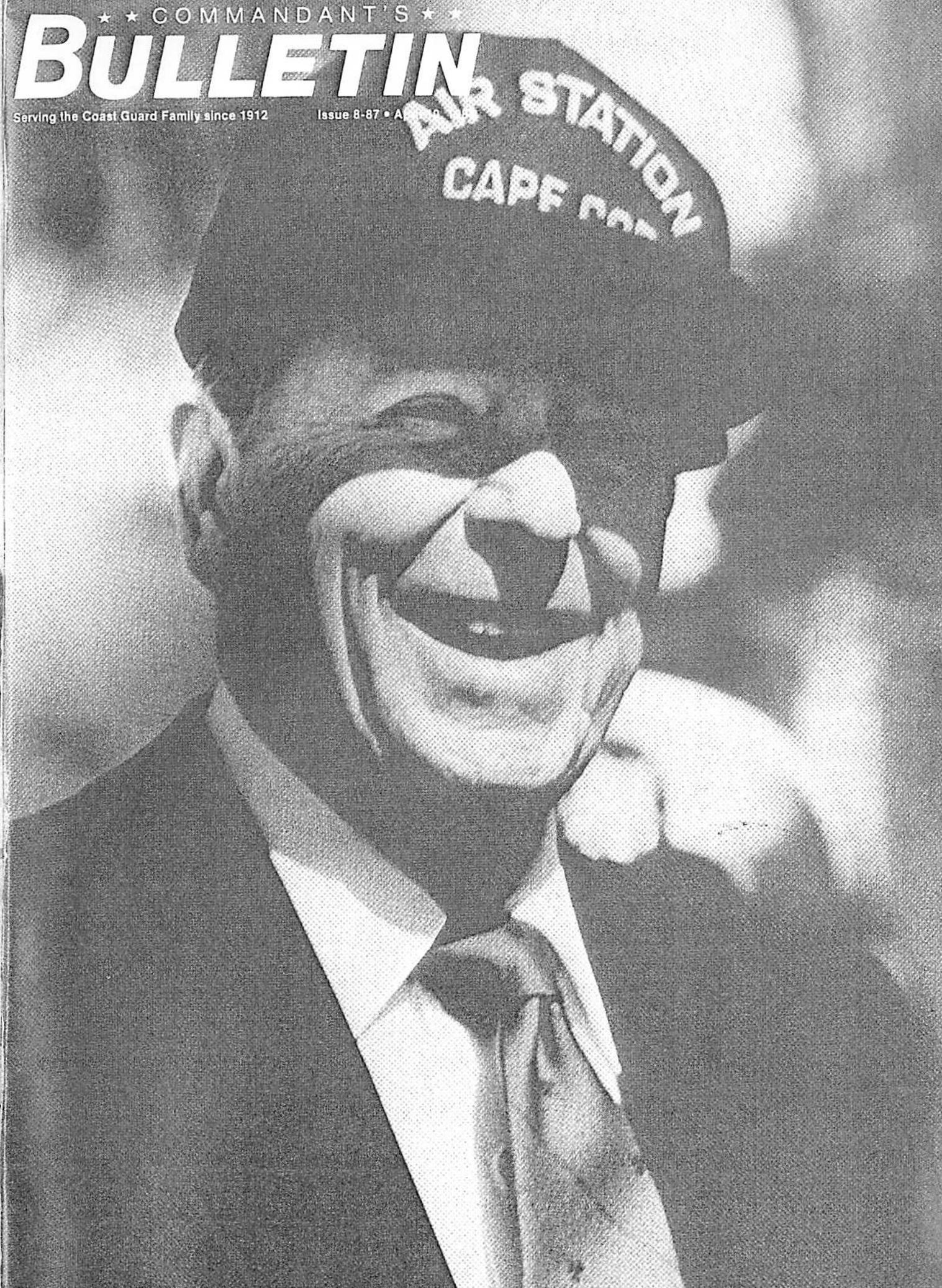


★ ★ COMMANDANT'S ★ ★
BULLETIN

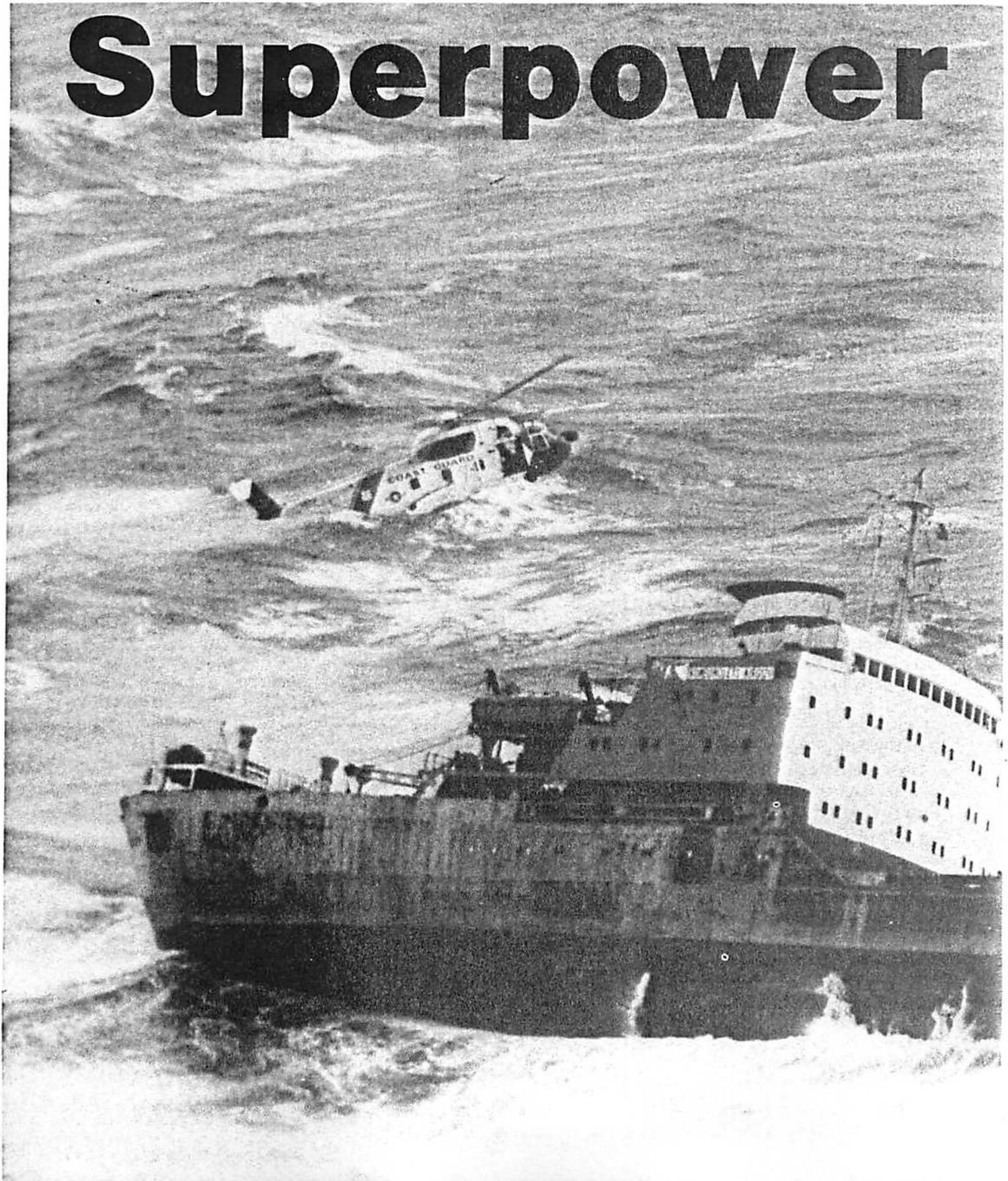
Serving the Coast Guard Family since 1912

