




U.S. Coast Guard Historic Documents

<p>U.S. Department of Transportation</p> <p>United States Coast Guard</p>		 <p>CG Liaison Officer Bahrain</p>
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From: Coast Guard Liaison Officer, Manama, Bahrain
To: Commander, Atlantic Area (Ap)

Subj: OPERATION DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM AFTER ACTION REPORT

1. This report covers the period 6 Jan 1991 to approximately 15 Jun 1991. It includes comments relating to my twelve weeks of Port Security Unit Training at Camp Blanding, Florida, as well my deployment as Coast Guard Liaison Officer, Manama, Bahrain.
2. This report is divided into the following sections:

Summary in General
 Summary of Recommendations
 Observations Regarding Initial Deployment of Units
 Observations Regarding Camp Blanding Training
 Navy/Coast Guard Interface in Theatre
 Command Relationships
 Coast Guard Liaison Office
 The Future of PSU's

3. SUMMARY IN GENERAL.

a. PORT SECURITY UNITS SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMED THE MISSIONS ASSIGNED TO THEM DURING OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM.

b. PRIOR TO MOBILIZATION, THE ORIGINAL UNIT COMPANIES HAD NOT ROUTINELY DRILLED TOGETHER AS UNITS. THIS DIMINISHED UNIT PERFORMANCE IN THE EARLY STAGES OF OPERATIONS. ADDITIONALLY, THE ORIGINAL COMPANIES WERE NOT DEPLOYABLE UPON ARRIVAL IN

THEATRE. THEY LACKED MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT NECESSARY TO DEPLOY AS SELF SUFFICIENT UNITS. THIS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE HARDSHIP ON PERSONNEL.

c. IN GENERAL, THE TRAINING OF REPLACEMENT COMPANIES AT CAMP BLANDING WAS SUCCESSFUL. THE LENGTH OF THE TRAINING CYCLE WAS APPROPRIATE. BOAT CREW TRAINING WAS WELL PRESENTED. THE TACTICS DOCTRINE FOR SMALL BOATS NEEDS TO BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE PSU OPERATIONS IN LARGE URBAN PORT ENVIRONMENTS, AND NOT JUST SINGLE ASSET PROTECTION IN SUCH PORTS. MARITIME SECURITY TEAM TRAINING WAS ALSO WELL PRESENTED BY STAFF; IT WOULD HAVE BENEFITED FROM ADDITIONAL EMPHASIS ON SECURITY IN AN URBAN PORT. CLASSROOM SESSIONS ON LEADERSHIP FOR THE COMMAND AND CONTROL ELEMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SHORTER. ALSO, THE COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR THE REPLACEMENT COMPANIES SHOULD HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED TO OPERATE EARLIER IN THE TRAINING CYCLE.

d. THE LACK OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP'S) DETRIMENTALLY AFFECTED ALL COMPANIES OF ALL PSU'S.

e. A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE EXISTS WITH REGARD TO THE BACKGROUND AND TRAINING OF OFFICERS IN THE DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE LENGTHENED TO ALLOW FOR MORE OPERATIONAL TRAINING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMAND PRESENCE.

f. THE GENERAL LACK OF DELIBERATE NAVY/COAST GUARD INTERFACE PRIOR TO MOBILIZATION DIMINISHED THE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF PORT SECURITY HARBOR DEFENSE COMMANDS (PSHD'S) IN THE EARLY PART OF OPERATIONS. NAVY OFFICERS ARE GENERALLY UNAWARE OF PORT SECURITY UNIT TACTICS AND DOCTRINE; COAST GUARD OFFICERS ARE EQUALLY UNAWARE OF THE CAPABILITIES OF MOBILE INSHORE UNDERSEA WARFARE UNITS (MIUWU'S), AND HOW PSHD'S FIT INTO NAVY COASTAL WARFARE DOCTRINE.

g. SUPPLY AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE DEPLOYED UNITS WAS ADEQUATE, AT LEAST IN THE LATTER STAGES OF OPERATION DESERT STORM. IN SOME CASES, THE SUPPORT OFFERED WAS BEYOND SIMILAR SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO UNITS IN OTHER BRANCHES OF THE MILITARY. PAY ISSUES OCCUPIED MORE TIME THAN THEY SHOULD HAVE.

h. ULTIMATELY, THE FOLLOWING REMAINS AS THE ESSENCE OF THE FACT: IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD AND DESERT STORM, AND WITH VERY LITTLE ADVANCE WARNING, THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD SUCCESSFULLY FIELDDED THREE PORT SECURITY UNITS OF NEARLY 300 PERSONNEL. IT SUCCESSFULLY TRAINED NEARLY 350

REPLACEMENT PERSONNEL, OF WHOM 250 EVENTUALLY WERE DEPLOYED. THE UNITS OPERATED FOR A PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT OVER 8,000 MILES FROM THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES. DURING THEIR WATCH, AND IN CONCERT WITH THE NAVY COMMANDS UNDER WHICH THEY WERE THEN OPERATING, THE UNITS SUFFERED NO BREACHES OF THE SECURITY ZONES THEY WERE CHARGED WITH PROTECTING, SUFFERED NO FATALITIES, AND REDEPLOYED TO THE UNITED STATES WITH ALL MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT INTACT, THOUGH WORN.

