



U.S. Coast Guard Oral History Program

Attack on America: September 11, 2001 and the U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. COAST GUARD ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Operation Noble Eagle Documentation Project

Interviewees: **Captain Dana Goward, USCG**

Chief, Office of Boat Forces (G-OCS)

&

Commander James Maes, USCG

Chief, Boat Platform Division, Office of Boat Forces (G-OCS-2)

Interviewer: PAC Peter Capelotti, USCGR

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Place: Office of Boat Forces, USCG HQ

Q: Sirs, if you could just give me a brief paragraph or so on your background and how you came to be here September 10th.

CAPT Goward: Okay. Well I'm Chief of the Office of Boat Forces and as you can tell from my uniform I'm an aviator, and that always sparks a question as to how I came to be here specifically. But as folks who have read some of the things I've written know, that regardless of your point of view on specific issues, there was pretty much of a general consensus that the small boats, in terms of assets, were pretty much being operated as a program on a kind of an ad hoc basis. There were a large number of non-standard boats out there and the training was somewhat less than systematic. Rear Admiral [Ernest R.] Riutta, when he came to fill the position in this office - at least as he explained it to me - he went looking for an aviator because he was very impressed with the standardization; both in terms of equipment and training in the aviation system in the Coast Guard. The aviation folks have a tendency to set standards and adhere to them and to resource to those standards. So that's kind of how I came into the job.

And of course the equipment and the training were really just to the tip of the iceberg. It's the overall doctrine support, budgetary considerations, standing of the community - or the lack of, really, - a professional BOAT OPS community within the Coast Guard; and the lack of an overall officer component that provides continual care and feeding, and updating of the community. So it's really kind of mushroomed into quite a bit. But that's how I've come to be here to answer that specific question.

Q: It's one of the questions I spring on the admirals is, if every Marine's a rifleman, what's every Coast Guardsman?

CAPT Goward: Well that's a good question.

Q: And I just like to see how many different responses I get depending on whether they're an "M" [Marine Safety] person or an "O" [Operations] person, and so forth.

CAPT Goward: Right.

CDR Maes: I'm Commander James Maes. I'm the Chief of the Boat Platform Division in Boat Forces and I'd only been at Headquarters for about a month. I reported in August, and September 11th happened about a month later.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: But I'm here basically because of my background at Group San Francisco. I was just coming from the Deputy job there at Group San Francisco and thought that I could come up here – and apparently Captain Goward thought the same thing – and that maybe I could contribute to what we're doing here in Boat Forces, and that's why I ended up here.

CAPT Goward: And initially he was particularly involved in post-9/11 planning because he has an extensive and very noteworthy background in terms of budgeting and resources, and that sort of thing; having served in our Program Division downstairs.

Q: Were you both here that morning?

CAPT Goward: Yes.

CDR Maes: Yes.

Q: When did you start to think about what 9/11 might mean for the Boat Force?

CAPT Goward: Pretty much when it happened. In fact my initial reaction was that this was going to derail a lot of the initiatives that we had had prior to 9/11 in terms of focusing on our capability, because at that point it had been structured pretty much around, or marketed pretty much around, a deficit in our ability to carry out the Search and Rescue [SAR] mission, which was the historical reason most of the stations were placed where they're placed and initially constructed. Subsequent to that though, what I think we've realized is that . . . and we realized it to a great degree before that . . . in fact we were even talking in this language; that while Congress and the IG [Inspector General] may be focusing on our Boat Force shortfalls as a Search and Rescue performance ability deficit, really the kinds of things that we need to support a 7 x 24 response boat operation, regardless of whether the boat is responding to Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, an oil spill or a Search and Rescue mission; the fundamental things we need in terms of infrastructure and overhead; boats, people trained to operate the boats, the survival equipment, and those kinds of things, are pretty much constant from mission to mission because they were all boat operations. In Boat Forces, we obviously service the missions but we primarily focus in providing professional boat operations, so that really the events of 9/11, if anything, just helped focus on the fact that we didn't have, or we don't have, the appropriate levels or types of infrastructure in terms of people, training and equipment that we need just to operate boats, regardless of what the boats are going to do.

Q: Would it be fair to say that you were trying to get the Boat Force up to speed in terms of just fully capable SAR response when this hit?

CDR Maes: As a matter of fact the Captain was down briefing the Chief of Staff on his SAR Strategic Plan on the morning of September 11th and we'd just finished the brief.

CAPT Goward: That's true.

Q: Really?

CDR Maes: When the Chief of Staff's secretary came in and said, hey Admiral, an airplane just flew into one of the World Trade Center Towers.

Q: So you were with [the Coast Guard Chief of Staff, Vice] Admiral [Timothy W.] Josiah that morning?

CDR Maes: Right.

CAPT Goward: Right.

CDR Maes: We stopped the brief and watched TV and watched all this unfold.

