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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Military Sealift Command First Officer Dave Lieberman (right), a civil service mariner working as chief mate aboard MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort, reaches for a young patient while CIVMAR Ordinary Seaman Ramone Garrett (left) helps the child's mother board the ship for medical treatment in Nicaragua in June during Continuing Promise 2011.



CIVMARs

Moving Comfort forward in Latin America

INSIDE — Safeguard conducts dive ops with Vietnam • MSC resupplies northernmost U.S. Air Force base

Recruiting, promotions and rumors

Managing our workforce is one of the most challenging aspects of running MSC. Here's what our civil service mariner workforce looks like today. It is mostly men (92 percent) around 46 years old who have about eight years of government service under their belts. Forty percent of them are former U.S. military members. About 17 percent have college degrees from a maritime academy, a U.S. military service academy or a college/university with an ROTC unit.

Ideally, I'd like our workforce to reflect the U.S. maritime industry and the U.S. population. Realistically, the job requirements of our CIVMARs include many skills that are not reflected in the general population and several that are not called for in the maritime industry, such as working an underway replenishment rig to transfer fuel and goods at sea.

As an equal opportunity employer, MSC recruits people based on job skills and meeting the conditions of employment aboard our ships and ashore without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and physical or mental disability.

Building diversity

In order to build diversity in our workforce, we're focusing on reducing and/or removing barriers that keep qualified individuals from joining us as shipmates. While we are gaining in diversity at the entry level in the majority of our departments aboard ship, we'd like to remove any barriers to recruiting, including those in hiring women.

Some of the same challenges we experience in recruiting qualified individuals appear in the promotion process. As with prospective CIVMARs, many of the applicants for promotion submit resumes that do not address the knowledge, skills and abilities called for on the promotion opportunity announcements. Some people apply without meeting the minimum eligibility requirements or lack the overall experience required for the new position.

Simply put, you need to give the promotion board members the right

details about *you* to get promoted!

It's important to me to have a totally transparent process that provides our mariners with access to the information they need to improve their preparations for promotion.

Crewing challenges

A more nuts-and-bolts challenge – separate from those in recruiting and promotions – involves keeping the number of rig teams afloat in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 at full manning levels. That means the pressure will remain on our CIVMAR detailers to keep those rig teams filled with qualified individuals.

At the same time, we need to increase the number of second officers and radio/electronics technicians to be able to meet the civilian substitution of existing Navy operations specialists and electronics and information technicians as they ramp down. Second officer positions are already strained because of the addition of ordnance management positions.

It looks like there will also be challenges to filling the billets with qualified members of the engine department. Deck engineer machinist, refrigeration, unlicensed junior engineer and pumpman positions are all growing.

Among galley positions, the challenge is to find American Culinary Federation-certified individuals, or former military people who could meet the certification requirements.

Another really intense area of competition with the maritime industry is for medical service officers, despite relatively high MSC starting salaries as compared to shoreside personnel who are paramedics, emergency medical technicians, physicians assistants and nurses.

Coordinated effort

As a result of these challenges, we are continuing to focus hard on building and maintaining the best workforce in the industry.

We're working with our recruiting partners to engage in diversity discussions with the maritime academies and colleges. Since they are one of our primary sources for

licensed officers, we are interested in learning more about their recruitment strategies, especially any efforts to enhance the diversity of their student populations. We believe we may be able to help them in their plans. By helping them, we help ourselves.

MSC has participated in the last four Women on the Water conferences held each year at one of the maritime academies. These conferences are designed to help promote career opportunities to female cadets entering the maritime industry. The conferences are attended by representatives from throughout the industry to help paint a complete picture of opportunities that exist for female cadets who want to work afloat.

We give monthly presentations at the Customer Support Unit East Coast and Customer Support Unit West Coast pools to educate CIVMARs on how to prepare solid promotion packages. Take advantage of these opportunities! We advise what to submit and what not to submit to earn the highest rating possible. We are also currently updating the MSFSC Merit Promotion Application Package Guide for CIVMARS. Once updated, copies will be sent to all ships, CSU East and West Coast pools, training centers and the CIVMAR Support Center.

Rumor Control

A few words about some of the "scuttlebutt" that's circulating around. I know the rumor is out there about moving MSC headquarters to Norfolk as a result of the "realignment" I mentioned in the August column.

There is no approved plan in place at present to make such a move.

To help prepare for possibly significant upcoming changes throughout the Navy, MSC leadership is looking at a number of options, including the feasibility of co-locating MSC and MSFSC, creating a single command both organizationally and geographically. In order to engage Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Navy Installation Command in a formal feasibility study, Navy se-

nior leadership has to give permission. This keeps us from starting a process that has not been endorsed by those above us.

We have prepared a "permission-to-study" brief and sent it up the chain of command for chop, ultimately by the Chief of Naval Operations. Should approval be given for the study, we would then go forward with further planning, only if the study returned a finding that there was a solid business case to do so. Assuming a solid business case, obtaining military construction funding through the budget process would be the next hurdle. In any case, none of these "ifs" will happen anytime soon.

I know this is important to everyone. When there are any updates, you'll hear them first from my front office.

In the meantime, sail safe, and my thanks to all of you for the magnificent effort you put forth every day.

Yours aye,

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

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Swift reaches out to local communities during APS

By Navy Lt. j.g. Adam Cole
HSV 2 Swift Public Affairs

Crew members aboard Military Sealift Command-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift have become used to hearing "merci beaucoup," or "thank you very much," for their community outreach efforts as part of Africa Partnership Station 2011.

Extending goodwill is part of the work Swift's 17-person civilian crew and 18-member military department have accomplished during their mission for African Partnership Station, or APS.

APS is a U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa-led program aimed at

strengthening emerging partnerships in East and West Africa to increase regional and maritime safety and security. Since its inception in 2007, APS has focused on increasing security capabilities through combined training and building long-term, professional relationships with partner nations.

The APS program is typically based aboard ships, like Swift, that function as mobile universities as they move from port to port. This year's initiative includes seven U.S. ships and engaged more than 20 African nations. Eleven Euro-Atlantic partner nations provided staff members and training teams for the program, which continues

year-round.

Swift's role during its three-month APS deployment is to serve as a training platform and to engage in partnership-building activities with multiple West African nations. While Swift is in port, African naval counterparts engage in training activities.

The ship's APS deployment began July 1 in the French-speaking nation of Gabon. Swift sailed next to the Republic of Congo, July 17-29, another French-speaking nation. Swift is slated to visit seven countries before completing its mission Sept. 27 in Gambia.

