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## iCommandant

*Web Journal of Admiral Thad Allen*

Thursday, December 31, 2009

Modernization Series: Communications iTeam

Guest Post by RADM Ronald Hewitt, CG-1:


One of the critical success factors to implement change is good communication, especially when parts of the organization you used to work with (MLC's and ISC's) go away. Effective internal (mission support members) and external (mission support customers and stakeholders) communication capabilities are essential to successfully transition to our new mission support business model that will deliver quality, standard support for all Coast Guard people, platforms and C4IT systems. Communication capabilities are essential since it will take several years to fully implement the process changes needed to standardize support for all our product and service lines. These capabilities will also provide a valuable feedback mechanism, facilitating employee and stakeholder input and involvement.

Within DCMS, we chartered a Communications Integration Team (iTeam) to address how to best meet our communication challenges. Mr. Hiram Bell, Director of the Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate's Office of Strategic Planning and Communications, provided the DCMS Executive Leadership with an update on the DCMS Communications "iTeam". His [blog post](#) discusses the team's charter, current status and timeline to propose an integrated communications capability within the mission support organization. Please visit our mission support blog ([www.dcmslog.blogspot.com](http://www.dcmslog.blogspot.com)) to view this post and stay up to date as we continue to roll mission support information out to the field. I ask Coast Guard members to email questions or topics for future posts to [AskMissionSupport@uscg.mil](mailto:AskMissionSupport@uscg.mil).

Thank you for your continued commitment to an improved and modernized Coast Guard.

Semper Paratus!

RADM Ron Hewitt  
Assistant Commandant for Human Resources

Posted at [12/31/2009 09:48:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 



Tuesday, December 29, 2009

## Modernization Series: Field Impacts

Guest post from CDR Derek Dorazio (Logistics Department Head) and CWO4 Scott Romero (Engineering Officer ) at Sector North Carolina:

We successfully completed our small boat transformation at Sector NC in May of 2009.

There have been some growing pains since we transformed, but the benefits of the transformation have outweighed the challenges. The keys to sustaining long term viability of the program are the continued placement of dedicated, experienced Asset Materiel Manager (AMM) and Field Terminal Operator (FTO) staff at the Sector, and permanent resolution of the parts supply problems that have hampered the Small Boat Product Line (SBPL) in its nascent state.

The biggest challenges we faced when we transformed were related to Industrial Service Orders (ISO), and the supply of parts.

In short, the SBPL had no effective way to issue ISOs to utilize ISD Fort Macon to perform work on our small boats. Issuing an ISO took weeks post transformation, due to the utilization of new accounting strings and learning curves for


SBPL personnel that had little experience with such practices. We had some pretty scary moments where all of our MLBs were down at three units along the North Carolina coast due to ISO backlogs. I am happy to report that these ISO problems have since been rectified, and it takes only a few hours to get an ISO from the SBPL today.

We also experienced delays in obtaining needed parts after we transformed. The SBPL is well aware of the supply problems associated with the transformation, and of the fact that this problem may be exacerbated as more Sectors are transformed (a message was released by COMDT on 14 Oct 09 discussing this issue). We just implemented what we hope to be a "short term" solution of using Sector personnel to commercially procure needed parts less than three thousand dollars (and needed services less than two thousand five hundred dollars). The SBPL issued credit cards to two of our SKs at Sector NC, and to one of our SKs at SFO Cape Hatteras, to procure these parts and services for Sector NC units.

As a sufficient parts demand history is built, and as SBPL obtains appropriate large scale procurement and repair contracts to support the demand in the Aviation Logistics Management Information System (ALMIS but tailored to small boats) inventory, the need for the Sector to procure its own parts and services will hopefully diminish. We also hope that the SBPL will be properly staffed in the near future to be able to handle all of the central procurements necessary for a complete small boat transformation throughout the entire Coast Guard. Time will tell if this can be effectively accomplished.

Having discussed the challenges, it is important to note that we have realized tremendous standardization gains by transforming. We are placing our engineering staff, from the sub unit to the Sector level, in a position to succeed. Our engineers at all units throughout our geographically disparate AOR are using the same process for managing maintenance, repairs, and parts ordering, with total asset visibility at all levels.

Learn ALMIS and follow the process guides, and work closely with your respective AMM and FTO staff, and you will be a success when you transform!

Posted at [12/29/2009 09:51:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 

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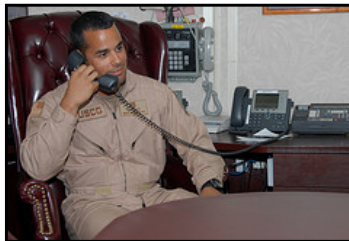
Monday, December 28, 2009

## BM2 Chris Valdes

Guardians,

We received this photo of BM2 Chris Valdes (MSST Miami) receiving our call on Christmas aboard USS CHOSIN off the Horn of Africa. Our thanks to LEDET Team Leader ENS Victor Natividad for providing the opportunity and the photo. We understand he was called to the Flag Cabin under the guise "he was in trouble" and as he found out we are very proud of what he and our deployed Guardians are doing every day. He looks pretty comfortable in that chair!

ADAM A



[091225-N-2600H-014.JPG](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [12/28/2009 04:21:00 PM](#) [@comments](#) 

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## Modernization Series: Reserve Impacts

Guest Post by RADM Ronald Hewitt, CG-1:

This week RDML May has provided the men and women of the Coast Guard with an update on the Reserve Force Readiness System (RFRS). His blog highlights the integral part RFRS plays in Coast Guard Modernization and the efforts being made to ensure the maximum readiness of our reservists as they work side by side with our active duty members. Please visit our [mission support blog](#) at to view this post and stay up to date as we continue to roll mission support information out to the field. I ask Coast Guard members to email questions or topics for future posts to [AskMissionSupport@uscg.mil](mailto:AskMissionSupport@uscg.mil).

Thank you for your commitment to an improved and modernized Coast Guard.

Semper Paratus!

RADM Ron Hewitt  
Assistant Commandant for Human Resources

Posted at [12/28/2009 09:06:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 

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Friday, December 25, 2009

## Holiday Phone Calls

Guardians,  
Happy holidays to all of our shipmates around the world. For those who are standing the watch here at home or abroad, thank you for your service and dedication. On Christmas day, President Obama called members of each Armed Service including two Coast Guard members.

The President called MK1 Michelle Roberts who is stationed onboard CGC MONOMONY in Bahrain and GM3 Matthew Harris, MSST Anchorage, currently deployed to Umm Qasr, Iraq.

I had the opportunity to call two of our Guardians who were deployed to wish them a merry Christmas.

The first was BM2 Christopher Valdes, MSST Miami, deployed onboard a naval vessel conducting counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa. Petty Officer Valdes hails from Miami, FL.

I also called GM2 Zachary Houghton, MSST LA/LB, who is currently deployed with the Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay Cuba. Petty Officer Houghton is from Redding, California and is part of the Force Protection Team in GTMO.

MCPO-CG Skip Bowen also made two phone calls. He talked to MK1 Martin Bowley, MSST LA/LB, who is deployed to the Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay Cuba and BM3 Daniel Sylvester, USCGC MAUI, in the Northern Arabian Gulf.

I am always inspired by the spirit and positive attitude of all our deployed members. I understand deployments are difficult and the holidays make them even more challenging. Our calls represent the thanks of our Nation for their sacrifice and an acknowledgement of the support that their families and friends provide.

Take this opportunity to thank your families and friends as well. They inspire and enable us.

ADM A

Posted at [12/25/2009 10:22:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 



Thursday, December 24, 2009

## Collision between a Coast Guard small boat and recreational vessel in San Diego

Guardians,

On Sunday, December 20th, a collision between a Sector San Diego based 33 foot boat and a 24 foot Sea Ray occurred in the vicinity of a holiday boat parade. Despite the best efforts of rescue crews, an 8 year old boy on the Sea Ray tragically died from injuries sustained during the collision. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Anthony DeWeese and the other passengers injured during this accident.

This incident is being thoroughly investigated and greater details on the causal factors will be determined and made public. The Coast Guard is committed to establishing the facts of how this accident occurred, using that information to prevent a similar accident in the future, and providing a full accounting to the families, the public, and our own people.

Last night, RDML Castillo, the Commander of the 11th Coast Guard District, provided a [statement](#) to local media and [answered questions](#) regarding the investigatory process. He has also provided a guest post which is included below.

We will publish more information as soon as we are able. Until then, whether you are on liberty or on duty, make safety your top priority.

