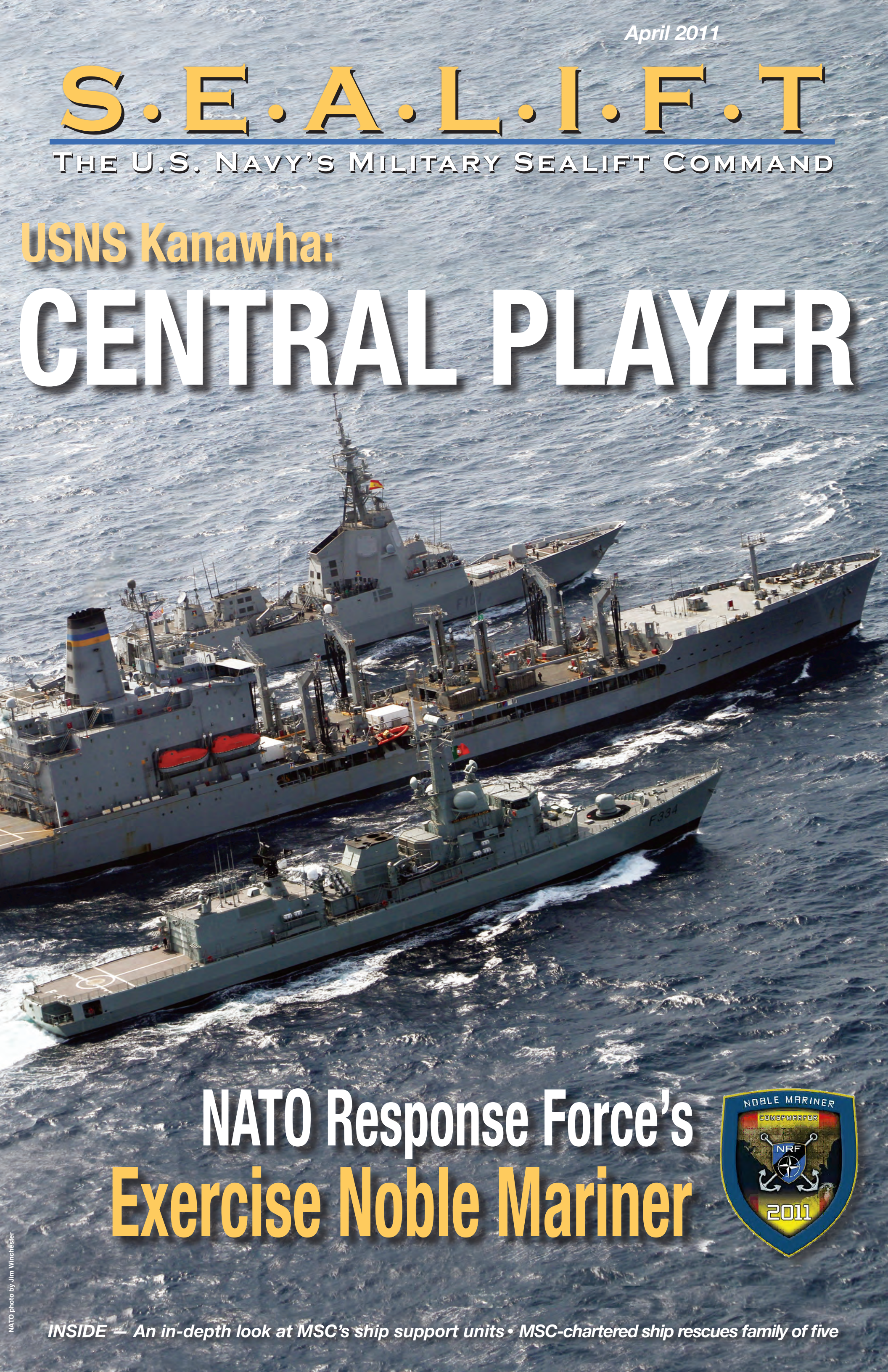
April 2011

S·E·A·L·I·F·T

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command

USNS Kanawha: CENTRAL PLAYER



NATO Response Force's Exercise Noble Mariner

NATO photo by Jim Winchester

INSIDE — An in-depth look at MSC's ship support units • MSC-chartered ship rescues family of five

Commander's perspective

Giving MSC people the means to excel

Tell a steam engineer to fix a high-voltage control panel problem armed only with a maul and a slugging wrench, he'll probably figure out a way to do it, but you're not likely to get a very elegant solution to the problem. A much smarter and more efficient approach is to give the right person, with the right training and experience and the right tools, the right amount of time and maximum encouragement. They'll not only solve the problem, they'll also complete the mission better, faster and more economically than it's ever been done before.

That's why developing, enhancing and enabling MSC shipmates around the world, afloat and ashore, is another of my strategic priorities.

MSC people are the wellspring of our past accomplishments and our future triumphs. Competition for bright, young talent is fierce in today's job market, and leveraging the knowledge and capabilities of our current employees is critical, too. That's especially true when you consider that a large percentage of MSC's workforce will be eligible for optional retirement within 10 years. Knowledge and skills must be passed on; we can't afford to lose them.

MSC's Human Capital Development Group, N00H, was formed to help me focus on new areas for developing and enabling our people around the globe in five areas: employee quality of life, the afloat work continuum, diversity and women's issues, training and professional development, and health and wellness.

The 50 initiatives that I've mentioned before form the constantly evolving list of issues we're working to make MSC not only the employer of choice, but the workplace where people can excel! Here are a few of the latest efforts in that area.

Health and wellness

Recently, Military Sealift Fleet Support Command received the Navy Surgeon General's 2010 Blue H Award with Gold Star for innovative health promotion initiatives, including a health benefits fair and smoking cessation program for their people in Norfolk, Va. The MSFSC facilities manager also led the efforts that resulted in a new fitness room at the Civil Service Mariner Support Unit-East.

MSC Ship Support Unit Singapore also received the Blue H Award with Bronze Anchor for their health promotion activities. Both of these awards recognized our efforts to increase the health and wellness of our people.

Quality of life

Obtaining permission for our civil service mariners to shop in Navy exchange facilities here at home without restriction was another milestone we reached in the past year. The ID card problem has been resolved and cards are being issued to our CIVMARs. Going after commissary privileges will be tougher – but I'm going to try.

Personal development

N00H is running a new CIVMAR leadership development training and coaching pilot program that began in March in Norfolk and will continue through April in San Diego. The two-day workshop includes leadership training and hands-on activities and exercises. It's aimed at building the leadership, communication, conflict management, teamwork and critical thinking skills that you've told us you want to improve. Each participant will receive two hours of personal time with a certified coach.

The workshops are aimed at ship's officers, engineers, bosuns, stewards, pursers, etc. Effectively, it's for anyone aboard who is in a leadership/supervisory position. If you're in San Diego during April, contact the CIVMAR Support Center to see if you can participate. We'll use this pilot program to refine the concept so we can offer more workshops in the future, so give us your feedback.

Other ongoing efforts to develop and enable our workforce include the principal port engineer conference held in Norfolk last fall and ship visits by the MSFSC human resources staff to talk with and answer questions from members of the crews.

New career development opportunities are being worked for our shoreside civil service employees, too. On March 29, all the headquarters marine transportation specialists met to get the latest information on the MTS advisory council established under COMSCINST 12400 to guide the development of an MTS community management program across MSC focused on the professional development, career growth, recruitment and retention of the command's MTS.

The bottom line is that the more you know about MSC and the mission, and the greater your skill inventory, the better you'll be able to participate in making MSC the best mission services deliverer in DOD. That's my goal.

What is MSC?

Consistent with allowing our people to be the best, we need to make sure that the rest of the world recognizes who we are, what we do and how good we are. Branding – making MSC a recognizable organization around the globe – is one way to do this.

