

April 2013

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

OPERATION DEEP FREEZE

MSC delivers according to plan



U.S. Navy photo by Larry Larsson

INSIDE — First Mobile Landing Platform christened • Training aboard USNS Washington Chambers

MSC voyages to the Quality Management System

A common characteristic of high performing organizations is a practice of continually evaluating and improving performance.

MSC is embarking on a path to implement a Quality Management System ashore. Military Sealift Fleet Support Command led the way for MSC several years ago by instituting a QMS, and what is now MSC Norfolk is certified to an international standard as a result. In phase one of a two-phase operation, we are expanding the scope of the system to MSC Washington. The second phase will expand QMS to include our area commands worldwide.

Afloat operations

For several years, our government-owned/government-operated ships crewed by civil service mariners have operated under the Safety Management System, another internationally recognized and certified program addressing the safety of our people, ships, operations and the environment at sea. This program, parallel to QMS, seeks constant process and program improvement. It's an excellent program and will continue.

Our government-owned/contractor-operated and commercially chartered ships and crews are all required by contract to have a safety management system that meets international safety requirements similar to our own SMS, so they, too, are looking for constant improvement.

Shore operations

In our 2013-2018 MSC Strategic Plan, we formalized my four strategic priorities, one of which was to focus on the customer. In the 2013 MSC Corporate Plan, the first of five annual "roadmaps" describing how we'll execute the strategic plan, we identified the objective of meeting customer requirements by providing talent, equipment and processes that achieve cost-effective, timely results. That resulted in the strategy of implementing QMS and certifying it through an external audit.

We're well on the way to completing that implementation, and we're working toward an external audit, which will take place in August.

What is QMS?

The MSC Quality Management System is a structured, systematic approach to developing, maintaining and improving the procedures, processes and resources we need to execute our mission. QMS is based on an international set of standards – ISO 9001:2008 – and gives us a process to continuously improve our operations and procedures across the board.

There are four stages in QMS. The first is PLAN – say what you do (and document the processes).



U.S. Navy photo by U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Ashley Hyatt

Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, MSC, boards high-speed vessel Swift (HSV 2) for an all-hands call at Naval Station Mayport, Fla., Feb. 14.

The second is DO – do what you said you would do by implementing the processes. Stage three is CHECK – prove what you did by presenting the records during an audit. The fourth stage is ACT – review and improve your processes continuously. Then you update your plan and begin the cycle again.

Quality policy

It all starts with the MSC Quality Policy: "At MSC, we will continuously improve our business processes in order to provide the best service to our customers." That makes sense, doesn't it? I think most all of us are looking for a better, more efficient way to do our jobs, right? This policy should be such an integrated part of the way we do business that we all know it by heart, or at least where to find it.

It's the continuous feedback loop that allows QMS to help us perform at our best level and continuously find new ways to improve our service.

QMS people

The international standards call for a Quality Representative in every ISO 9001:2008 organization. MSC's Quality Rep is John Quandt in N9, Strategic Planning. John and his crew have overall responsibility for QMS and its implementation. But they don't do it alone.

Each of the MSC staff N-codes and PO1, PO2 and their program managers have QMS Coordinators who can answer your questions and help you understand this new system within your area of expertise. If you don't know who your QMS Coordinator is, ask your supervisor. They should know.

Documentation & tracking

Documentation is key to tracking our objectives and initiatives, and to making improvements over time. Take advantage of opportunities to learn about the documentation requirements and why they

make the QMS an excellent tool for a 21st century organization like MSC. Ask your QMS Coordinator about taking a class.

Audits & auditors

Under QMS, audits will determine how well we are following our processes and, therefore, how well we are meeting our customers' needs. Audits will be either internal (conducted by MSC people who have been trained as internal auditors) or external (conducted by trained auditors from the American Bureau of Shipping). ABS understands the maritime business and what MSC is all about, so they are a natural choice for this task. The audits will provide an opportunity for continuous improvement.

Our first internal audit took place in March. Another is scheduled for May. The next external audit for Norfolk and Washington will be in August. That's when ABS personnel will visit various offices, asking MSC people what the quality policy is, what objectives and initiatives they support and what their processes look like.

