

Strike Team Areas of Responsibility



NSF Contact Numbers

Atlantic Strike Team **(609) 724-0008**

Gulf Strike Team **(251) 441-6601**

Pacific Strike Team **(415) 883-3311**

Coordination Center **(252) 331-6000**

Website **www.uscg.mil/hq/nsfweb/nsfcc**

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YEAR

2003 Year In Review



2003 Year in Review

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Tasman Spirit Oil Spill

TASMAN SPIRIT Oil Spill - Karachi, Pakistan

July 27, 2003

At the request of the government of Pakistan, the National Strike Force sent two members to provide technical assistance following a 27,000-ton crude oil spill from the grounded tanker ship TASMAN SPIRIT July 27 in the port of Karachi. The ship began to break up and release large quantities of oil in mid-August and threatened to impede commerce in Karachi's only deep draft channel.



The TASMAN SPIRIT's aft section after the ship broke up and came to rest on the bottom in the port of Karachi.



With the help of NSF personnel, the oil spill's impact to local beaches was kept to a minimum.



LCDR William Carter, Executive Officer of the Pacific Strike Team, and MSTC A.J. St. Germain, from the NSFCC, were deployed in early October to assess the spill and provide guidance on response techniques.

According to a statement by the American Consul General's office in Karachi, Carter and St. Germain helped focus response goals, "drawing upon their experience with oil spills, the team helped their Pakistani colleagues distinguish between immediate risks and remote possibilities. We appreciate their visit," the statement explained.

LCDR William Carter (right), the PST's executive officer, assesses the wreck of the Tasman Spirit with Rear Admiral Noman Bashir (left), the operations manager of the Karachi Port Trust.

NSF International Responses

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The Mina al-Bakr offshore oil terminal: U.S. Central Command planners pre-staged response gear that could be deployed as a first response capability in the event of the worst case scenario: the complete destruction of Iraq's Mina al-Bakr oil terminal.



Operation Iraqi Freedom - Persian Gulf

February, 2003

In anticipation of acts of environmental sabotage by Saddam Hussein, the NSF sent 13 members to the Middle East to join a team of contractors from the Navy Supervisor of Salvage (SUPSALV) and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to support Operation Iraqi Freedom's Military Environmental Response Operations (MERO).

Planners at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) assembled the team to prepare for the possible intentional destruction of Iraqi oil infrastructure meant to impede the progress of coalition forces and cause an international outcry. Using the complete destruction of an Iraqi offshore crude oil terminal, Mina al-Bakr, as a worst case template, the team put together a strategy to pre-stage SUPSALV pollution response gear and NSF pollution response experts who would be needed in the event of a spill. Intelligence estimates suggested approximately 1.3 million barrels of oil a day could be spilled if the terminal was sabotaged.

The NSF's team, which included personnel from all four units, traveled to the Middle East in February to join the MERO team as they assembled gear and prepared for a possible response. LCDR Ron Cantin, Executive Officer of the Pacific Strike Team, was chosen as MERO mission commander while the other NSF personnel assisted with SUPSALV small boats and skimmers, deck rigging, atmospheric monitoring, and safety supervision. The USS COMSTOCK (LSD 45), a 609-foot Amphibious Dock Landing Ship, was the base of operations because of its ability to support a large amount of equipment and personnel, provide heavy-lift cranes, and effectively transport large amounts of gear. Training and testing were critical as this was the first time SUPSALV oil pollution gear would be deployed on the well deck of an amphibious warship.

Fortunately, Iraqi forces never had the chance to destroy the terminal. Coalition forces preemptively seized oil platforms and shoreline facilities that controlled sub-sea pipelines. The move successfully averted the worst case scenario and allowed the

NSF team to return home after two months in theater.

Participation in MERO was a series of firsts for the NSF. Not only was it the first exercise of the Memorandum of Agreement between DOD and the DHS for Coast Guard support of the National Military Strategy under the Environmental Annex, but it was also the first time oil-spill gear was staged to deal with the consequences of an intentional spill in an active combat theatre.



NSF personnel supplemented Navy small boat and skimmer crews during oil pollution response gear deployment operations.

Commander's Comments

Capt. Scott E. Hartley

Two thousand and three has been a year of changes, challenges, and firsts. The Coast Guard officially became part of the newly formed Department of Homeland Security. This transition was the most extensive reorganization of the federal government since the establishment of the Department of Defense in 1947. The Coast Guard was given the responsibility of becoming the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security. As we assume our new roles and responsibilities in homeland security, our challenge is to continue to provide the exceptional level of service and support you have come to expect. We endeavor to have this be transparent and, as always, we strive to exceed your expectations.



