

June 2012

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

## SOUTHERN PARTNERSHIP STATION...

*Civil service mariner Matthew Blaha, right, and Navy Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Gregory Noyes help refurbish the Commodore Oliver Perry cemetery gate at Lapeyrouse Cemetery in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.*

*Gateway to building friendships*

**INSIDE — USNS Mercy CIVMARs excited for mission • Gilliland hosts SWAT-type training**

# Safety first, last and always

The "100 days of summer" are upon us, and that means all of us need to be especially aware of the need for safety. The Navy theme this year is "Live to play – Play to live." Shipmates afloat focus on safety year round – it's an absolute necessity aboard ship. But, when those who sail take leave and go ashore during the summer, there are extra things to remember.

First and foremost, school is out, and there are kids playing in our neighborhoods. Sometimes they spill out into the streets in their enthusiasm, so we all need to drive a little more carefully.

Summer means mowing the grass. The Navy Safety Center reminds us to mow when grass is dry. Wet grass clogs the discharge chute. Wet grass is also slippery, especially on hills or slopes. Make sure your kids are old enough and skilled enough to operate the equipment if you've given them the chore. It might be a good idea to remind them that mowers are for grass, not rocks and sticks – clear the path before mowing. In the past four years there have been 33 serious mower mishaps in the Navy family. We don't want any more.

Summer is also a time to head for the beach or marina. If you and your family are going swimming, make sure you swim where lifeguards are present. Watch water conditions and listen to the lifeguards. It's always worth reminding your kids, and yourself, about rip currents at the ocean front and how to avoid or survive them by swimming parallel to the shore until you're clear.

If you're going boating, it's always a good idea to have taken a Coast Guard-approved boating safety course. A refresher never hurts, even for those who sail the big ones for us. "Boating" and running an UNREP rig on a T-AO do have some subtle differences!

Before you cast off lines for some afloat fun, make sure everyone aboard has a personal floatation device and knows how to use it. That way, fun won't turn into tragedy.

Watch your speed in confined areas like the marina or near swimming areas, and NEVER mix alcohol with boating if you're the captain of the vessel. In fact, it's safer to leave the alcohol ashore and enjoy the beach cookout later.

It's generally warmer in the summer, so make sure you hydrate when enjoying summer sports. Stretch before you exert yourself, and wear proper clothing and gear for your sport of choice. Know your limits – we're not all Olympic-qualified athletes.

Road trips are always part of summer fun, and with fuel prices forecast to be a little lower this summer than last, more shipmates will be hitting the road. If you follow a few simple guidelines, you'll have a safer and more enjoyable time.

Start every trip well rested and drive during daylight hours if at all possible. It's easier to see and be seen that way.

Taking frequent breaks during a road trip accomplishes two things: it gives the driver(s) a break, and it lets you take a moment to really see and appreciate the places you're passing through.

Of course, never drink and drive. And, if you get tired, pull over. Remember: "It's better to be late, Mr. Jones than to be The Late Mr. Jones."

There's a simple system to help you make safer road trips. It's an on-line



Admiral John C. Harvey, Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces command, and Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command, preside over USS Ponce's (AFSB(I)-15) change of command ceremony April 16 in Norfolk, Va.

program called TRiPS – Travel Risk Planning System. You can get to it from Navy Knowledge Online. The program helps you recognize and reduce the travel risks associated with your trip. I want you to come back from your leave refreshed and ready. If you use an NMCI computer, your CAC will give you access to TRiPS. If you're using a home computer, you'll need to use your user name, which is your first.last name, and either remember your NKO password, or request a reset from NKO.

Last year, the Navy lost 31 trained and ready Sailors and Marines to summer accidents. Twenty-four of them lost their lives in vehicle accidents; half of those were on motorcycles. I want all our MSC shipmates to be safe personally and help keep their families safe, too, this summer.

As I said earlier, our afloat shipmates are focused on safety all year long. Aboard ship, slips, trips and falls are the three categories that account for 25 percent of all injuries afloat. Most are easily preventable.

Our safety team has been focusing on this and recently implemented a "slips, trips and falls" initiative that identified potential areas aboard ship where

accidents are more likely to happen. Briefings and Safety On Ships newsletter articles have pointed out the problem areas, and I ask all afloat shipmates to be aware of them.

The Waterborne Transportation Group, consisting of safety managers from commercial companies, has identified an increase in hand and finger injuries afloat. MSC participates in the WTG, which is planning an awareness campaign and sharing of best practices in an effort to reverse this trend. You'll see more as the summer progresses.

Whether you're afloat or ashore, nobody likes pain when they're trying to work or play, so be careful out there. Think safety. Act safely.

## Two other points

As part of our ongoing concern for our shipmates, I want to stress two additional points: preventing sexual assault and preventing suicide. I know that no one likes to talk about either of these subjects, but we need to.

Sexual assault hurts all of us, whether we're the individual assaulted or the ones who then live in the stressed environment that results. We can all help

prevent it by being an active bystander, either getting a friend away from a potential offender, or staying with a friend so they aren't isolated and alone. Don't just stand by and let your shipmates down.

Equally damaging are suicides, which can be preventable if we all are aware of the warning signs. When shipmates talk about suicide, or increase drug or alcohol use, they are at risk. When they withdraw from friends and family or begin behaving recklessly, they are at risk. We need to ACT – Ask, Care and Treat. That's what shipmates are for.

There are many resources out there for both sexual assault prevention and suicide prevention. I've mentioned them before in this column. Unless he or she is the problem, go to your supervisor and ask for help if you have an issue. It's not always easy, but I urge you to make sure someone knows you need help. Don't suffer in silence.

