

# JOINT CENTER FOR OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS AND LESSONS LEARNED

• QUARTERLY BULLETIN •

Volume VI, Issue 4 September 2004

*"Enforcing Maritime Laws, Protecting Ports, and Saving Lives: The U.S. Coast Guard and Joint Operations"*

# Report Documentation Page

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE <b>SEP 2004</b>		2. REPORT TYPE <b>N/A</b>		3. DATES COVERED <b>-</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>The U.S. Coast Guard and Joint Operations Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned Quarterly Bulletin, Volume VI, Issue 4, September 2004</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>USJFCOM JWFC ATTN: Joint Center for Lessons Learned 116 Lakeview Pkwy Suffolk, VA 23435-2697</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release, distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES <b>The original document contains color images.</b>					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>UU</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>88</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

# JCOA-LL

Joint Center for Lessons Learned (JCLL) has changed to Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned (JCOA-LL).



## Message From the Director

*BG Anthony A. Cucolo III, USA  
Director, JCOA-LL*

First, let me say how fired-up I am to be on-board as the new Director, Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned (JCOA-LL). The next best thing to being in the fight is being a part of an organization totally focused on helping those engaged in the fight...getting the right attention on those things we can fix ourselves and those things we can elevate to the right level outside our organization. One of the biggest challenges we face today is sustaining the pace of our own learning – we have to learn fast, and out-adapt a savvy, information-leveraging enemy. Clearly, from what I have seen in my first few weeks, the JCOA-LL is at the leading edge of this effort and is redesigning how we perform this function. In this regard, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my predecessor, BG Robert Cone, for his exceptional leadership and direction in establishing this center. We all wish him well in his new position as the Commander of the Joint National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

Second, I want to congratulate the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) on their 214<sup>th</sup> birthday. As a Service, they have been protecting the shores of our homeland and saving the lives of our people for over two centuries, and almost without the well-deserved recognition for their contributions. A significant milestone was established recently when, for the first time, the USCG was designated as the maritime component commander (MCC) for the refugee operations in Haiti. Having transferred under the newly established Department of Homeland Security, they are considered as the fifth military Service—but they bring unique skills that are essential to fighting domestic terrorism and the war on drugs. Indeed, they have been full partners in the global war on terrorism, having deployed to Iraq for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) prior to the onset of hostilities.



This issue of the JCOA-LL Bulletin is focused on the USCG, and each article tells a different aspect of their mission. The first two articles are an introduction by Vice Admiral Crea, Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area, and an overview of the USCG today by the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Collins.

These are followed by several articles on the response of the USCG to the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, and their role in homeland defense under the newly formed Department of Homeland Security, and as a part of the US Northern Command team in securing our shores and combating terrorism. The next four articles tell the story of the USCG in OIF and detail the lessons learned in supporting the war and in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The next article provides the lessons learned in the most recent effort in Haiti, where the Coast Guard was designated as the MCC during the migrant operations. And the final article gives us a perspective of the lessons learned during the Viet Nam conflict, where the USCG deployed a number of cutters to assist in both port and navigation operations.

ANTHONY A. CUCOLO III  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Director, Joint Center for Operational Analysis and  
Lessons Learned



## JCOA-LL UPDATE

*Mr. Mike Barker*

In the June 04 Bulletin Update I talked to our name change from the Joint Center for Lessons Learned to the Joint Center for Operational Analysis. I have an update to the update. In keeping with the spirit of the overall mission of the Directorate, our official name now stands as the Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned (JCOA-LL). In addition to our name change, JCOA-LL now has a new commanding general. BG Cone officially transferred on 1 Sep to become the Commander at the National Training Center, Ft Irwin, California. The new JCOA-LL Director is BG Anthony Cucolo. He comes to JCOA-LL from the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division where he served as the Commander, Task Force 180 in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the JCOA-LL active collection effort is still pressing hard. Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) Team Nine is prepping to deploy to Iraq and Qatar in the next several weeks. Reports from OIF Team Seven are being finalized. Team Haiti is also in the process of finalizing its report. The Democratic National Convention/Republican National Convention Team is vetting its initial findings with U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) in order to start writing that report. The Production/Analysis Division is working to finalize and present the Iraqi Perspective Program (IPP) Report to Admiral Giambastiani, Commander Joint Forces Command. Finally, the Transformation Division is gearing up to start accepting new lessons learned DOTMLPF (doctrine, operations, training, materiel, logistics, personnel, and facilities) change recommendations.

The Worldwide Joint Lessons Learned Conference held 13-14 July 2004 was extremely successful based on post-conference comments, both written and verbal. On average, we had 180 people attending both days. The highlight of the conference was having Admiral Giambastiani provide the keynote address. He has

been the moving force behind the expansion of what we now call JCOA-LL. A number of issues/concerns were identified that either Joint Staff J7 or JCOA-LL is working to resolve. Some of the issues being addressed are: 1) better collaboration capability, 2) common software tools/database, 3) improved information sharing (both US and multinational), and 4) recommendations for the next conference to focus on resolving predetermined issues. All presentations, pre- and post-conference messages, and the critique recap are posted to the JCOA-LL NIPRNET ([www.jwfc.jfcom.mil](http://www.jwfc.jfcom.mil)) and SIPRNET ([www.jwfc.jfcom.smil.mil/jcll](http://www.jwfc.jfcom.smil.mil/jcll)) websites. In order to get to the NIPRNET location, you will have to request a "web gate" account.

The Joint Staff is pressing as hard as possible to get the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Joint Lessons Learned Program (JLLP) instruction on the street as quickly as possible. They are currently working through over 200 critical comments. Anyone who has been involved with this process knows how time consuming this can be. The joint community should see the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft in the next several weeks.

Finally, if you have any thoughts or suggestions for focus areas for future Bulletins, please forward your ideas and articles to us.

We must review the causes of our failures and of our successes to ensure that the lessons which we bought so dearly with our dead not remain locked away in the memories of the survivors.

**GEN Paul Ely, French CIC  
Far East, 1955**

---

---

# Contents

Message from the Director .....	iii
JCOA-LL Update .....	iv
Introduction from VADM Vivien S. Crea .....	1
Change and Continuity: Today's U.S. Coast Guard .....	2
The U.S. Coast Guard Response to 9/11 .....	9
U.S. Coast Guard's Role in Homeland Defense .....	15
Same Ship, Different Day: the Coast Guard and Post 9-11 Maritime Security .....	20
A Unified Team: U.S. Northern Command and the U.S. Coast Guard .....	24
Multimission Costs Too Much .....	28
Arm the Coast Guard for the War on Terror .....	33
Building the USCG Common Operational Picture for Maritime Domain Awareness .....	38
What Was the Coast Guard Doing in Iraq? .....	42
Coast Guard Deployment and Outload: Integrated Support Command Portsmouth and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM .....	45
Joint Service Force Protection: PSU 308 in Operation Iraqi Freedom .....	51
Wartime Patrol Operations: ADAK's Lessons Learned in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM .....	55
Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf: Lessons Learned of the <i>Walnut</i> .....	60
The Coast Guard and Haitian Migrant Interdiction Operations in 2004 .....	66
Lessons Learned from History: The U.S. Coast Guard in Vietnam .....	72
JCOA-LL Points of Contact .....	79

## JCOA-LL Bulletin Staff:

BG Anthony A. Cucolo III, US Army, <i>Director JCOA-LL</i>	757-203-7381	anthony.cucolo@jcom.mil
Mr. Alan D. Preisser, <i>Editor</i>	757-203-7497	alan.preisser@jcom.mil
LT Kent Sieg, PhD., USCG, <i>Guest Assistant Editor</i>	703-428-6558	ksieg@grueasternshore.uscg.mil
Mr. Josiah P. McSpedden, <i>Graphics Design and Layout</i>	757-203-6119	josiah.mcspedden@jcom.mil



---

---

## LANTAREA Commander's Comments



**Vice Admiral Vivien S. Crea, USCG  
Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area  
Commander, Maritime Defense  
Zone Atlantic**

Since its creation by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton on August 4, 1790 as the Revenue Cutter Service, the Coast Guard has changed and grown, but has always remained a maritime, military, multimission force with a wide array of duties. The Coast Guard is the smallest of the five armed Services with a total strength of about 38,000 active duty members; 8,700 reservists; 7,400 civilians; and a formidable force of 33,000 volunteers in the Coast Guard Auxiliary. A unique instrument of national security, our primary missions include:

- Maritime Safety
- Maritime Security
- Maritime Environmental Protection
- Maritime Mobility
- National Defense

Every day, Coast Guard men and women operate boats, cutters, and aircraft to save lives; enforce maritime laws and regulations; ensure homeland security; protect marine fisheries, endangered species, and environmental resources; facilitate waterborne commerce; perform foreign assistance operations; and provide for the nation's defense both at home and abroad.

Since the terrorist attacks on 9/11, our emphasis on homeland security has increased dramatically. Given the access and interconnectivity of the U.S. maritime transportation infrastructure, on which 95 percent of our commerce travels, maritime homeland security operations encompass all Coast Guard units and activities as we balance the requirements of greater security while not impeding the flow of maritime commerce so vital to our nation's well-being.

We are proud of our contributions in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, from the beginning of combat operations when we deployed over one thousand people, including two major cutters, a buoy tender, eight patrol boats, boarding teams, and two port security units, to our current force laydown of six patrol boats, boarding teams, a port security unit, and support personnel. While our footprint in theater is small compared with the other military Services, our specialized capabilities in law enforcement and boarding operations, security zone enforcement, and small boat operations are well suited for anti-terrorism/force protection, both as we operate closely with the US Navy in the war zone and here at home.

Throughout our history, we have followed our motto *Semper Paratus* – Always Ready, and conducted military missions along side our sister Services during times of war and peace. In recent years and especially since 9/11, the requirement for the Coast Guard's participation in operations with the joint Service community and interagency has increased dramatically.

In this first issue of the new Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned Quarterly Bulletin, JCOA-LL highlights Coast Guard contributions to joint military operations at home and abroad. Like the rest of the joint community, we are actively trying to improve our lessons learned process. Our transition into the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) makes the capture of lessons learned while participating in joint operations more critical than ever before. For while the Department focus is properly on security here at home, our leaders in DHS clearly recognize that homeland security is directly linked to joint operations conducted overseas.

We will all benefit from the lessons learned presented here from our recent past, as we work together to provide an ever more effective presence for our nation's homeland security and defense in the 21st Century.



---

---

# CHANGE AND CONTINUITY: Today's U.S. Coast Guard

*Admiral Thomas H. Collins  
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard*

## Introduction

The breadth of security threats directed at our nation has grown not only more expansive but more complex—driving the need for the armed Services to make a “transformational” examination of the capabilities and capacity (force structure) needed to address them. We in the U.S. Coast Guard, although aligned organizationally outside the Department of Defense, are no less impacted by these winds of change, especially in terms of mission relevance and our emphasis on the need for a transformational approach to our capabilities and capacity so that we may deal effectively with evolving national security requirements. The Coast Guard's roles as a military Service, as a federal law-enforcement agency, as a regulatory authority of maritime transportation systems, and as a member of the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) place it squarely at the center of national initiatives to reduce security risks to our nation. This new organizational placement represents a true dividing line between our past and our future with respect to our continued role as a maritime, military, and multimission service.

Confronting new demands of homeland security and the global war on terrorism, the Coast Guard supported Operation Liberty Shield to defend the nation's ports, waterways, coastlines, and critical infrastructure. Deployed Coast Guard forces executed Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM as American and coalition forces liberated the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. At the same time, we successfully met unabated and unrelenting demands in our multiple mission areas of search and rescue (SAR), marine safety, environmental protection, drug and illegal migrant interdiction, fisheries enforcement, aids to navigation, and domestic and polar icebreaking.

On 1 March 2003 the Coast Guard moved smoothly from the Department of Transportation into the new DHS as part of the largest reorganization of the federal government in more than fifty years. We used the largest budget increases in Coast Guard history to raise operational readiness rates in our aging inventory of

cutters and aircraft. We continued to build tomorrow's readiness by executing the two largest acquisition programs in Coast Guard history, Rescue 21 and the Integrated Deepwater System. We led the international effort to adopt a new comprehensive maritime-security code and issued expansive domestic security regulations for ports and vessels in response to the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

The Coast Guard must seize its opportunities by transforming itself so as to be ready to address tomorrow's challenges. At the same time, we in the Coast Guard must implement transformation initiatives within a framework that allows us to hold fast to the core characteristics and values—honor, respect, and devotion to duty—that have defined the very essence and success of our service to the nation throughout our history and will continue to do so in the future. Our steady strategic focus on *people*, *readiness*, and *stewardship* will sustain the Coast Guard through today's challenges, transform it to meet evolving demands and the uncharted future that stretches ahead, and preserve its enduring character.

## Multimission Flexibility

During the protracted legislative discussions and debate leading to the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, there was discussion of the Coast Guard's ability to sustain performance in all of its traditional missions after it was realigned under DHS. Fortunately, a critical infusion of significantly increased funding, resources, and people over the past several years has enabled the Service to make tremendous progress improving readiness and restoring its performance in non-homeland security mission areas.

Recent operational highlights tell the story. In our national-defense mission during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, we provided port security for all Defense Department “outload” operations, activated 68 percent of our reserve force to meet increased operating and personnel tempo at the peak of mobilization, and deployed approximately 1,250 personnel to support combatant commanders. During the final weeks of 2002, two high-endurance cutters, eight patrol boats, a buoy tender, four port-security teams, strike team personnel, and two maintenance-support units made preparations for short-notice deployment to the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea. On station early in 2003, these units participated capably in maritime interception operations

---

---

and coastal security patrols with U.S. Navy and coalition forces; provided port-security resources in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq; conducted search and rescue (SAR) missions; helped open Iraq's main shipping channel to commercial traffic and humanitarian support; and maintained security for Iraqi oil terminals in the North Arabian Gulf.

The multimission capabilities, flexibility, and initiative of the crew of the buoy tender USCGC *Walnut* (WLB 205)—performing the first out-of-hemisphere deployment by a buoy tender in support of Department of Defense operations—are instructive. The U.S. Fifth Fleet originally wanted *Walnut* on station in the event Iraq resorted to environmental warfare and released a massive amount of oil into its coastal waters (the cutter can skim 420 gallons of oil per minute with its modern oil-recovery gear). Immediately after arriving in Bahrain in February, prior to combat operations, however, *Walnut* was pressed into service conducting maritime interception of commercial shipping entering and leaving Iraq, in support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 986. When the coalition went to war, *Walnut* applied its multimission capabilities in other ways, transporting Navy equipment on its large buoy deck and searching for the crew of two Royal Navy helicopters that collided during the opening days of hostilities. *Walnut* also made a critical contribution to coalition objectives by resetting navigational markers and buoys in Iraq's forty-one-mile Khawr Abd Allah, making this strategic waterway safe for navigation. This important communication link leads from the Persian Gulf to Umm Qasr, Iraq's only deep-draft port. Using new buoys "liberated" from an Iraqi warehouse in Umm Qasr, *Walnut* replaced thirty-five decrepit, nonfunctioning buoys and then worked with a British hydrographic team and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency to inform all mariners of the improvements to the aids to navigation marking the channel—enabling the opening of the port for humanitarian and commercial shipping at a critical stage in the coalition's campaign.

Other Coast Guard units also made important contributions during combat operations in Iraq. Vice Admiral Timothy J. Keating, U.S. Navy, then commander of the U.S. Fifth Fleet and Naval Forces Central Command, awarded Bronze Stars to the commanding officers of the patrol boats *Adak*, *Aquidneck*, *Baranof*, and *Wrangell*. In his award citations, Admiral Keating described the boat crews as

having been the "first line of defense" for coalition naval forces during the amphibious assault of Iraq's Al Faw Peninsula and for naval mine-clearing forces operating in mine-danger areas within Iraqi territorial waters. Our success in these historic events was due to five key factors. The first was the hard work, integrity, professionalism, and adaptability of our people; the second, the military character of our Service; the third, the multimission capability embedded in our cutters, in our aircraft, in our boats, in our systems, and in our people. The fourth was our close partnership with the Navy and our investment throughout the year in joint training opportunities and interoperability; and the fifth, our transfer to DHS, which strengthens both our relationships with other agencies within our department and our partnerships with the Department of Defense, as well as with other federal, state, and local agencies.

### A Multimission Portfolio

Working closely with its interagency and international law-enforcement partners, the Coast Guard has recently seized its second highest annual total of illegal drugs—136,865 pounds of cocaine and more than fourteen thousand pounds of marijuana. Coast Guard units stopped more than six thousand undocumented migrants from entering the United States illegally. This law-enforcement presence to preserve maritime security in the 3.4-million-square-mile American exclusive economic zone also led to the documentation of more than a hundred significant violations of fisheries regulations (and the seizure of more than forty illegal catches) and of more than 140 violations of laws protecting marine mammals and endangered species. International partnerships forged with law-enforcement agencies from nations of the North Pacific region and the establishment of Coast Guard Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers contributed directly, for example, to the seizure of trawlers engaged in illegal high-seas driftnet fishing. Our success in law-enforcement missions is due in part to innovative tactics, techniques, and procedures. Previously limited to counterdrug operations, armed Coast Guard helicopters now patrol port and harbor approaches to counter more complex terrorist threats. New equipment also is being fielded to enable units to stop vessels that refuse to comply with boarding-and-search orders.

In home waters, Coast Guard units conducted more than 41,500 SAR cases as the year drew to a close, saving more than six thousand lives and assisting in

---

---

safeguarding property. As part of their mission to protect natural resources, Coast Guard men and women have worked hard, through a concerted program of prevention, education, and enforcement, to eliminate pollution discharged into the nation's waterways from any source. Also, Coast Guard icebreaking cutters kept merchant vessels and barges on the nation's inland waterways moving. Coast Guard cutters from Maine to New York, and onto the Great Lakes, were employed to break ice along navigable rivers and waterways. A hemisphere away, in Antarctica, the icebreakers USCGC *Polar Sea* (WAGB 11) and USCGC *Healy* (WAGB 20) completed the most difficult resupply of McMurdo Station during the forty years of Operation DEEP FREEZE.

As the lead federal agency for maritime security, the Coast Guard also has worked closely with DHS directorates and other federal, state, and local agencies to improve its presence and responsiveness in the nation's ports, waterways, and coastal regions as part of its homeland security mission. In March 2003, incident to the onset of combat operations in Iraq, DHS Secretary Tom Ridge announced Liberty Shield, a comprehensive national plan to increase the safety of U.S. citizens and security of infrastructure while maintaining the free flow of commerce and people across the nation's borders. To enhance security along maritime borders and protect naval shipping and deployments en route to Iraq, the Coast Guard increased the number of patrols by its aircraft, cutters, and small boats. We also increased the number of escort vessels for commercial ferries and cruise ships; every high-interest vessel arriving at or departing from U.S. ports had an armed Coast Guard sea marshal on board to observe the crew and ensure that the ship made port safely. New security zones were established and enforced in and around critical infrastructure sites in many of the nation's major ports.

DHS, the Coast Guard, and the maritime industry also have implemented the far-reaching provisions of the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA). Designed to protect the nation's ports and waterways from a terrorist attack, the law requires, among its many measures, area maritime security committees and security plans for facilities and vessels that may respond to a transportation security incident. The act significantly strengthens and standardizes the security measures of the nation's domestic port security team of federal, state, local, and private authorities. In October 2003, the Coast

Guard published new maritime security requirements mandating significant changes in security practices within all segments of the maritime industry—including cruise ships, container ships, and offshore oil platforms. The industry is now required to complete security assessments, develop security plans and submit them to the Coast Guard for approval, increase security measures as a threat arises, and install automatic identification systems aboard large ships.

### **“One Team, One Fight”**

The Coast Guard's multimission assets, its military role as an armed force (codified in law under Title 14 U.S. Code Section 1), its law-enforcement authority, and its collaborative response capabilities bridge federal, state, local, and private sectors. As both a military and law-enforcement agency, it also straddles the seam separating the federal government's homeland-security and homeland-defense mission areas—an important consideration, given the possibility that the transition from a homeland security incident to a full-fledged homeland defense crisis could occur in a matter of minutes. As Secretary Ridge noted in a November 2003 address, “If we didn't have a Coast Guard working with the Department of Defense and as an integral part of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we'd have to invent one.”

Working in close cooperation with all agencies in DHS, the Coast Guard began forceful implementation of its new Maritime Strategy for Homeland Security to support the president's broader strategy for protecting the U.S. homeland. Our maritime strategy's layered-defense approach provides Coast Guard operating forces with a time-proven means to enhance security in U.S. ports and waterways while facilitating the smooth flow of commerce. The collective result of our efforts is aimed at reducing maritime security risks.

The strategy of “One Team, One Fight” is based on the Coast Guard's statutory authorities, operational capabilities and capacity, and both internal and external partnerships. Four “pillars” constitute the strategy's main elements: enhancing maritime domain awareness; building and administering an effective maritime security regime domestically and internationally; increasing military and civil operational presence in ports, coastal areas, and beyond; and improving response posture in the event a security incident does occur. Key to its success will be our ability to *prevent* future attacks through preemption or deterrence as the result of

---

---

improved maritime domain awareness—the ability to collect comprehensive knowledge of vulnerabilities, threats, and targets of interest on the water. Maritime domain awareness will be increased through more aggressive and effective means of gathering, using, and sharing information and intelligence. It means providing a level of knowledge that is increasingly comprehensive and specific as the activities and potential threats move closer to the United States.

In 2002, the Coast Guard became a formal member of the National Foreign Intelligence Program. Since that time, it has expanded cooperative efforts with the U.S. Navy at the National Maritime Intelligence Center. Our ability to share information that is gathered by all agencies and to derive tactical applications at the Coast



Guard's operational level is steadily improving. New Coast Guard Maritime Intelligence Fusion Centers were established on the East and West Coasts. Field Intelligence Support Teams now serve in major ports throughout the country. Joint Harbor Operations Centers (manned by Coast Guard and Navy personnel, and harbor police) began operations early in 2004 in Norfolk, Virginia, and San Diego, California.

The key to our current and future readiness is obtaining the right capabilities and the right capacity as we grow, modernize, and realign our force. In recent years the Coast Guard's budget has increased by more than \$1.6 billion—a 30 percent increase between 2002 and 2004. This budget growth is allowing us to improve our current readiness, balance better our full range of missions, modernize our aging fleet, build our homeland security capability, and sustain our non-homeland security

missions. Near-term improvements to Coast Guard operational capabilities included ongoing execution of the contract for our Rescue 21 maritime distress network for coastal waters, seven hundred new maritime security boats (under a \$145 million contract, the Coast Guard's largest single acquisition of identical response craft), twelve new hundred-person maritime safety and security teams, and additional sea marshals. Three *Juniper*-class 225-foot seagoing buoy tenders were delivered to the fleet in 2003, and two more were launched. In addition, sixty-five 87-foot coastal patrol boats will be built. Six C-130J Hercules maritime patrol aircraft have been added to the air fleet.

Well-trained and properly equipped people constitute an all-essential element in our response to today's growing operational tempo. We are poised to add thousands of new billets to our enlisted and officer force structure, which had an authorized end strength of 45,500 personnel during fiscal year 2004. Recruit training at Cape May, New Jersey, is operating at maximum levels to meet this expected growth. Our Coast Guard Reserve component will grow to ten thousand during the years ahead. A robust force of selected reservists is an integral part of our ability to provide critical infrastructure protection, coastal and port security, and defense readiness. Our Coast Guard Auxiliary proved again to be an invaluable resource in today's high-paced operations, and we will continue to rely on the talent and experience of its dedicated volunteers during the years ahead.

Increased capacity will allow the Coast Guard to become as much a "presence" organization as a "response" organization. In keeping with a central premise underlying our strategy for maritime homeland security, we cannot afford simply to respond to emergencies—we must *prevent* them. Ongoing modernization and recapitalization programs are critical in this regard, because they will deliver the platforms and systems needed to close the capability gaps found in today's Coast Guard. In particular, the long-range Integrated Deepwater System will recapitalize our entire inventory of aging cutters and aircraft, as well as systems at sea and ashore for C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance,

---

---

and reconnaissance) —all supported with an integrated logistics system. When the transformational Deepwater program is fully implemented, the total system will consist of three classes of new cutters and their associated small boats, a new fixed-wing manned aircraft fleet, a combination of new and upgraded helicopters, and both cutter-based and land-based unmanned aerial vehicles. Deepwater will provide the means to extend our layered maritime defenses from ports and coastlines many hundreds of miles to sea to increase maritime domain awareness. It is a flexible program, able to meet emerging requirements for maritime security and other missions. When Deepwater is complete, our cutters and aircraft will no longer operate as independent platforms with only limited awareness of what surrounds them in the maritime domain. Instead, they will have the benefit of information from a wide array of mission-capable platforms and sensors—enabling them to share a common operating picture as part of a network-centric force operating in tandem with other cutters, boats, and both manned aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles. The Deepwater program will allow the Coast Guard to enhance its operational excellence in the future.

### **An Expanded Concept of Jointness**

Maritime power in the twenty-first century is about awareness—gathering and synthesizing large amounts of information and specific data from many disparate sources to gain knowledge of the entire maritime domain. Maritime domain awareness and the knowledge it imparts will allow maritime forces to respond with measured and appropriate force to any threat. Building a network of alliances, people, and systems—at home and abroad with our friends and allies—to increase maritime domain awareness will be a critical product of collaborative partnerships. This has never been more important than it is now in our collective national imperative to defend our nation and win the war against terrorism.

Improved unity of effort and coordination, clear lines of authority and command, more effective risk-based investment decisions, and opportunities for greater synergy have all flowed from the Coast Guard’s realignment within DHS. The benefits of operating with other federal agencies sharing a common DHS mission perspective are multiplying daily. The DHS Border and Transportation Security Directorate, for example, receives information on cargo and shipping entering U.S.

ports. We collect information on ships and shipping by our work with the Navy in the Joint Intelligence Coordination Center. Our National Vessel Movement Center catalogues and assesses this information. Coast Guard captains of ports, responsible for safety and security issues in all major American ports, chair port-security committees comprising federal, state, and local officials, as well as representatives from the maritime industry. Quickly sharing and exploiting relevant, time-critical information at the working level on a daily basis will yield important short and long-range dividends. Similar opportunities exist—and must be taken advantage of—overseas, through our partnership with the International Maritime Organization.

In addition to the critical strategic relationships that we are forging within DHS, our battle-tested special relationship with the U.S. Navy warrants emphasis. The two Services have always enjoyed close relations, but we are today working together more effectively than at any time since World War II. This partnership is yielding important dividends in the global war on terrorism at home and overseas. In today’s post-9/11 world, we must forge even closer bonds.

It is worth recalling that one of the first telephone calls that Admiral Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations, made on 9/11 was to my predecessor as Commandant, Admiral James M. Loy. Admiral Clark, recognizing the Coast Guard’s leading role in providing enhanced levels of maritime homeland security in the wake of the terrorist attacks, asked how the Navy could assist the Coast Guard in carrying out this responsibility. Consistent with this vision of partnership, thirteen *Cyclone*-class coastal patrol ships were quickly transferred by the Navy for Coast Guard use in Operation NOBLE EAGLE.

Early in my own tour as Commandant, Admiral Clark and I signed a revision to the “National Fleet” policy agreement that guides our mutually supportive policies, programs, and operations. This policy guarantees that the U.S. Coast Guard will be steaming in close formation with the U.S. Navy during its transit through the sea of change. Our National Fleet agreement commits us to shared purpose and common effort focused on tailored operational integration of our multimission platforms, infrastructure, and personnel. Full cooperation and integration of our nonredundant and complementary capabilities will be achieved to ensure the highest level of maritime capabilities and readiness for the nation’s investment. Processes are in place to synchronize

---

---

research and development, planning, fiscal stewardship, procurement, development of doctrine, training, and execution of operations for the National Fleet.

The Coast Guard's contribution to the National Fleet includes its statutory authorities (including law enforcement), multimission cutters, boats, aircraft, and C4ISR systems designed for the full spectrum of Coast Guard missions. All ships, boats, aircraft, and shore command and control nodes of the National Fleet will be interoperable to provide force depth for peacetime missions, homeland security, homeland defense, crisis response, and wartime tasks. Coast Guard assets and expertise will continue to flow to the Navy in selected niche naval-defense operations, and U.S. Navy assets and expertise will flow to the Coast Guard, when necessary, in connection with our lead role for maritime homeland security.

Expanded Navy–Coast Guard collaboration extends from acquisition planning to current operations—an area where there is more than enough fight for each of us. This strengthened Navy–Coast Guard partnership occurs at a critical time. Attacks against seafarers have increased dramatically. Successful terrorist attacks against lucrative maritime targets and the U.S. maritime transportation system are especially worrisome because they could wreak economic havoc. It has been estimated that a terrorist strike against the American cargo shipping system could cost the U.S. economy as much as fifty-eight billion dollars. The future U.S. maritime security environment will be challenged as well

by an anticipated tripling of legal maritime trade, increased illicit trafficking by criminals, and the pressures of international migration.

The mandate for closer Navy–Coast Guard collaboration, framed by our joint National Fleet policy, is clear. The policy's focus on operational integration provides the foundation for closer cooperation to synchronize planning, training, and procurement in order to provide the highest levels of maritime capabilities for the nation's security investments. The policy will continue to remain a cornerstone for the Coast Guard, reaffirming its expeditionary capability as well as the requirement for the modern fleet that will become a reality as Deepwater's assets and systems enter service.

The discussion about the Coast Guard's role in relationship to both national defense and homeland security requirements has been, is, and will continue to be appropriately reexamined, especially in the post-9/11 security environment we face today. The Coast Guard's military and multimission character has never been more relevant, and it offers unique capabilities, competencies, authority, and access in its military, law-enforcement, and intelligence roles. Whatever the ultimate defense/homeland security tasking of the Coast Guard, preserving a robust, seamless, and totally interoperable collaborative relationship with the U.S. Navy remains one of my top priorities. We serve the nation best when we sail and fight as one team.



### **An Enduring Character and Strategic Change**

Preserving our enduring characteristics, traditions, and values will give the Coast Guard the flexibility, discipline, and capability to respond to evolving national priorities and an ever-changing national security environment. We will nurture, preserve, and build on a legacy forged over more than two hundred years as the nation's maritime guardian and shield of freedom. We begin with *people*—the bedrock of our

---

---

Service. We will identify new strategies to recruit, train, retain, and deploy a diverse, highly capable, and flexible force. *Readiness*—a capable, competent, and vigilant force, mission-ready in all areas—is, simply stated, the Coast Guard’s *raison d’être*. Superior operational service is our core purpose. We will ensure future readiness by leveraging the Deepwater project, Rescue 21, and homeland security initiatives as the strategic recapitalization of the Coast Guard for the twenty-first century gathers momentum with each passing year. Lasting strategic *partnerships* will help us to sustain readiness in the future and will enhance mission outcomes. Last, we must strengthen our commitment to *stewardship*—embracing innovation, technology, and effective leadership and management principles to achieve measurable outcomes. Performance-based program planning and acquisition, resource planning based on sound strategic analysis, risk-based management, and cause and effect metrics are indispensable.

We must inspire a culture of innovation and process change so that technology is infused creatively in all mission areas, and so as to enhance productivity and reduce workload—all the while driving toward quality outcomes. The results of our programs and operations must support the President’s Management Agenda and directly contribute to achieving the desired outcomes of DHS and the Coast Guard Strategic Plan. Past and future organizational realignments at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., will more closely align the Coast Guard’s resource planning and execution structures, enhance our ability to integrate information technology and allocate resources more effectively, and ensure that we have the capabilities we need to perform all Coast Guard missions.

In considering what it will take to continue to be successful in a variety of “futures” that may come to pass, the Evergreen Project is a comprehensive approach to creating continuous strategic renewal within the Coast Guard. It is really a strategic framework that delivers my strategic intent, my *Commandant’s Direction*, through linkage to our daily operations and activities. It assumes that we have applied our finite resources—time, energy, and money—in current operations and future investments in a purposeful way. The Evergreen Project has highlighted the criticality of enhancing capabilities and competencies in four enduring mission areas: defending national and homeland security interests; enforcing laws and treaties in the

U.S. maritime domain; promoting safe and efficient maritime activities; and protecting the marine environment. To this end, Evergreen has helped us identify our “world of work,” where we must:

- *Shape* the global maritime setting to promote American national interests
- *Know* maritime conditions, anomalies, and threats to prevent, protect, and respond (maritime domain awareness)
- *Create and manage* an integrated U.S. maritime domain to preserve and promote the national interest, and
- *Position* the Coast Guard, as a member of DHS, to act with strategic intent in a complex and uncertain environment.

