SEALIFT

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

May 2018 ISSUE

The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) transits the Mediterranean Sea during exercise Obangame Express 2018. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Krystina Coffey)

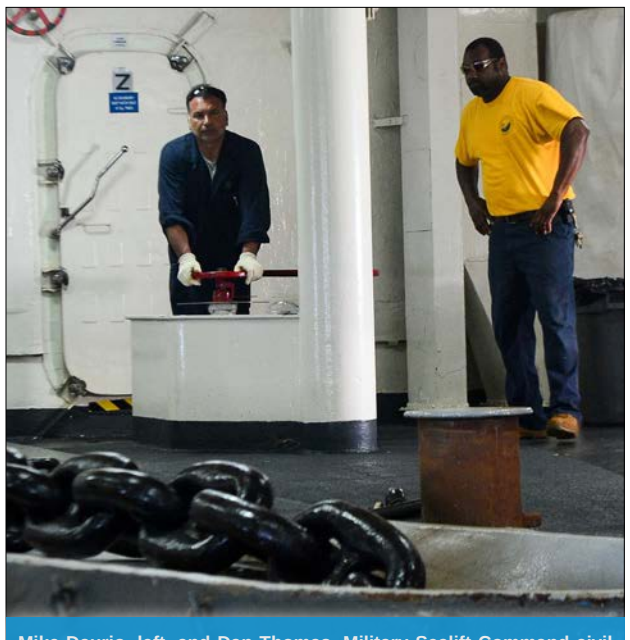
USS MOUNT WHITNEY JOINS OBANGAME EXPRESS 2018

By Lt. j.g. Dino Teppara, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, Africa

The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) arrived off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, March 24, to participate in exercise Obangame Express 2018 (OE 18).

Obangame Express 2018 is a regional U.S. Navy exercise sponsored by U.S. Africa Command designed to improve interoperability and cooperation among the maritime forces of Gulf of Guinea nations, Europe, and North and South America

Mount Whitney officially joined OE 18, the largest regional maritime exercise in West Africa. The eight-day exercise focused on countering the trafficking of illegal arms and drugs, human trafficking, illegal migration, piracy, and illegal fishing. Additionally, maritime interdiction operations and search and rescue training are incorporated as part of the exercise.



Mike Daurio, left, and Dan Thomas, Military Sealift Command civil service mariners, heave an anchor aboard the Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) while departing Libreville, Gabon, March 30, 2018. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Krystina Coffey)

"We were honored to participate in Obangame Express," said Capt. G. Robert Aguilar, commanding officer of Mount Whitney. "This ship is a symbol of our strong commitment to securing the peace, building capacity, and increasing maritime domain awareness with our West African partners. Our joint presence during this important exercise sends a powerful message throughout the region: the U.S. and West African nations will work together to protect important trade and shipping routes in the Gulf of Guinea, and increase maritime security and economic opportunities for the people of West Africa."

Mount Whitney operates with a combined crew of more than 300 Sailors and Military Sealift Command civil service mariners. The ship's forward operating presence in the Gulf of Guinea represents the U.S. Navy's commitment to support West African nations in countering illegal activities at sea while expanding training opportunities and cooperation among regional maritime forces.

The goals of OE 18 were to provide participating maritime forces the opportunity to work together and share information, as well as refine tactics, techniques, and procedures in order to assist Gulf of Guinea nations with monitoring their territorial waters and exclusive economic zones. The exercise took place from March 21-29, and encompassed an in-port command post exercise and an underway field training exercise.

The 31 nations who participated in OE 2018 included Angola, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Togo, Turkey and the United States, as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

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SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH, SAFETY AND NEAR MISS REPORTING, VISIT TO AREA COMMANDS AND MSC OFFICES

From Commander, Military Sealift Command

April marked Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM), a period reinforced with education opportunities and events observed in both military and civilian communities in the United States. While sexual assault awareness and prevention is a year-round effort, SAAPM is a focused time when military and civilian organizations engage their respective communities to identify and strengthen the roles that individuals and institutions play in combating sexual assault.

This recognition period aligns with one of the guiding principles in the Voyage Plan, "Our actions are guided by our core values of honor, courage, and commitment – We treat one another as we would like to be treated. We do not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment or assault, hazing, bullying, reprisal, fraternization, or the illegal or improper use of drugs or alcohol."

Participation in sexual assault awareness and prevention month events can help us to achieve three important goals:

- Promote a Navy culture that is intolerant of sexual assault and on-line misconduct, and that encourages reporting of sexual assault, and supports those who report sexual assault;

- Empower our Sailors and civilian team members to speak up whenever and wherever they see the bad behavior that can lead to sexual assault (on-line, at their workspace, amongst their peers/seniors/subordinates); and

- Position MSC as an organization that takes sexual assault very seriously and is implementing steps to eliminate it from our ranks.

This month provides us an opportunity to learn and educate ourselves about the issue of sexual assault, and then move to that next level and be action-oriented by encouraging behaviors that foster a climate of dignity and respect. In order to reach our goals, we need to continue to move from awareness to action in the area of sexual assault prevention.

Thank you to those who will be participating in sexual assault awareness and prevention events during the month, either at your work location or in your local communities. On April 2, at MSC headquarters we began SAAPM with a program featuring two guest speakers, Mrs. Rosemary Trible, founder of Fear 2 Freedom, an organization dedicated to restoring hope and dignity to survivors of sexual assault, and Lt. Cmdr. Erin Elliott, a sexual assault survivor and victim advocate.

Those working at other locations should look for opportunities to participate in any SAAPM activities taking place near you throughout the month of April.

Safety and Near Miss Reporting

Our vision of boldly sailing the world's oceans to provide essential assured logistics and service support to the joint warfighter can only be realized if we operate our ships in a safe manner. It must be part of our culture to "think safety" in everything we do. We've taken a number of steps over the past year to improve our safety culture including:

- Creating a Fleet Safety Officer position, with supporting staff, who reports directly to me;

- Completing action items identified by the Safety Cross Functional Team review;

- Analyzing recommendations provided by an independent safety review team;

- Improving partnerships with stakeholders like the Naval Safety Center, U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Fleet Forces Command;

- Establishing a relationship with the Office of Naval Research to look at maritime safety during research projects;

- Examining safety culture as a part of afloat assessments; and

- Developing processes to distribute safety information and updates to our civilian mariners.

