



# SEALIFT

## U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND... WE DELIVER

JUNE 2016 ISSUE



Maritime prepositioning force ship USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK 3017) and Expeditionary Transfer Dock USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) performs a "skin-to-skin" maneuver, March 13. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Madailein Abbott)

## 'SKIN TO SKIN' EQUIPMENT AND CARGO TRANSFER STOCKHAM AND MONTFORD POINT TEST CAPABILITIES

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Madailein Abbott

Military Sealift Command's maritime prepositioning force ship USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK 3017) and expeditionary transfer dock USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) performed a "skin-to-skin" (S2S) maneuver as part of exercise Ssang Yong 16, March 13. The operation enabled the two ships to test capabilities as well as practice transferring large cargo, such as vehicles, at sea.

The skin-to-skin maneuver is conducted by the two ships connecting side-by-side while the Montford Point acts as a floating pier for a simulated offload. The Stockham can discharge equipment onto the Montford Point through a connecting ramp. The equipment can then be loaded into landing craft air cushion (LCAC) for transfer to shore, further enhancing Marine Corps and naval integration.

The maneuver gained attention throughout the military and Navy Rear Adm. John B. Nowell, Commander Expeditionary Strike Group Seven, Amphibious Force 7th Fleet, Task Force 76; Navy Capt. Robert A. Rochford, commodore, Maritime Prepositioning Ships Three (MPSRON-3); and Republic of Korea military officials all visited the two ships while connected skin to skin.

"This kind of operation enables us to bring people, equipment and ammunition, to sea and assemble it as necessary to bring it to shore as a full combat power," said Rochford about the skin to skin. "We get

closer to that ultimate goal when we have other ships involved and when we successfully execute operations like these."

The Montford Point is categorized as an expeditionary floating pier-at-sea. The ship is tasked by the U.S. Marine Corps to provide a pier-at-sea to move and transfer from large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships onto LCACs to provide sea-basing capabilities for the Navy and the Marine Corps.

The Montford Point and Stockham are both part of MPSRON-3.

A strong advantage for the pier-at-sea concept includes being able to move at will so as to not become a possible target to unfriendly forces. The makeshift pier can operate 25 miles off shore and still provide support for our military, Rochford explained.

In addition to the skin to skin, the MPSRON-3 ships also hosted the transfer of a vehicle from one ship to the other and flight operations during the maneuver, which were both the first time these activities were conducted while connected during an exercise.

"These type of exercises are an opportunity for us to look at the way we currently look at amphibious assault operations, then utilize these platforms to see what they can do," said Rochford. "This clearly has demonstrated the value of these ships and what they can do for the sea-basing concept of the future."

Ssang Yong 2016 was the largest multilateral amphibious exercise to date. It is a biennial exercise conducted by integrated Marine Expeditionary Brigade/Navy Expeditionary Strike Group, forward-deployed forces with the Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy and Marine Corps designed to strengthen interoperability and working relationships across a wide range of military operations ranging from disaster relief to complex expeditionary operations.



A Humvee transits down a ramp from USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK 3017) to Expeditionary Transfer Dock USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) during a "skin-to-skin" maneuver, March 13. (U.S. Navy Photog by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Madailein Abbott)

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## COMMANDER'S PERSPECTIVE

### NEW SHIPS, ELECTION SEASON

**Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon, USN  
Commander, Military Sealift Command**

I recently returned from a visit to the Pacific region and our Far East Area Command.

I was honored to visit with our mariners aboard USNS Charles Drew, Matthew Perry, Walter S. Diehl, Rappahannock, Howard O. Lorenzen and John Ericsson. My visit reinforced what I already knew, that our men and women who make up our afloat workforce are the best in the world. And what you do each and every day directly supports the agencies that are responsible for the safety and security of our nation.

I know the mariners I met and ships I visited were representative of our teams located at all our area commands throughout the world.

I want to highlight some of the great work in the Far East. On any given day MSC operates 48 ships in the Far East, ships from all our mission areas.

As our nation continues to shift focus to the Pacific, MSC is at the front of that re-balance. In just the last month, MSC mariners and ships participated in large-scale exercises such as Ssang Yong in the Republic of Korea, Balikatan in the Philippines and USNS Pless is moving equipment for U.S. Army Pacific for Pacific Pathways. At the same time our special mission ships continued to respond to the high demand for their capabilities and our combat logistics force kept the fleet fueled and supplied.

