



UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER  
7115 SOUTH BOUNDARY BOULEVARD  
MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA 33621-5101

6 September 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. NAVAL FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND  
(NAVCENT)

SUBJECT: Command Investigation Into the Facts and Circumstances Surrounding the Loss at Sea of  
Two Task Force Three Personnel On Or About 11 January 2024

1. I have reviewed the above subject investigation and concur with the findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations, as modified, with the exception of Recommendations, paragraph 13.

2. I modify the Command Investigation, Recommendations, paragraph 13 to read as follows:

~~(CUI)~~ RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM evaluate and implement accountability based on community experience and the findings of this report. This incident, marked by systematic issues, was preventable. Neither the mission as assigned, the Command and Control (C2) structure, the "near or at threshold" environmental conditions, or the acceleration to pull execution twelve hours earlier were causal to this tragic mishap. Despite conflicting guidance as to buoyancy standards, no guidance suggests negative buoyancy for VBSS missions. This negative buoyancy was the root cause of these deaths. In the case of (b) (6), they either (a) didn't know they were negatively buoyant (as no buoyancy tests occurred in the first months of their deployment), or (b) acknowledged yet disregarded their negative buoyancy, expecting they would be "OK" after shedding tactical gear and/or supplementing with the TFSS. The TTP for boarding vessels recognize that one of the most hazardous phases of the operation is the boarding team's embarkation onto the suspect vessel. However, a layered defense of personal responsibility, properly maintained and functional equipment, and process and procedures safeguard against such hazard. Other layers of defense, such as pre-mission buddy checks or buoyancy tests, help provide forceful backup in the instance when individual responsibility misses the mark. In this mishap, that forceful backup may have fallen short of NSW expectations. As such, NSW commanders are best suited to determine what degree of responsibility to assign to the leadership echelons above (b) (6)

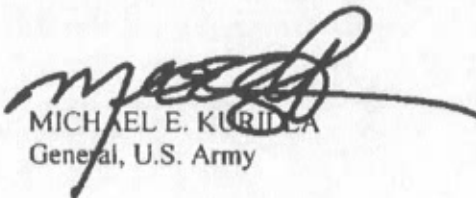
(b) (6)

3. I direct NAVCENT and the Investigating Officer to brief me on the findings and recommendations within the next 30 days.

4. I direct Fleet Master Chief (b) (6), Senior Enlisted Leader, USCENTCOM to be present for NAVCENT's investigation briefing.

5. The point of contact for this memorandum is Major General (b) (6), Chief of Staff, USCENTCOM who can be reached by telephone at (b) (6) or by electronic mail at

(b) (6)

  
MICHAEL E. KURIDCA  
General, U.S. Army

~~(CUI)~~



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
U.S. NAVAL FORCES CENTRAL COMMAND  
PSC 901 BOX 1  
FPO AE 09805-0001

5830  
Ser N00/123  
1 Aug 24

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on RDML DeVore ltr 5830 of 28 Jun 24

From: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command  
To: Commander, U.S. Central Command

Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES  
SURROUNDING THE LOSS AT SEA OF TWO TASK FORCE THREE PERSONNEL  
ON OR ABOUT 11 JANUARY 2024

1. ~~(CUI)~~ Readdressed and forwarded.
2. ~~(CUI)~~ I have reviewed the investigation and concur with the findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations, to include Opinion 3 as modified by Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, in part. Recommend the following change:
  - a. ~~(CUI)~~ Modify opinion 3 to read:

This incident, marked by systemic issues, was preventable. The "near or at threshold" environmental conditions were not causal to this terrible mishap, but were a contributing factor. The findings of fact do not support a causal nexus between the mishap and the mission as assigned, the acceleration to pull execution twelve hours earlier, or the Command and Control (C2) structure. [FoF 3, 5, 60, 65-68, 74-75, 78-79, 81-82, 84-93, 90-94, 96-97, 119, 148-150, 157, 360-362, 377, 379-380, 408]



G. M. WIKOFF

Controlled by: CUSNC  
Controlled by: N013  
CUI Category: ~~CUI/PRVET~~  
Distribution/Dissemination: FEDCON  
POC: N013 (b) (6)



~~CUI//ADPO-PRVGY~~

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND  
2000 TRIDENT WAY  
SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA 92155-6699

5830  
Ser N00/312  
30 Jul 24

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on RDML Michael B. DeVore, USN ltr of 28 Jun 24

From: Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command  
To: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command

Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES  
SURROUNDING THE LOSS AT SEA TWO TASK FORCE THREE PERSONNEL ON OR  
ABOUT 11 JANUARY 2024

1. ~~(CUI)~~ I carefully reviewed the subject investigation. It meticulously reconstructed the events leading up to and following the tragic loss of ~~(b) (6)~~. A copy of this investigation will be retained by the Force Judge Advocate's Office in accordance with § 0209 of reference (a), and by my Learning to Action Board for continued corrective action.

2. ~~(CUI)~~ I concur with the findings, opinions, and recommendations of the investigating officer, with the following recommended change:

a. ~~(CUI)~~ Modify opinion 3 to read: "This incident, marked by ~~(b) (6)~~. While neither the ~~(b) (5)~~

3. ~~(CUI)~~ In response to this tragedy, NAVSPECWARCOM will meet our duty and obligation to learn lessons from the tragic deaths of ~~(b) (6)~~. To prevent similar incidents, actions related to the following recommendations are already in progress:

a. (U) Recommendation 2 is in progress. The FRM has been revised into the Force Training and Readiness Manual (FTRM). The FTRM is in final draft awaiting signature. Changes were made to the FTRM maritime-related Training Events (TEs), to include requirements for addressing pre-mission checks, buoyancy checks, PFD maintenance, and donning.

b. (U) Recommendation 3 is in progress. Command Training Detachments (TRADETs) currently use SOPs and Lesson Training Guides (LTGs) which address the detailed buoyancy procedures to be used during training and execution of the evolutions. COMNAVSPECWARCOM is considering development of a force-wide policy to address water safety during maritime operations. This policy would task all NSW commands to ensure standardized documented procedures are in place for buoyancy requirements,

Controlled by: CNSWC  
Controlled by: N004  
CUI Category: ~~CUI//ADPO-PRVGY~~  
Distribution/Dissemination: FEDCON  
POC: N004, ~~(b) (6)~~

~~CUI//ADPO-PRVGY~~



Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE LOSS AT SEA TWO TASK FORCE THREE PERSONNEL ON OR ABOUT 11 JANUARY 2024

(b) (5)

c. (U) Recommendation 4 is in progress. NSWG-4 is currently refining man overboard (MOB) procedures for ALL personnel on board NSW craft. The procedures will be part of all NSW surface craft safety briefs given prior to any evolution. The procedures will provide clear guidance regarding the actions for MOBs and will be formalized and promulgated to the Force.

d. (U) Recommendation 5 is in progress. COMNAVSPECWARCOM is drafting a force wide policy to address water safety during maritime operations. This policy would task all NSW commands to ensure standardized documented procedures are in place for buoyancy requirements, equipment checks, equipment donning, equipment maintenance, and safety briefs.

e. (U) Recommendation 6 is in progress. TRADET SOPs are in place requiring buoyancy checks prior to maritime blocks of training or operations. Additionally, new requirements have been established including; pre-mission checks, buoyancy checks, PFD maintenance, and donning. The FTRM will also address updated buoyancy checks to account for mission specific equipment.

f. (U) Recommendation 7 is in progress. COMNAVSPECWARCOM is in the process of formally inducting lifesaving equipment into the Navy 3M program.

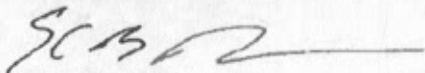
g. (U) Recommendation 8 is in progress. An industry survey and analysis of alternatives to provide operators a means of fail-safe buoyancy is underway.

h. (U) Recommendation 9 is in progress. COMNAVSPECWARGRU FOUR is conducting a review of equipment changes that will work within the current craft configurations.

i. (U) Recommendation 10 is in progress. COMNAVSPECWARCOM will direct a safety stand-down, once Naval Safety Command has completed the safety investigation. Further, COMNAVSPECWARCOM is working with TRADET on changes to policies and procedures.

4. (U) The painful loss of (b) (6) was (b) (5) (b) (5) This terrible loss was (b) (5) though it was (b) (5) Accordingly, I will doggedly pursue the implementation of the above recommendations in order to improve the safety of our Force as we continue to meet our global mission.

5. My point of contact for this matter is the Naval Special Warfare Command Force Judge Advocate. The office may be contacted at (b) (6) or (b) (6)

  
K. B. DAVIDS



5830  
28 Jun 24

From: RDML Michael B. DeVore, USN  
To: Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command  
Via: Commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command

Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES  
SURROUNDING THE LOSS AT SEA OF TWO TASK FORCE THREE PERSONNEL  
ON OR ABOUT 11 JANUARY 2024

Ref: See Appendix A

Encl: See Appendix B

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. Summary of Findings Overview

a. (EUH) On the evening on 11 January 2024, a deployed team of Naval Special Warfare (NSW) operators from Sea Air Land (SEAL) Team THREE, TWO Troop, Charlie Platoon (C-Platoon) and Special Boat Team TWENTY (SBT-20), conducted a nighttime boarding of a stateless dhow with suspected ties to the smuggling of Advanced Conventional Weapons (ACW) from Iran into Yemen. During the early moments of the boarding, the dhow's mariners left their wheelhouse in order to join their fellow crewmembers who were being gathered in one location for the SEAL Team's security and safety. This act changed the ship handling dynamics as the vessel stopped transiting forward. As a result, the sea state intensified the roll of the dhow as the boarding progressed, such that the combatant craft - assault (CCA) vessel carrying the assault team reset twice during the action to better reposition alongside the dhow.

b. (EUH) While climbing from the CCA up to the dhow's deck, (b) (6) USN, the Leading Petty Officer (LPO) of the platoon, fell from the side of the dhow into the water. Observing his teammate struggling, (b) (6) USN, jumped into the water to render (b) (6) assistance. Encumbered by the weight of each individual's gear, neither their physical capability nor emergency supplemental flotation devices, if activated, were sufficient to keep them at the surface. (b) (6) was only intermittently at the surface in the subsequent twenty-six (26) seconds after his fall. (b) (6) was only intermittently at the surface in the thirty-two (32) seconds following his entry to attempt a rescue of (b) (6). The entire tragic event elapsed in just forty-seven (47) seconds, and two NSW warriors were lost to the sea.

c. (EUH) The root cause of these drownings was a lack of a failsafe and layered defense to provide buoyancy (expounded in this report), whether to overcome the weight of equipment, fatigue from extreme physical exertion and resultant inability to tread water, or an injury suffered during the boarding process.

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d. ~~(CUI)~~ This forward-deployed team was generally manned, trained, and equipped to be ready for operations, receiving its full and complete pre-deployment training requirement. They were aware that Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) would be their primary deployment focus, and concentrated their pre-deployment training preparations accordingly. However, the following findings emerged in our study of this fatal mishap:

(1) ~~(CUI)~~ Failure to recognize risks to buoyancy and the role emergency flotation devices and supplemental buoyant material should play in achieving buoyancy. The Naval Special Warfare Force Readiness Manual (FRM) implies the importance of buoyancy in mitigating risk through regimented rehearsals in controlled environments by the number of times it prescribes "buoyancy test personnel and gear" in training scenarios. However, it prescribes no specific instruction or guidance on what an effective buoyancy test entails, when "neutral" or "positive" buoyancy should be obtained, nor does it outline the role emergency devices and supplemental buoyant material added to various worn equipment plays in achieving an effective buoyancy test - creating questions whether emergency flotation devices alone should keep an individual afloat in addition to their gear or if supplemental buoyant material to their equipment is required. The manufacturer of the flotation devices provides general guidance and limitations, but similarly does not provide specific information on the role of supplemental flotation material or how much additional weight it can compensate on top of assisting an individual in staying afloat.

(2) ~~(CUI)~~ Failure to complete buoyancy tests once deployed. C-Platoon performed buoyancy tests during their Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC), but under different mission sets and in different environmental conditions (San Diego, CA, late winter / early spring in wetsuits) than the conditions of this mishap (a maritime interdiction in the Middle East in water temperatures of eighty (80) degrees Fahrenheit). Because this test was performed in a different operating environment with different gear and equipment, it did not effectively provide a buoyancy test that would translate to the current operations in the Middle East.

(3) ~~(CUI)~~ Insufficient training specifically with the Tactical Flotation Support System (TFSS). Operators were not well-practiced in using their emergency gear, with many noting they had only operated the Tactical Flotation Support System (TFSS) devices once in their career, and some could not recall activating them at all. The fact that operators conducted buoyancy tests during their pre-deployment training did not necessarily mean they activated their TFSS since effective buoyancy could be achieved when supplemental buoyant material is added to individual gear.

(4) ~~(CUI)~~ Conflicting guidance and lack of implementation of buoyancy requirements. While a baseline Navy reference highlights the need for "positive" buoyancy for boarding team members, others, including the training materials provided to the mishap platoon during the Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC) highlighted the need for "neutral" buoyancy. Post-incident interviews with teammates revealed shock and disbelief that an operator (and in this case, <sup>(b) (6)</sup> [REDACTED] who was acknowledged as the team's strongest swimmer) would be unable to maintain themselves at the surface, especially when supplemented with an emergency

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flotation device. The conflicting guidance and lack of implementation of any buoyancy requirement ultimately placed responsibility upon individual members to determine what type of buoyancy was required and to configure themselves, possibly leading to confusion and ineffective execution.

(S) ~~(EU)~~ The mishap platoon's TFSS maintenance practices did not meet Navy Maintenance and Material Management (3M) system scheduling, tracking and documentation standards. It cannot be ruled out that either (b) (6) or (b) (6) attempted to activate their emergency devices, yet they somehow failed to activate. This could be a result of the operator's error, poor gear "hygiene" to ensure the safety devices were unobstructed by other equipment, material failure, an expired shelf life, and/or poor maintenance processes to ensure the device's proper operation. Performance of NAVSEA maintenance, if performed to a Planned Maintenance System or the manufacturer's standard, did not follow the formality of maintenance scheduling, tracking, and documentation of the Navy Maintenance and Material Management (3M) system. As a result, there is variance in maintenance documentation across the teams and checks were not consistently documented and/or missing information. No records of maintenance checks were available for ST-3 C-Platoon pre-incident. While it is possible the TFSS failed to activate due to operator error or being obstructed by other equipment, it cannot be ruled out that the TFSS simply failed to function properly either from defect or the lack of proper preventative maintenance.

e. ~~(EU)~~ Man overboard (MOB) procedures were enacted within seconds of (b) (6) falling into the water. Upon determination that both (b) (6) were in the water, the Ground Force Commander, (b) (6) USN, prioritized the personnel recovery (PR) as the primary mission of on-scene available assets. MOB procedures were appropriate, prompt, and in accordance with prescribed guidance. Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), committed extensive resources to the search in the chance that (b) (6) and (b) (6) reappeared at the surface. On 21 January 2024, the search and rescue concluded after ten (10) days and encompassed a search area of approximately 48,600 square nautical miles. Following the intensive ten day long search and rescue effort, and in accordance with established Navy policy, recovery and salvage was not pursued as the sea is recognized as a fit and final resting place for the remains of members of the Naval Service.

f. ~~(EU)~~ During the course of this investigation, NCIS received an anonymous complaint alleging misconduct violations by various members of C-Platoon. The allegations include wrongful consumption of alcohol aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER by (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) having surgery outside the knowledge and care of U.S. Navy medicine; and (b) (6) (b) (6) and (b) (6) wrongfully using Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs). The investigation team believes the allegations raised in the complaint were not root causes of the operational decision to conduct the boarding operation, the tactical execution of the operation, or the loss of life during the operation.



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**2. Conclusions and Recommendations**

a. ~~(CUI)~~ The NSW trainings, tactics, and procedures for boarding vessels contemplates that "one of the most hazardous phases of the operation is the boarding team's embarkation onto the suspect's vessel." There is no doubt the act of boarding a suspected smuggling vessel is dangerous and can elevate in risk depending on the factors of the mission. However, deficiencies, gaps and inconsistencies in doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures created missed opportunities for safeguards that could have decreased the likelihood for this incident. These gaps included conflicting guidance on buoyancy requirements, issues with maintenance of emergency buoyancy equipment, failure to recognize risks to buoyancy and the role emergency flotation devices and supplemental buoyant material should play in achieving buoyancy, and insufficient training specifically with the TFSS emergency flotation device.

b. ~~(CUI)~~ Thus, key recommendations to action these systemic issues include:

(1) ~~(CUI)~~ Formalization of buoyancy requirements for missions; eliminate ambiguity in guiding references;

(2) ~~(CUI)~~ Outline the role that emergency flotation devices play in achieving buoyancy;

(3) ~~(CUI)~~ Assess the need for a fail-safe means of emergency flotation, to include a review of whether some system of automatically-activated devices are operationally feasible and desirable in NSW missions;

(4) ~~(CUI)~~ Conduct more periodic and rigorous emergency training and testing, specifically Water Survival Training, under controlled conditions to develop proficiency in operating lifesaving devices under duress;

(5) ~~(CUI)~~ Consider formalizing pre-mission check requirements. Exhaustive checks already occur in diving and parachuting. This may provide a template for an appropriately scaled pre-mission formal inspection of gear by designated experts;

(6) ~~(CUI)~~ Enforce formal maintenance standards for emergency lifesaving devices. While NSW operators are responsible for significant numbers of equipment to execute a diverse range of missions, some pieces of gear warrant a formal, tracked, and focused maintenance effort. Recommend a review of that critical list and ensure that an auditable maintenance history exists.

  
M. B. DE VORE

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## INTRODUCTION

1. ~~(EU)~~ Enclosure (1) directed an investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the loss at sea of two (2) U.S. Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) Task Force THREE (TF-3) personnel on or about 11 January 2024. Pursuant to enclosure (1), as amended by enclosure (2), and reference (a), enclosures (3) through (132) are submitted in support of the findings of fact, opinions, and recommendations for the command investigation.
2. ~~(EU)~~ The investigation centered its analysis on the events specific to 11 January 2024, but in the process to understand underlying standards and policies, the team broadly reviewed the means by which a Naval Special Warfare (NSW) task unit is prepared for deployed operations. Just as in other Navy communities, a NSW operational unit follows a scripted IDTC that ensures their training, preparation, and readiness for deployed operations.
3. ~~(CU)~~ During the course of the investigation, the team received support and cooperation from all organizations, including U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command (NAVCENT), U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM), Naval Special Warfare Group ONE and its subordinate support elements, Commander, Task Force FIVE FIVE (CTF-55), SEAL Team THREE (ST-3), Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWO SIX (HSC-26), Task Force THREE, and the C-Platoon members, who provided statements.
4. ~~(EU)~~ Commander, NAVCENT, granted two (2) extensions due to the number of interviews required for sufficient fact finding, extensive documentary review, and inherent logistical complications involved in a complex investigation.
5. ~~(EU)~~ Scope of Investigation. Commander, NAVCENT, directed this investigation to inquire into the facts and circumstances surrounding the loss at sea of two Task Force THREE personnel on or about 11 January 2024 during a maritime interdiction operation. The investigation team conducted a root cause analysis of the mishap, analyzing potential causal factors presented by the evidence.
  - a. ~~(EU)~~ On 28 May 2024, Commander, NAVCENT, amended the scope of the investigation to address additional matters: (1) whether the mission was adequately planned with the appropriate oversight and Sailors were properly trained, equipped, and qualified for the specific mission, and (2) whether allegations in an anonymous tip received by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), contributed to the facts and circumstances surrounding the deaths [REDACTED] (b) (6) [REDACTED]. As a result of the expanded scope of this investigation, Commander, NAVCENT, granted an additional extension of the report's due date and added an additional assistant investigating officer, [REDACTED] (b) (6) [REDACTED] USN.



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b. (EUH) The Naval Safety Command (NAVSAFECOM) safety investigation, the technical analysis of the mishap and of emergency flotation equipment, is related to this incident, but independent of this command investigation.

6. (EUH) Investigation Team Background. Commander, NAVCENT, convened this investigation and assigned Rear Admiral Michael B. DeVore, USN, as the investigating officer. The investigation team included (b) (6) USN (COMUSNAVCENT), (b) (6) USN (COMNAVSURFRON-5), (b) (6) USN (NSWG-1), (b) (6) USN (ST-3), and (b) (6) USN (NSWG-1). (b) (6) TF-3 Senior Enlisted Leader, served as a subject matter expert for general questions about the Naval Special Warfare community. (b) (6) reported to TF-3 March 2024, after the incident occurred. Through the course of this investigation, legal guidance was provided by (b) (6) JAGC, USN. The legal team was augmented by (b) (6) JAGC, USN. Aside from the legal expertise that supported this report, the team included officers from both the conventional unrestricted line and NSW, totaling nearly one hundred five (105) years of experience, including command leadership at all paygrades and experience that includes deployed operations in all naval theaters.

7. (U) Report Structure. The findings of fact are divided by chapter.

a. (U) Chapter One (1) introduces SEAL Team THREE and their mission when (b) (6) USN, and (b) (6) USN, were lost at sea. Chapter One (1) also details SEAL Team THREE members' administrative and operational roles, referenced throughout the report.

b. (EUH) Chapter Two (2) details the sequence of events of maritime interdiction operations leading up to 11 January 2024. TF-3 FWD executed two boardings in December 2023, referenced in this report as Boarding One and Boarding Two. Chapter Two (2) describes these December 2023 boardings and also details the days from 05 to 10 January 2024 leading up to 11 January 2024 (the third boarding).

c. (EUH) Chapter Three (3) describes the series of events of 11 January 2024, the day of the man overboard. This chapter details the pre-mission planning, the change to the operational timeline, weather conditions and sea state during Boarding Three, and the man overboard.

d. (EUH) Chapter Four (4) describes the 10-day search and rescue effort, which started within seconds of calling the man overboard.

e. (EUH) Chapter Five (5) details safety standards applicable in maritime interdiction operations. This chapter also explains equipment standards and practices applicable to Naval Special Warfare boardings. As a reference, this chapter also summarizes a 2011 incident where the U.S. Coast Guard experienced its own similar tragic mishap and their subsequent corrective actions taken to address the mishap's findings.

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f. ~~(EU)~~ Chapter Six (6) addresses an anonymous complaint NCIS received on 15 February 2024. The complaint consisted of four allegations against members of C-Platoon. The first allegation stated [REDACTED] (b) (6) (C-Platoon LCPO) consumed alcohol aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER and that it affected his judgement. The second allegation stated [REDACTED] (b) (6) was medically unfit to conduct operations due to a medical procedure obtained outside the care of U.S. Navy medicine prior to embarking USS LEWIS B. PULLER. The third allegation stated [REDACTED] (b) (6) used Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) outside the knowledge and care of U.S. Navy medicine. The fourth allegation stated [REDACTED] (b) (6) USN, used PEDs, outside the knowledge and care of U.S. Navy medicine.

g. (U) Chapter Seven (7) describes general training, equipment, mission guidance, and risk management standards.

8. (U) Physical and video evidence were examined during the investigation, and pictures have been included as enclosures of physical or video evidence referenced.

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## FINDINGS OF FACT

### Chapter I. Overview

(U) This chapter introduces SEAL Team THREE and their mission when (b) (6) (b) (6) USN, and (b) (6) USN, were lost at sea. This chapter also details SEAL Team THREE members' administrative and operational roles, referenced throughout the report.

