

***Review & discuss the key risk factors from this patrol that may impact our judgment and decision-making.***

## **Learning Objectives**

Participants will learn to identify key risk factors and decision points that may impact judgment and crew safety.

- Identify the special challenges this mission presented.
- Identify and discuss the key issues that created a hazardous condition on this patrol.
- Understand how crew selection, condition or fitness, and experience issues impacted the outcome of this situation.
- Define the leadership and decision making issues that arose when the so called “routine” mission became dangerous to the crew and public.

## **The Patrol**

**Mission:** A “routine” MOM patrol in Monterey Bay, California

**Facility:**

1963 Chris Craft cabin cruiser, 36 foot LOA, twin screw inboard, wood construction.

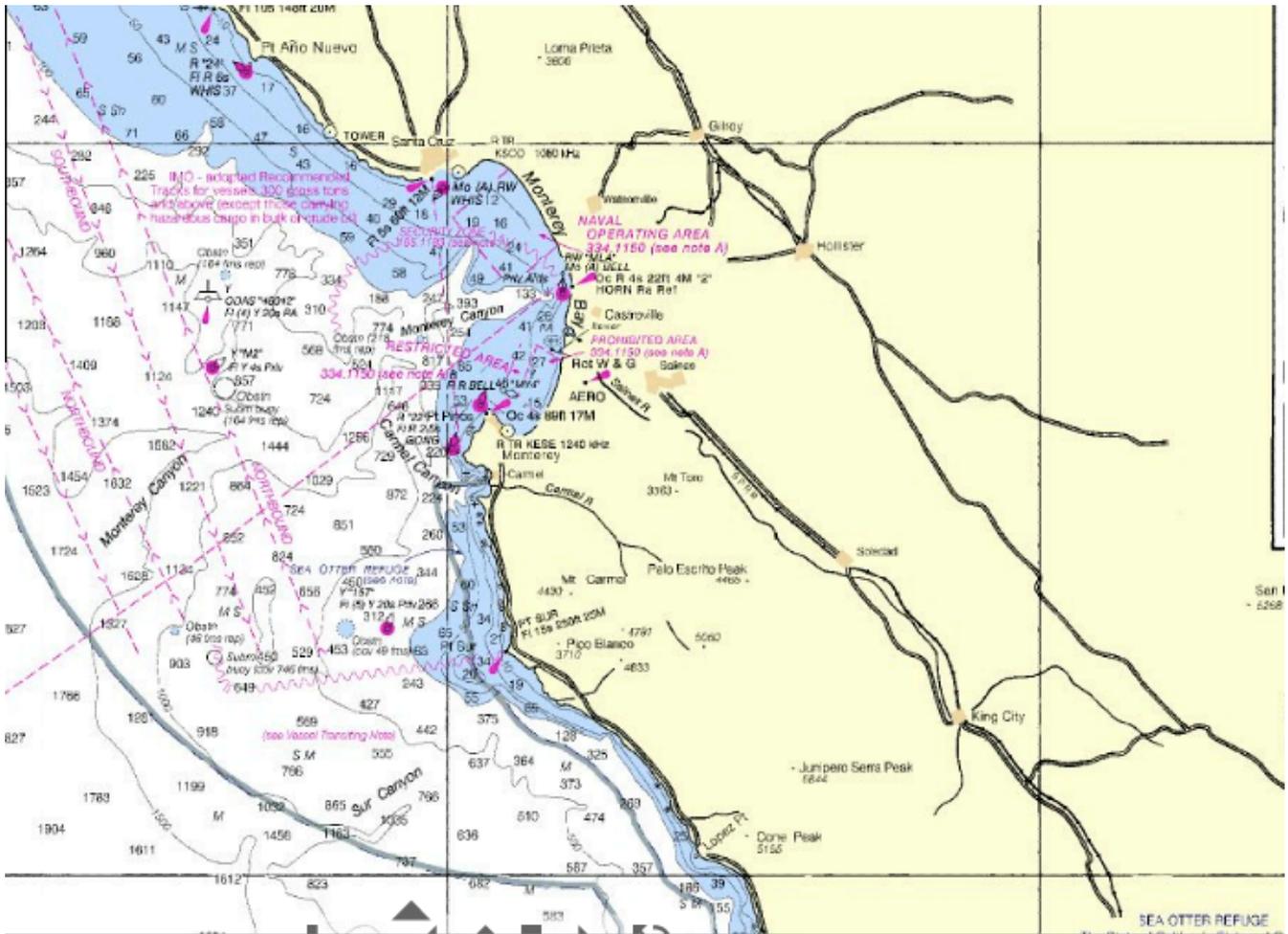
**Weather:** 91°F and hazy ...wind: W at 10 mph...Humidity: 72%...Low tide 1432 hrs

