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COMMANDING OFFICER—CDR RILEY GATEWOOD

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VIGILANT departed Cape Canaveral on March 18th for an exciting patrol transiting through the Panama Canal to navigate the waters of the Eastern Pacific. Helicopter operations, law enforcement, drug interdiction, and damage control training compromised much of our daily schedule.

Deservingly, the crew enjoyed mid patrol breaks in Golfito, Costa Rica, Puerto Chiapas, Mexico and an overnight break in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba before returning home to Cape Canaveral.

The crew experienced a lot of firsts this trip. The warm waters of the Pacific came alive with Bioluminescence on one particular night. It was truly amazing; unlike anything we've ever seen. Also, the good ship VIGILANT crossed the equator and many members were brought before King Neptune's court where they begged and pleaded for membership in his royal domain.

As a final note, this patrol marks the end of assignment for many of our valued shipmates. I like to thank you and your families for the sacrifices made to ensure VIGILANT could always be counted on to perform her mission. I wish you all fair winds, with following seas.

OPERATIONS

Working side by side with the U.S. Navy, the Ecuadorian Coast Guard and other Coast Guard cutters, VIGILANT aided in the interdiction and transfer of forty-four detainees and 5,313 kilograms of cocaine while patrolling the waters of the Eastern Pacific. Towards the conclusion of the patrol, VIGILANT was tasked to transport twenty-two detainees across the Panama Canal for further disposition at Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

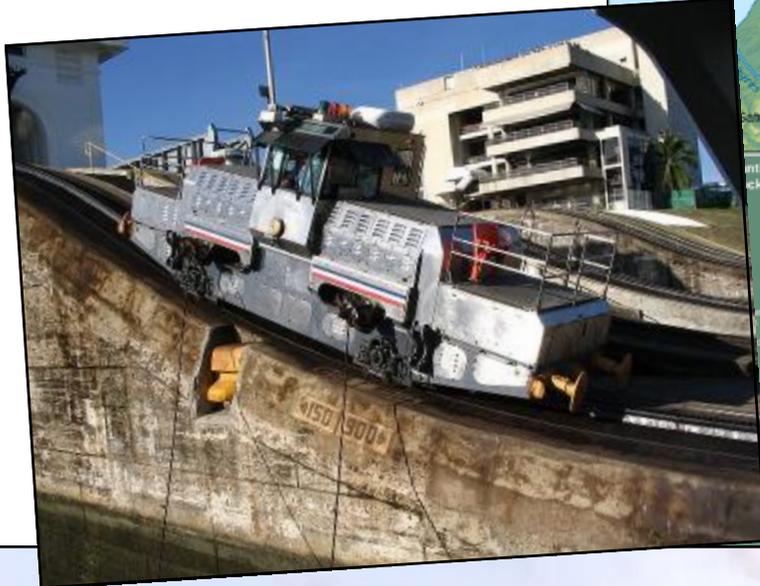
Marine life in the Pacific was incredibly visible as VIGILANT came across numerous mammals and fish in the Eastern Pacific. Lookouts routinely reported dolphins, whales, sea turtles, sting rays, leaping marlin and killer whales. In support of one of the Coast Guards fundamental missions, protecting and conserving living marine resources, VIGILANT rescued four sea turtles trapped in fishing gear. After spotting the tangled sea turtles, VIGILANT launched one of her small boats and proceeded towards the distressed animals. Carefully removing the nets from the turtles' fins and necks, BM1 Goolsby, MK2 Henderson and SA Demers were able to free the turtles without causing any harm.



