Cypress Times

Quarterly Newsletter

Interesting Facts

-The main hoist on the ship's crane can lift 40,000 lbs aka 20 tons!

-BM1 Mackin as a member at Station Monterrey was part of a search and rescue team trying to locate the plane crash of John Denver in 1997.

-Our XO, LT Tuckey served as a 3rd Mate aboard merchant ships prior to joining the Coast Guard. CYPRESS routinely navigates in close proximity to these merchant ships which can be upwards of a 1,000 feet long.

The Long Journey with NOAA

By: ENS Kyle Reese

On 1 September 2011 USCGC CYPRESS had just assumed Bravo-24 after returning from an underway period; however, the crew was keeping a very close eye on the developing tropical storm Lee. The cutter had topped off with fuel and supplies in preparation for AtoN discrepancy response and the crew was sent home to enjoy the holiday weekend.

CYPRESS' intentions were to get underway on Tuesday 6 September 2011 for a two week trip servicing NOAA buoys and aids to navigation in the Gulf of Mexico. Three technicians and one Coast Guardsman from the National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) would accompany the cutter to service the four weather buoys. This plan was threatened as the CYPRESS received a report of a disabled tanker, the Maersk Nautilus, approximately 80 miles south of Southwest Pass.

At approximately 1600 5 September 2011 the crew was recalled with sailing orders set for 1900. Even in the Bravo-24 status, the crew of the CYPRESS was able to safely return to the boat and was ready to steam just three hours after receiving the notification. The crew of the CYPRESS was not the only unit to contribute to the success of the recall. Station Pensacola had sent a 41' small boat to remove the boom from around the cutter since Naval Air Station Pensacola's Port Operations had secured their boats due to the inclement weather.

Once the boom was removed CYPRESS was able to push away from the pier and begin their special sea detail as nightfall began to darken the skies. After clearing the protective waters of Pensacola Bay the effects of the tropical storm were evident. CYPRESS was facing 13 foot seas and 25 knot winds to reach the Maersk Nautilus.

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The Long Journey with NOAA cont'd

After only a few hours underway the CYPRESS received a call to stand down from the case because the Maersk Nautilus was successfully repaired. CYPRESS spent the remainder of the night finding the best ride with plans of returning to NAS Pensacola in the morning to complete preparations for the planned trip in support of NOAA.

As daylight broke CYPRESS turned for home port to pick up the NOAA technicians with the expectation to initially respond to any storm related AtoN discrepancies. After just a few hours in port the CYPRESS was underway en route the entrance channel to Mobile Bay.

CYPRESS arrived at the entrance at 1915 which allowed enough time for the crew to service two aids reported discrepant. One was repositioned after finding it 500 yards off station and the other buoy was found on station. The cutter then made way to an anchorage for the night.

By morning the crew of the CYPRESS was ready for a long day of AtoN. The cutter left anchorage and was back in Mobile channel by 0800. The CYPRESS had to reposition an additional four aids found off station and position check one more aid. By late afternoon all the off station aids had been repositioned and the channel work was completed. Post storm recovery was not completed by only CYPRESS. The USCGC BARBARA MABRITY had repositioned two of CYPRESS' assigned aids which reduced CYPRESS' workload allowing us to depart and start our support of NOAA.

CYPRESS and her crew arrived at NOAA buoy 42001, 180 NM south of South West Pass, late the next morning. Once on scene the crew worked side by side with the technicians to service the three meter buoy. After a long day of work and three hours to verify that the buoy was transmitting properly, CYPRESS and the technicians had successfully repaired the buoy which had not been transmitting data. As evening fell the cutter turned west for NOAA Buoy 42002.

CYPRESS arrived on scene in the late morning to service the buoy. Today's tasking would be different. The crew had to lower the small boat and transport the technicians to the 10 meter buoy. CYPRESS then carefully maneuvered alongside the large weather buoy to transfer supplies with the crane; a task made more challenging and potentially dangerous in the moderate chop which was affecting both platforms. All day the cutter and its crew provided support for the technicians who spent over eight hours on the buoy. Just prior to sunset, a rigger from the CYPRESS was transported to the buoy to help rig the NOAA gear and hoist it back to the cutter. Returning the gear had become an even more difficult task as the seas had increased. The crew of the CYPRESS demonstrated their professional expertise as members on the buoy and the cutter safely hoisted the heavy load in unstable conditions. Not until 2200 did technicians have the buoy operating properly and were ready to return to the cutter. After this joint effort CYPRESS departed for NOAA Buoy 42019, located approximately 40 nautical miles off the coast of Corpus Christi TX.

