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Coast Guard Operations During Operation Iraqi Freedom

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Contents

Introduction

In late 2002, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) began preparations for its participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). This became its largest overseas deployment since the Vietnam War. The USCG sent two major cutters, a buoy tender, eight patrol boats, numerous port security units, and their support units out of country in support of this war. In addition, USCG personnel, mostly reservists, provided security for military out-load operations in the continental United States (CONUS), as well as general security for ports across the country. To perform these tasks, the Coast Guard had to call up reservists, re-assign active duty personnel, and train these forces for new missions in unfamiliar environments. In the course of the war, the Coast Guard performed many missions it is familiar with as well as many it is not.

The Coast Guard Historian's office asked the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) to help compile a history of the service's role during OIF. We conducted interviews with many of the commanders of Coast Guard forces in both Atlantic and Pacific Area Coast Guard Headquarters. We also collected message traffic and situation reports Coast Guard forces sent during the war. We supplemented the data we collected with the results of other CNA analyses of OIF.

We used this information to compile a set of issues that the Coast Guard faced during OIF, the way in which the service coped with these issues during the war, and the degree of success it had in resolving them. We point out areas where the Coast Guard should consider changes to its operations together with changes they made during OIF that should be institutionalized.

The Coast Guard performed many missions in OIF, but the primary ones were its traditional missions of maritime intercept, search, port security, and the maintenance of aids to navigation (ATON). In performing these missions, Coast Guard units were often closer to the

area of conflict than other naval units. Although this proximity was unexpected, the cutters employed in this role performed their missions effectively.

There were several areas of difficulty, however, for the Coast Guard units, which included supply and tasking for the Port Security Units (PSU), particularly for the two that were tasked to provide security on the Iraqi gas and oil platforms (GOPLATS). Communications with Navy units were also an issue. The Navy now performs much of its tactical communications via secure chat rooms vice encrypted radio circuits. Ships that are not equipped with this capability run the risk of missing important developments. The major cutters did have secure chat capability, but the small ones did not. We examine the impact this had on their operation.

Activities

Here we take a short look at the activities of the overseas forces. We provide more detail later in this report.

Mediterranean

These units provided security for shipping crossing the Mediterranean Sea between the Strait of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. *Dallas*, a 378-foot high endurance cutter and four 100-foot patrol boats escorted both carrier battle groups and military convoys. They intercepted ships that approached these convoys and conducted boardings as necessary. *Dallas* also acted as a plane guard for carrier flight operations. This freed up Navy ships that were needed for other operations that only they could perform.

PSU 309 was originally tasked to provide port security in a host country to which U.S. forces planned to deploy. However, political issues delayed and finally cancelled this deployment. PSU 309 moved between several ports in the Mediterranean basin before being shifted to the Arabian Gulf in mid-April. There they augmented the other port security forces already in the theater.

At the end of OIF, *Dallas* and the four patrol boats returned to the United States. The patrol boats, which had been carried over to the

Mediterranean on a cargo ship, made the return transit on their own power in company with *Dallas*. This was one of the longest transits ever made by this class of vessel.

Arabian Gulf

The USCG units sent to the Arabian Gulf were extremely busy. Before hostilities began the 378-foot cutter *Boutwell*, the buoy tender *Walnut*, and the four patrol boats were all engaged in enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq. They performed boardings, intercepted ships, and contributed to U.S. naval presence in the Northern Arabian Gulf (NAG).

Once OIF began, Coast Guard forces were not withdrawn to less dangerous area. Instead, they remained at "the tip of the spear" in the NAG. They supported the special operations forces that occupied the GOPLATS and continued to intercept and board Iraqi ships that got underway from the Kohr abd Allah (KAA), the main channel to Iraq's ports. The focus of these boardings shifted from UN sanction enforcement to the identification of potential mine layers, suicide attack boats, and to search for any Iraqi leadership attempting to escape by sea.

As the war moved north, USCG units helped re-open the main Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. Members of PSU 311 provided security at the port itself. *Walnut*, using buoys found in the port, re-established the aids to navigation in the KAA. *Walnut* and *Adak* escorted the first humanitarian supply ships into Umm Qasr.

PSU 311 and 313 performed a vital mission by guarding the two Iraqi GOPLATS after U.S. and Coalition special forces captured these facilities. Although, in retrospect, they may not have been the correct choice for this mission, the PSU personnel nonetheless carried it out with support from other Coast Guard and Navy units.

Summary of observations

The Coast Guard performed many vital missions during OIF. Some of them could also have been performed by Navy units, but most were of the type that the Coast Guard performs regularly. In the close-in,

shallow, littoral waters of the NAG, Coast Guard cutters (USCGC) and patrol boats were able to operate where larger naval vessels could not. The Coast Guard's training and experience in boardings and searches also played a vital role in OIF, from the sanction enforcement operations before hostilities began to the more general efforts afterwards.

The port security mission is one of the Coast Guard's specialties. The PSUs were created specifically to act as deployable units. However, it is not clear that the use of the PSUs during OIF was optimal. In particular, their use in the GOPLAT security mission may have been inappropriate. The PSUs performed the mission successfully, even though they did not have the number of personnel, the necessary weapons and sensors, nor the optimal boats for the task. In addition, the GOPLAT mission suffered as PSU personnel were detached to provide security at Umm Qasr, Ash Shuaybah, and other ports in the area.

The 110-foot patrol boats were the workhorses of the Coast Guard's efforts. They boarded, searched, and escorted many ships in the area. They supported the PSUs on the GOPLATS. During the war, they operated almost continuously. Their ability to do so was largely due to Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFOR SWA). This was the shore support and maintenance organization that Atlantic Area Headquarters set up in Bahrain to keep the patrol boats running.

Walnut was originally sent to the NAG as a contingency against Iraqi oil releases. Fortunately, she never had to perform this mission. However, during the war, *Walnut* performed boardings along with other Coast Guard ships. Her major contribution during the war was reestablishing the aids to navigation in the KAA. This helped open the port at Umm Qasr to large ships.

Data sources

We used several sources of data for this study. The primary ones were interviews conducted by a Coast Guard historian in the NAG soon after the initial hostilities of OIF ended. We supplemented this with interviews we conducted at Atlantic and Pacific Area Coast Guard Headquarters.

Interviews

Soon after OIF ended, a member of the Coast Guard reserve who works for the Historian's office conducted interviews with several of the conflict's participants. These interviews took place in theater soon after combat operations ended. (All personnel are Coast Guard members unless otherwise identified. Ranks and assignments are those held during OIF.)

