THE BULLDOG

Coast Guard Cutter ALEX HALEY News | Flight Ops | At Sea Boardings | Drills

Veteran Tie Down Crews train newly reported personnel during flight operations off of Kodiak Island.

Flight Operations: Revisited

written by OS3 Dale Arnould

As we begin to plan the rest of our Bering Sea patrol, we are reminded that a vital asset to any cutter operating in the unpredictable D17 Area of Responsibility is our Aviation Detachment. The ALEX HALEY's flight deck and hangar are not large enough for an HH60 Jayhawk, however we are more than comfortable for the MH65 Dolphin to call us home for a few months. As many a mariner can confirm, having helo on board simply saves lives. Having performed numerous search and rescue case in the past, we are well aware of the AVDET crew's potential and are fully prepared to utilize them in the most efficient way, including law enforcement. The dolphins' international orange coloring is symbolic for search and rescue, yet a smart cutter will engage this asset even further. Flight Reconnaissance is a vital mission for Kodiak Island Coast Guard units as we carry out the Domestic Fisheries Enforcement mission. Launching a helo with a flight plan that can span several hundred miles around the cutter is an effective way to identify vessels beyond the horizon. This helps the Operations Officer, LT David Gilbert, to focus efforts to meet D17 Boarding Goals, for safety and fishery enforcement. saving both time and money in the process. The ALEX HALEY is fine tuning our trade as fishery enforcement experts, having already met many of D17's annual boarding goals in our first three weeks. Teamwork and stamina are traits we constantly exercise and improve upon, allowing us to uphold our glowing reputation as Alaska's finest crew and cutter.

Five weeks down… three weeks to go!

SN Malerie Bell

SN Joseph Gallagher poses for a picture during flight ops.

LCDR Brian Chambers, XO, smiles as he inspects the flight deck.

SN Stephan Roney, a break-in tie down crew member, receives instructions on his new position.

SN Michael Mackie gives a reassuring thumbs up after performing his first few tie downs ever.

SN Neil McCarthy, left, follows SN Thomas Gould as they clear the flight deck after removing the helo's tie down straps.

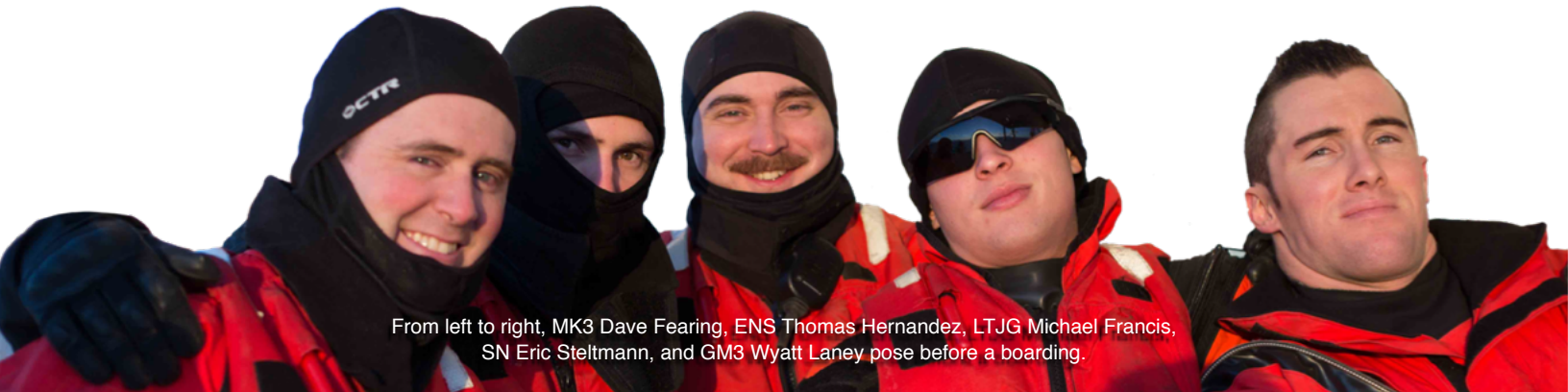
Boarding Officer Brandon Hayward, GM1, reaches for the boarding kit. Also pictured: BM3 Rian Bareuther, top, MK3 David Fearing, bottom, and BM2 Theodore Aniskoff as the coxswain. Taken in the Gulf of Alaska.

