

April 2012

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

No pier? No problem

A Modular Causeway System alongside Military Sealift Command-chartered cargo ship MV Green Wave allows the off-load of vital cargo at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

U.S. Navy photo by Larry Larsson

MSC completes annual Antarctic supply run

INSIDE — MSC continues push for green energy • Sioux supports bilateral salvage exercise

Travels are always revealing

I make it a point to get out and see as many of you as I can, as often as I can. First, it gives me a chance to actually see the mission being executed. Okay, and maybe to have some blue water under my keel. Second, I get to meet some of the best shipmates a commander could ever hope to work with. My recent travels have included embarking dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary off the Virginia Capes; traveling to Mayport, Fla., to visit rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp; and checking out life aboard fleet ocean tug USNS Apache. I also went to talk with union and maritime industry representatives at a training center in Dania Beach, Fla., made a quick trip to my alma mater – Kings Point – to talk about cyber terrorism, and travelled back to the Norfolk area to visit the Army's joint high-speed vessel crew training simulator and to check up on USS Ponce as that venerable ship is converted to MSC operation as an afloat forward staging base, interim. Here's my take on what's going on around the command.

Milestone

As I was underway aboard dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary, I got to see the first mission landing for the Marine Corps' MV-22 Osprey. It was an amazing sight to witness that twin-rotor beast make Peary's deck, with plenty of room to spare! The demonstrations proved that MSC can expand its role to include direct support of Marine Corps maneuver units ashore from an MSC ship. We even showed that we could refuel the Osprey when it lands on our T-AKEs, enhancing the Osprey's range. Well done to the T-AKE 5 team on a safe, efficient operation.

Huakai and Alakai

Speaking of the Marine Corps, high-speed vessel Huakai transferred to us from the Department of Transportation in January and was selected for conversion to support the III Marine Expeditionary Force in the Western Pacific. Huakai's sister ship, Alakai, will remain in an inactive status for the time being. While Huakai is being converted for MSC operation, HSV Westpac Express will continue to serve under a new contract to support III MEF. Westpac Express completed a drydock period in Yokohama, Japan, and worked on the movement of personnel and equipment for exercise Cobra Gold 2012 earlier this year.

JHSV

While we're on the subject of high-speed vessels, JHSV 1 USNS Spearhead is in the water and being finished up for delivery to MSC. Since we'll operate the five ships planned for the Navy and the five for the Army, we'll be creating somewhere around 220 new jobs for U.S. mariners. I visited Capt. Doug Cassavant and his crew for Spearhead at the JHSV simulator the Army built at Fort Eustis outside of Norfolk. It's one of the most realistic training simulators in service anywhere. I even got to stand on the bridge wing, take in lines and get safely underway from Little Creek. I didn't hit anything, so maybe there's still hope for me as a ship driver. The



U.S. Navy photo
Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, left, tours the joint high-speed vessel simulator at the Army's Maritime and Intermodal Training Center in Fort Eustis, Va., Feb. 13.

Admiral still has "game!"

Each JHSV will have a crew of 22 civilian mariners. The first four ships will be crewed by civil service mariners while we develop and refine our concepts of operation. We'll contract with ship operating companies to crew the other six.

NGW

We're moving ahead smartly on the Next Generation Wideband program. I visited the test lab in Norfolk in late February to talk with our N6 project personnel and actually laid eyes on the hardware – it exists! Test systems have been installed at the Afloat Network Operations Center and the NGW lab, and both "talked" to each other in late February. Ship checks have been done on USNS Grasp and USNS Zeus, our first two prototype installations. The project is on schedule and will be a boon to everyone afloat when it's done. Fleet installations will begin this fall.

AFSB(I)

In late December, the Navy came to us and asked if we could take USS

Ponce, a "retiring" amphibious transport dock, and turn it into an Afloat Forward Staging Base, interim, and, oh, by the way, deploy it by June.

"Of course we can!" I said. "MSC delivers!" USS Ponce will be underway to support forward operations in June with a combined crew of civilian mariners and Navy sailors. As you read this, the ship is finishing up its overhaul in Norfolk, and most of the 142 mariners have reported aboard.

Realignment

I want to point out that our rapid response on Ponce was enhanced by the realignment taking place within the MSC shore establishment. We were able to reach out, touch exactly the right team of people and get the project rolling to meet the Fleet Forces Command deadline. As we continue to refine our internal structure, align our core competencies and streamline our business practices, we will improve our service to our customers throughout Navy and DOD. That will lead to even higher levels of trust that MSC can and does deliver, anyplace, anytime.

