

Captain's Call

Time does fly when you're having fun, and for me this deployment has flown by much too quickly. We have accomplished a few firsts this cruise; record-setting REFTRA scores in setting ZEBRA and completing the major conflag, Fleet Week in New York, Harborfest in Boston, (earning the Bicentennial Unit Commendation ribbon), mooring at Thule, diplomacy at Keflavik, the oceanographic survey off the east coast of Greenland, meeting the Swedish icebreaker ODEN, Scoresby Sound, Bremerhaven, Prins Christian Sound and PACSCOPEX 90. The fabled Northwest Passage was no big deal for us, and the weather for us was great, even considering the two days south of Iceland. Few will believe the calm weather we enjoyed crossing the Gulf of Alaska - more "POLAR SEA weather". The port calls were fine, but the real fun was being underway and doing the job, and watching you all pull together as a crew and work together to keep POLAR SEA the "Queen of the Fleet" by the way she is maintained and operated. To be sure, there was very little "drama" this cruise. All hands did their jobs in a quiet, effective, professional way. All objectives were completed to the full satisfaction of our customers without fanfare, and that is the way that things are done in POLAR SEA. In all ports visited people saw a clean, squared away ship. You represented the ship, Coast Guard, and country in an exemplary manner, and demonstrated the diplomatic role required of icebreakers in addition to the primary job of being a tough, working ship.

I am not pleased at the prospect of leaving this ship and the business of icebreaking, but the time has come to move on to new challenges and opportunities. As you all carry on in the POLAR SEA tradition to new tasks, you will be challenged. Take on those challenges with enthusiasm, and remember them even if they mean being cold, or wet, or tired of being tossed around in a rough sea. Take the time to be aware of your surroundings whether at sea or in foreign ports. Take the time to know and work with your shipmates. All too quickly those times will be history, and, although in the years to come you may not remember all the detail, the sights and sounds and smells will come back to you when you least expect them, and you will remember that sailing in POLAR SEA was one of the finest adventures of your life. Carry on.