Q: Right. So you came back down here?

CAPT Goward: Yes, pretty much. It kind of re-gauged everybody's gyro, if you will.

Q: Right. Well let me show you a . . . well this is overall platform hours. The yellow line is what happened to the Boat Force from September 10th to the 13th. In terms of missions, was Port Security really on your radar screens on September 10th; in your strategic plans for the Boat Force?

CAPT Goward: Well again, I guess we really focus on the ability to operate the boats primarily and then specific missions secondarily, because the biggest job is getting the boat out there and then you layer on a little bit for the mission type. You put a P-6 pump onboard so they can dewater for a SAR case. You put on a boarding team and train the crew in boarding tactics so they can perform the law enforcement mission. You put a personnel protective equipment kit onboard so they can sample oil without contaminating themselves.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: So our primary thrust was, again, putting the response boats out there and getting them staffed properly and trained. Secondarily were the marginal increments for each one of the missions. Now we had talked about speed and arms quite a bit, and we certainly became more aware that speed was a little bit more important now and that armament was a little more important. And in fact it's interesting. One of the things prior to 9/11 that we had initiated, and in fact a lot of the District Commanders had quickly taken up and moved forward with as a workload issue, was the automatic weapons at the Stations. (For the ones that had automatic weapons. It turns out the Allowance List was not as well maintained as it should have been and that the actual weapons inventory didn't match up with the Allowance List at all, but that's another story). We suggested it would be appropriate to move the automatic weapons from the Stations back to the Groups or to the District Armories because the folks at the Stations were going in a number of different directions. They didn't have the time or expertise to maintain the weapons or to drill with the weapons, and we thought that we'd get a decrease in workload at the Stations and an increase in the effectiveness of the automatic weapons, because they'd be maintained by someone who was prepared to maintain them and they'd be with the people who would actually conduct the training when, and if, they were needed.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: Maybe even do a just in time kind of delivery.

Q: Now that's an important point because . . . well this is the mission breakdown graph of those four days, and this big spike in Port Security, which was for very few hours on the 10th, and one of the issues that's come up over and over again as I've been traveling around is this whole issue of whether small boat operators should be armed; how much they should be armed to and so forth.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: What's your feeling on that? Well let me ask this. What were you looking at on September 10th?

CDR Maes: Well as the Captain suggests, we were actually looking to take weapons off the boats; particularly automatic weapons. While I was at Group San Francisco I think I was among the more vocal advocates to take the weapons off of the boats and away from the Stations, mostly because of the workload issue. We really didn't have a mission requirement for them. Now we've got a mission requirement for automatic weapons and we're still trying to wrestle with the idea of what is exactly the right weapon to put out there. We don't want to be firing an automatic weapon that's got a range of 7,000 yards in an enclosed port. That's not a good thing.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: And so we're looking at the right weaponry that can penetrate boat materials and things like that; potentially anti-personnel-type things that don't have the incredible ranges that are going to cause a lot of collateral damage.

Q: It seems, just from the outside, that 9/11 was a Boat Force crisis in some respects, in that it forced all these kinds of questions on you guy's heads. Should you be armed? How you should be armed? And the enemy that you were being asked to deal with is somebody who could show up in sort of any guise. They weren't coming with overwhelming force. They might show up with a bomb strapped around them and so forth.

CAPT Goward: I'd like to point out that the problems we have in the Boat Force are really Coast Guard problems. It's just that because they are our smallest, least resourced, most junior units--that these Coast Guard problems show up in the Boat Force first. Stations and boats are like the canary in the mine. And the issue as to who needs to be armed, what the right kinds of weapons are, what the right response level should be, who needs to be trained; these questions have been asked at Marine Safety Offices and they've been asked aboard patrol boats and aboard the 378s for years, as well as at Stations. It's just that, additionally, since they're our most numerous units, they are more visible. So I would say that the boat force and the Coast Guard were in crisis beforehand and we had just magnified the issues by September 11th. One could very much argue that the Coast Guard was responsible for doing the same thing on the 12th as they were on the 9th. It's just that on the 12th we needed to do more of the same things, but and we weren't capable of doing all the things we were supposed to do on the 9th . . .

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: . . . and we were less capable of doing all the things we were supposed to do on the 12th.

Q: Yes. I want to get to those burn rates in a minute. But in terms of platforms; was it your sense after 9-11 . . . one of the things I've heard is that we might need a new kind of small boat and a different kind of small boat crew member in terms of a heavily armed small boat, and you'd have sort of a dual boat force; one that went after Aunt Millie's sailboat once she went aground and the other one that would fight off Al Qaeda?

