High-tempo, scorching heat no problem for oiler crew

Rappahannock refuels coalition warships in Persian Gulf

Articles and photos by Gillian Brigham
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Cross-functional teams: our newest tool

In May, I talked about my third operating axiom—everything has a cost, and every dollar counts. As I said then, the money we can save be used to upgrade the fleet and modernize our processes as well.

So, we’ve started looking at our cost drivers, those strategic areas of business that define our mission costs and affect our readiness. There are five primary cost drivers for MSC:

- Maintenance and Modernization
- Operations and Contracting
- Fatigue Management
- Ashore Personnel
- Support Command

As I mentioned then, the crossing over from one strategic area to another meant that nothing is simple. Indeed, many of the processes we began to identify crossed over from one strategic area to another. So, the concept of cross-functional teams came into being.

There are still five basic teams, but the team members possess skills in all the areas. Each team can touch the part of any process that affects their area and make recommendations to the other teams where the process crosses lines. To facilitate this cross-functional activity, the teams each meet weekly to cover their specific tasking. Then the team leaders meet to identify cross-overs issues and discuss overall process improvement ideas.

I’ve received two briefings from the leadership as of late, and we’re defi- nitely making progress. We’ll be re- porting regularly to Fleet Forces Com- mand and the Chief of Naval Opera- tions staff in our continuing work to improve our processes and serve our customers.

Here’s a look at the specifics of the five cross-functional teams.

Afloat Personnel

The Afloat Personnel Team has been looking at the length of the pipeline for acquiring a new civil service mariner, from recruitment to actual placement aloft.

Civilian substitution for current mariner jobs, known as CIVSUB, is an- other area being examined, as well as what generates overtime and how overtime is used. The team also is ex- amining ways to reduce the time that CIVMARS spend waiting for assign- ment in San Diego or Norfolk.

I anticipate issuing a policy shortly that will allow some CIVMARS to complete required computer-based training at home. The policy will allow those CIVMARS to spend a little more time at home, rather than await- ing assignment in the pools or at a training center.

Currently, the team is preparing to execute bottom-up manning scale re- views of MSC’s fleet replenishment oilers and the other support ships. It has been a number of years since the last comprehensive reviews. The re- view teams are composed of CIV- MARS and other staff, and will examine headquarters and Military Sealift Fleet Support Command.

Sustainment

The Sustainment Team is investigat- ing efficient use of fuel, port and force protection costs, ship husbanding, spare parts costs and afloat supply processes.

The team is also pursuing customer education: showing our customers the cost impact of their requests so future requests will be more cost effective. Right now, the Sustainment Team is developing information briefings on how mission costs are determined and what drives them.

The team is setting up the reporting process to collect fuel usage data from all of our government-owned ships. The data will be used to record and report fuel usage trends and the effi- ciency of operation, determine the most economical operational and cruising speeds, and to inform us when there are trends that contribute to rate sharing fuel efficiency while still achieving the mission.

The team is working to establish core force protection requirements for our ships, eliminating duplicate servic- es when two or more ships are transit- ing or tied up at a pier together.

Other port costs are also being re- viewed to establish and standardize the cost per type of ship, eliminating over- charges and saving money.

Spare parts always drive costs in terms of both storage space and money for the material and its ship- ping and handling.

The Sustainment Team is exploring ways to eliminate the need to stockpile tracking spare parts availability and equipment importance or redundancy more closely, resulting in fewer spare parts on every ship.

We’re also combining our excess spare parts system with the rest of the Navy, cross-feeding needed parts and supplies to both MSC and the rest of the Navy money.

Finally, the Sustainment Team is planning a new distance-support concept where ship supply work can be accomplished remotely ashore, freeing up the ship’s supply crew for mission duties.

Maintenance, Repair, and Modernization

The Maintenance, Repair, and Mod- ernization Team is looking at how we purchase maintenance for our ships, including potential changes in trea- tments in preparing indefinite-type contracts to reduce the time to turn our work.

The team is gathering data on how often our ships go into the shipyard and how long they normally stay there in an effort to save time and money and increase readiness by re- turning a ship to duty in a shorter time.