In the past, some of our customers have been confused by the various names of our worldwide commands and organizations. In some cases, our customers didn't realize that the command or organization they were dealing with was actually part of MSC.

In studying the problem, we realized that some of our nomenclature was confusing and didn't accurately identify all of our activities as part of MSC. Our leadership decided to help establish a common identity for MSC worldwide by renaming our sealift logistics commands and ship support units to more closely identify with MSC. The name-change results are in the table on page three.

Remember, they are name changes only; roles, functions, organizational structure, responsibilities and reporting requirements stay the same.

We just want people to know that it's MSC they're dealing with, no matter where in the world, or how we encounter them.

In addition, standardized templates have been created for business cards, PowerPoint slides, e-mail signature blocks and command coins. Please see page three for more details.

Atlantic fleet flagship

As some of you may have heard, I recently invited Adm. John Harvey, Commander Fleet Forces Command, to embark USNS Sacagawea for two days while the ship was operating off the Virginia coast. Adm. Harvey broke his flag in Sacagawea, marking the first time that an MSC ship served as flag ship for the Atlantic fleet. A proud moment for MSC!

Not unexpectedly, the admiral was mightily impressed by Sacagawea's crew. As we toured the ship, he told me, "There are two parts of the fleet that I never have to worry about completing their mission – the ballistic missile submarine force and MSC."

It's more evidence of the trust that you have built and continue to maintain every day. Sail safe, shipmates!

Yours aye,

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

Ship support units race toward fifth anniversary

By Susan Melow, MSFSC Public Affairs

About five years have passed since Military Sealift Command reconfigured its global waterfront presence to centralize and align its type commander support to its government-owned/government-operated ships. In 2006, six new pierside units, called ship support units or SSUs, were introduced as a part of the command's global transformation.

The SSUs, located in Manama, Bahrain; Guam; Naples, Italy; San Diego; Singapore; and Yokohama, Japan, were stood up as subordinate units to the Norfolk, Va.-based Military Sealift Fleet Support Command, which is a subordinate command of MSC. MSFSC executes type-command responsibilities, including crewing, training and maintenance for the Navy's combat logistics fleet worldwide. Today, the SSUs continue to execute one of MSFSC's primary missions: to oversee the maintenance and repair of MSC's more than 40 government-owned/government-operated ships operating worldwide.

The work of the SSUs centers on MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships, which are considered the logistics backbone of the Navy's operational fleets. Navy combatant ships depend on MSC ships to keep them supplied, at sea and on tasking throughout their deployments. NFAF ships include fleet replenishment oilers, dry cargo/ammunition ships, fast combat support ships, ammunition ships, fleet ocean tugs, rescue and salvage ships and hospital ships. In addition to these ships, the SSUs support command ship USS Mount Whitney and two submarine tenders.

Whether a ship experiences an unexpected engineering casualty at sea, needs a replacement part quickly to continue its mission, or requires repairs or routine maintenance, the SSUs are there to assist. They offer solutions and the resources to put those solutions in motion: from providing technical advice; to coordinating the services of commercial yards; to facilitating the acquisition of much-needed spare parts; to providing the full spectrum of support necessary to meet any ship maintenance/repair contingency.

A total of about 107 SSU personnel staff the six SSUs worldwide, acting as the regional interface for MSFSC. Individual SSU staffs range in size from about 30 staff members in San Diego to fewer than 10 members each in Naples and Bahrain.

"SSU personnel are the on-scene, go-to experts who work directly with ship masters and chief engineers for ships' emergent and in-theater support," said MSFSC Director Jack Taylor. "With small staffs, it is no wonder the SSUs are always busy."

Each SSU is staffed with a tailored mix of subject-matter experts to provide the right support at the right location around the globe. The SSUs offer expertise in engineering, contracting, supply and logistics, information technology, and budgeting and accounting. Staff members have years of experience working within MSC, and many were transferred from the regional area commands to form the new units. Many staff members also have the benefit of seagoing experience as civil service mariners. These individuals know the MSC organization, both ashore and afloat, and have a firsthand knowledge of the regional terrain.

SSU story continued on Pg. 8

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

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New names for 11 MSC field activities

In 2010, Military Sealift Command embarked on a strategic communication effort, focusing on the identity projected by MSC headquarters and its global commands. Feedback from all MSC leaders, as well as MSC's fleet customers was considered.

The consensus: five major area commands and MSC's six ship support units were often perceived as unaffiliated with MSC, especially by fleet customers. None of these names reference MSC, weakening MSC's global recognition and unified image.

After careful consideration, the five new names shown in the chart below were chosen. In addition, MSC's six ship support units now carry "MSC" before their command names: For instance, Ship Support Unit San Diego is now Military Sealift Command Ship Support Unit San Diego, or MSC SSU San Diego. MSC's five other ship support units are in Naples, Bahrain, Singapore, Guam and Yokohama.

Local commanders of the affected MSC field activities are responsible for implementing name changes. Standardized templates have been established to help them – and other members of the global MSC team – with business cards, PowerPoint slides, e-mail signature blocks and command coins. These templates can be accessed on MSC's Intranet main page and on the IS portal at https://www.mysealift.msc.navy.mil/sites/n00/stratcomm/MSC%20Templates/.

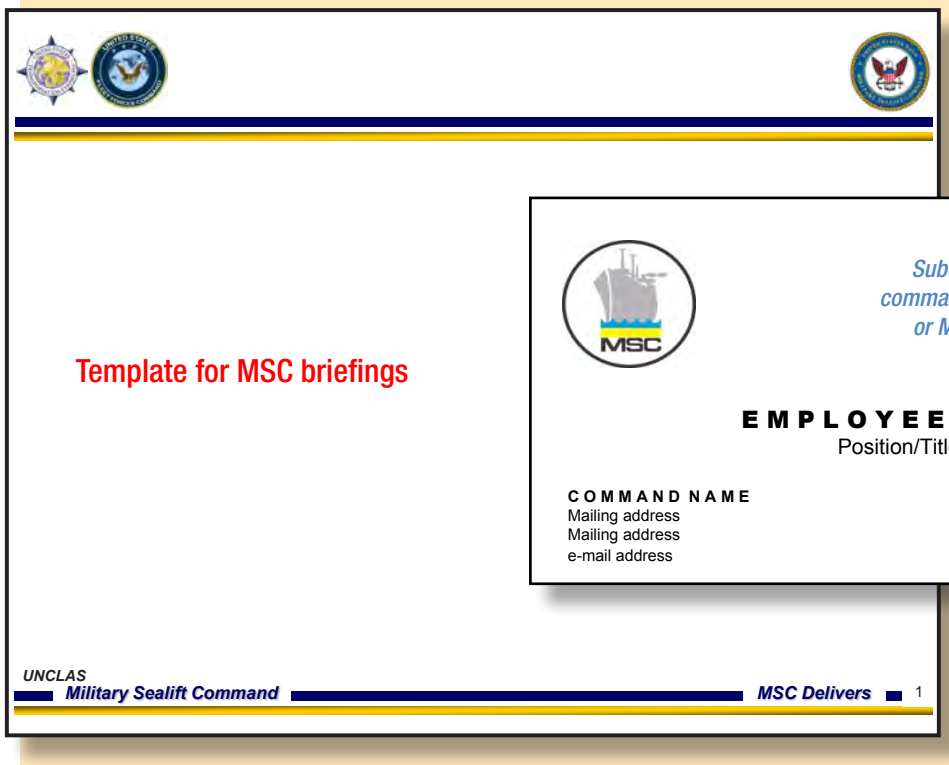
These changes should be implemented using reasonable and cost-effective expenditures at the discretion of local command leadership.

