

# Alaska Bear

REPORTING ON THE LAST FRONTIER

July 10, 2009

17th Coast Guard District

Summer 2009



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## From rescuers to teachers, volunteers abound

By PA3 Charly Hengen  
Alaska Bear Staff

Coast Guardsmen are known for their selfless service in the line of duty. But for many, service doesn't end with the moving of boats or flying aboard aircraft. For some Coast Guardsmen volunteering in their local community embodies another type of service.

For many Coast Guardsmen stationed in Kodiak, Alaska, volunteer opportunities have taken them across the air waves and to the tops of mountains. Although these Coast Guardsmen may be in the community for one tour, their contributions have a lasting impact

(see **VOLUNTEER** page 5)



photo by PA3 Richard Brahm

**Petty Officer 1st Class Pat Schmalix and his dog Kiah fly aboard a Coast Guard HC-130 on their way to assist with a search and rescue case on Adak Island in 2008. Schmalix has been volunteering his time and dogs with Kodiak Island Search And Rescue since 1998. Coast Guard volunteers assist organizations in a variety of ways to support their local communities.**

## Sycamore crew endures rigors of first unit triathlon

By FS2 Class John White  
Coast Guard Cutter Sycamore

It was overcast, drizzling, chilly and windy—typical Cordova weather for a Coast Guard morale event. It had been sunny and beautiful all week, and would prove to be the same next week as well. But coastal Alaska was kind enough to provide special weather conditions for the Coast Guard Cutter Sycamore's first triathlon relay.

Having been "voluntold" by the executive officer to come up with ideas for fitness activities that would be fun

for the crew, the Sycamore's newly formed fitness committee tossed around the idea of having a triathlon. Soon realizing that about three people would participate, they amended it to a relay-style team triathlon. After much discussion, most of which consisted of convincing Lt. j.g. Leigh "Dorsal Fin" Dorsey that if the swim was over 500 yards no one would sign up for it, the idea materialized into reality. There would be three-person teams consisting of a swimmer, a biker and a runner. The swim was 500 yards, the bike course was nine miles, and a three mile run ended the competition. The prize would be...

(See **TRIATHLON** page 10)

## Alaska Bear

- District Commander -

Rear Adm. Gene Brooks

- External Affairs Officer -

Lt. Eric Eggen

- Deputy External Affairs Officer -

Chief Dana Warr

- Editor/Layout -

PA1 Kurt Fredrickson

- Public Affairs Specialists -

PA1 Sara Francis

PA3 Richard Brahm

PA3 Charly Hengen

PA3 Jon-Paul Rios

PA3 Walter Shinn

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All queries concerning news and editorial content should be directed to Coast Guard external affairs, 709 W. 9th St., Juneau, AK 99801. (907) 463-2065. [www.uscgalaska.com](http://www.uscgalaska.com)

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Coast Guard external affairs  
709 W. 9th St.  
Juneau, AK 99801

## Honor, Respect, Devotion to Duty doesn't end with the workday



By AMTCM Michael Peterson  
District 17  
Command Master Chief West

Despite the fact that our core values have only been published for little more than 15 years, Guardians have lived by these guiding principles throughout our history. Honor, respect and devotion to duty are our watch words and define us as an organization.

While the vast majority of our Guardians live by our core values 24 hours a day, seven days a week, some believe these core values only apply while they are at work. This belief could not be further from the truth. We who choose to wear the uniform of the Coast Guard have an obligation to conduct ourselves in a responsible manner; never to bring discredit to ourselves or our service.

I decided to write this article to bring greater visibility to our requirement to act appropriately and follow our core values on and off duty. During my previous 10 years of service, I have served in senior leadership positions; so I have seen first hand how many of our hard-working, squared-away Guardians chose to ignore our core values while off duty and have found themselves in very compromising positions only because they lost focus.

I am asking everyone to reaffirm our core values and to stay vigilant in looking after one another – applying our Guardian ethos not only to the public but to ourselves as well. We do an excellent job taking care of one another while carrying out our mission; however, it is when we are on liberty that we sometimes forget about our responsibility to be Guardians to our shipmates. This is especially true when it comes to social events that involve drinking; we need to be on the lookout for irresponsible drinking.

I am asking you to be the Guardian that stops the shipmate that has lost focus and can no longer act responsibly. This simple thing will save many lives and careers, make us a stronger organization, and will continue to keep us Semper Paratus.

Master Chief Peterson  
D17 Command Master Chief West



# Color Guard pays tribute to fallen heroes

By PA3 Jon-Paul Rios  
Alaska Bear Staff

Their faces stern with reverence, uniforms sharp, eyes focused and ears tuned to commands as the chilling sound of Taps resonated through the bugle and tingles the spines of the now weak kneed color guard.

The 17th Coast Guard District Color Guard attended a Memorial Day service May 25, 2009 at the Evergreen Cemetery honoring those who passed establishing our United States.

The Color Guard consisted of Petty Officer 1st Class Michelle Jones, Petty Officer 2nd Class Jennifer Sanders, Petty Officer 3rd Class Kimberly Baynard and Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon Fox all of who volunteered their time to show their appreciation.

Memorial Day has no conclusive origins but is a day of remembrance birthed by the many lives, cities and towns that chose a specific day to honor the heroism of those passed. Originally it was known as



photos by PA3 Jon-Paul Rios

**The 17th Coast Guard District Color Guard stand reverent while Bill Ruddy, a member of the American Legion, plays taps during a Memorial Day event Monday in Juneau, Alaska. Bill Ruddy retired from the Army after serving seven years. (below) Petty Officer 1st Class Michelle Jones carries the colors during the Memorial Day observance.**

Decoration Day supposedly due to organized women's groups in the South decorating graves before the end of the Civil War.

"Memorial Day is a chance to honor those who have gone before me," said Jones. "We need to ensure our country and future generations never forget those who have lost their lives protecting our freedom and way of life."

Unfortunately, it seems as if many have already forgotten. "People just take Memorial Day as another day off," said Tim Armstrong, past commander of Juneau's local Veterans of Foreign Wars post. With the war in the background and all the negative light shined upon the military, it's hard for people to understand the sacrifice the military makes every

day to ensure a free America.

"A lot of people are naysayer's and don't appreciate the military," said Fox. "It meant so much to me especially now being in the military, to have the opportunity to volunteer my time to serve for those who have served."

