



# SEALIFT

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

NOVEMBER 2016 ISSUE

### PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2016 CONCLUDES



USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) steams in the Pacific Ocean after completing Pacific Partnership 2016 in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Mercy is sailing to her homeport of San Diego. (U.S. Navy photograph by Petty Officers 2nd Class Hank Gettys)

#### From Pacific Partnership Public Affairs

The 11th Annual Pacific Partnership mission recently departed the Western Pacific after completing mission stops throughout Southeast Asia.

The annual multilateral, multi-service mission saw partner nation counterparts working alongside one another in six countries to improve disaster response preparedness and enhance relationships in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multilateral disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Asia-Pacific. The 2016 mission was led by Commander, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 23, embarked aboard hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). Approximately 1,200 military and civilian personnel from Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States participated for the duration or parts of the four-month mission.

Pacific Partnership 2016 visited Dili, Timor Leste; Legazpi, Philippines; Da Nang, Vietnam; Kuantan, Malaysia; and Padang, Indonesia.

Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force personnel embarked aboard tank landing ship JS Shimokita (LST 4002) led a mission stop to Koror, Palau. Multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), medical, and civil-engineering teams partnered with their counterparts in each country to conduct live search and rescue field training exercises, subject matter expert exchanges, cooperative health engagements and community relations events.

The collaborative efforts between Pacific Partnership teams and their counterparts in each country improved collective capacity and multilateral cooperation to respond to a disaster and enhance regional partnerships at all levels.

“The men and women of Pacific Partnership made significant advances to the mission through their collaboration with host nations and our civilian and military partners,” said Rear Adm. Don Gabrielson, commander, Task Force 73. “Their hard work deepened partnerships and enhanced readiness in search and rescue and humanitarian and disaster response preparedness, preparing us to work together even more closely in the future.”

Pacific Partnership began in response to one of the world’s most catastrophic natural disasters, the December 2004 tsunami that

devastated parts of Southeast Asia. The mission has evolved over the years from the provision of direct care to collective capacity building, and Pacific Partnership 2016 focused primarily on knowledge exchange with the intent of sharing knowledge and skills that last long after the mission is over increasing resiliency and building sustained relationships.

Pacific Partnership 2016 was also different from previous missions with several other distinctions, to include:

- \* A multinational command-and-control structure for disaster relief, which included a deputy mission commander from the Royal Australian navy and a mission chief of staff from the Royal New Zealand air force.
- \* The visit by Mercy to Vietnam saw improved U.S. and Vietnamese military cooperation during a live search and rescue exercise on the Han River in Da Nang, which also included Vietnam People’s navy ship Khanh Hoa (K-123) and crew members from Shimokita. Pacific Partnership underscores the deepening relationship between the United States, partner nations and Vietnam.
- \* Pacific Partnership 2016 capitalized on the Women Peace and Security program, an international initiative designed to empower women and demonstrate the importance of including them in the planning and implementation of disaster preparedness and relief efforts. The Pacific Partnership 2016 Women, Peace and Security team hosted seminars and workshops as well as discussions during HADR symposiums.
- \* This year’s mission visited Malaysia for the first time, although Malaysia has contributed forces to Pacific Partnership since it began in 2006.

“Our partner nations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region have firsthand experience dealing with natural disaster, and our goal on this mission was to learn from that experience and also to share some of our lessons learned in disaster response,” said Capt. Tom Williams, mission commander, Pacific Partnership 2016. “Throughout the mission we all learned from each other and continued to strengthen professional and personal relationships.”

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## DISTINGUISHED CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

From Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Each year, MSC honors a Civil Service Mariner who has demonstrated the most sustained growth, development, integrity, and interest in the seafaring profession for the past five years, with the Military Sealift Command, Distinguished Career Achievement Award (DCAA).

“The DCAA is a most prestigious award, granted annually to recognize and encourage outstanding and deserving Civil Service Mariner Officers for sustained growth, development, integrity, and interest in the seafaring profession,” said Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon, MSC’s former commander.

The DCAA awardees receive \$5,000 and a certificate. Officers nominated but not selected for the DCAA are also considered for a Special Act, Special Service award which includes a \$2,500 and a certificate.

Nomination packages are forwarded to a review board for individual review and scoring.

Congratulations to ship master James Dolan who was selected as the 2015 Military Sealift Command Distinguished Career Achievement Award (DCAA) recipient.

Congratulations also to the following officers nominated for a Special Act, Special Service Award: Blaine Darling, Chief Engineer, Timothy Lockwood, Master, David Perkins, Chief Engineer and Senjamin Tai, Chief Engineer.

## MARINER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE AND MARINE EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

From Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Each year, MSC honors Civil Service Mariners who are considered the most outstanding in their department during the year, with the Military Sealift Command Mariner Award of Excellence.

The Mariner Award of Excellence recognizes and suitably honors Civil Service Mariners of MSC considered the most outstanding in their department during the year,” said Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon, MSC’s former commander.

The winners will receive a \$2,500 and a congratulatory letter. This year’s Mariner Award of Excellence winners are:

### Engine:

Casey Penney	First Assistant Engineer
Tracy McGowin	Second Assistant Engineer
Emerson Impat	Deck Engineer Machinist
Angel Canlas	Electronics Technician

### Deck:

Stephen Scott	First Officer
Brian Smith	Second Officer
James Conner	Boatswain
Qulumaulda Abdur-Rahim	Boatswain

### Supply:

Justin Figuracion	Yeoman Storekeeper
Joel Calanayan	Assistant Cook

### Purser:

Josefina Noa	Purser
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From these finalists, a board is held to select the overall winner as the Military Sealift Command, Marine Employee of the Year Award.

