



SEALIFT

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

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NEW COMMANDER TAKES THE HELM AT MSC



Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne addresses the audience at Military Sealift Command's change of command ceremony aboard USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3), Aug. 25. Mewbourne relieved Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon as Commander, Military Sealift Command. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne relieved Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon as Commander, Military Sealift Command, during a change of command ceremony aboard USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3), Aug. 25.

Shannon, a native of Calais, Maine, assumed command of MSC May 10, 2013, and ensured ready logistics support for carrier strike groups, expeditionary strike groups and ground force commanders operating forward every day.

While under Shannon's command, MSC ships delivered services, supplies and equipment to all branches of the U.S. military and their combatant commanders around the world.

During his tenure, Shannon expanded the Expeditionary Fast Transport (T-EPF) class from two ships in the delivery and initial operations stage to seven ships with four of them forward deployed. His foresight and leadership expanded the platform mission from a fast-transport cargo ship to a multi-mission Theater Security Cooperation and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance platform conducting national-level strategic missions around the world. Additionally, he oversaw the introduction of our Navy's first Expeditionary Sea Base (T-ESB) and Expeditionary Transfer Dock (T-ESD) platforms into the maritime seabasing concept.

"Serving as the commander of MSC and working with our team of Mariners, Sailors and shore-based civil servants has truly been an honor," said Shannon. "I look forward to seeing our talented team of professionals continue to do our nation's important work providing sealift and maritime transportation."

A graduate of the United States Naval Academy and native of Ormond Beach, Florida, Mewbourne assumed command of MSC following his latest tour of duty as the director of maritime operations, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, in Norfolk, Virginia.

Mewbourne's previous command tours include: Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 139 embarked in USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), USS Nashville (LPD 13), USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), USS Enterprise (CVN 65), USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), Naval Service Training Command, and Carrier Strike Groups Three and Eleven.

Mewbourne's completed sea assignments include flying the A-6E Intruder aircraft in Attack Squadron (VA) 34 embarked in USS America (CV 66); VA-75 embarked in USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67); Carrier Air Wing (CVW) Three embarked in Eisenhower; and as the executive officer of VA-196 embarked in USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). After transitioning to the EA-6B Prowler aircraft, he served as the executive officer of VAQ-139 embarked in Lincoln. He also served as the executive officer in USS George Washington (CVN 73).



Rear Adm. T. K. Shannon is 'Piped Over the Side' following Military Sealift Command's change of command ceremony and Shannon's retirement ceremony aboard USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3), Aug. 25. Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne relieved Shannon as Commander, Military Sealift Command. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

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Q&A WITH REAR ADMIRAL DEE MEWBOURNE, COMMANDER, MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND



By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with the new commander of Military Sealift Command, Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne. Here are the highlights from our conversation:

There are thousands of Civil Service Mariners, active duty and reserve service members and civilian support staff serving under your command at Military Sealift Command. For those of us who have not had the pleasure of serving with you, what can you tell us about yourself?

-Mewbourne- Foremost, I am a humble public servant. My motivations, throughout the course of 34 years of active duty service career, are my love of people and the Navy. I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the MSC team!

According to your biography, your career includes an extensive aviation background. What drew you to the aviation community and what attributes from the aviation community can be applied to MSC?

-Mewbourne- Somewhere around the fifth grade, I aspired to join the Navy. My Dad was a big influence as he was a WWII Destroyerman. Also, my uncles served in WWII in various services. I truly believe my calling was to serve and there was something about the Navy that appealed to me. I was drawn to ships and the idea of sailing on the seas.

I was the first person in my family to go to college. My parents were both children of the Great Depression. Their desire was for me to go to college and have the ability to provide for my family in a manner that they wish they could have done.

So my parents encouraged me to pursue an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy.

While attending the Naval Academy, I saw a poster with the head-on view of an aircraft carrier. The caption on the poster read, 'Four and a Half Acres of Sovereign U.S. Territory.' When I saw this poster I thought to myself, 'I want to be the captain of that.'

I was told that to be the captain of an aircraft carrier, I would need to become an aviator.

When I joined the aviation community, I found that I loved it. I related with the aviation ethos, the mission and the people. I am very proud of my Naval Aviation heritage.

Mewbourne ultimately flew a variety of naval aircraft and commanded three aircraft carriers; USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69), USS Enterprise (CVN 65) and USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75).

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MSCO KOREA CHANGES LEADERSHIP

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East

Military Sealift Command's (MSC) operations hub on the Korean peninsula changed commanders, Aug. 19, during a ceremony aboard the large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Soderman (T-AKR 317) at Pier 8.

Navy Cmdr. Matthew L. Nicholas relieved Navy Cmdr. Eric J. St. Peter as commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Korea (MSCO-K), which is a sub-regional command under MSC Far East out of Singapore.

"Over two years ago, when I made my introductory speech, I stated that the day was not to be remembered for me taking command," said St. Peter. "As I reflect over the past 26 months, I realize that once again, today is not about me...because of my staff's efforts, Korea is poised from a strategic sealift perspective to 'Fight Tonight' should deterrence fail."

During the ceremony, Navy Capt. Stephen F. Fuller, commodore, MSC Far East, presented St. Peter with the Meritorious Service Medal recognizing his achievements over the past two years.

Additionally, Brig. Gen. Kook Yoon, commanding general, Republic of Korea (ROK) Transportation Command, presented St. Peter a Certificate of Appreciation recognizing his contributions to strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance through the execution of more than 34 operations and combined exercises in the Korean peninsula.

