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iCommandant

Web Journal of Admiral Thad Allen

Showing newest 28 of 37 posts from April 2009. [Show older posts](#)

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Coast Guard and Offshore Marine Services Association Partnership

Guest post from [RADM Brian Salerno](#) (CG-5), Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security and Stewardship.

Today I had the pleasure of signing a partnership agreement with Mr. Otto Candies, III, of the [Offshore Marine Services Association](#), which entered the Coast Guard and OMSA into a Partnership Action Team.

The purpose of this partnership is to promote safety and security within the offshore industry and to enhance the protection of the marine environment. The Coast Guard and OMSA seek to achieve this goal through enhanced communication, collaboration, and cooperation. The partnership is intended to complement other industry partnerships and to provide a more efficient means for joint Coast Guard and OMSA interactions.

[Past successes from current partnerships](#) include a joint American Waterways Operators (AWO) and Coast Guard Safe Decks Campaign, "Stay Alert for the Edge," directed to prevent falls overboard and save lives. Since 1995, more than 200 Coast Guard and AWO member volunteers have participated in some two dozen Quality Action Teams at the national and regional levels, tackling such critical safety issues as crew fatalities, tank barge spills, and safe operations during dangerous water conditions.

The USCG expects that this new partnership with OMSA will more effectively bring the Coast Guard and the represented segment of industry together in a cooperative effort to enhance marine safety and environmental protection within the Offshore Support Vessel community.

The Coast Guard has [partnerships with other organizations](#) including the Passenger Vessel Association, the Cruise Lines International Association, the National Marine Manufacturers Association, and the American Boat and Yacht Council to provide industry specific input with a focus on improving safety aboard ships and boats. Other partnerships such as the Baltic and International Maritime Council and the International Association of Independent Tanker Owners Association provide technical and diplomatic support to U.S. proposed safety standards for adoption into the instruments of international treaties. The Coast Guard's National Boating Safety Advisory Council provides essential guidance to the recreational boating program. Open communication, cooperation, and non-regulatory solutions are the hallmarks of these successful partnerships.

Posted at [4/30/2009 01:54:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Labels: ["Marine Safety"](#), [Partnership](#)



Leadership Spotlight -- Self Awareness and Learning, Part 4 of a Series

Moderator's Note: Click the following for [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#).

Counseling as a Component in Self Awareness and Learning

"Learning is not compulsory... neither is survival."  
~ W. Edwards Deming (1900 - 1993)

Not so long ago, a member of the Atlantic Area staff learned that I wanted to speak with him; immediately, he thought

he was headed to the woodshed or, as he put it, to a quick and painless keelhauling. Truth is, I only wanted to dip him in the water.:-)

In all seriousness, it's time for all of us to consider counseling, performance counseling that is, as something positive rather than something negative, as something that helps rather than something that hurts. As I stated on Tuesday: "... it's one of the toughest jobs a leader can perform..." but it's of great value to you.

[One online resource](#) notes that counseling is "something that provides direction or advice as to a decision or course of action." Another [notes](#), "Counseling may be an informal or formal intervention that consists of a discussion between an employee and his or her supervisor [about] work performance, behavior, and/or conduct." While my staff member, and others, automatically thought the counseling was negative, it's not always. And, the more we can use counseling to accentuate the positive, to provide positive feedback, the more we will really be performance focused.

As Mary Lou Higgerson notes in [Performance Counseling: The Cornerstone of Professional Development](#):


Effective performance counseling is a key ingredient in building an effective organization. When organization members perform at optimal levels in behavior that supports the organization mission and objectives, they contribute to the organization's success. Further, performance counseling serves as a vehicle for leaders to make sure that every individual member understands how their job contributes to the welfare and success of the entire organization. Through performance counseling, leaders can clarify the organization mission and individual job responsibilities.

Dr. Higgerson writes for an academic audience (and I've changed the term department in the above quote to organization), but the substance is exactly the same for those of us in the Coast Guard. Dr. Higgerson reminds us that the "ultimate purpose is to help individuals succeed." To get us to that end, she provides an excellent primer with several noteworthy strategies:

- \* Make performance counseling a year-round (not yearly) activity.
- \* Offer both formal and informal evaluations of job performance.
- \* Make job performance expectations clear.
- \* Make performance goals specific and manageable.
- \* Focus evaluative comments on the person's performance, not personality.
- \* Link evaluative comments to specific examples.
- \* Link self-evaluation and goal setting.
- \* Offer specific suggestions for improvement.
- \* Establish a time frame for achieving goals.
- \* Recognize and reward positive achievement.

As you counsel your subordinates, keep these strategies in mind. And, as you receive counseling, know that it's not about keel hauling but about success for both you and the larger organization.

Tomorrow, I'll close out this series of posts on iCommandant with a brief discussion about mentoring. Until then, take care of your shipmates.  
~ VADM Bob Papp

Posted at [4/30/2009 08:37:00 AM](#) [2 comments](#) 

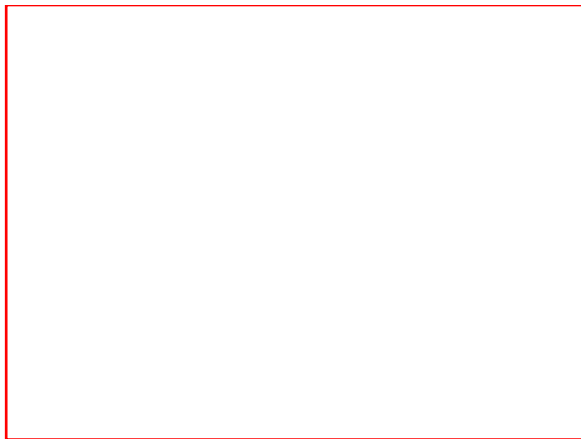
Labels: [Leadership](#)



Wednesday, April 29, 2009

## All hands at sea in the Northern Arabian Gulf

Updated with new shoutouts from [CGC ADAK](#) and [CGC BARANOF](#)



Shipmates,

Updating my earlier post with a quick picture. You can find others at [uscgpress](#) on [FLICKR](#).

While I couldn't get to every cutter because of time constraints, the CO's were very resourceful and transferred crew members. I met on ADAK and BARANOFF with Master Chief Bowen. Our main topics were the future of the security mission in the Northern Arabian Gulf, maintenance of their 110 fleet, and the status of the Fast Response Cutter program.

As noted earlier, the senior leaders here in theater couldn't be more pleased with the performance of our Coast Guard units.

BZ

ADM A



[All hands at sea in the Northern Arabian Gulf](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [4/29/2009 11:10:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Labels: ["Defense Operations"](#) [NAVCENT](#)



## Dispatches from the Road ... Northern Arabian Gulf

Shipmates,

Today I met with our deployed forces in the Northern Arabian Gulf, including PSU 311 (and some holdover augmentation personnel from PSU 305), members of our RAID Teams, forward deployed PATFORSWA personnel, and crews from USCGs MAUI, MONOMOY, BARANOFF, and ADAK. We visited the offshore Iraqi oil platforms and received briefs on the transition of security for the platforms to Iraqi forces.

Many of you may not be familiar with our RAID teams. They are Redeployment Assistance Inspection Detachments that inspect material that is being shipped out of the theater. This includes anything from heavy vehicles to personal goods. They insure the materials are safe to be shipped and facilitate the redeployment process. These personnel are in high demand over here and deploy to the most remote and forward deployed units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Again, we took pictures and recorded some video "shout outs" at each stop. We will post them as soon as we can. LCDR Jo Cousins, my aide, has been working overtime as our videographer and photographer.

We should all be proud of the work our personnel are doing for U.S. Central Command. We work with every service in a joint environment and our performance has received praised from every senior leader in theater, most notably VADM Gortney, Commander, Navy Central Command and Fifth Fleet.

ADM A

Posted at [4/29/2009 12:34:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)

Labels: ["Defense Operations"](#) [NAVCENT](#)



Tuesday, April 28, 2009

## Leadership Spotlight -- Self Awareness and Learning, Part 3 of a Series

### Informal Processes for Self Awareness and Learning

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

~ John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963), speech prepared for delivery November 22, 1963

Shipmates,

Yesterday, I wrote about [using 360-degree evaluations](#) to learn more about your own self and your own leadership actions, behaviors, and style. I consider evaluations, including full-circle evaluations, to be a fairly formal process. The good news is that there are several informal processes you can use to gain an understanding of the impact of your own leadership and management. In a sense, what I'm going to talk about today ties in situational awareness (your own) with evaluations.

Over the course of my career as a Cutterman, I developed certain leadership practices that are intuitive for a ship captain. I later found that leadership practices that seemed natural and common sense to me, have been codified and formalized by leadership gurus who make big money by selling books and giving lectures! I guess I'm jealous of their success, but allow me to share them with you for free.

"MBWA" -- Most of us have heard of MBWA, or Management by Walking Around, a technique which requires leaders to actually get up and out from behind the desk. As noted at the [Business Dictionary](#), MBWA is, "in contrast to rigid and distant management. In MBWA practice, managers spend a significant amount of their time making informal visits to work area and listening to the employees. The purpose of this exercise is to collect qualitative information, listen to suggestions and complaints, and keep a finger on the pulse of the organization."

In their article, "[Re-examining Management By Walking Around](#)," Neil MacNeill and Ray Boyd note MBWA first came to public notice in 1982 with the publication of, [In Search of Excellence](#), by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman. What Peters and Waterman discovered is that great things happen when managers get out of the office. We have learned much about both leadership and management since 1982; one thing we've learned is that leadership and management are intertwined, and most of us have jobs requiring a mix of both. MacNeill and Boyd suggest that it's time to rebrand MBWA as L&MBWA; they note, too, that L&MBWA has purpose, a purpose greater than just wandering about.

The two facets of a leader's role can be understood in terms of the Baconian aphorism: knowledge is the driver of leadership, and power underwrites management. L&MBWA therefore moves away from the primarily supervisory philosophy promoted in MBWA's early form to encompass both power and knowledge. MBWA affords organizational leaders a rare opportunity to learn about their organization through informal interactions. These interactions work reciprocally, with leaders learning from subordinates and subordinates learning from leaders in a range of situations.

Bottom line: you have to get out of the office and around to where everyone in the organization is in order to get a sense of what's truly going on!