I care about the MSC family. We all need to care about each other.

Sail safe and yours aye,

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

*Sealift* is an authorized publication for members and employees of the Navy's Military Sealift Command. Contents of this publication are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy. *Sealift* is published monthly by the Military Sealift Command Office of Public Affairs as authorized under NAVPUBINST 5600.42A. Submission of articles and letters should be addressed to Editor, *Sealift*, Military Sealift Command, 914 Charles Morris Court, S.E., Washington Navy Yard, D.C. 20398-5540; phone (202) 685-5055 or DSN 325-5055; fax (202) 685-5067; or via e-mail to sealift.editor@navy.mil. All photographic submissions must be sent via e-mail, express mail or parcel service.

COMSC Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, USN

Director, Public Affairs Tom Van Leunen

Editor James Marconi

Writers Edward Baxter, Singapore  
Bill Cook, Norfolk, Va.  
Susan Melow, Norfolk, Va.  
Meghan Patrick, Washington  
Jessica Alexander, Washington  
Sarah Burford, San Diego  
Kim Dixon, Naples  
Masha Rumer, Washington

Art Director Dale Allen, Washington

Graphics Susan Thomas, Washington

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.



Printed on recycled paper



## Moving forward with ONE MSC



Did we realign our competencies ashore so we could move the headquarters? Or did we decide to move the headquarters, which required realigning our shore-based competencies?

The answer to both questions is NO.

Competency realignment helps us focus on our mission and allows us to dedicate resources at all levels of the organization to better meet our customers' needs. Under the MSC/MSFSC dual-headquarters concept, there were significant redundancies and overlapping roles and responsibilities that stressed the command and resulted in inefficiencies. The ONE MSC realignment this past January was aimed at eliminating those redundancies.

Today, we are well on our way toward better organized operations that allow individual competencies to provide the necessary resources to our two lines of business: Government-Operated Ships and Contractor-Operated Ships. Change is never easy, and we know that the total realignment process will take time.

Success in doing business in this new way comes down to altering our behavior. Boxes and lines on organization charts are interesting and relevant, but the real success comes from how we act.

Our Total Force Management team (N1) is well on its way to processing the necessary paperwork to "officialize" our realigned organization, but please let me encourage you NOT to wait for the paper trail. Examine who you are, the role you play and how your daily contributions can make ONE MSC a success.

We're working in a push-pull situation.

Those of you who work in N-codes need to think about how you are supporting one of the two business lines every day – push.

Those of you who work in our two business lines need to think about what support you need from the N-codes, how you are communicating your requirements, how you are meeting customers' needs and how you are executing all elements of a successful business – pull.

You can use this thought process to accelerate the maturity of our realignment. As far as a relocation plan goes, there's more to follow on that next time.

# SWAT-style training storms Gilliland

By James Marconi  
MSC Public Affairs

Nine combat-clad police officers moved across USNS Gilliland (T-AKR 298) from its stern, each team member methodically covering each others' approach up seven levels to the Military Sealift Command ship's bridge.

Surging into the bridge, the ship's nerve center, the team secured all entry points after searching for potential threats. Objective achieved, everyone relaxed visibly, discussing ways to perform the exercise more efficiently as they walked outside to run it again.

A real-world scenario would require about 30 people to fully secure control points on the 956-foot MSC ship, including the bridge, engine room and other locations of armed resistance.

The nine-person Maryland Natural Resources Police Tactical Response Team spent April 24 training aboard Gilliland, practicing ship seizure tactics that would

be used in an emergent situation. Gilliland, one of MSC's large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships, served as a readily accessible and highly realistic training environment for the Tactical Response Team.

"For the folks who are aboard Gilliland now, they're training on a platform similar to one they might actually have to board someday," said Capt. Gary Ford, the ship's civilian master, who has more than three decades of experience sailing worldwide. "The more realistic you can make the training, the more beneficial it becomes."

Currently kept in reduced operating status in Baltimore, Gilliland has a crew of 12 living aboard the ship and keeping it in peak operating condition. The ship's full complement of 29 civilian mariners working for a company under contract to MSC could ready the ship, if needed, to sail in four days. Gilliland has a cargo capacity of nearly six football fields for outsized



U.S. Navy photos by Jessica Alexander

A member of the Maryland Natural Resources Police Tactical Response Team moves toward the bridge of USNS Gilliland (T-AKR 298) during a training exercise.

Department of Defense cargo like tanks and Humvees, which can be transported worldwide.

When not needed for surge sealift requirements, MSC makes Gilliland and similarly layberthed LMSR ships available for training purposes to law enforcement, military and other partner organizations.

In the past two years, the nine LMSR ships in MSC's Sealift Program have been used dozens of times. The majority of training exercises have occurred in Baltimore, although the LMSR ships have served the U.S. Navy, Army and Coast Guard on both the East and West coasts of the United States in training platform roles.

"The ships are versatile platforms that can meet a variety of training needs for these groups, from Navy

cargo handling procedures to police ship seizures," said Mark Coggins, surge sealift project officer at MSC headquarters.

LMSR ships that have berthed at Baltimore, including Gilliland and USNS Fisher (T-AKR 301), have hosted the Maryland Natural Resources Police Tactical Response Team and many other Maritime Tactical Operation Group partners numerous times in the past four years, and proven ideal platforms to hone the danger-fraught art of securing a ship, said Tactical Response Team member Sgt. Mel Adam.