With millions of lives lost in service stemming from the birth of our nation, it's impossible to think that Memorial Day is just another day. Consider the hardships endured for freedom and reflect on the true meaning of Memorial Day. If Taps were to always play for those living in peace at home it would signify time for bed, but for that veteran or family who lost their son or daughter it's the chilling reminder of what freedom truly costs. 🐾

# Alaska Bear Video Features

Click on the images to the right of text to view video features or visit [www.uscg.mil/d17/alaskabear](http://www.uscg.mil/d17/alaskabear)

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - Coast Guard reserve personnel deployed to Whittier for the Memorial Day weekend with a rescue boat from Station Valdez responded to a call for assistance from a stranded kayaker whose partner was adrift near Whittier with no lifejacket. The Coast Guard crew rescued the two kayakers and safely delivered them to awaiting emergency medical personnel in Whittier with the assistance of the Coast Guard Auxiliary **(Coast Guard video by PA1 Sara Francis)**



JUNEAU, Alaska - The Coast Guard Cutter Liberty conducts gunnery exercises four times a year. The exercises are essential for personnel to maintain their qualifications. Personnel from Station Juneau embarked with the crew of the Liberty and traveled more than 10 miles into the Gulf of Alaska. Crewmembers fired 1,900 rounds from the M240B machine gun, 500 from the .50-caliber machine gun and 23 25 mm machine gun shells. **(Coast Guard video by PA3 Walter Shinn)**



KODIAK, Alaska - Coast Guard Marine Safety Detachment Kodiak inspects vessels on a regular basis to improve safety at sea. As part of the voluntary dockside inspection program Coast Guard inspectors board fishing vessels and make recommendations on safety equipment as well as point out required maintenance and repairs that may have been overlooked. Equipment inspected includes items such as life rafts, fire extinguishers and survival suits. **(Pentagon Channel video by Airman 1st Class Jay Hernandez)**



KODIAK, Alaska - Coast Guard rescue swimmers are best recognized as those individuals who deploy from helicopters to save lives, usually in stormy seas. However there is far more to their job than one would expect. The rate of aviation survival technicians, more commonly known as rescue swimmers, performs maintenance on equipment that supports the safety of Coast Guard air crews as well as trains Coast Guard air crews in survival practices. **(Pentagon Channel video by Airman 1st Class Jay Hernandez)**





(Continued from page 1)

on the organization, individuals and community as a whole.

For one Coast Guardsman, his career path as an avionics electrical technician lead him to seek out volunteer opportunities relating to his line of work. Chief Petty Officer Dave Boschee with Air Station Kodiak started volunteering at Kodiak's public radio station about three years ago and is now a regular on-air personality.

KMXT-FM is a non-profit public radio station located in the heart of Kodiak. Its programming includes a variety of radio shows ranging from local and world news to rock and roll and classical music. Boschee runs a rock and roll show twice a month and also helps out for different time slots if needed. Even though he didn't know how to run the radio station by himself, he was trained to be proficient in running the control board and taking on-air requests.

"This is a way for me to give more of my time," said Boschee. "It's enjoyable to get more involved. I'm doing a public service and we should all aspire to do something in the community."

In general non-profit organizations such as KMXT welcome volunteers and recognize the benefits to the organization and the individual volunteering.

"I think the best reason to get involved in the community is to get a broader picture of it," said Jay Barrett, KMXT, 100.1 FM news director. "If a Coastie or dependent never leaves the comfort zone of other Coast Guard families, they miss out on the other 80 percent of the community that makes Kodiak such a great place to live."

Several dozen non-profit organizations abound in Kodiak for Coast

Guardsmen to volunteer and chances are there is something that fits everyone's taste. If a person seeks more of an adrenaline rush and prefers to spend time outdoors, they are not without volunteer options in Kodiak.

One such opportunity is with Kodiak Island Search and Rescue, a non-profit organization whose objectives are to train volunteers and dog teams for search and rescue for the benefit of the community. The group also educates institutions, agencies and community organizations regarding its missions as well as trains volunteers, dog teams and support personnel in search and rescue methods. Petty Officer 1st Class Pat Schmalix with Air Station Kodiak began volunteering with KISAR in 1998. Upon return to the island in 2005, he began volunteering again with his three-year-old dog Kiah, a Belgian Malinois.

"I volunteer with KISAR because I enjoy working with my dog and love being outside," Schmalix said. "I'm able to put my dog to good use and I'm able to enjoy my hobbies."

One of the more newsworthy KISAR cases occurred December 2008 and lasted for 14 hours. A group of KISAR volunteers were called into action, and Petty Officers 1st Class Schmalix and Joel Pomerinke, with Air Station Kodiak, along with civilians Hal Long and Kerry Felton responded to the rescue.



photo by PA3 Charly Hengen  
**Chief Petty Officer Dave Boschee stands in front of the music library at National Public Radio station, KMXT-FM in Kodiak, Alaska, where he volunteers. Boschee has been volunteering with KMXT for more than three years and supports the station as an on air personality and as a representative on the board of directors.**

"We were notified by Alaska State Troopers that four construction workers were trapped on Sharatin Mountain after having lost their main camp tent and facing blizzard conditions," said Pomerinke. "An MH-60 helicopter from Air Station Kodiak was unable to reach them due to whiteout conditions so a Maritime 206 helicopter dropped us on the shoulder of the mountain at 1,300 feet."

After the team hiked to the summit  
(see **VOLUNTEER** page 6)

(**VOLUNTEER** from page 5)

mit, they found the men in a makeshift shelter. The workers were in fair enough condition to hike out and the rescue team gave them snacks, water and extra clothing. Using extra snowshoes, the KISAR team assisted the stranded men off the Sharatin Mountain.

"Upon reaching the pick up location, the weather prevented the helicopter from reaching us, so we pushed our way through the lower areas of Sharatin Mountain to reach the road where state troopers and emergency medical personnel took care of rescued workers with minor cold injuries," said Pomerinke.

While this case might seem to be an extreme volunteer opportunity, some might argue spending a day with a dozen elementary students is equally as demanding. Many commands in Kodiak have taken it upon themselves to volunteer with Partnership in Education. PIE is a non-profit organization designed to enhance education opportunities and career awareness to youth across America. The Coast Guard encourages commands at all levels to support "adopt a school" efforts. Volunteer activities may include tutoring students or supporting extracurricular activities. Several commands in Kodiak have partnered with Kodiak elementary schools to provide interactive programs throughout the school year.

"Students love to have an adult that will actually talk to them," said Sandy Unruh, Kodiak Area Community Learning Activities Center coordinator. "A strong well-modeled adult is excellent for the students. Plus the students learn more about the community and the things the Coast Guard does."

