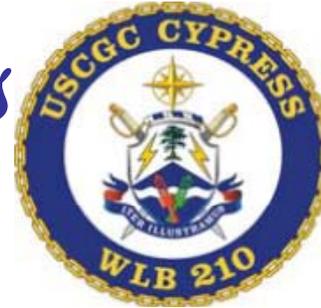


Cypress Times

Quarterly Newsletter



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Hello Tampa, It's Nice to See Ya...Again

By: LTJG Kurt Walker

I think it is appropriate to kick off the latest newsletter with an article about the event that has taken up the vast majority of CYPRESS's time since the end of the first quarter. The previous two trips to Tampa were due to emergency dry docks which is where an issue(s) has come up with the hull or machinery below the waterline that our own engineers cannot fix i.e. a stern thruster leaking oil. This time however, our dry dock was part of a maintenance schedule. Every so many years each Coast Guard ship is supposed to go through dry dock (where the ship is lifted up out of the water). At the very end of January the CYPRESS transited down to Tampa, FL to see our old friends at the International Ship Repair shipyard who won the contract to be able to perform the required maintenance on the ship. The ship has been raised out of the water for over two months now which is the longest amount of time since I have been onboard.

A massive amount of work has been getting done, at times it would have been hard to recognize the ship for a person that isn't very familiar with it. Two million dollars was allocated for this dry dock which is 1/16th of the cost to build the ship. The CYPRESS buoy deck crane i.e. "the strong arm of the gulf" had been on its last legs for quite a while and was in need of a complete overhaul. The shipyard used it's large crane to lift off the buoy deck crane and over the last month and a half it has been getting repaired and its wires have been replaced. It was finally brought back on board in the beginning of April and it is slowly progressing towards full functioning capacity.

Another large project has been the maintenance performed on the ship's shaft, which is a large metal pole about a foot in diameter that runs from the engine room all the way aft to the propeller. The shaft enables the propeller to turn thus allowing the ship to move forwards and backwards. Early in February the entire shaft was removed and sent away for repairs and maintenance. In addition to the shaft, the entire engine room deck (floor) has been repainted and many valves have been replaced.

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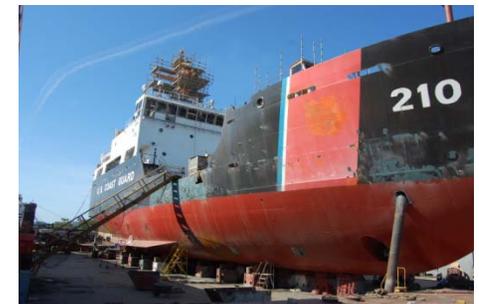
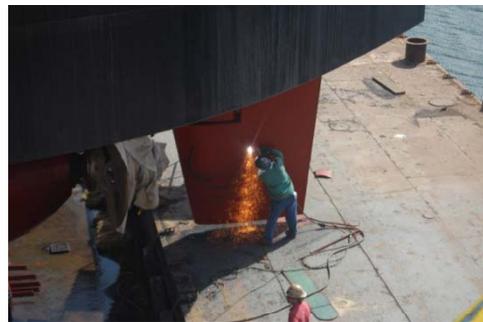
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Hello Tampa, It's Nice to See Ya Cont'd

Speaking of painting, the entire hull got a nice paint job to bring out its black luster which can get chipped and lose its shine due to salt water and ATON operations. One more area that got some tender loving care was the ship's mast where all of our radar and antennas run from. This is another area that, due to always being exposed to the elements, can become corroded. Most of the wiring and equipment was replaced over the course of several weeks and the mast received a paint job as well.