CDR Maes: You know that's an interesting point. I think, first of all, all the Coast Guard stations are multi-mission stations. They weren't just SAR stations. And they're the folks that are doing the mission right now and have been doing the mission, as the Captain suggested. The mission really didn't change too terribly much. Homeland Security is now a law enforcement mission and our multi-mission crews are already trained at performing law enforcement, maybe with different weaponry. And again, they're doing the mission right now without any change in weapons since September 11th. So that hasn't prevented them from doing the mission.

Q: Is it clear in the minds of people in the Coast Guard that its law enforcement, as opposed to say, a Homeland Defense/DoD issue?

CDR Maes: I think the Commandant's come out clearly to the Coast Guard that basically Homeland Security is a law enforcement mission, particularly because the way we approach it as a Use of Force issue, not as a standard Rules of Engagement, which is the traditional defense posture.

CAPT Goward: Now admittedly, just when you have new kinds of criminals you need new types of equipment and tactics. Our boats after 9-11 . . . in fact timing was propitious in that it allowed us to refine requirements for two new classes of boats a little bit more. We're purchasing the Response Boat - Small, which is our 25-foot trailerable type boat to standardize and replace the non-standard boats. So we pushed up the speed requirement on that a little bit and we put provisions for weapons mounts both fore and aft we had the same issue, for the Response Boat - Medium, which is going to replace the 41-footer. Again, pushed up the speed requirements and emphasize the weapons requirements a little bit more. We looked at things like ballistic protection. Working with the Navy, we found that it goes better on the people than it does on the boat because of degradation in performance caused by the weight.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: So we examined a couple other things and we marginally changed our future boats just a little bit. But quite frankly it is law enforcement. The weapons are another example, as James mentioned; automatic weapons were not necessarily appropriate for us before September 11th and the existing automatic weapons aren't necessarily appropriate for us after. What we're looking at now, as he alluded to, is something that will drop into the water at about 600 yards but has the capability of piercing armor and is handheld. So we may never use the weapon mounts except to put a big piece of hardware that looks like a weapon up there to intimidate people.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: And some of our work indicates that you can be more accurate on a boat with a non-mounted weapon because they're shock absorbing; the fact that you're holding it.

Q: Sure. And those are all discussions that have taken place since 9/11?

CAPT Goward: Yes.

CDR Maes: Sure.

Q: How did it affect this issue as far as the weapons lockers at the small boat stations? Was there suddenly a rush to get weapons lockers back?

CDR Maes: Well I think there was a lot of discussion about who all should have weapons. I know that the MSOs [Marine Safety Offices] who had given up weapons over the past couple of years because of the training requirements and things like that, there was a big rush to try to get those back on, and that was another office here that was working on those types of things. But at the Station level a lot of folks started

looking at trying to get automatic weapons back at the Stations. The 41-footers; the utility boats, actually have mounts on them to accept M-60s. We pretty much moved the M-60s around. In some places we started putting M-60s back on the boats but we had issues of firing warning shots over land and affecting people on the beach. And you know, we still have prohibitions against those types of things.

CAPT Goward: Well, and the training requirements. It's very hard to find a range where you can practice and qualify on an automatic weapon like that.

Q: So even if you had weapons on, say, 500 small boats in 360 ports, it doesn't necessarily mean you're going to be able to train these people anywhere near that small boat station?

CAPT Goward: Exactly.

CDR Maes: And we wouldn't put the weapon on the boat unless we had a qualified crew to use it.

Q: Right. Well the other issue that's come up is this whole issue of, if this is a law enforcement battle space if you will, should everybody have a sidearm; at least a sidearm, even if you don't have heavy automatic weapons?

CAPT Goward: Well that's a good question, and as I think working with police departments will tell you, it's frequently, if not more often, a liability than it is an asset. So does the engineer on the boat carry a sidearm? In other words, is it just the boarding party? Good questions to be sorted out in the law enforcement arena.

CDR Maes: But the question probably more appropriately applies to boats than pretty much anything else.

Q: Because you guys have more interaction with that.

CDR Maes: Well, we're in a Maritime Law Enforcement Agency. Our law enforcement authority doesn't necessarily extend out onto the beach unless we're in hot pursuit. That's probably more of an issue for the lawyers to answer. But we wouldn't necessarily suggest that everybody in the Coast Guard should be carrying a sidearm, because the only place we really ought to be enforcing is where we have jurisdiction, which would be actually out on the water, and that would be our boats and our boarding teams off the boats.

Q: Sure. Was there any discussion of . . . you say you have two new platforms coming online to sort of standardize those and you're going to harden them somewhat. Was there any discussion about separate platforms for rivers or a separate platform all together for these new MSST [Maritime Safety and Security Teams] teams?

CDR Maes: May I take this one?

CAPT Goward: You may.