Spring: Time to shine

I don't know about you, but I have noticed that we're in some sort of cycle where something big seems to happen early every year that involves MSC. Two years ago it was the quick response to the earthquake in Haiti with more than 20 MSC ships and crews. Last year, it was the earthquake and tsunami in Japan when MSC directly supported the U.S. fleet and activities ashore. This year it was the flurry of coordinated activity revolving around preparing USS Ponce as an interim Afloat Forward Staging Base.

It doesn't seem like that cycle is going to stop any time soon. The fact that we've recently been realigning MSC internally means that we'll be faster, more effective and more efficient in our response to our customers' needs. It's a situation that challenges us continuously, and I'm proud to say that all of you – my shipmates around the world – have come through every time.

It makes me proud to be your commander.

Sail safe and yours aye,

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

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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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Moving forward with ONE MSC



Our ONE MSC realignment work continues, and one important aspect of any organizational change is managing work-related stress during the change. Anxiety can arise when work demands of various types and combinations exceed our capacity and capability to cope, or when we perceive uncertainty in our work future. Each person responds differently to stress stimuli.

However you respond, it can be challenging. You need to take care of yourself during stressful times. When you feel burned out, adrift or even trapped, find ways to de-stress during your day. Focus on positive things. Communicate with your supervisor and colleagues to clarify work concerns. When you get home, unplug your business gadgets. You've got to take care of yourself.

The Navy's Civilian Employee Assistance Program, or CEAP, provides free and confidential assistance to any civilian employee who faces issues, including stress and work-related difficulties, that may have an adverse effect on job performance. MSCHQ civilians in DC may contact CEAP Counselor Kathy Castelo at 202-685-9629; employees in Norfolk may contact Germaine Harris at 757-444-6984; and OCONUS employees may contact their servicing HRO.

I want to reiterate the importance of open communication. I've led several all-hands meetings in Washington, D.C., and in Norfolk, Va. During those sessions, many of you asked good questions, seeking clarity from MSC leadership. That's excellent. We owe you clear, unambiguous answers, and we are committed to providing them.

The focus of realignment is genuinely to have "One MSC" an organization that is effective, efficient, integrated and responsive to our customers. MSC delivers! And that won't change.

MSC full speed ahead on green energy

Command pushes for 20 percent less fuel use by 2020

By Masha Rumer
MSC Public Affairs

Every dollar saved on fuel counts; a concept Military Sealift Command practices as it continues energy-saving efforts across its fleet.

In 2010, MSC received \$18.1 million in Navy funds to make MSC ships more energy efficient, with a commitment of an additional \$133 million, to be distributed from the Navy to MSC by 2016. With the updated technology and changes in practices funded by this initial investment, MSC set out to cut \$357 million in energy costs by 2016 and reduce energy consumption by 20 percent by 2020.

MSC's three-person Energy Conservation Office, headed by Energy Conservation Manager René Fry, is studying ship energy usage, both underway and in port. Research can take months, often with one vessel acting as a prototype for new technology. Once research is complete, Fry oversees implementation of the changes across other ships in that class. Fry's team also frequently recommends behavior changes ships' crew members can make to conserve energy immediately.

2011 projects

Roughly one third the command's "green" funds goes toward MSC's Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo/ammunition ships.

In early 2011, cargo light switches were installed in the five newest ships in the class, which allow the operator to turn off the lights without having to travel to another deck. The two newest ships of the class will join MSC with an efficiency-boosting propeller attachment, known as a boss cap fin. The device, resembling a smaller propeller, redirects excess energy back to the propeller shaft that would have otherwise been wasted.

Coriolos fuel meters were installed on board 10 dry cargo/ammunition ships May to August 2011, which enabled the ships' engineers to monitor engine performance on the fly and make decisions to keep engines loaded in their most economical fuel range. Lewis and Clark received the meters in August 2011.

"The Coriolos fuel meters are a unique device because they allow us to actually measure fuel mass and by doing so can equate fuel mass to kilowatts," Fry said. "We can look at grams of fuel and sit there and plot those things like crazy. If you're a true engineer, you get excited about that stuff."

Another cost-saving strategy, which was implemented fleet-wide starting in 2010, involves connecting to shore power rather than running the ship's generator in port. Lewis and Clark,



U.S. Navy photo by Barry Lake

René Fry



U.S. Navy photo by Art Diaz

Boss cap fins, like the one pictured here on MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers, redirect excess energy from the propeller, otherwise wasted, back to the propeller shaft.

for instance, can run up a fuel tab of more than \$17,000 a day while in port, said Charles Robertson, the ship's chief engineer. Plugging into shore power reduces costs

by about \$6,000.

"If we're going to be anywhere for more than a day, then we request shore power connection," Robertson said.

