

SHORE TIES VOL. 4
CUTTER HARRIET LANE (WMEC 903) NEWSLETTER
December 2005, JIATF South Patrol

From the Cabin:

Happy Holidays to all and Seasons Greetings from off the coast of South America. We are about two thirds through our counter drug patrol for the Joint Interagency Task Force South, thus far we haven't seen any smugglers unlike last patrol but we are still being productive in other areas. The ship and our crew are performing extremely well, especially considering the grueling schedule the ship herself has kept over the past year. During 2005, HARRIET LANE has been underway for 256 days, or 71% of the time. This is a combination of being crewed by our guys and the August – October patrol by the crew of the TAMPA. Of course, to successfully run the ship that hard, our guys have performed a tremendous amount of maintenance and work by all departments to make it happen. We and our operational commander at Atlantic Area have considered this initial crew rotation a success and are very happy with the results.

We are certainly looking forward to our return in the late afternoon of January 5th, after offloading ammunition. Looking ahead, January will be busy preparing to take the ship up the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore during the weekend of 11-12 February. HARRIET LANE is the next scheduled cutter in the Deepwater program's Mission Effectiveness Project (MEP). The MEP's goal is to improve the current cutter fleet's conditions until they are replaced by new Deepwater cutters over the next 10-15 years. For us, the MEP yard period runs six months from 13 February until mid-August. During this time, after we give the ship to the Yard, the crew will return home by the third week of February and be temporarily without a ship, in an "off-cycle" status, like late last summer. We will take control of cutter BEAR in mid-March and sail her for a patrol from 31 March to 01 Jun 06. After that, we will be in an "off-cycle" status again, focused on training opportunities until we get HARRIET LANE back in August. As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts to our schedule but the crew has handled it with the flexibility and "can-do" spirit I admire.

I hope the holiday season finds you well and in good spirits. We are planning a Christmas brunch, followed by a gift exchange and cook out. While it can't compare to being home for the holidays, it should be an enjoyable day for the crew. Heck, if we have seas like we had in the picture above, we'll even do a swim call. For New Years Eve and New Years Day, we plan to be in Key West. After that, it's head northbound in the Florida Straits and catch the Gulf Stream up to the Chesapeake Bay entrance, turn to port and steam home. We are looking forward to that trip and to seeing you all soon.

My best wishes for a warm Holidays and Happy New Year!
Chris Scraba

Letter from the Command Chief:

As Command Chief, along with the crew would like to say Season Greetings. Being the Holiday season and away from the ones we love. Thanks for the support you give. We understand during this time it's hard for all. You will have questions, on why we are not home for the holidays. Our children will ask, if we will be home for Santa. And you will have to explain the reason why we're not home. This is a big burden for you to carry and explain to all that ask you. It makes you feel lonely, but keep this in your mind. We are sacrificing our valuable time apart to keep you and the U.S. protected. You are in our hearts and soul and on our minds at all times. You understand we have joined a service that has made safety and protection it most valuable job. We attempt to stop all drugs from entering the US, which will end up on the street. We stop migrant boats from entering which can cause many issues like diseases, possible terrorist onboard. We also look at larger vessels for a possible terrorist attacks to our country. We rescue people at sea from disaster. We respond when called upon to help, like in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Rita to name a few. You are the support level that at times goes unnoticed. We might at times not say thank you but deeply down inside we Thank You for all the support you give us to complete our missions. So during this time we understand how rough it is to be apart and knowing that you are home explaining why we are not home for the joyful holiday season. Please remember the sacrifices we all but up as a family. Your at home, we're at sea, keeping America a safe place to live. As noted in other section of this letter you can see we have accomplished a lot and still have a lot ahead of us. We are a family and need all to support it to achieve the goals. THANK YOU for your support. We will be home before you know it.

Best wishes and Happy Holidays.
Jack Rowland

Graphic by
WTC Stephen Harris, USN Ret.

Your Guys in action:



MK3 Jones takes aim at the Thanksgiving Skeet Shoot



We enjoys a swim call off the coast of Brazil



SN Murphy takes aim during a .50 cal gun shoot



Helo In-Flight Refueling (HIFR)



The crew is mustered for awards and advancements



LANE 2 underway in rarely seen flat calm seas

Patrol Notes

Getting Reacquainted

It has been almost four months since the crew of the HARRIET LANE was last underway, and there have been a lot of changes in the interim. After the crew of the TAMPA returned, we had a busy two weeks getting the ship back and getting ready for the current patrol. In those two weeks we re-organized and checked all the equipment, ordered parts, moved our belongings onboard, and prepared to get underway.

