



MILITARY  
SEALIFT  
COMMAND

Seafarer's

# ADVISOR

ISSUE 2 2009

## Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

In this newsletter, we often talk about the positions MSC is actively recruiting to fill (to learn more – [www.sealiftcommand.com](http://www.sealiftcommand.com)). As a change of pace, in this edition, I'll talk about some of the unique adventures derived from a MSC career.

In support of U.S. and coalition forces' efforts to curb piracy off the Horn of Africa, USNS Lewis and Clark served as an afloat staging base and held suspected pirates awaiting transfer to Kenya for trial. Also working within the region, USNS Catawba remained on-scene near the Ukrainian cargo ship, M/V Faina, held captive by pirates for four months. Once the ordeal was over, Faina's captain, Viktor Nikolsky, sent a letter to Catawba in which he said, "It is difficult for me to express my feelings towards you and your crew. Our lives were spared because you were here to protect us. You gave us the strength to endure the hardest of times." We are very proud of the roles our mariners take in worldwide events.

On a more intimate scale, a group of our civil service mariners (CIVMARs) spent a day off volunteering to clean up a community center in Panama City, Panama. The CIVMARs helped move and haul large debris to prepare for the next phase of the project.

The mariners' efforts, while personally gratifying, went a long way to building friendships between the mariners and the small community where they volunteered their time.

Each civil service mariner brings special talents and skills to MSC making for a strong, diverse workforce. When we are looking for storekeepers or deck engineer machinists, we are not only looking for their professional skills but for people

## Job Fair Schedule

|         |  |                    |
|---------|--|--------------------|
| 5/1/09  | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Chula Vista, CA    |
| 5/6/09  | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Somersworth, NH    |
| 5/6/09  | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Gulfport, MS       |
| 5/7/09  | Recruit Military Career Fair           | Atlanta, GA        |
| 5/7/09  | Seattle Maritime Festival              | Seattle, WA        |
| 5/12/09 | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Neptune, NJ        |
| 5/12/0  | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Virginia Beach, VA |
| 5/14/09 | Workforce Escarosa Career Fair         | Milton, FL         |
| 5/20/09 | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Portland, ME       |
| 5/21/09 | Recruit Military Career Fair           | San Diego, CA      |
| 5/28/09 | Recruit Military Career Fair           | New York City, NY  |
| 5/28/09 | Recruit Military Career Fair           | Houston, TX        |
| 5/28/09 | Recruit Military Career Fair           | Tacoma, WA         |
| 6/3/09  | Mid Atlantic Maritime Academy Job Fair | Virginia Beach, VA |
| 6/11/09 | Recruit Military Career Fair           | Jacksonville, FL   |
| 6/16/09 | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Fairhaven, MA      |
| 6/16/09 | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Hampton, VA        |
| 6/18/09 | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | Juneau, AK         |
| 6/24/09 | MSC Mini Job Fair                      | St. Petersburg, FL |
| 6/25/09 | Recruit Military Career Fair           | Sacramento, CA     |

See [www.sealiftcommand.com](http://www.sealiftcommand.com) for more information on upcoming events.

willing to make a positive difference in the world. More amazing MSC stories are featured on our website and, as always, we are proud to feature a personal success story from one of our mariners on the back of this issue.

Thank you for your continued support,

Phyllis B. Spano  
Director, Human Resources and  
Manpower  
MSFSC

## MSC Positions

MSC is actively recruiting  
for the following positions:

**Deck Engineer Machinist**  
**Unlicensed Junior Engineer**

**Pumpman**

**2nd Radio Electronics Technician**

**Cook Baker**

**Assistant Cook**

**Medical Services Officer**

# Success Story: Nathan Murrell, Chief Steward

How does a guy called “Tex”, who was born in Australia, end up serving America as a civil service mariner with Military Sealift Command? For Chief Steward Nathan Murrell, it’s in his blood.

“My family has a long line of military service,” he said. Indeed. Murrell’s father was one of four brothers, all of whom served in the United States military service. His own brothers and sister sailed in the Navy, too. In fact, it was his younger sister, Naomi, who introduced Murrell to MSC – but his path there isn’t as direct as it sounds.

