Interview Summary Form

Interview Details

Interviewee Name:	**RADM Roy Nash**	Date:	**9/21/2010**	Time:	**10:00am**
Interviewee Title:	**Deputy FOSC, UAC**	Interviewee Job Location	**New Orleans, LA**		
Interviewer Name(s):	**Team**	Interview Location:	**New Orleans, LA**		

Interview Questions

	Initial Question1:	What was your job/role and how did it evolve (if at all) during the DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident?
Focus Area: UAC	**Question 1:**	Describe your relationship with the BP representative in the UAC? How frequent were your communications with BP outside of the formal meeting schedule? In your opinion was the UAC truly unified?
Focus Area: Cascading Resources	**Question 2:**	How would you improve your ability to incorporate resources, such as people or equipment, from state agencies (i.e., Maine) and industry if they have specialized knowledge and can support the USCG or other Federal agency in a response?
Focus Area: Dispersants	**Question 3:**	Describe your involvement in the application of subsea dispersants, the waiver process and the determination of daily quantity caps
Focus Area: ACP	**Question 4:**	How should the USCG be involved in the determination of a WCD from an offshore oil platform?
Focus Area: UAC/NIC	**Question 5:**	1. What was the coordination between the UAC and ICPs? 2. What was the relationship and coordination between the UAC and the NIC? 3. How did the roles and responsibilities of the UAC evolve once the NIC was established? 4. What would you recommend to improve either the UAC or NIC?
Focus Area: External Communications	**Question 6:**	What was your thought process in terms of removing some of the public affairs responsibilities from the Houma ICP?
Focus Area: Political Demands	**Question 7:**	How did you work with BP on addressing parish needs? When did you first find out about BP giving money directly to the parishes? Were you a part of that decision?
Focus Area: UAC	**Question 8:**	Status of transition and demob and any hinders to the process?
	Final Question 1:	What were the top 2 "best practice(s)" during this incident, from your perspective?
	Final Question 2:	What do you assess to be the top 2 "areas needing improvement" (or downright "failures") from your perspective, and do you have any related recommendations regarding these areas?
	Final Question 3:	Is there anything else we should know?
	Final Question 4:	Who else should we interview?

What was your job/role and how did it evolve (if at all) during the DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident?

- I arrived on May 30th, and the next day RADM Watson relieved ADM Landry. I became Deputy FOSC for RADM Watson and RADM Z. I was out for about 3 weeks. During that time RADM Corn took over for me.
- At UAC, I supported FOSC, working up and down the chain from the UAC. I coordinated communications with the ICPs. I supported the FOSC's needs and supported the overall DWH response needs, including requests for data, info requests to and from DC.
- I was connected with NIC staff daily/hourly.

Describe your relationship with the BP representative in the UAC? How frequent were your communications with BP outside of the formal meeting schedule? In your opinion was the UAC truly unified?

- It was genuinely cooperative. Had a battle rhythm. We would meet multiple times throughout the day. We worked as a Unified Command. It was a good, constructive arrangement. It was a one team approach, working to get the job done – boom deployed, oil out of the water, etc.
- Coordination with the media was taken over by the NIC when I was there. Within the UAC/ICP there was a collaborative arrangement. There were some unique things that particular agencies needed to keep an eye on things. The system worked as designed.
- In Robert, we were working in integrated groups there. We are still working in integrated groups here in New Orleans.
- We felt we had the same collaborative integration at the Command level. Didn't have all of the States represented at the UAC; FL, MS, AL worked out of the ICP Mobile. But they would call in. Even LA I would say worked more out of ICP Houma. Different states, different ICPs, different arrangements.

How would you improve your ability to incorporate resources, such as people or equipment, from state agencies (i.e., Maine) and industry if they have specialized knowledge and can support the USCG or other Federal agency in a response? I did you sustain personnel?

