Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• and Open Trackbacks

Description

Welcome to another Wednesday. Link up your work so others may read it. Not saying Iâ€™m some powerhouse blog in readership, just another junction in the cyber-hiway, and it may get you another reader of three.

Yesterday I was discussing the absense of Tomahawk Anti-Ship Missiles (TASMs) from the surface and sub platforms. During the recounting, I mentioned a story about Adm Harry Harris, now the Commander of that lovely garden spot, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with the thankless job of supervising the ~~â€œdetaineesâ€•~~ captured terrorists (I can say it, he canâ€™t). Here is it:

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So, there we were in late November â€™85, freshly arrived in the North Arabian Sea with the SARATOGA Battle Group, lead by Adm David Jerimiah of CRUDESGRU EIGHT. It was a deployment to make sure the bad guys of the region knew we were hanging around, with things that go â€œBOOM!â€• and a way to get them to their doorstep. One of the threats that was normally faced in that region went TU and was out of play. We sent the USS CAPODANNO (FF-1095) down south of Yemen to put some eyeballs on it, as it was being towed out of theater, just to make sure the intel was correct. It was. This act of the enemyâ€™s misfortune had the added benefit of freeing up one of our own platforms, which gave us someone to exercise with regularly.

As Adm Jerimiah sat at lunch, scanning a message, with Capt Wes Jordan sitting next to him, he commented his staff couldnâ€™t get the tasking done in 48 hours. Commodore Jordan â€œgraciouslyâ€• offered to peruse the comminique from CTF 74 and offer his assistance. He read it, then looked at the Admiral and said â€œMy staff can plan this in 48 minutes!â€•

He gets up, and walks from the Flag Mess up to the O-7 level, where we have the watch station (they wouldnâ€™t let us set up in CDC). He walks in, tosses the meesage on the chart table between LCDR Steve Nerheim and I and says: â€œI told the Admiral you could plan this in 48 minutes. That was five minutes ago. Youâ€™ve got 43 minutes.â€•

Tasking: Plan a joint TASM attack with surface and submarine assests. CTF 74 mentioned the subs donâ€™t get a chance often to practice that type of coordination, or even receiving the LINK 11 data for Over the Horizon Targeting (OTH-T). Note the salient points: Surface and sub attacking a surface target together. Purpose is to get the sub some experience using surface supplied info. extra salinet info: Our staff is assigned as â€œAXâ€• (the anti-submarine warfare commander) duty for the battle group. SARATOGA is â€œASâ€• (anti-surface warfare commander).

Yes, youâ€™re now wondering why we are doing this, as the lowly sub guys, and having the junior 4 stripper as the boss. Itâ€™s because the Commodore is really, really (and I mean really) good at â€œvolunteeringâ€• his staff for, well, anything that needs to get done. You get my drift, Iâ€™m sure. Thatâ€™s how this happened.

We roll up our sleeves, put our heads together, Steve, I, OSCS(SW) Jim Koch, and the Chief Staff Officer. We make a plan. The returning FF will be the â€œtattletale,â€• the supporting USNS Oiler that had run down to top her off, and was lagging behind on the rerun was to be the target. The CONOLLY (DD-979), assigned to the Middle East Force (MEF) at the moment, was out operating with us for a few days. She was TASM equipped, so we had our players (including the sub). Comm plans were made, the slides quickly drawn and down the briefing room we went. The first run over the data, which happened promptly at the 48 minute mark, was to the CCDG-8 Ops staff, with Capt Tony Colucci (OPS) taking the brief. There were lots of people in the back of the room, some from CCDG8, some from SARATOGA. The master plan at this point is to make sure the Admiral is fine with the plan, then weâ€™ll hand the sepcifics off to the SARATOGA ASUW guys for execution the next morning. Evryone nods to that. Once the pre-brief had a few corrections, the Admiral was summoned.

Admiral Jerimiah comes in, takes his seat, I brief the room. Same as a few minutes before, with a few minor changes. I finish. Before the Admiral opens his mouth, from the back of the room, a curly haired LCDR in Khakis says: â€œWe canâ€™t do that!â€•
Me: Why not?
Him: â€œBecause we canâ€™t have aircraft flying on an alerted target!â€•
(the rest is from an aging memory, so donâ€™t hold me to exact quotes, but below are â€œwords to that effectâ€• as the legal guys say)
Me: This is a TASM attack. There are no attack aricraft involved.
Him: â€œEveryone knows Tomahawk is only a mop up weapon. Weâ€™re sending in a full package first.â€•

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Okâ€¦I was floored for three reasons:

1) Somehow this was not brought up in the pre-brief
2) An O-4 preempted the Admiral by blutting out a statement as soon as I said: â€œAny questions?â€• and looked to the Admiral out of courtesy.
3) Mop up weapon? Well, with all the SWO pride of now possibly commanding long range ordnance, it cut me, but from a practical standpoint, I wondered how guys would rather fly into the face of massive AAA and SAMs, when they might be able to knock some of the systems out, let alone sink some, before they were ordered to roll in hot. I know the answer. Something about the mistique of special super powers and invulnerablity, but I digress to the issue of sunglasses and flight jacketsâ€¦:)

We handed off the charts, slides and other documents to SARATOGAâ€™s crew. They made a grand and glorious sea based attack out of it, launching A-6s and A-7s, as well as F-14s for Strike CAP, and did let the ship and sub practice their part on the virtual burning hulk of the cooperative mobile target. Iâ€™m sure the hot wash up was story after story of pickling off MK 80 series iron bombs while jinking to avoid the incredible, if not terribly inaccurate fire from the Soviet battle crusier they found steming aloneâ€¦I was busy checking sound profiles and refiguring screening assignments on the O-7 levelâ€¦.

Anyhow, the â€œHimâ€• above was LCDR Harry Harris. Also, it seemed the guys going feet wet in Desert Storm sure seemed to think Tomahawk (albeit the land attack variant) was a wonderful piece of technology to scamper about the battle space and render AA and SAM sites useless, so they might be undisturbed in focusing on the deployment of bombs on bunkers, troops and tanks.

Anyhow, thatâ€™s my â€œsea storyâ€• of the week, and Iâ€™m sticking to itâ€¦.

Category

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Author
admin

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