QMS & you

Over the next few months, the Washington and Norfolk staffs will be actively involved in building and documenting our processes as we fully implement QMS. When we are complete, your responsibility will be to be familiar with your processes and what initiatives and objectives they support.

Another thing you'll need to know is the MSC Quality Policy. Again, it's "At MSC, we will continuously improve our business processes in order to provide the best service to our customers." It's the first thing listed in the small, one-page, folded brochure entitled, "Introduction to MSC's Quality Management System (QMS)" that, by now, every MSC shipmate should have. Keep it handy. If you can refer to

it when the auditor asks you questions, you'll come through the audit with flying colors.

MSC delivers!

QMS is not another passing management fad – it is an internationally recognized business standard that will help MSC continue to make good on the mission promise that "we deliver." Like any new tool, QMS will take a while to get used to. We'll all need to expend some energy on learning how it applies to us and how to use it properly. Once we have QMS fully integrated, we'll be a tighter, more effective and more efficient organization. Which means that our QMS program directly supports our fourth strategic objective: Manage organizational change and growth!

Sail safe and yours aye,

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

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Grapple aids aircraft salvage operation

**By Staff Sgt. Evelyn Chavez
31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs**

The following article was originally published online by the U.S. Air Force.

U.S. Navy and Air Force personnel wrapped up a salvage operation to recover the wreckage of an Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon which crashed off the coast of Italy late February.

U.S. Navy divers from the Mobile Diving Salvage Unit 2, Company 4, and Airmen from Aviano Air Base, Italy, worked aboard USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) for more than two weeks. Their mission was to identify, locate and recover wreckage of the Aviano fighter jet which crashed in the Adriatic Sea during a training mission Jan. 28.

Collaborating to better identify debris and information vital to the investigation, the joint salvage operation faced several challenges throughout the process.

"Weather, size of debris field and poor visibility have been some of the challenges we have had to overcome these last few weeks," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Michael Woods, MDSU 2, Company 4, master diver. "We have been forced to operate with even greater caution under these conditions."

Also among the challenges has been identifying components of the



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Evelyn Chavez

U.S. Navy divers operating off MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) assist salvage efforts in the Adriatic Sea.

aircraft recovered by the divers.

"As subject matter experts we are able to provide immediate answers for proper handling of sensitive equipment," said Master Sgt. Chad Aubuchon, 31st Maintenance Squadron flight chief, aboard the Grapple. "It is important for us to caution the divers on potential dangers that might hurt them or damage their equipment."

After Air Force personnel briefed divers on proper handling of sensitive equipment, members of the MDSU 2, Company 4, began operations with scuba dives to locate potential wreckage located by underwater scanning devices. Divers

then conducted surface-supplied diving operations which allowed them to perform more difficult tasks such as moving heavier objects.

"With surface supplied diving operations we are able to stay down in the sea longer and gather more debris as opposed to scuba," said Woods. "We have unlimited air supply with this type of dive."

The divers recovered over 200 pieces within the first few days despite the large debris field. This has been a difficult feat, according to the divers, as the significant amount of soft mud at the bottom of the sea has reduced visibility to zero.

"We have overcome cold weather, bad sea state, mud and zero visibility," said Petty Officer First Class Andrew Swartwood. "Although it has been difficult, we are trained to operate in these conditions."

Despite the difficulties, the Sailors and Airmen remain committed to their mission and report that the partnership was a positive experience.

"The teamwork I have seen is outstanding," said Aubuchon. "The Navy works well together, and having the opportunity to work with them while participating in their traditions is definitely an eye-opening experience."

USNS Comfort shifts layberth to Norfolk

By MSC Public Affairs

USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) arrived March 1 at its new layberth at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. The ship left its previous home in Baltimore, Md., Feb. 26, conducting several days of sea trials before sailing to Norfolk.

