THE BULLDOG

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The New Bulldog

Here ye, here ye all you wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, grandmas, grandpas, boyfriends, girlfriends, good friends and new friends: The Bulldog is here. It is with great pride and pleasure that the Command and Crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley present to you "The Bulldog" a new, bimonthly newsletter from your friends and family aboard the Coast Guard's finest ship. We invite you to follow us as we carry out our mission wherever we may be.

Greetings from CDR White, Commanding Officer:

Ahoy!!! This has been a very busy patrol. We have been training, conducting drills and exercises. The crew's performance has been outstanding! You should be very proud of them!!! I was certainly honored to be part of the team. In addition to our training, the crew has also been busy maintaining the cutter, correcting casualties, ordering supplies and preparing for our return to Alaska to conduct fisheries boardings. We navigated the Alaskan-Canadian Inside Passage on our way to Washington and I can honestly say our navigation skills are better than they were when we left! I want to thank OS3 Dale Arnould who put this newsletter together. He is a wonderful asset to our team and I hope this newsletter helps us keep you informed. I also want to thank all of you for all the hard work you are doing while we're gone. I've said it before, but it's worth repeating… we could not do what we do without your support! Thank you all for your work, prayers, support and patriotism! We look forward to seeing you all. Together, family and crew, we will continue to provide our best service to this great country.

Fire School

written by OS3 Dale Arnould

Living aboard a ship can always be challenging, especially when that ship is hundreds of miles from land and a fire breaks out in the engine room. Crews of Coast Guard cutters must be familiar with every aspect of their ship in order to take initial and corrective action in any situation requiring damage control. From the locations of individual fire plugs to navigating multiple levels through dense, blinding smoke, the attack teams and investigators aboard the Alex Haley are always prepared to save their home away from home.

Kitsap Readiness Response Center

The Alex Haley arranged for nearly half of her crew to undergo the valuable training offered at the nearby Kitsap Readiness Response Center. The state of the art "Fire School" boasts one of the most unique burn buildings in existence, able to present simultaneous flooding and fire scenarios to eager students in order to best represent an underway casualty. The facility draws on multiple state and federal agencies for curriculum and staff including the Washington Military Department, Bremerton Fire Department, the Kitsap County Sheriff and Coroners offices and many more.

Fighting the Fire

The greatest benefit of the crew's training was not the theory and classroom instruction offered, but the group oriented, hands on practice that allowed members to see the responsibilities of unfamiliar roles. Course instructors ensured that the crew's senior petty officers, such as MK1 Carsten Stoeckler and EM2 Frank Griffitt were standing aside their usual responsibilities and rotating the junior members through the harder, more challenging positions. Nearly everyone participating was placed into an unfamiliar role in order to better educate them on the entire damage control organization. The theory was to develop a more comprehensible approach to casualties aboard the ship. In practice however, "placing individuals in unfamiliar positions " birthed a new attitude towards fire fighting, creating a "very energetic and very proactive mindset," says Chief Petty Officer Heath Reid, MKC. "In a casualty situation, seconds feel like minutes and minutes feel like an eternity." Chief Reid, as well as the school's director, Mike Tinder, was impressed by the ever-present positive attitude maintained throughout the heated environment, commenting that there was a definite "increased level of confidence and comfortability" among the Alex Haley's crew. The team returned to the cutter in tip top shape to continue tackling the constant drills, ready for anything TSTA could possibly offer.

MKC Heath Reid monitors the overall training effort, evaluating the Alex Haley's junior enlisted members as they combat fires and smoke in various damage control scenarios.

Attack Team Leader MK3 Brandon Ficht (Left) directs Nozzelman SN Kristopher Hernandez to combat the flames.

A Fire School instructor braves the flames for some last minute instruction.

Petty Officers Gabriel Rosario (DC3, Left) and Filip Malec (MK3, Middle) engage a galley fire with the help of SN Tyler Johnson (Right).

DC3 Jason Manor prepares a handheld radio before entering the burn building.

GM1 Brandon Hayward enjoys the damp Seattle climate as his foul weather parka absorbs most of the rain.

EM2 Frank Griffit smiles as his investigators deploy. He's happy to know his vital role will be expertly filled after his departure from the ship.