One area of a safety culture that merits reinforcing is near miss reporting. A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in serious injury, illness or damage, but had the potential to do so. The National Safety Council states that "history has shown repeatedly that most loss-producing events, both serious and catastrophic, were preceded by warnings or near miss incidents."

MSC has a robust Safety Management System (SMS) and near miss reporting contributes to the function of continuous improvement. Hazard identification and near miss reporting provides an opportunity for Mariners to contribute to a safe working environment aboard their vessel and to the welfare of their fellow mariners across the fleet.

Every mariner is encouraged and empowered to report near misses, hazards, and any other safety related information to the MSC Force Safety Office. Reports can be formally submitted by using the MSC Hazard/Near Miss/First Aid/Class B or C Mishap Form, forwarded to your supervisor or Department Head, or submitted as an SMS Finding. Near miss reporting is non-punitive and as a result, reports can be made without fear of retribution or retaliation.

Masters, Chief Engineers, and all MSC leaders have a responsibility to educate our personnel on the importance of identifying unsafe conditions and reporting a near miss and/or hazard. These self-identifying actions help protect our mariners and ensure MSC ships remain at the highest state of operational readiness and material condition.

Visit to Area Commands and MSC Offices

Recently, I returned from a trip visiting our Area Commands in Naples, Bahrain, and Singapore, and our MSC staff in Guam. Accompanied by our Executive Director and senior legal counsel, we met with our forward-deployed Mariners and staff, and talked with senior Navy leaders in the regions about the work we are doing at MSC.

First, I want to share with you that in my meetings with Navy leaders, including the Commanders of both U.S. 5th and 7th Fleets, they all told me how important the work we do at MSC is in supporting their mission. It was clear to me from these discussions that our work is appreciated and valued by our many customers and that what we do enables our Navy to maintain a continuous forward presence in each of the regions.

Second, we visited ships and crews including USNS Mount Whitney, USNS Kanawha, USNS Matthew Peary, USNS Choctaw County, USNS Catawba, USNS Invincible, USNS Bruce C. Heezen, USNS Henson, USNS Millinocket, USNS Fall River, USNS LT John P. Bobo, USS Emory S. Land and USS Frank Cable. It was important that we visited as many ships and crews as possible to listen to the concerns of Mariners and to update them about today's challenging maritime and the requirement to adapt in order to ensure that we can provide essential assured logistics and service support to the warfighter in the future.

Some of the topic areas we discussed with both Mariners and Area Command staffs included:

- Navy's Comprehensive Review: we will take the findings from the review and our recent operational pause, and use them to improve our operations;

- "Bending the Curve:" 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 lessen the risk to sealift and adapt to the changing environment in which we operate. We discussed how this is going to require that we learn faster, even exponentially;

- Crew manning and rotations: we exchanged ideas for improving the crewing process to better meet mission requirements and Mariner quality of life measures;

- The Navy the Nation Needs: we reviewed how the Navy's strategy is the maritime expression of National Defense Strategy, and that MSC and our Mariners play an integral role in the balanced approach to building a bigger fleet, a better fleet, a networked fleet, a talented fleet, an agile fleet and a ready fleet that will increase American naval power; and

- Leadership Promotion Board: we found that the present process, while sufficient, could be improved with additional formality and rigor, and a more formal approach to selecting the best and fully qualified maritime officers will benefit applicants for our critical Master Mariners and Chief Engineer positions.

One of my take-aways from the ship visits is that good communication is vital to the success of our organization. And everyone, from the longest serving MSC employee to the most recent new-join, should feel empowered to communicate problems, concerns and innovative ideas to rest of the team.

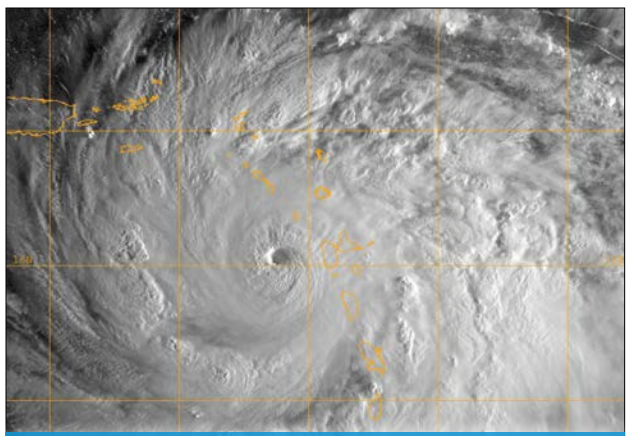
I'll close by extending my profound gratitude to ship Masters, Chief Engineers, Mariners and MSC staff who facilitated our trip and provided considerate and relevant feedback during our discussions.

Thank you for all the work you do each and every day.

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

HURRICANE SEASON 2018; ARE YOU PREPARED?

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



A satellite image of Hurricane Maria in the Caribbean Sea. The storm was a Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale. (U.S. Navy photo)

Spring is upon us and for many our thoughts shift to the outdoors and spending time in the sun with our family and friends. While we are enjoying this pleasant time of year, we are all encouraged to begin to planning for the 2018 Hurricane Season.

The Atlantic Hurricane Season begins on June 1 and runs through Nov. 30.

The Eastern Pacific hurricane season begins May 15 and ends Nov.r 30, according to www.ready.gov, and now is the time to get ready.

Hurricanes 101

"A hurricane is a type of storm called a tropical cyclone, which forms over tropical or subtropical waters. A tropical cyclone is a rotating low-pressure weather system that has organized thunderstorms but no fronts (a boundary separating two air masses of different densities)," according to Dan Lipps, Military Sealift Command's Emergency Preparedness Manager. "Tropical cyclones with maximum sustained surface winds of less than 39 mph are called tropical depressions. Storms with maximum sustained winds of 39 mph or higher are called tropical storms."

According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, when a storm's maximum sustained winds reach 74 mph, it is called a hurricane. The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale is a 1 to 5 rating, or category, based on a hurricane's maximum sustained winds. The higher the category, the greater the hurricane's potential for property damage.

"Hurricanes are giant, spiraling tropical storms that can pack wind speeds of over 160 mph and unleash more than 2.4 trillion gallons of rain a day," said Lipps. "These same tropical storms are known as cyclones in the northern Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal, and as typhoons in the western Pacific."

