



# SEALIFT

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



An MV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) refuel on the flight deck of USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5). Miguel Keith, assigned to Expeditionary Strike Group 7, is currently operating as the Theater Littoral Warfare Commander's flagship in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility to enhance interoperability with allies and partners and serve as a ready response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Sherrie A Flippin)

## Commander Task Force 76, Embarks USS Miguel Keith to Command and Control Theater Littoral Warfare Operations

From Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 7 Public Affairs

The Navy and Marine Corps 'blue-green team' composed of Commander Task Force Seventy-Six (CTF 76)/Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7 is underway with the embarked 31st and 11th Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), for training and operations in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Each ship sails with Sailors and Marines, supported by advanced sensors and combat systems, ready to operate as an integrated and cohesive littoral force. The complex and distributed operations we do every single day in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region are foundational to this great team," said Rear Adm. Chris Engdahl, commander, ESG 7/TF 76.

The unique composite nature of CTF-76 creates opportunities to develop and rapidly advance command and control (C2) capabilities across the Task Force. USS Essex (LHD 2) and USS

America (LHA 6) amphibious ready groups, with embarked Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU), as well as other critical theater littoral warfare assets, littoral combat ships USS Charleston (LCS 18), USS Jackson (LCS 6) and USS Tulsa (LCS 16), and mine countermeasures ship USS Warrior (MCM 10) are all being led by CTF-76 from the expeditionary staging base USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5).

"It's an incredible opportunity to be part of the operations in the region. Combining the expertise of professional mariners with the skill of our Navy and Marine Corps forces makes Miguel Keith a versatile warfighting asset," said Capt. Brice B. Behringer, ship's master, "This incredible platform, with more than 7,000 meters of cargo storage and mission deck space, is perfect for this region due to the variety of missions we can support."



An MV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) refuels on the flight deck of USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5). (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Sherrie A Flippin)

Since arriving in theater last September, Miguel Keith has validated capabilities across a wide range of operations to include; joint aircraft landing procedures, support to special warfare tasking, mine clearance operations and maritime presence operations. With the second largest flight deck in the U.S. Fleet and an immense lift capacity, this will be the first time Miguel Keith is serving as the flagship for U.S. 7th Fleet's Theater Littoral Warfare Commander.

"Executing amphibious and littoral command and control from a variety of platforms and locations allows me,

Miguel Keith continued on page 8



A CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) refuels on the flight deck of USS Miguel Keith (ESB 5). (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Sherrie A Flippin)

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# U.S. Navy Issues COVID-19 Standardized Operational Guidance 5.0

From the Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

Recently, the Navy issued updated Standardized Operational Guidance (SOG) with measures to help fight the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The latest SOG version 5.0 reinforces the need to protect the health of individuals and units while preserving operational readiness. Although the guidance is predominantly focused on the shipboard environment, it applies to all uniformed Navy personnel at home and deployed.

Standardized Operational Guidance 5.0 outlines the role of the Navy Surgeon General as the authority for COVID-19 measures and advises the fleet about the application of new Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance across the Navy's spectrum of operating environments. It also incorporates lessons learned from commands across the fleet operating in the COVID-19 environment and integrates the benefits of having a 100% vaccinated force into policy. While SOG 5.0 serves as the standard framework for the fleet, commanding officers ultimately hold responsibility for the health and welfare of their crews. The guidance also sets expectations that every Sailor must take personal ownership and responsibility of the promulgated measures required to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

"It is my responsibility to deliver the most capable force and this guidance helps us maximize mission readiness," said Vice Adm. Bill Merz, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy. "The Navy continues to execute its mission around the world while we work through the challenges of this pandemic. Vaccinations, vaccine boosters, command engagement, and personal accountability are the foundation of our success in fighting COVID-19."

This overarching plan includes information regarding restriction of movement (ROM), when to test and quarantine Sailors, and streamlines health protection measures. The Navy has met or exceeded CDC guidance and continues to experience a much lower rate of adverse effects than the general population.

"Over the past two years Navy medicine learned a great deal since the start of the pandemic," said Rear Adm. Bruce Gillingham, Surgeon General of



the Navy. "We learned how to protect our Sailors and Marines by using aggressive testing protocols, isolation and quarantine, good hygiene practices and most importantly we learned that vaccinations work."

While many shipboard commands still require current health protection measures like PPE, social distancing and routine cleaning, this guidance introduces opportunities for operational units to reduce certain measures. ROM requirements and other potential moderation of mitigation measures are included in the guidance, with the goal of improving operational effectiveness and quality of life for Sailors.

The Bureau of Medicine and Surgery COVID-19 Readiness Guide (BUMED CRG) provides medical personnel amplifying guidance to address deployability, duty status, return to work, and return to exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be found at:

<https://esportal.med.navy.mil/bumed/rh/m3/m34/crg/default.aspx>

For the latest updates on Navy COVID guidance please visit:

<https://www.navy.mil/US-Navy-COVID-19-Updates/>

For NAVADMIN 07/22:

<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Messages/NAVADMIN/NAV2022/NAV22007.txt>

## Two Military Sealift Command Teammates Earn Data Science Certificate from Naval Post Graduate School

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Two civilian teammates attached to Military Sealift Command recently furthered their professional development by earning an advanced certificate from the Naval Post Graduate School.