4. Summary of Recommendations.

a. Port Security Units should be created as stand alone units in the Coast Guard Reserve program.

(1) Each unit should have an active duty cadre assigned to it consisting of a junior officer (O-3 or below) with afloat operational experience, a yeoman, a storekeeper, a boatswain mate, and a machinery technician.

(2) In addition to the active duty cadre, each PSU should have no less than 120 billets assigned to it.

(3) Each reservist assigned to a PSU should be authorized to perform 60 drills each year.

b. The Coast Guard Reserve Direct Commission Program should be revised.

(1) The course of instruction should take place over a period of 12-15 months.

(2) An initial two weeks of instruction should occur at the beginning of the course in which trainees are oriented to the program, its goals, and what is expected of them as officers.

(3) Throughout the next nine to twelve months, the trainees should be scheduled for at least three weekends of training at Yorktown. During the other months, they should be scheduled to perform at least one multiple drill each drill weekend in course work relating to their training.

(4) Following the course work, the trainees should complete a three week session at Yorktown, two weeks of which should be underway afloat, standing a maximum number of watches.

c. PSU missions should be expanded to include law enforcement operations, and natural disaster and human made disaster response assistance.

d. The PSU's should be equipped for fully self sufficient initial deployments. "Self sufficient" should be defined to include fuel for three full days, water for seven full days, food for 21 full days, appropriate transport vehicles, weapons, ammunition, and waterside and shoreside operations capability.

e. One O-4/5 with Port Security Unit experience, one YN with strong word processing skills, and one SK, QM, BM, or MK should be assigned to complete SOP's for Port Security Units. In addition, this staff should methodically review training records from Camp Blanding to insure complete and timely insertion of all documentation into the service records of Camp Blanding trainees.

5. Observations Regarding the Initial Deployment of Units.

a. The following comments are based upon miscellaneous memoranda found in Coast Guard Liaison Office files, other after action reports I have read, and conversations I have engaged in with officers and personnel who were in the original companies deployed. Thus, most of the information upon which these observations are based are the result of hearsay. They are included only to document to the reader what others have expressed as to the original circumstances the units faced.

b. It would appear that the situation in which the original companies found themselves when they arrived in theater is best summed up by a comment one officer made to me: "It's a good thing we didn't get off the plane and walk into the middle of a war." Since he was attached to the unit which did not deploy until late November 1990, one can perhaps begin to understand the difficulties faced by the two units who arrived two months before that. The fact that the units performed as well as they did would appear to be the direct result of the essential grit of the personnel involved, not the result of training made available to them prior to mobilization.

c. The situation in theater was the subject of much comment by instructors at Camp Blanding. The following is a synopsis of those comments:

"PSU's were conceived of nearly ten years ago. However, these units did not drill together on a regular basis. Instead, personnel who held mobilization orders for them also performed augmentation duties on drill weekends at local Coast Guard units. Many of the personnel assigned to these units did undergo a two week combat skills course at Quantico, Virginia. Some personnel also participated in two week exercises in the Middle East, e.g. Egypt and Jordan. As recently as spring, 1990, part of one unit did mobilize, and was deployed to Central America for a two week period. Immediately prior to deployment for Operation Desert Shield, personnel did receive ramp training at Camp Perry, Ohio."

Regardless of the details, the clear sense of the matter stated to us at Blanding was that prior to Operation Desert Shield, Port Security Units remained largely unorganized and unpracticed as such. When the call came, personnel of various backgrounds and training were put together, given brief ramp training, and deployed.

d. If the above was true, it should not be surprising that the units did experience some initial difficulties. To the extent unit personnel had not trained together over a period of years, they did not know each other's capabilities and limitations. Nor could a command philosophy have evolved to which personnel could attach themselves in the initial time of crisis. It is commonly accepted that in times of stress, personnel will "fall back" on the training they have already received. If the personnel of the initial companies did not have the benefit of long term, methodical, and intensive training, then they had little to "fall back" on.

e. As a result, critical time was spent simply organizing the units. This took away from time clearly needed to deal with the already daunting challenges presented by the hostile environment into which they had arrived, as well as the performance of the mission itself. The Navy MIUWU's with which the PSU's were assigned, had their basic unit cohesion and routine established by virtue of the fact they had been functioning as stand alone reserve drilling units. Therefore, the PSU's found themselves at a decided disadvantage when working out the details of operations and tactics at the PSHD level.

