March 2021

SEALIFT

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

The crew of U.S. 6th Fleet command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) stands in formation during the ship's 50th anniversary celebration. (U.S. Navy photo by Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jared Kercel)

USS Mount Whitney Celebrates 50 Years of Excellence

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

U.S. 6th Fleet's flag ship, the Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20), celebrated its 50th birthday with a small ceremony in Gaeta, Italy, Jan. 14.

Vice Adm. Gene Black, commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, gave remarks as the crew, local dignitaries and Navy leadership reflected on the storied history and distinguished role Mount Whitney has played in key operations and exercises around the world since the ship's commissioning.

"This ship's history and accomplishments are truly remarkable," said Black. "You've enabled operations at sea, participated in joint service and multi-national exercises, and provided humanitarian assistance to our partners in need."

Over the years, Mount Whitney was on the scene for many major world events including Operation Uphold Democracy, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Assured Delivery, and Operation Odyssey Dawn.

"From Trident Juncture to Trident Jupiter, from Juniper Cobra to BALTOPS, Mount Whitney has been the lynchpin of our fleet from the Arctic to the Mediterranean," said Adm. Robert P. Burke, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, and Africa and commander, Allied Joint Force Command-Naples, via virtual remarks. "From routine operations to the enforcement of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 against Libya and then directing kinetic operations as flagship during Odyssey Dawn and NATO's Unified Protector, Mount Whitney is our enduring 'Vox Maris,' our 'Voice of the Sea.'"

As one of two Blue Ridge-class command ships in the United States Navy, Mount Whitney also serves as the afloat command ship for Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO), which Black also commands.

"Here on Mount Whitney, I know you're fond of saying your 'comms are bombs,' and these comms are incredible, ensuring that I, or any embarked commander, can confidently and effectively command and control widely-dispersed air, ground, and maritime units in an integrated fashion," said Black. "These accomplishments do not happen without your collective knowledge, skill, and expertise."

Capt. David Pollard, commanding officer of Mount Whitney, also provided remarks on the capabilities of his ship.

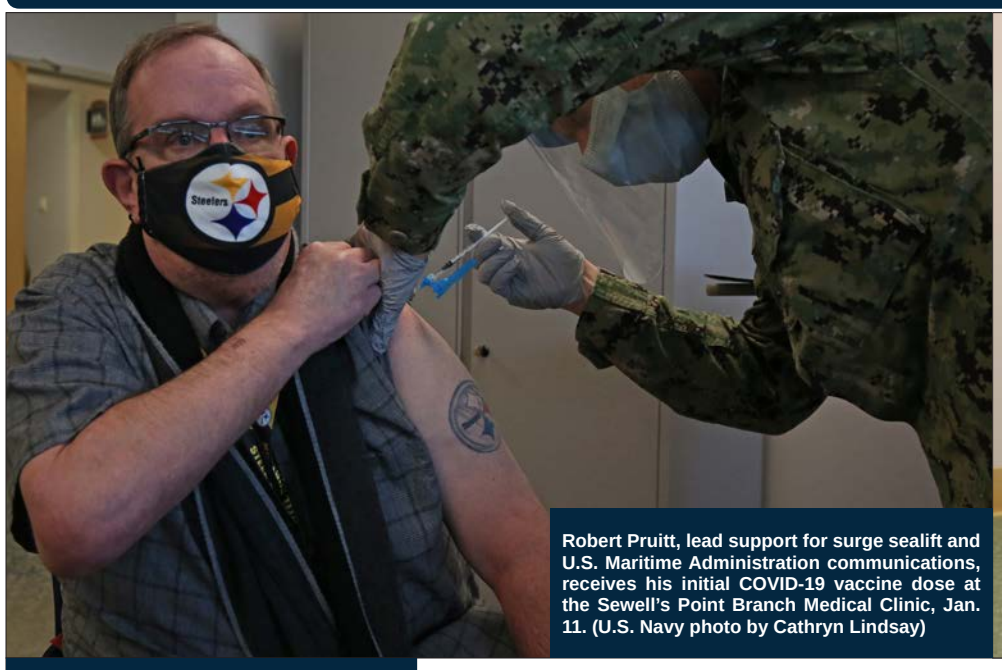
"Mount Whitney is the most sophisticated Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Combat Systems, and Intelligence

USS Mount Whitney continued on page 8

The U.S. 6th Fleet command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) in port during the ship's 50th anniversary celebration. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Justin Stumberg)

Capt. Dave Pollard, USS Mount Whitney commanding officer, (left) Vice Adm. Gene Black, Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, (center) Cosmo Mitrano, Mayor of Gaeta, and the crew of the command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) stand in formation during the ship's 50th anniversary celebration. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Justin Stumberg)

IN THIS ISSUE



Robert Pruitt, lead support for surge sealift and U.S. Maritime Administration communications, receives his initial COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, Jan. 11. (U.S. Navy photo by Cathryn Lindsay)

Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, Commander, Military Sealift Command (center) and MSC's Port Captain West Susan Orsini (left), receive their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine from Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Laverna Carbungco (right), at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic. (U.S. Navy photo by Jennifer Hunt)

Capt. Zachary Daniels, Master of the dry cargo ammunition ship USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13), receives his initial COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, Jan. 11. (U.S. Navy photo by Cathryn Lindsay)

Overcoming Challenges: MSC Working to Vaccinate Mariners, Staff

By Cathryn Lindsay, Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

As people around the world begin getting vaccinated against the novel coronavirus sars-cov-2 (COVID-19), the U.S. Department of Health, U.S. Department of Defense and subordinate agencies, including Military Sealift Command, are working diligently to overcome logistical hurdles to provide vaccines to civil service mariners, operationally critical civilian staff and service members around the world.

The ultimate goal is to have the vaccine available to the entire MSC Enterprise, explained Capt. Kathryn S. Elliot, Military Sealift Command's Force Surgeon. Military Sealift Command is working around the clock to prioritize mariners, work with partners to find scheduling opportunities and find ways to transport a delicate vaccine with very specific storage requirements.