The 2015 MSC Mariner award of excellence is Casey Penny, First Assistant Engineer. Penny will receive a \$3,000 award and a congratulatory letter. There were no nominations for the Communications or Medical category.

## USS FRANK CABLE WINS 2016 SECNAV AFLOAT SAFETY AWARD

By Lt. Lauren Spaziano, Commander, Submarine Squadron 15

The Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) recently announced Guam-based submarine tender USS Frank Cable (AS 40) as the winner of the fiscal year 2016 SECNAV Safety Excellence Award for having the best afloat safety program across the entire Navy.

Under Secretary of the Navy Dr. Janine Davidson presented the award to Frank Cable’s safety officer, Lt. Malia Gonzalez, who received the award on behalf of her ship during a ceremony at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes earlier this month.

“It is a great honor to have our safety team recognized with the SECNAV Safety Excellence Award. Throughout the year they proactively worked with the Sailors and Military Sealift Command Civilian Mariners serving on Frank Cable, focusing on education and developing a culture of safety, which has enabled us to execute a demanding schedule while keeping the crew safe,” said Capt. Drew St. John, Frank Cable’s commanding officer. “I could not be prouder of all they have achieved.”

Gonzalez led the ship in safety and established a safety culture aboard. Her intrusive and instructive safety leadership is actively focused on mishap prevention and deterring newly-reported craftsmen from developing habits that result in work-related injuries. Frank Cable had zero on-duty class “A” and class “B” mishaps and no lost man-hours or limited duty days resulting from on-duty mishaps while completing the mission over the past year.

“Protecting our people and assets by managing risk is paramount,” said Rear Adm. Frederick Roegge, commander, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet. “Recognition like this shows leadership ability and how well you can work together as a team.”

For her efforts, Gonzalez was selected by the National Safety Council as the winner of their 2016 “Top 40 Under 40” Rising Stars award, beating out more than 100 other nominees from every industry throughout the United States.

Over the last year, Frank Cable had a 62 percent reduction in safety mishaps and an 87 percent reduction in safety discrepancies. The ship adhered to all safety requirements and maintained the highest safety standards while executing the mission as evidenced by the completion of seven Continuous Maintenance Availabilities, 55 Voyage Repair Availabilities, 17 Remote-Site Fly-Away teams tasking, encompassing over 2,965 jobs and totaling over 345,000 production man-hours of quality maintenance aboard submarines and surface ships throughout the Pacific Theater.

## HEALTH, DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE PREMIUMS

The Open Season for making changes to Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) and Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Programs (FEDVIP) enrollments and electing to participate in the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS) for 2017 will be held Nov. 14 – Dec. 12.

The 2017 FEHB and FEDVIP premiums are available on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) web site. Plan booklets will be available in early November.

FEHB: The average 2017 premium increase for FEHB is 4.4 percent. The government contributes approximately 70 percent of the total cost of a plan’s premium. A full list of premiums is available at <http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/healthcare/plan-information/premiums/>.

FEDVIP: The enrollee pays the total cost of the FEDVIP premiums; there is no government contribution. A full list of premiums is available at <http://www.opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/dental-vision/plan-information/Premiums>.

The Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) portal at [https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Benefits/Pages/Benefits\\_Open\\_Season.aspx](https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Benefits/Pages/Benefits_Open_Season.aspx) is the central source for current information about the Open Season. You must use a government computer; have a “.mil, .edu or .gov” email address and a Department of Defense (DoD) Common Access Card (CAC). When prompted, select your email certificate. If this is your first time accessing the Web site, you will be required to complete a simple registration.

If you have FEHB questions, please call 1888-320-2917 or e-mail [navybenefits@navy.mil](mailto:navybenefits@navy.mil). For questions regarding FEDVIP please call 1-877-888-3337 or email [service@benefeds.com](mailto:service@benefeds.com).

# SECRETARY OF THE NAVY NAMES NEXT FLEET REPLENISHMENT OILER IN HONOR OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY



From Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Ray Mabus announced the next ship of the next generation of fleet replenishment oilers will be named USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208), Sept. 20.

A ceremony marking the announcement was held at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston.

T-AO 208 is part of the John Lewis-class of ships named in honor of U.S. civil and human rights heroes.

“This class of ships would be incomplete absent the name Robert F. Kennedy,” said Mabus. “He was a Navy man, a U.S. attorney general, a senator, and a leader who committed, and ultimately sacrificed, his life to pursuing justice, equality and freedom.”

Robert F. Kennedy, a U.S. Navy veteran, served as the U.S. attorney general from 1961 to 1964 and as a U.S. senator from New York from 1965 to 1968. A graduate of Harvard University and the University of Virginia School of Law, Kennedy was appointed attorney general after his brother John F. Kennedy was elected president in 1960.

In this role, Robert Kennedy fought organized crime and fought for civil rights for African Americans. He also served as a close advisor to the president.

As a Senator, he was a committed advocate of the poor and racial minorities.

While in Los Angeles campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination in June of 1968, Kennedy was shot and killed at age 42. Kennedy, the father of 11 children, is buried at Virginia’s Arlington National Cemetery.

The future USNS Robert F. Kennedy will be operated by Military Sealift Command and provide underway replenishment of fuel and stores to U.S. Navy ships at sea and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. Construction is expected to begin on Robert F. Kennedy in 2021.

