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Mississippi Katrina DR Response
MS 35-05A After Action Report

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This After Action Report consists primarily of input from Capt Chris Cook of MSWG, Maj Owen Younger of TXWG, and Lt Col Rickey Oeth of ILWG, and was compiled by Maj Younger. Comments from ground teams and mission staff have also been incorporated. Each overall section is identified by bolded and underlined headings, and the author of each of these major sections is identified on the next line in parentheses.

INITIAL PREPARATION AND INITIAL OPERATIONS

(Author – Capt Chris Cook)

On Sunday, 28 September 2005, we in MS WG began to preposition assets and equipment and ready our personnel as much as possible. Many of MS WG key personnel live in coastal areas and were unreachable from Sunday for the next several days. Katrina hit with full force on Monday, 29 September and continued north through out the day and into the early morning of Tuesday. Tuesday evening MS WG began planning and asset relocation to ICP at Hawkins Field, Jackson. Wednesday morning with less than a dozen personnel MS WG began operations coordinating with MEMA in support of relief operations, and search for unaccounted for MS WG members in areas hit by Katrina.

Early on, confusing information was received from NOC. Initially we were told that CAP would NOT be needed and that the Air Force had everything under control. We did not even slow our pace, our search for CAP personnel only intensified. AFRCC was contacted by the IC with a response from the AFRCC that when CAP is ready to turn off ELTs there is a mission number ready. MS WG initially began deploying ground and air

assets to search for and silence ELTs since initially we were told that we would not be needed or used. While searching, Aircrews verified roadways and bridges for ground crews. This information was two fold in that we had several civilians come by ICP to inquire about road conditions to the coast and it paved the way for a more rapid deployment of ground teams when tasking did come.

Many civilians were given food and water at ICP so they could make the trip to check on family. This doesn't sound like much, but two things should be mentioned here. One is that all these folks were looking for help and found help from CAP. Not one soul was sent away without ample food, water, fuel and available road conditions. The second item is that the IC staff was without food at times, we always had water. That CAP members would give the last morsel of food to someone in need speaks volumes in my book.

The conditions at ICP were rough at best. The intent here is **not** to take away from those dear folks on the coast in any way or suggest that our difficulties compared with the struggle to survive on the coast. I just want you to have a picture of what these extraordinary members of CAP had to go through while helping their fellowman. There was no electricity, we did have running water, but we couldn't drink it. The ICP was in a metal building and the temperature inside was oppressive to say the least. Gasoline became difficult, if not impossible, to find. The fuel shortage raised another difficulty that we've never trained or prepared for. Cash is the only means to pay for things like gas and fuel in times such as these. But, moving light on our feet we passed the hat among ourselves, and even cashed a couple of checks at the bank to keep our teams moving. I never heard any member complain or gripe. The only question asked was what can be done next.

MS WG Commander, Col John Wilkes lead several searches for our members that had not yet been accounted for on the coast. His heroism is something I will remember for the rest of my days. Col Wilkes selflessly searched and located several of our people single handedly. He flew sorties to clear roads for ground teams and worked tirelessly each day of the mission without regard for him self. Col Wilkes' home had damage and was flooded by the storm, yet he continued to place the needs of others before himself.

From day one CAP had communications. Though sketchy at times, we never lost communications. Lt David "Hank" Rogers, commander of Keesler squadron, made radio contact with high bird while in the presence of Biloxi fire and police personnel. (Hank is Chief Building Inspector for the City of Biloxi) A storm of questions came at Hank from these folks asking, "who are you talking to and how?" A repeater on top of one of the buildings on the coast was brought back online on Thursday 01 September. until someone cut the cables to the antennas and set up mini dishes this repeater worked flawlessly. (This willful act of sabotage is under investigation by the authorities) With these communications capabilities we, CAP, were able to help the rescue and search efforts in the Biloxi and Gulfport areas. Some of MS WG personnel, employed by MSU, had access to satellite photo data. Lt. Hank Rogers put in a request for aerial photo flights so Biloxi search and rescue personnel could "see what is behind the walls of debris and

make better decisions on how to navigate and deploy.” At that point in time no photos were available for delivery to Lt. Rogers in a timely fashion, but our MSU CAP members heard the call on the radio, made a few downloads and put a disc on the next flight to FOB Trent Lott. The disc contained satellite photos of the entire Biloxi/ Gulfport area with two meters resolution and saved incalculable time and effort for the searchers, which means people suffered less and lives were saved.

Safety was **never** compromised, at anytime on my watch. CAP personnel did **NOT** want to become a casualty and wanted to remain on task. Because of this desire, the utmost attention was given to every detail of every sortie weather ground or air. Safety briefings were given, issues discussed and decisions made. GTLs and IC staff discussed hazards and potential hazards and many of us were not new comers to disasters.