In addition to the improvements being made to MSC's dry cargo/ammunition ships, MSC also upgraded the boiler control systems on board MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon in August 2011 and MPF ship USNS SGT Matej Kocak in December 2011. This resulted in a 5 percent fuel efficiency increase on board both ships.

Other T-AKE upgrades

From 2010 through the start of 2012, Fry supervised several major studies and technological updates to the Lewis and Clark Class.

While analyzing energy usage aboard USNS Robert E Peary in 2010, the team discovered that air conditioning frequently cooled the spaces so much that the drop in temperature prompted heaters to turn on to maintain a consistent temperature. To solve the problem, USNS Lewis and Clark has upgraded to new heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in its habitability, cargo and engine room spaces.

"This is a huge deal," Robertson said. "Instead of running the motor at 100 percent speed, you might run it at 25 or 30 percent speed to get the same required heating or cooling."

Should results from testing, slated for April, demonstrate energy savings, this system will be installed on board the other MSC dry cargo/ammunition ships.

Another upgrade included a February propeller makeover for MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea. Rather than cleaning the ship's propellers every three months at \$30,000 per cleaning, the

propellers were coated with special paint. Known as foul-release paint, it casts off slime and other marine growth that reduces propeller efficiency and consumes more fuel. Navy studies show that a cleaner propeller can save up to 6 percent in fuel costs, Fry said.

Fry's team is also looking for the perfect trim, or the balance of ship's cargo from bow to stern, for various speeds. Since 2011, Fry has tested the optimum relationship between the two, with data showing up to 8 percent fuel savings when proper trim is achieved. The goal of

this study, slated for June completion, is to provide ship masters with a placard with the recommended trim for each speed.

"When you're riding in your car down the freeway, there's a place in your car under the right circumstances where you feel good in the car and the car feels good to you," explained Fry. "It's the same way on a ship. There's a place in the engine room where the engines are running their most efficient. If you can bring the engines and the hull to that magic spot, you have maximum efficiency."



U.S. Navy photo by John Massey

Left: Foul-release paint added to MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea's propellers drastically reduces marine growth on the propellers. The paint job is anticipated to save \$30,000 on the cleaning bill every three months.

Below: An upgraded refrigeration motor on MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark is part of a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system that maintains a consistent temperature with less energy.



U.S. Navy photo by René Fry

Despite challenges, Green Wave

By James Marconi, MSC Public Affairs

Fifty-seven years of experience participating in the annual supply run to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, has taught Military Sealift Command well that operational conditions can shift as rapidly as the Antarctic weather.

MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Peary and MSC-chartered dry cargo ship MV Green Wave successfully delivered food, fuel and other supplies to McMurdo Station as part of Operation Deep Freeze, the resupply mission currently led by Joint Task Force - Support Forces Antarctica.

Two MSC ships have made the trip each year since 1955, when the remote National Science Foundation outpost was established, to deliver vital cargo such as food and fuel.

There is no such thing as a routine mission to this extreme environment, where thick ice and frigid temperatures block the path of the critical supplies carried by MSC ships. Delivery difficulties were even more complex this year for Green Wave's 6.8 million pounds of cargo, including research equipment, which had to be off-loaded without the usual ice pier used to bridge the gap from ship to shore.

Cargo delivery planning

Typically, the MSC cargo ship off-loads its valuable cargo at a 500-foot ice pier that juts out from the Antarctic coast. This year's mission was one of the more challenging in the last two decades, as the ice pier at McMurdo was unusable for dry cargo operations. In the process of constructing a new, improved ice pier, it became clear that the requisite amount of ice to handle the weight of Green Wave's cargo would not accumulate on the pier's surface in time for the mission.

Canceling the ship's trip, though, was

not an option.

During this single mission, MSC ships deliver 100 percent of the fuel and about 80 percent of the supplies that researchers and support personnel who live and work in Antarctica need for the upcoming year.

"MSC's Operation Deep Freeze support is truly a 'no failure accepted' mission," said Tim McCully, deputy commander of MSC Pacific, which oversees MSC operations across the Eastern Pacific Ocean, including McMurdo. "Without the fuel, food and other support materials delivered by our chartered ships, researchers could not continue their operations through the brutal Antarctic winter."

The National Science Foundation proposed using a portable, floating pier capable of being broken down and

transported by Green Wave as an alternate solution in lieu of the ice pier. This type of equipment is highly specialized, but was available from the U.S. Army's 331st Transportation Company (Causeway), which deployed 41 personnel from Virginia to McMurdo to assemble and operate the pier, called a Modular Causeway System, or MCS.

