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# ALASKA BEAR

TAKING A FIX

THE LAST GREAT RACE

LEGACY OF ACUSHNET CREW

LIGHTING THE WAY

STRONG RESPONSE RESOURCES

# MIDNITE SUN RESCUE

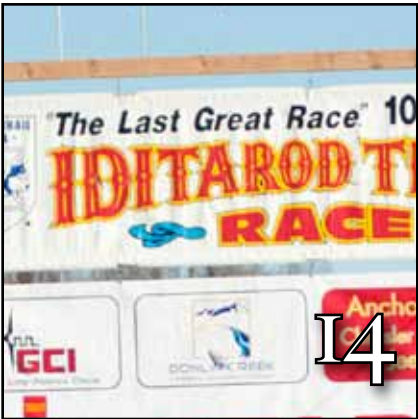




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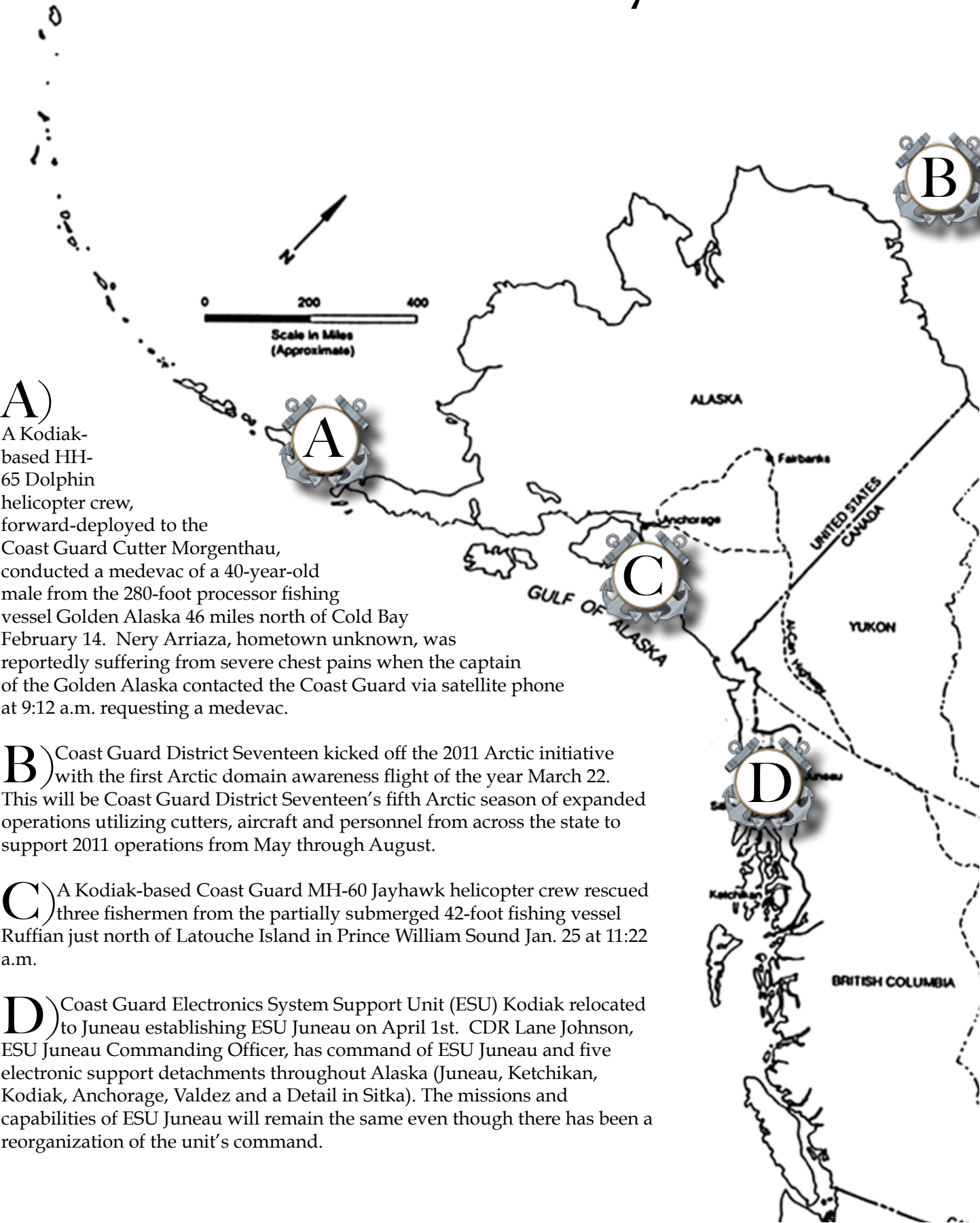
Is there an event you want covered for the Alaska Bear? Do you have an opinion to be heard? Does your unit have anything newsworthy to report? If so, we want to hear from you, call 907-463-2065.

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### On The Cover

KODIAK, Alaska - Crewmen working to salvage the grounded 68-foot Kodiak-based fishing vessel Midnite Sun wait for the tide to recede at Tanaak Cape 36 miles northwest of Kodiak Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2011 at 11:44 a.m. The Midnite Sun grounded Friday and the Coast Guard rescued the five crew and while no pollution has been sighted in the area heavy weather has damaged the vessel's hull causing some of the 6,000 gallons of diesel on board to escape. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Sara Francis.

## Around the 17th District



**A)** A Kodiak-based HH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew, forward-deployed to the Coast Guard Cutter Morgenthau, conducted a medevac of a 40-year-old male from the 280-foot processor fishing vessel Golden Alaska 46 miles north of Cold Bay February 14. Nery Arriaza, hometown unknown, was reportedly suffering from severe chest pains when the captain of the Golden Alaska contacted the Coast Guard via satellite phone at 9:12 a.m. requesting a medevac.

**B)** Coast Guard District Seventeen kicked off the 2011 Arctic initiative with the first Arctic domain awareness flight of the year March 22. This will be Coast Guard District Seventeen's fifth Arctic season of expanded operations utilizing cutters, aircraft and personnel from across the state to support 2011 operations from May through August.

**C)** A Kodiak-based Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew rescued three fishermen from the partially submerged 42-foot fishing vessel Ruffian just north of Latouche Island in Prince William Sound Jan. 25 at 11:22 a.m.

**D)** Coast Guard Electronics System Support Unit (ESU) Kodiak relocated to Juneau establishing ESU Juneau on April 1st. CDR Lane Johnson, ESU Juneau Commanding Officer, has command of ESU Juneau and five electronic support detachments throughout Alaska (Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Anchorage, Valdez and a Detail in Sitka). The missions and capabilities of ESU Juneau will remain the same even though there has been a reorganization of the unit's command.



### Port Call

JUNEAU, Alaska – The Coast Guard Cutter Hamilton makes its approach towards the Coast Guard Station Juneau pier after spending three months patrolling in the Bering Sea Feb. 4, 2011. The Hamilton was commissioned in 1967 as the first Secretary Class High-Endurance Cutter and is homeported at Naval Station San Diego, Calif. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios.





### Alaska Salute

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Jennifer Stubblefield, a boatswains mate stationed at Small Boat Station Valdez, (front left) and Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Troy Brevik, an Air Station Sitka aviation maintenance technician (fifth from the right) stand together with honorees from all branches of the military Feb. 18, 2011. The military members representing all branches of the military were honored at the 34th Armed Services YMCA of Alaska Annual Salute to the Military. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley.



Story and photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Walter Shinn, D17

# Serving for country and community

**E**nsuring the maintenance on a Coast Guard helicopter flying to rescue someone in dire need through turbulent weather conditions, over ice-cold water and jagged-edged mountains requires a team of highly motivated mechanics to keep the aircraft always ready.

For Petty Officer 1st Class Troy Brevik, an aviation maintenance technician at Air Station Sitka, this is what he lives for.

"We (the Coast Guard) are an emergency service that provides a means to assist those in need and that would be what motivates me," said Brevik, a resident of Juneau, Alaska. "Anytime you can take apart a complex aircraft then put it back together to fly a crew out to do a mission safely knowing that we are helping to rescue a family member or loved one is extremely rewarding."

Because of Brevik's call to serve he was selected as the 17th Coast Guard District Coast Guardsman of the Year Feb. 18 for his leadership and strong will to overcome a challenging year for the air station.