ADM A

Guest Post from RDML Joseph Castillo (Commander, 11th Coast Guard District):

A terrible tragedy occurred in San Diego Bay Sunday night as a Coast Guard 33 footer and a 24 foot civilian pleasure craft collided. Six people on the recreational boat were injured and one of them, an eight year old boy, died at the hospital. I cannot find words adequate to express the level of sorrow and grief the Coast Guard community shares with the family of the child lost in this accident, and we pray for the recovery of the injured.

As an emergency response and law enforcement agency, we must continually earn and maintain the confidence and trust of the boating public and the communities we serve. A tragic incident such as Sunday's crash can shake the public's confidence and erode their trust. So it is important we find out, share, and act on what happened. And we will do that.

We will do that through several internal and external investigations. Together, these will identify root causes and determine responsibility, to avoid repetition of this tragedy.

Shortly after learning of the crash I requested the National Transportation Safety Board be asked to conduct an investigation to assure full transparency and public accountability. These investigators are in place and will scrutinize every aspect of this case to determine what went wrong. While Coast Guard Marine Safety professionals are assisting

them with data and evidence collection, it is important to note that this is an independent body.

The San Diego Harbor Police is also conducting an investigation in accordance with State requirements. We have Coast Guard Investigative Service Special Agents working side by side with them in the process.


As the cognizant District Commander I have initiated an internal investigation in accordance with the Administrative Investigations Manual to provide me with the information I need to make appropriate decisions on safety and accountability for what occurred. This includes documenting the events that led to the accident and identifying any procedural or accountability issues. The team lead for this has extensive small boat experience in operating, training, and evaluating small boat programs.

We want to get to the facts as quickly as possible through a deliberative process. As we wait for investigators to complete their work (conduct interviews, review records and data, perform technical analyses, and prepare their reports), it is important to allow that deliberative process to take place without speculation or conjecture. In the meantime I assure our emergency response partners, the public, and the men and women under my command that we will not falter in our duties. We will redouble our commitment to safety and service to the public and continue to earn their trust and respect. Our crews remain on watch, ready to help those in distress, ever mindful of their duty to protect the public.

My personal thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of this tragedy, their loved ones, and friends,

Sincerely,

RDML Joseph "Pepe" Castillo  
Commander, Eleventh District

Posted at 12/24/2009 08:03:00 AM [@comments](#) 

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Wednesday, December 23, 2009

## Celebrating the Holidays with Friends and Guardians

Guardians,

We had the opportunity to reflect on the past year and gather with our friends, partners, and fellow Guardians at a reception held at the Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial at Arlington Cemetery. Our Homeland Security Deputy Secretary Jane Holl Lute was able to join us. Deputy Secretary Lute and I had the chance to meet two very proud Coast Guard SPARS who served with the first female members of our Service, Mary Gubisch and Eleanor Dempsey Emerson. They inspired us with their timeless devotion to the Coast Guard, their patriotism, and pride for being able to serve their Nation. We salute them and thank Deputy Secretary Lute for attending.



[Celebrating the Holidays with Friends and Guardians](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

ADM A


Posted at 12/23/2009 05:06:00 PM [@comments](#) 

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## Modernization Series: Naval Engineering

Guest post from Rear Admiral Tom Ostebo, Assistant Commandant for Engineering and Logistics (CG-4):

On Monday, 14 December 2009, approximately 60 Captains and Commanders from the Naval Engineering community gathered in Washington, D.C. for a day long meeting. While the objectives of sharing Naval Engineering challenges, concerns and ideas and reviewing our progress on Modernization were relatively simple, the meeting was noteworthy, as it was the first gathering of its kind in over six years. As I communicated to the group last week, I am extremely proud of our Naval Engineers and continue to be impressed with the great work they do to sustain our fleet of aging vessels and support Modernization. I invite you to visit the [DCMS Blog](#) to read more on the program review and the information conveyed by Coast Guard Senior Leadership, including the Commandant, at this event.

Posted at 12/23/2009 12:01:00 PM [@comments](#) 

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Tuesday, December 22, 2009

## Nomination of Next Commandant

Guardians,

We released the following ALL HANDS email earlier today. The text is provided below:

To the men and women of the United States Coast Guard,

I am pleased to announce that the President of the United States, upon recommendation from the Secretary of Homeland Security, has nominated VADM Robert J. Papp Jr. for appointment as the 24th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate. I have already extended my heartfelt congratulations to VADM Papp and I look forward to close personal and staff coordination over the next five months as we prepare for the Commandant Change of Command on May 25th, 2010.

We need to be capable of continually adapting to our environment and managing new circumstances. This is a principle tenet of our Modernization efforts. Leadership transition is one such change and we must each take ownership in making change possible.

Times of transition offer new prospects. I have known and worked with VADM Papp for many years and have every confidence in his leadership and ability. Your future and the future of the Coast Guard will be in excellent hands.

Semper Paratus!

Admiral Thad W. Allen  
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

Posted at [12/22/2009 09:05:00 PM @comments](#) 



## Modernization Series: Field Impacts

This is a lengthy post but I highly recommend you read it so you can understand how modernization is impacting our field units.

Guest Post from BMCS Jeremy McConnell and MKC John Christie:

As Officers in Charge and Engineer Petty Officers in the Coast Guard we have been taught over and again that pride in ownership and craftsmanship is one of the most endearing qualities that we can bring to a unit. We know that many in the current Coast Guard are having some strong feelings about the modernization effort taking place in the small boat world. As an OIC and EPO of a station that went through modernization, we were skeptical and uneasy with such a bold step. Numerous thoughts ran through our head, such as: What do you mean it is not my boat!; You are taking HOW MUCH of my budget!; I do not want anybody micro-managing me on how I run my department. After going through the process, all we can say is that the transformation should have happened a long time ago.

We both transferred this year leaving the modernized world and talked on numerous occasions about how we stepped back two years in time. While we still remembered how to do the job the old way, we knew that it can be done a much easier way that can benefit all involved. We decided to provide some positives and negatives to both at the OIC and EPO levels that we discovered during the entire modernization transformation. We do not have enough time and bandwidth to talk about all the issues and topics, but we will hit the big topics.

From an EPO perspective:

Inventory: As you all know, each unit inventory was pretty much stripped from them during the Field Unit Inventory Removal Project (FUIRP) and the Inventory Control and Compliance Program (ICCP). Out of approximately 320 line items, we had around 150 items taken from us and relocated to Elizabeth City. From a positive stand point, that was 150 less items that I was accountable for. Inventories became a lot easier, but I did not have the parts that I needed at times and sometimes condition F parts would show up leaving you 2 more days behind the repair of the asset. Where as after the modernization, I could order parts and have them in 1 to 2 days.

Preventative Maintenance System (PMS): In my opinion, this was one of the most needed transformations. While each unit had the resources to complete the task, not every unit was completing the task properly or on time. Many feel that they were or are going to be micromanaged or that they have big brother watching them. While it may be unsettling for some to be watched, if you do your job like normal you will not have a problem. In the old school of doing PMS, we all know how it happened, one section would complete all the PMS while their currency hours or training would lag behind. Vice versa for the other section. With modernization it could not be simpler. PMS is prescheduled for you and divided up so you don't have 15 tasks come due on one day. Monday you may have 1 or 2 items, Tuesday you may have none. Wednesday you may have one and Thursday you may have 2 or 3. The tasks were tracked and parts would show up ahead of time for PMS that was due 1 to 2 weeks down the road. Yes the Sector could keep track of where you were on maintenance and your OIC was privy to this information but as I said earlier, if you are doing your job as you should, you will have nothing to worry about.

The one unfortunate item is that there will no longer be a unit asset per say. While CG 41485 is attached to Hobucken, a need may arise in the sector, district or Coast Guard to move 41485 to another station and give Hobucken some other UTB. In the pre modernization Coast Guard this was unheard of and frowned upon by many. Units take pride in their boats. It is a symbol of who they are and how hard they work. No unit ever wants to give away their boat. That boat is theirs and they want nothing more than to show it off and compare it to other units.

From an OIC perspective:

As an OIC, we are graded on our personnel, our operations, proper training, and the ability to properly maintain our assets and facilities. We are looked at from multiple angles and dissected to the tenth degree, often spending

numerous hours trying to cover our stern in every way. We wear many hats and try to instill the very traditions that were upheld by so many before us. We live to help those in peril and protect those who could not protect themselves. The way we do things in many ways had not changed for years, just tweaked in order to accommodate new platforms or environmental changes. We are protective and proud of our abilities and the empowerment the Coast Guard Regulations Manual affords us. With that said, let us be realistic and truthful to the big picture. We live in a different world now. Our world is now understanding Force Optimization, management of resource and employment hour goals, currency data for boat crews, and ensuring every data goal is met all the while still doing the very things we were expected to do before. I have talked to some fellow OICs and they feel micro-managed and like someone is looking over their shoulder. I understand that and can identify with that way of thinking. But we need to realize that this change is beneficial and creates new tools to benefit our units and our Coast Guard.

