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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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REORGANIZING COAST GUARD DEPLOYABLE SPECIALIZED  
FORCES CAPABILITY TO MEET NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

DOUGLAS K. STARK  
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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Regionalizing Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces Capability: A Regional Solution to a National Maritime Security Issue.

**Author:** Lieutenant Commander Doug Stark, United States Coast Guard

**Thesis:** This study proposes there is a need for the Coast Guard to reorganize critical tactical capabilities resident within the Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces community in order to meet national maritime security strategy and new legislative requirements. By reorganizing the DSF capability, the Coast Guard will align DSF with the operational demands for layered maritime threat response capability.

**Discussion:** In the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 terrorist attacks, Congress passed legislation that created thirteen Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) in the nation's most critical commercial and military ports. Since that time, the nation's maritime security needs have changed and the Coast Guard has likewise evolved to meet the new requirement with an all threats, all hazards maritime force. As this evolution has taken place, the Coast Guard developed new capabilities, such as the Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT), to account for its increasing knowledge of the scope and nature of the maritime threat. The Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces was born to address the national need to aggregate rapidly deployable forces that possess specialized training in maritime interdiction, response, and consequence management. The creation of MSSTs and Security Teams and the MSRT were intended to close a critical response gap in the Coast Guard's operational portfolio. However, MSST capabilities remain largely what they were when they were created in 2002 despite a much improved understanding of the maritime security environment.

As shore based regional Coast Guard forces adjusted to a post 9-11 security environment, they established organic capabilities in order to provide for their day to day security requirements. This created capacity surplus at the lower end of the threat spectrum, which gives the Coast Guard an opportunity to realign some DSF capabilities and capacities to meet new national requirements outlined in the 2005 National Strategy for Maritime Security and the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011 that the Coast Guard establish a second "enhanced" team capability in order to minimize response threats to maritime threats.

**Conclusion:** This paper shows that by reorganizing MSSTs and consolidating Maritime Law Enforcement - Force Protection Teams (MLE-FP) personnel billets occupying positions that currently provide little operational utility, the Coast Guard can meet the nation's maritime threat response needs and become a more proficient and efficient force capable of bridging a critical gap in the nation's ability to respond to urgent maritime threats.

## Preface

Selection of this topic was the result of observations gathered over the past decade. It has been informed by multiple operational assignments at every level of the maritime operations spectrum, including two tours as Commanding Officer. As a former DSF commander, I see an opportunity to align capabilities and capacity to meet the nation's maritime security needs. With the coming budget challenges, this window of opportunity is small but critical to the nation's maritime security architecture.

The Coast Guard now has ten years of DSF operational experience spanning a range of national responses. During my tenure in DSF command I watched the Coast Guard train in disciplines that no longer align with the units' mission set. While this capability made sense immediately after 9-11, the mission has evolved and the service has invested in other ways to meet the nation's collective port security needs. By reorganizing the MSST force structure, the Coast Guard can improve proficiency, save money, and meet the needs of the country.

I offer my personal thanks to Mr. Dan Moose, and Mr. Walt Edwards for their contributions and valuable perspectives. A special thank you goes to Dr. Jonathan Phillips, Associate Professor of Military History, Dr. Eric Shibuya, Associate Professor of Strategic Studies, and Colonel Mark Strong, U.S. Army (Special Forces), Military Faculty Advisor for their counsel, and professional guidance throughout the process.

Finally, a special thanks to my wife Amanda for her untiring love and support throughout the course of my career which is approaching its twenty-fourth year, and for enduring another year of separation. To my children, Nicole and Billy, thank you for your love, support, and many years of sacrifice. My family has been the driver behind my all success.

*“Victory will smile upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after they occur.”<sup>1</sup>*

*-General Giulio Douhet*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Following the terrorist attacks of 9-11, the United States Congress passed the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. This legislation mandated that the Coast Guard establish new units with the capabilities to mitigate and respond to the threat of a terrorist attack on America’s maritime interests.<sup>2</sup> In response, the Coast Guard quickly established thirteen Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSST) to perform anti-terrorism and force protection missions in the nation’s most critical commercial and military ports.<sup>3</sup> It was these thirteen teams that formed the nucleus of Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces (DSF). While these new units met the initial reactive demand for deployable specialized teams to increase security presence in critical U. S. ports, the hasty nature of their creation fell short of establishing the full range of capabilities necessary to meet the nation’s evolving maritime security needs.

As the Coast Guard adjusted to the maritime security “pick-up game,” national maritime security needs continued to evolve as a result of not only 9-11, but also events such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, forcing the DSF community to again adapt its capability suite to prepare for both natural and man-made disasters. Hurricane Katrina added a layer of complexity to the way the nation saw security as a whole and exposed the nation’s post 9-11 security efforts as still lacking.<sup>4</sup> The devastation that occurred in the Gulf Coast region of the United States required the Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces (DSF) to evolve from a primarily port security focus and align to the new response reality of “all threats, all hazards.”<sup>5</sup> The result was a layered

approach to the delivery and availability of DSF capability designed to facilitate rapid deployment across the spectrum of response operations.<sup>6</sup>

While a layered approach has certainly provided a robust menu of capability options for Coast Guard and interagency operational commanders, the range of capabilities is not properly aggregated, organized, or geographically located to meet the Coast Guard's highest consequence maritime security mandate to 'defeat' a potential or known threat at the high end of the maritime threat spectrum in a critical maritime event.<sup>7</sup> As the national requirements have grown, the core of DSF, the MSSTs, now possess too many capability requirements to maintain proficiency in their highest demand focus areas: port security and waterside point defense. Likewise, the Coast Guard's only counter-terrorism team, the MSRT, has suffered from a lack of resources to maintain the level of readiness required to respond to urgent maritime threats. This paper proposes there is need to reorganize Coast Guard DSF capacity and capacity in order to properly align critical and highly specialized tactical response forces to meet legislative and national security mandates, and to close critical gaps in the nation's ability to respond to urgent maritime threats in the most critical U.S. port regions.

