USNS Lawrence H. Gianella Completes its Final Underway Mission

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command’s last champion class T-5 petroleum tanker, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella (T-AOT 1125), completed its final underway mission for the U.S. Navy by sailing down the Elizabeth River to downtown Norfolk, Virginia in support of National Maritime Day, May 23.

Christened April 19, 1986, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella’s primary role has been to perform point-to-point delivery of petroleum products to Department of Defense storage and distribution facilities worldwide.

“USNS Lawrence H. Gianella is the last and longest serving U.S. government-owned champion class T-5 Tanker,” said Matthew Sweeney, Military Sealift Command Tanker Project Officer. “As the longest serving T-5 Tanker she moved more petroleum for the U.S. military than any other vessel in U.S. military history.”

“USNS Lawrence H. Gianella was the last of five T-5 tankers built,” said Capt. Robert J. Mills III, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella’s ship master since 1998. “The Gianella is a liaison between commercial petroleum terminals and Department of Defense fuel facilities around the world.”

The other T-5 tankers in the U.S. Navy’s inventory were the MV Gus W. Darnell (ATO-1121), USNS Paul Buck (T-AOT 1122), USNS Richard G. Matthiesen (T-AOT 1124) and the USNS Samuel L. Cobb (T-AOT 1123).

“Military Sealift Command operated its T-5 tankers in each of its five area commands, MSC Atlantic, MSC Pacific, MCS Central, MSC Far East and MSC Europe and Africa,” added Mills. USNS Lawrence H. Gianella is the last non-combat logistics force petroleum tanker in MSC service capable of providing underway replenishment-at-sea services with combatants using the modular fuel distribution system (MFDS), according to Sweeney.

“Fuel is the lifeblood of the U.S. Navy’s combatant fleet,” said Mills. “USNS Lawrence H. Gianella is able to re-stock MSC’s fleet oilers and Navy combatant ships while at sea using its two re-fueling stations. We would pull into port and bring fuel to our fleet oilers so that they could remain at sea.”

MSC Headquarters is Proudly ISO 9001:2015 QMS Accredited
GUAM CHRISTENING, PAY RAISE UPDATE

From Commander, Military Sealift Command

Recently we had the opportunity to participate, through reflection and recognition, in two important national events, National Maritime Day and Memorial Day.

On May 22, we joined with communities around the nation to celebrate National Maritime Day. We bow our heads in silent memorial to our Merchant Mariner shipmates who crossed the bar for the final time this past year and honor the great sacrifice Merchant Mariners have made throughout our nation's history.

On this day, we also recognize the greatness and strategic importance of the maritime industry. Merchant Mariners, the shipbuilding and repair industry, and maritime companies have been essential to American economic prosperity since the founding of our nation. And in support of our national defense, it is Merchant Mariners, like our Department of Defense Civilian Mariners, who sail the ships with the fuel, supplies, and combat equipment that enable our armed forces to operate globally.

Then on May 27, we observed Memorial Day, an important occasion to reflect, consider the price of freedom, and remember our fallen countrymen who died while serving in our armed forces.

The National Moment of Remembrance at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day provides an opportunity for all Americans to observe one minute of silence and honor those who have died in service to our nation.

As we take time out on Monday to reflect, let us not forget the families of the fallen. They carry a heavy burden for a lifetime. We admire their courage and honor their sacrifices.

The Memorial Day weekend also signals the beginning of the summer season, what our Navy team often calls the “101 Days of Summer,” a time for vacation, travel, and increased outdoor activity. For many, these new activity patterns can be linked to increased risk. Everyone, regardless of age, must be mindful of safety over the summer. Risk management techniques should guide our participation in new activities as should a large measure of “common sense.”

Safe outcomes are enhanced with the basics: wear a seatbelt, don’t text while driving, don’t drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, have a plan when traveling, be aware of your surroundings, and look out for your teammates, friends and family.

Thank you for the work you do each day at MSC and your service to our nation.

USNS Guam Christening

On Saturday, April 27, the Navy christened our high-speed transport, USNS Guam (HST 1). We are honored to have an MSC ship named after the territory of Guam and grateful to have as the ship’s sponsor, Ms. Bruni Bradley, a retired naval officer and spouse of Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Korea Harry B. Harris, Jr.

