



Up Top In Operations

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Just One More in 2004

by Linda A. Nelson, DC-O

Just one more, that's all. Just one more patrol, just one more communications watch, just one more private aid report. Our ability to meet the needs that the Coast Guard has identified can be met if we each do "Just One More in 2004". And "one more" is really not a big deal. The premiere athlete is always striving for just one more set of reps, one more lap or one more mile. Pushing just a bit harder and farther makes the body strong. The Coast Guard Auxiliary will be stronger and ready to go the last mile if we push just a little harder.

If each pilot, each coxswain, each aid verifier, each communicator, each crewmember, each aircrew or observer, each member augmenting at the CG station does just one more...well, not only does it add up, it multiplies. As a team, we can make it happen. Completing the task ahead shouldn't (and can't) just rest on the shoulders of a few over-achievers. We can't sustain our momentum in our Homeland Security missions with only a handful of members; it will take all of us.

So make it a New Year's resolution: "Just One More in 2004". Pull out the calendar and schedule it today. **Just one more....**



The Pre-Mission "Not So" Brief

by Linda A. Nelson, DC-O

Ever have one of the patrols where the pre-mission brief is done so quickly, you almost didn't hear it? It might go something like this, "Nothing new on the boat, no specific tasking, same area for patrol. Everybody ready? Take off the lines."

This kind of mission brief is not only "not a brief", but it can actually breed complacency, which always spells trouble.

What then should be in a pre-mission brief? This is the time for all of the checks to be done, for all the crew members to get an idea about how the day is anticipated to unfold and for sharing of important information among the crew (including the coxswain). Let's break this down and see what we can accomplish.

Check and Re-check- Lots of things are happening during this phase of the brief. Certainly, new crew members need an orientation to the facility.

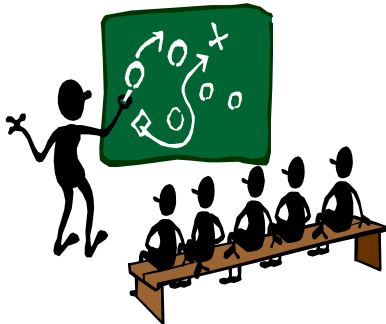
Critical points include the location and operation of any mission critical piece of equipment as well as all safety equipment. For instance, the crew member needs to know the coxswain's preferences during a towing evolution. Is the skiff hook used, is towing done from a tow bitt or a bridle, what lines are used when shifting to a side tow and well...you get the idea.



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The same thing holds for the safety equipment. Each crew member needs to know the location and operation of the fire fighting system on board the vessel. This may be as simple as fire extinguishers but other vessels have more sophisticated systems. Other equipment like bilge pumps, radios (including portable/handheld units), spare life-jackets, location and deployment of life rafts, etc. should be identified and discussed. A check should be done of the personal protective equipment in their lifejackets. Does the strobe light work; are the signaling devices still in date? Does each crew member have a full complement of the required equipment?

Each coxswain or facility owner should consider using a check list so that the brief is consistent from embarkation to leaving the dock every time the crew gets underway.



The Day Ahead – During this phase of the brief, the crew gets some idea of the big picture. Of course, no one can predict all of the possibilities for a patrol, but somebody needs to have a plan!

You usually know the general area of the patrol and well...maybe nothing else! That said, you can still have a plan.

Make sure that you have a plan for training. Survey crew members and find out what training would be beneficial. Does a crewmember need to complete currency tasks? Is there a coxswain trainee aboard who would benefit from some helm time?

You can also have a plan for crew rotation. Make sure that all crewmembers are proficient by rotating them from communications to deck work to lookout to navigation and so on.

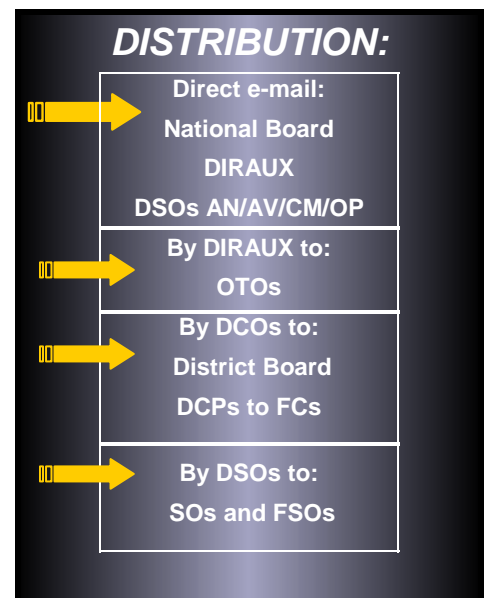
Sharing Important Information - This is, perhaps, the most neglected part of the pre-mission brief. Keeping the coxswain and other crewmembers apprised of significant obligations, restrictions or conditions which might limit mission performance is critical to a SAFE multi-mission patrol. One of the reasons that we fail to discuss our possible restrictions is that we don't realize that we may have an issue! Some of the things to think about disclosing include:

- Family or work commitments (the grandkids are visiting this evening)
- Physical or mental health issues (I twisted my ankle and I have it wrapped)
- Medications (I took some antihistamines for my allergies)
- Mental stress (the boss was on my case all week)
- Fatigue (I didn't sleep well last night)
- Recent alcohol consumption (I just turned the BIG FIVE-OH and partied all night!)

