

May 2013

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

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

One Team
One Mission

USS PONCE CREW

INSIDE — MSC commander writes final thoughts, farewells • MSC delivers for U.S. Marine Corps

"Relieve the watch..."

Seems like I have been doing that – standing watch - most of my adult life, and now, my watch is about to be relieved for the final time. By the time most of you are reading this, I will have been relieved as COMSC by a truly outstanding officer – Rear Admiral Tom “TK” Shannon. As a Maine Maritime Academy graduate, he is superbly prepared to lead this organization into the future armed with a solid foundation in the Merchant Marine and recent operational experience as a Carrier Strike Group Commander on the front lines. In short – you could not have hoped for a more highly qualified and experienced officer to take MSC’s helm. I am certain that he will lead this organization to continued greatness in the future.

As I depart MSC after 3 ½ years in command, and the Navy after 34 years, I do so with a great sense of satisfaction, and sense that, while I got paid, I never really had a “job.” With very few exceptions, I loved doing what I was doing and was always grateful for the opportunity to keep on doing it – especially when the assignment was at sea. I’ve always been fascinated by ships and boats, probably inspired by visits to magnificent ships like SS UNITED STATES, SS CONSTITUTION, and RMS QUEEN MARY when I was very young, so a life at sea was a natural draw for me. While the ships may have drawn me to sea, it was the Mariners and the Sailors whom I served with on ships over the years that made me sure that I had chosen the right profession. It is as true today as it was the first day I stepped aboard SS MORMACSAGA as a Cadet and knew I was in the “right place.” To end my career in a position to serve with and lead professional Mariners has been a high privilege, and spawned a cherished set of memories.

When I took command of MSC back in October 2009 on the flight deck of COMFORT amid a cold, squally Nor’easter, I pledged to you in my remarks that I would strive to be the very best Commander that I was capable of being, and I asked that you be the very best at what it is that you do in our organization – be it afloat or ashore. One look at what MSC has accomplished in the past several years by even a casual observer of maritime affairs will reveal that you all have certainly lived up to your end of the bargain. I salute you all for



Above: Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, MSC, observes an underway replenishment with USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) while aboard USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15) during an October 2012 visit to the ship in the Arabian Gulf. (U.S. Navy photo by Kim E. Dixon)



Left: Buzby tries out the captain's chair aboard USNS Guam (HST 1) during a January 2012 tour of the ship with MSC Executive Director John Thackrah. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Cook)



Above: Buzby, right, speaks to Deck Engineer (Machinist) John Prideax, left, during a late 2010 visit to USNS Flint (T-AE 32). (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Cynthia Z. De Leon)



Right: Buzby at the helm, with Zuzu alertly performing duties as aft lookout. (Photo courtesy of Gina Buzby)

that - you have every reason to be proud.

I will leave it up to you to make the assessment about whether I measured up to my responsibilities. I would like to think that I made a positive difference in this outfit and left it better than I found it. Time will tell, I suppose.

I can't tell you specifically what lies ahead for MSC, but I do know that our nation and our Navy will look increasingly to YOU for innovative means to get the job done at sea – effectively, efficiently, and without fail – more than ever before in our history. I go over the side knowing that you will meet that challenge as you always have, because that's what we do – We Deliver, any time, any ocean.

I wish you fair weather, Ship-mates; sail safe. FWE.

Yours aye,

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

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MSC perspectives from Key Resolve

Active-duty Navy and civil service personnel, along with 30 deployed Reserve Sailors from MSC-affiliated units, completed their role in exercise Key Resolve, March 21. Key Resolve is one of two annual Korean-peninsula defense exercises, and MSC plays a vital role during the exercise by managing the massive influx of dry cargo ships and fuel tankers should a real-world crisis erupt. This year, Reserve Sailors augmented staff in Singapore, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. The following blog post, compiled by MSC Far East public affairs, details a first-hand account from two Navy Reservists who participated in this year's exercise.

Navy Quartermaster Chief Sean Cote, MSC Far East Reserve Unit 101: When my commanding officer announced that I would be part of a nine-person team heading to Singapore for the exercise I was very excited.

Arriving in Singapore after a long flight from the U.S., the first thing I noticed was the friendly and courteous nature of the Singaporean people. They treated us with their own unique brand of hospitality and respect so I felt right at home from day one.

Reporting to the command the following morning, I was assigned as a watch officer at the Crisis Action Team cell for the duration of the exercise. Ul-

timately, our role was to ensure the safe and efficient passage of MSC ships to the Korean peninsula.

At the CAT, we tracked hundreds of MSC ships across the vast U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility in around-the-clock operations –working closely with staff from Commander, Task Force 73 throughout the exercise. CTF-73 is MSC Far East's operational commander and is co-located at Sembawang Wharves.

Overall, I was impressed by the intricate planning that went on behind the scenes in safely moving these vessels around. Managing this many ships at one time is a herculean effort and it truly takes team work to make it all happen. Actual MSC ships were incorporated in the computer-simulated exercise which made the training all the more realistic.

