



Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Spencerian*, the official newsletter of CGC SPENCER. We aim to reach out to both the crew and their families, to share what the cutter has been up to and what lies ahead. We'll be bringing you crew profiles, showcasing the crew's photographic talents, and highlighting the hard work and devotion to duty the crew displays every day.

From the CO

Dear Family Members and Friends of SPENCER,

I am very pleased to share our inaugural newsletter with you. Your SPENCER sailors work extremely hard in relative anonymity while at sea saving lives, hunting down illicit traffickers, enforcing safety and fisheries regulations, and defending the nation. With this newsletter, it is our intention to start sharing more of our stories and exploits with you. Your

support is a vital part of our success. Without it, we could not execute the Coast Guard's missions as effectively.

As we navigate through the annual transfer season, we say goodbye to many friends that diligently served their country and helped keep their shipmates safe. I offer my sincerest thanks to them for their contributions to SPENCER, and to their families for the sacrifices made during our deployments. Transfer season is also full of excitement and anticipation as we welcome aboard new shipmates. I look forward to serving alongside them and meeting their friends and family members.

Please email me any time if you have any questions about SPENCER - geoffrey.p.gagnier@uscg.mil. I also invite you to visit us while we are moored in Boston. If you are bringing kids with you, let us know ahead of time and we'll make their visit as memorable as possible. If we

are having an all-hands gathering that day, you can join us and meet some of your SPENCER sailor's shipmates. With that in mind, please feel free to join us the day we say goodbye to your loved ones who are transferring.

Thank you again for your support of SPENCER.

Sincerely,
Commander Geoff Gagnier
Commanding Officer

From the Ombudsman

Hello Crew, Families, and Friends of the SPENCER!

For those of you who are new to the SPENCER family, my name is Betsy Jones. As the SPENCER's Ombudsman, I act as a liaison from the Command to the families and vice versa. I am here to help you with locating resources, communicating information from the Command to you, and to take concerns from you to the Command. Please feel free to contact me at spencerombudsman@yahoo.com

Or, you can call me at:
Home - (603) 718-8678
Cell - (757) 285-6044

If you would like to be added or removed from my contact list please notify me or go through the correct channels on the ship. I am very proud to be your Ombudsman and I am happy to help. For those of you who are leaving, it was a privilege to have met you and I wish you the best! For those joining the SPENCER, I look forward to getting to know you.

Warm Regards,
Betsy Jones
Ombudsman, SPENCER

Patrol Happenings



It's been a busy six months. SPENCER got underway on November 20, 2011 to patrol New England and the Caribbean Sea. We boarded and inspected fishing boats to make sure they were prepared for winter, and that they were complying with federal fisheries regulations.



We were fortunate enough to have a brief port call in Boston on Thanksgiving Day, so that crewmembers could spend the

holiday with their family. For those without family in the area, or on duty, SPENCER's galley staff prepared a sumptuous feast.



When SPENCER returned to sea, we had a unique opportunity to advance our education while carrying out our mission. Professor Scott Frahlich, of Endicott College, embarked as a Semester At Sea professor, teaching college-level courses in subjects such as mathematics, writing, and psychology. Despite a grueling patrol schedule, the crew successfully earned 167 college credits.



In the Caribbean, SPENCER served as a visible symbol of America's commitment to the region when she participated in a training exercise with the

Colombian Navy and Coast Guard near San Andres Island in the western Caribbean. We conducted a passing exercise, or PASSEX, which simulated a joint pursuit of a go-fast smuggling vessel. SPENCER detected the go-fast, played by a Colombian patrol boat, and launched our over-the-horizon boat to intercept. As the go-fast simulated approaching Colombian waters, we passed control of the case over to the Colombians, who dispatched a Midnight Express interceptor boat. The Colombian crew simulated the use of warning shots and disabling fire before the vessel was stopped. The Colombians then conducted a boarding with our law enforcement team.



After leaving San Andres Island, SPENCER worked with USS OAK HILL, a U.S. Navy landing ship, to maintain custody of a Honduran fishing vessel loaded with 1.5 tons of pure cocaine. OAK HILL made the initial intercept of the smuggling vessel, but transferred custody of the drugs and the fishing boat, as well as 17 smugglers, to SPENCER in an at-sea operation involving three small boats and two helicopters. SPENCER's crew took charge of the vessel and contraband until CGC VIGILANT took custody, eventually transferring it to CGC VENTUROUS, which towed it to Miami.



Being away from home during the holidays is never easy, but the crew celebrated with enthusiasm. Members of the morale committee played Santa Claus and his elves by distributing surprise presents from home that families had sent in before SPENCER sailed, along with candy-filled stockings. The crew indulged their creative side by building gingerbread houses, or in one case a gingerbread ship, and listened to a Coast Guard version of *The Night Before Christmas*. We were fortunate enough to pull into Grand Cayman for a three-day port call on Christmas Day, allowing for some much-needed rest and relaxation, as well as the opportunity to call our families. After 60 days away from home, we returned to Boston on January 19th for some much-needed rest and relaxation before turning the cutter over to the crew of CGC ESCANABA.

Hail and Farewell

Transfer season marks a bittersweet phase of Coast Guard life. Old friends and shipmates move on to new duty stations, while we welcome our new arrivals and look forward to serving with them.