- USCGC *Boutwell*
  - CAPT Scott Genovese, Commanding Officer
  - CDR Michael Kazek, Executive Officer
  - LT J.W. Pruitt III, Operations Officer
  - LCDR Timothy Schang, Air Detachment Officer in Charge
- Major Cutter Support Detachment, Bahrain
  - CWO-2 Brian Clark, Officer in Charge
  - CWO-4 John McEwen, Finance & Supply Officer
- 110-foot patrol boats
  - LT Holly Harrison, CO USCGC *Aquidneck*
  - LCDR Christopher Barrows, CO USCGC *Baranof*

— QM1 David Chapman, Operations Petty Officer, USCGC *Wrangell*

- Naval Coastal Warfare Group One
  - — CAPT Mike Shatynski (USNR), CO Harbor Defense Command Unit 114
  - — CAPT Douglas Ash, Deputy CO Harbor Defense Command Unit 114
  - — CDR Scott Jerabek (USNR), CO Mobile Inshore Undersea Warfare Unit 114
  - — LCDR Mike Milkovich, CO PSU 309
  - — CDR Don Karol, CO PSU 311
  - — LCDR Rickey Thomas, CO PSU 313
- Commander Fifth Fleet
  - — CAPT James Hanna (USN), Chief of Staff
  - — LCDR Robert Hanley, Asst. Coast Guard Liaison Officer
  - — LCDR John McKinley, Coast Guard Liaison Officer, CDS-50
- Law Enforcement Detachments
  - — LTJG Robert Kinsey, CO LEDET 406
  - — MT1 Gerald Visser, LEDET 406
  - — DC3 Nathan Brukenthal, LEDET 406

During this project, CNA added to this list by interviewing personnel at both Pacific and Atlantic Area Coast Guard Headquarters. These interviews focused on the planning, training, and support required for the Coast Guard forces who supported OIF. They include forces deployed to the North Arabian Gulf and to the Mediterranean, as well as forces mobilized for out-load port security in CONUS. The interviews included:

- Atlantic Area Headquarters (Portsmouth, VA)
  - — VADM James Hull, Atlantic Area Commander

- Mr. George Brooks, Training Coordinator
- Mr. Chris Wethe, Asst. Branch Chief for Plans
- CDR Jim Brinkman (USN), Chief of Plans & Exercises
- CDR Webster Balding, Atlantic Forces Cutter Section and CDR Jack Kalis, Acting Section Chief for Port Security Units
- CDR Chris Doane, Chief of Response for Port Security and LCDR Dave Pugh, Maritime Safety Division

- Pacific Area Headquarters (Alameda, CA)
  - VADM Terry Cross, Pacific Area Commander
  - CDR Don Huknefeld, Executive Officer PSU 313
  - CDR Christopher Tomney, Director of Intelligence Operations
  - CAPT Drew Dilks, Deputy Commander of Military Logistics Command Pacific
  - Petty Officer Brian Zweir, Major Cutter Support Detachment
  - LCDR Ken Stenfanisin, Executive Officer PSU 311 and LT Mark Miller, PSU Program Manager, Pacific Area
  - CAPT Bob Day, Chief of C4I Pacific Area
  - CAPT Doug Ash, Port Security Office Naval Coastal Warfare Group One
  - LT Blake Novack, Scheduler, Pacific Area
  - RADM Timothy Sullivan, Chief of Staff Pacific Area.

We have compiled all of these interviews onto a compact disk that serves as an annex to this report [1].

Messages and situation reports

The Coast Guard Historian's Office collected a large number of situation reports, message traffic, and other material from the OIF

forces. This included planning briefings for the GOPLAT operations and after-action reports from the end of the war. This collection was not complete, and many of the messages were of minimal interest for our purposes (material casualty reports for instance). We supplemented this collection with some messages drawn from CNA's collection of message traffic from the war.

Many of these messages are still classified, and our use of them in this report is limited. We discuss some of the issues they bring up in a classified annex to this report [2]. We organized the message collection according to the ship that sent them and included them on a classified disk as an annex to this report [3].

Reconstructions

Throughout its existence, CNA has reconstructed and analyzed the Navy's operations. OIF was no exception. As in the first Gulf War of 1991, CNA had about 40 analysts in theater who collected data on various aspects of the operation. Since their return, they have analyzed much of the information and issued a series of reports, several of which are relevant to the Coast Guard's role [4-6]. As with the message traffic, much of this information is classified and is dealt with in the classified annex.

Coast Guard forces used in OIF

Forces involved

The Coast Guard sent forces to two theaters during OIF: the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf. These units came from both areas as indicated below.

Mediterranean – These units all came from Atlantic Area forces:

- USCGC *Dallas* (WHEC-716)
- USCGC *Grand Isle* (WPB-1338)
- USCGC *Bainbridge Island* (WPB-1343)
- USCGC *Pea Island* (WPB-1347)
- USCGC *Knight Island* (WPB-1348)
- PSU 309.

Arabian Gulf – The two large ships and the Port Security Units came from Pacific Area forces; and the 110-foot patrol boats came from Atlantic Area forces:

- USCGC *Boutwell* (WHEC-719)
- USCGC *Walnut* (WLB-205)
- USCGC *Adak* (WPB-1333)
- USCGC *Aquidneck*(WPB-1309)
- USCGC *Baranoff* (WPB-1318)
- USGCG *Wrangell* (WPB-1332)
- PSU 311
- PSU 313.

CONUS: The Coast Guard also mobilized reservists to provide security at ports in CONUS, particularly in support of the military out-load process. This took place primarily between January and March of 2003 as forces built up in the Iraqi theater.

Units deployed to the Arabian Gulf

For the remainder of this report, we focus on the forces the Coast Guard deployed to the Arabian Gulf in support of OIF. We present a brief description of them.

Large cutters

USCGC *Boutwell* (WHEC-719) is a Hamilton-class high endurance cutter. As such, she is one of the largest ships in the Coast Guard inventory. These ships, like many in the Coast Guard, are often referred to by their length (the 378-foot class). Figure 1 is a picture of *Boutwell.*

Figure 1. USCGC *Boutwell* (WHEC-719)

Boutwell displaces 2,716 tons and has a crew of 177. This makes her slightly smaller than the Navy's Perry-class frigates. She is armed with a 76-mm gun and carries one Mk-15 Close-in Weapon System (CIWS) for air defense. For close-in defense against small boats, *Boutwell* has

several 25-mm guns. Although several of the Hamilton-class cutters were once equipped to carry up to eight Harpoon anti-ship missiles, the Coast Guard removed this capability from them in the early 1990's.

Boutwell's crew was large enough to form three boarding parties. She also carried a rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) capable of operating over the horizon for the home ship. These capabilities made *Boutwell* a valuable asset in the NAG, where boarding and searching ships was one of the major naval activities.

The unique capability *Boutwell* brought was her helicopter detachment. She carried an HH-65 Dolphin helicopter. As we show in our discussion, this helicopter played a significant role in search, supply, and other support missions.

Buoy tender

USCGC Walnut (WLB-205) is a Juniper-class seagoing buoy tender. She is 223 feet long, displaces 2000 tons, and has a crew of 40. Her only armament is a 25-mm gun for close-in defense against small boats. Figure 2 is a photograph of *Walnut*.

Figure 2. USCGC *Walnut* (WLB-205)

Walnut's primary mission is the installation and maintenance of navigational buoys and other ATON. However, she also has capabilities for environmental clean-up, search and rescue, and law enforcement. *Walnut* was sent to the Arabian Gulf primarily as a contingency against environmental warfare should the Iraqis release oil into the Gulf as they did during Operation Desert Storm. *Walnut* is part of the national response team created to deal with such events both in the United States and abroad.

As a buoy tender, *Walnut* is not a fast ship. Although she is homeported in Hawaii, she had to depart sooner than ships that left for the Arabian Gulf from ports that are farther away. *Walnut* actually began her transit in January 2003, before the official request for her deployment came from NAVCENT. This was necessary so that she could be in the theater when hostilities began in March.

