



Captain E. L. Alexander
Commanding Officer

Bering Sea

3 September 2007

Dear MIDGETT Family and Friends,

For those expecting to see our location above as San Diego don't be alarmed; we did not get lost. As we were proceeding out the Straits of Juan De Fuca preparing to turn south our orders changed and instead of turning left at the sea buoy (south) we turned right and proceeded to Alaska. Here's why...

The Coast Guard has the responsibility of patrolling the maritime boundary line in the Bering Sea between Alaska and Russia as well as search and rescue, and law enforcement. A big part of the service's responsibility is monitoring the fishing activities of the U.S. fishing fleet. The cutter scheduled to relieve the "Bering Patrol" developed mechanical difficulties and could not get underway. The operational mission in the Bering overrode our training mission so our Pacific Area Commander ordered us north.

MIDGETT responded and without hesitation. When told the news on the flight deck the crew cheered and MIDGETT swung to starboard at the sea buoy, on a course for Kodiak Alaska to refit, train, and embark our HH65C helicopter. Even though it's summer up here it is still cold with water temperatures hovering just above freezing. We set out thinking we would be in the tropics not around the Arctic Circle. We had very little cold weather gear and had to place rush orders to get it up to Kodiak. When we moored at the Coast Guard Support Command in Kodiak it was cloudy with temperatures in the 40s, windy with a cold drizzle; Alaskan summer! We started fisheries training on Sunday and during the next three days completed training and outfitting. In that time we also hosted a senior Russian delegation visiting Alaska. These visits by the Russians are normal and go a long way toward ensuring cooperation along the maritime boundary line.

On the way out to the fishing grounds we responded to two Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) SAR calls in the vicinity of the erupting Pavlof Volcano. Both ELTs alerts turned out to be false alarms so we proceeded northwest through the Unimak Pass along the Aleutian chain, leaving the Pribilof Islands to starboard. We've spent the two weeks in the central Bering Sea conducting fisheries boardings. This area is rich in marine life; including whales, seal lions, porpoise, and all sorts of sea birds. This time of year the fishing is mostly centered on halibut, pollock, and cod. We send boarding teams over by small boat to inspect the catch and paperwork along with safety and survival equipment. If you have watched the television show "Deadliest Catch" you will have an idea of the severe weather conditions and dangers associated with operating in the Bering Sea. Alaskan fishing still remains the most dangerous U.S. job. Fortunately for us we have had excellent "summer time" Bering Sea weather. Activity on the maritime boundary line between the U.S and Russia has been low, but we will stay in a position to respond to incursions into U.S. fishing waters by the Russian fishing fleet.

As I write this letter, I expect to receive orders to stay on the Bering Patrol for the duration of our patrol. Our return to homeport date remains the same though, on or about 14 November. I guess the good news is that each of us will be well adjusted to cold weather when we come back home for the holidays.

Remember our Ombudsmen remain the best source of accurate information about our patrol.

Happy Labor Day!

Semper Paratus

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. L. Alexander'. Below the signature, the name 'E. L. ALEXANDER' is printed in a simple, sans-serif font.

E. L. ALEXANDER