"(Cmdr. St. Peter) you've done a phenomenal job leading this remarkable command demonstrating MSC's commitment to strengthening the alliance between the ROK and the United States," said Fuller.

Nicholas, an EP3 pilot, takes command having served most recently as current operations fleet reconnaissance officer at Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

"Cmdr. St. Peter's dedication is evident throughout this vibrant organization and community," said Nicholas. "He is an exemplar of outstanding naval leadership and I consider it a privilege to continue his work and lead this committed team of professionals."

During the ceremony, Fuller applauded St. Peter's accomplishments during his 26-month tenure as MSCO-K's commander. Under St. Peter's watch, the command hosted more than 85 on-site distinguished visitor and flag visits, and hundreds of port calls, which enhanced the U.S.-ROK alliance, according to Fuller.

Other accomplishments include planning and execution of more than 34 major operations and exercises; the installation of shore power at two berths at Pier 8, here, which saves MSC more than \$12,500 per day in operating costs; and the advocacy and collaboration with host nation officials for a multi-million-dollar dredging project at Chinhae ammunition pier.

In addition, St. Peter developed a deep relationship with the local Busan community mainly due to his involvement and partnership with the Meiwon Orphanage here.

Hwi Soo Han, social welfare chief director, Meiwon Orphanage, was at the ceremony to present St. Peter with a Plaque of Appreciation on behalf of the Meiwon Orphanage.

"You have always cuddled our children with loving smiles and a caring mind," said Han, through an interpreter. "As a loyal guardian angel of Meiwon, you have nurtured their dreams and hopes for the future."

MSCO-K's mission is to help defend the ROK by delivering fuel, ammunition and supplies to U.S. Navy, and partnered and allied vessels.

On any given day, MSCO-K has between three to ten MSC ships anchored or berthed at piers throughout the Korean peninsula, with about 14 ships a year performing repairs and maintenance in the ROK. Additionally, every year MSC loads approximately seven million barrels of fuel from ROK to deliver to various locations throughout the Pacific.



Navy Cmdr. Matthew L. Nicholas (left) relieves Navy Cmdr. Eric J. St. Peter as commanding officer of Military Sealift Command Office Korea, during a Change of Command ceremony aboard the large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Soderman (T-AKR 317) at Pier 8, here, Aug. 19. (U.S. Navy photograph by Grady T. Fontana)

RECORDER FROM CARGO SHIP EL FARO RECOVERED



By National Transportation Safety Board Office of Public Affairs

The voyage data recorder from El Faro, a U.S. flagged cargo ship that sank during Hurricane Joaquin in October 2015, was successfully recovered from the ocean floor, Aug. 12.

The recovery of the capsule caps a 10-month-long effort to retrieve the recorder, which was designed to record navigational data and communications between crewmembers on the ship's bridge. Investigators hope the recorder will reveal information about the final hours of El Faro's voyage and the circumstances leading up to the sinking.

"The recovery of the recorder has the potential to give our investigators greater insight into the incredible challenges that the El Faro crew faced,"

MV OCEAN GLORY RESCUES DISTRESSED FISHERMAN

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East

Military Sealift Command's (MSC) voyage-charter MV Ocean Glory rescued an Indonesian fisherman in the vicinity of the Straits of Bali while in route to Banyuwangi, Indonesia, Aug. 14.

"I stepped onto the bridge fully expecting to take a routine arrival a few hours later into the Port of Tanjungwangi, Indonesia," said Capt. Christopher Hill, merchant marine and master of the Ocean Glory. "Instead, the officer-of-the-watch reported a man standing atop an overturned, outrigger fishing boat."

The fisherman and the remains of his boat were caught in a strong current and were quickly being swept out of the Straits of Bali and into the open, unfrequented Indian Ocean. "Later, I would learn that the small boat had capsized the previous day in a squall and that the lone fisherman had been adrift in very rough seas for about 20 hours before Ocean Glory's arrival on scene," said Hill.

The Ocean Glory notified the Indonesian Coast Guard and while waiting on station for confirmation of Coast Guard assistance, the Ocean Glory attempted to pass a lifejacket via ship's heaving line to the distressed fisherman.

In the process of passing the heaving line and while waiting for local Coast Guard to arrive, it became apparent that the fisherman could not wait to be rescued, according to Hill.

"He lost his footing on the upside-down boat and took to the water holding only the bitter end of the ship's heaving line," said Hill. "The ship's pilot ladder was quickly rigged and all hands on deck worked together and with quick precision to drag the fisherman at the end of the heaving line alongside the ship's hull thence to the ladder."

Upon reaching the ladder, the man in the water let go of the heaving line and began to climb. After so many hours stranded at sea and as soon as he was dragged the last few steps up and onto the decks of the Ocean Glory he collapsed and was quickly taken to medical.

"While being treated for exhaustion and dehydration by ship's medical officer, he tearfully thanked everyone around him without knowing or needing a word of English and insisted, even in his weakened condition, on shaking everyone's hands... he was so thankful to be alive," said Hill.

An Indonesian ambulance and medical team came aboard as soon as the gangway was down in Tanjungwangi. The shoreside medical team transported the survivor to the hospital for further medical treatment.

said NTSB Chairman Christopher A. Hart, "but it's just one component of a very complex investigation. There is still a great deal of work to be done in order to understand how the many factors converged that led to the sinking and the tragic loss of 33 lives. I want to thank the dedicated professionals in the many organizations — especially the U.S. Navy, the Coast Guard, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, the National Science Foundation and the University of Rhode Island — who worked with NTSB investigators and support staff over three missions in 10 months to make this successful recovery possible," said Hart.

