

Navy Launches Military Sealift Command Workforce Initiative

The logo for SEAPOWER, with 'SEA' in blue and 'POWER' in red, in a bold, sans-serif font.

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WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro approved a plan Oct. 30 to restore the health of the Military Sealift Command (MSC) workforce and generate more logistics support for fleet operations worldwide.

MSC consists of 5,500 civil service mariners and 1,500 contracted mariners operating 140 logistics supply ships that support the replenishment and transport of military cargo and supplies for U.S. forces and partners. The command's new workforce initiative addresses civil service mariner recruitment and retention challenges by restoring the health of the MSC workforce for the next several decades.

The initiative will also include crew reassignments to higher priority vessels and the placement of some MSC logistics support ships into extended maintenance periods. Rotating

crews to higher priority vessels will minimize overdue reliefs and provide a more predictable work environment for civil service mariners.

“Our civil service mariners play invaluable roles providing continuous logistics support to our deployed naval forces, and they are working overtime to sustain that mission globally,” said Secretary Del Toro. “This initiative will not only address operational logistics challenges we face now, it will ensure that Military Sealift Command has policies, programs and incentives it needs to recruit and retain future generations of civil service mariners.”

Nationally, the U.S. merchant marine workforce is facing a shortage of personnel to fill positions at sea, as it has become more challenging to attract interested Americans, impacting mariners employed by MSC. MSC has also assumed broader logistics responsibilities and experienced higher mission demand for Navy operations in recent years, increasing the strain on the workforce and contributing to recruiting and retention challenges.

“Addressing the recruiting and retention challenges in MSC’s civil service mariner workforce will take time,” said Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck, MSC’s commander.

The types of ships for the workforce initiative include Fleet Replenishment Oilers (T-AO), Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ships (T-AKE), Expeditionary Fast Transports (T-EPF), and Expeditionary Sea Bases (ESB).

The MSC workforce initiative advances Secretary Del Toro’s vision for a new Maritime Statecraft to revitalize the naval, industrial and commercial aspects of America’s maritime power in an era of strategic competition. These investments will increase MSC’s operational readiness and support its civil service workforce, both of which strengthen maritime dominance