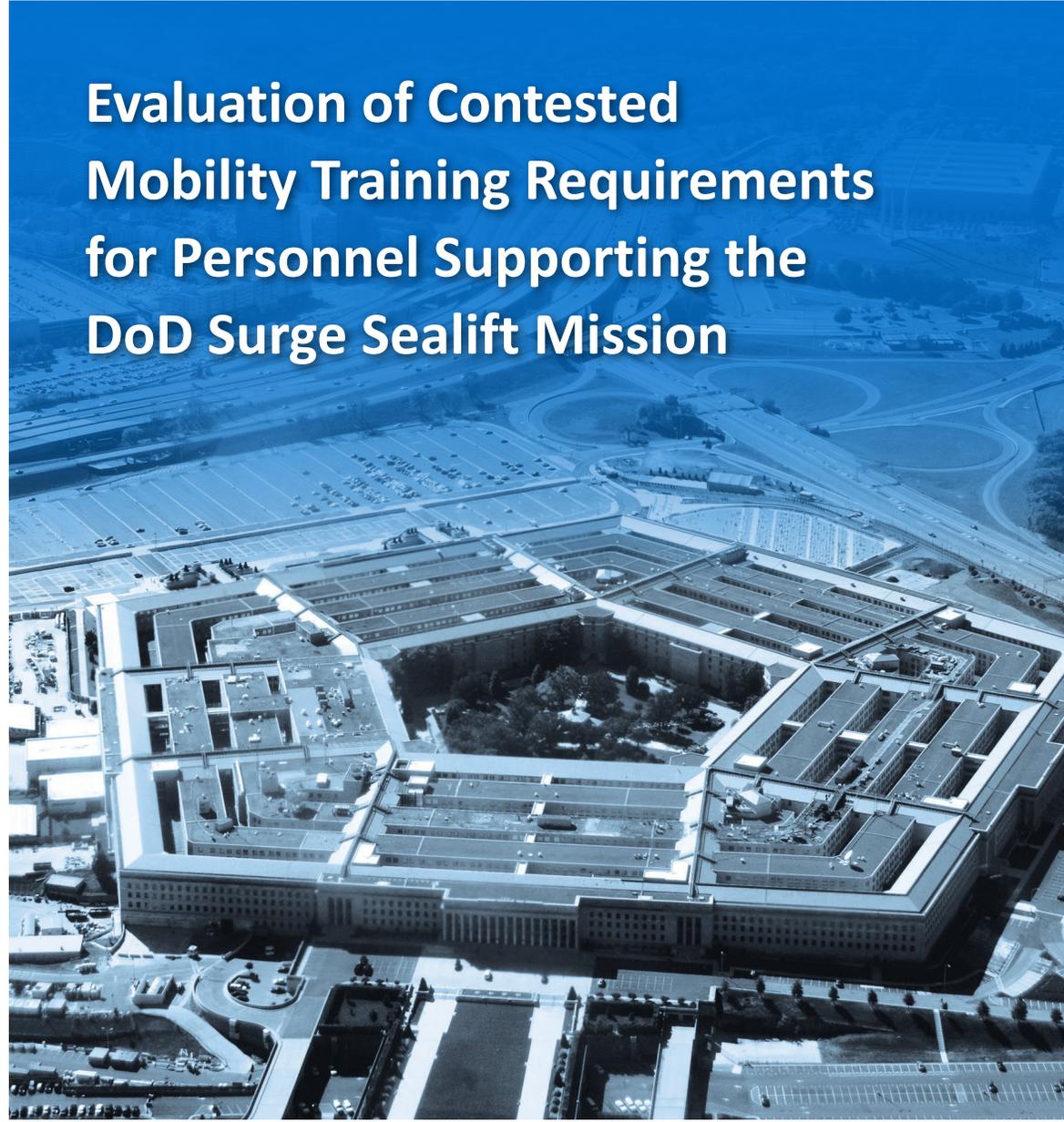


INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

JULY 9, 2024



Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting the DoD Surge Sealift Mission





Results in Brief

Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting the DoD Surge Sealift Mission

July 9, 2024

Objective

The objective of this evaluation was to determine whether the DoD effectively provided contested mobility training requirements for personnel supporting the DoD surge sealift mission.

Background

Sealift is how the DoD and the Department of Transportation transport most military equipment during a major conflict. A robust and responsive surge sealift fleet is critical to the U.S. national security strategy in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility and around the globe.