The name Guam is no stranger to our Navy as three ships have proudly represented the territory of Guam; a patrol boat, a cruiser, and an amphibious assault ship. We are honored to bring the name back officially.

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The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) worked proactively with payroll providers throughout this process to help ensure the execution happened as seamlessly as possible. After OPM issued the new pay tables and guidance, payroll providers worked quickly to update their systems and process retroactive pay actions.

While the exact timing of implementation varied, the majority of Department of Navy (DON) employees received their retroactive pay adjustment this past April.

Other employees who had a pay changing personnel action subsequent to Jan. 6, 2019, only received retroactive pay up to the effective date of the first subsequent action. The Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) Operations Centers must process manual personnel action corrections for all pay changing actions that occurred thereafter.

Due to the high volume of manual corrections needed across the DON, a small number of MSC personnel under the General Schedule pay system have yet to see the pay increase in their biweekly pay. These employees can reasonably expect to receive the full retroactive pay due by July 12, 2019.

Implementing the pay increase for every MSC employee is a priority. MSC’s Total Force Management representatives will remain in contact and engaged with the OCHR Operations Centers. This issue will continue to have our full attention until every member’s pay account is made whole. Thank you for the work you do each day at MSC and your service to our nation.

United We Sail,
Rear Adm. Dee L. Mewbourne, USN
Commander, Military Sealift Command

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On March 28, 2019, the President signed Executive Order 13866 authorizing a 1.4 percent across the board increase for statutory pay systems and locality pay increases of approximately 0.5 percent of basic payroll, reflecting an overall average pay increase of 1.9 percent for civilian Federal employees for 2019. This pay raise is retroactive to Jan. 6, 2019 (based on the standard biweekly payroll cycle).

We want to recognize and thank all those at MSC, and at other Navy and military commands, who played a role in the christening ceremony. We welcome Guam and crew into our family as they sail into the challenges ahead.

Pay Raise Update

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USNS Lawrence H. Gianella (T-AOT 1125), MSC’s longest serving dry cargo tanker, served as the back-drop for the ceremony honoring mariners. “USNS Lawrence H. Gianella serves as a reminder of the purpose and importance of National Maritime Day, recognizing the people and maritime industries that produced this ship, maintained and operated her for 33 years, and the thousands of professional and dedicated Mariners who sailed on her,” said Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, Commander, Military Sealift Command.

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FLEET WEEK continued on page 8

Honoring our Mariners: Maritime Day Norfolk

By Shevonne Cleveland, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command paid homage to the contributions of mariners and the maritime industry during a celebration co-hosted with the Propeller Club to celebrate National Maritime Day, May 22.

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The U.S. Navy’s newest Expeditionary Fast Transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) got underway from Norfolk with 26 civilian mariners and 20 active duty and reserve sailors to participate in Fleet Week New York, May 22-28.

The ship joined the annual celebration of the sea services with the U.S. Navy ships USN New York (LPD 21), USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), USS Milwaukee (LCS 5), USS Hue City (CG 66) and USS Tornado (PC 14). The U.S. Coast Guard ships USCGC Lawrence O. Lawson (WPC 1120), USCGC Katherine Walker (WLM 522) and USCGC Campbell (WMEC 909) also participated in Fleet Week. Additionally, two ships from the Royal Canadian Navy, HMCS Glace Bay (MM 701) and the sailing ship HMCS Oriole, sailed the waters of the Hudson River for the event.

Burlington was the featured ship at the State University of New York Maritime College in the Bronx. Other participating vessels were located throughout the greater New York City area to include Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn and King’s Point.

Excitement and curiosity of Burlington’s arrival brought thousands of New Yorkers to the ship, including local media outlets, school groups and distinguished visitors. More than 4,160 visitors came aboard the ship during the Fleet Week New York.

Military Sealift Command Atlantic Welcomes Thousands of Visitors at New York Fleet Week 2019

By LaShawn Sykes, Military Sealift Command Atlantic

A view of Military Sealift Command’s expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) as it pulls into New York to support the city’s annual Fleet Week. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)

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A view of Military Sealift Command’s expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) as it pulls into New York to support the city’s annual Fleet Week. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)
Congressman John Lewis Attends Keel Laying of Namesake Ship

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific

Employees from Military Sealift Command, General Dynamics NASSCO of San Diego and dignitaries from across the country celebrated the keel laying of MSC’s newest ship, USNS John Lewis at the NASSCO shipyard San Diego recently.