## FUTURE USNS YUMA (EPF 8) LAUNCHES IN SHIPYARD

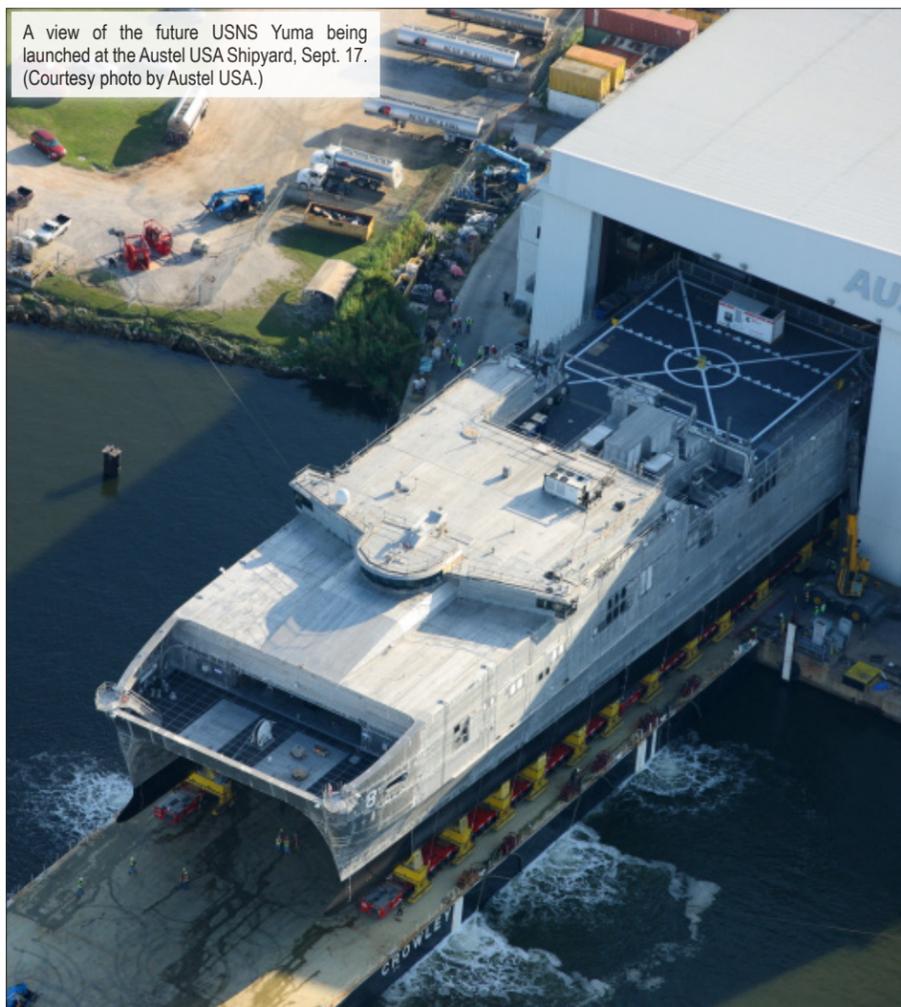
From By Team Ships Public Affairs

The Navy’s newest Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF), the USNS Yuma (EPF 8), was launched from the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Alabama, Sept. 17.

During the multi-step launch process, the ship was translated from the Modular Manufacturing Facility onto a moored docking barge, Sept. 16. It was then transported to a dry dock to be submerged and enter the water for the first time the following day.

“With Yuma in the water, we can begin working with our shipbuilders on the final outfitting for the ship,” said Capt. Henry Stevens, strategic theater and sealift program manager, Program Executive Office, Ships. “This milestone brings us a step closer to activating the ship systems and getting her out to sea for trials.”

EPF 8 is designed for the fast intra-theater transportation of troops, military vehicles and equipment. Capable of transporting 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots, the ship will provide U.S. forces with added mobility and flexibility.



EPFs are equipped with a flight deck and an off-load ramp which allow for vehicles and helicopters to quickly access ports and quays. Littoral operations and port access are further enhanced by the ship’s 15-foot shallow draft, ability to interface with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, and ease of access to austere and deteriorated piers. This makes EPF 8 an extremely flexible asset, capable of supporting a wide range of operations including non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

This year, the Navy and Austal marked major milestones on the EPF program. USNS Brunswick (EPF 6) delivered to the Navy in January. USNS Carson City (EPF 7) was christened and launched in January, underwent sea trials in May, and was delivered to the Navy in June. Yuma’s keel was authenticated in March, christened in August, and prepares for delivery in early 2017. In addition, Austal was awarded construction contracts for the next two ships, EPF 11 and EPF 12 on Sept. 15.

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



# USNS COMFORT: ON THE READY TODAY, ON THE READY TOMORROW, AND INTO THE FUTURE



U.S. Navy Sailors attached to Military Sealift Command's hospital ship, USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) prepare to move a simulated battle casualty onto a gurney. The Sailors took part in a mass casualty drill as part of the ship's week-long Comfort Exercise (COMFEX). (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

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

The crew of Military Sealift Command's hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) conducted a series of training events known as a Comfort Exercise (COMFEX) pier side, aboard Naval Station Norfolk, Sep. 19-23.

The quarterly battery of drills was conducted to ensure the ship's U.S. Navy medical professionals and civil service mariners are prepared to answer any emergent crisis rapidly. The training was also critical in preparing Comfort's crew for a pending amphibious exercise, Bold Alligator 2017.

