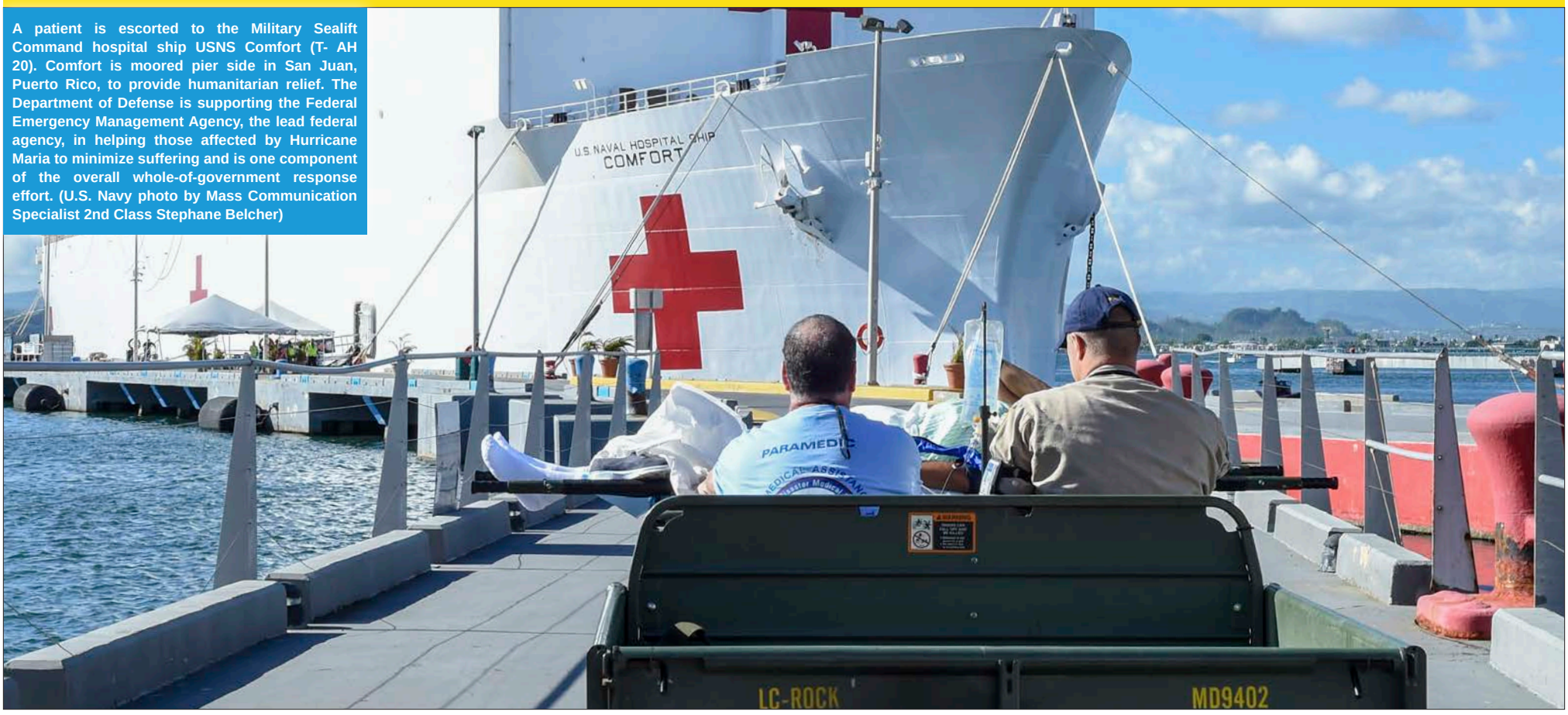
MSC

SEALIFT

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

DECEMBER 2017 ISSUE



A patient is escorted to the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T- AH 20). Comfort is moored pier side in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to provide humanitarian relief. The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead federal agency, in helping those affected by Hurricane Maria to minimize suffering and is one component of the overall whole-of-government response effort. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)

COMFORT TAKES ON PATIENTS IN SAN JUAN

By Seaman Danny Nunez, Navy Public Affairs Support Element East

Docked well in view of the cityscape of San Juan sits the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) ready to help the people of Puerto Rico in any way possible.

A Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), consisting of dozens of medical personnel from the U.S. Health and Human Services and Comfort's medical staff, has been stood up ashore to provide administrative and medical services near the pier prior to patient care aboard. Patients are screened and evaluated by the DMAT to determine if further treatment aboard the hospital ship is necessary.

"The Puerto Rican Department of Health along with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has determined that being in close proximity to Centro Medico is the best utilization of Comfort to help relieve pressure on the Puerto Rican healthcare system," said Capt. Kevin Robinson, mission commander aboard Comfort. "We're going to [...] have a great opportunity to reduce human suffering. That continues to be our number one goal."

Since arriving on Oct. 27, Comfort and the surrounding medical staging areas have provided care for more than 270 patients from around the hurricane-ravaged island.

"Comfort has enabled us to see many patients," said Ronda Lacey, a Health and Human Services (HHS) team lead on the island. "I am so proud of the individuals here and from the Comfort who are here to help. It is an honor and a service to be here."

These sentiments are shared by fellow Puerto Ricans who are equally happy with the level of care and treatment from the many government entities involved in alleviating the afflicted in Puerto Rico.

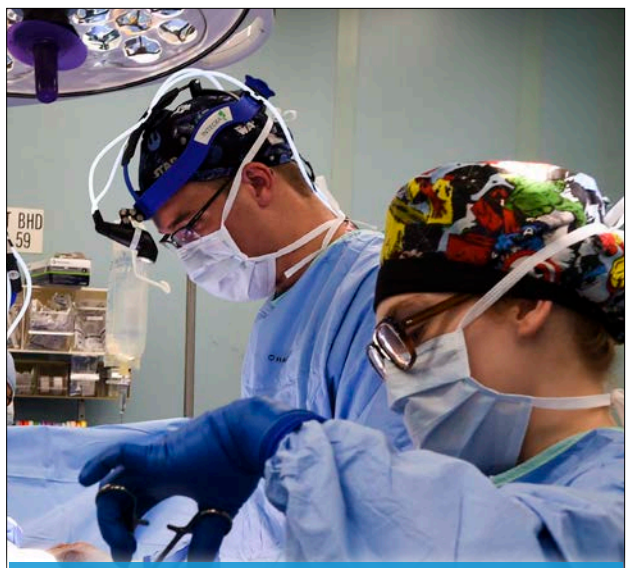
"Everybody is real good, everybody has treated us great, it is great," said Madeline Landarau, a citizen of Puerto Rico. "I don't have words to explain it."

