



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE USCG PACAREA INTELLIGENCE DIVISION

By

**Dave Rosen, Ph.D.
PACAREA Historian**

United States Coast Guard (USCG) Intelligence had humble beginnings when in 1924 as the Coast Guard (CG) established the Office of Intelligence. The USCG was the primary enforcement agency for maritime interdiction of smuggled illegal liquor (rum runners) along the coasts and inland waterways. During WWII, USCG Intelligence efforts supported Naval Intelligence with the USCG's previously compiled knowledge of Japanese merchant ships and helped break the codes used by Japanese merchants in the Pacific theater.

In 1974, the El Paso Intelligence center (EPIC) was created, and USCG personnel were assigned there including the present Commandant, Admiral Thad Allen. In 1983, Area intelligence functions were formalized in Alameda and Governors Island, NY which later moved to Portsmouth. In 1984, the Intelligence Coordination Center (ICC) was commissioned and, in 1985, Reserve Unit PACAREA Intelligence was commissioned.

The original "Pi" was designated as Poi and was a section within the Operations Division and was located on CG Island in Bldg 51-5. It was headed up by CDR Gene Tulich, who was previously assigned as Branch Chief to District Oil (Operations, Intelligence/Law Enforcement) at District 11, Long Beach. Before that he was at CG HQ MLE and worked drug interdiction in a coordinated and joint effort with USCS and DEA as well as developing the Maritime Law Enforcement School. ADM Clyde Robbins studied the intel requirements for the USCG for both the Atlantic Area (LANTAREA) and Pacific Area (PACAREA) in support of an innovative intel program. Poi was to have 15 initial assignees to

the intel Branch but wound up with 35 active duty billets. This was due to an aggressive and detailed set of justifications for additional analysts and CIE staff in addition to the absorption of the Area information technology (IT) staff as being part of Pi while providing support to the rest of the Area. Commander, Pacific Area was VADM Charles Larkin and his Deputy was CAPT George Wagner. CIE had Officers and Enlisted personnel as operators and analysts. A photo interpreter was included as part of Poi. A day watch of 12 hours was the rule. Poi consisted of 4 elements: the IT component, criminal analysts, military intel (Pim), and CIE. A Security Officer, CWO Ray Sanford, did operational security (OPSEC) review for PACAREA.

Poi had some early computer technology and also had access to the Treasury Enforcement Communications Center (TECS) and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) (connectivity achieved through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System [CLETS]). Poi had access to her information through circuits from US Navy sites (Skaggs Island, Imperial Beach and Hawaii). A clearance badge system was initiated to control access into the classified space for workers and visitors. The first Secure Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) was at Naval Station Treasure Island with the SCIF in space 51-7 eventually being constructed in 1985. The space was so well built by Navy Reserve Seabees that Poi passed the inspection the first time. The Navy survey team at the time said that it was the only facility that passed on the first review.

Thrice weekly, briefs were provided to VADM Costello and the District Commander in the 12th District secure conference room by the Poi duty officer. Intel products from a variety of sources were provided to the Districts. Poi was in possession of a motor home that was set up as a portable communications van at the Island. This platform would be deployed off the island with 2 analysts, and provided support to the DEA, particularly during the abduction and murder of DEA agent Kiki Camarena.

Poi also began to develop Counter Terror (CT) information. Poi began closely looking at the West Coast drug trade right on down to Colombia where drug smuggling had not yet included an observable narcoterrorist element. A basic intel course for analysts was developed based on the California Department of Justice course. Criminal Analyst George Finch was able to access the Western States Intelligence Network (WSIN) files so Poi had Counter Drug (CD) info flowing in and likewise provided support to WSIN and its CD efforts. CDR Tulich was relieved by CAPT Richard Wright and the Branch Chief billet became a Division Chief billet and was raised to an O-6 and Poi became Pi in October, 1985.

