

March 2012

S.E.A.L.I.F.T

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

MSC showcases seabasing in

BOLD ALLIGATOR



U.S. Navy photo

An MV-22 Osprey lands on the flight deck of MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary off the coast of Virginia during exercise Bold Alligator 2012.

INSIDE — MSC implements new load management system • MSC Reservists support Cobra Gold

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Strategic DOD guidance: New equipment/missions for MSC

While DOD is looking at significant budget cuts in the next several years, the 2012 strategic guidance recently released by the Secretary of Defense has a definite maritime focus. It reaffirms the benefits and strengths of sea power and operating forward, focusing on the Pacific area of responsibility, but keeping a firm eye fixed on the Middle East and Southwest Asia at the same time.

As more and more U.S. ground forces come home, air and sea power will become the predominant strengths behind U.S. diplomacy. The added maritime focus means MSC will be the enabling force for U.S. power projection, goodwill and humanitarian assistance. Led by the strategic guidance, the Navy’s budget for fiscal years 2013-2017 produces a Navy-Marine Corps team built for war that is capable of operating forward to preserve the peace, responding to crises and protecting United States and allied interests. The force will be lean, agile, flexible, ready and technologically advanced. So what does that really mean for MSC?

It means that the many MSC missions around the world every day – be they in our government-operated fleet or our contractor-operated fleet – will become increasingly important to the execution of the new defense strategy. It also means new equipment and missions are headed our way.

AFSB(I)

Responding to a longstanding requirement for a mobile offshore base to support mine countermeasure operations and other support missions in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, amphibious transport dock ship USS Ponce’s decommissioning was postponed to prepare it for a new mission as an interim Afloat Forward Staging Base. Commander Fleet Forces Command turned to MSC to operate the ship using the proven combined-crew model used aboard command ship USS Mount Whitney and submarine tenders USS Frank Cable and USS Emory S. Land. Under the leadership of a Navy captain, 148 MSC CIVMARs will provide deck, engineering, navigation, galley and laundry services aboard the ship. As you read this column in early March, the ship is undergoing conversion maintenance, and after a brief training and workup cycle, will deploy to CENTCOM this summer. MSC Deputy Commander Rear Adm. Brian LaRoche and class manager Mike Ricci are leading this high-visibility new mission for MSC.

T-AGM

We accepted delivery of missile range instrumentation ship USNS Howard O. Lorenzen Jan. 10. Built by Halter Marine in Pascagoula, Miss., Lorenzen will replace USNS Observation Island, which was launched in 1953. Lorenzen will provide worldwide, high-quality, dual-band radar data for ballistic missile treaty verification. Led by Capt. Thomas Finger, the 12,575-ton ship is being crewed initially by 33 civil service mariners, but will transition to a crew of commercial mariners under contract to MSC when the ship achieves initial operational capability in 2013. The ship

will conduct extensive trials out of Norfolk for most of this year.

Mobile Landing Platform

The first three of the Navy’s four planned MSC-operated mobile landing platform ships have been named by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. USNS Montford Point, USNS John Glenn and USNS Lewis B. Puller will be flexible platforms providing capability for large-scale logistics movements such as transferring vehicles and equipment from sea to shore, or serving as Afloat Forward Staging Bases. This will significantly reduce our reliance on foreign ports and allow such operations where there are no ports. That makes them ideal for disaster response and support for the U.S. Marine Corps once troops are ashore. Each ship will be able to support a vehicle staging area, a side-port ramp, large mooring fenders and up to three landing craft, air-cushioned (LCAC) lanes, or other deck layouts as necessary. Keel laying for the first ship, Montford Point, occurred in January at General Dynamics National Steel and Ship Building Company in San Diego. The vessel will be delivered to MSC in fiscal year 2013 and be operational in 2015. MSC will contract for the operation of all four MLPs.

High-speed vessels

USNS Spearhead (JHSV 1) continues the fitting-out process at Austal in Mobile, Ala., while Capt. Doug Casavant and his crew undergo a rigorous training program and prepare to take custody of the ship later this spring. Meanwhile, work is progressing well on JHSV 2, which will be commanded by Capt. Rolin Bellfi. JHSVs will support joint- or coalition-force operations to transport troops, vehicles, cargo and equipment for a wide range of global missions, including humanitarian relief and civic

assistance. The 338-foot aluminum-hulled catamarans are designed to carry a 600-ton load and more than 300 troops for 1,200 miles at 35 knots. Capable of operating in shallow waters, the ship can interface with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities. The stern ramp is capable of handling M1A2 Abrams main battle tanks. The first four ships will be crewed by 22 CIVMARs each, and the remainder will be crewed by commercial mariners working for ship operating companies under contract to MSC.

In addition to the JHSVs, the Department of transportation transferred two commercial high-speed vessels – Huakai and Alakai - to the Navy in January. After modifications this spring, MSC will operate the ships through commercial maritime companies. One ship will fulfill mission requirements for the Marine Corps in Okinawa currently being filled by HSV Westpac Express. The second vessel will be used for other potential missions.

SBX-1

In December, MSC added the Sea-based, X-band Radar platform, known as SBX-1, to our fleet. This unique ship is part of the U.S. ballistic missile defense system and helps us and our allies defend against missile threats using the world’s largest phased-array X-band radar set. The radar tracks, discriminates and assesses hostile ballistic missiles in flight. The semi-submersible, self-propelled vessel that carries the dome-shaped radar was developed from deep water oil exploration platform technology. At 389 feet in length and with a 238-foot beam, the vessel is bigger than the playing area and sidelines of most professional football stadiums. We’ll operate SBX-1 with 33 commercial mariners. Sponsor personnel will operate the radar and associated communications gear.

Better methods

We’ve been delivering supplies to the Navy at sea for decades. In all that time, we’ve always aimed at improving our service. Our new Combat Logistics Force load management system will mark a new era in delivering to the customer effectively and efficiently. Our CIVMARs are already outstanding cargo handlers, and their efforts will still be the driving force behind underway replenishment. The new management system and software are already allowing us to better track cargo location, availability and delivery. The shore-based, centralized inventory management system will help us reach a new level of service.

