

AMERICA AT WAR

THE DAY, TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2003

Coast Guard looking to 'net' terrorists

Stonington fishing boats are seeing extra patrols

By JOE WOJTAS
Day Staff Writer

Stonington — Town Dock fishermen, especially those who fish offshore near the shipping lanes leading into New York City said they have seen increased Coast Guard patrols as cutters question them and planes fly over their boats.

Fishermen say they are not bothered by the extra patrols.

"The Coast Guard is doing an excellent job. We appreciate having them out there," said scallop boat captain Bill Bomster Jr. During a recent 14-day trip, he said the Coast Guard called him three times.

"They call and say 'Ship in such and such a position, identify yourself.' They

want to know who you are because they're busy tracking boat traffic around New York City," he said. "They're calling everybody they see."

Bomster said the Coast Guard's big concern is the huge container ships going into U.S. ports.

He said the Coast Guard planes fly overhead to check the boat license number.

"As soon as they see your license they check you out and move on," he said.

During a trip two weeks ago, about 70 miles southwest of Montauk, fishing boat captain Alan Chaplaski said he was contacted by a large cutter that asked him for his boat's name, registration number, what he was fishing for, when he left and when he would return. He said he could hear radio chatter as the Coast Guard contacted other ships in the area. He also had a plane fly over him.

"They try not to impede our fishing but if

they do board you it does," he said. "But it's nice to have a rescue boat sticking around."

Boats that fish closer to shore and make shorter trips have not seen evidence of the increased patrols. Captains here say the Coast Guard is not boarding fishing vessels.

"I think they're looking at the large commercial ships, tankers and things with foreign crews," said Dockmaster Richard Bardwell.

Ensign Robert Bilbo, the public affairs officer for U.S. Coast Guard Station New Haven, said the Coast Guard has stepped up its patrols to meet the increased security alert by the Department of Homeland Security.

"The maritime public has been exceptionally receptive to our efforts. They realize the importance of the homeland security effort and that they have an important

stake in it," he said. "They've been providing us with knowledge and generating information."

Stonington police have asked fishermen to call them if they see anything suspicious as well.

In a memo to Southern New England Fishermen and Lobstermen's Association President Arthur Medeiros, police Captain Jerry Desmond said he had received a memo from the Department of Homeland Security that said terrorists might try to harm the area's coastlines, military areas and rail lines. Medeiros distributed the memo to fishermen in his association.

Captain Doug Riley said that fishermen could also be another set of eyes for the Coast Guard.

"We're all around. We may see something suspicious, especially being close to the sub base and Millstone," he said.

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Connecticut residents are well-represented in Mediterranean

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Emory S. Land — Master at Arms 1st Class Richard W. Reynolds, part of the police force for this submarine tender in the Mediterranean Sea, is interested in the ice cream situation back home.

"When Dairy Queen opens on March 15 in Niantic, I know spring is on the way," said Reynolds, a resident of East Lyme.

Reynolds, who worked in The Day's mailroom after high school, is one of several Connecticut residents serving on the ship that is the chief resupply point for submarines waging war against Iraq these days.

He joined the Navy in 1985, served four years, then came back in for eight, and left again to work at Boats Inc. back home. When he tried to re-enlist in May 2001, the Navy had too many people in his old job of boatswain's mate.

"They weren't going to let me back in as a boatswain's mate, so they asked me to consider other ratings," Reynolds said. "They made it clear to me that if I was going to come back to active duty, I would have to make the conversion."

Lt. Jim Getman, the deck force division officer, has been "commuting" from his Ledyard home as often as possible since he joined the tender almost two years ago. That means he's seen less of his wife and children, ages 9 and 6, than he did when he was making six-month deployments on the boats. He was in Groton from 1982 to 1991, and again from 1998 to 2001. In the interim, he moved his family twice, to Italy and to Guam.

"We made a decision that it would be good for the kids to stay there this time," Getman said. "The kids were in the Gales Ferry school, which is a great school, and my wife had gotten her old job back, and we thought it was better to have the kids wake up every morning in their own bedroom rather than have me drag them overseas."

But he has orders to a new job at Naval Submarine School in Groton later this year, which will be a much shorter commute.

Ens. Thomas Tinney, a native of West Virginia, had lived in Mystic since 1991 before reporting to the Land, and he and his wife plan to return after this tour.

He was promoted to chief petty officer about 11 years after joining the Navy, and decided to apply for the limited duty officer, or LDO, program.

"When I made chief, I realized I could only go up two more ranks, and if I went LDO I could just keep going up," Tinney said. "And I can help other officers approach every situation from the position of an enlisted person. I know what motivates that sailor. That's the perspective an LDO brings to the table."

