MSC

SEALIFT

U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND...*UNITED* WE SAIL

SEPTEMBER 2017 ISSUE

The expeditionary sea base USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3) gets underway from Naval Station Norfolk to begin its first operational deployment, July 10. Puller is deploying to the U.S. Fifth Fleet's area of operation in support of U.S. Navy and allied military efforts in the region. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

USNS LEWIS B. PULLER BEGINS FIRST OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy's first purpose-built expeditionary sea base, USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3), departed from Naval Station Norfolk to begin its first operational deployment, July 10.

Puller is deploying to the U.S. 5th Fleet to provide operational support for U.S. Navy and allied forces operating in the region.

"We call ourselves 'Team Puller,' said Cmdr. Arlen Rose, the military detachment's officer in charge. "The Puller is a brand new ship so we had a lot to learn. The military crew has been training with the ship's civil service mariners for a year to prepare for this deployment."

"We are ready to get Puller out there to take its rightful place in the fleet," added Rose. "Everyone is really excited to get to work and see what the Puller can do."

USNS Lewis B. Puller was delivered to the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command in June 2015 and is the Navy's first purpose-built expeditionary sea base. The ship has a hybrid-manned crew with a combination of military personnel and civilian mariners.

"The CIVMARs aboard Puller primarily focus on the operation of the ship," said Capt. George McCarthy, the Puller's master. "The CIVMARs perform a variety of critical tasks including navigation, propulsion and ventilation services."

The expeditionary sea base USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3) gets underway from Naval Station Norfolk to begin its first operational deployment, July 10. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

U.S. Navy Sailors observe the expeditionary sea base USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3) getting underway from Naval Station Norfolk July 10. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

The 784 foot-long vessel features a 52,000 square-foot flight deck, fuel and equipment storage, repair spaces, magazines, and mission-planning spaces. Able to accommodate up to 250 personnel, USNS Lewis B. Puller will support multiple missions, such as mine counter measures, counter-piracy operations, maritime security operations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions and crisis response operations.

According to McCarthy, "the Puller is going to be permanently deployed overseas, which saves a tremendous amount of time in terms of operations. So the ship's maintenance, repairs, as well as crew swaps will take place in theater."

USNS Lewis B. Puller is named after Lieutenant General Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller, one of the most decorated members of the Marine Corps. He is one of only two men, and the only Marine, to be awarded five Navy Crosses. He fought in Haiti and Nicaragua, and participated in battles of World War II and the Korean War. Puller retired from the Marine Corps in 1955 and spent the remainder of his life in Virginia.

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FUTURE NAVY, STAFF ALIGNMENT MOVES FORWARD

From Commander, Military Sealift Command

Recently, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Adm. John Richardson, released a white paper titled, "The Future Navy."

In it, the CNO lays out the path forward to increase our naval power. Numerous studies, by the Navy and other organizations, have concluded our nation needs a more powerful Navy. Reaching that goal will require more ships, emerging technologies and new operational concepts.

On the way forward, CNO made clear, "The Navy must get to work now to both build more ships, and to think forward – innovate – as we go. To remain competitive, we must start today and we must improve faster."

This document, and related guidance such as the Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority, make one thing clear; we need a sense of urgency in everything we do to support this increase in naval power. Today's faster paced, more complex, and more competitive security environment calls for a more powerful Navy now, not 25 years in the future.

We will get there by learning and innovating on the go, collaborating and taking an iterative approach. "Picking up the pace" won't be good enough.

We need exponential change that will propel us ahead of our adversaries. We must account for emerging challenges to get ahead of the threats so that we continue to meet our nation's requirements. At MSC this means embracing the challenge to improve our mission capability. We will collaboratively work to harness the diversity of knowledge, experience, skills, and perspective the workforce offers to creatively meet the challenge before us. Every team member at MSC has a role to play in realizing that more powerful Navy.

Thank you for all you do each and every day. Your work makes a difference to this command and to the security of our nation.

Staff Alignment Moves Forward

The command has been on a journey of unification which dates back to the initial Headquarters consolidation at Norfolk Naval Station and the matrix organization that we are currently executing. The next step of our unification path is to put balance into the advocacy process across both the functional directorates and program managers. The design is intended to enable our codes to operate more effectively within their lifelines and across the command. The most significant and visible change will be a shift in Senior Executive Service (SES) leadership.

We are working through the organizational realignment in three phases. Phase one, completed in May, was the realignment of the Special Assistants (PAO, SAPR, EEO, IG, Medical, Safety, Chaplain, Security and the Small Business Office), under the Chief of Staff office. Phases two and three will include the alignment of the program managers under the Director Ship Management (DSM) and N-codes under the Director Maritime Operations (DMO).

Phase two began in June with the placement of government- and contractor-operated ship programs under SES Chris Thayer, the new Director of Ship Management. As the DSM, he will have oversight and advocacy roles for all of our ships and program managers. Phase two is scheduled to be complete at the end of August.