Patrol boats

The Coast Guard deployed eight 110-foot Island class patrol boats in support of OIF. Four of these boats deployed to the Arabian Gulf. *USCGC Aquidneck* (WPB-1309), *Baranof* (WPB-1318), *Wrangell* (WBP-1332, and *Adak* (WPB-1333). These boats displace only 117 tons, are armed with a 25-mm gun, and normally have a crew of 16. For OIF, the crew was increased to 22 by adding some additional berthing. The additional crew provided more watch-standers and increased the size of the ship's boarding party. Figure 3 is a photograph of Adak, one of the four patrol boats sent to the Arabian Gulf.

Figure 3. USCGC *Adak* (WPB-1333)

These four boats turned out to be the Coast Guard's workhorses during OIF. They conducted maritime intercept operations (MIO) and inspections of merchant ships operating in the Arabian Gulf. They were among the first vessels to enter the Iraqi port Umm Qasr, and they escorted some of the first merchant ships into that port.

Port Security Units

Unlike the cutters, Coast Guard Port Security Units are primarily manned by reservists. The are intended to be deployed units, and OIF was not the first time PSUs have been sent to the Arabian Gulf. During OIF the Coast Guard PSUs operated as part of Naval Coastal Warfare Group One. This is a Navy command that includes units such as a Harbor Defense Command, Mobile Inshore Underwater Warfare Units, and Inshore Boat Units. The PSU works with these forces to protect shipping as it enters and leaves a harbor as well as during a ship's stay in port.

PSUs deploy with a contingent of 120 personnel. They are equipped with five or six 25-foot Boston Whaler-type motor boats. These boats have a crew of four, have a small navigation radar, and are armed with a 7.62mm machine gun. The PSU's shore facility allows them to coordinate rendezvous with shipping as well as to monitor the threat situation in their area via coordination with intelligence services and other security forces.

Three PSUs served in the Arabian Gulf during OIF. One transferred to the Gulf after its original mission failed to materialize. The other two PSUs initially provided security on the two Iraqi GOPLATS in the northern Arabian Gulf after Navy SEALS and Marines secured these two vital facilities. The GOPLATS were a possible source of oil release into the Arabian Gulf as well as a possible base of operations for small boats. Another reason why it was vital to protect them is their importance for the post-war Iraqi economy. As we show later, this was a stressing mission for the PSUs.

In addition to the GOPLAT mission, the PSUs established security for the military and commercial ports of Kuwait. These were the main ports of entry and embarkation for Allied forces during OIF. Once

Allied forces occupied southern Iraq, another PSU was sent to Uum Qasr to provide security in that port.

Law Enforcement Detachments

Two Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETS) were already in the NAG when preparations for OIF began. They are used extensively in counter-narcotics operations where Coast Guard personnel have a legal right to board a suspect ship, but Navy personnel do not. While this technicality did not apply in the NAG once the war had started, the LEDETS provided Navy vessels with a boarding capability they might otherwise lack. During OIF, LEDETS operated off the Navy's Cyclone-class patrol boats and provided these vessels with a boarding party capability that the Coast Guard vessels generated from their own ship's company.

Shore detachments

Although the deployed Coast Guard units operated under Navy command, they have some unique supply requirements that the Navy could not satisfy. Both Atlantic and Pacific Area Headquarters established shore detachments in Bahrain to support the supply, personnel, and maintenance requirements of their deployed forces.

Pacific Area set up the Major Cutter Support Detachment (MCSD) to take care of *Boutwell* and *Walnut*. MCSD was a fairly small staff of about 10 people. In addition to ship maintenance, MCSD provided support for the *Boutwell's* helicopter. The Coast Guard deployed a van used to maintain helicopters on cutters deployed to Alaska and other remote areas. This van had spare parts and other items the helicopter would need to keep flying. As this was the only HH-65 in the U.S. forces, this support was vital.

Atlantic Area established Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFOR SWA) to take care of the four patrol boats. PATFOR SWA was a much larger group than MCSD; it consisted of about 60 people. In addition to personnel and supply, PATFOR SWA performed maintenance on the patrol boats. This was necessary since the small crews of these vessels could not perform upkeep on them and maintain the required operational tempo. PATFOR SWA was a success. The four patrol boats

maintained a much higher fraction of time underway than their CONUS-based counterparts.

At the end of OIF, in the summer of 2003, *Boutwell* and *Walnut* returned from their deployments. The personnel assigned to the MCSD also returned and Pacific Area disestablished the detachment. The four 110-foot patrol boats, however, are still in the NAG as of the fall of 2004. Although crews have rotated home, the boats themselves are maintaining the same high operational tempo. Atlantic Area made PATFOR SWA a permanent unit, and the detachment is still in Bahrain supporting the patrol boats and their crews.

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Training and deployment

The Coast Guard units sent overseas were notified of their impending deployment in late 2002, between October and November in most cases. Between this notification and their actual departure in early 2003, these units underwent pre-deployment training and had additional equipment installed. This helped prepare them for the wartime environment of the NAG. The training of the cutter's companies and their deployment to the NAG ranged from routine to almost improvised.

Training & equipment

The Pacific Area deployers had varied training. *Boutwell* received her training, and other modifications, at Alameda beginning almost a year before she left for deployment. This included the installation of communications equipment that allowed her to use the secure internet protocol network (SIPRNET). Chat rooms on this network have become the standard channel for naval tactical communications, replacing encrypted voice circuits. SIPRNET is also used to transmit intelligence data and briefings along with commanders' intentions messages and other information. *Boutwell* and *Walnut* could communicate via this channel.

Boutwell picked up her helicopter in Hawaii during her transit to the Arabian Gulf. This helicopter had a forward looking infrared (FLIR) system installed. This FLIR was one of the few helicopter-mounted systems in the Coast Guard inventory and was borrowed from the squadrons doing counter-drug operations in the Caribbean. This system allowed the helicopter to identify potential boarding targets at night and greatly increased its utility.

Walnut received training and equipment in Hawaii before beginning her transit. Like *Boutwell*, she had SIPRNET capability installed. She also had some additional weapons emplaced and had her crew aug-

mented to help man these weapons. She also picked up equipment for use in controlling a potential oil release.

The Atlantic Area units, including all of the 110-foot patrol boats, received pre-deployment training at Area Headquarters in Portsmouth, VA and at Yorktown. Like all of the Coast Guard units sent to the Gulf, the patrol boat crews received additional training in chemical and biological warfare (CBW) protection before they deployed. They also received additional training in small arms use and general force protection. The patrol boats received additional law enforcement training to enhance their ability to conduct non-compliant boardings.

Since they have limited space for installing new equipment, the patrol boats did not receive SIPRNET or other enhancements to their communications equipment. Although this ultimately did not inhibit their contribution to OIF, it did make it difficult to change their tasking quickly. In actual operations, the patrol boats' communications were covered by another ship, often *Boutwell* or *Walnut*. The patrol boats also had maritime forward looking infrared (MARFLIR) systems installed, systems that had to be taken from other Coast Guard vessels. On at least one of the boats (*Aquidneck*) the MARFLIR stopped working and could not be repaired. The Commanding Officer of *Aquidneck* commented that while it was working, the MARFLIR "was invaluable because we could see at night what things were, what the cargo dhows were doing, who was on deck, did they have weapons; and you can't see that stuff without MARFLIR."

Deployment

After completing the training and equipment installations, the Coast Guard units began their transit to the Arabian Gulf early in 2003. For the larger vessels, this meant sailing over, either alone or in company with other ships. For the patrol boats it meant being carried over and meeting up with the crews in theater. The shore units and those with only small boats loaded their equipment in large transport aircraft and flew to the theater.