Carmen Iannello, Lead Engineer for MSC's Engineering Program and Logistics Specialist Vernon Ferrer of MSC's Logistics Program both earned their Data Science Certificate (DSC) by completing the 12-month academic program which ran from January to December 2021.

"The Data Science Certificate program provides education in distributed computing infrastructure and the application of statistical and machine learning techniques to appropriately manage and gain insights from data of all sizes and types," according to Roslyn Williams, MSC Human Resource Specialist, Leadership & Developmental Programs Coordinator. "Data Science has emerged as an area critical to the mission of the Navy and the Department of Defense because of the central role it plays in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, talent management, cyber-security, and logistics functional areas. Upon successful completion of the course work, students were awarded an academic certificate in keeping with standard practices of the Naval Postgraduate School."

The Data Science Certificate is a one year Master's degree level academic certificate consisting of four courses:

- CY3650 Cyber Data Management and Analytics (Q1)
- OS4106 Advanced Data Analysis (Q2)
- CS4315 Introduction to Machine Learning and Data Mining (Q3)
- OS4118 Statistical and Machine Learning (Q4)

"Self-development is an integral part of the MSC Civilian Workforce Development Strategy," Williams said. "As taken from the Military Sealift Command Civilian Workforce Development Strategy, 'Self-Development is focused on the fundamental building blocks of personal experience, competency, and growth opportunities that begets higher level organizational success. Intrinsicly, self-development requires both motivation on the part of the individual as well as organizational opportunity, and as such is a shared responsibility between employee seeking personal growth and supervisor facilitating participation. To provide for self-development, MSC invests in its employees through formal and informal learning and development related activities to close competency gaps and effect mission."

"Additionally, it is important to invest in oneself, and professional development is a way to realize that investment," she said. "Professional development is not just about professional growth but also about personal growth."

Vernon Ferrer, whose role as a logistics specialist focuses on the operation of logistics and data management systems, and in particular Ship Configuration Logistics Information Program (ShipCLIP) and Corrective Maintenance Logistics System (CMLS), offered some feedback about their experience at the Naval Post Graduate School.

"I wanted to expand my knowledge in the data science world to help with current logistics data metrics and future needs with MSC," Ferrer stated. "The program definitely helped me learn new data wrangling and other data handling processes to use in answering specific questions in future projects including metrics development."

"Do read the recommended reading prior the start of the program and adhere to the advice on brushing up on some programming languages, particularly 'Python' and 'R,'" Ferrer offered to prospective DSC students. "I think NPS has a great program fueled by really knowledgeable professors. A definite win for anyone wanting to expand their data science tool kit."

The Data Science Certificate program is open to GS 12-15, service members and Civil Service Mariners of equivalent status.

Pre-requisites for the DSC program include:

- Bachelor's Degree.
- Background in statistics and some experience with higher level programming language as evidenced by transcripts or work history is required for enrollment.
- Command endorsement.

"MSC is strongly committed to providing opportunities for excellence. MSC's external Leadership & Developmental program is a way to provide those opportunities," Williams concluded. "Eligibility for the various programs range from GS-4 all the way through Senior Executive Service. The Naval Post Graduate School Data Science Certificate program is just one example."

For those interested in applying, the tentative deadline for applications for Academic Year (AY) 2023-2024 is June 30, 2022," she added.

The 2021 Naval Post Graduate School Data Science Certificate program was conducted virtually to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

For more information about MSC's professional development opportunities, teammates can contact their Departmental Training Representatives (DTRs) or Roslyn Williams, [roslyn.s.williams.civ@us.navy.mil](mailto:roslyn.s.williams.civ@us.navy.mil).

# USS Lewis B. Puller Credited With Saving Lives of Rescued Mariners

From Commander, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade Public Affairs



A fire burns aboard a fishing vessel in the Gulf of Oman, Dec. 15. (U.S. Navy photo)

U.S. Navy sailors and Civil Service Mariners serving on the expeditionary sea base USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB 3) called upon their training and teamwork recently to save injured mariners in the Gulf of Oman.

The rescue effort occurred on Dec. 15, when U.S. Navy patrol craft USS Sirocco (PC 6) observed mariners in distress and immediately rendered assistance while conducting a counter-narcotics patrol. Sailors from Sirocco safely rescued five mariners injured in the explosion.

The injured mariners, who identified themselves as Iranian citizens, were later transported to Puller. Two patients were flown by helicopter to Oman for medical treatment, and the other three mariners were later transported to Oman for eventual repatriation.

“The entire crew, both military and CIVMARs, stepped up to perform incredibly that day,” said Capt. Richard G. Burgess, Puller’s commanding officer. “Our team did not waver for a moment, and acted with professionalism and compassion to save lives.”

Prior to the explosion, international maritime forces suspected the vessel of transporting illicit drugs and later recovered illicit drugs, estimated worth a total of \$14.7 million, from the wreckage. Sirocco was operating as part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, one of three task forces under Combined Maritime Forces, the world’s largest naval partnership.

As Sirocco rescued the mariners from the wreckage, Puller’s crew readied the deck to triage the injured mariners. Once received, Puller’s medical personnel worked urgently to stabilize the patients and arrange for rapid air transportation to advanced care.