Our responses were very unique this year. When the Space Shuttle Columbia tragically broke apart re-entering the earth's atmosphere, we were called to help recover debris that fell over six states. In addition to debris collection, we provided boats that U.S. Navy divers used to search for and recover shuttle parts. Strike Force personnel also played key roles in the recovery organization that numbered in the thousands at the height of the response.

Another unique response was our involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was the largest deployment of Coast Guard people and equipment to a theater of war since Vietnam. The NSF partnered with the U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support Military Environmental Response Operations (MERO). This was the first use of a Memorandum of Agreement for Coast Guard support of the National Military Strategy. We sent a contingent of NSF responders to Bahrain to plan for a response to any intentional spilling of oil that might impact combat operations or humanitarian relief efforts. Nine C-5 Air Force planes transported response equipment to Kuwait where it was loaded aboard a U.S. Navy amphibious war ship. This proved to be an ideal platform for launching and recovering skimmers, boom and small boats. Fortunately, preventive efforts by U.S. and Coalition Special Forces secured all potential release points and a response was not needed. This was an excellent opportunity and great learning experience that we hope doesn't happen often.

This is my last Year in Review, as I will retire after 27 years in the Coast Guard. I have had the good fortune to spend five of those years in the NSF. I have never met a group of more dedicated people that are as passionate about what they do and the services they provide. It has truly been an honor to serve with them. I only have one last request, "call the NSF". They can discuss options, provide responders and equipment, and help with organizational support. You will be pleasantly surprised, as have I.

Scott E. Hartley

Mission

The National Strike Force (NSF) is a vital national asset comprised of a unique, highly-trained cadre of Coast Guard professionals who maintain and rapidly deploy with specialized equipment and incident management skills.

Our mandate is to assist and support Lead Agency Incident Commanders and Federal On-Scene Coordinators with their response and preparedness activities for both crisis and consequence management.

In this way, the NSF supports the National Response System and Homeland Security by minimizing the adverse impact to the public and reducing environmental damage from Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) events, hazardous substance releases and oil discharges.

Vision

The National Strike Force will continue to be the catalyst for an effective National Response and Homeland Security System.

The NSF will maintain worldwide recognition as experts essential to the nation's ability to prepare for and respond to weapons of mass destruction events, hazardous substance releases, oil discharges, and other emergencies on behalf of the American public.

NSF Photos



Lt. JoAnne Hanson, the Atlantic Strike Team's chemical officer, and Petty Officer Joshua Decker, a marine science technician with the Gulf Strike Team, carry Petty Officer Dave Schacher, a reservist with the National Strike Force Coordination Center, on a rescue sked during the National Strike Force Weapons of Mass Destruction Technician Course March 10 at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. The sked is a light, highly portable piece of equipment used to evacuate personnel from a contaminated area.



Chief Petty Officer Scott Gray, a Machinery Technician with the Gulf Strike Team, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Anicia Hokanson, a Marine Science Technician with the Atlantic Strike Team, plot coordinates of reported debris sites on their computer Feb 5, at the Hemphill, Texas Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery Command Post. The debris coordinates were used to make maps with the locations of debris that teams later located with their handheld GPS's.



Petty Officer 1st Class John Kapsimalis and Petty Officer Bryan Nystrom, Marine Science Technicians with the Atlantic Strike Team, go over plans for locating wreckage from the Space Shuttle Columbia, Feb 4th outside of the San Augustine, Texas Command Post. Each of the Strike teams sent personnel to assist with the recovery efforts.



Tank fires and other damage to Guam's infrastructure after Hurricane Pongsona lead to fuel shortages, contaminated drinking water and other hardships for members of the Pacific Strike Team who travelled to the island in March to assist in the clean-up efforts.

NSF WMD Training

The NSF worked closely with the U.S. Army Chemical School at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. for two years to develop the National Strike Force Weapons of Mass Destruction Technician Course. Team members took the weeklong course in March and developed the skills and techniques needed to operate in a WMD environment.



Instructors set booby traps to keep the existence of secondary devices firmly entrenched in the minds of the Strike Team members as they did their initial entry into the contaminated building.

The Field Exercise portion of the course simulated a terrorist incident requiring the teams to enter a building suspected of housing weapons of mass destruction. Here, members of a three-man initial entry team in Level A HAZMAT suits search for weapons with chemical and radiological detecting devices.



Chief Petty Officer Harry Hueston, with the Gulf Strike Team, a member of the initial entry back up team, waits for the call he hopes will never come; "Man down!" during the Field Exercise. The emergency evacuation team wears the same level of protective gear as the initial entry team and is ready to go on air, zip up, and rescue a downed member of the initial entry team within minutes.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Peter Knorr, a boatswain's mate at the Atlantic Strike Team, pops an amulet containing the heating element of a M256A1 Chemical Detection Kit, while Petty Officer 3rd Class Bryan Nystrom, a Marine Science Technician with the AST, observes.