Military Sealift Command's fleet ocean tug USNS Apache departed Virginia Beach, Virginia, Friday with personnel from the NTSB, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Navy and Phoenix International aboard. After arriving at the accident location on Monday morning, technicians maneuvered CURV-21, a deep ocean remotely operated underwater vehicle, down about 15,000 feet to the sea floor where the wreckage of El Faro rests. Specialized tools were used to extricate the VDR capsule from the mast structure to which it was attached. The capsule was recovered to the deck of the ocean tug at about 10:30 p.m. Monday evening.

The voyage data recorder will be examined while at sea by NTSB investigators aboard the USNS Apache, to assess the condition of the device and to ensure proper preservation for readout and further examination ashore. The VDR will be transported to the NTSB's laboratory here after the Apache returns from sea on or about Aug. 12, 2016. Once at the NTSB's lab a team of specialists will audition the recording.

It is not yet known how long it may take to review the data and audio information that may be captured on El Faro's VDR. While the minimum design requirement for VDRs of this type is for 12 hours of recording, it may contain additional information -- the review of which is a thorough and time consuming undertaking. NTSB will provide updates as investigators learn more about the condition and contents of the El Faro's VDR.

While investigators examine the VDR, additional photo- and video-documentation of the El Faro wreckage and debris field will be completed today concluding NTSB's activities at the site. No further missions to the accident site are planned unless warranted as the investigation continues.

"But not before the ship's crew and on-board members of the U.S. Army passed the hat," said Hill. Through donations, they provided the unexpected shipmate with shoes, clothes and money to help speed his recovery and his return home.

The Ocean Glory, a commercial, multi-purpose, heavy-lift ship from Intermarine, had been sailing under a MSC charter for the previous few months in support of Pacific Pathways 16-2 (PP16-2).



MSC'S KOCAK CLASS FLEET; PROFESSIONALS AT SEA



Contract mariner Alvin U. Rhodes, attached to Military Sealift Command's, USNS SGT Matej Kocak (T-AK 3005), stows mooring line as the ship gets underway, Aug. 17. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's fleet of three Hampton Roads-based Kocak class container, roll-on/roll-off ships got underway to perform test and evaluation sea trials.

The USNS SGT Matej Kocak (T-AK 3005), USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon (T-AK 3006) and USNS MAJ Stephen W. Pless (T-3007) had their critical systems and processes evaluated by MSC inspectors as part of a contract mariner provider turn-over.

"The Kocak class ships, or T-AKs, got underway for their turnover sea trials," said Military Sealift Command Project Engineer Chris Macchia, one of the evolution inspectors.

"The three vessels will be transitioning to a new operating company on October 1, so the sea trials are an opportunity for the new operating company to get a feel for how the vessels operate, and learn their propulsion plant operation, and hopefully glean any quirks and unique features of the ships."

Kocak was underway from Aug. 17-19 while Obregon and Pless went to sea during the week of August 8.

"For 25 years the T-AKs were part of the maritime prepositioning program," said Capt. Darin Huggins who mastered the Kocak, Pless and Obregon during the sea trials. "One of the ships was stationed in the Mediterranean Sea, one in the Indian Ocean and one in the Far



Able Bodied Seaman Lloyd LaBeach and Bosun Sam Yazı engage the anchor windless break aboard Military Sealift Command's container, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS SGT. Matej Kocak (T-AK 3005), Aug 18. Kocak was underway to perform sea trials. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

East. The ships were fully loaded with military equipment and supplies."

"For the last couple of years, the T-AKs have been performing surge sealift operations and military exercises such as Pacific Pathways 2015, Pacific Pathways 2016 and Epic Guardian 2016," added Huggins. "Some of the ships' characteristics which made these vessels effective for these operations and exercises include their flight deck and troop carrying capabilities."

Pacific Pathways is a series of exercises designed to promote military interoperability in Southeast Asia. Epic guardian was a military exercise designed to promote to promote cooperation, understanding and interoperability between African partner nations and the United States.

Each of MSC's Kocak-class ship features the ability to transport military vehicles, cargo and fuel.

"These ships are container, roll-on/roll-off vessels/tanker," said Huggins. "We are able to transport cargo and fuel. We are also able to conduct underway replenishments. These ships are also able to perform self-sufficient loading and unloading container operations."

During the underway, MSC inspectors' observations included the propulsion plant, cargo and vehicle spaces, abandon ship capabilities, anchoring operations and a four-hour, high-speed run.

"We observed operation of most of the major systems of the vessel including operation of the steering gear, the bow thruster, anchors, and the propulsion plant to include a full power run to verify the vessel can reach contract speed," said Macchia. "We also inspected most of the auxiliary systems and equipment including fire pumps, distillers and generators."

"When the activation message was received, we stood up a 17-person 'tiger team' to augment the nine-person 'reduced operating status' crew," said Huggins. "The crew was fully manned on July 30 and immediately began to make sure the ships were prepared to get underway. We made sure the payroll program was implemented, ensured the crew was indoctrinated, brought the engineering plant on-line, brought the domestic refrigeration equipment on-line, prepared the navigation tables, conducted habitability inspections, and ensure medical supplies are on board."

"Then we completed the reduced operating status transition check-list," said Huggins. "We also through the daily situational report which included making sure the entire ship is secured for sea, operationally testing the cranes and the lifesaving equipment."

A ship placed in a ROS status is maintained by a minimal crew who is responsible to ensure the maintenance and upkeep of the vessel between missions.

"When these ships are in a reduced operating status we are usually maintaining readiness for either a war or a humanitarian crisis," said Huggins. "We make sure the ships are able to respond rapidly to either of these scenarios."