Issue 8-87 • August 1987

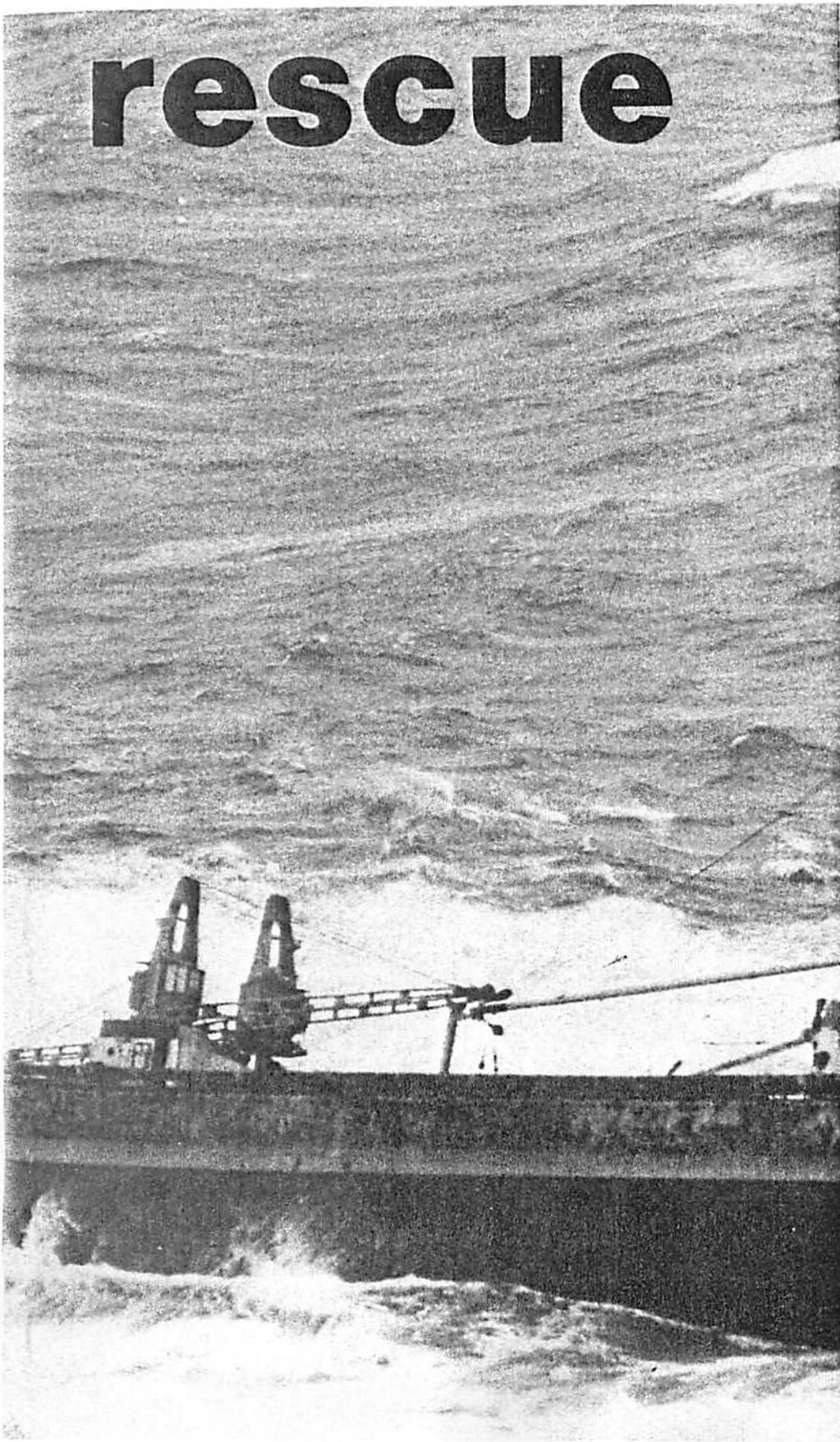
AIR STATION
CAPE COD



Superpower



rescue



By PA3 Kenn Arbogast,
1st District

Three H-3 helicopters from Air Station Cape Cod battled sleet and gale force winds to pluck 37 Soviet sailors from the deck of a sinking freighter 220 miles off the New Jersey coastline March 14.

During a ceremony honoring the Coast Guard's rescuers in the White House Rose Garden, President Reagan called it "one of the most dramatic rescue missions in the history of the Coast Guard."

Group Cape May received a distress call from the 482-foot *Komsomolets Kirgizii* about 8:30 that morning. The ship's skipper reported his vessel had a 26 degree port list in heavy seas and requested immediate evacuation of his crew. The ship's list prevented the crew from lowering the lifeboats.

The 3rd District operations center on Governors Island dispatched a C-130 from Air Station Elizabeth City to assess the situation. *Tamaroa*, sailing up the New Jersey coast en route to New Hampshire, was directed to the scene as well.

The C-130 was the first aircraft on scene, locating the Soviet freighter at 10:25 a.m. The pilot immediately requested a second C-130 with more survival gear. Communications Station Portsmouth acted as a communications link between the C-130, on-scene coordinator, and the 3rd District operations center, the SAR mission coordinator.

"It took us about 20 minutes to establish communications with the vessel's master because of the language barrier," said LCDR Mike Flood, pilot of the C-130. He finally found some English words the master recognized. The C-130 stood by with rescue gear, ready to drop it if the vessel sank. The plane also located and diverted to the scene two nearby American merchant vessels. Flood maintained constant communications with the Soviet master, reassuring him that helos were on the way and explaining what to expect when they arrived.



Top and previous page: A helo from Air Station Cape Cod maneuvers to rescue Soviet sailors from their sinking freighter.

LTJG Matthew Thomas

LTJG Matthew Thomas



The first Cape Cod H-3 was on scene about 11 a.m., after diverting from a search for a missing aircraft near Block Island, RI, to refuel and assist the distressed freighter. Two other helos left directly from the air station.

"We made it just in the nick of time," said LT Keith Comer, pilot of the first helo on-scene. "The entire port side was awash."

The helo hovered 50 feet over the fantail of the sinking ship. Twenty-foot swells washed over the pilot house. Gusts of 55-knots howled through the ship's superstructure and pounded the helo.

"It took 15 minutes to find a place to drop the basket where it wouldn't snag, it was blowing around so in the wind," Comer said.

Because of the helo's fuel supply and the ship's dangerous position, people rode up in the basket two at a time. The first helo hoisted 15 people aboard in 20 minutes, then departed for Atlantic City International Airport.

The second helo hauled up 16 more crewmen. The pilot of the second helo was CAPT Rick Hardy, an exchange pilot from the Canadian Forces.

Soviet sailors en route to Atlantic City.



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

March 27, 1987

Admiral Paul A. Yost, Jr.
Commandant
United States Coast Guard
2100 Second Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20593

Dear Paul:

I was very pleased with the excellent performance of the United States Coast Guard during the rescue mission of the Komsomolets Kirgizii on March 14, 1987. Please express my deep appreciation to everyone involved for their vigilance, courage and outstanding airmanship throughout this humane undertaking.

It is especially gratifying that the Coast Guard's usual outstanding performance resulted this time in saving the lives of thirty seven foreign seamen. It is not often we have an opportunity to reach beyond service to our own countrymen and to show we are truly committed to international brotherhood by our response during a time of need.

Please convey my congratulations to all Coast Guardsmen; all guardsmen have a right to be proud of this successful effort in the Atlantic.

With warmest regard,

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hanford Dole

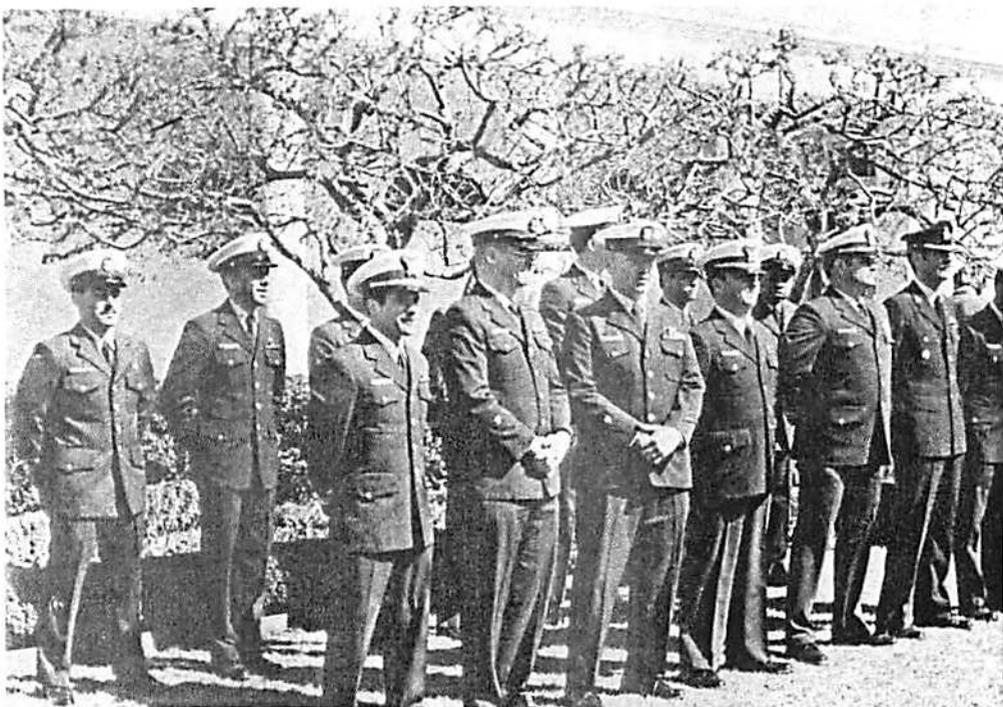
Below: The crews from Air Station Cape Cod in the White House Rose Garden. PA3 John Guzman

"It looked to me like the vessel was going down at any moment," said Hardy. "The deck was almost totally awash."