We continue to develop new capabilities and integrate these into our exercises and operations. For example, during exercise Ssang Yong, our expeditionary transfer dock, USNS Montford Point, conducted skin-to-skin operations with large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS GYSGT Fred Stockham, transferring rolling stock from the LMSR to the ESD and back again. Here again, our MSC team is at the forefront of sea-basing operations, using our platforms to transfer equipment and supplies to the war-fighter for use in follow-on operations.

#### Safety

We continue to focus on safety, both ashore and afloat. Every member of our MSC team has a responsibility to develop and maintain a culture of safety in our workplace. We recently initiated our campaign in Operational Risk Management. For those new to this work environment, ORM is a systematic approach to identify and assess hazards, accept risk only at the proper level, implement controls to mitigate risk and properly supervise the effectiveness of those controls. Our campaign will help reinforce this process.

Safety on the job is critical but so is your personal safety at home.

As we enter the summer season, please focus on safety, particularly for recreational activities in and around the water. Plan ahead, use common sense and pay attention to details in order to ensure a safe and enjoyable summer. Take responsibility for yourself and look out for your neighbor.

A common theme I hear when I travel and speak to senior leaders is that MSC is doing a great job. We are providing the transportation, logistics and special mission services that our customers need. This is happening because you remain mission-focused.

Thank you for the work you do each and every day on behalf of our great nation.

## TRANSCOM AWARD

By Bob Fehringer, USTRANSCOM Public Affairs



(U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

Gen. Darren W. McDew, commander, U.S. Transportation Command, recognized the winner of the Innovation Showcase Award for the first quarter of 2016, March 10, during a ceremony at the Scott Air Force Base, Illinois command.

The Innovation Showcase award recognizes high-performing, collaborative teams that emulate the command virtues which are the basis of the USTRANSCOM motto "Together, we deliver." Collaboration, trust, empowerment and innovation are the foundation to help solve problems and ultimately provide benefit to the war-fighter.

"With all the outstanding teams across the enterprise, it is with great pleasure I present the Commander's Innovation Showcase winners for the first quarter of 2016, the Combat Logistics Force Load Management Worldwide Fleet Sustainment Network of the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command's Logistics Directorate," said General McDew

The unit was tasked to determine how Navy combat fleets at sea could be kept most efficiently resupplied and mission-ready with diesel and jet fuel, food, spare parts, and consumables, enabling warships to conduct sustained combat operations at sea.

Until that point, MSC operated fleet resupply ships, but other commands managed these ships' cargo loads with antiquated and sub-optimal methods. The directorate developed a worldwide solution focused on collaboration and leveraged technology.

"Always focusing on the fleet, our Combat Logistics Force and CLO teams are vital to keeping our Navy sustained at sea and on station across the globe," said Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon, commander, Military Sealift Command. "We look forward to the continued collaboration and innovation within our Combat Logistics Force to keep our Navy and DOD partners ready to support our nation."



# TODAY DID NOT GO AS PLANNED, WHAT A DISASTER

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Last weekend was incredible. We had beautiful weather. My wife and I checked out a new water-side restaurant and caught a ball game. We didn't have a care in the world and trouble was the farthest thing from our minds.

Monday was a different story. The big voice sounded on base, "A tornado has been spotted in the vicinity of the base. Take cover. This is not a drill."

As the skies went dark and the wind outside hammered against the office window, I worried about my family. Are they ok? Are they hurt? What do we do now?

How are you going to handle a true crisis? Are you ready for a REALLY bad day?

"While most of us don't dwell on catastrophes, there are things we can do beforehand to increase our chances of 'weathering the storm,'" said Dan Lipps, Military Sealift Command's emergency preparedness program manager.

"The key improving your survivability is to have a plan," said Lipps. "Unfortunately, having a plan to manage a crisis is the step most people never take."

"We have to take a planning mind-set which applies to a wide variety of hazards or crisis," said Lipps "The bottom line is, it doesn't matter if you suffer a flood, bomb, fire or some other catastrophe, you must be prepared in advance so you can continue to function after the dust settles."

## The American Red Cross suggests some basic steps to better your prospects of enduring an emergency:

- Meet with your family or household members.
- Discuss how to prepare and respond to emergencies that are most likely to happen where you live, learn, work and play.
- Identify responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team.
- If a family member is in the military, plan how you would respond if they were deployed.

"One of the elements we should include in our plan is to designate a rally location for you and your family to meet at if you are separated," said Lipps.

## Plan what to do in case your family is separated during an emergency:

- Choose two places to meet:
  - Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
  - Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate.
- Choose an out-of-area emergency contact person. It may be easier to text or call long distance if local phone lines are overloaded or out of service. Everyone should have emergency contact information in writing or saved on their cell phones.

