Volume 1 Issue 2

United States Coast Guard
Office of Search & Rescue

ON SCENE

The Quarterly Search & Rescue Newsletter

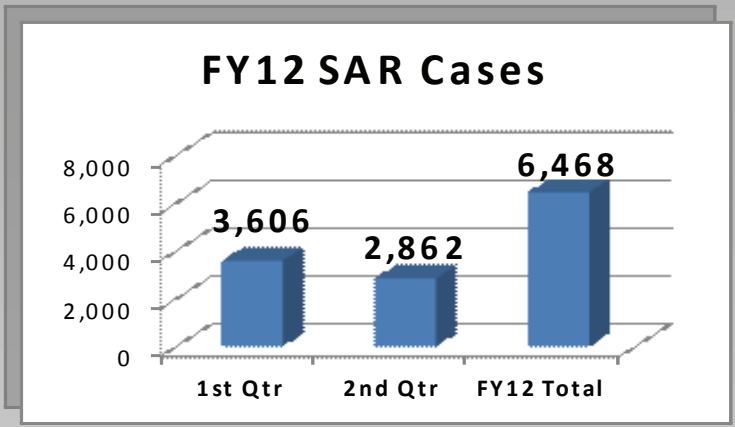
What's Inside:

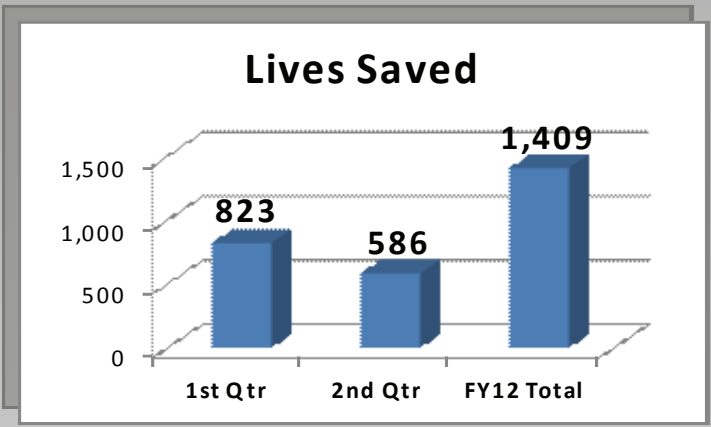
On the cover: HONOLULU – A crew aboard a 45-foot Response Boat-Medium from Station Honolulu navigates along the west coast of Oahu in search of an entangled whale, Feb. 1, 2012. photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony L. Soto