After the second helo finished its hoists and left for Atlantic City, a third H-3 moved into position over the ship's stern to rescue the remaining six crew members, including the skipper.

"By the time we got there, the ship had a 40 degree list," said AD3 Mark Noonan, hoist operator on the third H-3. "It was a pretty tough hoist job, because of all the obstructions on deck and the wind knocking the basket around."

A second C-130 arrived a few minutes before the hoists were complete. Once all the Soviets had been picked up, one of the C-130s left to catch up with the first helo and escort it to Atlantic City.



The other C-130 stayed with the second and third helos and escorted them in.

The last helo arrived in Atlantic City at 2:35 p.m. Each helo was in the air about 4 hours and travelled more than 400 miles on the mission. A fourth H-3, from Elizabeth City, was en route to the scene, but turned back once all the ship's crew were safely aboard the helos.

LTJG Matthew Thomas, co-pilot of the first H-3, talked with the rescued Soviet captain. The skipper told Thomas his ship's engines stopped and the vessel turned broadside in 30-foot waves. The load of flour sacks shifted to one side and caused the ship to list, Thomas said.

"He was distressed," Thomas said, describing the skipper who had watched his ship sink. "It's like watching something die, and he felt that way too. Part of himself died as it sank."

Komsomolets Kirgizii was barely afloat when *Tamaroa* arrived on-scene late Saturday night. According to *Tamaroa's* executive officer, LCDR Kenneth Dykstra, the ship was floating on its side, about to sink, when *Tamaroa's* searchlights spotted it.

"The freighter was laying over, about 90 degrees," Dykstra said. "With the 18-foot swells, it was apparent that it was going down."

Tamaroa moved away to wait for first light. At dawn, there was no freighter afloat, only debris.

"All that was left was thousands and thousands of bags of flour," Dykstra said. "Except for an oil slick, all the water in the area was white."

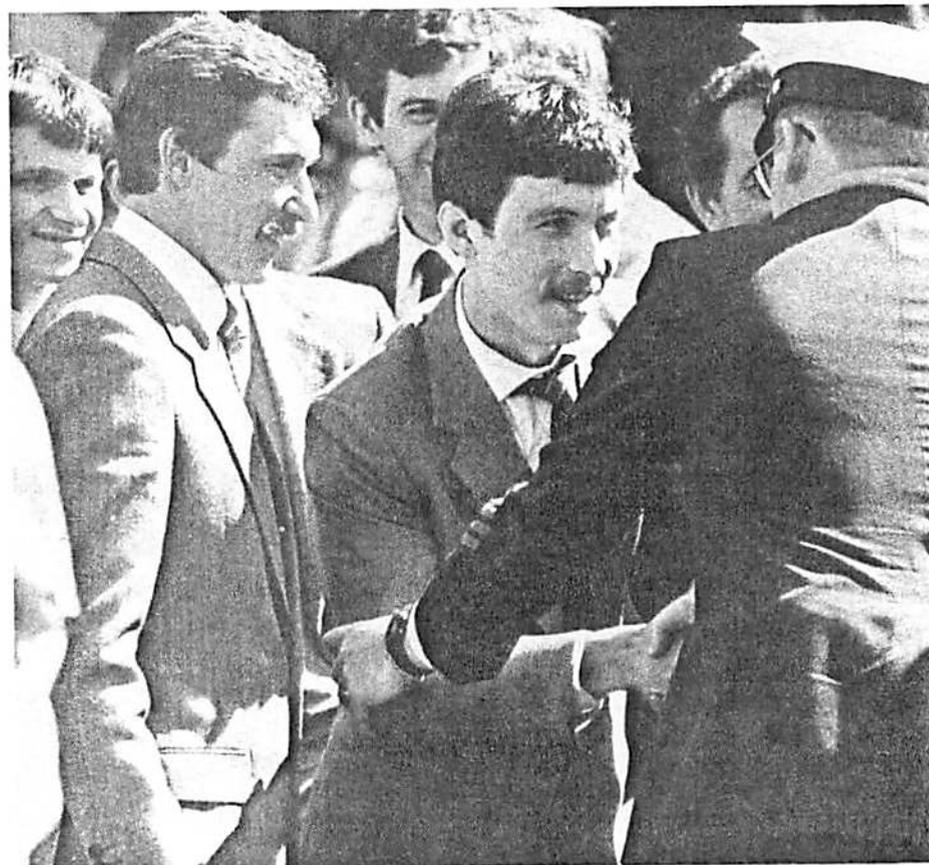
The rescued Soviets stayed in New Jersey the night of March 14 and flew to a Soviet embassy compound the next day. The rescued and the rescuers were reunited three days later in Washington. President Reagan invited the Soviet crew to attend an awards ceremony at the White House. The pilots, co-pilots and flight mechanics on each crew received Air Medals and other crew members received Coast Guard Commendation Medals.

In praising the crews for the daring efforts, President Reagan said, "In your



PA3 Trellis Moore

President Reagan praises the crews for a heroic rescue.



PA3 Trellis Moore

A handshake and a thank you from one of the Soviet sailors.

courage, your tenacity, your know-how, you summed up all that is best in the American spirit — in a word, all that is heroic." //

Next page: LT Keith Comer gives a model of the H-3 to the skipper of the *Komsomolets Kirgizii*. (Photo by PA3 John Guzman.)



*** COMMANDANT'S *** **BULLETIN**

Issue 8-87

April 10, 1987

Features

- Yocona firefighters** 8
Fires, sinkings and medevacs were the order of the day for Yocona's recent "fisheries" patrol.
- Brimfrost '87** 10
Coast Guard people were among 21,000 who participated in this year's 10-day, joint-service exercise in Alaska.
- Superpower rescue** 12
Thirty-seven Russians were very grateful after Coast Guard helo crews plucked them from the raging Atlantic.
- Southern comfort** 18
This year's annual expedition to resupply Naval forces in Antarctica was accomplished by the determined crew of *Polar Sea*.
- Omega keeps Voyager on track** 19
The most recent aviation milestone could not have happened without the guidance of the International Navigation System.
- Square rigger master** 20
A lover of sailing and the sea, CWO Richard "Red" Shannon recently retired after passing on his loves to an uncounted number of Coast Guard people.
- What is COGAP?** 21
Artists play a vital role in documenting Coast Guard accomplishments and "spreading the word" through pictures.
- Deck force down under** 26
Coast Guard divers perform a variety of underwater AtoN jobs, facing dangers and reaping rewards unknown to most people.
- Gem of a job in the South Pacific** 30
If you're a junior officer looking to get far away while still staying in a demanding job, this may be your ticket to paradise.

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Careers 26
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This is your magazine!

Commandant's Bulletin needs your news. Your readers need your news. Send double-spaced, typed articles written in "plain English" and photos (5x7 black-and-white prints preferred) to help tell your story. Be sure to include the author's name and phone number. Please do not send negatives — we can't always send them back. Call us for our writer guidelines!

