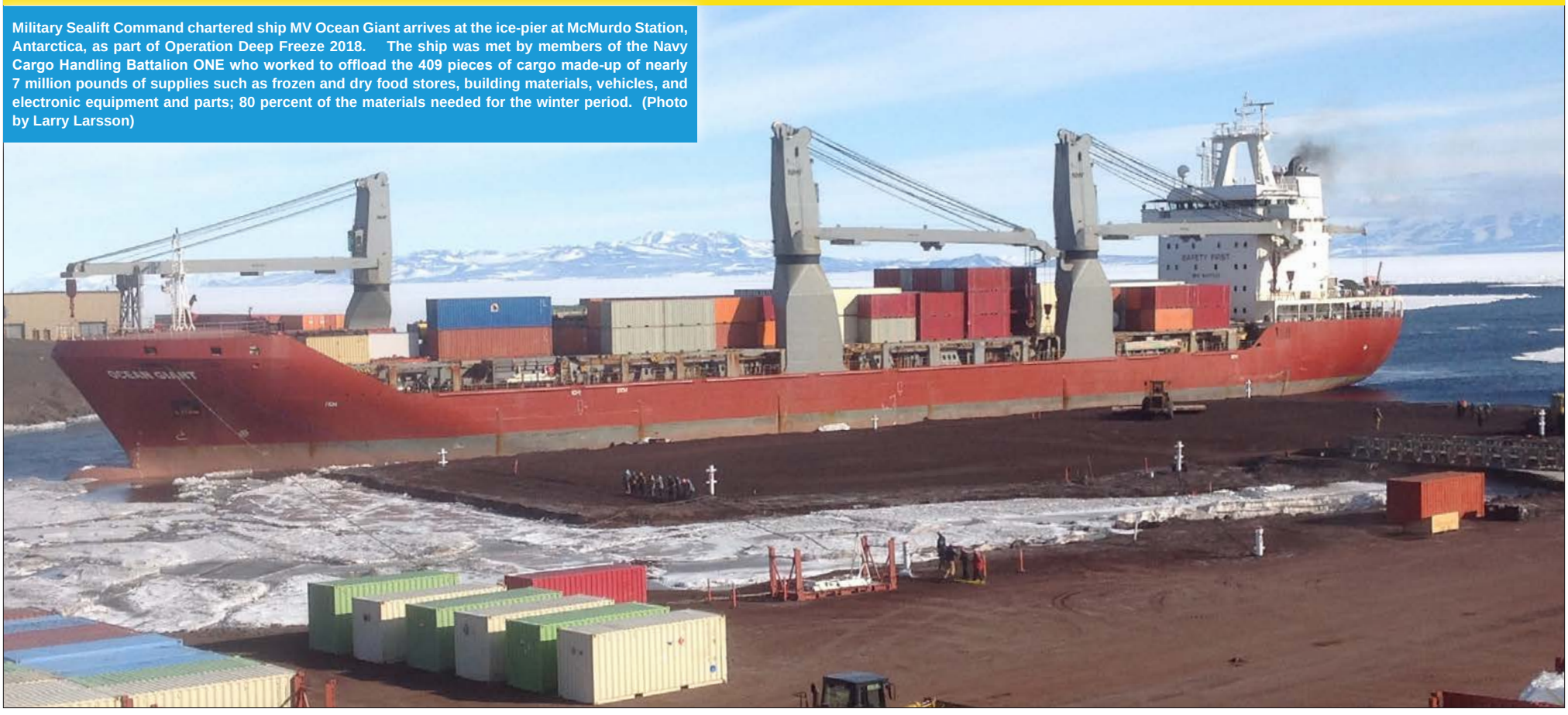
SEALIFT

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

March 2018 ISSUE

Military Sealift Command chartered ship MV Ocean Giant arrives at the ice-pier at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, as part of Operation Deep Freeze 2018. The ship was met by members of the Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE who worked to offload the 409 pieces of cargo made-up of nearly 7 million pounds of supplies such as frozen and dry food stores, building materials, vehicles, and electronic equipment and parts; 80 percent of the materials needed for the winter period. (Photo by Larry Larsson)



MSC CHARTERED SHIPS MV OCEAN GIANT, MT MAERSK PEARY SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE CARGO OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION DEEP FREEZE 2018

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

For 63 years, Military Sealift Command ships have made the arduous journey to McMurdo Station Antarctica to deliver supplies and fuel for the remote scientific base.

This year was no different as MSC chartered ships MV Ocean Giant and MT Maersk Peary successfully completed the annual resupply mission Operation Deep Freeze 2018, delivering most of the dry cargo, food and fuel needed for the year at the remote arctic outpost to function.

The dry cargo mission began Dec. 26, in Port Hueneme, California, with the load-out of the MSC chartered ship MV Ocean Giant.

Navy Reservists from MSC's Expeditionary Port Unit (EPU) 114 coordinated all aspects of the load-out of nearly 7 million pounds of cargo in 498 containers filled will food, mechanical parts, vehicles, construction materials, office supplies and electronics equipment, and much more.

Military Sealift Command chartered ship MT Maersk Peary arrives at the McMurdo Station Ice-Pier in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2018. (Photo by Larry Larsson)

The five members of EPU-114 were tasked with liaisoning with all the parties involved in the load-out which include Ocean Giant's crew, port workers, stevedores and members of the National Science Foundation.

Using only cranes, the cargo was loaded onto the ships in a specific order which was coordinated well in advance of the mission.