At Sea Boardings

written by ENS Thomas Hernandez

With over 34,000 miles of coastline. Alaska is one of the most bountiful fishing regions in the world, producing a wide variety of seafood. All five species of Pacific salmon, four species of crab, many kinds of ground fish, sablefish, pollock, and Pacific halibut are all harvested from Alaska. It is the only state to have coastlines on three different seas: the Arctic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and the Bering Sea. Over half of the nation's commercially harvested fish come from Alaska. This makes the commercial fishing industry in Alaska a multibillion dollar a year industry. In 2011 alone, 5.35 billion pounds of fish and shellfish worth over $3.0 billion were harvested in Alaska waters. This also makes the fishing industry one of the most regulated industries as well, which ensures that all Alaskan commercially harvested seafood species are sustainable for future and current generations.

The ALEX HALEY and her crew work endlessly to enforce these laws set in place to protect fish resources in Alaska. The crew went right to work at the start of this patrol, knocking out 29 boardings in nearly three weeks. One boarding alone is no easy task and involves a lot of coordination with the entire crew. A typical boarding consists of targeting a specific fishing vessel, which in many cases have not had a Coast Guard boarding in over a year. The next step is coordinating with the engineers, Officer of the Deck, boat crew, small boat lowering detail, the boarding team, and the command to conduct a boarding of a vessel safely and within a reasonable amount of time. Once everyone is all on the same page, the small boat is lowered to the water. The boarding team then climbs down a Jacob's ladder into the small boat. One of the trickiest moments of the entire boarding is actually climbing the fishing vessel's Jacob's ladder from the underway small boat. It requires a skilled small boat coxswain and great timing regarding both the small boat and the fishing vessel's movements through the seas and swells. Many find this the most exciting part of the boarding. Once on board, the boarding team members (BTM) conduct an initial safety inspection of the vessel, ensuring it is safe for the team. Next, an inspection of the vessel's survival and firefighting equipment is conducted. The BTMs ensure the equipment is up to date and ready to use in case of emergencies. The Boarding Officer (BO) and the Assistant Boarding Officer (ABO) make their way up to the wheelhouse and greet the captain where they handle the paperwork side of the boarding. The BO and ABO take their time to check permits, logbooks, and video recording systems, ensuring everything is in compliance and that the crew is not fishing illegally. This part of the boarding takes time and requires the BO and ABO to be thorough with their checks. At the end of the day, most vessels are compliant and very up to date with their equipment. Even though we board them while they are actively fishing, they still thank us for what we do.



From left to right, MK3 Dave Fearing, ENS Thomas Hernandez, LTJG Michael Francis, SN Eric Steltmann, and GM3 Wyatt Laney pose before a boarding.

ENS Kelsey Freeman, a Boarding Officer in training, climbs down the cutter's Jacob's ladder onto the small boat.

BM3 Jalechia Crockett pilots the CG23141.

SN Cody Litman shovels snow.

