



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Christy Garvin
Onboard NOAA Ship RAINIER
June 1 - 8, 2005**

Log 1

Day 1: Tuesday, June 1, 2005
Latitude: 56 deg 59 min N
Longitude: 135 deg 17 min W
Visibility: 12 nautical miles
Wind Direction: 285 deg
Wind Speed: 15 kts
Sea Wave Height: 1-2 ft
Swell Wave Height: 0 ft (we are in a protected bay)
Sea Water Temperature: 51deg F
Sea Level Pressure: 1022.5 mb



Science and Technology Log

Due to the Memorial Day weekend, today was the RAINIER's first operational day since I arrived in Sitka, Alaska. Sitka is located off the western coast of Baranof Island and is surrounded by snow-covered mountains. The weather has been sunny with temperatures around 55 deg F. Currently, the RAINIER is anchored in the Aleutkina Bay, which is just south of Sitka.

Because several interns and new hands joined the crew for this leg of the journey, the CO, or Commanding Officer, declared today a stand down day. Basically, this meant that normal work operations were suspended so that the entire day could be devoted to training. A large part of our training was concerned with the deployment and recovery of small boats called launches.

The launches are stored on a system called the gravity falls davit. The system was originally designed for emergency boat deployment and is capable of working without any electricity; by lifting a lever and removing a small pin, the weight of the boat will cause the davit to slide down the track and drop the boat in the water. Although this works well in emergency situations, it causes a great amount of stress and strain on the equipment. Therefore, this method is not used for the daily deployment of the launches. Instead, a somewhat more complicated process requiring a team of ten or more people is used to safely put the boats in and out of the water.

The first step in deploying the boats is to unplug the boats from the main ship and loosen the gripes that secure the boat. Once the boat is no longer constrained, a team of four people standing on the deck below grabs ropes called frapping lines and helps stabilize the boat as it is lowered down to the deck level by a controller allowing the davit to slowly descend. Once the launch has reached the main deck level, a survey team boards the launch with all of their equipment.

At that point, one member of the survey team sits on the bow of the boat while another stands on the stern. Their job is to help detach the chain falls (a hook with an attached shackle) from the padeyes (a horseshoe shaped attachment bolted to the deck). This detachment occurs after the boat is slowly lowered into the water by a controller using a winch drum. Throughout the entire process, the boat is continually stabilized by the four linesmen who provide or remove slack from the frapping lines. The deck crew and survey teams have practiced this process many times, and the process is quick and efficient when run by an experienced crew.

However, it was much less graceful as all of the new hands took their turns on deck; ropes ended up in the water, the launches bumped the ship a few times, and hooks didn't quite catch the padeyes; but by the end of the day all of the new hands were feeling much more confident in deployment and recovery of launches. It was an excellent opportunity to learn and practice new skills that will be used each day as survey teams are sent forth to accomplish the hydrography mission of the RAINIER.

Personal Log

I really enjoyed learning how to tie different types of knots and handle line today. Working as a linesman is very intense because someone could be seriously injured if you fail to do your job properly. The teamwork aspect is so important to safety as the launches are deployed, and I am having a great time actually being involved in the procedures that take place on the ship.

Question of the day: What is hydrography and why is it necessary?

Until tomorrow,

Christy