



SEALIFT

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

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Views of the troop transport ship USNS General Simon B. Buckner (T-AP 123) (upper left), fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) (upper right), fast combat support ship USNS Arctic (T-AOE 8) (bottom left) and liberty ship SS John S. Brown (bottom right) underway. (U.S. Navy photo illustration by Bill Mesta)

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND...75 YEARS AND COUNTING

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

This year, Military Sealift Command will celebrate its 75th anniversary. Since 1949, MSC, originally Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS), has been at the forefront of maritime logistics supporting the nation's joint warfighters around the world. Over the decades, the command has evolved into an agile fleet of more than 135 civilian-crewed ships that replenish U.S. Navy ships at sea, conduct specialized missions, preposition combat cargo at sea around the world, perform a variety of support services, and move military equipment and supplies to deployed U.S. forces.

Today, MSC's workforce includes more than 7,000 civil service and contract mariners, shore staff and active duty and reservist service members, deployed in regions all over the world. Throughout 2024, the command will be remembering its history, honoring

its legacy and celebrating the contributions of its Civil Service Mariners, civilians and military members – past and present - through various community outreach, observances and other special events to reflect on “75 Years of Maritime Excellence.”

“The prosecution of war requires the use of a tremendous number of noncombatant vessels. In all our history, we have never had a sufficient number of ships to meet the voracious appetite of war. Even with its service Force vessels, the Navy does not have enough ships to serve the mobile logistic support needs of the combatant fleets. In any war, therefore, the Armed Forces need the help and the close cooperation of the merchant marine. The groundwork for wartime cooperation with the merchant marine must be laid in times of peace. It would be dangerous to delay such cooperation until the outbreak of war for the complexities of ocean transportation cannot be learned overnight,” stated Vice Adm. William Callahan, Commander, Military Sea Transportation Service (1952).

The idea of creating an all-encompassing component responsible for water transportation of the military, in both peace and wartime was suggested as early as 1847 by the Quartermaster General of the Army, Brig. Gen. Thomas S. Jesup who had competed with the Navy for the chartering of American merchant ships. The division would continue through the early 1900s and the Spanish-American War and both World Wars.

During World War II, four different government agencies competed to utilize the commercial merchant marine - the Naval Transportation Service, the Army Transport Service, the U. S. Maritime Commission's War Shipping Administration, and the Fleet Support



A view of Military Sealift Command's dry cargo ammunition ship USNS Alan Shepard (T-AKE 3) at sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Sonar Technician 2nd Class Ashleigh Englebert)

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A view of the fuel nozzle from Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) as Civil Service Mariners serving on MSC's dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) bring it aboard during an underway replenishment-at-sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)

USNS JOHN LEWIS RECOGNIZED FOR LIFE-SAVING EFFORTS AT-SEA WITH ADMIRAL OF THE OCEAN SEA AWARD

By Bill Mesta and Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The Civil Service Mariners (CIVMAR) who crew Military Sealift Command’s fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) were recognized for life-saving efforts at sea by being presented the United Seaman Service’s Admiral of the Ocean Sea Mariner’s plaque at a ceremony in New York City, Dec. 1.

The AOTOS awards recognize mariners of vessels who, during the previous year, exhibited exceptional bravery, superb seamanship and devotion to duty while engaged operations at sea.

In December 2022, the crew of USNS John Lewis rescued a mariner from a sinking sailboat off the coast of San Diego.

Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, Commander, Military Sealift Command, served as the principal speaker for the event and recognized the ship’s efforts during his remarks.

“To the crew of MSC’s very own USNS John Lewis, represented here tonight by the Ship’s Master, Captain Dan Glazier, your quick and professional actions to rescue a sailboat and mariner adrift at sea for five days were consequential and lifesaving,” stated Sobeck. “You are an example of great Americans serving their Nation, just as over 4,000 CIVMARs aboard MSC vessels are doing around the world every day.”

The plaque presented to the USNS John Lewis’ crew read as follows, “While conducting operations roughly 210 miles off Southern California, the fleet oiler USNS John Lewis received an emergency transmission for a vessel in distress. The oiler immediately steamed through the Pacific locating a sinking sailboat.”

The sails were ripped off the sailboat during a squall approximately six days prior to the rescue.

“Unable to launch a small rescue boat due to 25-knot sustained winds, the (USNS John Lewis) crew skillfully maneuvered the 746-foot oiler alongside the battered sailboat,” the write-up continued. “Once alongside, the sailor scrambled up the pilot ladder to the safety of the ship.”

