ANTARCTICA

Getting there is half the battle

By Toni Murphy, MSC Public Affairs
Story and photos Pg. 4

INSIDE — MSC aids in satellite shoot down • MSC ships participate in Korean exercise
Remember these words from the Declaration of Independence?

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Those words, written almost 240 years ago, have become a guiding document that we refer to and live by. For Americans, it’s what we’re all about.

Similarly, for some, the Ten Commandments are a guiding document. For the British, it’s the Magna Carta; for many others around the world, the Bill of Rights from the Constitution is a guiding document.

What is MSC’s guiding document?

Until recently, we didn’t have a single one-page description of what we’re all about. But now we do, and it’s inserted in this issue of Sealift.

While this one-page document is new, the Mission, Vision, Priorities, and Values it describes are not — they come from our long-term strategic plan, and from our long-standing MSC tradition. This document was the product of a committee of nearly 20 people that included representatives from head-quarters, MSFSC, the SEALOGs, and ships’ crews; it included civilian and military personnel, new employees and MSC veterans. Like the guiding documents of our nation’s past, it represents the consensus of all our constituencies.

The purpose of this document is to help place in context the many things that take place at MSC every day, around the globe. Sometimes in these busy days, it’s easy to lose track of the big picture — that’s where guiding documents help us. They align us, they engage us and they bring us back to our roots.

This document, with its clear and simple declaration of our Mission, our Vision, our five Strategic Priorities, and our five Values, lays out for us what we do virtually everything we do can be tied back to one of these priorities or values.

Over the next few months, we’ll work hard to ensure that everyone with us in MSC sees this document and “gets” what we’re all about, and how what they do fits into our Priorities and Values. The insert is a poster, and I ask that it be put up in every MSC office and on every MSC ship around the world. (For additional copies, please call Sandy Graham at 202-685-5055, or e-mail Sandra.graham@navy.mil.)

We’ll also be sending out a PowerPoint presentation that details and explains each of the 12 bullets on the document, and I’ll ask managers and leaders to review that information with their people. Please take a look at the poster and make sure you understand what we’re all about. Then, more importantly, help us all to focus our efforts and workday on achieving those Strategic Priorities, and on implementing those Values. For instance, we value our employees — what are each doing every day to live up to that? We value accountability and responsibility — what are we each doing every day to make sure what happens? Remember, this document is not only about what we want to be, it’s about what we are today.

Thank you for your great work every day, and for your continued exemplary service. We are indeed living up to the ideals of this MSC guiding document. We are, indeed, “Mission-focused, value-driven.” Thanks to all of you, MSC delivers, every day.

Keep the faith,

Robert D. Reilly Jr.
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy Commander, Military Sealift Command

MSC’s Guiding Document

What We’re All About

By Gillian Brigham

SEALOGUE Public Affairs

“I’m still trying to grasp it. I’m not used to this. It’s wild,” said Navy Yeoman 1st Class Kevin Harden, still in disbelief a week after being named Military Sealift Command’s Shore Sailor of the Year for 2007.

MSC’s Sailor of the Year competition gives Sailors assigned to MSC commands worldwide the opportunity to be recognized for their commitment, hard work and leadership skills.

Harden, who represented Sealift Logistics Command Europe and Ship Support Unit Naples sailors in the competition, was one of six Sailors nominated for the award.

The nominees were flown to MSC headquarters in Washington, D.C., for the ceremony hosted by MSC Commander, Rear Adm. Robert D. Reilly Jr. in February.

Harden was unable to attend the ceremony in person.

“I just returned to Italy after attending my mom’s funeral, and I didn’t have enough time to fly back,” said Harden.

Instead, Harden and SEALOGUE Commander Navy Capt. Nick Holman tuned in to the proceedings via video teleconference.

“I have to help people and do your job the best you can, regardless of the circumstances,” said Harden. “My mom used to say, ‘Always do good, and don’t worry about anything else. The good will come back to you.’ ”

After winning MSC Sailor of the Year, Harden’s future goals include becoming a chief, getting his degree and helping the Sailors under him advance.

“I wish that my mom could have been here to see and hear all of this. That would have been a wonderful moment.”

MSC delivers, every day.

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MSC Deliveries

Support our nation by delivering supplies and conducting specialized missions across the world.

