



SEALIFT

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



U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 4 (ret) Hershel "Woody" Williams delivers a speech aboard his namesake ship the expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB-4) in downtown Norfolk, Virginia, March 7. The speech was part of the ship's commissioning ceremony where it transitioned from an auxiliary ship under operational control of Military Sealift Command to the Navy's combatant fleet. (U.S. Navy photo by Jennifer Hunt)

USS Hershel "Woody" Williams Commissioning

By Lance Cpl. Fernando Moreno, Defense Media Activity

The expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) was commissioned as a warship on March 7, during a ceremony held in downtown Norfolk, Virginia. The commissioning of the ship transfers its primary mission as an auxiliary ship under operational control Military Sealift Command to the U.S. Navy's combatant fleet.

In attendance to the event were prominent figures including the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. David H. Berger, West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy James Geurts and five Medal of Honor recipients.

The ship was previously designated as the United States Naval Ship (USNS) Hershel "Woody" Williams (T-ESB 4). Now, that it has been commissioned as a Navy warship, the ship is the United States Ship (USS) Hershel "Woody" Williams.

The ship is named for retired Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel Woodrow Williams. At 96 years old, Williams is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient who was recognized for his heroic actions at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Williams delivered his namesake address aboard the ship where he acknowledged the impact such an event has and will continue to have for the future.

"I'm grateful to all those who have the expertise to put something like this together," said Williams. "And may all those who serve aboard this ship that will bear my name be safe and be proud; and may she have God's blessings for a long-life of service to the greatest country on earth."

The commissioning of the ship as a United States Ship will make it a more versatile and flexible warfighting machine, capable of a variety of sea missions.

The ship operates with a hybrid crew of Navy Sailors and civil service mariner and it is uniquely designed and equipped with an open operations deck below and a flight deck above.

Its capabilities as a war-fighting asset are not to be outdone, however, by its overall cost effectiveness as stated by Marine Gen. David H. Berger.

"This ship is a step in the right direction for what we can afford as a nation. It's a draft office civilian design, but modified by naval architects to make a fighting ship out of it," said Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps."

The Williams was built at a cost of about \$500 million in 2017 and is the second of three expeditionary sea base ships built for the Navy by a private sector company.

"This is how the Navy and the Marine Corps can work with industry to produce what we need to protect our country," said Berger.



The ship's officers and crew man the ship during the commissioning ceremony of the expeditionary sea base USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4). (U.S. Navy photo by Jennifer Hunt)

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Keel Laid for Future USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7)

From Team Ships Public Affairs



A keel laying ceremony was held Feb. 12 for the future USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7), the second ship of the Navy's Navajo class of Towing, Salvage, and Rescue vessels. The ceremony was held near Gulf Island Shipyard at the Houma Terrebonne Civic Center.

The keel laying ceremony formally marks the start of a ship's life and the joining of the ship's modular components. The keel serves as the symbolic backbone of the ship.

In attendance to authenticate the keel was Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, The Honorable Chuck Hoskin, Jr. and the ship's sponsor and

Deputy Speaker of the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council, The Honorable Victoria Mitchell Vazquez.

During the ceremony, the keel authenticators etched their initials into the keel plate and declared it to be "truly and fairly laid."

"We are honored to have so many representatives of the Cherokee Nation in attendance to celebrate this early milestone," said Mike Kosar, support ships, boats and craft program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. "The ship is critical to the operations of our fleet, and will soon sail with the pride and determination of the Cherokee people, which it is named to honor."

The Navajo-class will provide ocean-going tug, salvage, and rescue capabilities to support fleet operations. The current capabilities are provided by three T-ATF 166 and two T-ARS 50 class ships, several of which will reach the end of their expected service lives later this year.

Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems. The platform will be 263 feet long, have a beam of 59 feet, and can carry a load of nearly 2,000 tons.

In addition to the future USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7), Gulf Island Shipyard is constructing the future USNS Navajo (T-ATS 6) and is under contract for the detail design and construction of the future USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek (T-ATS 8).

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.

Hershel "Woody" Williams Speaks With Sailors, Imparts Wisdom

From Naval Surface Force Atlantic, Public Affairs



Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams poses with two Sailors stationed aboard expeditionary mobile sea base ship USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darien Kenney)

It's not often that one gets to meet a living legend, one of the few remaining members of what many call 'the greatest generation.' It's a rare sight to see and hold a Medal of Honor, to feel its polished metal, to hear the story behind it, how it was earned and awarded by the President.

And so it was on March 6, along the waterfront here in Norfolk, Virginia, that Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams spoke with Sailors and civil service mariners aboard the expeditionary sea base ship USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams, just hours before the ship was converted to a USS ship. In town to be honored by the naming and commissioning of a ship with his name across the stern, Williams spent some time with the Sailors that will call his ship their ship when they next take her out to sea.