As part of the PIE program, the Cutter Munro participated in the Ko-



photo courtesy of Kodiak Island Search and Rescue

**Petty Officers 1st Class Mike Marratt and Pat Schmalix of Air Station Kodiak recover gear at a rescue site atop Sharatin Mountain after the December 2008 rescue of four construction workers. Both are volunteers with Kodiak Island Search and Rescue whose objectives are to train volunteers and dog teams for search and rescue.**

diak Area Community Learning Activities Center after school program by introducing Main Elementary students to different types of equipment used aboard the cutter.

"We held gumby suit relay races and had students throw our heaving lines," said Lt. j.g. Crystal Hudak, Coast Guard Cutter Munro public affairs officer. "It provided the students a hands-on experience."

For four consecutive weeks, volunteers from Munro, Air Station Kodiak, Integrated Support Command Kodiak's Rockmore-King Clinic and ISC Kodiak's Color Guard held interactive presentations with Main and East Elementary students about Coast Guard life.

"For the school year, we kept the KACLAC volunteer schedule but also expanded with special presentations," said Cmdr. Patrick Dugan, chief of facility maintenance branch at ISC Kodiak.

"I hosted a week-long class on bridge building at Peterson Elementary for their gifted and talented group," Dugan said. "We discussed the basic principles and mathematics behind bridges. Then the students built truss bridges out of Popsicle sticks and glue. We tested the bridges, and the winning bridge held 160 pounds without breaking."

Many organizations exist in the Kodiak community for Coast Guardsmen to volunteer with. Those interested in volunteer opportunities should contact the local chamber of commerce or visitor's bureau.

"Volunteering in my community gives me a chance to give and meet positive role models," said Hudak. "Our job is to serve the public and through volunteerism we meet the people that we serve." 🐾



# Group aids in Eagle River restoration

By PA1 Sara Francis  
Alaska Bear Staff

"Heave!" Wieland directed the group to lift the wooden crib and wrestle it into position under the existing support structure for the wooden viewing deck. The deck, canted to one side, was in need of shoring up.

Many thrill at the majestic beauty of Alaska's great outdoors. We throw ourselves into it by hiking, running, biking, trekking, camping or half a dozen other active lifestyle - ings. What may be taken for granted is the effort put forth by others to maintain and preserve that beauty.

Lt. Edward Wieland, logistics officer Sector Anchorage, has led an effort two years in a row to make structural improvements to a salmon viewing deck and conduct river bank restoration at the Eagle River Nature

Center about 20 miles north of Anchorage. Wieland assisted by Coast Guard personnel from Sector Anchorage, civilian and Air Force ROTC volunteers provided the engineering expertise and the manpower to see the project through.

"Without his initiative, that deck may have been closed or dismantled and the public would have lost a wonderful resource. It is here that thousands of children and adults come to view the valley vista and the spawning salmon," said Asta Spurgis, executive director Eagle River Nature Center.

During the last two years the Coast Guard team has spent a total of four days on-site. Wieland, a civil engineer by trade, noted the work needed to the deck while out at the center with his family in 2008. He approached the nature center staff and working with Marge Brehm and Dean Davidson, leads of the nature

center trail crew, came up with a suitable design to salvage the deck.

The extensive plans called for not only the restoration of the 400 foot deck but the stream bank as well. The plans alone took more than 40 hours to draft. Then proposals for permits from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources had to be secured.



photo by PA1 Sara Francis

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Lindsay McShirley moves sod from a mash. The sod was used to rebuild the riverbank under the nearby salmon viewing deck at the Eagle River Nature Center during a volunteer habitat restoration project May 23, 2008.**

"I manage logistics for the Sector. It's a long way from the drafting table," said Wieland. "I was happy to have a hands-on project to design and implement from cradle to grave with visible results."

With plans and permits in place the next step was to secure materials and labor. The board members at Eagle River Nature Center took the restoration proposal to their sponsors. They were able to secure funding for the materials from British Petroleum (bp) Alaska's Project Directorate Team. The labor was volunteer based – primarily Guardians.

(see **EAGLE RIVER** on page 8)



photo by MST1 Brian Schughart

**Members of Coast Guard Sector Anchorage conduct riverbank restoration at the Eagle River Nature Center May 19, 2009. More than 20 volunteers spent the day working on the viewing deck's restoration.**



(**EAGLE RIVER** from page 7)

May 2008 saw the deconstruction of an abandoned and vandalized beaver dam adjacent to the deck. The vandalism of the dam had redirected the river flow and it was undercutting the foundation of the deck. The redirection of the river away from the viewing deck legs and cantilevered footings was two days work for a crew of seven. With that cribs completed on site, constructed from wood and rebar, were put in place. Several went in during the 2008 work and the final three were placed May 19 during a day of concerted effort by guardian volunteers.

Four cubic tons of soil and mud doesn't move itself. With the cribs in place, spruce logs went down between them to shore up the stream bank. Burlap was laid over this and stretched out to provide a foundation for the willow and sod to take root. The marshy area around the deck, the stream and the volume of mud called for hip and chest waders, wellies or Xtra-tuffs and a strong desire to get dirty!

Chief Warrant Officer Darrel Howells, Coast Guard Sector Anchorage Inspections, jumped in with both feet and his son joined him. They among many others hauled countless buckets of mud and rock from one side of the deck to the other.

"It's fun to work on that stuff, especially with your kids," said Howells. "This was a long term project that a lot of people came together on. It's neat to think that it will affect and enhance the experiences of people who will never know we were here – locals, people from the "lower 48", Europe and Asia."

Still other Sector Anchorage staff like Cmdr. Michael Drier, Sen-



photo by MST1 Brian Schughart

**Members of Coast Guard Sector Anchorage conduct riverbank revetment and restoration at the Eagle River Nature Center May 19, 2009. Civilian and active duty volunteers restored the riverbank under the salmon viewing deck by planting willow in newly strengthened areas. More than 20 volunteers spent the day completing work on the deck's restoration, a project that began in 2008.**

ior Chief Petty Officer Lori Fields and Petty Officer 2nd Class Darla George let the dirt clods fly while digging up sod and grass in the nearby marsh and transported it under the deck on sleds to take root in the newly lain burlap along the river bank.

"In the years to come the grass and willows will grow and their roots will hold the soil in place and maintain the riverbanks," said George. "I like being involved in the community here. More than a few of us have put down our own roots."

Over 1,500 hours of labor went into the project. Wieland contributed 110 hours to the technical design and permit submittals in addition to about 300 hours on site. Twelve tons of rocks were moved over half a mile

by hand and an ATV with a trailer. 13 cubic yards of sod, soil and native vegetation were moved and placed. The effort saved the Eagle River Nature center around \$30,000. The deck will stand for decades to come and people from all over the world will use it to learn and enjoy the beauty and splendor in our back yard.

"Every act of love and generosity, however small it may seem, is significant. Every time you reach out to a neighbor in need, you touch a life, you improve your community and you strengthen our nation..."