A contested environment (CE) is a hostile or uncertain environment where host government forces do not have territory and population controls in the intended operational area. The Military Sealift Command (MSC) has a global presence and an understanding of the CE and the skills required to operate in a CE. CE training for mariners is important to keep sealift vessels afloat and continue the flow of logistics when called on. The surge sealift fleet consists of 48 vessels owned and maintained by the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD), also known as the Ready Reserve Force.

Findings

When activated on a Ready Reserve Force ship, MARAD contract mariners receive as-needed CE training from MSC tactical

Findings (cont'd)

advisors. According to MSC officials, they also allowed MARAD contract mariners to take the MSC operations courses with CE topics, but the courses were not required.

Although some training was offered, MSC and MARAD officials did not identify specific CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners who operate in the Ready Reserve Force, as required by the U.S. Transportation Command Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

This occurred because MSC and MARAD officials did not develop an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners or develop a training program. According to MSC officials, they met the intent of the guidance by developing the MSC operations courses with CE topics and offering those courses to MARAD contract mariners. However, as of December 2023, MARAD officials stated that MSC officials had not provided the training curriculum, instruction method, or credentials of the personnel delivering the operations courses. Additionally, U.S. Transportation Command officials did not ensure that MSC and MARAD officials developed requirements or an approach for providing CE training to contract mariners, in accordance with the U.S. Transportation Command Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

As a result, MARAD contract mariners serving in a CE may not be fully prepared to successfully support DoD surge sealift missions in a CE.

Recommendations

We recommend that the MSC Commander, in coordination with the Department of Transportation MARAD Administrator, develop and implement an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance and develop the associated training program.



Results in Brief

Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting the DoD Surge Sealift Mission

Recommendations (cont'd)

We also recommend that the Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command develop and implement an oversight plan to ensure that MSC and Department of Transportation MARAD officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

Management Comments and Our Response

The MSC Executive Director, responding for the MSC Commander, agreed with the recommendation to develop and implement an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for Department of Transportation MARAD contract mariners in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance, and the associated training program. Therefore, we consider the recommendation resolved but open. We will close the recommendation once we verify the development and implementation of an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners.

The U.S. Transportation Command Chief of Staff, responding for the Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, agreed with the recommendation. The Chief of Staff stated that the U.S. Transportation Command will develop and implement an oversight plan to ensure that MSC and Department of Transportation MARAD officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. Therefore, we consider the recommendation resolved and open. We will close the recommendation once we verify the development and implementation of an oversight plan to ensure that MSC and MARAD officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements.

Please see the Recommendations Table on the next page for the status of recommendations.

Recommendations Table

Management	Recommendations Unresolved	Recommendations Resolved	Recommendations Closed
Commander, Military Sealift Command	None	1	None
Commander, U.S. Transportation Command	None	2	None

Please provide Management Comments by August 9, 2024.

Note: The following categories are used to describe agency management’s comments to individual recommendations.

- **Unresolved** – Management has not agreed to implement the recommendation or has not proposed actions that will address the recommendation.
- **Resolved** – Management agreed to implement the recommendation or has proposed actions that will address the underlying finding that generated the recommendation.
- **Closed** – The DoD OIG verified that the agreed upon corrective actions were implemented.





OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500

July 9, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. TRANSPORTATION COMMAND COMMANDER,
MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND AUDITOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting
the DoD Surge Sealift Mission (Report No. DODIG-2024-106)

This final report provides the results of the DoD Office of Inspector General's evaluation. We previously provided copies of the draft report and requested written comments on the recommendations. We considered management's comments on the draft report when preparing the final report. These comments are included in the report.

The Military Sealift Command Executive Director, responding for the Commander of the Military Sealift Command, and the U.S. Transportation Command Chief of Staff, responding for the Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, agreed to address the recommendations presented in the report; therefore, we consider the recommendations resolved and open. We will close the recommendations when you provide us documentation showing that all agreed-upon actions to implement the recommendations are completed. Therefore, please provide us within 90 days your response concerning specific actions in process or completed on the recommendations. Send your response to [REDACTED].

If you have any questions, please contact [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

FOR THE INSPECTOR GENERAL:

Bryan Clark

Bryan Clark
Assistance Inspector General for Evaluations
Programs, Combatant Commands, and Operations

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Introduction

Objective

The objective of this evaluation was to determine whether the DoD effectively provided contested mobility training requirements for personnel supporting the DoD surge sealift mission. See Appendix A for the Scope and Methodology. Throughout this report, we use the term contested environment (CE) rather than contested mobility.