Crew members from across the U.S. who serve together on the forward-deployed Puller recalled strong feelings of pride for their work that day.

Chief Boatswain’s Mate Erick Chavez, from Fraser, Michigan, said the crew maintained a steel resolve during the chaotic rescue.

“We had to think on the fly, outside of the box,” Chavez said. “As we approached, we had this burning boat here and you know the adrenaline starts to pump up.”

Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Adam McGreevy, said the crew’s quick thinking and teamwork overcame a difficult rescue to hoist the survivors onto Puller’s deck, “It’s a great feeling, you join the military to help people and it’s a great satisfaction when you do.”

Meanwhile, Seaman Michael Burkus, said he remains inspired by the whole crew effort, “Anytime you are able to get in and help somebody, no matter what nationality they may be, no matter what part of the world you’re in, it is always great to know your efforts have helped others.”

Aviation Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Juan Toncoso Jr., Texas, described feeling calm confidence during the rescue where “everything was focused on using our training and doing the things we needed to do to assist.”

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Seth Linton, worked on the medical team whose actions directly saved one of the most critical patients.

“This is real life stuff going on, we got a ship that had burned and people were in the water,” he said. “It was great to see everybody work to accomplish this one goal and know it saved lives.”

Puller is forward-deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to extend U.S. Naval Forces Central Command’s maritime reach in 5th Fleet, by supporting a wide variety of missions including counter-piracy operations, maritime security operations, humanitarian aid, disaster relief and crisis response operations.

## Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa Welcomes a New Commodore

From U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa / U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs

Commander, Task Force 63/Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa (CTF-63/MSCEURAF) held a change of command ceremony on board Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy, Jan. 21, 2022.

Capt. Kenneth S. Pickard relieved Capt. Frank E. Okata as commodore, CTF-63/MSCEURAF during the ceremony.

Vice Adm. Gene Black, Commander U.S. 6th Fleet (SIXTHFLT), served as the guest speaker for the event.

“Frank, we have come a long way since the spring of 1997, when you reported aboard USS Normandy (CG 60) as Ensign Okata and stood your first bridge watches under the supervision of Lieutenant Commander Black,” said Black. “I thoroughly enjoyed serving with you again, seeing how far your career has come, and I look forward to continued future success.”

Black also spoke about the impact Okata had on SIXTHFLT during his tour and presented Okata with the Legion of Merit for his actions while serving as commodore, CTF 63.

“Frank, thank you for all you have done across SIXTHFLT supporting me and your fellow Task Force Commanders,” said Black. “I don’t think you fully realize the incredible impact you had enabling all of our success.”

During his time as commodore, Okata exercised operational and tactical control of logistics aircraft assigned as Navy Region’s Operational Support Aircraft, Navy Unique Fleet Essential Aircraft, and embarked vertical replenishment helicopters from active and reserve force providers to consistently deliver theater logistics support to two Combatant Commanders. This support led to over 1,600 unique airlifts across 74 countries in the European Command and Africa Command area of operations.

He oversaw a team that delivered 6,500 pallets of cargo and transferred 16 million barrels of fuel to transiting ships and fuel bunkering locations throughout Europe. Sealift ships under his command also performed 109 replenishment at sea operations with U.S. ships and 83 with NATO units.

After congratulating Okata on his noteworthy accomplishments, Black addressed Capt. Pickard, speaking to his confidence in Pickard and welcoming the new commodore to his position.



Capt. Kenneth S. Pickard delivers his first speech as Commodore, Commander, Task Force 63, during a change of command ceremony held at Naval Support Activity Naples, Italy, Jan. 21. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kaila V. Peters)

“Ken, I know you are ready to take command of this unique and extremely critical Task Force and Sealift Command. Task Force 63 and Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa provides the beans, bombs, and bullets to keep the fleet operational and in fighting form,” said Black. I am confident you will continue the amazing work and success of your predecessor.”

Okata had an opportunity to speak and reflect on his time as commodore and Commander of CTF-63/MSCEURAF.

“This was a hard speech to think about,” said Okata. “I had a very good time at this command serving under two great Fleet Commanders, Admirals Franchetti and Black.”

Commander, Task Force 63 is the operational commander of all the U.S. 6th Fleet air and sea logistics. Composed of oilers, provision ships, and repair ships, its mission is the delivery of supplies at sea, and effecting repairs to other ships and equipment of the Fleet.

U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and inter-agency partners, in order to advance U.S. National interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

# MSC Chartered Ship MV Ocean Giant Departs in Support of Operation Deep Freeze 2022

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

The Military Sealift Command chartered ship MV Ocean Giant departed Port Hueneme, California, recently, kicking off their support of the annual resupply mission to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, Operation Deep Freeze 2022.

Since Dec. 26, the 560-foot Ocean Giant has been conducting a load out of nearly 7 million pounds of cargo. The cargo consists of 503 pieces of cargo that include containers filled with mechanical parts, vehicles, construction materials, office supplies and electronics equipment, and also a mobile home; 80 percent of the supplies needed the year's survival at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

Following a stop in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the ship will load additional cargo, it will travel to the ice-pier at McMurdo Station, where members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE will conduct the offload. Before departing McMurdo station, Ocean Giant will be loaded with ice core samples that will be stored on the ship in sub-zero freezer containers. The ice core samples will be delivered to the United States for scientific study. In addition, retrograde cargo will be loaded onto the ship for transportation off the continent. These include trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on the station.