- Most contractors were at the ICP level, so I not familiar with them, but they were hired for their specialty skills such as boom deployment, etc. Contractors, States and BP hired back a lot of retired personnel.
- There was a demand for people with pollution response and ICS experience. OPA90 has been pretty successful over the years, so we have not had many incidents that would draw upon these people to get them experience.
- We had people onboard to teach ICS if they did not have that knowledge already. This was a Just-In-Time training.
- Experience in oil spill response is different than just having had training – it is a little different of an experience.
- We never ran out of people, to be honest. We never had a short supply of resources. I never really heard that we were short on people. We were short on boom.
- USCG was using both reserve and active duty personnel. Over time, we had over 3,000 USCG reservists. They worked well helping to build fiber into our command post. They could come on for 60 days and many volunteered to stay longer.
- If we ever ran into a roadblock, we found other ways to fill the demands.

We have heard different perspectives as to how JIT training worked, and how it may have affected the length of deployments. Did the JIT training cut into the deployments?

- We didn't know how long this was going to last when it started. At first we brought in people we knew and then there was a demand to bring in more people. The training may have taken a bit of time away, but it was minimal.
- BP had 2-3 week rotations, and would cycle some of the same people through.
- Each agency did things differently-they had their own rotation process.
- We went through the ringer back in June.

Were you there when the President announced tripling the personnel/response?

- Boom is not a panacea by any stretch. We used boom to protect certain areas.

- When looking at the Gulf, prevailing wind is out of the SE, that way for about a week, then moving SW. It took a while for the oil to reach any coastline. Best way to capture the oil was always at the source.
- The geometry of the winds sent oil a long ways. Problem was then trying to find the oil. We had a large area to cover, and when operating out of a vessel, it was hard to see exactly where the oil was. So we needed air assets. It initially was an issue coordinating contact between the air assets and vessels.

We resource to the mission – when told to triple the number of people – what impact did that have to the response organization? Was staffing truly 'mission driven' after all?

- As far as people, I don' t know that it worked out that great. There were a lot of VOOs hired, especially to the east. If the VOOs were pre-designated, that would be much, much better. Having a pre-designated VOO task force that can be scaled would be better. Maybe not have them be OSROs, but have them pre-trained and designated. When bringing lots of people to the table at once there is always confusion.
- Another issue was tripling the boom. When you put people on the water, in high heat index conditions, and placing boom that isn't that effective because oil is going to get over and under the boom depending on the waves…you know it isn't going to work well. Especially with the large exposure of this type of spill so far offshore. I would recommend going out with more skimmers to collect the oil rather than using boom.

Was the directive to, in general, triple the effort, or were there some specific areas identified?

- Triple the critical resources. We had 3 critical resources: boom, skimmers and personnel.
- Boom and skimmers are no longer critical, and neither are people. But the skill sets are changing now, we are asking them to do different things.
- If you have a lot of people placing and acquiring boom you have people competing for the same resources– had a few people who really knew where to get the boom from across the nation. Those people were key.

When talking about the ICS training – was there 1 training for all personnel or separate based on agency?

- It was open to whoever was coming in the door. The trainings were various lengths. It was held every week for a while.

Where was the instruction for tripling boom coming from?

- Recall that when the oil was starting to come into the FL panhandle, AL, and MS – somehow folks thought that more is better. When oil was starting to hit the beach, there was frustration. Cannot place boom on shorelines because of crashing waves. Hydrologic forces make it difficult to boom inlets.
- There was a misunderstanding that boom would help and that by doubling/tripling the amount being used, that it had to be better.
- There was a lot of work to maintain the boom. The concept of trying to keep boom where you want it is a difficult thing to understand until you get into a boat, try to hold the boom, and figure out what you actually have to do to place the boom and keep it there. In some cases, the act of a person trying to hold boom in place can literally drag a boat underwater. That leads to a safety issue. You have to exercise and teach this so the people placing boom understand what boom can/can't do.

Describe your involvement in the application of subsea dispersants, the waiver process and the determination of daily quantity caps? What was the process?

- When arrived, process was already in place for surface and subsea dispersant use.
- I took oil about 3 hrs to come up from 5,000ft level. Subsea dispersant being used to break up the oil. Also had ships working at the surface, and there were concerns with the safety of the personnel on the ships from the oil's VOCs. At one time there were about 40 vessels around the source.
- Needed to get EPA concurrence on the application of dispersants – balance between what could be used on surface and subsurface. Weather changed daily, so needed to coordinate this process daily.
- There were times when we could do a lot (i.e., ISB and skim) and times when the seas were too rough, so dispersants were only thing that we could do.