"Worldwide, more than 1,250 staff members (as of early February) have received at least one dose of vaccine, and more than 350 have completed the series for full immunization," Elliot said.

The Department of Defense announced a phased approach in late December 2020 to distribute and administer the initial 43,875 doses of vaccine, with health care workers and medical staff being the first priority, in accordance with Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. The initial phase also required the vaccine to be administered from only 16 sites around the world by trained healthcare providers.

As the vaccine roll-out continues, more sites will be capable of receiving and administering the vaccine, Elliot explained. For example, Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, was only able to begin administering the vaccine doses in late January.

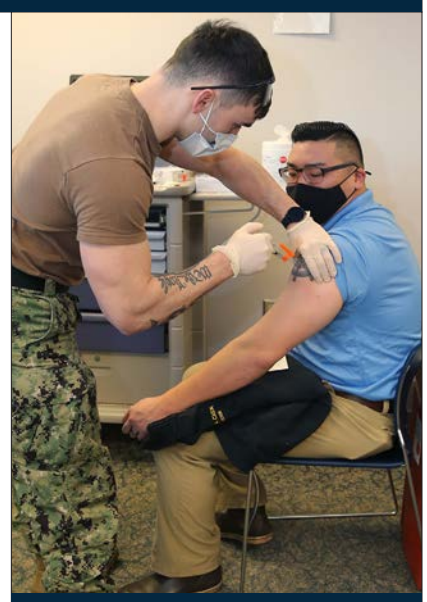
There are a complex set of variables that determine where and when the vaccine can be administered and to whom. Both the currently available vaccines, produced by Pfizer, Inc. and Moderna, Inc., require two doses of vaccine to be effective.

The vaccines doses must be kept at a specific temperatures, minus 80 degrees Celsius, for the Pfizer vaccine and minus 20 degrees Celsius for the Moderna vaccine, according to Elliot. Due to these specific temperature requirements, the facilities that receive the vaccine must have specialized equipment to store the initial and second doses.

"Plans are being developed to expand the vaccination sites, but the current limitations are based almost solely on the storage requirements," Elliot explained. "The vaccine doses require specific storage containers to be shipped and stored, and once the vaccine is thawed, it cannot be moved."

Vaccines continued on page 8

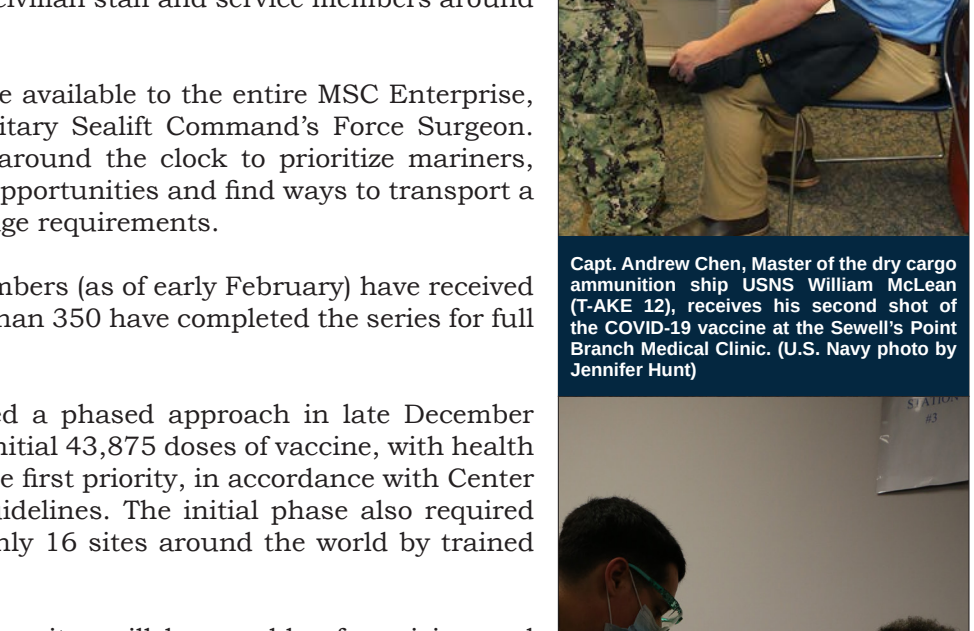
Chief Mate Pedro Aguinaldo, assigned to the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Joshua Humphreys (T-AO 188), receives his initial COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, Jan. 8. (U.S. Navy photo by Cathryn Lindsay)



Capt. Andrew Chen, Master of the dry cargo ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), receives his second shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic. (U.S. Navy photo by Jennifer Hunt)

Robert Carpenter, lead electronics technician for MSC's surge sealift ships, receives his initial COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, Jan. 11. (U.S. Navy photo by Cathryn Lindsay)

Able Bodied Seaman Harold Reid, assigned to the expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10), receives his initial COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, Jan. 8. (U.S. Navy photo by Cathryn Lindsay)



The Ship's Master of the expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10), Capt. David Narby, receives his initial COVID-19 vaccine dose at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic, Jan. 8. (U.S. Navy photo by Cathryn Lindsay)

Navy's Fleet Replenishment Oiler Recapitalization Making Headway

From Team Ships Public Affairs

The future USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's first-in-class fleet replenishment oiler, launched from General Dynamics-National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (GD-NASSCO) on Jan. 12, marking a significant shipbuilding milestone.

"Recapitalizing our aging fleet replenishment capabilities is a key component of making our naval logistics more agile and resilient," said Mike Kosar, Support Ships, Boats and Craft Program Manager, Program Executive Office, Ships. "John Lewis will be a steadfast and reliable ship and we have tremendous momentum behind the program right now. We're looking forward to delivering this enhanced capability to the fleet."

The future USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's first-in-class Fleet Replenishment Oiler, launched from General Dynamics-National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (GD-NASSCO) on Jan. 12, marking a significant shipbuilding milestone. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)

The John Lewis-class ships will be operated by the Navy's Military Sealift Command and provide underway replenishment of fuel and stores to U.S. Navy ships at sea and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. These ships will add capacity to the Navy's Combat Logistics Force and become the cornerstone of the fuel delivery system.