CDR Maes: Actually I got here, like I said, a month before September 11th actually occurred, and some of the work that was actually being done in this office, I think, is visionary and what's actually being done in the Coast Guard is visionary. We are looking at buying new boats, and as we look at the requirements for Homeland Security we figured all we were really doing was tweaking on the margins; things like speed, where we were going to mount weapons, and as the Captain suggested, maybe ballistic protection and things like that, whether the boat should fit on a C-130. All those things had really been considered at some point or another and we were considering those in the tradeoff analysis. After September 11th those things became more important to us and we started factoring them into the boats.

Other types of things that we were looking at were, [(now called Rescue-21, NDRSMP) National Distress Response System Modernization Project]; the Command and Control for the Coast Guard. You know that system that has been coming online for years really is going to be the Command and Control system for us doing the Homeland Security mission. Those folks thought about all these requirements years before September 11th ever occurred. Now with regard to the MSSTs; the visionary workgroup started by the Captain and some of his staff that were working on this before I got here, were standardizing all of the boats. We looked at this as an opportunity to have the Homeland Security guys driving the same boats as our Search and Rescue guys. They're all doing multi-mission type stuff.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: The Commandant directed that there would be no such thing as a single mission boat in the Coast Guard. We used that as an opportunity to say, you know what? Everybody can drive the same boat. It'll be supported by a standard system. There may be different levels of training for different organizations and tactics that are expected to do different things, but for the most part they can drive the same platform.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: And I think we've been very successful in marketing that concept, and I think we have a lot of folks who were not necessarily true believers in that before, but now that they see what boat capability we plan to deliver, are very convinced that they're going to get the right boat.

CAPT Goward: Part of that is that we've had some experience with specialized boats obviously, and especially very, very fast boats. We purchased some very fast boats; 60-knots plus, for our initial New Frontier operations, and offshore, and we had mixed results in terms of the crews' ability to handle the boats in the sea state and the reliability of a really high tech platform that something like that has to be in order to achieve those kinds of speeds.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: Plus we found that through our experience and through some simulation, that really the most critical factor is not the speed of the government boat as much as . . . I mean it obviously has to get out of its own way and be able to maneuver properly . . . but more it's your tactics and your advance planning.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: Because . . . well as one example: if you're protecting a ship that's coming into port, as long as you are in the vicinity of the asset that you're protecting and you can see something that's coming from a relatively far distance away, and you can maneuver to intercept and position yourself between the attacker and the asset, you're all set. So you don't have to go 60/70 knots for that. Thirty five to forty knots is fine. Also we have found in our work that there are a couple break points in the speeds of boats and how they impact your training requirements, and the performance of the boat. One is right around 20 knots where it goes from being a displacement boat to a planing boat and another is around 40 to 45 knots where at that point the coxswain really has to pretty much focus just on keeping the boat upright. You almost need one throttleman, one person at the helm, and another; a third person, to start thinking about the tactical situation; giving kind of helm commands, because the coxswain is just worrying about driving the boat and not flipping it over.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: So we have, through our experience and study of this, we found that real specialized, really fast boats - and that's what people usually mean when they talk about specialized; the boat's really faster – that those are more of a liability in many instances then they are an asset to us for any number of reasons.

Q: Right, and now that we have helicopters that can do that for us.

CAPT Goward: Well exactly. If you really have to go that fast then go in a helicopter. You're exactly right.

Q: Right. Let me ask you, to sort of follow up on that point is, you say preparation and planning. How comfortable are you that this whole new technology of C4ISR [Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance] that they're buying for Deep Water and so forth is eventually going . . . this intelligence coordination is going to find itself into the Boat Force?

CAPT Goward: That's a good question. We have some real tradeoffs to do there because we don't want to impose crypto requirements on a three or four person boat crew. But at the same time we need to be able to communicate with them without anybody else hearing. Everybody's saying and intending the right things in terms of Deep Water, and them and us matching up. Well the devils, or angels, are in the details. We'll have to see how it works out.

Q: It's all in the details.

CAPT Goward: Yes, right.

CDR Maes: But I don't think necessarily the Deep Water-type things are going to have a tremendous impact on the Boat Force. I think we're looking at doing that stuff 50-miles offshore . . .

CAPT Goward: That's true.

CDR Maes: . . . and our Boat Force stuff is pretty much in the coastal zone; 50-miles and in.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: And I think some of the technology and sensors may help us; infrared type technology that we will be using on the bigger platforms may help us. The Captain's suggested some communications breakthroughs may actually help us as well. But I think for the most part you'll see that the boat forces were ready, if not understaffed, before September 11th, and they'll be equally ready, if not equally understaffed for the tasking coming on now for Homeland Security.

Q: Were you asked after 9-11 to provide security to 361 ports and how much that would cost?

CDR Maes: Well actually we've got 187 stations right now in the Coast Guard and they're doing the mission. They were doing the mission before September 11th and they're the ones who took up the Homeland Security burden after September 11th, and they'll continue to do that. We've looked at how we can manage that. We've shifted the mission priorities, if you will. Search and Rescue and Homeland Security are now our priority, where Search and Rescue was once the predominate mission beforehand . That's all come at the direction of the Commandant for us to look at mission priorities.