"Preparing these ships for sea trials required a tremendous amount of work," said Huggins. "We had seven days for the crew to complete the sea trials for each ship which included four preparation days prior to getting underway."

The Kocak-class of ships are owned by MSC and manned by contracted civilian mariners.

"The inspections were important because they gave MSC a first-hand look at how the vessels operate and help us better plan for upcoming maintenance and repair availabilities," added Macchia. "We rely on the operating companies to not only operate and maintain the vessels,

but to truly understand the operation. There is no substitute for seeing things with your own eyes and being on the deckplates with the OPCO to understand the problems or nuances or a certain system or piece of equipment."

"We activated these three ships for the sea trials very quickly and the performance of the crews and vessels has been flawless," said Huggins. "Each ship departed port on time. We have suffered no equipment or systems issues which is impressive for the Kocak as the ship was not operational for a year."

"Once we receive the ships' activation notices, each ship had four days to prepare for the underway, complete the sea trials and be back in port on shore power by day seven," said Huggins. "The success of these underways was due to not only the mariner's underway efforts but also the effective maintenance efforts of the ROS skeleton crews."

Each of MSC's T-AKs is manned by approximately 32 contracted civilian mariners.

"The mariners who crew these ships operate the vessels 24 hours a day underway," said Huggins. "We have mariners who ensure safe ship's navigation, operate the main engine for propulsion, provide electricity and lighting throughout the ship, water production, and food support services."

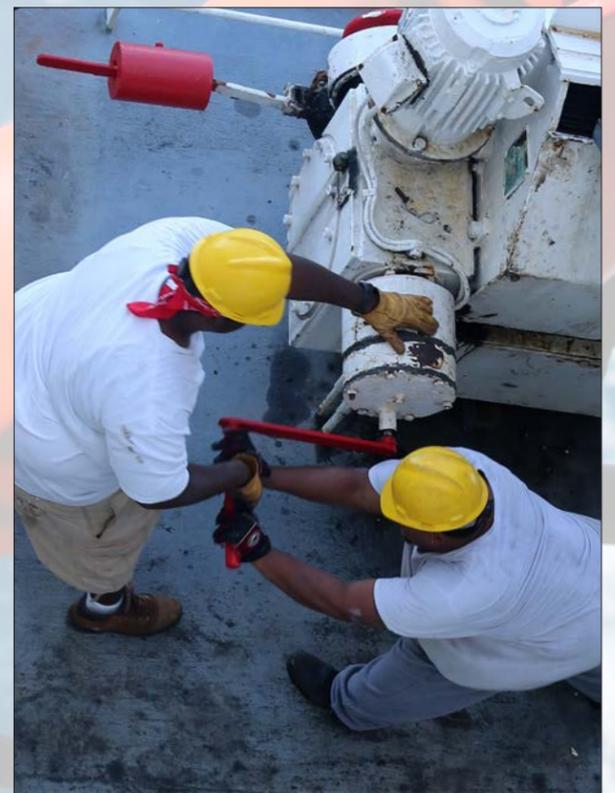
"Every member of these ships credentialed as a merchant mariner by the United States Coast Guard," added Huggins. "Therefore, they are all qualified for a variety of maritime skills such as basic firefighting and basic survival at sea."

People choose the difficult but rewarding career as a civilian mariner for many reasons.

"They like the opportunity to see the world and travel to interesting places," said Huggins. "The mariners also enjoy a flexible work schedule. Generally we work six months on with six months off. This career field also offers decent wages with good benefits."

The Kocak-class ships performed great during the inspections," concluded Macchia.

"All the vessels met their bar on their major system tests and inspections. The current operating company (Keystone) crew was highly professional, and the new operating company's (Crowley) representatives were engaged and eager to learn. And for us, we got to see the ships in action and get more familiar with the class before they transfer to the surge side of the house."



Two contract mariners aboard Military Sealift Command's container, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS SGT. Matej Kocak (T-AK 3005) raise a ship's lifeboat during a man-overboard drill, Aug 18. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

MSC'S ARCTIC RESUPPLY MISSION TO THULE AIR BASE

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's Arctic summer resupply mission to Thule Air Base, 'Pacer Goose 16' came to a successful conclusion, Aug 5.

Each year, MSC delivers critical supplies and fuel to the base ensuring continued operations. The ships also transport waste supplies and equipment from the base for proper disposal.

"Without the annual re-supply mission Thule AB would not be able to continue operation," said Rick Caldwell, a supervisory marine transportation specialist for Military Sealift Command and the on-site representative for the mission. "The base does have the ability to receive limited supplies by air but this form of support is very costly and more limiting in terms of the size of shipped cargo."

The population of the remote air base included approximately 160 active duty service members and approximately 400 civilian contractors.

"We take on this resupply each year at this time because the region warms up enough to melt the ice and allow ships to pull in," said Caldwell. "The only times to access Thule by sea is from the beginning of July through end of August. The rest of the year, the base is inaccessible by sea because it is 'iced in'."

The annual re-supply mission takes approximately 30 days each year to complete.

"Airlift in and out of Thule is severely limited," said Senior Airman Kurt Lantz, 821st Air Base Group executive officer. "Our extreme remote location, aircraft availability, and the supply versus demand considerations are all factors. For this reason Thule relies on both the fuel tanker and cargo vessel because of the sheer volume of cargo and stores they are capable of transporting."

The 440-foot ice-strengthened cargo ship MV SLNC Corsica delivered 3,025,024 pounds of bedding and supplies for Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and took away more than 534,000 pounds of damaged equipment no longer able to meet mission requirements.