f. Finally, the units were poorly equipped as to basic logistical needs. In the early stages, provisions for berthing and meals were inadequate. Vehicles were unavailable for basic transport. One concludes from this that in the very early stages of their deployment, the PSU's were a burden on an already stressed military logistics systems.

g. Making the above comments is not intended in any way to take away from the superlative individual efforts that must have been engaged in by the original deployed companies. Nor is it intended to slight the planners charged with the readiness of reserve units. At a time when the Coast Guard feels obliged to concentrate much of its reserve resources on augmentation of active duty commands, the fact that some personnel in these units received any prior training at all should be applauded. Furthermore, hindsight is frequently much clearer than foresight. But in the euphoria of victory, it is critical that appropriate lessons from the prior experience be learned.

h. The primary lesson to be learned in this case is that if the Coast Guard deems the PSU mission as valid, which it should, then it ought to program the development of PSU's as stand alone units.

(1) The example set by MIUWU's should be followed.

(a) MIUWU's have an active duty cadre of personnel which provides the day to day maintenance and support for the unit. The Coast Guard should invest in a detail of five active duty personnel to provide this continuing support for each PSU. This should include a junior officer with operational experience, one or two administrative personnel, and one or two maintenance personnel. Having such a cadre will insure that the PSU is more ready, and hence, more usable in different circumstances (see paragraph 10 below).

(b) Also, as a result of emphasis on deployability, MIUWU personnel are authorized 60 paid drills each year. They normally report for duty on the Friday night of their drill weekend. Having two full nights and two full days to work with deployment logistics would also increase the readiness of the PSU's.

(c) Apparently, someone has proposed three weeks of ADT each year for MIUWU's. This would also increase readiness of the units. However, in an era of shrinking budget dollars, such as an expense for PSU's seems unlikely.

(2) Certainly the deployability of the PSU's needs to be increased. When these units are activated, they should be able to arrive on scene and immediately commence the performance of their missions until reasonable long term support can be arranged. Fuel may not be transportable by aircraft, but the possibilities should be studied. Water ought to be transportable; meals and tents should be ready to go at a moment's notice.

(3) The second companies of the PSU's had 111 personnel assigned, including officers. This should be increased by at least 9 personnel. Several of these should be cooks; the rest should be engineering support. These additional personnel, plus the active duty cadre, would enhance the true readiness and deployability of the units.

6. Observations Regarding Camp Blanding Training.

a. The following is based upon my personal observation and participation in two full cycles of Camp Blanding training. It is also based upon numerous conversations I have had with officers and personnel who took the course of instruction, and on other written critiques of the training available to me.

b. Facilities. Camp Blanding was a very suitable training site; it lacked only an urban port environment on premises. A private port facility is nearby which, if arrangements could be made with the owners, would substantially round out Blanding as an excellent location for future training cycles.

(1) The Camp was isolated enough that it allowed undivided attention to training.

(2) Berthing facilities were spartan, but adequate.

(3) The meal arrangements were generally inadequate. Instead of the MWR Club, the Coast Guard could have done much better by utilizing the galley facilities available in the brigade areas. The MWR cooks made a valiant effort to keep up with the demand; sometimes they succeeded. But for the most part, they were on the edge of being overburdened, particularly when PSU Replacement #1 was delayed in deployment. At that time, all three replacement units were on board. Box lunches were overpriced and uniformly unsatisfactory, particularly in amount of food.

(4) Lake Lowery, the boat operations site, was far from the open water. But its remoteness offered the privacy necessary to allow the coxswains unrestricted use of its waters to learn and practice tactics.

c. Administration. Others who are more qualified should evaluate this part of the operation. I do not know the background or training of the personnel assigned. If they were personnel who were actively working in PERSRU's prior to the start up of Blanding, probably the division operated as well as could be expected in difficult circumstances. If the personnel were not PERSRU qualified, then administration was approached from the wrong angle.

d. Supply and logistics. Uniform and gear issue seemed to proceed reasonably well for Replacement Unit 1, less so for Unit 3. Unit 3 experienced the most difficulty in receiving its gear. I have no information on the reason for this. Personnel made do with what they had, and what they could borrow from others. It appeared to me that genuine efforts were made up to the very last day to outfit everyone. Ammunition supply never seemed to be a problem; likewise POL for the boats. Also, the equipment used in training seemed to operate reasonably well; few classes seemed to be affected by gear casualties.

e. Training philosophy. There appeared to be three fundamental elements in the training philosophy presented at Blanding:

(1) The emphasis for most of the sessions was on the field application of the material presented.

(2) Trainees were advised to forget everything they thought they knew about port security.

(3) Training experiences were expected to be comparable for everyone, regardless of rank or rate.

The field emphasis on the material presented was excellent. There was little theory and much practice at Blanding. Trainees learned by doing: bunkers were built, fields of fire were created, coxswain herding instincts were practiced. Success was achieved through failure, analysis, and redoubled efforts.

Forgetting everything one knew about Port Security was, of course, impossible. However, a point was made and even those trainees who considered themselves experts in one area or another, usually listened to the instructors before offering their own opinions.