In front of an attentive group of more than 120, Williams asked, "Why me?" in reference to the events that has led to this moment. He also talked to Sailors about what it is going to take to lead the ship to success and life lessons about unity of the crew for the future. The Sailors had their own questions for Mr. Williams, particularly about how he keeps in such good shape for 96.

"I reached a point in life where I couldn't do the pull-ups and the push-ups that the Marine Corps used to do with me, so I decided that I needed something else to keep my body limber so that my joints won't lock up and I maintain a little bit of muscle," said Williams. "I developed this system that I do it either in bed or sometimes I lay down on the floor; I move my arms my hips, shoulders, legs and neck, every part of my body in some way 100 times. I used to have pretty good size muscles too, but for some reason they disappeared," said Williams as the crowd laughed.

Williams and his family toured the ship that is named for him and was taken to the ship's mess decks where there is a glass case honoring his heroism and military accomplishments. He was surprised to see what the ship had done for him, but he had his own surprise in store. He took his own Medal of Honor that he received from President Harry S. Truman and replaced it with the replica that was made for the ship.

"It was very shocking to me, but the feeling as a Sailor aboard the Hershel "Woody" Williams I was just proud, proud to be in that moment, proud to be able to see that moment, it really touched my heart because it just shows how selfless Hershel "Woody" Williams is. That meant a lot to our crew and collectively we were just all humbled by that gesture," said Senior Chief Tiffanie C. Simpson, Command Senior Chief, gold crew.

Capt. David Gray, the commanding officer of the USS "Woody" Williams, had his own words to say about the honorable moment.

"The man is extremely humble, honorable and probably the best American I ever met," he said. "It is beyond recognition of what you can understand but it is extremely proud, honorable and I don't think I can ever duplicate that moment in my lifetime."

Mr. Williams and his family posed for photos with Sailors and crew members and had his last words of wisdom before departing the ship's commissioning ceremony.

Williams, a retired Marine Corps chief warrant officer 4, is the only living Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima, during World War II. As a Marine Corps corporal during the battle, Williams used a flamethrower to eliminate multiple enemy positions with little protection or covering fire.



USNS Medgar Evers Thwarts Simulated Force Protection Threats

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



A civil service mariner assigned to the USNS Medgar Evers' (T-AKE 13) security reaction force, secures the ship's bridge-wing during an unmanned aerial vehicle incursion drill held pier-side aboard the dry cargo ammunition ship, Feb. 11. The drill was conducted as part of Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2020, an annual force protection exercise conducted on all U.S. Navy installations inside the continental United States. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

The civil service mariners who crew Military Sealift Command's dry cargo ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) held force protection drills, pier-side on Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 11-12.

The drills were conducted as part of Citadel Shield/Solid Curtain 2020 and were designed to enhance the training and readiness of the ship's crew for potential force protection situations.

"Every MSC ship in our inventory is essential to the combatant fleet, and just as the combatant ships, our ships are potential targets for terrorism," said Dr. Elizabeth DeVault from MSC Afloat Force Protection program. "In some cases, MSC's ships could even be more at risk for attack because they are not equipped with offensive weapons or a crew full of service members. So it is just as important for our mariners to receive this type of training as it is for the combatant fleet Sailors."

The series of drills held on Medgar Evers represented the first time MSC has conducted

force protection drills on any of their ships as part of Citadel Shield/Solid Curtain.

"Citadel Shield/Solid Curtain 2020 is conducted across the continental United States (CONUS) each year," added DeVault. "What we did with the drills on Medgar Evers was to schedule, plan and integrate into the CONUS-wide exercise."

"In the past, Citadel Shield/Solid Curtain 2020 has primarily focused on the Navy's combatant fleet," she said. "MSC performs anti-terrorism drills but the past we have not been part of this exercise and have never played a collaborative role for this type of training with the combatant fleet."

On Feb. 11, Medgar Evers' mariners were faced with a simulated commercial unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) encroaching upon the ship. The mariners performed photographing documentation of the simulated UAV and notified the appropriate law enforcement officials who responded to the incident.

"This training opportunity was valuable because the training background for service members and civil service mariners is very different," said the USNS Medgar Evers' 1st Officer Matthew S. Twomey. "Mariners primarily train for a career in handing ships safely in a variety of situations. This type of training allows our mariners to sharpen their skills in dealing with anti-terrorism and force protection situations."

On Feb. 12, the mariners incurred a simulated active shooter on the ship's mess decks involving a disgruntle mariner who brandished a training firearm and took a fellow mariner hostage. This scenario involved activating the ship's security reaction force to counter the simulated threat.

