



SEALIFT

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

MAY 2016 ISSUE

COMFORT EXERCISE: TRAINING FOR THE REAL WORLD



Military Sealift Command's USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) gets underway from Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 17. Comfort went to sea as part of COMFEX, a battery of training evolutions designed to sharpen the skills of the medical professionals and Civil Service Mariners who crew the vessel. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) got underway from Naval Station Norfolk, Feb 17.

The Comfort's underway period was part of the 2016 Comfort Exercise (COMFEX).

"The COMFEX is a quarterly training battery designed to keep the medical personnel, support staff and Civil Service Mariners who serve on board the USNS Comfort sharp," said Capt. Lanny Boswell, the commanding officer for USNS Comfort's medical treatment facility. "It is important for us to conduct this quarterly training program to be ready to respond wherever and whenever the Navy needs us."

"When the Comfort is called into action, we have approximately a 1,200-person crew who gets underway, said Boswell. "The majority of the medical professionals who are part of our crew spend much of their time at other Navy medical facilities. As such, when the bell rings, we have five days to bring everyone we need on board and respond to a crisis."

"Training evolutions like COMFEX ensure those medical professionals who typically serve at locations away from the ship maintain their edge," added Boswell.

USNS Comfort provides an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility when called upon to the U.S. military,

such as the earthquake which devastated Haiti in 2010."

The third mission set for USNS Comfort is to act as an international good-will ambassador by participating in overseas operations such as Continuing Promise 2015.

"Whenever we deploy with USNS Comfort, we are seen as a symbol of hope," said Capt. Miguel A. Cubano, the executive officer for USNS Comfort's medical treatment facility. "The countries we visit and assist welcome us with open arms."

"It is important for us to treat everyone we serve on

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ANY DAY

and hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide.

The Comfort has three primary category missions.

"Our primary mission is to provide critical medical support to military personnel on the battlefield," said Boswell. "Secondly, we respond to humanitarian casualties



U.S. Navy medical personnel perform lifesaving procedures on a human casualty simulator on board Military Sealift Command's USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) during a 'Code Blue' drill, Feb. 16. The drill was conducted pier-side at Naval Station Norfolk as part of the Comfort's COMFEX. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)



COMMANDER'S PERSPECTIVE

NEW SHIPS, ELECTION SEASON

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

While our people are the lifeblood of our organization, our ships are the platforms from which we deliver our services to our customers. Recently we accepted two new ships into our inventory.

New Ships

Our latest expeditionary fast transport (EPF), USNS Brunswick, joins five other EPFs currently in our fleet. After a year of training, fine-tuning and maintenance availabilities, Brunswick will head to her forward deployed location at Guam in support of the Pacific Fleet.

Brunswick is named after the city of Brunswick, Georgia. Brunswick has a strong maritime history; home to one of the shipyards that produced the famed Liberty Ships during World War II. How appropriate that one of our ships will bear the name of a wonderful city with a naval heritage such as Brunswick, Georgia.

We also accepted the oceanographic survey ship, USNS Maury. Maury is designed to perform acoustic, biological, physical and geophysical surveys. The vessel will provide the U.S. military with essential information on the ocean environment.

Maury is named in honor of Cmdr. Matthew Fontaine Maury, known as the "Father of Modern Oceanography," and nicknamed, "Pathfinder of the Seas." He dedicated his life to the study of naval meteorology and oceanography, and made contributions to the charting of wind and ocean currents.

Election Season

I have no doubt that everyone has heard or seen campaign information in recent weeks. Yes, it is election season. First and foremost, our right to participate in the political process, cast a ballot and elect our leaders is an example of the greatness of our nation. I encourage everyone to participate in the electoral process this season.

Keep in mind, however, that as military members or federal government employees, we need to be cognizant of rules that guide our political conduct. Regulations and statutes prohibit and allow certain types of political activities. Because of our status as federal government employees, there are some restrictions on the actions we can take during the election season. An accompanying article provides information that will keep you in compliance with regulations as you participate in the political process.

Carl Brashear – inspiration and motivation

Last month our headquarters hosted a Black History Month celebration event. Our guest speaker was Mr. Phillip Brashear, the son of U.S. Navy legend Carl Brashear. Phillip Brashear talked about how his father overcame many obstacles to become our Navy's first black master diver.

The life of Carl Brashear is truly an inspirational story; so much so that Hollywood made a movie about Brashear called "Men of Honor." There is much we can learn from the life of Carl Brashear, mostly importantly, helping our fellow Sailor, mariner or officemate, to reach their full potential.

