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**FACING THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES  
ON DECOMMISSIONING U.S. NAVY SHIPS**

by

Darren J. McGlynn

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
University of San Diego

May, 2005

Dissertation Committee

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## ABSTRACT

Since the late 1980s, hundreds of U.S. Navy ships have been decommissioned. Although ship decommissionings were postponed immediately after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack, today the Navy is again engaged in "rightsizing" its force. Depending on the type of ship and its age, a ship faces different fates after the decommissioning process has been completed. Except on the rare occasion when a ship is turned into a museum, most decommissioned ships are disposed of in one of three ways. Some ships are sold to foreign navies to recoup some costs. Other ships are reassigned to the Military Sealift Command (MSC) to continue serving the fleet, albeit in a quasi-civilian capacity. The last option for a decommissioned ship is to be placed in an inactive status or "mothballs" and eventually sunk.

The impact of the decommissioning process on the crew is a major concern. The day the decommissioning ship completes its last operational assignment, the "mission" of the ship changes significantly: The crew must prepare its ship for a kind of death. Those in authority who may have recently mastered the art of leading sailors into hostile environments now must motivate their sailors and themselves to excel in the absence of danger. Consequently, the leaders on the ship are faced with a difficult challenge: to maintain morale and to keep the crew on task even though the mission and tasks have changed dramatically. If a naval leader cannot successfully adapt his/her leadership style to the environment created by the decommissioning, the crew morale may be adversely affected and retention may plummet.

The purpose of this research was to begin to explore leadership challenges in naval vessels that were scheduled for decommissioning. The study identified the

perceptions of nine naval leaders from three decommissioning ships regarding the decommissioning process. These perceptions were organized into 13 major themes that provide valuable information and insight about naval leadership during the decommissioning process. This information should be useful to prospective naval leaders who encounter decommissioning situations during their tours of duty.

**This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Joe McGlynn**

**1934-2003**

**A good street cop and an even better father**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God who gave me the ability to complete this degree and for providing me endless encouragement through the verse: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

I would like to thank my family: my wife Rosie for supporting me through the often difficult times associated with earning a doctoral degree; my daughter Elena, for providing encouragement in the form of notes and letters—she always lifted my spirits; my daughter Myriah for the many neck rubs that allowed me to return to the paperwork sooner than I would have if she had not been so kind; my son Luke for wrestling with me and providing a respite from the monotony of working on the computer for countless hours; my mother Liz for always listening and always encouraging.

I would also like to thank Bob Donmoyer for teaching me during the many hours we spent together at Peet’s—he enabled me to experience a glimpse of what it must be like to be a good writer. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dan Miller and Bob Martin for their guidance and suggestions.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Prologue.....	1
Background to the Study.....	5
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Purpose of the Study.....	9
Research Questions.....	10
Limitations of the Study.....	10
Significance of the Study.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
Lessons Learned Naval Messages.....	13
Comparing and Contrasting Downsizing and Mergers.....	16
Stress in a Naval Context.....	19
Notification: Communicating the Coming Change.....	20
Use of Ceremony in Civilian and Naval Contexts.....	23
Trust: The Key to Creating a Good Organizational Climate.....	24
Summary.....	26
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Respondents.....	27
Access.....	29
Researcher's Role.....	30
Data Collection Methods.....	31
Data Analysis.....	31
CHAPTER FOUR: USS VALDES	
History and Background.....	33
Description of Interview Contexts.....	35
USS VALDES Commanding Officer Interview.....	35
USS VALDES Executive Officer Interview.....	36
USS VALDES Command Master Chief Interview.....	37
Discussion of Major Themes.....	37



VALDES Theme 1: Operational vs. Non-Operational.....	37
VALDES Theme 2: Focus.....	42
VALDES Theme 3: Pride.....	44
VALDES Theme 4: Emotions.....	45
VALDES Theme 5: Rumors.....	47
VALDES Theme 6: Recapitalization.....	48
VALDES Theme 7: Upbeat/Positive Attitude.....	50
VALDES Theme 8: Buy-in.....	51
VALDES Theme 9: Regret.....	54
Summary.....	56

## CHAPTER FIVE: USS JOHN ADAMS

History and Background.....	59
Description of Interview Contexts.....	60
USS JOHN ADAMS Commanding Officer Interview.....	60
USS JOHN ADAMS Executive Officer Interview.....	61
USS JOHN ADAMS Command Senior Chief Interview.....	61
Discussion of Major Themes.....	61
JOHN ADAMS Theme 1: Creating a Meaningful Mission.....	62
JOHN ADAMS Theme 2: Focus.....	66
JOHN ADAMS Theme 3: Pride.....	69
JOHN ADAMS Theme 4: Emotions.....	71
JOHN ADAMS Theme 5: Rumors.....	73
JOHN ADAMS Theme 6: Motivation.....	74
JOHN ADAMS Theme 7: Denial.....	76
Summary.....	77

## CHAPTER SIX: USS KODIAK

History and Background.....	80
Description of Interview Contexts.....	81
USS KODIAK Commanding Officer Interview.....	82
USS KODIAK Executive Officer Interview.....	82
USS KODIAK Command Master Chief Interview.....	82
Discussion of Major Themes.....	83
KODIAK Theme 1: The Illusion of Being Operational.....	83
KODIAK Theme 2: Focus.....	86
KODIAK Theme 3: Pride.....	87
KODIAK Theme 4: Emotions.....	89
KODIAK Theme 5: Rumors.....	91
KODIAK Theme 6: Motivation.....	94
Summary.....	99

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY

Introduction.....	101
Major Themes Common to More Than One Ship.....	102
Operational vs. Non-Operational, Creating a Meaningful Mission, and the Illusion of Being Operational.....	102
Focus.....	104
Pride.....	105
Emotions.....	106
Rumors.....	106
Motivation.....	108
Major Themes That Emerged from Only One Ship.....	108
Denial.....	109
Recapitalization.....	110
Upbeat/Positive Attitude.....	110
Buy-in.....	111
Regret.....	111
Implications for Policy and Practice.....	112
Implications for Further Research.....	117
REFERENCES.....	119
APPENDICES	
A. Ship Decommissioning Lessons Learned.....	122
B. Consent to Participate in a Research Study.....	134

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Major Theme of Operational vs. Non-Operational as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 38
Table 2. Major Theme of Focus as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 43
Table 3. Major Theme of Pride as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 45
Table 4. Major Theme of Emotions as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 46
Table 5. Major Theme of Rumors as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 47
Table 6. Major Theme of Recapitalization as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 49
Table 7. Major Theme of Upbeat/Positive Attitude as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 50
Table 8. Major Theme of Buy-in as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 53
Table 9. Major Theme of Regret as used by the VALDES Triad	p. 56
Table 10. Major Theme of Searching for a Meaningful Mission as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 65
Table 11. Major Theme of Focus as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 68
Table 12. Major Theme of Pride as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 70
Table 13. Major Theme of Emotions as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 72
Table 14. Major Theme of Rumors as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 73
Table 15. Major Theme of Motivation as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 75
Table 16. Major Theme of Denial as used by the JOHN ADAMS Triad	p. 77
Table 17. Major Theme of the Illusion of Being Operational as used by the KODIAK Triad	p. 85
Table 18. Major Theme of Focus as used by the KODIAK Triad	p. 86
Table 19. Major Theme of Pride as used by the KODIAK Triad	p. 88
Table 20. Major Theme of Emotion as used by the KODIAK Triad	p. 90

<b>Table 21. Major Theme of Rumors as used by the KODIAK Triad</b>	<b>p. 93</b>
<b>Table 22. Major Theme of Motivation as used by the KODIAK Triad</b>	<b>p. 96</b>
<b>Table 23. Cross-Case Analysis of Triad Input to Major Themes</b>	<b>p. 101</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. The sinking of a decommissioned ship p. 6
- Figure 2. The collar devices indicating the rank of each Triad member p. 27

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### *Prologue*

*At the Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, WA on 23 March 2003 at 1423 the ship I helped lead took her last breath. We had already held the “wake” and “memorial service” in the form of a decommissioning ceremony two weeks earlier in San Diego, CA; but now it was official: the USS JOHN ADAMS<sup>1</sup> was dead.*

*About an hour earlier I had passed the Officer of the Deck, a Petty Officer who wondered out loud why any watchstanders were still required, especially since he was now the only sailor left on duty. He thought, “What am I guarding?” His comment was indicative of the underlying attitude of the crew. This attitude was something that the senior leadership onboard had attempted to curtail for months. Motivating the crew had become increasingly more difficult as we approached this day, but the struggle would be over soon.*

*As I entered the ship, the deafening silence immediately struck me. This was very wrong; a ship is never supposed to be silent. Even when she loses power there is always some sound. People scrambling though the passageways lit by strategically placed emergency lighting, for instance. And because the unplanned loss of shore power in port may be related to a terrorist attack to the base, the standard practice is for sailors on the security detail to blow a whistle as they traverse the dimly lit passageways to the armory where they are issued various weapons for securing and protecting the ship. Even when power fails at sea, one can usually hear the waves slapping against the hull and the cursing of engineers making their way to the Central Control Station where other*

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the three main ships used in this dissertation are pseudonyms in an attempt to maintain a level of confidentiality for those who were stationed onboard the ships and participated in this study.

*generators will be brought to life. But now there was only the muffled sound of my footsteps.*

*I continued through the dark passageways to the wardroom. As I entered the room the open port window illuminated the wardroom tables, the barren bulkheads, and the standard issue Navy coffee machine. I longed for one more cup of good, strong coffee, the lifeblood of the Navy. It had sustained me through many late nights and cold sea details. I was aware that this machine had already produced its last pot days ago, but I instinctively reached for the black spigot. I held my hand under the spigot as a few drops of the cold, dark “blood” ran down my finger and pooled in my palm.*

*On my way to the bridge, I passed the empty officer staterooms. Each was hollow without the carpet and mattresses; the only items remaining were the mustard colored lockers and desks with some drawers left ajar. I could almost see the young officers seated at their desks producing the constant stream of naval messages and correspondence that are always a part of a living ship.*

*I continued to the bridge where I met the Captain.<sup>2</sup> From the inside of the ship we unshackled the chain holding the port bridge wing door shut. All but one of the 15 exterior doors and hatches had been secured this way. The last one would be secured from the outside after we left. When we emerged onto the bridge wing, we gravitated to our familiar spots and I produced a ceremonial cigar saved for this moment. The Captain smiled as he lit his usual cigarette. We began reminiscing about the many underway replenishments and moorings we had overseen from this spot. We were pretty*

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<sup>2</sup> The term “Captain” refers to the Commanding Officer or CO of a ship (i.e. the senior member and the top decision maker on each ship). A Captain is also the Navy rank above a Commander and below Admiral. In the Navy, the captain of a ship can be a Lieutenant, a Lieutenant Commander, a Commander, or a Captain depending upon the type of ship that is being discussed. In this case the ship’s Captain is a Commander.

*certain that we would never again have a tour of duty with as much influence and autonomy—this moment was the epilogue of the best tour of my career.*

*As we conversed, an elderly, civilian shipyard worker joined us from inside the ship. He lit his own cigarette as he approached and interrupted our reunion. Decades of seafaring life shown on his leathered face and could be heard in his graveled voice. We soon learned that he had retired from the Navy several years before and was now, as a civilian, responsible for preparing the newly decommissioned ships for their stay in the “Bone Yard.” I immediately dubbed him “The Mortician.” I didn’t like his intrusion, preferring to spend my last moments on the ship differently, i.e., with those with whom I had served. However, the Captain didn’t seem to mind, so I left them talking about the latest sports scores and retreated to my stateroom. Although I had traversed the path to my stateroom hundreds of times, the darkness and overwhelming silence was now very disquieting.*

*I sat at the desk in my stateroom and put my feet up watching the cigar smoke curl around the room. I contemplated removing the two brass plaques on my door. One read “LCDR Darren J. McGlynn, Executive Officer,” and the other read “Knock then Enter.” I decided against removing them after fantasizing that a recreational SCUBA diver would pry them off in a hundred years after this ship had been sunk and become a reef.*

*After taking a last look at my old stateroom, I returned to the bridge to finish my cigar. The Captain had since wondered off so I sat in my bridge chair, propped up my feet, and looked through the windows at the other decommissioned ships. The ship that had preceded our decommissioning by two weeks, the EX USS VALDES, was moored at*



*the next pier, and it had already started looking like the other residents of the Bone Yard: faded, rusted, and forgotten.*

*My contemplative moment was shattered by the sound of the Mortician's voice behind me. I envisioned this moment to be somber and quiet, dedicated to remembering the exploits of this fine warship. His presence seemed to preclude this. I wanted to tell him to go away, but instead I tried to ignore him. Maybe he had a job to do up here on the bridge, and he would complete it and move to another part of the ship allowing me to mourn in peace. This was not to be; in fact, it seemed he had nothing to do but talk to me. The Mortician rattled on in painstaking detail about his days serving on the EX USS IDAHO; a nuclear cruiser moored three piers down, whose superstructure had been completely removed. The man lamented, "She doesn't even look like a ship anymore." At this point I realized that he was mourning too. He was trying to connect with me; perhaps he was trying to prepare me for the feelings that he was all too familiar with. He was an expert about such feelings; working here, he saw the crews deliver their terminal ships on a regular basis. As I listened to this sad man, I decided that I did not want to be like him, trapped in this dead world. I was sympathetic (I guess even empathetic), but now I needed to move on, something he had evidently not yet done.*

*The Captain rejoined us and we made our way to the Quarterdeck to depart the ship. I directed the Officer of the Deck to make the final deck log entry and turn over his watch to the civilian shipyard worker. The Captain and I walked off the ship, and neither of us ever looked back.*

*Crewmembers had been leaving the ship for months in small groups but after the last of us left the ship all of the remaining crewmen boarded buses headed to the airport.*

*This decommissioning and subsequent exodus occurred during the Gulf war in 2003 that necessitated the establishment of vehicle checkpoints at airport entrances. A security guard at the security checkpoint mistakenly assumed our bus was full of men headed off to war and wished us luck and safety in our upcoming combat assignment. Either because there wasn't enough time during the brief stop or because we were all too embarrassed, no one corrected her. At that moment, when our situation was illuminated in stark contrast to those leaving for war, the crew's morale hit bottom.*

### *Background to the Study*

Since the late 1980s hundreds of U.S. Navy ships have been decommissioned. Although ship decommissionings were postponed immediately after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack, today the Navy is again engaged in "rightsizing" its force.<sup>3</sup> During the 2003 fiscal year, in fact, 20 ships were decommissioned (Crawley 2003a, p. A1). In addition, during a recent visit to Bath Naval Shipyard, I observed several new warships under construction that the Navy will soon add to its ranks. As new ships are commissioned, older ships will almost certainly be decommissioned.

Depending on the type of ship and its age, a ship faces different fates after the decommissioning process has been completed. Except on the rare occasion when a ship is turned into a museum, most decommissioned ships are disposed of in one of three ways. Some ships are sold to foreign navies to recoup some costs, and more importantly, to bolster our ties with other countries. Other ships, mostly support ships, such as oilers, are reassigned to the Military Sealift Command (MSC) to continue serving the fleet, albeit in a quasi-civilian capacity. The last option for a decommissioned ship is to be

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<sup>3</sup> Despite the recent war in the Arabian Gulf, the process is still ongoing. Currently, the optimal size for the fleet seems to be slightly less than 250 ships.

placed in an inactive status or “mothballs”; most mothballed ships are eventually sunk in a similar fashion as the ship depicted in Figure 1.

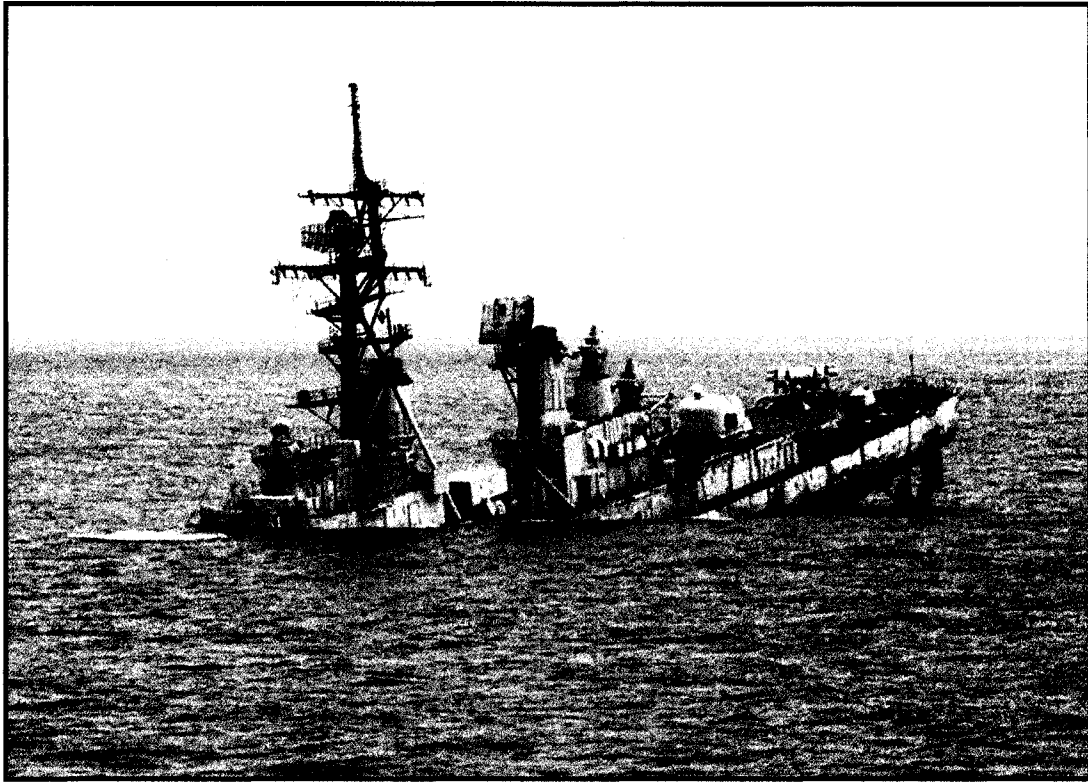


Figure 1. The sinking of a decommissioned ship (U.S. Navy released).

One recently decommissioned ship, the USS CONSTELLATION, was slated for mothballing. During its decommissioning process the Commanding Officer said of the decommissioning process: "It's an enormous undertaking. Anyone who's moved understands the challenges" (Crawley, 2003b, p. A1). Before the sailors leave for new assignments, they must complete a variety of tasks including taking inventory, packing, and removing hundreds of thousands of parts from the ship. These ships are preserved-for a time, at least-for the unlikely event that the country should enter a multi-theater war that requires reactivation of additional naval assets. Eventually even the

mothballed ships are sold for scrap or sunk as part of a targeting exercises for newer ships and aircraft.

During the decommissioning process, the impact on the crew is always a concern. Each person must be reassigned to another comparable command to serve out his or her remaining time at sea. Before sailors move on to their new assignments, however, work must be done: The crew must prepare its ship for a kind of death. The day the decommissioning ship completes its last operational assignment, in other words, the “mission” of the ship changes significantly. Those in authority who may have recently mastered the art of leading sailors into hostile environments now must motivate their sailors and themselves to excel in the absence of danger.

It is not difficult to instill the mindset of being the best-maintained, sharpest, and cleanest warship afloat when there is a tangible, operational commitment for which to prepare. The situation for the crew of a decommissioning ship, however, is radically different. Consequently, the leaders on the ship are faced with a difficult challenge: to maintain morale and to keep the crew on task even though the mission and tasks have changed dramatically. Jim Crawley, a San Diego Union Tribune Staff Writer, in his article on the decommissioning of the USS CONSTELLATION, quotes a sailor whose comments speak to the challenge of those who must lead a decommissioning process. The sailor said: “We can’t understand why we are going through all of this work when we’re letting the ship die” (Crawley, 2003b, p. A1).

#### *Statement of the Problem*

If a naval leader cannot successfully adapt his/her leadership style to the environment created by the decommissioning process, the crew morale may be adversely

affected. Unfortunately, decommissioning is a topic so unique to the Navy that literature about it is extremely limited and what does exist in naval archives does not address the leadership aspects of the decommissioning process. The only literature on the decommissioning process is in the form of the “Lessons Learned” messages. The information for these messages is compiled by the crew of a decommissioning ship during the final months of the ship’s “life,” and these messages are usually the last ones sent by a ship prior to the crew disbanding. These messages are written in standard naval message format and address logistical issues that the particular ship faced during the decommissioning process. As exemplified in Appendix A, the messages do not address any leadership challenges encountered nor do they address any morale issues, and they are not in anyway systematic, empirical research studies.

There is some relevant, systematic research in the civilian sector regarding mergers and downsizing, processes that are at least somewhat analogous to the decommissioning process. The lessons learned from studying these events may be at least somewhat applicable in the Navy; however, in an article entitled *Corporate Downsizing and its Effect on the Organization*, Choy (2003) said, “Morale suffers which equates to lower productivity and profits for the organization” (p. 2). Choy went on to reference Mabert & Schemenner (1997) who discuss “how managers complained of the morale-sapping character of most downsizing and described how low morale created anxiety and paralysis within their companies to the subsequent detriment of productivity” (Choy, 2003, p. 2). Anecdotal accounts suggest something similar occurs in a naval setting when a ship decommissions.

However, mergers and downsizing are not really exact equivalents of a decommissioning process. One difference involves the fact that the Navy wants to retain sailors involved in a decommissioning process and have them accept other assignments within the Navy. Admiral Vern Clark, the Chief of Naval Operations, has said concerning our sailors: “We've got to offer to them a chance to make a difference. They want us to give them a chance to show what they can contribute. They want a chance to grow and develop” (Kennedy, 2000, p. 1). If the men and women serving on decommissioning ships perceive that there is no relevant mission, retention could be adversely affected and the Navy could lose its most valuable asset, the sailor.

Because the ship-decommissioning program is back on track, naval leaders assigned to decommissioning ships will continue to face the unique challenges presented by this process. Consequently, there is a need to better understand how leaders can best respond to this unique leadership challenge so that the adverse effects of dealing with it inappropriately are avoided. This study will attempt to respond to the need articulated in this section, and it will attempt to begin to fill the literature void that exists regarding leadership during the decommissioning process.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this research is to begin to explore leadership challenges in naval vessels that are scheduled for decommissioning. The study will attempt to identify the perceptions of naval leaders regarding the decommissioning process. More specifically, the study will focus on the leadership techniques that naval leaders indicate they used during the decommissioning process.

### *Research Questions*

The study will be guided by the following questions:

- (1) What perceptions do naval ships' leaders have regarding the decommissioning process and the leadership challenges during this time?
- (2) What motivational techniques do naval leaders say they use to positively impact crew morale during the decommissioning process?

### *Limitations of the Study*

The decommissioning schedule is defined by Congress and the list of prospective ships to be decommissioned is updated semi-annually in a classified naval message. The schedule is subject to change, as is the disposition of each ship after decommissioning. Because of the way the ships are designated for decommissioning, the pool of perspective respondents was limited to those stationed on certain types of ship (i.e., the ships designated for decommissioning are usually older ships). Additionally, the number of ships decommissioned per year is relatively small compared to the rest of the fleet. This limited the sample pool during my available time for research and study.

Although ships are being decommissioned on both coasts of the U.S., for convenience sake, only those decommissioned in San Diego, CA were used in the study. This understandably limits the study to one geographic area, but it is my opinion that the leadership challenges are similar no matter where the decommissioning takes place. Nevertheless, during the transcription/coding process I did not note any issues regarding geographic location in the data analysis.

The interviews of each of the respondents took place at various times during the decommissioning process. The proximity to the actual decommissioning date or other

significant milestone in the decommissioning process, could have affected the way the respondents answered questions during the interview. The approximate time that a particular interview took place on the decommissioning timeline will be discussed for each respondent.

One of the shortfalls of this study will be the absence of data that would enable triangulation of the triad's perceptions. Ideally, a short survey given to a sample of sailors on each triad's ship could be used to determine if those being led shared the same perceptions as those leading them through the decommissioning process. Due to limitations posed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Navy regulations this will not be possible and only the perceptions of the naval leaders will be analyzed.

Because some information for this study was obtained from my own command, it may be what Glesne refers to as "backyard research" (Glesne, 1999, p. 26). Although backyard research can be very valuable there are numerous potential problems associated with it. Since I was an Executive Officer<sup>4</sup> on a decommissioning ship and participated in the study, I bring with me preconceived leadership ideas, specifically, how to lead through the decommissioning process. These ideas may be different from those of other respondents and may taint my perceptions of the data. Two of Glesne's additional warnings are to "go away from home to do your research," and "to conduct your research where you are not so emotionally close to your subjects that it distorts your design" (Glesne, 1999, p. 27). Despite the sound advice from noted scholars like Glesne, the importance of this study is such that conducting "backyard research" is worth the risk for the opportunity to glean the rich lessons about leadership in the challenging environment

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<sup>4</sup> The Executive Officer (XO) is second in command of a Navy ship and is primarily responsible to the Commanding Officer (CO) for the organization, performance of duty, and the good order and discipline of the command (OPNAVINST 3120.32, 1994).



created by the decommissioning process. To mitigate the effects of backyard research I will attempt to view my journal data from an outsider's perspective and will be mindful of the source when searching for emerging themes.

### *Significance of the Study*

Naval leaders assigned to decommissioning ships will continue to face the unique challenges presented by this decommissioning process. This study should be useful to perspective naval leaders who may encounter decommissioning situations during their tours of duty. When referring to the *particularistic* aspect of research Hoaglin states, "It can suggest to readers what to do or not to do in similar situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). This study promises to yield valuable information about naval leadership during the decommissioning process and may contribute to naval leaders improving their ability to lead during a challenging time. An informed and equipped leader can have a significant, positive impact on the ship including improving poor morale that may suffer during the tumultuous decommissioning process.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Based on my review using the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Navy-specific documents, such as Lessons Learned messages and Navy Marine Corps Internet resources, I concluded that there is currently no formal literature available that specifically addresses the problem of how to prepare naval leaders for the leadership challenges created when their ships decommission. As noted previously, there are some Lessons Learned naval messages written at the end of the decommission process, and I was able to retrieve these, albeit not through the Navy's Lessons Learned website (Navy Warfare Development Command, 2004). The site had no Lessons Learned messages posted on the decommissioning process. Rather, I had to contact the organization to which the ships that were decommissioned formally belonged. (This organization is referred to as the Immediate Senior In the chain of command or ISIC.)

### *Lessons Learned Naval Messages*

I will begin with a review of a sample decommissioning Lessons Learned naval message since this is the only formal literature that even addresses the decommissioning process. (For an example of these messages, see Appendix A.) These messages are written in all capital letters and use a formatting style unique to naval messages. These are not e-mail messages but rather are an outgrowth of Teletype messages transmitted using standardized radio equipment that is installed on all Navy ships. This form of communication has existed for decades and is still considered the formal medium of reporting and tasking in the Navy. The typical Lessons Learned message is divided into three or four sections corresponding to the number of major departments on the ship (i.e., Engineering, Operations, Supply, and Combat Systems). The information provided in

each of these sections addresses issues and challenges that were encountered by individuals who worked in those specific areas. Additionally, these messages list the recommended courses of action to either avoid or rectify the difficult situations that are part of the decommissioning process. An excerpt from the USS VALDES' Lessons Learned message is cited below. This example records a challenge encountered by the Engineering Department (the text was intentionally left in the original naval message format to allow the reader to visualize the differences in writing style between the Navy and the civilian sector):

**ITEM: BATTLE LANTERNS**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: BECAUSE THE SPACE CLOSEOUT INSPECTOR NEEDS TO VERIFY THAT ALL BATTLE LANTERN BATTERIES ARE REMOVED, THIS CAN BE A PROCESS THAT TAKES A LONG TIME AS LANTERN BULB PLATES ARE UNSCREWED TO INSPECT THE LANTERN'S INTERIOR CAVITY.**

**C. RECOMMENDATION: THE INSPECTION PROCESS IS EASIER IF WHEN THE BATTERIES ARE REMOVED, THE LANTERN FACEPLATE IS REATTACHED OFF TO THE SIDE LEAVING THE LANTERN CAVITY OPEN FOR THE INSPECTOR TO PERFORM A QUICK VISUAL CHECK. THIS AVOIDS REOPENING EACH CLOSED OUT BATTLE LANTERN. ONCE THE BATTERIES ARE REMOVED, TRANSFER THEM TO ANOTHER SHIP OR TURN IN AS HAZMAT. IF TURNED IN AS HAZMAT, THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE TERMINALS MUST BE REMOVED TO PREVENT ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE AND A FIRE. FOR RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES, CUT THE WIRES AS CLOSE TO THE BATTERY AS POSSIBLE AFTER REMOVAL.**

Each of the Lessons Learned messages consists of numerous entries that have essentially two parts, the background/discussion section and the recommendation section.

These entries usually address one of the following topics: (a) safety issues, (b) administrative matters, and (c) ideas that will expedite the decommissioning process.

