

SUMMER PATROL 2011

JULY 2011



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PATROL SUMMARY

VIGILANT departed Port Canaveral on July 17 for new adventures with 21 new shipmates.

We encountered some problems with our navigation equipment as soon as we left the pier and had to pull into Miami for a day of repairs. We quickly put that behind us and continued heading south to execute our mission and get our new shipmates qualified.

As soon as we got comfortable in our operating area, we were tasked to head back up to the Florida Straits to assist with an influx of Cuban migrants. This caused some disruption in our port call planning and we did not get a break for 18 days when we finally pulled into Key West for a three-day stop.

We then headed back to our assigned operating area in the southwestern Caribbean. Unexpectedly, we received a Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron from Jacksonville, FL for two weeks. This capability allowed us to increase our search sensors and improved our ability to respond to “go-fast” threats.

The operational highlight of the patrol was the two-day boarding of a suspect fishing vessel. While we did not find any drugs, we were credited with a “disruption” of over 1000 kilograms of cocaine. The second half of our trip had stops in Costa Rica and Grand Cayman. Overall, we had a very successful patrol. We demonstrated our flexibility and multi-mission capability by working for three different tactical commanders and caused a lot of heartache for the bad guys trying to bring illicit drugs into our country.



FROM THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR

CDR Estramonte observes small boat operations from the Bridge



Greetings to our VIGILANT family! As my first patrol writing to you I am pleased and honored to be serving with your family members on board VIGILANT. I have been thoroughly impressed with the crew's performance and attitude—simply the best. I know a large part of our success is a direct result of your support and love to each crewmember on VIGILANT. The patrol went by quickly, but the time away

from our families always takes a toll on us and we are excited to see you again upon our return.

As I reflect upon our first trip I think of the relationships and bonds that I have already made with the crew and how much I have enjoyed getting to know our new shipmates on a personal level. I look forward to getting to know you all upon our return to

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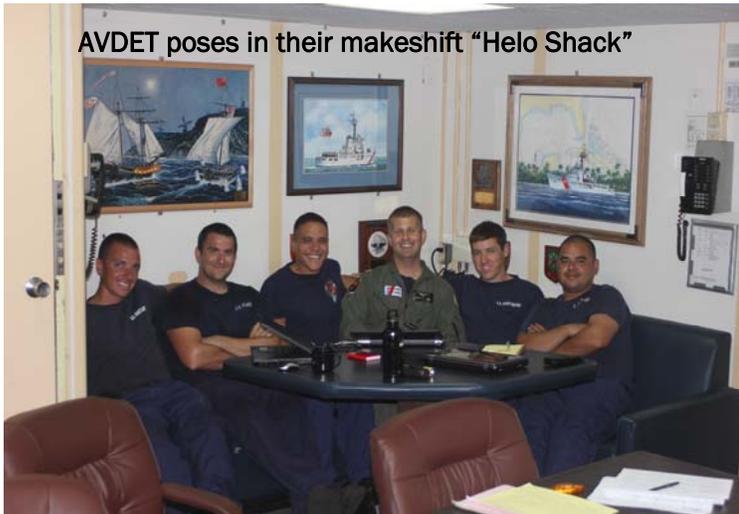


HITRON HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

This patrol we had the good fortune of having a Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON) for two weeks. HITRON specializes in airborne use of force to stop the illegal flow of drugs into our country. They fly a MH-65C Dolphin Helicopter that has a more powerful engine to assist in chasing drug runners. They are also capable of providing .50 caliber machine gunfire from the aircraft to stop the bad guys.

The HITRON helo has a “gunner” who can fire warning shots and take out the suspect vessel’s engines if necessary. This was a great capability for us to have in this operating area. Unfortunately, we did not get an opportunity to chase any “go-fasts” but we trained a lot and we now have a more capable flight deck team because of it. In the two weeks, we conducted 98 evolutions and flew over 32 hours.

Homeported in Jacksonville, Florida, the crew of HITRON consisted of LT Ed Aponte, LT Josh Wine, AMT1 Tim Neeley, AMT2 Dustin Harger, AMT3 Jake Traba, and AET3 Patrick Halsall. They quickly became part of the VIGILANT team and we had a great time sailing with our new shipmates. Through their hard work and dedicated training, they made us a more capable ship.



BM1 Chris Hoschak signals the helicopter during a vertical replenishment operation



Members of the Helo Tie-Down Crew get ready for landing the “bird”



INSIDE THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

VIGILANT always achieves great success, but it is never solely on the back of one person or even one department...it's a team effort. The Supply Department often does a lot of behind the scenes work that is not always noticed operationally, but it is so vital to our mission. Our Storekeepers Carlos Torres and Colin Nunez assist us with all our purchases that keep each department running with the proper supplies and equipment. Colin is also a member of the gun crew for the .50 cal machine gun, part of the flight deck tie-downs, and stands watch as Junior Officer of the Deck. Carlos is an interpreter for law enforcement boardings and is also part of the flight deck fire party. The Food Service Specialists, FS3 Charles Gasaway, FS2 Darren Taylor, FS2 Errol Vanzie, FS1 Mason Amos, and FSC Robert Barrett keep the crew's morale and energy up by making four meals a day. It is not always easy trying to please 80 different taste buds. FSC Barrett is a small boat davit operator and a member of the Damage Control Training Team. Darren is also a member of the .50cal gun crew.