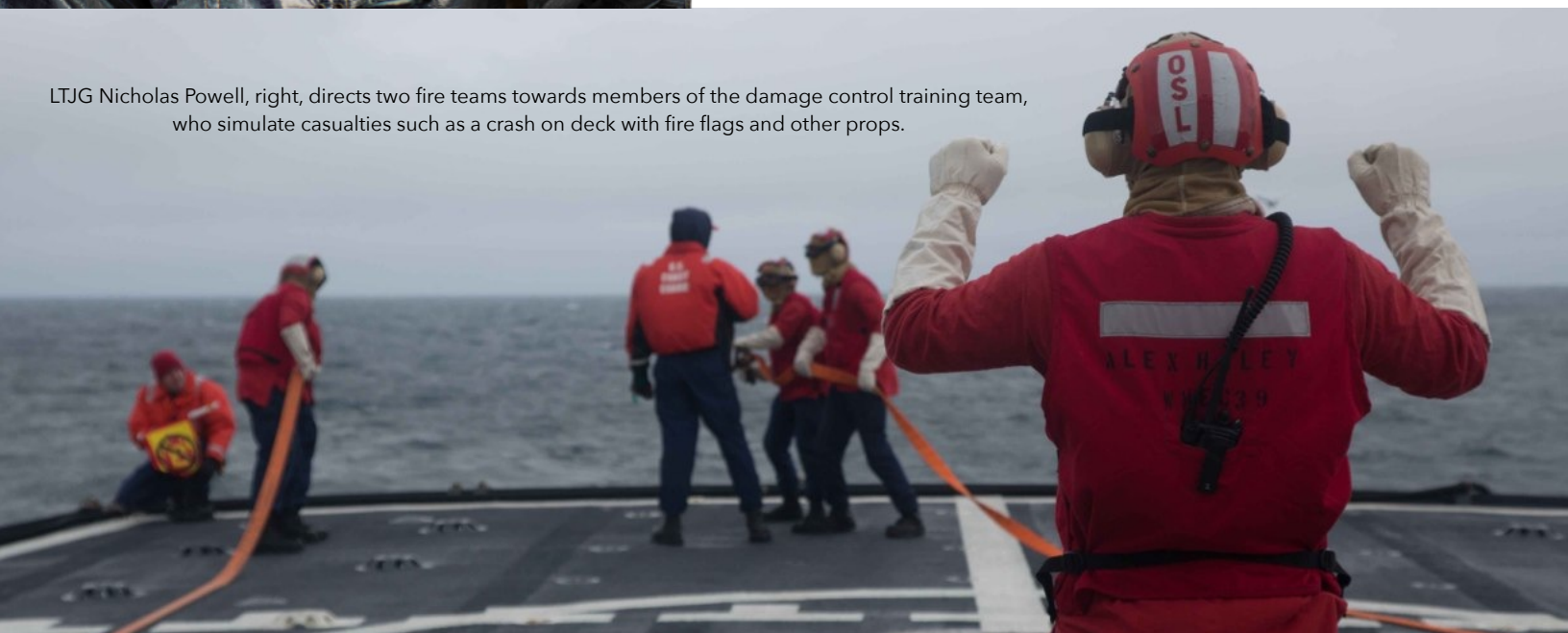
The ALEX HALEY's boat lowering detail prepares the small boat for launch during a Gulf of Alaska snow shower.

