

Aviators Repair Helo off St. Paul

RUSH had a crew of six aviators onboard during the Alpat. The HH-52 crew was part of a special group from Air Station Kodiak who are deployed only on cutters making Alpats. The group consisted of LT Greg Bowlby, LT Bill Peterson, AD2 Bob Hassinger, AD3 Phil Mayer, AE2 Dennis Trojanek, and AT3 Frank Baxter.

The aviators extend the eyes of the ship by flying on missions looking for fishing boats. Because the HH-52 has a radius of 40 miles about the ship it can spot contacts out of range of the cutter. The additional 25 miles that the radar gives the helo beyond its flying range makes finding contacts that much quicker.

There was a short period when the helo was out of commission. During one flight a warning light in the cockpit showed a loss of nitrogen in one of the blades. The blade was determined to be cracked and a replacement needed. At the time, in early May, the ship was in the vicinity of St. Paul of the Pribilof Islands. A C-130 flew a new blade from Kodiak to the loran station on St. Paul. The only problem was how to get the blade from the island to the ship as there are no facilities to moor. Undaunted a small boat crew transported the 20 ft. long, 450 pd box and blade by small boat to the ship.