How the NSF Works

Incident Occurs



Call made to National Response Center (NRC)

NRC Calls Coast Guard or EPA Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC)

FOSC calls a Strike Team for assistance

Strike Team mobilizes:

- 2 Strike Team members immediately
- 4 Strike Team members within 2 hours
- 12 Strike Team members within 6 hours



Strike Team Arrives On-Scene:

Consult with Federal On-Scene Coordinator
Assesses situation
Deploy Strike Team equipment



INCIDENT SUPPORT

Strike Team members, under the FOSC's direction, provide contractor oversight, air/water/soil sampling, site safety, and cost and photo documentation during:

- Natural disasters
- Oil spills
- Chemical releases
- WMD responses
- Other incidents



Strike Team Released

Federal On-Scene Coordinator makes decision to release team. Strike team departs and prepares for next incident.



Atlantic Strike Team

Fort Dix, New Jersey

Between January and December of 2003, the Atlantic Strike Team (AST) assisted Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Federal On-Scene Coordinators while responding to six hazardous materials releases, five oil spills, and two maritime security incidents.

The Atlantic Strike Team assisted with clean up efforts following Hurricane Isabel and the recovery efforts after the Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas and Louisiana.

In addition, AST personnel deployed to Buzzard's Bay, Mass. in April to assist Marine Safety Office Providence's clean-up efforts after a barge ran aground spilling 98,000 gallons of oil.

The PST currently has forty-four active duty members, forty Selected Reservists and two civilian employees assigned.



Atlantic Strike Team members went to Texas to assist with the Space Shuttle Columbia recovery efforts in January.



Members of the Atlantic Strike Team deployed to Staten Island, NY in February to assist after a barge containing 100,000 barrels of petroleum exploded February 21.



AST personnel spent much of April and May helping to clean up the Buzzard's Bay Oil Spill in Massachusetts.

Making the Cut

Strike Team Qualifications

RESPONSE MEMBER

Entry-level Strike Team position, attained by member within 6 months. Primary responsibility is to assist Response Technician.

Qualifications and Training:

- HAZMAT technician course
- Basic Strike Team equipment and response training
- NOAA Oil Spill Response course
- 100 and 200-level ICS training
- Familiar with all Strike Team equipment and operations



RESPONSE TECHNICIAN

Second-level Strike Team position attained within 12 months. Serve as technical experts and fill leadership positions in response organizations.

Qualifications and Training:

- Qualified Response Member
- HAZMAT specialist training
- Weapons of mass destruction training
- Advanced Coast Guard oil spill response training
- EPA water/soil/air sampling course
- HAZMAT Safety Officer course
- 300-level ICS training
- Expert with all Strike Team equipment and operations

RESPONSE SUPERVISOR

Highest enlisted-level Strike Team position, attained within 24 months. Primary responsibilities are to supervise Strike Team operations and lead responses.

Qualifications and Training:

- Qualified Response Technician
- HAZMAT Incident Commander course
- EPA Health and Safety for Decision Makers course
- FEMA Professionals in Emergency Management course



RESPONSE OFFICER

Highest level Strike Team position. Requires up to 3 1/2 years Strike Team experience and extensive field experience. Response Officers are HAZMAT Incident Command qualified and capable of managing all aspects of an incident response.

National Strike Force Coordination Center

Preparedness Department

In 2003, the NSF's Preparedness for Response Exercise Department (PREP) was busy assisting communities from Alaska to Mexico develop exercises to assess their preparedness to respond to oil spills, mass rescues and maritime security incidents. What set this year apart was a change in our customers' needs to integrate terrorism response in their planning and preparation activities. What will determine our future is our transition to a total preparedness provider, able to assist our customers with all aspects of preparedness including planning, training, exercise and evaluation.

The PREP department's most notable success in 2003 was the execution of three major exercises during three consecutive weeks in October and November. Running three major exercises in three weeks while simultaneously developing five other major exercises speaks highly to the professionalism, expert performance and mission-oriented focus of the 18-person staff assigned to the Preparedness Department.

Individually designed and developed 2003 PREP exercises included exercises in the panhandle of Florida (CHER-CAP), Albany, NY, Erie, PA, and Philadelphia, PA to meet the local areas' needs.

CHER-CAP was unique in that it was the first attempt to combine two major federal exercise programs; PREP and FEMA's Chemical Emergency Responder Capabilities Program, in an oil-spill, hazardous materials, weapons of mass destruction and anti-terrorism response using a single major marine incident to drive the exercise.