Comfort is a seagoing medical treatment facility that currently has more than 850 personnel embarked for the Puerto Rico mission including Navy medical and support staff assembled from 22 commands, as well as over 70 civil service mariners.

The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which coordinates all federal assistance requested by the government of Puerto Rico to help those affected by Hurricane Maria.

Comfort's primary mission is to provide an afloat, mobile, acute surgical medical facility to the U.S. military that is flexible, capable, and uniquely adaptable to support expeditionary warfare. Comfort's secondary mission is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide.

Members of the Disaster Medical Assistance Team transfer a patient to receive care aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20). (U.S. Navy Photo by MC1 Ernest R. Scott)



Sailors operate on a patient aboard the hospital ship USNS Comfort in the Caribbean Sea near San Juan, Puerto Rico, Oct. 18, 2017, while supporting Hurricane Maria relief efforts. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)

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USNS HERSHEL 'WOODY' WILLIAMS, MSC READING LIST

From Commander, Military Sealift Command

This past Saturday the Navy christened our newest expeditionary sea base ship, USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (T-ESB 4). The ship is named after Hershel Williams who joined the U.S. Marine Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and received the Medal of Honor for actions during the battle of Iwo Jima. He is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from that historic battle. We are honored to have an MSC ship named after this great American hero. If we can work with a fraction of the skill, tenacity and dedication displayed by Woody Williams we will be well on our way to operating as a high-performing team focused on mission accomplishment.

Naval forces are critically important in building partnerships with our friends and allies, rapidly responding to crises, deterring adversaries, and sustaining our forward presence. Ships like Hershel "Woody" Williams enable MSC to confidently sail the world's oceans, providing assured logistics and specialized support to the joint warfighter.

We know that today's maritime system has become more heavily used, more stressed, and more contested than ever before. The Chief of Naval Operations recently noted that in the last 25 years, the amount of maritime traffic on the sea has increased by 400 percent!

Our mission is to empower the global warfighter, 24/7/365, and we are the best in the world at what we do today. I continue to receive positive feedback from senior military leaders around the world that MSC is a valuable partner, contributing each day to the success of the joint warfighter.

However, we can no longer presume dominance in space, cyber, air, sea, and undersea domains. New operational concepts and innovative thinking are needed to ensure mission accomplishment.

Like her sister ship, USS Lewis B. Puller, currently operating forward in the Middle East region, Hershel "Woody" Williams will provide us a competitive edge against potential adversaries. Through her unique combination of aviation support, equipment staging, command and control, and a well-trained crew, this expeditionary sea base will provide our leadership with options and decision space.

An area we need to continue to develop and nurture is our many partnerships with other military units, as well as those outside our lifelines. The construction and delivery of Hershel "Woody" Williams is an example of a highly effective partnership with industry. More partnerships like these are needed to collectively ensure mission success in a contested environment.

It is important to remember that this ship will be crewed by U.S. mariners. As this ship will likely sail in harm's way, our mariners will be there, reliably and bravely manning our ships, even if the seas become a battlefield.

I want to recognize and thank all those in industry, at MSC, and other Navy commands, who played a role in bringing this ship to life. We eagerly await the upcoming arrival of this ship to our fleet where our Mariners will give her life and sail her into the challenges ahead.

MSC Reading List

As detailed in the Voyage Plan and Navigation Track, Military Sealift Command is committed to continuous improvement and innovation. This commitment not only applies to our processes and procedures, but to our professional development as well. This can best be achieved through honing our critical thinking and analysis skills. A regular diet of reading can be a great aid in this area.

MSC has developed a reading list that serves as a common frame of reference among our employees. These books, chosen from dozens of submissions from MSC employees across the enterprise, touch on issues which are of high relevance to our daily operations and include topics of maritime logistics and history, and personal and organizational successes. They reflect the diversity of thought and talent we have throughout MSC.

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. John Richardson, provides a thoughtful perspective on the value of reading when he says, "Warfare is a violent, intellectual contest between thinking and adapting adversaries. The team that can think better and adapt faster will win. As we prepare for operations and war with an increasingly complex set of potential adversaries, we must do more to sharpen our thinking, learn the lessons from history, and expand our minds."

The MSC 2017 Reading List is located on the MSC portal at the Commander's Corner under Commander's Links; and also on the MSC public website at http://www.msc.navy.mil/pao/ReadingList/MSCReadingList2017.pdf. Your supervisor can also provide you a copy of the reading list.

Our intent is to update this list annually so if you come across books you believe would be a good addition don't hesitate to submit those titles to our Public Affairs office for our 2018 list.

It is our responsibility as leaders and team members to continue to grow, intellectually challenge ourselves, and to question the status quo.

I encourage you to discuss with your teammates the ideas, concepts, and lessons from history you learn through reading books on this list and look for ways to use this knowledge to better inform the work we are doing at MSC.

United We Sail,

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

U.S. TRANSCOM TRAILBLAZING TRANSITION TO CLOUD COMPUTING

By Michael P. Kleiman, U.S. Transportation Command

U.S. Transportation Command is the first Department of Defense organization to initiate migration of its cyber domain to a commercial cloud provider to improve mission assurance, while strengthening information technology efficiency and effectiveness.

Last month, the first wave of five USTRANSCOM IT systems transitioned to a commercial cloud-based solution.

Relying heavily on the transportation industry to help accomplish its mission, USTRANSCOM faces significant challenges to provide transportation service providers timely information to carry out its tasks. As a result of this, and, in addition to the threat of a cyber-domain attack and the command's aging electronic infrastructure, USTRANSCOM Commander Air Force Gen. Darren W. McDew subsequently directed the organization's move to the cloud earlier this year.

The move will, among other things, allow USTRANSCOM to streamline and strengthen its security when working with industry partners while allowing them quicker access to vital transportation information.