One definition of transformation holds that it is the productive integration of technological change. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, argues that transformation goes far beyond technology and organizational change. In his view, transformation is as well a *process* and a *mindset* associated with managing change entailing intellectual, cultural, and technological dimensions. *This* is the definition of transformation that we readily identify with in the Coast Guard—and it is our pathway to the future.

**Editor’s Note:** This is an excerpted version of an article originally published in the *Naval War College Review* (Spring 2004). Reprinted with permission.

**About the Author:**

Admiral Thomas H. Collins assumed the duties of Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard on May 30, 2002. His past assignments include Vice Commandant; Commander, Pacific Area and Eleventh Coast Guard District; Commander, Fourteenth Coast Guard District; Chief, Office of Acquisition; Chief, Programs Division; Deputy Chief of Staff; and operational assignments aboard the cutters *Vigilant* and *Cape Morgan*; Deputy Commander, Group St. Petersburg; and Group Commander and Captain of the Port, Long Island Sound. He is a 1968 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and holds graduate degrees from Wesleyan University and the University of New Haven.

---

---

# The U.S. Coast Guard Response to 9/11

*Chief Petty Officer P.J. Capelotti  
U.S. Coast Guard Reserve*

## Introduction

In the aftermath that followed the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. Coast Guard's response drove its personnel and their small boats to the limits of endurance as they put the equivalent of twenty-two years of use on their boats, patrolling and securing the harbors of the homeland. From out of this national tragedy, the Coast Guard itself would be transformed from a low-profile, low-budget fifth armed force into the principle defender of the ports and waterways, the bays and banks, of the American homeland. It would find itself with a billion more dollars, and on its way into a whole new federal agency, its historic anonymity gone forever.

## The Coast Guard in New York

Activities New York was the command at the center of the attacks. Previous planning and organization greatly abetted its successful response. The event known as OpSail 2000, one of the largest-ever peacetime gathering of sailing ships, had an unlikely but governing impact upon the way in which the Coast Guard responded. OpSail involved not only a large Coast Guard security evolution to protect the gathering of visiting sailing vessels, but numerous partnerships with state and local law enforcement agencies and commercial shipping concerns. The primary lesson learned from OpSail centered around how to logistically support a large personnel influx. Further, the organizational structure of Activities New York combined Operations and Marine Safety into one-stop shopping for both the public and for the Coast Guard itself, allowing access to the many services the Coast Guard was called upon to provide in a major port environment. Because of the Activities consolidation, the entire New York/New Jersey port community knew where to find the Coast Guard at Fort Wadsworth on Staten Island.

At the outset of the attacks, Station New York launched its ready craft, a 41-foot utility boat, while the commander of Atlantic Area, Vice Admiral Richard Bennis, who had the staples from his cancer surgery removed from his head just the previous day and was

driving through northern Virginia, began a rapid return. Seven minutes after the second plane hit, the port was closed. Every available vessel was then launched, including the 110-foot Island Class cutter *Adak*, berthed at Station Sandy Hook. Its crew jury-rigged *Adak*'s then-disassembled steering system so that the cutter's commanding officer could hand-steer the cutter and take up station off the Battery at the southern tip of Manhattan. From that moment, until the arrival after midnight of the 270-foot Bear class *Tahoma* from New Bedford, Massachusetts, *Adak* acted as a command and control center and on scene commander for all Coast Guard underway units in New York. By mid-morning, the Coast Guard had nearly forty other boats operating in the harbor, along with a growing fleet of private and commercial vessels that were trying to help. They were soon joined by two 38-foot Deployable Pursuit Boats from the Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) North in Yorktown, Virginia.

Communications were being maintained along diminished pathways, both through low-site VHF radio and through sporadic cell phone communications in the VHF gaps. When the south tower collapsed, Vessel Traffic Service at Activities had put out a call for any vessels that could respond to come to the docks and assist the situation, and coordination of that diverse "fleet" would be a monumental task. Coast Guard marine inspectors went to a pilot boat and to several ferries, and moved out toward Manhattan to provide waterside security and direct the maritime evacuation. They calmed nerves on board the ferries, and in many places got off the ferries in Manhattan to stand at the head of piers and direct people to the appropriate waterside exit, be it to New Jersey or Staten Island or Brooklyn.

Initially, communications were down everywhere, with sporadic cell phone channels getting through. Communications did not begin to come back on line until a communications trailer from Atlantic Area's Communication Area Master Station Atlantic (CAMSLANT) arrived from Virginia and was set up on the point overlooking Fort Wadsworth. The Atlantic Strike Team's Mobile Incident Command Post (MICP) arrived at Bayonne, New Jersey, to further bolster the shaky communications net. Maintenance and Logistics Command (MLC) Atlantic sent a hundred and fifty cell phones.

Reopening the Port of New York became a matter of intense importance, but before that could happen the



---

---

Coast Guard had to secure it from maritime threats. The largest concern for Admiral Bennis in the first twenty-four hours, after the initial evacuation of Manhattan, was with the possibility of more attacks, where they might come and how could he prevent them. In addition to the limits on how much port security it could provide, the Coast Guard was not in a position to board a terrorist vessel and thwart a ship's crew intent on mass destruction. This realization led to quick improvisation. Tugs were directed to remain near vessels in order to deflect potential attacks. Also, closing the Kills waterway that separates Staten Island from New Jersey to recreational traffic and stationing a cutter at each end allowed Activities to consolidate many potential targets under a single maritime security force lay-down. As well, a security zone was established around the symbolically important Statue of Liberty. Rules of force and engagement were laid out early on.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Captain of the Port (COTP) soon agreed that the EPA would take responsibility for all hazardous materials-related issues at the World Trade Center. While the Coast Guard could then focus on port security, it was still a part of the environmental response effort. Starting on September 12, a platoon from the Atlantic Strike Team was responsible for air monitoring the financial buildings in Manhattan, making certain that rescue workers could go in and search for critical data and documents. Two days later, teams entered buildings in the financial district sliced in half by the collapse of the World Trade Center. Strike team members remained at ground zero monitoring the air quality on the massive debris pile to try to ensure the safety of the workers there. By September 20, the Strike Team had written a site safety plan for Coast Guard and EPA personnel working at both ground zero and at the Fresh Kills Landfill site. At Fresh Kills, a treeless mound 130-feet above sea level, strike team personnel set up air monitoring and site safety protocols.

### **First Coast Guard District**

The First Coast Guard District put assets into motion immediately. For the helicopter crews of Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, the first response had been both instinctive and jarring. Trained to pluck drowning mariners from the sea, they were ordered to speed to Manhattan in a dramatic attempt to save people clinging from the burning towers, then ordered to land before they got the chance.

After the towers collapsed, it was apparent that there would be no aerial rescue. But the crews believed that it was potentially feasible to lower their rescue swimmers down the side of the building, with the helicopter hovering over the rooftop, to pick someone out of a window. They would have used the Wall Street landing pad or even the possibility of using the deck of the retired aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Intrepid*, now a museum, as a potential landing pad to where shuttled survivors picked from the World Trade Center could be placed.

As the crisis developed at the World Trade Center, First District Commanding Officer Rear Admiral George Naccara decided to move more of the District's people and platforms to New York Harbor. When the towers came down, destroying communications between the District and Activities New York, Naccara decided that one of those people would be the District commander himself. Getting as many assets as possible on scene, reestablishing communications with Activities New York through Station Sandy Hook, evacuating Manhattan, and reassuring the public that the waterways were secure were the top priorities in the first twelve hours. Admiral Naccara went to New York to establish a Regional Incident Command (RIC) by bringing a communications suite, along with key legal, operational, and marine safety staffers, from Boston. The need to reestablish communications stemmed from the district's need to be able to move assets as required on scene, and from the Coast Guard's organizational thirst for information. A Service engaged in continuous daily operations, one that left little time for either contemplation or introduction of alternative strategies for conduct once an operation was underway, the Coast Guard required a continual stream of data passing from district officers to field commanders to field units.

Immediate discussions at Staten Island concentrated on if and when a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier and battle group might enter the harbor. Neither Admiral Naccara nor Admiral Bennis thought it necessary. But Coast Guard assets deployed were relatively light. There were four Coast Guard cutters stationed at different intervals in the harbor, on the East River and by the Verrazano Bridge. It was quickly apparent that Coast Guard Reserve Port Security Units (PSU) would be needed on scene as fast as possible. Even as they were en route northward, Admiral Naccara dispersed two of these highly-mobile, highly-trained, and heavily-armed units, 305 to New York and 307 to Boston, to cover as much of the District as possible.

---

---

The first impulse of field commanders was to come back to the District with a list that placed every asset within a particular Group or Marine Safety Office (MSO) in the first tier. This was clearly unworkable, so Admiral Naccara's staff set about to prioritize infrastructure within the District, leading to some heated discussions. But the issue in the end was moot, because the Coast Guard possessed nothing approaching the level of operating assets—cutters, aircraft, and small boats—with which to protect everything. Based on this analysis, and armed with a chart that showed the Coast Guard units and personnel available throughout the District, Admiral Naccara set out to meet with the governors of each state in his District. He offered this data to each of the governors, explaining the level of forces they could expect in peacetime, as well as that in place after 9/11. He showed which tiered assets the Coast Guard had chosen to safeguard, and asked for assistance from the National Guard or other state and local forces to look after the others. These would become instant port security force-multipliers for the Coast Guard, which would never have the personnel nor, in fact, the mission to provide physical security for each and every port in the United States.

In the movement of container ships alone, the First District initiated several new programs designed to enhance both container security and border security. Operation Safe Commerce focused on the movement of a single container vessel, from Europe to Canada and across the northern border to the ports of the northeast, to study the movement of a container through its multi-modal voyage, through varying levels of security. A New York-New Jersey Megaport Project enlisted more than a dozen shipping companies in an effort to identify better methods of waterfront security. "Coast Watch" and "Coast Picket" programs were also created.

New levels of intergovernmental cooperation after 9/11 became especially helpful in late September and early October when a series of liquefied natural gas (LNG) deliveries into Boston Harbor were delayed by concerns over security and public safety. The Coast Guard had ordered an LNG tanker out of Boston Harbor on 9/11 for these same reasons. The issue preoccupied much of Admiral Naccara's time, having to explain to the public and press alike that, as fearsome as they might appear as a terrorist weapon, an LNG tanker was in fact largely the opposite, as the resulting gas leak from an explosion would likely do little more than dissipate into the atmosphere, with little or no danger to

the general population. Establishing enhanced security zones around the tankers played, in effect, into the hands of the terrorists by multiplying the fears of the public, while at the same time distracting extremely limited Coast Guard resources from other, higher tier threats to the waterfront. On the other hand, such extremely high visibility events went a long way toward the goal of reassuring the public, which was such an integral part of Coast Guard operations after 9/11.

### **Atlantic Area**

When the second aircraft crashed into the World Trade Center, Atlantic Area Commander Vice Admiral Thad Allen created an Incident Management Team, with different cells devoted to tracking different areas of interest, and within twenty-four hours had stood up an ad hoc homeland security cell. Each District within his Area did the same. The COTPs were already in motion. Admiral Bennis had closed New York Harbor, while Captain Roger B. Peoples in Baltimore had closed that harbor as well as the Potomac River above the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. In classic Coast Guard fashion, the Service was surging all its assets towards an emergency until it could gain situational awareness in order to stay on mission for the long haul or to start to peel back some of the resources on scene or en route.

In a further attempt to gain situational awareness, Admiral Allen diverted every major cutter underway on 9/11 to a port, and directed underway cutters that had not been on patrol. Three large cutters initially dispatched, would be joined eventually by another thirteen cutters and more than thirty small boats. Needed for more than intelligence and security, these operational platforms possessed command and control architecture - secure communications and heavy weaponry - far beyond anything a COTP might have access to. In the Coast Guard command structure, the COTPs had legal authority over U.S. ports and waterways, but no operational platforms with which to enforce that authority on the water unless the COTP happened by geography or convenience to be co-located with the Coast Guard group or district offices that did retain control over operational assets. Many Captains of the Port operated from leased space in an office building, and communications often amounted to little more than a Nextel phone and a VHF-FM radio.

Atlantic Area established a command and control apparatus within twelve hours of the attacks. By

---

---

September 12, Admiral Allen was able to send a message to his Fifth District units, offering a district-wide status report, a summary of the actions that were being taken, and plans and recommendations for the next cycle of operations. From his other District commanders, he required a command and control scheme that would allow the COTPs to execute their tasks. If Admiral Allen was going to assign resources to them, he first wanted to know how the District commanders planned to manage those resources and exert command and control over them. Once he had that template from each District, he would know where to assign resources; if no template arrived on his desk, that District had a slim chance of prying platforms out of the Area command.

The first priority was to speed cutters to those ports without adequate command and control over their operations. The cutters moved out to support the COTPs, to provide them not just with command and control, but with eyes and ears, and with a platform with which to board suspect vessels. The cutters became, in effect, floating operations centers for the COTPs. To Admiral Allen, 9/11 and the arrival of cutters within the ports rendered the Coast Guard's entire shore-side command and control structure obsolete. As well, the ad hoc nature of the various District operational response models exposed the lack of a paradigm for the defense of American ports. Port security and defense readiness had been allowed to fade somewhat into the background. Command structures like the Maritime Defense Zones, created during the Cold War, were shown to be largely irrelevant to a global war on terrorism. 9/11 had forced the Service, from the Captains of the Port on up to the Commandant, to begin working through all the issues surrounding the security of the ports that would now be required in its aftermath. Operational data was then applied to each of the Atlantic Area's ports, in order to produce a port-specific security plan that offered equivalent levels of security, based on each port's unique vulnerabilities and threats.

### **The Commandant as Strategic Field Commander**

Since the end of the Cold War, concerns over the security of American ports had been allowed to fade into the background. The Coast Guard Reserve, upon whom the burden of port security rested, had been allowed to shrink through Congressional budgetary neglect from 12,500 sailors in 1988 to little more than 7,500 a decade later. An across-the-board twelve

percent "streamlining" process for active duty forces, initiated as an aggressive compliance to government-wide reductions in the early 1990s, had gutted four hundred million dollars from the annual operating expenses budget, and led to the loss of 4,000 active duty personnel, nearly ten percent of the entire active duty roster. Such cuts fell hard throughout the Service. The Coast Guard's large work platforms, its sea-going cutters, patrol aircraft, and rescue helicopters, operated for a set number of budgeted hours per year, and structural failures illustrated the recycled nature of the Service's aging fleet. The budget for acquisitions, construction, and improvements was cut nearly in half from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2001. An additional across the board cut in the Coast Guard's budget in the fiscal year prior to 9/11 had further demoralized an already diminished cadre, at the very time when all thoughtful personnel within the Service knew that their operational challenges were increasing each day. Normal operations had increased to such an extent that, for example, 110-foot patrol boats were being run 2,500 hours a year rather than their planned 1,800.

On that fateful day, the Commandant, Admiral James Loy, rallied his top staff deputies. He also engaged in two quick telephone calls. He got through to Norman Mineta, the Secretary of Transportation and Admiral Loy's civilian boss, who held the power under Title 14 of the U.S. Code to mobilize the Coast Guard Reserve in the face of a domestic emergency, and within minutes of the start of the crisis received Mineta's blessing for a call-up of 5,000 reservists. A few moments later, an equally dramatic phone call came from Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clarke, asking what the U.S. Navy could do to assist the Coast Guard.

The entire Coast Guard was now at war, and with a depleted Service Admiral Loy was responsible for coordinating the suddenly-threatened security of over 350 American ports; 12,383 miles of coastline; 88,633 miles of shoreline; and 26,000 miles of strategic and economically essential navigable channel waterways. The years of intellectual study Admiral Loy had invested in unconventional terrorist scenarios, and in both building and promoting the Coast Guard as a unique instrument of national security, allowed him to do the bureaucratic equivalent of some open field running. But Admiral Loy had to do all this while fully engaged in his two primary concerns before 9/11. The first was his ongoing effort to ratchet down the increasing tempo of the Service's other day-to-day operations. These included

---

---

search and rescue, fisheries and other economic security patrols, counter-drug and migrant interdiction operations, polar icebreaking and support of national science objectives, and the environmental protection of the American waterfront and maritime frontier. The second was his engagement with the future, with his vision of what the Coast Guard would look like in the year 2020, and development of the people, resources, and technologies required to begin what will become a total transformation of the Service.

The spike in the operational hours on those platforms, to say nothing of the cost, became an immediate concern. The Coast Guard spent about 67 cents of every dollar on its people, leaving less than a third of its budget for operations, maintenance, and logistics. The increased tempo of operations required more gas and spare parts, and there was little left in the budget for either. Further, as the nation's fifth armed Service, the Coast Guard aligned its force protection with that of the Navy. Admiral Loy had insisted that the Service match its entire inventory, small boats, Marine Safety Offices, cutters and aircraft, all of it, against the Navy's current force protection doctrine, with the result that the Coast Guard generated, in effect, a set of force protection conditions of its own. Once this new maritime security doctrine was in place, Admiral Loy was able to project the array of forces at the Service's command at any given threat level. With that force lay-down in effect, Admiral Loy then projected a three-year budget build to give the Coast Guard the assets it required to retain all its mission capabilities, and to adjust to the maritime security levels as necessary.

The Coast Guard's immediate role would be to secure the ports, increase the amount of time the Coast Guard had to examine inbound commercial vessels from twenty-four to ninety-six hours, and then conduct an intensive round of Port Vulnerability Assessments (PVA), which would identify the key areas of each port and which player, private enterprise, or local, state, or federal entities, would have responsibility and authority for each of those areas. For the Coast Guard, the new world required that it develop what came to be called Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), a sweeping and continuous view over the maritime horizon to detect potential threats long before they became attacks on the maritime frontier.

One of the major consequences of the Service's exposure after 9/11 were to reverse a decade of

reductions in the Coast Guard's work force, as Admiral Loy won back in the post-9/11 budget cycles more than half the 4,000 active duty personnel lost to streamlining, along with a simultaneous commitment to rebuild the Coast Guard Reserve. When combined with the subsequent approval of a contractor to oversee the development of the Deepwater Project, a program focused on the replacement of the Service's aged assets, along with the budget commitments to make it happen, the 9/11 performance of Admiral Loy was certain to fix him as one of the greatest Commandants in the history of the Service.

### The "M" versus "O" Dichotomy

The ports and waterways had to be defended, and it would take a Coast Guard-wide effort to do so. The long-standing separation of the Marine Safety ("M") and the Operational ("O") sides of the Coast Guard—the cultural differences that differentiated the regulators from the boat and aircraft drivers—had in recent years begun to draw closer together, both at the local level and as a matter of Service-wide policy. 9/11 would prove to be the event that cemented this shift once and for all. Operational platforms like medium endurance cutters suddenly appeared within major U.S. ports, giving the COTPs a secure command and control platform, as well as offering reassurance to a shaken public. After 9/11, the Coast Guard received two supplemental budget increases within the fiscal year 2002 budget; for more people, assets, and money. The new resources would be put to immediate use in securing cruise ship terminals and container ports, the latter involving a heavy partnership with the U.S. Customs Service.

This new normalcy of heightened security required a long-term strategy for the Service that required the "M" and "O" staffs to define all of the elements involved in the new normalcy in terms of mission requirements and associated operational activities, and at what level they would have to be funded. Counter-drug patrols had dropped to twenty-five percent of their pre-9/11 levels, while fisheries enforcement dropped to nearly zero percent. Neither situation was in the long-term national interest, so any 'new normalcy' funding for the Coast Guard would have to get these patrols back to their pre-9/11 levels, in addition to funding all of the new port and waterways security initiatives. Balancing the risk of maritime disaster versus maritime terrorism became a part of everyday thinking for Coast Guard planners.

---

---

Despite the awareness of the senior Coast Guard leadership to potential threats from terrorism within the ports, the Service had been able to gather only \$14 million in the initial fiscal year 2002 budget for maritime homeland security. After 9/11, this figure was increased twice; first by \$195 million, and then by another \$126 million. By mid-fall, 2001, the Coast Guard was apportioning \$335 million in funding in nine Distinct maritime homeland security categories. By definition, these increases, centered as they were on port security operations, served to bring Marine Safety and Operations even closer together, a process which had been ongoing in the years prior to 9/11.

The Coast Guard made rapid progress on the intelligence front as well. As a result of 9/11 and the imperative for intelligence sharing, the Coast Guard finally became a formal member of the U.S. intelligence community by Presidential decree on December 28, 2001. Intelligence gathering in the Coast Guard was located within “O,” with a clear recognition of “M” as one of the primary customers for the products of intelligence. Plans called for intelligence fusion centers in both Area commands, along with human intelligence gathering in the field. A more robust intelligence capability assumed such importance to the Service that the Commandant created a new and distinct position, the Assistant Commandant for Intelligence (G-C2). This two-level elevation within the bureaucracy, along with its designation as “C2,” was an indication that the Service was moving toward a more security-conscious, Navy-style battle staff, with C2 reflected in the Navy’s intelligence staff designation of N2.

### **The New War**

By the end of the day on 9/11, both immediate and long-term funding was in the works such as the Service had not enjoyed in its entire history. In short order, the Coast Guard was at the forefront of nearly every discussion of national security. The Service entered the everyday consciousness of the American people with greater impact than at any point since the Second World War. 9/11 was beginning to be seen as a hinge in the history of the Service rivaled only by the creation of the modern Coast Guard in 1915, or the formation of Alexander Hamilton’s original Revenue Marine in 1790. The “fifth armed force” of the morning of 9/11 had by the end of 2002 become the core of maritime homeland security. The performance of the Coast Guard’s 9/11 Commandant, Admiral Loy, was such that upon

retirement from the Service he became Chief Operating Officer of the new Transportation Security Agency and, not long thereafter, the Director, and finally Deputy Secretary, remaining a key figure in the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The effect of the terrorist attacks had also reached deep into the culture of the Coast Guard itself. Nearly every program within the Service was looked at anew, within the context of the security of the homeland. New, primarily active duty, Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) were created specifically to counter a range of threats to domestic ports, even as many members of the traditionally overseas-focused and reservist PSUs wondered if this deployment structure was not constructed backwards. Assets changed as requirements were redrawn for the new 25-foot Response Boat Small (RBS), which was designed to replace an array of non-standard small boats scattered throughout the Service. 9/11 led to enhancements in the speed of the new boat, as well as to provisions for weapons mounted fore and aft. The same types of design modifications were put in place for the Response Boat Medium (RBM), the anticipated replacement for the workhorse 41-foot Utility Boat (UTB). The reorientation of the Coast Guard to DHS, occurring simultaneously with the development of Deepwater technologies and the integration of both the Service’s command and control on the one hand and its “M” and “O” cadres on the other, foreshadowed many years of demanding and perhaps wrenching changes throughout the organization.

**Editor’s Note:** This article is excerpted from Chief Petty Officer P.J. Capelotti, Ph.D., USCGR, Rogue Wave: The U.S. Coast Guard on and after 9/11 (2004).

### **About the Author:**

**Dr. Peter “P.J.” Capelotti** holds a doctorate in Anthropology from Rutgers University and teaches Archaeology and American studies at Penn State University Abington College. Public Affairs Chief Petty Officer Capelotti enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserve in 1988. He was recalled to active duty following 9/11 and also deployed to Southwest Asia during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Among his awards is the Meritorious Service Medal.

---

---

## U.S. Coast Guard's Role in Homeland Defense

*Colin Claus, Military Analyst  
LT Kent Sieg, U.S. Coast Guard*

The direct effect of the September 11, 2001, attack by the Al-Qaeda terrorist network on the United States was to significantly affect the way in which the Coast Guard responds operationally. Virtually overnight, homeland defense rapidly evolved from a minor mission consuming a negligible amount of Coast Guard assets to a set of activities to which most of the Services assets were devoted. In a testament to its motto "Semper Paratus," a number of Coast Guard cutters and small boats were on scene in New York Harbor shortly after the incident and provided critical evacuation support and port security. But there is much more that has gone on behind the scenes to prepare, anticipate, and deter whatever additional threats the terrorists have planned.

This emergent response immediately posed the question as to what other potential attacks were awaiting, and just how the Coast Guard was to continue handling its other missions while dealing with the uncertainty of what would happen next. While the terrorists may not have planned on attacking on numerous fronts at the same time, that did not mean that using a shipping vessel in the same manner as a hijacked airplane was not under their consideration. This possibility weighed heavily as the Coast Guard immediately pulled vessels from other missions to patrol and intercept high interest and other vessels for inspection. The purpose for this increased effort was reaffirmed in late October 2001 when Egyptian Rizik Amid Farid was discovered in Gioia Tauro, Italy, sequestered in a shipping container complete with a bed, makeshift toilet, laptop computer, and documents indicative of a potential for terrorism. This stowaway incident demonstrated the resolve and determination of terrorists to interrupt, interfere, damage, and destroy American infrastructure while inflicting as many casualties as possible.

Regardless of their motivation, there is no underestimating the resolve of America's new enemies. However, the resolve of the Coast Guard is more than equal to the task, and the Service has bolstered its security and planning sections and devised new measures and proposals to counter and detect the threat long before it arrives. Among such measures are new ways to track the vessels and personnel embarked

before they leave to sail to the United States. These significantly enhance the captain of the port's (COTP) ability to track and anticipate the arrivals in his port. While before 9/11 all that was required was a 24-hour advance notice of intent for a vessel to arrive, after the attacks a temporary regulation was issued extending the advance notice of arrival to 96 hours and requiring the submission of crew lists and passenger manifests. This extension affords the COTP a much better operational picture (albeit not perfect) with which to manage the port, as well as to review the cargo manifest for potential terrorist intrusion and screen the crew and passengers. As with air travel, the more information provided, the easier it is to track and anticipate movement and to develop anomalies in the information, which may warrant further investigation.

Another challenge in screening arriving vessels had been the balancing of large lists of passengers and crewmembers from several uncoordinated security agencies within the government. This is extremely difficult for several reasons. First is the fact that our security agencies must improve their coordination and develop more consistent criteria for including a name on the "lookout" list—currently each security agency maintains different criteria and different lists. Second, correlation of names against a list is a hit-and-miss process. This is because Middle Eastern names have several spellings and common usages, and coupled with the fact that given false documentation, an alias can be easily substituted on the crew or passenger manifest without the knowledge or complicity of the ship's master. Finally, the sheer volume of names, particularly on cruise line passenger vessels, saturates the ability to clear the vessel and passengers in a reasonable amount of time.

Some of these problems are being resolved through greater attention on the part of the cruise-line security forces themselves, and through enhanced communication between federal and private security organizations. Technology using biometric techniques may provide part of the answer but, for success, cooperation among international transportation organizations and international security organizations will have to mature substantially. Obviously, ship's manifests can be altered so as to not reveal the true identity of who is onboard so it would be further necessary to have bonded loading and inspecting personnel at international ports clearing those vessels bound for the United States. But immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the Coast Guard Intelligence Coordination center launched the

---

---

Coastwatch program to track high interest vessels and their crews by coordinating intelligence information on an interagency basis.

Almost prophetically the Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001 (S. 1214), in work for more than two years and passed the Senate by voice vote on December 20, 2001, addressed the vulnerability of U.S. ports and proposed measures to enhance security through coordination of efforts. Comparing our seaports to our land borders and airport security, it was conceded that our ports are the weak link security wise. Granted, it is not a mere judgmental observation since land borders are relatively easily patrolled and there are only certain airports that accommodate international flights. “‘It’s difficult to imagine that our seaports have no federal security programs in place, especially given the level of security that we have all witnessed at our airports and land borders,’ noted Senator Fritz Hollings, Chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, prior to 9/11. ‘Our nation’s seaports are international borders serving major population centers, and consequently, we need to be mindful that our ports could be vulnerable to attack.’” Economic ramifications play a major role in motivating this legislation as well since, “‘Businesses sending cargo on ships deserve at least as much security for their products as they would expect if they sent them on a plane,’ Senator Bob Graham also said in 2001. ‘If businesses lose faith in our ports, the result will be a major blow for our economy.’” There is no doubt that the immediate downturn of the economy after September 11 would be repeated if an incident were to occur at one of the ports.

The analogy that perhaps best captures the mission of the Coast Guard regarding thwarting the use of a vessel for a terrorist act is that of plugging holes in a dike—just because you fix one doesn’t guarantee that others won’t spring up. The Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001 did help standardize and tighten security measures, thereby facilitating the Coast Guard’s ability to meet its mission through provisions including creating a task force to devise long-term solutions for seaport safety issues, establishing cooperative arrangements with the private sector to facilitate port security, completing fifty port security assessments, vigorously combating illegal cargo trafficking, improving port infrastructure, and training seaport security personnel.

One of the concerns over the upgrading in security of ports is that unlike airports, ports are privately owned

and operated, and legislating changes will impact on the “bottom line” of the owners. The 2001 bill authorized more than \$1.1 billion over six years and another \$3.3 billion in loan guarantees for local port authorities to finance security improvements. At the time, this was a quantum leap in securing imports in the United States. But the Coast Guard and port security needed more.

In 2002, both Hollings and Graham subsequently spearheaded through Congress legislation that further fortified the Coast Guard’s ability to make the nation’s waterways secure. On November 25 of that year, President George W. Bush signed into law the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2002. MTSA outlines the responsibilities for addressing and funding the effort needed to correct vulnerabilities in the maritime transportation system. Under MTSA, the Coast Guard launched a series of vulnerability surveys of vessels and waterway facilities. The legislations also tasked the Coast Guard with development of a national maritime transportation security plan, as well as incident response plans for the key ports. MTSA also required certain vessels to be equipped with identification devices, authorized special tracking systems for vessels in American waterways, and limited heretofore virtually wide-open port access. The Coast Guard also developed the Sea Marshal program for escorting certain vessels in harbors and channels, as well as the Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) to counter terrorist assaults. Funding was anticipated to have been an initial \$1.3 billion dollars and half a billion dollars per year thereafter.

Building upon the MTSA, in December 2002 the Commandant promulgated the Service’s “Maritime Strategy for Homeland Security.” In this published policy, the Commandant laid out the homeland security roles and responsibilities of the Coast Guard, placed a premium on countering threats before they reached the homeland, advocated the strengthening of port security posture, and supported the continuance of the Service’s multimission responsibilities in regard to threats from crime and the drug trade, as well as the threats posed to public health and the environment. Such a policy statement firmly emplaced the Coast Guard within the President’s National Security Strategy and the National Homeland Security Strategy. This maritime strategy is comprised of six parts including: increased awareness of the maritime environment; enhanced security operations; closure of port security gaps; the building of critical capabilities; leveraged partnerships for risk mitigation; and ensured readiness for homeland defense

---

---

operations. There are limits on Coast Guard security authorities on-shore, however.

The Coast Guard has a number of authorized roles to ensure security throughout the vast area for which it is responsible. The MTSA designated the Coast Guard as the federal maritime security coordinator. The Service is also the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security when responses require civil authorities. In addition, under the Federal Response Plan the Coast Guard is a supporting agency to its Department of Homeland Security (DHS) partner, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It also has been designated lead roles under the Interagency Domestic Terrorism Concept of Operations plan. Further, under U.S. Code Title 10, Coast Guard forces support military contingency operations.

Homeland security legislation passed in 2002 mandated that the Coast Guard meet new homeland defense requirements as well as continue carrying on its traditional missions in areas such as search and rescue, fisheries enforcement, environmental regulation, and navigation. Recent federal interagency agreements and multinational accords such as the Container Security Initiative, the Customs-Transportation Partnership Against Terrorism, the International Convention for the Safety of Life and Sea, and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code have further strengthened the Coast Guard's role in worldwide efforts to combat maritime terrorism. By the summer of 2004, the Coast Guard had successfully orchestrated compliance with the requirements incumbent with international port security.

There has been another increasingly frustrating aspect of technology outpacing tactics or procedures—that of computer information being plentiful but not always shared. That is not to suggest information is deliberately withheld from other departments or agencies, rather that individual databases of information are not always connected via the net to be accessible to other agencies. For example, over five years ago then-President Bill Clinton established the Interagency Commission on Crime and Security in U.S. Seaports. In a report released after a year's investigation, the commission concluded that it was not able to ascertain the extent of port crime due to the lack of data.

Fortunately, these problems are being addressed, with information sharing being at the top of the list. Shortly after 9/11, then Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Jim

Loy recounted the story of a river pilot onboard a ship inbound to the port of New Orleans who noticed a man videotaping the Crescent City Bridge. He reported his observation to the COTP, who arranged a pier-side boarding to investigate. A crewmember jumped overboard and when the New Orleans Police Department apprehended him, he had a large amount of money and a list of telephone numbers, one of which belonged to a person on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's most wanted list of terrorists. Even though there is no law specifically prohibiting the videotaping of a bridge, there was something about the circumstances under which it was being done that alerted the pilot to report it to the COTP. We live in a free society, but that does not mean we should not be aware and report suspicious events going on around us.