The layberth shift, coming after 25 years in Baltimore, will save the Navy approximately \$2 million per year. The Norfolk location also provides a variety of advantages, including on-site maintenance and engineering support, access to both commercial and military aviation facilities, and a transit time reduced by 12 hours for scheduled deployments.

"The entire MSC local team has made an exceptional effort to ensure a smooth shift of Comfort from Baltimore to Norfolk," said Navy Capt. Samuel Norton, commander, MSC Atlantic. "Having Comfort in Norfolk will add to the effectiveness of the area staff's ability to provide support to the ship. As we have concentrated on cost saving associated with the new layberth location, the vicinity to fleet concentration area and the assets that are here provides an amount of efficiency needed when the call is made for the Comfort."

One of two Military Sealift Command hospital ships, Comfort provides an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility for the U.S. military. As a sec-

ondary mission, Comfort provides full hospital support services for disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide.

The ship has 12 operating rooms, beds for 1,000 patients and a wide array of capabilities, with medical and surgical resources that can provide the full spectrum of medical services, including intensive care. Comfort also has radiography rooms with an angiography suite and a CT scanner, a dental suite, an optometry and lens laboratory, a physical therapy center, a pharmacy, a clinical laboratory and blood bank, and two oxygen-producing plants.

Here is some of the ship's history of providing world-class medical care when called upon.

Continuing Promise 2011

From March to early September, Comfort visited Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Peru. Mission personnel worked with host nations to provide up to 11 days of medical, dental, optometry, engineering, veterinary services and civil-military operations training. Medical personnel triaged more than 70,000 patients and performed more than 1,000 surgeries.

Operation Unified Response

Comfort deployed to Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 16 - March 19, 2010, to provide critical medical care to those affected by the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck the island

Jan. 12. Comfort's medical personnel treated 871 patients and performed 843 surgeries. Comfort departed Baltimore only 77 hours after receiving orders to activate Jan. 13.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

From September to October 2005, Comfort deployed to provide

medical assistance to Pascagoula, Miss., and New Orleans, La., following the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Comfort's medical crew provided treatment to nearly 1,500 people.

Bill Cook and James Marconi contributed to this story.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Jesse Hyatt

Left: Navy Capt. Kevin Knoop, commanding officer of Comfort's Medical Treatment Facility, mans the rail as the ship pulls into Norfolk March 1.

Below: MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) departs its layberth at Baltimore, Md., for several days of sea trials and a shift to its new home at Naval Station Norfolk, Va.



U.S. Navy photo by Jessica F. Alexander

McMurdo Station stock

By Sarah Burford
MSCPAC Public Affairs

The following story was originally published in three parts on Military Sealift Command's blog, <http://mscsealift.dodlive.mil>. Each year since 1955, MSC has participated in the Operation Deep Freeze resupply mission to McMurdo Station, Antarctica. This year, two MSC-chartered ships delivered supplies that will sustain the National Science Foundation outpost for the bulk of the year.

MSC-chartered container ship MV Ocean Giant and MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Peary (T-AOT 5246) completed off-loading fuel and dry cargo at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, for Operation Deep Freeze, the annual Joint Task Force Support for Antarctica mission to resupply the remote scientific outpost.

Maersk Peary arrived at the Antarctic base Feb. 8 and began off-loading its fuel cargo Feb. 10.

In addition to providing 100 percent of the diesel fuel, jet fuel and gasoline needed for the sustainment of the station through the harsh winter period, Maersk Peary also provided fuel for the National Science Foundation's chartered scientific research vessel R/V Nathan B. Palmer and the ice-breaker I/B Vladimir Ignatyuk.

Ocean Giant began containerized cargo offload operations Feb. 15. Members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One work around-the-clock off-loading nearly 7 million pounds of supplies such as frozen and dry food stores, building materials, vehicles and electronic equipment and parts; 80 percent of the materials needed for the winter over period.

Delivering, despite the weather

While North America endures the winter season, Antarctica is in the middle of its summer, which is unseasonably warm this year. Temperatures have reached as high as 30 degrees Fahrenheit some days, up from the average temperatures of 11-14 degrees Fahrenheit.