The Coast Guard has been America's maritime "Guardian" since 1790.<sup>8</sup> Throughout its storied history, the Coast Guard has safeguarded American maritime interests on the high seas, its rivers, ports, littorals, and in wartime theaters around the world. The service culture prides itself on being 'Semper - Paratus, Always Ready' to deliver whatever the nation demands, wherever it demands it. The United States, as a maritime nation, has significant and "enduring" maritime interests that must be defended at all cost.<sup>9</sup> Since its founding, the maritime environment has been a source of "commerce, sustenance and defense" against invasion by our enemies.<sup>10</sup> However, 9-11 and other incidents such as the Mumbai attack, exposed the maritime

environment as highly vulnerable to exploitation by violent non-state actors, and the Coast Guard responded in kind by creating Deployable Specialized Forces to augment and enhance interagency operational commanders' operational capability portfolios. With so much of the nation's economic well being tied to the maritime domain, DSF provides a robust maritime surge response capability that is trained, equipped, and able to respond where the threat and consequences are the greatest. The Coast Guard's layered security strategy leverages the services "broad authorities and expansive network partnerships, flexible, adaptable operational capability and presence, and access to relevant expertise within the international community to achieve maritime domain awareness."<sup>11</sup> The DSF fills the Coast Guard's needs for specialized capability to meet the growing threat of maritime terrorism. However, after ten years of operations, the community is in need of reorganization in order to align functions, response capabilities, and capacity to meet the national strategy to achieve maritime domain awareness.

## CONTEXT

**The Maritime Domain:** National Security Presidential Directive 41 and Homeland Security Presidential Directive 13 highlighted the national imperative of "securing the maritime domain," which is defined as "all areas and things of, on, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea, ocean, or other navigable waterway, including all maritime-related activities, infrastructure, people, cargo, and vessels and other conveyances."<sup>12</sup> The maritime domain of the United States is defined by more than 95,000 miles of coastline and more than 3.4 million square miles of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); the largest of any nation.<sup>13</sup> This vast maritime territory poses significant challenges in a post 9-11 security environment. Global maritime trade accounts for more than 80% of all goods moved on the planet and nearly 50% of the "world's trade by value."<sup>14</sup> As our economies become increasingly global in nature, the trend is for

maritime trade activity to continue to grow, and with this comes a higher demand signal for DSF capabilities to deal with these threats. With so much of the global economy tied to maritime trade, and the density of populations that live in close proximity to the ocean, the maritime domain is an inviting target that promises “dramatic effects” such as, “economic chaos”, fear among the population, and high probabilities of success due to the vastness of the territory involved.<sup>15</sup>

As economies increase their ties to the global Maritime Transportation System (MTS), criminal and terrorist organizations will likewise look to exploit the vast maritime environment as a means to voice their extremist ideologies and the DSF, through the MSSTs and MSRT, provides a tiered tactical response capability to prevent, deny or respond to these threats to our national maritime interests. As we saw with the attacks in Mumbai, the maritime domain was exploited to dramatic effect and the result was an attack that quickly overwhelmed the organic forces in the area and necessitated a national level response by a variety of different military and police organizations. The Coast Guard, through the DSF, provides local, state, and interagency partners with a rapidly deployable capability to deter, confirm, and if necessary defeat potential maritime threats by increasing presence in high vulnerability economic port regions such as Houston-Galveston, Los Angeles-Long Beach and New York where a maritime terror attack would garner the “biggest bang for the buck.”

**The U.S. Maritime Transportation System (MTS):** The 9/11 Commission concluded that “opportunities to do harm are as great, or greater, in maritime or surface transportation” as compared to the potential of commercial aviation.<sup>16</sup> The commission recommended the U.S. government “identify and evaluate the transportation assets that need to be protected, set risk-based priorities for defending them, select the most practical and cost-effective ways of doing so,

and then develop a plan, budget, and funding to implement the effort.”<sup>17</sup> Since the publishing of that report the government has identified the MTS as a key node that must be defended. The Coast Guard’s answer to that has been to provide additional training in port security for regional Coast Guard Small Boat Station and Coastal Patrol Boat Forces, the creation of surge capability to increase security presence in response to potential security threats or high profile events, and the development of a robust counterterrorism capability to augment limited national response forces resident in a limited number of Department of Defense (DOD) Special Operations Forces and Department of Justice’s Hostage Rescue Team (HRT).

The U.S. MTS receives on the order of 700 commercial vessel arrivals each day, including approximately 8,000 annual foreign vessel arrivals crewed by more than “200,000 foreign mariners.”<sup>18</sup> Economically, our more than 325 ports move close to a trillion dollars in merchandise, with the top ten ports accounting for nearly 90%.<sup>19</sup> It is estimated that an attack on one of the major west coast ports (resulting in closure of the port) could cost the U.S. economy approximately “1 billion dollars per day for the first five days, rising sharply thereafter.”<sup>20</sup> This is not hard to believe when one considers the estimated economic cost of the 9-11 attacks was approximately two trillion dollars.<sup>21</sup> As a result of the economic stakes and the foreign presence in the U.S. maritime trade process, demand for National and Regional Response Forces to meet threats in multiple locations exceeds current capacity. If the Coast Guard is to meet both present and future demands for a range of tactical response capabilities it must reorganize, realign, and expand current DSF capacity to meet the requirements for a full spectrum, specialized maritime force capable of timely response in the nation’s most critical maritime regions.<sup>22</sup> In order to understand the need for reorganization it is important to

understand the national level requirements responsible for the development and operation of Coast Guard DSF.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

**The National Strategy for Maritime Security:** In July 2005, President George W. Bush signed the National Strategy for Homeland Security which outlined five key strategic objectives. The key objectives are to “enhance international cooperation, maximize maritime domain awareness, embed security into commercial practices, deploy layered security, and to assure the continuity of the Maritime Transportation System.”<sup>23</sup> Central to the National Strategy for Homeland Security is the development of the systems and capabilities necessary to enable our ability to be able to detect a threat “so that preemptive or interdiction actions may be taken as early as possible.”<sup>24</sup> The Coast Guard DSF and specifically the Maritime Security Response Team is the Department of Homeland Security’s primary means of interdicting a potentially or known hostile threat in the maritime domain.

As the lead agency for maritime security, the new strategy placed implied requirements on the Coast Guard.<sup>25</sup> Specifically, the new strategy went beyond the language contained in the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (46 USC 70106), which largely centered on establishing capability and capacity to respond rapidly to threats and increase deterrent presence in the ports.<sup>26</sup> The new national strategy for the first time emphasized the need for capability to achieve defeat criteria against known or potentially armed “actors” in the maritime domain.<sup>27</sup> It is the Coast Guard DSF that provides the forces necessary to surge in response to a potential threat in the maritime domain. However, because the Maritime Safety and Security Teams were established in 2002 legislation, the new strategy forced the Coast Guard to adapt to answer the new “defeat” requirement. The Coast Guard’s answer came in the form of what is now known as

the Maritime Security Response Team which was formally established in 2006 by combining Maritime Safety and Security Team Portsmouth (91102) and Tactical Law Enforcement Team North (Portsmouth). The MSRT is the Department of Homeland Security's primary maritime advanced interdiction force and serves as a ready assault force capable of conducting unilateral or interagency Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) across the threat spectrum.

**Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR):** President Bush mandated the MOTR process be developed in his 2005 National Strategy for Maritime Security. The MOTR process is an event driven, interagency response process designed to coordinate the response and support capabilities of the interagency players including a designation of Lead Federal Agency for a particular event.<sup>28</sup> The process has been in place and integrated into the national exercise architecture since 2009.

The Coast Guard, as the Lead Federal Agency for Maritime Security, has a large stake in the MOTR process. Due to the Coast Guard's constant maritime presence and unique authorities, the Coast Guard will likely be first on scene and the Lead Federal Agency for any "Short Notice Maritime Response (SNMR)" event prior to the MOTR process being implemented simply by virtue of presence and access to a layered network of maritime specific resources.<sup>29</sup> However, with only one team located on the East Coast, the Coast Guard has a significant time-distance gap for events taking place in the Gulf or West Coast port regions. This highlights the need to reorganize the DSF in order to close this gap in our response capacity and provide additional MSRT capability. This would enable the Coast Guard to respond to simultaneous threats on opposite coasts with a full range of options including offensive counterterrorism capability.<sup>30</sup>

**2011 Coast Guard Authorization Act:** The recently signed Coast Guard Authorization Act aligned the language contained in 46 USC 70106 and the 2005 National Strategy for Maritime Security and formally authorized Coast Guard DSF as an operational community. It also directed and authorized the Coast Guard to establish “no less than two enhanced teams to serve as deployable forces capable of combating terrorism, engaging in interdiction, law enforcement, and advanced tactical maritime security operations to address known or potentially armed security threats (including non-compliant actors at sea).”<sup>31</sup> The Act also gives the Coast Guard the flexibility to aggregate or reorganize capabilities so long as the collective force continues to meet the statutory capability requirements.

The Coast Guard currently only possesses one MSRT capable of conducting the full range of operations required and authorized in the law, and while the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011 required and authorized two enhanced teams, Congress did not provide the appropriations to build the second team meaning the requirement is unfunded. From a purely functional level this means the Coast Guard could wait to build the second enhanced team until Congress provides the necessary appropriation to do so. This paper offers that a reorganization of the Maritime Safety and Security Teams provides the personnel resources necessary to establish a second MSRT in order to “minimize the response time to maritime terrorist threats and potential or actual transportation security incidents” as required by law.<sup>32</sup>

**The Coast Guard Strategy:** As stated in the U. S. Coast Guard Strategy for Maritime Safety, Security and Stewardship, the Coast Guard has three principle maritime security roles. They are to “protect the U. S. maritime domain and the Marine Transportation System, and deny their use and exploitation by terrorists as a means for attacks on U. S. territory, population,

vessels, and critical infrastructure; to uphold U. S. maritime sovereignty and enforce U. S. law, international conventions, and treaties against criminal activities; and to defend U. S. national interests in the maritime domain against hostile acts through military action.”<sup>33</sup> The Coast Guard Strategy guides the services operational priorities to which the service applies its broad and significant regulatory and law enforcement authorities.<sup>34</sup>

In October 2007, the Coast Guard co-authored “A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower” with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps. This document established a joint concept whereby the three services agreed to integrate capabilities in order to “defend the homeland by identifying and eliminating threats as far from our shores as possible.”<sup>35</sup> The Coast Guard DSF has been at the forefront of integrating advanced interdiction capabilities with our sister sea services. In 2009, the Deployable Operations Group began a process of joint service certification for vertical (aviation) delivery of Coast Guard advanced maritime interdiction capability. To date the program has yielded a national network of integrated aviation resources between all services of DoD. Additionally, the success of the program has led to its expansion to the interagency and now includes the Customs and Border Patrol Air Marine Branch, a critical component of the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>36</sup>

**Coast Guard Authorities:** The Coast Guard’s broad range of authorities affords it great utility to employ DSF that can surge as necessary to provide additional asset capability and capacity. The Coast Guard is a unique service and a critical component of national security both as an armed service, as designated in Titles 10 and 50 and as an instrument of homeland security as designated in Titles 6 and 14 of U.S. Code. Additionally, the Coast Guard has broad authorities in the maritime and littoral realms stemming from Titles 18, 19, 33, 46, and 49. Together, these authorities allow the Coast Guard to transition seamlessly from homeland

security missions to homeland defense missions, as operational conditions may dictate. It is the DSF that provides Coast Guard and interagency operational commanders an integrated and regionalized national maritime response force to meet the myriad of security, enforcement, and regulatory missions which these authorities require.

## **MARITIME OPERATIONAL THREAT RESPONSE FORCES**

**National Response Forces:** U.S. maritime threat response essentially contains three echelons of organizations: National, Regional and State/Local Response Forces. National Response Forces (NRF) include elements from DOD-SOF and DOJ which provide the greatest capability for dealing with the highest risk terrorism threats in the maritime domain.<sup>37</sup> However, because NRFs are high-demand, low-density assets, they lack the capacity to deal with threats in multiple geographic areas. Additionally, as national assets, their employment is approved at the National Command Authority level meaning they will typically be employed only when the existence of a terrorism threat has been confirmed and the nature of the threat requires the highest end capability.<sup>38</sup> Because these forces are limited in number and not geographically dispersed, their effective employment is largely dependent on actionable and specific intelligence, or an anomaly that prompts further investigation in time to mobilize and deploy national echelon forces. Based on the volume of maritime traffic and limited arrival notice, the threat is often too ambiguous initially to rise to the level necessary for the National Command Authority to deploy NRF teams. Therefore, we must be prepared to interdict when the threat does not clearly warrant national level responders, or when the threat is perceived too late or is too ambiguous for national assets to react in time. It is in this ambiguous threat area where Coast Guard DSFs are uniquely positioned to operate as Regional Response Forces.