I could go on and on. There is a lot happening right now, and it is no accident that DOD and the Navy continue to turn to MSC for innovative solutions to the toughest maritime logistics and support missions. Your outstanding performance afloat and ashore makes it possible, and for that, you have my enduring gratitude and admiration.

Sail safe Shipmates!

Mark H. “Buz” Buzby
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Military Sealift Command

Moving forward with ONE MSC

On Jan. 9, 2012, we officially began the MSC realignment. After months of planning, discussion among the leadership and weighing of pros and cons, we were ready to move ahead. Every day, my confidence grows that this is the right thing for MSC at this time. It will definitely position us to be stronger and more efficient while we maintain our effectiveness in the trying times ahead.

The formalization of this realignment requires the commensurate paperwork, of course. The leaders and supervisors of MSC are working closely with the newly formed Total Force Management team to ensure that all position descriptions and SF50 documents have been edited to be correct in our new structure. This is a time-consuming task that we are targeting for completion in June. I encourage all of you to stay in touch with your supervisors. They will know the completion schedule for each area of competency.

In the meantime, I am very pleased to see the behavioral swing that is taking place in our programs. The two new program executives are taking charge of their organizations and are leading the government-operated and contractor-operated pieces of our business successfully. Recent mission acquisitions have been handled extremely well – an excellent example of how strong program management and supporting competency structures can work with success.

As we build our strong base of competencies we’ll use the guidance of our recently developed Strategic Workforce Plan. The Total Force Management team has obtained and developed tools and templates that we’ll use to strengthen our competency structure. There will be much to share on the Strategic Workforce Plan in future editions of Sealift, so stay tuned.

Again, I thank all of you for your support in these challenging times. Please stay engaged, ask questions, challenge what you see happening and ask “why?” Together we will make this a successful transition for MSC.



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CLF ships' new tech = better service

By Wayne Cox, MSFSC

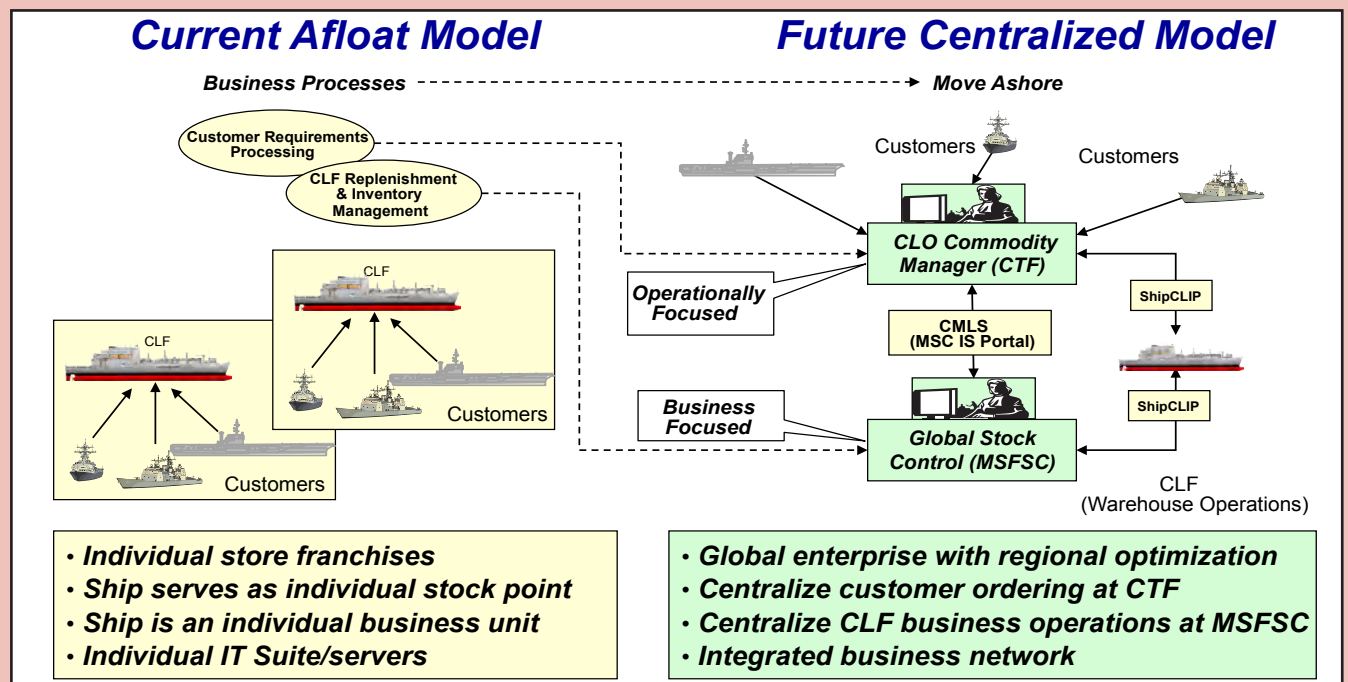
Thirty ships in Military Sealift Command's Combat Logistics Force are the logistics backbone of the Navy's global fleet. Operating 24/7, CLF ships keep hundreds of U.S. Navy ships supplied and able to remain at sea on task for extended periods of time. Last year alone, CLF ships delivered more than 1.3 million square feet of cargo and more than 583 million gallons of fuel to Navy ships at sea.

For MSC's CLF ships, getting the right supplies to the right ships in a timely manner is a daunting task. That task, however, has become easier due to a new globally integrated cargo load management system currently being implemented by MSC's CLF ships and six subordinate commands worldwide.

