SEALIFT

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

February **2023**

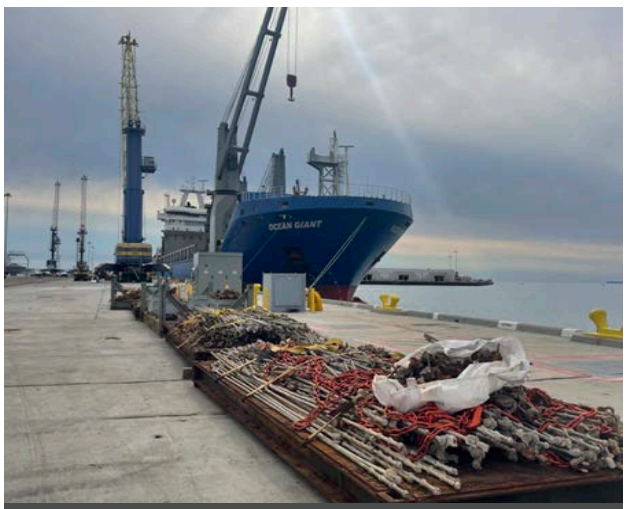
A vehicle is loaded aboard the Military Sealift Command chartered MV Ocean Giant. The ship is one of two ships chartered in support of the annual resupply mission to McMurdo Station, Antarctica; Operation Deep Freeze 2023 (U.S. Navy photo by Sarah Cannon)

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND CHARTERED SHIPS CONDUCT CARGO LOAD-OUTS IN PREPARATION FOR OPERATION DEEP FREEZE 2023

By Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

While most of the United States shivers under frigid winter conditions, members of the Military Sealift Command Pacific (MSCPAC) team have been enjoying warm, sunny Southern California temperatures while overseeing cargo operations in Port Hueneme, California, of the load-out of supplies and equipment being loaded onto the Military Sealift Command charter ships MV Ocean Giant and MV Ocean Gladiator, in preparation for delivery to the remote Antarctica outpost of McMurdo Station, in support of the annual resupply mission; Operation Deep Freeze 2023.

Unlike last year, where a cargo ship and a fuel ship made the trip to Antarctica, the ODF 2023 mission will feature two cargo ships, that will deliver most of the supplies needed the year's survival at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.



Materials are staged to be loaded onto the Military Sealift Command chartered ship MV Ocean Giant. The ship is one of two MSC chartered ships conducting cargo operations in Port Hueneme, California, in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2023 (U.S. Navy photo by Sarah Cannon)

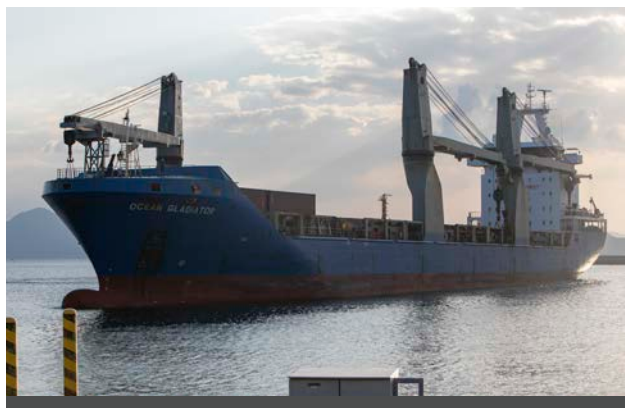
The week before Christmas, Ocean Giant conducted a load-out in Port Hueneme. During the operation, the ship received 443 pieces of cargo, which included include containers filled with mechanical parts, vehicles, construction materials, office supplies and electronics equipment and vehicles. In addition, the ship was loaded with a floating causeway that will be assembled in Antarctica and used for cargo offload operations instead of the traditional McMurdo Station ice-pier, which was deemed unusable for this year's mission.

Following Ocean Giant this week, Ocean Gladiator is conducting a cargo load-out. This ship is receiving 361 pieces of cargo, mostly construction materials to be used for an expansion project at the McMurdo facility. Upon completion of their delivery in Antarctica, the ship will return to Port Hueneme with ice core samples as well as other scientific information for further study in the United States.

Both ships will make the journey from California, to Antarctica, stopping in Christ Church, New Zealand to receive additional cargo, traveling approximately 8,040 nautical miles over nearly a month.

Loading cargo into both ships requires advanced planning. Weight differences in cargo, as well as the types of cargo loaded and the storage issues they have, require a specific load order, which is followed to the letter to ensure an on time departure. Because of this, the MSCPAC team have worked with members of the MSCPAC Operations team as well as the ships' crews, port workers, stevedores and members of the National Science Foundation.

Deep Freeze continued on page 8



A view of the Military Sealift Command Chartered MV Ocean Gladiator underway. Ocean Gladiator is one of two ships charted to support Operation Deep Freeze 2023. (U.S. Navy photo)

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IT TAKES TWO…MSC TRANSPORTATION OFFICE DELIVERS THE GOODS

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The Military Sealift Command's (MSC) Supply Chain Management Division, Code N48, ensures the command's 130 ships have all the parts and materials needed to accomplish their mission, and they have to be ready to get them out of the warehouses at a moment's notice.

Tucked away in MSC's Transportation Office at building W-143 in Norfolk, Virginia, are two people who arrange, oversee and track the delivery of those parts from when they leave the warehouse to when they touch down on the decks of the ship. This dynamic duo is responsible for "delivering the goods" at MSC.

MSC Transportation Officer Carlos Douglas and Contract Transportation Supervisor Carly Tew align Department of Defense-approved private industry carriers with the Supply Chain Management Division to deliver materials and parts for MSC. They are responsible for all movement of materials between warehouses, vendors, shipyards, and ships.

"We make sure everything is moving," said Douglas. "We make sure shipping requests are good and have all the right information on them; we certify invoices and track and trace material to confirm it gets where it needs to go. And we pay the invoices after they're delivered."

Douglas and Tew work with nearly 1,000 carriers who rely on the delivery of government-funded materials. The two oversee the movement of thousands of parts each week.

"In the past 14 days, our department has shipped 2,314 line items," said Tew. "That number can fluctuate and get higher or lower, but there is always constant movement."

