

SEALIFT

Our U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command

Proud to be
part of the Navy team

INSIDE the January 2014 Issue — Farewell to USNS Flint • Worldwide and mission ready

Looking ahead into the new year

The following blog was written by Rear Adm. T.K. Shannon, Commander, Military Sealift Command. Weathering the past year was not easy for MSC employees. Concern is evident about what the year ahead will bring. We will be strong together, helping each other through the rough spots because our MSC team is an extraordinary family.

As we move into January 2014, I believe we can all agree that 2013 was a hard year. We all felt the impact of the budget constraints of sequestration, as well as a widespread DOD hiring freeze, followed by the prolonged threat of furlough and then the actual reality. It was a tough year personally, professionally and financially for most of you.

To understand the impact of this summer's furlough on the MSC family, we conducted a comprehensive impact study. When we were briefed on the results, they confirmed what we suspected -- employee stress levels rose during the furlough, and they remained high even three months afterward. The study also indicated that our MSC employees lost a large chunk of money, and some took on new debt to cover the financial impact of the furlough. The holiday season may have been a little tighter and less joyous as a result.

I want you to know that I understand the impact of all this on your personal and professional quality of life. I also want you to know that the report identified the obvious - you did a first class job despite the added stress - pulling together as the great



USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), left, and USS Gettysburg (CG 64), right, conduct an underway replenishment with USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8) in late December. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Preston Paglinawan)

team that you are. You worked hard to allow MSC to succeed in its mission, and I want you and your families to know that you are the best!

Whether you were afloat or ashore this past year, your strength, selflessness and patriotism once again earned my deep respect. I was - and still am - very thankful for your commitment to our command goals. I am proud to serve with this fantastic family of men and women who are all dedicated to making MSC the best that it can be.

As we look forward to 2014, I believe we need to be both cautious and hopeful. With sequestration moving into its second year we need to continue to practice frugality with our funding - looking for ways to conserve our

financial resources to ensure we offer the best value we can for our customers' dollars. But we can be hopeful because there is some indication that our Congress is working to ease the sequestration burden a little.

I have talked about our MSC Global Review for some time now. As the review moves forward, I ask each of you to "lean in" when called upon by the team as they seek information, history, current perceptions, ideas and facts about who we are as a command. We want to ensure that we are structured appropriately and efficiently as we continue our mission into the future.

When our MSC Global Review team members focus on your work group or

area, please do your best to support their data gathering. We all need to be involved in - and proud of - the product the Global Review team will produce. It needs to be reflective of the best MSC can offer in terms of customer support and efficiency.

You are a superb team, and I urge you to continue to look for ways that we can improve - ways for us to be more efficient - ways for us to continue to deliver on our MSC mission as we move together into 2014.

Thanks for your service,

T.K. Shannon
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Military Sealift Command

Safety during the winter season

The following blog was written by Rear Adm. T.K. Shannon, Commander, Military Sealift Command. Winter weather afloat and ashore requires extra attention to detail if we all want to keep ourselves and our families safe all winter long.

Making safety part of our work and lifestyle

We need to consciously weave safety into everything we do, every day, because what we do in our everyday lives affects our work, our colleagues and our command.

We all make instantaneous risk assessments throughout the day in regard to walking, driving, climbing stairs and so on. The truth is that these instantaneous assessments become so common that they drop to the back of our minds. When we get to the workplace, the same thing happens with tasks we've completed a thousand times. We just don't seem to consciously think about safety and risk management, yet we all need to hold on to the safety mind.

Afloat

Aboard ship, we can fall into the tedium of routine tasks, forgetting that the job is inherently dangerous, whether above or below deck. Ladders are steep. Decks can be slippery. Eyes take a while to adjust to the dark. Cables under tension can break.

Please, consider the lint traps on clothes dryers. It only takes a couple of seconds to pull them out and clean them after you use a dryer. If you don't, the consequences can be devastating, as they were aboard the passenger ship Ecstasy in 1998. The resultant fire injured 14 crew members and eight passengers. Damages exceeded \$17 million, and the ship was out of commission for two months.

Whether ashore or afloat, it's the mental environment we've established in our heads that will keep us from hurting ourselves or others, maybe even save our lives. Please don't just react to an event or emergency, and don't let "urgency" overrule our common "safety" sense. We need to use operational risk management, a decision-making process that helps identify hazards, assess the risks associated with those hazards and implement the controls or processes that will reduce those risks.

Ashore

The familiar environment of our office or home just doesn't seem to be all that dangerous. But electrical cords can short out when yanked from a wall plug. Desk chairs don't make good ladders. Wet and slippery tile floors can lead to broken arms.

We've just survived some of our biggest travel holidays in America. Safety this winter still remains paramount. Cold weather, travel, parties and winter activities all require an extra sense of vigilance.

If you plan to travel via automobile to spend time with family and friends, then please plan ahead before you travel. Conduct a maintenance check on your vehicle. It's best to get plenty of rest before you make any long drives. Stopping frequently during the drive keeps you fresh. And, please, always make sure everyone is wearing their seatbelt.