## Plan what to do if you are required to evacuate:

- Decide where you would go and what route you would take to get there. You may choose to go to a hotel/motel, stay with friends or relatives in a safe location or go to an evacuation shelter if necessary.
- Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on your map in case roads are impassable.
- Plan ahead for your pets. Keep a phone list of pet-friendly hotels/motels and animal shelters that are along your evacuation routes.

Being prepared means being equipped with the proper supplies you may need in the event of an emergency or disaster. Keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you in case you must evacuate.

## The American Red Cross recommends, having these basic supplies in case of emergency:

- Water: one gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Food: non-perishable, easy-to-prepare items (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries

- First aid kit
- Medications (7-day supply) and medical items
- Multi-purpose tool
- Sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Copies of personal documents (medication list and pertinent medical information, proof of address, deed/lease to home, passports, birth certificates, insurance policies)
- Cell phone with chargers
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Map(s) of the area
- Consider the needs of all family members and add supplies to your kit.

## Suggested items to help meet additional needs are:

- Medical supplies (hearing aids with extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, etc)
- Baby supplies (bottles, formula, baby food, diapers)
- Games and activities for children
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
- Two-way radios
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Manual can opener

## Additional supplies to keep at home or in your survival kit based on the types of disasters common to your area:

- Whistle
- Surgical masks
- Matches
- Rain gear
- Towels
- Work gloves
- Tools/supplies for securing your home
- Extra clothing, hat and sturdy shoes
- Plastic sheeting
- Duct tape
- Scissors
- Household liquid bleach
- Entertainment items
- Blankets or sleeping bags

The American Red Cross also recommends one learns the types of disasters or emergencies that may likely occur in one's area. These events can range from those affecting only you and your family, like a home fire or medical emergency, to those affecting your entire community, like an earthquake or flood.

- Identify how local authorities will notify you during a disaster and how you will get information, whether through local radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio stations or channels.
- Know the difference between different weather alerts such as watches and warnings and what actions to take in each.
- Know what actions to take to protect yourself during disasters that may occur in areas where you travel or have moved recently. For example, if you travel to a place where earthquakes are common and you are not familiar with them, make sure you know what to do to protect yourself should one occur.
- When a major disaster occurs, your community can change in an instant. Loved ones may be hurt and emergency response is likely to be delayed. Make sure that at least one member of your household is trained in first aid and CPR and knows how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED). This training is useful in many emergency situations.
- Share what you have learned with your family, household and neighbors and encourage them to be informed.

Mr. Lipps recommended generating a phone listing of important phone numbers and make sure the whole family possesses a copy of the list.

- Print one card for each family member.
- Write the contact information for each household member, such as work, school and cell phone numbers.
- Fold the card so it fits in your pocket, wallet or purse.
- Carry the card with you so it is available in the event of a disaster or other emergency.

While the odds of a catastrophic emergency devastating you and your family's lives are very slim, is not being prepared for a disaster worth the risk?

# RIGGENBACH WINS FLEET SHORE SAILOR OF THE YEAR

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's Information Systems Technician First Class Chantel Riggenschach was recently named Fleet Shore Sailor of the Year.

The Sailor of the Year program was established in 1972 by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Elmo Zumwalt and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy John Whittet to recognize an individual Sailor who best represented the ever-growing group of dedicated professional Sailors at each command and ultimately the Navy.

"The Sailor of the Year program was established to recognize Sailors for outstanding performance throughout a year," said Riggenschach. "Each command selects four quarterly 'Sailor of the Quarter' recipients. Each of the command's quarterly awardees are nominated as candidates for their Sailor of the Year. The winners of each command move up through increasing levels until the Shore and Sea Sailors of the Year for the Navy are named by the Chief of Naval Operations."

