



SEALIFT

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

December 2023

The hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) gets underway in support of Pacific Partnership 2024-1 from Naval Base San Diego, Oct. 10. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class David Negron)



MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND'S HOSPITAL SHIP USNS MERCY DEPARTS FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

From U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs

The Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) departed San Diego, marking the beginning of Pacific Partnership 2024-1, Oct. 10.

The U.S. Navy will join allied and partner nation forces for the 19th iteration of Pacific Partnership, the largest annual multilateral disaster response preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific region. This annual maritime humanitarian and civic assistance mission focuses on improving disaster response preparedness, resiliency and capacity while enhancing partnerships with participating nations and civilian humanitarian organizations throughout the region.

For this year's mission, medical and dental practitioners will be embarked on the 1,000-bed hospital ship.



The hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) gets underway in support of Pacific Partnership 2024-1 from Naval Base San Diego, Oct. 10. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class David Negron)

Aboard the Mercy, a combined 800 military and civilian personnel will support the multi-month mission led by U.S. Navy Capt. Brian Quin, PP24-1 mission commander, and Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson, PP24-1 executive agent under U.S. Pacific Fleet, and commander, Task Force 73.

"The Pacific Partnership mission teams work collectively each year with host and partner nations to strengthen existing regional interoperability, and increase disaster-response-capacity," said Melson. "I am honored to be part of this year's mission because this annual mission helps increase security and stability in the region, while fostering new and enduring friendships in the Indo-Pacific."

The Pacific Partnership mission team aboard the Mercy will make stops in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Palau, and the Federated States of Micronesia. Experts in the fields of engineering, medicine and disaster response will partner with each host to conduct civic-action projects, community health exchanges, medical symposiums, and disaster response training activities.

"This mission reflects the continued commitment to the region and dedication to disaster-response-readiness from the United States, our partners and allies, and the host nations," said Quin.

Engagements between Pacific Partnership participants and host nations ensure the international community is better prepared to function together when responding to a disaster emergency by increasing capacity, enhancing regional partnerships, and increasing multilateral cooperation for disaster preparedness.



Sailors aboard the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) man the rails as it departs its homeport of San Diego in support of Pacific Partnership 2024-1 Oct. 10. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jacob Gay)

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USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY CHRISTENED AS MSC’S NEWEST SHIP

By Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Robert F. Kennedy (T-AO 208), the Military Sealift Command’s newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, Oct. 28.

The event was attended by dignitaries including The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House Emerita, U.S. House of Representatives; Carlos Del Toro, Secretary of the Navy; U.S. Rep. Darell Issa, California 48th District; U.S. Rep. Sara Jacobs, California’s 51st District; Dolores Huerta, civil rights activist; Rear Adm. Brendan McClain, Special Assistant to Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet; Steven Cade, Executive Director MSC; Capt. Micah Murphy, Commander, MSC Pacific, and Commander Task Force 33; as well as executives and employees of NASSCO San Diego and members of the Kennedy family.

“When we christen this ship, we are recognizing the tenacity and the spirit of Robert Kennedy,” said Pelosi.

The ship honors Robert F. Kennedy, an American lawyer and politician who served as the 64th United States Attorney General from January 1961 to September 1964, during his brother John F. Kennedy’s presidency, where he advocated for the civil rights movement, fought against organized crime and the Mafia, and involvement in U.S. foreign policy related to Cuba. Following his tenure as Attorney General, he served as a U.S. Senator from New York. In 1968, Robert Kennedy was considered a front-runner for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination. During a campaign event in Los Angeles, in June of that year, he was assassinated. A prominent member of the Democratic Party, Robert Kennedy has come to be viewed by some historians as an icon of modern American liberalism.



“Like the other great American Leaders honored by the ships of this class, Robert F. Kennedy contributed much to the freedoms we enjoy today,” said Cade during his remarks. “A champion of equality who sought to eliminate disparity and close opportunity gaps that plagued our nation during his lifetime. We are very proud to be associated with and eagerly look forward to sailing a ship in his name.”

The ship was officially christened, when Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Robert Kennedy’s oldest child and ship’s sponsor, broke the ceremonial bottle of champagne against the ship’s hull.

“The Navy is a fighting force and a force for peace,” said Kennedy Townsend. “It is fitting that the Secretary of the Navy named a class of ship after civil rights leaders like my father.”

The 746-foot Kennedy is the fourth ship in the John Lewis-class previously known as the TAO(X). This class of oilers 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, and will be equipped with a basic self-defense capability, including crew served weapons, degaussing, and Nixie Torpedo decoys, and has space, weight, and power reservations for Close In Weapon Systems such as SeaRAMs, and an anti-torpedo defense system. The John Lewis-class of oilers will replace the current Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oilers as they age out of the MSC fleet.

SECNAV DEL TORO NAMES FUTURE MEDICAL SHIP USNS BALBOA (EMS 2)

From the Office of the Secretary of the Navy

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro announced today that a future Bethesda-class expeditionary medical ship will be named USNS Balboa (EMS 2), during a ceremony at Naval Medical Center San Diego, Oct. 27.

The future USNS Balboa honors the legacy and commitment of Navy doctors, nurses, corpsmen, and staff of Balboa Naval Hospital in caring for the needs of U.S. service members.

“The contributions of this medical center over the past 100 years, represented by the care its personnel deliver to our Sailors, Marines, and families, are absolutely incredible. This hospital’s personnel continue to conduct ground-breaking medical research, discover new and innovative approaches to the delivery of world-class medical care, and provides a medical residency program for over a dozen medical specialties to develop our next generation of military doctors,” said Secretary Del Toro. “The guiding principle of Navy Medicine is to align its people and platforms in order to enhance warfighter health, wellness, and performance.”