Building a network of competent carriers is invaluable for the Transportation Office. It isn't just about having a list of companies. It takes working with different carriers and distinguishing the ones which are best capable of meeting MSC's needs.

"We use best value," said Douglas. "Basically, it's based on who gets it done and can meet the RDD (requested delivery date)."

Code N48 operates 19 warehouses in various regions in the world. Douglas says the key to overcoming the challenge of operating from afar is having a network of dependable carriers and coordination with other N48 Transportation Officers (in MSCPAC San Diego and MSCO Guam) who are all keys to successful deliveries to whichever time zone or AOR.

"Right now, we have a shipment in Australia, and it needs to go to Souda Bay, Greece," he said. "We must work with people worldwide on their time frames navigating different time zones. Sometimes we're eight hours behind schedule trying to work with people in an entirely different time zone."

Establishing an expeditious and accurate delivery program is about more than just carriers. Tew says that supply officers in the fleet and the entire supply chain management division have a role in that the Transportation Office is able to do its job effectively.

"Having reliable information and ensuring everyone is on the same page," she said. "If the ship isn't updating their CRIF (Cargo Routing Information File) that can push back the delivery because we don't have an accurate shipping information. We don't want something going to the wrong ship or just not getting where it needs to go as soon as possible. We want to get it right the first time to avoid having to re-do it."

MSC's supply chain management program is a complex operation vital to mission success—not just for MSC but across the entire military spectrum. MSC couldn't deliver without the men and women in Code N48, and Code N48 couldn't deliver without its own delivery service and the entire Transportation team who runs it.

Military Sealift Command (MSC) Transportation Officer Carlos Douglas and Contract Transportation Supervisor Carly Tew pose for a photo in W-143 Warehouse at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. The duo oversees the delivery of thousands of parts and materials to MSC's fleet of ships. (U.S. Navy photo by Hendrick Dickson)

SECNAV NAMES FUTURE OCEANOGRAPHIC SURVEY SHIP USNS ROBERT BALLARD

From The Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro announced today that a future Pathfinder-class oceanographic survey ship will be named USNS Robert Ballard (T-AGS 67).

The future USNS Robert Ballard will honor Dr. Robert Ballard, a retired U.S. Navy Commander, and former director of the Center for Ocean Exploration. A tenured professor of oceanography at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography, he is widely known as a discoverer of the final resting place of the R.M.S. Titanic. The name selection follows the tradition of naming survey ships after explorers, oceanographers and distinguished marine surveyors.

"Dr. Ballard's career, explorations, research and focus on teaching the next generation of oceanographers is remarkable, and I am pleased to name T-AGS 67 in his honor," said Del Toro. "One of my enduring priorities is building a culture of warfighting excellence, and that includes lifelong learning amongst DON personnel. The name Robert Ballard displayed across the stern of this ship will serve as an inspiration to all who see it while highlighting the results of commitment to education and exploration."

Ballard was born in 1942, growing up in San Diego, California. After he graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1965, he earned an Army Reserve Commission, ultimately requesting and transferring to the United States Navy when called to active service in 1967. Assigned to the Office of Naval Research as a liaison officer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, Ballard worked extensively with deep-submergence vehicle Alvin (DSV-2). After transitioning to the Naval Reserve in 1970, he completed a Ph.D. in marine geology and geophysics at the University of Rhode Island. He continued to work at Woods Hole, where he was part of a team that discovered deep-sea thermal vents near the Galapagos Rift. Best known for his 1985 discovery of R.M.S. Titanic at a depth of 12,000 feet, Ballard also led other shipwreck discoveries, including USS Yorktown (CV-5), USS Quincy (CA-39) and President John F Kennedy's PT-109. Ballard retired from U.S. Naval Service in 1995. In 1989, he founded the distance learning program the JASON Project, which reached 12 million school children; and the Institute for Exploration in Mystic, Conn, and is also the founder and president of the Ocean Exploration Trust.

"I am humbled to have the U.S. Navy's oceanographic ship, USNS Robert Ballard (T-AGS 67) as a namesake. As a 17-year-old, in 1959, I went on my very first oceanographic cruise, and very early in my oceanographic career, the U.S. Navy placed a central role and continues to do so to this day," said Dr. Robert Ballard. "It is indeed an honor to know that the USNS Robert Ballard will continue to explore the oceans long after I am gone."

Secretary Del Toro has designated Mrs. Barbara Earle Ballard, Dr. Ballard's spouse and President of Odyssey Enterprises, as the ship's sponsor.

Military Sealift Command's Special Mission program supports worldwide oceanographic programs with ships that perform acoustical, biological, physical and geophysical surveys. These ships gather data that provides much of the military's information on the ocean environment. The collected data helps to improve technology in undersea warfare and enemy ship detection. The oceanographic and hydrographic survey ships' multi-beam, wide-angle precision sonar systems make it possible to continuously chart a broad strip of ocean floor. Survey ships have charted three-fourths of the world's coastlines, making it easier for navigators to find their way along both well-traveled and not-so-familiar shipping routes.

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MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND'S TOTAL FORCE MANAGEMENT TEAM HOSTS A TWO-DAY SPEED MENTORING EVENT

By Jennifer Hunt, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command Civilian Teammates Human Resource Officer Laurie Beth Sargent (left) and Systems Accountant Abnet Tekola (right) participate in the command's Speed Mentoring Event. (U.S. Navy photo by Jennifer Hunt)

Civilian employees from across MSC participated in 15-minute mentorship sessions, a purposeful time allotment which paired mentors and mentees with the goal of a quick, yet meaningful interaction to foster new professional relationships.

"We want to broaden horizons for some of our junior staff members and match them up with senior leaders, so they can get a better understanding of the command and find a mentor to help with their professional career and development," said Training and Workforce Development Director Mike Kishbaugh.

The event consisted of 15 mentors paired with 60 mentees in half-day sessions. Mentors, GS-14 and above, were matched with eight mentees each day, while mentees had four mentoring sessions.

"I'm always looking for different ways to grow myself. This program helped me meet a lot of really great people, helped me get an understanding of how they developed themselves and how they applied their business practices to grow within the command," said mentee Dahlia Feliciano.