"All Hands Q&A Sessions." -- Another way to get a sense of what's going on is to engage your shipmates during all hands sessions. All Hands, or Quarters, isn't just for one-way knowledge transfer. Certainly, passing news is important, but the capable leader sees All Hands sessions as a chance to ask for questions and engage the crew in a conversation.

I stumbled onto this during my first command as a junior officer, and the tactic has served me well since then. Certainly, not every time I ask for questions do I get questions, and not every question I get is one that I think is important, but that's the point. It's not about what I think is important; it's about what my shipmates think is important, it's about gauging what's important to the crew.

Whether you're a section leader or you oversee a major staff, asking for questions during an all hands session is fundamental. A few caveats:

- \* Don't blow off answering a question; a question asked is a question to be answered.
- \* If you don't know the answer, write the question down, along with the name of the person who asked the question. After the All Hands, get an answer, and then provide that answer to the person who asked. Ideally, you'd go and seek out that person and answer the question in person.
- \* Be willing to accept criticism, and don't take any criticism as a personal attack.

"Engaging the Chiefs' Mess." -- A third methodology for learning about what's going on within your organization and to get feedback on your own performance, is to engage the Chiefs' Mess. The Mess truly is the nucleus at any Coast Guard unit, and a well-honed and finely tuned Mess knows what's going on.

As noted in the [Chief Petty Officer Charge](#), advancing from E-6 to E-7 isn't just a simple advancement, but an advancement to a unique body, the Chiefs' Mess. The privileges and responsibilities of the Mess generally don't appear in print. To paraphrase the Charge, they have no official standing, cannot be referred to by name, number, or file. They exist because since 1920, Coast Guard Chiefs' have freely accepted responsibility beyond the call of printed assignment. Their actions and their performance demanded the respect of their seniors as well as their juniors. The Chief is required to be the fount of wisdom, the ambassador of good will, the authority in personnel relations, and the technical expert.

They need to watch out for shipmates, both senior and junior. That Charge notes "Ask the Chief" is a household word in and out of the Coast Guard; "Ask the Chief" should be a phrase you use frequently to assess your own leadership.

Check in the Mess; find out what's going on. What concerns does the crew have? What's going well for the crew?

And, if you are a Chief, be ready to answer the mail and live up to the Charge.

Tomorrow I'll talk about how giving and receiving performance counseling can make you a better leader.

~ VADM Bob Papp

Posted at [4/28/2009 02:20:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: [Leadership](#)



## Dispatches from the Road ... Manama, Bahrain

Shipmates,

I had the opportunity to visit with our Guardians in Bahrain today. The incredibly dedicated folks that are serving in Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA), on our patrol boats, in the training teams and law enforcement detachments, on our RAID teams, and with our Port Security Units are a source of pride to me and the country we serve. As you have seen our video and photos require more time to post and make available our attempt to document what great Guardians we have met. In the mean time, let me underscore what has been passed to me by VADM Gortney (Fifth Fleet) and everyone who has had contact with the Coast Guard. We are recognized for what we do for this Nation, we are valued as a partner by our Navy brethren, we are sought after to collaborate with other nations, and, most importantly, we are seen as good "Shipmates."

Best of luck to PATFORSWA as they go for the softball championship in NAVCENT. Hit one out of the park!

ADM A

Posted at [4/28/2009 02:07:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: ["Defense Operations"](#), [NAVCENT](#), [PATFORSWA](#)



## Leadership Spotlight -- Self Awareness and Learning, Part 2 of a Series

Formal Feedback Systems for Self Awareness and Learning

"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."  
~ Abigail Adams (1744 - 1818)

Shipmates,

We can't get better without first looking at ourselves. An honest assessment of our individual strengths and weaknesses is absolutely vital before learning and personal growth can begin. The competency for Self Awareness and Learning tells us, "Successful leaders use various evaluation tools and indicators to assist in this process of understanding themselves." Indeed, without tools to evaluate ourselves, we would have no idea where we even stand, much less what we must do to get better.

We know what good organizational leadership and management looks like; organizational leadership and management is spelled out in the Commandant's Performance Excellence Criteria which is based on the [Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence published by the National Institute of Standards and Technology at the Commerce Department](#). From an organizational perspective, Baldrige categories ARE organizational competencies. Good organizations conduct armchair assessments against the Criteria (such as the Commandant's Performance Challenge process) or invite external teams to take a snapshot of where the organization is (such as with the examination process behind the Alexander Hamilton Award for organizational excellence). Excellent organizations take that feedback, whether it is from a self-examination or an external examination, and do something with it.

The same is true on the individual leadership level. We must use various tools to evaluate our own leadership. Formal performance evaluations (e.g. OERs, EERs, and EARS) are a critical component of this evaluation. While not all performance evaluations, such as the Coast Guard's Officer Evaluation Report system, are built to provide a counseling component between a senior and a subordinate, they all do provide excellent material for self evaluation.

While on the subject of counseling -- it's one of the toughest jobs a leader can perform -- but one of the most important. It gets easier when performed with regularity, and a leader will learn much about him/herself through the process of sitting down face-to-face with a subordinate.

The person who is excited about developing as a leader doesn't wait for the formal evaluation process to hear how they're doing, but uses other formal feedback systems in addition. One of those other formal feedback systems is 360 evaluations. 360 evaluations are "full circle" evaluations and allow the individual to receive feedback from seniors, subordinates, and peers.

Full circle evaluations vary from organization to organization, but here's how [Ilana DeBare describes the process](#):

- \* An employee chooses several people for her evaluation. The number ranges between six and 12, and includes people in the company who know her work well.
- \* Those people fill out anonymous questionnaires and rate the employee on criteria such as the ability to build consensus or make timely decisions.
- \* The results are tabulated by computer, and the employee is given a report that summarizes her performance.
- \* She goes over the results with her manager, and puts together a long-term plan to improve her work.

There are a number of commercial products available, but they are generally fairly pricy. For those truly desiring feedback, here's a great process that you and a trusted shipmate (best if from a former unit) can do to collect feedback. Charlie Coiro, from the [Leadership Development Center](#), instructs in the Senior Leadership Principles and Skills course. He teaches a process that was first introduced to the Coast Guard by a good Shipmate of mine Commander and Doctor Gregory Stump, who learned the process from [Rod Napier](#). They call it "Genie in a Bottle":

1. Find a Shipmate you trust.
2. Pick 7-11 people you work with (subordinates, peers, superiors, mentors, etc)
3. Send your people an e-mail saying that they will get a call from your colleague. Explain that you'd appreciate their honest feedback and anonymity will be maintained.
4. Your colleague calls your people to find their perception about your strengths and your areas for improvement (with potential corrective actions).
5. Your colleague tallies and synthesizes and sanitizes the information they gained through their interviews.
6. You and your colleague meet to share what you learned about each other.
7. You send a follow-up e-mail thanking those who participated and sharing a little bit about what you learned.

360 feedback, giving you input from a variety of sources, can truly be enlightening. I encourage you to give it a try.

Tomorrow, we'll look at some informal processes you can use to increase your self awareness as a leader. In the mean time, take care of your shipmates.

~ VADM Bob Papp

Posted at [4/28/2009 12:27:00 PM](#) [3 comments](#) 

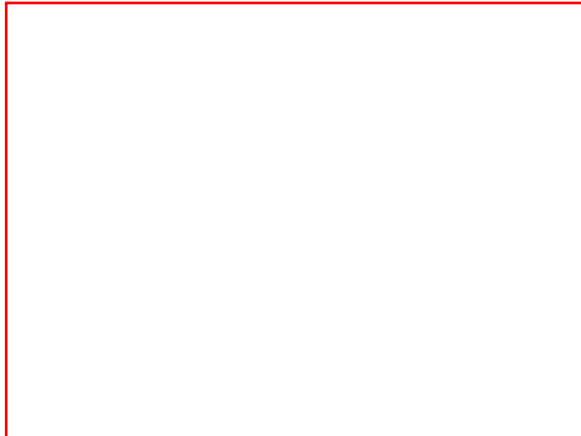
Labels: [Leadership](#)



Monday, April 27, 2009

## BOUTWELL Crew Gives Shoutouts with the Commandant -- Give One Back

While onboard [BOUTWELL this week](#) in Djibouti, crewmembers had the rare opportunity to say "Hi" to their loved ones back home while they [circumnavigate the globe supporting the 5th, 6th and 7th fleets](#). Here is one example:



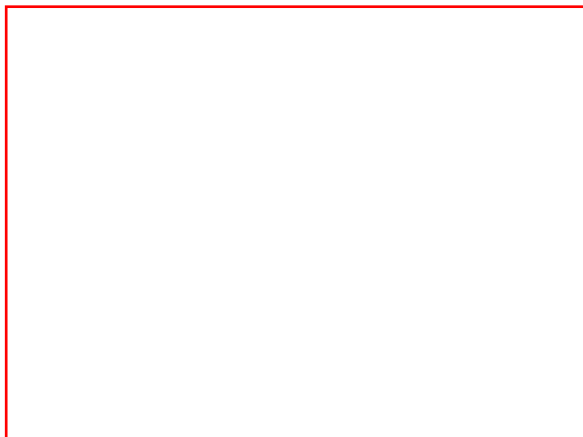
You can see more [here](#) (check back over the next couple days, we have more to upload).

Let's try a social media experiment and show your support to the crew of BOUTWELL by sending them your thanks and best wishes. You can do it three ways:

- Comment to this post
- Leave a post on their [fanpage](#)
- Comment on individual videos in the [photobucket](#)

We will be sure they get all the messages, but we are sure they will be checking.

Also, a special thanks to the unit Ombudsman, Cindy Stewart:



Posted at [4/27/2009 09:14:00 PM](#) [24 comments](#)



## Dispatches from the Road ... Delhi, India

Shipmates,  
Finished a short but fruitful visit to Delhi. Substantive, in depth meetings with the Director General of the Indian Coast Guard, VADM Chopra, regarding maritime security, maritime domain awareness, counter terrorism, and the recent Mumbai attacks. Frank, open, and constructive dialogue that will pave the way for a long term partnership. Will have pictures and video when we get a chance to upload them.