CNA's reconstruction of OIF examined the flow of forces, including the Coast Guard units, to the NAG [4].

Boutwell

Boutwell had a fairly normal transition to deployment. The Coast Guard has regularly deployed a major cutter to the Arabian Gulf in the years since the 1991 Gulf War. *Boutwell* was scheduled to deploy in the beginning of 2003 regardless of the transition to war. The only irregularity is that the transit was made somewhat faster than originally planned. *Boutwell* deployed with the *Tarawa* amphibious ready group (ARG). At 18 knots, the transit speed of the group was higher than the 13 knots *Boutwell* can maintain with her diesel engines; she had to use her gas turbine engines to keep up with the ARG. Although she burned more fuel than normal, *Boutwell* completed the transit without difficulty and entered the Arabian Gulf with the ARG.

Boutwell made two stops during her transit. One was in Hawaii to pick up her helicopter detachment and to complete some repairs to her engines before joining the ARG for the rest of the deployment. The second was in Singapore, which, according to the Executive Officer's interview, was cut short in order to get the ARG to the Arabian Gulf sooner.

Walnut

Walnut had one of the more adventurous transits to the theater. She made the trip alone and, due to her low cruising speed (12.5 knots), had to begin the transit before the official request for her presence came in from Central Command. After a stop in Guam, where she loaded additional equipment for handling oil spills, Pacific Area Headquarters sent *Walnut* as far as Singapore, where she was when the deployment order finally arrived. She made it to the Arabian Gulf just before OIF began in late March.

One concern during *Walnut's* transit was her security during the transit through the Strait of Malacca. Piracy is a concern for merchant traffic in this area and, to the untrained eye, *Walnut* may resemble many of the small merchant vessels often targeted by pirates. Despite

the concerns, *Walnut* transited the Strait of Malacca safely and arrived in theater after being escorted through the Strait of Hormuz.

Patrol boats

The 110-foot patrol boats are too small to make the transit to the Arabian Gulf on their own. They were carried to the theater on board the chartered merchant M/V *Industrial Challenger*. They were placed in special cradles that the Coast Guard had ordered for this type of contingency when the boats were built. Several of the interviewees commented that it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for the patrol boats to deploy if those cradles had not been available.

The patrol boat crews were flown into the theater, arriving about a week before the boats arrived on 4 March. The CO of *Aquidneck* commented that this difference allowed them to adjust to the time shift before the boats arrived. When they arrived, it took about 2 days to off-load the boats, make sure that they were not damaged in transit, and to get them operational. All four were ready when OIF began.

The four patrol boats that went to the Mediterranean were also transported over. However, on their return, they made the transit back on their own power in company with *Dallas*. It was possible because of the shorter distance back to the east coast compared to the Arabian Gulf. This was the longest non-stop, open-water transit ever made by a Coast Guard cutter of this type.

Port Security Units

Since they did not have large boats to transport, the PSUs and their equipment could be flown into the theater. For some of them, such as PSU 311, this was their second deployment to the Arabian Gulf within a 2-year period. After mobilization and training, they flew to Kuwait in February as the third echelon of NCWG One. Their equipment was transported on a Russian-built An-124 cargo plane, and the personnel went via chartered airliner. They were among the last of the NCWG One units to arrive in theater; most of the Navy components arrived in December and January.

Summary

The Coast Guard did a good job of preparing its forces for deployment in a short period of time and getting them into the theater of war before hostilities began. Some of this was due to prior planning (as in the case of the transportation cradles for the patrol boats) and some due to flexibility (as in the case of *Walnut* beginning her transit before the actual request for forces arrived).

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Command and control

Chain of command

Naval forces operate under two different chains of command: administrative and operational. The administrative chains take care of supply and personnel issues. Fleets and squadrons are examples of administrative command staffs. These squadrons tend to be fairly permanent ensembles of ships and other units.

For operational command and control, ships are organized into task forces (TF). Task forces tend to be flexible, with ships shifting in and out of them as needed. What can cause confusion is that the same staffs that exercise administrative control also function as task force commanders. It can be difficult to discern which "hat" the staff is wearing at any given moment.

Surface ships

Administratively, the Coast Guard units in the NAG operated as part of the Coalition forces under the overall command of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). The Commander of Naval Forces for Central Command, known as NAVCENT, is also Commander Fifth Fleet (C5F) in his Navy assignment. In the NAG, surface ships were under the command of Destroyer Squadron 50 (CDS-50) commanded by Captain Peterson of the Navy. *Boutwell*, *Walnut*, and the four patrol boats were part of this group. The shore detachments, MCSD and PATFOR SWA also operated under the command of CDS-50.

For actual operations, the Coast Guard forces were part of two different task forces. The surface units were part of Task Force 55 (CTF-55). Command of CTF-55 actually shifted during OIF, as pointed out by LCDR McKinley, the Coast Guard liaison to CDS-50. Initially, Rear Admiral Costello, Commander of the *Constellation* Battle Group, commanded CTF-55. The surface forces were designated Task Group 55.1

(TG-55.1) with CDS-50 as the task group commander. In mid-April, the Constellation Battle Group left the NAG and CDS-50 became the staff commanding TF-55 for the remainder of OIF.

Port Security Units

The PSUs were under a different chain of command. Administratively they are a part of Naval Coastal Warfare Group One. Operationally, TF-51 was responsible for port security and safety. NCWG 1 operated as CTG-51.9 in command of the PSUs and other harbor defense units.

The interviews with PSU personnel indicate that tension existed between the PSUs and the NCWG 1 staff over their employment in OIF. Among the issues:

- The assignment of the PSUs to the GOPLAT mission, when other units in NCWG 1 might have been better suited for it.
- A perceived failure to fully inform the PSUs of changes to the GOPLAT mission after they arrived in the theater.
- The added port security assignments at KNB, Ash Shuaybah, and Umm Qasr which reduced the number of personnel the PSUs could use for the GOPLAT mission.

While it is clear, in retrospect, that the PSUs were not suited for the GOPLAT security mission, their employment in other port security functions is understandable. NCWG 1 had limited forces with which to provide security at four ports (KNB, Fujiarah, Umm Qasr, and Ash Shuaybah) and for much of the time they were in the theater, the PSUs were available for this mission. Although they were pulled apart to cover the various ports, so were other elements of NCWG 1.

The friction between the PSUs and the NCWG 1 staff seems to be unique. The interviews with the PSU commanders and the deputy commander of NCWG 1 (a Coast Guard Captain) indicate that the PSUs worked well with the other Navy components of NCWG 1. Likewise, our interviews with the Atlantic Area staff indicate that NCWG 2, the east coast sister of NCWG 1, had no conflicts with the PSUs under its command.

Communications equipment and connectivity

During OIF, communications took place via four main channels:

- The Global Command & Control System (GCCS). This is a high level command system used by the task force commanders to monitor ship positions and to pass information such as intelligence between task forces.
- Message traffic. This is the standard way of passing information between ships. Message traffic is used to send orders and situation reports as well as more mundane information such as requests for spare parts.
- SIPRNET. The secure Internet has become the primary command and control channel for the Navy in recent years. It is used to pass intelligence data and to transmit daily intentions messages and operational orders. Chat rooms on this network have replaced voice communications as the real-time command channel in many situations. Reference [5] discusses the importance of the net in naval communications.
- Voice radio circuits. These circuits can be either encrypted or non-secure. They used to be the primary real-time command channel. As we mentioned, SIPRNET chat rooms have taken over this role in many situations. However, ships without SIPRNET access still use these circuits.

