

LT [REDACTED]
LT [REDACTED]
HSC [REDACTED]

Below is a summary of interview of LT [REDACTED] USCG, Dive Program Coordinator (G-RPC); LT [REDACTED] USCG, Liaison to USN Dive School; and HSC [REDACTED] USCG Assistant Liaison/Instructor USN Dive School, conducted by the AIM informal board on 11 October, 2006 concerning the diving incident which resulted in two deaths on 17 August 2006. AIM board members present were Captain [REDACTED] LCDR [REDACTED], and LCDR [REDACTED]

LT [REDACTED] reported to (G-RPC) in July 2006 as the CG Headquarters Dive Program Manager. He is a 2002 graduate of OCS. His previous assignments include a tour as DWO in ACUSHNET, and a tour as Dive Officer & Operations Officer in CGC WALNUT. He is a 2004 graduate of the Basic Dive Officer course at Navy Dive School. He is the policy writer, budget manager, billet coordinator and manual writer for the entire Coast Guard dive program. There are no other members of the dive program staff at Headquarters.

LT [REDACTED] reported to Navy Dive School as the CGLO in the summer of 2006. He is a 2002 graduate of the Coast Guard Academy. His prior assignments consist of an EOIT tour in ALEX HALEY, and a tour as Dive Officer in CGC KUKUI. His primary duties consist of managing the dive training program for the Coast Guard, assisting the 64 Scuba quotas, 8 dive officer quotas as well as any Dive Treatment and Recognition and Dive Medical Technician students attending dive school.

HSC [REDACTED] reported to Navy Dive School in 2004 as the Assistant CGLO and instructor. His prior assignments include a mix of corpsman and dive billets. He has served as a diver aboard CGC SASSAFRAS (two tours), CGC SEQUOIA, and CGC WALNUT. He has completed well over 300 Coast Guard dives. He attended the seven month Dive Medical Technician training at Navy Dive School in 1997. His primary duties consist of training students, coordinating Coast Guard specific classes, overseeing the PMS program, managing the dive equipment program for all CG dive teams, and assisting with overall program management.

LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED] and HSC [REDACTED] are the only members of the Coast Guard managing the dive program. The dive program consists of 18 dive teams – the three D14 AtoN cutters (USCGC SEQUOIA, USCGC WALNUT & USCGC KUKUI); the polar fleet (USCGC POLAR SEA, USCGC POLAR STAR & USCGC HEALY) and the twelve Marine Safety & Security Teams (MSSTs) serving at ports throughout the United States. All dive safety inspections, required to be conducted at each dive team on an annual basis, are conducted by LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED] and HSC [REDACTED]. At least two of the three program coordinators must be present for each inspection. In total, the dive inspections require approximately 18 weeks of TAD a year.

b (6) + 7 (c)

In response to questions, LT [REDACTED] LT [REDACTED] and/or HSC [REDACTED] stated the following:

- LT [REDACTED], LT [REDACTED] and HSC [REDACTED] are currently conducting a dive safety inspection in POLAR SEA. Dive safety inspections typically consist of a full review of a dive locker's PMS, equipment, training, procedures and admin. This particular inspection aboard POLAR SEA is similar to a ready for ops visit, as the inspectors are also running the dive team through actual dive operations, and emergency drills. In accordance with the Coast Guard Dive Manual, an annual safety inspection must be conducted aboard each dive unit. This is not always the case, depending on operations, and the availability of inspectors.
- CGC HEALY has never had its dive locker inspected. LT [REDACTED] stated that the inspection program was initially run by the USN. However some time in the late 1990's or early in 2000 the USN stopped doing CG dive inspections and the CG dive program took ownership of the process. There is no record as to why the USN program was stopped in favor of an in house program. LT [REDACTED] stated that the CG inspection program also halted after a short period, and no unit was inspected for several years. Eventually LT [REDACTED] LT [REDACTED]s predecessor re-started the program. Around the time LT [REDACTED] (now retired LCDR) restarted the program, the MSST units began to stand up dive teams. The dive program grew from 6 to 18 units. Due to the admin/program management necessary to stand up so many new units the inspection program suffered again.
- HSC [REDACTED] stated that the upside to the MSST stand-up is the creation of a ready for ops program/inspection. The program has not been modified for the afloat dive teams.
- The dive program management billets did not grow despite the tripling in size of the overall program, with the exception of one new MK billet at dive school. The MK is intended to handle the entire CG dive program's PMS. He's currently completing two years of school, following which he'll run the PMS program for two years, before PCSing somewhere else. The MK may or may not go to a dive unit next.
- HSC [REDACTED] stated that PMS has been a long-term problem aboard CG dive units. Diving is a PMS intensive activity, as there are requirements to PMS gear before and after each dive in addition to the normal daily, weekly, monthly and annual requirements. The system was designed for full USN dive lockers. CG lockers are "optimally" manned, and cannot typically keep up. Therefore the program has attempted to take on the burden. Now each unit is funded to outsource most PMS, by taking their gear to local dive shops. Other gear is mailed back to the dive school and swapped out for new PMS'd gear. The new MK will be responsible for doing the PMS, then getting the overhauled gear back into the fleet.
- HSC [REDACTED] explained that all dive training is conducted at Panama City, Florida at the U.S. Navy Dive School. CG students undergo training in the 5 week SCUBA course, or the longer Basic Dive Officer Course (currently running about 4 months.) The CG is starting to send officers to the Army Dive Officer Course also at USN Dive School as it appears to better suit CG dive program needs. For

