

[REDACTED] LCDR

From: [REDACTED] LCDR
Sent: Friday, September 01, 2006 7:27 AM
To: [REDACTED] LCDR
Subject: Captain Russell's coments from HEALY web page - 21 August

I know you're well aware of the tragic dive accident that occurred two days ago. I wanted to take a moment to share some details of what happened, how the crew is faring, and what our revised plans are. You are vital members of the HEALY family and many turn to you for support in their times of need.

We stopped for a short break in operations on Wednesday about 500 miles NW of Barrow following our successful completion of the westernmost leg of the current science mission. In taking advantage of our first real stop in ice in a month plus of operations, we capitalized on the opportunity to conduct a dive operation with our Dive Team. Unlike some of the press reports, the dive took place at the bow of the ship in a small area of open water. The dive operation was going pretty much as planned when something happened under the water while LT Hill and BM2 Duque were underwater together. When a problem was detected by the personnel supporting the dive operation, the divers were retrieved from the water. Immediate medical attention was provided and they were evacuated to the ship quickly where revival efforts continued for over an hour through the superlative efforts of many. Unfortunately, the efforts were unsuccessful and LT Hill and Petty Officer Duque were declared deceased just after 8:00 pm local time.

We have been enroute Barrow since then pressing hard but safely through various ice conditions for several things that will take place today. Our fallen shipmates will be transferred off today via helo, with an appropriate Coast Guard escort, and transported back to the states. We will embark the Chaplain, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, and a team who will conduct an investigation of the accident.

After these events, we will transit to Nome to disembark the Science Party and to embark additional Coast Guard support personnel. This will take place on Tuesday. Afterwards we will transit to Kodiak for a four day port call providing a good opportunity to take advantage of support from the CG family and to afford the crew the best opportunity to take advantage of a variety of outlets for a break from the shipboard routine in their quest to return to normality in their lives.

We will follow this up with a short transit to Dutch Harbor, our previously planned port call, for a 3 day stop. Our focus will be to execute a complex science equipment transfer - moving over 60 tons of gear on and off the ship plus completing many other logistics efforts. We'll depart on 4 Sep enroute Barrow ready to receive our 3rd Phase science party led by Dr. [REDACTED]

LT Hill and BM2 Duque were outstanding shipmates. They fully embodied our service's core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty.

LT Hill performed in an outstanding manner as our Marine Science Officer coordinating many highly complex activities that enabled our successful scientific operations. Her infectious positive attitude and high energy served her well as the Morale Officer. Her constant smile and sense of humor were always uplifting to others.

BM2 Duque was one of the most impressive Boatswain's Mates I've ever had the pleasure of serving with. He was the epitome of professionalism providing the perfect role model for the newest members of the crew. His pride in being a Coast Guardsman was evident in everything he did - Coxswain, Weapons Petty Officer, Diver, leader of the deck force, trainer and shipmate. He inspired all others, regardless of rank, to take pride and to seek perfection in all that they do.

The Officer's, Chief Petty Officers and Crew have done a magnificent job taking care of each other during this difficult time. The Coast Guard family has mobilized on many fronts to ensure the crew and our fallen

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shipmates are well taken care of. The outpouring of support has been beyond description and is well appreciated by all of our crew. Your direct support to your loved ones and friends in the HEALY crew is important as we grieve and work through the aftermath of this tragedy. We couldn't do it with out - thanks for being there.

Very respectfully, Doug Russell

CAPT D. G. Russell

Commanding Officer

USCGC HEALY (WAGB-20)

drussell@healy.uscg.mil

Underway Phone: [REDACTED] - Iridium

[REDACTED] - Inmarsat

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