- Subsurface dispersant application was successful in controlling VOCs at the surface above the source. When we adjusted the amount of dispersants used subsea, we would get VOCs at the surface. So if we dialed it down too much, we would have VOCs at the surface.

What did the plume look like when using dispersants vs. not?

- I didn't have any first person view of this. I only made 4-6 trips out to the source.

How should the USCG be involved in the determination of a WCD from an offshore oil platform? What role should USCG have in reviewing OSRPs?

- I think that USCG, MMS and a third party should all be involved in that process. We sit in Area Committees and we are conducting exercises for vessel or facility discharges. So I think it is appropriate we are involved with these wells. USCG should be a part of the planning review – I think we need to all work together.

What was the WCD when you arrived? Did the fluctuation in the WCD rate make a difference in how you responded? Did it impact the messaging?

- It was around 19K when I arrived. Then the science group came together to work that piece.
- If affected the questions we got (i.e., were you resourced adequately? Do you need to double/triple the resources?)
- There was a point in time that we could keep up with the oil coming out with the cap on, through dispersants and skimming – this was in mid-July.
- The NIC was working the messaging for us; the UAC didn't have to deal with the messaging.
- We were focused on boom and skimming capacity.
- There was some public concern, as they knew we couldn't figure out how much oil was coming out. We just kept doing our job, placing boom, getting skimmers, etc. It didn't stop us. The only way it affected us it that it pushed us to get more resources out there. Our focus was on cleaning/collecting/burning oil.

What was your thought process in terms of removing some of the public affairs responsibilities from the Houma ICP and in effect putting a gag order on them? From your perspective, how did the "One message, many voices" work or not work? How did the messaging coming from the NIC work/not work?

- We are living through this right now. We need to get to the waterfront and engage with local fishermen and media to get the message out on what is happening. There was a desire because it was a huge spill, wanted to get the message as clear and singular as possible. The goal was to let the NIC speak for the response. But it is not one thing or the other. There are certain times when you need to have a good local presence, like now. Also, we need to get the spokesperson out to the local level – in this case 4-5 states. Hard to do through 1 entity.
- There were times when you wanted anything related to the source of the well coming from 1 voice. Situation now as we move through the timeline, RADM Z is out there meeting with locals, taking them on overflights, getting our message out.
- Liaison program helped us to understand the needs of the locals and allowed us to address their concerns. A solid LNO program is a lessons learned.

What was the coordination between the UAC and ICPs? What was the relationship and coordination between the UAC and the NIC? How did the roles and responsibilities of the UAC evolve once the NIC was established? What would you recommend to improve either the UAC or NIC?

- Data needed to be tight – had questions about critical resources – how much boom was ordered, what do you have on hand? We had night shift working the numbers and granularity to get precise numbers for a snapshot in time. It relied on good data coming up from the ICPs.
- At some point it was as important to have consistent data. We needed to make sure the people in the field understood what they were being asked to report.

- Having good people in logistics, particularly critical resources, was key. If someone in DC saw our daily sheet, and noticed differences, they would point out our anomalies. It would take some time to get to the truth.
- There were lots of data moving through the UAC and lots of people working to ensure that the data was correct.
- In June/July received a lot of pressure to have reliable data. This required us to spend a lot of time working on that.
- Once we got the definitions identified, the system worked. It just took a while because there was so much data and different ways to look at that data.

The UAC spent a lot of time and energy providing numbers. Were the metrics used appropriate? Is it possible to develop better metrics prior to the next spill occurring?

- Yes, I think that if you had metrics laid out in advance, (e.g., oil removed from the water, wildlife oiled, wildlife rehabilitated, etc.), that would be good. It would help steer people to what they should be concerned about.
- The UAC did drive the metrics. We were working it – trying to determine how to report oiled shoreline. For example – 2 miles of shoreline, we clean it, then it gets re-oiled – how do you report that? If kept adding it up, eventually you would have more shoreline than exists in a state. We were pushing trying to give the most precise replication of what was occurring along the waterfront.
- We worked closely with the NIC staff on this.