So far, the team has identified po- tential excessive time in the yard indi- cated by growth in work not requir- ing additional time.

The patterns of these time periods will allow us to contract for shorter yard periods in the future.

The team is exploring how to de- termine the right amount of mainte- nance for our equipment and how to find faster replacement for problem equipment.

The team is also exploring the use of single-source/multiple-award contracts. Both have the potential to increase competition for our maintenance business, thereby lowering our costs. A group from the Royal Fleet Aux- iliary, our British counterparts, is coming here in November to show us what they’ve learned about mainte- nance process improvement.

Contracts and Charters

The Contracts and Charters Team is looking closely at training require- ments for our commercial mariners and outsourcing our layberth contracts to the U.S. Maritime Administration. Currently, streaming and care-taking requi- rements for contract mariners have been incorporated into our most recent operating contracts, and we are propos- al and will be included in future oper- ating contracts.

At the same time, the team is work- ing with MARAD to identify and cata- log potential barriers to outsourcing layberths, as well as to quantify actual costs so they can be analyzed for po- tential savings.

Ashore Personnel, Infrastructure and Information Technology

The Ashore Personnel, Infrastructure and Information Technology Team is looking at MSC’s Manning structure for redundancies and functions that are not aligned with our mission.

The team is also exploring infra- structure maintenance and acquisition costs and processes and the growth of information technology costs.

We know the costs will continue to grow, but we’d like to control how fast that happens wherever possible.

Currently, the team is coordinating with pre-existing efforts to oversee ashore personnel management through the Civilian Leadership Board process and information technology investments through the Capi- tal Planning and Investment Control process.
Global sealift experts deliver through fog, ice

By Bill Cook
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Seven hundred miles north of the Arctic Circle and through seas covered by four feet of ice, civilian mariners aboard Military Sealift Command-chartered ships delivered 1.5 million pounds of cargo and more than 9 million gallons of fuel to Thule Air Base, Greenland, July 21 to 27.

The 521-foot ice-classed dry cargo and container ship MV American Tern and the multi-flagged, Russian-crewed, ice-classed tanker MV Marvea completed the vital resupply mission, termed Operation Pacer Goose, escorted by Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker CCGS Henry Larson.

This yearly operation takes advantage of a three-month window beginning in July when the ice around Thule thins enough to be broken up, allowing vessels to pull into port.

During the window, ships deliver a year’s worth of supplies to the more than 800 people stationed at the largest and northernmost unit of eight worldwide satellite-tracking stations in the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

This year’s weather was cold and foggy for all but two days of operations at the port, according to Brian Hill, a marine transportation specialist with Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic, who coordinated the off-load in Greenland.

“The job had to get done despite the conditions. Sometimes the fog was so thick you could cut it with a knife,” said Hill, who worked with 22 Danish stevedores for 12-plus hours per day to complete the mission.

American Tern, which loaded its cargo in Norfolk, Va., carried 40-foot containers, flat racks, refrigerated units, three tank trucks, a bulldozer, breakbulk cargo and other general cargo. The supplies provide the air base with dry goods, commissary and base exchange supplies, vehicles, medical supplies, and sensitive satellite and radar equipment.

“As soon as American Tern tied up, it was off-loading cargo within 30 minutes,” Hill noted. “The ship’s cranes were lifting containers from the ship to waiting trucks while we were simultaneously getting the tanker positioned. This was teamwork at its best.”

Once the ship was off-loaded, it was reloaded with the non-reparable equipment, excess vehicles, and hazardous and solid waste produced during the previous year for disposal or reuse when the ship returned to Norfolk.

Because the pier could only accommodate one ship due to length and water depth, Marvea was anchored 50 feet from the pier. Both anchors held the bow in place and four sets of lines held the stern while fuel was pumped from the ship to land through hoses. “It was extremely challenging, but we made it happen,” said Hill.

Marvea delivered 8.8 million gallons of JP-8 diesel fuel and 80,000 gallons of unleaded fuel, which will be used by all of Thule’s operating systems, from vehicles to generators to the heating plant. The base relies primarily on JP-8 to provide electrical power and heating.

The annual operation to resupply Thule began in 1952 using U.S. Navy combatant ships to get the goods to and from the base. In 1969, MSC took over the role.