Background

Sealift is how DoD and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) officials transport most military equipment during a major conflict. A robust and responsive surge sealift fleet is critical to the U.S. national security strategy in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility and around the globe.

More than 90 percent of U.S. Service members' equipment and supplies travel by sea. The ability to move U.S. forces and military equipment enables the U.S. to defend and promote vital interests throughout extensive sea area in the U.S. Indo-Pacific area of responsibility and anywhere in the world. Therefore, mariners must be prepared to operate in a CE.

A CE is an uncertain environment where host government forces do not have effective controls of the territory and population in the intended operational area. A CE is also a hostile environment where hostile forces have control, intent, and capacity to effectively oppose or react to the operations a unit intends to conduct. CE training for mariners is important to keep sealift vessels operating safely and effectively and continue the flow of logistics when called on.

Sealift Components

The U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) is the DoD combatant command that provides air, land, and sea transportation to accomplish the DoD's global mobility mission. A USTRANSCOM component command, the Military Sealift Command (MSC), provides ocean transportation for the DoD. The MSC is also a component of the Navy and consists of civil service and contract mariners, as well as active and Reserve military personnel. The Navy is responsible for the organization, training, equipping, and provisioning of sealift forces. America's strategic sealift includes both Government-owned ships and assured access to

a fleet of privately owned, commercially operated, U.S. flag vessels and intermodal systems and the civilian U.S. citizen Merchant Mariners who crew them.¹ The DOT's Maritime Administration (MARAD) supports USTRANSCOM by providing sealift capabilities in times of national emergency or war.

MARAD secures America's maritime interests through a series of programs that use Government and commercial vessels to provide timely and scalable sealift capabilities in times of national emergency and to meet the DoD strategic sealift needs during war. MARAD works closely with its Navy and USTRANSCOM partners to provide the sealift capabilities needed to meet national security requirements. At the forefront of MARAD's strategic sealift operations is the National Defense Reserve Fleet, consisting of approximately 100 government-owned vessels waiting in reserve to provide additional domestic or international logistic support. In addition, the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) is a fleet of Government-owned vessels within the National Defense Reserve Fleet used to transport DoD cargo during major contingencies, typically cargo and auxiliary crane ships. Although MARAD owns and maintains the RRF in peacetime, when activated for national defense or civil purposes, MARAD turns over operational control to the MSC. MSC personnel do not serve on vessels in the RRF.² MARAD contracts for mariners to crew the vessels in the RRF.

The Surge Sealift Fleet

The MSC and MARAD reserve fleets are collectively referred to as the surge sealift fleet and are expected to be a ready source of shipping and provide millions of square feet of cargo-carrying capacity to transport Army, Marine Corps, and other equipment and supplies. The surge sealift fleet consists of 48 vessels owned and maintained by MARAD, which is also known as the RRF. The surge sealift fleet also includes one vessel owned and maintained by the MSC. According to MSC officials, the MSC will transfer this vessel to MARAD in 2024. Therefore, the vessel will become part of the RRF.³

The RRF is a subset of vessels within MARAD's National Defense Reserve Fleet that is ready to support rapid, worldwide deployment of U.S. military forces. As a key element of the DoD strategic sealift, the RRF primarily supports the transport of Army and Marine Corps unit equipment, combat support equipment, and initial resupply during critical surge periods.

¹ Intermodal transportation is the movement of goods in the same container by more than one mode of transport, such as truck, rail, ship, or plane, without handling the goods themselves when changing modes. It is a common way of moving freight internationally and domestically.

² MSC personnel includes military, civilian, and contract mariners.

³ We examined whether the DoD effectively provided CE training for personnel supporting the RRF since all the surge sealift vessels are in the RRF except one MSC surge sealift vessel. The MSC surge sealift vessel is scheduled to transfer to the RRF in 2024.

RRF ships are expected to be fully operational within their assigned 5-day readiness status and then sail to their designated loading docks. Prior to being activated, commercial U.S. ship managers provide systems maintenance, equipment repairs, logistics support, activation, manning, and operations management by contract. DoD and DOT officials test the RRF periodically by DoD-driven activations of ships for military cargo operations and exercises. Ships in priority readiness have reduced operating status maintenance crews of approximately 10 commercial merchant mariners, and additional mariners supplement the crews on a situational basis once activated.