The communications equipment situation varied for the Coast Guard units in the NAG. None of the cutters had GCCS, but this was not necessary for their missions. Both *Boutwell* and *Walnut* had SIPRNET access installed before they deployed and used it extensively. Since there was no room on them to install the necessary equipment, the patrol boats, did not have SIPRNET access and relied on voice circuits for their command and control. The two larger cutters often acted as communications guards for the smaller boats and passed on information of interest to them.

All of the Coast Guard cutters had the ability to receive and send message traffic. Once again, however, this was a limited capability on the patrol boats. The commanding officer of *Wrangell* mentions the diffi-

culties in his interview. The ship had to orient itself properly and bring its one satellite antenna into alignment. He went on to say, "the fact that we don't get message traffic on a regular determined basis means that all my direct tasking has to come over the voice circuits of UHF or HF voice." Usually another ship acted as a guard for the patrol boat's message traffic, but this did not guarantee timely delivery of those messages.

Lessons for future operations

The Coast Guard cutters integrated well into the Navy's command chain. All of the interviews with the Fifth Fleet staff attest to this, despite some of the connectivity difficulties with the patrol boats. The Coast Guard should procure SIPRNET capability for any vessel that will be operating with the Navy. This could be a set of systems that are installed as needed. This theme comes up in the post-deployment lessons learned message of the *Walnut*, among others.

The patrol boats need improvements to their communications suite to be fully integrated into Navy operations. Although they operated effectively during OIF, many "work-arounds" had to be done to get time critical information to them. Those operations would have been smoother with improved connectivity. The Coast Guard should look into how it might get SIPRNET capability onto the patrol boats; however, this may require removing some other equipment due to the space and weight restrictions on these vessels.

Operations

Much of the information about operations during OIF remains classified. We summarize the operations here and discuss the classified aspects in an annex [2].

Figure 4 is a map of the NAG. It shows the relative location of the two Kuwait ports (Ash Shuaybah and the Kuwait Naval Base), the two GOPLATS, the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr, and the Iranian border. The majority of the Coast Guard's operations took place in the Kohr abd Allah and the waters between its entrance and the two GOPLATS.

Figure 4. Map of the northern Arabian Gulf

All of the Coast Guard forces arrived in theater before OIF began. During the pre-war phase they joined the U.N. sanctions enforcement operations in the NAG as well as some operations related to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). They performed maritime intercept and boardings as the transition to war began.

The PSUs were sent in several directions in the pre-war period. They were sent to the NAG to help guard the GOPLATs after those two facilities were secured. Before that mission could occur, however, they were used to augment security forces at the Kuwait Naval Base (KNB) and Kuwait's commercial port of Ash Shuaybah. Both of these places were being used to off-load equipment for use in OIF.

Some of the Coast Guard units anticipated that they would move away from the vicinity of Iraq when the war began because they have limited self-defense capabilities compared to Navy ships. However, the opposite occurred. The Coast Guard cutters remained in the NAG at "the tip of the spear." This was partly due to the limited threat the Iraqi forces posed to ships and to the fact that smaller vessels, such as the Coast Guard's, were exactly the type needed for the littoral waters of the NAG. Also, the need for intercepts and boardings did not go away with the start of OIF. All of the Coast Guard units performed many boardings for the duration of the conflict.

In the remainder of this section, we look specifically at some of the unique operations each of the units undertook during OIF.

Boutwell

As the largest Coast Guard vessel in the NAG, *Boutwell* brought the most combat capability of any of the Coast Guard cutters that participated in OIF. As it turned out, much of this weaponry was not needed. However, with her large crew, *Boutwell* formed three boarding parties and because of her armament could operate in areas with more potential danger than the other cutters. Also, because of her size, *Boutwell* had greater endurance than the other vessels. She remained underway throughout the conflict, ultimately remaining at sea for 70 days. She was able to cover the periods when other vessels had to return to port either for re-supply or for repair.

Boutwell supported the patrol boats by providing fuel, food, and other supplies that had been flown out to them. The patrol boat crews were taken on board where they could relax on the larger ship, do laundry, and get better meals than they could on their own ship. This allowed the patrol boats to remain at sea longer without having to return to KNB or Bahrain.

Boutwell embarked an HH-65 Dolphin helicopter, making her unique among the Coast Guard vessels. The aviation detachment was augmented with an extra pilot and additional mechanics to help keep the aircraft operational for a greater portion of the time than normal. The helicopter support kit, operated by the MCSD, also helped by supplying spare parts as needed.

The helicopter's main mission during the deployment was surface search. It had a FLIR system installed, which allowed it to identify possible threats to the vessels in the NAG without coming within small arms range. This was important since the helicopter was not armed. It also performed several medical evacuations and transported some personnel between ships. Although the helicopter was also used to carry some cargo, its utility for logistics was limited by its size. Overall, the HH-65 was kept busy. In his interview, the air detachment OIC comments that they were scheduled every day.

Walnut

As a buoy tender, *Walnut* brought unique capabilities to the theater. She was not originally part of the planned Coast Guard deployment, which is why the official request for her presence did not come until she was in Singapore. The principal reason for *Walnut's* deployment was the possibility of Iraqi oil releases similar to what occurred at the end of the first Gulf War. With the proper equipment, *Walnut* has the capability to contain some oil spills. Fortunately, her capability in this regard was not needed during OIF.

When the war began, *Walnut* was with the other Coast Guard units in the NAG conducting search and boarding operations. She had her own boarding team and, in some ways, she was a better asset for this role than *Boutwell*. Her low freeboard, as shown in figure 2, made it

easier for her to deploy and recover boarding parties in the open ocean.

Walnut helped support the PSUs on the GOPLATS as they performed their security mission. Her crane, with a 40,000 pound capacity, lifted supplies to the PSU personnel on the platforms. She also rescued some of the PSU small boat crews and their boats when a storm made it difficult for them to remain at sea.

Walnut's major contribution to OIF was the re-establishment of the aids to navigation in the Kohr abd Allah (KAA) waterway. The KAA is the main channel into Umm Qasr. *Walnut* was one of the first vessels to transit the KAA and enter Umm Qasr after coalition forces secured the port and the nearby Al Faw peninsula. In Umm Qasr, her crew found a warehouse with unused buoys and other channel markers. For the next three weeks, *Walnut* used these buoys to mark the KAA navigation channel into Umm Qasr. This was an important step in opening up the port to humanitarian aid traffic as well as to commercial shipping. Although most of the area had been secured, the threat was still considered high, and *Walnut* performed the operation with her guns manned.

Walnut left the NAG and began her return transit soon after she completed marking the channel. Although the decision to deploy her was made late, it paid off well in the end.

Patrol boats

The four 110-foot patrol boats (*Adak, Aquidneck, Baranof,* and *Wrangell)* were the Coast Guard's workhorses during and after OIF. After they arrived on the M/V *Industrial Challenger* on 4 March, the crews had the boats ready for operations within 2 days.

Before the war began, the patrol boats performed boardings in support of the UN sanctions. They continued this after the war began, but with an emphasis on searching for arms and any Iraqi leadership. They did finds several instances of the former as one of the patrol boats helped identify a tug carrying mines and another found abandoned suicide boats in the KAA.