"The two scenarios which Medgar Evers conducted drills on are two of my biggest areas of concern for mariners and our ships' force protection," said Andrea D. Liebl, an MSC damage control officer. "Because our ships are crewed by civilians, it could be perceived that we are a soft target. I liked that with these drills, we had experts from outside MSC who were able to provide us with an unbiased perspective and assessment of our force protection."

Exercise Citadel Shield Solid Curtain is an annual, two-part force protection exercise conducted by Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command and Commander, Navy Installations Command on all CONUS Navy installations.

"In order to conduct these drills, we formed a training team of anti-terrorism experts to support these drills," DeVault said. "This allowed us to carry out integrated drills with simulated 'bad guys,' props and safety protocols; everything you find with force protection drills on a combatant ship."

Force protection is an all-hands responsibility on MSC's ships and facilities.

"The drills on Medgar Evers were fantastic," DeVault concluded. "Medgar Evers' crew is prepared to deal with force protection threats and they are very capable of protecting themselves."



Chief Operations Specialist Anthony Stocks brandishes a simulated firearm aboard USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) during an active shooter drill held pier-side aboard the dry cargo ammunition ship, Feb. 12. The drill was conducted as part of Citadel Shield-Solid Curtain 2020, an annual force protection exercise conducted on all U.S. Navy installations inside the continental United States. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

USNS Newport (T-EPF 12) Launched

From PEO Ships Public Affairs

The U.S. Navy's 12th expeditionary fast transport (T-EPF) vessel, the future USNS Newport (T-EPF 12), was launched at Austal USA's shipyard, Feb. 20. The launching of an EPF is a multi-step process. The ship modules are constructed in Austal's manufacturing facility, then transported to the assembly bay. When ready for launch, the ship is translated by heavy lift machinery to a docking barge in the Mobile River and further translated onto a floating dry dock. From there, the dry dock is submerged and the ship is launched. The translation and launch takes place over the course of two days.

"We are excited to get Newport in the water, so we can shift focus to final outfitting and trials," said Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Office Ships. "EPFs increase our reach, improving our ability to sustain our Navy and Marine Corps forces around the globe."

EPFs are versatile, non-combatant, transport ships that are being used for high-speed transportation of troops, military vehicles, and equipment.

The vessels support a variety of missions including overseas contingency operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, support of special operations forces, theater security cooperation activities and emerging joint sea-basing concepts.

EPFs are capable of transporting 600 short tons 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots. Each vessel includes a flight deck to support day and night aircraft launch and recovery operations. The ships are capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, as well as on/off-loading vehicles such as a fully combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank.

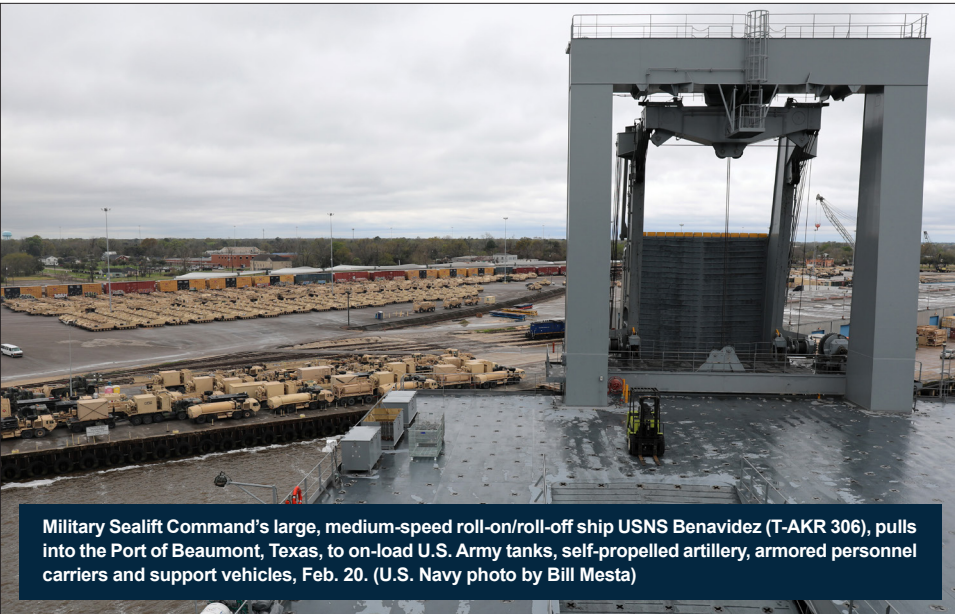
The future USNS Newport is on track to deliver later this year. Austal USA has also started construction of the future USNS Apalachicola (T-EPF 13) and is under contract to build the future USNS Cody (T-EPF 14).

