

COAST GUARD Alaska

Official Blog of the 17th Coast Guard District

Summer Arctic, Bering Sea expeditions for Coast Guard Cutter SPAR

Posted by PA3 Jonathan Lally, Wednesday, August 31, 2011



UNIMAK ISLAND, Alaska - A Coast Guard Cutter SPAR boat crew conducts a living marine resources law enforcement operation off of Unimak Island during their 2011 summer Arctic and Bering Sea patrol. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer Brett Miller.

By Ens. William Stark

The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter SPAR returned home to Kodiak Friday following a month-long patrol of the Aleutian Islands, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean.

The patrol, which came on the heels of a two-week training and logistics trip to Southeast Alaska, featured a very diverse set of operations for SPAR and its crew.

The cutter and crew departed Kodiak July 26 to service aids to navigation near Dutch Harbor and St. Paul Island. During the transit the crew conducted maritime law enforcement and marine resource

protection missions.

After completing the scheduled ATON work, the cutter and crew deployed north to the Arctic Ocean as part of the Coast Guard's Operation Arctic Shield. The operation highlights the importance of gaining experience operating in Arctic waters for a variety of Coast Guard assets.

The crew and cutter's primary mission in the Arctic was the completion of an emergency towing system exercise in Kotzebue Sound just offshore from the Red Dog Mine Portsite. The exercise, conducted along with a Foss Maritime tug, served as a proof of concept to test the capabilities of the ETS in the Arctic Ocean being deployed to large vessels in need of tow in hazardous situations.

The SPAR crew visited several villages as part of the Coast Guard's Alaska community outreach program while in the Arctic. The crew made port calls in Barrow and the villages of Point Hope, Wales and Little Diomedes to deliver shipments of penthrite in an effort to assist in safe, humane, and non-wasteful subsistence hunting.



The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter SPAR service a National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association weather data buoy in the Bering Sea during their 2011 summer Arctic and Bering Sea patrol. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Dean Stroup.

As part of the outreach SPAR transported a doctor who provided medical aid and training to the village residents while the crew conducted community service projects. The SPAR command sat down with the village elders to get their input on maritime traffic routing measures in concert with the Coast Guard's ongoing Port Access Routing Study in the Bering Strait.

En route to conduct ATON work near Adak Island SPAR's crew was diverted to conduct a medevac of an ill crewman aboard the 182-foot fishing vessel Maverick 250 miles north of St. Paul Island Aug. 16. They safely delivered the man to St. Paul where commercial emergency medical services took him to further medical care.

The SPAR crews worked with members of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association to service and replace two weather data collection buoys in the Bering Sea and stopped near Adak to service more aides. The crew completed their ATON servicing schedule in Bechevin Bay and Cold Bay on the return to Kodiak.

SPAR, commissioned in 2001, is the sixth of the Coast Guard's 225-foot Juniper Class oceangoing buoy tenders. Its nickname, The Aleutian Keeper, comes from the crew's primary mission of servicing ATON in the Aleutian Islands and Bering Sea. The crew also conducts search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and environmental response missions within this area of responsibility.

For more information about SPAR click [here](#).

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