Watch vs Warning

It is important that everyone understands the difference between a 'Hurricane Watch' and 'Hurricane Warning' and the steps one should take during each.

Lt. j.g. Patrick Shine observes a tree blown over by Hurricane Harvey at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi as part of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command Damage Assessment Team and the Contingency Engineering Response Team. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Timothy Schumaker)

"A 'Hurricane Watch' means your region could be impacted by destructive storm weather conditions within the next 48 hours," said Lipps. "If your region is in a 'Hurricane Watch,' you should review your evacuation route(s) and tune in for announcements from local officials. You should also review the items in your disaster supply kit. Add items as needed to meet the household needs for children, parents, individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs and pets."

A 'Hurricane Warning' means that destructive weather is expected in your region within the next 36 hours.

"If your area is under a 'Hurricane Warning,' you should follow the orders from local officials, and leave the region if an evacuation is called for," said Lipps. "Check-in with your family and friends by texting or using social media. Refer to and follow the hurricane time-line preparedness checklist, depending on when the storm is anticipated to hit and the impact that is projected for your location."

If your area is not being evacuated and you decide to stay in your home, make sure you have adequate supplies in case you lose power and enough water for several days. Do not try and drive anywhere until the roads are safe from flooding or downed electrical lines.

"You should sign up for local emergency alerts in your area," according to Lipps. "Plan to have at least 1 gallon of water per person and sufficient non-perishable food to last your family for three days," said Lipps. "Stock up on canned foods, dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. Make sure you have a manual can opener in the house."

"Also, you should consider adding an emergency weather radio to your home emergency kit; one that can operate with a crank in the event of extended power outages," added Lipps.

After the Storm

Once a hurricane has passed your area it is important to understand that the crisis may not be over as your region could have suffered destructive damage due to the storm.

"After the storm is gone, continue to listen to local officials for updates and instructions," said Lipps. "Check-in with your family and friends by texting or using social media and return home only when authorities indicate it is safe."

"Watch out for debris and downed power lines," added Lipps. "Avoid walking or driving through flood waters. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of fast-moving water can sweep your vehicle away."

"Avoid flood water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines and may hide dangerous debris or places where the ground is washed away," said Lipps. "If your property is impacted by a hurricane, gather photographs of the damage to your property in order to assist in filing an insurance claim," said Lipps. "Do what you can to prevent further damage to your property, such a putting a tarp on a damaged roof, as insurance may not cover additional damage which occurs after the storm."

Family Emergency Plan

Lipps encourages everyone to, "form a family emergency plan. Figure out who to call, what to pack, and where to meet, in advance."

"When disaster strikes, you will not be thinking about work. Your focus will be on your family's safety, as it should be," said Lipps. "The more confident you are in your family's knowledge of what do in an emergency, the better equipped you'll be to deal with emergencies both at home and at work. This is one of the most critical, yet often over-looked, elements of an emergency preparedness plan."

Lipps recommend MSC teammates reference www.ready.gov/make-a-plan for details in formulating a hurricane preparedness plan.

"Your family needs to know where to go in case of a hurricane," said Lipps. "If you are ordered to evacuate, know the local hurricane evacuation route(s) to take and have a plan for where you can stay until the evacuation is over."

"You should compile a 'go-bag, disaster supply kit' which includes a flashlight, batteries, cash, first aid supplies, medications, and copies of your critical information you might need during the evacuation," said Lipps.

"It is also important for your family to have a plan for staying in communication with each other during a crisis," added Lipps. "Many communities have text or email alerting systems

A house damaged by Hurricane Irma near Starke, Florida. (U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Lynette George)

for receiving emergency notifications."

Prepare Your Home

Now is also the time to prepare your home to withstand destructive storms.

"Hurricane winds can cause trees and branches to fall, so before hurricane season, trim or remove damaged trees and limbs to keep you and your property safe," said Lipps. "Secure loose rain gutters and downspouts and clear any clogged areas or debris to prevent water damage to your property."

"You may reduce property damage to your home by inspecting, securing and reinforcing your roof, windows and doors, including the garage doors," added Lipps.

"One can also purchase a portable or mounted generator to use during power outages," suggested Lipps. "Remember to use generators and other alternate power or heating sources outside your home, at least twenty feet away from windows and doors and protected from moisture. Never try to power your home's wiring by plugging a generator into a wall outlet."

More Information

For more information about being prepared for the 2018 Hurricane Season, check with your local media outlets; the Fleet Weather Center, Norfolk, Virginia; the National Weather Service; and installation websites and social media offerings.

"Be different. According to the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau, more that 60 percent of American's don't prepare for Hurricane Season," concluded Lipps. "Please, go home tonight and start the process. Your family, both at home and here at work, are depending on you."

USNS MERCY DELIVERS MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO ULITHI ATOLL

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Kelsey Adams, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

Service members assigned to Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) made a brief mission stop March 20 near Ulithi Atoll, which is part of the Caroline Islands in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

This is the first official engagement of Pacific Partnership 2018 (PP18), where Mercy will be sailing near Ulithi Atoll and using helicopters to deliver medical supplies to an advanced echelon team of PP 18 medical professionals embarked on USNS Brunswick, the secondary mission platform, which will conduct a mission in FSM. PP18 medical professionals plan to work alongside Ulithi Atoll public health professionals, assisting in treating local citizens at a clinic.

"It's truly a pleasure for our PP18 team to conduct this exercise and strengthen the partnership between our two countries," said PP18's mission commander, Capt. David Bretz. "This mission also holds a deeper meaning because of the strong historical ties the United States has had with Ulithi in the past."

On March 19, 1945, Comfort-class hospital ship USS Mercy (AH 8) reported to the 5th Fleet at the Ulithi Atoll to assist the Okinawa campaign, during WWII. Throughout this campaign, USS Mercy made several stops in Okinawa where they began embarking and treating patients despite the frequent air raids and kamikaze attacks. The Ulithi Atoll became one of the centralized points for the allies to treat patients and gather supplies for four months. For her service during WWII, Mercy received two battle stars.

Seventy-three years and one day after USS Mercy made a stop in the Ulithi Atoll, USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), anchored near Ulithi Atoll. This feat was significant to many.