Once safely aboard USNS John Lewis, the rescued mariner received a medical examination, a shower, a hot meal, clothes and was transported to San Diego.

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

For more than half a century, the United Seamen’s Service has annually presented the AOTOS Award, widely regarded as the most prestigious accolade in the maritime sector. This award acknowledges exceptional contributions made by individuals and organizations towards the advancement of American seafarers and the United States’ maritime industry.

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



Capt. John Glazier (left), USNS John Lewis’ Ship Master, accepts the United Seamen’s Service Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award from Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, Commander, Military Sealift Command, at the United Seaman Service’s Admiral of the Ocean Sea award ceremony, Dec. 1. (U.S. Navy photo)

KEEL AUTHENTICATED FOR FUTURE USNS BILLY FRANK JR.

From Team Ships Command Public Affairs

The keel for the future USNS Billy Frank Jr. (T-ATS 11), the Navy’s 6th Navajo-class platform, was laid at Austal USA’s shipyard in Mobile, Nov. 14.

A keel laying ceremony recognizes the start of a ship’s construction through the union of a ship’s modular components and the welding, or “authentication,” of an honoree’s initials into a ceremonial keel plate that becomes part of the ship. On hand to authenticate the keel was ship sponsor Pegan Frank, spouse to Nisqually Tribal Council Chairman William Frank III, son of the late Billy Frank Jr.

Billy Frank Jr. was a Nisqually tribal member and an iconic Native American environmental leader and treaty rights activist. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War, Frank chaired the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for over 30 years, receiving the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Award. President Obama posthumously awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015.

“The future Billy Frank Jr.’s keel laying marks the beginning of the construction journey for this ship,” said John Lighthammer, program manager, Auxiliary and Special Mission Shipbuilding Program Office. “It is an honor to be joined by members of the Nisqually Tribe and we look forward to the partnership as we highlight their heritage.”

The Navajo class is a multi-mission, common hull platform that will deploy to support a range of missions such as towing, rescue, salvage, humanitarian assistance, oil spill response and wide-area search and surveillance. The vessels will replace the

existing Powhatan-class T-ATF fleet ocean tugs and Safeguard-class T-ARS rescue and salvage ships in service with the U.S. Military Sealift Command.

Austal USA is also in production of future USNS Solomon Atkinson (T-ATS 12) with an additional three more T-ATS- ships under contract.



Ship’s Sponsor Pegan Frank, spouse to Nisqually Tribal Council Chairman William Frank III, son of the late Billy Frank Jr., authenticates the future USNS Billy Frank Jr. (T-ATS 11), Nov. 14. (U.S. Navy photo)



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ELIZA PINGREE: MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND’S FIRST FEMALE CHIEF ENGINEER

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

The crew of Military Sealift Command’s fast combat support ship USNS Supply (T-AO 6) held a promotion ceremony for Civil Service Mariner (CIVMAR) Eliza Pingree, who was advanced as MSC’s first female Chief Engineer, while the ship was in Rota, Spain, Nov. 16.

Upon being promoted, Pingree replaced outgoing Chief Engineer James Cochara aboard Supply. Of note, Cochara was Pingree’s first Chief Engineer when she began her career at MSC.

I had the opportunity to have a remote conversation with Pingree about her historic promotion. Here are some of the highlights from our conversation:

What is a Chief Engineer? What are the roles and responsibilities of a Chief Engineer?

Pingree-The ‘Chief’ is the most senior licensed Engineer aboard our ships and is ultimately responsible for all aspects of operating and maintaining the vessel. On Supply, the Engine Department comprises of approximately 40 people, with about 10 licensed Engineers and 30 unlicensed Engineers. We are responsible for keeping the lights on, the shafts turning, the toilets flushing, the freezers freezing, and anything and everything in between.

What does it mean to you to become the first woman to be promoted to Chief Engineer at Military Sealift Command?

Pingree-To me, I’m a first Engineer that’s just taken my first Chief’s job. I think that means for me the same thing it means to any other first Engineer assuming their first Chief’s job. It’s a long climb to the top of the pyramid, and there is huge a sense of accomplishment upon getting to that point. And there’s also a lot of responsibility that goes with that, which is a little intimidating. But it’s a natural progression from First Engineer to Chief. I just happen to be a girl. In this job, that isn’t something you see every day, and at MSC it hasn’t happened before. I guess the stars aligned, and I was in the right place at the right time.