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

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Military Sealift Command Supports DEFENDER-Europe 20

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan R. Bair, NPASE East and Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



A contract mariner assigned to the Military Sealift Command Bob Hope-class large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306) assists in mooring to the pier. Benavidez is underway in support of DEFENDER-Europe 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan R. Bair)

Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306), pulls into the Port of Beaumont, Texas, to on-load U.S. Army tanks, self-propelled artillery, armored personnel carriers and support vehicles, Feb. 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)



Military Sealift Command's large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306) departed Beaumont, Texas, following the extensive equipment on-load evolution of DEFENDER- Europe 20, Feb. 24.

DEFENDER-Europe 20 is an exercise, during which Military Sealift Command and two U.S.-flagged merchant vessels, vehicle carriers MV Resolve and MV Patriot, are transporting approximately 1.3 million square feet of U.S. Army equipment from southern continental United States to Europe.

"By exercising the protection of merchant shipping, the strategic sealift fleet can develop a better understanding of the tactical maritime picture," said Lt. Stephanie Mantz, Military Sealift Command Atlantic's operations officer.

DEFENDER-Europe 20 is the largest deployment of U.S.-based forces to Europe for an exercise in more than 25 years.

"Strategic Sealift Officers and the U.S. merchant marines are a critical part of our national defense," said Mantz. "Operationalizing them to conduct trans-Atlantic convoy operations alongside combatant Navy vessels is a skill that has not been practiced for decades."

Strategic Sealift Officers are commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy Reserve assigned to reserve U.S. Naval activities that support strategic sealift in times of national defense or emergency, according to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy web site.

DEFENDER-Europe 20 is designed to increase strategic readiness and interoperability by exercising the U.S. military's ability to rapidly move a large combat force of Soldiers and equipment from the continental United States to Europe. Alongside allies and partners this exercise prepares the U.S. for a quick response to a potential crisis.

USNS Benavidez Sails from Norfolk to Beaumont

Prior to the on-load and departure from Texas, Benavidez sailed from Norfolk, Virginia, to Beaumont.

During the underway, the crew made preparations throughout the ship for loading tactical vehicles, performed a

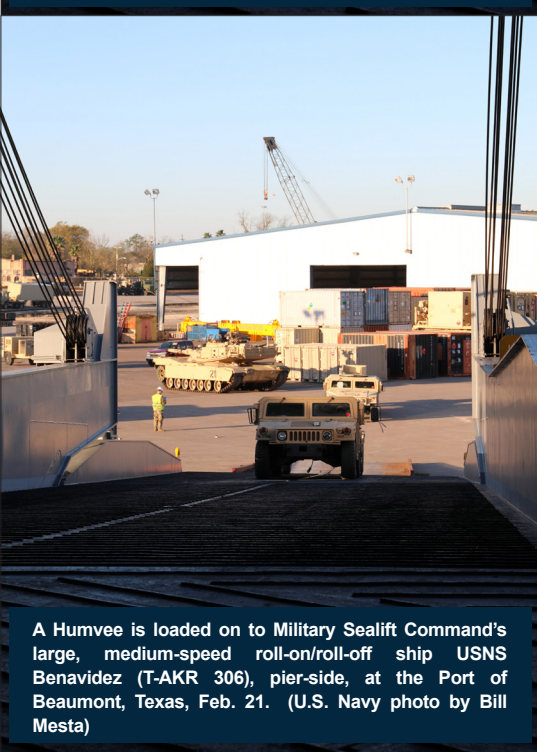


An M1A1 Abrams tank is loaded on to Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306), pier-side, at the Port of Beaumont, Texas, Feb. 21. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

Second Mate Edmun Scott, a contract mariner assigned to Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez's (T-AKR 306), monitors navigation equipment while the ship was at sea, Feb. 17. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)



An M1A1 Abrams tank is loaded aboard Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306), pier-side, at the Port of Beaumont, Texas, Feb. 21. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)



A Humvee is loaded on to Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306), pier-side, at the Port of Beaumont, Texas, Feb. 21. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

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Contract mariners who crew Military Sealift Command's large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306) use the ship's cranes to on-load containerized cargo, pier-side at the Port of Beaumont, Texas, Feb. 21. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)



A view of U.S. Army tanks, self-propelled artillery, armored personnel carriers and support vehicles staged for on-load to Military Sealift Command's large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306), Feb. 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

MT Maersk Peary Conducts Fuel Delivery Operations in Antarctica in Support of Operation Deep Freeze 2020

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific

Military Sealift Command chartered ship MT Maersk Peary has arrived at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, and is currently offloading nearly 8 million gallons of diesel and jet fuel. The operation is part of MSC's annual resupply mission in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Joint Task Force Support for the Antarctica mission to resupply the remote scientific outpost.

Peary, the second of three MSC ships bringing supplies to McMurdo Station this season, arrived at the Marine Causeway System (MCS), Feb. 4. The MCS replaces the traditional ice-pier, where cargo operations have been conducted in the past. The crew of Peary will work with Seabees from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE (NCHB-1) to offload fuel cargo, which will sustain McMurdo station for the next year.