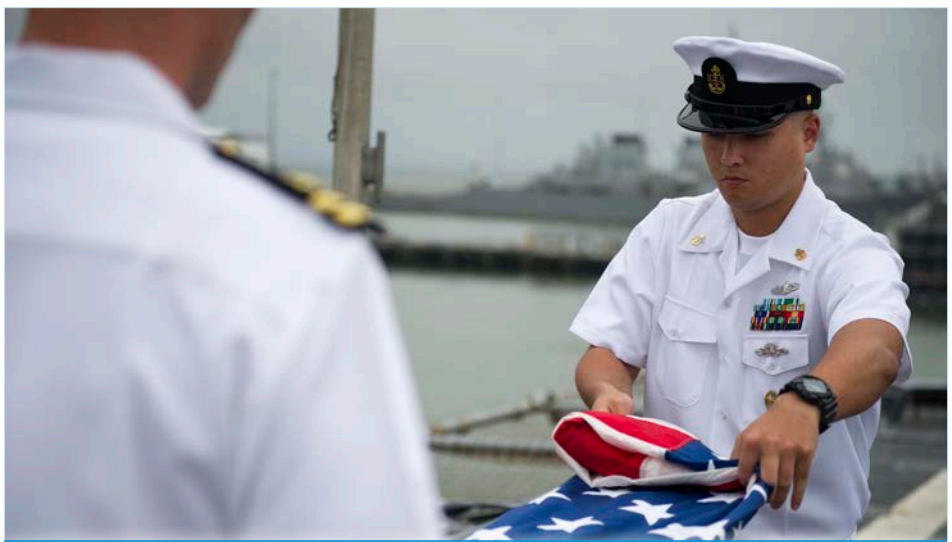
In February, the command's Cloud Center of Excellence stood up. Three months later, the CCoE, in collaboration with the Defense Innovation Unit Experimental, which underwrites pilot contracts for commercial innovation solving DoD problems in under 90 days, and the Army Contracting Command, Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, executed a contract for a prototype cloud-migration solution with REAN Cloud LLC, Herndon, Virginia. The contract established a USTRANSCOM-protected enclave within a government-authorized cloud environment.

"The command's transition to a cloud-based solution not only enhances mission assurance, but controls IT infrastructure costs and strengthens cyber agility, resiliency and innovation," said Air Force Lt. Col. John Riester, deputy chief, Enterprise Infrastructure Portfolio and Support Division, USTRANSCOM's Command, Control, Communications and Cyber Systems Directorate. "This transformational move to the cloud also allows us to keep pace with industry."

In addition, by year's end, the CCoE will migrate capability onto a cloud-native platform and transition 22 applications to a commercial cloud service provider including 19 systems associated with one of its three components, the U.S. Army's Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command collocated on Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. All other USTRANSCOM programs will migrate to the contracted commercial cloud provider by July 2018.

"In transitioning to proven commercial cloud technology, USTRANSCOM pays only for services used, while the commercial cloud service provider manages and adjusts the command's flexible IT footprint in minutes and with near-perfect reliability," stated Wes Schooley, chief, Enterprise Engineering Branch, Command, Control, Communications and Cyber Systems Directorate. "Acting as the pathfinder, USTRANSCOM leads the DoD in cloud migration, demonstrating increased transparency, risk tolerance, experimentation and innovation."

USS PONCE DECOMMISSIONED AFTER 46 YEARS OF SERVICE



During the afloat forward staging base (interim) USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15) decommissioning ceremony, Chief Information Systems Technician Steven Hoover, right, folds the last flag to be flown aboard the ship. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Justin Wolpert)

By SURFLANT Public Affairs

Following more than 46 years of honorable naval service, the afloat forward staging base (interim) USS Ponce (AFSB(I) 15) was decommissioned during a time-honored ceremony, Oct. 14.

Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic, Rear Adm. Jesse A. Wilson Jr., provided keynote remarks. Other notable speakers included Commander, Military Sealift Command, Rear Adm. Dee L. Mewbourne; Commander, Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Brig. Gen. Francis L. Donovan; Maritime Administration Associate Administrator for Strategic Sealift, Kevin M. Tokarski; and the ship's commanding officer, Capt. Christopher Wells.

Wilson highlighted the significance of the ceremony and ship's significant contributions to national security.

"It is truly an honor to participate in this momentous and time honored naval tradition, as we remember the accomplishments, warfighting attitude, contributions and legacy of the USS Ponce and its Sailors over the last 46 years," said Wilson.

During the ceremony, Wells spoke about the ship's naval service and recent mission.

"After exceptional service to the Navy and nation for nearly half a century, it is bittersweet that the "Proud Lion" has returned to its homeport here in Norfolk for one last event, its decommissioning," said Wells.

"It is quite an honor for me and also for the whole hybrid crew, made up of dedicated, professional Sailors and civilian mariners, to take Ponce to sea and bring it home for the last time. I can't praise this team enough for the job they have done these last years, aboard this aged warrior, in the hot and hostile seas in Fifth Fleet."

The ship, commissioned in 1971, was the 12th and last ship in the Austin-class of amphibious transport dock ships. In 2012, the ship was refitted as an afloat forward staging base (interim). After being forward deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operation for the past five years, the "Proud Lion" returned to its homeport in September and was decommissioned Oct. 14.

Named for the Puerto Rican city of the same name, Ponce served mostly in the Atlantic Fleet, completing 27 deployments in the North Atlantic, Caribbean, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf.

Originally slated for decommissioning in 2011, the "Proud Lion" was refitted and reclassified, based on the USS Kitty Hawk's (CV 63) role as an afloat special operations staging base during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001. And, she was outfitted with a joint Navy - Military Sealift Command (MSC) crew.

Forward deployed for the past five years, the crew provided vital support to U.S. and allied forces in the U.S. 5th Fleet and Central Command, primarily during mine countermeasures operations, but also in international maritime command and control roles. In doing so, the crew launched, recovered and sustained multiple aircraft, riverine and other vessels.

Their actions led to the ship and its crew being awarded the Combat Action Ribbon, presented to Wells during the ceremony by Donovan.

"In the Navy and Marine Corps, one award clearly stands out," said Donovan. "It is the award that recognizes service in combat against an enemy."

"I am extremely proud, honored and humbled to award Ponce her first Combat Action Ribbon, in 46 years of service. They were well trained, knew their ship and her combat systems and were well led by a superior Navy captain and MSC master. They were ready. They represented the absolute best of our nation operating at the very tip of the spear."

The "Proud Lion" was relieved in U.S 5th Fleet by the expeditionary sea base ship USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), the first ship built specifically for the purpose of serving as an afloat, forward-staging base.

In 2014, Ponce successfully deployed and operated the laser weapon system (LaWS) for the first time. This 30 kilowatt cutting-edge weapon significantly expands the Navy's viability of directed every weapons in an operational environment, something which will offer increased levels of precision and speed for naval warfighter at a decreased cost.

"You heeded the call of duty and had the remarkable opportunity to not just witness history, but to make history," said Wilson as he highlighted Ponce's commitment to innovation.