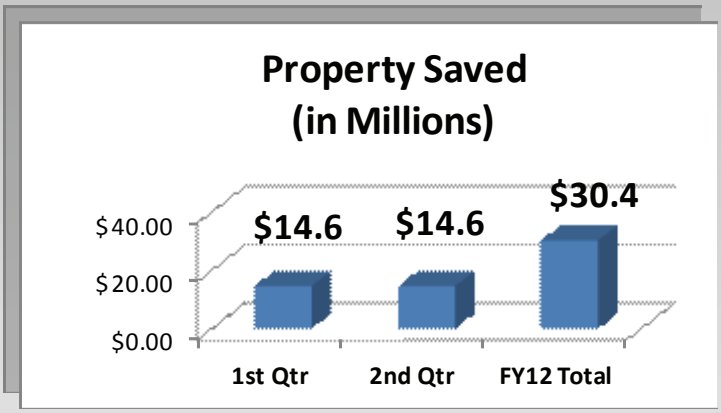
The SAR Mission

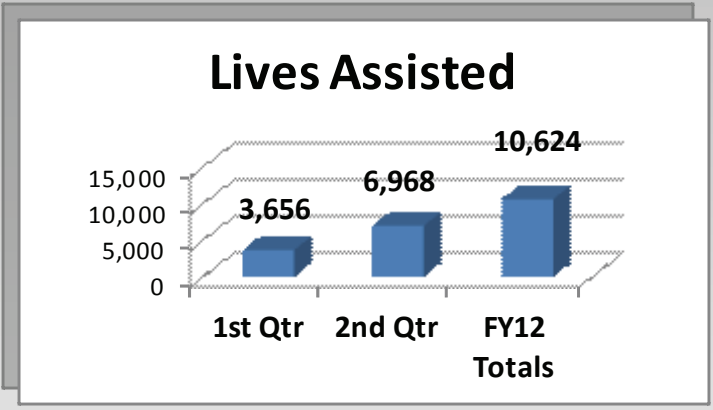
Search and Rescue (SAR) is one of the Coast Guard's oldest missions. Minimizing the loss of life, injury, property damage or loss by rendering aid to persons in distress and property in the maritime environment has always been a Coast Guard priority. Coast Guard SAR response involves multi-mission stations, cutters, aircraft and boats linked by communications networks. The National SAR Plan divides the U.S. area of SAR responsibility into internationally recognized inland and maritime SAR regions. The Coast Guard is the Maritime SAR Coordinator. To meet this responsibility, the Coast Guard maintains SAR facilities on the East, West and Gulf coasts; in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico, as well as on the Great Lakes and inland U.S. waterways. The Coast Guard is recognized worldwide as a leader in the field *of search and rescue.*

SAR Stats









SAROPS 1.4 ROLL-OUT PLAN

The SAR Program and FORCECOM have come to consensus on the way forward for the launch of SAROPS 1.4. Based on planning factors in the roll-out concept & timeline, SAROPS 1.4 will be available on 01 OCT 2012. The rollout of SAROPS 1.4 will require the cancellation of some of the Maritime Search Planning (MSP) courses this fiscal year. The Program will restrict CAT 5 personnel attendance at the MSP for the remainder of this FY year. The last MSP course this FY will be the course starting 11 JUN 2012. Courses from 23 July to 01 Oct will be closed to allow the school to write the curriculum for the updated MSP course. The 09 JUL 2012 course will be used to complete the annual training requirements for international students.

Additionally, the National Search and Rescue School will be providing "Train the Trainer" classes from 03 SEP through 30 SEP for all Command Centers. This course will train personnel from all command centers allowing them to return to their units and provide training to the remaining command center personnel. The Train-the-Trainer course will be conducted at Yorktown, VA. Additional information will be provided in the upcoming weeks that will provide more specific information. This information will include: Number of personnel to attend training per unit, date of training, and specific MSP and SC&E courses that will be canceled.

For question or concerns regarding the roll-out of SAROPS 1.4, please contact the Office of Search and Rescue at **202-372-2075**.

SAR Case Summary - Overdue Fishing Vessel

By LCDR Mark I. Kuperman

Supervisor, CG District 13

Command Center

On the morning of July 8th, 2011, a U.S. Coast Guard Group North Bend MH-65 helicopter located an overdue, 40 foot commercial fishing vessel, off of the Oregon coast, with two fishermen aboard. The Coast Guard had already conducted extensive overnight search operations, which were initiated after a concerned family member reported the vessel overdue. As a means of trying to preserve any remaining electrical power, the crew of the commercial fishing vessel had finally responded to an ongoing Urgent Marine Information Broadcast (UMIB). When the helicopter arrived overhead, the fishermen were exhausted, but otherwise in good health….the vessel had been disabled and adrift for five days.

" The Crew of the commercial fishing vessel had finally responded to the Urgent Marine Information Broadcast"

On July 7th, 2011, Coast Guard Sector Columbia River's command center received a call from the Eugene, Oregon 911 dispatch center. The 911 dispatch stated that a woman had called to report that she had received a text message from her son and grandson, though the text message was dated July 4th, and the text message stated that the two were onboard a disabled F/V, approximately 35 miles offshore Astoria, OR. The text message was received nearly four days after it was sent and no further information was provided. The woman did not know the name of the vessel.

Sector Columbia River immediately vetted the two names through the Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) database along with talking with additional family members to verify the name of the overdue vessel, at which time; Sector Columbia River began broadcasting an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast (UMIB). In addition to the radio broadcasts, Sector Columbia River utilized numerous databases and to search for additional information about the vessel. The Coast Guard 13th District Command Center also assisted by utilizing EPIRB registration information to trace the previous owner, who had sold the boat only a month prior. The previous owner confirmed that the vessel was sold with a functional EPIRB onboard, as well as one survival suit, multiple flares, a life raft, and an INMARSAT phone (which had no active service). The previous owner also indicated that the vessel had numerous seaworthiness issues, which is why he sold the boat and that the vessel was home-ported in Astoria, OR.