According to Capt. E.M Hatton, Peary's master, every precaution is taken when working with fuel delivery in Antarctica. In a place that receives fuel cargo only once a year, the ship's crew and the Seabee cargo handlers exhibit extreme caution to inspect and test every line and link of the fuel delivery system, ensuring all can withstand the rush of pressurized product. In addition, the fuel must travel uphill to storage tanks, which further slows the process.

The precautions are not just for the safety of the crew and cargo handlers, they are also protections for Antarctica's fragile environment. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the Antarctic region is one of the most pristine and remote wildernesses on the planet and is home to a wide variety of endangered animals and plant species, many of which can only be found in this one area of the world.

"The presence of endangered marine wildlife raises the stakes when we're working in Antarctica," explained Hatton. "Ashore there are increased safety measures. All crewmembers must have a brief on the dangers of Antarctica, before heading on hikes, that includes things like, 'Stay on the trail and do not touch wildlife.' We try to do everything we can to take care of this pristine place."

This season, delays in schedules gave Peary the opportunity to do an at-sea fuel transfer with the U.S. Coast Guard ice-breaker USCG Polar Star (WAGB-10); something Hatton credits as a way to test his crew before arriving at McMurdo Station.

"The slow trudging, wedged together in the ice with Polar Star provided an opportunity to perform a lightering operation," said Hatton. "With only one pump running, we discharged 534 thousand gallons of fuel over two days. The re-fueling operation provided a dress rehearsal for the larger discharge to follow."

Year after year, and mission after mission, participants note the unpredictability of the environment as a huge factor in working in Antarctica. The weather vacillates between eerie calm and sudden high

wind gusts. Visibility can quickly sink beneath a wall of white and temperatures that can fall to 20-30 degrees below zero can shut down all operations. Despite all these factors, Hatton, who is participating in his fifth ODF and his crew, all eagerly volunteered for the chance to work in and meet head-on the all the challenges Antarctica has to offer.

"Seventy five percent of my crew are first-timers to McMurdo," said Hatton. "Many are aboard Peary with the main reason of getting a chance to see Antarctica, and to test their resolve. The weather and isolation conspire against us in Antarctica, unlike anywhere else on Earth. If we perform best here, we can perform our best anywhere."

Upon completion of their fuel delivery, Peary will depart McMurdo Station. They will be followed by a third MSC chartered ship, SLNC Magothy, who will deliver construction materials for an expansion project 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.



The crew of the MSC chartered ship MT Maersk Peary mark their arrival at McMurdo Station Antarctica. Peary is currently offloading nearly eight million gallons of diesel and jet fuel. The operation is part of MSC's annual resupply mission in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Joint Task Force Support for Antarctica mission to resupply the remote scientific outpost. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)

Military Sealift Command Completes Cargo Operations in Antarctic

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific

Military Sealift Command has completed its resupply mission in Antarctica with the departure of the MSC chartered ship SLNC Magothy. The mission was in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Joint Task Force Support for Antarctica mission to the NSF-managed U.S. Antarctic Program. (U.S. Navy Courtesy Photo)



Military Sealift Command has completed its resupply mission in Antarctica with the departure of the MSC chartered ship SLNC Magothy. The mission was in support of Operation Deep Freeze, the Joint Task Force Support for Antarctica mission to the NSF-managed U.S. Antarctic Program.

Magothy delivered nearly 5,000 metric tons of construction materials and equipment that will be used to expand the facilities at McMurdo Station. The cargo was offloaded by Seabees from Navy Cargo Handling Battalion ONE (NCHB -1) homeported in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Magothy along with two other MSC-chartered ships, MV Ocean Giant, and MT Maersk Peary, conducted cargo offloads at the Marine Causeway System (MCS) that was put in place to replace the traditional ice-pier that has been used in years past. The MCS was delivered by the first MSC ship to arrive in Antarctica, Ocean Giant. Upon completion of their

cargo delivery, Magothy retrieved the dismantled sections of the MCS, and loaded it onto the ship. It will return to Port Hueneme, California, where its mission began in early January.

According to Capt. Eric Swanson, Magothy's master, operations such as Operation Deep Freeze and the challenges of working in a remote area create a unique learning experience for his crew. Here, they hone skills that can be used in operations while supporting future MSC missions.

"Due to the lack of resources available, and because of the remote location and weather challenges, the ODF mission really challenges us as a team," said Swanson. "I'm sure my team has learned a lot, and will take these lessons learned with them on future missions where they won't be challenged by these extreme weather conditions, or the challenges this environment brings."

