

[REDACTED] LCDR

From: [REDACTED] LCDR
Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2006 9:41 AM
To: [REDACTED] LCDR
Subject: INITIAL HEALY PRESS RELEASE

Attachments: Healy Release.doc; HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE; FW: press release; FW: HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE; FIRST HEALY PRESS RELEASE.rtf; D13 - Return to Seattle.htm; Final - HEALY RFC Press Release 0929 (3).doc

The following information on the 18 Aug 2006 initial press release for the Healy dive accident is being provided as requested to the administrative investigation board.

A timeline of events for PACAREA Public Affairs' initial response to the Healy dive accident is provided below. Seven attachments are also provided with information on the initial response, detection of an incorrect fact being released and the follow up. Short description of each attachment is provided with the list below. Specific details about the incorrect data in the first press release is located in Attachment 5, "FIRST HEALY PRESS RELEASE".

Public Affairs depends heavily on Command Centers at sectors, districts and areas for the most accurate and up-to-date information on quickly evolving cases when we are developing press releases. These are not our only sources, but they are our primary sources, because they represent the information upon which decisions are being made, operations are being conducted and senior officers are being briefed. Unfortunately, the PACAREA Command Center gave Public Affairs incorrect information as facts of the case for our initial press release on the Healy dive accident.

PACAREA Public Affairs did staff the release through the PAC Chain of Command, but did not e-mail Healy with the draft press release for three reasons. First, we were working to have the press release ready to issue when all family notifications were completed. For background, we were receiving numerous media calls on the case by 1000. Second, our experience with contacting our PA deployed on Healy had been hit and miss, so I was not sure if we could make contact with the ship. Third, I was not sure if we wanted to contact the ship and press them to review our press release given the situation on 18 Aug. I did not want to overwhelm the command with our media engagement details during a critical period.

Despite the best efforts to only release correct factual information, I have occasionally seen incorrect facts in press releases from various Coast Guard PA offices, as well as other government agencies. These situations almost always happen on quickly evolving cases (SAR, oil spills, accidents, etc.) that qualify as hot news stories where the PA office is trying to be proactive to maintain story control. The Healy dive accident definitely fits into this category. Updating an incorrect fact with the media normally involves a protocol of correcting the release and contacting media that are interested in the case. I have seen this process followed before with 100% success and PACAREA followed the same process on 18 Aug.

v/r

LCDR [REDACTED]
Coast Guard Pacific Area Public Affairs Officer
Phone: (510) 437-[REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]
Fax: (510) 437-5918
E-Mail: [REDACTED]@uscg.mil

TIMELINE: (All Times Approximate)

17 Aug
2230 - PAC Command Center gives initial notification to PAC duty PA

18 Aug
0630 - Initial notification to PACAREA PAO via G-IPA e-mail
0645 - Debriefed duty PA
0700 - Contacted G-IPA
0715 - Discussed plan of action with Pcs
0730 - Issued initial PA guidance to D7, D13 and D17 PA offices as they were most likely to get media calls

(b)6+7(c)

0800 - Started developing press release, PA1 obtained updated facts from PAC Command Center and developed first draft of the press release
 0945 - Informed BM2 Duque's family notifications completed
 1000 - Receiving numerous calls from the media about the accident
 1130 - Informed LT Hill's family notifications completed
 1145 - Staffed press release through Pcs and P for approval
 1230 - Sent updated PA guidance to D7, D13 and D17 PA offices and initial press release for D13 to issue
 1300 - PACAREA and D13 conducting interviews
 1430 - Informed a piece of information in the press release was incorrect
 1500 - Notified affected PA offices about the incorrect fact in the press release: D13 updated the release posted on their PIER site and PACAREA/D13 called back media that had done interviews to give them the correct fact
 1700 - Concluded interviews

ATTACHMENTS:

1. "Healy Release" – The first press release issued by PACAREA on the Healy dive accident.
2. "HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE" – The PA guidance issued by PACAREA with the first press release.
3. "FW: press release" – Notification from PACAREA Prevention that there was an incorrect fact in the press release.
4. "FW: HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE" – Updated information sent by PACAREA to D7, D13 and D17 concerning the incorrect fact.
5. "FIRST HEALY PRESS RELEASE" -- E-Mail report to VADM Wurster concerning the incorrect fact in the press release.
6. "D13 - Return to Seattle" -- Press Advisory sent in conjunction with Healy's return to Seattle with an editor's note that addresses the incorrect fact.
7. "Final - HEALY RFC Press Release 0929 (3)" -- One of a couple press releases sent that includes the correct fact information concerning the location of the dive accident.



Healy Release.doc
(1 MB)



HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS...



FW: press release



FW: HEALY SONNEL CASUALTYRESS RELEASE.rtf ..