Assets: We all have lived by the philosophy of: Do whatever you have to do to get the boat operational. We all spent late nights working on boats, driving long distances to pick up parts, and countless man hours and stress worry about making sure no one had to cover our AOR. We did what we had to do to make it happen. In the modernization, when a boat is put into Charlie and the unit is not capable of meeting its required SAR or LE coverage, Sectors and units must look to each other for help. This is where we must change our thinking but still keep the status quo of unit pride in an asset. We did not want our boat in Charlie, and we did not want to send our boat somewhere else. It was ours and only ours. Each of us knows that judgment is often passed by others by just looking at boats from another unit. Let us be honest, some time in our careers we have all said: wow, look at that boat, they don't take care of their boats, that unit must stink. As OICs, we all know this and often strive to create a positive reputation in the eyes of others, especially fellow OICs. It is one thing to have a BM3 say that, but when a fellow OIC says that, that is a peer talking.

OICs are a prideful group, a group that often looks to each other for advice and ideas, but when you are not viewed in a positive light, your phone might not ring as much. So yes this might sound petty, but it is true. Often we do not want to send one of our boats to another unit because they might not take the time and effort to properly care for your boat like your unit does. You can still take the time and effort to show your unit pride. Set your standards high and expect nothing less than before. Belief in the cause is paramount and think about the impression and influence you will send to other fellow OICs, not to mention their crew.

Money: Yes, they take 69 percent of your Standard Support Levels (SSL) budget for the platforms. Yes, that hurts but let us put it in perspective. At least 60 percent of your annual budget for each boat type goes to engineering. Once your unit is modernized, every item needed to be purchased for your platforms over fifty dollars is paid for by the modernization project. Any item needed for the boat over fifty dollars. That covers the Deck side too and really is not as big a hit as you think. As the system is up and running for awhile, just think about when Rescue and Survival (RS) items are added to the mix. The RS system ordered through this system would benefit the unit because we all know; each unit spends more on RS than what they are budgeted for. I will be excited to see it.

They are already receiving feedback on the data they have collected from modernized units on where funding is needed and not. When I sat down with the Commandant a couple of weeks ago he put the finance side of my issues to rest when he said: Last year we had over 13 million dollars in purchases for over 10 million dollars in items we already had in excess parts in the Coast Guard. We already had the parts!! We need this change in order to get more funding.

If that does not help, look at it the way the Logistics Transformation Program Integration Office (LTPIO) team put it to me. When you go to change a spark plug how long does it take? The common response was ten minutes. If you add it up, after you order the part, get your tools, start, stop, finish putting everything back, it is an hour later. The problem with the boat world is we have been getting paid and funded for ten minutes instead of one hour.

PMS: This is one of the most helpful items in the entire modernization project. As an OIC you go to the EPO and check the PMS logs and hope that everything is done well and the boats are ready to go. This cuts out the worry if the PMS is being done properly. Through the Aviation Computerized Maintenance System (ACMS), which has been tailored to the small boat community, you can track the PMS schedule and progress for each asset. The system also provides you with a compounded list of overdue PMS that is pending on your boats. This system justifies the OICs decision to take a boat down for PMS. Once there is PMS overdue on an asset, the boat is to be in a Charlie status until the PMS is done.

Each of us know when a MISHAP arises, they pull all records and review each item to ensure we were doing our job properly. This system covers our stern by making sure each PMS items is done and done correctly. Having the Engineer Officer capable of seeing the PMS lists also helps plan accordingly for trends and possible catastrophic events that can occur. Yes, it seems like someone is looking over your shoulder but look at it like another set of eyes helping you be at the top of your game.

As we stated earlier, these are just some of our observations and how we felt about the process. We did not agree on everything but if you cannot tell, we drank the Kool Aid and like it. We feel it is exactly where the Coast Guard needs to go and we are glad it is happening. We are a society that doesn't change well. We take our work personally and feel when change happens it is because we did something wrong. We did not do something wrong, we did the very best work with what we had. The best work in the world. This change is to help better the system to make it better for us. That is our view anyway. This is one of those things where we must give a little to gain a lot. Be open to it, the Kool Aid does not taste that bad.

Posted at [12/22/2009 12:25:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 

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Saturday, December 19, 2009

## Modernization Series: iTeam Update

Guest Post by VADM Currier, Coast Guard Chief of Staff

This week, I have asked CAPT Tim Heitsch to provide the men and women of the Coast Guard with an update on our Field Mission Support Delivery Integration Team (FMSD iTeam). His blog highlights the terrific work our iTeam specialists are doing right now in aligning the mission support business model to the field level. Please visit our [mission support blog](#) to view this post and stay up to date as we continue to roll mission support information out to the field. I ask Coast Guard members to email questions or topics for future posts to [AskMissionSupport@uscg.mil](mailto:AskMissionSupport@uscg.mil).

Thank you for your commitment to an improved and modernized Coast Guard.

Semper Paratus!  
VADM Currier

Posted at 12/19/2009 09:19:00 AM [0 comments](#) 




Friday, December 18, 2009

## Holiday Greetings

Guardians,  
We released our holiday ALCOAST today and the text is provided below. I hope all of the members of the Coast Guard family, active duty, reserves, civilians and auxiliaries, have a joyous, healthy, and safe holiday season.

ALCOAST 706/09  
COMDTNOTE 05300  
SUBJ: COMMANDANT'S HOLIDAY MESSAGE  
1. IT IS WITH GREAT PRIDE AND GRATITUDE FOR YOUR SERVICE THAT I SEND THIS HOLIDAY MESSAGE TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES. IN THE PAST YEAR YOU RESPONDED SUPERBLY WHEN CALLED INCLUDING FLOODING AROUND THE RED RIVER, THE TSUNAMI IN SAMOA, THE MIRACLE OF THE HUDSON RESPONSE TO THE CRASH OF U.S. AIRWAYS FLIGHT 1549, AND THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE H1N1 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC. YOU SUPPORTED OPERATIONS IRAQI AND ENDURING FREEDOM, ANTI-PIRACY EFFORTS OFF OF SOMALIA, AND LOGGED ANOTHER YEAR OF RECORD DRUG INTERDICTION STATISTICS. YOU ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN ALL OF OUR 11 MISSIONS. AT THE SAME TIME WE REFLECT AND REMEMBER OUR GUARDIANS OF CG 1705 WHO WERE LOST SERVING THEIR NATION.  
2. DUE TO THE NATURE OF OUR MISSIONS, THE SUDDEN DEPLOYMENTS, AND INCREASED PACE OF CURRENT OPERATIONS, WE ARE OFTEN CONSUMED BY THE TYRANNY OF THE PRESENT. OUR COAST GUARD IS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF THE DEDICATION OF OUR PEOPLE AND THAT DEDICATION EMANATES FROM THE STRENGTH OF OUR OWN FAMILIES. THE HOLIDAYS OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT UPON THE MOST VALUABLE THINGS IN OUR LIVES; FAMILY AND FRIENDS. AS YOU CAN, PLEASE SPEND SOME PRECIOUS DOWN TIME WITH YOUR LOVED ONES AND BE THANKFUL FOR OUR BLESSINGS AT THIS SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR.  
3. MY FATHER DCC CLYDE ALLEN USCG (RET) AND MY MOTHER WILMA TOGETHER WITH PAM AND I WISH YOU A HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON. FOR THOSE WHO ARE DEPLOYED OR STANDING THE WATCH OVER THE HOLIDAYS, THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING YOUR COAST GUARD FAMILY AND ALL AMERICANS WITH THE CONFIDENCE THAT THEIR COAST GUARD IS ALWAYS HERE TO PROTECT AND READY TO RESCUE. WE ALSO THANK YOUR FAMILIES FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND SACRIFICES THAT ALLOW YOU TO SERVE.  
4. THANK YOU AND SEMPER PARATUS.  
5. ADMIRAL THAD W. ALLEN, COMMANDANT, SENDS.  
6. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

Posted at 12/18/2009 02:04:00 PM [0 comments](#) 



## USCG Retired Flag Officer Brief

Guardians,

On Thursday of this week we hosted a group of 40 retired flag officers and senior executives for a series of briefings and discussions.