Phase three will begin in August with assignment of the N-codes under SES Jack Taylor, the new Director of Maritime Operations. As the DMO, he will oversee and advocate for our N-codes, Maritime Operations Center (MOC), and Fleet Training and Readiness Directorate. The DMO and MOC construct aligns closely with other Fleet commands, enabling more streamlined reporting from our ships and simpler collaboration outside the lifelines. Phase three is projected to be complete by the end of September. N1 and N00L SES' will continue in their current roles, while reporting directly to top leadership.

In addition, we will soon welcome SES Steven Cade, our new Executive Director. Mr. Cade is coming to MSC from Fleet Forces Command where he served as Director, Fleet Capabilities and Force Development. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience, particularly in the areas of integrating capabilities analysis to support programming and acquisition planning, as well as development of warfighting concepts of operations and experimentation programs.

In addition to SES-level oversight and advocacy, and direct alignment of some reports to the commander, our senior leadership will now be able to take a step back from the tactical details of our daily operations in order to look strategically at where the command needs to be in 10 years.

I'm excited to see the implementation of the alignment plan. These changes will enable us to better envision and execute the challenge to improve or "bend the curve" of our mission capability so that we can provide assured logistics and service support in the future.

United We Sail,

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

Richard V. Spencer is sworn in as the 76th Secretary of the Navy by William O'Donnell, Department of the Navy administrative assistant. Spencer, a Connecticut native, graduated from Rollins College in 1976 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics. Upon graduation, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served as an H-46 pilot until 1981 before departing active duty to enter the private finance sector. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jonathan B. Trejo)

SECNAV'S MESSAGE TO THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

On Aug. 3, Richard V. Spencer, a native of Connecticut, was sworn in as the 76th secretary of the Navy. The following is his opening statement:

Sailors, Marines and Civilian Teammates,

It is with great excitement and humility that I take on the role of your 76th secretary of the Navy. The excitement is born from the challenges and opportunities that we face now and in the near future.

Due to your consistent ability to successfully deliver on all demands put before you, there is a commensurate level of expectation for more of the same going forward. Therein lies the challenge we face and prudency says we should expect that challenge to grow as the threats around the world continue to increase.

Within every challenge lies opportunity and I urge everyone to adopt that point of view. Every member involved in the Navy Marine Corps team has the opportunity to make a contribution towards a more effective, versatile, resilient and lethal organization.

You, as a member of this team, will have access to a wide range of resources. Those resources must be applied in the most impactful manner possible in order to enhance our ability to deliver when called to fight. I look to each of you to seize the opportunity and contribute to enhancing the effort.

I am humbled to be in the position to lead an enterprise that is manned with such a stunning amount of proven talent. Our Nation's all volunteer force, and supporting teammates, are second to none. That is because of you.

I believe that the most valuable asset within an organization is the high performing human component. We will work together to ensure we have the best, sustainable environment in order to continue our history of delivering when requested.

FIRST OFFICER BRYAN STOOTS RECOGNIZED FOR SAVING A LIFE

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

On July 7, First Officer Bryan Stoots, a civil service mariner with Military Sealift Command, was presented a special act award citation signed by Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, Commander, Military Sealift Command, for saving the life of a shipyard forklift driver.

On Dec. 22, 2016, while Stoots was the first officer aboard the expeditionary sea base USNS Lewis B. Puller (T-ESB 3), he responded to a medical emergency on a pier adjacent to his ship, which was receiving post shakedown availably work at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in Portsmouth, Virginia.

Carrying the ship's medical bag, Stoots arrived on scene to discover a shipyard forklift driver whose left arm had been completely amputated.

"The shipyard worker was driving a forklift large enough to lift a container," said MSC Director, Total Force Management Mike Morris, who presented Stoots with the special act award citation. "The forklift driver was moving hauling slings. One of the slings got caught under the forklifts wheel while wrapped around the driver's arm, causing the amputation."

According to the citation, the shipyard worker was bleeding profusely, in severe pain and agitated to the point he required physical restraint. Stoots remained calm and provided life-saving first aid by applying a tourniquet and other measures to control the victim's bleeding.

"Stoots was the first person to respond to the accident and his efforts kept the victim from bleeding to death," said Morris. "While they were not able to save the driver's arm they were able to save his life."

"Our CIVMARs receive extensive training for just this type of situation, but never expect to need to use it," added Morris. "But Stoots did need to use his training and was able us it to save someone's life. While this incident was a shipyard accident, this type of injury is the same type of injury we could expect while sailing in contested waters. So take your training seriously."

First Officer Bryan Stoots receives a special act award citation from MSC's Director, Total Force Management Mike Morris for saving the life of a dockworker at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