Given the different perceptions that existed at the elected official level vs. operational level, do you think pre-established metrics would have diffused the situation with locals?

- Hard to say how much attention you can get with no oil in the water. It depends on the states. Some have close rapport with their elected officials, and get them to participate in trainings; other states, not so much. This should be worked through the Area Committee. I think there will be a lot of interest in the Area Committees for the next year, but that is a related issue.
- NCP vs. Stafford Act – not an issue, just two frameworks that are different. Having worked through the Stafford Act with hurricanes, the NCP is different and the expectations are different. Metrics are one thing, response paradigm is another. If people don't understand the organization under the NCP, and what the FOSC means – that might be a better starting point in the education process and then work towards the metrics.

Was there any effort made to tell the public what a successful response would be? Over 20% of the oil was recovered, which is impressive.

- I don't know if we did a good job there. We probably didn't. Don't know if it would have been acceptable to say that when oil hits the water, you are not in a winning situation.
- No one wanted to describe what a successful response was.
- Think it would be good to get the reality out to the public, what evaporates, what is dispersed, etc. Explain how the oil breaks down over time – how fast and with what damage. It is hard to sell success after an oil spill. But it is worth a try. We will have other oil spills. People should know what a successful oil spill response is.

How did you work with BP on addressing parish needs? When did you first find out about BP giving money directly to the parishes? Were you a part of that decision?

- We engaged with the parishes – there were 9 branches and 11 parishes. Most parishes had a branch dedicated to them – the branches were pretty big.
- Branches were made up of BP, BP contractors, USCG, and some state and parish reps.
- I had less experience in the parishes – my job was more getting the FOSC out there.
- I attended transition meetings to talk through how we would do the removal process – no oil offshore, no oil onshore, etc. Had to do individual transition meetings with each parish. Their needs varied.
- In hindsight, providing the money was helpful, but it needed to be worked through the UAC. When you provide money directly to the locals, you create some unintended consequences. There were good intentions, but we had outcomes that would make things difficult in the future.
- Money was not vetted through UAC to my knowledge. Think this occurred before I came in.

What is the status of the transition and demob process? What is the overall UAC involvement in this process?

- RADM Z met with the Parish Presidents one on one, along with the state. He sought \to understand the unique needs of each parish. Ultimately, we developed a transition plan for the state of LA, and that evolved to a transition plan for each parish. We worked at the UAC to ensure that the parish plans meshed with the overall state plan.
- Overall, the plans for each Parish were similar, but there were some differences.
- One of the focuses of the transition plan was to keep the branches fully empowered and staffed. There are branches in parishes, states and counties.
- The VOO Program was a source of income for individuals in the program. As long as these individuals we in the program, they could make more money than their normal fishing jobs.
- With the removal of the threat of oil coming ashore, and no oil on the surface, we realized the work can be done at the branch level to clean beaches, etc. We no longer need a big staff to keep things moving (e.g., resources ordered, etc.). We had excess capacity and could now streamline the process.
- As of September 20, we now have a UAC and Gulf Coast IMT. These are co-located in the same building.
- We will continue to coordinate with the branches to ensure that this process is working from their perspective. The branches will continue to decon vessels, conduct SCAT, clean beaches, etc. We still need to get agreement to identify a final stopping point. We do not want to end up doing more harm than good.

Is the NIC in the process of demob?

- The role of messaging that the NIC led will be brought down to the UAC level and we will deal directly with the press.

How has communication on the transition been with the states? What is their opinion?

- It varies. Much of FL and tourism equities want to have the beaches cleaned after hours. We have good coordination with the 3 states reps; things went easier in those states than in the LA parishes.
- There is still oil in some of the marshes in LA – so the transition was harder to talk about in LA.

What does the org structure look like from this point forward?

