

Fall 2009 • uscgalaska.com

Alaska Bear

A New Look
— For the —
Alaska Bear



SOUTHEAST ATON

KAYAKERS SAVED

INKED

AIRSTA KODIAK

TRICARE HEALTH
NEWS

Arctic Operations

Contents

Fall 2009

Ready in all Ways.....	7
Forgiveness.....	8
Arctic and the Northwest Passage.....	9
Operation Arctic Crossroads.....	11
Coast Guard team reaches out.....	17
Coast Guard, NOAA team up.....	19
Keeping Alaska moving.....	21
Israeli Kayakers saved from harrowing seas.....	25
Close to the Action.....	29
Scouting skills build foundation.....	31
Flying through harm's way.....	33
Inked.....	37
Caution.....	39
Do you have a case of the Mondays?.....	41
Arm yourself.....	43
Manage TRICARE Prime online.....	44



Alaska Bear Staff

- District Commander -
Rear Adm. Christopher Colvin

- External Affairs Officer -
Lt. Eric Eggen

- Deputy External Affairs Officer -
Chief Dana Warr

- Editor / Layout -
PA1 David Mosley

- Staff Writers / Photographers -
PA1 Sara Francis
PA3 Charly Hengen
PA3 Jon-Paul Rios
PA3 Walter Shinn

"This quarterly publication is authorized for members of the military services stationed in Alaska, their families and the general public. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Homeland Security or the U.S. Coast Guard and do not imply endorsement thereof." Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the staff of the 17th Coast Guard District external affairs office.

All queries concerning news and editorial content should be directed to Coast Guard external affairs, 709 W. 9th St., Juneau, AK 99801. (907) 463-2065. www.uscgalaska.com

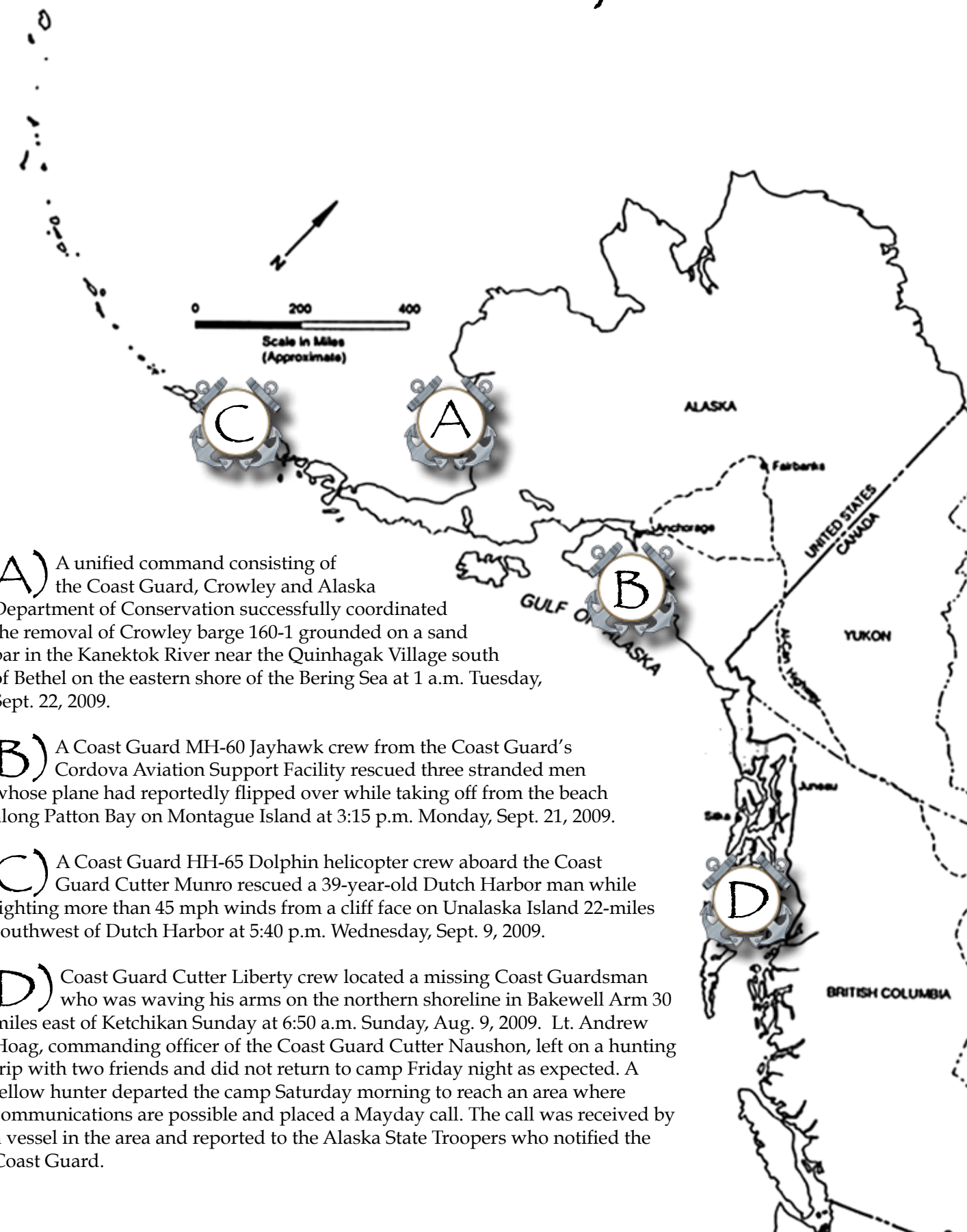
Is there an event you want covered for the Alaska Bear? Do you have an opinion to be heard? Does your unit have anything newsworthy to report? If so, we want to hear from you, call 907-463-2065.

Coast Guard external affairs
709 W. 9th St.
Juneau, AK 99801

On The Cover

A Coast Guard HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter flies as part of a three helicopter convoy enroute to Koyuk, Alaska. The Jayhawk was accompanied by an Army HH-60 helicopter and an Air Force HH-60 helicopter. (Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios)

Around the 17th District



A) A unified command consisting of the Coast Guard, Crowley and Alaska Department of Conservation successfully coordinated the removal of Crowley barge 160-1 grounded on a sand bar in the Kanektok River near the Quinhagak Village south of Bethel on the eastern shore of the Bering Sea at 1 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009.

B) A Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk crew from the Coast Guard's Cordova Aviation Support Facility rescued three stranded men whose plane had reportedly flipped over while taking off from the beach along Patton Bay on Montague Island at 3:15 p.m. Monday, Sept. 21, 2009.

C) A Coast Guard HH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Munro rescued a 39-year-old Dutch Harbor man while fighting more than 45 mph winds from a cliff face on Unalaska Island 22-miles southwest of Dutch Harbor at 5:40 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009.

D) Coast Guard Cutter Liberty crew located a missing Coast Guardsman who was waving his arms on the northern shoreline in Bakewell Arm 30 miles east of Ketchikan Sunday at 6:50 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 9, 2009. Lt. Andrew Hoag, commanding officer of the Coast Guard Cutter Naushon, left on a hunting trip with two friends and did not return to camp Friday night as expected. A fellow hunter departed the camp Saturday morning to reach an area where communications are possible and placed a Mayday call. The call was received by a vessel in the area and reported to the Alaska State Troopers who notified the Coast Guard.



Hot Competition

A buoy tender crewman prepares a shackle and pin for the next round of contenders in the 'heat and beat' competition of the 2009 Buoy Tender Roundup held in Juneau, July 22, 2009. This year's roundup brings seven U.S. Coast Guard buoy tenders from Kodiak, Cordova, Petersburg, Sitka, Ketchikan, Homer, Astoria, Ore., and one Canadian vessel together for five days of training. Participating are the Coast Guard cutters SPAR, Sycamore, Elderberry, Maple, Hickory, Anthony Petit and Fir along with the Canadian vessel Provo Wallis, a 209-foot Ice-Strengthened Medium Navigational Aids Tender. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios)

New Admiralty

The 17th Coast Guard District held a formal change of command ceremony July 16, 2009 at Centennial Hall in Juneau, Alaska, where Rear Adm. Christopher C. Colvin (third from the right) relieved Rear Adm. Gene Brooks (third from the left) as Commander, 17th Coast Guard District. Master Chief Sean McPhilamy (far right) also assumed the command Master Chief East position from Master Chief Terence Vanderwerf (second from right). (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Walter Shinn)



READY, IN ALL WAYS

“Am I Ready?” This is just one of the questions I asked myself as I prepared for my new job here in Juneau. Directly related to my chosen career and to my service’s motto *Semper Paratus*, this question is answered more by “How Ready?” rather than a simple yes or no.

How ready, indeed. First, allow me to introduce myself as your new Command Master Chief for south-central and southeastern Alaska. I reported aboard in August and along with Robin Krumm, my wife, we are feeling fairly settled on Douglas Island. While this is only my second assignment in Alaska, I am lucky enough to have sailed the waters on two icebreakers out of Seattle. Better than me, Robin has called Alaska home for eighteen years.

Beyond the job, I am mindful of how our families are also called to be Always Ready. Robin and I were looking over a recent All-Coast-Guard message with the subject of National and Family Preparedness. Robin and I have been geographically separated by both our jobs during the past three years and so we are quite happy to be back together once again. Very timely for us to discuss how Ready we are.

With twenty years of service, I am rather used to “the Call” where deployment and mission take me routinely where needed. But in our relatively young marriage, especially after living apart, I am seeing Readiness and Preparedness with new eyes.

There is no time like the present to discuss emergencies, such as natural disasters, widespread illness (like a pandemic flu), along with terrorism and other emergencies. To support us, the Coast Guard has references about preparing an emergency supply kit and more importantly how to build a family plan to deal with these situations. I started at the website <http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/ready.asp> in order to chart a course.

Particularly valuable to me, the legal and financial questions helped resolve some issues for me. Am I done “with it all?” Nope. But now I am pleased to report that both Robin and I have a plan and have started being more Ready.

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.

Semper Paratus,

Sean McPhilamy
Command Master Chief
Seventeenth Coast Guard District (dcmc-East)
office (907) 463-2036
email Sean.M.McPhilamy@uscg.mil



Forgiveness

The world we live in can be full of great joy and great sorrow. Each of us has been hurt in some way in our lives. Causing someone offense is an unfortunate part of life, that is why families, work places, schools and neighborhoods can become hotbeds of human conflict and suffering.

Let’s face it, human beings are messy and hurtful. We don’t mean to be that way. We don’t always intend harm. But most of us have caused and received many relational injuries. We have all insulted and injured our parents, siblings, spouses, children and a wide array of other people.

What is Forgiveness? To forgive is to release. Freely and wholeheartedly let it go. It releases a burden of bitterness and guilt for both parties involved. Forgiveness is simply a decision to let go of our own view of justice and move on in a positive way.

