

Ship Scheduling Committee Report
UNOLS Council Meeting
June 2, 3, 2003

The dust has still not settled from the shake-up to ships' schedules that have occurred because of acoustic legalities and the war in Iraq. Nonetheless, 2003 continues to look better than 2002, at least looking at days at sea. As of late May 2003, CY 2003 has 282 more days scheduled than CY 2002 (5120 vs. 4838). This represents a 5.8% increase. However, there are nearly 11% of those days still listed as pending (556) in CY2003. The latest schedules have NSF supporting one day more in 2003 than in 2002 (2971.5 vs. 2970.5); the Navy supporting 223 more days in 2003 (848 vs. 623); and other agencies and groups supporting 56 more days (1300.5 vs. 1244.5).

The large ships are the only class of vessels that shows a class-wide decline in usage from 2002 to 2003. These ships also were the most affected by the acoustic and war issues in 2003. The total usage is down by 44 days and percent utilization of the class decreased from 88.5% in 2002 to 86.4% in 2003. There are some late-breaking developments regarding large ship schedules in the Western Pacific late this year (with implications for early 2004) that will probably lead to a further decline in the total 2003 utilization. That dust still lingers and threatens more choking. The Class III ships will have an overall increase of 151 days at sea from 1301 to 1453. The percent utilization of the class goes up to 75.5% from 67.6%. The class IV ships increased by 86 days in 2003 (1189 vs. 1106) for a percent utilization of 82.6 vs. 76.8. And for the small vessels, the increase between 2003 and 2002 is 91 days. The utilization percentage for these ships went from 103.9% in 2002 to 120.5% in 2003.

For CY 2004, the first scheduling meeting is slated for July 23. Schedulers are just starting to put Letters of Intent together and there are still ship time requests for 2004 trickling into the scheduling system. One complicating factor will be the cruises that were deferred from 2003 into 2004. They total 306 days, a complete year for a large vessel. Unfortunately, the cruises are scattered around the globe. Fitting in these cruises plus the new funded ones will be among the schedulers' biggest concerns.