- FL panhandle, MS, AL each has a branch. Under the branches you have work sites. Parishes have something similar. At 1250 Poydras in New Orleans, we have a small UAC staff and then an IMT that is supporting the branches. The IMT has the traditional ICS pieces (Ops, Planning, etc.).
- Even though there is no longer ICPs, the UAC name will stay the same. The name of the UAC is just semantics – locals got used to the title so don't want to change it.
- There is no Operations Section in the smaller UAC; the Operations Section is now a part of the Gulf IMT.
- There are still some people working SCAT at Houma, but there is no longer an Operations Section at Houma. Any activities being run out of Houma at this point is simply a matter of convenience and nothing more.

There were a lot of offers of international help/equipment. Was this handled appropriately?

- We got lots of information about skimmers and boom from foreign governments. This process could have been handled better if we had people who knew the resources better, but they were able to sort things out eventually.
- There was a Jones Act discussion, but it was never really a huge issue. We could bring equipment in, but vessels were different.
- We need to make sure we have the right resources in the U.S. so we don't have to work through that process again. In some cases, there was a long delivery lag. In other cases, we had problems with the product. You couldn't take as gospel that the resources that you were provided would work.
- We were trying to be gracious, but then we had to identify how we would be able to really use it. So basically, we took a lot of things, but it depended if we put it in the water.
- We need to ensure going forward that we have a large capability to skim/boom oil within the U.S.

Did you engage in any analysis to look at skimmer efficiency – US vs. International sources – and use that to optimize skimmer deployments?

- Yes, we did get some skimmers from international sources that could be put on the back of a VOSS and remain working for long periods of time.
- There were capabilities and technologies that have improved over the years.
- As the oil got closer to the coast, it was harder to find the oil and communicate its location to the states.
- We had a blimp working for a little bit, but they had no restroom facilities or air conditioning. It was a good platform as it was slow, and could stay around for a while on location.

Did you ever find yourself in competition with the states in trying to acquire boom?

- I don't remember this happening, but I do remember the concern in the UAC. I can't really speak to specifics.
- This is another reason to get the states working through the ICS structure and not outside of it. It allows you to plan collaboratively and avoid duplication of effort.

To what extent did political pressures determine operational response?

- I don't know that it did. In terms of daily response decisions, we did what we thought needed to be done. Unless it was within our own branches, don't know that there was any. I don't feel there was any political pressure from the Federal level.
- I think the ICS methodology embedded in the IAPs, Area Operating Guide, etc. worked well.
- The IAPs were pretty thick documents. I don't know if there was any info that was missing in those documents.
- National incidents have additional reporting requirements. You have to expect them. It should have been expected since there were a fair number of agencies that had equities in this incident.
- We had to create a data sheet that met everyone's needs. Maybe we should ultimately change the structure of the IAPs so that we can more easily extract the components that are needed at a higher level.

How was the UAC determining priorities? Was the identification of ESAs part of that strategy?

- The UAC deferred to the ICPs to prioritize ESAs.
- With this particular case, we had some rookeries that needed to be protected – and they were critical because of the time of the year. So we had to double boom those ESAs.
- The Incident Commanders had the ACPs for their areas, and they were the ones outlining the sensitive areas. It might have been a bit muddled as more boom was placed than may have been needed.
- If you have one area, it is the most important area from that locality's perspective. I don't know there was a breakdown other than people not just understanding the larger view of all of the ESAs out there.

Discuss the COP.

- Used ERMA for the COP. ERMA was the COP for everything (e.g., showing sentinel snare locations, sediment and water column sampling locations, etc. NOAA did an awesome job bringing that in. They brought in people to improve ERMA as time went by. We used that to see the trajectories and what was impacted. We had satellite overflights and this data was incorporated, including what ESAs were impacted. It even had boom locations.

What caused the friction between Parish Presidents and the prioritization of ESAs?

- You had a lot of perspectives. If you have one area that you are worried about, and it is THE most important place, then cannot argue with anyone. The method to identify the areas to protect needs to be a collaborative process. We needed to be careful with some of the sensitive areas. The breakdown is everyone understanding the process.
- Think that there are also some political impacts related to the prioritization of ESAs.

