

*2002 –
In Review*



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From the Commanding Officer

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the new Commanding Officer of MSO Duluth. I want to thank all those who have made my transition a smooth and seamless one.

Much of this year has been focused on Port Security. Duluth-Superior finds itself high on the list of critical ports due to the commercial impact to the regional and national economy. However, our missions of casualty response, vessel inspection, and waterways management remain key work areas, and we strive to ensure that we addresses them accordingly - even in the face of resource shortfalls. This leads us to you.



Our relationship with you in this new normalcy is significant. We cannot go it alone. The goals of Safety, Protection of Natural Resources, Mobility, and Maritime Security will always be intertwined with a successful maritime economy. It is gratifying to see that you also recognize this and are willing to help us carry out these essential missions. Your support was critical to us achieving the successes we did in a very challenging year. Thank you.

CDR Hung M. Nguyen
Captain of the Port
Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection
Federal Maritime Security Coordinator

Summary



Safety

- We conducted over 100 vessel boardings including 15 damage surveys. This heightened level of safety awareness resulted in a 59% decrease in the number of marine casualties overall since 2001.
- We initiated a combined federal and state task force for an enforcement and education campaign for UPV operators in the Boundary Waters area.

Protection of Natural Resources

- We conducted a tabletop oil spill exercise in Houghton, MI that included representatives from the National Park Service, Houghton County Emergency Management, Department of Environmental Quality, EPA, and local police and emergency services.
- We discovered important procedural flaws in DM&IR's locomotive fueling operations during an oil spill investigation in Two Harbors, MN.

Mobility

- We oversaw the salvage operation of the grounded foreign freight ship FRASER. The vessel was successfully refloated within one day of the grounding.
- The M/V ANTILINA was found substandard and detained following comprehensive USCG port state control boarding.

Maritime Security

- We increased our security patrols of the port area. Since 9/11, over 1000 hours have been spent protecting our port's critical infrastructure.
- We established the Duluth/Superior Port Security Committee to meet the requirements of the Maritime Security Act of 2002.
- We worked jointly with Federal, State and local agencies during several foreign vessel security boardings, screening over 500 vessels and crews.

Maritime Security

Protect our maritime borders from all intrusions by halting the flow of illegal drugs, aliens, and contraband into this country through maritime routes; preventing illegal fishing; and suppressing violations of federal law in the maritime region. Defend the nation as one of the five U.S. Armed Forces. Enhance regional stability support of the National Security Strategy, utilizing our unique and relevant Maritime capabilities.

In response to the heightened threat of terrorism, MSO Duluth focused significant resources towards our maritime homeland security mission. During the past year, we leveraged partnerships with local, State, and federal law enforcement agencies to meet mission requirements for the region. Utilizing these partnerships, we have stood up a Port Security Committee that will be responsible for the development of Duluth-Superior's Port Security Plan.

In the 2002 shipping season, MSO Duluth inspectors worked closely with several federal agencies, including Customs and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, to coordinate several joint foreign vessel security boardings. Working together with these agencies, our personnel screened over 500 foreign vessels and approximately 9,000 crewmembers. Personnel were then integrated with Law Enforcement Boarding Teams from Coast Guard Station Duluth to conduct inspections on those vessels determined to be of a higher interest.

For the anniversary of 9/11 the MSO went to full 24 hour operations to ensure readiness in the event of a incident in the region. Our established cooperative efforts with our law enforcement partners on patrolling schedules, intel sharing, and resources, were important aspects of our prevention strategy.

In October, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area Law Enforcement Training Team trained MSO personnel. The MSO arranged for a local feighter to host an exercise that provided boarding officers and inspectors with expertise in issues such as space accountability, vessel nomenclature, and tactical procedures. Over 13 personnel, in two teams, conducted training aboard the S/S JOHN SHERWIN. The training consisted of typical Law Enforcement scenarios that incorporated lessons learned and training, each focusing on different approaches for securing a vessel and conducting tactical personnel sweeps.

The Harbor Watch program continues to pay great dividends. During the past year the waterfront community's interest ensured increased vigilance throughout the port. Suspicious activity was reported and investigated.



Homeland Security begins with you!
Coast Watch 1-800-424-8802

Safety

Eliminate deaths, injuries, and property damage associated with maritime transportation, fishing, and recreational boating.