"The Comfort is a floating, state of the art medical facility which provides the same level of medical care as a high quality shore medical hospital like Naval Medical Center Portsmouth or the Boston, Maryland Trauma Center," said Capt. Lanny Boswell, the commanding officer of the Comfort's medical treatment facility (MTF). "When we deploy, we get underway with the best medical and maritime professionals. We are crewed by the top CIVMARS and military medical professionals in their respective fields."

Recently USS Batann (LHD 5) played the role of a triage support platform during a 'table-top' pre-Bold Alligator 2017 exercise. The Batann is capable of receiving wounded personnel while the Navy's hospital ships USNS Comfort and Mercy are the only platforms capable of providing full service theater hospitalization services.



U.S. Navy medical personnel attached to Military Sealift Command's hospital ship, USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) perform emergency surgery on a simulated battle casualty during a mass casualty drill aboard the vessel, Sept. 22. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

"What makes USNS Comfort important for military missions is 99 percent of the world's population resides within 10 miles of a waterway," said Boswell. "So if there is a conflict, influence or stabilization needed, chances are, it is going to be near the water."

Comfort's MTF is an embarked crew of medical personnel from the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery responsible for operating and maintaining one of the largest trauma facilities in the United States.

The Comfort provides emergency, on-site care for U.S. combatant forces deployed in war or other operations. The ship also provides critical medical support for humanitarian missions.

"The Comfort is categorized as a 'Ready III' status," said Boswell. "We are expected to 'throw the lines' and be underway in three to five days. For us, the Comfort is always underway in three days or sooner, if possible. In a nut-shell, the Comfort is the biggest, baddest medical platform in the Department of Defense arsenal and in the world."

"The nature of a ship like the Comfort is challenging because the ship's missions requires the ability to man the platform very quickly and get underway," said Capt. David Murrin, the Comfort's Master. "As such we maintain a good, strong-core infrastructure on a daily basis so when the surge of medical professionals and CIVMARS are on station we are able to get everyone up and running to speed rapidly."

A civilian crew of up to 65 civil service mariners employed by Military Sealift Command operate and navigate the ship, load and off-load mission cargo, and assist with repairs to mission equipment.

"On the mariner side of the Comfort's crew, we are capable of getting the ship underway with the reduced crew, but the additional mariners are required for sustaining an enduring requirement. The additional crew would have to be transported to the vessel," said Murrin. "One of the aspects of the COMFEX is to shake out some of the details in terms of the timeline and manning capabilities on the 'hull-side'."

Ensuring the success of a ship such as the Comfort requires special leaders and a crew of highly talented professionals.

"It is very important that the CIVMARS and MTF personnel are fully aware of each other's requirements," said Murrin. "If the mariners are not ready to provide MTF required services such as power, water, refrigeration, habitability, waste management or steam the mission will fail."

"One of the purposes of the COMFEX is to ensure everyone is aware of what each aspect of the crew needs to complete their job and smooth out the activation process," added Murrin.

"The interaction between the MTF personnel and CIVMARS who crew the Comfort has to be tight," added Boswell. "There is no time to work in separate channels and everyone must be on the same page. The crew must work 'hand-in-hand' across the board to make this ship work."

Comfort's primary mission is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility to the U.S. military that is flexible, capable and adaptable to support expeditionary warfare.

"When the Comfort deploys, it represents not only the people who serve in the Navy and the residents of Hampton Roads, Virginia; it represents the benevolence of our great nation," said Boswell.

"Combat support is the Comfort's primary mission. When the Comfort moves into an area, we provide a 'deterrence presence,'" said Boswell. "When an aircraft carrier strike group moves off the shore of a potential adversary there tends to be a calming effect due to the tremendous fire-power stationed off that shore. If you add a hospital ship to that presence, it sends a message to the potential adversary that we are serious and resolved to the point where we anticipate taking casualties."

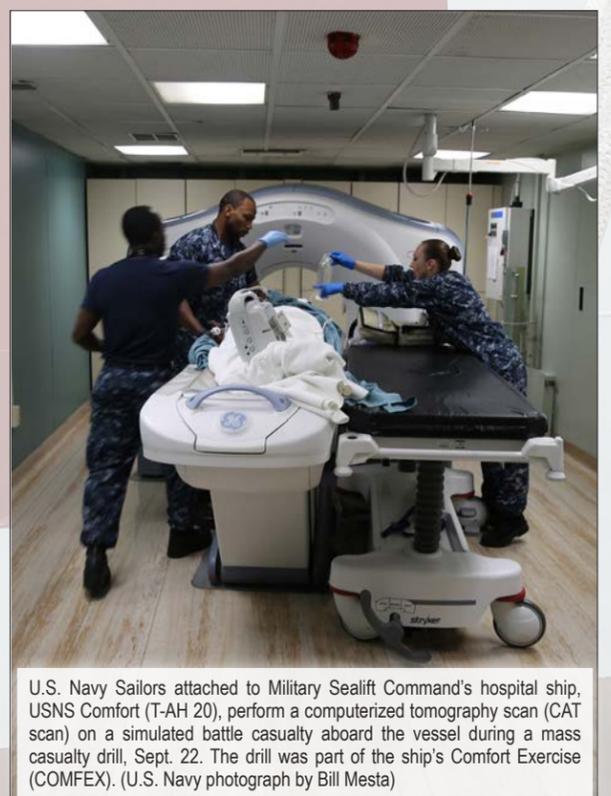
"To our troops in a combat zone, the addition of a hospital ship to a theater reflects the country's promise to send them the very best medical care available to help them if they are hurt in battle," said Boswell.

