

January 2012

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Navy Diver Chief Cory Hall checks the atmospheric levels inside a sealed chamber connecting Chilean submarine CS Carrera to a pressurized rescue module Nov. 3 during exercise CHILEMAR III.

HOS Dominator anchors submarine rescue exercise



INSIDE — Henson completes visit to Indonesia • USNS Medgar Evers christened

Happy 2012 - another year to excel!

Happy New Year to all! By the time you read this, we will be into the new year, a year which promises to bring its share of challenges, but also opportunities to serve the fleet even better than we did last year. I hope you were able to spend some quality time over the holidays with your loved ones; or if you were at sea, you had a quiet watch.

MSC: A good place to work

I always believed that this was true, but now there's more actual proof. MSC – afloat and ashore – is one of the “Best Places To Work” in the federal government. The latest survey by the Partnership for Public Service reports that MSC is ranked second only to the Office of Naval Research in the overall index score of employee satisfaction and commitment in all of the Navy. Among women, MSC was the top-scoring outfit in all of DOD! And, in the category of Employee Skills/Mission Match, we were the top-scoring command in all of the Department of the Navy.

Our ranking, which was better than most agency subcomponents throughout the entire federal government, indicates a command-wide commitment to our people and to executing our mission. That's the environment you helped create and continue to foster at our world-wide locations.

I think that is something we can all be proud of. We're far from perfect, but we are doing a pretty darn good job.

DEOMI surveys

Speaking of the work environment you help create, the results of the recent Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute surveys, both afloat and ashore, should be ready to publish very soon. Next month, the entire edition of Sealift will be devoted to showing you the survey results – where you think we're doing well and where we need work.

The response from shipmates afloat almost doubled from the first survey a couple of years ago, and I thank you for that. Despite difficulties with both the online and mail-in versions of the survey, you found a way to get your voice heard. The shoreside response was significantly higher, too. Thanks to all of you who participated. You help me and the MSC senior leadership stay on top of issues that are important to you and the things that affect your quality of life.

“Code Blue” for DOD budget

When the congressional “super committee” couldn't reach agreement in November, DOD's budget cuts went from the \$450 billion identified in the deficit reduction agreement in August to an additional \$500 billion over the next 10 years. We don't have details on how that will affect MSC yet and won't for a while, but when we get them, we'll pass them on to you.

Our basic aim is to maintain the capabilities, the “wholeness” of the MSC fleet, so we can respond to mission requests in any budget environment. Navy and USTRANSCOM tasking will drive us, so we need to be ready.

In the coming weeks and months, there will be much high-level strategizing over how best to serve U.S. interests around the globe, and the role that naval forces will play. MSC will obviously be impacted by those decisions, but it is just too early to speculate what will happen. Right now, no one really knows for sure. There are just as many scenarios that



U.S. Navy photo by Barry Lake

Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command, leads a town hall meeting Dec. 5 with personnel from MSC headquarters. The town hall meeting was the second in a series of discussions to highlight command-wide changes related to ONE MSC.

could call for an expanded MSC as there are for a smaller fleet.

Back when we first began talking about realignment under the ONE MSC banner, our basic premise was that we needed to prepare in advance for the eventuality of a rapidly changing mission.

We are way ahead in meeting the challenges of the future because of our advance planning. We're an agile force, and that's been a hallmark of this organization for years. I'm confident going into the future. Read more about where we are with ONE MSC in the accompanying article on this page.

Bold Alligator

Exercise Bold Alligator 2012 will be the largest multinational amphibious exercise in the past 10 years. In January, a brigade-size amphibious assault will launch from a sea base off the U.S. East Coast in a simulated medium-threat environment. Participants will include a carrier strike group, amphibious readiness groups and ships from several allied nations.

MSC will strongly support the exercise. Aviation logistics ship SS Wright

will be activated to support the repair of rotary and fixed-wing Marine Corps aircraft. Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon will launch amphibious assault vehicles at sea and will use the amphibious bulk liquid transfer system to support Marine Corps ground forces by pumping fuel and water ashore. Dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary and fleet replenishment oilers USNS John Lenthall and USNS Laramie will provide fleet logistics service during the exercise.

This is definitely a “train like you'll fight” exercise that will improve all our skills and capabilities, and none of it happens without MSC.

WESTPAC visit

Let me finish up this month with a quick recap of my trip to visit MSC forces in the Western Pacific Ocean.

The trip began in San Diego where I helped christen our newest dry cargo/ammunition ship, USNS Medgar Evers, the 13th of our capable T-AKEs. An unusually soggy day in San Diego, but

a proud day for Capt. Rollin Bellfi and his crew. From there, it was off to Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Guam, Saipan and back to MSC headquarters. Sixteen airplane rides, 15 MSC ship visits and almost 1,000 MSC shipmates in 11 days.

The MSC shipmates I talked with were in excellent spirits, and the MSC ships I visited were being maintained exceptionally well, and that goes for all the PM1, PM2 and PM3 ships I crawled through.

A special salute to the crew of USS Frank Cable for the incredible work they've done to turn that ship around since it joined the MSC fleet. The difference in that ship since I visited last year is just remarkable and speaks to the tremendous effort and thousands of manhours that have been expended. I am very proud of you, Shipmates!

I am reminded of a quote attributed to Sir Winston Churchill years ago when he said, “Difficulties mastered are opportunities won.” I look forward to joining with you all in this coming year as we win many opportunities. MSC delivers! Happy New Year.

Yours Aye,

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

Moving forward with ONE MSC



I recently held a second round of town hall-style meetings at MSFSC and MSCHQ to update our shipmates ashore on the state of our realignment.