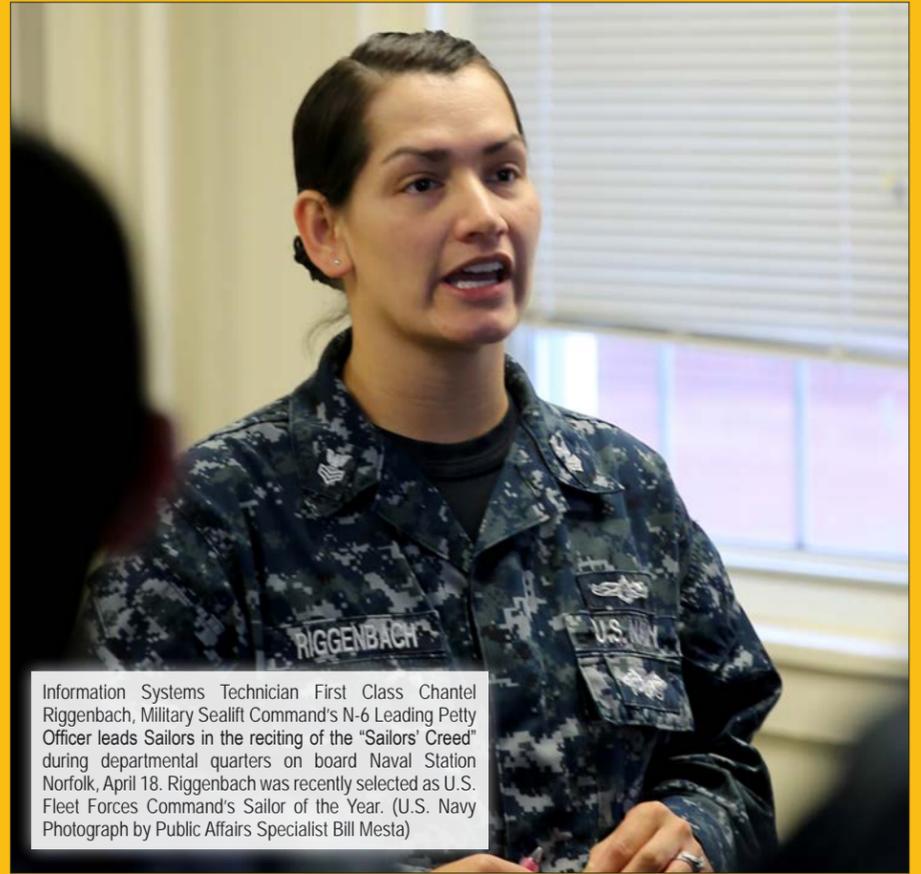
At the U.S. Fleet Forces Command level of competition, Riggenschach competed against Sailors from other 'Type' commands including Commander Naval Air Force U.S. Atlantic and Commander Submarine Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

Riggenschach believes it takes more than hard work at the office to become the Sailor of the Year.

"The panel evaluates not only how you are doing in your work center, but how is a Sailor performing as a member of the community," said Riggenschach. "The overriding consideration is what is a Sailor doing to better themselves, their Sailors and the members of their communities."

"I can't pinpoint my success in the Navy to any one thing," said Riggenschach. "Striving to excel in and out of the work center and making a positive impact on the Sailors I serve with have been key."

"Every day I come to work and strive to excel at my job," said Riggenschach. "As Leading Petty Officer, I know my responsibilities and I make sure all these responsibilities are met. I get the job done." Petty Officer Riggenschach is MSC's N-6 departmental Leading Petty Officer. Riggenschach oversees all N-6 divisions and ensures the day-to-day operations are running smoothly.



Information Systems Technician First Class Chantel Riggenschach, Military Sealift Command's N-6 Leading Petty Officer leads Sailors in the reciting of the "Sailors' Creed" during departmental quarters on board Naval Station Norfolk, April 18. Riggenschach was recently selected as U.S. Fleet Forces Command's Sailor of the Year. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

"Throughout my career, I have drawn on positive characteristics and attributes from other Navy leaders who I have served with and have led me," said Riggenschach. "For me, I feel very strongly one should lead by example. I like getting out there and doing the work while at the same time supervising and ensuring the tasks are taken care of properly."

Riggenschach is currently 'Selection Board Eligible' for an advancement and hopes to become a Chief Petty Officer. Her ultimate intention is to make a career of naval service.

"When it comes to interactions with my leadership, I feel it is important to understand 'why' we are doing something," added Riggenschach. "I believe a respectful, questioning attitude can lead to innovative new

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## USNS YUMA KEEL AUTHENTICATED

From Team Ships Public Affairs

Austal USA hosted a ceremony, March 29, celebrating the keel authentication of the Navy's eighth expeditionary fast transport ship, the USNS Yuma (EPF 8).

The keel was said to be "truly and fairly laid" as it was authenticated by the Honorable Douglas Nicholls, Mayor of Yuma, Arizona, by welding his initials into the keel plate. Authentication represents a major milestone in the ship's construction as the keel is the symbolic backbone of a ship.

"We are honored to have Mayor Nicholls here for this exciting event," said Capt. Henry Stevens, Strategic and Theater Sealift Program manager, Program Executive Office, Ships. "I look forward to working with the mayor, the city of Yuma, and Austal, as the ship continues to progress toward delivery."