Maritime Defense Zones were established by the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of the Navy through a Memorandum of Agreement signed on March 7, 1984. The Coast Guard Atlantic and Pacific Area Commanders were given collateral duties as the Commanders, Maritime Defense Zones Atlantic and Pacific, respectively. In performing their MDZ duties, they reported to the Navy Atlantic and Pacific Fleet CINC's, even in peacetime. Poi assumed the N-2 function for this new command and, in addition to providing military intelligence for the area staff, had to provide oversight for the sector N-2 staffs as well. Basically, all hands were starting from scratch in this field, and it was heavily dependent upon reserve participation. Training included familiarity flights on ASW P-3 flights out of Moffett Field and service on board the two mine sweepers assigned to Naval Station Treasure Island.

Several things stand out from the MARDEZ era. Poi (and soon thereafter, Pi) had USN/USNR personnel assigned to the units since they were USN units. Pi trained the sector N-2 personnel which included USCG personnel assigned to the MARDEZ units. During the many exercises held by MARDEZPAC, Pi supported the exercises as well as maintaining the real world plots on submarines and Soviet trawlers operating as intel collectors (AGI) on station in

the MDZ AORs. During the Summer of 1985, the largest CINCPACFLT exercise held since WWII was held at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. This required supporting CINCPACFLT with intelligence support to sanitize anchorages, coordinate with allies, and maintaining intelligence on ports within the Pacific Rim. Poi was there to support the MARDEZ concept, but early in the development of the Blue Forces, it was discovered that CINCPAC (NOT CINCPACFLT) did not bring intelligence support for the war game. The Poi representative was approached to see if he could handle the position for CINCPAC. After some discussion, it was approved that the Poi representative would act as the J2 for CINCPAC, and the N2 for CINCPACFLT. The exercise lasted a complete 5 day work week and about 10 hours a day. It should be noted that the Poi representative was the most junior officer present of all of the Uniformed Services present.

When Pi was formally established as a division in 1985, it initially occupied the same space it occupies today. With the addition of a commissioned Reserve Unit (CGRU Pacarea Intel) that same year, drilling reservists began supporting collection efforts. Most of the reservists had law enforcement backgrounds – including several full time Customs agents - and were adept with the automated systems in the office, primarily the federal TECS system and the California CLETS system. Also located with Pi at that time were US Customs and DEA liaison officers, since our primary mission at that time was counter-drug. This relationship later became the nucleus for the Joint Task Force (JTF) concept. JTF-5 started out in the Pi spaces and later occupied a separate space in Bldg 51 but continued to closely coordinate their efforts with Pi. DOD took a seat at the JTF table and provided air and sea assets and surveillance tools to assist in the CD effort. The agencies jointly developed profiles of the drug smuggling organizations which were importing drugs from Asia via the high seas. The walls

of the Pi office were replete with visual investigative analysis (VIA) charts and organizational charts of the various drug smuggling cartels.

An early notable case was the *M/V Pacific Star* (December, 1984) which was an off-shore re-supply vessel that was successfully prosecuted by the USCGC CITRUS. After an initial confrontation, the Pacific Star deliberately rammed the CITRUS, and then scuttled herself but the crew and evidence was taken into custody. Another case involved an offload of marijuana from Thailand to the U.S. by the *M/V Allison*. The vessel went to Seward, Alaska and transferred its load worth a quarter of billion dollars of Thai marijuana in containers onto an interstate barge which then proceeded to Seattle. Poi notified D-13 of the containerized illegal cargo, and, as it was leaving the yard at the port of Seattle by truck, it was seized by US Customs.