New names and standardized templates are intended to highlight MSC's global presence; clarify the link between MSC's global components; and generate greater awareness of and appreciation for MSC's impressive workforce worldwide.

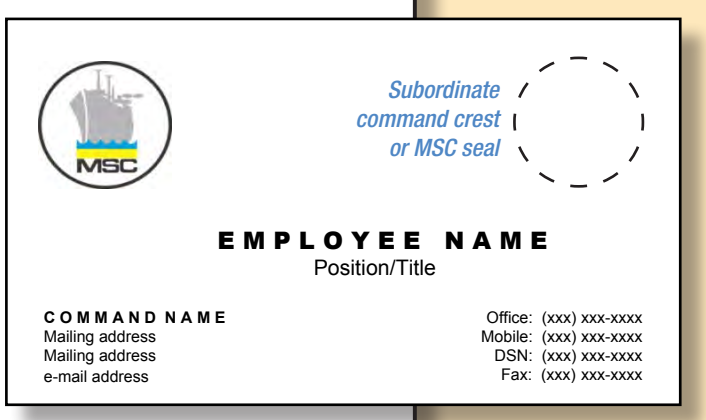
For questions on MSC field activities' name changes, contact MSC public affairs at (202) 685-5055, DSN 325-5055, or at mschqpublicaffairs@navy.mil.

Former Name	New Name
Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic (SEALOGLANT)	Military Sealift Command Atlantic (MSCLANT)
Sealift Logistics Command Pacific (SEALOGPAC)	Military Sealift Command Pacific (MSCPAC)
Sealift Logistics Command Europe (SEALOGEUR)	Military Sealift Command Europe & Africa (MSCEURAF)
Sealift Logistics Command Central (SEALOGCENT)	Military Sealift Command Central (MSCCENT)
Sealift Logistics Command Far East (SEALOGFE)	Military Sealift Command Far East (MSCFE)