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APS story continued from Pg. 2

The Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command, called MCAST, Naval Criminal Investigative Service Security Training Assistance and Assessment Teams, and personnel from Naval Forces Europe-Naval Forces Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet have played a role in training, embarking at the start of each port visit and disembarking at the conclusion.

APS offers courses in a variety of maritime security subjects, including expeditionary combat first aid, small boat hull maintenance and maritime law enforcement. In Pointe Noire, for example, Swift hosted maritime security classes for local Congolese navy personnel, who attended classes on boarding operations and physical security planning taught by the MCAST team aboard Swift. Students from the physical security planning course were taught methods of vehicle inspection and port security, while students in the boarding team operations course learned how to safely board and search a moving vessel.

Swift's mariners have ensured success by safely navigating the ship from port to port and driving forklifts to transfer donated humanitarian items off the ship and into the hands of non-governmental organizations. The ship's stewards also prepared and served lunchtime meals to participants from the African partner nations.

During Swift's African port visits, the ship's civilian mariners off-loaded donated humanitarian items for Project Handclasp, a Navy program that accepts and transports

donated educational, humanitarian and goodwill materials on a space-available basis on board Navy ships for distribution to foreign recipients in need.

"We help in every way we can," said Capt. Nicholas St. Jean, Swift's civilian master. "We always accommodate changes in schedules, the needs of instructors and never turn down someone who wants a tour of the ship. I think the entire crew realizes why we're here and wants to better U.S. relations with African partners."

Swift's military department has contributed to APS through joint activities, service projects, support for distinguished visitor receptions and ship tours for guests. Swift's sailors have met the challenges with teamwork and professionalism.

Navy members aboard Swift also seized several opportunities to build goodwill relationships with the people of Gabon and the Republic of Congo by participating in community relations projects. Volunteers from the ship's military department played with children July 7 at a Catholic school in Port Gentil after delivering school supplies collected for Project Handclasp.

"You can tell that the kids like the attention," said Seaman Jacob Lemke, a member of Swift's military department. "I think our involvement exposes the kids to how big the world is, since they are interacting with people from a country thousands of miles away. I think it is an eye opener for them that there are people from a different country going out of their way to help them out."

Swift's Navy volunteers also repainted orphanage dormitory



U.S. Navy photo by MCS Ian Carver

Navy Information Systems Technician 1st Class Damion Williams, assigned to MSC high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift, plays soccer with Gabonese children during a community service event for Project Handclasp at the Les Cocotiers Catholic School in Port Gentil, Gabon. Swift was in Gabon as part of Africa Partnership Station 2011.

rooms and played soccer with the children July 26-27 in Pointe Noire, the Republic of Congo.

"It makes you feel good when you can help people out," said Swift's administrative officer, Navy Yeoman 1st Class Dave Honegger. "To see the expressions on the kids' faces when we were playing with them shows you the kind of impact we are making."

Whether off-loading donated items, providing helping hands to those in need or taking care of the

training teams, Swift's civilian and military crew members are central to mission success.

"The [civilian crew and military department aboard] Swift provided excellent support, allowing us to maintain our focus on training," said Navy Chief Boatswain's Mate Jimi Partyka, the MCAST boarding team operations team leader for the training in the Republic of Congo.

MSC Public Affairs contributed to this story.

MSC delivers supplies to northernmost AFB

By Mark Bigelow
MSC Atlantic

Sailing through iceberg-studded waters, Military Sealift Command-chartered dry cargo ship MV Industrial Freedom left the U.S. Air Force's northernmost outpost July 26 after successfully delivering the 1,400 tons of dry cargo that will sustain the base for a year.

Thule Air Force Base, located in Pituffik, Greenland, is almost completely dependent on the annual resupply mission, called Operation Pacer Goose. Most of the base's material needs, including fuel, are provided by two MSC-contracted vessels, Industrial Freedom and tanker MT Afrodite, during the nearly two-week delivery.

The only other resupply method is a weekly logistics flight, which is at the mercy of the area's unpredictable weather. The weekly flight can carry just a few passengers, perishable goods and emergency spare parts, making the ship mission all the more valuable.

The short Arctic summer provides a brief window of opportunity each year for MSC ships to reach and restock the base, currently populated by more than 300 U.S. Air Force and multinational personnel. Located nearly 700 miles north of the Arctic Circle, winter resupply is not an option. The climate is harsh, and average winter temperatures range from 13 to 20 degrees below



U.S. Navy photo by Mark Bigelow

Military Sealift Command-chartered cargo ship MV Industrial Freedom awaits a load of retrograde cargo before departing Greenland July 26. The ship previously off-loaded dry cargo supplies during Operation Pacer Goose, the annual resupply mission that will sustain Thule Air Force Base in Pituffik, Greenland, for the entire year.

zero. The thick ice covering the approach to Thule does not break up until mid-June and freezes over again by mid-September, making passage impossible.

"Operation Pacer Goose is a once-a-year resupply mission," said Timothy Pickering, cargo project officer in MSC's Sealift Program, "and it's critical that the ships meet their delivery schedule during the summer months so the Air Force can carry on its missions without any interruptions."

Industrial Freedom sailed July 9 from Norfolk, Va., and Afrodite

sailed June 29 from St. Theodore, Greece. Both ships arrived at Thule July 16. Afrodite, a double-hulled ship designated as Ice-class – the thickest ice designation – spent four days discharging nearly 260,000 barrels of JP-8 fuel. JP-8 is the primary fuel used at Thule, powering everything from the electricity and heating at the base to aircraft and ground support vehicles. The fuel load was among the largest MSC has ever delivered, said John Joerger, tanker project officer in the Sealift Program. The discharge should provide "extra stock should

there be any issues in the future where we couldn't get a ship in," he said.

Industrial Freedom arrived carrying cargo including food, spare parts, furniture and goods for base personnel. The ship departed with another 600 tons of retrograde cargo, including damaged or retired vehicles and recycling.

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 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 1 of the 23rd Space Operations Squadron. In addition, the installation boasts a 10,000-foot runway and the northernmost deep water port in the world.

Mark Bigelow, an MSC marine transportation specialist, oversaw port operations at Thule for off-loading Afrodite and Industrial Freedom.