I started the meeting off with an overview of the transition to the new Administration, our interaction with DOD and my interaction with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the recent IMO General Assembly, our marine safety outreach, and my duties as Chair of the Interdiction Committee.

I was followed by the Master Chief of the Coast Guard who provided an overview of enlisted personnel force management and recruiting. RADM Brice-O'Hara briefed current operational issues.

VADM Currier and his team briefed major systems acquisitions and the way ahead for the mission support



[USCG Retired Flag Officer Brief](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)



organization. RDML Taylor provided a budget overview and the Vice Commandant closed the session.

The meeting was lively and there were many questions. This group of retired leaders is still active in industry associations and other leadership positions. It is important that they be kept current regarding key issues affecting our Service and it is important that we hear their ideas.

ADM A

Posted at 12/18/2009 01:49:00 PM @comments 



Wednesday, December 16, 2009

## Meeting with the World Shipping Council

Guardians,

As part of our continuous outreach to the maritime transportation industry, I met with the World Shipping Council (WSC) last night. I was joined RADM Brian Salerno and Senior Executive Jeff Lantz.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with WSC, you can find more at [www.worldshipping.org](http://www.worldshipping.org). Here are two excerpts from their site.


"World Shipping Council members operate approximately 90 percent of the global liner ship capacity, providing more than 400 regularly scheduled services linking the continents of the world. Collectively, these services transport about 60 percent of the value of global seaborne trade, or more than US\$ 4 trillion worth of goods annually."

"The goal of the World Shipping Council (WSC) is to provide a coordinated voice for the liner shipping industry. The WSC and its member companies partner with governments and other stakeholders to collaborate on actionable solutions for some of the world's most challenging transportation problems."

We had a very frank and open discussion about a number of issues that we share including maritime security and piracy, ballast water management, air emissions, seamen's access to shore, and climate change.

We thank CEO Chris Koch, Chariman Ron Widdows, and the Board Members for an enlightening discussion.

ADM A

Posted at 12/16/2009 10:46:00 AM @comments 



Tuesday, December 15, 2009

## Coast Guard's UAS Program

On 07 December, the [first maritime Unmanned Aircraft System](#) (UAS) was introduced at the General Atomics facility in Palmdale, California. We received a few questions regarding that UAS, the Guardian, so we are addressing them in a guest post from our Office of Aviation Forces (CG-711):

1. Is this Predator UAS property of the Coast Guard or property of CBP?

The Maritime Variant Predator (MVP) was acquired by Customs and Border Protection (CBP). However, the Coast Guard and CBP have a close working relationship on the development of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) for DHS missions. We have a Coast Guard Captain that serves as the Deputy Director of a Joint Program Office for UAS, and two other officers who serve as liaisons with CBP. To date, this partnership with CBP has enabled two Coast Guard aviators to receive Predator training at a CBP facility, with two more scheduled for later in 2010. These aviators will command the MVP during joint operations scheduled to begin early next year.

2. Do we currently have a long term strategy for UAS in the Coast Guard?

The Coast Guard is pursuing a strategy to acquire mid altitude, long range and low altitude, cutter based tactical UAS to meet DHS and Coast Guard specific mission requirements. A major part of the strategy is to partner with other federal agencies to reduce the overall cost of the project and leverage each agency's unique talents to develop the most efficient product possible. The Coast Guard needs greater awareness within the maritime domain and the UAS provides persistent, cost-effective, maritime surveillance in critical operational areas, where and when it is most needed. It will complement Coast Guard manned aircraft and surface assets, and will be a future key provider of aviation support across a broad scope of Coast Guard missions.

3. Does the Coast Guard still have plans for a Vertical Takeoff UAS originally planned for the National Security Class cutters?

The Coast Guard is still pursuing a tactical cutter based UAS solution. We are examining the Navy's Fire Scout Program and have partnered with the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) to collaborate on a future shipboard vertical takeoff UAS. Land based and cutter based UAS capabilities are critical for long range surveillance and tactical interdiction purposes respectively. Each system complements the other resulting in enhanced mission execution in the



field.

Posted at 12/15/2009 03:23:00 PM [1 comment](#) 



Saturday, December 12, 2009

## Maritime Domain Awareness and Small Vessel Security

Guardians,

In the past two years I have had numerous discussions around the country and around the world regarding maritime domain awareness and small vessel security. These are two very complex but important issues that need to be addressed through a national conversation regarding the vulnerabilities, threats and potential consequences that exist in the maritime domain to create our current risk environment. Unlike the land and air domains, the maritime domain lacks persistent surveillance and our challenge is complicated by our "bands of jurisdiction" as opposed to bright line borders (i.e. territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone). I have had this conversation with diverse organizations and individuals including the Director General of Indian Coast Guard following the Mumbai attacks and our National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. The conversation is important and needs to continue. This week RADM Brian Salerno testified before Congress and provided this guest post.

ADM A

Guest Post from RADM Brian Salerno (CG-5: Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security, and Stewardship):

On Dec 9, 2009, I had the opportunity to testify before the Congressional Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation on the topic of Maritime Domain Awareness, or MDA. This is a very broad subject which includes numerous ways to see what is happening on the water; understand what we are seeing; and then share the information with others who need it. MDA is concerned with a diverse range of threats, including severe weather conditions which may place mariners at risk, illegal smuggling activity, and the threat of terrorism, among many others. Although many issues were raised during the course of the hearing, the aspect of MDA most on the minds of the committee was the potential exploitation of small vessels as a means to attack the United States.

Small vessels remain a significant challenge from an MDA standpoint. Although introduction of new technologies, such as the Automatic Identification System (AIS) and Long Range Information and Tracking (LRIT), in combination with other sensors and analytical tools, has greatly improved our awareness of vessels above 300 gross tons, smaller vessels generally operate with far greater anonymity.

There are two broad categories of small vessels: commercial and recreational. The Coast Guard has proposed rules that will require commercial vessels above 65 feet in length, as well as certain small passenger vessels, tugs and vessels transporting dangerous cargoes, to be equipped with AIS. This proposed rule would not apply to recreational vessels, however. In fact, we do not have any rules contemplated that would impose such a requirement on recreational vessels. The Committee, Chaired by the Honorable Elijah Cummings, considered which measures would, in fact, be appropriate to improve security of recreational small vessels.

Also appearing before the Committee was Ms. Margaret Podlich, Vice President of Government Affairs, Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatU.S.), who pointed out that there are over 12.5 million registered recreational boats in the US. There are millions more which are unregistered, as most states do not require non-motorized vessels to be registered.

There are no federal licensing requirements that apply to recreational vessels, nor is a federal licensing requirement under consideration. In fact, there is no federal requirement to have any form of identification on board. And yet, as in the concern expressed by Chairman Cummings, small vessels they are free to "move in very loosely regulated fashion, across the waterways, in plain view of countless pieces of sensitive infrastructure..."

As we wrestle with the challenge of creating the awareness we need to better anticipate threats to our ports and adjacent populations, we are also mindful of the imperative to preserve our cherished freedoms. The question is: what measures make the most sense?


In our view, there three measures which would reduce risk on the waterways. One is a federal boating education standard that would be administered through the states. Better educated boaters would improve safe operation on our increasingly crowded waterways, as well as be more attuned to security concerns they may encounter while operating their vessels.

Another important measure is the Vessel Identification System (VIS), which provides law enforcement officers the ability to check the registration numbers of out-of-state boats, similar to what a highway patrolman can do with automobile license plates. Presently, 25 states participate in this system, as do 5 territories and the District of Columbia. We are actively working to attract the participation of the remaining 25 states.

Finally, there is participation in American Waterways Watch (AWW), which can be thought of as a neighborhood watch on the water. Boaters are encouraged to report suspicious activity and AWW offers guidelines on the kinds of activity that may be cause for concern. The Coast Guard, with the active support of organizations like BoatU.S., the National Association of Boating Law Administrators, the U.S. Power Squadron and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, have been reaching out to the boating community to spread the word. The philosophy is that boaters are not the problem; they are part of the solution. More information on AWW can be found at: [www.americaswaterwaywatch.com](http://www.americaswaterwaywatch.com).

Overall, the hearing provided a welcome spotlight on a very important issue!

Note: RADM Salerno's written statement and additional information on the Maritime Domain Awareness hearing is located at: <http://transportation.house.gov/hearings/hearingDetail.aspx?NewsID=1065>

Posted at 12/12/2009 07:47:00 AM [0 comments](#) 



Friday, December 11, 2009

## Coast Guard Participation in Super Bowl Media Day

Guest Post by RADM Steve Branham  
Seventh Coast Guard District Commander

Super Bowl Security Media Day, Dec 3, 2009 at Land Shark Stadium, Miami, Fla.