The same principle applies to the high seas. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) is the overarching concept that will tie in every available asset. In line with the National Security Strategy of the United States, MDA has been based upon preventing terrorism, reducing vulnerabilities, protecting critical infrastructure and systems, and mitigating the impacts of any attack. The domain with which the Coast Guard must deal includes: nearly 95,000 miles of shoreline; 361 seaports; 25,000 square miles of navigable waterways; 3.4 million square miles of exclusive economic zone; and 5.5 million containers of cargo. An approach involving MDA will allow for the detection, control, and blunting of all maritime threats to the country. The key aspects of MDA are a layered defense and the confronting of potential threats well before they reach American waters. Under MDA, the Coast Guard seeks to acquire information on a variety of aspects affecting the maritime environment—from crew backgrounds to ship movements to waterways infrastructure to cargo history. Therefore, the Coast Guard has launched an effort to identify and achieve critical measures for maritime security operations and to integrate the Coast Guard's efforts into those of other agencies. The resultant risk assessment, as based upon this strengthened information capability, will allow for the effective use of the limited assets the Coast Guard possesses to ensure the effectiveness of the maritime transportation system.

There have been numerous efforts to improve organizational or security structures for homeland defense. These have included the creation of naval vessel protection zones, which are safety areas to



---

---

restrict or prohibit movement around naval ships. Also, the Navy and the Coast Guard have established joint harbor operations centers (JHOC) to coalesce security measures in certain key ports, and a National Vessel Movement Center was set up to track the arrival and departure of all foreign vessels. The Commandant reaffirmed and updated the National Fleet Policy agreement with the Chief of Naval Operations to synchronize missions, platforms, and personnel; and the former Vice Commandant also established a dual-Service committee with the Navy known by the acronym NAVGUARD. The Coast Guard provides personnel to the joint Harbor Defense Command Units. Organizationally, the Coast Guard has moved away from its historical marine safety versus operations distinction by merging Marine Safety Offices and Groups into new organizations known as Sectors, which will be “one-stop shopping” for Coast Guard services in the field. The Sectors will be able to undertake the full-range of Coast Guard missions within a defined geographic area. Also of note, the position of Assistant Commandant for Intelligence and the setting up of intelligence fusion centers has greatly increased the profile of the information-gathering and analysis functions within the Service.

The use-of-force policy within the Coast Guard has changed to meet the new threat environment. The Coast Guard’s anti-terrorism and force protection policies are essentially those of the Department of Defense (DOD) in terms of scalable effort and force protection methodologies. These actions are designed to mitigate threats and minimize vulnerabilities by way of credible deterrence. But the Coast Guard’s force protection policy is not strictly tied to that of DOD. The major difference lies in the greater decentralization and delegation of authority in the Coast Guard. Coast Guard Headquarters sets policy, but Area and District commanders may raise or lower the security baseline as conditions warrant. In the aftermath of the attack in the Persian Gulf killing the first Coast Guardsman since Vietnam in wartime, the Commandant formed a team jointly with the Navy to examine tactics, techniques, and procedures, as well as rules of engagement. In the meantime, in May 2004 the Commandant set out the following policy guidance: “To increase the probability of success in countering the terrorist small boat threat, security forces must be aggressive in determining the intent of vessels approaching security zones while still at a standoff distance, without violating the civil liberties of our fellow citizens.”

In addition to the legal authorities, policies, and practical concrete changes, the Coast Guard requires the appropriate assets to be successful. The release of Rescue 21, a new national distress system, and the acceleration of the Deepwater recapitalization are illustrative of the Service leadership’s commitment to meeting the operational and readiness needs of the Coast Guard. As the current Commandant, Admiral Thomas Collins, noted in a July 16, 2004 speech, “Given the current state of our fleet, it is wearing out faster than we ever predicted. We can’t wait until 2015 to replace that fleet. We need to move on and do it quickly.” In fact, in 2003 the timeline for Deepwater was nearly halved in order for national security requirements to be met, and further accelerated in 2004. This effort will allow for the replacement of up to 90 afloat platforms that date in some extreme cases back to the Second World War, as well as 200 planes and communications and logistics systems, and boost assets so that the Service will, for example in the case of aviation, no longer sustains over six times the engine power loss of the Navy. Furthermore, a significant number of currently active cutters are undergoing conversion upgrades in the interim before the Deepwater cutters come on-line. The surface and air assets of Deepwater will last longer, operate better, and require less maintenance. As well, a new Response Boat Acquisition Project will bring aboard the small boats necessary for homeland security missions. New Deepwater command and control systems, already being installed, are capabilities-based and will notably allow broad information exchange and fusion of tactical and database information. As well, the Coast Guard’s antiquated coastal communications system was unable to meet the challenges of homeland security; it was thirty years old and did not work in 14percent of the Coast Guard’s area of operations. The new Rescue 21 will allow for greater signal detection, increase coverage areas, and enhance command and control.

Furthermore, the Coast Guard is building up the number of units it employs in homeland defense. New port security units (PSU) are being created. PSU have been deployed at home and abroad to guard U.S. ships and port facilities. Maritime safety and security teams (MSST) made their debut in 2002. These are ultimately to be twelve “PSU-light” tactical teams of active duty personnel who can deploy immediately in counter-terrorist actions. Furthermore, the Coast Guard has established the Sea Marshal program to place armed personnel aboard high interest vessels. The specialized capabilities of these units and personnel add considerable depth to the layered defense of the U.S. homeland.

---

---

Operations NOBLE EAGLE, NEPTUNE SHIELD, and LIBERTY SHIELD were the first large-scale employment of these new authorities and assets to meet homeland defense needs. As in any venture, the percent of success goes up with the amount of time and resources devoted to it. The down side is that the more stringent the controls, typically the cost in dollars and time increase as well. This has the trickle down effect of dramatically slowing the importation process and driving up the cost of goods throughout the distribution system. And as maritime commerce continues to grow, it is placed in tension with efforts to improve maritime security. Along with some of the aforementioned strategies, the use of new non-invasive technologies to detect illegal cargo will allow for quicker inspections and more accurate detection of illicit cargo, thereby having a minimal impact on the ship's schedule.

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004, signed into law by President Bush on August 9, put forth expanded authorities for the Coast Guard. As a result, the Service has been set to expand by at least 6,000 members to a total cap of 45,500, with much of the increase targeted at staffing the marine safety teams. For the first time, Coast Guardsmen also received authority to make arrests ashore and to carry firearms while engaged in all law enforcement duties. Rules for the use of force were relaxed as well. Reflecting the priority that Congress has placed upon the Coast Guard as the line of defense for homeland security, this act authorized \$8.17 billion in funding for the Coast Guard. That figure was substantially above what the Bush administration had requested, but did represent an amount designed to allow the Service to meet its emerging mission requirements (the funding available for operating expenses alone increased by 14

percent, for example). Congress also ensured that port security, vessel tracking, and Deepwater would get hefty support. Further, the Commandant is allowed to make recommendations on behalf of the Service directly to Congress, provided that the Secretary of Homeland Security is first notified. This act represented but the latest growth in strong bipartisan support that the Service finally enjoys.

As Admiral Loy stated in a speech on October 31, 2001, "Our present challenge is to find the 'new normal' port security posture, while returning to our other missions." This challenge is the outgrowth of the drain on resources occurring in order to meet the initial crisis response by diverting assets from other areas of responsibility such as counter-drug, fisheries, and migrant interdiction patrols—and this does not even address the inland navigable waterways. Even the call-up of the reservists is a surge effort that was never intended to be sustained. Therefore, even with the passage of relevant legislation, the Coast Guard is straining to maintain its massive efforts for maritime security necessary to preclude another attack. Despite the press's emphasis on airline safety, the vulnerability from the sea remains an even greater challenge. With additional resources and improved detection methods, the Coast Guard, and specifically the most important parts of it according to the Commandant's favorite mantra: "Readiness, People, and Stewardship," just may be able to plug the "holes in the dike."

**Editor's note:** This is an update of a previous version of an article that appeared in the December 2001 issue of the Joint Center for Lessons Learned Quarterly Bulletin.

#### About the authors:

**Colin Claus** is a retired naval aviator and was formerly employed by the Joint Center for Lessons Learned where he worked extensively on exercise data collection. He now works at the navy's Fleet Information Warfare Center as a specialist on naval information operations. **Kent Sieg** is a Coast Guard reservist and an historian with the federal government. LT Sieg holds a PhD in History from the University of Colorado, and has worked as an Historian at the Department of State and the Department of the Army.



**USCGC Morgenthau (WHEC 722) departs homeport in Alameda, California, enroute to a Western Pacific Patrol.**

---

---

## Same Ship, Different Day: the Coast Guard and Post 9-11 Maritime Security

*Scott Berinato*  
*CSO Magazine*

### Introduction

With the advent of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the U.S. Coast Guard's primary mission commutated overnight from drugs and migrants to ports and terrorists. Its predominant reputation transposed from a military afterthought—a “backwater,” a “stepchild”—to the front line of homeland defense. It was the incarnation of their motto, *semper paratus*. The service was “always ready.”

Had war been declared, the Coast Guard would have shifted command to serve under the Navy. But the day terrorists attacked, Navy Chief of Operations Admiral Vern Clark instead offered up his Navy to support Commandant Admiral James Loy's Coast Guard. Coast Guard tugboats, buoy tenders, reserves, and volunteer auxiliary boats led evacuation and first aid at ground zero. By Sept. 12, 2001, a dozen white-hulled cutters patrolled an otherwise empty New York Harbor under piercing blue skies still smirched by rising ash and smoke. By the 19th, most of the Coast Guard's fleet fenced the shores of the Northeast, Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and the long, gentle arc of the Pacific Coast. Even those who know and respect the Coast Guard still talk about that first week with awe. “God bless the Coast Guard,” says Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-N.J.), who chairs the Coast Guard and Marine Transportation congressional subcommittee.

However, even in those dramatic days following 9-11, after that rapid redeployment of forces the Coast Guard wasn't *paratus* at all. Bruce Stubbs, a retired Coast Guard captain who is now an analyst at Anteon, cites the example of the Second Coast Guard District headquartered at New Orleans. “No one in the Second District was weapons-qualified. They were limited in their ability to securely communicate with the captain of the port. They moved boats around, but there was no ops plan at the time. Full marks to the Coast Guard. They were good people making strong, commonsense decisions. It speaks well of them. But they weren't ready.”

### *Semper Volens*

The Coast Guard is perfectly tailored for the homeland security mission and critical to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) success—and not just because the Coast Guard already happens to patrol 95,000 miles of U.S. shoreline and 3.4 million square miles of U.S.-controlled open seas, through which pass 95 percent of all goods shipped in and out of the country. More important is the fact that the Coast Guard is uniquely matched to counter the threats that DHS was created to manage because it encompasses both the military power and law enforcement capabilities required to fight terrorism.

Its heritage of relative poverty means the Coast Guard has long had to do what other military and law enforcement agencies haven't—balance resources using risk analysis, which experts will tell you also happens to be a critical tool to combat an asymmetric threat like terrorism. It's no coincidence that the Coast Guard was put near the top of every proposed structure for a new cabinet-level security department; nor that, when DHS was formed, the Coast Guard along with the Secret Service became the only two agencies with direct-line reporting to Secretary Tom Ridge.

But as much as DHS needs the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard needs an agency like DHS lest it fall into permanent disrepair. By 9/11, the Coast Guard was the seventh largest coast guard in the world, yet its fleet ranked 39th out of 41 in average age. A few of its cutters were commissioned for World War II and many more were children of the 1960s. Its recapitalization project to modernize the boats and planes was in jeopardy of losing its funding. Its operations budget had been cut by 15 percent, even as its workload increased. Search and rescuers averaged 84-hour workweeks. Coasties joked that since they were constantly being asked to do more and more with less and less, eventually someone would ask them to do everything with nothing. Only it never was entirely a joke. But Coasties don't whine and complain and demand the resources they need. It is a noble flaw that has, at various moments in the Coast Guard's history, teetered the agency on the brink of falling apart. Admiral Loy himself compared the pre-9/11 Coast Guard to a “knife dulled by complacency and overuse.” The agency wasn't really *semper paratus*, he said, but rather *semper volens*. Always willing.

---

---

DHS, though, presented a proverbial win-win: The nation would get a top-notch agency to secure ports, harbors and waterways; in return, the Coast Guard would get from the nation—via DHS—the respect and resources needed to manage not only its security mission, but its myriad other missions as well. The Coast Guard’s prospects got even better when Admiral Loy became number two at DHS. Finally, in a post-9/11 world, the Coast Guard seemed to be in a position to thrive. It could exploit a favorable direct-line reporting structure and exploit Admiral Loy himself to break the Coast Guard’s long tradition of doing whatever it’s been asked without adequate resources.



But instead, DHS is reinforcing that tradition, not breaking it. Resources have indeed risen, but not enough according to observers. That’s obviously bad for the Coast Guard, but it’s even worse for maritime security, where the stakes are too high to try to do everything with nothing.

### **Semper Paratus**

The United States Coast Guard is the accretion of five maritime agencies founded at various moments during the country’s first century. They are the U.S. Lighthouse Service, in 1789; the Revenue Marines, in 1790; what would become the Steamboat Inspection Service, in 1838; the U.S. Life-Saving Service, in 1878 (set up to rescue wayward sailors); and, in 1884, the Bureau of Navigation (perhaps to help sailors navigate better so they wouldn’t become wayward). The five agencies would mutate, adjust, join, and commingle until 1948, when the Coast Guard officially took over all of it.

There is something Forrest Gumpian about the Coast Guard’s presence in American history—always a witness to major events but never the focus of them. The Revenue Marine fired the first naval shot of the Civil War. In 1886, the U.S. Lighthouse Service arrived on Bedloe’s Island to manage the first electric lighthouse, commonly known as the Statue of Liberty. Life-Saving Service workers assisted the Wrights at Kitty Hawk in 1903. Cutters patrolled the North Atlantic for icebergs

in 1913 and searched fruitlessly for Amelia Earhart in 1937. Coast Guard Flotilla 10 landed troops on Omaha Beach. Coasties helped secure space shuttle Columbia’s maiden voyage in 1981. They were the first on the scene after Bligh Reef flayed the hull of the Exxon Valdez. They brought Elian Gonzalez to American shores. Recently, they assisted space shuttle Columbia again, this time somberly skimming the Gulf Coast for its debris.

The Coast Guard’s role in waterway security was defined specifically at 2:08 a.m. on July 30, 1916, when foreign terrorists attacked the United States for the first time. German saboteurs gained access to the wharf on Black Tom Island in New York Harbor, where munitions were being transferred to British ships, and set a boxcar on fire, causing a chain reaction of massive explosions that continued until dawn. The Black Tom incident led to the Espionage Act of 1917, which in turn gave the Coast Guard broad sway over U.S. waters and defined port security for the rest of the century. The security role, though, would ebb and flow with peace and war for the rest of the century. On Sept. 10, 2001, security was only 2 percent of the Coast Guard’s mission.

### **Semper Flexus**

From dockside, the Coast Guard’s changed affiliation—from the Department of Transportation (DOT) to DHS—appeared to come off like a well-drilled vertical insertion, whereby Coasties drop out of helicopters on

---

---

ropes during hurricanes to rescue sailors in distress. The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) unified and streamlined security regulations for all maritime stakeholders and gave the Coast Guard its broadest authority yet. Post haste, the Coast Guard produced a Maritime Strategy for Homeland Security under new Commandant Admiral Thomas Collins. The Coast Guard set up a dozen (and counting) Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST)—small SWAT-like teams contracted out for ship arrivals and other events requiring maritime security, such as the Democratic and Republican national conventions.

According to observers, the Coast Guard didn't suffer from the infighting that marked the transitions of quasi-competitive agencies, such as Customs and Border Protection. And it didn't suffer whiplash from a radical shift in focus either, the way the Federal Emergency Management Agency did when it morphed its view from local to federal. Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Thad Allen, who led the transition, attributed its success to the agency's multimission, dual military-civilian charters—what he calls the “genius of the Coast Guard.” Coasties call it *semper flexus*. Always bending.

According to Captain Daniel May, commanding officer of Group Boston, *semper flexus* is what allowed the Coast Guard to shift from a mission of 2 percent security to nearly 60 percent right after 9/11, and eventually settle to about 20 percent, where it is now. The Coast Guard revitalized the Marine Safety Office, or MSO. Pre-9/11, an MSO was responsible for port safety and waterway management, but separated from operations. Yet now the MSO is the key to enforcing MTSA and making waterway security a success through its Maritime Homeland Security office. This tack has relied heavily on retraining Coasties, who were welding and cleaning up pollution, to pick up guns and inspect ships. But that's *semper flexus*.

*Semper flexus* extends to the Coast Guard's fleet. Just take an inventory of the boats docked at the Coast Guard pier in Boston, a mishmash flotilla adaptable for any number of missions. There's a 41-foot utility boat from the 1960s, capable of handling almost any of the Coast Guard's missions, but old, expensive and due to be replaced. Next to that is a brand-new 25-foot Response Boat-Homeland Security (RBHS) with twin outboard engines. Coasties love the orange-hulled RBHS because it goes fast and turns tight. It can't go in deep water, but it can go in a C-130 jet for transport.

It's the future of the Coast Guard's port security mission, but it's designed for law enforcement too. Next to that is a 27-foot Boston Whaler, improvisationally refitted for harbor patrols and vessel escorts. It's a stopgap, the brainchild of a vice admiral with the unlikely name of Jim Hull. Looming downstage is the 270-foot Medium-Endurance Cutter, Seneca, carrying a full cargo of lore, from search and rescue adventures to drug and migrant interdictions. However, it has lately become part of the homeland security mission as well. At the bow of the Seneca there is one Rigid Hull Inflatable (RHI), which is a fast boat that was originally designed to chase down drug runners, and Coasties love it nearly as much as the RBHS. However, it's used so much that it has become a maintenance millstone. On the port side, there's a motor surf boat that will soon be replaced by another RHI, since the motor surf boat performs the way it looks, like a tub.

In 1998, the Coast Guard launched an ambitious \$20 billion, 30-year plan—the Integrated Deepwater System project—to modernize this hoary fleet of cutters and aircraft. Deepwater was never really embraced. In fact, President Bill Clinton commissioned a “Roles and Missions” study the next year to see just what it was the Coast Guard did. The report, issued in 2000, suggested that if the Coast Guard didn't exist, it would need to be invented. The Coast Guard was called “one of the most efficient agencies in government” and “a unique instrument of national policy.” Moreover, it said that Deepwater should be a “national priority that should move forward expeditiously and without interruption.” Presciently, the report implored the government to “rebuild” the Coast Guard to “hedge against tomorrow's uncertainties” including “terrorist activities.” It concluded: “America will need a Coast Guard capable of operating alongside the other U.S. armed services to support the nation's security strategies and policies.”

Yet within a year, the General Accounting Office (GAO) went the other way entirely and criticized Deepwater so severely that the program looked as if “it may be reduced to yet another piecemeal, stop-and-shop program,” National Defense magazine wrote. GAO didn't argue that the Coast Guard didn't need to modernize—it would have been impossible to argue that. Rather, it said that the kind of money that the Coast Guard demanded for modernization wasn't realistic. It was \$500 million per year. Put into perspective, that was one percent of DOT's budget at the time, less than the rest of the military spends cleaning up pollution at

---

---

its own bases, or the same amount of money the Coast Guard seizes in drugs every 52 days.

### **Semper Nixus**

Deepwater was resuscitated and even given a jolt after 9/11. It is slated for nearly \$700 million in 2005, but then again, in the DHS era, \$700 million turns out to be not enough. After all, security as a Coast Guard mission has increased 1,220 percent in terms of resource hours, from 19,000 hours pre-9/11 to 254,640 last year. And Deepwater's timetable is not practicable for combating terrorism's immediate threat. Rep. LoBiondo said he wants to step up investment in Deepwater and compress the timetable, largely because investing sooner, rather than spreading it out over decades, could save as much as \$6 billion in interest payments and equipment maintenance costs.

Days after LoBiondo made this observation, however, the GAO issued two more reports that voiced serious concerns over the Coast Guard's ability to manage Deepwater, even at the current pace—because the Coast Guard can't afford to hire more people to manage it. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution estimates that homeland security has increased the Coast Guard's workload by 25 percent, but personnel, while rising, has not increased in kind. O'Hanlon says that the Coast Guard needs at least 20 percent more money—something closer to \$9 billion per year instead of \$7 billion. He says, "It's hard to imagine \$2 billion more wouldn't get a hearing," given the mission at hand. After all, the Navy will spend \$20 billion—almost three times the entire Coast Guard budget—just buying boats and airplanes in 2005.

In other words, DHS, a cabinet department focused almost exclusively on security and antiterrorism, hasn't been able to fight for a credible level of resources for the agency that it has charged with what is arguably one of the country's greatest weaknesses—maritime security. DHS's shortcomings in this regard were crystallized recently when a Senate panel rejected a measure to raise a much-needed \$400 million for port security through users' fees. That, despite the fact that the panel agreed that the Coast Guard doesn't have all of the \$7.4 billion it needs to enforce MTSA and that port security thus far is underfunded. For 2005, the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) budget was increased 20 percent to the Coast Guard's 7

percent. The Coast Guard's budget is still slightly higher than TSA's but then again, security is all that TSA does while it's only 20 percent of what the Coast Guard does.

The Coast Guard's traditional missions haven't disappeared, but they suffer. Illegal drug interdiction resource hours, according to the GAO, are down 44 percent, from about 122,000 hours pre-9/11 to 69,000 last year. Search and rescue is down from 83,000 to 64,000 hours. Domestic fisheries enforcement dropped from 91,000 to 67,000 hours. Other missions have spiked, like migrant interdiction (up 81 percent), ice breaking (up 44 percent), and defense readiness (up 518 percent). The GAO says it's not clear the Coast Guard has figured out how to balance all these fluctuating parts with its resources. In the meantime, while defending the maritime homeland, the Coast Guard sent its largest contingent of personnel overseas—to Iraq—since the Vietnam War. Then secured the port at Guantanamo Bay. Then went to Haiti. *Semper nixus*. Always straining.

### **Semper Gumby**

Coasties have one other unofficial motto, borrowed from the Marines—*Semper Gumby*, a reference to the pliant green claymation figure. *Semper Gumby* is *semper paratus* reflected off of a funhouse mirror. It's confidence, professionalism, politeness, adaptability, efficiency and bravery, all warped by resigned frustration. *Gumby* is flexible, and also bent by other people. *Semper Gumby* has been notoriously translated by Coast Guard search and rescuers as "We have to go out, but we don't have to come back."

**Editor's Note:** This version of the article is reprinted through courtesy of CSO Online magazine, copyright 2004 CXO Media Inc., all rights reserved.

### **About the Author:**

**Scott Berinato** is Senior Editor for both CIO and CSO magazines. Previously, he was a reporter for PC Week (currently e-Week) where he covered news and trends in the hardware and software markets, and has also written articles for The Boston Globe, Boston Magazine, University Business and Outdoors. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and holds a master's degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

---

---

# A Unified Team: U.S. Northern Command and the U.S. Coast Guard

*Christopher Towery  
Military Analyst*

## Introduction

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, were a monumental catalyst for change in the United States. That fateful morning altered the way in which the nation views many things, including terrorism, war, religion, and patriotism. However, the most dramatic transformation involves America's sense of security. The United States is no longer a haven from the world's madness. The World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks proved that the nation's enemies are willing and able to bring death and destruction to America's doorsteps, leaving U.S. citizens vulnerable in the one place most everyone thought was safe—the home front.

But our nation has never been one to cower before danger. The country is currently undertaking efforts to deal with these new threats, and to that end, the government has made major changes in the command structure of our armed forces and federal agencies. One of the biggest of these changes is the stand-up of the new U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) on October 1, 2002. Located at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, and under the command of Gen. Ralph Eberhart, USAF, NORTHCOM is tasked to provide a unity-of-command in the protection of our homeland from threats both foreign and domestic. Working as a team with NORTHCOM, the U.S. Coast Guard plays a unique role in both homeland defense and homeland security. This role is still being defined, but it's already clear that the Coast Guard stands as one of the most important entities to restore America's lost sense of safety.

## Homeland Defense and Homeland Security

Before explaining NORTHCOM and the Coast Guard's role inside the command, it is first necessary to define what is meant by "homeland security" and "homeland defense." After September 11, the terms homeland defense and homeland security have often been used interchangeably. However, this use is incorrect as there

are distinct differences between the two. NORTHCOM's website defines homeland defense as "the protection of U.S. territory, domestic population, and critical infrastructure against military attacks emanating from outside the United States." It's important to note that to be considered a matter of homeland defense, a threat must come from outside the U.S. and take the form of a recognized foreign military. One example of this would be if China's army invaded California.

The issue of homeland security, however, largely deals with internal threats. NORTHCOM's website defines homeland security as "the prevention, preemption, and deterrence of, and defense against, aggression targeted at U.S. territory, sovereignty, domestic population, and infrastructure as well as the management of the consequences of such aggression and other domestic emergencies." Without a clear connection to a foreign military, aggression targeted at the U.S. homeland, such as terrorism, is considered a matter of homeland security. The attack on the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh would be an example of a homeland security issue.

These definitions are important because matters of homeland defense and homeland security have separate authorities who are tasked to perform lead roles in their management. NORTHCOM and the Coast Guard both have a part in securing and defending our nation, but in certain instances either one can be in a lead or a supporting role.

## NORTHCOM and Homeland Defense

Before the creation of NORTHCOM, U.S. homeland defense was assigned to several military commands without unification or a clear chain of command. None of the commands had a lead role in defending the nation, and their responsibilities often overlapped. The events of September 11 showed that this unarticulated homeland defense posture left the home front more vulnerable to attack, and it was evident that the U.S. military structure needed to be streamlined. Gen. Eberhart explained that prior to September 11, our country felt that "we weren't in danger because we were protected by two large oceans and two friendly neighbors... But, on 9/11, we realized that we were threatened, especially by asymmetrical threats, and we needed one command and one commander to protect against all hazards."

---

---

President Bush's response to this lack of a single command was the creation of NORTHCOM. NORTHCOM is what the Department of Defense (DOD) classifies as a unified command. A unified command deters and defeats threats against the U.S. and its interests within an area of responsibility (AOR). AORs can be either regional or functional. NORTHCOM is a regional command, and like other regional commands, such as U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. European Command, and U.S. Southern Command, its AOR is geographic in nature. However, while the other regional commands are primarily concerned with protecting U.S. interests in foreign locales, the geographic AOR for NORTHCOM is North America. According to a NORTHCOM statement, North America makes up the "air, land, and sea approaches and encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and the surrounding waters out to approximately 500 nautical miles. It will also include the Gulf of Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The defense of Hawaii and U.S. territories in the Pacific remains the responsibility of U.S. Pacific Command."

The general in charge of each regional command is called a combatant commander, and in NORTHCOM's case, that commander is Gen. Eberhart. Due to the fact that before September 11 there was no unified command for North America, NORTHCOM's creation marks the first time that there has been a single combatant commander in charge of protecting the U.S. homeland and its people since the days of George Washington. Gen. Eberhart stresses that the primary effect of NORTHCOM is one of "unity." If there is an external military threat against the U.S., rather than have the five branches of the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard) react in an unaligned approach, NORTHCOM organizes the effort and formulates a unified plan for homeland defense. In carrying out such a plan, NORTHCOM can call upon any of the branches to act in these operations.

For matters of homeland defense, NORTHCOM is the lead authority. It coordinates exactly who and what is needed from the armed forces to best protect the nation from an external military threat. Each branch of the military has a portion of their forces devoted to supporting NORTHCOM actions. Once assigned to a homeland defense operation by NORTHCOM, the armed forces then carry out their traditional military combat roles to defend our nation.

## **NORTHCOM and Homeland Security**

Unlike other unified commands, NORTHCOM has a role outside of providing military defense for its AOR. According to NORTHCOM, the command has the additional responsibility to "provide military assistance to civil authorities including consequence management operations." In these cases, NORTHCOM would provide military resources to aid federal, state, and local agencies in dealing with domestic emergencies. NORTHCOM documents state that such emergencies would include "domestic disaster relief operations that occur during fires, hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. Support also includes counter-drug operations and consequence management assistance, such as would occur after a terrorist event employing a weapon of mass destruction." Terrorism lacking a clear connection with a foreign military would be a homeland security issue.

Here, the leading authority would likely be the newly formed Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or an agency inside DHS like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In such cases, NORTHCOM would only act in a supporting role. To that regard, in order for NORTHCOM to provide assistance, the incident must exceed the capabilities of the civil authorities. After this occurs, those authorities would have to request NORTHCOM's aid through the Secretary of Defense. Once approved by the Secretary of Defense, NORTHCOM can provide the military support the agencies need for the situation. It's important to note that even when NORTHCOM brings military assistance to the civil authorities, the command still acts in a strictly supportive role, rather than taking control of the operation. "Once a request for NORTHCOM support is validated by the Department of Defense, NORTHCOM is contacted to provide assistance," said Lt. Cmdr. Curtis Jenkins, USN, a spokesperson inside NORTHCOM's Public Affairs Department. "We (NORTHCOM) have to be directed; we don't just show up and say, 'Here we are! We're taking over!' That's only in the movies. We don't necessarily stay until everything is finished, either. We provide the support we were asked for, and then we go home."

## **The Coast Guard's Role with NORTHCOM**

With the establishment of NORTHCOM, the Coast Guard's roles and responsibilities have been realigned. For its role in homeland defense, the Coast Guard fits into NORTHCOM as one of the five branches of the



---

---

U. S. Armed Forces. As an armed Service, if a foreign military attacked North America, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) can be called upon to support NORTHCOM in homeland defense. As the lead authority in such a situation, NORTHCOM dictates what resources it needs from the Coast Guard in this defense. The link-up with NORTHCOM provides a single combatant command, which should ultimately ensure a more unified effort between the USCG and the other armed forces in such an action.

To facilitate this connectivity, each of the armed forces has members of its Service on staff at NORTHCOM headquarters. There are currently eight members of the Coast Guard on staff at NORTHCOM, including Rear Adm. James Van Sice, who serves as NORTHCOM's Deputy Director of Operations. These staff members function as action officers at NORTHCOM, offering insight into each Service's abilities, and at the same time, NORTHCOM provides them with insight into its own capability. CAPT Brad Jacobs, another Coast Guard member on staff at NORTHCOM as the Maritime Operations Division Chief, illustrates this point; "We're working with NORTHCOM issues, but we bring a Coast Guard flavor to the staff to educate NORTHCOM on the Coast Guard's capabilities and requirements. Vice versa, NORTHCOM educates us on where DOD is coming from and what it can and cannot do."

However, the Coast Guard's relationship with NORTHCOM doesn't end with homeland defense. Because NORTHCOM has a secondary role to provide support to civil authorities, and the Coast Guard is classified as both a branch of the military and a federal civil authority, NORTHCOM can be called upon to support the Coast Guard in matters of homeland security. As one of the 22 federal agencies under the Department of Homeland Security, the USCG is the lead federal agency (LFA) for maritime homeland security. If in carrying out its duties under DHS, the Coast Guard finds that it needs military support beyond its own capabilities and the capabilities of the other civil agencies, then it can request assistance from NORTHCOM through the Secretary of Defense (SecDef). In such situations, the Coast Guard, not NORTHCOM, would have the lead role. NORTHCOM would only provide assistance in a supporting role.

For example, if a terrorist used a small boat to attack a cruise ship inside a U.S. port, the Coast Guard would

respond to this attack due to its responsibilities as the LFA for maritime homeland security. However, if in responding to the incident, the Coast Guard found that it needed additional support the other local, state, and federal agencies were unable to provide, then the Service could ask for assistance from NORTHCOM through the SecDef. At that point, if the SecDef approved the request, NORTHCOM would come onboard in a supporting role to provide the Coast Guard with the assistance it needed. The approval of such requests can be verbal, and would take only a matter of minutes.

The two-pronged relationship with NORTHCOM for both homeland defense and homeland security puts the Coast Guard in a unique position unlike any other organization. Because the USCG has both law enforcement powers as a civil authority, as well as military powers as an armed Service, it can quickly change its own operations to meet whatever challenges the situation may call for. The law enforcement role is especially important to NORTHCOM because, as a military entity, the command is bound by the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA), a law that restricts the military from participating in law enforcement. However, because United States Code 14 USC 2 gives the USCG law enforcement authority, it is exempt from the PCA, even though it is technically a branch of the military.

"Because the Coast Guard is not bound by Posse Comitatus, its forces may easily shift their hats when out in the field," said Dom DiIulio, a technical director for Anteon Corporation, who is serving as a consultant for the Coast Guard. "If Coast Guard forces are operating in a defense role and see that a situation requires law enforcement action, they can shift to a law enforcement posture. Conversely, if Coast Guard forces are operating in a law enforcement posture and see a military situation develop, they can shift to a defense role. If the other armed forces on patrol in the field see a law enforcement situation developing, they can't act. They can monitor the situation, but they can't make arrests or take any other law enforcement action. The Coast Guard is unique in this regard."