How long have you sailed with Military Sealift Command and which of MSC’s ships have you sailed on prior to USNS Supply?

Pingree-I started with MSC in 2015. USNS Supply was actually my first ship, but I have also sailed on the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) and the dry cargo ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4).

What were you doing prior to sailing with MSC?

Pingree-I was hired by MSC shortly after I graduated from Maine Maritime Academy. Prior to that I had been a student at University of Maine at Machias, studying in the Interdisciplinary Fine Arts program.

What challenges did you face while striving to become a Chief Engineer and what do you consider your keys to success to overcome these challenges?

Pingree-I guess that I don’t really see my career with MSC as a journey to become Chief Engineer. I knew after seeing my first underway replenishment-at-sea that I wanted to become a Cargo Engineer, and that’s something that I had a lot of drive to achieve and succeed at. But I also wanted to keep my career options open. I got my first’s license with no intention of sailing on it; I just wanted to get the test out of the way, so I sat for the exam as soon as I had the sea-time for gas turbine and motor plants. I was very happy as a Cargo Engineer, and under other circumstances I would probably still be in that position. But in 2021 Supply needed a First Engineer, and I was here, licensed and, although I had no experience in the position, the Chief knew I could do it. So I rose to the occasion. I don’t see this promotion as being any different. Supply needs a Chief, and I will rise to the occasion.



USNS Supply’s incoming Chief Engineer Elizabeth Pingree (right) is congratulated by outgoing Chief Engineer James Cochara (left) during a promotion ceremony, held aboard the fast combat support ship USNS Supply (T-AOE 6) while the ship was moored in Rota, Spain, Nov. 16 . Pingree is the first Female Chief Engineer in Military Sealift Command’s history. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)

What advice do you have for other Civil Service Mariners who are striving for a successful career?

Pingree-A good work ethic will take you a long way. Show up, work hard, ask questions, and never stop trying to learn more. And don’t cause drama; it’s exhausting for everyone.

Why did you decide to sail for MSC and what about MSC makes our organization appealing to you as a professional mariner?

Pingree-I got a job with MSC because there weren’t too many options the year I graduated. MSC seemed like a good way to get some experience under my belt, pay off my student loans, and upgrade my Mariner license on more than one platform. I have been able to achieve all of those goals here, and I think that those are goals, in some variation, that appeal to many young Mariners.

What are your future aspirations as a Chief Engineer and a Civil Service Mariner?

Pingree-At this point I haven’t thought that far ahead. Becoming Chief on Supply is something that’s been in the works for over a year now, but it went from a possibility to a reality very fast. Right now I’m living in the moment, keeping the lights on, and making sure that Supply can meet her mission as we embark on our deployment. Once I get my feet under me, I’ll figure out what my next goal is for the future.

Is there anything you would like to add about becoming the first woman to be promoted to Chief Engineer at MSC?

Pingree-I’ve been in positions of leadership before, and what is important to me is that I’m there because I’m the best person for the job. In this day and age, there can be a perception that women get promoted or selected for positions by organizations looking to improve their image on diversity; and in a heavily male dominated industry this is a very real possibility. Fighting that stigma, whether real or perceived, has certainly driven me to become a better Engineer. I don’t want to get promoted to make MSC’s statistics look better; I want it because I’ve got what it takes to do the job.

USNS MERCY’S VISIT TO MARSHALL ISLANDS MARKS LAUNCH OF PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 24-1

From Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

On Oct. 30, the United States Pacific Partnership arrived in Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to commence the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific region.

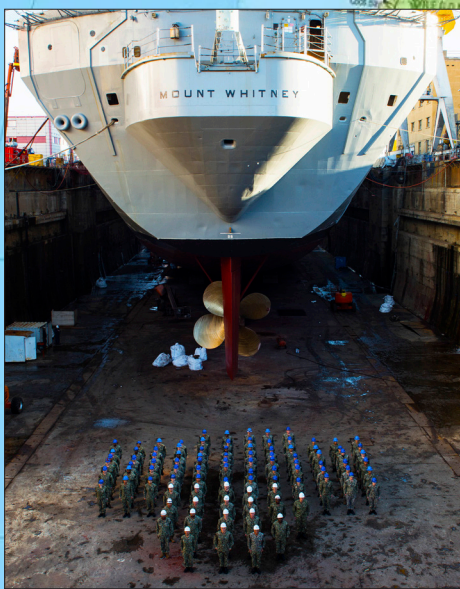
The arrival of Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) to Majuro, RMI, signifies the launch of the Pacific Partnership 24-1 mission, which will enable American and Marshallese participants to work together to enhance disaster response capabilities and foster new and enduring friendships.