"I cannot be more proud of your accomplishments, what you achieved together and of your unyielding warfighting spirit. This ship will always be linked to the American resolve. The legacy of this ship will live on in our Sailors, our Marine brothers and sisters, and our civilian mariners."

During its 46-year journey, Ponce and its crews were lauded for their outstanding service, earning numerous individual and unit awards. Ponce now joins the inactive fleet and will be dismantled.

NAVY CHRISTENED EXPEDITIONARY SEA BASE HERSHEL "WOODY" WILLIAMS

By Department of Defense

The Navy christened the Expeditionary Sea Base future USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (T-ESB 4) during a ceremony Saturday, Oct. 21, at General Dynamics NASSCO, San Diego.

The Hershel "Woody" Williams is the first ship to bear the name of Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer Hershel Woodrow Williams, the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient recognized for heroism at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Maj. Gen. Eric M. Smith, commanding general, 1st Marine Division, delivered the ceremony's principal address. Williams's daughters, Tracie Jean Ross and Travie Jane Ross, who serve as the ship's sponsors, will break a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow to formally christen the ship, a time-honored Navy tradition.

"This ship honors a man who dedicated his life to service-heroic service as a Marine and continued service to his fellow veterans," said the Honorable Richard V. Spencer, secretary of the Navy. "This dedication will live on in USNS Hershel 'Woody' Williams as the ship is deployed around the world bringing additional capability to our growing fleet. The ceremony on Saturday will also represent the dedication to service demonstrated by the men and women who worked tirelessly to build this ship and their commitment to quality and innovation."

The future Hershel "Woody" Williams is optimized to support a variety of maritime-based missions and designed around four core capabilities:

An undated artist rendering of the future expeditionary sea base USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (T-ESB 4). (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of General Dynamics)

aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support and command and control assets. ESBs can be enhanced to meet special operations force missions through increased communications, aviation and unmanned aircraft system support.

Built by General Dynamics NASSCO, the Montford Point-class is comprised of five ships across two variants: expeditionary transfer docks and expeditionary sea bases. USNS Montford Point (ESD 1), USNS John Glenn

USNS WILLIAMS, continued on page 8

COMFORT WELCOMES NEWEST ADDITION

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ernest R. Scott

Cmdr. Michael Chaney, chaplain from Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and the head chaplain embarked on the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), speaks to the mother and father of the first baby born on Comfort since 2010. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)

The sound of two bells rang through the passageways of the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) as the announcement passed over the ship's one main circuit.

"Sara Victoria Llull Rodriguiz, born this day Oct. 14, arriving!"

With Comfort underway in the vicinity of San Juan, Puerto Rico, providing medical assistance throughout a region devastated by Hurricane Maria, the birth of Sara aboard the ship was a reminder of the work to be done, but also hope for the future of the island.

"I never thought that our special moment would happen here on this ship," said Francisco Llull Vera, Sara's father. "Everyone has been so helpful and gentle while caring for our baby. I hope this opens the door for those who still need help to seek out the Comfort."

At 6 pounds 8 ounces, Sara may be small, but her presence is mighty. Her birth on Comfort gained the attention of Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello who said this has been a bit of good news that has gone across the island. Capt. Kevin Robinson, Comfort's mission commander, said the special occasion is one felt throughout the ship.

"I think the birth of that little girl has reinvigorated the crew," said Robinson.

One of Comfort's primary missions is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief and humanitarian operations worldwide. Although fully equipped, capable and ready to support, Sara's delivery came to many as a welcome surprise.

"We stood up the labor and delivery ward prior to getting underway," said Lt. Karri Washbon, a labor and delivery nurse aboard Comfort who assisted with Sara's birth. "We expected to see a lot of patients, but we weren't sure how often we'd get to utilize this aspect. With every birth there is a unique story and we are glad to be a part of their experience. Now everyone just wants to see the baby!"

While more than 800 medical personnel and support staff aboard Comfort want to greet their newest "shipmate," Sara's 6-year-old brother Alonzo and 4-year-old sister Sofia, who are currently staying with family ashore in Puerto Rico, anxiously await her return.

"They are so excited to meet her," said Tania Rodriguiz Ramos, Sara's mother. "I got the chance to call my family and let them know that I am ok and that the baby is healthy and happy. It's a huge blessing for Sara to be here; I owe everything to the doctors and nurses and everyone aboard."

The last birth aboard Comfort occurred on Jan. 21, 2010, while the ship was providing humanitarian relief in support of Operation Unified Response following a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that caused severe damage in Haiti.

Recognizing the rarity of the situation, Comfort's current Ship's Master Roger Gwinn ceremoniously renamed one of the ship's two small boat tenders the Sara Victoria.

"We wanted to do something special, the crew has taken to the baby as one of our own," said Gwinn. "As she goes forward in life, we hope she carries Comfort with her."

As of Oct. 15, Comfort has delivered more than 10 tons of food and water, 21,000 liters of oxygen, and treated more than 100 patients to relieve pressure on the Puerto Rican health system.

DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY, USNS SUPPLY DELIVER PRODUCE FOR SAILORS ABOARD USS OAK HILL

By Shawn J. Jones, DLA Troop Support Public Affairs

Sailors retrieve supplies from an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter on the flight deck of the dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) during a vertical replenishment with the fast combat support ship USNS Supply (T-AOE 6). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Taylor A. Elberg)

When acquisition professionals at the Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support received an emergency order to restock the galley of a Navy ship performing hurricane-relief operations, they raced against the clock to ensure the Sailors had fresh produce to fuel their efforts.

The USS Oak Hill was operating in the Caribbean, ready to help those affected by Hurricane Irma. The ship was running low on fresh fruits and vegetables and would need to be replenished by the USNS Supply, a Military Sealift Command ship docked at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. The USNS Supply was set to depart Sept. 9 on a mission to replenish several ships operating in the Caribbean, including the Oak Hill.

Larry Munoz, a field representative for the DLA Troop Support's Subsistence supply chain, with the help of fellow Subsistence acquisition professionals, received and executed several emergency orders to stock the Supply.

But the order for the Oak Hill wasn't submitted due to a communications error. By the time the error was corrected, only four hours remained before the Supply would close its cargo holds in preparation for departure.

Navy Lt. Tam Colbert, a logistics support officer in Naval Supply Systems Command's Fleet Logistics Center in Norfolk, said she thought there wouldn't be enough time for the vendor to make the delivery, but she placed the request anyway.

"To our surprise, Larry said 'Send the order in'," she said.