During the transition to the new version of the Jayhawk rescue helicopter, the tango model with a complete avionics upgrade featuring an all new glass cockpit with modern communications and navigation systems, Brevik led his maintenance team through a meticulous inspection of all new aircraft before they were qualified to fly on missions. He also led all 55 aircraft maintenance personnel through a training plan addressing the new aircraft's qualifications required for its multi-mission capabilities.

He was also responsible for supervising an intensive training program to streamline the aviation engineering department's transition to the new aircraft for the air station. During this arduous task Brevik had to account for 24-hour operations, three daily shifts heavy

maintenance cycles and training others to help meet requirement for the air station to have 45 qualified flight mechanics to be ready for anything at a moment's notice.

In addition to leading maintenance personnel at Air Station Sitka he also willingly lends help to his shipmates especially during difficult times.

Last July, the air station suffered a tragic loss of three Coast Guardsmen when a Sitka-based crew was ferrying one of the new Jayhawk helicopters from Elizabeth City, N.C., to Sitka and they went down in the waters off La Push, Wash.

Brevik exemplified the Coast Guard's core values as he stepped up as a shipmate during this difficult time for the air station by volunteering to represent the family of Petty Officer 2nd Class Brett Banks throughout the funeral and memorial arrangements.

Volunteering to lend a hand for someone in need is not only what Brevik does in the Coast Guard but also for community of Sitka.

He volunteers with both the Sitka Fire Department and Sitka Mountain Rescue.

Over the course of the year serving for the fire department he gave 40 hours of instruction during the 2010 Firefighter One Academy. He responded to 67 fire calls in turn saving or assisting 70 lives.

While volunteering for Sitka Mountain Rescue he spent time educating the public on wilderness safety and provided professional emergency services to those in need of rescue. He also responded to 35 search and rescue cases.

Brevik acted as a team leader, directly supervising three Alaska State Troopers, 14 Alaska State Trooper cadets, two Coast Guard members and several local volunteers during one particularly successful search and rescue mission for a lost hunter.

Brevik knew little of what he would be doing

when initially joining the Coast Guard in 1992 and never imagined he'd be a volunteer life saver in the military and community.

"I was living at home and couldn't afford to go to college so I joined the Coast Guard to do my four years and then go back to college," said Brevik. "Once I completed my training school I just kept going and really enjoyed the job and the people."

During 2010, the expertise Brevik brought to

the air station enabled rescue helicopters to fly more than 2,100 hours on 150 search and rescue missions. He personally flew on 15 search and rescue missions resulting in five lives saved.

"What we do is inherently dangerous and keeping an aircraft safe for flight for all of us is my motivation," said Brevik. "I am most thankful for my family and my lovely wife and her continued support for all that she gives. We shall never forget those who sacrificed all." 🐾



Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley



# Taking a fix, charting the course

## State of the Coast Guard

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley, PADET Anchorage



Like a ship's crew needs to make frequent position fixes and make periodic course changes as needed, each year it is the practice for the commandant of the Coast Guard to address the service and give a position check and plot the course ahead.

Adm. Robert Papp, Coast Guard commandant, started his address by quoting legendary coach Vince Lombardi, who when addressing his team said, "we are going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it, but we are going to relentlessly chase it, because in the process we will catch excellence."

This simple story seems to sum up the direction and focus of Papp's remarks and course for the Coast Guard.

"I can report that we're ready to meet mission demands, but we're facing some real challenges," said Papp. "Today I am releasing my commandant's direction; my direction is the sailing plan for my watch. It is designed to keep the service focused on pursuing my four principles."

Papp outlined his principles as:

- 1 - Sustain mission excellence
- 2 - Recapitalize and build capacity

- 3 - Enhance crisis response and management

- 4 - Prepare for the future

Stating that sustaining mission excellence is one of the Coast Guard's toughest challenges, Papp has made this the first of his priorities.

"For over two centuries, in spite of often old and obsolete equipment, the strength of our service has been our incredibly talented and professional people," said Papp. "In many cases, the price of change and operations has placed our focus on simply training (our people) to a level of basic qualification. But qualification is a minimum standard."

Papp continued by outlining how qualification is a significant first step, however, the service cannot stop at qualification. He continues by emphasizing that, "We need to train to be proficient."

In an effort to achieve and maintain proficiency, Papp recognizes the service may need to reduce the number and range of activities and capabilities.

"This is acceptable... until (we are) properly resourced," said Papp. "We will prepare and train to perform the most essential missions professionally, effectively and efficiently."

Recapitalizing and building capacity is the second challenge and principle outlined by Papp.

"In order for the Coast Guard to win the future, we need to continue recapitalizing our fleet and by fleet I mean cutters, aircraft and boats, as well as our shore infrastructure," said Papp.

Papp continued on to outline how much needed updates are underway including the continued acquisition of the National Security Cutters, the Fast Response Cutters, the HC-144 Ocean Sentry, HC-130J Hercules and the

### First Speech

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp delivers his first State of the Coast Guard Address at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., February 10, 2011. During his speech, Papp painted a picture of the state of the Service while laying out his vision for the future. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.



continued development of the Offshore Patrol Cutter to replace the aging Medium Endurance Cutters.

“Every good Coast Guardsmen keeps a weather eye to windward and it is clear there’s been a change in the weather, our Nation is facing serious fiscal challenges,” said Papp. “It’s time to adjust the sails. As we work to recapitalize, we will do our utmost to ensure we are good stewards of the taxpayer’s dollars.”

However, Papp recognizes that unless the service can continue to update its assets, it will not be able to maintain an acceptable level of readiness to perform its missions.

“More with less is not an acceptable option,” said Papp. “Without continued recapitalization, we will not be Semper Paratus.”

Over the past decade, crisis management and response has evolved into one of the core competencies of the Coast Guard, and this is the third challenge presented by the commandant.

“Although we’ve had a good track record to date, we can’t rest on our success,” said Papp. “We must build on the many lessons learned to further enhance our abilities both as a service and as individuals. We need to ensure we’re ready for the next response.”

Lastly, preparing for the future, Papp emphasizes that the services needs to focus on more than just what we see, but what’s over the horizon.

One of his areas of concern and one that directly affects Coast Guard units in Alaska is the Arctic.

“Our Nation has significant strategic interests in the emerging Arctic waters,” said Papp. “Retreating ice has spurred an increase in maritime activity. Increased activity means increased Coast Guard responsibilities.”

The commandant continued by stating that the service is fully engaged in on-going Arctic and ocean policy discussions. He affirms that the service is committed to leading, and where

appropriate, supporting the National Arctic Policy.

“But, if we are serious about protecting our Arctic National interests and resources, then we must make the investment to do so,” said Papp.

In preparing for the future, Papp says that we must work to respect our shipmates.

“Respecting our shipmates is about people. It’s about caring for one another,” said Papp.

“Today, I’m proclaiming this year the ‘Year of the Coast Guard Family’ we will place renewed focus on ensuring our housing, child care development centers and other family support programs are the best they can be.”

Papp continues to emphasize that taking care of service members and their families is essential to the strength of the service.

“Coast Guardsmen over the course of two centuries have understood the challenges of resource

constraints and dangerous missions,” said Papp. But we’ve always had each other; we’ve always had meaningful work that provided for the safety and security of our country. We are blessed by our people, our missions and our heritage.”

As the commandant has shown in his address to the service and to the Nation, our position is fixed and our course is set. For over 200 years the service has been everywhere the Nation has needed it.

“We are on scene today, adapting for tomorrow and always ready,” said Papp. 🐾

“In order for the Coast Guard to win the future, we need to continue recapitalizing our fleet...”

*Adm. Robert Papp*

Standing Ovation

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Bob Papp delivers his first State of the Coast Guard Address at Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., February 10, 2011. During his speech, Papp painted a picture of the state of the Service while laying out his vision for the future. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.





## COAST GUARD

KEN ANDERSON  
2011  
IDITAROD

Story, graphic and photos by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley, PADET Anchorage

# The Last Great Race on Earth

**W**hen 63 dog sled racers embark on a more than 1,000-mile race, one would expect drama and excitement, but for two racers the race came to its climax during a drag race down the main street of Nome each competing for 9th place and the winner taking the lead by the length of a dog's nose.

Nine days earlier, Coast Guard sponsored Iditarod musher Ken Anderson, a 10-time Iditarod race veteran, was one of a multi-national list of racers who departed from Willow, Alaska, each competing against each other and the wilds of Alaska in what has become to be known as the "last great race on Earth."

