



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



March 28, 2008

## Sea Basing & Africa Partnership Station (APS)

*"We are excited to be able to participate in APS. The opportunity to validate our sea base concept and exercise our ship-to-shore capabilities while supporting a humanitarian aid operation really demonstrates the broad capabilities of our prepositioned force."*

**– Capt. Clay Saunders, Commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron One**

In March, as part of West Africa Training Cruise (WATC) '08, Military Sealift Command prepositioning ships USNS 2nd LT John P. Bobo and USNS LCPL Roy M. Wheat joined APS ships USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43) and HSV-2 Swift and Marines from Naval Beach Group Two and U.S. Marine Forces Europe for a sea-basing and humanitarian assistance distribution exercise off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia.

### First operational deployment of the Improved Navy Lighterage System (INLS)

WATC '08, in concert with APS, focused on the delivery of humanitarian assistance supplies to various clinics and schools in Monrovia from a sea-based command. This year, WATC employed INLS, a redesign of a floating dock system originally used during World War II.

- INLS is composed of smaller pieces assembled at sea which lock together to create ferries, causeway piers, or roll-on, roll-off discharge facilities to transport cargo and equipment from ship to shore.
- Sea basing with INLS leaves a minimal footprint and its deployed configuration can be tailored to the specific mission.

### Advantages of delivering humanitarian assistance through sea basing, WATC impact

The ability to create a mobile platform at sea enables future execution of the Maritime Strategy, complements APS initiatives and has the potential to enhance future support in the African region.

- After INLS was assembled at sea, cargo from Bobo, Wheat and Fort McHenry, including trucks, equipment and humanitarian aid supplies, were transferred to Swift via INLS. Swift then ferried these supplies to Liberian schools and medical clinics in Monrovia.
- Nearly 300 additional Sailors, Marines and civilian mariners participated in WATC with APS staff and crew.
- Tailored sea basing – WATC and APS provided proof of concept, donating \$3 million in Project HOPE health items and \$58,000 worth of hospital equipment to facilities in Monrovia on behalf of the people of the United States.
- As seen with APS's experience to date with existing interagency and multi-national partners and new non-governmental partners, sea basing is uniquely capable to provide persistent, non-threatening outreach and assistance to maritime nations.

### Key Messages

- WATC complements APS initiatives and can enhance future support to the African continent.
- APS is currently deployed to West and Central Africa through May 2008. Part of the Global Fleet Station concept, APS embodies the Maritime Strategy by supporting regionally sustained, focused training and multinational/interagency collaboration.
- INLS provides facilities at sea that allow ships to off-load cargo at sea and deliver it ashore when traditional harbor facilities are unavailable.

### Facts & Figures

- This is the first time INLS, including the causeway ferries and the roll-on, roll-off discharge facility, was assembled at sea in real-world operations.
- This was the first time Swift has come alongside and loaded cargo from a discharge platform at sea.
- Bobo's stern ramp was connected to the discharge platform five miles off the coast of Liberia, the greatest distance out in the open ocean this connection has successfully been accomplished.
- Additional stories on [WATC '08](#) and [INLS preparations](#) are available.