



# SEALIFT

THE U.S. NAVY'S MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

SEPTEMBER 2024



U.S. Navy Sailors, U.S. Army Soldiers, members of the Australian Defense Force and members of the British Armed Forces, man the rails as the expeditionary fast transport ship USNS City of Bismarck (T-EPF 9) sails into the Port of Legazpi in preparation for the start of Pacific Partnership 24-2 in the Philippines July 30, 2024. Now in its 20th iteration, Pacific Partnership series is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Pacific Partnership works collaboratively with host and partner nations to enhance regional interoperability and disaster response capabilities, increase security and stability in the region, and foster new and enduring friendships in the Indo-Pacific. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Ryan D. McLearnon)

## PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2024-2 CONCLUDES SECOND MISSION STOP IN LEGAZPI, PHILIPPINES

From Petty Officer 1st Class Ryan D. McLearnon, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet Public Affairs

Pacific Partnership 2024-2 (PP24-2) concluded its second mission stop in Legazpi, Philippines, Aug. 13, at a closing ceremony hosted aboard the expeditionary fast transport ship USNS City of Bismarck (T-EPF 9) at the Legazpi City Port.

In a collaborative effort between Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, United Kingdom and the United States, PP24-2 participants held basic first aid workshops for 98 members of the community, taught health and music fundamentals to 2,776 local students, and facilitated training for search and rescue professionals and K-9s

Participants also organized a multinational conference with faith community leaders. provided free spay and



U.S. Navy Capt. Daniel Keeler, the Pacific Partnership 2024-2 (PP24-2) Mission Commander, gives remarks at the PP24-2 Philippines closing ceremony aboard USNS City of Bismarck (T-EPF 9) in Legazpi, Philippines. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Gavin Arnoldhendershot)

neuter clinics including rabies vaccinations for 281 cats and dogs, performed eight public concerts for approximately 7,500 people with the Philippine Navy Seabees Band, and renovated a building at Legazpi Port Elementary School.

The Pacific Partnership team also worked with the Legazpi City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office to test the city's tsunami response plan for the first time.

"Pacific Partnership brings nations together to prepare in calm to respond in crisis," said U.S. Navy Capt. Daniel Keeler, PP24-2 mission commander. "Multilateral efforts with the local government and military representatives alike are crucial to laying the groundwork for Indo-Pacific disaster response preparedness, maritime security and stability."

The largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific, Pacific Partnership enables participants, including U.S. and Philippine personnel, to work together to enhance disaster response capabilities and foster new and enduring friendships.

In addition to mission leadership, the Legazpi City Mayor Carmen Geraldine B. Rosal and Philippine Army Lt. Gen. Facundo Palafox, Commander Southern Luzon Command, also attended the closing ceremony.

"We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the services and projects you have shared with us and our community," said Mayor Rosal. "Our collaboration is a testament that we can do great things if we put our efforts together for the benefit of the people."

PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP continued on page 8



U.S. Hawaii Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Walter Ross, gives a speech during the Pacific Partnership 2024-2 (PP24-2) Philippines mission stop closing ceremony aboard the expeditionary fast transport ship USNS City of Bismarck (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Gavin Arnoldhendershot)

### in this issue

CTF 73 Change of Command - page 2

Super Garuda Shield 2024 - page 3

We Are MSC - page 4

RIMPAC 2024 - page 5

Maritime Academies Visit - page 6

Blast from the Past - page 7

# COMBINED TASK FORCE 73 HOLDS CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY IN SINGAPORE

By Lt. Cmdr. Derrick Ingle, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific

With the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS Carl Brashear (T-AKE 7) in the background, the tone was set for the 22nd change of command ceremony for Commander Logistics Group, Western Pacific/Task Force 73 (CTF 73). Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson bequeathed command of CTF 73 to his successor, Rear Adm. Todd Cimicata, Aug. 2, in the Sembawang region of Singapore.

The pier-side ceremony commenced on the flight deck of the USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10) in front of more than 100 guests, which included loved ones, diplomats, academics, staffers, and senior leaders from allied and partner navies.

U.S. 7th Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Fred Kacher presided as keynote speaker for the ceremony.

“Despite the relentless pace of operations in the Western Pacific, he [Melson] has never missed a beat to ensure that this group [73] continues to deliver to our fleet, and the American people, and this region,” said Kacher. “And that is a warfighting advantage that we can count on to keep the peace in an incredibly important part of the world.”

As head of CTF 73, Melson’s team led nearly 2,500 underway replenishments, which equated to 400 million gallons of fuel for surface units deployed to the Western Pacific. In addition, his command delivered 70 thousand pallets of cargo and nearly 30 thousand pallets of ordnance. These efforts were recognized by the U.S. Marine Corps, and a CTF 73 staff Marine Officer was named Ammunition Officer of the Year in 2023.

“My focus was to deliver credible and reliable logistics in the maritime domain to ensure our commanders had viable options, whether in a competitive or contested environment,” said Melson. “My second priority was to strengthen the bilateral relationship with our host nation Singapore and the multilateral relationships with our regional allies and partners. The trust and cooperation we have built with our Singaporean counterparts from the ministerial level down to the task force level is mission critical in responding to the current and future dynamic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.”