"People have helped me in my career, so I enjoy any opportunity I can to reach back and help others," said mentor Shay Grant. "I was able to share my own professional knowledge and meet people from different parts of the command, especially with us being so geographically dispersed. It was also great to interact with other mentors who represented a broad spectrum of our command."

Another goal of the event was the possibility for mentees to click with multiple mentors they wouldn't otherwise interact with in their daily lives.

"Every mentee-mentor relationship is unique. No two relationships are the same, and that's why it's often beneficial to have more than one mentor," said Kishbaugh. "You might have one that you talk to about career growth and another who might guide you in some other aspect of your career with experience and advice."

"Having multiple mentors from other parts of the organization, who can give you a different level of constructive feedback and insightfulness into your career, helps you grow a little faster," said Total Force Management Director Greg Pelowski.

While the Total Force Management team plan on hosting the speed mentoring event again, there are other programs offered as career development boosters for MSC personnel. Those who have already benefited from mentorship sessions can benefit from programs such as MSC's Civilian Rotation Training Opportunity and the Management 360 course, said Pelowski.

"Just get out there and try something new. If you don't take that step, then you can't grow as an individual. It starts with you to really grow in your profession."

MSC TO LAUNCH NEW 'GAME CHANGING' DATA ANALYSIS PROGRAM THIS FALL

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command (MSC) will launch a new data analytics platform this fall that will encapsulate a wide array of data tools available within MSC and put information right at the users' fingertips.

The cloud-based data hub Data Analytics Environment (DAE) will replace the legacy system Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW) and integrate multiple MSC business systems, into a centralized data lake to help leaders, data analysts and employees work more efficiently.

"This is really going to be a game changer," said Pete Pascanik, Data Science Director N93. "It's going to provide a more accurate and fluent flow of data for leaders who make decisions and anyone else at the command who uses data to do their job."

The DAE initiative began in 2021 under the management of MSC's N9 Directorate, contracted through the N6 Directorate, with the mission of developing a program that will allow all MSC employees to examine data with flexible analytical tool-sets, integrated development environments and supporting libraries that deliver detailed insight into the operations of MSC.

With a fleet of approximately 130 ships, and staff of nearly 10,000 Civil Service Mariners and civilian teammates, MSC has lots of data maintained separately by various directorates. DAE will ingest all of that data together where it can be edited for consistency, duplication, ambiguities and then be available for analysis, visualization and presentation to leadership.

"The data lake will consist of the most critical data at MSC and make that data available to everyone who needs to use and analyze it giving everyone access to information so they can do their reports for leaders with the most factual information," said Clark Capshaw, Senior Operations Research Analyst, N931.

Capshaw says the DAE development is an N6 and N9 effort, but the end result is dependent on everyone at MSC.

"Our data stewards are positioned to set the vision for their own data and its governance, setting rules for access and defining how it may be used throughout the command," said Capshaw. "All of the things people care about – the things they're reporting to leadership - if we have the data as a source of information then we want to take advantage of that and include it in DAE."

DAE development has been an ongoing process of collaboration beginning with numerous focus groups where MSC's data stewards discuss issues they are having with current business systems and how to eliminate them.

"We need to know what problems users are incurring now because the end result is having a data lake they can go into and query multiple systems to answer data questions free of errors," said Tina Smidt, Business Intelligence Analyst N93. "We can bring in these systems as they are now, but that's not what we want. We want to know what problems they are encountering and how we can correct them in order to better respond."

Comparing DAE to the Internet and Google, Pascanik said the goal is to provide MSC with a user-friendly program that provides access to accurate and critical information as timely manner. He says it will be an ongoing process even after this fall.

"If you look at the Internet, it has gone through various iterations since it was introduced," he said. "In September or October 2023 DAE should be launched and available for everybody. At this point we are depending on our data stewards to let us know their essential data fields so that we give them the system they desire. In essence, we want to give everyone such quick access to information that they can trust."

U.S. SEIZES 1.1 MILLION ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION, OTHER ILLEGAL WEAPONS IN GULF OF OMAN

From U.S. Naval Forces Central Command Public Affairs

Bags containing more than 50 tons of fuses and propellants for rockets and ammunition rounds sit on the flight deck of expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), Dec. 3. Forces from Lewis B. Puller seized from a fishing trawler more than 1 million rounds of 7.62mm ammunition; 25,000 rounds of 12.7mm ammunition; nearly 7,000 proximity fuses for rockets; and over 2,100 kilograms of propellant used to launch rocket propelled grenades. (U.S. Navy photo)

On Dec. 1, U.S. naval forces in the Middle East intercepted a fishing trawler smuggling more than 50 tons of ammunition rounds, fuses and propellants for rockets in the Gulf of Oman along a maritime route from Iran to Yemen.

Navy personnel operating from expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3) discovered the illicit cargo during a flag verification boarding, marking U.S. 5th Fleet's second major illegal weapons seizure within a month.

Forces from Lewis B. Puller found more than 1 million rounds of 7.62mm ammunition; 25,000 rounds of 12.7mm ammunition; nearly 7,000 proximity fuses for rockets; and over 2,100 kilograms of propellant used to launch rocket propelled grenades.

"This significant interdiction clearly shows that Iran's unlawful transfer of lethal aid and destabilizing behavior continues," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. "U.S. naval forces remain focused on deterring and disrupting dangerous and irresponsible maritime activity in the region."

The direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of weapons to the Houthis in Yemen violates U.N. Security Council Resolution 2216 and international law.

U.S. 5th Fleet previously intercepted a fishing vessel illegally shipping lethal aid from Iran to Yemen on Nov. 8. U.S. Coast Guard ship USCGC John Scheuerman (WPC 1146) and guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68) intercepted the vessel in the Gulf of Oman.

A week-long search assisted by patrol coastal ship USS Hurricane (PC 3) and Navy explosive ordnance disposal technicians from U.S. 5th Fleet's Task Force 56 discovered more than 70 tons of ammonium perchlorate, a powerful oxidizer commonly used to make rocket and missile fuel as well as explosives. U.S. forces also found more than 100 tons of urea fertilizer, a chemical compound with agricultural applications that is also known for use as an explosive precursor.