The closest habitation to Thule is the Inuit village of Qaanaaq, 75 miles northwest of the base with a population of about 460 people. The rest of the desolate landscape is filled with ice caps and miles of rock.

“Remember, Thule is 500 miles too far north to see the Northern Lights, but on the few occasions they do see them, they are called the ‘Southern Lights,’” Hill mused. “That should give some idea of how alien the climate can be in Greenland.”

SEALOGFE officer improves life for East Africans

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

In late 2006, a Sealift Logistics Command Far East officer traded in his khakis for desert camouflage, underwent two weeks of intensive training at a U.S. Army camp and, three days later, touched down on a dusty airfield in the Republic of Djibouti.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Mike Johnson, SEALOGFE logistics officer, just returned from a six-month deployment as an individual augmentee in Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa at Camp Lemonier near Djibouti’s airport.

Though the primary mission of the task force is to protect, disrupt and ultimately defeat terrorists in Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Yemen, Johnson wasn’t running combat patrols. Instead, the logistics officer spent most of his deployment winning the hearts and minds of the local population.

“We sought out ways to fund projects for local communities,” said Johnson, who was one of more than 40 Navy individual augmentees. “We helped them drill wells for fresh water, make renovations to schools and clinics, and make improvements to bridges and roads.” Johnson also taught English to local Djiboutians and volunteered at a local orphanage. According to Johnson, teams also conducted bilateral training with host-nation military forces.

To prepare himself for unique mission requirements and potential danger, Johnson attended pre-deployment training at Camp McGrady in South Carolina six weeks after he reported to SEALOGFE in October and just before heading to Djibouti. During the training, he learned desert survival techniques and qualified as a marksman with an M-9 before deploying.

“Sailors took a crash course to learn to be soldiers, but our primary mission was to promote regional peace and security in the area,” said Johnson.

Johnson, who began his work in Africa as a logistics officer supporting work in Ethiopia, saw his duties grow to include the countries of Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Comoros Islands, Djibouti and Yemen, serving the needs of the countries’ poor in addition to providing support for the military.

“When we arrived in a local village, children would rush up to our vehicle asking for food, water or anything we could spare. Once out of the village, they would swarm around us. We recognized that these were very poor people,” said Johnson.

He often traveled for hours through potentially hostile areas — in SUVs or minivans with armed escorts — to pay for host-nation construction and renovation projects by Navy Seabees.

As a logistics officer, Johnson’s job was to be a lifeline to troops in the field — providing food, water, transportation and money to pay for local contractors. Though Johnson’s living accommodations were modest — an 8-foot by 8-foot dedicated space in a tent with make-shift wooden walls — he said he would like to go back again.

“I hope to return one day to see how much the people have progressed,” he said. “I think we are making a real impact in the daily lives of many people in these countries.”
Julien Pantin did not choose a life at sea. He was shanghaied into it — literally. At age 18, he was running the streets of his native Trinidad and Tobago, a poor kid looking for ways to make a quick buck.

One night Pantin and two of his friends were stopped on the 677-foot tanker, Rappahannock's crew fires shot lines rigged with glow-in-the-dark weights over to Anzac's deck. The shot lines make it over this time.

The class was not exactly what Pantin expected.

"I stopped going to school when I was 13. That's just the way things were in my country. It was so poor you had to get on your own. I decided to become a mate. I thought, 'heck, I'm in this situation now. I might as well enjoy it.'"

Pantin went back to sea but used every spare minute of his time aboard ship to study. Three years later, I went back to that class, took the mate's exam and passed. I'm in this situation now. I might as well enjoy it."

Little did he know, in seven months he would find himself fighting in the jungles of Vietnam, the height of the Vietnam War. He was innocent no more. "I got to be a man pretty fast," he said. Fourteen months later, he was sent back to the United States after surviving a rocket-propelled grenade attack during a jungle battle, for which he was also awarded a Bronze Star.

Pantin spent two years in and out of the Manhattan Veteran's hospital, recovering from his injuries. It was this hospital that referred him to Military Sealift Command when he was well enough to work again.

