



NOAA Teacher at Sea
John Schneider
Onboard NOAA Ship *Fairweather*
July 7 – August 8, 2009

NOAA Teacher at Sea: John E. Schneider

NOAA Ship *Fairweather* (S-220)

Mission: Hydrographic Survey

Geographical Area: Shumagin Islands

Date: July 10, 2009

Position

Sailing bathymetry grids offshore in the Shumagin Islands

Weather Data from the Bridge

Weather System: Partly Cloudy/Fog/overcast

Barometer: 1022.0

Wind: variable <8 kts

Temperature: 13.0° C

Sea State: 1 foot

Science and Technology Log

Today I was not assigned to the launch details. (The launch crews change frequently and the officers try to have the duty load between the ship and the launches balanced. Launch duty is a minimum of an 8½ hour day on the water and it taxes the crew to have the same personnel repetitively deployed. I'm also not yet up to speed enough to have any use to data processing or ship-board data acquisition.

Sooooo, I took a self-directed tour of the interior of the ship!



The computer area outside my stateroom

Personal Log

The ship is divided into Decks and Sections. The sections run from 1–10 with the bow being

1 and the stern being 10. Decks run from A to G with G being the Flying Bridge and A being the bilge. My cabin is number C-5-106. I'm on C-deck, just about amidships. The sheet of paper above my cabin number is my duty station list for

emergencies. Each crewmember has one of these on their door and it tells where you belong in emergencies: Fire/AbandonShip/MOB (ManOverBoard)



This sheet on my door lists my duty station in case of an emergency.

Just outside my door there is a small computer area about 10' x 10'. In that area are two terminals for the ship's LAN. Additionally there is room in this area for each member berthed there (there are four of us) to stow some gear (like the work vest/life jacket on the hook next to my door.) To the left is a yellow ladder and the sign behind it reads "Escape Hatch Do Not Block." There are escape hatches like this all over the ship and above them the decks are kept unobstructed.

Unlike a cruise ship, most of the ship is accessible to people on board. Of course the cabins of other folks are off limits. Violate this and the punishment is severe . . . you'd never get a position on another ship in the fleet again. Also, officers' offices are restricted. Other than that, I spent a good couple of hours nosing around and learning my way around the ship.

I found that EVERY spare nook and cranny is used for storage. If she had to, I bet the *Fairweather* could sail for months at a time with the only limiting factor being fuel. *Fairweather* even makes her own fresh water by evaporating and re-condensing seawater in order to extract the salt. They should sell it as bottled water!

I found a "chiller" where food is refrigerated. It's HUGE – must have been 300-400 square feet! The freezer was locked, but it must be comparably sized. When I saw the lock on the freezer door I thought of the movie *The Caine Mutiny* with Humphrey Bogart as Captain Queeg ("they had the keys to the food locker. They ate the strawberries." (If you're not familiar with the movie it is certainly worth renting!).



The "chiller" where the food is refrigerated

I also found several smaller compartments where dry goods for the chefs were stored. There were



Hazardous materials remediation equipment in the quartermaster's storage.

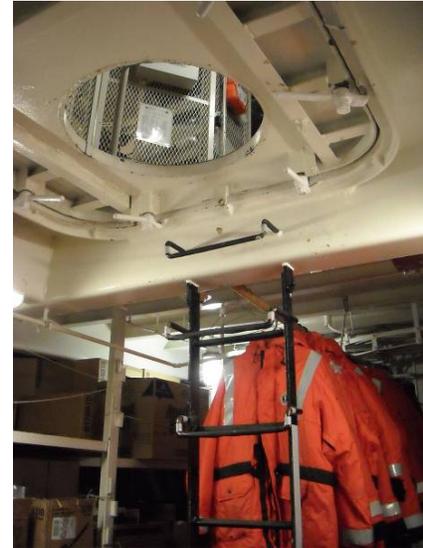
cake mixes, spices, cases of condiments (including 3 flavors of Tabasco Sauce) . . . name it, and the chefs can find it!

Further forward I found the quartermaster's stores. Line, chain, tools and an entire 250 square foot caged off area for Hazardous materials and asbestos remediation equipment. I opened a hatch in the floor and there was a ladder that went straight down. So, I went in to find another compartment of stores. The shot below is from the bottom of that ladder, and you can see the caged hazmat locker up through the hatch. In this lower compartment were survival coats and immersion suits, printer cartridges, more work

vests and more.

As I worked my way aft, I went into C-9 and C-10. C-10 is the steering compartment and the rudder posts (those are the “axles” of the rudder that come up into the ship) are about a foot in diameter! There’s a motor just to turn them and for them to operate in tandem there is an 8” steel bar connecting them. You can see it with the yellow stripes. C-10 is also the home to the stern mooring lines, lubricants, hoses and power cables and spare propellers for the launches as well as the hydraulic motors for the winches and equipment on the fantail.

Just forward of C-10 is C-9. C-9 has dozens of parts drawers with thousands of parts and fittings for all over the ship. It is also the home to the exercise equipment. The crew has figured out how to cram just about everything they need into the compartment. Free weight, Pilates balls, punching bag, speed bag, treadmill, and weight bench! There are even a few bicycles hanging from the overhead that are used in port.



If you look up through the circular hatch you can see the caged hazmat locker.



This is the part of the ship called the steering compartment which houses the machinery that controls the direction of the ship.



This room has many drawers that contain thousands of different parts and fittings for all over the ship. It also has the exercise equipment.

To close the story (I’ll have to do your tour of decks D and up on a later day) I made it all the way down to A-Deck. A-Deck is the bottom of the ship. It is accessed by going through a shower compartment forward on C-deck into a small, half-height, sloped-ceiling opening in which there is a 24-inch diameter hatch. The 24-inch hatch connects with rungs welded into the wall and it goes straight down. Descend this ladder and your feet are on B-deck. Open an even **SMALLER** hatch and you can see the inner bottom of the ship. This compartment is only about 3½ feet tall, but I squeezed through the hatch and put my feet on the bottom. In retrospect, I should have taken off my Crocs to see how cold the steel was. I’ve been told that people actually go **into** this space to do work. I think if I could wiggle my way in somehow, the only way to ever get me out would be to drydock the ship and cut me out through the bottom!



Here I am squeezing through the hatch that leads to the very bottom of the ship.



Here are my feet touching the bottom of the ship.

Questions for You to Investigate

- Where does the term “scuttlebutt” (meaning rumors and gossip) come from?
- The survey technicians use the term NADIR a lot in regards to the multi-beam echo sounder. What is a nadir?
- When was the Marine Mammal Protection Act passed?
- What was “Seward’s Folly” and how do you think it turned out for America?
- Which is closer to the Shumagin Islands, New York City or Moscow? San Diego or Guam?