



# News Release

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## Storm-tossed Scientists and Ship's Crew Celebrate Safe Return

**HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA,** Scientists and crew members aboard the scientific drill ship *JOIDES Resolution* have safely docked in Halifax and are celebrating their safe return. The scientists were conducting research in the North Atlantic off the coast of Greenland when they experienced hurricane force winds and waves of 60-70 feet for 26 hours during the most violent storm the vessel has ever endured. None of the 110 crew members aboard the ship were injured.

"I was amazed at how efficient and composed everyone aboard the ship was during some very traumatic hours," says Dr. Jamie Allan, a scientist with the Ocean Drilling Program. "Winds were gusting more than 120 miles per hour with near freezing, driving rains. During these conditions, many Sedco and ODP crew members demonstrated the highest levels of valor I have ever witnessed to save the ship."

The 471-foot long ship did sustain damage to its communication and navigation systems when two separate waves smashed into the port wing on the bridge deck (front, left side), breaking a bridge window and flooding the bridge with several feet of sea water. Other damage included a crippled dynamic positioning system, minor structural damage and two disabled life boats resulting from extended pounding from the waves.

In its return to Halifax, the ship was accompanied by the *Gadus Atlantica*, which served as an ice scout vessel before the storm. The *Atlantica* assisted the *JOIDES Resolution* by providing radar coverage in transit to Halifax.

"Everyone feels lucky to be alive after those 26 hours," says Dr. Robert Duncan, one of the co-chief scientists aboard the ship and geology professor at Oregon State University. "The captain and crew did a marvelous job of bringing us back and keeping damage to a minimum. That must be some fantastic secret Mother Nature is guarding off the east coast of Greenland. We can't wait to see what the core samples tell us."

The Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) uses the *JOIDES Resolution* for geological research. Sedco/Forex owns and operates the ship for ODP. There are about 60 Sedco crew members and 50 ODP scientists and technicians aboard during each expedition.

The ship was originally scheduled to dock in Halifax on 28-31 Oct., but arrived Saturday, 7 Oct. at 10:30 a.m. to undergo repairs and prepare for the next leg. The ship should be in port for about three weeks.

Each expedition, called Legs, last about two months with the ship porting in the nearest country to transfer scientific participants and crew members. The ship was in the third week of leg 163 before the storm halted operations. Scientists on this leg were studying the separation of Greenland from Europe by collecting core samples from a large submerged region of lavas offshore eastern Greenland.

"The fact that we persevered as long as we could in an extreme hostile environment is a testimony to the crew, technicians and scientists -- driven by the excitement of the science," says Dr. Allan

“Scientifically, what we discovered is that about 60 million years ago a massive plume of hot mantle helped render apart Greenland and Europe, erupting huge quantities of lava and ejecting large amounts of gases such as carbon dioxide.”

Once the repairs are completed, the *JOIDES Resolution* will resume operations and begin leg 164 to investigate large concentrations of buried solid methane on the North America continental shelf. The ship will be drilling off the coast of South Carolina for two months studying these gas hydrates that lie frozen beneath the sea floor.

The Ocean Drilling Program is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation, Canada, Australia, the European Science Foundation Consortium, Germany, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom to investigate such topics as earth’s history and evolution, climate change and formation of the ocean crust.

Joint Oceanographic Institutions for Deep Earth Sampling (JOIDES), an international group of scientists, provides scientific planning and program advice. Joint Oceanographic Institutions, Inc., a nonprofit consortium of 10 major U.S. oceanographic institutions, manages the program.

Texas A&M University, science operator, operates and staffs the drill ship that retrieves core samples from strategic sites in the world’s oceans. Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University is responsible for downhole logging.

Note: U.S. members of JOIDES are: University of California at San Diego, Columbia University; University of Hawaii, University of Miami; Oregon State University; University of Rhode Island, Texas A&M University, University of Texas at Austin; University of Washington, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The European Science Foundation Consortium consists of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Greece, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

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