"MSC hired me as an able seaman in 1975," said Pantin. "The money was good, but I had a family and wanted more. I decided to become a mate. I thought, 'how hard could it be?'"

So, I spent $300 on books and signed up for a class at the Seaman's Institute of New York.

"You have to be well maintained coming out here," said Pantin. "The temperature of the ocean water is 98-degrees. You have to keep it well maintained."

The day after he arrived, he was walking around Queens and saw a string of military recruiting offices on a street corner.

"There were signs for Army, Navy and Air Force, and I just went into the first door and sat down among a bunch of guys," he said. "A man in uniform walked in and told us all to stand up and raise our right hand. I didn't really realize what was going on, but five minutes later, I was in the Army. That afternoon, I was on a bus to Jacksonville, Florida."

"Pantin was unfazed by the split-second, 180-degree turn his life had taken. After all, the first time he stumbled into a new tangents and all this trigonometry stuff, I thought they were trying again, re-gauging their aim in the darkness."

As the frigate breaks away from Rappahannock, an AC/DC song blasts out of Anzac's speakers. The captain, Maude and the other watchstanders on the bridge rock along to the song as it signals the close of their 16-hour day. One by one, they head below deck. The music echoes across the ship's wake as it sails into the night.

"I was a naïve 23-year old, and it all happened so fast. I thought, 'heck, I'm in this situation now. I might as well enjoy it.'"

"The money was good, but I had a family and wanted more. I decided to become a mate. I thought, 'how hard could it be?'"

"We'd rather be busy," said Seabrook about his ship's workhorse mentality.

"I stopped going to school when I was 13. That's just the way things were in my country. It was so poor you had to get on your own."

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"The class was not exactly what Pantin expected. "I stopped going to school when I was 13. That's just the way things were in my country. It was so poor you had to get on your own and work," he said."

"So, I could barely read or do equations. When I sat down in this class and heard them talking about sines, cosines, tangents and all this trigonometry stuff, I thought they were speaking another language. I was so ashamed that I smacked out during the first coffee break."

That shame was quickly replaced with determination.

Pantin went back to sea but used every spare minute of his time aboard ship to study. "I taught myself to read, to write and to math. I studied everything you needed to know to be a mate. Three years later, I went back to that class, took the mate's exam and passed."

Now, Pantin is USNS Rappahannock's cargo mate and a 32-year veteran of MSC. He's unashamed of his love of the organization and of his belief that he was destined to be a part of it.

"MSC is a family. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, but it always takes care of you. I was a man with nothing, and MSC put my kids through college and put several houses in my hands," he said. "Everything in my life, the whole series of things that happened, it was all just to get me here where I am today. My family and I have everything we ever wanted. I might as well be a millionaire."
Every thing out here is pushed to the max — our air conditioning, our engines, everything.

Even Rappahannock’s new crew members are inspired by the mission and by their co-workers aboard ship.

Utilityman Lynn Graham signed on as a civil service mariner with MSC in March 2006, egged on by a cousin who had been sailing aboard MSC ships for years. Prior to joining, she worked as a delivery specialist at Sears. Graham doesn’t miss it.

“I want to make this my career, absolutely,” she said. “Rappahannock is my first ship, and I love it. I’m glad to make it my first home at sea. We serve each other well.”

Rappahannock’s refueling of Anzac came in the middle of a busy five-day underway period, during which time the oiler resupplied eight ships, including USS Mitscher, USS Mount Rushmore, USS Bonhomme Richard, USS Denver, USS Chung-Hoon, HMS Enterprise and HMS Richmond, transferring 1 million gallons of fuel and 321 pallets of cargo.

Though it may sound otherworldly to most, for Rappahannock, sailing past fire-spitting oil platforms on the southern tip of Iraq while simultaneously pumping fuel to warships steaming along both sides is just another day at the office. And the crew wouldn’t have it any other way.