Our differences are a source of strength, reflect the nation we serve, and enable us to operate successfully around the globe. I encourage you to read the accompanying article that further explains the importance of our recognition event and provides more details about the life of Carl Brashear.

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

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

CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command is roughly half way into its headquarters consolidation move from the Washington Navy Yard in Washington D.C. to Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

The move to MSC's new headquarters location began in November 2014 and was undertaken to streamline processes, maximize customer service, and cut costs associated with maintaining the two headquarters in separate locations.

"I would love to see the consolidation complete on my watch because I don't like leaving things incomplete," said Rear Adm. T.K. Shannon, Commander, Military Sealift Command. "MSC committed to a time-line for a lot of reasons. First and foremost is MSC understands the personal challenges which are inherent for our teammates who moved or are moving to our new headquarters. Some of the personal trials faced during the move include finding a new church, schools, sports teams and homes for their families."

There are approximately 765 MSC civilian personnel currently serving at the headquarters campus on board Naval Station Norfolk. There are roughly 200 MSC civilian employees still working in Washington D.C.

"It is very difficult to pick up your life and move to another city. It is hard," said Shannon. "So some of the time-line for our move was driven by not 'breaking MSC' while we execute the consolidation. We needed a sufficient period of time to make this change with compassion."

"I would have loved keep all of our employees from Washington D.C.," said Shannon. "However, I understand the realities of picking up and moving to a new city."

Over the course of the consolidation, the number of teammates expected to serve at MSC's headquarters in Norfolk is expected to reach approximately 1,500 personnel.

When the MSC headquarters consolidation started, approximately 400 MSC teammates were assigned to Naval Station Norfolk.

"Each of our senior leaders has approached me since the move began to express admiration for the quality of people we are bringing in to Military Sealift Command," said Shannon. "For those who are new to the MSC family, welcome aboard. Your supervisors are speaking very highly of you and we are fortunate to have you join our team."

Over the course of this fiscal year, MSC renovations are expected to begin on buildings SP-16, SP-30, R-52, KBB and W-143. Also there will be a new parking lot for SP-312.

In 2017 the final round of renovations are scheduled to begin on buildings N-19, SP-47, SP-48 and SP-64.

"So while the move will not be completed on my watch, the consolidation is well underway," said Shannon.

Rear Adm. Shannon, who will be retiring from MSC later in 2016, expressed excitement for the future of MSC's team in Norfolk.

"I would like to thank you for how professionally you have tackled the enormous challenge of the consolidation," said Shannon. "Throughout the process of moving, our fleet commanders, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Sean Stackley, General McDew, all commended MSC's ability to continue making mission. During the consolidation, with many new hires and losing some experienced talent, MSC has continued to make mission. This is a credit to you and I applaud you for that."

During the final round of renovations, some of the affected MSC personnel will be required to work temporarily at buildings S-29 and T-26.

"We will use these two locations as 'swing spaces' while the permanent work locations are being renovated," said Shannon.

"As more new folks continue to make the move to Norfolk, I know you will continue to welcome and embrace our new MSC teammates," said Shannon.

The MSC headquarters consolidation is expected to be complete in 2018.

IT'S AN ELECTION YEAR; DO YOU KNOW THE RULES?

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. (February 25, 2016)—2016 is a huge year for the democratic process in the United States. America will host important national, state and local elections. Included will be the election of a new President of the United States.

Military Sealift Command's teammates need to understand what they are allowed to do and must not do in terms of participating in political campaigns.

"The Hatch Act governs federal civilian employees' political activity," said Jeff Davenport, assistant counsel for Military Sealift Command. "Congress enacted the Hatch Act in 1939 and has amended it a number of times, most recently in 2012."

"The Hatch Act was enacted to ensure federal employees are able to do their jobs without political bias, to protect federal employees from political coercion in the workplace, and to ensure that federal employees are promoted based on merit and not on political affiliation," added Davenport.

Federal civilian employees are forbidden by law to conduct political activities while in an official capacity and or while using federally owned government equipment and vehicles.

"Military Sealift Command personnel should be especially mindful of the restriction on engaging in political activity in the federal workplace and/or using federal equipment," said Davenport.

"Using your government computer to forward an e-mail encouraging a co-worker to vote or not vote for a particular candidate constitutes a violation," said Davenport. "Even using personal e-mail or phones while on federal property to criticize or support a political party or candidate runs afoul of the law."