Although these messages provide valuable advice about managing schedules and implementing procedures, they do not address how to deal with leadership challenges.

The leadership challenges I am referring to evolve from the interactions with subordinates and superiors within the naval hierarchy during the decommissioning process. In other words, the Lessons Learned messages do not address how to lead people. In fact, these messages rarely address personnel issues at all other than to convey a procedure for administrative processing or personnel safety. The following excerpt from a safety Lessons Learned message (Navy Safety Center, n.d.) exemplifies how personnel issues are recorded and it illustrates the previous point:

**J. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS - AS THE DECOM DATE APPROACHES, IT IS TYPICAL THAT THE CREW SIZE WILL DRAW DOWN. THIS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CREATE KNOWLEDGE GAPS WITH REGARDS TO SHIPS SYSTEMS AND DAMAGE CONTROL EXPERTISE. SHIPS MUST CAREFULLY PLAN CREW DRAWDOWNS TO ACCOUNT FOR CONCEIVABLE EMERGENCIES.**

**K. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS - DECOM PREPARATIONS INVOLVE MOVING THE ENTIRE CREW OFF THE SHIP, TYPICALLY TO A BERTHING BARGE. SHIPS SHOULD HAVE EGRESS TRAINING FOR BARGE LIVING/WORKING SPACES EARLY IN THE MOVE-OFF TO ENSURE PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO QUICKLY AND SAFELY EVACUATE IF REQUIRED.**

**L. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS - AS SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT ARE REMOVED, PERSONNEL MAY BE TEMPTED TO USE IMPROPER TOOLS AND/OR PPE TO ACCOMPLISH REQUIRED WORK. SUPERVISORS AT ALL LEVELS MUST REMAIN VIGILANT TO THIS TEMPTATION AND CONTINUOUSLY REMIND THEIR PERSONNEL TO USE THE PROPER EQUIPMENT. PLANNING FOR THE PHASED REMOVAL OF PPE CONSISTENT WITH THE ANTICIPATED WORK REQUIREMENTS WILL HELP TO ENSURE THE PROPER EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE AS LONG AS IT IS NEEDED.**

Although the Lessons Learned messages can be useful to naval leaders when preparing for a decommissioning, the leadership challenges encountered during the decommissioning process need to be addressed and guidance needs to be provided to naval leaders.

### *Comparing and Contrasting Downsizing and Mergers*

Literature about corporate downsizing and mergers, although not an exact fit with the decommissioning process, can be useful in this study. A company that is scheduled to undergo a merger or is scheduled to downsize might encounter experiences that at least somewhat resemble the circumstances associated with a ship decommissioning. Of course, there are differences as well as similarities between mergers and downsizing in the corporate world, on the one hand, and a ship decommissioning in the Navy on the other. Therefore, these differences, as well as the apparent similarities between decommissioning and downsizing, are discussed below.

Choden (2000) lists common mistakes that employers make during and after an organization's merger and subsequent downsizing:

- Failing to plan how the company will operate after downsizing.
- Failing to involve the human resource department in the planning stages.
- Failing to keep employees informed about the merger and the impact it will have upon their jobs.
- Promising employees that "This will never happen again."
- Holding closed-door sessions immediately after the layoff.

These mistakes made in civilian contexts are somewhat analogous to a naval setting. Specifically, the first three points directly relate to a naval context. Failing to plan how the organization will operate during the decommissioning (which also involves a steady downsizing until the entire crew has detached) can create a plethora of problems that a ship might not be able to recover from. Failing to involve the human resources department would be like trying to accomplish a decommissioning without the Command

Master Chief<sup>5</sup> and the administrative department handling the individual sailor's next set of orders. The third analogous failure involves communication, which is arguably the major challenge in the decommissioning process. During a decommissioning, naval leaders need to decipher the many pieces of information and pass on what they think are the most reliable ones to the crew. The leaders need to distil the raw (sometimes contradictory) information down to the essentials: the time of the decommissioning, where it will take place, and what type of decommissioning it will be (i.e., hot swap<sup>6</sup> or mothballs). Ironically, these pieces of information are exactly what the leaders on decommissioning ship's have difficulty obtaining.

Organizations that go through downsizing and mergers change at an accelerated pace, and the leaders involved will no doubt make mistakes during this process. Members of those organizations will react to the changes and the subsequent mistakes (these mistakes may be actual or perceived). Howard (n.d.) cites six major reactions to downsizing from the book *Healing the Wounds* (Noer, 1993). These reactions are somewhat analogous to those of sailors on Navy ships during the decommissioning process. These negative reactions, listed below, can significantly impact the organization:

- *Reduced risk-taking.* This usually takes the form of reluctance to take on new challenges or introduce new products or ideas, and fear of proposing changes.
- *Lowered productivity.* Survivors tend to become consumed by seeking information and reassurance rather than productivity.

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<sup>5</sup> The Command Master Chief's (CMC) role on a ship may resemble that of someone assigned to Human Resources in a civilian company.

<sup>6</sup> A hot swap is when a decommissioning ship has been purchased by a foreign country and the current crew hands the operating ship over to that new crew. This involves some overlap time when both crews reside on board simultaneously.

- *Thirst for information.* Noer describes an unquenchable need for any type of information, whether formal communications or through the company grapevine.
- *Blaming others, usually management.* Everyone is looking for someone else to blame. It is the opposite reaction from a sense of empowerment, i.e., someone else is in control, and someone else is to blame. Typically, everyone looks "up" in the organization for faultfinding.
- *Justifying the need for a layoff.* In order to live with themselves, typically a group of survivors tries to justify the layoff decision. These are generally the people who took part in the decision-making process—managers and human resource people.
- *Denial.* A common response is to deny the feelings of layoff survivors. It is particularly common among upper managers to deny the feelings of fear, insecurity, sadness, frustration, etc. typical of the survivor syndrome.

If the change itself does not illicit negative reactions from sailors, mistakes probably will. If sailors perceive the decommissioning process is not going well (i.e., they perceive that mistakes are being made by their chain of command and that their best interests are not being served) they may become divisive and can undermine the decommissioning efforts of the command. Coyne (2004) describes personality types that he has encountered during his naval service that would be very difficult to deal with during the dynamic decommissioning environment:

*Complainer.* Nothing is good enough for the Complainer. Things would be different if he were in charge. He criticizes everything and everyone up and down the chain of command and actively seeks others who share his outlook. This personality is incredibly destructive to unit morale, and if he finds a receptive audience, his attitude can multiply quickly. (p. 69)

The changes that are inherent with the decommissioning process are likely to bring out the complainers in the ranks. The leaders on the ship will have to effectively deal with each of them.

### *Stress in a Naval Context*

One rather obvious similarity between a Navy ship decommissioning and civilian downsizing is the stress that is engendered by any significant change strategy. Although during both processes a degree of stress exists, there is a major difference between civilian and naval contexts. For instance, the stress during a merger or downsizing can be caused by not knowing if you are going to lose your job. On a decommissioning ship the entire crew will get another assignment; the stress resides on where the next assignment will be and the subsequent geographic move for the sailor and his/her family. At an organizational level, the Navy's problem is almost the reverse of some of the problems that corporate America must solve at merger or downsizing times (i.e., granting severance pay or helping employees who are being let go find new jobs). In the Navy, failing to retain Sailors is the problem, and if the men and women serving on decommissioning ships perceive that there is no relevant mission, retention could be adversely affected and the Navy could lose its most valuable asset, the sailor. Natter (2000) emphasizes this point and highlights the charge to those in authority on Navy ships to retain quality people:

We have been blessed as a nation and are privileged to have the greatest Navy in the world. But it will not remain great without a Navy-wide commitment to retaining our best and brightest, one sailor and one officer at a time, through good, old-fashioned leadership. And it will not last without a national commitment to continue our nation's influence in the world and to improve the size and readiness of our naval forces. (p. 3)



The civilian sector must deal with downsizing in much the same way. Orman (2002, p. 1) describes the possible consequences if those in authority do not handle a downsizing correctly: "When change is not handled well, additional loss of jobs can occur. In addition, demoralization of the work force; increased worker turnover; decreased cooperation and teamwork; and increased levels of stress, anxiety, absenteeism, illness, and mistakes can follow." With the exception of the loss of additional jobs and increased worker turnover, the rest of the consequences described are identical to a naval context. Orman continues to expound on these consequences:

One of the worst things you can do...is to pretend everything is "just fine." Even if you agree intellectually that the changes are necessary, emotionally you still may have some painful, negative reactions to deal with. Unfortunately, today's business culture has little regard for honest human emotions. Expressing or even acknowledging negative feelings is considered "inappropriate." Workers are expected to be upbeat, positive, and "team players" all the time. While this is a laudable goal, there should also be room for people to express heart-felt negativity as well. Truly enlightened business leaders know this. During times of significant change, they actively solicit negative feelings from their workers. They know that denying these feelings or trying to suppress their expression will only make things worse. (p. 2)

*Notification: Communicating the Coming Change*

One facet of mergers and downsizing that must also be accomplished in the case of ship decommissioning is the notification of those that will be affected. Regarding civilian organizations, Hunter (2004, p. 2) points out that, "Advanced notice of layoffs had a positive effect on performance." There are both similarities and differences between the civilian and naval settings regarding the notification of an organizational change (i.e., decommissioning in the naval setting and downsizing and mergers in the civilian sector). One of the similarities is the existence of rumors, which have always been present on Navy ships; the decommissioning process seems to amplify this phenomenon. When enough information is not provided (which is the normal state of

affairs during a decommissioning), rumors inevitably ensue. The decommissioning process provides a perfect environment for yet another of Coyne's (2004) personality types: the *Conspiracy Theorist*.

The Conspiracy Theorist believes his lack of success is a result of a flaw in the system or some personal vendetta held by someone further up the chain. A frustrated individual who spreads rumors of injustice or prejudice may affect all who are struggling. Regardless of rank, this usually occurs when the member does not have a clear understanding of the expectations that come with his assignment. (p. 70)

The existence of at least a few *Conspiracy Theorists* on the study ships is likely based on the number of rumors that are reported in the interviews detailed later in this study.

When comparing and contrasting communication practices in civilian and naval settings within a rapidly changing environment it is constructive to look at Bacal's (2001) comments on tumultuous periods in an organization. Bacal's ideas somewhat apply to the decommissioning experience: "During drastic change times, employees will expect effective and sensible planning, confident and effective decision-making, and regular, complete communication that is timely" (p. 1). The problem Bacal has observed in a civilian context is, if anything, amplified when sailors, who are trained to operate in accordance with scripted routines and familiar schedules find themselves in an unfamiliar, dynamic environment.

Regarding workplace communication, Marks (2004, p. 3) took note of a CEO of an association that had experienced three restructurings in two years who took time to speak with employees—both formally and in large group settings, and informally, in ways like dropping in on work groups to acknowledge the difficulties of what they had been through. Similar sorts of extraordinary efforts to communicate also appear to be

important in naval contexts where rumors can become rampant. After the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, rumors spread that two of the ships in this study would not be decommissioned for another ten years. This timeline changed weekly, almost until the last month prior to decommissioning. It would be useful for the reader to understand how people in the Navy communicate and gather information about the decommissioning process so a comparison between the naval and civilian contexts can be made.

On Navy ships the sailors can obtain information about the decommissioning from a variety of sources, each has a different degree of effectiveness and credibility but all can contribute to constructing the complete picture of the ship's fate, and by association, the individual sailor's fate. The Plan of the Day (POD) and the 1MC (shipboard announcing system) are two mechanisms used to convey information to the crew. The former is a written daily document edited and promulgated by the XO. It contains the daily shipboard schedule, and items of interest to the crew. The following quote is from the last POD written on JOHN ADAMS and it shows how the POD is used to convey decommissioning information (e.g., schedule changes, congratulations, and thanks to the crew:

**XO NOTE:** You guys did it again! You completed a week's worth of work in a day! This has become commonplace for you guys. It looks as though all of your hard work has paid off—we will probably be able to get everyone out of here today and tomorrow. Please contact the Admin Officer for your records and to get specific times and flight info. The flight this evening will depart at 1958 so the bus will have to travel during rush hour—right now the guess would be—be ready around 1530 to leave the base (muster at central billeting/resource center—the place you got your room key). This will allow the bus to arrive at the airport the required two hours prior to flight departure.

The rest of the folks are scheduled to leave tomorrow but, as with everything, this is subject to change. We will put out more info on Thursday morning for the rest of the people.

One last thing–this will be the last POD for JOHN ADAMS and I just wanted to personally thank each of you for the outstanding job you have done. It was an honor to serve with each of you and I wish you the very best in the future.  
V/r XO

Shipboard leaders use the 1MC less frequently than the POD, but it can be used to update the crew on any emergent issues, including the decommissioning. In Chapter 5 I discuss how the Commanding Officer of JOHN ADAMS used the 1MC to dispel a rumor about the fate of the ship after the decommissioning.

Some COs invite their bosses to address the crew about the decommissioning process. This allows the sailors to hear about their fate from an off-ship entity,<sup>7</sup> which usually carries more weight than hearing the news from anyone on the ship including the most senior person, the Commanding Officer.

#### *Use of Ceremony in Civilian and Naval Contexts*

Ceremonies are used to mitigate stress during the decommissioning process and also during the downsizing and merger processes. Concerning a relatively successful downsizing effort in a civilian context, Marks (2004) writes, “Ceremonies and other symbolic events were offered to employees to bring the message home on an emotional level” (p. 3). The commissioning and decommissioning ceremonies of a Navy ship are foundational events and can help the reader understand the significance of ceremony in the naval context. The following quote (Ship Commissioning, n.d.) highlights the meaning of a ship commissioning:

The commissioning of a Navy warship...is an impressive ceremony and marks the beginning of the history of the ship. Commissioning is a formal ceremony, steeped in tradition, during which the crew officially “mans” (boards) the ship to “bring the ship to life” and begin her service as a United States Ship. (p. 1)

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<sup>7</sup> The CO’s boss is the Immediate Superior In the chain of command (ISIC). In the case of each of the ships in the study the ISIC was a Commodore holding the Navy rank of Captain.

A decommissioning ceremony is modeled from the commissioning ceremony only in the reverse. Whereas during the commissioning ceremony the radars and gun systems were rotated and elevated after the crew manned the ship, during the decommissioning ceremony these systems are stopped and lowered as the crew de-mans the ship. Likewise, where the crew had run onto the ship at its commissioning, they walk off the ship during the decommissioning ceremony.

After the decommissioning ceremony, I was invited to a party held by the family of the ship's namesake. This party was an informal extension of the ceremony, and it reminded me of an Irish wake where people would make many toasts to the deceased remembering the exploits and the good times. This event was primarily attended by civilians who had some connection with the ship. There were a few former Commanding Officers and Executive Officers, but the military representation was much less than the non-military. This quasi-ceremony created an interesting dynamic: namely, civilians mourning the passing of a military vessel.

#### *Trust: The Key to Creating a Good Organizational Climate*

The final area that will be explored is the subordinate's level of trust in a leader's ability to lead prior to, and during, a downsizing process. Bacal (2004, p. 1) writes: "In organizations characterized by poor leadership, employees expect nothing positive. In a climate of distrust, employees learn that leaders will act in indecipherable ways that do not seem to be in anyone's best interests." Bacal goes on to illustrate that this poor leadership can impact the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. "Poor leadership means the absence of hope, which if allowed to go on for too long, results in an organization becoming non functioning." The significance of Bacal's thinking for naval

contexts in general and the decommissioning process in particular is especially noteworthy in light of the following comment by Tangredi (2001, p. 38) that reveals the sentiments of naval officers and enlisted personnel: "Leadership is either out of touch or uninformed, or just does not care enough to address the plight of our people in meaningful ways." This alarming statement is contained in the Navy Inspector General's Report on Aviation Readiness (Brown, 2000). Even if the leaders on decommissioning ships are fortunate enough to have all highly motivated, self-starting officers and sailors assigned to their commands, they are still at a disadvantage because of the de-motivating circumstances surrounding their next, and final, mission. The following statement by Natter (2000) provides a glimpse of the responsibilities of command at sea, and describes some of the team effort involved in developing a good organizational climate:

The commanding officer sets the command climate. The work center supervisors, leading petty officers, chiefs, and wardroom officers take their cue from his or her lead, and most certainly influence a sailor's and his family's decision to stay or go. If the CO is a jerk and treats his people like spare parts, even a great retention team and career counselor won't be able to help. Conversely, a good CO needs a committed and hardworking team to help work the problem. (p. 1)

Natter points out that ultimately the CO is responsible for cultivating a good command climate. He or she needs to actively seek out the assistance of subordinates, especially the XO and CMC, to ensure the command is a healthy place for sailors to thrive. A former commodore commented on this issue (Quinn, p.18) saying: "I think it's important to have a command climate in our ships where people are treated with dignity and respect." When a ship is at sea, junior sailors live in extremely confined quarters and privacy is very difficult to find. The ship is the sailor's entire world; it contains the sailor's workplace, cafeteria, gymnasium, library, store, and place of worship. If the crew is not kept engaged, they can begin to focus on the less than adequate living

conditions and motivation to perform well can decline rapidly and morale can plummet.

To prevent this, the chain of command needs to stay focused on the mission, project a positive image, and strongly resist the desire to gripe about the rigors of being at sea.

White (2003) highlights this concept in the following quote:

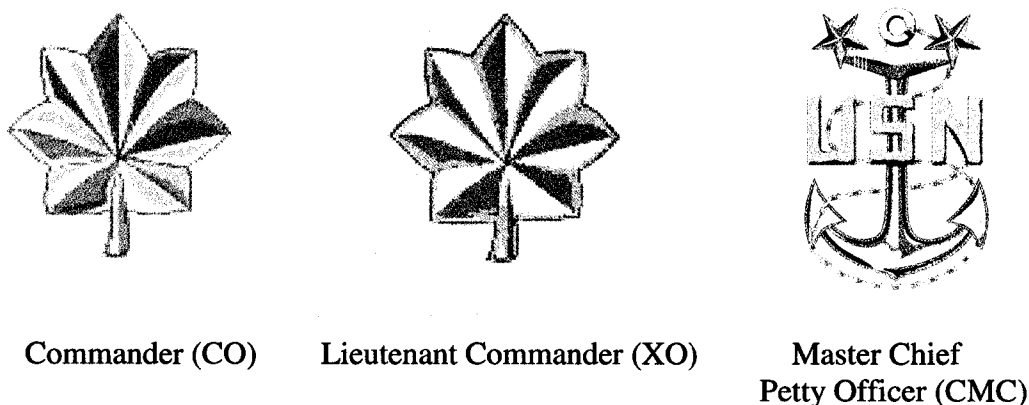
A leader lacking personal motivation and belief in the mission will be transparent to junior members. In the course of long deployments, the temptation is great for a leader to join the inevitable chorus of complaints about the utility of the mission, schedule changes, and the like. This temptation must be avoided. A leader who does not believe in the mission cannot inspire or lead others to tolerate the sacrifices of sea duty. (p. 66)

#### *Summary*

As indicated in the beginning of this chapter, there is very little formal literature on the decommissioning process and none on how to lead during this time. In the previous discussions I have attempted to use similar examples from the civilian sector and examples from shipboard Navy life (not during the decommissioning process) to allow the reader to better understand the issues experienced on a decommissioning ship.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study will use input from Commanding Officers (COs), Executive Officers (XOs), and Command Master Chief Petty Officers (CMCs)<sup>8</sup> from three decommissioning ships. The CO, XO, and CMC make up what is commonly referred to as the Triad. The ranks of these individuals are depicted in Figure 2. On a well-balanced ship, the Triad is a close-knit group that usually communicates frequently making command-wide decisions together, after receiving recommendations from others and discussing all aspects of an issue at length. The Triad is the final decision making body of the ship. The study will explore Triad members' perceptions about the decommissioning process and the leadership methods and techniques they say they use to remain motivated and to motivate the other officers and crew.



**Figure 2.** The collar devices indicating the rank of each Triad member (U.S. Navy released).

#### *Respondents*

The first group of respondents, the COs, is comprised of United States naval officers holding the rank of commander who were in the process of decommissioning or

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<sup>8</sup> The Command Master Chief is the senior enlisted member onboard the ship. He or she usually holds the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer but may be a Senior Chief Petty Officer or even a Chief Petty Officer. When this is the case the title reflects the lower rank (e.g., Command Senior Chief Petty Officer).



had just decommissioned the ship they commanded. As mentioned in the earlier footnote, the CO is the senior person and the top decision maker on each ship. He or she alone has earned the privilege of command at sea. The role of CO is in some respects similar to a civilian CEO but there are many significant differences as well. The following excerpt entitled "Command at Sea" by Joseph Conrad (n.d.) best describes the unique position of the Commanding Officer:

Only a seaman realizes to what great extent an entire ship reflects the personality and ability of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman this is not understandable and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend, but it is so! A ship at sea is a different world in herself and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the fleet units the Navy must place great power, responsibility, and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command. In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea can turn to no other man. There is one who alone is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation, engineering performance, accurate gunfire and morale of his ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship! This is the most difficult and demanding assignment in the Navy. There is not an instant during his tour as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges in view of his obligations are almost ludicrously small; nevertheless this is the spur, which has given the Navy its great leaders. It is a duty which most richly deserves the highest, time-honored title of the seafaring words...CAPTAIN. (p. 1)

The second group of respondents is made up of Executive Officers who hold the rank of Lieutenant Commander. The XO has been compared to the vice president in a civilian organization but, as with the CO and CEO comparison, there are significant differences. The XO is responsible for all administrative matters of the ship and enforces the cleanliness standard. Given their different role, XOs presumably might have slightly different perspectives than their CO has on matters related to the decommissioning process.

The third set of respondents is made up of the Command Master Chief Petty Officers on each of these ships. The CMC acts as the CO's advisor and confidant in all

matters pertaining to the crew and is the primary advocate for the enlisted sailors on a Navy ship. The CMC's role also provides a somewhat unique vantage point on the decommissioning process.

I served as the Executive Officer of a ship that recently was decommissioned and will be used as one of the three ships focused on in this study. I will act as a participant/observer in the study examining my own leadership techniques using journal notes that I recorded during the decommissioning process.

#### *Access*

Because of the fixed decommissioning schedule and limited availability of decommissioning ships in my geographic area, data collected for a preliminary study that focused on one Triad, and one ship, have been included in the current study. The University of San Diego's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for data collection was obtained for up to three ships in the spring of 2003; data collection took place in the spring and summer of 2003.

Permission to conduct the study with each of the approved Triads was obtained from the Commanding Officer of that respective ship. When soliciting prospective interviewees' participation, the sampling process was constructed to move from the lowest ranking person among the potential interviewees on a ship to the highest. This was designed to meet IRB approval ensuring that those of a lower rank would not feel pressured to participate. Such pressure might have been felt if higher-ranking officers had already agreed to be part of the study sample.

The specific procedures were as follows: When first making contact with the respondents, I asked the lowest ranking individual on the prospective ship (the CMC) via

e-mail or telephone, if he<sup>9</sup> would participate in the research. After the CMC consented to participate in the research, the XO was then asked to participate, and after he agreed to participate, the CO was invited to join the study. All three triad members had to agree to participate in order to have a particular triad become part of the study.<sup>10</sup>

Respondents were asked to review and sign a consent form (Appendix B) prior to the interview and were given a copy of the signed consent form for their records. I described the research in detail via e-mail and/or telephone prior to requesting verbal consent from potential participants. (This was done following the ascending order in terms of rank, described above. As suggested above, if a potential interviewee at a lower rank decided not to participate, those above him would not have been contacted and another decommissioning ship would have been selected for study.) The sample questions and a copy of the consent form were e-mailed to each participant at least a week before the actual interview. Once the potential participant had reviewed the material and had consented to the interview, a mutually agreeable time and location for the interview was set. Six interviews took place on the respondents' ship, or the adjacent barge; one interview was conducted over the phone; and one interview was conducted at my home.

#### *Researcher's Role*

I acted as the interviewer and transcribed most of the interviews myself. Due to time constraints, I hired someone to transcribe data from the last Triad. Additionally, in my analysis, I drew from professional journal notes written while I was XO during the

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<sup>9</sup> All interviewees were male; therefore, only masculine pronouns are used when referring to them.

<sup>10</sup> This is not the case with my Triad where the CSC was interviewed after the decommissioning process, thus making him no longer in my chain of command.

decommissioning process. In this way I played the part of active participant in a participant observation process.

### *Data Collection Methods*

Interviews lasting less than an hour were the primary data collection method for this qualitative study. In an effort to gain insight into respondents' perspectives on the decommissioning process, I asked the following sample questions, in the order written, about the effects of the decommissioning:

1. Describe the decommissioning process from when you were first made aware that your ship was being decommissioned until the present. Mark significant events on a timeline and tell me about them.
2. Describe how the decommissioning process has affected you.
3. How has the decommissioning process affected your ability to lead your crew?
4. Right now, what do you believe motivates the crew?
5. How is this motivation different from a year ago?
6. Describe how the decommissioning process has affected your view of the Navy's core values: Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

I took field notes during the interviews to augment the transcriptions and to possibly highlight issues that may eventually emerge as themes for study. Opportunity for follow-up interviews was limited because respondents transferred to locations around the globe. Nevertheless, forwarding e-mail addresses and contact information was obtained at the time of the interviews in case respondents needed to be contacted again.

### *Data Analysis*

The data from the individual interviews were transcribed and coded for emerging themes. The interview questions were used to develop the initial codes. The coded

material went through a series of sorting processes using several matrices to place the data in some sort of logical order. The codes initially were sorted into either negative or positive responses to the interview questions. After examining the results of the negative/positive sorting, inductive codes were created and a second matrix was developed allowing further division of the data and subsequent analysis. During the process of coding and matrix development, I established links between the pieces of coded data and the themes that emerged. These themes were used to determine what the perceptions of the naval leaders were regarding the decommissioning process, and if there were techniques and methods used by the leaders to accomplish the mission of decommissioning. Additionally, the methods that the leaders used to maintain their own motivation during the decommissioning process were explored.

## CHAPTER FOUR: USS VALDES

### *History and Background*

The USS VALDES was a smaller ship compared with other ships in the Cruiser Destroyer or “CRUDES” Navy.<sup>11</sup> Unlike most other CRUDES ships, this ship had an all male crew and was a part of the Naval Reserve Force (NRF). As a member of the NRF, the ship was tasked with an additional mission: the training and readiness of part time personnel called Selected Reservists. This mission was completed in conjunction with the regular commitments of a naval ship, such as six-month deployments to the Persian Gulf, and other parts of the world. This training of Selected Reservist was mostly accomplished during the monthly reserve weekends and the annual two-week active duty drill periods.

Sixty percent of VALDES’ crew was made up of active duty or “full time” personnel and forty percent of the crew was made up of Selected Reservists. The average full time crew size for this class of ship is approximately 200–230, but VALDES’ active duty compliment was approximately 170–185 personnel. Having been stationed on two NRF ships, I know that, rather than gripe about their lot, many of the active duty members of an NRF ship are often proud of the fact that they have to do more with less.

The USS VALDES had a distinguished history that the Triad members who were interviewed were very proud of. In 1988, for example, while deployed to the Arabian Gulf, VALDES completed a record 32 safe transits of the Strait of Hormuz while

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<sup>11</sup> The US Navy has several “subspecialties within its ranks (i.e., Surface, Submarine, Aviation, Special Forces, etc.) Within each of these there are additional subspecialties. For example, the Surface Navy is made up of Amphibious ships or AMPHIBs; the Cruiser-Destroyer (CRUDES); the Combat Logistics Force (CLF); and the Mine Counter Measures (MCM) ships. The AMPHIB Navy is comprised of amphibious ships whose mission is to support an amphibious assault. The Cruiser Destroyer Navy is made up of what I call the traditional naval ships: cruisers, destroyers and frigates.

escorting oil tankers in and out of the volatile Gulf region. The ship also participated in combat operations as part of Operation Praying Mantis, the U.S. retaliation in response to the Iranian mining of USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS. In 2002, VALDES participated in the war on terrorism, conducting maritime operations during her last deployment.

Also, in 2002, VALDES led a combined U.S.-Australian task group in defense of strategic interests in the Indian Ocean. In an ironic twist, one of VALDES' last operational assignments was participating in a SINKEX.<sup>12</sup> During this exercise, VALDES launched a missile at a decommissioned Adams-class destroyer. The ex-destroyer sank soon after VALDES' missile impacted. This accomplishment is usually a time for revelry and "high-fives" on a Navy ship, but many on VALDES may have been wondering if their ship would soon be the target in a future SINKEX. They may have envisioned sailors on another, more modern ship congratulating themselves for successfully sinking their ship.

A decommissioning ceremony, on February 15, 2003, marked the end of VALDES' naval career. Shortly afterwards, she entered the Inactive Reserve Fleet at Bremerton, WA. The USS VALDES was 21 years old and during the majority of service she was part of the largest class of ships ever built.