“We’re out here to support the fleet,” said Seabrook, embodying the gung-ho spirit that characterizes the ship. “We just want to go for it.”
Aug. 3, making special calls on MS C
sign Enrique Asuncion
commander, Military Sealift Com-
in April, while Freeman and Asu
Corps Officer pin:
earned their Surface Warfare Supply
tempo, three junior Navy officers aboard
USNS Concord departed the U.S. 5th
battle support ships USNS Bridge and
year beginning in September.
abbative, professional excellence, commu-
nity involvement, a commi-
ment to public service and integrity.
Defense employees who exhibit out-
standing leadership potential, initia-
tive, professional excellence, commu-
nity involvement, a commitment to
public service and integrity.
Chief Engineer Raymond Blanchet to the headquarters
staff and Claudio Azzaro and Dave
Allen to class manager positions in July.
MSFSC bids farewell to the follow-

voices in military bands.
Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr.

child; and
Rear Admiral Retired Robert L.

Chief Warrant Officer David Hatcher

Naval Supply Systems Command,

with a musical performance.

USNS Bridge and USNS Rainier in less
than three hours.

the region.
USNS Walter S. Diehl and was hosted
by civil service master Capt. Larry Carley.
Civil service master Capt. Dan La-
Porte and the crew of combat stores ship
USNS Niagara Falls also hosted Reilly.

shipyard provides repairs to num-
ber of ships and repairs to Sea GO Ffe

and damage control.

Chief Engineer William Gibson,

M SS welcomes Chief Master at
Arms Derek Holman, force protec-
tion, Paul Kang and Leland McN-
abb, contracts and business manage-
ment. Bianca Young, David Miney
and King Merendino, maritime
forces and manpower management,
Andrew Traugh, engineering, David
Bassett, operations and plans, and
Sara Landry, Special Mission Pro-
gram.
The command bids farewell to the
following summer interns: John
Pedro, public affairs; Nicole Young
and TaQuasha Wallace, maritime
forces and manpower management;
Christopher Adams. Jake Bauer,
William Berthold. Raymond
Boehling, Janelle Bonead, Andrej
Cerni. James Lambeth, Thong
Nguyen. Daniel Ross. Robert
Sweeney and Justin Wesselholt, engi-
neering, and Breanne Mabe, contracts
and business management.

operation Afloat Readiness and Training
2007, a series of maritime training exer-
cises between the United States and six
Southeast Asia nations designed to build
relationships and enhance the operational
readiness of the participating forces.
Sealift Logistics Command, First
commander, Navy Capt. Susan Dunlap
hosted the command’s second command-
ers/commanding officer conference.
Navy Capt. Ulysses Zalamea, com-
mander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship
Squadron Three; Navy Capt, Scott
Anderson, commander, Maritime
Prepositioning Two; Navy Cmdr. Ron
Oswald, commanding officer, MSCO
Korea; Navy Lt. Cmdr. Greg Haynes,
commanding officer, MSCO Diego

Since it was the rainy season, the team was engulfed in several downpours
which made work challenging but not impossible. According to the ship’s stock
control officer Navy Lt. J.g. Garrett Stone. Covered with ponchos made from
plastic trash bags, the crew worked hard and enjoyed themselves knowing
that their work would benefit the children of the St. Clare School.

Concord conducted 57 underway re-
plenishments and 104 port replenish-
ments; transferred more than 192 thou-
sand gallons of fuel; moved more than
32 passengers; and

U.S. Navy photo

U.S. Navy photo

U.S. Navy photo

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U.S. Navy photo
Atlantic Lines

Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic staff members sent five boats of donated clothes, school supplies, toys and candy to a reserve unit in Afghanistan that requested donations in July. The items were sent in July and will be distributed to needy children and families.

JohnGregov, SEALOG-LANTrepresentative inPortCanaveral, Fla., received an award Aug. 13 from the U.S. Army’s Surface Deployment and Distribution Command office there. Gregov was lauded by SDDC’s Army Lt. Col. Manuel Mendoza for providing outstanding support and cooperation between the two offices.

EUROPE • NEWS

Military Sealift Command-chartered cargo ship CEC Endeavor delivered aboard. The ships entered the 3rd Fleet’s operations area. During the three-month project, the Seabees will also build the slope of the ramp, enabling the boat ramp at the city of Sao Tome’s coast guard base. At the time, the base’s only boat ramp was unable to launch patrol boats due to the ramp’s erosion and shallow slope into the water. During the three-month project, the Seabees will widen and steepen the slope of the ramp, enabling the Coast Guard to once again launch patrol boats from their base. In Sao Tome, the Seabees will also build a guard house for the base. Both building projects are aimed at strengthening Sao Tome and Principe’s ability to contribute to maritime security and safety in the region. Increasing regional maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is one of the U.S. Navy’s top priorities in their growing engagement with Africa.