"The ODF mission is very different from any of the other mission/exercise load-outs we conduct over a year," said Lt. Cmdr. Benjamin Meyer, EPU-114's executive officer. "The cargo we normally deal with is military vehicles and equipment. Here, things range from sodas and food, to HAZMAT and construction materials. There are significant weight differences between lifts that have to be accounted. The operation is changing all the time because of the very specific order of the load-out. If something is loaded in the wrong order and has to come off, then we have to pull everything off to that point and start all over."

Ocean Giant departed Port Hueneme, on time, on Dec. 31, en route Christchurch, New Zealand, where the ship loaded additional cargo, before transiting to the ice-pier at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

On Jan. 25, Ocean Giant arrived in Antarctica and was met by Seabees from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE (NCHB -1) homeported in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The team worked with Ocean Giant's crew, and the MSC representative, to execute a safe and efficient offload and back-load of various containers, breakbulk, and special lifts. Additionally, close coordination was maintained between NCHB-1 and the Antarctic Support Contract logistics team who managed the loads and stow plans for United States Antarctic Program, as well as the New Zealand Defense Force who assisted with rigging and transporting loads from the pier to designated lay-down areas. NCHB-1 has participated in ODF for more than 60 years. During the first resupply mission, they were known as Special Stevedore Battalions within the U.S. Navy Seabees, also known as 'Seabee Specials'.

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BENDING THE CURVE, UNION PARTNERSHIP VISIT AND SHIP LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM, MARITIME ACADEMY DAY

From Commander,
Military Sealift Command

Over the past several months I've been speaking to various groups including military leadership, industry representatives and our own workforce, providing a one-year assessment of our work at MSC and some thoughts on where we are heading over the next two years.

At each of the talks, I use the phrase, "Bending the Curve," to represent our comprehensive multi-year plan of action to adapt to the changing operational environment.

The phrase is meant to help us visualize where we are now in relation to our competition, where we need to be, and the work required to get us there. Bending the Curve is about wisely and effectively using our resources, solving problems with innovative solutions, and making a commitment to our fellow workgroups and taking ownership of the job we do every day.

Bending the Curve explains the "what" and the "how," but it is important to understand the "why." Simply, the Navy is changing. Decades of sailing the maritime commons at will have ended. Recent events, such as missile attacks against U.S. Navy ships while sailing in the U.S. 5th Fleet have forced us to think differently about how we operate. With the rise of near-peer competitors, we can no longer presume dominance in space, cyber, air, sea, and undersea domains. These recent and on-going maritime actions confirm that our Navy is operating in a contested environment. We must prepare ourselves to operate in this environment. This will require us to think differently, to act differently, and to work differently.

A not-too-distant example from our nation's past provides us with significant lessons learned that we can apply to our work today. If we go back in time to World War II and the Battle of the Atlantic at the beginning of the war, the Atlantic and Caribbean Oceans were a killing field for our merchant marine. In the run-up to the war we failed to calculate or observe what was going on with the German submarine threat. The Germans attacked our supply chain and we lost hundreds of ships and sadly, thousands of mariners. We did not provide our mariners the tools to succeed in a contested environment.

Eventually our military planners focused on the problem set at hand and developed strategies to avoid and defeat the German submarine threat: convoys, coastal defense systems, anti-submarine warfare, emission control measures, tactical sailing, survival skills and a better understanding of the enemy's pattern of life. The point here is that we learned, we adapted, and eventually defeated the enemy, but at great cost, losing 9,000 mariners.

The lesson for us is that we need to prepare now so that our mariners can operate in a contested environment and to ensure we continue to empower the joint warfighter. And while we are the best in the world at delivering maritime logistics today, we are instituting a number of actions to better prepare our efforts to mitigate the risk to sealift and adapt to the changing environment in which we operate. Our plan has four Lines of Effort:

- Training Wholeness: Ensuring our mariners have the skills to mitigate emerging threats across all five dimensions;

- Holistic Readiness: Ensuring the modernization and readiness of our platforms;

- Capability Alignment: Ensuring we remain aligned with the Fleet and Joint Forces; and

- Experiential Learning: Ensuring that we are learning as fast as possible.

Bending the Curve is about focusing on and committing to improve the many programs and processes associated with these four lines of effort. Everyone at MSC has a role to play within these areas and is capable of contributing to Bending the Curve.

Now is our time to prepare for the future. We can make a difference. We hope that we don't see an operating environment like that in the Battle of the Atlantic. But if we do, we want to be prepared. The high-quality, team-based work we are doing today will enable MSC to provide global assured logistics, sealift, and special services to the joint warfighter in any environment we may encounter.

Union Partnership Visit and Ship Leadership Symposium

Recently we conducted two important events that directly support our "Bending the Curve" campaign, a comprehensive multi-year plan of action to adapt to the changing operational environment.

First, MSC senior leaders met with leadership from the maritime unions. In line with the MSC Voyage Plan focus, this meeting fostered and nurtured a relationship with important strategic partners. We rely on our unions to assist with crewing our vessels and representing the interests of the workforce.

We had the opportunity to exchange views on issues impacting our mariners. In addition, we conducted a frank and open discussion about today's challenging maritime environment and why we are adapting in order to ensure that we can provide essential assured logistics and service support to the warfighter in the future.

Secondly, we held the first Masters and Chief Engineers Leadership Symposium in a long time. The purpose of the symposium was to gather together senior afloat leadership and discuss the current operating environment and the changes we are making so that our mariners are trained and able to operate in a contested environment.