#### (U) SEAL Team THREE and Task Force THREE

1. (U) SEAL Team THREE (3) is an echelon IV U.S. Navy Command, assigned under Commander, Naval Special Warfare Group ONE, in San Diego, CA. [Refs. b, c]
2. (EUH) SEAL Teams under Naval Special Warfare Group ONE complete rotational deployments to Geographic Areas of Responsibility throughout the world, and are deployed with Operational Control (OPCON) transferred from Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), to the Geographic Combatant Commander who then further delegates OPCON to the Theater Special Operations Commander (TSOC) for employment through the DoD Global Force Management Process. [Refs. b, c, d]
3. (EUH) When deployed to U.S. Central Command as they were in January 2024, elements of SEAL Team THREE were under the OPCON of Commander, U.S. Central Command, with delegated OPCON and tactical control (TACON) to the TSOC, Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT). [Refs. b, c, d, f]
4. (EUH) At the time of the mishap (in January 2024), elements of SEAL Team THREE were deployed to the U.S. CENTCOM Area of Responsibility and employed by SOCCENT within Task Force THREE (TF-3) (formerly known as Naval Special Warfare Unit Three), headquartered onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain. [Refs. b, c, d, f]
5. (EUH) For the purposes of conducting maritime security operations in direct support of NAVCENT, TF-3 was organized to include a TF-3 Forward (FWD) sub-element, embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER (LBP), and placed TACON to TF-55, NAVCENT's Warfare Commander for Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO). [Refs. g, h, f]

#### (U) Overview of Maritime Interdiction Operations

6. (EUH) Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, (COMUSNAVCENT), tasked Task Force THREE (TF-3) with conducting MIO. [Refs. e, g, h, f]
7. (EUH) In order to support the operation, TF-3 produced a concept of operations (CONOP) brief for the execution of boardings, searches, and seizures of vessels suspected of smuggling



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Advanced Conventional Weapons (ACW) by nefarious actors via historic smuggling routes in the Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Red Sea. [Ref. h]

8. (EUH) Risk to the force was considered in the planning of the operation to include: small arms fire from mariners at sea, vessel collision at sea, crane operations, crushing injury, and man overboard (MOB). [Refs. g, h]

9. (EUH) The planning team also considered risk mitigation measures that were completed or could be completed prior to a boarding in order to lower the overall risk to force associated with the operation. Specifically, the risks associated with a crushing injury were believed to be mitigated due to their training of day and night casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) procedures. [Refs. g, h]

10. (EUH) Additionally, risks associated with a man overboard were mitigated due to the CCA crews' training and rehearsals of man overboard recovery and response. [Refs. g, h]

11. (EUH) TF-3 was certified, verified, and validated through an 18-month pre-deployment training cycle on asset management, maritime assault, lethal use of force, and post assault procedures. TF-3 also rehearsed and validated CASEVAC procedures with HSC-26, the assigned helicopter squadron to the operation, during previous training serials. [Refs. g, h]

12. (EUH) Overall, TF-3 leadership determined and briefed the general risk to force to be "Low" for the operation. [Refs. g, h]

(U) SEAL Team THREE/Task Force THREE Roles and Responsibilities

(U) SEAL Team THREE/Task Force THREE administrative leadership:

13. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as Commander, TF-3, based in Manama, Bahrain, co-located at U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) headquarters during the planning and execution of the operation. [Encl. 5]

14. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the ST-3 Executive Officer (XO). Specific to the operation, (b) (6) served as Deputy Commanding Officer, TF-3 and the On Scene Commander (OSC), while embarked on the USS LEWIS B. PULLER (ESB 3). [Ref. h] [Encls. 6, 6a]

15. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the ST-3 C-Platoon Commander and the TF 3.2 Officer in Charge (OIC). Specific to the operation on 11 January 2024, (b) (6) served as the Assault (or Ground) Force Commander (AFC). [Ref. h] [Encl. 7]

16. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the TF 3.3 Commander (CDR) of Special Boat Team 20. Specific to the operation on 11 January 2024, (b) (6) served as the TF-3 FWD

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Maritime Mission Commander aboard CCA C-1. As the Maritime Mission Commander, (b) (6) led the search and rescue during the man overboard. [Ref. h] [Encl. 8]

17. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the ST-3 C-Platoon Leading Chief Petty Officer (LCPO), and TF 3.2 Senior Enlisted Leader specific to the operation on 11 January 2024, (b) (6) served as the Helo Assault Force (HAF) team leader TF 3.2 aboard one of the two helicopters on board the USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Ref. h] [Encl. 9]

18. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the ST-3 C-Platoon Leading Petty Officer (LPO). Specific to the operation on 11 January 2024, (b) (6) served as the Assault Lead and Squad Leader aboard CCA C-1. (b) (6) was the first man overboard (MOB). [Refs. g, h]

19. (EUH) Combatant Craft – Assault (CCA) A-1 personnel on 11 January 2024:

a. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Patrol Officer for CCA A-1 and A-2. Specific to the operation, (b) (6) rode on CCA A-1 and coordinated with the Joint Operations Center during the MOB. [Ref. g] [Encl. 10]

b. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as an assaulter aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 11]

c. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Boat Captain aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 12]

d. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the lead Navigator aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 13]

e. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Multi-Purpose Canine Handler aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 14]

f. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the communications officer and medic aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 15]

g. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Chief Engineer aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 16]

h. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Navigator and Joint Terminal Air Controller aboard CCA A-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 17]

20. (U) Combatant Craft – Assault (CCA) A-2 personnel on 11 January 2024:

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- a. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Boat Captain aboard CCA A-2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 18]
- b. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Gunner and Chief Engineer aboard CCA A-2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 19]
- c. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Navigator aboard CCA A-2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 20]
- d. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Chief Engineer and Forward Gunner aboard CCA A-2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 21]
- e. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the forward-looking infrared (FLIR) video footage operator and the Chief Engineer aboard CCA A-2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 22]

21. (EUH) Combat Craft - Assault (CCA) C-1 personnel [in addition to (b) (6) (FoF 15), (b) (6) (FoF 16), and (b) (6) (FoF 18)] on 11 January 2024:

- a. (EUH) (b) (6) USCG, served as the Maritime Security Response Team (MSRT) Troop Chief, aboard CCA C-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 23]
- b. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Patrol Officer aboard CCA C-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 24]
- c. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Boat Captain aboard CCA C-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 25]
- d. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, was the Lead Climber for Assault Force aboard CCA C-1. (b) (6) served as the first assaulter/climber to board Vessel of Interest (VOI). [Ref. g] [Encl. 26]
- e. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as an assaulter/climber and was aboard the VOI when the MOB was called. [Ref. g] [Encl. 27]
- f. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Navigator aboard CCA C-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 28]
- g. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as an assaulter aboard CCA C-1, and the second climber to board the VOI. [Ref. g] [Encl. 29]
- h. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Radio Telephone Operator and assaulter aboard CCA C-1. (b) (6) was the second man overboard. [Refs. g, h] [Encls. 9, 33, 36, 40]



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- i. (EUH) (b) (6), USN, served as an assaulter aboard CCA C-1. (b) (6) was the fourth assaulter to board VOI. [Ref. g] [Encl. 30]
  - j. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as an assaulter aboard CCA C-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 31]
  - k. (EUH) (b) (6) USCG, assigned to the MSRT aboard CCA C-1, served as an assaulter/climber aboard VOI. [Ref. g] [Encl. 32]
  - l. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Chief Engineer aboard CCA C-1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 33]
22. (EUH) Operators aboard the helicopters "HELO 1" or "HELO 2" [in addition to (b) (6) (FoF 17) on 11 January 2024]:
- a. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as co-pilot aboard aircraft HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 34]
  - b. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as co-pilot aboard aircraft HELO 2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 35]
  - c. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as ST-3 C Platoon, Assistant Officer in Charge. Specific to the operation (b) (6) was aboard HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 36]
  - d. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as co-pilot aboard aircraft HELO 2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 37]
  - e. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as co-pilot and FLIR operator aboard aircraft HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 38]
  - f. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Operations Chief, gunner, and rescue swimmer aboard aircraft HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 39]
  - g. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the Joint Tactical Air Controller (JTAC) aboard HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 40]
  - h. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as the medic and Helo Assault Force (HAF) Lead in the aircraft, HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 41]
  - i. (EUH) (b) (6) USCG, served as a HAF member aboard the aircraft HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 42]

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j. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as the Sniper aboard aircraft HELO 2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 43]

k. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as aircrew aboard aircraft HELO 2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 44]

l. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as aircrew aboard aircraft HELO 2. [Ref. g]

m. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as the port side gunner aboard aircraft HELO 1. [Ref. g] [Encl. 45]

n. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as senior medical technician aboard aircraft HELO 2. [Ref. g] [Encl. 46]

23. (U) SEAL Team THREE/Task Force 3 personnel not embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER:

a. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as the ST-3 TWO Troop Commander. Specific to the operation, (b) (6) was deployed to Yemen and Qatar, and not with TF 3.2 and TF 3.3. [Encl. 47]

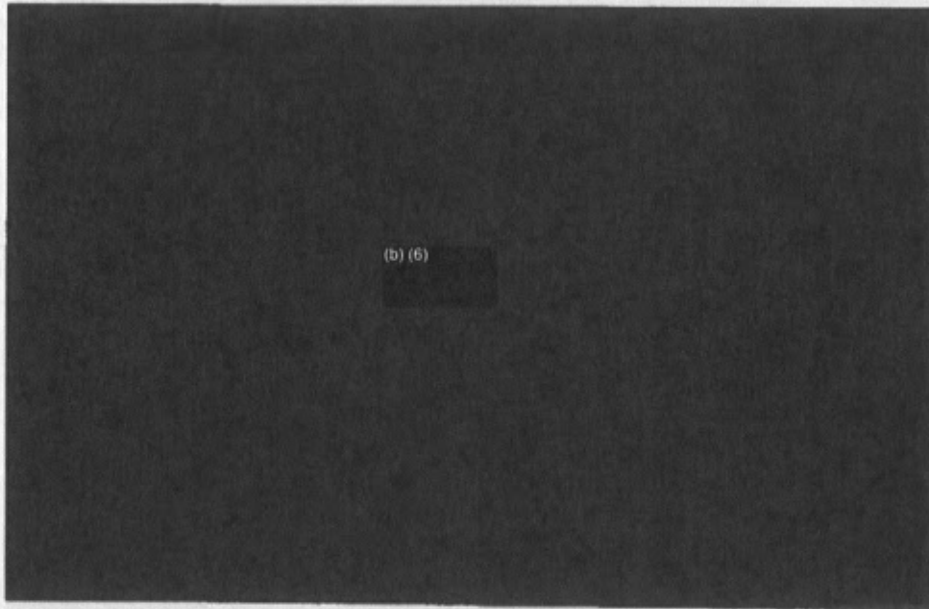
b. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as the ST-3 TWO Troop Leading Chief Petty Officer. Specific to the operation, (b) (6) was deployed to Yemen and Qatar, and not with TF 3.2 and TF 3.3. [Encl. 48]

c. (U) (b) (6) USN, served as the Special Boat Team 20 and, Coastal Troop One Detachment LCPO, operating as Task Force 3.3 Detachment LCPO in Joint Operating Center. [Encl. 49]

d. (U) (b) (6) was in San Diego, CA, at the time of the incident and not deployed with TF 3.2. and 3.3. [Ref. g] [Encl. 107]

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(b) (6)

~~(CUI)~~ Figure 1-1. Photograph of the small boat assault team taken prior to the mission on 11 January 2024 depicting equipment worn prior to the mission. [Encl. 58]

**(U) Chapter II. Maritime Interdiction Operations**

(U) This chapter details the sequence of events leading up to 11 January 2024. TF-3 FWD executed two boardings in December 2023, referenced as Boarding One and Boarding Two. This chapter describes these December 2023 boardings and details the days from 05 to 10 January 2024, leading up to the 11 January 2024 boarding, the day of the man overboard.

(U) Boardings One and Two (December 2023)

24. ~~(CUI)~~ In early December 2023, TF-3 FWD embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Refs. g, h]

25. ~~(CUI)~~ (b) (1) (A) [Redacted] [Refs. g, h] [Encls. 7, 9, 12, 16, 41]

26. ~~(CUI)~~ TF-3 FWD conducted Boarding One on or about 10 December 2023, during daylight hours. [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 7]

27. ~~(CUI)~~ During Boarding One, TF-3 FWD boarded a large dhow, estimated to be fifty (50) to sixty (60) meters (164-196 feet) in length. [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 7]



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28. (CUI) TF-3 FWD conducted Boarding One in daylight while the sea state was calm. [Refs. g, h] [Encls. 7, 36]
29. (CUI) Numerous interviews highlighted that Boarding One was conducted in good weather and calm seas. [Encls. 7, 31, 32, 36]
30. (CUI) (b) (6) and (b) (6) described Boarding One as "no issues" and a "good tactical evolution." [Encls. 7, 31, 32, 36]
31. (CUI) TF-3 FWD conducted a post-event debrief of Boarding One and lessons-learned were incorporated into proficiency training and maturation of follow-on planning. [Encls. 7, 50, 50A]
32. (CUI) TF-3 FWD conducted Boarding Two on or about 27 December 2023, also in daylight, however, in an increased sea state than Boarding One. [Encls. 9, 40, 42]
33. (CUI) Boarding Two occurred on a cargo dhow approximately twenty (20) meters (65 feet) in length. [Encls. 6, 31, 40, 42, 43]
34. (U) (b) (6) and (b) (6) described the dhow in Boarding Two as pitching strongly (bow-to-stern oscillation along the centerline axis) due to the sea state. [Encls. 30, 43]
35. (U) (b) (6) and (b) (6) described the dhow in Boarding Two as having a very low freeboard, meaning the dhow was sitting low in the water. [Encls. 30, 43]
36. (CUI) Assaulters did not require a boarding ladder because they were able to step across from the CCA to the dhow. [Encls. 30, 43]
37. (U) (b) (6) and (b) (6) noted the decks were covered in oil and slick. [Encls. 30, 43]
38. (b) (1) (A) [Encls. 7, 30, 31, 40]
39. (CUI) During the Boarding Two post-event debrief, TF-3 FWD noted that it was a tough boarding due to it being spatially compact with thirty-four (34) people aboard, pitching seas, and the vessel being heavily laden (and therefore, sitting very low). [Encls. 7, 29]
40. (CUI) As part of his assessment during the Boarding Two debrief, (b) (6) serving as the Assault Force Commander, stated that the team was operating well and "dialed in." There was good integration with the special boat teams and Coast Guard MSRT members. [Encl. 7]

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41. (U) (b) (6) and (b) (6) noted Boarding Two was well executed, with no significant issues. [Encls. 7, 9, 36]

42. (U) (b) (6) specifically highlighted that (b) (6) the Leading Petty Officer and Tactical Lead, was very process and procedure oriented. [Encl. 7]

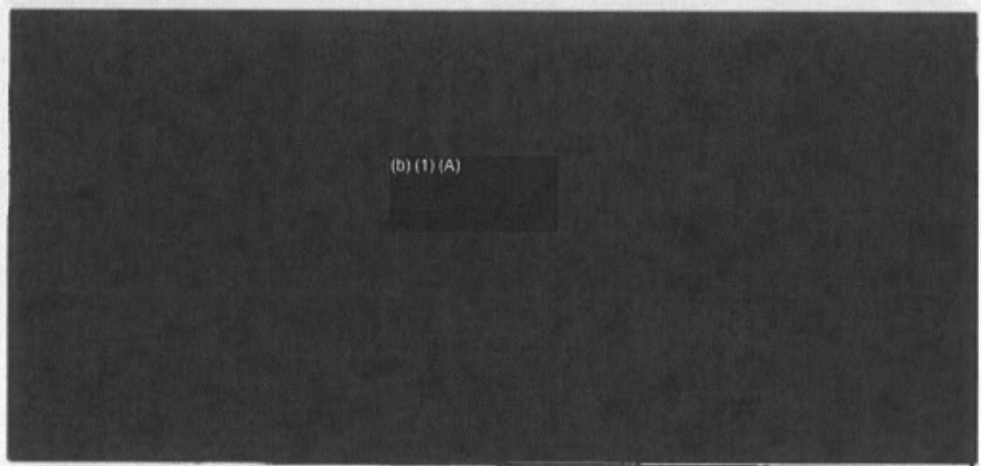
(U) Boarding Three Target Development (05-10 January 2024) of Vessel of Interest (VOI)

43. (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 6]

44. (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 6, 7, 8, 51]

45. (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 6, 7, 8, 51]

46. (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 6, 7, 8, 51]



(b) (1) (A) Figure 2-1. (b) (1) (A) [FoF 46]

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47. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 6]

48. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Encl. 6]

49. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 52]

50. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 52]

51. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Refs. g, h]

52. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Encls. 6, 53]

53. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [Encls. 52, 53]

54. ~~(CUI)~~ TF-3 tentatively scheduled a time to start the boarding based on the time of intercept at 0300Z/0600 local, or time zone "Charlie" (0600C) on 12 January 2024. [Refs. g, h]

55. (U) 0300Z/0600 local was the estimated time of sunrise. [Refs. g, h]

56. ~~(CUI)~~ 0300Z/0600 local was also the specific hour when the operation commenced for the previous two boardings. [Ref. h]

**(U) Chapter III. BOARDING THREE (11 January 2024)**

(U) Morning: Gear Checks, Preparations, Review

57. ~~(CUI)~~ With the location of the VOI now known, and course and speed tracked by persistent surveillance, TF-3 FWD deliberately planned a timeline to intercept the vessel and conduct a boarding in accordance with their approved standing CONOP. [Refs. g, h] [Encls. 52, 53]



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58. (EUF) TF-3 FWD created a vessel specific brief that included timeline of actions and an enumerated pre-boarding execution checklist to meet a boarding time for 0600C on 12 January 2024. [Ref. g]
59. (EUF) TF-3 FWD scheduled the boarding and briefed the plan on 11 January 2024 to USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Refs. g, h]
60. (CUH) Wind speed, sea state, cloud ceiling, precipitation, air and sea temperature, visibility, wave height and height of wave swells were considered in the brief as well as establishing "GO / NO-GO" criteria for boarding operations. [Refs. g, h]
61. (EUF) Local weather conditions predicted for the area in vicinity of USS LEWIS B. PULLER for the period of Thursday, 11 January 2024 through Saturday, 13 January 2024, are provided in the boarding brief. [Refs. g, h]
62. (EUF) Predicted weather conditions and possible impact to CCA and AFSB Crane Ops on 11 January 2024 were identified, but within the permissible range to conduct operations in accordance with pre-established GO / NO GO criteria of six (6) feet swells. [Refs. g, h]
63. (EUF) Weather was also within limits of CCA operations in accordance with U.S. Special Operations Command Manual, which notes marginal thresholds for CCA operations as six (6) to eight (8) feet, with unfavorable thresholds above ten (10) feet. [Ref. j]
64. (EUF) Similarly, weather was also within limits of CCA operations in accordance with Navy Special Warfare Group FOUR Instruction, the administrative chain of command authority for the small boat unit attached to TF-3, which notes: "The maximum sea height for conducting CCA VBSS operations is eight (8) feet. [Ref. c]
65. (EUF) Reference (e) also states that deployed NSW forces are capable of nighttime opposed boarding from CCA in sea states less than or equal to eight (8). A sea state "8" on the Beaufort scale corresponds to a wind speed of Gale Force winds (34-40 knots) and associated waves as high as 18-28 feet (5.5 meters). [Refs. e, j]
66. (EUF) Predicted weather conditions showed abating conditions, with progressively calming winds and sea states over the period of 11 January 2024 through 13 January 2024. [Refs. g, h]
67. (EUF) Estimated sea state for 1200C-0000C on 11 January 2024 was NE three to four (3-4) feet swells with NNE five to seven (5-7) feet waves at every seven to eight (7-8) seconds. [Ref. g]
68. (EUF) Estimated sea state for 0000C-1200C on 12 January was NE four to five (4-5) feet swells at every (7-8) seconds and NNE four to six (4-6) feet waves every eight to nine (8-9) seconds. [Ref. g]

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69. (U) According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), swells are lower frequency waves that outrun the storm that creates them and travel great distances from a wind source. Contrasted with wind waves that are high frequency waves generated near the wind source and depend on wind strength, duration and fetch - the uninterrupted distance over which the wind blows without significant change in direction. [Refs. k, l]

(U) Afternoon: Team OPORD Brief and ROC Drill; CUSNC Direction to Accelerate Timing

70. (EUH) On the afternoon of 11 January 2024, TF-3 FWD planned, briefed, and rehearsed timing of actions to conduct their boarding at 0600C. [Ref. g]

71. (EUH) (b) (6) led the brief and presented a clear explanation of the mission to the boarding team members. [Ref. h] [Encl. 11, 36]

72. (EUH) During this same hour, (b) (6) Commander (CDR) TF-3 briefed at the NAVCENT Daily War Council Brief (1530C) at NAVCENT. [Encl. 51]

73. (b) (1) (A) (b) (1) (A) [Encl. 51]

74. (b) (1) (A) [Encls. 51, 52]

75. (EUH) At the conclusion of this War Council Brief, (b) (6) passed COMNAVCENT's intent to (b) (6) (via a secure voice call and email), and inquired whether they could execute that same evening. [Encl. 54]

76. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, served as Deputy Commodore (DEP CDRE), TF-55, and the FIFTH FLEET Maritime Interdiction Operations Commander. [Encls. 52, 54]

77. (EUH) TF-3 FWD conducted a rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill, which commenced at or about 1600C, and members noted it went well, with no major standouts or shortfalls identified. [Ref. h] [Encls. 3, 7, 36]

78. (EUH) At approximately 1625C, (b) (6) emailed (b) (6) to confirm feasibility of conducting the boarding operation prior to 12 January 2024, 0600C. [Encls. 54, 55]

79. (EUH) At approximately 1632C, (b) (6) reported to NAVCENT command leadership that the boarding could be executed per the TF-3 FWD On Scene Commander (OSC). Further, he noted that seas were at six (6) feet waves, and expected to abate. Estimated time of execution would be 1900C. [Encl. 56]

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80. (EUH) Based on the TF-3 mission slides, sunset was anticipated to be 1726C on 11 January 2024. [Refs. g, h]

81. (EUH) At approximately 1638C, (b) (6) responded to (b) (6) email emphasizing COMUSNAVCENT's guidance to execute as "quickly / safely" as possible, with a goal to take custody that night. [Encl. 54]

82. (EUH) (b) (6) noted that it was also acceptable to conduct a full sweep during daylight if the mission could not be conducted safely in the evening. [Encl. 54]

83. (b) (1) (A) (b) (1) (A)  
[Encl. 51]

(U) Revised Mission Planning and Pre-Execution – VOI

(U) Reader's note: this section steps back in time briefly from the above exchange between TF-55 and TF-3 (FWD). The exchange as noted above indicated that TF-3 (FWD) deemed the accelerated boarding executable. The following reviews the discussion, planning, and revised execution that led to (b) (6) note to (b) (6) that the boarding was feasible.

84. (EUH) Back aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER, (b) (6) passed down to the team the intent to conduct the boarding sooner, and led a conversation about the time shift of the operation. [Encls. 3, 7]

85. (EUH) (b) (6) Officer in Charge (OIC), TF 3.2 and (b) (6) Commander (CDR), TF 3.3 assessed and determined that they could still accomplish the mission, that the environmental conditions were within their thresholds, and the mission was within the capability of the team for execution. [Refs. c, g, h, j] [Encls. 6, 7, 8, 52]

86. (EUH) TF 3.2 and TF 3.3 team leadership communicated to the members of their team not to rush the mission. (b) (6) however, voiced his concern about moving up the timing of the operation because it felt rushed. [Encls. 6, 7, 8, 23, 52]

87. (U) Seas were approximately six (6) feet wave height at time of launching the craft. [Encls. 6, 9, 22, 24, 49, ]

88. (EUH) TF 3.2 OIC (b) (6) stated in his interview that he desired to execute while there was still remaining daylight, but other crewmembers preferred to do it later to have more time to prepare. [Encl. 7]



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89. (EUH) (b) (6) stated in his interview that he emphasized to the team to take a deliberate approach, but still "at our pace." [Encl. 7]
90. (EUH) (b) (6) as TF-3 Platoon Chief Petty Officer, asked everyone in the group of their ability to execute, and all offered an "ok" and "good to go." [Encl. 9]
91. (EUH) The TF-3 FWD On-scene Commander (OSC) (b) (6) conversed with key team leaders, including the military detachment Officer-in-Charge (OIC) embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER, the two-craft helicopter detachment OIC from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWENTY SIX (HSC-26), Special Boat Team TWENTY embarked, Boat Assault Force (BAF), Helicopter Assault Force (HAF), and crane operators and deck crew responsible for safely launching and recovering the CCAs. [Encls. 6, 6a]
92. (EUH) (b) (6) stated he was concerned when informed of the timeline shift, and voiced the same upon receiving the news. However, (b) (6) acknowledged the operation was within their capabilities. [Encls. 6, 23]
93. (EUH) Without receiving any explicit dissent, key leaders reported back to the TF-3 (FWD) OSC, that it was feasible that evening and the TF-3 (FWD) OSC determined to execute the mission. [Encl. 6, 7, 54]
94. (EUH) (b) (6) believed if someone was uncomfortable with the changes to the operational timeline, or believed it to be outside their capabilities, they would have spoken up. [Encl. 49]
95. (EUH) The team implemented mitigations, with an intent to use white light and visible lasers to account for the nighttime operation. [Encls. 6, 7, 9, 10, 27, 30, 36, 40, 43]
96. (EUH) From the TF 3.3 perspective, Special Warfare Combatant Crewmen (SWCC) operators pushed the planned timeline an additional thirty (30) minutes later in order to provide for additional mitigations and readiness preparations. [Encl. 28]
97. (EUH) (b) (6) noted that in his role as lead climber, [he] "was going to be very honest as [he] set the hook - that [he] had the ability to wave-off [and call] no go if unsafe." [Encl. 26]
98. (U) Near time of execution, both visibility and illumination were low. [Encls. 38, 45, 57]

Pre-Mission Conditions - (b) (6) and (b) (6) Specific

99. (EUH) (b) (6) asked all assaulters for a good light check because Boarding Three was a nighttime evolution. [Encl. 26]

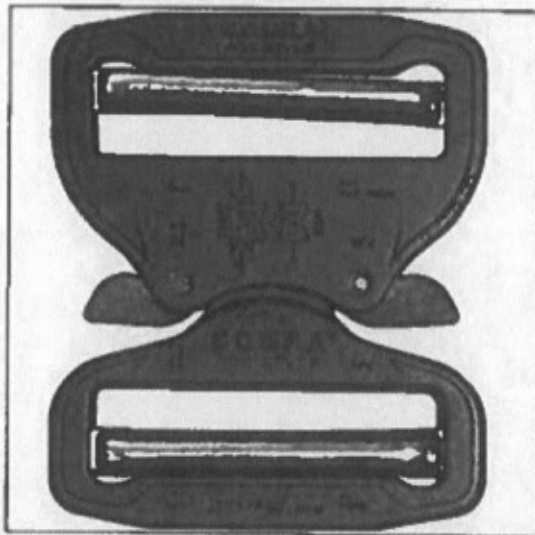


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- 100. (EUH) (b) (6) conducted the buddy check on (b) (6) [Encl. 26]
- 101. (EUH) In completing his buddy check of (b) (6) (b) (6) noted that (b) (6) (b) (6) water wings were "hard pointed" on his belt (secure). [Encl. 26]
- 102. (EUH) A pre-mission photo depicted that (b) (6) was wearing at least one TFSS attached near his left hip (a second waterwing (TFSS) was not clearly visible). [Encl. 58]
- 103. (EUH) The method in which the TFSS is clasped to (b) (6) rigger belt could not be determined. [Encls. 25, 26, 40, 41, 43]
- 104. (U) (b) (6) was wearing gloves at the time of the incident. [Encls. 58, 62 (Images 11, 13)]
- 105. (EUH) (b) (6) had not exhibited any indications of orthopedic injury or ailment in the twenty-four (24) hours leading up to the incident. [Encls. 8, 9]
- 106. (EUH) (b) (6) and (b) (6) were both wearing visual strobes on their helmets at the time of the incident. [Encls. 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64]
- 107. (EUH) (b) (6) conducted buddy checks with (b) (6) [Encl. 7]
- 108. (EUH) (b) (6) was wearing two (2) TFSS attached to his belt. [Encl. 7, 61]
- 109. (EUH) The method in which (b) (6) clasped the TFSS to his riggers belt could not be determined. [Encls. 25, 26, 40, 41, 43]
- 110. (U) (b) (6) riggers belt had a Cobra [brand name] buckle that allows a quick-release capability. An individual is required to press down on both clips located at the top and bottom of the buckle simultaneously in order to release the buckle. One-sided release (pressing only one clip) is impossible. [Ref. i] [Encl. 59, 59a]