Expeditionary fast transport ships are non-combatant vessels designed to operate in austere ports and waterways, increasing operational flexibility for a wide range of activities including maneuver and sustainment, relief operations in small or damaged ports, flexible logistics support, or as the key enabler for rapid transport. The ships are capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, as well as on/off-loading vehicles such as a fully combat-loaded Abrams main battle tank.

EPFs support a variety of missions including the overseas contingency operations, conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, supporting special operations forces, and supporting emerging joint sea-basing concepts.



(Photograph courtesy of Austal USA)

Yuma will be capable of transporting 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots. The vessel will also include



(Photograph courtesy of Austal USA)

a flight deck to support day and night aircraft launch and recovery operations. The ship will have airline-style seating for 312 embarked forces with fixed berthing for 104.

As one of the Department of Defense's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, and boats and craft.

# GOOD EATS; THE BEST OF THE BEST

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command recently recognized the accomplishments of three of its culinary teams by naming the winners of the 2016 David M. Cook Food Service Excellence Awards.

The culinary teams serving on board USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4), USNS Pecos (T-AO 197), and USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) have been named as the recipients of the annual award in recognition of outstanding food service performance.

“The culinary programs for all of MSC’s ships are very important because the dining area is where the foundation of the crew’s moral begins and ends,” said Senior Executive Chef Roberta C. Jio, MSC’s Food-service Director. “A good dining experience can help customers have a good day while a poor experience can make customers have a very bad day.”

“The overall feel a customer receives when they go through the serving line, day in and day out, year-round, is a huge aspect of the evaluation,” said Jio. “The food prepared in a galley can be outstanding but if customer service is poor, that ship will most likely not be a finalist because the customers on board participate in a food-service survey in which they grade their food-service staffs on food preparation as well as customer service. Providing outstanding customer service is just as important as providing outstanding food. The two go hand in hand.”

Military Sealift Command’s government-owned and government-operated ships are eligible to compete for the excellence award. “Good food equals good morale,” said USS Mount Whitney’s Chief Steward Gregory Garza. “This is a hybrid ship and the success of the



ship’s mission depends on team effort from all hands. The culinary team provides a nice break during meal times when good food is served during high-tempo exercises.”

Garza encourages MSC’s culinary specialists, “to make customer service your top goal, to treat your shipmates as customers. Treat them the same way you would want to be treated in any food service establishment you patronize and provide great looking and tasting food as much as you can.”

USNS Pecos is being recognized for the first time this year since the culinary award’s inception.

“After a long day at work, our crew deserves the best meal and service they can have, and this is where our food-service excels,” said USNS Pecos’ Chief Steward Julian Estacio. “We solicit our crew on what they want to see on our serving line and if it is within our ‘range’ (availability and budget) we try our best to accommodate them.”

The culinary team on board USNS Robert E. Byrd has won the David M. Cook Food Service Award three times in a row.

“It is a great honor for the culinary team of USNS Richard E. Byrd to be awarded the Captain David M. Cook Food-service Excellence Award for the third consecutive year,” said Chief Steward Danilo Puniesto, of USNS Richard E. Byrd’s culinary team. “It took hard work and perseverance to earn the award. Our culinary team just did a great job everyday by cleaning the spaces daily, outstanding service to crew and based on MSC’s Healthy Heart Menus, served outstanding quality food to crew daily.”

“The entire crew is appreciative of their culinary team’s remarkable everyday thought and care,” said Captain Lee Apsley, USNS Richard E Byrd’s master. “The culinary team continues to seek original and innovative ways to keep the menu fresh and exciting.”

The judging for the award is based on a ship’s culinary team’s performance for the previous year.

“Entering the 2016 David M. Cook Food Service Excellence awards



involves a two-pronged approach,” according to Jio. “First, each nominated culinary program receives an initial evaluation. A team goes to the nominated ships and evaluates utilizing the MSC Food-service Award checklist.”

Jio added, “The first round is the elimination round where only two ships in each category move forward to the final round.”

“In the final round, a team evaluates the ships that moved forward from the initial round. The criterion for evaluation is very comprehensive and well rounded. Items in the check-list includes food preparation/presentation, sanitation, customer service surveys, inventory management, food-service equipment safety/maintenance, financial accountability, among other areas,” added Jio.

“Culinary programs who win this award, understand the concept of being there to support civil mariners who requires their services,” said Jio. “Every customer who uses a ship’s dining area/s should be treated with respect. The ship’s food-service staff should take pride in their service to the MSC Fleet.”