Recommended MSC coin design



Template for MSC briefings



Template for MSC business cards

```
Name
Job Title
U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command
Subordinate command name (as applicable)
Mailing address
Mailing address

Phone number (office)
Phone number (mobile) (optional)
Unclassified e-mail address
Classified e-mail address (as applicable)

Visit our website:
http://www.msc.navy.mil (optional)
Follow us on Facebook:
http://www.facebook.com/MSCdelivers (optional)
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Approved MSC email signature template

Crew aboard MSC-chartered ship rescues family of five in Philippine Sea

Laura M. Seal
MSC Public Affairs

Sailors from Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines and civilian mariners aboard Military Sealift Command-chartered maritime support vessel MV C-Champion rescued five people – including two small children – 12 hours after their boat capsized in the Philippine Sea Feb. 21.

U.S. sailors aboard C-Champion were conducting joint military drills with their Philippine counterparts a few miles off the coast of Tawi-Tawi Island in the southern Philippines, when the civilian mate on watch and one of the ship's embarked U.S. sailors spotted a man in the sea clinging to floating debris at approximately 5:30 p.m.

The sailor jumped into the water without hesitation and swam toward the man as the ship's civilian master sounded the man-overboard alarm and the civilian chief engineer threw a life ring into the water before overseeing the launch of one of C-Champion's small boats.

The sailor swam 900 feet to get to the man in distress, who was barely conscious from exhaustion and needed help holding onto the life ring while waiting for the small boat. Unable to speak, the man started crying and pointed in the general direction where the rest of his family was adrift.

When U.S. sailors arrived at the scene in C-Champion's small boat, they pulled the man from the water and contacted the ship's bridge, notifying the master that there were still people in the water.

Within two minutes, civilian crew members aboard C-Champion spotted the man's wife, their two children and the children's grandmother clinging onto plastic containers and wood.

A sixth family member, the children's grandfather, drowned before the rescue efforts began.

Rescuers said all five family members were sorely fatigued, shivering uncontrollably and severely dehydrated after consuming a great deal of salt water.

Sailors took the rescued family members to C-Champion where a Tagalog-speaking member of the ship's civilian crew was able to communicate with the family while the ship's steward fed and hydrated them.

A military medic kept close surveillance on all family members throughout the night.

"I am thankful to the sailor who risked his life to save my father," stated the young boy. The whole family expressed their gratitude to the people who provided first aid, clothes and food to the family before they were taken to a hospital on Tawi-Tawi Island the next day. The family was released from the hospital Feb. 22 to return to their home on nearby Tumindao Island.

Although they lost all of their belongings when their boat sank, the family did not leave empty-handed. The ship's civilian crew collected all of the Philippine money they had – about $230 – and gave it to the family for food and clothing.

"It made all of us feel good about why we are here – not only to support the military, but also to help the Filipino people whenever we can," said the ship's master.

C-Champion is operated and navigated by civilian mariners working for a private company under contract to MSC. Varying numbers of military personnel operate aboard the ship depending on its mission.

C-Champion is used by the U.S. military throughout the Pacific region and is primarily designed to transport personnel, equipment and supplies to remote locations that cannot be reached with larger vessels. The MSV is equipped with smaller vessels that can reach locations that are extremely remote.

Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines Public Affairs contributed to this story.

U.S. Navy photo

A Philippine family receives care after being rescued at sea by the crew of Military Sealift Command-chartered maritime support vessel MV C-Champion. The family, which includes two small children, was rescued after floating for more than 12 hours off the coast of Tawi-Tawi Island, Philippines.

BIG role for Kanawha plays multiple pa

By Meghan Patrick
Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Able Seaman Lamarr Smith was standing watch aboard Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha in the Strait of Gibraltar when a helicopter appeared overhead, its propellers pounding and thumping as the aircraft hovered in place. Moments later a dozen men – clothed completely in black down to facemasks that only exposed their eyes – fast-roped from the helicopter onto the flight deck a few yards from Smith.

The moment the fast-ropers had feet on solid ground, they bolted toward the bridge and the ship's engineering spaces.

"I got out of their way immediately," said Smith. "Even without seeing their faces, I knew these weren't guys I'd want to mess with."

Once they secured the spaces, the fast-ropers physically restrained their non-cooperative targets – four of Kanawha's civil service mariners – and took control of the ship.

Upon reaching their goal, the fast-ropers – all members of the Spanish Special Operation Forces – shed their masks and extended their arms to shake the hands of their targets, all volunteer role players. This concluded one of many visit, board, search and seizure exercises that took place during the NATO Response Force's maritime interdiction operation training as part of Exercise Noble Mariner Feb. 28 to March 6.

Kanawha's crew of 89 civil service mariners and three-person military department played a major role in Noble Mariner as the only U.S. Navy vessel among 25 NATO naval units, which involved 3,500 NATO personnel from 11 nations.

Kanawha helped sustain the operations by supplying fuel and cargo via replenishment at sea to six of the 21 international warship participants. Kanawha completed 12 replenishments in five days, transferring 470,000 gallons of fuel to ships belonging to the Spanish, Portuguese and German navies, including the exercise flagship, Spanish navy command ship ESPS Castilla.

Kanawha added to its fast-tempo pace by serving as a high-value unit in several defense and combat exercises, such as its role as a non-cooperative vessel with the Spanish

U.S. Navy photo by Senior Chief Matthew Marks

Cover and background: Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha sails in the center of several foreign navy ships – the place designated for the ship deemed most valuable – in the Strait of Gilbraltar March 6. The formation was conducted as part of the NATO Response Force's Exercise Noble Mariner. Kanawha, the only U.S. participant in the week-long exercise, played many roles from fuel provider to visit, board, search and seizure scenario platforms.

Above: Members of the Spanish Special Operations Force fast-rope out of a helicopter onto Kanawha's flight deck during a mock boarding exercise. Kanawha played the role of a non-cooperative vessel.

Right: Kanawha Boatswain's Mate Daniel Goetz sends a shotline to German navy frigate FGS Lubeck during an underway replenishment.

German navy photo by Chief Sergeant Rolf Walter

Right: A German navy sailor aboard Lubeck receives Kanawha's fuel line during an underway replenishment March 5. Kanawha, maintaining its multi-faceted role in Noble Mariner, conducted the replenishment at sea after a day of participating in air defense and combat air support exercises.

Far right: A Portugese marine questions Kanawha Third Mate Rob Teneholz during a cooperative boarding scenario. During the simulation, Teneholz and other Kanawha civil service mariners assumed the role of a merchant ship crew.

NATO photo by Jim Winchester

BIG oiler

navy. A high-value unit in sea operations is the ship or submarine considered the most important in a group, and is therefore placed in formation to receive the most protection.

MSC ships are coveted participants in maritime interdiction operation training because, while they are Navy ships, they more closely resemble commercial vessels, which are the types of ships NATO forces must board in real-world situations like anti-piracy and counter-drug operations.

"From the silhouette and layout, to the crewing and where the cargo is stored, this ship is the most similar you're going to get to a civilian merchant ship in the U.S. fleet," said Navy Senior Chief Matthew Marks, who is assigned to Kanawha.

"Many of the boarding procedures that the NATO special operations teams need to know how to do, like fast-roping, are very dangerous," said Kanawha's Cargo Mate Arthur Davis, a CIVMAR who has sailed with MSC for nearly 10 years. "They need to practice all of the time to hone those kinds of skills. But when they practice on an MSC ship, which has a civilian captain and crew, and follows civilian regulations that are different from warships, they get to experience what it'll actually be like on a merchant ship with more open decks and different passageways."

On day three of the exercise, several Portuguese marines drove a small patrol boat alongside Kanawha. This time, the scenario was a cooperative boarding exercise with Kanawha playing the role of a cooperative vessel. The Portuguese navy simulated a real-life setting of boarding a suspicious ship with a crew willing to have their spaces and persons searched. The marines – dark-clad figures wearing helmets and carrying several radios – climbed up Kanawha's Jacob's ladder to first establish security for the boarding office and team. The marines then frisked and searched six CIVMARs playing the simulated merchant ship crew.