With John Lewis (T-AO 205) now in the water, production efforts will focus on final outfitting in support of Christening in the spring, and sea trials and delivery in late 2021. GD-NASSCO is also in production on the future USNS Harvey Milk (T-AO 206), which started construction in August, with delivery planned in 2022, and the future USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), which started construction in December 2020, with delivery planned in 2023.

U.S. Navy Names Future Military Sealift Command Ships

From Secretary of the Navy Public Affairs

The Navy announced on Jan. 15 that a future Navajo-class towing, salvage, and rescue ship will be named USNS Muscogee Creek Nation (T-ATS 10) to honor the self-governed Native American tribe located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

The Honorable Gregory J. Slavonic, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of the Navy and Oklahoma native, announced the name selection during a ceremony at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City.

"I am sincerely honored, on behalf of the Secretary of the Navy, to announce that this future naval vessel will carry the proud legacy of the people of the Muscogee Creek Nation, and be cemented as part of Navy and Marine Corps history," said Slavonic. "The future towing, salvage, and rescue ship honors the culturally distinct people of the state of Oklahoma, and will join the fleet as a symbol of appreciation for the contributions of American Indians and the Muscogee Creek citizens to the defense of our nation."

The Muscogee people are descendants of not just one tribe, but a union of several. Muscogee Creek Nation is the largest of the federally recognized Muscogee tribes, which is the fourth largest tribe in the U.S. with more than 86,000 citizens - some of which have or continue to serve across the U.S. Armed Forces. This ship will be the first Navy vessel to carry the name Muscogee Creek Nation.

"Despite a complex and sometimes challenging history with the U.S., no race has answered the call of duty and served more than Native Americans, per capita," said David Hill, Principal Chief of the Muscogee Creek Nation. "Today, we are joined together to once again strengthen our ties and recognize those efforts with this wonderful gesture by the Navy to respect that commitment. Myself, along with our tribal leadership, employees and citizens are so thrilled that for the first time, a United States Navy Ship will be named after the Muscogee Creek Nation."

In early 2019, the Navy announced that T-ATS ships would be known as the Navajo-class of ships to honor the contributions of the Navajo people to the armed forces. Vessels in this class are named for prominent Native Americans or Native American tribes.

The Navajo-class T-ATS ships are designed to combine and replace the current capabilities of the Powhatan-class ocean tugs and Safeguard-class rescue and salvage ships in service with the Military Sealift Command. They will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and 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 carry a load of nearly 2,000 tons.

Additionally, to honor the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, a future Navajo-class towing, salvage, and rescue ship will be named USNS Lenni Lenape (T-ATS 9). This will be the first naval vessel to carry the name of the Lenni Lenape tribe who are indigenous people of the Northeastern Woodlands, and the first tribe to sign a treaty with the United States in 1778.

"The future USNS Lenni Lenape will carry the legacy of the Lenape people for generations to come," according to Secretary of the Navy Kenneth J. Braithwaite.

The future USNS Muscogee Creek Nation and USNS Lenni Lenape will join USNS Navajo (T-ATS 6), USNS Cherokee Nation (T-ATS 7), and USNS Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek (T-ATS 8) providing a wide range of missions including open ocean towing, oil spill response, humanitarian assistance and wide area search and surveillance.

Also joining the fleet will be the first Expeditionary Sea Base USS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7), carrying the name of Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipient Private First Class Robert Ernest Simanek who earned the nation's highest medal for valor for his actions during the Korean War when he unhesitatingly threw himself on a deadly missile to shield his fellow Marines from serious injury or death.

"Private Simanek stands in the unbroken line of heroes extending from the early Marines who once stood in the fighting tops of our original frigates, to the Marines holding the line around the world today, and those who will deploy from the future USS Robert Simanek for years to come," said Braithwaite. "This Expeditionary Sea Base continues the honored legacy of warriors from the sea, exemplified by her namesake."

Simanek, a Detroit Michigan, native, joined the Marine Corps in August 1951. He was just 22 years old when he sailed for Korea, joining Company F, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines in May 1952 to serve as a rifleman and as a radioman when needed.

Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariners Receive Second Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine Ahead of Deployment

By LaShawn Sykes, Military Sealift Command Atlantic Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariner Sean Finch, Medical Services Officer attached to the dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), receives his second shot of the COVID-19 vaccine at the Sewell's Point Branch Medical Clinic. (U.S. Navy photo by Jennifer Hunt)

Fifty-three Civil Service Mariners (CIVMARs) assigned to Military Sealift Command's dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), received their second Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, Jan. 22.

In compliance with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration December 10, 2020 analysis, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, BNT162b2 (30 µg), is to be administered intramuscularly as a series of two 30 µg doses (0.3 mL each). Pfizer and BioNTech companies provided the FDA, in late November, with the initial vaccine results that showed a 95% efficacy in preventing COVID-19 disease in adults when both doses of the vaccine were taken 21 days apart.

COVID-19 vaccines are expected to increase the health of our workforce and protect our operational readiness said MSC Force Surgeon Capt. Kathryn S. Elliott.

"Within the medical community, we're working around the clock to maintain the medical readiness of the force by widely distributing the vaccine in a phased approach, adding additional MSC personnel to the vaccination list as the vaccine becomes more readily available, according to the Department of Defense prioritization schema. The ultimate goal, of course, is to have the vaccine available to the entire MSC Enterprise," said Elliott.

Elliott added, "Worldwide, more than 1,000 staff members have received at least one dose of vaccine, and more than 350 have completed the series for full immunization."

CIVMARs aboard William McLean were among the first to be offered the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine because they are mission essential workers of the sea, and play a critical role in support of our nation's defense.

"I was anxious to receive the first vaccination, and I was elated to know that we would be the first to receive them. I did not know what to expect at first but there was nothing to fear, just a little soreness in my left arm," said Capt. Andrew Chen, master of USNS William McLean. "Since receiving the first shot, we have been working closely with Force Medical to coordinate our second round of vaccinations prior to deploying to 6th Fleet. We are ready to tackle this deployment knowing that our health will not be compromised by the COVID-19 virus."