“I can say, with full confidence, that Naval Medical Center San Diego achieves this on a daily basis,” he added.

The name selection follows the tradition of naming expeditionary medical ships after U.S. military hospitals.

As the informal name for Naval Medical Center San Diego, “Balboa” began as a naval hospital tent erected in December 1914 in support of the Panama-California Exposition (1915–1917) held in San Diego’s Balboa Park. When the United States entered World War I, the Navy converted the deserted exposition grounds into a training center containing a war dispensary and a camp hospital. In September 1919, San Diego officials set aside 17.35 acres of the park at Inspiration Point for the construction of a permanent naval hospital, often referred to as the “Pink Palace,” for its stucco facade. Commissioned in 1922, the complex added a hospital corpsman

USNS Balboa continued on page 8



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U.S. NAVY, JAPANESE MARITIME SELF-DEFENSE FORCE CONDUCT SHIPS QUALIFICATION TRAINING TO INCREASE INTEROPERABILITY IN INDO-PACIFIC

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East Public Affairs



Military Sealift Command’s commercial charter oiler MT Acadia Trader, left, connects fuel lines with Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force oiler JM Oumi (AO-426), during ships qualification training, in which the ships performed a simulated consolidated cargo replenishment at sea, Oct.8. (U.S. Navy photo)

Military Sealift Command’s (MSC) commercial charter oiler MT Acadia Trader conducted ships qualification training (SQT) with Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) oiler JM Oumi (AO-426), in which the ships performed a simulated consolidated cargo replenishment at sea (CONSOL), at the Sea of Japan, west of Kyusyu, Oct. 6-8.

“This CONSOL exercise demonstrated the professionalism and determination of our MSC fleet: civilian mariners, and contracted mariners; and how they impact partnership and interoperability with our allies and partner nations,” said Capt. Robert R. Williams, Commodore of MSC Far East in Singapore.

CONSOL capability is when a specially outfitted MSC-controlled tanker conducts underway refueling operations, transferring cargo to combat logistics-force ships at sea.

Typically, CLF ships are required to return to shore to a supply depot to resupply. CONSOLs eliminate those round-trips to a supply point, thereby, reduces cost and increases time at sea to support the fleet.

However, this SQT marked the first time an MSC-chartered commercial vessel connected with a JMSDF ship, further increasing interoperability between the allies. The ability of a JMSDF tanker to CONSOL allows them to also carry fuel out to the fleet, and provide underway replenishment of fuel, fleet cargo,

and stores to customer ships at sea, thereby increasing capacity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Acadia Trader is one of a few commercial oil tankers that has been chartered and outfitted to pump fuel to CLFs at sea, which allows the CLF ships to stay closer to the fleet.

Although MSC conducts hundreds of replenishments-at-sea a year, these events are inherently dangerous and replenishing a foreign vessel presents its own unique challenges.

“We frequently conduct CONSOLs with [JMSDF oilers] and our own fleet replenishment oilers,” said William A. Andrews, marine transportation specialist, MSC Far East. “But we wanted to build our capacity and add capability for JMSDF vessels to connect with the MSC-chartered commercial oilers.”

In a CONSOL, providing fuel to CLF ships means they don’t have to return to a Defense Fuel Support Point to refuel.

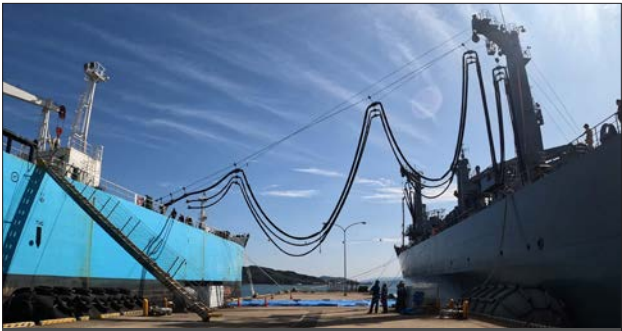
The three-day SQT began at port on board U.S. Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan, and involved safety briefings, discussions and cross-deck training.

The next phase involved deploying, retrieving and re-deploying the fuel lines between the two ships while at port.

“When we recovered the [fuel lines] a second time, we also conducted emergency breakaway drills,” said Andrews. “This is where we set up as if we have to [disconnect] due to a simulated emergency.”

Day three, both ships got underway and connected at sea. No fuel was transferred during the evolution, however; the ships connected as planned offering a successful proof-of-concept, according to Andrews.

“A CONSOL is a very dangerous operation and everyone has to know their place and know exactly what they’re doing,” said Andrews. “The two ships are about 50-60 meters away from each other, which is very close. You need good leadership, which was demonstrated every step of the way.”



Military Sealift Command’s commercial charter oiler MT Acadia Trader, left, connects fuel lines with Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force oiler JM Oumi (AO-426), during ships qualification training, in which the ships performed a simulated consolidated cargo replenishment at sea, on board U.S. Fleet Activities Sasebo, Japan, Oct. 7. (U.S. Navy photo)

MONTFORD POINT BECOMES FIRST MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND SHIP TO TRANSIT PANAMA CANAL’S NEWEST LOCKS

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The expeditionary transfer dock USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) became the first Military Sealift Command ship to transit the Panama Canal’s newest locks during a trip from Portland, Oregon, to Norfolk, Virginia, Sept. 4.