The old cargo load management system used outdated technology that was virtually unaltered since the 1960s. The new system offers unprecedented benefits over the previous one, including a comprehensive, real-time, centralized look at the total inventory of supplies on board CLF ships. Access to the big picture, in turn, has enabled CLF ships to more efficiently respond to the demands of fleet customers in need of food, fuel, spare parts and other vital supplies.

Ship inventories worldwide can now be monitored from six centralized locations ashore. Latest state-of-the-art computer technology enables both seagoing personnel and a shore-based management team to see accurate, up-to-date inventories. As a result, supply-laden CLF ships can be better directed to provide the necessary underway replenishment to Navy combatant ships at sea.

Shoreside support personnel dedicated to monitoring CLF ship inventories have already been trained at MSC Far East in Singapore and MSC Central in Bahrain. By mid-March, 19 CLF ships are scheduled to have completed the software upgrades that allow shoreside personnel to see total inventory information. All changes, ashore and afloat, are slated for completion by October 2012.



MSC's new globally integrated cargo load management system includes real-time, centralized access to ship supply inventories.

Leadup to change

The old cargo load management system was designed to support independently operating CLF ships, which all functioned as individual stock points to replenish Navy combatant ships at sea. Whenever specific supplies were needed aboard a ship, the crew could only contact the crew aboard a specifically assigned CLF ship to see if the ship was stocked with the desired cargo. For the Navy's seagoing forces, this piecemeal look at supply inventories – ship by ship – made it challenging and time consuming to locate and obtain urgently needed materials. A change was needed.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command and Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet – both of which oversee MSC's resupply of Navy combatant ships – asked MSC to improve that cargo load management system in October 2007. By March 2010, MSC completed a concept of operations that provided the initial framework for establishing how dry cargo/ammunition ships, fleet replenishment oilers and fast combat support ships could be reconfigured to provide more centralized, efficient support to the fleet.

"As MSC and the rest of the Navy continue to look for ways for efficient cost savings, while still providing

outstanding logistic support to our warfighters, global management of CLF stock levels is an imperative to success," said Navy Cmdr. Robert Keating, the officer in charge of the military department aboard MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Alan Shepard, one of the ships using the new cargo load management systems.

Making CLF more efficient

MSC's new cargo load management system eliminates some of the inefficiency inherent in the old ship-to-ship inventory search. The new system provides the capability to see and manage all CLF inventories from ashore, leaving the crews of CLF ships able to concentrate on physically handling and transferring cargo.

Accurate data is the first step to ensure high-quality viewing and efficient management of all CLF inventories from ashore. Using a software upgrade, called the Shipboard Load Management Module, all inventory data carried by the ships is transmitted via satellite link to a shore-based Global Stock Control Office, or GSCO, located at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., as well as a CLF logistics officer-led team based at each of MSC's five area commands worldwide.

Ashore in Norfolk, the GSCO performs

two primary functions; processing all CLF ship resupply requests and keeping track of all CLF ship inventories, including managing the financial transactions between ships.

At the area commands, the CLO team serves as a centralized point of contact to coordinate requests from all combatant ships in that area of operations. Based on the centralized inventory information available via satellite, the CLO team can accurately determine which CLF ships should resupply which Navy combatant ships.

The new cargo load management system went live in August 2011 when MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Amelia Earhart, MSC Far East and the GSCO in Norfolk participated in a major Pacific Fleet exercise supporting the USS George Washington Carrier Strike Group, successfully conducting 30 underway replenishments that transferred 2,400 pallets.

"CLO is likely the single biggest change in logistics going on in the Navy today," said Navy Capt. Matt Garside, Commander, Logistics Group, Western Pacific chief of staff. "We go from a large force afloat to a much smaller group ashore. We gain efficiency, save money and still deliver the goods."

Ponce receiving refit for new role as AFSB(I)

By James Marconi
MSC Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command civil service mariners will join forces with uniformed U.S. Navy personnel to crew USS Ponce, which is currently preparing for a new mission as an Afloat Forward Staging Base, destined for service in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, according to U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

Ponce, a long-serving Navy amphibious transport dock ship, had its scheduled 2012 decommissioning postponed as the ship is refitted for its new role. The ship will soon be re-designated as AFSB(I) 15 Ponce. The "I" stands for interim.

Although the ship will remain based at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., under the auspices of Commander Naval Surfaces Force, Atlantic, Ponce will deploy this summer to fulfill a long-standing request for an AFSB in USCENTCOM. Ponce will support mine counter-measure and coastal patrol ships, and aircraft operations. The ship will also have the capability to provide flexible support as needed for embarked detachments of personnel

when requested by USCENTCOM and U.S. 5th Fleet.

The ship entered a commercial shipyard in February to conduct deferred maintenance and modifications for the CIVMAR crew to support the ship's new mission. Completion is scheduled for mid-April. Modifications include replacing bridge equipment with modern commercial systems for the CIVMARs who will navigate, operate and maintain the ship.

In addition, Ponce's main propulsion boilers will be overhauled; main and auxiliary condensers will be cleaned; additional overhauls will be made and maintenance performed on existing ship's equipment; and the galley will be upgraded and overhauled.

A Navy captain will continue to command Ponce, overseeing a crew that will comprise 55 Navy officers and sailors, a MSC civil service master and 148 other CIVMARs. This hybrid crewing structure is similar to MSC's other commissioned ships; two submarine tenders and the command ship USS Mount Whitney.

In early February, USFF released a request for Navy volunteers to crew the

new AFSB – a great opportunity to be on the leading edge of a new program. The majority of the Navy crew billets will be filled with, but not limited to, information systems technicians, electronics technicians, fire controlmen, operations specialists, gunner's mates and seamen.

CIVMARs have an exciting opportunity to serve on this new platform.

"AFSB(I) 15 represents a particularly challenging mission for Military Sealift Command but we are well prepared," said MSC Deputy Commander, Rear Adm. Brian LaRoche. "The key to success remains exceptionally skilled civilian mariners with a strong desire to contribute directly to our national security. This is a terrific place for any civilian mariner seeking professional growth and adventure."