A warm welcome to our newest arrivals:

- FN Patrick McGinnis
- SN Gage Hill
- SN Tyler Kelley

- SN Joseph Cavalier
- SN Alfred Donegan
- SK3 Brian Cole
- ME3 Daniel Farnsworth
- DC3 Cody McLendon
- MK3 Janisse Rivera-Soto
- MK3 Douglas Jarden
- MK2 Nicholas Klotz
- MKC Robin Lutz
- ENS Daniel Evans
- ENS Joshua Tucker

And to all our departing shipmates, best of luck at your new assignments, we've enjoyed serving with you.

- SN Andy Jeh
- SN Grant Furlong
- BM3 Nicholas Santos
- ET3 Ben Trenkler
- ET3 Josh Callahan
- ME3 Luis Flores
- SK3 Enrique Yopez
- IT2 Chris Grasso
- OS2 Omar Arietta
- MK1 Michael Jacobs
- EMC David Kinney
- MEC Mohammed Raza
- MKC James Lacagnina
- LTJG Matthew Malacaria
- LTJG Jeremy Somplasky
- LTJG Luke Walsh

Command Assessment of Readiness for Training

CART is an evaluation of the cutter's training programs, material condition, and ability to safely complete the Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA). The assessment is conducted prior to TSTA, which SPENCER will be attending in August. Members of the Atlantic Training Group (ATG) visited the cutter in May and evaluated our material condition and observed us conducting drills. The ATG members were very impressed by the crew's

professionalism and enthusiasm. The Electrical, A-gang and Main Propulsion divisions all had zero discrepancies, and the ship as a whole got a grade of 93%! Well done everyone!

View from the Deckplates

This section features “Day in the Life” accounts of different crewmember’s experiences aboard SPENCER. This issue’s “View” comes from FN John Thompson, who took most of the photographs in this issue.

With the shrill screech of the Bo’sun’s pipe the work day begins. Out of my rack I climb, like a bear from his den. I make my way to the locker space and get ready for the day. The mess deck is next; breakfast is now being served to the crew. After the crew is done eating, each turns to leave for his or her respective department; mine is main prop. We’re responsible for the diesel engines and the generators. A trip to the heart of ship is required to accomplish this. Before I arrive at my shop, our MK2 is there, waiting for myself and the rest of our department. Once we arrive, he lays out the plan for the day. This can be anything from basic preventive maintenance (PMS) and cleaning to working on the main diesel engines. The meeting concludes and we head to our respective tasks. I will be working with one of the other Non-rates to get basic PMS done. As we complete our assigned tasks, we hear the pipe for the noon meal. Clean ups take place, then we scurry off to get washed up and eat. Finished eating just in time “Now officer’s call, first call to Quarters” comes belting over the PA system. I make my way to the flight deck with the rest of the crew. Quarters takes place. The Captain and XO tell us what the ship will be doing over the next few days. After, we break into our departments for more detailed instructions. Quarters is over. It is back to work. Throughout the rest of the

day I am assigned to different tasks ranging from clean ups in the engine room to helping the MK’s. The work day ends with shrill notes from the Bo’sun’s pipe. Yet another day has come on gone on the *USCGC SPENCER*.

Community Service

During our crew swap with ESCANABA, several crew members went above and beyond to give back to the community. Bravo zulu to all our volunteers!

- OSC Resendes: Save the Bay
- FS1 Nicholson: Boston Food Bank & Habitat for Humanity
- FS3 Boatman-Fields: Northeastern Humane Shelter
- FN Champagne : North Adams Baseball Clinic

Getting Back in the Game



Despite spending over four months ashore, SPENCER’s crew refused to allow their skills to atrophy. Between damage control drills, simulator sessions, and a daylong shakedown cruise, we’ve all been working hard to keep ourselves sharp and ready for our next patrol. The conning officers and navigation team travelled to the

Coast Guard Academy to practice conning in the bridge simulator, as well as approaching an oiler for underway replenishment. The Damage Control Division led a trip to Naval Station Newport for sessions in the fire school and USS Buttercup flooding simulator.

The capstone of our underway preparations was our one-day shakedown cruise. We left Boston on the morning of 15 May, got out to open water, and operated both the over-the-horizon boat and rigid-hull inflatable boat before returning to Boston. Although brief, the day gave us the opportunity to get back into our underway mindset and left us ready for the coming patrol.

Did You Know??

In 1991, SPENCER towed a disabled US Navy frigate to safety. This ship was nearly twice the size and over twice the tonnage of SPENCER

Heritage & History



On April 17th, 1943, the previous CGC SPENCER (WPG 36) was escorting Convoy HX-223 across the Atlantic to England when her sonarmen detected the German submarine U-175. SPENCER's crew sprang into action, bracketing the u-boat with depth charges and forcing her to

the surface. SPENCER and her sister ship CGC DUANE immediately opened fire with their deck guns, and the German crew began abandoning ship. SPENCER dispatched a small boat with a boarding party to U-175, to ensure that she was truly out of action, gather intelligence, and capture the famed Enigma encryption device. With pistols drawn, LT Ross Bullard and BM1 Mike Hall leapt aboard the crippled submarine, but she was too badly damaged to enter. While they were unable to capture the code materials, LT Bullard and BM1 Hall were the first American military personnel to conduct a hostile boarding of an enemy vessel since the 19th century.