Kevin Graney, NASSCO president welcomed ship namesake, Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), and ship’s sponsor, actress Alfre Woodard to the ceremony.

“I am absolutely thrilled to be here today in the capacity of sponsor to this great ship,” said Woodard in her remarks. “As a leader, John Lewis is a bright light in the service of our country. May this ship be a beacon in times of darkness.”

“I tried to promise myself that I would not be overcome, but this is too much,” said Lewis.

USNS John Lewis will serve the U.S. Navy as a replenishment oiler under the control of MSC. The ship is the lead ship of her class of 20 perspective ships that will all be in the Lewis class.

The ship honors Lewis, a 17-term congressman and a well-known civil rights activist, known for his courage during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He organized voter registration drives and community action programs during the Mississippi Freedom Summer. He led over 600 peaceful, orderly protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965, where the group was attacked by Alabama state troopers in a brutal confrontation that became known as “Bloody Sunday.” Throughout his life, Lewis has remained a devoted advocate of the philosophy of nonviolence, and continues to advocate for peace throughout the world.

“We need great ships, like this one, to carry our men and women in our continued work for peace, because we are one world,” said Lewis.

Following construction and christening, the ship will go through a rigorous schedule of tests and inspections before joining the MSC fleet of over 120 ships, operating throughout the world.

Military Sealift Command’s USNS Richard E. Byrd Replenishes USS William P. Lawrence

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East

Military Sealift Command’s fleet ordnance and dry cargo ship USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4) conducted a replenishment-at-sea (RAS) with guided missile destroyer USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110) in the South China Sea, May 8.

The two ships steered side-by-side while the Richard E. Byrd transferred about 130,000 gallons of diesel fuel and about 10,000 gallons of jet fuel, and cargo.

“Proficiency is vital in mission readiness and achieving overall operation success,” said civilian mariner Olivia Osborne, navigator, USNS Richard E. Byrd. “By ensuring proper scheduling, effective communication, timeliness and other essential attention-to-detail aspects, the crew is able to successfully conduct a replenishment-at-sea evolution and support our customers’ needs.”

During a RAS, the delivery ship, in this case the Richard E. Byrd, takes tactical control of the receiving ship. The receiving ship pulls up from behind of the delivery ship and positions itself abreast and about 200 feet away from the delivery ship.

“When an evolution goes smoothly and successfully, it’s a beautiful piece of choreography,” said Osborne. “Cohesion is key when providing our customers with all aspects of what they need in a timely manner.”

Once the ships are side-by-side, one of the vessels launches a shotline to the other in order to send a messenger and span wire across to the other vessel. When the span wire is connected, the process of deploying the fuel hoses are set in motion.

MSC conducts hundreds of replenishments a year supporting the U.S. Navy and partner nations. Despite a vast experience in RAS operations, the procedure is inherently dangerous.

“In order to eliminate complacency, it’s critical to remain focused on every individual task at hand and make attention-to-detail a priority,” said civilian mariner Nathan Wheeler, operations chief, USNS Richard E. Byrd.

USNS Richard E. Byrd is currently operating in the U.S. Navy 7th fleet area-of-responsibility.
Guam Commemorates National Maritime Day
By Alana Chargualaf, Joint Region Marianas

In observance of National Maritime Day, local and military officials, along with members of the maritime community, gathered to honor the nation’s merchant mariners and seafarers in Guam May 22.

The day’s events began with a proclamation signing by Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor’s Complex in Hagatna, where those in attendance acknowledged the sacrifice and dedication of merchant, civilian, and contract mariners, who contribute their time and talent to the nation’s commercial and military operations. They also recognized those who have lost their lives doing so.

Cmdr. Ted Huebner, commanding officer, Military Sealift Command Ship Support Unit Guam, regarded merchant mariners as the nation’s fourth arm of defense and one of the most dangerous military professions, especially during times of war. Further, he recognized mariners as the “lifeblood” of the economy in both Guam and the U.S. mainland.

