

# The Sentinel

USCGC HAMILTON (WMSL 753)

## CAPT's Corner

Greetings families and friends of HAMILTON!

It has been several months since our last update. We've come a very long way here on the Mississippi coast, and we're now underway in HAMILTON on our maiden voyage.

But first, here's a recap of the summer. For the most part the crew arrived in Pascagoula between April and June, where we all lived in hotel rooms in D'Iberville, Mississippi. We commuted to the shipyard each day where we worked out of trailers on the shipyard grounds. We went on over 500 "test calls" where we would inspect HAMILTON at different points of production. Many crewmembers worked the "second shift" from the afternoon into the evening in order to facilitate drawing the ship's systems and subsystems--a critical task in becoming familiar with the ship. Over 1,000 drawings were completed, which represented 96% of all required drawings. We also contracted with Ingalls Shipyard to conduct damage control and firefighting training, as well as a Damage Control Petty Officer maintenance course. Our Post-Delivery Availability planning continued throughout the summer, writing a few dozen shipboard instructions, such as the Engineer Officer's Standing Orders, the Casualty Control Manual, Machinery Space Firefighting Doctrine, Navigation Standards, Commanding Officer's Standing Orders, etc.

The major milestones in bringing HAMILTON to life included

By: ENS Silvia Rodriguez

Volume 1, Issue 2

November News '14

### Inside this issue:

CAPT's Corner 1-2

HAMILTON News 3

Pictures 4-18



USCGC HAMILTON (The Coast Guard's newest WMSL) and USCGC RAYMOND EVANS (The Coast Guards newest FRC) steam in formation in the Straits of Florida.



*USCGC HAMILTON  
(WMSL 753) in the water  
for the first time.*



**“HAMILTON’s  
motto is  
Vigilant  
Sentinel; we  
are now  
standing the  
watch at sea.”**

conducting Builder's Trials in mid-July, Acceptance Trials in mid-August and Delivery in mid-September. Once HAMILTON was delivered to the Coast Guard, we had a small ceremony and took ownership. We stood the quarterdeck watch, began preparing the galley for meals, got the Repair Lockers set up for our damage control abilities. We've been training, unpacking and securing for sea. Each crewmember began to move his or her own personal belongings onto the ship, and we began the long process of breathing life into this ship.

Our maiden voyage has been some long days of training and testing of the ship's weapons. Our objective for the Maiden Voyage is to become certified "Ready for Sea." We will have some shipriders that are coming to help us train and develop basic proficiency in engineering, damage control, seamanship, navigation and combat systems. We'll make a few port visits on the way around, as entering and exiting port provides great training for engineering, operations and deck personnel.

We planned to arrive in Charleston by December first. However, we have made great progress to be certified Ready for Sea, so we adjusted our plans to arrive in Charleston on November 24th. This adjustment is due to the serial, outstanding performance of our crew and 100% completion (and then some) of our Ready for Sea certification requirements.

Thank you all for your support and understanding over these past six to eight months as we've been getting HAMILTON ready. We've had several family milestones along the way too. With weddings, births, anniversaries and birthdays. We miss our families very much, and look forward to being reunited once we return to Charleston. I know many of you have endured hardship with your loved ones gone. My earnest prayer for each of you has been for a sustaining network of helpers until we return. Now we're getting close! Before you know it we will be home and reunited in time for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

HAMILTON's motto is Vigilant Sentinel; we are now standing the watch at sea. Thank you all for your continued support.

Godspeed,  
Captain Doug Fears

## HAMILTON News

It has been a couple of months since our last Newsletter. Since then, HAMILTON sailors have been relocated to Pascagoula, MS and are now headed back to homeport. During our time in Mississippi, we dedicated tens of thousands of hours towards learning the ship's engineering and operational features, in addition to the deck equipment and combat systems.

During Pre-Delivery, we quickly settled into our office space at the 7-plex in Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) Shipyard and commenced our work lists; ranging from every day training, to completing Pre-Commissioning checklists, establishing Standard Operating Procedures, finalizing FY14 budgets for each division, creating a Unit Training Plan, and so much more.

In preparation for delivery, HAMILTON underwent a series of Sea Trials to test the ship's capabilities and equipment status. A few members were chosen to ride along in order to become more familiar with the equipment and ultimately help better prepare ourselves for delivery. Meanwhile, other HAMILTON sailors attended various "C" Schools, to include: Bridge Operator Course, Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) and Damage Control Fundamentals, among others.

In addition, all crew members had the opportunity to attend the "Wet Trainer" Course offered by HII. During this training, our Damage Control Assistant (DCA) and our Damage Controlmen got the opportunity to teach the crew the proper way to don and utilize firefighting equipment and respond to casualties in a controlled, yet realistic environment.

