

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Norm Paulhus <otterx@erols.com> (Norm Paulhus <otterx@erols.com> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:12-NOV-1999 02:42:55.00

SUBJECT: CGF FORWARD: MORE ON FLIGHT 990 RECOVERY IMPACTS ON USCG CREWS

TO: CGFNETWORK <otterx@erols.com> (CGFNETWORK <otterx@erols.com> [UNKNOWN])
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The Cape Cod Times
Friday, November 5, 1999

Grim search for remains exacts human price

By JOHN LEANING
STAFF WRITER

The gruesome recovery of human remains and plane wreckage from the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 has taken its toll on Coast Guard crews from Cape Cod and elsewhere on the East Coast.

"My people are humans, and all were affected in varying degrees," said Capt. Russell Webster, commander of Coast Guard Group Woods Hole, which had the first ship at the scene of the crash early Sunday morning.

No survivors were found, and Coast Guard and other units were, until heavy seas forced a suspension, gathering up floating wreckage and human remains.

"They all understand the importance of what they are involved in now. It is absolutely essential that we expend the effort to reunite families (of crash victims) with the remains of their loved ones.

"Every person I've talked to that is involved in this believes it is the right thing to do," Webster said from the unified command post set up at the Pier 2 Naval Station in Newport.

Now, the sixth day after the Boeing 767 airliner plunged from the sky 60 miles southeast of Nantucket, killing 217 people, recovery efforts remain

stymied by heavy seas.

Meanwhile, Coast Guard and other military personnel are charting floating wreckage and reassuring relatives of crash victims gathered in a secluded part of Newport to await the resumption of the recovery mission.

Webster said daily flights over the crash scene drop special buoys equipped with radio beacons.

By following the trail of the beacons on the surface, searchers will be able to follow as well track the wreckage and other floating material from the plane, he said.

In addition, the Spencer, a 270-foot-long medium-endurance cutter out of Boston, was "standing the watch" by the crash site.

The Spencer's presence, Webster said, may be reassuring to waiting family back on shore, knowing that the Coast Guard has not abandoned the remains of crash victims to the whims of wind and sea.

"I let them know the Spencer is staying there, to act as a presence, to ensure the remains of their loved ones are cared for as much as possible," Webster said in a telephone interview yesterday.

Pressure on Group Woods Hole personnel has lessened somewhat, given the suspension of the recovery effort and assistance from other units, especially the Marine Safety Office in Providence, Webster said.

His crews are in need of a breather, perhaps especially those on board the 110-foot cutter Monomoy, which was immediately diverted to the crash site Sunday morning while out on regular fisheries patrol.

Alerted by Coast Guard District headquarters about the disaster at about 2:05 a.m., Monomoy arrived at 5:12 a.m., the first ship on site, according to Coast Guard records.

A Falcon jet from Air Station Cape Cod was flying over the area within an hour, but no debris was spotted until just before dawn.

By 8 a.m., Webster said, six Coast Guard cutters were en route or on the scene, along with six aircraft.

The Hammerhead, an 87-foot patrol boat from Woods Hole, and Monomoy each spent the next several days scouring the area for survivors, retrieving wreckage and remains of victims. Webster said he believed it was the Monomoy that recovered what is reported to be the only body so far.

Both ships are back at Woods Hole, and their crews are resting.

"The Coast Guard is doing everything it can for these people," Webster said, including making available chaplains and members of the Coast Guard's Critical Incident Stress Management Debriefing Teams.

"They have been with the crews since Day One, at Woods Hole, Otis, Newport and Quonset," Webster said.

Coming just five months after the intensive effort to find John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife and sister-in-law, who were lost in a private plane crash off Martha's Vineyard, the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 has put Coast Guard personnel to a harsh test.

"The Kennedy effort heightened our awareness to better understand how people may be affected in the future. We're that much better in being able to take care of our people," he said.

Nevertheless, the grim task of searching for wreckage and human remains is daunting.

"No man or woman should have to do this. Some were fresh out of boot camp," said Coast Guard Lt. Gary Jones, a helicopter pilot with his own memories of rescues and disasters.

Jones, now chief of public affairs for 1st District Coast Guard headquarters in Boston, recalled the first time he saved someone's life.

"I was like a kid when I called my mom and dad. 'Do you know what I did today?'" he asked them.

"No bonus check in the world, nothing whatsoever in the world, can put a smile on your face or warmth in your heart like when you're pulling someone up in the basket and you're telling them, 'I will get you home,'" he said.

"When you reach into the water, and grab a jacket or arm, you don't know what it's like until you do it. You saved a person, a generation, and when you return them to their family, that generation will go on," he said.

That elation turns inside out, however, when you hold wreckage in your hands, he said.

"Speaking for myself, you think, my God, that was someone a few hours ago.

"You touch these objects. This was someone's life. This article of clothing was worn, maybe to a wedding, to a store. This is someone who is lost," Jones said.

"That's when it slams you in the face, that someone is gone."