"Corsica is a break-bulk heavy container lift capable of transporting up to 400 tons of supplies and equipment," said Caldwell.

The 591-foot ice-class tanker MT Maersk Peary off-loaded 6,858,222 gallons of JP-8 jet fuel over the course of three days.

"All of Thule's operating systems rely on this fuel, every degree of heat and every bit of electricity," said Lantz. "Even the vehicles run on the JP-8 unloaded."

The CCGS Pierre Radisson, a Canadian Coast Guard icebreaking cutter, cleared a path through the ice covered harbor, allowing the supplies to be delivered.

"It is really good to have an icebreaker on these missions," added Caldwell. "Even if the ice is already broken up before the ships arrive, the icebreaker is able to push icebergs out of the path of the other ships."



The Canadian Coast Guard icebreaking cutter, CCGS Pierre Radisson, pulls pier-side at Thule AB, July 15. (U.S. Navy photograph by Rick Caldwell)

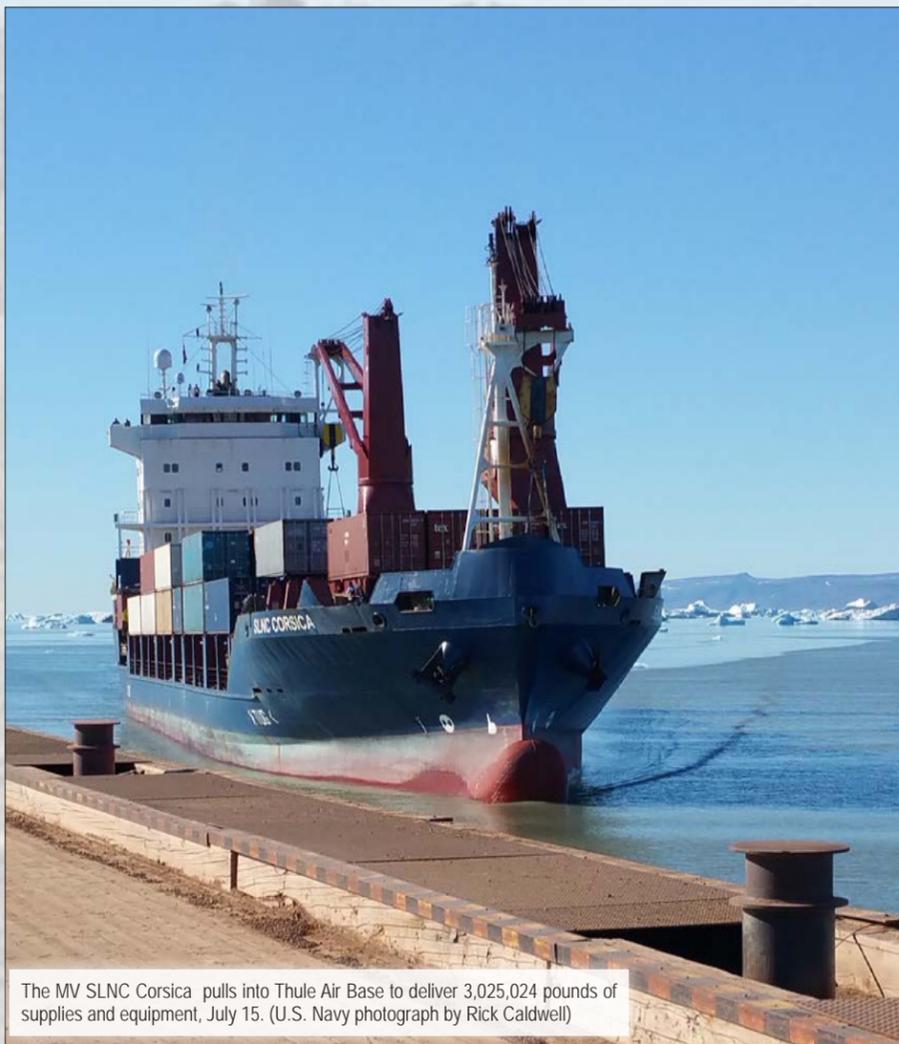
"The mission to Thule includes a variety of supplies including batteries, bulldozers, snowplows, rock crushers," said Caldwell. "We also supply containers of dry goods to re-stock the Base Exchange including chilled goods, frozen foods, and disposable items."

"We also transported lots of contract supplies such as cement," added Caldwell. "We delivered the cement as part of a rehabilitation project for the U.S. Air Force's 12th Space Warning Squadron."

The 12th SWS provides early warning detection of an enemy ballistic missile attack.

"The mariners and Canadian Coastguard who ran the re-supply mission performed great," concluded Caldwell. "It was really good to have two American-flagged ships moving these supplies to Thule."

Civilian contract mariners aboard ships like Corsica and Peary have provided key support in supplying this isolated location since 1952. Thule AB is located approximately 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle and approximately 750 miles from the North Pole.



The MV SLNC Corsica pulls into Thule Air Base to deliver 3,025,024 pounds of supplies and equipment, July 15. (U.S. Navy photograph by Rick Caldwell)



The MT Maersk Peary pulls into Thule Air Base to offload 6,858,222 gallons of JP-8 jet fuel, July 12. (U.S. Navy photograph by Rick Caldwell)

MSC EXERCISES EXPEDITIONARY TACTICS DURING UFG 16

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East

About 40 Military Sealift Command (MSC) reserve-component Sailors traveled to Korea and Singapore, and are participating in Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2016 (UFG 16), Aug. 24.

