

## SENECA eNewsletter – 19 JAN – 09 FEB 2009

Good day, shipmates.

Below is the day to day story of the remainder of our January patrol to D7's Windward Passage.

**Monday, 19 January:** Patrolled Windward Passage (WWP) between Cuba and Haiti. One of our vigilant Lookouts, spotted a northbound Haitian sail freighter. SENECA investigated and found an overloaded sail freighter which SENECA followed through the night by excellent vigilance from a larger watch team on night vision goggles, low light cameras, and searchlights. The watch team did an outstanding job of coordinating their efforts and being patient as night, fog, and close proximity to land obscured the sail freighter.

**Tuesday, 20 January:** Rescued 61 Haitians. At first light, we launched both small boats and set the Alien Migration Interdiction Operations (AMIO) Bill. Over the next couple of hours in good weather, Team SENECA rescued 61 people from an overloaded sail freighter off Isle de la Tortue, a Haitian island just north of Haiti. These folks were not initially cooperative as they thought they were within sight of Miami, which was over 600 nautical miles to the northwest.

**Wednesday, 21 January:** Patrolled WWP with 61 guests (Haitian migrants) embarked on our flight deck under a big Army tent.

**Thursday, 22 January:** Safely repatriated 61 Haitians to Cap Haitien, Haiti. With the assistance of a couple of small boats from the Haitian Coast Guard, the United Nations Security Assistance Representative from Canada, and the USCG Haitian Liaison Officer, we transported our guests from SENECA's flight deck to a port on the North Coast of Haiti where they'll be given some supplies and resources to return to where they departed.

After much fanfare, a champion for SENECA's Fear Factor II was crowned with the overall winner earning a 48 Hour Liberty Pass.

**Friday, 23 January:** After transiting the canal between the North Coast of Haiti and the Isle de la Tortue, we continued our patrol of the WWP. Friday Night Bingo was called by our ever enthusiastic Main Propulsion Assistant (MPA) with prizes ranging from movies, dryer balls, to Flintstones Chewable Vitamins, which was the most popular.

**Saturday, 24 January:** Patrolled WWP. We hosted DILIGENCE's CO & OPS for an Inbrief. OPS gave our new patrol mates a good summary of what we've been up to and how we've been getting it done. We watched the movie "Mirrors" on the Flight Deck.

**Sunday, 25 January:** Patrolled WWP. The Weapons Division put on SENECA's first skeet shoot in over 2 years which was well attended and which we'll do again. The Annual Pinewood Derby Car Race was won by ET1 who earned himself a \$20 Gift Card to Best Buy.

<http://www.scouting.org/cubscouts/activities/adults/derbies.aspx>

**Monday, 26 January:** Patrolled WWP; nighttime interdiction. After dropping off our Royal Bahamian Defense Forces (RBDF) Shiprider in the early morning at Great Inagua, Bahamas, we headed to US Naval Station Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) while patrolling en route. He was a good shipmate even though we did not have an opportunity to exercise his authority in our international partnership. He had completed his 30 days of deployment; however, his relief on SPENCER did make use of the partnership and authorities on a boarding. Later in the day we transferred the contract Creole interpreter (for the language spoken in Haiti), a 10 year veteran of AMIO ops, to DILIGENCE. At the end of the day near sunset while standing a vigilant watch, our Bridge Team spotted another sail freighter. This Target of Interest (TOI) turned out to have 242 Haitian migrants on it. Over the next 10 hours, we and DILIGENCE's crew worked safely and diligently

through the night in marginal sea states keeping track of the vessel and safely embarking all of them on board DILIGENCE for repatriation a few days later in Port au Prince, Haiti.

**Tuesday, 27 January:** Completed the rescue of the 242 Haitians. The boat crew towed the TOI to a place east of the Cuban coast and outside the shipping lane for our engineers to destroy. We then proceeded to our GTMO portcall.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/breaking-news/story/880156.html>

**Wednesday, 28 January:** GTMO portcall. It was a short break at Naval Station Guantanamo (GTMO, pronounced "gitmo") Bay Cuba. 2/3s of us got a chance to take a break for a day with our second day cancelled; SENECA's tactical commander - District Seven - needed us back on the line looking for Haitian migrants putting themselves at risk on the sea and trying to get to Florida.