The company prepared the pieces of the MCS in December 2011 for transport via truck from Virginia to California, where the entire system was loaded aboard Green Wave. The ship underwent a standard, rigorous, MSC-led inspection later that month to ensure the ship's readiness to complete its mission. Bill Wright, part of MSC's Ship Inspection Branch, stayed with the ship until mid-January to supervise emergent repairs that needed to be made before Green Wave's departure Jan. 11 from Port Hueneme.

Making the delivery

Prior to Green Wave's arrival Feb. 13, Maersk Peary – following a Russian icebreaker ship – brought more than 6.3 million gallons of crucial diesel, gasoline and jet fuel to McMurdo Station Jan. 28-31.

"The tanker portion went very well; there was great cooperation with the icebreaker and cargo ops went off without a hitch," said John Joerger, tanker project officer at MSC headquarters. "We had no weather delays, which meant that the tanker was in and out rapidly and did not impede the dry cargo operations."

Green Wave, meanwhile, got underway to Antarctica Feb. 6 and like Maersk Peary, faced one final obstacle to reaching McMurdo. Although Maersk Peary and Green Wave have hulls designed to withstand the pressure of ice, both ships were escorted through a 15-mile ice channel – in some places more than 13 feet thick – by an icebreaker that carved a safe path to the station.



U.S. Army photo by GPT Christina Shelton



U.S. Navy photo by Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Nelson Doromal

OPERATION

Green Wave delivers for

Once Green Wave safely arrived at McMurdo Station, the 331st Transportation Company personnel went to work off-loading the MCS, now the key to successfully transporting supplies from ship to shore.

Although most of the interlocking pieces of the MCS had to be assembled on the scene, the company saved four days of work in California by pre-assembling the powered modular warping tugs that helped anchor the system, said Army Capt. Christina Shelton, who led the team.

That time-saving procedure still left the two-and-a-half-day assembly of 24 individual causeway modules comprising a 40-foot piece and two 20-foot pieces on each end. In transport aboard Green Wave, those end pieces were folded on top of the larger piece, connected only by a device similar to a hinge. Shelton's team linked the modules together with locking pins after the modules were unfolded and placed in the water.

"Nothing really prepares you for those temperatures and that wind. For us in particular, there is no place for us to take cover or warm up," said Shelton. "Since things were freezing and ice was getting in between the modules, it was becoming a little bit difficult to get the locking pins into place. We

"MSC's Operation Deep Freeze support is truly a 'no failure accepted' mission."

Tim McCully, deputy commander, MSC Pacific

had to do all that manually."

Powered by the same cold-weather fuel used at McMurdo, the warping tugs helped anchor the MCS in place aided by cables attached to bollards and heavy bulldozers ashore.

"The members of the 331st Transportation Company really stepped up to this challenge," said Timothy Pickering, cargo project officer at MSC headquarters.

"The talented men and women in the unit deployed this very unique capability, allowing our ship to accomplish its vital mission."

After the causeway was ready, approximately 60 Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One personnel worked around-the-clock for eight days to off-load Green Wave's cargo, then load the ship with 391

pieces of cargo for transportation off the continent, including ice core samples carried back to the United States in sub-zero freezer containers. The ship also took on trash and recyclable materials for disposal.

"This year the surface mission was truly a joint effort," said Larry Larsson, the MSC cargo operations officer who oversaw Green Wave's offload. "MSC, Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One and the Army's 331st Transportation Company delivered."

Shelton's transportation company repacked the MCS, although without needing to refold all the modules. Cargo operations ended Feb. 24, and Green Wave departed McMurdo Station Feb. 25.

"We felt great," Shelton said. "When we were told what this was all about, what the National Science Foundation does there, the supplies that they rely on, we were really excited and privileged to get to support that."



Photo courtesy of the crew of MT Maersk Peary

Above: MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Peary discharges more than 6 million gallons of vital fuel to McMurdo Station in late January.

Opposite page: Army Sergeant First Class Jacob VanDyke, Specialist Alpan Risvanoglu and Specialist Eric Burmeister, part of the Army's 331st Transportation Company (Causeway) disassemble a portion of the Modular Causeway System.

Background: Navy cargo-handling personnel off-load Green Wave after the Modular Causeway System was assembled and ready to handle heavy loads.

ATION DEEP FREEZE

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command ships operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility conducted 98 underway replenishments in February, allowing U.S. combatant ships and 43 allied ships to remain at sea for extended periods.

MSC-chartered cargo ship MV BBC Houston successfully delivered an Iraqi patrol boat to Bahrain Feb. 14 for reactivation and further transfer to Iraq. BBC Houston continued to Kuwait where it loaded 225 pieces of cargo

Feb. 15-18 for redeployment back to the United States. The patrol boat is the most recent of eight MSC has delivered since December 2010.