*President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, thanking the military and volunteers in a radio address to the Nation, 1943.* 🐾



# History on tap at Juneau's Buoy Deck club

By PA3 Walter Shinn  
Alaska Bear Staff

For Coast Guardsmen in Juneau, Alaska, a tradition has held fast for more than 46 years at a gathering place known as The Buoy Deck.

The Buoy Deck was established in 1963 as an enlisted club which later expanded to officers and family. It has served as an important place for Coast Guardsmen to go on their off time, but it has also served as a place for many official Coast Guard events like promotions, retirements and visiting Coast Guard cutter functions. During the year it remains open to all Coast Guard families in Juneau.

Over the years service members have volunteered on their off-time to help make The Buoy Deck into what it is today; a place to rejuvenate and relax.

The Buoy Deck got its name from the actual buoys that were placed strategically for the purpose of storage above Coast Guard Station Juneau. As the storage area became less used, tables and chairs began to fill the empty spaces. With the help of a Coast Guard photojournalist, Ray Gliniecki, it became more popular as a place for fun and games.

In its beginning the Buoy Deck was separated into an officers section and an enlisted section. The officer's room was nicknamed "The Potlatch" and the enlisted area was named just that. Neither side of the Buoy Deck held the luxury of a kitchen until 1986. Until then everyone had to bring in their own food if they wanted to eat.

Over its span of time dating to today, the Buoy Deck has since undergone three major refurbishments. In the refurbishments the volunteers hand crafted the bar and helped maintain other items such as the large wooden beams which stretch across the ceiling.

"Over time things change, the Coast Guard changes, but here at the Buoy Deck it will always be a place to go to build camaraderie," said Frank Love, retired Master Chief Petty Officer and long time Juneau resident. "Building camaraderie will never change."

As the Buoy Deck is part of the military there are certain rules that visitors must abide by. One of the biggest rules at the Buoy Deck is you're not allowed to wear hats. If one is caught wearing their hat, they are obligated to buy a round of drinks for everyone in the bar which is



photo by Ray Gliniecki

**Coast Guardsmen and friends enjoy some off-time in the enlisted area while at the Buoy Deck March 10, 1969. The Buoy Deck remains a gathering place for Coast Guardsmen stationed in Juneau, Alaska.**

an unwritten rule older than the Buoy Deck. So I recommend not wearing any hats during your first visit to the Buoy Deck for you may not know what you'll be getting yourself into.

"Ensuring everyone is happy with the event is a great feeling because there is nothing like not getting what you ask for. That's a terrible feeling to have," said Petty Officer 1stClass Adam Thomas, the manager of the Buoy Deck. "The whole concept of customer service comes first at the Buoy Deck."

There are also several Coast Guard Morale Welfare and Recreation events such as family Halloween parties and birthday events for all ages. Times have changed since the early '60s when jukeboxes were the primary way to enjoy music at the local watering hole. Now we have computers filled with music for all generations and genres to satisfy everyone's listening pleasures. The Buoy Deck has remained a place for military members to wind down after a hard day's work over the years and will for years to come.

"If these walls could talk there would be plenty to say," said Fran Simms, who retired as a bartender from the Buoy Deck after working there for 27 years in 2003. 🐾

**(TRIATHLON** from page 1)

well there was plenty of time to figure that out later.

A signup sheet was posted on Sycamore's mess deck and team names started appearing. Team names consisted of The Lightweights, Team No Name, Team You, Me & Him, Team Boo-Yah and Team Norris Beard. Smack-talking began almost as soon as the signup sheet was posted. The participants consisted of practiced athletes, weekend warriors and a guy who had ridden a bike a few times. As the triathlon drew near it was apparent not one team had any advantage over the others. Predictions circulated and trash talk commenced, but the winning team was really anyone's guess.

On competition day the participants met at Bob Korn Memorial Pool and began warming up. After the swimmers were informed that swimmies and pool floats were not allowed, they began churning the water with elegant and not-so-elegant strokes. The runners counted the swimmer's laps and shouts of encouragement could be heard from the bikers waiting in the viewing area. The bikers were ready to dash to their bicycles as soon as their team's swimmer slapped the edge of the pool. Seven minutes later, the first biker was on her way. The bicycling portion was a longer, lonelier event. The competitors' only company was stinging rain, an obnoxiously persistent head-wind, and thoughts like, "Why the heck did I sign up for this," or "Now I see why they all shook



photo by FS1 Mike Walker

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Daryn Hughes rides his bike during the Sycamore's first triathlon May 15, 2009.**

their heads and laughed at my mountain bike."

The competitors, crew and family members all waited at the town's "Grassy Field" as the bike race dragged on. Suspense and speculation were rampant, as everyone guessed which biker would appear first. Shouts roared when the first biker was spotted down the road. One by one the bikers crossed the finish line to slap hands with the runners, and the last leg of the triathlon started.

Less than 18 minutes after the first biker came in, his runner crossed the finish line. Team No-Name, consisting of Petty Officer 1st Class John Baxstrom, Petty Officer 2nd Class Daryn Hughes, and Fireman Josh Tighe, a quiet, unassuming group who'd signed up just days before the race, pulled out a surprise first-place finish. Huddling under a gazebo in the wind and rain, they celebrated with fellow competitors and family while refueling on hamburgers, bratwursts and homemade desserts. Their prize – pride, bragging rights and a gift certificate for brick-oven pizza. 🐾



photo by Melissa Young

**Petty Officer 3rd Class David Patterson, left, makes the pass off to his teammate Petty Officer 3rd Class John Paul Brown of team "Team Boo Yah" during the triathlon May 15, 2009. (right) Teams participate in the swimming portion of the triathlon.**



photo by FS1 Mike Walker



# Coast Guard offers substantial bonus to educate Guardians

By PA1 Kurt Fredrickson  
Alaska Bear Staff

The Coast Guard is offering an annual \$4,500 bonus to all Guardians interested in receiving tax free money with no added service commitment or strings attached. This equates to an annual 11 percent bonus for a petty officer 1st class with eight years of service or a substantial 17 percent bonus for a 3rd class with more than three years. And if this sounds too good to be true, there is a catch. Individuals must use the money for education in any area of interest, from vocational skills to traditional college classes. And while some may shirk at the thought of going back to school, the process is easier than they think and more rewarding than they know.

While the prospect of starting or continuing an education may seem daunting, the process is simple. Developing an initial plan to take full advantage of tuition assistance is the easiest step and one that is done for the member, regardless of rank, by the Coast Guard Institute. Their time investment to get the process started ... three minutes. After that, the service members need only have the motivation to extend their hand to receive a substantial amount of money for their own personal gain.