But it also meant the Navy wanted him to do an overseas tour as the force protection officer on the Land.

"It's a much more active position than the old physical security officer job was, especially since the attack on the Cole and 9-11," said Tinney, who is going to the Naval Submarine Support Facility in Groton next and hopes to get future postings at some of the other Naval Submarine Base commands.

"I could retire from Groton easily. There are enough positions for me to do 10 more years there," Tinney said.

Seaman Apprentice Stephanie Johnson of Vernon joined the Navy Sept. 12, 2002, and her first job was on the Land.

She enlisted right out of high school, when many of her classmates went on to college, but "I didn't want to sit in a classroom for four years," she said.

Johnson said she wants to apply for training in marine sciences, but for now is busy painting the ship and doing other deck division tasks.

"There aren't many people here from Connecticut, so when the submarines come in, I'm always asking people, 'Are you from Groton?'" Johnson said. "It's nice to hear anything about home."

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TIM COOK / The Day

■ Rear Adm. Kirk H. Donald, standing, commander of Submarine Group 8 and the area's NATO submarines, with the crew of the USS Providence Monday.

Admiral: War shows submarines' new flexibility and capabilities

By ROBERT A. HAMILTON
Day Staff Writer

Aboard the USS Emory S. Land — In modern warfare, the emphasis has been on developing a force that can move the fastest and employ its power precisely.

"The idea is to get inside the enemy's decision cycle," said Rear Adm. Kirkland H. Donald, who commands U.S. Navy submarines in the Mediterranean Sea. By the time the enemy responds to your first attack, he explained, you have moved on to another.

"It eliminates his options to influence the battle," said Donald, commander of Submarine Group 8 and the area's NATO submarines.

During Desert Storm, the war to force Iraq from Kuwait, submarines launched a few accurate Tomahawk land-attack missiles but could not quickly respond to newly discovered threats. The missions were received in advance and carried out, he said. In the current war, submarines have been able to respond to unexpected developments, he said.

In addition, submarines were able to respond quickly when Turkey withdrew its support for the war by shifting to the Red Sea. A dozen U.S. boats and two from the United Kingdom made it through the Suez Canal and to their new stations within days.

"The flexibility that naval forces bring to this — we were able to get where we needed to be very quickly, and we were able to move when we had to — that's a characteristic naval force has always had, but it's even more valuable today," Donald said.

Assessing the opening days of the war on Iraq, Donald observed, "The submarine contribution was remarkable. It's very satisfying to see submarines and the whole Navy play as important a role in this operation as they have."

Donald typically has two or three submarines in his area of responsibility, but the buildup to the war on Iraq saw his task expand considerably.

"At one point in time we had ... six submarines that are over here from the Atlantic, and we also had a major NATO exercise with seven other submarines," he said. "We have ramped up. And they have performed absolutely magnificently."

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He said one of the reasons submarines were employed more heavily in this war against Iraq is that they are now "players" in the battle group, which includes surface ships and aircraft, primarily because of rapid advances in communications.

When he commanded Submarine Development Squadron 12 in Groton from 1995 to 1997, the high data rate submarine antenna "was still a twinkle in someone's eye."

But that antenna is now on board most submarines, along with other communications improvements, including the abil-

ity to tap into military chat rooms for operational planning.

Donald said the Navy has made good use of young people who have grown up in the era of using instant messaging on the computer while watching television, talking on the phone and doing their homework.

"This is the environment that they've grown up in, this information-sharing environment with multi-tasking," Donald said. "But you don't see any dinosaurs in this business, either. Everybody embraces it."

The technology is too important to ignore, he said, and some of the older people who learn the new technology have been even more important to the process.

"They learn it, then they innovate, they find new ways to do things once they get them, they all figure out better ways to put them into use," Donald said.

The advances in communications systems has increased the interoperability of submarines with other ships, allowing the battle group commanders to assign tasks in a fast-paced battle environment to submarines.

"It's very satisfying because we've worked a long time to get it that way," Donald said. "We're working this issue really hard, and if you look at this operation, it speaks to how well we are doing at that."

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Donald said some of the submarines that are on a normal deployment cycle would be readied for new missions. Others that were sent out months early, like the Groton-based USS Toledo, or had their deployment extended because of the war, like the Groton-based USS San Juan, will be sent home.

"They did it, and they did it admirably, but we do need to get them home, get them ready for the next time we need them over here again."

"The unsung hero in this whole thing is this ship right here, the Emory S. Land," he said.

The Land has provided a home away from home for the boats, a place to reload weapons, bring on fresh food and spend a few days in the secure location it has set up at an undisclosed location in the Mediterranean.