MSC Central/Commander Task Force 53 bid fair winds and following seas to Navy **Lt. Mark Miner** and Navy petty officers 1st class **Kelli Weems** and **Charles Wardlaw**.

MSCCENT/CTF 53 welcomes Navy **Lt. j.g. Christopher Sacks** and Navy petty officers 2nd class **Lettoya Fowler** and **Jessica Macias**.



U.S. Navy photo by MCC John Lili

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd conducts an underway replenishment with amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island Feb. 21 in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Sean Martin

Explosive ordnance disposal technicians from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3 rappel onto MSC fast combat support ship USNS Bridge Feb. 22, during a visit, board, search and seizure training event in the Arabian Sea.

EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha alternated in-port periods at Souda Bay, Greece, and Augusta Bay, Italy, to load fuel, food and cargo for forces afloat in February. As the single combat logistics force ship in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility, Kanawha conducted nine underway replenishments at sea with guided-missile destroyers USS Carney, USS The Sullivans and USS Arleigh Burke; guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf; and frigates USS De Wert and USS Taylor.

Kanawha participated in Exercise Proud Manta 12, NATO's largest anti-submarine warfare exercise, Feb. 14-18. Proud Manta took place in the Ionian Sea to the southeast of Sicily with forces from Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. The exercise was designed to demonstrate NATO's proficiency and to improve interoperability

in coordinated anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, coastal surveillance and other maritime operations using a multinational force of ships, submarines and aircraft.

Capt. Walter Nullet replaced **Capt. Jim Dolan** as Kanawha's civil service master Feb. 23 while in port at Souda Bay.

MSC command ship USS Mount Whitney conducted local operations Feb. 23-26 in the central Mediterranean Sea.

In sealift operations, MSC-chartered cargo ship MV Ocean Charger transited the Mediterranean carrying retrograde cargo from the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility to the United States. MSC-chartered roll-on/roll-off ship MV Green Lake entered the area en route from Diego Garcia to the U.S. carrying equipment for the U.S. Marine Corps. MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Rhode Island transferred Department of Defense aviation fuel between ports in the European area of operations.

COMPASS • HEADING

As of March, a total of 5,459 civil service mariners have earned Global War on Terrorism medals. A fourth eligibility review will be conducted in April.

Military Sealift Fleet Support Command completed its first ordnance block training January through February, which aligned six required ordnance training courses end-to-end, accelerating qualified CIVMARs for ammunition cargo mate positions. Fifteen officers completed the block training curriculum; 10 are being directly assigned to shipboard positions, while the remaining five gained additional experience and training by observing an early March loading of MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply. Port Captain East **Capt. George McCarthy** and **Neafie Buck**, ordnance programs training specialist, were instrumental in coordinating the training, which the command plans to repeat in June.

Tracy Mabry has volunteered to serve as ombudsman for the com-

mand's military members. Mabry previously served in a similar position from 2000-2002, supporting the families of Mobile Diving Salvage Unit 2 during the bombing of USS Cole and on 9/11. She volunteered again 2009-2011 as the MDSU 2 ombudsman during the highest tempo of operations in the unit's history. Anyone needing her assistance can reach her via the email listed on the command's Internet contact page at <http://www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/default.asp?page=contact>.

The command wishes fair winds and following seas to Utilityman **Alexis Reyes**, **Medical Services Officer Cesar Grados**, **Capt. Greig Hague** and **Able Seaman Herbert Heyward** on their retirements.

The command offers condolences to the family of **Boatswain Rolando Masferre**, who passed away in early February.

For more civil service mariner news view the on-line newsletter at www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, presented Navy **Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Leopold Brandenburg** Feb. 29 with the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal recognizing Brandenburg's selection as MSC headquarters 2011 Blue Jacket of the Year. The award reflects Brandenburg's professional achievements, including his work to track and report medical readiness for MSC personnel worldwide.

MSC, the Seafarers International Union, the Marine Engineers' Beneficiary Association and the International Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots met Jan. 30 to Feb. 3 as part of negotiations to revise Civilian Marine Personnel Instruction 610, "Hours of Work and Premium Pay."

The MSC team included lead negotiator **Re-nee Desrosiers**, maritime forces and manpower management; **David Townsend**, office of counsel; as well as **Constance Halleen**, **Andrew Lefebvre** and **Atlee Ladao**, maritime forces and manpower management. Civil service masters **Capt. Randall Rockwood** and **Capt. David Gommo**; and chief engineer **James Sullivan** and **Jamie Shine** also participated. The parties are nearing completion of negotiations, coming to consensus on most outstanding general provi-

sions. Negotiations with individual unions also took place in February and March, bringing issues specific to the bargaining unit nearer to resolution. Financial analysis continues with all parties to determine the economic impact of alterations to the language.