MSC VISITS RFA WAVE RULER

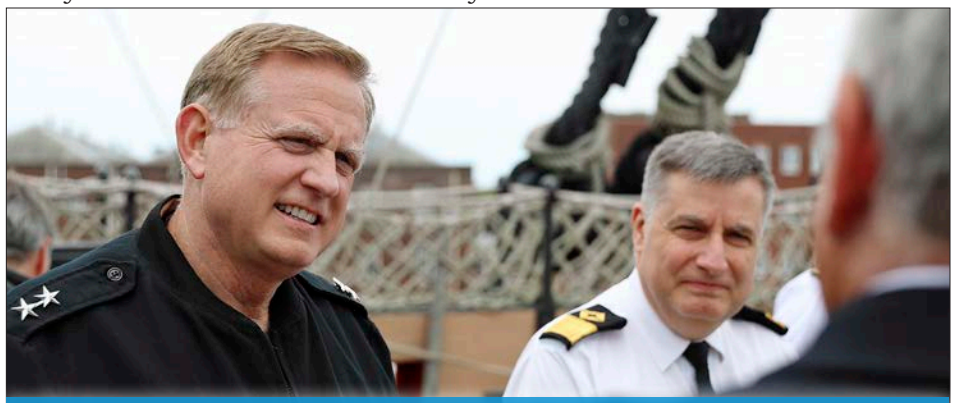
By Cmdr. Dudley Scorgie, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Military Sealift Command Liaison

During his whistle stop visit to the United Kingdom, Commander, Military Sealift Command, Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, paid a brief visit to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's fast fleet tanker RFA Wave Ruler (A390), which is currently operating as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) support tanker.

During Mewbourne's time aboard he was able to view FOST tanker operations with a focus on how the Royal Fleet Auxiliary trains personnel for fire fighting and damage control casualty care in a wartime, action scenario.

Accompanied by RFA Head of Service (COMRFA) Commodore Duncan Lamb RFA and three MSC Officers, the party embarked on board Wave Ruler by Staff boat South of Plymouth Breakwater, where they were welcomed by Operations Officer, First Officer Gordon Peebles, before proceeding to the Bridge to meet Commanding Officer, Captain Rob Anders RFA and the Bridge team.

Thursday at FOST is the culmination of the weekly training package and always concludes with the 'Thursday War.' This is where lessons learned during training are put into practice and the ship's crew are put through their paces by the FOST Staff. Training is intense and often arduous, but nonetheless vital to maintaining the required high level of operational capability and safety.



Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, Commander Military Sealift Command and Commodore Duncan Lamb, Royal Fleet Auxiliary Head of Service aboard the RFA Wave Ruler. (Courtesy photograph)

During his time on board Wave Ruler, Mewbourne observed a minefield transit, followed by air attacks, underpinned by an ever present submarine threat.

While touring the ship, Mewbourne was able to witness ship's teams as they dealt with simulated battle damage of flood, fire and injury to personnel.

Prior to his late morning departure by helicopter Mewbourne commented, "Though my visit today has been somewhat brief, it has nonetheless been most enjoyable and I have been extremely impressed by the enthusiasm and professionalism displayed by the Wave Ruler team."

Following his experience of war aboard Wave Ruler, the next stop for Mewbourne was Navy Command Headquarters and a visit to the RFA Afloat Support Team, based at Whale Island, Portsmouth. Here he was briefed by COMRFA and his team on the continuously evolving role of the RFA, maritime afloat reach & sustainability (MARS) tankers, future fleet solid support (FSS) Ships and RFA Training.

Cmdr. Lamb commented "The USMSC and RFA have historically maintained strong links and this year's visit to the UK by Rear Adm. Mewbourne was a great opportunity to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing each organization. In spite of differences in scale, there is significant common ground and we have much to learn from our U.S. counterparts."

The trip was rounded off by an extensive tour of HMS Victory, which gained renown leading fleets in the American War of Independence, the French Revolutionary War and the Napoleonic War.

For More Information About Military Sealift Command Visit us at www.msc.navy.mil

OCEAN GIANT DEPARTS FOR PACER GOOSE 2017

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

U.S. Navy Sailors render honors as the Military Sealift Command contracted ship MV Ocean Giant gets underway from Naval Station Norfolk, July 16. Ocean Giant left Virginia in support of Operation Pacer Goose 2017, the annual resupply mission to Thule Air Base. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

The Military Sealift Command chartered heavy lift ship MV Ocean Giant departed Naval Station Norfolk in support of Pacer Goose 2017, the annual resupply mission to Thule Air Base, July 16.

Ocean Giant spent three days at the naval station loading equipment and supplies destined for the remote U.S. Air Force base, located in the northern coastal Arctic region of Greenland.

"Ocean Giant is going to deliver the goods needed for the air base to operate," said Capt. Timothy Arey, Ocean Giant's master. "We are going to sail through the ice and the cold to get them what they need and take away the items which are no longer needed at Thule."

Operation Pacer Goose is one of the Arctic outpost's few sources of food, spare parts and other manufactured goods needed each year.

Even though the temperature will be freezing, summer is the only time of year that the ice is thin enough to break through, added Arey.

Ocean Giant is going to rendezvous with the oil tanker MT Maersk Peary which is loaded with fuel for Thule. The two ships will follow a Canadian icebreaker through the ice and into the air base's harbor. The ships taking part in the mission also remove all of the base's solid waste and non-repairable equipment for return to the United States.

"Ocean Giant is a beautiful ship and has the ability to transport a wide variety of cargo," said Arey. "The ship is also a great fit for this mission because it is double hulled to handle the ice and is extremely maneuverable. The ship also has its own cranes so it can load and offload cargo independently."

Ocean Giant left Norfolk loaded with 100 shipping containers full of supplies, modular buildings and four K-Loads, which are used to load and offload military cargo aircraft.