“When the evaluators conduct the initial round, we strive to nominate one candidate from the east coast and one candidate from the west coast in each category,” said Jerry Holly, MSC’s Food-service Operations. “The east and west coast nominations compete head to head for the final award.”

Holly added, “This year’s winners included two ships from the west coast and one from the east coast.”

MSC’s awardees are broken down into three entrant categories. The medium category was secured by the USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4) while the small group recipient was won by USNS Pecos (T-AO 197). USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) was the awardee for the hybrid category.

The 2016 David M. Cook Food Service awards were presented on May 20 in Chicago. Mr. John S. Thackrah, MSC’s Executive Director, attended the awards presentation as a senior command representative.

“Award winning culinary teams receives hands-on training by chefs who visit the winning platforms thus improving MSC’s culinary programs across the board,” said Jio.

Capt. David M. Cook was MSC’s Logistics Director from 1995 to 1998. Chef Jio worked for Capt. Cook while he served with MSC.

“Captain Cook truly cared about the well-being of MSC’s mariners. He took an interest in the mariners,” said Jio. “He made great strides to organize, set standards and enforce adherence to the standards for MSC’s culinary program. He strove to provide ‘restaurant quality’ meals across MSC’s fleet because the mariners deserve it.”



# USNS YUKON, M/T EMPIRE STATE MAKE HISTORY CONDUCT UNREP OFF THE COAST OF SAN DIEGO

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

Off the coast of San Diego, Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon (T-AO 202) made history with Motor Tanker Ship Empire State as they conducted the first underway replenishment between a State Class tanker ship and an MSC oiler.

In the 1980s and 1990s, MSC chartered Champion Class tankers (T5 tankers) UNREPing Navy oilers was common place, especially in the Navy's 5th Fleet area of operations. With the switch to privately owned/ Navy chartered tankers, Navy oilers refueling at Navy owned fuel piers became the favored process. Civilian tanker ships, such as Empire State, still maintained the ability to fuel at sea; the demand for fuel consolidation (CONSOL) at sea declined...until now.

While commercial tankers have maintained the ability to conduct UNREPs, not performing them for many years meant unseasoned crews. Unlike MSC ships whose crews conduct refueling at sea operations several times a week, even several times a day in some areas of operations, for the crew of Empire State, an UNREP was more something they'd done in theory than in reality. For this, the crew went back to basics with a series of training courses at the Underway Replenishment Test Site in Port Hueneme, California.

"Only a handful of crew-members had conducted actual UNREP before and never from a commercial tanker," explained Capt. Andrew Miller, Empire State's civilian master. "Some parts of the mission differed from training such as maneuvering between vessels and the transfer of cargo ship-to-ship which could not be practiced during static exercises and could not be simulated, but all other aspects (connecting phone and distance line, span wire, and cargo hose, and signaling) were just like we conducted in training."

Before conducting the UNREP with fuel, four training runs were conducted, where cargo hoses were sent across, but no fuel was transferred. This gave both crews the ability to work together, and for the Empire State crew to get a feel for the real-world environment. When both masters were confident with the ability to successfully conduct the UNREP, Yukon made its approach alongside Empire State

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Yeoman Storekeeper Markus Mitchell of USNS Yukon's (T-AO 202) rig team signals crew members on board M/T Empire State during UNREP operations. (Photograph by Sarah E. Burford)

## USNS WHEELER, OFFSHORE PETROLEUM MULTIPLIER

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Madailein Abbott

Several military officials, including Navy Vice Adm. Joseph P. Aucoin, commander of U.S. 7th Fleet, attended a tour of the offshore petroleum distribution system USNS Vadm K.R. Wheeler (T-AG 5001) during exercise Ssang Yong 16, March 17.

The tour also included Navy Rear Adm. John B. Nowell, commander of Expeditionary Strike Group Seven, Amphibious Force 7th Fleet, Task Force 76; U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. John Jansen, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade; and Navy Capt. Robert Rochford, commodore, Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron Three.

Before the tour, the Wheeler also performed a demonstration of its "blow the nose" procedure, which involved pipes aft of the ship extinguishing water. The hose can be used to transfer water to other ships or to land based containers.

"They hook up a tanker to the ship and the water is pumped through the Bow Discharge Unit," said Rochford on the procedure. "They demonstrated the volume of water they can send through the pipes to be transferred. It's unique for ships to have that capability and it's what makes the Wheeler stand out."

The vessel holds one million gallons of its own fuel which would enable the ship to be able to go around the world 1.5 times without having to refuel. The Wheeler creates its own water, making up to 60 tons of water a day. The ship can also transfer fuel from a tanker to depots ashore from up to eight miles off the coast.

