

WINTER PATROL 2010-2011

FEBRUARY 2011

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PATROL SUMMARY

VIGILANT departed Port Canaveral on December 20 and embarked on another patrol working for Joint Inter-agency Task Force South.

After a relatively calm transit down to the operating area, the weather started to turn and 10 foot seas soon became the norm. A Christmas Eve casino night and a Christmas Day white elephant gift exchange helped keep spirits high. However, the bad guys usually stay quiet when the seas are rough.

A two-day port call in Cartagena, Colombia had to be cut short due to some last minute tasking. The one-day stop gave a much needed break for a New Years Eve celebration.

Soon after leaving Cartagena, VIGILANT was re-directed to the north and was able to enjoy an unscheduled two-day port call in good old Guantanamo

Bay, Cuba...always a crew favorite. The morale committee hosted an awesome beach volleyball tournament and NY Jets fans were able to see a great win over the Colts (it's always good to have a happy XO...at least for a little while anyway).

On January 18, VIGILANT lived up to its name and scored another drug bust. After a seven-hour chase, VIGILANT recovered approximately 1,100 lbs of marijuana (see page 2 for complete story) on the high seas off the coast of Costa Rica.

VIGILANT visited Puerto Limon, Costa Rica soon after the bust and the crew had a blast. From zip lining through the rain forest to surfing on pristine beaches...Puerto Limon offered memories of a lifetime. We stopped another go-fast, but were unable to find any evidence of wrongdoing. The patrol ended with another fantastic stop in beautiful Key West before heading home.



1,100 Pounds of Marijuana

The Captain Dons a Lifejacket for Ensign Swaim's First Qualified Bridge Watch



FROM THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR

Greetings and belated Happy New Year to our VIGILANT family! We missed all of you during this holiday season and wish we could have been home with you. Another successful patrol has come to an end and we are excited to be reunited again.

I am very thankful for the love and support you provided our crew during this patrol. It is never easy, especially during the holidays, but you always seem to get us through. Our success

stems directly from the support we receive from our families and friends...we could not execute our mission without it.

The crew did an outstanding job during the patrol and helped protect our borders by keeping over \$1 million of marijuana from reaching the streets. I am very proud of their efforts, and honored to lead the best cutter and crew in the fleet!

(Continued on page 4)

ANOTHER VIGILANT DRUG BUST

On the morning of January 18 Seaman Aaron Clark spotted what appeared to be a sport fishing vessel about six miles away from VIGILANT. At a closer look it turned out to be a “go-fast,” equipped with three outboard engines and not so good intentions. Upon detection, the boat immediately began to flee at speeds of over 40 knots. VIGILANT launched its small boat crew consisting of BM2 Ryan Smith, ME1 Gabe Wilch, MK1 Afip Castillo, MK2 Phillip LaMantia, and ME2 Kyle Walker. The team was in hot

pursuit of the go-fast. With help from a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol aircraft, the team closed within 500 yards of the vessel. At that time, the smugglers began throwing their contraband overboard. VIGILANT’s second small boat crew with BMC Frank Parenti, MK3 Seth Heiserman, SA Anthony Green, and BM3 James Miron recovered the jettisoned contraband while the other team and the aircraft pursued the boat until it beached itself on a river in Costa Rica. The smugglers

went free but their mission was a failure thanks to the outstanding efforts of the entire VIGILANT crew and our interagency partners.

The seized marijuana weighed over 1,100 pounds and has an estimated street value of over \$1 million dollars. This case exemplified the awesome camaraderie of our crew. Everyone on board felt a great sense of pride knowing we accomplished our mission together.



40 Bales of Marijuana

COSTA RICAN ADVENTURES

After a successful drug bust the crew stopped for a much deserved port call in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. Many of the crew went on an excursion to the rain forest where they zip lined through the forest at heights of over 200 feet. Many different types of nature existed in the rain

forest from sloths to bullet ants. YN1 Matt Falor strapped on his helmet cam and recorded memories many of us will never forget. Many shipmates also headed for a relaxing day in the sun in Puerto Viejo, a resort like town near the border of Panama. Some of the crew

even took a turn at surfing some of the waves in Viejo. It was good to sit back and relax on the beach after a good drug bust.



Costa Rica Zip Line Crew

FROM THE CHIEF’S MESS

Hello family, friends and shipmates. Well another patrol goes down in the books and all of you should be very proud of what your loved ones accomplished. The biggest challenge was being away from all of you during the holiday season. It was rough (literally and figuratively), but we all made it through like the VIGILANT

family always does. Lots of great things happened during this patrol, but I will let them tell you their version of the stories. It always sounds better coming from the person instead of reading about it from some old Chief.

A big thank you to our outstanding ombudsmen, Amy Spencer, Heidi Brostowicz, and Leslie Falor. As usual,

you went above and beyond for the families back on the beach, especially those in need.