"There is no one agency that can take on the monumental task of clearing and securing a large vessel, should the need ever arise," said Adam. "That is why it is critical that SWAT teams train together on platforms like the Gilliland, to prepare for a threat in the maritime environment."



The Tactical Response Team, which has trained aboard Gilliland several times in recent years, benefits from a realistic environment similar to ships it might someday be required to board.

## USS Ponce gets new commanding officer

By James Marconi  
MSC Public Affairs

Sunny skies abounded over Afloat Forward Staging Base (Interim)-15 USS Ponce, as the ship received a new commanding officer during a ceremony April 16 at Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

Adm. John C. Harvey, Jr., commander, U.S. Fleet Forces, and Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command, presided over the formal transfer of Ponce's command authority from Cmdr. Cole Hayes to Navy Capt. Jon Rodgers.

Ponce – formerly an amphibious transport dock ship – was refitted by Military Sealift Command in a little more than two months as an AFSB(I) and is slated to fulfill a longstanding requirement for such a ship by U.S. Central Command.

Buzby lauded the "inspiration" to refit Ponce in his introduction to Harvey, saying he was "honored to represent the nearly 10,000 men and women of MSC," particularly the team that made Ponce's quick refit a reality.

Harvey, the ceremony's keynote speaker, also emphasized in his remarks the skill and perseverance

of the team that successfully made Ponce fit for a new set of duties and challenges. Ponce will provide the flexible support that USCENTCOM and U.S. 5th Fleet will need to help maintain stability in their areas of responsibility, encompassing one of the world's most important strategic waterways, Harvey said.

"We responded to the urgent needs of our combatant commander in the area of our 5th Fleet," Harvey said. "There was no manual for this, yet in our finest tradition, you figured it out."

The ship is scheduled to deploy this summer to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. Ponce will support mine counter-measure and coastal patrol ships, and aircraft operations. The ship will also have the capability to provide flexible support as needed for embarked detachments of personnel when requested by USCENTCOM and U.S. 5th Fleet.

To perform its new role, Ponce's bridge equipment and navigation sensors were replaced with modern automated systems to support reduced crewing by 152 of MSC's civil service mariners, who will navigate, operate and maintain the ship. Ponce

is also crewed by 55 uniformed Navy personnel; Rodgers has command over the entire combined CIVMAR and Navy crew.

Other portions of MSC's refit included overhauling Ponce's main propulsion boilers, cleaning the ship's main and auxiliary condensers, overhauling other existing ship's equipment and refurbishing the galley and berthing spaces.

Hayes, as outgoing commanding of-

ficer, said his experience aboard Ponce was humbling. The ship's new role was a testament to 41 years of outstanding service by all of Ponce's crew members, he said, "generation after generation of Sailors getting it right."

Rodgers, upon relieving Hayes, said it is a "privilege to command such Sailors and mariners" aboard Ponce. "She is wise, she is experienced, she is seasoned, she is salty. She's our home."



U.S. Navy photo by MGSN Samantha Thorpe

Cmdr. Cole Hayes, left, former commanding officer of USS Ponce (AFSB(I)-15) salutes Capt. Jon Rodgers, as he formally takes command of Ponce during a ceremony aboard the newly refitted ship in Norfolk, Va.

# Grapple dives

# INTERNA

By Masha Rumer, MSC Public Affairs

Not everyone gets to support divers as they practice intercepting cocaine shipments or help repair international heritage sites. Military Sealift Command civil service mariners, or CIVMARs, do.

The CIVMAR crew members of USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) and embarked Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2 are currently participating in Southern Partnership Station 2012, an annual deployment of U.S. Navy ships to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility in the Caribbean Sea, Central and South America.

SPS aims 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.

This year, Grapple is deployed Feb. 21 to June 23 and is slated to visit five countries: Colombia, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Guatemala and Jamaica.

## Working together

The variety of scheduled assignments during SPS, and the fact that MSC and Navy divers live and work together aboard Grapple, make the mission a case study in cooperation. While U.S. Navy divers share techniques with international divers during port visits, the MSC crew

navigates the ship, oversees engineering and ultimately makes sure the divers are fed and berthed. MSC's CIVMARs may also pick up extra projects in host countries as needed.

"The enthusiasm of the crew always amazes me," said Capt. Curtis Smith, Grapple's civil service master. "Even after six years of being assigned to Grapple, they continue to make me and MSC proud."

Abe Kritz, deck machinist aboard Grapple for the past five years, underscored teamwork among MSC and the divers.

"We all work side by side, whether it be driving boats or towing wrecks. Whenever we can pitch in, we will. Whenever they can pitch in, they will," Kritz said.

## Steady does it: USNS Grapple

Because Navy diving involves sea floor walking in addition to diving, Grapple offers a dive stage that takes divers to the bottom and then back up to the surface, like an elevator. The ship's steady supply of air to the working divers, recompression chamber and cranes to lift objects and tow vessels make it "the Navy diver's dream," said Cmdr. Thomas Reynolds, commanding officer of MDSU 2.

"Capt. Smith has a long history of working with the Navy divers," Reynolds said. "We understand each other's nuances. We understand our body language and we can work together on a project with simple hand signals and looks."

## Work in every port

Grapple's first stop was in Cartagena, Colombia, Feb. 24 to March 14, where the divers practiced ship search strategies with their Colombian



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kathleen Gorby



*"We understand our body language and we can work together on a project with simple hand signals and looks."*

Cmdr. Thomas Reynolds, MDSU 2 commanding officer

counterparts as part of drug interception training.