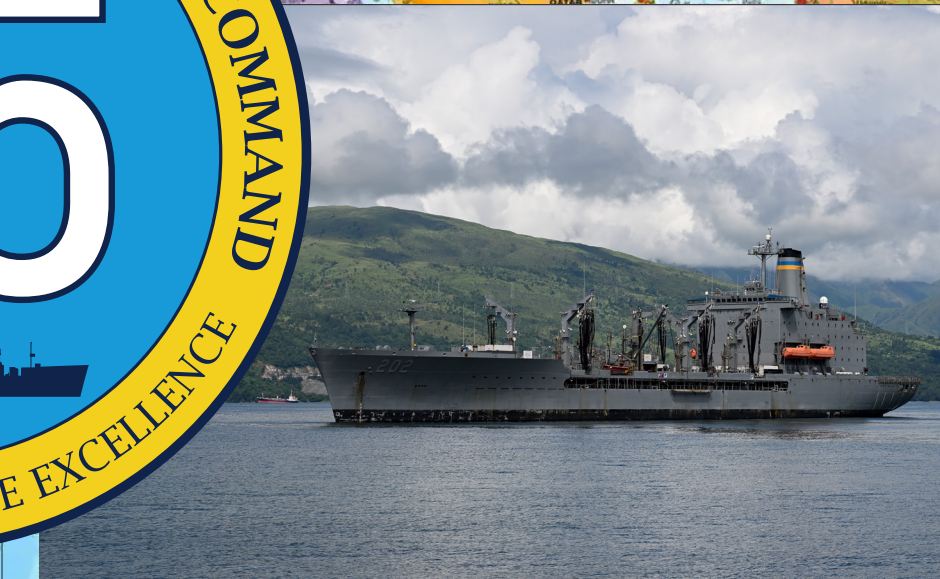
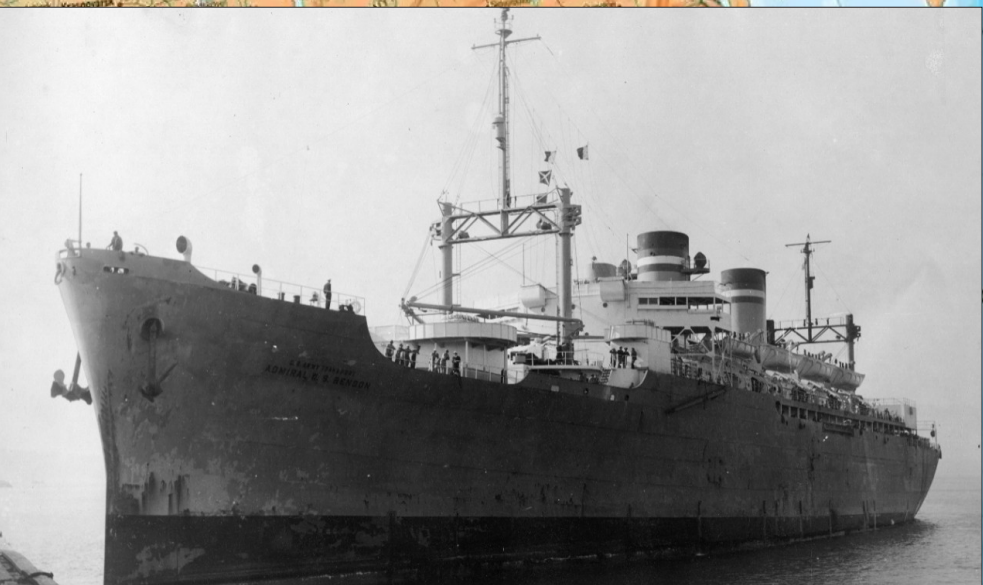
“The Pacific Partnership 24-1 mission is one example of our longstanding commitment to the Indo-Pacific region, while further strengthening enduring relationships and cooperation with partner-nations such as the RMI,” said Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson, Commander, Task Force 73 and Executive Agent for this year’s mission. “The RMI is a long and respected partner with deep ties to the U.S. Navy and contributes to security and stability in the region.”



The hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) prepares to anchor off the coast of Majuro, Republic of Marshall Islands, prior to its first mission stop for Pacific Partnership 2024-1, Oct. 30. (U.S. Navy photo by Grady Fontana)

75 YEARS OF MARITIME EXCELLENCE





UNITED WE SAIL...INTO 2024

SINGAPORE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SEND TREATS TO CIVIL SERVICE MARINERS, SAILORS

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East Public Affairs



Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariner Gina Mitton, Able Seaman, with fleet replenishment oiler ship USNS Rappahannock (T-AO 204), receives a care package prepared and donated by students and their families from the Stamford American Internal School, and members of the American Association in Singapore, during a port stop in Singapore, Nov. 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Jamil Khan)

Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariners and Sailors currently operating in the Indo-Pacific Region visited Sembawang Wharves, Singapore, and received care packages from the American community in Singapore, Nov 20-21.

Students and their families from the Stamford American Internal School (SAIS) in Singapore, and members of the American Association in Singapore (AAS) prepared and delivered more than 120 packages to the deployed members supporting the U.S. 7th Fleet, just in time for the Thanksgiving holiday.

“It is our great privilege to collaborate with AAS in delivering a touch of happiness to the Sailors stationed in Singapore,” said Jacqueline Windebank, head of community engagement at SAIS. “This act serves as a token of our profound gratitude to those who bravely stand in harm’s way, safeguarding us all.”

According to Windebank, many students at SAIS have direct ties to the U.S. Navy as they have family members who either have served or are serving.

Volunteers from both groups and the American Club in Singapore donated items and worked together to pack the boxes with familiar items and a taste of home.

“The American Association of Singapore is thrilled to partner with Stamford American International School to support our Sailors here. It’s our small way of saying ‘thank you’ from the American community here in Singapore to those who serve our great nation far from home,” said Melinda Murphy, general manager, AAS. “It’s truly heartwarming to see so many from the community – young and old – pitching in to show our gratitude.”

The CARE package has become part of the U.S. military lexicon for more than 70 years since the end of World War II in Europe, according to the National Museum of American History website; and is an acronym for the organization: Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe. The original intent of CARE was to create infrastructure for Americans to “send emergency packages of food to friends and relatives in post-war Europe.”

Today, a care package is a beloved term for a package of comforting essentials sent to deployed service members far from home.

“Thank you for giving these care packages to the Rappahannock crew,” said Lorraine Ninete, Purser, fleet replenishment oiler ship USNS Rappahannock (T-AO 204). “Some were excited like little kids trying to find out what’s in their boxes.”

MSC Far East Chaplain, Lt. Jamil Khan, delivered the care packages to Civil Service Mariners and Sailors aboard four Military Sealift Command ships. Crews

from USNS Rappahannock, ocean surveillance ships USNS Impeccable (T-AGOS 23) and USNS Able (T-AGOS 20), and expeditionary fast transport USNS Puerto Rico (T-EPF 11) received a package filled with games, food and supplies.

“What I loved most was seeing the joy on their faces as they tore open the boxes and read the heart-felt notes that the kids had written,” said Khan. “It’s an incredible feeling to be recognized and appreciated by the international community in Singapore, and it serves as a reminder that our effort does not go unnoticed.”



Military Sealift Command Civilian Mariner Andre Nero, an Able Seaman, with oceanographic survey ship USNS Able (T-AGOS 20), receives a care package prepared and donated by students and their families from the Stamford American Internal School, and members of the American Association in Singapore, during a port stop in Singapore, Nov. 20. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Jamil Khan)

FUEL THE BEAST

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Brad Kaminski, USS Boxer (LHD 4)

The U.S. Navy has long been charged with preserving the peace by protecting international law, and safeguarding all nations’ inherent right to freedom of the seas. Supplies and equipment are required to fuel the nearly 100 Navy ships operating around the globe every day.

The founding fathers knew the importance of establishing a Navy capable of self-sustainment, as Alexander Hamilton said in The Federalist No. 11, “To the establishment of a Navy, it must be indispensable.”

One major modern component to this maritime capability of self-sustainment is the execution of an underway replenishment-at-sea, known as an “UNREP.” The UNREP evolution is a true testament to the coordination and teamwork required to keep each ship sea worthy and mission-focused. From the bridge-to-bridge communication in the pilot house, to the boatswain’s mates manning the replenishment-at-sea station and logistics specialists processing the oncoming inventory, it requires a focused performance from all hands involved.