Since this ship was in the same squadron as the ship I was stationed on, I had knowledge of the perceptions of other officer's regarding VALDES' leadership during this decommissioning process. The CO of VALDES was rumored to have had a difficult time accepting the fact that his ship was being decommissioned. Consequently, it was reported that many of the decommissioning steps were delayed or modified by the

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<sup>12</sup> A reminder from Chapter 1: a Sink Exercise or SINKEX is when ships and aircraft use a decommissioned ship for target practice. The object of this live fire exercise is to train the crews resulting in the sinking of the hulk.

leadership to allow rapid restoration to full capability should the order to decommission be rescinded.

There also were rumors from credible sources that both VALDES and JOHN ADAMS would have their lives extended for another seven years. Because the job of Commanding Officer is the pinnacle of a naval officer's career, it would be very easy for a CO to take seriously the rumors that supported extending the life of the ship and having her play an active role in the upcoming war. Being prepared for that possibility could be viewed as a prudent precaution by the CO. Surely, if VALDES was ordered to deploy and she were not prepared, the CO could suffer negative consequences.

On the other hand, a CO needs to ensure his ship is ready for any contingency and going to war was not outside the realm of possibilities for VALDES. At any rate, these rumors served as hypotheses as I embarked on interviewing the three members of the Triad. I did not, however, ask about these matters directly for two reasons: (a) A direct question would not necessarily have netted an honest response; (b) Such questioning would almost certainly have been seen as inappropriate in a Navy context.

#### *Description of Interview Contexts*

##### *USS VALDES Commanding Officer Interview*

The interview with VALDES' CO took place in his cabin. The CO's cabin is the largest living quarters on board (the room was about 15 ft wide and 15 ft long) with many accommodations that are not found in the other staterooms. The CO's cabin, for instance, has its own bathroom or head, it has a small circular window or port light, and it has a nightstand with a sound powered phone and a regular phone mounted on the bulkhead near the bed. During the interview, the barren hooks that used to hold pictures



protruded from three of the four bulkheads. The bed was the fold-up type that turned into a sofa when not in use; it was in its sofa form when the interview took place. Along the overhead or ceiling, above the CO's desk, were several navigational instruments that were visible to anyone seated at the desk or from the bed. These allowed the CO to instantly know the direction and speed of the ship from his living quarters. This knowledge is important since the CO is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation of the ship regardless of his location on the ship. The usual Navy procedure if a ship collides with another ship or runs aground, in fact, is to relieve the CO of his command. During the interview, I sat on a blue L-shaped couch in one corner and the CO sat in his desk swivel chair, which he had turned to face me.

#### *USS VALDES Executive Officer Interview*

The interview with VALDES' XO took place in his stateroom. His room had many of the same accommodations that the CO's cabin had but was about half the size (7 ft wide by 12 ft long). The room no longer had any pictures on the bulkheads and the desk was relatively bare. The XO was just finishing up some work on his computer when he turned down the volume of the 1MC (the shipboard announcing system) and posted a sign that read "Meeting in Progress" on the outside of his door to mitigate interruptions.

Before the interview began, the XO and I compared notes on our common roles as second in command on decommissioning ships. He seemed just as busy as I was organizing the administrative matters that accompany a decommissioning. The two most time consuming administrative requirements are evaluations and awards. Every person onboard needs to be evaluated in writing in the form of a fitness report or evaluation. Also, those who deserve to be rewarded for their service onboard should receive the

appropriate recognition; recognition usually takes the form of a Letter of Commendation or a medal with an accompanying citation. The XO is the final reviewer of all of this correspondence. As we spoke, our voices echoed slightly in the somewhat empty room.

#### *USS VALDES Command Master Chief Interview*

Unfortunately VALDES' CMC was not available at the time the CO and XO were interviewed. Whereas the CO and XO were interviewed onboard the ship a week before the ship decommissioned, the CMC was interviewed a month and a half after the decommissioning via telephone.

#### *Discussion of Major Themes*

Nine major themes emerged from the analysis of the interview data gathered from the VALDES' triad. Each theme is discussed below with an accompanying table that lists exemplary quotes from members of the Triad about the particular theme. In each of the tables, the word or words that signify the theme are printed in italics.

#### *VALDES Theme 1: Operational vs. Non-Operational*

One of the most basic themes that emerged involved the Navy's concept of a ship being operational. This term refers to a ship having a real, tangible purpose or mission that is aligned with the Navy's central mission. The most significant mission or purposes are combat related. For example, a ship patrolling the Persian Gulf is considered *highly operational*. A ship that was helping another ship prepare for combat by serving as an opposition force (OPFOR) in the training exercises would be considered *somewhat operational*. A ship is *not considered operational* when it is in a shipyard period for repair and during the decommissioning process.

Regarding the process of decommissioning, the VALDES XO said: “It’s not the exciting *operational* doing-your-mission kind of work.” Implicit in this comment is the challenge that the Triad faced. The decommissioning process is not exciting. There would be no more exotic ports-of-call. There would be no more real purpose for the ship; still, the Triad would need to somehow motivate the crew to continue maintaining and operating the ship until the last day of the ship’s service life.

In short, the reason that the *operational vs. non-operational* category is significant in this study is that a ship’s status impacts the motivation and morale of its crew. It is easier to motivate a crew during operational periods of a ship’s life because the crew is doing what it has been training to do for its entire time onboard. Additionally, there are very real dangers facing a Navy ship that this training is designed to counter, such as the recent examples of ships that encountered mines, suicide bombers, or anti-surface missiles—stark reminders to the crew that they need to be alert, engaged, and attentive during the training phase and the actual deployment phase. These historic scenarios can be used to reinforce the importance of the ship’s operational mission. A Navy training adage presents this concept well: “The better we train in peace, the less we bleed in war.”

Table 1. Major theme of operational vs. non-operational as used by USS VALDES’ triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Operational vs. Non-Operational	“We really didn't have to deal overtly with the issue of decommissioning because of how we are being decommissioned again as an intact ship without too much stuff really leaving the ship and without much diminished effort. So we were able to remain <i>operational</i> and keep that in the forefront of the	“The last <i>operational</i> commitment for us was...a couple of weeks ago at Seal Beach. Prior to that we did some opposition force underway periods for Battle Group Operations in the October timeframe. During those underway periods we had already been notified that the ship	“The January before that <i>we were getting ready to go on deployment</i> and getting everybody to focus on the various missions that we were going to be tasked with while we were on deployment...you know the areas we

Table 1. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Operational vs. Non-Operational	<p>crew's mind from a leadership perspective literally up until the end of our decomm availability."</p> <p>"Although we got back in July we were not deployed; we were still busy doing other things, not necessarily the decomm.... Even though we didn't have deployed operations...we had all the training, which we Navy people understand, is <i>to prepare for a deployment</i>. You just change the focus of the effort and the way you motivate the crew to how you're contributing to the <i>operational deployments</i> of other activities of other fleet units. Specifically we were preparing battle groups for deployment, we were preparing air wings for deployment."</p> <p>"<i>Our mission is to deliver an immaculate, intact ship to the inactive reserve fleet.</i>"</p>	<p>was going to be decommissioned so you know your mentality is to try to get as much training as you can out of those periods knowing that when we pull in the ship is pretty much going to be pier side for long periods of time. To keep the crew proficient at fire fighting skills and combat system skills and ship driving you kind of need to maximize that underway time due to the impending large amount of in port time we are going to have."</p> <p>"And decommissioning is <i>not one of the exciting things of the Navy; it's not shooting weapons or going out and doing some operations or flying helicopter</i>. It's a lot of hard administrative work like evaluations, awards, getting all the paperwork for people to transfer, and move, moving the equipment off the ship and redistributing it. So the work is different work. It's not the exciting <i>operational, doing-your-mission kind of work</i> and [in] that case, it can kind of wear on you and it has worn on me to an extent."</p> <p>"It is important for their country and in our case on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February <i>their [the crew's] mission now is to bring the ship safely to Bremerton and</i></p>	<p>were training to and that is, of course, how you motivated people...hey, you need to know this because this is where we are going and these are the threats that we are going to encounter. Whereas coming back and getting ready for the decomm process, you still need to know a certain amount of professional expertise when you go to your next ship."</p>

Table 1. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Operational vs. Non-Operational		<p><i>to turn over the ship to the inactive fleet. And I think it is important that they have that message conveyed to them so that they realize that they still have a mission, they still have a goal, there's still a focus that they need to obtain."</i></p> <p><i>"There's a lot of folks including myself who feel this [deployment in time of war] is what I've trained for and would like to be on one of the ships that are deploying to actually execute the mission that we train every year, day in and day out, for."</i></p>	

Not surprisingly, it is more difficult to motivate a crew if their ship is not deploying, but merely helping other ships deploy to combat zones. The CO of VALDES, for instance, took note of this fact when he described his efforts to motivate his crew during the period prior to the decommissioning period. The VALDES' mission was shifted from preparing for deployment and actually deploying to training other ships that were in the process of preparing for their own deployments. The VALDES, in other words, was assigned the task of playing an opposing force (OPFOR) that the deploying ships might encounter during the ships six-month + deployment. The CO indicated that he used the OPFOR mission to motivate his crew by harkening back to their own deployment preparations and how that training helped them when they were performing their missions. He appealed to his crew to assist their fellow sailors on other ships to get them ready for their upcoming deployment.

Of course, the most difficult period in terms of motivating the crew comes when the ship is in a non-operational phase, and the most difficult of non-operational phases is the decommissioning process. After the OPFOR assignments it was becoming clear to most that VALDES was not going to deploy again. When members of the Triad verbalized this fact, as far as the crew was concerned, it was official: VALDES was going away. With this shift in mission, the triad had to again adjust the focus of the crew on a new goal to motivate them. All three of the Triad members took note of the special things they had to do to motivate crewmembers during this phase, and their tactics are summarized in the quotes in Table 1.

The CO, for example, focused on the possibility that the ship might, some day, be taken out of mothballs and once again become operational. For him, the mission was “to deliver an immaculate, intact ship to the inactive reserve fleet.” This task, as one of the quotes on the table indicates, allowed the ship to “remain operational,” at least in the CO’s mind. He also acknowledged the need to prepare the sailors for their future on other ships but did not emphasize this point as much as the CMC did. As will be noted below, this line of thinking was central to the CMC’s efforts to keep the crew motivated.

The XO also emphasized the same mission that the CO did: “to bring the ship safely to Bremerton and to turn over the ship to the inactive fleet.” He also focused on the need to be “upbeat” every day and make sure folks are focused on what they need to do each day. He added: “I think the key thing is—and what I try to do every morning—is to keep a very positive outlook.”

As the quoted material from the CMC in Table 1 indicates, he also recognized the need for an extra effort to motivate the crew during a non-operational period and,

especially, during the decommissioning process. As noted above, however, this individual emphasized a different strategy than the major strategies endorsed by the ship's CO and the XO. The CMC emphasized looking ahead to a time when crewmembers would, once again, be on another ship functioning at the operational level. His focus, in short, was on the individuals on the ship, while the other two members of the Triad tended to focus on the ship itself. There will be more on this in discussions of subsequent themes.

#### *VALDES Theme 2: Focus*

The most frequently mentioned theme that emerged from the interviews of VALDES' Triad was *focus*. It is also a very prevalent theme mentioned by the other two Triads in the study. *Focus*, here, is defined as the unified direction that an organization proceeds toward in an effort to achieve certain goals and/or the process of moving toward that goal. The term, in other words, can be both a noun and a verb. The theme of focus is a kind of corollary to the *operational* theme that was discussed above. The following quote from the CMC best encapsulates the *focus* theme: "Keeping everyone focused on the deployment was our number one priority." Table 2 includes exemplary quotes related to the theme of focus from each of the members of the Triad. These quotes emphasize that a number of foci came into play, everything from the possibility that the ship might be brought back into service in a time of war to the need to attend to the crew's individual careers and next move in their careers. Though the focal points varied from person to person and from time to time, it is obvious that establishing some sort of clear focus was a key component that each of the these Triad members used to keep the crew motivated.

Table 2. Major theme of focus as used by USS VALDES' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
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Focus	<p>“When we began making that change from being an operational unit to starting to <i>focus</i> the crew towards the activity of decommissioning—I’d say a 50 to 60 day period—there was some pretty significant leadership challenges that we had to get crew buy-in to.”</p> <p>“Our mission is to deliver an immaculate, intact ship to the inactive reserve fleet and that’s how we did it. And then everything that was accomplished along the way, whether it be personal achievement like warfare qualifications which we have in the Navy, or unit accolades that we receive, we always use those opportunities to reinforce to them [the crew] that this is why you are excellent. You are the ones who made this ship and this is proof of that, and, oh by the way, you have a responsibility in that because your excellence is inculcated and injected into your next command. So this is the point, this is the key thing: we start transitioning from <i>focusing</i> on the unit so much and <i>focusing</i> more on their careers and their larger contributions to the Navy. At that point they really want to foster a Navy team spirit with the next layer in the organization vice [i.e., instead of] the unit layer.” [The focus, in other words, was on being a Navy sailor rather than just VALDES sailor.]</p>	<p>“It’s important to...make sure folks are <i>focused</i> on what they need to do [for the decommissioning] and hopefully, that positive energy gets transferred to them...even though the process can be tedious...troops know what they are doing is important.”</p> <p>“And I think it is important that they [the crew] have that message conveyed to them so that they realize that they still have a mission, they still have a goal, there’s still a <i>focus</i> that they need to obtain. And they realize that they are not spending the last couple of weeks onboard with no <i>focus</i>.”</p> <p>“Where originally when it [the disposition of VALDES] was going to be just a SINKEX, there was talk of cannibalizing and removing major systems and pieces of equipment and that <i>focus</i> changed kind of midstream to the fact that we would only let pieces of equipment that would degrade our ship go to forward deployed ships. I think in a way that shifted the mindset a little bit; Hey, this ship needs to be put away and brought up to Bremerton. If we had to come back within 120 days and get this ship underway, what condition would we want it in? I think people took that onboard and you can tell by the way they continue to clean the ship and paint and preserve the ship that they take that seriously.”</p>	<p>“Keeping everyone <i>focused</i> on the deployment was our number one priority.”</p> <p>“So, as far as starting a material decommissioning process.... We knew that we needed to <i>focus</i> on what we were doing and what our tasks were at the time.”</p> <p>“Our mission right now is what we need to <i>focus</i> on, and all that decommissioning stuff will take care of itself.”</p> <p>“I think the challenge was in keeping everyone <i>focused</i> on the fact that it was the end of the ship’s life and not the end of their career.”</p> <p>“That is what kept them <i>focused</i>...was what got them to buy into the fact that the ship was just a piece of metal, it was us that that was making it the living breathing thing that it was...”</p> <p>“Getting ready to go on deployment and getting everyone to <i>focus</i> on the various missions that we were going to be tasked with...”</p>
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*VALDES Theme 3: Pride*

The third major theme that emerged, albeit only from the XO and CO, was *pride*, meaning finding satisfaction in one's accomplishments and having self-respect, no matter what one's rank may be, or what situation a person might find himself/herself in (e.g., even a decommissioning situation). The XO, for example, said about his crew: "I can still feel their pride from their service from that six month deployment." And the CO also spoke of pride. For instance, at one point he compared and contrasted the decommissioning of a ship with the demise of any organization:

To see that organization vanish, to go away so the disappointment lies in the fact that you lose the thing that you have worked for. Particularly when it is a good thing, it's like losing a possession, in effect. A ship, unlike a factory, has the additional emotional connection of being a home.... It is the place where you live; it's the place where you connect to, like with any job, the people you've shared the time together with.... I think that there's the other side of it, as far as the emotional realm is pride. Because what you do in your line of work is in fact focused on accomplishing certain missions. So when you put your labor to use to accomplish a variety of missions, that's a pride no one can ever take away from you. And that's a good thing. And that's the kind of thing that you put forth to the crew to remind them as they go through the sad scut work of disassembling the ship.

The CO's emphasis on pride is intriguing. One cannot help but wonder whether there is a certain amount of projection in his statement that "When (you) put your labor to use to accomplish a variety of missions, that's pride no one can take away from you." He certainly was proud of having been the CO of VALDES. Being the CO of a ship is usually the high point of a naval officer's career. This may be his only command, and he may never again hear the name of his ship announced when they bring him aboard.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> It is a Navy tradition to strike bells commensurate with the rank of a senior officer as he arrives and departs a commissioned ship (i.e., four bells for a Commander and Captain). A CO will also have the name of the ship he commands announced immediately after the bells (i.e., bong bong, bong bong, VALDES arriving).

Interestingly, the CMC did not say anything that could be classified under the *pride* theme. As noted above, he took a much more pragmatic tack with his crew, preferring to emphasize their career achievement and their professional life after the demise of the USS VALDES. Additional VALDES Triad quotes about the *pride* theme are contained in Table 3.

Table 3. Major theme of pride as used by USS VALDES' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Pride	<p>“And I think you do that [remain upbeat] by viewing the ceremony and the other artifacts and trappings of the process with a sense of dignity but also with <i>pride</i> and with positive overtones vice [i.e., versus] negative overtones of, “Oh, well, the ship is going away,” and that kind of stuff. You really need to try to stay on the positive side.... It is hard work to make something go away, particularly when you've put a lot of hard work to keep it in great shape. Let that [i.e., the ship going away] be the only negative stuff, and that can remain unspoken. As far as the leadership is concerned, I think it is absolutely important that you try to, without BS-ing things...end on a positive note, and you can do that by just simply <i>making an aura of dignity</i> and importance to the work at hand up until the very last moments of that command's existence.”</p>	<p>“I can still feel their [the crew's] <i>pride</i> from their service from that six month deployment.”</p> <p>“I think they [the crew] are <i>proud</i> of what they did in July [VALDES came back from a six month deployment in July] and I think they understand their mission and the need to put this ship away to modernize the fleet.”</p>	No mention of this theme

#### *VALDES Theme 4: Emotions*

The fourth major theme was *emotions*. This term will be used to describe the comments made by the interviewees (contained in Table 4) that referred to the feelings (either theirs or those of their crew) associated with the decommissioning. The CO said: “So it's a mixture of conflicted *emotions* of happy and sad.”

The CO of VALDES also said: “It is important not to perceive a decommissioning with too much sullenness.” Although the CMC did not specifically mention emotion, sullenness, or any other related term, the quotes recorded in Table 4 indicate that he came close to this theme when he spoke about the unique feeling that walking through the empty ship evoked in him. Additionally, I wrote in my field notes

Table 4. Major theme of emotions as used by USS VALDES’ triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Emotion	<p>“We are fortunate because the ship will actually remain a ship, intact, all the way until the moment of decommissioning. That's because we have to operate it and deliver it to its eventual storage location in a different state. So it's a mixture of conflicted <i>emotions</i> of happy and sad but I think the difference between say decommissioning a Navy ship and closing down a factory is that a factory involves the potential loss of jobs. A factory involves the potential loss of accumulated seniority of positions within an organization. There's no such loss for our sailors.”</p> <p>“It is important not to perceive a decommissioning with too much <i>sullenness</i>. I think it is tempting to gravitate towards a more somber tone.”</p>	<p>“I think the impact [how the decommissioning process has affected him] is at several different levels...an <i>emotional</i> level as far as the ending of the service life of a platform, in my case, that I have been on for 22 months and so bringing some closure to that <i>emotionally</i>; obviously serving on this ship with two Commanding Officers and a lot of the same shipmates for that period, there is some <i>sullenness</i> associated with that [decommissioning] to bring around that closure.”</p> <p>“I'd say I've had motivational issues. I mean there's days that you know bringing a closure to a ship...does have some <i>emotional impact</i> as far as closure and ending a ships life.”</p>	<p>“I think the realization that you are seeing the death of a ship, is the only way you can put it. Each day... every morning... I was always over there first and I would walk in all the passageways and go into all the berthings, and walk all the decks before anyone got over there... and everyday you could just feel the life being sucked out of the ship. It is a unique feeling.”</p>

that the CMC sounded sad when stating “Everyday you could just feel the life being sucked out of the ship. It is a unique feeling,” yet he never came out and said he was sad. The CMC’s apparent stoicism relative to the CO’s and XO’s explicit references to their emotions during their respective interviews may be attributed to the fact that he was

interviewed over the phone and I couldn't see his expressions and body language.

Another reason for the CMC not explicitly mentioning any sadness or related emotions may have been that, since the interview took place after the decommissioning, time had already begun to help him forget.

*VALDES Theme 5: Rumors*

The fifth theme that emerged, *rumors*, was a theme in the other triad interviews as well. Indeed at the aggregate level it is the second most frequently mentioned theme in the interview data. Interestingly, in the VALDES case, the theme of rumors was only mentioned by the CMC. These quotes are contained in Table 5. The rumors he refers to were started by people on and off the ship, possibly because the crew wanted to get on with the decommissioning process but the CO and XO were perceived as not providing a clear plan and timely direction. Without this direction, the sort of direction that most Navy personnel are accustomed to, rumors flourish. The CMC said: "It was again at the saturation point that we were so saturated with rumors and things that hadn't actually happened that it was like everybody was taking a wait-and-see attitude."

Table 5. Major theme of rumors as used by USS VALDES' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Rumors	No mention of this theme	No mention of this theme	<p>"We still weren't getting all the firm answers on when we actually were going to decomm and...there were <i>rumors</i> that we were still going to sail to Hawaii and there were <i>rumors</i> that we might end up doing it [decommission] there in San Diego."</p> <p>"It [the type and amount of information given to the ship] was again at the saturation point that we were so saturated with <i>rumors</i> and things that hadn't actually happened that it was like everybody [officers and crew on VALDES] was taking a wait-and-see attitude."</p> <p>"We knew the [military] buildup was happening over the in the [Persian] Gulf again and the rumors started to fly, hey, you're not really going to decommission and by then</p>

Table 5. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Rumors			<p>obviously we had stopped the flow of people coming in, so our numbers as far as crew had dwindled down and then we were also transferring people out without replacement, so obviously we were concerned, hey, you know if we do end up getting told, hey you're not going to decomm, and getting a lot of bodies back to us on a short notice would have been tough."</p> <p>"Everything was changing so rapidly that it was almost like saturation point where if somebody would say something it was like, okay, we'll believe it when we see it."</p>

*VALDES Theme 6: Recapitalization*

On VALDES the CO and XO seemed aligned in their attempts to convey the sixth major theme, *recapitalization*, to the crew. In the corporate financial context, Trudeau (2004, p. 1) defines recapitalization as "A transaction in which a company reallocates the equity and debt on its balance sheet." This term has a similar meaning in the Navy. More specifically, the term was used by both the CO and XO to describe the Navy's process of using the money saved by decommissioning older ships to make and maintain newer, more capable warships like the ARLEIGH BURKE class.<sup>14</sup>

*Recapitalization* in fact, was the reason given for the VALDES decommissioning by both the CO and XO. They both referred to it several times in their respective interviews and all of the quotes are contained in Table 6. One noteworthy quote from the XO is: "I think that those people understand that bringing closure to this ship allows recapitalization of the money and manpower that was on this ship to go to more modern

<sup>14</sup> The Navy considers the newest ARLEIGH BURKE-class destroyer to be its most capable and survivable surface combatant. The FY 1999-2003 (the years just prior to the interviews being conducted) shipbuilding program included funds for 15 destroyers, achieving the procurement objective of 57 of these ships (Military, 2003).

ships to support the mission of our nation and that could be war against Iraq or whatever that mission is determined to be.”

From my experience in the Navy, many sailors transferring from decommissioning ships have orders to newer ships and can relate well to the recapitalization concept that the CO and XO described. Interestingly, however, the logic of recapitalization was never alluded to by the CMC. Whether the crew, in fact, responded to the recapitalization argument as the CO and XO believed they did, could not be determined from this study, but it may be significant that the member of the Triad who was closest to the crew never invoked the recapitalization logic.

Table 6. Major theme of recapitalization as used by USS VALDES’ triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Recapitalization	<p>“I’d say [a] 50 to 60 day period [after the last maintenance period and up to the actual decommissioning], there were some pretty significant leadership challenges that we had to get crew <i>buy-in</i> to. For example: we sold them [the crew] on the idea of <i>recapitalization</i>. <i>That everything they pulled off of here would somehow benefit the fleet. It would save money for taxpayers.</i>”</p>	<p>“I think that those people [the crew] understand that bringing closure to this ship allows recapitalization of the money and manpower that was on this ship to go to more modern ships to support the mission of our nation and that could be war against Iraq or whatever that mission is determined to be. I think that they understand that this ship has served its nation well for 22 years, that the nation needs to <i>recapitalize</i> and take the money and the manpower and equipment from this ship and provide it to other ships that are newer with technology and I think they [the crew] understand that.</p> <p>And a lot of these individuals are going to ships that are deployed or who are being deployed so they will have an opportunity to continue to serve their country in a deployed status.”</p> <p>“We had a Commodore’s call,<sup>15</sup> the Captain’s boss...came over and ...explained the same issues to the entire crew on the importance of their mission to decommission the ship and how <i>it’s important to the nation to redistribute these assets to other platforms.</i>”</p>	No mention of this theme

<sup>15</sup> A Commodore is usually a Navy Captain who is in charge of a squadron of five to seven ships. VALDES assembled all of the offices and crew for the Commodore’s call.

*VALDES Theme 7: Upbeat/Positive Attitude*

The seventh major theme that emerged was *upbeat/positive attitude*. The term positive was used and could be seen as a synonym for upbeat. Sasson (2004, p. 1) suggests the relationship between these two terms when he writes: “When the attitude is positive....We walk tall and the voice is more powerful. Our body language shows the way you feel inside.” In other words, an upbeat appearance is the manifestation of the internal positive attitude.

Although the CMC neither mentioned the need to remain upbeat or attempts to remain positive, these themes were very much a part of the data gathered from both the CO and the XO. The *upbeat/positive attitude* theme was especially strong in the data from the XO interview. When asked about his morning meetings with the ship’s khaki,<sup>16</sup> for instance, the XO said: “Every morning it’s important to be upbeat.” This statement suggests that he was conscious of his attitude on a daily basis and made a daily effort to be positive. He said, “Hopefully, that positive energy gets transferred to them [officers and chiefs] and it gets transferred to their divisions.” In short, he seemed to believe that positive energy would trickle down from him and eventually permeate the rest of the crew throughout the workday.

Table 7. Major theme of upbeat/ positive attitude as used by USS VALDES’ triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Upbeat/ Positive Attitude	<p>“It is really best to try to be <i>upbeat</i> without being flippant.”</p> <p>“You really need to try to stay on the <i>positive</i> side.... It is hard work to make</p>	<p>“So I am always <i>upbeat</i>.”</p> <p>“Every morning it’s important to be <i>upbeat</i>.”</p> <p>“I think the key thing is and what I try to do every morning is to keep a very</p>	No mention of this theme

<sup>16</sup> Khaki is the color uniform that officers and chief petty officers wear. The morning meeting is chaired by the XO and is often referred to as khaki call. This meeting is used to promulgate the plan of the day and to allow all of the leaders to coordinate the day’s activities and make pertinent announcements.

Table 7. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Upbeat/ Positive Attitude	something go away, in particular when you've put a lot of hard work to keep it in great shape. Let that be the only negative stuff and that can remain unspoken. As far as the leadership [is] concerned I think it is absolutely important that you try to...end on a positive note, and you can do that by just simply making an aura of dignity and importance to the work at hand up until the very last moments of that command's existence."	<p><i>positive</i> outlook."</p> <p>"Hopefully, that <i>positive</i> energy gets transferred to them [officers and chiefs] and it gets transferred to their divisions so...that the troops that are actually doing the work have some <i>positive</i> energy that what they are doing is important."</p> <p>"It's [decommissioning] not what people join the military and the Navy for. But I think because the message was clear on the mission and how important it is and that there is a good command environment here, where <i>people enjoy coming to work, and people enjoy being with their shipmates</i>, our retention numbers have actually increased over the last two quarters, and <i>it's been very positive.</i>"</p>	

The tone that VALDES' CO set during my interview with him was more formal than any of the other interviews I conducted during this study, and this formality was reflected in the way he discussed the *upbeat/positive attitude* theme. Nevertheless, the topic was very much a part of his comments to me. At one point, for instance, he said, "It is really best to try to be upbeat without being flippant." This balance is reflected in a statement quoted earlier: "Let that [the ship decommissioning] be the only negative stuff *and that can remain unspoken*" (emphasis added).

#### *VALDES Theme 8: Buy-in*

The eighth major theme that emerged was *buy-in*. This concept will be defined as the voluntary agreement from the crew to focus on, and to participate in, achieving the goals of the command. In this situation, of course, the major goal was to prepare the ship for decommissioning. Pertinent comments from the Triad on buy-in are listed in Table 8.