Have you ever deflected an apology? How often have you heard (or said), “No apologies are necessary,” or “Oh, don’t worry about it?” Those kinds of responses abort the necessary and healthy process of forgiveness and renewal.

When we give offense to another human being, an apology and plea for forgiveness is essential to cleaning the wound and preventing relational infection. Apologies and forgiveness are serious stuff. They should be heartfelt and real. We all need to be forgiven for wrongs that we have done. The least we could do would be to forgive others the way we would want to be forgiven.

The Cure for foot-in-mouth disease

Story by Lt. Cmdr. Steven Orren, D17 Chaplain



More than a fable, a myth and a dream? Arctic and the Northwest Passage

Story by PAI David Mosley, PADET Anchorage

Sought by explorers for centuries as a quick way around the North American continent, the Northwest Passage became nothing more than a fable, a myth and a dream.

For years many ship captains tried and failed to navigate this long sought after shortcut with a few actually accomplishing the feat, returning home with stories about the sea of ice.

In 1957 it was the Coast Guard's turn to take a stab at the north. Three cutters, the Storis, Bramble and Spar, left the West Coast in search of a deep water shipping channel across the top of the world only to realize that despite their successful transit of the Northwest Passage, a permanent shipping route was not feasible at that time.

With climate change happening across the globe, explorers, scientists and merchants are once again turning towards the Northwest Passage and an unprecedented shortcut across the globe.

So the question must be raised, "how does this affect the Coast Guard?"

The Coast Guard is the United States' premier military, maritime multi-mission service with a focus on five primary missions comprising maritime homeland security, maritime safety, maritime mobility, national defense and the protection of natural resources. With such a broad

focus, the Coast Guard has been thrust to the front of the climate change issue with its foremost concern being the ever more accessible Arctic waters off Alaska's north coast.

The Coast Guard's focus on the Arctic is being driven from the top down. Admiral Thad Allen, Coast Guard Commandant, recently toured Alaska spending much of his trip visiting and meeting with leaders and members of the communities of the Arctic region.

"The United States is a maritime nation and the Arctic is primarily a maritime domain," Allen stated in response to a question asked of him at the "State of the Coast Guard" address. "The changing conditions in the Arctic will produce its greatest effects in the maritime region. Tied to the seas for security, commerce and resources, America must protect its maritime borders from unlawful intrusion and uphold its maritime sovereignty and with the correct mission-skills and operational experience the Coast Guard is poised to lead."

The responsibility of these newly opened waters is falling firmly into the lap of the Coast Guard's 17th District, as this command oversees all Coast Guard operations in

and around Alaska, with Coast Guard Sector Anchorage first in line when it comes to response to the Arctic region.

"While the world seems to be refocusing on the Arctic, the commands here in Alaska have always been focused there," said Capt. John Kenyon, previous commander Sector Anchorage. "Marine Safety Office Anchorage, now known as Sector Anchorage has continuously performed maritime inspection and response functions in Arctic ports."

If vessel traffic continues to increase in the Arctic, Sector Anchorage may need to respond at an increased tempo and district is planning for any future needs.

Distances in Alaska are great as well as the costs associated with transiting people and equipment to the Arctic. This impacts ability to respond and preplan for Arctic operations, said Kenyon. "The

Sector is capable of responding for short term immediate needs, said Cmdr. Steven Pearson," Sector Anchorage response officer. "A long term presence will require an increase in equipment, assets and people."

When the Presidential Arctic Regional Policy was signed January 9, 2009, this event further enforced the Nations resolve to focus upon the Arctic and the future. Allen stated in support of this policy that, "For the men and women of the Coast Guard, and the partners we work next to every day, this is just the beginning of the work to be done to ensure that we expand our superior mission

Adm. Thad Allen

execution to the increasingly significant Arctic region," said Allen. 🐾

Arctic Ice Edge

The Coast Guard Cutter Healy prepares to enter the ice pack on its mission to map the Arctic sea floor, Sept. 7, 2008. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Anderson)

Reaching out to Rural Alaska

Story by P3 Jon-Paul Rios, D17

Nome was incorporated on April 9, 1901 and was once the most populous city in Alaska. During the 1925 serum run to Nome, also known as the "Great Race of Mercy", 20 mushers and roughly 150 sled dogs relayed diphtheria antitoxin 674 miles across Alaska in a record breaking five and a half days, saving the city of Nome and surrounding communities from an incipient epidemic. Recently the Coast Guard traveled to Nome and surrounding communities in the Arctic to provide its own humanitarian initiative. The mission statement translates Operation Arctic Crossroads as a multi-agency mission consisting of Coast Guard, Air Force, Army National Guard, Air National Guard and U.S. Public Health Services personnel who deployed to Nome and Barrow for a 20 day initiative providing medical, optometry, and veterinary services to more than 17 communities throughout Northern Alaska.

The 17th Coast Guard District was granted an annual \$1.3 million budget to use for missions in the Arctic of which \$300 thousand was used to pay for transportation, rental vehicles and hotels to accommodate approximately 100 participants who joined from the different agencies. Prior to commencing any humanitarian aide, the Coast Guard worked closely with Norton Sound Health Corporation to determine what care was needed in the different villages.

Operation Arctic Crossroads

An Alaska Village

In this photo released by the Coast Guard, the community of Kivalina, Alaska, is shown. Coast Guard and military personnel in an outreach program to foster understanding and relations, as well as provide essential medical and veterinary services visited Kivalina a community of 400, with half of the community under the age of 18. (Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Micheal McNeil)



Morning Flight

A Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk, an Army National Guard HH-60 Blackhawk and an Air National Guard HH-60 Pavehawk depart the Nome, Alaska, airport in route to Shishmaref as part of the medical, optical and veterinary outreach efforts of Operation Arctic Crossroads, Aug. 17, 2009 (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley)

The Dog Walk

Air Force Capt. Rhonda M. Ellison, of 117th Medical Group in Birmingham, Ala., and Maj. Michael G. Lewis, of 116th Medical Group in Warner Robin, Ga., are chased around by children in the village of Kivalina. As Veterinarians, both Ellison and Lewis provided animal care expertise and vaccinations during Operation Arctic Crossroads. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios)



Flights on Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters, Army MH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and Air Force MH-60 Pavehawk helicopters to the communities left Nome around 8 a.m. each day.

Military personnel were greeted by village natives who would pull up on their ATV's ready to transport them to where they could set up and work from. Set up would take around 30 minutes and then it was straight to work. People would file in one after another seeking optometry and basic medical care.

Veterinarians chose to walk for hours through the unpaved rocky paths. Mosquitoes swarmed them as they went house to house looking to vaccinate pets with rabies shots or as the locals called it "pokes". By late morning the children of the community would swarm around the veterinarians clinging on to them acting as guides. It wasn't uncommon for a veterinarian to have three children dangling from their bodies at a time.

"They are in love with our uniforms," said Maj. Michael G. Lewis, a veterinarian and public health officer with the 116th Medical Group at Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robin, Ga. By the end of the day all military members exhausted from the tasking day would look out the helicopter windows upon lift off to be given the most fulfilling farewell in the form of smiles and waves of the local community who paid no regard to the sandstorm headed there way caused by the now airborne helicopters. Individual medical staff or combinations of medical, dental and recreational boating safety teams were greeted with open arms in 16 more communities.

"These missions are something that the communities, especially the children will be talking about for a long time," said Lewis.

"Due to the excellent planning between the Coast Guard and Norton Sound Health Corporation staggering numbers



Dental Work

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Vincent Fabunan works as a dental technician in Shishmaref. Vincent Fabunan is originally from the Philippines, but is stationed at the Coast Guard Medical Clinic in Kodiak, Alaska. Operation Arctic Crossroads is a community outreach across northern Alaska, in an effort to integrate local knowledge with military expertise to meet the many challenges of Arctic operations. The operation is made up of members from the, Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, Army National Guard, Air National Guard and U.S. Public Health Services. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios)

resulted after visiting the villages,” said Lt. Cmdr. Michelle Webber, supervisor of Operation Arctic Crossroads.

The optometrist treated 149 patients, veterinarians vaccinated 1,082 animals and the doctors saw 138 patients. Dental was only requested in Shishmaref and 14 patients were seen there over a three day span.

“I felt honored to extend patient care outside the Coast Guard community,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Vincent Fabunan, of Coast Guard Health and Safety Work-Life in Kodiak. “They expressed that they appreciated our support and how we traveled long distances to help them.”

More than 30 Coast Guard and Air Force volunteers also committed their time to organize the clean up of approximately one mile of Middle Beach in Nome.

After the clean up they held a search and rescue demonstration for the community. Spectators gathered on the beach amazed, sea spray fogging their sunglasses as they watched Coast Guard and Air Force personnel 50 yards away putting on a show. They watched as a Coast Guard member drifted in the water playing the role of a person in distress. A Coast Guard Jayhawk helicopter swooped down, lowered a rescue swimmer and pulled the distressed Guardian out of the water to safety.

Immediately following the demonstration both the Coast Guard and Air Force helicopters landed on the beach allowing the community to tour and become more familiar with the equipment used during everyday rescue missions. Children’s eyes lit up as they climbed into the cockpits and manned the controls as if they were pilots engaging their

own rescue attempt.

Another one of the reasons the Coast Guard was in the Arctic was to find, where if possible, a permanent search and rescue station could be placed. As of right now if there were an emergency in the Arctic on a clear day, clear days being few and far between since Alaska is known for its inclement weather, it would take a C-130 Hercules airplane 3 hours to fly from Kodiak to Barrow and a Jayhawk helicopter 8 hours. This being said, many believe there is a need for a base somewhere in the Arctic and the issue is finding where it would be most practical to establish.

The Coast Guard has tried launching assets from different locations of interest to better determine where a base would work but there is still much more research and planning before any decisions are made regarding placing a forward operating location in the Arctic.

Though there is much planning still to be done, nothing perfect comes overnight, and as Webber said, “This would not be able to be done without the help and support of the communities who have been generous in helping us as their guests in the different communities.”

In 1905, a vacant building on the government reservation in Nome was turned over to the Coast Guard due to the urgent demand for a life saving crew but was discontinued in 1949. With operations like Arctic Crossroads the opportunity of a new station has rekindled the hopes of bringing a search and rescue operating base back to the Arctic and sparked a new relationship between the Coast Guard and rural Alaska. 🐾



Soft Landing

A Coast Guard HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter lands next to an Air National Guard HH-60 Pavehawk during a search and rescue demonstration in Nome, Alaska, Aug. 16, 2009. After landing on the beach the helicopters were opened to community members so they could come up and see the helicopters and learn about them. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios)

Clean Beach

Coast Guard members load the back of a truck with trash that was collected during a beach cleanup in Nome, Alaska, Aug. 16, 2009. Members of the Coast Guard, Air Force and Air National Guard all volunteered their Sunday to clean Middle Beach of trash and debris. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios)



Coast Guard team reaches out to North Slope youth

Story and photos by PA3 Charly Hengen, PADET Kodiak

It is 8:00 a.m. and 10 Guardians board an HC-130 Hercules aircraft in Kodiak with luggage and gear. The crew begins their pre-flight and once everything is checked and rechecked, the pilot says, "Okay guys, let's go."