Warmer temperatures have made passage through a 15-mile ice channel into McMurdo Sound very easy for ships, but flooding on the airstrips made landing planes with personnel and supplies challenging.

Even with the warmer temperatures, personnel working on the ice still faced arduous conditions; especially those who have traveled from warm climates such as those in southern California and Hawaii.

"The wind is very harsh but we're fortunate that the entire crew doesn't have to be out on the deck to discharge the cargo," said Larry Larsson, an MSC marine transportation specialist from San Diego who supervised cargo operations at McMurdo Station.

"High winds are forecasted for the next couple of days, which will impact us greatly. Today is bitter cold. The wind is blowing at 30-35 mph with an ambient temperature of 10 degrees Fahrenheit with a wind chill of -27 Fahrenheit. Temperatures like that make you feel like you've gobbled down a large bowl of ice cream. Your face numbs immediately and your head pounds like you've hit yourself with a hammer. Even

wearing the extreme foul weather gear the winds find the weakest spot of your clothing and bite at your skin," said Larsson.

Summer also means 24 hours of sunlight each day, which can play havoc with sleep. Workers face long days, little to fill their free time with besides sleep.

"Antarctica is actually beautiful in its own weird way," said Dave Coulter, an MSC marine transportation specialist from San Diego providing support to this year's ODF mission.

"It takes a while to get used to. It's all rocks and ice, no trees, no grass, nothing but rocks and ice. Of course there's lots of sunshine, 24-hours a day in fact. You say to yourself, 'I'm tired, but the sun is still out, so it can't be time for bed,'" he said.

Cargo operations in any environment are dangerous. Heavy containers swing from cranes, pallets of material are moved with forklifts; with 24-hour cargo operations you usually have the factor of darkness as well. In Antarctica, however, the 24-hours of daylight becomes an advantage.

"All the extra sunlight really makes the night shift for the cargo ops easier," said Coulter. "When you're dealing

with

"Your face numbs immediately and your head pounds like you've hit yourself with a hammer."

Larry Larsson
MSC Pacific marine transportation specialist



Photo courtesy of SIU

Photo courtesy of SIU

ked for another year

with the cold, the wind and the ice, it's nice to have something that's on your side."

Concluding ODF

Ocean Giant's cargo operations continued through Feb. 23, and the ship departed McMurdo Station Feb. 25, bringing to an end MSC's involvement in ODF 2013.

"With the departure of MV Ocean Giant from McMurdo Station, we near the end of another successful ODF season. We have faced our challenges, but it has been a great mission. It's been great working with the entire ODF team. We're all looking forward to next season," said Tom Brown, MSC Pacific.

Ocean Giant is loaded with retrograde cargo for transportation off the continent, including ice core samples carried back to the United States in sub-zero freezer containers, as well as trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on station. The ship stopped briefly in Christchurch, New Zealand, before traveling to Port Hueneme, Calif.

Top, left to right: Dave Coulter, MSC marine transportation specialist, braves the extreme weather on the deck of MSC-chartered cargo ship MV Ocean Giant.

Ocean Giant makes its way to McMurdo Station, where it delivered 80 percent of the dry goods that will sustain the research outpost for a year.

Personnel from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One work to off-load cargo from Ocean Giant.

NCHB One worked around-the-clock to bring nearly 7 million pounds of supplies off Ocean Giant.

Ice-breaker I/B Vladimir Ignatyuk sails alongside MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Peary (T-AOT 5246).

Maersk Peary's crew delivered 100 percent of the fuel McMurdo Station will need to survive the harsh Antarctic climate.

Cover: Maersk Peary, right, provides fuel to research vessel R/V Nathan B. Palmer.

Background: Ocean Giant is a welcome sight moored at McMurdo's ice pier.



CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command ships operating in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of responsibility conducted 84 underway replenishments in February, including 40 events with coalition, European Union and NATO ships. This vital logistical support provided by the ships of Commander Task Force 53 enabled U.S. 5th Fleet combatants to stay at sea and focused on their missions.

USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201) transited the Suez Canal Feb. 24, ending a successful three-month deployment to the Middle East. Since arriving in theater Nov. 18, Patuxent completed over 50 underway replenishments across the area of responsibility. Patuxent also conducted the first-ever maintenance period by a U.S. ship at Port Khalifa in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) has replaced Patuxent in the region.

MSC-chartered float-on/float-off

ship MV Super Servant 3 loaded two U.S. Navy minesweepers in Bahrain Feb. 25. In the early morning hours, Super Servant 3 ballasted down and the two ships, USS Warrior (MCM 10) and USS Pioneer (MCM 9) were towed aboard. After a week securing for sea, Super Servant 3 set sail March 2 to redeploy Warrior and Pioneer to Sasebo, Japan and San Diego respectively.

MSCCENT and CTF 53 bid fair winds and following seas to Navy **Cmdrs. Tom Gerstner and Robert Parke, Chief Petty Officer Felicia Wells, Petty Officer 1st Class Shuva Chowdhury and Petty Officer 2nd Class Lettoya Fowler.** The command welcomes Navy **Cmdrs. Chip Elliott and John Leed, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Greentree and Petty Officer 1st Class Vincent Theus** to the MSCCENT team.

U.S. Navy photo by Paul Farley



MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) conducts a berth shift during a port visit to Souda Bay, Greece, in mid-March.

EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189) completed an eight-month deployment Feb. 28 to the Mediterranean Sea serving as the U.S. Sixth Fleet oiler. In its last month in theater, Lenthall conducted underway replenishments with USS Robert G. Bradley (FFG 49), USS Forrest Sherman (DDG 98), USS Mahan (DDG 72), USS Laboon (DDG 58), USS Barry (DDG 52), and French navy ship CDT Bouan (F797). These were the last of 128 customers Lenthall served during its deployment, during which the ship delivered 15,842,638 gallons of diesel fuel marine, 473,209 gallons of aviation fuel and 2,658 pallets of cargo. Lenthall also conducted 263 passenger transfers.

Navy **Capt. Richard Soucie,** commander, Task Force 63 and commander, Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa, presented awards and certificates of recognition to Lenthall's crew during a port visit to Souda Bay, Greece. Soucie praised civil service mariner **Capt. William McCarthy** and the entire crew for "outstanding support in meeting Commander, 6th Fleet's logistics requirements and

operational objectives during a busy time in the Mediterranean."

Prior to its departure, Lenthall stopped in Augusta Bay, Italy, to load opportune lift materials for delivery to the United States. The opportune lift program allows service members to move personal vehicles, boats, motorcycles and household goods on Navy ships if there is space available.

USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) reported Feb. 24 to relieve Lenthall as the U.S. 6th Fleet oiler and is preparing to conduct replenishment at sea events beginning early March.

In other combat logistics force support, the transiting USNS Laramie (T-AO 203), USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201), and USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) each resupplied customers in theater during the month, conducting underway replenishments with Mahan, Bradley and USS Laboon (DDG 58).

MSC-chartered commercial tankers, including MT Vallermosa, MT Cielo de Salerno and MT Port Russel, transported more than 458,230 barrels, or 19.2 million gallons, of DOD fuel throughout the theater.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kenneth Abbate



MSC fast combat support ship USNS Bridge (T-AOE 10) conducts an underway replenishment with USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) and USS Mobile Bay (CG 53).



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Stephen Lawlor

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Armando Gonzales

In the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility, helicopters assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 8 move pallets of food and supplies from Bridge to Stennis Feb. 16.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kenneth Abbate



Helicopters transport cargo to Stennis, as Mobile Bay pulls alongside for underway replenishment.

COMPASS • HEADING

In early February, Military Sealift Command released the evaluation board results listing candidates selected for the wiper advancement program. Forty-two were selected as "best qualified," or eligible for permanent promotion after manpower authorization and completing an administrative review. An additional 84 candidates were designated "qualified." The wiper advancement program was established by MSC to assist the command in filling shipboard qualified member of the engine department positions.

