

OCEAN GIANT AT THE END OF THE EARTH

The M.E.B.A.-crewed M/V OCEAN GIANT was at McMurdo Station in the South Pole this week as Operation Deep Freeze (ODF) heats up.

The ship was contracted by the Military Sealift Command to be a key part of their annual Joint Task Force Antarctica mission for the resupply of McMurdo – a remote scientific outpost. MSC has supported ODF since the Station was established in 1955, providing supplies and fuel to scientists.



The OCEAN GIANT on the ice pier at McMurdo (File Photo)

The vessel reached the outpost in late January and began conducting cargo offloads from the McMurdo ice pier soon after. The ship arrived with 550 pieces of cargo consisting of nearly 7 million pounds of supplies such as frozen and dry food stores, building materials, vehicles, and electronic equipment and parts. Members of Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One helped conduct the offload.

In years past, temperatures at McMurdo Station have hovered in the single digits and below zero daily. The icy winds from Mt. Erebus, known to be the coldest place on earth, blew upwards of 20 knots or more, making for long, bone chilling days. This year, the weather condition on the remote continent have been exceptional with temperatures near freezing and low winds. According to Larry Larsson, MSC's representative at McMurdo Station, a slight change in scheduling has also played a positive role in cargo operations.

Before departing McMurdo, OCEAN GIANT will be loaded with retrograde cargo for transportation off the continent, including ice core samples carried back to the United States in sub-zero freezer containers, as well as trash and recyclable materials for disposal and equipment no longer required on station.

M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer Tom Eastwood is heading up the engine room on the OCEAN GIANT's Antarctic adventure joined by 1st A/E Patrick Fales and 2nd A/E William Sprouse. M.E.B.A. retiree Dave Seltzer is also onboard serving as the Cargo Crane Mechanic and making sure cargo operations go smoothly.