At the beginning of February two and a half months seemed like such a long time but now we are almost finished and looking back the time seemed to go rather quickly. A lot of the crew was able to take some much needed leave and attend a wide variety of "C" schools where they were able to acquire new skill sets for both the unit and Coast Guard. All of the great work that was accomplished wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the crew, particularly all of the primary and secondary inspectors that ensure work being completed is preformed to the proper specifications. Furthermore, without the oversight and long hours that CWO Witbracht and EMC Burke put in, the dry dock would have been a much more difficult and trying task. I think I speak for the rest of the crew when I say, "Thank you to the shipyard and Tampa, but hopefully we don't have to meet again for any surprise repairs, at least for a few years "



CYPRESS visit to Tampa Children's Hospital

BY: MK3 Mayra Barton

On the 6th of April several members of the CYPRESS had an opportunity to visit the children's hospital in Tampa. It was an amazing experience. Being able to volunteer and help bring joy to their lives is something that everyone involved was very grateful to do. They set up an Easter egg hunt, helped the kids decorate eggs, and participated in the egg hunt. The strength and courage that the children showed was extremely inspiring. While we as Coastguardsman face various types of hardships across the nation it is easy to forget the struggles and problems facing kids just like these. When these kids have the ability to wake up everyday and tackle whatever issues are thrown at them it is truly a motivating experience. The CYPRESS crew members greatly appreciated the opportunity to be able to help out and provide a little bit of comfort to these wonderful children.



Links in the Chain

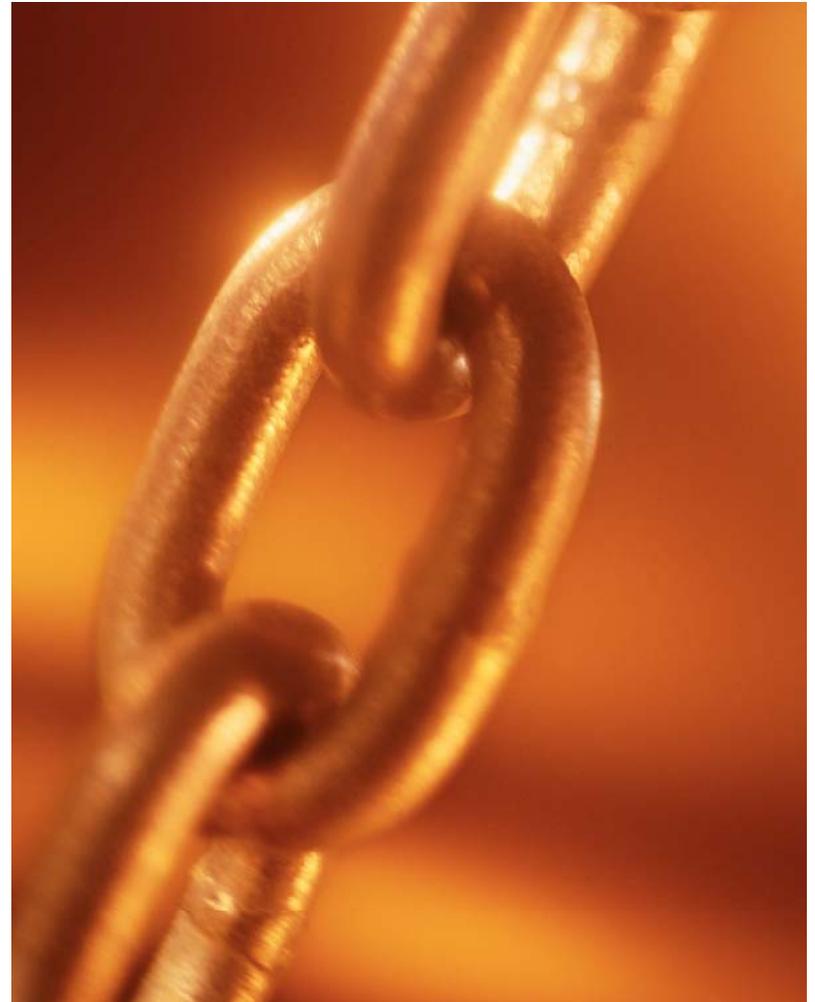
By: Kurt Walker

Hello again, CYPRESS newsletter readers. This edition I will be focusing on the Deck Force and the Deck Watch Officer (DWO). Both are very important entities onboard the ship.