"It's very special to be doing this in a place like the Ulithi Atoll, which has incredible historical significance for the Allies efforts in the Pacific Theater during World War II," said Her Majesty's Royal Navy Capt. Peter Olive, Deputy Mission Commander, Pacific Partnership 2018. "Joint efforts such as these are what Pacific Partnership is all about – multiple nations coming together to achieve a common goal and to share experiences."

During this mission, several government officials from the Federated States of Micronesia were flown onto Mercy from the Ulithi Atoll, where they were given a tour of the ship and were able to meet Sailors stationed aboard the ship.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Rudolf Delarea, right, from San Diego, shows Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia Robert Annan Riley III the simulated intensive care features aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Harley K. Sarmiento)

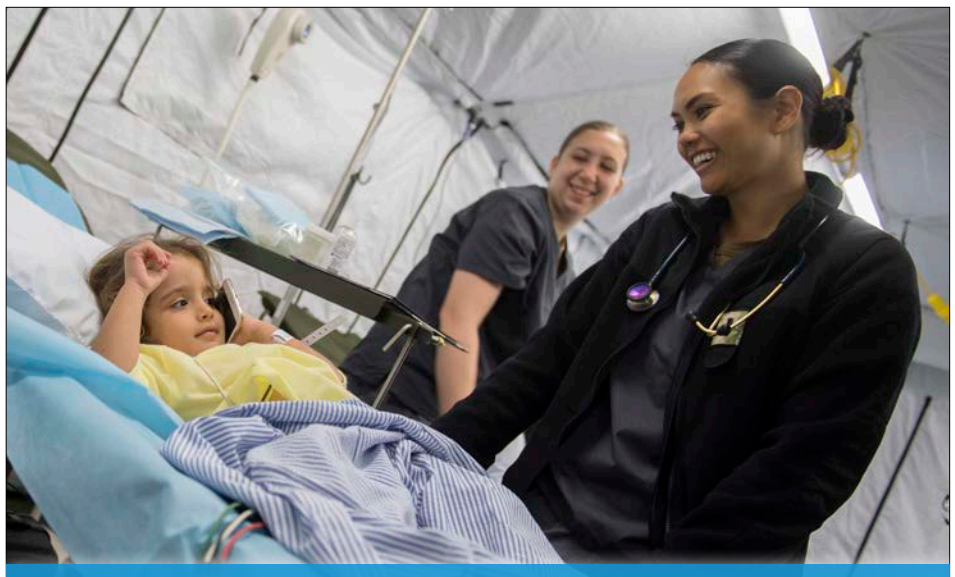
"We are really excited to help out in any way that we can," said Lt. Brian Ford, family physician and the event lead for the medical portion of this exercise. "Ultihi has done a lot historically for the United States, and I think it will be an amazing opportunity to give back to a community that has assisted the United States in the past by working alongside their local health professionals in a clinic and bring medical supplies to this clinic to be used for current and future patients."

Mercy, along with Military Sealift Command expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6), are participating in PP 18, the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. PP18's objective is to enhance regional coordination in areas such as medical readiness and preparedness for man-made and natural disasters.

PP 18 consists of more than 800 U.S., partner and host nation personnel working side-by-side to better prepare for potential humanitarian aid and disaster response situations.

CONTINUING PROMISE 2018 COMPLETES MISSION STOP IN HONDURAS

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kayla Cosby, Continuing Promise 2018



Lt. j.g. Grace Romasko laughs with a 4-year old Honduran girl while she waits for her hernia surgery in the expeditionary medical unit in Puerto Cortes, Honduras, during Continuing Promise (CP) 2018. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Mike DiMestico)

The Continuing Promise 2018 (CP-18) team departed Honduras, March 26, after delivering humanitarian aid for the first mission stop of CP-18.

Service members, along with members of nongovernmental organizations provided medical assistance for local Hondurans at the Franklin D. Roosevelt School and in local hospitals throughout Puerto Cortes and San Pedro Sula.

"I want to thank the Governor, Operation Blessing, the Honduran Navy and the various government organizations to include the Franklin D. Roosevelt School and Martin Caraccioli, owner of property where our home has been while we have been here in Honduras," said Commodore of Destroyer Squadron 40 Capt. Angel Cruz at the CP-18 closing ceremony.

This collaboration contributed to a CP-18 milestone of nearly 7,000 patients treated and over 40 surgeries performed at the Expeditionary Medical Unit.

In addition, multiple trainings occurred between the Honduran general surgeons, gynecologists and anesthesiologists and the Continuing Promise surgical team at the Dr. Mario Catarino Rivas North-Western National Hospital. The subject matter expert exchanges included observing surgical procedures in the operating rooms and the clinical pre-operative areas.

"Many lives were changed during our time here in Honduras," said Cruz, a native of Miami, Florida. "The impact goes both ways, as my life and the lives of my Sailors and Soldiers have changed for the better. We hope these friendships will continue to grow and bear much fruit that will benefit both our countries."

Furthermore, the CP-18 U.S. Army veterinarians and veterinary technicians provided services to 995 animals, including vitamin treatments, rabies vaccinations and 80 surgeries.

U.S. Fleet Forces Band had 18 engagements at schools, hospitals and other venues, while communicating through music and boosting morale. In addition, three community relations projects were completed further assisting the people of Puerto Cortes.

Also, the Forward Deployed Preventive Medicine team and medical subject experts worked in conjunction with local hospitals to include medical providers, nurses, bio-medical technicians and preventive medicine technicians. During the partnership exchanges, more than 120 topics were covered in over 375 hours including infection control, community health, dentistry, women's health and disaster preparedness.

"We could not have done our mission without our Honduran partners assistance," Cruz continued. "By working together, we were able to exceed previous records in healthcare and subject matter expert exchanges."

‘NAVY COOL’ ANNOUNCES NEW ‘BEST SOURCES’ FOR USCG LICENSE TRAINING

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Taylor Jackson, Center for Information

Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-line (COOL), in partnership with Military Sealift Command (MSC), announced “best sources” training opportunities available to Sailors, March 19.

These courses can be used for gap/delta training to help prepare Sailors, officers and enlisted, for USCG credentials. The USCG credentials can be funded for eligible Navy COOL.