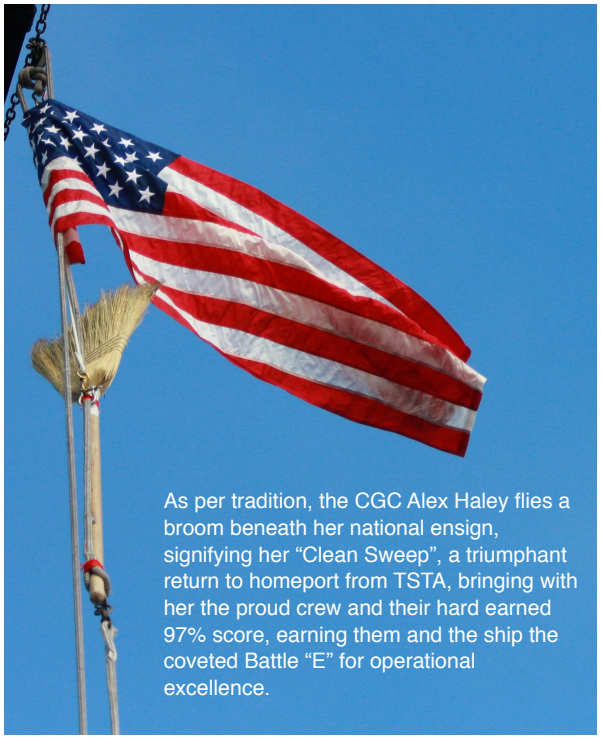
BM3 Parker Wall double checks his gear before braving the flames yet again.

The Crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley

February 8, 2014

Sweepin' TSTA

written by ETC Charles Paulauskas



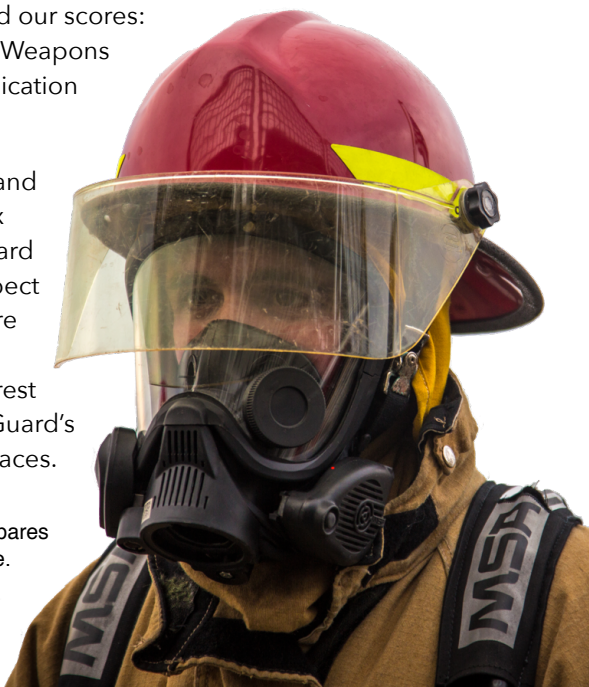
As per tradition, the CGC Alex Haley flies a broom beneath her national ensign, signifying her "Clean Sweep", a triumphant return to homeport from TSTA, bringing with her the proud crew and their hard earned 97% score, earning them and the ship the coveted Battle "E" for operational excellence.

Amid the Naval Station that boasts the presences of an aircraft carrier, two guided missile destroyers, two frigates and two Coast Guard Cutters resides a small unit comprised of both Navy and Coast Guard members. The men and women of the Afloat Training Group Pacific Northwest (ATG) are experts in their fields of shipboard damage control, seamanship, navigation, communications, engineering, and medical casualty control. ATG's primary mission is to inspect and evaluate both Navy Ships and Coast Guard Cutters to ensure they are fully prepared to conduct at-sea operational missions.

It is during these evaluations that the seasoned crew members of the CGC Alex Haley are graded on both how well we perform our mission across different warfare areas and how well our senior member's train junior folks on how to handle them. During any given normal patrol, we regularly train on a wide variety of scenarios; the most common being simulated fuel leaks, fires, flooding, medical casualties, loss of steering, and even loss of communications equipment. We also refine our skills in situations we face everyday, like navigation, anchoring, and mooring the cutter. When we departed Kodiak on December 28th, our focus was to fully prepare for the over 100 drills that we would be graded on by ATG pier side in Seattle, underway in Puget Sound, and pier side in Everett, Washington. Our eight day transit consisted of perfecting our current techniques by self evaluation with constant drills lasting anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours. A minimum grade would be 80%, but we had our sights aimed higher.