The command's surface rescue swimmer program, which trains civil service mariner volunteers to assist in the rescue of individuals from the sea, continues to steadily build, according to **Frank Cunningham,** CIVMAR Manpower and Personnel deputy director. Fifty-five mariners are currently qualified with an additional three in training. In addition to routine shipboard duties, qualified surface rescue swimmers respond to and evaluate the condi-

tion of survivors in the water and provide immediate assistance to help ensure their safe recovery.

Twenty-three MSC personnel attended a three-day course on contract management for ship construction, repair and design. The program, conducted Feb. 19-21 at Naval Station Norfolk, is designed for project managers, persons who form contracts and senior managers who monitor contract-related resources/cash flow.

The command wishes fair winds and following seas to **Deck Engineer Machinist Romeo Atrero, Logistics Management Specialist Fred Lee Colston, Assistant Cook Ricardo Gonzales, Second Assistant Engineer Earnest Green, Jr., Boatswain Mate Roy Kawamoto, Accountant Dean Rad, Junior Supply Officer Piorilio Rubis, and Second Cook Fernando Valet** as they enter onto the retirement roles. Thank you for your service.

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

DC • HIGHLIGHTS

The command bids farewell to **So Cheung Lee**, office of counsel. MSC welcomes **Rachel Trifeletti**,

command, control, communication and computer systems, and **John Baron**, Positioning Program.

FAR EAST • HAILS

Staff members from Military Sealift Command Ship Support Unit Guam participated in the ninth annual Na Bonita Hagat beautification project at Agat on Guam's western shore Feb. 9. SSU Guam's military and civil service personnel picked up trash and debris on local roads. Agat Mayor Carol Tayama presented a certificate of appreciation to commanding officer Navy **Cmdr. Brian Peterson** thanking SSU Guam.

During a ceremony held Feb. 20 at Military Sealift Command Office Diego Garcia, assistant operations officer **Ray Diaz** retired following 29 years of service with MSC, including 21 years at Diego Garcia.

MSCO Diego Garcia also bids fair winds and following seas to executive officer Navy **Lt. Benjamin Thornton**, and welcomes his relief,

Navy **Lt. j.g. Robert White**.

Established in 1984, MSCO Diego Garcia provides administrative, material and logistical support to MSC vessels at Diego Garcia, ensuring their ability to transport equipment, supplies and ammunition to U.S. forces worldwide.

Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Cesar Belton reported to MSC Office Okinawa Feb. 15.

MSC Office Korea welcomes **Logistics Specialist 1st Class Miguel Garcia**, who relieves **Logistics Specialist 1st Class John Dobson**, retiring from active duty after 20 years of service.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two welcomes force protection officer Navy **Lt. j.g. Cameron Williams** and administrative officer **Yeoman Chief Latasha Jones**.



Helicopters transport ordnance from MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4) to USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) in the Pacific Ocean.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, Military Sealift Command, visited San Diego March 1, holding an all-hands call with MSCPAC staff and civil service mariners at CIVMAR Support Unit West. Buzby also visited the Balboa Ave. Transshipment/Training Site and USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4). Additionally, Buzby presented MSC's new command-at-sea pins to CIVMAR permanent masters and chief engineers in the San Diego area.

Phil Patton, MSC Pacific's force protection officer, conducted a site visit Jan. 23-26 to the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX-1) in Hawaii. Patton collaborated with **Lance Murray** and key SBX-1 personnel to finalize security plans.

The MSCPAC Combat Logistics Force Officer team engaged with Fleet Logistics Command Pearl Harbor and MSC Global Stock Control to coordinate the cross-deck transfer of more than \$23,000 in materials from USNS Guadalupe (T-AO 200) to USNS Rainier (T-AOE 7). The transfer was part of a supply top-off of Rainier's deployment inventory.

During the same period in port, the CLO team also coordinated loading 98

pallets of provisions, supplies and mail to Rainier for delivery to USS Higgins (DDG 76), USS Shoup (DDG 86), USS Stockdale (DDG 106) and USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110).