Departing Kodiak and flying to Anchorage, the Hercules and crew pick up more Guardians completing the team of 26. The aircraft is loaded with more luggage, boxes of promotional items such as T-shirts and whistles, the PFD Otter and a mechanical boat known as Coastie.

This Coast Guard team comprised of aviators, auxiliaries, recruiters, civilians, marine safety technicians, machinery technicians, boatswain mates, a yeoman and a doctor traveled to the North Slope over three days to educate, expose and promote Coast Guard missions and operations to Alaska's youth in Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow.

The whirlwind trip kicked off in Nome Sept. 23, traveled to Kotzebue Sept. 24 and finished up in Barrow Sept. 25 reaching more than 2,600 students. Elementary students learned about water safety and the

Demonstration

Mike Morris, a Coast Guard auxiliary from Sitka, demonstrates one of the heat loss areas on the body to Kotzebue elementary students during the Alaskan Native Outreach Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009, at Kotzebue Public School. The outreach spanned three days from Sept. 23-25 and exposed Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow students to Coast Guard operations and missions. The water safety team focused on educating elementary students about the Kid's Don't Float program and the importance of wearing a life jacket.



importance of wearing a life jacket while high school and college students discovered future Coast Guard career opportunities.

"I think the outreach went very well, said Petty Officer 1st Class Sammy Atkins, aviation maintenance technician and Anchorage based recruiter. "We had a lot of interest from the students and parents alike. The parents and faculty I spoke with were very excited for the students to see and experience the possibilities of a positive future within the Coast Guard."

Several different education activities flourished at all three communities. The Hercules aircraft and an HH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Kodiak were available for tours with aviators explaining specific aircrew job descriptions. The PFD Otter and Coastie the boat educated elementary students about water safety and the Kid's Don't Float program. Marine science technicians taught students about inspections and water testing while Coast Guard law enforcement and boarding team members displayed their gear and let students try it on.

"Being from King Salmon which is a small town, I understand what the youth in the area might think as far as what kind of future they can pursue," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Corey Lind a marine science technician with Sector Honolulu. "Often times I thought my options after high school were going to be limited. But by joining the Coast Guard, it opened many doors for me. It was great to talk with the students about my Coast Guard career and how they could have the same experiences as me regardless of

Coastie

Nome elementary students pose with Coastie the mechanical water safety boat during the Alaskan Native Outreach, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2009. The outreach spanned three days from Sept. 23-25 and exposed Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow students to Coast Guard operations and missions. Water safety teams taught elementary students the importance of wearing a life jacket and about the Kid's Don't Float program.

where they are from."

As the Arctic becomes increasingly popular with scientists, fishermen, explorers and tourists, the Coast Guard's visibility will increase in order to test its operating capabilities. The three-day outreach developed deeper friendships and a lasting relationship between the Coast Guard and the Northern Arctic communities. By exposing Coast Guard missions to these Alaskan communities, the outreach team provided an awareness of opportunities available for local youth's futures. It also extended the Coast Guard's hand to community leaders and opened more doors for future engagements.

"Overall this outreach was a huge success," said Lt. Cmdr. Mia Dutcher, District Seventeen Command Center chief. "All the schools were very pleased to have us there and most asked us to return. It was such a huge success because of the positive attitude of all participants. The team members believed in the mission objectives and nearly all of them voiced they enjoyed the engagement with the children." 🐾

Coast Guard, NOAA team up to explore the Last Frontier

Story by PAI Sara Francis, PADET Kodiak

The Arctic is hot, in more ways than one. While the region is experiencing periods of warming not previously recorded, it is also reaching new heights of popularity as a destination for explorers, adventures and researchers.

Coast Guard personnel and scientists have been teaming up for decades to research the northern oceans. Scientists from academic institutions and research projects, working with the National Science Foundation, have used the Coast Guard ice breakers as platforms for discovery. Now they are partnering in new ways using not only cutters, but aircraft as well.

Personnel from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak deployed an ocean drifting buoy into the Arctic Ocean from the rear of an Air Station Kodiak-based C-130 Hercules plane for the first time Aug. 18, 2009, under the supervision of a team from the Coast Guard International Ice Patrol headquartered in New London, Conn., in cooperation with several scientific agencies.

"This effort signals the beginning of airborne deployments by Coast Guard C-130 Hercules Arctic Domain Awareness flights in support of the buoy network," said Pablo Clemente-Colón, chief scientist of the National Ice Center and an oceanographer with NOAA who deployed aboard the cutter Healy during its summer 2009 expedition.

According to Clemente-Colón, the deployment of this buoy represents a contribution by the U.S. Interagency Arctic Buoy Program (USIABP) to the Arctic Observing Network (AON) and the International Arctic Buoy Program (IABP) to maintain a network of automatic data buoys to monitor surface air pressure, air temperature, and ice motion throughout the Arctic Ocean.

The International Ice Patrol deploys between 12 and 15 buoys annually in the Labrador Sea and North Atlantic region. The buoys are deployed by vessels of opportunity or by Coast Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft during iceberg reconnaissance. Each buoy costs about \$2,000.

"We are leaning forward to gain a thorough understanding of the cultural, environmental and operational challenges the Coast Guard faces in Northern Alaska and the Arctic domain. As such, we need to

project a persistent presence in these remote regions to expand our knowledge of the environment and protect U.S. sovereignty," said Capt. Robert Phillips, Incident Management Branch chief for the Seventeenth Coast Guard District. "In order to accomplish these goals we are partnering with the scientific community and other federal agencies, such as NOAA, to join us in collecting data for future operations and a successful road ahead in the Arctic."

The remote regions of Alaska always offer difficult challenges and the Arctic Ocean is no different,"

- Capt. Michael D. Inman

Scientists and Coast Guard crews have been at work on the cutters to chart the ocean floor, track currents, mammal migrations and food chains, sample ecosystems and follow weather patterns with increased regularity since 2007. Currently teams aboard the Healy are participating in the Joint U.S.-Canada Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) mapping mission, and are supporting the deployment of additional ocean drift buoys, seasonal ice buoys, and ice beacons for the USIABP. The cutter Polar Sea took the Healy's place on the northern border this fall.

The research efforts are not limited to the cutters. NOAA and Coast Guard C-130 Hercules aircraft crews are chasing gas. NOAA is tracking methane and carbon dioxide sources in Alaska through November.

Last March, scientists from NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory based in Boulder, Colo., replaced one of the plane's windows with a plate for air inlets. The inlets lead to onboard instruments that measure greenhouse gases and ozone in real time. One instrument measures methane and carbon dioxide every other second. Air is stored in glass flasks that are sent back to the Boulder lab where they are analyzed to understand the distribution of almost 40 other pollutants and trace gases.

According to NOAA, recent observations suggest that the air above Alaska may already hold the first signs of a regional increase in greenhouse gas emissions that could contribute to climate change around the globe.

Scientists are searching for natural sources of methane and carbon dioxide, the two most important heat-trapping gases, as well as methane sources from human activities, such as oil drilling in Prudhoe Bay. Gathered over three

seasons, the data will help NOAA map natural emissions sites, estimate their outflow and set benchmarks for future changes in a warming world.

"North of the Brooks Range, the tundra is not yet melting, but south of the range, partial melting is already occurring. The south will give us clues to what's likely to happen north of the range in the coming years," said Colm Sweeney, of NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory (ESRL). Sweeney is head of a NOAA aircraft project that samples greenhouse gases around the country. NOAA ESRL monitors the gases from 60 sites worldwide.

Researchers have documented large quantities of methane near Arctic lakes. Last year research vessels in the Arctic Ocean observed methane vents releasing gas from the ocean floor. These vents may have been there all along, undiscovered, say the scientists, or they could have developed recently.

"Recent observations could be isolated cases or part of a vast regional change in emissions that could accelerate climate warming to a more dangerous pace. We don't know yet," said Sweeney. "We're eager to find out."

These joint efforts for insight do not undercut the Coast Guard's ongoing commitment to fisheries enforcement, security, marine safety and search and rescue.

Search and rescue controllers at the Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center in Juneau coordinated a rescue Sept. 4 with Alaska Clean Seas and British Petroleum for the transfer of a 27-year-old German woman suffering from symptoms of possible appendicitis aboard the cruise ship Bremen about 30 miles west of Prudhoe Bay.

"The remote regions of Alaska always offer difficult challenges and the Arctic Ocean is no different," said Capt. Michael D. Inman, Response chief for the Coast Guard's Seventeenth District. "The missions in the Arctic are many and we are here meeting the challenge every day."



Graphic by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley

Keeping Alaska moving

Story by PA3 Walter Shinn, D17

Maintaining Mobility

Coast Guardsmen are working to maintain an Aid to Navigation in Southeast Alaska. There are 832 aids throughout Southeast Alaska that are designed to guide mariners to safety and away from hazardous areas that are maintained by 80 Guardians from these four units. (Coast Guard photo)

Breathtaking mountainous terrain, rugged landscapes and abundant wildlife attract hundreds of thousands of tourists to Alaska annually who travel on cruise ships and charter vessels through Glacier Bay and the Inside Passage. Additionally, more than 10,000 fishermen navigate through the waterways of the Alexander Archipelago every year.

While the archipelago provides some protection from the Gulf of Alaska's vicious weather, much of the area experiences strong semi-diurnal tides which can create extreme 30-foot differences between high and low tide, so careful navigation is necessary in many places to prevent collisions with underwater obstructions or running aground.

Mariners navigating the waterways of Southeast Alaska rely on a nationally and internationally recognized system of aids to navigation made up of buoys, channel markers and lighthouses maintained by the Coast Guard. These navigational markers are expected to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

To meet this expectation they are routinely maintained by personnel from Aids to Navigation Team Sitka and the

Coast Guard Cutters Maple, Elderberry and the Anthony Petit as well as other buoy tenders stationed in Alaska. In total, there are 832 aids throughout Southeast Alaska that are designed to guide mariners to safety and away from hazardous areas that are maintained by 80 Guardians from these four units.

Aids to Navigation throughout the waterways of Southeast Alaska provide mariners on vessels of all sizes with the same type of information drivers get from street signs, stop signals, road barriers, detours and traffic lights. These aids are comprised of lighted structures, beacons, day markers, range lights, sound signals and floating buoys. Each aid is designed to help mariners navigate while determining a specific location, getting from one place to another or staying out of danger.

