



# CYPRESS TIMES

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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# HURRICANE SANDY

## BY: LTJG KYLE REESE

On October 28<sup>th</sup> 2012, the crew of the CGC CYPRESS was recalled for what many feared would be the largest storm to ever hit the Northeast. The challenges of this mission were vast; due to the adaptability and readiness of the crew, however, the cutter was able to overcome all obstacles.

Less than 24 hours after completing a very successful Haunted Ship the crew reported aboard ready to respond to Hurricane Sandy. The first task was to tear down all decorations and stow all gear for sea. As many of you know there was a lot of work to be done with the clean-up efforts. Yet the duty section and later the crew was able to make the ship ready to depart Pensacola in just a few hours. After all gear was put away and ship's light offs and tests were complete, CYPRESS steamed for the eastern seaboard, not quite sure of her destination.

Passing through the Florida Straits was the last good weather the crew would see until returning home. The cutter turned north bound and a few days later pulled into Base Portsmouth to resupply and take on ATON gear. Meanwhile, the ship had received tasking – head towards District 1 and New York! (Cont. on pg. 2)

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# HURRICANE SANDY

During the day and a half steam, the crew saw the seas begin to decrease. Once on scene CYPRESS was tasked with opening 5 inlets on the south side of Long Island. The Deckies worked as fast as they could, knowing that a nor'easter was approaching. After working as many aids as possible the CYPRESS turned for Newport, RI, where the crew was able to rest for a few days while waiting for the storm to pass.

After the storm dissipated CYPRESS headed back to Long Island. In total the crew serviced 11 aids, helping reopen all the significant channels on the south side of Long Island. Having a few extra hours to spare before being released from D1 control, the crew headed into New York harbor to drop off a buoy to a 175' buoy tender and steamed by the Statue of Liberty for a quick photo.

Once out of the harbor the crew headed for Pensacola. Yet, the challenges were not over. The Engineers had to trouble shoot engine difficulties and repair the Reverse Osmosis water purifier. Due to their outstanding work the cutter was able to continue on her way home. CYPRESS rounded the Florida Straits once more and made a direct line for Pensacola; mooring in time for Thanksgiving.



# THE ADVENTURES OF HURRICANE ISAAC PART II

## AUG 26<sup>TH</sup> – SEP 4<sup>TH</sup>

BY: LTJG PETER DOLTON

Last time we left the CYPRESS, we were running west from Isaac along with most of the other ships in the Gulf. On 28 August we pulled in for a quick refuel at Galveston, allowing some fortunate crew members to step foot on the Lone Star state, although I hear from the natives that Galveston doesn't really count as Texas, you be the judge. That night we were anchored just off the coast bobbing gently and feeling only the very edge of Isaac's mighty winds. We stayed there until the next day when we got the orders to set sail for Southwest Pass, the entrance to the Mississippi river and the major commerce artery of the United States. We were fortunate to time things so that we took the seas on the bow or stern (mostly) for the next few days.

You see, bad weather isn't just a factor of size, although sailing into anything bigger than 10 feet is going to be bad no matter what direction you steer. My personal best is 40-45 foot seas, but that's an experience that I'd like never to repeat. First you have to understand the difference between seas and swell. Seas are the very tops of the wave that forms from the wind

that is blowing at the moment. Swells are the residual effects of that wind over the past few days that form the long, rolling waves. You add the seas to the swells to come up with the total sea state. But it's not that simple. Swells can hit the ship quickly, one after another, or come every few seconds, depending on their period. Seas can be in the same direction as the swells, against them, or even perpendicular. The quick shift of winds from a Hurricane causes many unpredictable combinations and despite all the science behind predicting, the only way to really know what the ride is going to be like is trial and error. So that's what we did. Fortunately it was more trial than error for us.