Navy COOL provides active duty and reserve Sailors, whether forward deployed, underway or ashore, a way to map their Navy education, training, experience and competencies to civilian credentials and occupations. It also allows Sailors to pursue credentials throughout their military life cycle, from completion of technical training until they become eligible for transition opportunities.

As part of the Military to Mariner program and credentialing programs supported by Navy COOL, MSC provides the mandatory Coast Guard certification training to Sailors seeking to transition into Merchant Marine careers.

The latest courses offered include Immersion Suit Training, which satisfies the required personal survival techniques training, and Proficiency in Survival Craft, which satisfies the survival craft training requirements for endorsement as a lifeboatman.

“These course offerings continue the close collaboration between the Navy Voluntary Education (VOLED) Department, Navy COOL, and MSC to enhance Sailors’ ability to earn Coast Guard Credentials aligned with their training and qualifications,” said VOLED Chief Jim Johnson. “Working toward a Coast Guard credential while in service positively impacts readiness through increased awareness of national and international maritime standards and can lead to valuable post-service job opportunities.”

The Immersion Suit Training course locations vary depending on equipment and instructor availability. Proficiency in Survival Craft will be offered in Norfolk and San Diego aboard the hospital ships USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) and USNS Mercy (T-AH 19), respectively.

To be eligible for certification, Sailor applicants must have completed U.S. Navy Recruit Training and have acquired at least one year of sea service every five years since the completion of recruit training.

“MSC benefits greatly from having a pool of qualified, experienced, and trained mariners who can help us, as well as our commercial partners, meet Navy fleet support and military sealift needs,” said Michael Morris, MSC’s Total Force Management department head. “They enable us to support the joint warfighter across the full spectrum of military operations.”

For enrollment information, call the Military Sealift Command Underway Replenishment Training Center at (757) 462-1732, or email at msc_mutc.fct@navy.mil.

PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2018 CONCLUDES MISSION STOP IN YAP, CONTINUES ONWARD TO PALAU

By Lt. Clyde Shavers, Commander, Task Force 73/Destroyer

Pacific Partnership 2018, the annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) preparedness mission, concluded aboard expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6) in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia, April 1.

More than 134 military personnel from the U.S., United Kingdom, Japan and Australia conducted 51 medical engagements and subject matter exchanges, six engineering projects and 22 community relations and band performances, along with subject matter exchanges with local professionals on HA/DR readiness, in Yap.

Twenty-eight Seabees from Amphibious Construction Battalion 1 worked alongside the community at six construction projects spread throughout the island. Projects included installing roofing and walls at the Yap Memorial Hospital, painting at the Gilman Elementary School and Early Childhood Center, door replacements at Gaanelay Elementary School and Tomilang Elementary School, and restoration of flooring and doors at the Fanif Elementary School.

The U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet “Deep Six” brass band, along with military personnel aboard Brunswick, participated in community-wide events such as a Sports Day at the Yap Sports Complex and an island-wide parade in downtown Colonia. Other events included visiting students at schools throughout Yap and playing sports, reading together and discussing life in the U.S. military.

The medical team of audiologists, veterinarians, primary care physicians, medical technicians, dentists, dental technicians and nurses conducted a Community Health Engagement (CHE), which provided health screenings to nearly 130 patients, dental care to more than 70 patients and optometry support to more than 60 patients.

“The U.S. is committed to the FSM,” said Hon. Robert A. Riley, U.S. ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. “There is no sunset to the dedication of the protection of FSM for a free and open Pacific.”

The U.S. and the Federated States of Micronesia continue a long history of friendship, as FSM participated in the Pacific Partnership mission as host nation for five years and many Micronesia men and women have served or are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Pacific Partnership team aboard Brunswick will be heading to the Republic of Palau to continue the mission to strengthen national capacities and preparedness for disaster response.

Since 2006, 22 partner nations around the globe in 18 host nations have participated in Pacific Partnership providing medical care to more than 300,000 patients, veterinary services to nearly 40,000 animals and completed nearly 200 engineering projects while building meaningful and close partnerships throughout the region.

Children from the Dalipebinaw Elementary School perform a cultural dance outside Military Sealift Command expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6) for attendees of the Pacific Partnership 2018 (PP18) Yap mission stop closing ceremony, March 31. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Byron C. Linder)

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

MSC'S FIRST FEMALE MASTER SAYS GOODBYE AFTER 36 YEAR CAREER

By Sarah E. Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command bid "Fair Winds and Following Seas" to one of its most recognizable employees, Capt. Emigdia Esqueda, or 'Capt. Amy' as most know her, April 3. A 36-year employee of MSC, Esqueda pioneered the way for female mariners and became a mentor and role model for many people who sailed with her. She is most notably recognized as the first female Master at MSC, but her career is long and storied, and during this Women's History Month, is reflective of the long strides women have taken in the fight for equality.

Esqueda's career as a mariner began at Texas A&M University in Galveston, Texas, where, following several years in community college, she studied marine biology. One day she noticed a group of students dressed in khakis looking up at the night sky and curiosity got the best of her. Conversations with the students revealed they were cadets from the Texas A&M Maritime Academy. After a little research into the Merchant Marine, Esqueda was hooked, and even though it meant an extra year in school, she applied and was accepted into the program.

"I loved the idea of being a marine biologist, but they didn't make very much money in those days," explained Esqueda. "Since I was helping support my family, I needed a career that really paid, and the Merchant Marine was paying almost twice what marine biologists made. I'd love to say I got into this from a love from the sea or travel or something, but at the time it was out of necessity."

People who have worked with Esqueda throughout her career are quick to point out her strong work ethic, something that could have begun while in college. Coming from simple means, she worked steadily throughout school, sometimes at three jobs, where she did everything from translating documents from Spanish to English (her parents were of Mexican descent), to waiting tables, working at hotels and anything else she could fit around her studies.

During her junior year, Esqueda was promoted from the student training ship to a position on a merchant ship. This she attributes to her good grades and lack of demerits. It was here she learned about MSC and its opportunities for newly licensed mariners. At the end of her senior year, she applied for her first MSC job and was one of the lucky cadets to get one of the seven positions offered that year.