MSC headquarters welcomes Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Barnes** and Navy **Operations Specialist First Class Jonathan McMillion**, operations; **Eric Percival**, command, control, communications and computer systems; **Jason Hicks** and **Jacob Miller**, engineering; **Andre Jones**, office of the comptroller; and **Patrick Nagel**, strategic planning.

The command bids fair winds and following seas to **Patricia Larson**, public affairs; Navy **Lt. Jonathan Harmer** and Navy **Operations Specialist 1st Class Antonio Herring**, operations.



U.S. Navy photo by Barry Lake

Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby presents Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Leopold Brandenburg with a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medal Feb. 29.

ATLANTIC • LINES

Military Sealift Command Atlantic supported Exercise Bold Alligator 2012 Jan 31 to Feb 12, the largest multinational amphibious assault drill in more than a decade. Navy **Capt. Samuel Norton**, commander, MSCLANT, witnessed the launches of 12 Marine Corps amphibious assault vehicles from MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon Feb. 7.

MSCLANT Marine Transportation Specialist **Brian Hill** and **Josh Skinner**, marine transportation intern, supervised Obregon loading the AAVs and other cargo Feb. 2-5 in Newport News, Va. Hill and Skinner also assisted MSC aviation logistics support ship SS Wright loading its cargo.

In February, marine transportation specialists at MSCLANT's Beaumont, Texas office performed an on-hire survey for newly chartered MSC tanker MT Conti Greenland, which loaded nearly 129,000 barrels of fuel in Houston. The team also assisted MSC-chartered tanker MV Houston loading more than 233,000 barrels of fuel in Houston.

Joe Guivas, lead marine transportation specialist in Beaumont, and **Jack Davis**, marine transportation specialist,

acted as MSC liaisons to the Defense Logistics Agency in February for a future initiative integrating commercial jet fuel rather than specialized jet fuel into the fuel supply chain for the U.S. Air Force.

John Gregov, MSCLANT's marine transportation specialist in Port Canaveral, Fla., provided technical operational briefings and accompanied **Chris Thayer**, director, Contractor Operated Ships, to the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island, Bahamas, Feb. 16-18. MSC-chartered tug and barge T/B Megan Beyel/MOBRO resupplies the center weekly. Gregov also supported and coordinated MV Houston's delivery of 70,000 barrels of fuel to Naval Station Key West, Fla., Feb. 28-29.

At MSCLANT's port office in Charleston, S.C., **Tom D'Agostino**, director of ship operations, oversaw MV Houston discharge 164,000 barrels of fuel Feb. 25-26. Marine Transportation Specialist **Mary Ann Liberto**, also of the Charleston office, coordinated logistics for the shipyard arrivals of MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman Feb. 1 and MSC fast combat support ship USNS Arctic Feb. 15.

Fourteen Navy Junior Reserve



U.S. Navy photo by Barry Harvey

Nine Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets from Cherokee High School in Marlton, N.J., sail aboard MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply in February. Fourteen cadets total sailed Feb. 25-27 from Norfolk, Va., to Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J. From left, **Nikolett Geczko**, **Frances McGrath**, **Michael Strzelczyk**, **James Witkoski**, **Kirsten McKenney**, **James Taylor**, **Anthony Marrazzo**, **Thomas Bolen** and **John Archer**.

Officer Training Corps cadets from Cherokee High School in Marlton, N.J., sailed aboard MSC fast combat support ship USNS Supply Feb. 25-27 for its voyage from Norfolk, Va., to Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J.

Capt. William Thomas, Supply's civil service master, hosted the group and provided ship tours and other activities to familiarize the students with seamanship skills such as ship navigation, basic damage control training,

engineering and bridge operations.

Dean Doolittle, MSCLANT's marine transportation specialist in Jacksonville, Fla., led a tour of MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS SGT Matej Kocak Feb. 23 for two members of Florida Senator William Nelson's staff. The staff members visited Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island Command for indoctrination briefings on the Marine Corps prepositioning program.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kathleen Gorby

With MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple providing a stable platform, Navy divers 2nd class **Christopher Gaines** and **Kyle Weiss** of Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2, Company 2-1, support divers searching the bay Feb. 29 at Cartagena, Colombia, during the annual multinational exercise Southern Partnership Station.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Capt. Sylvester Moore**, commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific, and Navy **Lt. Cmdr Bob Rieger**, MSCPAC/Commander Task Force 33 scheduler, attended the Rim of the Pacific Commanders Conference in Esquimalt, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Feb. 6-10. The conference continued planning for the bi-annual, multinational maritime exercise held off the coast of Hawaii, scheduled for this summer.