Commandant's Bulletin
U.S. Coast Guard (G-BPA)
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★ Fore: President Reagan sports a ball cap given to him by Coast Guardsmen from Air Station Cape Cod. Photo: PA3 John Guzman
★ Aft: A Coast Guardsman tends to one of the rescued Soviet sailors. Photo: LT Matthew Thomas

FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION TOR-03:14:16:19:28: 87

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ARCHIVE NUMBER - 14407
SSIC 16120
OPC-COG B DT E DTM

CCGDONE BOSTON MA

O 141511Z MAR 87
FM CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//
TO RUEDEPA/COGARD COMMSTA BOSTON MA
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RUCOCGA/COMCOGARDGRU EASTERN SHORE CHINCOTEAGUE VA
ACCT CG-W2GDRC

BT

UNCLAS//N16120//

SUBJ: DISTRESS BROADCAST - M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UR)/UTDW
1. FOR COMMSTAS: MAKE DISTRESS VOICE AND OR CW (AS APPROPRIATE)
BDCST WITH AUTOALARM, FIRST BROADCAST. TEXT TO BE CONTINUED EVERY
2 HOURS UNTIL CANCELLED.
2. GROUPS: MAKE DISTRESS BROADCAST VOICE/HF, WITH AUTOALARM FIRST
BROADCAST, TEXT TO BE CONTINUED EVERY 2 HOURS UNTIL CANCELLED.
3. FOR CCGDFIVE: REQ GRU EASTERN SHORE MAKE DISTRESS BROADCAST
VOICE/HF, WITH AUTOALARM FIRST BROADCAST, TEXT TO BE CONTINUED
EVERY 2 HOURS UNTIL CANCELLED.
4. QUOTE: THE M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UR)/UTDW, A 482 FOOT
CARGO VESSEL, HAS REPORTED ITSELF IN DISTRESS IN POSITION 38-15N
70-19W, APPROXIMATELY 220 NM EAST OF DELAWARE BAY. THE VESSEL
REPORTS A 26 DEGREE PORT LIST IN EXTREMELY HEAVY SEAS AND
REQUESTS IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE IN REMOVING HER 37 CREWMEMBERS ON
BOARD. VESSELS IN THE VICINITY ARE REQUESTED TO KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT,
ASSIST IF POSSIBLE AND REPORT ALL SIGHTINGS TO U.S.
COAST GUARD. SIGNED: U.S. COAST GUARD NEW YORK.
5. FOR DMAHTC: REQUEST ISSUE NAVAREA IV.

BT

#8436

NNNN

FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION TOR-03:14:16:52:48: 87

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ARCHIVE NUMBER - 14411
SSIC 16130
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SH

CCGDONE BOSTON MA

O A1
A1 DE NC
O 141619Z MAR 87
FM CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//
TO NC/CCGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC//
RUEDEEA/COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC-1//
RUEDEEA/COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ
INFO A1/COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA
RUEOBGA/COGARD AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY NC
RUEDEPB/USCGC TAMAROA
RUCOCGA/CCGDFIVE PORTSMOUTH VA//OPC//
ACCT CG-W2GDRC
BT

UNCLAS//N16130//
SUBJ: DISTRESS - M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UR)/UTDW - 26 DEGREE
PORT LIST

1. SITUATION:
A. 140820R GROUP CAPE MAY RCVD AUTO ALARM 2182 KHZ FROM SUBJ
VSL. UPON SUBSEQUENT COMMS, VSL REQUESTED EVACUATION OF 37 POB.
VSL HAS 26 DEG PORT LIST FROM AN UNKNOWN CAUSE. VESSEL IS NOT
SINKING AT THIS TIME. M/V SEALAND EXPLORER IS ENROUTE, ETA
141200R.
B. VSL DESC: 482 FT GENERAL CARGO VSL, 37 POB.
C. O/S WX: WIND N 50 KT; SEAS 20-25 FT, VIS 7 NM; CEIL 600 FT;
OVC.

2. ACTION:
A. FOR CCGDONE: REQUEST AIRSTA CAPE COD LAUNCH APPROPRIATE
NUMBER AND TYPE OF ACFT TO ASSIST AND EVACUATE POB TO ATLANTIC
CITY FAA CENTER.
B. FOR CAA: REQUEST AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY LAUNCH C-130 FOR AIR
COVER AND ASSESS SITUATION. REQUEST SECOND C-130 LAUNCH ASAP TO
RELIEVE CG-1502 O/S. ALSO REQUEST USCGC TAMAROA CHOP TO
CCGDTHREE FOR SAR AND PROCEED TO ASSIST SUBJ VSL.
C. FOR GRU CAPE MAY: MAINTAIN COMMS WITH ALCON AND KEEP SMC
ADVISED. DIRLAUTH WITH AIRSTA CAPE COD ACFT AND BRIEF LOCAL INS
AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS CONCERNING ARRIVAL OF FOREIGN NATIONALS AT
FAA CENTER.

3. COORDINATION:
A. CCGDTHREE IS SMC.
B. CG-1502 (AIRSTA E-CITY) IS OSC.
C. PRIMARY COMMS THRU GROUP CAPE MAY 2182/4134.3 KHZ DUPLEX.

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ARCHIVE NUMBER - 14418

SSIC 16130

OPC-COG O M DPA B OSR

CCGDONE BOSTON MA

O A1

A1 DE NC

O 141620Z MAR 87

FM USCGC TAMAROA

TO RUEDEEA/COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC//

RUEDEEA/CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//

INFO NC/CCGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC//

RUEDEEA/COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ

RUEDEEA/COGARD AIRSTA CAPE MAY NJ

A1/COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA

ACCT CG-W2GBRC

BT

UNCLAS //N16130//

SUBJ: DISTRESS SITREP ONE - M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UTOW)

(UCN 005-87)

A. PHONEPATCH CCGDTHREE OPC/USCGC TAMAROA

1. SITUATION:

A. RCVD INFO VIA REF A OF VSL LISTING TO PORT 27 DEG.

B. POB: 37 NFI

C. DESC: 482 FT FREIGHTER.

D. POSIT: 38-15N, 70-19W.

E. O/S WX: WIND 007/24, SEAS 010/09, SWELLS 025/12, BARO 30.04R,
TEMP 40D/38W.

2. ACTION:

A. 1000R TAMA?OA NOTIFIED OF CASE VIA P/P WITH CCGDTHREE. DIRECTED
TO CHOP D3 FOR SAR.

B. 1015R TAMAROA ENR SUBJ VSL FROM POSIRS39-31N, 73-01W. ETA O/S
142200R.

3. FUTURE PLANS:

A. PROCEED TO SCENE AND ASSIST AS DIRECTED.

4. MISC INFO:

A. TAMAROA HAS EXPERIENCED A CASUALTY TO NUMBER ONE SHIPS SERVICE
GENERA?OR, REPAIRS AT SEA UNLIKELY. CURRENTLY OPERATING NUMBER TWO
SSG. IF SHIP LOOSES NO TWO SSG WE WILL LOOSE ALL PROPULSION. EMERGENCY
GENERATOR ONLY POWERS COMMUNICATIONS CIRCUITS NOT PROPULSION.

5. CCGDTHREE IS SMC.

BT

#0522

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ARCHIVE NUMBER - 1513
SSIC 16130
OPC-COG O M DPA B OSR

8 A

CCGDONE BOSTON MA

O
NC DE A1
ISN-A1/01
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ZNR UUUUU

**CORRECTED COPY
DESTROY
PREVIOUS COPIES**

O P 142110Z MAR 87 ZDS
FM COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA
TO ZEN/CCGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC/OSR//
CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC/OSR//
INFO COGARD AIRSTA CAPE MAY NJ
COGARD AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY NC
ZEN/USCGC TAMAROA
COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC//
COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ
ACCT CG-W2GBRC

BT

UNCLAS //N16130//

SUBJ: DISTRESS SITREP ONE M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UCN 112-87)
A. CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY 141619Z MAR 87

1. SITUATION:

- A. HH3F CG1472, CG1495, CG1489 O/D ATLANTIC CITY NJ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 37 SURVIVORS DISEMBARKED, AFTER SUCCESSFUL HOISTS FROM SUBJ VSL.
- B. WX: CEILING- 1500 FT, VIS- 6 M, SEAS 25 FT, WINDS: 360/50 KTS.

2. ACTION TAKEN:

- A. 0920R THIRD DISTRICT RCC REQUEST LAUNCH OF THREE H-3 HELICOPTERS.
- B. 0920R HH3F CG1495, CAPT HARDY(CANFORS) DIVERTED FROM UCN (110-87), ENR QUONSET PT, RI FOR FUEL.
- C. 1001R HH3F CG1472, LT COMER ABN FROM AIRSTA CAPE COD ENR 3844N 7027W ETA O/S 1130R.
- D. 1020R CG1495 ABN FM QUONSET PT ENR SCENE W/RESCUE SWIMMER, ETA 1150R.
- E. 1048R CG1489, LCDR POLL ABN FM AIRSTA CAPE COD WITH HIFR KIT AND RESCUE SWIMMER ENR SCENE, ETA 1215R.
- F. 1119R CG1472 O/S COMMENCED HOISTING SURVIVORS.
- G. 1140R CG1495 O/S, COMMENCED HOISTING SURVIVORS AT 1155R.
- H. 1155R CG1472 D/S ENR ATLANTIC CITY INTL A/P WITH 15 SURVIVORS ABOARD, ETA 1400R.
- I. 1215R CG1489 O/S, COMMENCED HOISTING SURVIVORS.
- J. 1255R CG1495 D/S ENR ATLANTIC CITY INTL A/P WITH 16 SURVIVORS ABOARD, ETA 1445R.
- K. CG1489 D/S ENR ATLANTIC CITY INTL A/P WITH 6 SURVIVORS ABOARD, ETA 145R.
- L. 1350R CG1472 O/D ATLANTIC CITY, SURVIVORS SAFELY ASHORE.
- M. 1435R CG1495 O/D ATLANTIC CITY, SURVIVORS SAFELY ASHORE.
- N. 1435R CG1489 O/D ATLANTIC CITY, SURVIVORS SAFELY ASHORE.

