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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 14: Recover and Recon

Chris Linder
August 14, 2005

Typing in these dispatches is becoming harder and harder... Not because I don't have enough to write about, or a lack of inspiration... It's because my laptop won't stay still! Not only is typing difficult, but walking, eating, even showering all take a bit of effort. As we break this harder ice and pressure ridges (tall piles of ice that form where floes have smashed together), the ice seems to be fighting back. A dull continuous thudding reverberates through every compartment and the ship lurches and bucks as we bounce off the harder floes. Unlike a ship in open water, where the rolling can become quite predictable, this motion is completely random. I have learned (the hard way, ouch) not to put my face too close to the mirror when shaving, brushing my teeth, etc. When we steam through the occasional pond of open water everyone breathes a sigh of relief and enjoys the 10-20 seconds of peace and quiet. Then, BOOM, it's back into another pressure ridge, and my laptop starts to dance all over the place again.

The mooring team and deck department worked nonstop today. The action started well before breakfast as they pinpointed the location of the mooring. Then the Captain broke up the ice around the mooring site to make a hole for the floats. At 9AM John Kemp sent the signal for the mooring to release. After a few tense moments, we spotted the top float--or should I say a corner of the top float, since half of it was caught underneath a small ice floe. A few minutes of gently jostling the floe with the bubbler system popped it free, and the recovery was underway. Working straight through lunch, the entire mooring was safely on deck in four hours.

John Kemp and Rick Krishfield had barely enough time to gulp down a few of the galley's calzones before they were planning an ice reconnaissance flight with pilot Christopher Swannell and ice officer Lucie Theriault. The fog had finally lifted and the weather was perfect for flying. They loaded some ice augers into the helicopter so they could determine the ice thickness and took off to the north, looking for that perfect piece of ice for a buoy deployment.

While John and Rick were cutting holes in the ice, Kris and I were putting on our ties for a special dinner. It's a tradition on the *Louis* to enjoy a formal dinner with the Captain in the senior officer's mess. Joining Captain Potts this evening were officers Rod Johnston, Heather Kinrade, Stephane Legault, and Jonathan Lee plus science party members Doug Sieberg, Mary Steel, Waldeck Walczowski, Kris Newhall and myself. It was a great honor to be able to share in this tradition on the *Louis*--sipping wine while pressure ridges sailed by outside, truly a memorable night.

When Rick and John returned, I could tell their mission was a success. "Ready to set up ice camp tomorrow?" Rick asked. "We found the perfect floe. We named it Ice Camp Smiley."

Last updated: October 13, 2015

Doug Sieberg and John Kemp pull the moored profiler on deck (and a small tangle of floats).

Winchman Peter King climbs up to the crane controls while Doug, Kris, and John begin to disassemble the floats.

Bos'n Bob Taylor guides the helicopter out of the hangar for the ice recon flight.

A special tradition--formal Sunday dinner with Captain Potts at the senior officer's mess.

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