"Also, keep the jokes out of the workplace," added Davenport. "Though you may consider your cubicle to be your personal space, remember it is federal property, so the same rules apply. This means you may not display photographs or posters of candidates."

According to the Hatch Act, federal civilian employees are forbidden from the following:

- Using his or her official title or position while engaged in political activity.
- Suggesting to subordinates that they attend political events or undertake any other partisan political activity.
- Host a political fund raiser.
- Collecting contributions or sell tickets for political fundraising functions.
- Run for public office in a partisan political election.
- Knowingly solicit or discourage participation in political activity of contractors.

Additionally, if civilian employees are on duty, in any federal room or building, or using a federally owned or leased vehicle, they may not:

- Distribute or display campaign materials or items.
- Perform campaign-related tasks.
- Wear or display partisan political buttons, tee-shirts,

signs, or other items.

-Contribute money to a partisan political party, candidate, or group.

-Comment to a blog or social media site advocating for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or group.

-Use any e-mail account or social media to distribute content that advocates for or against a political party, candidate, or group.

- "Like" or "friend" a political party, candidate, or group.

-Express opinions about candidates and issues.

-Volunteer for a partisan political campaign.

Civilian employees are allowed to conduct the following in regards to political campaigns:

-Register and vote in elections.

-Assist in voter registration drives.

-Contribute money to political campaigns, parties, or groups.

-Attend political fundraising functions, political rallies, and meetings.

-Join and be an active member or officer of political clubs and parties.

-Sign and circulate nominating petitions.

-Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.

-Park his or her privately owned vehicle that displays a partisan political bumper sticker on federal property.

-Identify his or her political views on a Facebook page

-Express opinions about candidates and issues when outside the federal workplace, not on duty, and not using a federally owned or leased vehicle.

-Volunteer for a partisan political campaign when outside the federal workplace, not on duty, and not using a federally owned or leased vehicle.

"Punishments for civilian employees who violate these rules include removal from federal service, reduction in grade, suspension, reprimand, and/or a civil penalty up to \$1,000," according to the Hatch Act.

"You are encouraged to exercise all rights available to you as U.S. citizens," said Davenport. "You may place a campaign sign in your yard, place a bumper sticker on your car (and park it in a government parking lot), make a financial contribution to a political party or candidate, attend political events, and work for the city or county as a poll worker on Election Day."

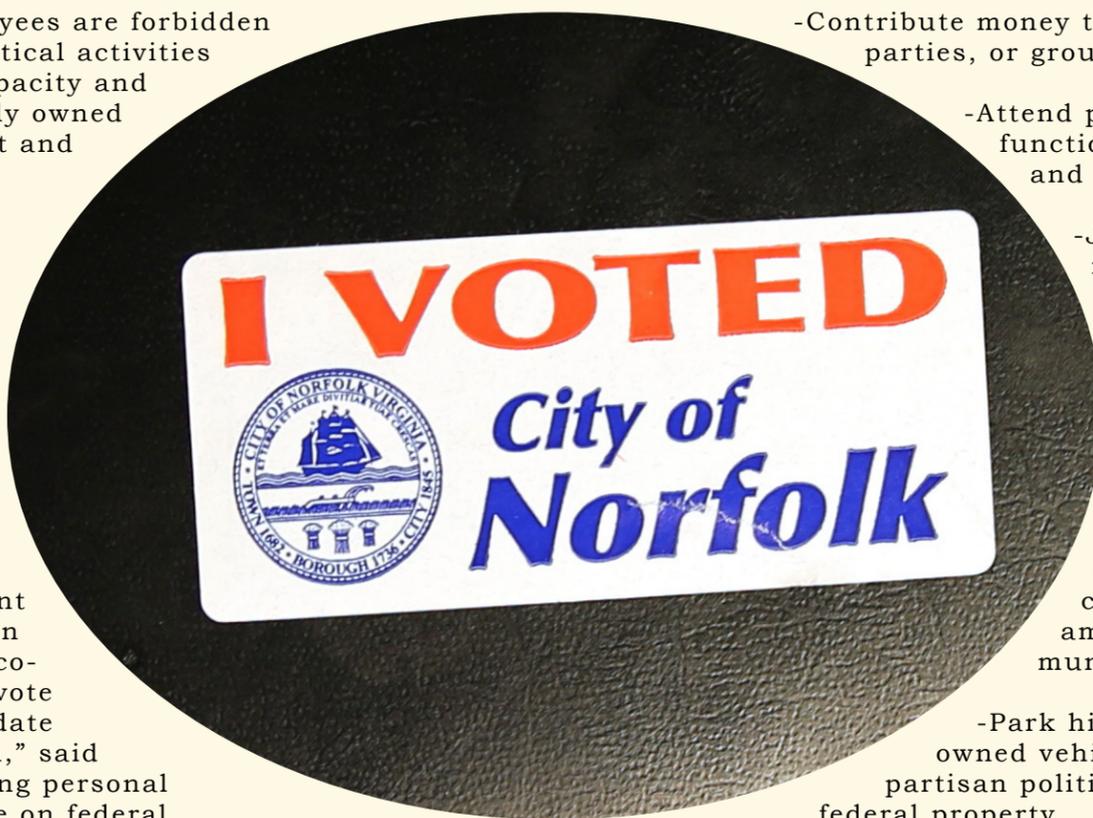
According to the Hatch Act, military service members are forbidden from the following:

-Actively participate (as more than a mere spectator) in partisan political fundraising activities, rallies, conventions, or management of a campaign.

-Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election, solicit votes for a particular candidate or issue, or request political contributions.

-Publish partisan political articles, letters, or

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MAKING MISSION SUCCESS THROUGH MAINTENANCE

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua Fulton

Aboard every Military Sealift Command ship, preventative maintenance plays a critical role. For the crew of USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011), proper upkeep of the on board equipment ensures the future success of every mission.

As an MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force Ship (MPS), Lummus prepositions U.S. Marine Corps equipment, vehicles, and ammunition around the world for use in support of planned operations and in response to unforeseen events. The crew's dedication to upkeep results in the on board equipment being ready to deploy at all times, fulfilling the Lummus's mission as an MPS.

"You never know when the Navy is going to come and say hey, we need the equipment," said Frank Muna, Improved Navy Lighterage System maintenance crewman. "We make sure we are 110 percent ready when we need to give the equipment out for use. We keep it ready for them, always."

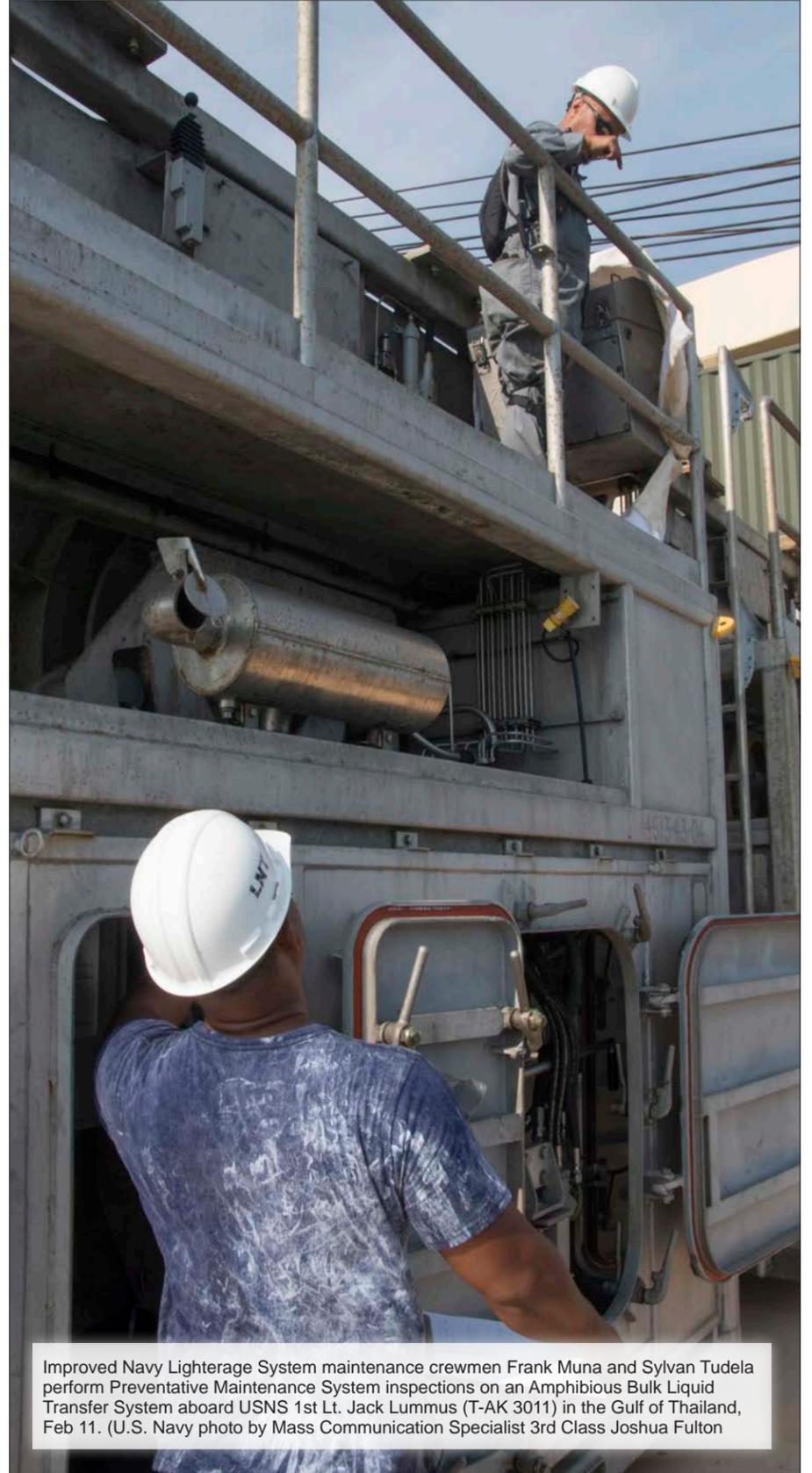
Lummus is currently anchored in the Gulf of Thailand in support of Exercise Cobra Gold. The ship deployed 129 pieces of equipment in support of the exercise, each of which had undergone the rigorous Preventative Maintenance System (PMS) checks. Thoroughly inspecting every aspect of the gear ensured that no problem, regardless of size, could hinder the exercise.