Our Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) officially begin January 6th. Over the next 19 days we would focus on both completing every drill flawlessly and ensuring that our gear and damage control organization was aligned with current standards. Blood, sweat and tears were had by every member as we trained to fight the ship, saving our ship again and again from disaster, sabotage, and terrorist attack. Three weeks later, we graciously accepted our scores: Damage Control 96%, Engineering 97%, Seamanship, including Weapons and Gunnery 99%, Navigation 96%, Medical 99% and Communication 95%. We had done it. Our final average was a staggering 97%!

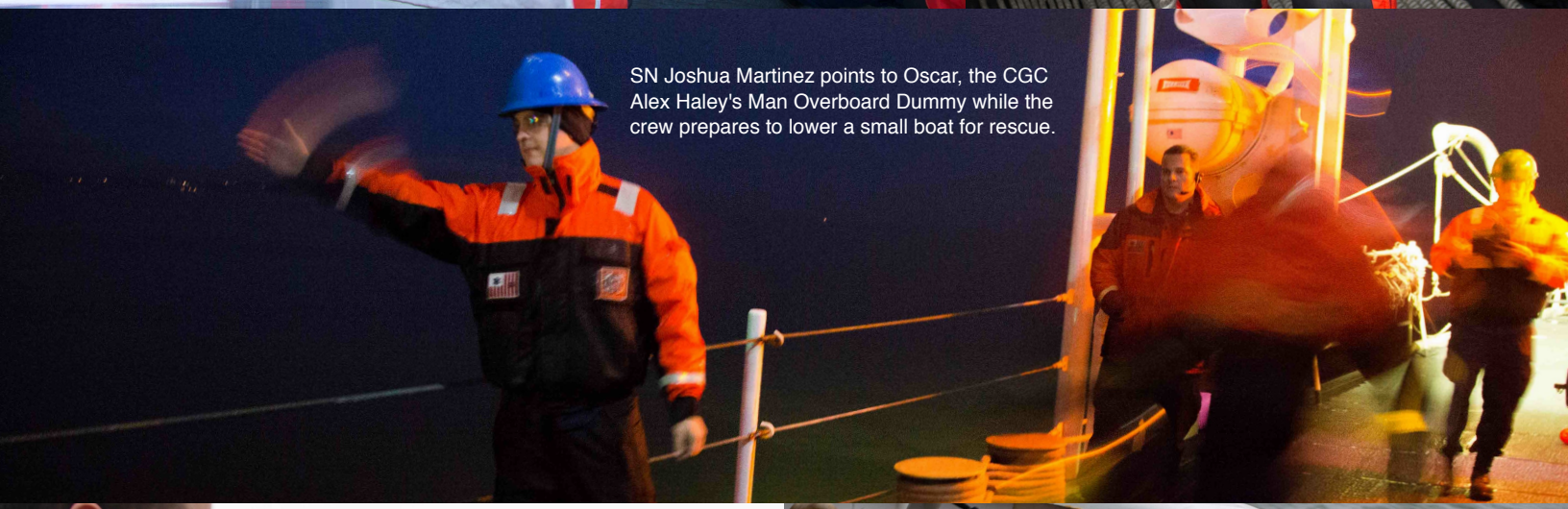
Our average of 97% is a reflection of the dedication, hard work and competence your friends and loved ones bring to the CGC Alex Haley. The time spent at TSTA solidified our response to shipboard emergencies and strengthened both our teamwork and the respect we have for each other. Not only can you be assured when we are deployed away from you in the unpredictable Bering Sea and vast Gulf of Alaska that we are working hard, but you can also rest easier knowing we are very well prepared to carry out the Coast Guard's mission and respond to any emergency that the CGC Alex Haley faces.



SN John Kurlovich prepares himself to engage a fire.