ADM A

Posted at [4/27/2009 01:45:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)



## Leadership Spotlight -- Self Awareness and Learning, Part 1 of a Series

Guest post by VADM Bob Papp, Atlantic Area Commander. This is the first in a series of posts by VADM Papp discussing the leadership competency "Self Awareness and Learning":

"What is important is to keep learning, to enjoy challenge, and to tolerate ambiguity. In the end there are no certain answers."  
~ Martina S. Horner, (b. 1938)

Shipmates, this week I want to discuss one of the key [leadership competencies](#), Self Awareness and Learning. While all the leadership competencies are important, "Self Awareness" and "Learning" are worth special attention.

As we continue to [modernize the Coast Guard](#), we must remember that we are changing in anticipation of future challenges that result from a rapidly a changing world. We are not reorganizing, transforming, or streamlining. This modernization is about agility, better organizational learning, and systematic management and leadership. The new Operational Command (OPCOM) is a step toward achieving these desired characteristics. By using self awareness throughout our organization, we now realize that we have to change to better serve the American people.

One of the primary tasks for any Coast Guard unit, and of vital importance to OPCOM, is to maintain situational awareness. For OPCOM, this means maintaining a Common Operating Picture that tells us what is going on, and a Common Intelligence Picture which helps us to predict what may happen next. As each day goes on, we learn from our mistakes and successes...that's the desired result of a learning organization.

During the next several days, I will discuss several aspects of Self Awareness and Learning at the individual level



[VADM Papp](#)  
Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)


(you), unit level (your command), and enterprise level (the entire Coast Guard). This leadership competency can be applied to all three. Let's put it to use!

For tomorrow's blog posting, I want you to think about Self Awareness and Learning and how it has impacted your own personal and professional life. Here is how the Coast Guard defines this important leadership competency:

Coast Guard leaders are self-objective. They continually work to assess self and personal behavior, seek and are open to feedback to confirm strengths and identify areas for improvement, and are sensitive to the impact of their behavior on others. Successful leaders use various evaluation tools and indicators to assist in this process of understanding themselves. Coast Guard leaders understand that leadership and professional development is a life-long journey and always work to improve knowledge, skills, and expertise. To that end, they seek feedback from others and opportunities for self-learning and development, always learning from their experiences. Leaders guide and challenge subordinates and peers, encouraging individuals to ask questions and be involved. Leaders are open to and seek new information and adapt their behavior and work methods in response to changing conditions.

Leadership expert Warren Bennis States: "It is the capacity to develop and improve their skills that distinguishes leaders from their followers." Most of the successful leaders I've known are learners.

Stand a taut watch Shipmates!  
VADM Bob Papp

Posted at [4/27/2009 11:12:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 



## Greetings from Camp Lemonier (Djibouti, Africa)

Shipmates,  
This next video clip comes from outside the Mess Hall at Camp Lemonier (a former French Foreign Legion Base) in Djibouti. We had just finished dinner with the US Ambassador and the Commander, Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa. BOUTWELL is working very hard with many Theater Security Cooperation taskings across the Pacific and in to the Indian Ocean. We had good discussions regarding our ongoing maintenance challenges with the High Endurance Cutter fleet. RDML Ostebo and the Mission Support folks are working this problem hard.

ADM A



[Greetings from Camp Lemonier \(Djibouti, Africa\)](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [4/27/2009 02:22:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 



Sunday, April 26, 2009

## TWIC Update and Way Ahead

Guest Post by Captain Mark O'Malley, Chief, Office of Port & Facilities Activities (CG-544)

One of the Coast Guard's main missions is that of Maritime Security. On April 15, 2009, a major milestone was reached in protecting America's borders and furthering the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) vital safeguarding of our Nation's ports, critical infrastructure, and cargo supply chain. As of April 15, 2009, the national [Transportation Worker Identification Credential](#) (TWIC) compliance date, all personnel requiring unescorted access to secure areas of the [Maritime Transportation Security Act](#) (MTSA) regulated facilities, vessels, and Outer Continental Shelf facilities, as well as all mariners holding Coast Guard issued credentials, must hold a TWIC.



[TWIC.jpg](#)  
Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)



The TWIC is a biometric-based identification credential which will help ensure all personnel requiring unescorted access to secure areas of MTSA regulated facilities and vessels, and all mariners holding Coast Guard issued credentials, are vetted and do not pose a potential security threat to the maritime transportation system. The TWIC program was established in the MTSA of 2002 and the [Security and Accountability for Every \(SAFE\) Port Act](#) of 2006. The joint implementation of the TWIC program by the Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) fulfills the mandate of the MTSA, the SAFE Port Act of 2006, and most importantly, furthers DHS' multi-layered approach to the safeguarding our Nation's ports and critical maritime infrastructure by ensuring only vetted individuals have unescorted access to secure areas. As of 15 April, over 1,100,000 individuals have enrolled and TWIC is now required for unescorted access to approximately 3,200 regulated facilities, 10,000 regulated vessels, and 50 regulated OCS facilities.


Another main mission of the Coast Guard is that of Maritime Mobility. Working closely with port officials and the maritime industry, the CG and TSA have approached TWIC implementation with a steadfast commitment to protecting the maritime transportation system while facilitating commerce. To date, there have been no major disruptions to commerce or port operations. CG personnel have conducted extensive outreach and worked closely with industry members in advance of the compliance date to facilitate compliance and ensure success.

Coast Guard personnel will conduct visual TWIC verification as part of existing annual compliance exams and security spot checks. The Coast Guard will continue using a scalable enforcement approach to ensure compliance with the TWIC regulations and, as always, considers issues of non-compliance on a case by case basis.

CG-5442 has awarded a contract to provide up to 300 hand-held TWIC readers to the field. When fully deployed, the readers will provide an additional layer of security to help protect the marine transportation system.

The Coast Guard, with assistance from TSA, is in the process of developing a follow on rule to propose the use of biometric readers aboard regulated vessels and facilities. An [Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) was published in the Federal Register on March 27, 2009.

The TWIC program is a complex endeavor. Over the past several years, Coast Guard personnel have laid the groundwork for TWIC implementation and compliance as one element to improve access control and identification standards within the existing MTSA framework. Although more work is ahead, the efforts to date have been tremendous and worthy of thanks. We have accomplished important milestones, strengthened working relationships with public and industry stakeholders, and held a steadfast commitment to protecting the maritime transportation system while facilitating commerce. The process has not been trouble free. Inevitably, we will continue to encounter additional challenges, as happens in any major endeavor of this complexity. As we have in the past, we will address each of these in turn, to the best of our ability, in keeping with the best public interest.

Posted at [4/26/2009 03:34:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

 [Share](#) |    

## Visit to BOUTWELL

Shipmates,

I just posted the following message on the BOUTWELL Facebook Page. More to follow ...

Friends and Family of the Crew of BOUTWELL. Master Chief Bowen and I just finished a visit on board BOUTWELL during a port call in Djibouti. I held an all hands, met with the Chiefs, and had lunch with the Wardroom. I also toured the engine room and discussed the engineering challenges the crew has faced. Wherever possible I took video with the crew and pictures with the help of my aide LCDR Jo Cousins. We will be posting them in the next day or two as we are still traveling.

The crew has worked hard and represented the US and Coast Guard well. We actually delivered a spare part for the EO and some mail. We also brought 5 new DVD of movies that hadn't been released on their departure.

My thanks to all of you who have supported your Guardian. Again, we will post pictures and video as we can upload them.

ADM A

Posted at [4/26/2009 07:47:00 AM](#) [1 comments](#) 

 [Share](#) |    

Thursday, April 23, 2009

## Dispatches from Athens, Greece.

Shipmates,  
We have finished up a full day in Athens.  
Several very valuable meetings with the  
Ministry of the Interior and Mercantile Marine.  
We ended the day at a reception hosted by  
the Propellor Club and presented a public  
service award to Mr. Sava Kalafidis who has  
mentored and guided the Greek shipowners  
to expanded membership in AMVER. Greek  
owned ships are the largest number of  
AMVER participants.  
ADM A



[Admiral Allen makes a few comments about his day's work in Athens, Greece.](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at 4/23/2009 05:07:00 PM [0 comments](#) 



## Leadership Spotlight: Innovation -- A Call for Bold Leadership

*Guest Post by VADM Clifford Pearson, Chief of Staff, co-written with LT Shameen Anthanio-Williams, CG-441, Industrial Program Manager. LT Williams is also the leading official for the annual Industrial Maintenance Innovation Award Committee. Each year, units involved in depot maintenance apply for this award (two categories: Individual Team and Process Improvement). Winners receive \$1,000 and plaque presentation. The purpose of this program is to recognize command's support of maintenance improvements. Reference COMDTINST 5240.6.*

The Coast Guard's modernization effort is intended to improve the way we do business operationally and logistically so that we can effectively meet our number one priority of keeping America safe and secure. The Commandant's vision is clear, but the key to successful implementation is heavily dependent upon the creative spirit of our workforce...both you and me. This effort requires ingenuity in the way we support our platforms, our systems, our missions and our people. While creativity is important, great ideas are nothing but ideas without proper vetting, support and execution. This is why many of our senior leaders are working long and hard to create a culture of innovation in our modernized Coast Guard.



[Innovation](#)  
Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

Organizations are now better understanding the need for enterprise wide innovation as a key operational discipline. To realize this within the Coast Guard, we must create and support an organized, systematic process for managing and executing innovation. The goal is to stomp out seeds of bureaucratic resistance and provide a culture where leaders at all levels are encouraged to boldly adopt initiatives in finding ways to perform our operations more efficiently. To achieve this vision, we must develop a strategy that provides the appropriate structure and process to accomplish the objectives listed below:

- \* Create a culture of innovation. Members of our workforce must be empowered to act as leaders in the effort to foster innovation on a continuous basis. To do this, commands must actively promote a workplace environment of question asking. They should embrace new ideas and be careful to avoid the natural tendency to trump those ideas that fall outside of their own preconceived opinions. Considering that every one's box is different, leaders must remember that out of the box brainstorming should be a team effort. Finally, to create a culture of innovation, leaders must make innovation an integral component to their unit's mission by incorporating it into their command business plans.

- \* Develop a clear and meaningful process for implementing new products or processes enterprise-wide. Not all ideas should make it to the product manager and sponsor. Ideas must be aligned with

organizational policy and support Coast Guard missions. In addition, the process should identify product managers and sponsors and provide a clear pathway from idea generation to enterprise-wide implementation.