On the evening of July 7th, as the apprehension level increased, Sector Columbia River requested, from the 13th District, C-130,MH-65 , and MH-60 air support and once on-scene, the aircraft commenced their search patterns and deployed **Self Locating Datum Marker Buoys** (SLDMB). Over the course of the next 16 hours, Coast Guard crews from Air Station Sacramento, Air Station Astoria, Air Station North Bend, and the cutter FIR conducted 22 cumulative sortie hours, searching for the vessel off Central Oregon's coastline. The total length of the search legs covered 180NM and spanned across SEC Columbia River and Group North Bend's Area of Responsibilities, at which time based on the vast search area covered, the 13th District command center assumed SMC.

On the afternoon of July 8th and over 18 hours after the first reported phone call, the overdue vessel regained enough battery power to power up their VHF radio and responded to Group North Bend's UMIB and an Air Station North Bend MH-65 and a Station Siuslaw River 47 foot Motor Life Boat (MLB) was launched to

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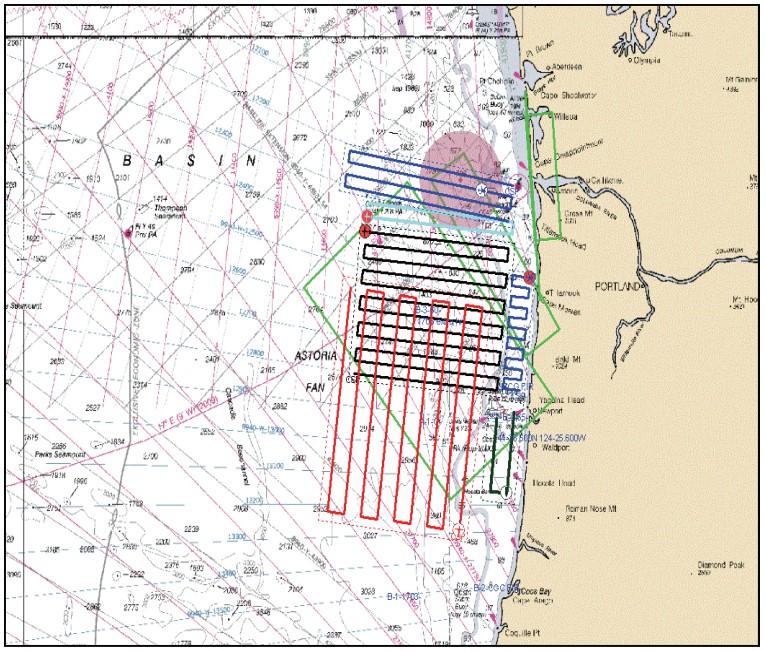
" An extensive post-SAR boarding revealed that the vessel had numerous safety violations"

assist. The MH-65 arrived on scene first and lowered a radio to the vessel to establish communications with the disabled vessel. Shortly after, the Station Siuslaw River's MLB arrived on scene, and proceeded with towing the vessel for six hours and eventually brought across the bar into Florence, Oregon. An extensive post-SAR boarding revealed that the vessel had numerous safety violations including structural integrity and electrical malfunctions (which was determined to the cause of the vessel's power loss. The vessel was ultimately issued Captain of the Port order until effective repairs can be made

There are several factors that would have greatly assisted the Coast Guard during this search. The most important factor would have been if the vessel elected to activate their EPIRB, which would have allowed the Coast Guard to immediately know that they were in distress. Secondly, if the crew of the vessel had attempted to use some of their battery power earlier, they could have possibly heard the UMIB in the first hours of the search. Additionally, the crew would have benefited by providing a family member with a float plan with, rather than relying on an incomplete text message from sea.

This case continues to prove the utility and importance of UMIBs as a valuable SAR tool. The ability of the crew to briefly monitor and respond to the UMIB was integral to these fishermen being rescued before they drifted into shoal waters or suffered the effects of degrading weather conditions. In addition, the Search and Rescue Optimal Planning System (SAROPS) proved once again to be a useful tool for our SAR planners, particularly when searching over 12,000 square miles.

Fishing Vessel being towed by Coast Guard Station Siuslaw 47-foot Motor Life Boat



SAROPS search patterns, using various Coast Guard resources.