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(U) Figure 2-2. Example of a Cobra buckle. [FoF 110]

111. (EUH) (b) (6) was wearing gloves at the time of incident. [Encls. 62 (Images #11-12), 61, 64]

112. (EUH) (b) (6) was wearing a backpack with a three-prong quick release buckle when he entered the water. [Encls. 9, 62 (Images #11-12), 61, 64]

113. (EUH) The contents of the backpack included at least a Harris AN / PRC-117G radio with battery, weighing approximately twelve (12) pounds. [Encls. 36, 64, 65]

113a. (EUH) (b) (6) stated (b) (6) had extra batteries and estimated (b) (6) backpack to weigh approximately forty (40) pounds. [Encl. 36]

113b. (EUH) The backpack appeared to be buckled when (b) (6) entered the water. [Encls. 36, 62 (Images # 11-14)]

114. (EUH) (b) (6) previously carried this backpack on pre-mission Full Mission Profile rehearsals, as well as during the first two boardings. [Encl. 40]

115. (EUH) (b) (6) commented that (b) (6) always had the right gear, and often carried extra gear to help teammates. [Encls. 25, 26, 36]

116. (EUH) (b) (6) had not exhibited any indications of orthopedic injury or ailment in the twenty-four (24) hours leading up to the incident [Encls. 8, 9]

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(U) VBSS Mission to VOI

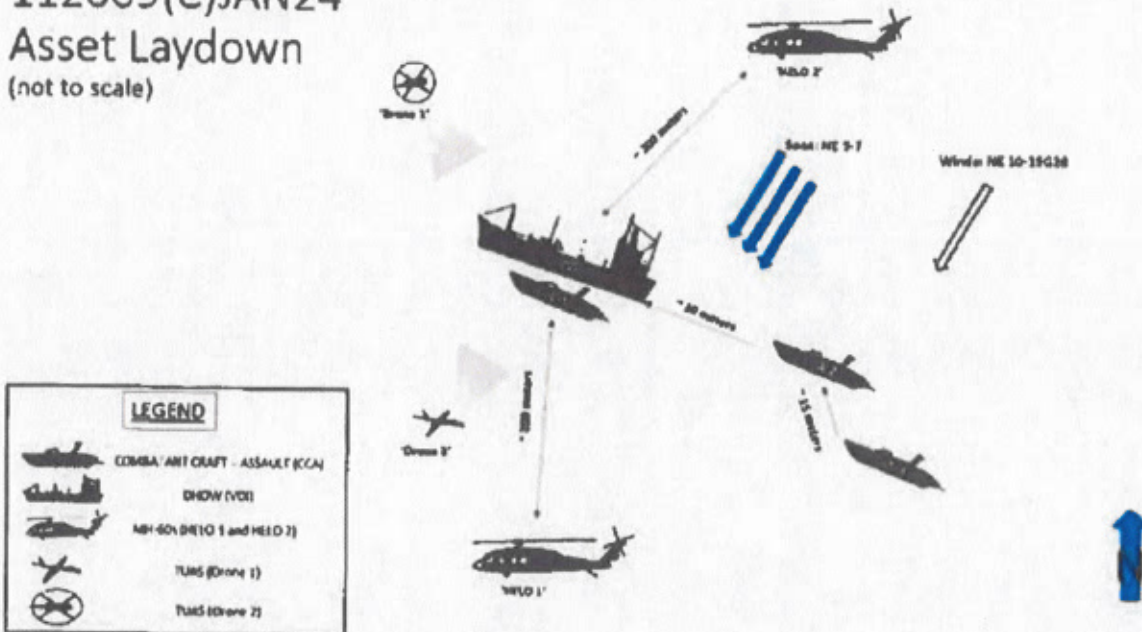
117. (EUH) Combat Craft Assault (CCA) C-1 embarked the Boat Assault Force (BAF) as the primary team to board the VOI. [Refs. g, h]

118. (EUH) The forces participating in the boarding event are included as enclosure 66. [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 66]

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Asset Laydown

(not to scale)



(EUH) Figure 3-1. Depiction of assault craft boat C-1 in relation to VOI (not drawn to scale).

119. (EUH) Once the CCAs were in the water, (b) (6) assessed the seas to be four to six (4-6) feet, and "felt good" about combined wind and sea state. [Encl. 10]

120. (EUH) (b) (6) and (b) (6) assessed seas to be six to eight (6-8) feet. [Encls. 22, 33]

121. (EUH) TF-3 FWD deliberately planned a slow approach, which took approximately one hour. [Encls. 24, 29, 30, 31, 36]

122. (EUH) While en route to the VOI, seas were assessed as six to seven (6-7) feet by the Navigator aboard CCA C-1. [Encls. 24, 28]

123. (EUH) Team members were getting wet during the ingress to the VOI. [Encls. 30, 33]



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124. (EUH) HELO 1 and 2 (helicopters) were positioned roughly two-hundred (200) feet off and two-hundred (200) feet above the VOI at the time of the incident. [Encls. 62, 66, 67-71]

125. (EUH) The ladder apparatus used in boarding the VOI was in appropriate working condition and did not display any noticeable performance deficiencies. [Encls. 26, 27, 72-73]

126. (U) The ladder rungs have a high-friction grip tape surface allowing for increased grip in maritime conditions. [Encls. 72 and 73]

(U) Approach #1 – First three Assaulters

127. (EUH) On the first approach, the CCA was riding well with minimum rocking. [Encls. 7, 8]

128. (EUH) The VOI was rolling, but on par with what C-Platoon experienced in training and other boardings. [Encl. 27]

129. (EUH) (b) (6) Lead Climber for the Assault force, stated he got a "perfect hook." (b) (6) was satisfied with placement of the climbing ladder. [Encl. 27]

130. (U) The rail cap upon which the ladder apparatus was placed for the boarding party to climb had been recently painted and the surface was slippery. [Encls. 27, 30]

131. (U) The rail cap was elliptical in shape and roughly 1.2' by 0.75' by lateral and vertical extents. [Encls. 72-73]

132. (EUH) (b) (6) boarded the VOI as the first assaulter, noting it was "Spicy, but not out of parameters." [Encl. 27]

133. (EUH) During the first approach, the three (3) assaulters aboard were (b) (6) (b) (6) [Encls. 8, 26, 29, 31]

(U) Approach #2 – Second Three Assaulters

134. (EUH) CCA C-1 started to get out of position due to the sea state and ultimately required CCA C-1 to re-approach the VOI. [Encls. 7, 8, 12, 34, 36]

135. (EUH) During the second approach, the next three assaulters aboard were (b) (6) (b) (6) [Encls. 23, 26, 30]

136. (EUH) As the roll of the VOI increased, some assaulters went over the rail directly, without the use of the ladder to board the VOI. [Encls. 22, 29, 31, 32, 36, 42]

137. (EUH) (b) (6) described the climb as not being "super bad." [Encl. 30]



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138. (EUH) (b) (6) had to hang on to the railing of the VOI while it rolled one full cycle until he could let go and roll himself over the railing and onto the deck of the VOI. [Encl. 30]

139. (EUH) Aboard the dhow, (b) (6) recalled a newly painted surface at the top rail, and noted that the new paint job "made it a little sporty," and that the top rail was likely wet or slippery. [Encl. 30]

140. (EUH) (b) (6) also described the cap rail as "slippery." [Encl. 26]

141. (EUH) (b) (6) noted the VOI's increased rocking and tried to communicate with the assaulters aboard the VOI to get the vessel back underway, which would have steadied the VOI. [Encl. 7]

142. (EUH) (b) (6) ultimately made it up to the wheelhouse area of the dhow, followed by (b) (6) [Encls. 23, 26, 62]

143. (EUH) Aboard the dhow, (b) (6) helped clear the space and ensure its security. [Encls. 23, 62]

144. (EUH) (b) (6) found no one at the helm or on the throttles, and the throttles were in neutral. [Encls. 8, 23, 26, 62]

145. (EUH) After three more assaulters made their way onto the VOI, CCA C-1 again had difficulty holding its position and moved away from the VOI and re-approached a third time to reset its position alongside the vessel. [Encls. 7, 8, 12, 18, 34, 40, 62]

146. (EUH) At 2004C, TF-3 (FWD) reported via chatroom to TF-55 that the "initial assessment is the [VOI's] crew is compliant." [Encl. 74]

(U) Approach #3 - Man Overboard

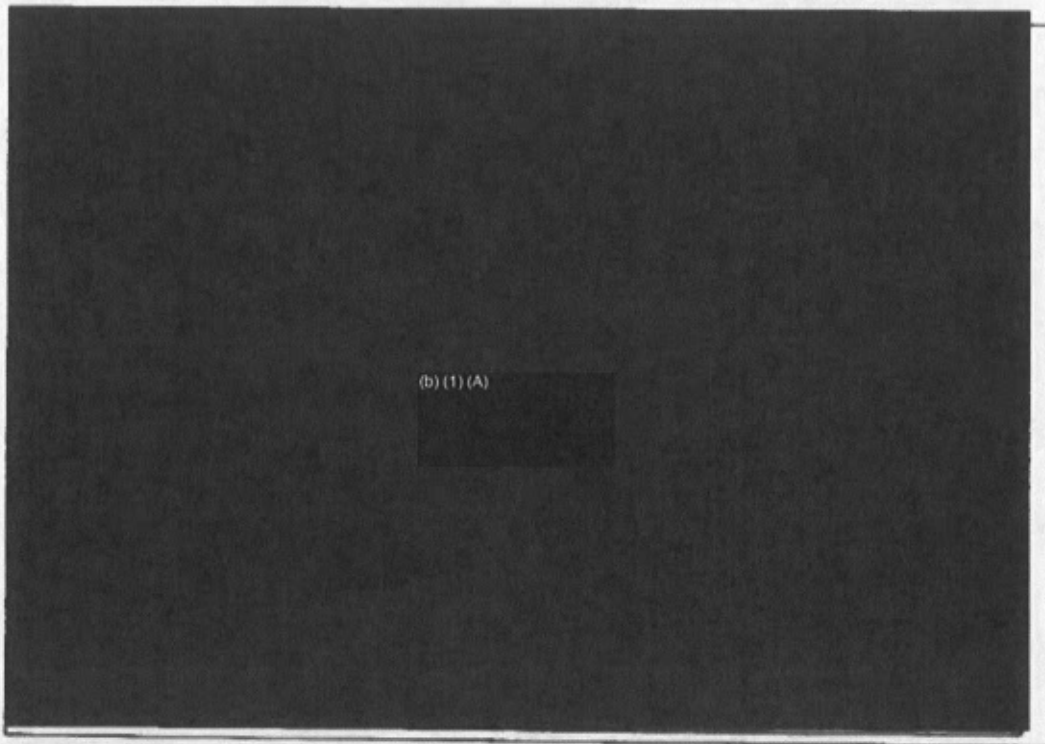
147. (EUH) By the third approach, the VOI did not have any forward momentum. [Encl. 8, 10, 62]

148. (EUH) (b) (6) noted that the rocking increased as the VOI stopped. [Encl. 41]

149. (CUH) The CCA C-1 Boat Captain, (b) (6) described the VOI as rocking, but still manageable. [Encl. 25]

150. (EUH) Video evidence shows a clear difference in the rolling dynamics between the first and third CCA approach. [Encl. 62 (Images #01-08)]

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(b) (1) (A)

attempted to board VOI. Blue circle depicts [redacted] [Encl. 62 (Images #01-08)]

151. (EUH) (b) (6) noted that when it was his turn to climb the ladder, the hairs on the back of his neck stood up, so he chose to time the VOI's roll, placing his stomach on the cap rail and rolling onto the dhow. [Encl. 32]

(EUH) Enclosure (62) provides a detailed deconstruction of events observed via ISR video. Time stamps are included to assist the reader. All are common to the 11th of January 2024, and times are denoted as the local (CHARLIE) time converted from ISR reference data, originally recorded in ZULU time. In sum, the following events lasted approximately forty-seven (47) seconds (between 20:09:29 and 20:10:16).

152. (EUH) <<20:09:29 (seconds)>> (b) (6) made a boarding attempt from the engine compartment cover on the back of the CCA to the rail cap of the VOI. [Encls. 24, 62 (Images 02)]

153. (EUH) (b) (6) attempted to board at the same time as (b) (6) who was positioned forward of (b) (6) on the CCA. [Encls. 24, 28, 32, 62 (Image 02)]

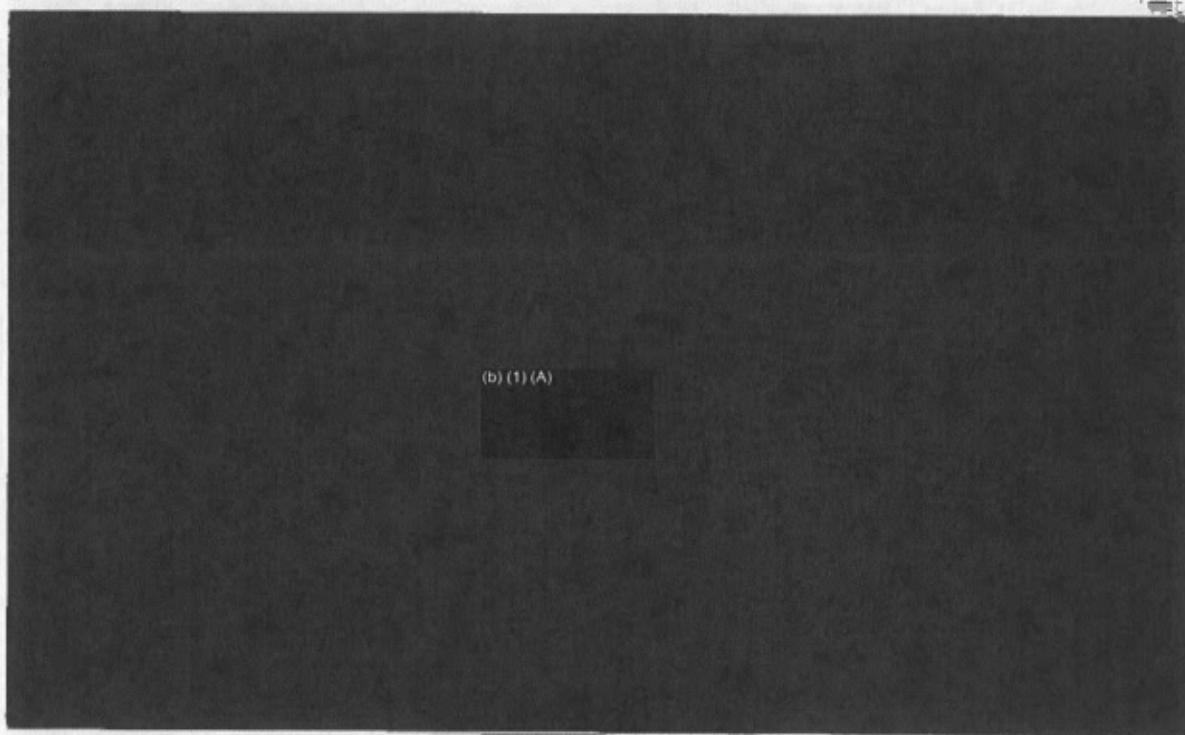
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154. (EUH) There was no contact between (b) (6) and (b) (6) that would have affected (b) (6) attempt to board. [Encls. 32, 62 (Images 02, 04)]

155. (EUH) (b) (6) did not use the ladder apparatus in his boarding attempt. [Encl. 62 (Images 02-04)]

156. (EUH) (b) (6) attempted to grab the rail cap directly from the engine compartment cover of the CCA. [Encl. 62 (Images 02-04)].

157. (EUH) <<20:09:29.5 to :30 (seconds)>> (b) (6) threw both of his hands over the rail, though his hands swiftly dropped below the rail cap indicating a fall due to lack of positive control. [Encl. 62 (Images 03-04)]



(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

(EUH) For the ease of the reader, time 20:09:30 is used as the time referenced for when (b) (6) "fell".

158. (EUH) (b) (6) is assessed to have fallen approximately nine (9) feet into the water based on the rail cap height above the waterline and the addition of a rolling ship while in beam seas. [Refs. g, h] [Encls. 62, 72, 73]

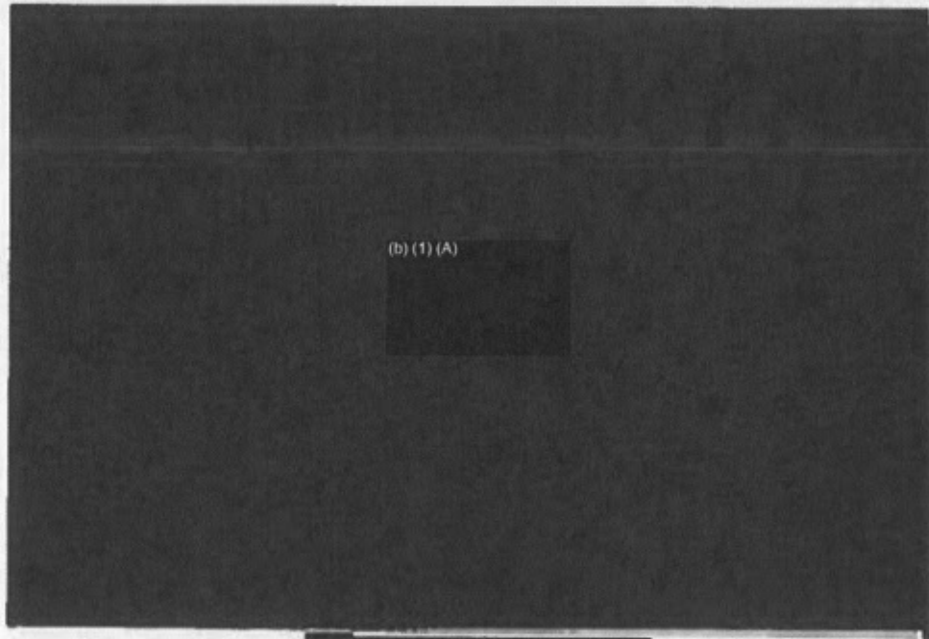
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159. (EUH) The VOI was rolling away from (b) (6) at the time of his fall. [Encl. 62 (Images 02-04)]

160. (EUH) <<20:09:31 (seconds)>> An unmanned aerial vehicle lost visual of (b) (6) after his fall, due to the rocking of the VOI and the drone's positioning relative to the VOI. [Encl. 62 (Images 04-08)]

161. (EUH) <<20:09:35 (seconds)>> Four seconds later, a different airborne asset, HELO 1, regains visual and video coverage. The remainder of all video evidence is from the helicopter's feed. [Encl. 62 (Image 09)]

162. (EUH) <<20:09:35 to :36 (seconds)>> Roughly five (5) seconds after his fall, (b) (6) grips the bottom rung of the pool ladder portion of the ladder apparatus. [Encl. 62 (Images 09-10)]



(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

163. (EUH) <<20:09:38 to :38.5 (seconds)>> Roughly eight (8) seconds after his fall, with marginal grip of the bottom rung of the pool ladder, (b) (6) rotated his body towards the CCA. [Encl. 62 (Images 11-12)]



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(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

164. (EUT) <<20:09:38.5 to :40.5 (seconds)>> After eight and a half (8.5) seconds following his fall, (b) (6) releases from the ladder and reaches toward the CCA, but does not gain control and is swept under by a wave. [Encl. 62 (Images 12-15)]

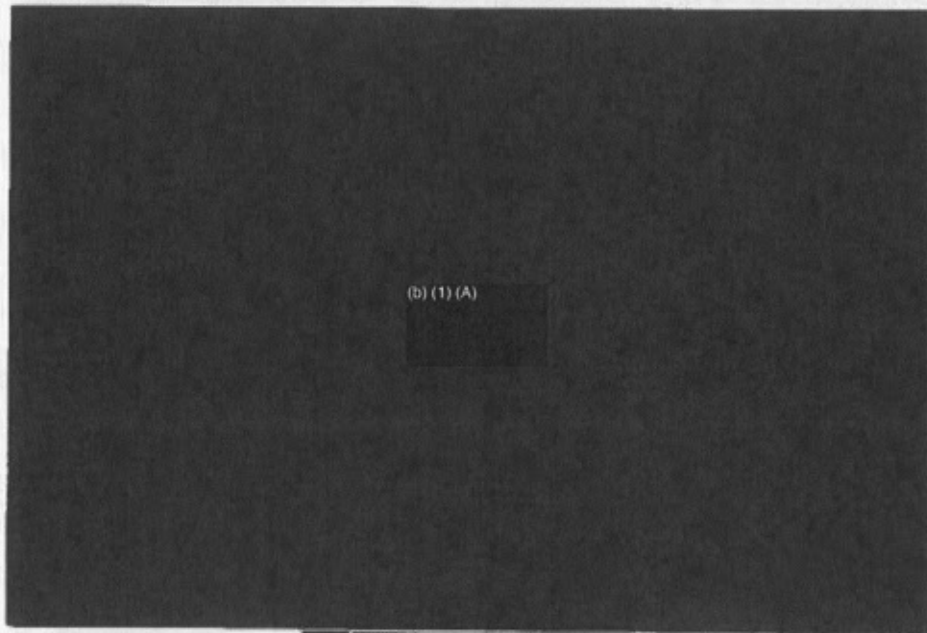
(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

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165. (EU) NSW CCAs have no handholds or surfaces to grab on the outside of the boat. [Encls. 62, 72, 73]

166. (EU) <<20:09:40.5 to :41 (seconds)>> Now nearly eleven (11) seconds after his fall, (b) (6) appears to have gained marginal control of the caving ladder while he was submerged in water, roughly four (4) feet below the connection point of the caving ladder with the pool ladder. [Encl. 62 (Images 15-16)]



(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

167. (EU) <<20:09:41.5 to :42 (seconds)>> (b) (6) leaped into the water towards (b) (6) after (b) (6) had been in the water for roughly eleven (11) seconds. [Encl. 62 (Images 17-18)]

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[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

168. ~~(C)~~ Following <sup>(b) (6)</sup> [REDACTED] entering the water, between 20:09:43 to :53 (10 seconds duration), video footage confirms visual of both operators intermittently at the surface of the water with some contact with the caving ladder extension. [Encl. 62 (Images 19-32)]

[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED]

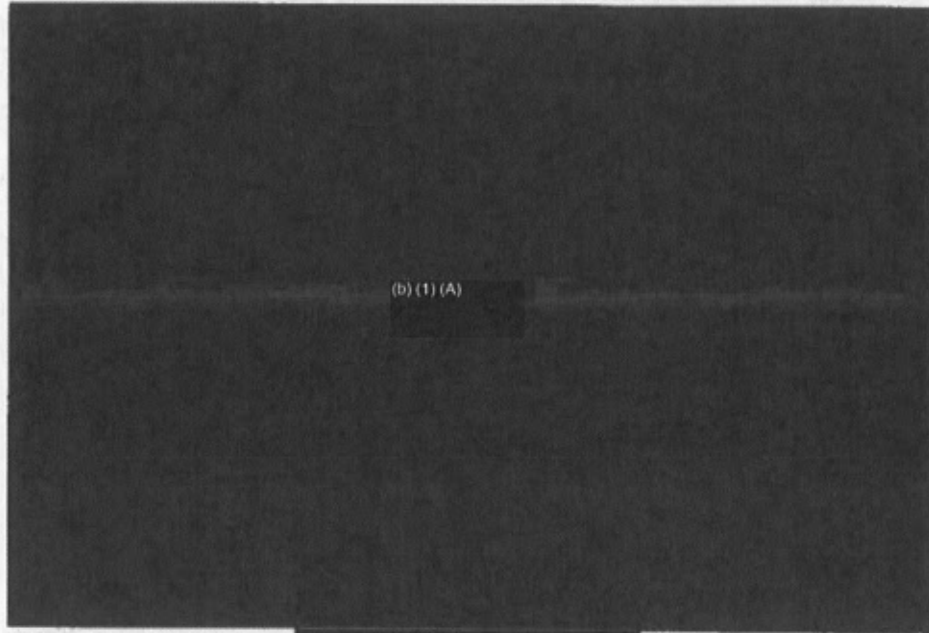
(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED]

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169. (EU) <<20:09:54 to :56 (seconds)>> (b) (6) is clearly seen at the surface, and (b) (6) helmet breaks surface. [Encl. 62 (Images 19-32)]

170. (EU) At 20:09:55, (b) (6) appears to gain positive control of the caving ladder, but it is indeterminate if (b) (6) still had contact. [Encl. 62 (Images 33-35)]



(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

171. (EU) <<20:09:56 (seconds)>> The last visual of (b) (6) was after roughly twenty-six (26) seconds in the water. [Encl. 62 (Image 34)]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

172. (ett) <<20:09:57 to :59 (seconds)>> After roughly fifteen (15) seconds in the water [Encl. 62 (Images 36-38)]