Later in the day, local and military officials, along with Coast Guardsmen and Sailors, boarded U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kiska (WPB-1336) and set out of Apra Harbor for a wreath-laying ceremony, at sea.

In 1933, members of the U.S. Congress signed a joint resolution, designating May 22 of each year as National Maritime Day, in commemoration of the first transoceanic voyage by the American steamship S.S. Savannah in 1819.

U.S. 6th Fleet Units Participate in Exercise Argonaut 2019
From U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs

The Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Yuma (T-EPF 8) and a P-8A Poseidon, attached to Patrol Squadron (VP) 10, began participation in exercise Argonaut in Limassol, Cyprus with the Cyprus Air Force and British Royal Navy, May 27.

The Republic of Cyprus Joint Rescue Coordination Center-led exercise is designed to develop the individual and collective maritime proficiency of participating nations in search and rescue and non-combatant evacuation operations, as well as promote mutual understanding, cooperation, and interoperability.

The exercise is a demonstration of the U.S. Navy’s continued commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships in the European region.

“Participating in exercise Argonaut gives us two excellent opportunities: To test our maritime interoperability at sea with our partners and to enjoy the beautiful city of Limassol on liberty, while engaging with the local community during a small but meaningful service project,” Gregory Jonic, Yuma military detachmnet officer in charge, said. “Fourteen of our Sailors spent their Memorial Day cleaning and painting a local children’s playground park. We also welcomed Cypriot and British military and civilian personnel and local media to the ship for tours and a reception.”

U.S. Navy ships and personnel from U.S. military units stationed in the continental United States and from U.S. installations in the Indo-Pacific will participate with approximately 200 aircraft from all services.

Military Sealift Command Conducts First Ever Cargo Load-out in Seward, Alaska in Support of Exercise Northern Edge 2019
By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific

The Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187) made history by conducting the first ever cargo operation by MSC in Seward, Alaska, May 16. The ship took on cargo as part of its support of the joint training exercise Northern Edge 2019.

During operations, Kaiser loaded 53 pallets of cargo that will be delivered to U.S. Navy ships participating in the exercise.

Alaska’s strategic location is vital to maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Conducting cargo operations in Seward allows MSC and its ships to provide much needed supplies to ships conducting operations in the area, or passing through to other theaters of operation.

“The world today is more dynamic than it has been in the past,” explained Cmdr. Paul Benishek, Military Sealift Command Pacific’s Logistics officer. “Having a variety of ports and facilities to operate from allows MSC to be flexible and to move throughout our various areas of operations to provide logistics services to Navy combatant ships.”

After completing its support in Seward, Henry J. Kaiser (T- AO 187) continued its support of the Northern Edge 2019, in the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex.

Kaiser has provided logistics services to the U.S. Navy ships participating in Northern Edge, delivering 179 pallets of food and supplies.

“Being a part of exercise Northern Edge 2019 is a great opportunity for MSC and Capt. Gabe Varela, commander Military Sealift Command Pacific. “Conducting logistics support operations in an area that we don’t normally operate in, along with our Navy counterparts, is another example of preparations that will allow us to respond to crises in the Indo-Pacific region.”

Kaiser is one of two MSC ships supporting Northern Edge 2019. MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Rappahannock (T- AO 204) is also providing logistics support in the area.

Northern Edge 2019 a joint training exercise hosted by 11th Air Force, on and above central Alaska ranges and the Gulf of Alaska. Northern Edge is one in a series of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command exercises in 2019 that prepares joint forces to respond to crises in the Indo-Pacific. The exercise is designed to sharpen participants’ tactical combat skills, to improve command, control and communication relationships, and to develop interoperable plans and programs across the joint force. Nearly 6,000 personnel from U.S. military units stationed in the continental United States and from U.S. installations in the Indo-Pacific will participate with approximately 200 aircraft from all services.
Pacific Partnership 2019 Concludes Mission Stop in Timor-Leste

By Petty Officer 1st Class Nathan Carpenter, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

Coastal Riverine Squadron 2 Conducts Mark VI Astern Refuel at-Sea Exercise

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Philip Wagner, Jr., Commander, Task Force 75 Public Affairs

Pacific Partnership 2019 Concludes Mission Stop in Timor-Leste

Senior mission leadership, host nation and partner nation participants attended the closing ceremony of the fifth Pacific Partnership 2019 (PP19) mission stop in Dili, Timor-Leste, May 3.