On 03 December, I met once again with many of the law enforcement and fire rescue personnel who are already extremely busy working to ensure this year's Super Bowl in Miami is a safe and secure event. Although we have had several meetings where we have ironed out much of the planning for Super Bowl security and conducted a comprehensive tabletop exercise, last Thursday's event brought all of the federal, state and local agencies and their equipment together to show the media what is involved in preparing for nationally significant events like the Super Bowl.



[Coast Guard Participation in Super Bowl Media Day](#)

Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

And what a show it was!

The equipment and capabilities on display were amazing. From state of the art mobile command posts to armored tactical vehicles to several bomb sniffing dogs that can pick up on tens of thousands of different types of explosives, I am confident that we have the assets in place to make this Super Bowl just as safe and secure as the previous nine Super Bowls that have been held in South Florida.

But, what really impressed me the most was the people. Hundreds of federal, state and local personnel focused on one thing, Super Bowl security preparations! It is clear that Miami Dade and Broward Counties know a thing or two about ensuring a safe and secure Super Bowl experience for the spectators, teams and workers. Most of the local agency personnel I talked with have more than one event already under their belts.

When Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano designated me as the Federal Coordinator for Super Bowl XLIV, she instructed me to ensure that a coordinated Federal planning mechanism existed to support local incident management efforts. We are working hard to do that and we have put together a fantastic interagency team from about 30 different organizations.

On February 7, the public will see a thorough and wide ranging security plan in action. And there will also be many behind the scenes activities that the public will not see. After seeing the personnel, equipment and other assets that will be in place this year, I am even more confident that it will all add up to another safe and enjoyable experience at one of the world's finest sporting traditions.

Posted at 12/11/2009 05:03:00 PM [0 comments](#) 



## CG-6505 Final Investigation Documents

Guardians,

Today closes a week in which we conducted family notifications, congressional outreach and media engagement regarding the conclusion of our Administrative and MISHAP (Safety) Investigations into the loss of the crew aboard Coast Guard helicopter 6505 on September 4, 2008.

CAPT Thomas Nelson, LCDR Andrew Wischmeier, AMT1 Joshua Nichols and AST1 David Skimin made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our Nation. Please remember these fine Guardians and keep their families and friends in your thoughts.

The ALCOAST below provides a summary of the incident and announces the public release of our final action documents, including findings and directed actions, to learn from and prevent this type of tragedy in the future. These documents are available in the FOIA Reading Room at: <http://www.uscg.mil/foia/reading-room.asp>

ADM A

FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-00//  
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ALCOAST 697/09  
COMDTNOTE 3750

SUBJ: RELEASE OF THE FINAL ACTION MEMO (FAM) FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION AND THE FINAL DECISION LETTER (FDL) FOR THE MISHAP (SAFETY) INVESTIGATION FOR THE COAST GUARD AIR STATION BARBERS POINT CLASS "A" AVIATION INCIDENT INVOLVING HH-65C CGNR 6505 ON 04 SEP 2008

1. SYNOPSIS. AT 2011 (HST) ON SEPTEMBER 4TH 2008, AIR STATION BARBERS POINT COAST GUARD HELICOPTER NUMBER (CGNR) 6505 WAS TAKING PART IN A NIGHT HOISTING TRAINING EVOLUTION WITH STATION HONOLULU MOTOR LIFE BOAT (MLB) 47317 APPROXIMATELY SIX MILES SOUTH OF HONOLULU, HI. CGNR 6505 WAS CARRYING 4 PEOPLE: TWO PILOTS, ONE FLIGHT MECHANIC AND ONE RESCUE SWIMMER. CG 47317 HAD FOUR PEOPLE ONBOARD: ONE COXSWAIN, ONE CREWMEMBER / BREAK-IN COXSWAIN, ONE ENGINEER AND ONE BREAK-IN CREWMEMBER. CGNR 6505 WAS IN THE RECOVERY PHASE OF A HOIST FOLLOWING A STANDARD DELIVERY OF THE RESCUE BASKET WITH TRAIL LINE TO THE MLB WHEN THE MISHAP OCCURRED. AS THE HELICOPTER MANEUVERED OVERHEAD, IT DESCENDED AS THE MLB ROSE ON A SWELL. THE RELATIVE MOTION CREATED EXCESS SLACK IN THE HOIST CABLE. DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE ATTENDING MLB CREWMEMBER, THE EXCESS CABLE ENTANGLED ON THE MLB ENGINE ROOM DEWATERING STANDPIPE ON THE AFT BUOYANCY CHAMBERS FORWARD FACE. AS THE MLB RODE DOWN THE SWELL AND THE HELICOPTER MANEUVERED TO REGAIN ALTITUDE, THE CABLE BECAME TAUT, PHYSICALLY PULLED THE HELICOPTER DOWN TO THE RIGHT AND THEN PARTED UNDER TENSION AT THE ENGINE ROOM DEWATERING STANDPIPE. THE CABLE PARTING INDUCED AN UNUSUAL ATTITUDE RECOVERY (EXTREME YAW TO THE LEFT), DURING WHICH THE MAIN ROTOR BLADES CONTACTED THE HOIST BOOM ASSEMBLY. THIS CREATED A SIGNIFICANT OUT OF BALANCE CONDITION THAT CAUSED SEVERE VIBRATIONS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE FLIGHT. THE MAIN GEARBOX SUSPENSION SYSTEM WAS ALSO COMPROMISED AT THIS POINT FROM THE FORCES OF EXTREME DYNAMIC LOADING. DESPITE THE SEVERE VIBRATIONS, THE AIRCREW RECOVERED FROM THE UNUSUAL ATTITUDE, AND IN THE PROCESS, FLEW AWAY FROM THE WATER. THEY ALSO MADE SEVERAL MAYDAY CALLS THAT WERE OVERHEARD BY THE MLB CREW, SECTOR HONOLULU, AND HONOLULU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER. APPROXIMATELY THREE MINUTES LATER, THE DAMAGE TO THE AIRFRAME WAS COMPOUNDED BY DETERIORATION OF COMPONENTS OF THE ROTOR SYSTEM, FURTHER DEGRADING THE AIRWORTHINESS OF THE HELICOPTER. THE AIRCRAFT DEPARTED CONTROLLED FLIGHT AT APPROXIMATELY 500 FEET AND 40 KTS AND ENTERED AN UNCONTROLLED DESCENT TO THE SURFACE. ALL FOUR PEOPLE ONBOARD CGNR 6505 WERE KILLED AND THE AIRCRAFT WAS LOST. NO INJURIES TO THE MLB CREW OR DAMAGE TO THE MLB OCCURRED AS A RESULT OF THIS MISHAP.

2. THE RELEASE OF THE FAM AND THE FDL SIGNALS THE COMPLETION OF RIGOROUS ADMINISTRATIVE AND MISHAP (SAFETY) INVESTIGATIONS, ANALYSIS AND HIGH LEVEL REVIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO THE LOSS OF CGNR 6505 AND CREW ON 04 SEP 2008. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION WAS TO MAKE FINDINGS AND PROVIDE INFORMATION UPON WHICH TO BASE DECISIONS AND TAKE ACTION. THE SOLE PURPOSE OF THE MISHAP INVESTIGATION WAS TO DETERMINE THE CAUSAL FACTORS AND UNDERLYING CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THEM. BOTH THE FAM AND THE FDL SUMMARIZE ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE THE ACCIDENT AND TASK VARIOUS COAST GUARD PROGRAMS WITH REQUIRED ACTIONS TO IDENTIFY/AVOID SIMILAR HAZARDS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES IN THE FUTURE. ALL MEMBERS OF THE COAST GUARD ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO READ THE FAM AND THE FDL POSTED IN THE FOIA READING ROOM AT: ([HTTP://WWW.USCG.MIL/FOIA/READING-ROOM.ASP](http://www.uscg.mil/foia/reading-room.asp)).

3. CAPT THOMAS NELSON, LCDR ANDREW WISCHMEIER, AMT1 JOSHUA NICHOLS, AND AST1 DAVID SKIMIN MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE WHILE SERVING OUR NATION. IT IS UP TO ALL GUARDIANS TO REFLECT ON OUR LOSS, TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT WE ACT ON WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED, AND TO PREVENT THIS TYPE OF TRAGEDY IN THE FUTURE.