Murrell’s family moved to central Texas when he was just 3 years old, and he spent most of his childhood there. That’s how he got his nickname, Tex. “I love Texas on the borderline of crazy, just like most Texans,” he said.

Murrell entered the Navy in 1991 at the age of 17. He served until 1993 as a damage controlman and was in the reserves for a while. After he left the Navy, he went to work for a restaurant. There, he worked his way up from an entry-level cook and was several years along in the manager track when a personal tragedy changed the course of his life.

“My older sister died. She had been sick for most of her life with an incurable disease,” he said. “But I took her death really hard. I wanted to get away from everything, so I left my job and went to go live in Australia.”

Murrell spent about a year working in a restaurant in Australia. He returned to the United States when his dad became ill. Shortly after his father’s death, he went to Texas State University to study his real passion: history. He continued his culinary adventures, too, working at Logan’s Roadhouse while attending college.

“My younger sister was working at MSC at the time and she told me about it. I knew I wanted to travel and I liked MSC because it

was government service,” Murrell said. “So I applied, even though I had never sailed for a commercial company.”

Murrell’s first full tour was on USNS Mount Whitney as an assistant cook. “I really enjoyed it – and could not believe the kind of money I was making,” Murrell said.

With his eyes on the future, Murrell left the ship to take advantage of the training opportunities offered by MSC. He took several culinary courses to enhance his knowledge and skills as a cook.

After another tour as an assistant cook, Murrell took more courses, this time in food service management, which helped him get promoted to his current assignment as chief steward aboard USNS Shasta, which sailed out from Japan in early April, 2008.

“I was extremely happy to get this new assignment,” he said. “It’s what I was hoping for.”

As is evident in the path that led him to MSC, Murrell is an expert at making the most of any situation. Another example? During one of his seagoing assignments, which professionally he does not classify as favorite by any means, he met the woman who would eventually become his fiancée. “I love her more than anything,” he said.

Murrell proposed to his bride-to-be standing under the statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial, in Washington, D.C. “Lincoln is my favorite president,” the history buff explained. “He did some unconventional things but believed the end justified the means. He really did more for America than anyone.”

On board, Murrell said he doesn’t have a problem making the ship feel like home. Sure, he misses friends and family however, he adds, “It’s all about finding things to do and not thinking about what you left behind.”

“Living where you work is different,” he said, “but most cooks will tell you they usually work so much it feels like they live there,” he joked.

Still, finding time to relax isn’t a problem. Murrell fills his time with historical

documentaries, books and video games. “I’ve made the ship feel like home to me. The things I like to do: read, watch TV, play video games – I can do that as easily on a boat as I can in a house.”

“I really do enjoy my job. I like cooking and I love it when crew members come up and compliment my food – food I made – or if they ask me to make something they like. My favorite thing to make, though, is desserts – great pastries and desserts,” Murrell said.

Murrell said he would recommend a MSC career to anyone who doesn’t want to be tied down to one place. He also shared these words of career advice: “Don’t be discouraged if you don’t think you’re being promoted as fast as you think you should. It took me five tries, but once I made it, it happened rapidly. You have to help your career along.”

Murrell obviously lives his own advice.



See other  
MSC Success Stories at  
[www.sealiftcommand.com](http://www.sealiftcommand.com)

## Combined documents create a new Merchant Mariner Credential

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) has decided, based on requests from the public, to consolidate the Merchant Mariner’s Document, Merchant Mariner’s License, Certificate of Registry and International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers into a

single document. The consolidated document will be referred to as the Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC).

The new MMC will look like a passport but it will not negate the need for mariners to have a current passport. The MMC will work in conjunction with the

Transportation Workers’ Identification Credential.

Over the next several weeks the USCG will provide guidance for the issuance of MMCs and an implementation timeline. For more information, please refer candidates to [www.uscg.mil/stcw](http://www.uscg.mil/stcw).