No Mission Chaplains were immediately available to MS WG, but as the mission continued CISM teams arrived.

From my point of view:
(Capt Chris Cook)

We started with a very young and inexperienced mission staff. We had veteran personnel in the field and in the air. Support from our National Commander and Vice Commander was outstanding. I can not describe the feeling of hope that I felt when I spoke with Gen Pineda on the phone and he told me help was on the way, “Hang in there, Buddy”. When I pulled into the parking lot of the ICP that morning, I saw Gen Glasgow in the parking lot with a trailer full of relief supplies, equipment and gasoline. A sight for sore eyes.

At times, working with the NOC was difficult, not because of the people, but because the mission seemed unclear for them. The methods of notification used by the NOC to other wing’s ground teams were faulty. The NOC repeatedly released ground and air sorties without the expressed approval of the IC. On several occasions, the teams released did not make contact with ICP until on site at one of the FOBs. According to CAP regulations **ALL** sorties must be released by the IC. This did **NOT** happen on several sorties in this mission. Example, one aircrew flew a G8 into FOB Stennis, completely bypassed ICP and Hawkins field where all air operations were based. I asked the pilot who released this flight without giving instructions on what to do, the pilot’s reply was “John Salvador released this flight, Buddy”. This flight originated in PA WG, by the way.

According to regulations the IC is in command and no sortie, ground or air, will be released or covered under any mission without the ICs approval. The IC should have control, not the NOC.

Earlier in this report, I mentioned we only had about a dozen people signed in initially, and of that number less than half were IC staff. Repeatedly, the NOC tried to

communicate through email or fax, and the ICP had **no** access to either since we were in a disaster zone. Calls from the NOC came in expressing the extreme discontent of the Air Force over not getting some report in by a certain time that I had never even heard about, nor had it ever been required before. It turns out that the NOC requested the reports via email, after being notified that ICP had limited communications and no electronic method of data transfer. The NOC seemed to ignore requests, and facts given to them by the IC or IC staff. In one situation, I was able to check my email. I downloaded several messages, some of which, were from the NOC. One message requested a man hour report to be turned in by 1700 local. The next message opened, less than a minute later was from the NOC requesting a change in the format of the report that was due by 1700. The next message opened less than one minute later was also from the NOC, and was for a change in the change requested and this change must be submitted NLT 2030 local. I received this message on my server at 2047 local. At this point, the IC notified the NOC that we would no longer attempt to comply with reporting due to unrealistic reporting requirements and a severe shortage in IC staff. The NOC called and asked if it would be easier for us if they called and took verbal reports. The IC replied that they were welcome to any data we have available, complete or incomplete, but we would do our mission first and report second. A system was developed over the next several days utilizing the state director's office and personnel.

OPERATIONS DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

(Author – Maj Owen Younger)

Mission Objectives

The overall Katrina relief effort for the state of Mississippi was lead by the USCG. CAP was assigned responsibilities that came from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) by way of the USCG. Our final customer from the perspective of operations performed for the benefit of the state of Mississippi was MEMA. In addition to support for MEMA, CAP also provided support for the USCG (outside of the MEMA-to-USCG tasking state needs), for FEMA, for the Air Force, and for other agencies. The objectives identified in the Incident Action Plan for the entire operating period from 5 SEP 2005 through 11 SEP 2005 were as follows:

1. Make contact with the members of MSWG who had not reported in following the storm
2. Make contact with USCG personnel who had not reported in after the storm
3. Support for MEMA missions as assigned
4. Support for 1st Air Force and outside agency missions as assigned

Operations Discussion

Ground

The ground mission as assigned to CAP by MEMA (via the USCG) was to make contact with individuals in four affected counties in the southern tip of the state: Hancock, Pearl River, Stone, and Jackson. Ground teams were deployed at three forward staging areas: 1) Stennis, 2) Wiggins, 3) Pascagoula. The operational concept was to attempt contact with individuals on a residence-by-residence basis in areas where contact would be most beneficial to the people remaining in those areas, and then to perform short interviews in order to document the persons in each residence and identify any needs. The completed interview sheets were then forwarded to MEMA, and any critical needs were to be relayed back to Jackson MB by the most expeditious means. The teams were also provided with the locations of water and food distribution facilities within their areas of operation so that local residents could be informed. Progress in this mission was tracked by way of documenting completed grids of each county, as identified by MEMA. In addition to this task, CAP ground teams were also tasked with locating and making contact with CAP and USCG personnel who had not yet reported in after passage of the storm.

Air

The air mission for this operation was multi-dimensional. Aircraft and crew were used for digital imagery for both state and federal needs, for transport of critical personnel (both CAP and other), for lifesaving flights, for direct resupply of ground teams, and for airborne communications platforms.