A common thread running through these two events was the importance of coming together with our people and partners. Working together in a collaborative, team-based setting, overcoming obstacles and seeking innovative solutions, is how we will adapt to the changing operational environment. It is only through a team effort that we continue to remain the premiere maritime logistics force in the world.

I would like to extending my profound gratitude to the staff who facilitated both engagements. The prepared briefings, assisted discussions, and administrative support contributed to the success of the events.

Maritime Academy Day

Recently we hosted presidents from the state maritime academies, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and the Administrator of the U.S. Maritime Administration. The purpose of the day-long meeting was to provide an update on issues of mutual interest such as mariner employment outlook and hiring trends, and sexual assault prevention program actions. In addition, we looked at the changing operational environment and discussed the skills and training that academy graduates will need in order to operate in the contested environment.

During our day with the academy presidents, we discussed our effort to "Bend the Curve" and the intense focus by MSC to adapt to the changing operational environment. We also talked about ways in which the academies could contribute to that effort as well as ideas for MSC to help the academies in producing resilient, adaptable, and innovative mariners. We highlighted three areas that should be cultivated as we teach and mature student mariners, to include: developing leaders of winning teams, teaching skills to survive and prevail, and inciting a mindset of adaptability and creativity.

This outreach effort to the academies is aligned with the Voyage Plan pillar of Our Partners. Fostering relationships with the academies will mutually strengthen one another and assist in providing MSC a pipeline of skilled and trained mariners who will lead MSC into the future.

We have been reaching out to our partners in industry, the maritime unions, and at academic institutions to collectively address and solve common problems. Our partners expand our scope of operations by providing additional tools for our people and platforms to accomplish the mission.

I'll close by extending my gratitude to our guests for contributing to the rich dialogue on ways MSC and maritime academies can adapt to the changing environment, and to the staff who prepared briefings and provided administrative support. Thank you for making this forum and exchange of ideas a success.

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

A FACEMASK BREACH CAN BE DEVASTATING

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy's damage control doctrine has been written in blood. One catastrophic event which impacted the Navy's stance on being able to breathe in a damage control situation was a fire aboard the USS Forrestal (CV 59) during the Vietnam War which killed 134 Sailors while injuring 161 more.

"There was an accidental missile launch on the aircraft carrier deck which set off the chain reaction of fires and explosions," said Bob Farmer, Director, Military Sealift Command Training Center East. "The main fire party (Damage Control Team 8) led by Chief Gerald Farrier rushed in without protective clothing to rescue aviators still in their aircraft to escape, and some did; including the future Senator John McCain. Just a little over a minute and half after the fire started, a bomb exploded killing the Chief and killing or injuring the rest of the team. With the team specifically trained for dealing with this type of event killed or injured, other Sailors had to step in and be part of the firefighting effort. Many of those remaining Sailors were not trained in shipboard damage control. This proved costly as many critical mistakes were made by these Sailors who were trying to save the Forrestal."

Military Sealift Command's shipboard Civil Service Mariners work in dynamic and at times hazardous environments. Functioning in these hazardous conditions requires the use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for fighting fires or respirators to perform work tasks which could expose CIVMARS to toxins. Failure to maintain a proper seal around the facemask while using one of these devises can be devastating. "Due to the nature of MSC's mission, civil service mariners must be able to respond rapidly to shipboard emergencies and other exigencies, in times of peace and war," said Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne, commander, Military Sealift Command. "Our crews must maintain their personal grooming and wear apparel in a manner that permits proper donning and use of emergency, safety, and military-specific equipment with little or no advance warning."

"All civil service mariners must be ready at all times to properly use a self-contained breathing apparatus, emergency escape breathing device, gas masks, lifesaving and survival equipment, and other similar required devices and garments," Mewbourne added. "Any hair growth between the skin and sealing surfaces, such as stubble beard growth, beard, or mustache or sideburns which cross sealing surfaces, are prohibited. Additionally, mariners cannot be attired in clothing or jewelry (including religious articles or devices) that interferes with proper donning and operation of this required equipment."

As standard operating procedure, CIVMARS aboard MSC vessels are required to wear an SCBA while fighting fires aboard ships.

"An SCBA is a type of respiratory protection equipment that contains breathable compressed air. It is typically used by firefighters and rescue workers while operating in areas of immediate danger to life and health," said Farmer. "Over the years, many mariners have argued that they can maintain a facemask seal with a beard and questioned the need to fit test for a positive-pressure breathing apparatus, which a SCBA is. The regulations contained in 29 CFR 1910 clearly states that we cannot permit respirators with tight-fitting face-pieces to be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface."

"Our SCBAs use positive pressure, so although toxins have difficulty entering the facemask, air can escape and, depending on the amount of facial hair and the quality of the seal; a lot of air could escape reducing the time the wearer would have to fight the fire," said Farmer. "The hose team is only as good as its weakest link. We train to rotate fire teams as a group, so if one team member runs low on air, the entire team would have to rotate out; even possibly before the planned rotation. This could allow the fire to continue to burn, and spread."

Another area of concern regarding facial hair or interfering apparel is that CIVMARS are required to use respirators when performing a variety of hazardous tasks.