MARAD contracts with several private-sector companies to maintain RRF ships and ensure the ships are ready to sail. The contractors are also responsible for providing the crew or MARAD contract mariners needed to maintain and operate the RRF ships if activated to support a DoD mission.⁴

Beginning October 1, 2018, the MSC Commander assigned a tactical advisor (TACAD) to activated sealift vessels to enhance force protection and increase the survivability of U.S. personnel, cargo, and equipment by providing tactical information and advice on potential threats. TACADs are strategic sealift officers, a community of 2,400 Navy Reserve officers who are also U.S. Coast Guard-licensed commercial mariners and who typically work in industry (ashore and afloat) when not executing Navy Reserve missions and orders. The MSC only provides TACADs when an RRF vessel is activated and based on mission requirements and availability of TACADs.

Sealift Requirements and Training

On October 5, 1989, the President issued National Security Directive 28, “National Security Directive on Sealift,” to ensure that the U.S. maintains the capability to meet sealift requirements in the event of crisis or war. This directive states that the DoD will determine the requirements for sealift of deploying forces. In 2008, the USTRANSCOM Commander and the DOT MARAD Maritime Administrator signed a memorandum of agreement between the DoD and the DOT to identify the roles and responsibilities of the DoD and the DOT in the administration of the National Defense Reserve Fleet program, including training of personnel in the RRF. According to the memorandum of agreement, USTRANSCOM is responsible for annually developing the DoD’s strategic sealift requirements (except for Service-unique or theater-assigned requirements) and coordinating the overall DoD RRF requirements with MSC and MARAD officials.

⁴ In this report, we use the term MARAD contract mariner to refer to the crew provided by the contractors to maintain and operate the RRF ships.

In July 2023, USTRANSCOM issued the memorandum, “Strategic Sealift Program Guidance FY24-FY30” (the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance), which states that the MSC, in coordination with MARAD, will define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in CEs, to be reviewed annually.⁵

⁵ USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, “Strategic Sealift Program Guidance FY24-FY30,” July 24, 2023.

Finding

MSC Officials Offered CE Training to MARAD Contract Mariners but Did Not Ensure the Sufficiency or Appropriateness of That Training

When activated on an RRF ship, MARAD contract mariners receive as-needed CE training from TACADs. According to MSC officials, they also allowed MARAD contract mariners to take the MSC basic and advanced operations courses, which contained some CE topics, but the courses were not required.

Although some training was offered, MSC and MARAD officials did not identify specific CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners who operate in the RRF as required by the USTRANSCOM Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

This occurred because MSC and MARAD officials did not develop an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners or develop a training program. According to MSC officials, they met the intent of the guidance by developing the MSC basic and advanced operations courses that covered some CE topics and offering those courses to MARAD contract mariners. However, as of December 2023, MARAD officials stated that MSC officials had not provided the training curriculum, instruction method, or credentials of the personnel delivering the operations courses. In addition, USTRANSCOM officials did not ensure that MSC and MARAD officials developed requirements or an approach for providing CE training to contract mariners, in accordance with the USTRANSCOM Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

As a result, MARAD contract mariners may not be fully prepared to successfully support DoD surge sealift missions in CEs. For example, MARAD contract mariners may not be aware of the latest threats and procedures related to operational security and executing tactical maneuvering in CEs.

MSC Officials Provided CE Training to TACADs Who Provided As-Needed CE Training to MARAD Contract Mariners

MSC officials identified CE training requirements for and provided training to TACADs, who then provided CE instruction to MARAD contract mariners as needed during the activation of an RRF ship. According to MSC officials, they also allowed MARAD contract mariners to take the MSC basic and advanced operations courses, which contained some CE topics, but the courses were not required.

MSC Officials Developed the TACAD Program for Strategic Sealift Officers

MSC officials developed the TACAD program in August 2018 to train strategic sealift officers to serve as TACADs. Commander MSC Instruction 3120.21 requires TACADs to complete initial, in-service, and specialized trainings to become qualified prior to serving on a vessel, which the MSC does through the TACAD program.⁶ TACADs advise the ship's crew of potential threats within the CE and increase survivability of the ship's personnel, cargo, and equipment. Onboard, TACAD responsibilities include the following.

- Operating secure communications to augment the commander's command and control structure and providing increased visibility on global, joint military cargo movements
- Translating DoD initiatives and language to the commercial fleet to enable effective and secure movement
- Conducting CE training for the ship's crew and supercargo and operating anti-unmanned aerial vehicle kits to augment and increase survivability⁷

MSC officials offer a TACAD Basic Operations Course, a two-week course with instruction on the following topics.

