

The Fox is Crowing

By RADM Sean F. Crean, SC, USN, (Ret.), Member

In August of 1990, I was XO of Commander Military Sealift Command Mediterranean 201 (COMSCMED201), the first naval reserve unit activated since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Even with advance notice gained from MSCMED's Commodore, the Bangor, Maine reserve center CO's response, was "Don't give yourself airs. You're not that important." At 2 am on Sunday August 26th, my phone rang. The voice of my unit CO said, "The Fox is Crowing." Our orders had arrived, and we were in theater on 31 August (staying well into August 1991). Logistics, first in, last out. The MSC mission was to oversee the transit of the largest strategic sealift of supplies in history. With more than 250 ships carrying nearly 18.5 billion pounds of equipment and supplies to sustain Desert Shield/Storm forces, one memory stands out.

At the end of January 1991, Iraq began to spill massive amounts of oil into the Persian Gulf, to foul the desalinization plants making drinking water and foil the landing by US Marines on Kuwait's coast. MSC identified a crude oil tanker in Istanbul converted for potable freshwater. My orders were to go to Turkey, finish contract details and get the ship underway by midnight February 7th. In weeks preceding, the terrorist group Dev Sol placed a \$20,000 price tag on the head of any American military and blew up an Istanbul Army office. With direct orders from VADM Frank Donovan to "do whatever it takes" to get the ship underway. I experienced, over the next 6 days, having a bomb removed from my car, midnight repairs to a sabotaged pipeline, and fending off other shipowners wanting MSC business—all while running a fever of 103. However, at 2345, on the 7th, the MV OBO VEGA, sailed from the Bosphorus Straits. Mission complete.

RADM (ret) Sean F. Crean was assigned as the Officer-in-Charge Reserve Support MSC Mediterranean, from August 1990-July 1991 during the First Persian Gulf War. He served as a Navy Supply Corps Officer from 1978-2012, retiring after 34 years. Afloat tours included USS JOHN HANCOCK (DD981) and Carrier Battle Group Sustainment Assessment Officer for four battle groups including USS ENTERPRISE (CVN65), USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV67), USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN70) and USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN73). Highlights Ashore include tours with NAS Brunswick Maine, Military Sealift Command (COMSCMED201), Seabees (NMCB27), DLA Troop Support Philadelphia, NAVSUP O9R, and assignment to Deputy Chief of Naval Operations N4 at the Pentagon. Flag tours included Deputy Commander, NAVICP (now WSS) Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (DASN) Acquisition and Logistics Management, and finally as Deputy Commander, NAVSUP. After retiring the uniform, RADM Crean served as member of the SECNAV Senior Executive Service (SES) as Director of Navy Small Business and retired recently with the US Small Business Administration as Executive Director, Office of Executive Management, Installations and Support Services. RADM (ret) Crean and his wife Diane have five children and two grandchildren. Three of their sons also served or are currently serving in the Navy.



Left: RADM (ret) **Sean Crean** with the Ship Owner, testing the drinking water before acceptance Feb 1991; Right: the MV OBO VEGA.