Deploying for the next six months to U.S. 6th Fleet, the crew will be responsible for running all of the ship's departments, including deck, engine, supply, communications, medical, and administration. They will also be responsible for navigating the ship, maintaining and operating the engineering department, performing preventive maintenance, and preparing all of the crew's meals.

Chen said the crew will first head toward the Mediterranean Sea to provide Navy ships with logistical support via underway replenishments-at-sea which is a common task for this type of ship. "Additionally, we anticipate working with our allies to enhance our partnerships and will be providing military exercise support."

USNS William McLean is a Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo, ammunition ship, named in honor of William McLean, a United States Navy physicist who conceived and developed the heat-seeking Sidewinder missile.

U.S. Marine Naval Integration Continues: U.S. Marines Return from USNS Burlington

By 1st Lt. Heather Chairez, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South

A team of U.S. Marines completed a three-month deployment at sea serving as an embarked security team aboard Military Sealift Command's expeditionary fast transport USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) and returned to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia, Dec. 28.

The ten-Marine team, who were selected from Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Southern Command for this mission, were responsible for providing force protection during the auxiliary vessel's deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of responsibility.

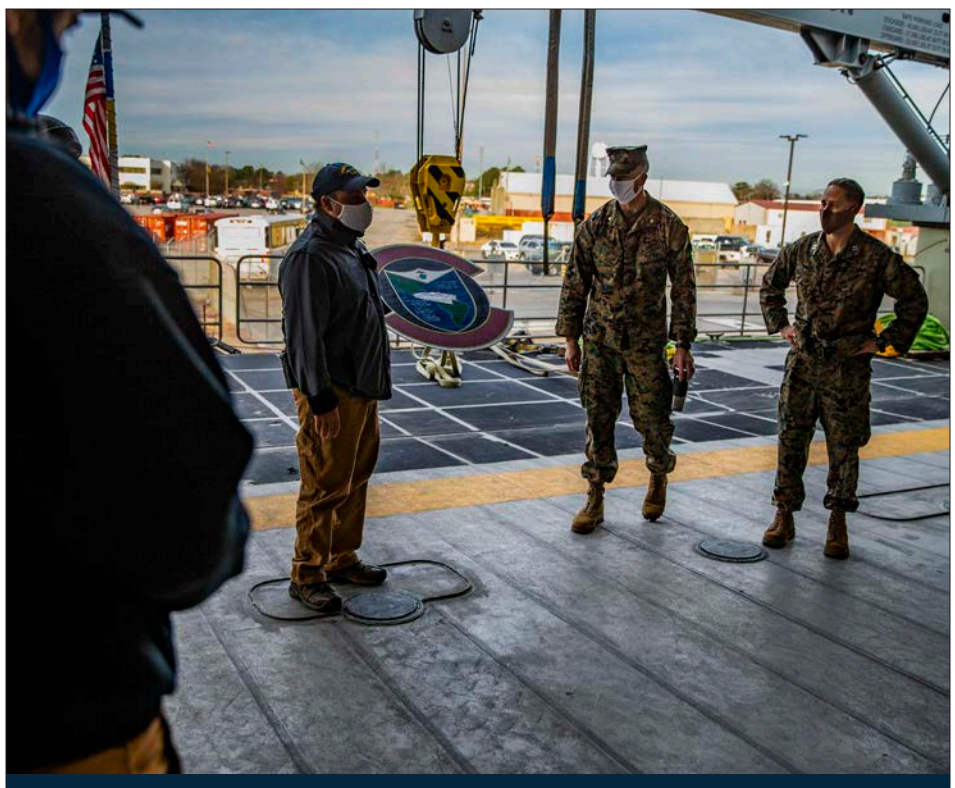
"USNS Burlington's mission was to provide at-sea maintenance to littoral combat ships that were in the area of responsibility as a proof of concept for the future of forward deployed littoral combat ships," said Maj. Drew Miller, the officer in charge of the embarked security team. "Our mission was to provide 360-degree waterside protection in both foreign ports and while under way in international waters."

This deployment supported the U.S. Marine Corps Commandant's Planning Guidance as Marines return to the seas and focus on naval integration. The document calls for a 'need to re-focus on how we [the Marine Corps] will fulfill our mandate to support the Fleet.' Both the Navy and Marine Corps seek to reestablish a more integrated approach to operations in the maritime domain, and the deployment directly supported the Navy's sea control mission.

Continued integration efforts are designed to support leaders in the development of naval operational concepts that will guide how the joint force conducts expeditionary operations in the future, according to the Commandant's Planning Guidance.

The Burlington is a 338-foot-long aluminum catamaran designed for rapid intra-theater transport of troops and military equipment. It can transport approximately 300 people and 600 tons of military equipment and supplies in support of a variety of specialized missions, such as supporting littoral combat ships with maintenance and sustainment services. Because the Burlington is a naval auxiliary vessel, operated entirely by Civil Service Mariners, the ship requires the integration of an embarked security team.

The embarked security team's mission, historically a function of Marines aboard ship, has been accomplished by Sailors as the Marine Corps shifted its focus to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As the Marine Corps re-focuses back to supporting the naval fleet, this mission fills the critical role to enhance force protection while underway and supports the integration of the Navy and Marine Corps.



U.S. Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force - Southern Command thank the crew of the Spearhead-class USNS Burlington (T-EPF 10) with a metal plaque at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, Virginia. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jose Gonzalez)

"The opportunity to serve on a ship puts us at the forward edge of optimizing our Navy and Marine Corps relationship," said Col. David Emmel, the Operations Officer for Marine Corps Forces South. "Providing security for a ship that enables sustainment for a warfighting ship supports our naval campaign objectives for U.S. Southern Command. This is one of the ways we enhance security in the region, support our partners, and reinforce naval integration."

The National Defense Strategy, published in 2018, acknowledges the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition from revisionist powers that pose a legitimate threat to the disposition of maritime forces, and U.S. Southern Command is tracking this threat in the Latin American and Caribbean regions.