Ocean Giant is crewed by 19 civilian merchant marines who perform all the operations aboard the vessel including navigation, engineering, medical care and line handling.

"Ocean Giant's merchant marines run lean and mean," said Arey. "Because of the size of the crew our mariners tend to wear a lot of hats. Our crew multi-tasks lots of different jobs which keeps the ship running efficiently."

"Merchant marines have a proud history of service to the United States," said Arey. "During WWII civilian mariners did their part in support of the war effort and we are very proud to be supporting the military by delivering supplies to Thule."

MV Ocean Giant is owned by Ocean Marine and crewed by SeaBulk Fleet Management.

"Ocean Giant performs a lot of work for the U.S. military," concluded Arey "We are really excited about this mission and feel very privileged to be a part of it."

Ocean Giant supports a variety of military missions including resupplying Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Yokohama, Japan.

The crew of civilian contract mariners of Military Sealift Command contracted ship MV Ocean Giant poses for a photograph prior to getting underway from Naval Station Norfolk, July 16. Ocean Giant left Virginia in support of Operation Pacer Goose 2017, the annual resupply mission to Thule Air Base. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

USNS SACAGAWEA DEPARTS NEW CALEDONIA, TRAVELS TO TONGA FOR NEXT PHASE OF KOA MOANA 17

By Petty Officer 3rd Class Madailein Abbott,
Military Sealift Command Far East

Military Sealift Command's (MSC) USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2) departed New Caledonia July 11 in support of Koa Moana 17 (Ocean Warrior).

The USNS Sacagawea is a Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ship, which provides ammunition, food, repair parts, stores and small quantities of fuel for the U.S. Marine Corps as well as other military service branches. The ship can also be tasked to respond in a disaster in the form of providing equipment and supplies to a target area.

U.S. Marines embarked aboard USNS Sacagawea returned after two weeks of field training events with the French Armed Forces New Caledonia. French Armed Forces service members also embarked on the USNS Sacagawea to travel to the next phase of exercise Koa Moana in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

"We had a great time with the French Armed Forces during this phase of the exercise," said 1st Lt. Andrew Buck, assigned to 3rd Battalion 4th Marines (3/4), 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. "We did some kayaking, hiking, and also a night raid, which was beneficial for everyone when it comes to training. They put on a good course for us, which was great."

The Koa Moana exercise series seeks to enhance senior military leader engagements between allied and partner nations with a collective interest in military-to-military relations and to discuss key aspects of military operations, capability development, and interoperability.

From June-September 2017 U.S. Marines from 3/4, stationed out of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms in Calif., and Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, from Marine Corps Base Hawaii and Marine Corps Bases Japan in Okinawa have embarked aboard the USNS Sacagawea to participate in Koa Moana 17 events in Kiribati, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

Willie Watkins, Able-Bodied Seaman aboard USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2), raises navigational flags during sea and anchor detail for the ships outbound journey from New Caledonia during Koa Moana 17, July 11. Koa Moana 17 is designed to improve theater security, and conduct law enforcement and infantry training in the Pacific region in order to enhance interoperability with partner nations. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Madailein Abbott)

USNS Sacagawea is part of Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron THREE and operated by MSC, which operates approximately 120 non-combatant, civilian-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy Ships, conduct specialized missions, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world and move military cargo and supplies used by U.S. forces and coalition partners.

"Everyone did a good job here in New Caledonia," said 1st Lt. W. Stone Holden, assigned to 3/4. "The French forces were able to help us with some shortfalls we had with getting moved around a bit, but overall everything went well and we look forward to working with them again at our next destination and aboard the ship."

In the next phase of the Koa Moana 17 exercise the ship and embarked U.S. Marines and French military forces will depart in Nuku'alofa, Tonga for joint field operations.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN THE MAKING: THE BIRTH OF MILITARY SEA TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

By Salvatore R. Mercogliano, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History

USNS SGT Andrew Miller (U.S. Navy file photograph)

In 1946, the new chiefs of the Navy and Army, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz and General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower, sat down to discuss a situation that had plagued their commands throughout the Second World War.

With the creation of the National Military Establishment, subsequently re-designated the Department of Defense, both these veterans sought to correct a shortfall that had existed since America's first overseas operation.

As early as 1847, the Quartermaster General of the Army, Brigadier General Thomas S. Jesup had to compete with the U. S. Navy for the chartering of American merchant ships. Following the successful outcome of the Mexican-American War, Jesup recommended that the Navy be given the responsibility for the water transportation of the military, in both peace and war-time. However, this divided relationship persisted through the Spanish-American and both World Wars.

In World War II, four different government agencies competed to utilize the commercial merchant marine -- the Naval Transportation Service, the Army Transport Service, the U. S. Maritime Commission's War Shipping Administration, and the Fleet Support Services. To oversee these organizations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) established the Joint Military Transportation Command (JMTC), but this arrangement proved cumbersome. In May 1946, Nimitz and Eisenhower directed that the JMTC make a study of the situation and recommend a solution.

On Dec. 15, 1948, the Secretary of Defense James Forrestal issued a statement, "all military sea transport including Army transports would be placed under Navy command." With the decision made, the details of the actual transfer and scope of the new command's responsibilities had to be ironed out. While the Army and Air Force agreed in the transfer of sealift functions to the Navy, they could not agree on how to distribute the costs.