"The Colombian divers are doing a lot of work daily keeping drugs out of our country as well as other countries," said Reynolds. "It's a problem that we share."

Cocaine is frequently smuggled on the outside, rather than the inside, of a ship, Reynolds said. Smugglers get scuba divers to stash their goods into external ship compartments or tie packages to the vessel's bottom in water-tight bags. Often, the crew is not even aware of what they are bringing to port.

"Colombian divers have been very successful in stopping tons and tons of cocaine from being shipped out. This is truly a bilateral engagement where we're learning from them and they're learning from us," Reynolds said.

Later, March 19, the ship pulled into the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, in time for a project that would honor the heritage of both nations.

Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, an American naval hero who died on the way to a diplomatic mission to South America, was buried at Lapeyrouse Cemetery in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in 1819. Perry's remains were eventually repatriated to Rhode Island, his home state. A gateway honoring Commodore Perry has adorned the Trinidadian cemetery since 1925, but recently fell into a state of disrepair.

Because this year marks the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kathleen Gorby

Background: Navy divers, an MSC civil service mariner and Panamanian divers work from rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp (T-ARS51) during rescue extraction training.

Above left: Navy Diver 2nd Class Kyle Weiss hooks a lift bag to an object to raise it to the surface, with the help of Trinidad and Tobago divers.

Bottom: Navy Diver 2nd Class Matthew Kelly is hauled up and over Grasp's side during training with Panamanian divers.

Opposite page: Colombian divers guide a surface supply diving stage back onto Grasp after a successful dive with Navy Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2.

# into ATIONAL MISSION

50th anniversary of Trinidad and Tobago's independence, national officials approached Grapple for assistance with the Perry Memorial Gate restoration.

"They asked if anybody would like to volunteer and I said I would help," said Kritz.

Kritz and Navy Diver 1st Class Brian Mouton led the restoration, involving fabrication and replacement of the metal, welding, sanding and painting. Kritz spent approximately 12 to 14 hours per day on the repairs. Eight CIVMARS, five divers and 10 security detachment members put in 375 hours of work combined, most performed aboard Grapple.

The volunteers left several personal mementos to mark the gate's refurbishment. They wrote their initials and project completion date inside one of the new centerpieces and placed a Grapple coin, a Southern Partnership Station 2012 coin, and dive pin into the hollow area behind the centerpiece.

"Someone would eventually find it and the names would live on," Smith said about this time capsule of sorts.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the work was the gratitude of the local community, particularly one local engineer, Kritz said. "He brought me a bottle of rum, and he took me to his cousin's house on the side of the hill for dinner. They treated us like we were family," Kritz said.

April 16 to May 4, MDSU 2 divers teamed up with Panamanian salvage divers, police divers and special operations divers to exercise together in Panama.

MSC crew helped the divers raise wrecked patrol boats stranded in the harbor. The crew patched up the boats, then floated and towed them to the beach.

## **SPS is about preparedness**

Natural disasters like hurricanes, storms and volcano eruptions are common in the Caribbean Sea, and Central and South America. Dive training is crucial for preparedness.

"We don't plan on whether it's going to happen, we assume that it will happen," Reynolds said. "And it's our job to be prepared."

MDSU 2 forces have previously responded to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and deployed to assist in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

Just weeks after training with Chilean divers in 2011, for instance, a deadly plane crash in the Pacific claimed 21 lives. MDSU 2 divers were sent to assist Chilean divers, providing familiar faces in a time of crisis.

"When we get wet and cold and miserable and we're wearing the same gear, we're engaging on a peer level," said Reynolds. "That personal relationship makes all the difference."

After making stops in Guatemala and Jamaica, Grapple is scheduled to return to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va., June 23.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brandon Keck



## CENTRAL • CURRENTS



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jonathan Garcia

HSV 2 Swift's civilian master Capt. Nicholas St. Jean gives Air Force Gen. William Fraser, commander, U.S. Transportation Command, a tour May 3 while in port in Rota, Spain.

## ATLANTIC • LINES

Military Sealift Command Atlantic participated in the Navy's annual hurricane exercise, Citadel Gale 2012, April 16-27. The exercise sought to verify communications and rehearse procedures, both for work-related scenarios and family members in preparation for a heavy-weather event in the Atlantic area of responsibility. This year, MSCLANT updated the hurricane brief for daily review and reduced the amount of message traffic required to report conditions of readiness, now using phone and e-mail instead of Naval messages.

At MSCLANT's port office in Charleston, S.C., **Tom D'Agostino**, director of ship operations, assisted MSC-chartered tanker MV Houston in its discharge of 70,000 barrels of jet fuel April 26. MSCLANT's Charleston staff also conducted comprehensive warehouse inventory of all shore-based spare parts in storage facilities for MSC's large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships.

**Capt. Thomas Finger**, civil service master of USNS Howard O. Lorenzen

(T-AGM 25), hosted tours coordinated by MSCLANT April 4 and 27 while the ship was berthed at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The first tour group included members of the U.S. Air Force deputy chief of staff for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance led by Lt. Gen. Larry James and Brig. Gen. John Horner. Navy **Capt. Samuel Norton**, commander, MSCLANT, and **Chris Thayer**, director, Contractor Operated Ships, represented MSC.

Lorenzen's new master, **Capt. Daniel Glazer**, led a second tour that included nearly 80 sponsors and stakeholders from U.S. Fleet Forces Command interested in the Cobra Judy Replacement platform provided by the ship. The CJR is an integrated surveillance and ballistic missile data collection radar system supporting U.S. treaty-monitoring activities.