- Command and control structure
- CE training
- Naval message writing and Naval communications
- Divisional tactics
- Mobile expeditionary communications kit training
- Secure communications and tactical signal training

Commander MSC Instruction 3120.21 requires all TACADs to complete refresher training at the MSC headquarters with instructors and TACAD staff prior to going on a mission. Instructors teach all strategic sealift officers the tactics and practices that reduce vulnerability and increase security.

MARAD officials stated that TACADs provide contract mariners with CE instruction as needed without an approved curriculum during the activation of a vessel. In addition, MARAD officials stated that the instruction competes with planned tasks that are part of the approved activation plan and required by the contract.

⁶ Commander MSC Instruction 3120.21, "Tactical Advisor Employment," January 24, 2020.

⁷ Supercargoes are unit personnel who are designated by deploying units (on orders) to accompany, supervise, maintain, and guard unit equipment aboard a ship. An essential part of their job is to monitor and adjust equipment lashings and tiedowns, control access to cargo, document items that cannot be repaired enroute, and brief the port commander at the sea port of debarkation on vehicle conditions and any unusual circumstances concerning the cargo.

MSC Officials Offered Basic and Advanced Operations Courses for MSC Civilian and Contract Mariners

In 2018, MSC officials provided basic and advanced operations courses for mariners operating Government-owned, contractor-operated vessels and long-term charter vessels under the MSC. The MSC's Basic Operations Course provides a basic understanding of the U.S. Navy's organizations, capabilities, command and control, operations, doctrine, policies, and tactics, techniques, and procedures. This course presents an introduction and basic level of CE provided at the unclassified level. The MSC developed the Basic Operations Course for chief mates, operations chiefs, and licensed officers. The Basic Operations Course is a 4-day, unclassified course that includes CE topics such as:

- global scene setter,
- integration with Naval and Joint Force command and control structures, and
- operational security.

As of August 2023, 426 MSC civilian mariners and 63 MARAD contract mariners attended the MSC's Basic Operations Course.⁸

The MSC's Advanced Operations Course provides an overview of numerous Navy fleet operations and how MSC officials interact with Navy officials. The course informs the students on the latest fleet tactics, techniques, and procedures, including operations under the confines of a CE. The Advanced Operations Course is a 4-day, classified (at the secret level) course covering the following CE topics.

- Understanding and employing signature control
- Operational and information security
- Naval force integration from the operational to tactical level of war, including operational logistics in a CE
- Global scene setter and current intelligence
- Supporting strategic information operations and communications
- Implementing lighting and emission control standards
- Executing tactical maneuver in a CE

As of August 2023, 107 MSC civilian mariners and 7 MARAD contract mariners attended the MSC's Advanced Operations Course.

Although the basic and advanced operations courses were offered to MARAD contractors, they were not required to take the course, and the courses were not specifically focused on CEs.

⁸ The MSC civilian and contract mariners that attended MSC's Basic Operations Course do not serve on vessels in the RRF.

MSC and MARAD Officials Did Not Develop an Agreed-upon Approach for Defining Training Requirements for MARAD Contract Mariners or Develop a Training Program

The CE-related training offered to MARAD contract mariners was either only offered as needed when they were activated on the RRF or was not CE-focused and required. MSC and MARAD officials did not develop an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners or develop a training program. USTRANSCOM's 2023 Strategic Sealift Program Guidance for FY 2024 through FY 2030 states that the MSC, in coordination with MARAD, will define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in CEs. MSC officials stated that they met the intent of the guidance by developing the MSC basic and advanced operations courses with some CE topics, which are available to MARAD contract mariners.

We requested training records for MARAD contract mariners that serve on the RRF ships that attended either course; however, MSC and MARAD officials responded to us saying that no MARAD contract mariners had attended the courses.

Additionally, even if MARAD contract mariners had attended the courses, MARAD officials identified the following challenges with the basic and advanced operations course. These challenges are rooted in the fact that MSC and MARAD officials had not yet developed an agreed-upon approach for CE training for MARAD contract mariners, including identifying the skills they need to possess and the qualifications of the instructors offering the training.

- The training may not be functional to the crew or mismatched to the mission.
- Instructors are not certified.
- No record of training exists to inform refresher training or skills assessment.
- The majority of MARAD's contract mariners are not in the military and do not have military identification cards to easily access military bases for training.