As always, please don't drink and drive, and always identify and use a designated driver. Alcohol and driving do not mix.

If you engage in outdoor activities, please think about what you're doing. It's always good to watch your kids and use layers of clothing for cold weather. If you're playing winter sports, please review the rules and wear the proper safety gear. With any outdoor activity, minimizing alcohol consumption is a giant step toward personal safety.

All the time

Leaders play a critical role in safety. They must be committed to safety on a daily basis: education, training, practice and enforcement. Safety itself starts at the bottom with each one of us, but a safe environment starts at the top with leadership by example and a safety mindset.

Safety has to be part of what we do and who we are, no matter where we are or what we're doing. Safety has to be so much a part of our lives that we act safely without having to think about it.

Our goal is to begin the New Year with no injuries or lost workdays. Safety isn't rocket science. It's common sense and proper planning, and it's everyone's job. No one is immune when it comes to mishaps. So, please, watch out for each other - think safety - act safely. Have a safe winter season!

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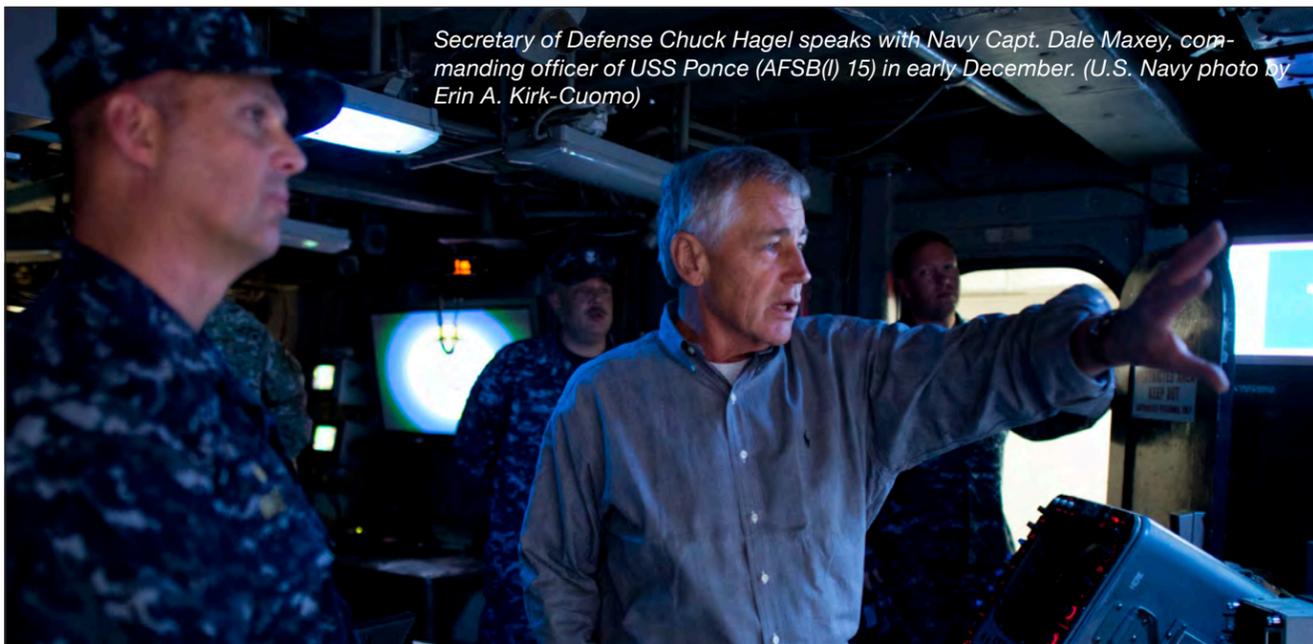
Military Sealift Command reports to the Commander, U.S. Transportation Command for defense transportation matters, to the Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command for Navy-unique matters and to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition for procurement policy and oversight matters.



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MSC: Worldwide and mission ready



Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel speaks with Navy Capt. Dale Maxey, commanding officer of USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15) in early December. (U.S. Navy photo by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo)



A helicopter from USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8) delivers cargo to USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) in the Gulf of Oman. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lyle H. Wilkie III)



Navy personnel establish communications to Guam while aboard USNS 2ND LT John P. Bobo (T-AK-3008). (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Timothy Wilson)



Sailors aboard USS Truxtun (DDG 103) prepare for an underway replenishment with USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) in the Atlantic Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Scott Barnes)



Personnel aboard USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), shift colors as the ship departs Romania. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Collin Turner)



Personnel off-load from a barge during ordnance operations with USNS Carl Brashear (T-AKE 7). (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Eli J. Medellin)



USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201), left, and USS Leyte Gulf (CG 58) prepare for an underway replenishment in the Atlantic Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Justin Wolpert)