On the other side of the world, MSC chartered tanker ship Maersk Perry has departed a fuel pier in Greece with diesel and jet fuel; 100 percent of the fuel needed for the year. Like Ocean Giant, Maersk Perry will deliver its cargo to the ice pier at McMurdo station.

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. 2022 marks MSC's return to support of ODF which was paused in 2021 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. An MSC-chartered cargo ship and tanker have made the challenging voyage to Antarctica every year since the station and its resupply mission were established in 1955.

# M/T Maersk Peary Arrives at McMurdo Station Beginning Military Sealift Command's Operation Deep Freeze 2022 Support

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs



Military Sealift Command chartered ship MT Maersk Peary arrived at McMurdo Station, Antarctica and is currently offloading nearly 9 million gallons of diesel and jet fuel in support of the Operation Deep Freeze 2022 resupply mission.

Peary arrived safely at the ice-pier at McMurdo Station, following a voyage from Greece that began before Christmas, and immediately began the offload of fuel, working with the Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE already on the ice.

Over the next five days, Maersk Peary delivered nearly 8 million gallons of diesel fuel and over 800 thousand gallons of aviation fuel. This combination of fuels is 100 percent of the fuel needed for the next year's support of the remote outpost at McMurdo Station.

The delivery is nearly double what was delivered in 2019, due to the 2020 ODF mission being canceled in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

# Keel Authenticated for the Future USNS Cody

From Team Ship Public Affairs

The keel for the future USNS Cody, expeditionary fast transport ship (EPF 14), the first of the Spearhead-class EPF Flight II configuration, was laid at Austal USA, Jan. 26.

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

"The new capabilities of this variant of EPFs fulfills a critical need for the Navy and Marine Corps," said Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Ships. "Ensuring that the fleet has fast access to the right medical care increases both the safety and readiness of our Sailors and Marines."

EPFs are operated by the Military Sealift Command and the USNS Cody is the first ship in naval service named after Cody, Wyoming.

Beginning with EPF 14, the Flight II configuration will enhance current EPF capabilities by including a combined forward resuscitative care

capability with a limited Intensive Care Unit and medical ward, while maintaining most of the original requirements of the ship. Flight II EPFs will be able to stabilize post-surgical cases for evacuation without the requirement to first route them through a higher level facility.

EPF ships provide high speed, shallow draft transportation capabilities to support the intra-theater maneuver of personnel, supplies and equipment for the Navy and Marine Corps. The design of the EPF allows flexibility to support the fleet in maintaining a variety of roles, including humanitarian assistance, maritime security, disaster relief and more.

Austal USA is also in construction on the future USNS Point Loma (EPF 15) with production efforts commencing earlier this month.

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

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# NATO Kicks Off Vigilance Activity Neptune Strike 2022

From U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa / U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affair

Members of U.S. 6th Fleet and Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, commanded by Vice Adm. Gene Black, center, pose for a photo aboard the U.S. 6th Fleet flagship, the Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Scott Barnes)



Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO) and U.S. 6th Fleet (SIXTHFLT) commenced NATO-led activity Neptune Strike 2022 from the SIXTHFLT flagship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), Jan. 24.

Neptune Strike 2022 highlights the natural evolution of NATO's ability to integrate the high-end maritime warfare capabilities of a carrier strike group to support the defense of the Alliance. Neptune Strike 2022 accomplishes the long-planned handover of command and control of the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group (CSG) from SIXTHFLT to STRIKFORNATO and the wider Alliance.

"The capability of SIXTHFLT and STRIKFORNATO combined staffs to enable a handover of the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group demonstrates the power and cohesiveness of our maritime forces and the NATO Alliance," said Vice Adm. Gene Black, commander, SIXTHFLT and STRIKFORNATO. "NATO's command and control of a CSG is the result of decades of Alliance maritime interoperability."

Neptune Strike 2022 is the execution phase of a long series of activities known as Project Neptune, conceptualized in 2020. The activity focuses on overcoming the complexities of integrating command and control of a carrier strike group to NATO.

Previous events in the Neptune series include table-top exercises at SIXTHFLT headquarters in Naples, Italy, last year, and a STRIKFORNATO embark in 2021 aboard Mount Whitney called Neptune Challenge. Neptune Challenge integrated the two staffs aboard Mount Whitney in the Black Sea and developed the necessary procedures enabling the successful start of Neptune Strike.

"Neptune Challenge gave our staffs an incredible opportunity to learn and grow together aboard our flagship, Mount Whitney," said Rear Adm. James Morley, deputy commander, STRIKFORNATO. "The lessons we took from Neptune Challenge led directly into our execution of Neptune Strike, and I look forward to watching this combined team work to command and control high-end forces in real time."

SIXTHFLT, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and inter-agency partners, in order to advance U.S. National interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

STRIKFORNATO, headquartered in Oeiras, Portugal, is Supreme Allied Commander Europe's (SACEUR) premier, rapidly deployable and flexible, maritime power projection Headquarters, capable of planning and executing full spectrum joint maritime operations.



