

Exhibit 9 – Coast Guard Ongoing Violations, PSU 309



A Coast Guard reservist from PSU 309 peers over a wall during a training exercise near Port Clinton, Ohio. (Coast Guard file)

Mobile Defenders

Bullets ricochet as they strike the chalky ground or bounce off the target vehicle. Crews dig foxholes in the scarce foliage as jet fighters roar loudly overhead. It's nothing unusual.

by PA3 Judy Silverstien, 7th District, & PA2 Paul Roszkowski, 9th District

After all, the setting for the warlike scenery was the bombing range at Avon Park, Fla.

For the men and women of Coast Guard Port Security Unit 307, the only unusual thing about the January day was how warm it had gotten.

The day's itinerary included a healthy regimen of practicing good defensive positions, throwing practice grenades, reviewing squad tactics and setting concertina wire at Avon Park.

The training was well-timed, since PSU 307 members left the following month to support

harbor defense in Southwest Asia. It was nearly 10 years to the day after Desert Storm began.

It was PSU 307's first deployment since being formed in 1999, even though members of the PSU had performed port security duties with other units.

At the range, an assistant gunner yelled, "Double feed!" and stepped up to clear a bullet that had jammed itself in the chamber of his weapon. Reeds bent and twisted in the wind. This was more foliage than some of these folks would see for a while.

"We developed a three-tiered training program and tailored that a bit once we found out we might deploy," said Cmdr. Paul Crissy, commanding officer of the PSU.

Scheduled training included a qualifications program that would cover situations the unit could encounter anywhere in the world.

In the weeks prior to the Feb. 28 departure from Air Station Clearwater, Fla., the unit focused heavily on boat operations, said Lt. Steven J. Bosau, logistics officer.

There was an intensive training session at the unit in tactical maneuvers with the boats. Then they headed off to Camp Lejeune, N.C., for more intensive training. There they received their first round of the anthrax vaccine, making deployment just a bit more real.

There were calls to YN1 Shawna Ward -- the unit's familiar yeoman. Ward's expertise with pay and her ability to crack a joke while unraveling red tape made her the ideal point of contact for the crewmembers and the families left behind.

"Sometimes I have to answer questions about federal tax exemptions, combat pay, and I try to answer e-mails we get from the field," said Ward. "You're the main contact for the families and those deployed," she said.

Crews met with the Coast Guard legal assistance officer to get wills and power of attorney papers in order. Employers were contacted, and Ward said most of them were very supportive of the executive order issued for six months' deployment.

"We expect they'll be home before then," said Bosau.

But the psychological and familial adjustments of deployment on short notice are something a crewmember cannot really train for.

"We have students missing class, police officers and firefighters asking colleagues to cover shifts, and small business owners entrusting others to keep things running smoothly," said Crissy. "Almost everyone has missed a birthday, anniversary or other significant personal

event. The first team deployed only a short time before Christmas and left their families with an unexpected void during the holidays."

But the response to the call for deployment, said Crissy, has been awesome.

"It's indicative of their commitment to public service."

Bosau said temperatures were a comfortable 70 degrees in desert terrain when they left Clearwater. But he expected his crews to encounter some blazing heat upwards of 130 degrees before they returned home.

Naturally, they traded woodland camouflaged uniforms for the lighter desert style and a PSU 307 patch with its swirling shark, to match.

During the summer of 2000, PSU 307 members had had the opportunity to meet and work alongside members of PSU 309, the unit they're augmenting overseas, in New York during the International Naval Review and Operation Sail July 4. When PSU 309 deployed, PSU 307 took up a collection and sent a care package that included cookies, chocolate, writing paper, cards and the PSU 307 unit flag, as a way of lending their support.

"That package meant everything to them," said Ward. But she added that her charges are well cared for overseas.

"We hear there's no caffeine, but there's an entire base with beds, showers and a mess hall, so it's not too bad," she said.

Back in St. Petersburg, there's an entire bulletin board devoted to newspaper clippings and notes sent home. It's a reminder that the missions this unit trains for every month aren't just a fantasy.

Overseas, they're learning things are different. Alcohol is taboo. Chocolate is a rare commodity. The mail lags behind. There is only an occasional stint at a computer and the accompanying e-mail providing a necessary link back home.

But for family members left behind, there is an incessant, gnawing fear. Ward and Bosau, who shared the task of informing the crew they had been re-called to active duty, heard the fear reverberate through the telephone cables.

"I think we heard every response imaginable," said Ward. "But a lot of people expected the call," she said.

Ward said she was taken with a story shared by one of the petty officers before he left.

"He took his 11-year-old son aside and explained what honor, loyalty, respect and devotion to duty meant now that he was the 'man of the household.' He gave his son a job."

The local Coast Guard chaplain briefed the crew about customs, attitude, sensitivity and awareness.

"Things are going to look and sound different. Avoid being 'the ugly American.' Get to know the people and their culture," he said.

For the 15 men and one woman of PSU 307, it is the culmination of the training they've received.

"Our crew is part of a much larger multi-force operation charged with increasing waterside protection in a port with existing security. We're beefing up a system already in place," said Bosau.

Members of PSU 307 and PSU 309 were tasked with assisting other naval coastal warfare elements in support of the U.S. Central Command, which is headquartered in Tampa, Fla.

"Our PSUs complement existing security forces protecting critical seaports, military logistics and supply ships. The Coast Guard is providing expeditionary resources and capabilities for port security overseas," said Crissy. And he thinks they'll perform well.

"No," he said. "I know they will."



A PSU 309 member fires a .50 caliber machine gun from a 22-foot Raider boat during firing exercises near Port Clinton, Ohio. (PA1 Chuck Reinhart, 9th District)

They've got what it takes

"We are prepared to go anywhere, anytime within 72 hours," said Cmdr. Steve Day, commanding officer of Port Security Unit 309 based in Port Clinton, Ohio.

PSUs are the Coast Guard's answer to the needs of security around ships in ports.

"The only things we need as a unit are a lift to where we're going and water and fuel to be able to sustain us for 30 days," claims Day.

"We are expected to be ready to go both personally and as a unit anywhere the President directs us within 72 hours of activation," Day said. The challenge is for the individuals to be fully committed to having their personal lives in order. This means that not only do the members have to understand, but their families and employers must understand the mission and commitment they have made, he explained.

Each unit is equipped with six 25-foot transportable port security boats outfitted with twin 175-horsepower outboard engines, two 7.62 caliber machine guns aft and a forward-mounted .50 caliber machine gun.

"We have weapons, trucks, tents, six boats and enough equipment to equip a 117-person unit for operations anywhere around the world," Day said.

The members of a PSU are trained in the art of waterborne protection and limited land-based protection for U.S. and allied ships.

"Our focus is to ensure we can complete mission requirements, taking opportunities to update personal qualification standards, to cross train and integrate with units that could be affiliated with our deployment," Day said.

All PSU members go through a two-week basic skills course consisting of field operations, individual and squad defense tactics, weapons handling and qualification and general military training.

"A member of PSU 309 has to be fully dedicated and understand the importance of their personal stake and responsibilities," Day said. "I want my people to be committed members of our team. I hold the highest regard for them, because they have the courage to say, 'I am ready to go. Anytime, anywhere.'"

The PSUs provided protection for Allied shipping during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990-91, Operation Uphold Democracy in 1994, and more recently members of PSU 309 deployed to the Arabian Gulf following the terrorist attack on the Navy ship USS Cole in Yemen.

"The members of PSU 309 or any of the other five PSUs deserve the praise for their past, current and future efforts to ensure that we are ready to go and the mission gets done," Day said.

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