CISM

CISM teams were deployed at all three forward staging areas and also at Jackson MB. Some ground teams had already rotated out when CISM support arrived, but following the deployment of CISM personnel, all members received CISM debriefings before being released from the mission.

PARTICIPATION

As of the end of the mission, a total of 214 individuals participated for a total of 14,615 man hours. 19 echelons participated, including personnel from 16 Wings, from two region staff's, and individuals from Nat HQ. The following chart provides a breakdown of participation by echelon, and includes the total man hours:

Wing/Echelon	Aircrew	Ground Teams	CISM	Mission Staff
Alabama		15		1
Arkansas		8		
California				1
Florida	2	8		
Georgia		14		
Illinois		13		1
Indiana		7		2
Louisiana			1	
Missouri		13		
Mississippi	27	7		12
North Central Region				1
Nebraska		9		3
Nat HQ			1	3
Ohio				4
Pennsylvania		26		2
Southwest Region			1	
Tennessee	4			
Texas	8	8	5	2
Wisconsin				5
Sub Totals	41	128	8	37
Total personnel	214			
Total Man Hours	14615			

Safety

The Mississippi Katrina Relief effort was incident and mishap free. This is significant given the distance that ground teams and aircrew traveled in order to arrive at Jackson Mission Base, the number of wings included in the effort, the operational tempo of the mission, the number of people involved, and the fact that ground teams were deployed in hurricane affected areas. The increased awareness of our safety environment and the deliberate use of ORM concepts contributed directly to the safety success of this mission. An item by item ORM discussion follows that attempts to identify certain successful actions and policies used for the mission.

- Daylight Operations. The ground teams that were forward deployed were located in areas with road obstructions and infrastructure damage. In order to make sure that all road transport was safe, ground teams were restricted to daylight operations only, and were instructed to remain at their staging areas at night.

- Aircraft Daylight Operations. Due to unavailable power at some forward airfields, resupply aircraft were only permitted to operate into and out of these airfields during daylight hours.
- Ground Team contacts. In order to minimize the possibility that ground teams would be confronted with individuals who might be skeptical of our desire to assist, ground teams were instructed 1) to operate in groups of no fewer than three people, 2) to always be in uniform, and 3) to always wear their required orange vests.
- Aircraft Inspections. The Air Operations Branch Director Maj Russ Melvin enacted a policy that each aircraft signed in to the mission would have a CAPF 71 inspection performed immediately, followed by a new CAPF 71 inspection every five (5) days. Aircraft in need of maintenance were identified and removed from service if necessary. Several of the mission pilots signed in at the mission were rated A&P mechanics and were able to perform small items like oil changes on site.
- Aircrew Duty Hours. The CAPR 60-1 limitations on aircrew duty hours were scrupulously enforced, as they should be. In some cases, in order to ensure that the crew day would not be exceeded, some aircrews planned to recover at and RON at the forward staging areas following their last flight of the day. This was a reasonable practice given that the flight time one way from the forward areas back to Jackson Mission Base was around 1.4 hours.
- Food and Water. Special attention was paid to the supply situation both at the Jackson Mission Base and also at the forward staging areas. Aircraft resupply sorties made periodic drop offs of MRE's and bottled water when necessary. Ground Teams were advised to let Jackson Mission Base know if their supplies were ever reduced below the 2 day level. Arrangements for resupply were made in every case.
- Communications. The ability to communicate with the forward areas provides a measure of safety all by itself. Primarily through the use of High Bird, but also with the assistance of ALE and Sat Phones, communications were maintained with each of the forward areas.
- Operational Periods. Ground teams, aircrew and mission base staff were placed on a 6-7 day rotation. By engaging members for a defined length of time and rotating them out on a schedule a margin of safety was gained in preventing excessive fatigue. This rotation was key not only to safety but also to the overall success of the mission.
- CISM Support. This mission brought with it considerable stress factors which, combined with long mission base duty hours and somewhat primitive sleeping arrangements, after a time began to impact the effectiveness of all personnel on

the mission. The effect of these factors on a mission of this magnitude is both expected and inevitable, but with CISM support this impact was alleviated to a great extent.

Safety Issue Averted

In a single circumstance, one individual in a residence located in Jackson County had a concern that the CAP ground team member might be a looter. The team member approached in daylight and in uniform, but was alone. Evidently some announcement on a radio had advised people in uniform who were alone should be considered looters. The Mission Base staff was not able to verify this information. However, upon hearing of this, the IC contacted each staging area to reiterate that no fewer than three people should approach a residence, and that all members be in a full and proper uniform with appropriate orange vests.