Educational services officer Gary Dorman has been helping individuals in Kodiak, Alaska, find the on-ramp of the education freeway for more than a decade. He noted that when individuals come to see him their first question is always the same. "What do I need?"

Dorman helps them answer that

question by having them first complete a simple online education assessment. No training record or documentation is required. The assessment is sent to the Coast Guard Institute which then pulls the individuals history from Direct Access. This assessment converts Coast Guard training into an official transcript worth college credit. Dorman noted that credit is given for everything from basic training to "A" and "C" schools and can accumulate quickly.

"A general associate's degree is 30 credit hours of what they call the general ed, or the core, which is English, science, math, history and humanities," Dorman explained. "The other 30 are in electives. What I tell E4s, E5s and especially E6s, is you've already got this done; your half way home to an associates degree and you haven't even been to college! Your Coast Guard career has taken up this 30. What you're missing is the core."

To complete the core requirements individuals can take a college level examination program test or a defense activity for non-traditional education support test, take a traditional college class or through online education, Dorman explained. An E6 with six years of service can hopefully pass the CLEP English, math, history and science, get their Coast Guard assessment, and be nearly done with an associate's degree.

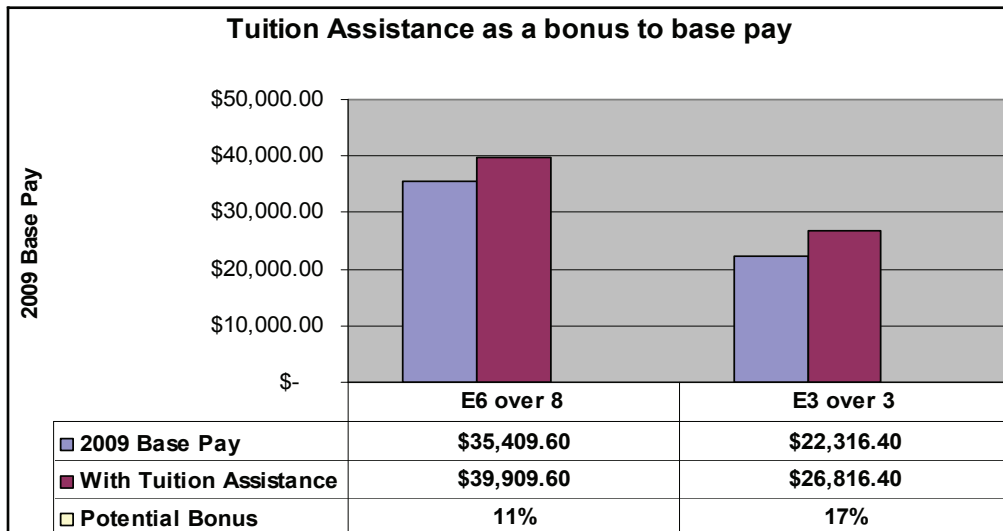
For Petty Officer 1st Class Thomas Logan, a damage controlman stationed at Integrated Support Command Kodiak, his Coast Guard experience provided 19 credits toward his recently completed associate's

(see **BONUS** on page 12)



photo by PA1 Kurt Fredrickson

**Gary Dorman, educational services officer at Integrated Support Command Kodiak, Alaska, stands in front of photos of individuals who have earned their degree while in Kodiak.**



(**BONUS** from page 11)

degree with a double major in Occupational Safety and Health Administration safety and health and welding technology. The remainder of his credit was made up through traditional college classes. Dorman says that for those, like Logan, who need to fill their core requirement, that's where the education assessment, tuition assistance and other available grants come into play. The education assessment will detail exactly what classes an individual needs and what colleges can provide them, he noted. All that remains to be done is pick a school, enroll and start tapping into tuition assistance benefits.

In the way of benefits, a potential \$5,600 is available to students each year. The largest amount of which, is the \$4,500 provided by Coast Guard tuition assistance to active duty, select reservists and civilian employees. When an individual identifies classes they want to take, they simply fill out the tuition assistance form and submit it to their local education service officer for processing. The approved form is returned via e-mail and can then be submitted to the school for payment.

"Tuition assistance is simple, especially now that it's on the Inter-

net," Logan explained. "I used tuition assistance to pay for the classes and then for the books I went to Work Life and got the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Supplemental Education Grant."

While tuition assistance covers the actual cost of tuition, books are not covered and can cost up to several hundred dollars per class. But students, like Logan, need not dig into their pockets yet. The CGMA supplemental education grant provides \$250 for books and other costs not covered by tuition assistance. This grant is available to everyone associated with the Coast Guard, to include immediate family of service members. If costs go beyond that, and the student is enlisted, then they can apply for the Coast Guard Foundation Education Grant which awards \$350 for books and other expenses not covered, Dorman explained. On the rare occasion that an individual uses the CGMA grant and the Coast Guard Foundation grant, they can then apply for the \$500 Vander Puten Education Grant which covers similar expenses.

Although the money and resources are out there to pursue an education, Logan and Dorman both stress that individuals should start small and take one class at a time,

especially those working full-time and subject to the unpredictable schedules that come with military service. Logan added to that sentiment by noting that, "you can only fit in one or two classes each semester because of duty schedules and everything else. It would be a lot easier to go through the Internet to get a lot of your courses, because [online colleges] give you a lot more credit for what you've done in the Coast Guard. A university may not take all of your work experience and you will have to take more courses to complete your degree."

To provide more support to working students, many online colleges have shortened semesters from 12 weeks to 5 weeks, giving military students flexibility in getting assignments done on a condensed schedule, Dorman said.

"That offers the flexibility of going to school in your pajamas or  
(see **BONUS** page 13)



photo by PA1 Kurt Fredrickson  
**Petty Officer 1st Class Thomas Logan holds his recently completed associate's degree June 11, 2009.**



(**BONUS** from page 12)

being able to work on the weekends to get it done,” he added. “Because of course in our lifestyles, duty, marriage, family, kids, underway, TAD, whatever... that traditional college classroom doesn’t fit. So that’s where the online learning comes in.”

Dorman noted that there are more than 200 online colleges to choose from and the Institute will tailor a degree plan based on programs offered at that particular school. And while taking classes one at a time may seem like a long arduous process, the benefits are substantial in the long run.


“My degree I hope will help me go for warrant and will make my resume look that much better when I put it in,” Logan said. “It has definitely helped me excel in my marking. I probably had the best marks I’ve had in the Coast Guard while I was going to school.”

While many young Guardians visit Dorman eager to begin a college education, he has seen an increase in senior enlisted taking advantage of tuition assistance and distance learning.

