Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• and Open Trackbacks

Description

Itâ€™s Wednesday once more. Send your trackbacks!

The â€œsea storyâ€• of this day is not a humorous one, but is a story of my experience the one time I personally had to inform someone they had a family member in the hospital, with about 0% chance of survival. Itâ€™s one of those things you may have to do in the performance of your duties while on deployment and up the chain of command.

I was executive officer (XO) and we were deployed to the Persian Gulf. It was in the latter half of the deployment and, thankfully, they had modified the operational schedule for us to patrol the northern area of the gulf, as a reward for having spent the first half of deployment operating in the Straits of Hormuz (SOH)/North Arabian Sea (NAS). This change put us close to Mina Sulman, Bahrain and the logistics head of the 5th Fleet.

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The Captain called me to his cabin and handed me a Red Cross message. Generally, thatâ€™s not a good thing. In this case, it was a very bad thing. The few month old baby of one of our petty officers was in the hospital back home on life support, having been taken there when his wife found the baby not breathing in his crib. It was now my job to get things rolling to get him home ASAP, and I also would be the one to notify him of the medical emergency.

I got back to my stateroom and called down to admin and got PN1 Weber going on cutting orders. I called the Ops Boss and put him to work contacting the ASU in Bahrain. I had the Combat Systems Officer find the man and bring him to my stateroom.

In that short time, while I awaited his arrival, the crew involved had arranged for a helo to come and get him, and a seat on the contract air carrier out of Bahrain after midnight. Better yet, the helo had been flying and would be able to get to us soon. The logisitics in support of this difficult moment clicked together in less than 30 minutes.

I had the petty officer come in and sit down while I closed the door for some privacy. The moment was difficult, and itâ€™s hard to know what to say, keeping in mind youâ€™re 6,000 miles from home and a life is hanging by a thread. It is more than humbling to realize the right words are elusive, even if you have a good vocabulary.

I told him his son was in the hospital in Charleston and we had arranged for him to be flow into Bahrain for a flight home that night. I handed him the Red Cross message and sat silently while he read the few short lines of (bad) news from home. He said nothing. I told him how sorry I was, and he needed to get below and get a bag packed, so he could get home. He was not a man who drew attention to himself, but he was one of those who got the job done, and sort of stayed back in the shadows, but he was even quiter now. I can only figure the emotional shock was gripping him. He stood, I opened the door and told him to let us know what we could do, and to contact the squadron when he got home. We would notify them of the case.

Off he went to pack, and shortly there after, we set flight quarters for the â€œDesert Duckâ€• to do the â€œpax transfer.â€•

The sad part was the baby had no hope, but he was able to be with his wife for the decision on whether to continue life support.

In the military, you are fully engaged in the lives of those you serve with. There are the good times, the parties and tactical successes to tell of in later years, but these type of moments are a part and parcel of the experience as well.

Cross Posted at:

Linkfest Haven

Stuck on Stupid

Category

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