Strategic Priorities:

- Assist in winning the Global War on Terrorism
- Help customers efficiently meet their objectives
- Develop and care for our workforce
- Use smart business practices to provide quality services at the best value
- Ensure that MSC has the right ships to conduct future missions

Values:

- Customer focus: Customers, Sailors, Soldiers, Almenn and Marines
- Our people
- Innovation, responsiveness and effectiveness
- A challenge and a mission: Identifying and solving customer needs

The U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command has more than 20,000 employees worldwide. MSC delivers, every day.

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MSC delivers, every day.
Two Military Sealift Command ships assisted in the U.S. Navy’s interception of a 5,000-pound, non-functioning National Reconnaissance Office satellite over the Pacific Ocean Feb. 20.

MSC missile range instrumenta-
tion ship USNS Observation Island provided telemetry information. The ship, which can monitor ob-
jects in space, tracked the satellite and collected data on it both before and after the missile launch. Guid-
ed missile cruiser USS Lake Erie launched the SM-3 missile to inter-
cept the satellite.

A second MSC ship, fleet replen-
ishment oiler USNS Guadalupe, sorted from San Diego to support the mission. Instead of conducting a two-week repair period, the ship was given short-notice tasking and got underway with enough fuel to replenish the other ships involved in the operation.

Hours after the interception, Guadalupe provided about 160,000 gallons of fuel to Lake Erie and 114,000 gallons to guided missile destroyer USS Decatur.

In addition to Observation Island and Guadalupe, three MSC fleet ocean tugs stood by to recover debris.

“I’m proud that our MSC ships were able to support the intercept on such short notice,” said Capt. David Kiehl, commander of MSC’s Sealift Logistics Command Pacific. In late January, the U.S. government notified other nations that the satellite was unresponsive and would make an uncontrolled reentry in late February or early March.

President Bush decided to bring down the satellite because of the likeli-
hood that the satellite could release hy-
drazine fuel upon impact, possibly in populated areas. The Navy modified three SM-3 missiles to strike the satellite.

MSC ships assist in satellite shoot down

By Sarah E. Burford
SEALOGPAC Public Affairs

MSC ships, personnel support major Korean-defense exercise

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs
Military Sealift Command-owned tanker USNS Gianella, which loaded cargo fuel in Greece in December 2007, began making its way to Antarctica when the ship departed Fremantle, Australia, on Jan. 3. Within about 48 hours, Gianella reached its first stop — Fremantle — where its crew refueled, unloaded its cargo, and prepared for its journey through the icy waters of the Southern Ocean.

This was the last stop the ship made before continuing its mission to McMurdo Station in Antarctica. Gianella and American Tern are modified with ice reinforcement, and they each carry an additional “ice master” to assist the captain with the physical strains of maneuvering through the ever-changing ice channels.

Like all ships that go to Arctic or Antarctic regions, Gianella faced intense storms, which brought gale-force winds, fog and 30- to 40-foot waves. Gianella’s arrival. Oden moved to meet Gianella. The ship slowly moved along at 4-5 knots, but Gianella of course could not turn as quickly or as sharply as Oden could. This year, harsh weather and ice flows posed significant challenges. But the mariners prevailed, knowing that the 1,500 researchers and support personnel that live at McMurdo Station were counting on their ability to move supplies to and from McMurdo Station.

The mission was part of Operation Deep Freeze, the research station’s annual replenishment of supplies during the short period of Antarctic summer. The cargo ranged from food and mail to construction resources and scientific equipment that sustains year-round habitation of the otherwise barren ice desert. The return to McMurdo Station was what American Tern removed from the continent. This year, nearly 5 million pounds of cargo — ranging from precious ice-core samples to waste that McMurdo Station accumulated over the year — was loaded onto American Tern for transport back to the United States.

In 2007, American Tern was loading about 9 million pounds of cargo in Port Phillip Bay, Australia. Once the nearly 6 million gallons of fuel were pumped into the ship, the task of moving cargo to McMurdo Station began offloading cargo around the clock. These cargo operations, of atmospheric disturbances over the South Pole and of Earth’s largest icebergs. Some of these studies include changes of penguin populations, shifts in the distribution of fish and changes in the growing season of sea ice. This season, more than 150 studies are supported by the National Science Foundation for its Antarctic programs.

The National Science Foundation relies heavily on MSC's delivery of fuel and supplies for its ongoing research projects. MSC’s delivery of fuel and supplies for its ongoing research projects.