The feasibility study on consolidating MSC headquarters and MSFSC has been funded and will begin in January. It will take about six to eight months to complete and will investigate a number of options, from maintaining the status quo, to renovating or converting existing facilities, to leasing or building space in the Norfolk area. Based on the outcome, we'll look at alternatives and make decisions, probably in late 2012, on how to move ahead. Whatever happens, it will be quite some time before anything actually happens, and anything that does take place will have to be approved all the way up the Navy chain of command.

On the reassignment of Senior Executive Service duties and responsibilities, we're still waiting for final approval, but upon receipt of the final signature we'll begin the actions. This first step will place all MSC human resources activities under Eileen Roberson, all of MSC's government-operated ships under Jack Taylor, and all of MSC's contractor-operated ships under Chris Thayer. At the same time, MSC ship support units will begin reporting directly to their area commands.

In the meantime, you can ask questions about the ONE MSC realignment process by sending an e-mail to MSC-Future@navy.mil. Or, you can visit our new blog, Thackrah's Thoughts, on the MSC portal at <https://www.mysealift.msc.navy.mil/sites/n01/mscfutures/default.aspx>.

Stay involved. Stay current. Don't rely on hearsay. Don't listen to rumors. If you've got a question, ask someone who knows the answer.

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Bob Hope trains with lighterage system

By Sarah E. Burford
MSCPAC Public Affairs

In the waters off stereotypically sunny San Diego, Military Sealift Command, large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Bob Hope served as a cost-saving training platform Nov. 9-10 for the Navy amphibious warriors of Expeditionary Strike Group 3 during Exercise Brilliant Tern.

Brilliant Tern was designed to improve the skills necessary for the movement of equipment and supplies from ship to shore in support of Maritime Prepositioning Force ships. The exercise also focused on command-and-control functions during this transport. Expeditionary Strike Group 3 subordinate commands Naval Beach Group 1, Amphibious Cargo Battalion 1 and Beach Master Unit 1 participated in the exercise, using the 949-foot Bob Hope to train in conjunction with the Improved Navy Lighterage System, or INLS.

The INLS includes two components. The roll-on/roll-off discharge facility, or RRDF, is a large, floating platform positioned at the base of a ship's ramp, like Bob Hope's, so that wheeled and tracked vehicles can be easily driven out of the ship's cargo holds and off the ship. Causeway ferries, or motorized watercraft, can then be positioned alongside the RRDF and used to transport the off-loaded vehicles or containerized cargo from the RRDF to shore.

Bob Hope is ideally suited for transport of large combat gear and is a superb platform for the training needs of Brilliant Tern. The ship, a surge LMSR, is kept in reduced operating status as a mobilization resource until activated to support surge sealift requirements during a crisis. With decks designed specifically for heavy loads, the ship is typically used for point-



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Jasmine Sheard

Sailors assigned to Beach Master Unit 1 use an amphibious vessel called a LARC to check beach conditions, including holes and sandbars, before landing the Improved Navy Lighterage System during Exercise Brilliant Tern, Nov. 9-10. The INLS loaded cargo from MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Bob Hope.

to-point transportation of out-sized military equipment like tanks, trucks and Humvees. Bob Hope's seven decks have a 380,000 square-foot cargo-carrying capacity equivalent to more than six football fields, with interior ramps between decks to facilitate the movement of cargo on board. A slewing stern ramp and a movable ramp that services two side ports on the ship make it easy to drive vehicles on or off the ship onto a receiving platform. The ship also has two 110-ton single pedestal twin cranes that can be used for loading or off-loading cargo.

For Brilliant Tern, Bob Hope provided a geographically convenient site for conducting the training exercise with the INLS. In port, just across the bay from Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Bob Hope's nearby location allowed local units to train close to home.

Typically, an exercise like Brilliant Tern would involve significant time and travel to one of three MPF squadrons worldwide in the Western Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean or

the Mediterranean Sea. Conducting Brilliant Tern in a more accessible location saved travel time and related travel expenses.

Bob Hope has been similarly used for training purposes multiple times in 2011, including an early December exercise when ACB 1 and the ship practiced with the INLS and Bob Hope's stern ramp.

During Brilliant Tern, the INLS departed from the piers at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado and transited more than a mile across San Diego Bay to Naval Base San Diego. Upon arrival, the INLS maneuvered alongside Bob Hope, and the ship then craned shipping containers onto the INLS. In addition, 20 pieces of rolling stock, including trucks, were driven onto the INLS for transport back to the Naval Amphibious Base Coronado beach. Before off-loading the INLS, Beach Master Unit 1 used an amphibious vessel called a LARC to check beach conditions, including holes and sandbars.

"Having a ship like Bob Hope

right here in our own back yard is a win-win all around," said Lt. Cmdr. Jessica O'Brien, Navy Beach Group One MPF officer. "It's a great training platform, but it was also accessible throughout pre-planning. I have had the opportunity to meet with the ship's master to discuss issues face-to-face throughout the pre-planning and the mission, which makes for a much smoother operation all around."

While the military units conducted valuable training, Bob Hope's civilian mariner crew members – who work for a private company under charter to MSC – were also in a learning mode, honing their working relationships with Navy military personnel and becoming more familiar with the INLS.

"I love exercises like this one," said Bob Hope's civilian master, Capt. Bob Silva. "Anytime we get to train with the military units we work with is a good opportunity for us. It gives us another chance to test ourselves and to make sure all of us are on the same page when mission time comes."