"This was the seventh time that Timor-Leste hosted Pacific Partnership," said U.S. Ambassador to Timor-Leste Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick. "While tonight marks the end of this particular exercise, it is by no means the end of the longstanding and mutually beneficial partnership between Timor-Leste and the United States of America."

During the two-week mission stop in Timor-Leste, participants from PP19, including the Timor-Leste Defense Force, military personnel from PP19 partner nations, and civilians from local government agencies collaborated to launch two engineering projects and complete a third one, participate in eight host nation outreach engagements, nine performances by the Pacific Fleet Band, 20 medical, dental and veterinary side-by-side subject matter exchanges, and five humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exchanges that culminated in an extensive tabletop training exercise, simulating local response to a disaster.

"It’s an exciting experience for our people to witness the great cooperation between military and civilians with different nationalities and cultures in unity of action," said Timor-Leste Minister of Foreign Affairs Dionisio Babo Soares. "Providing humanitarian, medical and engineering support, as well as social and sport programs has touched our lives to further friendship and connection between people in the region."

Pacific Partnership began in response to one of the world’s most catastrophic natural disasters, the December 2004 tsunami that devastated parts of South and Southeast Asia. The mission has evolved over the years from emphasis on direct care to an operation focused on enhancing partnerships through host nation subject matter expert and civil-military exchanges.

Working at the invitation of each host nation, Pacific Partnership collaborates with partner nations including Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and the United Kingdom to strengthen disaster response preparedness around the Indo-Pacific region.

“As this mission comes to a close, the lines of communication remain open and strengthened by every bond and relationship created here,” said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Joey Tynch, Task Force 73 commander. “We look to continue this great work together and strengthening our relationship with Timor-Leste into the future.”

Timor-Leste is one of several host nations for Pacific Partnership 2019. The Pacific Partnership mission teams have also made stops in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Philippines, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Malaysia, and are scheduled to make stops in Vietnam and Thailand. Experts in the fields of engineering, medicine and disaster response partner with each host nation to conduct civic-action projects, community health exchanges, medical symposiums, and disaster response exercises.

Pacific Partnership’s mission is to work collectively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase stability and security in the region, and foster new and enduring friendships across the Indo-Pacific region. Pacific Partnership, now in its 14th iteration, is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific region.

Coastal Riverine Squadron 2 Conducts Mark VI Astern Refuel at-Sea Exercise

Sailors assigned to Coastal Riverine Squadron (CRS) 2 conducted a astern refueling training evolution with the Military Sealift Command maritime prepositioning force container, roll-on/roll-off and mobile landing platform USNS Dahl (T-AKR 312) during a replenishment-at-sea in Apra Harbor, May 24.

The coastal riverine force has performed astern replenishments-at-sea (RAS) multiple times in recent years, but this is the first time it’s been conducted in Guam in several years.

“It’s extremely important to prove the concept of getting fuel from a non-traditional expeditionary support platform,” said Lt. Max Duncan, Patrol Officer.

Duncan added, “It’s important to us because it will allow us to reach out far beyond Guam to other island chains in the Federated States of Micronesia, and even farther.”

The astern refueling is a proof-of-concept with the Dahl to demonstrate the Mark VI’s ability to conduct a RAS, ultimately allowing the patrol boats extended sustainment while at sea.

“Sailors performed at the absolute highest levels. The evolution was swift, safe and a complete mission success. The whole thing could not have gone any better from my perspective,” said Duncan.

For some of the Sailors at CRS 2 this was the first time they have ever been involved in a RAS.

“This is the first time for me to be involved in a refueling at sea, especially on the Mark VI patrol boat. It felt really good to see the crew motivated, excited to complete and accomplish a pretty complicated evolution like this,” said Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Jimmy Edwards, Granbury, Texas.

“I have not done this type of evolution before in any capacity, this was a first for me on a Mark VI and the Navy,” Information Systems Technician 1st Class Geoffrey Trimble, Columbus, Georgia, boat captain for patrol boat 1205.