Why is this so important? All of these items may limit your performance during the patrol. The coxswain will need to know the strengths and limitations of each person for assigning missions, recognizing when a crewmember needs assistance or relief and for determining if a mission should be undertaken at all. This is vital information for planning and planning is key!

The pre-mission brief builds the critical foundation for a safe patrol.

Even with the “regular” crew, make sure that the pre-mission brief is “not so” brief!



The Changing Face of Operations

by **Linda A. Nelson, DC-O**

As the year comes to an end and we close the door on 2003, we can reflect on some of the changes that have been set in motion. One of the more significant changes is in the constitution of the senior staff.

As the year drew to a close, several staff members opted to step down, step up and step aside. **Jim Jacobson**, longtime division chief of the aviation branch, decided that it was time to step down. We appreciate all that Jim has done to promote safety in the aviation program while overseeing substantial growth. **Jim Duncan**, division chief for the Aids to Navigation and Chart Updating Program, also decided to turn in the national Staff Badge at the end of the year. Jim has skillfully guided the ATON/CU program for over 10 years. Jim provided this program with training support for the Private Aids Verifier; a solid system for measuring successes in the program and close liaison with senior leadership in the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation program. Jim will continue to be active in the program on the local level, working in the District 11 ATON office with his CG counterparts.

Lastly, **Gail Fisher**, formerly the Operations Department Deputy Chief, has been promoted to Department Chief of Personnel. Gail provided unmeasured support in the Operations Department, most of it behind the scenes. Gail provided leadership for the Education Division and did most of the "hiring" for the staff. Most importantly, she provided insightful analysis of a variety of situations encountered throughout the year.

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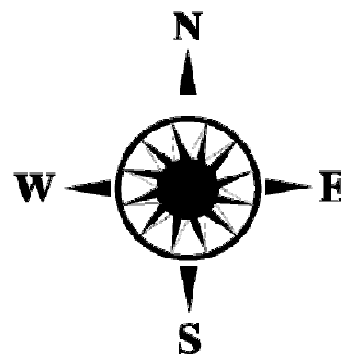
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All of this, of course, is a terrific training environment for the new Personnel Chief! Gail's unique contributions will be missed.

We are fortunate that some many talented people are "at the ready" to help. Let's meet them.

David Elliot, DC-Od - David steps up from his former position as Branch Chief, Operations Aviation Training to take on the responsibilities of Deputy Chief. David brings a wealth of experience to the position, having served in both the elected and appointed staff. A former Rear Commodore, David has most recently served as DSO-AV and District Directorate Officer for Operations and Marine Safety in the First District, Southern region. David is an Aircraft Commander, Flight Examiner, coxswain and AUXOP member. He is active in the communications program, finding that it complements his professional expertise. David is president of a consulting firm, Elliot Technologies, LLC, specializing in the business and technology issues of television broadcasting.



Henry (Hank) Foglino, DVC-OE - Hank Foglino joined the Operations Education division about a year ago as the Instructional Design specialist. His work on the Operations Workshop was convincing evidence that he was aptly suited to take over the Education Division as the position was vacated.

Hank's background is in engineering and marine environmental science, but he also has a license as a Coast Guard Merchant Marine Officer Master - Near Coastal. Managing in volunteer organizations is not new to Hank, as he is a past National Rear Commander in the US Power Squadrons. Retired from full time employment, Hank still teaches...he is an assistant adjunct professor of Oceanography and Climatology at the Suffolk County Community College!

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Robert Shafer, DVC-OA – Bob Shafer is taking on the leadership for the aviation division. Serving as District Staff Officer, Bob has built a very successful Air Operations program in the Ninth District, Central Region. He has considerable aviation experience, including his designation as an Aircraft Commander, Flight Examiner/Instructor Pilot and Flight Safety Officer (and is Boat Crew qualified as well). On the civilian side, Bob has been a professional flight instructor for 15 years. He is designated as an FAA Aviation Safety Counselor and is a Michigan Helicopter Association Safety Officer. Bob works as the technical director for WDIV-TV, CH-4 in Michigan.

These folks join **Ned Kroeker, DVC-OT, Mark Simoni, DVC-OS** and me as the senior leadership team in operations. We anticipate that this collection of knowledge, skills, experiences and perspectives will enrich the entire department as we move ahead in 2004. Welcome aboard!



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