FIRST HEALY



D13 - Return to Seattle.htm (1...



Final - HEALY RFC Press Relea...

From: [REDACTED] LCDR
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2006 5:12 PM
To: Wurster, Charles VADM
Cc: [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED] CDR
Subject: FIRST HEALY PRESS RELEASE
VADM Wurster,

There are two pieces of information that went out in our 18 Aug Healy press release that were not accurate. First, is the purpose of the dive. We included, "The dive was intended to be a shallow-water dive to inspect Healy's rudder," (the underlined piece is not accurate). Second, were both member's ages.

PACAREA Public Affairs identified the errors in the early afternoon of 18 Aug and updated/reposted the press release. We also called back media that were interested in the story and worked to correct the information that afternoon. The media were focused on the location of the dive, but were not very interested in the correct age information. I fully support our current stance on waiting until the investigation is complete to release any details of the accident, but I believe the reason media are so focused on the location is because we are not giving them any additional information.

Both pieces of information were provided to PACAREA Public Affairs by the Command Center as facts for inclusion in the press release we were developing. PA1 [REDACTED] was the duty PA and engaged the Command Center on our behalf.

PA1 [REDACTED] told me on the afternoon of Friday, 18 Aug, that the original call from the Command Center to him on Thursday evening included the correct information, but this information had changed on Friday morning when he talked to the Command Center and specifically requested the facts of the case for a press release. The rudder inspection was provided as the purpose of the dive. I also found out from LTJG [REDACTED] on 18 Aug (my recollection of the conversation) that he overheard Command Center personnel speculating on Thursday night about what happened on Healy and discussing the possibility of rudder inspections.

Public Affairs depends heavily on Command Centers at sectors, districts and areas for the most accurate and up-to-date information when we are developing press releases, fact sheets, etc., on a case, as well as an incident command's situation unit and 209 for information on a major response. These are not our only sources, but they are our primary sources, because they represent the information upon which decisions are being made, operations are being conducted and senior officers are being briefed. In my seven previous years of conducting public affairs, four as the Eighth District PAO and three as the PACAREA PAO, these sources have worked well and enabled us to complete our job.

Despite Public Affairs efforts to only release accurate facts, I have seen mistakes on occasion in releases from offices around the Coast Guard. Normally, after identifying a mistake, we re-issue a release and/or call all interested media directly. Media normally understand and appreciate the fact we notified them of the mistake.

On the media side, they make huge mistakes in their reporting and getting the facts correct. We have seen this several times already today and worked with them to get their story right. It is also reflected in the quotes that CAPT [REDACTED] provided from the Miami newspaper article below.

My immediate plan for Healy public affairs is to do a return to homeport release to distribute on Friday with an editor's note to media to again provide the correct location of the dive and ages of the two CG members. I am working with D13 to have Public Affairs representation on the pier and plan to develop a PAG for everyone to use.

v/r
[REDACTED]

(b) 6+7(c)

[REDACTED] LCDR

From: [REDACTED] t CDR
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 1:20 PM
To: [REDACTED] LCDR
Subject: FW: press release

Importance: High

[REDACTED]

Apparently all the facts are not accurate. Please ensure any follow on press releases reflect more accurate information.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

Commander, USCG
Chief, Waterways Management Branch (Pow) USCG PACAREA Coast Guard Island, Bldg. 51-5
Alameda, CA 94501-5100 Ph# (510) 437-[REDACTED] Fax (510) 437-2961

DRussell

-----Original Message-----
From: [REDACTED]@healy.uscg.mil [mailto:DRussell@healy.uscg.mil]
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 1:03 PM
To: [REDACTED] CDR
Cc: Jackson, Jeffrey CDR; [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: press release
Importance: High

[REDACTED] Facts are wrong in the report.

Dive was not being conducted on the rudder or anything at the after end of the ship. It was being conducted at the bow as a cold water familiarization dive.

I don't think it changes anything but you need to know as questions will continue to arise. I'll assume that you'll keep the Chief of Staff and others informed as appropriate.

Thanks, dgr

-----Original Message-----
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 12:48 PM
To: Russell, Douglas CAPT
Subject: FW: ?

Doug,
The press release was too big to go through so I attached the text below.

-----Original Message-----
From: [REDACTED], David
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 12:49 PM
To: ' [REDACTED]@whoi.edu'
Cc: ' [REDACTED]@nsf.gov'; ' [REDACTED]@arcticsscience.org'; Russell, Douglas CAPT; [REDACTED]
LTJG; [REDACTED] LCDR
Subject: RE: ?

[REDACTED]

I talked to [REDACTED] at home. He will look for [REDACTED] email.