The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) transits the Mediterranean Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Scott Barnes)

## Military Sealift Command Supports Theater Cooperation in Europe

By Lt. Cmdr. Kartik Parmar and Cmdr. Cameron Rountree, Military Sealift Command



Members of Military Sealift Command's Expeditionary Port Units 104 and 106 stand by U.S. Army materiel transported by MSC's time-chartered motor vessel ARC Independence at the Port of Alexandroupolis, Greece. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Kartik Parmar)

The last month of 2021 brought with it the renewed efforts of Military Sealift Command to facilitate joint theater cooperation in Europe.

Arriving on November 27, the MSC time-chartered motor vessel ARC Independence brought critical U.S. Army materiel to the eastern Mediterranean through the port of Alexandroupolis, Greece. MSC's support to the mission began months in advance and included preparations in multiple countries across two continents. The months of preparations culminated on Dec 3, with a visit by Greek Minister of National Defense, Nikos Panagiotopoulos, and other distinguished visitors, including the Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, Gen. Konstantinos Floros; U.S. Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic, Geoffrey Pyatt; U.S. Consul General to Thessaloniki, Elizabeth Lee; and Deputy Commander of Army V Corps, Maj. Gen. Matthew Van Wagenen.

The American-flagged ARC Independence, originally a purpose-built vehicle carrier launched in 2007, was contracted by MSC to transport equipment of the U.S. Army's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, from Beaumont, Texas, to the port in Greece. The 750-foot vessel, with a 30,000-ton dead weight, only represents a fraction of the sealift capacity of the U.S. Joint force, and renewed the United States' commitment to security cooperation in southern and eastern Europe by demonstrating American sealift mobilization and logistics capabilities. ARC Independence carried more than 40 helicopters and 700 pieces of total cargo for the Ft. Hood, Texas-based 1st Air Cavalry Brigade and rolling stock cargo for discharge at Alexandroupolis.

In a concurrent mission, the ship loaded more than two dozen helicopters and 250 pieces of other cargo for the 1st Combat Aviation Brigade from Fort Riley, Kansas, which was finishing its Atlantic Resolve rotation.

"The ever-growing volume of military activity at the Port of Alexandroupolis underscores this location's expanding strategic role as a lynch pin of our defense and security relationship in Greece's north, in addition to its role as a key gateway to the Western Balkans and the Black Sea region, supporting NATO's commitment to deter and defend," said Ambassador Pyatt. "And with each visit, we welcome a new milestone of partnership, collaboration and growth between the United States and Greece, not just in the realm of defense, because Alexandroupolis is also playing an increasingly important role in our country's shared goals of bolstering European energy and climate security and building regional stability."

Captain Frank E. Okata, Commander of MSC Europe and Africa (MSCEURAF) and Commander, Task Force 63, described the operation as, "A highlight of U.S.-Greek military cooperation in 2021 enabled through flexible sealift capability."

Personnel from MSCEURAF headquarters, from Naples, Italy, and members of Expeditionary Port Unit (EPU) 106, a reserve component unit based out of Baltimore, and EPU 104 from Syracuse, New York, were crucial in making these evolutions a success. The composite EPU team was led by Lt. Cmdr. Kartik Parmar.

The latest efforts of MSC in Europe highlight the U.S. military's ability to mobilize, deploy, and establish a sealift presence, helping to ensure regional stability.

A view of military aircraft and vehicles delivered by Military Sealift Command's time-chartered motor vessel ARC Independence to the eastern Mediterranean through the port of Alexandroupolis, Greece. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Kartik Parmar)



# From Bow to Stern, Civil Service Mariner Gets Job Done

By Leslie Hull-Ryde, Military Sealift Command Far East Public Affairs

Whether on deck, below decks, above deck, forward, aft, port or starboard, if something needs to be done on board USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14), the ship's master turns to Robert Ratcliff.

"I'm what you call a ship serviceman," the Oakland, California, resident explained. "I work anywhere and everywhere on the ship, including the steward, deck and engine departments. I can do any job on the ship whenever I'm needed, including cooking."

"Nothing is too difficult to accomplish when you're part of [Military Sealift Command]. Any and all work can be simple. As long as you have the right tools, you will find there is nothing you cannot do."

For more than 45 years, he has worked with Military Sealift Command, taking care of fellow Civil Service Mariners and helping keep ships running smoothly.

"Being able to carry out your assignments or tasks efficiently contributes to the essential mission. Supplying the crew with basic services, such as cleaning, laundry and any other household duties, makes our lives easier, and that's important to me," Ratcliff said.

While he's proud of the important role he plays aboard Cesar Chavez and how he contributes to his shipmates' quality of life, he personally enjoys working with the diverse crew.

"There is always something you can learn from someone, if you are willing to listen. MSC has

expanded my horizon and allowed me to see the world," the former infantryman said.

After his military service, Ratcliff worked for the U.S. Postal Service before joining Military Sealift Command in 1978. In the last 4.5 decades, he's had unique experiences, met many people and explored countless ports of call. The veteran-Civil Service Mariner believes working for MSC is a "great" opportunity.

"Being able to interact with so many people from different backgrounds and races, seeing how everyone works together and becomes like a family over time, there's no better career to have."