MSC: A BEACON OF U.S. COMPASSION

By Meghan Patrick, MSC Public Affairs

Able Seaman Erwin Joiner fulfilled his older sister's greatest wish when he sailed into Nicaraguan waters aboard a great white ship 1,000 times the size of the vessels that employed him there as a fisherman 26 years ago.

Joiner left his sister, her family and Nicaragua's civil war and poverty to immigrate to the United States for a better life when he was 21, hoping to someday bring back something to his childhood home. The now-U.S. citizen dreamed of delivering money or gifts to his nieces and neighbors. But those thoughts were nothing compared to what became reality: returning on an 894-foot hospital ship – the size of three football fields – equipped with an extensive on-board medical treatment facility and 12 modern operating rooms, 900 specialized personnel and a five-month mission to provide humanitarian and civic assistance to nine Latin American and Caribbean countries. The mission – called Continuing Promise 2011 – is one of the biggest historical undertakings of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

As of mid-August, Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort, emblazoned with signature red crosses on its hull, had sailed 6,422 miles, starting from its port in Baltimore, to Jamaica, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica, with Haiti scheduled as the ship's last mission stop before returning to the United States in early September. Also as of mid-August, medical personnel from Navy and non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, had examined 63,047 patients and performed 1,008 life-changing surgeries in the shipboard hospital and provided veterinary care to 7,784 animals. During the same time, embarked Seabees and Marines conducted engineering projects ashore.

"I was so excited when my name was called for this mission, especially because Comfort was going to my country. I know as a former citizen that there is a deep need and many voids to fill in Nicaragua and surrounding areas," said Joiner, one of 70 civil service mariners, or CIVMARs, who operate and navigate the ship. They also transport mission personnel and patients between ship and shore by small boat when the ship's size precludes it from pulling into ports; and maintain electricity and water sup-

Right: Able Seaman Erwin Joiner (far left) gives his sister, nieces and nephews a shipboard tour in Nicaragua in June. Joiner emigrated from Nicaragua to the United States in 1985, while his sister remained in their native land.

plies to the hospital.

The growing reputation of Comfort, which treated a combined 198,000 patients during Continuing Promise missions to the region in 2007 and 2009, sparked the interest of Joiner's sister, a retired physician who spent her career working in a hospital in Nicaragua's capital city of Managua, where many cannot receive the health care they need due to lack of resources.

"Her wish was to step foot on it," said Joiner, who led his sister, plus eight nieces and nephews, on a shipboard tour one June afternoon while Comfort was anchored off the coast of San Juan del Sur. "When she came on, she said 'Am I in heaven? Now I can die in peace. My dream has been fulfilled.' She wanted to visit the ship so badly, because the quality is like nothing else. In the patients'

"When you're sailing on here with 900 people and a fully functional modern hospital between the bow and the stern, you really get a feel for the power and strength of the United States differently than you would on a gray combat ship."

Comfort civil service master Capt. Randall Rockwood

and local doctors' minds, this is a whole different world."

Comfort and its San Diego-based sister ship USNS Mercy, both converted tankers, were delivered to MSC in the 1980s. Their primary mission, which is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute-surgical medical facility to the U.S. military, eventually expanded to provide hospital services for disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide. The ships' responses to situations ranging from both Persian Gulf wars to the 2004 Indonesian tsunami and 2005 Hurricane Katrina put both of them on international radar. But their respective biannual humanitarian deployments to parts of the world in need since 2006 have become a symbol of the U.S. military's compassionate side.

"There's an adage that when the president hears of some trauma going on in the world, he asks where the aircraft carriers are, and then where the hospital ships are. They're that important," said Comfort's civil service master Capt. Randall Rockwood, a 29-year MSC veteran.

"When you're sailing on here with 900 people and a

fully-functional modern hospital between the bow and the stern, you really get a feel for the power and strength of the United States differently than you would on a gray combat ship," Rockwood continued. "In this case, the ship brings healthcare and civic assistance to countries that have invited us to assist. It's not just being a supporting character in a huge play. It's a starring role, and there's a lot of positive focus that comes with it."

CIVMAR experience moves mission forward

Executing a medical mission the caliber of Continuing Promise requires collaboration on the part of several entities, from the embarked Navy and NGO personnel, to the Medical Treatment Facility staff and the CIVMAR crew.

Comfort's CIVMARs – a combination of hospital ship veterans; seasoned members of the MSC fleet like Rockwood; and new blood eager to serve – work tirelessly to execute the mission, improve operations and engage in the often-described "magic" happening around them.

"All CIVMARs are incredible professionals and subject-matter experts in their field," said Navy Capt. Kathy Becker, executive officer of the Medical Treatment Facility. "This very unique and dynamic platform couldn't operate without [them]. Their working knowledge is reassuring to us on this end and launches us forward. They are force multipliers."

When the ship is underway and only 24 hours from a mission port, the ship's flight deck hosts a flurry of activity, and three CIVMARs are at the center of it all. The ship's embarked helicopters must begin shuttling 130,000 pounds of mission supplies to the shoreside sites within an hour of arriving in a country, enabling a quick set-up so that personnel can begin examining patients at the sites the next morning. This requires elaborate preparation and staging of the cargo by Comfort's cargo mate, Second Officer Grant Begley, and boatswain's mates Yanny Jimenez-Rodriguez and Roda Lamarche.

Forklifts scurry around deck while CIVMARs show the uniformed Navy personnel how to separate and package the diversely-sized medical and engineering cargo into giant cargo nets to ensure the proper weight for helicopter delivery. If the pallets are too large, they pose a danger to

flight operations. If the pallets are too light, the cargo could be damaged by bouncing and shifting in flight. When the cargo is delivered to land, one CIVMAR oversees operations on the ship while the other two go

ashore to orchestrate operations there. This coordination involves working with the local contractors hired to assist the cargo movement who often do not speak English, and using local equipment, the quality of which is often unknown until arrival.

Cargo coordination was previously assigned to Marine Corps personnel on hospital ship missions. Now, with these Marines no longer embarked, all coordination for the ship is in CIVMAR hands. To fill the void, CIVMARs also took the initiative in training Navy boatswain's mates on how to conduct these specialized operations.

Jimenez-Rodriguez, who has sailed with MSC for 11 years, noted that this type of cargo handling is totally new to the Navy boatswain's mates.

Left: Civil service mariner Harrison Harvey, a wiper aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort, checks the fit of a child's new pair of shoes during a volunteer community relations event at an elementary school in Jamaica in April.



