Ropeyarn Sunday â€œSea Storiesâ€• and Open Trackbacks

Description

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The â€œsea story:â€•

Back in the day when we could neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons aboard naval vessels, we used to regularly practice the protection of things that might or might not have been aboard. It mattered not if they were or werenâ€™t from the crewâ€™s standpoint, it was s skill necessary to be regularly flexed and so it was.

The calling away of the drills were mandated to be stated the same as though it was an actual â€œeventâ€• when an intruder might get aboard, so when the word was passed â€œAway the Security Alert Team, Away the Backup Alert Forceâ€• it always sounded the same. This was different from the other exercises on the ships, which would be prefaced on the 1MC (General Announcing System) with â€œTHIS IS A DRILL!â€• to let us all know to be professional, yet not damage gear or ourselves in the response.

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So, one fine day, on an unnamed vessel in an unnamed port at a major Naval Station, at the approximate time the drill was run daily, the word was passed on the 1MC, setting feet into motion and sending adrenaline coursing through the veins of young men, who, having first reported to the small arms lockers, were then equipped with 1911 .45 cal pistols, Remington 870 12 gauge shotguns and M-14 7.62mm rifles, and, I might add, at least two magazines for each weapon, and yes, the magazines were loaded with live rounds.

The response to the crew, if not a member of the SAT or BAF, was to â€œstand fast,â€• in other words, stay put right where you were. It would help separate the good guys from the bad guys, had the need to give pursuit and engage arisen.

However, on this particular day in either late 1979, or the middle of 1980, the Main Propulsion Assistant, being one of the citizens of the Engineering Department, made the judgment call that this, was in fact a drill, and, he being the important Naval Officer that he was, not to mention on who made the ship move through the water and caused electricity to be generated, deemed himself above the fray and trouble, since the SAT and BAF we doing something for the â€œUpper Decks,â€• so he walked on and did not stand fast.

Heading aft on the main deck, port side, and near the mess line, he encountered a member of the security forces, armed with a 1911, an imposing weapons of considerable power at close range. When challenged by the second class petty officer, a Quartermaster by trade, the officer proclaimed his self appointed right to continue to his work area, as he had important business of the ship, and therefore, the Navy to execute.

Said LT, regardless of his rank, within moments, found his nostrils in close quarters with the business end of the .45, and a QM2 uttering the words â€œHALT, (insert vulgarity here)!â€• for the LT and those in the vicinity to hear. I might also mention, between the moment of the brushing aside of the direction to stop the first time, and the more pointed command, a magazine of 7 rounds had been inserted into the pistol, the slide had been pulled back and released, causing a live round to be stripped from the top of the magazine and enter the chamber, presenting a condition commonly known a â€œlocked and loaded.â€•

In a moment of exceptional clarity, the LT indicated his desire to â€œstand fast,â€• having reconsidered the level of prioritizing he had early assigned to his work with Engineering Department.

In the aftermath of this â€œsituation,â€• both the LT and the QM2 had lectures on procedure, for one did not understand it was not his command prerogative to override Navy wide guidance for his convenience, and the other for executing the steps towards the use of â€œdeadly force,â€• which for those who have stood the watch, know the implication of inserting the magazine on such a drillâ€¦.

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Category

1. "Sea Stories"
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