I feel far more prepared to hit the ground running should an actual emergency occur. Singapore is the “gem” of the Pacific and I fondly look forward to returning here soon.

Navy Yeoman 2nd Class Aldwyn Singleton, MSC Far East Reserve Unit 101: MSC plays a vital role

by coordinating and deploying U.S. reinforcements to the Korean peninsula during a crisis, a vital part of Key Resolve. At the CAT, I was part of a



Chief Quartermaster Sean Cote and Yeoman 2nd Class Aldwyn Singleton share their thoughts from exercise Key Resolve, one of two annual Korean-peninsula defense exercises. MSC plays a vital role by managing the simulated influx of dry cargo ships and fuel tankers into the region.

logistics and tactical team which managed hundreds of MSC ships transiting the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans to support our forces in South Korea.

Having completed this training, I gained significant insight as to how important MSC is in supporting a crisis, be it in South Korea, or any other area

around the world.

Participating in Key Resolve has definitely been a great learning experience and I will take many lessons-learned home. On a personal note, experiencing the culture and sites of Singapore was enlightening. Singapore is definitely a place I'd like to visit again.

Navy christens, launches USNS Maury

From Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command

Accompanied by azure blue skies and a stiff breeze, the Navy christened and launched its newest oceanographic survey ship, USNS Maury (T-AGS 66), the last of its class at VT Halter Marine's shipyard in Moss Point, Miss., in a traditional Navy ceremony March 27.

The 350-foot ship is named for Cmdr. Matthew F. Maury, considered to be the father of oceanography, nicknamed the “Pathfinder of the Seas” and the first superintendent of the U.S. Naval Observatory.

Maury is 24 feet longer than its six sister ships to accommodate a 300 square-foot moon pool for easier deployment and retrieval of unmanned underwater vehicles.

Rear Adm. Jonathan White, Ocean-

ographer and Navigator of the Navy and the principal speaker at the launch and christening, said the T-AGS ships are a reflection of Matthew Maury, who he said, led a transformation in our Navy.

Matthew Maury developed wind and tide charts in the 1840s from ship's logs. White said that Maury realized the importance that understanding the natural environment has for ship operations. That lesson has persisted.

“We need to know about the environment to be the best Navy in the world,” White said.

USNS Maury will survey the world's oceans, collecting ocean data for Navy operations, continuing the work in the 21st century that Matthew Maury started in the 19th. The ship will be operated by Military Sealift Command for Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command.

“If Matthew Fontaine Maury was here today to see this ship and to see the



USNS Maury (T-AGS 66), the Navy's newest oceanographic survey ship, is launched during a March 27 ceremony in Mississippi. (U.S. Navy photo by David Stoltz)

character of the people who built it, there is no doubt he would say, ‘all's well,’”

said White.

NAVMETOCOMM directs the Navy's

meteorology, oceanography and hydrography programs, operates the Navy's atomic clock for precise time, and tracks the positions of the stars for navigation.

USNS Mercy recognized for humanitarian work

**By Sarah Burford
MSCPAC Public Affairs**

The National Conflict Resolution Center presented USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) with the prestigious 25th annual Peacemaker Award during a March 14 ceremony in San Diego.

The award, which honors individuals and organizations dedicated to peacemaking in their own neighborhoods and around the world, recognized Mercy for its bi-annual Pacific Partnership humanitarian deployments to Southeast Asia.

Navy Capt. Tim Hinman, commanding officer of Mercy's Medical Treatment Facility, accepted the award.

“I think the mission clearly demon-

strated the goodwill of the American people, and it showed the capability of our military health care system,” Hinman said. “It was all about the coming together of the various entities to accomplish something worthwhile. We're not just doing good things and leaving, we're building relationships that can be relied upon later.”

Converted from a commercial oil tanker, Mercy was delivered to the Navy in 1986 and served during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990. In response to a 2004 tsunami impacting Southeast Asia, Mercy deployed for a humanitarian assistance, disaster relief mission that led to bi-annual Pacific Partnership deployments for Mercy.

Mercy is operated by civil service mariners from MSC and staffed by a combination of military and civilian medical personnel and non-governmental organizations during missions. During the 2012 Pacific Partnership mission, the ship visited Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, where nearly 50,000 patients were treated and more than 900 surgeries were performed. In addition to human patients, veterinarians treated approximately 7,000 animals and engineers built or refurbished 13 school and health care buildings.

“Since that first mission to the tsunami and earthquake disasters in Indonesia in 2005, Mercy's four subsequent planned humanitarian cruises

have helped hundreds of thousands of patients in some of the poorest, most health care deprived areas of the Western Pacific,” said Tim McCully, deputy commander, MSC Pacific, and one of the first mission commanders in 2005.

“Every patient Mercy's doctors and nurses have treated becomes a lifelong witness, along with their families, for the United States' good will and peaceful aspirations for our world. Our hospital ships' recurring humanitarian cruises provide an outstanding return on the Navy's investment by showing all nations the very best of America's desire and ability to help others, and make the world a better, more peaceful place for us all.”



A perspective from

THE CAPTAIN

**By Lt. Dawn Stankus
Expeditionary Strike Group 5 Public Affairs**

Editor's note: This article is excerpted from an All Hands story featured in March.