FS2 Darren Taylor puts on his gun crew body armor



Our Yeoman, Matt Falor, assists everyone with their paperwork and ensures we all get paid on time. Make no mistake about it...handling the administrative burden for an 80-person crew is more than a full-time job. On top of that, Matt also operates the small boat davit and is the repair locker leader for all of our shipboard damage control emergencies. HS2 Tim Sutherland serves as our "Doc" and is able to provide us all with much needed medical attention and works under very limited resources while underway. Tim trains our crew in first aid and is also a member of the Damage Control Training Team.

Without their support, our recent success are simply not possible. We appreciate their hard work and want to ensure that their efforts do not go unnoticed. Thank you Supply Department!

YN1 Matt Falor (hard to see but trust me he is there) operates the small boat davit.

OC PEPPER SPRAY

One of the most dreaded experiences may be getting a full facial with OC Pepper Spray and then having to defend yourself from an oncoming attacker. Although the attacker is simulated, the spray burns worse than anything you can imagine. It can also affect your lungs and cause difficulty breathing. All crewmembers onboard VIGILANT must get sprayed in order to stand migrant watch or be part of the Law Enforcement teams. Six crewmembers had the pleasure of getting sprayed this patrol when we were in Key West (see picture on right). If you carry the weapon, you must know what it feels like to be sprayed in case it happens in the field and need to defend yourself. It is really to protect the member and ensure they know what to do, but are still able to react after they have been exposed to pepper spray. At the end of the day when the burning sensation has ceased, you take a shower and the water causes it to reflash. Although less intense, you still have to endure the burning ...again!



ME1 Gabe Wilch teaches members how to properly use the OC Pepper Spray

CAPTAIN'S CHAIR (CONTINUED)

home and meeting the loved ones that keep our crew motivated even when times are tough. As you all know, being at sea is no easy job for the crew or the families and friends we leave each patrol. I commend you for being flexible with this lifestyle and supporting your country and family during their tour on VIGILANT. This patrol we were able to assist with migrant interdiction operations and protect our borders from illegal aliens. The crew also patrolled known drug trafficking areas in order to keep our streets free of drugs. Such important missions could only be handled by men of character who are devoted to our mission and our Nation's success. Once again I thank you for your support and hope you enjoy your time together this inport.

With Great Appreciation,

CDR Jim Estramonte

Commanding Officer

Captain inspects the crew during Change of Command



DAMAGE CONTROL TRAINING TEAM BY ET2 JAKE CIMBAK

VIGILANT's Damage Control Training Team, or DCTT (pronounced *Dee-Set*), consists of our most senior members and subject matter specialists. DCTT members are responsible for the training of an entire ship's crew to safely and effectively combat fires, flooding, toxic gas hazards, and medical emergencies at sea.

With only one Health Services Technician (HS) onboard, Tim Sutherland is one of VIGILANT's newest members, but his roots in the Coast Guard and in the medical field run deep, with over eight years of active duty service. Around the ship he is simply known as "Doc," and he teaches all of us how to identify and care for wounds that may be had at sea, such as compound fractures, facial wounds, electrical shock,

smoke inhalation, and burns. Tim also leads the Stretcher Bearer Team (SN Anthony Green, SN Daniel Nieves, SN Kesler Reifel, and SN Marcus Thompson) to safely evacuate injured shipmates from anywhere on the ship to Sick Bay, or to the flight deck for immediate medical evacuation.

At sea, we have to act as our own fire department and ambulance. Lieutenant Geoffrey Sahlin, the Engineer Officer, leads a team of Chief Petty Officers and select First Class Petty Officers, like DC1 Cesar Perez and BM1 Chris Horschak, to teach our shipmates to battle that which is most scary at sea: fires, flooding, and toxic gas. Twice a week, DCTT members gather together and create likely scenarios that could or have happened before at sea, and then

place the responsibility of identifying and fixing those casualties on the crew.

Often, some of VIGILANT's most junior members are immediately thrown into the mix of the controlled chaos that ensues when all hands come together to battle against damage. Weeks, months, and eventually years of repetition are necessary for a crew to be able to effectively battle against damage at sea. This leads to an overall very safe environment onboard VIGILANT while still conducting dangerous missions and special evolutions, such as helicopters landing, refueling, and taking off again at night with no moon in the sky and zero percent illumination. The task of putting out fires or slowing and stopping flooding at sea is a serious matter, but as always VIGILANT does it with the best of them.