Newest T-AKE christened Medgar Evers Ship name honors slain civil rights leader, a U.S. Army veteran

By Sarah E. Burford
MSC Pacific Public Affairs

With the traditional words, "I christen you USNS Medgar Evers," Myrlie Evers-Williams, the widow of the ship's namesake, broke the traditional bottle of champagne against the bow of the ship during a morning ceremony Nov. 12 at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego.

Evers, the newest ship in the U.S. Navy's Lewis and Clark-class of dry cargo/ammunition ships owned and operated by Military Sealift Command, was launched Oct. 29 and is scheduled for delivery to MSC in spring 2012.

Designated T-AKE 13, the 689-foot ship continues the Lewis and Clark-class tradition of honoring legendary pioneers and explorers. The ship is named in honor of slain civil rights leader and Army veteran Medgar Wiley Evers, who is especially remembered for his efforts to end segregation at the University of Mississippi in the 1950s and for his opposition to Jim Crow laws in the 1960s. Evers was appointed Mississippi's first NAACP field officer in 1954 and held the position until his assassination in the front yard of his

Mississippi home the night of June 12, 1963, by White Citizens' Council and Ku Klux Klan member Byron De La Beckwith. Evers' murder, which occurred only hours after

President John F. Kennedy delivered a televised, pro-civil rights speech, was mourned nationally.

"This technological marvel will carry the strong name of Medgar

Evers, as well as the amazing spirit and expertise of the American people, across oceans and seas to every corner of the world," said Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, MSC, to an audience of more than 1,000 people who braved the rainy morning to attend the event.

Ceremony attendees included the Evers family, NAACP and other civil rights leaders from around the country, Calif. Gov. Jerry Brown, distinguished guests from the U.S. military and maritime industry and NASSCO employees who built the ship.

"USNS Medgar Evers and its MSC civil service mariner crew will be indispensable to the Navy by daily performing the many tasks required to keep our combat fleets on station, ready to face any aggressor, anywhere in the world," said Buzby.

USNS Medgar Evers is the 13th of 14 projected dry cargo/ammunition ships built for use by MSC's Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force and Maritime Prepositioning Force.

"This is truly a wonderful day, one that will go down in the history books and one that will remain in our hearts forever," said Evers-Williams in her remarks to the crowd.



Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of civil rights activist Medgar Evers, delivers remarks during the christening ceremony Nov. 12 for MSC's newest T-AKE, USNS Medgar Evers. MSC Commander Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, right, also spoke at the event, which had an audience of more than 1,000 people.

280 feet DOWN

U.S. & Chilean

By Meghan Patrick, MSC Public Affairs

As the rising sun brings color into the sky off the coast of San Diego Nov. 3, Navy diver Chief Cory Hall lowers a collapsible ladder over the side of a long, narrow chute jutting from a Navy submersible rescue vehicle. Demonstrating one of the most remarkable assets of the U.S. Navy, Hall, a member of the Navy's Deep Submergence Unit, scurries down the frigid, two-foot wide chute to the open hatch of an intentionally bottomed Chilean submarine, laying 280 feet below the ocean's surface.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Karolina A. Martinez

In a real emergency, Hall would have immediately started to help people depart the distressed watercraft, sending them back up the chute, which can hold up to 16 individuals at one time, to the pressurized rescue module. But this time, Hall held out his hand in greeting to the foreign captain below the sea, acknowledging the successful exercise that brought them together.

Exercise CHILEMAR III, the third annual event between

the United States and Chile, was designed to demonstrate interoperability between U.S. submarine rescue systems and Chilean submarines. While the United States has not participated in a documented actual submarine rescue since 1939, the capability exists – and is practiced to perfection – so that in the event of an emergency, those stranded below the surface can be saved.

While CHILEMAR III took place during the course of only 10 hours, many moving parts, from shipside support to the positioning of the submarine, made the event a success.

Dominator's crucial role

The day began aboard Military Sealift Command-chartered MV HOS Dominator, a submarine support

ship. First, the ship transported the divers and module to the submarine's location at sea. The U.S. Navy's pressurized rescue module, which is capable of reaching depths of up to 2,000 feet, is a tethered system and must have a surface support ship for operations.

"But using dynamic positioning, like I can with Dominator, allows me greater flexibility and the ability to respond quicker to an exercise or actual submarine rescue."