4. ADMIRAL T. W. ALLEN, COMMANDANT, SENDS.

5. INTERNET RELEASE IS AUTHORIZED.

BT  
NNNN

Posted at [12/11/2009 12:43:00 PM](#) [1](#) comments 



Thursday, December 10, 2009

## 1st Annual Commandant's Chili Cookoff

Guardians,

Don't be fooled by this picture. This is not a staff meeting at Headquarters. This was the serious work of the judges at Commandant's Chili Cook-off to support the National Capital Area Combined Federal Campaign. Our thanks to Terri Dickerson (Office of Civil Rights) and her staff for their tireless work this year to raise funds for our community. However, as much as I tried, I couldn't match the intensity of Command Master Chief Cantrell who obviously has grasp of the intricacies of fine chili.

ADM A



[1st Annual Commandant's Chili Cookoff](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [12/10/2009 11:49:00 PM](#) [1 comment](#) 



## Lunch with Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Guardians,

I had the opportunity on Thursday to have lunch and discuss a variety of issues with ADM Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. ADM Mullen has been a friend, mentor, and counselor to me for a number of years. We have worked a number of issues dating back to our agreement to transfer Navy WPC 179 patrol boats to the Coast Guard following 9/11. He and his wife Deborah have been steadfast in their support for the men and women (and their families) of our military services. He has been tireless in attacking the vexing problems facing our forces including care for wounded warriors, diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injuries and post traumatic stress, military suicides, and support for military families.



[Lunch with Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

ADM A

Posted at [12/10/2009 11:05:00 PM](#) [2 comments](#) 



## Kick-Off to our Modernization Series

Guest post from VADM Currier:

As a follow-up to Admiral Allens [All Hands](#) at Sector San Diego, I would like to offer this post as a first in a series of blogs regarding modernization efforts, progress to date and priorities for our way ahead. Specifically, recent concerns have been expressed regarding our Field Support organization including Base Support Units which fall under the Shore Infrastructure Logistics Center (SILC).

First let me say that our field organizational structure and associated business rules are critical aspects of support effectiveness. We cannot produce readiness without a well structured and fully integrated field element. With the disestablishment of our Maintenance and Logistics Commands (MLC) this fall, a system of support units was put in place to ensure the continued delivery of critical services. Business rules, including the designation of a Principal Support Officer (PSO), have been generally successful. That said, I am not convinced we have it right. Accordingly, I am taking action to review our modernized field support structure to ensure that it is optimal.

We have not done a good enough job at informing our workforce about the way ahead. I invite anyone interested to visit our support website at <http://dcmslog.blogspot.com> and view the first in a series of postings explaining where we are, and where we are headed. Coast Guard men and women; active, reserve, civilian or Auxiliary can ask questions or offer suggestions by e-mailing us at: [askmissionsupport@uscg.mil](mailto:askmissionsupport@uscg.mil).

I am committed, as is our mission support team, to achieving efficient and effective mission execution through enhanced readiness. Modernization is the key.

Semper Paratus  
VADM J. P. Currier  
Chief of Staff

Posted at [12/10/2009 05:42:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 



## Guest Post from LT Kristi Nadler

Guardians,

During our trips we often have the opportunity to take additional personnel. On our recent trip to New Orleans we asked LT Kristi Nadler from our National Command Center to join us.

She offered the following observations.

ADM A

On Friday 04 December 2009, I had the privilege of accompanying ADM Allen on his trip to New Orleans for the Work Boat Show. During the trip down on CG01, the flight crew showed me the technology on the plane that allows for world-wide communications. As a watchstander in the National Command Center (NCC) who needs to reach out to the Commandant while he is traveling, this was highly informative. The communication capabilities of the plane allow

the Commandant to remain available in the event there is a timely and important call for him to take/make or a conference call to participate in even at the classified level. So, even in the air with these capabilities, ADM Allen is able to remain Semper Paratus; always ready for that phone call from the National Command Center!

While in New Orleans, I had the opportunity to visit the D8 Command Center and meet with LCDR Paul Morgan, Command Center Chief, and fellow watch standers. With D8 being such a large District, I was surprised at the small size of the Command Center. Currently, D8 is in the progress of standing up a Common Operating Picture, COP, watch that will allow the Command Center to have visibility on vessel traffic throughout their area of responsibility. The COP will be a viable tool especially with all the inland rivers and waterways D8 monitors; modern technology is vital on the success of a Command Center. Thanks D8 Command Center!

The trip was a great learning experience and I had a wonderful time. Thanks to ADM Allen and staff for the opportunity and thanks to the flight crew for being so hospitable.

Posted at [12/10/2009 11:49:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 

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## Visit of Singapore Chief of Navy

Guardians,

On Wednesday I met with RADM Chew Men Leong, Chief of the Singapore Navy. This meeting followed discussions we had early this fall at the International Sea Power Symposium in Newport, RI. RADM Chew leads one of the most professional Navies in the world and we share many issues. The main topics of our conversation on Wednesday were piracy and small vessel security. Singapore has been a regional leader in coordinating the efforts of nations bordering the Straits of Malacca to reduce piracy and they have had great success through information sharing and coordinated efforts. Singapore also leads the rest of the world in creating maritime domain awareness. They have minimized the threat from small vessels by requiring transponders and all power vessels, including jet skis. It is always a pleasure to meet and talk with RADM Chew.

ADM A

Posted at [12/10/2009 05:28:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 

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Wednesday, December 9, 2009

## Briefing to the Naval Studies Board


Guardians,

Today I briefed the Naval Studies Board of the National Academy of Sciences on current Coast Guard operations and challenges. This is an annual exchange and it offers the opportunity to discuss in depth Coast Guard operational challenges with advisors to the Chief of Naval Operations and others.

Our thanks to Miriam E. John: Chair of the NSB and Dr. Charles Draper: Director of the NSB

This year the discussion centered on piracy, small vessel security issues, the Arctic, icebreaking capability, and current initiatives at the International Maritime Organization. This is an experienced, insightful group that asks probing questions and helps us create better understanding of issues. This year the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Gary Roughead, has asked the group to look at climate change and small vessel security, two issues that are significant for the Coast Guard. This is a group that understands better than most the challenges we face in the Arctic and the need to maintain our icebreaking capability.

ADM A

Posted at [12/09/2009 10:56:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 

 [Share](#)    

## NASSCO Shipyard Visit, San Diego, CA

Guardians,

We closed out our San Diego visit by meeting with leaders of the General Dynamics NASSCO Shipyard. We received a detailed brief on the shipyard's operations from President Fred Harris and his staff. We appreciated the briefings and tours of the ships under construction.

It was a special treat to meet with members of the USS BOXER that was dry docked at NASSCO for maintenance. BOXER recently deployed to the Horn of Africa and were part of the anti-piracy operations to free the Master of the MAERSK ALABAMA.



[NASSCO Shipyard Visit, San Diego, CA](#)

During my recent trip to London for the IMO General Assembly, BOXER received a certificate of merit for their performance in anti-piracy operations.

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

ADM A

Posted at [12/09/2009 12:11:00 AM](#) @[comments](#) 



Tuesday, December 8, 2009

## San Diego Military Advisory Council Achievement Awards breakfast

Guardians,

It was a great morning in San Diego on Tuesday, despite unusually bad weather caused by a gale that came on shore overnight.

We attended the Annual San Diego Military Advisory Council (SDMAC) Achievement Awards Breakfast. It was nostalgic for me because it was held at the Admiral Kidd Conference Center at the Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Complex, Point Loma. When I commanded CITRUS (1982-84) we made many port calls in San Diego and moored at ASW Pier 9 behind the Admiral Kidd Center.



[San Diego Military Advisory Council Achievement Awards breakfast](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

On Tuesday we were there to celebrate local community groups and leaders who support the military services in San Diego. I was honored to deliver key note remarks with San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders.

The winners of this year's awards were truly worthy:

1. The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Miramar
2. San Diego Armed Services YMCA
3. San Diego Council, Navy League of the United States
4. United Through Reading (an organization that records DVDs of parents who are deploying reading books to their children)
5. Dr. Stephen Weber, President, San Diego State University (for his effort to educate and employ veterans)

We thank SDMAC for the chance to tell the Coast Guard story to over 300 attendees and I thank the local Coast Guard commands for their participation (particularly CAPT Tom Farris for his introduction).