During the Iditarod, or any dog sled race, mushers and their teams form a great respect for the race, for the elements and for the other mushers. Without respect for these areas, a musher could find themselves and their team in a scenario that could be life threatening for the dogs, for another musher or for the musher themselves.

Less than a month before the Iditarod, while racing in the Yukon Quest, a 1,000-mile, two-country race, Anderson was racing along the banks of Birch Creek in Eastern Alaska when he observed a light flashing through fog which had developed from a fresh water breakout in the ice.

As Anderson neared the light he discovered that it was originating from the lamp of fellow

musher Dallas Seavey who had broken through the ice and was now soaking wet in negative 50-degree temperatures.

Fearing for his fellow musher, Anderson searched for a safe way across the semi-frozen creek. Anderson found a set of moose tracks nearby and followed them safely across the frozen creek and over to his friend in need. The race was forgotten as a fellow musher was in need of help.

Anderson helped Seavey ring water from his clothing and boots then he used plastic bags to help protect Seavey's feet from his wet and frozen boots and inserted hand warmers into Seavey's clothing to help fight off hypothermia. Anderson then guided both dog teams back onto the trail toward the next checkpoint three hours away.

Anderson's selfless display of respect for the conditions that he finds himself and for the well being of his fellow mushers harkens to the very core of the Coast Guard and why the men and women of the Coast Guard serve.

"It is exciting to be sponsored by the Coast Guard," said Anderson. "I think it is kind of a neat relationship, that we share some similarities. In the Iditarod (like in the Coast Guard), it doesn't matter the weather, it doesn't matter the conditions, when you are called out you go."

For the second year in a row the Coast Guard has sponsored Ken Anderson in his running of the Iditarod. In 2010, Anderson finished in 4th place, and through elementary school outreach efforts helped bring the Coast Guard's message and mission to kids across the country.

The Coast Guard renewed the sponsorship to continue outreach efforts to the rural communities in northern Alaska. The Coast

## Modern History

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - The Coast Guard is proudly sponsoring 10-year Iditarod race veteran Ken Anderson in his 2011 Iditarod race attempt extending 1,150 miles from Anchorage to Nome. The Coast Guard has a long history in Alaska including using dog sled teams in 1897 to save stranded starving whalers in Barrow. U.S. Coast Guard illustration by Petty Officer 1st Class David Mosley





## Journey Begins

ANCHORAGE, Alaska - Coast Guard sponsored Iditarod racer Ken Anderson departs on the race re-start point of the 39th edition of the Iditarod in Willow, March 6, 2011. The Coast Guard is sponsoring Anderson in his 11th running of the Iditarod, which is known as "The last great race on Earth."

Guard's missions continue to grow as the Arctic climate keeps changing thus the Coast Guard is looking to recruit and draw upon the local knowledge from the region.

Traditionally the people of Alaska have been very patriotic in serving their country; however, they don't normally serve in the sea-going services like the Navy and the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard wants to change that by recruiting from these amazing people and using their traditions and knowledge to better strengthen the service.

"I think that it (Iditarod sponsorship) is a great way for the Coast Guard to get people to be aware that the Coast Guard is out there looking

for folks to become a Coastie," said Mark Begich, Alaska Senator. "It shows the Coast Guard is committed to the Alaska spirit here with the Iditarod."

The Coast Guard has had a long history working in Alaska, including using dog teams for search and rescue efforts. In 1897, officers serving in the Revenue cutter service used dog teams to traverse more than 1,500 miles while herding Caribou to starving whalers who were trapped in the winter ice north of Point Barrow in the Arctic Ocean.

In what has become to be known as the "overland expedition," the efforts by these courageous officers saved all 265 whalers and immortalized their names in Coast Guard lore with the modern day Coast Guard Cutters Jarvis and Berthoff named after these legendary men.

The modern day mushers of the Iditarod run their race in honor of a similar rescue effort conducted through the use of dog sled teams. In 1925 the community of Nome was hit by a Diphtheria outbreak that threatened the life of every child in

the community.

In what became to be known as the "great race for mercy" 20 mushers and 150 dogs were used to relay antitoxin more than 650 miles in five days, ultimately saving the community.

"The Coast Guard has been an extremely important part of our state's history, it is just as important as the sled dog for transportation and in search and rescue, because the sled dog (and the Coast Guard) played that roll in the early days of Alaska," said Chas St. George, director of public relations for the Iditarod Trail Committee. "I think that it is important thing to realize that they (the Coast Guard) perform such a vital mission for our state. They are our search and rescue for the state, so I think that Ken's opportunity to not only represent the Coast Guard but also to represent the Iditarod is a perfect fit."

The 2011 Iditarod race ended in the history

books as clear weather and a well-marked trail let mushers shatter all race records with first place finishing the race in Nome in less than nine days.

"Mother Nature was pretty kind to us, it was great weather," said Anderson. "After the Quest, I was hoping for a no drama race, weather wise and we got that."

While the weather may not have been a factor, strategy was a deciding factor. After sprinting through the Yukon Quest, Anderson decided to take a measured approach to the Iditarod. He took slightly longer rests early in the race saving his dog's strength for a 2nd half, come from behind and sprint to the finish.

"While I may have underestimated my competitors and I possibly could have pressed a little harder, the race went basically according to plan," said Anderson. "I did not come here to finish 9th, but I was able to make up ground ending up in possibly one of the closest finishes in the history of the race."

Anderson started the race in 43rd and maintained a middle of the pack race position for most of the race. After taking his mandatory eight hour rest in 17th place at the Eagle Island checkpoint, Anderson was able to push his dogs over the remaining 420 miles to Nome picking up eight places including passing fellow musher Jessie Royer in a photo finish race for 9th place down the streets of Nome finishing at 12:23 a.m. on March 16, 2011.

"It is a real honor that the Coast Guard is willing to sponsor our sport and that they are willing to back me," said Anderson. "It makes me feel proud that I have that type of backing, it helps me set a personal standard in my life and while on the trail.

While the life of an Iditarod musher may seem vastly different from that of the men and women of the Coast Guard,

## Racing Finish

NOME, Alaska - Coast Guard sponsored musher, Ken Anderson, departs the Iditarod finish line in Nome after finishing the 2011 race in 9th place March 16, 2011. Anderson moved up two places in the final hours of the race, passing DeeDee Jonrowe and just beating Jessie Royer by the length of a dog's nose at the finish line.

they both share unique and similar traits that allow them to overcome diversity and hardship ultimately to obtain their final goal.

"Anderson is one of the most respected mushers in a field where you don't get that type of respect unless you are one of those mushers that shares in your success," said St. George. "It is very important for our mushers to have the kind of sponsorship that the Coast Guard provides, because that sponsorship is all about the relationship that the Coast Guard has created with Ken, but it is also about what he represents to his sponsor." 🐾





Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class Charly Hengen, PADET Kodiak

# ***Weather doesn't hinder helicopter rescue***

**I**t was just after midnight and a low pressure system with strong winds and snow battered Kodiak Island. The search and rescue alarm shattered the quiet night at Air Station Kodiak for a grounded fishing vessel with five people aboard needing rescue.

Two pilots, a flight mechanic and a rescue swimmer scrambled into their personal protective equipment, assessed the weather situation and came up with a rescue plan.

The 68-foot fishing vessel Midnite Sun was aground 36 miles northwest of Kodiak near a cliff face. The weather was reported as winds gusting to 52 mph with blowing snow and 18 to 20 foot seas. The vessel was starting to take on water and the crewmembers needed to get off the vessel.