This COMFEX was a 'fast cruise,' with all hands living aboard, to simulate an underway period. The theme for the exercise was to recreate scenarios from the recent Bold Alligator 2016 synthetic exercise, and prepare the crew for next year's live exercise.

"There is a whole new group of people who are aboard Comfort and a big part of the COMFEX was to learn all of the processes required to meet the ship's mission," said Capt. Paul Arp, the director of nursing services for USNS Comfort's MTF. "As a group, we are learning how to 'fight' the ship and be ready to receive and treat casualties."

When the Comfort is at its normal, pier side reduced manning, there are approximately 50 personnel who crew the ship. When activated, Comfort's crew grows to approximately 1,200 personnel.

COMFEX, continued on page 8



U.S. Navy Sailors attached to Military Sealift Command's hospital ship, USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), perform a computerized tomography scan (CAT scan) on a simulated battle casualty aboard the vessel during a mass casualty drill, Sept. 22. The drill was part of the ship's Comfort Exercise (COMFEX). (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

# ROYAL FLEET AUXILIARY; GLOBAL LOGISTICS PARTNERS

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Commodore Duncan Lamb, Head of Service for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary visited Military Sealift Command in Hampton Roads, Virginia, Sept. 26-28.

Lamb visited MSC to learn more about the organization and to re-enforce the partnership between the two maritime logistic institutions.

“My visit to MSC was part of a routine which has been established over a number of years where the leaders of each organization visit each other,” said Lamb. “Our mutual visits are an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and to learn from each other’s organizations.”

The civilian-manned Royal Fleet Auxiliary delivers worldwide logistical and operational support for the wide range of tasks the Royal Navy undertakes including warfighting, counter-piracy, humanitarian and disaster relief, and counter-narcotics operations.

“The RFA is the forward maritime operational support force for the Royal Navy,” said Lamb. “We deal in front-line logistics support and other operational support for the Royal Navy.”

“In addition to logistical support we provide maritime policing in conjunction with the Royal Navy,” said Lamb “We also provide amphibious support to include transporting troops and equipment to the beachhead for the Royal Marines.”

According to the RFA’s official site, the types of ships the RFA sails include a casualty ship, forward repair ship, landing ships, stores ships and tankers.

“The RFA currently has 13 ships in its inventory,” said Lamb. “The types of ships we sail range from replenishment tankers to solid support ships, landing ships, to primary casualty reception ships. The RFA has seven different classes of ships within the 13 vessels we sail.”

“The RFA is a civilian organization which is similar to MSC,” added Lamb. “We have 2,000 civilian mariners, which makes the RFA the largest employer of civilian seafarers in the United Kingdom just as MSC is the largest employer of U.S. civilian seafarers.”

“There is a huge similarity between the RFA and MSC,” according to Lamb. “The difference between the two organizations is their scale. MSC is substantially larger than the RFA.”



Commodore Duncan Lamb, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, boards Military Sealift Command's dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13), Sep. 28. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

“Both the RFA and MSC use civilian mariners, working alongside our armed forces, delivering operational output for the armed forces. Both are required to operate within civilian regulations delivering military output,” said Lamb. “The advantages to this setup are being able to leverage on value for money and on commercial operations and commercial style manning of the ships which is different than how combatant vessels are manned. We also use a more commercial approach to ships’ maintenance, repair and upkeep.”

RFA continued on page 8

## NEW MSC CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS PINNED

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Six U.S. Navy Sailors assigned to Military Sealift Command donned their new ‘anchors’ during pinning ceremonies globally, Sept. 16.

The world-wide ceremonies were held to mark the Sailors’ successful completion of CPO-365 Phase II and promotion to Chief Petty Officer.

“The MSC Enterprise was fortunate enough to have six Sailors selected for promotion to Chief Petty Officer for fiscal year 2017, said Military Sealift Command’s Command Master Chief John T. Lawry. Our new Chiefs are Chief Boatswain Mate Bertram Bonadie serving at Ship’s Support Unit Guam, Chief Logistics Specialist Mark Igmén serving at MSC Europe & Africa/Commander, Task Force 63 in Naples, Italy, Chief Yeoman Aaron Jackson serving at MSC Central/Commander, Task Force 53 in Bahrain, Chief Hospital Corpsman Kishaun Jeffers serving on USS Comfort (T-AH 20) home ported in Norfolk VA, Chief Information Systems Technician Warner Brooks and Chief Information Systems Technician Chantel Riggenbach serving at MSC Headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia.

A Chief Petty Officer is a non-commissioned officer in the United States Navy with a pay grade of E-7.



Fellow Chief Petty Officers place Chief Petty Officer Waran Brooks' combination cover on his head during the Chief Petty Officers' Pinning Ceremony on board Naval Station Norfolk, Sept. 16. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

“Being a Chief is certainly more than a promotion to a better pay grade,” according to Lawry. “Being a Chief is to have earned the title of one who carries the responsibility of being the guardian of 241 years of Navy History and 123 years of the tradition and heritage of the ‘Season of Pride.’ The Chiefs Mess is a fraternity of men and women who have dedicated their careers to being something bigger than themselves, about promoting their Sailors accomplishments over their own and about sacrificing for the betterment of a team.”

Prior to being ‘pinned’ as the Navy’s newest CPOs, the new Chiefs completed CPO 365 Phase II.