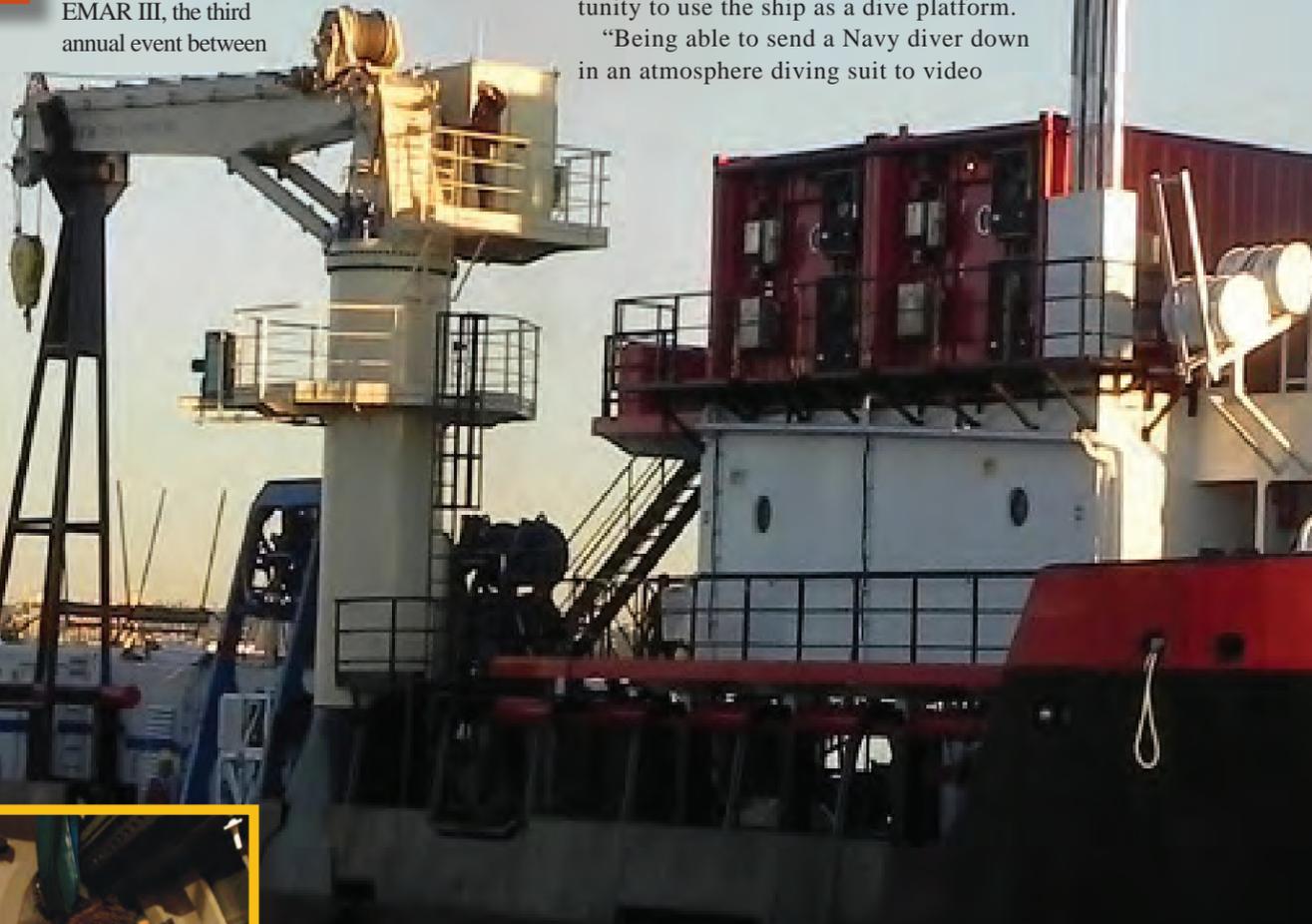
Deep Submergence Unit Commanding Officer Navy Cmdr. David Lemly

Once on location, Dominator's advanced computerized positioning system permitted the 12 contract mariners aboard Dominator to keep the ship in place without anchor or mooring. That way, the deployed pressurized rescue module and the 44 Navy submariners and Navy divers who operated it could be positioned directly over the sunken submarine. During the exercise, Dominator's civilian master Capt. Albert Calland and Navy Cmdr. David Lemly, commanding officer of the Deep Submergence Unit, stayed in constant communication to make sure the Navy divers below remained safe and secure.

"What Dominator does with dynamic positioning makes my job much easier," explains Lemly, who has led the Deep Submergence Unit out of San Diego for two-and-a-half years. "When we operate the pressurized rescue module, I have to either lay a complicated four-point moor or operate in dynamic positioning. But using dynamic positioning, like I can with Dominator, allows me greater flexibility and the ability to respond quicker to an exercise or actual submarine rescue."

Another advantage of working with Dominator was the opportunity to use the ship as a dive platform.

"Being able to send a Navy diver down in an atmosphere diving suit to video



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Karolina A. Martinez



U.S. Navy photo by Paul Lampley

navies practice sub rescue

survey the situation before launching the pressurized rescue module helps us prepare for a rescue. It's amazing," says Hall.

CHILEMAR III: A rare opportunity

Lemly and his team of 44 submariners and divers practice their skills weekly. Normally the team practices on a submarine hatch mounted to the sea floor, as the opportunity to conduct an exercise on a real, foreign navy submarine is rare.

"It's not every day we get to do an exercise like CHILEMAR," said the Deep Submergence Unit's executive officer, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Platten. "We really have to seek out opportunities, either with the Chileans or with other international submarines with that capability. It's a mutually beneficial experience when we do, though. They get to practice their bottoming tactic, and we practice our end."

During CHILEMAR III, 40 Chileans practiced exiting the submarine, and 44



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Karolina A. Martinez

U.S. Navy submariners and divers practiced the submarine rescue procedure. Unlike diving, this entry and exit did not require the use of breathing apparatus, thanks to the pressurized rescue module, which maintained a breathable environment. Once the module was positioned over the submarine, video cameras allowed for the placement of the transfer skirt onto the submarine's hatch. A high-pressure/low-pressure pump then drew water away to create a seal with the submarine. Then the submarine's hatch was opened, creating a stable avenue to safety.

"It's exciting to know we're capable of doing this," said Hall. "It's especially unique to work with a different nation and to see their technology. There are many different types and models of submarines out there, and it's very helpful to learn about each of them."

Helping the military is Calland's favorite part of the exercise, which he has been doing in many forms and on many ships throughout his several-decade career.

"I always enjoy contributing to efforts that help our red, white and blue," he said.



Opposite, top left: Sailors assigned to Deep Submergence Unit help a diver resurface after examining Chilean submarine CS Carrera to verify that its hatch was clear for the pressurized rescue module.