Questions related to authority resulted in delays to get decisions made – were you aware of that, was there a way to expedite the decision making process, or is that just the nature of the bureaucracy?

- There were some situations. As we went through the transitions from ICPs to the consolidated organizational structure. The process to coordinate and collaborate caused delays.
- Wanted to give authority to Deputy ICs in FL, MS, and AL and gave them some money and authority and allowed them to be someone to represent the FOSC and be more accessible to the state. Also had the FOSC at the UAC and FOSC-R at Houma and Mobile ICPs. Think that worked better and may have shortened the decision making process as it provided a direct link to the states.
- My perception is that what we did worked. It built confidence that there was a fed at the state level. One thing we learned though was that we needed to have a representative or ICP in all of the affected states (i.e., AL, MS and FL and not just AL).

Was the USCG ready for this incident? What would you recommend to put them in a better position for any future spill? Is the USCG organization ready to meet the needs of this type of event?

- We were ready as an organization.
- Our skimming capacity was less than optimal. We needed large skimmers for a blowout event and this needs to be addressed. I don't know who needs to have them – private companies or government – but they need to exist and be readily available.
- I am all for prevention, but there also needs to be the capacity to respond to the consequences of a spill of this nature. This is not just a USCG issue, and it needs to be addressed in the ACs.
- In future SONS exercises, we need to address some of the issues that were experienced here.
- ICS worked well. We are never going to be done with training because of the large amount of turnover we have in personnel.
- All those agencies that haven't invested in ICS need to invest in ICS. They need to know how they will fit into the organization when the arrive on-scene.

The confusion about the initial flow rate estimates – did that create confusion in terms of USCG operations?

- No, no it didn't matter how much oil was coming out, we were trying to recover the oil.
- No matter the number, we were putting everything we could at it. As time went by and the number went up, we were already continuing to acquire resources – the precise number didn't matter.

Were there any operational impacts related to the oil budget?

- The oil budget impacted us all as we are all trying to explain to the public what we are doing. The pie chart that shows the 26% still remaining out there. This did affect the response.
- We have a robust subsea monitoring program in place. We solicited input from academia to improve the monitoring program. We need to have a better understand what is happening in the water column going forward. We are seeing decreased DO levels, which is good. This means that bacteria are biodegrading the oil that is out there.

Was there any technology that was not being used or that you wish was available during the response?

- The ability to track skimmers on the water. It was helpful to track everything. We eventually used an electronic tracking/accountability system. Many vessels had RFID tags and knowing where the equipment was located was helpful for accountability.
- Blimp was useful and could be further developed. It was able to cover some ground and provide input that you can't get from the surface.
- UAVs were not as helpful.
- A-WHALE didn't work. We tried it a few times. Wasn't really a skimmer, just a big ship with an opening.

Is the USCG sufficiently equipped and funded to deal with the aggressive offshore oil development that is in existence or proposed?

- Not sure I can answer that question. But I do think we were ready as an organization.

- The Federal government needs to be able to develop better response capabilities to deal with a response offshore. USCG is part of this, but we are not the only organization that has to be involved. There needs to be an understanding of what you can do to prevent a spill of this type.
- We need to take the lessons learned from this incident and ensure we have capacity to deal with prevention, mitigation and the response in order to prevent degradation of the environment.
- If USCG owns everything related to the response, then yes, but it is better said that the federal government needs the resources to address this and all federal agencies involved in the response need to invest in ICS training.

What were the top 2 "best practice(s)" during this incident, from your perspective?

- Perseverance of the DWH response. No one gave up, even with long odds. Personnel kept moving forward and kept going. They understood that they would accomplish things by working in an integrated fashion. We need to press forward as an integrated organization.

What do you assess to be the top 2 "areas needing improvement" (or downright "failures") from your perspective, and do you have any related recommendations regarding these areas?

- Too much boom. We spent too much time placing and removing it. Lots of man hours and resources were wasted on boom. People need to better understand the limitations of boom. We need to go and do some education on the limitations of boom (i.e., it can be useful to protect ESAs, but not whole coasts).