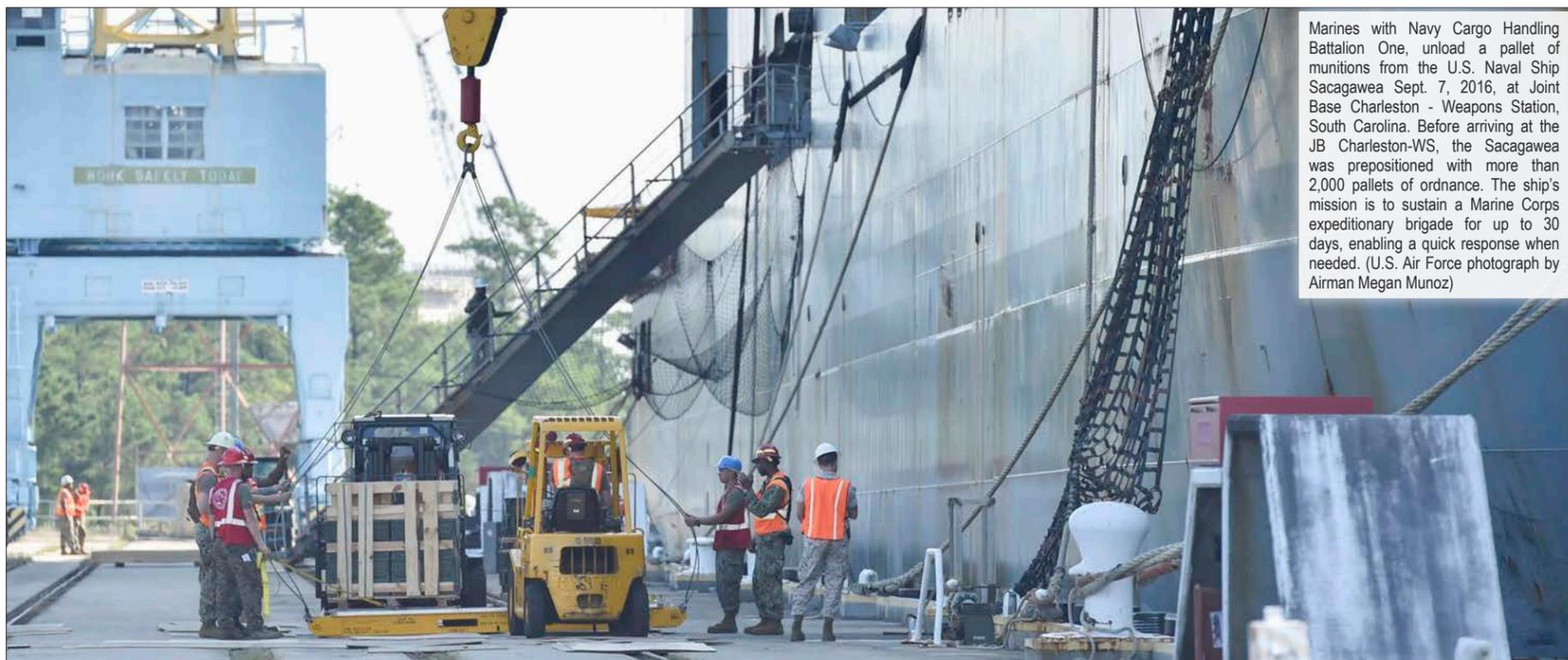
“CPO 365 is a training plan designed to better prepare our First Class Petty Officers for advancement to Chief year round or 365 days a year,” said Lawry. The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy provides the Chief’s Mess with training guidelines with specific areas of training that are executed differently at every command throughout the Navy.”

“Our Phase II candidates did an outstanding job of representing our entire team across the globe and I am very proud of their efforts,” added Lawry. “They will most certainly be excellent additions to their respective Chiefs Mess.”



Chief Petty Officer Chantel Riggenbach, of Military Sealift Command, is 'piped aboard' during the Chief Petty Officers' Pinning Ceremony on board Naval Station Norfolk, Sept. 16. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

# MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND UNLOADS CARGO FROM USNS SACAGAWEA



Marines with Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One, unload a pallet of munitions from the U.S. Naval Ship Sacagawea Sept. 7, 2016, at Joint Base Charleston - Weapons Station, South Carolina. Before arriving at the JB Charleston-WS, the Sacagawea was prepositioned with more than 2,000 pallets of ordnance. The ship's mission is to sustain a Marine Corps expeditionary brigade for up to 30 days, enabling a quick response when needed. (U.S. Air Force photograph by Airman Megan Munoz)

By Airman Megan Munoz, Joint Base Charleston Public Affairs Office

Multiple units offloaded more than 2,000 pallets of ordnance from the ship and transferred them to a storage facility on the Joint Base Charleston-WS, Sept. 7.

“There are a lot of entities at play,” said Navy Lt. David Alverson, the Navy Munitions Command Atlantic Unit Charleston executive officer. “Military Sealift Command supplied the ship itself. MSC is responsible for getting the ammo off the ship and onto the pier with their embarked cargo handling battalion. After it’s on the pier, Naval Munitions Command loaded the ordnance onto trucks taking it to the storage facility, called a magazine.”

Before arriving at the JB Charleston-WS, the Sacagawea was prepositioned with cargo to sustain a Marine Corps expeditionary brigade for up to 30 days. A detachment from Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, oversaw the offload and collected data to plan future operations.

“My detachment’s role in this operation is largely in a quality assurance capacity,” said Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ronnie Henry, Detachment Charleston Marine Core liaison officer. “We’re also facilitators, or coordinators, for the organizations supporting this operation. We are making sure all the ammunition being offloaded is safely stored so we can begin working a load plan for the back load planned for next year.”