These quotes suggest that the Triad was very concerned with getting the crew to participate with them in the decommissioning, a duty that many sailors view as undesirable. Two comments from the CO and CMC suggest a connection between the *buy-in* theme and the *focus* theme. The CO said, “So to get that buy-in you have to continue focusing on mission”; the CMC, the person closest in both rank and responsibility to the ship’s sailors, also talked about buy-in as a component of focus, but his emphasis was on a more expanded mission:

I think the challenge was in keeping everybody focused on the fact that it was the end of the ship’s life and not the end of their careers, and then make them understand that we still needed to continue with the training and they needed to continue to pursue professional goals and personal goals, i.e., the ESWS program,<sup>17</sup> that sort of thing, which we kept going all the way to the end. That is what kept them focused...what got them to buy-in to the fact that the ship was just a piece of metal, it was us that that was making it the living breathing thing that it was and us were going on to other waters and could continue to take our expertise to other ships.

It is interesting to note that the XO suggests that he had to first buy-in to the decommissioning process himself before he could persuade others to join him. He recognized that the decommissioning was an enormous feat that had to be broken down into smaller projects to make it manageable. He then used open communication to facilitate buy-in for the next echelon, the officers and the chiefs. They in turn were expected to get the rest of the crew to buy-in as well.

For the CMC, focusing on training that developed necessary skills required to accomplish longer-term professional goals was a method used to motivate sailors. The message being conveyed here, of course, was that sailors needed to recognize their individual career goals as more important than the ship that would soon be gone.

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<sup>17</sup> The program on board a Navy ship led by the CMC to guide enlisted sailors in becoming Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialists. This qualification is a prestigious achievement that is also a requirement needed to advance at higher enlisted ranks.

Table 8. Major theme of buy-in as used by USS VALDES' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Buy-In	<p>“We began making that change from being an operational unit to starting to focus the crew towards the activity of decommissioning. I'd say [for] a 50 to 60 day period, there was some pretty significant leadership challenges that we had to get crew <i>buy-in</i> to. For example...we sold them on the idea of recapitalization.”</p> <p>“It was noble that how we...had a responsibility to execute our final mission which was to deliver this ship to the fleet inactive reserve force intact, ready to be reactivated. That means we had to keep it up. That justified the maintenance activities. That's really the hardest thing. A sailor might find it difficult to understand and be inclined to just ignore his routine responsibilities of house cleaning and maybe routine devotion [to] equipment maintenance. So to get that <i>buy-in</i> you have to continue focusing on mission. Our mission is to deliver an immaculate, and intact ship to the inactive reserve fleet and that's how we did it. And then everything that was accomplished along the way, whether it be personal achievement like warfare qualifications which we have in the Navy, or unit accolades that we receive we always use those opportunities...to reinforce to them [the crew] this is why you are excellent.”</p>	<p>“So you know the ship will be put away...and you start working back.... In my <i>case I started buying into this process</i>. So you take the big enormous thing of decommissioning a ship and start breaking it down into little projects and you realize that it is a pretty enormous feat that needs to be done, and then eventually you start putting that sort of stuff done on paper and try to come up with a plan a vision on how to advise the CO.”</p> <p>“I think what I learned so far is to communicate, communication of everything that starts from the time you are notified to the time the ship is actually decommissioned. It starts with the top. It starts with the Commanding Officer and through myself and the Department Heads. You need open communication with the crew so they feel that they have <i>buy-in</i> and feel they are part of the process.”</p>	<p>“We still needed to continue with the training and they [the crew] needed to continue to pursue professional goals and personal goals, i.e., the ESWS program, that sort of thing, which we kept going all the way to the end. That is what kept them focused...what got them to <i>buy-in</i> to the fact that the ship was just a piece of metal; it was us that that was making it the living breathing thing that it was.”</p>

*VALDES Theme 9: Regret*

The ninth theme, *regret*, was also not mentioned by either the CO or XO but was brought up several times by the CMC. This theme was about regrets that the leadership onboard did not permit certain individuals to transfer from the ship early, a typical practice on decommissioning ships. Although information on this theme was not solicited, the CMC mentioned it five separate times. I wrote in my field notes that “the CMC had a remorseful, almost bitter, tone when discussing his inability to let sailors transfer early.” This attitude is understandable, given the CMC’s role.

Among the many duties that the CMC performs onboard, two of the primary roles are acting as the senior enlisted advocate for the crew and serving as the CO’s primary advisor for all matters regarding the well being of the enlisted personnel. The CMC reported, “We weren’t given the flexibility of letting more people go when we could have.” This comment and the other quotes listed in Table 9 suggest that the CMC not only disagreed with the decision to hold crew on the decommissioning ship longer than would normally have been done, but also resented the negative effects that it had on the crew.

In this regard, it is important to note that individuals’ requests were denied even though it would have benefited these sailors by allowing them to attend certain schools for their particular job specialties. The reason given was that they (the sailors) might be needed should there be an emergency during the four to five-day transit to the final port. The CMC seemed to take it personally, almost as if he felt he had not taken proper care of his sailors; he seemed to view his inability to move crew members who requested early

transfer to new commands and had solid reasons to support their requests, as a failure in his role as the crew's advocate.

In fairness, it is also important to note the likelihood that the CO's decision not to allow transfers that were in the best interest of individual sailors was linked to the rumor that the decommissioning order might be rescinded due to the impending war. As was noted above, the CO seemed to believe—and, almost certainly, had an incentive to believe, this rumor. Allowing people to transfer would not be a prudent move if the ship were not going to be decommissioned because of a wartime situation. In that sort of situation, the ship would need every sailor they could muster. Thus, the bottom-line story, here, may be the failure of the CO to communicate his real reasons for denying the CMC's requests to accommodate the needs of crew members and/or the inability (or possibly the unwillingness) of the CMC to hear the rationale behind the CO's actions.

There is one other point that should be made before ending the discussion of this theme. Because he is a dedicated professional, the CMC probably would not have mentioned the issue that has become the final theme in this case, at least not in the same direct fashion, or with the same frequency, had he still been stationed on the ship. Doing so may almost certainly have been viewed as inappropriate while he was still stationed on the ship and serving under the same chain of command that had countered his decision.

In addition, the CMC would not have seen the full effects of keeping everyone on board until after the decommissioning. Perhaps after the decommissioning, while en route to his own specialty schools, the CMC had time to further reflect on the decisions that he had been involved with and he was able to solidify his position against them.

Thus, in this case, at least, the timing of the CMC's interview may have had a positive impact on the data collection process.

Table 9. Major theme of regret as used by USS VALDES' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Regret	No mention of this theme	No mention of this theme	<p>"We [<i>The chain of command</i>] didn't know how many people you could actually let go early.... A lot of people were saying, 'Hey, you know as we are being decommissioned, why can't I transfer this day, that will give me a chance to get this extra school?' that sort of thing...<i>we weren't given the flexibility of letting more people go when we could have.</i>"</p> <p>"I feel we [<i>The chain of command</i>] could have left more people behind, and we could have started to fly more people out earlier than we did."</p> <p>"I think we [<i>The chain of command</i>] could have loosened up a bit and gotten more people out of there [Bremerton, the shipyard decommissioning site] earlier."</p> <p>"Looking at it from the crew's perspective, some of them had things they needed to get taken care of in San Diego."</p> <p>"I knew that we [<i>The chain of command</i>] could have gotten more of them [the crew] out of there [Bremerton] earlier and back to San Diego."</p>

### Summary

On VALDES the CO and XO were pretty much aligned with regard to the major themes they discussed as evidenced by the fact that they brought up the same themes, the frequency with which they mentioned each theme, and the similar ideas they expressed about each theme. Specifically, both the CO and the XO expounded on *pride* (one of the Navy's core values) and being *upbeat/positive attitude*. Neither of these themes was found in the data from the CMC interview. In fact, the CMC did not mention any themes that could be considered positive. The CMC only mentioned four of the nine major

themes that the CO and XO, did and he was alone in discussing two of the major themes that could be considered negative: *rumors* and *regret*. Thus, there was a distinct difference in the data obtained from the CO and XO, on the one hand, and the data obtained from the CMC, on the other. The CMC, in fact, was quite candid during the interview, and he revealed information that did not paint as positive a picture of the ship or the command environment as his superiors had.

One can speculate why there was such a variation in data obtained from the CMC, who is enlisted, and the CO and XO, who are officers. To explore the officer/enlisted difference further one can consider that the CO and XO both have graduate level degrees and have completed a different training track that includes exposure to more extensive public affairs education. This education, which had a clear public relations valance, may have made the officers more polished while conducting interviews and may have better prepared them to project all issues about their ship in a positive light. Conversely, the CMC, who does not have a graduate level education and whose public affairs training is arguably more abbreviated, seemed more down-to-earth and less guarded with information that may have been considered by some to be private and best shared only within the lifelines of the ship.

The variation in candidness might also be the result of the fact that the CMC was interviewed via telephone and the CO and XO interviews were conducted in person. The lack of interpersonal interaction may have sufficiently removed the CMC from a naval environment so he felt more relaxed and willing to share information that the CO and XO were not inclined to share.

Another consideration as to why the data obtained from the CMC was so different from that obtained from the CO and XO is that the interview with the CMC occurred after the decommissioning, at a time when he was no longer part of VALDES' chain of command, and, therefore, no longer constrained by any perceived pressure from the CO or XO to not discuss potentially unflattering information.

Finally, the differences might be attributable to the different roles the officers and chief enlisted person on the ship play. It is the job of the CMC to look out for the welfare of the crew, but often, officers are expected to put naval concerns (the mission) ahead of the needs of individual sailors. Whether the rumors about the VALDES being put back in service because of the country going to war were ever really viable (or merely the wishful thinking of a CO whose command was being terminated prematurely) or, whether, even if the rumors were true, it was really necessary to hold onto the existing crew well beyond what other ships, in a similar situation, did, could be debated. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that the CO believed both in the possibility of the decommissioning process being halted and the need to have a nearly complete crew if this occurred. What seems most significant here is the fact that the CO either did not communicate his thinking to the CMC or the CMC was unable to hear the rationale. What we have here is, in other words, a failure to communicate.

## CHAPTER FIVE: USS JOHN ADAMS

### *History and Background*

The USS JOHN ADAMS was the same class, or type, of ship as USS VALDES, and, like the VALDES, it had an all male crew. JOHN ADAMS was commissioned in 1980 at Todd Shipyard in San Pedro, CA.

Like the VALDES, the JOHN ADAMS made several deployments to the Persian Gulf from 1982 thru 1985 in support of U.S. interests in that region. Also, like VALDES, JOHN ADAMS transitioned to the NRF. This transition, which occurred in 1985, brought with it a new primary mission: the training and readiness of Selected Reservists. During this transition the normal process of replacing personnel that are transferring was modified. Forty percent of the regular active duty replacements of transferring crewmembers were now going to be filled with part time Selected Reservists.

From 1987 through 1989, JOHN ADAMS received major upgrades in Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities. The ship was fitted with state of the art equipment used for submarine detection and spent the next four years participating in extensive anti-submarine equipment testing as well as ASW operations.

In 1992 JOHN ADAMS began a series of three deployments designed to counter drug traffic from South America to the United States. One accomplishment that became a part of waterfront lore was the JOHN ADAMS' drug bust in 2001. During this deployment, JOHN ADAMS pursued two high-speed boats heading west from Colombia. Coordinating the pursuit of the first speedboat with its helicopters, JOHN ADAMS maneuvered at flank speed causing the smugglers to jettison their illegal cargo. The first pursuit lasted approximately eight hours but the perpetrators escaped when the boat



entered Colombian territorial waters after dark. JOHN ADAMS did, however, recover most of the illegal cargo that had been thrown overboard. Less than one week later, JOHN ADAMS again pursued drug traffickers who also jettisoned their illegal cargo while trying to escape. Although the second speedboat eventually eluded capture, too, JOHN ADAMS once again retrieved the illegal cargo from the water. At the end of the deployment the crew had confiscated more than 7,000 pounds of raw, uncut cocaine, successfully preventing these illegal drugs from reaching the United States.

During JOHN ADAMS' last deployment, the ship participated in the Cooperation Afloat Readiness And Training (CARAT) Exercise during the spring and summer of 2002. During this exercise, JOHN ADAMS operated as part of a four-ship U.S. Task Group sailing to numerous Southwest Asian ports working with the navies of six Southeast Asian countries. This annual exercise strengthens U.S. ties with these countries as well as fulfills the mission of showing the U.S. flag abroad. After the CARAT portion of the deployment, JOHN ADAMS conducted two separate humanitarian missions rebuilding schools in the war torn island of East Timor.

#### *Description of Interview Contexts*

##### *USS JOHN ADAMS Commanding Officer Interview*

The interview with the CO of JOHN ADAMS took place in the CO's cabin, which was the same size and had almost the same layout and equipment as the CO's cabin on VALDES. Instead of the L-shaped couch that was on VALDES, however, there was a small entertainment center whose TV had been removed and a nylon tie-down strap was lying in its place. On either side of the entertainment center were beige cushioned chairs where the CO and I sat during the interview.

*USS JOHN ADAMS Executive Officer Interview*

As previously mentioned, since I served as XO of JOHN ADAMS during the decommissioning process, the excerpts from my professional journal were analyzed in lieu of analyzing formal interview notes. I began mentioning the decommissioning process in my journal shortly after reporting onboard in October 2001 and continued the entries through the decommissioning in March of 2003. Journal entries regarding decommissioning became more frequent and detailed as the decommissioning date drew nearer.

*USS JOHN ADAMS Command Senior Chief Interview*

The interview with JOHN ADAMS' CSC was conducted two months after the decommissioning so that the Senior Chief was no longer in my chain of command. If there would have been any perceived pressure to respond one way or another due to a senior/subordinate relationship, holding the interview after the decommissioning removed that pressure. Additionally, scheduling the interview after the decommissioning satisfied any Institutional Review Board concerns that might have arisen from interviewing a subordinate in the chain of command. Of course, the later interview date also helped to ensure that more accurate data could be obtained from the interview. The interview took place in the evening at my home where the CSC and I sat facing one another at my dining room table.

*Discussion of Major Themes*

Seven major themes emerged from the analysis of the interview data gathered from the JOHN ADAMS' Triad. Each theme is discussed below with an accompanying table that lists exemplary quotes from members of the triad that relate to the particular

theme. In each of the tables, the word or words that are especially significant in signifying the particular theme are printed in italics. Some, though not all, of the themes are common to all three ships' Triads. To the extent possible, I have presented the themes from JOHN ADAMS' Triad in essentially the same order as the themes from VALDES. This will facilitate easier analysis across all three Triads presented in Chapter 7.

*JOHN ADAMS Theme 1: Creating a Meaningful Mission*

The theme of *creating a meaningful mission* is related to the *operational vs. non-operational* theme that was central in VALDES' Triad's data. As with the VALDES Triad and crew, the JOHN ADAMS' Triad and crew had difficulty seeing their work during the decommissioning process as meaningful. The *operational vs. non-operational* language was never used by any member of the JOHN ADAMS' Triad, and consequently *operational vs. non-operational* is not listed as a separate theme in this case. Rather, I am using the label *creating a meaningful mission* to characterize a JOHN ADAMS phenomenon that bore a close family resemblance to the *operational vs. non-operational* theme in the VALDES case. The *creating a meaningful mission* theme refers to a ship's crew searching for a purpose or mission that they could understand, agree with, and move toward. The quotes in Table 10 capture the Triad's views on this theme.

Although, as noted above, the operational vs. non-operational distinction was never invoked by any member of the JOHN ADAMS' Triad, it is clear that the need to search for meaning was prompted by the ship's non-operational status. This becomes obvious in my journal entries:

We are almost incommunicado (one of our officers has a short wave radio that he receives small news snippets [about the war in Iraq] from NPR; eleven U.S.

soldiers captured, three aircraft mishaps, etc.). Our world is so far from that right now, it's almost like we are in another time. If ships on deployment are on the tip of the spear, we must be on the blunt end of the shaft at the other end.

This journal entry demonstrates my feeling that JOHN ADAMS' mission of decommissioning was insignificant relative to that of other ships at that time (i.e., participating in the war). I was also frustrated with having to pretend that I believed decommissioning was an important mission so that the crew would not be able to say, "Hey, the XO has given up; why should we care." Despite this frustration, pretending was a necessity: The other members of the Triad and I agreed that this was our mission, whether we liked it or not, and we would do it to the best of our ability and finish it as quickly as possible.

Many similar ideas were brought up by JOHN ADAMS' Triad even though the *operational vs. non-operational* language was never used in any of the JOHN ADAMS interviews. In fact, during the interviews, interviewees put considerable emphasis on the fact that ship decommissioning was not a central task in Navy operations, especially in the context of discussing the need to define a mission that was meaningful to the crew and to the Triad members themselves. The following quote from the interview with the CO during JOHN ADAMS' final transit captures the essence of this theme:

I think we have tried to say, and I said this at the decom ceremony, and I've said this [stating the mission of the ship] informally to a lot of people on the smoke deck, or whenever I'm talking to them, because it comes up a fair amount:  
*There's a mission and this is our mission.*

The CO's reference to the smoke deck relates to the fact that the CO was a smoker and, consequently, he would spend a fair amount of time at the ship's designated smoking area, which was frequented by the other smokers on the ship regardless of rank. While on the smoke deck, sailors would often approach the CO with questions about the

ship and its policies. The CO was careful to only answer questions that would not be construed as “jumping the chain of command.” He would politely defer to the appropriate person if he felt he should not answer the question. One issue that he said came up a lot from sailors was the topic of the ship’s mission. The CO, in fact, indicated that he used the smoke deck conversations to attempt to make the decommissioning process seem meaningful to the crew.

Interestingly, one way he did this was to use the recapitalization idea that was a major theme in the VALDES data. The CO said that he would say the following to crewmembers on the smoking deck: “There’s a reason why we are doing this. [It] is an instant money savings on paper the day we go over to inactive ships.”

The CO obviously believed this to be a viable reason; he and I, in fact, discussed recapitalization in our conversations on a number of occasions during the decommissioning process. The recapitalization concept was not used in the same fashion, with the same frequency, or to the same extent that the Triad on VALDES had used the notion; therefore, I have not designated it as a major theme in the analysis of the JOHN ADAMS data.

The crew of the JOHN ADAMS appears to have had a somewhat different view of what was necessary to find meaning in a mission. While the *operational vs. non-operational* distinction is clearly implicit in much of what the Triad members said and wrote, the following journal entry about bridge watchstanders suggests that at least some of the crew members viewed this issue quite differently: “I asked the bridge team yesterday if they were going to miss this [being at sea]? They initially had a look of

yes...but the senior guy said, 'No way, can't wait for shore duty.' After that, they all seemed to agree.”

Although the sailors were initially reticent about sharing what might be perceived as negative comments, they eventually indicated that they not only did not want to be operational anymore, but also that they wanted to be back in San Diego on shore duty. Interestingly, this is arguably the least operational type of duty station available to sailors. Perhaps the desire to be operational was expressed mostly by those of higher rank like the CO, i.e., the Triad members interviewed for this study.

Table 10. Major theme of creating a meaningful mission as used by USS JOHN ADAMS' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Creating a Meaningful Mission	[Referring to his speech on the 1MC about the JOHN ADAMS being sunk after decommissioning] “That was an effort to dispel [the rumor], that was an effort to say ‘hey, we’re still an asset of the U.S. Navy.’ Actually I tried to point out that we were still an asset of the U.S. Navy up until the day we decommission. I mean we had been on the decomm list since 95 and things have changed quite a bit. We still had JTFEX to do, we still had	24 MAR 2003 <sup>18</sup> –We are steaming 000 at 18 kts. Seas are calm. I thought the motivational issues would be a problem but I didn't know that we would be actively engaged with a war on Iraq at the time [and we would have that to contend with as well]. We are almost incommunicado (one of our officers has a short wave radio that he receives small news snippets [about the war in Iraq] from NPR. Eleven U.S. soldiers captured, three aircraft mishaps, etc.) Our world is so far from that right now it's almost like we are in another time. If ships on deployment are on the tip of the spear we must be on the blunt end of the shaft at the other end. I asked the bridge team yesterday if they were going to miss this?	“We still had to do that one OPFOR <sup>19</sup> between the post deployment stand-down, which we did to ensure that we were going to be able to do that safely, effectively, [and] efficiently as we had been trained throughout the whole enchilada, and deployment, and the training cycle and the whole thing. [We need to] be able to do our job safely, and then go on another 30 days of non-operation, and then start up again to

<sup>18</sup> When I recorded the date of the journal entry I included it in the quote to help the reader to develop a sense of the timeline before the decommissioning on 28 March, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> A reminder from Chapter 4: During training and certification exercises the Opposition Force or OPFOR can be a ship or several ships that play the role of the enemy preparing the deploying ships for combat.

Table 10. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Creating a Meaningful Mission	<p>COMPTUEX<sup>20</sup> to do.”</p> <p>“I think we have tried to say, and I said this at the decom ceremony, and I’ve said this [stating the mission of the ship] informally to a lot of people on the smoke deck, or whenever I’m talking to them, because it comes up a fair amount; <i>There’s a mission and this is our mission. There’s a reason why we are doing this.</i> [It] is an instant money savings on paper the day we go over to inactive ships.”</p>	<p>They initially had a look of yes...but the senior guy said ‘No way, can't wait for shore duty.’ After that they all seemed to agree. No nostalgia there, at least none that will be admitted to.”</p> <p>“21 MAR 03 - The conversation between the CO the OPS boss and the CSO on the bridge wing was concerning the usefulness of this class of ships. Also, the CSC commented that ‘it didn't matter how much firepower a ship had to do humanitarian Operations in East Timor’ (a mission that this ship had recently completed). For every three ships they decommission they produce one flight II ARLEIGH BURKE. One could not deny that a new ARLEIGH BURKE class destroyer had more firepower but it had a deeper draft than this ship and therefore could not go into as many ports to show the flag [one of the U.S. Navy’s missions].”</p>	<p>work with the...battlegroup... meanwhile, we were having our talent leak out the door, going to their next duty stations, and we were still getting some new guys that didn’t know which end went forward, had never been underway before.”</p>

### JOHN ADAMS Theme 2: Focus

As in the discussion of the VALDES data, the theme of *focus* is defined as the unified direction that an organization proceeds toward in an effort to achieve certain goals and/or the process of moving toward that goal. The theme is related to the *creating a meaningful mission* theme that was discussed earlier and the *motivation* theme (discussed later in this chapter) in that the crew cannot focus unless the mission is clearly defined and they will not display motivation without both of these factors being present.

The quotes in Table 11 reveal that the focus theme played out in somewhat different

<sup>20</sup> JTFEX and COMPTUEX are naval exercises where JOHN ADAMS was designated to participate as an opposing Force or OPFOR.

ways in different interviews. The following quote captures the CO's response to the issue of focus:

If there is a lackadaisical attitude towards something [by the crew] it was probably because of my attitude which was [that] we had worked so hard for the first eight months, we made a conscious effort to have as relaxed a deployment as we could. We had a stand down and obviously the focus was on getting home and not necessarily working hard on the ship. I'm not sure it was relative to decommissioning. I think it was more relative to just our general attitude, you know.

It is interesting to note that the CO acknowledged a lack of focus (lackadaisical attitude) and essentially takes credit for this condition. This may have been because, as Commanding Officer, he recognized a weakness in his crew (the attitude). Rather than harangue the crew about being lazy, he took the blame, essentially saying that they were following his example. One can only speculate about whether he would have answered the same if he had been interviewed by someone who did not possess a first hand knowledge of the state of affairs on the ship.

The CSC approached the focus issue in a somewhat different way. He emphasized the procedures he used to help the other Chief Petty Officers regain and maintain their focus. The procedures involved encouraging the Chief Petty Officers to write out the steps required to achieve the final goal of decommissioning. The following quote describes this process:

We [the Chiefs] had like a laundry list prioritized of all the things that we needed to do and we did that, I want to say, probably three times after deployment until the end of decomm. We kept going through our list. We would all get back together. What I gained from that is basically a reemphasis on our goals, a re-focus for some guys that were kind of drifting back, to bring them back up to the forefront and be able to focus on our goals as a group. It worked out pretty well. Nobody died.



The CSC's statement that "Nobody died" at first glance might come across as a facetious comment. Actually, it was not; he was very serious. Even though we were not participating in the war, everyday life on a Navy ship can be quite dangerous. We have all known people who have been killed in peacetime operations and training and we were very aware of the dangers associated with something as simple as our final transit and the offload.

Table 11. Major theme of focus as used by USS JOHN ADAMS' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Focus	<p>"We suspected that we were going to decommission officially even prior to the INSURV which was in December but we weren't <i>focused</i> on that—we had a different <i>focus</i>. I think we really started <i>focusing</i> on the decommissioning process, I think we were working on our timeline prior to deployment—which was April 2002—but we didn't look at it again until we got back [from deployment] in October 2002."</p> <p>"And I think the <i>focus</i> on it [the decommissioning] really started in November 2002. Well I think we were making preparations [so] that we didn't come back from the stand-down disorganized."</p> <p>"If there is a lackadaisical attitude towards something [by the crew] it was probably because of my attitude which was [that] we had worked so hard for the first 8 months, we made a conscious effort to have</p>	No mention of this theme	<p>"For the first year we didn't <i>focus</i> on decomm. It was barely a rumor. It was more we might decomm; we don't know when we're decomming."</p> <p>[Referring to the upcoming OPFOR underway period after several non-operational periods and leave periods] "Okay, let's get back on the bus [a metaphor used to describe staying on track] and try to stay <i>focused</i>."</p> <p>"The last thing we wanted to be able to do as a crew, as a ship, [was] to be able to protect ourselves, and that was [to] fight a fire underway. That was our goal, to be able to maintain that ability, and maintain the stability of the ship no matter what. That was our bottom line. And...that was our ...<i>focus</i>. In the chief's mess,<sup>21</sup> I kind of made it their <i>focus</i> ...and let them do it. Fortunately, they were on the same plane, [the] same line of thinking that the command level was."</p>

<sup>21</sup> The chief's mess is a term used to describe both the collective group of Chief Petty Officers on a ship and the actual spaces or rooms where the Chiefs reside. On a typical ship these rooms consist of a berthing area, an eating area, and a lounge/meeting area.

Table 11. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Focus	<p>as relaxed a deployment as we could. We had a stand down and obviously the <i>focus</i> was on getting home and not necessarily working hard on the ship. I'm not sure it was relative to decommissioning. I think it was more relative to just our general attitude, you know."</p> <p>[Responding to the question: Right now [during the final days of the decommissioning process] what do you think motivates the crew?] "Finish and get home, to get home. I think the biggest danger right now... well, I think it is making sure that we are <i>focused</i> on doing efficiently what we need to do to finish in three days."</p> <p>"I think you can see, if you just look on the bridge, the number of times you have to say "calm down, stay <i>focused</i> on what you are doing.' I think that's [excited attitude] going to get gradually worse."</p>		<p>"We [The Chiefs] had like a laundry list prioritized of all the things that we needed to do and we did that, I want to say, probably three times after deployment until the end of decomm. We kept going through our list. We would all get back together. What I gained from that is basically a reemphasis on our goals, a <i>re-focus</i> for some guys that were kind of drifting back, to bring them back up to the forefront and be able to <i>focus</i> on our goals as a group. It worked out pretty well. Nobody died."</p>

### JOHN ADAMS Theme 3: Pride

The third major theme that emerged was *pride*, which here, as in the VALDES case, is defined as "finding satisfaction in one's accomplishments and having self-respect no matter what one's rank may be or what situation a person might find himself/herself in." As mentioned in the VALDES section, there are many active duty sailors on NRF ships that are proud of the fact that they have to do more with less. The following quote from the CSC alludes to the underdog mindset that some of the NRF sailors on JOHN ADAMS adopted:

From the first indication that the ship was to be decommissioned eight years earlier, the [decommissioning] stigma was associated with the ship. The normal upgrades [material improvements] that other ships received as a matter of course were no longer available to the ship slated for decommissioning. Essentially the ship had to perform the same mission as other ships that were continually being modernized through the regular modernization program. Some crewmembers saw this as the underdog syndrome and a challenge to overcome. We have a Ford Pinto and they have a Mercedes.

When presented to the crew correctly, the underdog mindset could be developed and used very effectively to motivate sailors to far exceed expectations. The other quotes listed in Table 12 indicate that, from the Triad's perspective, the sailors on JOHN ADAMS *were* so motivated, and the pride they had in the ship reflected this.