[REDACTED]

(b) (6)

[REDACTED]

(b) (6)

[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

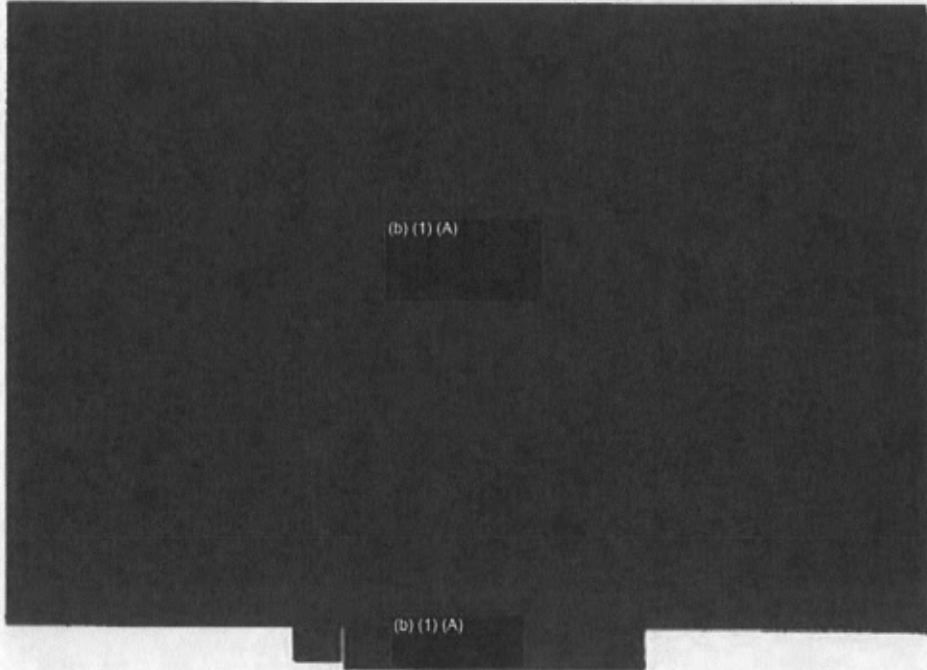
[REDACTED]

(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED]

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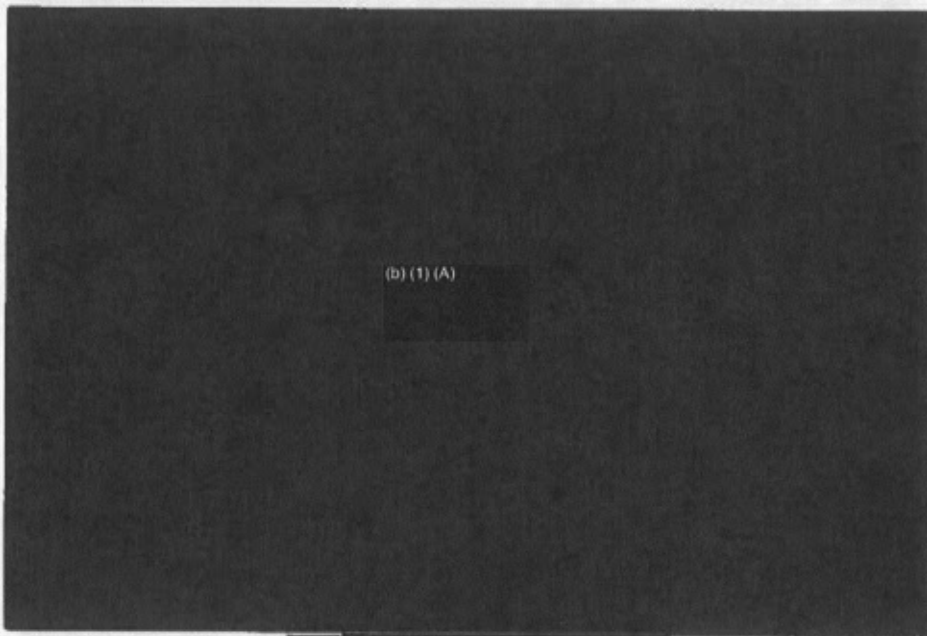
173. (CUI) <<20:10:00 (seconds)>> [REDACTED] (b) (6) releases one hand from the pool ladder, as he appears to attempt to regain situational awareness. [Encl. 62 (Image 38)]



174. (CUI) <<20:10:01 (seconds)>> [REDACTED] (b) (6) was overcome by an oncoming wave and washed off the ladder apparatus and back into the water after nineteen (19) seconds in the water. [Encl. 62 (Image 40-41)]

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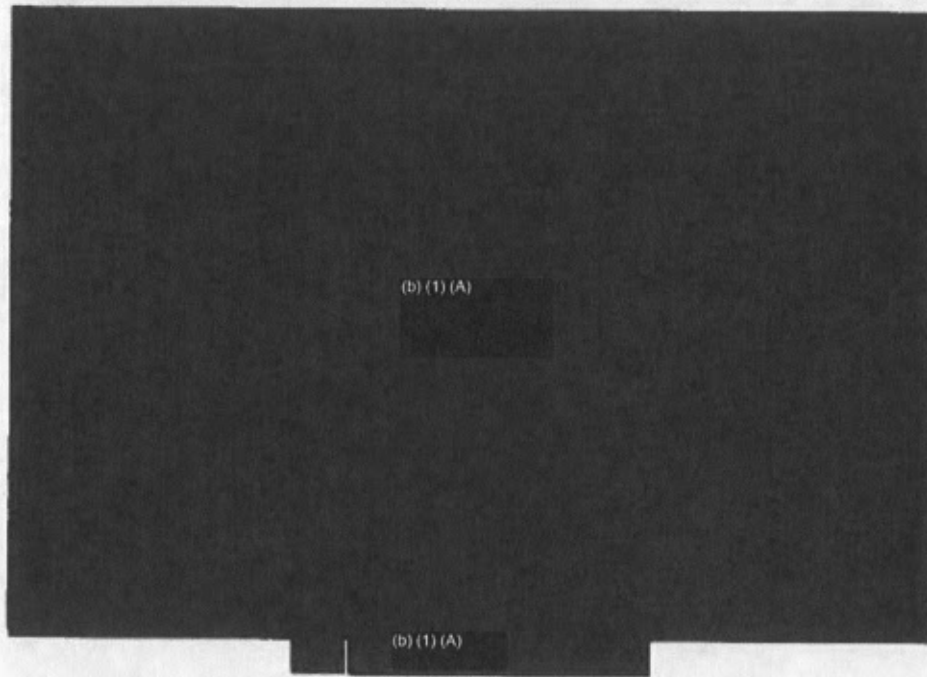
(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [REDACTED]

175. (CU) <<20:10:02 to :09 (seconds)>> During the next seven seconds [REDACTED] (b) (6) gets to the surface, but slips below twice. [Encl. 62 (Image 42-49)]

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176. (EU) <<20:10:10 (seconds)>> With his helmet barely breaking the surface, appears to deploy a TFSS 'waterwing'. [Encl. 62 (Image 50)]

177. (EU) <<20:10:11 to :12 (seconds)>> An unattached water wing appeared within approximately one (1) foot of [redacted] s last observed location. [Encl. 62 (Images 51-52)]

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(b) (1) (A)

(b) (1) (A)

178. ~~(U)~~ <<20:10:12 (seconds)>> (b) (6) re-emerges at the surface within approximately two (2) feet of an unattached water wing. [Encl. 62 (Image 50)]

(b) (1) (A)

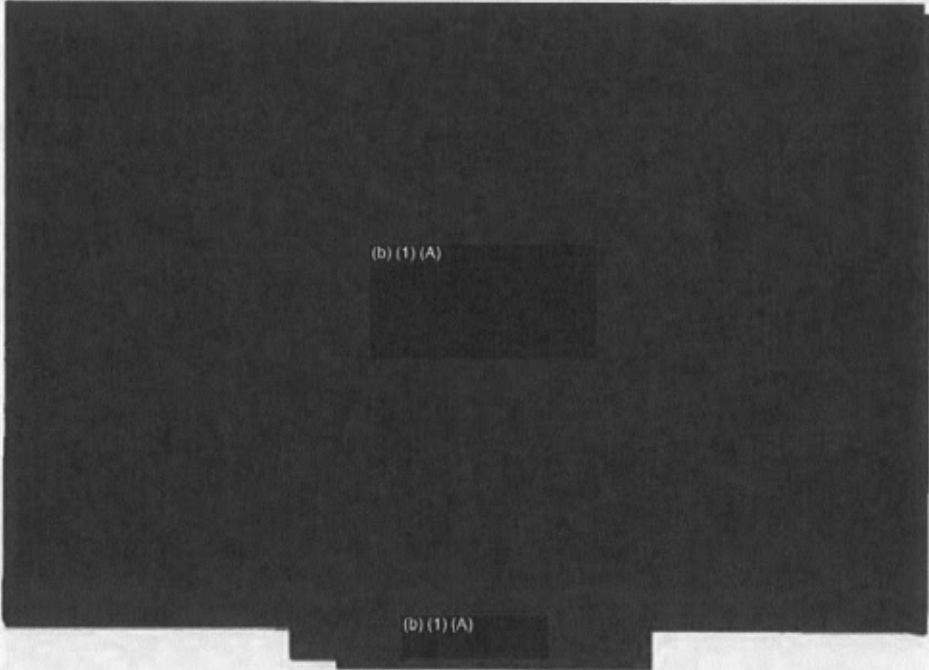
(b) (1) (A)

[REDACTED]

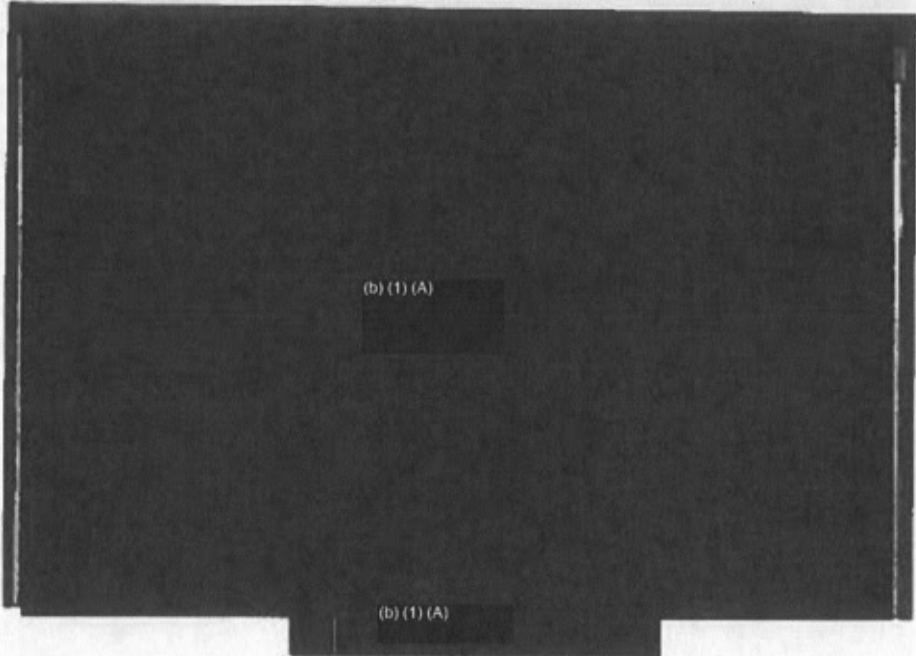
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179. ~~(U)~~ <<20:10:13 to :14 (seconds)>> [REDACTED] (b) (6) head movement appears to indicate an attempt to shed his gear while at the surface. [Encl. 62 (Images 53-54)]



180. ~~(U)~~ This is the last sighting of [REDACTED] (b) (6) at the water's surface. By this point [REDACTED] (b) (6) [REDACTED] (b) (6) had been in the water approximately 32 seconds. [Encl. 62 (Images 53-54)]

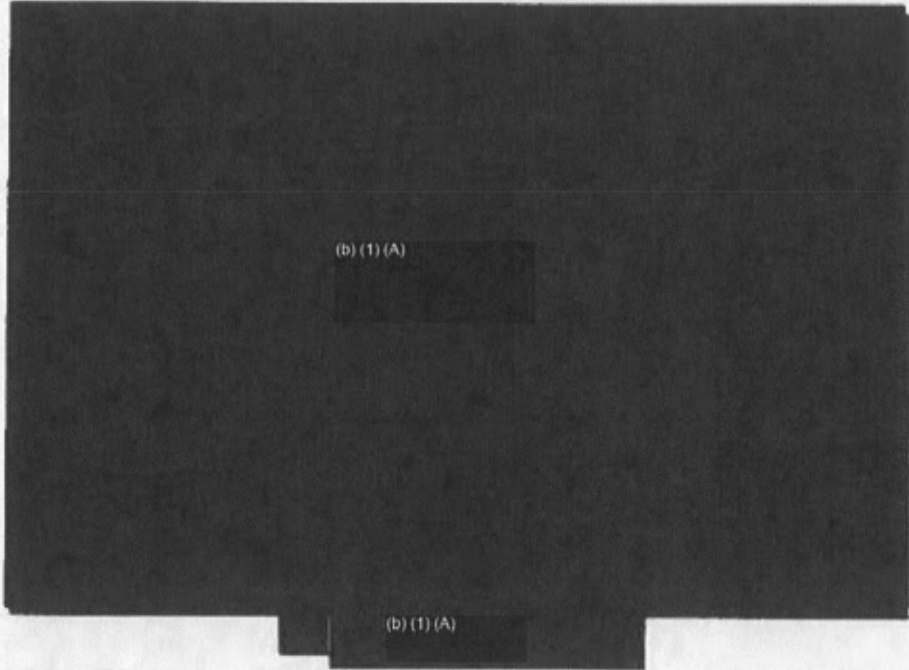


[REDACTED]

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181. (~~EUH~~) <<20:10:15 (seconds)>> (b) (6) slipped below the surface; visual was not regained. [Encl. 62 (Image 55)]



**(~~EUH~~) CHAPTER IV. Search and Rescue Events**

**(U) On Scene Rescue Efforts**

182. (~~EUH~~) Man overboard (MOB) procedures, prescribed by Special Boat Team – TWENTY (SBT-20), were enacted within seconds of (b) (6) falling into the water. [ref. c] [Encls. 6, 7, 18, 28, 57, 74, 75]

183. (U) Man overboard procedures include calling orientation of the MOB in relation to the VOI, marking the location on the navigation suites, gaining visual custody, and marking the position with a buoyant strobe (light). [Ref. c] [Encls. 6, 7, 9, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22]

184. (b) (1) (A) [REDACTED]  
(b) (1) (A) [REDACTED] [Encl. 57]

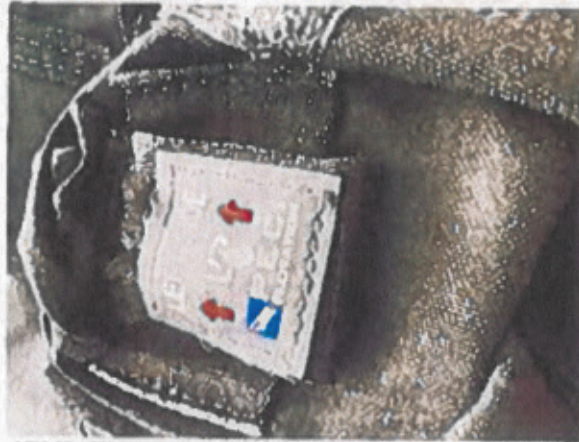
185. (~~EUH~~) Upon determination that there were two MOBs, the Ground Force Commander aboard CCA C-1, (b) (6) prioritized the personnel recovery (PR) as the primary mission of available assets. [Encl. 7]

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186. (EUH) After the MOB call, (b) (6) put the VOI back in gear at an idle speed to reestablish control of the vessel. [Encl. 26]
187. (EUH) CCA C-1 moved away from the VOI in order to avoid crushing the MOB. [Encl. 7]
188. (EUH) Upon coming back around, (b) (6) expected to find (b) (6) and (b) (6) floating, but they were not at the surface. [Encl. 7]
189. (EUH) (b) (6) stated that the search area was well illuminated by helicopter lights and helmet lights. [Encl. 7]
190. (EUH) (b) (6) who was aboard CCA A-1 at the MOB call, stated he saw (b) (6) in the water and yelled MOB. [Encl. 14]
191. (EUH) (b) (6) opined that it was very hard to see (b) (6) because of the sea state and that it seemed instantaneous with (b) (6) jumping in the water. [Encl. 14]
192. (EUH) (b) (6) directed the assaulters aboard the VOI, via their command tactical radio, to set the gear in neutral because the only reason he could think (b) (6) (b) (6) had not resurfaced was that they were caught under the propellers of the VOI's rudder. [Encl. 14]
193. (EUH) (b) (6) ST-3 C Platoon's Assistant Officer-In-Charge, positioned in the aircraft HELO 1, approximately 200 meters above in the airspace, saw (b) (6) fall into the water and (b) (6) go in after. [Encls. 36, 66]
194. (EUH) After about one minute, (b) (6) said he thought to himself, "Where are these guys." [Encl. 36]
195. (EUH) A TFSS was recovered during the search and rescue on 11 January 2024, which remained inflated and intact at time of recovery. The rigger's belt was not recovered. [Encls. 6, 7, 25, 53, 57, 76]
- 195a. (EUH) The strap to the TFSS, where it should have been attached to the riggers belt, remained intact with no visible tearing. The CO2 canister indicated it had been activated to properly inflate the TFSS. [Encl. 76]
196. (EUH) The recovered device showed no damage to the securing loop which might indicate it had been ripped from a rigger's belt. [Encl. 76]



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(~~CU~~) Figure 4-1a. [FoF 196] Recovered TFSS



(~~CU~~) Figure 4-1b. Recovered TFSS. Found inflated, but subsequently deflated at the time of photo.

197. (~~CU~~) The next day, on or about 1303C, 12 January 2024, a Kevlar helmet was recovered by helicopter, which can be positively attributed as (b) (6) helmet. [Encls. 6, 7, 8, 18, 21, 53, 57]

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(S) Figure 4-2. (b) (6) recovered helmet

198. (S) The prevailing expectation within the special operator community—expressed by numerous interviews with C-Platoon and SBD members—was that in the event of a man overboard, the operator would return to the surface to effect a rescue. This was noted in at least 12 interviews. [Encls. 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, 21, 22, 26, 27, 36, 39, 40]

199. (S) According to (b) (6) kit was set up as a Radio Telephone Operator (RTO) Manpack radio in backpack. [Encl. 36]

200. (S) (b) (6) estimated the backpack weighed around 40 (forty) pounds. (b) (6) was unsure if the waist strap of the radio was buckled at the time of the MOB. [Encl. 36]

201. (b) (1) (A) [Encl. 57]

- 202. (b) (1) (A) [Encl. 57]
- a. [Redacted]
- b. [Redacted]
- c. [Redacted]
- d. [Redacted]
- e. [Redacted] and



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f.

(b) (1) (A)

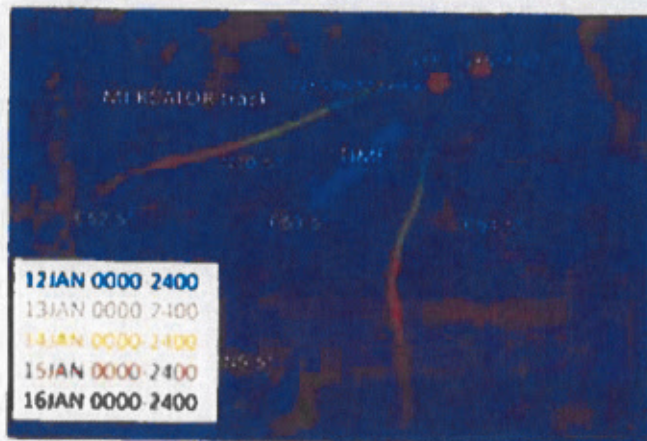
**(EUH) U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (Manama, Bahrain) Rescue Efforts**

203. **(EUH)** On 15 January 2024, COMUSNAVCENT ordered the creation of an operational planning team (OPT) to review all sources of information for the search and recovery efforts and make recommendations on the duration of the search. The OPT recommended the search continue to the ten (10) day-mark at 1710Z on 21 January 2024. [Encls. 51, 75]

204. **(EUH)** As of 15 January 2024 (four days into search and rescue), the search area had encompassed 7,500 square nautical miles. [Encl. 75]

205. **(EUH)** In developing the planned search, NAVCENT used ocean drift models as analyzed through the US Coast Guard (USCG), Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center (FNMOC), and European Mercator model (provided through Scripps Institute of Oceanography). [Encl. 75]

206. **(EUH)** All models showed a general southwesterly drift model despite small variances. [Encl. 75]



**(EUH) Figure 4-3. Comparison of MERCATOR and HYCOM draft tracks**

207. **(EUH)** On 21 January 2024, the search and rescue concluded after ten (10) days and encompassed a search area of approximately 48,600 square nautical miles (64,360 square statute miles). [Encls. 51, 77, 78]

208. **(EUH)** The ten (10) day search accounted for the chance that sunken remains might resurface. [Encl. 78]

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209. (U) The Department of Defense's policy permits a maximum of ten (10) days for service members to be in a Duty Status – Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN), after which a determination must be made on either a service member's death or missing status. [Refs. m, n] [Encls. 51, 57, 75, 78]

(U) Recovery Considerations

210. (U) Reference (o) outlines the Navy's Salvage and Recovery Program. [Ref. o] [Encl. 75]

211. (U) This instruction states that "The Navy respects the sanctity of human remains and recognizes the sea as a fit and final resting place so generally will not conduct operations for the primary purpose of recovering human remains." [Ref. o]

212. ~~(EU)~~ The OPT assessed that (b) (6) and (b) (6) were wearing body armor, clothes, boots, plus their gear, and were unable to shed the heavier gear before losing consciousness. [Encls. 51, 57, 75, 78]

213. ~~(EU)~~ The OPT estimated that the seafloor, within a three (3) to nine (9) square nautical mile radius from the MOB point, was the most likely area to recover the bodies of (b) (6) and (b) (6) [Encls. 75, 78]

214. ~~(EU)~~ The OPT based the estimated recovery area on the assumption that (b) (6) and (b) (6) "went straight down due to weight." [Encls. 75, 78]

215. (U) The water depth in this area was estimated at 12,000ft. [Encls. 75, 78]

216. ~~(EU)~~ The NAVCENT Operational Planning Team (OPT) recommended to COMUSNAVCENT not to pursue recovery and salvage efforts following the unsuccessful search and rescue at ten (10) days. [Encls. 75, 78]

217. ~~(EU)~~ This recommendation was based on the extreme water depth, uncertain buoyancy and ocean current effects, the low probability of locating the remains, and the Navy's guidance on the sea serving as a final resting place. [Ref. m, n, o] [Encls. 75, 78]

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**(U) CHAPTER V. Safety and Equipment**

~~(EU)~~ This chapter details safety standards applicable in maritime interdiction operations. This chapter also explains equipment standards and practices applicable to Naval Special Warfare boardings.