**Regional Response Forces:** Coast Guard forces are the primary Regional Response Force (RRF) for a maritime event. Through its layered defense strategy, continuous presence in the littorals, and its extensive interagency and maritime industry partnerships, the Coast Guard will most likely be the first federal agency to receive an indication or warning of a SNMR threat.<sup>39</sup> Coast Guard Publication 1 categorizes the capabilities of Coast Guard operational units according to three types of forces: Shore-based Forces, Maritime Patrol and Interdiction Forces, and Deployable Specialized Forces (DSF).<sup>40</sup> The first two categories make up the bulk of Coast Guard operational capability and have the largest maritime footprint. In addition to Coast Guard forces, the FBI possesses fourteen “maritime capable” Regional Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Teams collocated in ports with one of the eleven remaining Coast Guard MSSTs. However, these teams have conducted little joint training with Coast Guard DSF and do not possess the organic maritime delivery capabilities or level of training necessary to be effective in an offshore environment.<sup>41</sup> For the Coast Guard to achieve defeat criteria in the maritime domain as required by national strategy, it requires the employment of DSF capability resident only in the lone MSRT and to some extent the eleven MSSTs.

**Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces:** Coast Guard Deployable Specialized Forces are currently made up of the eleven MSSTs, two Tactical Law Enforcement Teams (TACLETs), one MSRT, eight Port Security Units (PSUs), and the National Strike Force (NSF). Each of these forces has the interoperability and capacity necessary to integrate a range of capabilities in order to achieve maritime security and incident management objectives throughout the range of maritime responses. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on the MSSTs and MSRT as the other elements of DSF have task specific legislative mandates that do not allow the Coast Guard to realign without significant changes to federal law.<sup>42</sup>

**Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT):** Located in Chesapeake, Virginia, the MSRT is the Coast Guard’s only advanced interdiction force for high risk law enforcement and counter-terrorism operations. The MSRT maintains a nationally deployable ready force to conduct maritime threat response as a single unit or as part of an adaptive interagency response force package.<sup>43</sup> Based on the suite of capabilities listed below, the MSRT meets the capability requirements for interdicting and defeating maritime threats as required by the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011. MSRT has 235 active duty personnel and several civilian government employees and contract personnel permanently assigned.<sup>44</sup>

***Table 1 MSRT Capabilities:***

Maritime Law Enforcement	Offshore Waterborne Tactical Delivery	Tactical Vertical Insertion (Fast Roping) <sup>45</sup>	Dive (USN Trained)
Boarding Officer Ashore <sup>46</sup>	Organic Tactical C3I	Rappelling-Container Climbing	Remote Operated (underwater) Vehicles
Direct Action - Close Quarters Combat (CQC) <sup>47</sup>	Non-Permissive CBRNE Detection, Classification, and Triage. <sup>48</sup>	Precision Marksmanship – Observer Teams <sup>49</sup>	Advanced Maritime Breaching
Non-Compliant, High Freeboard Interdiction and Boarding Operations (Hook and Climb) <sup>50</sup>	Canine Explosive Detection Teams (CEDT)	Organic Tactical Training Team and Close Quarters Combat Instructors (CQCI) <sup>51</sup>	Deployable Planning, Logistics and Tactical Medicine Teams

**Maritime Safety and Security Team (MSST):** Regionally located in eleven locations, MSSTs are deployable anti-terrorism and force protection forces. MSSTs primarily work in support of Coast Guard and interagency operational commanders to meet surge capacity requirements specific to planned and unplanned events. MSSTs are highly trained to conduct tactical boat operations to enforce federal security zones, Naval Vessel Protection Zones, and in support of National Special Security Events (NSSEs) as designated by the U.S. Secret Service. MSSTs are

regionally located but deploy nationally.<sup>52</sup> While all MSSTs possess a standardized capability package, some teams possess enhanced capabilities such as dive and CEDT. MSSTs generally have approximately 74-80 active duty personnel permanently assigned.

***Table 2 MSST Capabilities:***

Maritime Law Enforcement	Tactical Boat Operations	Security Zone Enforcement	Non-compliant (in extremis) Low Freeboard Boarding Operations <sup>53</sup>
Boarding Officer Ashore	Fixed and Moving Security Zone Enforcement	Level II CBRN Detection <sup>54</sup>	Mechanical Maritime Breaching
Direct Action (CQC)	Vertical Insertion (Fast Roping)	Canine Explosive Detection Teams (CEDT) <sup>55</sup>	Dive (USN Trained) <sup>56</sup>
Search and Rescue (Limited) <sup>57</sup>	Integrated Anti-Swimmer System <sup>58</sup>	Remote Operated (underwater) Vehicle	

## **ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

One of the principle challenges for Coast Guard DSF since coming on line in the wake of the 9-11 attacks is that it has grown reactively to meet evolving legislative and national strategic initiatives.<sup>59</sup> This has resulted in a patchwork organization of capabilities that no longer make sense from a financial (training) or threat basis. The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011 is recognition of this and has provided the Coast Guard the legislative flexibility to structure DSF to meet its improved understanding of the maritime threat problem. Many of the capabilities invested in the MSSTs made sense immediately following the attacks because the Coast Guard simply lacked the specialized capabilities to meet the new maritime security demands. As time has passed since 9-11, the Coast Guard has aggregated authorities at the port level by combining the traditional Maritime Safety (regulatory) functions with the Group Operations (law

enforcement and search and rescue) under one roof. These new Sector commands have the capabilities to conduct many of the missions initially filled by MSSTs such as day to day enforcement of security zones (done by small boat stations) and positive control boardings (done by Sector VBSS teams). This has resulted in a change in how the Coast Guard uses MSSTs today. Whereas, shortly after 9-11, MSSTs were primarily used within the region they were assigned, today they are deployed in support of NSSEs and planned or unplanned missions that are beyond an operational commander's ability to support organically.

The Coast Guard since 9-11 has developed a much better sense of its maritime security responsibilities. Where the Coast Guard was initially conducting adhoc boardings based on limited information or for the sake of numbers alone, the Coast Guard now conducts specific targeting of vessels using a system of intelligence analyst screening and computer risk modeling. The initial demand for a well trained tactical small boat force capable of meeting the threat of a USS COLE style attack is being met largely by geographically fixed Coast Guard Stations and State and Local Law Enforcement partners. Additionally, there was a lack of shore based boarding capability available to the Captain of the Port to meet the need to provide positive control boarding teams on targeted vessels.<sup>60</sup> These new realities illustrate the evolution of capabilities that has taken place within the Coast Guard and interagency and again highlights the need to reorganize the DSF to meet the improved understanding of the maritime risk.

With ten years of experience with the DSF, the Coast Guard has improved its understanding of maritime risk and has developed a coordinated system of screening and targeting through the Coast Guard's Maritime Intelligence Coordination Center and a computer based Maritime Security Risk Analysis Model.<sup>61</sup> This vastly improved integrated system has enabled the Coast Guard to make better use of limited operational resources which has resulted

in a corresponding reduction in the demand for some MSST capabilities to meet day to day maritime security. Yet despite these improvements, the DSF has yet to undergo a reorganization to align its capabilities to meet changes to the Coast Guard's shore-based operations organization or national level requirements.