**CREW**

**Coxswain:** Jack, 55 year old with 12years experience with his own 20 foot center console, no experience with facility used in this patrol.

**Crewmember:** Joe, 82 year old “retired cox’n” who offered his 36 footer for use since a heart ailment forced him to drop back to “crew” status earlier this year.

**Crewmember:** Ed, 64 year old with 3 years experience as crewmember



## Enlarged Area of Operations

### Scenario:

Facility owner Joe is a 20 year veteran; 17 years as coxswain of his own 36 foot Chris Craft. Joe now takes heart medicine that causes an occasional dizzy spell in hot weather. That has caused him to give up his coxswain qualification, but he still offers his boat for use as a facility, as long as he can continue to crew.

Coxswain Jack is an experienced coxswain but, until now, has exclusively used his own 20 foot center console for patrols. Crewmember Ed, a 64 year old with 3 years' experience as crewmember, rounds out the crew.

The patrol is a Maritime Observation Mission (MOM) conducted in the Monterey Bay AOR just off the coast of California; the facility is under orders and communications is maintained by the local CG boat station. The coxswain considered this to be a routine patrol that posed no special problems and advised his crew of that finding.

During the patrol, a passing boater hails the facility. The boater informs the crew that, moments earlier, he saw a lone fisherman fall off a small skiff after a large wake, caused by a passing party fishing boat, violently rocked his boat.

Jack is at the helm and proceeds to the location reported by the passing boater, approximately 500 yards away. He plans to assess the situation before notifying the Coast Guard duty officer. About 100 yards from the scene, they see a male struggling in the water some 20 yards from a small skiff with no one aboard. Ed immediately yells "Man Overboard", points to the port side and yells again, "Man overboard... 100 yards at 270 degrees relative".

Jack immediately powers down and begins approaching the man in the water. Joe goes below and begins rummaging through his cabin, looking for his throwable life ring. Several minutes pass while Jack tries to maneuver the 36 footer closer in to the struggling man.

As the facility arrives next to the man in the water, Joe finally emerges from the cabin, but seems unsteady and a little pale as he tries to untangle the line attached to the life ring. Jack sees Joe's difficulty and realizes that Joe cannot heave the ring, nor will he be able to assist retrieving the man from the water due to his weakness and instability on deck.

Jack has been having trouble maneuvering the twin-screw vessel close in without losing sight of the man in the water, due to the size and configuration of the large cabin cruiser, as well as his inexperience with this vessel. He feels helpless to assist with the retrieval. Jack then realizes that Joe must take the helm while he heaves the life ring and Ed prepares to help him (Jack) lift the exhausted man from the water.

Jack reluctantly orders Joe to the helm and throws the ring. As the man in the water grabs onto the ring, Jack notices the facility, still under power, moving further away from the man. As he hauls in on the life ring line with the man hanging on, they begin to inadvertently tow the man through the water, which causes the man to lose his grasp on the ring. Jack retrieves the ring and throws it again to the man, then quickly takes the helm, places the facility in reverse to stop its forward motion and begins to again close the gap between the man in water and the facility. As the facility comes up to the man again, he places both engines into neutral and then leaves the helm to assist Ed in retrieving the man according to proper procedure.