\* Provide a streamlined path between idea generator and product team. A great idea can get lost in translation and transition and result in additional unnecessary work by the idea generator. There should be a way to get a great idea to the appropriate product team and sponsor without going through too many hoops.

\* Increase program marketing. This will ensure all units are familiar with our Innovation Program and the process for submitting ideas. Conducting annual road shows is one way to support this objective.


\* Improve communications. Make use of Web 2.0 technologies to better capture innovative ideas at all levels of the organization. Ensure we capture lessons learned and develop communities of practice in a structured knowledge management system.

\* Create innovation cells. To make innovation a part of our organization's DNA, we will incorporate innovation cells within the logistics commands. The innovation cells will be comprised of a full-time workforce completely dedicated to observing, analyzing and improving the way we do business.

I recognize that there are challenges, many of which are inherent to any reorganization effort. One issue being discussed is the "virtual office" many of us will be assigned to during modernization. The notion that synergy is lost when your teammate/supervisor is not in the same office, is incongruous to the realities brought upon by recent global trends in communication technology. For example, Coast Guard units nationwide are equipped with Video Teleconferencing (VTC), working Web 2.0 technologies into the daily workplace and/or using phone conferencing capabilities. As leader-innovators, you must look at the glass half-full and actively seek out the opportunities that modernization provides for innovation.

As we look to develop new ways to drive innovation across our organization, the existing Innovation Program is still available to receive your ideas and provide guidance. For more information on how to submit your ideas, [click here](#). Also reference COMDTINST 5224.13 for information about the Coast Guard Innovation Program and COMDTINST 5240.6 for information on the Industrial Maintenance Innovation Award. The Department of Homeland Security has recently launched its department-wide Efficiency Review initiative, to "get the highest and best use out of the precious taxpayer dollars that we have." As leaders, we should not be content with the status quo and instead look to identify areas where business functions can be performed better, faster and cheaper. Leaders must set the right tone and promote an attitude and expectation of innovation to realize efficiencies and encourage a shift in thinking away from the "business as usual" mentality.

After serving in this organization for 36 years, I truly believe that this modernization transformation will require the creative synergy of our workforce in order to be successful. So, consider this a call for individuals at all levels, to become better stewards of our resources by recognizing and utilizing the creative talents within yourself or your co-workers. I charge each of you to be bold in seeking out and promoting innovation. I look forward to hearing your ideas on this topic. Go Innovation!

Posted at [4/23/2009 10:44:00 AM](#) [2 comments](#) 



Wednesday, April 22, 2009

## Harnessing the Power of the Sea -- Environmental Innovation in Action

*This is a guest post from Capt. Jim McPherson, Commander, Sector Northern New England and their environmental innovation activities. We would like to hear from others out there how you are innovating to reduce the Coast Guard's environmental footprint.*

Being stationed at the most northern Coast Guard station on the east coast certainly has its share of challenges. The water temperature this winter averaged 37 degrees Fahrenheit and the rocky coast is unforgiving to careless or unlucky mariners.

For Chief Petty Officer James Malcolm, the officer in charge of Coast Guard Station Eastport, the greatest challenge of all is dealing with the sheer force of the water brought in by the 22-foot tides and 6-knots of current that flow through the deep channels of the St Croix River.



[Old Sow](#)

The [Old Sow](#), a geological feature near Eastport, is home to the largest tidal whirlpool in North America. The combination of extreme tides and bathymetry cause a unique vortex that can create a 10-foot depression on the water's surface as millions of gallons of water rush past Eastport.

Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

For the Coast Guard, these environmental challenges illicit only one response -- if you cannot change it, use it. Why not harness the immense and predictable power of the tides to power the Coast Guard Station?

It is fitting that on Earth Day Coast Guard Sector Northern New England, in a partnership with the Coast Guard Research and Development Center, announced a plan to test tidal generators off station Eastport.

Qualified partners could be authorized up to \$100,000 to test in-stream tidal equipment this summer. The local community has been extremely supportive and state and congressional delegations participated in the Earth Day

press event at Coast Guard Station South Portland. The proposals are intended to test actual generators in the extreme currents and tides.

With 22 Coast Guard units guarding an area spanning over 5,000 miles of coastline, Sector Northern New England strives to be a steward of the environment by pursuing renewable energy sources to help decrease our dependency on fossil fuels.

Most are aware of Coast Guard's role in protecting the marine environment, but we also have responsibilities to the taxpayers too. Nature provides other opportunities for New England units and solar and wind power are part of the plan. Sector Northern New England has initiated the following:

- \* A wind turbine was installed at Coast Guard Station South Portland, powering several computers with 125-kilowatt hours per month.

- \* A wind turbine was installed at our Coast Guard Station Southwest Harbor, powering over 20 computers, servers, and monitors with 244-kilowatt hours per month.

- \* 360 lighted buoys and 60 lighthouses are currently powered by solar panels.

Adm. Thad Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, and Senator Collins were recently briefed on the Eastport tidal energy initiatives.



The following were participants in a press conference held at Coast Guard Sector Northern New England on Earth Day, April 22, 2009:

Cheryl Leeman, of Senator Snowe's office  
Sara Holmbom Lund, of Senator Collin's office  
Jim Pineau, of Congresswoman Pingree's office  
Jennifer Puser, of Maine's Governor's Office of Energy and Security

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This is just one example of Coast Guard green initiatives undertaken. Other examples include:

- \* The Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, Md., opened the Coast Guard's first [Landfill Gas Renewable Energy Center](#).

- \* Cadets at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., created a network to reduce, reuse, and recycle; such as reducing paper and Styrofoam waste; testing methods to reduce water consumption; and recycling electronics and electrical devices.

- \* Air Station Sitka, Alaska completed a Facility Energy Efficiency Fund project that targeted several savings programs in lighting energy. They installed new lighting systems in all work areas, including a 66,250 square foot aircraft hanger, and replaced standard light switches with motion detector switches.

- \* Instead of renovating the Coast Guard innovated Station Emerald Isle, N.C., using recycled products such as overhead doors (60% recycled product); gypsum panels (100% recycled product); steel doors (35% recycled product).

- \* Electronic Systems Sustainment Detachment, Southwest Harbor, Maine, installed a centralized Renewable Energy Uninterruptible Power Supply (REUPS) that generates electrical power by wind and solar energy. The command has successfully reduced its dependence on commercial energy supply by approximately 43 percent.

- \* In Feb. 2008, a new small arms firing range in Integrated Support Command Honolulu, Hawaii was the first in the Coast Guard to be designated as a "reduced hazard ammunition" facility. The facility requires that only lead free ammunition is used, which significantly reduces the environmental impact of operating a firing range.

During the week of April 16-22, various Coast Guard units have coordinated volunteer events to celebrate Earth Day. These include beach and harbor clean-ups to remove trash and harmful materials, tree-plantings and promoting awareness about our environment.

Posted at [4/22/2009 02:48:00 PM](#) [3 comments](#) 



## Coast Guard is First Installment of Whitehouse.gov's Earth Day Live Blog

The Whitehouse Blog is running an [all-day live blog](#) on Earth Day events. The Coast Guard's Twitter campaign was picked up as the first installment of the day:

9:20: First installment. The US Coast Guard has an Earth Day Twitter campaign today talking about the various ways they're trying to preserve the environment while safeguarding the open seas, including plenty of green building and energy.

We will post on some other Coast Guard environmental activities shortly.

Posted at [4/22/2009 02:24:00 PM](#) [3 comments](#)



## Google Earth Outreach -- U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Stewardship Efforts

Guest post by VADM David Pekoske, Pacific Area Commander:

For the past month, the Coast Guard has been providing information to Google on ways to better inform and engage the public in its many missions. Today, Earth Day 2009, Google will publish a gallery of environmental layers within the Oceans layer of Google Earth, Google Maps Version 5.0, highlighting environmental stewardship activities of groups around the world. The Coast Guard will proudly be featured in this gallery.



Coast Guard Google Layer

This layer lets you view descriptions and photographs of Coast Guard efforts to protect and conserve the environment in the Pacific including environmental response, energy conservation, marine debris cleanups, fisheries and sanctuary enforcement, polar operations and wildlife conservation initiatives. Via this layer, you can follow along the Coast Guard Cutter HEALY's Arctic Deployment and view hourly position and webcam footage. You can also explore and learn about recent Coast Guard responses and initiatives from efforts to prevent vessel strikes of whales in the Santa Barbara Shipping Channel to an overview of Training Center Petaluma's planned solar array--the Coast Guard's first power purchase agreement ever!

Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

I encourage you to explore the [Coast Guard layer](#). To view, you must have Google Maps Version 5.0 (this is not viewable on the CGDN). Development of the Coast Guard layer in Google Earth continues and a layer showcasing operational highlights and unit profiles is anticipated in the coming weeks. Stay tuned.

Posted at [4/22/2009 01:41:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)



## Written Testimony for House of Representatives Appropriations Hearing

Shipmates,  
Earlier this morning, I testified before the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Homeland Security. The focus of the hearing was Coast Guard acquisitions - a critically important topic as we continue to modernize our Service. You can find my written statement [here](#).

Posted at [4/22/2009 09:45:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#)



Tuesday, April 21, 2009

## Introducing the National Strike Force Blog

I received this comment on my "200th blog" post. I will be following...

Good afternoon Admiral Allen,

Congratulations on your 200th blog! I found the topics brought up by yourself, your guest posts, and the comments attached to be both interesting and enlightening.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to visit the [National Strike Force blog](#).

Our blog has posts that address various [NSF](#) training and outreach efforts, including a post on the F/V MarGun lightering activities in Alaska. In trying to take advantage of the ever-growing social media venues, we are making a concerted effort to get more stories out featuring NSF members in action.

In our recently published 2008 Year in Review, I spoke of one of my mentors, Command Sergeant Major USArmy (retired) Donald Simmons, who inspired me through his dedication to his North Carolina Vietnam Veterans group. Just recently he was in Beckley WV at a veterans' group meeting when he encountered Coast Guard members in uniform. He mentioned that he was featured in a recent Coast Guard magazine and asked them if they knew of me. As it turned out, the Coast Guard members were actually National Strike Force members who were conducting hazardous material response training at the Tunnel complex, which the Atlantic Strike Team was completing and the Gulf Strike Team is presently going through. CSM Simmons and his veteran counterparts shared stories and fellowship with our members for several hours, as well as took many photos. CSM Simmons has contacted all of his friends and relatives in North Carolina, Connecticut and Texas and told them how the Coast Guard members made him and his veterans group feel special.