"People in school laughed at the people who went to MSC. None of them wanted the long times at sea you had with MSC," said Esqueda. "When the oil industry bottomed out in the early Eighties, everyone was suddenly fighting for MSC jobs. I was really happy to get one of the seven positions that year, because, I wasn't just ending up at MSC, I had always wanted to work for MSC."

In 1982, when Esqueda accepted her first position at MSC, women were still an uncommon sight on merchant ships. As a newly licensed 3rd Mate on USNS Ponchatoula (T-AO 148), she found herself facing daily challenges of being a woman in a man's world as well as learning her job and how to lead.

"It was really hard in the beginning. The men weren't very responsive to me as a woman," explained Esqueda. "Giving an order to a man was really hard, but I learned how to stand my ground and do it, and to sometimes, do it with humor and wit that eventually won them over. I have very strong aunts and I learned about tough from them."

Realizing confidence came from not only toughness, but a deep understanding of every part of sailing and working on a ship, Esqueda not only stood her watches and performed the duties of a 3rd Mate, but also stepped into the role of Able Seaman, where she learned seamanship from the bottom up, often with only 2-3 hours of sleep between watches.

"I would tell the men I worked with, 'You have the work knowledge and I have the book knowledge. Let's get together and make it work.'"

As time progressed Esqueda's confidence built and so did the crew's trust in her and her abilities. She credits several captains who encouraged her, challenged her and taught her how to be a Merchant Marine officer and to lead people.

"To dock your own ship for the first time is absolutely euphoric," exclaimed Esqueda. "Then the crew says, 'Good job!' And you realize they noticed what you just did. OH…it's better than anything!"

In 1989, Chief Mate Emigdia "Amy" Esqueda chats with a Second Mate on USNS Adventurous (T-AGOS 13) in San Diego, California. (Courtesy photo)

As the years went by, Esqueda transferred to ships throughout MSC, working her way up one position at a time on various MSC ships including fleet replenishment oilers, ammunition ships and scientific research ships. In 1995, she took command of USNS Effective (T-AGOS 21), becoming MSC's first female Master. As a Master, the bulk of her career was in command of MSC's two ocean tug boats, USNS Navajo (T-ATF 169) and USNS Sioux (T-ATF 171). From 1995 to the present, Esqueda and her crews participated in salvage and recovery missions to retrieve aircraft, sunken vessels, and helicopters from the ocean floors around the world, and towed 42 ships and submarines. Her most notable mission came on March 2, 2014 on Sioux when she and her crew rescued the Canadian tanker HMCS Protecteur which had sustained massive damage from an engine room fire at sea. When the Navy ship USS Chosin (CG 65) couldn't complete the tow, Sioux sailed 325 nautical miles through extremely high winds and seas and towed the ship, with 298 Sailors aboard, safely back to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Capt. Emigdia "Amy" Esqueda uses a sextant to track Venus across the sky while serving as master of the Military Sealift Command fleet ocean tug USNS Sioux. (Courtesy photo)

"I have been a part of a lot of recovery missions over the years," said Esqueda. "Getting the 298 people on Protecteur safely to Hawaii is something I will never forget. That was the mission the Navy couldn't do; that we weren't supposed to be able to do, but did. That mission was a great example of how good planning and teamwork can equal success. To this day I am so proud of that crew and the good work we did on that mission."

When asked about the success of her career, Esqueda over and over again credited the people she worked for and the crews that served under her.

"I always tried to give the very best I had and to be as good to my crew as I could be."

This philosophy seemed to have carried through to former members of Esqueda's crews who remembered serving with her as master.

"It was very special serving with Capt. Amy on Sioux," said Paige Johnston, a former 3rd Mate. "She really understood that the tug was a way different platform from an oiler or a bigger ship. There are certain skill sets needed on the tugs and the crew needed to be happy and to want to stay aboard, so we could keep those skills with the ship. Capt. Amy understood this. She treated us like a family, and cared about our lives both on and off the ship. She trusted us and our skills in handing the ship, sometimes in difficult situations."

Paul Torres, a former 2nd Mate on Sioux, credits Esqueda with his advancement to Chief Mate. "Capt. Amy was always very patient and let the officers under her really do their jobs, but wasn't afraid to step in if she needed to," he said. "I remember her letting me dock the ship for the first time. There are a lot of captains who will let you handle their ship, but they look over your shoulder the whole time. Capt. Amy didn't do that. She put us in control. For a captain to let someone else step in and take control, especially when docking, is something special and it shows her level of trust in us as a crew. You didn't see that on other ships."

While it may sound like she has led a charmed life, Esqueda has endured many challenges. She has lost family members, including her sister, mother and father. She survived cancer. She has spent long periods of time away from her husband and family due to her shipboard assignments. She says her secret is, "putting your mind to something, pressing on and keeping the faith no matter how bleak the present might be."

To many people, Esqueda is a role model, and they aren't afraid to look to her for advice. She feels a particular connection to the young women mariners who are beginning their careers. After 36 years of service you would expect her guidance to be vast and wide. Instead it is a few simple ideas: "Stand-up tall. Be professional, and always try to be better than you have to be."

As she looks forward to her retirement, in true Esqueda fashion, she won't be sitting idle. Splitting her time between her homes in Oxnard, California, and San Antonio, Texas; working in her garden, being more involved in her church and her Star Trek club, volunteering and charity work and spending time with her husband and family are just a few of the things she is looking forward to doing.

"I'm learning how to be a housewife after all these years away at sea," she laughed.

With her experiences and adventures tucked into her scrapbooks, Esqueda ends her career with her favorite prayer; the 107th Psalm.

"Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters; they saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep."

WOMEN LEADERS PASSING THE TORCH TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

Courtesy Story By, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

Fresh out of medical school in 1995, a young woman walks into the National Naval Medical Center for the first day of her internship. She sits alone with a notebook and pen in hand. The sudden sound of howling cackles coming from the corner startles her out of her thoughts. She looks over and sees a group of male interns bonding. They all know they belong at the internship, but she's not so sure she does. She continues to look around the room and there just isn't very many women within sight, not even the instructors. As she sits in the classroom, the loneliness seems to creep up on her and she begins to wonder if she can be successful in this environment. She knows the material and has earned her spot as an intern, but the resounding feeling of inadequacy continues to haunt her as she watches the men seemingly breeze through the program.