To all of our family and friends, thank you for your love, support, and understanding. We couldn’t do it without you!

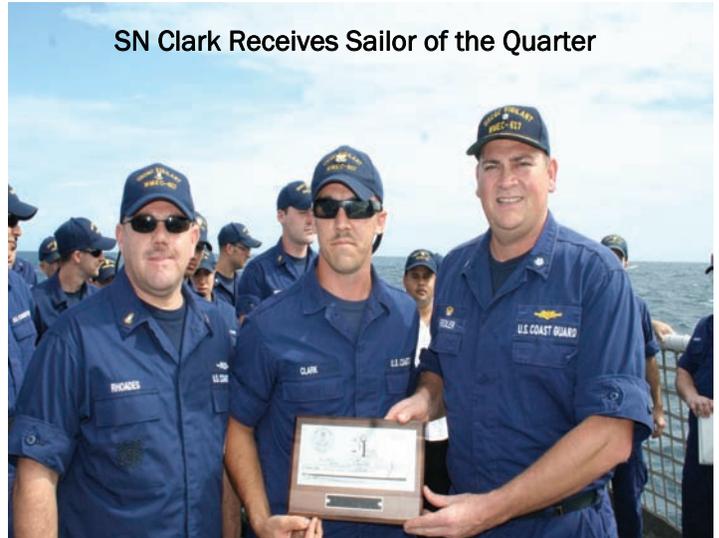


Mustache Growing Contest

SAILOR OF THE QUARTER

Seaman Aaron Clark received the VIGILANT Sailor of the Quarter award for the period from 01 October to 31 December. During this period Aaron demonstrated excellent seamanship skills, a dedication to becoming a rated Storekeeper and a steadfast commitment to VIGILANT and the Coast Guard core values. He was instrumental in developing a “running mate” program for new personnel. He completed all the procurements for Deck Department and reconciled their \$21K quarterly budget.

He also created a inventory system to help improve his department’s efficiency. His influence extended beyond the lifelines of the ship as well. Aaron and his wife Dana volunteered to serve Thanksgiving meals to elderly citizens of Canaveral. He also volunteered to be part of a Joint Color Guard Detail in Orlando during his own leave time. Aaron is the epitome of what it means to be a great “shipmate.” Well done!



SN Clark Receives Sailor of the Quarter

NEW YEAR’S EVE IN CARTAGENA



Pulling into Cartagena

VIGILANT’s crew brought in the New Year in Cartagena, Colombia. The city is known for its emeralds and rich history of the “Old City.” The Old City was a particular part of town that very closely resembled New Orleans and had a lot to visit and see.

Many of the crew took a tour of the Emerald farm,

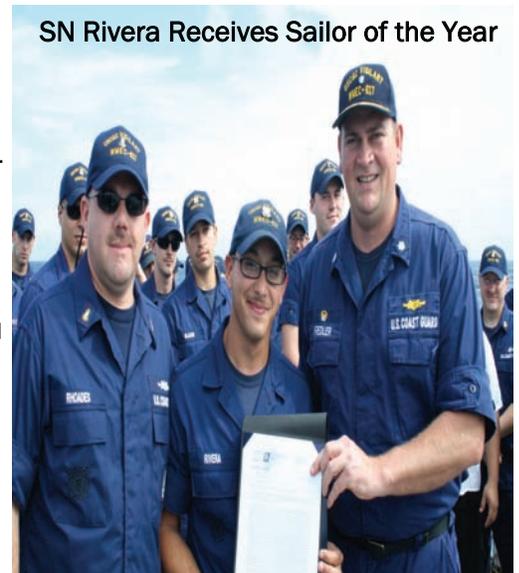
which showed how these beautiful jewels were mined and processed. Some of the crew even purchased an emerald or two (I’m sure someone is in trouble now!). Many of the crew sampled different dishes from their local cuisine and were able to celebrate 2011 with great music and

entertainment. Another bonus came in the form of a special pay we received in our paychecks. For visiting Colombia, each crewmember brought home an extra \$450. Now someone is really in trouble for not bringing home an emerald!

SAILOR OF THE YEAR

Seaman Ryan Rivera received the 2010 Sailor of The Year award for VIGILANT. As previous Sailor of the Quarter winners, ET1 Christopher Pedano, MK1 Franklin Mitchell , and MK1 Afip Castillo were also recognized for their outstanding performance.