“We all retire and move on,” Dorman said. “With that in mind, it would be nice to move on with a degree in pocket. When they move on

from the Coast Guard they take their experience and their degree with them.”

It doesn’t have to be that traditional accounting degree, he added. It can be a degree for people who like electronics or being a good mechanic. There are other educational opportunities that might sway away from a degree per say, that focus on a vocational certification. Given the number of schools, the choice of what to study is up to the student.

“From a program point of view, I’m sitting here with all the support that a person would need,” Dorman said. “The only thing stopping them is their willingness.” 

## 16 Juneau Guardians complete degree program

By PA3 Jon-Paul Rios  
Alaska Bear Staff

Founded in 1801 by United States President William Henry Harrison, ninth president of the United States, Vincennes University has been providing quality education to students throughout the world.

Sixteen Coast Guard members in Juneau enrolled in Vincennes University in September 2007 and graduated June 7, 2009 with an Associate’s degree in science. Recognizing the importance of having a degree proves important seeing as how we live in an era where not having a degree can make it harder to find a job once out of the military.

“Education is often times viewed as a transition piece,” said Janie Pehrson, 17th Coast Guard District education services officer. “People want to get an education so that when they get out of the military, they can take what they’ve learned on the job along with there education and pursue something greater.”

Another benefit of being professionally educated is that you can translate what you have learned to your job in the military.


“Education is paramount to the military,” said Pehrson. “It creates critical thinking, sharpening your mind so that regardless what task is at hand you will be

able to perform a better job.”

The 16 graduates pushed themselves taking classes, doing homework, studying and taking tests all while still performing their every day jobs, sometimes consisting of 24-hour shifts.

“We worked together as a team,” said Seaman Sarah E.

Perez, one of the 16 graduates stationed at Station Juneau. “Earning my degree along with everyone else really helped station morale because it gave us a common bond.”

In an era where having a degree can make the difference between getting hired for a job or being selected for advancement, there is no wonder why earning a degree is becoming easier than ever before. From online classes to a G.I. Bill that can now be given to dependants and spouses, earning a degree is quickly being molded to fit the needs of service members. 



# Finding ways to manage the stress of daily life

By Lt. Cmdr. Todd Orren  
District 17 Chaplain

Are you stressed about bills, debt, health, relationships? Are you worried about what is in store for you and your loved ones in the future? It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the stress of life but keeping a big perspective can help ease the burden.

Stress is part of life. If you had no stress you would be dead. So some stress is good and it keeps us involved and motivated to live life. It is when we are so over-our-head that we can't seem to breath that we need some peace. There are a variety of things that you can do if you are stressed out. Some things are obvious

but others might not be.

Exercise is a great way to reduce stress. It is a healthy way to let your built up stress out. You don't have to be a marathon runner to get a good work out. Sometimes just going for a good walk can be just what you need to reduce stress. Regular exercise is the key. Find a friend that you feel comfortable working out with and hold one another accountable to work out together.

Talking is also an excellent way to reduce stress. Women are usually better at this than men but both benefit greatly from letting all that stress out. Having a good friend to talk to is not only good emotionally but physically. It helps relieve built-up stress. So make that call or lunch date to

talk to your friends about all the stuff in your life.

Prayer can help reduce your stress, just like talking to your friends – talking to God through prayer can help also. Sometimes when you are alone and friends seem far away, you can pray about whatever is on your heart. There are people that don't feel comfortable praying or they don't believe in prayer but either way prayer can be a great way to help with stress or anxiety that can build up.

These are just a few ways to help each of us work through our stress in healthy and encouraging ways. 🐾

## Munro sails the Pacific from Arctic seas to tropical shores

By Lt. j.g. Crystal Hudak  
Coast Guard Cutter Munro

It was another day with borderline freezing temperatures for Coast Guard Cutter Munro as 160 crewmembers began preparations for their 23rd fishery boarding - inspecting safety equipment and ensuring a level playing field by checking compliance with federal fisheries laws.

The Munro's most recent patrol after leaving Kodiak, Alaska was anything but dull including boardings miles from the ice edge in single digit temperature and the cutter's rigid hull inflatable boat challenged by an inquisitive pod of killer whales.

Soon after arriving in the Bering Sea, the Munro served as the on-scene commander during the grounding of the fishing vessel Icy Mist



photo by PA1 Kurt Fredrickson

**The Coast Guard Cutter Munro plows through rough seas near Dutch Harbor, Alaska, during the rescue of the crew from the grounded fishing vessel Icy Mist Feb. 25, 2009.**

near Akutan Island February 25 and coordinated the efforts of the embarked HH-65 Dolphin helicopter and two MH-60 Jayhawk helicopters

forward deployed from Air Station Kodiak. As the tide receded, all four crewmembers were hoisted off the

(See **MUNRO** page 15)



(**MUNRO** from page 14)

beach by one of the Jayhawks.

“Responding in weather conditions that made the rescue almost impossible for our embarked helicopter, the Jayhawk pilots from Air Station Kodiak did an exceptional job and were responsible with saving lives today,” said Lt. Brad Anderson, Munro’s operations officer. “They are the real heroes.”

The next week, while engaged in a fishery boarding, Munro watchstanders answered a distress call from the fishing vessel *Stellar Sea* with a sick crew member. Coordinating with a flight surgeon located in Kodiak, the decision was made to immediately evacuate the crew member to Dutch Harbor. The small boat with a corpsman and an emergency medical technician were sent to assess the situation and stabilize the patient. An HH-65 helicopter was used to hoist the crewmember and deliver him to emergency medical personnel in Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

“I joined the Coast Guard to help others and it felt good to participate in this case,” said Seaman Kurt Dalton with the *Munro*. “A friend of mine had recently passed away, and while I couldn’t attend his memorial service, it was amazing to help someone in honor of my friend.”

After completing a six week patrol in the Bering Sea, the *Munro* began the transit to Honolulu to participate in Tailored Annual Cutter Training where the crew of the cutter demonstrated proficiency in navigation, fire, flooding and warfare drills under the guidance of Navy and Coast Guard ship riders. While in transit, the *Munro* was diverted for the sailing vessel *Loon*, reported to be taking on water off the coast of Molokai, Hawaii. The *Munro* went into rescue and assistance mode, sending



U.S. Coast Guard photo

**Crewmembers from the Coast Guard Cutter *Munro*, a 378-foot high endurance cutter homeported in Kodiak, Alaska, assist the captain of the sailing vessel *Loon* April 13, 2009, 45 miles southeast of Oahu, Hawaii.**

a team to determine the cause of the casualty, as well as assist in repairs.