U.S. Navy photo by Meghan Patrick



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jonathan E. Davis

“The guys we’re working with are usually on carriers fueling planes and helos. This is their first time netting cargo,” he said. CIVMARs teach Navy boatswain’s mates how to handle different materials, such as frozen food, which must be removed from trucks piecemeal so it does not melt while waiting for helicopter pick-up in the airfield.

Another way CIVMARs have improved the support to Continuing Promise is by tackling the problem of replenishing Comfort while it operates in Latin America. Most of Comfort’s mission stops are far off the beaten path, away from the logistics services that most commercial ports offer and away from the Navy’s fleet replenishment ships.

Begley, a six-year MSC employee and a second officer aboard Mercy in 2010, took the lead on solving this challenge. Under his guidance, Comfort took on enough fuel and dry cargo when the ship departed Baltimore in March to last until mid-July. His plan for Comfort was unprecedented: a single underway replenishment for the entire mission.

As the sole underway replenishment approached, Begley educated a crowded room of uniformed personnel, including Seabees, about what to expect and the complex roles they must fill in order to make the critical evolution a success.

The careful planning paid off July 26, off the coast of Costa Rica, when MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark and Comfort conducted the largest underway replenishment the hospital ship has received since the first Persian Gulf War. While the ships traveled side-by-side, 170 feet from each other at 12 knots, 12,000 barrels of fuel passed from



Third Officer Edward Pollard spends free time while off-duty visiting a young patient and his mother.

were not the ones who made the decision. Now we can solve problems before we even get there.”

Rockwood said Begley’s preliminary work is “more than invaluable. It’s priceless. When the ship goes to various ports, Begley already has local maritime knowledge, such as the horsepower of the tugs available and where the port authorities intend to dock Comfort. He has most of the answers for the questions I need to know prior to arriving. Without him, it would be shooting in the dark each time.”

Comfort’s engineers also work at a high tempo during the mission. This includes running the steam plant to propel the ship; distilling 70,000 gallons of water daily for those aboard; monitoring air conditioning for the hospital; making repairs in the engineering spaces and to the utility boats to ensure continued patient transfer; and responding to thousands of trouble calls.

In the past, engineers received trouble reports through phone calls and filling out paper forms. This year, the effort became more streamlined with the introduction of the ships automated maintenance program, an electronic work list that permits personnel aboard the ship to enter requests as

problems occur, allowing CIVMARs to get input instantaneously and prioritize more effectively.

“It’s nice to be part of a growing, maturing process,” said Chief Engineer Joseph Watts, who is sailing on Comfort after five years of working aboard Mercy. “This system helps us better respond to the needs of the hospital and everyone embarked, from doorknobs to toilets to hospital machinery, and it allows CIVMARs to keep in better touch aboard this giant ship. As we better define our abilities, we’ll be able to deliver more care to people in the same period of time. People embarked are trying and improving, and I think this will continue into the future.”

For old-timers & first-timers: Motivation in service

For those sailing aboard the ship for the first time, and to others on their 10th hospital ship deployment, Comfort’s CIVMARs find different ways to stay motivated during long,

exhausting hours; remain connected with interested loved ones back home; and connect with the patients.

For some, like Joiner, Jimenez-Rodriguez and Lamarche, the connection comes through a common first language.

As patients step onto the ship with the assistance of Lamarche’s outstretched hand, they share incredible gratitude.

“They want to give you something. They’re so thankful,” said the Dominican Republic native. “I’ve even had people inviting me to their homes for dinner. The fact that they invite you to their home is a major gesture. People don’t have a lot, so they protect what little they have. They want to share that one thing that they do have with someone special who earned it and deserved it.”

For Third Officer Edward Pollard, relationships spawn from walking on the hospital decks when he is not on watch to give out lollipops and play with kids, and to see if there’s anything he can do to help the medical staff with their needs during long hours.

For Engine Utilityman Darlene Mertz, Wiper Harrison Hanvey and Rockwood, meaning comes from sacrificing sleep so they can use their time between shifts to volunteer ashore. In Peru, Mertz joined a group that went to elementary schools to teach good hygiene habits to children the same age as her five-year-old daughter. In Jamaica, Hanvey and Rockwood volunteered to wash and measure the feet of children who needed new shoes.

“We gave them new sneakers, but we also had a chance to play with them, so it felt like more,” said Hanvey, a 2010 graduate of Texas Christian University who switched career paths and joined MSC with the hope of placement on a hospital ship. “I’m glad I got to be a part of that experience, people don’t have those opportunities very often so it was nice to take advantage of it,” he said.

For Engine Utilityman Jay-Ryan Imbuido, a plumber, Comfort’s a connection with friends and family that he does not get as often on other ships.

“My sister-in-law notices a difference in my attitude, that I’m more cheery than I was during other missions,” said Imbuido. “She can tell that I honestly love this ship, and that I won’t want to leave. I mean, I’m plunging toilets, and I still feel this good.”

For Third Officer Laura Hammond, a utility boat driver among the first to greet the patients and the last to see them go, the mission became clear within a few days of joining the crew.

“We’re all working incredibly hard, but it’s okay because it’s all about the patients and their faces to me,” she said. “When they get on the ship they look one way; a little nervous and curious, and when they leave, their eyes just shine with deep gratitude. It makes everyone involved feel like they’re doing something right.”



Comfort civil service mariner, Boatswain’s Mate Yanny Jimenez-Rodriguez, (left) oversees cargo operations aboard the ship while Comfort’s helicopters return mission cargo to the ship from medical sites in Nicaragua in June.

Lewis and Clark to Comfort through connected fuel hoses. At the same time, Lewis and Clark’s CIVMARs transferred 275 pallets of medical supplies and food by wire to Comfort’s connected replenishment stations. In addition, Comfort’s helicopters moved 275 pallets of NGO material onto the hospital ship flight deck, and carried 90 pallets of material from Comfort to Lewis and Clark for later disposal. The multifaceted replenishment lasted 10 hours, a full working day less than anticipated.

“The smooth collaboration between CIVMAR and military personnel was a great victory for the Comfort mission,” said Begley. “We brought the experience and they brought the manpower.”

Another demonstration of the CIVMAR role in advancing the mission began six months before Continuing Promise. Begley, selected because of recent experience in the 2010 Mercy mission, became the first MSC representative to join either Comfort or Mercy’s mission leaders or medical planners in a predeployment-site survey. Starting in October 2010, Begley flew from country to country, spending one week in each mission site to evaluate port conditions to determine whether the ship could pull pierside or must remain at anchor; to find charts for the often obscure destinations; to meet with authorities such as local fishermen, husbanding agents and the captains of other ships in port, and to determine hazards for the ship and patients coming aboard.