As the internship went on, her feelings continued to plague her. She wasn't part of "the club," rather an outsider to be ignored. Day-after-day, she was looked over by her male counterparts. Often, she settled on the idea of returning to the comforts of Baltimore, where she had grown up. Where she felt safe and secure.

Sailors and civil service mariners aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) cut the cake at the conclusion of the women's history month celebration. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Harley K. Sarmiento)

However, Dr. Lynelle Boamah, would not give up. She knew the end result of becoming a lieutenant in the United States Navy was worth it. Boamah dug deep and with the support of her family in Baltimore, her strong faith, and supportive mentors, she made it through that internship and began her career serving as a pediatric physician in the United States Navy on May 19, 1995.

Now 23 years later, Capt. Lynelle Boamah, is the executive officer of Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). Boamah, is very thankful that she endured that challenging internship and finished medical school.

"My family is full of service members," said Boamah. "My sister was an active duty Yeoman at the time I joined. I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life at that point and she really helped me to decide that joining the Navy was the way to go. I'm the only one in my family still serving 23 years later."

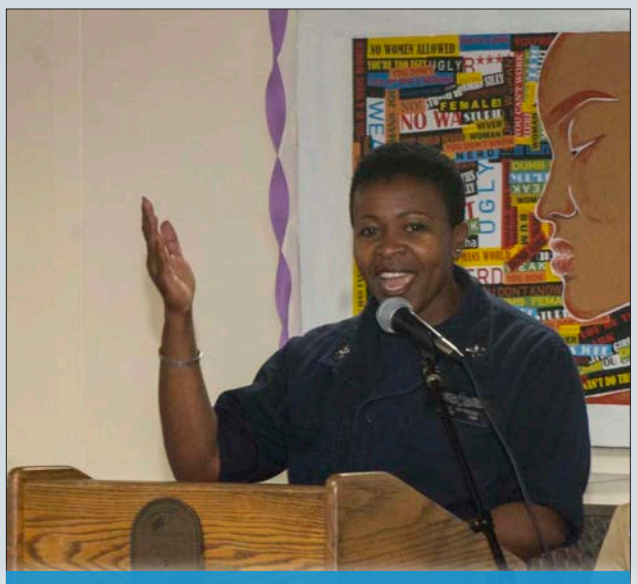
When Boamah joined the Navy, the military was still adjusting to women being allowed to serve in a greater capacity. According to Boamah, even her specialty, pediatrics, was about two-thirds male.

"Now, the Navy pediatrics field is led by women," said Boamah. "Being one of the few women in the field helped me to develop patience and has given me the dedication and drive that I have now. All the hard work and adversity I faced, drove me to better develop as a physician and as a professional."

But as the years have gone by, things have changed in Boamah's opinion.

Boamah made it through all of the tough times throughout the years thanks to her family coupled with a strong sense of faith within her.

"I have a very close family, I would go home some weekends," reminisced Boamah. "My family has a very strong sense of faith, so when



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Joelle Meyindjou, from Bafoussan, Cameroon, reads a poem during the presentation to celebrate women's history month aboard Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Harley K. Sarmiento)

I was feeling like I couldn't make it through the week, I would go back to my hometown church and regain my confidence. They are a huge factor is my ongoing success and triumphs while in the military and just in my day to day life."

It wasn't just her family and strong faith that helped her grow into the person she is today, according to Boamah.

"I found mentors within the military who helped me learn and grow into the leader I am today," said Boamah. "As the Executive Officer aboard Mercy I encourage Sailors to decide their passions and inner motivation while providing tools so they may realize their true potential. I understand that not everyone wants to be a master chief or an admiral, but I want to be able to help my Sailors realize what they are capable of. My mentors did that for me and I want to pass on that knowledge and experience to the Sailors I now lead. If I'm making a difference with even one Sailor, I'm doing my job."

Women's History, continued on page 8

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND KICKS OFF SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

By Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Service member and civilian teammates attached to Military Sealift Command gathered at Breezy Point on Naval Station Norfolk to commence Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, April 2.

Sexual Assault and Awareness and Prevention Month is intended to draw attention to the fact that sexual assault remains an intolerable violent crime which impacts the readiness for our Navy community.

Chief Warrant Officer Tia Bailey, MSC's military manpower officer, began the event by reading aloud Commander, Military Sealift Command Rear Adm. Dee Mewbourne's Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month Proclamation.

Civilian teammates attached to Military Sealift Command play the roles of silent victims of sexual assault during the command's Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Proclamation reading and ceremony on Naval Station Norfolk, April 2. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

"Sexual Assault is an affront to the core values we support and defend as proud members and civil servants of today's Navy," read Bailey. "We must work together to educate our community about what can be done to prevent sexual assault and support survivors to ensure they are provided the help needed to survive sexual assault."

The event included MSC Sexual Assault Prevention and Response service member and civilian support staff members playing the roles of 'Silent Victims' of sexual violence.

"Our dedicated leadership and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response staff encourage every person to speak when witnessing acts of sexual violence," continued Bailey. "With leadership, dedication and encouragement, there is compelling evidence that we can be successful in reducing sexual violence within our command and the Navy through preventive education, increased awareness, and holding offenders who commit acts of sexual violence accountable for their actions."

The event featured two guest speakers, the Honorary Rosemary Trible and Lt. Cdr. Erin Elliot. The event also featured a Navy color guard and award presentations for MSC's key Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program contributors.

"Military Sealift Command strongly supports the dedicated efforts of national, state and local partners to include citizens actively engaged in prevention, awareness and response efforts surrounding sexual violence and whose goals are to eradicate sexual violence," concluded Bailey.

For more information on Sexual Assault and Awareness and Prevention Month, including more information on how to prevent and report sexual assault, go to www.navy.mil/saapm.

Women's History, continued from page 7

The Navy has progressed in many ways since Boamah's first days as a physician. The overall attitude towards women serving in the military is one of the major progressive moves toward gender equality.

When Boamah joined the Navy in 1995, the USS Benfold (DDG 65) became the first destroyer built to accommodate females. Then, in 2011 the first group of female submariners completed nuclear power school and reported on board two ballistic and two guided missile submarines. Most recently, in 2016, final plans were made for United States Special Operations Command (USSOOM) to open all combat jobs to women in all branches of the military.