ADM A

Posted at [12/08/2009 11:57:00 PM](#) @[comments](#) 



## Maritime Predator Acceptance Ceremony

Guardians,

We were pleased to join our partners at Customs and Border Protection, Office of Air and Marine, at a ceremony Monday in Palmdale, CA where the first maritime variant of the unmanned aerial system (UAS) Predator B was accepted. Called the Guardian, this Predator version carries a maritime radar suite for acquiring and tracking surface contact. MG USAF(ret) Mike Kostelnik, Assistant CBP Commissioner for Air and Marine accepted the aircraft from General Atomics President RADM USN (ret) Tom Cassidy. General Atomics is the manufacturer of Predator.



[Maritime Predator Acceptance Ceremony](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

The Predator is operated from a portable Ground Control Station which includes the ability display and fuse information from the sensors on the aircraft including radar, electro/optical, and infrared. In addition, the payload is capable of receiving Automated Identification System (AIS) information which identifies vessels over 300 gross tons. Predator on scene endurance vastly exceeds our ability to maintain manned aircraft presence and provides an integrated sensor display that will allow us to track, sort, identify, and target those surface targets that present the greatest threat.

Early next year we will be working with CBP OAM to deploy the Guardian in the Southeast to conduct testing. This will include our new Guardians pilots who have been qualified to fly the UAS. Present for the ceremony was newly qualified Guardian pilot LT Tank Shuler who will take part in the operational testing.

This successful endeavor is the result of hard work by the Joint Program Office established by CBP and the Coast Guard in September 2008 to integrate our UAS efforts. We look forward to results of the scheduled testing.

#### ADM A

Here is a profile of LT Shuler from Coast Guard Public Affairs Specialist Thomas Blue:

After eight years of testing the Department of Defense Unmanned Aircraft Systems program, the U.S. Coast Guard has its first qualified operational UAS pilot ready to develop and implement training and standardization for the service's newest branch of aviation assets—UAVs or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

Coast Guard Lt. Thomas Shuler returned to his duty station at the Coast Guard's Aviation Training Center in Mobile, Ala., as a qualified UAS pilot, after landing his General Atomics Aeronautical Systems MQ-9 Predator at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Training Facility in Sierra Vista, Ariz., Oct. 21, 2009.

"It's an honor to train with the CBP and to earn the title as first operational UAS pilot," Shuler said.

While Shuler is the first operational pilot, he was not the first Coast Guard pilot qualified to fly a UAS. That distinction is held by Cmdr. Jose Saliceti, now stationed at the U.S. Navy's Commander Operational Test and Evaluation Force in Norfolk, Va.

The Coast Guard is currently working with the Navy evaluating and testing different UAS platforms to determine those best suited for maritime deployment operations.

The Coast Guard's UAS testing began in February of 2001 when a Boeing Condor UAV deployed aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Harriet Lane to evaluate how a UAV would operate from a cutter and its potential as an asset.

Since then, the Coast Guard's research and development branch in Groton, Conn., working alongside the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, and other Department of Homeland Security agencies, has been steadily testing several of the U.S. government's UAS platforms already in use by the DoD.

Coast Guard pilots attend a nine-week CBP UAS training course. They train first at the UAS Operations Center in Grand Forks, N.D., located on the Grand Forks Air Force Base and secondly at the Predator-B training facility at Fort Huachuca, in Sierra Vista, Ariz.

"It was an easy fit and transition, training under the CBP," explained Shuler. "The missions they fly are similar to the missions we fly every day."

Shuler, a six-year veteran as an HU-25 Guardian pilot, decided to enroll in the UAS program once he saw the opportunity to succeed in the Coast Guard utilizing a new aircraft and technology. He will maintain his qualifications on both airframes, therefore increasing his operational capabilities.

"I decided to apply for the UAS program because I wanted to be part of something new and innovative in the Coast Guard," Shuler said. "Along with my command giving me the opportunity to succeed with this new technology, I will have a footprint in bringing a new aircraft and technology into Coast Guard aviation."

Now back at ATC Mobile, Shuler, along with a few other newly qualified pilots and maintenance officers, will take on the ever important task of developing standards and training program for the newly created UAS branch.

"With such a new technology, there are new challenges and hurdles to cross," Shuler said with confidence. "We ask ourselves, 'How are we going to use a UAS in the Coast

Guard and use it to the Coast Guard's advantage in support of SAR or Homeland Security?' Implementation of new technology and a new aircraft is always an obstacle but one the UAS Branch looks forward to tackling."

At this early stage of development the UAS branch team will be responsible for developing manuals and procedures and also creating maintenance schedules. All components needed to bring the program on line.

Also, the UAS program is scheduled to get its first maintenance officer, Chief Warrant Officer Scott Corner, an aviation engineer also stationed at ATC Mobile.

"I'll be attending several maintenance schools and developing a maintenance schedule for the UAS program," Corner said. "Also, I'll be looking at the other branches and see how each conduct and oversee their individual UAS programs and find the best way for us to administer ours."

Another part of the branch development stage is getting crewmembers qualified to maintain and repair the UAVs. Procedures and steps are being established to send enlisted aviation maintenance technicians to UAS maintenance schools in the future.

These procedures are important when developing the program since Coast Guard crewmembers are responsible for repairing and maintaining each airframe in the fleet and do not contract out any maintenance or repairs.

Each branch of Armed Forces utilized the UAS program in its own way. The common mission to protect and defend is the same, but there are different platforms and standards. This is where Shuler and the UAS branch members' roles are so important. What they develop and propose will lay the foundation and groundwork for future Coast Guard UAS pilots.

"What we develop, if approved, will be incorporated into the Coast Guard Air Operations Manual," Shuler said. "Basically outlining what we can and cannot do with the aircraft."

The Coast Guard is currently testing two different UASs: the Northrup Grumman MQ-8 Fire Scout and the MQ-9 Predator. Each UAS has very distinct differences and capabilities, one of them being a fixed-wing and the other a helicopter.



"It's an awesome program with a lot of potential to increase Coast Guard capabilities," said Shuler.

For instance, according to a CBP fact sheet, the MQ-9 Predator B can reach altitudes of up to 50,000 feet, fly at speeds of approximately 240 knots, has a range of approximately 3,222 miles and can fly for up to 30 hours. This flight duration greatly increases how long the Coast Guard could stay on station during a search and rescue mission.

During a case with multiple people in the water and air assets needing to switch out and refuel, an UAV could stay on scene and monitor situational developments, relaying real-time video and other information to search and rescue controllers on the ground or aboard cutters.

Another advantage to the flying a UAV is its ease of piloting from anywhere in the world.

"It's really amazing technology," Shuler says. "We fly the Predators from the ground control station, which means: I can be sitting overseas and fly a mission in Las Vegas if needed.

The GCS is basically a cockpit built into a high-tech trailer that can be towed anywhere it's needed. It is equipped with all the latest communications and optical viewing apparatuses needed to fly a \$10 million dollar remote-controlled aircraft. Included in GCS are HF, UHF, VHF radios, cellular satellite communications, infrared radar, GPS, TV monitors and several types of recording devices that can store and relay real-time information for strategic planning and observation of missions all over the world.

Lastly, as the early stages of the Coast Guard UAS program are being developed, Shuler and the new branch crewmembers will be working alongside the CBP flying joint missions on a regular basis. As of now, there are three locations crewmembers will deploy in support of CBP law enforcement missions: Cape Canaveral, Fla., Grand Forks, N.D., and Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

These missions and continued training with CBP will not only maintain the Coast Guard's UAS pilot's qualifications, but also aid in the development of the Coast Guard's UAS program and lay the foundation for future pilots to follow.

Posted at [12/08/2009 07:27:00 AM](#) [2 comments](#) 



Monday, December 7, 2009

## Sector San Diego All Hands

Guardians,

This morning I held an all hands session at San Diego which included the Sector and nearby units. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the major changes that are taking place in our mission support organization as modernization progresses. Over the next several weeks we will be discussing different aspects of modernization. The focus of this morning's discussion was small boat and cutter maintenance, recapitalization of our cutter fleet, financial management, and the implications of a likely constrained fiscal environment in the future.

I have had questions recently regarding Coast Guard funding in the context of modernization. It is important to understand that we are building a new mission support structure for our Service that is focused on bi-level maintenance, configuration control, and supply chain management through product lines managed at our logistics and service centers. While resources are always a challenge, the case to change the Coast Guard is clear regardless of the funding level we receive. Whether we are receiving funding increases, maintaining current levels or facing an uncertain future, we need a better mission support organization. Further, the recapitalization of our aging assets is a requirement that is best met through a mission support organization that integrates acquisition of the platform and its life cycle management in a single point of accountability, in this case a Deputy Commandant for Mission Support.

There will a series of posts regarding difference aspects of the changes taking place and some will be guest posts from the field.