~~(EU)~~ Equipping a SEAL Team Unit for Boarding Team Operations

218. ~~(EU)~~ Standard SOF Personal Equipment Advanced Requirements (SPEAR) is a comprehensive list of equipment available for issue to NSW operators for specific mission skillsets. [Ref. p] [Encls. 60, 61, 79]
219. ~~(EU)~~ The standard SPEAR equipment issued for MIO includes a detachable maritime plate carrier, swimmer plates, lightweight ballistic helmet, and multiple dry bags (watertight flexible bags). [Ref. p] [Encls. 60, 61, 65, 79]
220. ~~(EU)~~ Personal gear is different from SPEAR gear, as personal gear includes consumable items which do not require return or turn-in, and is managed as part of the Personal Gear Issue (PGI) form by the Logistics Support Unit (LOGSU). [Ref. p][Encls. 6, 9, 65, 79]
221. ~~(EU)~~ PGI items are recorded in the Defense Property Accountability System (DPAS). [Encls. 63, 64]
222. ~~(EU)~~ As part of personal gear, operators are issued a TFSS (also referred to as "Life Preserver, Underarm - NSN -1-524-5323"). The TFSS is also known as "water wings." [Encls. 60, 61, 63, 64, 79]
223. ~~(EU)~~ NSW operators use an emergency flotation device manufactured by PECE Flotation, LLC, model TFSS-5326 (TFSS). [Encls. 60, 61, 63, 64, 79, 80]
224. ~~(EU)~~ In configuring a TFSS device, the operator's belt is rigged through the TFSS loop. The TFSS is further bracketed by other gear on the belt, which themselves are either threaded onto the belt or secured via Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment (MOLLE) connectors. [Encls. 25, 26, 40, 41, 80]

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(~~U~~) Figure 5-1. [FoF 226]



(~~U~~) Figure 5-2. [FoF 226]

225. (U) The PECE TFSS is an inflatable aid to flotation device specifically designed to provide eighty (80) pounds of flotation on the surface and forty-five (45) pounds of flotation at a depth of thirty-three (33) feet to assist for any equipment worn and an individual's natural buoyancy, which can vary based on specific body composition (i.e. bone, muscle, fat, blood, etc.). [Encl. 80]

226. (U) Each TFSS system consists of one each independent left and right-and units. [Encl. 80]



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227. (U) The minimum buoyancy per system (two floats on the rigger's belt) is 80 pounds lift in seawater, at the surface. The minimum buoyancy per unit is 40 pounds (one float) lift in seawater, at the surface. [Encl. 80]

228. (U) The TFSS system utilizes a manually activated CO2 cartridge for primary inflation and an oral inflation tube for secondary inflation. [Encl. 80]



(U) Figures 5-3 & 5-4. Demonstration of an activated TFSS system

229. ~~(S)~~ In October, 2009, U.S. Army Operational Test Command reported on the performance of the Tactical Flotation Support System-5326 during an abbreviated operational test (AOT). [Encl. 82]

229a. ~~(S)~~ The test was to substantiate the fit, form, and function as well as operational procedures for the TFSS. Generally, the Army test found that the TFSS was effective, with many positive remarks in the post-jump questionnaire (testing was done in conjunction with parachute operations). [Encl. 82]

230. ~~(S)~~ During this same AOT, however, there were two comments indicating challenges with operation. One comment highlighted the operator had to use two hands to deploy the TFSS after five (5) unsuccessful attempts with one hand. Another tester noted that for one device, they had to pull it four (4) times, but it ultimately inflated. [Encl. 82]

231. ~~(S)~~ The Naval Special Warfare Command Parachuting and Cargo Airdrop Operations Manual issues policies and guidance that govern the conduct and training of NSW parachuting



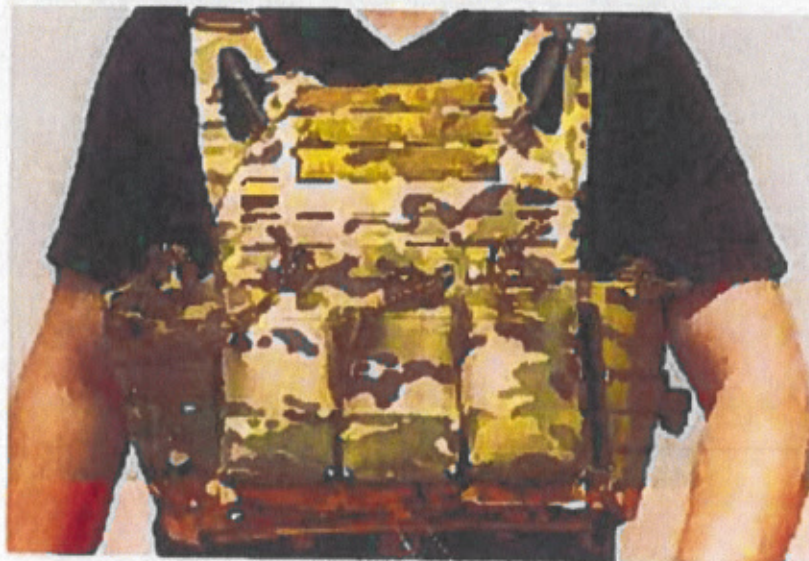
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and cargo airdrop operations. For both static line and military free-fall parachute jumps, the policy is that the TFSS devices will be worn on a separate belt, around the waist. [Ref. q]

231a. (U) The TFSS manufacturer's instructions also state that TFSS devices should be worn at the hip level with a separate belt. Activation handles should be visible, free, and clear. [Encl. 80]

232. (S) Besides the Naval Special Warfare Command Parachuting and Cargo Airdrop Operations Manual and general instructions provided by the manufacturer, there are no other NSW instruction discovered that specifically addresses and outlines the manner of wearing a TFSS-5326. [Ref. q]

233. (S) NSW Operators are issued a detachable plate carrier manufactured by Eagle Industries. Plate carriers are body armor vests that protect an individual from high-level threats. [Encls. 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 79, 83]



(S) Figure 5-5. Detachable Plate Carrier

234. (S) The carrier has the ability to house four (4) ballistic plates, one (1) on the front, one (1) on the back, and one (1) on each side, and includes extensive connection points. [Encl. 83]

235. (S) The detachable maritime plate carrier is designed to achieve buoyancy by inserting foam into several points in the carrier, including the sides, front, and back. [Encl. 83]

236. (S) Operators configure their kit based on their assigned role in a mission – for instance, one operator noted being specifically “neutral” for buoyancy based on an assigned role to be in the helicopter (Helo Assault Force). [Encls. 7, 29, 32, 33]



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237. (EUH) Others noted that the more foam you put in your kit the more bulk you have, so staying slim to avoid interfering with the ladder on a climb or to enable an ability to crawl through small spaces is important. [Encls. 11, 32, 47]

238. (EUH) Several operators noted that they keep their kit the same rather than changing it between missions. [Encls. 22, 32, 33]

239. (EUH) A standard issue gear kit for a NSW maritime interdiction mission that may have been worn on the night of question includes the equipment below. [Encls. 60, 61, 63, 64, 65]

- a. Shooter Belt
- b. Water wings (TFSS)
- c. (3) Pistol Magazines
- d. (4) M4 Magazines
- e. Pistol Holster
- f. Glock pistol
- g. M4 rifle
- h. Suppressor
- i. Laser
- j. Eo-Tech optic for M4
- k. Issued Plate Carrier
- l. Tourniquet X 2
- m. Medical Blowout Kit X 1
- n. Helmet
- o. Strobe
- p. Night Vision Googles Mount
- q. Night Vision Googles
- r. Issued Jet Ski Vest
- s. Radio and MCAS Communication System

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(~~FOUO~~) Figure 5-5. FoF 239.

240. (U) Total gear is estimated to weigh about forty (40) to forty-eight (48) pounds. [Encl. 65]

(U) Pre-Mission Safety Check or "Buddy Check" of Equipment

241. (U) It is standard practice to conduct a pre-mission "buddy check" immediately prior to executing an operation. [Encls. 7, 9, 10, 25, 31, 65]

242. (~~FOUO~~) A pre-mission buddy check consists of Team Members pairing up with each other and one member taking turns voicing every piece of gear on a list. [Encls. 7, 9, 10, 25, 31, 65]

243. (~~FOUO~~) Pre-mission buddy checks are tailored to the specific mission and to the operator's role in the mission. [Encls. 7, 9, 10, 25, 31, 65]

244. (~~FOUO~~) Pre-mission buddy checks mainly include weapons, magazines, special equipment, medical, and communication checks. [Encls. 7, 9, 10, 25, 31, 65]

245. (~~FOUO~~) Operators break this down into three (3) categories, first, second, and third line gear. [Encls. 7, 65]

246. (~~FOUO~~) First line gear is designated as a uniform and items in your uniform and pockets. [Encl. 65]

247. (~~FOUO~~) Second line gear is the plate carrier and attached items to include: armored plates, helmet, night vision, magazines, communication, and specified ordnance or explosives. [Encl. 65]

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248. (EUH) Third line gear is considered a pack of some sort worn over the plate carrier that can be easily taken off mainly for special equipment, food, water, etc. [Encl. 65]

249. (EUH) The check is for physical presence of gear, not necessarily functionality. [Encls. 7, 65]

250. (EUH) [REDACTED] (b) (6) stated that he trusts that the operator with whom he is paired has checked their own gear for effectiveness and that it works. [Encl. 26]

251. (EUH) There is no formal standing operating procedure or instruction that outlines this common practice. [Encl. 65]

252. (EUH) A buddy check takes about two to three (2-3) minutes unless an operator forgot a piece of gear and must retrieve it. [Encl. 26]

(U) General Maintenance Standards of Equipment

253. (U) Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) provides formal maintenance procedures for equipment via the Planned Maintenance System (PMS). [Encl. 84]

254. (U) Specific maintenance requirements for the TFSS-5326 Life Preserver is found under the NAVSEA Maintenance Index Page (MIP) 5832/024-53, and includes a specific maintenance requirement to include an inspection and lubrication of the TFSS to be completed annually and after issue (Maintenance Requirement Card (MRC) 53 IBS4Y). [Encl. 84]

254a. (U) The manufacturer of the TFSS similarly states an annual inspection should be performed for the device or when it is exposed to water. [Encl. 80]

255. (U) There is also a formal requirement to inspect the TFSS prior to use (MRC 43 IBS6 N) and to rinse the TFSS after each use (MRC 53 IBS5 Y). [Encl. 84]

256. (EUH) [REDACTED] (b) (6) stated they were unaware of formal maintenance procedures to check their TFSS – but received on-the-job training in what to check for. [Encls. 7, 9, 24, 27, 43, 48]

257. (EUH) Team members described a need to ensure: (1) the bladder was airtight, (2) the actuating mechanism was clean and free of rust, (3) the actuation tab moves freely, and (4) the actuation tab would puncture the installed CO2 cartridge. These general steps are consistent and included in the prescribed PMS for the gear. [Encls. 7, 9, 24, 27, 43, 48]

258. (EUH) In July 2022, the Special Assistant for Safety Matters (CNO N09F) issued a Safety Assurance Letter to Commander, Naval Expeditionary Combat Command and Commander,



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Naval Special Warfare Command, highlighting concerns during safety assessment visits in the fleet. [Encl. 84]

259. ~~(CUI)~~ The Safety Assurance Letter noted "an absence of required maintenance and documentation actions on Life Preserver, Tactical Flotation Support System (TFSS-5326)." [Encl. 84]

260. ~~(CUI)~~ The Assurance Letter recommended immediate use of the 3-M program to conduct and document maintenance on the TFSS. [Encl. 84]

261. ~~(CUI)~~ In March 2023, via letter, the Special Assistant for Safety Matters (CNO N09F) notified Commander, Naval Expeditionary Combat Command and Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command of continued deficiencies with TFSS inspections in the fleet. [Encl. 84]

262. ~~(CUI)~~ The letter noted that, "Naval Safety Command Assessors continue to see the Tactical Flotation Support System (TFSS)-5326s individually issued to personnel without the required maintenance actions documented or completed." [Encl. 84]

263. ~~(CUI)~~ The 30 August 2023 Naval Safety Command Semi-Annual Report noted that "since March 2023, CNSC assessors have observed a marked increase in TFSS-5326 maintenance and documentation by NECC and NSW commands... CNSC will continue to monitor/document TFSS-5326 maintenance during all airborne assessments going forward." [Encl. 85]

264. ~~(CUI)~~ Based on the actions by NECC and NSW noted above, CNSC closed this Safety Assurance Letter (SAL). [Encl. 85]

265. ~~(CUI)~~ NSW Group ONE SEAL teams are tracking TFSS maintenance completion via locally-prepared worksheets, to include serial numbers, the manufacture date, and inspection date. [Encls. 86-89]

266. ~~(CUI)~~ Across SEAL Teams ONE, THREE, and FIVE the annual periodic check or the situational check is not consistently documented, although in some documents "annual" is denoted. [Encls. 86-89]

267. ~~(CUI)~~ There is variance in types of maintenance documentation across the teams (SEAL Teams ONE, THREE, and FIVE) and NSW Logistics Support Unit-ONE. [Encls. 86-89]

268. ~~(CUI)~~ Maintenance documentation of TFSS is not tracked via the Navy's SKED 3.2 program of record. [Encl. 86-89]

269. ~~(CUI)~~ Within ST-3, documentation indicates TFSS maintenance procedure failures specifically within Alpha, Delta, and Foxtrot platoons, including expired gear, seized inflation valves, or leaking bladders. [Encl. 88]



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270. (EUH) For ST-3 C-Platoon, a functional check and maintenance check on TFSSs (not specified as the annual or situational "R" check) is noted as being complete on 5 February 2024, following the mishap. [Encl. 88]

271. (EUH) No records of checks are available for ST-3 C-Platoon pre-incident. [Encls. 88, 90]

272. (EUH) ST-3 TFSS maintenance tracker was incomplete and has missing information. [Encls. 88]

273. (EUH) Defense Property Accountability System (DPAS) records do not indicate issuance of TFSS to either (b) (6) or (b) (6) although both were observed with TFSS in their possession during buddy checks and pre-mission photos. [Encls. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 76]

274. (EUH) There is no maintenance documentation available for the TFSS belonging to (b) (6) [REDACTED] [Encls. 88, 91]

(U) United States Coast Guard Drowning Incident (2011)

275. (EUH) USCG suffered the loss of a Marine Safety and Security Team (MSST) operator (Maritime Enforcement Specialist Third Class) in 2011. Although there are no safety messages or directives that notify or make any of the USCG's findings controlling or a requirement on the other services, the incident does provide context to this investigation. [Encl. 92]

a. (EUH) First, when the operator (ME3) was recovered, it was determined that his Tactical Flotation Support System – at the time (2011) the same version that NSW uses today (2024) – did not have CO2 cartridges installed. Hence, although the Guardsman may have attempted to activate the device in the water, the inflation bladder could not activate. The USCG investigation notes that the operator had previously activated his emergency devices as part of Basic Tactical Operator's Course pre-requisite training. [Encl. 92]

b. (EUH) Second, the investigation determined that the quick release feature of the operator's ballistic plate system was fouled by other gear and the way it had been configured. [Encl. 92]

276. (EUH) The Coast Guard's findings indicated that although there was training on proper set up of equipment, in this instance, gear checks involved a leader calling out items while the students visualized and checked their gear (i.e., held it up for the instructor to see). The presence of CO2 cartridges was not a specific item called out, only for the presence of the TFSS assembly, itself. [Encl. 92]

277. (EUH) The USCG investigation directed, among others, three key things:

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- a. ~~(CUI)~~ Revision to training, tactics, and procedures (TTP) to better assess equipment readiness in advance of evolutions requiring the use of a TFSS system and Ballistic Protection Systems (BPS). Further, the gear check [should] specifically include a minimum two-person physical check of each CO2 canister [within the TFSS]. [Encl. 92]
  - b. ~~(CUI)~~ For USCG to analyze and assess systems that might better account for both conscious and unconscious operators, to include consideration of auto-inflation systems; [Encl. 92]
  - c. ~~(CUI)~~ Establish a policy that prior to each evolution for which a Ballistic Protection System is required, an appropriately certified instructor, hook and climb master, or fast-rope master, must inspect and "verify that each BPS in use...is properly configured to release without interference by misrouted straps or other equipment." [Encl. 92]
278. ~~(CUI)~~ Today, the USCG uses the Mustang MD1250 as its tactical flotation system. [Encls. 23, 93, 94]
279. ~~(CUI)~~ The Mustang MD1250 devices are rigged such that one side is automatic (in the event that the operator is unconscious or otherwise unable to execute manually), and the other (the shooter's sidearm side) is manual so as to permit unfettered access to tactical weapons. [Encls. 93, 94]
280. (U) The Mustang MD1250 is a low profile safety device, which provides emergency flotation. Using a hydrostatic device, each pouch will automatically inflate when submerged in four (4) or more inches of water, or the automatic hydrostatic function can be disabled by installing a cap over the hydrostatic device, allowing manual activation only by pulling the beaded handle. [Encl. 93]
281. (U) This permits the user to set the MD1250 for manual inflation for aviation operations or quickly convert to automatic for maritime operations. [Encl. 93]
282. (U) Each unit provides thirty-five (35) pounds of buoyancy. Worn as a pair, the emergency device provides seventy (70) pounds of total buoyancy. [Encl. 93]
283. ~~(CUI)~~ USCG outlines minimum flotation requirement for tactical operations as the inherently buoyant Coast Guard Approved Type III Personal Flotation Device (PFD). [Ref. r, Part 2, Ch. 4, A.2.d. Note 1 (pg. 2-25)]
284. ~~(CUI)~~ USCG policy notes that an option to meet this requirement includes the Tactical Flotation System, MD-1250. [Ref. r, Part 2, Ch. 4, A.2.d. Note 1 (pg. 2-25)]

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285. (EUH) A note within the USCG Rescue and Survival Systems Manual states that the "MD-1250 is the only PFD authorized to be worn in conjunction with a ballistic protection system." [Ref. r, Part 2, Ch. 4, A.2.d. Note 1 (pg. 2-25)]
286. (EUH) The USCG prescribes a formal maintenance check for the MD-1250 to be performed quarterly and any time after activation or use to ensure its readiness for operations. [Encls. 93, 94]
287. (EUH) USCG procedures require serial numbers for tracking and to document maintenance completion. The formal procedure is documented in the Maintenance Procedure Card (MPC) KB0123.0. [Encls. 93, 94]
288. (U) PEGI, the manufacturer of NSW's current version of a TFSS, also manufactures an automatically activated emergency flotation device, model Auto-TFSS, designed to inflate when totally submerged in water, and includes a back-up manual lanyard. [Encl. 81]
289. (U) The PEGI Auto-TFSS has the same performance parameters as the in-use TFSS-5326. [Encl. 81]
290. (EUH) USCG special operators are required to conduct a semi-annual Water Survival test as delineated in COMDTINST M16260.4C. [Ref. s]
291. (EUH) This test takes operators through a series of exercises, requiring them to respond to a water emergency and demonstrating all modes of recovery, including oral, manual, and automatic inflation of a Tactical Flotation System (TFS), in addition to doffing tactical gear. [Encls. 92, 93, 94]
- (EUH) Naval Special Warfare Command Parachuting and Cargo Airdrop Operations
292. (EUH) While there are no formal equipment inspections required prior to boarding a vessel in maritime interdiction operations, Naval Special Warfare Command Parachuting and Cargo Airdrop Operations do have formal inspections procedures in place and provide some context. The Naval Special Warfare Command Parachuting and Cargo Airdrop Operations Manual notes that when conducting parachute operations, a trained specialist who is designated to conduct a Jumpmaster Personnel Inspection (JMPI) will personally check the equipment configuration of jumpers to ensure proper wear and operation of parachute equipment. [Ref. q]
293. (EUH) Jumpmasters conduct a personnel inspection prior to operations that includes a check to ensure the TFSS is worn on a separate belt, and free of obstructions. [Ref. r]
294. (EUH) The Jumpmaster will "squeeze [the] lower portion of TFSS-5326 to ensure [a] CO2 bottle is present on both units." Further, an additional check will open the protector flaps to ensure the unit is closed properly and the closing pin is routed through both closing loops. [Ref.



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q]

**(U) CHAPTER VI. Anonymous Complaint Alleging Misconduct by TF-3 Charlie Platoon**

(U) This chapter addresses the anonymous complaint NCIS received on 15 February 2024. The four allegations against various members of the C-Platoon are addressed in turn. The first allegation stated (b) (6) (C-Platoon LCPO) frequently consumed alcohol aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER (LBP) that affected his judgement. The second allegation stated (b) (6) was medically unfit to conduct operations due to a medical procedure obtained outside the care of U.S. Navy medicine prior to embarking LBP. The third allegation stated (b) (6) used Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) outside the knowledge and care of U.S. Navy medicine. The fourth allegation stated (b) (6) USN, used PEDs, outside the knowledge and care of U.S. Navy medicine.

**(U) Allegations of (b) (6) Alcohol Abuse and Alcohol Aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER**

295. (U) The NCIS anonymous complaint dated 15 February 2024 alleged that (b) (6) was abusing alcohol throughout ST-3's deployment aboard LBP. [Encl. 95]

296. (EUH) The introduction, possession or use of alcoholic beverages aboard any ship, craft, aircraft, or in any vehicle of the Department of the Navy is prohibited, except as authorized by the Secretary of the Navy. [Refs. y, z]

297. (EUH) Per reference (z), numbered fleet commanders are authorized to permit consumption of up to two 12-ounce cans or bottles of beer by each member of the crew or embarked unit during an appropriate one day stand down at sea, in conjunction with morale building activities. This consumption is permitted on a one-time basis following each 45-day period at sea. [Ref. z]

298. (EUH) USS LEWIS B. PULLER set out to sea on 1218Z on 2 December 2023. [Rcf. aa] ST-3 C-Platoon embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER comprised of SEAL operators and support personnel. [Refs. g, h] [Encl. 126]

299. Deleted

300. (EUH) While underway, ST-3 C-Platoon operators slept in tents located on the flight deck of USS LEWIS B. PULLER. This tent area was colloquially known as the "Alaska tent."

301. (EUH) (b) (6) opined that (b) (6) did not have an issue with alcohol dependency. (b) (6) also believed that (b) (6) alcohol consumption did not affect his leadership or tactical decisions during their time working together. [Encl. 128]

302. (EUH) (b) (6) initially slept in ship's berthing, but eventually moved to the "Alaska tent" with the other C-Platoon operators. [Encl. 128]

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303. (EU) (b) (6) stated he observed the presence of alcohol once, while embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER, following the conclusion of the 10-day search for (b) (6) and (b) (6) [Encl. 128]

304. (EU) (b) (6) stated there was a toast among teammates. (b) (6) declined to provide more details when probed about the toast with questions such as, how he knew there was alcohol present, and who participated in the toast. [Encl. 128]

305. (EU) (b) (6) stated he did not witness (b) (6) consuming alcohol aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER, but observed a bottle of hard liquor on the deck following the conclusion of the ten (10) day search for (b) (6) and (b) (6). (b) (6) did not recall the type of liquor. [Encls. 97-98]

306. (EU) (b) (6) stated that he witnessed (b) (6) drink out of a cup from the ship's galley, and could not confirm the beverage was alcohol, but remembered (b) (6) referencing a "mixed drink." (b) (6) recalls (b) (6) referencing this mixed drink around Christmas day, but does not recall an exact date. [Encls. 96-97]

307. (EU) Upon conclusion of the search and rescue efforts on or about 21 January 2024, most of C-Platoon disembarked the USS LEWIS B. PULLER. (b) (6) along with (b) (6) were responsible for packing up the "Alaska tent," which contained C-Platoon's personal gear and equipment. [Encls. 129, 130]

308. (EU) (b) (6) USN, served as the TF 3 FWD Intelligence Analyst, attached to ST-3 during the entire 2022-2024 cycle, and embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER, though not as C-Platoon personnel. [Encl. 129]

309. (EU) While packing the "Alaska tent," to include C-Platoon's personal gear and equipment, (b) (6) did not see anything to indicate C-Platoon was in possession of alcohol or that consuming alcohol occurred. [Encl. 130]

310. (EU) While packing the "Alaska tent," to include C-Platoon's personal gear and equipment, (b) (6) did not see any alcohol or indicators that alcohol was consumed. [Encl. 129]

311. (EU) (b) (6) remained embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER after 21 January 2024. (b) (6) packed (b) (6) stateroom. (b) (6) did not find any alcohol in (b) (6) personal effects nor signs of alcohol consumption. [Encl. 126]

312. (EU) (b) (6) USN, supported TF-3 as the Communications Department Representative, while embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encl. 131]

313. (EU) (b) (6) slept in the ship's male berthing and rarely entered the "Alaska tent," but maintained a professional relationship with ST-3 C-Platoon members. [Encl. 131]

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314. (EU) On one occasion (b) (6) searched through the "Alaska tent" to ensure that communications equipment was not left behind, and (b) (6) did not see any alcohol. [Encl. 131]

315. (EU) (b) (6) never heard anything about (b) (6) possessing or consuming alcohol aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encl. 131]

316. (EU) (b) (6) USN, served as ST-3 C-Platoon's communications support for the 2022-2024 inter-deployment training cycle and embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER with the Platoon. [Encl. 132]

317. (EU) (b) (6) had professional interactions with (b) (6) throughout their time working together and never suspected (b) (6) of having issues with alcohol. [Encl. 132]

318. (EU) (b) (6) socialized around the Alaska tent during off-duty hours, but slept in ship's berthing while embarked aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encl. 132]

319. (EU) (b) (6) never observed the presence of alcohol while embarked or heard anything that would make her think C-Platoon members were in possession of alcohol. [Encl. 132]

320. (EU) (b) (6) and (b) (6) stated they did not observe (b) (6) under the influence of alcohol while aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encls. 96-101, 130]

321. (EU) (b) (6) stated they did not see alcohol aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encls. 100-102]

322. (EU) (b) (6) believe (b) (6) has a healthy relationship with alcohol and that alcohol did not impair his decision making as a leader throughout C-Platoon's inter-deployment training cycle. [Encls. 96-101]

323. (EU) (b) (6) acknowledged his rights per the Uniform Code of Military Justice Article 31b, before his interview with the Assistant Investigating Officer, (b) (6) [Encl. 103]

324. (EU) In response to the allegations of possessing and consuming alcohol while aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER, (b) (6) stated that, "none of the SEALs from Charlie Platoon were ever drunk while underway and alcohol was never consumed in the weeks leading up to operations." [Encl. 103]

(U) (b) (6) Alleged Performance Enhancing Drug (PED) Usage

325. (U) The next allegation in the NCIS anonymous complaint alleged (b) (6) was wrongfully using PEDs. [Encl. 95]



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326. (EUH) PEDs without a medical prescription are prohibited in the U.S. Navy. Performance-enhancing drugs include steroids, human growth hormones, and selective androgen receptor modulators, known as SARMS, and are similar to anabolic steroids. [Rcfs. ab, ac]
327. (EUH) Article 15-105 of the Manual of the Medical Department delineates the conditions which are considered disqualifying for Special Operator (SO) duty. [Ref. ad]
328. (EUH) Per section (4)(i) of Article 15-105, "any condition requiring chronic medication or dietary modification...may be waived for qualified SO personnel." [Ref. ad]
329. (EUH) Section (4)(i)(6) of Article 15-105 specifically enumerates "hypogonadism or other conditions requiring ongoing use of exogenous testosterone or testosterone analogs" as disqualifying." [Ref. ad]
330. (EUH) Section (4)(n)(8) of Article 15-105 states, "for designated SO personnel, use of any medication that may compromise mental or behavioral function, limit aerobic endurance, or pose a significant risk of mentally or physically impairing side effects is disqualifying. Any medical requirement that necessitates close monitoring, regular tests...is disqualifying." [Ref. ad]
331. (EUH) Section (4)(n)(8) of Article 15-105 additionally provides that, "SO designated personnel taking medicines prescribed by a non-DoD provider are disqualified until reviewed and approved by the Service member's Undersea Medical Officer." [Ref. ad]
332. (EUH) Service members may submit waiver requesting one or more physical standards be waived. The outcome of the request is a determination by the responsible waiver authority as to whether the physical standard is waived or not. [Ref. ad]
333. (EUH) On 29 September 2023, Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command, Rear Admiral (b) (6) USN, disseminated force-wide guidance announcing urinalysis testing for PEDs to begin November 2023. [Encl. 106]
334. (EUH) Per that guidance, members with concerning symptoms were encouraged to speak with the medical providers for diagnosis and proper treatment for conditions requiring prescription supplementation and medication. [Encl. 106]
335. (EUH) The Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Force Medical Officer, (b) (6) (b) (6) MD, MPH, CPE, USN, disseminated guidance to all NSW Senior Medical Officers stating that the "goal of the program is to identify the medications that people are using and make sure they are managed correctly and being used safely." [Encl. 106]
336. (EUH) (b) (6) USN, SEAL Team THREE Medical Department Head, confirmed that following the release of (b) (6) e-mail to the Force, (b) (6) came forward to SEAL Team THREE Medical and reported that he had a prescription for testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) from a civilian doctor in San Diego, CA. [Encl. 104]

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337. (U) (b) (6) acknowledged TRT is medically disqualifying for special operators and requires a waiver. (b) (6) notified SEAL Team THREE Triad and Naval Special Warfare Group One Medical of (b) (6) new medical status. [Encl. 104]

338. (U) (b) (6) obtained a medical recommendation from a U.S. Navy urologist regarding (b) (6) medical status. To avoid inducing adverse effects from altering the TRT regimen in a deployed and remote environment, the urologist advised to continue TRT as prescribed from the civilian provider until return from deployment. [Encl. 104]

339.