“It’s definitely a sought after skill that the U.S. Navy has really developed and mastered,” said Lt. Cassidy Lewis, a native of San Diego and a qualified Officer of the Deck aboard Boxer. “Being less than 200 feet away from another vessel for an extended period of time while managing the effects of the ocean – along with maintaining clear and concise communication is critical to making the evolution successful and safe.”

The first documented replenishment-at-sea was during the Quasi-War by the USS Constitution in the Caribbean Sea in 1799. In the many years to follow, including the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II, this method of replenishment was consistently refined, providing new innovative techniques to foster a more streamlined process as technological advances in maritime capability were developed. This included incorporating a larger amount of ammunition, stores, fuel and personnel in a shorter period of time, allowing warships in a wide range of areas of operation

around the globe to maintain mission readiness. Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz called replenishment the “U.S. Navy’s secret weapon of World War II.”

The modern performance of a replenishment-at-sea is conducted in a vertical (VERTREP) and connected (CONREP) fashion depending on the situation and amount of materials required to transfer during the evolution.

Communication between the guide ship, sending the supplies, and the approach ship, receiving them, requires a large amount of planning. The sea state, time, location, speed, quantities needed and course are all factors taken into account before the evolution occurs. Once alongside, both vessels’ crews must be prepared to execute decisively in order to ensure the replenishment is a success.

“It’s important for the ship and the crew to experience a full scale evolution like a replenishment-at-sea,” said Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Eric Wade, a native Benton Harbor, Michigan. “It builds confidence knowing that we can sustain ourselves out at sea and continue to execute the Boxer’s mission going forward.”

On Oct. 3, Boxer conducted a replenishment-at-sea with Fleet Replenishment Oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 187). Boxer can also serve as the guide ship, demonstrating this capability during a refueling-at-sea with USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) a few days later.

“What it means for us and the fleet is that we can supply our smaller sister ships with fuel while at sea,” said Chief Machinist Mate Brandon Reese, a native of Prattville, Alabama, and Leading Chief Petty Officer of the Hydraulics Division. “It’s essential for the operational readiness of ships far from home anywhere in the world.”

Self-sustainment is key for ships at sea, and the crew aboard America’s Golden Gator works together—and with other vessels—to execute mission-critical underway replenishments that keep Boxer underway and mission-ready.

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SPECIAL OBSERVANCE: MSC OBSERVES NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

By Bill Mesta, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs



Civilian teammates and service members assigned to Military Sealift Command gathered on Naval Station Norfolk for a special observance held in honor of National American Indian Heritage Month, Nov. 30.

Every November, the Department of Defense joins the Nation in celebrating National American Indian Heritage Month. The celebration is also known in some circles as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month.

“National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month provides a platform for native people in the United States of America to share their culture, traditions, music, crafts, dance, and ways and concepts of life,” said Senior Chief Information Systems Technician Tina Rivera, the Mistress of Ceremonies for the special observance.

The theme for this year’s special observance was “Tribal Nations Soaring to New Heights.”

“Native American Heritage Month first began with the establishment of American Indian Day by the Governor of New York in May 1916,” Rivera stated. “Later, several additional states enacted celebrations during the fourth Friday in September, but the celebration did not gain official national recognition until President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 as ‘National American Indian Heritage Month.’

Similar proclamations under different names, including “Native American Heritage Month” and “National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month,” have been issued each year since 1994.

The keynote speaker for MSC’s special observance was Marilyn Morrison, Chief of the Roanoke-Hatteras Tribe under the Council of the Algonquian Indians of North Carolina, Inc.

We are all connected and it is important that we strengthen our connections with everyone around us because we all play an important role and each of us has something to offer to each other, Morrison said.

There are over 9 million American Indian and Alaska Natives living in the United States today. With over 574 federally recognized tribes, there are hundreds of different cultures that are as unique as the people they represent.

“Historically, American Indians have the highest record of military service per capita when compared to other ethnic groups,” according to the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). “The reasons are deeply rooted in traditional cultural values that drive them to serve their country. These include a proud warrior tradition, best exemplified by the following qualities said to be inherent to most, if not all, Native American societies: strength, honor, pride, devotion, and wisdom. These qualities closely correlate with military tradition.”

The special observance included a video presentation from DEOMI focused on National American Indian Heritage Month.

“As the first people to live on the land we all cherish, American Indians and Alaska Natives have profoundly shaped our country’s character and cultural heritage,” the video stated. “American Indians and Alaska Natives have built a legacy of professionalism and selfless service that inspires future generations.”