"It is very important, no matter how small it is," said Sylvan Tudela, Improved Navy Lighterage System maintenance crewman. "In the long run, if you don't do that, the equipment will degrade, and pretty soon you are not going to be able to use it and you are going to have to replace the parts."

Tudela said past experience has taught him that commitment to performing proper maintenance on the equipment aboard the ship can help determine an operation's success or failure before the operation ever begins.

"Last year on an operation in the Philippines, we discharged boats with the lighterage system for the navy to use," explained Tudela. "I know if we didn't do those PMS inspections, the boats would not be in the water. They would be on the Lummus, doing nothing for the exercise, so it plays a very big role."

For more information from Military Sealift Command, visit www.navy.mil/local/MSC/.



Improved Navy Lighterage System maintenance crewmen Frank Muna and Sylvan Tudela perform Preventative Maintenance System inspections on an Amphibious Bulk Liquid Transfer System aboard USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) in the Gulf of Thailand, Feb 11. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Fulton)

COMFEX - Continued Reading From Page 1)



Hospital Corpsman Third Class Caleb Moyer, Lt Cmdr Steven Weatherspoon and Hospital Corpsman First Class Luke Pete perform lifesaving procedures on a human casualty simulator on board Military Sealift Command's USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) during a 'Code Blue' drill, Feb. 16. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

deployment with respect, provide quality medical care and partner nation medical training," added Cubano. "To these ends, we hold intensive training evolutions to ensure our skills are maintained."

To increase training realism and impact, this COMFEX included the use of human casualty simulators provided by Naval Medical Center Portsmouth's Healthcare Simulation Center.

"The simulators have proven to be very valuable training aids for simulating medical emergencies," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Patrick Gravel of NMPC's Healthcare Simulation Center. "These mannequins are more effective than traditional advanced medical training methods. The simulators are anatomically correct when compared to human subjects and have advanced to a level which leads to very accurate and efficient training."

The underway portion of the COMFEX included training focused on using the human casualty simulators for the full spectrum of care available on board USNS Comfort.

"The simulated battlefield casualties were received on the ship flight deck and given an initial evaluation," said Boswell. "If the casualty were as a result of chemical, biological or radiological exposure, they are received in an area designed to treat these threats."

Non-CBR patients are transported directly inside the ship for triage and ultimately advanced medical care as required.

The expeditionary medical services offered on board USNS Comfort include x-rays, advanced diagnostics, full surgical services and post-surgery recovery.

"The types of wounds we encounter in a battlefield environment or at the scene of a humanitarian disaster are very different than one would encounter in a traditional emergency room," said Boswell. "This is why it is so important to conduct regular training for our medical professionals."

USNS GRAPPLE (T-ARS 53) DEPLOYS TO AFRICA

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) departed from Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story to begin a deployment in support of U.S. Navy and allied operation in the 6th Fleet's area of operation, Feb. 29.