To the casual observer, Afloat Forward Staging Base (Interim) USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15), may appear to be just another haze gray Navy vessel operating in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility, but a look inside the skin of the ship reveals something much different than the standard U.S. Navy military crew and a challenge for traditional thinking; leading a unique hybrid Navy and Military Sealift Command civil service mariner crew.

Married couples, sons and daughters, piercings, ponytails, beards, dreadlocks, Nike sneakers and backwards ball caps add to the remarkable blending of the MSC civilian mariners and their uniformed Navy shipmates serving aboard Ponce. As civil service employees, CIVMAR clothing and grooming standards are far from typical for Navy Sailors. However, MSC has implemented a pilot program to test new flame-resistant uniforms for CIVMARs aboard two ships, including Ponce.

The military crew is also an out-of-the-ordinary manning concept, since all military Sailors are individual augmentees from more than 50 commands worldwide, serving in seven-, nine- and 11-month rotations.

Capt. Jon P. Rodgers, Ponce's commanding officer, serves as the first U.S. Navy captain in command of the hybrid-crewed afloat forward staging base. He assumed command of Ponce April 16, 2012, following the ship's re-designation from an amphibious transport dock to an AFSB(I), and deployed her with the hybrid crew 45 days later. Ponce is his fourth steam-plant ship and the third ship more than 35 years old.

"Ponce is not old, she is wise!" Rodgers is quick to point out.

It is difficult to ignore the value of the hybrid manning concept for the AFSB permanently on station in 5th Fleet with a rotational crew substantially smaller than the legacy LPD version.

"The LPD crew billet base consisted of 360 active duty Sailors, not counting the Marine complement," explained Rodgers. "The AFSB(I) sails with only 165 [MSC] civilians and 55 [Individual Augmentee] Sailors manning the entire ship."

The duties between the civilian mariners and Sailors are allocated to efficiently handle the decreased manning. MSC civil service mariners crew engineering, supply and deck departments, while U.S. Navy Sailors crew operations, combat systems, weapons, communication stations and handle force protection duties. The ship is held to both military specifications and American Bureau of Shipbuilding standards.

One of the major challenges Rodgers centered on was blending two distinct cultures together to serve Ponce's intense mission requirement.

"My first task was to take a crew of complete strangers and meld a team to deploy a near-decommissioned ship in 45 days," said Rodgers.

"Now, the greatest challenge is training continuity with the constant turnover of both military and CIVMAR personnel.

We take the best of two cultures and fight fires, flooding and foe as one."

Rodgers explained that civil service mariners and military Sailors are very proficient in their individual job ratings,



AIN'S CHAIR

but the teamwork of a crew demands a certain degree of continuity. CIVMARS are only committed to serve four continuous months underway, and the IA military crew rotates frequently as they serve shortened tours. Rodgers is commanding the ship under two-year IA orders.

"Since our June 1, 2012, deployment, we have turned over approximately 85 percent of the crew," said Rodgers. "The [crew] churn demands a deckplate presence and a lot of trust."

"Trust is a big thing for me, especially during evolutions where an effective bridge team is essential, like underway replenishments, sea-and-anchors and maneuvering details," said Rodgers. "Because [experienced watchstanders rotate often], during an UNREP you will find me conning, the ship's [MSC] master handling traffic and comms with the rigs, and the chief engineer and first engineer as the throttlemen. The master, chief engineer, air boss and I speak directly with each other without middlemen phone talkers. Additionally, the bridge team consists of three people during normal underway steaming."

One civilian mariner in the role of mate on watch serves as the officer of the deck, junior officer of the deck, conning officer, lee helmsman, boatswain's mate of the watch, quartermaster of the watch, combat information center phone talker, and one of two required lookouts. Combat information center and embarked security team (EST) personnel are heavily integrated with the watch, and the EST acts as additional lookouts. With less people, each watch station requires more duties and responsibilities.

"There has been a lot of give and take since [last] April," emphasized Rodgers. "There truly are two distinct cultures aboard Ponce, but I have been focusing on making this crew one team with one mission. In the beginning, we trained according to culture. For example, there were two separate general quarters drills – a fire-and-boat drill for civilian mariners and general quarters for the military Sailors. Today, we train as one, using both the fire-and-boat and GQ alarm signals. I credit the individual maturity and professionalism of the crew to keep an open mind and selfless focus on the mission, vice the closed minded obsession with 'the-way-we've-always-done-it' mentality."