That story will be posted on an upcoming NSF blog.

I am hopeful that you will enjoy our blog, make it part of your regular blog visits and even add it to your list of blog favorites.

Thanks again for your proactive and inspirational leadership.

Semper NSF!  
Semper DOG!!  
Semper Paratus!!!

Very Respectfully,  
Roderick E. Walker  
Captain, US Coast Guard  
Commander, National Strike Force

Posted at [4/21/2009 04:00:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 



Monday, April 20, 2009

## Coast Guard Collaborates with U.S. Interagency, International Partners and Maritime Industry to Halt Piracy

Piracy has been rightfully called an [insult to civilization](#). The recent pirate attacks on the motor vessels MAERSK ALABAMA and LIBERTY SUN focused the attention of the American public on what has been an increasingly significant international issue. It is important that the American public and the international community know that the U.S. Government is working hard to find an enduring international solution to this international problem.

Maritime piracy is a symptom of instability in Somalia. The only long-term solution must address piracy's root causes in Somalia itself: political instability and lack of economic opportunity. The U. S. supports a reconstituted Somalia with lawful control over its entire territory. The new unity Transitional Federal Government offers the hope that Somalia can return to the rule of law and legitimate economic activity. Until this happens, the U.S. and the international community must treat the symptoms and secure the maritime domain and protect its seafarers by improving response options, reducing vulnerabilities, and establishing effective legal mechanisms to deliver consequences against pirates.



[CTF 151 -- Coast Guard Law Enforcement Training](#)  
Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

In December 2008, the National Security Council published the, "[Strategy for Countering Piracy off the Horn of Africa: Partnership and Action Plan](#)." The Plan is founded on the principles of the [National Strategy for Maritime Security](#) and, "recognizes that nations have common interest in achieving two complementary objectives: to facilitate the vibrant maritime commerce that underpins economic security, and to protect against ocean-related terrorist, hostile, criminal and dangerous acts, including piracy." This requires a whole-of-government approach, integrating military, law enforcement, judicial, diplomatic, and commercial interests.

There are positive effects of the international military response, including the U.S. Fifth Fleet's [Combined Task Force 151](#), a [European Union Naval Force](#), as well as a number of ships from other nations operating independently but cooperatively with these task forces. Essentially, this is the [Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Sea Power](#) in action and examples of its success include the [interdiction of 16 pirates](#) in February by U.S. Navy and Coast Guard forces working from the USS VELLA GULF; the French capture of three pirates in mid-April, bringing the total facing French prosecution to 15; and most recently the rescue of Richard Phillips, heroic Captain of the MAERSK ALABAMA. The Cooperative Strategy was promulgated by the three maritime U.S. military service chiefs in October 2007.

On the vulnerability front, working through the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and via the [international Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia](#), the U.S. has engaged with the shipping industry to develop self-awareness and self-protection measures that reduce their vulnerability to attack. These most recent attacks against U.



S. ships have added to the already heightened sense of urgency, and have raised the possibility of armed security teams as a specific measure to be employed by merchant vessels to reduce their vulnerability to pirates. The Coast Guard, working closely with the maritime industry, will issue a new Maritime Security Directive to address additional security measures authorized and required by U.S. vessels operating in waters threatened by piracy. It is important to recognize that armed security is but one of many protection measures, including the application of non-lethal tactics. There are [numerous examples](#) of these measures succeeding in thwarting pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa region.

[Regionally coordinated operations and information sharing](#), an approach that has been highly successful in reducing piracy in the Strait of Malacca, are critical to the sustainable disruption of piracy. In January, the [Djibouti Code of Conduct](#) was adopted, providing a legal framework for the interdiction and prosecution of pirates. The Code also contains practical law enforcement measures, including a shiprider program to share scarce patrol resources and information sharing and operational coordination mechanisms. This agreement has so far been signed by nine regional nations.

The passage of [U.N. Security Council Resolution 1851](#) in December 2008 further assisted in establishing an effective legal framework for prosecuting pirates. This resolution encourages nations to employ the operative provisions of the [Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation \(SUA\) Convention](#). SUA provides a robust mechanism for effective consequence delivery applicable to 78% of the World's nations. Complementing this, in January the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Kenya for the transfer and prosecution of suspected pirates. Seven of the pirates captured by the USS VELLA GULF were transferred to the Government of Kenya under the terms of this MOU.

One thing is abundantly clear. The U.S. and its international partners are adapting and becoming more effective. Although cooperation between governments will be critical to addressing piracy, cooperation and coordination within our government comes first. In the MAERSK ALABAMA response, the Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) protocol, a novel concept to orchestrate intra-governmental efforts in maritime incidents, played a positive and significant role. This protocol facilitates interagency unity of effort, efficient information flow and decision-making.

Piracy is a complex problem that is not going to be solved overnight. Establishment of rule of law and economic opportunity in Somalia are essential for a long-term end to this threat. In the meantime, there must be continuous strategic and operational engagement alongside our international partners. Such a coherent on-shore and off-shore strategy will enhance the security of the global commercial shipping lanes and halt the rise of piracy.

Posted at [4/20/2009 06:08:00 PM](#) [4 comments](#) 



## Maritime Domain Awareness -- The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its

Guest post by Mr. Dana Goward, Director of Assessment, Integration, and Risk Management.

As the recent piracy cases off the coast of Somalia have illustrated, there is a significant need for maritime domain awareness - the ability to detect, classify and identify vessels at sea. We need greater awareness on the high seas as well as along our coastlines for safety and security purposes. This need has been universally agreed upon by the international maritime community.

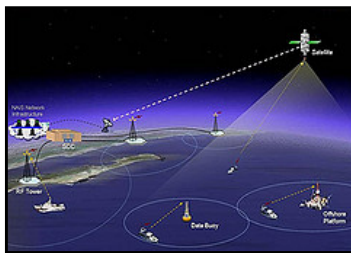
Two of the means the Coast Guard is pursuing to enhance our awareness of the maritime domain are the [Automatic Identification System \(AIS\)](#) and global [Long Range Identification Tracking System \(LRIT\)](#). I want to address the inaccurate arguments suggesting these systems are not being properly coordinated and their capabilities are redundant.

While AIS and LRIT are complementary, they provide different types of information, apply to different classes and sizes of vessels, and are being developed under separate statutory and international mandates. LRIT, which became mandatory on 01 January 2009 for passenger vessels and cargo vessels over 300 gross tons conducting international voyages, is a [mandated system by the International Maritime Organization \(IMO\)](#). AIS will be required for most vessels over 65ft in U.S. waters and was mandated by the Congress under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. It is also a global system required under the International Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention.

The primary purpose of AIS is navigational safety. It is a VHF-FM system that self-reports every 2-10 seconds but is limited to line-of-sight coverage. It is extremely useful for bridge-bridge communications at sea as well as an input to Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Services trying to deconflict contacts within their ports. Since it is an open broadcast system, there is no expectation of confidentiality in the signal transmissions.

LRIT is principally satellite based providing broad coverage on the high seas but it only self-reports every 6 hours. Its primary purpose is for maritime safety and security. LRIT is more "secure" than AIS because the data is only accessible to those nations who have agreed to the SOLAS convention.

We are dealing with two different systems. Both are needed because they feed vessel positions, which can be verified against each other, into the Coast Guard's Common Operational Picture. This centralized system can aggregate vessel positions from a variety of sources, including LRIT and AIS, to provide comprehensive track displays that enable operational commanders to detect safety and security anomalies. These different information sources are the



NAIS101sm.jpg

Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

pillars of maritime domain awareness - if you remove one of the pillars you reduce the stability of your awareness structure. This means potentially putting mariners, as well as the safety and security of our [Marine Transportation System](#), at greater risk.

Maritime threats, including piracy and the [potential use of small vessels](#), can be mitigated through greater maritime domain awareness. It is the Coast Guard's responsibility to use all available means of information to achieve that goal and we are doing so at best possible speed.

Posted at [4/20/2009 12:05:00 PM](#) [8 comments](#) 



Saturday, April 18, 2009

## Suicide Prevention Training

Shipmates,

The below comment was received on my Facebook page, it was worth bumping to here.

Peter DiMarzio said: I am a veteran of the US Air Force now working as the EAP Coordinator for District 1 for the last two years. Prior to this position I worked for the last twelve years with the Massachusetts Dept. of Mental Health. I am concerned about GMT topics being placed online in particular Suicide Prevention. I can say after almost every presentation I have has shipmates come up to me with concerns about their shipmates, parents or friends who have express suicidal tendencies, or have concerns these people are heading down that road. These people are looking for guidance on how to help. Its my greatest concern that without this face to face these individuals will sit in front of a computer and never come forward with these concerns. The online training becomes another circle to fill in. I have been to many commands, units and the Academy and all feel this particular topic should remain face to face. Please keep this a face to face training to ensure concerns can be addressed. Thank you.

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Mr. DiMarzio,

Thank you for your thoughtful comments regarding the Suicide Prevention GMT. The fact that participants in your Suicide Prevention training feel comfortable approaching you about such sensitive issues tells me you are providing excellent services for our members and employees. Also encouraging is the fact that members at your training sessions are outwardly showing concern about the well-being of shipmates, parents and friends, and are looking for ways to help. This is exactly the [Guardian climate](#) we are trying to reinforce within the Coast Guard.

You present a good case for keeping the Suicide Prevention GMT as a face-to-face requirement. My Work-Life staff agrees with you, and so do I. We continue to work towards that end; however, we are currently reaching only about 60% of Coast Guard personnel with face-to-face Suicide Prevention training annually. We realize that face to face is the best delivery method, but training in an alternate format, rather than no training due to limited resource capacity is the current reality. To ensure that we are able to provide everyone with valuable Suicide Prevention training, we must also rely on an online option to serve remote units and those personnel who were otherwise unable to attend the face-to-face training. For all its short-comings, on-line training does have several positive attributes 1. we can be assured that all the important learning objectives are consistently presented 2. we have verification that students actually understood what was taught, 3. the message conveyed is consistent and delivered in an approved / scripted manner.