Opposite page, far left: Navy Diver 2nd Class Joe Olin (center) and Chilean Lt. Cmdr. Roldofo Emcimas (right) discuss personnel transit procedures inside the pressurized rescue module.

Opposite page, below: The Deep Submergence Unit loads MSC-chartered ship MV HOS Dominator. The ship later tethered the pressurized rescue module, seen on the ship's stern, during exercise CHILEMAR III in early November.

This page, above: Navy Diver Chief Cory Hall greets a Chilean submariner aboard CS Carrera after first contact inside the pressurized rescue module.

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

MSC Central/Commander Task Force 53 welcomes Navy **Capt. Robert Gonzales**, who arrived from the Joint Staff in Washington, D.C., and took command Nov. 22.

MSC ships in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility conducted 74 underway replenishments in November, involving 39 from eight countries and enabling U.S. 5th Fleet combatant ships to remain at sea for extended periods.

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea and fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman departed the area with aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush. Sacagawea and Grumman both transited the Suez Canal Nov. 20 en route to the United States.

The command welcomes Navy **Lt. j.g. Cliff Golon** and Navy **Petty Officer 2nd Class Elizabeth Roberts**.

The command also bids fair winds and following seas to Navy **Chief Petty Officer Arturo Perez**, Navy **Petty Officer 1st Class Jimmie Anderson** and Navy **Petty Officer 2nd Class Ricky Villegas**.



Capt. Robert Gonzales, USN

COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Command headquarters and Military Sealift Fleet Support Command co-sponsored a T-AKE/Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ship Lessons Learned Conference at Naval Station Norfolk, Vista Point, Nov. 8-9. **Andrew Busk**, T-AKE class manager, gave an overview of the status of the ship class to more than 200 attendees. Engineers **John Harold**, **Dan Norton** and **Ed Hatcher** discussed specific class issues.

Individual ship presentations, covering dry cargo/ammunition ships USNS Lewis and Clark, USNS Sacagawea, USNS Alan Shepard, USNS Richard E. Byrd, USNS Robert E. Peary, USNS Amelia Earhart, USNS Charles Drew, USNS Washington Chambers and USNS William McLean were also given. Representatives from the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command gave a presentation on communications/broadband issues, and the Naval Surface Warfare Center Port Hueneme Division discussed underway replenishments.

MSFSC Director **Jack Taylor** addressed the Surface Navy Association Hampton Roads chapter during the group's monthly luncheon meeting Nov. 9. Taylor discussed the command's history and growing importance of providing logistics support to the warfighter. During a question-and-answer session, Taylor discussed new

ships MSC will operate, hybrid crews and MSC employment opportunities with the command for those leaving military service.

MSFSC continues to work on standardizing the civil service mariner promotion application process. Effective immediately, CIVMAR promotion opportunity announcements, and windows of time during which applications will be accepted, will be established in advance for a given calendar year. The information will be widely promulgated to the fleet, aiming to maximize the time CIVMARs have to plan for, prepare and submit their promotion packages.

Fair winds and following seas to **3rd Assistant Engineer Manuel Adasa**, **Yeoman Storekeeper Patrio Cabrera**, **Yeoman Storekeeper George Epps**, **Pumpman Napoleon Galang**, **Supply Officer Michael Hepler**, **Able Seaman Delfin Novilla**, **Able Seaman Kerry Smith**, **3rd Assistant Engineer Eugene Tinio** and **3rd Officer Ney Vencer Jr.** as they enter onto the retirement rolls. Thank you for your service.

MSFSC regrets to inform the fleet of the passing of **Supply Utilityman Teresita Serrano**.

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

ATLANTIC • LINES

John Gregov, Military Sealift Command Atlantic marine transportation specialist at Port Canaveral, Fla., ensured timely food delivery during Thanksgiving week to personnel at the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center on Andros Island off the Florida coast. The AUTECC commissary's digital temperature readout failed. The food supply loaded aboard MSC-chartered tug and barge T/B Megan Beyel/MOBRO 1210 for delivery Nov. 21 could not be accepted until Gregov obtained MSC temperature cards to accurately confirm temperatures and assure food quality.

Gregov also helped develop a cost-savings plan to support the early departure of MSC navigation test support ship USNS Waters Nov. 28 in order for MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS Pathfinder to use the vacated berthing during a temporary Port Canaveral pier shortage caused by a construction project.

Gregov coordinated the arrival of roll-on/roll-off vessel MV Honor Nov. 6 and the discharge of 211 pieces of retrograde military cargo that the ship had carried from Iraq. Gregov developed the mooring plan for positioning the stern ramp at the Port Canaveral piers, enabling the ship to avoid using a costly commercial pier.

Tom D'Agostino, director of ship operations at MSCLANT's Charleston, S.C., office, assisted the discharge of more than 180,000 barrels of fuel from MSC-chartered tanker MV Houston Nov. 8-9. Marine Transportation Special-

ist **Mary Ann Liberto** coordinated tugs and pilotage for dock landing ship USS Gunston Hall's port visit to Charleston Nov. 4-7.

MSCLANT anti-terrorism/force protection staff completed seven triennial individual ship assessments and 14 ATPF spot checks throughout November. MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple; Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS Eugene A. Obregon, MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships USNS Sisler USNS Watkins and USNS Pililaa; high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift; and MSC submarine and special warfare support ship MV Dolores Chouest all successfully completed the inspection. The inspections, mandated by MSC, consist of a thorough examination of the vessel's implementation of force protection program and an evaluation of the ship's readiness to defend against threats.