Q: You had, what, 1,400 boats? How many boats are we looking at, at these 187 stations?

CAPT Goward: About 1,500 total throughout the Coast Guard, but that includes flood relief punts and cutter boats and that sort of thing.

Q: Right. Are we looking at a big increase in the size of the boat force over the next few years or is it going to stay pretty much the same?

CDR Maes: Over the next three years we're looking at anywhere between 87 and 250, maybe, new boat allowances in the Coast Guard.

CAPT Goward: For Homeland Security types.

Q: Just for Homeland Security?

CAPT Goward: Yes.

Q: And that would have been a direct result of 9-11?

CAPT Goward: Right.

CDR Maes: Yes.

Q: Were you getting reports from the field, or how much were you keeping your ear to the ground in terms of what was going on with the Boat Force after 9-11? You had a force that seemed, as you say, fairly stressed out on 9-10, and I'll show you the . . . as I graphed out some of this Abstract of Operations data after 9-11, you had a spike in the cutter force; this pink line here, which went pretty much back to normal hours, although a different mix of missions, within three weeks. But the Boat Force took a huge leap up in hours and really never came down to the extent that the cutter force did, and sustained it for months.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: Is this what you were hearing from the field anywhere?

CAPT Goward: We were, but I think we were sort of to some degree, were still on the initial adrenalin period. You know folks are doing what they think has to be done. We certainly keep our ear to the ground and we listen to folks, but I have to explain to you that we care very much about day-to-day operations here, though we don't worry too much about day-to-day operations. I explain this when I visit with commanders in the field. We in Headquarters are charged with and we must worry about tomorrow and the system as a whole; where the system is going. We can't do both things. We have District Commanders and Group Commanders and Officers-in-Charge that worry about today and the immediate future and how they're going to get through. And in order to make sure that tomorrow is better we (Office of Boat Forces) have to focus on tomorrow. Now yes, we have to stay in touch with what's going on and have a sense of the trends and those sorts of things. And one thing that we continually tell people is that the central problem in the Coast Guard - again, we're the canary in the mineshaft - certainly one of the central problems in the Boat Force - is the whole issue of balancing tasking and resources; operating to your resource levels. And we in the Coast Guard, have never been willing to do that.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: We always want to go the extra mile and that always involves running somebody, at least one-person, ragged, even if it's just ourselves. And I think that our real challenge in the force and in the Coast Guard is to try and somehow get an understanding of what tasking equals the level of resources that's provided, and try to adjust either the tasking or the resources to get some sort of equilibrium.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: And of course 9/11 wrote that large, you know. We can surge a little bit because, my God, the world's coming to an end or it's changing, or whatever. A lot of it, I think, was sort of high-energy wasted effort. You know much of it was probably necessary just to reassure ourselves and the public that we were there and that something was being done. But there you go.

Q: Do you think that's . . . and it's a good point. I wonder, because it seemed in those first few weeks and months that everybody was waiting for the other shoe to drop.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: That there was going to be some other big incident that was going to happen.

CAPT Goward: And there may still well be.

Q: And may still.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: But you're right. It seems, at least with some hindsight now, that this wasn't Pearl Harbor so much as something else.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: That we weren't going to . . . what we thought we were going to do in those first few weeks, which is this full-scale national mobilization of everything.

CDR Maes: Well as your graphs indicate, I mean there was an incredible surge right after September 11th, and we started hearing from the field of an incredible PERSTEMPO [Personnel Tempo] to maintain the OPTEMPO [Operational Tempo] on the boats. We don't have enough money to buy things like fuel, spare parts. We don't even have the amount of boats and people to continue that type of OPTEMPO, and you see that it peaked out very quickly.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: We just realized that it was unsustainable and I think people realized that. We were very concerned about mishap rates; about things like that; people operating tired beyond their normal fatigue levels, and that just wasn't the right thing to do.

Q: In a programmatic sense you would not see the Coast Guard building toward this level, but yet with this "New Normalcy," as they are calling it, its somewhere above what it was on September 10th. Are you confident that you now will have the number of platforms and the number of personnel that you're going to need to maintain that?

CAPT Goward: Well I say "no" in that what you're envisioning is that someone within the Coast Guard is going to say, this is the New Normalcy. Operate to this resource hour level or this OPTEMPO.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: And I guarantee you that if we did say that, which hasn't been done, that we wouldn't have the resources to do that. I think that, defacto, we will do what we've always done, which is we will

describe where we think we need to go to the Congress and the Administration in terms of new levels of activity. They will then provide us additional resources or will reprogram resources within the Coast Guard and then we will take a look at what we've got and try and operate to that level, probably over-operate at that level.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: But try and do with what we have, which is sort of the American public service equation I guess.