**Mission:** The MSST mission has evolved considerably since 2002 when they were created. Capabilities inherent in the units today are still aligned with mission priorities that have matured and been reduced as a result of an improved system of making risk decisions, enhancements in interagency cooperation, and additional investments in capabilities at the Coast Guard Captain of the Port level. A good example of this can be found in the MSST Maritime Law Enforcement – Force Protection (MLE-FP) Teams made up of 13 personnel trained in advanced interdiction Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP).<sup>62</sup> The original intent for these teams was to work within their port regions conducting positive control boardings of 'compliant' commercial vessels targeted for boarding as a result of its cargo, crew, or some other anomaly. Their advanced training in CQC was to ensure the teams were prepared for an unpredicted extreme threat situation. Current reality is that these teams function in this capacity primarily for surge operations only and to augment positive control boarding capability that is resident in the Captain of the Port level, a capability that did not exist immediately following 9-11. The debate today within the Coast Guard has been whether to continue the investment in CQC training at the MSSTs, given that their original purpose was to possess the capability for missions where someone else conducts the lion's share of the mission with no CQC training. It seems logical that if the skill set is not being used, the Coast Guard should reaggregate this capacity from the MSSTs to meet the requirement of an additional MSRT. Doing so would allow the small

commands to refocus training efforts to meeting its statutory requirements for conducting security zone enforcement and tactical small boat capacity for national surge requirements.

Like the MLE-FP, the MSSTs Waterside Security Section (WSS) has experienced changes from its original requirements. The WSS of the MSSTs is the highest demand capability and was created to address potential USS COLE style attacks against High Value Units of the U.S. Navy. In the days after 9-11, the Coast Guard surged to meet maritime force protection demands of the U.S. Navy. While the Coast Guard still provides this service, its scale has been drastically reduced. The Coast Guard primarily limits these services to the most critical strategic naval units. In geographic areas of high demand, the Coast Guard and Navy established units known as Maritime Force Protection Units in Bangor, Washington and Kings Bay, Georgia.<sup>63</sup> These units became fully operational in 2010 and this has resulted in a very significant reduction in MSST demand for naval force protection.

When MSSTs were created, they were designed to deploy as an independent unit capable of supporting tactical small boat operations anywhere in the nation. In 2002, the West Coast MSSTs worked under the Operational Control (OPCON) of Pacific Area Commander, and the East and Gulf Coast MSSTs worked under the OPCON of the Atlantic Area Commander. However, in 2007 the Coast Guard established the Deployable Operations Group (DOG) as a central Force Manager for DSF. The DOG standardized doctrine and TTP across DSF and developed the concept of the Adaptive Force Package (AFP), a capabilities based approach to providing operational commanders the right tools for the mission.

This concept changed the way MSSTs deployed and enabled units to become fully interoperable because they shared the same doctrine and TTP. The DOG, through TTP

standardization and requirements based mission analysis, was successful at matching requirements with force structure.<sup>64</sup> One of the outcomes has been a reduction in the number of crewmen required for certain missions which translates to some excess capacity in the MSST WSS, capacity that can be used to meet the requirement to have a minimum of two units capable of advanced maritime interdiction. Opponents have argued that stripping any excess capacity out of the WSS will limit the ability of MSSTs to surge in response to significant events.<sup>65</sup> However, the advent of the AFP has increased DSF's flexibility to combine units into a type of Task Force to meet events such as the Haiti earthquake and Deepwater Horizon oil spill while still having the capacity to respond to regularly apportioned missions.<sup>66</sup>

**Location:** The Coast Guard as a force is smaller than the New York City Police Department. With a total MSST and MSRT force of less than 1100 personnel, the Coast Guard must make calculated risk decisions as to what port regions will receive priority with regard to enhanced security protection. On the East Coast, there is little question that New York and Norfolk are priorities, New York because it is a known ideological target of the enemy and Norfolk because of the concentration of strategic naval forces. On the West Coast, the Port of Los Angeles is the priority given its status as the largest container port in the U.S. In the Gulf of Mexico, the Houston-Galveston shipping corridor is the main effort because it is the nation's largest energy/chemical, and fuel refining port. With only enough resources to have two MSRTs at this time, locating an MSRT on the East Coast (Chesapeake, Virginia) and on the West Coast (San Diego, California) will provide both the Atlantic and Pacific Area Commanders the capability to meet national requirements.<sup>67</sup>

**Capabilities:** In order to successfully interdict and board a non-compliant actor at sea the Coast Guard trains DSF personnel for two primary insertion methods: waterborne hook and

climb and airborne vertical insertion (fast roping). Currently the MSRT is the only unit authorized to conduct both methods. The MSSTs hook and climb capability was suspended after a fatal training accident during training in October 2010 and has not been reinstated.<sup>68</sup> One of the enduring problems with hook and climb has been an inadequate delivery platform. The MSSTs use the 25-ft Ready Boat-Small (RB-S), a high performance platform developed for tactical intercept operations, not for conducting waterborne insertions of boarding teams which is not a viable offshore platform due to its range limit of ten nautical miles offshore. The MSRT also has the 25-ft RB-S, but they also possess an offshore 11-meter Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat that is designed specifically for the waterborne hook and climb insertion of direct action forces in an offshore environment aboard a high freeboard vessel.<sup>69</sup>

Neither the MSRT nor the MSSTs possess organic tactical or mobility airlift. Up until 2010, the MSRT had two dedicated HH-60J aircraft to conduct offshore tactical delivery of the DAS. The rotary wing air capability enables the most effective use of Precision Marksman-Observer Teams which provide critical isolation and containment during an opposed boarding.<sup>70</sup> In order to close this gap, the Coast Guard has been very successful leveraging interagency support from its interagency partners. With this coast to coast network in addition to the eight HH-60 capable Coast Guard Air Stations, the DSF is well positioned to respond to an urgent high threat scenario anywhere in the U.S. While the lack of organic airlift capability is less than ideal and requires additional levels of management, it has paid significant dividends by reinforcing strong interagency relations.