As of December 2023, MARAD officials stated that MSC officials had not provided training curriculum, instruction method, and credentials of the personnel delivering the basic and advanced operations courses.

According to MSC officials, the MSC provided MARAD with the basic and advanced operations courses, outlines, and curriculum materials that lay out competencies for contract mariners. In addition, MSC officials stated MARAD officials should proactively look for the CE training and materials. Furthermore, MSC officials stated that MARAD contract mariners have access to and attended courses at the MSC training center.

USTRANSCOM officials stated that MARAD is not able to identify the skills and training required to operate in CEs without assistance from the MSC, which has a global presence, understanding of the operating environment, and the required skills. A MARAD official stated that a CE working group operated from 2015 through 2019, but was terminated. Since the termination of the working group, no recurring meetings took place between MSC and MARAD representatives to discuss contract mariner preparedness for serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in CEs. *Therefore, the MSC, in coordination with MARAD, should develop and implement an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance and the associated training program.*

U.S. Transportation Command Officials Did Not Develop and Implement a Plan to Oversee the Implementation of MARAD Contract Mariner Preparedness Requirements

USTRANSCOM officials did not ensure that MSC and MARAD officials complied with mariner preparedness requirements in the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. According to the memorandum of agreement between the DoD and the DOT, USTRANSCOM is responsible for annually developing the DoD strategic sealift requirements and coordinating the overall DoD RRF requirements.

Since July 2021, USTRANSCOM issued three Strategic Sealift Program Guidance memorandums that provide the MSC and MARAD strategic sealift guidance in accordance with the 2008 memorandum of agreement.⁹ The memorandums included the following three mariner preparedness requirements.

- July 2021—The MSC will define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in CEs.

⁹ USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, "Strategic Sealift Program Guidance, FY22-FY28," July 30, 2021.

USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, "Strategic Sealift Program Guidance FY23-FY29," November 8, 2022.

USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, "Strategic Sealift Program Guidance FY24-FY30," July 24, 2023.

- November 2022—MARAD, in coordination with the MSC, will define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in CEs, to be reviewed annually.
- July 2023—The MSC, in coordination with MARAD, will define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in CEs, to be reviewed annually.

Although a USTRANSCOM official stated that the MSC has a global presence, understanding of the operating environment, and the skills required to operate in a CE, USTRANSCOM directed the mariner preparedness requirements to both the MSC and MARAD in the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. However, USTRANSCOM officials have not provided oversight to ensure compliance with these requirements. *Therefore, USTRANSCOM should develop and implement an oversight plan to ensure that MSC and MARAD officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.*

MARAD Contract Mariners May Not Successfully Support DoD Surge Sealift Missions in a Contested Environment

Without clear requirements and effective preparation and training, MARAD contract mariners may not be fully ready to successfully support DoD surge sealift missions in a CE. For example, MARAD contract mariners may not be aware of the latest threats and procedures related to operational security and executing tactical maneuvering in CEs. Additionally, without an oversight plan, USTRANSCOM cannot ensure that the MSC and MARAD comply with mariner preparedness requirements in the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Commander of the Military Sealift Command, in coordination with the Administrator of the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, develop and implement an agreed-upon approach for defining contested environment training requirements for Department of Transportation Maritime Administration contract mariners in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance and the associated training program.

Military Sealift Command Comments

The MSC Executive Director, responding for the MSC Commander, agreed and stated that the MSC will work with MARAD to establish a joint working group tasked to define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations in CEs and in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. The requirements will be recorded in the Procedures Guide section of the sealift memorandum of agreement between the MSC and MARAD. The Executive Director also stated that the MSC, in conjunction with MARAD, will use the requirements identified by the working group to develop an agreed-upon training program for strategic sealift contract mariners. In addition, the MSC will brief USTRANSCOM annually on the training requirements, skills, and competencies and the status of the contract mariner training program.

Our Response

Comments from the MSC Executive Director addressed the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved and open. We will close the recommendation once we verify the development and implementation of an agreed-upon approach for defining CE training requirements for MARAD contract mariners.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command develop and implement an oversight plan to ensure that Military Sealift Command and Department of Transportation Maritime Administration officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

U.S. Transportation Command Comments

The USTRANSCOM Chief of Staff, responding for the USTRANSCOM Commander, agreed and stated that USTRANSCOM will add an Intermediate Military Objective to the Command Strategy Forum under an existing line of effort titled “Maritime Mobility Force Readiness” to provide oversight on mariner preparedness in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. The new task will read: “Military Sealift Command, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, will define and implement the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in contested environments to be reviewed annually.” The Chief of Staff also stated that this task will be reviewed annually by the USTRANSCOM Commander or the USTRANSCOM Deputy Commander until completion.