A look back at MSC's "TO

Military Sealift Command proudly serves as part of our U.S. Navy's team, operating worldwide, 24/7. Our maritime professionals – civilian and military, afloat and ashore – help sustain our Navy's forward presence with ships capable of undertaking diverse mission types around the world. These capable platforms enable the resupply of combatant ships at sea, provide prepositioning and point-to-point transportation, and respond swiftly to natural disasters and other crises. The following blog highlights just a few of this year's accomplishments:

1. Operation Damayan

In mid-November, MSC participated in our Navy/Marine Corps team effort to provide disaster relief to the Philippines in the wake of super typhoon Haiyan. Ships included USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 10), USNS Bowditch (T-AGS 62), USNS Walter S. Diehl (T-AO 193), USS Emory S. Land (AS 39), USNS Richard E. Byrd, (T-AKE 4), and USNS Yukon (T-AO 202).

2. USS Mount Whitney

Homeported in Gaeta, Italy, the U.S. 6th Fleet flagship deployed several times in 2013, including a two-month deployment that ended in early July. Mount Whitney made several port visits including two in northern Europe, and participated in the annual Baltic Operations exercise, aimed at enhancing maritime security in the Baltic Sea.

3. Mine Countermeasures

USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15) provides unique capabilities as our Navy's first designated interim afloat forward staging base, operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility. In late May, Ponce concluded its participation in the at-sea portion of the International Mine Countermeasures Exercise. Like Mount Whitney, Ponce's crew comprises both civil service mariners and uniformed Sailors, commanded by a Navy captain.

4. MV-22 Flight Ops on USNS Sacagawea

A Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey took off and landed aboard a dry cargo/ammunition ship for the first time during the 2012 Bold Alligator exercise. The MV-22 continued to demonstrate its interoperability with the T-AKE class this year during Exercise Freedom Banner and Balikatan in the Far East, with several days of at-sea flight operations.

5. First Mobile Landing Platform Delivered

It's been a big year for our Navy's first mobile landing platform, USNS Montford Point (MLP 1). Christened and launched in March, Montford Point delivered to the Navy in May and sailed to Naval Station Everett, Wash., where it successfully completed final contract trials. The ship is currently having its core capabilities set installed in Oregon, which will allow it to transfer equipment and personnel at sea, and deliver vehicles and equipment ashore.



TOP 10" of 2013

6. Joint High-Speed Vessels

The first joint high-speed vessel, USNS Spearhead (JHSV 1), completed its initial operational testing and evaluation in early August. USNS Choctaw Count (JHSV 2) delivered to the Navy in early June, and USNS Millinocket (JHSV 3) launched in Mobile, Ala. The JHSV, another of our Navy's most capable new platforms, is capable of operating at sustained speeds of 33 knots for 1,200 nautical miles, and in austere ports.

7. USNS Flint (T-AE 32) Inactivates

The last of the Kilauea Class, the now ex-USNS Flint inactivated Nov. 8 after more than four decades of Navy service. USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) towed the former ammunition ship on its final voyage to Beaumont, Texas, earlier this month. During the ship's 42 years, it operated worldwide, finishing its service in the U.S. 5th Fleet areas of responsibility.

8. Operation Deep Freeze

Every year, MSC supports Operation Deep Freeze, providing dry cargo and fuel to the scientists operating from the remote McMurdo Station in Antarctica. MV Ocean Giant delivered nearly seven million pounds of supplies to the scientific outpost, and chartered tanker MT Maersk Peary (T-AOT 5246) provided 100 percent of the fuel necessary to sustain McMurdo through the harsh Antarctic winter.

9. Cobra Gold

MSC-chartered container ship MV Capt. Steven L. Bennett completed cargo operations at the port of Chuk Sa Met, Thailand, delivering more than 520 pieces of 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force cargo Feb. 8 to support exercise Cobra Gold 2013.

10. One Navy, #OneTeam

USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) played a key role supporting U.S. Navy destroyers as they remained on station in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea in Aug. 2013. Whether resupplying combatant ships at sea or providing potable water during disaster relief efforts we are honored to be a part of our U.S. Navy and will continue to strengthen our partnerships in the year ahead!

Cover photo: Ensign Brooke Amoroso, aboard guided-missile destroyer USS Gravelly (DDG 107), provides orders to the helmsman during a refueling at sea with MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO 203). U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Darien Kenney.

U.S. Navy photo credits, center spread, from left page, top: MC3 Brian H. Abel; MC1 Collin Turner; MC1 Michael Sandberg; Ensign Chang Liu; courtesy of General Dynamics NASSCO; MC1 Phil Beaufort; U.S. Navy photo; Larry Larsson; Brian Tully; MC3 Lacordrick Wilson)



USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), which is operated by a hybrid crew of military personnel and civil service mariners working for Military Sealift Command, operated in the Black Sea in November in support of routine maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. Mount Whitney is homeported in Gaeta, Italy.

USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) provided replenishment support as the Navy's duty oiler in the Mediterranean Sea during November. Grumman conducted 15 replenishments at sea with U.S. Navy and NATO assets, delivering 1.3 million gallons of F-76 fuel; more than 36,272 gallons of JP-5 fuel; and 184 pallets of supplies.

USNS Rainier (T-AOE 7) departed the Mediterranean Sea Nov. 7 after six weeks operating in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

MSC Europe and Africa/Commander Task Force 63 conducted sealift operations in November with two Italian-flagged tankers and one Dutch-flagged tanker under short-term charter to MSC.

Chartered tanker MT Maersk Peary (T-AOT 5246) entered the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility Nov. 24. The ship will load fuel in early 2014 for Operation Deep Freeze, the annual replenishment of the National Science Foundation's McMurdo Station in Antarctica.

MSCEURAF/CTF-63 bids farewell to Navy **Lt. David Nysten**, air logistics.

Royal Canadian Navy ship HMCS Protecteur (AOR 509) completed duties as the Southern California duty oiler Nov. 17. While supporting operations off the coast of California, Protecteur provided logistics support to U.S. Navy ships from two carrier strike groups. Following duty oiler operations, the ship embarked friends and family for a tiger cruise before heading north and returning to regular duties with the Royal Canadian Navy.

USNS Guadalupe (T-AO 200) embarked six Taiwanese naval officers Nov. 12-15. While aboard, the visitors observed underway replenishments and day-to-day operations on board the oiler. The embarkation was part of a U.S. 3rd Fleet-sponsored information exchange between the United States and Taiwan covering a broad range of fleet logistics topics.

Army **Brig. Gen. Burt K. Thompson**, deputy director U.S. Pacific Command Strategic Planning and Policy Directorate, visited the Sea-Based X-Band Radar (SBX-1) platform in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The visit included an orientation briefing and a tour of the mission spaces, radar dome, bridge and engineering support areas. Other attendees included the J5 Division heads and personnel from the PACOM Foreign Disclosure Office.

Navy **Cmdr. Louis Costa**, Military Sealift Command Pacific Combat Logistics Force Logistics Officer, and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Bryan Boggs**, MSCAPC deputy CLO, attended a Marine Expeditionary

Brigade Logistics Familiarization Briefing and Tour at Camp Pendleton, Calif. The event provided an in-depth look into basic Marine Corps logistics operations and capabilities in real-world situations. The tour was part of an ongoing Naval Logistics Integration effort between MSCAPC, I MEF and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit staffs in preparation for their upcoming deployment.

Rep. Susan Davis of California toured USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) Nov. 25. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Davis' focused her visit on MSC and the ship's activation preparations for deployment to the Philippines in support of typhoon recovery operations. Following a meeting with MSCAPC and the Military Treatment Facility leadership, Davis toured the ship and spoke with crew members.

MSCAPC welcomes **Information Technology Specialist 2nd Class John Gohranson**. Gohranson joins the MSCAPC team as a member of the command, control, computer and communication department.

Best wishes to departing MSCAPC team members **Tom Brown** and **Information Technology Specialist 1st Class Michael Nagy**. Brown, a marine transportation specialist with the MSCAPC operations department, will serve as a logistics management specialist at U.S. Africa Command Headquarters. Nagy reports for duty at the White House Communications Office.



Boatswain's Mate 3rd Class Marsell James of USS Monterey (CG 61) gives signals to USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) in the Mediterranean Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Billy Ho)

ATLANTIC • LINES

Marine Transportation Specialist Mary Ann Liberto of Military Sealift Command Atlantic's Charleston, S.C., office, coordinated port services for the departure of USNS Waters (T-AGS 45) Nov. 15 and port services for the arrival of USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) Nov. 30, in anticipation of towing ex-USNS Flint (T-AE 32). Liberto also arranged for the post-shipyard availability layberth to include a sole source justification allowing for continued mission support requirements in December.

To accommodate ex-Flint's tow, **Tom D'Agostino**, director of ship operations at MSCLANT's Charleston office, completed a dead ship tow letter to the U.S. Coast Guard as well

as coordinated the harbor tug support to assist Grapple with the tow.

D'Agostino also coordinated a short-fused safe haven berthing requirement for USNS Apache (T-ATF 172) due to a weather advisory. The ship arrived Nov. 26 and departed Nov. 28. The requirement was a challenge because all the pier personnel for the only available pier were already on holiday leave. The port call was arranged at no cost to MSC. Apache's civil service master, **Capt. Nate Reybold**, praised the MSC team for the quick turnaround and support provided.

At MSCLANT ship operations, November was a busy month. USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189) and USNS Robert E. Peary (T-AKE 5) provided

logistics support for the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Group combined exercises in the Cherry Point, N.C., and Jacksonville, Fla., operational areas. Additionally, Peary provided fuel for the ships participating in the annual submarine commander's course which took place in the Bahamas.