In attendance for the ceremony were senior members of the Republic of Singapore Navy, the Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S.-Singapore Embassy, and officers from the navies of Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. They all attended to welcome Cimicata and bid Melson farewell and following seas.

“Mark as you prepare to pass the torch to Rear Adm. Cimicata, you have embodied the lead – drive – fight ethos, and I’m confident Chimi, [Cimicata] that you’re going to keep this winning streak going,” said Kacher.

In his closing remarks, Cimicata said, “Mark, your leadership has set a high standard, and I am privileged to carry forward your legacy. I am also excited to collaborate and work shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies and partners. The synergy of our combined efforts will elevate logistics and sustainment in the maritime domain -- ensuring that our forces remain agile, responsive, and resilient in the face of any challenge. I am honored to serve as the new commander, and I look forward to the challenges, relationships and opportunities that lie ahead.”

Rear Adm. Todd Cimicata, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific/Task Force 73, informs Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet, that he has relieved Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson, during a change of command ceremony. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jomark A. Almazan)



Cimicata, a native of Rochester, New York, and a career Naval Aviator, assumed command as a newly pinned Admiral, coming from Commander, Naval Air Forces, Pacific Fleet (COMNAVAIRPAC) in San Diego, California. The emotional ceremony concluded with 15 musicians of the U.S. 7th Fleet Band playing Anchors Aweigh. Melson, a native of Iowa, will retire in fall 2024, after more than 32 years of service.

“It has been my profound honor to serve as the 21st Commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific and Task Force 73,” said Melson. “The friendships and partnerships forged during my tenure will remain with me always. I am proud of what we have achieved together.”

## SHIP SUPPORT UNIT GUAM CHANGES LEADERSHIP

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East Public Affairs



Cmdr. Kristopher M. Blandin, left, incoming Commander, Military Sealift Command Ship Support Unit Guam, speaks to the audience during the SSU Guam change of command ceremony in the base chapel at Naval Base Guam, July 12, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Grady T. Fontana)

Military Sealift Command’s Ship Support Unit in Guam transferred authority during a change of command ceremony at the chapel on board Naval Base Guam, July 12.

In the ceremony, Cmdr. Kristopher M. Blandin assumed the helm from Cmdr. Omari D. Buckley for MSC SSU Guam, which is located at NB Guam.

Capt. Robert R. Williams, Commodore of MSC Far East, presided over the ceremony that was witnessed by a crowd of various commanding officers, staffs, and family members.

“Guam’s strategic location in the Western Pacific makes NB Guam a vital hub for U.S. Navy’s operations and power projection in the region,” said Williams. “From day one, Cmdr. Buckley understood the importance of ship support in this region. His team is among the best, and under his leadership, SSU Guam has taken major steps towards strengthening its ship repair capabilities.”

Buckley, a native of Harrisville, Mississippi, assumed command of SSU Guam in July 2022. During his tour, he led a team that bolstered MSC’s ability to rapidly re-arm, re-supply, re-fuel, and repair ships across the full spectrum of operations; and guaranteed MSC’s ability to support the warfighters.

In his final address to SSU Guam, Buckley credited the command’s success to the team’s hard work.

“Leadership is not about being in charge, it’s about taking care of those in your

charge,” said Buckley, to the SSU Guam team. “It has been about you, your families, and the exceptional work you do seven days a week to support our warfighters in the third busiest port in the U.S. Navy.”

Blandin, a native of Boise, Idaho, assumed oversight of SSU Guam, which provides operations, logistics, maintenance, and administrative support for all MSC operated, controlled, and interest vessels in support of the type commander and/or as directed by the area commander in support of the fleet commander.

“I am humbled and truly grateful for the opportunity to lead this extraordinary organization, with such dedicated and inspiring people, who have so much experience,” said Blandin. “We have a vital mission today supporting the fleet. We also have an essential mission to look ahead and ensure we meet all challenges to our mission and develop solutions. It will be my honor to lead SSU Guam in this effort.”

Before assuming responsibilities of SSU Guam, Blandin served as Executive Officer of pre-commission unit aboard USS Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29).

Blandin’s sea assignments include serving as anti-terrorism officer and anti-submarine warfare officer aboard USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) and damage control assistant aboard USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79). He served his department head tours aboard USS Anzio (CG 68) as the weapons officer, and as administrative officer and senior watch officer in Amphibious Squadron FOUR (CPR 4).

During his post department head tour, he served as damage control assistant aboard USS George H. W. Bush (CVN 77).



Cmdr. Omari D. Buckley, right, outgoing Commander, Military Sealift Command Ship Support Unit Guam, speaks to the audience during the SSU Guam change of command ceremony in the base chapel at Naval Base Guam, July 12, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Grady T. Fontana)

# MV CAPE HUDSON ARRIVES AT INDONESIA FOR SUPER GARUDA SHIELD 24 OFFLOAD

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Command Far East Public Affairs



Military vehicles are staged near Military Sealift Command chartered ship MV Cape Hudson (T-AKR 5066) during an offload of equipment in support of exercise Super Garuda Shield 2024, at the Port of Banyuwangi, Indonesia Aug. 12. Super Garuda Shield, one of the largest multinational exercises in the Indo-Pacific region, continues to solidify the U.S.-Indonesia Major Defense Partnership Defense Cooperation Agreement and advances cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. (Navy photo by Grady T. Fontana)

Activated U.S. Maritime Administration Ready Reserve Force ship Motor Vessel (MV) Cape Hudson (T-AKR 5066) arrived at the port of Banyuwangi, Indonesia, to offload equipment in support of exercise Super Garuda Shield 2024, Aug. 12-13, 2024.