Future Safety Recommendations

- Whenever CAP ground teams are to be deployed in affected areas where this fear might be likely on the part of local residents, all efforts should be made to advise local radio stations that our teams are in the area. Training for the sort of house-to-house contact that was requested of CAP by its customers on this mission should be developed and implemented. That training should include ways to successfully interact with individuals who may be skeptical of our status.
- A second future safety recommendation is that no aircraft be deployed to a mission without having a CAPF 71 inspection completed prior to that departure.

Sorties and Cost

This mission exceeded a total of 200 combined ground and air sorties. Due to the size and scope of this mission the total number of sorties and total cost are unavailable to the Incident Commanders who are contributing to this report at the time of its writing.

DEMOBILIZATION

(Author - Lt Col Rickey Oeth)

The process of demobilizing the mission started when information from nightly staging area manager reports indicated that the ground teams were no longer being effective in

their mission. It became abundantly obvious that recovery in the effected counties was well underway and the general living conditions of the residence being surveyed was improving when the teams found people mowing their lawns and on their way out to eat dinner. When the living conditions of the teams was in ways worse off than those they were supposed to assist, the decision was made by the IC with concurrence from BG Glasgow to cease operations. It should be noted that after the decision to begin closing the operations a call was received from the NOC informing the IC that three additional ground teams were being send. The IC informed the NOC that the teams were no longer needed and to recall them. Two of the three teams arrived at the ICP despite the IC's decision to recall them.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to the demobilization was the disposition of mission assets back to their original wings. From reading the earlier narrative concerning the opening of the mission, the rapid operations tempo combined with a lack of mission base staff (most notably a logistics section chief) resulted in equipment being used and brought in to meet the immediate needs of the mission without due record keeping. The closing mission base staff found themselves not knowing what equipment was being used and where it had come from. The staff had to go on a equipment fact finding mission to find out what was out there and who it belonged to. A plan was then developed by the planning section chief to move some assets to secure storage for later retrieval and bring other equipment back to the ICP to be immediately returned to their wing. It should be noted that the ground teams played an invaluable part in moving assets to their final destinations. If they had not stepped up to the plate, it would have been on the shoulders of the Mississippi Wing to organize and return everything.

There did not seem to any hesitation on the part of CAP wings to send much needed equipment to this mission. There was one exception however. One wing vice-commander kept demanding that the IC sign and send a CAPF 37C to their wing for communications equipment being used. After several emails the IC finally wrote a memo for record that the equipment was being used and that that the IC took custodial responsibility for the equipment. Wing commanders should be reminded of the regulations concerning use of CAP owned equipment at missions. This annoyance could have been averted through better knowledge of the CAP regulations of the part of the wing's command staff.

Another consideration of the demobilization plan was developing a procedure for submitting reimbursements to the members who worked the mission. In most missions, it is ultimately the responsibility of the IC with assistance of the finance/admin section chief to ensure all of the reimbursement paperwork is submitted. The scope of this mission coupled with a lack of an finance/admin section chief precluded the outgoing IC from handling this function. BG Glasgow conferred with NHQ and worked out that each wing would send their respective reimbursements to CAP/FM, an elegant solution that ensured the CAP members would be reimbursed in a timely manner and that no undue workload would be placed on the outgoing IC. The CAPF 108's could be cross-checked with the sortie listing provided to the NOC by the planning section chief to ensure the legitimacy of the reimbursements.

It has been previously stated that the CAP CISM team played an important role assisting members with coping with the inevitable stresses and strain this kind of mission will produce. In any future operations of this kind, CISM teams should continue to play a part as their value is felt long after the event is over.

The final disposition of the mission paperwork was left with the Mississippi Wing Commander.

From my point of view:

(Lt Col Rickey Oeth)

As the last IC, it was my responsibility to briefly continue operations and head the demobilization phase of the mission. I was blessed that there had been IC's prior to me that had set into motion a system that worked despite a severe shortage of mission base staff. The hand off from Major Younger to myself went smoothly and there was no interruption in the mission. Looking back, I can clearly see that the shortage of mission base staff affected mission base staff members profoundly by diminishing their overall effectiveness. Workdays often started at 0600 and ended at 0000 (the workday hours did improve as more staff arrived). CAP should not allow missions of this magnitude to be as handicapped by lack of mission base staff as Katrina was. The comments made by Major Younger resound in my ears concerning staff saturation. He could not have been any closer to the truth. When command and control begin to falter, this causes immediate safety concerns and jeopardizes the outcome of the mission.