USNS Pathfinder (T-AGS 60) conducted survey operations in support of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command. USNS Lawrence H. Gianella (T-AOT 1125) delivered strategic fuel to East Coast and Caribbean Sea fuel depots and port facilities including Norfolk, Va.; Charleston; Port Everglades, Key West, and Jacksonville, Fla.; and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. USNS Dahl (T-AKR 312) and USNS Bob Hope (T-AKR 300) both transited the Panama Canal in November; with Dahl returning to Guam and Bob

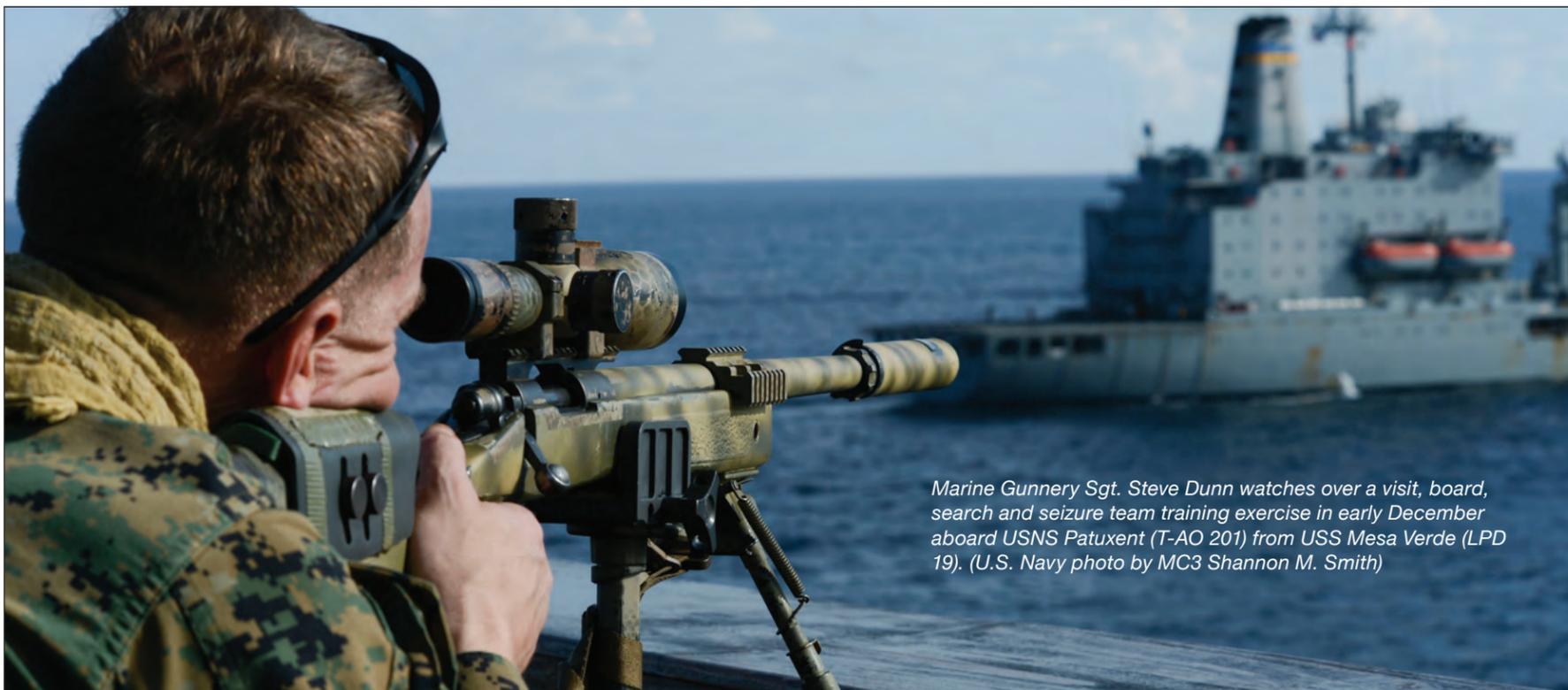
Hope transiting to Philadelphia.

MSCLANT welcomes **Ken Rye, counsel**, who arrived to the command on Nov. 18. No stranger to MSC, he was previously counsel for MSC's Europe and Africa Command in Naples, Italy, and before that, with MSC Norfolk for many years.

Fair winds and following seas to retiring MSC civil service mariners worldwide: **Ship Communications Officer Paul Harpin**, **3rd Assistant Engineer Jose Majan**, **Able Seaman-Watch Modesto Patio, Jr.**, and **Capt. Nathan Smith**. Thank you for your many years of service.

MSC regrets to note the passing of **Laundryman Wadreskus Hall** and sends condolences to his family.

Merit promotion, training, travel, medical, payroll, and employee benefit information for CIVMARs is now available at www.sealiftcommand.com.



Marine Gunnery Sgt. Steve Dunn watches over a visit, board, search and seizure team training exercise in early December aboard USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201) from USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19). (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Shannon M. Smith)

DC • HIGHLIGHTS

Navy **Rear Adm. T.K. Shannon**, commander, Military Sealift Command, talked with headquarters personnel during an all-hands call Dec. 6. Shannon highlighted the command's ongoing concern with the impacts of this year's furlough on personnel, and the need to continue conserving funds where possible in ongoing fiscal uncertainty.