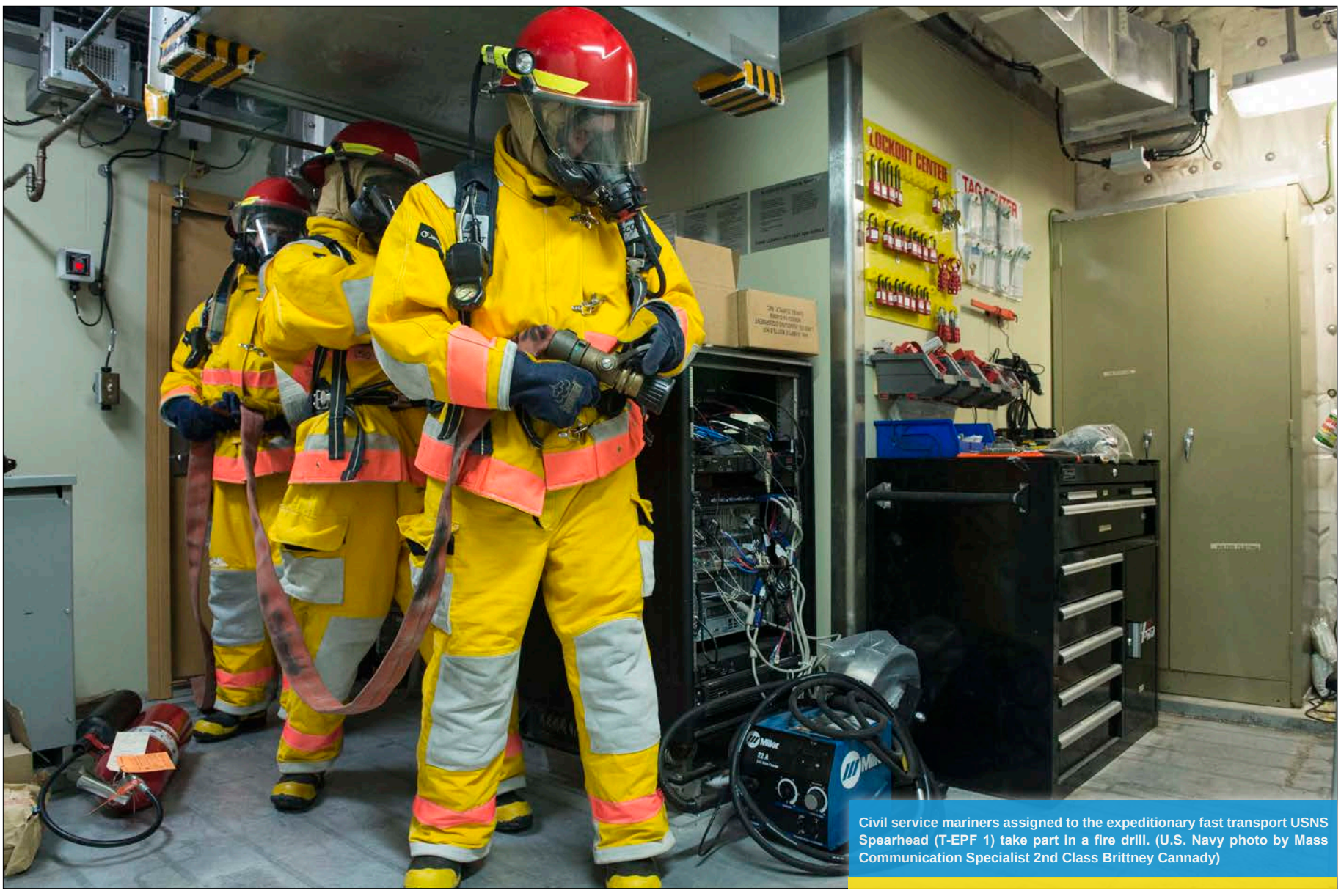
"Military Sealift Command's CIVMARS are required by Safety Management System procedures to be medically certified to don and use a respirator and fit tested within the past year for using the intended respirator," said Joe McMullen, Military Sealift Command's Senior Safety Manager. "Our CIVMARS are required to properly use a respirator to perform a variety of tasks that expose them to contaminants that may be dangerous if inhaled, such as aerosols (mist, dust, fumes) or gases (fumes and vapors), and when working with toxic chemicals."

The Safety Management System prohibits mariners from having facial hair that may interfere with the respirator's effectiveness at sealing against the face, including SCBAs and respirators. "If someone is working in a toxic environment with an improper facemask seal, they are at risk of inhaling in harmful airborne particles and poisons," added McMullen. "Properly fitted and donned respirators can protect our CIVMARS from devastating health complications such as upper respiratory issues, brain damage, cancer and even death."

According to the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety Hazard Administration website, "An employer shall not permit respirators with tight-fitting face-pieces to be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face-piece and the face or that interferes with valve function; or any condition that interferes with the face-to-face-piece seal or valve function."

For more information concerning the proper wear of SCBAs, or respirators please consult the Safety Management System articles 2.1-015-3.4.1.1, 2.1-015-3.4.1.2, 2.1-015-3.4.1.1 and the United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety Hazard Administration article 1910.134.

If you have questions, please ask your chain of command, resident damage control expert or safety representative.



Civil service mariners assigned to the expeditionary fast transport USNS Spearhead (T-EPF 1) take part in a fire drill. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brittney Cannady)

USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN DEPLOYS FROM NAVAL STATION NORFOLK

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command

Military Sealift Command's dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12) gets underway from Naval Station Norfolk, Jan. 23. McLean departed from Virginia to begin its deployment in support of U.S. Naval and allied forces operating in the U.S. Sixth Fleet's area of responsibility. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

Military Sealift Command's dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12) departed Naval Station Norfolk to begin its overseas deployment in support of U.S. Naval and allied forces operating in the U.S. Sixth Fleet's area of responsibility, Jan. 23.