Exercise UFG 16 is scheduled from Aug. 17 – Sep. 2 and is an annual, combined command and control exercise designed to improve the Alliance's ability to defend the Republic of Korea (ROK), and sustain the capabilities that strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance. About 25,000 U.S. service members are participating, along with nine other nations: Australia, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, France, Italy, Philippines, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

The MSC Sailors were from MSC Far East (MSCFE) Detachment 101 out of St. Louis, Missouri; MSCFE Detachment 102 out of Kansas City, Missouri; Expeditionary Port Unit (EPU) 108 out of Atlanta; and EPU 115 out of Honolulu.

Despite the small exercise footprint of MSC Far East, the scope of the training was both diverse and complex, managing hundreds of simulated U.S. government and commercially contracted dry cargo ships and fuel tankers to and from the Korean area of operations. MSC scenarios included adverse weather, unscheduled maintenance, fueling of vessels, bunkering and working with host nation port authorities.

At the MSCFE headquarters in Singapore, MSCFE Detachment 101 augmented permanent command staff in manning an around-the-clock command and control center, working with counterparts from the staff of Commander, Task Force 73. During UFG, they monitored and directed all simulated MSC shipping traffic throughout the western Pacific.

In Pier 8 here, eight Sailors from MSCFE Detachment 102 augmented permanent MSC Office (MSCO) Korea staff. They manned a 24/7 crisis action team, and the Combined Seaport Command Center, a centralized command and control center that can manage cargo ships at ports throughout South Korea. Here, MSCFE Sailors worked closely with the Army's Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), and ROK army and navy personnel.

Also on Pier 8, EPU 115, a highly mobile unit that can deploy quickly and establish port operations even under the most adverse conditions, operated a Mobile Sealift Operations Center (MSOC), which is a full communications suite outfitted inside a standard shipping container. EPU 108 manned a second MSOC at the ROK Naval Base ammunition pier at Chinhae.

During a real-world operation, a foreign port could be overwhelmed by ships and cargo movement. EPUs serve as the military liaison for the local port authority.

"We're the connector between MSCO Korea, ship's crew, husbanding agent, stevedores, Army SDDC, Navy cargo handling battalion, port authorities, ROK port operations group, and anybody else," said Navy Cmdr. Rich Maloney, commanding officer, EPU 115, and reserve-component Sailor.

Despite yearly participation, this exercise provides a continuous challenge for the MSC reserve units. Every year, the majority of reserve unit members are fresh to the Korean peninsula and to UFG. Some members have to travel far and infrequent to U.S. drill sites prior to ramping up for the exercise.

"I have 12 reserve Sailors with me and they're from various reserve centers: Hawaii; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Denver; Los Angeles; Boston; Norfolk, Virginia; Washington D.C.; and Chicago," said Maloney. "In the reserves we have a lot of Sailors who are cross assigned. That's because we can't necessarily fill our units with local drilling individuals who have



Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Dylan Simons (left) and Yeoman 2nd Class Sir Joseph Moses, both with Reserve Unit Expeditionary Port Unit 115, out of Honolulu, examine a satellite dish at Pier 8, Aug. 24. (U.S. Navy photograph by Grady T. Fontana/Released)

the skills we need."

As a result, the EPU ended up with Sailors who are distributed and the CO had the responsibility to get them trained and ready in as few as three to four drills in a year.

"When they show up, they're well prepared and ready to go from day one," said Maloney, while acknowledging their inexperience. "Only four of the 12 have been to Korea before. For seven of the 12, this is their first annual training (AT) with MSC. For the other five it's been one or two ATs. We're constantly training the next wave of folks, it's an ongoing process."

While the MSCFE Detachments were standing watch at the various locations during one of the largest computer-simulated exercise, they're also providing valuable training to the EPU units. In between the watch, they were injecting master scenario events list (MSEL) objectives at the EPUs.

"We work closely with the EPU COs to assess unit experience-level and work with the (officers-in-charge) to determine how we want to test them and how we want to grade them," said Navy Cmdr. Brad Newcomer, MSCFE Detachment 102, operations officer, and reserve-component Sailor.

The EPUs are tested based on a wide range of potential scenarios. "It could be anything from delayed sailing, an equipment causality on a ship, a personnel casualty, a security threat like a bomb threat, or a terrorist attack. We evaluate how they respond," said Newcomer. "We do an after-action-report after each MSEL to see what did we learn, what do we want to do different."

The EPU CO's goal is that every member up and down the chain of command is able to act quickly and properly, should a situation arise and those members are the senior person in the MSOC at that time.

"These guys have been training hard; we have a lot of new people but they're doing well, and between the mix of people that have done this a couple of times, we have the right skills and we have the right people," said Maloney. "All our preparation at home is paying off."

Exercise UFG 16 is a United Nations Command, U.S. Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces Korea annual joint/combined command post exercise. The exercise highlights the longstanding and enduring partnership and friendship between the two nations and their combined commitment to the defense of the ROK and ensuring peace and security in the region.

USNS RICHARD E. BYRD, USS PIONEER CONDUCT ASTERN REPLENISHMENT AT SEA

By Petty Officer 1st Class Micah Blechner, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

The Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE-4) and Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Pioneer (MCM 9) conducted replenishment at sea in waters south of Japan, Aug. 24.

"While replenishments at sea are routine, astern refueling is unique and requires precise navigation and coordination," said Lt. Cmdr. Jason Iletto, fleet replenishment scheduler for Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific. "Pioneer and other minesweeping vessels have fueling stations on their bows and require astern refueling."

Ships fueled at sea during normal replenishment evolutions connect to each other alongside. Astern refueling is the earliest type of replenishment operation used by the U.S. Navy. The receiving ship follows directly behind the supplying ship. This evolution is more limited, as only one transfer rig can be set up.