MSC Washington honored National Native American Indian Heritage Month Nov. 21. "Guiding Our Destiny with

Heritage and Traditions" served as the 2013 theme, and **Gary Rensing**, Counsel, provided an insightful history about ships named after Native American Indian tribes, rivers, counties, cultures or individuals.

The command welcomes **Operations Specialist Seaman Bryan Brunnermontes**, **Operations Specialist Seaman Recruit Ashley Rivera** and **Operations Specialist Seaman Recruit Dakota Thomson**, operations.

FAR EAST • HAILS

Guam **Lt. Gov. Ray Tenorio** presented Navy **Cmdr. Brian Peterson**, commanding officer, Military Sealift Command Ship Support Unit Guam, with a Governor's Award Nov. 14 for contributions to the Guam community.

The certificate, signed by Guam **Gov. Eddie Calvo**, recognizes Peterson and the staff of SSU Guam for their numerous volunteer activities including the annual international coastal clean up initiative. Tenorio also recognized Peterson for spearheading the observance of National Maritime Day – held every May – now designated as "Guam Maritime Day" by a signed proclamation by the governor's office.

"Because of his unselfish act and dedication to duty, as it relays to supporting the local Guamanians, Peterson's contributions to Guam have been outstanding and he is well deserved of this award," Tenorio said.

Navy **Cmdr. Joseph Casale** relieved Peterson one week later. During a change of command ceremony held at Naval Base Guam Nimitz hill facility, Navy Capt. Jim Hruska, commander, MSC Far East, the ceremony's principal speaker, presented Peterson with a Meritorious Service Medal recognizing his outstanding service to the command over the previous three years.

Off the coast of Saipan Nov. 18, Navy MH-60S helicopter pilots from

Guam-based Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 conducted deck landing qualifications aboard Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three ship USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams (T-AK 3009). Pilots trained in flight deck proficiency by landing their helicopters in daylight and under cover of darkness.

Navy **Capt. Leonard Remias**, MPS Squadron Three commander, and squadron staff members participated in the Northern Mariana Islands Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 11 at the American Memorial Park in Saipan. MPS Squadron Three staff members joined **Gov. Eloy S. Inos**, governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and other local dignitaries recognizing the service and sacrifice of Mariana natives who have served in the U.S. military.

MPS Squadron Three bid fair winds and following seas to senior enlisted advisor and administrative officer **Yeoman Chief Robert Faretta**. The command welcomes **Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Jomer Veras** as assistant supply officer.

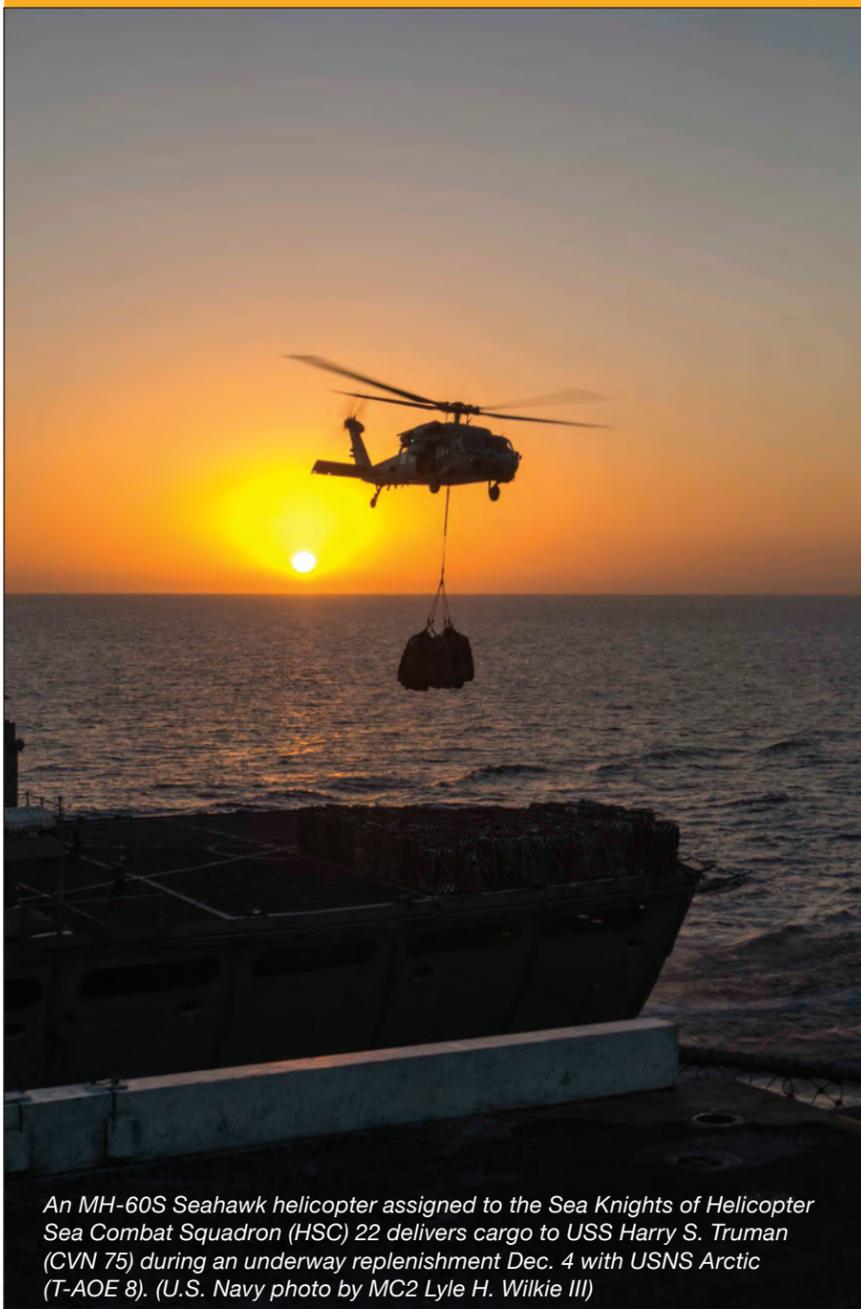
During a ceremony held Nov. 29 at MSC Far East headquarters in Singapore, **Boatswain's Mate Chief Ruben Radoc** reenlisted in the U.S. Navy. Navy **Cmdr. Mark Roemhildt** administered the oath of office to Radoc, a boarding officer in the command's strategic sealift directorate.