**Force Management:** The DOG was established July 2007 as the force manager of all Coast Guard DSF capability. The DOG's mission is "to be the nation's foremost force manager, provider, and integrator in support of national objectives."<sup>71</sup> The DOG's mission is to deploy

specialized capabilities in order to “prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies.”<sup>72</sup> Despite a distinguished record of accomplishments and validation by an OIG Audit in 2010, the DOG has been ordered closed by 2013 as a cost savings measure. Without a central force management command, the DSFs will go back to being managed regionally. The West Coast MSSTs will be placed under the Operational Control of the Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, while the East and Gulf Coast MSSTs and the MSRT will be placed under the Operational Control of the Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Currently, the MSRT is available for national deployment in support of both Area Commanders and its force allocation is managed by the DOG. Reverting back to the old system of force management leaves the Pacific Area region without a dedicated regional advanced interdiction capability, thus necessitating the need for a West Coast MSRT.<sup>73</sup>

**Tactical Training and Proficiency:** Coast Guard doctrine requires a Close Quarter Combat Instructor (CQCI) be present in order for personnel to conduct live fire or “Simunitions” close quarters combat training.<sup>74</sup> To date, the Coast Guard has not established the CQC-I qualification criteria or authorized the competency for Coast Guard personnel. This puts restrictions on all the MSSTs who lack an organic training team assigned to the unit. The MSRT does possess an organic training team that includes CQCIs and as a result conducts extensive live fire close quarter combat training. In order for MSST MLE-FP teams to maintain minimum level qualifications, the Coast Guard has had a long term contract with a private contractor who provides quarterly sustainment and proficiency training on a quarterly basis to every MSST. While this is a suitable stop gap measure to ensure personnel maintain the minimum level of proficiency, it falls short of developing the highly proficient tactical skills necessary to be effective in a hostile maritime threat scenario against a potentially armed adversary.

During the years that hook and climb training and qualifications were required at both the MSRT and MSST level, the MSST force structure again provided challenges with regard to mission focus, assigned platforms, and the process of attaining a qualification to meet minimums with no demand for its employment. This was largely due to the types of missions that MSSTs deployed to support. In line with their legislative mandate, MSSTs are experts in tactical boat operations related to enforcing security zones, protecting infrastructure, escorting High Interest Vessels (HIVs) and military High Value Units (HVUs).<sup>75</sup> They are employed as maritime security surge capacity to augment Coast Guard or interagency operational commanders when a planned or unplanned event falls beyond their own capacity to support. Examples are NSSEs such as Presidential visits, Super Bowl, national political conventions, and the Olympic Games.<sup>76</sup>

Readiness for these missions entails extensive tactical boat training to maintain proficiency. As the unit's bread and butter mission, this area of training receives the highest priority. While MLE-FP is trained to conduct aggressive tactical operations, the demand at the port level is limited to increasing presence on passenger ferries or accompanying Local or State Police Officers on maritime patrol duties. While increasing the presence aboard a passenger ferry is a necessary mission, it is best conducted by State and Local officers or can be accomplished by regular Coast Guard boarding personnel versus a force that we are spending several millions collectively to train.<sup>77</sup>

With the looming budget crisis and the numerous challenges related to qualifications, proficiency and the gap in high end tactical capability to meet the nation's maritime security demands, it makes sense to reorganize DSF capabilities in order to close the gap in national maritime threat response requirements. With services drawing down and resources being cut, the responsible thing to do is develop a plan that reorganizes and redistributes underutilized capacity

that exists within the MSSTs and to invest those resources in building a second MSRT on the West Coast.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Establish MSST San Diego as the future West Coast MSRT. San Diego is home to a Coast Guard HH-60J Air Station that is proficient at supplying tactical airlift for vertical insertion. Additionally, MSST San Diego is located on the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and has established relationships for the use of flat ranges, rappelling towers, and access to the marina for waterborne assets. Additionally, MSST San Diego, like the MSRT is the parent command of the West Coast Regional Dive Locker.
- Eliminate the MLE-FP capability from the ten remaining MSSTs (San Diego stays intact to form the base for the new MSRT). This results in 130 positions available for investment in the West Coast MSRT. This eliminates the need for private contractors to conduct quarterly tactical sustainment assessments and saves approximately 5 million dollars annually.<sup>78</sup>
- Reduce MSST boat crew and C2/Planning capacity by twelve personnel. This results in 120 additional active duty billets (This accounts for the change in Coast Guard boatcrew manning policy standards from 4 to 3 person crews).
- Amend the MSRT staffing model for MSRTs, adding a fourth 18 man Direct Action Section, an additional 4 man PM-OT Section, an additional 7 man Tactical CBRNE section, and 8 additional training and support billets. This will raise the units staffing from 213 to 250 and provide the capacity to run a schedule that support a deployed team, a ready team, a down team, and a team in training cycle.

- Establish shared DAS rotation to ensure a tactical capability is always present to respond to a threat in the gulf region, particularly in the Houston-Galveston shipping corridor.
- Explore the possibility of co-locating the duty team with the Customs and Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) located in El Paso, Texas.
- Retain the Deployable Operations Group as a staff element within Headquarters or the Coast Guard Force Readiness Command until such time as the budget supports its return as an autonomous DSF Force Management command.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite shrinking budgets and the war in Afghanistan winding down, the threat of terrorism is likely to loom for generations. Regardless of budget austerity, the Coast Guard owes its best effort to securing the homeland against the threat of maritime terrorism. The current force structure in place at the eleven MSSTs offers a unique opportunity to consolidate and reorganize within our current budget base, and within our current service force strength of approximately 40,000 personnel. By re-aggregating the underutilized MSST MLE-FP teams and “right sizing” the units to account for post 2002 service reorganizations and policy changes, there is sufficient billet capacity to build a second MSRT in order to meet the 2011 CG Authorization Act requirement for two MSRTs.

