

## New AMO jobs aboard *USNS Montford Point*

### U.S. Navy christens first mobile landing platform in series

The Navy christened the *USNS Montford Point*, the first mobile landing platform in a series of three being built by General Dynamics NASSCO, at the shipyard in San Diego, Calif., March 2, adding new jobs for the membership of American Maritime Officers.

Ocean Ships, Inc. is the operating company for the mobile landing platforms (MLPs) and AMO represents all licensed officers. The *USNS Montford Point* is scheduled for delivery in the second quarter of 2013.

"AMO is proud to be onboard as the *USNS Montford Point* nears completion and is prepared for service," said AMO National President Tom Bethel. "The MLPs are central to the Navy's sea-basing concept and our union looks forward to providing characteristic exceptional service to Military Sealift Command aboard these new ships."

The *USNS Montford Point* will join MSC's Maritime Prepositioning Force as a seagoing pier in the event that accessibility to onshore bases is denied. As a cornerstone of sea basing, the MLP will serve as

a transfer point for a Marine Corps amphibious landing force between large ships and ship-to-shore landing craft. The ship also provides the ability to transfer vehicles and equipment at sea while interfacing with surface connectors to deliver the vehicles and equipment ashore.

During the christening ceremony, Gen. James Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps, delivered the principal address and Rear Adm. Mark Buzby, commander of MSC, discussed the ship, its crew and its potential in service to the military. Also attending the ceremony and addressing the more than 1,000 people gathered for the christening were Congresswoman Susan Davis (D-CA) and Congressmen Juan Vargas (D-CA) and Scott Peters (D-CA).

"I salute the ship's first master, Captain Kurt Kleinschmidt, his chief engineer, Bill Maus, and the rest of the U.S. merchant marine crew," Buzby said. "Their determination will stand this ship and its mis-

**Below:** Attending the christening ceremony for the *USNS Montford Point* were the ship's Captain Kurt Kleinschmidt and Chief Engineer William Maus, First Assistant Engineer Joseph Gelhaus (first relieving chief engineer) and Chief Mate Mike Sands (first relieving master). With them here are Ocean Ships, Inc. Vice President of Operations Bob Sheen, Ocean Shipholdings CEO Joe Vaughan, Jr., AMO National Secretary-Treasurer José Leonard, Ocean Ships, Inc. President Jim McGregor and AMO National Assistant Vice President Daniel Shea.

See *Montford Point* ♦ Page 12



# Montford Point

Continued from Page 1

sion in good stead as they sail anywhere on the globe that the mission sends them.

“When it comes to sacrifice, none know it better than the brave Marines who passed through Camp Montford Point,” Buzby said. “They were the role models for a long line of Leathernecks who believed in nation and patriotism before self. They were the first of their ‘class.’”

“It is fitting then that this ship, *USNS Montford Point*, is the first of its class,” he said. “And it is also fitting that it will be crewed by merchant mariners sailing under the Military Sealift Command house flag.

“Like the Montford Point Marines during World War II, our merchant mariners have never hesitated to complete the mission, even when that mission put them in harm’s way,” Buzby said.

“This ship, with its unique capabilities, will become the centerpiece of sea-basing, allowing the U.S. Navy to raise forward operations to a new level,” he said. “Wherever the call, whatever the need, *USNS Montford Point* will be part of the Navy’s global force for good.”

The *USNS Montford Point* is named for the approximately 20,000 African-American Marine Corps recruits who trained at Montford Point Camp in North Carolina from 1942 to 1949. Their exceptional service prompted President Truman to sign an executive order in 1948 disallowing segregation in the Marine Corps.

“I chose to name the department’s new MLP Montford Point as a way to give some long-overdue recognition to these proud Americans who gave so much in the defense of our nation. The courage shown by these Marines helped forge the Corps into the most formidable expeditionary force in the world,” said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

“As we gather today to christen the

newest ship of the Military Sealift Command and the Maritime Prepositioning Force, it is fitting that we also recognize those who the ship honors,” Gen. Amos said. “Much has already been said about the Montford Point Camp and the men who trained there to become Marines until segregation in the military ended. These Marines, 35 of whom are seated here in front, changed our Nation and our Corps.”

The ship will leverage float-on/float-off technology, allowing the *USNS Montford Point* to partially submerge, facilitating easy movement of cargo and craft. Additionally, the ship’s size allows for 25,000 square feet of vehicle and equipment stowage space and 380,000 gallons of JP-5 fuel storage, the Navy reported.

With this set of capabilities, the ship is able to easily transfer personnel and vehicles from other vessels, such as the large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships (LMSRs) onto landing craft air cushioned (LCAC) vehicles and transport them ashore. The platform with its open reconfigurable mission deck will serve as an important flexible and transformational asset to the Navy as it can be reconfigured to support a wide variety of future operations, the Navy reported.

“NASSCO delivers high-quality, mission-ready ships to the fleet and MLP 1 is no exception,” said President of General Dynamics NASSCO Fred Harris. “NASSCO’s performance on the MLP program is a direct reflection of our design-build strategy. When MLP 1 construction began, 100 percent of the design was complete, nearly all the production planning was complete, and all the material to support production was in the pipeline. The result of this rigorous approach to ship-building is a high-quality, affordable vessel that was 91 percent complete at undocking and now more than 97 percent complete at christening. MLP 1 is on track to be delivered under budget and on schedule.”



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Dominique Pineiro  
The Mobile Landing Platform *USNS Montford Point* (T-MLP 1) is moored pier side in San Diego during the ship’s christening ceremony. The *USNS Montford Point* is the first ship of its class and will serve as a floating base for amphibious operations and a transfer point between large ships and small landing craft.



Ship Sponsor Alexis “Jackie” Bolden prepares to christen the *USNS Montford Point* at General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego, Calif.



Montford Point Marine Association National President James Averhart, Jr. greets *USNS Montford Point* Captain Kurt Kleinschmidt.



USMC Commandant Gen. James Amos hails the Montford Point Marines.



Rear Adm. Mark Buzby



Rear Adm. David Lewis



Rep. Susan Davis (D-CA)



Rep. Juan Vargas (D-CA)



Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA)



GD NASSCO President Fred Harris