The U.S. 5th Fleet operating area includes 21 countries, the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea, parts of the Indian Ocean and three critical choke points at the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb and Suez Canal.

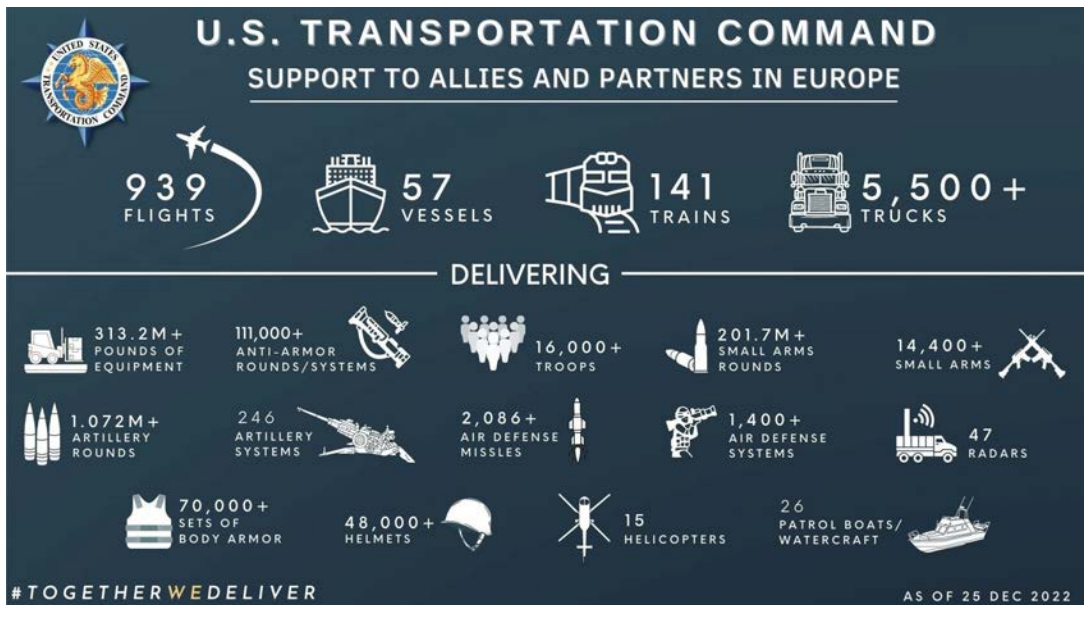
Photo of a U.S. service member holding a proximity fuse seized from a fishing trawler interdicted by expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3), Dec. 1, in the Gulf of Oman. (U.S. Navy photo)

U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND DELIVERS HOPE TO UKRAINE

From U.S. Transportation Command Public Affairs

As of December 2022, U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) has delivered more than 313 million pounds of equipment to Ukraine to help them defend themselves against Russia. While the year came to an end, USTRANSCOM's commitment to delivering hope and aid to Ukraine will continue.

USTRANSCOM began delivering security assistance cargo to Ukraine, Jan. 21, and began movement of U.S.-based forces to Europe Feb 3. The command has airlifted more than 16,000 troops from the U.S. to Europe to assure allies and deter further Russian aggression.



The equipment and supplies delivered to Europe, including missiles, artillery, tanks, helicopters and more, have proven critical to success on the battlefield against Russian forces that invaded Ukraine Feb. 24.

"The speed and reliability at which we are delivering this significant assistance demonstrates America's stalwart support for the Ukrainian government," said Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, USTRANSCOM commander. "No other nation has the strategic comparative advantage in logistics we are leveraging on behalf of Ukraine."

USTRANSCOM has three component commands that conduct global mobility operations by air and surface modes of transportation. They are Air Mobility Command (AMC), Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), and Military Sealift Command (MSC).

"Together, SDDC and MSC have delivered armored vehicles, ammunition, fuel and other vital supplies where they were needed," Van Ovost said. "AMC military and commercial air carriers have deployed significant volumes of troops and continue to deliver critical lethal aid for Ukraine's defense."

USTRANSCOM and its commercial partners have collectively flown over 900 flights to deliver aid to Ukraine and U.S. partners this year to deter Russian aggression.

"USTRANSCOM's strategic use of airlift is often highlighted," indicated Lt. Gen. John Sullivan, USTRANSCOM's deputy commander. He said the command had relied heavily on commercial air partners and their cargo fleets.

"However, the sheer volume of materiel moved by sealift has been incredible and has contributed immensely to this effort," Sullivan continued. "Vessel voyages have played an instrumental role… whether that be through liner service, charters, or with activated Ready Reserve Force vessels."

USTRANSCOM conducts globally integrated mobility operations, leads the broader Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, and provides enabling capabilities to project and sustain the Joint Force in support of national objectives.

"This is how the U.S. projects power – fort to port, port to fox hole, airfield to airfield," said Van Ovost.

More than 201 million small arms rounds, 1 million artillery rounds, 70,000 sets of body armor, and more have been supplied to Ukraine. However, the work is not done. USTRANSCOM will work tirelessly into 2023 and beyond.

While supporting efforts to assist Ukraine's defense, USTRANSCOM continues to conduct global operations – from Europe and the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific region.

"USTRANSCOM delivers…whenever, wherever," said Van Ovost.

USNS JOHN LEWIS ANSWERS CALL FOR HELP AT SEA

By Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

The crew of Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) gave an early holiday gift to a boater stranded at sea, when the ship answered a distress call off the coast of Southern California.

Lewis received a distress call from a man whose sailboat had been damaged in a storm, that tore his sails and caused the boat to take on water. Once the boater was located, the ship was able to maneuver next to the damaged sailboat. The man on the sailboat, was then able to climb Lewis' pilot ladder. Once aboard the ship, he was given a security check, a medical examination, a shower, a hot meal, clothes and a ride to San Diego.

'Once we got this poor guy aboard, we found out that he had been stranded for five days!" said USNS John Lewis' Capt. Dan Glazier. "I'm glad we were in the area and were able to help! Everything has a purpose, and now this guy can make it home for the holidays rather than the alternative, stuck on the ocean."