“Sending someone out first makes everything easier for everyone when the mission takes place,” said Begley. He experienced the downside of changing plans last minute on Mercy in Cambodia, when CIVMARs spent their first hours in the country locating an attachable platform after finding that the designated pier area was too high above the waterline for the patients to safely debark Mercy’s 33-foot utility boats safely. “The problem was that the subject-matter experts



New commanders for MSCPAC, MSCEURAF

By Sarah Burford
MSCPAC Public Affairs
and Kim Dixon
MSCEURAF Public Affairs

Two of Military Sealift Command's five operational commands changed leadership in July.

Navy Capt. Sylvester Moore assumed command of MSC Pacific from Navy Capt. Jerome Hamel July 21. The ceremony was held aboard MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon at Naval Base Point Loma in San Diego.

The MSCPAC commander is responsible for MSC ships operating in the Eastern Pacific and is dual-hatted as Commander, Task Force 33, directing the underway delivery of fuel, provisions, ordnance and towing services to Navy combatants in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of responsibility.

Moore comes to MSCPAC from the Board of Inspection and Survey where he served as assistant deputy chief of staff.

Moore enlisted in the Navy in 1974 and was subsequently selected into the Limited Duty Officer Program in 1988.

Moore's sea tours as an officer include amphibious assault ship USS Okinawa and USS Belleau Wood, aircraft carrier USS Independence, amphibious transport docks USS Juneau and USS Dubuque, and aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman.

His shore tours include officer-in-charge at Port Operations Little Creek; executive officer of Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and commanding officer of Naval Brig Norfolk.

Hamel's next assignment is chief of staff with Commander, Naval Reserve



Navy Capt. Sylvester Moore (left), Navy Capt. Jerome Hamel (center) and Navy Rear Adm. Brian LaRoche, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command, participate in the MSC Pacific change of command ceremony July 21 in San Diego, where Moore relieved Hamel.

Forces Command in Norfolk, Va.

During a July 29 ceremony at Support Activity Capodichino in Naples, Italy, Navy Capt. Richard Soucie took the reins of MSC Europe and Africa from Navy Capt. James Tranoris.

The MSCEURAF commander is responsible for MSC ships operating in the European and African theaters. He is dual-hatted as Commander, Task Force 63, which involves coordinating and providing transportation and delivery of personnel, equipment, fuel, supplies, repair parts, mail and ammunition via air and surface logistics assets to sustain U.S. forces in the European and African theaters.

Soucie reports to MSCEURAF from his most recent duty as di-

rector of the plans and policy division in the manpower and personnel directorate at U.S. Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Fla.

Soucie enlisted in the Navy in 1978 and was subsequently selected into the Limited Duty Officer Program in May 1988 as a surface operations officer. He served aboard aircraft carriers USS Forrestal and USS John F. Kennedy and on the staffs of Commander, Carrier Group Two and Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group Two.

Soucie's shore tours include officer-in-charge, Navy Center for Tactical Systems Interoperability, Detachment Six; combat systems readiness and training officer at Commander, Naval Air Forces, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; and surface limited duty officer/chief warrant officer assignment officer at the Navy Personnel Command. Soucie has also served as executive officer and commanding officer, Navy Recruiting District Miami, and as director of Training and Quality Assurance, Navy Recruiting Command headquarters.

Tranoris's next assignment is with the NATO Maritime Component Command on the island of Nisida, Italy.



U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Gary Keen

Navy Capt. Richard Soucie (right), salutes Navy Capt. James Tranoris (left), relieving him during the Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa change of command ceremony July 29 with Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris, Jr. (center), commander, U.S. 6th Fleet.

ATLANTIC • LINES

In sweltering summer temperatures, **Brian Hill**, Military Sealift Command Atlantic marine transportation specialist, oversaw the redeployment offload of the U.S. Navy's Expeditionary Support Command fleet hospital retrograde cargo from an MSC time-chartered ship at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Cheatham Annex, Va., July 27-31. Hill had previously supervised the initial deployment of refurbished hospital cargo in early May. The offload comprised 360 containers and 117 pieces of support equipment. Fleet hospital equipment is refurbished ashore every five to six years.

Tom D'Agostino, director of ship operations at MSCLANT's Charleston, S.C., office, assisted MT Overseas Luxmar discharge more than 90,000 barrels of fuel July 21-22. The vessel was then anchored in Charleston July 22-25 awaiting a pier survey at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va.

MSCLANT anti-terrorism/force protection staff attended a counterterrorism workshop in Virginia Beach, Va., hosted by the Department of Homeland Security July 7-8 on improvised explosive devices. The workshop included detailed discussions about the growing threat of homegrown violent extremists, recent domestic case studies and ways to deter,

prevent, detect and respond to terrorist use of explosives in the United States.

MSC fast combat support ship USNS Arctic returned July 14 to Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J., after a six-month deployment in the U.S. 5th Fleet and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility. While deployed, Arctic sailed more than 45,000 miles, performed 119 underway replenishments and delivered more than 25 million gallons of fuel, 8,500 pallets of supplies and nearly 275,000 pounds of mail.

Members of MSCLANT's headquarters Reserve unit toured dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark July 9 while the ship was berthed at Naval Station Norfolk. The tour, led by Chief Mate **Troy Bruemmer**, Navy **Chief Petty Officer Angel Medrano** and Navy **Petty Officer 2nd Class Tiffany Palmer**, took Reservists from the pilot house to the engineering spaces. While the group was on the bridge, Reservist **Demario Thomas** was promoted to petty officer 2nd class during a ceremony.

MSCLANT bids farewell to its logistics officer, Navy **Lt. Maura Thompson**, who transferred to Fleet Forces Command in early August. Navy **Cmdr. Rick Adside** replaced Thompson as logistics officer.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy **Capt. Wesley Brown**, commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two, led a group sail of nine Military Sealift Command Maritime Prepositioning Force ships July 19-21. The sortie from Diego Garcia included USNS SGT Matej Kocak, MV LTC John U.D. Page, MV SSG Edward A. Carter, Jr., USNS Pomeroy, USNS Seay, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella, MV MAJ Bernard F. Fisher, USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham and MV CAPT Steven L. Bennett. The sortie marked the first time that all nine ships have participated in a mass sortie together. Despite foul weather, which led to cancelling part of the exercise, the MPF ships still sailed through the first night and conducted drills the next day, including man-overboard drills, fire-fighting and abandon-ship procedures as well as emergency-flight quarters.