In addition to the challenges facing the integrated civilian and military crew, the 41-year-old ship also had to go through quite a transformation to serve in its current role. Fleet Forces Command, Military Sealift Command, Naval

Surface Forces Atlantic and Command Strike Force Training Atlantic invested a lot of time and resources in getting the ship upgraded with state-of-the-art equipment. These commands provided a talented crew to meet the task,

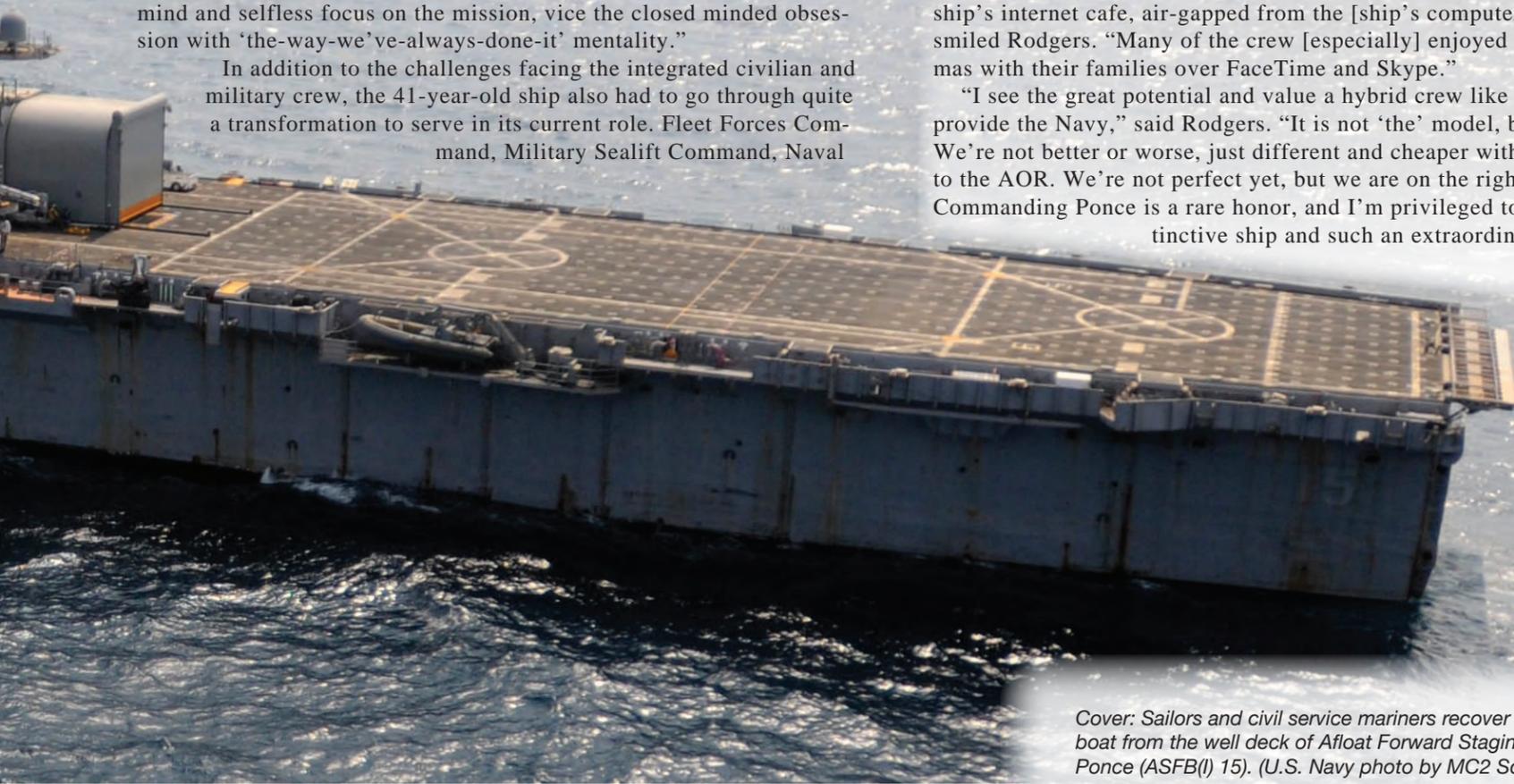
and scheduled an intense training program to get Ponce's crew competent and confident to meet a very aggressive operational schedule.

Now that Ponce is forward deployed to 5th Fleet, she is in high demand because of her unique capabilities and her full-time availability. Besides the legacy capabilities of a well deck, flight deck, cargo stowage, crane and embarked berthing spaces, she offers even more than before.

Ponce serves as a repair ship with a fully functional machine shop, metal shop, valve shop, hydraulic shop, filter shop, and a guest machine shop for mine countermeasures, special forces, riverine, joint, and partnership/coalition embarks. The Scan Eagle unmanned aerial vehicle is now a ship asset and, while there are no aircraft assigned to Ponce, she has a very functional and busy underway flight deck. The ship can embark at least 350 personnel, male and female, with more than 137 work stations in eight new mission spaces, all with video teleconference capability. The large joint operational center has access to six independent computer networks.

"Additionally, we have a full-size gym and self-serve laundry. One of the best morale installs on Ponce was a stand-alone Wi-Fi in the ship's internet cafe, air-gapped from the [ship's computer network]," smiled Rodgers. "Many of the crew [especially] enjoyed having Christmas with their families over FaceTime and Skype."

"I see the great potential and value a hybrid crew like Ponce's can provide the Navy," said Rodgers. "It is not 'the' model, but 'a' model. We're not better or worse, just different and cheaper with proven value to the AOR. We're not perfect yet, but we are on the right trajectory. Commanding Ponce is a rare honor, and I'm privileged to lead a distinctive ship and such an extraordinary crew."