Thirteen students from the U.S. Navy's Surface Warfare Officer's School in Norfolk, Va., toured USNS Robert E. Peary (T-AKE 5) April 24 with Peary **1st Officer Grant Begley**.

## COMPASS • HEADING

Military Sealift Command Norfolk congratulates the entire CIVMAR support team, including placement, the CIVMAR support units East and West and medical, travel, employment and training divisions, for increasing the number of shipboard mariner billets assigned to 98.3 percent in late April.

**Medical Services Officer Nicole Shouder** was recognized as the marine employee of the year.

Others recognized in the mariner award of excellence category were **1st assistant engineers Matthew Laffey and Paul Smiley; Chief Electrician Emelito Francisco; Electronics Technician James Ott; 1st Officer Sarah Daleo; 2nd Officer Michael Huzyak; Boatswain Russel Paisley; Supply Officer David Terrell; Chief Steward Silvestre Diloy, Jr.; Chief Cook Nestor Trinidad; Yeoman Storekeeper Brandon McMillan; pursers Carla Rush and Nicholas Wollitz; medical services officers Nicole Shouder and Jack Grimberg; Ship Communication Officer Jeffrey Yohn; and Chief Radio Electronics Technician Larry Reisinger.**

Honored with recognition as MSC Shipmate of the Year were **Supply Utilityman Wilma Bates; Refrigeration Engineer Nonelon Bucayan; able seamen Kenneth Bennett, Wayne**

**Clark, Langley Lang Herman Milton, Jr. and Nicholas Petrone; electronics technicians John Lewis and William Cowan; Chief Radio Electronics Technician Michael Dennis; Yeoman Storekeeper Timothy Frierson; deck engineer machinists Lawrence Teran and George Gilson, Jr.; junior supply officers Rodrigo Gonzales and Patricia Savage; Pumpman Manalo Hingada; 2nd Cook Apolinar Janaban, Jr.; Chief Steward Orlando Josafat; and wipers Sean Ivens and Jimmy White.**

Navy **Chief Petty Officer Andrew Shull**, at the completion of back-to-back assignments aboard USNS Matthew Perry (T-AKE 9) and USNS Big Horn (T-AO 198), reenlisted in the Navy during an April 13 ceremony at MSC's Norfolk complex.

Fair winds and following seas to **Jeanne Scanlon**, human resources operations manager; **1st Assistant Engineer Louis Lanier; Engine Utilitymen Jose Montano and Shannon Myles; 2nd Officer Garrett Wanzor; 3rd Officer Clifford Twaddell;** and able seamen **James Cramer, Robert Cason, Terry Johnson and Lawrence Wasley** as they enter retirement.

For more MSC in Norfolk and civil service mariner news, view the online newsletter at [www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter](http://www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter).

Military Sealift Command combat logistics force ships in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility conducted 81 underway replenishments in April, including 39 UNREPS with coalition, European Union and NATO ships. This crucial logistic support provided by the ships of Commander Task Force 53 enabled 5th Fleet combatants to stay at sea for extended periods.

USNS SGT William R. Button (T-AK 3012) and USNS Sisler (T-AKR 311) completed Exercise Native Fury in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, in April. The amphibious Maritime Prepositioning Force exercise involved every branch of the U.S. military and centered on humanitarian assistance and disaster response in the wake of a potential major typhoon. Button and Sisler safely executed both an instream off-load and instream backload,

proving they can get equipment on and off a beach anytime, anywhere.

USNS Pecos (T-AO 197) and USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4) departed to 7th Fleet area of responsibility April 14, concluding successful deployments to the U.S. 5th Fleet. Since arriving in theater in September 2011, the crews of Pecos and Byrd executed more than 100 underway replenishments with ships in that AOR.

MSC Central and Commander Task Force 53 bid fair winds and following seas to Navy **Senior Chief Petty Officer Ariel Cayetano, petty officers 1st class Lakisa Howard and Thomas Ellison and Petty Officer 2nd Class Erica Ward.**

The command and CTF 53 welcome Navy **Capt. Ken Dixon and petty officers 2nd class Antwone Adams, Leslie Garcia and James Dipinto.**



U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Brian Reynolds

A Seahawk helicopter transports supplies between MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 10) to USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in the Arabian Sea.

## EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

Military Sealift Command Combat Logistics Force ships continued their work throughout the Mediterranean Sea keeping the Navy on station and ready in April. USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) provided continuous support to USS Vella Gulf (CG 72), USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) and USS Nitze (DDG 94). Kanawha also conducted underway replenishments with the transiting Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group, including USS Iwo Jima (LHD 7) and USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44).

USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) chopped to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility April 25 and completed a port visit April 30 to May 2 to Rota, Spain, to transfer Project Handclasp materials to MSC-chartered high-speed vessel Swift (HSV 2) for distribution during Swift's Africa Partnership Station mission.

Prior to commencing its APS deployment, Swift visited Toulon, France, where it hosted Vice Adm. Yann Tainguy, commander of French Naval Forces in the Mediterranean. After

departing Toulon, Swift conducted a passing exercise with French navy ship FS Adroit and completed port visits to Palma de Mallorca and Rota, Spain, before reporting to U.S. Africa Command April 29.

USNS Bruce C. Heezen (T-AGS 64) reported to the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility April 12. After a port visit to Souda Bay, Greece, Heezen headed to Monaco for a port visit in conjunction with the XVIII International Hydrographic and Oceanographic Conference, where Heezen hosted a Commander, Naval Meteorological Oceanographic Command reception as part of conference events.