0402/00162

3. FUTURE PLANS:

A. ANTICIPATE RETURN OF CG1472, CG1489, AND CG1495 TO AIRSTA
CAPE COD THIS EVENING. 3ST

4. CASE PENDING RETURN OF HELICOPTERS, REQUEST MUCNO.

5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

A. CG1472:

1. ACFT CDR: LT COMER
2. COPILOT: LTJG TAYLOR
3. FLT MECH: AD1 BARDSLEY
4. AVIONICSMAN: AE1 HAMILTON

B. CG1489:

1. ACFT CDR: LCDR POLL
2. COPILOT: LT WARTH
3. FLT MECH: AD3 NOONAN
4. AVIONICSMAN: AT3 PARADIS
5. RESCUE SWIMMER: ASM3 ROCK

C. CG1495:

1. ACFT CDR: CAPT HARDY (CANFORS)
2. COPILOT: LTJG THOMAS
3. FLT MECH: AM1 LONGER
4. AVIONICSMAN: AT3 MARBLE
5. RESCUE SWIMMER: ASM2 THOMPSON

D. LOCAL NEWS MEDIA NTFD: TV 58, WCIB RADIO, AND CAPE COD
TIMES NTFD. UNIT PAO COORDINATING MEDIA RELEASES.

6. SAR SUMMARY:

A. CG1472:

1. 3.7 HRS ON SORTIE, 0 HRS SEARCHED, 0.6 HRS O/S.

B. CG1489:

1. 3.8 HRS ON SORTIE, 0 HRS SEARCHED, 0.7 HRS O/S.

C. CG1495:

1. 4.7 HRS ON SORTIE, 0 HRS SEARCHED, 1.2 HRS O/S.

BT
#4946
NNNN

FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION TOR-03:15:00:40:24: 87

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ARCHIVE NUMBER - 1529
SSIC 16130
OPC-COG O M DPA B OSR

Handwritten initials: JA

CGSDONE BOSTON MA

O
NC DE A1
ISN-A1/02
OTTUZYUW RUEOABA4949 0740040-UUUU--RUCOSUW.
ZNR UUUU
O P 150030Z MAR 87

FM COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA
TO ZEN/CCGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC/OSR//
COGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC/OSR//
INFO COGARD AIRSTA CAPE MAY NJ
COGARD AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY NC
ZEN/USCGC TAMAROA
COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC//
COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ
ACCT CG-W2GBRC

BT
UNCLAS //N16130//

SUBJ: DISTRESS SITREP TWO AND FINAL M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII
(UCN 112-87)

A. MY 142110Z MAR 87

1. SITUATION:

A. AS PER REF A.

2. ACTION TAKEN:

- A. 1616R CG1489 ABN FM ATLANTIC CITY ENR OTIS.
- B. 1617R CG1495 ABN FM ATLANTIC CITY ENR OTIS.
- C. 1658R CG1472 ABN FM ATLANTIC CITY ENR OTIS.
- D. 1827R CG1489 ON DECK AIRSTA CAPE COD.
- E. 1828R CG1495 ON DECK AIRSTA CAPE COD.
- F. 1906R CG1472 ON DECK AIRSTA CAPE COD.

3. FUTURE PLANS: NONE

4. REQUEST MUCNO

5. SAR SUMMARY:

- A. CG1472:
 - 1. ADDITIONAL 2.2 HRS ON SORTIE
- B. CG1495:
 - 1. ADDITIONAL 2.2 HRS ON SORTIE
- C. CG1489:
 - 1. ADDITIONAL 2.2 HRS ON SORTIE

BT
#4949
NNNN

Handwritten note: 0413/01112/1

FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION TOR-03:15:13:19:22: 87

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ARCHIVE NUMBER - 15182

O A1

A1 DE NC

D3 D0 D1 D5 DE R5

O 150851Z MAR 87

FM USCGC TAMAROA

TO COGDTTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//

INFO COMLANAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC//

COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-TGC//

D1/COGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC//

A1/COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA

COGARD AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY NC

COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ

ACCT CG-W2GERC

BT

UNCLAS //N16130//

SUBJ: DISTRESS SITREP TWO-M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII(UTOW) CAPSIZED
(UCN 005-87)

A. MY 141620Z MAR 87 (NOTAL)

1. SITUATION

A. AS PER REF A.

B. VSL HAS CAPSIZED AND IS LYING ON ITS SIDE.

C. POSIT: 150218R 38-04.6N, 070-09.0W, 25588.2, 42433.5, 59661.6.

D. O/S WX: WIND 352/29, SEAS 350/07, SWELLS 010/15, BARO 29.95F

2. ACTION

A. 0100R TAMAROA PICKED UP A RADAR CONTACT AT 17NM BELIEVED TO BE
SUBJ VSL.

B. 0218R VISUALLY SIGHTED DEBRIS AND LIFE RAFTS IN POSIT 38-04.6N,
070-09.0W. ALSO SIGHTED HULL OF VE/sd eT78 ITS SIDE. UNABLE TO
GET POSITIVE ID DUE TO DARKNESS AND SEAS.

C. 0300R P/P COGDTTHREE WITH INFO. DIRECTED TO CONTACT M/V SOVETSK
(UIZD) AND PASS INFO.

D. 0315R CONTACTED (UIZD) VIA GROUP CAPE MAY AND PASSED APPROPRIATE
INFO. (UIZD) ETA O/S 0500R.

3. FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. REMAIN O/S UNTIL FIRST LIGHT. THEN ATTEMPT TO RECOVER LIFERAFTS
AND DEBRIS.

B. REQUEST SMC COORDINATE ACTION TO BE TAKEN IF VSL UNSALVAGABLE.

4. COGDTTHREE IS SMC.

BT

NNNN

D |DCS|DET|DH |DI |DL (DPA|DPL|DSO|DT |DTM|B)E |F (M) |P |
CEA|FK |R (U) |OAN|OIL (OPC|OR |OSR)RIC|A/S|

ARCHIVE NUMBER - 15309
SSIC 16100
OPC-COG B M DPA OSR

(7)

COGDONE BOSTON MA

P A1
A1 DE NC
P 151616Z MAR 87 ZYB
FM COGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//
TO A1/COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA
RUEOBGA/COGARD AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY NC
ZEN/COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ
RUEDEPB/USCGC TAMAROA
INFO RULSJGA/COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-TGC//
ZEN/COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC-1//
NC/COGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC//
RUCOCGA/COGDFIVE PORTSMOUTH VA//OPC//
ACCT CG-W2GDRC

BT
UNCLAS//N16100//
SUBJ: DISTRESS - M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UR) - ABANDONED
1. SITUATION: ALL FOB SUBJ VESSEL TURNED OVER TO INS OFFICIALS.
NUMEROUS DEBRIS AND OIL SLICK O/S INDICATES THAT SUBJ VSL HAS
SUNK. CGC TAMAROA AND M/V ULAN BATOR ATTEMPTED TO LOCATE
SUBMERGED HULL WITH NEGRES.
2. ACTION: FOR CGC TAMAROA: RELEASED FROM SAR, CHOP TO CAA.
3. FUTURE PLANS:
A. CAA MUCNO 7125 APPLIES.
B. CASE CLOSED.

BT
#1193
NNNN

D |DCS|DET|DH |DI |DL |DPA|DPL|DSO|DT |DTM|B |E |F |M |P |
CEA|FK |R |O |OAN|OIL |OPC|OR |OSR|RIC|A/S|

ARCHIVE NUMBER - 15308

SSIC 16120

OPC-COG B DT E DTM

CCGDONE BOSTON MA

O H0

H0 DE NC

O P 151615Z MAR 87

FM CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//

TO RUEDEPA/COGARD COMMSTA BOSTON MA

RULYWCA/COGARD CAMSLANT PORTSMOUTH VA

NC/CCGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC//

RUCOOGA/COGDFIVE PORTSMOUTH VA//OPC//

ZEN/COMCOGARDGRU SHINNECOCK NY

ZEN/COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ

RUKGNQA/DMAHTC WASHINGTON DC

INFO ZEN/COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC-1//

RUEDEPB/USCGC TAMAROA

RUCOOGA/COMCOGARDGRU EASTERN SHORE CHINCOTEAGUE VA

H0/COMCOGARDGRU WOODS HOLE MA

RUEDAUA/CTG TWO SIX PT ONE

ACCT CG-W2GDRC

BT

UNCLAS//N16120//

SUBJ: BROADCAST CANCELLATION

A. COMLANTAREA COGARD/CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY

1. CANCEL URGENT BROADCAST FROM REF (A), VOICE, CW AND VHF-FM
IAW ITU REGS 1982 AND COMDTINST M2000.3 WITH ADDITIONAL TEXT AS
FOLLOWS;

QUOTE: THE M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII (UR)/UTDW HAS SANK AND NO
LONGER POSES A THREAT TO NAVIGATION.