On a personal note, in almost thirty years of CAP never have I bonded with so many in such a short period of time as what took place in Mississippi. I believe that times like this bring out the best in people and indeed, in this case, the best in CAP. It is moving to see CAP members, hurricane victims themselves, setting aside their own lives and problems to help others. Just as inspiring is watching members coming from all over to work as a team. Most inspirational is watching CAP's senior leadership role up their sleeves and "get their boots dirty." BG Glasgow particularly deserves recognition as he was a consistent, bonding force throughout the mission smoothing the transition from IC to IC. While there are important lessons that CAP must learn from this mission in order to better the organization, it is equally important to look the big picture as see it as a job well done.

MISSION SUCCESS

(Author – Maj Owen Younger)

With respect to the ground mission in the four assigned counties, CAP made contact with 4266 residences for a total of 8504 individuals. Many of these individuals told our ground teams that CAP was the first contact they had received from any officials

following the storm. The air mission in this operation either directly supported the ground effort above or met other critical needs for federal and state agencies.

As of the time of the writing of this After Action Report, one Save is confirmed on a specific AFRCC Mission Number, but a determination on the remainder of the saves from the overall DR effort is still pending.

Summary

This mission had both successes and shortcomings. Overall, however, we were able to make contact with over 8500 individuals and provide assistance where needed, we were able to support the State of Mississippi directly, and we were able to support 1st AF and other federal agencies with imagery and transport capability.

The Mississippi Wing carried the weight of this disaster on its own shoulders for many days until relief arrived. The performance of MS WG under adverse conditions, the wing's professionalism, its commitment to service before self, and its devotion to the people of the State of Mississippi and other areas along the coast, served as an example for those who rotated in to this mission following in their footsteps. In this mission, Mississippi Wing set the standard, and the rest of us tried to live up to that level of commitment and performance.

CAP has performed in a manner that should make all of us proud.

MISSION STAFF

(Author – Maj Owen Younger)

During the period from 5 Sep 2005 to 11 Sep 2005, the mission staff organization chart was as follows:

Incident Commander – Maj Owen Younger
Liaison Officer – BG Rex Glasgow
Mission Safety Officer – Maj David Starcks
Planning Section Chief – Lt Col Rick Oeth (Later)
Operations Section Chief – Maj Russ Melvin (Later)
Admin Officer – Capt Shannon Juhl
Air Operations Branch Director – Maj Russ Melvin
Assistant Air Operations Branch Director – Maj David Starcks
Flight Line Supervisor – Maj David Starcks
Ground Branch Director – Maj Jim Maher
Ground Branch Director – Capt Eric Hudzinski
Communications Unit Leader – Lt Col Dan Ritchie

Operations Section Chief – Initially OPEN
Planning Section Chief – Initially OPEN
Finance Admin Section Chief – OPEN
Logistics Section Chief – OPEN
Information Officer – OPEN
Mission Chaplain – OPEN

These individuals worked long hours doing jobs that were not glorious or exciting, they endured stress, they slept on cots or on the floor, and they gave this mission everything they had. Without the commitment of these individuals there would have been no ground team successes, there would have been no aircrews, there would have been no transport missions and there would have been no saves. Not a single one of these individuals held anything back, and every single one of them is worthy of the highest praise. They forwent the ability to actually see the damage, they gave up the chance to fly or be on a ground team themselves, and instead they accepted even greater burdens. It was my privilege to work beside them.

MAIN ISSUES AND LESSONS LEARNED

(Author – Maj Owen Younger)

No mission ever happens without learning new lessons. Below are a summary issues encountered and lessons learned that are grouped into three main areas: 1) Command and Control, 2) Mission Clarity, and 3) NOC and C4 Support. The intent of this section of the report is not to point fingers, lay blame, or otherwise disparage specific individuals. It is my belief that all work is simply a process, and that when processes need improvement those needs should be identified clearly for further action. It is my hope that a review of these issues will enable future Incident Commanders to avoid some of the initial problems this mission encountered.

Command and Control

Below is a list of issues related to the Command and Control Challenges posed by this mission. A thorough analysis of each is provided from the point of view of the IC and of mission staff, and where appropriate the solutions that worked well are given.

- IC Saturation. At the time of the arrival of the first non-Mississippi Wing replacement IC (Maj Younger, TXWG), the Mississippi Wing Staff members working at the mission base were all tired and ready to head for home. They had been working for a week or more under very difficult conditions, and their desire to leave to take care of their own homes and families was understandable. Their efforts up to that point were significant and even heroic. The remaining mission

staff, after the dust settled, consisted of the IC, an Air Ops Branch Director, a Ground Branch Director, a Communications unit, and a Liaison Officer. A request was made of the NOC for assistance, and that is discussed in more detail below, but with respect to Command and Control the mission staffing situation in and of itself speaks directly to the subject. There simply was not enough mission staff, resulting in the saturation of the staff that was available, which led to a reduced level of command and control. The mission staff lacked the resources to exert any more control than it did on 5 SEP. On 6 SEP when BG Glasgow and Maj Younger flew out to the Staging Areas for direct briefings those problems should have been alleviated to some large extent, but additional follow ups were not possible. An effort should be made in the future to ensure sufficient mission staff is available.