USNS Trenton, Tunisian Navy Exercise Maritime Security Capabilities

By U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command's Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport USNS Trenton (T-EPF 5) and Tunisian Navy partners conducted joint maritime operations to enhance maritime security, critical lifesaving capabilities, and Tunisia's ability to protect its maritime borders, Jan. 18-21.

The series of naval exercises with the Tunisian Navy focused on developing both nations' ability to conduct maritime security operations in the Mediterranean, further enhancing cooperation between U.S. and Tunisian forces in support of shared security goals.

"It is important to work alongside our partners in the Mediterranean to improve our interoperability and teamwork," said Capt. Frank Okata, Commodore Military Sealift Command Europe and Africa and Commander, Task Force 63. "Conducting training exercises together with countries like Tunisia contributes to a more secure and stable region."

Demonstrating a shared commitment to enhance critical lifesaving capabilities in a COVID-19 degraded environment, all missions were conducted with respect for protocols protecting both U.S. and Tunisian forces against the spread of the virus.

In November, the expeditionary seabase USS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) conducted joint maritime operations with the Tunisian Navy, while U.S. Special Forces conducted simulations to bolster counter-terrorism

(U.S. Navy file photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Conner Foy)

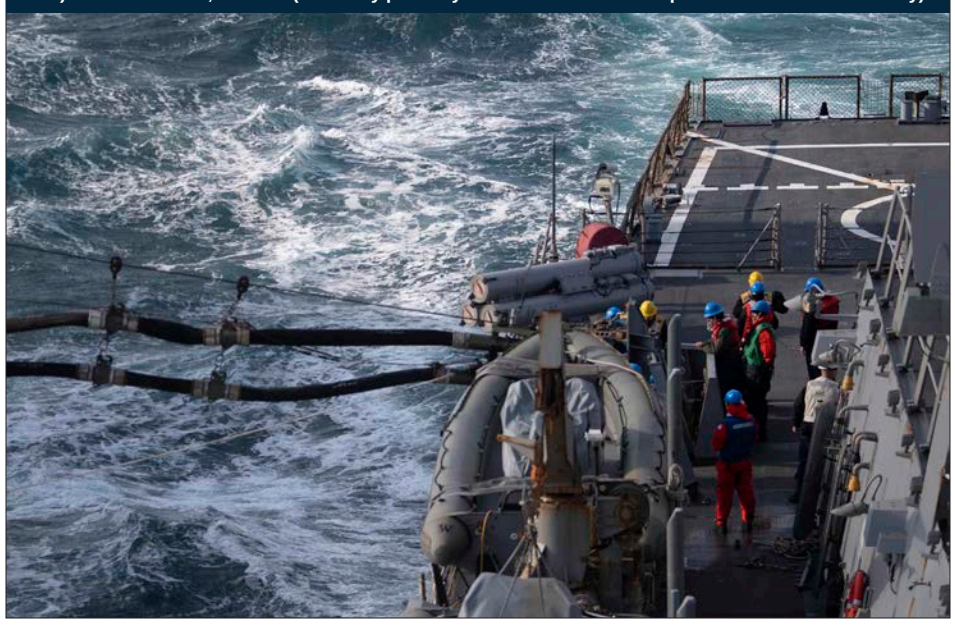
capabilities, perform critical lifesaving tasks, and improve cooperation between U.S. and Tunisian forces.

MSC operates approximately 125 naval auxiliary civilian-crewed ships which replenish U.S. Navy ships, strategically preposition combat cargo at sea, and move military cargo and supplies used by deployed U.S. forces and coalition partners around the world.

USNS Laramie Joins USS Donald Cook in the Black Sea

By Lt. Anthony Giancana, U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs

Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) participate in an underway replenishment with the Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) in the Black Sea, Jan. 29. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Will Hardy)



The Henry J. Kaiser-class fleet replenishment oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) transited into the Black Sea and rendezvoused with Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75), Jan. 24.

Laramie's arrival in the Black Sea helps promote stability in the region by its ability to replenish ships at sea. Laramie's refueling capabilities allows Donald Cook extended time on station to continue operations in without having to go to port. It also allows NATO partners to refuel and extend their patrol time before returning to homeport. This is the first time this year that the U.S. Navy has sent multiple ships to the Black Sea.

"Our logistics capabilities are critical for forward operations in places like the Black Sea," said Capt. Joseph Gagliano, commander, Task Force 65. "Presence matters most when it is persistent, and refueling at sea makes that reality."

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

Naval Forces Korea Supporting COVID-19 Readiness

By Lt. j.g. Billy Petkovski, Commander, Naval Forces Korea

Naval Forces Korea (CNFK), a U.S. Navy staff command located in the Repulic of Korea, has taken a leading role in ensuring sea services, whose missions require engagement in South Korea, are in compliance with DoD and South Korea's COVID-19 mitigation measures.

As a staff command, CNFK's role is administrative in nature. It has no conventional military assets like aircraft or ships, and is relatively small compared to other service components in the Repulic of Korea. What the command lacks in size it has made up for with its impact on mission readiness for sea services and military components on the peninsula during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to new pandemic-related requirements by DoD and South Korea's government, CNFK created a COVID-19 response plan that included COVID-19 testing for ships entering Busan's port and quarantine lodging coordination that has allowed the sea services to get their crews on to the peninsula in order to continue with their vital mission of supporting military components in the Repulic of Korea and in the broader Pacific theatre.

One of the ships whose crew was tested was the large, medium speed roll-on, roll-off ship USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK 3017). The ship's master highlighted the importance of testing to the ship's ability to complete its mission.

"We take proactive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of every member of the Stockham team because the health of our crews, and those who we work with, are our top priorities," said Military Sealift Command Capt. Paul Ginnane, ship's master, USNS Stockham. "Everywhere we go we are always committed to keeping our crew and international neighbors healthy."

Testing ship's crews and coordinating quarantine lodging has been a joint effort between Naval Forces Korea, Military Sealift Command, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 14 and the U.S. Army, who administer the barracks in Camp Humphreys, as part of a combined COVID-19 mitigation plan to ensure adherence to DoD and South Korea's national guidelines.