Ryan is VIGILANT’s Lead Seaman and has performed at a level far exceeding his pay-grade. He has displayed an extraordinary amount of effort this last year and has given up his own time in order to make VIGILANT a better unit. He has been an incredible influence to the development of his fellow shipmates, assisting more than 15 members with their primary watch qualification. He also was a driving force behind over 400 work projects and is directly responsible for the impeccable appearance and material condition of our 46-year old ship. On his own initiative, he created a VIGILANT specific program, which included tasks, tests, answer keys, and study guides so shipmates can more efficiently complete their qualifications. Ryan has been a jack of all trades onboard and was influential in three complex drug interdiction cases resulting in over \$26 million of seized illegal drugs. As VIGILANT’s Sailor of the Year, he will compete for the District Seven Sailor of the Year. We are all anxious to hear the results and wish Ryan the best of luck. Well done Shipmate!



SN Rivera Receives Sailor of the Year

CAPTAIN'S CHAIR (CONTINUED)

One of the great privileges I had this patrol was to see so many of our well deserving shipmates receive orders to their new assignments throughout the Coast Guard. Everyone due to transfer this summer received one of their top choices. It is always exciting to set out on a new Coast Guard adventure and I wish everyone transferring this summer the best of luck. VIGILANT will surely miss you and your family.

If I can take one thing away from this patrol, it is the realization that this is the tightest crew I have ever sailed with in my 19 years in the Coast Guard. We truly are a family underway and it shows with all the success we have achieved.

With Great Appreciation,

CDR Brian Fiedler

Commanding Officer

BM2 Colin Burr Gets VIGILANT Back on Course



COLOMBIAN TOY DRIVE

Before departing on patrol, Ensign Joe Drenzo organized the crew to donate toy to a Colombian orphanage. This was a great chance for the crew to give back to those who are less fortunate, especially during the holiday season. Joe collected various toys from the crew and delivered them to an orphanage representative while in Cartagena. This is another example of the impact VIGILANT and her crew has on people throughout the world. As a humanitarian service, it is good to see we can touch the lives of those not just on the water. The kids were overjoyed to receive the toys and made for a happy holiday surprise.

(Pictured from left to right: Ensign Chris Gardner, Ensign Brian Koch, Ensign Kevin Curry, and Ensign Dan Swaim)

The Junior Officers Show Some of the Toys



CHRISTMAS EVE CASINO NIGHT

As Christmas Eve rolled around aboard VIGILANT, the crew celebrated with cards, snacks, and fierce competition. They were on a mission to prove who among the crew could display the best poker face. OS2 David Mooney was designated as the game warden. He made sure the games were handled smoothly and everyone had a good time. It may have been one of the largest floating casinos on the high seas that night as we waited for Santa's sleigh to bring us our presents.

From Blackjack to "Texas Hold Em" the crew tried their luck as the best poker player emerged. Times like poker night bring the crew closer together and allow us to bond in a way that allows teamwork to be stronger on board. The crew had an enjoyable time playing the different games and spending some much earned leisure time after a week of being underway. It was a great Christmas Eve celebration and it allowed us to take our minds off missing our loved ones at home.

Card playing is very popular on board VIGILANT. Every patrol, the VIGILANT Gaming Commission hosts various tournaments for morale prizes and pride. This patrol was unprecedented as SK1 Ben "Bobby Flay" Brostowicz took home two tournament titles. One for no-limit Omaha Poker and one for a no-limit Texas Hold Em. Curiously, Ben just received orders to San Pedro, California...only a short three hour drive to Sin City!

CREW FITNESS

Maintaining a high level of fitness, required by the Coast Guard can be challenging while underway. Maritime Enforcement Specialists, Kyle

Crew Showing Off The Results



Walker and Matthew Atteberry took it upon themselves to ensure VIGILANT stayed in excellent shape, in spite of the limited exercise facilities. The crew completed various circuit workouts on the flight deck, involving jump roping, running, pushups, sit-ups, and other various exercises. The workouts facilitated not only increased health, but teamwork and cohesiveness. Increased teamwork allows our unit to better complete its mission along with increasing

morale. The crew showed an increased attendance at these fitness hours this patrol and the results speak for themselves. The workouts were difficult and challenged the dedication of every individual involved. It was good to see the group encourage one another and work towards a common goal. The workouts directly influence our ability to fulfill the Law Enforcement aspect of our mission and keep each other safe.

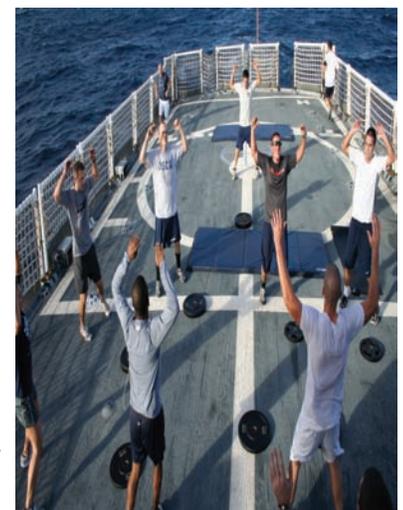
Christmas Eve Casino Night



A Few Poker Faces Vegas Could Not Handle



Flight Deck Workout



AWARDS AND ADVANCEMENTS

Sailor of the Year:

SN Rivera

Sailor of the Quarter:

SN Clark

Spirit of VIGILANT

DC1 Spencer

BM2 Smith

SN Geiser

Commandant's Letter of Commendation:

GM3 Sickman

FS3 Smith

SN Nieves

Letter of Appreciation

SN Presley

SN Heavilin

FN Rose

FN Curiel

FN Kuhn

Advancements

HS1 Thurston

Sea Service Ribbon:

OS3 Danvers

SN Kearney

SN Thompson

Pistol Marksman:

ENS Koch

SA Green

Rifle Marksman:

FN Potter

SN Saladin

SN Thompson

HAIL AND FAREWELLS

Welcome Aboard:

FN Tamayo

FN Barss

FN Linares

SA Adefunmi

Fair Winds and Following Seas:

GM3 Sickman (PATFORSWA)

FS3 Smith (Station Point Judith)

SN Presley (HS "A" School)

SN Heavilin (GM "A" School)

FN Rose (OS "A" School)

FN Kuhn (MK "A" School)

**FSC Barrett Pins the Cutterman Insignia on
FS3 Darren Taylor and SN Brian Kearney**

QUALIFICATIONS

Underway Officer of the Deck:

ENS Swaim

ENS Gardner

Engineering Officer of the Watch:

ENS Garofalo

EMC Claybrook

In-Port Officer of the Deck:

ME1 Wilch

Boarding Officer:

ENS Direnzo

ME2 Walker

Boarding Team Member:

ENS Koch

ENS Direnzo

SA Green

ME3 Atteberry

Landing Signals Officer:

ENS Gardner

Helicopter Control Officer:

ENS Direnzo

Helm/Lookout:

SN Perkins

SN Stetter

BM3 Gardner

Junior Officer of the Deck:

LTJG Prouhet

ENS Curry

Boatswain Mate of the Watch:

SN Cunningham

SN Geiser

Advanced DCPQS:

FN Potter

Basic DCPQS:

SN Stetter

SN Perkins

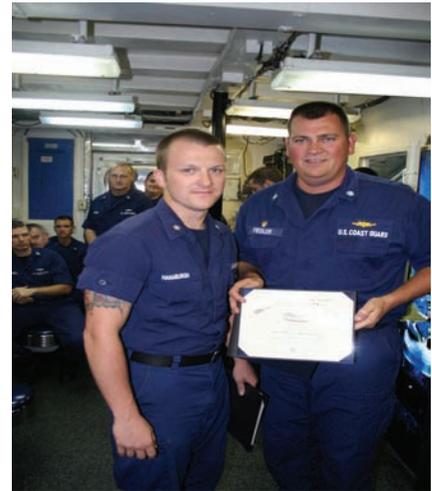
Small Boat Coxswain:

BM3 Miron

Small Boat: Engineer and Crew:

MK3 Hanaburgh

**MK3 Philip Hanaburgh Receives
Boat Engineer Qualification**



Temporary Cutterman:

EMC Claybrook

EM2 Coughlin

EM3 Nicholl,

EM3 Wood

EM3 Beachler

MK2 LaMantia

MK3 Heiserman

MK3 Calhoon

FN French

ET1 Pedano,

ET2 Tortora

ET3 Cimbak

IT1 Thoele

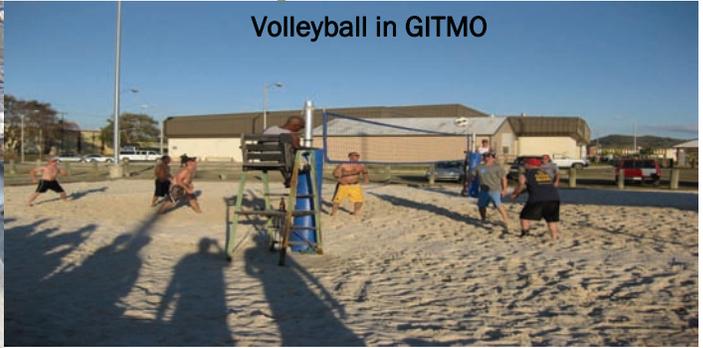
SN Kearney

SN Nieves

FS3 Taylor



Helicopter Crew During Personnel Transfer



Volleyball in GITMO



Refueling The Helicopter



Deck Dept Poses on the Flight Deck



Fresh Water Washdown



Shipmates After Costa Rican Zip Line



Waiting to Fuel



SN Richard Mason, OS3 Michael Danvers. And SN Ryan Rivera Pose After Quarters

Compiled By: Ensign Kevin Curry, photos by OS3 Michael Danvers

Email any questions or concerns to ENS Kevin Curry at Kevin.a.curry@uscg.mil