This was certainly one of the many highlights of FRUKUS Exercise 2010 and a great example of interoperability and teamwork.”

MSC resupplies Thule AFB in Pacer Goose 2010

By Mark Bigelow
SEALOGLANT Marine Transportation Specialist

The warehouses are restocked, and the fuel tanks are topped off once again at the U.S. Air Force’s northernmost site, thanks to the arrival of Military Sealift Command tanker USNS Samuel E. Cobb and MSC-chartered dry cargo ship MV American Tern at the remote Arctic outpost.

Operation Pacer Goose, the annual summer resupply mission of Thule Air Force Base in Pituffik, Greenland, is the main supply line for the area, which is located halfway between the North Pole and the Arctic Circle. There are no resources available locally to sustain the residents of the base. The closest habitation to Thule is the Inuit village of Qaanaaq, 75 miles northwest of the base with a population of about 640. The rest of the desolate landscape is filled with ice caps and miles of rock.

“It is always gratifying to bring the supplies to Thule,” said Richard Caldwell, Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic supervisory marine transportation specialist, who helped coordinate the delivery of 8.5 million gallons of fuel, 120 40-foot containers of cargo and four snow-removal tractors weighing about 29 tons each, July 4-28. In addition, the ships also removed all of the base’s solid waste and non-repairable equipment for return to the United States, including 83 containers and cargo flat-racks and almost 50 pieces of large break-bulk cargo totalling nearly 6,900 measurement tons. This retrograde cargo included two 20-foot-tall diesel power plant engines and two quarry dump trucks, each weighing more than 35 tons.

Pituffik is accessible by sea only from mid-June to mid-September due to thick ice that covers its coastal waters. While the waters are relatively free of sheet ice during the summer, ships still encounter large ice masses and small icebergs, called growlers, even in July, the peak of Greenland’s summer.

“We are their lifeline, and they depend on us to deliver,” said Caldwell. “Sometimes the weather cooperates; usually it doesn’t, but we still have to get cargo and fuel to the port and get it there safely. So far, we have always done that exceptionally well.”

Civilian contract mariners aboard ships like American Tern and Cobb have provided key support in supplying this isolated location since 1952. When weather permits, passengers, fresh produce and emergency spare parts are delivered to Thule through bi-weekly logistics flights, but capacity is very limited.

Cobb’s civilian contract mariners loaded fuel in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and departed July 4 for Greenland. American Tern, the main resupply vessel for Thule, is a 521-foot, ice-strengthened container ship built to comply with Finnish 1A ice-class specifications in the former East Germany. The ship’s strengthened hull, which is specially designed to withstand harsh environments, makes American Tern the ideal choice for support to Pacer Goose and Operation Deep Freeze, the annual resupply mission of McMurdo Station in Antarctica. The ship was loaded with cargo at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., and began its nearly 3,000-mile journey to Greenland July 10.

The two ships and their escort, Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker CCGS Henry Larsen, began arriving at Thule July 15. A pusher boat with a Danish crew was on standby

to deal with the wayward bergs.

Cobb arrived first and discharged its load of JP-8, the fuel that powers all of Thule’s machinery from jet aircraft to its fleet of pickup trucks. The base fully-transitioned into a one-fuel base during the operation, with the last of its gasoline-powered vehicles removed by American Tern along with other retrograde cargo.

American Tern arrived at the base July 20 and departed July 28 for Norfolk, where it unloaded the retrograde cargo Aug. 9.

Caldwell and Mark Bigelow, a marine transportation specialist at Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic’s Norfolk headquarters, were on hand as the ships arrived at the Greenland port to begin the complex operation of mooring and downloading the ships. The operation was complex due to the limited water depths and pier facilities. There was no option to bring in outside equipment or personnel for difficult loading or discharge issues in such an isolated location. The Danish longshoremen, led by port



Military Sealift Command-chartered dry cargo ship MV American Tern approaches the pier at Thule Air Force Base in Greenland in preparation for cargo discharge during Pacer Goose 2010. The route to Thule requires immense caution, as icebergs drift at an extremely close distance.

U.S. Navy photo by Mark Bigelow

manager Torben Kristensen, were up to the task and solved problems as they arose.

“I am quite pleased with how the operation turned out; it was very safe and efficient,” Kristensen said.

Weather was better during this year’s operation than in years past, but conditions were far from ideal, said operation participants. High winds came close to stopping operations twice, which would have required the vessels to leave the pier and return to anchor at sea, but the mission concluded without any delays.

Thule became a part of U.S. history in the mid-to-late 19th century, when American explorers used the area as a starting point during attempts to reach the North Pole. In 1909, Navy Rear Adm. Robert Peary was the first recorded American to reach the North Pole.

The U.S. military presence at Thule began during World War II when weather and communication stations were established to assist aircraft transiting to the European theater. The base was created in secret as a refueling stop for strategic bombers during the Cold War. Now, the base of more than 1,100 U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard and multinational personnel is a detection and tracking station for objects traveling over the Arctic Circle. The base is home to the 21st Space Wing, which is part of the North American Aerospace Defense Command network; the 821st Air Base Group; 12th Space Warning Squadron; and Detachment 3 of the 22nd Space Operations Squadron. In addition, the installation boasts a 10,000-foot runway and the northernmost deep water port in the world.