The timing for reorganization is critical. If the Coast Guard fails to act, it will run the risk of being consumed by fiscal realities. By contrast, taking bold steps now fulfills our pledge of more than 222 years to the American public of being Semper – Paratus, Always Ready.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, Tactics, MCDP1-3 (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, December 30, 1997), 79. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/service\\_pubs/mcdp1\\_3.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/service_pubs/mcdp1_3.pdf) (Accessed January 7, 2012).
- <sup>2</sup> 46 USC 70106 states: To enhance the domestic maritime security capability of the United States, the Secretary shall establish such Maritime Safety and Security Teams as are needed to safeguard the public and protect vessels, harbors, ports, facilities, and cargo in waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States from destruction, loss or injury from crime, or sabotage due to terrorist activity, and to respond to such activity in accordance with the transportation security plans developed under section 70103.
- <sup>3</sup> Initial MSST locations: Boston, MA; New York, NY; Portsmouth, VA; Kings Bay, GA; Miami, FL; New Orleans, LA; Galveston, TX; San Diego, CA; Los Angeles, CA, San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; Anchorage, AK; Honolulu, HI.
- <sup>4</sup> President, The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned. <http://georgewebush-whitehouse.archives.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned/chapter4.html> (February 23, 2006), (Accessed January 20, 2012)
- <sup>5</sup> Allen, Thad. "All Threats, All Hazards: Plotting a Course to Sustain Mission Excellence: A Naval Forces Interview." By Captain Gordon I. Peterson, USN (ret). Naval Forces IV, 2006 <http://www.uscg.mil/history/allen/articles/docs/PetersonTruverAdmAllenIntNAFOIV2006.pdf> (Accessed January 21, 2012), 105-106
- <sup>6</sup> Note: DSF small boat forces were not required to train conduct search and rescue training as part of their comprehensive unit training schedule. Additionally, DSF lacked suitable platforms to operate in shallow unmarked waterways or flood zones. As a result of Katrina, DSF purchased Combat Rubber Raiding Craft for shallow water operations, and MSST Boston prototyped a Rapid Water Rescue Program specifically for future hurricane response.
- <sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this paper 'defeat' is defined as the ability to board a high freeboard target at sea, engage and neutralize a hostile, armed adversary, take control of the vessel, and stop its movement prior to its entering waters that place the U. S. population, infrastructure, and economic well being at risk.
- <sup>8</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, Coast Guard Pub 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard, 1 January 2002), 2
- <sup>9</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, Coast Guard Pub 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard, May 2009), 1
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5
- <sup>11</sup> Commandant of the Coast Guard, The U.S. Coast Guard Strategy for Maritime Safety, Security, and Stewardship, 2008, <http://www.uscg.mil/strategy/docs/CGS-Final.pdf> (Accessed January 3, 2012), 4
- <sup>12</sup> Department of Homeland Security. National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness. October 2005, 1 [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSPD\\_MDAPlan.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSPD_MDAPlan.pdf) (Accessed January 5, 2012)
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 (Accessed January 5, 2012) Note: The Exclusive Economic Zone or EEZ is defined as the area extending from 3 nautical miles (State waters) out to 200 nautical miles. Within this zone, the U.S. has sovereign rights over exploration and economic activities such as living marine resources (fishing).
- <sup>14</sup> President, National Strategy for Maritime Security. (September 2005), 1-2
- <sup>15</sup> Sloan, Stephen. The Challenge of Nonterritorial and Virtual Conflicts: Rethinking Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism. JSOU Report 11-2. The JSOU Press. March 2011, 45
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. *The 9/11 Commission Report*. (New York: Norton, 2004), 391.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 391
- <sup>18</sup> The U.S. Coast Guard Strategy for Maritime Safety, Security, and Stewardship, 20
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21
- <sup>20</sup> The U.S. Coast Guard Strategy, 21
- <sup>21</sup> Institute for the Analysis of Global Security. How Much Did the September 11th Terrorist Attacks Cost America. <http://www.iags.org/costof911.html> (Accessed January 19, 2012)
- <sup>22</sup> Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011, Public Law 111-281, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong, U.S. (October 15, 2010)
- <sup>23</sup> National Strategy for Maritime Security, September 2005, 13

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- <sup>24</sup> Department of Homeland Security, National Plan to Achieve Maritime Domain Awareness: For the National Strategy for Maritime Security [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSPD\\_MDAPlan.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSPD_MDAPlan.pdf) (October 2005), 1
- <sup>25</sup> Testimony of Rear Admiral David Callahan, USCG, before the House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, "The Reserve Components as an Operational Force: Potential Legislative and Policy Changes" <http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/testimony/20110727-callahan-uscg-reserve-components-operational-force.shtm> (July 27, 2011) Accessed 07 February 2012
- <sup>26</sup> <http://us-code.vlex.com/vid/maritime-safety-and-security-teams-22511402> 46 USC 70106 Accessed 15 January 2012.
- <sup>27</sup> National Strategy for Maritime Security, September 2005, 8
- <sup>28</sup> The National Strategy for Maritime Security, 2005 Note: The Primary Federal MOTR agencies are DHS, DOD and DOJ.
- <sup>29</sup> Headquarters U.S. Coast Guard, *Operations* Publication 3.0 (Washington DC: U.S. Coast Guard February, 2012), A-3.
- <sup>30</sup> Author's conversation with Rear Admiral Paul Zunkuft, Deputy Commandant for Maritime Safety, Security and Stewardship, circa April 2011. Rear Admiral Zunkuft is the former 11th Coast Guard District Commander responsible for Coast Guard operations in California. He was recently selected as the Pacific Area Commander and U.S. Commander for Maritime Defense Zone Pacific.
- <sup>31</sup> Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011, Public Law 111-281, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong, U.S. (October 15, 2010)
- <sup>32</sup> Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011, Public Law 111-281, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong, U.S. (October 15, 2010)
- <sup>33</sup> Headquarters, U.S. Coast Guard, The U.S. Coast Guard Strategy for Maritime Safety, Security and Stewardship, (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard, January 2008), Pg 11-12.  
[http://quantico.usmc.mil/seabasing/docs/U.S.\\_Coast\\_Guard\\_Strategy.pdf](http://quantico.usmc.mil/seabasing/docs/U.S._Coast_Guard_Strategy.pdf) (Accessed 18 December 2011).
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid, Pg 3
- <sup>35</sup> A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower, 7
- <sup>36</sup> Author's phone conversation with Mr. Walt Edwards, Deputy Chief of Training and Standardization at the United States Deployable Operations Group, February, 2012.
- <sup>37</sup> National Tier I SOF assets assigned to conduct Maritime Interdiction Operations in support of Homeland Defense are extremely limited. The location, capability and capacity are highly classified and not permitted for further elaboration within this unclassified paper.
- <sup>38</sup> This level of capability includes WMD-Render Safe requirements.
- <sup>39</sup> SNMR is a broad term used to describe a wide range of unplanned and short notice maritime response activities requiring a surge of Coast Guard forces. (i.e. potential WMD or armed threats, search and rescue, migrant interdiction or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HA/DR)).
- <sup>40</sup> [http://www.uscg.mil/doctrine/CGPub/Pub\\_1.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/doctrine/CGPub/Pub_1.pdf) Coast Guard Pub 1, 19-22
- <sup>41</sup> <http://www.justice.gov/oig/reports/FBI/a0626/findings2.htm> The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Efforts to Protect the Nation's Seaports (Redacted and Unclassified). Office of the Inspector General. Audit Report 06-26. March 2006.
- <sup>42</sup> PSUs are Reserve units that are primarily used overseas to protect DoD maritime assets. The NSF works primarily in consequence management in response to incident of national significance and its authorities are nested within a variety of laws. The Tactical Law Enforcement Teams are legislatively bound in 10 USC to deploy aboard U.S. and allied naval vessels in support of maritime counterdrug operations.
- <sup>43</sup> Coast Guard Publication 3.0, 22.
- <sup>44</sup> MSRT command cadre, assault force, and associated support personnel is 215. The additional twenty personnel are assigned to the East Coast Dive Locker.
- <sup>45</sup> Tactical VI is a coordinated insertion that includes cover, isolation and threat containment of a target of interest.
- <sup>46</sup> Boarding Officer Ashore is a specific qualification that allows Coast Guard Boarding Officers to conduct security operations ashore at maritime facilities such as marinas, ferry terminals or boardwalks.
- <sup>47</sup> DA-CQC is conducted by 18 person teams and is used to neutralize armed adversaries and secure maritime threats.
- <sup>48</sup> Triage refers to the ability to isolate and stabilize a threat in preparation for the arrival of designated National Render Safe teams.
- <sup>49</sup> PM-OTs operate in pairs and are trained to conduct precision fires during air and surface (boat) insertion and are capable of conducting shore based reconnaissance support.
- <sup>50</sup> High freeboard is defined as 24-35 feet.