USNS Crew Rescues Marine Life in Arabian Sea

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dawson Roth, U.S. Fifth Fleet Public Affairs

Civil service mariners who crew Military Sealift Command's dry cargo ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12) successfully rescued two sea turtles from abandoned fishing nets, Feb. 3 in the Arabian Sea.

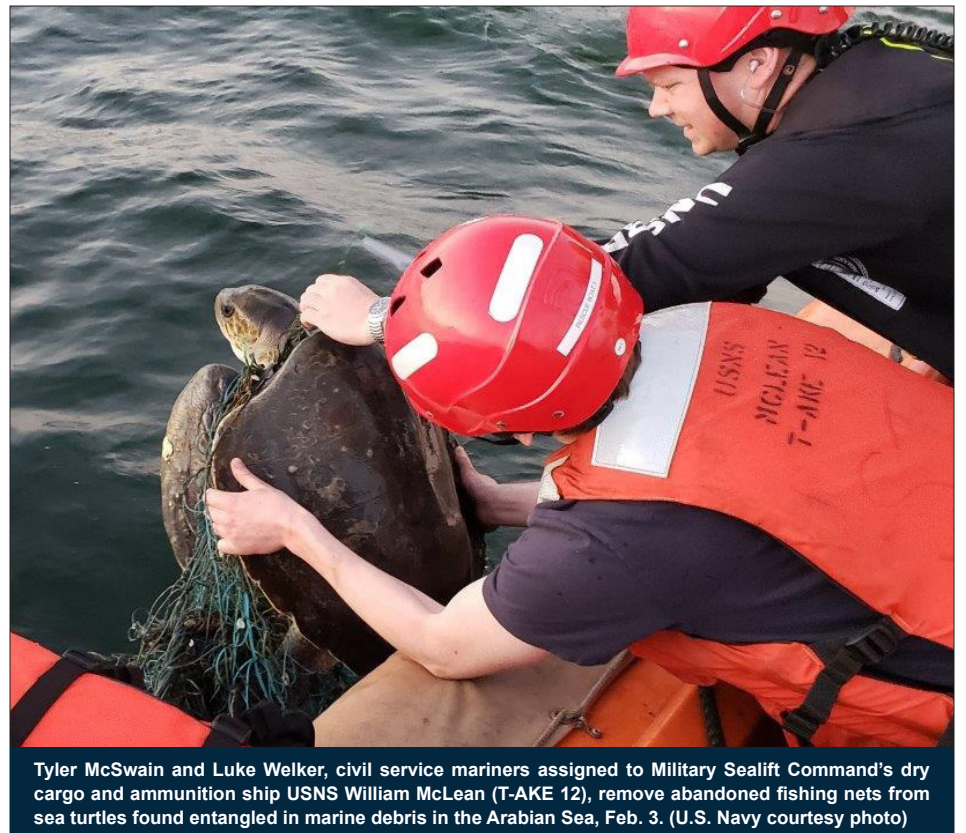
William McLean's crew discovered the turtles while on a routine patrol and deployed a small boat and crew members to investigate. Ships routinely post lookout watches to ensure marine life is not endangered during operations.

The boat crew found the sea turtles ensnared in the nets, with ropes coiled around their necks and each fins. Unlike other turtle species, sea turtles can't retract into their shells, leaving them vulnerable to entanglement in marine debris.

The ship's small boat and rescue team located the turtles with assistance from watch standers on the bridge. Working together, the boat crew and a rescue swimmer were able to untangle the turtles from the nets and set them free.

"It was the right thing to do and it felt great to see those two turtles swim away, free of the fishing nets," said Brandon J. Varner, captain of William McLean.

William McLean is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points.



Tyler McSwain and Luke Welker, civil service mariners assigned to Military Sealift Command's dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), remove abandoned fishing nets from sea turtles found entangled in marine debris in the Arabian Sea, Feb. 3. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)

Ford Gets Pumped, Receives 1.3 Million Gallons of Fuel

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ruben Reed, USS Gerald R. Ford Public Affairs

USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) conducted a successful underway replenishment-at-sea (UNREP) Feb. 8, marking the ship's first time receiving fuel from a replenishment ship in more than 24 months.

Ford successfully received more than 1.3 million gallons of fuel, and exercised a solid cargo station, transferring 22 pallets for training from the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195), in less than three hours.

The UNREP started off with Ford pulling alongside Grumman. A few moments later, a line was shot from Ford to Grumman to establish communications and connect to the fuel lines. Once completed, the fuel lines were pulled to Ford to begin the fueling process.

"A UNREP is what drives and enhances our mission capabilities," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) Joshua Faulds, assigned to Ford's V-4 division of the Air department. "The primary mission of an aircraft carrier is to fly aircraft, and we need to be able to replenish the jet fuel without having to pull in port."

During a RAS, Ford's V-4 division, responsible for the safe handling of all jet propulsion (JP-5) fuel aboard, stations and more than 60 personnel throughout the ship to monitor and handle the on-load of fuel.