Working together, the Maple, Elderberry, Anthony Petit and ANT Sitka schedule maintenance in order to ensure channel markers and buoys function properly throughout Southeast Alaska. These Guardian's skills range from electrical repair to welding and crane operation.

Navigational equipment consisting of aids and blocks of concrete weighing anywhere from 100 to a combined total



Pointing the Way

Crewmembers inspect the mooring, bridle and lantern on a 9-foot lighted buoy in the Gulf of Alaska. There are 832 aids throughout Southeast Alaska that are designed to guide mariners to safety and away from hazardous areas that are maintained by 80 Guardians from these four units. (Coast Guard photo)

of 38,000 pounds are lifted by personnel using cranes.

The crew of the Maple occasionally lifts 38,000 pounds, just 2,000 pounds less than its crane's maximum capability. That total weight is comprised of an 18,000 pound buoy and a 20,000 pound concrete sinker which anchors the buoy on the sea floor and the necessary length of chain to connect the sinker and the buoy. Maintenance is done to clear any marine growth, inspect different parts of the light, verify the chain has not become too degraded to function and to ensure the batteries or solar panels are functioning correctly.

Crews work hard to scrape marine growth from the sides of the buoys as some buoys measure as much as 35-feet long and nine-feet wide. One lucky Guardian, frequently the most junior of the buoy deck crew, is called upon to "shoot the tube" a three foot shaft in the center of some buoys to scrape the ocean's bounty from inside before it is returned to its station.

"Bitter cold, hurricane force winds, limited daylight during winter, eight-plus knot currents, 20-plus foot tidal ranges, and a shoreline that always consists of rock and boulders," answered Chief Warrant Officer Mark Helmers, of the 17th Coast Guard district response management, when asked

what makes working in Southeast Alaska different compared to the "lower 48".

Last summer a buoy in the Mendenhall Bar, near Juneau, Alaska, broke loose and was retrieved a quarter of a mile from its location by the local Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla. The buoy that broke free is a key navigational aid that helps mark the 80-yard channel that has a depth of three to five feet at low tide. Without this buoy in place navigating through the channel would be very difficult for mariners to distinguish which side of the red buoy to pass during low tide.

In order to return the buoy Petty Officer 3rd Class Jeremy Allgeyer, from the Elderberry and Petty Officer 3rd Class Sean Slycord of the 17th Coast Guard District waterways branch in Juneau, mucked through the wetlands rolling the 120-pound buoy 600 yards and carrying 50 pounds of electronic equipment through a strong current in waist-high water while searching for the chain to re-attach the bolt to put the buoy in its final resting spot. After finding nothing but muddy holes for about 30 minutes, the chain was finally stumbled on.

A computer needed to receive data transmitted from satellites to determine the exact position of the buoy. In order for this to be completed Allgeyer was required to stand in the approximate location of the buoy. Doing this, however, required great skill and coordination. While Slycord held the buoy to keep it from rotating, Allgeyer typed in position coordinates with one hand and held the antenna with the other.

At the same time crewmembers from any of the three cutters are lifting a buoy to conduct maintenance while personnel from ANT Sitka could be scaling a cliff like sure-footed mountain goats preparing to examine a remote channel marker.

The markers can become damaged in storms. Those near the water's surface are often damaged by floating debris or by the wake of vessels and need fresh color and retro-reflective tape.

Most of the aids ANT Sitka services are light houses and shore structures that mark rocks and entrances to harbors and channels. Without the work ANT Sitka conducts in Southeast Alaska mariners would have a much more treacherous time navigating along the rugged coasts especially in severe weather conditions and dense fog.

The maintenance personnel often have to be hoisted down to the aid via a MH-60 Jayhawk rescue helicopter from Air Station Sitka. Often the Guardians working on the aid are left for hours on the side of a cliff, the beach on a remote island or on a small rock with no shelter. If the helicopter that delivered them to the site is diverted for a search and rescue case they may be left with the aid overnight or until another helicopter can pick them up. For this reason they routinely pack camping gear and provisions.

The Guardians of the Maple, Elderberry, Anthony Petit and ANT Sitka not only keep the waterways running but are also trained to conduct all of the Coast Guard's missions. These crews are able to deploy oil containment booms to protect the environment, conduct law enforcement patrols and perform search and rescue missions. Conducting these missions fulfills the three broad roles of maritime safety, security and stewardship that represent the Coast Guard as America's maritime guardian. 🐻

Enlightened Passage

Coast Guardsmen are working to maintain an Aid to Navigation in Southeast Alaska. There are 832 aids throughout Southeast Alaska that are designed to guide mariners to safety and away from hazardous areas that are maintained by 80 Guardians from these four units. (Coast Guard photo)

A jagged rocky coastline stretched out under gray skies and seas. The wind howled at more than 25 mph hurling rain against the exposed faces of the two figures being tossed about in twenty foot swells. Not another soul in sight for miles...the figures looked south toward their destination...Homer...about 100 miles away. They had been at sea in individual kayaks for eight days...



Israeli Kayakers saved from harrowing seas

Story and photo by PAI Sara Francis, PADET Kodiak

and had traveled about 100 miles already. Now they were caught in a storm.

Tired, alone, beset by the weather they made the call...the call for help. The distress call of Albert Kachesky and Gadi Goldfarb, both of Israel, was heard and relayed by the crew of the good Samaritan fishing vessel Inlet Sunrise to the Coast Guard Command Center in Anchorage.

"Now put the ready 60 on the line for two kayakers disoriented and adrift off Gore Point," squawked over the air crew's ready crew pagers. As the personnel of the line crew pulled the helicopter out, the flight crew wriggled into two layers of long underwear, drysuits and lifevests. Helmets in hand they headed for the aircraft. About 30 minutes after the call had come in the blades were turning and the rescue crew was en route.

While the aircraft was in flight the crews of the fishing vessel Vigilant and Northern Mariner passed to search and rescue controllers at Sector Anchorage that they were within about a mile of the kayakers relayed position and would assist. The Inlet Sunrise continued to help with communications but was engaged in fishing and couldn't break away.

With rescuers on three platforms closing in Kachesky and Goldfarb huddled together in their kayaks, they activated their 406 emergency position indicating radio beacon to help rescuers locate them and rode the waves... waiting.

The location of a transmitting 406 beacon can be determined within approximately three miles by the first satellite pass, and to within one mile after three satellite passes. The 406 EPIRB uses the COSPAS/SARSAT system of polar orbiting satellites which gives worldwide coverage.

As the helicopter crew drew closer, the crew began to hear the kayaker's transmissions over the radio. The rescue swimmer, Aviation Survival Technician 1st Class Charles Ferrante, had just transferred from Air Station Cape Cod, Mass. This was his second duty day and he'd only been in Kodiak for three weeks. Ferrante was on the radio working with Kachesky and Goldfarb's broken English to try to establish their location while Avionics Electrical Technician 2nd Class Tito Sabangan, the flight mechanic on the third year of his tour in Kodiak, scanned the horizon for a flash of color that might be the two men. The helicopter arrived in the area at 4:18 p.m., about a half hour after departing Kodiak.

The crew tried to use the radio signal to search for the men. "Sir, please give me a long count, 10...9...8..." said

Ferrante. Goldfarb responded. He repeated the count several more times.

"Locating the kayakers was a bit of a challenge due to the low visibility, the search pattern's close proximity to land which made maneuvering a little restrictive, a lot of radio traffic from the good Samaritans and language barriers from the kayakers made communications hard," said Sabangan.

The rescue crew used Goldfarb's heavily accented voice to vector in on the kayakers. After a half hour on scene a red and yellow dot came into view. The crew of the fishing vessel Vigilant arrived right on their heels.

Ferrante donned his fins, hood and snorkel and prepared to drop into the water. The helicopter came into a low hover, about 40 feet above the water, as a swell passed under the helicopter Ferrante pushed himself out the door and free fell into the frigid ocean. With a quick thumbs up to Sabangan, Ferrante began his swim toward the kayaks. Up and down the twenty foot swells he swam a hundred yards.

"They're OK," radioed Ferrante when he reached the kayakers. "Tired, cold, mildly hypothermic but OK."

The kayakers had a choice. They could be hoisted by the helicopter or they could go aboard the Vigilant. In the end they chose the Vigilant because they could take their kayaks. Over the next thirty minutes Ferrante towed the kayakers alongside the Vigilant and

assisted each man out of his kayak and onto the fishing vessel.

According to Ferrante, getting the men out of the kayaks was a bit of a task just because of the sea state. It caused the fishing vessel to pitch and yaw right next to them.

"During the first attempt to get near the fishing vessel the vessel almost ran us over with the starboard quarter, said Ferrante. "Later I found out this was due to the captain of the fishing vessel leaving the pilot house to help his only deckhand. Once he left the pilot house the vessel went broadside into the seas and the back of it came right at us"

Ferrante was forced to push off of the fishing vessel and swim the two kayakers away to safety.

"It was difficult to communicate with the deckhand due to the wind and seas," said Ferrante. "I had the deckhand throw a life ring to us. He was dead on with his throw."

Ferrante dragged the men out of the kayaks and one by one put them into the life ring. Then the deckhand pulled them to the vessel and Ferrante pushed them up on deck.

"I would have to say that I believe putting them on the fishing vessel was harder than if we had hoisted them from

"I had the deckhand throw a life ring to us. He was dead on with his throw."

~ Petty Officer 1st Class
Chuck Ferrante

Welcome Inquiries

Petty officer 1st Class Chuck Ferrante, of Air Station Kodiak, speaks with two Israeli men about their condition Thursday, July 30, 2009. The Coast Guard helicopter crew was launched to rescue the kayakers after receiving their distress call. They were en route from Seward to Homer and were located near Gore Point 40 miles directly southeast of Homer.



the helicopter,” said Ferrante “The pilot and I discussed this prior and during the evolution. After three attempts I decided I would give it one more try. I knew we could have hoisted them to the helicopter safely, but they would have had to leave their kayaks behind and there was a good chance they would have ended up in Kodiak with us. If I could safely get them on the vessel that was heading to Homer I would, besides safety being number one priority I thought of what I would want the rescuers to do if I were in there shoes.”

With the men on board all that remained were their kayaks. One by one they were hefted onto the deck of the Vigilant.

“This was not an easy task but I timed the seas and leaned on one end of the kayak to get the other side up for the deck hand to grab,” said Ferrante. “We then had to flip it to get all the water out; while I kicked hard and as long as I could to get the kayaks up on board.”

Sabangan and the pilots maintained their hover. Watching. Waiting.

By six all was well. The two very cold, very tired and slightly nauseous men were safely aboard the fishing vessel headed to overnight in Port Dick with plans to transit to Homer the following day.