Other later major maritime seizures that occurred in those years included the *M/V Encounter Bay* (June, 1988), *M/V Nordcap* (September, 1990), the *M/V Lucky Star* (July, 1991), the *M/V Malekula* (July, 1991) and the *M/V Pai Sheng* (May, 1993). The *Encounter Bay* was captured after being disabled by machine gun fire from a USCG Cutter and the crew was arrested, prosecuted and convicted. 72 tons of high grade Thai marijuana was seized. The *Nordcapp* scuttled itself in 11,000 feet of water but not before the crew was apprehended and some documents were seized. The case was successfully prosecuted in U.S. Court. The *Lucky Star* was interdicted, seized, and taken to Hawaii, and the crew was arrested and successfully prosecuted. The *Malekula* was set afire and scuttled, but not before the crew was captured. Evidence including a sizable amount of hashish was seized, and the case was successfully prosecuted. The *Pai Sheng* illegally entered San Francisco Bay, dropped off about 300 undocumented Chinese at a dock at the U.S. Army Presidio, and fled back out to sea. A High Endurance Cutter captured the ship after a hot pursuit and returned it to San Francisco Bay. It was heavily exploited by U.S. Customs and the Pi division.

Significant intelligence was gathered which helped to impede future maritime human smuggling events directly into the continental U.S.

During the Cold War years, Pi had a branch (Pim) that researched and monitored adversary military activities and presence. Pim was primarily staffed with reservists but the active duty side covered day-to-day events and briefed them accordingly. While OPSEC was part of this effort (identifying adversary efforts to solicit and collect information on USG activities), Pim also plotted the presence of communist bloc vessels in the AOR. Of particular interest was the presence of Soviet AGIs - usually converted trawlers that would have extensive antenna arrays on board. These vessels were usually loitering outside San Diego, Pearl Harbor, and the Straits of Juan de Fuca and would monitor the movement of US combatants, both surface and sub-service. Information was also collected and briefed on foreign navies' order of battle. Moreover, the Warsaw Pact Naval Studies was a required course to be completed by those members working in Pim.

When US forces were dispatched to Somalia in 1992, Pi led a MARDEZ survey team to survey the port areas for future use by US forces. By a simple walk through, LCDR Larry Yarborough discovered that one of the piers in Mogadishu had reduced off loading capability compared to what had been reported. This included discovering a sunken ship pier side that hadn't been reported and would have to be salvaged in order to fully utilize the pier.

Pi provided special intelligence products to fill the gaps in existing products that weren't specific enough for MDZ use. Mine threats, mine warfare, and special ops threats to the ports were chief among these products.

Pi provided support to USCG and composite USCG/USN units that were deploying to the Korean Peninsula and to the Middle East during exercises, surge deployments, crisis deployments, and war. During **Desert Storm**, six

reservists were recalled to active duty to work in support of intel collection efforts concerning domestic maritime threats to West Coast ports.

As Pi evolved, other priority missions materialized in addition to CD. Alien Migration Interdiction Operations (**AMIO**) became a major mission set, and the seizure of the M/V *Pai Sheng*, a Chinese human smuggling vessel, was a watershed event. The vessel and its contents were heavily exploited by US Coast Guard and US Customs (USCS) as part of post-seizure analysis to determine routes, ports of embarkation, etc. Of note, was the seizure by Pi of the ship's charts which contained track lines and a number of erased track lines leading us to believe that this was not a first time event for this particular vessel. The charts showed that they were printed by the PLA Navy, and Pi speculated that there might be PRC government involvement with the human smugglers. However, this was discounted when it was determined that production of maritime charts and maps were the sphere of the PLA Navy, and no other government agency was responsible for their production in China.

AMIO efforts increased due to increased human smuggling. Gradually, Pi worked backwards from the West Coast of Central America and found a five vessel train of Chinese alien smuggling ships located from west of Hawaii to the coast of Central America. NSA assisted us with TAD linguists to deal with this threat.