The 746-foot Lewis is the first of the new John Lewis-class of fleet replenishment oilers, and one of MSC's newest ships, having been christened in 2021 and accepted into MSC's fleet in 2022. It has the ability to carry 162,000 barrels of diesel ship fuel, aviation fuel and dry stores cargo. The upgraded oiler is built with double hulls to protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks. The Lewis-class of oilers will replace the current Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oilers and they age out of the MSC fleet.

A view of Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) at sea. (U.S. Navy file photo)

VLISSINGEN PORT OPERATIONS SHOWCASE U.S.-NETHERLANDS AND JOINT FORCE INTEROPERABILITY

By Eleanor Prohaska, 21st Theater Sustainment Command

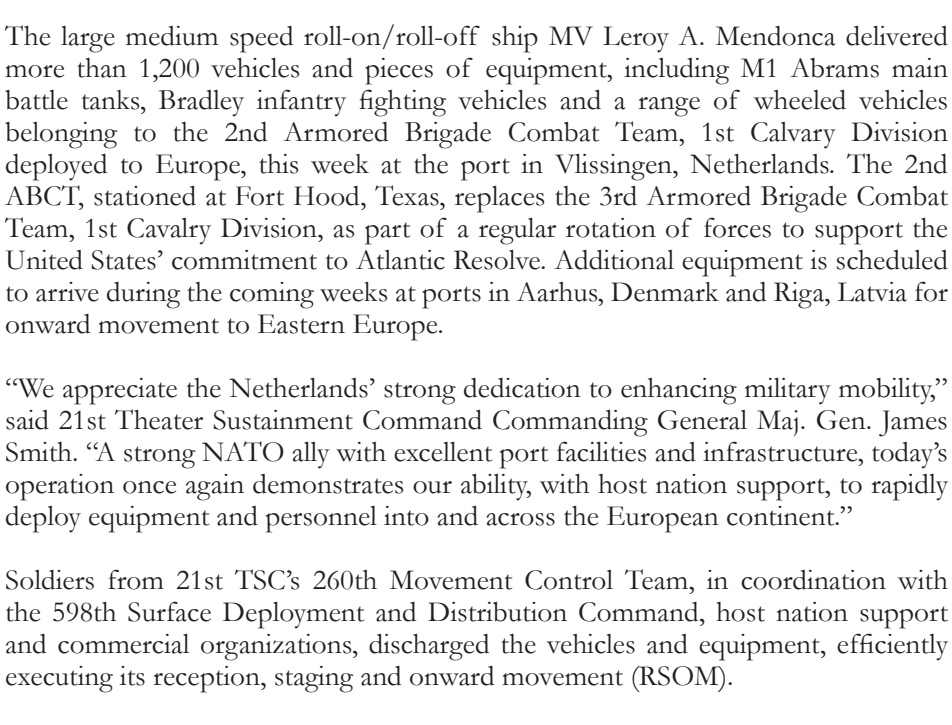
The large medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship MV Leroy A. Mendonca delivered more than 1,200 vehicles and pieces of equipment, including M1 Abrams main battle tanks, Bradley infantry fighting vehicles and a range of wheeled vehicles belonging to the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Calvary Division deployed to Europe, this week at the port in Vlissingen, Netherlands. The 2nd ABCT, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, replaces the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, as part of a regular rotation of forces to support the United States' commitment to Atlantic Resolve. Additional equipment is scheduled to arrive during the coming weeks at ports in Aarhus, Denmark and Riga, Latvia for onward movement to Eastern Europe.

"We appreciate the Netherlands' strong dedication to enhancing military mobility," said 21st Theater Sustainment Command Commanding General Maj. Gen. James Smith. "A strong NATO ally with excellent port facilities and infrastructure, today's operation once again demonstrates our ability, with host nation support, to rapidly deploy equipment and personnel into and across the European continent."

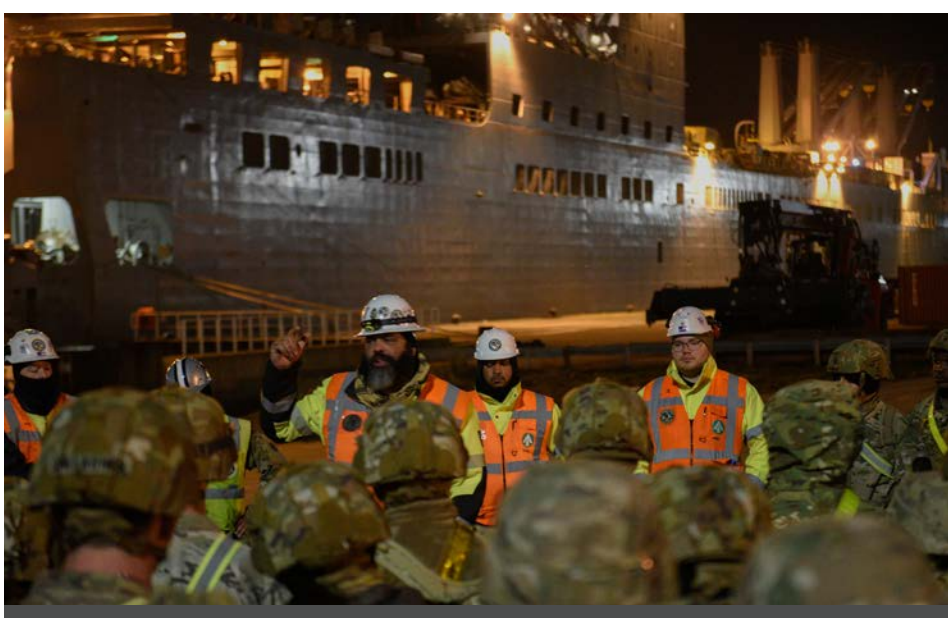
Soldiers from 21st TSC's 260th Movement Control Team, in coordination with the 598th Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, host nation support and commercial organizations, discharged the vehicles and equipment, efficiently executing its reception, staging and onward movement (RSOM).

According to 260th MCT Commander Capt. Karl Bliven, Vlissingen's facilities and the Netherlands' infrastructure make it possible to rapidly download an entire brigade's worth of equipment and quickly stage it for transport throughout the European theater. The Army's use of cutting-edge technology enhances safety, speed, and in-transit visibility.