The Albany, NY EPA exercise evaluated both the local incident command in Albany, NY and the newly developed EPA Region II area command structure response to a complex oil and hazardous materials release caused by a deliberate act.

The Erie, PA exercise assessed the capability of Coast Guard and local responders to a mass rescue operation and to provide mass casualty care to survivors of a collision between two vessels, transition to a response organization to respond to an oil spill affecting two states, two Coast Guard Federal On-Scene Coordinator zones, and two Regional Response Team boundaries.

The PREP branch's Philadelphia PA exercise was highlighted by the use of outside Incident Command System (ICS) experts to provide players with exceptional coaching/mentoring. It produced a new ICS organizational structure which integrated law enforcement and oil spill response personnel and assessed the capability of the local response community to form a Unified Command to respond to an oil spill and a deliberate criminal act causing the oil spill.

The PREP Department was asked by Coast Guard District 14 (Hawaii) to develop a response plan and an exercise for maritime security incidents. Incorporating input from lead federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, PREP developed the Maritime Security Incident Response Plan within two months. It was quickly approved by the senior leaders of the lead agencies.

2004 PREP Exercises

April: Spill of National Significance (SONS) drill in San Diego, Los Angeles, and Mexico's 2nd Naval Zone

August: Valdez, AK

October: Boston, MA

December: Guam

September: Milwaukee, WI



Forrest Willis (left) and Dennis Cashman, both team leaders with the NSFCC's PREP Department, discuss the Philadelphia PREP exercise's progress in the control room.

In addition to PREP's 2003 exercises, branch personnel were heavily focused on planning the Spill of National Significance (SONS) Exercise. This national-level exercise, taking place in April 2004, will have multiple oil spill scenarios occurring in the Los Angeles CA, San Diego, CA and Ensenada, Mexico. The exercise will require the establishment of a National Incident Commander (NIIMS Area Command) in accordance with National Contingency Plan requirements for a SONS Incident. While robustly assessing the preparedness of the National Response System as a whole, this exercise will also be the first national-level exercise of the new Initial National Response Plan and National Incident Management System.

We see the future of PREP exercises having a terrorism component in "all hazards all risks" type scenarios. Our commitment to our customers in the response community is to work together to design, develop, and conduct the best possible exercises to meet their needs. Whatever changes come our way, we will remain steadfast in our belief that "Preparedness Perfects Response."

Overturned Fuel Truck

Fort Dix, NJ March 5th, 2003

The AST responded to a request from the Fort Dix Fire Chief to provide oversight on clean-up operations of a fuel truck that had overturned on Range Road, which runs along the perimeter of the Fort Dix Army Base.

Upon AST's arrival, the Fort Dix Fire Dept. was busy constructing berms to contain the spilled diesel fuel. The AST's personnel evaluated the existing containment berm and assisted with the completion of a bermed enclosure around the spill. The AST personnel also conducted atmospheric monitoring, oversight of clean-up operations, and ensured site safety protocols were followed throughout the response.

With the help of Clean Harbors, a Fort Dix-contracted Oil Spill Removal Organization, approximately 7,500 gallons of diesel fuel were recovered by vacuum truck. The AST personnel were demobilized after the truck was righted and the contaminated berming soil was removed.

This incident provided AST personnel a rare opportunity to participate with a local Fire Dept. in a response involving a tanker truck. Furthermore, the inter-agency response afforded both agencies' personnel familiarization with each agency's procedures.



Damaged Oil Pipeline

Pittsford, NY June-August, 2003

On June 17, 2003, the Atlantic Strike Team received a request from an EPA Federal On Scene Coordinator (FOSC) at the Monoco Oil facility in Pittsford, NY. The request was to manage site safety at an EPA-managed oil spill remediation operation for five days to allow EPA personnel to attend a training session.

The site was the scene of a 1998 oil pipeline spill. The pipeline was damaged during an ice storm and caused approximately 8,000 gallons of #6 oil to spill into a containment area. After the initial clean-up efforts reclaimed all of the retrievable oil, it was determined that approximately 3,000 gallons had seeped down into the soil and underlying sedimentary limestone strata. The site was closed in 2000 by a state order and scheduled for clean-up under the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund in 2003.

cols were followed. They also provided contractor oversight of the excavation of the substrate, test application of a bio-remediation agent, and soil sifting and segregation operations.

The AST provided site safety management over all activities, including the control of generated dust particulates, ensured proper waste disposal proto-

tion agent, and soil sifting and segregation operations.



APM Terminal Leaking Tank

Elizabeth, NJ August 27, 2003

The AST received a request from Coast Guard Activities New York for technical guidance in response to a damaged intermodal tank (IMT) containing epichlorohydrin (ECH), a highly flammable, poisonous liquid.