In 2017, Panama Canal Authority completed construction on an expansion on the Pacific and Atlantic side of the canal to increase waterway capacity for larger cargo and container vessels. With a length of 785 feet and gross tonnage of more than 61,000 metric tons, Montford Point was able to enter the Cocoli Lock on the Pacific side and the Agua Clara Lock on the Atlantic side.

“This class of ship has never been through the Panama Canal because they were too large for the old locks,” said Montford Point Master Capt. Ryan Arnold. “Before, we would transit around the tip of South America to get from the Pacific to the Atlantic Coast. Now, we can cut our transit in half, which makes us more efficient and allows us to respond faster.

Planning for the transit began nearly three years ago when MSC began collaborating with the canal authority and Montford Point’s operating company, Ocean Shipholdings Inc., to make modifications aboard the ship that would accommodate the capabilities of the new locks.

“The main difference is the old locks used locomotives, and wires were connected from the shore to the ship and then the ship was physically pulled through,” said

Arnold. “In the new locks, you have a tugboat on the forward end and aft end that helps navigate the ship through. The ship remains under its own power, and uses its own lines to hold itself through middle of the locks.”

USNS Montford Point continued on page 8



Military Sealift Command’s expeditionary transfer dock USNS Montford Point (T-ESD 1) transits through the Panama Canal, Sept. 4, on a trip from Portland, Oregon, to Norfolk, Virginia. Montford Point was the first MSC ship to transit the canal’s newest locks. (U.S. Navy photo)

BURLINGTON’S TOP-TIER COMPLETES FIRST-EVER CONTINUING PROMISE MISSION

By LaShawn Sykes, Military Sealift Command Atlantic Public Affairs



Military Sealift Command’s 10th expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) returned home to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek–Fort Story, Oct. 17, after a three-month deployment in Latin America and the Caribbean. This deployment was a part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet’s Continuing Promise 2023, a humanitarian assistance and goodwill mission in Panama, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Grenada. (U.S. Navy photo by LaShawn Sykes)

Military Sealift Command’s (MSC) tenth expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) returned home to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek (JEBLC)–Fort Story, Virginia, Oct. 17, after a three-month deployment in Latin America and the Caribbean. This deployment was a part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet’s Continuing Promise (CP) 2023, a humanitarian assistance and goodwill mission in Panama, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Grenada.

U.S. 4th Fleet embarked U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Fleck who served as the officer-in-charge for the embarked military detachment (MILDET) team. Burlington’s Masters, Captains Tyler Driscoll and Adam Streeper, were responsible for maintaining the operation and safety of the vessel and the discipline of the 120 Burlington crew-members that included Civil Service Mariners (CIVMAR), U.S. Navy Sailors, and a medical engagement team.

The embarked medical engagement team, working alongside host nation medical personnel, provided critical medical care to citizens in local community clinics. The engagement team included veterinarians and biomedical technicians, along with Navy Seabees who conducted small engineering-construction projects and the U.S. Fleet Forces Navy Band that hosted live music performances.

While this evolution marked the 13th CP mission to the region since 2007, this was Burlington’s first time serving as the deploying platform for a Continuing Promise mission, said Fleck. “Much credit goes to Military Sealift Command and the top-notch skills of their CIVMARs who were instrumental in assisting us in overcoming some of the challenges faced in this proof of concept. The collaborative cadence of the military-CIVMAR team displayed great resilience in order to complete the mission successfully and bring everyone home safely.”

Steaming throughout the Caribbean for three months, the Burlington team had several highlights worth nothing. Working in tandem, the team provided vital medical care to 6,100 patients, administered 950 vaccinations, and dispensed 8,750

prescriptions. The U.S. Navy Biomedical Equipment Repair team collaborated with host nation medical personnel to repair and troubleshoot medical equipment, valued at more than \$500,000. The U.S. Navy Seabees took on construction and engineering projects that benefited host nation schools, hospitals, and local communities. The U.S. Navy Fleet Forces band hosted 5,000 people and performed 26 live concerts for U.S. and foreign military officials, U.S. ambassadors, and other host nation leaders. Additionally, the Burlington team conducted several subject matter expert exchanges that ranged from public health issues to epidemic infectious diseases to disaster response training and Women, Peace, and Security initiatives.

“Your dedication and steadfast commitment to mission completion helped to further enhance regional interoperability and create long lasting friendships for generations to come – all of which is in keeping with the Navy’s enduring promise to the region, said U.S. Navy Capt. Jamie A. Murdock, Commodore, Military Sealift Command Atlantic.

Echoing Murdock’s sentiments, Streeper acknowledged that Continuing Promise 2023 was a huge success, “Because of the vessel’s unique capabilities, EPFs are frequently called upon to support the Navy’s medical and humanitarian missions. These missions are often, located in austere environments, in various fleets worldwide, where larger draft vessels cannot berth; which is not a problem for the Spearhead-class ship. Designed perfectly, EPFs are able to meet the demands and requirements of the military and the logistic planners who create these missions for MSC to execute. Additionally, the CIVMAR and MILDET crews’ ability to integrate seamlessly, in order to carry out the daily mission requirements, was the key to our success. I am quite proud of the work we accomplished. It is always great to leave a location better than we found it, and we did just that – through medical and humanitarian engagements, cooperative learning and training with partner nations, and the community relations carried out at the four port stops visited.”