SIGNED: U.S. COAST GUARD NEW YORK

UNQUOTE.

2. FOR DMAHTC: REQUEST CANCEL NAVAREA IV.

BT

#1178

NNNN

FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION TOR-03:15:20:33:00: 87

D :DCS:DET:DH :DI :DL :DPA:DPL:DSO:DT :DTM(B) :E :F :M :P :
CEA:FK :R :O :OAN:OIL:OPC:OR :OSR:RIC:A/S:

ARCHIVE NUMBER - 15373
SSIC 16000
O-COG DPA DCS E F P DI R DPL

CCGDONE BOSTON MA

C - NK

P E5 D5
E5 D5 DE D1
ISN-A1/06
P 152030Z MAR 87
FM COGARD AIRSTA CAPE COD MA
TO E5/COGARD AIRSTA ELIZABETH CITY NC
INFO ZEN/CCGDONE BOSTON MA//O//
D5/CCGDFIVE PORTSMOUTH VA//O//
ACCT CG-W2GBRC
BT
UNCLAS //N16000//
SUBJ: PERFORMANCE OF DUTY, M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZZI
1. THE CREWS OF THE CAPE COD HH3FS WISH TO PASS
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CREW OF HC130 CGNR 1502 FOR A
SIERRA HOTEL JOB AS OSC. THEIR COORDINATION WAS ESSENTIAL
TO THE SAFE COMPLETION OF THIS DIFFICULT MISSION, WELL DONE
AND THANKS.
BT
NNNN

PRIORITY

UNCLASSIFIED

INCOMING

U S COAST GUARD
HDQTRS TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PAGE 01 OF 02
COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON

004192 15/0938Z
UNIT TOTAL: 022)

INFO: G-TGC (01) AI-60 (01) G-B (01) G-BPA (01) G-C (01) G-CC (01)
G-CP (01) G-CPI (01) G-D (01) G-L (01) G-M (01) G-MER (01)
G-MMI (01) G-MPS (02) G-MTH (01) G-MVI (01) G-NSR (01)
G-OAV (01) G-OSR (01) G-OSR-1 (01) SUPR (01)

----- 15/0938Z A0 (TOTAL COPIES: 022)

PRIORITY

P 150840Z MAR 87 ZZB

FM CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC/

TO COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC-1//

INFO COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-TGC//

NMCC WASHINGTON DC

USINS WASHINGTON DC

CCGDFIVE PORTSMOUTH VA//OPC//

USCGC TAMAROA

SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC//INM-EUR//

FAA WASHINGTON ARTCC LEESBURG VA

CCGDONE BOSTON MA//OPC//

BT

UNCLAS //N16100//

SUBJ: DISTRESS - SITREP ONE - M/V KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII/UTDW
(UR) - ABANDONING SHIP (UCN-0024)

1. SITUATION:

A. 140835R ORIG RECEIVED REPORT FROM GROUP CAPE MAY THAT SUBJ VSL SOUNDED AUTOALARM AT 0820R. SUBSEQUENT COMMS BY GRU CAPE MAY REVEALED SUBJ VSL HAD A 26 DEGREE LIST TO PORT FROM AN UNKNOWN CAUSE 220 NM ESE OF DELAWARE BAY IN POSIT 38-15N 70-19W. SUBJ REQUESTED IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF ITS 37 CREWMEMBERS. ORIG DISPATCHED 3 HH3F'S FROM CGAS CAPE COD WITH COVER FROM 2 C-130'S OUT OF CGAS ELIZABETH CITY. USCGC TAMAROA WAS DIVERTED. THE M/V SEALAND DEVELOPER (US) AND M/V BEAJOLAIS (US) RESPONDED, BUT NEVER ARRIVED ON SCENE. SUBJ EVENTUALLY DEVELOPED A 40 DEG LIST TO PORT. ALL POB WERE SUCCESSFULLY EVACUATED BY HH-3F TO FAA FACILITY ATLANTIC CITY NJ. VSL WAS LAST SEEN FLOATING IN POSITION 38-24N 70-19W, ABANDONED WITH ENGINES RUNNING AT 3 KTS AND VSL LIGHTS ENERGIZED. C-130 ACFT COMMANDER INDICATED SEAS WERE COMING OVER THE PILOT HOUSE. SEVERAL SOVIET COMMERCIAL SHIPS HAVE BEEN DIVERTED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST WITH SALVAGE, ETA UNKNOWN. AGENTS HAVE ARRANGED FOR A NEW YORK CITY TUG COMPANY TO SEND A TUG OUT TOWARDS VSL'S LAST KNOWN POSIT TO ATTEMPT SALVAGE, ETA AM 16 MAR.

B. DESC: 482 FT GENERAL CARGO VSL, 10292 TONS SACKED FLOUR, LPOC HALIFAX N.S. 12 MAR, NPOC HAVANA CUBA 17 MAR. 37 POB, VSL

AGENT SOVSRACHT, USA, PH 212-548-8758

C. WX: WIND N-50 KTS, SEAS N 20-25 FT, VIS 7 NM, CEILING 600 FT.

2. ACTION TAKEN:

A. 140835R ORIG RCVD INITIAL NOTIFICATION.

B. 0918R C130 CG1502 (CGAS ELIZABETH CITY) DIVERTED FROM TRAINING WITH 4 HRS FUEL ON BOARD.

C. 0920R HH3F CG1495 (CGAS CAPE COD) DIVERTED FROM UCN 110-87 TO REFUEL.

D. 1001R HH3F CG1472 (CGAS CAPE COD) ABN, ETA 1130R.

E. 1015R CGC TAMAROA CHOPPED CCGD3 FOR SAR, ETA ON SCENE 2200R.

F. 1020R HH3F CG1495 ABN.

G. 1025R CG1502 ON SCENE.

H. 1048R HH3F CG1489 (CGAS CAPE COD) ABN.

I. 1119R CG1472 ON SCENE, COMMENCED HOISTING SURVIVORS.

J. 1122R C130 CG1501 (CGAS ELIZABETH CITY) ABN.

K. 1140R CG1495 ON SCENE.

L. 1155R CG1472 DEPT SCENE WITH 15 SURVIVORS, CG1495 COMMENCED HOISTING SURVIVORS.

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M. 1205R HH3F CG1479 (CGAS ELIZABETH CITY) DIVERTED.
 N. 1215R CG1489 ON SCENE, COMMENCED HOISTING SURVIVORS.
 O. 1255R CG1495 DEPT SCENE WITH 16 SURVIVORS.
 P. 1305R CG1489 DEPT SCENE WITH LAST 6 SURVIVORS.
 Q. 1350R CG1472 ON DECK ATLANTIC CITY, SURVIVORS SAFELY
 ASHORE.
 R. 1420R CG1501 DPT SCENE ENR CGAS ECITY.
 S. 1435R CG1495 ON DECK ATLANTIC CITY, SURVIVORS SAFELY
 ASHORE. CG1502 ON DECK ATLANTIC CITY FOR FUEL
 T. 1435R CG1489 ON DECK ATLANTIC CITY, SURVIVORS SAFELY
 ASHORE.
 U. 1520R CG1501 ON DECK CGAS ECITY.
 V. 1527R CG1479 ON DECK CGAS ECITY

3. FUTURE PLANS: CGC TAMAROA CONTINUE ENROUTE TO LOCATE SUBJ VSL AND STAND BY UNTIL ARRIVAL OF SOVIET AND/OR COMMERCIAL SALVAGE VESSELS.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

A. SPECULATION BY THE MASTER REVEALED THAT HE DEVELOPED ENGINE PROBLEMS IN THE EARLY AM 14 MAR AND BECAME BEAM TO THE SEAS. PALLETIZED CARGO OF FLOUR MAY HAVE SHIFTED, THUS CAUSING THE INITIAL LIST. VSL WAS SUBSEQUENTLY UNABLE TO REBALLAST HIS CARGO AND LIST CONTINUED TO INCREASE.