Cover: Sailors and civil service mariners recover a rigid hull inflatable boat from the well deck of Afloat Forward Staging Base (Interim) USS Ponce (ASFB(I) 15). (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Scott Raegen)

Background: Ponce transits the Arabian Gulf. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Blake Midnight)

Banner left: Navy Capt. Jon P. Rodgers, Ponce's commanding officer, scans the horizon. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Dawn Stankus)

Banner right: Operations Specialist 1st Class Marcus Mitchell plots navigation points aboard Ponce. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Blake Midnight)

Bottom, left to right: Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Francis Dexter, background, receives a simulated casualty during a dive casualty drill aboard Ponce. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Scott Raegen)

A CIVMAR guides an Army AH-64D Apache helicopter as it lands aboard Ponce during an exercise. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jon Rasmussen)

Sailors and CIVMARs muster on the flight deck of Ponce during an abandon ship drill. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Dawn Stankus)



ATLANTIC • LINES

Students in the strategic studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology toured USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) for the first time in its new layberth at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., March 28.

Military Sealift Command Atlantic supported independent certification exercises in the Virginia Capes and Cherry Point operations areas for U.S. Navy and NATO ships preparing to deploy. USNS Big Horn (T-AO 198) and USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189) supported the exercises, which ran mid-March to April.

Three former guided-missile frigates moved in March to the Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility in Philadelphia. USNS Apache (T-ATF 172) towed ex-USS Carr from Mayport, Fla. Immediately afterward, Apache headed back to Mayport for ex-USS Klakring. USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) picked up ex-USS Underwood from Mayport March 29.

At MSCLANT's port office in Charleston, S.C., **Tom D'Agostino**, director of ship operations, assisted with the discharge of 225,000 barrels of fuel from USNS Lawrence H. Gianella (T-AOT 1125) March 23-25. Members of the Charleston office also assisted with the agency, husbanding services and load out of prepositioning cargo on USNS Soderman (T-AKR 317) March 14 to April 3. A total of 1,687 pieces of equipment were loaded, which equaled more than 265,000 square

feet. Marine Transportation Specialist **Mary Ann Liberto**, arranged port services for USNS Robert E. Peary (T-AKE 5), which called on a local shipyard March 13.

Marine Transportation Specialist **John Gregov**, who operates MSCLANT's Port Canaveral, Fla., office, coordinated and provided technical support for the loading of 287 pieces of equipment and cargo March 3-5 aboard the MSC-chartered vessel MV Ocean Atlas. The material is for U.S. Southern Command exercise Beyond the Horizons 2013.

Gregov secured approval for USNS

Pathfinder (T-AGS 60) to complete its loading at Port Canaveral March 25-26 after initially being denied due to a scheduling conflict at the port. By completing the loadout at the government facility, more than \$360,000 was saved in dockage, wharfage, commercial crane and forklift costs.

Judy Lee, MSCLANT deputy operations chief, and Navy **Cmdr. Rick Adside**, MSCLANT logistics officer, participated in an Expeditionary Strike Group Two working group March 4 to develop contingency plans for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in both the U.S. Northern and Southern Command areas of responsibility.

USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201) returned to Norfolk, Va., March 14 after

a six-month deployment supporting U.S. Navy combatants in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility. Patuxent performed more than 45 underway replenishments, transferring more than 6 million gallons of fuel and 300 tons of supplies.

USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) returned to Mayport March 26 after a six-month deployment supporting recovery operations.

Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J., hosted a community reception for local officials March 13. These quarterly receptions provide an opportunity for leadership to interface with individuals representing government, environmental, educational, emergency management, law enforcement and homeland security organizations.



A Sailor guides a medium tactical vehicle replacement off high-speed vessel Swift (HSV 2) April 2 in Puerto Castillos, Honduras, during Southern Partnership Station 2013. SPS 13 is a U.S. 4th Fleet initiative to strengthen regional partnerships with countries in the Caribbean Sea and Central and South America. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ashley Hyatt)

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Navy Combat Logistics Force ships operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility continued to provide logistical support in March. CLF ships performed 72 underway replenishment evolutions, including 34 events with coalition, European Union and NATO ships. Underway replenishments allow U.S. 5th Fleet combatant ships to stay at sea and focused on their missions.

Oceanographic survey ship USNS Bruce C. Heezen (T-AGS 64) started a dry-dock period March 7 at a repair facility in Qatar. This dry-dock period marks the first time a

U.S.-flagged ship has conducted maintenance at the facility. Prior to Heezen's arrival, a coalition dive event was conducted with U.S. Navy and Qatari military scuba divers off the pier where Heezen berthed.

Navy **Cmdr. Curtiss Culwell**, the Commander Task Force 53 requirements officer, visited USNS Joshua Humphreys (T-AO 188) and spent a few days underway. He observed the crew loading supplies in port, getting the ship underway and conducting a night underway replenishment with USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110).