The astern refueling of Pioneer reflects the flexibility of Military Sealift Command ships and crews to deliver innovative expeditionary logistics support to the fleet. Richard E. Byrd and Pioneer are currently operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

The U.S. 7th Fleet conducts forward-deployed naval operations in support of U.S. national interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific area of operations. As the U.S. Navy's largest numbered fleet, 7th Fleet interacts with 35 other maritime nations to build maritime partnerships that foster maritime security, promote stability and prevent conflict.



FATHER, SON SHARE MARINER LIFE ABOARD USNS WALTER S. DIEHL



Civilian mariners Shane (left) and Ron McCann, father and son, are both assigned to fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl (T-AO 193). Shane is a boatswain mate and Ron, a native of Charleston, S.C., is the supply officer. Shane has been with MSC for 15 years, while Ron, a retired Navy veteran and 25-year MSC veteran, has served more than 41 years in federal service. (U.S. Navy photograph by Grady T. Fontana)

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East

Aboard fleet replenishment oiler USNS Walter S. Diehl (T-AO 193), a father and son share the joys and heartaches of life as a civilian mariner.

Mariners are all too familiar with the anguish of family separations—missed events and milestones. Life at sea will guarantee family events must sometimes be appreciated while underway or at foreign ports.

Ron McCann is the supply officer for the Walter S. Diehl, and a veteran of Military Sealift Command (MSC) for the past 25 years. If you account the six years in the Army and 15 in the Navy, the 70-year-old mariner has had more than 41 years of federal service.

He is a native of Charleston, South Carolina, and has a wife who still lives there, and two adult children. “I deeply miss my family,” said Ron. “I haven’t seen my grandson in four or five years.”

Although Ron grinningly proclaims he will “probably” do another 10 years at MSC, he is not without family on the Diehl. He is serving with Shane McCann, a boatswain mate aboard the same ship, and his son.

In 1991, Ron retired from the Navy and began his MSC career. In 2001, a then 21-year-old Shane joined his father and started sailing. Fifteen years later, Shane is still with MSC and has sailed on four ships with Ron.

“I decided to give it a chance, to go and see the world and make some money,” said Shane, who is also a father of an 11-year-old son in Guam. “Nothing was happening at home, so I decided to give it a try. It’s a good job, and I’ve learned a lot of trades...and met a lot of good people—and dad, of course.”

Shane says that the toughest part of the job is the family separation, “the longest I’ve been away from Guam is about nine months,” said Shane. But a potential upcoming trip to Guam was enough to lift his spirits.

The pair enjoys their time on the Diehl and admits the best thing about being on this ship is the camaraderie. “We have a really good crew here. We’re really tight and everyone gets along...almost everyone is mature,” Ron said with a chuckle.

Shane wanted to see the world and declares at least 15 more years with MSC. Though, he knows the reality of the ups and down of being a mariner. “The best trip...Central America: Guatemala, Panama, it was a good time,” said Shane. “But, I also have a son, so the hardest part is being away from home.”

For now, Ron and Shane enjoy their time together on the Diehl, and the years of experience that Ron has gained are passed on to Shane.

“The goal is to be a mate,” said Ron about his advice to Shane. “The end product is not what he’s doing now, but what he will do in the future.”

The USNS Walter S. Diehl is currently in Singapore after recently completing a Regular Overhaul period.

MSC operates approximately 115 non-combatant, civilian-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships, conduct specialized missions, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world.

MSC RESERVISTS EMBRACE NEW MISSION

By LS3 Daniel Richards, Afloat Mission Control-East

In addition to more traditional roles like fleet logistics and strategic sealift, the ships of the U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command (MSC) are increasingly supporting naval missions such as theater security cooperation and maritime security operations. Because these vessels are operated by civil service mariners (CIVMARs), they sometimes require military detachments to work alongside CIVMARs to coordinate complex naval missions and interact with the embarked Adaptive Force Packages (AFP). These AFPs consist of smaller elements of joint servicemembers and equipment which, when embarked on MSC ships; give them the capability to complete operations typically seen aboard warships. Here are the latest highlights on this new and exciting Reserve unit supporting MSC.

Newest Reserve Unit Supporting MSC

Afloat Mission Control-East (AMC-East) is a new Navy Reserve unit that stood up in December 2014 to deploy command and control detachments world-wide aboard MSC ships. Based out of NOSC Richmond, Sailors assigned to AMC-East are provided with the opportunity to get underway quite often which many Reservists are unable to do. AMC-East is the only unit of its kind in the entire Navy and the Sailors have embarked on some of the Navy’s newest ships, including MSC’s Expeditionary Fast Transports.

AMC-East Sailors have embarked on a variety of ships to support theater security exercises including Freedom Banner, Balikatan, Pacific Pathways, and Rim of the Pacific..

Operation Freedom Banner

Operation Freedom Banner, AMC-East’s first overseas mission, is a biennial, multilateral exercise conducted by the U.S. and Republic of Korea’s naval and marine forces. Sailors from AMC-East were embarked

aboard the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2), assigned to Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron 3 (MPSRON-3). Sailors supported the MPSRON staff and received training from the ship’s crew on manning, crash and salvage, anchoring, and flight quarters evolutions. A navy cargo handling battalion was also onboard and trained many AMC-East Sailors on various cargos handling equipment. The mission proved that AMC-East Sailors can be included seamlessly to support an afloat staff while providing a wide variety of training opportunities.