PANAMA CANAL

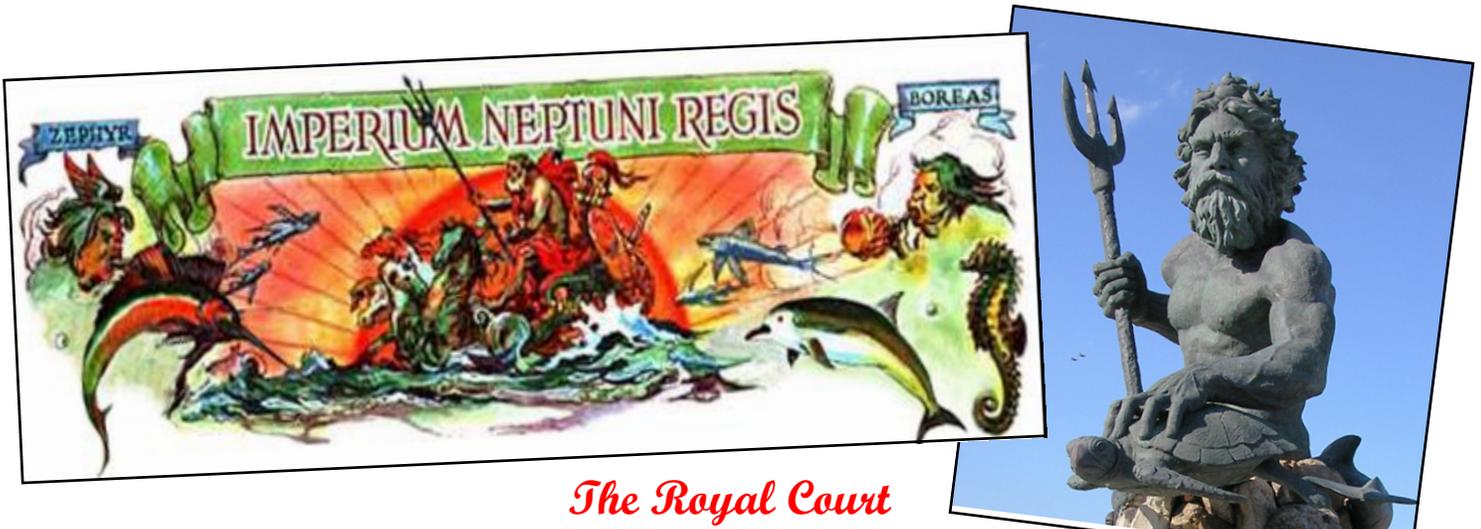
The *Order of the Ditch* is a Naval certificate awarded to sailors who have navigated the Panama Canal. In order to reach our patrol area in the Pacific Ocean, VIGILANT safely navigated over 50 nautical miles through the narrow Panama Canal to include the Gatun, Miraflores and Pedro Miguel locks.

The lock system raised the ship 85-feet above sea level for the transit across and then lowered us back on the south side. The entire trip took us 11-hours to complete.



SEAGOING CEREMONIES

VIGILANT and her crew patrolled more than 1,000 nautical miles south to reach the Equator just East of the Galapagos Islands. During present-day Equator-crossing ceremonies, Neptunus Rex, the mythological ruler of the seas, is paid due homage by Sailors and presides over the initiation into his realm of Pollywogs, lowest of the low and first-time “crossers”. Custom and tradition dictate that the oldest and most distinguished senior shellback member of the crew preside in appropriate garb as “King Neptune” along with the Royal Court. Once deemed worthy by the king and court, by passing a series of tests, each Sailor becomes a “Trusty Shellback” and is given a much-treasured certificate of acknowledgement and recognition, signed by King Neptune, the Commanding Officer and Davy Jones, listing exact longitude and latitude of crossing.



THE MIGHTY VIGILANT
POEM BY OS2 JAVIER GONZALEZ

-Let me convey a story brief,
of the mighty Vigilant.

-She goes where others dare not go
and many say she can't.

-And if you'll spare a moment,
I would just share a word.

-About some of the hardy souls,
that can be found aboard.

-The Skipper runs a right, tight ship.
The Ops, she points the way.

-and according to XO's POD,
it's Wednesday, everyday?

-The EO knows if the genny goes
he'll be woken up tonight.

-The MPA is all tatted up,
hot damn, that man looks right.

-One can't forget the Chief's Mess.
keepers of Guard tradition.

-I'm sure it's pure coincidence,
they're closest to the kitchen.

-The engineers, they work her gears,
and give the Vig her steam.

-They're all a bunch of teddy bears,
although they look so mean.