MSCCENT and CTF 53 bids fair

winds and following seas to Navy **Lts. Jim Scharff** and **Chris Sacks**, and Petty Officers 1st Class **Ravindra Bissessar**, **Undrea Jones**, **Nelson Cooper** and **David Leflet**.

The command would like to welcome Navy **Cmdr. Chipman Elliot**, Navy **Lt. Oscar Garcia** and Petty Officers 1st Class **Maria Simmons** and **Kendrick King** to the MSCCENT team.



USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) refuels in early April with USNS Walter S. Diehl (T-AO 193) in U.S. 5th Fleet. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Matthew R. Cole)

COMPASS • HEADING

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, held all-hands calls March 15 at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., and USNS Comfort (T-AH 20). At both gatherings, Buzby recognized MSC personnel for their outstanding support to the organization and discussed the pending furloughs of civil service personnel and its impact.

The command congratulates **Michael Phipps** for earning the designation "honor graduate" from the Surface Rescue Swimmer School. While undergoing the training, Phipps further distinguished himself by beating a previous record, which had held for three years, for the 500 meter swim/400 meter buddy tow.

Sponsored by the command's Equal Employment Opportunity office, the command held a Women's History Month event March 21. Attended by MSC personnel from across the various codes and directorates based in Norfolk, the event featured civil service mariner

Capt. Susan Orsini as keynote speaker.

Quality Management System Designated Person **Francis Pelosi** and QMS Lead **Alison Parker** conducted an annual internal audit of MSC's PO1 office March 27-28 in Norfolk, Va. Personnel interview conducted by Pelosi and Parker helped verify that the organization is familiar and in compliance with outlined standards.

Fair winds and following seas to **Chief Cook Isidora Amaya**, **Mechanical Engineer Robert Atlas**, **Able Seaman David Callahan**, **Wiper Rafael Deguzman**, **Lead Financial Technician Jane Doxie**, **1st Assistant Engineer Richard Hall**, **Able Seaman Cesar Gonzales**, **Able Seaman William Klauber III**, **Boatswain John Kluver**, **IT Specialist Elizabeth Lang**, and **General Supply Specialist Anita Pass** as they retire.

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



Seaman Xavier Brown waves the Romeo flag on the flight deck of USS Peleliu (LHA 5) during an underway replenishment March 17 in U.S. 5th Fleet with USNS Laramie (T-AO 203).

EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

Navy **Capt. Richard Soucie**, commander, Task Force 63 and commander, Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa, visited USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) during a port visit to Augusta Bay, Italy, March 5. Soucie delivered theater in-briefs to **Capt. James Dolan**, the newly-arrived Kanawha's civil service master. Soucie also congratulated Kanawha for being awarded the Capt. David M. Cook Food Service Excellence award a second consecutive year. Soucie also presented letters of appreciation to **Chief Steward Derrick Piercy**, **Supply Officer Edward Owens**, **Baker Kevin Benjamin**, **Cook Lester Blunt, Jr.**, and **Supply Utilityman Sydney Cherenfant**.

"It felt very good to receive the award back to back. It is very rare because MSC ships as a whole pride themselves on providing the crew with the best healthy, nutritious meals available, and the competition is very fierce," said Piercy. "We felt here on the Kanawha, that because we push ourselves each day on improvement, that we were confident about winning. Many thanks to Capt. Soucie and Europe and Africa for the

recognition, and we look forward to making it a trifecta."

Concluding its port visit, Kanawha commenced its services as the U.S. 6th Fleet oiler, providing an underway replenishment March 6 to USS Robert G. Bradley (FFG 49). Kanawha also served USS Gravelly (DDG 107), USS Mahan (DDG 72), USS Farragut (DDG 99), USS Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81), USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), USS Hue City (CG 66), USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), USS Barry (DDG 52), USS Kearsarge (LHD 3), and German navy ship FGS Hamburg (F220) throughout March.

USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201) and USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) provided additional underway replenishment services in the area of responsibility.

USNS Dahl (T-AKR 312) entered U.S. 6th Fleet waters March 23, traveling to Agadir, Morocco, for participation in the Marine Forces Africa exercise African Lion 2013.

MSC-chartered tankers MT Cielo di Salerno and MT Port Russel continued to provide the inter-theater transfer of Department of Defense fuel, moving more than 555,000 barrels.



Civil service mariner Nathan Pirhadi operates the cargo station winch controls aboard USNS Kanawha (TAO-196) during an underway replenishment with USS Mahan (DDG 72) in the Mediterranean Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Nicholas Petrone)

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Navy **Rear Adm. Thomas K. Shannon**, MSC's prospective commander, got underway with the newly christened USNS Montford Point (T-MLP 1). The underway period was the first for the mobile landing platform, which was christened in San Diego March 2. Shannon also visited USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4), USNS Navajo (T-ATF169), USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187), USNS Waters (T-AGS 45) and USNS Bob Hope (T-AKR 300). Shannon worked out of MSCPAC as part of his transition as Commander, Carrier Strike Group One to commander, MSC.

USNS Yukon (T-AO 202) sailed with USS Freedom (LCS 1), providing logistics support via underway replenishments during Freedom's transit to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility. Both ships arrived in Singapore March 20.