MSCLANT bids Port Operations Officer **Mike Menchaca** fair winds and following seas on his retirement after serving the command since 1984. Serving as port operations officer since 1997, Mike directly supported every MSC ship and crew that called upon any East Coast, Gulf Coast, South and Central American or Caribbean port. Menchaca received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award in recognition of his longstanding service from Navy **Capt. Samuel Norton**, MSCLANT commander, during farewell festivities Dec. 2.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Rear Adm. Brian LaRoche**, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command, attended MSC's Pacific Reserve Conference Nov. 4-6 in San Diego. The conference was an opportunity for MSC counterparts from MSC headquarters, MSC Far East and MSC Pacific to meet and discuss issues related to their areas of operations.

MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux provided a stand-by emergency rescue vehicle from Deep Submergence Unit 1 Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 in support of the nuclear submarine USS Chicago's sea trials off the coast of Hawaii. Sioux was equipped to launch the deep submersible rescue vehicle from its deck to provide emergency escape for submarine crew members while the submarine was submerged.

Sioux also served as a dive platform in support of diving and salvage training with Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 1 Nov. 15-18 off

the coast of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Rick Appling, MSC deputy operations officer, and **Michael Bryant**, Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force team lead, visited Pearl Harbor Oct. 30 to Nov. 3. While in the area, Appling and Bryant observed an ammunition offload from MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Washington Chambers and as met with MSC representative Pearl Harbor; Commander Pacific Fleet's Middle Global Force Management representative and logistics staff members; the Middle Pacific Oiler scheduler; and the Naval Munitions Command, East Asia Division.

MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Salvor departed San Diego with the decommissioned amphibious dock ship ex-Cleveland under tow Nov. 22. The tow followed a series of training, maintenance, certification and tow preparations which began in San Diego on Nov. 14. Salvor delivered ex-Cleveland to the Inactive Ships Activity, Pearl Harbor, Dec. 9.

Midshipman Fee Reimbursement for U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Students

An extensive review of U.S. Merchant Marine Academy accounting records for the academic years 2003/2004 through 2008/2009 indicates that some academy midshipmen were overcharged for midshipman fees. The current and former students who were overcharged during the six-year period are eligible to receive a reimbursement. Individuals eligible to receive a reimbursement will be notified by the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

For information about midshipman fee reimbursements, please see the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy website at http://www.usmma.edu/brief_announcement.htm.

For inquiries about U.S. Merchant Marine Academy midshipman fee reimbursements, please email MNFeeReimbursement@dot.gov or call toll free 888-719-9213 (or local 202-493-0263) Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, visited Japan, Korea, Singapore, Guam and Saipan Nov. 14-20.

Buzby met with Ship Support Unit Japan Director **Sam Reynolds** in Yokohama Nov. 14. Pierside, Buzby visited civilian master **Capt. George Baker** and the crew of MSC-chartered high-speed vessel Westpac Express at Yokohama, presenting crew members who participated in Operation Tomodachi with Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medals for outstanding achievement. Operation Tomodachi was a U.S. military-led effort to provide humanitarian and disaster relief assistance after a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck northern Japan in March.

Buzby also toured MSC missile range instrumentation ship USNS Observation Island with civilian master **Capt. Robert Weichert**.

In Sasebo, Japan, Buzby visited USNS Bridge Nov. 15, meeting with civil service master **Capt. Steve Perdue**. Buzby presented Merchant Marine Meritorious Service Medals for outstanding achievement to 80 civil service mariners for their service during Operation Tomodachi.

Buzby traveled next to Okinawa, Japan, where he met with MSC Office Okinawa Director **Carl Welborn** and command staff members Nov. 16. Buzby also visited MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Matthew Perry and was hosted by civil service master **Capt. David Murrin**.

During a Nov. 17 visit to Seoul, Republic of Korea, Buzby met with Army

Gen. James D. Thurman, commander, U.S. Forces Korea.

Buzby traveled to Singapore Nov. 18, visiting Navy **Capt. Chip Denman**, MSC Far East commander, and MSC fleet replenishment oilers USNS Tippecanoe and USS Rappahannock.

In Guam, Buzby met with SSU Guam commander Navy **Cmdr. Norm Maple** and command staff members Nov. 19. Buzby also visited MSC submarine tender USS Frank Cable, MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson and MSC cable laying/repair ship USNS Zeus.

Buzby concluded his tour in Saipan, meeting Navy **Capt. Deidre McLay**, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three commander, Nov. 20 aboard squadron flagship USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus. Buzby also visited MPF ships USNS 1ST LT Harry L. Martin, USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams, USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless and USNS Dahl.

Navy Rear Adm. Dan Cloyd, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan and commander, U.S. Navy Region Japan, visited MSCO Okinawa Nov. 29 for a briefing on MSC operations and activities on Okinawa.

MPS Squadron Two participated in a first-of-its-kind, joint search and rescue training mission with Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia and British Indian Ocean Territory officials Nov. 9 at Diego Garcia. MPS Squadron Two ships USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella and USNS Pomeroy participated in the simulated, communications exercise designed to cross-train in



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 David A. Cox

Puma helicopters from Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Amelia Earhart transfer munitions at sea in the Pacific Ocean from aircraft carrier USS George Washington Nov. 21 as part of an ammunition offload.

procedures to conduct a potential search and rescue mission in and around the central Indian Ocean atoll.

Navy MH-60S helicopters pilots from Guam-based Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 conducted a total of 42 deck landing qualifications aboard Martin while the ship was underway off the coast of Guam Nov. 17.