In addition, Ratcliff explains that Civil Service Mariners assigned to Military Sealift Command ships learn not only technical skills but develop cultural awareness as well.

"With MSC, you will gain more respect for the people who assist you on your missions and assignments along the way," he said.

In addition to a respectable career conducting an essential mission of sustaining warfighters throughout the 7th Fleet Area of Responsibility, Ratcliff says being underway a good deal of the time has other intangible benefits.

"It can help you appreciate where you are from and where you are in the world at any time. You can gain a great sense of pride and value by being essential to the mission every ship you step on and knowing the work we do is for a great cause," Ratcliff added. "Helping your country is always the best perk of the job."



U.S. Army veteran Robert Ratcliff, has served as a Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariner for more than 45 years. As a ship serviceman aboard USNS Cesar Chavez (T-AKE 14), he ensures the crew aboard receive high quality-of-life services. (U.S. Navy photo by Alexis Beasley)

Military Sealift Command Far East ensures approximately 50 ships in the Indo-Pacific region, including Cesar Chavez, are manned, trained and equipped to deliver essential supplies, fuel, cargo and equipment to warfighters, both at sea and on shore.

As the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed fleet, U.S. 7th Fleet employs 50-70 ships and submarines across the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans. U.S. 7th Fleet routinely operates and interacts with 35 maritime nations while conducting missions to preserve and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific Region.

# Navy Reservist Steps Up To Support Civil Service Mariners in Korea

By Leslie Hull-Ryde, Military Sealift Command Far East Public Affairs



At Military Sealift Command Office Korea, Navy reservist Hospital Corpsman Glenn Field has been responsible for helping ensure the health of MSC personnel, specifically conducting COVID-19 testing of those entering, departing and transiting through the Republic of Korea. (U.S. Navy photo)

When he joined the Navy Reserves in 2019 as a corpsman, Glenn Field had no idea what was in store for him.

Who could possibly know that shortly after he enlisted a global pandemic would occur that would take the third class petty officer from the Big Apple to South Korea?

At Military Sealift Command Office Korea, Field was responsible for helping ensure the health of

MSC personnel, specifically conducting COVID-19 testing of those entering, departing and transiting through the Republic of Korea.

"I also helped care for patients who came into the clinic not feeling well," he said.

"I was glad to help alleviate the ever-increasing load of the under-staffed medical team who juggled their regular patient load with the added responsibility of meeting, tracking and administering COVID-19 related restrictions and obligations."

Field said that one of the most challenging aspects of the assignment was making sure all COVID-19 requirements – which changed frequently – were met in a timely manner. He explained that active duty and reserve service members, civilian employees and Civil Service Mariners needed their COVID-19 test results promptly, especially during crew reliefs.

He's used to juggling deadlines, though, and competing requirements to ensure success. The former journalist has a Bachelor of Science in psychology and a master's in conflict resolution and mediation. In addition to assisting the State of New York with its COVID-19 response mission, he has supported MSC in Albania and the Marines in North Carolina.

"The most gratifying aspect of my job is the opportunity it provides me to give back to the community around me," Field said.

He's done that as part of every assignment, but in Korea, he did just a bit more. During his short tenure with Military Sealift Command Office Korea, he volunteered at a local orphanage and took part in a Korean-to-English language exchange.

"These opportunities gave me incredible insight into the culture and hospitable people and allowed me to help build important partnerships."

Although Field has only been with MSC for a couple of years, he believes it's a good fit for him and his passion for taking care of others.

"From the most senior leadership on down, there is a sincere commitment to make sure every member of the command is taken care of," he said.

"I get a great deal of satisfaction from being a small part of a much bigger team. MSC is critical to the Navy's operational success around the world. MSC delivers all the logistics needed to sustain our warfighters – and our partners and allies -- not only in the Indo-Pacific but throughout the world as well."



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# Military Sealift Command Gathers to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Service members and civilian teammates attached to Military Sealift Command gathered virtually for a special observance held in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 21.

Each year the Department of Defense (DoD) joins the nation in honoring the life and legacy of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The holiday, celebrated on the third Monday of January, encourages people to reflect on the principles of our nation: that all men are created equal—regardless of color or creed—and we are all equal members of the human family.

Dr. King, originally named Michael King, Jr., was born January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was Baptist minister and social activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his death by assassination on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. King is widely regarded as America's pre-eminent advocate of nonviolence and one of the greatest nonviolent leaders in world history.

The keynote speaker for the special observance, U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Marcus Ivery, Chief of the Fleet Training and Readiness Branch of U.S. Coast Guard Force Readiness Command (FORCECOM), presented the national theme for this year's celebration, "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On...Not a Day Off," which calls upon the American people to engage in public service and promote peaceful social change.

"I took these words quite literally this year and made a point to take action and serve my community as much as I could on Dr. Martin Luther King Day," Ivery stated. "I participated in a couple of community events on Dr. Martin Luther King Day. I stopped by the Buckroe Baptist Church to assist with their renovation efforts on the back part of their church and I stopped by the Food Bank in Hampton, Virginia, to drop off some canned goods and help pack up food in boxes. The team of volunteers was great and I met some of the nicest people who were volunteering on their time off."