Even though the weather was treacherous that

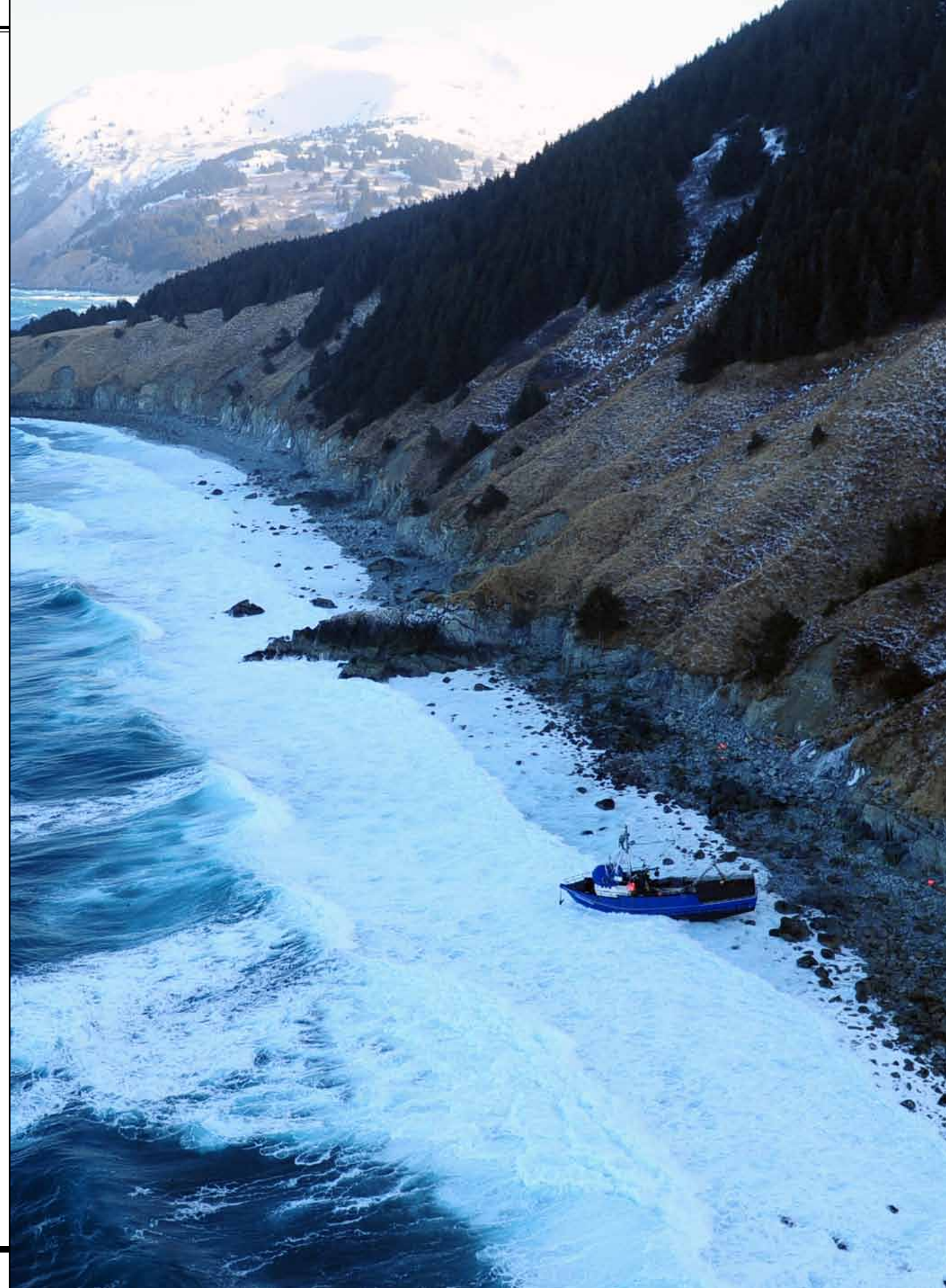
night, the four Coast Guardsmen launched in an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter at 1:17 a.m., and raced across the night sky to the vessel's location.

The Coast Guard might not have known the Kodiak-based Midnite Sun was in distress if it wasn't for the fishing vessel Sea Warrior crew. They reportedly heard the initial mayday call on the marine VHF radio channel one, which is not monitored by the Coast Guard, and relayed the call to Coast Guard watchstanders resulting in the evening's rescue activity.

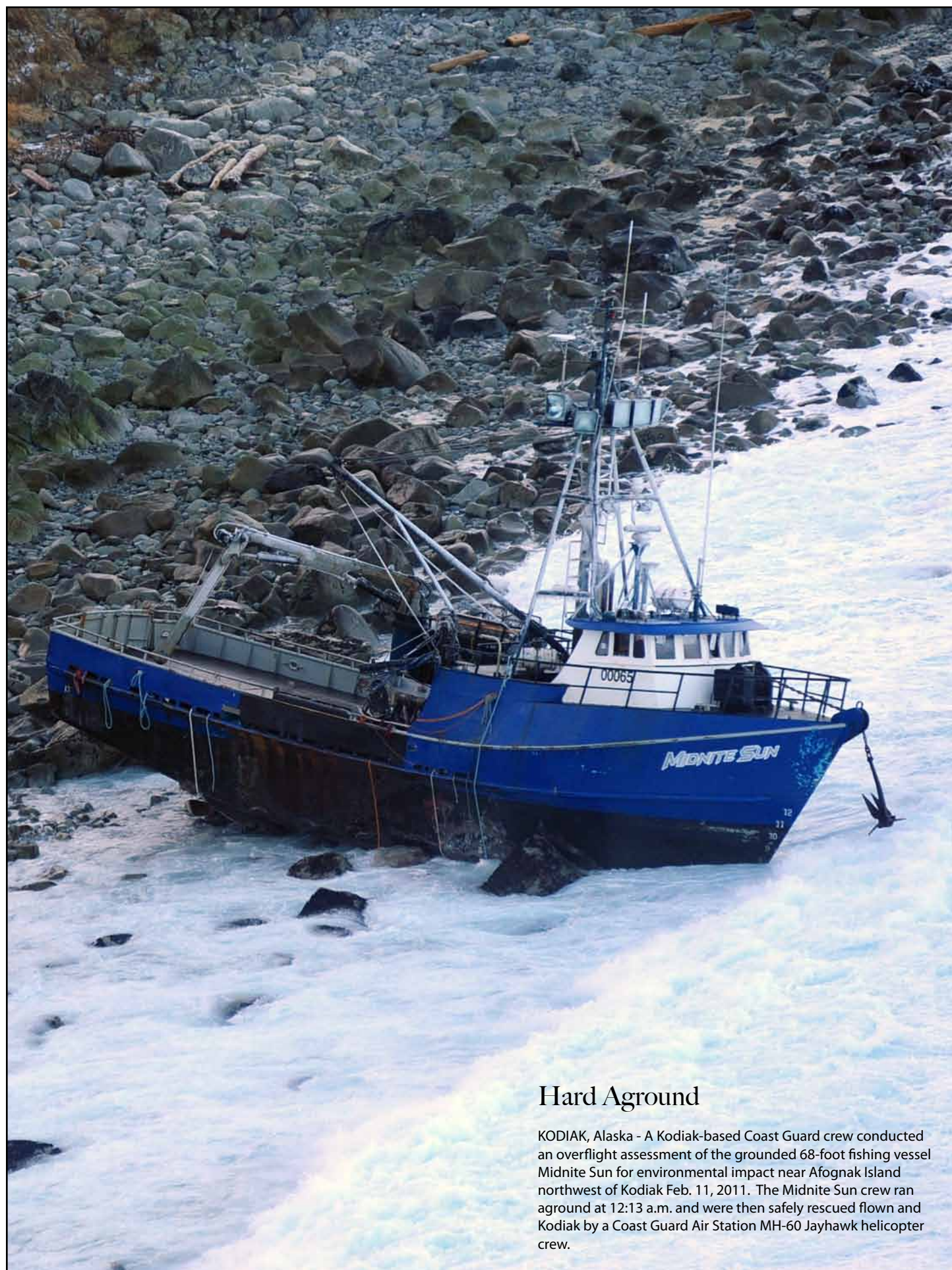
"Once we got on scene, we got into a hover and the winds were pretty bad," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Mike Wallace, flight mechanic and avionics electrical technician. "We would get steady runs of winds and then it would lull off for about five to 10 seconds, but the winds were also coming off the mountains too.

## **Lonely Beach**

KODIAK, Alaska - A Kodiak-based Coast Guard crew conducted an overflight assessment of the grounded 68-foot fishing vessel Midnite Sun for any environmental impact off Afognak Island northwest of Kodiak Feb. 11, 2011. The crew of the Midnite Sun was safely rescued from the vessel at 1:38 a.m. by a Kodiak-based MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jonathan Lally.







### Hard Aground

KODIAK, Alaska - A Kodiak-based Coast Guard crew conducted an overflight assessment of the grounded 68-foot fishing vessel Midnite Sun for environmental impact near Afognak Island northwest of Kodiak Feb. 11, 2011. The Midnite Sun crew ran aground at 12:13 a.m. and were then safely rescued flown and Kodiak by a Coast Guard Air Station MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew.

Winds were coming from every direction that night."