<https://www.cnic.navy.mil/Guantanamo/index.htm>

**Thursday, 29 January:** Underway from GTMO; patrolled WWP; Chiefs held Wing Night ~ hot & mild for a snack.

**Friday, 30 January:** Patrolled WWP en route homeport after being relieved of CTU by SPENCER. Stopped in the Old Bahama Channel to recover a small Zodiac with a 15 HP outboard that had blown loose from a mooring the in Bahamas. Because we could, we dropped the Zodiac off in Port Canaveral when we swapped good for OOC OTHs.

**Saturday, 31 January:** Transiting in Florida Straits off Miami, FL. Abnormally cold weather produced some strong northwest winds for over a day which, combined with the 3-4 knot northbound Gulf Stream, really stacked up the seas. As SEN had to head north, we pounded and pitched directly into the 10-12 foot seas. However, we were still able to get in some End of Course Tests to prepare shipmates for the upcoming Service Wide Exam, hold a board for an Underway OOD, and enjoy steak/lobster/chocolate cake prepared by our Amazing Chief Petty Officer Mess.

**Sunday, 1 February:** Go Steelers ! <paid sports announcement for the XO> After swapping out our good OTH with the one that capsized from CGC CONFIDENCE with some assistance from Station Port Canaveral, Florida, we headed north on some very smooth seas. The transfer of OTHs also gave our brand new coxswain an opportunity to practice his skills. Our ever resourceful Supply Department found a way that SENECA could receive the network channels on our DirectTV system, and we enjoyed the game. Thank you SK1; BZ! Held an outstanding, blowout, food feast for the Superbowl XLIII with wings, popcorn, soda, and finger food; great job Cooks.

**Monday, 2 February:** Transit and MSRT Training. We continued transiting north on very nice seas. We took a few hours while meandering north to allow the Coast Guard's Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT) to conduct some Vertical Insertion (VI) training on SENECA's flight deck. VI is where a rope is lowered from an HH60J (Jayhawk helicopter) and Guardians slide down the rope to the deck in full gear with no harnesses. It's quick, intense, and a very perishable skill that needs continuous training.

[www.nrt.org/production/NRT/RRTHome.nsf/resources/RRT4Feb2008Meetings1/\\$File/DOG\\_Overview\\_Brief.pdf](http://www.nrt.org/production/NRT/RRTHome.nsf/resources/RRT4Feb2008Meetings1/$File/DOG_Overview_Brief.pdf) (see slide 14; good DOG overview)

DOG = Deployable Operations Group, which is the USCG command that owns all the MSSTs, NSF's, PSUs, and the MSRT.

**Tuesday, 3 February:** Transit to homeport. Decent weather in the morning, turned into a good winter storm by early afternoon with blizzard conditions. It was good to get within a dozen nautical miles of Block Island, Rhode Island so that the fetch was less and the seas layed down. Our navigation teams gave us a few hours of good rest before we got underway in Buzzards Bay en route the Cape Cod Canal.

**Wednesday, 4 February:** Transited Cape Cod Canal, nice first run by our Conning Officer, in the morning and moored homeport in the afternoon, nice first mooring evolution by our DCA, completing a very successful patrol with 440 lives saved, lots of shipmates qualified, and safely transiting some tough winter storms to and from the District Seven area of operations.

**Thursday-Sunday, 5-8 February:** 96 hours post patrol stand down. There was nice, cold weather to welcome us home with the exception of a balmy Sunday.

**Monday, 9 February:** Analogue TV signals are extinct, maybe, TV goes digital.

For family and friends of SENECA: If you would like to know more about our fine cutter and myself, please visit these web site.

Cutter SENECA <http://www.uscg.mil/lantarea/cgcSeneca/>

Be well, God bless, Semper Paratus ~ Always Ready,  
Sincerely,  
wjw

CDR Wm. J. "Willy" Wolter Cutter  
SENECA (WMEC 906)  
~ Underway; patrolling our East Coast ~