Navy **Capt. Richard Soucie**, commander, Task Force 63 and commander, MSC Europe and Africa, sent his congratulations to the crew of USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat (T-AK 3016) for its selection as a Chief of Naval Operations 2011 Safety Award winner. "Bravo Zulu to the Wheat team for their consistent dedication to safety," Soucie said.



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jonathan Sunderman

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) refuels USS Gunston Hall (LSD 44) during an underway refueling in the Mediterranean Sea.

## FAR • EAST • HAILS

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West met with Military Sealift Command Far East Commander Navy **Capt. Chip Denman** at Singapore's Sembawang Wharves April 27.

Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Victor Cirilo** relieved Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Mike Little** as officer in charge of MSC Ship Support Unit Singapore during a ceremony held April 13 at Singapore's Sembawang Wharves. Navy Rear Adm. Tilghman D. Payne, commander, Navy Region Midwest, served as the ceremony's principal speaker. Denman participated as a member of the official party.

Guests at the ceremony included Navy Rear Adm. Tom Carney, commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific; Singapore-based U.S. Navy regional commanders; as well as representatives from Singapore's Sembawang Shipyard, Vietnam's Cam Rahn Bay ship repair facility and the Philippines' Subic Bay Dry Dock.

The ceremony also served as Little's retirement from active duty, having completed 20 years of service. Payne presented

Little with the Meritorious Service Medal, recognizing outstanding service during his five-year tenure in Singapore.

Cirilo's last assignment was security division officer in charge of Coronado, Calif.-based Mobile Security Squadron Three.

The governor of State of Yap, part of the Pacific Ocean-based Federated States of Micronesia, and the U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia both sent letters of appreciation to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One Sailors and civil service crew members from USNS Safeguard (T-ARS 50) for their work in salvaging a grounded ship obstructing a major harbor. The ship, MV Cecilia, had run aground several years ago and its leaking fuel was damaging Yap's ecosystem. Safeguard refloated the vessel and moved it out to sea during an operation conducted earlier this year.

MSC Far East headquarters hosted two prospective masters to the command for one-day orientation visits. USNS Washington Chambers' (T-AKE 11) prospective civil service master **Capt. Guy Ziccardi** met with Denman and command staff members

April 6. **Capt. Tom Pearse-Drance**, prospective civilian master of USNS Bowditch (T-AGS 62) visited the command April 9.

MSC Office Diego Garcia commanding officer Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Patrick Haney** presented Logistics Management Specialist **Raymundo Diaz** with a certificate marking 30 years of service to the government of the United States, 28 of which included work

with MSC.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three welcomes Navy **Ensign Chang Liu**, who replaces Navy **Ensign Andrea Francis-Baptist** as command supply officer.

Navy **Damage Controlman 1st Class Travis Huff** reported aboard as assistant material officer relieving **Damage Controlman 1st Class John McPhee**.



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West, right, meets with Capt. Chip Denman, commander, MSC Far East, during a late-April visit to Singapore.

## HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters awarded its employees for length of service at a May 2 awards ceremony.

**Jessie Barton** and **Dan Cluxton**, engineering; **Erin Greninger**, contracts and business management; and **Tom Walters**, Sealift Program, were each awarded for 10 years of service.

**Shelley Croyle**, Force Surgeon's office; and **Earl Thomas**, logistics, were recognized for 15 years of government service.

**René Fry** and **Lisa Hecker**, engineering, were awarded a 20-year pin in recognition of their service.

**Lloyd Haugh**, Prepositioning Program; **Jim Hayes**, engineering; and **John Riedel-Alvarez**, maritime forces and manpower management, were recognized for 25 years of service.

**Keith Bauer**, Prepositioning Program and **Don Shelton**, Special Mission Program, were recognized for 30 years of service.

**Joan Galleher** and **Kevin Ryan**, Prepositioning Program, were awarded with 35-year pins, while **Dorothy Caldwell**, maritime forces and manpower management, received a 40-year pin.

**Don Clark**, mechanical engineer for the Sealift Program, was presented with the Military Sealift Command Civilian of the Quarter Award by Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, MSC. Clark was instrumental in developing an operating contract and vessel modification plans for USNS Guam, formerly MV Huakai, as it transferred to MSC.

Navy **Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Danelle Hankins** was

commended for superior performance as official information exchange/defense message system supervisor and alternate electronic key management system local element manager by Buzby. Hankins' professionalism and attention to detail resolved 85 percent of audit discrepancies during a program reassessment.

Navy **Lt. Scott Diamond** was presented with the Air Medal, 2nd and 3rd strike/flight awards on behalf of the president of the United States for meritorious achievement as an MH-60S pilot assigned to the 2515th Naval Air Ambulance Detachment, U.S. 5th Fleet.

Navy **Lt. Grant Greenwell** was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for meritorious service as flag lieutenant for commander, Military Sealift Command, on behalf of the Secretary of the Navy.

The MSC headquarters Reserve Unit received a Bravo Zulu letter from Navy

Capt. Randy Johnson, Navy Operation Support Center Washington commanding officer, congratulating the unit on its high level of readiness.

The command welcomes Navy **Capt. Michael Graham**, chief of staff; Navy **Lt. Scott Diamond**, flag aide; Navy **Capt. Robert Marin**, Prepositioning Program; **Jillian Morris**, public affairs; **James Parks** and **Kristen Reale**, and **Katrina Strand**, logistics; and **Roberto Ochoa**, **Elissa Reynolds** **Juan Rivera** and **Kate Sobus**, command, control, communication and computer systems.