With no time to waste, subsistence professionals went to work, trying to figure out how the crew of the Oak Hill could receive the fresh produce. Dave Jolls, who manages Subsistence's produce and market fresh division, said he had a vested interested seeing the order filled.

"I know how it feels to be on a ship and not receive those fresh fruits and vegetables," said Jolls, who spent 24 years in the Navy.

Getting the order to the Oak Hill would prove to be a complicated process, Jolls said.

The primary vendor with an established Subsistence contract was unable to deliver the items in time. So Jolls had to coordinate with vendors in the Norfolk area who were capable and willing to coordinate with the vendor under contract to meet the requirements.

Jolls said he didn't expect to be able to meet all of the Oak Hill's requirements, but would try to fill at least some of the order.

"We weren't looking for 100 percent, because it was last-minute, and you don't know what the vendors have in stock," he said.

It also proved difficult to find a short-notice delivery driver who could access the military installation with minimal delay.

Jolls and Munoz, also a Navy veteran, worked the phones, drafted contracting documents and fired off email after email in an attempt to accomplish their part of the mission.

"It was tough, but it was good," Jolls said. "It was all hands on deck, the whole nine yards, all in the matter of a couple of hours."

Their efforts paid off as the driver made the full delivery with no time to spare.

DLA DELIVERS, continued on page 8

CIVIL SERVICE MARINERS CONDUCT SURVEY FOR COMFORT'S CONTINUED SUPPORT

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephane Belcher, Navy Medicine East

Civil service mariners (CIVMARs) aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) surveyed berths for the ship along the shore of Ponce, Puerto Rico, Oct. 23.

It's not typical to conduct hands-on surveys of a pier, but after traumatic experiences, like hurricanes, there could be damage to the ports–that's when someone needs to make sure the pier is still structurally sound.

"This side of the island was hit harder than the other," said Gerald Butch, the boatswain and a civil service mariner embarked on Comfort. "We need to check out the harbor and what facilities they have."

Third Officer Nathan Grant went on one of Comfort's two rigid hull inflatable boats to do the survey with a waters depth sounder that tells him how much water is below him. He ran the length of the pier and saw there was 50 feet of water and used a sounding tape that stops when it hits the bottom.

"Today's mission was a reconnaissance mission of the port," said Grant. "To see if we can do a similar [patient] tender ops, like we did in Arecibo, and also the possibility of maybe pulling in the entire Comfort vessel because there's a container terminal there. To see if it was able to support us, similar to what we did in San Juan."

Ensuring there's no obstruction that occurred in the port is vital, especially with a ship as large as Comfort. But the 85 CIVMARs working around-the-clock for this hybrid ship provide much more. They support the military treatment facility (MTF) by ensuring the ship is operational.

"We work seamlessly together," said First Officer Andrew Cheng. "There's the hull side, which is the operations of the ship. We navigate, we communicate and we operate the plans and all the facilities on board while the MTF operates the hospital. We provide them with the ability to operate the hospital. We get them there, we drive the ship."

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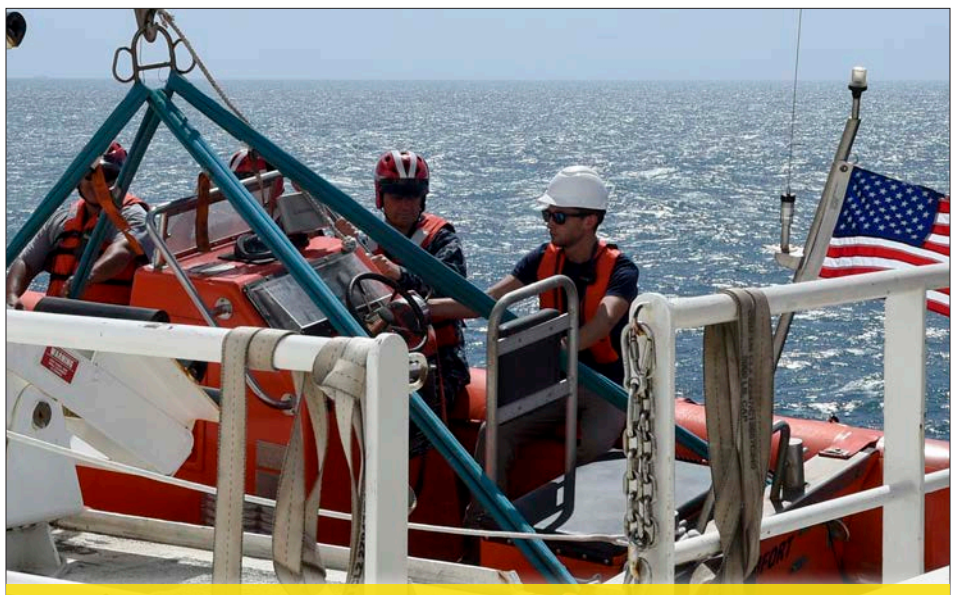


Civil service mariners and Cmdr. Kenneth Davies, chief staff officer from Military Sealift Command (MSC) Afloat Mission Control East, embarked on the MSC hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) launch one of two rigid hull inflatable boats aboard the ship to survey piers in Ponce, Puerto Rico. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)

TRENTON'S CREW FEATURES RESERVE SAR SWIMMERS

By Matthew Montgomery, Military Sealift Command Europe

The MILDET helps foster theater security cooperation, preserve freedom of the seas, and promote peace and regional stability. Trenton is currently assigned to Commander Naval Forces Europe-Africa (CNE-CNA), and operates in the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet Area of Operations (AOO).

Trenton's adaptive force package includes two seven-meter rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIB) with corresponding boat crews. Each crew has two boatswain mates, two engineman and a search-and-rescue (SAR) swimmer. They are AFP mission enablers when responding to emergencies, such as casualty evacuations (CASEVAC), unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) waterborne recovery, as well as migrant and other maritime SAR operations. Additionally, the AFP boat crews are prepared to support other task force element missions and conduct foreign military-to-military training exercises and engagements in the AOO.

So far Trenton's boat crews have conducted multiple at-sea and in-port training and operational evolutions, accumulating over 50 hours of SAR and CASEVAC drills and UAV standby recoveries. They have also conducted medical evacuation litter retrieval exercises with Trenton's MSC civilian mariner crew, referred to as CIVMARs.

Currently, the two MILDET boat crews are made up of two active duty and six reserve component Sailors. The two SAR swimmers are both reserve Sailors from the Navy Reserve Littoral Combat Ship units, one of which was instrumental in the development of the reserve SAR swimmer program.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Gregorio Bianchini has been in the Navy Reserves for 14 years and was one of the key driving forces behind the creation of the reserve SAR swimmer program. He is from North Plainfield, New Jersey, and works as a pilot and student in his civilian career.

Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Jared Aellis has been in the Navy Reserves for three years. He is actively pursuing and plans to apply for the Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman (SWCC) program upon returning from his current mobilization. SWCC are responsible for operating a variety of small boats in direct support of Navy SEALs and other special operations forces.

Aellis is the first non prior-service Sailor to ever qualify as a SAR swimmer. He lives in Freehold, New Jersey, and is currently a student at Brookdale College pursuing a degree in psychology.

During their deployment aboard Trenton, Bianchini and Aellis have already completed over 25 hours of SAR sustainment training and 11 RHIB operations. Both reserve Sailors are current on all SAR required training including six at-sea rescue litter evolutions. They have also conducted 20 hours of SAR classroom training with presentations provided by Afloat Training Group.

"The reserve swimmers have been a perfect example of a plug and play scenario for reserve Individual Augmentee mobilizations," said Lt. j.g. Randy Vincent, MILDET Force Protection Officer who also serves as the deck officer during small boat operations.

In addition to their duties as SAR swimmers, Bianchini and Aellis also work within their rates and fulfill the mission with unrivaled work ethic.

"As small boat operations continue to improve and evolve, Bianchini and Aellis are instrumental in the growth of the overall mission capability and continue to forge the path for future reserve SAR swimmers to be deployed to other T-EPF AFP," said Cdr. Dan Mirelez, MILDET officer-in-charge. "The work of these Sailors while aboard Trenton has not only improved the success of the Reserve SAR swimmer program, but their ability to work in-rate has led to significant improvements to the associate equipment and maintenance requirements as well."

Together, they helped improve the Maintenance Material Management Schedule, known as the 3M SKED program, for the boats and successfully put together a parts requirement list which resulted in 100% of the required shipboard allowance being ordered. This contributed directly to ensuring proper boat maintenance. They also used their SAR swimmer expertise to improve the SAR required equipment aboard Trenton, and their efforts have directly led to improvement in future planning for U.S. 6th Fleet and MSC in regards to the T-EPF AFP concept of operations.

Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Gregorio Bianchini and Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Jared Aellis, both search-and-rescue swimmers with the USNS Trenton's U.S. Navy Military Det., participate in rigid-hull inflatable boat training. Trenton (T-EPF 5) is a Military Sealift Command spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport vessel. (U.S. Navy photo by Matthew Montgomery)

USNS TRENTON, continued on page 8

USNS BRITTIN DEPARTS VIRGINIA TO SUPPORT HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS IN PUERTO RICO

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's dry cargo surge sealift carrier USNS Brittin (T-AKR 305) departed from Newport News to provide logistical support for ongoing hurricane relief efforts in Puerto Rico, Oct. 25.

"Prior to departing, Hampton Roads, vital hurricane relief equipment and stores were loaded aboard the ship," according to Rick Caldwell, a Military Sealift Command supervisory marine transportation specialist. "Brittin is sailing to Charleston, South Carolina, to pick up additional hurricane relief equipment and supplies to be transported to Puerto Rico. They will also be bringing worn equipment back to the U.S. mainland to be refurbished."

"With the devastation that Puerto Rico has sustained, all of the cargo Brittin will be delivering is critically needed to support the re-building of the island's infrastructure," added Caldwell.

Some of the equipment Brittin is transporting to Puerto Rico includes mobile water buffalo trailers, prime movers and rough terrain container handlers, according to Caldwell.

Brittin is also delivering portable generators, water purification systems, and portable cell phone charging stations and support vehicles.

"Brittin is crewed by 32 contract mariners," added Caldwell. "The mariners maintain the safe and efficient operation of the vessel for MSC, from re-building pumps in the engine room to operating the cranes for heavy lifts, while they perform routine maintenance on the vessel."

Brittin is a large medium speed roll-on, roll-off cargo carrier, which is capable of conducting cargo operations at anchor or pier-side. Brittin can conduct cargo operations from four areas aboard; from the stern ramp, side-port ramp for roll on, roll off operations, and port and starboard side for lift-on, lift-off requirements.

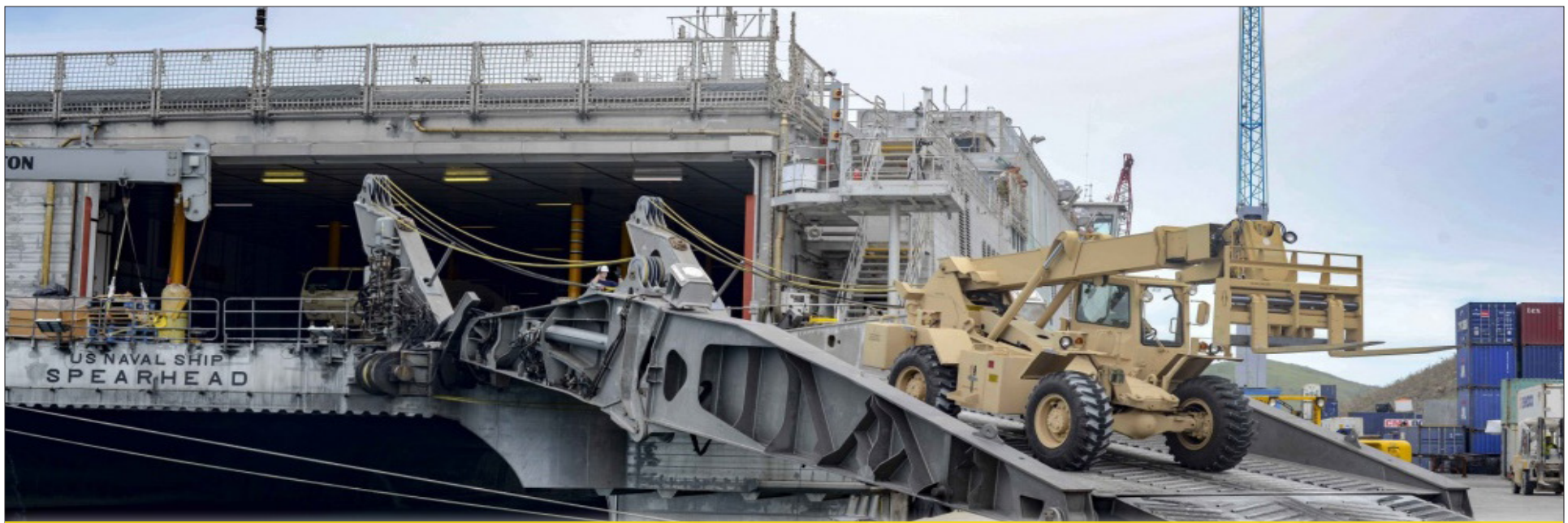
"Brittin is self-sustaining cargo vessel with four cranes and external and internal ramps to roll cargo on and off and into the hulls. It has two 110-ton Hagglunds deck crane pedestals mounted with twin cranes to lift cargo through three hatches," added Kimberly Harris, an MSC transportation specialist. "It can carry various cargos from wheeled to containers and break bulk secured on six decks and in six holds."