"I haven't been able to do as much volunteer work as I would like to over the past couple of years due to the COVID-19 pandemic," Ivery added. "But my experiences during this year's Dr. Martin Luther King Day have inspired me to work harder on observing the 'Day On, Not a Day Off' mentality, and I plan to do a whole lot more volunteer work in the future in recognition and respect of Dr. King's legacy of selfless dedication to a greater cause."

"We all have our own ways of giving back to our communities," he added. "Whether it be by donations, community service, mentoring, or just being good neighbors, we all have our own ways to serve and demonstrate self-sacrifice, to remember Dr. King, to celebrate his legacy, and to take action for a good cause."

In addition to encouraging MSC's teammates to give back to their communities, Ivery focused his presentation on the teaching from Dr. King's 'Street Sweeper' speech, which was presented on the steps of Barratt Junior High School, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in October of 1967. During this speech, Dr. King asked this audience, "What's In Your Life's Blueprint?"

"Has anyone told you that you need to have your own life blueprint?" Ivery asked the audience. "Does anyone know why having a life blueprint is important?"

"A blue print is a foundational drawing that you build off of," according to Ivery. "Dr. King stated in his speech that your blueprint will serve as a pattern, a guide, the model from which you build."

Based on Dr. King's speech, Ivery presented three principles for MSC Teammates to assist in navigating through life's challenges.

"Number one in your life's blueprint should be 'a deep belief in your dignity, your own worth, and your own sombodiness,'" Ivery stated. "Always feel that you count. Always feel that you have worth. And always feel that your life has ultimate significance."

"Number two in your life's blueprint, 'You should have, as a basic principle, the determination to achieve excellence in your various fields of your endeavor,'" he continued. "As the U.S. Coast Guard equivalent to a Naval Surface Warfare Officer, I have given myself the expectation that I will be the best ship-driver and the best conning officer, in the U. S. Coast Guard. I have made my personal expectation that I will be the best Cutterman (or Surface Warfare Officer) that the U.S. Coast Guard has in our organization's workforce."

"Excellence, excellence, excellence. Excellence is you being the best you that you can possibly be," Ivery Added. "Dr. King passionately said that we all should have that determination to achieve excellence. If it is your duty to clean the passageway and empty the trash, schedule fleet replenishment oilers for underway replenishments-at-sea, or provide strategic plans to the MSC senior leadership, then you do whatever it takes to be the master of that duty. Make it a goal in your life's blueprint to do these jobs so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn couldn't do it any better."

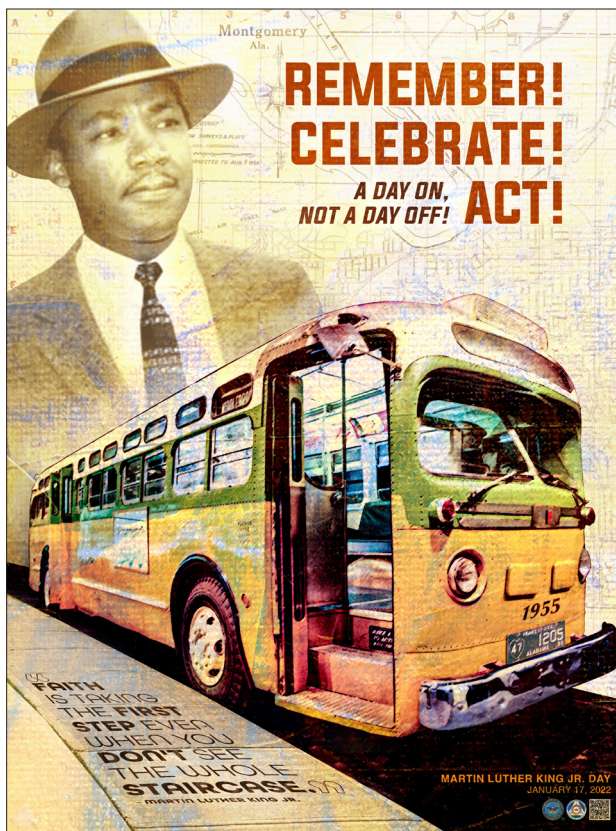
The final principle from Dr. King's speech is that one's blueprint "must be based on a commitment to the eternal principles to beauty, love and justice."

According to Ivery, "the interesting thing about the three principles that Dr. King offered in building your life's blueprint are, the first principle of sombodiness is 100% about you, the 2nd principle, excellence, is 100% about you, but the 3rd principle is 100% not about you; it's about how you appreciate, care for, and treat and serve others."

Ivery encouraged the MSC team to reach out to their neighbors, both at work and in their personal lives, and provide uplifting encouragement and appreciation for all that they do and who they are.