Trimble added, “I would definitely reiterate the crawl, walk and run method of training; practicing in port we learned a lot, while still a complicated evolution the pier-side lessons made today’s underway evolution easier.”

Edwards added, “It makes me feel really good to be involved in what I believe will be a critical moment for this program. If something happens we will be able to transit our boats with our own crew, complete our mission, and be able to refuel while we are out there.”

CRS-2, assigned to Coastal Riverine Group 1, Det. Guam, is capable of conducting maritime security operations across the full spectrum of naval, joint and combined operations. Further, it provides additional capabilities of port security, embarked security and theater security cooperation around the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.
Beyond Religious Boundaries; Learning from the Holocaust
By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Civilian teammates and service members assigned to Military Sealift Command attended a special observance for the Days of Remembrance for Victims of the Holocaust at Naval Station Norfolk, May 15.

“The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945,” according to the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute website. “Jews were the primary victims of the Holocaust. Six million people were murdered; Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), people with mental and physical disabilities, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi Germany.”

“Prejudice, or hatred of Jews, known as anti-Semitism, has plagued the world for more than 2000 years,” said Mrs. Dorothy Hughes, a ceremony keynote speaker and representative from the Holocaust Commission of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater. “The Holocaust is the world’s most extreme example of this hatred.”

“In 1933 the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million,” said Hughes. “By 1945, the Nazis and their corroborators, had murdered six million Jews; nearly two out of every three Jews in Europe.”

The special observance featured a video of William John Jucksch, a forward observer and infantry liaison radio operator in the U.S. Army’s 71st Infantry Division during World War II. Jucksch was one of the liberators of an estimated 10,000 near-death Jews at the Nazi death camp Gunskirchen Lager.

In the video, Jucksch described the victims and environment he encountered at the death camp. “Well, they were all hollow-cheeked, boney and pretty hungry. As we were getting closer to the camp, we started seeing a lot of bodies, strewn all over the place, in the fields, on the roads. These were all people who had obviously been starving for a long time.”

“The closer we got to the campsite, the more the bodies, and then when we got to the camp there were bodies just everywhere,” he continued. “And the people (who were alive in the camp) were so weak that they could barely get out of the buildings to see the liberators.”

There was almost no way you can describe what was being seen,” Jucksch said. “There is no single word to describe the mood, it was a horror show, one of disgust.”

Jucksch passed away in 2017 leaving his wife, two sons, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

“We hope to help people understand the consequences that result from hatred, prejudice and discrimination, and how they can lead to unimaginable tragedies, like the Holocaust,” said Hughes. “We hope that you will speak up if you witness these things, even if others do not. Our hope is to prevent this tragedy from ever happening again to anyone, anywhere at any time.”

The week of remembrance is set aside to honor and remember the victims of the Holocaust and their liberators, so we never forget the great atrocity of which mankind is capable and to remember the strength of the human spirit.

“Days of Remembrance’ raises awareness that democratic institutions’ values are not simply sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured and protected,” said Ms. Terri Blair, MSC’s mistress of ceremonies for the special observance.

Asian Pacific Heritage Month
By Shevonne Cleveland, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Service members and civilian support staff attached to Military Sealift Command gathered at Vista Point at Naval Station Norfolk to celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, May 30.

Military Sealift Command’s special observance program hosted the event to honor the sacrifices and accomplishments of Asian American Pacific Islander citizens.

“The contributions of Americans of Asian and Pacific Islander descent are firmly woven into the diverse fabric of our nation. During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of Americans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage that have enriched our great country and helped define our history,” according to President Donald J. Trump’s 2019 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Presidential Proclamation. “These Americans bolster our economy as entrepreneurs, business owners, and employees who initiate and expand opportunities for their families, communities, and country.”

Jean Dumlao, Director of Public Works for Naval Facilities Engineering Command Mid-Atlantic, was the keynote speaker for MSC’s Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month special observance.

“My mother was only four years old when the Japanese invaded the Philippines,” said Dumlao. “She and her family fled and escaped into the jungle. She remembers her one-year-old baby brother, and uncle succumbed to illness while living in the jungle. When my parents talked about their experience they always counterbalanced the turmoil they experienced with the optimism and hope that they saw when America came back and liberated the Philippine islands Oct. 20, 1944.”