DCTT members meet to formulate their plan for the drill



WELCOME ABOARD

CDR James Estramonte FS3 Charles Gasaway
 LT Kyle Weist SN Gabriel Lassus-Ramirez
 ENS Mike Rathbun SN Brian Fletcher
 MKC Ronald Clifton SN Valentin Carasquillo
 MKC Robert Barnard SA Eric Gordon

BMC James Smith
 ET1 Saul Kosydar **Temporary Assignment Duty**
 MK1 Kellyn Montesino ENS Kyle Pearson
 MK1 Kevin Williams ET3 Raul Marrero- Ramirez
 DC1 Cesar Perez
 SK1 Carlos Torres
 IT2 Kenneth Mcabee
 BM2 Jonathon Johnson
 HS2 Tim Sutherland

AWARDS

Sailor of the Quarter
 BM1 Chris Hoschak
Commandant's Letter of Commendation
 FN Dustin Potter
 FN Joshua French
Spirit of VIGILANT Award
 DC1 Cesar Perez

FAREWELL

FN Dustin Potter
 FN Joshua French
 SN Travis Cunningham
 SN Benjamin Folk

ADVANCEMENTS

FS2 Darren Taylor
 SN Eric Gordon
 SN Obasegun Adefunmi
 FN Andres Tamayo

QUALIFICATIONS

Engineer of the Watch (EOW)

MKC Robert Barnard
 DC1 Cesar Perez
 MKC Ronald Clifton

Officer of the Deck Underway

ENS Kevin Curry

Inport EOW

ENS Mike Rathbun
 MKC Ronald Clifton
 MKC Robert Barnard

Pursuit Coxswain

BM2 Colin Burr

Small Boat Engineer

EM3 Matthew Nicholl

Pursuit Boat Crew Member

ME2 Kyle Walker

Combat Watch Officer

ET1 Saul Kosydar
 ET3 Raul Marrero
 IT2 Kenneth Mcabee

Throttle Man

ENS Mike Rathbun
 MKC Robert Barnard
 MKC Ronald Clifton
 Dc1 Cesar Perez

Mk1 Kellyn Montesino

Junior Officer of the Deck

BM2 Johnathon Johnson
 GM3 Matthew Lewis

Boatswain Mate of the Watch

SN Benjamin Folk
 SN Ronnie Saladin

Lead Seaman

SN Marcus Thompson



FSC Robert Barrett and MK3 Scott Calhoun receive Good Conduct Awards



SN Travis Cunningham receives his departing award, before heading off to become an Aviation Rescue Swimmer

Master Helmsman

SN Marcus Thompson

Gangway Petty Officer of the Watch

BM2 Johnathon Johnson
 SN Brian Fletcher
 SN Eric Gordon
 SN Stephen Orsillo

Auxiliary Watch stander

FN Thomas Barss
 MKC Ronald Clifton
 MKC Robert Barnard
 DC1 Cesar Perez

MK1 Kellyn Montesino

MK1 Kevin Williams

Davit operator

EMC Cory Claybrook
 YN1 Matt Falor

Advanced Damage Control

ENS Mike Rathbun
 MKC Ronald Clifton
 BMC James Smith
 MKC Robert Barnard
 SN Brian Fletcher

Boarding Team Member

BM2 Johnathon Johnson
 MK3 Philip Hanaburgh
 SN Ronnie Saladin
 SN Brian Kearney

Helm/Lookout

SN Valentin Carasquillo
 SN Fletcher
 SN Orsillo
 SN Lassuss-Ramirez

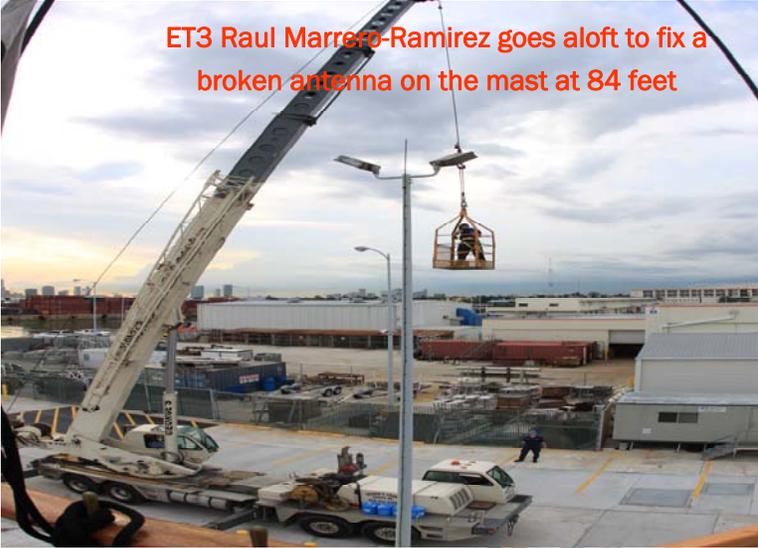
SN Obasegun Adefunmi stands look-out on a clear and sunny day



Crew practices drills on the small boat



ET3 Raul Marrero-Ramirez goes aloft to fix a broken antenna on the mast at 84 feet



Several Members practice their training techniques for Law Enforcement



The Boat Crew formulates their plan



FS2 Darren Taylor and ME2 Kyle Walker shoot the .50cal at the gun shoot