Q: Well that's a good point. As 9-11 starts to fade in the American public's memory, do you see that port security; this big surge of port security that's now pulled back somewhat, sort of fading from their memory as well and not being such a big issue, or do you think that as far as the Coast Guard's concerned, that it's going to be institutionalized, at least for a while?

CDR Maes: I think the New Normalcy is something we're probably going to live with. It's going to be higher than what it used to be before. I would say to a certain extent maybe it has faded a little bit from the general public's; from what they see and think about every single day. I would say from our perspective it really hasn't gone away and I would expect it would probably take a period of time before it ever does, if it ever does.

CAPT Goward: Yes, I think that the public awareness and perception is one thing. But my impression is that folks within government; both Executive and Legislative, are impacted by these things in an ongoing and fairly sustained basis. I mean in terms of people in government, this was a paradigm altering, life altering, cathartic, event. It's here to stay.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: Now at what level is yet to be determined. But yes, things change. You know, we have these – what is it – four/six, twelve eventually, MSSTs standing up as specialized units. I think that at some level we should have had them before anyway. We should have always operated the Port Contingency Plans. We should have had more resources in the Pacific Northwest because it's a huge area and we have very few Coast Guard resources there.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: We had responsibilities in terms of port security and safety that we were just not able to resource well. Now we will be able to resource them. Will we have the same number of MSSTs on an ongoing basis as we did when we built them to their peak? Maybe not, but I don't think they'll all go away.

Q: Is it in the works for them to be equipped with a certain platform?

CAPT Goward: Right, the same platform the Stations have.

Q: And that will be?

CAPT Goward: The Response Boat - Small.

Q: Small boats, okay.

CDR Maes: Yes.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: And when are those scheduled to come online?

CDR Maes: We expect we'll be awarding the contract early in Fiscal Year '03 and then they'll be coming online three months after that sometime.

CAPT Goward: What we did was . . .

Q: Where are those being built?

CAPT Goward: Well we don't know yet. We don't have the contract.

Q: No.

CAPT Goward: Ahh, trying to trip us up! (Laughter)

Q: No, no, my mistake.

CAPT Goward: But I can tell you that . . .

CDR Maes: In the United States of America.

CAPT Goward: That's right.

Q: Or at least a substantial percentage thereof.

CDR Maes: Yes.

CAPT Goward: That's right. A couple of things in terms of boat acquisition: between September 11th and the end of the fiscal year, which was 19 days afterwards, an additional 42 boats were purchased by the District Commanders, because up until the first of this fiscal year purchase of the small end of our boat inventory was the responsibility of the District Commander, so they went out and purchased 42 – no, it wasn't 42. It was like 26 – new boats. But we have 42 boats operating above our allowed level as a result of those purchases and boats that are brought back out of retirement, and that sort of thing.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: I think those are the numbers. At any rate, so that was sort of Phase One of providing more boats right away. Phase Two providing more boats right away was a sole source contract we had under our emergency authority to Safe Boats of Washington State for a 25-foot trailerable, prominently fendered, twin outboard engine boat that we can immediately field. It's in production right now. We'll start delivery at the end of May for Maritime Safety and Security Teams, and to provide us capability in those locations where we have basically empty allowances as a result of the allowances that were added on as a result of September 11th.

Q: And does your office also handle the concomitant buildup, and you've got to write training manuals and pre-qualifications and all that?

CAPT Goward: Right.

CDR Maes: Yes.

Q: All that policy is also done right here?

CAPT Goward: Right. Sixteen folks; we do all those new programs and they run about 25 percent of the field level . . . more like 30 percent, I guess, of the field level Coast Guard in terms of daily support.

Q: Being a polar archeologist myself and interested in polar history, I was fascinated when Doctor [Robert] Browning told me we have an LCVP [Landing Craft, Vehicle & Personnel] onboard the newest icebreaker in the Coast Guard.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: I said, that must be a lot of fun to go off this 2002 icebreaker and be dropped in the water over there, you know, a 1945 LCVP.

CAPT Goward: That's right. But that's---

Q: Well actually I found a photograph of us leaving one of those on the beach in about 1962, and it's somewhere in Antarctica. It's still sitting down there somewhere.

CAPT Goward: It's probably in pristine condition because it's so dry. We'll have to go down and get that one.

Q: We'll use it for spare parts.

CAPT Goward: That's right.

Q: Would it be possible to get a list of these two new platforms that they are going to try to streamline, you know, the ones that they're replacing?

CAPT Goward: We can give you the copy of the transition . . .

CDR Maes: Yes, we've got sort of a . . . yes, we've got a transition paper we can give you.

Q: And a notional idea of what . . . ?

CAPT Goward: Yes. And this was something that we had in place before September 11th.

Q: Sure.