1

(b)6+7(c)

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] both pointed out that there is a football game in Barrow which has got national attention and the press are in town including ESPN. FYI

As requested, attached is the press release. Please read the guidance and contact LCDR [REDACTED] if you have questions.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]@whoi.edu [mailto:[REDACTED]@whoi.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 12:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: ?

[REDACTED] might be back in town now but he is not yet in the office. One of the BASC guys said he would be in on Monday! but Glenn told me that he was flying back on Friday. Let me know if you want me to go find him. I can find his wife and then him.....if he doesn't seem to be appearing.

I assume [REDACTED] must be trying to call him? Call me on the cell if you want me to hunt him down. I would have to tell him what is going on I expect.

Coast Guard Pacific Area
U.S. Coast Guard

From: [REDACTED] LCDR
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 12:32 PM
To: [REDACTED] PA2; [REDACTED] LT; [REDACTED] PACS; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PAC; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] INF2; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] PAC; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] LT; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PAC
Cc: [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] CDR; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] CDR; [REDACTED] LTJG; [REDACTED] ENS; [REDACTED] PA2; [REDACTED] PA2; [REDACTED] CDR; [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED] VADM
Subject: HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE

Wurster, Charles

For D13 and D17:

The guidance I issued this morning by e-mail to hold off on any interviews until next of kin are notified is cancelled. Next of kin have been notified.

The following guidance now applies: Attached below is the Healy personnel casualty press release. Please immediately issue this release in your AOR's. You can conduct interviews using the information provided in the press release. Do not speculate. Questions about this accident that extend beyond the scope of this release should be answered with a polite statement that the matter is under investigation. We will release details from the investigation when it is completed. If you absolutely feel there is a question that we need to answer about the accident that goes beyond the release, please give me a call at office (510) 437-[REDACTED], cell [REDACTED] or over the weekend at home [REDACTED]

For LANTAREA and D7:

This e-mail and press release are being forwarded to you for your information. Please use the information in the release if you get a call, but please do not proactively issue the release. I am trying to protect the families from media calls. I realize that if the

[REDACTED] LCDR

From: [REDACTED] PACS
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 3:01 PM
To: [REDACTED] PAC
Cc: [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] LCDR
Subject: FW: HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE

Can you update [REDACTED] of the PI? His deadline is 6 p.m. today so he shouldn't have filed his story by now.

From: [REDACTED] LCDR
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 3:00 PM
To: [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PA2; [REDACTED] LT; [REDACTED] PACS; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PAC; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] INF2; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] PAC; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] LT; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] CDR; [REDACTED] CAPT
Cc: [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED] CDR
Subject: RE: HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE

FYI to all involved PA offices. We were given information by our command center that the dive was conducted to inspect the ship's rudder and we included this info in the release we sent you. I was informed a short while ago that this information is incorrect. The dive was not being conducted on the rudder or anything at the after end of the ship. It was being conducted at the bow as a cold water familiarization dive. Please keep this change in mind when you do any future interviews on this case. Thanks.

v/r

LCDR [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] LCDR
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2006 12:32 PM
To: [REDACTED] PA2; [REDACTED] LT; [REDACTED] PACS; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PAC; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] INF2; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] PAC; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PA1; [REDACTED] LT; [REDACTED] LCDR; [REDACTED] PAC
Cc: [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED] CDR; [REDACTED] LTJG; [REDACTED] ENS; [REDACTED] PA2; [REDACTED] CDR; [REDACTED] CAPT; [REDACTED] Wurster, Charles VADM
Subject: HEALY PERSONNEL CASUALTY PRESS RELEASE

For D13 and D17:

The guidance I issued this morning by e-mail to hold off on any interviews until next of kin are notified is cancelled. Next of kin have been notified.

The following guidance now applies: Attached below is the Healy personnel casualty press release. Please immediately issue this release in your AOR's. You can conduct interviews using the information provided in the press release. Do not speculate. Questions about this accident that extend beyond the scope of this release should be answered with a polite statement that the matter is under investigation. We will release details from the investigation when it is completed. If you absolutely feel there is a question that we need to answer about the accident that goes beyond the release, please give me a call at office (510) 437-[REDACTED] cell [REDACTED] or over the weekend at home [REDACTED]

For LANTAREA and D7:

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This e-mail and press release are being forwarded to you for your information. Please use the information in the release if you get a call, but please do not proactively issue the release. I am trying to protect the families from media calls. I realize that if the Associated Press or other wire service runs a story, there is a good chance the story will be localized in Florida anyway since both crewmember's are from that state and their families live there.

For D11 and D14:

This e-mail and press release are being forwarded to you for your information and the outside chance you get a call. The guidance to D13 and D17 apply if you get a call.

General Info:

If there are any questions or concerns, please call the PACAREA PA office at (510) 437- [REDACTED] ASAP.