 MSC has been a part of this operation since McMurdo Station was established in 1955. Today, MSC is responsible for delivering about 70 percent of the dry cargo and 100 percent of the fuel that is taken to Antarctica each year.

Built on the volcanic rock of Ross Island, McMurdo Station was established by the National Science Foundation and became the largest research station in Antarctica. The station marks the southern-most solid ground accessible by ship and the center of the U.S. Antarctic Program.
Operation Deep Freeze

Mariners overcome tough conditions to deliver on time

The National Science Foundation relies heavily on MSC’s delivery of fuel and supplies for its ongoing research projects. This season, more than 150 studies are supported by the cargo and fuel delivered by MSC.

Some of these studies include changes of penguin populations, of atmospheric disturbances over the South Pole and of Earth’s largest icebergs.

“We could not do the science we do without the fuel and without the suppliers,” said Peter West of NSF’s Office of Polar Programs.

Like all ships that go to Arctic or Antarctic regions, Gianella and American Tern are modified with ice-strengthened hulls and machinery to withstand the harsh environment.

Both ships carry an additional “ice master” to assist the captain with the physical strains of maneuvering through the water around the ice on a 24-hour basis.

Gianella

Gianella, which loaded cargo fuel in Greece in December, began the most difficult part of the journey to Antarctica when the ship departed Fremantle, Australia, Jan. 7.

This was the last stop the ship made before continuing more than 2,000 miles on its journey through the icy waters to McMurdo Station.

Within two days of leaving the port in Fremantle, Gianella faced intense storms, which brought gale-force winds, fog and 30- to 40-foot waves.

“While you’re in the ice, the only thing that is constant is change,” said Gianella’s civilian master, Capt. Robert Lee.

In addition, the seas between Fremantle and Antarctica had about 50 percent more ice than they had in previous years, reaching hundreds of miles from McMurdo.

“There were huge slabs of ice nearly as tall as the ship that stretched for miles as far as the eye could see,” Lee said. “As we passed into the area, you could definitely feel the ice gripping our hull and peeling the speed away.”

The ship slowly moved along at 4-5 knots, but Gianella eventually found itself surrounded by nearly solid pack ice.

For the first time, an icebreaker was called to assist an MSC ship almost 500 miles from McMurdo. The Swedish icebreaker Oden, which was under contract to the National Science Foundation, had just finished clearing a 17-mile ice channel leading to McMurdo’s ice pier in advance of Gianella’s arrival. Oden moved to meet Gianella.

Within about 48 hours, Oden reached Gianella, cleared a 30-mile path through the band of pack ice and escorted Gianella to McMurdo, where the ships arrived on Jan. 28. Gianella delivered three types of fuel – JP5, AN8 and unleaded gasoline – to support the station’s generators, vehicles, helicopters and research boats.

Once the nearly 6 million gallons of fuel were pumped from its tanks, Gianella was escorted back out by Oden.

American Tern

While Gianella was transiting to McMurdo, American Tern was loading about 9 million pounds of cargo in Port Hueneme, Calif., before heading to Lyttelton, New Zealand, to pick up the rest of the station’s supplies.

American Tern met Gianella and Oden on their outbound transit. Oden then escorted American Tern into McMurdo.

The ships arrived Feb. 8, and, as soon as American Tern’s bow dropped, 59 Sailors from the Navy Expeditionary Support Group’s Navy Cargo Handling Battalion 1 began offloading cargo around the clock. These cargo handlers competed for a chance to be part of the mission and arrived at McMurdo trained to operate shipboard equipment in the continuous sunlight of the Antarctic summer.

MSC’s McMurdo representative, Larry Larsson, who had reported to the station weeks earlier to provide support for the MSC operation and act as a mediator between the ship and shore, and the ship’s civilian mariners were also on hand to provide special assistance and troubleshooting if necessary.

In total, about 12 million pounds of equipment and supplies were offloaded. What was scheduled to take seven days took only five, despite temperatures that dropped to zero degrees. Once the offload was complete, Oden maneuvered within 20 feet of American Tern – which was still piercing – and received fuel.

The return

Equally important to the supplies delivered to McMurdo Station was what American Tern removed from the continent. This year, nearly 5 million pounds of cargo – ranging from precious ice-core samples to waste that McMurdo Station accumulated over the year – was loaded onto American Tern before it departed.