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser hosted 60 Executive Leadership Development Program students Feb. 15. While underway for the day, these future senior government leaders observed a refueling event with MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon. Participants also received a briefing by **Rick Appling**,

MSC deputy operations officer, detailing MSC's global mission and operational requirements. The underway opportunity aboard Kaiser was part of a 10-day Navy and Marine Corps training cycle held in San Diego. MSCPAC has supported the Executive Leadership Development Program for many years through MSC information briefs and tours of MSC ships.

MSCPAC welcomes Navy **Personnel Specialist 1st Class Zamone Bennett**. Bennett joins Ship Support Unit San Diego's military detachment.

MSCPAC bids farewell to Navy **Personnel Specialist 2nd Class Mark Mojica**, Ship Support Unit San Diego's military detachment, as he departs for duty aboard aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, homeported in Everett, Wash.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy Rear Adm. Thomas Carney, Commander, Logistics Group, Western Pacific and Commander Task Force 73, visited MSC missile range instrumentation ship USNS Observation Island at Sembawang shipyard in Singapore Mar. 1, hosted by civilian master **Capt. Robert Weichert**. Observation Island was undergoing routine maintenance at the time.

From Singapore, civilian **Capt. Richard Gordon**, prospective master of MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS Mary Sears, met with Navy **Capt. Charles Denman**, commander, MSC Far East, and staff members at MSCFE Feb. 17 for an orientation visit before reporting aboard the ship.

Air Force Col. John Parker, director of operations, Air Force Technical Applications Center, met with Denman and Special Mission ship officer Navy **Lt. John Genzler** Mar. 1 at MSCFE. AFTAC is the technical sponsor for USNS Observation Island.

U.S. Navy pilots from Guam-based Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 con-

ducted deck-landing qualifications aboard MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS 1ST LT Harry L. Martin off the coast of Guam Feb. 13. Flying MH-60S Knighthawk helicopters, U.S. Navy pilots completed a total of 12 day and 30 night landings on the ship's flight deck. Martin is

assigned to MPS Squadron Three.

In the Republic of Korea, MSC's Busan office welcomes three new staff members: Navy **Electronics Technician 1st Class Chad Loy** as communications officer, Navy **Logistics Specialist 1st Class John Dobson** as supply officer and Navy Reserve **Information Technology 1st Class Michael Robinette** for a six-month assignment with the command's communications department.

In the central Indian Ocean, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two welcomes force protection officer Navy **Lt. j.g. Kendra Attaway** and Navy **Operations Specialist Chief Rodney Alexander**, assistant operations officer.

The command also welcomes Navy **Lt. Ben Thornton**, executive officer at MSC Office Diego Garcia, and bids fair winds and following seas to the former executive officer, Navy **Lt. Tony Butcher**.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Kenneth Abbate

MSC fleet replenishment oiler **Walter S. Diehl** and guided-missile cruiser **USS Mobile Bay** sail alongside aircraft carrier **USS John C. Stennis** Feb. 3 during underway replenishments in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

Sioux provides platform for SALVEX

By Sarah E. Burford
MSCPAC Public Affairs

Building on a relationship first forged in 2005, U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One, Indian navy divers and the civil service mariner crew of Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux teamed up Feb. 8-17 for a bilateral, cross-cultural training exercise off the coast of Hawaii.

The exercise, known as a salvage exchange, is part of an ongoing program between the United States and India that allows divers from the two nations to train annually together in a non-mission environment. The nations alternate serving as host. In 2011 diving teams worked off the coast of Port Blair, capital of the Andaman Islands, an Indian territory. U.S. Navy divers are slated to return to India in 2013.

Throughout the course of nine days, the divers familiarized themselves with each other's equipment and procedures. Classroom time provided an overview of safety procedures, various tools and techniques used in salvage missions, and an overview of the diving scenarios to be conducted in the actual underwater operations phase from the decks of the Sioux. As in years past, SALVEX's ultimate goal is to strengthen relationships and streamline operations for potential missions between the U.S. and Indian navies.

"It's really interesting working with a foreign navy," said Navy Cmdr. Thomas Murphy, MDSU-1 commanding officer. "The United States is very fortunate to have the rescue and salvage equipment and training opportunities that we have at our disposal. Being able to share these with our allied navies makes it a win-win for everyone. It's also interesting to see

just how alike we all are."

MSC fleet ocean tugs like Sioux are excellent platforms for SALVEX training of this type. The ships' wide fantails provide large, stable deck spaces that can be used as an on-site launch platform for divers.