During their operations in the KAA the patrol boats escorted humanitarian aid ships up this channel into Umm Qasr. During the GOPPLAT security mission, the PSU's Boston Whaler boats had to withdraw because of the weather (discussed below). The patrol boats took over the maritime protection of those platforms. They continued to provide security to ships in the NAG, even after hostilities ended.

As the combat operations of OIF wound down, the crews of the four patrol boats rotated back to CONUS. The boats themselves, however, remained together with PATFOR SWA. Several new crews have rotated into the NAG to take over for the crews that fought in OIF. The patrol boats are still providing security for the ships operating in the theater.

PSUs

Three PSUs eventually operated in the NAG during OIF. The two sent directly to the theater (PSU 311 and PSU 313) were originally dedicated to the GOPLAT security mission. PSU 311 was assigned to the Kohr al Amaya Oil Terminal (KAAOT) and PSU 313, the Mina al Bakr Oil Terminal (MABOT). The PSU staffs had performed some preliminary planning for this mission before their deployment in early February. Upon their arrival, however, both PSUs were immediately called upon to supplement the NCWG-1 forces providing security at the KNB and Ash Shuaybah. Despite this additional tasking, the PSU staffs continued to plan for the GOPLAT mission.

As the start of OIF approached, however, PSU 311 received additional tasking from NCWG 1. A Navy Inshore Boat Unit was originally ordered to go to Umm Qasr once that port had been taken. However, it was re-assigned to provide off-load security at Fujiarah in the United Arab Emirates, and PSU 311 was assigned to perform the Umm Qasr mission while simultaneously manning the KAAOT. The unit had to split its force, sending about half the 120-man unit to Umm Qasr while the remaining 60 went to the KAAOT. Likewise, PSU 313 split its personnel between MABOT and the KNB. Both PSUs also sent personnel to the Kuwaiti commercial port at Ash Shuaybah.

We describe the actual GOPLAT operation in the classified annex to this report[2], but we discuss some of the aftermath here. Once PSU 311 and 313 had their detachments on the platforms, things began to go sour. First, living conditions on the platforms were extremely bad. The commanding officer of PSU 311 commented:

> The living conditions on KAAOT were extremely primitive. There were hundreds of rats, some of the Coast Guardsmen assigned to defend the platform rigged tarps and lived out on pipes on the open platform rather than live inside the building.

Similar conditions existed on MABOT. The commanding officer of PSU 313 remarked: "It was just plain filthy." Both groups spent time making the platforms more habitable.

It was difficult to supply the personnel on the GOPLATS. Originally, the plan called for a barge to be lashed to each platform for use as a staging platform. Then a Navy LCU would use its crane to move stores and equipment from the barge to the GOPLAT. As it turned out, the crane on the LCU was not stable enough to do this. The PSU personnel ended up forming a human chain to move supplies to the platform 40 feet above. Helicopters could not be used to fly in supplies due to the questionable condition of the landing sites on the platforms. Ultimately, *Walnut*, with her crane, lifted the necessary supplies to the PSU personnel.

Finally, the sea conditions around the two platforms made it difficult to operate the 25-foot boats the PSUs used to provide seaward security to the platforms and early warning of any attack to the personnel on them. Ultimately, they proved unsuitable for the mission. Although the seas around the GOPLATS are shallow, the platforms themselves are in the open ocean, over 30 nautical miles from the nearest land. When winds became high, or a storm came through, the sea state became too high for the safe operation of the small, open boats.

That situation occurred on the second night of the war (March 22) when a strong storm passed over the NAG. PSU 313's boats were being damaged at their moorings, so it was decided to get them underway. This was scarcely better, and ultimately they took refuge aboard *Walnut*, which took the boats alongside and the crews on

board. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries. However, the 25-foot boats from both PSUs returned to the port security operations, for which they are more suited. *Boutwell*, the Coast Guard patrol boats, and other ships under CDS-50, took on the job of providing seaward security for the GOPLATS.

Conditions eased somewhat with the arrival of PSU 309 on 15 April. This unit, originally assigned to the Mediterranean, helped the other two PSUs maintain security at the two Kuwaiti ports. The PSU contingents remained on the GOPLATS until 12 June for total of 84 days.

Port Security Units were probably not the best forces to send for the GOPLAT mission. They did not have adequate weapons, and their boats proved to be too small to operate in the waters around the platforms. Captain Ash, the Coast Guard Deputy Commanding Officer of NCWG 1 explained this well in his interview.

> The port security units were not the best units to put on the gas and oil platforms because the boats were too small - the seas are devastating. In fact when the boats were taken out to GOPLATs they didn't last three days. We had a storm come in, we almost had significant injuries and critical damage to the boats. ... We needed to have, (at a) minimum110 foot patrol boats out there. I'm talking about the assets that we have. Maybe the 87 footers, but the port security boats were the wrong boats for that mission. (as were) the platform's Mark 19s and 50 caliber (weapons). The Coast Guard tried to get the Navy to put out Mark 38 weapons (25-mm chain guns) and it was a no go. Had we had a large vessel or anything relatively high speed I doubt the weapons on the platform would have been successful. And obviously the weapons on the boats and any kind of seas and any type of sea state ... were virtually useless...

Summary

The Coast Guard cutters and PSUs brought many unique capabilities to the theater. The capability of their boarding parties to perform uncooperative boardings was duplicated only by the two Navy Cyclone-class patrol boats carrying Coast Guard LEDETs. Only *Walnut* could have re-established the ATON in the KAA as quickly as she did. *Boutwell*, *Walnut* and the patrol boats were the only U.S. ves-

sels that could operate easily in the shallow littoral waters around the GOPLATS. Very few Navy ships (the two Navy patrol boats excepted) could have operated as freely there as the Coast Guard did.

Even though they were the only ships that could easily operate in the extreme north end of the NAG, all of the interviewees expressed some surprise that the Coast Guard ships remained so close to the front throughout the war. This was partly due to the low maritime threat the Iraqis posed. Another reason often given was the less threatening nature of a "white-hull" Coast Guard ship as opposed to a "grey-hull" Navy one, especially when dealing with Iranian naval forces. Because the NAG and the GOPLATS are all close to Iranian waters, this was a plausible, if not demonstrated, reason.

This level of support came at a cost to other Coast Guard operations. The patrol boats sent to the NAG and to the Mediterranean were taken from other missions such as counter-narcotics and fisheries enforcement. The Coast Guard managed this loss by prioritizing its missions (search and rescue in particular remained the top priority) and by increasing the operational hours of the remaining patrol boats.

Out-load security

A major, but overlooked, part of the Coast Guard's mission during OIF was the provision of security and safety for the out-loads of material that the U.S. military sent to the Arabian Gulf for OIF. This included the activation of ready-reserve shipping, ensuring that the military loads (often including explosives) were safely stowed, and calling up almost 2000 reservists to provide security in the out-load ports.

Since most of this shipping left from ports on the eastern seaboard, the bulk of this effort was supported by the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area Headquarters. Several of the people we interviewed there were specifically involved in providing the necessary manpower and ensuring that the reservists were trained and sent to the ports where out-loads occurred.

As the war approached, the U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) began the activation of ships in the Ready Reserve fleet. These are merchant ships in mothballs that can be re-activated to support emergent sealift requirements. Ultimately, 25 to 30 of these ships were activated to support OIF. The Coast Guard had to certify them as seaworthy. This was a major task given that many of these ships had been inactive for years. The Atlantic Area commander, VADM Hull, commented that:

> We had to take care of ships that had been sitting in Charleston. Ships that had been sitting there for years without smoke coming out of them, and all of a sudden now all the ships are starting to move from pier to pier. Things were happening.

