Tactical Development 20 Years Later â€“ Part III

Description

Part II left the notional Battleship Battle Group (BBBG) departing home ports on the East Coast, heading for the Gulf of Mexico.

As with many other moments at sea with DESRON 32, there was not enough time in any given moment, exaserbated by our need for data, that was electronically gathered and transmitted to us, but we had to sort it by hand. National tasking poured ream after ream of contact reports, which had to be quickly evaluated, checked against other tracks building and then analysed for its tactical significance, followed with orders for the use of our surveillance assests to maneuver to intercept. Under the crushing task of doing this, we didnâ€™t realize we were leading the way for more automation of the Over the Horizon targeting (OTH-T) shooters and tactical staffs.

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We used JOTS, the HP9020 computers that could take a LINK-14 data feed, and manual inputs. It wasnâ€™t unusual to have 4 -6 tactical radio circuits you had to keep an ear out for key words. We were in port and starboard from the staff watchbill, two officers in each section, with OSCS(SW) Jim Koch staying on station about every waking moment for 6 straight days. We drove the flagshipâ€™s crew nuts, but, we were going to develop the tactics ~~(or die trying)~~.

we had brainstormed the use of Tomahawk Anti-Ship Missiles (TASM) and figured out we could plan attacks from multiple platforms, but we couldnâ€™t, due to the technical limitations of the missiles using their search patterns, plan a simultaneous attack. No problem: We designed the â€œNear Simultaneous Time on Topâ€• (NSTOT). By directing specific employment options, we had some reasonable degree of success in sending several TASMs at the target within a short time.

In addition to the tactical staff watchstanding requirements, we had to monitor the progress of the Cooperative Mobile targets (CMTs â€“ see earlier posts on this topic). That added to the anxiety and intensity, as we had to control all that happened, if you follow my drift.

Oh, yes: We had masterminded an extensive, all encompassing data collection plan, which, we also, as watchstanders, had to make sure was being done, not only within our staff, but aboard the Flagship, and via radio, the other units in company.

When one of our shooters decided to launch a TASM, they would go out on the HF tactical radio net and transmit â€œGREENFLASH, GREENFLASH, GREENFLASH!â€• That message set in motion a detailed set of data collection for that moment, aboard all the players, so we might have the innformation to reconstruct were ships and aircraft thought they were and where they actually were.

For four days, that was the routine, carried on at max output plus another 50% or more. Not much sleep was gotten, and many meals were missed in the pseudo intensity of the exercises.

More laterâ€¦the story continues!

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