Personnel aboard USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 10) remove an ammunition pallet from a trolley during an ammunition offload with USS George Washington (CVN 73) in the Western Pacific Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Brian H. Abel)



Lt. Gov. Ray Tenorio of Guam, right, presents Cmdr. Brian Peterson with a Governor's Award Nov. 14. (U.S. Navy photo by Norma Pillman)



An MH-60S Seahawk helicopter assigned to the Sea Knights of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 22 delivers cargo to USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) during an underway replenishment Dec. 4 with USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8). (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lyle H. Wilkie III)



Boatswain's Mate Seaman Brantley Harper, right, attaches a hook to a rig aboard USS Gettysburg (CG 64) while being resupplied by Arctic. (U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Lorenzo J. Burluson)

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Navy Combat Logistics Force ships operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility provided 79 underway replenishment evolutions in November, including 34 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, which included two carrier strike groups, to remain at sea and able to conduct their missions without interruption.

MV BBC Seattle (T-AK 5272) returned to the region for its quarterly mission, marking the end of months of planning and coordination with host nation officials, U.S. embassies in three separate countries and the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. MSC Central personnel worked closely with all parties involved. The BBC Seattle's mission is to provide

critical equipment to both the Army and Air Force.

USNS Catawba (T-ATF 168) participated Nov. 6-10 in Exercise STAKENET 13-03, a Combined Maritime Forces exercise conducted routinely throughout the year. The exercise took place in the Arabian Gulf and included ships from many of the navies and coast guards of the nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Catawba functioned as an oil response spill support ship.

MSCENT/CTF 53 bids fair winds and following seas to **Petty Officers 1st Class Sreedas Nair**, **Melissa Polanco** and **Tarenta Payne**. The command welcomes Navy **Ensign Roberto Campo**, **Chief Petty Officer Julio Ortiz**, **Petty Officers 1st Class Glenn Oania** and **Cenon Lu**, and **Petty Officers 2nd Class Jason Mendonca** and **Joseph McCoy**.

Ex-USNS Flint makes final journey

A look at the ammunition ship's career with MSC

After more than four decades of service to the U.S. Navy, ammunition ship USNS Flint inactivated Nov. 8, 2013. Yesterday afternoon, USNS Grapple towed ex-Flint on its final voyage to Beaumont, Texas. The following article, originally posted on MSC's official blog, provides some of the ship's history and perspectives from two of the vessel's civil service masters, Capt. William Baldwin and Capt. Jonathan Olmsted. Ed Baxter, MSC Far East public affairs, contributed to the article.

Capt. Bill Baldwin - Flint's first MSC master

“It was bittersweet to be the one to offer Flint a final salute before leaving service,” said Baldwin, civil service master aboard USNS Matthew Perry (T-AKE 9) during a final underway replenishment with Flint off the coast of Guam in August. Baldwin also served as Flint's first master from 1995 to 2000.

Flint, commissioned as USS Flint (AE-32) in 1971, transferred to Military Sealift Command in 1995.

Flint achieved several key milestones after completing a 15-month overhaul as MSC's second ammunition ship in service. The ship completed its first post-overhaul underway replenishment in the Atlantic Ocean with USNS Rappahannock (T-AO 204) in March 1997. Flint replenished a carrier for the first time after the overhaul when she transferred ammunition to USS Nimitz (CVN 68) the following month.