Alaska has some of the harshest weather to operate in including 50-foot seas and hurricane force winds. Williwaw winds, which are strong dangerous gusts coming off mountains, can force a helicopter to lose altitude. Add snow and the icing conditions and the environment makes it a challenge to rescue people. And even though the winds were strong, the pilots were able to hold the aircraft into a hover so Wallace could lower the basket to the fishing vessel.

"The vessel was taking heavy crashing waves over the wheel house," said Lt. Cmdr. Craig Neubecker, Jayhawk helicopter aircraft commander. "Due to the weather and situation, we decided to use the basket to hoist the men instead of lower the rescue swimmer. However, if we needed to use the rescue swimmer, he was ready to deploy."

One by one, the men climbed into the rescue basket and Wallace hoisted them into the helicopter safely. Petty Officer 1st Class Claude Morrissey, the rescue swimmer, worked with Wallace to physically haul the men out of the basket inside the aircraft which sped up the process.

"The crewmembers were in good spirits after they were off of their boat," said Wallace. "We were all laughing and joking on the trip back to the air station. They realized how bad it could have been and all were fairly happy to be alive."

The five crewmembers walked off the helicopter once it returned to Air Station Kodiak and were able to return to their loved ones that morning.

"I had a pilot tell me once that the fishermen are saying prayers out there and the Coast Guard is the answer to those prayers," said Neubecker. "Before I take off, I always pray to God to guide us, to guard us and keep us safe and in this case, we were very fortunate to save everyone and return safely." 🐾



### After Action Report

KODIAK, Alaska - Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Craig Neubecker an MH-60 Jayhawk aircraft commander with Air Station Kodiak, inputs information into the Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement database at 2:51 a.m., Feb. 11, 2011, after rescuing five men from the fishing vessel Midnite Sun. The weather at the time of the rescue was reported as 52 mph winds with 18 to 20 foot seas. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Charly Hengen.





# eFLOP:

## Legacy of Acushnet crew

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class Sara Francis, PADET Kodiak

The Coast Guard Cutter Acushnet bore two titles before its March 11 decommissioning "The Queen of the Fleet" for being the oldest commissioned Coast Guard cutter on active service and the A-Team in fisheries for their exemplary performance protecting our living marine resources.

On their final patrol of Alaskan waters the crew conducted 44 fisheries boardings in 41 days. In 18 months they conducted 165 boardings total. These are very high numbers for any crew. Lt. Kirk Fistick, Acushnet's operation officer, credits eFLOP and the crew's dedication for their success.

Lt. Lee Davis, engineer officer, and Fistick jointly developed the Electronic Fishing Vessel Locator and Operational Planner which was chosen as the 2010 Pacific Area Innovation Award Winner for operations and readiness.

"eFLOP is a Microsoft Excel-based tool that correlates and plots fishing vessel data to help operations personnel target enforcement efforts in areas where they can provide the most benefit in terms of fishing vessel safety and protection of Alaska's fish stocks," said Fistick.

Additionally, the use of eFLOP helps reduce fuel consumption by enabling cutters to proceed at more economical speeds to areas where enforcement operations will yield the best results rather than racing from area to area looking for fishing vessels to board.

The Coast Guard is tasked to protect the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone from foreign interests, enforce domestic fisheries laws and international fisheries agreements. Acushnet's presence in Alaska supported all of these goals. Fisheries management plans to ensure the sustainability of fisheries are developed by regional fisheries management councils.

The Coast Guard is responsible for enforcing these plans at sea, in conjunction with NOAA fisheries enforcement ashore.

Acushnet was a key resource in maintaining the integrity of Alaska fishery management plans by conducting fisheries enforcement boardings throughout the state and ensuring fishermen were operating at the right time in the right areas. The Seventeenth Coast Guard District's other medium and high endurance cutters with the continued support of the West Coast high endurance cutter fleet have taken up that mantle.

eFLOP is a tool that these cutters can use to make the most of their time at sea. The system was born out of a need to find the most efficient way to position a Coast Guard cutter that moves at an average of 18 miles per hour in a vast area of responsibility.

eFLOP correlates the vessel ID information

### Fishery Enforcement

JUNEAU, Alaska – A boarding team from the Coast Guard Cutter Acushnet terminated the voyage of two fishing vessels for safety violations during a boarding in the Gulf of Alaska Monday. The Acushnet boarding team is aboard the Teri Lynn as the small boat follows close behind. Coast Guard photo.

from NOAA's vessel monitoring system on approximately 1,500 federally registered vessels with the living marine resource boarding data in the Coast Guard system and exports this compiled data to Coast Guard's charting software for tracking.

"The beauty of the program is that it works with the systems we already have and doesn't require any additional software or hardware," said Fistick. "This is important for our cutters which are limited by the technology on board and data connection speeds while at sea."

In Alaska maximizing resources has continued to be a focus for Coast Guard






### On the Lookout

JUNEAU, Alaska – Seaman Jacob Coulter looks through the big eyes while standing watch on the fly bridge of the Coast Guard Cutter Acushnet during their last voyage at 8:35 a.m. Feb. 9, 2011. The Acushnet is the oldest commissioned vessel in the Coast Guard and is due to be decommissioned March 11, 2011. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios.

operators as cutters are retired and the environment remains challenging. NOAA and Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game reports indicate that the sustainable fisheries resources in the Bristol Bay and the Southeastern Bering Sea alone are worth nearly \$2.5 billion dollars annually. Alaska's fisheries are vital to the state and the people who live here and Coast Guard crews must continue to operate at their best. eFLOP eliminates the need for manual data entry and reduces the correlation of data from hours to minutes thus reducing the burden on Coast Guard operations planners.

Though the Acushnet has been decommissioned and the crew has been divided and reassigned to new stations their contributions to the Coast Guard fleet remain active. This simple tool is maximizing the Coast Guard's time and resources and by extension taxpayer's money while ensuring there are fish for another generation. 



Story and photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Sara Francis, PADET Kodiak

# Lighting the way for Alaskans since 1932



## Flight Check

SITKA, Alaska - A Coast Guard Air Station Sitka MH-60 Jayhawk crew waits on a landing pad at Cape Decision Lighthouse to pick up two crewmen from Aids to Navigation Team Sitka March 11, 2011. The ANT Team makes regular visits to aids in Southeast Alaska to ensure they operate properly.

On a remote island in Southeast Alaska Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Sanders and Petty Officer 3rd Class Seth Riley carry equipment across a wooden walkway 25 feet above the sea as waves from Sumner Strait wash around the supports and rocks below. They climb the concrete steps to a 79-year-old abandoned building and push open the warped wooden door. The blades of the helicopter that brought them here beat the air in the distance.

Sanders and Riley are members of the Aids to Navigation Team in Sitka and the building is Cape Decision Lighthouse 83 miles southeast of Sitka on Kuiu Island. They are here to conduct routine checks of the light.

"It's really a tiny bulb that powers this light," said Sanders holding the bulb up, "Now that they are automated these lighthouses don't take much, but we still do periodic maintenance and replace any needed parts to make sure they keep working."

ANT Teams work on shoreside aids to navigation like dayboards and lighthouses around the United States. Coast Guard buoy tenders manage the buoys that stud many passages. ANT Sitka's twelve-man crew manages 105 primary aids to navigation in Southeast Alaska and 120 secondary aids.

"We used to maintain all of the fixed aids throughout Alaska until 1996 when ANT Kodiak was established," said Petty Officer 1st Class Jeremy Norbryhn, the executive petty officer at ANT Sitka.

Cape Decision is one of 11 existing Alaskan lighthouses and is automated and unmanned, but it wasn't always this way. After



the 1867 purchase of Alaska from Russia vessel traffic from the West Coast to Alaska increased to support the growing economy and transport supplies and goods to and from the new territory. Several fishing communities with hundreds of inhabitants, fishing fleets and canneries developed along the inside passage.

There were some limited aids left by the Russians but they weren't well established and didn't reach very far. The only actual lighthouse was a light atop the Russian governor's house, called Baranof's Castle, in Sitka and is generally considered to be the first Alaskan lighthouse. However, it burned down in 1894.

Recognizing the need for navigation in the region, to prevent groundings and accidents, the Lighthouse Bureau saw to the coordination and building of additional aids often drawing on other federal services, the Army and private industry for support. From the purchase date in 1867 to 1902 when the first American-built Alaska lighthouses were activated 324 shipwrecks are known to have occurred throughout the state, most due to heavy weather.

It wasn't until 1900, spurred largely by gold rush activity, that congress began to appropriate money for navigational aids. The first two American-built lighthouses in Alaska were Cape Sentinel on Lynn Canal and Five Fingers Island at the entrance to Stephens Passage both lighted March 1, 1902.

