

Ship Report Transcript  
Tuesday, April 30, 2024

By Joanne Rideout

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It's time for the Ship Report to show about all things maritime. I'm Joanne Rideout. It's Tuesday, April 30th, 2024.

Well, let's take a look at our marine weather forecast. If we have time, we'll talk a little bit about ships on our schedule today. And then I want to talk about a really interesting Coast Guard rescue that happened right off Tillamook in the ocean off a cruise ship just last week. It shows how adaptable and really amazing our Coast Guard is here. So it's a great opportunity to talk about the Coast Guard. It's one of my favorite subjects.

But first, our Marine weather. We have a weak, low pressure system exiting our area today. High pressure brings calmer conditions tonight into Wednesday morning. Another system will approach later on Wednesday. So we are doing the usual musical chairs with the weather as we seesaw our way through spring and into summer on the coast. We have a small craft advisory in effect through this evening. And today's forecast includes southwest winds 10 to 15 knots, veering to the northwest in the afternoon. Wind waves from the southwest three feet high at 4 seconds apart, shifting to the north, three feet at 4 seconds in the afternoon. West swells nine feet at 11 seconds and chance of thunderstorms in the morning. Then a slight chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon.

Let's take a look at our inbound schedule today. We have the first arrival in the river today was the Seaspan Raider. And this is a tugboat that does really interesting thing. Every now and then when she comes in, she brings in a barge. she's arriving from Vancouver, B.C., so from Canada, from the Puget Sound area. And she hands that barge off to a U.S. flag, tug like off of Warrenton and Hammond. And then she goes to the Astoria Anchorage and picks up another barge and takes it out to sea. So it's an interesting barge hand off and pick up that happens here. So if you see a barge waiting by itself there in the area around Tongue Point off the Astoria waterfront, that is the barge that the Seaspan Raider is coming in to pick up. And she will be in the river in Astoria by about 2 a.m. today.

The Merel D is arriving from Sacramento, California, headed for Vancouver. I think she could be bringing in wind turbine parts or she could be handling wood products. Passing Astoria around 2:30 a.m., she could be in Vancouver by about 8:30 a.m..

And the MSC Joanna is a container ship arriving from Vancouver, B.C. She's headed for the Port of Portland, passing Astoria around 3 a.m.. She could be in Portland by 9 a.m.

And we have the Thai kingdom arriving from China, headed for the Astoria Anchorage. She'll be there at about 3:30 a.m., picking up wheat eventually upriver.

Well, today I wanted to talk with you about the U.S. Coast Guard. One of my favorite subjects and about a rescue that happened last week locally here that showed once again how amazing they are.

Those of us who live in Astoria and surrounding communities up and down the coast, we're used to seeing U.S. Coast Guard aircraft in the air over the area. We're aware, as we see them flying to and

from open water, that many times they're in the process of helping someone in trouble at sea. They rescue people from all types of vessels who need help. And today's story happened just last week. And it's a good opportunity to talk about the amazing work they do locally.

So here is a quote from a story from KGW eight news in Portland from last Thursday. Quote, A U.S. Coast Guard aircrew rescued an injured man from a cruise ship off Oregon's northern coast Thursday afternoon. The air crew from Astoria reached the 65 year old man on the Koenigsdam cruise ship, which was about 170 miles west of Tillamook and about 309 miles away from Astoria. And that's where the helicopters are based.

Here's a quote from Jason Weeks, a Coast Guard lieutenant commander who was the pilot in command for the rescue. He said, "We had received a notification that the individual did sustain injuries from a fall that happened two days prior."

So the Coast Guard did not provide any initial information about the extent of the man's condition. But Weeks said that he was treated in the ICU. The intensive care unit aboard the cruise ship before the rescue.

Weeks said this rescue mission was particularly challenging due to how far away the cruise ship was from the coastline and from Astoria. So close quote there. That's from that KGW eight story.

So this story offers a great opportunity to show how amazing our Coast Guard is. And also to show the limitations of what they can do in a given situation and in this case, how they, through careful planning, got around some of those limiting factors so they could help a person in trouble at sea.

So it's a story about responding to an emergency with resourcefulness and compassion and a very successful way. Here's what was especially challenging about this search and rescue call. They're called SAR calls in the Coast Guard or SAR missions.

It involved taking the Coast Guard helicopter over 300 miles away from its home base, something that is usually beyond the distance capacity for a Coast Guard helicopter. The reason for that limitation is fuel. Helicopters can only carry so much fuel, and this capacity limits their work to about 200 nautical miles off shore.

But in this case, they were able to adjust by getting rid of weight from the helicopter so they could take more fuel for the journey. They also had on board the helicopter a paramedic and a nurse from the Life Flight network so they could continue to provide the same level of intensive care services that the patient had been receiving on the ship in the ship's sickbay or hospital. And he evidently needed this. And so they had these people extra crew on board.

Now, this also is unusual since the U.S. Coast Guard generally doesn't take extra personnel from other agencies on board on these search and rescue flights. So once they picked up the patient, they flew him to OHSU in Portland. So further, even than just back to the U.S. Coast Guard base at the Astoria, Warrenton Airport. According to the KGW story, it took about an hour and 20 minutes for the helicopter to fly to OHSU.

So this is a level of care for someone in this case beyond what you would expect even on a Coast Guard rescue. But it was needed. So they made it happen. Now, it's not uncommon for the Coast Guard to rescue people off of vessels, even cruise ships. But it's interesting to note that while cruise ships have

doctors on board and an onboard medical facility, kind of like a hospital - most commercial vessels, like cargo ships and fishing vessels, do not.

On some cargo ships, there are telemedicine options for remote care. But often the medical staff on a ship is an officer with some basic medical and first aid training. And this ship, the cruise ship in this story today was on the outer edge of what a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter could do in terms of distance from shore. So they found a way to make it work.

In this case, the man's injury happened a few days before, but the ship may simply have been too far offshore to be within reach of Coast Guard helicopter crews.

Had the ship been much further out to sea in this case, rescue might not have been possible until the ship moved more inside that 200 mile limit for safe rescue by a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter crew. The Coast Guard's ability to adjust so that they could carry more fuel and carry extra medical crew allowed this person to get rescued sooner. And that may have been a critical factor in his care.

So hat's off to our coast is always for this and so many other things you do here on the coast. We see you in action every day and are most grateful for the lifesaving services you provide.

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