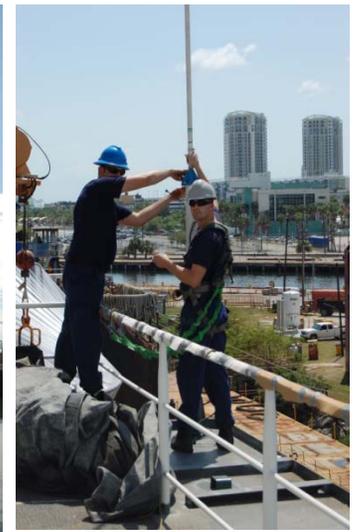
The crew is the heart and soul of the CYPRESS. They perform a myriad of tasks from small boat operations, ATON operations, man overboard drills, Law Enforcement boardings, armed watch standers, and general ship board maintenance i.e. painting, sanding, etc. The primary mission of the cutter is to service aids to navigation hence a lot of the deck force work revolves around making this possible. They typically spend several hours during work days and after liberty loading and unloading the buoy deck with chain and buoys. On underway days devoted to ATON operations they are out on the buoy deck for the vast majority of the day doing the physical labor required to successfully service buoys. The Deck Force consists of a Warrant Officer and Chief Boatswain's Mate who oversee the rest of the contingent which is a combination of First, Second, and Third class petty officers along with several seamen. There is no question that without these dedicated men and women CYPRESS would not be able to accomplish any of the missions required of a sea going buoy tender.

The DWO is almost always an E-6 or above on the CYPRESS and they are responsible for the safe navigation of the ship from the moment the ship pulls away from the pier until we pull back in. The DWO is in charge of the Quartermaster of the Watch as well as the lookout when they are on duty. The Captain cannot be on the bridge 24/7 and as such he needs someone who he is confident can act on his behalf and make the correct decisions in a wide variety of situations. The most precarious time to be an Underway DWO is the middle of the night when no one else is awake and everyone sleeping is depending on you to make the right call. The DWO has to be very familiar with the equipment at his or her disposal namely the radar, radios, and ECPINS an electronic form of navigation. These tools are meant to help the DWO make the decisions necessary for safe navigation. For a Deck Watch Officer this qualification is the pinnacle achievement and an important stepping stone in many enlisted and officer's careers.

Next issue look for the Ship's Office Personnel and Underway Engineer of the Watch.



CYPRESS in Action



Captain's Corner

Hello CYPRESS family!

Finally, finally, finally- it's official. Pensacola is the new homeport of CYPRESS. We're dotting the i's and crossing all the t's. I expect that there will be some form of official ceremony but I don't know what or when that will be.

We will not be supporting the Blue Angels air show this year. We have tasking that will prevent our participation.

We're moving towards hurricane season here on the Gulf Coast so stay tuned for more info on how to be prepared. It's important to have a family plan so your crewmember knows what you intend to do and where you will go in the event a storm impacts our area. It's important to have an out of area contact. Local numbers are typically negatively impacted if a storm hits, so having a point of contact away from the Gulf Coast that you and your crewmember can call to report/verify your status (i.e. you're ok and accounted for) is important. This info is provided to CYPRESS to assist in accounting for personnel/dependents. The Coast Guard is very concerned with accountability of their members AND the family of those members. As a unit, we'll have to report the status of our crewmembers and their families after a storm has hit. Hopefully, this will all just be a drill, but hope doesn't always overcome the reality of Mother Nature, so I prefer planning for the worst and hoping for the best. "Preparation equals performance." Please visit some internet sites (<http://floridadisaster.org/> or <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/prepare/>) for info. Remember to consider any pets/animals that you have, too.

January started off well with some ATON and training along with a trip to the Mississippi River to work some buoys for the cutter BARBARA MABRITY. But let's face it, the biggest issue since then is that the crew has been working hard since late January to ensure that we have a successful dry dock here in Tampa. We've been away for over 9 weeks now and it will probably be a total of 11 weeks by the time we're all said and done. The crew has been doing great and a lot of good work is being accomplished. We will all be ready to come home, though.

Start planning for hurricane season and utilize the OMBUDSMAN, Jamie Burke, for questions. You're also welcome to call me or the XO, LT Chris Tuckey. We will plan on putting on a family/crew event with a hurricane brief in the near future.

Thanks for your support. Semper Paratus!

-LCDR Paul Morgan
Commanding Officer