

23 DEC	Depart Miami to patrol Eastern Bahamas
29 DEC	Swim call at Galliot Cut/Farmer's Cay
30 DEC	Rendezvous with CGC FARRILLON, exchange crewmembers
02 - 04 JAN	Inport Nassau
05 - 12 JAN	Inport Miami for main motor repairs
12 - 15 JAN	Inport Key West, make preps to patrol Cay Sal Bank
16 JAN	Morale gun shoot
19 JAN	Anchored: Double Headed Shot Cays, fish call pizza and soda night - officers provide
22 - 25 JAN	Inport: Key West, main motor inspected again
25 - 31 JAN	Patrol with FCI, beach party at Anguilla Cay
31 JAN - 3 FEB	Inport: Key West, main motor repaired again
04 FEB	CGC SHEARWATER makes bust
05 FEB	Received prisoner and tow seized vessel Pizza and soda night - first class provide
07 - 14 FEB	Inport: Key West - mid patrol break!
15 FEB	Anchored off of Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas
16 - 17 FEB	Working with Navy and mine countermeasure ops
19 FEB	Pizza and soda night - second class provide
23 - 25 FEB	Inport: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

THE XO REPORTS that we have received a few new people and lost some old ACACIA sailors since the last newsletter. We lost MK3 Don Witherwax, SN Craig Hawley and FA Paul Golimbieski to PCS transfers and received MK2 Jim O'Brien from Station Grand Haven, FA Kimm Miller from his home in Muskegon, Michigan and QM3 Mike Prahst from Cleveland, Ohio. We wish smooth sailing to those who departed and look forward to meeting our new crewmembers' families when we return to Grand Haven. And for those of you who had not heard: Dawn and Jerry Houle had a son on January 9th and Paul and Tammi Golimbieski had a son on January 31st. Congratulations!

CAPTAIN'S NOTES Thus far our deployment has been varied and exciting at times. Although we haven't caught any smugglers yet we have foiled plans between planes and fast boats on two occasions that we know of and have recovered marijuana from a botched pickup. While on patrol we've provided fuel, water and supplies to smaller Coast Guard patrol boats and have enjoyed working with them by coordinating tactics. All that we've met have been very enthusiastic and professional. Lately it seems that the number of drug busts here in the 7th District has picked up to about one per week!

Our main motor continues to give us a very frustrating problem at high speed (12 knots) by creating excessive sparks on the brushes. We've been steaming at 10.5 knots to keep the sparking down and will have it inspected (again!) when we pull into Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GITMO) for 3 days of training on 29 FEB.

We are entering the "slow" part of our Deployment as we are well past hump day, but it's still too soon to be counting down the days before we put over the lines in our home port. Morale is still high and we do our best to enjoy ourselves even though it's been a long separation. As always I'm very proud of the crew's attitude and performance, and am pleased with all the help and support we receive from families, friends and fellow Coasties.

Let's hope for good weather, an early spring and we'll be home as soon as the ice is out!
Sincerely, J.M. DWYER

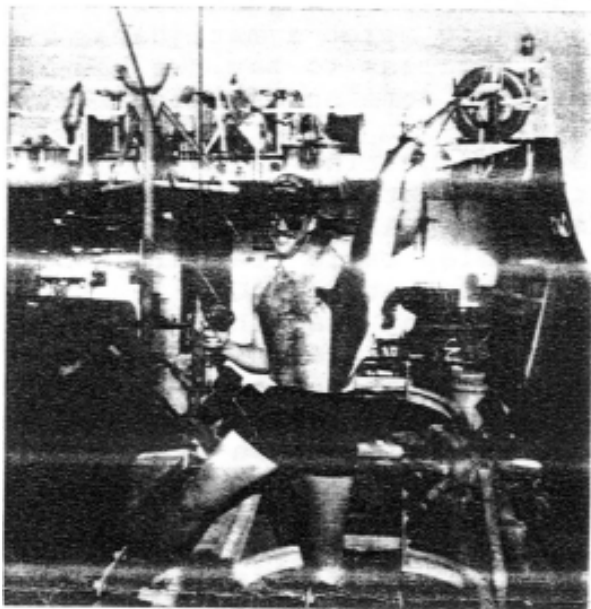
Last time y'all heard from us we were in Miami preparing for our upcoming Law Enforcement patrols. Since then we've completed six full patrols in such exotic areas as Cal Sal Bank, Great Bahama Bank and Key West areas, completing a total of 36 boardings. I'm pleased to report we now have one official "drug bust" as we found six balls, (about 300 pounds) of marijuana adrift near Anguilla Cay in the Cal Sal Bank. I must say, we've enjoyed all the news we've heard about the deep freeze up north. We of course have enjoyed our own deep freeze down here in Key West – it must have been all of 50 degrees with the wind chill. Upon departure from Base Miami Beach, we loaded our buoy deck with the two "Christmas toys" given to us by District 7: a 6.5 meter and a 7.0 meter "Hurricane" small boat. These two powerful and versatile boats allowed our boarding teams to run in close to the shore of the cays and patrol for durggies where the ship itself otherwise couldn't patrol. During our first patrol of the Bahamas we made good use of these Hurricanes and we must have seen every one of those Cays – at least twice.

In between all the small boat deployments and many boardings, we did find time to do plenty of fishing. On Christmas day we boarded a Canadian sailing vessel (with the master's consent) and provided him a quart of egg nog after ensuring that he was "clean"; then when we weren't opening presents with Santa (CWO Harko) by the Christmas tree, or eating our Christmas feast, the day was spent fishing and sunning ourselves off the Current Isle. Our first port call, Nassau, was received with mixed reviews. Although we had decent weather and plenty of bargains to be had at the Straw Market, there was not much else to do besides donating our hard earned money to Nassau's economy by frequenting their casinos. Incidentally, our big winners there were seamen Lynch, Roetman, Hawley and also MK3 Ranville. The magnitude of the region's drug problem hit us in full force here as almost everyone who went ashore was approached to buy drugs, and some crewmembers were even asked six or eight times during our two day stay! We left Nassau with renewed convictions to keep drugs out of our country.

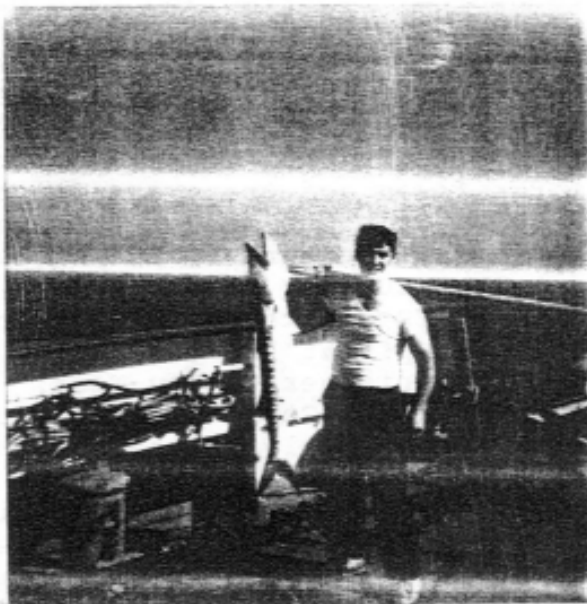
Our next stop was Base Miami Beach where we ended up staying a little longer than expected due to main motor problems. From Miami we went straight to Key West for a few days to gear up for our second patrol, this time in the Key West/Cay Sal Bank region. This patrol had in store for us even less boardings and less sights to see than our previous patrol. We did manage to squeeze in a morale gun shoot and a pizza and soda night between the boardings and foul weather. Back in Key West we found the good times waiting for us on Duval Street. There were plenty of shops to visit to perhaps catch up on Christmas shopping. But for those who already lost the Christmas spirit, there were always a few find drinking establishments such as Sloppy Joe's, Captain Tony's, Rick's, the Bull, the Whistle and of course, Margaritaville (who's Jimmy Buffet?)

Our third patrol, again in the Key West/Cay Sal region, had a few surprises for us. The overall weather for the patrol was not very suitable for boardings and we were tasked with patrolling with a Coast Guard 43 foot FCI (fast coastal interceptor). The concept was to provide hotel services for the FCI and two crews so they could operate from us 24 hours a day. The FCI looks kind of like a floating bullet and is quick enough (hopefully) to catch speed boats that make the final run into Florida after picking up drugs from mother ships or dropped from planes. Because of the rough sea conditions we frequently had to anchor in the lee of one of the islands, until the weather subsided. On January 29, we anchored off of Anguilla Cay for a day or two with the FCI. While approaching the island by small boat, we noticed a total of 6 marijuana bales... recovered, reported and then properly destroyed. It just so happens that amount of marijuana is enough to merit a marijuana leaf on the stack, signifying a "bust". Needless to say, we had to celebrate, having a beach party and doing some snorkeling before completing the patrol.

Next, we found ourselves back in Key West getting our main motor fixed and preparing for our next brief patrol. This patrol did not bring us a bust but brought the CGC SHEARWATER one, with our help, of course. It was exciting to relay radio transmissions from the Customs aircraft (who saw the airdrop) to the CGC SHEARWATER and to vector them toward the fishing boat that made the pickup! At the end of the patrol we took that fishing boat and one prisoner to Key West. The



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b.

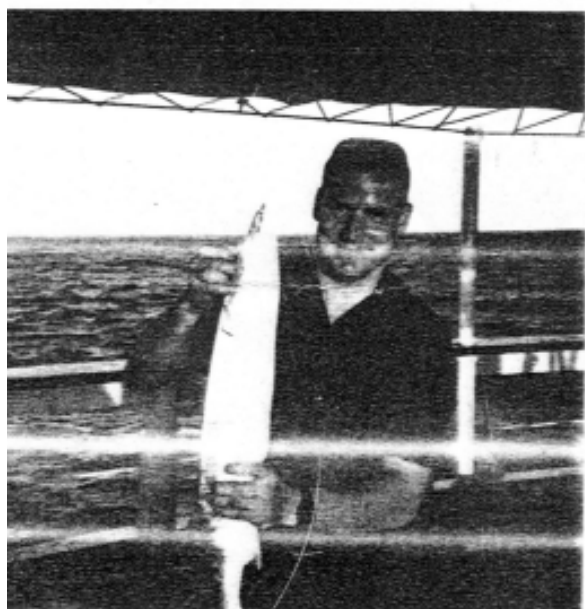
SOME OF THE ACACIA'S WINNING CATCHES:

(a) BM2 TELEHANY

(b) SS2 BADGER

(c) FA KRUEGER

(d) THE SECOND CLASS PROVIDE PIZZA FOR THE CREW.



c.



d.

other prisoner had to be evacuated via Coast Guard helicopter because of a heart attack. Also, we were pleased to have Mike Walsh and Brian Masch of the Muskegon Chronical (newspaper) along to report our progress.

February 7 – 14 was our mid-patrol break in Key West for maintenance. Perhaps you saw some of us in Grand Haven. None the less, it was a much needed break for us all in more ways than one. On President's Day, we were underway again out to the Dry Tortugas and anchored off of Fort Jefferson for a day. The rest of the week was spent pulling dummy mines for the Navy out of the waters off Key West Harbor. From Key West we patrolled down to where we are now in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. The weather here is very hot and humid. The city is very crowded (lots of poverty) with buildings dating back to the 1500's, but it is also very historical (Columbus is reported to be buried here). The museums were very good, as was the local food (some more so than others) and many blisters were had from walking the city. To view a different culture was interesting but somehow the surrounding area reminds us of how lucky we are to live in the U.S. We are thousands of miles away from y'all, but are everyday getting closer to home. We simply ask that you keep the home fires burning and the driveways shoveled, maybe we'll see you soon.

Sincerely, C.S. SWIRBLISS, Editor.