- Initial Deployment. Initial ground team self releases and lack of coordination with Jackson Mission Base led to a difficult command and control situation in the first days of the ground involvement. Teams did not have a clear picture of expectations. They also had no clear sense of mission. The first teams that deployed without direct contact with the Jackson MB tended to do their own thing rather than accomplish the tasks assigned to them.
- Operational Control. Exacerbating the problem listed above, some ground teams did not consider themselves to be under the operational control of the IC at Jackson Mission Base. In one particular instance, when a disagreement occurred between one of the Ground Team Leaders and the IC, the GTL contacted his own wing commander in order to dispute the instructions given by the IC. This was completely inappropriate. It is important to note that the only teams that seemed to have this problem were from the Pennsylvania wing. Additionally, it is significant to note that the only wing commander who saw fit to contact the IC was the PA WG CC. Within a short period of time the IC made the determination that to maintain proper command and control over the forward staging areas, delegate Ground Branch Directors subordinate to the main Ground Branch Director at Jackson Mission Base would be deployed at each forward staging area as staging areas managers.
- Ground Team Failure to Follow Directions. When the problems above were identified by the IC and Operations Section staff, the decision was made that the IC (Maj. Younger) and LO (BG Glasgow) would personally depart for the staging areas with the morning resupply flights in order to brief the ground teams directly. The hope was that by 1) asserting a more direct influence and 2) providing clear expectations, that the needed results could be obtained. In the cases of the Ground Teams at Pascagoula and Wiggins, this tactic was successful, but for some reason the teams at Stennis still continued to pose problems. In spite of direct instructions to make themselves available to BG Glasgow for a briefing, these teams failed to follow those instructions. Furthermore, in spite of the direct briefing from the General to certain of the Team Leaders, the teams continued to fall short of complying with their instructions. It is my personal conclusion that

the particular ground teams in question, all from Pennsylvania Wing, would not have cooperated under any circumstances. The conclusion is proven by the both by the performance of the teams that were rotated in to replace the four PA teams and also by the fact that the staging areas that posed the least command and control challenges were the ones where the PA WG teams were NOT deployed.

- Communications Problems. The Wisconsin Wing provided an excellent radio command post vehicle and well trained operators. However, technical difficulties with the Installed whip antennae and with the ALE HF gear in that vehicle precluded effective communications for the first critical days of the ground operation. Also, we discovered quickly that the Sat Phones were not fully reliable due to system saturation. Sat phone calls that made it through were frequently dropped suddenly in the middle of message traffic, and most calls simply did not go through. The ultimate solutions to all of these communications problems were to use more conventional wire antennae, to go out to the staging areas and assist them in setting up ALE HF gear, and finally to make extensive use of High Bird aircraft equipped with airborne repeaters. Of all solutions, by far the repeater equipped high bird was most effective.
- Distributed Concept of Operations. The fact that this operation occurred with distances as great as 180 statute miles between the ICP and the forward Staging Areas is obviously a factor in the complicated nature of this operation. A lack of training with this type of environment contributed to the original problems posed by this situation. However, once ICP staff with considerable experience in utilizing area command in a distributed environment arrived, these problems were worked through.
- Lack of Information Officer. One fundamental shortcoming of this mission was the lack of an IO from the onset. To some extent the problem was alleviated by asking BG Glasgow to put out information daily on our day-to-day accomplishments, but this was not sufficient to deal with continually incoming requests for information from local and national media. This must not be overlooked in the future.

Mission Clarity

Below is a list of issues related to Mission Clarity that affected this mission. In the discussion, some relation back to the Command and Control will be made, but these issues are otherwise intended to be viewed as stand alone subjects.

- Ground Team Expectations. The initially deployed Ground Teams were either sent directly into the field by the NOC, or they were self released and simply went to one of the forward staging areas (in the case of PA WG). In both of these

cases, the ground teams simply did not develop a clear picture of the needs of the Jackson Mission Base in order to support CAP's final customer, MEMA. This lack of clarity led to a number of Ground Team sorties and operations that simply did not contribute to our stated mission in support of our customer. Given the number of instances and attempts to clarify made by the ICP staff, only two reasonable conclusions may be drawn: Either 1) That some of the Ground Teams simply chose to be uncooperative. This is obviously unacceptable. Or 2) That in spite of all attempts to make our mission known and understood that some teams in the field still continued to lack clarity.