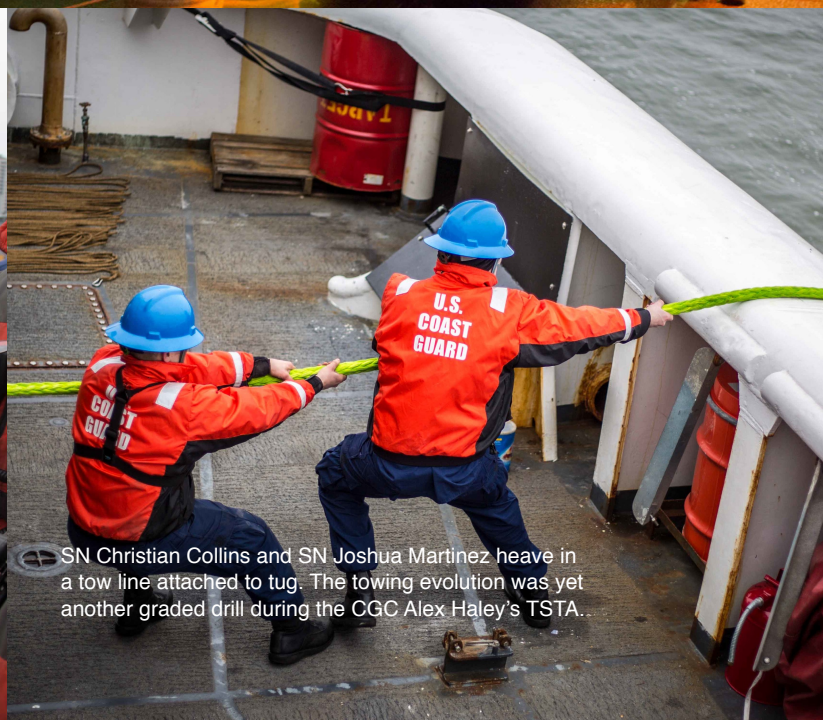
Deck force prepares to load a Rescue and Assistance team for a mock vessel taking on water during a TSTA drill.

BM3 Matthew Delcambre ties a bowline knot.

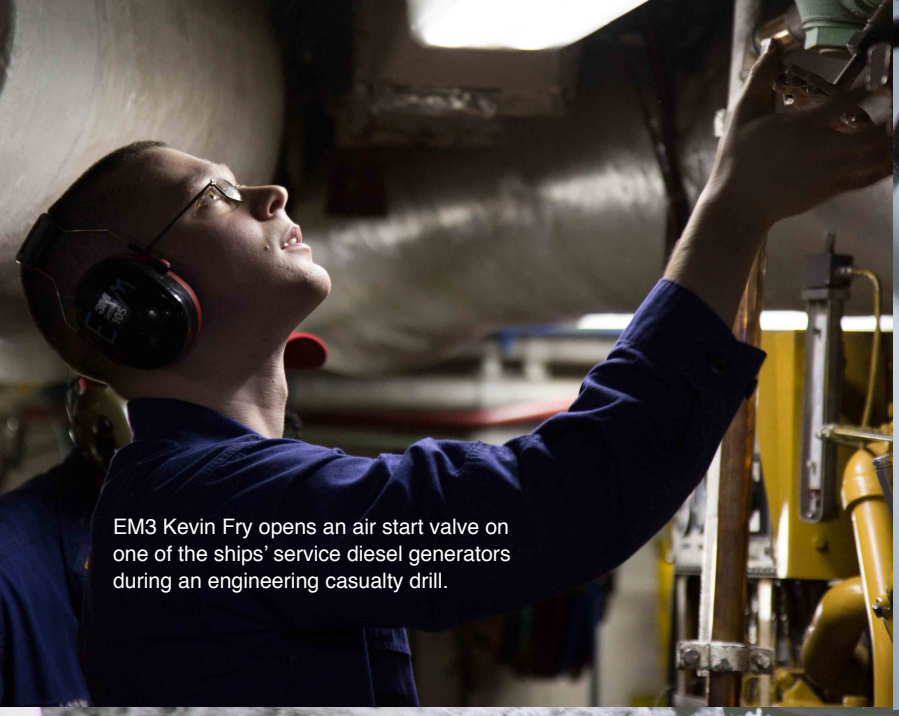


SN Joshua Martinez points to Oscar, the CGC Alex Haley's Man Overboard Dummy while the crew prepares to lower a small boat for rescue.

Portraying a medical casualty, SN Khafre Rogers shows off his missing hand.



SN Christian Collins and SN Joshua Martinez heave in a tow line attached to tug. The towing evolution was yet another graded drill during the CGC Alex Haley's TSTA.



EM3 Kevin Fry opens an air start valve on one of the ships' service diesel generators during an engineering casualty drill.

LTJG Nick Powell tests one of the ship's most unique features, a fire monitor, off the coast of Everett, Washington.

MK3 Felipe Patarroyo secures the sea painter, an attached line keeping the small boat in step with the cutter as the coxswain aligns himself with the cutter's davit.

DC3 Gabriel Rosario stabilizes BM3 Matthew Delcambre's leg while DC3 Jason Manor, DC3 Shannon Foster, and SN Sara Tarbuck help wrap during a medical drill.

GM3 Wyatt Laney readies a shoulder line throwing gun as a back up to the traditional heaving line. GM3 has successfully used the SLTG once before during the 55 foot swells of the infamous KULLUK case.