After being offloaded from the ship, each pallet was processed before being stored in a magazine. The pallets were inspected and categorized as reusable or able to be refurbished. The munitions were then palletized to be maintained in Charleston’s inventory or sent to another base.

The cargo being maintained at another location will be reloaded onto the Sacagawea. According to Tom D’Agostino, Military Sealift Command Atlantic Representative-Charleston director of ship operations, cargo operations are scheduled to end by Sept. 16, 2016. Afterwards, the ship departs to Jacksonville, Florida for the final discharge of general cargo and maintenance.

“It is vital we all work together to ensure a successful offloading of dangerous cargo,” said Navy Lt. Charles Gatewood, 628th Logistics Readiness Squadron waterfront operations officer. “Our goal is to accomplish the mission. In this case, the mission is to bring in the Military Sealift Command ship, moor it safely and then download the ammunition and cargo so the ship can receive critical maintenance.”



Marines with Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One, unload a pallet of munitions from the U.S. Naval Ship Sacagawea Sept. 7, 2016, at Joint Base Charleston - Weapons Station, South Carolina. Before arriving at the JB Charleston-WS, the Sacagawea was prepositioned with more than 2,000 pallets of ordnance. The ship's mission is to sustain a Marine Corps expeditionary brigade for up to 30 days, enabling a quick response when needed. (U.S. Air Force photograph by Airman Megan Munoz)

## PANAMANIAN NAVAL OFFICER LEADS MULTINATIONAL FORCE ABOARD FLAGSHIP, USNS SPEARHEAD

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command & U.S. Fourth Fleet

With over 33 years of experience in naval operations, Panama Navy Capt. Jose Jesus Rodriguez took command of Combined Task Force 401 during exercise UNITAS 2016.

UNITAS is a multinational maritime exercise. Already in its 57th year, the goal of the exercise is to increase interoperability among participating navies and public security forces.

With the USNS Spearhead, operated by Military Sealift Command, as his flagship, Rodriguez’s staff is composed of military personnel from U.S. Navy Destroyer Squadron 40, additional U.S. military personnel from across the Department of Defense brought together into an adaptive force package, and military members from the 11 multinational countries participating in UNITAS.

Rodriguez, from Panama City, Panama, began his military career when he was accepted to a military high school 34 years ago. Since then, he’s seen the Panamanian navy grow from a small force with some personnel but with no actual ships to sail, to a modern fleet protecting Panama’s coastlines.

As a naval officer, he’s served in a wide and diverse range of positions, and is now the Panama chief of naval group, the U.S. equivalent of a fleet commander.

“UNITAS is important to Panama because of the regular presence of drug traffickers, contraband, and human trafficking – this exercise improves our sailor’s professionalism and improves their ability to counter these threats,” Rodriguez said.

# EMBRACING, ENABLING AND ENRICHING; CELEBRATING HISPANIC SERVICE



Vanessa Torres, the Norfolk, Virginia Federal Bureau of Investigation, addresses civilian teammates and service members assigned to Military Sealift Command during a special observance honoring Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 9. (U.S. Navy photograph by Brian Suriani)

**By Bill Mesta and Brian Suriani, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs**

Military Sealift Command civilian support staff and service members gathered for a celebration in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month on board Naval Station Norfolk, Sept. 9.

The event, hosted by MSC’s Special Emphasis Program, was held to honor the dedication and sacrifices of the Navy’s Hispanic service members and civilian teammates.

Preston Tafiti, of MSC’s Human Resources Office, read the Presidential Proclamation for Hispanic Heritage Month.

“America’s Hispanic community has woven unique threads into the diverse fabric of our country and played an important role in shaping our national character as a people of limitless possibility,” the proclamation reads. “This month, let us honor their distinct heritage while reaffirming our commitment to enabling them to build a future bright with hope and opportunity for themselves, their families, and the country we love. Hispanics contribute to our Nation’s success in extraordinary ways; they serve in the military and government, attend schools across America, and strengthen the economy.”

Vanessa Torres, the community outreach specialist for Norfolk, Virginia’s Federal Bureau of Investigations office, was the keynote speaker for the special observance.

Torres was born in Panama and moved to the United States as the depended of a service member when she was a child. Upon moving to America, Torres faced many challenges.

“On my first day of school as a first grader, I had a note pinned to my shirt which read ‘does not speak English,’” said Torres. “I remember everyone looking at me like I had two heads because the students were thinking ‘why would she not speak English?’”

“Some of the kids asked ‘what are you?’ because at the time there were not many Hispanics in America,” said Torres. “My skin was tan, I was kind of little and I didn’t speak the language. So this was my first experience with diversity and inclusion.”

“My teacher at school provided my first experience with someone embracing my cultural differences,” said Torres. “Even though I didn’t speak the

language very well and had trouble with certain words, she would ask me to come up to the front of the class and read to the students in Spanish. My classmates thought this was the greatest thing ever.”

The theme for this year’s special observance is ‘Embracing, Enabling and Enriching America.’

“When one embraces their children or loved ones, which is usually who we typically embrace, our loved ones, we often tear down barriers we encounter in our lives,” according to Torres. “Sometimes our children and loved ones are mad at us. An embrace during these times can show just how powerful an embrace can be during a very stressful situation.”

“In the workplace, we often forget how powerful our words are and how much these words can effect someone when we don’t embrace their differences, when we don’t make them feel included or as part of the team” said Torres.

The nation’s Hispanic Heritage Month runs from Sept. 15- Oct. 15.