Drills: Helo Crash On Deck

written by MK3 Filip Malec

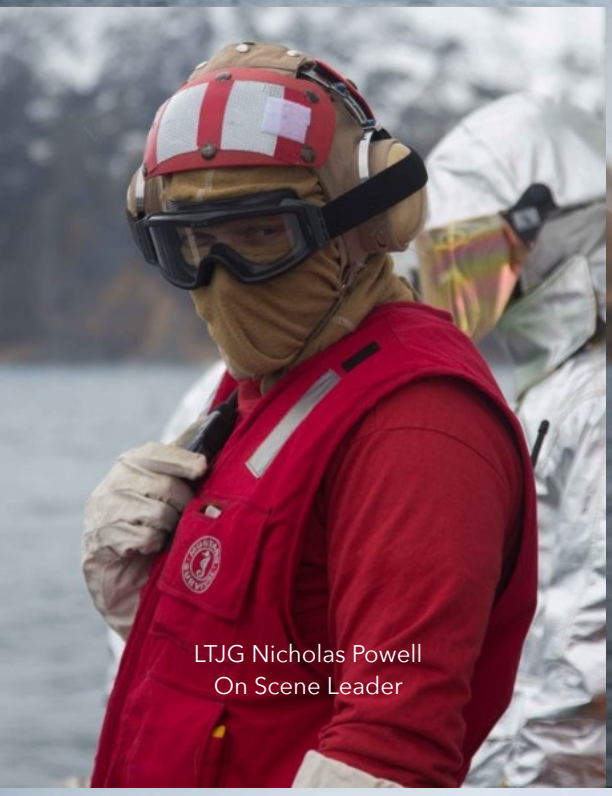
Trying to land a helicopter on a cutter's flight deck can be a challenging evolution. It all begins with Flight Quarters. Flight Quarters is a way to gather the crew and ready them to assist a helicopter in any event, including fueling, personnel transfer, or a basket hoist. Every member has a predetermined job during flight operations, and are trained before hand so that they can perform their job with proficiency. Part of that training includes responding promptly and properly to emergencies. A crash on deck is terrifying situation where a helicopter experiences an issue causing them to land irregularly. The phrase "Helo Crash on Deck" however, is just a way to identify this irregularity, and does not necessarily mean that the helicopter has literally crashed violently on deck. It could be something minor such as a wheel breaking free due to a harder than usual landing during heavy seas. It could also mean the helicopter has rolled onto its side after landing due to heavy winds. That being said, anything is possible. The crew is fully trained for the worse case scenario where a helicopter crashes violently, injuring aviation and cutter crew, and setting the flight deck ablaze in highly flammable fuel oil. To deal with a situation like this, there are a few essential billets required. During a crash on deck, there are several people that immediately respond and take control of the chaos. There is an on-scene leader with two fire teams consisting of three people each trained to combat a fire on a helicopter, two rescue men trained to extract injured personnel from the helicopter and cut off electrical power, fuel supply to the engine and secure the rotor blades. The on-scene leader and fire teams are both equipped with fire retardant gear and hearing protection. The rescue men, who get closest to the helicopter, wear proximity suits, which reflect heat and protect them from temperatures reaching 1500 degrees Fahrenheit and higher. When the helicopter crashes, these people, in an organized and calm manner, transit the flight deck safely around fire and smoke to assume their positions. The fire teams man their hoses, the on-scene leader stands near the hangar door, or the best vantage point of the casualty, and the rescue men stand next to the on-scene leader with a crash kit and a potassium bicarbonate extinguisher, good for combating fuel fires. The on-scene leader advances the fire teams as they attempt to push the fire back and extinguish it. Once the fire is extinguished or pushed far enough away from the helicopter, the rescue men are ordered to advance and extract and deliver the aviation crew from the helicopter to awaiting medical personnel. Once all members are extracted from the helicopter, the rescue men conduct "Charlie Checks" on the airframe. Charlie Checks include the removal and jettison of the main battery, cutting off all electrical power, then securing the fuel supply to the engine, then securing the rotor blades, and finally removing all pyrotechnic gear, or flammable hazards, such as flares. Once any remaining fire is extinguished, all crew is evacuated from the flight deck while the bridge attempts to roll the wreckage off the flight deck by steering sharply, causing extreme listing of the ship. Luckily, a crash on deck scenario is a rare, yet carefully prepared for event and the majority of helicopter evolutions are completed without issues due to the proficiency held by the well trained crews of the ALEX HALEY and Air Station Kodiak.

MK3 Filip Malec displays a proximity suit.



LTJG Nicholas Powell, right, directs two fire teams towards members of the damage control training team, who simulate casualties such as a crash on deck with fire flags and other props.

FN Benjamyn Potvin, left, and DC3 Gabriel Rosario follow the On Scene Leader's queues in order to effectively respond to a helo crash on deck.



LTJG Nicholas Powell
On Scene Leader

DC2 James Lovelace and MK3 Filip Malec simulate responding to a helo crash on deck within proximity suits, designed to withstand short bursts of more than 1500 degrees fahrenheit.

FN Austin Holmes and DC3 Shannon Foster, a second attack team, advance towards the casualty from the starboard side of the flight deck.

TSTA Validated

written by ENS Jacob Bibb

ALEX HALEY Watchstanders respond to a Major Lube Oil Leak

At approximately three o' clock on a cool February morning a pump seal was beginning to fail inside the ALEX HALEY's engine room, a situation likely to become catastrophe. The seal was located in a pump on the starboard reduction gear. Finally giving in, it began to leak flammable oil into the bilge of the Main Machinery Room. Chief Petty Officer Jason Ellison was performing a mid-watch machinery round when he first noticed the leak. How he would respond, whether or not the liquid would combust, and the alertness of his watch standers would all be paramount in the minutes following his discovery in order to avoid a truly major casualty. The Machinery Watchstander, Petty Officer Third Class Felipe Patarroyo, immediately secured the engines in the vicinity of the leak and then quickly emptied an Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) extinguisher onto the oil, smothering the fumes to cut off their supply of oxygen. By the time he finished and looked up, the Engineering Security Watchstander (ESW), Fireman Devon Fitzgerald, was already poised above with a fire hose, ready to respond immediately in case the oil ignited.