Prior to transit, the Military Sealift Command Pacific Combat Logistics Force logistics officer team coordinated with Fleet Logistics Center Puget Sound and MSC Global Stock Control to load 168 pallets of material on board Yukon. The ship also delivered 30 barrels of lubrication oil to support Freedom.

Bob Hope activated and transited to an anchorage site off the coast of San Diego March 3. Hope provided a training

platform for Commander Naval Beach Group One Mar. 4-8. Working during day and night operations, Navy and Marine Corps personnel trained for operations requiring the transportation of military and humanitarian cargo to shore from ships at sea with a roll-on/roll-off discharge facility in various sea states. The RRDF is a large, floating platform where vehicles can be easily driven out of the cargo. Working from Hope's stern ramp, the RRDF enabled delivery of 25 military vehicles, which were loaded onto the ship and then off-loaded and deployed back to the beach. The command congratulates 2013 MSCPAC/Ship Support Unit San Diego Chili Cook-Off winners: 1st Place **Sarah Burford**, MSCPAC Public Affairs officer; 2nd Place **Debby Martelet**, MSCPAC manpower director; 3rd Place Navy **Cmdr. Joe Whalen**, MSCPAC operations support officer. Special recognition goes to **Steve Drexler**, Customer Support Unit West director, and contractor **Shirlee Linke** with the command's information technology support office.

Best wishes to **Airica Dryden**, MSCPAC Operations Department, as she ends her employment with MSCPAC. Dryden leaves MSC after a 13-year career that included service as a civil service mariner aboard Kaiser.

FAR EAST • HAILS

Navy **Capt. Timothy Callahan** relieved Navy **Capt. Calvin Slocumb** as commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two during a March 26 ceremony at Diego Garcia's United Seamen's Service Center.

Navy Capt. Richard Skiff, commanding officer of Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia, served as principal speaker, joining MPS Squadron Two ship masters and the British representative to Diego Garcia at the ceremony.

Skiff presented Slocumb with a Legion of

Merit Medal recognizing his achievements as squadron command over the past year.

While deployed to the Republic of the Philippines in support of exercises Freedom Banner and Balikitan, Sailors assigned to Expeditionary Port Unit 102 visited local children from the Subic Bay Children's Home March 23.

Sailors presented various supplies to the school's principal, handed out sweets to the children and painted the front of the school's church. Sailors shared lunch and a few stories about what it's like to be a Navy Sailor.

DC • HIGHLIGHTS



Navy Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander, MSC, greets Commander, Navy Reserve Force Vice Adm. Robin Braun. Braun presented the keynote address at an MSC Women's History Month event in March. (U.S. Navy photo by Barry Lake)

Military Sealift Command headquarters personnel in Washington, D.C. attended a Women's History Month event March 21. Navy Vice Adm. Robin Braun, commander, Navy Reserve Force, presented a keynote address about the service and sacrifice of Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War II.

MSC headquarters personnel in Washington, D.C. and Norfolk, Va., participated in a remote work drill March 26. The exercise tested the capabilities of shoreside personnel to continue operations in the event a contingency limited or cut off access to MSC office spaces.

Meghan Patrick Henderson, public affairs, graduated as salutatorian honor graduate from the Defense Information School Public Affairs Qualification Course in Fort Meade, Md., in March. For leadership and outstanding performance during the intensive course, Henderson also received the Joseph M.

Galloway award, named for a Vietnam war journalist awarded a bronze star.

For the Days of Remembrance, the annual U.S. commemoration of the Holocaust, survivor Louise Lawrence-Israels spoke April 10 to headquarters personnel in Washington, and via video teleconference to personnel in Norfolk. Lawrence-Israels shared stories of her life in hiding during World War II.

The command wishes fair winds and following seas to **Bryan Nails**, **Michael Young** and **Dashana Davis**, maritime forces, manpower and management; and **Samantha Jernigan**, **Elizabeth Lang** and **David Milstead**, command, control, communication and computer systems; and **Robert Atlas**, engineering.

MSC welcomes **James Mills**, maritime forces, manpower and management; **Antwon Morgan**, logistics; and **Lloyd Goodwin**, command, control, communication and computer systems.

"I made friends with the children and shared stories about our hobbies and goals in life," said **Yeoman 2nd Class Kim Villegas** of EPU 102.

MPS Squadron Two bids fair winds and following seas to chief staff officer Navy **Lt.Cmdr. Blaine Bitterman**.

Military Sealift Command Office Diego Garcia welcomes **Boatswain's Mate Chief Gilbert Cano** who relieves **Boatswain's Mate Chief Robert Gibbs** as operations officer.

Marine Brig. Gen. Craig Q. Timberlake, deputy commanding general, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force and commanding general, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade visited Navy **Capt. Richard**

Rainer and MPS Squadron Three staff members aboard USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) at Subic Bay, the Philippines, March 26. After touring the vessel, Timberlake addressed embarked U.S. Marines and squadron staff members, thanking them for their support of exercises Freedom Banner and Balikitan 2013.