- AFNSEP Tasking. During the first week or more of our air operations, there was no question either by the NOC, the EPLO, or the Air Ops staff that any air sorties necessary to support the forward staging areas or to transport personnel or supplies as required were an essential part of the mission and acceptable under our AFNSEP MA (mission authorization). However, as the mission progressed and the USAF representatives as EPLO were rotated, this support became unclear, and finally the Mission Base lost the ability use available aircraft to directly support the forward staging areas other than by ONE resupply sortie per day plus four HighBird sorties. In the future, a better briefing should be given to the EPLO officers as they rotate during the course of the mission so that there is no confusion between the EPLO and Air Ops ICP staff about what constitutes an appropriate sortie from one day to the next.
- NOC Release of Ground Teams and Aircrew. The nature of this operation is different from other CAP training and operational missions in that the ICP staff (IE, the Incident Commander or his delegate) do not have the authority to approve sorties. All sorties in this operation were subject to the direct approval of the EPLO via the NOC. This complex chain of command and the delays posed by it lead to operational issues during the mission. In a number of cases the requests for sortie approval for subsequent day operations were unresponded to even after many hours. This places a large burden on the IC and ICP staff. Ultimately this situation led to a micromanagement of each specific sortie by the EPLO and the NOC. If this situation is acceptable operationally by the Air Force and by CAP, then we will have to live with it during missions of this nature. However, there are inherent inefficiencies in this process and we all ought to be able to look at this and create a better process. Ultimately these inefficiencies lead to a number of impacts, but the issue is included here due to their contribution to a lack of mission clarity.

NOC and C4 Support

This is a discussion of the shortcomings in how additional assets and staff personnel were requested from the NOC by the IC and ICP staff. These comments are direct, but are not

intended to criticize a particular person. The goal of these comments is to point out how the process failed so that lessons can be learned and the failure not be repeated.

- Responsiveness to ICP Staff Needs. When the IC requested staff support in the form of a qualified **Logistics Section Chief** and a qualified **Planning Section Chief**, the NOC advised that they would be sending five (5) fully qualified Incident Commanders. Not only was this inappropriate to the needs of the mission, but it was also NOT what was required to do the jobs that needed to be done. When I spoke to the NOC about this, I specifically advised them that I did NOT need 5 Incident Commanders. In spite of my insistence, they sent them anyway. When these individuals arrived, not a single one of them was qualified as either a Logistics Section Chief or a Planning Section Chief. It is completely unclear to me why the NOC and C4 would go out of there way to do exactly what the IC specifically requested that they NOT do, and moreover why the NOC and C4 would FAIL to provide the support necessary to complete the mission. While this was not wasted effort on the part of the NOC and C4, it hindered the mission more than it helped. This scenario should never again be repeated. **The IC and ICP staff who are in the field should not be second guessed – send exactly what they have asked for.** Another IC is “not just as good” to serve as a replacement in any other position, and you have very diminishing returns when you all of the sudden have 8 chiefs and no Indians. If CAP is serious about qualified people filling the jobs they are assigned, then this situation should not happen. Otherwise we are kidding ourselves about being sufficiently trained.
- Timeliness of NOC support. After I made the request indicated above, it took the NOC and C4 four (4) days to actually send people.
- ICP Staff Taking Personnel from Ground Teams. During the four day wait time to receive additional staff assistance, the IC made the decision to meet directly with all incoming personnel who were qualified Ground Team Leaders and Ground Branch Directors in order to possibly draw staff positions from those personnel. This is the approach that was used to obtain the Planning Section Chief (who eventually became the final IC). This should NEVER be how the process works. Unfortunately, this was exactly what was necessary to do get the job done. The fact that it was necessary indicates that there are serious breakdowns in how support is provided by the NOC and C4.

RECOMMENDATIONS – OPENING DAYS

(Author – Capt Chris Cook)

Train and prepare each coastal area with multi wing practices using and implementing the lessons learned. Some difficulties and problems have yet to be solved, but should be addressed now while events are fresh.

Communications:

- Basic and Advanced communications should be reemphasized in each wing
- Deployment trailers or vehicles should be prepared in strategic locations far enough from harms way, but close enough to be effective. These should be self contained and self sustaining for a minimum of 7 days with food, water, gasoline and generators.
- Airborne repeaters and mobile repeaters should be acquired by and located in each wing, with continuous training in proper use, preparation and deployment of the aircraft, repeater and crew.
- All CAP operational personnel should be refreshed and signed off on communications skills, message transfer, communications logging and proper phraseology.