COSPAS/ SARSAT

By CDR Mark Turner - CG-5342

While the current space segment relies on low earth orbiting (LEOSAR) and geostationary orbiting (GEOSAR) satellites, the MEOSAR system will rely on medium earth orbit satellites. MEOSAR satellites will orbit the Earth at altitudes ranging from 19,000 to 24,000 km. The primary mission for the satellites used in the MEOSAR system is global navigation. As a secondary payload, the SAR instruments will be carried by Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) satellites. Three constellations totaling 72 operational satellites will make up the MEOSAR space segment. The three constellations are the United States Global Positioning System (GPS), the European Commission Galileo Navigation Space System, and the Russian Glonass Navigation System. MEOSAR will provide more reliable detection, more accurate locations and more rapid relay of distress and security alerts. The U.S. space and ground segments are being jointly developed by the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Air Force, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with research and development assistance from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The U.S. operational ground segment of MEOSAR will consist of two Medium Earth Orbit Local User Terminals (MEOLUTs) and the US Mission Control Center (USMCC). The first operational US MEOLUT has been constructed in Hawaii and is undergoing initial system tests. The USCG Communication Station in Miami, Florida has been selected as the second operational US MEOLUT location. Construction of the second MEOLUT is expected to begin in 2012. The US Mission Control Center is envisioned to remain at its current location in the NOAA Satellite Operations Facility (NSOF) in Suitland, MD. For more information about COSPASS/ SARSAT, please visit: http://cospas-sarsat.org/index.php

Q & A

By CDR Max Moser—CG-5341

Q: At one time, it was spelled out that ACTSUS was to be done by rank; i.e. O-6 to O-6 or O-5 to O-5, but an O-5, regardless of position, couldn't have ACTSUS authority for an O-6. But it would appear from the wording of ALCOAST 004/11, that the position, not rank is the determining factor in determining the succession of ACTSUS authority when persons are acting in a higher capacity.

A: Rank is **NOT** the determiner of who can be SMC or be granted the authority for ACTSUS

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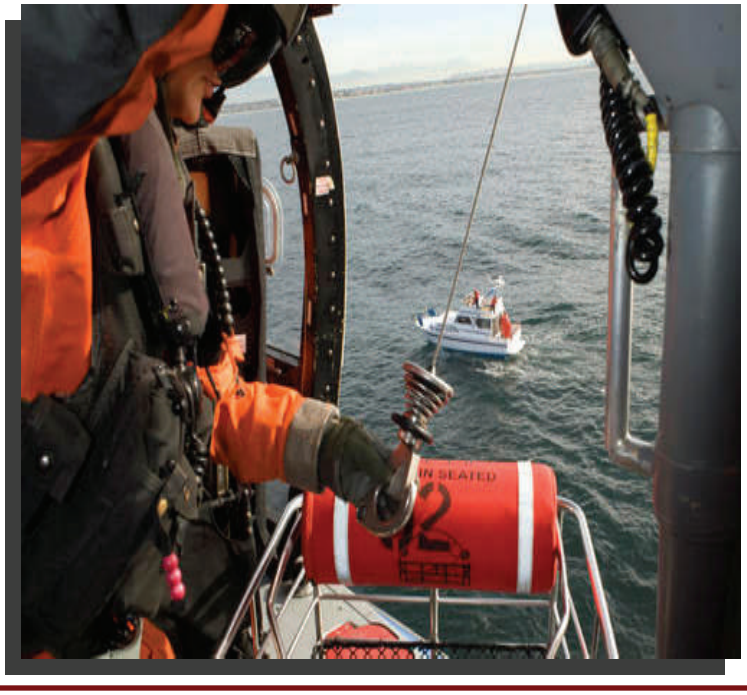
authority; it is position and relative position to SMC (one level above) for the case.

Could it be inverted? i.e. O-5 suspending for an O-6 SMC... sure, particularly when the O-6 is at the sector & O-5 is at the district. BUT, this is certainly not the intention when dealing with both SMC and ACTSUS residing at a single command (district or sector); it is clearly intended that you have ACTSUS up the chain of command from SMC; expectation of broader experience, higher level of knowledge and authority.

Q: Has CG-534 factored in the impact of economic recession creating (presumed) less seaworthy vessels and potentially increased SAR with decreased RBS/CFVS compliance. Just curious if this was addressed in your MPP process, or if there is/is not a direct correlation.