Operated by Military Sealift Command (MSC), the vessel embarked on its voyage from its home base in San Francisco, and made stops to load cargo and personnel in Tacoma, Washington, Honolulu, and Japan before arriving at Banyuwangi.

Super Garuda Shield, one of the largest multinational exercises in the Indo-Pacific region, continues to solidify the U.S.-Indonesia Major Defense Partnership Defense Cooperation Agreement and advances cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

“This is not a typical commercial route,” said Civilian Mariner Benjamin Day, Ship’s Master, MV Cape Hudson. “We originated from the West Coast of the United States, then Hawaii and Japan, to bring equipment and a mission set all the way to Banyuwangi, Indonesia, to support (Exercise Super Garuda Shield).”

Oversight of the offload in Indonesia was conducted by a detachment of the U.S. Army’s 835th Transportation Battalion, 599th Transportation Brigade, Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), out of Okinawa, Japan.

Within two days, the ship unloaded approximately 313 pieces of equipment and containers. Once the items were discharged off the ship, they were staged at the marshalling area for onward movement to the respective training area.

Between the expertise of MSC, SDDC and Banyuwangi port officials, all gear was off loaded as scheduled.

Cape Hudson is a 750-foot-long roll-on, roll-off container vessel with four decks of cargo space. The ship can accommodate 186,000 sq. ft. of cargo, which equates to about 4.3 acres of space that can equal roughly 38,000 tons of cargo. It is part of the Cape H-class of ships that include MVs Cape Horn and Cape Henry.

Despite its massive presence, the ship’s characteristically low draft allows for this tonnage while still getting into smaller ports. This ship has a significant cargo capacity and is multimodal, making Cape Hudson ideal for the charter.

According to Day, his experience on commercial container ships differs from these types of ships and missions.

“These ships are a lot different than what I’m used to,” said Day, who has more than six years of experience with the Cape H-class ships. “Doing this type of mission is fun because the cargo is different, you’re lashing it differently; it takes a broader skill set.”

Cape Hudson is part of the Ready Reserve Force fleet of vessels. The RRF is a subset of vessels within the U.S. Maritime Administration’s (MARAD) National Defense Reserve Fleet ready to support the rapid worldwide deployment of U.S. military forces.

As part of the crew of Cape Hudson, MSC also assigned a Tactical Advisor (TACAD), whose job is to deploy on commercial chartered vessels and act as a liaison between military higher headquarters and the ship’s crew.

The Navy Reserve is MSC’s manpower solution for surge mission sets, and TACADs are typically Strategic Sealift Officers (SSOs), who are warfare qualified Navy Reserve Officers with civilian Merchant Mariner credentials and military training to support the activation, operation, and sustainment of the Sealift fleet.

“I make sure the vessel gets from ‘point A’ to ‘point B’ safely and that we are in contact with higher headquarters,” said Lt. j.g. Alexa Lumpkin, TACAD on Cape Hudson. “This involves establishing secure communications between the ship and military operations center. I also provide contested-maritime-environment training with the crew.”

Lumpkin is serving on her fourth TACAD mission. She stated she enjoys serving as the TACAD. In her civilian job, she is a merchant marine and sailing on her Third Mate’s license as a Merchant Mariner can be stressful.

“As a mate, I don’t feel like I have a lot of time when we get to port,” said Lumpkin. “But as a TACAD, it’s a whole different experience. I get to work with lot of people; I get to be involved in missions such as this. I just like being a part of it.”

Additionally, to support the discharge of equipment, MSC deployed a three-member Reserve-component

team from various Reserve Expeditionary Port Units (EPU) in the U.S. to assist with port operations.

“We’re here to help MSC and SDDC with the offload of Cape Hudson. Our role is to act as a liaison between SDDC, the ship, and port authorities, and to make sure that the port is suitable for the ship in Banyuwangi,” said Quartermaster Chief Joshua Vest, senior enlisted leader, EPU 112, from Little Rock, Arkansas. “We’re also making sure everyone involved is adhering to safety procedures. I think we’ve been maintaining a good schedule, and everybody has learned something valuable toward the expeditionary side of port operations.”

According to Vest, it makes a lot of sense to bring out EPUs to support these specialized missions.

“EPUs play a crucial role that is sometimes overlooked,” said Vest. “Their contributions are not tethered to certain tasks or responsibilities but on providing expertise in varying situations.”

According to the MARAD website, RFF provides nearly 50 percent of government-owned surge sealift capability.

MSC Far East supports the U.S. 7th Fleet and ensures approximately 50 ships in the Indo-Pacific Region are manned, trained, and equipped to deliver essential supplies, fuel, cargo, and equipment to warfighters, both at sea and on shore. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2024, MSC exists to support the joint warfighter across the full spectrum of military operations, with a workforce that includes approximately 6,000 Civil Service Mariners and 1,100 contract mariners, supported by 1,500 shore staff and 1,400 active duty and Reserve military personnel.