The major problem in the out-load security mission was ensuring that the reservists were properly trained for the mission. Most of them required training in small boat handling, weapons use, and in the rules of force that they would operate under. The Coast Guard's main

facility for this training is at Yorktown, Virginia. The Atlantic Area staff had to find a way to fit this additional training into an already busy facility. CDR Jim Brinkman, who was in charge of the planning for the security mission commented:

> A huge ramp-up we had to do to get people trained as coxswains (and) all the weapons quals, so it was some superhuman effort that went on up in Yorktown to create holes in their already packed curriculum or their training schedule to find time to fit these reservists in.

Part of the problem was in the Coast Guard's reserve call up system. CDR Brinkman commented:

> The Coast Guard Reserve was basically used as an augmentation force for the regular folks. They weren't trained in the capabilities and functions that they had to perform within their contingency billets.

This opinion was also stated by CDR Doane, Atlantic Area's chief for port security, who said:

> I think one of the lessons we learned out of this whole thing was that there were a lot of things that were broken with the reserve program.

Despite these difficulties, the reserve forces received the necessary training for the mission.

Another problem was in the timing of the reserve call up. Those called up under the Coast Guard's Title 14 authority can remain active for only 30 days. The Presidential recall under Title 10 authority can remain active for 2 years out of a 3-year period, but their number is limited by the available funding. (These numbers came from CDR Brinkman). The forces had to be trained and to perform their mission within the time constraints of their call up.

The timing problem came because of the ad-hoc nature of the military load out. Rather than follow the pre-war plans, the U.S. deployed its forces based on individual deployment orders. CNA's analysis of this [4] goes into more detail. For the Coast Guard this meant that the reserves could not be activated, trained, and deployed as laid out

in the operational plan (number 9700). CDR Doane addressed this issue when he said

> In fact they never actually executed an OPLAN for the war which was what would have set everything off and ignited the reserve support. Instead it was a series of DEPORDS (deployment orders) that came out. Unfortunately a lot of the planners forgot a very important role which was the Coast Guard's providing the domestic security for the out-load; particularly in not allowing the ramp-up time we need to activate reservists, train them, and deploy them to the ports where we need them.

Despite these problems, the Coast Guard provided the necessary security at the primary out-load ports–Charleston, South Carolina; Beaumont, Texas; and Jacksonville, Florida. In addition to these ports, significant operations took place in Savannah, Georgia and Corpus Christi, Texas. Philadelphia and Norfolk also saw some military traffic, but not at the level of the other ports. Often, the security personnel were shifted between ports as needed if the ports were geographically close to each other. The two ports in Texas often shared security forces, as did the three along the Atlantic seaboard.

Although the Coast Guard successfully performed this mission, several things could have made it a smoother evolution. One of these, the ad hoc nature of the deployment and the uncertainty that it generated in the reserve call up, was outside the Coast Guard's control. However, the issues related to reserve training are within the Service's control. One outcome of this effort should be better tracking of reserve qualifications and ensuring that reservists have the training required for their activation billet before a contingency such as OIF occurs.

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Summary of major issues

We draw some general conclusions and lessons learned from the Coast Guard's activities during OIF.

Training

The training of reservists for the out-load security mission in CONUS was a major effort. Several of the interviewees commented on the difficulties the Coast Guard had in identifying the personnel and providing them the necessary training. This effort had the potential to interfere with other vital training at the Yorktown facility. The Coast Guard should maintain the skills this group of reservists acquired for future contingencies. They should identify the personnel who will perform this mission in the future and provide refresher training in boat handling, weapons use, and the rules of force that apply to this mission.

The ability to perform boardings, cooperative and otherwise, is one of the core competencies of the Coast Guard. The training of the patrol boat crews should continue to reflect this. Larger ships will also benefit from continued training in this area. The Coast Guard should examine the boarding operations that occurred during OIF and make modifications to their training accordingly. The commanding officer of one of the patrol boats (*Aquidneck*) commented on this, saying:

> We've seen some unique boarding situations; things we've done that we'd never do in the States, and we've had some training prior to coming over here. I think we could improve our law enforcement training and make us more flexible and adaptable. That could help us back in the States, so people are more comfortable with doing, say, an aggressive boarding if they have to get into it.

To improve interoperability with the Navy, the Coast Guard should send some officers to classes at the Navy's Tactical Training Groups at Dam Neck, Virginia and San Diego, California. In the Navy, all prospective commanding and executive officers attend sessions there. Some Coast Guard officers currently attend these courses, but the service may want to consider increasing this number. The officers of scheduled deployers, such as *Boutwell*, should definitely attend these courses.

Equipment

The equipment requirements for a forward deployed unit in a war zone differ from those for a unit working in CONUS. During OIF, the following equipment proved useful to the deployed Coast Guard units:

- The FLIR system on the HH-65 helicopter
- The MARFLIR system on the patrol boats
- Additional satellite communications systems and SIPRNET capability on *Walnut* and *Boutwell*
- Additional small machine guns on all ships for force protection.

The Coast Guard had all of this equipment before OIF. However, they had to strip it from other units in order to provide it to the deploying cutters. The Coast Guard should consider acquiring additional equipment, especially the equipment for SIPRNET connectivity, for use in future contingencies.

One difficulty the Coast Guard faced in preparing their cutters for OIF was the limited space for additional equipment on the patrol boats. Their mission would have been much easier to accomplish if they had SIPRNET connectivity. The Coast Guard should attempt to find the space and weight on these boats for the necessary equipment, even if it means removing some less essential equipment on future deployers.

The 25-foot Boston Whaler boats of the PSUs proved to be inadequate for open ocean operations such as the GOPLAT security mission. In retrospect, this is not surprising, and PSUs may not be called on to repeat this sort of mission in future operations. Nonetheless, the Coast Guard may want to examine the procurement of slightly larger boats for the PSUs if this sort of mission is contemplated for them. These boats would have to be air transportable to preserve the PSU deployment footprint. If the PSU focus remains on port security, however, the existing boats are adequate.

Supply

The Coast Guard did an excellent job of keeping its deployed units supplied and operational. The MCSD and PATFOR SWA performed this role during OIF, and the latter continues to do so. The Coast Guard should establish a similar unit for future operations.

One element the MCSD provided was the helicopter support kit. This van was vital to keeping the HH-65 from *Boutwell* operational. However, as with other equipment the Coast Guard sent to the NAG, this kit was pulled from other Coast Guard units that also needed it. The Coast Guard should consider acquiring an additional kit specifically for use by deployed helicopter detachments.

Operations

The Coast Guard forces under CDS-50 fit well into the Navy's command and control structure. All of the Navy personnel we interviewed commented on the valuable and unique contributions the Coast Guard made. The recommendations for training and equipment made above will increase the capabilities the Coast Guard will bring to future operations.

As we mentioned before, the PSUs were not the optimal units for the GOPLAT security mission. Their boats were too small, and they lacked the surveillance and weapons to properly defend the platforms. In the interviews with PSU personnel and the Coast Guard's liaison officer at Fifth Fleet, there is some evidence of friction between the PSUs and the NCWG-1 staff. This friction may have con-

tributed to the difficulties they faced. Nonetheless, the PSUs did successfully perform the security mission.