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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Norm Paulhus <otterx@erols.com> (Norm Paulhus <otterx@erols.com> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:18-NOV-1999 20:28:51.00

SUBJECT: CGF FORWARD: REP. GREEN REQUESTS MEETING WITH COMMANDANT ON LINDA E SEARCH

TO: CGFNETWORK <otterx@erols.com> (CGFNETWORK <otterx@erols.com> [UNKNOWN])
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Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel
Updated Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Lawmaker seeks sonar search for Linda E.
Green asks Coast Guard to use gear from JFK Jr. crash

By Meg Jones
of the Journal Sentinel staff

At the urging of families of three commercial fishermen who vanished on Lake Michigan nearly a year ago, a congressman on Wednesday said he is asking the U.S. Coast Guard to use the same equipment that found John F. Kennedy Jr.'s plane to look for the missing fishing vessel.

At a private meeting organized Wednesday in Ashwaubenon by Rep. Mark Green (R-Green Bay), about 40 family members met with three Coast Guard officials to discuss the search for the fishermen of the Linda E.

The Coast Guard could use deep-sea salvage sonar to look for the 42-foot fishing boat, the same equipment that helped find the wreck of Kennedy's plane. But authorities said the only way to bring in salvage sonar is to get approval from Adm. James M. Loy, the commandant of the Coast Guard, Green said.

Green immediately called Loy's office Wednesday to request a meeting.

The Coast Guard views the search as a salvage operation, "and the Coast Guard doesn't do salvage operations," Green said in a phone interview. "In our view, there's a likelihood that a maritime accident is involved, which is within the Coast Guard's jurisdiction."

There has been no evidence that the Linda E. was the victim of an accident, but commercial fishermen and the families of the men suspect it was struck by a barge, Green said.

"It's all speculation, but because of the ramifications to the maritime community, we should find (the boat)," Green said.

"With the amount of traffic on the Great Lakes, it is critical that we get to the bottom of it and make sure another accident doesn't happen."

The Linda E. and its crew disappeared without a trace in calm, clear weather on Dec. 11 after its captain, Leif Weborg, 61, phoned Smith Bros. Food Service in Port Washington to say the boat would soon dock with a 1,000-pound load of chub.

Also missing are Warren Olson, 44, and Scott Matta, 32, Weborg's son-in-law. All three men lived on Milwaukee's near south side.

The Linda E. was the subject of a massive search that started with 3,000 square miles of the lake and was narrowed to 27 square miles southeast of Port Washington when a sonar search detected a vessel image Dec. 28.

In January, the Coast Guard brought in a 180-foot cutter with a remote-operated video camera that showed the image was a 19th-century shipwreck never before identified.

Questions about the Linda E. resurfaced last summer after Kennedy's plane crashed in the Atlantic Ocean and was found with the help of Navy and Coast Guard ships and planes. The issue arose during Wednesday's meeting.

"The Coast Guard officials said it was an unusual circumstance because they were directed by the president (to look for Kennedy's plane). Otherwise, they would have not gotten involved," Green said.

Fisherman Jeff Weborg, a cousin of Leif Weborg's, said better search equipment should be brought in to solve the mystery.

"When you have a vessel that disappears and no known reason why, with three people missing, you need to find that vessel," he said.

"There hasn't been a time since this happened that upon getting into the boat in the morning, that I haven't thought about Leif."

Although the missing men are from Milwaukee, several family members living in Door County and Marinette contacted Green for help.

"I think now out of (Wednesday's) meeting there's a renewed sense of urgency," Green said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Norm Paulhus <otterx@erols.com> (Norm Paulhus <otterx@erols.com> [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:19-JAN-2000 21:46:10.00

SUBJECT: CGF FORWARD: JFK JR. PLANE RECOVERED TO THWART THRILL DIVERS

TO: CGFNETWORK <otterx@erols.com> (CGFNETWORK <otterx@erols.com> [UNKNOWN])
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The Boston Herald
Wednesday, January 19, 2000

Kennedy plane recovered to thwart thrill divers
by Laura Brown

Government officials made the "unusual" decision to recover the wreckage of John F. Kennedy Jr.'s plane from the ocean in part to prevent divers from going after it later, New England's top Coast Guard officer said yesterday.

"We simply felt we couldn't leave that wreckage in place," said Rear Adm. Richard Larrabee, who directed the Coast Guard's initial search and rescue effort, and then the recovery operation.

"It was a decision that was unusual, but I think it was the right one," said Larrabee, who was participating in a U.S. Department of Transportation conference in Cambridge on Livable Communities. If the wreckage had been left on the ocean floor, divers might have put their lives at risk trying to reach it, he explained.

Kennedy, his wife Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, were killed when the single-engine Piper Saratoga he was piloting crashed off Martha's Vineyard, July 16, 1999.

Larrabee, who is retiring next month, also directed the Coast Guard recovery operation for the Oct. 31, 1999, EgyptAir crash.

The Kennedy crash made Coast Guard officials much more conscious about their relationship with the families of accident victims, Larrabee said.

“We clearly have a responsibility to the families,” he said. “We want to make sure people understand where we’re going and why we’re doing it, so we can manage those expectations.”

The Coast Guard has been involved in about 10 search efforts in which lives were lost since the Kennedy crash, Larrabee said.

“Generally, the Coast Guard mission is a search with the expectation that we can find somebody alive,” he said. “When we get to the point that expectation is no longer reasonable, our standard practice is to stop.”