One of MSO Duluth's primary missions is to promote the safety and security of people, property, and the environment on waters within our geographic area of responsibility. This mission is accomplished mainly through our vessel inspection program, but we also rely on partnerships with other maritime affiliated agencies and organizations like the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and Power Squadron, to assist with outreach and provide training. These partnerships facilitate the commercial and recreational use of our waters in consistent compliance with maritime safety standards, and in order to achieve the goal of prevention of marine accidents.

The small passenger vessel community, inspected and uninspected, continues to grow steadily as new and larger vessels are being built to service a new generation of passenger commerce. The number of new construction projects within Duluth's zone has doubled in the last year, adding to an already large fleet that currently numbers over 200 vessels. During 2002, MSO Duluth personnel inspected 2 new construction projects with an aggregate cost of approximately \$500,000. We have been fully engaged in coping with the increased regulatory functions resulting from the current industry upswing, ensuring that all new vessel construction projects meet regulatory standards. Given the large geographic area that MSO Duluth is accountable for, it is a major undertaking to ensure that small passenger vessel operators throughout the Western Lake Superior region are receiving appropriate on-site visits, inspection assistance, and regulatory guidance whenever required. This includes charter fishing, tour boats, and ferry vessel operators.

Last spring, MSO Duluth initiated an enforcement and education campaign addressing Uninspected Passenger Vessel (UPV) requirements in the Boundary Waters area. A Task Force was set up that included Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel, the MSO, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The group's focus was to conduct safety training, random drug and alcohol program audits, and vessel safety examinations.

Marine casualties on merchant and passenger vessels decreased slightly this year. Overall, there were 12 marine casualties in 2002 (down from 29 in 2001) including 3 groundings, 2 incidents of vessels striking fixed objects, 1 fire, equipment damage, and injury of crew. Within the past year we investigated and presented before an Administrative Law Judge, two suspension and revocation-related issues involving alleged misconduct and violations of dangerous drug laws.

In another annual community outreach effort, MSO Reserve and Active Duty personnel coordinated Coast Guard participation in Duluth Riverquest 2002. This program, sponsored by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, brought down approximately 800 sixth grade students from throughout the Duluth area to the waterfront. MSO personnel, with assistance from the Auxiliary, taught the kids seamanship skills and demonstrated oil spill recovery techniques using a tabletop display.



Safe Boating Information:
<http://www.uscgboating.org/>

Protection of Natural Resources

Eliminate environmental damage and natural resource degradation associated with maritime transportation, fishing, and recreational boating.

After years of hard work and exhaustive dedication, the Captain of the Port approved the Duluth/Superior and Upper Peninsula Area Contingency Plan. The plan is a model for other Coast Guard MSOs and Area Committees throughout the Great lakes. I commend the two Port Area Committees for their substantial effort in working with us to complete this monumental task.

Isle Royale National Park (IRNP) is the most important pristine wilderness attraction and ecological resource in Lake Superior's marine system. After IRNP personnel raised concerns regarding the island's preparedness for responding to a major oil spill, the Regional Response Team has established a subcommittee to address mitigation measures, protection strategies and response issues. Meetings of this sub-committee will begin in the spring of 2003.

IRNP again received an excellent evaluation for its facility equipment maintenance and training programs. For the second year in a row, the Park's five facilities passed their annual inspections without a single deficiency. Other National Parks that operate fuel transfer facilities are now using IRNP's Preventative Maintenance System program as a model.

This fall, during a joint pollution investigation involving MSO Duluth and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, investigators identified systemic problems with railroad fueling operations in Two Harbors. The investigation started when the Coast Guard received a report of sheen in Lake Superior at Two Harbors. During the preliminary investigation, vessels located near the sheen were eliminated as the possible source. The subsequent investigation revealed significant surface and subsurface oil near the rail yard refueling area. Procedural problems in how train engineers fueled their trains were identified as the cause of the spill. Over 2000 gallons of oil was recovered, and over 500 cubic yards of contaminated soil was removed during the clean up.

Throughout the year, MSO Personnel responded to 23 pollution cases. Our staff investigated and/or supervised the cleanup of discharges ranging from a few gallons of gas leaching from a ski boat sinking in the Keweenaw Waterway in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, to upwards of 2,000 gallons of diesel oil spilled onto the ground at the train fueling station in Two Harbors, MN.



Report Oil or Hazardous Chemical Releases
1-800-424-8802

Mobility

Facilitate maritime commerce and eliminate interruptions and impediments to the economical movement of goods and people, while maximizing recreational access to and enjoyment of the water.