"Initially, we will be heading to the Mediterranean Sea," said Captain James White, USNS William McLean's master. "We are going to provide our forces operating with logistical support via underway replenishments at sea which is a common task for this type of ship. Additionally, we anticipate working with our allies to enhance our partnerships and will be providing military exercise support."

USNS William McLean is crewed by 126 civil service mariners (CIVMARS). According to White, "Our CIVMARS are the heart of the ship. They run all of the ship's departments including deck, engine, supply, communications, medical and administration. They also navigate the ship, maintain and operate the engineering department, perform preventive maintenance and prepare all the crew's food."

Dry cargo and ammunition ships, like the William McLean, deliver supplies to U.S. Naval and Allied ships while at sea thus providing the ability for combatant ships to remain underway for longer periods of time.

"William McLean can transport large quantities of dry cargo, to include ammunition, food, spare parts, and mail; everything that the Navy needs to sustain itself at sea," said White. "Additionally, the ship carries a significant quantity of fuel which we are called upon to deliver to other ships frequently."

Preparing for William McLean's deployment required significant training and preparation.

"The crew was outstanding during the preparation period for this trip," concluded White. "The William McLean is a great ship with a fine crew and we are all looking forward to this deployment."

The ship's namesake, William McLean, was a United States Navy physicist, who conceived and developed the heat-seeking Sidewinder missile.

KEEL LAID FOR FUTURE USNS MIGUEL KEITH

From Team Ships Public Affairs

The future USNS Miguel Keith (T-ESB 5) held a keel laying ceremony Jan. 30, at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard, San Diego.

A keel laying is the formal recognition of the start of a ship's construction. It is the joining together of a ship's modular components and the authentication or etching of the ship sponsors initials into a ceremonial plate.

"A keel laying is the first major milestone in the construction of a new ship," said Capt. Scot Searles, Strategic Sealift and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Office (PEO) Ships. "The keel is the symbolic backbone of the ship. Over the next several months ESB 5 will begin to take shape and I look forward to seeing its progress as we continue constructing this versatile ship."

ESBs are highly flexible, modular platforms that are optimized to support a variety of maritime based missions including Special Operations Force and Airborne Mine Counter Measures support operations in addition to humanitarian support and sustainment of traditional military missions. The ESBs include a four spot flight deck and hangar and a versatile mission deck and are designed around four core capabilities: aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support, and command and control assets. The ESBs will operate as the component commander requires providing the U.S. Navy fleet with a critical access infrastructure that supports the flexible deployment of forces and supplies.

The Montford Point class is comprised of five ships across two variants in support of the Maritime Prepositioning Force. USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) and USNS John Glenn (T-ESD 2) have been delivered and are currently in service. The first of the ESB variant, USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), was delivered to the fleet in 2015 as a USNS ship. In August 2017, the ship was commissioned as an USS ship on station in Bahrain. The USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (T-ESB 4) was christened in October and is expected to deliver to Military Sealift Command at the end of February.

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, PEO Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships and boats and craft.

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

USS FRANK CABLE MARKS 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHIP'S CHRISTENING

Story by Seaman Randall Ramaswamy, USS Frank Cable (AS 40)

Cmdr. Tony Pecoraro, executive officer of the submarine tender USS Frank Cable (AS 40), left, and Command Master Chief Wade Tandberg, cut a cake during a celebration commemorating the 40th anniversary of the ship's christening on the mess deck, Jan. 14. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Heather C. Wamsley)

The crew of the submarine tender USS Frank Cable (AS 40) celebrated the 40th anniversary of her christening while transiting the Pacific Ocean, Jan. 14.

Frank Cable was christened Jan. 14, 1978, at Lockheed Shipbuilding and Construction Company in Seattle. The Ship's Sponsor, Rose S. Michaelis, wife of Adm. Frederick H. Michaelis, then Chief of Naval Material, smashed a bottle of champagne across the bow and bestowed the name 'USS Frank Cable', after the pioneer of early submarine development.

Cmdr. Tony Pecoraro, executive officer of Frank Cable, led the ceremony and crew in celebration of Frank Cable's 40 years of naval service. The crew celebrated by proposing a toast to her sponsor, Mrs. Rose S. Michaelis, to Frank Cable, and to the United States Navy.
"For 40 years Frank Cable Sailors have supported both submarine and surface combatants in protecting the nation," said Pecoraro. "With great pride and outstanding dedication, the men and women of Frank Cable have deployed globally in every theater, ensuring our submarines, and surface ships are ready for the fight. It truly is an honor to be part of this crew and to participate in this special occasion."

Following the toasts was a cake-cutting ceremony involving a Military Sealift Command civilian mariner who has served aboard Frank Cable the longest and a Sailor who most recently reported to Frank Cable while in Pearl Harbor.

During its 40 years of service, Frank Cable participated in events such as rescue and recovery of Korean Airline Flight 801 crash on Guam, recovery and clean-up efforts following Super Typhoon Paka, and she was the first U.S. Navy ship to visit Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, during the 21st anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations.

"I think our ship's sponsor, Mrs. Rose Michaelis, would be proud Frank Cable is still ready and able, and still relevant to combatant commanders," said Capt. Jeff Farah, Frank Cable commanding officer. "Her spirit lives throughout the ship and through the work and deeds we do. From supporting our Forward Deployed Naval Forces to our community outreach programs, as we do today and have done for the last four decades."