Thank you.

v/r

LCDR [REDACTED]

<< File: Healy Release.doc >>

(b) (6) + (c)

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



Press Release

Date: August 18, 2006

Contact: Public Affairs

Phone: (510) 437-3375

TWO COAST GUARD MEMBERS PERISH IN DIVE OPERATION

COAST GUARD ISLAND, ALAMEDA, Calif. – Two Coast Guard divers assigned to the Seattle-based Coast Guard Cutter *Healy* died Thursday afternoon during a routine dive operation in the Arctic Ocean approximately 500 miles north of Barrow, Alaska.

Deceased are Lt. Jessica Hill, 30, of St. Augustine, Fla., and Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Duque, 26, of Miami.

The victim's next of kin have been notified and additional support services are being provided to each family, as well as *Healy* crewmembers.

"I felt a deep sense of loss when I received the initial report on this situation," said Vice Adm. Charles D. Wurster, Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, adding, "I offer my prayers to the families and friends of Lieutenant Hill and Petty Officer Duque in their time of grieving."

Healy was engaged in a science mission when the accident occurred. The dive was intended to be a shallow-water dive to inspect *Healy's* rudder, a routine activity when the ship is operating in Arctic ice. During this type of dive, the ship sits idle and hazardous pumps and propellers are disengaged.

The cause of this dive accident is under investigation.

"The Coast Guard will conduct a thorough investigation to determine the cause of this accident," Wurster said.

The 420-foot *Healy* is one of three polar ice breakers operated by the Coast Guard. *Healy* is primarily used for Arctic science operations under sponsorship of the U.S. National Science Foundation.

More information about *Healy* can be found by visiting <http://www.uscg.mil/pacarea/healy/>.

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The U.S. Coast Guard is a military, maritime, multi-mission service within the Department of Homeland Security dedicated to protecting the safety and security of America.

Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Coast Guard Thirteenth District

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard



Press Advisory

Date: September 1, 2006
Contact: District 13 Public Affairs Office
(206) 220-7237

COAST GUARD CUTTER HEALY RETURNS TO SEATTLE

COAST GUARD ISLAND, ALAMEDA, Calif. - Coast Guard cutter Healy will conclude its 2006 Arctic deployment Sunday when it returns to Seattle. Media are invited to obtain video and still photos of the ship's arrival.

The following facts apply:

- WHO:** USCGC Healy (WAGB 20)
- WHAT:** Healy will return to Seattle, its home port.
- WHEN:** Approximately 1 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 3, 2006.
- WHERE:** Coast Guard Integrated Support Command (Pier 36)
1519 Alaskan Way South
Seattle, WA 98134-1192

Interested media should contact the Thirteenth District Public Affairs Office at (206) 220-7237 to coordinate entry onto the Integrated Support Command and parking. Media should plan to arrive at 12:30 p.m. If the Healy's arrival time changes, an updated media advisory will be distributed.

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Editor's Note: FACT CORRECTION - The Aug. 17 dive accident occurred about 60 feet off Healy's bow during a shallow water Arctic familiarization dive and did not, as initially reported, include an inspection of Healy's rudder.

The U.S. Coast Guard is a military, maritime, multi-mission service within the Department of Homeland Security dedicated to protecting the safety and security of America.

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



Press Release

Date: Sept. 29, 2006

Contact: Lt. Cmdr. [REDACTED]
(510) 437-[REDACTED]

HEALY COMMANDER'S RELIEF MADE PERMANENT

COAST GUARD ISLAND, ALAMEDA, Calif. – Rear Adm. Clifford I. Pearson, the Coast Guard's assistant commandant for human resources in Washington, today concurred with and approved the recommendation of the Pacific Area commander to permanently relieve Capt. Douglas G. Russell of command of the Coast Guard cutter Healy due to a loss of confidence in Russell's continued ability to command.

Russell has been assigned to administrative duties since Vice Adm. Charles D. Wurster temporarily relieved him Aug. 30. The temporary relief followed the Aug. 17 deaths of crewmembers Lt. Jessica Hill, 31, of St. Augustine, Fla., and Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Duque, 22, of Miami, during an ice training dive 60 feet off the cutter's bow. Cutter Healy was in the Arctic Ocean approximately 500 miles north of Barrow, Alaska at the time of the dive accident, which remains under investigation.

Capt. Tedric R. Lindström, chief of response with the Thirteenth Coast Guard District in Seattle, has been ordered to cutter Healy as the new commanding officer.

The 420-foot cutter Healy is primarily used for Arctic science operations and is currently at its homeport in Seattle.

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The U.S. Coast Guard is a military, maritime, multi-mission service within the Department of Homeland Security dedicated to protecting the safety and security of America.

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