



## Marine Prediction Center



### Report to Stakeholders --1999 Accomplishments

#### 1. Introduction

The year 1999 was very busy for the MPC. The most significant change within the Center was the retirement of the Intergraph system and implementation of graphical production of charts using electronic workstations. PC staff embraced the new technology and significant gains in efficiency were realized such that improvements in existing products were implemented without additional staffing. Also, the Center widened its scope of responsibility by taking over the North Pacific and North Atlantic hemispheric surface analysis from the Hydrometeorological Prediction Center.

Significant investments in outreach to users and educational institutions were also made. Although fully staffed from March to December the Center invested approximately 665 hours of overtime and compensatory time in support of outreach activities during this 10-month period. Outreach activities included marine safety-at-sea workshops, seminars, boat shows, and formal presentations at various educational institutions such as the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS), Merchant Marine Academy, New York Maritime Academy, Marine Maritime Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, Sea Education Association, and American Sail Training Association.

#### 2. Major Accomplishments

The following is a chronological list of MPC's major accomplishments for the year 1999 above and beyond the daily issuance of high-quality marine products seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.

- . **Backup Plan for TPC Tested** - MPC serves as the backup to the Tropical Prediction Center's (TPC's) offshore marine program. On March 28, MPC successfully exercised the backup plan. The exercise was especially useful in providing MPC forecasters experience in coordinating with the Miami and New Orleans forecast offices, which have coastal zone responsibilities adjacent to TPC's offshore zones.
- . **Retirement of Legacy Intergraph System** - MPC completed its migration from paper and pen-based production of graphical products to the new workstation-based N-AWIPS software on March 31. The daily production of 58 graphical products is now entirely on N-AWIPS workstations.
- . **Surface Analyses Transferred** - The North Pacific and North Atlantic hemispheric surface analyses were transferred from the HPC to the MPC on April 30. Enhanced software display techniques using state-of-the-art computer-generated presentations of plotted observations, satellite cloud cover, and numerical model forecasts were developed through a partnership involving NCO, MPC, and HPC staff.
- . **UCAR Advisory Panel Review Completed** - Review of the MPC by a panel convened by the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research was completed July 14-15. Professor Russell

Elsberry of the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, led the Review Team. The review reaffirmed the value of the MPC to the international maritime community and made a number of suggestions for enhancing MPC's products and services.

**Backup Plan for MPC Tested** - As the counterpart to the backup test of March 28, TPC successfully tested its backup plan for the MPC on August 24. There were a few communications glitches in the product headers that were fixed immediately. Periodic tests like this are essential to guaranteeing the delivery of MPC and TPC products and services during emergency situations.

**EgyptAir 990 Recovery Task Force Support** - At the request of NTSB Chairman James Hall, specialized marine support for the EgyptAir 990 Recovery Task Force located in Newport, RI, was provided November 2-19. Throughout the primary recovery efforts either MPC Director Jim Hoke or MPC Director of Operations Chief Dave Feit was on-site at the Command Center. They provided on-scene, customized weather forecasts and graphics for the search area to the NTSB, Coast Guard, Navy, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Public Health Service, and ships of the recovery effort, including NOAA's *WHITING*. These meteorologists were supported by a team of weather specialists working around the clock at MPC in Camp Springs, MD, and the Naval Atlantic Meteorology and Oceanography Center, Norfolk, VA. Marine forecasts of wind speed and wave height are of extreme importance during search and recovery efforts. NTSB Chairman Hall was very appreciative and impressed with the weather support the Recovery Task Force had been receiving and said, "You weather people have done an incredible job. We couldn't have done it without you."

Hoke and Feit participated in the NOAA debrief session in Silver Spring for the EgyptAir 990 Recovery Task Force on November 30. The meeting was led by Captain Richard Permenter of the National Ocean Service's (NOS') Office of Response and Recovery. The twenty people in attendance represented all NOAA components involved with the Recovery Task Force, including the NOAA Corps, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Public Affairs, NOS, and NWS. The group discussed the NOAA team's actions and approaches that were successful and determined steps to make future responses even more effective. It was recommended MPC be the initial NWS point of contact for future maritime emergencies.

**Radiofacsimile Product Suite Improved** - MPC implemented a number of improvements to its suite of products broadcast on HF radio facsimile and placed on the Internet on November 17. A major change was the addition of a 48-hour Peak Wave Period/Direction chart for each ocean. Other changes included emphasis of the prediction of warnings and the depiction of ice edges.

**NAVTEX Offshore Text Products Begun** - A new suite of offshore text products in support of NAVTEX to meet the US obligations under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System was begun on November 30. NAVTEX is a coordinated product of the MPC and coastal NWS weather forecast offices and covers the waters from two miles out to 200 mi from both east and west US coasts. These products are now routinely issued along with the regular offshore forecasts four times daily.

**Year 2000** - The year concluded with an uneventful Y2K rollover at meteorological New Years, which occurred at 7 p.m. EST December 31, 1999.

### **3. Awards in 1999**

**Sienkiewicz receives Cline Awards** - Senior Marine Forecaster Joseph Sienkiewicz was selected as the winner of the MPC Isaac Cline Award for 1999. Joe was recognized for his outstanding forecast skill and initiative in getting the word out for a very serious storm threatening the Pacific Northwest and adjacent waters on March 1-3, 1999. Joe's efforts ensured the public and the weather forecast offices along the west coast of the U.S. and Canada were well aware of this life-threatening storm. As an indication of the significance of Joe's contributions he was subsequently selected as the Isaac Cline Award winner for all of NCEP.