The crew of the Land has unflinchingly provided support to the fleet, Donald said. His visit this week is his third since the war started, "and every time I come down the sailors have more bounce in their step, a greater twinkle in their eye."

"I can't overemphasize how proud I am of the work, not only of the submarines and the sailors on the tender, but all the sailors and Marines and soldiers and airmen in this operation," Donald said. "They're putting their lives on the line for the freedom of the Iraqi people, to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction."

"The admiration I have for all of that is difficult to put into words. I'm proud of them, and I pray for them every single day."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Bush warns of desperate, dangerous enemies in Iraq that might attack U.S.

Philadelphia — President Bush said Monday that terrorist groups or even, in a last-ditch show of desperation, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein "may try to bring terror to our shores" in retaliation for the war in Iraq. "We know that our enemies are desperate; we know that they're dangerous," Bush said. Since the fighting began almost two weeks ago, Bush and his spokesmen have sought to lower expectations for a quick, easy war. Bush warned last week of many more battlefield casualties before the war is won. He broadened that alarm Monday. "Many dangers lie ahead. But day by day we are moving closer to Baghdad; day by day we are moving closer to victory," Bush told hundreds of Coast Guard personnel at the Port of Philadelphia.

U.N. monitors say Iraqi smoke, sewage pose rising health threats

Smoke from burning oil and bombing damage in Iraq pose rising health risks to both soldiers and citizens, while waterways are becoming fouled by untreated sewage, environmental analysts say. Extinguishing fires and repairing water treatment facilities will be an immediate priority of humanitarian aid when the war ends, along with more extensive monitoring, said United Nations environmental officials. U.N. officials are monitoring the Iraqi environment by reviewing satellite images and television coverage, but have little firsthand knowledge of conditions in the war zone. They say the public health dangers do not yet match the smog created during the 1991 Persian Gulf War when Iraqi troops retreating from Kuwait ignited or damaged more than 700 oil wells. But as the war intensifies and U.S. forces approach Baghdad, experts said millions of people could be exposed to more toxic smoke and other hazards.

As fighting in Iraq rages, Syria and United States escalate war of words

Washington — The war of words between the United States and Syria escalated on Monday when the Syrian Foreign Ministry said it hoped to "see the invaders defeated in Iraq." The latest bellicose remarks came after a speech on Sunday night by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to a Jewish group in which he accused Syria of providing "direct support for terrorist groups and the dying regime of Saddam Hussein." He added, "Syria bears the responsibility for its choices, and for the consequences." Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld had started the war of words on Friday, when he accused Damascus of shipping sensitive military technology to the Iraqi army, specifically night-vision goggles.

Jesse Jackson to help in search for two missing Newsday journalists

Melville, N.Y. — The Rev. Jesse Jackson said Monday he has told the families of two missing Newsday journalists last seen in Baghdad that he would try to help track down their whereabouts. Jackson, who has had success in negotiating the release of American prisoners in past conflicts, said relatives of Newsday correspondent Matthew McAllester, 33, and photographer Moises Saman, 29, asked him Sunday to help locate the two men. "And I said I would do my very best," Jackson said. He said he had no plans to travel to the region, however. Saman and McAllester have been out of contact since March 24, when they e-mailed their Long Island-based newspaper to say they would be filing material. Newsday editor Anthony Marro said in the paper's Saturday editions that he believes the two have been detained by the Iraqi government.

Powell plans talks with Turkey and European and NATO nations

Washington — Secretary of State Colin Powell will travel to Turkey and Brussels, Belgium, for talks on the war with Iraq and postwar reconstruction of that country. Powell said Monday it was the first of a number of trips he intends to take in the weeks and months ahead "about our hopes for Iraq in the future." He told reporters he would tell Turkish leaders "it is unnecessary for them to consider any incursions in the region."

Arab and Islamic nations want U.N. to adopt resolution against war

United Nations — Arab and Islamic nations decided Monday to push for adoption of a resolution in the U.N. General Assembly against the U.S.-led war in Iraq to show the strength of world opposition. In a statement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group, which has 57 member nations, emphasized its readiness to take the issue to the General Assembly. It called for an immediate cease-fire, withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq, and respect for the sovereignty and political independence of Iraq and its neighbors.

Truck crashes into British Embassy wall in Iran; may have been attack

Tehran, Iran — A pickup truck crashed into the perimeter wall of the British Embassy on Monday night, exploding in flames in what one witness said appeared to be a suicide attack. Police Col. Ali Ahmadi said the crash appeared to be an accident in which the truck driver was killed. No other casualties were re-