

SENECA eNewsletter – 15 – 30 November 09

Good day, shipmates.

We are back underway patrolling the high seas in the service of our nation. After a summer of transfers during our three month drydock availability, it's good to be back underway doing what cutters and their crews are designed to do ... be at sea. Here is a description of what we're doing now and a cool link and then I will run through what we've been doing.

Tomorrow night we transit through the Panama Canal, here is a link to share with your family and friends. It takes you to the web cameras that cover the Canal from north (Caribbean Sea side) to south (Pacific Ocean). We should be able to be seen even as we make our night transit as the Canal is well lit in most places.

Panama Canal:

<http://www.panacanal.com/eng/photo/camera-java.html?cam=Miraflores>

Now to the story. After our drydock in Norfolk this summer, we had a long inport in order to accomplish some significant operational readiness objectives and then we did a bit of celebrating. We conducted Limited Team Training (LTT) followed by an alignment of our Main Propulsion Control Monitoring System (MPCMS) in order to clear a Computer Governor Casualty on the #2 Main Diesel Engine (MDE) and concluded those busy weeks with a Dependants Cruise ~ celebrating what we do with those whom we do it for.

LTT, 08-17 September: With a 45% crew turnover this summer, we needed some training. We schedule two weeks with our Afloat Training Group (ATG) who sent us trainers to develop our On Board Training Teams (OBTT) during inport and underway training and drills in Navigation, Engineering, Damage Control, and Combat Systems. We followed the inport portion up with a couple of days underway that included a Towing Exercise with the Cutter SANIBEL, a 110 WPB, in Cape Cod Bay.

MPCMS/MDE Alignment, 18-22 September: This concluded a year long effort to determine the requirements for installing a new electronic governor system (723 Plus Governor by Woodward) for both of SENECA's MDEs. The level of effort required the assistance from the Coast Guard Yard and other engineering technical experts to verify and adjust mechanical and electrical systems from the blades on the shafts to the pilot house throttle console. The teamwork and diligence demonstrated by these technicians along with you, my shipmates, and our local mission support partners (NESU Boston) were critical and most impressive. SENECA's MPCMS is now "tight" and we've learned how to keep her so.

Dependants Cruise, Wednesday 23 September: 90 friends and family got underway with us for a day trip into Boston harbor. We departed Base Boston Pier 3B on a cool fall morning and anchored in President Roads, Federal Anchorage A in sight of Deer Island. With loads of tasty food and beverages available, we were offered multiple demonstrations of Coast Guard maritime power: Station Boston's small boat (RB-S), SENECA's Over-the-Horizon (OTH) small boat, Sector Boston's Security Zone with port partners for a Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) ship, and ... the grand finale' ... Air Station Cape Cod's HH60J Jayhawk overflight. During the trip to and from the anchorage, guests were briefed on the Port of Boston and her islands by Mr. Donald Cann, who is a volunteer with the National Park Service for the Boston Harbor Islands. Please enjoy these photos from our occasional shipmate PA3 Terrell.

Photos: <http://s629.photobucket.com/albums/uu17/CGCSeneca/Dependants%20Cruise%20SEP09/>

Bravo Zulu ~ Well Done to our newly qualified shipmates who are now standing the watch.

Inport, 19-23 October: Gun Change Out. SENECA replaced our MK75 / 76mm, big white gun on foc'sle, with a refurbished gun from the Coast Guard Yard Gunners. The swap went very smooth and we look forward to Gunnery Exercises this patrol. Kudos to our mission support partners at WAT Boston.

Sunday, 15 November: Underway. After a bit of a delay, we got underway for patrol. Our helicopter hanger door had jammed all the way up. However, our vigilant watchstanders had identified the issue the night before and worked with our mission support partners. We had a crane, crane operator, and about half a dozen blue suitors working the issue as

the sun came up on Sunday. The sea outside the harbor was a bit lively after the storm had moved through Friday and the subsequent fog delayed our transit through the Cape Cod Canal until the next day.

Cape Cod Canal web cameras:

http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/ccc/telecama/telecama_main.htm

<http://www.maritime.edu/webcam/index.html>

Monday, 16 November: Transited Cape Cod Canal. OPS was driving and keeping us in the middle, except for when we met the tug and barge on one whistle (port to port).

Tuesday, 17 November: Helicopter Operations with USCG Air Station Elizabeth City and Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT). Unfortunately, a SAR case delayed and then the weather conditions deteriorated to cancel these important training evolutions. We'll keep trying.

Wednesday, 18 November: Patrolling enroute Mayport, Florida, which is just south of Jacksonville.

Thursday to Tuesday, 19-24 November: Moored US Naval Station Mayport Florida. What was to be an overnight to conduct drills for our upcoming patrol and get Diesel Fuel Marine (DFM) turned out to be a five day repair job to our #2 Main Diesel Engine's Jacket Water Cooler. Oil was leaking into the cooler being emulsified and turning into something that looked like chocolate milk ... not good. We got some great support; repaired the leak; cleaned out the cooler; offloaded the oil/water/cleaning results; and were ready to resume the patrol.

Wednesday, 25 November: Underway; resumed our patrol.

Thursday, 26 November: Thanksgiving Day. Great food and decorations by our fabulous Food Service Team led by FSC ... turkey, beef, canberry jelly, stuffing, rolls, cookies, pumpkin bread, huge decorated chocolate cakes (one with a Turkey saying "Eat Beef"), cherry pie, and pumpkin pies. FS3's strong performance in the Galley with his preparations and execution of the meal was recognized later with a Command Coin presented to him at Quarters.

Mess Deck is decorated for the holidays with lights and trees. I believe that Santa's leg is coming through the overhead as he missed our stacks on a test run.

Friday to Sunday, 27-29 November: Transiting to the Panama Canal via the Yucatan Channel, waters between Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and Cuba's western tip, then through the Western Caribbean. Saturday included Cook Morale Night with the Deck Department making pizzas for their shipmates; great stuff, esp. the Bar-B-Que one.

Saturday Night Bingo: prizes included DVDs and Beach Towels with our new caller GM1, aka "The Voice".

Monday, 30 November: Panama Canal. During this evening's transit through the Panama Canal, I give over control of the cutter to a pilot who takes us through.

Please be vigilant on watch; train our new shipmates to our professional standards; enjoy the warmer waters; have fun and be safe on liberty.

For new shipmates: If you would like your family and friends to receive this periodic eNewsletter, please send me their emails and I will add them to the distribution list.

For family and friends of SENECA: If you would like to know more about our fine cutter and myself, please visit these web sites.

Cutter SENECA <http://www.uscg.mil/lantarea/cgcSeneca/>

Be well, God bless, Semper Paratus ~ Always Ready,

Sincerely,

wjw

CAPT Wm. J. "Willy" Wolter
Cutter SENECA (WMEC 906)

~ underway patrolling the high seas ~