Our Response

Comments from the USTRANSCOM Chief of Staff addressed the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved and open. We will close the recommendation when we verify the development and implementation of an oversight plan to ensure that MSC and MARAD officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements.

Appendix

Scope and Methodology

We conducted this evaluation from June 2023 through May 2024 in accordance with the “Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation,” published in December 2020 by the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Those standards require that we adequately plan the evaluation to ensure that objectives are met and that we perform the evaluation to obtain sufficient, competent, and relevant evidence to support the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. We believe that the evidence obtained was sufficient, competent, and relevant to lead a reasonable person to sustain the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The objective and scope of this evaluation was to determine whether the DoD effectively provided contested mobility training requirements for personnel supporting the DoD surge sealift mission in CEs. Specifically, we reviewed the CE training requirements and the availability of training for personnel operating in a CE. We reviewed the DoD’s coordination efforts with the DOT MARAD. In addition, we reviewed planned and finalized policy regarding surge sealift operations.

To perform this evaluation and achieve our objective, we collected and reviewed laws, policies, directives, regulations, and command-specific guidance on strategic sealift and CE, including the following.

- William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-283, January 1, 2021
- Merchant Mariner Recruitment, Training, and Retention Strategic Plan, 46 U.S.C. § 51707
- National Security Directive 28, “National Security Directive on Sealift,” October 5, 1989
- Joint Publication 4-01.2, “Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Sealift Support to Joint Operations,” October 9, 1996
- Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3501.199D, “Required Operational Capabilities and Projected Operational Environment for Strategic Sealift Ships to Include the Roll-on and Roll-off Ships and Auxiliary Crane Ships,” March 4, 2022
- Memorandum of Agreement Between the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Maritime Administration, “Development, Design, Construction, and Operation of Dual-Use Vessels,” November 2011
- Memorandum of Agreement Between Department of Defense and Department of Transportation, August 8, 2008 (Updated July 27, 2009)

- Joint Publication 4-01, “The Defense Transportation System,” July 18, 2017
- Commander MSC Instruction 3120.21, “Tactical Advisor Employment,” January 24, 2020
- Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3501.101G, “Required Operational Capabilities and Projected Operational Environment Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force,” November 23, 2022
- Commander MSC Decision Memorandum 18-11, “Tactical Advisor,” August 16, 2018
- USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, “Strategic Sealift Program Guidance, FY22-FY28,” July 30, 2021
- USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, “Strategic Sealift Program Guidance FY23-FY29,” November 8, 2022
- USTRANSCOM Memorandum for the Administrator, Maritime Administration and Commander, Military Sealift Command, “Strategic Sealift Program Guidance FY24-FY30,” July 24, 2023
- Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 3501.199D, “Required Operational Capabilities and Projected Operational Environment for Strategic Sealift Ships to Include the Roll-On and Roll-Off Ships and Auxiliary Crane Ships,” March 4, 2022

We obtained and reviewed data call responses and training information to identify roles and responsibilities for contested mobility requirements and training. Additionally, we interviewed representatives from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, USTRANSCOM, the MSC, and the DOT MARAD to:

- determine roles and responsibilities for providing contested mobility requirements and training for personnel supporting the DoD surge sealift mission in CEs,
- identify any additional offices or organizations responsible for developing and managing contested mobility requirements and training,
- identify any challenges that the DoD organizations and the DOT MARAD experienced with developing contested mobility requirements and training for personnel serving on strategic vessels in a CE, and
- determine whether and how the DoD organizations and the DOT MARAD responsible for contested mobility requirements and training mitigate or address these challenges.

Use of Computer-Processed Data

We did not use computer-processed data to perform this evaluation.

Prior Coverage

During the last 5 years, the GAO issued one report discussing surge sealift contested mobility requirements and training.

Unrestricted GAO reports can be accessed at <http://www.gao.gov>.

Unrestricted DoD Office of Inspector General reports can be accessed at <http://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/>.