With a crew of approximately 45 U.S. Navy Divers and Civil Service Mariners, the Grapple is primarily going to provide dive salvage services in support of emergent situations such as requests to salvage and recover ships and aircraft, clear harbors and tow vessels.

"Our primary mission will be to work with our Africa partners," said Master Diver Daniel Laube of Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit TWO (MDSU 2). "We will be training with them on how to further their diving programs. "It is not going to be an easy deployment, but I am confident everything will get done."

"When we are conducting diving operations, the Navy Divers are responsible for salvaging things that go down such as ships, aircraft and small boats," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Chad Miller, the Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2 Company Commander. "We are also responsible



Civil Service Mariners and U.S. Navy Sailors attached to Military Sealift Command's USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53) bring stores on board the ship prior to getting underway from Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Feb. 29. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

for providing diving training with our partner countries in Africa."

The MDSU Navy Divers deployed on board USNS Grapple are capable of performing a variety of missions to include underwater construction and demolition projects, search and rescue missions, and provide support for military and civilian law enforcement agencies.

The USNS Grapple is specially designed to support diving and salvage operations at sea.

"Should there be an aircraft or a vessel which sinks, we arrive on scene and rescue the pilots and crew," said Capt. Curtis Smith, USNS Grapple's master. "We also are capable of recovering pieces of debris from both the oceans' surface and sub-surface."

"We are planning on working with several countries in Africa," said Smith. "We are planning on spending time in Morocco, Algeria, the Ivory Coast and many additional African ports working to enhance and improve the practices of our African partners."

The Civil Service Mariners who crew USNS Grapple will be critical to ensure the deployment is a success.

Much of the Grapples crew has deployed multiple times while for some this will be their first deployment.

"The Grapple's deployment is very important because with a small crew of Civil Service Mariners and Navy Divers on board is will be easier for us to make an impact in some of the smaller countries we plan on working with," added Smith. "Our footprint is much smaller than an aircraft carrier or a destroyer where there are many people arriving in a port so it is easier for us to assimilate with local residents."

The Civil Service Mariners who crew USNS Grapple will be critical to ensure the deployment is a success.

"The crew of the USNS Grapple is phenomenal," said Smith. "The leadership did a great job making sure everyone was trained and that we had all the stores and repair parts we would need to be ready to go."

"The civil service mariners operate the Grapple," added Smith. "The engineers provide hotel services such as electricity, water, heat and air-conditioning. The mariners maintain the engine running gear, bow thruster and top-side equipment."

"The mariners from our deck department stand watches in the wheel house. They steer the ship and avoid heavy seas," added Smith. "Our steward department operates the ship's galley and the berthing services on board as well."

USNS MAURY (T-AGS 66) DELIVERED

By Team Ship Public Affairs

The Navy accepted USNS Maury (T-AGS 66) from builder VT Halter Marine, Feb. 16.

The USNS Maury was designed to perform acoustic, biological, physical and geophysical surveys. The vessel will provide the U.S. military with essential information on the ocean environment.

"The Navy's acceptance of T-AGS 66 is the culmination of a dedicated team effort between the Navy and VT Halter," said Mike Kosar, the Support Ships, Boats, and Craft program manager for the Navy's Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. "I look forward to learning of the new and innovative contributions to science and ocean exploration that USNS Maury and her crew will undoubtedly make over the next 30 years."

T-AGS 66 is named in honor of Cmdr. Matthew Fontaine Maury, known as the "Father of Modern Oceanography," and nicknamed, "Pathfinder of the Seas." He dedicated his life to the study of naval meteorology and oceanography, and made copious contributions to the charting of wind and ocean currents. USNS Maury will continue to contribute to his curiosity and thirst for ocean discovery and understanding.

The vessel is 353 feet in length with an overall beam of 58 feet. Maury is 24 feet longer than the previous T-AGS design to accommodate a moon pool for deployment and retrieval of autonomous underwater vehicles.

Maury will be operated by the Military Sealift Command. MSC consists of non-combatant, civilian crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships.



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



Boatswain Jerald Martinez participates in a zero-visibility drill aboard USNS 1st LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) while anchored in the Gulf of Thailand, Feb 17. Lummus is a Military Sealift Command Maritime Prepositioning ship supporting Exercise Cobra Gold 2016. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Fulton)

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS, IN THE DARK

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Joshua Fulton

Civilian mariners aboard Military Sealift Command (MSC) Maritime Prepositioning ship USNS 1st LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) participated in a zero-visibility drill in the Gulf of Thailand Feb. 17.