A: Impacts of economics, including recession are discussed in the CG-534 performance planning documents as one of the many factors that may impact the number of SAR cases that the U.S. Coast Guard responds. The program recognizes that a recession may negatively impact safety and maintenance expenditures of recreational and commercial vessel operators. An analysis of RBS and CVS has not been completed to determine the direct correlation of increases in non-compliance with safety and maintenance contributing to an increase in the number of SAR cases.



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
SEMPER PARATUS
1790

MISLE

Ensuring Completion of SAR MISLE Cases

Who is responsible for a MISLE case file from beginning to end?

The short answer is in Appendix B, Section 3. This section of the CG Addendum provides that "…***each command shall designate in writing individuals with the authority to validate MISLE case information and change the status of MISLE Incident Management Activity***…" cases are only validated when appropriate MISLE entries have been made, the information timeline is correct, thorough, accurately reflects the case, and all attachments are uploaded in the case. Additionally, "…***Each command shall designate in writing an individual or individuals tasked with completing review of all MISLE activity at the unit***…"

What does this mean?
The command shall designate….

The decision for designation is up to the Area, District or Sector Commander. There are some aspects that should be considered in the designation, at least in the case of a sector. The Sector Organization Manual identifies the Chief, Response Department as the person responsible for "… ***Directing the execution of all the Sector's SAR…includes serving as SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) (if Designated by the Sector Commander)…***" Additionally, within the Sector construct the Chief, Incident Management is responsible for "…***Directing and/or coordinating the execution of all Sectors SAR***…"

The Sector Organization manual provides departments to direct and coordinate. However, the Organizational manual does not indicate who should be responsible for the case administrative workload. The Command Center Manual states that "…***Command review of all MISLE cases should be completed within 5 days of the final disposition of the case***…" and chapter four provides the administrative function of the Sector Command Center "…***Reviews CC MISLE entries and ensures CC compliance with MISLE policy/standards***…"

The CG Addendum does indicate that the *SMC* is responsible for the case review. Appendix B, Section 3.3.2 states "…***During the case review process, the SMC case data review shall ensure that all activities in the case are set to the proper status***…" After all that the person responsible for validating the MISLE case is not identified.

Who should be designated?

It is apparent that units are not completing SAR MISLE entries properly. Most units are aware of this when they receive the out-brief provided by the Sector Command Center Standardization Team (CCST). This item on the CCST is probably the most noted discrepancy through the years.

The designation of a person with the authority to validate MISLE case information is a command decision. If the command is looking for a recommendation, I would provide that the personnel most responsible to the command for SAR are the Chief of Response and the SMC. The command may not deem the Chief of Response or the SMC as the most competent entity for completing the case. However, each of the people in these positions should have the requisite training and experience to provide the validation to the SAR MISLE case and change the status of the MISLE incident Management Activity. There is latitude for the command to designate a person. Who would be in a better position, including decisions and information in the case, to validate the MISLE case file than the **SMC** and/or the **Chief of Response**?

International Maritime Organization

By Mr. Dave Edwards (CG-5342)

IMO is not a foreign body…

For the last several years, and hopefully in the future, the Chief of SAR (CG-534) and Mr. Dave Edwards (CG-5342) have represented US government SAR interests at the IMO. This forum gives us the chance to 'raise' US SAR policy, philosophy, practices and technologies into international use. And, as the global community establishes new international norms for SAR, we bring that home for the US to blend into our SAR system.

"This one-week session approved the extensive revamping of the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR (IAMSAR) Manual"

We were quite active in the March 2012 session of the IMO subcommittee on Radio communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR). This one-week session approved the extensive revamping of the International Aeronautical and Maritime SAR (IAMSAR) Manual – two US SAR experts were among the team of 16 experts who developed the changes. Starting in 2013, a new edition of the IAMSAR Manual will be published every three years with routine amendments not published between editions. Three US SAR papers presented at COMSAR (on issues regarding social media, email, and commercial emergency notification devices) received strong support from other countries ans industry – follow-on work will lead to international solutions rather than various local national solutions which could become global problems.

IMO brings together countries, maritime industry and international governmental and non-governmental organizations…it is not a pretty process but the result is a continuous effort to advance SAR. To this end it benefits the US to have USCG presence at COMSAR and for us to be informed by the Field as to what we need to focus upon.