Parity of training experience was good. The officers were permitted a perspective they might otherwise have lacked had they not built their own bunkers, or engaged in their own squad assaults, etc. However, more hands on experience with the boats would have been helpful.

f. Training Schedule. Overall, the training schedule showed much thought and hung together reasonably well. This is not to say, however, that Staff always had a handle on what was going on; certainly the trainees did not. Plans for the day often seemed to be only moments ahead of events. Having said this, it is important not to overstate the impact of the problem. To be sure, it is almost always preferable to have a clear picture of what to expect on a daily basis, or longer. But successfully waiting and adapting is a part of the military experience, and most trainees handled it well. TRADET staff was placed in a situation not unlike first year instructors who do not have a set of notes from previous training cycles upon which to build; Blanding had no precedent. In general, Staff had to struggle to keep a day ahead of the schedule, but with very few exceptions, they managed to pull it off with aplomb. There was a significant difference between the instructors who had book knowledge and those who had field experience upon which to build. Students could usually tell who was which; not surprisingly, the instructors held in the highest esteem tended to be those who had "been there."

g. Command and Control Training

(1) Without question, the most controversial part of the C2 training was in the area of leadership. The classes themselves were thoroughly prepared. However, they never seemed to be as well received as they might have been in other circumstances, even though most sessions offered something to anyone willing to learn something new. The junior officers tasked with these classes obviously worked hard, but having juniors teach graybeards is always risky. Regardless of rank, the fact of the matter is that the greater part of the officers who volunteered and reported to Camp Blanding, arrived having personally observed and experienced more leadership successes or failures than the instructors had -- by virtue of age, if nothing else. These classes probably would have been more successful if officers more senior had presented them; they would have added a credibility that the sessions otherwise lacked.

(2) Command and control personnel should have been permitted to assert control of the replacement units earlier in the program. Actually, this did occur in the case of Replacement #3. This may have been because the TRADET staff recognized the need and allowed it to happen. Or, it may have been because TRADET was preoccupied with attempting to deploy Replacement #1 and finishing the training of Replacement #2. Or perhaps it was because TRADET was wholly absorbed with the impending shutdown of the Blanding operation. Regardless of the reason, as prospective Commanding Officer of Unit #3, I did have a measure of control which did not appear to have been accorded to the prospective CO's of either Replacement #1 or #2. As a result, it is my opinion that Replacement #3 was able to commence effective operations as a unit more quickly than the others. A basic command philosophy was established earlier and adhered to throughout the course of instruction. Division officers had a fairly good estimate of their personnel early in the program; unit command and control personnel made recommendations almost from the beginning, especially in regard to the changing out of billets. Without question, the Chief's mess in the third replacement unit was the strongest of the three. When Chiefs and officers are called upon early to do their assigned duties, they will respond appropriately.

(3) The C2 training did reveal significant weaknesses in the Coast Guard direct commission program.

(a) Operational experience was clearly lacking among a number of junior officers; few of them had been in positions as officers wherein they were called upon to develop command presence. With only one or two exceptions, all the officers who reported to Blanding were highly motivated; they came to work. But Blanding was not the place to offer junior officers, and in some cases senior officers, experiences they had missed earlier in their careers. The fundamentals of relative motion, watch routine, understanding and following orders, issuing crisp commands, are matters which must be developed over a period of years.

(b) At Blanding, one could almost always tell the officers who had received extensive operational training in the past; they usually had an Academy background, although several OCS trained officers performed very well. The key seemed to be whether the officer had had afloat experience. The officers who had gone to sea had a sense of command, of that difficult to define presence necessary to lead others under exceptionally difficult circumstances.

(c) Of the three, I would rate the wardroom of Replacement Unit 1 as the strongest: Of the seven commissioned officers assigned to that unit, three were academy graduates with extensive underway time. One of these three and two others who had direct commissions, had prior experience in Vietnam. What the two nonacademy Vietnam veterans lacked in operational skills they came close to making up for in a mature approach to combat training situations.

(d) The Coast Guard needs to rethink its direct commission program. It is difficult to see how anyone can expect a person who has received only two weeks of indoctrination at Yorktown to develop into a take charge, competent officer who knows what orders to give in a given situation; or if he gives bad orders, how to get out of the tough situation he has created. Administrative drill weekends do nothing to develop command presence. If PSU's are going to remain as reserve programs functions, officers must be given the opportunity to face exacting situations.