On the day of Delivery, Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias presented HAMILTON sailors the "Key to the Ship." The crew then moved out of the hotel and onto the ship to quickly assume the duties and responsibilities of the in-port watchstanders. While only a small number of crew members were previously qualified on other WMSLs, we have all been working tirelessly on our Watch Qualification Standards (WQS) and Personal Qualification Standards (PQS) to earn the necessary qualifications to stand a taut watch.

As we transit home, we reflect on the accomplishments that have gotten us to this point, and those to come. On September 15<sup>th</sup> we had hundreds of pallets full of equipment to unload, sea bags to unpack, workspaces to organize, repair lockers to prepare accordingly and systems to familiarize ourselves with. We conducted a successful "Fast Cruise," where we had the opportunity to identify the areas where we needed to train better, and a "Shakedown," where we had the opportunity to get underway for the first time prior to departing for our maiden voyage.

As HAMILTON sailors prepare the ship to carry out the day-to-day missions to come after its Commissioning, we are en route to South Carolina to culminate our voyage with a well deserved Thanksgiving and Christmas break with our friends and families.

*"As we transit home, we reflect on the accomplishments that have gotten us to this point and those to come."*



*For the first time, the two new NSCs in the water at the same time in the shipyard, USCGC HAMILTON and USCGC JAMES*



*USCGC HAMILTON (WMSL 753) in the water for the first time.*



**"HAMILTON's motto is Vigilant Sentinel; we are now standing the watch at sea."**

## The XO's Corner

To apply the words "What a long strange trip its been" to this pre-commissioning process would be so apropos....yes its been long and every bit of it crazy. But.....your HAMILTON shipmates achieved what seemed many times to be impossible—we have safely taken delivery of HAMILTON, and are heading home. Finally!

While it may be difficult to understand or quantify the enormity of this task—compounded by the long time away from home, family and friends—let me throw a few tidbits at you:

***Over 7,000 line items of supplies had to be unpacked and stowed.***

***HAMILTON crewmembers completed more than 1000 drawings of ships systems***

***We completed more than 120 drills and exercises in a 55 day stretch***

***Two babies were born while we were gone!***

***During the first 3 days, we have to locate, unpack, and launder our linen so we had a place to sleep.***

***More than 300 individual watch qualifications have been achieved.***

***We conducted Aviation Facility Certification, Ready for Sea Certification, ship-helo training, small boat training, gunnery exercises, man over board exercises, Bridge simulator training, precision anchoring drills, in port fire drills, flooding drills, small arms/weapons qualifications, engineering casualty drills, navigation and combat systems training, and was even able to get our flu shots! (thanks Doc).***

And if that doesn't demonstrate the heart and spirit of this crew—your shipmates also managed to help the community:

***HAMILTON crew members raised more than 1,000 dollars for the Armed Forces Retirement Center located in Gulfport, Mississippi.***

***A number of HAMILTON shipmates partnered with Horticulture for Humanity to revitalize the Katrina Park Memorial in Biloxi, Mississippi.***

I will close for now and this version of the Sentinel. We couldn't be more proud of every single HAMILTON shipmate. However without the incredible support and understanding of everyone of the extended HAMILTON family, we would not have been this successful. We still have a long transit home but each passing minute, your HAMILTON sailors are 60 seconds closer to Charleston.

CDR Steve Matadobra, Executive Officer

## Here's what we've been up to...



CAPT Fears signs the document officially assuming control of USCGC HAMILTON



A placard is placed on the port mast to mark the location of the Mast-Stepping contents.



Despite the reminders of shipyard life, we were able to have our first 'quarters'.





After living in a hotel for months, it was nice to have that first meal aboard ship





EM2 Tessing and MK2 Sturm getting advanced!





OS3 Klepsa and DC3 Kimball getting presented their Good Conduct Medals



Introducing some of our newest HAMILTON shipmates—SN Miranda Lack and SN Alyssa Mino



More Good Conduct medals—BM2 Dingeldein, IS1 Leep, SK2 Pryor, MKCS Poponea and EMC Kocurek



CAPT Fears introducing our new Command Senior Chief, FSCS Traci Addicott



LT Brandt, Combat Systems Officer observes deck training



OSCS Bell and SKC Tahtinen conduct an in port duty section drill as LTJG Cuprak, Assistant Engineer Officer, observes.

Small boat ops...





DCC Prior conducts training as HAMILTON 's fire fighting team prepares to attack a 'make-believe' fire during a drill.



Some Halloween fun!





I think its ME2 Siciak.



DC3 Hollister and MK2 White—stylin!



**Mrs. Doubtfire  
(AKA—OSCS Bell)**



**Mystery Rocker!!!  
(I think its LTJG Mark Zanowicz)**



ME2 Siciak, ENS Ray, ENS Lemly and ENS Stephens (aka—home slice)



ENS Lacefield-Rodriguez, DC2 Robb and ENS Lemly as.....well you know :)

## Farewell, Mississippi!



That's all for now—we are homeward bound!!! Woo hoo!!