"The testing program and quarantine coordination we administer in South Korea is a great demonstration of the teamwork between multiple organizations during a tough time where we have to collectively find solutions of how to meet mission requirements," said Rear Adm. Buzz Donnelly, commander, Naval Forces Korea. "Our Naval Forces Korea COVID-19 readiness team has been diligent in ensuring they are completing the testing, retrieving results and coordinating quarantine facilities in a timely manner to ensure we, and our partners, are able to accomplish our missions safely."

MSC officials stationed in Busan reached out to Naval Forces Korea for support with testing crew members on ships entering Busan's ports.

"We reached out to the Navy component on Busan because we needed to figure out a way to be able to get crews tested in a timely manner," said Chris Wolfe, director of operations, MSC office in Korea. "Having the capability to test our crews here helps ensure we continue to provide mission-critical support to the fleet."

With testing an ongoing process, CNFK planners always seek ways to increase safety and streamline the process of getting the medical readiness team to and from the ship. Naval Forces Korea enlisted the help of HM-14 who have a detachment in the Repulic of Korea to assist in transporting the medical readiness team to and from the ship.

"We reached out to HM-14 because it allowed us to ensure our medical readiness team could efficiently get on and off the ship reducing the team's own exposure to any crew members who may be COVID-19 positive," said Cmdr. Randy Gire, medical planning officer, Naval Forces Korea. "The medical training team's safety is one of our top priorities because of the importance of the mission they're executing."

The testing and quarantine coordination efforts ensure sea service components who enter South Korea are aligned with the Repulic of Korea's national COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Military Sealift Command Far East Delivers New Approach to Cultivating Resilience, Dealing with Stress

By Leslie Hull-Ryde, Military Sealift Command Far East

Like Sailors throughout the Navy, Military Sealift Command's Civil Service Mariners (CIVMAR) and contracted mariners (CONMAR) are facing challenges as they travel to their ships, which are forward deployed all over the world.

During the COVID-19 pandemic that may be easier said than done, and for many, it can cause additional stress. Just like the rest of the fleet, some of these mariners are facing unexpected health concerns, new ways of doing business, and increased uncertainty. Couple all that with unique COVID-19 restrictions, which vary in every country around the world, and these professionals have quite an interesting journey.

At the very least, countries within Military Sealift Command Far East's area of responsibility require CIVMARs and CONMARs who transit en route to their ships to quarantine in a host nation-approved facility for at least 14 days, sometimes longer. Negative COVID-19 test results are also required before civil service and contracted mariners are cleared by host nation governments to leave their hotels and head for their ships – or go to another hotel while they wait for follow-on travel which will eventually get them to their ships.

All that can cause additional stress for those confined to ships for longer-than-normal periods and for those sitting in hotels, watching television shows in foreign languages, unable to step outside, or go wherever they'd like for dinner.

Lt. Eric Bryan, MSCFE chaplain, says the key to powering through these unprecedented COVID-clad times is cultivating resilience.

"Having strong personnel plays into the organizational resilience, which is key to accomplishing our overall mission and objectives," the San Diego native said.

"Something as simple as being able to learn from a past challenge will contribute to one's readiness for the future."

To help MSC's civilian mariners develop their own resilience, Bryan developed a program known as MSC Deliverables.

"Deliverables addresses personal resilience needs, allowing our personnel to operate and contribute in creative and innovative ways to the mission," Bryan said.

He has spent years researching and studying personal and organizational resilience. Bryan culled that experience, knowledge, and the personal

Lt. Eric Bryan, Chaplain, Military Sealift Command Far East, disscusses 'MSC Deliverables,' a program designed to help teammates cultivate resilience and cope with stress. (U.S. Navy courtesy photo)

testimonies of CIVMARs, service members, and families to develop this unique program.

"I have the honor of seeing first-hand how remarkable our team is across the board at every level. This is a great way for me to share what is already working for so many," the chaplain said.

"I wanted to capture the elements of the toughness and resilience required of our service members, mariners and their families to endure through the challenges we've all had this year."

Bryan explains that MSC Deliverables, named in keeping with the enterprise's motto, 'We Deliver,' features a journal designed to help CIVMARs and CONMARs grow in the area of personal resilience.

Originally, Bryan tailored Deliverables to meet the needs of the team who keep the Navy afloat: the civil service and contracted mariners who are the backbone of Military Sealift Command. However, Deliverables resources are available to everyone - service members, mariners, and family members.

"Though it was first designed to provide personnel [in quarantine] something to do other than stream movies or stare at the wall all day, I quickly realized this could be for everyone no matter where they find themselves," Bryan said of the project.

MSC Blast from the Past: USNS Hassayampa

By Shevonne Cleveland, MSC Public Affairs

USNS Hassayampa (T-AO 145) was a Neosho-class fleet replenishment oiler in service with the U.S. Navy from 1955 to 1991.

Hassayampa served during the Vietnam and First Gulf War and completed multiple exercises and operations throughout the Pacific during its 36 years of service.

On Nov. 17, 1978, USS Hassayampa was transferred to MSC and renamed USNS Hassayampa (T-AO 145).

Hassayampa was removed from active naval service and placed in reserve in the Susin Bay Reserve Fleet in California in 1991 and struck from the Naval Register. On May 1, 1999, it was transferred to MARAD and sold for scrapping in 2014.

(Pictured USNS Hassayampa (T-AO 145) refuels USS Midway (CV 41) in 1984)

For More Information About Military Sealift Command Visit us at www.msc.usff.navy.mil

We are MSC: Lt. Gerrit Porter

By Leslie Hull-Ryde, Military Sealift Command Far East

The Western Pacific is a long way from Texas, on the other side of the world, in fact, but it's where Houston native Lt. Gerrit Porter spends his time these days.

In the Lone Star State, Galveston Bay is the largest body of water. Now in Southeast Asia, Gerrit focuses his attention on the world's biggest oceans, specifically, the Indian and the Pacific.

His job with Military Sealift Command Far East helps keep the hundreds of U.S. Navy and partner nations' ships operating throughout the Indo-Pacific Region supplied with food, fuel, spare parts and ammunition. He does that by assisting MSC ships get the maintenance, personnel and equipment they need.