USS Ponce, seen here docked at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., postponed a scheduled decommissioning to be refitted as an Afloat Forward Staging Base. The vessel will be crewed in part by MSC civil service mariners.

Navy & Marine Corps part

By James Marconi
MSC Public Affairs

With the continuous roar of twin rotors sending powerful waves of air across the black flight deck, a U.S. Marine Corp MV-22 Osprey loaded with supplies for 100 Marines took off from Military Sealift Command dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Robert E. Peary.

The Feb. 9 shipboard landing and subsequent takeoff marked the first time an Osprey has operated with one of MSC's dry cargo/ammunition ships underway at sea, serving as a proof of concept that the ship class is a viable platform for Osprey aircraft supporting Marine missions. The mission in this case was an amphibious assault on Fort Pickett, Va., one of the centerpiece operations during Bold Alligator 2012 – the largest amphibious exercise in a decade.

“Bold Alligator gets us back to the Navy and Marine Corps’ fundamental role of power projection from the sea,” said Navy Rear Adm. Mark H. Buzby, commander, MSC. “It also gives us an opportunity to try new concepts, like this. The last time we conducted a major amphibious exercise on the East Coast, neither the Osprey nor the T-AKE were operational.”

Bold Alligator, which is dual-sponsored by U.S. Fleet Forces Command and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command, is intended to revitalize Navy and Marine Corps amphibious expeditionary tactics, techniques and procedures. Using a combination of live training and simulations, Bold Alligator's scenarios were designed to refocus the Navy and Marine Corps partnership on projecting power from the sea. The exercise, held Jan. 31 to Feb. 12, encompassed 25,000 personnel and 25 ships associated with a carrier strike group and two expeditionary strike groups. These groups deployed in three major areas of operation off the East Coast: Jacksonville, Fla., Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Fort Pickett.

Six MSC ships, including Peary, participated in the exercise. During the two-week training period, these MSC ships demonstrated the concept of seabasing, one of the core competencies at the heart of Bold Alligator. Seabasing, in principal, means that an amphibious force can operate with support from ships and other assets at sea, without having to depend on equipment, supplies and repair capabilities that might not be available in a real-world scenario.

MSC, as a principal provider of underway replenishment services and prepositioning capabilities, was well-positioned to give that level of operational flexibility to exercise participants. In addition to transferring fuel and food to other ships, an MSC vessel acted as a floating machine shop for aircraft, while another launched amphibious vehicles as part of a beach assault reminiscent of World War II. Although geographically separated by thousands of miles of coastline and open ocean, MSC's ships were tightly coordinated by MSC Atlantic, one of MSC's five area commands worldwide.

Combat Logistics Force ships

Peary and two other MSC Combat Logistics Force ships, fleet replenishment oilers USNS John Lenthall and USNS Laramie, kept combatant vessels fully fueled and supplied during Bold Alligator. Lenthall, assigned to the USS Enterprise carrier strike group, also helped conduct the normal certifications that the strike group will need prior to its regularly scheduled deployment. Laramie, assigned to the USS Iwo Jima expeditionary strike group, conducted underway replenishments off the coast of North Carolina. Laramie also helped conduct certification exercises, like visit, board, search and seizure, for the strike group's scheduled deployment.

Like Laramie and Lenthall, Peary also transferred fuel and food to exercise participants. Together, all three ships transferred millions of gallons of fuel during Bold Alligator.

rtners...

Peary, however, also tested high-level capabilities that will eventually be used by several MSC dry cargo/ammunition ships dedicated to Marine Corps missions. To start, Bold Alligator tested the ship's capacity to quickly locate vital materiel stored on board. Peary has very sophisticated cargo tracking identification software, which the embarked Marine personnel used to locate fuel and ammunition intentionally scattered all over the ship. Later, the Osprey transported a pallet of fuel in 5-gallon gas cans, two pallets of meals-ready-to-eat and ammunition cans, simulating live ammunition, to support a shore-based, 100-person Marine Expeditionary Landing Team during the Fort Pickett raid.

"I thought this was great," said Marine Lance Cpl.

Matthew McGriff, 2nd Supply Battalion, Supply Co., Supply Management Unit-Customer Service. "Supporting expeditionary Marines is what I do, so seeing what the Osprey and T-AKE can do together is really impressive."

Wright, Chouest and Obregon

Three other MSC ships also participated in Bold Alligator.

Off the coast of Virginia, aviation logistics support ship SS Wright hosted embarked Marine Corps personnel from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. With civilian personnel aboard the ship, the Marines provided the critical capability to practice aircraft repairs during the exercise.

"To understand Wright's participation in Bold Alligator, you must understand the context," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Chris Cook, the MSC liaison officer aboard the ship. "One part of Bold Alligator is the Marine Corps – in conjunction with the U.S. Navy and certain NATO nations – simulating a large-scale assault on a beach head. The USMC and Navy aviation component are a critical part of that operation. Any time you have large numbers of aircraft involved in sustained operations, sooner or later equipment on them will fail. Wright allows damaged aircraft to get back into the fight quicker and stay forward-deployed for longer."

MSC-contracted special warfare support ship MV Dolores Chouest served primarily as a platform for U.S. and Canadian divers to conduct diving operations.

MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon lowered its gunmetal gray stern ramp into the water Feb. 7, allowing 12 Amphibious Assault Vehicles, or AAVs, to enter the waters just off Camp Lejeune. The AAVs, tracked vehicles that can carry three crew and 21 combat ready troops, splashed into shallow water in preparation for a massive D-Day style amphibious assault on the beach.