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<sup>51</sup> MSRT possesses a permanently assigned training cadre to support the high level of training proficiency required by the mission.

<sup>52</sup> Coast Guard Publication 3.0, 22.

<sup>53</sup> Low Freeboard is defined as below 24 feet. Note: MSSTs are not currently capable of conducting hook and climb operations due to a 2010 mishap. This limits their boarding capability to compliant low freeboard vessels only.

<sup>54</sup> Level II CBRN is limited to detection only.

<sup>55</sup> Canine Explosive Detection Team (CEDT) billets have not been sourced at the MSSTs. Teams possessing this capability select two personnel from within their unit. This is a capability requirement that did not come with the people to do it. MSST CEDTs are located in New York, Kings Bay, Houston-Galveston, LA-LB, SF, and Seattle.

<sup>56</sup> MSST dive capability only exists at MSST San Diego who maintains the West Coast Dive Locker.

<sup>57</sup> Search and Rescue cases are normally only undertaken when a unit is uniquely positioned to respond to a distress call. Due to the security mission this normally requires the approval of the Captain of the Port.

<sup>58</sup> Developed by SPAWAR, the IAS System is a stationary sonar based system that enhances security zone enforcement where underwater threats are likely. Requires significant training and deployment to maintain proficiency.

<sup>59</sup> MTSA of 2002 established MSSTs to conduct port security operations. Since 2002, the port security mission has expanded to include 'defeat' of terror threats within the maritime domain as required by the National Strategy for Maritime Security. As a result the Coast Guard combined MSST Portsmouth and Tactical Law Enforcement Team (TACLET) North to form what became the Enhanced Maritime Safety and Security Team, which evolve into what is now the Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT).

<sup>60</sup> A Positive Control Boarding is one where armed boarding personnel are positioned in certain control points on the ship to where if necessary the team could take control and stop the movement of the vessel.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/587142.pdf> U.S. Government Accounting Office Report GAO 12-14. Coast Guard Security Risk Model Meets DHS Criteria but More Training Could Enhance Its Use for Managing Operations, 22

<sup>62</sup> MLE-FP Teams are 13 person deployable law enforcement teams capable of conducting positive control boardings, shore-side facility security, and in-extremis threat response to armed and potentially hostile actors. While they are trained in Close Quarters Combat (CQC), their level of proficiency is far below the MSRT based on their level of access to suitable training facilities. MSRT conducts Advanced CQC training several times a week with a continuous system of evaluation and assessment, whereas the MSST MLE-FP Teams conduct training several times per month and are evaluated only once every three months.

<sup>63</sup> Maritime Force Protection Units are dedicated specifically to the protection of U.S. Navy Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarines. The two units were commissioned in 2007 and became fully operational in late 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Atkin, Thomas. "Interview with RADM Thomas Atkin." By Christopher Havern. USCG Oral History Program, May 19, 2009. <http://www.uscg.mil/history/weboralhistory/AtkinThomas05192009.pdf>, 4-7 (accessed February 19, 2012).

<sup>65</sup> Author's conversation with Commanding Officer of MSST San Diego, April 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Author's personal experience while serving as CO of an MSST during both the Haiti and BP response where he had C2 of DSF forces under the National Incident Commander.

<sup>67</sup> Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area is responsible for the East Coast, Gulf Coast, and Great Lakes regions, whereas Commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area is responsible for the West Coast, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, and American Samoa.

<sup>68</sup> Author's phone conversation with Mr. Walt Edwards, Deputy Chief of Training and Standardization at the United States Deployable Operations Group, February 17, 2012.

<sup>69</sup> High freeboard is defined as between 12 and 35 feet.

<sup>70</sup> PM-OTs are trained in anti personnel, reconnaissance and air to surface disabling fires. Note: Containment is the act of dominating the access points of a vessel to restrict the freedom of movement of personnel. Isolation is the act of establishing a defensive perimeter around the vessel.

<sup>71</sup> Deployable Operations Group Strategic Business Plan, Fiscal Year 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Deployable Operations Group Strategic Business Plan, 4

<sup>73</sup> A west coast MSRT would meet the 2011 Coast Guard Authorization Bill requirement for "at least two enhanced teams."

<sup>74</sup> Simunitions is a proprietary system for conducting weapons training. It makes use of a paint marking cartridge that is fired through an operators regular service weapon systems after a special training barrel is fitted.

<sup>75</sup> High Interest Vessels (HIVs) are vessels whose cargoes are deemed to have the potential for mass casualties if they were to be attacked (i.e. LNG Tankers etc) or vessels that the Coast Guard Captain of the Port deems to be a

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potential risk for other reasons. An military HVU is a Naval vessel of national strategic value such as a SSBN, or CVN.

<sup>76</sup> DSF Forces were deployed in support of the Secret Service and as part of a joint U.S. – Canada bilateral law enforcement effort to control the maritime borders.

<sup>77</sup> Author's phone conversation with Mr. Walt Edwards, Deputy Chief of Training and Standardization at the United States Deployable Operations Group, February 17, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Authors phone interview with Mr. Walt Edwards, Deputy, DG-7 (Standardization and Training) January 21, 2012.

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