"I think everyone was very interested to come see this Offshore Petroleum Discharge System (OPDS)," said Rochford. "Being able to see the capabilities the ship can bring to the table is critical. The Wheeler is unique to the fleet, she's a strategic asset and nothing else can take her place."

The Wheeler is one of five ships assigned to Pacific-based MPSRON-3. The USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1), Wheeler, USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK 3017), USNS PFC Dewayne T. Williams (T-AK 3009) and USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2) are also participating in this year's Freedom Banner and Ssang Yong exercises. The event, the largest multilateral amphibious exercise to date, promises valuable training for all involved.

MPSRON 3, operating in the western Pacific, maintains tactical control of the 12 ships carrying afloat prepositioned U.S. military cargo for the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Army, and the U.S. Air Force.

The offshore petroleum distribution system USNS Vadm K.R. Wheeler (T-AG 5001) performs a "blow the nose" operation here, March 17. The action involves discharging water through pipes aft of the ship for either transfer of potable water or discharge. The Wheeler is the only ship of its kind stationed in the South Korea area and can transfer fuel from a tanker to depots ashore from up to 8 miles off the coast. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Madailein Abbott)



# CELEBRATING SACRIFICE AND DETERMINATION THE PROMISE OF AMERICA

By **Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs**

Approximately 100 Military Sealift Command civilian support staff and service members gathered for a Women's History Month celebration at Naval Station Norfolk, March 22.

The event, hosted by MSC's Special Emphasis Program, was held to honor the achievements of women who serve past, present and future. "We gathered together to honor and celebrate the contribution of women who serve the United States of America," said Senior Chief Yeoman Nashera Brown, the celebration's master of ceremonies. "Women's History Month was originally called Women's History Week. In March 1987, Congress declared the month of March as National Women's History Month."

President Barack Obama's 2016 Women's History Month presidential proclamation was read to the audience by MSC teammate, Mr. Earl Napier.

"Throughout history, women have driven humanity forward on the path to a more equal and just society, contributing in innumerable ways to our character and progress as a people," read aloud Mr. Napier. "In the face of discrimination and undue hardship, they have never given up on the promise of America: that with hard work and determination, nothing is out of reach."

"During Women's History Month, we remember the trailblazers of the past, including the women who are not recorded in our history books, and we honor their legacies by carrying forward the valuable lessons learned from the powerful examples they set," said Napier. "During Women's History Month, we honor the countless women who sacrificed and strived to ensure all people have an equal shot at pursuing the American dream."

The celebration featured U.S. Army Lt. Col. (RET) Vernita Anderson-Manning as the keynote speaker.

"Women's History Month is a time for us to recognize and salute women's contributions to the American family and to society," said Anderson-Manning. "Women have been making these contributions to

our country since the continent was explored, settled and America won its independence."

"Women continue to strengthen and enrich our lives with intellectual gifts, creative talent and an indomitable spirit in business, government, volunteer services, religious life, education, health, the military, sports, and the arts," stated Anderson-Manning.

Anderson-Manning also praised the tremendous contributions countless women have made by raising children to adhere to the moral, ethical, civic and patriotic principles which helped make America a great nation.

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"Beginning on the battlefield of the Revolutionary War to the deserts of Iraq and to the mountains of Afghanistan, women have served our country with valor," said Anderson-Manning. "We are reminded that even in America, freedom and justice have never come easily. During Women's History Month, we recognize the victories, the struggles, and the stories of women who have made our country what it is today." During the ceremony, Anderson-Manning asked the audience to dawn novelty masks. The masks were symbolic of hidden prejudice many hold. The masks also symbolized how removing discrimination frees us to succeed.

The ceremony included Delanya Hopkins singing of the National Anthem, an invocation presented by Chaplain Vito Crecca and a special slide show produced by Carneal Smith.

"Our country has prospered on the philosophy that each of us is created equal," said Anderson-Manning. "This is a notion that makes America unlike any other place on Earth. We are a country, regardless of where you are from or what you look like, you can go as far as your talents will take

you."

"With grit and resolve, women have fought to overcome discrimination and shatter 'glass ceilings'," said Anderson-Manning. "After decades of slow, steady and determined progress, women have widened the circle of opportunity for women and girls across our country. When women succeed, America succeeds."



Civilian teammates and service members attached to Military Sealift Command dawn masks to symbolize equality during the command's Women's History Month celebration which was held on board Naval Station Norfolk, March 22. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)



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# HIGH SPEED TRANSPORT LEASED TO CANADIAN COMPANY

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The Office of the Secretary of the Navy has approved an Enhanced Use Lease of a high-speed transport vessel to Bay Ferries, Ltd., March 24.