Carl Welborn assumed duties as the new civilian director of MSCO Okinawa, where he took charge from Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Jason Sparks** July 2. Sparks, who served as acting MSCO Okinawa commanding officer since November of 2010, received the Navy Commendation Medal for his outstanding contributions to the command. Sparks will serve as air opera-

tions officer with commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa.

U.S. Navy pilots from Guam-based Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 conducted deck-landing qualifications aboard MPF ships USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless, USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus and USNS 1ST LT Harry L. Martin off the coast of Guam throughout July. Flying MH-60S Knighthawk helicopters, U.S. Navy pilots completed a total of 85 landings on the ships' flight decks.

MPS Squadron Three commander Navy **Capt. Deidre McLay** presented **Damage Controlman 1st Class Christopher Cisneros** with a Navy Commendation Medal for meritorious service as the MPS Three assistant materiel officer. The award marked the end of his tour with the squadron.

MPS Squadron Three staff members participated in an educational event at Saipan's American Memorial Park July 24-29. Staff members assisted U.S. National Park Service rangers in teaching swimming and snorkeling to 25 school children.

MSC Far East welcomes Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Antwan Johnson** as administrative officer at MSC Office Korea.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn and MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary finished their logistics support to the sailors and Marines assigned to the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group and 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit during the bilateral Spanish Amphibious Landing Exercise 2011, off the coast of Spain from June 20-29. PHIBLEX included amphibious operations, flight operations and parachute, fast rope, medical evacuation and non-combatant evacuation training.

Following the exercise, Big Horn and Peary rejoined MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall in the western Mediterranean to support Operation Unified Protector, the NATO-led operation

to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas in Libya. MSC Combat Logistics Force ships provided 2.2 million gallons of diesel fuel and 25,000 gallons of aviation fuel April 28 to June 26 during 54 underway replenishments with NATO ships from various countries, including Italy, Greece, Turkey, United Kingdom, Canada and France. Lenthall worked dawn to dusk July 24 refueling seven NATO ships.

USNS Grapple traveled to the U.S. Naval Forces Africa area of responsibility for upcoming Africa Partnership Station theater security cooperation events, beginning in Liberia July 27.

MSC Europe and Africa bids farewell to operations assistant **Glaudio Cruz**, who transferred with his family to the Washington, D.C., area.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

MSC headquarters recognized 20 members of the workforce at a ceremony July 28 for their length of government service and extraordinary performance. **John Austin**, engineering directorate, and **Jim George**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force technical director, were recognized for 35 years of service. **Pete Budi**, director, logistics directorate, was recognized for 30 years of service. **Robert Elwell**, office of counsel; **Willis Williams**, command administration; and **William Merkle**, command, control, communication and computer systems directorate, were recognized for 25 years of service. **Melissa Morgan**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force; **Juanita Broennimann**, Prepositioning Program; **Shawn Mullins** and **Antionette Reynolds**, office of the comptroller; and **Kevin Spillane**, contracts and business management directorate, were recognized for 20 years of service. **Mike Cunningham**, operations directorate; **Yarinett Souffrain**, office of the comptroller; and **David Hatcher**, strategic planning directorate, were recognized for 15 years of service. **Lauren Rummel**, command, control, communication and computer systems directorate; **Isagani Penaranda**, maritime forces, manpower and management directorate; and **Michael Vicory**, contracts and business management directorate, were recognized for 10 years of service. **David Baer**, contracts and business management directorate was recognized as the MSC headquarters second quarter Civilian of the Quarter. **Karen Williams**,

Prepositioning Program, was awarded the Meritorious Civilian Service Award for superior performance as lead project engineer for the conversion of three large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships for U.S. Marine Corps prepositioning service, January 2008 to June 2011. **Theresa Germanovich**, office of the comptroller, was awarded the Joint Civilian Service Achievement Award for exceptionally meritorious service as comptroller, Special Operations Command of the U.S. Joint Force Command, from January 2010 to March 2011.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. **Lee Dortzbach** and **Kevin Gorom**, part of the Strategic Sealift and Preposition Detachment to the U.S. Transportation Command, competed as the "MSC Row-Row" team during the 2011 Cardboard Boat Regatta held July 9 at Scott Air Force Base, Ill, finishing third.

MSC bids farewell to **Jonathan Butanis** and **Steven Truelove**, engineering directorate; **Clement Ludd**, office of the comptroller; **Ryann Kahn** and **Jerry Schall**, contracts and business management directorate.

The command welcomes **Carl Phillips**, operations directorate; **Shannon McDonald**, command, control, communication and computer systems directorate; **Jeffrey Neyers**, engineering directorate; **Shannon Burdick** and **James Sledge**, contracts and business management directorate; and **Reynaldo Macawili** and **Joshua Skinner**, Strategic Sealift and Prepositioning office.

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's disaster management team conducted a tabletop exercise July 21 at its headquarters at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. Using a hurricane scenario, including a hypothetical a mandatory evacuation of the Hampton Roads region, the team worked through scripted evacuation plans. The follow-up exercise, held July 25-26, sent DMT personnel to Navy Operational Support Center, Raleigh, N.C., where they established communications capabilities, which could support mission-essential operations if needed.

Evaluation boards were convened in July to select civil service mariner applicants for subsequent promotion consideration to chief cook, laundryman, able seaman and assistant medical damage control officer. Opportunities to apply for promotion to third officer, and third and second assistant engineer watchstanding positions will be available in September.

Members of MSFSC's small business program sponsored an exposition at Breezy Point in Naval Station Norfolk July 27. The event enabled

small businesses and prime vendors to meet with MSFSC marine engineers and contract specialists to discuss new products and services relevant to supporting the MSC fleet.

MSFSC wishes fair winds and following seas to civil service master **Capt. John Pope**, Boatswain **Arthur Bennett**, Deck Engineer Machinist **Lewis Dechaine**, Chief Cook **Simie Dollano**, First Officer **John Lubitz**, Able Seaman **Cyril McBurnie**, Assistant Damage Control Officer **Sam Mullins**, Third Assistant Engineer **Josefino Protacio**, Chief Steward **Bill Speer**, Assistant Cook **Roberto Ocampo**, Engine Utilityman **Roberto Yap**, Boatswain **Locksley Russell**, supervisory financial management analyst **Robert Quick** and accountant **Diane Walters** as they enter onto the retirement roles. The command thanks them for their years of service to MSC.