Military Sealift Command chartered ship MV Cape Hudson (T-AKR 5066) arrives at the Port of Banyuwangi, Indonesia, to offload equipment in support of exercise Super Garuda Shield 2024, Aug. 13. (U.S. Navy photo by Grady T. Fontana)



# WE ARE MSC: BROTHERS' FAMILY TIES HELP CREATE CLOSE-KNIT CREW ABOARD USNS APALACHICOLA

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

In February 2023, the Navy accepted delivery of the spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport vessel USNS Apalachicola (T-EPF 13) ushering in a new era for one of Military Sealift Command's most versatile platforms. It is the first EPF with Flight II specifications, incorporating medical capability and the ability to support V-22 osprey flight operations.

With a crew size of only 25, every Civil Service Mariner aboard Apalachicola has to perform multiple duties to ensure mission success which makes working together vital. Brothers Kwabino and Henry Noris, who lead the ship's supply department, understand this. So, they use their family ties to help create a close-knit bond among the crew strengthening unity and camaraderie onboard.

Kwabino Noris, 46, is the Steward Cook aboard Apalachicola. His brother Henry, 41, is the ship's Supply Officer. Serving their country has always been a family affair. Their father is a retired senior chief in the U.S. Navy, and before Kwabino joined MSC, he served in the U.S. Army.

"I served in the Army for six years as a Food Service Specialist," said the Virginia Beach, Virginia, native. "When I was getting out, I saw MSC was hiring and their headquarters was in Norfolk, Virginia, close to home, so I just decided to try it."

Kwabino joined MSC in March 2004. It wasn't long after, he began recruiting his younger brother.

"When he first joined, he tried to get me to come in, and I heard the whole military thing and I was like 'I'm not joining the military,'" said Henry, also from Virginia Beach. "But after a few years of watching him and seeing what he was doing, I knew it was time."

In 2008, Henry took the oath to become a mariner. Since then, he and his brother's career paths have essentially aligned. Both joined as entry-level Supply Utilitymen (SU) and worked their way up the ranks through hard work and taking advantage of the opportunities MSC offered.

"We started as SUs but stayed focused on moving ahead," said Henry. "We both just put in the work to get to where we wanted to be. We took classes that MSC offered, got our qualifications, put in our packages and promoted up the ranks."

"I've sailed at every cook position up to Steward Cook," said Kwabino. "Only position I haven't sailed as is Chief Steward. But I've sailed at every other level and taken on every challenge along the long way."

This is the fourth time in their careers they have sailed together – having been shipmates aboard USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13) and USNS Supply (T-AOE 6).

"Whenever we're together, there is a lot of joking and sometimes a lot of catching up too because there are periods of time where we don't see each other. But he's a great professional, and I try my best so we're always going to do some good things when we're together," said Kwabino.



Most mariners would probably agree that aboard every ship, supply department sets the tone for morale. Mariners in supply department ensure crew is fed well, living quarters are comfortable and invaluable parts and consumables are on order. With Kwabino leading the culinary department and Henry the logistics department, a family atmosphere emanates throughout the crew.

"Just growing up, we've always been a tight-knit family and that's something we try to have here," said Kwabino. "We get together out in town and go bowling, and have dinner, we even break out the cornhole boards on the flight deck when we can. There is a lot of unity and camaraderie."

"From the top down - the Captain, Chief Engineer, SCO (Ship's Communications Officer), SUs and everybody else, make this ship one of my favorites," added Henry. "The number one rule is 'no drama.' We don't do drama here. It's good spirits and we get the job done. It's actually a family affair, and this is one of the best crews I've ever sailed with."

The Noris' family commitment to service has extended beyond the brothers. Kwabino's wife also serves with MSC. He says his daughter, a recent college graduate, is considering joining MSC as well. And Henry's oldest son will be joining the U.S. Air Force later this year. It is something they are proud of just as their father is seeing his sons' success.

"Our father thinks it is cool we're serving together on the same ship, and he's happy to know his sons are doing something positive with their lives," said Henry.

"We made the choice to serve our country and make it a career. To be able to support each other and depend on each other while we're doing that makes it a little easier," added Kwabino.

## MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND HOSTS WEEK-LONG TRAINING AND OUTREACH EVENT FOR SEA CADETS

By Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

For the second summer in the row, Military Sealift Command hosted U.S. Naval Sea Cadets to its ships and training facilities for weeklong training and outreach visit July 15-19.

The seven cadets who came from several states including Florida, Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina, spent a day at sea aboard the expeditionary fast transport USNS Apalachicola (T-EPF 13) to observe various shipboard operations. They also learned about conducting underway replenishments at the MSC Underway Replenishment Training Center; how to combat fire and flooding aboard ships in the Damage Control Wet Trainer, and participated in training evolutions such as search and rescue swimmer and shipboard reaction force training.

"Our goal is to allow them to see what different things MSC does and what opportunities are available to them," said Warrant Officer Brian Rulifson, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Leader, Pensacola, Florida. "While they are Sea Cadets, we want to expose them to as much as we can so when the time comes, they can determine what they want to do having had that firsthand experience."