In 1929 congress set aside \$59,400 for a light to be built at Cape Decision on the west end of Sumner Strait. It was the last of the 16 light stations to be built. The lighthouse was completed March 15, 1932, at a final cost of \$158,000. All of the Alaska lighthouses still standing are concrete and built in an art-deco style with square light towers.

Lighthouse keepers manned Cape Decision until 1974 when a diesel electric system was installed. A solar powered aero beacon replaced the third order Fresnel lens in 1996. The Fresnel lens is now on display in the Clausen Museum in Petersburg.

Every two to three months technicians like Sanders and Riley visit the lighthouse to evaluate the system and swap any necessary equipment.

The Cape Decision light flashes white every five seconds and can be seen for 21 miles guiding many mariners as they ply these unforgiving waters.

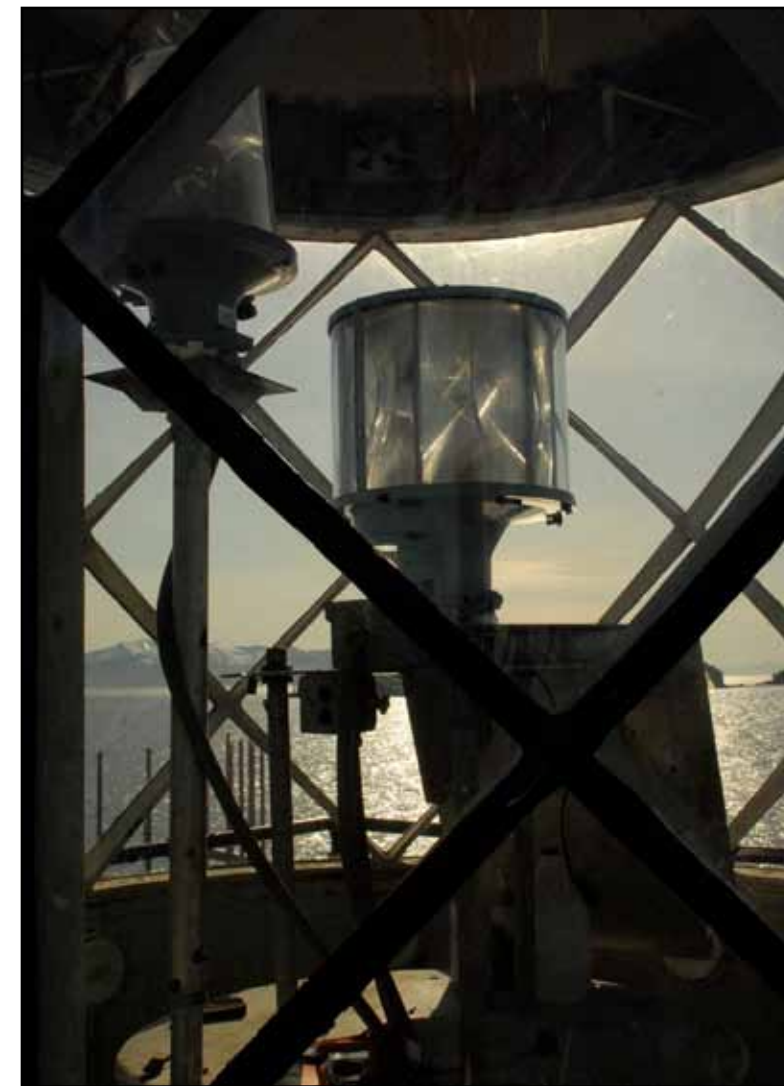
In 1989 Aids to Navigation Team members accidentally caused damage to the boathouse, pier and the derrick used to hoist supplies and the supply boat from the water below. Standard practice at that time was to incinerate trash in burn barrels near the lighthouse. It's unknown exactly what happened, but left briefly unattended the fire from the burn barrels spread to the nearby structures.

The ANT members used extinguishers and water from the lighthouse's cistern to put out the fire. An Air Station Sitka helicopter crew and the Coast Guard Cutter Woodrush aided them. The lighthouse and the helicopter pad were undamaged. Some of the burned areas are still visible today.

There are still reminders of the event around the air station. Articles clipped from the Ketchikan Daily News and an oar hung above the maintenance shop inscribed with the date and the names of the Coast Guard helicopter crew.

"We do what we can to support the ANT and get the job done safely and efficiently," said Lt. Dave Marrama, assistant operations officer for Air Station Sitka. "We fly with the ANT several times a month, more in the summer than the winter because it's easier for them to work on the aids then."

Aside from the Coast Guard technicians the only other regular visitors to the island are the Cape Decision Lighthouse Society members. The society is a grass roots organization that was awarded custody of the building and grounds in 1997. They are currently working to rebuilding the areas damaged by the fire, the cistern and the lighthouse's masonry in hopes of returning Cape Decision to its former glory. Despite its outward appearance the light continues to burn brightly and will continue to do so if the ANT crew has anything to say about it.



### ▲ Solar Light

SITKA, Alaska - The solar-powered aero beacon lights that flash white every five seconds after dark at Cape Decision Lighthouse were serviced March 21, 2011, by members of Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team Sitka. The light, located on Kuiu Island, became active in 1932 at a cost of about \$158,000 and was originally powered by a third order Fresnel lens which now resides at the Clausen Museum in Petersburg.

### Bulb Check ◀

SITKA, Alaska - Petty Officer 3rd Class Seth Riley, a boatswains mate, and Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Sanders, an electronics technician, both with Aids to Navigation Team Sitka, check the bulbs which now power the Cape Decision Lighthouse on Kuiu Island 83 miles southeast of Sitka. The lighthouse's original third order Fresnel lens was replaced by a solar-powered aero beacon in 1996.





Story by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon Lally, PADET Kodiak

# Remote access necessitates strong response resources

A plane crashes on an Afognak Island cliff face just north of Kodiak Island, Alaska. Access is by aircraft only. The Coast Guard receives notification that there are survivors and they are in critical condition. The call sets into motion a response from Coast Guard emergency medical service crews from three Kodiak-based units.

Kodiak aircrews receive the order to launch and have an aircraft ready in as little as 30 minutes with medical equipment and supplies on board. The flight medic who's going is briefed by the duty flight surgeon on recommended medical care for the crash victims and Coast Guard firefighters and rescue technicians set up a triage area at the Kodiak air station and prepare to receive the survivors and transfer them to more advanced care.

"Remote access changes the rules for emergency responses," said Fire Chief Jeff Halcomb, lead supervisor of Coast Guard Fire and Rescue Department Kodiak. "It's unique because here we're on an island, nothing else is coming, so you better be able to do it yourself or it's not going to get done."

The most well recognized Coast Guard rescuers are the rescue swimmers.

The main job of rescue swimmers, also known as aviation survival technicians, is to maintain all the survival equipment kept on board Coast Guard aircraft like the search and rescue vests, rescue baskets, litters, oxygen systems, liferafts and EMT kits. They also provide basic medical care to patients during rescues.

EMS training the swimmers receive is a three-week course given in Petaluma, Calif. There they receive a basic emergency medical technician certification.

Swimmers most often conduct EMS on their own, but can also work with flight medics to provide in-flight medical care for patients.

Stoecker worked with a flight medic on a case to provide care to a man mauled by a bear. The victim was severely wounded and suffered from a 14-inch wound near his spine. They provided in-flight care for the patient until they were able to get him to more advanced medical care in Kodiak.

Flight medics, who are health service technicians

## Medicine Bag

KODIAK, Alaska - Petty Officer 2nd Class Felipe DeFreitas, a qualified flight medic with Kodiak-based Rockmore-King Clinic, checks the medical flight bag, March 24, 2011, at the clinic. Every day that DeFreitas has flight duty he checks the bag to ensure it is fully prepared with medical supplies for emergency responses. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jonathan Lally.







within the Coast Guard, provide medical services to Coast Guard members and their families on a daily basis. Coast Guard HSs go through in depth schooling to become technicians for the service.

"The EMS training is very intensive due to the fast pace curriculum with a lot of tests and a lot of information that you need to cram in during the first three weeks of HS school," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jose Varela, a qualified flight medic with the Rockmore King Clinic in Kodiak.

There are three levels of emergency medical technician certifications that HSs can obtain to become flight medics.

HSs wanting to attain flight medic status have to work outside their designated field of duty often taking time from their personal lives and family to get flight qualified.