Logistics Specialist Third Class Elena Medina was one of the AMC-East Sailors supporting exercise Freedom Banner, “The opportunity to travel to Korea and work as an LS and also to work outside my rate was extremely enriching. Our unit’s mission creates a platform to launch junior Sailors to become more diverse assets for MSC.”

Reservist, continued on page 8



Logistics Specialist 3rd Class Elena Medina, reserve-component Sailor from New York City, operates a shipboard crane for training on board dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2), March 7. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Third Class Madallein Abbott)



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Exercise Balikatan

AMC-East also embarked a team aboard USNS Sacagawea again during Balikatan '16, an exercise designed to strengthen the relationship between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines' Armed Forces.

"During Balikatan, we supported the embark of 70 multinational Special Operations Forces including Marine Raiders, Navy SEALs, Australian Commandos, and Filipino operators," said Capt. Chris Rawley, commanding officer, AMC-East. "The exercise allowed us to demonstrate the versatility that a reserve detachment of cross-trained individuals can provide to an MSC ships operating in a non-traditional role, in this case as an afloat forward staging base for SOF. During Balikatan, our detachment stood watches and augmented the MPSRON-3 staff and civil service mariners in a variety of tasks while the ship operated in the South China Sea."

Operations Specialist Seaman Cameron Bennet remarked that "My experience on USNS Sacagawea was like no other I have ever had. It was a great opportunity to work alongside civil service mariners, Marines, and our foreign counterparts. It was definitely an opportunity that I will never forget and I cannot wait to support other missions in the future."

Mother's day weekend 2016 witnessed the annual Blessing of the Fleet in Brunswick, Georgia This Portuguese tradition, which started in 1938, originally began to bless Brunswick's shrimp boats at the beginning of the shrimp season. This year was a little more special; the newly delivered expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6) was present as were embarked AMC-East Sailors and a Marine security detachment from Naval Weapons Station Yorktown. Bearing the name of the town and being a new and unique ship was cause for a lot of attention and fanfare. USNS Brunswick is the fourth ship to bear the name of the city that in World War II was able to produce 99 liberty ships to considerably assist in the war effort.

During the transit to and from Norfolk, Virginia and the Brunswick port visit, AMC-East Sailors were able to gain extensive knowledge of the ship and assisted the ship's crew in various shipboard operations. Most of the activity and cross training occurred during the docking and undocking of the ship where Sailors of every rate, many of whom had never been underway, were involved in line handling and other activities. While in port, Sailors supported distinguished visitor receptions and gave ship tours to almost 3,000 visitors.

AMC-East stands alone for now, but there is the potential to expand this afloat capability to other reserve units assigned to MSC in the future. ■

Q&A, continued reading form page 2

A successful aviation team includes people who maintain, repair, prepare, fly and guide the aircraft through its mission. The aviation community taught me that successful mission accomplishment is all about being part of a team. Success is only achieved through a team effort which requires every single person doing their part.

We are a big team here at MSC. No one person can do it all.

At the end of the day, we all have a mission to accomplish. In our case, 'MSC Delivers.' We deliver capability to the warfighter all over the world, 24/7, 365 days a year. Regardless of conditions, we get our mission done.

Successful professionals, such as yourself, tend to have mentors and supporters who provide guidance and advice throughout their careers. Can you tell us about those who have mentored and supported you and how they have assisted in your success?

-Mewbourne- I credit any success I have enjoyed to my family and their love and support. They keep me grounded and remind me every day of the things which are really important in life.

We should all recognize the importance of our families and friends in our own professional lives.

I have enjoyed the advice and guidance of many mentors in the workplace including officers, enlisted service members and civilians. These professionals continue to teach me many great life lessons.

I listen intently for words of wisdom every single day as one is never too old to be mentored. As I interact with the teammates of MSC, you are mentoring me, and I remain open and receptive to anyone's thoughts on improvement.

MSC's teammates come from all walks of life to form an effective collection of skillsets, characteristics and mid-sets. Along these lines, what do you consider are your best attributes and how will these traits assist you in your role as the MSC commander?

-Mewbourne- When one has spent time in command, you experience some 'hard knocks.' You will have enjoyed good days but there will have been days which were wrought with challenge. These collective experiences give one a sense of perspective and judgment which can be applied to future situations.

MSC is my ninth opportunity in command, and I am bringing all of the collective lessons learned to bear for our team.

Also, I have a great love of people and truly care deeply about every member of our MSC team. I understand that the soul of our organization is our people. While we tend to think of MSC as ships, it is really the people who ensure our success.

Finally, I have a passion for the U.S. Navy and our joint service partners. I have devoted my life to the service of others. I consider myself a patriot who wants to do my part to preserve the freedoms our countrymen hold dear.

At the end of the day, MSC's mission is assured maritime logistics. The Navy cannot function without MSC and MSC cannot function without our people and our business partners.

What is your leadership style and what can the men and women of MSC expect from you during your time as MSC's commander?

-Mewbourne- My basic leadership style is collaborative. A collaborative leader is an approachable, active listener who is surrounded by a team that seeks diversity of thought, and who creates an environment which fosters collaboration and transparency.

I encourage MSC's teammates to bring forth issues and build a culture of mutual respect. I want people to actively voice their opinions.

I will do my part to provide our team with clear commander's guidance on MSC's priorities.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

-Mewbourne- It is a great honor and a rare privilege to have the opportunity to serve our country as the MSC twenty-seventh commander. As I continue to make my way around the command and meet the staff, I am already impressed with the quality of our workforce. I feel richly blessed and look forward to serving with the men and women of Military Sealift Command. ■



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USNS YUMA (T-ESB 8) CHRISTENED**