More to follow ...

ADM A

Posted at [12/07/2009 01:11:00 PM](#) [2 comments](#) 



Sunday, December 6, 2009



[Sector San Diego All Hands](#)

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## Centers of Expertise Established in New Orleans and Morgan City

Guardians,

This is a final update from our trip to New Orleans on Friday. We announced the opening of two our National Centers of Expertise (NCOE) at the Work Boat Show on Friday. RADM Mary Landry introduced the Supervisor for the Center of Expertise for Investigations of Marine Casualties at Sector New Orleans, CAPT (sel) Kathleen Moore. She also introduced LCDR Brian Khey, Supervisor of the Outer Continental Shelf Center of Expertise. LCDR Khey and his staff will be located at Marine Safety Unit Morgan City. Our NCOEs are a key component of our Marine Safety Enhancement Plan. I opened the event by providing remarks and taking questions. Interest remains strong in the pending towing vessel rulemaking project and merchant mariner licensing and documentation. I also announced our new service to provide email status regarding mariner licenses and documents that are being processed.

Our thanks for RADM Landry and the Eighth District Guardians for their support for our visit.

ADM A

Posted at [12/06/2009 07:02:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

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Friday, December 4, 2009


### Work Boat Show

Guardians,

We took some time this morning to walk the exhibit floor of the Work Boat Show at the Morial Center in New Orleans (<http://www.workboatshow.com/09/public/enter.aspx>). I was surprised to find so many vendors that were providing equipment to our acquisitions including the National Security Cutter, Fast Response Cutter, and our many small boats. I was also interested in the exhibits that dealt with ballast water and other environmental requirements.

I was also please to meet so many of our partners who work on the water with us and who praised the work of our men and women.

ADM A

Posted at [12/04/2009 04:30:00 PM](#) [1 comments](#) 

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### Meeting with the Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals Association (IRPT)

Guardians,

We were pleased to join the Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals Association (IRPT) for a breakfast meeting in New Orleans that included a gathering of the local Merchant Marine Academy Alumni. Our thanks to IRPT President Jerry Sailors and Secretary/Treasurer Ned Peak for the opportunity to discuss our mutual issues and partnerships.



[Visit to New Orleans](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

RADM Mary Landry, our Eighth District Commander, provided comments and I followed. We then took questions from the membership.

Items discussed during breakfast and the Q&A included the pending Towing Vessel Rulemaking by the Coast Guard, recent IMO agenda items (ballast water, air emissions), the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal fish barrier, hurricane flood gate protection being built in and around New Orleans, our Inland Towing Center of Expertise in Paducah, KY, and hurricane sortie procedures for tugs and barges in the Industrial Canal.

Thanks to IRPT and the USMMA Alums for a great morning.

ADM A

Posted at [12/04/2009 10:56:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 

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### Visiting at Mother's in New Orleans

Guardians,

We are in New Orleans today for a variety events that we will be highlighting in subsequent posts.

We started the day at a breakfast sponsored by the Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals Association (see following post). The breakfast was held at Mother's restaurant. I met the owners while they were repairing and cleaning Mother's after Hurricane Katrina. I try to visit with Jerry Amato and Ronnie Demilio when I am in town. Mother's is a New Orleans institution and social crossroads for the central business district. They represent the spirit that is bringing the city back. As you would imagine, all the talk down here is about the New Orleans Saints and their fabulous season.

More to come throughout the day.

ADM A



[Visit to New Orleans](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [12/04/2009 10:38:00 AM](#) [1 comment](#)



Thursday, December 3, 2009

## Congratulations to Award Winning Team at FD&CC Detachment Seattle

Guest Post from RDML Tom Ostebo, CG-4:

Congratulations to the men and women of the Facilities Design and Construction Center (FD&CC) Detachment in Seattle for their award winning project in Neah Bay, Washington!

The team members from left to right are: Francis Brito (FDCC Det Director of Projects), Debra Chinn (Civil Engineer, Engineer in Charge), Mark McAll (Construction Project Manager), and Tim Stott (Environmental Engineer).

The \$3.4M Neah Bay Breakwater is the winner of the 2008 Design Excellence GOLD AWARD in the Large Business category, presented by the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), Seattle/Tacoma Post. This is the highest award from SAME presented to an Architect/Engineering (AE) Design Firm working jointly with federal agencies to complete major construction to improve operating capability and sustainability at military facilities. Projects were judged for incorporating innovation into the design and build out to solve complex technical and environmental challenges. AE Firm Moffatt and Nichol designed the project, and Contractor Bergerson Construction Inc. completed the build out.



[FD&CC Det Seattle Personnel](#)

Originally uploaded by [icommandant](#)

Recognizing the constraints of a remote site and an extremely limited in-water construction window, the structural system consisted of a steel soldier pile system and precast concrete panels, sitting on a submerged rubble mound, and a cast-in-place concrete pile-cap. In keeping with the low-maintenance site needs, a passive cathodic system provides corrosion protection to the steel members.

The breakwater was completed within budget and on time in July 2009 and contributes to improved response time and seaworthiness of the Coast Guard especially during the harsh winter months.

Congratulations to the entire construction team!

Posted at [12/03/2009 05:07:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)



## Coast Guard Senior Executive, Jeff Lantz, elected as Chair of the IMOCouncil

Guardians,

I am please to announce that Coast Guard Senior Executive (SES) Jeff Lantz has been elected as the Chairman of the IMO Council. The Council is comprised of 40 countries voted on by IMO members at the Biannual General Assembly. The council provides governance of IMO activities between General Assembly sessions including strategic direction, budget, and management functions. You can learn more about the IMO at [www.imo.org](#).

We are pleased that Jeff's leadership and expertise have been recognized in his



[Coast Guard Senior Executive, Jeff Lantz, elected as Chair of the IMO Council](#)

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election as Chairman.

ADM A

Posted at [12/03/2009 09:28:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 



## The American Waterways Operators Meeting

Guardians,

Last night I met with the Executive Board of the American Waterways. ( see <http://www.americanwaterways.com/>).

"The American Waterways Operators is the national trade association representing the owners and operators of tugboats, towboats, and barges serving the waterborne commerce of the United States.



[The American Waterways Operators Dinner](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Its mission is to promote the long term economic soundness of the industry, and to enhance the industry's ability to provide safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible transportation, through advocacy, public information, and the establishment of safety standards." (From their website)

RDML Kevin Cook joined me as we discussed current issues in the towboat industry. The Coast Guard has had a long standing partnership with the towboat industry through AWO. I discussed this year's International Maritime Organization's General Assembly, ballast water standards, our meetings this week with EPA and their General Vessel Permit rule, the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal fish barrier, and the work of the President's Interagency Task Force on Ocean Policy and Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning.

After extensive outreach to industry including AMO and Towing Safety Advisory Committee, we are nearing completion of a towboat inspection rule.

ADM A

Posted at [12/03/2009 05:52:00 AM](#) [@comments](#) 



Tuesday, December 1, 2009

## Visit of Taiwan Coast Guard

Guardians,

We were pleased today to meet with Wang Ginn Wang, Minister of the Taiwan Coast Guard, and his staff at Coast Guard Headquarters. Through a series of meetings and briefings a significant number of topics were covered during the visit including an overview of our functions, law enforcement and fisheries enforcement, search and rescue operations, port security, enlisted workforce development, and our international training programs. During my personal meeting with Minister Wang we discussed common challenges presented by enforcement of exclusive economic zones, drug trafficking, and sustainment of our fleets. Our range of partnerships and outreach to Coast Guards around the world continues to grow. We thank the Minister and the assistance of the American Institute in Taiwan for this opportunity.

ADM A

Posted at [12/01/2009 10:12:00 PM](#) [@comments](#) 




## EPA - Coast Guard Discussions

Guardians,

On Monday morning I hosted EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and her senior advisor, Robert Perciasepe, for a breakfast meeting at Coast Guard Headquarters. Joining me was Deputy Commandant for Operations, RADM Sally Brice-O'Hara and RDML Kevin Cook. This is the second meeting with Administrator Jackson and continues the extensive collaboration between our organizations. Issues for discussion included our current ballast water rulemaking, EPA's vessel general permit rule, invasive species, renewable energy projects, LNG permitting, the upcoming Spill of National Significance exercise to be held in New England next year, special emission control areas established under IMO's MARPOL Annex VI, and the current efforts of the President's Interagency Task Force on Ocean Policy. We thank Administrator Jackson for her leadership and continued partnership with the Coast Guard.

ADM A

Posted at [12/01/2009 05:12:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 



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