MSFSC sadly reports the passing of Chief Electrician **Emmanuel Hilario** and sends condolences to the Hilario family.

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

New leadership for Mercy MTF



(Left to right) Navy Capt. Timothy Hinman; Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command and Navy Capt. Jeffery Paulson, commanding officer Medical Treatment Facility USNS Mercy, participate in Mercy's MTF change of command ceremony Aug. 3 in San Diego. Hinman relieved Paulson during the ceremony, which was held aboard the hospital ship Mercy. Buzby served as a guest speaker, presenting Paulson with the Legion of Merit medal for his leadership while commander of the MTF. Paulson's command of the MTF included the 2010 Pacific Partnership deployment to Southeast Asia.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux demonstrated its towing capability twice this month. Sioux began towing decommissioned guided-missile frigate ex-USS Jarrett July 6 from San Diego to Bremerton, Wash. The mission ended in Bremerton July 15. After returning to San Diego, Sioux began towing decommissioned amphibious transport dock ex-USS Dubuque July 29, arriving in Bremerton Aug. 6.

MSC Pacific provided transportation support to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force/G7, Special Operations Training Group. Using the chartered, 80-foot supply launch Aces Wild, personnel and equipment were transferred to and from oil platform training environments off the coast of Southern California near the Channel Islands July 8-10. The transfer was the third oil platform recovery train-

ing of this kind. Three additional events are scheduled for later this year.

Eight student apprentices from the Regional Occupation Program Maritime Academy at Mar Vista High School in Imperial Beach, Calif., completed a month-long summer internship July 27 aboard MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe. The students experienced shipboard life by working in the engineering and deck departments, participating in daily operations and living aboard the ship during the internship program. MSC has supported to give high school students maritime experience – since 2002. In total, 197 students have completed maritime apprenticeships aboard MSC ships.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Summer has been busy for Military Sealift Command ships operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. Logistics support provided by the ships of MSC Central/Commander Task Force 53 enabled U.S. 5th Fleet combatant ships to stay at sea and focused on their missions. Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships in this region conducted 70 underway replenishments, which involved 35 different ships from 10 countries during July.

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Alan Shepard and its crew were the linchpins in two key logistics operations. In the first event, helicopters from Shepard provided the vital link between the port of Djibouti and MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Tippecanoe. Shepard's MSC-contracted helicopters flew for eight hours July 15, ferrying internal cargo and mail to Tippecanoe for further delivery to guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt. Roosevelt had

just chopped into U.S. 5th Fleet and required cargo and mail.

For the second event, Shepard took on a load of nearly 800 pallets of cargo. The massive loadout enabled Shepard to resupply both the Ronald Regan Strike Group and the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group in one trip July 16-17.

Ready Reserve Force roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cape Trinity continued to Port Ash Shuaybah, Kuwait, after the successful delivery of two U.S.-built patrol boats July 14 to Bahrain for use by the Iraqi navy. Cape Trinity was activated to transport the patrol boats from Houston. In Kuwait, the ship off-loaded 63 pieces of support equipment July 18 for the patrol boats. The ship then loaded 324 containers and 245 pieces of rolling-stock July 18-23 for return to the United States. The load significantly reduced Cape Trinity's net operating and activation costs for MSC.

Safeguard hosts diving exchanges with Vietnam

By Edward Baxter
MSCFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard was one of three U.S. Navy ships to glide into the Vietnam's port city of Da Nang July 15 for a week of naval exchanges aimed at strengthening ties between the United States and Vietnam. Safeguard's 26 civil service mariners and an embarked 16-person mobile diving team experienced a major milestone as the ship's visit coincided with the 16th anniversary of the reestablishment of U.S. diplomatic ties to Vietnam July 11, 1995.

Guided-missile destroyers USS Chung-Hoon and USS Preble arrived in Da Nang with Safeguard. Over the next week, more than 700 MSC CIVMARs and Navy sailors participated in non-combatant events and skill exchanges in navigation, maintenance, damage control, firefighting and diving.

Such exchanges have become more commonplace. About eight years after the history-making reestablishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries, military ties were established in 2003 when the U.S. Navy's guided-missile frigate USS Vandergrift made a port call on Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Since then, military relations have grown with the advent of high-level defense visits, exchanges and port calls by U.S. Navy ships, including MSC oceanographic survey ships USNS Bruce C. Heezen in 2009 and USNS Bowditch in June 2011.

"This exchange helps our respective sailors gain a greater understanding of one another and builds important relationships between our navies for the future," said Navy Rear Adm. Tom Carney, who oversaw the naval exchange activities.

During Safeguard's portion of the ex-

changes, 16 embarked Navy divers from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii-based Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Company 1-2 practiced specialized diving techniques and conducted training with Vietnam navy divers. The exchanges are the first training of this kind conducted with the Vietnamese aboard a U.S. rescue and salvage ship.

When deployed, the U.S. mobile diving team's mission is to conduct harbor clearance, salvage, underwater search, recovery and underwater-emergency repair in virtually any ocean environment.

Safeguard's CIVMARs also played a crucial role during the exchanges. They worked around the clock to support the divers by operating cranes to lower and raise the stage used to deploy divers to the ocean floor. Safeguard's engineering team ensured generators were running to supply power for the recompression chamber, lighting and compressors used to make air for the divers. CIVMAR crew members also prepared meals for the additional Vietnamese navy divers who were embarked on Safeguard during the training exchange.

"MSC's rescue and salvage ships, with embarked Navy divers, operate worldwide to prove their ability to foster cooperation and positive relations among nations," said Capt. Ed Dickerson, Safeguard's civil service master. He assumed command July 18 from Capt. Susan Orsini during a scheduled change of command.

Divers train together

A Navy diver aboard Safeguard took to the water July 17 to demonstrate a surface-air-supplied dive using a KM-37 dive helmet, which attaches to an umbilical tube leading to the surface, providing breathable air for the diver and a secondary port for emergency gas. A decompression-sickness drill was performed after the dive, comprising a

full neurological examination and follow-on recompression inside a hyperbaric chamber. Such drills could prove invaluable if the need arises to treat decompression sickness, also called "the bends." Decompression sickness is caused by nitrogen bubbles forming in the bloodstream and tissues of the body, which occur when divers ascend too quickly from deep water to the surface, where the surrounding pressure is lower.