"The entire evolution is a well-orchestrated effort," said Faulds. "If one station or group of Sailors isn't on top of their game things can go very wrong because the risk is high. The Sailors in our division are mostly new to the ship but they performed very well and the evolution's success is a testament to the training and qualification process aboard."

Faulds also attributed the success of the evolution to Ford's increased automation and systems integration. The ship's systems help control and monitor events throughout the ship including safety sensors, auxiliary systems, and JP-5 fuel sensing and management.



Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195) pulls alongside the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) to begin an underway replenishment at sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ruben Reed)

"The system aboard Ford is wonderful because it helps make things much more efficient," said Faulds. "The benefits of having one central interface and be able to track everything in such a user friendly way is great for our management and other departments around the ship."

One group heavily involved in the evolution that doesn't have a need for the electronic system is Ford's Deck department. The more than 80 personnel on station to uphold the lines connecting the ships and maintaining stability of fueling probes are dependent upon training, teamwork and proficiency to ensure safety.

"The professionalism and flawless execution by the team was incredible," said Chief Warrant Officer Steven Sturm, Ford's Ship's Boatswain. "I think they exceeded expectations and we couldn't be happier with how the evolution went."

Planning, execution and crew capability are a few factors to consider when conducting a UNREP. The preparation before the UNREP is just as important as the execution.

"This is one of the most dangerous evolutions the crew will participate in," said Faulds. "Coordination, training, and teamwork are key to a successful UNREP. If the fuel system alignment is off, fuel could potentially go into spaces that it's not intended to. This is why we train like we fight."

The evolution allowed Ford Sailors to practice their skills and train junior Sailors on the ins and outs of an UNREP.

"About 75 percent or more of my department has never conducted an UNREP or seen that much fuel on-loaded at one time," said Sturm. "We train and conduct walkthroughs when we know we have a UNREP coming up. Completing this evolution increased their confidence and it increased ours as well."



Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate Michael Kyne, assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) visually inspects a fuel sample during an underway replenishment at sea with the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Leroy Grumman (T-AO 195). (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Third Class Joshua Murray)

We Are MSC: Ship's Boatswain's Mate William Wallace

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



Contract mariner William Wallace, the ship's boatswain's mate on Military Sealift Command's large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306) operates a fork-lift while the ship is at sea in support of DEFENDER-Europe 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

unlicensed mariners aboard a ship. I am in charge of supervising all of the deck department maintenance aboard the ship.

A boatswain's mate is responsible for taking care of all of the deck department equipment and ship's appearance to ensure we meet the Navy's and MSC's standards. I make sure that the everything that deck department is responsible for is ready to go so the ship can make its mission. The ship's boatswain's mate runs the deck.

How long have you been a mariner?

Wallace: I have been a Mariner for almost 26 years, and I have been a boatswain's mate for about 20 years.

When I started as a deck department mariner, I started at the bottom. I started as an ordinary seaman (OS), and I liked it. I have always felt that

if a person finds a job or career that they truly like to do, they will always excel at it. And I like shipping and I like sailing and I have never been seasick a day in my life.

Before I switched over to deck department, I started at the bottom in the engine room. I started in engineering as a wiper. I had a background as an auto mechanic so it made sense to start out in the engine room.

Sometimes I will still sail as an Able Bodied Seaman because I like to work with other ship's boatswain's mates. I have found this to be very informative because you are always

able to learn new techniques for handling various situations and people in the deck department on other ships.

What are some of the other ships you have sailed on?

Wallace: I have sailed aboard a number of ocean surveillance ships, back when they were mono-hull, before the newer twin hull design. I have also sailed aboard various tankers, container ships, car carriers, and pre-positioning ships.

I enjoyed working on the propositioning ships and sailed on that type of ship during Desert Storm, delivering equipment and supplies to the troops.

I really enjoy traveling. As a Mariner, I have gotten paid to work hard and see the world.

What advice do you have for other Mariners and those who might be interested in becoming a Mariner?

Wallace: Don't cut corners. Take the time to do things the right way.

To emphasize his point, Wallace displayed a scarred finger which was injured in an accident many years ago.

The best thing about working as a Mariner is that you can control your own destiny. You can control your own pay. If you want a pay increase, you have the opportunity and means to move up in your specialty. You have the ability to perform, pass required testing and qualifications, and move up in your specialty; and the whole process is in your control.

If you are interested in becoming a Mariner for the money, there is money to be made. This is definitely an industry where you can grow both financially and professionally.

Recently I had the honor to sit down for a conversation with the ship's boatswain's mate, William Wallace, aboard Military Sealift Command's large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306). The ship was underway in support of DEFENDER-Europe 20 and Wallace is a contract mariner employed by Maersk.