Frank Cable is one of two submarine tenders that are forward deployed to Guam to repair, rearm and re-provisions deployed U.S. Naval Forces in the Indo-Pacific region..

For more information on Frank Cable, find us on Facebook at USS Frank Cable (AS 40), or http://www.csp.navy.mil/frankcable

USS FITZGERALD ARRIVES IN PASCAGOULA FOR RESTORATION

The guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) arrives at the port of Pascagoula, Miss., Friday, Jan. 19, 2018 aboard the heavy lift transport vessel MV Transshelf. Fitzgerald will begin restoration and modernization work at Huntington Ingalls' Industries shipyard in Pascagoula. (U.S. Navy photo by David L. Stoltz)

From Naval Sea Systems Command Office of Corporate Communications

The Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) arrived in Pascagoula, Mississippi, Jan. 19, aboard heavy lift vessel MV Transshelf from Yokosuka, Japan.

Fitzgerald is expected to spend several days in the Port of Pascagoula as the heavy lift ship will commence the reverse operation of unfastening, lowering and guiding the ship off the platform. The ship will then be taken to its designated pier space at Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard.

Due to the extent and complexity of the restoration, both repair and new construction procedures will be used to accomplish the restoration and modernization efforts. Various Hull Mechanical and Electrical (HM&E); Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence; and Combat System equipment, including the electronic warfare suite, radar, switchboard, gas turbine generator and air condition plant, require repair and/or replacement. Fitzgerald will also receive HM&E; Combat System; and Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Collaboration and Intelligence; upgrades that were originally planned for installation during a fiscal year 2019 availability.

Work on the ship is expected to occur on a land level facility throughout 2018 and one to two quarters of 2019, followed by an extensive test and trials period to ensure all systems and spaces are restored to full functionality and operational capability. The entire restoration and modernization effort is expected to complete approximately 24-months post work commencement on the ship.

Fitzgerald was involved in a collision with the Philippine-flagged ACX Crystal June 17. Seven Sailors lost their lives and the ship was damaged on the starboard side above and below the waterline. The Navy released a comprehensive review of the incident Nov. 1.

USNS HERSHEL WILLIAMS COMPLETES INTEGRATED TRIALS

From Team Ships Public Affairs

USNS Hershel 'Woody' Williams (T-ESB 4), successfully completed the first Integrated Trials for an Expeditionary Sea Base (ESB) ship Jan. 19, sailing from and returning to General Dynamics National Steel and Shipbuilding Co. (NASSCO) shipyard in San Diego.

Integrated Trials combine Builder's and Acceptance Trials, allowing for the shipyard to demonstrate to the Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey the operational capability and mission readiness of all the ship's systems during a single underway period. During trials, the shipbuilder conducted comprehensive tests to demonstrate the performance of all of the ship's major systems.

"During the trials we were able to conduct a number of tests including full power propulsion, steering and anchoring," said Capt. Scot Searles, strategic and theater sealift program manager, Program Executive Office, Ships. "ESBs are versatile platforms, and the ship handled extremely well demonstrating its readiness for delivery."

Hershel 'Woody' Williams is the second platform of the ESB variant. ESBs have a maximum speed of 15 knots and range of 9,500 nautical miles. The ship can hold 100,000 gallons of potable water and 350,000 gallons of JP-5 jet fuel. Acting as an expeditionary sea base, ESB 4 is optimized to support a variety of maritime based missions including special operations force and airborne mine counter measures. The ESBs include a four-spot flight deck and hangar and are designed around four core capabilities: aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support, and command and control assets.

The ship USNS Miguel Keith (T-ESB 5) is also under construction at NASSCO and conducted its ceremonial keel laying ceremony with a representative of the namesake's family Jan. 30.

As one of the Defense Department's largest acquisition organizations, Program Executive Office Ships is responsible for executing the development and procurement of all destroyers, amphibious ships, special mission and support ships, and boats and craft.

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)

MISSION COMPLETE FOR USNS LEROY GRUMMAN

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) pulled into Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 4, thus completing an overseas deployment in support of U.S. Navy and allied forces operating in the U.S. Sixth Fleet's area of responsibility.

"The Leroy Grumman left for our deployment to the Mediterranean Sea in September of 2017," said Captain Kevin Tapp, USNS Leroy Grumman's master. "While we were deployed, the crew conducted over 30 underway replenishments at sea, providing 3.7 million gallons of fuel, 1,019 pallets of materials and provisions to U.S. Navy and NATO units from Canada, Italy, Turkey, Germany and the United Kingdom."

USNS Leroy Grumman is crewed by 89 civil service mariners who perform all required tasks and provide all needed support aboard the ship.

"As the ship's Master, one of my responsibilities includes sailing the vessel alongside customer ships during underway replenishment operations," said Tapp. "Our Rig Captains supervise at sea fueling and cargo transfer operations alongside customer ships."

"The able-bodied seamen man the underway replenishment stations during at sea fueling operations while the engineers keep the ships engines maintained and running at optimum performance," added Tapp. "Our Operations Chief coordinates rendezvous and cargo requirements with customer ships at sea while the ship's master and navigators safely navigate the vessel between ports and underway replenishment evolutions."

Fleet replenishment oilers provide resupply services to U.S. Navy and allied ships while at sea so the combatant vessels are able remain on station longer.

"Leroy Grumman has five underway replenishment stations we use to deliver fuel, provisions and materials to U.S. Navy and NATO customers, and conducting military personnel transfers between vessels and shore," according to Tapp.