The revised Suicide Prevention policy that is currently being developed will "strongly encourage" face-to-face training but will allow Commanding Officers/Officers-in-Charge to seek a waiver to use online training in lieu of face to face sessions. With this provision the unit's chain of command will be able to monitor and ensure the best mix of services.

The use of on-line suicide prevention training is consistent with the policy currently proposed by DoD, and reflects the reality that we are currently unable to reach everyone with "on-site" training. We continue to strive to reach our goal to provide face-to-face Suicide Prevention Training to all Coast Guard personnel in the future.

Thank you again for taking the time to comment on this issue. And, most sincerely, thank you for your passion and enthusiasm in addressing the needs of all of the members of our extended Coast Guard Family. You embody the true meaning of Guardian. Semper Paratus.

*Note: Emergency suicide crisis services may be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the Employee Assistance Program toll free number (800) 222-0364.*

Posted at [4/18/2009 01:35:00 PM](#) [2 comments](#) 



Wednesday, April 15, 2009

## USCGA's "Challenge of the Guardian"

In light of this month's spotlight on leadership thought We would share this great initiative underway at USCGA. This was sent to us by 2/c Matthew Peterson.

The Challenge of the Guardian is inspired by the [Guardian Ethos](#). Each of the 6 challenges for the event is based on a



line from the Guardian Ethos. At the beginning of each challenge, the Guidon Bearer in charge of that challenge will say a few words on how the line applies to our daily lives as cadets and future officers. The first two lines of the Guardian Ethos are addressed during the welcoming/kickoff brief held on this Sunday night. The last two lines are addressed during the Challenge of the Guardian Ceremony held on this upcoming Friday.

Though the Challenge of the Guardian is going to be carried out this week as an event, the challenge is much more than that; the true Challenge of the Guardian is to [live the Guardian Ethos](#) in our daily lives.

The Class of 2012 will be split into 6 groups and each group will rotate through the challenges. The groups are named for the 6 training ships that have been associated with training Coast Guard Cadets: DOBBIN, CHASE, ITASCA, DANMARK, HAMILTON, EAGLE.

The challenges will be held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday morning from 0635-0715 and Monday and Tuesday evening from 1900-1940.

There is a Challenge of the Guardian Ceremony to be held at 1600 Friday, 17APR09, that will mark the completion of the event.

Observers are welcome at any time, though it is requested that observers stay in the designated observance area as to not interfere with the challenges. There will be at least one cadet present to answer questions in each observance area.

The Class of 2010's President will be presenting the Class of 2012's with a challenge coin during the ceremony on Friday. After the completion of the ceremony, each 2/c will give his/her 4/c the challenge coin. Below are pictures of the Challenge of the Guardian Challenge Coin. One side has the Guardian Ethos, the other ties in the Long Blue Line and our Core Values.



Here is one of the challenges as an example:

This challenge echoes the 4th line of the Guardian Ethos: "I will defend them."

This challenge was inspired by the actions of the [EAGLE during the War of 1812](#). The EAGLE was being attacked by a British brig and sloop. When the EAGLE ran ashore on Long Island, the cutter's crew dragged her guns to a high bluff and fought the British ships from there. During the battle the EAGLE's flag was shot down 3 times, and each time a crewmember replaced it. The EAGLE was eventually captured, but her crew showed to the end what it means to defend the citizens.

The story of the EAGLE was retold to the 4/c at the beginning of the challenge. To honor the crew of the EAGLE's dedication to defense, the 4/c transported their own "cannons." This challenge is held on 5th deck Rowland Hall (indoor track), and the "cannons" were weighted sleds that they had to push/pull around the track. In addition to the sleds they had some shot-put weights (cannon balls) and large blue jumper pits that they also had to carry. Every single 4/c is involved. Many people have to work together to carry the blue pits (they are not very heavy, just very large) and the shot-put weights and push/pull the sleds. And they have to stay together as a group.

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We have asked for some cadet guest bloggers to share their experience and observations from the challenge as well as looking for some photos. We hope to post those in the next week.

Posted at [4/15/2009 09:16:00 AM](#) [1 comment](#) 



Monday, April 13, 2009

## Leadership Spotlight -- Partnership

Guest Post by Vice Admiral David P Pekoske, Commander, Pacific Area

Partnership -- It is the first thing that is impressed upon us as we enter the halls of basic training, officer candidate school, or the Academy. In the beginning we are drilled in the fundamentals, simple exercises that allow us to tap into parts of ourselves previously unrealized. From the moment we put on Coast Guard blue a sense of purpose begins to form, we draw down roots into the heart of our ethos, we begin to live our core values. It is the reason that a group of strangers can meet on the tarmac in Mobile, Alabama fire up the rotors and immediately become a team capable of extraordinary heroism in the wake of a devastating event. The uncommon bonds forged in the wake of a crisis, lead us to achieve those things that are unimaginable if we attempt to tackle them alone. The true, unfailing friendships that emerge from the trials and tribulations of a lifetime committed to public service are worth more to our nation than any boat, ship, or plane. These partnerships are what make our organization great.

Through the close partnerships between operators and their support staffs the country's smallest military service is capable of playing a pivotal role in the execution of our national security strategy. An aging fleet, a rapid transition to a modern organization, and a deteriorating infrastructure, each on their own can appear as seemingly insurmountable obstacles. A Deck Watch Officer and her helmsman steering a course through a gale force storm to intercept a foreign vessel illegally fishing in the U.S. EEZ; or a civilian employee that spends his Christmas in Dutch Harbor directing the Planning Section of the Unified Command in an effort to protect the pristine resources of Alaska from degradation, these shared experiences help us build the partnerships that allow our organization to succeed. Often times, however, it is the simple act of a Second Class Petty Officer from the Deck Department remaining after hours to lend a hand to a Third Class Petty Officer from the Engineering Department that matters most. When an Auxiliarist rushes into the station on a moments notice to assume the watch upon hearing that the duty watchstander must depart on emergency leave, it is a testament to the commitment we have to each other. These are the kinds of acts that make all the difference in transforming a unit into a team. The desire to develop strong partnerships and to belong to something greater than ourselves, these are the reason most of us join the Coast Guard and it is why together we sail confidently into the future, partners in service to humanity.



[VADM Pekoske](#)

Originally uploaded by [iCommandant](#)

Posted at [4/13/2009 04:37:00 PM](#) [1 comment](#) 



Sunday, April 12, 2009

## 200th Blog Posting

Shipmates,

This is our 200th blog posting, coming just over six months since we launched this site. We have really enjoyed the dialogue and appreciate all of the apparent interest and growing readership (though we could always use more comments). As you hopefully know, iCommandant is just the tip of the iceberg for the Coast Guard's effort to leverage social media for the benefit of our mission execution and support, including our external communication and internal

coordination. Since we initiated this effort, Team Coast Guard has stepped out aggressively to meet [my intent](#). With social media really being about building networks, I thought I'd mark this milestone blog by sharing those sites that I read, both officially and unofficially. (This is not all inclusive, but a pretty good representation of some of the stuff I follow and/or find interesting).

The (ever expanding) Coast Guard Official Blogroll:

[Coast Guard All Hands](#) -- The voice of Master Chief Charles W. Bowen, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve Force, Jeff Smith.

[USCG TRACEN Cape May](#) - The blog of the Coast Guard's Bootcamp.

[iFORCECOM](#) - The website of the United States Coast Guard Force Readiness Command, which is part of the Modernization Effort. The Force Readiness Command (FORCECOM) will become the Coast Guard's first command solely responsible for preparing forces to perform missions and execute them properly. FORCECOM will be charged with the current and future readiness of the Coast Guard's workforce -- Active Duty, Reserve, Auxiliary, Civilian and Contractor -- to ensure they will be ready when called to execute their missions.

[Your Great Lakes Coast Guard](#) -- a forum for the Ninth District Commander and members of his staff to share information about the U.S. Coast Guard's efforts as "Guardians of the Great Lakes."

[Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach](#) -- an official forum to share information about the U.S. Coast Guard's efforts as Guardians from Morro Bay, California south to Dana Point, California. Sector Los Angeles -- Long Beach is responsible for Coast Guard operations, missions, functions, and responsibilities that include providing search and rescue, marine safety, security, and environmental protection throughout the harbors and waters of California.

[USCG Pay and Personnel Center](#) -- Military Pay, Personnel and Travel procedural updates for Coast Guard Servicing Personnel Offices and unit administrative staffs.

[USCG Pacific Northwest](#) - D13 - The official blog of the 13th Coast Guard District

[USCGAlaska](#) - D17 - The official blog of the 17th Coast Guard District

[AMVER](#) -- The official blog of the Coast Guard's Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System

[Coast Guard Auxiliary in the Pacific Northwest](#)

[Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 76](#)

Some of my other reads (some official, some not, listed in alphabetical order. We do not endorse everything found on these sites):

[An Unofficial CG Blog](#)

[BitterEnd](#)

[Bryant's Maritime Blog](#)

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The next couple of months will be pretty interesting on the social media front. We are gradually phasing in the social media-friendly new CG Portal and in May we intend to launch the official Coast Guard Service blog and completely 2.0 enabled online CG Magazine. Keep reading, and better yet, commenting!!

ADM A

Posted at 4/12/2009 07:13:00 PM [13 comments](#) 



Saturday, April 11, 2009

## Updated -- Dealing with piracy...What's your endgame?

The recent pirate attack on the M/V MAERSK ALABAMA has heightened the interest in the piracy problem. We continue to work very closely with the international community, maritime industry, as well as our interagency and military partners to help [find a solution](#) to this problem.

Tomorrow, several Coast Guard Leaders will be interviewed on this topic:

Admiral Allen will be interviewed for tomorrow's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" on ABC.

Two interviews will be on Fox News: [RDML James Watson](#) is scheduled to appear at 11:35 a.m. and [RADM William Baumgartner](#) scheduled at 5:30 p.m.

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Originally published 12/3/2008:  
Shipmates,

There has been a lot of attention paid recently to the dramatic increase in acts of piracy in and around the Horn of Africa. It is a vexing problem, but one that must be solved. International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary General Efthimios Mitropoulos has called piracy an "insult to civilization."

We believe it is as well.