The 2002 shipping season began with a boom as all laid up vessels laid up in Duluth “broke out” in March. MSO staff worked closely with industry to accommodate the annual surge in operations as the ships began the new shipping season. Strong taconite and western coal shipments through the port held 2002’s volume above 2001’s level.

Low lake water levels and shoaling were again serious issues that hampered commercial vessel traffic throughout the entire system. This year ongoing shoaling problems at the mouth of the Nemadji River, where it empties into the Superior Harbor channel, required additional dredging. By working with other regulatory agencies and industries on the Harbor Tactical Advisory Committee, and the Army Corps of Engineers, this issue was resolved quickly and had very little impact to commercial traffic in the port.

The most highly visible casualty impacting the port occurred in August with the grounding of the Panamanian-flagged freighter FRASER in Duluth Harbor. Fortunately, there were no personnel injuries, vessel damage, or environmental pollution resulting from this incident. Decisive action by MSO personnel assisted by CG Station Duluth, enabled a swift investigation and salvage, sparing an impediment to commerce. MSO Investigators did not find negligence or misconduct, but rather a series of miscommunications by the bridge watch team as the cause of this incident. A contributing factor was extreme fog in the port area.

As the number of vessels operating in Western Lake Superior and Minnesota continues to grow, the number of marine casualties (along with resulting investigations) has increased proportionately. During 2002, MSO Duluth personnel conducted over 15 vessel damage surveys and repairs, which represents a significant portion of Duluth’s workload. One noteworthy project included the complete refurbishment of the ARTHUR M. ANDERSON’s propulsion boilers after a marine casualty occurred during the 2001-shipping season.

The M/V ANTILINA was detained because it was found to be “substandard” during a comprehensive USCG exam. Numerous safety measures and risk analyses, with intense Coast Guard oversight with the vessel’s classification society and operator, were performed to ensure each safety issue was resolved. The vessel departed in regulatory compliance and with its crew better educated in international safety regulations.

2002 saw numerous Marine Events, including the Fourth of July, Hands Across the Bridge and Superior Dragon Boat Races. Thousands of individuals and families attended and enjoyed these events. Next year looks to improve on last; MSO Duluth encourages promoters and event sponsor to engage our office early in the planning cycle to ensure proper safety and security measures are identified and set into place.



Local Notice to Mariners
<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/lnm/d9/>



*Coast Guard Marine Safety Duluth
Sailor of the Year
Marine Science Technician Third Class
Genevieve Aragon*

Petty Officer Aragon was selected as MSO Duluth Sailor of the Year because of her exceptional leadership, initiative, and commitment while carrying out her assigned duties in the Port Operations Department. As the Port Operations harbor patrol supervisor, she was instrumental to the success of the MSO's goal to increase Maritime Domain Awareness after 9/11. By completing detailed reviews of daily port conditions, identifying local marine events, commercial vessel arrivals, and water front operations, she utilized risk-based decision tools to identify high or medium risk evolutions. Using this information, she directed security patrols to lower the vulnerabilities of each activity.

After 911 she recognized the unit's critical need for maritime law enforcement training and volunteered to attend the challenging 5-week Marine Law Enforcement Boarding Officer course (BO) held in Yorktown, VA. Upon graduation, she aggressively developed a comprehensive training and qualification program for the MSO. Demonstrating superior maturity and leadership, she expertly guided junior and senior students through the demanding performance qualification standards (PQS) and practical skill sets. During the strenuous physical fitness process her enthusiastic example was instrumental in challenging and motivating the crew.



Her personal achievements are equally impressive. Even under the higher operational tempo MSO Duluth was working under in 2002, she demonstrated great commitment in continuing her formal education by attending the University of Wisconsin Superior College spring session, earning 6 credits in liberal arts and humanities. She utilized the military CLEP program to earn an additional 6 credits in Math and English.

In the community she also lead by example. Her service was highlighted by her active role in her local church, and Mentor Duluth, where she mentors a ten-year-old girl from the local community.

As Sailor of the Year for MSO Duluth, she was nominated for the 9th Coast Guard District's Enlisted Person of the Year Award, where she was selected out of a pool of approximately 1800 active duty personnel stationed in the Great Lakes region.

Congratulations to Petty Officer Aragon, who clearly epitomizes the spirit of the Coast Guard's Core Values: Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty.