



Bravo Zulu

USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60)

Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal
FCCM(SW) Kraig Holubar

Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal

Lt.j.g. Lane Ogawa
YN2 Joseph Chilton
RM2 David Decker
EN2(SW) Ricardo Obando
FC3 James Rowe

Good Conduct Medal

DC2(SW) Jonathan Brown
ET2 Ryan Johnson
FC2 Jason Quarles
ET3 Joe Simmons
OS3 Anthony Bassetti
QM3 Christopher Brooks
ET3 Juan Espinoza
FC3 Harold Fanning
SM3 Jesse Garcia
FC3 Kim Hartsfield
OS3 Kyle Jackson
DC3 Enrique Nauparivera
DC3 Scott Schoaf
OS3 Alexander Thompson

Letter of Commendation

PCC(SW) Sydney Dawson
RM1(SW) Jerry Hukill
EM1 George Martin
BM1(SW) James Mulroy
ET1 Kevin Newborne
IC1(SW) Terry Traweek
GSM1 Kenneth Billups
DK1(AW) Romeo Camu
FC2(SW) David Avila
MS2(SW) James Moore
GSM2(SW) Kenneth Newton
GM2 Darrell Severns
DC2(SW) Jonathan Brown
GM2(SW) Kevin Moran
GSM2(SW) Luke Nielsen
SM3(SW) Robert Hunter

Around the Fleet

7th Fleet sends ships, Marine Expeditionary Unit into the future

To further validate Navy and Marine Corps readiness for the year 2000, the U.S. Seventh Fleet sent nine ships and a Marine Expeditionary Unit into the future.

Ships of the USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3) amphibious group from Sasebo, Japan joined ships from Yokosuka, Japan as well as the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and logistics force ships in conducting a detailed Y2K operational validation exercise. The exercise took place Sept. 17-26, in and around Okinawa.

On Sept. 22, the participants advanced the dates on

their computer systems forward to December 31, 1999 to test their systems as the clocks roll over to the new year.

Unique to this operational validation, a full amphibious assault was in progress as the clocks rolled over to January 1, 2000. The assault involved Marines of the 31st MEU and projecting power ashore with helicopters, amphibious assault vehicles, landing craft, and AV-8 Harrier jets.

The validation is a joint and integrated test designed to ensure the Navy and Marine Corps team can deploy together on short notice without interference or worry from Y2K-related problems.

Military Sealift Command celebrates golden anniversary

Navy Wire Service

"MSC has been conspicuous because its people and ships generally have been where the action has been," said Rear Adm. Bruce Keener III, Commander, Military Sealift Command, 1979-1981.

Rear Adm. Keener made this observation on the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command's 30th anniversary in October 1979. His words still hold true twenty years later as MSC, the ocean transportation specialist for the Department of Defense, celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Today MSC operates about 120 ships worldwide with about 100 more ships in reserve status. What sets MSC ships apart from other Navy ships is that all MSC ships are crewed by civil service or contract merchant mariners instead of active duty Sailors. Using civilian crews frees active duty Navy personnel for more traditional war-fighting assignments.

MSC ships wear many hats for DOD. MSC Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ships support the Navy around the world, providing everything from fuel to food to ammunition and towing services. NFAF ships keep the Navy's combatants at sea, on station and combat ready.

MSC Special Mission ships provide many specialized services for the Navy and the federal government, including surveying the world's oceans and performing counter-drug operations. MSC Special Mission ships work with scientific and military commands to expand knowledge of the world's oceans, combat drug smuggling, monitor international compliance with strategic arms treaties and lay submarine cable.

MSC prepositioning ships place U.S. Marine Corps, Army and Air Force equipment in strategic locations around the world such as the Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf, and are key in keeping the U.S. military forward deployed.

MSC Sealift ships transport military cargo and fuel quickly wherever they're needed — to hotspots like the Balkans and remote areas such as Thule, Greenland. In the past year, MSC ships delivered aid to Hurricane Mitch-ravaged Central America, provided logistics support during the Kosovo crisis, and maintained presence in places such as the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.

Today's MSC is an outgrowth of four different agencies that provided ocean transportation for the U.S. military through World



file photo

War II — the Naval Transportation Service, the Army Transport Service, the U.S. Maritime Commission's War Shipping Administration and the Navy's Fleet Support Services.

Following World War II, U.S. military leaders sought a better system. Military Sea Transportation Service, MSC's name prior to 1970, was established on Oct. 1, 1949, to be the U.S. military's ocean transportation provider. MSTTS faced its first challenge almost immediately with the onset of the Korean War in June 1950. The command moved thousands of troops and millions of tons of cargo to Korea, operating more than 450 ships at the height of hostilities.

The MSTTS mission expanded in 1958 to include operation of scientific support ships — vessels involved in oceanographic research, missile tracking, communications and other special missions.

MSTTS continued to define its role within the Navy and DOD in the 1960s. MSTTS ships transported people and supplies to and from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. MSTTS ships also supported the Apollo 11 moon mission in 1969.

MSTTS began the 1970's changing its name to Military Sealift Command. In 1972, MSC began operating its first Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force ship, civilian mariner-crewed fleet replenishment oiler USNS Taluga. Today, MSC operates about 30 NFAF ships working side-by-side with

the U.S. Navy combatant fleet worldwide.

The Ready Reserve Force, owned and maintained by the U.S. Maritime Administration in reduced operating status but under MSC control when activated, was established in 1976. The RRF ships fill ocean transportation needs that the commercial maritime industry may be unable to fill for the U.S. military during contingencies.

In the 1980s, MSC introduced afloat prepositioning ships — vessels laden with combat equipment and supplies and prepositioned at sea within several days sailing time of potential contingency areas. The seven initial Near-Term Prepositioning Ships, operating near Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, were the forerunners to the Maritime Prepositioning Ships operated by MSC for the U.S. Marine Corps. These began service in 1984.

The fastest large cargo ships in the world joined the MSC fleet beginning in 1984, when fast sealift ships were purchased and converted by the Navy. The eight FSS are capable of speeds of greater than 30 knots, and can carry nearly a full U.S. Army mechanized division from the U.S. East Coast to northern Europe in just five days.

The first Navy Combat Logistics Force ships built specifically for MSC operation, the Kaiser class fleet replenishment oilers, also began delivery in the 1980s. In addition, the Sirius class combat stores ships, purchased from the United

Kingdom, joined the MSC force.

MSC showcased its sealift and prepositioning capabilities in Operation Desert Shield in 1990-91. At the peak of strategic sealift activity, MSC operated 212 dry cargo ships and 22 tankers. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Frank B. Kelso II, USN, awarded MSC a Navy Unit Commendation, MSC's first, for its execution of strategic sealift in support of the war.

As a result of lessons learned from the Persian Gulf war and changing world dynamics after the fall of the Berlin Wall, DOD expanded afloat prepositioning and surge capabilities, building 19 large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships for MSC operation. The last of the 950-foot behemoths — nearly as big as an aircraft carrier — is scheduled for delivery to MSC in 2002.

Throughout the 1990s, Navy leaders continued to transfer active duty crewed Combat Logistics Force ships to MSC operation. A total of seven Kilauea class ammunition ships and three Mars class combat stores ships are currently operated by MSC.

Rear Adm. Keener was right," said Rear Adm. Gordon S. Holder, the current Commander, Military Sealift Command. "We are confident we will be able to meet and master all challenges, and we now have 50 years of achievement to justify our confidence. Military Sealift Command is 50 years strong."

Pay raise: Congress passes 4.8 percent pay hike, pay table reform

Continued from A-1

rization bill calls for the annual raise to match the ECI plus .5 percent. So, if the index is 3.9 percent, for instance, the military raise must be 4.4 percent.

The second pay initiative is pay table reform. First, a little history. The current pay tables have been around since 1949 and few changes have been made since, with the exception of adding E-8 and E-9 pay grades in the late 1950s and the chief warrant officer 5 grade recently. The last two Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation panels recommended pay table reform. It is finally accomplished in the fiscal 2000 authorization.

"What this will do is place the emphasis on performance rather than longevity," Bloxom said. "Under the current pay tables only 37 percent of pay raises are tied to promotions and 73 percent to longevity." Reform will make promotions more meaningful and more valuable than simple longevity, he said.

While pay table reform has also been called "targeted pay raises," pay table reform does more. It affects the entire pay table, and the effects are lasting. The July 1 raise should not be considered so much a "raise" as a permanent correction to past distortions in the pay table.

On July 1, 2000, 75 percent of all service members will receive pay raises ranging up to an additional 5.5 percent. With the 4.8 percent pay raise from January figured in, some service members will receive raises totaling 10.3 percent in fiscal 2000.

"This is a one-time pay table adjustment," Bloxom said. "But what's important for service members to remember is not what raise you get on July 1, but the raises you will get

if you stay in the service and perform well. Don't look at where you are now, but where you expect to be in five years."

The authorization bill calls for 75 percent of the money devoted to pay table reform to go toward correcting imbalances in the enlisted chart, whereas normally the split occurs on a 66 to 33 percent basis. Some pay cells in the officer chart will see marked raises,

es, but they are the ones "most out of whack," Bloxom said.

Once pay table reform is adopted, 53 percent of the raises service members receive during their careers will occur with promotions vs. 47 percent via longevity. Further, the raises become larger as service members go up the ranks.

"This is a good-news story," Bloxom said.

"Changes in pay and retirement are designed to recognize the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. All personnel will benefit."

The proposed basic pay tables for January and July 2000 are available online at <www.defenselink.mil/specials/pay2000>.

Military retirement changes explained

American Forces Press Service

their 15th year of service beginning in 2001.

Military retirement reform often headed the list of concerns when Defense Secretary William S. Cohen spoke to service members. Retirement was also a top priority for the Joint Chiefs of Staff when they testified before Congress last fall.

The fiscal 2000 Defense Authorization Bill would make retirement reform a reality, but not a simple one. Congress overwhelmingly approved the bill Sept. 22, and it now goes to President Clinton for signature.

The retired pay reform in the bill gives a choice to service members subject to the Redux retirement system — all those who entered the service on or after Aug. 1, 1986 — who reach

opposed to CPI minus 1 percent currently calculated for Redux.

Or, second choice: Eligible service members subject to Redux can take a taxable \$30,000 lump-sum bonus, agree to complete at least 20 years of service and choose to remain in the Redux plan with the lesser annual COLA. The bonus, which is immediately payable, can be used any way the member wishes.

Which option is better depends on the individual, said Navy Capt. Elliott Bloxom, DoD director of compensation. "It's the members' responsibility to weigh the options and decide whether they want a higher monthly income for the rest of their lives or whether they need the money now," he said.

Members choosing the

\$30,000 bonus would receive the money within 60 days of their decision. If they don't serve the full 20 years, they would have to pay back the unearned portion at the rate of \$6,000 per year.

The first group of service members will face this retirement decision in February 2001, Bloxom said. Once members reach the 14-and-a-half year service mark, they have 180 days to decide which option to select. Their choice is irrevocable.

Service members facing the retirement choice should consult financial counselors and personnel managers before deciding, Bloxom advised. DoD plans to put up a Web site soon offering interactive retired pay computers to help service members make their decisions, he said.