Sabangan leaned out the aircraft door and sent down the hook. Ferrante clipped in on the other end and was hoisted aboard. With all parties safe and accounted for the helicopter crew headed back to Kodiak arriving at 7:05 p.m.

“Despite all the challenges of this case, the H-60 helicopter once again proved that it is a very suitable search and rescue platform, due to its sensory packages,” said Sabangan.

Kachesky and Goldfarb were well prepared. They had all the gear they needed. They were wearing drysuits. They left word with a friend and took multiple means of communication. That’s what led to their successful rescue. Being heard and wearing gear to stay alive made all the difference. Having a radio and a properly registered EPIRB saved their lives in a beautiful but unforgiving environment. 🐾

Vigilant Rescue

Petty Officer 1st Class Chuck Ferrante, a crewman from an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Kodiak, Alaska, hovering above, holds onto a lifeline and two kayakers as crewmen from the fishing vessel Vigilant tow him toward the vessel to take the weathered kayakers aboard, Thursday, July 30, 2009. The aircrew located the two men after a search near Gore Point about 40 miles southeast of Homer. The men were on a trip from Seward to Homer and had been kayaking for eight days. Weather worsened and they became tired and lost some gear prompting them to use their emergency locator beacon and contact the Coast Guard. The kayakers were taken aboard the fishing vessel Vigilant and transported to Homer.

Close to the Action: Coast Guard Jayhawk forward deployment

Story by Drew Herman, Coast Guard Auxiliary

When the fishing vessel Alaska Ranger started taking on water in the Bering Sea on March 23, 2008, the nearest Coast Guard station was about 700 miles away, on Kodiak Island. But one of Air Station Kodiak's MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters put a rescue swimmer in the water in time to start an operation that saved the lives of 42 crewmembers. "If they hadn't come from St. Paul, the results would have been vastly different," said Lt. Chris Carter, a Jayhawk pilot at Air Station Kodiak.

The "forward deployed" helicopter took off from St. Paul, one of the remote Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea. During the height of the crab season, the Coast Guard keeps a Jayhawk and crew there ready to respond, cutting hours off the time needed to reach fishermen in trouble. A person wearing a survival suit can last three to six hours in the cold water, Carter said, but even with the Jayhawk's "long legs" – a range of about 600 miles – getting from Kodiak to the fishing grounds around the Pribilof Islands can take eight hours and require two refueling stops.

As the concentration of commercial fishing moves to other Alaska waters the forward deployed Guardians move too. In the first week of October the operation transfers from Cordova in Prince William Sound west to Cold Bay on the Alaska Peninsula.

As a member of the Kodiak Deployment Operating Group, Aircraft Maintenance Technician 2nd Class Joshua McCarthy has a handle cool enough for a rap artist. "K-DOG" organizes the personnel and equipment that create "a little mobile air station" hundreds of miles from the home base. He said the process of moving crews, aircraft, fuel and almost a ton of spare parts has gotten pretty smooth over the more than 10 years the system has been in operation.

"History helps us out," said McCarthy, who has served at the forward sites. "I don't even want to know what it took in the beginning."

Keeping the helicopter crewed and ready for action takes 11 Guardians: four pilots, two rescue swimmers, two flight mechanics and three line crew. Crewmembers typically serve seven to 14 days at the remote base, making three or four such deployments in a year. Pilots spend six to 12 weeks per year forward deployed.

"Everything's worked smoothly over the years," McCarthy said. "We put a lot of responsibility on our crews." Guardians serving in Alaska get used to working from remote areas, but even the small community of Kodiak can seem like a bustling burg after a few weeks at one of the forward deployment sites.

"Kodiak winters are bad, but St. Paul winters are twice as bad," McCarthy said.

Carter, a five-year veteran of forward deployment, misses his family in Kodiak while he's away, but finds compensation in hunting and hiking.

"For an outdoorsman, Cordova in the summer is Mother Nature's playground," he said. "St. Paul and Cold Bay, you start to get into the remote sense."

Aviation Maintenance Technician 1st Class Joe Miller has served on forward crews about eight times and doesn't miss city life. He grew up in Paris, Texas, a town even smaller than Kodiak.

"Our main concern is the plane," he said.

Miller loves the quiet and beauty of Alaska, where he is on his third tour of duty. He enjoys the fishing in Cordova, and doesn't mind spending time in lonely St. Paul. But stints in Cold Bay -- a community with 60 permanent residents about 700 miles southwest of Anchorage and inaccessible by road -- strain even his tolerance for isolated locales.

"Any time you land in Cold Bay, it's nasty," Miller said.

While at the remote sites, Miller keeps in touch with his wife and two children in Kodiak by phone and e-mail.

"She understands I have to do it," he said.

People in the hosting communities like having a miniature Coast Guard air base for part of the year, and would welcome a year-round presence. This year, Cold Bay finished a new terminal building at its airfield where the Coast Guard leases hangar space for the Jayhawks. The large, fixed-wing HC-130 airplanes also use it for refueling stops.

"We're in hopes that the Coast Guard will soon be building a hangar for the C-130s here," said Monty Martin, manager of the hovercraft terminal in Cold Bay.

Monty and his wife Mary Martin own Cold Bay Lodge, which caters to hunters and the many government employees who come through.

"We built the lodge in 2000, and in 2001 Coast Guard were our first customers," Mary said. "We've always tried to make them welcome."

Guardians stationed in Cold Bay now stay at the Alaska State Troopers barracks, but the Martins' lodge still gets occasional overflow business.

"In winter it's always helpful because we don't have a lot of industry," Mary said.

It's a far cry from World War II, when the U.S. military built the runways in Cold Bay and stationed 20,000 troops there. The city of Quonset huts is now long gone, and you have to look out for grizzly bears when traveling between the airfield and housing.

Mary's family has a long history of Coast Guard and military connections, and she appreciates the visiting Guardians who not only protect fishermen around the Alaska Peninsula, but take part in local activities like the salmon derby and Halloween. "The Coast Guard's a very important part of our lives," she said.

St. Paul in the Pribilof Islands has a permanent Coast Guard LORAN station, where the forward deployed air crews stay during the winter crab season. The surrounding waters also support long-line cod and halibut fisheries through the summer.

"People are very appreciative of their presence here and would like to expand them up to year-round," said Ron Philemonoff, CEO of TDX, the village corporation for St. Paul Island.

The Coast Guard leases helicopter hangars owned by TDX, which plans improvements to make the temporary crews more comfortable. Philemonoff said recently installed wind turbines will make it possible to heat the hangars cheaply. So far, the Coast Guard has no plans to turn any of the forward deployment sites into year-round operations, but Alaska and the Arctic have been getting a lot of attention lately.

"I foresee continued expansion up there due to ice recession," said Cmdr. Joe Deer, operations officer at Air Station Kodiak. "The potential certainly exists."

With frequent Arctic Domain Awareness missions, the Coast Guard is gaining experience operating in the far north. Deer named the Alaska towns of Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow as likely locations for an expanded



Aerial ATON

A Jayhawk helicopter and its crew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak lift off from the airport in Cold Bay, Wednesday, with a small green buoy slung underneath. For the first time, the Coast Guard used a helicopter to set a buoy in water too shallow for a boat to enter. (Photo courtesy of Air Station Kodiak)

Light Landing

A Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew forward deployed from Air Station Kodiak to Cordova for the summer provides transportation and support to Coast Guard electronics technicians from Electronics Support Unit Kodiak to and from a lighthouse near Cordova. (Photo courtesy of Air Station Kodiak)

Coast Guard presence. High-level officials are showing interest, and in August, Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad Allen and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Director Jane Lubchenco joined an ADA flight from Kodiak to the Arctic.

"We're at the genesis of Arctic mission expansion," Deer said. "What that end state is going to be, I don't know."



Scouting skills build foundation

Story and photos by PA3 Charly Hengen, PADET Kodiak

Temperatures were in the mid to upper 90s. It was hot, dirty and grimy. Even though the hikers went through snow, sleet, hail and heavy rain, they were in the desert. Fourteen Boy Scouts and Venture Scouts endured these conditions during an 11-day, 60 mile backpacking trek in Cimarron, N.M., more commonly known as Philmont.

"My biggest challenge was during the last 10 miles up a mountain where a plane had crashed in the 1950s," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Kemp Thompson, with the Air Station Kodiak's Supply Department. "The hike was up to the 'Tooth of Time' which is the highest summit at Philmont, reaching 9,003 feet. On the way back down, I stopped to take a 10 minute break. I plopped down on a rock, pulled out a water bottle, took a sip and heard a faint rattle under the rock. I didn't think at all. I jumped up even with my 60 pound pack on and booked it down the hill."

Thompson started developing leadership characteristics at a young age even before he knew he wanted to join the Coast Guard. His journey through the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts led him to attain the honor of Eagle Scout by emulating the same ideals the Coast Guard holds true.

Thompson joined the Cub Scouts at six years old in

Leadership

Petty Officer 2nd Class Kemp Thompson instructs Petty Officer 2nd Class Amanda Rhodes regarding the proper way to ready an aircraft part for air station personnel at Air Station Kodiak's Supply Division. Thompson uses his Eagle Scout training every day in the Coast Guard to train new petty officers or those wanting to strike as a storekeeper.



1991. He moved through the ranks over the course of six years as a Tiger, Wolf, Bear and then a We Be Loyal Scout member, WEBLO, in Pack 18 in Charlotte, N.C. He then joined Boy Scouts in 1997 with Troop 49.

While in Troop 49, Thompson lost interest in the Scouts due to a budding interest in sports. However in 2000, his father and his church, Newell Presbyterian in Charlotte, N.C. started Troop 18 again. It was then Thompson decided to give the opportunity to become an Eagle Scout another chance.

"It takes awhile to become an Eagle Scout," said Thompson. "You have to go through the ranks, and some of the ranks you have to be in for awhile, just like in the Coast Guard."

Thompson developed leadership and character while earning merit badges and making different ranks in hopes of becoming an Eagle Scout. He earned the rank of Scout, Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, 1st Class, Star and Life along with merit badges in first aid, swimming, lifesaving, citizenship in the nation, family life and public speaking, along with several others.

To become an Eagle Scout, one of Thompson's critical assignments was to complete an Eagle Scout Project from

Scouting Family

Kemp Thompson, left, poses with Trent Thompson, Kemp's father, and Hunter Thompson, Kemp's brother, after Kemp receives his Eagle Scout badge at Newell Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C. Kemp joined the Coast Guard in 2004 and still uses his Eagle Scout skills to aid in training new petty officers and those wanting to strike as a storekeeper. (Photo courtesy of Trent Thompson)



start to finish. He organized a memorial for veterans at his church's cemetery which included a flagpole and benches. Even though the actual work only took two weeks to finish, the project took him roughly one year to complete.

"Once I was finished with the project, I felt patriotic and very proud," said Thompson. "I owe a lot of gratitude to my family for helping me and giving me encouragement."