“It was good to put our skill set to work, it was real,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Tyler Quigley, one of *Munro*’s crewmembers who was sent to the sailing vessel to assist. “It was not a drill and there was an actual sense of urgency to effect repairs because water was coming aboard.”

The sailing vessel also received a dewatering pump from a Dolphin helicopter stationed at Air Station Barber’s Point, Hawaii, with Petty Officer 3rd Class Logan Cole from Air Station Kodiak, serving as the flight mechanic.

*Munro* successfully conducted more than 100 drills while adapting to a vastly different climate.

“Our preparation for TACT was incredibly fast paced, but it did pay off when we received consistently high scores for our drills,” said Lt. j.g. Francesca Hanna, *Munro*’s assistant engineering officer. “The worst part was the 80 degree temperature

change as we transited from Alaska to Hawaii.”

While at TACT, we received news that a Coast Guard cutter patrolling the Bering Sea had mechanical difficulties and could no longer complete the patrol. Therefore, we would be returning to the Bering instead of returning to Kodiak as scheduled.

“The Coast Guard’s high-endurance cutter fleet continues to be challenged by age and increasing equipment casualties,” said Capt. Craig Lloyd, *Munro*’s commanding officer. “Despite the obstacles, the men and women of the *Munro*, with the support of our families, have certainly lived our service motto of being ‘Always Ready’ to protect, serve, and save mariners from Hawaii to Alaska.”

*Munro* returned to Kodiak on June 2 after 100 days and transiting more than 10,600 miles. 🐾

# Put TRICARE on your Pre-Deployment Checklist

By Tyler Patterson  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance

If there's one universal rule in the military, it's that your pre-deployment days can be hectic.

There's a lot on your plate that needs taking care of, like getting your finances and legal documents in order and making arrangements for your family while you're gone. If you are deploying from a reserve component, you may also need to square things away with your civilian employer before you leave.

With so much going on, it can be easy to overlook your TRICARE benefit—but don't worry! Making sure your family has healthcare coverage while you are deployed is as easy as it is important.

## Know the "What"

First, make sure your spouse has access to all necessary records. This includes a copy of your orders at the bare minimum. If your spouse will need access to your medical records, you will need to prepare an authorization to disclose form. You can download this form at [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com), from the Find a Form page.

Next, make sure the records for you and each family member are current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Additionally, show your spouse how to make changes in DEERS at a



photo by PA1 Kurt Fredrickson

nearby ID card-issuing office, by phone (1-800-538-9552), or online at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers>.

After that, check your family's identification cards. If any will expire while you're deployed, be sure to replace them before you leave. Current ID cards are required for accessing health care through your TRICARE benefit.

## Know the "How"

Finally, make sure your spouse knows the basics of your TRICARE coverage. Encourage your spouse or child's guardian to attend a mobilization briefing or Family Readiness Group meeting in their area. Review your family's TRICARE plan so they know how to properly access care and fill prescriptions.

For more pre-deployment tips covering everything from automobile storage to legal resources, visit the Force Health Protection and Readiness Pre-Deployment page at <http://fhp.osd.mil/preDeployment.jsp>. Members of the reserve component can also visit [www.triwest.com/ngr](http://www.triwest.com/ngr) for additional pre- and post-deployment advice.

Benefit videos and information are also available at TriWest's "TRICARE 2 You Online Library," at [www.triwest.com/t2u](http://www.triwest.com/t2u).

Online at [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com): Registered users can find answers, check status of claims, authorizations and referrals and track expenses. 🐾

1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378)





# Faux fish add realism to Coast Guard training

By Drew Herman  
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Coast Guard officers charged with fisheries enforcement in the North Pacific have to recognize the different species harvested. Thanks to taxidermist Kelly Harris, a member of the Auxiliary, they can learn the different species hands-on but also slime-free.

Harris lives in Kodiak, Alaska, also home to the Coast Guard's North Pacific Regional Fisheries Training Center, known as "fish school."

The training center holds classes year-round to prepare boarding crews from various units throughout Alaska for fisheries enforcement in the North Pacific and Bering Sea, some of the world's richest fishing grounds.

"We teach every cutter crew that comes through here," said Chief Petty Officer Steve Johnston, a fish school instructor.

The school's main classroom at the Kodiak Coast Guard base has dozens of fish models mounted on its walls with a numbered label next to each so students can practice identifying species.

"They're starting to wear out and we needed more of them," Johnston said.

Harris credits the power of word-of-mouth in a small community for the opportunity to meet the fish school's need. She heard about the job from another parent at a middle school wrestling event. The Coast Guard accepted her bid to supply eight new fish mounts.

"She did an outstanding job,"



photo by Drew Herman

**Taxidermist Kelly Harris of Kodiak, Alaska, inspects a fish mount in her home workshop. Harris' fish mounts take approximately six months to complete. She was recently awarded a contract by the Coast Guard for eight new fish mounts that will be used to help Coast Guard boarding officers recognize the many species of fish found in Alaskan waters.**

Johnston said.

Ten years ago Harris had little contact with dead fish, oceans or the Coast Guard. She lived in Iowa where she enjoyed selling investments and insurance and she painted pictures as a hobby. But she wouldn't go back now.

"Taxidermy's an art," she said.

A visit to an outdoor show in Iowa sparked her interest in preserving hunting and fishing trophies. After moving to Fairbanks, she made an opportunity to learn the trade. She had to do some convincing before Fairbanks taxidermist Charlie Livingston accepted her as an

apprentice.

"He didn't take me very seriously," she said. Livingston told her to visit on Saturday to see him work and she showed up every Saturday for a year. "He's a very good friend now."

For her apprenticeship in the Interior of Alaska, Harris mostly prepared mammals, including a lot of bear rugs. Her teacher even had her practice the "old school" art of carving body forms by hand. Today, taxidermists usually order prefabricated forms of different animals then attach the skins and glass eyes and apply

(See **FISH** page 18)

(**FISH** from page 17)

the finishing touches.

In 2005, Harris moved to Kodiak when her husband became publisher of the local newspaper. People noticed her artistic gift and began asking her for paintings. Applying the taxidermist's art to fish was a natural step in the island community.

"Being a painter, I've kind of found a niche that I enjoy with fish," she said.

Trophies of saltwater species from the North Pacific are not made from the actual skins because they dry and lose color after being caught, Harris explained.

"Freshwater fish in the Lower 48 are made for skin mounts," she said.

Unlike bass and walleye, oily salmon skins will shrink and don't last long as mounts. Instead, taxidermists photograph the fish from different angles and paint a prefabricated form to match. Harris checks photos of live fish and visits a local aquarium to get colors just right.

A recent customer introduced a new challenge, asking her to reproduce sea lice clinging to a king salmon's body. Harris sculpted the parasites out of the compound she uses for teeth.

