Army Reserve Ship Aground in Kodiak

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The United States Army Vessel LCU 2030 Monterrey, grounded on Puffin Island after striking a submerged rock and puncturing its hull. US Coast Guard photos

Jay Barrett/KMXT

A U.S. Army Reserve ship struck a rock in Chiniak Bay late Friday night and began taking on water. The landing craft Monterrey was then intentionally grounded in front of town, according to Army Reserve spokeswoman Major Annmarie Daneker.

"It struck an underwater obstruction on Friday night and started taking water. The Coast Guard responded very quickly and per instructions from the Coast Guard the Monterrey was beached on Puffin Island so that the coast Guard could continue to respond to the breach in the fuel tank."

The fuel tank that was punctured had a capacity of 8,000 gallons, though how much was in it, or how much spilled is not known at this time. Though only one fuel tank has been reported as damaged, the Monterrey is reportedly carrying up to 40,000 gallons of fuel.

Daneker said she did not have a timeline for clean-up or salvage of the Monterrey.

"Our major focus right now is safety and

health of the crew, and also the environmental impact on the area. Cooperating fully with the U.S. Coast Guard, and as soon as they give the clear that we can continue with salvage operations we'll continue forward, but I don't have timeline for that."

The Monterrey was transporting heavy construction equipment from Port Hueneme, California, to Newtok on the coast between the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers, in support of a U.S. Marine Corps mission called Metervik Innovative Readiness Training.

"What this is is a five-year evacuation project. It's being led by the United States Marine Corps and supported by the U.S. Army Reserves, to build an evacuation and emergency shelter, roads, homes and actually an airfield at a new village site for the village of Newtok, which is being moved to Metervik because Newtok is sinking into the river due to erosion and melting permafrost."

The fishing vessels Resolution and Peggy Joe also responded last night. The Peggy Joe crew transported two Monterrey crewmembers with minor injuries to emergency medical services in Kodiak.

The Coast Guard has contracted Alaska Chadux Corporation to assist in containing and cleaning up the fuel leak. Pumps and oil-skimming equipment were loaded aboard the civilian landing craft Cape Douglas this morning in downtown.