"It definitely opened up a new area for me to explore for a career, and I definitely think I will look into it for something to do after high school. It has been really fun," added Sea Cadet Olivia Rulifson of Pensacola.

The U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps is the Navy's youth development program that gives young people skills, knowledge and confidence through an amazing variety of training opportunities. The mission is to build leaders of character.

"This program has been a significant change in my life," said Sea Cadet Philip Hackett of Windermer, Florida. "It's a really wonderful program. It's for kids our age to go out and learn a bunch of new skills they can possibly never get in any program like this."

For Sea Cadet Maddox Salazar of Moyock, North Carolina, it is his second year visiting MSC. This year he is the company leader. He said he was looking forward to seeing how much his fellow cadets enjoyed the experience.

"I think MSC is very cool for giving us this opportunity," he continued. "Having coming here for the second time I can say that they are bringing a unique experience to the cadets that help them choose what they want to do later in life."

MSC plans to continue this annual visit and make it a tradition, informing these young people and future leaders of MSC's mission as the nation's premier maritime logistics provider.



# MSC SHIPS PROVIDE LOGISTICS SUPPORT DURING RIMPAC 2024

By Sarah Cannon, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's (MSC) Combat Logistic Fleet (CLF) ships have completed their support to the world's largest, international maritime exercise, Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024, in Hawaii.

Throughout the four-week long exercise, MSC fleet replenishment oiler USNS Pecos (T-AO 197), and MSC dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) delivered nearly 4 million gallons of diesel ship fuel (DFM), over 1 million gallons of JP5 aviation fuel, and 1,256 pallets of food, dry stores, mechanical parts, supplies and mail, to U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard, and foreign navies' through a series of 101 replenishments-at-sea.

While moving cargo is a day's work on an MSC CLF ship, the RIMPAC operations tempo is unlike a regular day, where a ship may service one or two ships. During RIMPAC, the operations tempo could see the CLF ships service up to ten ships a day, with underway replenishments (UNREPs) being conducted on both sides of the ship with U.S. Navy and foreign navy ships.

"Supporting RIMPAC gives us the opportunity to provide UNREP services to the numerous allied countries who are participating," said Capt. Keith Walzak, Pecos' civil service master. "This allows both us and them to do real-time actual alongside operations, which without an event like RIMPAC would leave questions as to the abilities of the naval ships to be able to get those same services in a real wartime environment. As a duty oiler, the ship's mission is to provide services for the local fleet, be it in San Diego, or Pearl Harbor. In RIMPAC, everyday has the ship providing some sort of service, or role-playing different types of ships for the training of the engaged forces."

As a multi-national exercise, RIMPAC's unique aspect is the interaction between participating countries and the U.S. Navy. This is true for MSC ships as well, who provided logistics services to foreign navy ships during the exercise. Working with crews whose first language is not English, can prove challenging. For this reason, fostering relationships, before getting underway for the exercise, helped increase the communications with all the ships, making the UNREP evolutions smoother.

"One of the biggest challenges is communications," explained Nathan Wheeler, Washington Chamber's Civil Service Operations Chief. "One of the best ways to overcome these challenges is to host meet and greet visits aboard the vessel while in port, which Washington Chambers has done with countries such as the Republic of Korea."

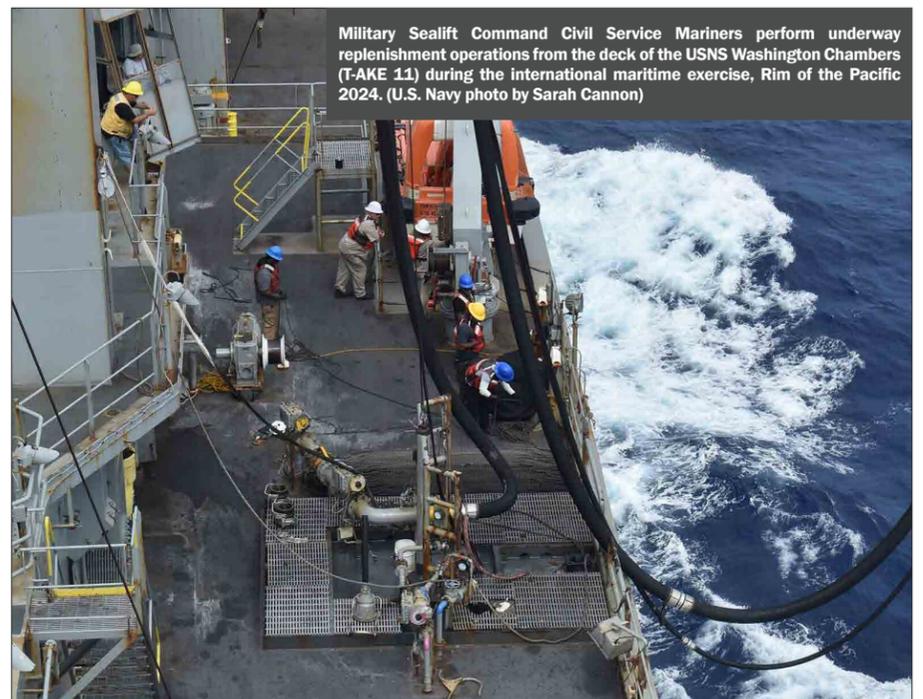
With the closing of the Navy's fuel terminal at Red Hill, MSC CLF ships received fuel through a series of Consolidated Cargo Operations (CONSOLs) with two MSC chartered tankers; Overseas Mykonos and Allied Pacific. The two tankers delivered over 2 million gallons of JP5 and DFM through 17 CONSOLs with

the MSC ships and to the New Zealand Navy's Polar-class sustainment vessel HMNZS Aotearoa (A11).