Once Thompson finished his project and earned the required merit badges, he achieved the status of Eagle Scout one month before he turned 18. He can display the Eagle Scout Badge on his Scout uniform for the rest of his life.

Thompson said all of his Scouting achievements aided him when he joined the Coast Guard. Because of his Eagle rank, he was able to enlist as an E-3 providing him a jump on future advancement. His Scouting skills also assisted him with the pressures of boot camp.

"I think it was the third week and we had just gotten our company commanders and our squad bay," said Thompson. "There were roughly 30 recruits in the company running around and wondering what was going to happen next."

"One company commander gathered us around the front of the squad bay and asked if any of us had prior military experience," he said. "One recruit raised his hand for being in the Marine Reserves and another for the Army ROTC. He then asked if anyone is graduating as an E-3 and why. I

raised my hand, not knowing what I was volunteering for."

Thompson said the company commander gave them squad leader pins and said, "Here, you're a squad leader... now lead," and walked off. Thompson and the other squad leaders came up with a plan to get the squad bay in order.

Thompson said, it wasn't too long before he and the other squad leaders were marching the company to the galley, class and other formations during boot camp. It was his Eagle Scout training, he said, that helped him keep his composure and lead the company with the help of two others.

Over the past four years in the Coast Guard, Thompson has built upon his Boy Scout skills and still uses them today. As one of Air Station Kodiak's storekeepers, he is responsible for training new petty officers from Storekeeper "A" school or those wanting to strike as a storekeeper.

"Petty Officer Thompson is a prime example of honor, respect and devotion to duty," said Chief Petty Officer Dave Curran, the Air Station Kodiak Supply chief. "He has exhibited leadership traits and responsibilities well above his pay grade, contributing to the success of the air station supply department."

Being an Eagle Scout has helped Thompson become a Coast Guard leader. As he trains budding storekeepers in their new job he said he looks forward to continuing his Coast Guard career in hopes of becoming a chief warrant officer by using his Boy Scout skills he learned so long ago. 🐾

Flying through harm's way Air Station Kodiak

Story by PA3 Walter Shinn, D17

As vessels travel through the Bering Sea they encounter fierce hurricane-like storms that travel south from the Arctic creating seas rising higher than three story buildings and wind squalls greater than 70 mph. With the massive distances of occasionally more than 1,000 miles between the mainland of Alaska and the western most island of the Aleutians, personnel from Air Station Kodiak are often called upon to fly through such conditions.

Air Station Kodiak was commissioned as an air detachment April 17, 1947 with one PBY Catalina aircraft, seven pilots and 30 crewmen representing the first permanent Coast Guard aviation resource in Alaska. Dating from its humble beginnings to today, the air station is now staffed with 53 officers, six chief warrant officers, 300 enlisted personnel, and six civilian personnel who help maintain as well as provide support for five HC-130 Hercules fixed wing aircraft, four MH-60 Jayhawk and four HH-65C Dolphin helicopters.

When the time comes, aircrews will fly from Kodiak Island to search for or medevac someone to or from Attu,

Shemya or Adak Island, encompassing a distance of more than 2,200 miles total.

The Aleutian Island's are comprised of 300 small volcanic islands which stretch 1,100 miles forming a chain from the mainland of Alaska to the farthest westward island of Attu separating the North Pacific Ocean from the Bering Sea.

"Weather here spans from beautiful days to dense fog and rain in summer time to intense winds, icing, blowing snow, with turbulence and wind shear due to terrain in the winter months. Volcanic eruptions are also common and not something we have to contend with often in the lower 48," answered Lt. Cmdr. Craig Neubecker, a Jayhawk pilot and the air station's deputy executive officer, when asked what makes flying in western Alaska so demanding. "Flying in this weather, in and around the mountainous terrain calls upon pilots and aircrews to know their helicopter inside and out, such as how the helicopter will handle in high winds and turbulence, anti-ice/de-ice equipment and what to do during an emergency. Our limits with both the aircraft and personnel are truly tested."

In addition to dealing with hurricane force winds, aircrews often fly through visibility of less than one-half mile, horizontal snow squalls and extended periods of darkness during the long winters.

Due to the extreme distances of flying throughout western Alaska, Coast Guardsmen at the air station work together for logistics, planning and operations in order for the aircraft to be ready at all times.

Aircrews are stationed with rescue aircraft and helicopters on St. Paul Island during the months of January to April due to the large number of fishing vessels that operate around the area catching Opilio crab. The same follows for Cordova during the months of May through September and Cold Bay during October through November. Having the rescue crews at these aviation support facilities enables aircrews to respond quicker for search and rescue missions during the seasonal fisheries in the area.

"We could not conduct our missions without all the support personnel such as the yeoman, storekeepers, gunners mate's, marine science technician's, and the operation specialist's who take care of the logistics at the air station which in turn makes it possible to do what we do," said Neubecker.

The training done on a regular basis enables the aircrews to be prepared for any situation. When crews are not conducting operational rescue missions they are training for them. No time is wasted as crews are either conducting a mission or training for the next one.

In late February aircrews responded to a mayday call and encountered 90 mph winds as well as 15-foot seas while attempting to rescue four fishermen from the fishing vessel Icy Mist near Akutan Island. The rescue effort was

comprised of multiple aircrews including all three types of aircraft from Air Station Kodiak.

One dolphin aircrew launched out of Dutch Harbor but had to abort due to high winds and heavy turbulence exceeding the limitations of the aircraft. Prior to the Dolphin launching, two Jayhawk helicopters launched from St. Paul along with a Hercules aircrew who launched from Air Station Kodiak to provide communications support.

"Imagine being hit with a hammer on the top of the aircraft," said Lt. Cmdr. Scott Jackson, pilot at Air Station Kodiak. "We dropped 100 feet in less than a second. The bottom of the aircraft dropped out of the sky as we realized the weather was going to limit us and we were not going to be able to hoist them from their vessel."

The four fishermen had to disembark the vessel and crawl across jagged rocks to a nearby cliff in order for the Jayhawk piloted by Jackson and aircrew to safely hoist them.

When severe weather arises unpredictably in Kodiak making it impossible for them to land, aircrews frequently have to divert to other locations. Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage as well as King Salmon often serve as an alternate airport. Additionally, rescue helicopter crews divert to Cordova, Cold Bay or Dutch Harbor to avoid bad weather.

Flying vast distances along the Aleutian Islands can take anywhere from two to four days to take survivors to proper medical care. For this reason multiple helicopter aircrews travel in a Hercules to remote locations to meet with the search and rescue helicopter and rotate with other aircrews in order to keep flying.



Air Crew

Coast Guard Air Station personnel stand in formation in front of an HC-130 Hercules aircraft at Air Station Kodiak July 3, 2009. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Charly Hengen)

The reason it takes multiple aircrews to conduct a long range medevac is similar to why it's not safe to drive 24 hours straight. Aircrews are limited in the amount of consecutive flight time they can accumulate to avoid severe fatigue while airborne. In the case of a long range medevac a second aircrew may fly in with a Hercules to relieve the first.

Furthermore, during the rescue operation when a Jayhawk or Dolphin helicopter is hoisting someone the Hercules aircrew helps maintain communications coverage between the helicopter crew and the rescue coordination center in Juneau. Once the rescue helicopter returns to the nearest island with an airport the Hercules can then transfer the patient to a higher level of medical care if a commercial life flight is unable to do so because of weather or distance.

Aircrews that fly vast distances across the Bering Sea to remote locations are given a lot of time to think while enroute on a mission.

"How's my family? Is everything okay back home? When will I get home?...You don't have time to think about those things until you get the mission done and are safe on deck," answered Lt. Gary Scott, pilot at Air Station Kodiak

when asked what it's like to fly in a long range medevac. "On the other hand there is an element of excitement and a feeling of 'Hell ya, let's go get 'em!' That rush of adrenaline."

Many of the missions are completed in ice-cold arctic weather conditions comprised of extremely low visibility and periods of extended darkness.

In addition to search and rescue missions personnel at the air station help conduct and coordinate missions pertaining to law enforcement, marine environment protection, aids to navigation and logistical support for isolated 17th Coast Guard District units such as delivering supplies to any of the six LORAN-C stations.

What started in 1947 with one aircraft and 37 personnel as the Coast Guard's first aviation base grew to 12 aircraft with more than 450 personnel in what is now the Coast Guard's largest AOR. From beautiful sunny days to blizzard conditions that seemingly last all winter long, pilots and their aircrews along with the support and logistic personnel take pride in what they do day in and day out at Air Station Kodiak. The team effort enables the air station aircraft and crews to permanently be Semper Paratus. 🐾



Let it Snow

Severe weather conditions like those shown here can lead to some hair-raising experiences for Alaska-based aircrews. The Air Station is the major tenant of Integrated Support Command Kodiak, and the largest Coast Guard command in the entire Pacific Area. The present complement of HC-130H's, HH-60J's, HH-65A's aids in completing our mission and saving lives. (Coast Guard photo / Petty Officer 2nd Class Al Bennett)

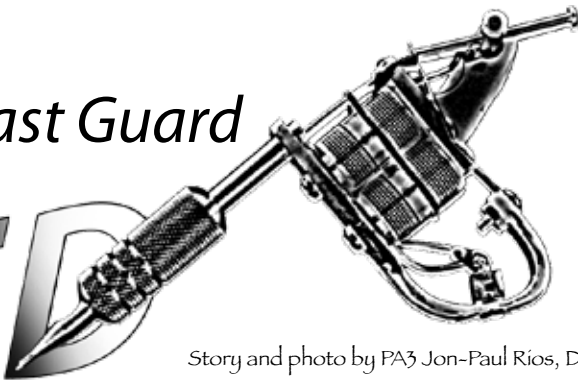
Sun Spot

Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters from Air Station Kodiak fly in formation as the sun rises over Kodiak Island December 17, 2007. Air Station Kodiak maintains a fleet of four MH-60 Jayhawks maintaining a 24-hour readiness to respond to emergencies across Alaska's southwestern waters. (Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Kurt Fredrickson)

Revisions made to Coast Guard tattoo policy

INKED

Story and photo by PA3 Jon-Paul Rios, DI7



In 1769 sailors with Captain James Cook's crew during their first trip to the southern seas offered their bodies as a canvas for the Tahiti natives to perform a "tatau", a former native ritual, in an effort to memorialize their experiences in the foreign culture. These sailors were pioneers in an essence as they were the first to present the form of art as a fashion statement to Europe.

Eventually, the "tatau" now known as tattoo, was mixed with European designs thus going from a basic tribal design to now incorporating synonyms for the southern seas such as palm trees, exotic birds, ships, anchors, pin-ups and light houses.

Undeniably, there has always been history between sailors and tattoos. Samuel O' Reilly, who introduced the electro

mechanic tattoo machine said, "A sailor without a tattoo is like a ship without a grog, not seaworthy."