Navy **Cmdr. Krista Sturbois** assumed the duties of executive officer of MSC headquarters Reserve Unit. Navy **Cmdr. Ted Summers** has been selected for promotion to the rank of captain.

The command bids fair winds and following seas to Greenwell; **Matthew Clifford**, engineering; and Navy **Operations Specialist 1st Class Adam Schwegel**, operations.

## PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, served as a guest speaker for the christening and launch of MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14) in San Diego May 5. Buzby met with civil service mariners at Customer Support Unit West and with the staff of MSCPAC. He also visited MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon (T-AO 202).

Navy Vice Adm. Gerald R. Beaman, commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, toured USNS Navajo (T-ATF 169) March 28, as the ship prepared to support missions tasked by COMTHIRDFLT in the eastern Pacific Ocean area of operations.

USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187), USNS Sioux (T-ATF 171) and USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52) participated in Exercise Citadel Pacific 2012 in the Hawaiian area of operations. Citadel Pacific is the Pacific version of the Solid Curtain/Citadel Shield exercise held across the United States in late March. These annual exercises enhance the training and readiness of Navy Security Forces to respond to installation and unit threats and evaluate the effectiveness of shipboard anti-terrorist force protection programs.

Navy **Capt. Sylvester Moore**, commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific, and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Robert Rieger** attended the Rim of the Pacific 2012 exercise's final planning conference in Pearl



USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14) is christened and launched May 5 in San Diego.

Harbor, Hawaii. The conference was an opportunity to finalize logistics schedules to include underway replenishment, sink exercise and tow operations during the bi-annual maritime exercise scheduled for July. This year's exercise will feature the delivery of biofuel by USNS Yukon (T-AO 202) to Navy ships at sea.

Best wishes to **Parrish Guerrero**, MSCPAC logistics department, as he departs MSCPAC for a new position with the MSC Central Logistics Department.

## MSC raises SAAM awareness

By Masha Rumer  
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command dedicated the month of April to educating its community worldwide about sexual assault, as part of Navy-wide efforts to promote Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The command displayed posters and circulated educational information about sexual assault and its frequent precursor, sexual harassment. While the Navy required all uniformed personnel to attend two training workshops, MSC held four workshops for its uniformed Sailors worldwide, including 55 uniformed personnel at MSC headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Workshops featured informational videos and discussion about the contributing causes and the far-reaching impact of sexual assault.

Even one incident of sexual assault is too many. The Navy has multiple resources available for victims.

Supervisors, equal opportunity advisors and the sexual assault victim advocate within every Navy command are all available to help.

Victims of sexual assault can proceed in two ways. They can file a restricted report, which will neither lead to investigation nor disclose the names of the involved parties to the command. The command's victim advocate, sexual assault response coordinator, medical examiner and the chaplain all fall under the umbrella of confidentiality, for both Sailors and civilians.

Alternatively, sexual assault victims can file an unrestricted report, which will begin an investigation and alert the chain of command for both the victim and the accused. At any point, victims may make their restricted report unrestricted.

### DOD contacts:

- Text zip code or installation/base name to 55-247 within continental United States or to (202) 470-5546 outside the country
- Call the DOD Safe Helpline at (877) 995-5247. Calls are anonymous.
- Chat online anonymously @ safehelpline.org

### Within MSC:

- PSCS(SW/AW) Shannon Coleman, MSC Worldwide Sexual Assault Program Coordinator and Force Equal Opportunity Advisor, (202) 685-5138
- Sexual Assault Victim Advocate, IT1 Antoinette DeBouse, (202) 685-5709

# CIVMAR morale high aboard Mercy

By Meghan Patrick  
MSC Public Affairs

The excitement level among Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy's (T-AH 19) civil service mariner crew spiked high May 3 as the ship pulled away from its layberth at Naval Station San Diego.

The crew of 70 mariners, joined by a team of nearly 1,000 military and civilian personnel, embarked the ship for Pacific Partnership 2012, a four-and-a-half month humanitarian and civic assistance mission to Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Engine utilityman Paula Michaud is excited to send e-mail updates to her two teenage grandchildren. One of them plans to write a school report on his grandmother's role aboard the 894-foot white ship emblazoned with large red crosses: a well-known symbol of U.S. compassion to many living in Southeast Asia, where the hospital ship has conducted three similar missions since 2006.

Boatswain's Mate Cromwell Rafol, a three-time Pacific Partnership veteran, is eager to return to his homeland of the Philippines with the modern hospital and medical resources he knows many of his former countrymen lack.

Able Seaman Jeffrey Ginogino is stocking up on small toys and lollipops to give to children he will help transport by small boat from shore to ship for life-changing surgeries in one of Mercy's 12 modern operating rooms.

Supply utilityman Cesar Ocampo, a 14-year member of Mercy's full-time skeleton crew, is excited to see his new shipmates experience the same mission that has given his life "great purpose" the past decade.

Pacific Partnership 2012 will bring medical, dental, veterinary, engineering and civic assistance aid to countries where relationships have been developed during previous missions. Subject-matter-expert exchanges are also a key part of the mission.

This year's mission is led by three dif-



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Eva-Marie Ramsaran

MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) sails from San Diego May 3 to start a four-and-a-half month humanitarian mission.

ferent element commanders: Navy Capt. James Morgan, mission commander for Pacific Partnership 2012 and commander of San Diego-based Destroyer Squadron Seven; Navy Capt. Timothy Hinman, commander of the medical treatment facility, who is responsible for the hospital and for providing medical care aboard Mercy and ashore; and Capt. Jonathan Olmsted, Mercy's civil service master who has overall responsibility for the ship and the safety of its passengers.