Burlington is a 338-foot-long aluminum catamaran designed to be fast, flexible and maneuverable, even in austere ports, making it ideal for rapidly transporting troops and equipment within a theater of operations. The 20,000-square-foot mission bay area can be re-configured to adapt quickly to whatever tasking given to the vessel, which includes anything from carrying containerized portable hospitals to support disaster relief to transporting tanks and troops.



Military Sealift Command’s tenth expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) returned home to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek–Fort Story, Oct. 17, after a three-month deployment in Latin America and the Caribbean. (U.S. Navy photo LaShawn Sykes)

HYBRID FLEET CAMPAIGN EVENT EVALUATES TECHNOLOGY FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS

From U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs



An Aerosonde unmanned aircraft system launches from the flight deck of Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) during U.S. 4th Fleet’s Hybrid Fleet Campaign Event in the Atlantic Ocean, Oct. 10. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist John R. Fischer)

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet demonstrated unmanned air and surface capabilities from expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) during the command’s Hybrid Fleet Campaign Event (HFCE) in Key West, Oct. 4-13.

This is the most recent event in U.S. 4th Fleet’s campaign to operationalize cutting edge technologies. After successful roll-out of the Campaign at UNITAS in July 2023 and the beginning of operation Windward Stack in September, the Science

and Technology event in Key West focused on the evaluation of unmanned systems in advanced kill chains, contested littoral operations, survivability, and sustainment at sea. It served as both a proving ground for emerging technologies and an opportunity for senior leaders to see for themselves the capabilities of systems that could support the hybrid fleet.

“One of the best ways to change our force is to rapidly operationalize new technologies, new systems, and new tactics, techniques, and procedures,” said Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Vice Chief of Naval Operations. “Whether you’re talking about artificial intelligence, cyber, unmanned platforms, directed energy, or hypersonic missiles, we are on the cusp of technological breakthroughs that are going to define future conflict.”

“This week’s technology evaluation event pushed the boundaries and risked failure in order to allow us to evaluate unmanned technology and then move to operationalize that technology to inform the hybrid fleet,” Rear Adm. Jim Aiken, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (USNAVSOUTH) and U.S. 4th Fleet, said in advance of the event. “We have many events scheduled and in some of those events we will win, and in some of them we will learn. In both cases, the Hybrid Fleet will be informed, and the Navy will continue to push forward at the speed of technology.”

NAVY DEMONSTRATES VLS RE-LOAD IN SAN DIEGO

From Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy demonstrated re-arming the vertical launch system aboard Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Spruance (DDG 111) at Naval Air Station North Island and in the San Diego Harbor from Oct. 4-7.

This was to be the first time the Navy has tested VLS reloading from an off-shore support vessel platform, using Military Sealift Command fleet experimentation ship MV Ocean Valor.

The demonstration was conducted to provide proof of concept that an off-shore support vessel can reload the weapons system pier-side and while the ship is at sea, with a goal of expanding the capability of VLS reloading in expeditionary environments.

The launch system re-load has been tested previously, in 2016 and 2019, using other Military Sealift Command platforms.

Spruance, named for Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, who commanded U.S. forces at the Battle of Midway, is homeported in San Diego. The ship returned to the Naval Base San Diego in August following a seven-month deployment with Carrier Strike Group 3 to the U.S. 3rd and 7th Fleets. Spruance was also one of 38 ships from 26 partner nations who took part in Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2022 in the Hawaiian Islands Operating Area from June to August.

Built in 2002, MV Ocean Valor is an MSC-contracted vessel that supports logistics experimentation for fuel, stores, passengers and ordnance delivery.

The demonstration did not include live ordnance and there was no danger posed to the residents of San Diego, the harbor or sea life.



USNS GRASP COMPLETES TOW OF DECOMMISSIONED GUIDED-MISSILE CRUISER BUNKER HILL

By Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command rescue and salvage ship USNS Grasp (T-ARS 51) successfully delivered the decommissioned Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) to the Naval Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility (NISMF) Bremerton, Oct. 11. The ex-Bunker Hill was the third ship in its class to be towed by Grasp to the Puget Sound, following ex-Mobile Bay and ex-Lake Champlain in August and September.

The journey, of the two ships began in San Diego, Sept. 29. In the San Diego Bay, Grasp connected to Bunker Hill and began the tow journey that would conclude in Bremerton.



The Navy decommissioned Bunker Hill at Naval Base San Diego, Sept. 22, after more than 37 years of service. The decommissioning ceremony drew a large crowd of former officers and crew of the ship, all wanting to say farewell to the ship and the formative memories they enjoyed from their time aboard.

“While bittersweet to watch the vessel depart San Diego Bay for the last time; it was comforting to see the USNS Grasp stewarding her to sea,” said Briede Charbonnet MSC Supervisory Port Engineer; who served as the U.S. Navy Port Engineer for the USS Bunker Hill for eight years. “It makes me proud to have assisted Grasp in her efforts to accomplish all of these critical moves for the Navy.”

Bunker Hill, which was originally commissioned in 1988, was a participant in the Gulf War and deployed off the Somali coast for counter-piracy operations. The ship was forward-deployed to Yokosuka, Japan, and performed missions in the Pacific.

“I am very proud of the professional and dedicated crew of Grasp,” said Capt. Micah Murphy, Commander, Military Sealift Command Pacific. “Capt. Joel Bruce and his amazing crew delivered ex-Bunker Hill to Washington under some difficult weather conditions during the transit. They scored a towing hat trick, successfully completing three back-to-back missions. Their performance is an example of the high level of dedication and experience that our civilian mariners display every day. Bravo Zulu to the Grasp crew!”