However, this does not mean that tattoos in today's Coast Guard can be of whatever or wherever the member pleases when visible. Coast Guard policy the past few years has been forbidding. An example of which is some members wanted a full arm sleeve tattoo but couldn't due to the 25 percent rule in the previous policy. According to U.S. News & World Report, tattooing has become one of America's fastest growing categories of retail business. There are now an estimated 15,000 tattoo studios in operation, furthermore, it is estimated that at least one new studio opens daily. With this kind of economic boom and obvious increase in popularity, change was due to come regarding

tattoos in the Coast Guard. Coast Guard commandant instruction states it best in that, Coast Guard policy on tattoos, branding, piercing and other forms of body art has changed significantly over the recent years due to cultural changes in our society making these forms of body art more acceptable and desirable among a wide range of the population. The most recent and noticeable changes come in the new policy which now allows full arm tattoos as long as they do not surpass the wrist.

Restrictions that remain are tattoos not being allowed on the neck, face, head and hands. Also any tattoo or brand anywhere on the body that promote racism, independency, extremist or supremacist philosophies, lawlessness, violence, or contain sexually explicit material are prohibited. The new policy allows Guardians to further pursue means of expression by adding art to their bodies.

"I have always been a fan of the old school sailor type tattoos, and that's why I have stuck to that theme, now that the policy has changed I can continue working on my full sleeve," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Jorden Walker, of Coast Guard Station Ketchikan, who has 10 tattoos. There will always be the argument of whether tattoos are professional or not, but that's where the policy comes into play. It's a means to regulate excessiveness and maintain presentable, professional military appearance to the public while still allowing the opportunity to those who want to express themselves.

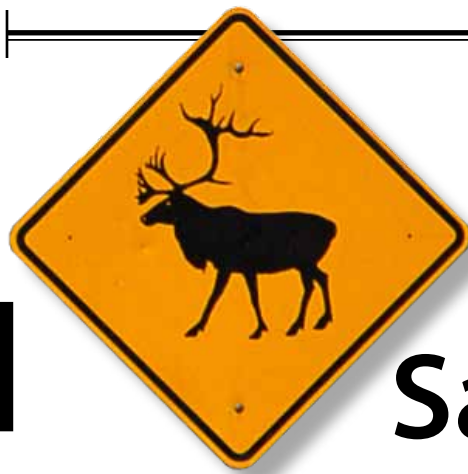
"Tattoos are a way of life for many people and I am very pleased in the new policy and I know there are a lot of coasties out there feeling the same way I do. Five of my 10 tattoos have been done by a prior coastie and wife to a current coastie," said Walker. Regardless of ones personal opinion on tattoos in the military, as long as there is a story to tell, they are clearly here to stay. Eleanor Barnes from the Seaman's Institute said, "The sailor enlists the tattooer's needle upon his own body in dull blues, vivid reds, greens, and yellows to record the story of his loves and hates, his triumphs, his religion and his patriotism." 🐾

This story serves to be informative and in no means intended to take the place of Commandant Instruction. If you have any questions regarding the tattoo, body marking, body piercing and mutilation policy please reference COMDTINST 1000.1B.

Painted

Sailors have had a fascination with tattoos ever since they first encountered the tattoos of the island nations of the South Pacific. Today Coast Guard men and women still seek out the best designs and artists to adorn their bodies with tattoos. The Coast Guard's tattoo policy recently changed, relaxing the formerly stringent regulations, and now allowing Guardians to receive tattoos in places upon them selves that were formerly against regulation, like the "full sleeve" tattoos shown here.





Story and photos by PAI David Mosley, PADET Anchorage

CAUTION

Safe Hunting in Alaska

After a busy summer, providing the core Coast Guard missions that are expected to be preformed, many Guardians around Alaska look forward to the cooling of the weather and the upcoming hunting seasons that fall brings.

For hunters the closing of the summer months comes with a shift toward organizing gear, purchasing supplies and making sure firearms, bows and other equipment are in top-notch shape and in working order prior to the upcoming hunting seasons.

"Being prepared while in Alaska's remoteness is essential," said Cmdr. Steven Pearson, who has been hunting for 32-years, nine of which are in Alaska. "There are many things to be prepared for, from the unique weather concerns to the local wildlife especially bears."

"I remember when I was on the Storis, there were two junior officers who went out deer hunting and the weather came in and the fog rose and they could not find their way back," said Pearson. "They ended up calling for help and a group of us from the boat had to go up and find them. It pays to be ready for anything."

Successful hunts can also depend on the effort spent planning and researching so a person will be familiar with the

laws, rules and regulations of the hunting seasons and areas.

All outdoorsmen and especially hunters should keep an eye toward safety. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Website, since originating around 1950, nearly 30 million students across the nation have completed a basic hunter safety course, which has dramatically help reduce hunting related accidents by up to 75 percent in some states.

Along with taking a hunting safety course, which in some areas of Alaska and for hunters under 16-years-old is mandatory, hunters and all outdoorsmen should keep in mind the following basic principles while enjoying the outdoors:

- Tell someone where you will be going and never go alone.
- Dress properly and be prepared for the worst



Image used with permission from tundracomics.com

possible conditions. Protect your self from getting wet and the possibility of hypothermia.

- Check weather forecasts before going into the woods.
- Check hunting equipment before and after each outing, and maintain it properly. Familiarize your self with your equipment before heading out into the field.
- While not required in Alaska studies have shown that wearing blaze orange increases safety by helping to make a hunter highly visible to other hunters.
- Never cross a fence, ride a 4-wheeler or climb a tree with a loaded rifle, also never carry a loaded rifle in your truck or car, and be sure to unload your rifle when you get back to camp or when you stop hunting for the day. Always assume that every rifle in camp is loaded unless the action is open and you have verified that it is safe to handle.
- Identify your target before shooting. Be sure of

your target before you put your finger on the trigger. Many fatalities are the result of mistaken-for-game accidents.

- Be careful when dragging out your hunt. Be aware of where you take your shot, if you take a moose several miles away from your vehicle, how will you get it back? Always remember that Alaska is a state with bears, as you drag out your hunt, you are leaving a scent trail that is like calling out "dinner time" for a hungry bear.

"If you have to leave your kill for any reason, place a stick with a flag in a visible location upon the carcass," said Larry Lewis, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. "With a visual indicator upon the carcass, a hunter can quickly tell if something like a bear has been investigating the kill, and alert the hunter to its presence with in the area."

"In Alaska while hunting or enjoying the outdoors, always plan for the worst, but enjoy the best, realize your limitations," said Lewis. 🐾

Always Ready

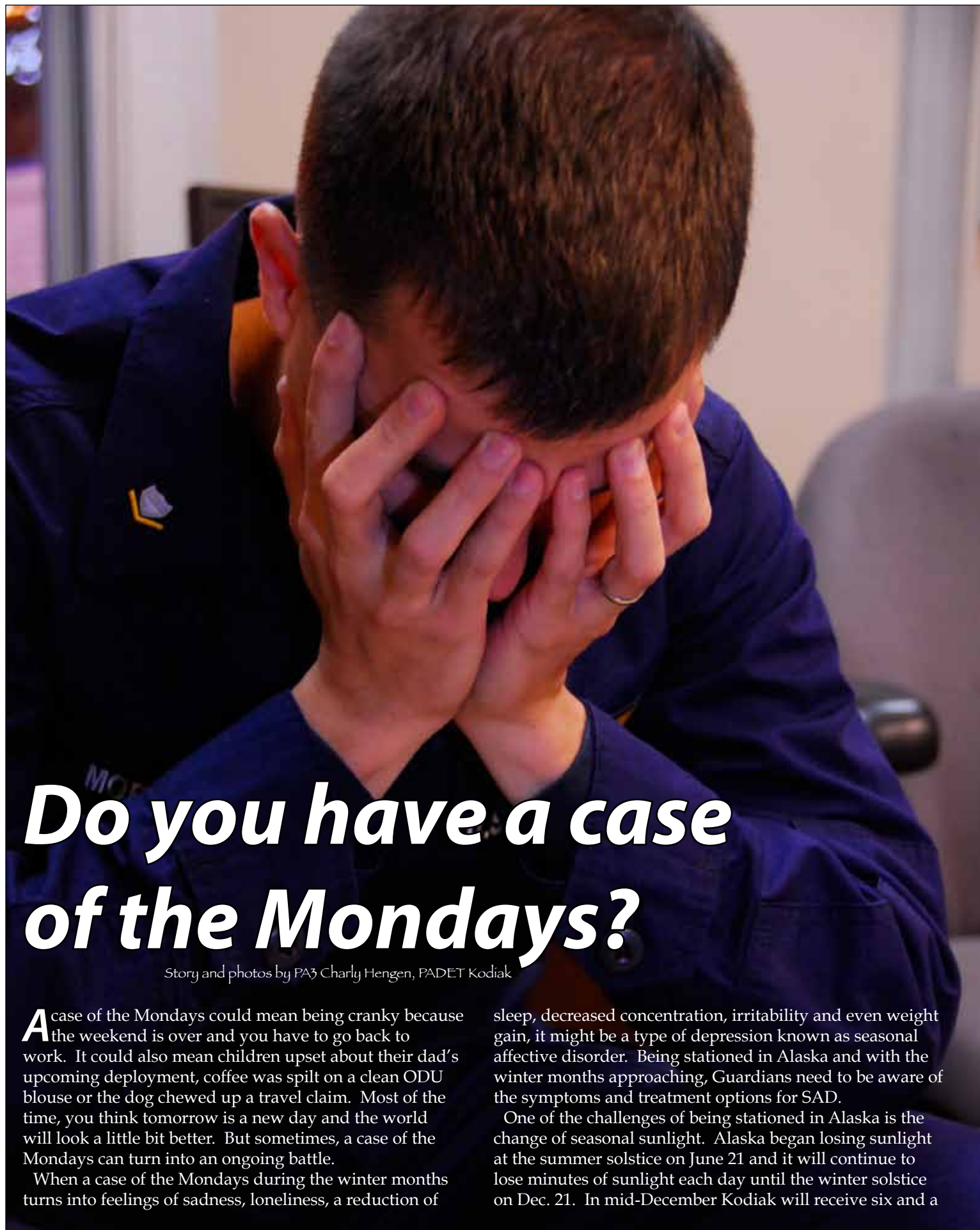
Safety can be as simple as a plastic bag filled with essentials that may ensure your survival in an emergency.



Use the following links for more information on hunting safety in Alaska:

www.wildlife.alaska.gov

www.wildlife.alaska.gov/hunting/workbook.pdf



Do you have a case of the Mondays?