“MSC ships are a vital piece of the U.S. Navy’s ongoing mission in Africa,” said Navy Capt. Nick Holman, commander of Sealift Logistics Command Europe and Commander Task Force 63, who oversees logistics in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations. “Every piece of equipment or gallon of fuel our ships deliver contributes to the greater work of establishing freedom and security on the seas around Africa and elsewhere in the world.”

Congratulations to MSC’s Rotterdam (Europe) port representative, Joe Guivas, who received a commendation letter from Army Col. Janet Cobb, commander, 598th Transportation Terminal Group, Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. The colonel noted that Guivas’ efforts during a load transfer of Army Stryker vehicles to large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez, was critical to maintaining the schedule of the “right equipment” deployment of the vehicles. “He is one of your best,” Cobb said. SRCMCR also welcomed a good-bye to Beth Johnson, personnel and travel officer. The operations department bids farewell to Navy Lt. Ashley Pankow, who returns stateside to attend department head school before reporting aboard guided missile destroyer USS Gonzalez as chief engineer. Chief Engineer Steven Turner welcomes comptroller Sharon Curtis, who reports to the command from MSC headquarters in Washington, D.C.

SEALOGEUR also welcomes Marsha Neely, personnel and travel officer and Paul Augustine, force protection specialist.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

The third ship of the new dry cargo/ammunition ship class was delivered to Military Sealift Command, July 27. In a ceremony held at NASCO Shipyard, San Diego, USNS Alan Shepard was welcomed into the MSC fleet.

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry K. Jaiser spent most of July as the Southern California duty oiler in support of U.S. Navy ships operating in the area. The ship embarked 12 marines apprentices from Mar Vista High School in Imperial Beach, Calif., a school that MSC partners with encouraging students to consider seagoing careers—particularly with MSC.

The apprentices were aboard to gain experience and travel officer. The operations department plans to sail to the Yucatan Peninsula. The Giannella crew transferred the Cubans to the U.S. Coast Guard.

MSC tanker resues 13

While in the Gulf of Mexico, Aug. 2, Military Sealift Command tanker USNS Lawrence H. Giannella rescued two Cuban refugees in a small boat after crew members aboard Giannella spotted the craft and its occupants signaling distress. The nine men and four women who were rescued appeared to be in good health despite some minor medical needs. They were given warm clothes prior to being transported to a U.S. Coast Guard vessel that had rescued Cubans in the area the previous week.

U.S. Navy photo by Ens. Service Master Capt. Robert McCormick

Seafair Logistics Command Pacific congratulates Information Systems Technician 1st Class Denise Brannen on her selection to chief petty officer. She will become the first IS Technician 1st Class Bridge, USN, transferred the Cubans to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The command bid farewell to Storekeeper 1st Class Angela Corvey, who left USNS Bridge and reported to USNS Emory S. Land; Operations Specialist 2nd Class Roazen Belland, who transferred from USNS Shasta to USS Russell; and Operations Specialist 2nd Class Kenya William from USNS Kiska, who reported as a student to Fleet Combat Training Center Pacific in San Diego.
Ammo ship delivers small-scale explosives

By Rosemary Heiss
MSC Public Affairs

A military Sealift Command ship that routinely carries ordnance to Navy ships delivered a very different type of explosive cargo in July. Ammunition ship USNS Flint distributed 250,000 bags of donated microwave popcorn.

The 564-foot Flint, which supports the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet, supplied the popcorn to Navy ships at sea and passed a portion of its edible cargo to other MSC ships that will help deliver it to thousands of Sailors and Marines aboard other Navy ships around the world. Termed Operation Popcorn, delivery of 3,000 cases of the butter treat — in addition to already-planned ammunition — was made by Flint's civil service mariners.