**Partain awarded the Bronze Medal** - Science and Operations Officer James Partain was awarded the Department of Commerce Bronze Medal by DoC Deputy Undersecretary Scott Gudes at ceremonies held December 14, 1999, at the University of Maryland Conference Center. The Bronze Medal is the third highest award of the Department. James was recognized for "outstanding leadership in planning, organizing, directing, and implementing MPC modernization activities." The great strides MPC has made in recent years to improve the quality of products and services for its many customers would not have been possible without James' extensive and innovative efforts.

#### **4. Staff as of December 31, 1999**

##### **Administration**

James E. Hoke, Director  
Marshall P. Waters, III, Deputy Director  
Angela K. Wright, Secretary

##### **Marine Forecast Branch**

David M. Feit, Branch Chief  
Senior Marine Forecasters: Robert W. Kelly, Edward R. Schoenberg, Douglas H. Scovil,  
Joseph M. Sienkiewicz, Paul R. Vukits  
Forecasters: George P. Bancroft, Jeffrey K. Bowman, Lee S. Chesneau, David L. Chorney, Joe  
B. Cope, Joseph L. Czarniecki, Allen W. Fritz, Jr., Curt J. Janota, Hugh G. McRandal,  
James D. Nolt, Robert J. Oszejca, Donald S. Prosis, Michael A. Rowland, Todd S.  
Shaw, Wayne D. Weeks

##### **Marine Applications Branch**

Marshall P. Waters, III, Branch Chief  
James L. Partain, Jr., Science and Operations Officer

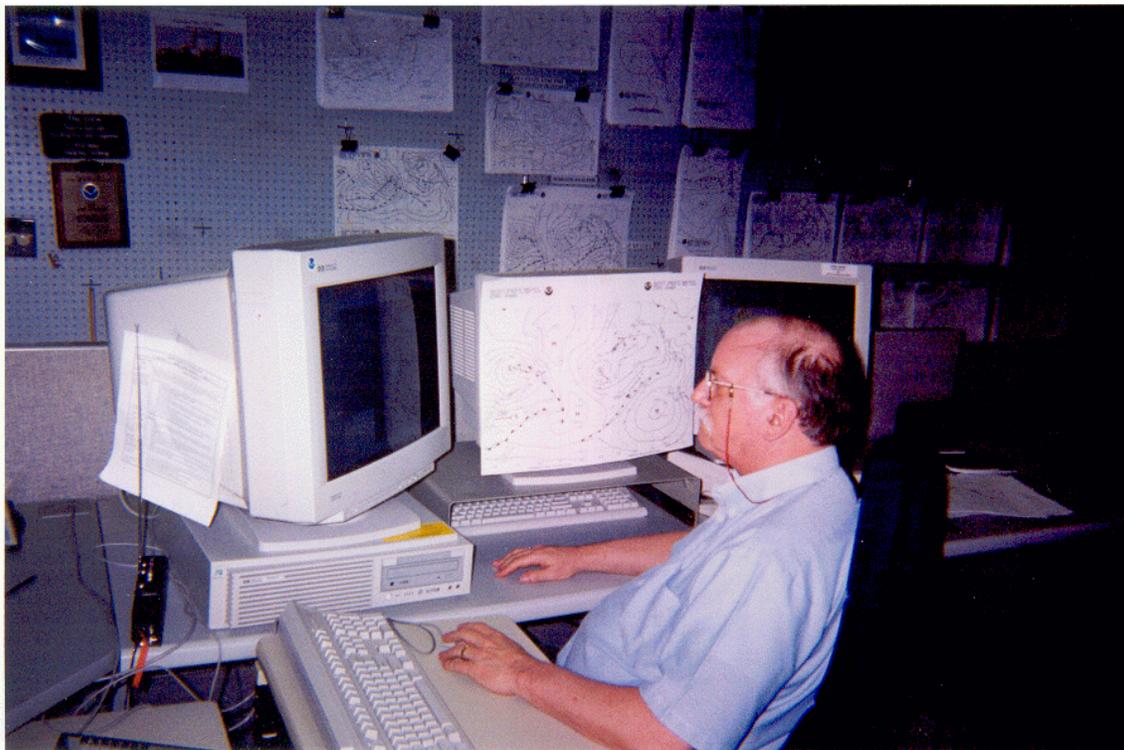
#### **5. Personnel Changes**

Vacancy filled on March 15, 1999: Curt J. Janota, forecaster  
Promotion effective June 22, 1999: Angela K. Wright, secretary

## 5. Images of the MPC



The MPC operations area with forecaster Jim Nolt (foreground) working the Pacific High Seas Desk and forecaster Curt Janota on the Atlantic High Seas Desk. The map briefing wall is in the background.



MPC forecaster Joe Cope using the new N-AWIPS workstation to prepare Pacific high-seas graphics products. The replacement of the old Intergraph systems with N-AWIPS on March 31 enabled MPC to produce clearer analysis and forecast products and freed up time for product enhancements.



MPC Director of Operations Dave Feit at Pier 2 Naval Station Newport with the U.S. naval vessel GRAPPLE. The ship was part of the fleet including NOAA's WHITING instrumental to the search, location, and recovery efforts following the EgyptAir 990 crash. Pier 2 was the home of the Recovery Task Force for the operation. This photograph was taken when many of the ships returned to port due to the bad weather at the recovery site as forecast by MPC and Navy meteorologists. The benign conditions in this photograph illustrate how different the weather conditions could be at the recovery site only 80 miles away and how important precise, site-specific weather forecasts were.