The Army and Air Force felt that the Navy should be made to pay for the operations of the vessels, while the Navy felt that the services wanting to ship items should provide the necessary funds. This issue held up the matter till the new Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, issued a memorandum on July 12, 1949 that spelled out the financing, purpose, and responsibilities of the new Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS).

USNS Josiah Willard (U.S. Navy file photograph)

Secretary Johnson directed that the title of the Army's cargo and passenger ships be transferred to the Navy. MSTS would accept the responsibility of being a carrier service and assume the responsibility for the cargo once it was loaded. Operation of the ports would remain with the respective services. The final issue, funding, proved elusive till the service shifted to Naval Industrial Fund on July 1, 1951, whereby a pool of $100 million was provided to MSTS for operations. However, the respective services were required to backfill the fund for their shipping expenses.

The initial commander of MSTS, Rear Admiral William M. Callaghan (subsequently promoted to Vice Admiral), coordinated the transfer of the NTS with its commander, Rear Admiral A. J. Wellings (re-assigned as Vice Commander MSTS), and Major General F. A. Heileman, the Chief of the Army Transportation Corps.

Previous experience as the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Transportation), and Chief of the Naval Transportation Service, Callaghan proved an excellent choice. Graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1918, he served as the commander of the battleship USS Missouri in the Pacific and on the staff of Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet during the Second World War.

Initially located in the Main Navy Building, situated on the Mall in Washington D.C., the command opened for business on October 1, 1949 when NTS was dissolved and its assets and personnel transferred to MSTS. The fleet initially consisted of 6 troop transports, 3 attack transports, 12 attack cargo ships, and 16 tankers. These ships, unlike today, were commissioned vessels in the U.S. Navy and manned by military crews.

USNS General Maurice Rose (U.S. Navy file photograph)

The same day, 57 tankers of the Petroleum and Tanker Branch of the Chief of Naval Operations office (OP-422), joined the MSTS fleet. Unlike the ships of NTS, these were government-owned tankers, but contract operated by four commercial firms (Pacific Tankers, Inc.; American Pacific Steamship Co.; Tankers Company, Inc.; and Marine Transport Lines, Inc.) and with licensed civilian merchant mariners aboard.

Additionally four field offices were established in New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and New Orleans, each commanded by a Navy captain and designated as Deputy Commanders of MSTS.

While Navy assets were quickly assimilated into MSTS, the transfer of Army assets took a while longer.

On March 1, 1950, 72 ships of the ATS based in the continental United States were re-designated from United States Army Transports to United States Naval Ships. Unlike the ships of the NTS, they possessed civilian merchant crews, directly employed by the government and known as civilian mariners.

Besides these ships, 19 commercial cargo ships under contract shifted to MSTS operational control. Four months later, on July 1, the ATS offices and assets based at Bremerhaven, Germany; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Balboa, Panama; Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii; and Tokyo, Japan joined the growing fleet. The last portion of the Army's fleet, ten ships stationed in Alaska joined on November 1, 1950, completing the initial Military Sea Transportation Service fleet.

USNS MONTFORD POINT CONCLUDES SKIN-TO-SKIN

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

USNS Red Cloud (T-AKR 313) and USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) conduct "skin-to-skin" (S2S) operations in waters off the coast of Saipan, North Mariana Islands, July 11. (U.S. Navy photograph)

The expeditionary transfer dock USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) wrapped up a series of "skin-to-skin" operations in the vicinity of Saipan, July 22.

The operations took place over the course of 17 days and included complex maneuvering and positioning drills with ships from Maritime Prepositioning Squadron Three (MPSRON-3).

"Skin-to-skin operations are game-changers when it comes to supporting the Marine Corps and other expeditionary forces with greater flexibility at sea," said Mr. Paul Grgas, Deputy Director of Operations for the Military Sealift Command Far East. "Expeditionary transfer docks like Montford Point can operate off shore and augment ship to shore movements during amphibious operations."

During the skin-to-skin operations, USNS Soderman (T-AKR 317), USNS Red Cloud (T-AKR 313), and USNS Stockham (T-AK 3017), rehearsed the transfer of equipment and cargo with Montford Point.

Skin-to-skin operations occur when two ships connect at sea allowing specialized vessels like Montford Point to operate as a floating pier for simulated offload operations.

The skin-to-skin drills build proficiency for ships like Montford Point to operate at sea for a sustained period and transfer large cargo from prepositioning ships for use by forces ashore and afloat.

The Military Sealift Command operates approximately 115 non-combatant, civilian-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships, conduct specialized missions, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea around the world and move military cargo and supplies used by deployed U.S. forces and coalition partners.

MPSRON 3, operating in the western Pacific, maintains tactical control of the 12 ships carrying afloat prepositioned U.S. military cargo for the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Army, and the U.S. Air Force. The squadron's mission is to enable force from the sea by providing swift and effective transportation of vital equipment and supplies for designated operations.