In their actual assigned role of port security at Ash Shuaybah and the KNB, the PSUs did an excellent job. The assignment to Umm Qasr, while unanticipated, was exactly the proper mission for a PSU.

Despite the pre-war anticipation that Coast Guard cutters would be pulled back once the war began, the deployed vessels, especially the patrol boats, continued to operate far forward during OIF. They were needed in the NAG and could operate there for several reasons:

- The Iraqi threat to maritime assets was low.
- There was a need for ships that could operate in shallow, littoral waters.
- Along with GOPLAT security, the main mission in the NAG was maritime search, intercept, and boarding. These are all missions the Coast Guard performs best.
- The Coast Guard brought unique capabilities for the restoration of ATON and for small boat operations such as those performed by the PSUs.
- There is a perception that Coast Guard cutters are less confrontational than a Navy combatant. This was important due to the proximity of Iranian territorial waters to the NAG operational area.

The Coast Guard's ability to operate in the littorals was an important one. Most Navy ships cannot operate in water as shallow as that found in the NAG. The Assistant Coast Guard Liaison to Fifth Fleet put this into perspective in his interview where he said:

> This was a war that was fought in the littorals, ... and for many years now in the Navy and the whole Forward From the Sea thing they said ... we've got to be able to project power from where the water turns blue to where it turns brown, but the Navy's now well equipped to do that. So here we are with the WPBs (patrol boats) and a 378 (*Boutwell*) that were able to allow the Navy to project force in the places it couldn't have gotten to otherwise.

It's not clear that this combination of conditions and requirements will exist in other operations. But when they do, the Coast Guard could find itself playing a role similar to the one it played in OIF.

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Appendix A

In this appendix we provide a chronology for the Coast Guard ships that took part in OIF.

Walnut

Alerted for possible deployment	14 November 02
Training in Hawaii	November - December 2002
Request for Forces message	13 January 03
Underway from Hawaii	18 January 03
Inport Guam	30 January - 1 February 03
Inport Singapore	10 February - 14 February 03
Deployment Order	14 February 03
Inport Kuwait Naval Base	27 February 03
Start of OIF	20 March 03
Begin survey for ATON mission	02 April 03
RFA *Sir Galahad* arrives in Umm Qasr for humanitarian aid mission	5 April 03
Inport Umm Qasr	07 April 03
Setting ATON in KAA	08 April - 08 May 03
USS *Grapple* and USNS *Catawaba* help remove wrecks in KAA	30 April 03
End of OIF combat operations	01 May 03
Walnut departs KNB (73 days in theater	13 May 03
Walnut returns to Hawaii	July 03

Patrol boats

Alerted for deployment possible deployment	October 02
Training in Portsmouth, VA	November 02 - February 03
Load boats on M/V *Industrial Challenger*	Late January 03
Patrol boat crews arrive in Bahrain	23 February 03
M/V *Industrial Challenger* arrives in Bahrain	03 March 03
Patrol boats and PATFOR SWA unload	04 March 03
PATFOR SWA stands up in Bahrain under DESRON 50/CTF-55	08 March 03
Search and boardings in support of UN Sanctions and Enduring Freedom	09 March - 19 March 03
Start of OIF	20 March 03
Wrangell and *Adak* escort forces during GOPLAT occupation	20 March 03
Adak captures first maritime prisoners of war	21 March 03
Aquidneck aids in search and rescue after helicopter collision	22 March 03
Aqidneck escorts RFA Sir Galahad to Umm Qasr	5 April 2003
Patrol boats get first stop in port after four weeks underway	6 April 2003
Wrangell escorts M/V *Mana, first* commercial ship to enter Umm Qasr	12 April 2003
Baranof escorts USNS *Catawba* and USS *Grapple* during KAA clearance operations	30 April 2003
End of OIF combat operations	01 May 2003
Patrol boat crews begin rotation back to U.S.	July 2003

Boutwell

Depart Alameda for deployment	03 January 2003
Arrive Hawaii for port call, embark helo detachment	12 January 2003
En route Singapore with *Tarawa* ARG	13-29 January 2003
Port call, Singapore	30-31 January 2003
En route Bahrain	01-10 February 2003
Inchop 5th fleet	06 February 2003
Port call, Bahrain	11-13 February 2003
En route NAG	14-15 February 2003
MIO OPS, NAG	16 February-20 March 2003
OIF starts	20 March 2003
MIO, Patrol SAA	21-24 March 2003
SAA/GOPLAT security	25 March-01 April 2003
MA1/2	10-11 April 2003
Operations in SAA	18-20 April 2003
Port call Bahrain after being at sea for 70 days.	24-29 April 2003
En-route NAG	30-31 April 2003
SAA/GOPLAT Ops	01-10 May 2003
En-route Bahrain	11 May 2003
Port call Bahrain	12-13 May 2003
En-route Suez Canal	14-23 May 2003
Enter Suez, outchop 5th fleet	24 May 2003

Port security Units

Alerted for impending deployment	October 2002
Planning for GOPLAT mission	November 2002 - February 2003
PSU 311 and 313 recalled to active duty	8 February 2003
PSU 311 and 313 depart for deployment	17 February 2003
Arrival in Kuwait	18 February 2003
PSU 311and 313 provide security at KNB and Ash Shuaybah	18 February - 19 March 2003
PSU 311 assigned Umm Qasr security mission in addition to GOPLAT mission	17 March 2003
Start of OIF	20 March 2003
Half of PSU 313 continues to provide security at KNB and Ash Shuaybah	20 March 2003 - 15 June 2003
Components of PSU 311 and 313 depart KNB for GOPLAT security mission	20 March 2003 (evening)
PSU 311(KAAOT) and 313 (MABOT) board the GOPLATS to provide security	21 March 2003 - 12 June 2003
Storms in NAG force PSU boats to return to KNB	22 March 2003
Half of PSU 311 convoys to Umm Qasr	24 March 2003
Elements of PSU 311 provide security at Umm Qasr	24 March 2003 - 12 June 2003
PSU 309 arrives at KNB provides security at Ash Shuaybah and KNB	15 April 2003
OIF combat operations end	01 May 2003
PSU 311 and 313 turn over GOPLAT security	12 June 2003
PSU 311 returns to U.S.	15 June 2003
PSU 313 and 309 continue to provide security at Kuwaiti ports through summer of 2003	

Glossary

ATON: Aid to Navigation

CBW: Chemical and Biological Warfare

CDS: Commander, Destroyer Squadron

CENTCOM: United States Central Command

CONUS: Continental United States

CTF: Commander, Task Force

CTG: Commander, Task Group

FLIR: Forward Looking Infrared

GOPLATS: Gulf Oil Platforms

KAA: Kohr abd Allah

KAAOT: Kohr al Amaya Oil Terminal (a GOPLAT)

KNB: Kuwait Naval Base

LEDET: Coast Guard Legal Detachment

MABOT: Mina al Bakr Oil Terminal (a GOPLAT)

MARFLIR: Maritime Forward Looking Infrared

MCSD: Major Cutter Support Detachment

MIO: Maritime Intercept Operations

NAG: Northern Arabian Gulf

NAVCENT: Naval Forces, United States Central Command

NCWG: Naval Coastal Warfare Group

OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom

PATFOR SWA: Patrol Forces, Southwest Asia

PSU: Coast Guard Port Security Unit

RHIB: Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat

SIPRNET: Secure Internet Protocol Network

References

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