

Today marks the twentieth anniversary of my recall as a reserve Lieutenant Commander to active duty for the Coast Guard in response to the 9/11 attacks. Reporting to Seattle, I joined literally thousands of other reservists across the nation who joined our active-duty counterparts to plan and respond to potential other attacks. Working long hours and no days off, Coast Guard personnel took immediate steps to protect the homeland. After a couple of weeks, I was assigned as the supervisor to the facility inspection program for the Seattle area of responsibility. This was a daunting task as the Coast Guard has always been in charge of ensuring selected waterfront facilities, such as refineries, were in compliance with security requirements, we had not had an active program to ensure this was completed. When I inquired on what the requirements were, my supervisor simply gave me the Code of Federal Regulations and said 'figure it out.' Working with other senior officers and enlisted, we proceeded to identify what those requirements would be. But we were lacking in practical on-the-ground knowledge and experience to ensure we were effective.

To obtain this information, I identified the most effective waterfront facility program we knew of and notified this facility I was coming to visit. I arrived the following day and met with the security chief, who had quite an impressive staff of trained officers. We met, and it was obvious by his body language he was not thrilled that the Coast Guard was now going to tell him how to do his job, especially with his decades of experience. I introduced myself, and basically stated "I am here to inspect your facility." "Yea, I know," he remarked. "Well, to be frank," I responded, "I don't have a clue what the heck we are suppose to inspect. This was thrust upon us due to the attacks, and I was hoping you could train me and my staff on what we should be looking for." He blinked, paused, and then quickly stated "no problem, it would be my honor to do so." We spent two days at this facility, with this highly experienced officer, thoroughly showing us the ins and outs of inspecting a facility. We would later update our plans using this new information as a guideline.

I only mention this as with any organizations, it is about building trust and relationships. Later, we had a couple of issues with waterfront labor unions. There were a lot of questions to be answered, and I took the approach of directly meeting with the heads of these two unions, despite being told it wouldn't do any good. One meeting took place at the union hall, another took place in a bar. Amusingly, I recall visiting this bar lounge in Fife and being asked sarcastically by a union member if I wanted sasparillo (however that is spelled). I said no, I'll have a beer, surprising the members. I did it, to start building the trust. We resolved the differences and both parties moved on. Upon my release from active duty ten months later, I was awarded a medal for my work with resolving these issues.

All facilities had a deadline for submission of a new Coast Guard security plan and with strong guidance, cooperation and assistance from our staff, all facilities met this deadline. This ten-month active-duty period was one of my most rewarding reserve experiences in my 38-year career, one where I cherished the people who worked for me and with those I met in the civilian sector. As one facility manager in Tacoma told me, "Steve, you may be Coast Guard, but we are all Americans. We are working for the same thing."

My final thoughts are those in the Coast Guard who I considered the heroes for the response in Seattle. Captain Mike Moore was the Commanding Officer, who was highly disciplined and led the effort with strong management skills. Captain John Dwyer was the deputy, another reservist, who answered the call. If Captain Moore wasn't around, Captain Dwyer was, and you couldn't tell any difference in the management. Captain Lurilla Lee led the reserve planning effort, a monumental task figuring out not

only who to recall, but also job assignments, lodging and food requirements. Lieutenant Russ Read led the intel effort, an impressive planning effort that was recognized nationally. There were many, many others who contributed, and it would take days to fully recognize all these efforts. I returned home to my wife and two teenagers (wife had the harder job), and to continue my civilian job. Six months later, I would be recalled for a two-year period in Portland...but that is another chapter. Semper Paratus!