Obregon also tested the Navy Beach Group 2 Amphibious Bulk Liquid Transfer System, which enables fuel transfers of 10,000 feet and water transfers of 10,000 feet from ship to shore where conventional port facilities are limited or non-existent. The system comprises three reels of floating hose, which can



U.S. Marine Corps photo by LCpl. Michael Petersheim

U.S. Marines with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit storm aboard MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Laramie during a visit, board, search and seizure exercise Feb. 1. The procedure was part of the umbrella of exercise Bold Alligator 2012 to prepare the unit for a regularly scheduled deployment.

be anchored to the ocean bottom when in use to prevent drifting. Obregon pumped water, rather than fuel, during Bold Alligator, transferring 50,000 gallons to Marine forces ashore.

"Obregon has supported the MPS program since the mid-1980s, including AAV deployments," said Lora Hutchinson, a Prepositioning Program marine transportation specialist involved with Bold Alligator's planning. "By participating in this exercise, the ship continues to prove the robust capabilities it offers to the Navy."

Background: An Amphibious Assault Vehicle splashes into the water Feb. 7 off the stern ramp of MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS PFC Eugene A. Obregon. The AAV, one of 12 on Obregon, was part of a massive beach assault.

Bottom: MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall performs two simultaneous underway replenishments with guided missile destroyers USS McFaul and USS James E. Williams Feb. 1.

Below: A helicopter flies off MSC aviation logistics support ship SS Wright. During exercise Bold Alligator 2012, Marines and civilians aboard Wright tested the ship's ability to repair damaged aircraft.



U.S. Navy photo



U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jesse L. Gonzalez

ect power from the sea

CENTRAL • CURRENTS

Military Sealift Command Combat Logistics Force ships operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility conducted 76 underway replenishments for 42 different ships from seven countries in January.

MSC fleet ocean tug USNS Cawaba took part in a bilateral diving exercise with the Qatari Navy Jan. 2-7 at the Emiri Naval Base outside Doha, Qatar, with multiple dives each day.

MSC-chartered cargo ship MV Ocean Charger successfully delivered two Iraqi patrol boats Jan. 19 to

Bahrain, for eventual transfer to Iraq. Ocean Charger continued to Kuwait, where it loaded 255 pieces of cargo Jan. 20-23 for redeployment back to the United States.

MSC Central/Commander Task Force 53 bids fair winds and following seas to Navy **Lt. j.g. Thomas Poe**, Navy **Senior Chief Petty Officer Cesar Lelis** and Navy **Petty Officer 2nd Class Nathan Blaylock**.

The command welcomes Navy **Lt. j. g. Christine Rieger** and Navy petty officers 1st class **Thomas Walton** and **Jessica Mendez**.

EUROPE/AFRICA • NEWS

In January, Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha traversed the central and eastern Mediterranean Sea and provided underway replenishment support to U.S. Navy ships, including the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, specifically amphibious assault ship USS Bataan and dock landing ship USS Whidbey Island. Kanawha performed underway replenishments with the guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans and guided-missile cruiser USS Vella Gulf. Kanawha also performed an underway replenishment following a short-fused

request by Canadian navy frigate HMCS Vancouver, allowing Vancouver to bypass a port visit for refueling.

Members of the U.S. 6th Fleet staff embarked MSC command ship USS Mount Whitney Jan. 19-27 to participate in training and future exercise planning.

MSCEURAF marine transportation specialists coordinated force protection and fueling for the transit of MSC-chartered cargo ship MV BBC Houston and heavy-lift ship MV Ocean Charger, transporting Iraqi patrol boats to the MSC Central area of responsibility. Ocean Charger, carrying two boats, transferred to MSCCENT Jan. 2. Houston, carrying one boat, transited the Mediterranean Sea Jan. 16-29.

MSC-chartered tanker MT Maersk Rhode Island completed its 30-day time charter Jan. 12 for transferring DOD fuel within the theater.

Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One, including MSC Maritime Prepositioning Force ships USNS 2nd LT John P. Bobo and USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat visited the ports of Palma de Mallorca, Spain, Dec. 2 to Jan. 9; Alicante, Spain, Jan. 10-24; and Hurd Bank, Malta, arriving Jan. 26.

MSCEURAF welcomes Navy **Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Yoel Mejia-Diaz**, who reported Jan. 11 as waterfront coordinator.



U.S. Navy photo by MCS Kenneth Abbate

MSC fast combat support ship USNS Rainier performs an underway replenishment in the Arabian Sea Jan. 5 to transfer supplies to aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis.

COMPASS • HEADING

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, Military Sealift Command, toured two of MSC's high-speed ferries Jan. 24 in Norfolk, Va.. The ferries, currently named MV Huakai and MV Alakai, were transferred to the Navy from the Department of Transportation.

The command continues to award Global War on Terrorism medals to qualified civil service mariners. **Frank**

Cunningham, director of manpower and personnel afloat, said that 631 medals total will be distributed by mid-2012. A fourth round of screenings to identify additional individuals eligible to receive the medal will be conducted by mid-March.

Civil service mariners, administered within the manpower and personnel afloat directorate, can now be more readily reassigned to their U.S. coast of choice.

Previously, the assignment process was administered within East and West Coast personnel rosters. CIVMARs had to request a transfer from one coast to another coast and wait for an appropriate billet vacancy in order for their requests to be granted. The new policy of expediting the transfer process is in response to input from the CIVMAR community.

MSFSC wishes fair winds and following seas to **3rd Assistant Engineer Richard Chambers**, **Boatswain's Mate Larry Collins**, **Able Seaman Eugene Davis III**, **First Officer James Moree**,

Master Michael Murphy, **Able Seaman Alta Seaman**, **Medical Services Officer Samuel Swenson**, **Boatswain's Mate Fernando Diaz**, Safety and Occupational Health Specialist **James Mahon** and Human Resources Specialist **Dafney Johnson** on their retirements.

The command sends condolences to the family of **Second Electrician Travis Lawson**, who passed away in January.

For more MSFSC and civil service mariner news, view the on-line newsletter at www.msc.navy.mil/msfsc/newsletter.