For some, it could be quite a daunting task, but not for this Astros fan – who happens to be a reservist on active duty. When not in uniform, the 2016 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy serves aboard Military Sealift Command ships.

As a civilian mariner, Gerrit served as a third assistant engineer on the fleet replenishment oiler USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196), the dry cargo ammunition ship USNS Carl Brashear (T-AKE 7), and the expeditionary fast transport USNS Brunswick (T-EPF 6). In uniform, he's been stationed in Bahrain with U.S. 5th Fleet's Task Force 53 and Military Sealift Command Central. But for now, this marine engineering and shipyard management major puts his knowledge and experience in shipyard maintenance to work for USNS crews operating in the Indo-Pacific theater.

What are some of your responsibilities?

Porter- Working in the operations department for Military Sealift Command Far East, I am responsible for day-to-day tasks to keep the [MSC] ships running smoothly. As of late, this has included a lot of coordination of CIVMAR movement, so we can get CIVMARs relieved as soon as possible in this challenging environment.

What are some of the challenges of your job?

Porter- COVID-19. It makes for a dynamic environment, and we have to stay up on the COVID-19 guidance from the Navy and the various countries in the region, which often changes as the situation chances. It has offered opportunities for the team to come up with some creative solutions, though.

Lt. Gerrit Porter of Military Sealift Command Far East's Operations Department poses for a photo (U.S. Navy photo)

Why is your job important and how does it contribute to mission accomplishment?

Porter- As one of the staff lieutenants at MSCFE, I use my prior experience as a CIVMAR to help the command make informed decisions when it comes to the manning, training, and maintenance of our vessels to better serve the logistical needs of U.S. 7th Fleet.

What aspect of your job gives you the most satisfaction (and why)?

Porter- The part of my job that I enjoy the most is hearing "mission complete" after investing a lot of time into planning and coordinating everything from CIVMAR movement to getting a ship a needed part for a critical repair.

Why did you join MSC?

Porter- I joined MSC because I wanted the adventure and thrill of going to sea. Also, some of the best times I had were as sailing as a cadet with MSC on the hopital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19).

What would you say to others who are considering joining the global MSC team?

Porter- MSC offers a lot of opportunities to work on various platforms and missions from every angle at sea to shore-side. Also, you can't beat the port-calls!

March is National Nutrition Month

From Leighanne Gerstbrein, Military Sealift Command Health Coordinator

Food is medicine. It is estimated that 65% of American adults are obese or overweight because of poor nutrition. Unhealthy eating habits can also result in compromised immune function, poor digestion, hypertension, high cholesterol, and lack of strength.

Learning to eat healthy foods in recommended amounts helps to maintain healthy weight, prevent chronic diseases, increase energy, and improve self-image. Check out the general recommendations provided by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans on what a healthy eating plan looks like:

- Half the plate is filled with fruits and vegetables. Note that the size of the vegetables section is greater than the fruit section.
- The other half of the plate is filled with grains and protein.
- The dairy group is included – like a glass of milk off to the side – to ensure adequate calcium intake. However, calcium needs can be met by eating non-dairy foods.

Interested in learning more? Head to *www.ChooseMyPlate.gov*, which includes resources and tools for a personalized dietary assessment and nutrition education, and/or contact one of your Health Promotion Coordinators:

CSU-East: Email: Leighanne.gerstbrein.ctr@navy.mil

CSU-West:Email: kkutina@millenniumenterprises.net

Military Sealift Command Pacific Welcomes Fleet Replenishment Oiler USNS John Lenthall

By Sarah Burford, Military Sealift Command Pacific Public Affairs

Military Sealift Command Pacific recently welcomed the fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189) to the Pacific area of operations.

Lenthall arrived in San Diego for the first time on Jan. 6 following a nearly two-week trip from the Atlantic area of operation (AOR). The trip included passage through the Panama Canal.

Lenthall will temporarily provide logistics services in the area during its time in theater while fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser (T-AO 197) completes a maintenance period.

"We are excited to have USNS John Lenthall here, providing support to the Pacific Fleet," said Matt Sweeney, Military Sealift Command Pacific's deputy commander. "The ability to bring Lenthall, who hasn't been to our AOR before, and to have them supporting operations as soon as they arrive, is an example of MSC's flexibility and the professionalism of our Civil Service Mariners, who execute our missions and provide support to the Navy fleets every day."

Military Sealift Command's fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189) arrives in the San Diego Bay. (U.S. Navy photo)

Christened in 1987, Lenthall has been an important part of Military Sealift Command's operations in the Atlantic and Mediterranean theaters, participating in numerous operations and missions.

MSC's fleet replenishment oilers provide underway replenishment-at-sea sevices for U.S. Navy and allied ships, allowing the combatant fleet to remain at sea without pulling into port for supplies.

USS Mount Whitney continued from page 1

(C5I) ship in the world, and the hybrid crew of Military Sealift Command Civil Service Mariners (CIVMARS) and United States Navy Sailors are phenomenal, ready to support operations across all domains," said Pollard.

Mount Whitney has hosted countless distinguished visitors, ambassadors, military leaders, and heads of state, including the Prince of Monaco and the presidents of Lithuania and Ukraine.

"Today, Mount Whitney continues the legacy of the Sailors and CIVMARS of our great nation that have come before us as warriors, teachers, leaders, and ambassadors," said Pollard. "We stand ready to demonstrate 'Power for Peace' across 20 million square nautical miles of ocean, from the Barents to the Baltic, to the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, to the waters surrounding the African continent."

The ship is named for Mount Whitney, a peak in the Sierra Nevada mountain range of California. Mount Whitney is the highest summit in the contiguous United States with an elevation of 14,505 feet. She is the first Navy ship to bear the name.

The ship's unit awards include two Navy Unit Commendations, three Meritorious Unit Commendations, 10 Battle "E" Awards, and a Humanitarian Service Medal. Mount Whitney was the first U.S. naval combatant to permanently accommodate female Sailors and has the distinct accomplishment of being the only commissioned U.S. warship to operate south of the equator and north of the Arctic Circle in the same year.