Piracy is an international problem that requires an international solution. Many steps in the right direction have already been taken; including the passing of UN Security Council Resolutions 1814/1816/1838, which allow entry into Somali territorial waters to ensure critical food shipments can reach their destination. However, these primarily address monitoring and response operations...until now.


Previously, the foundational challenge of addressing the problem of piracy was the lack of an established end game, or means to hold the offenders accountable within a legal system. Somali-based piracy is flourishing because it is profitable and nearly consequence-free due to the lack of governance and a judicial system in Somalia. Although governments and industry have focused considerable attention on interdiction, an essential element of any comprehensive counter-piracy plan is the establishment of a regionally based and readily

accessible "consequence delivery system" to bring interdicted pirates to justice. Mutually agreed upon procedures for this must be established before an event occurs -- trying to finalize policy during an international incident is a recipe for confusion and failure. This is very similar to counterdrug operations that take place pursuant to international agreements that allow for the prosecution of those involved.

Yesterday (Dec. 2, 2008), the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed [UNSCR 1846](#). From our perspective, the most significant aspect of this resolution is its inclusion of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA) clause. This clause, based on the [United Nations Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation](#), provides an immediately available instrument for logistically effective consequence delivery applicable to 78% of the world's States (those nations who have signed the Convention). The SUA Convention was the result of the hijacking and murder of passengers aboard the Cruise Ship ACHILLE LAURO in 1985 by the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF). The act was doubly egregious because the murdered victim, Leon Klinghoffer, was wheel chair bound and defenseless. The SUA Convention was adopted by the IMO in 1988 and came into force in 1992.

SUA applies to nearly all of the attacks occurring in the Gulf of Aden, and obliges State Parties to criminalize such acts and establish jurisdiction when the offense is committed against their vessels or nationals. SUA establishes a framework whereby masters of ships may deliver suspected SUA offenders to a coastal State Party and the coastal State Party is obliged to accept custody and extradite or prosecute unless it can articulate why the Convention is not applicable. Leveraging States SUA obligations in conjunction with existing international law against piracy provides an effective legal framework to deliver an "endgame." We have worked for several months now with our partners on the Joint Staff, through the "interagency process", and with our international partners to pursue this outcome. This is definitely a step in the right direction and I will provide updates in the future.

ADM A

Posted at [4/11/2009 08:44:00 PM](#) [14 comments](#) 

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## Leadership Spotlight -- Mentoring -- Updated and bumped

We received a good question with a follow-up response by RADM Brice-O'hara and updated this post:

Anonymous asked: RADM Brice-O'Hara: Ma'am, Thank you for sharing. But I have a question for you; did you aim for Admiral when you first joined the CG? Did your mentors provide you the steps needed to make it to the position you hold today?

I ask this b/k I am constantly changing my career path: It ends in 2034 when I retire as Commandant. As silly as it may sound, I feel that whatever you are involved in, you should have clear short and long term goals, or else you're just moving about with no real direction. It would be nice if there were some clear steps laid out for junior members wanting to make this a career. For example in your case; reading your bio is one thing, but giving us the "what set you apart from the rest" would really help in our understanding of what was needed to make it so far and so long in this organization. Is that the nature of your discussions with your mentees? Also, referring to the picture just posted, Are other CG Admirals providing mentorship to JO(s) like you are doing? It is really great to see. V/R  
-----

RADM Brice-O'hara responds: Hello and thanks for taking the time to read this site. I can tell from your questions that you have put a lot of thought into your career and are anxious to continually improve. That is a great start, so let me give you a few more ideas that may be of use to you and other readers.

Setting realistic goals and taking actions to achieve them are critical for success in the Coast Guard, and equally important to being happy and fulfilled in life. I did not decide to become an admiral, instead my goals always focused on performance.

Fortunately, I have enjoyed every assignment and am thankful for the opportunities and responsibilities the Coast Guard has entrusted to me. Yes, I have gotten jobs I especially wanted, but I have also been assigned to places that were far from the top of my preferred duty station or type of job. It comes to this - you'll do fine as long as you keep a positive outlook and make good use of every opportunity put before you. I have many close friends and wonderful memories, as well as important professional learning from each of my nineteen assignments.

Throughout my career, I've done everything possible to master all aspects of my work, doing the best that I could in every instance. I set high standards and take a lot of pride in the quality, integrity and expertise reflected in my decisions and actions.

My mentors contributed to my achievements with encouragement and timely advice, such as pointing me to specific

things that could help expand my professional knowledge. They gave me tips on applicable courses, books and articles to read; some pushed me to seek collateral duties that would broaden my experience.

I attempt to do the same for the men and women that I mentor. Instead of focusing just on what they know, I try to open their perspectives and nudge them to things they may not have considered. Helping them understand and effectively use policies, identifying ways to take advantage of applicable tools the the Service offers, or simply listening and providing a venue for venting are ways that I add value in the mentor-mentee relationship. Mentoring allows for some pretty frank conversation, which is healthy and should lead to better understanding about issues of concern.

And it works two ways, because as a mentor, generally to a more junior person, I benefit from hearing how Coast Guard policies and initiatives are received...was it as the organization intended, or were there unexpected consequences that necessitate further action by decision-makers?

So mentoring provides a great feedback loop in multiple ways. And yes, several of my peers, both flag officers and senior executive service civilians, are active mentors. ADM Allen sets the example from the top, and we all recognize that mentoring is a great way to further reinforce and embed values and principles among our fellow Guardians.

Finally, I'll point out how important my family has been during my Coast Guard career. This year, my husband and I will celebrate our 29th anniversary and we have two terrific adult sons. Sure, moving was challenging for the boys, but fortunately they readily made friends and did well in school despite many relocations. You may not think of your family as mentors, but I sure got a lot of advice - mostly good! - and ideas from them. We should never lose sight of how important our loved ones are to us. We could not do well on the job if we did not have a lot of support and flexibility at home. Remember to tell your loved ones how much you appreciate them!

Thanks for your service now, and to 2034. If you're the commandant, or at some other level in the Coast Guard, make certain that at the end of the day, you have made a positive contribution, that you have performed with the highest professionalism and dedication that will distinguish you as one of America's Maritime Guardians.

Semper Paratus,  
RADM Sally Brice-O'Hara

-----

Original Post by Rear Admiral Brice-O'Hara, Deputy Commandant for Operations:

Guardians!

I've long been an advocate of Mentoring, so am pleased to have the chance to share a few thoughts about this important tool for leaders and followers. I recommend that you check out all 28 of the Coast Guard [Leadership Competencies](#), including mentoring.

Has Mentoring contributed to my personal and professional success? Absolutely!

As a result of being mentored, I've benefited from the ideas of a variety of people with different experiences and perspectives. Having a trusted person to talk with outside of my chain of command often validated the very things that my own supervisors were telling me. Mentors have helped me refine my own goals and encouraged me to stretch to take on new challenges. Hearing how someone else overcame obstacles or resolved a problem is a great way to gain the self-confidence to tackle an issue, enroll in a course, give a speech, or seek a particular assignment. One of the best things about my mentors has been their accessibility and willingness to listen and provide advice.

With more than 34 years of active duty, I've also enjoyed serving as both an informal and formal mentor to many officers, enlisted members, Auxiliarists, and civilians. In every instance, honest dialogue and accessibility are essential to the relationship. Email is a tremendous way to stay in touch when units are deployed or we are separated by distance. I also like to schedule face-to-face meetings, or at least periodic phone calls, to establish stronger ties to the individuals I mentor. But, that's not always necessary; in fact some of my most productive mentoring has been with an individual who was a junior petty officer when we began corresponding and is now a chief petty officer, yet, we have never met in person. Be creative in using whatever technologies best fill the needs of both parties.

Mentoring is a career and life development tool that is particularly relevant to our current organizational climate. The Coast Guard is leaning forward to modernize and we are executing increasingly complex missions...this is not a time for complacency, incompetence, or failure. Entering into a mentoring relationship can accelerate your expertise and keep you competitive in this dynamic environment. It is a two-way relationship that adds value for both mentor and mentee by enhancing knowledge and awareness.

I encourage you to give this learning partnership a try for new approaches to improve professional skills or to obtain objective feedback and guidance. Like everything that we do in the Coast Guard, preparedness is key. To help you get started in a mentoring relationship, or to hone your leadership, check out these useful [resources](#).

A quote that I found on the web sums it up well, "Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."



Rear Admiral Brice-O'Hara and her mentee, LT Hannah Bealon.

Posted at [4/11/2009 04:40:00 PM](#) [3 comments](#)

Labels: [Coast Guard](#), [Leadership](#), [Mentoring](#)

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## Being Semper Paratus Takes Practice


Guest Post by Captain Mike Mohn, Chief, Office of Contingency Exercises (CG-535)

With hurricane season right around the corner, Coast Guard commands across the nation will soon be reviewing and readying their response plans. Part of that cycle will be a series of exercises that will ensure the Coast Guard is in fighting trim. In support of our overall preparedness goals, the Coast Guard has undertaken an effort to improve its corps of exercise professionals. The Coast Guard recently graduated its 115th federally-certified Master Exercise Practitioner as a result of a growing partnership with [FEMA's Emergency Management Institute](#) in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The Coast Guard is now the 2nd leading federal agency in number of graduates (Customs & Border Protection is 1st).

For the past two years the Office of Contingency Exercises (CG-535) has sponsored special convenings of the [Master Exercise Practitioner Program \(MEPP\)](#) course to raise the proficiency of Coast Guard Preparedness Staff nationwide. The MEPP program is the senior-most course offered by the federal government for the design and conduct of exercises. The Coast Guard and the network of port communities we serve benefit from having this expert cadre distributed throughout the operational Coast Guard. MEPP skills complement the various Coast Guard and DoD preparedness courses taken by our planning and exercise staffs. The combined competencies guide our unit commands to more meaningful exercises that improve preparedness for All Threats - All Hazards.

So, what does a MEPP course entail? Through a comprehensive series of three one-week sessions (that include professional demonstrations in between), the MEPP students develop hands-on expertise in multiyear exercise program management, design and conduct of tabletop, functional, and full scale exercises. The MEPP course is based on the [DHS Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program \(HSEEP\)](#), which provides a common approach for all levels of government. Students receive a healthy understanding of the many emergency management disciplines of federal, state, and local agencies that have key roles during incident responses. The MEPP course is taught by FEMA at either the Emergency Management Institute or the [Center for Domestic Preparedness \(Anniston, AL\)](#). As Coast Guard graduate numbers increased, subsequent courses included Coast Guard MEPP graduates as instructors, working in tandem with FEMA instructors, to tailor the curriculum to CG-specific examples and topics.