CYPRESS' crew and NOAA technicians hoisted and serviced this three meter buoy by mid afternoon on 09 September 2011. As before, the crew of the CYPRESS and NOAA technicians had serviced the aid and had corrected the transmission issues. Before long it was time to depart and start the long steam to Southwest Pass to discontinue a temporary aid to navigation. The 26 hour steam would take CYPRESS through Sunday and into Monday morning.

By the morning of 12 September 2011 the cutter had arrived at Southwest Pass to disestablish a buoy that had been placed there by request of the pilots after a structure had been destroyed . AtoN at the entrance of the Mississippi can be a difficult evolution but the crew stood ready and enthusiastic knowing the buoy deck hoist had to be quick and safe. The Sunday rest, as well as beautiful weather conditions, paid off as the crew once again demonstrated their professionalism. The deck force had quickly recovered the buoy and pulled the sinker so the cutter could move away from shoal water and the entrance to the Mississippi river, a heavy traffic area. Once safely away, CYPRESS began her transit to Gulfport, MS for discrepancy response.

The cutter arrived at Gulfport just prior to sunset. This was enough time to position check a buoy that had been reported off station. Racing against the retreating sun the crew was able to position check the aid, finding it on station. Had the buoy been off station, we probably would have waited until daylight the next morning to service the buoy. Conducting night time operations for routine ATON is discouraged. As night fell CYPRESS headed for Horn Island Pass, the entrance for Pascagoula, MS.

http://specialprojects.nos.noaa.gov/images/noaa_seal.gif http://bigboatblog.info/wp-includes/images/220coastguard.jpg

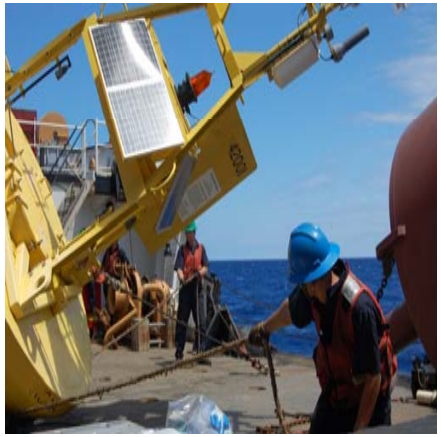
The Long Journey with NOAA cont'd

Daylight broke over the horizon and CYPRESS had timed her arrival for a morning AtoN detail. On the agenda was a position check and mooring inspection on one of CYPRESS' primary aids. The cutter was able to find the aid on station and perform the required work. After securing the deck and setting the buoy CYPRESS turned towards Orange Beach for the last of the four NOAA buoys scheduled for service.

Later that afternoon the CYPRESS arrived to work NOAA buoy 42012. Once again the small boat was launched and the technicians boarded the three meter buoy. The needed work did not required the buoy to be brought onboard, which was an added benefit since CYPRESS had experienced a stern thruster casualty and any working of buoys with the ship was ruled out. The technicians worked through sunset and into the night as the CYPRESS' small boat kept a watchful eye and acted as go-for. All efforts were made by both organizations to correct the buoys transmission issues. By 2100 the technicians felt the buoy would properly transmit and returned safely back to the cutter.

CYPRESS began to head back to the Pensacola area for the cutter's last night underway. By morning the crew was prepared for the special sea detail back to NAS Pensacola. At 0900 the cutter was moored and the NOAA gear was off loaded; however, the work day was not over. The crew began preparations to make the boat ready to sail again, prepared to carry out any mission.