FAR • EAST • HAILS

Navy **Cmdr. Delbert Yordy** relieved Navy **Capt. Charles "Gene" Emmert** as commander of Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Two aboard Military Sealift Command Maritime Prepositioning Force ship USNS SGT William R. Button in Diego Garcia's lagoon Jan. 16. Yordy, who is currently assigned as director of operations at MSC headquarters, acted as interim commander until March.

Emmert, who has served as MPS Squadron Two commander since last August, retires from active duty with more than 30 years of service. Emmert was awarded the Legion of Merit Medal to recognize his achievements as squadron commander.

"Capt. Emmert distinguished himself through dynamic leadership, superb management, and unparalleled resourcefulness in optimizing mission readiness for squadron ships forward-deployed to the Indian Ocean," said Navy **Capt. Charles "Chip" Denman**, commander, MSC Far East.

Denman also met with Marine Brig. Gen. Craig Q. Timberlake,

deputy commanding general, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force and commanding general, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, at Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Jan. 25. Denman also visited Navy Capt. Richard W. Weathers, commanding officer, Fleet Activities Okinawa.

Denman also visited MSC-chartered high-speed vessel MV Westpac Express Jan. 25 at Okinawa's Naha military port, hosted by ship's civilian master **Capt. Adam Parsons**.

While visiting with MSCO Okinawa director **Carl Welborn**, Denman presented excellence award certificates Jan. 26 to **Naomi Yasumoto** budget technician; **Shizuo Yokoda**, supply technician; and **Kayoko Sakiyama**, administrative specialist.

At SSU Japan in Yokohama, Denman met with Director **Sam Reynolds** Jan. 27 and conducted an all-hands call with command staff members.

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Washington Chambers civil service master **Capt. Mike Flanagan** and Navy **Cmdr. Richard McCarthy**, military department officer-in-charge, met Denman and

command staff members Jan. 17 during a one-day orientation visit to the command.

MSCFE bids farewell to Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Delbert Toney** and Navy **Lt.**

Cmdr. Todd Malaki.

The command welcomes Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Francis Santos**, who relieved Malaki as MSCFE deputy logistics officer.



U.S. Navy photo by Master Diver Jon Klukas

Navy divers from Mobile Dive and Salvage Unit 1, Company 17, check the progress of water being pumped from an abandoned ship blocking the harbor of Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, Jan. 25. MDSU 1 is embarked on MSC rescue and salvage ship USNS Safeguard.

PACIFIC • BRIEFS

Tim McCully, Military Sealift Command Pacific's deputy commander, represented MSCPAC at the California Maritime Academy Career Fair along with an MSC recruiter Jan. 17. At the fair, MSC described job opportunities to future graduates planning careers within the maritime industry.

Fourteen MSCPAC and Ship Support Unit San Diego employees served as MSC representatives at the annual Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Forum held Jan. 24-26 at the San Diego Convention Center. The forum, with nearly 8,000 attendees, featured the latest in electronics and communications technology geared toward U.S. warfighters.

Bernie Donathan, from the office of MSC Representative Pearl Harbor, attended a meeting with personnel from Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam's operations directorate and office of the comptroller. Discussions included funding, berthing and mooring for the

Sea-Based, X-band Radar.

Parrish Guerrero, MSCPAC deputy logistics officer, provided a Combat Logistics Force Load Management Program brief to logistics officers from Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet, Commander Naval Air Forces Pacific and San Diego-based supply officers about doing business with MSC.

MSCPAC bids farewell to Navy **Lt. Cmdr Florence Beato**, MSCPAC logistics officer, as he departs the command for his new position at the Defense Logistics Agency in San Diego. Beato received the Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding service during his tour by Navy **Capt. Sylvester Moore**, MSCPAC commander.

The command welcomes Navy **Cmdr. David Dowler**, who joins MSCPAC as the new command chief staff officer, and Navy **Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Marshall Vanorum**, joining the MSCPAC logistics department staff.

HQ • HIGHLIGHTS

MSC headquarters honored employees at an awards ceremony held at the Washington Navy Yard Catering and Conference Center Feb. 7. Receiving length of service awards for their years in the federal government were **Larry Urban**, Combat Logistics Force, for 35 years of service; **Ken Allen**, Maritime Forces and Manpower Management, for 25 years of service; **Matthew Dunton**, Sealift Program, and **David Dempster** and **Brendan Thompson**, engineering, for 20 years of service; **Robert Atlas**, Combat Logistics Force, for 15 years of service; and **Mark Buenaventura**, Combat Logistics Force; **Stephen Delaney**, Special Mission Program; **Brian Fricke**, **Terrell Randall** and **Dave Johnson**, command, control, communication and computer systems; and **Rosanna Florida**, office of the comptroller for 10 years of service.

Timothy Boulay, director of public affairs, received a Navy Civilian Meritorious Service Medal, which cited his superior performance of duty leading MSC's efforts to communicate with internal and external audiences on MSC's mission, initiatives and achievements. Boulay departed MSC for his new Senior Executive Service position as Deputy Associate Administrator for External Affairs at the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Trish Larson, MSC's deputy director of public affairs for nearly 23 years, also received a Navy Civilian Meritorious Service Medal, citing her professionalism in proactive media relations, her critical role in providing communication advice to senior leadership, and her development of key communication points during emergent situations. Larson will retire Feb. 29.

MSC also recognized Navy **Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Leo Brandenburg**, who was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and named MSC headquarters 2011 Junior Year Sailor of the Year. Navy **Yeoman 2nd Class Erika Cash** was also awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and was named MSC headquarters 2011 Senior Sailor of the Year. **Gilberto Correa-Ruiz**, opera-

tions, was named Civilian of the Quarter; Navy Operations Specialist **2nd Class Sherard Cooley** was named Junior Sailor of the Quarter; Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Teretha Linnear** and Navy **Lt. Jonathan Harmer** received Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medals; and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Jason Nuñez** and Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Eric Percival** received Meritorious Service Medals.