After stopping to pick up a life ring blown off and oil rig, CYPRESS surfed the swells into Southwest pass and began to transit up the Mississippi river. It was disconcerting at first to stop feeling the rocking and rolling that we'd felt for the last 5 days. I almost got sea-sick again from the lack of motion. Yes, that's right, I've been going to sea for 5 years and still turn green, get clammy skin, and feel like curling up into a ball every time I get in

seas bigger than 4 foot. Go ahead, laugh.

I know I laughed when I looked out at the marshland on either side of us and saw the herds of wild cows munching away on their breakfast, completely over the fact that less than 48 hours ago a hurricane had swept through that might have picked them up and sent them flying. The wild cows of Louisiana's swampland never cease to amuse me. When we had stopped admiring the scenery we got down to the job we had come there to do: survey the aids the CG put in place to help big ships drive up the river. There were numerous land aids that had been blow away and lights that had been broken or burnt out, but all the buoys were floating just fine. The mighty Mississippi washes so much mud, sand, and (sometimes) refrigerators, cars, trees, and other debris onto the rocks holding the buoys down that it is rare to see them blown off station. By the end of the day our report was complete and we said goodbye to the cows, hello to the rolling seas, and drove to our next port: Horn Island Pass and Pascagoula Ship Channel. (Cont. on pg. 3)

# THE ADVENTURES OF HURRICANE ISAAC PART II

## AUG 26<sup>TH</sup> – SEP 4<sup>TH</sup> (CONT.)

The first day of work looked promising, we woke up early to another beautiful sunrise and calming seas and Deck Force began the fast-paced ritual of bringing the buoys on deck and setting them back on the bottom when CYPRESS moved them to the right spot. We'd worked two buoys in record time and were about to get rid of the third when, all of a sudden, the Engineer on Watch called up and reported that we had a leak on the Controllable Pitch Propeller, causing us to lose the ability to drive the ship. General Emergency alarms sounded throughout the ship and every single crewmember onboard sprang into action. Engineers raced to the scene of the problem, deck force dropped the anchor, secured the buoy on deck, and all hands went to their stations in case the leak turned into a fire. After a few tense minutes those of us on the bridge determined that both the buoy and the anchor were holding CYPRESS from drifting aground and the engineers reported they had the problem contained.

With a little creative engineer problem solving, we put a few crewmembers onboard the Station Pascagoula boat that came out to meet us, complete with their black Labrador mascot, and sent them in to get the parts to repair us. In the meantime those of us left on the boat got to experience being a lightship for the newly opened channel. Every once in awhile I would look up to see a huge ship looming alongside us no more than 30 yards distant. It was like checking your blind spot and seeing a semi-truck bearing down on you, repeatedly. Like anything else, though, we got used to it and by that same night we were repaired and ready to start round 2.

Over the next 2 days CYPRESS reset 9 buoys including some improvisations by dragging a buoy from the hip, sending our smallboat out to check aids that may have weathered the storm, and working within spitting distance of sandbars that continually encroach on the channel.



Deck Force worked tirelessly for 10 hour days through Sunday and Labor day (why do they call it that if we're supposed to get the day off?). Then we beat feet home but, of course, with poetic irony drove back to port in a thunderstorm that reduced visibility to zero and got most of the crew nice and wet for our return, thanks a lot Gulf Weather.

Final score: CYPRESS- 9 aids reset, Hurricane Isaac – Hundreds of aids destroyed. However we made it back home in one piece with no serious injuries so I call this one a win. Go team CYPRESS!

# HAUNTED SHIP

BY: ENS NATHAN WHITE

People laughed. People cried. Most people couldn't make it through the whole thing. No, I am not talking about the latest *Twilight* movie; I am talking about the CYPRESS' Haunted Ship event, hosted the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of October. Due to advertisements in the Gosport, on the radio, in the *Pensacola News Journal*, onboard NAS Pensacola, and throughout the city of Pensacola, over 2200 people were able to go into the Haunted Ship, with hundreds more being turned away. MANNA food bank was able to collect over 3,000 lbs of food and \$300 to help the needy in the Pensacola area. This effort by the crew of the CYPRESS really shows its dedication to ensuring that they give back to the Pensacola area as much as possible.