“My family is very proud to be here, and we are very proud to serve, and it’s because of our great country and the willingness for people to fight for freedom,” Dumlao said. “That’s what America did in the 1940s, they fought for freedom for the people of the Philippines.”

The observance recognizing Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month was established by Title 36, U.S. Code, Section 102. This observance runs through the months of May and celebrates the service and sacrifices of Asian/Pacific Islanders throughout the United States. The theme for Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2019 is ‘Unite Our Mission, By Engaging Each Other.’
From 2009-2012, we were part of the prepositioning fleet out of Diego Garcia,” said Mills. “While in this role, the ship was on standby to respond to a crisis in a variety of areas including the Persian Gulf, Africa, or locations in the Far East.”

“While in the MSC inventory, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella has incurred minimal down time and its length of time in service is a testament to how well this ship was built,” said Mills.

USNS Lawrence H. Gianella is owned by MSC and crewed by civilian mariners from Ocean Ships Inc., whose duties include running the deck department, engine department and steward’s department.

“We have typically been crewed by 23 civilian mariners and occasionally travel with two maritime academy cadets,” Mills said. “In addition to myself, we have a chief mate, two third mates, one bosun, five able bodied seamen, and two deck engineers.

“On the engine side of the crew, we have one chief engineer, one first engineer, and a second engineer,” he added. “The engine team also includes one pump-men and two qualified members of the engine department.

“Our galley is crewed by one steward, one cook and two galley stewards utilities personnel,” according to Mills.

The ship’s namesake, Lawrence Henry Gianella, recipient of the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal, was born on Feb. 15, 1921, in California. On Dec. 19, 1941, Gianella was serving as the radio operator on board unarmed U.S. freighter S.S. Prusa when Japanese submarine I-172 torpedoed and sank the ship in the mid-Pacific Ocean, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command website.

The explosion blew through Prusa’s after decks, wrecking the engines and dynamos, and it became immediately apparent that the ship would remain afloat for only a few minutes.

The ship’s master ordered the crew to prepare to abandon ship, and an officer directed Gianella to send an S.O.S., but found the radio operator already engaged in rigging an emergency set.

The crewmen meanwhile lowered lifeboats, and the master sent orders to Gianella to join them. He had not been able to get his message through. However, and realizing that upon him rested all hope for the rescue of his shipmates, Gianella refused to leave his post and chose to face certain death in his stark devotion to duty.

“We, the crew of USNS Lawrence H. Gianella feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve aboard this ship,” Mills concluded. “Serving aboard this ship has been very much like serving with family.”

The five sister ships of the USNS Lawrence H. Gianella were also named after Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal honorees. Upon deactivation, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella will be placed in layup in coastal Texas.

“Fleet Week has been an amazing opportunity for us to show the many facets of the Navy that many people do not usually see. It has also been a wonderful chance to meet all kinds of people from the New York community, getting to interact with them, hear how the military has impacted their lives and families,” said Navy Reserve Lt. Phil Criswell, assistant officer in charge of naval personnel. “And of course, nothing beats seeing students come aboard, then leaving screaming “HOO YAH!” at the top of their lungs.”

Kelly Ramos, a middle school teacher at the Edward R. Byrne in the Bronx, brought 155 students to visit USNS Burlington. As an educator, Ramos commented that experiences like this helps enhance a student’s education as well as providing opportunities to learn more about future careers.

“They enjoyed the opportunity to see what’s out there, what sort of things they can go into in the future as well as what jobs are available outside of the day-to-day,” said Ramos. “We are college and career ready at the middle school. We tell our students that this is a real viable option especially since SUNY Maritime is so close to where they live.”

Burlington’s master, Capt. Aaron Reiss hosted a reception in the ship’s mission bay to celebrate the ship’s participation in Fleet Week with SUNY Maritime College. Visiting guests included Rear Admiral Bob Clark, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command, and members of the college: Joe Hoffman, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs; Mary Muecke, Executive director of External Affairs; Bob Wolf, associate director of Veteran and Military Affairs and other university staff members.

During the reception, Admiral Clark spoke about MSC’s capabilities and the role the command plays in global logistics. Likewise, be spoke to Sailors and cadets about the importance of their contributions to the fleet, providing a vision for those new to the sea service.