

**NOTE:** *LT Andrew Pate '98 is the Commanding Officer for the USCGC NANTUCKET (WPB 1316) Starboard Crew. The Nantucket is a 110 foot Coast Guard cutter with its home port in St. Petersburg, FL.*

## COAST GUARD NEWS

# Coast Guard Cutter Nantucket crew returns home after helping to save 10 lives

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ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Nantucket returned home to St. Petersburg today after a successful patrol resulted in crewmembers helping save 10 lives in the Bahamas.



The Nantucket was on patrol off South Florida Thursday, when a 206-foot cargo ship capsized and broke into pieces near Damas Cay in the Cay Sal Bank, Bahamas.

Coast Guard search-and-rescue coordinators in Key West received a mayday call at 2:08 p.m. Wednesday from the motor vessel *Mystic*, a 206-foot cargo ship with 10 persons aboard. The *Mystic* passed a position, but no nature of distress was given and the vessel was unable to hear any response from Coast Guard rescue operators.

The Coast Guard responded immediately by diverting the Coast Guard Cutter Nantucket, a 110-foot coastal patrol boat, and a Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules aircraft from Air Station Clearwater, Fla., patrolling in the area that proceeded immediately to the position passed by the *Mystic*. The HC-130 arrived on scene at 2:19 p.m. and established communications with the vessel, discerning that the *Mystic*, while transiting from Miami to Haiti, apparently struck a submerged object and was taking on water.

Crew members had been attempting to dewater the vessel using a pump aboard, but were unable to control the rate of flow. The HC-130 successfully dropped another pump to the vessel and they commenced dewatering with the second pump. The dewatering efforts appeared to maintain the rate of flow, but was unable to make headway in overcoming the flooding.

The Nantucket crew arrived with the *Mystic* at 4:06 p.m. but was unable to launch their small boat or approach nearer than one nautical mile to the vessel due to the proximity of rocks and weather conditions that included 8-10 foot seas and more than 30 mile-per-hour winds.

At approximately 6:23 p.m. the *Mystic* was able to weigh anchor and shift around to the western side of the cay, where the seas were reported at 4 feet and Nantucket's crew could be a better position to respond if needed. The *Mystic* reported that flow rate appeared to be controlled, and the crew would remain aboard the vessel until no longer safe to do so. The crew of the Nantucket established an hourly communications schedule with the vessel, and the situation appeared to be stabilized.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watch standers received notification at 3 a.m. that the *Mystic* was in danger of capsizing, and the 10-member crew of the vessel was making preparations to abandon ship. At 4 a.m. the 10 crew members of the *Mystic* abandoned ship into two life rafts.

A Coast Guard helicopter aircrew that had pre-staged in Marathon through the night launched and arrived on scene with the *Mystic* at 4:10 a.m. and Nantucket launched their small boat, to effect a coordinated response.

At 4:30 a.m. the Nantucket small boat crew recovered four of the individuals in liferafts and the rescue helicopter crew deployed their rescue swimmer who assisted in hoisting the remaining six people and one dog onto the helicopter.

The rescue helicopter airlifted the six people and a dog to Key West International Airport, and the other four to Coast Guard Station Key West.

The Nantucket is a 110-foot patrol boat homeported in St. Petersburg, Fla. Nantucket's missions include Alien Migration Interdiction Operations (AMIO), Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, and Ports Waterways and Coastal Security.