For more information regarding the IMO, please contact Mr. Dave Edwards at (202) 372-2087 or via E-mail at David.L.Edwards@uscg.mil

Container Ship Rescues 3 Canadians in Dramatic Pacific Rescue

Three Canadians, including a nine year old boy, were rescued by the Amver participating container ship *HORIZON RELIANCE* after their 38 foot sailboat *LIAHONA* sank 280 miles northeast of Hilo, Hawaii Wednesday February 8, 2012. The three survivors are from Edmonton, Canada.

The sailors, on a voyage from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico to Hilo, Hawaii, contacted the Coast Guard Cutter *KISKA* Tuesday afternoon after their sailboat became disabled. The crew reported damage to their top forestay and engine. After trying to rig a makeshift sail they lost the mast in the extreme conditions.

" We are thankful the Horizon Reliance was in the right place at the right time"

Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center Honolulu, using an Amver surface pictures (SURPIC), contacted the 893 foot container ship and asked them to divert to assist the crew of the LIAHONA. The *HORIZON RELIANCE* was 149 miles away from the sailboat's location.

At approximately 2:00 am Wednesday morning, Captain James Kelleher and the crew of the United States flagged ship reached the sailboat. As the *HORIZON RELIANCE* approached, a swell caused the sailboat to capsize and sink, throwing all three passengers in the sea. Weather conditions were poor, with southwesterly winds gusting to 40 knots and sea swells in the 20 foot range.

The *HORIZON RELIANCE* crew lowered a ladder to conduct the rescue. A 29

Photo credit: crew of the HORIZON RELIANCE

year-old-man was rescued first, but the others, a 32-year-old man, and a 9-year-old boy, drifted away. Both were rescued shortly thereafter because they were wearing lifejackets with strobe lights attached, which enabled rescuers to keep them in sight.

"We are thankful the *HORIZON RELIANCE* was in the right place at the right time to come to the aid of these individuals," said William A. Hamlin, Horizon Lines Senior Vice President of Operations. "We commend Captain Kelleher and his crew for their skilled seamanship in accomplishing a successful rescue despite very adverse weather conditions."

All three were reportedly in good health and will remain aboard the *HORIZON RELIANCE* until it arrives in Hilo, Hawaii at approximately 4:00 am local Hawaii time.

The *HORIZON RELIANCE* , managed by Horizon Lines of Charlotte, NC, enrolled in Amver in 1990 and has earned participation awards for 21 years.

Office of Search and Rescue (CG-534)

The Office of Search and Rescue consist of two divisions, the Policy Division (CG-5341) and the Coordination Division (CG-5342). CG-5341 oversees search planning applications such as Search and Rescue Optimal Planning System, conducts SAR research and development, reviews SAR resource and policy data analysis, and maintains the Coast Guard Addendum to the National SAR Supplement. CG-5342 oversees international and interagency SAR coordination, reviews and negotiates SAR agreements, serves as Secretariat for the National SAR Committee, and serves on the U.S. delegation to the International Maritime Organization communications and SAR subcommittee, and International Civil Aviation Organization joint working group on SAR. In addition, this division oversees the Amver, Mass Rescue Program, SAR Contingency Exercises, International Engagement and Maritime Industry Matters, and is the Coast Guard Program Manager for Cospas-Sarsat issues.

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http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/default.asp

Links:

AMVER—http://www.amver.com/

CG SAR Addendum: http://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/16000-16999/CIM_16130_2E.pdf

RESCUE 21—http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/rescue21/

COSPASS– SARSAT— http://www.cospas-sarsat.org/

If you have any comments, suggestions, or ideas for future newsletter articles, please contact LT Tom Gorgol at: Thomas.F.Gorgol@uscg.mil or call 202-372-2082.

Exercise Black Swan

Why black swan? In his book, *The Black Swan*, Nassim N. Taleb describes major scientific discoveries, historical events, and artistic accomplishments as "black swans," or rare events, which can change the course of history.

Exercise "Black Swan" is part of a series of mass rescue operation exercises designed to educate and prepare participants for a potential mass rescue operation at sea.

These exercises also examine our ability to implement mass rescue operation response and recovery plans in support of federal, state, local, and private-sector response and recovery activities.

Exercise Black Swan
CG District 7
Miami, Fla.

April 1–5, 2013