USNS Red Cloud (T-AKR 313) and USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) conduct "skin-to-skin" (S2S) operations in waters off the coast of Saipan, North Mariana Islands, July 11. (U.S. Navy photograph)

MSC OFFICER RECEIVES 2016 BATCHELDER AWARD

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Lt. Michael Scoffone, of Military Sealift Command's Mobile Supply Chain Unit, was recently recognized for outstanding service by being presented the 2016 Vice Admiral Robert F. Batchelder, Reserve Category.

The Navy League of the United States (NLUS) presents this award to recognize five Navy officers in the Supply Corps who have made the most significant personal contributions to the supply readiness of the operating forces.

"Please join us in congratulating Lt. Scoffone as the 2016 Vice Admiral Robert F. Batchelder Award winner in the Reserve Category," said Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, Commander Military Sealift Command. "Recognition of this prestigious award speaks volumes about your exceptional dedication and commitment to the support of MSC and the Naval Reserves."

"This is a huge recognition amongst the Navy Logistics, Supply Corps community for both active duty service members and reservist," said Pete Budi of MSC's Director of Logistics. "The Lieutenant's recognition also demonstrates that MSC's reservists are fully integrated in the command's high visibility missions."

"In this particular case, Lt. Scoffone was a standout as one of several MSC reservists that answered the bell to stand-up the Secretary of the Navy's mandated husbanding ashore program," added Budi.

Each year, NLUS presents awards in recognition of outstanding individual achievements in leadership, maritime affairs, scientific progress, engineering excellence, logistics competence, excellence in intelligence, and service to community and country.

Lt. Michael Scoffone, of Military Sealift Command's Mobile Supply Chain Unit receiving the 2016 Vice Admiral Robert F. Batchelder, Reserve Category award. (U.S. Navy photograph)

SPS-EPF 17 TEAM DEPARTS FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

By Southern Partnership Station 2017 Public Affairs

Military and civil service mariner members of Southern Partnership Station-Expeditionary Fast Transport 2017 (SPS-EPF 17) successfully completed the first-ever adaptive force package (AFP) embarkation and deployment from Gulfport, July 18.

SPS-EPF 17 team members loaded USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1) with nearly 800,000 pounds of cargo, including construction equipment and medical supplies, to support partner capacity building and subject matter expert exchange (SMEE) operations in Central and South America.

"We have successfully concluded our first-ever adaptive force package embarkation in Gulfport, and we are excited to bring our best and brightest experts to exchange knowledge with our counterparts in Honduras," said Capt. Steven Stacy, SPS-EPF 17 mission commander.

AFPs are specialized teams of U.S. service members from the fields of engineering, force protection and medical. The service members are deployed aboard the civil service mariner-operated Spearhead in support of SPS-EPF 17, to collaborate with partner nation military forces through naval-focused training exercises, military-to-military engagements and community relations projects. This year's engagements are scheduled to take place in Honduras, Guatemala, Chile and Colombia.

Spearhead was moored at the Port of Gulfport, less than three miles from Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport, which was essential for a quick cargo transport and loading operation.

"It is great to be able to conduct our cargo loading and deployment from Gulfport, with such a strong Seabee presence in the local area," said Stacy. "The specialized skill sets and capabilities the Seabees bring to the table are essential to our partner capacity building efforts in Central and South America."

A DAY AT THE BALLPARK FOR MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Capt. John A. Carter, Chief of Staff, Military Sealift Command, Norfolk, Virginia, throws out the first pitch at the Norfolk Tides baseball game July 27 against the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Rail Riders in Harbor Park. Military Sealift Command teammates spent the day at Harbor Park as part of the MWR employee appreciate day. The Tides won the game 2-1. (U.S. Navy photo by Brian Suriani)

Approximately 300 service members and civilian teammates attached to Military Sealift Command gathered at Harbor Park in Norfolk, Virginia, to enjoy an afternoon of Norfolk Tides baseball, July 27.

The event was organized by MSC's Moral, Welfare and Recreation committee to offer the command's teammates an opportunity for camaraderie and relaxation during the busy work week.

Highlights of the afternoon included Capt. John Carter, Chief of Staff, Military Sealift Command, throwing out the 'first pitch' prior to the baseball game.

"Baseball is America's game, and the honor of throwing the first pitch was very special," said Carter. The opportunity to represent the amazing Americans at MSC, who work hard to deliver, assured logistics, is a memory that I will cherish."

Carter added, "As the unification of the MSC Headquarters on board Naval Station Norfolk draws to a close this year, it is really important we build a culture which values our families and organizational camaraderie as both are critical in developing resilient teammates."

The consolidation of the MSC Headquarters to Norfolk, Virginia, began in 2015.

"The MSC Day at the Ball park was the largest event our MWR committee has sponsored since the consolidation move of the command from the Navy Ship Yard in Washington D.C. to Norfolk," said Marrissa Miller, a member MSC's MWR committee.

Prior to the baseball game, the MSC teammates in attendance had the opportunity to enjoy a picnic at the baseball park which included bar-b-que, hot dogs, and sausage and pepper sandwiches.

"This was the perfect opportunity to enjoy some good ole-fashioned summer fun," concluded Carter. "We all had a great time at the ball park."