With its arrival at the Inactive Shipyard, ex-Bunker Hill will be in a Logistic Support Asset status.

FRANK CABLE RETURNS TO GUAM

By Seaman Apprentice Andrew McPeck, USS Frank Cable (AS 40)

The Emory S. Land-class submarine tender, USS Frank Cable (AS 40), returned to its homeport in Apra Harbor, Guam, Oct. 6, after completing a regular overhaul at Mare Island Dry Dock, in Vallejo, California.

The ship returned to its homeport to resume its mission of repairing, rearming, and resupplying submarines and tended units operating in the Indo-Pacific region.

Frank Cable operates with a hybrid crew comprised of U.S. Navy Sailors, and Civil Service Mariners employed by Military Sealift Command (MSC). While in dry dock, the ship received several repairs and upgrades to reinforce its long-term mission readiness.

“I’m excited for the crew to return home and reunite with friends and family. I’m also very proud of the way our combined crew worked tirelessly side-by-side to complete the overhaul and return Frank Cable to Guam to resume our role as the lead maintenance activity,” said Capt. John T. Frye, Commanding Officer of Frank Cable.

As lead maintenance activity (LMA), Frank Cable will serve as the ‘anchor’ of forward-deployed submarine maintenance and sustainment in the Indo-Pacific, and the repairs and upgrades Frank Cable completed during the overhaul enhanced the ship’s abilities to deliver top-tier support as LMA.

“We’ve been training our sailors to get into the repair mindset and focus on our ship’s mission of repair, rearm and resupply,” said Chief Hull Technician Ryan Magee. “Our Sailors are expertly trained to execute our mission, and we’re excited to repair forward-deployed assets as LMA. I know I speak for the whole crew when I say we are all very excited to be back in Guam. It’s been a long time since we have been at our home port, and it’s wonderful to see our families and friends.”



TEACH CYBERSECURITY, PRACTICE CYBERSECURITY, TALK CYBERSECURITY

From Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare (N2N6)

The Navy observed Cybersecurity Awareness Month during the month of October, joining government and private industry to raise awareness about online security.

Celebrating its 20th year, the National Cybersecurity Awareness month campaign has grown globally since its inception, reaching consumers, small and medium-sized businesses, corporations, and families in over 75 countries and territories.

The National Cybersecurity Alliance’s Cybersecurity Awareness Month theme this year is “Secure our World: It’s easy to Stay Safe online,” reminding internet users that there are plenty of simple ways to keep personal information and private data secure when browsing and using the internet. In line with that, the U.S. Navy has adopted Navy-specific themes for our observance: Teach cybersecurity, Practice cybersecurity, Talk cybersecurity, and Prioritize cybersecurity.

“Any individual logging on to a Navy information system has a responsibility to ensure cybersecurity,” said Scott St. Pierre, Director of the Navy’s Enterprise Networks and Cybersecurity Division. “Each user must follow the principles of zero trust, to prevent a harmful impact to our global force and breaches to our systems”.

The Navy is increasingly reliant on technology and cyberspace to conduct its missions and protect the United States. Unlike traditional combat, a cyber-attack has the ability to affect multiple areas in very little time due to the nature of communications systems.

“Remember the threats,” said St. Pierre. “Social engineers, spear phishers, hackers, insider threats, ransom artists, and nation states all seek to undermine the U.S. and its institutions.”

Every day across the Department of Defense information network there are 48 million e-mails processed, 174.8 billion cybersecurity events, 420 million marketing and phishing attacks, and 1.5 billion malicious cyber-attacks blocked.

A successful cyber intrusion of the Navy’s network can jeopardize systems and data that affect nearly every aspect of the Navy’s mission. A larger cyber footprint, coupled with technological advances among adversaries, has increased the Navy’s risk for potential cyber intrusions. All those who access Navy information systems need to understand that their decisions in the digital environment are either an asset or a threat to protecting the Navy’s networks, and also a threat to them and their families outside the work environment.

Here Are Some Cybersecurity Best Practices While Logged On to a Navy Network

“Cybersecurity is a Navy priority and commander’s business,” said Scott St. Pierre, Director of the Navy’s Enterprise Networks and Cybersecurity Division. “We are in a cyber-fight all day every day, on the job and at home. The threats are both nation states and cybercriminals. Therefore, we must be prepared.”

Cybercriminals often rely on operator mistakes to gain access to systems: 95% of all cybersecurity breaches are due to human error.

Here are some best practices to keep in mind while at your desk:

* Every member of the Navy team shares responsibility to protect the Navy’s systems and information. Every time you check your e-mail, access a shared drive, or log onto a network, you are a cyber-warrior, and cybersecurity is your responsibility.

* Verify links and files before clicking or downloading; both are common attack vectors for nation states, criminals, and insider threats.

* When clicking on hyperlinks in emails, hover over the link to verify authenticity. Also ensure that URLs begin with “https.” The “s” indicates encryption is enabled to protect user information.

* Always check the “To” and “Cc” line to ensure information is being sent to those with a need to know.

* Make passwords complex and change them frequently. Strong passwords include one uppercase letter, one lowercase letter, at least one number and 11 or more characters. Never write passwords down.



* Keep your computer healthy. This includes reading User Awareness Bulletins and acting as necessary to install software updates and apply security patches when prompted.

* Keep your Common Access Card (CAC) in your possession at all times. Your CAC serves as part one of two-factor authentication; it is something you have. Your PIN, something only you know, serves as part two. A bad actor in possession of even one part of two-factor authentication increases the likelihood of them gaining access.