The key to meeting the demands of RIMPAC is MSC's ability to work in concert, directly with Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet and Commander, Task Force 73. The MSC Representative Pearl Harbor coordinated the delivery of food and stores, as well as the pierside time at the correct pier for the loadouts of cargo to the specific ships scheduled for later RAS.

"Being part of RIMPAC allows us to participate with other nations that have common goals, and ideologies," said Walzak "There have been multiple events scheduled, ashore to allow all the RIMPAC participants to gather together, and share cultures. The best one was 4th of July fireworks."

Twenty-nine nations, 40 surface ships, three submarines, 14 national land forces, more than 150 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC in and around the Hawaiian Islands, June 27 to Aug. 1. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC 2024 is the 29th exercise in the biennial series that began in 1971.



Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariners perform underway replenishment operations from the deck of the USNS Washington Chambers (T-AKE 11) during the international maritime exercise, Rim of the Pacific 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Sarah Cannon)

## USNS BURLINGTON ARRIVES IN COLÓN, PANAMA DURING CONTINUING PROMISE 2024

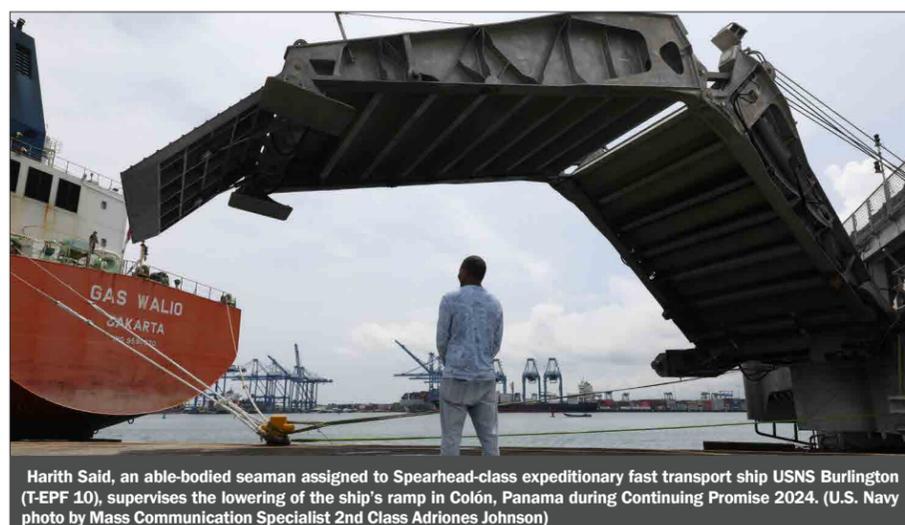
By Lt. j.g. Daniel Ehrlich, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command / U.S. 4th Fleet

Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) arrived in Colón, Panama, on Aug. 18, 2024, as part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet's Continuing Promise 2024.

Panama is the final stop on this iteration of the Continuing Promise mission, which has seen previous stops in Jamaica, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Colombia. This visit to Panama is the seventh such visit for Continuing Promise since the exercise first began in 2007, and first visit to Colón since 2019. Burlington served as the primary ship for Continuing Promise 2023, which stopped in Almirante, Panama.

"We are excited for Continuing Promise's return to Panama," said Lt. Cmdr. Zachary Smith, Continuing Promise 2024 mission commander. "We have seen so much success on this mission with our various partners and we aim to finish strong with our partners here."

Thirty U.S. Navy medical professionals specializing in dentistry, family and geriatric medicine, optometry, nursing, pharmacy, biomedical equipment repair, land radiology will partner with Panamanian Ministry of Health personnel and civilian



Harith Said, an able-bodied seaman assigned to Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10), supervises the lowering of the ship's ramp in Colón, Panama during Continuing Promise 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Adriones Johnson)

medical professionals to provide care at Clinica Dr. Hugo Spadafora and Parque de Juventud during the mission's visit to Colón.

"My favorite part of this mission is working with host nation medical professionals and students," said Cmdr. Brent Collins, an ophthalmologist with the mission. "It is really different from the regular grind working by yourself."

A detachment of four U.S. Army veterinary professionals will also provide working dog subject matter expert exchanges to the Panamanian Ministry of Security and partner-led veterinary events with local veterinary professionals.

Along with medical personnel, the CP24 team also includes a detachment from the U.S. Fleet Forces Band called "Uncharted Waters." The band will perform and conduct music clinics at seven separate events throughout the visit.