(e) I recommend broad changes in the direct commission program. Candidates should pursue a course lasting not less than a year. It should include a segment of two weeks in the beginning; it should continue throughout the next nine to twelve months; it should conclude with a three week segment. At least two weeks of that segment should be underway standing a maximum number of watches. The exact curriculum is beyond the purview of this report; suffice it to say for now that the emphasis should be on field experience, as was the case at Blanding.

h. Ombudsman program -- I concede that I have always been skeptical of ombudsman type programs. At first glance, they do seem appropriate in an era when concern for employee welfare is put at the top of the list of many managers, even surpassing product or mission. However, they are extremely difficult to pull off and

Blanding was no exception. I am convinced as much bad information was passed through this program as good. The problem that I observed was that there were simply too many imponderables in this call up and training. Many decisions as to training policy, administration, mission, deployment, seemed to be made day by day. This was not only a TRADET problem; it existed up and down the chain of command. Operation Desert Shield was such a huge undertaking that many policy decisions had never really been thoroughly considered. The desire, if not the need, for information by families back home was certainly understandable; too often, however, in the rush to keep people informed, partial information was passed to the field which later turned out to be wrong, or OBE (overtaken by events).

(1) Lack of follow up on individual ombudsman type questions was also a problem. I believe my main criticism of staff in this regard is that never in three months of training did I ever see an administrative person pull out the well known green U.S. Government "Memoranda" book and write down the particulars of a question asked or issue presented. With all due respect to the staff which worked very hard throughout the Blanding period, I do not see how it would have been possible to keep every question straight for action by reliance upon memory alone.

i. Boat OPS Training.

(1) Lake Lowery was a good training environment for the introduction of tactics new to most of the boat coxswains. They arrived at Blanding with a SAR background and a collision avoidance philosophy; at Blanding they were taught to aggressively intercept and hazard their crafts as necessary to prevent penetration of the security zone. Training was long and intensive. By all accounts the boat training staff was highly professional. Lake Lowery's other advantage was that it was private enough to allow the crews full run of the lake at all times, not only for tactics, but for live fire exercises. The disadvantage of Lowery was that it did not offer anything urban in character for crew training.

(2) The small boat tactics doctrine needs to be expanded. The tactics taught at Lowery work very well when PSU's are called upon to protect single assets within a port. But they are not easily adaptable to situations in which PSU assets are called upon to protect an entire port. This was the case in the Saudi Arabian ports; it was somewhat the case in Bahrain, which had a smaller port area to secure. The sheer magnitude of the ports made the basic two boat screen / one boat react difficult to operate. Also, there were differences between the PSU's and the PSHD's from time to time when defining the assets to be protected. By all accounts, it would appear that the 22 foot Raider boat was suitable for inner harbor tactics; a larger boat is desirable for more open water patrolling. I recommend that a study of PSU small boat tactics be undertaken as soon as possible to update these for use in future deployments.

j. MARSEC -- This training was as intensive as that for the small boats. Physically, it was the most demanding training of all. As in the case of the boats, the staff was quite professional.

(1) Due largely to the stiff daily regimen of their group, the MARSEC personnel from all three units appeared to merge into very cohesive security teams. Three factors appeared to give the MARSEC teams an excellent edge: (1) they tended to be an older group; (2) police work was a common background for many; (3) a fair number of them had prior military experience either as Marines or Army MP's.

(2) Much has been said about the training which Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security (FAS) teams receive. For comparison purposes, the Coast Guard should review the curriculum of training presented to FAS team personnel, if it has not done so already. Regardless, the MARSEC personnel were very highly motivated, well disciplined, and exceptionally talented groups when they left Blanding. They took their training very seriously; superb fire discipline was their hallmark.

k. Training for other elements: Training for the remaining elements, e.g. administrative personnel, engineers, and radiomen, never quite seemed to get to the point it should have. It would appear that the primary philosophy in this regard was to have these elements perform the same duties with TRADET that they could expect in theater. Personnel did receive a week of MARSEC, the CBR instruction, and had range qualification days. But the on-the-job approach never quite fit right. Instead, these trainees tended to feel either used or neglected. Administrative personnel would likely have benefited from additional computer training; engineering personnel would have benefited from some refresher instruction on outboard motor repair and fiberglass reconstruction.

l. Several other areas in the Blanding training ought to be singled out:

(1) CBR training was a two day block with some additional follow up later in the program. The instructors were absolutely professional from beginning to end. Never once did I hear less than superlative reviews from trainees regarding the CBR block of instruction. This was over a twelve week period, and enough two day blocks to train over 350 personnel.

(a) Aside from the thorough indoctrination of the threat and response to it, there was another side to this training that may have gone largely unnoticed: it built confidence among the trainees. Of all the potential dangers expected to be faced by trainees in the even they were deployed into a wartime environment, their greatest concern was the enemy's chemical and biological weapons. Few, if any, trainees truly thought they would be deployed into a situation where they would face hordes of the enemy charging across the sand dunes with tanks and artillery. Although the Scud missiles were understood to be real, they were not considered as much of a menace as the chemical weapons, unless delivered by Scuds. Trainees knew the enemy had chemical weapons and had used them in other conflicts. But the approach the instructors used in the CBR classes was straightforward and practical in all respects. At the end of two days of training, the very great majority of trainees felt confident that if there was a chemical attack in their area of operations, they would survive it and carry on.