(b) (6)

[Encl. 104]

(U) (b) (4) Alleged Unauthorized Medical Procedure

340. (U) The next allegation in the NCIS anonymous complaint alleged (b) (6) was not fit to conduct operations because he received an unauthorized medical procedure in Bahrain prior to embarking USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encl. 95]

341.

(b) (6)

[Encl. 95]

342.

(b) (6)

[Encl. 104]

343. The Naval Branch Health Clinic Bahrain onboard Naval Support Activity Bahrain is limited in scope of services to include medical homeport, ancillary services, occupational health, general dentistry, and administration. The local civilian section supplements all other medical services, including emergency care. [Ref. 1]

344.

(b) (6)

[Encls. 104, 105]

345.

(b) (6)

[Encls. 104, 105]

346.

(b) (6)

[Encls. 104, 105]

347. (U) (b) (6) and the ST-3 TRIAD were aware of (b) (6) procedure and follow-on care. [Encls. 103, 104]

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348. (U) (b) (6) USN, Command Surgeon for Commander, Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, provided an independent assessment of (b) (6) medical care specific to the (1) medical procedure diagnosed and treated on 26 November 2023, and (2) the subsequent follow-on care (b) (6) received from (b) (6) (b) (6) [Encl. 123]

349. (b) (6) [Encl. 123]

350. (b) (6) [Encls. 104, 123]

351. (b) (6) [Encls. 104, 123]

(U) (b) (6) Alleged PED Usage

352. (U) The final allegation in the NCIS anonymous complaint alleged (b) (6) USN, was wrongfully using PEDs. [Encl. 95]

353. (U) The Assistant Investigating Officer, (b) (6) conducted an in-person interview with (b) (6) (b) (6) denied wrongfully using performance enhancing drugs. [Encl. 107]

354. (U) There is nothing in (b) (6) medical record indicating that he was using PEDs. [Encl. 104, 123]

355. (U) The C-Platoon members interviewed had no knowledge of (b) (6) using PEDs during the 2022-2024 inter-deployment training cycle at SEAL Team THREE. [Encls. 96-101, 104]

**CHAPTER VII. Mission, Training, Equipment, and Risk Management Standards**

(U) Authorities and Command and Control

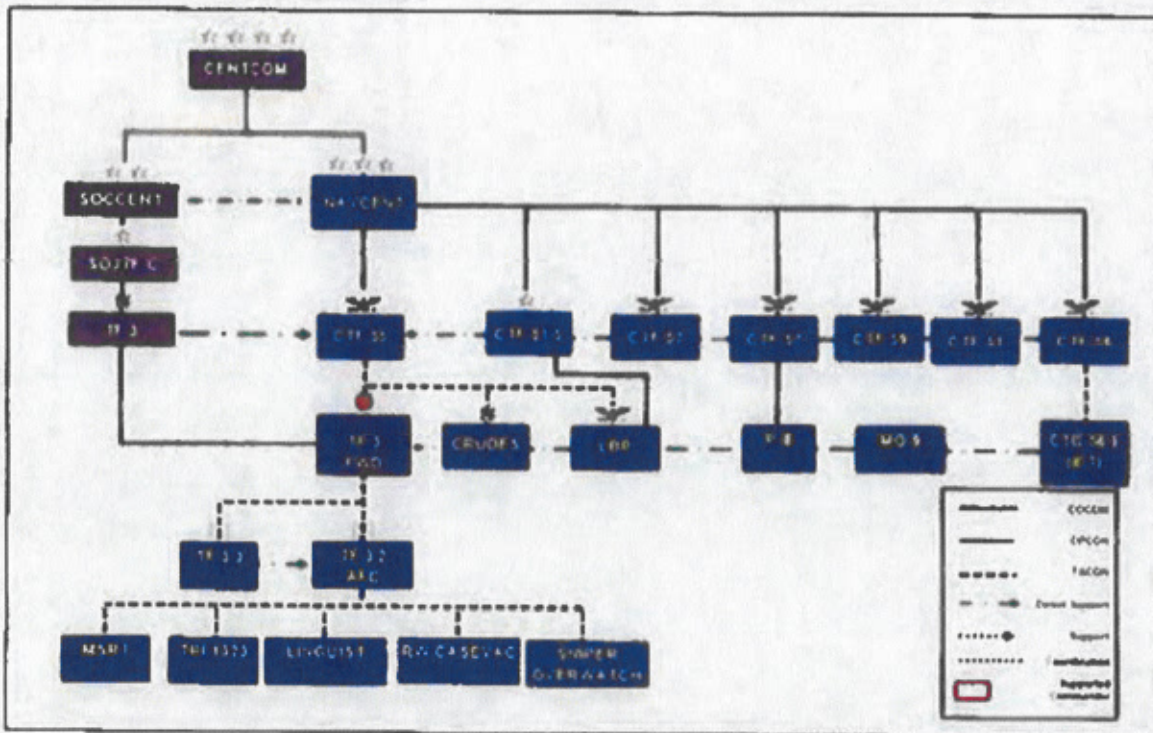
356. (U) The Missions, Functions, and Tasks (MFT) of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT) are delineated in OPNAVINST 5450.341A, dated 13 September 2023. [Ref. u]

357. (U) COMUSNAVCENT commands and controls warfighting-focused, forward postured, ready and capable maritime forces to maintain freedom of navigation; deter and counter state and non-state aggression; defeat violent extremism, respond to crises and strengthen partner nation's



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maritime capabilities in order to promote a secure maritime environment in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. [Ref. u]



(U) Figure 6-1. Notional Chain of Command

358. (U) The MFT of Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM), are delineated in OPNAVINST 5450.221E dated 23 January 2018. [Ref. v]

359. (U) WARCOM's MFTs are to recruit, organize, train, man, equip, educate, sustain, secure, and maintain combat readiness, and deploy Active Component and Reserve Component NSW forces and personnel to accomplish special warfare missions assigned by Commander, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) or geographic combatant commanders employing special operations forces (SOF). [Ref. v]

360. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Ref. 1]

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361. ~~(U)~~ The order provides that SOCCENT may transfer Operational Control (OPCON) and / or Tactical Control (TACON) of all attached, allocated, and apportioned forces as necessary to accomplish the MSO, MIO, and OPE missions. [Ref. f]

(U) Command and Control Structure of ST-3

361. (U) ST-3 Standard Organization and Regulations Manual (SORM), dated 31 July 2020, articulates the roles and responsibilities of command personnel. Chapter Three, section 309 outlines these responsibilities within the Operational Task Units. [Ref. b]

362. (U) The ST-3 SORM identifies leadership positions and corresponding responsibilities:

a. (U) Task Unit Commander (TU CDR) – Maintain the overall readiness of the Task Unit (TU) and report all matters concerning the operational readiness of the TU to the Commanding Officer (CO). Ensure proper conduct, safety, morale and welfare of TU personnel and keep the command informed on all matters affecting combat readiness and discipline. Equip, ensure sufficient training, conduct operations, and manage personnel. Enforce the command's standards and SOPs, and use ORM to mitigate risk while accomplishing realistic valuable training and real world missions. [Ref. b]

b. (U) Platoon Officer-in-Charge (PLT OIC) – Report to the TU CDR and maintain the overall readiness of the platoon to support mission execution. Ensure proper conduct, safety, morale and welfare of platoon personnel, and keep the command informed of all matters affecting combat readiness. Equip the platoon by signing for sub custody of items assigned to the platoon, being responsible for the technical publication allowance, and coordinating for the scheduled maintenance and upkeep of assigned equipment. Ensure training and readiness of platoon and equipment maintenance / repairs are performed. Enforce the command's standards and SOPs, and use ORM to mitigate risk while accomplishing realistic valuable training and real world missions. [Ref. b]

c. (U) Task Unit Senior Enlisted Advisor (TU SEA) – Responsible for all aspects of the conduct, safety, morale and welfare of TU personnel. Keep the TU CDR informed of all matters. Validate, develop, and conduct training as Subject Matter Expert (SME) in all tactical aspects of NSW operations. Manage organization and TU equipage and enforce the command's standards and SOPs. [Ref. b]

d. (U) Platoon Leading Chief Petty Officer (PLT LCPO) – Keep track of platoon personnel, ensure proper conduct, safety, morale and welfare of platoon personnel. Manage / inform organization and equipage of platoon. Train the platoon and enforce the command's standards and SOPs. [Ref. b]

e. (U) Platoon Leading Petty Officer (PLT LPO) – Keep the LCPO informed, track personnel, organize the platoon to accomplish tasks, enforce command standards and SOPs,



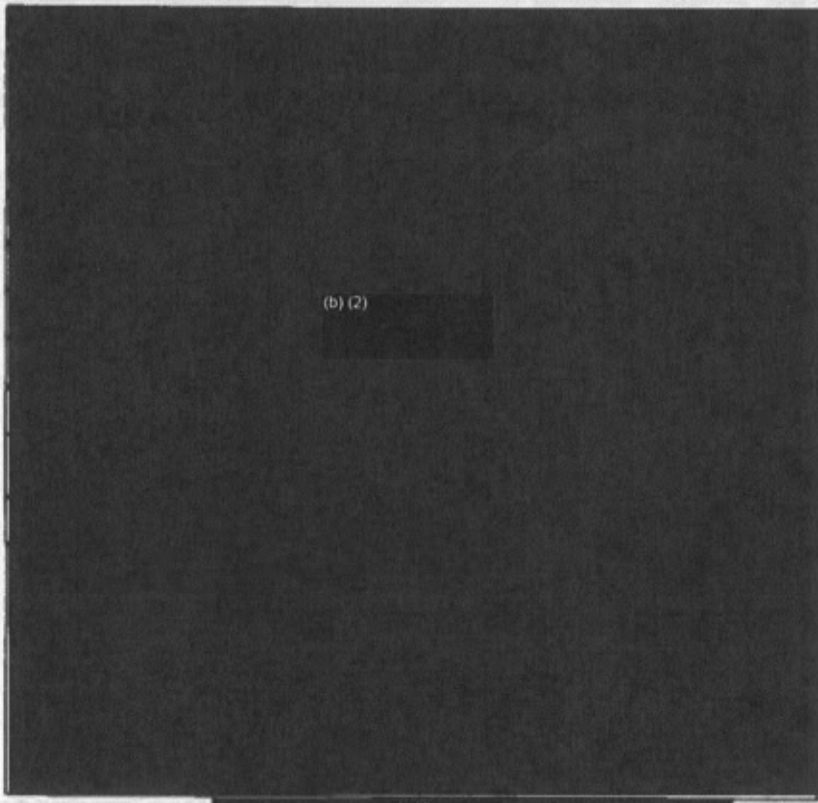
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prepare for assignment as a platoon LCPO, and mentor the platoon department representatives.  
[Ref. b]

(S) Capabilities of a NSW Boarding Team

363. (S) [REDACTED] (b) (2)  
[REDACTED]  
[Ref. c]

364. (S) [REDACTED] (b) (2)  
[REDACTED]  
[Ref. e, Figure 6-2 (July 2023)]



(S) Figure 6-2. [REDACTED] (b) (2) [FoF 364]

(S) Training a SEAL Team Unit for Deployed Boarding Team Operations

365. (S) SEAL Teams Platoons complete a twenty four (24) month Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC) consisting of six (6) months of Professional Development (PRODEV), six (6)



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months of Unit Level Training (ULT), six (6) months of Task Group Integration Training (TGIT) (formerly known as SIT), and a six (6) month deployment. This is outlined in COMNAVSPECWARCOMINST S3500.3A, the Force Readiness Manual (FRM), 2016. [Ref. d, pg. 3-3]

366. (~~EUH~~) During the PRODEV phase, each platoon focuses on meeting the Personnel, Equipment, and Qualification (PEQ) standards specified within the NSW FRM. This includes personnel readiness, equipment acquisition and familiarity, and qualification attainment through individual schools or courses of instruction. [Ref. d (pg. 3-4)]

367. (~~EUH~~) During the ULT phase, SEAL Team Platoons attend blocks of training with their respective Troops. These blocks include, in no particular order: Military Free Fall, Maritime Operations, MIO, Combat Swimmer / Diving, Land Warfare, Special Reconnaissance, Close Quarters Combat, and Special Operations Urban Combat. This phase of training forms the individual platoons and their respective troops into competent maneuver elements ready to begin TGIT. [Ref. d (pg. 3-5)]

368. (~~EUH~~) During the TGIT phase, the SEAL Team begins to operate as a Task Group, increasing interoperability with non-organic units, capabilities, and assets. TGIT ultimately results in the SEAL Team's participation in a Final Battle Problem, whereupon successful completion, the SEAL Team will be certified and ready to deploy. TGIT can also include other tailored training for maneuver elements to better prepare for expected deployment AORs. [Ref. d (pg. 3-6)]

369. (~~EUH~~) Specific to MIO / VBSS, units are required to demonstrate Mission Essential Tasks (MET)s via the following core training proficiency exercises (TPE) [Ref. d (pg. H-7 to H-11)]:

- a. SEAL.1.11 Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB) Operations
- b. SEAL.1.14 Helicopter Fast-rope Insertion
- c. SEAL.3.03 Static Shipboarding
- d. SEAL.3.04 Underway Shipboarding - Boat Assault
- e. SEAL.3.05 Underway Shipboarding - Air Assault

370. (~~EUH~~) FRM Exercise SEAL 3.04, Underway Shipboarding via Boat Assault outlines the training and execution standards for a boat assault. [Ref. d] (pg. J-211)]

371. [REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (b) (1) (A) [REDACTED] [Ref. d (pg. J-211)]

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372. [REDACTED]  
(b) (1) (A)  
[Ref. d (pg. J-211)]

373. [REDACTED]  
(b) (1) (A)  
[Ref. d (pg. J-211)]

374. ~~(EU)~~ ST-3 C-Platoon and the SBT-20 detachment (TF 3.2 and TF 3.3, respectively) conducted one week of VBSS mission training to include small boat interdiction, casualty evacuation, and tactical movements and close-quarters combat (CQC) inside ships in Bahrain. [Encl. 6, 49]

375. [REDACTED]  
(b) (1) (A)  
[Encl. 65]

376. [REDACTED]  
(b) (1) (A)  
[Encl. 67-71A]

~~(EU)~~ Mission Guidance to SEAL Team Units for Boarding Operations

377. ~~(EU)~~ [REDACTED]  
(b) (2)  
[Ref. c, [REDACTED]]

378. ~~(EU)~~ COMNAVSPECWARGRU FOUR Instruction 3120.2B outlines guidance and standard operating procedures for CCA operations. This CCA Operations Manual notes: "The maximum sea height for conducting CCA VBSS operations is eight (8) feet. The experience of the CCA crew, experience of the assault force, and if it is a training evolution or operation should be taken into consideration. Ultimately, the Patrol Officer will make the call to continue or abort mission." [Emphasis deleted]. [Ref. c, pg. 69]

379. ~~(EU)~~ USSOCOM M525-6cc: Critical Meteorological and Oceanographic Thresholds for SOF Operations notes marginal thresholds for CCA operations as six (6) to eight (8) feet, with

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unfavorable thresholds above ten (10) feet. For a transit in excess of one hundred (100) nautical miles, the marginal thresholds are two (2) to three (3) feet, and unfavorable thresholds above five (5) feet combined seas. The manual provides the additional context for considering sea state thresholds that, "For boat operations, conditions up to and including the unfavorable threshold can impact accuracy of weapons, crew endurance / alertness, and speed of advance and may also diminish as seas increase. Above this threshold, damage to craft and equipment or serious injury to crew members is possible. Sea State alone is not an absolute indicator of crew / craft safety. Wave periodicity, direction of travel, and crew experience can lower or raise the unfavorable threshold. For initial planning purposes, however, sea state is a primary consideration factor for safety of navigation, crew, and overall mission success." [Ref. j, pg. C-7]

380.

(b) (1) (A)

[Encls. g, h]

(~~EUH~~) Mitigating Risk During SEAL Missions

381. (~~EUH~~) "Naval Special Warfare Operational Risk Management," outlines the force's implementation of ORM. It notes, "[T]he success of NSW is based on a willingness to balance risk with opportunity in taking the bold and decisive action necessary to triumph in battle... Risk management is an effective tool for mitigating the inherent risk in 'high risk' training and achieving success in combat." [Ref. w]

382. (~~EUH~~) The instruction outlines the force's "Risk Assessment Worksheet Process," as List Hazards, Assign Risk Level to Hazards, Assign Control Measures, Determination of Residual Risk, and the Implementation of controls. [Ref. w, Enclosures (2) and (3)]

383. (~~EUH~~) The purpose of Risk Assessment (RA) is to provide a structured process to identify and assess hazards. This process allows for the identification and assessment of hazards to determine risk levels, finding ways to eliminate, reduce, and control the risks to make them acceptable to the responsible decision maker. [Ref. w]

384. (~~EUH~~) The instruction permits standing RAs, provided the CO / OIC signature date has not exceeded one calendar year, the training evolution has not changed, and the evolution safety officer and senior person present review, sign, and date the worksheet or a coversheet the day of the evolution. [Ref. w]

385. (~~EUH~~) NSW Group ONE's Training Detachment (NSWG-1 TRADET), responsible for the instruction and preparation of NSW-1 ST-3 C-Platoon for their deployment, prepared standing RAs for training evolutions which are reviewed annually and signed by the NSWG-1 TRADET Officer in Charge (OIC). [Ref. w]



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386. (U) The 2023 version of the NSWG-1 TRADET RA form for MIO / Shipboard Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (SVBSS) Hook and Climb noted specific risk mitigations for certain events. For example, for a "Man Overboard" event the RA indicates: "Flotation worn by all personnel." The risk mitigations for a "Pool Ladder Lifts and / or Separates from Platform or Vessel" and "SEAL Injured / Crushed during Ladder Climb" event provides: "Neutral Flotation worn by all Personnel." Finally, as a mitigation for "SEAL injured during transit" event, it provides: "Flotation and PPE worn." [Encl. 50]

387. (EUH)

(b) (2)

[Ref. e]

388.

(b) (1) (A)

[Ref. d (pg.

J-211)]

389.

(b) (1) (A)

[Ref. d]

390. (EUH) In preparation for specific blocks of training prior to their deployment, NSWG-1 TRADET outlines SEAL platoon requirements for execution via a "Trip Package," which is intended to serve as a pre-training block primer to focus team preparations. [Encls. 50, 50A, 79, 79A]

391. (EUH) For MIO / VBSS, the 2023 trip package provides, "Buoyancy Requirement: All operators are to have completed a buoyancy test of all equipment prior to training." [Encls. 79, 79A]

392. (EUH) For MIO / VBSS, the 2023 trip package (MIO) Gear List prescribes, under Personal Gear, "neutral flotation." [Encls. 79, 79A]

(U) Swim Buddy

393. (EUH) The 2023 NSWG-1 TRADET RA form for CRRC Long Range Navigation, CRRC Dewatering, Swimmer Surf Passage, and Swimmer Propulsion (Surface) notes specific risk mitigations for "Drowning," to include: "All personnel have an assigned swim buddy"; and "Swim buddy enters water if swimmer falls from boat." [Encl. 50]

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394. (EUH) The CCA Operations Manual notes, "[S]ome Assault Forces SOP will be for another assaulter to jump into the water with the man overboard in case consciousness is lost. Ensure what the Assault Force actions will be so everyone knows how many people to expect to look for." [Ref. c; Encl. 1, Ch. 3, 9(c) (pg. 74)]

395. (EUH) Numerous interviews with NSW and adjacent supporting elements noted an expectation that in the event of a Man Overboard (MOB), a second person would jump in to assist (referred to as the "buddy rule"). This was noted in at least seven different interviews. [Encl. 4, 6, 8, 35, 36, 37, 38]

(U) C-Platoon Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC) Execution

396. (EUH) From 16 January 2023 – 03 February 2023, ST-3 TWO Troop, which includes C-Platoon and D-Platoon, completed the ULT block of Maritime Ops (MAROPS) / Over the Beach (OTB) that included missions of Swimmer Surf Passage and Swimmer Propulsion (Surface). [Encls. 36, 47]

397. (EUH) The ORM RA for the MAROPS / OTB block was signed on 17 January 2023. [Encls. 36, 47, 48, 109]

398. (EUH) From 10-21 April 2023, ST-3 TWO Troop, which includes C-Platoon and D-Platoon, completed the ULT block of MIO. [Encl. 110]

399. (EUH) In preparation for the MIO block of training 10-21 April 2023, ST-3 TWO Troop published a trip package, with assigned trip POCs as [REDACTED] (b) (6) for C-Platoon and [REDACTED] (b) (6) for Delta Platoon. The package outlined NSWG-1 TRADET points of contact for training, the anticipated schedule, and the required personal and departmental gear list. [Encls. 79, 79A]

400. (EUH) The ST-3 TWO Troop MIO trip package listed neutral flotation as part of MIO personal gear. This aligns with the 2023 edition of the NSWG-1 TRADET trip package that stated a need for neutral flotation in the personal gear list. [Encls. 79, 79A]

401. (EUH) During TWO Troop's MIO block of training, the NSWG-1 TRADET RA form for MIO / SVBSS Hook and Climb was completed on 19 April 2023. [Encl. 79]

402. (EUH) On 15 May 2023, ST-3 C-Platoon conducted a Full Mission Profile (FMP) Boat Assault Force (BAF) / Helicopter Assault Force (HAF) MIO as part of ST-3 TGIT Final Battle Problem, from which they emerged certified to deploy for the CENTCOM AOR. [Encls. 69, 70]

403. (EUH) All ST-3 TWO Troop leaders were in their prescribed positions at the time of the team's Final Battle Problem and deployment when the team was deemed ready to deploy. [Encls. 111-117]

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404. (EUH) On 22 June 2023, ST-3 C-Platoon and USCG MSRT WEST, conjointly, conducted Close Quarters Combat (CQC) and Sensitive Site Exploitation interoperability training in San Diego, CA. [Encl. 118]

405. (EUH) On 26 June 2023, ST-3 C-Platoon and USCG MSRT WEST, conjointly, conducted Close Quarters Combat (CQC) interoperability training in San Diego, CA. [Encl. 119]

406. (EUH) On 19 July 2023, ST-3 C-Platoon and USCG MSRT WEST, conjointly, conducted MIO and At Sea Space Accountability (ASSA) Training pier side onboard HOS DOMINATOR at Naval Air Station North Island. [Encl. 120]

407. (EUH) On 07 September 2023, ST-3 was annotated by CNSWC as completing all assigned Mission Essential Task List items (METLs). [Encl. 121]

408. (EUH) Throughout both C-Platoon and the SBD's IDTC, members noted they had seen a wide breadth of environmental conditions, including nighttime operations and all weather conditions. NSW operators specifically noted that the team had exposure to "sporty" sea states and environmental conditions. [Encls. 14, 30]

409. (EUH) ST-3 C-Platoon had high confidence following completion of their MIO block, noting that the team ended on a high note, and felt it was their strongest block of training. [Encls. 7, 30, 36, 41, 48]

(U) Buoyancy Checks and TFSS Training

410. (EUH) There are no publications or directives discovered that mandates specific procedures for a "buoyancy test." However, [REDACTED] (b) (6) described buoyancy tests, also known as a "dip test," as a process to ensure an operator is positively buoyant. Operators jump in the water with all the gear they intend to wear on mission, to ensure positive buoyancy is maintained. Any change to personal equipment, another dip test should be accomplished. [Encl. 65]

411. (EUH) Buoyancy tests are conducted with a full combat load out of what will be worn on the specific mission by the operator. The test is initially conducted in a controlled environment such as a pool before transitioning to the sea. Operators will don all combat equipment required for the mission, slide into the pool, and check for positive buoyancy. If not buoyant, supplemental flotation material will be added or specific equipment may be taken off to maintain positive buoyancy. After positive buoyancy is maintained operators will, if available, jump off a high dive or something equivalent, to ensure positive buoyancy is maintained at depth. [Encl. 65]

412. (EUH) An effective buoyancy test does not require a TFSS to be activated. [Encl. 65]



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413. (EUF) Some members recall testing their buoyancy while wearing their personal gear ("dip tests") during OTB or Dive Phase Training. Of them, some recall using different gear than what was in use during the CENTCOM boardings. [Encls. 7, 9, 13, 14, 20, 48]