They then notify CG communications and request immediate assistance, unsure of the medical condition of the man just retrieved. Meanwhile Joe sits in the mate's chair and searches for his heart medication. The Coast Guard dispatches a patrol boat and takes charge of the recovered man and takes the skiff in tow.

### **End of Story**

## Participants

Participants will identify at least three examples of good decision making by this crew and others.

Participants will identify at least 3 examples of poor decision making by this crew & others.

Participants will be able to suggest alternative actions to avoid high-risk situations

Discuss at least 3 errors, and 3 good decisions made by this crew during the mission.

\* A facilitator led general discussion of what was done well, and what mistakes were made should be conducted at this point. Remember the basic elements of Team Coordination Training and use those elements to guide your analysis.

### Review of TCT Basics

A short summary of the key points of Team Coordination Training is provided to assist with your analysis of the case. This information is accessible to all members on the Coast Guard's TCT website:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg3/cg3pcx/training/tct/default.asp>.

A Team Coordination Training student guide is available on the Coast Guard site at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg3/cg3pcx/training/tct/intro.pdf>

### Mission Analysis

Always conduct a risk assessment prior to a patrol, no matter how routine you believe the mission to be. Every mission is unique: contingency planning based on experience should include complexity of mission, environmental factors, crew fitness factors and any other circumstance that could impact the mission & your safety.

### Situational Awareness

We must know what is going on around us to make good decisions. Plans are critical to success, that is for sure...but we must be ready to change those plans, use contingency plans if necessary, based on what we encounter during the mission. Stressful situations, complacency and boredom will inhibit our situational awareness and increase the likelihood of poor decision making.

### Adaptability

Adaptability is the ability to react to changes in conditions, crew fitness, equipment failures, etc. and is based on the "situational awareness" we mentioned above. How flexible are we? How receptive are we to different opinions? Leaders do not necessarily have "all the answers". Leaders do take advantage of everyone's ideas and experience and remain adaptable to new conditions and challenges.

### Communication

Communication takes many forms. We have verbal and non-verbal (facial expressions, etc.) communication that everyone uses to convey thoughts and ideas. The key of course is to ensure that the person or persons we communicate with have a clear understanding of what we wish to convey. This

involves closing the “feedback” loop. We can ask for feedback, or we can observe behavior to be sure the message was received. The key is a two-way expression, either verbally or non-verbally, that confirms the communication process was completed.

Department of Operations (Response)

## **Leadership**

Leadership is not about giving orders. Leaders do find ways to obtain the willing participation of others towards accomplishing a goal. That goal, in this case, must be consistent with the Coast Guard’s core values as well as consistent with the mission at hand. Since we cannot “order” anyone to do anything, we must strive to achieve the respect, confidence and loyalty of those entrusted to our care...all Auxiliarists have this opportunity to lead, regardless of their position.

## **Assertiveness**

The Coast Guard values people who are assertive, but not aggressive. The difference between these two characteristics is sometimes hard to see. The aggressive person seeks to bully his/her way through situations for their own ego or self image....while an assertive person cares about the “mission” more than themselves and their ego. They always communicate their concerns but they also try to get a reasonable resolution when ideas are in conflict without stepping on top of those who may disagree.

## **Decision Making**

Making good decisions is really at the heart of TCT. How do we ensure that we act or perform in a manner that maximizes mission success and minimizes risk to ourselves, our crew, the public, etc? The other elements of TCT all play a role in improving those decisions. We define a problem or condition, seek information about that problem, analyze that information, identify alternatives and select one or a range of alternatives. Then we measure our success or failure in order to adjust our course of action. This process can take us 20 seconds in the case of routine decisions, or 20 months in the case of large complex problems. The process is the same ... the depth of analysis and level of importance is always changing. Thank you for your participation in the 2009 Team Coordination Training Refresher. Please share your thoughts about this training and the format with us!

Thank you for your participation in the 2012 Team Coordination Training Refresher. Please share your thoughts about this training with us!

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