"My toughest case yet, bar none, is the Ted Stevens plane crash when we had a 15-year-old boy come aboard the C-130 asking where his dad was," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Felipe De Freitas, of the Rockmore King Clinic, describing the difficulty of his most recent case. "I still remember his face, his name and him asking me over and over where his dad was. I found out later that his dad did not survive the crash, which was hard."

The third component, Coast Guard Fire and Rescue Department in Kodiak, also has responders available for medical emergencies. They often receive the patients brought on aircraft and preside over the transfer from aircraft to Kodiak City ambulance.

Like the flight medics, the firefighters in Kodiak are trained in one of the three levels of EMT certifications.

According to Halcomb, of the 32 firefighters on staff at the fire house all of them are certified as

basic EMTs and 12 have a more advanced EMT certification.

The Coast Guard fire department deals with more than emergency response for the Coast Guard units in Kodiak.

"Our multiple responsibilities include the air field, the state airport and all incoming and outgoing medevacs and community flights," said Halcomb. "We also have responsibilities over the Coast Guard aircrafts, base buildings and medical emergencies."

Even with all that training sometimes the first response is still not enough.

"There was a case a few years ago that I responded to at the Coast Guard gym providing medical care to a guy who ended up having an aneurism," said Capt. Mike Oliver, a firefighter and shift leader with the Coast Guard fire department. "There was a crowd of people around and there was nothing we could do for him. I knew the guy which made it even harder and things like that affect you a lot because it brings mortality to the forefront."

Both Halcomb and Oliver agreed that living in Kodiak and working with the Coast Guard fire department is unique when dealing with EMS. Because Kodiak is an isolated community of about 13,000 you likely know the patient you're treating. The firefighters view many of the new residents as potential patients.

The rescue swimmers, flight medics and firefighters have to work as a team to get the job done and save lives. Each one can provide first response care treatment that could be critical for a person in an emergency response, because unlike larger communities, no one else may be coming so they better be able to do it themselves. 🐾

## Clinic Duty

KODIAK, Alaska - Petty Officer 2nd Class Felipe DeFreitas, a qualified flight medic with Kodiak-based Rockmore-King Clinic, walks down the hall of the clinic with the flight medic gear March 24, 2011. DeFreitas and other flight medics carry a backpack full of medical supplies and a mobile resuscitator along with all the flight gear they are issued. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jonathan Lally.



Story and photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Walter Shinn, D17  
and Petty Officer 3rd Class Charley Hengen, PADET Kodiak

# Pilot of the Year tells of his emergency landing

The sound of spinning helicopter blades and the ocean in Chiniak Bay off Kodiak Island could be heard by the deck crew as the aircrew prepared to land on the flight deck of the Coast Guard Cutter Healy Sept. 30, 2010.

What began as a typical night time training mission for the MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew turned into a survival mission to landing safely on the ship's moving landing pad in the middle of the bay.

The helicopter hovered 40 feet above ice-cold water 100-feet away from the ship when the crew heard something unusual.

"We were at a hover waiting for the green light to land on the cutter and we heard a loud howl in the aircraft," said Lt. Audie Andry. "It sounded like wind coming thru a vent, but it was louder than it should have been. It lasted for two to three seconds maybe and by the time I was thinking, what is that noise, it turned into a high pitched squeal."

Suddenly the aircraft began to yaw and the rotors drooped causing the aircraft to descend. So Andry aimed the nose for the flight deck directing the aircraft to make an emergency landing.

"We went from a normal training atmosphere to an absolute survival situation in about three seconds," said Andry. "I remember thinking, I set up to far away and we weren't going to make the

ship."

The helicopter was beginning to lose altitude as it had suffered a main-transmission input failure. One of two engines was no longer providing power.

As Andry focused on the flight deck the aircraft moved forward gaining momentum but it was very sloppy due to the low motor rpm.

Wind helped move the aircraft forward but as they moved closer to the ship the aircrew encountered turbulence caused by wind coming across the super structure of the ship as they approached the flight deck.

Andry has landed on the flight deck of a ship more than 100 times since joining the Coast Guard in 2003. None of the previous landings were like the one he was about to experience.

"We started losing tail rotor efficiency as we came over the deck," said Andry. "And at that point, it was happening so fast, there was no chance of changing our decision. As we hit, which was a little bit sideways, there was a second or two we all paused to make sure all three wheels were on the deck."

The safe landing onto the flight deck aboard



Photo courtesy of Air Station Kodiak

the Healy is the second emergency landing for Andry.

In 2005, he was piloting a Jayhawk helicopter while in a 30-foot hover with the aircraft carrying a sling load. Suddenly, the aircraft experience an engine failure.

"My flight mechanic was able to drop the load within one and a half seconds and we were on the ground three seconds later," said Andry. "We narrowly avoided landing on the load which would have caused significant damage to the aircraft."


Inherent danger exists in every day missions for the Coast Guard. Andry has learned that the risk is part of his job.

"Through this I have learned risks are part of the Coast Guard life, whether in an aircraft, on a surface asset, and even during shore duty," said Andry. "There will always be some risk

associated with our missions and we accept those risks because we believe the service we provide to the public is worth it."

Andry was selected as the Pilot of the Year by the Helicopter Association International for demonstrating exceptional airmanship and decisive action for landing the aircraft safely aboard the Healy.

The Pilot of the Year award honors an outstanding single feat performed by a helicopter pilot during the year or extraordinary professionalism over a period of time.

"I look at this award and think the organization was looking at this one event, this one time and saying to me that I did a good job," said Andry. "I respect the organization and it's nice to see something positive come out of an event that could have had a much more negative outcome." 



Story and photos by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jon-Paul Rios, D17

# Gardening success

## Chief Gardner's story

### inspires Alaskan students



**T**here are more than 550 native tribes in the United States and of those 229 are in Alaska.

With the largest Coast Guard command being recruiting with roughly 400 dedicated service members staffing it, it's hard to believe that Alaska only has three recruiters to cover a land mass almost the same as the continental United States.

With it being nearly impossible for recruiters in Alaska to reach the entire state, many Coast Guardsmen take it upon themselves to recruit through community relations. Whether it's by providing static displays, vessel tours or even

volunteering their time to visit local schools; Coast Guardsmen across Alaska devote their time to assist in recruiting efforts.

For Chief Petty Officer Gerald Gardner, an Alaskan Native born into the rich Tlingit and Haida culture, this is no different. Gardner has devoted a sum of his 24-year Coast Guard career reaching out to the Alaskan community.

Growing up in Ketchikan, Alaska, Gardner was the son of a commercial fisherman. As one



could guess, living in the marine subsistence rich Alaska, Gardner soon followed suit. At the young age of eight Gardner was out with his father commercial fishing on his 54-foot purse seiner.

At 17, Gardner was a seasoned fisherman able to do pretty much everything except maintain the urge to stay in the business.

"I just didn't want to be a commercial fisherman anymore," said Gardner. "I always thought the Coast Guard would be a great career but wasn't sure if they accepted natives."

This mindset can be all too common as the Coast Guard is comprised of more than 42,000 men and women of which only 2.5% are Alaska Native.

For Gardner, it wasn't until his sister's boyfriend, a Coast Guardsman asked him, with so much experience on the water why don't you join the Coast Guard? This came obviously as a shock to Gardner who had no idea that he could join. Shortly after, he took his Armed

Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery exam and from there it was off to boot camp.

Gardner tries to employ that same knowledge given to him when he was younger by going to different schools throughout Alaska and telling students that they too can join the Coast Guard.

"I've been fortunate enough to have served in Ketchikan, Petersburg and twice in Juneau," said Gardner. "I try to reach out to every senior class and tell them my story."

Most recently Gardner was invited by Joel Casto, the Coast Guard 17th District tribal liaison, to be part of a job fair put together by the Inupiaq community where they flew seniors from the Arctic Slope into Barrow so they can learn different career opportunities.

Casto thought it was a great opportunity to bring Gardner along as he knew he was native and could relate best to the teens.

"Talking to many of the principles, they ask if I could bring someone who looks like their students, a native," said Casto. "The principles stressed the importance so the students can see themselves in the blue uniform."

Gardner was happy to take the opportunity and talk to the students. This was his first official invitation to speak as all the other times he spoke to seniors it was on his own time.

He went to Barrow in his operational dress uniform but brought along with him his blanket, an important part of his regalia. The blankets of Alaskan Natives tell a unique story of their clan and what it means to be part of it, a story that by one glancing at it wouldn't understand unless you were part of that culture. This helped Gardner further relate with the seniors.