HST 2, owned by Military Sealift Command, is to be leased to Bay Ferries, Ltd., a Canadian company, to operate ferry service between Portland, Maine, and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.



High Speed Transport 2 pier-side at the Philadelphia Ship Yards prior to being leased to a Canadian company, March 28. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

The lease is for an 18-month period between June - October, 2016 and 2017 with two one-year options after the first two years. At the end of the lease HST 2 will return to the U.S.

The U.S. Navy found HST 2 to be a non-excess, but underused, property and found an opportunity to lease the vessel which will benefit the U.S. Navy. For example, Bay Ferries Ltd. will pay for all repairs necessary for HST 2 to obtain its U.S. Coast Guard certificate of inspection. Additionally, while the vessel is leased to a Canadian company, the U.S. Navy requires that HST 2 remains U.S. flagged, crewed by U.S. citizens, maintains a U.S. Coast Guard certificate of inspection, and all work bringing HST 2 into class will be conducted in U.S. shipyards.

HST 2, one of two high-speed transports, were designed and built by Austal USA as commercial passenger vessels for Hawaii Superferry and were named MV Huakai and MV Alakai. HST 2 (ex-USNS Puerto Rico, ex-MV Alakai) was transferred to the U.S. Navy from the Maritime Administration in January 2012 and has remained under caretaker status in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

HST 1, owned by Military Sealift Command as the USNS Guam and previously known as MV Huakai, supported humanitarian relief operations in Haiti during Operation Unified Response in 2010. HST 1 is scheduled to enter a shipyard this year to accomplish mission required modifications to bring the vessel in class and is expected to support the III Marine Expeditionary Force mission in the Western Pacific beginning in FY17.

## Sailor of the Year, Continued Reading From Page 4

solutions to age old problems.”

As the N-6 Departmental LPO, Riggenbach and her Sailors are responsible for all of MSC’s information systems technology including computers, telephones and video tele-conference systems.

“I strive to ensure my Sailors see the big picture when it comes to doing our job,” added Riggenbach. “I want them to understand why we sometimes make difficult sacrifices for our work.”

“It is critical they understand just how important our work is to better understand some of the hardships we endure,” added Riggenbach, “My Sailors need to understand the real impact they are making to ensure mission success. My Sailors need to know their hard work is important, even when it may not feel important.”

Riggenbach has been in the U.S. Navy for 13 years. Prior to checking in on board MSC in November of 2014, Riggenbach served with Strike Fighter Squadron 211 (VFA 211) known as the ‘Flying Checkers’.

“Do your job really well. Go above and beyond,” Riggenbach advised “It really shouldn’t be about striving for an award but striving to have a positive impact on others.”

## Historic UNREP, Continued Reading From Page 4

and the rig teams sent the shot lines across the 180-foot span between the two ships and the fuel transfer began.

“Maneuvering alongside another ship is a unique circumstance,” said Capt. Guy Ziccardi, Yukon’s Civil Service Master. “The main challenge with the Empire State was they had no corporate knowledge of how to conduct an UNREP prior to the events last week.”

As both masters acknowledged, communication with each other was key to a successful mission.

“Captain Miller and I had extensive pre-event communication and coordination to reduce risk and to provide sufficient information on what to expect,” said Ziccardi. “We also discussed steps that should be taken prior to the event such as briefing his crew on emergency breakaway and conducting loss of steering training. Empire State performed very well during all events including a five degree course correction, while the two ships were still connected, in order to avoid the USNS Guadalupe and a Navy cruiser who were also engaged in UNREP.”

At the end of the day, Empire State successfully transferred 10,000 barrels of diesel ship fuel to Yukon, without incident, setting the stage for future events.

# ANYDAY



First Engineer, Gary Bussier, a civil service mariner aboard USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1), conducts a tour of the ship’s engineering console for Ambassador to the Gabonese Republic and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, Cynthia Akuetteh. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Amanda Dunford)



The 757 Destroyers’ Head Coach Charlie Bazdanes, a Military Sealift Command procurement analyst policy and compliance specialist, and Assistant Coach Dave Foster, an MSC supervising contracting officer for Ship Repair, pose for a photograph after leading their varsity softball team during a tournament against the Quantico Marine Corps team. The 757 Destroyers are currently the first placed ranked U.S. Navy varsity team and eighth ranked Department of Defense varsity team. (U.S. Navy Courtesy Photograph)



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## NEXT ISSUE: SPEARHEAD RETURNS HOME