A Date with Destiny â€“ Part II

Description

The post deployment â€œstand downâ€• was truncated because the ship with the commitment couldnâ€™t sail.

Getting a vessel to see is not like taking your 26â€² boat out for a spin. Yes, the trailering and jockeying for a position at the boat ramp is exasperating, but no where near the level of effort to get out to a multi-ship exercise.

Communications plans are needed, the Engineer has to make sure he has fuel and water and other valuable consumables, such as lube oil. The 1st LT makes sure all the topside equipment is ready for use and loose gear stowed. The Combat Systems Officer makes sure his crew has sufficient munitions for the events scheduled, and any mandated operational loads. The Navigator has to pre-plan the transit from the pier to the sea buoy, and then to the rendezvous point, carefully checking the safe passage planned and setting a time frame to request the tugs and harbor pilot, so you can arrive at the exercise area as planned. Never late. Itâ€™s walking the dog back to make sure youâ€™ll make it and not exceed any defined â€œspeed limitsâ€• for transits that are in place for overall fuel economy. The quartermasters double check the work of the Navigator and also make sure the latest corrections for the nautical charts have been marked onto the charts to indicate missing navigational aids, dredging operations and other changes worth paying attention to. The Combat Information Center (CIC) gang has lots of work to make sure they know the schedule of events for the transit and exercises, the designated operations areas and the restrictions that may apply to those areas. On top of that, if any shore based services are required, they need to draft and send coordinating messages to other units to make sure whatâ€™s needed is there.

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The general process when I was in for the post-deployment stand down was for 1/2 of the crew to go on leave the first 15 days and then the second half was off the last 15 days, then you came back and got back into the swing of things.

In this case, the â€œget back into the swing of thingsâ€• happened during the time people were on leave, so it was people shouldering the extra work for those gone, or some coming back early or on some days off, in order to be ready.

This was not just any ship. It was one with 6 months of Earnest Will convoy escorting work. As the second senior command in the Persian Gulf at sea, this ship was regularly assigned the duty of Convoy Commander for oil tankers going one direction, while the Destroyer Squadron Commodore, the ranking commander, was Convoy Commander for a group of vessels going the other direction. The ship had all of itâ€™s duty, plus the duty to manage a herd of merchant vessels, keeping them from harm, while keeping in contact with higher authority, and directly managing the other â€œassetsâ€• in the region to assist. The DESRON Commander had his assigned staff, but then the ship they were riding was left to just perform their duties, and not those responsibilities of commanding a convoy.

The net result of this extra effort for the ship will come to factor into their operations later.

Tracked back @: Yankee Sailor, Third World County

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