"He's not a recruiter, just someone who loves his culture and likes giving back to it the best way he knows how and that's informing the youth," said Casto.

With passion for youth and an informative tongue, Gardner continues to volunteer his time to Alaskan students. His devotion to the Alaskan community far surpasses his normal job requirements by informing Alaskans that they too can translate their native expertise and experiences into a successful Coast Guard career.





Story and photo by Petty Officer 3rd Charly Hengen, PADET Kodiak

# Only female flight engineer flies high

**C**hecking in at five-feet and one inch in height, this red-haired 24-year old female Coast Guardsman dons a green flight suit and prepares for a flight to St. Paul.

Stepping into the aircraft and positioning herself between the pilot seats, she adjusts the flight engineer's seat so her boots touch the aircraft's floor. She begins her pre-flight checks by flipping the switches and turning the knobs. During the flight, she will be in control of the aircraft internal systems.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Dani Church, an aviation maintenance technician with Air Station Kodiak and a Forsyth, Ga., resident, is currently the only female HC-130 Hercules aircraft flight engineer in the Coast Guard out of 125 flight engineers.

"It's a great feeling, knowing that right now, I'm the only female C-130 flight engineer," said Church. "But given the size of the C-130 community and the number of females that stay in and make a career out of the military, it doesn't surprise me because there aren't too many female AMTs out there."

A flight engineer is charged with keeping watch of the nine aircraft systems, four engines and numerous instruments on board the 155,000 pound aircraft. One might conclude this is a stressful position simply due to the aircraft's size. Another aspect of the job is that when a problem arises, the pilots turn to the flight engineer to find out what is wrong. Not only is the flight engineer in charge of the plane, but this person is in charge of the crew as well.

"It is a stressful crew position due to the fact that when on the road with a broken plane, the crew looks to the engineer for direction on getting it fixed and flying again," said Church. "Plus, I'm in charge of the crew and it's hard to tell grown adults how to act. Thankfully, experience is just a phone call away."

Church was asked to go to flight engineer

school by the C-130 enlisted flight engineer board leader for Air Station Kodiak, Petty Officer 1st Class Ken Norris, also an aviation maintenance technician.

"What I look for before I send someone to flight engineer school is a second tour aviator, maintenance experience, a willingness to learn and a great attitude," said Norris. "I wanted her to go because she would do whatever was asked of her, always performed it with a good attitude and turned out a quality product."

When Norris spoke to Church about going to flight engineer school she was lacking in the maintenance realm. Norris's plan was to send her to the night shift so she could gain maintenance experience before she went to school.

"I was really anxious at first," said Church. "I realize now I could have told Norris no, but at the time, I left like it was my only chance. My gut said yes so I went with my gut."

Church spent three months in Tampa Bay, Fla., learning about the aircraft's systems. Since there were only two students in the specialized school, she had almost one-on-one instruction and plenty of time for all of her questions.

"I was able to complete the ground phase of the flight engineer syllabus with the standardization team in Florida," said Church. "Once I returned to Kodiak, I had to complete 10 flights."

When Church returned to Kodiak, the task of completing those 10 flights stood before her. Church's main fear was failing. Even though she had confidence she felt like she didn't know nearly enough about the aircraft or the systems.

"When Church returned from school, she jumped right into work," said Norris. "Kodiak is not the best training environment since many flights get cancelled due to weather and last minute operational changes. But if you can make it here, you got it licked. She worked really hard at getting qualified."

Church became flight engineer qualified in August 2010. Her first flight as a qualified C-130 flight engineer was a flight from Kodiak to Shemya Island and back.

"The flight to Shemya was an uneventful one, thankfully," exclaimed Church. "I was nervous about emergencies but I was comfortable with the normal stuff, such as monitoring the engines, instruments and other systems and balancing fuel."

It's been a few months since she's completed her first flight as the only female C-130 flight engineer and being such has not caused her any troubles at all.

"I haven't gotten any criticism from anyone for being a female flight engineer because once they talk to me about the plane or the job, they realize that there is no reason a female can't do it," said Church. "That was my goal from day one...I didn't want anyone to doubt the decision to send another female because of something I did."

Church's advice to other females is to do the job as well as you possibly can, don't shy away from work and if the males are elbows deep in an engine to jump in there and don't let them push you out of the way.

"I see her daily maturing into an outstanding engineer," said Norris. "I'm sad to say I won't be there to see her four years from now, because I know she'll be doing great."





# April, Autism Awareness Month

Courtesy of Shari Lopatin, TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Today, autism in children has become more prevalent than childhood cancer, juvenile diabetes and pediatric AIDS—combined.

That's according to Autism Speaks, a national autism science and advocacy organization. The association defines autism as "a group of complex developmental brain disorders." Today, about one in every 110 children is diagnosed with autism.

April is Autism Awareness Month, a month that's been celebrated by the Autism Society since the 1970s, according to their website. Autism Awareness Month highlights the growing need for concern about autism and its potential treatments.

Many different types of treatment exist for an autistic individual. However, one of the more prominent techniques that's gained notoriety recently is Applied Behavior Analysis, or ABA therapy. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, ABA may help reduce problem behaviors associated with autism and teach vital new skills.

As part of the growing recognition of ABA therapy, TRICARE now covers this type of treatment for eligible beneficiaries. It's part of TRICARE's Autism Services Demonstration, an enhanced benefit under the ECHO program. ECHO—or Extended Care Health Option—is TRICARE's benefit for individuals with disabilities.

Here's how it works:

To be eligible for ECHO, a family must first enroll into its service branch's Exceptional Family Member Program. Each service branch has a point of contact to help families enroll. After enrolling, the family needs a referral to register for ECHO, which can be obtained from a provider, or even a self-referral. After a family gets registered in ECHO, they can check their eligibility for the Autism Services Demonstration.

Children eligible for the Autism Services Demonstration must have a diagnosis that falls along the autism spectrum. In addition, they must have an active duty sponsor, be living in the United States, be 18 months or older and be enrolled in the ECHO program through their TRICARE regional contractor.

The TRICARE Autism Services Demonstration covers ABA treatment and other types of therapies that fall under the umbrella of "Educational Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorders." The providers that implement these therapies must be TRICARE-authorized in order for the treatments to be covered.

Each month, families pay a "cost share" for services they receive under ECHO. This monthly cost share depends on the sponsor's pay grade. For more information on the Autism Services Demonstration, including specifics on cost shares, visit [www.triwest.com/autism](http://www.triwest.com/autism).



# Phone Home: Transfer TRICARE Prime

Courtesy of Brian P. Smith, TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Moving to a new region or overseas? Don't forget to make a call before you leave.

Active duty Service members (ADSM) and active duty family members (ADFM) who are moving to a new stateside or overseas TRICARE region can now easily transfer their TRICARE Prime enrollment by phone.

Start the process

Eligible TRICARE Prime beneficiaries can either call their current TRICARE contractor or go to the TRICARE Service Center at their installation medical treatment facility to start the transfer process. The contractor will ask for:

- the sponsor and family members who are transferring
- the sponsor or spouse's mobile phone and email address
- the new location
- the expected date of arrival at the new location.

Complete the transfer

The TRICARE contractor at the new location will contact the sponsor or family members to complete the enrollment transfer around the planned date of arrival.

ADSMs and ADFMs moving within the West Region can also transfer their enrollment by phone. All they need to do is call TriWest at 1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378) after arriving at their new duty station to complete the transfer.

All beneficiaries (including active duty) can continue to use these options to transfer TRICARE Prime enrollment after a move:

- Online: Enrollees in the U.S. can log onto DoD's Beneficiary Web Enrollment site ([www.tricare.mil/bwe](http://www.tricare.mil/bwe)) to update their enrollment.
- By Form: Complete and sign the TRICARE Prime Enrollment Application & PCM Change Form (DD Form 2876). Submit the form by mail or at a TRICARE Service Center.

Find enrollment forms, contact information and more at [www.triwest.com/beneficiary](http://www.triwest.com/beneficiary) and [www.tricare.mil/enrollment](http://www.tricare.mil/enrollment).





## Heli-Sking

KODIAK, Alaska - A Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak HH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew trains with ski sleds installed on the 6596 March 25, 2011, atop Narrow Cape. The ski sleds were installed so aircrews could continue to have a skill set in case the helicopter needed to land on snowy or icepack terrain. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Charly Hengen.