The IMT was damaged after it fell off of a trailer while being moved within the terminal facility. Damages were so severe that the IMT could not be transported over land and required transferring of the ECH to another approved tank.

During the response, AST personnel performed a number of vital tasks including research of product hazards, establishment of initial safety protocols until a transfer plan could be finalized, continuous atmospheric monitoring, and reviewing transfer and site safety plans prior to commencement of operations.

The AST personnel also provided site safety management over all response activities including proper grounding/bonding, use of compatible materials, and monitoring worker fatigue.

By Sept. 2nd, a "gravity feed transfer" method was approved by the Captain of the Port and a hazardous materials response/transfer team was contracted by the terminal owners. During the transfer, AST provided site safety management and contractor oversight. Transfer operations were successfully conducted on Sept. 6th.



Gulf Strike Team

Mobile, Alabama

Between January and December of 2003, the Gulf Strike Team (GST) assisted Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Federal On-Scene Coordinators while responding to 12 hazardous material releases, 12 oil/petroleum spills and three support cases.

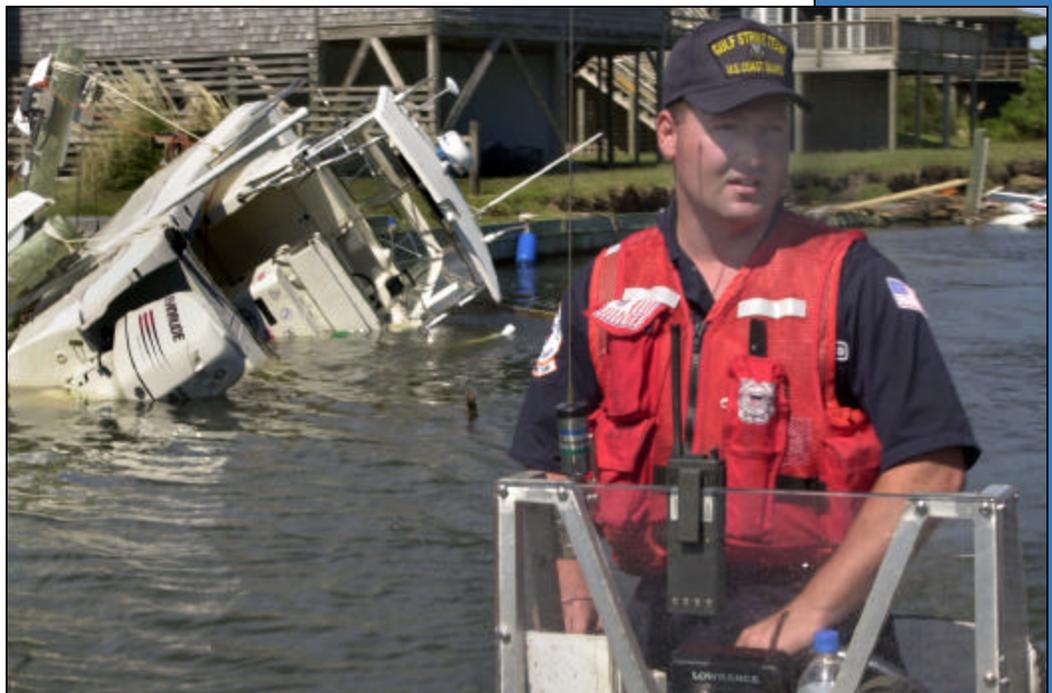
During a very active, dynamic year, the GST also assisted with clean-up efforts after Hurricane Isabel and with recovery efforts after the Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas and Louisiana.

In addition, GST personnel deployed to vessel groundings and sinkings, chemical and petroleum releases, abandoned chemical storage containers, and radiation detection and EPA time-critical responses.

The GST currently has forty-four active duty members, forty Selected Reservists and two civilian employees assigned.



A GST small boat provided an excellent diving platform on the Toledo Bend Reservoir in Texas during the Space Shuttle Columbia Recovery.



Members of the Gulf Strike Team deployed to North Carolina's Outer Banks to assist the EPA's clean-up of wreckage left by Hurricane Isabel in September.

National Strike Force Coordination Center

Equipment Support Branch

During pollution incidents where Coast Guard-owned response equipment has been deployed, the NSF's Equipment Support Branch provides logistical support for transporting resources and technical assistance to Strike Teams, District Response Advisory Teams, and JUNIPER Class WLB's.

In 2003, the Equipment Support Branch coordinated three Oil Spill Response Technician courses with oversight including all aspects of coordination, curriculum update, student participation, scheduling, and instructing.