The drill instructed the crewmembers on the proper methods for using teamwork and communication to conduct a search in a situation in which vision is obscured.

“It was very informative for the ships crew,” said Able-Body Seaman Bryan Howell, drill participant. “We all got to experience the same training; we donned the masks, we donned the air packs and we went through the spaces together, learning how to work together throughout the drill.”

The drill involved participants wearing vision-obscuring masks as well as self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) tanks in order to accurately simulate a plausible zero-visibility situation, such as a fire in the ship’s spaces. The main focus of the drill was to prepare the crew for a real-life zero-visibility situation by demonstrating the importance of cooperation and preparation.

“When we all do the training together, it gives us the outlook of what the scenario is going to be like if we were really going through this situation,” said Howell. “If everyone had to go through a space searching for a crewmember, we know how to do it, how to go about it. Everything should go smoothly; we should be able to get the crewmember out of there, and it should go the way we planned it.”



Crew members participate in a zero-visibility drill aboard USNS 1st LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) while anchored in the Gulf of Thailand, Feb 17. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Fulton/Released)

The drill included instructions on how to sweep the room by touch in order to rescue a person who cannot be seen and cannot respond to verbal commands. It also included a tutorial on how to use a thermal imager to search for body-heat signatures in a smoke filled room.

Howell advises all ships to integrate a zero-visibility drill into their regular training schedules so that all MSC ships can reap the benefits of this unique training.



Third Mate David O'Brien demonstrates search techniques using a thermal imager during a zero-visibility drill aboard USNS 1st LT Jack Lummus (T-AK 3011) while anchored in the Gulf of Thailand, Feb 17. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Fulton)

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY, HONORING OUR HEROS

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Phillip Brashear, son of U.S. Navy Master Chief Navy Diver (Retired) Carl Brashear, addresses U.S. Navy Sailors and civilians attached to Military Sealift Command on board Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 24. Brashear delivered a speech as part of MSC's Black History Month special emphasis observance. (U.S. Navy Photograph by Public Affairs Specialist Bill Mesta)

Military Sealift Command's Special Emphasis Observance Committee hosted a Black History Month celebration on board Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 24

"Today we will celebrate African American, Black History Month," said Clarence White of MSC Executive Office and Master of Ceremonies for the event. "Black History Month, also known as National African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their accomplishments throughout the history of the United States."

"When February approaches, there seems to be a collective shift in the atmosphere," said MSC's Chaplin, Lt. Vito Crecca. "This observance is very germane to who we are as a people. When we pause to remember black history, we also pause to remember American history."

"When one travels around this country from one local to another, one would be hard pressed to not encounter the experience of a black patriarch," said Crecca. "Their sacrifices, their passion, their hope, their victories are undeniably laced through the very soil of our country."

The keynote speaker for MSC's Black History Month celebration was U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer Four Phillip M. Brashear, the son of U.S. Navy Master Chief Navy Diver Carl Brashear. The late master diver was the first African American Navy Diver and the first amputee to remain on active duty as a deep-sea diver in the United States Navy.

"My father passed away 10 years ago this July," according to Brashear. "He was a great American hero and now he is at legend status. I never want my dad to become a myth. I always want by dad to be remembered as a legend and American hero. He did not believe he was 'all that.' He was just doing his job."

"My father was black in a time when being black in this country, and at a time in the Navy, was not a real popular thing," said Brashear. "At the age of 17 he joined the military with an eighth grade education."

"My father grew up poor, he grew up on a share-croppers farm," added Brashear. "He also had a physical disability."

Carl Brashear lost his leg during an attempted recovery of a hydrogen bomb when two military aircraft collided, losing the bomb in the ocean off the coast of Spain. During the recovery,

Brashear was severely injured when a pipe broke loose.

"I got all the Sailors out of the way, but I didn't get myself out of the way," Carl Brashear reported after the incident.

The pipe flew across the deck and hit Carl Brashear below the knee.

"The fifth challenge my father had to deal with was alcoholism towards the end of his Navy career," said Brashear. "Think about it, he dealt with racism, lack of education, economic challenge, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse. Five issues which are still affecting our country today."

"With all of these challenges, my father proved that anything is achievable," added Brashear. "We have no excuses for never making it in this world. Because you know what, if he can do it, anyone can do it."

"You have no right to give up," said Brashear. "My father never gave up when things got hard. When things are hard and life gives you lemons, make lemonade that is what my father did."

After Phillip Brashear addressed the audience, Military Sealift Command's Commander, Rear Adm. T.K. Shannon, presented Brashear with command challenge coins and remarked on the significance of the event.