Mount Whitney was commissioned as a unit of Commander, Amphibious Forces, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, home-ported in Norfolk, Virginia. The ship served for years as the Commander, Striking Fleet Atlantic and U.S. Second Fleet flagship. In 2005, Mount Whitney was forward-deployed to Gaeta and assumed her current role as the U.S. 6th Fleet flagship.

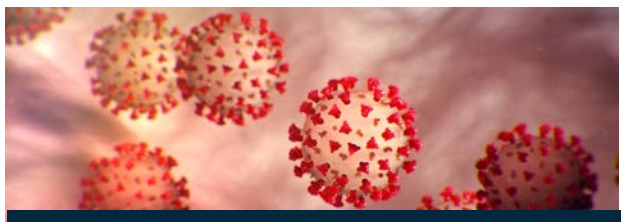
U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied, and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.

Vaccines continued from page 2

Another hurdle of vaccinating a world-wide, mobile workforce is the requirement for two doses of the vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine requires a 21-day window between the initial and secondary doses, and the Moderna vaccine requires a 28-day window. This creates unique logistical challenges getting the vaccine to the fleet.

Military Sealift Command is working with fleet commanders and U.S. Fleet Forces Command to find windows where CIVMARs will be available to receive both of the required doses of vaccine, according to Elliot.

"Our CIVMARs are in the conversations," Elliot explained. "Our ships don't stay in one place very long, and we are working to find windows where we can get the deployed crews vaccinated."



A graphic representation of the COVID-19 virus. (Center for Disease Control file graphic)

The Pfizer vaccine was approved for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on December 11, 2020, which gave Pfizer the ability to begin mass producing the vaccine. During the initial distribution, the DOD received only a portion of the vaccines to be distributed among the more than 4.8 million people employed by the Department.

"It's a supply-limited situation," Elliot explained. "The DOD only gets what the manufacture gives us, and that is released weekly. The COVID-19 Task Force then pushes that down to the services. Every dose of vaccine is expended, but it has to be planned correctly. There are no vaccines just sitting around in freezers. As DOD gets more there will be more vaccinations, but right now the demand far exceeds the supply, but our CIVMARs are being prioritized, along with personnel who are required to frequently go aboard our ships."

With the complex set of variables, the initial roll-out was a little bit slower than hoped, but Elliot anticipates it's going to accelerate. Military Sealift Command is working with service and enterprise partners to find solutions and get the vaccine to the MSC Fleet.

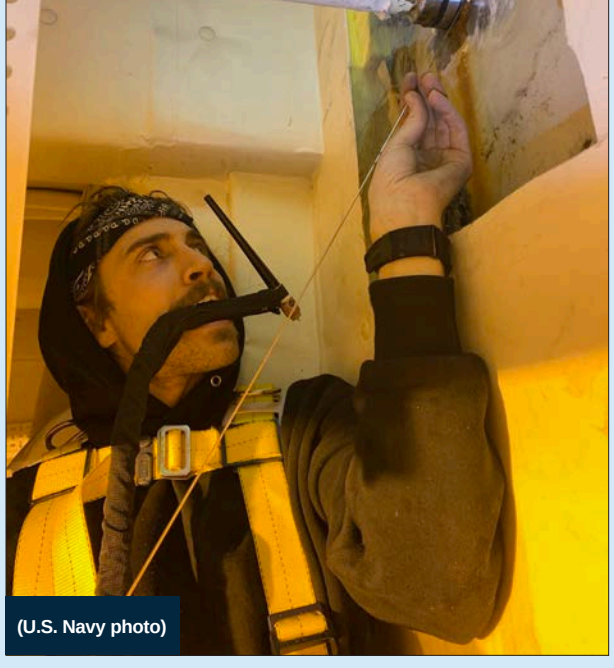
Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are administered intramuscularly in a series of two doses. In late November Pfizer and BioNTech companies provided the FDA, with the initial vaccine results that showed a 95% efficacy in preventing COVID-19 disease in adults when both doses of the vaccine were taken.

According to the CDC, common side effects for the COVID-19 vaccine are pain and swelling at the vaccination site, fever, chills, tiredness and headache. Side effectives typically abate within a few days.

The COVID-19 vaccinations do not contain a live virus and will not cause anyone to become sick with COVID-19 or show positive on a viral COVID-19 test, according to the CDC. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, vaccines should be taken regardless of a previous COVID-19 infection.

ANYDAY HAWAII SINGAPORE BAHRAIN NORFOLK GUAM ROTA

SEALIFT



(U.S. Navy photo)

(U.S. Navy photo)

USNS Amelia Earhart, Making it Happen

From Military Sealift Command Public Affairs

While conducting firefighting training at sea, the crew of Military Sealift Command's dry cargo, ammunition ship USNS Amelia Earhart (T-AKE 6) recently discovered a leak in the piping system for the ship's Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) firefighting system.

Wiper Dave Kreeger (pictured), a Civil Service Mariner assigned to Amelia Earhart and former shipyard worker, was able to assess the damage and make temporary welding repairs to the AFFF system. His efforts allowed the ship to continue at-sea operations until the ship is able to pull into port and implement permanent repairs.

AFFF is a fire suppressant agent used by U.S. Navy ships to fight flammable, liquid-based fires.

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Editor, Sealift, Military Sealift Command
471 East C Street
Norfolk, VA 23511-2419
Commercial: 757-443-2839
DSN: 646-2890
EMAIL: lewis.w.mesta@navy.mil

Commander.....Rear Adm. Mike Wettlaufer, USN
Director, Public Affairs.....Tom Van Leunen
Deputy Director, Public Affairs.....Jillian Morris
Editor..... Bill Mesta, Norfolk, VA
Visual Information.....Brian Suriani, Norfolk, VA
Visual Information.....Jennifer Hunt, Norfolk, VA
Writer.....David Griesmer, Norfolk, VA
Writer..... Wayne Perry, Norfolk, VA
Writer..... Shevonne Cleveland, Norfolk, VA
Writer.....Cathryn Lindsay, Norfolk, VA
Writer..... LaShawn Sykes, Norfolk, VA
Writer.....Sarah Burford, San Diego, CA

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.