Once that phase was complete, a boarding team of Portuguese personnel arrived and conducted a professional boarding procedure, which includes citing the international law they are enforcing, requesting documents and asking to inspect the cargo areas. Once complete, the small boat returned and the Portuguese were transported back to their waiting ship, frigate NRP D. Francisco de Almeida.

"The training was quite good," said Kanawha's Boatswain's Mate James Tyman, one of the CIVMAR role-players. "I got goosebumps even though I knew they were acting. Their physical presence made them more intimidating than anything."

Tyman and his shipmates volunteered to role-play because they were part of a group that had gone through extra anti-terrorism training the week before.

"We were caught up on some of the newest tactics and maneuvers, so we decided to put it right to use," said Tyman, who has sailed with MSC for eight years. "Constant vigilance is key. There are many threats at sea, and unless you practice how to respond, it's going to nip you by surprise and you're not going to be ready."

Throughout the week Kanawha was on station, the ship engaged in several other exercises, both as a high-value unit and in other roles. One of these included simulating merchant vessels being boarded and searched for contraband and human trafficking. Another was a lengthy exercise where Kanawha and her escort ships faced an opposing group of ships in a simulation. Both countries claimed control of an island and tried to demonstrate naval power by sailing in the vicinity of that island.

One of the greatest challenges of Exercise Noble Mariner for Kanawha were the formations, said Kanawha's Chief Mate Roman Pociecha. In the span of a week, Kanawha spent more than 135 hours in close formations with nearby ships.

"We were right in the middle of the exercise," he said. "There was a lot of traffic at all times, with both navy ships and merchant ships. We were in 24/7 communication with the other ships. There was a lot of maneuvering."

On the fourth and most taxing day for Kanawha's master, operations officer and watchstanders, Kanawha spent nearly 24 hours in close formation in an air defense exercise. During the photo exercise, when the ships sailed in formation for aerial photographs, de Almedia and Spanish navy frigate ESPS Alvaro De Bazan were each positioned only 180 feet away from Kanawha. In addition, Kanawha maintained its position 750 feet behind Castilla and 750 feet in front of Spanish navy carrier ESPS Principe De Asturias. The other ships then took station 1,500 feet from Kanawha's quarter.

"The long hours of tight formation steaming was probably the most challenging tasking of the exercise," said Kanawha's civil service master Capt. James Dolan. "Being fully integrated into the battle group and running multiple real-time scenarios from air defense to submarine exercises was a change of pace for my bridge team, but my crew did an outstanding job throughout the whole exercise."

During the busy pace of exercises like Noble Mariner, Kanawha's crew remains on call for possible re-tasking to real-world situations. But the mariners always rise up to the challenge of long days and an unpredictable course ahead, said Davis.

"The energy level is really up at times like this," said Davis. "Everyone always wants to be part of something big and when they feel like they are – which is often on a ship like Kanawha – they put in a lot of extra effort."

"We're always on call," Smith agrees. "This isn't any different for us. When things really happen it's out of nowhere, so we appreciate that they actually practice this stuff. Guys can easily jump out of helicopters anywhere, but it's very different when they're in the middle of the ocean jumping out of helicopters onto ships with crews that don't want them there."

At the conclusion of Kanawha's participation in Noble Mariner, the commander of NATO's Response Force, Spanish navy Vice Adm. Juan A. Cuadrillero Pinilla, sent a farewell message to Kanawha's crew.

"We want to convey our sincere appreciation and thanks," Pinilla wrote. "Your professionalism and logistics support enabled [this] phase of Noble Mariner 2011 to be a complete success. Kanawha performed above and beyond what was expected … excelling in a challenging operational exercise."

U.S. Navy photo by Senior Chief Matthew Marks

German navy photo by Chief Sergeant Rolf Walter

arts in major international drama

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Military Sealift Command Deputy Commander Navy **Rear Adm. Brian LaRoche** visited MSC personnel and fleet customers in Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore Feb. 7-14. In Japan, LaRoche met with Navy Rear Adm. Robert Thomas, commander, Submarine Group Seven/commander, Task Force 74, and Navy Rear Adm. Richard Wren, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan. LaRoche then visited Yokohama where he met **Sam Reynolds**, director of Ship Support Unit Japan.

LaRoche's next stop was Seoul, Republic of Korea, where he met Navy Rear Adm. Peter Gumataotao, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea, and ROK army Brig. Gen. Kye Sung Lee, commander, Republic of Korea Defense Transportation Command. In Busan, LaRoche visited Republic of Korea army Col. Kook Yoon, commander, ROK Port Operations Group and Navy **Cmdr. David Bartell**, MSC Office Korea commanding officer. Later he visited MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Watson and met civilian master **Capt. Chris Larkin**.

LaRoche visited Sealift Logistics Command Far East headquarters at Singapore's Sembawang Wharves, Feb. 11-14 and met with SEALOGFE commander Navy **Capt. Chip Denman**. The admiral held an all-hands call with command personnel and toured MSC missile range instrumentation ship USNS Observation Island, dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Alan Shepard and MSC-chartered tanker MT Empire State. LaRoche also met with staff members from Ship Support Unit Singapore.

MSC Counsel **Gary Ressing** visited SEALOGFE headquarters Feb. 8-9 for an orientation visit with Denman and SEALOGFE Counsel **Phil Ketner**. In addition, Ressing visited SSU Singapore, Alan Shepard and MSC ocean surveillance ships USNS Loyal and Observation Island.

Forty U.S. Marines stormed Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus during a mock visit, board, search and seizure operation held Feb. 17 off the coast of Thailand in support of exercises Freedom Banner and Cobra Gold 2011. Playing the role of a suspicious merchant vessel, Lummus was intercepted first by guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale. Marines then fast-roped onto Lummus' flight deck from a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter based above amphibious assault ship USS Essex to take control of the bridge and other key areas of the ship.

While in Thailand, Navy **Capt. Herman Awai**, commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three, joined other squadron staff members embarked on Lummus in a community relations event. The volunteers painted the interior walls of the Phu Rhu boarding school near Sattahip and played sports with the children. Students then performed a traditional Thai dance for the Navy group. "Your generosity will have long-lasting benefits for the children and their future," said the school's director, Panchana Chim-in.

From the central Indian Ocean, Navy **Lt. Anthony Butcher** relieved Navy **Lt. j.g. Brian Sheckells** as MSC Office Diego Garcia's executive officer Feb. 18. MSCO Diego Garcia Commanding Officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Robert Rosales** presented Sheckells with the Navy Commendation Medal to recognize his outstanding achievements during his tour with the command. "Sheckells was a highly-valued member of the command and an equally valued member of the entire Diego Garcia community," Rosales said.

Diego Garcia-based MPS Squadron Two welcomes Gunner's Mate Navy **Chief John Moore** as the command's weapons officer.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

John Thackrah, Military Sealift Command executive director, visited the San Diego area Feb. 28 to March 2 as part of a familiarization tour of MSC's subordinate commands worldwide. Thackrah held an all-hands meeting with the Sealift Logistics Command Pacific and Ship Service Unit San Diego staffs, and the civilian mariners at the CIVMAR Support Unit West. He discussed the 2011 MSC Strategic Planning Guidance and reviewed ongoing quality-of-life initiatives. He also toured several MSC and SSU San Diego facilities, and he got underway on MSC navigation test support ship USNS Waters.

SEALOGPAC held a meeting with members of the Fleet Industrial Supply Center San Diego and Carrier Strike Group 3 staff Feb. 7. The participants discussed their shared missions, including the load out of provisions in support of deploying carrier strike groups in the area of responsibility, and were briefed by Navy **Lt. Florence (Bok) Beato**, SEALOGPAC logistics officer.

Navy **Capt. Jerome Hamel**, commander, SEALOGPAC, and **Capt. Mike Flanagan**, civil service master, MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Washington Chambers, attended the Joint Maritime Tactics Course Feb. 8. During the course, Hamel served as a guest speaker, discussing MSC's Combat Logistics Force support. Both Hamel and Flanagan met with 48 middle-grade to senior officers and carrier strike group staff regarding combat logistics force operations in U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th fleets.

Bruce Leach, ship's operations officer, MSC representative Seattle, and **Steve Busby**, deputy ship's operations officer, MSC representative Seattle, participated in a Port of Anchorage Port Readiness Committee meeting Feb. 10, via conference call. The meeting was part of the planning process for three commercial brigade moves via commercial shipping scheduled for 2011.