Air Force Lt. Gen. Robert Allardice, vice commander, U.S. Air Mobility Command, visited the MSC-chartered tanker MV Maersk Peary (T-AOT 5246) Feb. 12 in Antarctica. While on the ship, Allardice presented Antarctica Service Medals to the ship's crew. Maersk Peary is one of two MSC-chartered ships supporting Operation Deep Freeze, the annual Joint Task Force Support for Antarctica mission to resupply McMurdo Station.

USNS Bob Hope (T-AKR 300) participated in the Citadel Shield exercise Feb. 25. The ship hosted an improvised explosive device drill, which involved an exercise role player attempting to board the ship with an IED. Participants successfully implemented pre-planned responses and coordinated with local force protection stakeholders afloat and ashore. The event marks the first time that an MSC ship has participated in a major Commander Navy Installations Command force protection exercise at the scenario level.



Civil service mariners aboard MSC submarine tender USS Frank Cable (AS 40) heave in the aft mooring lines in preparation for getting underway from Sepanggar Naval Base in Malaysia.



Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Eric Gajewski fires a shot line from USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) during an underway replenishment with MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock (T-AO 204).

ATLANTIC • LINES

USNS Spearhead (JHSV 1), Military Sealift Command's first joint high-speed vessel, arrived Feb. 16 at its layberth at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Va. Spearhead's journey to Little Creek began in Pensacola, Fla., where the vessel finished a three-week period of post-shipyard training and trials. The ship left Pensacola Feb. 9 and arrived the next day at St. Petersburg, Fla., for its first official port call. Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, MSC, embarked in St. Petersburg and traveled with the ship to Mayport, Fla., where Spearhead's crew demonstrated the ship's capabilities for U.S. 4th Fleet staff. Since arriving at its layberth, Spearhead will continue to undergo testing and certification trials pending its turnover for fleet tasking.

At MSC Atlantic's port office in Charleston, S.C., **Tom D'Agostino**, director of ship operations, coordinated USNS Lawrence H. Gianella's (T-AOT 1125) port call Feb. 17-18 to discharge 214,000 barrels of fuel.

MSCLANT participated in the annual anti-terrorism/force protection exercise Citadel Shield Feb. 25-26.

Due to fiscal uncertainty and spending constraints, this year's exercise was modified to support local command table-top exercise participation and training. MSCLANT personnel completed training seminars on active shooter, suspicious package, bomb threats and improvised explosive devices. The command also executed a highly successful internal suspicious package drill Feb. 28.

Melvina Lewis and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Philip Karg** coordinated robust Reserve support for the exercise, which included Navy **Cmdr. Carlos Cruz**, Navy **Lt. John Ahearn** and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Keith Dominic**. With the exercise scaled back, Reserve support refocused on supporting MSCLANT staff duty officer training and qualification. Dominic, of MSCLANT Headquarters Unit 106, passed his qualification board Feb. 28 after two weeks of studying personnel qualification standards and standing watches under instruction. Cruz is scheduled for qualification in early March. Ahearn, who previously qualified as staff duty officer, aided training.

Washington Chambers: Always training

Dry cargo/ammunition ship crew hones skill sets while underway

By Edward Baxter
MSCFE Public Affairs

Civil service master Capt. Mike Flanagan and the crew of USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) take every opportunity to train for the next evolution.

“Even if we don’t have customers on the immediate schedule, we never sit idle while underway,” said Flanagan. “We have to make sure we are ready whenever U.S. 7th Fleet calls upon us.”

The ship’s primary mission is to provide fuel, ammunition and other supplies to U.S. 7th Fleet or coalition ships at sea.

Underway in the South China Sea March 6, and with little shipping traffic on the horizon, Flanagan and Chief Engineer Tim Nesbitt decided to put the Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship through its paces.

Nesbitt spun up all four engines reaching a near-top speed of 21.8 knots and then took dramatic 360 degree turns to port and starboard directions.

“Having recently completed repairs to its engines in January, it was a great opportunity to test the engines’ capabilities and test the ship’s maneuverability,” said Nesbitt.

Chambers is able to cruise at slower speeds on just one engine.