* Report phishing or suspicious activity. According to the National Cybersecurity Alliance, only 22 percent of email recipients report phishing. Use your Information Systems Security Manager and cybersecurity professionals for support.

Teleworking or Off Duty? Here are Some Cybersecurity Best Practices While on the Go

Remember the pillars of zero trust,” said Scott St. Pierre, director of the Navy’s Enterprise Networks and Cybersecurity Division. “Trust but verify everyone and everything. This includes exercising good digital citizenship even when not logged onto a Navy network. Our online behavior, no matter what the circumstance, must reflect the highest standards of character and conduct.”

In keeping with the Navy’s National Cybersecurity Alliance’s Cybersecurity Awareness Month themes of Teach, Practice, Talk, and Prioritize Cybersecurity, this week the Navy is asking Sailors and staff to practice effective cybersecurity hygiene while interacting on the internet in a remote or non-work capacity.

Here are some best practices to keep in mind while working remotely or off duty:

* Know and follow your agency’s cybersecurity and telework policies and ensure you are current on mandatory training. Department of the Navy information technology, information management, and cybersecurity policy and guidance may be found here: <https://www.doncio.navy.mil/Policy.aspx>. Check with your leadership for agency-specific guidance.

* Only connect government furnished equipment (GFE) to a network over which you have complete control, such as a home Wi-Fi network. If you must use public Wi-Fi, be sure to utilize a virtual private network (VPN) to protect your data.

* Be cognizant of your surroundings to deter eavesdropping and shoulder surfing, and always remove your CAC card from your machine when not in active use.

* Only use agency-approved collaboration tools, including but not limited to chat and video conferencing platforms. The Navy’s enterprise collaboration tool is Microsoft Teams.

* Store work-related content on GFE and agency-approved cloud services only. Do not forward work emails to a personal email account.

* Do not print work-related materials at home or on a public printer. Be mindful of how you handle paper documents outside the office and remember that a locked personal residence is not considered a secure facility for the handling of classified materials.

* Limit what information you post on social media—from personal addresses to where you like to grab coffee. What

many people don’t realize is that these seemingly random details are all that adversaries need to know to target you and your loved ones—online and in the real world. Keep Social Security numbers, account numbers, and passwords private, as well as specific information about yourself, such as your full name, address, birthday, and even vacation plans. Disable location services that allow anyone to see where you are—and where you aren’t—at any given time.

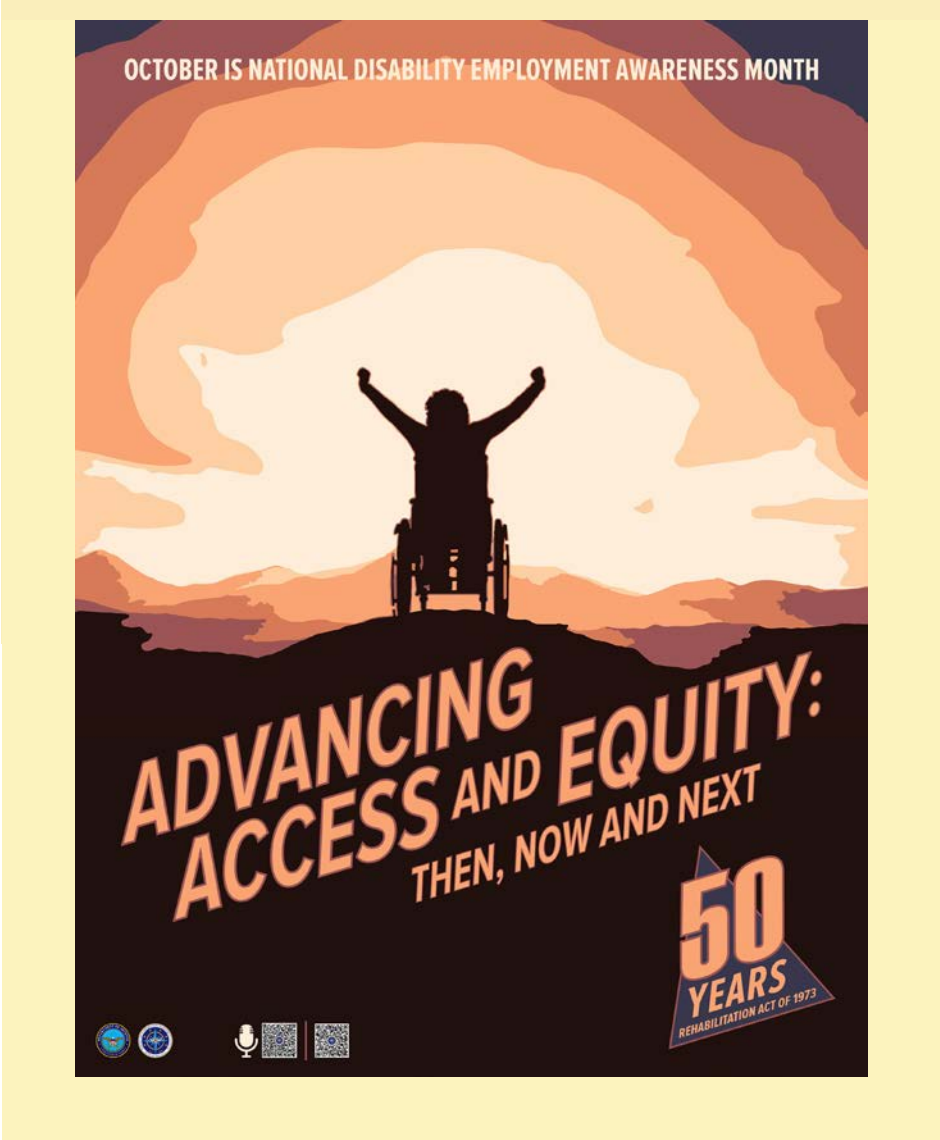
* Be careful of who you allow to be a “friend” or “follower,” and be mindful of the difference. Social media platforms may allow different levels of access to your profile depending on your relationship with those with whom you connect.