This year, the Equipment Support Branch oversaw three equipment system alterations, four system upgrades, and established two new Spilled Oil Recovery Systems (SORS) onboard the Coast Guard Cutters OAK and CYPRESS.

The NSF's National Maintenance Contract (NMC) provides national oversight of the maintenance program for more than \$41 million dollars worth of Coast Guard oil spill pollution response equipment. NMC ensures standardization, interoperability, and the operational reliability of all Coast Guard-owned oil spill response equipment.

In 2003, NMC activities included performing maintenance visits at 21 Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System (VOSS) sites, 13 Spilled Oil Recovery System (SORS) sites, and at all three Strike Teams.

In addition to site visits, the Equipment Branch provided assistance at one SORS exercise to evaluate inventory like the 25,000 gallon Canflex Seaslug Temporary Storage Device to insure that they will perform effectively during oil spill responses.

NSF Pre-Staged Pollution Response Equipment



VOSS: Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System: a portable oil recovery system capable of being deployed on vessels 65 feet or longer.

SORS: Spilled Oil Recovery System: a portable oil recovery system designed for use aboard Coast Guard Buoy Tenders.

National Strike Force Coordination Center Elizabeth City, North Carolina



The NSFCC provides support, strategic direction and standardization to all three Strike Teams. The NSFCC is home to the National Preparedness for Response Exercise Program, the Public Information Assist Team, the Response Resource Assessment Branch, the National Oil Spill Removal Organization Classification Program and the Equipment Support Branch.

Operations Department

The Response Resource Assessment (RRA) Branch experienced three major changes this year including the name change from Oil Spill Removal Organization Branch (OSRO) to the Response Resource Assessment Branch, the introduction of Preparedness Assessment Visits, and the alignment of these visits with NSF Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP) drills.

The branch name change reflects RRA's expanding focus from strictly commercial OSRO verification to the assessment and verification of Coast Guard and other federal, state, and local agency response assets and salvage equipment. Ultimately, this will provide an accurate picture of the nation's emergency response resources.

The RRA developed the Preparedness Assessment Visit program to ensure OSROs are prepared for participation in PREP drills. Preparedness assessment visits identify response resources within a 70-mile radius of a proposed PREP drill's exercise datum and verify OSRO assets.

Each visit begins approximately six months prior to a scheduled PREP drill with the Captain of the Port (COTP) to address concerns about their area's response assets.

Next, classroom training is conducted to explain the verification program, regulations, job aids, average most probable discharge coverage, and the scope of site verifications (site verifications include records checks, verification of 100% of listed equipment, and operation of 10% of the mechanical equipment at each site visited). This training is primarily for Coast Guard Marine Safety Office personnel; however, participation by other response community stakeholders is strongly encouraged.

Next, site verifications are conducted, and RRA's

response resource inventory is updated. Deficiencies are noted for a preparedness assessment visit after action report which is presented to the COTP during an outbriefing.

Finally, OSROs are required to correct deficiencies within 60 days, giving ample time to ensure their readiness for the upcoming PREP drill.

PIAT

The Public Information Assist Team consists of four highly-trained and skilled public affairs specialists who provide Federal On-Scene Coordinators with media and community relations guidance during hazardous material releases and homeland security incidents.

In 2003, the PIAT responses included sending personnel to the Staten Island barge explosion, the Space Shuttle Columbia recovery operations, two potential terrorist events, two hurricanes, the Buzzard's Bay oil spill in Cape Cod, Mass. and the Cooper River oil spill in Charleston, S.C.

Training is another mission area for the PIAT. Team members provide Joint Information Center training and Risk Communications training to federal, state and local agencies. In 2003, PIAT members developed two Strike Force-specific training courses; Media Interview Techniques training and Photography training. PIAT members travelled to each of the strike teams to present the training.

The PIAT members also traveled around the country to participate in multi-agency exercises, including Preparedness for Response Exercise drills.

Finally, PIAT provided guidance to the Department of Homeland Security and member agencies on establishing Rapid Response Public Affairs Teams.

NSF U.S. Army Chemical School Liaison Office



During 2003, LCDR Dennis Branson, the NSF's Liaison Officer (LO) at Fort Leonard Wood, MO continued to enhance the Strike Teams' response capabilities to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats. Two NSF "Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Technician" courses were held. The resident, week-long training events were hosted by the Army Chemical School.

In addition to this training, LCDR Branson also provided "CBRN Awareness" outreach training to over 250 personnel in multiple units across the operational spectrum via exportable training courses.

In the fall, an Assistant Liaison Officer position was added, and CWO3 Gene Kentch came onboard to "double" the Fort Leonard Wood ranks. The new position, added under the Maritime Transportation Safety Act of 2002, will serve to increase the NSF's relationship with the Military Police (MP) School at Fort Leonard Wood.

