

USNS Gianella Completes Final Underway Mission



The Military Sealift Command petroleum tanker USNS Lawrence H. Gianella pulls into downtown Norfolk on May 23, completing its last mission before being deactivated. Christened in 1986, USNS Gianella delivered petroleum products to Department of Defense storage and distribution facilities worldwide. U.S. Navy/Bill Mesta

NORFOLK,

Va. – Military Sealift Command's last champion class T-5 petroleum tanker, USNS

Lawrence H. Gianella (T-AOT 1125), completed its final underway mission for the

U.S. Navy by sailing down the Elisabeth River to downtown Norfolk, Virginia, in

support of National Maritime Day on May 23.

Christened

April 19, 1986, Gianella's primary role has been to perform point-to-point

delivery of petroleum products to Department of Defense storage and

distribution facilities worldwide.

"USNS

Lawrence H. Gianella is the last and longest serving U.S. government-owned

champion class T-5 tanker," said Matthew Sweeney, Military Sealift Command

tanker project officer. "As the longest serving T-5 tanker she moved more

petroleum for the U.S. military than any other vessel in U.S. military

history."

Gianella “was the last of five T-5 tankers built,” said Capt. Robert J. Mills III, USNS Lawrence H. Gianella’s ship master since 1998. “The Gianella is a liaison between commercial petroleum terminals and Department of Defense fuel facilities around the world.”

The other T-5 tankers in the U.S. Navy’s inventory were the MV Gus. W. Darnell (ATO-1121), USNS Paul Buck (T-AOT 1122), USNS Richard G. Matthiesen (T-AOT 1124) and the USNS Samuel L. Cobb (T-AOT 1123).

“Military Sealift Command operated its T-5 tankers in each of its five area commands, MSC Atlantic, MSC Pacific, MCS Central, MSC Far East and MSC Europe and Africa,” Mills added.

USNS Gianella is the last noncombat logistics force petroleum tanker in MSC service capable of providing underway replenishment-at-sea services with combatants using the modular fuel distribution system (MFDS), according to Sweeney.

“Fuel is the lifeblood of the U.S. Navy’s combatant fleet,” Mills said. “USNS Lawrence H. Gianella is able to restock MSC’s fleet oilers and Navy combatant ships while at sea using its two refueling stations. We would pull into port and bring fuel to our fleet oilers so that they could remain at

sea.”

Over the course of USNS Lawrence H. Gianella’s service, the ship has provided direct support to the warfighters in multiple wars.

“During the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, USNS Gianella supported U.S. fleet and convoy operations in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf by providing fuel consolidation (CONSOL) support to MSC fleet oilers,” Sweeney said. “The ship also provided CONSOL and petroleum logistics support for Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.”

As an ice-class oil tanker USNS Lawrence H. Gianella has performed numerous Arctic and Antarctic resupply missions since the mid-1980s.