"Events such as this are incredibly important," said Shannon. "We take time out of our day to look back at the very impressive contributions of those who have gone before us."

"It is our turn to 'put the shoulder to the wheel' and carry on the hard work of those who came before us," added Shannon. "Slavery was wrong. Segregation was wrong. Denying people the right to vote was wrong. Thank goodness for the courageous folks who took a stand to have those policies ended."

"We have a problem though," continued Shannon. "For all of those who worked to correct these wrongs, there were hundreds who saw the injustices and didn't do anything about it. They turned a blind eye."

"Let's go forward, be proactive and take a stand," charged Shannon. "Anybody who sees an injustice, whether it is equal opportunity, sexual assault, sexual harassment, wherever we see wrong, and let's not turn a blind eye. Let's take a stand and do the right thing."

The celebration included the singing of the National Anthem by Ms. Delanya Hoskins and the reading of the 2016 Black History Month presidential proclamation by Ms. Terry Blair.

"The origins of Black History Month date back to 1926 and the establishment of Negro History Week," according to White. "The original celebration fell on the second week of February, between the birthdays of the famous orator and abolitionist Fredrick Douglas and President Abraham Lincoln."

"In 1976 the celebration expanded to include the entire month of February," said White. "Since 1976, every U.S. President has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month."

"America's greatness is a testament to generations of courageous individuals who, in the face of uncomfortable truths, accepted that the work of perfecting our Nation is unending and strived to expand the reach of freedom to all," according to President Barack Obama's 2016 Black History Month Proclamation. "During National African American History Month, we recognize these champions of justice and the sacrifices they made to bring us to this point, we honor the contributions of African Americans since our country's beginning, and we recommit to reaching for a day when no person is judged by anything but the content of their character."



For More About
Military Sealift Command
www.msc.navy.mil

endorsements signed or written by the service member that requests votes for or against a particular political party, candidate, or cause.

-Serve in any official capacity with a partisan political club.

-Speak before a partisan political gathering.

-Participate in any radio, television, or other program advocating for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.

-Solicit or otherwise engage in fundraising activities in federal offices or facilities for any political cause or candidate.

-March or ride in a partisan political parade.

-Display a large political sign, banner, or poster (as distinguished from a bumper sticker) on the service member's privately owned vehicle.

-Actively promote partisan political dinners and other fundraising events.

-Attend partisan political events as an official representative of the armed forces.

Military service members are allowed to conduct the following in regards to political campaigns:

-Register, vote, and express a personal opinion on political candidates and issues, but not in the federal workplace or using your position or title.

-Promote and encourage others to vote, as long as the other person is not the service member's subordinate and the

activity doesn't occur in the federal workplace.

-Join a partisan or nonpartisan political club and attend its meetings when not in uniform.

-Make monetary contributions to a political organization, party, or committee favoring a particular candidate.

-Display a political bumper sticker on your private vehicle.

-Attend partisan and nonpartisan political fundraising activities, meetings, rallies, debates, conventions, or activities as a spectator when not in uniform.

"Military service members who violate any of the above provisions are punishable under Uniform Code of Military Justice Article 92, 'Failure to Obey Order or Regulation'," according to Department of Defense directive 1344.10.

"Military Sealift Command employees and service members should feel free to participate in the political process by any lawful means," concluded Davenport. "However, MSC teammates should regularly review these important rules regarding political activity in the federal workplace, especially during election season."

"Using your government computer to forward an e-mail encouraging a co-worker to vote or not vote for a particular candidate constitutes a violation."

The Hatch Act (Title 5 U.S. Code Sections 7321 - 7326) is available at http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/defense_ethics/resource_library/5cfr733.pdf. Additionally, you can visit the website of the Office of Special Counsel, the office tasked with investigating and prosecuting violations of the Hatch Act at <https://osc.gov/Pages/HatchAct.aspx>.

ANYDAY



Able Bodied Seaman Frankie Heggins, attached to Military Sealift Command's USNS Grapple (T-ARS 53), secures a mooring line at Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Feb. 11. (U.S. Navy photograph by Visual Information Specialist Brian Suriani)



Alexander Spitz, 3rd mate, speaks into a talkback intercom during an abandon ship drill on USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist First Class Amanda Dunford)



The crew of Military Sealift Command's USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) poses for a photograph in the Vigor Marine Dry Dock in Portland Oregon, Jan. 13. (U.S. Navy photo by Bruce Johnson)

SEALIFT

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