Another mission acquired by Pi was fisheries enforcement, which eventually became known as **LMR** (Living Marine Resources). Fisheries as a mission began in 1989 with a sole member building files on fishing fleets and attempting some high seas driftnet (HSDN) tracking. This culminated in the late 1990s with several successful HSDN vessel seizures. In 1997, the USCG started flying the Maritime Boundary Line seeking to prevent incursions into the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by foreign (principally Russian) fishing vessels. This culminated in the August, 1999, confrontation between the USCGC HAMILTON

and a Russian fishing fleet after a boarding team from the HAMILTON went onboard a Russian vessel in U.S. controlled waters and were nearly taken hostage. This event influenced the direction and expansion of Pi Fisheries to a 3 person team which engaged in aggressive monitoring of the MBL and an annual HSDN fleet forecast. During 1998-1999, threat assessments were produced and fishery messages were sent from Pi. In 2002, LMR was an important and professionally conducted mission of Pi. In 2005 a HSDN Threat Assessment was published, which facilitated the deployment of USCG and Canadian interdiction forces.

Following the terrorist attacks of 9-11 in New York City, Counter Terrorism (**CT**) became an expanded Pi mission. This branch started out in August, 2001, with a focus on Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection. Following the events of 9-11, additional personnel were added to its staff and it became the Counter-Terrorism branch as it exists today.

The USCG had determined several years prior to 9-11 that an intelligence operations center was needed with around the clock manning. Pi began planning their watch center and in December, 2001 The USCG joined the Intel Community. The **MIFC** was first called the Theater Intel Center when it began its initial operating capability and in Nov, 2002 achieved full operating capability as the MIFC. The original MIFC was contained in the old Pit spaces in 51-7 while the previous communications center in 51-1 was built out to house the present MIFC. LCDR Rocky Cole headed up the MIFC when it went operational. The MIFC now provides continuous intel and situational awareness (SA) to PACAREA units, NORTHCOM, PACOM, JFMCC, PACFLT, 3rd FLT, 7th FLT & underway USN assets. It provides the NORTHCOM Maritime watch with threat monitoring in the Pacific. Imbedded in the MIFC is the USN Shipping Coordination Center (PACSCC) assisting with tracking and monitoring in the Pacific Theater.

From 2004 to 2007, significant PACAREA maritime cases included the following: *F/V Rainbow One* - interdiction of 39 Chinese nationals (August, 2004); *F/V Lina Maria*, *F/V San Jose* – 56,478 lbs cocaine (September, 2004); *M/V Reymar* 96 kilos cocaine (February, 2005); Pi support to seizure of *FF/V Marshalls 201* for violation of the Howland Baker EEZ (September, 2006); significant role in incident with international implications involving the Chinese freighter *M/V Tong Cheng* that docks in Honolulu under a claim of force majeure (January, 2007); *F/V El Vengedor* seized for illegal shark fishing (February, 2007); and the *M/V Gatun* seized with 33,468 lbs of cocaine (03/07).

In 2008, the MIFC PAC Watch Branch produced 168 actionable intelligence communications, reports, and messages related to 38 cases involving the interdiction/disruption of approx 45 MT of cocaine and the arrest/detention of 40 suspected smugglers. This represents an 89% increase in intelligence communications, and a 36% increase in cocaine seized. MIFC PAC analysts contributed intelligence supporting the interdiction of 186 migrants in the Eastern Pacific. MIFC PAC analyzed and produced quarterly assessments on vessel stowaways, deserters and absconders; summarizing and analyzing the activities of over 40 ship-jumpers in PACAREA ports in 2008.

We acknowledge the below past Division Chiefs at Pi who guided the division over the years as it evolved until we safely arrived at the point where we are at today.

1. CDR Eugene Tulich (Poi) 1983-1985
2. CAPT Wright, Richard 1985-1988
3. CAPT Paskewich, James 1990-1993
4. CAPT Foley, Robert 1993-1994

5. CAPT Carpenter, R Lee 1994-1996
6. CAPT Moore, David 1996-1998
7. CAPT Hanson, Arthur 1998-2002
8. CAPT Rieksts, Derek 2002-2005
9. CAPT Dean, Gerald 2005-2008
10. CAPT McCrimmon, Douglas 2008-Present