414. (EUF) Special Warfare Combatant Crewmen (SWCC) members of the Special Boat Detachment in particular outlined that buoyancy tests occur at the schoolhouse whether a part of initial accession or PRODEV with an emphasis on positive flotation. [Encls. 12, 16-17, 22]

415. (EUF) Other members described buoyancy tests being conducted individually. [Encls. 20, 29, 47]

416. (EUF) Team members did not recall any personal buoyancy tests upon deployment and subsequent training aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER. [Encls 8, 10-11, 14, 19, 27-29, 31, 33, 40-41, 43, 47, 49]

417. (EUF) The most frequent noted personal buoyancy test by team members was during the OTB block of training. This training was conducted in late winter / early spring in Southern California. During this time, wetsuits and / or dry suits would have been used, which provide some level of inherent buoyancy. [Encls. 7, 9, 13, 14, 19, 20, 48]

418. (EUF) Specific to maritime operations, (b) (6) and (b) (6) were both issued the following equipment:

- a. Light Weight Ballistic Helmet;
- b. Maritime Plate Carrying Vest, detachable (BAV, MMAC-R 2019, KIT, MC);
- c. Ballistic Swimmer Cut Plates, GEN V;
- d. Multiple Thicknesses of Vest Flotation;
- e. Multiple Water Proof Communications Cables and Adapters, Boom Microphones (no boom microphone for (b) (6))
- f. Water Proof Headsets;
- g. Maritime LCS Pouches (small bags for ammo/supplies). [Encls. 60-61]

419. (EUF) Few operators had ever operated specifically TFSSs in a training scenario. Even fewer had ever actuated the devices in order to gain familiarity and confidence with activation in emergency situations and to check if any adjustments need to be made, such as the length and tightness of the pull string. [Encls. 9, 14, 15, 24-25, 28-29, 33, 36, 43, 49]

420. (EUF) Additionally, some operators highlighted the necessity of deploying the TFSS in order to achieve positive buoyancy. This is contrary to the view that one can be either be positively or neutrally buoyant simply based on supplemental buoyant material being added to specific gear worn via foam inserts in vests or in dry bags. [Encls. 9, 14, 15, 24-25, 28-29, 33, 36, 43, 49]

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421. (E) The August 2023 ST-3 Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) raised no concerns with regards to risk management, training, safety or equipment issues that might have provided early identification of issues within TWO Troop, or specifically within C-Platoon on those topics. [Encl. 122]

(U) Buoyancy Checks: Neutral versus Positive Buoyancy and Conflicting Guidance

422. (E) Neutral buoyancy implies that a person would neither sink nor rise in the water column. Alternatively, if a person was positively buoyant, they would float at the surface of the water. Across the breadth of a SEAL Platoon's broad operations and missions it may require different personal gear configurations. A long-range waterborne infiltration requiring a swim-in to the objective might require different personal equipment and related buoyancy requirements as compared to a shipboarding via boat assault. In a heliborne operation over water, positive buoyancy could risk pinning the individual inside a sinking airframe. [Encls. 21-29, 37]

423. (E) [REDACTED] (b) (2) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [Ref. e [REDACTED]]

424. (E) In preparation for specific blocks of training prior to their deployment, NSWG-1 TRADET outlines SEAL platoon requirements for execution via a "Trip Package," which is a training aid for a particular topic. For MIO / VBSS, the 2023 trip package (MIO) Gear List prescribes, under Personal Gear, "*neutral flotation*." (Emphasis added) [Encl. 79]

425. (E) The tailored ST-3 TWO Troop MIO trip package for training conducted in April 2023 listed *neutral flotation* as part of MIO personal gear. (Emphasis added) [Encl. 79]

426. (E) During crane launch and recovery, the CCA Operations Manual states that proper personal protective equipment (PPE) will be worn at all times when working under cranes, to include a helmet and *positive flotation* when conducting waterborne operations. (Emphasis added) [Ref. c]

427. (E) In addition, CCA MOB procedures also call to ensure a person in the water is wearing *positive flotation* device. (Emphasis added) [Ref. c]

(b) (6) [REDACTED] Individual Training

428. (b) (6) [REDACTED] joined the Navy in 2012, completing Basic Underwater Demolition / SEAL (BUD/S) in mid-2013 and the SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) in 2014. [Encl. 116]

429. (b) (6) [REDACTED] was on his fourth deployment cycle, completing three of four cycles assigned to the U.S. Central Command Area of Operations. [Encl. 116]

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430. (EUH) (b) (6) served as a member of Commander, NSW Group ONE Training Detachment (NSWG-1 TRADET), as a Land Warfare Instructor. [Encl. 116]

431. (EUH) (b) (6) completed all operational assignments as a member of ST-3. [Encl. 116]

432. (EUH) (b) (6) was an accomplished swimmer: a state champion in high school, and competing at the collegiate Division I level with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the University of Maryland swim teams. [Encls. 116, 123, 124]

433. (EUH) (b) (6) Training Records include [Encl. 116]:

- NSW Preparatory Course 10/10/2012
- BUD/S Basic Orientation, 1st Phase Through Hell Week 2/15/2013
- Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) Post Hell Week, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Phase 6/17/2013
- HAP PHYS 7/2/2013
- Pre-SEAL Qualification Training 7/12/2013
- COLD WEATHER ENVIRONMENTAL SURV 8/9/2013
- SERE Level-C 8/9/2013
- Navy Static Line Parachutist 11/16/2013
- Military Free-fall Parachutist (MFFP) 12/13/2013
- NSW SERE Level-B 1/17/2014
- SERE Level-C 1/17/2014
- NSW BASIC COMBATIVES 1/31/2014
- SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) NEC O26A 2/1/2014
- SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) Course CIN K-431-0059 2/7/2014
- NSW Diving Supervisor 5/16/2014
- NSW Range Safety Officer (RSO) Course 5/23/2014
- Joint Terminal Attack Controller (NAWDC JTACC) NEC 822A 7/3/2014
- Joint Terminal Attack Controller (NAWDC JTACC) NEC 822A 7/3/2014
- NSW Communications 10/3/2014
- Helicopter Rope Suspension
- Techniques (HRST)/Cast Basic Roper 10/7/2014
- Joint Terminal Attack Controller (NAWDC JTACC) NEC 822A 12/16/2014
- NSW Sniper NEC O19A 6/1/2016
- NSW Sniper NEC O19A 8/1/2016
- Helicopter Rope Suspension
- Techniques (HRST)/Cast Master 8/19/2016
- Helicopter Rope Suspension Techniques (HRST)/Cast Master 4/4/2018



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- HAP PHYS 5/11/2018
- Small Arms Range Safety Officer (RSO) 8/8/2018
- HRST Rope Master 12/10/2019
- JSOU Joint Fundamentals CEP-1 J-011-3701 5/15/2020
- Dynamic (Fire and Movement/ Maneuver) Range RSO 5/21/2020
- Indirect (Mortars) Fire RSO 5/21/2020
- Laser RSO 5/21/2020
- Rockets (Stand-off Weapons) RSO 5/21/2020
- Small Arms Range Safety Officer (RSO) 5/21/2020
- NSW Instructor Training (NSW IQC) (NITC) (SNEC 805A/9502) 6/26/2020
- NSW Instructor Training (NSW IQC) 7/1/2020
- NSW Leading Petty Officer (LPO) Preparatory Course CIN K-431-8001 2/4/2022
- Joint Terminal Attack Controller Instructor (JTAC-I) NEC 823A 7/1/2022
- HAP PHYS 8/8/2022
- NSW Advanced Combatives 8/26/2022
- Dynamic (Fire and Movement/ Maneuver) Range RSO 9/26/2022
- Helicopter Rope Suspension Techniques (HRST)/Cast Basic Roper 9/26/2022
- Indirect (Mortars) Fire RSO 9/26/2022
- Joint Terminal Attack Controller (NAWDC JTACC) NEC 822A 9/26/2022
- Laser RSO 9/26/2022
- Military Free-fall Parachutist (MFFP) 9/26/2022
- Navy and Marine Corp Parachutist (Naval Parachutist Insignia) 9/26/2022
- NSW Range Safety Officer (RSO) (OQUAL) 9/26/2022
- Range Officer-in-Charge (ROIC) 9/26/2022
- SEAL Leading Petty Officer (LPO) NEC O26L 2/1/2024

(U) [REDACTED] (b) (6) Individual Training

434. (U) [REDACTED] (b) (6) USN, joined the Navy in 2019, completing BUD/S and SQT in 2021. [Encl. 117]

435. (U) Upon completion of SQT, [REDACTED] (b) (6) joined ST-3 and was on his first deployment cycle. [Encl. 117]

436. (U) [REDACTED] (b) (6) Training Records include [Encl. 117]:

- NSW Preparatory Course 2/7/2020
- BUD/S Basic Orientation, 1st Phase Through Hell Week 5/30/2020
- Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) Post Hell Week, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Phase 3/19/2021
- HAP PHYS 6/9/2021 COLD WEATHER ENVIRONMENTAL SURV 10/8/2021
- SERE Level-C 10/8/2021
- NSW BASIC COMBATIVES 10/15/2021

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- NSW SERE Level-B 11/5/2021
- SERE Level-C 11/5/2021
- Navy Static Line Parachutist 11/12/2021
- Military Free-fall Parachutist (MFFP) 12/10/2021
- SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) Course CIN K-431-0059 12/17/2021
- SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) NEC O26A 12/20/2021
- NSW Range Safety Officer (RSO) Course 2/11/2022
- NSW Communications 6/10/2022
- NSW Advanced Combatives 8/26/2022
- Military Free-fall Parachutist (MFFP) 3/9/2023
- Navy and Marine Corp Parachutist (Naval Parachutist Insignia) 3/9/2023
- Small Arms Range Safety Officer (RSO) 3/9/2023

(U) Special Boat Team Guidance and MOB Procedures

437. ~~(EU)~~ During a MOB, the immediate actions of the boat crew are subject to the following directives:

- a. Communications must be clear and concise to disseminate all updates to all craft;
- b. All boats shall hit their respective MOB buttons on the NAVNET GPS systems;
- c. Immediately followed by crewman throwing a boat strobe in vicinity of last known position of MOB;
- d. All hands shall keep a watch utilizing the naked eye, CCFLIR, any available asset i.e. rotary or fixed wing, and night vision equipment if applicable. [Ref. c (pg. 42)]

438. ~~(EU)~~ CCA MOB procedures for a conscious person in the water are subject to the following directives:

- a. They shall make every effort to get the attention of the boat crew to expedite recovery;
- b. They shall ensure they are wearing positive flotation, a sound signaling device such as a whistle, a visual signaling device such as a strobe, and personal radio to get positive communication with the detachment. [Ref. c (pg. 42)]

439. ~~(EU)~~ CCA MOB procedures for an unconscious person in the water are subject to the following directives:

- a. Personnel shall have positive flotation to keep them afloat in the event the MOB is unconscious;
- b. Boat crews will make every effort to recover the MOB;
- c. Boat Captain will make the recovery approach downwind of the MOB;
- d. Crew will deploy rescue swimmers to retrieve MOB as well as prepare medical equipment. [Ref. c (pg. 42)]

[REDACTED]

MARKING REMOVED

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440. ~~(EUH)~~ The CCA Operations Manual notes, "During the climbing portion, whichever boat is astern of the Contact of Interest will act as a safety boat in case a climber falls off the ladder or a MOB situation occurs. If an assaulter falls, the boat alongside will stay alongside and continue to up climb assaulters." [Ref. c, pg. 74]

441. ~~(EUH)~~ The CCA Operations Manual notes, "Assaulters will generally require extra gear to be hoisted up once on deck. The preferred method is to up climb all assaulters and then hoist up gear as required." [Ref. c, pg. 75]

442. ~~(EUH)~~ Reference (c) dated 27 August 2018 lists no specific contingency plan or Standard Operating Procedure that accounts for recovery of a submerged operator who has gone overboard. [Ref. c]

443. ~~(EUH)~~ Neither references (g) or (h) designate a role for a search and rescue swimmer. [Refs. g, h]

444. ~~(EUH)~~ Neither the CCA Operations Manual nor the NSW Group FOUR Engineering and Maintenance Manual identifies a comprehensive list of lifesaving equipment to be carried in the craft. The *Passenger Brief* template contained in the CCA Manual does make mention of life rings, but it is the only mention in either reference. [Refs. c, x]

445. ~~(EUH)~~

[REDACTED]

(b) (2)

[Ref. e]

SECTION INTENTIONALLY BLANK

[REDACTED]

MARKING REMOVED



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**OPINIONS**

1. ~~(EUH)~~ (b) (6) and (b) (6) deaths were caused by the weight of their gear and a general lack of buoyancy. Despite conflicting guidance as to buoyancy standards, no guidance suggests *negative* buoyancy for VBSS missions. This *negative* buoyancy was the root cause of these deaths. [FoF 113a, 239, 418, 420, 422-427]

2. ~~(EUH)~~ Supplemental buoyant material (i.e., foam inserts added to their vests or added to dry bags containing their equipment, if carried) and properly functioning inflation devices, could have kept these operators at the surface while awaiting recovery, as recovery assets were in place and poised for response. [FoF 219, 235, 420]

3. (b) (5)

4. ~~(EUH)~~ Deficiencies, gaps and inconsistencies identified in doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures included conflicting guidance on buoyancy requirements, issues with maintenance of emergency buoyancy equipment, and failure to recognize risks to buoyancy and the role emergency flotation devices and supplemental buoyant material should play in achieving buoyancy. [FoF 188, 233, 253-274, 362b, 391, 393, 419, 422-427, 439]

(U) Opinions Specific to (b) (6)

5. ~~(EUH)~~ There is no indication that (b) (6) athletic and / or cognizant abilities were hampered prior to the boarding of the VOI that would have negatively affected his ability to execute the mission. [FoF 105, 432]

6. ~~(EUH)~~ Despite getting two (2) hands over the rail cap, (b) (6) hands immediately slipped off the rail cap and then his head and hands disappeared from view, indicating that he had fallen from the rail. It is possible (b) (6) impacted the rail cap with the top of his chest, collarbone, or possibly his neck or head. [FoF 156-159, 162-164]

7. ~~(EUH)~~ The rolling of the VOI in beam seas and the external contours of the VOI as it rolled away from (b) (6) during his fall increased the likelihood of physical contact and impact between the VOI and (b) (6) [FoF 158-159, 186-187]

8. ~~(EUH)~~ The near simultaneous boarding attempt by both (b) (6) and (b) (6) had no causal relation or impact on the mishap because of their physical separation from one another. (b) (6) boarded the VOI from the forward part of CCA C-1 (and forward of the boarding ladder) while (b) (6) attempted to board the VOI from the back part of CCA C-1. [FoF 151-154]

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9. (EUH) Subsequent to his fall, while at the bottom of the ladder and partially in the water, (b) (6) appears to rotate his body towards the CCA in an apparent effort to communicate with (b) (6) [FoF 162, 163]

10. (EUH) As (b) (6) turns his body back towards the CCA, he releases from the ladder in an apparent attempt to recover back to the CCA, but was unable to find any hand-hold to establish control as there are no hand-hold surfaces at the stem. [FoF 164-165]

11. (EUH) (b) (6) was wearing approximately 40-48 pounds of gear and the weight of the gear directly contributed to his drowning. [FoF 162-164, 166-171, 240]

12. (EUH) (b) (6) was negatively buoyant, based on observation of his continued difficulty to break the surface. [FoF 162-164, 166-171]

13. (EUH) (b) (6) TFSS, if properly secured to the wearer, fully operable, and both manually actuated by pulling the grab handles, should have provided up to a combined eighty (80) pounds of added buoyancy (depth dependent) and assisted (b) (6) to the surface. [FoF 23, 24, 225-229a]

14. (EUH) (b) (6) cause of death was drowning. [FoF 162-181, 212, 214, 228-258]

(U) Opinions Specific to (b) (6)

15. (EUH) There is no indication that (b) (6) had suffered any injury or that his athletic and / or cognizant abilities were hampered in any way prior to the boarding of the VOI that would have negatively affected his ability to execute the mission. [FoF 116]

16. (EUH) (b) (6) was the only person that appeared to have had direct sighting of (b) (6) amidst the emergency, and likely the only person to rapidly capture and assess the condition of (b) (6) inability to effect self-recovery. [FoF 162-164, 166-167]

17. (EUH) (b) (6) entered the water in an effort to rescue / save (b) (6) placing his own life at risk. [FoF 167]

18. (EUH) While it is not possible to know (b) (6) mindset at the time of entering the water, it appears clear from the documentary evidence that he made a conscious decision to do so and attempted to assist his teammate. [FoF 163-167]

19. (EUH) (b) (6) equipment weighed approximately 52-80 pounds: Approximately 40-48 pounds for the boarding gear and approximately 12-40 pounds for the on-the-back radio (12

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pounds) and backpack (possibly holding extra batteries, supplies and gear). [FoF 112-113a, 199-200, 238-240]

20. (CUI) Observing (b) (6) performance in the water, (b) (6) was negatively buoyant. The gear and radio ruck sack likely contributed to this negative buoyancy. [FoF 112-115, 172-181, 199-200, 240]

21. (CUI) For the immediate tactical action of capturing the VOI, the carrying of a tactical radio by (b) (6) could have been avoided and hoisted aboard the VOI at a later time. [FoF 21h, 375]

22. (CUI) After (b) (6) fell into the water, his movement appeared consistent with an attempt to shed excess gear, such as his radio ruck sack. [FoF 176, 179]

23. (CUI) The investigation team does not hold the opinion that (b) (6) accidentally unhooked his rigger's belt, to which his TFSS was presumably attached. (b) (6) Cobra belt buckle requires both clips located at the top and bottom of the buckle to be pressed simultaneously in order for it release. One-sided release (pressing only one clip) is impossible. [FoF 23-25, 110]

24. (CUI) The design of the recovered TFSS, which was inflated at the surface, precludes the possibility of it becoming unthreaded from a belt worn by an operator even if the belt buckle would have been mistakenly released. The nature of the TFSS mounting system, woven through the belt and worn on a hip, ensures that frictional forces of other belt mounted equipment, and the buckle itself would have prevented the TFSS from breaking free. Thus, had (b) (6) rigger's belt / shooter's belt been accidentally released, the entire assembly would have come to the surface attached to the inflated TFSS. [FoF 195-196, 226]

25. (CUI) The activated TFSS that came to the surface originated from (b) (6). The investigation team forms this opinion based on the proximity of its position to (b) (6) immediately after being actuated and the unlikely probability that the TFSS originated from (b) (6) by traveling beneath the surface in a horizontal movement towards the proximity of (b) (6). [FoF 195]

26. (CUI) (b) (6) deployed at least one TFSS in his attempt at self-recovery, though the deployed TFSS did not stay positively attached to (b) (6) kit. The recovered device showed no damage to the securing loop to indicate it ripped from a rigger's belt. Thus, the TFSS was likely improperly secured. [FoF 177, 195, 195a, 196]

27. (CUI) (b) (6) cause of death was drowning. [FoF 167-181, 228-258]



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(U) Opinions Common to Both (b) (6) and (b) (6)

28. (EUH) Based upon video evidence, it does not appear that either operator became entangled with the caving ladder which would have inhibited their ability to recover. [FoF 166, 168, 170]

29. (EUH) The behavioral characteristics displayed by (b) (6) and (b) (6) indicate that subsurface hazards likely did not affect either member while in the water. [FoF 166, 168, 170]

30. (EUH) It is undetermined whether (b) (6) activated or attempted to activate his TFSS or if some other unknown failure occurred. [FoF 229, 265-271, 273-276]

31. (EUH) It is undetermined whether (b) (6) activated or attempted to activate his secondary TFSS or if some other unknown failure occurred. [FoF 229, 265-271, 273-276]

32. (EUH) The manufacturer states a TFSS provides eighty (80) pounds of positive flotation on the surface, but only forty-five (45) pounds at a depth of thirty-three (33) feet. Due to the degradation of performance as the device descends in water depth, it is possible that even if the members activated the TFSS, the additional buoyancy may have been insufficient to reverse their descent. [FoF 225]

(U) Search and Rescue Efforts

33. (EUH) MOB procedures, as executed by the TF 3.3 detachment, were appropriate, prompt, and in accordance with prescribed guidance. [FoF 182-185, 437-445]

34. (EUH) Although not a requirement identified for the CCA, a means to deploy an additional flotation device, such as a life-buoy or a lifeguard's pool buoy, may have provided another defensive layer to a struggling swimmer in the water. [FoF 372]

35. (EUH) (b) (6) or (b) (6) chances of survival would have increased had they been at the surface as a result of positive buoyancy due to the proximity of the CCAs and recovery assets. [FoF 182-185, 198]

36. (EUH) At time of mission and in the immediate follow-on response, there was sufficient and appropriate allocation of support on scene to rapidly find, fix, and recover an operator at the surface. [FoF 184, 201-202]

37. (EUH) Sufficient resources were committed to the search and rescue effort in the chance that (b) (6) and (b) (6) reappeared at the surface. [FoF 201-202, 204-207]

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(U) Boarding of VOI

38. ~~(CUI)~~ On 11 January 2024, team members demonstrated a familiarity with boarding procedures due to having already completed two successful boardings in December 2023. They continued to iterate and improve on each successive mission. [FoF 70-71]

39. ~~(CUI)~~ Although there was an accelerated timeline for mission execution related to the VOI based on higher HQ interest, the associated time-compression and consequential reduction of time to prepare were not causal factors in the mishap. All team members reported adequate time to make deliberate and contemplative decisions regarding their individual and force readiness. [FoF 85, 90-94]

40. ~~(CUI)~~ Based on the interviews, the decision to execute the boarding of the VOI during the period of darkness on 11 January 24 was deemed within the scope of their training and with due consideration to the environmental factors expected. [FoF 85, 90, 92-94]

41. ~~(CUI)~~ Execution of the boarding of the VOI was within the doctrinally defined and Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC)-rehearsed tactical capabilities of ST-3 C-Platoon. [FoF 363, 371-376]

42. ~~(CUI)~~ Given the shift of timing from a planned 12 January 2024 morning daylight event to an 11 January 2024 nighttime event, the team took deliberate steps to consider identification of additional hazards, means to mitigate those additional hazards, and adjusted the plan accordingly, demonstrating sound application of risk management on a compressed timeline. [FoF 95-97, 99]

43. ~~(CUI)~~ Environmental conditions during the boarding of the VOI were within USSOCOM and CNSWG-4 VBSS threshold guidelines. TF-3 (FWD) leadership, both TF 3.2 and TF 3.3, were working under the described briefed threshold. [FoF 62-64, 119, 122]

44. ~~(CUI)~~ The use of white light during the boarding of the VOI was a deliberate and appropriate mitigation to account for the shift to a nighttime boarding. It did not have any negative impact on the mishap or the subsequent search effort. [FoF 95]

45. ~~(CUI)~~ The Boarding Team ladder played no role in the mishap; several operators used the ladder to scale the cap rail of the VOI, while others timed their moves in order to get directly over the rail without assistance from the ladder. [FoF 125]

46. ~~(CUI)~~ Helicopter operations and associated rotor wash did not play a role in the mishap. [FoF 124]

47. ~~(CUI)~~ The crew aboard the VOI was compliant and responsive to the maneuver elements' directives throughout the operation and had no causal effect on the mishap. [FoF 146]

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48. (EUH) During the boarding of the VOI, the embarked crew stopped the vessel, which subjected the VOI to the will of the sea. As a result, the VOI settled with its beam perpendicular to the incoming seas, increasing the initial rolling movement seen during the early phase of the assault. [FoF 142, 144, 147-150]

49. (EUH) At the time of CCA approach #3 to the VOI, the assault team only had six (6) assaulters onboard and were outnumbered by VOI crewmembers. The Assault Lead, (b) (6) likely took into account the potential risk to force with a delay in establishing better boarding conditions (i.e. getting the VOI back underway and pointed into the seas). [FoF 133, 135, 142, 145]

(U) Training, Mission, and Operational Risk Management

(U) This forward-deployed team was manned, trained, and equipped to be ready for operations, receiving its full and complete pre-deployment training entitlement. They were aware that Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) would be their primary deployment focus, and concentrated their pre-deployment training preparations accordingly.