"Once the vehicle gets offloaded from the ship, we as an MCT use what is called a DRAM (Distribution Retrograde Adaptive Planning and Execution Management) tablet to scan the military shipping labels on these vehicles," said Bliven. "This will ensure that we know all the information relating to the vehicle and that it gets on the correct truck, barge or train to get to the final location.



Soldiers from the 16th Sustainment Brigade assigned to the 260th Movement Control Team receive a safety brief from the 838th Transportation Battalion Surface Deployment and Distribution Command as they assist with the transport, offload, and processing of over 1,250 equipment items assigned to the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, at the port of Vlissingen, Netherlands, Jan. 10. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Yeadon)



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"It's important that we do this smoothly and safely to allow for the equipment to arrive ready, in terms of maintenance, and in the most efficient way possible."

Dutch Sea Port of Debarkation Commander, Lt. Col. Peter van Dorst, said experience working with the U.S. Army at Vlissingen is paying dividends, as this is the fourth time the port has supported an Atlantic Resolve rotation.

"As a representative of the 13th Light Brigade from the Netherlands, we enjoy working together," said van Dorst. "Cooperation with [598th] SDDC, 21st TSC and members of the 2nd Armored Combat Brigade is going very well. The Dutch military are already showing their experience in an operation like this, and it is going better each time."

598th SDDC Commander Col. Robert Kellam said the Vlissingen port operation was an opportunity to exercise multiple capabilities. "We're building partnerships with the Dutch military, working with our partner organizations like 21st TSC and the 16th sustainment brigade.…to get all of the equipment on multiple modes of transportation, as well as establishing the LSA (logistics support area)."

The Vlissingen port operation also demonstrated U.S. Joint Forces providing proactive and scalable options for priority missions. USNS Leroy A. Mendonca is a U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command asset in support of DOD sealift missions worldwide.

The 2nd ABCT "Black Jack Brigade" will fall under the command of U.S. Army V Corps. Also known as "Victory Corps," V Corps is America's forward deployed corps in Europe and works alongside NATO Allies and regional security partners to provide combat-ready forces, execute joint and multinational training exercises, and retain command and control for all rotational and assigned units in the European theater.

Since April 2014, U.S. Army Europe and Africa has led the Department of Defense's Atlantic Resolve land efforts by bringing units based in the U.S. to Europe on a rotational basis. Deployed units are ready, combat-capable forces able to conduct extensive bilateral, joint, and multilateral training throughout its deployments to more than a dozen countries in Europe. Moreover, Atlantic Resolve enables the U.S. to enhance deterrence, increase readiness and support NATO.

USNS CARSON CITY HELPS VENICE'S 'KITTENS OF THE FORT'

By Christina Johnson, Military Sealift Command, Europe and Africa Public Affairs

USNS Carson City (T-EPF 7) crew-members gave back to Venice, Italy, by providing supplies and participating in a clean-up project for the Associazione Mici del Forte, "Kittens of the Fort," cat rescue and sanctuary, Jan.6. Crew-members spent nearly six hours of cleaning, applying varnish, and painting rooftops for nearly 20 cat homes, and they put together a donated wagon which was immediately put to good use by carrying supplies to the various locations within the expansive sanctuary area. (U.S. Navy photo by Christina Johnson)

USNS Carson City (T-EPF 7) crew-members gave back to Venice, Italy, by providing supplies and participating in a clean-up project for the Associazione 'Mici del Forte' cat rescue and sanctuary, Jan. 7.

Carson City, a Military Sealift Command (MSC) ship with a crew of Civil Service Mariners and deployed military personnel, spent the holiday season pier-side in Venice. The ship's officer in charge (OIC) requested assistance from the U.S. Embassy to find a community project, specifically focused on animal care, as a way to say thank you to their Venice hosts.

Megan Jones, the Venice Embassy representative, suggested helping the Mici del Forte, "Kittens of the Fort," and coordinated with the sanctuary's volunteer staff to put together a visit.

"The people of Venice have been very warm and accommodating," said Cmdr. Sarah Camarena, Carson City's OIC. "It's a privilege to have this opportunity to give back by supporting the four-legged residents of Venice."

The ship's crew donated more than 30 pounds of dry cat food, several containers and pouches of treats, cat toys, and grooming tools to be used in the care and feeding of the more than 150 cats that live in the sanctuary.

According to the Mici del Forte's lead volunteer, the non-profit sanctuary was established in 2014 by utilizing private funds and combining several local cat-care organizations into one at Forte Marghera. The location of the sanctuary is unique since it was created following the return of Forte Marghera, a centuries-old military fort, to the Venice community.

Crew-members spent nearly six hours of cleaning, applying varnish, and painting rooftops for nearly 20 cat homes, and they put together a donated wagon which was immediately put to good use by carrying supplies to the various locations within the expansive sanctuary area.

"Hopefully the work we accomplished took the clean-up and painting requirements, and putting together the supply wagon, off their plates," said First Class Petty Officer Robert Veillette, a Carson City Culinary Specialist and a participant. "What we did can allow them to focus on bigger projects at the sanctuary or provide additional animal care, whatever is needed for the cats."

USNS Carson City (T-EPF 7) crew-members pose for a photograph at a clean-up project for the Associazione Mici del Forte, "Kittens of the Fort," cat rescue and sanctuary, Jan.6. (U.S. Navy photo by Christina Johnson)

II MEF MARINES RETURN FROM EUROPEAN DEPLOYMENT

By Staff Sgt. Shaehmus Sawyer and 1st Lt. Jasmine Scott, II Marine Expeditionary Force