On the horizon for 2004, LCDR Branson is actively involved in developing and coordinating a national-level WMD exercise ("Determined Promise 04") under the new Northern Command (NORTHCOM).

VICKSBURG CHEMICAL PLANT

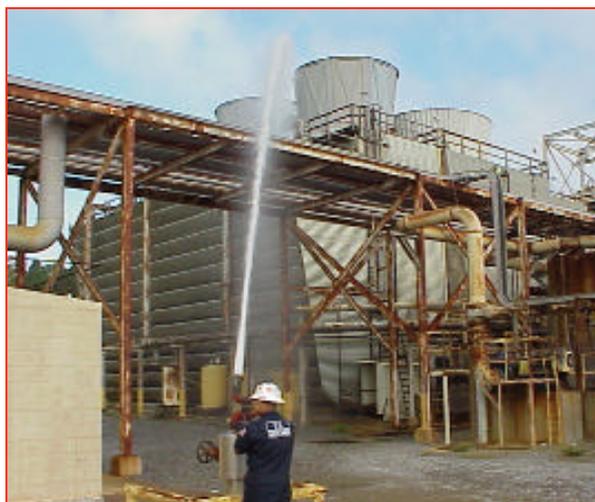
Vicksburg, MS January 5, 2003

Gulf Strike Team personnel assisted EPA Region IV after the Vicksburg Chemical Plant closed and personnel walked off the facility.

They left behind a variety of corrosive, toxic, and potentially explosive hazardous chemicals in pipelines, process vessels and storage tanks throughout the 700-acre site. Employees left some plant processes in operation that had to be continued to prevent explosions or hazardous chemical releases.

Gulf Strike Team personnel learned to operate the plant's electrical, compressed air, product transfer and waste water systems to keep them functioning safely. The GST members also conducted detailed chemical inventories and inspected numerous vessels and storage tanks for hazardous products and quantities.

Many materials on site were dangerous chemicals used in producing pesticides and rocket fuels such as nitric acid, sulfuric acid, nitrogen tetroxide, potassium hydroxide and sodium hydroxide. The GST personnel also assisted the EPA with the safe removal and transportation of most of the hazardous commodities off site to industrial consumers.



COLUMBIA SPACE SHUTTLE RECOVERY

Lufkin, TX February 1, 2003

The GST deployed to Texas and Louisiana shortly after the Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart during re-entry into the earth's atmosphere to help with the safe recovery and processing of shuttle materials. The GST's effort quickly grew into a larger NSF response with 42 response personnel from all three strike teams and the NSFCC. Hazardous substances recovered included rocket fuels, oxidizers, and explosive pyrotechnic devices.

Strike Force personnel assisted in quickly organizing a variety of federal, state and local agencies into a unified incident command system in six separate command posts. The GST personnel served as safety officers ensuring recovery operations that often occurred in remote areas and in difficult terrain. They also developed daily Incident Action Plans and communicated tasking to assisting agencies. The GST deployed its Mobile Incident Command Post to provide both shelter and communications capabilities to recovery teams conducting searches in remote

areas. The GST also provided personnel and boats as support platforms for sonar searches and dive operations at the Toledo Bend Reservoir and assisted in establishing and enforcing Security Zones to keep curious boaters at a safe distance.

CAPSIZED BARGE

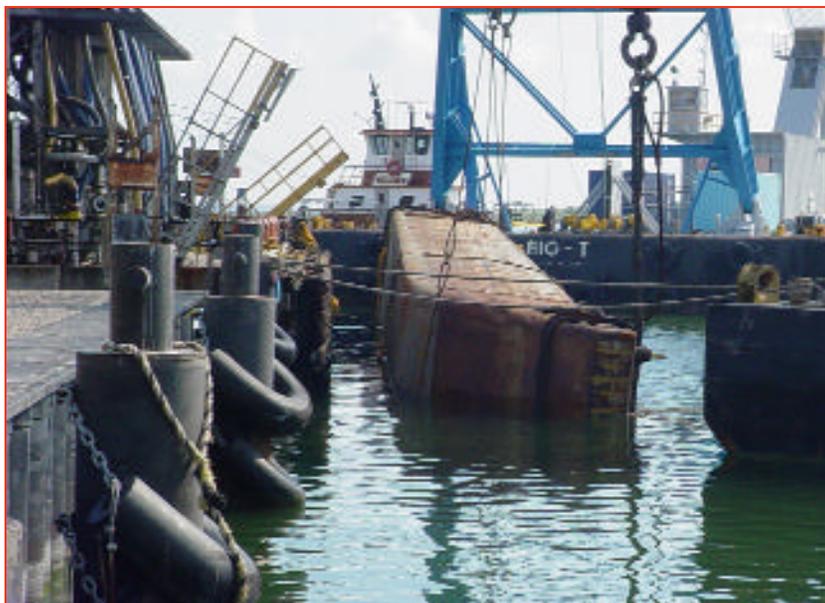
Texas City, TX November 11, 2003

The Gulf Strike Team responded to a request for assistance from Marine Safety Unit Galveston, TX when the tank barge "NMS 1477" capsized containing 197,000 gallons of Sulfuric Acid in Texas City Harbor.