Navy **Rear Adm. Mark Buzby**, commander, MSC, recognized Navy **Information Systems technician 1st Class Jonathan Pollard** Feb. 6 as the command's 2011 Sailor of the Year, afloat. Pollard is currently assigned to MSC hospital ship USNS Mercy. As information assurance manager, Pollard remediated numerous network vulnerabilities, which resulted in Mercy's accreditation by the Naval Network Warfare Command. In his other primary duty as damage control assistant, Pollard was cited for expertise and outstanding leadership that significantly improved personnel and material readiness and resulted in U.S. Coast Guard Damage Control certification for Mercy.

MSC headquarters welcomes **Derek Swanson**, operations; **Elizabeth Merkowitz**, maritime forces, manpower and management; and **Brian Steuerwald**, engineering.

The command bids fair winds and following seas to **Harold Elliott** and **Donald Petska**, office of the comptroller, and **James Fischer**, contracts and business management, on their retirements. Thank you for your service. MSC headquarters also bids farewell to **Ann Vargo**, contracts and business management; **Margaret Sheatzley**, **Alex Isidro**, **Zach Patterson**, **Hussein Fahema**, **Gregory Maines**, **James Nance**, **Alexander Davenport** and **Benjamin Amos**, engineering; Navy **Lt. Marie Hart**, **Linda Beinsu** and Navy **Yeoman 1st Class Teretha Linnear**, maritime forces, manpower and management; Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Eric Percival** and **Andre Gould**, command, control, communication and computer systems; and **Ramone Memita** and **Samuel Petska**, office of the comptroller.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jeremy Starr

In Pearl Harbor, Navy Adm. Cecil Haney, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, visits MSC submarine tender USS Frank Cable Jan. 26 with Cable's commanding officer, Navy Capt. Pete Hildreth, and the ship's civil service mariner Chief Engineer David Every.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Chris Salisbury

Guided-missile submarine USS Michigan moors against Frank Cable in Polar Point, Guam, Jan. 3. Cable conducts maintenance and support of submarines deployed in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

ATLANTIC • LINES

At Military Sealift Command Atlantic port office in Charleston, S.C., **Tom D'Agostino**, director of ship operations, assisted MSC-chartered tanker MV Houston with discharging 180,000 barrels of fuel during two port calls, Jan. 5-22. MSC large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Red Cloud arrived in Charleston Jan. 5 and loaded 1,430 pieces of prepositioning military cargo, totaling nearly 280,000 square feet, Jan. 17-27. D'Agostino assisted with the load process and Marine Transportation Specialist **Mary Ann Liberto** coordinated all agency services for the vessel.

MSC dry cargo/ammunition ships USNS Sacagawea and USNS William McLean, and MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn, arrived at a private shipyard in early January for repairs. Liberto coordinated port services for those vessels.

John Gregov, Marine transportation specialist and manager of MSCLANT's Port Canaveral, Fla., office, worked with the port to remove obstacles on Poseidon Pier, such as hard-wired shore power box and cables, that precluded ships with stern ramps from fully using their capabilities. This modification project will allow Navy ships to dock by the pier, rather than use commercial piers nearby. The pier

was reopened Jan. 9.

Gregov also developed and provided guidance for an ammunition stow plan for MSC-chartered tug and barge T/B Megan Beyel/MOBRO 1210 Jan. 21. The ammunition loaded aboard the barge at Port Canaveral was successfully delivered to the Navy's Atlantic Underwater Testing and Evaluation Center located on Andros Island in the Bahamas.

William Woodrum, MSCLANT assistant anti-terrorism/force protection officer, was selected as the command's Civilian of the Year Jan. 30. Woodrum was cited for improving the overall training and readiness of ship reaction forces to detect, deter and defend against threats.

The command bids fair winds and following seas to its operations officer, Navy **Cmdr. Ray Beno**, who transitioned to his new position as MSC's liaison officer to U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

MSCLANT welcomes its new operations officer, Navy **Cmdr. Chris Anderson**. Anderson, who was most recently assigned to Naval Surface Forces Atlantic as its integrated air and missile defense requirements officer within the Requirements and Assessments Directorate.

The command also welcomes Navy **Lt. Cmdr. Manny Powell**, who joined the command as the assistant logistics officer.

Swift runs final laps of SPS 2012

**By Lt. Matthew Comer
HSV 2 Swift Public Affairs**

Military Sealift Command-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift continued its participation in Southern Partnership Station 2012 in Callao, Peru, arriving Jan. 19 for three weeks of subject-matter expert exchanges.

Swift previously visited the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Panama and Guatemala during its four-month mission. The ship is slated to complete its tour in early March in Haiti.

Southern Partnership Station, or SPS, is an annual deployment of U.S. Navy ships to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility in the Caribbean Sea and Latin America. The goal is to strengthen partnerships and maritime security through training and subject-matter exchanges with navies, coast guards and civilians in the region. The mission is directed by USSOUTHCOM and executed by U.S. Naval Forces South.

In Peru, embarked Naval Criminal Investigative Service security training specialists worked with Peruvian security personnel. Discussion topics included how to organize surveillance detection teams and how to conduct target and route analyses.

Throughout the mission, Swift's crew of 17 contract mariners, all U.S. merchant mariners, operated and navigated the ship. In addition, Swift's mariners have off-loaded mission cargo and assisted with repairs to mission equipment.

"This has been a great opportunity



Navy Steelworker 2nd Class Rejuny Casswell, assigned to Navy Mobile Construction Battalion 23 embarked aboard MSC-chartered high-speed vessel HSV 2 Swift, drills anchor holes into a pre-fabricated wall frame at a school in Callao, Peru, Jan. 27.

for the contract mariners to show their expertise in the operation of the vessel and the support of HSV-SPS," said Capt. Rhett Mann, Swift's civilian master during part of the ship's SPS participation. "Our CONMAR engineers have also assisted with boat motor and haul repairs, and have led subject-matter expert exchanges on basic electricity. The deck and engine departments have

assisted the military personnel aboard by leading classes to aid the enlisted surface warfare qualifications aboard Swift."