These changes helped pave the way for women who are currently serving in the Navy. Musician Seaman Alyssa John started her active duty journey Feb. 13, 2017. Her introduction to the Navy was vastly different from Boamah's start in the Navy.

"Being a musician in the military was always a dream of mine," said John. "When I joined it was such a supportive and accepting environment. I felt like I belonged and I never felt looked down upon by my male shipmates."

When John was assigned to the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, she was welcomed with open arms and smiles from the moment she got off of the plane.

"It didn't matter to them that I was a woman, they simply saw me as another member to the team; a family member that they couldn't wait to meet," recalled John.

Similar to Boamah, when times were tough or she began to doubt her abilities, she relied on her friends, family, and mentors to provide guidance and support.

"Despite the warm welcome, there have been times I have doubted my ability to perform the way I need to," said John. "My close friends, family, husband, and fellow band members encouraged me to take it one day at a time and that has really kept me going."

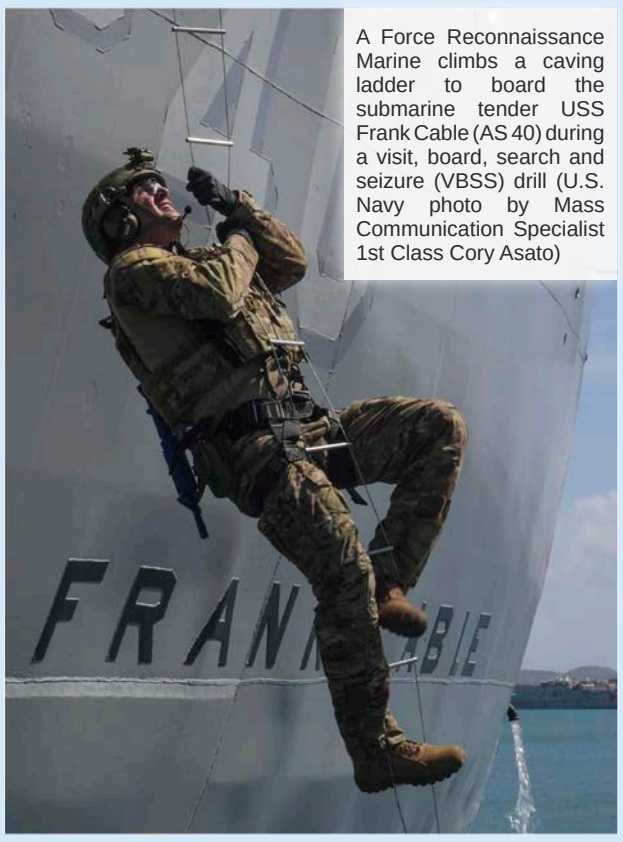
The Navy gave her an extended family, and John is grateful for the experiences she has had. She looks forward to her future in the military working alongside the men and women in the service.

"I am thankful for the strong women leaders I have in the military," said John. "I am also thankful for the tough times and adversity they had to go through to make my experience in the military so vastly different then their earlier days. I continue to learn from all the strong leaders around me and can't wait to see what more time will bring."

Both women currently serve aboard the Mercy and are currently deployed for Pacific Partnership 2018 (PP18).

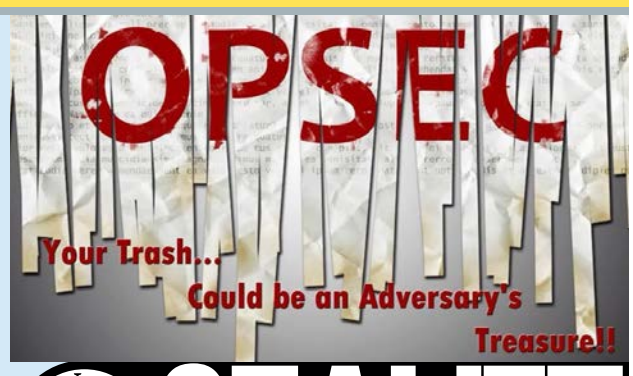
PP18's mission is to work collectively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase stability and security in the region and foster new and enduring friendships across the Indo-Pacific Region. Pacific Partnership, now in its 13th iteration, is the largest multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific.

ANYDAY



A Force Reconnaissance Marine climbs a caving ladder to board the submarine tender USS Frank Cable (AS 40) during a visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) drill (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Cory Asato)

A pier-side view of Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn in Rota, Spain. Big Horn is currently deployed in support of U.S. Navy and allied forces operating in the U.S. Sixth Fleet's area of responsibility. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)



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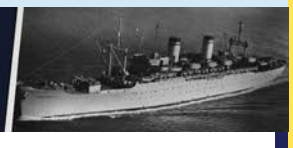

Privateers

Because of British policy regarding import of gunpowder during the American Revolution, the colonists did not have enough to repel the third British charge at Bunker Hill.

A survey by George Washington at the time showed army stockpiles were sufficient for 9 rounds per man.

By 1777, the privateers and merchantmen brought in over 2 million pounds of gunpowder and saltpeter. A typical New England privateer carried two or three African-Americans who had long found employment in the fishing industry. The General Putnam from New London, Connecticut, had 4 blacks on board; the Aurora had 3. In Salem, Massachusetts, Titus, a slave owned by Mrs. John Cabot, ran a successful business recruiting blacks as privateers.

Privateer John Manley captured the Nancy, supplying the American army with 2,000 muskets, 31 tons of musket shot, 7,000 round-shot for cannon, and other ammunition.

Captain Jonathan Haraden from Salem, Massachusetts, who captured 1,000 British cannon, was considered one of the best sea-fighters, successfully taking on three armed British ships at the same time. Privateers captured countless British reinforcements and over 10,000 seamen, keeping them out of the British Navy.

In 1777 George Washington's armies totaled about 11,000 men. At the same time there were 11,000 privateers at sea intercepting British shipping in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and even between Ireland and England.

Together, the Continental Navy and privateers captured 16,000 British prisoners, a substantial contribution in comparison with the 15,000 prisoners taken by the entire Continental Army before the surrender at Yorktown. The crew of the privateers were well paid for their hazardous work, earning as much as $1,000 for one voyage, while average pay at the time was $9 per month.

SOURCE: American Merchant Marine at War, www.usmm.org

NEXT ISSUE: USNS CITY OF BISMARCK

SEALIFT

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