Table 12. The major theme of pride as used by USS JOHN ADAMS' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Pride	<p><i>"There was tremendous pride in the ship from the crew members. They would tell you that [our ship] is the best ship in the squadron."</i></p> <p><i>"I think their personal pride and their career motivation also contributes to still trying to do a good job."</i></p> <p><i>"As egotistical as it may sound, I think that we have engendered an atmosphere of people [who] are proud of the ship. I think people like the command. I think they like the fact that they know their jobs, that their equipment works, that they've worked hard and have gotten rewards for it."</i></p> <p><i>"The thing about the SINKEX was, when you are going to put it in ready stow, for me internally there is more motivation to maintain the equipment. We don't</i></p>	<p><i>"JOHN ADAMS is by far the cleanest ship on the waterfront. It makes me feel proud when we get the frequent compliments from both civilian and military guests, remarking how clean she is."</i></p> <p><i>"Since the HS2 helicopter squadrons have all been disestablished, JOHN ADAMS converted the starboard helo hanger into a weight room. It was modeled after a 24-hour Fitness Center complete with TV's and stereos. It is by far the best weight room on the waterfront. We may be NRF but we'll be in shape."</i></p> <p><i>"During CARAT the JOHN ADAMS' 5-man Tug of War Team was undefeated. Even a team comprised of the best [contestants] from all other ships in the Task Group, the Marines, and the Singaporean</i></p>	<p><i>"From the first indication that the ship was to be decommissioned eight years earlier, the [decommissioning] stigma was associated with the ship. The normal upgrades [material improvements] that other ships received as a matter of course were no longer available to the ship slated for decommissioning. Essentially the ship had to perform the same mission as other ships that were continually being modernized through the regular modernization program. Some crewmembers saw this as the</i></p>

Table 12. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Pride	want to turn over a ship that is crappy. <i>I think it has a lot to do with how people view their jobs and their equipment that is a reflection of their jobs.... I mean if you have the hackneyed phrase <i>pride and professionalism in your equipment</i>, then I think that carries over and you will turn it over in good shape."</i>	Navy was easily beaten. This raised eyebrows since we are one of the smallest ships and in the NRF."	<i>underdog syndrome and a challenge to overcome.</i> "We have a Ford Pinto and they have a Mercedes."

#### *JOHN ADAMS Theme 4: Emotions*

The fourth major theme was *emotions*. This term will be used to describe the comments made by the interviewees that referred to the feelings (either theirs or those of their crew) associated with the decommissioning. An interesting dichotomy exists between the CO on one hand, and the CSC and myself on the other. The CO made only one very brief reference to his emotions: "I myself am a little giddy about getting out of here." As seen in the quotes in Table 13, the CSC and I expressed what might be considered sad emotions about the decommissioning process. Perhaps the most telling quote from the table is from the CSC who said:

I miss the ship a lot and I never thought I'd say that. I miss the ship, but more importantly I miss the crew, and I miss the camaraderie that we had in the Chief's Mess, that you and I and the Captain had. That was a very special relationship to me and that I had with the crew... I could go out and... say, "Hey, how are ya doing?" I miss that a lot. I don't know if I'll ever get the opportunity to do that again. It's kind of weird.

My field notes indicate that the CSC's tone became very somber during this part of the interview and, as the CSC was reflecting on his sad emotions, I began to empathize with him as my own memories flooded back into my head. The emotions the CSC and I experienced were typical for a decommissioning; the emotions the CO reported were not.

I suspect that the CO experienced more emotions than he indicated in the interview process. The emotion of being “giddy” seems very unusual to be associated with a decommissioning process unless it was associated with behaviors like a nervous laugh. As a matter of fact, no other person interviewed for this study reported that they experienced anything close to that emotion. I’m not sure of the reason for the CO’s response, but I can speculate that the CO may have been exhibiting a type of self defense mechanism to soften the blow of losing his command. It is also quite possible that the CO was in denial (but I have no other indications of this) or, perhaps, he just wanted to project a stoic image to me and to the rest of the crew to show us “how it should be done.” In any case it is difficult to believe that the only emotion experienced by the Commanding Officer of a ship that is being decommissioned was giddiness.

Table 13. Major theme of emotions as used by USS JOHN ADAMS’ triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Emotions	“I myself am a little giddy about getting out of here.”	<p>“After SEPT 11<sup>th</sup> a [rumor about a] memo changing our decommissioning date from 2003 to 2011 changed the tone of all I encountered. <i>I personally felt better - like the tumor was no longer visible in the x rays.</i>”</p> <p>“15 MAR 2003. The decommissioning ceremony was abysmal. An hour before the ceremony, it started to drizzle. The rain lasted the entire ceremony.... It made for a much more somber mood cast upon the ceremony.”</p> <p>“23 MAR 2003. [Five days left] <i>The crew is subdued, resting before the long hours start when we get into port. I still need to interview the CO; I hesitate, I think partially because that is another event that signifies the end. I keep thinking about smoking that last cigar; the last one on board and all that. Will I go through all the spaces? Who will be with me...? I will miss this stateroom and this ship. I may even miss some of the people. Isn't that who a ship is after all, people, the crew? As the CO said in his speech the lifeblood of a ship is her crew. We have been bleeding for a while [and] no transfusion [is] planned, just a gushing in a few days. We will start convulsing soon, the last efforts, then the steady flow until just me left never to see another like it [I knew I would not be stationed on a ship like this again.] Am I getting melancholy on myself?</i>”</p>	“ <i>I miss the ship a lot and I never thought I'd say that. I miss the ship, but more importantly I miss the crew, and I miss the camaraderie that we had in the chief's mess, that you and I and the Captain had. That was a very special relationship to me and that I had with the crew.... I could go out and... say “Hey, how are ya doing?” I miss that a lot. I don't know if I'll ever get the opportunity to do that again. It's kind of weird.</i> ”

*JOHN ADAMS Theme 5: Rumors*

*Rumors*, defined as information of uncertain origin and accuracy, were also a large part of the decommissioning process for JOHN ADAMS' Triad. Table 14 details examples of the Triad's ideas regarding the rumors that proliferated throughout their decommissioning process. The one rumor that had the most impact dealt with the core concept of this study and affected both the VALDES and the JOHN ADAMS. This was the rumor that both ships were to be sunk soon after their respective decommissionings. The CO of JOHN ADAMS said: "I didn't like that rumor because that makes people wonder why are we doing maintenance? Why are we maintaining this?...I discounted it." It is interesting to note that, although the CO said he personally discounted the rumor, he felt that it was potentially damaging enough to warrant using the ship-wide announcing system to downplay and discount it. This was something that he rarely did.

Table 14. Major theme of rumors as used by USS JOHN ADAMS' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Rumors	<p>"I didn't like that <i>rumor</i> [the rumor that the ship would be sunk after decommissioning] because that makes people wonder why are we doing maintenance? Why are we maintaining this?... I discounted it."</p> <p>"The biggest thing that disturbs morale is the uncertainty. You overcome that by trying to dispel <i>rumors</i>, trying to have a plan. If you have a plan and everyone knows what the plan is I think that improves morale because I think uncertainty is what confuses</p>	<p>"DEC 12<sup>th</sup> 2002 - At the Decommissioning meeting ...the COMNAVSURFPAC rep made a rather flippant remark that the ship was to be sunk after the decommissioning process."</p> <p>"DEC 17<sup>th</sup> 2002 - The CO got on the 1MC<sup>22</sup> and basically refuted the idea that we were going to be sunk. He didn't go as far as some of the other ship's CO's and think we were</p>	<p>It was barely a <i>rumor</i>. It was more we might decomm, we don't know when we're decomming. Several different entities, ...would tell us, well you're going to decomm here.... You know, it was like nobody could really give us a straight answer. So, we really didn't pay any attention because, as you know, on the ship we have plenty of other things to focus on."</p>

<sup>22</sup> A reminder from Chapter 2: The 1MC is the shipboard announcing system. Depending on their personality or the importance of the message, CO's sometimes use it to update the crew on various issues.

Table 14. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Rumors	<p>people.”</p> <p>“You have to avoid the rumors that are created. That didn’t bother me. That was just another thing that somebody off the ship was talking about. [the rumor that the ship was not going to decommission due to the war] I was very confident that we were going to decommission.”</p> <p>[When asked if he ever had a hope that the ship wouldn’t decommission] “No, no, I was absolutely confident [of] that from day one, when they said that this is the day that we were going to decommission. So in contrast to the VALDES that took the attitude that ‘hey we might get called back to active service and still live as a ship,’ I never thought that, never thought that for one second.”</p>	<p>going to be reassigned to the [Persian] Gulf, but he had to extinguish that rumor.”</p>	<p>“There was a lot more discussion coming out of SURFPAC,<sup>23</sup> and none of it, of course, on any message traffic. No official... anchor, official message. So, around, I want to say March-April timeframe in 2001 there [were] more and more <i>rumors</i> coming out of SURFPAC and THIRD FLEET as far as what the plan was.”</p>

### *JOHN ADAMS Theme 6: Motivation*

The theme of *motivation* is defined as the will and incentive, whether individually or as a group, to accomplish the defined mission of the ship. Of course this was an issue on each of the three ships in the study and it is central to the thesis of this dissertation, but the data from the JOHN ADAMS’ Triad interviews contained numerous mentions of motivational techniques and several explicit examples of techniques that Triad members

<sup>23</sup> COMNAVSURFPAC and THIRD FLEET are three star admiral staffs that ultimately determine the schedule of ships and were expected to provide ground truth regarding the actual decommissioning date.

had employed. Table 15 contains all of the quotes on the *motivation* theme but the following quote from the CO best encapsulates this theme:

I think you [the XO] were on leave when we came up with this idea with getting up there [Bremerton] as soon as we could. We, on the ship, came up with the idea of getting up there three days sooner...to get out of there early. I think there's a lot of discussion about it. I think that everyone is confident that we can do it. There are issues that may be beyond our control. I'm not sure the challenge motivates them to do it [but] I think people are motivated to finish on time.

Compressing the timeline [the time the crew spent in the Bremerton shipyard] from ten days to three days was a means to give the crew a high goal to achieve, and thus be able to give the crew additional bragging rights. It also provided them less time to dwell on the final days of the ship's life. The compressed timeline also served to motivate the crew because it allowed them to spend more time with their families after the decommissioning and before they had to report to their next assignments.

Table 15. Major theme of motivation as used by USS JOHN ADAMS' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Motivation	<p>"I think you [the XO] were on leave when we came up with this idea with getting up there [Bremerton] as soon as we could. We, on the ship, came up with the idea of getting up there three days sooner ...to get out of there early. I think there's a lot of discussion about it. I think that everyone is confident that we can do it. There are issues that may be beyond our control. <i>I'm not sure the challenge motivates them to do it [but] I think people are motivated to finish on time.</i>"</p> <p><i>"Liberty [time off work] does not keep morale high."</i></p> <p><i>"I think if you have people who are motivated and engaged to do one thing well, and then they succeed at that and then they are motivated and engaged to do the next thing well. The decommissioning just becomes another mission that you have to do. It's another thing in the line of accomplishments or goals you have to reach."</i></p>	<p>24 MAR 2003<sup>24</sup>—We are steaming 000 at 18 kts. Seas are calm. <i>I thought the motivational issues would be a problem [in the decommissioning process] but I didn't know that we would be actively engaged with a war on."</i></p>	<p>"I could feel when a few of them [other chiefs] start to say, 'Well, I'm done,' and then I would [say] 'Hey, what's going on with Timmy?'<sup>25</sup> He doesn't have orders yet,' and then, 'Hey guys, let's have a meeting,' and we would have these meetings.... And, we would start to write things down on the white boards. We just kind of brainstormed things, what we wanted to make sure [that] timeline-wise, what was our most important thing we wanted to do."</p>

<sup>25</sup> "Timmy" was a term used to refer to any junior sailor, e.g., Seaman Timmy is going to sleep in if he can.



*JOHN ADAMS Theme 7: Denial*

The *denial* theme is unique to this Triad, and only the CO and CSC mentioned it. I was keenly aware of the situations that they described and I even participated in conversations about the incidents described in the Table 16 quotes. However, I did not make any journal entries about this theme. The following quote encapsulates the denial theme:

Even when there were reams of people from other ships coming onboard saying “Can we have this” and “Can we have that?”—even at that point—I think we tried to say, “No, don’t give away the farm.” I think people still had in their minds, “Well maybe, we’re doing this [not giving equipment away] because we might stick around.” But once we got the berthing cleaned out, I think a lot of people went “Oh, Wow,” and it personally affected them.

The cleaning out of the berthing, or crew living area, occurred after the sailors who lived there had been moved to one of the other two berthing areas. The crew size had shrunk as a result of the decommissioning process, and this consolidation of the crew was designed to expedite the final decommissioning process in Bremerton. It had the ancillary effect of making the decommissioning process very real to the crew, basically removing the denial aspect from the scenario. Prior to this, the CSC perceived that the crew exhibited more signs of denial than anyone else.

I recall the incident the CSC was referring to regarding the berthing compartment and the discussions that the CO, CSC and I had about the fact that it was a good decision to close out one of the three berthing compartments early while still in San Diego. This had the effect of shifting the crew’s collective mindset towards the final stages of the decommissioning; this was something that was definitely needed in light of the truncated timeline in Bremerton.

Table 16. Major theme of denial as used by USS JOHN ADAMS' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CSC
Denial	<p>"I think up until probably about three weeks ago a lot of people didn't have the realization. Until we closed out that first berthing. When we closed out the very first berthing <i>I think people on the ship starting going 'Wow, hey we are going to decommission.'</i> Until we started moving DC [Damage Control] gear off, when we started closing and draining systems, I think that was the point where we were kind of like wow, <i>we actually are decommissioning....</i> even when there were reams of people from other ships coming onboard saying 'can we have this' and 'can we have that?'—even at that point—I think we tried to say, 'No, don't give away the farm.' <i>I think people still had in their minds, 'Well maybe, we're doing this [not giving equipment away] because we might stick around.'</i> But once we got the berthing cleaned out, I think a lot of people went 'Oh, Wow,' and it personally affected them."</p>	No mention of this theme	<p>"If we would have said in January. 'Okay, we are going to inspect everybody's lockers and y'all have to be cleaned out except for three pairs of skivvies, two shirts and a pair of socks,' then that might have acted against us negatively by [the crew] "saying," You know what, if I'm keeping three pairs of skivvies, a towel and a pair of socks in my locker, then what am I wiping this diesel down for?... What am I replacing this light bulb for? Why am I making sure that this is wrapped up like it is supposed to be? Why am I putting this in lay up like it's supposed to be?..." I thought that in the end it worked out better than I could have ever imagined, because when we walked off we knew in our hearts and in our minds that it was done ... the best way it could be done."</p> <p>"After the first berthing compartment was emptied out prior to leaving San Diego, <i>the crew suddenly realized that it [the decommissioning] was real.</i>"</p> <p>"<i>They [the crew] had a stark realization that they needed to make plans to decomm.</i>"</p>

### Summary

On JOHN ADAMS all three Triad members were pretty much aligned in terms of the major themes they discussed. The only outlier in this regard was the *emotions* theme where the CO had a single, very different response as compared to the multiple responses of the XO and CSC. Even though I (the XO) did not comment in my journal on two of the seven themes (*denial* and *focus*), this is not to say that I did not consider these themes during the decommissioning process. In fact, I participated in numerous conversations with the other Triad members about them, and I did agree with the comments made by the other two Triad members about the denial and focus themes. For whatever reason, I

simply did not record ideas about these themes in my professional journal; therefore, I have indicated in the table “no mention of this theme.”

Like the CO and the XO on VALDES, the Triad on JOHN ADAMS expounded on pride (one of the Navy’s core values). It is noteworthy that comments about pride were in response to the Navy’s core value question. This is probably due to the culture in which the Triad members exist and have existed for many years.<sup>26</sup> The military climate cultivates pride in individual service and accomplishment, and it also cultivates pride in the accomplishments of the command to which an individual is assigned. One of the ways this is accomplished is by awarding medals and ribbons that are displayed on a person’s uniform, and also on the side of the ship (usually below the bridge). The more time the person or ship has served, the more rows of awards are displayed.<sup>27</sup>

The CSC recognized lapses in the motivation of his peers, and his comments about his method of dealing with this facet of the decommissioning process suggest an approach that was very mechanical. The CSC focused on motivating his peers through discussion and verbal engagement while the CO and I seemed to focus more on attempting to inspire the crew for the long-term mission, including the next assignment. One can speculate why this variation in techniques existed. Perhaps the dynamic of the enlisted verses officer differences came into play as it did on the VALDES.

Variation in Triad responses to the *emotion* theme were also noted in this case. The CSC and I were more sullen than the CO. The fact that the CSC was interviewed two months after the decommissioning may have caused him to be more melancholy than he

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<sup>26</sup> Each of the JOHN ADAMS triad members has been in the Navy for over 18 years.

<sup>27</sup> These awards tell a whole story of where the ship (or person) has deployed to, how many deployments were made, and they highlight exemplary performance in a variety of competitive categories. It has been said that, “A sailor wears his biography on his chest.”

might have been during the decommissioning process when he was much busier and focused on the task at hand. As for me, I often recorded very personal issues about on-the-job challenges in my professional journal; this included the emotions I was experiencing, which accounts for the presence of more data from me on the *emotions* theme than from either of the other two Triad members.

## CHAPTER SIX: USS KODIAK

### *History and Background*

The USS KODIAK was the lead ship of a class of amphibious ships.<sup>28</sup> These ships transport and launch amphibious craft and vehicles with their crews and embarked personnel in amphibious assault operations. KODIAK was the only mixed gender ship in this study, and the crew size was almost double that of the JOHN ADAMS and the VALDES. During KODIAK's career the ship completed 19 Western Pacific deployments and was one of the most decorated ships on the West Coast. KODIAK had served notable roles in military operations and humanitarian efforts since it was commissioned at Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, VA in 1969. During the end of the Vietnam War, KODIAK carried Marines back to the United States as part of Operation Keystone Blue Jay, a planned withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. In 1991 during Operation Desert Storm, KODIAK controlled the largest offload of landing craft in support of combat operations.

KODIAK was called upon in 2000 to provide support for the crew of USS COLE after a small boat laden with explosives blew up alongside the destroyer as it refueled in Aden, Yemen, tearing a hole in its side and killing 17 sailors.

KODIAK participated with JOHN ADAMS in the Cooperation Afloat Readiness And Training (CARAT) Exercise during the spring and summer of 2002. This was supposed to be her last deployment; however, she was tasked to participate in a surge, or

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<sup>28</sup> When a ship type, or class, is designed to support a certain naval mission the first ship built in the class traditionally bears the same name as the class (i.e., the KODIAK is the first ship of the KODIAK class of ships). This class was designed as part of a mobile and modern amphibious strike force. The ship's parts involved transporting pre-loaded heavy landing craft to the shore and discharge them rapidly along with the accompanying Marines.

emergency, deployment to support Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

During that last deployment, KODIAK disembarked Marines and supplies during the opening stages of OIF. Later, the ship provided logistic support to U.S. forces stationed on captured offshore gas and oil platforms near the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. KODIAK also conducted operation Desert Tortoise during OIF. This task involved loading up 100,000 lbs of mail, 232 pallets of cargo and 71 Sailors from Bahrain and delivering them to the other amphibious ships in the task force patrolling the Persian Gulf.

KODIAK was the only non-reserve ship in this study and the only ship to participate in the Iraq War. These facts may be significant and will be addressed later in this chapter. KODIAK returned home in July 2003; she was last home ported in San Diego, CA. In an ironic twist, KODIAK was the first ship of the class to be commissioned and was also the last to be decommissioned.

#### *Description of Interview Contexts*

The San Diego Union Tribune newspaper article Crawley wrote about the decommissioning process that was mentioned in Chapter 1 was written after the decommissioning of VALDES and JOHN ADAMS. The article, however, appeared prior to the decommissioning of KODIAK so I chose to read an excerpt from this article to each of the three interviewees prior to their respective interviews. My hope was that reading this article would convey to the interviewees the type of problems and behaviors that Crawley discussed and that also may have been present on their ship as well.

*USS KODIAK Commanding Officer Interview*

The interview with KODIAK's CO took place on the berthing barge that was moored just forward of the now abandoned ship. This large, white barge provided a stark contrast to the haze grey ship next to it. The barge was three decks high and was designed to house the crew of a ship during times that their ship was uninhabitable. The barge had office spaces, areas to cook food and feed the crew, and a limited sleeping area for the duty section<sup>29</sup> to remain overnight. The CO and I sat across from each other at a rectangular table in a relatively barren conference room on the top deck.

*USS KODIAK Executive Officer Interview*

The interview with KODIAK's XO took place in the same conference room that the interview with the CO had taken place. The XO on the KODIAK was a friend of mine, and he had shared many experiences on the recent CARAT deployment with me prior to the formal interviews. We also had informally discussed the decommissioning process that we both were engaged in on a number of occasions.

*USS KODIAK Command Master Chief Interview*

The interview with the CMC took place in his office across the hall from the conference room. The room was cluttered and the CMC initially seemed preoccupied, but he became very involved in the interview after it began. He came across as a very gruff, no-nonsense person and, as the interview progressed, it became evident that the CMC probably adhered to an "X" viewpoint from McGregor's X-Y theory of motivation.

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<sup>29</sup> The duty section is comprised of approximately one third of the crew of a decommissioning ship. These personnel are charged with guarding the ship and standing by in case of an emergency (i.e., fire or flooding).

### *Discussion of Major Themes*

Six major themes emerged from the analysis of the interview data gathered from KODIAK's triad. Each theme is discussed below with an accompanying table that lists exemplary quotes from members of the Triad about the particular theme. In each of the tables, the word or words that signify the theme are printed in italics.

#### *KODIAK Theme 1: The Illusion of Being Operational*

Just as with VALDES data and, less explicitly, the JOHN ADAMS data, the KODIAK data invokes the *operational vs. non-operational* distinction, though, once again, the terms themselves are not often used. As was noted in discussing the VALDES data, operational refers to a ship having a tangible purpose or mission that is aligned with the Navy's central mission. The most significant mission or purposes are combat related. Since KODIAK was the only ship in the study to actually participate in the Gulf War, it was also the most operational ship of the three. Of course, when the ship's crew began the decommissioning process, there was a shift to a non-operational status. The Triad seemed to deal with the ship's non-operational status somewhat differently. For example, in an attempt to keep the crew in a quasi-operational mindset, the CO attempted to construct an operational environment similar to the environment on the ship when KODIAK had been at sea. This, in effect, created an *illusion of being operational*. The XO and CMC were participants in this plan, if not because of agreement then due to their subordinate status, and they did not comment explicitly on the creation of operational illusion in their respective interviews. The following quote details the CO's plan:

I am trying to keep the running of the ship as best I can, the same as if we were at sea. You know, trying to keep the normal operations the same [and] as best I can for the kids, so the kids are in the routine that they are used to. And then when we



zig on that routine [my job] is to let them know, “Hey, the zig is coming, here is when it is going to happen....” Okay, so that there are no surprises.

This plan to act as if the ship was operational, even though it was non-operational, was intended to communicate the seriousness of the decommissioning process to the crew. Many ships adopt a different work schedule and subsequent mindset when they are in port. Undoubtedly, the CO’s plan to keep the same schedule that was used when the ship was underway was a unique approach that some crewmembers may have perceived as too rigorous. The CMC spent much of the interview discussing his techniques for enforcing regulations and standards. It is interesting to note that the CMC reported that enforcing regulations and standards was required in the operational as well as the non-operational phases. The CMC described what happened on the ship while KODIAK was en route to the Gulf War:

They [the crew] go, “Hey, we’re going to war. Let us grow our hair out.” That was the first thing the Captain said, “No way.” You know, we were going to shoot across the pond [transit to the Persian Gulf] and [the crew was] say [ing] “Let’s just have a beard growing contest.” Kind of grow beards for crossing the line ceremony.<sup>30</sup> Nope, it was a standard.

In short, the CMC perceived that the crew wanted to let the standards slip regardless of their situation. This may have had more to do with the CMC’s perception of people in general than with the actual condition of the crew. At any rate the CO and the CMC seem to have been on the same page with regard to this theme: Both seemed to blur the line between operational and non-operational.

Although the XO wrote the Plan of the Day and was integral in enacting the CO’s plan, he focused on the difference between being operational and non-operational and not so much on the *illusion of being operational*. When comparing the decommissioning

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<sup>30</sup> Crossing the line refers to the ceremony that all Navy ships have when they cross the equator. Generally, the crew is allowed to relax some standards in conjunction with this ceremony.

process with participating in the war the XO said: “I am more stressed now, here with the decomm than I was during the war.” This statement may be surprising to some but the rest of the quote explains his reasoning, which makes sense:

I mean you are stressed but you feel more confident because you actually have been preparing your whole naval career to execute some kind of war plan. There is no preparation for you to...decommission a ship. I'm not a professional decommissioning ship kind of guy.

Table 17. Major theme of the illusion of being operational as used by USS KODIAK triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
The Illusion of Being Operational	<p>“The mission was...we now have to decommission the ship and the fact is that we have to compress cycle because when we got home decommissioning was put on hold because we were informed that Turkey was interested in buying the ship. So, we were told we can't do anything with the exception of cleaning, painting, and fixing the lagging. So I couldn't start taking systems down or putting stuff in lay-up until we got an idea of what the Turks were going to do, because they were talking hot swap. So, hot swap was that we had to keep the ship operational, send a Turkish crew over, train the crew and then turn the ship over.”</p> <p>“I am trying to keep the running of the ship as best I can, the same as if we were at sea. You know, trying to keep the normal operations the same [and] as best I can for the kids, so the kids are in the routine that they are used to. And then when we zig on that routine [my job] is to let them know, hey, the zig is coming, here is when it is going to happen.... Okay, so that there are no surprises.”</p>	<p>“I am more stressed now, here with the decomm than I was during the war. I mean you are stressed but <i>you feel more confident because you actually have been preparing your whole naval career to execute some kind of war plan.</i> There is no preparation for you to ... decommission a ship. I'm not a professional decommissioning ship kind of guy.”</p> <p>“Normally a ship is taken out of the deployment mode, be ready to go to sea status, anywhere from three to six months before you decomm. We got the word we could stand down [stop] from being ready to get underway...the last week in August. So, during that whole time we are doing PMS. <i>If they told us 'get underway tomorrow,' we could have done it.</i> So, to get from that point to...removing all the equipment, it takes a lot. Today is the 26<sup>th</sup> of September and we're decommissioning in five days, we're taking CIWS off today” [a major gun system that should have been removed much earlier].</p>	<p>“We basically sat around for three months doing circles at 2, 4 knots. That was a lot of time to just sit and think. We weren't allowed to do drills. <i>We couldn't keep the guys busy because we had to be watching for mines, this, that and the other stuff.</i> The guys, they wanted to just mellow out and let standards slip. We wouldn't let that happen onboard the KODIAK.”</p> <p>“<i>They [the crew] go, 'hey, we're going to war. Let us grow our hair out.'</i> That was the first thing the Captain said, 'No way.' You know, we were going to shoot across the pond [transit to the Persian Gulf] and say [the crew says] 'let's just have a beard growing contest.' Kind of grow beards for crossing the line ceremony. Nope, it was a standard.”</p>

*KODIAK Theme 2: Focus*

*Focus*, here, has the same definition that was used in discussing the *focus* theme for VALDES and JOHN ADAMS: the direction that an organization proceeds toward in an effort to achieve certain goals and/or the process of moving toward that goal. As before, the term focus can be used as both a noun and a verb. The following quote from the CMC best encapsulates the *focus* theme:

We are going over there [Persian Gulf] and even though we are going to war and I was trying to maintain the focus for the crew on that, in the back of their minds they were already starting to think, hey, we're decomming in October, why do we need to worry about PMS?<sup>31</sup> Why do we need to clean the ship? They were willing to let standards slip.

Table 18 includes exemplary quotes related to the theme of *focus* from the CMC.

Although the CO and XO did not specifically mention the *focus* theme the CMC's emphasis on focus was centered on countering the same type of attitude (i.e., lack of motivation) that was described in the Crawley article. In fact, among all of the interviewees in the study, the CMC on KODIAK reported experiencing leadership challenges more closely aligned with what I expected (e.g., major decline in motivation, a search for purpose, lethargy, and a decline in professionalism).

Table 18. Major theme of focus as used by USS KODIAK' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Focus	No mention of this theme.	No mention of this theme.	<p>"We are going over there [Persian Gulf] and even though we are going to war and I was trying to maintain the focus for the crew on that, in the back of their minds they were already starting to think, hey, we're decomming in October, <i>why do we need to worry about PMS? Why do we need to clean the ship? They were willing to let standards slip.</i>"</p> <p>"We aren't going to let that happen [let the standards slip]. And that has always been my philosophy from day one. It is because of the exposure I have seen</p>

<sup>31</sup> PMS stands for Planned Maintenance System. This is the system used to schedule periodic maintenance checks and tune ups to almost all equipment on naval ships.

Table 18. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Focus			<p>from other decommissioning ships. The sailors that I have watched walk around the base with their painted up coveralls and the holes torn in and their long hair, [that]...are part of decommissioning crews. The sailors I have received...from decommissioned ships, their professionalism was lacking. <i>Their military bearing, their appearance was kind of poor. And that was one thing I was going to make sure didn't happen to KODIAK.</i> I didn't want any other command that received one of my sailors to say, 'damn KODIAK let it slip.' I didn't want any of my guys to be walking around this base and be stopped by [a] CMC somewhere for being out of uniform or needing a haircut, or whatever...."</p> <p>"We will do divisional training...three training topics at a minimum on a weekly basis. <i>They know that is the standard and they know I'm not going to deviate from it....</i> So, it has been a tool for me and it has assisted me in refocusing the crew during this cruise when we had really nothing else to do once we dumped the Marines off.... The full decommissioning mentality went into effect for the crew."</p> <p>"Trying to make a positive out of a negative, and that is why I said I went back to the basics and <i>I tried to keep the guys focused on something...cause we're all still going to be sailors and we're moving on, and I at least tried to give them a focus for a few minutes in the morning on how to look and show up on time, and being respectful.</i>"</p> <p>"<i>I took the focus off of KODIAK and that destroying KODIAK or ripping it apart was just a daily task for us for a month or two... I wanted to focus on the Sailor and the Navy itself.</i> That is how I went to the instructions and the standards in other areas. It seems to be working."</p>

### *KODIAK Theme 3: Pride*

The third major theme that emerged, albeit only from the CO and CMC, was *pride*, meaning finding satisfaction in one's accomplishments and having self-respect no matter what one's rank may be or what situation a person might find himself/herself in (e.g., even a decommissioning situation).