B. CREW WAS MET AT FAA FACILITY BY A MYRIAD OF PERSONNEL, INCLUDING SOVIET OFFICIALS, AGENT REPRESENTATIVES, COAST GUARD DEBRIEFERS FROM STA ATLANTIC CITY, FBI, INS, AND CUSTOMS. INS PROCESSED ALL CREWMEMBERS AND RELEASED THEM TO THE SOVIET OFFICIALS AND AGENT REPRESENTATIVES. THE IMMEDIATE PLANS ARE FOR THE CREWMEMBERS TO REMAIN OVERNIGHT IN PAULSBORO NJ, THEN TRAVEL TO OUTSIDE OF WASHINGTON DC ON 16 MAR TO A RECREATION COMPOUND. IF THE VESSEL IS SALVABLE, THE SOVIETS MAY ATTEMPT TO RE-MAN IT. IF NOT, THE CREW WILL PROBABLY DEPART FROM JFK AIRPORT ON 17 MARCH.

C. MEDIA INTEREST WAS EXTREMELY HIGH.

5. CASE PENDS.
BT

G-TGC (1)... INFO FOR COMDT COGARD WASHING (22)

16100/ 1/0099

588158/5569/074
CSN: RXOG0195

1 OF 3

M3 0092

RTD: 000-000/COPIES: 0022
074/09: 37Z 150840Z MAR 87
CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC/

U S COAST GUARD
HDQTRS TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PAGE 01 OF 02

004159 15/0518Z

COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON

(UNIT TOTAL: 022)

INFO: G-TGC (01) G-B (01) A1-60 (01) G-BPA (01) G-C (01) G-CC (01)
 G-CP (01) G-CPI (01) G-D (01) G-L (01) G-M (01) G-MMI (01)
 G-MTH (01) G-NSR (01) G-OSR (01) G-OSR-1 (01) G-OAV (01)
 G-MER (01) G-MPS (02) SUPR (01) G-MVI (01)

----- 15/0650Z A1 "A" (TOTAL COPIES: 022)

PRIORITY

P 150406Z MAR 87

FM CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC//

TO COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//G-TGC//

INFO COMLANTAREA COGARD NEW YORK NY//AOC-1//

P 150140Z MAR 87 ZZB ZDS

FM COGARD STA ATLANTIC CITY NJ

TO CCGDTHREE NEW YORK NY//OPC/

INFO COMCOGARDGRU CAPE MAY NJ

BT

UNCLAS//16000//

SUBJ: SAR DEBRIEF M/V KOMSOMOLES KIRGIZII

1. LT HALL BRIEFED THE CAPTAIN OF SUBJ VESSEL AT FAA TECH CEN. VESSEL IS 147 METERS LONG, 19.7 METERS WIDE AND 12,600 TONS DEAD WEIGHT. VESSEL DEPARTED HALIFAX ON 12 MAR ENROUTE HAVANA WITH 10,292 TONS OF FLOUR. FLOUR WAS IN SACKS. AT APPROX 03400 THERE WAS AN ENGINE PROBLEM, LUBE OIL RELATED. APPARENTLY, THE VESSEL LOST ITS ENGINES FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. THE VESSEL STARTED LISTING DUE TO THE SHIFTING OF THE SACKS OF FLOUR. CREW WAS UNABLE TO PREVENT THE LISTING AND UNABLE TO RIGHT THE VESSEL. CAPTAIN STATED VESSEL WAS NOT TAKING ON WATER.

2. ON SCENE WEATHER: SEAS OF 7 METERS AND WINDS FROM THE NORTH AT 20 METERS PER SECOND. POSITION OF VESSEL WAS 38 26.39N 070 20.22W. ALL 37 MEMBERS WERE EVACUATED AND VESSEL WAS LEFT RUNNING AT IN NORTHLY DIRECTION AT APPROX 3 KTS, WITH 20 DEGS STARBOARD RUDDER ON AND RUNNING LIGHTS LIT.

3. ONLY INJURIES REPORTED WERE TWO MINOR HAND INJURIES, RECEIVED PRIOR TO EVACUATION. MR. MATH MATHIASSEN, ADMIN COORDINATOR FOR RICE, UNRUH CO., SHIPS AGENT ARRIVED FAA TECH CEN APPROX 1745. MR JACK LONERGAN, INS NEWARK, ARRIVED FAA TECH CEN APPROX 1815Q AND BEGAN PROCESSING CREWMEMBERS. CREWMEMBERS WILL BE BROUGHT TO PHILADELPHIA AREA TONIGHT TO BEGIN TRIP BACK TO RUSSIA.

4. CREW CONSISTED OF 37 MEMBERS, 34 MALE, 3 FEMALE. LIST OF NAMES GIVEN TO FBI AND CUSTOMS. FOLLOWING CREW MEMBERS WERE ABOARD:

1. CAPTAIN KHURASHEV VLADIMIR
2. CHIEF MATE KOTEL'NIKOV VALENTIN
3. 1 MATE SHAPOVALOV VALEOY
4. 2 MATE NEVOLIN SERGEY
5. 3 MATE PODOL'NIKOV VIKTOR
6. 4 MATE MORZOV OLEG
7. CHIEF ENGINEER TUMORIN BORIS
8. 2 ENG KAZAKOV ANETOLY
9. 3 ENG KONDRAT'EV SERGEY

U S COAST GUARD
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004159

15 0518Z

- 10. 4 ENG SMIRNOV MIKHAIL
- 11. EL ENG POSTHIKOV VLADIMIR
- 12. CH R/ST SHAROV EVGENY
- 13. R/OPER KUZNETGOV MIKHAIL
- 14. DOCTOR SULIMOV VALERY
- 15. BOATSW DOKUKIN VASILILIY
- 16. SEAMAN TRESKIN ANATOLY
- 17. SEAMAN REZNICHENKO VLADIMIR
- 18. SEAMAN PURYGIN LEONID
- 19. SEAMAN KLOCHEV ALEKSEY
- 20. SEAMAN VERBA SERGEY
- 21. SEAMAN ANDREEV ANDREY
- 22. SEAMAN KAPUSTIU GENNADY
- 23. MOTORMAN OCLOR LEONID
- 24. MOTORMAN GUR@YANOV JURY
- 25. MOTORMAN D@YAKOV ALEKSEY
- 26. MOTORMAN BOBROV VIKTOR
- 27. MOTORMAN IZUMOV ALEXANDR
- 28. MOTORMAN OBRYADIN BORIS
- 29. ELECTR. VOLKOV ALEXANDR
- 30. ELECTR. FIL@CHENKOV STANISLAV
- 31. ELECTR. GRIGOR@EV ANATOLY
- 32. TURNER SELEZNEV ANATOLY
- 33. COOK BOGDANOV ALEKSEY
- 34. COOK KUZ@MIN ALEXANDR
- 35. STEWARD BULKINA TAT@YANA
- 36. STEWARD SHATALOVA MARINA
- 37. STEWARD ILLARIONOVA TAT@YANA

5. CAPTAIN WAS VERY COOPERATIVE AND VERY GRATEFUL TO COAST GUARD FOR ASSISTANCE RENDERED. ALL FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES INVOLVED WORKED WELL TOGETHER. IF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED, CONTACT LT HALL AT (609) 652-3026.
 BT

CWO (1) ... ACT FOR COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON (3)

/ 8/0002

587698/5488/074
 CSN: RXOG0119

1 OF 3

M3 0054

RTD: 000-016/COPIES: 0003
 074/05: 18Z 150140Z MAR 87
 COGARD STA ATLANTIC CITY NJ



BPA-2

FLAG PLOT INCIDENT MEMO

Number: 87-04
Time: 1000
Date: 16 MAR 87

Subj: SOVIET CREW RESCUED
CARGO VESSEL FOUNDERS AND SINKS OFF DELAWARE

Saturday morning, 14 March, three Air Station CAPE COD H-3 helicopters, with two Air Station ELIZABETH CITY C-130's flying cover, safely evacuated 37 Soviet crewmen to Atlantic City, N. J. when their 482-foot Soviet cargo vessel KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII, enroute Havana, Cuba, foundered 220 miles east of Delaware Bay. The evacuation was requested after 10,292 tons of cargo shifted in 20-foot seas. The crew was unable to correct a 26 degree list which eventually increased to 40 degrees. When KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII was evacuated, engines running, it was headed in a northerly direction at three knots with the running lights energized.

After debrief on Saturday, the rescued Soviets were turned over to Immigration officials. The master revealed that engine problems early Saturday morning resulted in the vessel laying beam to the seas. He theorized that the palletized cargo of flour had shifted and caused the initial list. The crew was unable to stabilize the vessel and the list increased.