While on deployment, USNS Leroy Grumman visited Rota, Spain, Naples, Italy, Souda Bay, Island of Crete (Greece), Augusta Bay, Sicily, and Malaga, Spain.

"The crew's performance on this deployment was superior," said Tapp. "The USNS Leroy Grumman's civil service mariners were outstanding ambassadors of goodwill for our country during all of our port visits, and all of our missions were conducted successfully and safely.

The ship's namesake, Leroy Grumman, was an American aeronautical engineer, test pilot, and industrialist who founded the company now known as Northrop Grumman.

Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) pulls into Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 4. The ship returned to Virginia to complete its overseas deployment in support of U.S. Naval and allied forces operating in the U.S. Sixth Fleet's area of responsibility. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

A DAY ON, NOT A DAY OFF

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Key Note Speaker Barbara Hamm Lee, executive producer and host of WHRO's 'Another View,' addresses Military Sealift Command service members and civilian support staff during a special observance honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at Ely Hall on board Naval Station Norfolk. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

Military Sealift Command service members and civilian shore support personnel gathered on board Naval Station Norfolk to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King during a special observance held at Ely Hall, Jan. 17.

The celebration was hosted by MSC's Equal Employment Opportunity program and was held to recognize Dr. King's efforts in the struggle against racial inequality.

The special observance included the reading of the Presidential Proclamation by MSC Teammate Willie Allen.

"The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., dedicated his life to a vision: that all Americans would live free from injustice and enjoy equal opportunity as children of God," the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Presidential Proclamation 2018 read. "His strong, peaceful, and lifelong crusade against segregation and discrimination brought our Nation closer to the founding ideals set forth in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Today, as we come together to honor Dr. King, we know that America is stronger, more just, and more free because of his life and work."

Dr. King is widely regarded as America's pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.

"The theme for this year's Dr. Martin Luther King's observance is 'remember, celebrate, act; a day on, not a day off," said Keynote Speaker Barbara Hamm Lee, the executive producer and host of WHRO's 'Another View'. "As we take the time to honor and remember Dr. Martin Luther King, I would like everyone to turn inward and take a look at ourselves, and how interactions between people will make the biggest difference in our world. Because if we don't all learn how to get along with each other, then the acts we perform, such as volunteering in the community, become 'acts' as opposed to real efforts."

This year's theme calls upon the American people to engage in public service and promote peaceful social change.

"The two biggest social issues which Dr. King focused on were racial equality and poverty," according to Lee. "Dr. King said, 'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character'."

Lee charged to audience to, "perform a personal 'deep-dive' inside yourself and think about what you need to do to ensure that your character is such that you are making for a better world."

Each year, Americans across the country come together on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday to serve their neighbors and communities. The holiday represents the opportunity to start the year off right by making a positive impact on the community.

"In paying tribute to Dr. King, we are reminded that the duty lies with each of us to fulfill the vision of his life's work," According to the Presidential proclamation. "Let us use our time, talents, and resources to give back to our communities and help those less fortunate than us."

MSC HOSTS DON OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

A group photograph of the DoN Office of General Counsel New Employees taken aboard the hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), Feb. 1. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

From Military Sealift Command Office of General Counsel

On Feb. 1, Military Sealift Command and the USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) hosted approximately 60 new employees of the Department of Navy Office of General Counsel (DoN OGC). The visit was part of a "meet the fleet" component of OGC's annual orientation for new employees. The three-day orientation opened in Washington, D.C. with briefings delivered by Anne Brennan, Acting General Counsel of the Navy, and other senior members of the DoN civilian and military legal community. On Jan. 31, the orientation "road show" traveled to Quantico for events that included weapons training, the use of a convoy simulator, and a spirited question and answer session with Active Duty Marines over "chow." The day ended with a bus trip to the Norfolk Naval Station.

Sunrise on Feb. 1 found the OGC attorneys and their MSC hosts on Naval Station Norfolk's Pier One for a highly anticipated tour of USNS Comfort (T-AH 20). They assembled in Comfort's wardroom where Captain Kathryn S. Elliott, Executive Office of Comfort's Medical Treatment Facility (MTF), and Tony Verducci, MSC's Counsel and leader of a 32-person Legal Team located at the Headquarters and all five Area Commands, welcomed the group. Attorney Jeff Davenport provided all hands with an overview of MSC as well as the ways in which Office of Counsel staff and attorneys support MSC operations and initiatives. Following the presentations, the attorneys were divided into two groups for a tour of the ship from the bridge, to the flight deck, to Comfort's operating rooms.

The host guides provided insight into Comfort's recent experience supporting humanitarian operations in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Capt. Elliott and her colleagues provided in-depth answers to an array of questions regarding everything from acquisition of MTF items to safety and security in the aftermath of a natural disaster. The group was also impressed with the extent of the vessel's physical capabilities and the commitment of the entire crew, including civilian mariners, military members, and non-governmental agency personnel.

The Comfort tour was an orientation highlight for the participants, a reflection of MSC's teamwork support of warfighters and global citizens in need of humanitarian assistance. The orientation's afternoon concluded with a ship tour on USS Gunstun Hall (LSD 44) and squadron visit to C-2 Greyhounds and E-2 Hawkeye aircraft. The orientation undoubtedly left a lasting, positive impression on these future leaders and directly contributed to a greater understanding of the unique role DoN OGC personnel play in supporting our Nation and our Navy.