CAPT Goward: It's called Response Boats; 2010. It's a Commandant Instruction that outlines how we're transitioning from a boat force dominated by non-standard boats to one that has several fleets of standard boats with complimentary capabilities; kind of an integrated coastal waters response boat system, if you will.

Q: Is that concept of . . . you were never asked to sort of step out of the multi-mission area and think that we needed some kind of radical new platform?

CAPT Goward: Not really.

CDR Maes: I think when the MSSTs were first conceived in the first days there was some thought that they would be a single mission type. But I think the discussion was like a domestic port security unit. I think after we sort of discussed that, it was, in fact, a boat force-type capability. I think we're able to sort

of explain why we couldn't have a Coast Guard boat that wouldn't do search and rescue in a domestic setting.

Q: Sure.

CDR Maes: And I think everybody agreed then that there would be no single mission Coast Guard boats out there; particularly in a domestic setting.

CAPT Goward: And that's really one of the benefits to having our current organization where . . . and to a certain degree, aviation's always been this way. They provide aviation services to the Coast Guard regardless of the mission and sort of temper the periodic mission pulses of, oh, we have to do this, or, we have to do that. We're able to do the same thing in terms of being boat resource providers to all Coast Guard missions.

Q: Is that a historical trend in the Coast Guard whereby we've finally gotten the idea that the Coast Guard historically has gone to one or another mission depending on where they thought the money was that day?

CAPT Goward: Yes, I think, as per Pub One [Coast Guard Publication One] that the Coast Guard's multi-missioned and we need to stay as multi-missioned as we can because the priorities change from day-to-day and we service any number of business lines. No, we can't make all of our vessels law enforcement, aids to navigation, ice breaking fast boats. But when the opportunities present themselves, certainly in terms of station boats, it makes sense.

Q: Right.

CDR Maes: It helps us and it hurts us.

Q: Yes.

CDR Maes: You know we were trying to buy the Response Boat - Small and the Response Boat - Medium with the Search and Rescue plus-up that we were hoping to get as a result of the DOTIG [Department of Transportation's Inspector General] report that took a look at our readiness at Coast Guard stations, predominately focusing on SAR. Now that Homeland Security's become a real priority we're still looking to buy those same Response Boats: Smalls and Mediums, and now we're getting funding to do those things and we are accounting for that money buying Homeland Security boats; Response Boats - Small and Response Boat - Mediums, even though they'll be the same; almost the exact same thing.

Q: The same platform, different mission.

CDR Maes: Yes, a different funding source with a mission focus on those boats, yes.

Q: Is that just something that Coast Guard officers have to deal with; programmatic officers have to deal with as a matter of their life in the Coast Guard?

CAPT Goward: Oh absolutely.

Q: You might ramp-up for one platform and then all of a sudden the funding comes from a completely different source for a different mission.

CAPT Goward: Right. Well you know it's funny because Congress gives you money to do specific things, but you spend the money on assets that are cross-programmatic; cross-missions.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: So to some degree it's an accounting issue of how you allocate your overhead, which I think is . . . I mean commercial firms deal with it every day. If it's necessary for us to do that, we can do that too.

Q: I'm just wondering of the psychology of the Congressman who comes back three years from now and says, well I saw one of your boats out there doing whatever, you know, taking plastic out of a seal's mouth or whatever it was, and he's supposed to be guarding my chemical plant and what not.

CDR Maes: I think if a Congressman says, hey, we gave you "X" number of millions of dollars to buy 20 boats, we can tell him exactly where those 20 boats went and what they're doing for Homeland Security.

Q: Yes.

CDR Maes: On the other hand, if a Congressman said, we gave you "X" number of millions of dollars to plus-up your Search and Rescue capability, we can say, this is where we put those boats to plus-up our Search and Rescue capability. The ultimate goal for us though is to put the resources in the hands of the people that are actually doing that day-to-day decision-making and what is their highest priority mission at the time; respond to the Search and Rescue case or do the Homeland Security patrol.

CAPT Goward: It's triage.

Q: Well I'm going to switch from platforms for a minute and ask you about personnel. How do you think this has affected, both in training and the psychology, of the people who run the Boat Force? What was your sense of it before September 11th and what is it now?

CDR Maes: Well I think the feeling of the folks in the field was that they were understaffed; that they had a lot of things on their plate and they didn't have all the people to do the mission. I don't think that that's changed right now. I think there's even more on their plate and the Captain and his staff before me have actually had a lot of success in trying to restore the Boat Force staffing. After September 11th a lot of the gaps were filled with Reserves. We got Reserves in for long periods of time and there was a lot of training requirements and outfitting requirements, personal protective equipment; things like that, we had to do for our Reserves to make a good number of them contributing members of the Boat Force. Now some of those folks are being demobilized and sent home. I think that the reality is that . . . and I think the trends in your OPTEMPO for boats indicate that that we don't have the staffing to maintain that high level of OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO that we're looking at. So I think the general consensus is there's a lot more work out there to do than we're staffed to do.