* Speak up if you’re uncomfortable. If a friend posts something about you that makes you uncomfortable or you think is inappropriate, let them know. Likewise, stay open-minded if someone approaches you because something you’ve posted makes them uncomfortable. People have different tolerances for how much the world knows about them, and it is important to respect those differences. Don’t hesitate to report any instance of cyberbullying, suspicious, or harassing activity. Work with the social media platform to report, and possibly block, harassing users. Report an incident if you’ve been a victim of cybercrime. Local and national authorities are ready to help you.

Since 2004, the President of the United States and Congress have declared October Cybersecurity Awareness Month, helping individuals protect themselves online as threats to technology and confidential data become more common.

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND OBSERVES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



Civilian teammates and service members attached to Military Sealift Command gathered for a virtual special observance in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Oct. 23.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a nationwide campaign that celebrates the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. The observance also emphasizes the importance of guaranteeing that all Americans have access to the services necessary to enable them to work.

“October is NDEAM,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christina Flores, MSC’s mistress of ceremonies for the special observance. “It is an opportunity to reaffirm the Department of Defense’s (DoD) commitment to recruit, retain, and advance individuals with disabilities throughout our workforce and to recognize the important contributions American workers with disabilities make each and every day.”

“NDEAM has its origin on Aug. 11, 1945, with the signing of Presidential Proclamation 2664 stating, ‘Whereas the people of this Nation are determined to foster an environment in which those of their fellow citizens who have become physically handicapped can continue to make their rightful contribution to the work of the world and can continue to enjoy the opportunities and rewards of that work,’” Flores stated.

This year’s theme, ‘Advancing Access and Equity: Then, Now and Next,’ was selected to recognize the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have equal opportunities to succeed in employment.

“Although I believe we certainly understand the importance of advancing access and providing equity for all of our workforce members, it’s incredibly important for us to take pause and to understand where we can do better to make sure that it’s meaningful each and every day for each and every member of our team,” stated Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, Commander, Military Sealift Command. “We need to make sure that we don’t create any environment that would dissuade the best out of everyone and instead, we empower all those who want to work for this great command in every which way possible.”

The national observance dates to the end of World War II. In 1945, with the return of many injured service members, the U.S. government pushed to educate the public about issues relating to disabilities and employment.

“What I would say is that everyone deserves fundamental dignity and respect, and that everyone who part of our team has something to offer, has something to give,” said U.S. Army Col. Greg Gadson, a Combat Veteran injured in support of the Global War on Terrorism in Iraq and the keynote speaker for MSC’s special observance. “We have to make sure that we are enabling everyone with an environment where we’re willing to listen and learn and be inspired by our differences of experience and challenges, so that we can learn and overcome and make our team stronger.”

“We have come a long way, but there’s always room for prompt improvement,” Gadson concluded. “We have to acknowledge that we can be better and let this be the beginning of us living up to our best selves. Let this be the beginning of us taking on the challenge of making our team stronger by embracing our differences.”

MSC remains diligent in providing every teammate the opportunity for a meaningful career in a culture that embraces diversity and inclusivity.

STAY HEALTHY FOR THE HOLIDAYS THIS DECEMBER

By Stephanie Rusnak, Military Sealift Command Health Promotion Program

We know the holidays can be a challenging time to stay on top of your health and fitness goals. It can be even more of a challenge as a mariner. Working over the holidays can make you feel forgotten and left out, so here are some health tips to make this time of year a little more festive when out at sea:

- 1. Maintain a Sense of Wellbeing:** It is crucial for your own mental health and if not taken care of can lead to loneliness and social isolation.
- 2. Prioritize your sleep:** Sleep should never fall to the bottom of your to-do list. Create a smart to do list that allows you to go to bed at your normal time or as close to it as possible. Try to pick a bedtime that works for you and do what it takes to stick with it, whether that means turning off screens two hours prior to your bedtime or sleeping with blackout curtains, an eye mask, or earplugs to help you get the sleep you need. Missing sleep and being tired leads to increased stress, low energy, and making unhealthy eating and drinking decisions.
- 3. Get the team spirit flowing:** Get some friendly competition going with your crew-mates by challenging them to a game of cards or a board game, or a fitness challenge like a push-up or pull-up competition. This does not have to be Christmas related unless you want to add that in like a gingerbread house competition.
- 4. Keep your eyes on the prize.** The prize being your friends and family. Knowing that you will be seeing them again before too long. Have your family photograph and video their celebrations at home so that you can all share in the moments when you are back ashore. You can even plan a Holiday Party II that you can join.
- 5. Bring the festivities aboard.** Why not take the initiative to be that cheery person. Plan an activity night for the crew; add decorations on board, plan a Christmas movie night, secret Santa, just adding a little holiday magic for yourself and everyone else.

However and wherever you will be spending your Holiday season, your MSC Health Promotion team wish you all the very best season.

