Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• and Open Trackbacks

Description

Batteries released. Post your trackbacks here!

On this past Monday, I told some of the story of Gustavus Conyngham in Monday Maritime Matters. left a comment, telling the woeful tale of a finely tuned mind in a Tactical Action Officer course deciding to act upon â€œhostile intent.â€• Not in those words, exactly, but thatâ€™s what he said he did, and, for risking a mock courts martial, he was relegated to the DDG-2 CF ADAMS Class mock up in Taylor Hall for the rest of the exercise.

I, too, have some stories about war games, decision making and injecting a little frivolity into an otherwise serious place. I will tell pieces of each week for several Wednesday Ropeyarns, just to provide material.

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At the Naval War College for Command and Staff (aka the â€œjunior courseâ€•), there were three trimestersâ€• of study. I took them in the order of Strategy and Policy, followed by Maritime Operations, and finally taking Defense Decision Making in the final trimester of study. In the Maritime Operations session, we were required to plan and execute a virtual maritime operation at the end of the studies. Along the way, I, and one other officer, and â€œElectricâ€• EA-6B Naval Flight Officer named Eddy, were the only students of the junior course who had actually been present at the Operations in the Vicinity of Libya from Jan to May, 1986. Much of the course material, as we in the military are wont to do, reactively had adopted that real world operation as a foundation for the study of â€œJointness.â€• Given the most jointed we got were the FB-111s flying from bases in England over the Atlantic (Thanks, France!), we pretty much had a Navy only show going, but, Eddy and I had â€œreal world, hands on time.â€• I dissected and retold of my involvement in â€œA Journey Into Historyâ€• series (link to Part I) , in case you didnâ€™t catch the posts last year.

Anyhow, the odd thing, was Eddy and I consistently had some of the lowest grades in the class, with our section having a faculty member who was a P-3 Naval Flight Officer, an O-6, as he thought we didnâ€™t fully comprehend the answers we gave to questions, coz they didnâ€™t mimic the â€œparty lineâ€• about jointness, with a bias to always make sure the Naval person was the top of the heap. I was the one SWO in the room, with lots of F-14 back seaters and helo guys getting re-tooled for upward mobility outside of their professional fields, as they didnâ€™t have slots with their community anymore. We had a Coastie and a Defense Mapping guy, and then a two USAF and a few Marines.

Eddy and I didnâ€™t have to think a lot sometimes, because of the basis that formed the questions. We had seen the practical application of the process for this very â€œcase study.â€• Frustrated, yes, and it was fun messing with an O-6 who had been in the classroom too long. One time, I was asked to go the chalkboard and layout the operational command structure. I had the first few boxes drawn when I heard from the back â€œThatâ€™s not in accordance with doctrine.â€• I turned and looked back at the Captain and said: â€œThatâ€™s how Admiral Jeremiah did itâ€• and went back to drawing the organizational relationships for the provided force structure. No further comments came my wayâ€¦On the other hand, Paul the resident Supply Officer, being a smart man, but with no operational

background, could spit out what doctrine said. Not because he was a stooge of the system, but it was all he had to go on. He got the best grades in Maritime Opsâ€¦go figure.

Major Danny Troutman, a helo driving Marine and one of the smartest people I ever met, was assigned to as the Chief of Staff for the upcoming war game. The plan was one person would hold that position for both the planning and the execution parts of the war game. Everyone else would get shuffled. The operation: A non-combatant evacuation from Pakistan of American citizens. My job for planning: Operations Officer. I got to head up drafting the plan for the ops for approval. I asked Danny why me, I was getting the lowest grades. Response: They wanted it done rightâ€¦.

Next week: Going to virtual war at Naval War College

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Date Created
September 19, 2007
Author
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