Military Sealift Command Far East welcomes **Yeoman 1st Class Ketrick Dale** who relieves **Yeoman 1st Class Stacy Olivias** as administrative officer. Navy **Capt. Jesus Cantu**, MSCFE deputy commander, presented Olivias with a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal recognizing achievements during a three-year assignment at the command.

Lummus, Sacagawea perform in Far East

MSC transports USMC cargo to Philippines for exercise

By Edward Baxter
MSCFE Public Affairs

Navy ships and personnel assigned to Military Sealift Command transported U.S. Marine Corps combat equipment and supplies to Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, in support of exercises Freedom Banner and Balikatan, March 21-26.

Freedom Banner is an annual exercise held in conjunction with a large-scale exercise in the Pacific.

This year's primary exercise is Balikatan, a Marine Corps exercise providing humanitarian civic assistance and live-fire field training in the Philippines, April 5-17.

Designed to deliver military cargo and supplies in response to a contingency, Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) and its crew, transported hundreds of tactical vehicles and amphibious assault vehicles culminating in a pier-side offload during Freedom Banner 2013.

Dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2) remained offshore during the exercise, testing ship-to-shore sustainment of troops and equipment.

MV Capt. Steven L. Bennett delivered additional Marine Corps cargo from Okinawa. The



A U.S. Marine Corps Amphibious Assault Vehicle rolls down USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus's (T-AK 3011) ramp for delivery to the Philippines for exercise Balikatan. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

687-foot container ship off-loaded 430 pieces of equipment, including vehicles, containerized equipment and break-bulk cargo.

MSC Reservists played an important role during the exercise. Sailors from Expeditionary Port Units 102 and 105, along with Reservists assigned to the Navy's Strategic Sealift Officer program, crewed a mobile sealift operations

command center. They also crewed a portable communications facility designed to operate and manage port operations even if port infrastructure is damaged or destroyed. Sailors assigned to MSC Office Korea deployed to Subic Bay in support of the exercises.

"We gained critical real-world mission experience which will contribute directly to our unit's

overall readiness," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. William Hartman, EPU 102.

At the conclusion of the Balikatan exercise, cargo will be reconstituted aboard Lummus and Sacagawea. The reconstitution also concludes Freedom Banner 2013. Remaining cargo is then delivered back to Okinawa aboard a contract vessel.

Ospreys land for first time on Maritime Prepositioning Force ship

The following story by Ensign Chang Liu, MPS Squadron Three Public Affairs was originally published on Military Sealift Command's blog, <http://mscsealift.dodlive.mil>, during Exercise Freedom Banner and Balikatan off the coast of Subic Bay, Philippines, April 2013.

U.S. Marine Corps pilots from the Okinawa-based "Dragons" of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron VMM-265 conducted flight operations with MV-22B Ospreys aboard USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2) in early April 2012 – the first-of-its-kind training with the dry cargo/ammunition and Maritime Prepositioning Force ship.

Beginning April 6, Osprey pilots initiated a series of take-offs and landings aboard Sacagawea. Flight operations with the tilt-rotor Osprey, designed to combine the functionality of a conventional helicopter with the long-range, high-speed cruise performance of a turboprop aircraft, continue through April 11.

Marine Corps aviation personnel are working closely with civil service mariners from Sacagawea in familiarizing themselves with the aircraft's unique capabilities as well as cargo lifting and passenger transfer capabilities.

"This is our first MV-22 land-



Civil service mariners from Sacagawea train with Marines by connecting a Humvee to an Osprey before attempting the operation at sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Chang Liu)



A U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey lands on board USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2) off the coast of Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. This flight tested Sacagawea's capability to move cargo and personnel ashore quickly via air transport. (U.S. Navy photo by Ensign Chang Liu)

ing, fueling, cargo and passenger transfer and Sacagawea is leading the way with safe and smooth Osprey operations," said Capt. Rollin Bellfi, Sacagawea's civil service master.

Part of the training also occurs ashore where Marines and civil service mariners assigned to Sacagawea's flight deck practice lifting a Marine Corp Humvee light vehicle in preparation for an at-sea cargo operation aboard Sacagawea later in the week.

At nearby Subic Bay international airport, flight deck personnel practice hooking up the Humvee to the MV-22, lifting it and placing it safely on the ground.

"The Osprey is the obvious solution to the Marine Corps' Expeditionary aerial ship-to-shore connector for sea-based logistics," said Marines Corps Maj. Sean Forester.

Sacagawea conducted additional landing qualifications, refueling operations, passenger transfers and cargo lifts with the Osprey throughout the remainder of Exercise Balikatan, an annual exercise aimed at improving Republic of the Philippines-United States combined planning, combat readiness, and interoperability while enhancing security relations and demonstrating US resolve to support the Philippines against external aggression.

Along with USNS 1ST LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011), Sacagawea deployed to the Philippines in support of exercise Freedom Banner and Balikatan and delivered 170 pieces of Marine Corps cargo ashore via U.S. Navy watercraft last month. Once ashore, the cargo is used by the III Marine Expeditionary Force for its field portion of exercise Balikatan.