The Health Promotion program at MSC offers the following free services to its civilian mariners:

- InBody Screenings (measures percentage of body fat, muscle bass, basal metabolic rate, or how many calories you burn at rest in a day, and more)
- Individualized Health Coaching.
- Online health education and exercise classes.
- Subscription to Weekly Wellness newsletters, covering a variety of health and wellness topics.
- Health Risk Assessment and subscription to online wellness portal.
- SHIP FIT: A workout plan distributed quarterly with all bodyweight exercises that can be done while underway or at home.

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USNS Balboa from page 1

school in 1928 and continued to grow throughout World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, adding a surgical building, medical library, and outpatient clinic over time. By the early 1970s, the Balboa complex was among the largest military hospitals in the world. A new hospital compound to replace aging structures was completed in 1988 on land adjacent to Inspiration Point with the former site reverting to the City. Today, Balboa leads the way as one of the largest naval medical teaching and research facilities in the nation, in addition to supporting five medical mobilization teams and USNS Mercy (T-AH 19).

In addition, Secretary Del Toro announced that Mrs. Deborah Paxton, MSN, RN, agreed to be the ship’s sponsor. Mrs. Paxton, wife of retired Marine Corps General John Paxton, the 33rd Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, has spent her life in support of the Marine Corps and a decade of work serving the Marine Corps’ Wounded Warrior Regiment as the mental health advisor to the regiment.

“I am beyond grateful that Secretary Del Toro chose me for this great honor, and I pledge my commitment to USNS Balboa and her crew,” said Deborah Paxton.

“I feel such confidence and comfort knowing that EMS 2 will operate where Marines and Sailors are engaged in either combat or humanitarian relief providing access to world-class medical care in critical times,” she added

Bethesda-class expeditionary medical ships are designed as a dedicated medical ship that optimizes hospital-level medical care in support of distributed maritime operations (DMO). EMS will feature a shallow draft enabling greater reach and allowing direct access to shallow austere ports, while also providing a flight deck that accommodates military helicopters. This design provides a full range of medical capabilities including triage/critical care, three operating rooms, medical laboratory, radiological capability, blood bank, dental, mental health, OB/GYN and primary care, rapid stabilization and follow-on evacuation of multiple casualties and combat search and rescue including recovery at sea. The primary mission of the EMS as a high-speed forward-deployed medical ship is to provide rapid responsive sea-based and near-shore hospital level critical care, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation operations and special operations. The EMS is designed to respond and provide care at a more rapid pace than their predecessors, USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort, sailing at speeds of at least 30 knots with a range of 5,500 nautical miles at 24 knots.

USNS Montford Point from page 3

During overhaul at Vigor Shipyard in Portland this spring, Montford Point underwent several modifications required by the canal authority. This included the addition of Dutch ballards, an extra chock on the stern and several electrical upgrades to allow the ship to make the transit safely.

While most of the structural modifications were completed by the shipyard, Arnold said the ship’s crew completed the electronic modifications that included installations on the bridge and bridge wings.

“My electronics officer ran cabling so we could install monitors on the bridge wings that will allow us to see what’s going in the engine rooms, and they had to install a new pilot plug assembly suite so we could have a pilot on station forward and mid-ship,” said Arnold.

When the ship arrived in Panama, Sept. 2, the canal authority conducted inspections to ensure the modifications were done to their specifications. Once the transit began, it took more than 12 hours to navigate the vessel through the canal.

“Even in the new locks, we only had about four feet on either side,” said Arnold. “It was stressful, but the pilots were phenomenal and they did an excellent job taking us through and kept the ship well-controlled. Our merchant mariners operated flawlessly and the helmsman was excellent.”

Montford Point, along with USNS John Glenn (T-ESD 2), are in reduced operating status on the East and West Coasts. The vessels serve as transfer stations to facilitate the delivery of equipment cargo to areas with limited or unavailable port access.

USNS Burlington from page 4

The campaign to inform the hybrid fleet calls for the combination of manned and unmanned systems to allow U.S. 4th Fleet to execute its larger missions of defending the southern approaches to the United States, countering malign activity in the region with our partners, and supporting the detection and monitoring of illicit trafficking in the region.

“Broad partnership across DoD and industry partners has allowed U.S. 4th Fleet to mature operational capabilities rapidly fostering innovation and providing informed recommendations to the parties involved in creating the Disruptive Capabilities Office,” said Dr. Chris Heagney, the Naval Air Systems Command Fleet/Force Advisor to USNAVSOUTH/4th Fleet.

detail in SECNAV and CNO’s vision was that U.S. 4th Fleet would not stand up a separate task force like U.S. 5th Fleet did in Bahrain in 2021, but would develop the hybrid fleet from inside the staff already in place.

“This technology evaluation event is a continuation of the campaign we began in April,” said Cmdr. David Edwards, USNAVSOUTH/4th Fleet’s technology and innovation director. “We evaluate these technologies in focused events like this, then operationalized the technology quickly to fulfill operational requirements in the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility. While we operate these systems to fulfill the U.S. 4th Fleet mission, the evaluation continues over months and years, not just hours and days. Those operational evaluations inform future acquisitions to ensure the Navy is ready to fight and win with these technologies.”

HFCE was U.S. 4th Fleet’s largest technology event yet with 305 participants including VCNO and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea and 26 other U.S. government distinguished visitors, 10 foreign partners, 18 industry partners, and 47 Department of Defense commands participating.

FALLEN MSC TEAMMATES



Laurress Johnson
Boatswain’s Mate
MSC Service:
2000-2023



Montrall Smith
Assistant Storekeeper
MSC Service:
2010-2023

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**

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