“When I think of the word enabling I think of the word empowering,” said Torres. “You are making someone able to perform their job. Whether it is by providing training opportunities, equal access to critical systems or reasonable accommodations, you are enabling someone to do the work they need to do.”

“When we enable someone to be their very best that they can be, we are removing the bond and allowing them to be free to do the best job they can do,” said Torres. “Ultimately, this will make our teams and organizations more successful.”

Torres became a naturalized citizen after her mother earned her citizenship while their family was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. “When we enrich each other’s lives, we are adding value to each other’s lives,” said Torres. “We are allowing people to be themselves. We are allowing people to be unique.”

“Can you imagine opening up a box of crayons and all of the crayons being the same color?” asked Torres. “How boring would that picture be? Think about Americans the same way and how unique we are and how much value we each add to the entire picture.”

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COMFEX, continued reading from page 4

“Strong leadership and constant communication between the pier-side reduced operating status (ROS) crew and the core full operating status (FOS) activation crew are key to successfully activating the ship on short notice,” said Arp.

“The COMFEX is the foundation of how we maintain our readiness but the flow of communication between the exercises is key to our success,” said Arp. “The ROS and FOS leadership meet once a week between the quarterly COMFEXs and collaborated about the direction the ship is going. This keeps all the key players tuned in and ready to deploy.” This COMFEX included a shipboard firefighting drill, ship-to-ship patient recovery and two mass casualty drills.

“The Sailors worked directly with the CIVMARs during the COMFEX and performed a wide variety of training evolutions together,” said Hospital Corpsman Second Class Quinishia Reed, USNS Comfort’s command executive assistant and a year-plus crew member aboard the ship. “The crew runs ‘real world’ scenarios-based drills to ensure the crew is ready, but which we hope does not actually happen. We train to make sure we are ready for these situations should they actually occur.”

Comfort will conduct quarterly COMFEXs leading up to Bold Alligator 2017. Comfort’s anticipated mission during exercise Bold Alligator 2017 will be to establish an afloat patient movement system and to coordinate patient movement from point of injury to higher roles of care.



U.S. Navy Sailors attached to Military Sealift Command’s hospital ship, USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) prepare to move a simulated battle casualty onto a gurney. The Sailors took part in a mass casualty drill as part of the ship’s week-long Comfort Exercise (COMFEX). (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

RFA, continued reading from page 5

Commodore Lamb’s visit to MSC included touring the MSC Underway Replenishment School at Joint Base Little Creek-Fort Story, the dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) and meetings with various MSC leaders.

“There are a whole host of advantages of sailing with the RFA as opposed to serving with a merchant naval company,” said Lamb. “The RFA offers its civilian mariners a very exciting halfway house between the military and civilian world.”

Lamb added, “The RFA places a high value on port visits and we offer a far more exciting, different, unpredictable operating environment to work in than say an Atlantic or Pacific trade route. The RFA also has better employment terms and conditions than merchant naval companies. Additionally, we don’t place the service obligations that a member of the armed forces has to undertake.”

Both MSC and RFA participate in the Officer Exchange Program which provides an opportunity for officers from each institution to be embedded with each other’s organization for an extended period of time.

“We have an officer exchange program because of the similarities between

the two organizations,” said Lamb. “The U.K. and the U.S. are the only countries who conduct this in the style of naval logistics support. All of the other NATO and allied Navies use their front line, combatant naval officers as opposed to civilian mariners, who would to conduct the logistics support and manning the auxiliary vessels.”

“By having the exchange officers, it means we have an immediate checks and balances of how each organization does business,” said Lamb. “We gain a great deal of value out of having a U.S. officer on my staff and Rear Adm. Mewbourne our officer on his staff at MSC.”

“From a U.K. perspective, the people who come to serve at MSC have their careers’ enriched,” said Lamb. “Not only are they working with MSC, but they are working in the U.S. which is great for professional development. The RFA officers, who serve with MSC, leave here with a solid understanding of how we both do business and tend to go on to excel professionally.”

Commodore Lamb was appointed the head of the RFA in 2015

“I have learned a number of things over the course of this visit which I will take back to the U.K. with me,” concluded Lamb. “Additionally, I was able to offer a number of things to offer MSC. Even after the visit, our two organizations will maintain very close ties and contact into the future.”

# ANYDAY

## FORTY-PLUS YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE FOR MSC

Chief Mate Richard Hensel was honored in a ceremony held aboard the fast combat support ship USNS Supply (T-AOE 6), Sept. 22.

The ceremony was held to recognize Hensel’s 40-plus years of service as a Civil Service Mariner for Military Sealift Command.

“MSC has changed a lot since I started,” said Hensel. “When I joined there were very few amenities. We didn’t have televisions so the crew would meet on the mess decks and watch movies. We also had open-bay bathrooms and berthing which made things interesting.”

“The underway periods were also consistently longer when I started,” added Hensel. “It was not uncommon to deploy for five months or more without any liberty ports.”

“The quality of life aboard our ships has gotten a lot better since I joined,” concluded Hensel. “Being a mariner has been a pretty cool job.”

Hensel started his career in 1975 as a Seaman aboard USS Tarawa. Additionally Henson has served aboard the North Star III, Taluga, Novasota, Passumpsic, Kawishiwi, Higgins, Spica, Observation Island, Pecos, Zeus, Effective, Narragansett, Rappahannock, Sioux, Niagara Falls, Guadalupe, Ericsson, Grasp, Ponce and Supply.

(U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)



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