Before sunrise Sunday morning, cutter TAMAROA arrived on scene and discovered KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII capsized. At day light, TAMAROA, joined by the Soviet M/V YAAH GATOP, searched for KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII but could not relocate it. The case was closed after evaluation of floating debris indicated KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII sank. The vessel's agent indicated that planned salvage operations had been cancelled.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. A. Meadows".

D. A. MEADOWS, CAPT, USCG
Chief, CG Headquarters Command Center

1522VMAYFWARBY

REAGAN PRAISES HEROES OF DARING MID-SEA RESCUE

CG HELOS RESCUE 37 SOVIETS FROM SINKING FREIGHTER

By PA3 Kenn Arbogast

Three H-3 helicopters from Air Station Cape Cod battled sleet and gale force winds to pluck 37 Soviet sailors from the deck of a sinking freighter 220 miles off the New Jersey coastline March 14.

During a ceremony honoring the Coast Guards rescuers in the White House Rose Garden, President Reagan called it, "one of the most dramatic rescue missions in the history of the Coast Guard."

Group Cape May received a distress call from the 482-foot Komsomolets Kirgizii about 8:30 that morning. The ship's skipper reported his vessel had a 26 degree port list in heavy seas and requested immediate evacuation of his crew. The ship's list prevented the crew from lowering the lifeboats.

by Capt W. J. ...
LTJG Matthew Thormal

Third District operations center on Governors Island dispatched a C-130 from Air Station Elizabeth City to assess the situation. The Coast Guard Cutter Tamaroa, sailing up the New Jersey coast enroute New Hampshire, was directed to the scene as well.

A Cape Cod H-3, CG-1495, diverted from a search for a missing aircraft near Block Island, RI, to refuel and flew to assist the distressed freighter at 10:00 a.m. Two other helos left directly from the air station.

"We made it just in the nick of time," said LT Keith Comer, pilot of the first helo on-scene, CG-1472. "The entire port side was awash."

The helo hovered 50 feet over the fantail of the sinking ship. Twenty-foot swells washed over the pilot house. Gusts of 55-knots howled through through the ship's superstructure and pounded the helo.

"It took 15 minutes to find a place to drop the basket where it wouldn't snag, it was blowing around so in the wind," Comer said.

Because of the helo's fuel supply and the ship's dangerous position, two people rode up in the basket at a time. The first helo hoisted 15 people aboard in 20 minutes, then departed for Atlantic City International Airport, accompanied by the C-130 from Elizabeth City, CG-1501.

A second C-130, CG-1502, remained on-scene while the second helo, CG-1495, hauled up 16 more crewmen. The pilot of CG-1495 was Capt. Rick Hardy, an exchange pilot from the Canadian Forces.

"It looked to me like the vessel was going down at any moment," said Hardy. "The deck was almost totally awash."

After CG-1495 finished its hoists and left for Atlantic City with CG-1501, CG-1489 moved into position over the ship's stern to rescue the remaining six crewmembers, including the skipper.

"By the time we got there, the ship had a 40 degree list," said AD3 Mark Noonan, hoist operator on CG-1489. "It was a pretty tough hoist job, because of all the obstructions on deck and the wind knocking the basket around."

The last helo arrived in Atlantic City at 2:35. Each helo was in the air about 4 hours and travelled more than 400 miles on the mission. A fourth H-3, CG-1479 from Elizabeth City, was enroute to the scene, but turned back once all the ship's crew were safely aboard the helos.

LTJG Matthew Thomas, co-pilot of CG-1495, talked with the rescued Soviet captain. The skipper told Thomas his ship's engines stopped and the vessel turned broadside in 30-foot waves. The load of flour sacks shifted to one side and caused the ship to list, Thomas said.

"He was distressed," Thomas said, describing the skipper who watched his ship sinking. "It's like watching something die, and he felt that way too. Part of himself died as it sank."

The Komsomolets Kirgizzii was barely afloat when Tamaroa arrived on-scene late Saturday night. According to the Tamaroa's executive officer, LCDR Kenneth Dykstra, the ship was floating on its side, about to sink, when the Tamaroa's searchlights spotted it.'

"The freighter was laying over, about 90 degrees," Dykstra said. "With the 18-foot swells, it was apparent that it was going down."

Tamaroa moved away to wait for first light. At dawn, there was no freighter afloat, only debris.

"All that was left was thousands and thousands of bags of flour," Dykstra said. "Except for an oil slick, all the water in the area was white."

The rescued Soviets stayed in New Jersey the night of March 14 and flew to a Soviet embassy compound the next day.

The rescued and the rescuers were reunited three days later in Washington. President Reagan invited the Soviet crew to attend an awards ceremony at the White House. The pilots, co-pilots and flight mechanics on each crew received Air Medals and other crewmembers received Coast Guard Commendation Medals.

In praising the crews for the daring efforts, Reagan said, "In your courage, your tenacity, your know-how, you summed up all that is best in the American spirit -- in a word, all that is heroic."

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 17, 1987

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO GREET THE CREW OF KOMSOMOLETS KIRGIZII
AND PRESENT COMMENDATIONS TO COAST GUARD RESCUERS

The Rose Garden

11:14 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Secretary Dole, Vice Admiral Irwin, Charge Sokolov, American and Soviet citizens, good morning and welcome to the White House. And I want to make my welcome especially warm, because for so many of you, coming here today was -- well, let's just say that it was unexpected, to say the least.

The first distress signal reached the Coast Guard station at Cape May, New Jersey, at 8:20 a.m. this past Saturday morning. Just 15 minutes later, the Coast Guard had established radio contact with the stricken vessel -- a Soviet freighter -- and fixed her position at a point some 200 miles east of Cape May. The distress signals were relayed to the Coast Guard Air Station on Cape Cod, and what took place next represents one of the most dramatic rescue missions in the history of the Coast Guard.

Three Coast Guard helicopters left Cape Cod to rendezvous with two C-130s already flying above the troubled vessel. The first chopper, piloted by Lt. Keith Comer, reached the ship at 11:19 a.m. He found her listing 26 degrees to port in seas that were running 20 feet with waves that would soon crash over the pilot house, the highest point of the ship. Lt. Comer's helicopter was being blasted by rain and sleet and gale force winds that were gusting up to 55 knots. But Lt. Comer managed to hover steadily some 75 feet above the ship. And then, with infinite care, he and his crew lowered a wire basket to the pitching deck. A woman was the first to climb into the basket. Then others. And in all, Lt. Comer and his crew rescued 15 people before heading back to shore.

The second helicopter, flown by Captain Richard Hardy, a Canadian Air Force pilot on an exchange program, arrived at 11:40 a.m. and took 16 crew members aboard. The third helicopter, piloted by Lt. Commander Gary Poll, plucked up the last six crew members and carried them to safety.

And the only injury in all of this: a cut finger.

Coast Guard officials said afterwards that it was hard to overstate the skill and bravery that the rescue involved. I think we all know what they mean.

Screaming winds, the rain, the sleet, the pitching seas. Transferring people from a moving ship to moving helicopters. Pilots contending with the helicopters fuel range. One Coast Guard spokesman said with admirable understatement that, "In view of the fuel situation, they had to do it pretty rapidly."

This mission represents just one more example of cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union in search and rescue missions -- indeed, the Coast Guard and the Soviet Merchant Marines are scheduled to hold further talks in Moscow early next month.

But in the end, the story of this rescue is above all the story of human beings -- of men and women in desperate danger and the men and women who saved their lives.

And if I could just interject something here, in the past I've often talked about what would happen if ordinary Americans and people from the Soviet Union could get together -- get together as human beings, as men and women who breathe the same air, share the same concerns about making life better for themselves and their children. And here we have a case where just that happened -- where pilots from Mission Viejo, California; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Prince Edward's Island, Canada, reached out to sailors from Leningrad, Novgorod and Yaroslavl. I hope and pray that no matter how stormy international affairs, the leaders of the world can look at what happened between these fliers and sailors and be duly inspired.

After all, this good planet whirling through space isn't so very different from a ship upon the sea. We must reach out to each other in good will. For we have no other alternative.

And so, to Captain Khurashuv and his fine crew rescued from the Soviet vessel: Welcome again to our country -- and we thank God for your safety. As you prepare to return home -- I'm going to be very brave here -- S chastlovo puti.

And to all the men and women of the United States Coast Guard who made this rescue possible: As your Commander-in-Chief, it's my high honor to commend you on a job well done. In your courage, your tenacity, your know-how, you summed up all that is best in the American spirit -- in a word, all that is heroic.

Congratulations once again, God bless you. (Applause.)

END

11:25 A.M. EST