-We also have the deckies,
splicing ropes, and handling lines

-Grinding, painting, sanding.... just kidding
they're playing FIFA all the time.

-FSs in the galley, slinging hash,
earning their pay,

-By God that is a thankless job,
and they do it every day. (lay off the salt)

-The MEs and the Gunners Mates,
with their bullets and their shells.

-If ever in a scrap we are,
those boys will give'em hell.

-Those secret squirrels in the OS Shop,
What do they actually do?

-I'd tell you, oh I would you see, but
then I'd have to kill you too.

-Lastly Vig's IT Shop,
a one man IT force.

-But IT2, what can he do
it's a shitty satellite course.

-There are so many left to mention,
believe, you're on my mind.

-But if I listed everyone,
I'd eat up all the time.

-Know that you're all important,
as are the things you do.

-And for this filthy WOG it's been
an honor, and a privilege, to serve with all of you

GOLFITO, COSTA RICA

After being underway for 21 straight days, VIGILANT was finally able to stop for a mid-patrol break in Golfito, Costa Rica. Though the town was small and quiet in nature, it had some unique attractions to offer. During liberty hours, crewmembers visited the rain forest and participated in zip line excursions. Members who participated in this event took an exciting ride through the tropical mountains of Costa Rica and accelerated their way down 3,000 meters of zip lines.

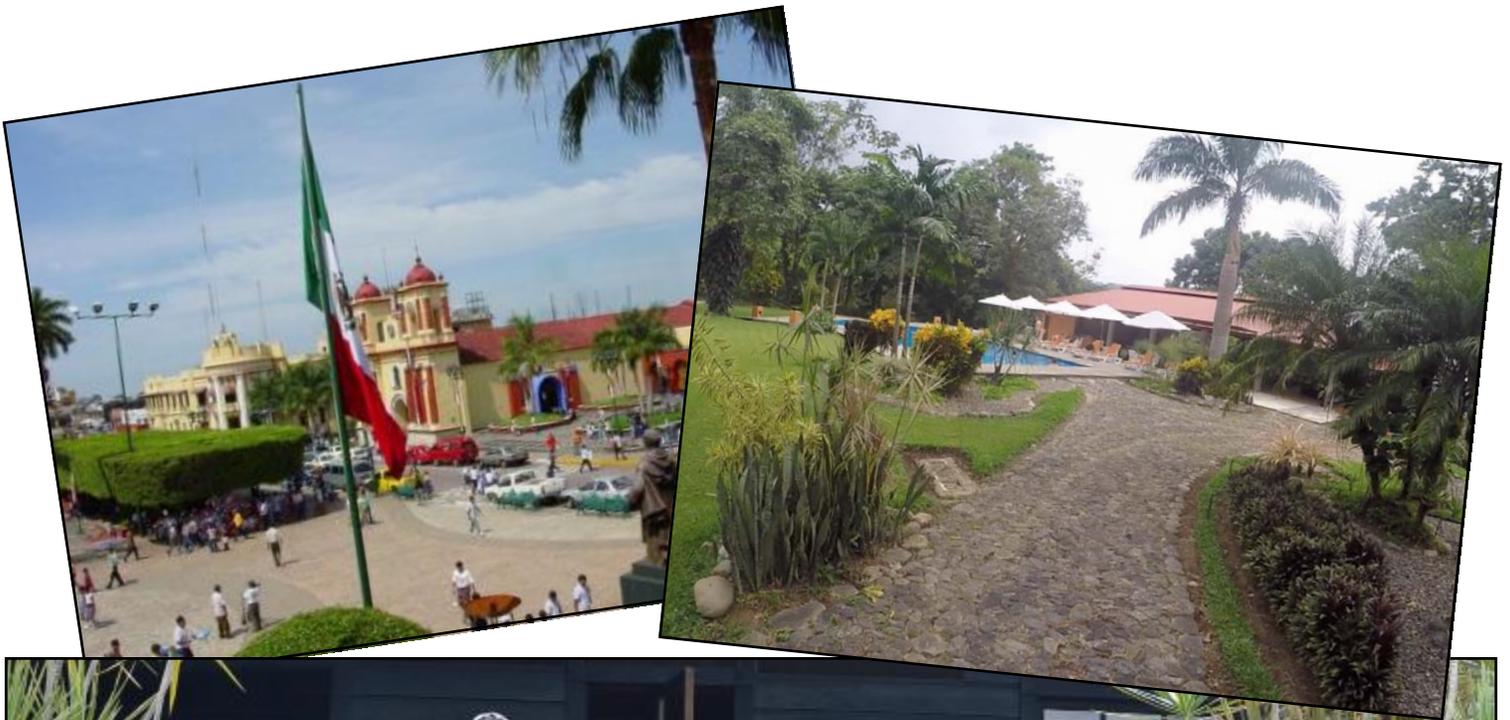
Other members of the crew enjoyed an off-road trip ending with a short hike to beautiful waterfalls and streams. This adventure involved practical hiking, swimming, cliff diving and a fulfilling meal at a local restaurant to conclude the trip.