The donation was a result of a coordinated effort between the Boy Scouts of America, Support Our Troops organization and Weaver Popcorn Co., which gave the $70,000 worth of popcorn for Sailors and Marines serving far from home.

“Our ship received 82 pallets of microwave popcorn,” said civil service Capt. Robert C. Holley, master of Flint. “I think it is great to be part of a project this huge.”

The ammunition and cases of butter, butter light and kettle corn popcorn were loaded at Naval Magazine Indian Island, Wash.

Each year, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts across America sell popcorn door to door to raise money for their organizations, and this year they provided a portion of their donations to support the military service members.

“I think it is excellent to see what the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts of America are doing for us. We appreciate their great efforts to continue to support our troops,” said Chief Operations Specialist William Small, assigned to Flint.

SEALOGCENT changes leadership

By Gillian Brigham
SEALOGEUR Public Affairs

The command responsible for providing air and sea logistics to the U.S. Navy in the Middle East changed leadership at U.S. Naval Forces Central Command headquarters in Manama, Bahrain July 19. Navy Capt. Anthony Dropp assumed command of Sealift Logistics Command Central from outgoing commodore Navy Capt. Glen Sears II.

The SEALOGCENT commander also serves as commander of Navy's Commander Task Force 53 and Commander Logistics Forces U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

SEALOGCENT provides at-sea logistics and strategic sealift services to U.S. and coalition troops operating throughout the U.S. Central Command theater. In their strategic sealift capacity, the command is responsible for overseeing the delivery of nearly 90 percent of all cargo being used by U.S. troops operating in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East. The commander of SEALOGCENT, wearing his other hats, is also responsible for coordinating the air and sea delivery of people, parts, fuel, ammunition and mail to a fleet of 40-plus U.S. and coalition ships operating in the Middle East.

During Sears' year-long tenure as commodore, the command oversaw the distribution of more than 100 million gallons of fuel to ships in theater as well as nearly 500 million gallons of fuel to Department of Defense defense distribution depots. The command also supported 1,100 air logistics missions and managed a daily average of 12 ships and eight aircraft in theater.

“The last year has been inspiring and humbling. I have been privileged to observe from the deck plate and the waterfront a logistics and sealift capability that no other nation can match,” said Sears. “Several times in the last year the world was watching as events unfolded in this region. Each time, the world saw that our Navy was there. Our Navy was there because MSC ships made it happen. It has been a profession- al highlight and a personal honor to be associated with the mariners, Sailors and civilians who support MSC's efforts at the tip of the spear.”

Sears will attend the National War College in Washington, D.C.

Dropp reported to SEALOGCENT from the office of the chief of naval operations, where he served as the future ships branch head and then as the executive assistant to the director of warfare integration and assessments.

Comfort's CIVMARs score goodwill on basketball court

By Laura Seal
MSC Public Affairs

Civil service mariners from Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort befriended locals in Acajutla, El Salvador, in July over a few evening games of pick-up basketball.

Getting a little downtime for a game of basketball hasn't always been easy for MSC's civil service mariners on this deployment — given the hectic schedule and eight aircraft in theater. The unusual opportunity for rest and relaxation arose while the ship was in port in Acajutla conducting humanitarian operations as part of a four-month mission to Latin America and the Caribbean.

On Comfort's second evening in port, a group of about 10 CIVMARs went to a park near the ship to watch basketball, and rather than just play each other, struck up a game with some of the locals.

“We were over there playing ball. Then some of the locals called us over, and we started playing with them,” said Boatswain's Mate William Ramos, who speaks Spanish and served as a translator.

“Sunday, our second night playing, it was so crowded. There were at least 100 people in and around the park watching us play and having fun with us,” said Ramos. “At first they were cheering for their own people, but after the third game, they started cheering for us, too.” On their last night playing, one young boy even brought a small American flag.

Some of the people in the crowd had been treated on the hospital ship and recognized the crew. The CIVMARs took sports drinks, water, snacks and even a soccer ball to share with the other players and the many children who gathered to watch the games.

Three of the CIVMARs even gave some of their expensive athletic shoes away to their new friends. “I just really like these people,” said ordinary seaman John Rogers, who gave a pair of Air Jordan tennis shoes to one of the players.