Phil Patton, SEALOGPAC force protection officer, conducted anti-terrorism/force protection spot checks aboard MSC aviation logistics support ship SS Curtiss Feb. 11. Spot checks of this kind help ensure that Curtiss and other MSC ships meet anti-terrorism/force protection requirements.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe hosted 53 Executive Leadership Development Program students Feb. 16. While underway for the day, students observed an astern refueling evolution with mine countermeasures ship USS Devastator. In addition, students received an MSC brief by **Rick Appling**, SEALOGPAC's deputy operations officer, detailing how requirements are met for MSC's global mission.

Hamel spoke on behalf of Navy **Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby**, commander, MSC, at the deactivation ceremony of break-bulk ship SS Cape Jacob in Alameda, Calif., Feb. 18. The ceremony marked the end of Cape Jacob's 13 years of service with MSC before transferring back to the operational control of the Maritime Administration. David Matsuda, maritime administrator, gave the ceremony's keynote address and presented the crew with the Professional Ship Award. Hamel then got underway for sea trials on Ready Reserve Force roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cape Horn during its Turbo Activation.

MSC accepted delivery of its newest dry cargo/ammunition ship, USNS Washington Chambers, during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO Ship Yard San Diego Feb. 23. The ship, the 11th of 14 ships scheduled to be built as part of the T-AKE class, is named in honor of Navy Capt. Washington Irving Chambers, a pioneer in naval aviation who coordinated the world's first airplane flight from a warship Nov. 14, 1910.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

In mid-February, while operating off the Virginia Capes, Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea became the first MSC ship to serve as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet flagship. Navy Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, embarked to observe aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman off-load 4,110 ordnance assets to Sacagawea. Navy **Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, hosted Harvey's visit with the support of Sacagawea's crew and civil service master, **Capt. George McCarthy**; staff from MSC headquarters' logistics office, including **Pete Budi**, **Mike Crosby**, **Jim Andreano** and Navy **Capt. Don Williams**. Harvey received a comprehensive briefing on the capabilities of the T-AKE class and met with civil service mariner and military department crew members.

Representatives from MSC, the Seafarers International Union, the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association and the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots met Feb. 7-11 as part of the negotiations to update Civilian Marine Personnel Instruction 610: Hours of Work and Premium Pay. The MSC team included lead negotiator **Reneé Desrosiers**, **Andrew Lefebvre** and **Kathleen Giacolone**, maritime forces, manpower and management and **David Townsend**, office of counsel. Subject-matter experts who attended include civil service masters **Capt. David Gommo** and **Capt. Randall Rockwood**, chief engineers **James Sullivan** and **Jamie Shine**, and pursers **Wendy Richards** and **David Guilbert**. The negotiations resulted in agreements on dirty work and tank cleaning.

MSC headquarters and all of the sealift logistics commands participated in the Navy-wide Exercise Solid Curtain-Citadel Shield 2011 Feb. 21-25. The annual anti-terrorism exercise provided training for security guards, watchstanders and the command at large. Simulated acts of terrorism at Naval District Washington, where MSC headquarters is located, included an aircraft explosion, an anthrax incident, a bomb explosion and active shooter scenarios.

Navy Adm. John C. Harvey Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command (second from left); Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command (second from right); and MSC Force Command Master Chief Miguel-Juan V. Reyes, (far right), join MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea's military department on the deck of the ship Feb. 15. During this visit off the Virginia Capes, Sacagawea became the first MSC ship to serve as the U.S. Atlantic Fleet flagship. U.S. Navy photo by Greg Redick

British Commodore Bill Walworth, head of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service, visited MSC headquarters Feb. 24. While visiting, he attended the Prepositioning Program MSC Business Execution Cycle briefing, met with Buzby and received briefs on MSC's financial management of Combat Logistics Force ships and underway replenishment operations.

MSC headquarters celebrated Black History Month with an observance Feb. 23 at the Washington Navy Yard Catering and Conference Center. The celebration included music, a sampling of traditional African-American food and a keynote address from Ronald Joe, principle director of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

MSC was recognized at the Department of the Navy Combined Federal Campaign Awards Ceremony March 2 at the Pentagon for its work during this year's CFC campaign. This year MSC raised $106,732.

MSC bids farewell to Navy **Lt. Bradford Jordan**, maritime forces, manpower and management; **Robert Zaepfel**, engineering; **Stephen Ruschmeier**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; and Navy **Cmdr. Lorenzo Williams**, **Ronald Ortega** and **Jeffrey Bartz**, contracts and business management.

MSC welcomes Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Lee Marie Hart**, **Michael Shircliff** and **Pedrito Acosta**, maritime forces, manpower and management; Navy **Lt. j.g. Patrick Whitmore**, Navy **Lt. j.g. Alexander Allen**, **Clifton Brock** and **Scott Nicholas**, operations; **Miriam Bolaffi** and **Aaron Cohen**, engineering; Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Dane Hankins**; **Tawana Ford** and **Anthony Graber**, command, control, communications and computer systems; **Stella Obayuwana**, contracts and business management; and **Demetrio Camua**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force.

U.S. Navy photo

Military Sealift Command Logistics Reserve community manager, Navy Reserve Capt. Althea Coetzee, has been nominated for appointment to the rank of rear admiral (lower half). Coetzee graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1985 and served on active duty until 1993, when she joined the Navy Reserve. During operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, she served as Food Service Officer aboard MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy. As a Reservist, Coetzee's positions include support to Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa and Operation Unified Response. She came to MSC in December. In her civilian career, Coetzee serves as deputy director of Regional Contracting Office – Marine Corps Installations West.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Military Sealift Command-chartered integrated tug and barge OSV Navigator discharged nearly 235,000 barrels of fuel Feb. 16-19 in Charleston, S.C., with the assistance of Marine Transportation Specialist **Mary Ann Liberto** of the Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic Charleston office and Marine Transportation Specialist **George Pearson** of SEALOGLANT's Southport, N.C., office. Pearson later coordinated the offload of prepositioned cargo Feb. 23 from MSC-chartered container ship MV SSG Edward A. Carter Jr. at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, N.C.

Brian Hill, marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT headquarters in Norfolk, assisted the Southport office Feb. 21-25 with the offloads of Carter and MSC-chartered container ship MV Noble Star, which went off hire upon completion of cargo removal.

Dean Doolittle, marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT's office in Jacksonville, Fla., coordinated the outfitting and departure of Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS Seay Feb. 19 for dynamic-interface testing off the coast of North Carolina. These tests are crucial in the vessel's ramp up to becoming one of MSC's U.S. Marine Corps prepositioning assets. Marine Transportation Specialist **John Gregov**, of the command's Port Canaveral, Fla., office, represented SEALOGLANT Feb. 14-18 at a Caribbean Migration Conference at U.S. Southern Command headquarters in Doral, Fla. During his absence, Doolittle and **Tom D'Agostino**, senior marine transportation specialist at SEALOGLANT's Charleston office, assisted MSC-chartered tug and barge T/B Megan Beyel/MOBRO 1210 operations.

From SEALOGLANT's office in Beaumont, Texas, Senior Marine Transportation Specialist **Joe Guivas** and Marine Transportation Specialist **Jack Davis** oversaw MSC-chartered tug and barge Elsbeth II/Elvis operations in support of Exercise Beyond the Horizons in Acajutla, El Salvador.

Students from the Joint Military Attaché School toured MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Fisher March 1. These 18 officers and enlisted personnel from various services embarked Fisher as part of their training to become attachés and staff personnel at U.S. embassies worldwide.

SEALOGLANT congratulates its outstanding employees of the year for 2010: **Joe Guivas**, senior marine transportation specialist, outport specialist of the year; **Mike Menchaca**, port services officer, civilian of the year and **Tom Howser**, supervisory marine transportation specialist for Combat Logistics Force and special mission ships, supervisor of the year. Kudos also go to **Bruce Moon**, security manager, SEALOGLANT's civilian of the quarter.

Howser was also recognized with a 40-year career service award, which Navy **Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, presented to him in Norfolk, Feb. 15.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