Though the focus of the trip was to service NOAA buoys and respond to storm discrepancies CYPRESS had accomplished much more. The cutter had steamed 1588 nautical miles, worked 4 NOAA weather buoys, repositioned 4 aids, position checked an additional 3 aids, discontinued one aid, and serviced one other buoy. The trip also provided the opportunity for several of the crew to complete required underway training and qualify in their watch stations. The cutter was able to run engineering drills, keeping themselves ready to respond to any casualty. Overall the trip was highly successful and highlights the benefits of the Coast Guard and NOAA partnership. CYPRESS built a professional working relationship with our NOAA partners, corrected aids that are vital to the safe transit of many commercial and recreational users, and furthered the professional competence of the members onboard. The trip was a fine demonstration of the Coast Guards capabilities and professional competence.



Semper Paratus! And Semper Fi, too.

By: LTJG Louise Mandour-Brackin

On Saturday, September 17th, six dedicated members of Team CYPRESS woke up extra-early, stretched, grabbed a bite to eat and headed downtown to Seville Quarter for the 28th Semper Fi 5K Run/Walk. This annual event is organized by the Marine Corps, and this was CYPRESS' second year of participation. Proceeds from the run benefit local charities.

It was a beautiful day, and already warm at 8 o'clock when the race started. We were glad that a few clouds crossed the sun, otherwise it might have been like last year—uncomfortably hot. Instead, the temperature was perfect as we ran through lovely historic Pensacola, out along Bayfront Parkway which was closed to traffic for the race, and back again, weaving in and out of over 600 other runners and walkers. Several people were running with strollers, with babies fast asleep in them. Children, too, were running, dodging nimbly in and out under our elbows. We had plenty of motivation to run fast, as hundreds of Marines in formation, dressed in green PT gear and belting out cadences, brought up the rear of the race.

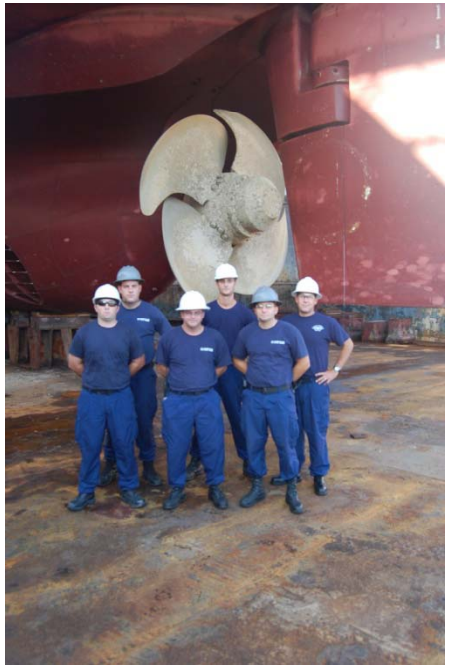
Our very own star runners LT Tuckey and ENS Walker crossed the finish line neck-in-neck at 21:40, coming in numbers 57 and 58, with Mr. Tuckey destroying his last year's record of 22:45. DC3 Robbins came in at 26:52 with an impressive 8:39 split. LCDR Morgan, our Captain, was next at 28:41. LTjg Mandour-Brackin and YN3 Thompson ran the race together and finished strong with a last sprint, at 31:24 and 31:29, YN3 shattering her former 35:00 but Miss Mandour-Brackin adding about a minute to last year's time (she blames the excellent food on CYPRESS).

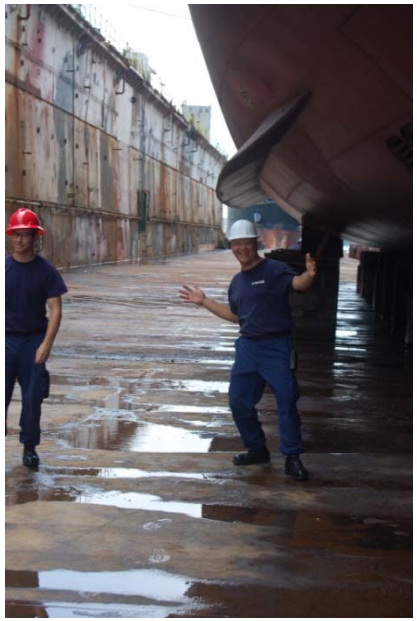
After the race, we gathered in the Quarter and enjoyed complimentary pizza, bagels, and fruit, and cheered on the last of the runners and walkers. It was a great day, enjoyed by all.