(1) Training

50. (EUH) The NSW Force Generation Model provides deploying SEAL Team platoons broad exposure to the range of missions a platoon may execute during deployed operations. It consistently uses a crawl-walk-run approach to reinforce confidence and build readiness. [FoF 10-11, 25, 70, 77]

51. (EUH) The NSW ORM regime provides a thorough review of potential hazards across the breadth of NSW high risk activities, and prescribes a template for sound risk management decision-making whether in training or real world operations. [FoF 8-12, 381-383]

52. (EUH) Training for contingencies is a valuable and worthwhile investment of time and resources. The fact that so many members had activated emergency inflation only once, and others not at all, is insufficient to build confidence and competence in an operator's ability to operate in extreme conditions. [FoF 442, 445]

(2) (U) Mission Authority and Guidance

53. (EUH) Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT), operated within the scope of authorities to direct the maritime interdiction operation in accordance with assigned mission and capabilities. [FoF 74, 356-357]

54. (EUH) The authorities and means of execution of the boarding of the VOI were congruent with the Commander's authorities to execute the boarding. [FoF 74, 356-357, 360-361]



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(3) (U) Risk Management

55. ~~(CUI)~~ While some references point to the need for positive buoyancy, such as NTTP 3-07.11M and the CCA Operations Manual, COMNAVSPECWARGRU ONE Training Detachment MIO guidance denoted a neutral buoyancy requirement during VBSS missions. This was the guidance provided to ST-3 TWO Troop during their pre-deployment training cycle. As such, there was widespread confusion and differing understandings of safety requirements among operators with regards to buoyancy requirements during operations. [FoF 363, 386, 400, 423, 420, 423, 425]

56. ~~(CUI)~~ The FRM frequently cites a need for buoyancy tests, as gear, protective clothing, and equipment are constantly changing. However, it does not prescribe the specific buoyancy needed for specific missions. This implies a reliance and trust in NSW operators to tailor their gear to the mission. [FoF 388]

57. ~~(CUI)~~ Because "buoyancy test personnel" is listed 58 times in the FRM, it can be interpreted that it is crucial that operators have a thorough understanding of their buoyancy condition regardless of mission and equipment provided. Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that buoyancy tests would be as frequent and often conditions checks to assure operators of their own, up-to-date, self-assessment of buoyancy. [FoF 388]

58. ~~(CUI)~~ The lack of specificity with regard to buoyancy type being neutral, positive, or negative also implies a level of the trust and autonomy given to the SEAL Team members to determine their own mission-dependent and preferred level buoyancy. The role and load requirements that a member is filling during an operation may dictate different requirements as well. Hence, no singular standard can be uniformly applied. Some members may prefer less bulk depending on their assigned role so as to be more maneuverable and agile, but that comes at the expense of supplemental buoyancy or a reduction in the amount of gear taken on mission. Other members may prefer more buoyancy even though the additional flotation may make them bulkier and less maneuverable. The lack of standard unnecessarily increases the risk for the operator. [FoF 192, 236, 386-387, 392, 400, 422-427]

59. ~~(CUI)~~ During their pre-deployment training cycle, C-Platoon conducted at least one validated buoyancy test, likely during the Over-the-Beach (OTB) portion of the ULT, as team members recalled the test and its proximity to the OTB mission training. Because this test was performed in a different operating environment with different gear and equipment, it did not effectively provide a buoyancy test that would translate to the current operations in the Middle East. [FoF 396, 413, 417]

60. ~~(CUI)~~ There may have been another set, or multiple, of buoyancy tests within the training cycle, but individuals either could not recall details, or were absent from training during a given block when additional testing would have occurred. [FoF 359, 413, 415-416]

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61. (EUH) Any personnel or gear buoyancy tests apart from the OTB block of training were ad hoc, informal, or performed at the individual level, without consistent oversight of the individual operator performing this requirement. [FoF 359, 413, 415-416]

62. (EUH) Members of C-Platoon derived their sense of buoyancy security from the OTB and VBSS blocks of training. These blocks of training were completed in Southern California during winter time and required the use of drysuits and wetsuits which, themselves, impart their own inherent buoyancy. C-Platoon did not re-validate their kits in the absence of drysuits and wetsuits for VBSS missions in the warmer waters of the Middle East. [FoF 417]

63. (EUH) Further, when deployed, C-Platoon personnel rotated between the Helo Assault Force (HAF) and Boat Assault Force (BAF) across the three (3) boardings, and did not tailor their personal gear to achieve a specific buoyancy, whether positive or neutral. This further increased confusion and likelihood of mishap. [FoF 236-238]

64. (EUH) TF-3 (FWD) operators operated with unrecognized risk. This risk was unrecognized because missions-based buoyancy tests had not been conducted prior to the mission to account for differing operators' positions and equipment carried. [FoF 8, 188, 198]

65. (EUH) From NSW accession training at BUD/S to pre-deployment training, SEAL candidates and SEALs are taught to act as a swim buddy and jump into the water in order to help or save a teammate. Therefore, given the incorporation of swim buddies as a risk mitigation contained within NSWG-1 TRADET RA, and the inclusion of swim buddies as a possible outcome in the CCA Operations Manual, it is a reasonable expectation that a NSW member would jump in the water after a struggling teammate in order to provide aid. [FoF 393-395]

66. (EUH) Teams conduct pre-mission buddy checks. This process is described as an expeditious and final review of gear and equipment that an operator has immediately prior to executing the mission. In this instance, safety gear was considered items such as radios, strobes on helmets, and presence of TFSS. More specific checks to confirm buoyancy, such as addition of flotation foam, would be useful as forceful backup to the individual to ensure their mission readiness. [FoF 99-101, 107-108, 241-252]

67. (EUH) Compared to equipment and safety checks conducted as part of standardized diving or air (parachute) operations, the buddy checks performed on 11 January 2024 were more informal and reliant on the experience and expertise of individuals conducting the buddy checks. An important opinion earlier in this section is that the activated, and recovered, TFSS was likely incorrectly affixed to the operator. It is possible that a more thorough or formal buddy inspection could have caught this possible error. [FoF 100-101, 107-109, 196-197]

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(4) (U) C-Platoon IDTC Cycle

68. (EUH) ST-3, TWO Troop, C-Platoon completed the prescribed inter-deployment training cycle (IDTC) with specific emphasis on missions they would be expected to conduct during a U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) deployment in support of SOCCENT and NAVCENT. [FoF 396-409]

69. (EUH) The ST-3, TWO Troop leadership cadre participated in key elements of the IDTC. Most notably, by the time the troop concluded their Final Battle Problem, the leadership team was stable and consistent; there was no change out that risked disruption to team cohesion as they concluded preparations for deployment. [FoF 365, 367, 396, 398, 402, 407-409]

(U) NSW Gear, Maintenance, and Safety

70. (EUH) There is widespread confusion about the role of the Tactical Flotation Support System (TFSS) in contributing to any buoyancy requirement. Some operators described they could not achieve positive buoyancy absent TFSS activation. This is contrary to the view that one can be either be positively or neutrally buoyant simply based on supplemental buoyant material being added to specific gear worn via foam inserts in vests or in dry bags. [FoF 410-412, 419-420]

71. (EUH) Further, although many team members stated the important role the TFSS plays in achieving positive buoyancy, few had ever operated the device in a training scenario to build familiarity and confidence with activation in emergency situations. More formal practice and rehearsal is required to build confidence and competence in use of the device. [FoF 410-412, 419-420]

72. (EUH) When handling a TFSS in the current NSW configuration, it is apparent that threading a rigger's belt through the device's strap is the appropriate means of affixation. To rig it any other way would inherently compromise the intended design and reduce the surety of effective performance of the device. [FoF 110]

73. (EUH) The only formal guidance regarding wear of a TFSS is captured in AIROPS (parachuting) procedures for the use of the TFSS-5326 alongside various parachute configurations. Further, the safety controls of a Jumpmaster inspection demonstrate an appropriate means to validate proper wear of the lifesaving device prior to executing a mission. [FoF 231-232, 292-294]

74. (EUH) As made apparent through interviews, the TFSS is used for missions beyond AIROPS. SEAL team members mentioned their use as part of a standard kit during maritime operations near and over water. However, no other Navy reference points to their use in varying missions, forcing a reliance on pass-down and corporate knowledge as to their proper use. [FoF 223-224, 231-232, 292-294]



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75. (EU) Maintenance of NSW TFSS is not tracked, documented, or formally performed to the Navy's 3M standard. Pre-mishap maintenance records are not available for the platoon and thus would fail any reasonable audit. Lacking such an audit trail, it cannot be ruled out that the devices malfunctioned or did not perform to specifications. [FoF 257-274]

76. (EU) The NSW-issued TFSS are manual-operation only, and provide no means of automatic emergency actuation in the event of an unconscious or incapacitated operator. The use of a device that provides for automatic deployment, such as through the use of a hydrostatically actuated inflation mechanism, may provide better performance to account for such emergency situations. [FoF 228-229, 276, 278-280, 287-288]

(U) Anonymous Complaint Alleging Misconduct by TF-3 Charlie Platoon

77. (U) A bottle of alcohol was likely present aboard USS LEWIS B. PULLER (LBP). [FoF 295, 303-306]

78. (U) The evidence does not sufficiently support that (b) (6) consumed alcohol aboard LBP in violation of Navy policy. [FoF 295, 303-306, 311, 320, 324]

79. (EU) Even if (b) (6) consumed alcohol aboard LBP, it is unrelated to the drowning of [REDACTED] [FoF 157, 158, 167, 214, 240]

80. [REDACTED] (b) (6) [REDACTED] [FoF 335-339]

81. [REDACTED] (b) (6) [REDACTED] [FoF 343]

82. [REDACTED] (b) (6) [REDACTED] [FoF 299, 340-346]

83. (U) The allegations pertaining to (b) (6) fall outside the scope of this investigation. [FoF 352-355]

84. (EU) The facts and circumstances surrounding in the anonymous complaint against (b) (6) and (b) (6) are not contributing factors in the drowning of (b) (6) or (b) (6) [FoF 157, 158, 167, 214, 240]

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**(U) RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARGRU ONE consider nomination of (b) (6) (b) (6) for laudatory commendation. In his effort to provide rescue and assistance to his teammate he ultimately gave his own life, demonstrating heroism and bearing witness to the best of the SEAL Ethos.
2. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM consider expeditious review and update of the FRM. Last updated in 2016, much has changed in NSW, not only in terms of the previous two decades land warfare operations, but also the advent and introduction of an entire host of new technologies and capabilities. Coupled with a renewed emphasis on the maritime environment, such a central document that outlines execution across the entire breadth of NSW capabilities is ripe for review and update.
3. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM clarify buoyancy guidance and expectations for given missions. In this instance, operators were trained to a neutral standard with the personal confidence that a combination of athleticism, capability, willpower, and faith in activation of the emergency TFSS would bring them to the surface. Some also highlighted the difference when embarked in aircraft, where positive buoyancy would be detrimental in an emergency. It is further recommended that buoyancy requirements be outlined as to the role the TFSS plays in achieving that desired buoyancy; more specifically, whether it is part of inherent buoyancy, or considered as an additional, emergency, and redundant source of buoyancy. USCG guidance provides an example for consideration.
4. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM provide clarifying guidance regarding a Buddy Rule. The investigation team could find no formal reference on the topic, but did find mention in a CNSWG-4 CCA operations manual and a mitigation in an ORM RA from CNSWG-1 Training Detachment. Numerous NSW members interviewed during this investigation operate with a strongly held conviction, some of it enculturated from BUD/S, of the obligation and moral duty to follow a Man Overboard into the water.
5. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM consider formalizing appropriate portions of the pre-mission buddy check. During this specific VBSS mission, the buddy check system was informal, undocumented, and thoroughness left to the individual operator conducting the quality assurance check. Accomplishment also presumes each buddy knows the correct standard for gear requirements. Contrast such checks to those conducted during jump / parachute evolutions, where a qualified jumpmaster conducts specific equipment checks to confirm readiness to jump. Similarly, the USCG uses several master specialists, including a water survival training master, hook and climb master, and fast-rope master, charged with providing in-situ master-level knowledge of equipment, configuration, and safety for evolutions to conduct specific checks. NSW should consider how crucial and key safety checks might be appropriate, akin to existing safety checks completed by jumpmaster and dive master specialists.

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6. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM consider requirement for formal and periodic demonstration of competency using emergency lifesaving equipment. Some interviewed in the investigation noted they had activated emergency lifesaving devices only once within a career. An equal lot noted they had never actuated their emergency gear. In comparison, Navy guidance calls for semi-annual requalification and refresher training for both small arms weapons and firefighting self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Similarly, the USCG Water Survival Training Program requires active duty personnel in specific specialties complete competency checks on a semi-annual basis, including pool immersion in full personal combat gear and requiring full activation of their flotation safety system by both the installed CO2 actuator and manually through attached oral inflation tube. Such a NSW-tailored program may warrant inclusion in the FRM.
7. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM review and consider appropriate documentation and tracing of completed formal maintenance on personal, and specifically lifesaving gear. Ensuring proper operation of many pieces of NSW gear is executed at the individual level, with on-the-job training to learn how to effectively maintain what may be a vital piece of safety equipment. A NSW operator may receive hundreds of pieces of gear over the course of a professional career. As demonstrated in this tragic mishap, perhaps some pieces of gear warrant a more formal maintenance and documentation procedure. NAVSEA has provided a series of formal maintenance procedures for the TFSS-5326 device, and while team members could describe general checks to ensure operation of gear, it does not follow the formality of execution and documentation as outlined in the Navy 3M program.
8. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM conduct industry survey and analysis of alternatives to provide operators a means of fail-safe buoyancy. Aside from determining the necessity for inherent buoyancy, systems that can provide supplemental and additional buoyancy with automatic operation are available. USCG tactical operators utilize the Mustang MD-1250 Tactical Flotation System, which includes an automatic, hydrostatically-activated inflation device. Likewise, PECL, manufacturer of NSW's TFSS presently in service, also makes a system with automatic activation. The use of such systems may increase chance of survival, especially in the event of an unconscious or incapacitated person in the water.
9. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARGRU FOUR, as the ISIC for NSW special boat teams, review and consider changes to lifesaving equipment inventory carried on CCA. While there are lifesaving tools available on SBT craft, including a shepherd's hook, recovery ladder, strobe marking devices, and chem-lights, a throwable flotation device, whether a life ring or lifeguard's pool buoy, could have provided either operator additional flotation in the moment of crisis.
10. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM direct NSW units conduct a Safety Stand-down to reestablish the standards outlined in various NSW guidance and reference documents specific to buoyancy tests. Individual buoyancy checks and buoyancy checks of equipment can be found throughout both FRM guidance and existing ORM RA. In the instance of this platoon,



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such checks certainly occurred at least once, but for a wholly specific set of environmental conditions and mission that was different than the environmental conditions and mission in the mishap instance. Teams must continuously assess their mission and conditions and be confident in their personal safety configuration. If there is risk that this perspective is prevalent across the force, an immediate stand-down is needed.

11. ~~(EU)~~ RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARCOM consider procuring a vessel or training façade that better replicates expected regional vessels encountered in deployed ship boarding scenarios. Today, all CONUS-based ULT training is executed on similarly configured USS ships or larger contracted vessels. While these are challenging missions, they are far different than a ship boarding assault of CENTCOM specific dhows or PACOM specific regional trawlers.

12. (U) RECOMMEND COMNAVSPECWARGRU ONE consider administrative action to address alcohol being onboard the USS LEWIS B. PULLER. Although found not to be a root cause of the drownings of (b) (6) and (b) (6) it is likely an unauthorized bottle of liquor was onboard the USS LEWIS B. PULLER and possibly used to share a toast by members of C-Platoon in honor of their fallen comrades contrary to Navy regulations.

13.

(b) (5)

References:

(a) JAGINST 5800.7G

(b) SEALTEAMTHREEINST 3120.1C

(b) (2)

(d) COMNAVSPECWARCOMINST S3500.3A dtd 20 July 2016 (NSW FRM)

(b) (2)

(b) (2)

(b) (2)

(i) Cobra Buckle Manuel

(j) USSOCOM M 525-6, NSW METOC THRESHOLDS TABLE, pg. C-7, dtd 08 November 2022

(k) NOAA Definition of Waves

(l) OPEN

(m) MPM 1770-020

(n) DoDI 1300.18

(o) OPNAVINST 4740.2H, dtd 07 Jan 2021

(p) COMNAVSPECWARCOMINST 4400.1A

(q) CNSWCINST 3000.3D dtd 09 August 2023

(r) COMDTINST M10470.10H (dtd October 2020)

(s) COMDTINST M16260.4C dtd Oct 2020

(t) OPEN

(u) OPNAVINST 5450.341A, dtd 13 Sept 2023

(v) OPNAVINST 5450.221E, dtd 23 Jan 18

(w) COMNAVSPECWARCOMINST 3500.2C (dtd 27 Jan 2017)

(x) CNSWGFOURINST 3102.b

(y) U.S. Navy Regulations 1162

(z) OPNAVINST 1700.16B

(b) (2)

(ab) SECNAV 5300.25F

(ac) DoDI 1010.16

(ad) Manual of the Medical Department Article 15-105

- (1) Appointing Order dtd 23 Jan 24
- (2) Ext. to Appt. Order dtd 27 Feb 24
- (3) Amended Appt Order ICO TF 3 Loss of Life CI
- (4) Open
- (5) Email - (b) (6)
- (6) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (6a) Email - (b) (6) .indf
- (7) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (8) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (9) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (10) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (11) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (12) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (13) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (14) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (15) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (16) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (17) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (18) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (19) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (20) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
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- (22) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
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- (24) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (25) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (26) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (27) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
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- (31) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
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- (39) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (40) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (41) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (42) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (43) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (44) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (45) Interview Summary, (b) (6)



- (46) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (47) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (48) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (49) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (50) COMNAVSPECWARCOMINST 3500.2C - RA Worksheet, SVBSS Hook and Climb (2023)
- (50a) COMNAVSPECWARCOMINST 3500.2C - RA Worksheet, SVBSS Hook and Climb (2024)
- (51) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (52) Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (53) (b) (2)
- (54) Emails between (b) (6) and (b) (6) of 11 Jan 2024
- (55) (b) (6) follow-up email to (b) (6)
- (56) (b) (6) email to (b) (6) 11 Jan 2024
- (57) (b) (6) MFR dtd 06 February 2024
- (58) Group Picture
- (59) (b) (6) picture
- (59a) Cobra Belt Buckle image
- (60) SPEAR records dated 11 Jan 2024 (b) (6)
- (61) SPEAR (b) (6)
- (62) ISR PHOTOS
- (63) (b) (6) DPAS Records
- (64) (b) (6) DPAS Records
- (65) (b) (6) SMEE MFR
- (66) Force Laydown Graphic
- (67) TF3 FWD SITREPS 04 December 2023
- (68) TF3 FWD SITREPS 05 December 2023
- (69) TF3 FWD SITREPS 06 December 2023
- (70) TF3 FWD SITREPS 07 December 2023
- (71) TF3 FWD SITREPS 08 December 2023
- (71a) Email - (b) (6) statement for record.pdf
- (72) Picture of CCA Ladders
- (73) Picture of Vessel CCA STBD quarter
- (74) Demented Viking MSO chat
- (75) MOC XO - MFR on Search\_PR
- (76) Recovered Gear Photos
- (77) MOC XO Email RFI (total sq mi search)
- (78) MOC D Email Re Recovery Recommendation
- (79) TWO Troop MIO BLOCK Trip Package.pdf
- (79a) NSWG-1 TRADET MIO training package
- (80) TFSS 5326
- (81) PECI Auto-TFSS
- (82) USAOTC AOTR dtd October 2009
- (83) MMAC-R Manual\_R02
- (84) NSC ltr dtd 21 Mar 23 (w/ encls of NSC ltr dtd 13 July 2022)
- (85) NAVSAFECOM Semi-Annual Report - 30 August 2023

- (86) LOGSU - I AIROPS TFSS PMS Tracker
- (87) ST1 TFSS PMS Tracker
- (88) ST3 TFSS PMS Tracker
- (89) ST5 TFSS PMS Tracker
- (90) Email TYCOM N49 (also NSWC Deputy N4 email)
- (91) ST3 XO Email (b) (6)
- (92) Final Action on USCG Incident
- (93) MD1250 Datasheet
- (94) Formal MPC (USCG)
- (95) NCIS Anonymous Complaint
- (96) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (97) Email Re (b) (6) and (b) (6)
- (98) Sign Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (99) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (100) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (101) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (102) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (103) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (104) (b) (6) TF 3 Medical DH Memo
- (105) Email FW: FORCE WIDE PEDS TESTING
- (106) RFI Re FW: FORCE WIDE PEDS TESTING
- (107) Signed Interview Summary, (b) (6)
- (108) OPEN
- (109) After Action Report - SEAL Team THREE TU2 MIO dtd 24 April 2023
- (110) After Action Report - SEAL Team THREE TU2 OTB dtd 7 February 2023
- (111) NTRMS Biography Card ICO (b) (6)
- (112) NTRMS Biography Card ICO (b) (6)
- (113) NTRMS Biography Card ICO (b) (6)
- (114) NTRMS Biography Card ICO (b) (6)
- (115) NTRMS Biography Card ICO (b) (6)
- (116) NTRMS Biography Card (b) (6)
- (117) NTRMS Biography Card (b) (6)
- (118) Email - Subj: C PLT Training Event dtd 20 June 2023
- (119) Email - Subj: C PLT Assaults Training dtd 26 June 2023
- (120) Email - Subj: C PLT MIO ITERATIONS dtd 29 June 2023
- (121) NAVSPECWARCOM MFR ICO ST-3 CV2 Status
- (122) DEOCS Cover Page
- (123) MEB Surgeon Memo Re Care of (b) (6) and (b) (6)
- (124) UMass Swim (b) (6)
- (125) UMaryland Swim (b) (6)
- (126) Interview notes ICO (b) (6)
- (127) OPEN
- (128) Interview notes ICO (b) (6)
- (129) Interview notes ICO (b) (6)
- (130) Interview notes ICO (b) (6)
- (131) Interview notes ICO (b) (6)

(132) Interview notes ICO

(b) (6)



**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

3M	Navy Maintenance and Material Management
ACW	Advanced Conventional Weapons
AF	Assault Force
AFSB	Afloat Forward Staging Base
AOIC	Assistant Officer in Charge
AOT	Abbreviated operational test
ASSA	At Sea Space Accountability
BAF	Boat Assault Force
C-ACW	Counter Advanced Conventional Weapons
CASEVAC	Casualty Evacuation
CCA	Combat Craft - Assault
CDR	Commander
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
C5F	Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet
CFMCC	Combined Force Maritime Component Commander
CFSOCC	Combined Joint Special Operations Component Command
CHENG	Chief Engineer
CNSWG-4	Commander, Naval Special Warfare Group Four
COCOM	Combatant Commander Command
COM	Commander
COMNAVSPECWARCOM	Commander, Naval Special Warfare Command
COMUSNAVCENT	Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command
CONOP	Concept of operations
CQC	Close Quarters Combat
CTF-55	Commander, Task Force 55
CUSNC	U.S. Naval Forces Central Command

DPAS	Defense Property Accountability System
ERSS	Expeditionary Resuscitative Surgical System
EUCOM	United States European Command
FLIR	Forward-Looking Infrared
FMP	Full Mission Profile
FNMOC	Fleet Numerical Meteorology and Oceanography Center
FRM	Force Readiness Manual
FVB	Flag Verification Boarding
FWD	Forward
GFC	Ground Force Commander
HAF	Helicopter Assault Force/Helo Assault Force
HELO	Helicopter
H-Hour	The specific hour on D-day at which an operation commences
HM	Hospital Corpsman
HQ	Headquarters
HSC	Helicopter Sea Control Squadron
IDTC	Inter-Deployment Training Cycle
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JOC	Joint Operations Center
JTAC	Joint Tactical Air Controller
LBP	USS Lewis B. Puller (ESB-3)
LCPO	Leading Chief Petty Officer
LPO	Leading Petty Officer
MAROPS	Maritime Operations
MEC	Maritime Enforcement Specialist Chief Petty Officer, U.S. Coast Guard
MFT	Missions, functions, and tasks
METOC	Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command (weather)
MIO	Maritime Interception Operations

MOB	Man Overboard
MOC-D	Maritime Operations Center Direction
MSRT	Maritime Security Response Team
N4	Logistics Department in the Navy
NAV	Navigator
NAVCENT	U.S. Naval Forces Central Command
NAVSEA	Naval Sea Systems Command
NCIS	Naval Criminal Investigative Service
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
NVG	Night Vision Goggles
OIC	Officer in Charge
OPCON	Operational Control
OPORD	Operations Order
OPT	Operation Planning Team
OPTASK	Operational Task
ORM	Operational Risk Management
OTB	Over the Beach
PED	Performance Enhancing Drugs
PEQ	Personnel, Equipment, and Qualification standards
PID	Positive Identification
PLT	Platoon
POA&M	Plan Of Action and Milestones
PRODEV	Professional Development
RHIB	Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat
ROC Drill	Rehearsal of Concept Drill
RTO	Radio Telephone Operator
SAR	Search and Rescue
SATCOM	Satellite Communications



<b>SBCS</b>	<b>Special Boat Team Senior Chief</b>
<b>SBD</b>	<b>Special Boat Detachments</b>
<b>SBT</b>	<b>Special Boat Team</b>
<b>SEA</b>	<b>Senior Enlisted Advisor</b>
<b>SEAL</b>	<b>Sea Air and Land</b>
<b>SEL</b>	<b>Senior Enlisted Leader</b>
<b>SITREP</b>	<b>Situation Report</b>
<b>SME</b>	<b>Subject Matter Expert</b>
<b>SO1</b>	<b>Special Warfare Operator First Class Petty Officer</b>
<b>SO2</b>	<b>Special Warfare Operator Second Class Petty Officer</b>
<b>SOCENT</b>	<b>U.S. Special Operations Command Central</b>
<b>SOF</b>	<b>Special Operations Forces</b>
<b>SOP</b>	<b>Standard Operating Procedure</b>
<b>SPEAR</b>	<b>Standard SOF Personal Equipment Advanced Requirements</b>
<b>SQT</b>	<b>Seal Qualification Training</b>
<b>ST</b>	<b>Seal Team</b>
<b>SWCC</b>	<b>Special Warfare Combat Crewman</b>
<b>TACLEAD</b>	<b>Tactical Lead</b>
<b>TACON</b>	<b>Tactical Control</b>
<b>TF</b>	<b>Task Force</b>
<b>TFSS</b>	<b>Tactical Flotation Support System (Water Wings)</b>
<b>TGIT</b>	<b>Task Group Integration training</b>
<b>TOT</b>	<b>Time on Target</b>
<b>TRADET</b>	<b>Training Detachment</b>
<b>TTPs</b>	<b>Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures</b>
<b>TU</b>	<b>Task Unit</b>
<b>U/W</b>	<b>Underwater</b>
<b>ULT</b>	<b>Unit Level Training</b>

<b>USCENTCOM</b>	<b>U.S. Central Command</b>
<b>USCG</b>	<b>U. S. Coast Guard</b>
<b>USSOCOM</b>	<b>U.S. Special Operations Command</b>
<b>VBSS</b>	<b>Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure</b>
<b>VOI</b>	<b>Vessel of Interest</b>