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Shorelines

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Introducing the new Canadian Coast Guard Hovercraft *Penac* makes her West Coast debut

BY DAN BATE

Mrs. Dosanjh accepts flowers in appreciation of being sponsor to Penac as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Geoff Regan looks on.

On September 9, 2004, with a crack of a champagne bottle, Coast Guard's newest hovercraft, CCGH *Penac* was named and dedicated at Canadian Coast Guard Station Sea Island.

(Multiculturalism) and members of the Tsartlip First Nation. Mrs. Raminder Dosanjh, wife of MP Ujjal Dosanjh was given the special honour of sponsor for the vessel. The ceremony was well attended by media, members of the Richmond emergency services, and Coast Guard employees with their friends and family.

Penac (pronounced pen-nash) means "fair winds" in the Saanich dialect. This vessel joins the Pacific Region's other hovercraft, *Siyay*, in a Coast Salish heritage. Both vessel names underscore the importance of cooperation and dialogue between the federal government and the First Nations of Canada.

Penac is the latest addition to a proud heritage of hovercraft operating on the Pacific Coast. She is the sixth hovercraft to operate in the Pacific Region since the arrival of SRN5 in 1968. Since then hovercraft have proven to be effective, efficient and versatile members of the fleet, particularly in the search and rescue (SAR) role.

The unique capabilities of hovercrafts consistently prove their value in search and rescue situations where rapid response is crucial. Hovercrafts can respond at high



On hand at the ceremony were Geoff Regan, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, John Adams, Commissioner of the Coast Guard, Raymond Chan, Minister of State

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Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Coast Guard

Pêches et Océans
Canada

Garde côtière

Canada

You can't keep a good buoy down!

BY MICHELE D'EON

A major storm on December 15, 2003 damaged one of the 17 weather buoys that Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada maintain off the west coast of Canada.

The North Hecate Strait weather buoy's last transmission recorded winds hitting 61 knots and waves over 20 metres, so nobody was surprised when the buoy was damaged. But before the buoy could be repaired, the mooring failed and it went adrift without a trace.

A replacement buoy was deployed on January 28 but the fate of the old buoy

remained a mystery. That is, until Bryan Blom, a sharp-eyed pilot flying for North Pacific Seaplanes, spotted the buoy on February 26, 2004 near Rose Spit.

Bryan relayed the location of the buoy, and CCGS *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* recovered it the following day. The buoy was returned to Victoria where it was repaired.

Weather information from the buoys is available on the Coast Guard Continuous Marine Broadcast or on the Environment Canada Meteorological Services web site at weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca.

Welcome *Dan Bate* our New Editor

As *Shorelines* bid a fond farewell and calm seas to former editor Micheline Brodeur, *Shorelines* welcomes a new editor, Dan Bate to the publication.

Dan was raised in South Delta, so he's no stranger to the West Coast.

For the past two years, Dan has worked for Fisheries and Oceans as a communications advisor for multiple fisheries related programs,

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Contributors

Dan Bate, Michele d'Eon, Jackie Hicks, Joanne McNish, John Palliser and Allan Wright



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We appreciate your comments. If there are stories you'd like to read about, or if you want to be added to our mailing list, contact:

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Penac debut Continued from page 1

speed in all types of weather, which gives them exceptional versatility for this role. Their amphibious capabilities are invaluable for our west coast geography. These operational attributes allow hovercraft to transit the shallow waters surrounding Richmond, or to land on the region's many beaches.

The H.T. AP1-88/100-S air cushion vehicle travels on a fan-generated cushion of air with propulsion provided by two variable pitch propellers. *Penac* is 25 m long and 11 m wide, with a service speed of 45 knots, depending on environmental conditions.

Penac is fitted with comprehensive communications gear, and she is equipped with three NightSun searchlights that provide 90-million candle power of illumination for night time operations. The craft has space for a crew of seven, composed of two pilots and five rescue specialist/divers. She has space for a hospital, first-aid area, diver rescue area, galley, communications centre. *Penac* will be primarily tasked for search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, oil pollution response and aids to navigation duties.

The hovercraft was completely rebuilt and modified by hovercraft manufacturer Hoverwork Ltd. of Ryde, Isle of Wight, UK to meet Coast Guard specifications. All propulsion, navigation and electrical systems have been replaced and upgraded to ensure that the vessel meets and exceeds our search and rescue requirements.

Penac's configuration is very different from the longer, wider, more rugged and less passenger-friendly *Siyay*. The new craft is thought to be better-suited than *Siyay* for search and rescue work because of the position of its bridge, which offers better visibility, as well as its spacious interior and superior speed.

Penac has a cavernous interior, which in an emergency can accommodate up to 50 standing passengers and keep them sheltered from the elements. It's truly a search-and-rescue vessel, with much more room for providing medical attention and more space for emergency personnel to suit up.

In a recent media introduction, Captain Craig Rackham took the craft out for a



Mrs. Dosanjh smashes a bottle of champagne over Penac's bow.



The H.T. AP1-88/100-S air cushion vehicle travels on a fan-generated cushion of air with propulsion provided by two variable pitch propellers. Penac is 25 m long and 11 m wide, with a service speed of 45 knots. Watch for the Spring 2005 edition of Shorelines for a full rundown of Penac's specifications.

demonstration, showcasing the craft's speed and manoeuvrability. With CTV's Chopper 9 overhead, Captain Rackham and the Sea Island crew provided the media with excellent opportunity for footage of the craft cruising over mud and water alike.

The addition of CCGH *Penac* complements existing rescue services at Canadian Coast Guard Station Sea Island, and will give Coast Guard greater flexibility in providing search and rescue coverage in the Pacific Region.

Valour in the midst of severe weather earns special award

BY DAN BATE WITH FILES FROM JOANNE MCNISH

Coast Guard employees continually demonstrate dedication, courage and excellence in their work, and on June 14, 2004, First Officer Les Palmer was commended for his search and rescue efforts at the Coast Guard

The incident occurred when *F/V Larissa* reported heavy icing prior to entering Grenville Channel. The vessel rolled when struck by a 100-knot gust heeling the vessel over to a point where it began to take on water, forcing rapid and immediate abandonment. Fortunately, the crew

managed to get into a life raft and grab their survival suits before abandoning their stricken boat.

The Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre received a satellite hit from an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB) around 1630 hrs and tasked CCGC *Point Henry*, CCGS *John P. Tully* and CCGS *Sir Wilfrid Laurier*. *Point Henry* arrived on scene first and was met with extreme weather conditions, with heavy snow, freezing spray and winds gusting to 90 knots.

Once on scene, *Point Henry* set off illumination flares which the two

survivors spotted and acknowledged by flashing a light to show their location. The pair had washed ashore in their life raft, so *Point Henry* launched their small rigid-hull inflatable and set First Officer Les Palmer ashore.

The breaking surf on the beach complicated matters, and they searched out a landing spot



Regional Director Coast Guard (Pacific) Terry Tebb presents award to First Officer Les Palmer for the bravery he exhibited in the search and rescue of *F/V Larissa*.

Commissioner's Awards, part of the Public Service Awards ceremony, held at the Vancouver Hyatt Regency hotel.

While Les has participated in many rescues over the years, this particular incident showed his exemplary courage and determination in the rescue of two crew members of the fishing vessel *Larissa*.

half a kilometre away from the survivors. Les waded through deep snow and sheer ice on the rocky shore, his eyelids freezing shut each time he faced into the howling wind. When he reached the two survivors, Les found one to be extremely hypothermic and minimally responsive—non-responsive to the touch.

The crew of *Point Henry* were not able to get the two individuals off the beach without the help of *John P. Tully*, which was making its way to the location, so they rigged up a kisby ring with a light (lifebuoy) to float a warming kit and hot packs across the water. The crew assessed the wind and current so the ring would land on the beach because previous attempts to throw a rocket line failed to make it to the beach.

Les received the additional equipment, and he cut off the wet suits and put both men into dry survival suits and administered treatment. Les kept both men warm on the beach with only a light to flash to indicate their status, as they had lost radio communications. The trio stayed put and waited four hours until *John P. Tully* arrived.

Once on scene, both crews worked tirelessly against constant ice build-up on their suits and minimal visibility. They used the Hurricane 733 rigid-hull inflatable from *John P. Tully* to transfer the two survivors from the beach to *Point Henry*.

Once safely onboard *Point Henry*, the crew continued to work to keep the survivors alive. A Medic-A from *John P. Tully* remained with the two men onboard *Point Henry* as she transferred the men to hospital in Prince Rupert.

Both *John P. Tully* and *Point Henry*

experienced extreme icing, which added to a dangerous situation as the weight of the ice affects the stability of any vessel. In such heavy winds, stability can be affected to the point where the vessel may not be able to right itself.

Although there are many incidents like this in which conditions and circumstances are far beyond the norm, Coast Guard staff and other agencies work together every day to save lives. In this incident, a Buffalo aircraft was on scene at the start, and a Cormorant helicopter was tasked but unable to proceed due to heavy icing and was forced to turn back.

As with any rescue, it's the teamwork from all those who participate that results in a positive outcome. With help from *Point Henry*, (Commanding Officer Don Lee) and *John P. Tully* (Commanding Officer Duke Snider) and rescue controllers John Millman and Andy Howell, this incident ended in success.

Coast Guard congratulates all who were involved in this difficult incident. The outcome is another example of the exemplary efforts performed every day by the men and women of Coast Guard.

When he reached the two survivors, Les found one to be extremely hypothermic and minimally responsive—non-responsive to the touch.

Siyay and crew face daunting task in search for downed plane

BY DAN BATE

It was on a beautifully sunny Sunday afternoon in February that the crew of Coast Guard Hovercraft *Siyay* learned how quickly a ministerial inspection can become an urgent search and rescue mission.

With the Honourable Geoff Regan, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on an inspection of the hovercraft *Siyay*, Captain Brian Wooton and crew were tasked to respond to a downed plane in the Fraser River.

Minister Regan and his aides were rushed back to Sea Island Coast Guard base and were disembarked by "hot unload," in which passengers unload safely while the hovercraft has its engines running.

From tasking to response, it took a mere five and one half minutes before *Siyay* was speeding towards her destination: the Fraser River between Mission and Maple Ridge.

Negotiating the Fraser River is never an easy task. The river is often crowded and it presents many navigational challenges. As *Siyay* and crew know all too well, flying against the speeding current of the mighty Fraser River is no easy feat.

Siyay sometimes accesses the Fraser River by using "hole in the wall," a narrow marshy channel off Gary Point Park in Richmond. While it's a challenging squeeze for the 70,000 kg *Siyay*, it allows the hovercraft to bypass the shallow muddy flats around the mouth of the Fraser. This route shaves about 20 minutes off the journey—valuable time in a search and rescue.

On this particular Sunday, a dredge was working in the channel, and that added another navigational obstacle. Picture a quiet seaside park in Richmond on a Sunday afternoon, filled with locals walking their dogs and enjoying the sunshine. Then picture the brilliant red and white *Siyay* squeezing through a channel filled with floats from a dredging operation just offshore—an impressive sight indeed!

As *Siyay* sped up the river, captain and crew were forming a rescue plan in anticipation of their arrival on



The view from Siyay's cockpit. She's arguably one of the nimblest vehicles operating on the West Coast. Just left of centre is one of the two main steering fan outlets.

scene. The Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) told them that a Cormorant helicopter team had been dispatched. Calls to rescue officials on scene gave the hovercraft crew an increasing clearer picture of the events that had unfolded on the river, moments before.

With a fully equipped dive team preparing themselves for an imminent dive on the deck below, Captain Wooten called ahead to have the rail bridge at New Westminster swung open because *Siyay* needs the space in order to get past. Unfortunately timing was not on *Siyay's* side, as a coal train on its way back from Roberts Bank was crossing the bridge.

Captain Wooten decided to drop the communications mast so *Siyay* could pass under the bridge. With inches to spare and a coal train thundering overhead, *Siyay* squeezed under the bridge and shot out the other side!

Siyay arrived on scene just one hour after the call was placed—an impressive time to travel 41 nautical miles against the strong current of the Fraser. *Siyay* reached speeds in excess of 50 knots!

When a search and rescue crew arrives at the scene of an incident, they rely heavily on the observations of witnesses. At this particular incident however, boaters gave two different positions as to where the plane hit the water. The crew pieced together the most reasonable scenario and they decided that it was time for the dive team to “get wet.”

When the first diver hit the water, the scope of the challenges that lay underwater became clear. The divers were constantly fighting the current and had great difficulty negotiating the muddy river bottom. With near zero visibility, there were few visual clues

to help them find the fully submerged aircraft.

Because *Siyay* sits low to the water, the reflection of the sun on the river made it impossible to spot oil that sometimes floats to the surface after accidents.

But from the overhead view afforded by the Cormorant rescue helicopter, *Siyay's* crew was informed of the position of any new upwellings of oil that might be coming from the stricken plane.

By the end of the day, Coast Guard Auxiliary Unit 6, several small fishing vessels, a private helicopter and the Ridge Meadows RCMP were all on scene to assist in the recovery operation.

But even with all this sophisticated hardware working as a team to find the wreckage, the Fraser had its own ideas. With a downstream current of five to six knots and the low visibility, the dive team was unable to locate the aircraft. After several exhausting and tense hours, the search was called off as darkness enveloped the crash scene.

The aircraft and its pilot, renowned BC artist Tony Onley was found by the RCMP and the coroner several days later. Side-scan sonar located the wreckage upside down in the muddy river bottom.



Rescue divers searched repeatedly in the dark and dangerous Fraser River for many hours until finally ceding to the mighty water.

Rescue dive team stationed at Sea Island base

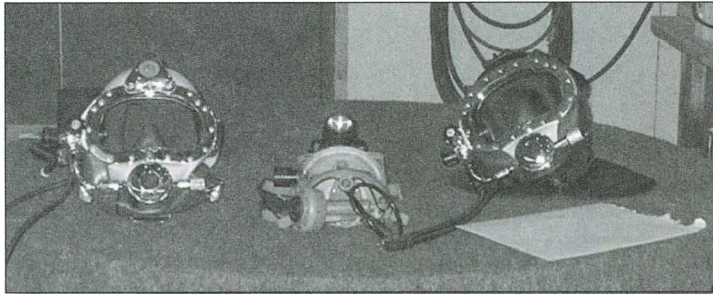
BY NICK NILSEN

Coast Guard's Sea Island Base is now home to a full-time, full-service rescue dive team and a back-up dive team. Since November 3, 2003, the 25-member strong dive teams have been trained and ready to respond to maritime emergencies.

world, and the rescue dive program adds a needed capability because it allows divers to enter submerged vessels and vehicles.

Rescue diving is dangerous, and Canadian law requires two dive teams to be present whenever the decision is made to enter a submerged vessel or vehicle. Each dive team is composed of two divers and one dive tender, or surface support specialist. This means there are six trained divers and a vessel operator on scene during an underwater entry dive mission.

The new recruits underwent intensive training in all facets of emergency diving.



Dangerous work requires cool hardware. State of the art is all that will do when fighting the forces of nature.



Rescue divers require three levels of training: Coast Guard training, rescue specialist training and full emergency dive training. Recruits studied and practiced penetration dives, with safety topmost in mind. They learned correct use of surface air equipment, which supplies divers with unlimited air from air tanks on the surface.

Canada's search and rescue system saves about 3,100 people annually, 1,500 in BC alone. More than 97% of lives at risk on Canadian waters are saved each year.

The Government of Canada is committed to maintaining search and rescue coverage in the Vancouver area using a combination of conventional vessels, hovercraft and helicopters. While Coast Guard search and rescue programs are among the best in the

Sea Island base expands to accommodate new dive team program

BY JACKIE HICKS

A new back-up dive team stationed at Sea Island Coast Guard base forced the expansion and updating of the old administration building, and everyone is breathing a sigh of relief.

On February 6, 2003 the Honourable Robert G. Thibault, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, announced that the back-up dive team would be in place on November 3, 2003, ready to augment the full dive team. With the short time frame, discussions began in the Real Property and Technical Support Group (RPTS) of Fisheries and Oceans to come up with a solution. And they did.

The administration building at Sea Island was small, outdated and it no longer met current safety regulations. RPTS staff saw the need to expand the administration building to accommodate the new staff and to bring it up to code.

David Nairne and Associates was selected as design consultant for the project through a competitive process. David Nairne and Associates conducted extensive discussions with Coast Guard staff, and the final design met everyone's needs and brought the building into compliance with the safety code.

The design was completed in August 2003

and it was put out to public tender. Bynett Construction was the successful bidder, and in November 2003 they began demolishing the interior of the outdated building and excavating the footings for the addition.

Coast Guard staff moved their office and operations room into a space in the adjacent hanger, which is regularly used as a classroom. The construction lasted six months and it went very smoothly, considering the obvious inconveniences.

Bynett Construction maintained clear communication with Coast Guard staff, so people knew what to expect and when to expect it. Problems and safety concerns were dealt with immediately, so it was a very safe work site.

Coast Guard staff, the dive team and back-up dive team have settled comfortably into their new accommodation.

Construction lasted six months and it went very smoothly. The renovation and expansion was necessary to accommodate new staff and to bring the building up to current code.

Three *Tanu* crew presented with Seattle Yacht Club Appreciation

BY JOHN PALLISER

Kent Reid, Heather Shobe and Al Clemens of CCGS *Tanu* are this year's recipients of the Seattle Yacht Club Appreciation Trophy for their work on a search and rescue incident that occurred on September 13, 2003.

On that day, there was a medical emergency on a dive vessel in a remote Vancouver Island location. Heavy weather

Winter Harbour. The crew worked diligently to keep the patient's airway clear while treating for hypothermia.

Upon arrival in Winter Harbour the patient was transferred to an air ambulance and flown to Victoria. There, the emergency room doctor determined that the patient had suffered a massive brain aneurysm. The patient succumbed to his injury while in the hospital. The doctor also reported that due to the extent of the injury, nothing that the crew or anyone else could have done would have saved this man's life.

The Seattle Yacht Club Trophy was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Rasmussen of Seattle in appreciation for assistance the Coast Guard provided them several years ago. The award recognizes Coast Guard Crew, Inland Rescue Boat Crew or Coast Guard Auxiliary Crew that takes exceptional measures and exhibit meritorious performance in a medical evacuation.

The trophy has not been presented over the last few years, however, the effort put forth by these nominees is commended and the awarding of the Seattle Yacht Club Trophy to CCGS *Tanu* is well deserved. It acknowledges the difficult and sometimes extremely challenging situations Coast Guard personnel face.

Heather, Kent and Al were each presented with a plaque to recognize their dedication and tremendous effort on this incident by Regional Director Coast Guard (Pacific) Terry Tebb.



Regional Director Coast Guard (Pacific) Terry Tebb with trophy recipients Kent Reid, Heather Shobe and Al Clemens.

prevented an air-evacuation of the patient, so CCGS *Tanu* was tasked to attend. She arrived on scene after two and a half hours of steaming.

Tanu's crew found the patient hypothermic and unresponsive, and so they transferred the patient aboard from the dive vessel. Medical treatment was administered for almost four hours during the long transport to

Coast Guard transfers departments to Transport Canada

BY DAN BATE

As part of ongoing changes this past spring, the Coast Guard transferred policy and regulatory responsibilities for pleasure craft safety, navigable waters protection and the environmental response planning and the hazardous materials function, to Transport Canada. Responsibility for environmental response continues to remain with Coast Guard.

For many these changes meant saying goodbye to some familiar faces in the Coast Guard.

Transferred from Transport Canada from the Navigable Waters Protection Division were: Colin Parkinson, Bob Gowe, Linda Thomas, Jim Schellenberg, Jim Naylor, Deanna Jenkinson, Marguerite Skinner, Colleen Wilson and Susie Harder.

From Environmental Response Planning and Hazardous Materials were: Bill Dutrizac and Erik Kidd.



Office of Boating Safety personnel: L-R Paul Blunt, Kevin Monahan, Terry Tebb, Sean Payne and Paul James.



NWPA employees: back row – Colin Parkinson, Bob Gowe, Erik Kidd, Linda Thomas, Jim Schellenberg, Bill Dutrizac. Front row – Jim Naylor, Deanna Jenkinson, Terry Tebb, Marguerite Skinner, Colleen Wilson and Susie Harder.

Transferred to Transport Canada in the Office of Boating Safety were: Kevin Monahan, Gerald Loiselle, Chris Seeley, Sean Payne, Paul Blunt, Tyson Schenk, Paul James and John Bentham.

This transition represents a new beginning that will strengthen the already strong bond that exists between the Canadian Coast Guard and Transport Canada.

The shared commitment to the provision of effective maritime safety, security and accessibility services to Canadians ensures that, everyone from the Coast Guard looks forward to continuing to work side by side with these individuals in supporting

Canada's maritime community in the months and years to come.

Artist's scale model evokes strong ties to maritime history

BY DAN BATE

Artist Allan Wright of SeaSwept Fine Designs relied on the generosity of Coast Guard employees Mike Mitchell and Vivian Skinner for assistance in the project.

For many people the architecture and design of BC's prominent lighthouses evoke strong emotional ties to maritime history. To local BC artisan Allan Wright of SeaSwept Fine Designs, the sweeping lines and impressive scale of Estevan light represented a unique opportunity. By using his talent and extensive experience, Allan set out to carve and build a scale model of Estevan light entirely out of wood.

In order to carve an accurate model, accurate measurements of scale need to be taken. In this particular circumstance, Estevan light was much too large a structure to take accurate measurement. Instead, Allan relied on the generosity of Coast Guard employees Mike Mitchell and Vivian Skinner to provide assistance in the project.

Mike Mitchell provided Allan with personal photographs of BC coastal lighthouses taken overhead by helicopter. The photographs allowed Allan to view the structural details of the lighthouse and to gain a real feel for Estevan's dimension and proportion that would not be available through conventional

photos taken from the ground.

Vivian Skinner also provided generous support and invaluable assistance in providing Allan with a wealth of information and material about BC coast lighthouses, including literature, photographs, sketches and artwork drawings.

Coast Guard also provided Allan with copies of the artwork drawings completed by Mr. Graham Kennell. Those drawings included actual measurements and some of the fine structural detail found on the light.

These resources greatly reduced Allan's research and design time but perhaps more importantly helped ensure the piece would be accurate in its scale. For Allan, the experience proved very rewarding, not only for the opportunity to build the model but for having an opportunity to have such a positive association with Coast Guard.

As an appreciation of all of Coast Guard's efforts, Allan donated his first replica of the Estevan Point lighthouse as an expression of his sincere thanks and appreciation. The model can be seen in the entranceway of the Victoria Coast Guard Base.

Dan Bate, New Editor

Continued from page 2

including the species at risk and rockfish conservation programs. In January 2004, Dan was promoted to Communications Officer for Coast Guard.

"Coast Guard work is diverse so there are many different issues," said Dan. "The tough part is that you never know which one is going to need your attention on a particular day or week.

"It's my job to be aware of all the issues as they progress, which is sometimes challenging considering the broad a scope of Coast Guard operations. Nevertheless, I'm excited about the opportunity to work with such great people in the organization," he said.

Shorelines welcomes Dan and wishes him the best in his latest endeavor.