



Press Release

Date: November 21, 2007

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HH60J Jayhawk flying after being refueled. (U.S. Coast Guard photo)

Crew of CGC SENECA diverted to Bermuda to assist stranded Jayhawk

16 NOV – 326 miles northeast of Bermuda, a 20 year old cook was badly burned with grease on the M/V YANKEE CLIPPER. On Friday, November 17th, Air Station Elizabeth City sounded the SAR alarm and initiated actions to rescue the cook.

Due to the distance from shore, an HH60J can only make it to Bermuda on a single tank of gas with assistance from the southern jet stream providing an additional 30-40 knots of tailwind; however, returning to the US on a single tank of gas is impossible with the jet stream creating a headwind that works against the helicopter. The Air National Guard was contacted to see if they could respond to the case with aircraft capable of flying longer ranges, but the National Guard reported back that nothing would be available for another three days.

Air Station Elizabeth City and Atlantic Area decided to conduct a lily pad operation with an HH60J and a cutter to act as a refueling station in between Bermuda and the US. To conduct the rescue, a C-130 escorted the HH60J to Bermuda where it refueled and returned to the YANKEE CLIPPER to hoist the cook. After bringing the cook to a hospital in Bermuda, the Jayhawk was then stranded on the island until a cutter could arrive to refuel it.

The crew of CGC SENECA, currently on board CGC TAHOMA, was on a District One fisheries patrol when the call came in requesting assistance. Being the closest asset that could support an HH60, TAHOMA immediately diverted south and made it to the scene within 24 hours. Once the Jayhawk launched from Bermuda, turning back was not an option with only enough fuel to either land on TAHOMA or HIFR. After waiting out the weather for two days, the Jayhawk carefully landed, refueled, and made it safely back to Air Station Elizabeth City.

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