As political unrest in countries throughout the Middle East ramped up in February, so did Military Sealift Command Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships. Sealift Logistics Command Central/Commander Task Force 53 remained abreast of changing operational taskings for U.S. Navy ships and moved MSC ships to optimal locations throughout the area.

Working out of Middle Eastern waters, including the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, nine MSC ships supported U.S. Navy and coalition navy ships with 92 underway replenishments. MSC dry cargo/ammunition ships USNS Lewis and Clark, USNS Wally Schirra and USNS Amelia Earhart; MSC fleet replenishment oilers USNS Walter S. Diehl, USNS Henry J. Kaiser, USNS Patuxent and USNS Joshua Humphreys; MSC fast combat support ship USNS Arctic; and MSC ammunition ship USNS Flint, delivered the necessary food, fuel, cargo and mail to keep the U.S. Navy and coalition navy ships at sea and on station. In addition, Diehl delivered critical ship parts to Spanish navy frigate ESP Canarias and to Bahrain navy frigate RBNC Sabha.

MSC-chartered commercial container ship MV Noble Star departed the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility Feb. 4 after loading redeployment cargo in Kuwait bound for the United States, following the delivery of an Iraqi patrol boat.

MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS Bruce Heezen continued its routine survey operations in the Arabian Gulf.

Three commercial ships chartered by MSC moved more than 1.5 million gallons of fuel for the Defense Logistics Agency. MSC-chartered tankers Maersk Michigan, Lombardia and ST Nikolai delivered military diesel and aviation fuel to DOD locations throughout the area.

EUROPE • AFRICA • NEWS

Ships belonging to the USS Enterprise Carrier Strike Group kept two Military Sealift Command Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships busy in February as the CSG supported Naval Forces Europe's and U.S. 6th Fleet's theater security cooperation objectives in the Mediterranean Sea en route to U.S. 5th Fleet. MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark loaded cargo in Augusta Bay, Italy, Jan. 27 for follow-on underway replenishment with strike group ships near Souda Bay, Greece, Jan. 31 to Feb. 1 and Feb. 7-11. MSC fast combat support ship USNS Arctic, which is providing direct replenishment support for the strike group ships throughout their January-through-July deployment, stopped in Rota, Spain, Jan. 27 to offload U.S. 6th Fleet theater-stock ordnance and to load strike group cargo. Arctic provided underway replenishment support to deployed ships in the strike group while they made two more replenishment stops in Augusta Bay, Italy, and Souda Bay, Greece. Arctic and the strike group departed U.S. 6th Fleet Feb. 14 as they began their transit down the Suez Canal.

MSC-chartered container ship MV Noble Star loaded cargo in Ashdod, Israel, with SEALOGEUR Marine Transportation Specialist **Robert Foster** supporting the operation during the month of February as the ship transited through the Mediterranean Sea during its return to the United States from U.S. Central Command. Noble Star off-loaded the cargo at Sunny Point in Wilmington, N.C., the same month.

MSC command ship USS Mount Whitney got underway in the Mediterranean Sea in late January in support of Naval Forces Europe/U.S. 6th Fleet. The ship's approximately 150 civil service mariners and 150 Navy sailors completed training in support of their required annual combat commander certification. The ship returned to its home port in Gaeta, Italy, in early February. During the exercise, Mount Whitney had the opportunity to go alongside Lewis and Clark for replenishment while Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris, Jr., commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, observed from the bridge wings.

COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command received its official certification in February for meeting the requirements for the implementation of a quality management system of standards for the management and support of naval vessels. The certificate is effective through November 2013.

MSC ammunition ship USNS Shasta off-loaded gear Feb. 7 at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for the ship's inactivation period. Ship Support Unit San Diego is providing contracting, engineering, electronics and logistics support in the weeks leading up to the deactivation, which is scheduled for late April.

MSFSC Director **Jack Taylor** hosted Royal Fleet Auxiliary Commodore William Walworth Feb. 23 during Walworth's visit to Norfolk. Walworth received a tour of MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary by the ship's civil service master **Capt. John Little**. The RFA, which operates a fleet of 16 ships, is the United Kingdom's counterpart to MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force.

MSFSC Navy Command Petty Officer **Master Chief James Williams** transferred to guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin in early March. Navy Hospital Corpsman Senior Chief **Petty Officer Tom Guest** has been assigned as a temporary relief for the master chief.

Fair winds and following seas to civil service master **Capt. Philippe Julienne**, First Assistant Engineer **Richard Martin**, civil service master **Capt. Rodger LaGrone**, Second Officer **David Wood**, Second Assistant Engineer **Wayne Snow**, Communication Officer **Fred Farkash**, Chief Electrician **Reuben Barbadillo**, Second Electrician **Domingo Marbella**, Supply Officer **Kenton Gooden**, Chief Cook **Jess Viray**, assistant cooks **Jesus Florendo** and **Romeo Mojar**, Yeoman Storekeeper **Wilfred Alexander**, Boatswain **Felix Garcia**, Able Seamen **Rodel Catalasan**, **Robert Starr** and **Joven Yalung**, Chief Petty Officer **Craig Mazzei** and Supervisory Financial Management Analyst **Dominick Guagenti** as they retire.

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

MSC Reservists contribute to Kuwait 50/20 celebration

By Kim Dixon
SEALOGCENT Public Affairs

U.S. Navy Reservists assigned to Sealift Logistics Command Central provided critical mission support to Kuwait during the country's month-long 50/20 celebration in February, which commemorated 50 years of independence from Great Britain and 20 years of liberation from Saddam Hussein's invading army.

The 50/20 celebration honored the veterans of Operation Desert Storm and recognized the longstanding and successful partnership between Kuwait and the United States.

Navy Lt. Nathaniel Worthing and Navy Boatswain's Mate First Class Shane Knable coordinated the Feb. 25-28 visit of U.S. Navy dock landing ship USS Carter Hall to the Port of Shuwaikh in Kuwait for a reception and ship tours for the more than 200 dignitaries and special guests of the United States Embassy and Kuwaiti government.

MSC Office Kuwait was originally established in January 2003 to support the build-up of U.S. and Coalition forces participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terror. The Kuwait-based office, staffed by as many as 12 Navy Reserve component members who typically served on one-year mobilization orders, played a critical strategic role, managing more than 90 percent of all military cargo headed to and from Iraq.

In December 2010, MSCO Kuwait evolved into the present configuration of a five-person detachment of Sealift Logistics Command Central/Commander Task Force 53. The detachment and its officer-in-charge are now based out of Bahrain. The other four members – two sets of two-person teams – rotate between Kuwait and Bahrain quarterly. The Kuwait personnel continue to liaison with Kuwait port officials and maintain the MSCO Kuwait equipment onsite, while the Bahrain-based personnel supplement the SEALOGCENT/CTF-53 staff, maintaining the flexibility to deploy if necessary.

Worthing, a Navy Reserve component officer on one-year mobilization orders who is between Reserve units, and Knable, a member of MSC Expeditionary Port Unit 108, were the team members based in Kuwait during the 50/20 celebration.

"Our role was to liaison with the Kuwait Port Authority, USS Carter Hall and Camp Arifjan," said Worthing. "We established a security perimeter with port security, arranged for diver support, assisted the ship's crew with logistic support at Camp Arifjan and got the Air Force band to the port for the reception."

The participation of U.S. forces in Kuwait's 50/20 celebration highlighted U.S. equipment and capabilities to Kuwait and to the world community, serving as a reminder of the force that the United States has at its disposal to promote peace and stability through the Middle East region and the world.

Bringing in forces such as Carter Hall required extensive interaction and planning with local Kuwait government officials and port authorities; actions facilitated by the relationships Worthing and Knable have cultivated during their three months working for MSCO Kuwait.

"Conducting business in Kuwait requires an understanding of the local culture," said Worthing. "You have to spend a long time talking, drinking tea and developing a relationship before you can talk business. Because of the relationships that we have established, such as the one with the port director, we were able to make the necessary arrangements to ensure Carter Hall's visit went smoothly. And since we don't normally work with the Port of Shuwaikh, our efforts will serve us well in the future when we need to return there."

"I feel that for the Kuwaitis, seeing the ship there helped them realize we're here to help them whenever they ask for it," said Worthing. "As we go about in Kuwait, whenever the people realize we're Americans, they are always friendly and happy to see us because Americans helped liberate Kuwait during the Gulf War."

SSU story continued from Pg. 2

Although the majority of SSU staff members are civil servants, a number of military personnel are also assigned to each SSU, including two in leadership roles in Guam and Singapore.

"The SSUs are MSFSC's customer service representatives, and MSC's government-owned/government-operated ships are MSFSC's customers," said Taylor, noting the customer-focused care that the SSUs provide. "The SSUs' critical coordination ashore keeps our ships underway."

This sentiment was echoed by Navy Cmdr. Norm Maple, commanding officer of SSU Guam.

"The mariners of MSC are the 'facilitators of the fleet,' and the SSUs are MSC's fleet backstop and support structure at all of the outports of an ever-expanding area of operational support responsibility," he said.

The unit in Guam includes more than 20 staff members who work by the motto "superior service through teamwork." This SSU serves as a logistics hub for ships calling in ports throughout the region, including Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Palau. SSU Guam also provides support to the ships and embarked staff of MSC's forward-deployed Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three, which operates in the region.

Further north, SSU Yokohama is headed by SSU Director Sam Reynolds. In 2010, this 20-plus-person team, which includes some Japanese nationals, supported more than 300 ship visits to Japanese ports, which included coordinating all of the logistics support for ship arrivals at the bustling ports of Yokosuka, Yokohama and Sasebo. The team also played a central role in the sealift cargo resupply to the tiny islands of Kwajalein and Wake.

A snapshot of a busy month at SSU Yokohama found team members scattered to ports around the island nation. In Sasebo, Port Engineer Bill Kegley worked dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Matthew Perry's scheduled voyage repairs. In Yokosuka, the crew of Perry's sister ship, USNS Carl Brashear, ran the shipboard electronic-systems-evaluation-facility range with Ship Repair Facility-Japan Regional Maintenance Center, as arranged by the SSU's Mechanical Engineer William Novobilsky. In Singapore, Reynolds participated in the Far East area commanders' conference, while coordinating future ship repair schedules around the operational needs of the fleet.

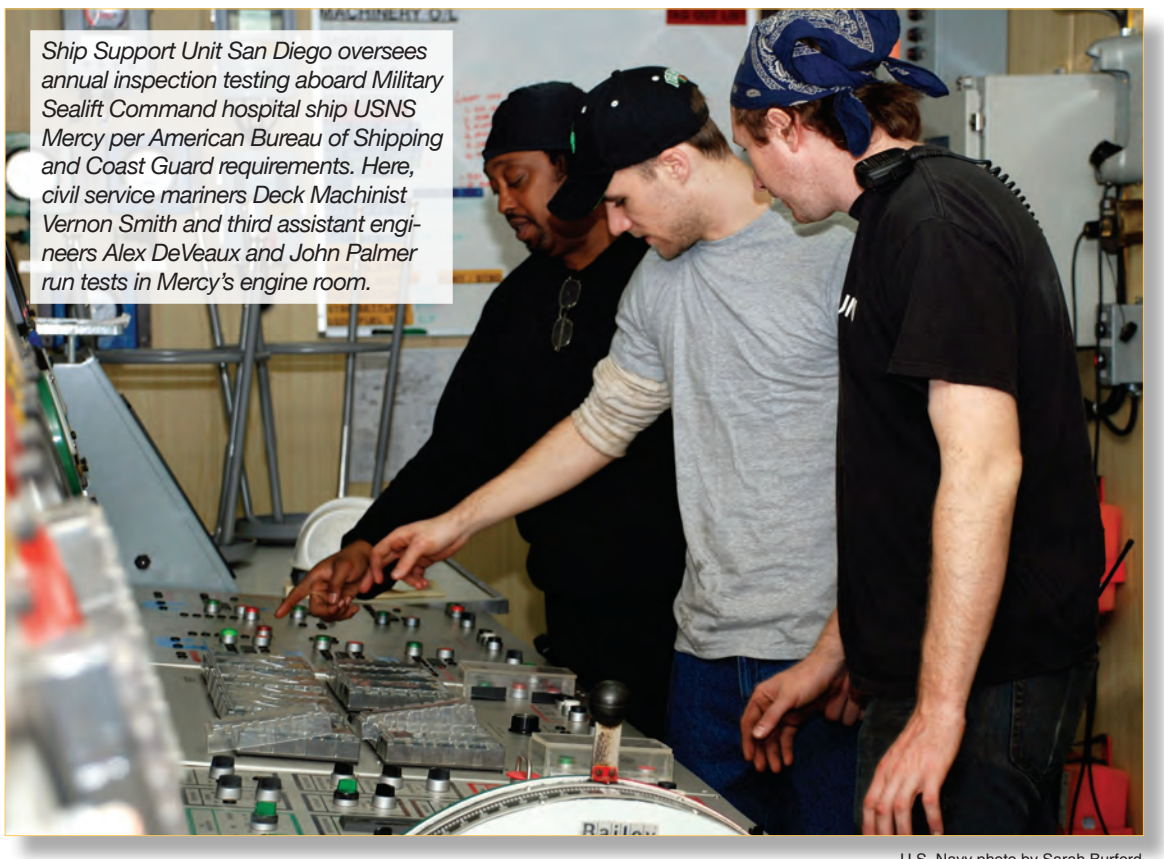
SSU Singapore is just west of the international dateline, headed by Officer-in-Charge Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Little and staffed by 16 individuals. This SSU has established new ship-repair options in Vietnam. At the same time, the SSU has continued to oversee MSC ships undergoing voyage repairs and maintenance availabilities in Thailand, the Republic of the Philippines, and at the nearby commercial yard of Sembawang.

SSU Singapore is unique to its counterparts by having an assigned chaplain, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Kenneth Lee, who supports sailors aboard forward-deployed MSC ships working throughout the region. Lee has helped the Navy be a goodwill ambassador at overseas ports by coordinating community service projects ashore for sailors and CIVMARs.

SSU Bahrain supports MSC's government-owned/government-operated ships in the U.S. 5th Fleet operating area, a high operations-tempo area considered the tip of the spear for U.S. and allied warfighters. Will Burke, the director of this SSU, leads a hard-working staff of eight people in a temporary office space on Naval Support Activity, Manama, just off the coast of Saudi Arabia. SSU Bahrain supports MSC ships operating from Egypt and the Red Sea, to the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, and throughout the Arabian Gulf.

Burke is proud of the dedication of his SSU staff members and the key role they play in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. As an example, he cited Jeanie Foster, the unit's comptroller designee, an MSC veteran whose knowledge, experience and commitment to her work has made her an invaluable resource to the SSU and its MSC ship customers.

"She's been with SSU Bahrain since its inception, and prior to that, was assigned to Sealift Logistics Command Central," said Burke. "She's a superb comptroller and manages all fiscal matters for SSU Bahrain and the budget for SEALOGCENT and MSC Office Kuwait. As needed, she also supports SSU Naples in the absence of that unit's comptroller. Her experience as a comptroller and as a U.S. 5th Fleet operator are irreplaceable."



Ship Support Unit San Diego oversees annual inspection testing aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy per American Bureau of Shipping and Coast Guard requirements. Here, civil service mariners Deck Machinist Vernon Smith and third assistant engineers Alex DeVeaux and John Palmer run tests in Mercy's engine room.

U.S. Navy photo by Sarah Burford

Another example of dedication to duty is Dawn Leonard, the acting director of SSU Naples. She was permanently assigned to MSFSC as a senior program analyst and then volunteered for an almost no-notice assignment to SSU Naples. She now leads a staff of seven, which executes type-commander support to USS Mount Whitney, the U.S. 6th Fleet flagship homeported in Gaeta, Italy, and other MSC government-owned/government operated ships operating within that fleet.

Leonard has coordinated the refurbishment of Mount Whitney's galley, worked with Italian customs officials in Milan and supported efforts for a Gaeta service contract to secure harbor pilots and line handlers.

SSU San Diego is the only SSU located within the continental United States. It's the largest of the six SSUs with its more than 30 staff members; and the only unit whose director is a former CIVMAR and U.S. Merchant Marine chief engineer. Director Mike Sullivan's team has been working issues ranging from the dry docking of fast combat support ship USNS Bridge at a shipyard in Portland, Ore., to ensuring hospital ship USNS Mercy is well maintained and ready for activation between its multi-month international humanitarian missions.

SSU San Diego has another unique function. It serves as the "jumping off spot" for hundreds of newly reporting Navy personnel each year, by providing administrative and personnel support, as they prepare to assume new assignments aboard MSC ships operating in the Pacific.

"The SSUs demonstrate the success and vision of MSC's transformation team a half decade ago," said Jim George, Program Manager for MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships. "These units are great allies for our ship masters and chief engineers to have trouble-shooting and responding to the full spectrum of maintenance and repair issues. Without a doubt, the SSUs have contributed to the readiness of MSC's Combat Logistics Force, and that, in turn, has enabled Navy at large to maintain a strong, forward presence around the world."

The SSUs continue their high-operating tempos and help keep MSC ships at sea in support of the combatant fleet. "I genuinely enjoy visiting each and every SSU and offering my personal thanks," said Taylor. "There is no such thing as too much praise for the people who are our deckplate interface with the fleet."

Spotlight: SSU Naples Port Engineer Scott Kearney

By Meghan Patrick, MSC Public Affairs

Ship Support Unit Naples Port Engineer Scott Kearney was working as a port engineer for Sealift Logistics Command Pacific in 2008 when he heard about a job vacancy in Naples for someone comfortable with both the afloat and ashore worlds of Military Sealift Command ships. Kearney, a 1991 engineering graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, applied for the position and was hired. His seven years of commercial sailing experience and 10 years of ashore work at SEALOG-PAC make him an exceptionally good fit.

"I need to be fluent in two languages to work as a port engineer at an SSU," said Kearney. "I need to understand both the technical side of ships, as well as the contracting and business side of making repairs."

Kearney's job is to help MSC ships visiting the Sealift Logistics Command Europe area of responsibility with casualty repairs that ships' crews cannot make themselves.

"SSUs take care of repairs that are beyond what ships' crews can handle organically," said Kearney.

To do this, Kearney connects with chief engineers aboard MSC ships heading into the SEALOGEUR area of responsibility. He does this several days before the ships arrive in theater. Once the ship has arrived, Kearney checks in with the engineering department frequently. If the ship needs any repair or spare part, the chief engineer submits a voyage repair request to SSU Naples, where Kearney and his colleagues begin making arrangements to take care of it.

Ship Support Unit Naples Port Engineer Scott Kearney, center, joins Assistant Cargo Mate Peter Lenardson and Cargo Mate Robert Foor aboard MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark in Souda Bay, Greece, Feb. 9. Kearney met the ship in port to supervise a casualty repair.

U.S. Navy photo

Normal arrangements involve getting the ship to a port, often Rota, Spain; Sicily or Souda Bay, Greece, for support. When jobs are more complex, Kearney will travel to the site to oversee the technical aspects, often on very little notice.

"My sea bags are always ready," he said.

Jobs include finding a spare engine part for an emergency diesel generator – and quickly getting the part to Sicily – for MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Joshua Humphreys during the summer of 2010.

Later that year, Kearney jetted to Glasgow, Scotland, with only a few hours notice, to oversee repairs on board MSC cable laying/repair ship USNS Zeus. At issue were an air compressor and a cylinder power pack for the ship's service diesel generator.

In December, Kearney went to Souda Bay to supervise local contract divers for the installation of a low-sea-suction cofferdam and repairs to the cross-connected, cooling water pipe on MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark.

"It's a great job because it's so different week to week. Each situation and ship has very unique needs. It feels good to be able to help them as quickly as possible by knowing what our resources are and being able to think creatively about solutions.