The barge then shifted to rest port-side up in 40 feet of water and slowly released sulfuric acid, creating a continuous exothermic reaction. Area water sampling results determined surrounding waters to be at or less than 1.0 pH.

Seawater entering the barge also produced flammable hydrogen gas, which increased internal pressure and began compromising the barge's structural integrity.

The GST personnel assisted Marine Safety Unit Galveston with environmental sampling, site safety, development and implementation of transfer procedures, barge righting operations, and contractor oversight.





Pacific Strike Team **Novato, California**

Between January and December of 2003, the Pacific Strike Team (PST) assisted Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Federal On-Scene Coordinators while responding to seven oil/petroleum spills, and 13 chemical releases.

The Pacific Strike Team assisted with recovery efforts after the Space Shuttle

Columbia disintegrated over Texas and Louisiana. In addition, PST personnel deployed to Guam after Hurricane Pongsona to assist the EPA with their HAZMAT recovery efforts.



The hurricane-waste dumpsite in Tiyan, Guam caught on fire spewing black, toxic smoke into the air after Hurricane Pongsona. Personnel from the Pacific Strike Team deployed to Guam in March after the hurricane. Members of the PST worked with both the U.S. and Guam Environmental Protection Agencies to organize and staff Household Hazardous Waste collection sites for locals to bring old batteries, paint and other household material. Team members also provided a roving response team to assess possible releases of HAZMAT, and provided site health and safety assistance.



Members from PST, based out of the Mobile Incident Command Posts pictured above, assisted NASA, EPA, and FEMA in the Space Shuttle Columbia recovery efforts in Nacogdoches, Texas. Strike Team personnel helped locate and recover shuttle debris containing hazardous materials. Because the debris field was stretched over a large, mostly rural area, locating much of the debris required the use of aircraft.

The PST currently has forty-four active duty members, forty Selected Reservists and two civilian employees assigned.



Graner Oil Pipeline Blow-out

El Segundo, Calif. May 16-22, 2003

When a 6-inch weld in an oil pipeline ruptured during a mandatory pressure test at the Graner Oil Co. facility in El Segundo, Calif., the EPA On-Scene Coordinator called on the Pacific Strike Team to assist with the clean-up.

As contractors from Boots and Coots worked on stopping the leak, PST personnel used TVA 1000 PhD Ultra and Dreager chemical detectors to conduct air monitoring of the surrounding area for fugitive hydrocarbon emissions.

Strike Team members also met with employees of adjacent businesses to explain public health issues and educate them on measures being taken to ensure the operations' safety.

Eventually, the leaking well was brought under control by forcing heavy water (saltwater and calcium chloride) down the casing to exert pressure against the flow of oil. All pump rods were pulled and a Blow-Out Preventer (BOP) was installed. The well was then temporarily capped and PST members were released from the scene by the EPA FOSC.

Tank Truck Oil Spill

Coos Bay, Ore. June 22, 2003

The Pacific Strike Team assisted the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in June after a tank truck lost its secondary tank on a highway in Coos Bay, Ore.

Approximately 2,900 gallons of waste oil threatened to contaminate a marsh area and a creek bed making it necessary to remove large amounts of soil and vegetation from the tidally influenced area in order to keep contamination from migrating through sub-surface sediment into Isthmus Slough.

Pacific Strike Team personnel assisted EPA Region 10 with contractor over-site and shore-line clean-up assessment.



North Ridge Estates Asbestos Removal

Klamath Falls, Ore. - July 6 - October 17

The discovery of several tons of asbestos materials left over from a 1940's-era U.S. Marine Corps barracks complex led to an enormous clean-up effort at a subdivision in Klamath Falls, Ore. and resulted in a long-term response for the Pacific Strike Team over the summer.

At the request of the Environmental Protection Agency's Federal On-Scene Coordinator, the PST sent a total of 12 members to the site over a four-month period.

Pacific Strike Team personnel assisted the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and contractors with cost documentation, site safety and contractor oversight.

The PST's efforts helped to safely remove more than 49 tons of asbestos material from roofing, flooring, piping and foundation materials from the site.