Continuing the diving exchange, both groups of divers practiced skills used to identify submerged objects, deploying a remotely operated vehicle and making side-scan sonar searches.

"The Vietnamese took turns operating the control console of the [remotely operated vehicle] and commented that it is a very valuable tool," said MDSU One's officer-in-charge, Navy Chief Warrant Officer Dennis Kypros.

The next day, Navy divers conducted classroom training on Safeguard's mess deck, which focused on basic diving medicine as well as an overview of

scuba equipment and capabilities.

The exchange continued with a joint dive and concluded July 20 with both sides meeting aboard Safeguard to review events, summarize lessons learned and discuss opportunities for future operations. Safeguard, Chung-Hoon and Preble departed Da Nang July 21.

"Strengthening military-to-military alliances through bilateral training was the overarching objective for the exercise," Kypros said. "I think we have clearly achieved that goal."



U.S. Navy photo MC1 Laura Wood

U.S. Navy divers embarked on Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard prepare a U.S. diver and a Vietnamese diver for a dive July 19, part of a week of naval exchanges between the U.S. and Vietnam.

MSC manages ammo transport during TurboCADS

By Laura M. Seal, MSC Public Affairs

This summer, Military Sealift Command personnel throughout the Far East and in Washington, D.C., managed the transport of more than 1,000 20-foot containers of conventional ammunition aboard an MSC-chartered ship between the United States and five ports in Guam, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

This lift, being conducted from June 13 to early September, is part of an annual U.S. Transportation Command exercise called Turbo Containerized Ammunition Distribution System, or TurboCADS.

Established in 1994, this exercise brings together MSC and one of its fellow TRANSCOM components, the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, or

SDDC. With other military partners, MSC and SDDC demonstrate and improve the Department of Defense's ability to transport conventional munitions across oceans and continents using multiple modes of transportation, including – in this case – ships, trucks and trains.

This year, MSC-chartered, U.S.-flagged container ship MV American Tern transported real-world cargo in support of the U.S. Pacific Command, delivering more than 400 containers of modernized munitions to the PACOM area of responsibility in July and August. At each port, American Tern also loaded containers of old and outdated munitions – more than 600 containers total – to return them to the United States for maintenance, repair or disposal.

"TurboCADS is not just a ship-char-

tering exercise," said Timothy Pickering, cargo project officer in MSC's Sealift Program. "It fully stresses the entire ammunition distribution process from the depot to the fort and the necessary coordination between MSC, Joint Munitions Command and our counterparts at SDDC."

The Army's Joint Munitions Command, or JMC, is responsible for all conventional DOD munitions.

At MSC headquarters in Washington, D.C., Marine Transportation Specialist Larry Riley, who specializes in ammunition moves, oversaw the contracting process to charter American Tern. Riley coordinated with SDDC to ensure that the right ship was hired to meet the requirements and timeframe.

At the Singapore-based MSC Far East, Strategic Sealift Officer Dennis Debraggio coordinated with colleagues at MSC offices, or MSCOs, in Okinawa and Korea and MSC Ship Support Units, or SSUs, in Guam and Japan to arrange the details necessary for American Tern's five port visits, including diplomatic clearances in each country, berthing space and husbanding services at each port, and – in coordination with SDDC transportation battalions – shoreside cargo-staging areas and over-land transport. The MSCOs and SSUs also oversaw the ship during its port visits.

American Tern loaded the more than 400 containers of munitions at Naval Magazine Indian Island in Port Hadlock, Wash., June 13-18. JMC transported the cargo to Indian Island from multiple storage depots, first by train and then by Army and Navy trucks.

American Tern departed Indian Island June

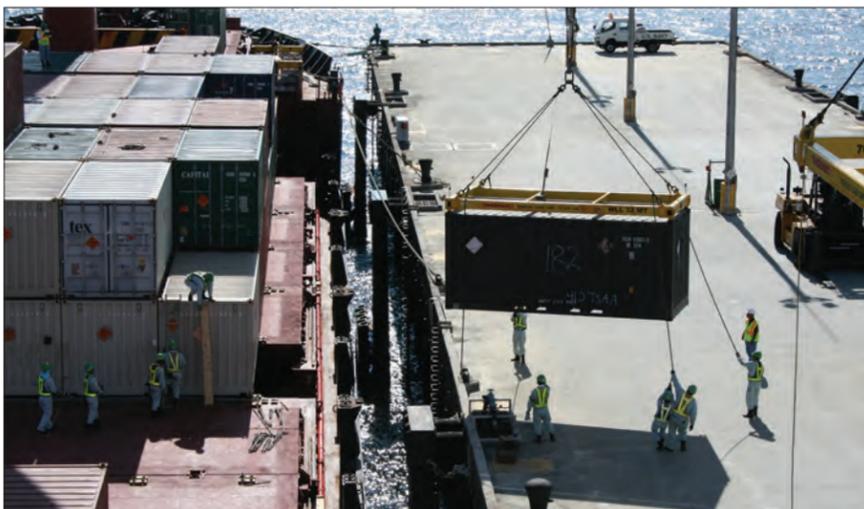
19 and arrived at the first stop in Guam July 5. The ship continued to Okinawa, Kure and Sasebo in Japan, then to Chinhae, Republic of Korea, and back to Guam before beginning the trip back to the United States Aug. 18. American Tern is scheduled to deliver its cargo to the West Coast in early September.

While American Tern was in Okinawa in mid-July, a powerful typhoon blew through the area, forcing the ship to delay its departure to the next mission destination. Debraggio and other MSC personnel throughout the MSCFE area of operations acted quickly to push the ship's schedule back while still being required to have the ship visit the ports in the same order.

"There is a limit to how much net explosive weight the ship can carry," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Gene Palabraca, operations officer at MSC Office Okinawa. "Since we were off-loading and loading at each port, we couldn't switch the order without the possibility of going over."

TRANSCOM values MSC's expertise in managing ships and ship schedules.

"A lot of what MSC does for the exercise flies under the radar, but it's vitally important," said Thomas Parker, chief of TRANSCOM's Intermodal Programs Team and primary TurboCADS program officer. "MSCFE really took the bull by the horns to work the ship's schedule around the typhoon. For MSC, that's routine. But for the rest of us, it's unique and important."



U.S. Navy photo by HT1 Gregory Beene

Soldiers from the U.S. Army's Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command off-load containers of conventional munitions from Military Sealift Command-chartered, U.S.-flagged container ship MV American Tern at Tengan Pier in Okinawa, Japan, July 12.