"Having participated in a previous Pacific Partnership mission, I know firsthand what an impact we have on the local populations we visit," said Olmsted, who served as master aboard USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4) during Pacific Partnership 2009. "In building these relationships, we'll have a better understanding of how multiple militaries and civilian organizations can work together to overcome the adversity of a natural disaster or contingency."

Throughout the mission, Mercy will serve as a platform from which U.S. and partner nation militaries and non-governmental organizations will coordinate and carry out humanitarian and civic activities in each country. Japanese landing ship tank JDS Oosumi (LST 4001), carrying a complete medical team, as well as helicopters and representatives from Japanese volunteer organizations, will join Mercy during its stops in the Philippines and Vietnam.

MSC's civil service mariners are vital

to the mission's success. They navigate the ship to each mission stop and provide the freshwater and electricity needed to run the shipboard hospital and to support the mission personnel living and working aboard.

In addition, the civil service mariners play a critical role in mission success by operating two 33-foot utility boats that transport patients and mission personnel between ship's anchorage and shore. Mercy is too large to pull pierside at any of the mission stops. The operation of these small boats, which can carry more than twice as many passengers as Mercy's two embarked helicopters, will greatly increase the number of people who will benefit from the mission.

Since graduation from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, N.Y., five years ago, Third Officer Debra Westendorf has dreamed about joining a mission that weds her two passions, sailing and service. Westendorf was so enthusiastic about serving aboard Mercy that she took a demotion to join the crew, willing to go from a day position as a second officer/navigator to a night-watch billet as third mate. But one would not guess Westendorf's hours based on the huge smile she's worn since setting foot on Mercy the month before it departed San Diego.

"Sometimes when I'm just walking down a hallway I'll stop and take in everything around me," she said. "I'm just blown away by the capability this ship

has to do something good for the world. I feel so privileged to play a small part in something so big."

The mission will also foster new relationships when Mercy stops in three Indonesian islands for the first time in early June.

"I am really looking forward to going beyond what we have done in the past as part of our exchanges," said Hinman about the medical capabilities of the mission. For previous missions, surgeries were traditionally performed by U.S. and partner nation providers aboard Mercy. "This year's mission provides opportunities to integrate host nation providers into performing surgeries, both on the ship and ashore, as a true exchange of expertise and practice that will greatly increase medical capacity and build relationships."

The mission will include personnel from all branches of the U.S. military; U.S. departments of State and Justice; the Agency for International Development; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association; 12 partner nations; 11 NGOs and numerous in-country organizations.

"This is the biggest thing I've ever been involved in, in my life," said Second Officer Casey Bell, who is working aboard Mercy as the cargo mate. "I'm really excited to get going. I've spent my career moving ammunition or fuel; now a better name for me is 'patient mate,' because I'll be working to safely move patients and personnel to and from the ship."

## Kocak delivers cargo for African Lion exercise

By Jessica F. Alexander  
MSC Public Affairs

MSC demonstrated its ability to provide U.S. warfighters a flexible edge, ensuring fast delivery ashore of the earliest arriving U.S. military equipment and supplies for the eighth annual African Lion exercise, held March 27 to April 23 in the

Kingdom of Morocco.

Similar to years past, MSC delivered Marine Corps combat equipment and supplies from USNS SGT Matej Kocak (T-AK 3005) to shore in support of the joint bilateral theater and security exercise held in conjunction with Royal Moroccan Armed Forces. The exercise is intended to build partnerships and promote inter-opera-

bility between nations while ensuring regional peace.

"We have the longest standing partnership with Morocco; they were the first country to recognize the U.S. as an independent country," said Marine Corps Maj. Raymond Howard, logistical officer for African Lion 2012.

Morocco and Spain are separated by the Straits of Gibraltar, a narrow but strategic shipping lane transited by thousands of merchant and U.S. Navy ships annually. This location is critical for freedom, safety and security of worldwide merchant shipping and U.S. Navy ships in the region.

Kocak was loaded with cargo – including rolling stock – at Marine Corps Support Facility Blount Island in Jacksonville, Fla., to support a Marine Expeditionary Battalion before sailing to Morocco. The ship arrived in Agadir, Morocco, in early April to conduct a pierside offload of USMC cargo in support of AL 12. Once pierside, MSC personnel performed the offload alongside Marine reserve support, which served as the Offload Preparation Party. The OPP embarked the ship a few days prior to the operation with drivers, tank

operators and artillery support.

"AL 12 is important to demonstrating our ability to discharge equipment from Maritime Prepositioning Ships so we are ready for subsequent missions," said Howard. "The MSC crew bent over backwards to support us and help accomplish the mission."

According to Howard, MSC support was vital to establishing Marine Corps mission readiness and showcasing core capabilities for a full range of military operations, which included instream operations and aviation support. Additionally, MSC support provided the Marine Corps around \$3 million in cost savings, Howard said.

"MSC not only offers the cargo, but also the professional crew and a cost-saving alternative," Howard said.

"The offload was completed in 10 hours rather than two or three days," Howard said. "This was important because it allowed us time to conduct our initial ground operations more deliberately. It allowed us more time to prepare for onward movement and accountability."

Kocak back-loaded the Marine Corps equipment in late April.



U.S. Navy photo by LTJG Gregory Fell

A U.S. Marine Corps M1A1 Abrams tank drives off USNS SGT Matej Kocak's (T-AK 3005) stern ramp in Agadir, Morocco, as part of African Lion 2012.