(2) Public affairs was of minor concern at Camp Blanding, but deserves comment. Most trainees were somewhat familiar with the well known televised interview in which Coast Guard personnel seemed to express grave doubts about American policy in the Gulf. The presentation by the public affairs representative was the best I have witnessed in the military on the topic of press relations. It was not cynical; the lecture discussed the role of the press in a free society, and it gave some simple and eminently practical pointers on how to answer questions truthfully.

(3) Range training was completely thorough except for the deployment of concussion grenades; in that respect there was a glaring weakness which may have led to the most serious physical injury sustained by a trainee at Blanding. But as to small arms firing, all trainees enjoyed the rare luxury -- at least by Coast Guard standards -- of having enough ammunition to become familiar, comfortable, and competent with the weapons. The coaches were top notch. I have heard estimates that over 500,000 rounds of ammunition were fired at Camp Blanding, including blanks, flares, artillery simulators, etc. Regardless of whether that number is correct or not, there was certainly an appropriate amount fired; the results were that Blanding deployed some highly trained and skilled gunners both in MARSEC and on the boats, as well as engineers and administrative personnel.

m. A note should be included in regard to the field training exercises, at least the one in which Replacement Unit #3 participated. The exercise MESL's were realistic and well thought out. The practice of debriefing participants at the end of each event, rather than saving comments for the "hot wash," was excellent.

n. A comment about uniforms is appropriate. Regardless of whether the Coast Guard is comfortable with seeing its personnel in BDU's or not, the fact is that the uniforms issued to the trainees were exceptionally functional. Every trainee who I heard make a comment, was impressed with their durability and practicality. Likewise, every trainee who I heard had nothing good to say about the current Coast Guard work blues.

o. A final comment. If specific steps have not been taken already, I believe appropriate personnel should be brought onto active duty to make sure the extensive training received by each person at Blanding is thoroughly documented in the service record of each. This is particularly true of personnel in Replacement Unit #3; when the unit did not deploy, TRADET was closing down quickly, and I would be quite surprised to learn that someone has really sat down to prepare the entries necessary for personnel qualification purposes.

7. Navy/Coast Guard Interface In Theatre.

a. I have very little credible information upon which to base any assessment of the Navy/Coast Guard interface with the original deployed companies. From the few conversations I have had with those who were in theater from the beginning, there were significant problems, at least in the early stages of the deployment of each unit. The main

reasons for this conflict appear to have centered around personality conflicts between senior officers of PSHD's, MIUWU's, and PSU's.

(1) There is another factor which cannot be discounted, however. MIUWU's have been operating as established units in the Naval Reserve program for a number of years. To that extent, they arrived in theater with some sense of who they were. Even the junior MIUWU's arrived possessing a familiarity with the basic mission which can be gained only by operating as a unit. Also, they had a fairly comprehensive understanding of their own personnel. The PSU's had little of this. It may be said, therefore, that the MIUWU's hit the deck running when they arrived in theater; the PSU's hit the deck. Anytime one group has fairly deep organizational background and another doesn't, the group that doesn't have it will often get the short end of the stick.

b. With regard to the second companies of PSU's and MIUWU's (they also changed out personnel), the relationship appeared adequate. In some situations, it was quite satisfactory. To be sure, there were disagreements between commands over some matters, and there would appear to have been spirited debates at times regarding boat tactics and the nature of asset protection. But so far as I can tell, these were professionally conducted and resolved.

c. There does seem to be a general ignorance on the part of Navy and Coast Guard officers as to exactly what the other's units do. During the last few days prior to redeployment, the Harbor Defense Commander, Commodore Mays, conducted a series of "choir practices" in which a number of issues were discussed. One such "choir practice" centered around the PSU's. The Navy personnel were quite candid, and perhaps too harsh on themselves, as to their lack of understanding regarding PSU boat tactics. Officer and enlisted seemed to agree that MIUWU's know very little about Coast Guard small boat doctrine. This can be changed somewhat by having stand alone PSU's exercise much more frequently with MIUWU's, particularly if they are located in the same community.

(1) By the same token, based upon what I saw at Blanding, few in the Coast Guard seem to have an in depth understanding of MIUWU's. As I understand it, following Replacement Unit #1's field training exercise, the Navy offered to staff a MIUWU van at Blanding for instructional purposes. Somehow, this didn't fit into the training schedule, and it was a golden opportunity lost. Blanding training did hammer home one point as to the roles of the MIUWU's and PSU's when operating together: "The MIUWU's are the eyes and ears of the operation; the PSU's are the teeth." Having said that, there was not nearly enough training for PSU officers as to the capabilities of those eyes and ears.

d. There is an often expressed concern that the Coast Guard can get lost in the shuffle when operating as part of the Navy. I believe it is somewhat overstated. It is true there are probably a number of Naval officers who don't understand the role the Coast Guard plays in the larger scheme of things, and perhaps those who dismiss the Coast Guard's capabilities. But I continue to believe that in a military environment,

competency is noted very quickly, and the organization begins to rely on it fairly soon if the competency is aggressively demonstrated.