"It's fun for me to try to reproduce these things," she said. She even pays attention to details, such as the teeth and mouth of halibut, which are not visible when the fish is displayed on a wall.

"It's neat that it's there," she said.

In her own painting room built into the family's garage, Harris needs about six months to turn around a fish for a customer. The hours of lonely work are a reason she decided to join the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the service's civilian volunteer branch.

"All of my jobs require me to be a hermit," she said, "and I thought it would be fun."

Harris's professional relationship with the Coast Guard isn't over yet. A former Kodiak fish school officer who now works in Washington,



photo by Drew Hermon

**Chief Petty Officer Steve Johnston, an instructor at the North Pacific Regional Fisheries Training Center, holds a Pacific cod prepared by Kelly Harris.**

D.C., wanted appropriate art for his new office. When he heard about Harris's work from his former command, he decided the unique Alaskan art would be perfect at Headquarters. 🐾

## Calling all writers, bloggers and photographers

**Units in Alaska now have an official blog to post ideas, sea stories, information and imagery to educate and inform Coast Guard families and the public while providing an inside glimpse of Coast Guard life and missions.**

Individuals may make posts related to their responsibilities in the Coast Guard provided the information is appropriate and does not violate operational security.

Posts can conveniently be made by e-mail, allowing units to post from anywhere they have access to a computer, including underway. Posts can be shared through popular social media tools such as Facebook,

Individuals interested in posting to the blog should contact their unit public affairs officer or the 17th District external affairs staff in Juneau at 907-463-2065.

**The Alaska Logbook can be found on the internet at**





# The Alaska Logbook

Below are select posts from the District 17 unit blog, recounting stories of life underway, unit events and interesting occurrences. Units are encouraged to make posts to the blog. Several posts will be printed each quarter.

## More than the news

### What lurks in the shadows...

By ET2 Dea Lang  
Coast Guard Cutter Munro

It was a couple of years ago, and I found myself up early in the morning, around 0200. Nobody was up, and it was dead quiet with the exception of the engines. I got myself a drink from the messdeck, and stood near the doorway leading to the main ship's passageway reading the billboard. As I was reading the menu for the next day, something in my peripherals caught my attention. I looked down the dark passage way, the only light red and low. On the deck farther up forward near the wardroom was a dark shape, roughly the size of a can of soda on its side with a "tail". My first thought was "I thought there weren't any rats aboard..." and I took a closer look. As I watched the "rat", it darted out of my site and back again,


slowly inching its way up the passage way toward me in a very erratic way. Five, ten, almost fifteen minutes went by and it was behind the AFFF machine, a small bit peeking out at me. I then thought it prudent to grab a cup and catch it. I stayed behind the wall, waiting for it to come a bit closer. It darted out of my sight and stayed there. I waited, but growing impatient, I took a few steps forward, slowly, and looked around the AFFF machine. What I saw surprised the heck out of me. The LARGEST dust bunny ever, equipped even with a tail. It was around two-thirty, and I had just spent about a half an hour watching a dust bunny come down the passage way. The funny thing is that I never felt any wind... 



Photo by PA3 Charly Hengen

### Never speak of the Phantom Oiler while on watch

By DC1 Dennis Amerson  
Coast Guard Cutter Acushnet

Last night a shipmate ran into the 1st Class lounge with a pale look on his face. He told me that he was working out in the rectifier space and out of nowhere the punching bag was aggressively thrown side to side. "I thought someone was messing with me, so I got off the treadmill and the bag stopped moving suddenly it swung at me, so I ran as fast as I could", said the frightened shipmate.

He had all the reason in the world to freak out because the sea state was very calm, and he was the only person in the space. Is there a

poltergeist on this ship? From dark tales and folklore of sea monsters and sink holes to actual sightings of the walking deceased, can the Bering Sea actually cause a man to go mad, or can these be non-fictional paranormal accounts?

Back in 2007 during a mid-summer patrol I remember having a late engineering watch where I and two others began to talk about the Acushnet ghost known to all as the "Phantom Oiler". One of the guys began telling me of the numerous sightings of this mascot of a ghost, and how he had been decapitated by a falling metal deck plate in B-1. I interrupted saying, "I think you guys  
(See **OILER** page 20)



illustration by PA1 Kurt Fredrickson

(**OILER** from page 19)

need to get a life, and there is no such thing as the Phantom Oiler". At that second all four of our main diesel engines secured themselves and lights began to flicker. After losing propulsion that day it is now off limits to speak of the Phantom Oiler while on watch. I'm even surprised that it is not yet written in the EO's standing orders. We currently have a crew member that has seen the same poltergeist on a few occasions while standing watch in B-1. He spoke of how he was wiping up some oil in the bilge and had a feeling that someone else was in the space with him. He looked up and saw a younger

short man with a beard, long blond shaggy hair wearing a brown leather 70s style coat. In fear the crew member closed his eyes real tight thinking he was just seeing things from lack of sleep. As he opened his eyes he saw the man standing on the other side of the engine room still staring at him. It took a long time for that specific crewmember to gather the strength to stand watch in B-1 again. Rumor has it that the man he saw was a fireman by the name of Patrick that had climbed up between #2 and #3 mains to carve his initials in the stacks in the mid-70s. The Fireman fell and broke his neck. The creepy thing is that his initials are really carved in the stack "P.M.S." 🐾



photo by DC1 Dennis Amerson

## ESU Kodiak's National Distress System team

Posted by Electronic Support Unit Kodiak

ESU Kodiak's NDS team oversees the contracted maintenance of more than 40 sites including VHF, HF, microwave links and command center watch positions throughout the state of Alaska. With Chief Petty Officer Mike Yrjana as the one quality assurance evaluator in Kodiak and AJ Edwards as the NDS contracting officer's technical representative in Juneau, this dedicated and well trained team works hard to ensure the Coast Guard's National Distress System radios throughout Alaska stay on the air. This ensures D17's operational commands are equipped to listen for mariners in distress and conduct command and control of their CG assets. Providing coverage to several thousand square miles in the Gulf of Alaska,



**Access to many of the remote sites is performed by helicopter.**



photos by ESU Kodiak

**Chief Petty Officer Mike Yrjana stands on a platform on the Reef Island site in Prince William Sound.**

Prince William Sound, Bristol Bay and the inside waterways of Southeast Alaska, NDS sites are located in some of the roughest terrain in the state. Given these remote mountain top locations, the ESU Kodiak NDS team and maintenance contractors log as much commercial helicopter travel time as anything else – a necessary hazard of the job but a welcome one instead of the view from an office window or cubicle. 🐾