An MSC, 17-person military detachment is embarked to provide logistic, administrative and operational support to the ship and embarked mission detachments. In addition, Navy Seabees, Marines, health services professionals and personnel from the Assistance and Assessment Team, Expeditionary Security Team and Maritime Civil Affairs and Security Training Command, were also embarked to serve as subject-matter experts for information sharing on a variety of subjects with host nation partners.

"Throughout this mission, we have had the amazing opportunity

to work with several militaries and communities throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean," said Navy Cmdr. Garry Wright, SPS mission commander. "Every port brought new experiences and built friendships that will encourage our continued partnerships."

During SPS 2012, the teams aboard Swift worked with their host-nation

peers to build those lasting partnerships. NMCB 23 has completed more than 10 projects, renovating and reconstructing elementary schools with local combat engineers. The Marine detachment aboard has worked with more than 200 foreign marines to develop small-unit leadership, marksmanship and patrolling practices. The medical and veterinary teams have worked with in-country doctors and vets to exchange best practices of patient care, including military working dogs and tropical disease treatment.

"Knowing that what we are doing is having a positive impact on the countries we visit is a good feeling," said Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Quincy Champion, force protection officer aboard Swift. "This is my second Swift deployment, and I look forward to continuing the work we do here."

In Haiti, Swift is slated to off-load approximately \$4 million of medical and hygienic supplies to be distributed to hospitals and clinics. Cargo also included the donation of two trucks and pallets of high-calorie meals as part of the Navy's Project Handclasp program, which accepts and transports educational, humanitarian and goodwill material donated by America's private sector on a space-available basis aboard U.S. Navy ships for distribution to foreign nation recipients.

"I've been at sea all my life; I love it," said Marlon Brown, chief cook aboard Swift. "But I have never been on a ship like this where we go out to different countries and teach people. Most of the ships I've been on move loads, but here we are making a difference."

Reservists deliver during Cobra Gold

**By Edward Baxter
MSCFE Public Affairs**

Military Sealift Command Reservists helped load and off-load more than 55,000 square feet of U.S. Marine Corps cargo delivered in late January by an MSC-chartered ship from Okinawa, Japan, to three ports in the Kingdom of Thailand as part of exercise Cobra Gold, which began Jan. 15.

The exercise, sponsored by the U.S. Pacific Command, brought 10,000 U.S. military and 2,400 Thai service members together in the month-long training exercise which included live-fire training and computer-simulated scenarios. Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea also participated in the exercise.

For three decades, MSC has delivered combat equipment and other supplies to Marines deployed during the exercise. This year, MSC-chartered ship ITB Strong Mariner moved 602 pieces of cargo, including wheeled and tracked vehicles, trailers, shipping containers and break-bulk cargo.

Sixteen Reservists from several MSC expeditionary port units, or EPUs, worked closely with the host nations, soldiers from the U.S. Army's 835th Transportation Battalion and Marines from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force to coordinate loading and off-loading Strong Mariner's cargo. EPUs are highly mobile units which can quickly deploy to a contingency operation, establish port operations and manage the arrivals and departures of cargo ships in port.

MSC began its Cobra Gold support



A container of U.S. Marine Corps cargo is off-loaded Jan. 27 from MSC-chartered ship ITB Strong Mariner at Chuk Sa Met, Thailand, to support exercise Cobra Gold.

Jan. 14-17 as eight Reservists from Oklahoma City, Okla.-based EPU 111 loaded Strong Mariner at Naha military port and Tengan Pier in Okinawa. In addition to taking charge of cargo operations, the Reservists trained in a variety of procedures, including berthing, customs clearance and line handling. As part of the training, EPU 111 sailors operated I-Code scanners; a hand-held, computerized tracking system used by the army to inventory cargo.

"A key objective for our sailors was to cross-train with Army personnel and Marines to learn what they do," said EPU 111 Operations Officer Navy Lt. Matt Hertz. "The integration with the 835th was top notch. I am confident in EPU 111's ability to jump in and

perform our duties anytime or anywhere our nation calls upon us."

Fully loaded, Strong Mariner pulled away from the pier Jan. 17, sailing 1,700 nautical miles southwest to ports in Thailand. EPU 111 left Okinawa Jan. 22.

Prior to Strong Mariner's arrival in Thailand, eight Ft. Worth, Texas-based EPU 113 Reservists were part of a U.S. Transportation Command-sponsored team that comprised 50 Army and Navy personnel. Beginning Jan. 22, the team tested its ability to rapidly open and establish a port of debarkation and initial distribution network to support a joint operation.

The team assessed the capabilities of the port, such as pier space, port cranes, stevedores, communications and cargo

staging.

"Imagine moving to another duty station, and when you arrive, you find your furniture in place, the phone and Internet working and the car in the garage," said Thad Reap, the MSC Far East tanker officer who participated in the assessment. "The overarching goal is to ensure everything is in place and operating so that cargo can move seamlessly from the port to support the warfighter."

Strong Mariner arrived at Laem Chabang, Thailand, Jan. 25, where EPU 113 Reservists worked to off-load shipping containers and some break-bulk cargo.

The ship then made the short transit to Chuk Sa Met where EPU 113 sailors operated from Mobile Sealift Operation Command Center Nine, a portable facility which provides critical communications equipment for managing port operations even when a port infrastructure is damaged or destroyed. Ramp down, the ship worked around-the-clock to quickly discharge remaining cargo by Jan. 28.

MSC's role in Cobra Gold finished up Feb. 17 when Little Rock, Ark.-based EPU 112 deployed to Thailand to oversee the redeployment phase of the exercise and return cargo to Marine Corps bases on Okinawa.

"The knowledge gained by working in a joint setting, and with our allied partners, has enhanced our sailors' abilities to work in an environment, which is becoming more and more prevalent," said Navy Cmdr. Chris Briggs, officer-in-charge of EPU 113.