b(6) + 7(c)

instance, the Army school focuses more on actual diving, whereas the USN school is more shore support based. This reflects the change in how the USN utilizes dive officers – mostly in an admin role. The Army and Navy courses both run about the same duration.

- LT HILL attended the BDO course. She was a dive school classmate of LT [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED]. They described her as a good classmate and student. She had no obvious problems at dive school with the exception of a couple of skills dealing with treading water with weights.
- At the dive school they teach the use of BCs with dry suits. They teach 25lbs as a starting point for weight with a dry suit.
- Officers graduating from the BDO or Army (MEDO) course are taught and qualified as dive supervisors. SCUBA divers are not. Therefore, CG SCUBA divers must either attend a follow-on supervisor course, or get PQS qualified at their dive unit. A CG supervisor course is being developed, but is not yet up and running. For now, the CG is using the USN Explosive Ordnance Disposal supervisor course in Little Creek, Virginia. It's a two week course.
- Following the SCUBA program, all CG students attend a three day class at the U.S. Navy Dive School on Coast Guard related diving. The course covers PWCS, AtoN and cold water fundamentals, including dry suit. The course is not an official CG course, in that there are no training or terminal objectives, the class is not recognized by TQC, and there is nothing in writing regarding the course. HSC [REDACTED] stated the course covers AGA, comms, dry suit, adverse conditions, and CG missions. The course is taught by HSC [REDACTED].
- LT [REDACTED] stated that he is working on a new Coast Guard Dive Manual that is in the concurrent clearance process at CGHQ. The manual has a PWCS & AtoN section but does not contain an ice diving section. LT [REDACTED] and HSC [REDACTED] stated that the USN Dive Manual already contains a section on cold water diving that covers the topic thoroughly.
- LT [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] agreed that it is a very tall order to expect a first tour dive officer to fill that role as well as qualify as a DWO. It makes more sense to have someone act as a diver on their first unit and as the dive officer during their second afloat tour. They have attempted to implement this idea with mixed results. It has worked ok with divers rotating from polars to ATON units, but not vice versa.
- Considering the dive program managers lack of clout with the detailers and lack of a formal process with the detailers, divers and dive officers often rotate out of the program after one tour. This precludes building the strong knowledge base necessary to adequately support the program.
- It would be very helpful to the dive program if we could create incentives to keep some of the senior enlisted personnel and junior officers in the dive program. Other programs have incentives to stay in program and to advance within that particular program. The dive program lacks any such incentives. They mentioned providing additional pay for qualified dive supervisors.
- LT [REDACTED] LT [REDACTED] and HSC [REDACTED] stated that split fins are designed for light diving, not torque. Heavy diving operations are not suited for split fins.

b (6) + 7 (c)

(140)

- All three stated that diving is too dangerous to be a collateral duty. There's always time for operations, but most lockers do not adequately train. Making diving a primary duty would be a good idea.
- All three mentioned a concern regarding MSST dive teams. Presently, some of the MSSTs do not have qualified dive officers. They are functioning solely with divers who attended the 5 week SCUBA dive course.
- They all recommended including more dive training familiarization for command cadre.