"I'd like you to send one text, e-mail, or social media post or direct message to someone you don't interact with on a daily basis, but you really care about, and tell them one nice thing about them," Ivery offered. "When you tell them this, don't thank them for something they already did. Tell them one thing

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## March is National Nutrition Month

From Leighanne Gerstbrein, Military Sealift Command Health Coordinator

March is national nutrition month. This means it is the perfect time to talk about making informed food choices, eating mindfully, and developing healthy eating habits. Eating nourishing foods increases your energy, improves your mental and physical health, helps you maintain a healthy weight, prevents chronic diseases, improves self-image, and much more. What we consume has a significant impact on our overall sense of well-being. Check out these general recommendations, provided by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, on what you should aim to fill your plate with and why this is important:

### Fruits And Vegetables Should Fill Half Your Plate.

And the size of the vegetable section should be greater than the fruit section. Aim for variety and color. There are numerous reasons this is important – from lowering blood pressure, reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke, preventing some types of cancer, lowering your risk of eye and digestive problems, and having a positive effect on blood sugar, which helps keep your appetite in check, to name a few.

**Grains And Protein Should Fill The Other Half Of The Plate.** Try to make half your daily grains whole grains. Whole grains tend to be higher

in fiber, which plays an essential role in keeping you fuller longer and digesting food. Therefore, a high fiber diet also plays a critical role in weight loss and weight management (Women should aim for at least 25 grams of fiber a day, and men should aim for at least 35 grams of fiber per day). For protein, lean proteins are best (i.e., chicken, turkey, white fish, etc.), and plant proteins are always a great alternative (i.e., beans, peas, nuts, and seeds).

**Don't Forget About Dairy.** This can mean a cup of yogurt or a glass of milk, or some milk alternative like soy milk, oat milk, almond milk, etc. This ensures adequate calcium intake. Calcium needs can also be met by eating non-dairy foods like chia seeds, sardines, canned salmon, almonds, beans, lentils, and leafy greens like kale and spinach.

Are you interested in learning more about National Nutrition Month? Head to [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org), which includes resources and tools for a personalized dietary assessment and nutrition education. If you are interested in learning more about the Health Promotion program at MSC, contact one of your Health Promotion Coordinators:

CSU-East: Email: [leighanne.gerstbrein.ctr@navy.mil](mailto:leighanne.gerstbrein.ctr@navy.mil), (757) 443-5630  
CSU-West: Email: [kylie.kutina.ctr@navy.mil](mailto:kylie.kutina.ctr@navy.mil), (858) 224-3068

as the commander, to employ coordinated and complex operations while experimenting with emerging systems and technologies that enhance naval integration,” said Engdahl. “My staff and I are beginning this underway period embarked on the USS Miguel Keith to demonstrate the platform’s versatility and expand its value as a command and control platform. I am looking forward to exercising the full range of the ESB’s capabilities alongside the rest of the Task Force.”

Command and control is one of four core capabilities the ESB platform was designed to perform. The ESG 7 staff, since embarking on board Miguel Keith, has established secure and reliable communications networks and already controlled amphibious operations from the waters off to Japan to the seas around the Philippines. Simultaneously, they have directed mine clearance operations and near shore LCS operations.

“While both Navy and Marine technological capabilities have improved and expanded in recent years, establishing communication between nodes and platforms distributed throughout the theater requires continuous training,

testing, and assessment,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Patrick Eldridge, deputy for integration, ESG 7/TF 76. “We are stressing the Miguel Keith’s C2 capabilities and learning valuable lessons that will inform our tactics, techniques and procedures, as well as other units who will learn from our experimentation.”

“In addition to C2, the staff is also learning that the ESB is incredibly versatile and has the potential to directly or indirectly support the other warfighting functions to include logistics, fires, intelligence, and maneuver,” said Eldridge. “The Navy and Marine Corps team in the Indo-Pacific aggressively seek out advantages, such as the Miguel Keith, that shape the naval force into a more flexible, agile, and capable warfighting organization”

As the U.S. 7th Fleet’s primary advisor on amphibious matters in the Indo-Pacific, TF 76 routinely integrates with Marine expeditionary forces throughout the region postured to conduct full spectrum theater contingencies, ranging from humanitarian and disaster relief operations, to crisis response, to major combat operations.

that is a good characteristic of them. Tell them one thing you admire about them.”

Ivery then charged the MSC team to ask themselves, “How did it feel? How did it feel to send that note of beauty, love and affirmation to the person you cared about? How did it feel when you said something nice to somebody else? If you received a compliment back from them, how did it feel when you received it back?”

“By sending out those notes, emails, texts, direct messages, whatever you sent out there in the world, you just did everything that Dr. King wanted

us to do with his 3rd principle; beauty, love, justice,” Ivery concluded. “And hopefully we can continue to share this practice long after today and we place this practice in our professional toolbox and use it from time to time when we have to have those difficult conversations, when we have disagreements on tasks, or when we are mentoring or being mentored by people who care about our own self-worth and talents. We should be intentional in demonstrating beauty, love and justice in our everyday lives.”

Military Sealift Command remains dedicated to providing a positive and inclusive working environment focused on the development and advancement of all of its teammates.

# ANYDAY

SINGAPORE NORFOLK BAHRAIN GUAM



Aviation Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Princes Rosit directs a Super Puma on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) during a replenishment-at-sea with the Military Sealift Command dry cargo ammunition ship USNS Alan Shepard (T-AKE 3). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Jett Morgan)



Sailors, assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Gridley (DDG 101), handle line during a replenishment-at-sea with the Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson (T-AO 194). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Colby A. Mothershead)

# SEALIFT



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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.

## Fallen MSC Teammate



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.

Captain J. Rogers  
Source: The Mast, September 1948



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