The ability to stop and investigate a vessel in law enforcement mode enables the Coast Guard much more freedom than the other forces. If there is a suspicious vessel heading toward the U.S., the Coast Guard can interdict the vessel and make arrests as a law enforcement agent long before the craft gets near our

---

---

shores, while the other military branches, bound by Posse Comitatus, could only monitor and track the threat. Additionally, as an armed Service, the Coast Guard has a direct link to NORTHCOM, which provides the command with detailed intelligence on the situation while it's still in its early stages.

### **The Future**

Because NORTHCOM and the Department of Homeland Security are relatively new entities, many of the USCG's responsibilities are still being defined and planned out. Regardless of what new roles it will play in the future, it's evident that the Coast Guard, both as an armed Service and a federal agency, will forever be transformed. As this transformation evolves, the USCG will continue to model and exemplify America's efforts to defend and secure the homeland. "There's no question that there is more attention being focused on the Coast Guard now than ever before," explained DiIulio. "It used to be that the only time you heard about the Coast Guard was when there was a record

drug bust or a significant flow of immigrants from Haiti or Cuba. Though the Coast Guard remains involved in these activities, the headline-grabbing events since September 11 have focused on the Coast Guard's role in both homeland security and homeland defense. Preventive actions and responses to future events will inevitably include a more robust Coast Guard effort. As a result, the Coast Guard will continue to be on the frontlines of our nation's defense and in the national spotlight."

**Editor's note:** This article originally appeared in the 2003 edition of "The United States Coast Guard: The Shield of Freedom." This official Coast Guard magazine is published annually by Faircount, LLC. Reprinted with permission.

### **About the Author:**

**Christopher Towery** is a contributing writer to Faircount publications.



---

---

## Multimission Costs Too Much

*Bruce Stubbs  
Military Analyst*

### Introduction

The question before the Coast Guard is whether to retain its “jack-of-all-trades” doctrine or focus on a handful of missions related to the nation’s most critical security requirements—such as maritime law enforcement and security—with deep expertise and tailored capabilities. If it does not, others will.

“Great battles,” Winston Churchill remarked, “change the entire course of events, create new standards of values, new moods, in armies and in nations.” The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have had such an effect on the United States and its Coast Guard.<sup>1</sup> The “great battle” against al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups has launched two new paradigms with the power to fundamentally alter the Coast Guard: an operational paradigm that demands greater concentration of resources and organizational focus on counterterrorism; and a policy paradigm that redefines the Coast Guard’s national defense role as one of limited overseas deployments, if any, and extremely low-end, domestic force protection

Unlike all other federal agencies, the Coast Guard has multiple functions—transportation safety, environmental protection, search and rescue, constabulary, and defense. The new operational and policy paradigms bring into question whether the Service can continue in this vein. If it seeks to preserve its multifunctional status, and does not address the full implications of these two new paradigms, the Coast Guard stands to transform much of the Service into little more than a physical security force, and for all intents and purposes, becomes a uniformed, and not a military, Service.

### New Operational Paradigm: Active Deterrence

Vice Admiral James Hull, Commander, Atlantic Area, until his retirement on 16 July 2004, has described the Coast Guard’s new operational paradigm: “We used to have one boat in the barn, so to speak, and we’d bring it out and respond when called upon. It was a firehouse response. Now we’re proactive. I want the bad guys

to see our presence, to see our boats, to see our planes, to know we rely on intelligence and technology and say, ‘Geez, I’m going to go someplace else. This isn’t worth it.’”<sup>2</sup> While his “firehouse” metaphor obviously does not apply to the Coast Guard’s aggressive conduct of its law enforcement missions, the admiral has brought into sharp focus a fundamental shift in Coast Guard operations since the 11 September attacks. Counterterrorism demands that the Coast Guard expand its operational paradigm from “static response” to “active deterrence” throughout the U.S. maritime domain, while still conducting its full set of pre-9/11 missions.

Active deterrence requires the Coast Guard to project a willingness and a capability to deny terrorists their objectives by making hostile acts as difficult as possible to carry out and, if an attack occurs, to prevent attainment of the group’s goals. In addition, active deterrence requires the Service, using primarily the authorities of the Maritime Transportation Security Act, to establish a “national maritime security regime” by developing and enforcing physical security standards for ports, ships, and the maritime industry.<sup>3</sup> Coast Guard operational forces must be equipped and trained for defensive activities that aim at protecting people, critical infrastructure, and key assets from terrorist attacks; and for offensive activities that aim at interdicting, disrupting, and destroying terrorists that are planning to (e.g., gathering intelligence), or are on their way to, attack a target. Coast Guard prevention forces, responsible for establishing the national maritime security regime, must become subject matter experts in physical security, port operations, and supply chain logistics from point of origin to destination.

All forces must be fully deployable, either in totality or in detachments, for assignments in other regions as the threat or operational conditions change. In addition, for Coast Guard forces to act as deterrents, they must have credibility that they have the skills and weapons to get the job done. Obsolescent forces, or forces with a capability-to-threat mismatch, have low credibility and are easily countered. Finally, these forces must be prepared for all eventualities. They must be ready for the unexpected, since they no longer can trust that “what they see is what they get.” If events go sour on a boarding at sea, Coast Guard forces cannot as easily extract themselves as their land-based brethren can from a vehicle they have stopped or a building they have entered. When it comes to unexpectedly confronting a terrorist threat

---

---

on a ship in the course of a “normal” boarding, Coast Guardsmen at sea are in a “velcro boarding”—they are stuck. They need to be well-trained and well-equipped for counterterrorism operations.

Active deterrence shifts mission execution from relatively straightforward single-unit sorties for discrete, short-duration, maritime incidents to enduring, complex, multi-agency, multi-unit campaigns with detailed tasking orders against numerous, adaptive, and asymmetric threats. Operational commanders, especially those at the tactical (port and regional) level, must be supported, not only by a current operations staff, but also by separate, dedicated staffs for planning and intelligence. In lieu of focusing on reactionary operational decision making as experienced in the firehouse model, field commanders must concentrate on developing extensive knowledge of terrorists’ capabilities, methods, objectives, ideologies, and organizational structures to assess their strengths, vulnerabilities, and centers of gravity. On the basis of this understanding, they can plan and implement reliable protective measures and effective defensive and offensive operations; and can identify requirements to operate against agile adversaries versus rescuing distressed boaters.

In the most far-reaching change, interdiction of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or terrorists en route to attack, demands Coast Guard personnel be prepared to give their lives in defense of their country. It is a hard truth, but in the war on terrorism, they are expected to give their “last full measure.” Just as “every Marine is a rifleman,” Coast Guardsmen at all tactical units must now be trained and equipped to a baseline law enforcement and physical-security standard—weapons and boarding team qualified at a minimum. No matter their specialty, Coast Guard personnel must be well-grounded in basic maritime security tasks to defend themselves and their units. In active deterrence, few operational missions will not require Coast Guardsmen to be armed.<sup>4</sup>

The implications of this new operational paradigm are enormous. It will change the way the Coast Guard organizes, trains, and equips its forces, and how it plans and executes its missions. To its credit, the Coast Guard has recognized these realities and made many key adjustments:

- It has declared counterterrorism shares the same high priority as its traditional search and rescue mission.

- It has established a new tactical command and control organization to replace its fragmented arrangement of independent units, with maritime “sector commands” that merge these units into one organization responsible for all missions.
- To improve training, it recently established a Maritime Law Enforcement Academy in South Carolina by relocating and fusing the Maritime Law Enforcement School in Yorktown, Virginia, and the Boarding Team Member School in Petaluma, California.
- It has established a law enforcement qualification program to increase its ability to train, grow, and retain law enforcement professionals among its enlisted rates—but did not go so far as to authorize a new and separate law enforcement rating.
- It is well on its way to standing up 13 specialized domestic physical security units—marine safety and security teams (MSST)—at critical seaports.
- It commissioned maritime intelligence fusion centers at the Atlantic and Pacific Area commands, assigned a field intelligence support team to vital seaports, and increased staffing at its intelligence coordination center.

It is evident from the types of new units established, and the nature of the terrorist threat, that Coast Guard personnel involved in law enforcement, planning, security, and intelligence require greater levels of specialized skills than was the case before 11 September. They need extensive training in a host of counterterrorism and weapons subjects; frequent requalification; and something as prosaic as security clearances and physical fitness. Personnel operating aircraft and boats that deliver lethal and non-lethal fires require even more specialized training and frequent practice, because of the significant consequences of errors and the danger inherent in their duties.

The hundreds of persons assigned to the expanded intelligence program are even more of a special case. The enlisted personnel are sourced from ratings such as yeoman, storekeeper, subsistence specialist, and marine science technician to become trained intelligence or counterterrorism analysts, with high-level security clearances, including special access. Once in the intelligence program, they can further specialize in

---

---

disciplines such as imagery, electronic, or human intelligence. The upshot of all this is that a significant portion of the Coast Guard's total workforce is becoming highly specialized for maritime security duties.

### **New National Defense Paradigm: Guard the U.S. Coast**

Through a series of actions, the Department of Defense (DOD) is redefining the Coast Guard's national defense function as guarding the homeland and low-end force protection responsibilities. Some key DOD leaders publicly questioned the appropriateness of the Coast Guard's deployment of 11 cutters and four port security units (PSU) to the Persian Gulf for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in view of the magnitude of the Coast Guard's homeland security responsibilities, and the anticipated increase in the homeland threat level.<sup>5</sup> They pointed to the apparent paradox of Navy frigates conducting counterdrug operations, and Navy patrol craft conducting domestic homeland security missions, while the Coast Guard dispatched cutters to Iraq. Some defense officials harbored additional concerns that—short of a declared war—DOD could not rely on the Coast Guard to fulfill its obligations spelled out in the combatant commanders' contingency plans, because its domestic homeland security duties have precedence.

In addition, the Navy is replicating Coast Guard national defense capabilities called out in the 1995 Memorandum of Agreement between the DOD and Department of Transportation (DOT). This memorandum defines five categories of "specialized" capabilities the Coast Guard provides: (1) maritime interception operations (MIO); (2) port operations, security, and defense; (3) military environmental response; (4) peacetime military engagement (PME); and, (5) coastal sea control.<sup>6</sup>

For each category, the Navy has either replicated the capability or can hire it elsewhere. The Navy began its own MIO by establishing boarding schools whose curricula have many similarities to those at the Coast Guard's law enforcement schools.<sup>7</sup> Today, the Navy's MIO capabilities are so good that a U.S.–Liberian accord signed in February 2004 authorizes the Navy to board Liberian registered commercial ships in international waters to search for WMD.<sup>8</sup> The Navy's mobile security squadrons (MSS), naval coastal warfare groups, independent boat units, mobile inshore undersea warfare units, and harbor defense commands provide equivalent capabilities to the Coast Guard's for the port operations,

security, and defense category, and for the coastal sea control category. The MSS, with 175 active-duty personnel operating six 25-foot patrol craft, are the Navy's version of the Coast Guard's PSU. If DOD operational commanders need environmental response capability, they can get it from the Environmental Protection Agency or buy it from a contractor. In a similar fashion, commercial firms such as DynCorp, MPRI, or Kellogg, Brown, and Root can provide PME capabilities in Coast Guard missions.

### **Transformation**

The Coast Guard's essence is the interchangeability of its people and platforms for multiple duties. Although most federal agencies are organized around a single core function, the Coast Guard has multiple core missions. In keeping with its corporate ideology, Coast Guard personnel are assigned to a disparate range of duties, as exemplified by the recent comment of a chief petty officer: "Just a year ago, I was a boarding officer and managing an engineering team on a Coast Guard cutter. These days, I'm helping mariners navigate the challenges and consequences of drug use, and trying to prevent future marine accidents by determining what caused them."<sup>9</sup> This typical Coast Guardsman cites at least four different primary duty functions he has performed: (1) maritime law enforcement boarding officer; (2) senior marine engineering technician; (3) criminal investigator for drug misuse; and (4) maritime transportation safety analyst.

Being multimission has caused the Coast Guard to generalize the professional development and training of its people. For example, it is not uncommon for an officer to spend 25 years as a support specialist, be selected for admiral, and become an operational field commander responsible for missions he has never conducted. In lieu of formal, resident training, the Coast Guard counts on on-the-job training and professional qualifications standards for the majority of its law enforcement personnel; and, unlike DOD, it does not require joint professional military education (JME) for its officers, but it expects to be integrated into military operations and commands in the same manner as the other Services. The multimission doctrine obliges the Coast Guard to place a greater value on being a generalist than a specialist, and to treat those who do support missions as interchangeable with those who do operational missions. Unfortunately, one very harmful result of this doctrine is that other federal agencies,

---

---

especially the law enforcement agencies, and the other military Services have mixed views of the Coast Guard's competencies.<sup>10</sup>

The Coast Guard acknowledges that the costs of maintaining a multimission force are too high. Prior to 11 September, plans were afoot to remove all weapons but side arms from operational shore units with small boats. In a cost-cutting move, the Coast Guard already had removed chemical, biological, and radiological capabilities from its cutters. And when 200 Haitians sailed brazenly into Miami harbor in the fall of 2002, the first Coast Guard unit to spot them and attempt an interdiction was a single-mission, aids-to-navigation vessel with no law enforcement capabilities; it consequently failed in the attempt.

As the Coast Guard embraces this new operational paradigm, the increased demand for a specialized workforce devoted to maritime security, and the associated costs of maintaining workforce competency, preclude multimission career paths for most Coast Guardsmen. It is imprudent operationally and economically to assign highly skilled and trained law enforcement and intelligence personnel with special security clearances to unrelated duty assignments such as boating safety, icebreaking, repairing aids to navigation, oil spill containment, or personnel management.

DOD is sending the Coast Guard a message to stay home and guard the coasts. Underscoring that message is a Navy policy to replicate Coast Guard "non-redundant capabilities," and its less than full commitment to fund the combat systems for all new Coast Guard Deepwater cutters. The Coast Guard's national defense role is being redefined as one of little relevancy and value to the DOD. Aside from the 1995 Memorandum of Agreement, DOD leaders have thought so little of the Coast Guard's national defense contribution that they have never acknowledged the Coast Guard's national defense role in any formal planning or reporting document, such as the Secretary of Defense's Annual Report to the President and the Congress.<sup>11</sup>

### **An Unaffordable Ethos**

New operational and policy paradigms force the Coast Guard to reexamine its multimission ethos. It can no longer afford the training costs; the nation cannot risk

"generalists" going in harm's way against the likes of al Qaeda; and in attempting to be all things to all people, the Coast Guard sets capabilities and personnel expertise for many of its missions to a baseline level. DOD has pounced on this shortcoming. It perceives a major gap in our national capabilities for domestic maritime interdiction. The Commander, U.S. Northern Command, questions whether the Coast Guard can deal with terrorists smuggling a WMD into the country on a vessel.<sup>12</sup> The Chief of Naval Operations wants "a maritime NORAD" and has stood up a Navy working group to do just that.<sup>13</sup>

The attacks of 11 September 2001 were a defining moment for the Coast Guard. Its expanded role in homeland security, and its relocation to the DHS will not be reversed. By maintaining its emphasis on its multimission doctrine, and underestimating the full implications of these two new paradigms, the Coast Guard transforms a large portion of the Service into a domestic, paramilitary guard force, forfeits its status as a valued member of the nation's defense team, and loses the lead for maritime security—at home as well as overseas.

### **Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Victor Davis Hanson, *Ripples of Battle* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> David Lamb, "Coast Guard's Status Is on a Rising Tide," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 February 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Statement of ADM Thomas H. Collins, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; Robert C. Bonner, Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection; and RADM David M. Stone, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Acting Administrator, Transportation Security Administration, Department of Homeland Security, on Maritime Security Status before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation U. S. Senate, 24 March 2004.

<sup>4</sup> This does not mean the entire Coast Guard is trained and equipped for the full range of counterterrorism operations. Instead, specialized quick-reaction units provide enhanced capabilities (e.g., lethality, vertical insertion, opposed boardings).

<sup>5</sup> John Mintz and Vernon Loeb, "Coast Guard Fights to Retain War Role," *The Washington Post*, 31 August 2003, p. A07. As *The Washington Post* reported, some Defense and Navy officials suggested that the Coast Guard restrict itself to "guarding the coast"; that overseas deployments of Coast Guard units be "written out" of current DOD operational

---

---

plans; and that the Navy begin developing organic equivalents for many of the capabilities now provided by the Coast Guard, such as maritime interception and port security in forward areas.

<sup>6</sup> Revised DOD and Department of Transportation “Memorandum of Agreement on the Use of U.S. Coast Guard Capabilities and Resources in Support of the National Military Strategy,” 3 October 1995.

<sup>7</sup> At these schools, “students learn to embark and debark foreign vessels to review documents, and inspect the vessel, its cargo and personnel. Students also learn to identify and control threats and hazards, collect evidence and intelligence information, and manage medical emergencies.” JO2 Sean A. Hughes, USN, “Navy, Coast Guard Team Up for Boarding, Search and Seizure Training,” Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet Web page news item, undated.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Harris, “U.S. Navy Gets OK to Search All Liberian-Flagged Ships for WMD,” Associated Press, 13 February 2004.

<sup>9</sup> LCDR. Todd Offutt, “Coast Guard ‘Columbo,’” *Hawai’i Navy News*, 12 March 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Because of the Coast Guard’s training methods, and because the Coast Guard does not conduct investigations, federal agencies are reluctant to authorize armed Coast Guard personnel to conduct missions on land without elaborate and special provisions—something the Coast Guard urgently requires to improve its security posture in the ports and waterways.

<sup>11</sup> The Navy also has not supported the Senate and House Armed Services Committees receiving any testimony or even informal briefings on the Coast Guard’s national defense capabilities, the National Fleet policy, or the Deepwater Project.

<sup>12</sup> Chris Strohm, “Military Explores Greater Role In Maritime Security,” *GovExec.com*, 3 March 2004.

<sup>13</sup> James W. Crawley, “Top Admiral Urges ‘Maritime NORAD’ for Security on Seas,” *The San Diego Union Tribune*, 5 February 2004.

**Editor’s note:** Reprinted from the August 2004 issue of *Proceedings* with permission; copyright U.S. Naval Institute.

**About the author:**

**Bruce Stubbs** retired with the rank of Captain after serving in the U.S. Coast Guard for 30 years, with duty as a senior strategic and force planner, a combat tour in Vietnam, and command of a major Coast Guard ship conducting maritime security missions. After the 11 September 2001 attacks, he was asked by the Commandant to participate in his strategic task force to define the Coast Guard’s way ahead in homeland security and was a member of the Heritage Foundation study group on homeland security. Currently, he works for Anteon Corporation as a national security consultant. This essay was the winner of the Coast Guard Essay Contest sponsored by Integrated Coast Guard Systems, LLC.

---

---

## Arm the Coast Guard for the War on Terror

*CAPT Steve Vanderplas  
U.S. Coast Guard*

### Introduction

The solution to an under equipped Coast Guard is not to assign the work—such as maritime boardings—to someone else, but to provide the Coast Guard with the resources to do its work properly. The 2001 terrorist attacks brought momentous change to the Coast Guard, and the Service can take pride in the past three years' efforts to adapt to its new operating and political climate. Unfortunately, the immediate task of absorbing new missions has demanded so much attention that the Service has not adequately accounted for how debilitating an influence its pre-11 September readiness shortfalls continue to be, or how much more mission growth it is likely to see. To deal with these factors, the Coast Guard urgently needs a dramatic invigoration of its maritime law enforcement capabilities, beginning with a massive expansion of the Integrated Deepwater Systems (Deepwater) acquisition project. Without focused growth, the Coast Guard will be unprepared for its homeland security missions and unable to support the global war on terror (GWOT).

### Readiness Problems before 11 September

The Coast Guard of 10 September 2001 was in the throes of a severe readiness crisis. The catabolic processes by which it had steadily consumed its infrastructure finally had pushed the Service to the brink of operational meltdown. Then-Commandant Admiral Jim Loy had publicly declared the Coast Guard no longer would maintain readiness on the backs of its sailors, rob maintenance and training budgets to cover the higher operating costs of obsolete cutters, or otherwise disguise the longstanding and systemic funding shortfalls. Instead, he would retire certain ships "early," which in Coast Guard parlance means after two or three times their predicted service lives, but before a replacement is built. He would scale back operations to sustainable levels and maintain only core response capabilities. With these drastic measures, he hoped the Coast Guard could hold its breath until the Deepwater cutters and aircraft came on line.<sup>1</sup> Like the young man this past spring who sold all his possessions and staked his entire financial worth

on a single spin of a roulette wheel, the Coast Guard of 10 September had depleted its surge capacity and placed all its hopes on Deepwater.

The Coast Guard of 10 September was in no position to expand its mission reach to combat terrorism. It saw drug smuggling and illegal immigration as national security threats with terrorist connections, but its open-ocean cutters and aircraft were too old, too slow, too few, and too detached from information networks to compete against well-capitalized smuggling organizations.<sup>2</sup> In addition, it was a foregone conclusion that the Coast Guard could not answer should the Pentagon's call for sustained help enforcing sanctions, supporting expeditionary warfare, or providing maritime deterrents to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These critical limitations were apparent before 11 September; they did not disappear on 11 September; and they still wait to be addressed.

Thus, it was a very unready Coast Guard that on 11 September was handed a multitude of homeland security missions. The work to accept these new missions has consumed the organization for three years. An early priority was implementing adequate antiterrorism and force protection measures at bases that had hitherto given these issues little thought and less investment. Outside the gates, new work included harbor patrols; cruise ship escorts; establishment of new units; security of military load outs; and heightened scrutiny of merchant ships, cargo, and crews. Overseas, the Coast Guard sent two-dozen units and detachments to support Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.<sup>3</sup>

### Current Coast Guard Readiness

This crush of new work has proven that poor readiness, plus accelerated operations tempo, equals further degraded readiness—even with incremental budget growth. The General Accounting Office (GAO) reported to Congress that use of Coast Guard ships, boats, and aircraft has increased 39 percent since 11 September—an increase that would be alarming even if the Coast Guard had not joined the war on terror already at a point of readiness extremis.<sup>4</sup> On top of that, the costs of moving to the new Homeland Security Department and launching initiatives on risk assessment, intelligence coordination, field reorganizations, federal and international security regulations, and maritime domain awareness have diverted both money and managerial attention from the readiness crisis.



---

---

The inevitability of the readiness arithmetic asserts itself even when officials strain to emphasize good news. For example, Commandant Admiral Thomas H. Collins in his 2004 State of the Coast Guard address assessed the condition of his three priorities—readiness, stewardship, and people—as “very, very good today, and it’s getting better.”<sup>5</sup> He detailed many operational successes from the past year and draws encouragement from the news that “the president’s \$7.46-billion budget for the Coast Guard in ’05 is a 9 percent increase over fiscal year ’04.”<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, this optimism is tempered by the Commandant’s own acknowledgment that certain indicator lights on critical readiness measures are glowing bright red. In-flight helicopter engine failures, patrol boat hull breaches, and unscheduled maintenance days for cutters have increased so sharply that the Coast Guard was compelled to alter the timelines of Deepwater to hasten the arrival of replacement assets.

Another sign of readiness desperation apparent in the speech is the purportedly good news that the five Cyclone (PC-1)-class patrol boats transferred from the Navy soon will have white hulls. These are boats the Coast Guard had declined as too tired and too expensive when the Navy offered them up prior to 11 September. Intercepting broken-down Navy ships on their way to the scrap yard helped bring on the current crisis. It is not likely to be a winning strategy for resolving it.

Another limit to Coast Guard preparedness is the modest ambitions of the Deepwater project itself. Despite being pushed as the long-term answer to the Coast Guard’s readiness woes, Deepwater was designed only to replace legacy assets and fulfill 1998 mission requirements. The program was conceived during the mid-1990s amid such an air of budgetary timidity that the task force, whose report provides the most authoritative validation of the need for Deepwater, thought itself bold to declare the continued need for Coast Guard missions at all. It envisioned no mission growth and made only passing references to terrorism.<sup>7</sup>

Deepwater simply was not designed for the Coast Guard’s post-11 September responsibilities, and the GAO’s concerns about the cost of Deepwater miss the point. It should be obvious—even to the GAO, which acknowledges the Service’s increased responsibilities and declining readiness<sup>8</sup>—that the problem is not that Deepwater is too big, but that it is too small. Expanding the program is essential; merely

sustaining it would be negligent; reducing it would be reckless.

### **Long-Term Mission Growth Potential**

Coming to terms with the limited aspirations of Deepwater is important because it is likely the Coast Guard has seen only the beginning of post-11 September mission growth. President George W. Bush likens the GWOT to the Cold War, and warns that it will be a protracted struggle lasting many years.<sup>9</sup> This prediction is shared by eminent historian James Schlesinger, who notes, “Bin Laden and his ilk may be fanatics, but they are deadly serious and thoroughly persistent. We must anticipate, therefore, a conflict that will continue for many years.”<sup>10</sup>

It takes little imagination to see how this long-term struggle could require the Coast Guard to assume maritime sovereignty roles far greater than its already formidable task of preventing terrorists from using or disrupting the U.S. maritime transportation system. Two years before becoming National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice spoke on the “responsibilities of being on the right side of history,” and noted “the United States stands today as the only military force of any consequence in the world capable of doing the things that the world really needs done.”<sup>11</sup> What Dr. Rice noted years ago is even more evident today. The scale, efficiency, and creativity of our national security investments have created such insurmountable barriers to entry that no nation aspires to build a military that might challenge us in full-scale conflict, and few nations are capable of providing significant assistance in a world that still needs considerable policing against transnational and asymmetric threats.

This lack of partners in a still dangerous world makes it plausible to predict a long-term scenario in which—despite significant gains in establishing democracies and market economies in the Middle East—the persistence of international Islamist terrorist groups or other destabilizing forces requires the U.S. military to enforce a *Pax Americana* to sustain the global economy and protect the advances of freedom. Abroad, the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, augmented by ad hoc or regional coalitions, could patrol some or all of the major maritime choke points—Gibraltar, Suez, Panama, Malacca, Hormuz—preventing smuggling of weapons of mass destruction and other first-order contraband, suppressing pirate and terrorist attacks on shipping, and protecting

---

---

canal and port infrastructure. Closer to home within the exclusive economic zone and the Western Hemisphere drug transit zones, the nation would expect more-capable enforcement of fiscal, immigration, sanitation, and customs laws than that delivered before 11 September.

### **Fundamental Coast Guard Work**

Enforcing U.S. maritime sovereignty will require more ships to be boarded, in more parts of the world, and for more reasons—and this work necessarily will fall to the Coast Guard. Recent suggestions to overcome *posse comitatus* legal restrictions and have the Navy contribute more directly to homeland security, do open for discussion the possibility of assigning the Navy the leadership role in open-ocean interdiction or visit, board, search, and seizure operations.<sup>12</sup> After all, the Navy has supported counterdrug operations for a generation, and most boardings conducted by Coast Guard law enforcement detachments embarked on Navy ships do require technical assistance from the Navy ship. The Navy has interdicted prohibited materials under the Proliferation Security Initiative, and special operations forces have conducted untold boardings. In addition, the Coast Guard does not have the operational reach to be in all the places where vessels need to be boarded. Despite these considerations, two overriding reasons call for beefing up the Coast Guard instead of handing the job to the Navy.

First, assigning the work to the Navy would create within that Service the very tension between defense and homeland security missions that caused Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to question the Coast Guard's continued role in expeditionary warfare.<sup>13</sup> The Homeland Security Department was created specifically to avoid entrusting domestic security to agencies with higher priorities. If large-scale conflict breaks out, the Navy will be obliged to resolve competition for its resources in favor of defense operations. Thus, it is imprudent to ask the Navy to accept responsibilities it could fulfill only on a “we’re there ’til you need us” basis.

The second reason is the fundamental distinction between Coast Guard missions and Navy missions. The Coast Guard is America’s bridge between maritime civil enforcement authority and military capability. It is beneficial to have a Navy ship conduct interdiction operations in support of the Proliferation Security Initiative, but what happens when the boarding team

encounters illegal activities or unsafe conditions unrelated to what they came aboard looking for? Under what authority will they address fiscal, immigration, sanitation, or customs violations they encounter? With what training and operational processes will they engage in interagency consultation and secure the situation in a manner that protects the government’s prosecutorial, environmental, and other interests?

Questions of statutory authority aside, it is not realistic to ask the Navy to master the intricacies of establishing a legal basis for boarding imperfectly identified vessels; stopping vessels and getting aboard without endangering either the vessel crews or the boarding teams; accounting for all ship’s spaces; examining cargo, crew, and vessel documents; applying international and U.S. safety and environmental standards; preparing cases for subsequent prosecution; transferring contraband, evidence, and suspects; and otherwise conducting the work of civilian law enforcement professionals in addition to its present employment. Boarding ships at sea and applying the rule of law to the messy details are Coast Guard work. The solution to an under equipped Coast Guard is not to ask someone else to do the work, but to equip the Coast Guard to do its work properly.

### **Expand Deepwater**

Thus, the great and inescapable necessity is to make Deepwater bigger and get it delivered sooner. Unfortunately, current Deepwater discussions are mired in debates over whether it should take 15 or only 10 years to equip the Coast Guard for its pre-11 September missions. Neither plan will do. The answer is to build to perform the missions the Coast Guard reasonably expects to see over the next 20 years—or at least to the missions it already has. The GAO has noted a 39 percent increase in Coast Guard resource utilization. That should be the minimum starting point for considering how much larger Deepwater ought to be.

But expansion alone is insufficient. It also is necessary to modify the concept of Deepwater’s high-end Maritime Security Cutters to reflect their likely employment in the GWOT. Envisioning neither mission growth nor an extended struggle against terrorists, the 1999 task force merely called for flexibility and multimission capability. Today, we can see the need for specialized platforms capable of accompanying expeditionary strike groups and delivering full-service law enforcement and maritime interdiction operations.

---

---

These cutters should be crewed and equipped to overcome any resistance in getting aboard a target vessel (special forces qualifications are not out of the question). They should have the equipment and training to discover and secure any concealed contraband, to neutralize chemical-biological-radiological and other hazards, and to handle any other boarding contingencies. In addition, there need to be enough of these platforms for the Coast Guard to promise their sufficient availability to the Navy. In short, the Maritime Security Cutters should support boardings so reliably and so well that no expeditionary strike group commander would want to entrust any boarding to any other unit.

### Making the Case

The Coast Guard has not come to terms with how much the increased operational tempo has exacerbated its readiness problems. It has not publicly acknowledged that Deepwater will arrive too late and buy too few operating assets to meet current mission requirements.<sup>14</sup> And, it shrinks from even contemplating how mission requirements will increase if world events follow a predictable path.

The Coast Guard urgently needs bold and focused growth to meet the missions that properly fall within its portfolio. Unfortunately, the greatest obstacle is the Service's own reluctance to calculate the full cost of fulfilling its statutory obligations. For too long, the Coast Guard budget cycle has consisted of force fitting budget requests within preset growth limits, telling Congress it can maintain current services with whatever whittled down figure survives, quietly figuring out which pieces of the infrastructure must be allowed to atrophy to keep things running, and praying for a supplemental appropriation to get past the next maintenance crisis.

To end this destructive routine, the Coast Guard needs to find the multiplication key on its calculator and present a theoretical budget based on actual mission requirements. Then the Service needs to make the case in public before both the administration and Congress. It may ruffle feathers, but getting the Deepwater assets the Service needs is well worth the risk.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> ADM James M. Loy, "Transformation: State of the Coast Guard Address," speech at Andrews Air Force Base, 22 March

2001, available at [www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/Loy/SOCCG01.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/Loy/SOCCG01.htm).

<sup>2</sup> ADM James M. Loy, "A Unique Instrument of National Security," speech to Naval War College, Newport, RI, 14 December 1998, available at [www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/Loy/NWC.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/Loy/NWC.html); and "Winning the Drug War," speech to U.S. Naval Institute, Annapolis, MD, 27 April 2000, available at [www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/Loy/USNIDrugWar4-27.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/Loy/USNIDrugWar4-27.html).

<sup>3</sup> Two high-endurance cutters, two helicopters, eight patrol boats, four port security units, six law enforcement detachments, one buoy tender, and one pollution response detachment.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret T. Wrightson, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, "Coast Guard: Key Management and Budget Challenges for Fiscal Year 2004 and Beyond," Testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, GAO-04-636T, 7 April 2004, available at [www.gao.gov/new.items/d04636t.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04636t.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> ADM. Thomas H Collins, "State of the Coast Guard," speech at National Press Club, Washington, DC, 25 March 2004.