Drydock in Tampa Part II & III

By: Kurt Walker

You may recall if you have been following our quarterly newsletters that the CYPRESS was down in Tampa, FL for dry dock around this same time last year. About two months ago it was discovered that oil was leaking from the stern thruster. A little bit of background on this piece of equipment. CYPRESS is equipped with a bow and stern thruster. They allow the ship to move laterally without moving forward by propelling water out the side of the ship underwater. For example, if we are trying to moor up to a pier on the port (left) side we will be thrusting the ship to port meaning that water will be expelled on the starboard (right) side to push the ship to the left. As I said the thrusters are below the waterline so if a problem occurs with one of them they can only be fixed one of two ways. Divers can be sent down to try and ascertain the problem but their capabilities to make any repairs are pretty limited. The other way is to have the ship lifted up out of the water so that engineers can work on the problem. In August the ship came down to International Ship Repair in Tampa for the repairs. In less than two weeks we were given a clean bill of health and transited back to Pensacola to resume normal operations. During a subsequent 9 day trip it was determined that we still had a leak and would need to go back to dry dock once more. Fortunately, the repairs that had been previously made were still under warranty. We got lifted out of the water on Thursday the 22nd of September and we were back in the water on the 24th and this time hopefully for good. All the crew was excited to head back home and have the ship functioning at 100% again





Welcome Aboard!

The following members have reported on CYPRESS during this past summer,

EM3 Joshua Bell	SN Daniel Powell	MK2 Brandon Jennings	MK3 Mayra Barton
EM3 Chad Theriot	BM1 Terrence Mackin	FN Dammron Parsons	MK2 John-Paul Vasey
BOSN2 Larry Zeruth	BM2 Gunther Daley	SK2 Kenneth Brown	ENS Kyle Reese
ENG3 Chad Witbracht	BM3 Cortney Vandershaaf	FS3 Rodney Bailleux	
MKC Thomas Daniels	MK1 Carlton Prescott	HS2 Thomas Culpepper	