The CO and CMC on KODIAK expressed pride in their ship, as did the other Triad members interviewed, but this Triad seemed to demonstrate more pride than the previous two Triads (Table 19 records all of the Triad's quotes). This may be due in part to the fact that KODIAK was arguably more operational than either of the other two ships in this study, immediately prior to decommissioning: KODIAK was the only non NRF ship and the only ship to participate in the war in Iraq. The failure of the XO to mention anything that could be cited as relating to the *pride* theme might be attributable to the drowning-in-paperwork explanation that was offered by the XO and subsequently recorded in my field notes.

Table 19. Major theme of pride as used by USS KODIAK' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Pride	<p>"You know, <i>we were the only ones to go to the Gulf and come back without any problem[s]</i>. She [the KODIAK] went through all the wickets, did everything we asked her to do. [KODIAK] was the most reliable of the four."<sup>32</sup></p> <p>"<i>She [KODIAK] was the most reliable and I think [the] Commodore...would agree with that.</i>"</p> <p>"But some kids feel when they have projects, this is my ship. <i>I mean the biggest boasting rights about this; we did a deployment without sustaining any major casualties that prevented us from doing our mission. That was a big prize for a ship.</i>"</p>	No mention of this theme.	<p>"<i>We were all very proud to be part of this...endeavor to go free Iraq, but in the back of our minds we were still being told October 2003 is when we're supposed to decomm...</i>"</p> <p>"<i>It would be a personal embarrassment [to allow sailors to appear slovenly], not only to myself but to KODIAK and the CO, and I wasn't going to let that happen. So, basically we haven't been running ram shot on the guys, but we have been doing sea bag inspections. Guys that are showing up looking like crap in uniform, we break out the sea bag inspection checklist.</i>"<sup>33</sup></p>

<sup>32</sup> KODIAK deployed with three other ships to bring Marines to Iraq.

<sup>33</sup> A sea bag inspection is when a superior, usually a Chief Petty Officer, ensures that a sailor has every item that was issued to him or her at basic training. If the sailor does not have all of these items he or she is escorted to the uniform shop and must immediately acquire all of these items at their own expense. It can be very expensive, sometimes costing hundreds of dollars depending on the completeness of the sea bag.

Table 19. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Pride	<p>“Yeah. And we’d come home [from deployment] and like we are the only ship [that did this mission]. You know, [sailors would say] where were you [when we did that mission]...<i>that’s bragging rights, I’m off KODIAK, you know. And everybody knows that.</i> So, it was everybody [the other three ships in company] was having problems on the transit over and here’s KODIAK. We were just steaming along smartly and doing our thing. Everybody was like, yeah! So, when something would come up, [our superiors would say] oh, let’s send KODIAK. <i>Yeah, it’s good. That’s a good feeling.</i>”</p>		<p>“I think for a year straight, every time I put my anchors on the hair stood up on the back of my neck because I was so proud of myself and being part of that organization [being a Chief Petty Officer], and over time things slid.”</p> <p>“Becoming Command Master Chief and getting my ship kind of brought some of those same feelings [the initial feelings of pride that he felt when he became a Chief] back again.”</p> <p>“My chief’s mess took this crew after only four months being home...[we] turned around and we went to war, and we were the only amphib ...that didn’t break down. All the way over and all the way back. Yeah, we had a few little glitches down the plant [the engineering plant], but we were always steaming, 24/7.”</p> <p>“We were very proud of that [the fact that KODIAK did not break down] and I am proud of the fact that our chief’s mess kept that going. I have had guys staying up 24/7 keeping this baby steaming.”</p>

#### *KODIAK Theme 4: Emotions*

The fourth major theme was *emotions*. This term will be used to describe the comments made by the interviewees referring to the feelings (either theirs or those of their crew) associated with the decommissioning process. Table 20 contains quotes from all three Triad members regarding the *emotions* theme. The following quote from the CO is very candid and reveals interesting insight about his future as well as the future of his ship:

It is also a personal realization that, hey, you're not going to be in command anymore, you're just going to be a commander at large. I mean, here you were responsible for so much and now it is all going away, and it's hard.... When somebody retires from the Navy, you know we have this big ceremony and we wish them well, and we give them kudos and that type of thing. Here, this ship that served her country for 34 years, we strip her, and we paint her, and we rig her for tow, and then tow her to wherever, and then she just sits there.

My field notes indicated that the CO's tone became melancholy and somewhat distant during this part of the interview. The ceremony he referred to is a person's retirement ceremony. Another ceremony that he, because of circumstance, would not be given an opportunity to participate in is the change of command ceremony. This is where a CO passes the baton of command to a new CO. For KODIAK, and every other decommissioning ship for that matter, the decommissioning ceremony serves as a replacement for the change of command ceremony.

Table 20. Major theme of emotions as used by USS KODIAK' triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Emotions	<p>"It always has been kind of somber because the ship has done so well."</p> <p>"It is also a personal realization that, hey, you're not going to be in command anymore, you're just going to be a commander at large. I mean, here you were responsible for so much and now it is all going away, and it's hard.... When somebody retires from the Navy, you know we have this big ceremony and we wish them well, and we give them kudos and that type of thing. Here, this ship who served her country for 34 years, we strip her, and we paint her, and we rig her for tow, and then tow her to wherever... and then she just sits there."</p>	<p>"I mean you can see it. I mean, you walk on the ship and it is sad to see this vibrant ship and you walk on it now and you can hear your footsteps it is so quiet."</p> <p>"No one has really come and said, you know, I'm disappointed or anything like that, but you can tell it in their faces and their expressions. Guys have asked... 'I want to stay until we decomm.'"</p> <p>"I think if you leave it up to them to get the job accomplished and you really don't care how it gets accomplished as long as its safe and nobody gets hurt, and it's within all of the Navy legal parameters,</p>	<p>"Well, that's the sad part. My chief's mess and I really are a tight knit group of chiefs. We went through some tough times the first year or so and this past year, since CARAT and the war, we have really gotten close together. I mean we're friends. Some of us have our attitudes with each other, but we are all a very tight knit group. We work hard together, we play hard together, and we get together with our families and I haven't had that feeling since I made chief over a decade ago. Having that feeling, being part of this chief's mess, and then slowly tearing the ship apart has been very depressing."</p>

Table 20. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Emotions	<p>Responding to the comment: <i>“It kind of seems like it is almost an undignified end.”</i></p> <p>“Yeah, kinda, it kinda does, and all the blood, sweat and tears that have gone into her and to see her like this, just being stricken from the record, <i>it is kind of a hard pill to swallow.”</i></p> <p>“You deal with as you would any other event in your naval career. It’s a part of the job and the orders have been given and you say, ‘Aye, aye,’ and you carry them out smartly and then you look forward to what lies beyond, like after KODIAK. Sometimes it doesn’t make a pill any smaller, but sometimes it helps make it easier to swallow. <i>You have a fondness for the ship. It’s just like you are losing a friend. I am sorry to see her go,</i> and I understand the reasons that she has to go, so you carry on smartly, but it’s been....it has been a thrill. Being commander of the ship...is an experience that, you know...unless you have been there it is hard to describe. I mean, we have heard all the stuff of command at sea, but if you are actually sitting in the chair it is a whole new dynamic. It’s just things that you wouldn’t even imagine, they just come your way. It’s fun. It’s fun and you know the ship becomes a part of you. And like I said, it’s like seeing a friend go away.”</p>	<p>they’re happy, cause they are controlling their own destiny then.”</p>	<p>“I work at keeping the chiefs together. I call the guys up on the weekends, hey what are you doing. I call them up if I’ve got computer problems or a car problem, or I just want a piece of advice.... <i>I just try staying close with them because the decomm process has split everybody up.</i> I mean, we’re all over the place trying to take care of a thousand projects on a daily basis.”</p> <p>“Yea. It has been <i>depressing. It’s sad.</i> We try to go to lunch everyday as the chief’s mess.”</p>

### *KODIAK Theme 5: Rumors*

The sixth theme that emerged, *rumors*, was also a major theme in the other Triad interviews. Table 21 contains several quotes from the XO and CMC about their



experiences with rumors during the decommissioning process. The failure of the CO to comment on the rumors theme may be due to his above-the-fray leadership style.

An interesting event occurred on KODIAK that resulted in reducing the number of rumors. For whatever reason, the authorities that decide what type of decommissioning KODIAK was to proceed with were not forthcoming about the final disposition of the ship. Would it be mothballed, sold to another country, or sunk? Nobody was saying. Although the CO of KODIAK did not directly comment on the rumors theme, the following quote from him describes an action that he took that, in effect, greatly reduced a major source of rumors:

We [KODIAK's decision makers] sat down and they said, "Okay, if we are to meet a 1 October decomm date, what is the final day that I can be notified and still accomplish that goal?" And we decided it was like the 20th or 21st August. And we sent that to the higher ups saying, "Okay, if you don't give us a decision we are going to decommission the ship for cold turnover..." We felt, hey, you need to let us know by this date so that we can plan one way or the other. If we don't hear from you we will decomm the ship and we will put her in a cold swap condition.

The CO of KODIAK was understandably frustrated with this situation and he developed two sets of timelines, one corresponding to a hot swap type of decommissioning and the other timeline corresponding to a decommissioning ending in a cold swap condition or mothballs. He then counted back from the decommissioning date using both timelines and determined the earliest point of no return where the ship could not deviate from the chosen plan without extending the decommissioning date. The CO presented this information to his superiors. This in function almost certainly would have been interpreted as an ultimatum. The CO's intent was to force the decision makers to provide direction to the ship. This plan evidently worked and the CO was provided the direction he sought as to the type of decommissioning KODIAK should proceed with.

This action resulted in greatly mitigating at least one source of rumors, i.e., rumors that related to the fate of the ship after the decommissioning.

Another interesting handling of an incident on KODIAK also helped the Triad control rumors. The XO reported that “the Captain, myself and a few key people knew [about the postponement of a ship-wide inspection in August], but the crew did not know about it until probably November or so.” This delay was intentional. In my field notes I recorded that the XO indicated that the delay in promulgating the schedule change was instituted, in part, to capitalize on the crew’s motivation preparing for the inspection. If the Triad were to reveal that the major inspection had been rescheduled to a much later date, the crew’s enthusiasm to repair equipment and clean the ship would greatly diminish. The XO also indicated that there was a second purpose: to wait until the information became more solid so as not to distribute information that was no longer valid. This latter purpose, of course, was directly linked to one goal of minimizing rumors. Basically, the triad made the best use of the situation to achieve the overall good of the ship.

Table 21. Major theme of rumors as used by USS KODIAK’ triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Rumors	No mention of this theme	<p>“A year ago when we were first...well, we have been decommissioning for five years now. I think that is the last cycle of the <i>rumor</i> about decommissioning.”</p> <p>“Before I got here there were <i>rumors</i> the ship was going to decomm, and the <i>rumor</i> was that it was going to decomm in fiscal year ’05.... During the time that I have been here that changed to ’04 and then when in ’04 kept on changing and now we are decommissioning the first day of fiscal year ’04.”</p>	<p>“Since last July timeframe we have been on a roller coaster ride. ‘<i>You’re decomming’ and ‘You’re not decomming’</i>, then ‘<i>You’re decomming, you’re not decomming.</i>’ So, the crew has been up and down as far as apprehension.”</p> <p>“<i>We are going to war, when are we going to come home.</i>”</p>

Table 21. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Rumors		<p>“One message comes out and says the following ships are decommissioning on a date. Look for a message that has our name on it. You won’t find one. “So, that is just the decommissioning part. Let’s say April or May we finally realize that we are going to decommission October 1<sup>st</sup>. <i>From then until now we flipped-flopped from being a hot swap...[to], what you did on JOHN ADAMS.</i>”</p> <p>“We had to act like we were going to do a hot swap even though there was no authorization, and that authorization has to come from Congress. <i>So everybody was, [saying] ‘Man, it ain’t happening,’</i> but nobody wanted to make the decision to say do foreign military sale, so everybody said, nope, just keep everything up.... From the time we knew until now, all we could do was what that kid [the sailor mentioned in the Crawley article who was not motivated] is complaining about: paint, lag, clean.”</p>	<p>We [are] going to be gone six months, eight months. How much time will we have to do a decommission and get our families taken care of, plus just try to get back to a normal life?”</p>

#### *KODIAK Theme 6: Motivation*

As with the JOHN ADAMS, the theme of *motivation* is defined as the will and incentive, whether individually or as a group, to accomplish the defined mission of the ship. Quotes from all three Triad members discussing motivation are contained in Table 22. An interesting dichotomy existed on KODIAK regarding the perceived motivation of the crew. The CO and XO, on the one hand, did not believe there were any motivation problems. On the other hand, the CMC spoke almost exclusively about sailors with motivation problems and his methods of dealing with these problems. This stark contrast in perspectives is evident in the following quotes: The XO said, “I don’t think there is a lack of motivation”; the CMC, on the other hand, said, “It kind of seems hard to motivate a bunch of guys to tear something apart, especially since we spend so much time trying to build this command.”

The data from the KODIAK Triad interviews contained numerous references to motivational techniques used, but KODIAK's CMC provided the most interesting—and most concrete and candid—information on this theme. The motivational techniques employed by the CMC may be viewed by some, especially those in the civilian sector, as archaic and even Neanderthal. The two motivational techniques I will discuss are his “back-to-basics” approach and the favoritism that he demonstrated towards good sailors. (The latter may have actually de-motivated portions of the crew).

The back-to-basics theme could almost be discussed as a separate, major theme but since the CMC was the only one to mention it and since it deals directly with motivation, I included it in the *motivation* theme discussion. As seen in the following quote, the CMC repeatedly mentioned how he returned to the basics (e.g., enforcing the uniform regulations) to re-motivate sailors that he perceived needed such motivation.

I went back to the basics. I went back to the very basics and...I run business like that...there is nobody babysitting you like they did in boot camp.... So, because of that, our guys were slipping. They'd go, “Hey, we're going to war. Let us grow our hair out.” The Captain said, “No way.” We were going to enforce [the standard] and the Captain said, “We're not going to deviate off that.” It's a good plan.

The second motivational technique that the CMC used involved favoritism towards top performing sailors (i.e., getting their orders to their next command earlier than others). The following series of quotes describe how the CMC worked to get orders for sailors he perceived to be good performers and did not do the same for poor performers. “There was only a handful of guys...the most outstanding junior sailors that ...I'd say ‘make this one guy available’ [to get orders to his/her next command].... It opened up a can of worms.” The rest of the crew eventually found out about the CMC's

preferential treatment and the CMC had to justify his actions to the crew. The following quote details the CMC's justification of his actions:

I told them [the sailors who got orders early] not to say anything, but you know word gets out or the orders came in.... But it was okay because these were outstanding sailors. All I had to do was compare the complainer who was substandard to this guy going don't come crying to me."

When asked if he thought this tact was a de-motivator the CMC replied:

I don't know if it de-motivated the junior guys, it pissed them off, I'm sure. At a minimum, I'd go, "Here's the standard you guys should be striving for. If you were like this guy [the good sailor] I'd pull a few strings for you too, but you're not."

This quote is very much aligned with the CMC's hard-core approach to leadership and his no-nonsense demeanor that he demonstrated repeatedly during the interview.

Table 22. Major theme of motivation as used by USS KODIAK triad

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Motivation	<p>"I think the biggest <i>motivator</i> is...getting this done. Getting the job done. I think that is the biggest motivator."</p> <p>"Well a year ago <i>we were gearing up to go to war.</i>"</p> <p>"It is funny. As ironic as it is, <i>war in itself was a motivator</i>, because ... we're going to do what we trained for. You are actually going to do your job.... Okay, now this is what that is all</p>	<p>"I don't think there is a <i>lack of motivation.</i>"</p> <p>"The guys are more disappointed seeing the ship go away. <i>As far as getting the job done, I don't think that we have any problems.</i>"</p> <p><i>In response to the question what motivates the crew now?:</i> "Going to a new command, going through school."</p>	<p>"Quarters is for muster, instruction and inspection.<sup>34</sup> You know, they say that phrase for a reason. There were times when my guys would come out there and they would talk to their people and they would turn around and walk away. <i>And I'd watch a half dozen sailors walk by me that had hair touching their ears or down to their collars or their uniforms looked like crap.</i> I'd get the chief and then I'd get a hold of First Classes and I'd say, look, we have quarters for a reason. My philosophy has always been with standards, is <i>hold the sailor to the standard</i>, and I began with uniform regs. Uniform regs are one of the very few instructions guidelines in the Navy that you can't dispute. If it's not written, you can't do it. Every other instruction is negotiable, interpretable. You can kind of read between the lines with every other instruction, for the most part, but not uniform regs."</p> <p>"I went back to the basics. I went back to the</p>

<sup>34</sup> "Quarters" is the morning meeting where supervisors inspect their sailors, take attendance, and give out daily tasking.

Table 22. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Motivation	<p>about. So, now you are actually going to get to put into practice what you go through all the training and inspections for.”</p> <p>“The motivation of getting it done and going on to where they’re going, you know. And, that all boils down to, (a) you took care of ‘em, (b) you kept them informed, and (c)...the leadership was engaged and caring about what was going on, [and give a] pat on the back, ‘hey, you guys are doing a great job, we’re almost there.”</p> <p>“The motivational reasons why the kids are doing stuff [has] probably changed. [from preparing for war to the decommissioning] Here, I think for some it is, as I say, the light at the end of the tunnel. I think some of it is the excitement of doing something that we have never done before.... So just going through the decomm process because it is</p>	<p>“I think that guys were looking forward to a change.... this ship has made three deployments in three years.”</p> <p>“I don’t think it [a motivation problem] has existed here. I mean, I may be blind to it, but I don’t think that we have motivation problems.”</p>	<p>very basics and...I run business like that.... there is nobody babysitting you like they did in boot camp.... So, because of that our guys were slipping. They’d go, ‘hey, we’re going to war. Let us grow our hair out.’ The Captain said, ‘No way.’ We were going to enforce [the standard] and the Captain said we’re not going to deviate off that. It’s a good plan.”</p> <p>“Well, any good leader has to modify his style incident to incident, scenario to scenario.... I have done this my entire career and I have always gone back to the basics of uniform regs, no matter what command I go to. Because I always see that is the first thing that is lacking. If that is lacking, if a guy can’t dress himself properly, can’t show up on time for work, and just keep a basic do as you are told. Those are three simple things, show up on time with a good uniform, do as you’re told, and anything above that, that is great. That is the bare minimum to be successful in the Navy.... I’m kind of tough with that. I lead by example and I expect the crew to follow that.”</p> <p>[Describing a sailor’s poor attitude] “We’re going to rip everything out of the ship, and ‘who cares if it’s dirty?’ ‘Who cares if I look like crap in uniform?’ ‘Who cares if my hair is long?’ ‘Who cares if I don’t show up on time?’ Hell, the first day after leave when we came back from the war, I must have had 30 guys show up late. I sat up on the flight deck and watched all these guys come cruising in anywhere from 5 minutes to a half hour late. Any excuse was, ‘Well, there was traffic.’ ‘We weren’t expecting the traffic.’ ‘Oh, there was this, there was that.’ The standard was already starting to slip. They had been out on leave, hanging out at home. They started to demilitarize themselves, I guess, and they come back thinking, ‘Hey, we’re decomming, we’re just going to cruise and just kind of do whatever we want.’ We had to nip that right in the bud. So right off the bat, I got the chiefs together and we had a long talk about the standard that we would not allow it to slip onboard KODIAK.”</p> <p>“The things that affected me the most...when you go to war. We weren’t shooting anybody, but we still had the same time of building, camaraderie that you would get in the field. The things that affected me the most...when you go</p>

Table 22. (cont'd)

Theme	CO	XO	CMC
Motivation	<p>another, if you will, old salt thing. 'Well, you know I've decommed a ship. I know what goes on.'"</p> <p>"The kids feel the same as I do. They love the ship and it's their job and they enjoy working on her, and they want to see her go out with the dignity that she deserves to go out with. Having said that, I think that plays a lot into how these kids are motivated."</p> <p>"I have not seen any downturn in the kids. The focus has changed, but I have not seen any, you know, kids walking around saying 'this sucks'..."</p>		<p>to war. We weren't shooting anybody, but we still had the same time of building, camaraderie that you would get in the field."</p> <p>"Liberty has always been about the only thing that motivates the majority of today's younger sailors. Getting that guaranteed paycheck every two weeks whether you do 40 hours of work or 100 hours of work. Each sailor's personal motivation is different than another, but for the most part the younger guys, they just like to come in and collect a paycheck and would much rather be on the beach or be at home. So it [the decommissioning] <i>really hasn't changed motivation</i>. It just becomes more apparent now since we are not in an operational mode and things are so quiet, and <i>I am just more aware of how many guys are really liberty hounds.</i>"</p> <p>"There was only a handful of guys that were ... the most outstanding junior sailors that ... I'd say make this one guy available [to get orders to his/her next command].... <i>It opened up a can of worms.</i>"</p> <p>"I told them [the sailors who got orders early] not to say anything, but you know word gets out or the orders came in.... But it was okay because these were outstanding sailors. All I had to do was compare the complainer who was substandard to this guy going don't come crying to me."</p> <p>"<i>I don't know if it de-motivated the junior guys, it pissed them off, I'm sure.</i> At a minimum, I'd go, here's the standard you guys should be striving for. If you were like this guy [the good sailor] I'd pull a few strings for you too, but you're not, so it kind of goes back to that standard. Hey...you [have] got a big mouth and now you are going to come crying to me about why you haven't been opened up for [allowed to receive] orders."</p> <p>"<i>It kind of seems hard to motivate a bunch of guys to tear something apart, especially since we spend so much time trying to build this command.</i>"</p>

### *Summary*

As was the case with VALDES, the CO and the XO on KODIAK were aligned in their perceptions about most of the major themes. The CMC had a different perspective on some of the themes that sometimes was at variance with that of his superiors. Specifically, when analyzing the Triad's perceptions of the crew, an interesting dichotomy exists between the CO and XO on the one hand, and the CMC on the other. The CO and XO did not report any morale or motivation problems in the ranks while it seemed that the CMC dealt with this issue very frequently. Either the CO and XO were not aware of the issues that the CMC mentioned, or they chose not to share that information during the interview. As seen during the analysis of the VALDES data's theme of *regret*, this may be due to the CO and XO's desire to project only a positive image of their ship to outsiders.

Another point that should be addressed is the CMC's consistent referral to basic naval regulations throughout the interview. One might deduce that the CMC associated the basic uniform regulations with the duty of decommissioning the ship. The idea of wearing a uniform and maintaining military grooming standards is sometimes difficult for sailors to get used when they are new to the Navy. The idea of decommissioning a ship is also difficult to get used to but, like adherence to uniform standards, it has to be done.

The CO used the term "kids" to refer to the crew twelve times in the transcribed interview data. Although he was referring to all of his sailors, many of whom were undoubtedly older than him, it could be inferred that he felt like a father figure to them. The traditional father figure on a Navy ship is often the CMC. This is because the CMC



is enlisted; he/she is generally older than most of the crewmembers, and it is the CMC's duty to look out for the best interests of the crew. Perhaps the stern personality of the CMC on KODIAK caused a shift of the father figure role from the CMC to the CO.

## CHAPTER 7: CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

In the last three chapters I have presented each Triad's data on a case-by-case basis. In this chapter I will step back and examine the larger picture of all Triad data collectively. The first section of this chapter will analyze connections, similarities, and differences between the major themes common to more than one ship. The second section, will analyze the major themes that emerged from only one ship in the study, and the possible reasons for this phenomenon. Finally, I will discuss possible future uses of the study and implications for further research. Table 23 shows all of the major themes that emerged in this study and which triad members from each ship brought them up. This table will be used as a baseline to begin the discussion.

Table 23. Cross-case analysis of triad input to major themes

Theme	VALDES	JOHN ADAMS	KODIAK
Operational vs. Non Operational & Related Themes	CO, XO, CMC	CO, XO, CSC	CO, XO
Focus	CO, XO, CMC	CO, CSC	CMC
Pride	CO, XO	CO, XO, CSC	CO, CMC
Emotions	CO, XO, CMC	CO, XO, CSC	CO, XO, CMC
Rumors	CMC	CO, XO, CSC	XO, CMC
Motivation		CO, XO, CSC	CO, XO, CMC
Denial		CO, CSC	
Recapitalization	CO, XO		
Upbeat/Positive Attitude	CO, XO		
Buy-in	CO, XO, CMC		
Regret	CMC		

*Major Themes Common to More Than One Ship*

*Operational vs. Non-Operational, Creating a Meaningful Mission, and the Illusion of Being Operational*

This section will discuss three major themes that are very similar but address the concept of the ship's operational mission in slightly different ways (i.e., VALDES: *Operational vs. Non-operational*; JOHN ADAMS: *In Search of a Meaningful Mission*; and KODIAK: *The Illusion of Being Operational*). In describing the operational mission concept, only the VALDES' Triad consistently used the terms operational and non-operational. Regardless, the basic tenants of this theme for all of the Triads are essentially the same: their ships were at one time engaged in the sorts of activities that were the center of naval life (in naval practice they were operational) and at some point in the decommissioning process they crossed a line and began engaging in activities that were perceived to be less critical (i.e., they became non-operational). The Triad members used different terminology to describe this phenomenon and they used different methods to deal with the awareness that they were no longer in essence, operational.

As I alluded to earlier, the VALDES Triad made the most explicit contrast between being operational and being non-operational, in part because the Triad members used the Navy's operational/non-operational language. This greater emphasis can probably be attributed to the CO's strong desire, and possible wishful thinking, that his ship would not be decommissioned and that it might be an active participant in the Gulf War.

In Chapter 5, JOHN ADAMS' major theme *creating a meaningful mission* about the operational status, is so named because that is exactly what the Triad members were

trying to do. They tried to inject some semblance of meaning into the “mission” they had yet to complete. From a Navy perspective, this decommissioning mission was relatively insignificant. By purposely shortening the final stages of the decommissioning timeline, the Triad created meaning and significance by intensifying the pressure to get done what had to be done. This artificial deadline came complete with two very tangible rewards: spending more time with loved ones before reporting to the next assignment, and bragging rights about the speed and efficiency of *their* decommissioning.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, KODIAK was the most operational ship of the three in the study prior to the start of the decommissioning process and the transition from operational to non-operational status took place in the shortest amount of time, without any conscious manipulation of the timeline. This is partly due to the manner in which KODIAK was decommissioned. KODIAK was left in San Diego to be towed to her final destination without any crewmembers on it. This had some positive effects: The crew had less time to dwell on the fate of the ship and was probably much busier than the other two ships albeit for a shorter period of time; also the leaders did not have to deal with transporting crew members back to the homeport. On the KODIAK, the CO maintained the “at sea” routine that his crew had become accustomed to even after the ship had returned to port from her final voyage. Retaining this more rigorous schedule is very unusual, but it had two advantages: First, the working hours were longer; therefore more work could be accomplished in the compressed timeline KODIAK had been given. Second, presumably a portion of the “at sea” mindset was retained by the crew, creating an illusion of a mission and the perpetuation—at least for a brief period—of the motivation that accompanies being operational.

One final thought about the concept of operational mission. The three ships in the study differed somewhat in their operational status in their final days. VALDES and JOHN ADAMS had to be steamed from San Diego, CA to their final resting place in Bremerton, WA before beginning the last phase of the decommissioning. During the final transit, both JOHN ADAMS and VALDES were considered somewhat operational since they were still, in fact, underway. However, at closer examination, they were not really capable of performing in any operational capacity. (This was more true for JOHN ADAMS than it was for VALDES.) Conversely, once KODIAK pulled into San Diego for the last time, the debilitating final steps of the decommissioning began. These steps included rigging the ship to be towed and laying up all of her engineering gear making it impossible to operate the ship without going through a detailed process of re-commissioning.

#### *Focus*

A theme that was discussed by at least one Triad member from each ship was the idea of *focus*. This term emerged numerous times as Triad members referring to the different missions that the crew was required to participate in. The focus was usually being directed toward a mission or goal and away from the aspects of the decommissioning that might cause the crew to be less productive. At a certain point, after the Triad members realized that there was no turning back, the focus was directed to the decommissioning and that became the mission. For instance, on each of the ship's last deployments, the focus was directed to the threat and the mission at hand, not to the upcoming events associated with the decommissioning (i.e., moving families and preparing for the next assignment). This was difficult because all of the ships had to

conduct the preliminary negotiations for their crewmembers' next assignments while they were deployed.