Q: Does that lead to an unfair rap, if you want to call it that, when something disastrous happens within the boat force somebody dies on a SAR case or something like that, I guess magnified, whereas say somebody falls off a 378 or what not, that wouldn't necessarily be such a big issue?

CDR Maes: I better let you answer that question.

CAPT Goward: I think that the raps are fairly fair. If somebody gets in an automobile accident it's not going to be a _____. Somebody dies on one of the boats line; the Niagara case, we investigate it and find out why and the causes. . . I'm not sure what you mean by an unfair rap?

Q: Well I'm kind of following up on your canary in the mine metaphor.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: It seems like that you can extend that to say that when the canary dies it's a huge, you know, an organizational disaster.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: Whereas you don't see that in other parts of this organization, I don't think, at the same level.

CAPT Goward: Well whenever we have a fatality, whenever we have a mishap, I like to say that responsibility is, should be evenly apportioned, in three places: the coxswain, the command, and the Coast Guard. The coxswain because, obviously, there is some sort of proximate cause there. Not obviously, but nine times out of ten there's a proximate cause there that they turned the wheel wrong, they didn't wear the survival device, they did something that was the cause of the mishap. The command; because the command has an immediate responsibility in terms of supervising and equipping and preparing and so forth.

Q: Yes.

CAPT Goward: And the Coast Guard overall because we have the responsibility to create the culture to prevent these sorts of things and to supply the equipment, funding, background training and all of that to prevent these kinds of things from happening. And you know, the fatal mishaps are really just the tip of the iceberg. It's just where any number . . . you know you pull the arm on the slot machine and all of sudden, miraculously, all the things line up.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: And any one of which didn't line up, you wouldn't have the fatality.

Q: Right.

CAPT Goward: But the statistics get you. So really these individual failures that often occur at once have been occurring individually all along, and you just have the simultaneity of it that cause it to happen all at once and you get a fatal mishap. So our inability to see them happening all along and correct those is what allows, eventually, the mishap to occur.

Q: Right. Speaking of culture, I just want to kind of wind up. As I've been going through Situation Reports, it strikes me as culturally interesting in that it seems most of our Situation Reports will identify a cutter by its name; you know, cutter so and so is enroute or on-scene, or whatever. And this was the very first Situation Report that was generated here the first day and you see what's happening here, there and everywhere, and then you've got cutter so and so and then small boats; seven each. So they tend to fade into anonymity in history, and I wonder if . . . I know that you've been involved in this issue about naming Small Boats.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: But shouldn't there be a requirement to tell us what numbers those are so that those crews aren't lost?

CAPT Goward: Well yes. I think that the old adage: small boats, small stuff . . . well I don't know if you've read my initial article about this in the Naval Institute. But the leadership of the Coast Guard comes from the Academy as cutterman by and large. And so that's what they think about. You are where you came from and they don't think about the boats. I mean it is not to say they're bad people or evil people. It's just we're all a product of our background, whereas the public thinks about the Coast Guard as a small boat organization, you know, boat driven/boat oriented. And when you look at the amount of public interaction where the Coast Guard and the direct service provided is to the public, which makes sense.

Not to say one is more important than the other, but it's just a matter of emphasis and visibility. And historically is it to the guy's on the boats disadvantage? Probably a little. I think they have the most exciting stories, the most interesting stories, but they're the least able to capture them for themselves.

Q: Well that was kind of my point is, it's easy to find out who the Commandant is and its easy to find out who the District Commander is, and its easy to find out what cutters are on-scene in an incident like this. But it's almost impossible, first to find the small boat that was there and then to track down the crew, and then to actually get to the crew.

CAPT Goward: Right.

Q: I went to Activities New York a couple of weeks ago and, you're right, some of the best stories I got were from the small . . . in fact the very first Coast Guard boat that responded to 9-11 was a 41-footer with a BM3 who had just been coxswain-qualified about two or three weeks before 9-11, had never been on a SAR case before. A SAR alarm goes off on the morning of 9-11. He thought it was mistake and said there was smoke coming out of the North Tower, so they sent the boat over to investigate. It was about a ten minute run from Station New York to the Battery and they got just even with Governor's Island and he said, one of my guys said to me, he said, hey Perez, did you hear that? And he said, no, what? And they turned around and they looked and there was another plane coming in like a hundred feet over their head, and they looked up and this plane came right over their boat as they were even with Governor's Island, right into the South Tower. So they were there like seven/eight blocks away and watched the whole thing, and they were the only boat on-scene for about two hours until everything got cranked up. It was really an incredible story.

CAPT Goward: Yes.

Q: So a helluva first SAR case.

CAPT Goward: That's right.

CDR Maes: Oh yes.

Q: Well gentlemen, I want to thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