Once underway, we proceeded south to the waters off of Savannah, GA, where we conducted helicopter evolutions to train new pilots and some of our crewmembers. During our three days of helicopter operations, we were able to qualify new crewmembers as helo deck tie down team members and Landing Signals Officer (LSO). We conducted over 150 evolutions, day and night, including landing the helicopter on a completely darkened ship. The helicopter work ups included operations with the armed MH-68 helicopter in order to re-certify ourselves to do lillypad operations with the armed interdiction helicopters in the Caribbean.

We then departed south to our area of operations. We stopped at San Juan, Puerto Rico for a day to refuel before continuing south. We continued on until we were 900 miles east of Brazil and 600 miles north of the equator. There, we served as a support unit for a DEA drug case. While down there, we had a swim call in the warm waters, and the crew was informed that they had 1 hour to make the 1,200 mile round trip swim to the equator, if they chose, none did. We also spent Thanksgiving at sea, and held a morale skeet shoot, where the crew was able to demonstrate their marksmanship blasting clay pigeons with the morale shotgun. Then everyone sat down to a delicious meal made by the cooks, consisting of all the favorite items of the holiday.

While out at sea, our air conditioning unit broke down, and the engineers worked feverishly to repair the unit, cannibalizing at least five other assorted pumps to make a workable A/C pump. After our mission was completed, we steamed back north to our port call in Barbados. After three weeks at sea, the crew was ready for three days worth of rest and relaxation as they explored what the island had to offer, including golf and scuba diving. Barbados was OK, probably rated two stars out of five for a port call destination. Shortly afterwards leaving, our freezer compressor started to break down, fortunately our Auxiliary gang was able to nurse it along and let us patrol the islands of the Lesser Antilles until we arrived in San Juan for a two day repair on the system.

After leaving San Juan, we traveled southwest to the deep Caribbean and are now looking forward to a three day stop in Aruba. We hope that we will be able to put the last couple weeks of training to good use and apprehend some drug smugglers, our primary mission here. As always, we are shooting for "THE DESIRED EFFECT!"

ENS Dan Bell
Public Affairs Officer

Advancement and Recognition:

ENS CONDIT PROMOTED TO LTJG ON 19NOV05
ENS FULLAM PROMOTED TO LTJG ON 19NOV05
ENS HASTINGS PROMOTED TO LTJG ON 19NOV05
SNFS MASH ADVANCED TO FS3 ON 03DEC05
SAOS WALKER ADVANCED TO SNOS ON 01DEC05
OS3 VALLIN ADVANCED TO OS2 ON 01DEC05

Qualifications:

HELM / LOOKOUT

SN BARBER	21NOV05
SN LOCKER	21NOV05
SN MATOS	02DEC05
SN PENNO	02DEC05

SN WALLACE	15DEC05
SN MADERA	16DEC05
SN ADER	16DEC05
SA PEBBLES	16DEC05

AUXILIARY WATCHSTANDER

DC1 ROY	15NOV05
FN HAMILTON	15NOV05
MK2 PAYNE	27NOV05
MK2 HEAPE	27NOV05
DC3 PERRY	27NOV05
EM3 MCCREARY	02DEC05
FN GRAHAM	02DEC05

THROTTLEMAN

DC1 ROY	09DEC05
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HELICOPTER CONTROL OFFICER

OS2 MONTEMBEAULT	11NOV05
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BOAT CREW

SN MULKUSKY	21NOV05
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COXSWAIN

SN GILLILAND	21NOV05
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BOARDING TEAM MEMBER

ENS WATTS	22NOV05
ENS BELL	22NOV05
SK1 GOBBELL	22NOV05
MK3 JONES	22NOV05
LTJG CONDIT	26NOV05

QUARTERMASTER OF THE WATCH

BM3 BECK	22NOV05
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BOATSWAIN'S MATE OF THE WATCH

SN MULKUSKY	02DEC05
SN DOUGHERTY	16DEC05

INPORT OFFICER OF THE DECK

ENS BRINKLEY	02DEC05
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Welcome Aboard to:

BM1 Tapp	02DEC05	TAD from Station Muskegon MI
SN Ader	02DEC05	
SN Madera	02DEC05	
SA Peebles	02DEC05	
SN Ceely	18DEC05	
SN Pittman	18DEC05	
EM3 Blanton	18DEC05	
YN3 Savain	18DEC05	

Fair Well and Following Seas to:

SN Green	18DEC05 to HS-A school
SN Lopez	18DEC05 to HS-A school
SN Riesbeck	18DEC05 to BM-A school
SN Leib	18DEC05 to BM-A school