Deep Freeeze, continued from page 1

Following the offload, Ocean Giant was loaded with ice core samples that were stored on the ship in sub-zero freezer containers. The ice core samples were delivered to the United States for scientific study. In addition, 1000 containers of retrograde cargo were also loaded onto the ship for transportation off the continent. These include trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on the station.

On Feb. 1, Ocean Giant concluded its mission and departed the ice-pier. It was followed the same day, by the arrival of Maersk Peary. The two ships passed each other, coming and going in Winters Quarters Bay.

Over the next five days, Peary delivered nearly 5 million gallons of diesel fuel and 500,000 gallons of aviation fuel. This combination of fuels is 100 percent of the fuel needed for the next year's support of the remote outpost at McMurdo Station.

Each year, with each mission, the crews of the ships and the support teams on the ground face a unique set of challenges. Antarctica is known for some of the toughest and most unpredictable weather on the planet and this year was no different. Because of Antarctica's geographical location, ships must cross the latitudes 50-70 where storms rage one after the other. Ship captains liken it to, "Running across a major highway with cars coming one after the other." Even when ships are diverted to another course, chances are they will encounter another storm. Ship captains take it all in stride, and report feeling a sense of adventure and accomplishment when they arrive safely at the ice-pier.

Tanker ships require relatively calm seas and low winds to safely navigate to the ice-pier.

On Feb. 1, with the silhouette of Peary in the distance, all eyes were on the weather. As the tanker ship made the approach to Winter's Quarters Bay, the winds were registering 20 plus knots, and the captain was radioing in, "Sorry guys, I'm not going to attempt an arrival in these conditions." Keeping safety in the forefront, a pause was taken. Within an hour, the winds had dropped to 15 knots and the ship was on its way to the pier.

For workers arriving by air, just getting to the continent is a challenge. There are no commercial flights to McMurdo Station. Those that arrive from the air must take a series of flights to Christ Church, New Zealand, where they board a military flight on a C-17 or C-130. Military flights are far from the luxurious experience of a Virgin Atlantic airliner. No movies; no reclining seats, no flight attendants serving drinks and snacks; if you are lucky enough to get a place on a flight to the "Ice", it's bare bones accommodations, sling seats, with only the snacks you carry on yourself.

"The first thing I look forward to once arriving to Antarctica is that first big intake of air as we are departing the airplane. It is amazing to me!" said Larry Larsson, MSC's representative in Antarctica. "The smell, taste and feeling of natural air, with no man made pollutants; it's pristine. You almost feel perfectly healthy. It's like you've been infused with a natural adrenaline."

For everyone, whether on a ship's crew, or working on shore, the weather conditions at McMurdo Station are always a factor and can vary from day to day. One day it could be in the mid 30's and then -20 Fahrenheit with gale force winds the next. The workers consider these conditions a blessing. After all, it is currently summer in Antarctica, for the scientists work there over the winter, the average temperature is -59 degrees Fahrenheit.

"On Jan. 22, it snowed," said Larsson. "Snow is nice for just one day, but it's not very conducive for safe cargo operations. Snow makes for very slippery conditions, nothing good can come out of snow and cargo operations. Accidents can happen anytime anyplace, we all need to be extra cautious when Mother Nature adds a degree of difficulty to an already difficult operation."

Personnel working in Antarctica know the reputation of the continent, anticipate harsh conditions and plan accordingly. Everyone bundled in heavy winter clothes, and exposure time was limited, but no matter how much planning is done, nothing can prepare you for the South Pole environment.

"When you walk outside, the wind finds that area that you thought you had covered with your coat, neck warmer, gloves and stocking cap. Immediately you realize it's going to be a shockingly cold walk to work," said Larsson. "It was so cold; my head felt like I had taken a large bite out of a snow cone and I got a massive ice cream headache. My mouth went burning numb and seconds later my head was pounding."

Despite the arduous conditions and long working hours, the professionalism of the team shines through, and the mission goes on.

"By tomorrow all the glitz and glamor of being in Antarctica will have worn off and we all will have to take a real gut check to reach down to work through the constant coldness," explained Larsson. "That's when we realize that we are here to support a very important mission and be in the history books as one of the very few that have set foot on the continent Antarctica."

Every person who participates in the ODF mission walks away with their own experiences and their own reasons for making the trip. For some, this will be their only mission. For others, it's an annual trip to a place that keeps them coming back. For Larsson a twelve-year veteran of ODF, it is a series of milestones that begins with the first piece of cargo being loaded onto the ship in Port Hueneme. It's meeting new people, problem solving to get the ships in and offloaded on schedule, getting the ships home again and getting the crews the recognition they deserve for a job well done.

"I really can't name all the things that I touch or assisted other departments with," said Larsson. "At the end of each season, when I'm ready to get on the C-17 to fly back to Christchurch, I actually feel like I really have made a difference, and that's why I continue to return each year."

Operation Deep Freeze is a joint service, on-going Defense Support to Civilian Authorities activity in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF), lead agency for the United States Antarctic Program. Mission support consists of active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel from the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Army, and Coast Guard as well as Department of Defense civilians and attached non-DOD civilians.

ANYDAY

Navy Diver 2nd Class Jordan McElyea, left, and Navy Diver 1st Class Scott Johnson, both assigned to Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1 aboard the Safeguard-class salvage ship USNS Salvor (T-ARS 52), ascend on a diving stage during a underwater recovery operation led by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). DPAA conducts global search, recovery and laboratory operations to provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel to their families and the nation. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tyler Thompson)

NEXT ISSUE: BURIAL AT SEA

SEALIFT

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