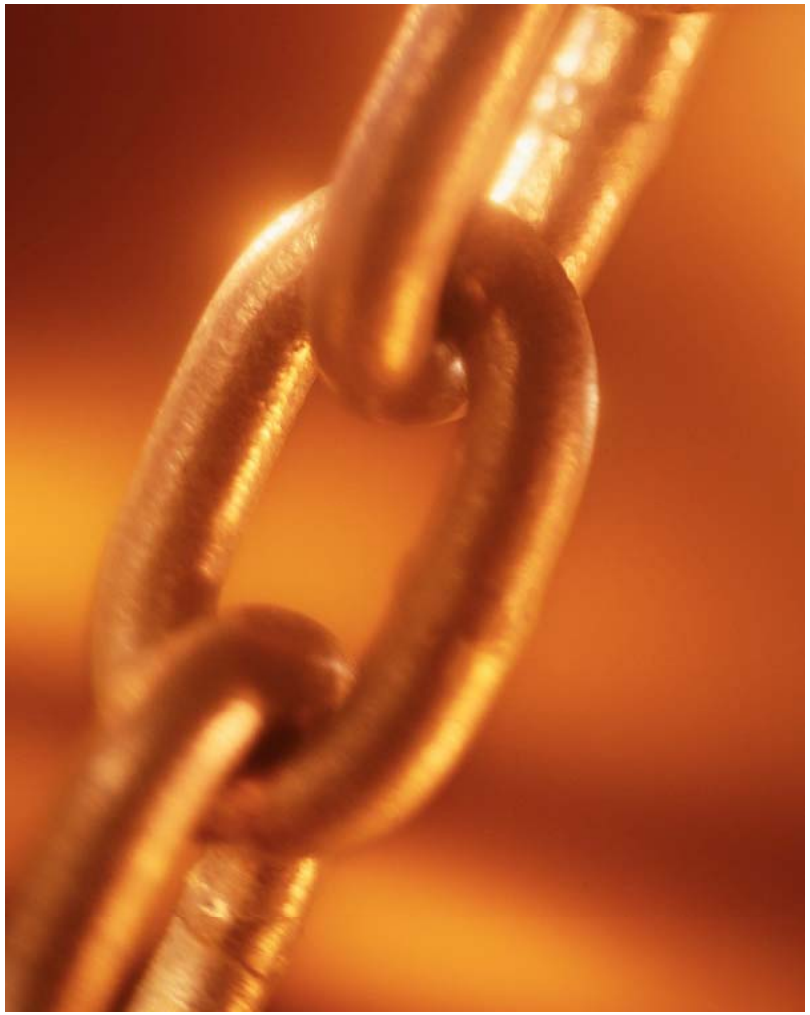
Links in the Chain

By: Kurt Walker

I am starting a new series of articles aptly titled “Links in the Chain” with the purpose being to describe a different jobs that people perform on board the CYPRESS. While the mission of the cutter is often discussed I feel it is important to clue in family members and friends on what the people on CYPRESS do. For this newsletter I am going to discuss the roles of the helmsman and lookout, two critical bridge team members. The helmsman literally drives the ship, his job is follow the conning officer’s commands. Some of the more common commands are for example, rudder amidships which means having the rudder in the center and not to the left or right at all. A lot of time the conning officer will order the helmsman to steer a given course in which case the helmsman is able to use up to 10 degrees out of a total of 30 degrees rudder to get on that course and stay on it. It take a while for a helmsman to become proficient because they have to get a feel for the rudder and how quickly or slowly it reacts to different speeds. When we are going faster more water passes over the rudder which means that a smaller amount of degrees will be needed to turn the ship. Conversely when the ship is moving slowly it could take up to 20 or even 30 degrees to turn the ship.

Another position crucial to safely navigating the ship is the lookout. Our lookouts are primarily non rates aka Seamen. While we do have radar and rely on it extensively as a tool for the conning officer the lookout is able to confirm what we see on the radar picture. Furthermore, they are able to see any lights or day shapes that the ships or objects may be displaying. Also, with the Big Eyes (high powered binoculars) they can see minute details such as the name of a ship miles away that the conning officer may want to contact on the radio. Another advantage of having a lookout is that they are able to hear things that the conning officer never would such as the fog signal of another vessel if the ship was in restricted visibility (fog/haze). Plus, if someone fell overboard and yelled for help there is a good chance that the lookout will hear them and be able to throw over a life ring.

Stay tuned because in the next issue I will focus on the food service specialist and the oiler.



College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI)

By: ENS Kyle Reese

I was fortunate enough to be accepted into a program that the Coast Guard has called The College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative . This unique program offers much more to college students than two fully funded academic years and a steady salary. The program provides many students the opportunity to receive academic and professional training which prepares them to be future officers in the Coast Guard.

Students who attend qualifying schools may apply as college sophomores or juniors. After completing an extensive application package the student will interview at an officer board. If the student's package is competitive and the board members' recommendations are high, the student stands a good chance of being selected as one of the 30 CSPI students. However, being selected is just the beginning of their efforts to become an officer.

The summer after the selection board has convened; the 30 CSPI students will attend the full 8 week boot camp mixed in among all the other individuals trying to prove they have what it takes to be a Coast Guardsman. This is one of the unique attributes to the program, as it is one of the only officer accession programs which the applicants have the opportunity to attend boot camp at TRACEN Cape May.

After their 8 week military indoctrination the students will return to their universities to begin their last 2 academic years. During each semester the student is responsible for reporting to a recruiting office and performing various training opportunities as stations, sectors, or cutters. The students must also maintain a minimum GPA and complete all required training.

Once the students first academic year as CSPIs has concluded they will report to the Coast Guard Academy for a 3 week Officer Candidate Indoctrination. The goal of this program is to provide the CSPI students with the tools to succeed as Officer Candidates in Officer Candidate School (OCS). The program mirrors OCS and teaches the CSPI many skills they will carry to their summer units and on to OCS. These skills include plotting, writing, navigation rules, drill, and daily inspections.

After completing OCI the CSPI students report to a summer unit for approximately 2 months before returning to their university. Many students will be sent to sectors to experience prevention or response jobs as they shadow junior officers. The students may also report to cutters where they will receive hands on practical training and receive active duty sea time.