That is not to say the crew went unrewarded for their hard work. We got to see DC3 Doerr and Robbins scare multiple college-aged men from the ship in their first 20 seconds of being onboard. We got to see a haunted nursery filled with the best child actors on this side of Hollywood. We got to see EM2 Labianca make every kid who went through scared to visit McDonald's ever again. And, not to forget, we saw YN2 Suggs almost make people jump overboard to avoid his chainsaw.

Just as important as the crew, the dependents were crucial in making this event a success. From Connor, Nevaeh, Haley, Haven, Dalton, Katie and Ariana working the haunted nursery to Mrs. Doerr, Mrs. Reese, Mrs. Carrier, and many others working the crowds and giving out candy (in the freezing cold!). There is no way the event would have been as successful as it was without the help on the pier. Thanks to everyone's imagination, excitement, and incredible endurance, CYPRESS' Haunted Ship will be remembered as one of the best events in Pensacola this year. Especially because Hurricane Sandy stayed to the East. Right?

# HAUNTED SHIP PICTURES



# HAUNTED SHIP AWARD

The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard takes pleasure in presenting the  
COAST GUARD MERITORIOUS TEAM COMMENDATION to:

USCGC CYPRESS (WLB-210)  
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

for service as set forth in the following

## CITATION:

“For exceptionally meritorious service from 22 to 27 October 2012 while conducting public affairs and community outreach. During this period, the crew of USCGC CYPRESS planned and executed a ‘Haunted Ship’ charity event open to the public. Through countless hours of planning and hard work, the crew transformed CYPRESS from a seagoing 225’ buoy tender into a ship of terror with 13 separate ‘scare’ stations manned by over 30 costumed role players. By partnering with the Port and City of Pensacola, CYPRESS was able to moor at downtown Pensacola at no cost, providing an excellent location for the event. Through online publications, radio broadcasts, paper flyers, and word of mouth, the crew got the word out, increasing event exposure and public attendance. Expert teamwork and coordination ensured that role players and watchstanders could trade positions, maximizing participation while allowing for crew rest and effective monitoring of ship’s systems. Impressive communication between the different stations allowed for up to 60 civilians split into 8 separate groups to be onboard CYPRESS at once, and ensured quick response time to any potential safety or medical concerns. CYPRESS’ outstanding preparation, oversight, and teamwork helped ensure a popular, safe, and spooky experience for over 2200 civilians who toured the haunted ship, broadening awareness and appreciation towards the Coast Guard in the Gulf Coast area. The crew’s coordination with the Coast Guard dependents and the Coast Guard Auxiliary helped provide pier side games and activities for children, while also offering boating safety information to the Pensacola public. Partnering with the MANNA Food Bank, the crew’s outstanding efforts allowed the charity to collect \$300 and over 3,000 lbs of food donated to help the needy and hungry in Pensacola. The dedication, pride, and professionalism displayed by the crew of the USCGC CYPRESS are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

For the Commandant,



PAUL I. MORGAN  
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commanding Officer, CGC CYPRESS (WLB-210)

# LINKS IN THE CHAIN

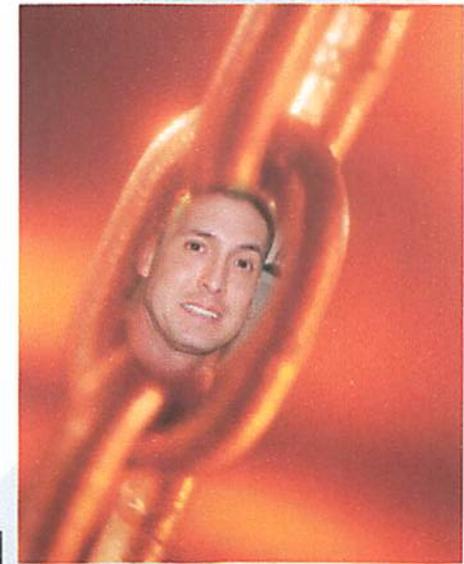
BY: ENS CHRIS MONACELLI

Hello again, CYPRESS newsletter readers. This edition I will be focusing on the Ship's Deck Watch Officers (DWOs). DWOs play a key role in keeping the ship safe while underway.