<sup>6</sup> There is some confusion in this claim. U.S. Coast Guard Fiscal Year 2004 Report: Fiscal Year 2003 Performance Report, Fiscal Year 2005 Budget in Brief reported a \$7.46 billion budget for 2005, but that is only \$430 million or 6.3% more than 2004. Operating expenses were budgeted to increase 9.6%, but that is a more narrow claim, one that obscures the 7.6% decrease in acquisition, construction, and improvements.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Coast Guard, Report of the Interagency Task Force on Coast Guard Roles and Missions, 3 December 1999, available at [www.uscg.mil/news/reportsandbudget/21stcentury/executive.html](http://www.uscg.mil/news/reportsandbudget/21stcentury/executive.html).

<sup>8</sup> Wrightson testimony, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> George W. Bush, "Remarks at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," 6 November 2003, available at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html).

<sup>10</sup> James Schlesinger, "The Strong Horse? Failing to Stay the Course in Iraq Would Be a Provocation for bin Laden," *Opinion Journal*, 25 April 2004, available at [www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110005002](http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110005002).

<sup>11</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "American Foreign Policy for the 21st Century," speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, 15 January 1999, available at [www.lawac.org/speech/rice.html](http://www.lawac.org/speech/rice.html).

---

---

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Webb, “*Posse Comitatus* and the Military in Domestic Law Enforcement,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 2004, pp. 44-45; and LCDR Geoffrey A. C. Mones, USN, “The Coast Guard Needs Help from the Navy and Marine Corps,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 2004, pp. 40-45.

<sup>13</sup> John Mintz and Vernon Loeb, “Coast Guard Fights to Retain War Role,” *The Washington Post*, 31 August 2003, p. A07.

<sup>14</sup> I remain skeptical that unmanned aerial vehicles, automated identification systems, or other innovations will substantially reduce the Coast Guard’s requirement for Deepwater cutters and aircraft. It seems more likely such tools will increase the number of vessels the Coast Guard is aware of and will want to subject to the scrutiny of live boarding teams.

**Editor’s note:** Reprinted from the August 2004 issue of *Proceedings* with permission; copyright U.S. Naval Institute.

**About the author:**

**Captain Vanderplas** is assigned to the Department of Homeland Security Headquarters Integration Team. He holds master’s degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the College of William and Mary and was the Coast Guard fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



---

---

# Building the USCG Common Operational Picture for Maritime Domain Awareness

*LCDR Todd Hannah  
LT Kurt Clarke  
Jeff McDowell  
U.S. Coast Guard*

## Introduction

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is uniquely positioned as both a military armed force as well as a federal agency. The Coast Guard has worked to meet the increased need for cooperation between military and civil agencies through the development of a USCG common operational picture (USCG COP) for Homeland Security that bridges the divide between military and civilian authorities, and includes the consolidation of data sources solely available to the Coast Guard. Portions of the complete USCG COP can be shared with both the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

## COP and Maritime Domain Awareness

The USCG COP exists as a reality today. This recently developed COP capability is employed in command centers and cutters throughout the Coast Guard every day, and has become an integral tool for executing a variety of Coast Guard missions. The geographic scope of the USCG COP is global and promotes Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) to enable Coast Guard operations far out on the high seas for fisheries enforcement, to the Caribbean for counterdrug operations, to littoral areas for search and rescue, right into the harbors for vessel traffic services, and Captain of the Port security operations. The USCG COP's initial operating capability is a key new enabler of MDA.

The USCG COP is not a single computer system or application, but instead is a conceptual collection of many diverse data sources brought together into a single, common, and managed information space. The COP can be shared wholly, or filtered into discrete relevant pieces, among multiple commands at multiple leadership echelons, and displayed or used on multiple interoperable systems. The USCG COP Working Group (COP WG) has defined the COP as "a display of

relevant information shared by more than one command. The COP provides a shared display of friendly, enemy/suspect, and neutral tracks on a map with applicable geographically referenced overlays and data enhancements. The COP contains a decision maker toolset fed by a distributed and exchanged track and object database(s). Each user can filter and contribute to these databases according to their area of responsibility or command role. The COP environment may include distributed data processing, data exchange, collaboration tools, and communications capabilities. The COP may include information relevant to the tactical and strategic level of command. This includes, but is not limited to, geographic information systems data, assets, activities and elements, planning data, readiness data, intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance data, imagery, and environmental data. A common operational picture facilitates collaborative planning and assists all echelons to achieve situational awareness."

In recent years, numerous initiatives have begun, or are in progress, that seek to improve MDA. Some of these include: establishing local port level surveillance and sensor systems (Joint Harbor Operations Centers, Project Hawkeye); upgrading capabilities in Area, District, and Section Command Centers with Global Command and Control Systems; funding USCG Mobile Command Centers; expanding classified network connectivity to the port level; combining Marine Safety and Operations functions at new integrated maritime command centers; and, establishing the Inland Rivers Movement Center to track hazardous cargo carrying barges on the Western Rivers. These initiatives, as well as the two major Coast Guard transformational procurements of Rescue-21 and Integrated Deepwater System, all have one common linkage— they all converge at the one USCG COP.

## Development

Over the last few years, numerous initiatives have been undertaken to improve MDA that have vastly increased the quantity and availability of data. New improvements to Coast Guard sensor capabilities, including new coastal radars, Automated Identification System (AIS) receivers, and surveillance equipment installed at US ports, waterways, and coastal areas, combined with upgrades to the underlying Coast Guard communications infrastructure and classified connectivity, have exponentially increased the quantity of disparate data sources available to Coast Guard decision makers. The need to integrate this data into a packaged and singular view, common and

networked to provide information for all decision makers, became increasingly evident. The COP WG was formed in April 2003 to oversee these efforts.

Today, all new data sources integrate into the one USCG COP. The COP WG drafted a COP concept of operations (CONOPS), signed by the Coast Guard flag officer for Operations Capability, that describes a logical information architecture for both a classified and a sensitive but unclassified (SBU) COP view. The COP CONOPS directs all USCG COP nodes to participate in the COP synchronization tools (CST) environment, so that common data is consistently synchronized to all users across the USCG enterprise. The CST also allows the Coast Guard to produce a single, managed USCG COP picture that can be shared with partners in homeland security in both DHS and DOD.

### COP Tools

The backbone for the architecture and track management services for USCG COP rests on the Global Command and Control System – Joint (GCCS-J). GCCS-J is deployed at all top tier USCG command centers and the embedded COP synchronization tools provide the capability described in the CONOPS architecture. Expertly trained COP “watchstanders” at both the Coast Guard’s Atlantic and Pacific Area Command Centers develop, manage, and maintain the COP picture 24/7 on their GCCS-J servers.

COP operators in the field have a wide variety of COP tools available to access the managed COP track database. The end-user can access the USCG COP using a GCCS-J box directly, a GCCS-J client, any Command and Control Personal Computer (C2PC), a Web Browser, or various other USCG developed software applications (e.g. Sector Command Center Project Hawkeye Command and Control (C2) System, Shipboard Command and Control System). No single application “is” USCG COP since many different ones can access the common picture. Future application development and deployment of new systems under the major Coast Guard transformational “Deepwater” program is expected to

field improved capability that can leverage the existing USCG COP architecture.

### Sensitive but Unclassified COP (SBU COP)

COP consumers who only work with unclassified data (e.g., units without classified network connectivity) can access an SBU picture from collection servers before the data goes to the classified high side. This solution is the SBU COP. A collection server located at each Coast Guard District aggregates all SBU data feeds in the District area of operations (AOR) and also acts as a gateway providing the data to C2PC clients. A single SBU COP collection server at USCG HQ provides a gateway for national level SBU COP consumers (e.g., DHS). The information is also forwarded to a high assurance guard (HAG) for transfer to the classified side. (See Figure 1)

### Classified COP

The complete USCG COP is at the GENSER SECRET level. The SBU COP information coming through the HAG up to the classified network is automatically injected into the classified COP. At each area command center, the COP watchstander merges this SBU data with information received from other secure means. This complete COP is then replicated to secure track servers located at Districts and Sectors. Coast Guard intelligence centers also receive the COP that is produced in this collaborative environment. (See Figure 2)

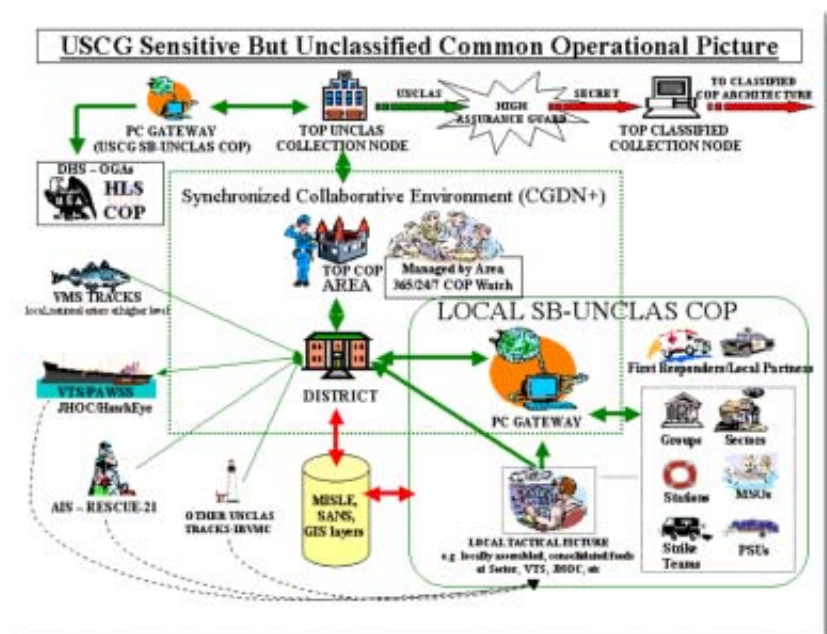


Figure 1- Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) COP Architecture

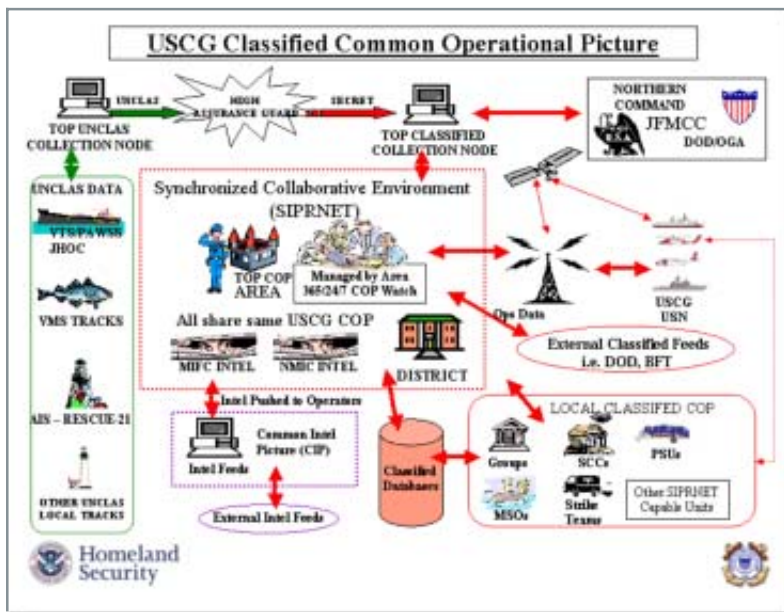


Figure 2- Classified COP Architecture

### COP Track Data Feeds

The Coast Guard builds a single COP from data sources originating both externally from DOD sources and internally from those sources that are exclusively available to the Coast Guard. The following track data feeds are operationally available in the USCG COP today:

- Classified DOD feeds shared with combatant commands
- USCG cutter and aircraft track reports
- National Marine Fisheries Service Vessel Management Service (VMS)
- USCG Vessel Traffic System (VTS)
- USCG Port and Waterways Safety System (PAWSS)
- Joint Harbor Operations Command (JHOC)
- USCG Inland Rivers (Inland Rivers Vessel Movement Center)
- Automated Identification System (AIS)

### Lessons Learned from Implementation

The Coast Guard built the COP using the CST architecture for several beneficial reasons, but there

have also been challenges and lessons learned in implementing a CST architecture. The benefits have included:

- Bandwidth. The use of CST greatly reduces the bandwidth needed to maintain an accurate and timely COP. The CST environment transmits only those changes to the picture as the system is updated, eliminating the need for large “batch” broadcasts across the network.
- Operators. The CST environment enables an accurate picture to be maintained by remote sites without a dedicated watchstander at each location. The command centers for each Area Commander (Atlantic and Pacific) both have a dedicated 24/7 COP watchstander. No other command

centers, including Coast Guard Headquarters, require dedicated COP watchstanders. Using the CST environment, the track management required to maintain an accurate picture for the entire Service, including the Commandant at USCG Headquarters, can be done at any node in the network.

- Interoperability. All combatant commanders (COCOM) operating within the Coast Guard’s AOR have adopted the CST architecture, and have agreed to conduct any COP data exchanges via CST. As some of the COCOM AOR’s overlap both Atlantic Area and Pacific Area, the COCOM desire to maintain only one CST channel for the Coast Guard, which originates at USCG Headquarters.

Challenges in the form of problematic issues have included:

- Track Deletions. The problem of unauthorized track deletions is a risk present whenever a CST environment is implemented. An unauthorized deletion in any COP node can potentially be propagated throughout the entire CST network. Steps have been taken to mitigate this risk. The correct balance has been sought between the permissions of authorized COP users and the broad need to lock down the CST to prevent unauthorized track deletions. The first step was to promote

---

---

increased training and awareness of the risk. Over-the-shoulder mobile training teams were contracted to visit each USCG COP-capable command center and conduct one-week of onsite training. Second, the C2PC architecture was groomed to tighten controls on the write/delete permissions of units using C2PC. Finally, the Coast Guard tightened the access control lists for the C2PC track database gateways. While the vulnerabilities present in the CST for an authorized COP user to inadvertently delete COP track data can never be entirely eliminated, the Coast Guard has taken action to reduce the risks.

- **Track Limits.** Currently, the user is limited to 11,300 tracks available to be maintained on a single track server. While this limit can be constraining, there are several remedies to the problem. First, the tracks are filtered. A filter has been built so that Atlantic Area does not maintain Pacific Area's data, and vice versa. Second, dual track servers to provide redundancy and additional track capability will be provided to top COP nodes. The GCCS 4.x transition is expected to initially increase the track limits to 20,000, and eventually track limits are expected to be eliminated altogether in future 4.x releases.

### Forecast

The COP is an operational decision support tool that is employed every day in the Coast Guard that helps achieve situational awareness. It is deployed at higher headquarters, the new Sector Command Centers, and at mobile assets and is applicable to the full range of the Service's missions. The systems used include GCCS-J, C2PC, and GCCS-like variants such as shipboard command and control system (SCCS) for cutters, Hawkeye for Sector Command Centers, and VTS for port level vessel traffic control. Both classified and unclassified data feeds are in the COP. Operational commanders use COP today: it will be continually improved upon in spiral developments.

The COP synchronization tools have gained strong support throughout the DOD command and control community. The use of a single CST channel between Coast Guard Headquarters and the DOD is a key solution to eliminating data ringing and data redundancy.

Despite growing pains of building and implementing the CST architecture, the lessons the Coast Guard has learned, and the benefits derived have made CST a successful part of the its plan to enable a robust Coast Guard COP.

The Coast Guard is leading the way for DOD and DHS interoperability by building a COP from data sources uniquely available to the USCG (e.g., VTS, PAWWS, VMS). Increasingly, the Coast Guard has received requests to support interagency and DOD efforts in the homeland security mission by providing USCG COP data. Currently, the USCG COP provides data feeds to outside interagency partners such as NORTHCOM's Interagency Operating Picture, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency's Project Homeland, and the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center. The COP is also shared with the COCOMs. As the Coast Guard's data sources grow with increased sensor and surveillance capability down to the port level, the USCG COP will become more robust and MDA will be greatly amplified.

**Editor's Note:** An earlier version of this article was published in the Spring 2004 edition of *U.S. Coast Guard Systems Times*. Reprinted with permission.

### About the Authors:

**LCDR Robert "Todd" Hannah** is the Tactical Systems Branch Chief in the Office of Command and Control Architecture. He is 1991 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and holds a Masters of Information Technology Management degree from the Naval Postgraduate School. **LT Kurt Clarke** is a 1994 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and holds a Masters degree from the Naval Postgraduate School. He is currently a Command Center Systems Program Manager in the Office of Command and Control Architecture, and has overseen new systems integration, the transition to DHS, and the construction of the USCG COP. **Jeff McDowell** is currently the USCG Program Manager for GCCS-J. He represents the Coast Guard as a voting member on the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff GCCS-J COP Working Group, and has led the Service-wide plan to implement the COP capability. He is a retired U.S. Navy Operations Specialist who holds a degree in Computer Systems.



---

---

## What Was the Coast Guard Doing in Iraq?

*VADM (ret.) James Hull  
CDR Cari Thomas,  
LCDR Joe DiRenzo III  
U.S. Coast Guard*

### Introduction

On 29 January 2003, General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, was asked, “The Coast Guard announced today [it is] sending eight cutters, 600 people, to the Persian Gulf, which I understand is the first time they have been dispatched to a combat zone since the Vietnam War. What’s the thinking behind that, and what’s their mission going to be?” General Myers answered, “For the Coast Guard, primarily for port and harbor and waterway security. That’s what they do best.”

Immediately, questions followed about why the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security should remain a military expeditionary force, as part of a power projection strategy overseas. After all, the Coast Guard suffers from its own readiness issues and is embarked on a multiyear, multimillion-dollar strategy to address deficiencies and modernize much of its fleet. Why, in the face of our current homeland security threats, should the nation’s primary maritime security force deploy overseas?

The answer is because we are good at it. Even with the Coast Guard’s recent move to the Department of Homeland Security, our authorities allow us to work at home, on the high seas, or in a foreign theater. We can speak the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System and Incident Command System. We still work with the Department of Defense, maritime industry officials of many countries, and a variety of law enforcement agencies, navies, and coast guards. General Myers revalidated one of the Service’s primary missions and reinforced our long commitment to national defense and expeditionary operations.

Coast Guard contributions to a wide-range of missions in support of in-theater combatant commanders align precisely with President George W. Bush’s National Security Strategy, which includes defending, preserving, and extending the peace. With forces that can play in both the home and the away games, the Coast Guard



**USCG in Iraq – Mina al Bakr oil platform**

remains equipped to participate in whatever portion of power projection the President decides to invoke.

### Defending the Peace: Military Power

Defending the peace includes defeating global terrorism, preventing future attacks, and transforming our national security institutions to meet new challenges and opportunities. A 1995 memorandum of agreement between the Secretaries of Defense and Transportation identifies Coast Guard core capabilities applicable to the national defense role, and provides the operational framework for interoperability. The components of the agreement include: port security and defense, maritime interception operations, coastal sea control operations, peacetime military engagement, and military environment response operations. The agreement, still valid today, states that the Coast Guard is “a branch of the Armed Forces at all times . . . required to maintain a state of readiness to function as a specialized Service in the Navy in times of war.”

The Coast Guard is the recognized leader in port security, at home and overseas. Overseas missions are performed primarily by port security units (PSU): self-

---

---

contained units staffed mostly by reserve members that operate in conjunction with harbor defense commands, mobile inshore undersea warfare units, and in-shore boat units as part of the Naval Coastal Warfare Plan. PSU have contributed significantly to operations in Umm Qasr and Bahrain, providing command and control for port and shoreside security and escort operations. In addition, the Coast Guard patrol boat *Wrangell* (WPB-1332) was assigned to protect British minesweepers clearing the entrance to Umm Qasr. In this 40-mile swath of water, comprised of a 200-yard wide channel, the *Wrangell's* 110-foot size was ideal. Trained at the Coast Guard's Special Mission Training Center at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, the PSU fit well within the combatant commander's requirement for a proficient, expeditionary, self-contained port security contingent.

In recent years, the Navy has been involved overseas in the visit, board, search, and seizure mission, particularly in the Persian Gulf since the end of Operation DESERT STORM. This effort recently was expanded to support detection and interception of al Qaeda and Taliban leaders attempting to flee Afghanistan and Pakistan. Coast Guard personnel provide the Navy with boarding expertise taken from extensive experience in combating drug and alien smugglers.

Law Enforcement Detachment 205, embarked on the USS *Chinook* (PC-9), located and secured a large Iraqi military equipment and weapons cache hidden in caves in southern Iraq. It is likely that members of the Republican Guard had prepositioned this equipment for future urban combat. Also in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the high-endurance cutter *Boutwell's* (WHEC-719) boarding teams worked with HMS Chatham and the Danish frigate *Olsen Fischer* to intercept and board suspected smugglers close to the Iraq-Iran border.

The cutter *Dallas* (WHEC-716), positioned off the west coast of Syria, intercepted fugitives from Saddam Hussein's regime who were attempting to flee by sea. She also provided force protection to Navy battle groups in the eastern Mediterranean. In a 13 April 2003 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper*, Rear Admiral John Stufflebeen said, "Whether they [Hussein regime] stay or whether they decide to go, we're going to work this part of the water hard to make sure that if they do go, we catch them." He referred to the *Dallas* as "the

lead dog," sniffing around any ships moving through the eastern Mediterranean.

Military missions for the Coast Guard are an important part of the national strategy, and an instrumental part of those forces that defend the peace. The National Fleet concept, signed in 1998 and revalidated in 2001, speaks directly to Coast Guard-Navy integration. It is a cornerstone document that reaffirms the Service's expeditionary capability and the immediate need for a modernized fleet to replace ships such as the *Dallas*, commissioned in 1967.

### **Preserving the Peace: Diplomatic Power**

The Coast Guard has capabilities to preserve the peace. We work with our hemispheric neighbors in counterdrug operations, and with international partners to provide safe vessel standards across the globe. With our eyes squarely on the homeland security ball, the Coast Guard also sends expeditionary forces to help preserve the peace overseas. At the request of the regional combat commanders, eight Coast Guard 110-foot patrol boats are deployed in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Operating in various locations within the Central and European Command areas of responsibility, these vessels provide a layered harbor defense, as well as serving as quick response maritime interceptors. Coast Guard patrol boats have also escorted the British vessel *Sir Galahad* with the first shipment of humanitarian aid to Iraq. On 11 April 2003, the *Wrangell*, *Adak* (WPB-1333), *Aquidneck* (WPB-1309), and *Firebolt* (PC-10)—with a Coast Guard law enforcement detachment embarked onboard—escorted the *M/V Manar*, with more than 700 tons of vital humanitarian supplies, into port.

During Operation DESERT STORM, the Iraqi-generated oil spill in the Persian Gulf was an ecological disaster, but quick Coast Guard response saved precious natural resources and contained the damage to the environment. The Service's capability in this area is unmatched. Through its extensive international interests, the Coast Guard has instant access to the largest worldwide database of oil spill response capabilities, which can be brought to bear as circumstances dictate. The *Walnut* (WLB-205), a seagoing buoy tender with oil spill containment system capability, was sent to support IRAQI FREEDOM operations. In conjunction with the Coast Guard National Strike Force teams and the Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System, the Coast

---

---

Guard provides formidable pollution response and an element of national security.

Worldwide, the Coast Guard receives more requests for engagement operations from combatant commanders than it could ever support. Like many navies of the world, we perform border security missions and fisheries and law enforcement duties, and there is a natural humanitarian link. Central Command, European Command, and Pacific Command all use a variety of Coast Guard platforms for worldwide engagement missions. Through these and other engagement opportunities, the Coast Guard builds on common interests to promote global security, all in the name of preserving peace.

### **Extending the Peace: Economic Power**

Ensuring the unfettered flow of commerce, both import and export, is critical to most national economies. In Iraq, preserving oil resources for that nation's economic future was an important objective in extending the peace. Just 13 miles off the Iraqi coast, 39 Coast Guard reservists secured the Mina-al-Bakr offshore oil terminals in the opening phases of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. More than a million barrels of oil a day flowed through this terminal before the war. The Coast Guard's action will help ensure continuation of the flow, a major source of income that will aid in the reconstitution of Iraq.

Placing navigation aids in approaches and harbors is important for the safe navigation of the ships that import and export goods. In a post-conflict environment, the aids-to-navigation program is an essential military mission, which currently only the Coast Guard is able to perform. The *Walnut* demonstrated this expeditionary capability in support of IRAQI FREEDOM, maintaining the 41-mile navigable channel

heading from Iraq's primary southern port, Umm Qasr, to the sea. Because of years of neglect, the buoys along this route were either in a terrible state of repair or had been removed. The *Walnut* provided a well-marked channel for humanitarian aid arrivals, vital to coalition objectives. In all cases, establishing a well-maintained seaway provided greater safety and security for mariners transiting to these ports.

### **An Expeditionary Force Multiplier**

The Coast Guard adds measurable value to the larger National Security Strategy goals, and its capabilities are an extraordinary force multiplier. From Operation IRAQI FREEDOM lessons learned, to historical data from ongoing maritime interdiction operations, to recent responses to large environmental defense operations, the Coast Guard's unique skill sets must be continually capitalized on and maintained. We carefully assessed our expected demands when contemplating deploying eleven cutters and four port security units to the Gulf, and the Department of Homeland Security steadfastly supported the combatant commanders' request for Coast Guard expeditionary forces. The Coast Guard's participation had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on our nation's future.

**Editor's note:** Reprinted from the August 2003 issue of *Proceedings* with permission; copyright U.S. Naval Institute.

### **About the authors:**

**VADM James Hull** was Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area, until July 2004.

**CDR Cari Thomas** was the executive assistant to the Atlantic Area Commander.

**LCDR Joe DiRenzo III** is the Atlantic Area's Anti-Terrorism Coordinator.

---

---

# Coast Guard Deployment and Outload: Integrated Support Command Portsmouth and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM

*LCDR Gavin Wentz  
U.S. Coast Guard*

## Introduction

The Coast Guard Integrated Support Command (ISC) Portsmouth prepared Coast Guard members and cutters for international deployment, and supported domestic military outload operations throughout the Mid-Atlantic area, all while improving processes and systems to increase ISC Portsmouth's ability to more effectively provide logistics services to the Fifth Coast Guard District. In addition to meeting the logistical support needs of the command, 18 tenant commands, and the Fifth District, ISC Portsmouth took on the task of simultaneously providing the logistical support that was instrumental in the success of five contingency operations: two contingency groups deploying to Europe and, notably, to the Middle East for service as PATFORSWA (Patrol Forces Southwest Asia); two military outload operations; and a reserve orientation program.

## ISC's Support for Deployment

ISC Portsmouth, like ISCs throughout the Coast Guard, has significant latitude in meeting their logistical support requirements. ISC Portsmouth personnel rose to the challenge for managerial oversight and the establishment of logistics support organizations that provided personnel, finance, engineering, supply, and transportation support from the outset. Beginning in late 2002, ISC Portsmouth began planning for the arrival of four 110-foot Coastal Patrol Boats, their crews, and a forward support unit (FSU) preparing for international deployment. Augmenting these boat forces were personnel from tactical law enforcement teams (TACLET). Integrating and effectively executing all

facets of logistics support, ISC Portsmouth provided the support that allowed these two contingency teams to properly prepare, plan, and deploy. A second squadron of five 110-foot Coast Patrol Boats and a forward support unit arrived in early 2003, and ISC again went through the same evolution.

The ISC team provided engineering support eventually for preparing nine cutters for international deployment. Nearly 750 naval engineering maintenance items were rapidly completed to ready the cutters for deployment. These items ranged from the complete replacement of the two main engines on one cutter that had neared the end of their life, to weapons upgrades, and to the installation of advanced electronics. Some of these electronics were military in nature and not generally found on Coast Guard ships; thus, contractors had to be brought in to work on these systems. Damage control and safety requirements were rigidly enforced and corrected, and all systems were groomed. All of the cutters in the respective clusters were selected from the same class and outfitted the same way. The cutters in this initial group were readied within an astonishing window of three weeks in late October 2002. The second cluster going to the Mediterranean was ready on the same schedule in January 2003.

Crew readiness was another top priority. The ISC's medical staff provided physicals to more than 300 members of these contingency groups ensuring each person was medically qualified for international



**Cutter Engines Changeout**

deployment. Additionally, the staff prepared and administered all required inoculations including anthrax, hepatitis, and smallpox; conducted over 800 laboratory tests; and prescribed over 215 pairs of eyeglasses. While completing these physicals and inoculations, the medical team was also able to maintain normal support to the eight cutters homeported at ISC Portsmouth, along with the other ten tenant commands, and Hampton Roads area Coast Guard members. The personnel division staff seamlessly integrated and absorbed the workload providing personnel support to this surge of members, including personal data record and payroll support. Family support included direct mailings to members and various “town hall” style meetings between the command, deploying personnel, and their families.

The logistics staff provided shipping and receiving support, equipment staging and issue, facilities for training, and watch sections for the cutters being prepared for deployment. Responding to the large need for shipment of supplies and equipment supporting these contingency groups, the warehouse staff took quick action to provide space and facilities for the assembly of all materials required to support this international deployment. The staff also coordinated and provided support for training areas around the ISC for the evolution preparing the contingency team for deployment. As a result, the use of on-base training rooms was maximized while the disruption to normal activities supporting the 18 tenant commands was held to a minimum. Responding to the need to maintain watches on the cutters while the team members were training, the logistics staff took over live watches on the cutters while the members were conducting training away from the piers. This watch augmentation allowed the contingency teams to make the best use of their time and complete all training before deploying against a very aggressive schedule. Special attention was paid to inculcation in anti-terrorism/force protection and anti-chemical, biological, and radiological weapons countermeasures. A

Navy special warfare unit fitted gas masks for the deployees. The watch augmentation also allowed the deploying personnel to have leave time with their families before their extended deployments.

Cargo ships took the cutters overseas, and this was done at Portsmouth since it had the pier and assembly space. However, in order to get the cutters aboard these contracted vessels, personnel from the Coast Guard Yard, the Maintenance and Logistics Command (MLC), and the ISCs at Portsmouth and Miami had to assemble four cradles at ISC Portsmouth. With the coordination and contracting support of the Military Sealift Command as funded from MLC, and with industrial support and personnel from other ISC tenants filling in for contract workers when they were restricted from work, in just a week’s time the *Industrial Challenger* and *BBC Spain* were loaded with the cutters. The crew of the cutters and support personnel flew to theater and met the vessels upon arrival. Indeed, the development of these cradles had been pioneered by the Coast Guard Yard during the late 1990s under a working agreement with the Department of Defense, and they were recovered from storage at Barstow, California, for use in this operation. The use of cradles had only been practiced but never used. Now, it is through such a project put firmly into practice, that Coast Guard assets can be deployed anywhere throughout the world.



Loading a USCG cutter for deployment

---

---

## Outload Operations

Meeting the need to prepare for and offer continuing support to military outload operations at two ports in the Mid-Atlantic area, ISC Portsmouth provided the leadership and labor force necessary to standup the logistics sections at these two ports. An assembled team provided management oversight by establishing logistics support organizations at these two locations that provided personnel, finance, engineering, supply, and transportation support to a 400-person, 18-boat operation in the Wilmington area; and a 100-person, 10-boat operation in the Hampton Roads area. This support allowed the operational commanders in these locations to provide for maritime safety and security of military outloads supporting the military build-up in the Middle East.

Responding to a last minute need to stand-up a logistics and an administrative section supporting military outload operations at three ports along the North Carolina coast, the ISC quickly assembled an expert staff of logistics professionals to establish the support section to manage the outload operations at the ports. This “tiger team” arrived in Morehead City to meet the first wave of recalled reserve members, set up logistics, administrative, and financial systems to support these recalled members and operations. The team completed the administrative in-processing of more than 65 members of the first wave, and ensured all members were properly entered into the personnel system. This in-processing included ensuring members were set to be paid properly, and that they and their family members had access to all military support facilities and benefits including medical treatment. The in-processing was a very smooth process. Reserve members who had been recalled to active duty during Operation DESERT STORM commented that the in-processing for this outload operation was a great improvement over what they experienced during the 1990-1991 period. The attention by the logistics staff eased the worries of the recalled members, allowing them to focus on the job at hand of providing security for ships deploying out of North Carolina to the Middle East.

In addition to establishing in-processing procedures, the logistics team identified equipment gaps and took quick action to order the required personal protective equipment needed to allow the recalled members to perform their mission. A vessel support unit was created and led by members from the ISC Portsmouth Logistics staff. This unit identified equipment, parts, consumable goods, and personnel requirement needs to support more than 18 boats operating in the outload security operations. The vessel support team established a functional repair and maintenance operation that allowed 24 hours a day, seven days a week coverage of outload operations in the three locations along the North Carolina coast. In order to improve the on-scene repair and maintenance capability, the ISC Industrial staff deployed a mobile engineering support team from Cape May, New Jersey, to Wilmington, North Carolina. This team provided additional capability allowing the vessel support unit to complete everything from unit to depot level maintenance on-site. This allowed quicker repairs of discrepancies and seamless operational coverage.