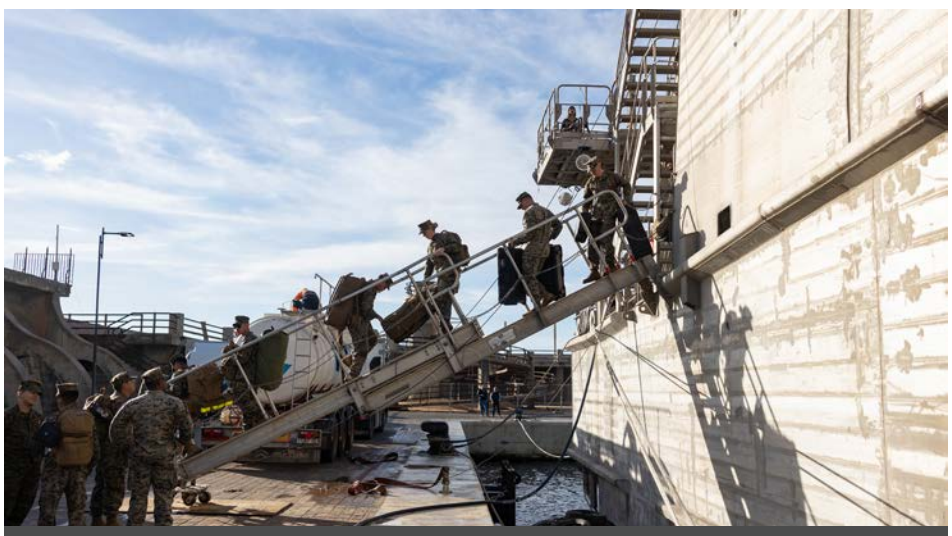
Approximately 50 Marines and Sailors returned from a month-long deployment for training aboard the Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Trenton (T-EPF 5) to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Dec. 13.

The deployment showcased II Marine Expeditionary Force's ability to rapidly move forces into the European theater, aboard a non-standard platform, and conduct unit-level and bilateral training with partner nations.

The service members supported a wide range of interoperability training alongside U.S. allies and partners in Europe, like Spain while visiting Naval Station Rota.

"We enjoyed being able to bring the Marines aboard the USNS Trenton and assist them with mission completion," said Trenton's Officer in Charge Cmdr. Timothy Rustico. "Opportunities such as these demonstrate our unique capabilities and interoperability as we learn to work better together as a Navy and Marine Corps team."

The detachment of Marines gained first-hand experience and knowledge about II MEF's relationships with allies across three countries within U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.



U.S. Marines assigned to II Marine Expeditionary Force disembark the Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport USNS Trenton (T-EPF 5) in Spain, Dec. 6, concluding a month-long deployment aboard. Marines assigned to II MEF, based out of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, embarked aboard USNS Trenton (T-EPF 5) to improve interoperability while refining the U.S. capability to rapidly deploy forces aboard U.S. Navy expeditionary fast transport vessels. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Scott Jenkins)

U.S. Marines assigned to II Marine Expeditionary Force pose for a photo in front of the Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport USNS Trenton (T-EPF 5) in Spain, Dec. 6, concluding a month-long deployment aboard. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Scott Jenkins)

In the Central Mediterranean, Marines and Sailors participated in: chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear familiarization; Thanksgiving aboard the USNS Trenton; a port clean up near Elefsina, Greece; tactical combat casualty care practical application; M18 weapon familiarization; an obstacle course; Marine Corps Martial Arts Program sustainment; a squad competition at Naval Rota Station, Spain; and a live-fire training alongside the Spanish Naval Infantry.

"Our time spent aboard the USNS Trenton integrating with the Navy and our limited time training in Spain were equally valuable," said U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Joshua Ramirez, Marine Detachment Officer in Charge, 8th Engineer Support Battalion. "The detachment was able to learn from our Navy counterparts aboard the USNS Trenton and we were impressed with the level of professionalism the Spanish Naval Infantry displayed during our short time conducting live fire training alongside of them."

This deployment is an example of the many opportunities II MEF Marines have to travel the world, experience different cultures, and train and build camaraderie with fellow service members from our allied nations.

SPECIAL OBSERVANCE:
MSC OBSERVES DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Gilbert T Bland, President and Chairman of the Urban League of Hampton Roads addresses service members and civilian employees assigned to Military Sealift Command at the command's special observance held in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. 11. (U.S. Navy photo by Hendrick Dickson)

Military Sealift Command (MSC) honored the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during a special observance event held, Jan. 11, at Vista Point on Norfolk Naval Station.

Born Jan. 15, 1929, Dr. King, one of America's preeminent advocates of nonviolence and the leader of the civil rights movement, strived to achieve his dream of equality and justice for all until his death in 1968. In 1986, Congress passed a bill designating his birthday as a national holiday. Each year, on the third Monday of January, the nation comes together to commemorate and celebrate his legacy.

The enduring theme of the holiday, "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day on…Not a Day Off," calls upon Americans to engage in public service and promote peaceful social change. It aspires to continue Dr. King's pursuit toward equality through unity and compassion.

The event opened with a video documenting Dr. King's life while highlighting from his iconic "I Have a Dream Speech," on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington in 1963 to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

President and CEO of Urban League of Hampton Roads Gilbert Bland delivered the keynote address at this year's observance. Bland is a 2021 inductee into the Hampton Roads Business Hall of Fame and has been recognized by Volunteer Hampton Roads to receive the region's lifetime achievement award for volunteerism.

"I'm happy you're willing to recognize and support the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Day," Bland said to the crowd of nearly 100 Sailors and civilian employees. "Your presence here today reaffirms the need to remain vigilant and attempt to live the principles and meet the goals and legacy of Dr. King. Your interest is further proof that Dr. King's voice was heard and had impact."

Bland then asked the audience, "Is Dr. King's dream realized or relevant today or simply deferred?"

"Let me hasten to emphatically state, I believe there is much progress to celebrate," he said after noting some of Dr. King's achievements and his philosophy. "There is hardly any realm or endeavor of where America cannot point to significant progress over the past 60 years since the March on Washington. Progress is abundant and remarkable by any measure…"

"And yet, unfortunately progress in equity and inclusion is uneven," he continued. "Too often, even today, the zip code of where you were born or lived determine the trajectory of your life."

Bland went on to praise the Navy for its role in breaking down the walls of inequality through a commitment to diversity. He went on to talk about the parallels the military shares with his own organization, the Urban League, in the fight against racial inequality.

He concluded by sharing a quote from the speech on Washington to inspire the members to continue to lead that fight from the front-lines.

"I leave you with words from Dr. King, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.'"