DWOs are a direct representative of the Commanding Officer, when he is not on the bridge. Their primary responsibility is for the safe navigation of the cutter and the safety of her crew. The group of DWOs onboard CYPRESS is comprised of first class petty officers and above. Each DWO stands one four hour watch a day. While on watch the DWO constantly monitors and reviews the bridge equipment such as the radar, radio, and electronic charting system. This is to ensure that there are no vessels or other obstacles that could cause a hazard and to make sure that CYPRESS is headed in the right direction. Constant monitoring becomes extremely important when CYPRESS is transiting near very busy areas such as Mobile Bay and Galveston

In addition to standing their daily watch, the DWO is also responsible for driving the ship during AToN operations. Due to the high risks involved with working a buoy it takes very precise driving with zero errors or mistakes. In order to do this the DWO uses the cutter's Dynamic Positioning System, DPS, which allows the ship to move forward, aft, and side to side in one foot increments. The DWO uses the DPS's joystick and knob to control the thrusters and propeller. Gamers could use this system easily. This system also allows the cutter to hold position and stay in one spot while the buoy is being serviced.

So needless to say the DWO is essential to the operation of the cutter underway. Therefore I would like personally thank all the DWO for their hard work and devotion to duty up on the bridge, and helping us all return home safely to our families. We salute you CYPRESS DWOs!





# CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Hello CYPRESS family!

The holidays have me behind: I'm tardy in getting our newsletter out.

The quarter started back in Oct with a successful 10 day trip in support of the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration (that's a mouth full and why we just say "NOAA"). After that we thought we'd have a fairly easy holiday season.

The end of October found CYPRESS at the Palatoc pier in downtown Pensacola set to conduct a Haunted Ship charity event. The two night event was a great success with 3000lbs of food and \$300 dollars collected for the Manna food bank. I hope to make this an annual event but that will depend on future COs, crews, District Eight approval/support, and operations permitting. Thanks to all those who helped make it such a great time.

We were flying high after our Haunted Ship when I got the call to deploy in support of super storm Sandy response operations in the north east. I arrived to a ship that was still decorated and suffering from the effects of 2200 guests passing through. The crew did a fantastic job cleaning up and getting us underway and enroute Portsmouth, VA for gear onload.

Most of the east coast 225' buoy tenders were not fully mission capable, which is why we headed north. Coast Guard District One, as well as Atlantic Area and Headquarters, greatly appreciated our flexibility and can-do attitude. We serviced buoys off of Long Island, rode out a nor'easter in Newport, RI, and got to take a New York harbor cruise before heading back to paradise. Unfortunately, during our return, we too suffered some engineering setbacks which limited our speed and kept us inport for maintenance from our return before Thanksgiving until 2 January.

As usual for cuttermen, there is little time for rest. During that inport time it was more working hard getting the thruster generator repaired and preparing for our readiness evaluation by Allied Training Group (ATG) Mayport. In mid December we hosted about 15 inspectors from the ATG who came onboard and evaluated our training and maintenance programs, equipment, and crew readiness. We did pretty well and should have a successful Tailored Ships Training Assessment (TSTA) in Mayport, FL in February.

Thanks to everyone who made the kids and big kids Christmas parties a success. I hope that everyone had a great Christmas and holiday season. Remember the importance and don't get too wrapped up in the commercialization of the season.

I will probably have only one, maybe two more Captain's Corner to write. I am preparing to retire and be relieved as commanding officer of CYPRESS, which is why I missed the holiday parties. I've been spending every weekend since Thanksgiving at our house in Sibley, LA getting it repainted and "Morganized" since our renters vacated.

I thank you for supporting CYPRESS and your crewmember.

Semper Paratus!

-LCDR Paul Morgan  
Commanding Officer