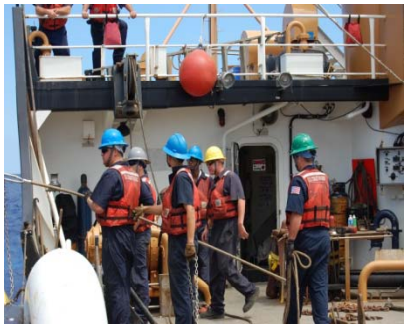
Upon returning to their universities the students will complete their academic course work and prepare for the 17 week Officer Candidate School. After graduating from their civilian colleges the student will report to the next convening OCS class were they will train to become ensigns and join the fleet.

Little Know Facts About the CSPI Scholarship Program:
CSPI students are considered active duty and are on a 4 year contract until they receive their officer commission.
Students are paid as E-3 and receive all pay and benefits associated with the pay grade.
The program pays for 2 academic school years and the student is still eligible for the GI Bill
The program covers all required fees and textbook costs
Students receive active duty time towards retirement from their report date to boot camp, meaning most CSPI students have 2 years active duty time before they even attend OCS

More information can be found on the Coast Guard Recruiting Website:

http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-career/officer-opportunities/programs/college-student-pre-commissioning-initiative-(scholarship-program)

CYPRESS in Action



Captain's Corner

Hello CYPRESS family!

We've had a busy 4th quarter with a lot of happenings. We started off the quarter with the Blue Angels air show off Pensacola Beach and a lot of you came along for the show. Those of you that sailed got a little taste of what our crewmember does on board and what it's like to be on a cutter. You probably went home tired; just being underway can be a little draining, so I hope you appreciate the hard work that your CYPRESS crew does and your important role of supporting them while they're away. After the "Blues" we started to get back to normal ATON ops but ended up going to emergency dry dock in Tampa Bay for an oil leak in our stern thruster. It was a pretty quick fix and we were able to get back to buoy work pretty quickly. September brought us Tropical Storm Lee. After putting some Mobile buoys back on station we headed offshore and started servicing four NOAA weather buoys throughout the Gulf, in addition to disestablishing an unneeded buoy at Southwest Pass and correcting a couple other discrepancies (i.e. buoys reported off station). That 9 day trip really provided some good underway time to train and qualify several crewmembers in their watch positions. We ended the trip on a low note with another stern thruster casualty and I sit in dry dock, once again, in Tampa Bay as I write this. But, we'll get fixed in a pretty quick fashion and hopefully this fix will last quite a bit longer than the last one.

Due to several reasons we'll finish the fiscal year about 150 hours short of the 2,100 hour underway goal. That's about 6 extra days that your loved one was home with you. This fiscal year (starts 1 Oct) we'll get off to somewhat of a slow start, too, due to maintenance time and a week where I'll attend the District Eight Commanding Officers conference when the ship won't be underway without me. I know all things are relative but the big picture is that we buoy tender sailors have it very good compared to our "big white boat" brethren (i.e. we're home quite a bit).

Remember, it's still hurricane season until 1 Dec. Make sure you have an evacuation plan and communications plan (how you and your Coastie can communicate in the event cell phone coverage is limited/non-existent in the area). Helpful evacuation and hurricane resource info can be found on the ship's website: http://www.uscg.mil/d8/cgcCypress/hurricane.asp . Please call the ship if you have any questions about evacuations and hurricane plans.

In regards to our efforts to move CYPRESS' homeport to Pensacola, I was mistaken that the Decision Memo (DM) had been signed by the Commandant. The process has gotten quite a jump start though by the endorsement of some other offices in Headquarters. District Eight and Atlantic Area have contacted me concerning services needed, orders for personnel wanting to move from Mobile, etc. I'm beginning to feel like we're finally in the home stretch.

At the end of October we're having our Haunted Ship function. We're looking for a lot of help. We need role players, friendly folks to interact with guests on the pier, people that can face paint kids, any extra creepy items that can be used by the ship, etc. Many hands make light work so if you're able to help out, please contact Ms. Louise Mandour-Brackin on the ship. We're hoping that the NAS will hold their "Trunk or Treat" function on the pier in conjunction with our Haunted Ship, which should make for a double-good time.

Semper Paratus!

-LCDR Paul Morgan