"This quote is the answer to the question of whether the dream remains relevant or whether it has meaning to you personally," he continued. "The Navy is at the intersection of every American community literally and figuratively. Sailors represent every socioeconomic demographic. Their success represents America's success. Remember, whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

FEBRUARY IS AMERICAN HEART HEALTH MONTH 02

February is American Heart Health Month, a time for us to take a closer look at our cardiovascular health and how it impacts our overall health.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., and can affect adults at any age. However, you can do a lot to protect and take care of your heart.

For instance, even small acts of self-care, like taking daily 10-minute walks, prioritizing quality sleep, and eating healthy, nourishing meals help your heart. Research shows that these forms of self-care keep your blood pressure in a healthy range and reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

In addition, knowing your numbers matters. This means understanding your risk factors for heart disease. About half of all Americans have at least one of three key risk factors for heart disease, which are (1) high blood pressure, (2) high cholesterol, and (3) smoking. Talk with your health care provider about a plan to stay on top of your numbers and risk factors.

Finally, there are certain behaviors you should know about that increase your risk of heart disease. These include (1) eating a diet high in saturated fats, trans fat, and cholesterol; (2) not getting enough physical activity (remember, we want to aim for 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity aerobic activity and/or 75 minutes a week of vigorous intensity aerobic activity); (3) drinking too much alcohol (women should have no more than one drink a day and men no more than two drinks a day); and (4) tobacco use. Cigarette smoking can damage the heart and blood vessels, which increases your risk for heart conditions and raises your blood pressure.

Remember, your primary care provider should be your partner-in-health, and can help you establish a plan to protect your heart!

Know that you have support! For more information check out www.healthwise.net, contact your Health Promotion Program Manager at MSC_HPP@us.navy.mil, or Leighanne.gerstbrein.ctr@us.navy.mil

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"Everyone we are working with has been extremely professional and easy to work with, especially the stevedores," said Lt. Cmdr. Raymond Lilly, MSCPAC representative in Port Hueneme. "They really understand how to move cargo to and from the pier to the ship, and how to get it loaded quickly and safely. They are true professionals."

While most people would think working, away from home at the holidays, would be a hardship, members of the MSCPAC team welcomed the opportunity and are enthusiastic about being the part of the ODF mission.

"ODF is a very unique mission and people get excited about it because it is tangible," explained Lilly. "Being a part of a mission with the National Science Foundation and Antarctica is exciting, and I am happy to be a part of it."

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. ODF operates from two primary locations situated at Christchurch, New Zealand and McMurdo Station, Antarctica. An MSC chartered cargo ship and tanker have made the challenging voyage to Antarctica every year since the station and its resupply missions were established in 1955.

A view of the Military Sealift Command chartered MV Ocean Giant being loaded with equipment in support of Operation Deep Freeze 2023. (U.S. Navy photo by Tristan Pavlik)

OPERATIONS SECURITY AWARENESS

By Joshua Rodriguez, Naval Information Forces

Operations Security, or OPSEC, is a 24/7 mission, but throughout the month of January, the Navy participated in National Operations Security (OPSEC) Awareness Month to further increase understanding of OPSEC principles and to promote ways Sailors, civilian teammates and family members can protect critical information.

OPSEC is defined as the process that identifies critical information to determine if friendly actions can be observed by enemy intelligence, determines if information obtained by adversaries could be interpreted to be useful to them, and then executes selected measures that eliminate or reduce adversary exploitation of friendly critical information.

Naval Information Forces commander Vice Adm. Kelly Aeschbach emphasized the critical role of OPSEC in effectively competing in today's challenging information environment.

"For the first time ever, the 2022 National Defense Strategy specifically addresses OPSEC, noting that DOD, as a whole, must focus on cultivating operations security and protecting critical information," said Aeschbach. "As information warriors, we're often best poised to see how our information environment is changing, and in recognizing that good OPSEC makes us best able to meet strategic competition," said Aeschbach. "Every day our competitors attempt to identify, aggregate, and analyze information to gain insights about our Navy. They have one purpose: to find our weak points, and to hurt us where and when we least expect it."

NAVIFOR's Force Master Chief Laura Nunley also highlighted the role every member plays in protecting OPSEC.

"We know that even a small disclosure of [critical] information can threaten our ability to conduct the missions that our Navy and our Nation need," said Nunley. "Ask yourselves: How is OPSEC integrated with your command's mission? What information do you need to protect, and what indicators do you need to manage so your command can accomplish the mission, or for us to win the next war?"

Kurt Fischl, OPSEC Specialist for NAVIFOR and the Navy OPSEC Support Team, iterated that the entire Navy family must work to protect critical information.

"It all starts by doing the easy – if occasionally inconvenient – things correctly," said Fischl, emphasizing key items Navy members and their families should consider when dealing with critical information:

- Follow existing OPSEC and other security policies at your command and be familiar with your command's Critical Information List.
- Encrypt emails. Assume unencrypted emails and conversations in the open may be compromised.
- Do not use commercial applications or email to transmit operational information, regardless of their advertised encryption or security.
- Keep critical information off social media, including messaging platforms.
- Consider the information shared via commercial email accounts like Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, or other .com accounts may be potentially compromised.
- Strictly follow telework policy and procedures.
- Always remember unclassified information in the aggregate can become sensitive or even classified. Take the conversation to SIPR if you need to.

FALLEN MSC TEAMMATE

Joseph D. Carter
Third Mate
MSC Service:
2020-2022

The Lord is my Pilot;
I shall not drift.
He leadeth me across the dark waters
and steereth me in the deep channels.
He keepeth my Log
and guideth me by the star of holiness
for His Name's sake.
Yea, though I sail amid
the thunders and tempests of life,
I shall dread no danger,
For Thou art with me;
Thy love and Thy care, they shelter me.
Thou preparest a harbor before me
in the homeland of eternity;
Thou anointest the waves with oil,
and my ship rideth calmly,
Surely sunlight and starlight
shall favor me all the days of my voyaging,
and I will rest in the port of my Lord forever.

Military Sealift Command

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

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Military Sealift Command reports to the Commander, U.S. Transportation Command for defense transportation matters, to the Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command for Navy-unique matters and to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition for procurement policy and oversight matters.