The ship maintained its speed for just under an hour. What happened next was quite amazing: The ship slammed on the brakes. Engines were put in ‘reverse’ as propellers oscillated in the opposite direction.

Chambers shuddered as it slowed to as little as seven knots in a matter of minutes.

Afterward, crew members quickly donned life jackets and survival suits, mustering at life boats for an abandon ship drill. A drill leader took a roll call at each of the four stations, radioing the captain that all personnel were accounted for.

UNREP practice

Training continued the following morning, as Chambers rendezvoused with USNS Matthew Perry (T-AKE 9), operating close by. Perry, scheduled for an underway replenishment operation with USS Shoup (DDG 86) that morning, invited Chambers to come

along the starboard side, training in maneuvering and sending dry cargo pallets to and from each ship.

As Shoup came alongside Perry, Chambers approached carefully at a speed of about 13 knots. Once parallel, and as Perry began passing fuel over to Shoup, Chambers shot a messenger line over to waiting civil service mariners aboard Perry.

Next, as lines were secured at a distance of about 181 feet, empty metal ammunition cargo pallets were passed back and forth.

Throughout the one hour evolution, Able Seaman Andre Griffin at Chambers’ helm maintained the ship’s course within a half of a degree.

“Great work,” Flanagan said to Grif-

fin, who responded with a nod and a smile. “It’s not easy to do and it takes a seasoned helmsman with experience.”

Refueling complete, Shoup quickly gained speed and sailed away from Perry. A short time later, Chambers disconnected lines from Perry. Perry then sailed away as it gained speed.

Chambers practiced one more approach from Perry’s stern before calling it a day.

“Really appreciate the help,” Flanagan said to Capt. Bill Baldwin, Perry’s civil service master, as the two captains spoke by radio. “This is the way it should be. We need to seek every opportunity to train with each other.”



MSC dry cargo/ammunition ships USNS Matthew Perry (T-AKE 9) and USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) practice an underway replenishment while underway in the South China Sea.

First Mobile Landing Platform christened in San Diego

By Sarah Burford
MSCPAC Public Affairs

Alexis “Jackie” Bolden, wife of current NASA Administrator Charles Bolden, christened the Mobile Landing Platform USNS Montford Point (T-MLP 1) at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, March 2.

Montford Point will be a Military Sealift Command ship operated by a civilian crew and scheduled for delivery later this year.

“This ship, with its unique capabilities, is the centerpiece of seabasing, allowing the U.S. Navy to raise forward operations to a new level,” said Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, MSC. “Wherever the call, whatever

the need, USNS Montford Point is part of the Navy’s global force for good.”

Montford Point is named in honor of the 20,000 African-American Marine Corps recruits who trained at Montford Point Camp, N.C., from 1942 to 1949. It’s the corner stone of the Navy’s sea-base concept and serves as a transfer point for an amphibious landing force between large ships and ship-to-shore landing craft.

The ship also provides the ability to

transfer vehicles and equipment at sea while interfacing with surface connectors to deliver the vehicles and equipment ashore, improving the Navy’s ability to deliver equipment and cargo from offshore to an amphibious landing point.

Montford Point is the first of three MLPs being built for the Navy. It’s slated to join MSC’s Maritime Prepositioning Force as a seagoing pier in the event that accessibility to onshore bases

is denied. The ship’s flexibility is critical for humanitarian response to natural disasters and for support to warfighters ashore. Its size allows for 25,000 square feet of vehicle and equipment stowage space and 380,000 gallons of JP-5 fuel storage.

“Service to the Navy and the nation is what MSC people and ships are all about, whether it’s combat logistics service to the fleet, humanitarian response to disasters wherever they occur, routine transportation of Department of Defense cargo worldwide or the specialized services MSC provides to the submarine fleet and special operations, as well as myriad other government organizations,” said Buzby.



Above: Alexis Bolden christens Montford Point, the first ship of its class, which will serve as a floating base for amphibious operations.

Right: Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos speaks at the christening ceremony of USNS Montford Point (T-MLP 1) in San Diego.



U.S. Navy photo by Steven Whalen, courtesy of General Dynamics NASSCO