JANUARY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

By Stephanie Rusnak, Military Sealift Command Health Promotion Program

Every New Year you may tell yourself that this will be the year that you achieve your long awaited goals, just to find yourself at the end of the year without ever reaching those goals and repeating the cycle over again the following year. Research shows that 80% of New Year’s resolutions fail by the beginning of February. Why is that? Because New Year’s resolutions seldom have actionable steps. They are created out of peer pressure based on an arbitrary date.

This year, I encourage you to set SMART goals, not resolutions. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time bound

1. Reflect over all areas of your life to determine where you are and where you want to go.
2. Write down your SMART goals for the areas in your life you are committed to changing.
 - Be specific. Your goals should answer the questions of what you want to accomplish and why it is important.
 - Make it measurable. Quantify your goal in a way you have control. Do not rely on others to measure your success.
 - Make it achievable. Make sure the goal is possible to achieve. It all starts with a single step.
 - Make it relevant. Why is it important to you? Is this goal relevant to your life?
 - Time bound. Make the goal specific to a deadline. Having a deadline will create a sense of urgency that can motivate us.
3. Post your goals where you can see them. Try posting up words of affirmations, creating vision boards, and other visualization techniques.
4. Be flexible. Sometimes things can happen or you may have to re-evaluate your goals. Be flexible for change.

The Health Promotion program at MSC offers the following free services to its Civil Service Mariners:

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

HPP is here for you! We encourage you to connect with us for any questions or concerns you may have.

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Services. To oversee these organizations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff established the Joint Military Transportation Command.

On Dec. 15, 1948, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal issued a statement, “all military sea transport including Army transports would be placed under Navy command.” With the decision made, discussions began on the details of the actual transfer and scope of the new command.

While the Army and Air Force agreed in the transfer of sealift functions to the Navy, the services could not agree on how to distribute the costs. The services thought was the Navy should pay for the operations of the vessels, while the Navy believed that the services wanting to ship items should provide the necessary funds. This issue was not resolved until the new Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, issued a memorandum July 12, 1949 that spelled out the financing, purpose and responsibilities of MSTs. The new command opened for business October 1, 1949 – the birth of Military Sealift Command.

The initial MSTs fleet consisted of six troop transports, three attack transports, 12 attack cargo ships, and 16 tankers. These ships were commissioned vessels in the U.S. Navy and manned by military crews. During the Vietnam War, MSTs was renamed Military Sealift Command.

“MSC has been conspicuous because its people and ships generally have been where the action has been,” said Rear Adm. Bruce Keener III, Commander, Military Sealift Command (1981).

Since its inception MSTs/MSC has been present during every major conflict since World War II, providing vital logistics and operational support to the warfighters on the front line. MSTs responded to the challenge of the Korean War within nine months deploying the 24th Infantry Division from Japan followed by the 25th Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division. In three years, MSTs transported more than 54 million tons of cargo, nearly 5 million troops and passengers and more than 22 million long tons of petroleum.

Between 1965 and 1969, MSC transported nearly 54 million tons of combat equipment and supplies and nearly 8 million tons of fuel to Vietnam. MSC ships also transported troops to Vietnam which marked the last use of MSC troop ships. Now, U.S. troops are primarily transported to theater by air.

During the first Persian Gulf Wars, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, MSC distinguished itself as the largest source of defense transportation delivering more than 12 million tons of wheeled and tracked vehicles, helicopters, ammunition, dry cargo, fuel and

other supplies and equipment. At the height of the war, MSC managed more than 230 government-owned and chartered ships.

Following the attacks of 9/11, MSC ships delivered more than 25 billion gallons of fuel and moved 126 million square feet of combat equipment and supplies to U.S. and coalition forces engaged in operations supporting Iraq and Afghanistan.

In March of 2003, on the heaviest day of delivering combat gear to Kuwait for Operation Iraqi Freedom, MSC operated 167 ships that stretched from the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts to Kuwait, the equivalent to one ship every 50 miles, a constant stream of combat material, supplies, vehicles and helicopters delivered to U.S. forces in the Middle East.

Throughout its existence, the MSC combat logistics force has continued to provide fuel, ordnance, food, parts, and supplies via underway replenishment to carrier strike groups and amphibious ready groups, independent deployers and ships from allied and partner nations.

“In peacetime, during conflict, responding to natural disasters and now during this global pandemic, our mariners and their teammates ashore remain steadfast and committed to provide agile logistics to our Navy, support joint warfighters forward and help defend our nation,” according to Rear Admiral Michael Wettlaufer, Commander, Military Sealift Command (2023).