Flint completed its largest at-sea delivery with USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) in May 1999, delivering 1,790 pallets in 11 hours of connected replenishment operations and 15 hours of vertical replenishment operations.

“Flint's last underway replenishment was very emotional for me,” Baldwin said. “I thought of all the events we participated in, the ships we supported, the ports we called in and the exercises we played in. Mostly, though, I thought about the people.”

“We didn't break any records; we didn't do anything glamorous; we didn't make headlines. We simply did what was asked of us and did it the best we could. Those who sailed in

her lived the ship's motto ‘Judicemur Agendo;’ let us be judged by our deeds, day in and day out.”

Capt. Jonathan Olmsted - Flint's final master

It has been a bittersweet assignment as Flint's final master. Flint means a great deal to me and many others who were fortunate enough to serve on board.

Speaking personally, I have very strong feelings and many fond memories of Flint from my earlier days. I joined the ship in 1999 and stayed for almost four years, my longest assignment on any ship. Capt. William Baldwin was in command, and he and his senior officers had established an extremely professional ammunition program. Flint was a no-nonsense ammo ship, and the crew was there for one reason; to move ammo. In 2000, Capt. Baldwin handed the reins to Capt. Robert Jaeger, and the ship never skipped a beat. Over the years, Flint trained hundreds of mates, engineers and ammunition handlers. Her legacy within MSC will always be retained in the ammo community. Those who were fortunate enough to serve on her decks or down below will forever hold a special place for her in their hearts.

USS Flint (AE 32) was built in Pascagoula, Miss., beginning in 1969. She was launched in 1970 and commissioned in 1971. As the fifth of eight Kilauea-class Navy ammunition ships, Flint and her successors shared design improvements and machinery automation upgrades which distinguished them from the first four AE hulls. Due to this distinction, these later ships, Flint, Shasta, Mount Baker and Kiska, were also known as the “AE 26/32 class.”

Flint operated with a full Navy crew of more than 300 Sailors for more than 20 years. Originally homeported at Concord Naval Weapon Station in California, she made over a dozen Western Pacific deployments and supported operations off the coast of Vietnam. She deployed to U.S. 5th Fleet during Operation Desert Shield, and supported Operation Desert Storm in 1991.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, MSC operated only one



An MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter transports ordnance from USNS Flint (T-AE 32) to USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) during a vertical replenishment in the Pacific Ocean in Jan. 2005. (U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Apprentice Jacob Childre)

ammunition ship for the Navy, USNS Kilauea (T-AE 26), which proved to be highly successful. Due to the ship's impressive results, the Navy decided to transfer the remaining ammunition ships, beginning with Flint. USS Flint was decommissioned in 1995 and transferred to MSC for continued operation with a civilian crew of 140, plus a small military detachment.

For the next 16 years, Flint served as one of the premiere workhorses of Navy ammunition logistics. She spent the majority of her MSC career forward deployed in the Western Pacific, often attached to the Seventh Fleet aircraft carrier based in Japan. In addition to supporting carrier operations, Flint shuttled cargo ammunition between various Western Pacific bases and the continental United States.

During the opening stages of Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001, Flint deployed to U.S. 5th Fleet with USS Kitty (CV-63). She steamed through Hormuz Strait Dec. 25 and supported combat operations for the next four months.

Flint returned to Guam in 2002 and proceeded to the shipyard for scheduled maintenance. While in the yard with her main engine under repair, Flint was caught directly in the path of Typhoon Chataan, which barreled over Guam with winds over 150 knots, knocking out power and water throughout the island. Flint remained undamaged and spent the next several weeks providing fresh water and ice to local residents and a nearby nursing home.

In 2003, the ship made another combat deployment to U.S. 5th Fleet to support the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Flint remained on station during the ground campaign into Baghdad, providing day and night ammunition replenishment to the carrier strike group.

Following her OIF deployment, the ship returned to the Pacific and continued to provide ammunition logistics support in Seventh Fleet and Third Fleet for the next seven years.

The Navy identified a new requirement for a U.S. 5th Fleet ammunition ship in 2010. So at age 40, Flint began a new chapter in her long career as the first ammunition ship to be permanently forward deployed in U.S. 5th Fleet. She spent the next three years operating in and out of the Arabian Gulf, providing the fleet with a “floating ammunition magazine.”

In June 2013, Flint transferred her cargo ammunition load to USNS Alan Shepard (T-AKE 3) and departed Hormuz Strait for the final time. She then began a three-month, 18,000-mile journey across the Indian Ocean, across the Pacific and through the Panama Canal, finally reaching her inactivation shipyard in Charleston, S.C. As an amazing coincidence, Charleston had been USS Flint's first duty station as a brand new ship – full circle indeed!



USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) works with USNS Flint (T-AE 32) in 2007 in the South China Sea as the aircraft carrier unloads all of its weapons, signaling the beginning of the end of the carrier's surge deployment. (U.S. Navy photo by MCC Spike Call)