Using a two-point anchor moor, Sioux's crew securely positioned the ship over the dive site, providing a safe platform for the divers to work at various depths. The moor also provided a shield from the wind and waves, giving the divers calmer seas. Once dive operations were underway, Sioux's crew provided crane support to assist divers in and out of the water and to move equipment.

With the dive platform secured by Sioux's crew, the combined team of divers set to work training with a submerged, decommissioned yard tug boat. The training included a Hot Tap, an environmentally friendly procedure for removing fuel from a sunken ship by attaching hoses to the fuel storage areas and pumping it to the surface. In addition, the divers trained with remotely operated underwater vehicles and side-scan sonar.

"Being able to train with the foreign navies we work with, allows us to build good working relationships that will be extremely valuable down the line," said Puglia. "When the request for support comes, we will be able to jump right in and work with each other and see the mission through to a successful completion."

Extra people aboard Sioux during the salvage exchange required



Sharma jumps from Sioux for dive training Feb. 13, part of nine days of classroom review and live dive scenarios for 12 Indian divers and six U.S. divers.

additional logistical planning and consideration on the CIVMAR side. During the exercise, Sioux's crew hosted the 12 Indian divers and six MDSU-1 divers. This included providing accommodations and meals, as well as working around the additional people on the decks while continuing to meet all the requirements of maintaining the ship.

"MSC makes exercises like this possible for us," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Puglia, MDSU-1 operations officer. "Being able to bring our gear onboard and have someone else get us out to the dive site makes things easy for us. It lets us focus on the mission tasking we're trained for."



Indian navy Leading Seaman Clearance Diver 2nd Class YK Sharma prepares to dive from MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux off the coast of Oahu, Hawaii, during the annual Salvage Exercise between the U.S. and Indian navies, Feb. 8-17.

USNS Comfort preps for Norfolk layberth shift

By Kim Dixon
MSC Public Affairs

Mainstay in Baltimore Harbor since it entered Navy service in 1987, Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort will relocate to Naval Station Norfolk, Va., in 2013.

Operated by MSC civil service mariners, known as CIVMARs, with a medical treatment facility staffed with Navy personnel, Comfort provides an afloat, mobile, acute-surgical medical facility to the U.S. military. As a secondary mission, the ship provides a full-service hospital asset in support of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance missions worldwide.

The CIVMARs and medical personnel assigned to the ship in its reduced operating status say that while they have an attachment to Baltimore, they understand the advantages of the move.

"We have a relationship with Baltimore, and it will be a sad day to leave," said Navy Capt. David Weiss, commanding officer of Comfort's Medical Treatment Facility. "I've enjoyed living in Baltimore County, but the Department of Defense is obligated to look at things most efficiently."

The current layberth contract for

Comfort ends in May 2013. Navy leadership made the decision to shift the vessel to a military pier in Norfolk for a number of reasons, including an estimated savings of \$1.7 million in the initial year, with a \$2.1 million annual savings in succeeding years. Improved access to military facilities for the 59 permanent military members assigned to the ship; better use of the naval logistics hub and industrial base in Norfolk; and a reduction in transit time to typical mission areas were also considered.

"As the ship's master, I can tell you there are definite advantages to being in Norfolk," said civil service master Capt. Randall Rockwood. "Being in Norfolk literally gets us 12 hours closer to anywhere we need to go. As fast as the ship can leave the dock here in Baltimore after receiving deployment orders, we still have a 12 hour transit to get to the Atlantic. Just like our recent mission to Haiti after their massive earthquake, being 12 hours closer to arriving in the area of need can be significant."

Since 2007, Comfort has served prominently as a platform for humanitarian and civic assistance missions throughout the Caribbean Sea, Central America and South America as part of Operation Continuing Promise, an

annual mission providing medical, dental, veterinary and engineering support in those regions. The mission also provides subject-matter expert exchanges and foreign disaster relief training. Comfort has deployed during odd-numbered years, with shipboard medical personnel treating more than 265,000 people during three missions. Comfort's sister ship, USNS Mercy, deploys during the alternate even-numbered years on a similar mission, Pacific Partnership.

When not actively deployed, Com-

fort is kept in a reduced operating status with 22 civil service mariners and 59 U.S. military personnel maintaining the ship in a high state of readiness. When activated, Comfort can transition to full operating status in five days with an increase in crew size to 71 civil service mariners and 1,215 Navy medical personnel.

Comfort is the third Navy ship to bear its name. Like Mercy, Comfort was built as an oil tanker in 1976. After substantial renovations, Comfort delivered to MSC Dec. 1, 1987.



MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort, seen here in Costa Rica, is slated to move its layberth from Baltimore to Naval Station Norfolk, Va., in 2013.