An observation about the type of personalities that are associated with Navy leadership positions might be useful when examining the major theme of *focus*. At a recent transition seminar for senior military officers, the facilitator indicated that when using the Meyers-Briggs personality assessment most officers place themselves in the T (Thinking) and J (Judgment) categories (Ruehlin, 2004, p. 28). This means, among other things, that they are objective and come to closure quickly. This may help explain the frequent mention of the idea of focus by the senior leadership on the three ships. Since they presumably have a predilection to closure, they may believe that focusing on the objectives will not only achieve this goal but also keep the attention away from more distracting ideas, such as the sadness associated with a decommissioning and the lack of motivation that may ensue.

### *Pride*

Triad members from each ship expressed views that their ship was very successful in general and with the decommissioning process in particular. The leaders on a ship are not only expected to view their ship as a success, but it would be unusual if they did not. After all, the leaders are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of their ships and even if they recognize its faults, they are not likely to reveal those in a taped interview (and possibly not even to the members completely).

An interesting data point emerged regarding the *pride* theme when comparing what VALDES and KODIAK Triad members reported about the timeline for final crewmember departures. On the one hand, VALDES sailors, who formally requested to leave early, were prevented from doing so by the chain of command. (This led to the

emergence of the *regret* theme from the VALDES CMC.) On the other hand, KODIAK sailors, whose normal departure date was prior to the decommissioning, volunteered to stay until the very end of the ship's life. This was reportedly because the crewmembers wanted to ensure KODIAK was taken care of and that the process was handled in a dignified manner. Pride was most definitely a motivator for these KODIAK sailors who requested extensions. This may not mean that VALDES sailors did not have the same amount of pride; their pride, however was not displayed in the same fashion as pride was displayed on KODIAK.

### *Emotions*

Decommissioning a ship can be an emotional experience and the data suggest that people on each of the ships reacted emotionally to the decommissioning process. Indeed the *emotions* theme was the only one that every Triad member commented on. Though everyone commented on the emotions stirred by the decommissioning process, the emotions they described varied. The responses ranged from the unexpected giddiness described by the CO of JOHN ADAMS to the dour and somber reflections of KODIAK's CO. The latter sort of emotional response was more the norm and what one would expect to have reported during the decommissioning process. Other terms that Triad members used to describe their emotional response were "excited," "sad," "depressing," "sullen," "melancholy," "subdued," "quiet," "disappointing," "missing," "hard," "closure," "abysmal," and "death."

### *Rumors*

A common theme among all three ships was the uncertainty surrounding the actual decommissioning date. This, in turn, generated rumors that affected all three

ships. Interestingly, even though rumors were present on each of the ships, among the ranks, and off the ship in the various supervisory organizations, not all Triad members reported this theme. The two primary rumors on VALDES and JOHN ADAMS involved the actual decommissioning date and whether the ship would be sunk after the decommissioning. The former was caused, in part by the timing of the decommissionings; VALDES and JOHN ADAMS were scheduled to be decommissioned before the Gulf War. In previous wars ships have been brought out of mothballs to support the war effort.<sup>35</sup> It is a logical line of thinking that during wartime the decommissioning of all assets would be frozen. For whatever reason this was not the case during our nation's most recent war.

KODIAK was not scheduled to be decommissioned until after the war so she could transport Marines during the early stages of the conflict. Consequently, there was no ambiguity about whether the decommissioning would go forward. On KODIAK the main rumor involved the type of decommissioning to be conducted. One of the reasons for the rumors is that the people on the ships have no control over any of these factors and speculation provides some comfort. Every Triad member who brought this theme up revealed that a degree of uncertainty about some facet of the process existed right up to the actual decommissioning day. This caused the rumors and misinformation to spread and for the crew to speculate as to the actual fate of the ship and the crew. This seemed to be one of the primary factors associated with the creation of uncertainty and anxiety in the crews. Not knowing when you would be required to move and how long would you have to prepare yourself and your family for this move caused significant stress for the

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<sup>35</sup> Battleships were brought out of mothballs to support the Vietnam Conflict and numerous cargo ships had to be brought out of mothballs to transport equipment to the Persian Gulf during the 1991 Gulf War.



sailors. On two of the ships the crews developed very skeptical attitudes about their ship's decommissioning date and they subsequently became somewhat cynical. Not surprisingly, rumors were rampant in this sort of environment.

### *Motivation*

Motivation is central to the thesis of this dissertation. In fact, the primary challenge that naval leaders face during the decommissioning process involves motivation; their own, and that of their crews. Both the COs of KODIAK and JOHN ADAMS had similar views of what motivated their respective crews during the final days of their ship's lives. KODIAK's CO said, "I think the biggest motivator is...getting this done. Getting the job done. I think that is the biggest motivator." The CO of JOHN ADAMS said, "I think people are motivated to finish on time." The crews of these two ships were arguably busier than the crew of VALDES during the final days (KODIAK because of the schedule imposed on her, and JOHN ADAMS because of the schedule the CO requested).

### *Major Themes That Emerged from Only One Ship*

Interestingly, the data from VALDES produced the vast majority (four of the five themes) of themes that emerged from only one ship, the topic of this section. Possibly this was because the CO and XO on VALDES consciously developed a strategy to deal with the decommissioning. At any rate, they were the only ones to make the sorts of comments that fit comfortably under the *recapitalization* and *upbeat/positive attitude* themes, and they, along with the VALDES' CMC, said things that could be coded as *buy-in*. The major theme of *regret* was commented on by only one person from one ship—the

VALDES' CMC. For the remainder of this section, I will speculate as to why each of the themes was not mentioned by more than one Triad.

### *Denial*

Two members of the JOHN ADAMS Triad, the CO and the CSC, were the only ones who commented on the *denial* theme. It is noteworthy that the denial they were talking about was not their own, but rather that of the crewmembers. This may be due to the nature of denial—even if they were experiencing it, they may not have been aware of it, and, if they were aware of it, they probably would not have wanted to admit it.

The CO of VALDES may have been experiencing denial based on the rumors surrounding his apparent belief that his ship might not decommission but would be reassigned to participate in the imminent war. His actions to keep VALDES operational for as long as possible certainly support this idea, but there really are no direct comments on his denial from the interview data. This being said, the CO of JOHN ADAMS references the differences between his approach and the VALDES' approach to the decommissioning. His comment alludes to the VALDES (i.e., the CO) being in denial: "In contrast to the VALDES that took the attitude that 'Hey we might get called back to active service and still live as a ship'..."

During the decommissioning process I had many conversations with the other JOHN ADAMS' Triad members about the VALDES and the choices that their leadership had made regarding readiness. I remember standing on the bridge wing with the CO and CSC looking across the pier at the VALDES moored next to us. We discussed why certain pieces of gear that had been removed from our ship had not yet been removed from VALDES, especially since she was decommissioning a month earlier than us. We

concluded that the CO of VALDES was experiencing a form of denial and this denial had manifested itself in such a way that it had slowed the pace of his ship's decommissioning process. Again, however, the CO of the VALDES said nothing that would support the denial hypothesis.

### *Recapitalization*

Although the *recapitalization* concept was only brought up, by name, by the CO and XO of VALDES, it is a concept that applied to all three ships in the study and all decommissioning ships in the Navy, for that matter. It is, after all, the primary reason for decommissioning. Despite this fact, KODIAK's Triad did not comment on this theme at all, and JOHN ADAMS' CO only spoke of this theme to sailors at the smoking area but did not bring it up during the interview. As mentioned earlier, it almost seems that the VALDES CO and XO had a rehearsed explanation as to why their ship was decommissioning. If this was true, it was an excellent method for projecting a consistent message from the chain of command, but it may have sounded artificial if it was repeated too many times. The Triads on KODIAK and JOHN ADAMS did not appear to have such uniformity in their message about why their ships were decommissioning.

### *Upbeat/Positive Attitude*

The *upbeat/positive attitude* theme was primarily mentioned by the XO on VALDES and it seemed to be a method by which he kept himself motivated. The XO indicated that he had to remind himself to be upbeat; in fact, it was one of the things he did prior to addressing his subordinates every morning. Because the *upbeat/positive attitude* theme was also mentioned by the CO on VALDES, but by no other interviewees, it may have been part of a conscious shared strategy to deal with the decommissioning

process. Both the *upbeat/positive attitude* theme and the *recapitalization* theme were unique to the same two individuals.

### *Buy-in*

The *buy-in* theme is another idea that was only mentioned by one Triad, but it is something that was undoubtedly present on all three ships. In fact, most Triad members will attempt to get buy-in from the crew whenever they have a major, ship-wide task to accomplish. The CO needs to “spin” the situation in such a way that there is a positive aspect and that the positive aspect is predominant. A very common example of this would be when a ship is supposed to return to port on a given day and then receives additional tasking keeping her out to sea longer. The entire crew, including the CO, would be disappointed, but it is the CO’s duty to maintain morale at the highest level possible. He or she would need to convince the crew (get buy-in) that the reason for staying out to sea longer is better than going into port. This is a tough sell but many COs are very successful.

### *Regret*

The CMC on VALDES was the only Triad member to comment on the *regret* theme. This was due to an internal issue with his chain of command where the decisions made by the CO, and enforced by the XO, did not allow some crewmembers to leave the ship early. The other interviewees probably had regrets about certain aspects of the decommissioning process and their tours of duty on their respective ships for that matter, but it was evidently not enough to mention in the taped interviews. The frequency with which VALDES’ CMC mentioned this theme indicated that he still had a deep-rooted regret about the way the crew had been treated in the final days of the ship’s life. The

CMC's comments about his regret seemed to be a glimpse, albeit a brief one, through the veneer that was normally presented to outsiders. When comparing the VALDES CMC's comments with those of KODIAK's CMC, the data shows that KODIAK's CMC had many more of these candid moments, in fact, during most of his interview the KODIAK CMC did not seem concerned about how his frank responses might be perceived. The one area that one would think he might have regretted was the way he handled the assignment of orders to sailors. He gave special treatment to certain sailors who he perceived as being top performers, and those that were poor performers were not allowed to apply for their next assignments until much later. The CMC admits that his actions "pissed them off" but there is no indication that he regretted doing this. In any case, KODIAK's CMC did not report any other regrets during the interview. Based on the image he projected during the interview, and the general impression he made on me, the CMC seemed like the type of person who does not admit to regrets very often.

#### *Implications for Policy and Practice*

In the development of new Navy decommissioning policies, many factors come into play but the fiscal requirements and the mission requirements seem to be especially significant. The fiscal requirements of the Navy involve the cost to maintain older ships, and the cost to upgrade the capabilities of those ships to counter current world threats. The mission requirements are requirements to fulfill the various missions as demanded by the current world situation (e.g., a certain number of ships are required in a certain theater of war to ensure success). Truver (2004) discusses the current effort to decommission the first five Aegis cruisers; it reinforces the idea that fiscal belt tightening is the primary factor that plays into the creation of the decommissioning policies:

Greater manning requirements [on the older ships] contribute to annual operating and support costs of about \$60 million for each ship and totaling nearly \$1.8 billion across the Fiscal Year 2005 Future Years Defense Plan. With a growing need to focus increasingly scarce resources on tomorrow's fleet and modernizing "legacy assets" only when it makes best business sense to do so, the Navy expects the cost-avoidance generated by decommissioning these five ships and not attempting a "cruiser conversion" program (in all, more than \$3 billion) will help offset the cost of recapitalizing the force and constructing the Navy's next-generation surface warships. (p. 28)

Based on the data that were generated in this study, other factors could be incorporated into the development of the decommissioning process to make the final outcome more beneficial for all parties, especially the personnel who are tasked with conducting the actual decommissioning. The first policy modification would be the shortening of the timeline from the operational phase to the non-operational phase. The data from the JOHN ADAMS and KODIAK showed that both ships experienced accelerated decommissioning schedules (JOHN ADAMS by request and KODIAK by direction). This seems to have kept the crews busier, and it gave them an additional, albeit final, goal to achieve. In the case of JOHN ADAMS, the CO requested the shortening of the stay in Bremerton for this very reason.

Ideally, a ship would return from deployment (the most operational phase), conduct a stand down period (one month long, to allow sailors to take leave to reunite with loved ones), and then commence an accelerated decommissioning process of about two months. The process can be completed in this three-month span if all parties, both on and off the ship, focus on the final mission. Any longer than the three months in the non-operational condition, provides opportunity for the crew to dwell on the negative aspects of that phase and crew motivation can be adversely affected. This three-month decommissioning policy would provide the Navy with an operational (mission capable)

ship for a longer period of time, and it would mitigate any negative effects that the decommissioning process has on crewmembers.

A second policy change that would positively contribute to the decommissioning process would be the establishment of, and adherence to, an official notification timeline. This refers to the definitive direction from the chain of command for a ship to decommission on a certain date, the type of decommissioning to proceed with, and where the process is to take place. Although an official notification process already exists, all three ships in the study had problems obtaining this information. In fact, the KODIAK XO reported that his ship never received an official notification message to decommission his ship. Had the existing notification policy been adhered to during the ship decommissionings in this study, the number of rumors that were generated would have been vastly reduced. Many organizations Navy-wide use the official decommissioning message to change the way they deal with a ship that has been slated for decommissioning. For instance, the Navy organization that directs sailors to report to a ship to replace those who are leaving needs an official decommissioning message to stop the flow of personnel to that ship. Evidently, on KODIAK, enough phone calls and e-mails from the XO stopped the flow of new personnel and rectified any other situations created by the lack of an official notification message. This *ad hoc* approach is hardly ideal, however.

The previously discussed policy changes would need to be agreed upon and enacted by organizations well above the shipboard level. The likelihood of this actually happening is slight, due to the dynamic nature of world events and the flexible nature of fleet schedules. For instance, the requirement to train the deploying forces necessitates

Opposition Forces (OPFOR) to make the series of training scenarios as realistic as possible (both VALDES and JOHN ADAMS served as OPFOR during their decommissioning processes). The timelines for deployments change with world events and consequently, the need for OPFOR changes with them.

Since the previously discussed policy changes may or may not be implemented, it is important to provide shipboard leadership practices that can be instituted by the leaders on decommissioning ships themselves because they will have a vested interest in improving their own decommissioning processes. As was seen from the analysis of the three ships in this study, no two decommissionings are alike; however, the concerns of the crew, the feelings that one might experience, and morale issues are essentially the same for every decommissioning ship. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 detailed numerous practices of naval leaders that could be considered beneficial, and some not so beneficial, to completing the final decommissioning mission. I have extracted three shipboard leadership practices from the previous chapters that future Triad members can employ to assist them through their decommissioning processes.

The first shipboard leadership practice that could improve the decommissioning process is to maintain clear, consistent, and frequent communication from the Triad about the decommissioning. As mentioned earlier, the Triad on VALDES seemed to do this well, as discussed in the sections dealing with the *recapitalization*, *up-beat/positive attitude*, and *buy-in* themes. The use of the 1MC, the Plan of the Day, discussions at officer and chief meetings, and even informal explanations offered at the smoking break should be used to get this message out. This will keep the crew informed and help to reduce the rumors that can become rampant.



The second shipboard leadership practice is to create a reward system within the decommissioning process. The Navy is replete with reward systems that tap into the motivation and pride that is instilled into sailors and officers when they first enter the service. A reward system that is specifically tied to the decommissioning process would be potentially valuable. The JOHN ADAMS' Triad used the "carrot" of more time at home with loved ones to expedite the final days of the decommissioning process. The KODIAK CMC used the performance of sailors as a means to determine who got to apply for their next assignment first. Although I do not agree with the way the CMC executed this idea, if modified somewhat, it may have merit. (The CMC seemed to use giving priorities for new assignments as a punishment rather than a reward.) There are not too many motivators with more influence than the sailor's livelihood (i.e., where he/she will be stationed next). Suggested modifications would be to publicize the criteria to be eligible to apply for orders early, and somehow tie this to a level of contributions toward the decommissioning process. For instance, if everyone on the ship is required to have all of their assigned spaces painted and prepped as part of the decommissioning process, as soon as those tasks are completed, everyone in the department or division responsible is eligible to apply for orders early. This example is very simplistic and some might disagree with the concept, but if this principle was enacted correctly and equitably, the decommissioning process could be expedited and the sailors would have a viable goal with a tangible reward.

A third shipboard leadership practice is to acknowledge the decommissioning (i.e., check yourself for traces of denial) and allow adequate time for the expression of emotions. I believe that acknowledgement of emotions throughout the decommissioning

process might reduce the amount of denial that crewmembers experience and it may allow the focus of emotions (whether the emotions are sadness or excitement) toward the completion of the decommissioning. Surely the decommissioning ceremony provides this in some respects but other, more informal events might provide a better forum. The CMC on KODIAK seemed to do this well with his description of the many informal get-togethers that he and his fellow chiefs had in the final days of the ship. He explained how they were able to experience closure, something that is required for many on decommissioning ships.

#### *Implications for Further Research*

Those interested in further study of how naval leaders face the challenges of a decommissioning process could explore several areas. The first might be by conducting a replication study that would incorporate the use of triangulation. If conducted within the strict requirements that the Navy and the Institutional Review Board demand, it may be possible to construct a qualitative/quantitative study that would provide the opportunity for triangulation. One way to achieve this might be to construct an anonymous survey to be given to a representative sample of the officers and crew. The purpose of the survey would be to validate the perceptions of the Triad members as reported in taped interviews similar to the ones conducted for this study.

A second avenue of further study could be to construct a study designed to compare and contrast two different types of decommissionings. For instance, the study ships could consist of two ships that were being transferring to the inactive fleet and two ships being sold to foreign navies. In this way, the differences between those two very different types of decommissionings could be explored. The latter type of

decommissioning involves a period of time when representatives from both the U.S. Navy crew and the purchasing country's naval crew navy are living onboard together training and transferring each specific piece of gear and space. One can speculate that the emerging themes on during this type of decommissioning might include reluctance to give away the ship and resentment toward the other navy (toward the foreign navy for taking away their ship, and toward the U.S. Navy for not being as cooperative as they could be).

In a follow-on study the researcher should consider expanding the scope of the study to include approximately 15-20 ships. A study involving this many ships would, no doubt, extend the timeframe of the study over several years but the potential information gleaned could be invaluable to naval leaders.

The information contained in this study can be used in the same fashion as the Navy's Lessons Learned messages discussed in Chapter 2, only, instead of concentrating on procedural issues about the mechanics of decommissioning, like the Lessons Learned messages, it can provide insight about the methods and techniques naval leaders need during their decommissioning processes, and the successes and mistakes of nine naval leaders as they dealt with various leadership challenges. My hope is that future leaders tasked with decommissioning their ships can avoid, or at least mitigate, some of the challenges discussed in this study.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Ship Decommissioning Lessons Learned Message**

DECOMMISSIONING LESSONS LEARNED MESSAGE<sup>36</sup>

ROUTINE

R 000000Z APR 03 PSN 00000000

FM USS VALDES

TO COMDESRON ZERO ZERO

USS JOHN ADAMS

INFO COMNAVSURFPAC SAN DIEGO CA

UNCLAS //N03200//

MSGID/GENADMIN/VALDES//

SUBJ/USS VALDES DECOMMISSIONING LESSONS LEARNED//

REF/A/DOC/NISMO/17NOV02//

REF/B/RMG/VALDES/000000ZJAN03//

REF/C/RMG/CNSP/00000NOV02//

REF/D/RMG/CNSP/000000NOV02//

NARR/REF A IS USS SHIP INACTIVATION PLAN. REF B IS STABILITY

WAIVER REQUEST. REFS C AND D ARE TWO PART SHIP SUPPLY

DEPARTMENT DECOMMISSIONING PROCEDURES.//

RMKS/1. THE FOLLOWING USS SHIP DECOMMISSIONING LESSONS

LEARNED ARE SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF FUTURE READY RESERVE

"SAILAWAY" SHIP DECOMMISSIONINGS:

## A) ENGINEERING

## 1. A. ITEM: FIRE MAIN

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: AS EQUIPMENT IS SECURED AND COOLING WATER TAGGED OUT, FIRE MAIN PRESSURE INCREASES SIGNIFICANTLY. SHIP HAD ONLY 1 FIRE PUMP ONLINE AND REGISTERED 150 PSI WITH A 1.5 INCH OVERBOARD FROM THE PIER FIRE TREE CONNECTION FULLY OPEN. NORMALLY, 1 FIRE PUMP WOULD PROVIDE ABOUT 120 PSI. AS A RESULT, EXCESS FIRE MAIN PRESSURE WAS DIVERTED OVER THE SIDE TO MAINTAIN PROPER SYSTEM PRESSURE.

C. RECOMMENDATION: THE KEY TO SHUTTING DOWN ALL SYSTEMS IS FIRE MAIN. THE RECOMMENDED SEQUENCE TO SHUTTING DOWN FIRE MAIN IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) CLOSE OUT BERTHING SPACES
- 2) PUMP CHT SYSTEM DRY
- 3) PUMP FUEL TANKS DRY
- 4) TAKE DOWN A/C'S
- 5) TAKE DOWN POTABLE WATER SYSTEM
- 6) TAKE DOWN FIRE MAIN SYSTEM

FIRE MAIN IS USED TO FLUSH THE CHT TANK AND THE MAJORITY OF THE FIRE MAIN CAN BE DRAINED THROUGH THE CHT SYSTEM TO THE PIER

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<sup>36</sup> This message has been modified to remove any references to the actual names of ships, people, and other information in an attempt to maintain a degree of confidentiality.



RATHER THAN THE BILGES. THIS WILL SAVE BILGE PUMPING TIME AT THE SHIP'S STORAGE SITE.

2. A. ITEM: DEFUELING

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: SHIP EXPERIENCED INITIAL DIFFICULTY IN DEFUELING IN BREMERTON BECAUSE THE INSTALLED FUEL TRANSFER SYSTEM TAKES TOO LONG TO ACHIEVE A SUCTION AND SUFFICIENT DISCHARGE HEAD PRESSURE TO MAKE IT TO THE 02 LEVEL DISCHARGE PIPING.

C. RECOMMENDATION: REQUEST PNEUMATIC PUMPS AND HOSES/AIR FITTINGS, MANIFOLD AND AIR HOSES TO USE FOR DEFUELING IN BREMERTON. IF THE FUEL BARGE IS ON THE PORT SIDE OF THE SHIP, OPEN THE FUEL OIL SERVICE TANK TOP FOR 5-204-2-F AND DROP THE PUMP HOSES (SHIP USED TWO. ANY MORE AND THE DRAIN ON THE AIR SYSTEM IS GREATER THAN THE ACHIEVED PUMPING RATE AND BECOMES A HINDRANCE TO OVERALL DEFUELING RATE). TRANSFER ALL FUEL INTERNALLY FROM ALL TANKS TO THE SERVICE TANK VIA THE PURIFICATION SYSTEM AND OFF THE SHIP. IF THE BARGE IS STBD SIDE TO, USE 5-204-1-F IN THE SAME MANNER.

3. A. ITEM: BATTLE LANTERNS

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: BECAUSE THE SPACE CLOSEOUT INSPECTOR NEEDS TO VERIFY THAT ALL BATTLE LANTERN BATTERIES ARE REMOVED, THIS CAN BE A PROCESS THAT TAKES A LONG TIME AS LANTERN BULB PLATES ARE UNSCREWED TO INSPECT THE LANTERN'S INTERIOR CAVITY.

C. RECOMMENDATION: THE INSPECTION PROCESS IS EASIER IF WHEN THE BATTERIES ARE REMOVED, THE LANTERN FACEPLATE IS REATTACHED OFF TO THE SIDE LEAVING THE LANTERN CAVITY OPEN FOR THE INSPECTOR TO PERFORM A QUICK VISUAL CHECK. THIS AVOIDS REOPENING EACH CLOSED OUT BATTLE LANTERN. ONCE THE BATTERIES ARE REMOVED, TRANSFER THEM TO ANOTHER SHIP OR TURN IN AS HAZMAT. IF TURNED IN AS HAZMAT, THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE TERMINALS MUST BE REMOVED TO PREVENT ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE AND A FIRE. FOR RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES, CUT THE WIRES AS CLOSE TO THE BATTERY AS POSSIBLE AFTER REMOVAL.

4. A. ITEM: BILGES

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: THE INACTIVATION PLAN REQUIRES THE SHIP TO BE TURNED OVER TO THE INACTIVE FLEET WITH TANKS PUMPED DRY OR TO LOW SUCTION. AS SYSTEMS ARE CLOSED OUT, THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR OILY WASTE OR CONTAMINATED WATER TO END UP IN THE BILGES. SYSTEM CLOSEOUT MUST BE CAREFULLY COORDINATED TO LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF LIQUID PUMPED TO THE BILGES AND AVOID EXTENDED CLOSEOUT TIME IN BREMERTON.

C. RECOMMENDATION: PUMP DOWN AS MANY "CLEAN" SYSTEMS THROUGH THE CHT SYSTEM AND THE PIER AS POSSIBLE. THE MAJORITY OF SYSTEMS ARE JUST WATER (POTABLE WATER, WASTE HEAT, CHILL WATER, FIREMAIN) AND CAN ALL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE CHT SYSTEM SAFELY.

5. A. ITEM: RHIB

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: THE WORK REQUIRED TO PREPARE THE RHIB FOR SHIPMENT IS EXTENSIVE AND TIME CONSUMING. PRIOR TO SHIPMENT, ALL FLUIDS MUST BE DRAINED, THE RHIB MUST BE DEFUELED, BATTERY DISCONNECTED, BILGE PLUG REMOVED AND BILGES WIPED CLEAN. ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED AFTER THE RHIB HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE WATER. DUE TO THE DESIGN OF THE GRAVITY DAVIT, THE RHIB MUST BE LOWERED INTO THE WATER FIRST AND THEN CRANED INTO A SHIPPING CRADLE ON THE PIER.

C. RECOMMENDATION: PUT THE RHIB IN THE WATER PRIOR TO MOORING AND TAKING ANY SWOB BARGES ALONGSIDE WHICH MAY BLOCK THE DAVIT. GETTING THE RHIB OFF THE SHIP AND INTO THE CRADLE ON THE PIER EARLY IS THE KEY TO GETTING THIS TASK COMPLETED QUICKLY.

6. A. ITEM: STABILITY

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: FOLLOWING THE REMOVAL OF ALL AMMUNITION, FOOD AND GSK STORES, SIDES WAS APPROXIMATELY 300 TONS LIGHTER AND SAT ALMOST TWO FEET HIGHER IN THE WATER. STABILITY CALCULATION PRODUCTS AVAILABLE DID NOT SUPPORT LIGHT-LOADED CONDITION.

C. RECOMMENDATION: AS MATERIAL IS REMOVED FROM THE SHIP, CLOSE ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO STABILITY. SHIP COORDINATED WITH NAVSEA, CODE 5P, AND CNSP TYPE DESK OFFICER, FOR RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM AND FOR WAIVER REQUEST (REF B). NAVSEA'S SOLUTION REQUIRED THE SHIP TO BALLAST DOWN WITH APPROXIMATELY 80 TONS OF SEAWATER IN FOUR FUEL TANKS (5-100-1, 5-100-2, 5-250-2 AND 5-250-3) TO COMPENSATE FOR LIGHT LOADING. THE ADDITION OF THIS DIRTY BALLAST REQUIRED COORDINATION WITH NISMO FOR REMOVAL UPON ARRIVAL IN BREMERTON, AS IT WOULD HAVE ADDED APPROXIMATELY THREE DAYS TO THE TIME REQUIRED TO DEFUEL AND PUMP OILY WASTE IN BREMERTON. THIS ADDED TIME WOULD HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT GIVEN THE LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME (APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK) AVAILABLE FOR FINAL CLOSEOUT AND TURNOVER OF THE SHIP IN BREMERTON. SHIP FURTHER MITIGATED THIS TIME REQUIREMENT BY PUMPING ALL CLEAN BALLAST OVER THE SIDE AT SEA PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN BREMERTON.

7. A. ITEM: SAFETY CHAINS/SHACKLES

B. BACKGROUND/DESCRIPTION: PRIOR TO TURNOVER TO THE INACTIVE FLEET, ALL TEMPORARY (ROPE) LIFELINES AROUND WEATHERDECKS,

PLATFORMS AND INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR STANCHIONS AND PLATFORMS MUST BE REPLACED WITH CHAIN. THE SPACE CLOSEOUT INSPECTOR WILL NOT ACCEPT SPACES WITH TEMPORARY LIFELINES OR SAFETY LINES.

C. RECOMMENDATION: ORDER ENOUGH CHAIN AND SHACKLES PRIOR TO THE START OF THE DECOM AVAIL TO AVOID DELAYS IN SPACE CLOSEOUT.