Those who sought a more relaxing stay opted for Hotel Casa Roland or Banana Bay, that provided members with a large swimming pool, quiet restaurant area, and ample Wi-fi to facilitate calls to their loved ones. Fishermen were in paradise as they enjoyed charter fishing catching exotic fish such as Marlin, Markel, Yellow Fin Tuna, Rooster Fish, Grouper, Red fish and more.



PUERTO CHIAPAS, MEXICO

Puerto Chiapas, a small Mexican fishing town 8 miles north of the border with Guatemala, allowed VIGILANT's crew to rest, stock up on goods and continue on patrol after a well rested break. Most of the crew took the 20 minute ride to the bigger city of Tapachula with a population of nearly 400,000. Being the capital of the Mexican State, Chiapas, Tapachula had commodities and services common to larger cities. Freshly cooked meals along with a Wal-Mart, Sam's Club and Holiday Inn, ensured VIGILANT's crewmembers could have an enjoyable port call. Additionally, members were able to visit Ancient Mayan ruins and take tours of local Cocoa and Coffee bean plantations. Everywhere the crew went in Mexico, they experienced Latin hospitality while witnessing the traditional process of hand crafts and authentic Mexican cuisine.



GUNNERY AND PYROTECHNICS TRAINING

One most exciting and fun exercises we conduct onboard are the Gunnery and Pyrotechnics Trainings. During Gunnery Exercises, everyone involved simulates General Quarters conditions, which trains the crew on how to respond in the event of an imminent attack. Within minutes of announcing the drill, everyone onboard knows exactly where to be, what to do, and the appropriate gear to wear.

Pyrotechnic Training is mandatory for all new personnel and members involved in small boat evolutions. After a quick presentation on the specifications and proper deployment procedures for the pyrotechnics, all members involved get to have a hands on experience with parachute flares, smoke floats and pencil flares.



QUALIFICATIONS

Underway OOD

ENS Francis

ET1 Torgesen

Underway EOW

ENS Daniels

Boarding Officer

BM2 Poklemba

Inport OOD & HCO

ENS Ross

Helm and Lookout

SN Harvey

SN Kaui

SN Symanski

SN Magnuson

BMOW

BM2 Poklemba

BM2 Loerzel

SA Demers

Good Conduct Award

OS3 Diehl

Advancements:

Congrats to FN Waluski, SN Milne and SN Magnuson on their advancements and SKC Dombrowski on receiving his permanent cutterman's pin! Representing 5 years of sea service.

Quarter Master of the Watch

ENS Vanstraten

Small Boat Engineer & Fuel Oil Water King

MK2 Henderson

Small Boat Engineer

EM3 Lynster

ET2 Harris

Coxswain OTH

BM2 Poklemba

Coxswain CBL

BMC Brown

BM2 Poklemba

Pursuit Crewman

ET2 Harris

MK2 Henderson

BM2 Poklemba

Helo Tie Down

ET2 Floyd

ET2 Harris

SN Vega-Mercado

SN Harvey

Photo Courtesy of:

ENS Francis

MK2 Hencken

EM2 Bushnell



UNDERWAY LIFE



UNDERWAY LIFE