USNS Brittin's namesake is Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. 1st Class Nelson V. Brittin, an American combat Soldier who was killed in action during the Korean War. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in Yonggong-ni, Korea, on March 7, 1951.

Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE (NCHB-1) Sailors embark the USNS Brittin (T-AKR-305), Oct 24. NCHB-1 Cargo Handlers embarked to assist in hurricane relief efforts. (U.S. Navy Photo by Logistics Specialist Third Class Petty Officer Kristoffer Malinao)

USNS SPEARHEAD TRANSPORTS TROOPS FROM SINT MAARTEN TO MARTINIQUE

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kristen Cheyenne Yarber, Southern Partnership Station 17 Public Affairs



Equipment destined for Sint Maarten is loaded onto the expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1). Joint Task Force-Leeward Island deployed to Sint Maarten to assist in humanitarian aid and disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Irma hit the island. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kristen Cheyenne Yarber)

Expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1) picked up Joint Task Force Leeward Islands (JTF-LI) personnel at Philipsburg, Sint Maarten, Sept. 29.

Thirty-one people, including U.S. military personnel and members of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), boarded Spearhead and loaded their equipment into the ship's mission bay.

"Non-food items and humanitarian aid and disaster relief equipment were loaded onto the ship," said Lt. John Graff, the operations officer for the military detachment embarked aboard Spearhead.

The leadership element of JTF-LI requested Spearhead's assistance in transportation and equipment lift from Sint Maarten to the island of Martinique. JTF-LI relocated their headquarters to Martinique after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, the previous location of their headquarters.

JTF-LI worked in conjunction with members of USAID to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), after Hurricane Irma caused significant damage to the island of Sint Maarten.

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) typically works with civilians on missions. However, they requested support from the Department of Defense for this specific disaster relief operation.

"OFDA's mission is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the economic and social impact of disasters," said Kate Legates, the deputy team leader of the Disaster Assistance Response Team. "If there's a unique capability of the U.S. military to respond to a disaster, we will request it."

OFDA and JTF-LI maintained two water desalinization operations on Sint Maarten, providing clean water for the residents.

"People who have been affected by the storms have been very appreciative," said Legates. "We do our best when we are one coordinated U.S. government team. It's been really great to be a part of that."

Spearhead continues to provide intra-theater lift support to HA/DR efforts in the Caribbean while deployed as part of Southern Partnership Station 17.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet (USNAVSO/FOURTHFLT) supports U.S. Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM) joint and combined military operations by employing maritime forces in cooperative maritime security operations to maintain access, enhance interoperability, and build enduring partnerships in order to enhance regional security and promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Caribbean, Central and South American regions.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Neil P. McNulty, the president of Eggleston, addresses Military Sealift Command service members and civilian teammates during the National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month Special Observance, Oct 24. (U.S. Navy photograph by Bill Mesta)

Civilian teammates and service members attached to Military Sealift Command gathered at Ely Hall on board Naval Station Norfolk for a special observance held to recognize National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Oct. 24.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is held annually to recognize the significant contributions of American workers with disabilities make each day.

"The theme for this year's observance was 'Inclusion Drives Innovation', which was intended to highlight the contributions that individuals with disabilities provide to the total work force effectiveness," said Information Systems Technician Second Class Allison Shorter, the mistress of ceremonies for the event. "Each year we observe National Disability Employment Awareness month from Oct. 1-31 as an opportunity to reaffirm the Department of Defense's commitment to recruit, retain and advance people with disabilities throughout our workforce."

"National Disability Employment Awareness Month began on Aug. 11, 1945, with the signing of President Harry S. Truman's signing of proclamation 2664 'Whereas the people of this Nation are determined to foster an environment in which those of their fellow citizens who have become physically handicapped can continue to make their rightful contribution to the work of the world and can continue to enjoy the opportunities and rewards of that work'," according to Shorter.

The keynote speaker for the event was Neil McNulty; the president of Eggleston, one of Virginia's largest, oldest and most respected non-profit organizations for employment and services for persons with intellectual and physical disabilities.

"Persons with significant disabilities often face an uphill climb in the workplace," said McNulty. "Some of the challenges that persons with disabilities face include limited mobility and trouble communicating."

"But when it comes to employment, what usually happens is once an organization hires a disabled person, that organization discovers they have an extremely valuable teammate who loves their job," said McNulty.

The special observance included a video presentation focused on disability etiquette mistakes. According to the video, there are some common mistakes people make when interacting with the disabled.

"First, one should not grasp a visually impaired persons arm to guide them someplace. Most visually impaired people would prefer to take your arm and have you guide them to your destination. Be sure to warn them of any obstacles," according to the video.

"Secondly, shouting at someone with a hearing impairment actually makes it more difficult to understand you so just speak in your normal voice and volume and make sure the person can see you," the presentation continued.

"Thirdly, talking to guide-dogs before their owners. We all love dogs, but it is considered to be rude to pay attention to a guide-dog before addressing its owner. So always talk to the person, not the dog," the video continued.

"Standing up when talking with a wheelchair user could cause the person to develop a stiff neck from looking up at you while you talk," according to the video. "Try to position yourself at a similar level as the person you are talking with."

"Finally, don't assume you know how to assist a person with disabilities," the video concluded. "It is better to ask the person you are trying to assist how you can best help them."

Military Sealift Command and the Department of Defense has an ongoing commitment to an inclusive total force where qualified men and women of all walks of life can pursue their full potential.

CHANGES ARE COMING TO TRICARE: ARE YOU READY TO TAKE COMMAND OF YOUR HEALTH?

By Naval Hospital Jacksonville

Changes are coming to your TRICARE benefits beginning Jan. 1, 2018. These changes will give you more benefit choices, improves your access to care, simplifies cost shares, and allows you to take command of your health.

"Taking command of your health means empowering you to make the right health care and coverage choices for you and your family," said Lt. Cmdr. William Bennett, Naval Hospital Jacksonville director for healthcare business. "Leading up to Jan. 1, 2018, we will connect you with TRICARE resources to navigate your benefit questions."