The ice core samples allow scientists to study the composition of the atmosphere from hundreds of thousands of years ago to examine current global climate changes. And the transportation of waste off the continent – about 75 percent of which is recycled – is crucial in maintaining a pristine environment at McMurdo Station and adheres to international treaties.

“It’s irreplaceable,” said American Tern master Capt. Brian O’Hanlon about the vital operation. “If we don’t get this cargo here, this place closes, and if we don’t get the cargo back, it’s all for nothing. It’s a mission, not a job.”

While Feb. 23 marked the official end of the Antarctic summer, it did not mean the end of the mission. Operation Deep Freeze continued into March when ice-core samples taken from McMurdo Station were offloaded from American Tern in Port Hueneme, Calif., March 11-14.
Military Sealift Command honored 10 federal employees for contributing over 200 total years of service to the federal government. Mary Avery, command, control, communications and computer systems; Frank Shukis and Leslie Robertson, command, control, communications and computer systems; were honored for 25 years of federal service. Recognized for 20 years of federal service were Joan Divens, engineering; and Antoinette Simmons, comptroller’s office: a 15-year award went to Diana Fischer, maritime forces and manpower management; and Robert Scelfo, engineering, and Matthew Kane, programming, were honored for 10 years of federal service.

Richard Pek, maritime forces and manpower management, received his Department of Defense Compensation Professional certification after completing an intensive, two-week program held in Southbridge, Mass., in February. The program covered NSPS compensation fundamentals, base pay management, quantitative methods and market pricing. Richard is among a small cadre of MSC headquarters civilian Air Force, Navy and other non-DOD government employees who will assist the DOD in developing policies and guidance and provide MSC with NSPS compensation-related expertise.

MSC headquarters celebrated Black History Month by commemorating more than 18 years of partnership with Brown Elementary school. The event was held on Feb. 23 featured guest speaker Principal Almeta Hawkins and the Bowen Elementary Step Team.

Rene Fry, comptroller, received the MSC headquarters 3rd Quarter 2007 Civilian of the Quarter Award, and Navy Personnel Specialist 1st Class Felicia Brown, maritime forces and manpower management, received the MSC headquarters 3rd Quarter 2007 Sailor of the Quarter during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., Feb. 27.

MSC welcomes Margaret Oliver and Andrew Mitchell, comptroller’s office; Peter Passalacqua, Seafil Pro- gram; Navy Lt. Timothy Hannen, comptroller’s office; and Navy Chief Yeoman Joe Acosta, commander’s office. MSC bids farewell to Cynthia Davis, comptroller’s office, and Navy Chief Storekeeper Ferdinand Kho, logistics.

Officers from the U.S. and Chilean navies received an in-port tour of Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oilers USNS Big Horn. Key hosts for the event included civil service master Capt. Steve Ferguson and his crew and Andrew Kallgren, military Sealift Fleet Support Command’s civilian service mariner workforce development division director. Chilean Navy master Command. Ronald Baasch, liaison to U.S. Fleet Command, and U.S. Navy Lt. Jason Knox, USFF liaison officer program manager, learned about cargo handling capabilities, container capacity and civil service mariner crewing.

Navy Cmdr. Robert Oakeley, officer-in-charge of the military department aboard dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Lewis and Clark, received the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal in February for distinguished himself on Lewis and Clark’s historic maiden deployment. According to the ship’s civil service master Capt. Randall Rockwood, Oakeley demonstrated “superior leadership, logistics expertise, exceptionally high professional standards and unparalleled initiative as he sustained critical logistic support throughout the U.S. 5th Fleet.”

Fair winds and following seas to these civil service mariners as they enter into the retirement rolls:

- Electronics Technician 2nd Class Matthew Kane
- Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Ronald Patton
- Able Seaman Richard Bryant
- MSPO Robert Scott
- Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Thomas Brown
- Communicationsman 1st Class A. Kyle Madden
- Boatswain’s Mate 3rd Class Jeff Shinn
Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oilers USNS Kanawha and USNS John Lenthall were directed to join guided missile destroyer USS Cole off the coast of Lebanon Feb. 26. This comes during a political standoff over Lebanon’s presidency.

“It’s a group of ships that will operate in the vicinity for a while...the presence is important,” Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said about the move. “It isn’t meant to send any stronger signal than that. But it does signal the Administration’s commitment to us and we are going to be in the vicinity, and that’s a very important part of the world.”

MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Patuxent replaced USNS Laramie as the U.S. 6th Fleet duty oiler in February. After arriving in theater, Patuxent sailed to Africa’s Gulf of Guinea to resupply guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge and guided-missile frigate USS John L. Hall, which were in the region supporting President Bush’s visit to Africa Feb. 15-21. The president visited Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Liberia and Ghana.

Patuxent also anchored in Ternéa, Ghana, Feb. 14 to resupply dock-lading ship USS Fort McHenry, which along with the MSC-chartered high-speed sealift HSV2 Swift has been operating in Africa since October 2007. The ships are participating in the U.S. 6th Fleet’s EUCOM Partnership Station initiative. During this initiative, U.S. and partner nation naval personnel have been providing military training and humanitarian aid to West African nations in order to develop strong maritime partnerships in the region. While in Ghana, Patuxent transferred more than 150 pallets of non-governmental organizations’ supplies to Fort McHenry.

Military Sealift Command roll-on/roll-off ship MV Cape Knox loaded more than 28,000 square feet of cargo Feb. 19-20 in Charleston, S.C. The load, including mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles, is destined for troops supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On Feb. 21-22, the Sealift Logistics Command Atlantic Charleston office arranged for the discharge of more than 20,000 square feet of cargo returning from Iraq aboard large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Sealy.

From March 4-7, LMSR USNS Mendonca loaded about 500 MRAP vehicles destined for Iraq. This was the largest deployment of the mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles loaded on an MSC-converted vessel to date.

Rich Bolduc, SEALOGLANT’s Jacksonville, Fla., representative, visited LMSR USNS Sidero to inspect deployment readiness as MSC’s offload team began loading the ship’s cargo for the deployment.

A Military Sealift Command-contracted crew of nine merchant mariners sailed Army tug Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene into Yokohama, Japan, March 3. The 128-foot, 924-ton tug normally crewed by 24 Army soldiers set sail Dec. 21. The vessel is home-ported in Japan. The Army wanted to transport the vessel without tying up a frigate and its crew, so the service turned to MSC to provide a solution. “MSC displayed its maritime flexibility to meet this unique requirement,” said Tim Pickering, MSC cargo project officer. “We were able to respond quickly to the Army and to deliver the tug on time.”

More than 50 Republic of Korea local and national media, as well as numerous international media, observed offshore petroleum distribution system ship MV Vice Adm. K.R. Wheeler demonstrate its offloading capability at Chinhae’s Korean navy base Feb. 26.

The mediation also visited Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 1st Lt. Jack Lummus, hosted by civilian Capt. Rich Horne and Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three command Captain Jeff Lammance. Lummus’ Chief Mate Dan Reed also provided a tour of the vessel and briefed the media on the ship’s mission and capabilities.

Lummus also hosted Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Peter J. Tallett, commanding general, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force — deployed to Korea as part of exercise Key Resolve 2008, one of two major Korean defense exercises conducted each year.

Feb. 8, Rear Adm. Carol Pottener, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group Seven/Task Force 76, toured Wheeler at the commanding officers from the supporting command’s executive officer. Supplied supervisor Navy Storekeeper 1st Class Ubaldu Huaroama reported aboard, as did operations officer Navy Chief Boatswain’s Mate Heath Breden.

MSCO Diego Garcia bid fair winds and following seas to chief Boatswain’s Mate Reynaldo Macawili and Navy Storekeeper Seaman Matthew Rodriguez.
T-AKE 2 working hard during first deployment

By Gillian Brigham
SEALOGUE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Sacagawea got underway for its first deployment Dec. 11 and since then has been busy in the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet area of operations.

Oil spill exercise

Just days after arriving in theater, Sacagawea took part in an oil spill response drill Feb. 5 at the Port of Jebel Ali in the United Arab Emirates. MSC logistics ships operating in the area frequently stop in Jebel Ali to load supplies and fuel they need to deliver to U.S. Navy and coalition warships conducting maritime security operations in the Persian Gulf.

The purpose of the drill was to test the Port of Jebel Ali’s fire/rescue/pollution squad response time to an accidental oil spill while conducting fueling operations. The drill was organized by the commercial fueling company that loads MSC ships in the United Arab Emirates.

“Protection of the environment is a core Military Sealift Command operating principle and a responsibility we take very seriously,” said Sacagawea’s civil service master Capt. George McCarthy. “We share this responsibility with our partners at shoreside facilities. This exercise demonstrates our shared understanding of our responsibility and our commitment and ability to work together in its fulfillment.”