After establishing the Morehead City operations, the logistics team moved south to Wilmington to meet an additional 120 recalled reserve members and established the support section of the Incident Commander’s staff managing all operations in North Carolina. While in Wilmington the team trained all reserve logistics and administrative team members, and put a system in place that subsequently guaranteed the long-term success of outload operations in North Carolina. The team established and provided for all transportation needs,



ISC Portsmouth

---

---

met information system requirements, created a system to track and retain operational costs, formulated local personnel management policies, and integrated the operational components into the ISC.

### **Reserve Indoctrination**

Coast Guard participation and support to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM required a huge influx of reserves. While supporting the logistics needs of the overall Wilmington area operation, the ISC established a second logistics and administrative team to stand up a similar operation to support military outload operations in the southern Virginia area. This section mirrored the ISC team operating in the Wilmington area. The Strategic Port of Embarkation (SPOE) Recall Logistics Section included cells for personnel, communications, facilities support, medical, cost, and procurement. Reservists were brought in to staff this section, thereby relieving their active duty counterparts so they could focus on other pressing logistical demands within their purview.

The ISC ensured all reserve members recalled for the surge were properly brought on active duty, to make sure each member was properly processed for pay and other family benefits, allowing these members to focus on integrating into the active duty force. Additionally the ISC provided for all the berthing needs of these members, coordinating locations that minimized cost and maximized both training, operational utility, and member comfort. The SPOE ensured all Coast Guard members were on per diem for providing their own meals and transport, but did oversee lodging costs in order to ensure efficiencies and savings in this most-expensive aspect.

There were problems. Reservists were recalled usually with less than 72 hours of recall notification. They were expected to begin work as crewmembers immediately. Qualification issues notwithstanding, the fact that personnel were thrown into new circumstance and could be expected to be an effective crew was a false expectation. Another major issue in recalling reservists was systemic in origin. Due to the integration of the reserve component with the active duty Coast Guard during the 1990s, mobilization became an arcane process wherein a reservist likely would not be recalled to the active duty unit he normally supported, but instead would often be dispatched to units far removed. There was significant confusion in regards to what contingency billets would and could be filled. Also, units could not be sure that they could backfill their recalled reservists. Reserve

readiness was a further issue encountered by ISC. In the Coast Guard, there were no reserve units (except for Port Security Units) that deploy to train. The Selected Reserve list had not been culled for readiness for mobilization. Unit commanders as well as the ISC were often caught by surprise in terms of personnel issues. However, the mobilization ultimately did serve to vet such individuals from the reserve forces. Another issue consuming the attention of ISC was the in-processing of reservists. A hurdle was obtaining active duty identification cards for personnel recalled to extended active duty, a firm requirement that could not be met. Also, it was discovered that, save artifacts left over from Operation DESERT STORM, there were no mobilization packages to give to members. The personnel section had to scramble to devise an ad hoc package. A standardized package of resources from headquarters would have been much more useful and time-saving. In the future, shortfalls need to be identified and plans need to be in place.

To get incoming personnel ready, ISC Portsmouth also became a “training center” providing orientation and indoctrination of reserve members destined for SPOEs and other units throughout the Mid-Atlantic area. No large-scale mobilization plans had been exercised since 1991, and Coast Guardsmen were precluded until recently from mobilizing strictly for training; thus, basic through advanced training was needed at all levels. ISC Portsmouth provided the facility (especially large spaces), personnel, and resource support that allowed this training to be successful (in conjunction with courses at Training Center Yorktown). Carried out by the Fifth District Training Team, this orientation relieved the operational commanders of the training requirement and allowed them to focus on the management of an operational force of more than 600 members.

### **Stand up of Boat Forces Detachment Washington**

Responding to the need to establish a Coast Guard presence in the Washington, D.C., area to provide maritime security to the nation’s capital, ISC Portsmouth took on the tasks of providing and negotiating all logistic services required for the successful stand up of this operation. The ISC logistics team negotiated with capital area Air Force and Navy activities for access to temporary office space, lodging and barracks, dining hall availability, small boat moorings, haul out facilities, and communications needs for the new Washington detachment. Negotiating no-cost access to Naval

---

---

barracks on Andrews Air Force Base for the 16-person detachment crew resulted in \$72,000 annual savings for the Service. ISC also successfully negotiated a memorandum of understanding with Bolling Air Force Base to provide facilities and support to Boat Forces Detachment Washington. The logistics team's efforts were instrumental in the quick stand up of this unit and built a positive relationship that will result in long-term solutions to provide a Coast Guard presence in the Washington area.

### **Logistics Systems Improvements**

During 2003 in the extraordinary execution of the shipping and receiving function at ISC Portsmouth, the shipping and receiving team managed the movement of more than 85,000 crates and small packages in support of worldwide operations of the Portsmouth tenant commands, the District, and six area cutters. While using a manual system to track warehouse activity, the team achieved a greater than 99 percent delivery accuracy rate. The team quickly recognized the need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the shipping and receiving function by eliminating the manual tracking system and implementing a state of the art, electronic, automated tracking system. Leveraging technology, the team procured an automated shipping and receiving system that has brought the ISC's warehouse operation into the 21st century. In the spirit of embracing the Commandant's direction to create an "electronic Coast Guard," the team identified and deployed a system that has greatly improved business processes within the shipping and receiving operation.

When researching a system to automate the warehouse operation, many inventory control systems were available, but those inventory systems did not meet the needs of a fast paced shipping and receiving operation. Commercial off-the-shelf shipping and receiving systems were not prevalent on the market. A system was finally identified through Ascom, a large international company specializing in providing equipment to increase efficiencies of postal operations. Ascom had a Smart Track system that met ISC Portsmouth needs perfectly. Smart Track is a PC-based locator/tracking/routing system that follows the path of an item from an entry point (in this case, at the ISC) to its ultimate delivery point. The main benefit is the simplification of all the accounting associated with the receipt and delivery of more than 85,000 pieces of freight each year (as eventually someone wants to know when

their item was delivered, who signed for it, and where it is now). A wireless receiving scanner is used to log the carrier name and delivery date into the system. The Smart Track operator speaks the recipient's name into the system, where the receiving screen identifies the recipient and automatically sets up delivery routing. This special alert screen identifies time-critical deliveries with e-mail capabilities. A signature capture device, or a signature pad, enables delivery verification. Almost all paper has been eliminated from the process. This system quickly tripled the efficiency and productivity of the warehouse staff. It has been estimated that this system saved more than 800 labor hours during its first year of use.

The control and accountability for in-process warehouse inventory was almost perfect. Additionally, the warehouse staff's ability to respond to customer needs and improve service has increased exponentially. The increase in warehouse inventory turnover rate that resulted from the automation of the shipping and receiving function allowed the warehouse staff to free up valuable storage space to accommodate the storage of the Atlantic Area CBR (chemical, biological, and radiological) gear stockpile. The warehouse staff freed up more than 75,000 cubic feet of storage area to meet this requirement. The team's efforts over the past year greatly improved the ISC warehouse staff's ability to quickly respond to changing needs. Bottom line: the streamlining efforts through reorganization and automation freed up both space and labor resources required to meet the expanded needs of the ISC, tenant commands, Fifth District, and the Atlantic Area.

### **Reflections**

While supporting these additional operational surge requirements, ISC Portsmouth continued to improve its logistical processes and systems reducing costs and saving time. ISC was the heart of the supply chain for Mid-Atlantic area Coast Guard units, and capably supported the tenant commands, numerous deployed cutters, and several contingency operations. The logistical support provided by ISC Portsmouth far exceeded all expectations, was accomplished with no increase in available resources, and positioned the Coast Guard for success in supporting contingency operations.

There were challenges. ISC Portsmouth deployed members to Wilmington, provided staff resources to the international deployment team, and experienced the loss



---

---

of civilian employees being recalled to active duty. However, ISC Portsmouth continued to excel in the delivery of logistic services as a normal course of business to the Fifth District. This performance allowed the District to meet daily operational commitments, as well as the numerous contingency operations, and the lessons learned have been incorporated into processing returning personnel. ISC Portsmouth's efforts and performance had, and will continue to have, wide-ranging, world-wide ramifications for joint military operations in the Middle East, homeland security operations all along the southeast coast of the United States, drug interdiction in the Caribbean, maritime

security in the nation's capital, military outload operations in important East Coast ports, and maritime security for all ports in the Mid-Atlantic area.

**About the Author:**

**LCDR Gavin Wentz** is the Comptroller, ISC Portsmouth, and received the 2003 Chief Financial Officer's Award. He enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1981, serving with the Presidential Honor Guard for four years and subsequently as a public affairs specialist. He was commissioned as a reserve officer in 1987 and holds an M.B.A. from the University of Missouri.



---

---

## **Joint Service Force Protection: PSU 308 in Operation Iraqi Freedom**

*LT Jonathan M. Walsh  
LT Phillip Snodgrass  
U.S. Coast Guard*

### **Introduction**

The U.S. Coast Guard's Port Security Unit (PSU) 308 deployed to the Kuwaiti strategic port of debarkation/embarkation (SPOD/E) during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. As part of Naval Coastal Warfare Group One (NCWG-1) Forward, PSU 308 participated in a joint-Service force protection operation, the extremes of which tested the strength of its personnel and equipment. While PSU 308's landward security mission was ultimately successful, some shortcomings were encountered along the way. Lessons learned as derived from this unit's experience might be of value to the future participation of the Coast Guard in such missions.

### **The PSU as a Unique Asset**

PSUs are special mission units capable of deploying anywhere in the world within ninety-six hours of notification. Including a five person active duty cadre, the PSUs have a full strength of one hundred and forty members, the vast majority of whom are part-time selected reservists. Their primary mission is to provide waterside force protection to designated high value assets (HVA). By providing their own communications, electronics, supply, administrative, and landward security elements, the PSUs are capable of independent operation in any environment except the arctic. PSUs have been deployed notably for Operation DESERT STORM, Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, in the aftermath of the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*, and immediately following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the homeland.

Because they are Coast Guard units and purposely designed for self-sufficiency, the PSUs generate a certain amount of sibling rivalry when they are tasked within the larger naval coastal warfare (NCW) community. Doctrinally, PSUs are "supporting" units. In practice, though, the top heavy structure of NCW Navy units, and the always-complicated political and

budgetary relationship between the two sea services, caused PSU 308 to be broken into its component parts, all of whom were subordinated to either Navy or Army control.

The Coast Guard currently has six PSUs stationed around the country. PSU 308 is homeported in Gulfport, Mississippi. Like all PSU members, the personnel of PSU 308 received extensive skills training at the Special Missions Training Center at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. PSU 308 had returned to readiness status only six months after a previous deployment. It was called to active duty on July 28, 2003, and deployed in the Port of Ash Shuaiba, Kuwait, from August 14, 2003 until March 7, 2004, when PSU 307 from St. Petersburg, Florida relieved it. The primary mission of PSU 308 was to ensure that the flow of equipment and supplies to coalition forces was protected and unimpeded.

### **PSU 308 In-theater**

The PSU's advance teams were forced to unload and reload five C-5 Galaxy Air Force transports when mechanical problems developed with the aircraft while enroute overseas. However, this effort enabled the unit's boats and supplies to remain on schedule for the planned arrival time in theatre. The work done by the unit's advance team allowed the main body of the PSU to completely transition operations with the unit being relieved, PSU 309, a full four days ahead of schedule. This in turn allowed PSU 309 to move on to a secondary high-priority maritime force protection mission in theatre ahead of the operational schedule for that mission. PSU 308's main body, including boat operations and shore side security operations, were fully transitioned and operational 48 hours after arrival in theatre.

Living conditions were tough. The PSU members resided in a tent city known as Camp Spearhead. There were limited liberty opportunities due to force protection requirements. As well, there was a limited amount of privacy afforded to members, even to the command cadre for wardroom conferences, which basically had to be done at the camp's perimeter. The unit also had its mission extended while in theater. However, the personnel pulled together and made concrete contributions to the overall coalition military effort.

The PSU's boat division logged over 10,000 underway hours, conducted 226 vessel escorts, and provided protection for 113 high value asset vessels including



**A boat crew from Coast Guard Port Security Unit 311, a San Pedro, Calif.-based unit made up primarily of Reservists, is lowered for a patrol in Iraqi waters during Operation Iraqi Freedom.  
PA1 Tom Sperduto, USCG**

arrival. The medical division: developed a seaport evacuation plan; conducted 85 field medical missions to facilitate weapons training at Camp Udari; logged 4,000 miles for off base patient escorts; logged and processed over 600 pulmonary and electrocardiogram tests; qualified 61 persons in cardiopulmonary resuscitation; provided over 1,800 vaccinations (notably anthrax and small pox); provided dental care to prisoners of war at Camp Bucca in Iraq; and treated over 2,000 Coast Guard, Navy, Army, and Marine

those of the Military Sealift Command (MSC) and coalition forces. Over 125,000 pieces of military cargo were off-loaded in the port during this time without incident. In addition, the boat division participated in three surge operations at the Kuwaiti Naval Base to the south of Ash Shuaiba, providing port protection at that facility with no additional assets required.

The security division conducted 12,480 vehicle searches and conducted over 1,000 roving patrols in the port. Division members strung 8,000 feet of sea wire, filled 3,000 sandbags, and spent 4,000 man-hours in the process of fortifying security positions in the port. The division detained 150 individuals with questionable or improper port identifications, responded directly to twelve serious suspicious incidents in the port—including threats against U. S. Marines by third country nationals aboard a ship, and a suspected improvised explosive device in a transport truck. The division also provided security details for Secretary of the Navy John England while he visited Ash Shuaiba, and for two senior members of the U.S. Army's 143th Transportation Division who were visiting the Port of Um Qasr, Iraq.

Other divisions forged into new areas as well. The weapons division established the first-ever integrated Coast Guard-Navy armory. It conducted 300 use of force and weapons conditions and clearing procedures tests, and efficiently transferred the weapons inventory left by the three PSUs in theatre prior to PSU 308's

Corps personnel for a variety of ailments and injuries.

On the technical side, the engineering division's aggressive maintenance program resulted in zero casualties or lost time to boat operations because of mechanical or electrical failures on the unit's boats. The division also successfully coordinated the transfer of PSU 313's hulls to the coalition forces for use in riverine security patrols in Iraq. The communications division established a satellite Internet system for the unit's operations center, as well as a dedicated network line for personnel to use. While in theatre, the division also processed and completed some seventy secret and top-secret personnel clearances necessary for the deployment.

Evidence of unit members going above and beyond to ensure the mission's success abounded both in theater and at home. Members from all divisions spent two weeks removing 500 pounds of trash and debris from an abandon port entrance facility, and then repaired and renovated the building for use as the unit's operations center. To resolve personnel gaps created by medical and emergency leaves, back-filling came from internal unit resources who were being trained back in the states by PSU 308's stateside cadre, thus allowing Atlantic Area and Integrated Support Command New Orleans the opportunity to concentrate on other personnel issues. The stateside cadre also successfully completed the unit's move from the Naval "Sea Bee" Base in Gulfport

---

---

to its new home at the Mississippi Air National Guard Base, saving the Coast Guard thousands of dollars in moving expenditures.

### **Essential Landward Security Provided**

PSU 308 essentially drew a line in the water that no unknown vessel could cross. The unit also provided a landward security component at the port. The nature of the force protection mission at the SPOD/E required PSU 308 to grow its security division by taking personnel from other divisions to fill a rather large guard force foot print on the pier apron and beyond. For its entire seven month deployment, PSU 308's security division was able to maintain a twenty-four hour landward security presence by, among several innovations, developing a division watch-bill that allowed for rest and training periods, both crucial to long term success in an extreme environment.

It was on the landward side that PSU 308 faced its most difficult challenges and worked alongside the most Services. With PSU 308 maintaining upwards of six guard positions inside the pier spaces, the Army's Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (MSDDC) controlled port operations and MSC directed vessel arrivals and departures. Contingencies were often resolved by Army, Navy, and Coast Guard personnel working in close cooperation.

The force protection mission at the SPOD/E would have failed repeatedly had the several services not been so willing to work together. For example, a roving patrol by a Coast Guardsman discovered a breach in the container wall providing a secure perimeter around the HVA and pier operating spaces. Alerting his chain of command, which included a Navy lieutenant commander and a Coast Guard commander, the Coastie positioned himself within the breach and recommended that the military working dog (MWD) unit be called in to sweep the spaces. While waiting for MWD to arrive, he called his MSDDC counterpart, an Army captain, who arranged for local Kuwaiti port workers to fill the breach with containers. That all of this occurred while the HVA was inbound, its massive grey shape growing larger and larger, speaks loudly to the efficiency and rapidity at which joint Service resolutions were reached.

In the grand scheme of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the fact that some Coastie stood in a hole in a container wall for an hour while working dogs sniffed a pier may

seem like small stuff, especially in comparison with the massive movements of troops and daily exchanges of gunfire and lives taking place some forty-five minutes to the north. The recent Iraqi oil platform attacks, which took the lives of a Coast Guardsman and several Navy sailors, and the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*, are powerful and painful reminders that force protection, even in seemingly secure areas—in the rear with the gear, as it were—can never be taken lightly.

The success of PSU 308's landward security mission cannot be denied. Its security division searched 12,480 vehicles without incident. They expended over 4,000 man-hours improving force protection within the pier spaces by stringing miles of concertina wire, moving hundreds of Texas and Jersey barriers, and laying innumerable sandbags. Their efforts kept U.S. and coalition forces safe for the duration of their deployment.

### **Lessons Learned from Overcoming Problems**

From a joint Service operational standpoint, the biggest lesson learned for PSU 308 was that, like it or not, joint Service requirements will shape the way the Coast Guard does business. On several occasions, NCWG-1 adopted practices or procedures that were at odds with PSU doctrine and training, and seemed designed to standardize operations between Coast Guard, Navy, and Army elements. Although successful, some of the changes dampened some of PSU 308's unique performance capabilities.

As NCW's landward security mission expanded, so to did the lengths to which they went to find solutions to the manning problems created by that expansion. Early on, the Puerto Rico National Guard's Guardian Mariners, who provided shipboard force protection on all MSC vessels arriving and departing the SPOD/E, were tapped to stand new posts within the pier spaces. Combining National Guardsmen with Coast Guardsmen proved difficult, due to disparate language skills, training levels, and mission priorities. At the end of the day, if the Guardian Mariners were needed on a ship, they went—often with little or no notice to NCW. It fell to PSU 308 to make up the difference. During surge operations in February 2004, the Guardian Mariners were tasked to their shipboard duties, and basically left PSU 308 to make up the difference at a time when the landward force protection mission required more personnel than ever. Again, only joint Service cooperation saved the day. PSU 308 and Alabama

---

---

National Guardsmen from a transportation unit assigned to the SPOD/E alternated coverage of the berths until a permanent solution was reached.

### **Conclusion**

PSU 308's mission was a success, and the unit was submitted for the Navy Unit Commendation in recognition of its service. But the joint Service nature of the NCW Community needs to be re-examined and re-emphasized. If PSU 308's experience at the SPOD/E is the future of the PSU program, the Navy and the Coast Guard need to implement ways of introducing the disparate elements of NCW to each other well before they reach the battlefield. A suggestion would be to open a designated, joint Service NCW training facility. This would allow each NCW asset to train towards its expected mission alongside the units and

Services with whom it will be working. This will increase the efficiency of NCW's force protection mission in the future.

### **About the Authors:**

**LT Jonathan M. Walsh** earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Notre Dame and a law degree from Tulane University, and was commissioned as a reserve officer in the Coast Guard in 1997. He is the Security Officer at PSU 308. **LT Phillip Snodgrass**, also a Coast Guard Reserve officer, is PSU 308's Training and Boat Division Officer. On the civilian side, he serves as a Mobile, Alabama, police lieutenant. LT Snodgrass was selected as the 2004 Reserve Officer Association Junior Officer of the Year for the Coast Guard.

---

---

## Wartime Patrol Operations: ADAK's Lessons Learned in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM

*LT Scott Rae*  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

The U.S. Coast Guard served in numerous roles during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Land-based units of the Coast Guard provided port and oil facility security, while the Coast Guard's cutters played an important role in the successful prosecution of the war in Iraq by maintaining sea-based patrols. These vessels participated in maritime interception operations and coastal security patrols in conjunction with U.S. Navy and coalition forces. Coast Guard patrols enforced sanctions, prevented Iraqi maritime attacks, stopped the transit of prohibited cargo, ensured navigability of the Northern Arabian Gulf (also known as the "NAG"), and seized enemy prisoners. The deployment of Coast Guard afloat assets included two 378-foot cutters: the *Boutwell* and the *Dallas*; one 225-foot buoy tender: the *Walnut*; four 110-foot patrol boats: *Wrangell*, *Adak*, *Aquidneck*, and *Baranof* (with four 110-foot patrol boats in the Mediterranean); and 1,300 Coast Guardsmen spread among these ships and other support units. This is the story of the *Adak*'s participation in this effort.

The crews of the cutters underwent initial training and equipping at various ports of embarkation. *Adak*'s members received their pre-deployment training at Integrated Support Command Portsmouth, and were taught by special teams from Coast Guard Headquarters, Atlantic Area, civilian specialists from contractors such as Blackwater USA, and various units from the Navy. An overall list of the subjects in which they received instruction included: tactical law enforcement, emergency response to terrorism, explosive recognition, boarding procedures, emergency medical response,

and damage control. These teams further demonstrated subjects such as weapons doctrine and chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) weapons countermeasures, including gas chamber exposure. The crews also attended special communications training from Communication Area Master Station Atlantic (CAMSLANT). Key to effective preparations was the personal relationships established by *Adak*'s officers with logistics and Atlantic Area command staffs, and coordination of training schedules with the other deploying cutter crews.

The cutters initially marshaled at Portsmouth, Virginia, and were loaded onto commercial ships at the Norfolk International Terminal. On January 29, 2003, the *Adak*, *Aquidneck*, *Baranof*, and *Wrangell* were hoisted onto the *Industrial Challenger*. Crews departed by air transport on February 22. On March 4, the cutters were "splashed down" in theater at Bahrain from the transport ship. Within two days, the cutters were underway. The *Adak* itself was the first cutter underway in wartime since the patrol boats of the Vietnam era.

It was truly a coalition operation. Of note, the Coast Guard cutters engaged with a significant number of foreign military and naval forces. For example, an Australian boarding team was onboard the *Adak*. The Australians had excellent portable communications for



USCG cutter Adak arrives in theater

their boarding teams, known as “wingtail and pigtail radios,” that far exceeded ours in performance. The other nations whose personnel with whom the Coast Guard fleet interacted included the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Poland, Britain, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Singapore, and Japan. Of note, the *Adak* established a direct relationship with Army logistic support vessels for obtaining supplies and parts that allowed our ship to sustain a high operational tempo underway.

Interdiction was a key mission, but one fraught with hazards. Anti-smuggling operations posed significant dangers. The ships attempting to smuggle “illegal” goods out of Iraq would resist any effort to turn them back. Legitimate commerce entering the territorial seas of Iraq posed a much larger problem. The sheer numbers of vessels attempting to conduct business with Iraq were at times large convoys that overwhelmed the Coast Guard patrol boats. Yet the Coast Guard cutters often found onboard that the captains and crews were very appreciative of their presence; on occasion Coast Guardsmen even received blown kisses and bows from them. Sandstorms were also an issue for our patrols. They would reach so far out to sea that the cutters were covered with mud and no longer appeared white; the sand clogged vital engineering filters onboard. As well, the cutters operated frequently near or within the territorial waters of Iran. Tangible reminders of war were the shell impact marks from the first Gulf War that could be seen all over the naval base in Kuwait.

Dhow “breakouts” were also a problem. In the days leading up to the war, a large assemblage of these civilian craft would leave en masse from the mouth of the Khawr Abd Allah (KAA) river in an effort to get past the coalition naval blockade. These dhow breakouts would last three or more days. On March 17, we had witnessed the first dhow “breakout” which consisted of three-dozen vessels. *Adak*, call sign “Big Apple,” was used to herd the dhows into a holding area. “Manhattan,” our small boat, was used as well. *Wrangell* was on scene to help herd the dhows. The



Using small boats for “breakout” containment

“round up” and herding lasted all night. White flags were flying from the dhows; some had loads of dates and some were empty. Some of the Iraqis claimed they left for fear of being hurt or killed because of the war. Our area of operation was only 6.5 miles from Iraqi land. The cutters eventually established a “smugglers box” in which suspected vessels and their crews were detained.

Intelligence had it that Iraqis might blow up the two oil terminals prior to the start of the war. United Nations inspectors fled the terminals, MABOT (Mina al Bakr oil terminal) and KAAOT (Khawr al Amaya oil terminal). MABOT was still in operation, but KAAOT was not. The Shatt al Arab (SAA) runs between Iraq and Iran so our position was right on the edge of the territorial sea of Iran. These terminals were important symbols, and the Coast Guard immediately set up a security perimeter to protect them.

*Adak* was in the thick of it at the onset of the war. At night, we got word the war would start within hours. There was an uneasy calm on the waters of the NAG. All of the fishing dhows that were once scattered throughout this area were now gone. It was very creepy. Prior to and during hostilities, we had to carry our CBR masks in the event of an attack. If we heard “lightning, lightning, lightning” over the public address system, it meant an incoming attack. We were destined to wind up on the front line – this was for real and danger was

---

---

imminent – so we were using our training and expertise to help this nation defeat the Saddam Hussein regime. There were some rarely voiced concerns in this regard. We were told Iraq launched a Scud missile at Kuwait, and from our position we could hear the bombs dropping. Also, while still at MABOT and scheduled to go up the KAA to provide force protection for the Royal Marines, we could hear air raid sirens on the radios (in the background). This was for real! We were at war.

The cutters moved north to support the landing of the British Royal Marines who were going to be inserted into the Al Faw peninsula at the KAA river splitting Iraq and Kuwait. *Adak* would be the first cutter underway in the war. Overhead, Chinook helicopters could be seen and heard carrying vehicles and supplies to the Marines on the front lines. Bombardment came from coalition naval vessels who lobbed shells onto the peninsula to assist in providing the marines protection as they moved north deeper into Iraq. Meanwhile, mobile sea-sucker missile attacks from up to twenty nautical miles away posed serious and tangible threats to the ships at all times.

We were scheduled to be up the KAA near Buoys 14 and 15 by 0015 hours that morning, and arrived sometime around 0030. The U.S.S. *Chinook* (PC-9) came with us. Together we were tag-teaming the security watch for any and all traffic that might interfere with the Royal Marines landing in southern Iraq. Between 0100 and 0300 hours, the bombs fell heaviest. We could hear them, one after the other. The explosions shook the ship. Tomahawk land attack missiles had flown over earlier. At 0210 on March 21, *Adak* was the forward most naval warship—closest to Iraq of all naval ships in theater. The KAA is the boundary between Kuwait and Iraq and there was no one further up the KAA than us; the Coast Guard truly was leading the way! The Al Faw peninsula had to be cleared by the Royal Marines so the minesweepers and humanitarian aid ships could proceed up to Umm Qasr without being attacked from the shore. We provided force protection for these missions.

The smell from the bombs was evident. It smelled like the after-smoke of Fourth of July fireworks. At times, there were so many bombs going off you almost did not notice it. The two oil terminals, MABOT and KAAOT, were secured when special forces occupied those valuable assets. Money generated by the sale of oil loaded at these terminals would be used to rebuild Iraq. In addition, Kuwait took more Scud missile fire from Iraq. I recalled thinking that Iraq was not supposed to have these. We fared our first night of the war pretty well, and were glad to be leading the waterborne side of the conflict. Our ship had proven pretty useful.

The weather was an issue, as an extremely heavy sea storm hit the NAG bringing high winds and steep seas to the Middle Eastern body of water. The storm wreaked havoc on the *Adak*, requiring an intense two-day clean up and repair of the ship from the damages. The *Adak*'s brow was actually bent and wrapped at a 90-degree angle around the 25-millimeter gun mount located on the bow of the cutter. Intense sandstorms, unseasonable for the Arabian Gulf area, occurred at the war's outset and caused degradation of some of the cutter's engineering and navigation equipment.

The cutters also engaged in supporting the mine-clearing operations of U.S. and foreign Navy minesweepers. In fact, the Coast Guard stopped and seized two Iraqi tugs towing barges full of mines that the military Iraqi crew was beginning to lay in the waters of the KAA.



Iraqi Mine Laying Tug



---

---

The Iraqi military captain was not expecting to see coalition vessels so far up the river. He was startled by the presence of the Coast Guard and the Navy as he turned the bend heading down river. The presence of the Coast Guard certainly stopped what could have been the release of dozens of mines. The larger coalition vessels that were farther south in the gulf would have been possible victims of these mines, for sure. The Coast Guard provided a salvage team and pumps to keep the sinking barges afloat so the confiscated mines would not find their way into the water. The crew placed their lives in danger the entire time while pumping water from the barges. Some of the mines discovered on the barges were floating contact mines; some would be anchored by a cable just below the waterline; and the final type actually rested on the bottom of the river.

By its mere presence, the Coast Guard had deterred the laying of these mines (a few were reported to have been deployed), had intercepted the first Iraqi military vessels, and kept these vessels afloat while commercial salvage teams could be contracted to tow the tugs/barges to a safe port. Our executive officer (XO) explained how vital it was that we were forward deployed in the KAA the night the tugs with the mines came down. Our presence definitely deterred the setting of dozens of mines that would have been released on the warships further south. It is still sinking in that we were facing the enemy in a very dangerous situation. The tensions were high, our ship was loud, but we were able to escape any mine damage. Little *Adak* played a very big role and history was made!

At 0830 on March 21, *Adak* captured three Iraqi personnel floating down the KAA near Buoys 14 and 15; one was by himself in a PFD (personal flotation device), and two others were clinging to a life ring in PFDs. All three were hauled from the water and brought onboard. They were hypothermic and did not speak much English (so they indicated). They were stripped of their wet clothing, handcuffed, searched, and all belongings were bagged for each individual. The prisoners were believed to be crewmembers from a PB-90 patrol boat. One was an officer, possibly the XO. He was non-compliant and gave us problems, but eventually complied. The prisoners received medical treatment for hypothermia and minor cuts on their feet while onboard *Adak* from the emergency medical technician. We transferred the prisoners to the *H.M.A.S. Kanimbla*, an Australian ship, for holding.

Meanwhile, the bombing continued. We observed Chinook helicopters transporting jeeps, HMMWVs, and supplies from Kuwait to the Al Faw for the Royal Marines. It felt weird to look out and see a jeep hanging below a “helo” flying across the sky. The large Navy ships provided naval gunfire support for the Royal Marines on shore, and the smoke from the smoldering remains of the Iraqi military machine could be seen in the distance.

On March 26 we had heard about an approaching storm, but had to go south right through it. I have made many patrols on 82 and 110-foot cutters and this storm ranks in the top two. Sustained Waves were 10 to 12 feet in short sets, and we saw 15 feet plus waves on several occasions. Winds were blowing at over 35 knots. Our brow broke loose on the foc’sle (bow) and bent; we threw it overboard. We rode in the trough for eight hours. To make matters worse, we sailed into another sandstorm. We were about three miles from Kuwait when sand filled the air and visibility dropped to zero.

We pulled into Kuwait and found the Iraqi tugs that were carrying the mines moored there. We went to the tugs and barge to see the mines again in daylight. We had not seen the tug which had mines stacked on the fantail with two doors cut for pushing the mines out. Those things were unreal – I still cannot believe we came that close to being one of the mines’ statistics. Later in the day, the air raid alarm sounded due to an incoming missile. It was intercepted and shot down.

In spite of the difficulty, *Adak* successfully made landfall at Umm Qasr on March 29, the first cutter into Iraq. The deployed cutters also engaged in traditional Coast Guard missions, such as performing search and rescue. The *Walnut* possessed an environmental response capability. The cutters also escorted humanitarian supplies into Umm Qasr, the principal marine port in southern Iraq. Sunken ships of the first Gulf War had been kept in place by the Iraqis to conceal their small boat and sniper ambush operations.

Of note, *Adak* conducted refueling at sea operations with three Coalition vessels. *Adak* overcame language barriers and equipment differences to complete the efficient transfer of fuel and water. We left gears and fittings behind so that future refueling operations from Coast Guard 110-foot cutters could be conducted.