8. Command Relationships. As usual, keeping command relationships straight consumed an inordinate amount of time.

a. Chain of Command. I estimate that fully 20% of my time was dealing with issues in which the chain of command was violated by someone. At the beginning of my deployment, I violated it myself several times, before I relearned the discipline of using it, and then following up. Following the chain is always emphasized in the military, but even those emphasizing it often have their own "contacts" or "sources" of information which usually gum up the works. The chain will work if personnel insist on it, and fairly fundamental rules are followed.:

(1) Before contacting the next level in the chain; have a very clear explanation of the issue to be pursued;

(2) At the conclusion of the discussion with the person in the next level of the chain, that person should be able to express a fairly coherent statement as to how he or she intends to approach the issue;

(3) A deadline for action or response should be set, although a reasonable time beyond it should be allowed; most jobs seem to take longer than anticipated to do well;

(4) If the promised action is not taken, or appears to be incomplete, the next level should be informed of any intention to proceed around it and up another step.

b. The relationship with the LEDETs presented some interesting issues.

(1) Support wise, as can be seen below, the amount of time spent by my staff and me on LEDET matters was not huge, but it was enough to press in sometimes when we had other things to get done for Harbor Defense Command and the PSU's. This was through no fault of the LEDET personnel; I erred in not suggesting earlier in the game that the LEDETs begin using NAVCENT DET ALFA or ASU to get some of their issues worked. DET ALFA is the shoreside support group for NAVCENT. At the beginning of my deployment, I don't recall hearing any detailed explanation as to how the Liaison Office and the LEDETs fit together. It seemed a natural accommodation for Coast Guard personnel to assist other Coast Guard personnel in theater. But as the deployment continued, it seemed that we became the first point of contact for LEDETs, and it was not uncommon that someone would arrive in theater, or on the island who needed our help, usually with little or no advance notice.

(a) Part of the reason for this were the awful communications links between the USS LASALLE and shoreside. I would have thought that the flagship would have had excellent communications with whomever it needed; instead, communications were catch-as-catch-can.

(b) The LEDET support functions were not a full time job for anyone. While the notion of one Coast Guard [office] for Coast Guard assistance sounds desirable, the air operations people never used us for anything that I can recall. Had I pushed LEDET contact with DET ALFA or ASU more, and use of us as a last resort, some time might have been freed up for staff to do other things, e.g. rest.

(2) As Director of MIF operations, CAPT Wilder, USCG, was put into an unusual situation which somewhat confused the command relationships for PSU's. Certainly his perspective ought to be sought. Since he was aboard LASALLE, and therefore had proximity to RADM Taylor (CMEF, and then NAVCENT), it would appear he was obliged to become the unofficial speaker regarding PSU Coast Guard matters in theatre. This small problem could have been eliminated if NAVCENT had someone from Harbor Defense Command afloat with him. I am certain that CAPT Wilder was as uncomfortable answering PSU type questions as I would have been had the Admiral started asking me LEDET questions.

(2) One thorny problem regarding command relationships was the role of the Coast Guard Liaison Officer and staff in the chain of command for deployed units. I have not yet entirely formed an opinion on this. The definitive role was never entirely worked out, but I do believe substantial progress was made; the subject does warrant further discussion if there is ever another mobilization such as Operation Desert Shield/Storm. I believe the following to be an accurate statement of the issue:

Is there a need for a Coast Guard Liaison Officer on the Staff of the Harbor Defense Commander? If so, where does he fit into the Chain of Command, particularly with regard to the PSU's?

(a) Based upon my experience, I certainly agree there is a place for a Liaison Officer on staff. The notion that such an officer should know the "secret Coast Guard handshakes" for getting Coast Guard pay and supply issues resolved is valid. Additionally, it is important to have someone in house who can advise the Harbor Defense Commander with respect to PSU capabilities and tactics.

(b) However, to the extent possible, such officer should avoid line authority over the PSU's, except insofar as necessary to his position as a member of the HDC staff. To the extent he does assert some sort of line authority, it confuses the chain for PSU's: They shouldn't have to choose between reporting to their PSHD and the CGLO. Perhaps it sounds outrageous, but when I look at the various staff positions at HDC, the only one I think would clearly be out of line for a Coast Guard Officer is N-4 (Supply). The rest could be learned and performed by an aggressive officer with proper Navy and Coast Guard staff back up.

(i) Additionally, the Coast Guard should insure highly capable officers are assigned to each of the two COMNAVIUW Group Staffs. The staff of Harbor Defense Command came former Liaison Officer who has since retired; it is my understanding Group One may never have had one.