#### B) SUPPLY/FINANCIAL

##### 1. A. ITEM: MATERIAL/EQUIPMENT DISPOSITION/TURN-IN

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE DECOM AVAIL, COMNAVSURFPAC WILL TRANSMIT A TWO PART MESSAGE (REFS B AND C) OUTLINING SUPPLY DEPARTMENT DECOMMISSIONING PROCEDURES. A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS AND POINTS OF CONTACT AT COGNIZANT AGENCIES (SPAWAR, FTSCPAC, NWSO CRANE, CNSP, NAVSEA, ETC.) IS IMPERATIVE TO A SMOOTH OFFLOAD OF EQUIPMENT AND EQUIPAGE. C. RECOMMENDATION: IDENTIFY AND ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH COGNIZANT AGENCIES AND POC'S TO REVIEW THESE REFS IN THEIR ENTIRETY PRIOR TO THE START OF THE DECOM AVAIL. CLEAR UP ANY DISCREPANCIES OR QUESTIONS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

##### 2. A. ITEM: DECOM/XFER UPDATE MEETINGS

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: DECOMMISSIONING A SHIP REQUIRES AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF WORK AT ALL LEVELS OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND. DUE TO THE INCREASED ACTIVITY ACROSS A TIGHT TIMELINE, THE PROBABILITY OF REDUNDANT OR DUPLICATIVE WORK INCREASES, LOWERING EFFICIENCY OF THE OVERALL WORK EFFORT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE INFORMATION FLOWING UP CENTRALLY TO THE DECOM COORDINATOR AT ALL TIMES.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS: SHIP CONDUCTED DAILY "WORKING" DECOM MEETINGS WITH DECKPLATE LEVEL LEADERSHIP (DH AND BELOW) TO COORDINATE POA&M COMPLETION AND EQUIPMENT OFFLOADS. A FORMAL MEETING WAS HELD ONCE EACH WEEK WITH MAJOR PLAYERS (CO, XO, DH'S, DECOM COORDINATOR, ISIC REP, CONTRACTORS, PORT ENGINEERS AND CNSP TYPE DESK OFFICER) TO KEEP SUPPORTING COMMANDS, SHIP'S' CHAIN OF COMMAND AND THE SHIP'S INTERNAL LEADERSHIP INFORMED OF MAJOR ISSUES. THIS MEETING ALSO SERVED AS A CLEARING HOUSE FOR ANY ISSUES REQUIRING SPECIAL MENTION IN THE WEEKLY DECOM SITREP.

##### 3. A. ITEM: BUS DRIVERS

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: SHIPS WILL REQUIRE BUSES IN BREMERTON TO MOVE LARGE NUMBERS OF THE CREW TO THE AIRPORT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS OF THE DECOMMISSIONING PROCESS AND TO MOVE PERSONNEL TO BEQ/BOQ ROOMS. CONTRACT BUS DRIVERS ARE EXPENSIVE AND MUST BE SCHEDULED IN ADVANCE.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS: LICENSING SHIP'S FORCE TO DRIVE BUSES PROVIDES THE MOST FLEXIBILITY AND COST SAVINGS FOR THIS ISSUE.

THERE IS ONE AUTHORIZED BUS DRIVER LICENSING OFFICIAL IN SAN DIEGO AND CLASSES FILL UP QUICKLY. CONTACT THE BUS LICENSER AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE TO ENSURE CLASS AVAILABILITY.

4. A. ITEM: DRMO TURN-INS

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: DRMO IN BOTH SAN DIEGO AND BREMERTON PLACES RESTRICTIONS ON THE ITEMS THAT THEY WILL ACCEPT. FOR EXAMPLE, MATTRESSES AND PILLOWS MUST BE CLEAN (NO STAINS) AND IN GOOD SHAPE, AND EQUIPMENT MUST BE IN WORKING CONDITION. CERTAIN DAYS ARE DESIGNATED FOR TURN-IN OF CERTAIN ITEMS, E.G., ON FRIDAYS DRMO ONLY ACCEPTS FURNITURE. FINALLY, TURN-IN OF EQUIPMENT MUST BE COORDINATED WITH DRMO AT LEAST ONE DAY IN ADVANCE.

C. RECOMMENDATION: ARRANGE FOR A DRMO REP TO MEET WITH DIVISIONAL REPS ON THE SHIP BEFORE THE DECOM AVAIL BEGINS TO DISCUSS TURN-IN REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES.

5. A. ITEM: AFLOAT PURCHASE PROGRAM

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: PER REF B, SHIPS ARE REQUIRED TO TERMINATE SMALL PURCHASING CAPABILITY 30 DAYS PRIOR TO DECOMMISSIONING DATE TO ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME FOR ACCOUNT CLOSEOUT THE SHIP WILL STILL REQUIRE THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE REQUIRED SUPPLIES THROUGHOUT THE DECOM AVAIL.

C. RECOMMENDATION: WORK WITH ISIC AND TYCOM TO TRANSFER A PURCHASING FUND TO A SISTER SHIP IN THE SQUADRON TO PROCESS SMALL, EMERGENT PURCHASES DURING THE DECOM AVAIL.

6. A. ITEM: FOOD SERVICE INVENTORY

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: BALANCING NUTRITIONAL NEEDS AND VARIETY WITH IMPENDING GALLEY CLOSURE IS DIFFICULT. ONCE A FIRM DATE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR GALLEY CLOSURE, TWO OPTIONS EXIST FOR FEEDING THE CREW DURING THE DECOM AVAIL. THE FIRST IS TO CONTINUE TO COOK MEALS IN THE GALLEY UP TO CLOSURE DATE. THE SECOND IS TO SERVE PRE-PACKAGED FROZEN MEALS IN THE FINAL WEEKS OR DURING THE TRANSIT TO THE SHIP'S FINAL STORAGE LOCATION. SHIP CONTINUED TO COOK MEALS UP UNTIL THE DAY THE SHIP ARRIVED IN BREMERTON.

C. RECOMMENDATION: SHIP REDUCED ITS MENU VARIETY AS A MEANS TO MAINTAIN FOOD INVENTORY AS LOW AS POSSIBLE AS THE GALLEY CLOSURE DATE APPROACHED. THIS METHOD PROVIDED THE LEAST EXPENSIVE OPTION WHILE MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST QUALITY FOOD SERVICE. DESPITE USING THE EQUIPMENT TO COOK MEALS THROUGHOUT THE FINAL DELIVERY TRANSIT, IT TOOK ONLY ONE DAY TO CLOSEOUT THE GALLEY AND SCULLERY ONCE IN BREMERTON.

7. A. ITEM: RELIEF FOR SHIP'S STORE CLOSEOUT INVENTORY

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: AS THE CLOSURE DATE FOR THE SHIP'S STORE APPROACHES, PRICES MAY BE REQUIRED TO BE DECREASED TO

HELP SELL REMAINING INVENTORY. RELIEF FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITEMS THAT PROVE HARD TO SELL IS AVAILABLE ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS FROM NEXCOM. C. RECOMMENDATION: APPLY EARLY IN THE DECOM AVAIL TO NEXCOM FOR RELIEF FOR HARD TO MOVE ITEMS.

8. A. ITEM: OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION FUNDS (ORF)

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: ORF FUNDS ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO USE FOR DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONIES UNLESS A CIVILIAN GUEST TO DOD MEMBER RATIO OF 50 IS MET. BECAUSE DEPENDENTS OF DOD MEMBERS, RETIRED SERVICE MEMBERS AND DOD EMPLOYEES DO NOT COUNT AS CIVILIANS, THIS RATIO CAN BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE. ADDITIONALLY, THE USE OF OPTAR OR MWR FUNDS FOR DECOM CEREMONY RECEPTIONS IS ILLEGAL. DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONIES ARE AS MUCH A PART OF NAVY TRADITION AS COMMISSIONING CEREMONIES. THEY PRESENT A DIGNIFIED WAY TO HONOR A SHIP AND HER CREW, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT, FOR THEIR SERVICE TO THE NATION. WITHOUT ORF FUNDS BEING PROVIDED, SHIPS FACE A STRUGGLE IN PAYING FOR AN APPROPRIATE CEREMONY AND RECEPTION TO HONOR THE SHIP WITHOUT THE HELP OF PRIVATE PURCHASES.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS: RECOMMEND ORF FUNDS BE PROVIDED TO DECOMMISSIONING SHIPS IN THE SAME MANNER AS FOR COMMISSIONING SHIPS TO ALLOW FOR PURCHASES OF RECEPTION ITEMS.

9. A. ITEM: ADVANCE TRAVEL/DLA/PAY

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: THE TRANSFER OF THE ENTIRE CREW IS AN EVENT UNIQUE TO A DECOMMISSIONING SHIP. COORDINATING THE PAYMENT OF ADVANCED TRAVEL, DLA AND PAY REQUESTS IS DIFFICULT AND REQUIRES SIGNIFICANT PRIOR PLANNING. EARLY ACTION ON THESE REQUESTS IS ESSENTIAL TO COMPLETING THEM ALL ON TIME.

C. RECOMMENDATION: SHIP' DISBURSING OFFICE BEGAN EXECUTING ADVANCE PAYMENTS FOR DETACHING/TRANSFERRING CREW ONCE IMMEDIATELY INSIDE OF THE 30 DAY WINDOW PRIOR TO DECOM. AT A MINIMUM, ALL PAYMENTS SHOULD BE EXECUTED PRIOR TO CLOSEOUT OF THE DISBURSING OFFICE AND TRANSFER OF THE OPERATION TO BASE PSA/PSD. IF PROPERLY ORGANIZED, THIS WILL ECONOMIZE PROCESSING TIME, REMOVING THE DIFFICULTY OF TRYING TO EXECUTE AT THE SHIP'S STORAGE LOCATION PORT.

11. A. ITEM: HAZMAT DISPOSAL

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: PER REF A, SHIPS ARE REQUIRED TO BE TURNED OVER TO NISMO FREE OF ALL HAZMAT. WHILE THE BULK OF ALL HAZMAT CAN BE DISPOSED OF IN SAN DIEGO, "SAILAWAY" SHIPS WILL REQUIRE SMALL QUANTITIES OF CERTAIN TYPES OF HAZMAT NEEDED TO MAKE THE VOYAGE TO BREMERTON HAZMAT DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST ARE MUCH MORE COSTLY THAN IN SAN DIEGO, IN THAT THE DISPOSAL COST PER POUND OF HAZWASTE IS

SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER. THIS REQUIRES CAREFUL PLANNING AND COORDINATION WITH THE HAZMAT CENTER IN THE SHIP'S STORAGE LOCATION.

C. RECOMMENDATION: REMOVE AS MUCH HAZMAT FROM THE SHIP AS POSSIBLE PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. IDENTIFY HAZMAT REQUIRED FOR THE TRANSIT EARLY ON AND ESTABLISH LIAISON WITH THE HAZMAT CENTER IN THE INACTSHIPS STORAGE LOCATION TO DETERMINE DISPOSITION OF THESE ITEMS UPON ARRIVAL. SHIP CLOSED ALL SEVEN DAY LOCKERS AND OFFLOADED EXCESS HAZMAT BY THE SECOND WEEK OF THE DECOM AVAIL. EVEN SO, THOROUGH INSPECTIONS OF WORKSPACES WERE REQUIRED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK TO IDENTIFY AND REMOVE ANY HAZMAT THAT MANAGED TO FIND ITS WAY BACK INTO WORKSPACES. ARRIVING AT THE STORAGE LOCATION WITH AS LITTLE HAZMAT AS POSSIBLE IS KEY TO ELIMINATING DELAYS IN SPACE CLOSEOUT.

#### 12. A. ITEM: POST OFFICE

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: POSTAL SERVICES IN SAN DIEGO ARE CENTRALLY FUNDED BY COMNAVSURFPAC FOR ALL SHIPS. POSTAL SERVICES IN BREMERTON ARE FUNDED BY INDIVIDUAL SHIPS. SHIPS WILL NEED TO MAIL EVALS/FITREPS, PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS, REPORTS, DECK/ENGINEERING LOGS, ETC., DURING THE FINAL WEEK OF THE DECOM AVAIL TO CLOSE OUT ALL REQUIREMENTS. FUNDING FOR POSTAL SERVICES MUST BE IN PLACE TO ACCOMMODATE THESE REQUIREMENTS.

C. RECOMMENDATION: ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDS ARE RETAINED BY THE SHIP TO PAY FOR FINAL SHIPPING COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DECOMMISSIONING AT THE STORAGE LOCATION. A DD 1149 FUNDING DOCUMENT SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN ADVANCE.

#### C) OPERATIONS

##### 1. A. ITEM: CLASSIFIED MATERIAL

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: THE SHIP MUST BE TURNED OVER TO THE INACTIVE FLEET WITH NO CLASSIFIED MATERIAL REMAINING ONBOARD. ALL CLASSIFIED MATERIAL CAN BE DESTROYED. THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN CLASSIFIED TECH MANUALS ONBOARD. FACILITIES FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF CLASSIFIED MATERIAL IN BREMERTON ARE LIMITED. SHIP SCHEDULED WEEKLY BURN RUNS THROUGHOUT THE DECOM AVAIL, AND TWICE WEEKLY RUNS THE FINAL WEEK.

C. RECOMMENDATION: REMOVE AS MUCH CLASSIFIED MATERIAL FROM THE SHIP AS POSSIBLE PRIOR TO DEPARTURE. THOROUGHLY SCRUB REQUIREMENTS FOR KEYMAT, CRYPTO EQUIPMENT, PUBS, ETC., PRIOR TO THE TRANSIT. SHIP' COMMPLAN DID NOT REQUIRE ANY CRYPTO EXCEPT FOR THAT NEEDED TO PROCESS CUDIXS AND SATHICOM.

##### 2. A. ITEM: REMOVING ADP ASSETS FROM THE SHIP

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: THE SHIP WILL REQUIRE THE USE OF

COMPUTERS TO COMPLETE ADMIN WORK THROUGHOUT THE DECOM AVAIL. REF C REQUIRES SUBMISSION OF ADP ASSET INVENTORY FOR REDISTRIBUTION TO CNSP THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO DECOMMISSIONING.

C. RECOMMENDATION: CONDUCT A THOROUGH INVENTORY OF ALL LEASED ADP ASSETS AND STANDALONE ASSETS PRIOR TO THE DECOM AVAIL, AND RECONCILE THE INVENTORY WITH CNSP. DETERMINE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ADP ASSETS THROUGHOUT THE DECOM AVAIL. CONSOLIDATE COMPUTERS FOR USE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. SHIP DEVELOPED A PLAN TO REMOVE APPROXIMATELY A THIRD OF ALL ADP ASSETS EACH WEEK OVER A PERIOD OF THREE WEEKS. SHIP TRANSITED TO BREMERTON WITH THE SIPRNET LAN WORKING AT 4 NODES (CO, XO, OPS, RADIO) AND THE NIPRNET LAN AT 7 NODES (CO, XO, OPS, SUPPO, RADIO, ADMIN, ADP). THESE REMAINING ASSETS WERE REQUIRED TO ALLOW SHIP'S FORCE PERSONNEL TO COMPLETE EVALUATIONS, AWARDS, DRAFT AND REVIEW MESSAGE TRAFFIC, ETC., THROUGHOUT THE TRANSIT. THE REMAINING ADP ASSETS WERE REDISTRIBUTED TO PACNORWEST SURFPAC UNITS UPON ARRIVAL IN BREMERTON.

3. A. ITEM: OFFICE SPACE REQUIREMENTS IN BREMERTON

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: DUE TO THE NEED TO SHUT DOWN POTABLE WATER, CHT AND VENTILATION TO ALLOW ENGINEERING SPACE CLOSEOUTS, SHIP BECAME VIRTUALLY UNINHABITABLE UPON ARRIVAL IN BREMERTON. THIS CONDITION MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO RETAIN ADMIN OFFICES ONBOARD.

C. RECOMMENDATION: SHIP ARRANGED FOR OFFICE SPACE AT THE FISC PUGET SOUND BUILDING. THIS SPACE CONSISTED OF SEVEN CUBICLE AREAS EQUIPPED WITH PHONES AND UNCLAS COMPUTERS AND WAS ADEQUATE. NO SIPRNET ACCESS WAS PROVIDED AS THE FISC BUILDING IS NOT A SECURE SITE. EARLY COORDINATION WITH FISC BUILDING MANAGER AND FISC HELP DESK IS VITAL TO AVOID DELAYS IN OFFICE SPACE SET UP AND LAN ACCOUNT ESTABLISHMENT. IN ADDITION, MAKE ARRANGEMENTS EARLY TO SUPPORT ANY ANTICIPATED WEEKEND WORK IN THE OFFICES. THE FISC BUILDING IS LOCKED ON THE WEEKENDS AND REQUIRES SECURITY BADGE ACCESS. BADGES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE BASE SECURITY OFFICE WITH SUFFICIENT ADVANCE WARNING.

4. A. ITEM: MESSAGE TRAFFIC

B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: WITH THE REMOVAL OR LAYUP OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND COMPUTERS, TRANSMITTING AND RECEIVING MESSAGE TRAFFIC DURING THE FINAL DAYS OF THE INACTIVATION REQUIRES PRIOR COORDINATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES.

C. RECOMMENDATION: SHIP COORDINATED WITH NCTS PUGET SOUND TO GUARD SHIP TRAFFIC INPORT. SCRUB COMMAND GUARD LIST PRIOR TO LEAVING HOMEPORT TO ELIMINATE ALL UNNECESSARY MESSAGE TRAFFIC. IN ADDITION, CONTACT MANAGERS OF AIGS/CADS TO HAVE

THE COMMAND REMOVED FROM THE LIST. BE PREPARED FOR SLOWER THAN USUAL RECEIPT AND TRANSMISSION OF TRAFFIC. SHIP' IT'S DOWNLOADED TRAFFIC TO DISK THREE TIMES DAILY AT NCTS PUGET SOUND. TRAFFIC WAS LOADED INTO MDS ONBOARD, AND LATER ON A STAND-ALONE COMPUTER IN THE FISC OFFICE SPACE ONCE RADIO WAS CLOSED OUT. A HARD COPY READ BOARD WAS ROUTED TO CO, XO, DH'S, CMC AND CDO. OUTGOING TRAFFIC WAS HAND-CARRIED ON DISK TO NCTS PUGET SOUND ON THE FINAL RUN EACH DAY FOR TRANSMISSION.

**D) CMS/CRYPTO**

**1. A. ITEM: CMS ACCOUNT DISESTABLISHMENT**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: PRIOR TO DECOMMISSIONING, THE SHIP'S CMS ACCOUNT MUST BE DISESTABLISHED AND ALL TRANSACTIONS RECONCILED. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THROUGH MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF TRANSACTIONS, DCMS MAY HAVE INCOMPLETE RECORDS FOR RECEIPTS AND DESTRUCTION. ALL TRANSACTIONS MUST BE RECONCILED PRIOR TO ACCOUNT DISESTABLISHMENT. THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS PROCESS IS ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH DCMS WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE START OF THE DECOM AVAIL TO ENSURE A THOROUGH INVENTORY AND SUFFICIENT TIME TO DETERMINE THE STATUS OF ANY OUTSTANDING TRANSACTIONS.**

**C. RECOMMENDATION: REQUEST ACCOUNT DISESTABLISHMENT INSTRUCTIONS FROM DCMS AT LEAST 90 DAYS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE DECOM AVAIL. THIS SHOULD ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO RECONCILE ANY OUTSTANDING TRANSACTIONS THAT WOULD DELAY DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACCOUNT.**

**2. A. ITEM: CRYPTO AND KEYMAT INVENTORY**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: DECOMMISSIONING SHIPS WILL LIKELY CONTINUE TO OPERATE UNTIL THE START OF THE DECOM AVAIL. CRYPTO AND KEYMAT MAINTAINED IN THE CMS INVENTORY TO SUPPORT THESE OPERATIONS AS WELL AS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS MUST BE CAREFULLY MANAGED DURING THE FINAL MONTHS OF A SHIP'S LIFE. AUTOMATIC DISTRIBUTION OF CRYPTO AND KEYING MATERIAL MUST BE CAREFULLY MANAGED TO ENSURE REQUIRED MATERIAL IS HELD ONBOARD WITHOUT ACQUIRING A LARGE EXCESS OF MATERIAL THAT MUST LATER BE DESTROYED. SOME CRYPTO AND KEYMAT WILL BE REQUIRED DEPENDING ON COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS DURING THE TRANSIT TO THE STORAGE LOCATION.**

**C. RECOMMENDATION: CONTACT DCMS AT LEAST 90 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF DECOM AVAIL START DATE TO DETERMINE FINAL SHIPMENTS OF CRYPTO AND KEYMAT. THOROUGHLY SCRUB REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS CIRCUITS AND HARDCOPY KEYING MATERIAL NEEDED DURING THE FINAL MONTHS OF THE SHIP'S LIFE AND THE COMPLAN SUPPORTING THE TRANSIT TO THE STORAGE LOCATION. MAKE GOOD USE OF OTATS/OTARS WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO LIMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR HARDCOPY MATERIAL.**



**E) COMBAT SYSTEMS****1. A. ITEM: FORCE PROTECTION EQUIPMENT**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:** THE BULK OF THE SHIP'S FP EQUIPMENT WILL BE REDISTRIBUTED EARLY IN THE DECOM AVAILABILITY DUE TO DEMANDS CREATED BY FLEET FP EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES. MANAGING THE POTENTIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE NEED TO REMOVE EQUIPMENT VERSUS SHIPBOARD SECURITY REQUIREMENTS IS CHALLENGING.

**C. RECOMMENDATION:** IDENTIFY FP REQUIREMENTS AT STORAGE LOCATION EARLY AND DEVELOP PLANS FOR EACH FPCON. COORDINATE WITH BASE SECURITY TO ALLEVIATE WATCHSTANDING REQUIREMENTS, ESPECIALLY AS CREW SIZE DECREASES IN THE FINAL DAYS OF THE AVAIL. SHIP COORDINATED WITH NAVSTA BREMERTON BASE SECURITY OFFICE TO PROVIDE SENTRIES AT THE HEAD OF THE PIER AND PROVIDED REMAINING SHIPBOARD WATCHES FROM SHIP'S COMPANY. AS SOON AS ALL CLASSIFIED MATERIAL, WEAPONS AND ORDNANCE HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE SHIP, MAINTAINING A FULL SAT/BAF ONBOARD BECOMES OVERKILL AND A REDUCED SECURITY PRESENCE IS POSSIBLE BY ARMING SOUNDING AND SECURITY, QUARTERDECK AND A SECURITY ROVER.

**2. A. ITEM: SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:** ALL SMALL ARMS MUST BE RETURNED TO NSWC

CRANE, INDIANA, AND SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION TURNED IN TO A NAVAL WEAPONS STATION PRIOR TO TURNOVER OF THE SHIP TO THE INACTIVE FLEET. SMALL ARMS WILL BE REQUIRED THROUGHOUT THE DECOM AVAIL TO MEET FP AND SAT/BAF REQUIREMENTS.

**C. RECOMMENDATION:** COORDINATE WITH STORAGE LOCATION TO SUBCUSTODY WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION. SHIP COORDINATED WITH NAVSTA BREMERTON TO SUBCUSTODY SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION FROM THEIR ARMORY SO THE SHIP'S INVENTORY COULD BE REMOVED.

**F) GENERAL DECOMMISSIONING ISSUES 1. A. ITEM: SPACE LIST**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:** AN ACCURATE LIST OF ALL SPACES ONBOARD IS ESSENTIAL TO PROPER AND EFFICIENT SPACE CLOSEOUT. AS SHIPS GO THROUGH MODIFICATIONS DURING THEIR LIFE CYCLE, SPACES MAY BE CREATED OR REMOVED AND DIVISIONAL RESPONSIBILITY MAY CHANGE.

**C. RECOMMENDATION:** THOROUGHLY SCRUB COMPARTMENT LIST TO REMOVE ANY DUPLICATE LISTINGS. IDENTIFY ANY SPACES WHOSE NAMES OR RESPONSIBLE WORKCENTER HAVE CHANGED AND ADD ANY SPACES THAT MAY HAVE BEEN CREATED AS THE RESULT OF MODIFICATIONS TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SHIP. HAVE THIS PRODUCT HANDY WHEN NISMO REP/LIAISON ARRIVES TO BEGIN SPACE CLOSEOUT.

**2. A. ITEM: SPACE CLOSEOUT**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: SPACE CLOSEOUT CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST TIME CONSUMING ASPECTS OF THE DECOMMISSIONING PROCESS. NISMO WILL PROVIDE THE SHIP WITH A GENERAL LIST OF REQUIRED ACTIONS FOR SPACE CLOSE PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE DECOM AVAIL.**

**C. RECOMMENDATION: ESTABLISH A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPACE CLOSEOUT INSPECTOR EARLY ON. HE OR SHE IS THE SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT AND THE SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT REGARDING SPACETURNOVER. THE KEY IS TO START EARLY. IN ADDITION, WORK WITH THE SPACE INSPECTOR TO DETERMINE ANY SPACES HE OR SHE WILL NOT ACCEPT UNTIL ARRIVAL IN THE STORAGE LOCATION. THIS WILL ALLOW SHIP'S FORCE TO FOCUS ON SPACES THAT CAN BE ACCEPTED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.**

**3. A. ITEM: DUTY SECTION REQUIREMENTS**

**B. BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: SHIP EMPTIED MATTRESSES, RACK CURTAINS, PILLOWS AND LINENS FROM ALL BERTHING COMPARTMENTS, STATEROOMS AND CPO MESS SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVAL IN BREMERTON IN PREPARATION FOR CLOSING OUT BERTHING AREAS. THE CREW MOVED INTO ASSIGNED BOQ/BEQ ROOMS THE FIRST DAY INPORT. BERTHING SPACE ONBOARD THE SHIP FOR WATCHSTANDERS, FIRE PARTY AND SECURITY FORCES WAS EXTREMELY LIMITED. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CLOSE OUT BERTHING AREAS AND MAINTAIN A FULL DUTY SECTION ONBOARD. SHIP COORDINATED WITH THE BASE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO RESPOND TO ANY EMERGENCIES ON THE SHIP, ALLOWING THE SHIP TO MAINTAIN A 4 MAN RAPID RESPONSE TEAM TO CONTAIN CASUALTIES ONBOARD. IN ADDITION, SAT AND BAF PERSONNEL REMAINED ONBOARD OVERNIGHT. SHIP KEPT ONE OVERFLOW BERTHING COMPARTMENT (9 BUNKS) OPEN TO ACCOMMODATE THESE PERSONNEL. ALL OTHER DUTY SECTION PERSONNEL SLEPT IN THEIR BEQ ROOM UNLESS THEY WERE ON WATCH.**

**C. RECOMMENDATION: REMOVE ALL CLASSIFIED AND OTHER MATERIALS FROM THE SHIP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO ELIMINATE THE NEED TO MAINTAIN 24 HOUR SAT/BAF ONBOARD. COORDINATE WITH BASE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES SO THAT THE IET CAN BE REDUCED TO A RAPID RESPONSE TEAM.**

**G) THE FOLLOWING DECOMMISSIONING ITEMS AND PRODUCTS PRODUCED BY SHIP ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE ISIC DECOMMISSIONING COORDINATOR: POA&M, EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION LIST, APPLICABLE DECOM MESSAGES, DECOM CEREMONY NOTICE, STABILITY WAIVER REQUEST MSG AND LIST OF SPACES.//**

**BT**

**APPENDIX B**  
**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

### Consent to Participate in a Research Study

CDR Darren McGlynn, a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is conducting a study entitled "Facing the Leadership Challenges on Decommissioning U.S. Navy Ships." Below are the conditions under which participants in the study will work:

1. Participants will be asked to describe what they have done during the decommissioning process. The interviews will be tape-recorded, the tapes will be transcribed and analyzed, and the information in the transcription will be used to write a report and additional articles. The tapes will be destroyed after five years.
2. There are no physical risks associated with participation in this research outside the general fatigue and mental discomfort associated with being interviewed for no longer than an hour.
3. Participation in this research is *entirely voluntary* and consent to utilize all or any part of the interview material can be withdrawn at any time.
4. Although pseudonyms will be used, participants in the study may be identified in what is written and particular quotes may be attributed to particular individuals; confidentiality, in other words, is not guaranteed

Interviewees will have an opportunity to review material from the interview transcript that might be used in any written reports or articles based on this study; interviewees will be given the opportunity to withdraw or change any material that is likely to be quoted. The information collected will be used in CDR Darren McGlynn's research paper for a doctoral level independent study class.

If participants have questions or concerns at any point, they are encouraged to contact CDR Darren McGlynn at (619) 524-9583 or [dmcglynn@cox.net](mailto:dmcglynn@cox.net) or his advisor, Dr. Robert Donmoyer at (619) 260-7445 or [donmoyer@sandiego.edu](mailto:donmoyer@sandiego.edu).

There is no agreement either written or verbal beyond what is contained in this consent form.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and on that basis, I give consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

Signature of Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Two copies of this form will be provided, one for the researcher and one for the participant.*