The command welcomes MPS Squadron Three Assistant Force Protection Officer Navy **Gunner's Mate Chief Thomas Harris** and MPS Squadron Two Chief Staff Officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Jason Schwarzkopf**.

From the Korean peninsula, MSCO

Korea Commanding Officer Navy **Cmdr. David Bartell** presented **Boatswain's Mate Chief Albert Henderson** with a Navy Achievement Medal for outstanding service during his two-year assignment with the command.

In Singapore, Denman presented Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Del Toney** with a Meritorious Service Medal for his outstanding performance of duty with the command.

MSCFE bids fair winds and following seas to MPS Squadron Two Chief Staff officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Brett Garvie** and Operations Officer Navy **Chief Warrant Officer Mark Foster**.

EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

Navy Vice Adm. Frank C. Pandolfe, commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, visited Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary Nov. 10 while the ship was in port Augusta Bay, Italy. **Capt. John Little**, Peary's civil service master, and **Chief Engineer Trevor Darling** greeted Pandolfe. He addressed Peary's civil service mariners and U.S. Navy crew members, praising them on their replenishment role, contributing to the success of operations Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector.

Meanwhile, Peary continued to provide underway replenishments to U.S. Navy ships throughout the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility, including a Nov. 22 underway replenishment with aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush and MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea, both of which were transiting the Mediterranean Sea from the U.S. 5th Fleet. MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall also conducted underway replenishments with U.S. Navy and NATO ships, while Sacagawea and fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman, which both arrived in theater Nov. 20, supported U.S. Navy ships. Sacagawea and Leroy Grumman continued to support the George H.W. Bush carrier strike group during its return from deployment back to the United States.

In dry cargo operations, MSC-chartered container and heavy lift ship MV Virginian conducted cargo operations Nov. 14 in Eemshaven, the Netherlands, off-loading and loading containers of military supplies. From there, MV Virginian went to Newport, U.K.,

where the ship off-loaded a portion of the containers Nov. 19, using MSC-chartered coaster MV Dollart.

MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Rhode Island moved DOD diesel and aviation fuel between ports in the Mediterranean until going off-hire Nov. 13.

MSC command ship USS Mount Whitney completed a 69-day regular overhaul and dry-dock period Nov. 21 at the Viktor Lenac shipyard in Croatia. The extensive work package included upgrading the ship's Close-In Weapons System, replacing 26 tons of steel, inspecting and cleaning 82 tanks and voids and completing inspection and preservation of the ship's hull.

Staff and visiting family members of MSC's Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday Nov. 25 by volunteering at a community center in Mouzouras, Greece. The 14 men, women and children spent the day performing yard work at the center's playground.

MSCEURAF wishes fair winds and following seas to Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Bruce Martin** upon his retirement after 20 years of active-duty service. He was recognized during a Nov. 4 ceremony at the Naples Support Activity chapel. A surface warfare officer, Martin reported to MSCEURAF in July 2009 and was assigned as the readiness and Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force officer.

In October, Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Robb Toliver** relieved Navy **Cmdr. Bradley Hawksworth** as Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One chief staff officer.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Devin B. King

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman performs an underway replenishment Nov. 30 with guided-missile cruiser USS Anzio in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Navy **Rear Adm. Brian LaRoche**, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command, participated in the Returning Warrior Workshop Dec. 3-4 in West Palm Beach, Fla. The workshop was held to honor returning Navy Reservists who were mobilized and deployed to the Middle East. LaRoche was actively involved in several group sessions and served as the keynote speaker at the Honors Banquet.

Navy **Capt. Philip Gregory "Greg" Hilton** relieved Navy **Capt. Timothy DeLoache** as commanding officer of the MSC headquarters Navy Reserve Unit at a Nov. 19 ceremony held at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. LaRoche served as the principal speaker at the event. This Reserve unit augments the MSC headquarters staff by providing watchstanders for the General Command Information Center, as well as personnel to support MSC's contracting, information technology and legal counsel.

Also in November, the MSC Headquarters Reserve Unit announced Navy **Religious Petty Officer 1st Class Rachel Doran** as MSC's Reserve Sailor of the Year. The Reserve unit also congratulates Navy seaman yeoman strikers **Clayton Bass** and **Timothy Jackson** for passing their advancement exams for advancement to petty officer 3rd class.

MSC headquarters welcomes **Eric Otero**, engineering; **Joseph Osazuwa**, logistics; **Patrick Augustin**, contracts and business management and **Kelly McKallagat**, office of the counsel.

The command wishes fair winds and following seas to **Margaret Seward**, maritime forces, manpower and management, on her retirement. MSC headquarters also bids farewell to **Eric Doerfler** and **Zadoc-Lee Kekuewa**, command, control, communication and computer systems; **Linsey Donnolly**, engineering and **Aku Nenonene**, office of counsel.

Swift kicks off SPS 2012 mission

By Lt. Matthew Comer
HSV 2 Swift Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift departed Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Nov. 27, completing the first stop of its five-month mission during Southern Partnership Station 2012.

Southern Partnership Station, or SPS, is an annual deployment of U.S. Navy ships to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility in the Caribbean Sea and Latin America to strengthen partnerships and maritime security through training and subject-matter exchanges with navies, coast guards and civilians in the region. The mission is directed by USSOUTHCOM and executed by U.S. Naval Forces South.

Swift, which subsequently visited El Salvador and Panama, is also slated to sail to Guatemala, Peru, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Haiti before completing its mission in March.