"MSC's MWR program is designed to promote positive, healthy lifestyles; support civilian and military readiness, and mission accomplishment through physical fitness, camaraderie, and unit cohesion," said Yeoman First Class Garland Albert, the president of MSC's MWR Committee. "We also provide support and services for military personnel, family wellbeing, and quality of life services."

Prior to the event, the MWR Committee developed marketing fliers, coordinated the picnic and worked with the staff at Harbor Park to ensure a successful day at the ballpark.

"The MWR Committee is thankful for everyone who supports our MWR fund-raisers and social events," said Albert. "The day at Harbor Park was a huge success and we hope to return to the ball park next year."

The Norfolk Tides defeated the Scranton Rail Riders two runs to one in the nine inning baseball game.

For more information about MSC's MWR Committee, please contact Yeoman First Class Garland Albert or Kristen Norfleet of MSC's N-8.

HAMPTON ROADS MORNING OF HOPE

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Service members and civilian teammates attached to Military Sealift Command are invited to join the Hampton Roads Morning of Hope at Mount Trashmore in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on Saturday Sept. 9 at 9:30 a.m.

The event is designed to promote good mental health and to raise awareness of depression as a treatable disease and suicide as a preventable tragedy. "We must take care of one another with support on these two issues that are plaguing so many of our loved ones and coworkers," said Chief Master-at-Arms Michael Brandon, MSC's suicide prevention coordinator. "It is important that we display unity and have a voice of support which is vital to so many who are struggling with depression and suicide."

The event will begin with the program of 'Awareness, Remembrance and Celebration' which will feature a welcome statement from Virginia Beach Mayor Will Sessoms and Tom Schaad, WAVY-TV 10 news anchor, as the emcee. The program will also include messages from several featured speakers.

According to Brandon, "the Hampton Roads Morning of Hope will include complimentary breakfast, an informative and moving program opened by a Color Guard, a memory wall, family activities, names will be read in remembrance and licensed counselors will be available on site for support."

From 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. everyone is invited to participate in a walk which will feature passing through a curtain of 1,000 paper cranes strung by event volunteers. The cranes symbolize the hope for peace for those who have died by suicide and those currently suffering from depression.

"Team MSC will carry a banner representing the command. We are hoping as many members of the command, service members, civilians and contractors, can come out to support," added Brandon.

According to the event web site, the Hampton Roads Morning of Hope initiative is locally sponsored by the Hampton Roads Survivors of Suicide Support Group Inc., a non-profit organization for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. With the intention of sparing others from their tragedy, its members want to reach out to anyone touched by depression or by suicide.

To register for the Hampton Roads Morning of Hope, please visit: http://www.hamptonroadssos-hope.org.

Check-in for the event will begin at 8:30 a.m.

"Our hope is that MSC will show up to support in huge numbers for this very important event," said Brandon. "Let's show how much MSC cares about a critical, community-wide problem."

September has been designated by the U.S. Navy as Suicide Prevention Month.

US NAVY KICKS OFF 8TH ANNUAL NAVAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY WITH VISIT TO CAM RANH INTERNATIONAL PORT, VIETNAM

From Task Force 73 Public Affairs

The USS Coronado (LCS 4) and the USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52) arrive to Cam Ranh International Port during Naval Engagement Activity Vietnam 2017. (U.S. Navy photograph by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joshua Fulton)

The U.S. Navy began the 8th Annual Naval Engagement Activity (NEA) with the Vietnam People's Navy, July 5, with the arrival of USS Coronado (LCS 4) and USNS Salvor (T-ARS-52) at Cam Ranh International Port.

This five-day collaboration will focus on events and skills exchanges in diving and salvage and undersea medicine. A brief at-sea phase will allow ships from both navies to practice the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), ship handling, and medical evacuations. Subject matter expert exchanges ashore will focus on shipboard damage control, shipboard medicine, and law. NEA will also feature formal office calls, band concerts, community relations events, and team sports.

"The United States values our comprehensive partnership with Vietnam and we look forward to deepening our relationship and people-to-people ties through engagements like NEA," said Rear Adm. Don Gabrielson, commander, Task Force 73. "By working and interacting together regularly we foster meaningful relationships and trust between our nations that contribute to the peace and prosperity of the region."

This is the first time the event is being held in Khanh Hoa Province and the eighth iteration of NEA Vietnam since it was established as an annual engagement in 2010. Previous NEAs were held in Da Nang.

"Our partnership with the Vietnam People's Navy continues to grow stronger each year," said Capt. Alexis T. Walker, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 7. "We're excited to have the opportunity to work alongside our partners here in Vietnam and build off the success of last year's engagement."