Story and photos by PA3 Charly Hengen, PADET Kodiak

A case of the Mondays could mean being cranky because the weekend is over and you have to go back to work. It could also mean children upset about their dad's upcoming deployment, coffee was spilt on a clean ODU blouse or the dog chewed up a travel claim. Most of the time, you think tomorrow is a new day and the world will look a little bit better. But sometimes, a case of the Mondays can turn into an ongoing battle.

When a case of the Mondays during the winter months turns into feelings of sadness, loneliness, a reduction of

sleep, decreased concentration, irritability and even weight gain, it might be a type of depression known as seasonal affective disorder. Being stationed in Alaska and with the winter months approaching, Guardians need to be aware of the symptoms and treatment options for SAD.

One of the challenges of being stationed in Alaska is the change of seasonal sunlight. Alaska began losing sunlight at the summer solstice on June 21 and it will continue to lose minutes of sunlight each day until the winter solstice on Dec. 21. In mid-December Kodiak will receive six and a

half hours of sunlight per day; Anchorage will get five and a half hours of sunlight and Barrow will get zero.

Sunlight plays a vital role in a person's everyday health and well-being. Since Alaskan Guardians face a lack of sunlight in the winter months, it could affect their sleep-wake cycle and other circadian rhythms. Even though the specific causes of SAD are unknown, doctors believe it could be related to a person's serotonin and melatonin levels.

If a Guardian is toying with the idea of whether or not he has SAD, he can ask himself some simple questions: Is there a change in sleep patterns, especially oversleeping? Is there a decrease in social activities? Is there irritability? Is there a change in appetite, especially craving carbohydrates? Is there a drop in energy levels? Is there a feeling of hopelessness or anxiety?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, you might be displaying symptoms of SAD. These symptoms may come and go approximately the same time each year, but for most SAD sufferers the symptoms start in early October and last through May.

"I can only remember being in a funk one time a few years back," said Chief Petty Officer Michael Caldwell, Safety and Environmental Health Specialist at Rockmore-King Clinic in Kodiak. "It was due to the weather. One winter it rained for almost three months straight and I couldn't get out to ride my four-wheelers, hunt or trap. Plus, getting a face full of rain first thing in the morning to start up the truck can be quite annoying."

If you seek help through your local doctor, he will ask specific questions to determine whether or not you have SAD. The doctor will probably want to know if you have been depressed during the same season and have gotten

better when the seasons changed. Other questions might be, Do you have symptoms reflecting SAD? Do you have a relative diagnosed with SAD? The doctor will also want to know the length of time you have felt this way, especially if it's been over two years.

If the doctor thinks a person has SAD, light therapy will probably be prescribed as a treatment. Light therapy requires a person to sit in front of a specialized light box for 30 minutes exposing someone to mimicked sunlight. This artificial sunlight could lift a person's mood relieving the symptoms of SAD.

"The clinic has two 10,000 lux light boxes we can loan out," said Chief Warrant Officer David Romero, Rockmore-King Clinic medical administrator. "Normally the loan time is from 30 days to three months. After the initial three months, the patient would schedule a follow-up to see how it is working."

A second option for treatment is to talk with a counselor. The Coast Guard's Work-Life field offices can connect you with a local counselor or provide information for the Employee Assistance Program.

"I'm always here for someone to talk to," said John Eaton, ISC Kodiak's Employee Assistance Program coordinator. "If they want a request for counseling to be confidential, someone can call the EAP coordinator directly. But if they come here first, we can definitely point them in the right direction."

For others, a healthy lifestyle might be all a person needs. Regular exercise is also a way to lift a person's mood. It doesn't need to be strenuous exercise, but enough to get a person up and moving around, such as a brisk walk. A balanced diet may help your mood as well.

"To have a peace of mind, you need to get out and

move, whether it's hiking, walking or snowmobiling," said Ron Williams, personal trainer and long-time resident in Kodiak. "If the body feels good, the mind feels good. And when you get moving, you're body will want more protein instead of sugar."

With the winter months and long stretches of darkness setting in, Guardians need to be aware of possible effects of SAD. By seeking advice through the medical clinic, talking with a counselor or just exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet, the Coast Guard is here to assist those with SAD. Knowing how to look out for SAD will ensure Alaska remains a fun and rewarding station. 🐾

Feeling Blue?

If you or someone you know has feelings of sadness or loneliness, is overeating, has gained weight or perhaps sleeps too much, he could be portraying symptoms of seasonal affective disorder. Many options are available for help whether it is with medical, the EAP or maintaining a proper diet and getting plenty of exercise.

Eat Right

Guardians who eat a healthy diet and maintain regular exercise could ward off symptoms of seasonal affective disorder.



Arm yourself: Get a Flu shot

Story by Shari Lopatin and Diane Mayer, TriWest Healthcare Alliance

With the focus on fighting H1N1 flu this year, it's now more important than ever to get a flu shot. But where can TRICARE patients go, and when?

Only months ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the H1N1 flu a worldwide outbreak. This year, beneficiaries will need to get their seasonal flu shot, as well as another vaccination for the H1N1 flu.

The seasonal flu vaccine is a TRICARE-covered benefit and has up to a 90 percent success rate in a healthy population, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). On top of that, it's available as a shot or nasal spray. Patients may benefit the most by getting vaccinated in October or November. However, getting it as late as December can still help bolster the immune system.

To get either the seasonal flu shot or H1N1 vaccine,

TRICARE Prime patients enrolled at a military installation clinic should call the facility to find out when the vaccines are available. As long as TRICARE Prime patients receive the seasonal flu shot from a TRICARE network provider, the vaccine is free.

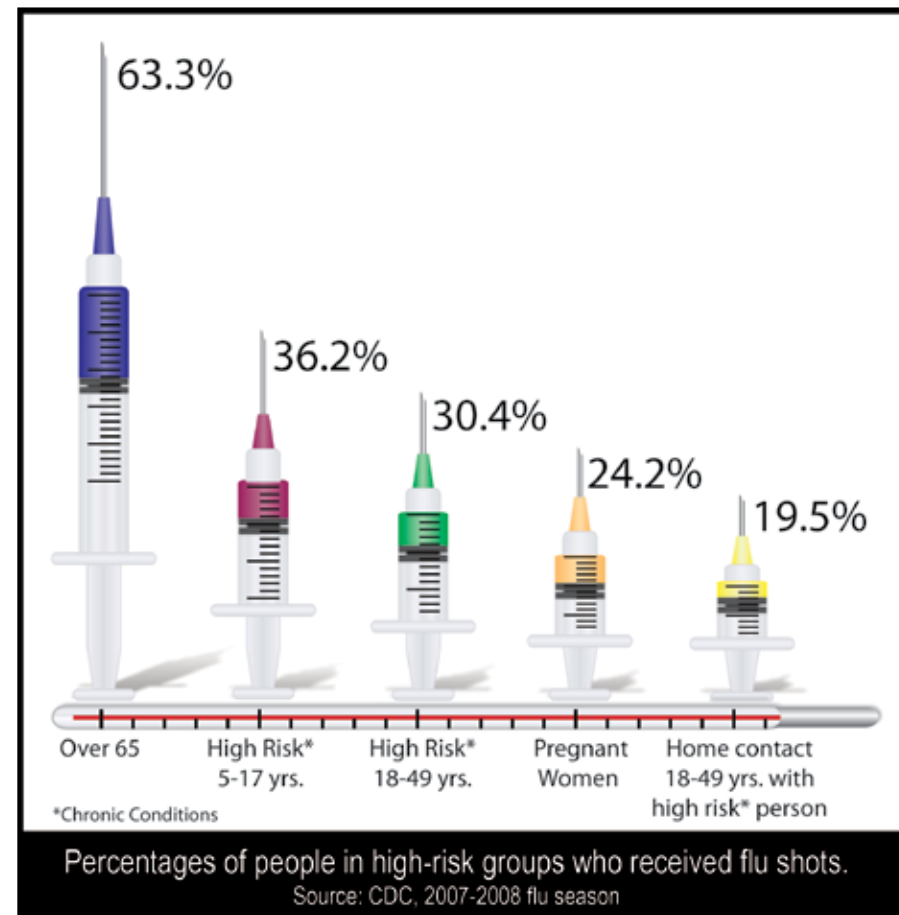
The shot is also free for those enrolled in TRICARE Standard, Extra, or TRICARE Prime Remote, as long as they use any TRICARE-authorized provider.

Keep in mind that while going to a local grocery store or pharmacy for the flu shot may be convenient, these public clinics do not use TRICARE providers and therefore TRICARE will not reimburse beneficiaries for the cost.

If beneficiaries have any concerns about getting a seasonal flu shot or H1N1 vaccine, they should talk to their doctor. Typically, anyone 6 months and older can be vaccinated. The CDC recommends the seasonal flu vaccine for those at high risk, including:

- People 50 years and older
- Children 6 months to 18 years old
- People living in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu
- Pregnant women

For more information about the seasonal flu vaccination, West Region TRICARE beneficiaries can talk to their doctor or visit the TriWest Healthy Living Portal at www.triwest.com/healthyliving.



Manage TRICARE Prime Online with BWE

Story by Tyler Patterson TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Looking for an easy way to manage your TRICARE Prime enrollment? Eligible service members and their family can do just that by using the Beneficiary Web Enrollment (BWE) Web site.

Through BWE, you can:

- Enroll in Prime
- Make your initial enrollment fee payment
- Choose a primary care manager (PCM)*
- Update personal information and DEERS records
- Transfer enrollment to a new location or region
- Convert active duty to retiree enrollment
- Add Other Health Insurance (OHI) information
- Request a new enrollment card

*Enrollment to a military clinic PCM, civilian PCM or a PCM change, may be subject to approval by the local military clinic commander.

To access BWE, visit www.triwest.com/bwe and click the link at the top of the page. You will need a Valid Certified Common Access Card, Defense Financial and Accounting Services myPay PIN or a DS Logon (also referred to as a DoD Self-Service Logon) to use the service.

Note that TRICARE Overseas Prime beneficiaries cannot use BWE. These enrollees should contact their TRICARE Area Office for more information about eligibility and enrollment.

Additionally, if you use BWE to change your PCM, remember the BWE site does not factor in drive time from your home to your PCM. If you select a PCM located more than 30 minutes from your home, you are accepting a waiver of TRICARE's Access to Care standards.

To learn more about Beneficiary Web Enrollment or to get started using it right away, visit www.triwest.com/bwe.





Flying Food Service

Chief Warrant Officer Brian Marshall with Integrated Support Command Ketchikan prepares a brunch aboard a Kodiak Air Station HC-130 Hercules aircraft Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2009, during the commandant's visit to the North Slope which included several White House officials and the NOAA administrator. This was the first time brunch was served aboard a Kodiak based C-130 and breakfast included fruit and yogurt parfaits, quiche, pastries, fresh fruit, orange juice and coffee. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Charly Hengen)