"I enjoy seeing what we share in common despite not speaking the same language," said Musician 1st Class Benjamin Fodor. "I also enjoy seeing what's different in how we see music and how we can learn from one another."

Ten U.S. Navy engineers, known as Seabees, will conduct renovations throughout the week on a clinic at the Colón branch of the Panamanian Ministry of Health's Centro Reintegra.

U.S. Navy Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) professionals will host two multi-day seminars, a on the topic of gender-based violence. WPS is a United Nations (UN) initiative that started with UNSCR 1325 signed in 2000. The UN resolution is a public acknowledgement that women are more adversely impacted by conflict and crisis, and including women in security planning will lead to a more peaceful world.

While in Panama, U.S. Department of Defense humanitarian assistance and disaster relief professionals will partner with non-government organizations such as the International Federation of the Red Cross, University of Miami, and Deployed Logix to host a two-day training event. The first day will feature a classroom training on disaster relief tactics with the second day being a field training day to put those tactics into action.

# MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND HOSTS MARITIME ACADEMIES

By Jennifer Hunt, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

Representatives from each of the six state U.S. maritime academies toured fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) after attending presentations and discussions regarding recruiting and retention improvements facilitated by Military Sealift Command's Total Force Management team. (U.S. Navy Photo by Jennifer Hunt)



Military Sealift Command (MSC) hosted representatives from each of the six state U.S. maritime academies as an effort to improve recruiting and strengthen partnerships within the maritime industry.

“This is the first time that we were able to gather a representative from each of the maritime academies,” said Frank Cunningham, Deputy Director of Total Force Management. “We are looking to increase the number of graduating Third Mates and Third Engineers wanting to join MSC, so we want to do whatever we can to improve that outcome.”

The representatives received an introductory presentation about MSC’s mission and structure prior to touring Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196). During the presentation, MSC’s Total Force Management team shared all of the initiatives currently underway to improve quality of life for the Civil Service Mariner workforce.

The Total Force Management team also facilitated conversations with the maritime academy representatives, seeking feedback on improving recruitment and cadet shipping processes.

“We met together about collaborating to get more cadets in the pipeline so that they can work for MSC and educating the next generation of the workforce so we can relay the benefits and how exciting it is,” said Maryanne Richards, Director of Career Services at Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

“We were able to meet people who are enthusiastic about their jobs like the Chief Mate and the Chief Engineer. You can just feel the buzz, so we want to bring that back to campus.”

During the tour of USNS Kanawha, First Officer Anthony Canseco provided feedback of his own on how academies can better prepare their Cadets for a career with MSC.

“The best thing you can do is send them out to get experience on MSC ships, to get the full 90 days to ensure they know what to expect,” said Canseco. “It’s better to get them on here early, we love to train and invest in our Cadets.”

In addition to meeting and talking with the crew, academy representatives walked through living and working spaces aboard Kanawha to get a better sense of life aboard an MSC vessel.

“This meeting has been really insightful. It’s really helpful to actually see what MSC is doing in person, so I can talk to students in a more impactful way,” said Maya Sandy, Career Services Coordinator at Texas A&M University Galveston Campus. “To be able to trade ideas and tell MSC where we need better support from them and vice versa is very rewarding.”

“We got a lot of good feedback on areas of Cadet shipping, hiring graduates and retaining our workforce,” said Cunningham. “It was a very positive meeting and it will be the first of many. We plan on doing this event annually.”

MSC directs and supports operations for approximately 140 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. Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2024, MSC exists to support the joint warfighter across the full spectrum of military operations, with a workforce that includes approximately 6,000 Civil Service Mariners.



Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) First Officer Anthony Canseco walks maritime academy representatives through Kanawha’s living and working spaces during a tour of the ship. (U.S. Navy Photo by Jennifer Hunt)

## MSC anyday



Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariners assigned to the submarine tender USS Emory S. Land (AS 39) throw a heaving line from the ship to Royal Australian Navy Sailors on the pier as the Emory S. Land moors at HMAS Stirling, Western Australia, Australia. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Darek Leary)



Sonny Trinh, left, a Civil Service Mariner, Operational Specialist 1st Class Alexander Hallquist, middle, and Mariano Gavino, a Civil Service Mariner, all assigned to Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport ship USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10), push down mooring lines after the ship enters port in Cartagena, Colombia as part of Continuing Promise 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Adriones Johnson)

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# MSC75 Blast from the Past - USNS Spica (T-AFS 9)



USNS Spica (T-AFS 9) served in Military Sealift Command for more than 25 years. It was built at Swan Hunter and Wigham Richardson Ltd, Wallsend-On-Tyne, United Kingdom for the Royal Navy as RFA Tarbatness (A-345). The ship was purchased by the U.S. Navy as a combat stores ship Nov. 1, 1981, and renamed USNS Spica, after the brightest object in the constellation Virgo and one of the 20 brightest stars in the night sky.

Spica's mission was to provide logistic support of naval forces by providing refrigerated supplies, dry supplies, spare parts, general supplies, fleet freight, mail and replacement of personnel. It participated in several major operations, including; Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Spica was stricken from the Navy Jan. 25, 2008, and laid up at the Naval Sea Systems Inactive Ships Maintenance Facility, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was sunk as a target during an exercise off the U.S. East Coast May 6, 2009.

## SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGING AWARENESS MONTH

By Meghan Sullivan, Military Sealift Command Health Promotion Program

This month focuses on the positive aspects of growing older. Many factors influence healthy aging. Some of these include genetics, which is not in our control. However, others like exercise, a healthy diet, and taking care of our mental health are all within our reach.

The National Institute of Aging (NIA) supported researchers have been reviewing the effects of strength training for years and have identified several ways it can help improve the lives of older adults, including maintaining muscle mass, improving mobility, and increasing the healthy years of life.

### Tips for Promoting Healthy Aging in Older Adults

- Encourage Regular Exercise. Find the right exercise that works for you! Exercise increases balance, relieves arthritis symptoms, and improves coordination. Common options among adults include walking, swimming, and dancing. Individuals with more severe mobility concerns should consult with a physical therapist to find suitable exercises.
- Make Changes to The Living Space. Make sure you have a clear walking space throughout your home. Some improvements such as installing railings and ramps can make it easier to move around your home. Various mobility issues are also associated with difficulty seeing, so make sure your home is properly lit.
- Enhance Balance. Proper balance requires the brain and body to work together. You can enhance your balance capabilities regular practice and exercises like standing on one foot, climbing stairs, and gently raising and lowering one leg at a time.
- Eat a Healthy Diet. An ignored cause of reduced mobility in adults is obesity. Being overweight puts a great deal of pressure on the joints, making walking difficult. It is a good idea to avoid processed foods and ensure to intake the recommended amounts fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains.

MSC has available resources for you. The Health Promotion program at MSC offers the free following services to its civilian 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 contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

EMAIL: [stephanie.rusnak.ctr@us.navy.mil](mailto:stephanie.rusnak.ctr@us.navy.mil) or [msullivan@millenniumhealthandfitness.com](mailto:msullivan@millenniumhealthandfitness.com)



## MSC IS NOW HIRING

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**PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP from Page 1**

In the aftermath of the December 2004 “Boxing Day” tsunami that devastated parts of South and Southeast Asia, the United States mobilized numerous military assets and personnel to support the relief effort. Recognizing the opportunity to build on the goodwill and lessons learned from that initial mission, the U.S. Navy planned and executed the inaugural Pacific Partnership (PP) mission in 2006; its primary aim was to proactively prepare for a more effective response to natural disasters while strengthening relationships and security ties between nations.

The Pacific Partnership mission brings a unique opportunity for collaboration and cooperation to the Indo-Pacific in a deliberate, sustainable, and transparent way by working to enhance the knowledge, experience, and capacity of all participants.

“Building upon the success of last year’s Pacific Partnership, we have strengthened our collaboration, expanded our capabilities and deepened our commitment to regional resilience,” said Palafox. “This year’s progress is a clear reflection of our dedication to enhancing the partnerships that are essential to our collective security and humanitarian efforts in the Indo-Pacific region.”

The United States stands ready to assist when called upon and continuously demonstrates its commitment to the region. Recent relief efforts include the 2023 volcanic eruption in Papua New Guinea, 2022 volcanic eruption and tsunami in Tonga, 2018 Super Typhoon Yutu relief efforts in Northern Mariana Islands, 2016 earthquake relief efforts in New Zealand, 2013 relief efforts in the Philippines for Operation Damayan in the wake of Super Typhoon Haiyan, and 2011 relief efforts during Operation Tomodachi in Japan following the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

# U.S. ARMY ASSAULT HELICOPTERS CONDUCT DECK LANDINGS ON USNS SACAGAWEA

By Grady Fontana, Military Sealift Far East Command Public Affairs



U.S. Army UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade lands aboard Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2), off the coast of Jinhae, South Korea, July 31, 2024. (Courtesy photo)

USNS Sacagawea, off the coast of Jinhae, South Korea, to certify nine crew members and 13 pilots in landing on a ship.

The DLQs were conducted through coordination between Military Sealift Command Office-Korea, USNS Sacagawea, and crews from Assault Helicopter Battalion 2-2 CAB to qualify or reset their crew on single-spot DLQ currency.

The training environment was also an opportunity for Army aircrews to ensure maritime air movement capability and readiness.

“Combining the expertise of professional Civil Service Mariners aboard USNS Sacagawea, and the joint efforts between U.S. Army’s 2-2 CAB and MSCO-Korea personnel, this evolution provided a valuable opportunity to enhance interoperability between all involved,” said Cmdr. Patrick J. Moore, Commanding

Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade (2-2 CAB) conducted deck landings with U.S. Army UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters aboard Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2), July 30-31, 2024.

The aircraft crews from Assault Helicopter Battalion 2-2 CAB practiced single-spot deck landings aboard



U.S. Army UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade lands aboard Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS Sacagawea (T-AKE 2), off the coast of Jinhae, South Korea, July 31, 2024. (Courtesy photo)

Officer, MSCO-Korea. “Overall, there was great collaboration between MSCO-K, USNS Sacagawea, and the Soldiers of 2-2 CAB.”

The event was executed safely and without incident.

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

## FALLEN MSC TEAMMATE



**Boatswain David Chinchilla**  
MSC Service 2020-2024

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



### Military Sealift Command

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

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