The Coast Guard exercise program plans to continue this beneficial partnership with FEMA, with the goal of providing each of our major field commands (Sectors, Districts and Areas) with a certified Practitioner. Additionally, all Exercise Support Team professionals will be sent to this course of instruction. To date, we are 95% complete in fulfilling that goal. Additionally, we will continue to pursue opportunities for our field commands to assist local agency partners obtain seats in MEPP to increase our interoperability, interagency coordination, and collective contingency preparedness.

Posted at [4/08/2009 11:51:00 AM](#) [16 comments](#) 

Labels: [Coast Guard](#) [Disaster Preparedness](#) [Disaster Response](#) [Exercises](#) [Leadership](#) [Planning](#)



Tuesday, April 7, 2009

## Visit to Maine with Senator Susan Collins

Shipmates,

Today I visited Sector Northern New England Coast Guard units and some local shipyards with Senator Susan Collins. We had a terrific All Hands at Station Rockland which is housed in a historic building and is one of the most unusual stations I have visited.

We capped a great day at a legendary local institution in Brunswick, The Fat Boy. Our thanks to the Burtons and their staff for hosting us.

Thanks also to Senator Collins for her terrific support

ADM A



[The Burton's with Senator Collins](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [4/07/2009 06:46:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

Labels: [Congress](#) [Maine](#)



Monday, April 6, 2009

## Coast Guard Elite Athletes

Shipmates,

I earlier posted on our annual leadership award winners. Today at Coast Guard Headquarters we formally recognized their achievements. We also recognized our Elite Athletes. Please meet them.

2008 Coast Guard Elite Female Athlete of the Year: YN3 Syreeta Bromfield-Kemp  
 -- Command: TRACEN Cape May, NJ  
 -- Sport: Basketball

2008 Coast Guard Elite Male Athlete of the Year: LTJG Brian Monaghan  
 -- Command: CEU Miami, FL  
 -- Sport: Triathlon and Running

YN3 Syreeta Bromfield-Kemp is stationed at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, NJ. YN3 Bromfield-Kemp distinguished herself as one of the best female basketball players in the Coast Guard.

YN3 Bromfield-Kemp had a superb 2008 basketball season. She led the 2008 All-Navy basketball team to its first gold medal in tournament history, where she led them in scoring and second in rebounding. She served as co-captain of the 2008 All-Navy basketball team. YN3 Bromfield-Kemp was then selected to the 2008 All-Armed Forces and All-Tournament Basketball teams. She again held the honor of co-captain for the All-Armed Forces Team. She led this team to a gold medal at the 2008 Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) tournament, leading this team in scoring and rebounding.

In addition to her athletic achievement, YN3 Bromfield-Kemp volunteered her time with "Cleaning the Beach Access" at CG STA Wrightsville Beach, NC, volunteering to collect toys and coats for the less fortunate in the Wilmington, NC area, and also volunteering to coach basketball at the Boys and Girls Club in Wilmington, NC.



LTJG Brian Monaghan is stationed at Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit Miami, FL. LTJG Monaghan distinguished himself as one of the best male triathletes and runners in the Coast Guard.

LTJG Monaghan continued his rigorous training and competed in two Ironman events, one Half Ironman event, and numerous other triathlon and running races. The highlight of his season was his performance at the Ironman Triathlon World Championships in Hawaii, which consisted of a 2.4-mile ocean swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run. For the second year in a row, LTJG Monaghan won the military men's division, placing first out of 15 of the best endurance athletes in the U.S. Armed Forces. His performance also was instrumental in the Coast Guard taking second place among the five Services in the military team standings. His time of 9:36:38 placed him 125th overall (top 8 percent) out of 1,731 competitors, including the best professional and amateur triathletes from around the world. In April 2008, LTJG Monaghan was recognized as an All-American in the 18-24 age group by USA Triathlon.

In addition to his athletic achievement, LTJG Monaghan tutors children at a local elementary school, supporting the Coast Guard's partnership in education program, and he participated with CEU Miami in a Habitat for Humanity project, constructing homes for impoverished families in his community.



We congratulate these two fine athletes and their commitment to their communities.

ADM A

Posted at 4/06/2009 05:43:00 PM [@comments](#)



## A Question from an A School Student Regarding LORAN C

Shipmates,

I received this question on my Coast Guard Commandant Thad Allen Facebook page and copied here to provide a comprehensive answer.

"I'm Fireman Garrett Holloman. I'm currently stationed at TRACEN Petaluma, ET A-school. I will be graduating here on April 15th and after my C-school I will be heading to LORSTA St. Paul. I am curious, if the budget calling for the closing of the LORANs gets approved, will they be closing immediately? If not, what is the timeline for the completion of closing them? Also, will they be totally shut down or will some of them be turned over to civilians? I believe that although they may be out dated, they are quite reliable if not more reliable then the GPS/DGPS that we are attempting to transfer over to. GPS may be more accurate when it works but what is the gurantee that it is going to work as long as the LORANs have been. I feel that they are a reliable and maybe even necessary part of what we do. Thank you for your time."

Fireman Holloman,  
The President will propose in the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget that LORAN C be terminated the station shutdown. The budget must be approved by both the House and Senate and then signed into law by the President. We are developing plans as to how we will execute the tasking when it is approved by Congress. Accordingly, it is difficult at this point to provide timelines or to address the issue of a backup for GPS which is a separate and distinct issue. This decision will certainly force the discussion.

That said, I have been thinking about the LORAN C termination for several weeks now and would pass on these personal thoughts (again, independent of the future of a GPS backup)...

This transition is challenging, but necessary. We have struggled for some time to recapitalize our current LORAN C technology to move from 1970's era vacuum tube technology to solid state. Funding has been a continual challenge. During this time GPS has become the preferred and predominant navigation system in the maritime environment eclipsing the maritime requirements for Loran-C. Accordingly, the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget provides direction that we terminate LORAN C. The Department of Homeland Security has the responsibility and is leading an effort to reach out to various interagency and private sector stakeholders to determine if a national, systemic backup is required for GPS.

In many ways the proposed termination of LORAN C has been a flashback for me. In 1974 I was assigned as the Commanding Officer of LORAN C Station Lampang, Thailand. The Southeast Asia LORAN C chain supported military operations in Southeast Asia. Construction on this chain started in 1965 and ultimately included two stations in Vietnam (Tan My and Con Son) and three in Thailand (Sattahip, Udorn, and Lampang). In the spring of 1975 as the North Vietnamese advanced south we lost the Stations at Tan My then Con Son. The decision was ultimately made to disestablish the chain and I oversaw the shipping of electronics equipment and other parts back to the United States. In lieu of a change of command I transferred control of the station to the Thai Army.

Every dog has it day and LORAN C has had its day. However, its history is instructive as we go forward.

LORAN-C HISTORY

For those interested in a detailed history of how the Coast Guard acquired the LORAN mission I would recommend Louis Bragaw's MANAGING A FEDERAL AGENCY: THE HIDDEN STIMULUS (1980) ... although I'm not sure it is still in print. Bragaw devoted 3 chapters to a case study of we acquired the LORAN mission and how LORAN was ultimately chosen as the maritime navigation system of choice over its competitors at the time: LORAN A and OMEGA.

The Coast Guard was brought into the radio navigation mission through the confluence of unrelated events, the first being the assimilation of the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1939 "The Advocacy of the LORAN C System" as a case study of the federal bureaucracy. In the opening paragraph he states "Since the early 1970s OMB and the Office of Telecommunications Policy in the Executive Office of the President had recognized that the combined cost of overlapping navigational systems was simply too high." The competing systems were LORAN A, LORAN C and Omega. As Bragaw points out the Department of Transportation was concerned with the Coast Guard's advocacy of LORAN C, based in part on its performance in Southeast Asia (we were proud of our performance!). He quoted a Department of Transportation official as saying, "its [Coast Guard] known advocacy of LORAN C required that an impartial evaluation of these radio aids should be completed by a non-DOT agency." As the discussion boiled down to a decision between LORAN C and Omega Bragaw commented "It would be a struggle to decide, because a decision would require the concurrence of the Department of Transportation, the Department of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Congress. Many would be unhappy whether LORAN C or Omega was selected." We all know now that LORAN C became the standard.

Ultimately, the issue was decided when the FY 1975 Appropriations and Authorization bills were enacted. The Commandant at time, ADM Bender, testified at several hearings that year in support of construction funding for the LORAN C sytem to replace LORAN A. By then, the question had been reduced to replacing LORAN A with LORAN C in coastal approaches (termed the "coastal confluence zone"). In general, commercial fishermen opposed the transition due largely to the price of replacing LORAN A receivers with new LORAN C receivers. It should be noted that this dialogue took place in the context of several external events: the wreck and oil spill from the TORREY CANYON and the construction of the new Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Faced with a "go-no go" decision to proceed, Clay Whitehead, the Director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy testified before Congress, "Although the system selections - Omega for high-seas navigation and LORAN-C for the coastal and rivers and harbors areas - are still being questioned by proponents of other systems, the time necessary to develop and evaluate alternative proposals would delay any system implementation for at least two years. Therefore, OTP supports the DOT proposal for LORAN-C expansion as primarily a civil maritime system for both coastal and rivers and harbors navigation." Congressional approval followed.

We are now at another choice point. LORAN C has served the Nation and global mariners well. The men and women who have stood the transmitter, timer, and engine room watches have done an exceptional job keeping the system running. However, it is time for change. It is time to understand that despite the passage of more than 30 years, one-sixth of today's Loran-C stations still operate equipment with vacuum tubes similar to those present at LORAN Station Lampang in 1975. This cannot be sustained indefinitely. It is time to choose between living in the past and operating in the future.

We will take care of our people. We will conduct this transition with the same sense of responsibility and stewardship as we did in 1975 at LORAN Station Lampang. The Loran-C system was not designed to be and is not a systemic backup for the positioning, navigation, and timing provided by GPS. A decision on eLORAN will be made independently.

ADM A

Posted at 4/06/2009 05:08:00 PM 2 comments



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