GAO

GAO Report No. GAO-21-125, “DOD Can Better Leverage Existing Contested Mobility Studies and Improve Training,” February 2021

The GAO found that, from 2016 through 2019, the DoD conducted or sponsored at least 11 classified or sensitive studies on contested mobility and the ability of the U.S. military to transport equipment and personnel in a contested operational environment. The studies resulted in more than 50 recommendations, and DoD officials stated that they believed some of the recommendations were implemented. However, officials did not know the exact disposition of the recommendations because they do not actively track implementation activities. Further, no single DoD oversight entity evaluated the studies’ recommendations and tracked implementation across the DoD. As a result, the DoD may miss an opportunity to leverage existing knowledge on mobility in CEs across organizations and strengthen its mobility efforts for major conflicts, as envisioned in the national defense strategy.

Management Comments

Commander of the Military Sealift Command



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND NORFOLK
SP64 471 EAST C STREET
NORFOLK, VA 23511-2419

5216
N04
28 May 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL

From: Military Sealift Command, Mr. Steve Cade, Executive Director

To: Office of Inspector General, DOD, [REDACTED]

Subj: RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL (DODIG), DRAFT REPORT "EVALUATION OF CONTESTED MOBILITY," dated 20 May 2024 (Project No. D2023-DEV0PA-0125.000)

Ref: (a) USTRANSCOM memo for Department of Defense Inspector General of 3 May 2024

1. The Military Sealift Command provides management responses attachment (1) to Ref a, found in the subject report.
2. The point of contact in this matter is [REDACTED]

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Cade", is positioned above the typed name and title.

S. C. CADE
Executive Director

Copy to:
DMO
N00IG

Commander of the Military Sealift Command (cont'd)

DoDIG Draft Report (Project No. D2023-DEV0PA-0125.000)

**“Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting the DoD Surge Sealift Mission”
Dated May 2024**

Recommendation 1: Commander of the Military Sealift Command, in coordination with the Administrator of the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, develop and implement an agreed-upon approach for defining contested environment training requirements for the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration contract mariners in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance, and the associated training program

Military Sealift Command Response: Concur. Military Sealift Command (MSC) will work with the Maritime Administration (MARAD) to establish a joint working group tasked to define the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations in contested environments and in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. The requirements will be recorded in the Procedures Guide section of the Sealift MOA between MSC and MARAD. MSC, in conjunction with MARAD, will use the requirements identified by the working group to develop an agreed upon training program for Strategic Sealift contract mariners. MSC will brief U.S. Transportation Command annually on the current list of training requirements, skills and competencies and the status of the contract mariner training program.

Attachment (1)

Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command



UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
508 SCOTT DRIVE
SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS 62225-5357

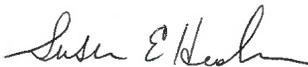
10 June 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM: TCCS

SUBJECT: Response to DoDIG Draft Report "Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting the DoD Surge Sealift Mission," dated 20 May 2024 (Project No. D2023-DEV0PA-0125.000)

1. The U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) provides management responses to Recommendation 2 found in the subject report.
2. The point of contact in this matter is [REDACTED]


SUSAN E. HENDERSON
Major General, U.S. Army
Chief of Staff

Attachment
USTRANSCOM Response

cc:
TCJ5
TCJA
MSC

Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command (cont'd)

DoDIG Draft Report (Project No. D2023-DEV0PA-0125.000)

**“Evaluation of Contested Mobility Training Requirements for Personnel Supporting the DoD Surge Sealift Mission”
Dated May 2024**

Recommendation 2: The Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, develop and implement an oversight plan to ensure that Military Sealift Command and Department of Transportation Maritime Administration officials develop and implement mariner preparedness requirements in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance.

USTRANSCOM Response: Concur. USTRANSCOM will add an Intermediate Military Objective (IMO) to the Command Strategy Forum under an already-existing line of effort titled “Maritime Mobility Force Readiness” to provide oversight on mariner preparedness in accordance with the Strategic Sealift Program Guidance. The new IMO task will be “Military Sealift Command, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, will define and implement the training requirements, skills, and competencies required of contract mariners serving on strategic sealift vessels during naval operations and in contested environments to be reviewed annually.” This task will be reviewed annually by the Commander, U.S. Transportation Command or by the Deputy Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, until completion.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CE	Contested Environment
DOT	Department of Transportation
MARAD	Maritime Administration
MSC	Military Sealift Command
RRF	Ready Reserve Force
TACAD	Tactical Advisor
USTRANSCOM	U.S. Transportation Command

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Congressional Liaison

703.604.8324

Media Contact

public.affairs@dodig.mil; 703.604.8324



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4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22350-1500
www.dodig.mil
DoD Hotline 1.800.424.9098

