After Action Report

Antonio L. Viana Portuguese & Spanish Interpreter

Interpreter Deployment on USCGC ESCANABA (WMEC 907) UNITAS 52
04 April to 15 May 2011

It is still clear in my childhood memories the days I would stand with my father amazed by the sight of the UNITAS warships moored at my hometown port of Recife - Brazil. I was even yet amazed when my TAD orders arrived to meet Escanaba in Puerto Rico, this time as a participant in the very UNITAS exercises now in its 52nd year.

After a short flight from Miami, I was kindly welcomed at Sector San Juan by Chief Antonio Manalus who introduced me to the crew and to my new floating home. Later that same day I reported for duty to our CO CDR Westfall and XO LCDR Balmaceda.

UNITAS Latin for “unity” is the longest-running military training exercise in the world, a combined South American and US-sponsored annual exercise series. Active participants for UNITAS LANT 52 include Brazil, The United States, Argentina and Mexico. Aimed at promoting regional partnerships by building relationships and sharing exercises to enhance regional security.

Finally underway we bore south along the Virgin Islands having reached the northern coast of South America where we rendezvoused with Navy warships Boone, Thatch
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and Nitze and our special guest Mexican Baja California. From this point on we would sail under Navy’s command along the coast of Brazil.

USS warships USCGC ESCANABA, NITZE, BOONE, THATCH, along with Brazilian warships BOSISIO, NITEROI, INDEPENDENCIA. GASTAO MOTA, TAMOYO (submarine), Mexican BAJA CALIFORNIA and Argentinean BROWN were this year’s UNITAS participants.

Participants had the unique opportunity to improve, test, share their Naval skills in a wide range of operations and scenarios not limited to Hello-Ops, FAS (Fuel-at-Sea), Small Boats, LE (Boarding), Crew Exchange, Live-Fire, GQ (General Quarters), GE (General Emergency), Communication, Interoperability, and to most of all strengthen friendships with their counterparts.

One might wonder: Where does an Auxiliary Interpreter fit within such a huge Naval Exercise?????? Well the “magic word” is MULTI-TASKING. From standing Lookout watch to radio watch standing, at times in communication with intruding freight vessels, or even alerting traffic to divert course away from restricted zones, assisting the OOD and Command, and participating in NAV briefs, drills, quarters, Officer’s Call, port pilot translation, and briefing the crew before every pot visit.

During port visits is multi-tasking all over again assisting our Supply Officer with the ship’s needs, attending meetings, ceremonies, COMRELs, and assisting crew while on liberty, to name a few duties.

This Deployment has tested my Auxiliary skills and physical fitness to their limits. Being underway and away from loved ones for long periods of time, while having to strictly adhere to ESCANABA’s intense schedule has instilled in me a profound appreciation and admiration for the men and women of the United States Coast Guard and their devotion to duty.
I will forever be grateful to those who made this patrol possible and specially to the men and women of the USCGC ESCANABA for their steady support throughout the patrol.

I write this from the comfort of my home confident that our efforts helped foster a positive image of the United States Coast Guard, and the United States of America to the international community.

“…fair winds and following seas shipmates “

Antonio L. Viana
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United States Coast Guard Auxiliary