The best way for you to prepare now is to update your information in DEERS at:

https://TRICARE.mil/plans/eligibility/DEERS

Sign up for TRICARE benefit updates at:
www.TRICARE.mil/subscriptions

Visit TRICARE changes at:
https://TRICARE.mil/about/changes.

Here are changes that you will need to know about:

Region Consolidation

Currently, there are three TRICARE regions in the U.S.: North, South and West. The North and South regions will combine on Jan. 1, 2018 to form TRICARE East, while TRICARE West will remain mostly unchanged. Two new contractors, Humana Military, and Health Net Federal Services will administer these regions. This change will allow better coordination between the military hospitals and clinics and the civilian health care providers in each region. Florida and Georgia will continue to be served by Humana Military as part of the new TRICARE East.

TRICARE Select

On Jan. 1, 2018, TRICARE Select will replace TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra, both stateside and overseas. Stateside, TRICARE Select will be a self-managed, preferred provider network option. You will not be required to have a primary care manager (PCM), therefore you can visit any TRICARE-authorized provider for services covered by TRICARE without a referral. If you live overseas, TRICARE Overseas Program Select will be a preferred provider organization-styled plan that provides access to both network and non-network TRICARE-authorized providers for medically necessary TRICARE covered services. Also, TRICARE Select adopts a number of improvements, including additional preventive care services previously only offered to TRICARE Prime beneficiaries.

TRICARE Prime

TRICARE Prime is a managed care program option. An assigned PCM provides most of your care. When you need specialty care, your PCM will refer you to a specialist. Active duty service members and their family members do not pay anything when referred to a network provider by their PCM. All others pay annual enrollment fees and network co-payments.

Enrollment

All current TRICARE beneficiaries will be automatically enrolled into plans on Jan. 1, 2018 as long as they are eligible. TRICARE Prime enrollees will remain in TRICARE Prime. TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra beneficiaries will be enrolled in TRICARE Select. During 2018, you can continue to enroll in, or change coverage plans.

In fall 2018, TRICARE will introduce an annual open enrollment period. During this period, you will choose whether to continue, or change your coverage for the following year. Each year the open enrollment period will begin on the Monday of the second full week in November, and run through the Monday of the second full week in December.

Are You Ready? Take Action Now!

You can begin to prepare for the upcoming changes now:

* Sign up for a DS Logon: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/identitymanagement/authenticate.do?execution=e4s1

* Update your personal information in DEERS: https://TRICARE.mil/Plans/Eligibility/DEERS

This is YOUR Benefit - Take Command! Stay informed with the latest information.

In the coming months, more information will be available at:
https://TRICARE.mil/about/changes.

To stay informed, sign up for email alerts at
www.TRICARE.mil/subscriptions.

You can also get alerts by signing up for eCorrespondence in milConnect at:
www.TRICARE.mil/eCorrespondence.

By staying informed, you'll be ready for a smooth transition with TRICARE.

USNS Williams, Continued from page 3

(ESD 2) and USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3) have been delivered to the fleet. ESB 4 is planned to join the fleet in 2018, with ESB 5 to follow in 2019.

The platform has an aviation hangar and flight deck that include two operating spots capable of landing MH-53E equivalent helicopters, accommodations, work spaces and ordnance storage for an embarked force. The platform will also provide enhanced command and control, communications, computers and intelligence capabilities to support embarked force mission planning and execution. The reconfigurable mission deck area can store embarked force equipment including mine sleds and rigid hull inflatable boats.

Trenton, Continued from page 5

In October 2017, both Aellis and Bianchini assisted MSC with a five-day Fast Rescue Boat Driver Training course for the ship's CIVMAR crew. They participated in the course as SAR swimmers and spent time in the water allowing the boat crews to learn, practice and certify in SAR swimmer insertion and retrieval.

"Having the MILDET Reserve SAR swimmers aboard allowed MSC to complete and certify this course and develop a plan for the integration of MILDET SAR swimmers as part of the ship's Fast Rescue Boat team," said Andy Peretti, Trenton chief mate. "This was previously exclusive to the CIVMAR crew."

Bianchini is also certified as a second-class swim tester and spent four hours in a local Rijeka, Croatia, city pool conducting second class swim qualification for the MILDET crew. This allowed three members to obtain their second-class swim qualification and enhance the MILDET's mission readiness. Aellis assisted a safety swimmer in the pool, thus assuring a safe training evolution.

DLA Delivers, Continued from page 4

"It really, literally, made it there just on time," Jolls said. "And to be able to fill 100 percent of their order, that's the icing on the cake."

Colbert said the merchant marines aboard the Supply applauded when they saw the last pallet coming off the truck, and that she appreciates Joll's and Munoz's can-do attitudes.

"The work they do behind the scenes allows us to do our job on the waterfront, which is taking care of our fleet and our warfighters so they can focus on the mission," she said.

"It was a miracle that they pulled off," she said. "They found ways to overcome many obstacles that day to replenish the Oak Hill with fresh fruits and vegetables."

Jolls said that even though he's now a retired sailor, it still meant a lot for him to be a good shipmate to those who were out at sea, supporting relief efforts.

"This is why we're here. This is who DLA is, and this is what we do," he said. "It was gratifying, absolutely gratifying. I actually teared up."

The Subsistence supply chain team at DLA Troop Support has coordinated the procurement of more than $220 million in food supplies as of Sept. 29 for hurricane-relief efforts since Hurricane Harvey hit Texas in August.

The Oak Hill deployed to Puerto Rico, providing initial disaster relief. The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead federal agency, in helping those affected by Hurricane Maria to minimize suffering and is one component of the overall whole-of-government response effort.

ANYDAY

Nathan Grant, a 3rd officer aboard the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), places the name "Sara Victoria," the first baby born aboard the ship since 2010, on one of Comfort's two patient tenders. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stephane Belcher)

Sailors take cover as an SA-330J Puma helicopter assigned to the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS Amelia Earhart (T-AKE 6) lands on the flight deck of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65). Benfold is on patrol in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Benjamin Dobbs)

NEXT ISSUE: NEW T-ESB NAMED

SEALIFT

Sealift is an authorized publication for members and employees of the Navy's Military Sealift Command. Contents of this publication are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Navy. Sealift is published monthly by the Military Sealift Command Office of Public Affairs as authorized under NAVPUBINST 5600.42A. Submission of articles and letters should be addressed to:

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Printed on recycled paper