For Sacagawea, the drill gave the crew a great opportunity to “test the effectiveness of our response procedures, our ability to communicate and effectively respond to situations like this,” said McCarthy. During the drill, Sacagawea simulated a leak in the cargo-loading arm, which caused fuel to spill over the side of the ship and onto the pier. The ship alerted the response team, and the on-scene commander arrived within six minutes of the alert to assess the situation. The crew successfully deployed absorbent pads and booms to contain the mock spill, and a fire truck and ambulance arrived to tend to potential fires or casualties.

“The active participation of Sacagawea’s crew is highly commendable,” said the fuel company manager Deepak Bhatia. “They demonstrated a high degree of professionalism and spirit in making this drill a success.”

Rescue at sea

Seventeen days later, Sacagawea rescued 10 Iraqi citizens from a sinking 250-foot coastal tanker in the central Persian Gulf.

The Bahrain-based maritime liaison office issued an alert that the North Korean-flagged MV Nadi was sinking and that the ship’s crew needed assistance Feb. 22. Nadi, which was actively flooding, had been operating without power for a week, and its crew members were suffering from dehydration and exhaustion.

Sacagawea, which was conducting logistics operations in the area, arrived on-scene to help shortly after the distress call.

Aircraft from aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman’s Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 7 picked up the seamen and delivered them to Sacagawea, where they were examined by medical officers.

“Sacagawea’s crew provided shower facilities, laundered the rescued crew’s clothing and provided meals,” said McCarthy. “Many crew members also generously donated clothing, outerwear and shoes.”

MV Nadi’s captain thanked Sacagawea’s crew for giving them back their lives.

The helicopters transferred the Iraqi mariners to the United Kingdom’s Royal Fleet Auxiliary landing ship dock Cardigan Bay Feb. 23. The next day, the mariners were transferred to the Iraqi navy for further transport to their country of origin.

This is the maiden deployment of Sacagawea, the second ship of MSC’s new class of Lewis and Clark dry cargo/ammunition ships. Sacagawea is currently serving in the Middle East.

Survey ship visits Jakarta

By Edward Baxter
SEALOGFE Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command oceanographic survey ship USNS Mary Sears visited Jakarta, Indonesia, Feb. 18-22, marking 30 years of bilateral cooperation in hydrographic surveying between the U.S. and Indonesian navies.

The visit also marked the first return of Mary Sears to Indonesian waters since the survey ship helped the Indonesian navy locate a commercial jet that crashed off the coast of Sulawesi in January 2007. Mary Sears found the Adam Air black box voice recorder, as well as scattered wreckage in water about 2,000 meters deep. USNS John McDonnell, one of six other oceanographic survey ships in MSC’s inventory, also surveyed areas off Aceh, Indonesia, in early 2005 when a tsunami devastated the island of Sumatra.

“Indonesia and the United States have a long history of hydrographic and oceanographic cooperation,” said Capt. John Cousins, commanding officer of the Naval Oceanographic Office, based at Stennis Space Center, Miss. “We hope our visit here to Jakarta will lead to even more cooperation between our offices in the future.”

Since the first survey mission was conducted in 1976, it is estimated that the United States and Indonesia have engaged in more than 200 survey missions around Indonesia — a vast archipelago of about 17,000 islands in Southeast Asia.

Mary Sears uses sophisticated technology to create three-dimensional maps of the sea floor, which are used in military and commercial maritime navigation. The ship also uses sensors to measure water temperature, salinity and currents in the ocean.

“Our cooperation in conducting these surveys has led to increased safety of navigation, safety at sea, as well as the protection of our marine environment,” said Indonesian navy Rear Adm. Willem Rampangilei, chief hydrographer of Jawatan Hidro-Oseanografi, Indonesia’s equivalent of the U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office.

Other officers from Indonesia’s hydrographic office observed technical equipment up close and saw hydrographic charts — one of which was produced when the Adam Air wreckage was found.

Rampangilei and Cousins spoke to more than 200 marine journalism students in a press conference held aboard the ship, Feb. 20, at Tanjung Priok port just outside Indonesia’s capital city. Members of the press and the Indonesian navy also took the opportunity to tour the ship, led by Chief Mate Andrew Swan, a merchant mariner who works for a private company under contract to MSC.