The initial actions taken by the watchstanders were performed flawlessly, timely enough to defer, and ultimately eliminate the need to set General Emergency in accordance with the Main Space Fire Doctrine. In lieu of a late night, ship wide, all hands effort the Engineering Casualty Response Team, a designated group of senior engineering members, was dispatched to carry out repairs and supervise the clean up efforts to remove the oil to a storage tank.

A major contribution for the capability and success of the first responders was the intense training received in preparation for and during the cutter's recent Tailored Ship's Availability Training (TSTA). The biennial training offered by the TSTA environment is irreplaceable when the crew members on board any cutter face real-life casualties. As usual, the stellar crew of the ALEX HALEY hold true to their reputation as an unwavering and focused team of Coast Guard men and women.

MK3 Felipe Patarroyo and other watchstanders responded quickly and accurate to a major lube oil leak.

Welcome Aboard!

FS3 Keven Narvaez (left) and SN Elliot Hagan (right)

Traveling as far as 5,400 miles, FS3 Keven Narvaez and SN Elliot Hagan climb safely aboard the underway ALEX HALEY. After arriving in Kodiak, Alaska, the two were flown to Dutch Harbor via commercial air and then hopped aboard our small boat and finally met their new home in the Unalaska Bay. SN Hagan, a native of Alabama is reporting from Training Center Cape May while FS3 Narvaez, hailing from Puerto Rico, comes to us from Food Service Specialist A School and the CGC SPENCER of Boston, MA. Both are excited to sail with the Bering Seas's finest cutter and crew.

ALEX HALEY's Helping Hands from Kodiak

HS3 Lauren Coghill

Rockmore King Clinic, Kodiak

Selflessly volunteering to deploy with the ALEX HALEY for three months, HS3 hoped to learn what life would be like as an Independent Duty Health Services Technician (IDHS) aboard a Bering Sea cutter and having the chance to learn her trade under the Coast Guard's current IDHS of the Year, HS1 Cassandra Brockett was too good to pass up. In HS3's two months so far, she's learned to write, brief and conduct TSTA caliber drills and respond to emergency casualties. HS3 has also become proficient at the many expected daily tasks of an IDHS, including daily sanitation inspections, water testing, maintaining safety and emergency equipment, and monitoring the overall health of the crew by hosting the ship's sick call and giving her first set of stitches!. HS3 has truly been an invaluable part of all facets of the crew's health and well being, including morale, participating in all events and even showing her skill in the galley, serving up her now famous pound cake.

OS1 Allison Claycamp

Air Station Kodiak

OS1 Claycamp has been supporting Kodiak's missions for several years. As one of only a handful of flying Operations Specialists, she has perfected her position and is ready to advance. Her recent orders to become an Operations Specialist In Charge of the newly gender integrated CGC Dauntless of Galveston, TX will come as a complete occupational turn around. The CGC ALEX HALEY, always prepared to defend Kodiak's hardworking reputation, has taken her under it's sail to show this airborne OS how the afloat Coast Guard operates. She's quickly learning and adapting to boat life, fully prepared to bring the ALEX HALEY's Go-To attitude to the Gulf of Mexico.

ME1 Charles Conley

BMC Ray Anderson

North Pacific Regional Fisheries Training Center - Kodiak

BMC Anderson and ME1 Conley have played a vital role aboard the ALEX HALEY, facilitating our efforts to complete the domestic fisheries mission. Chief Anderson has been an instructor at NPRFTC for over two years, while ME1 Conley has been an instructor for almost one. Together, the two members have brought a wealth of "fish school" knowledge to our new boarding officers, boarding team members, and the cutter lookouts. They regularly teach boardings officers of various units the rules and regulations governing one of the nation's most profitable and dangerous industries. Chief Anderson and ME1 Conley have engaged themselves in every single boarding while they have been on board in the Bering Sea and having their experience beside you while conducting a boarding on a fishing vessel mothership much larger than your own is invaluable.