---

---

*Adak* had left Bahrain, thereafter sustaining a 32-day underway schedule, something unheard of for a 110-foot cutter. By the end of the first week of April, the fishing dhows and commercial endeavors returned. The Iraqi Republican Guards were suspected to have been using the fishing dhows for possible war operations. The Coast Guard cutters became involved in ferrying Arabic-speaking Kuwaiti naval officers on boardings out to the dhows in order to gather further intelligence to corroborate this supposition, and to enable a better exchange of info between the fisherman and the boarding teams. They also visited members of the Coast Guard port security unit (PSU) who had occupied KAAOT since the beginning of the war, delivering them much-needed supplies and a morale boost. The *Adak* escorted humanitarian ships passing through KAA and coordinated relief supplies for PSUs. In these operations, we used escort techniques utilized in the maritime sector and those learned in our Portsmouth training days.

The Coast Guard maritime patrols successfully provided force protection before, during, and after Operation IRAQI FREEDOM hostilities. These cutters protected vital assets and interdicted smuggling and asymmetrical operations. The Service stepped up to the challenge, and Coast Guardsmen demonstrated they could survive as real military combatants. The (purposefully) non-camouflaged “white hull” status of the Coast Guard

cutters acted as a less threatening force for use, particularly in humanitarian assistance to Iraq. The “white hulls” undoubtedly de-escalated encounters with Iranians, as opposed to ships dressed in war paint.

The Coast Guard forces in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM demonstrated the Service’s can-do spirit, and successfully performed all of our multimission requirements. The Coast Guard was in Iraq doing the same jobs as it does at home, including search and rescue, law enforcement, and boardings. It was a job that was very much appreciated by the Iraqis themselves. Indeed, many of the fishermen that the *Adak* encountered became well known to the crew and did not hesitate to express their optimism about the future. They looked forward to being free from a terrible regime. They no longer wanted to be afraid. The Coast Guard was a real part of achieving this goal for them.

**About the author:**

**LT Scott Rae** has served as both an enlisted and officer member of the Coast Guard. He was Executive Officer of the USCGC *Adak* during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and subsequently served as deputy commander, Group Eastern Shore before accepting an assignment at the Coast Guard Headquarters operations center.



**Checking for contraband**

---

---

# Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf: Lessons Learned of the Walnut

*LT Rick Wester*  
*LT Brian Smicklas*  
*CDR C.M. Smith*  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

## Introduction

During Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) *Walnut* deployed to the Northern Arabian Gulf (NAG). The *Walnut* is a buoy tender, generally used in aids to navigation (ATON) missions. Other buoy tenders had deployed with Department of Defense (DOD) operations in the recent past: *Sagebrush* served as a mother ship during the Coast Guard's deployment in support of the 1983 Grenada operation, and in 1994 *Papaw* led an armada into Port-Au-Prince harbor. However, this was the first out of hemisphere war zone deployment of a buoy tender since the Vietnam War.

## Fitting the Cutter and Preparing the Crew

The 225-foot seagoing buoy tender (WLB class) was not designed for war, and thus significant changes had to be implemented prior to deployment. With six weeks to prepare the *Walnut* for deployment to the NAG, perhaps the biggest concern was communications. We knew this would be key to successfully operating alongside other coalition units, and if nothing else, identifying our unfamiliar vessel as a member of the coalition. The U.S. Air Force attacks on Point Welcome during the Vietnam War further underscores the importance of this. The first step was assembling three temporary active duty (TAD) radio watchstanders to continually man the radio in theater. Their early arrival on board also allowed them to assist with the varied installs on the bridge and in the radio room. Working with command and control, logistics, engineering, and support commands and a host of commercial vendors, they installed the following: underway internet connectivity, Secure Internet Protocol Routing Network (SIPRNET), SIPR chat (how virtually everything gets done in DOD), Satellite UHF Voice communications, and Fleet Broadcast to conduct over the air transfers (OTAT) of needed cryptology. Without such capabilities,

*Walnut* would have been unable to effectively operate in theatre.

Another concern was *Walnut's* defense. For this, we sent the entire crew to the range for 9mm, M16, and shotgun familiarization, and after passing training, everyone was qualified to carry at least one type of weapon. This was essential not only for general quarters III steaming, which we did the entire time we were in theater, but also for setting our anti-piracy bill in the Philippine Sea; and for high-threat inport watches in Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, and Singapore. In addition, all watchstanders also attended Armed Sentry Training. Also, we gave the entire crew secret information access since we needed to keep watchstanders apprised of the latest intelligence on various threats.

Working with the Pacific Area (PACAREA) Armory Detachment in Honolulu, we unloaded two extra .50 cal machine guns, as well as extra small arms. For the first leg of our trip, from Honolulu to Guam, we embarked an amphibious task group (ATG) small arms trainer who conducted extensive weapons training, tactics, and live fires, thus furthering our small arms knowledge and familiarity. We also conducted gunnery exercises throughout the 41-day transit with .50 caliber weapons mounted on all four gun mounts. With our crew numbering 50 and no other space to easily add sleeping racks—we didn't have a TAD gunner's mate—our deck department effectively carried out all of the weapons duties instead. The only practical way to provide full coverage would have been to add crew served weapons on the bow and stern, or utilize external assets such as dedicated port security unit (PSU) coverage while *Walnut* was restricted in her ability to maneuver.

The most likely threat that we figured *Walnut* would encounter was chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction. To prepare for this danger, we obtained a TAD damage controlman and sent him to school for chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) training. We also worked with Maintenance and Logistics Command (MLC) to receive all of the required CBR protective gear, air testing equipment, and antidotes. The 225-foot WLB does not have a countermeasure wash down system installed, so we came up with a system of nozzle holders placed throughout the exterior of the ship. The 225-foot is also not designed for a circle william (a type of damper in a cutter's ventilation system), so the engineers came up with a system of

---

---

duct-tape and plastic to isolate the interior of the ship. CBR training with the whole crew, as well as the decontamination teams, throughout the transit effectively prepared us in the event of CBR weapons use.

Much of the preparation for this deployment was done in the engineering department. New equipment had to be installed prior to departure, and a list of existing equipment that was inspected and “groomed.” Each division also made a list of high-failure items based off database information and personal experience. These items were purchased and stored onboard. All engineering divisions purchased and stored sufficient quantities of consumable items necessary to maintain all machinery and equipment for an extended period.

### **Transit Issues**

An issue with our 10,000-mile transit was where we would stop along the way. Given the 225-footer carries 77,800 gallons of fuel, and going below 30,000 would require the use of the lower suction units, that left 47,800 gallons to burn at approx 12.5 knots (kts). *Walnut* averages 3,400 gallons per day at 12.5 kts (300nm per day); thus, we needed to refuel about every 12 days. That left *Walnut* approximately 4,000 miles between pit stops and Guam and Singapore matched with the mileage limitations, so that’s what was arranged. After our hasty 18 January departure from Honolulu, our stop in Guam allowed us to get in some last minute range training, as well as the onload of additional equipment.

Another limitation, not usually of a concern to a 225-footer, is the radar’s limit of twenty contacts being tracked at a given time. During our nighttime approach to the Straits of Singapore, the busiest waterway in the world with dozens of large contacts on various courses and no traffic separation zone, our conning officers had to decide which contacts were not going to be tracked. The shipping rules-of-the-road apparently did not apply either, and there were some close calls with improperly passing and oncoming vessels. On top of it all, we also had to man our anti-piracy bill in the Straits of Malacca due to the ongoing piracy threat against small coastal freighters, which *Walnut* could easily be mistaken for. To counter this threat, *Walnut* placed an extra watch officer on the bridge and an extra lookout on the fantail. Fire hoses were laid out on the foc’sle and fantail for immediate use, and the bridge had immediate access to an M-16 rifle with three 30 round magazines, as well

as three pistols stored in a weapons safe. Both lookouts and the bridge had night vision goggles.

We would embark harbor pilots only when required. This included Singapore, Bahrain, and Cairns. In half the transits, pilots were nervous and insisted on making turns early despite being provided with the WLB’s tactical characteristics. In the other half of the transits, pilots said nothing, or in one case conducted other business on a cell phone, allowing the bridge team to pilot. While most pilots were helpful and provided good local knowledge and communications assistance, the extra “command” presence on the bridge was awkward for the bridge team. On occasion, an exemption letter was available for those ships that applied and were cleared by a pilot. *Walnut* obtained such an exemption letter, which was especially helpful during the frequent berth shifts which otherwise required a pilot. In all cases, *Walnut* would have been fully capable to safely transit the waterways without a pilot, or after one transit with a pilot.

### **In-theater Ports**

Our final destination, as we learned enroute, was Kuwait Naval Base (KNB), which we reached on February 27, 2003. *Walnut* arrived at Kuwait Naval Base wearing gas masks at the hip and in long sleeved shirts. The temperature was in the mid-60 degree Fahrenheit range during the day, while dropping to the mid-40’s at night. On future pit stops in Kuwait we tried to fuel as quickly as possible to avoid daily incoming missile alerts. Pier facilities were limited and security was limited for off-base liberty.

After Kuwait, *Walnut* set a course along a specified carrier avoidance route to Naval Support Activity (NSA) Bahrain. Bahrain is the main base for coalition operations in the NAG. *Walnut* moored in Bahrain three times for supplies, fuel, and rest and relaxation. Force protection requirements allowed *Walnut*’s duty sections a “1 and 3 rotation” with one section on and two sections off, a major improvement from port and starboard watch requirements at KNB. The Navy provided pier and waterborne security. The NSA is a well-equipped base, and thus Bahrain was the safest and best port of call in the NAG.

The Khawr ‘Abd Allâh (KAA) is a 41-mile waterway that leads from the Persian Gulf up to Umm Qasr, Iraq’s only deep-draft port. By the time *Walnut* arrived in

---

---

Umm Qasr, the Al Faw peninsula and Umm Qasr were in Coalition control. British forces based out of the new port ran its port control. The port proper was secured by an array of forces, including PSU and Navy port security. Most of the forces were based out of the new port, which is up river about a mile from the old port. The Spanish ship *Galacia*, moored in the old port, provided security in the old port complex. The port was enclosed and reasonably safe. The berth itself had sanitary issues, including broken sewer pipes, chemical residue on the ground, and a large fly infestation. The PSU also obtained potable water from the Army, which allowed *Walnut* to stay in the river during all ATON operations. If *Walnut* had been unable to get water in Umm Qasr, transiting to sea to run the reverse osmosis water makers would have been necessary, almost doubling the amount of time needed to rebuild the 41-mile waterway.

### **NAG Boardings**

At Bahrain, we received an in-briefing on the current operational situation. The maritime interception operations (MIO) brief was given by a Coast Guard commander who eagerly inquired if *Walnut*'s law enforcement (LE) team was up to standards since he intended to use *Walnut* to assist in United Nations Security Council Resolutions (U.N. 986) boardings. The commercial ships were waiting up to three days before being allowed to, or from, an Iraqi port, and the vessels needed to be cleared before the onset of war. *Walnut*'s LE Team learned the regulations and the ropes from a two-day internship with USCGC *Boutwell*'s 30 member LE team, and then got to work clearing vessels. *Walnut* became proficient at boarding bulk cargo, tanker, and container vessels—searching for contraband going into Iraq or unapproved oil being smuggled out.

Surprising many, *Walnut* completed ten U.N. 986 boardings on vessels no smaller than 100 meters in five days, greatly reducing the number of vessels in the Gulf prior to the commencement of hostilities. Eventually, *Walnut* was assigned as the “guard ship” of the holding area, which, without a combat information center (CIC), was a tremendous undertaking. At one point, all four VHF radios were in use by the commander, executive officer, operations officer, and the officer of the deck (OOD) to ensure vessels were in compliance with the United Nations Sanctions and proceeding as directed by *Walnut*.

### **Shift to Wartime Mode**

On March 18, 2003, war with Iraq had begun. The U.N. boardings were now suspended, and it was time for *Walnut* to be on station in the event of a massive oil release by the Iraqi Regime. *Walnut* has the capability to skim 420 gallons of oil per minute and had tested its Spilled Oil Recovery System (SORS) gear very recently during a joint exercise with USCGC *Kukui* and the National Strike Team in Pearl Harbor. Luckily, the environmental disaster never materialized, and *Walnut* continued to conduct daily operations as ordered by her operational and tactical command.

*Walnut*'s highly maneuverable and stable characteristics also led to its assignment to a variety of other tasks including: shipping tens of thousands of pounds of Navy equipment from Hawaii to Kuwait on its spacious buoy deck, towing a derelict barge, refueling a stranded Iraqi civilian tug, search and recovery efforts for two U.K. helos that collided, and recovering five PSU crews who had been battered in heavy seas for 12 hours aboard their 25-foot security boats. In addition, *Walnut*'s 40,000-lb capacity crane proved useful in resupplying captured offshore oil terminals, terminals that we were also tasked with providing security for.

Bulk air filter material was found to be a must in the NAG due to frequent sand storms and airborne dust and dirt. *Walnut* used three rolls of multi-layered filter material, which was provided by *Boutwell*. The dust and dirt particles from these frequent sand storms also became suspended in the water, wreaking havoc on *Walnut*'s reverse osmosis (RO) membranes. Water productivity dropped off slowly over time, until the RO's could not keep up with water consumption. After completion of ATON operations, the membranes were replaced and found to be impacted with fine particles of sand, similar to that found on deck after a sandstorm.

### **Ensuring Navigation in the NAG**

We had known that the KAA was marked by decrepit, unlit, incomplete, and off station buoys for some time – the executive officer had done a helicopter overflight. But the question remained, if tasked with replacing the 35 buoys in the waterway, where would we get the buoys and who would pay? These questions were answered when the operations officer and the warrant boatswain's mate evaluated the buoys during an

intelligence gathering trip up the KAA aboard USCGC *Baranof*, only days after the fall of Umm Qasr to coalition forces. The task was to assess the waterway and determine if a reported warehouse full of unused Iraqi buoys and ATON equipment actually existed. Although the interim “harbor masters” firmly denied any evidence of ATON equipment in a warehouse, our officers went ashore and confirmed the rumor. The warehouse contained \$1.7 million dollars worth of unused Iraqi buoy hulls (35 to be exact), chain, and sinkers. We quickly ordered three dozen Carmanah lanterns for pickup during our next stop in Bahrain.

While in Bahrain, local vendors similar to Kmart could provide the ship with some needs, but General Services Administration (GSA) supplies or Mater-at-Arms (MAA) supplies for visiting ships must be ordered stateside and shipped in. Anticipating needs and either forward deploying material to Bahrain, or bringing as much onboard as possible will cut down on this problem. While later working out of Umm Qasr, the only major deep-water commercial port in Iraq, infrastructure and support was non-existent. This was solved by extensive networking with the Coast Guard PSU and other coalition units based there.

After our ATON plan of attack was approved by the Coalition, we received permission to proceed to Umm Qasr to closely evaluate the ATON equipment. Other than a few minesweepers, two 170-footers, and the 4 patrol boats (WPBs), coalition vessels stayed in the Persian Gulf. In addition, just prior to our transit well

into Iraq, a LE detachment had discovered an Iraqi weapons cache along the KAA, and the Al Faw Peninsula still had sporadic fighting. As a result, our transit to Umm Qasr was viewed as high-threat, and our four .50 caliber weapons were ready to go if need be.

*Walnut* used the old port section of Umm Qasr as a forward base of operations while reconstructing the KAA waterway. Some special forces comrades took a break from their festivities and assisted us in locating a forklift to start hauling hulls, sinkers, and chain to the pier. Our further inspection also indicated that we would need additional bridles. We unloaded four of the “big Iraqi style” buoys, and departed for Bahrain. Our plan was to refuel and onload stores in Bahrain while preparing the four buoys, purchase buoy bridles from Middle East Navigation Aids Service (MENAS) — a vendor that tends buoys in the Gulf — and then return to the mouth of the KAA and position our first four buoys. We would then return to Umm Qasr, spend the next day inport offloading the old and unloading/preparing the new buoys, and then underway the next day removing old buoys and positioning the new ones. We planned on repeating this cycle until all 33 buoys were replaced.

Over 25 buoys needed to be pulled, and 33 needed to be set. Approximately 10 percent were currently lit, and none appeared to be on station. Adding to the confusion were numerous chart corrections that made so little sense they posed a hazard to navigation. To keep the re-marking as simple as possible, *Walnut* was

instructed to re-mark the channel as it was charted, in order to keep chart corrections to a minimum. For global positioning, the closest site was in Bahrain and, although it was more than 265 miles away, we received a good, consistent signal. However, around lunchtime each day there would be a signal spike and, after an hour, it would fall back to acceptable levels.

The mission got off to a rough start both on deck and on the bridge due the amount of time since *Walnut* had worked a buoy and a hold position failure.



**Buoys in KAA Waterway**

---

---

Furthermore, the officers who would do a majority of the conning evolutions in three-knot currents and a stone's throw from land possessed a dearth of significant ATON experience. The commander immediately showed that this was not his first time working buoys in a river with a strong current, and expertly tutored the relatively inexperienced officers on ATON 180-foot buoy tending. Without "hold position" for the first few of our buoys, the commander deftly used the current to his advantage rather than thrusters, matched the pitch to the current using visual ranges rather than "hold position," and many other ship handling techniques that are not required in the calmer waters of the Hawaiian Islands on a 225-footer. After completing two trips, *Walnut* began picking up the pace, and as the transits became shortened as *Walnut* worked her way upstream, the amount of deck evolutions simultaneously increased.

Using "liberated" Iraqi ATON equipment presented some challenges. The buoy hulls located in the warehouse were approximately 10 feet in diameter, 22 feet in height, and about 12,000 lbs. With no counterweight, we could fit five standing on deck. The buoy cages were of a lighter construction than their U.S. equivalent, which was evidenced by several of the old Iraqi buoys missing their entire cage. The sinkers were 6,600 lbs. of steel encased lead. They were considered quite handy, as they were easily stored on deck, taking up less room than a standard concrete sinker. The liberated chain was 1.25 inch and of shoddy workmanship, due to noticeably weak welds. One link did part during a set, and luckily no one was injured. The use of Carmanah lanterns also seemed like a good match for the KAA – low maintenance, plenty of sun, can program charted-out-of-the-ordinary characteristics, and no need for a nominal range of more than three miles on the windy river. Also, locals had pilfered the batteries out of the old buoys for use in fishing vessels, and the Carmanahs are solid state and attached with theft proof bolts.

We worked closely with British Hydrography and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) to ensure that other mariners were aware of the ATON improvements. In all, the "liberated" equipment operates properly, and the floating ATON greatly assists in marking a channel with poor radar return and very few visual bearings other than the random war-torn wrecks from previous wars. The KAA waterway was completely remarked with floating ATON in nine trips, taking about three weeks. The whole time, Umm Qasr served as our homeport. The food and fuel we unloaded in Bahrain

was enough to last until our return to Bahrain after our ATON mission was complete, and we were able to get water daily in Umm Qasr via a local desalination plant. We maintained an armed inport watch, and had a local population of feral dogs that would stand watch on the pier at night, alarming us of any activity in the vicinity.

Leaving Umm Qasr for the "last time," we planned on setting a few buoys on the way out. One had an attachment point (AP) particularly close to shoal water, so we timed our departure to coincide with high tide (tidal range was about 16 feet during spring tide). After positioning the buoy, *Walnut* began steaming into the sunset, enroute Bahrain. The executive officer picked up his binoculars to observe *Walnut's* handiwork just in time to see the hull, then the cage, and finally the lantern sink below the surface. This of course required our return to Umm Qasr one more time. With all of the new buoys having been used, we needed to salvage the best, or rather, the least-worst old buoy and come up with a plan for raising the sunken hull.

The buoy appeared to go straight down when it sank, and if it did, we figured we should be able to see the lantern at low tide (20 feet of water). We sent our small boat over and, sure enough, the Carmanah was peeking out of the water, winking and blinking. A boat crewman attached a marker buoy, and that night we hatched a plan to raise the buoy. We would get underway and stand off the buoy while our small boat would take our dive team to the marker. They would dive and attach a lifting strap to a bail on top and on bottom of the buoy. *Walnut* would then make its approach and lift the buoy sideways to the waters edge. Our calculations indicated that the flooded buoy exceeded the rated capacity of our crane, so we needed to cut a hole in the buoy hull, drop in a sub-pump, and then dewater the buoy while slowly raising it out of the water. With the buoy out of the water, we would then position the replacement buoy that we had patched together.

## Conclusion

During the deployment, *Walnut* firmly established the WLB 225 as a truly multimission asset. The flexibility of the cutter and crew made *Walnut* the "go-to" cutter in the NAG, and deploying was certainly worthwhile and should continue to be considered for future contingencies. While our KAA ATON operation played a key role in safely opening the port of Umm Qasr for commercial and humanitarian vessel traffic, it probably

---

---

also marked the first and only time in Coast Guard history that ATON received national media coverage.

**Editor's Note:** An earlier version of this article was published in the August 2003 edition of The Bulletin: The Magazine of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association.

**About the Authors:**

**LCDR Rick Wester** is the CGC *Walnut*'s executive officer, and formerly served on the cutters *Neah Bay* and *Escape*. He is a 1993 U.S. Coast Guard Academy

graduate and holds a master's degree in mass communications from the University of Georgia.

**LT Brian Smicklas** served as operations officer aboard the *Walnut*. He graduated with the Coast Guard Academy's class of 2000 and also served aboard the CGC *Dauntless*.

**CDR C.M. Smith**, *Walnut*'s commanding officer during the Iraq war, graduated from the Academy in 1987 and also holds a graduate degree from the University of Illinois. He previously served on the cutters *Iris*, *Redwood*, and *Sweetgum*, and in staff positions at Civil Engineering Unit Juneau and Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco.



---

---

# The Coast Guard and Haitian Migrant Interdiction Operations in 2004

*CDR John N. Leonard  
U.S. Coast Guard*

## Introduction

One of the U.S. Coast Guard's most critical homeland security missions is alien migrant interdiction operations (AMIO). The Coast Guard plays a vital role in saving the lives of desperate people attempting passage across vast seas in unsafe boats, securing the national coastal borders from being overwhelmed by illegal aliens, as well as avoiding lengthy, costly repatriation processes for those who reach our shores. Migrant interdiction means safety and security, and the Coast Guard is the principal maritime force supporting the national policy encouraging safe and legal migration.

For much of the last two decades, the origin of the majority of illegal migrants interdicted at sea have been from the Caribbean island nation of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The most recent surge in mass migrations began in February 2004 with the start of public unrest directed at the government of Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide. In anticipation of a possible large surge of Haitian migrants, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the Homeland Security Task Force–Southeast (HSTF-SE), based on Operation Plan (OPLAN) Vigilant Sentry (OVS), an OPLAN that had been in development since June 2003. OVS was part of a not-yet-completed regional strategy for dealing with mass migration from Caribbean countries, especially Cuba. As unrest and violence quickly unfolded in Haiti, President Bush specifically directed the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard to deter and prevent any Haitian migrants from reaching U.S. shores. To accomplish this, the Coast Guard spearheaded the quick development and approval of a branch plan of OVS called Operation ABLE SENTRY (OAS).

As executed, OAS was an effort in which HSTF-SE, with strong support from interagency (IA) partners, played a major role in dissuading surge migration from Haiti. The OAS mission continued into March 2004, when U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) began Operation SECURE TOMORROW (OST), in which the Coast Guard was selected as the maritime

component commander (MCC) for the combined joint task force (CJTF) stabilization effort in Haiti. Because of the Coast Guard's familiarity and long involvement in the area, OST was the first time in memory that the Coast Guard, rather than the Navy, served as MCC in a joint task force (JTF).

## Chronology of the 2004 Haitian Crisis

The Coast Guard has long experience in Haitian operations, having dealt with numerous migrations from Haiti since the early 1980s. Indeed, 75,000 people fled Haiti after democratically elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide was previously ousted in a 1991 coup. A U.S. presidential executive order in 1992 directed the Coast Guard to interdict Haitian and other migrants at sea and return them to their homelands. Starting in 1993 USCG undertook Operation ABLE MANNER, in which cutters patrolled the Windward Passage, and Operation ABLE VIGIL, in the Florida Straits. These culminated with Coast Guard assets and naval coastal warfare (NCW) units supporting SOUTHCOM during Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in the fall of 1994, in which joint forces successfully permitted President Aristide to return to office as the properly elected leader of Haiti.

After almost a decade of political stability but continuing declines in the living standard of the average Haitian, on February 9, 2004, insurgents seized the city of Gonaives from Haitian authorities and escalated violent protests against President Aristide's government throughout the northern portion of the country. In response to the destabilization and lawlessness, preparations for a U.S. response began because of the security threat that a massive Haitian migrant outflow would pose in the Caribbean and the southern United States. OAS began on February 21 and continued until March 12. Following President Bush's order on February 25 that no Haitian migrant reach U.S. shores, the Coast Guard, at the request of HSTF-SE, directed all available cutters, boats, and aircraft in the Atlantic Area to proceed at best speed to Haiti to prevent migrations. The Department of Defense (DOD) and other agencies initiated a response to the impending crisis.

## Operation ABLE SENTRY - DHS leads U.S. Mass Migration Response

Within days after the fall of Gonaives, DHS Secretary Tom Ridge stood up HSTF-SE and directed the Task Force to execute a contingency plan to coordinate

customs, border, and immigration response to the potential mass migration. Although not yet approved through interagency clearance, Secretary Ridge also directed that OVS provisionally apply as a regional, coordinated, and integrated approach towards dealing with Caribbean mass migration. HSTF-SE developed OAS as a branch plan of the overall OVS interagency strategy for migrant interdiction. The cornerstone of the OAS plan was to ensure that Haitian migrants did not land on American soil. In executing OAS, the “no landings” imperative from President Bush required that the capability to deter be put into place before the need arose.

For several days following the end of Carnival (Mardi Gras) on February 24, the Haitian government was completely shut down as violence, lawlessness, and unrest directed at President Aristide’s administration escalated around the country. By February 28, 16 cutters from the Coast Guard Atlantic fleet had arrived on station off Haiti in layered patrol areas, with numerous aircraft and boats deployed all the way to the Florida Straits.

During a key period from February 25-28, Coast Guard Cutters *Valiant* and *Vigilant* rescued over 500 Haitians from two small boats, and the cutters *Spencer* and *Diligence* coordinated a rescue of 300 people from their wooden boats. Coast Guard Cutter *Harriet Lane* conducted boardings off the southern coast to prevent migration attempts there, with the buoy tender *Cypress* also conducting boardings while replacing missing aids

to navigation. The hundreds of migrants intercepted by cutters on February 27-28 were quickly repatriated under the direction of the Coast Guard’s Commander Task Unit (CTU) aboard the largest cutter, *Dallas*. Quick repatriations were executed safely in Port Au Prince harbor with the help of the Haitian Coast Guard (HCG), in spite of insurgent attacks around the city. With the government closed, the HCG was the only government entity in the country that continued to operate during that crucial week.

During the early morning of Sunday, February 29, facing insurmountable pressure, President Aristide quietly left Haiti while Chimeras and other insurgent forces attacked in the capital and other parts of the country.

### **Operation SECURE TOMORROW- CJTF-Haiti Maritime Component Command**

Within hours after Aristide’s departure from Haiti, the HSTF-SE-led Operation ABLE SENTRY began to evolve into the SOUTHCOM-led Operation SECURE TOMORROW. The United Nations (U.N.) Security Council endorsed the deployment of a U.N. Multinational Interim Force (MIF) to Haiti. U. S. Marines were deployed to Haiti by Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) to protect the U.S. Embassy. The presence and purpose of the U.S. military forces in Haiti quickly shifted to a multinational task force that focused on disarming and stabilizing the nation. A Marine Corps-led CJTF under the command of Marine Corps Brigadier General Ronald Coleman arrived in

the troubled nation. The mission of Combined Joint Task Force–Haiti (CJTF-H) forces, as part of the UN MIF, became one of stabilization and humanitarian assistance while Haiti’s interim government re-established control and rule of law throughout the nation. HSTF-SE continued OAS until standing down on March 12, when the threat environment in Haiti stabilized to a point that a normal Coast Guard force structure with fewer major cutters and shore-based boats was sufficient. Captain Dan Neptun of the Coast



**Haitian Coast Guard Vessel**

---

---

Guard was deployed to Haiti from Seventh Coast Guard District in Florida. On March 22, Captain Neptun relieved Captain Chris Colvin, Commanding Officer of the cutter *Dallas*, as MCC for CJTF-H, and the MCC collocated with General Coleman's CJTF-H staff ashore in Port au Prince.

The MCC coordinated a smaller contingent of Coast Guard forces supporting stability operations in Haiti, as extensive OAS operations using Coast Guard assets continued into the spring months. Three boats and crews of Marine Safety and Security Team (MSST) 91104 deployed from Galveston, Texas, by way of the forward operating base (FOB) at Guantanamo Bay (GITMO), supported MCC operations to provide port security, port assessment, navigational upgrading, and humanitarian aid in Port au Prince and the near shore areas of southern Haiti. OAS patrols carried on in the Windward Passage at levels above the normal force lay down in terms of major cutters. On April 24, the cutter *Forward* saved 380 Haitians in one of the largest single interdiction operations of one boat. Not long after, the 378-foot high

endurance cutter *Gallatin*, which had taken station after *Dallas* departed, saved 173 Haitians at sea.

After several months of stabilization operations in April and May 2004, the U.S.-led CJTF-H ultimately transferred its peacekeeping operations to a larger U.N. multinational stabilization force in June. Although this was the first time in memory that a senior Coast Guard officer served as a JTF MCC, it was a perfect fit for CJTF-H. The Coast Guard has a great deal of experience with Haiti, while the Navy had few assets and much less experience in the area. It was natural for the Coast Guard to assume a lead role in Haiti, which has always been basically part of the Coast Guard's backyard of operations in the Caribbean basin.

### **Homeland Security Task Force-Southeast Organization**

OAS was the first operation conducted by a Homeland Security task force since DHS was created as a U.S. cabinet department on March 1, 2003. Rear Admiral

Harvey Johnson, Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District headquartered at Miami, served as Director of HSTF-SE. This task force superbly met its mission objectives—there were no known Haitian migrant landings on U.S. soil. However, due to the rapidly evolving nature of the operation, a high-level DHS interagency group to oversee an HSTF incident response was not activated as dictated by the OVS contingency plan. Instead, HSTF-SE reported directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the Commandant of the Coast Guard. Liaison with DOD was via HSTF-SE's operational coordination with SOUTHCOM. A Coast Guard liaison officer (LNO) was detailed on a full-time basis to the SOUTHCOM crisis management center. A Coast Guard LNO is also part of the Haiti Country Team under the direction of the U.S. ambassador. During OAS, coordination between HSTF-SE; the Seventh Coast Guard District; Atlantic Area Command in Portsmouth, Virginia; Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C.; and DHS Headquarters, also in Washington, D.C.; for getting cutters, aircraft, personnel, and equipment on scene and supporting them, was superb.



**Boarding operations from Coast Guard Cutter *Forward*— vessel had 380 migrants on board**

However, command and control issues were not as smooth as desired, partially due to organizational growing pains within DHS. For example, the initial HSTF-SE chain of command did not include Vice Admiral Jim Hull, who as Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area deploys and provides logistics for all Coast Guard Atlantic forces, including major cutters, wherever needed. Such reporting communication issues will be studied and improved among the Coast Guard and DHS, but legislation patterned on the Goldwater-Nichols law, which clearly defined and strengthened high-level reporting relationships in DOD, should be given consideration for DHS and other interagency partners responsible for homeland security as future organizational relationships mature.

### **Preventing Mass Migration—Rapid Repatriation as a Deterrent**

HSTF-SE pushed U.S. borders out to the edge of the Haitian territorial sea; interdicting over 1,700 migrants often close to the Haitian coast, and decisively discouraging mass migration. During the entire operation, HSTF-SE's direction of the rapid repatriation underscored to potential illegal immigrants that they would be stopped and returned home quickly, with no opportunity to get three meals and a cot in a holding facility away from their troubled country. The interdiction effort also saved the lives of thousands of migrants who would have perished in harsh weather from rough seas, winter winds, and the unsafe condition of overloaded boats. Furthermore, HSTF-SE provided critical support to the Haitian Coast Guard and kept it functional in spite of the fall of the central government.

U.S. Navy ships also patrolled during OAS along with many partners from DHS, state entities, and local agencies. However, the Coast Guard cutters handled all patrol coverage in the Windward Passage between Haiti and Cuba. The Coast Guard and its cohorts leaned forward very successfully, as evidenced by a 100 percent interdiction rate for OAS. Rapid Coast Guard



**The crew of the 110-foot Coast Guard Cutter *Staten Island* towed the Haitian vessel *Lovely Express* to safety after it had lost power in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.**

replacement of deficient Haitian aids to navigation allowed nighttime boardings and relief cargoes carried by Military Sealift Command ships to reach the capital of Port au Prince, and port operations to begin to return to normal during the month of March.

Although GITMO was viewed as the Haitian migrant holding facility of last resort, the establishment and staffing of a FOB at GITMO was very significant as an invaluable support base for Coast Guard logistics. A large warehousing facility was definitely needed for OAS, since during the 1990s over 12,000 Haitians had been held at GITMO. FOB GITMO provided the ability for interagency and intradepartmental sharing of logistics expertise and contacts between DHS and DOD. The migrant holding facility and operations base, coordinated by DHS with the DOD military command at GITMO, allowed for backup expansion plans in case the number of migrants overwhelmed the deck space on the patrolling Coast Guard cutters. FOB GITMO was also a critical location for the detachment supporting Coast Guard MSST 91104 for extended port security operations as part of the CJTF-H MCC.

### **Lessons Learned for the Coast Guard in Joint Operations**

**Battle Rhythm:** The mechanisms to deal with communications and information flow in OAS were relatively untried within the framework of the new DHS.

---

---

Coast Guard operational commanders are superb crisis managers, and their typical response mode fed into the insatiable demand for rapid information by the DHS leadership. Information could flow unfiltered to the most senior levels and, without appropriate analysis, impact decision-making. There were instances in which senior people “pulsed” into the lower reaches of the operation via technology, and by bypassing the experienced command received an erroneous picture of the situation. In addition to circuit discipline, DHS should adopt a standard operational information system that would be recognized throughout DHS as the official message record for operational tasking and reporting.

**Operational Planning:** OAS demonstrated that Coast Guard and interagency planning processes must continue to improve. OST demonstrated that the Coast Guard must make the joint Services and combatant commanders more aware of Service capabilities. The Coast Guard likes to say with a proud smile that we are “the hard nucleus around which the Navy forms in time of war.” The Coast Guard is a single digit percentage in numbers but a vital force multiplier for any JTF. Extensive participation in SOUTHCOM exercise BLUE ADVANCE 04 gave HSTF-SE and Coast Guard planners exposure to the joint planning and implementation process, and allowed HSTF to devise a number of alternative planning scenarios to consider for OAS. A strong DOD-DHS relationship was built in 2003-04, which continued through OAS into the CJTF-H stabilization operations during OST.

**Plan Execution:** Because there is no Coast Guard Headquarters planning section (a “CG-5”) outside the Atlantic and Pacific Area Plans Divisions, and other DHS agencies are also not staffed or resourced to conduct deliberate and crisis action planning, the same staff needed for preparation of future operational plans were also the operators needed to conduct current OAS operations. Use of the DOD Joint Operations Planning and Execution System (JOPES), as well as strict adherence to National Interagency Command System (ICS) procedures specified in DHS policy, will improve HSTF planning and execution in future contingencies. In this case, OVS contained a non-standard hybrid plan structure in a non-JOPES format, making it difficult for others outside the planners who developed OVS to use as a planning resource in emergent operations. A dedicated five member staff planning section, consistent with ICS doctrine, should be implemented for HSTF contingencies in the future. Collaborative contingency

planning will integrate Department-wide efforts and facilitate close coordination with agencies at all governmental levels, as well as with private concerns. There must be a continuous process to undertake interagency planning preparation, and periodic review.

**C4I (Command, Control, Communication, Computers, and Infrastructure):** Physical communications during OAS and between the MCC and CJTF-H during OST were excellent—much better than in similar fast-paced operations in the past. The biggest C4 issue was circuit discipline and protocol during OAS. The Coast Guard operates in homeland security and national security environments. As such, it must be a universal translator to speak both languages using DHS and DOD communications systems. The collateral benefits of established communications with DOD and DHS interagency partners cannot be underscored. Information flow between HSTF-SE and DOD elements was often better than within DHS itself. Because there were no standard informational mechanisms throughout DHS, HSTF-SE did encounter challenges in the areas of proper command and control, information flow during the height of the operation, and the usefulness of the information technology employed. Intelligence during OAS and OST was superior; however, dissemination was not optimized because of similar issues with reporting chains discussed earlier. In future MCC operations, Coast Guard personnel should have a larger presence on the CJTF J1 (administration), J2 (intelligence), and J4 (logistics) staffs.

**Operational Sustainability:** Personnel and logistic assets nearly reached a maximum during OAS. A longer, more complex mass migration scenario would have severely challenged the command and control links employed for OAS between HSTF-SE and DHS, as well as the logistics sustainability and endurance of HSTF personnel caught up in a high-operations tempo working long days for many weeks without relief. Fortunately, rough winter weather in the Caribbean during the period helped keep many Haitians from trying to migrate away from their island via the sea, and hastened the transition from OAS migration prevention to the OST stability operations after Aristide’s departure. There were unanticipated costs to the Coast Guard, including cutter assets diverted from fisheries patrol and counter drug enforcement. While HSTF-SE logistics staff successfully coordinated the rapid expansion of the FOB at GITMO, a formal ICS logistics section would have made the

---

---

contingency support more efficient. DHS's focus on operations creates new expectations for Coast Guard responsiveness and operational sustainability. The Coast Guard must improve its contingency supply lines, and should prepare to become the primary logistician for all agencies within DHS.

### **Conclusion**

The standup of HSTF-SE and the subsequent stability operations under the multinational task force headed by SOUTHCOM presented new opportunities and challenges for force integration in joint operations, situational awareness, command and control, and the flow of logistics. The HSTF-SE provided opportunities for regional integration and unity of command, while at the same time providing new challenges for traditional chains of command, battle rhythm, and situational awareness. The transition to the MCC provided a new framework for DHS support to DOD joint operations in an environment where the Coast Guard, instead of

the Navy, provided the primary maritime assets. Logistics, communications, and organizational relationships faced unexpected challenges due to the fluidity of the internal situation in Haiti. But the "Semper Paratus – Always Ready" flexibility of Coast Guard people, as well as the rapid deployment of its assets, proved key to the overall success of the national policy of deterrence, and will continue to remain effective in future joint DHS and DOD operations.

### **About the Author:**

**CDR John Leonard** is a reserve officer recalled to active duty as Program Manager, Reserve Readiness in the Plans and Exercises Division (CG-5/7) at Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area, in Portsmouth, Virginia. A graduate of the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, he holds a PhD from Texas A&M University and has over 20 years of active and reserve service. In civilian life, he is an information technology project manager in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.

---

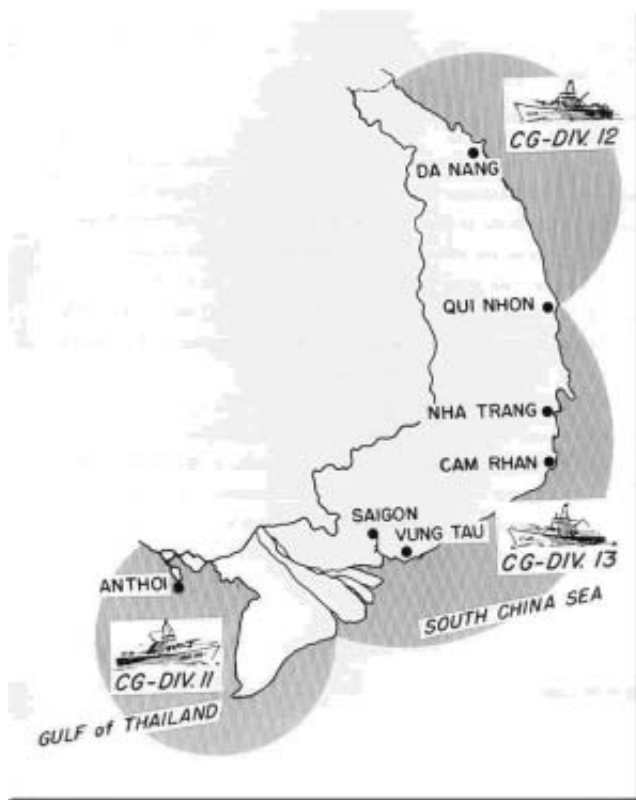
---

## Lessons Learned from History: The U.S. Coast Guard in Vietnam

*Kent Sieg*  
*U.S. Coast Guard*

### Introduction

As a military Service of the United States, the U.S. Coast Guard has participated in all of the nation's major conflicts. The Vietnam War was no exception, and Coast Guard leadership actively maneuvered to ensure that their Service would not be relegated to the mere support role it had during the Korean Conflict. In April 1965, the Secretary of the Navy requested the participation of the U.S. Coast Guard's "more suitable patrol craft" in support of military operations in the Vietnam War. Within weeks, the secretaries of both the Treasury and Defense Departments had signed a memorandum establishing a mechanism for the deployment of Coast Guard assets to Southeast Asia.



This map of South Viet Nam shows the approximate locations of the bases from which Divisions 11, 12 and 13, comprising U. S. Coast Guard Squadron One, operate as part of the U.S. Navy Coastal Surveillance Force.

The Coast Guard brought its unique capabilities to the war effort against Communist forces in Vietnam. Coast Guard Activities Vietnam – and after August 1970 Senior Coast Guard Officer Vietnam – overcame numerous challenges to support a wide range of operations in theater. By examining the manner in which the Coast Guard carried out its assigned missions, many lessons from this experience prove illustrative.

### Patrols

The Coast Guard assets of most immediate need in Vietnam were the 82-foot Point-class patrol boats. In comparison to other classes, these cutters were newer, more consistently equipped, and had only two engines, a factor that would make maintenance more simplified. They also had just a 5½-foot draft and were considered very seaworthy. Under a joint Service agreement, the U.S. Navy would provide all basing, fuel, ammunition, and logistical support, including transportation of the cutters and crews abroad, while the Coast Guard would staff and prepare the deployment. Coast Guard Headquarters personally selected most of the personnel deploying. It changed the manning of the patrol boats to include two officers, which was not the case when these boats operated domestically. The presence of these officers would strengthen boarding actions. The ordinary seamen billets were changed to those of higher-grade gunnery and electronics personnel. Training included small arms instruction, survival and evasion, damage control, firefighting, and communications at various Navy and Marine Corps installations.

The first cutters arrived at Danang, Republic of Vietnam, on July 20, 1965. They were assigned to support MARKET TIME interdiction operations that attempted to prevent the flow of arms and materiel from North Vietnam to the Viet Cong in the south. The Coast Guard vessels operated near the 17th parallel, but also in the Gulf of Thailand. The first hostile fire upon a cutter occurred just four days after arrival in-country when the *Point Orient* was machine-gunned from a beach while it patrolled near the Cua Viet River.

An eventual complement of fifty-eight boats, including twenty-six patrol boats in Squadron One and the five cutters of Squadron Three, worked jointly with the U.S. Navy and the South Vietnamese Navy (VNN) in the Coastal Surveillance Force. However, due to the miniscule amount of materiel actually seized in Operation MARKET TIME, whether it was a useful



**The USCGC *Point Young* of Division 11, U.S. Coast Guard Squadron One, on patrol off Phu Quoc Island, 13 November 1965**

application of Coast Guard cutters has been open to debate; perhaps its deterrent effect was more significant than realized. At its peak, the Coast Guard patrols were cruising 4,000 nautical miles per month and spending 72 percent of their time underway. The last Coast Guard MARKET TIME patrol occurred in December 1971.

While few North Vietnamese naval craft got through the MARKET TIME interdiction near the demilitarized zone and in the Gulf of Thailand, the southeastern coast of South Vietnam was at first relatively unprotected. Eventually, the assets devoted to the MARKET TIME interdiction effort were refocused to the internal waterways network of South Vietnam. It was found that Coast Guard afloat assets were most effective not offshore, but rather in the midst of junk traffic along the coast and rivers. A dramatic increase in the Coast Guard cutters, patrol boats, motor lifeboats, and utility boats sent to Vietnam provided a significant force to utilize in riverine operations. By late 1968, Coast Guard patrol boats were participating in joint operations with Navy Swift boats at an ever-increasing rate. While it was found that the cutters had been perfect for coastal interdiction, the patrol boats had not been designed for raiding and notably lacked armor, weaponry, speed, and the shallowness that would have been optimal.

A side-note to the Coast Guard's role in Vietnam is that an August 1966 "friendly-fire" attack on the *Point Welcome*, which killed the commanding officer and another seaman, caused an alteration of the rules of engagement for air attacks on small vessels. But the Service's boats still managed to destroy over 2,000 enemy vessels and inflict over 1,800 Communist casualties.

## Aviation

The unique skillset that the Coast Guard brought to military aerial capabilities in Southeast Asia was its in unparalleled rotary-winged flying. The Coast Guard pilots were assigned to the Air Force under a 1967 exchange agreement initiated at the request of that Service, which was long aware of the preparation and experience that Coast Guard pilots had in the quintessential Coast Guard mission of helicopter rescue.

These pilots began arriving in Vietnam in 1968, and it was soon recognized among the Air Force aviators with whom they worked that the capabilities of Coast Guard pilots assigned to the Aero Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) were superior.

The Coast Guard pilots came into country as fully qualified flight commanders; all were designated Air Force instructors and often trained their newly arriving Air Force counterparts. They also flew fixed winged aircraft as well. Because of their experience in domestic rescue operations, Coast Guardsmen of relatively junior rank to their Air Force copilots would often be the lead flier. What struck most observers was the dedication of these pilots to saving the lives of those who had crashed or otherwise needed extraction, something not unexpected for men who came from a Service historically dedicated to saving lives. Another common



**Commissioning ceremony, Coast Guard Squadron One**



---

---

theme was the unique capacity for adaptability possessed by the Coast Guardsmen.

The Coast Guard pilots developed or improved upon a number of tactics. The procedure for most rescues evolved into the use of two rescue helicopters, which would work in tandem with four A-1 Skyraiders divided into two flights; one set would cover while a single helicopter would swoop in for the rescue. Over the water, the Coast Guardsmen taught Air Force pilots about stabilized hovering using reference points independent of wave action. Another tactic imparted was a technique of hovering over the extraction point and letting the enlisted flight engineer direct operations, something unheard of in the Air Force at the time. Coast Guard pilots knew how to fly high enough to avoid hand-held weapons and low enough to deter surface to air missile launches against them.

However, no tactics evolved could ever prevent the enemy from realizing that a rescue attempt of downed American airmen would take place, and so these Coast Guardsmen usually flew into hailstorms of danger. To survive, Coast Guard pilots often had to push the performance of their helicopters far past what technical manuals specified – and these pilots could do it. For example, performing rescue operations from the mountain elevations of the Central Highlands was not uncommon, in spite of the fact that hovering was not technically possible at such altitudes. In another case, a helicopter piloted by a tenacious Coast Guard officer had taken so much fire from the enemy – with forty holes in the fuselage, parts of the tail section missing, and four of the rotor blades damaged – that upon return to base the chopper was declared unfit for further flight. On other occasions, Coast Guardsmen flew with fuel dangerously spewing throughout the cabin and also with the rotor spinning off. As well, it has been reported (although unconfirmed) that one Coast Guardsman, who could maneuver a C-130 like a fighter, was able to down an enemy MiG by flying it into the trees while it was pursuing his aircraft. With the use of in-flight refueling, Coast Guardsmen also piloted what was up to then the longest over-water medical evacuation ever completed by helicopters.

One notable fatality of this group was LT Jack Rittichier, himself a former Air Force pilot before transferring to the Coast Guard. Rittichier had perished on April 3, 1968, due to his persistent attempts to rescue a Marine Corps A-4 pilot in heavily defended enemy territory.

Rittichier's self-sacrifice was a quality shared by his colleagues. The effectiveness and heroics of this small group is evidenced in the list of awards they received, including four Silver Stars, fifteen Distinguished Flying Crosses, and eighty-six Air Medals.

### **Port Operations**

At the end of 1965, the Commander of Coast Guard Squadron One was also designated as senior advisor to the Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam, in order to coordinate requests for Coast Guard assets. In 1966, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) requested more shore-side help from the Coast Guard. The advisor's already wide array of roles expanded and a port operations director was sent.

A major problem confronting port operations was the behavior of merchant seamen. The layover to embark and depart the major ports in South Vietnam was so long that crews on liberty had more than ample opportunity wreak havoc on the local populace. Because the U.S. Embassy in Saigon strongly resisted the creation of a Merchant Marine Detail (MMD) by the Coast Guard, the first shipping director sent to South Vietnam was detailed as a mere advisor to the Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS). This officer was busy; his purview included all of the deepwater ports of South Vietnam, as well as the embarkation ports in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines – a million square miles and “the largest police beat in the world.” He boarded 500 ships a year and investigated hundreds of offenses. At one point, when the master of a ship with urgently needed cargo was away, this Coast Guardsman personally took over command of this ship and got underway for sea trials. He also ensured that merchant seamen did not go errant or engage in criminal activity, and enforced disciplinary action against them after the Uniform Code of Military Justice was applied to them in December 1966. Other merchant marine problems mandated regular inspections for seaworthiness and investigation of accidents. The workload eventually forced the State Department to acquiesce to the creation of MMD Saigon on July 1, 1968.

MACV also request port security help from the Coast Guard. A port security and waterways detail (PS&WD) arrived in Vietnam in October 1966. Up to this time, access to port areas had been porous and there were few protective emplacements around them. For elevated security in the major ports, the PS&WD

---

---

set out recommendations for the institution of access controls: the installation of chain-linked fences, lighting, and barbed wire; defoliation of the perimeter areas; bunkers and guard towers; shore patrols and watches; and mine-sweeping and booms outside of the ports. The team also prepared merchant dispersal plans for each port in the event it came under attack. The officer in charge of the PS&WD was officially designated as the U.S. Army in Vietnam's port security advisor.

In one year alone, Coast Guard personnel from the port security and explosive loading details supervised the off-loading of more than four million tons of explosives from fifty ships. The Coast Guard advisor also established a National Port Security Committee to coordinate the organizations involved with South Vietnam's ports. Furthermore, with the Coast Guard active in port the disruptions caused by merchant seaman dissipated at an astonishing rate. Without Coast Guard expertise in these areas, resupply and logistical support to MACV would have been greatly impaired.

### Navigation

Bombing runs against Communist targets required an accurate markings and navigations system that would overcome the bad weather in, and poor charting of, Southeast Asia. The Coast Guard already had in use a

system that would allow bombers to more safely strike targets at night. The Coast Guard's version of the long-range aid to navigation, or LORAN-C, was comprised of electronic pulses synchronized from two stations. Funds left over from other Department of Defense navigation projects underwrote work to survey for and establish three stations in Southeast Asia under Operation TIGHT REIGN. Coast Guard engineers selected a master site and a slave site in Thailand, and a second slave site on Con Son Island off the Mekong Delta. In less than eight months the sites were operational. A site north of Danang was added by the summer of 1969. During the Easter Offensive of 1972, this last site at Tan My was nearly overrun by the North Vietnamese army.

South Vietnam had only one buoy tender, and it was never used. Clearly, the Coast Guard's ability to lay a large number of buoys was needed. In April 1966, the Coast Guard buoy tender *Plaintree* began laying mooring buoys off of Phan Rang, Qui Nhon, Chu Lai, and Danang. Subsequently, aids to navigation (ATON) personnel deployed to Saigon to work with the Agency for International Development and the South Vietnamese government in order to improve ATON efforts. By 1967, the realization that the South Vietnamese could never adequately handle ATON precipitated the deployment of the buoy tender *Ironwood*. This tender set buoys around Danang and



**WORKING A BUOY**—The Coast Guard Cutter *Basswood* works a buoy as busy Vietnamese fishermen travel to open sea and their fishing grounds from Vung Tau harbor. The cutter battled monsoon weather for a 30-day tour to establish and reservice sea aids-to-navigation dotting the 1,000 mile South Vietnamese coastline.

marked the Cua Viet River. The *Basswood* followed and laid seasonal moorings around Phu Quoc Island. The 180-foot *Blackhaw* began a series of fifteen deployments to Vietnam beginning in March 1968. By the summer of that year, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had assigned the installation and maintenance of all maritime ATON in Vietnam to the Coast Guard on a reimbursable basis. Towards the end of American involvement in the war, the Coast Guard's last ATON action was the tender *Basswood*'s replacement of buoys with shore-based structures.

### Asset turnover

Protracted peace talks involving the United States, South Vietnam,



**DA NANG, VIETNAM — 82-foot USCG cutters tied up at the dock.**

North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong began in 1968; as they slowly progressed the nature of the war began to change. As part of the Nixon administration's policy of Vietnamization, and at the request of the U.S. Navy, the Coast Guard began the process of turning over its cutters to the South Vietnamese Navy (VNN) as early as December 1968. Before that time, the Coast Guard had extensive contact with the VNN, including having Vietnamese translators onboard all of its cutters. In fact, the Coast Guard commander in the Gulf of Thailand was designated as the senior naval advisor to the Vietnamese Fourth Coastal Zone commander, and other Coast Guard officers had worked closely with officials from the four Vietnamese ministries that had some authority over ports and maritime commerce. The turnover would be not only ships and equipment, but also the expertise that the Coast Guard possessed.

Cutter and boat turnovers, continuing through 1972, began with a pilot program of fifteen weeks, a period that eventually evolved into six months, and finally was reduced to three months. This period was necessary to facilitate the VNN's operation of these vessels. VNN replacement crews would serve two at a time with the Coast Guard crews in order to familiarize them individually with shipboard operation. As time passed, the American crewmen would depart, and eventually

the Coast Guard cutter commander would be left with a fully Vietnamese crew. This method of turnover was so successful that the entire program was accelerated.

The VNN took possession of the twenty-six 82-footers in 1970. The final transfer of cutters occurred during 1972. In May of that year, Coast Guardsmen sailed these vessels from Virginia to Guam, where they were turned over to the U.S. Navy. In June and July, the Navy, in turn, transferred these ships to the VNN. However, upon full assumption of command and control of the cutters, the VNN suffered from poor leadership, and the new Vietnamese crews were seldom effective or fully staffed.

Port operations were turned over to the South Vietnamese army (ARVN)

as well. The Coast Guard explosives handling manual was translated into Vietnamese for the ARVN's use. Years of working alongside Coast Guardsmen had trained the ARVN to do the job competently. Still, cultural strictures against direct confrontation made it difficult for many of the Vietnamese to enforce directives vis-à-vis merchant captains and seamen. The situation eased somewhat when Coast Guardsmen threatened to report any incidences of noncompliance by American merchant mariners to the captains of the port back in the United States. Another action that did wonders to increase Vietnamese authority was the simple design of an emblem the Vietnamese could wear which signified that they were U.S. Coast Guard-trained.

The signing of the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973 brought an end to formal U.S. participation in the war. The PS&WD, the Coast Guard's last operational unit in Vietnam, was disestablished within a week of the accords. Also in that month, contractors took over operations at the LORAN stations in Vietnam. In February, the Senior Coast Guard Officer Vietnam left, and the MMD was transferred to the U.S. Embassy for operational control. The MMD was ultimately closed down in May. Coast Guard aviators continued to participate in ARRS missions from Thailand until July 1973. The last Coast Guard activity in Vietnam ended

---

---

when the LORAN station on Con Son was hastily evacuated on April 29, 1975.

### Conclusion

Approximately 8,000 Coast Guardsmen served in the Vietnam War. The Coast Guard had seven of these personnel lost and fifty-three wounded during its involvement. Coast Guardsmen patrolled 1,200 miles of coastline, supported 6,000 maritime actions against the enemy, saved hundreds of distressed American servicemen, offloaded millions of tons of crucial cargo, and made the waterways of Southeast Asia safe for local and allied shipping. But the Coast Guard also demonstrated its humanitarian side in Vietnam. At Song Ong Doc village, the Coast Guardsmen made improvements to the local school, and the crews of eight vessels engaged in medical civic action programs there. Coast Guardsmen also took a special interest in the Saigon School for the Blind, including arranging for scholarships in the United States for its girls and, in one case, setting up a cornea transplant by a Naval surgeon. The Coast Guard also established an “island adoption” program whereby its units would make regular calls on certain islands to improve relationships with the local populace.

The legacy of Vietnam carries on for the Service in tangible ways. As recently as early 2004, several of the most senior officers in the Coast Guard had Vietnam War service, including the patrol duty of Atlantic Area



**Lieutenant Jack Rittichier (R), USCG**

Commander, Vice Admiral James Hull, and the Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard, Vice Admiral Thomas Barrett (both now retired); in addition, the Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard, Vice Admiral Thad Allen, served at LORAN Station Lampang. On July 16, 2004, the Service dedicated a monument to the men who had served in Vietnam at the Recruit Training Center in Cape May, New Jersey. The capstone event that put the specter of Vietnam to rest for the Coast Guard, though, was the discovery and return home of LT Jack Rittichier, whose remains would not be recovered until the United States was on the eve of another war in early 2003.



**‘MEDCAP’ AT SONG ONG DOC DISPENSARY - CIVIC ACTION PROGRAM: While the doctor worked, Coast Guardsmen mingle with the crowd. Here, candy being distributed failed to detract from the children’s fondness for the camera**

The Coast Guard not only made a direct military impact in action against the enemy, but it also saved lives. Perhaps of greatest importance, though, was that the Coast Guard dramatically increased merchant and wartime resupply commerce through improved navigation, more secure and effective port management, and by policing the waterways through its patrols. The Vietnam War also changed the Coast Guard institutionally. The war caused a rapid expansion in Coast Guard personnel numbers. Military readiness among these personnel, as well as the procurement of equipment effective within a military environment, also expanded. It is likely that the Coast Guard’s identification as a military Service during wartime also was a factor that allowed it to transfer intact to the Department of Transportation in 1967. The



1974 - Changes in the Coast Guard at the end of the Vietnam era also included new uniforms.

Service's highly regarded reputation for patrolling, search and rescue, and port control were the factors that brought it to Vietnam in the first place. The Coast Guard demonstrated that it could effectively support small conflicts in far-away places, and these factors are still those that make the Coast Guard an effective branch of the military today.

### Bibliography

Cutler, Thomas J. *Brown Water, Black Berets: Coastal and Riverine Warfare in Vietnam*. Naval Institute Press, 1988.  
Johnson, Robert Erwin. *Guardians of the Sea: History of the United States Coast Guard, 1915 to the Present*. Naval Institute Press, 1987.

Kaplan, Hyman R. "Coast Guard Played Vital Role in Vietnam War," *Navy: The Magazine of Seapower*, November 1970.  
Larzelere, Alex, *The Coast Guard at War: Vietnam, 1965-1973*. Naval Institute Press, 1997.

Scotti, Paul. *Coast Guard Action in Vietnam: Stories of Those Who Served*. Hellgate Press, 2000.

Tulich, Eugene N. *The United States Coast Guard in South East Asia During the Vietnam Conflict*. U.S. Coast Guard Public Affairs Division, 1986.

### About the author:

**Kent Sieg**, a reservist in the Coast Guard, holds a doctorate in history from the University of Colorado. He has taught U.S. military and diplomatic history at a number of collegiate institutions, and has worked as an historian for the Department of State and within the Department of Defense. His specific area of scholarly specialization is the Vietnam War. He is the guest assistant editor for this issue of the JCOA Lessons Learned Bulletin.

## Joint Center for Operational Analysis and Lessons Learned

116 Lake View Parkway  
Suffolk, VA 23435-2697

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
BG Anthony Cucolo, Director	(anthony.cucolo)	x7317
CDR Al Musgrove, OPPO	(albert.musgrove)	x7618

DSN: 668 Comm: (757) 203 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@jfcom.mil

## Joint Staff, J7 JETD

7000 Joint Staff Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20318-7000

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
CAPT J. Miller	(jeffery.miller)	697-3752
LTC V. Price	(vincent.price)	695-4711
Larry Schaefer (JLLS)	(larry.schaefer)	697-3665

DSN: 227 Comm: (703) 697 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@js.pentagon.mil  
SIPRNET: (username)@pentagon.js.smil.mil

## USJFCOM

USJFCOM  
116 Lake View Parkway  
Suffolk, VA 23435-2697

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
Mr. Mike Barker	(hugh.barker)	x7270

DSN: 668 COMM: (757) 203 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@jfcom.mil  
SIPRNET: (JW4000)@hq.jfcom.smil.mil

## FEMA

FCP 200-H  
500 C St. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20472

### Office of National Preparedness

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
Mr. K. Iacobacci	(kevin.iacobacci)	x3293

Comm: (202) 646 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@fema.gov

## CENTCOM

US Central Command  
7115 South Boundary Blvd.  
MacDill AFB, FL 33621 - 5101

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
Mr. L. Underwood	(underwlm)	x3384
Ms. M. Avery	(averyma)	x6301
Mr. Jerry Swartz (JLLS)	(swartzjc)	x3450

DSN: 651 Comm: (813) 827 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@centcom.mil  
SIPRNET: (username)@centcom.smil.mil

## Joint Lessons Learned Points of Contact

### PACOM

HQ US Pacific Command  
ATTN: J375  
Camp Smith, HI 96861

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
Mr. Jim Long (JLLS)	(peter.j.long)	x7767

DSN 315-477 Comm: (808) 477 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@pacom.mil

### TRANSCOM

US Transportation Command (TCJ3-OPT)  
Scott AFB, IL 62225 - 5357

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
Mr. R. Netemeyer	(robert.netemeyer)	x1810
Mr. T. Behne (JLLS)	(todd.behne)	x3479

DSN: 779 Comm: (618) 229 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@hq.transcom.mil  
SIPRNET: (username)@transcom.smil.mil

### SOUTHCOM

US Southern Command  
3511 NW 91st Avenue  
Miami, FL 33172 - 1217

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
Joe Cormack (JLLS)	(cormackj)	x3380

DSN: 567 Comm: (305) 437 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@hq.southcom.mil

### STRATCOM

US Strategic Command(J371)  
901 SAC Blvd. Suite M133  
Offutt AFB, NE 68113 - 6500

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
LTCOLA. Smith	(smithaj)	271-2303
LT Matt Frank	(frankma)	272-5098
Mr. Dave Coombs	(coombsd)	271-2378
Mr. Vince Valenti	(valentiv)	272-7694

DSN: 272 Comm: (402) 294 - XXXX FAX: 5798  
Internet: (username)@stratcom.mil  
SIPRNET: (username)@stratnets.stratcom.smil.mil

### ALSA CENTER

Air Land Sea Application Center  
114 Andrews Street  
Langley AFB, VA 23665

	<u>user name</u>	<u>phone#</u>
LCDR Mike Schroeder	(michael.schroeder)	x0967
LTC Doug Sutton	(douglas.sutton)	x0966

DSN: 575 Comm: (757) 225 - XXXX  
Internet: (username)@langley.af.mil or  
alsa.director@langley.af.mil  
SIPRNET: (username)@langley.af.smil.mil



---

---

## JCOA-LL BULLETIN DELIVERED TO YOU ELECTRONICALLY!

The JCOA-LL Bulletin is now available through electronic subscription and distribution to approved subscribers. Currently, it is only available on the Non-Secure Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNET).

**Users within the jfcom.mil:** There is no need to register for a Webgate account. You have three options to access the sign up: first option, you can go to the JWFC Staff Working Area and under 'Research,' locate the link for JCOA-LL and click the button for JCOA-LL Bulletin; or, second option, under the sub-heading 'Publication' (also under 'Research'), locate the link for the JCOA-LL Bulletin; or, third option, under 'JDLS Work Areas,' locate the link for JW4000 and click the button for the JCOA-LL Bulletin.

Once at the JCOA-LL Bulletin page, you will see the subscription link. Click on the link, fill out, and submit the subscription form.

You will be notified via e-mail when your subscription registration has been approved (if your request must be manually approved). The next time the JCOA-LL Bulletin is distributed against the JCOA-LL list of subscribers, you will receive e-mail with the latest Bulletin attached.

**Users outside the jfcom.mil:** You will need to register and be approved for a JWFC Webgate account. The Webgate account allows you to access the JCOA-LL web site and thus submit the subscription request. Go to the unclassified web site by the following URL: <http://www.jwfc.jfcom.mil/jcll/> The webgate page for the NIPRNET will open and you may select "Account Request" from the left side of the page.

When filling out the information needed to obtain a Webgate account, you will be asked for a sponsor/POC and a purpose for the request. For the purpose of obtaining an electronic JCOA-LL Bulletin subscription, please use Mr. Al Preisser as the sponsor/POC.

Once a Webgate account has been established, you will need to visit the same URL above and click on the purple button in the middle of the page, "Registered Users." After reaching the JCOA-LL homepage, click on the link for "JCOA-LL Bulletins" and you will see the subscription link on the JCOA-LL Bulletin page. Click on the link, fill out, and submit the subscription form.

You will be notified via e-mail when your subscription registration has been approved (if your request must be manually approved). The next time the JCOA-LL Bulletin is distributed against the JCOA-LL list of subscribers, you will receive an e-mail with the latest Bulletin attached.

### *Disclaimer*

The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense, USJFCOM, the JCOA-LL, or any other government agency. This product is not a doctrinal publication and is not staffed, but is the perception of those individuals involved in military exercises, activities, and real-world events. The intent is to share knowledge, support discussions, and impart information in an expeditious manner.



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

**COMMANDER**

**USJFCOM JWFC CODE JW 4000**

**116 LAKE VIEW PKWY**

**SUFFOLK VA 23435-2697**

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