The key for MSC’s longevity has always been its Civil Service Mariners (CIVMARs). Merchant mariners have courageously supported the nation’s warfighters, and they have a tradition of going in harm’s way to deliver equipment and personnel, wherever and whenever called upon.

There is no better display of the spirit and versatility of the merchant mariner than the “Taluga Tigers.” In 1972, a group MSC civil service mariners did something many naval leaders didn’t think was possible when they took a decommissioned Navy oiler and converted it into MSC’s first fleet service oiler.

The experimental project, Charger Log II, tested MSC’s ability to man a fleet oiler with a minimum crew of mariners. The goal was to test the viability of operating an aging Navy ship with a civilian crew.

The recently decommissioned Cimarron-class oiler, USS Taluga (T-AO 62), was turned over to MSC, and after an overhaul, USNS Taluga (T-AO 62) became the first MSC fleet support oiler. Manned with a crew of 105 CIVMARs and a 16-member military detachment to handle communications, Taluga would conduct 875 underway replenishments with the Seventh Fleet over three and a half years.

The Tigers proved that mariners could conduct underway replenishments re-purposing a Navy oiler and their efforts set a new course for the Navy. It was a cost-saving alternative that preserved the operational lifetime of numerous naval vessels.

With the success of Taluga, the Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force grew from one ship to 22 T-AOs, eight T-AEs and three supply ships purchased from the British Ministry of Defense recommissioned as Sirius-class T-AFS ships. Then, in 1987, the USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO-187) was introduced to the fleet in 1987 becoming the first of a 15-ship class of replenishment vessels designed from the beginning to be operated by civilian mariners.

“Through innovation, adaptability and a commitment to success, we will continue Military Sealift Command’s legacy of Maritime Excellence for another 75 years,” charged Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, Commander, Military Sealift Command (2024).

As the Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet oiler era ends, the John Lewis-class era begins, and MSC continues to adapt to an ever-evolving maritime environment. The Navy accepted delivery of USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205) in July 2022. It is the first of 20 in the class – USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206) was delivered in May 2023.

The new oilers have the capacity to carry 156,000 barrels of oil, including biofuels. They are fitted with a helo-deck with the capacity to conduct refueling for helicopters, and they can hold more dry cargo than their predecessors. The vessels can also be armed with a close-in weapon system anti-ship missile defense system for detecting and destroying anti-ship cruise missiles.

Twelve new classes of vessels are scheduled to come on-line over the next decade, and 20 new ships will be delivered to the fleet in the next five years, all with modernized systems. MSC is also focusing on emerging capabilities such as new connectors, unmanned aerial resupply and expeditionary munitions reload to better support distributed maritime logistics.

For 75 years, MSC has provided agile logistics, strategic sealift and specialized missions to the Department of Defense and has kept warfighters equipped and ready. Now, they are looking forward to another 75!

MSC is grateful for Dr. Salvatore R. Mercogliano’s contributions to this article. Salvatore R. Mercogliano Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of History at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina, and Adjunct Professor at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation from the State University of New York Maritime College, along with a Merchant Marine Deck Officer License (Unlimited Tonnage 2nd Mate), a Master’s in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology from East Carolina University, and a Ph.D. in Military and Naval History from the University of Alabama.

MSC anyday

USNS Big Horn (T-AO 198)



Military Sealift Command’s fleet replenishment oiler USNS Big Horn (T-AO 198) approaches the aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), prior to a fueling-at-sea in the Philippine Sea, Nov. 10. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan Brown)

Military Sealift Command

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Editor, Sealift, Military Sealift Command
471 East C Street
Norfolk, VA 23511-2419
Commercial: 757-443-2839
DSN: 646-2839
EMAIL: lewis.w.mesta.civ@us.navy.mil

CommanderRear Admiral Philip Sobeck, USN
Director, Public Affairs Tom Van Leunen
Deputy Director, Public Affairs Jillian Morris
EditorBill Mesta, Norfolk, VA
Visual InformationBrian Suriani, Norfolk, VA
Visual InformationRyan Carter, Norfolk, VA
WriterJennifer Hunt, Norfolk, VA
Writer Hendrick Dickson, Norfolk, VA
WriterDave Griesmer Norfolk, VA
Writer LaShawn Sykes, Norfolk, VA
WriterSarah Cannon, San Diego, CA
WriterGrady Fontana, Singapore

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