9. Coast Guard Liaison Office.

a. I would break down the time I spent on various issues as follows: (1) undoing chain of command violations -- 20%; (2) rumor control -- 15%; (3) supply issues -- 20%; (4) pay issues -- 15%; (5) MIF/LEDET liaison -- 3%; (6) Special HDC projects -- 7%; (7) Coast Guard follow up on items HDC wide -- 10%; (8) Redeployment -- 10%.

b. Actually, I think the above percentages are fairly decent except for pay issues. Pay issues should not have consumed 15% of my time. Had one fairly fundamental rule been followed, it is my opinion pay issues would have been less of an issue in theater: LES and mid-month pay advices [sic: advances?] should have been air expressed from the beginning. These were the keys to the problems. If a person can see timely hardcopy as to what he or she is being paid, then the questions and concerns can be much more easily formulated, asked and answered. This being the case, it is also my opinion, units should have direct line authority on pay issues. If there are so many pay issues that a staffer has to be delegated to the task full time, then something is obviously wrong. Had there been fewer pay issues pending when I arrived in theater, I would have pushed for direct contact between units and the PERSRU in this area.

c. For the most part, support of the Liaison Office by LANTAREA and MLS was excellent. Extensive use of telephone and fax capabilities permitted timely responses to most issues and questions.

10. The Future of PSU's. Port Security Units didn't win the war; they didn't negotiate the peace. While they did endure hardships, particularly early on, others had it more difficult. Nevertheless, PSU's did provide the Coast Guard with a significant presence in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; they performed a needed mission, and they acquitted themselves well. The Coast Guard presents itself out as the leading expert on port security and small boat operations. The PSU's have added to this reputation.

It is difficult to understand why then, the future of PSU's appears blurred. It would appear that the basic concept worked, and with refinement, PSU's can do even better. Still, it seems as though the Coast Guard organization is not quite sure what to do with the PSU's in the future.

At Blanding, there was much speculation among all levels of trainees as to whether the Coast Guard was comfortable in a "warrior's role." Many commented that program managers for other missions directed toward the PSU's detracted from other "more important" missions. This was further fueled by an April report in theater that a senior officer within the Coast Guard had likened the service to being ". . .halfway between flying a jet and serving in the Peace Corps." This caused much dismay among those who heard about it.

If the Coast Guard sticks to basics, it will remember that by law, it is a military service and a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States at all times. It is not halfway between anything. It is a unique instrument of American national policy which performs

an unusual variety of missions. But all missions flow through that simple straightforward directive establishing it as a military service. To the extent the Coast Guard loses sight of this, it imperils itself.

Aside from the performance of the port security mission, the PSU's helped to revalidate the fact the Coast Guard is a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. Every time the President, or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, or CENTCOM acknowledges the presence of the Coast Guard in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, it strengthens the Coast Guard as an organization in its current form. I happen to believe that dollar for dollar, and day for day, the taxpayers of the United States have received more return on their investment from the Coast Guard as it is currently constituted, than with any other branch of the armed forces, and more than with most other federal agencies.

The above alone would not justify the cost of port security units were it not for the fact that PSU's do have a valid mission. These units do have a unique capability which other services could perhaps train for, but for which the Coast Guard is already well suited.

Ideally perhaps, the PSU's would train only for a port security mission in circumstances similar to Desert Shield and Desert Storm. But that does not appear realistic. Very soon, the nation will likely enter into a period of reexamination of its budget priorities. Much of this debate was expected last year, but the events of 2 August 1990 intervened. Instead, consideration of other missions should be considered which would "round out" PSU capabilities for other Coast Guard missions.

There are at least two possibilities which, if developed properly, could be performed, and yet would not seriously detract from the overall mission of PSU's. PSU's could be utilized in GANTSEC for law enforcement work. PSU's could also be utilized as a core for Coast Guard response to natural or human-made disasters.

In regard to the former, it is noted that MIUWU's apparently have had a presence in GANTSEC for some time. Based upon conversations with various MIUWU officers who have had experience with these operations, the MIUWU's frequently do not have the operational assets to deal with the events they can observe unfolding on their radars. Nor do they have proper security assets to protect their operational van. It is recommended that the Coast Guard consider the possibility of using PSU detachments to rotate through the GANTSEC operations the same as the MIUWU's do.

As to disaster recovery operations, except for strike teams, the Coast Guard response to such disasters seems to be based entirely upon solicitation by districts. This method lacks an overall base upon which to build a well organized and disciplined approach to recovery operations. It is recommended that the Coast Guard consider using PSU's and their deployable resources as bases upon which to assign additional personnel for disaster response. The Army and Marines appeared to have little problem shifting gears from the war in southern Iraq to the Kurdish relief efforts in northern Iraq; the principles of training and discipline are transferable from armed conflict to humanitarian.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm are all over but for the shouting. The Coast Guard can be justly proud of its role in the affair; it can demonstrate its pride by looking ahead, making the most of the lessons learned from the experience, and applying them for the good of the nation and the service in the future.

J. T. RIKER