"The SPS mission on board Swift is a great opportunity to improve partner nation relationships," said Capt. Rhett Mann, Swift's civilian master. "This is my fourth SPS mission, so I have the unique perspective to see the effect this mission has had. The crew works hard to make sure the ship can support mission needs, and it is great to see the impact of their hard work."

Swift is crewed by 17 contract mariners, all U.S. merchant mariners, who operate and navigate the ship, and a 17-person military

department to support other mission requirements. Seabees, Marines, health services professionals, Naval Criminal Investigative Service Security Training specialists, and personnel from the Assistance and Assessment Team, Expeditionary Security Team and Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command were also embarked to serve as subject matter experts for information sharing on a variety of subjects with host nation partners.

Swift stayed in the Dominican Republic for three weeks to participate in a series of these exchanges, which included land navigation, small-unit leadership and marksmanship exercises ashore; ship-board security exercises to develop observation techniques and identify possible risky behaviors; and ship-board medical classes on life-saving techniques and diagnosis of common local diseases.

This mission gives us a much-needed opportunity to work with our partner nations," said Navy Cmdr. Garry Wright, SPS mission commander. "The time we spend in port really allows us to create strong bonds with our host-nation counterparts. It is great to see the friendships that grow through working together."

In addition to hosting subject-matter expert exchanges, Swift also off-loaded 64 pallets of Project Handclasp materials. These materials consisted of high-calorie meals, water filters, school desks, wheelchairs and medical supplies.



U.S. Navy photo by LT Matthew Comer

Hedi Marzougui, first mate of Military Sealift Command-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift, off-loads Project Handclasp materials in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, part of Swift's participation during Southern Partnership Station 2012.

Project Handclasp is a U.S. Navy program that accepts and transports educational, humanitarian and goodwill material donated by America's private sector on a space-available basis aboard U.S. Navy ships for distribution to foreign nation recipients.

"Project Handclasp is a great opportunity to use our resources to really impact local communities in the countries we visit," said Lt. Christopher Ganske, Swift's military department supply officer. "The people that I meet through Project Handclasp are as committed to making a difference as we are."

Teams aboard Swift will continue working with partner-nation counterparts in similar information exchanges for the remaining SPS port stops. Seabees will complete construction projects with local schools and the ship will off-load the remaining 140 Project Handclasp pallets.

"I like being out to sea because it is so peaceful, but the best thing about SPS is the port visits," said John Wahl, able-bodied seaman aboard Swift. "Because of our time in port, you really get to meet the people, and they are so hospitable and inviting."

Henson finishes Indonesian survey work

By Edward Baxter
MSCFE Public Affairs

The Sunda Strait, which separates the islands of Sumatra and Java and connects the Java Sea to the Indian Ocean, is notoriously difficult to navigate. Sandbanks, strong tidal flows, shallow waters, uncharted man-made obstructions and heavy commercial shipping traffic all congest the vital shipping lane to and from Jakarta, Indonesia's capital and largest port.

U.S. Navy and Indonesian navy personnel aboard Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Henson helped chart potential obstructions in the strait, completing a one-month survey mission Nov. 14.

Thirteen hydrographers and oceanographers from the Stennis Space Center, Miss.-based U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office, or NAVOCEANO, joined five liaison officers from the Indonesian Naval Hydro-Oceanographic Office aboard Henson for the mission. NAVOCEANO is the largest subordinate command within the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, responsible for providing oceanographic products and services to all elements of the Department of Defense.

Using Henson's sophisticated sonar, the bilateral team created three-dimensional maps of the ocean floor to create nautical charts



Navy Capt. Greg Ulses, deputy hydrographer of the Navy, speaks with Indonesian navy Capt. Dede Yuliadi aboard Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Henson upon the completion of a month-long bilateral survey mission.

for aid in maritime navigation.

"The data collected will be used by both navies to address shared navigation concerns," said Navy Capt. Greg Ulses, deputy hydrographer of the Navy.

Once all the survey data was analyzed, it was determined that a charted wreck and some charted shoals – sandbanks either in shallow waters or protruding on the surface – were incorrectly marked on existing charts by up to half a mile. The team also discovered that two charted buoys were missing.

"This survey was a great oppor-

tunity [for us] to exchange ideas, discuss procedures, and gain a better understanding of oceanography and hydrography," said Henson's civilian master Capt. Joe Goodwin, one of 24 contract mariners who operate the ship.

Henson's mariners worked around-the-clock to ensure the ship's safety, often in challenging circumstances.

"Navigators on both the Hydrographic Survey Launches, or HSLs, and the ship had to be on their toes at all times, working around hazards and shipping traffic as well as maneuver in accordance with

NAVOCEANO's survey requirements," Goodwin said.

In some cases, the HSLs, small craft embarked on Henson used to survey shallow waters or areas close to the coastline, experienced currents in excess of seven knots close to shore.

"It was a great experience to ride aboard Henson and I enjoyed exchanging knowledge," said Indonesian navy Lt. Cmdr. Anom Hascaron.

The U.S. and Indonesian navies have cooperated since 1978 on more than 200 survey missions in the waters around Indonesia.

In recent years, MSC oceanographic survey ship USNS John McDonnell surveyed areas off Aceh, Indonesia, expediting the flow of relief supplies to remote areas of the province when tsunamis devastated the island of Sumatra in 2005. Oceanographic survey ship USNS Mary Sears was instrumental in locating a downed commercial aircraft which crashed off Sulawesi Island in 2007.

"Our partnership with the Indonesian Navy is very important to us, and we're hopeful that this survey will allow us to strengthen it even more," said Ulses.

MC2 Jessica Bidwell of Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific Public Affairs, contributed to this article.