Here are some of the highlights from our conversation.

What is a ship's boatswain's mate?

Wallace: The ship's boatswain's mate is often the middle-man between the licensed and

April: Stress Awareness Month

From Leighanne Gerstbrein, Military Sealift Command Health Promotion Coordinator

Stress happens to all of us; it is inevitable. At times, it can even feel unbearable. Taking time for yourself to relax, renew, and rejuvenate is critical in maintaining a healthy mind and body.

Lets talk about the mind, stress, health connection...

Stress can go as far as to affect you on a cellular level. The sympathetic stress response is a survival mechanism that has been hardwired into humans to help us perceive threats and react quickly.

Danger generates a rush of stress hormones into the bloodstream, or the stress response. Unfortunately, work conflicts, financial concerns, bad memories, or overall anxiety in general can also generate this stress response. While it is normal to have bad days here and there, long-term stress can weaken the immune response and raise your risk for illness.

If you feel like you suffer from chronic stress and cannot change the situation, then how you meet the situation will have to change. Humans are adaptable; you may have to try a multitude of options to find what works best for you.

- Acknowledge what you do and do not have control over. Let go.
- Try not to get anxious about situations you do not have control over.
- Take responsibility for your own reactions. Acknowledging that not all situations that we perceive as negative in the moment may be negative in the end. In addition, they might not always require a strong emotional reaction.
- Concentrate your mind and something that makes you feel calm and in control. This will most likely take some practice.
- The human body is designed for movement. Take a walk, go for a run, play a sport, do yoga.

Stress will always come and go. Choosing how to respond to it in a controlled manner will leave you with the ultimate reward of a healthy, balanced life with time for fun, work, relationships, and relaxation.

MSC has available resources for you. For more information on this or the Health & Wellness Program at MSC, contact your Health Promotion Coordinator.

Email: Leighanne.gerstbrein.ctr@navy.mil
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CONTROLLABILITY

Keep An Even Keel

You may not be able to control every aspect of a challenging event, but you can control your response. Controllability is about making choices that help restore a sense of empowerment during adversity – from emotional responses to problem-solving actions.

required life-boat test, held an abandon ship drill, conducted a fire drill and performed maintenance on various systems and equipment.

USNS Benavidez is one of MSC's 19 large, medium speed roll-on/roll-off ships and is used for transporting U.S. military combat equipment and combat support equipment as required overseas, according to Capt. Jennifer L. Senner, USNS Benavidez's ship's master.

"Benavidez is capable of transporting enough tactical and armored vehicles to support almost an entire battalion," said Senner, "They could transport the equipment on military planes but the amount of time and effort involved makes this type of ship a much better option."

"In addition to transporting the vehicles, we are delivering cargo containers loaded with food and supplies, such as ready-to-eat meals," added Senner. "Basically we will deliver everything the warfighters will need to operate for 30 days."



Military Sealift Command's large, medium-speed roll on/roll off ship USNS Benavidez (T-AKR 306), sails past the MSC chartered vehicle carrier MV Resolve as the ship pulls into the Port of Beaumont, Texas, to on-load U.S. Army tanks, self-propelled artillery, armored personnel carriers and support vehicles, Feb. 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)



A view of the Military Sealift Command chartered vehicle carrier MV Resolve moored at the Port of Beaumont, Texas, Feb. 20. The on-load of USNS Benavidez was carried out in support of DEFENDER-Europe 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

Benavidez is crewed by 31 civilian mariners who are contracted by MSC from Maersk.

"When the ship is in reduced operating status, there are 13 mariners working aboard, which is the bare minimum to keep the ship ready to operate," according to Senner. "Once we were activated, we were able to bring aboard the extra people required to crew the ship at sea."

Benavidez had five days from receiving its activation notice to bring on additional crew aboard. During this period they also were required to bring on-line critical ship systems, such as the engineering plant, thrusters, emergency diesel generators, cargo equipment and ensure the mariners are trained and administratively prepared to sail.

"Everyone put in long hours and worked really hard to get the ship underway," Senner said.

"We are proud to part of this exercise," concluded Senner. "I am a veteran and we have lots of veterans in the crew and we are happy to do whatever we can to support the warfighter."

ANYDAY

SINGAPORE NORFOLK GUAM BAHRAIN ROTA SAN DIEGO HAWAII NAPLES

Sailors prepare to hook cargo to an Aerospatiale SA 330J Puma from the USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4) during a vertical replenishment-at-sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Toni Burton)



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd (DDG 100) receives pallets from the Military Sealift Command replenishment oiler USNS Guadalupe (T-AO 200) during a replenishment-at-sea, March 27. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandie Nuzzi)



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 preparast 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



Alvin Joshua Nucum
Assistant Cook
MSC Service:
2007-2020

SEALIFT

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