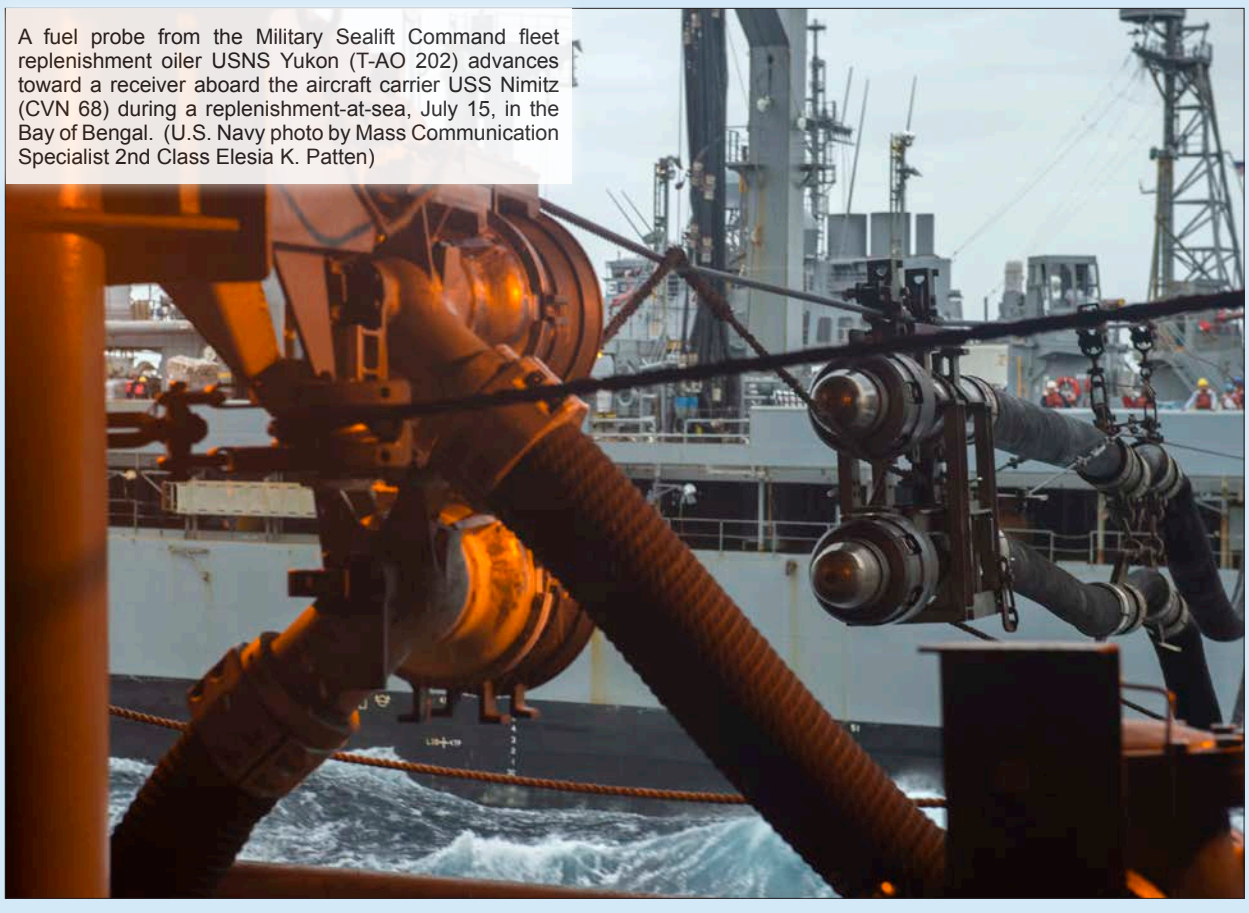
In addition to USS Coronado and USNS Salvor, U.S. units participating in Naval Engagement Activity Vietnam include personnel from Task Force 73, Destroyer Squadron 7, and the U.S. 7th Fleet Band.

"These naval activities underscore the deepening and diverse relationship between the United States and Vietnam. Our security cooperation was an important discussion point during the recent meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc," noted U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius.

This year marks the 22nd anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam.

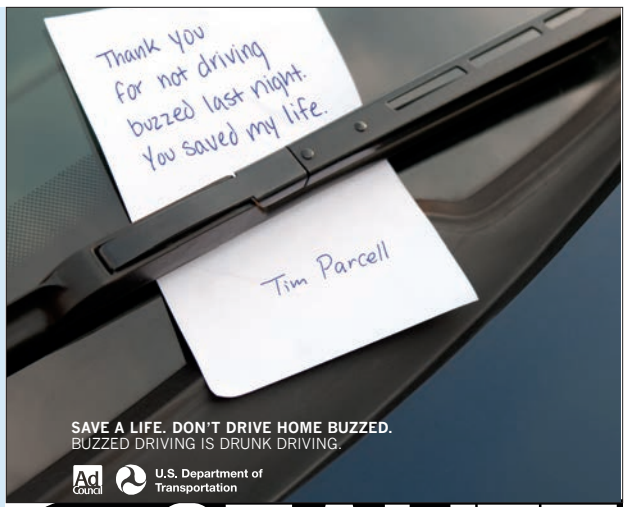
ANYDAY

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Airman Walter Rutherford directs a SA-330J Puma helicopter, assigned to the Military Sealift Command dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4), to drop cargo on the flight deck of the amphibious transport dock USS Green Bay (LPD 20) during a vertical replenishment as a part of Talisman Saber 17. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Sarah Myers)



A fuel probe from the Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS Yukon (T-AO 202) advances toward a receiver aboard the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68) during a replenishment-at-sea, July 15, in the Bay of Bengal. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Elesia K. Patten)

NEXT ISSUE: GROUP SAIL



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