Ground:

- Ground Team Leaders should be required to sign a blood oath to follow orders given by the IC or staff or forfeit their rights to live a free life in the USA as long as the tasks are safe, reasonable, within regulations and morally correct.
- A system of training across state lines should be implemented allowing GTLs to work under different ICs with out Wing Commanders micro managing teams outside the IC system.
- A renewed emphasis must be placed on checking credentials at sign in, and a method of checking credentials remotely should be established to prevent fraud and potential problems.
- A renewed emphasis should be placed on the proper wear of CAP uniforms
- Forward Operations Bases should have a deputy IC, air or ground branch director on site to help maintain Command and Control.
- Practices should implement the use of FOBs and staging areas into training scenarios

Air:

- A renewed emphasis on the CAP flight release system, command and control, mission base operations
- 182s were almost exclusively used on this mission. We should look at ways and possibilities for the use of our 172 fleet
- A uniform CAP radio should be used in all aircraft
- Aircrews should be trained in High bird missions including logging messages, setting up the repeater, knowing how to set the CAP radio, communications failure on CAP frequency

- Aircrews should be retrained in the proper completion of paperwork, 104, flight logs, form 71 etc.

Mission Staff:

- Mission staff teams should be set up in different locations in each wing making sure that the teams are not crippled during a disaster or other type of mission due to geographic difficulties or infrastructure failure
- Staff should regularly be trained and updated on all types of paperwork requirements and reporting requirements to be met during a mission.
- Use of status boards is a must for all operations
- A uniform system of sortie numbering should be established **Nationally** and approved by all concerned to eliminate the problem of bookkeeping from the very beginning of a mission
- A system of software must be developed at the National level and provided to all Wings. This software should track and prepare data for reports to AFNSEP, AFRCC or other agencies while tabulating costs, printing forms, tracking man hours, calculating 108 and other forms as needed for final mission folders. This will make crossing wing lines much easier and staff relief much easier for relief personnel to assume duty and make better decisions more quickly.

RECOMMENDATIONS – ONGOING MISSION

(Author – Maj Owen Younger)

Its clear that all individuals who participated in this mission held as their primary goal to assist those individuals in the affected areas who were in need. The comments made below are not intended to be recriminations or accusations, but simply to point out where CAP as an institution can improve its performance when responding to future disasters.

- Additional E/S Training. The following Emergency Services Training should be considered, added or created:
 - Staging Area Manager. This position should be created. Under ICS, a Staging Area Manager is a position subordinate to an Operations Section Chief who manages the operations at a staging area. This position is well suited for an environment like the mission that was set up in Mississippi for Katrina. In the particular case of this mission the ideally suited staging area manager would have essentially been a qualified ground branch director, but that would not always be the case, and CAP should foresee the need to develop training that specifically relates to this type of mission specialty.

- **Aerial Digital Imagery.** Additional emphasis should be given to training mission aircrew in this critical skill. The training for mission observer should be enhanced to include real experience at this skill.
- **Ground Team Interactions.** In one case a ground team in Jackson County encountered a woman in a residence who had some fear the ground team were not official but that they might be looters. Some thought should be given to this type of situation, and training for diffusing a similar situation should be created and implemented for Ground Team Leaders.
- **IC Control.** There should never be any question that the IC has operational control over all teams and assets signed in to a mission. Unfortunately, due to the nature and scope of this operation, some wings seemed to have separate agendas. There should be a renewed emphasis in our training, and when deploying to multi wing environments, that the all teams and aircrews on a particular mission are accountable to the IC and Operations Section of that mission. Wing Commanders should be advised in no uncertain terms that once their members are signed in at the mission ICP, those members report through the ICP structure and not back to their respective wings. Unless everyone working on the mission is operating from exactly the same page CAP will not be able to support its customers. In some cases, making this clear to all wings may require a fundamental cultural change.
- **Training with a Distributed and Multi Wing Concept.** There should be greater emphasis on national level training that crosses wing boundaries, with an ICP maintaining operational control over staging areas which are geographically distributed.
- **Training with Scenarios where Infrastructure is Damaged.** There should be training that specifically considers the difficulties in Communications, and Command and Control that are posed by large scale infrastructure damage such as what was seen in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.
- **Less Reliance on Advanced Technology.** The internet, satellite phones, ALE HF communications equipment, cellular telephones, fax machines, and even email contact with forward staging areas were not necessarily available during this operation. Each of these capabilities is extremely useful under normal circumstances, and even under limited emergency conditions, but given the wide scale damage to infrastructure in this case we have learned not to count on any of them. CAP should devote time to creating solutions that work around these problems. One solution that worked very well for this mission was the use of repeater equipped HighBird aircraft. Another possibility could have been the use of text messages via wireless devices, but to my knowledge CAP has never given this idea much thought. This area needs much consideration.

- Communications. Due to the need for concise and accurate communication we attempted the use formal message handling procedures but only with limited success. Attention should be paid to this practice, because in situations where rapid phone communication is difficult or impossible this practice can be the difference between effective and ineffective control. Mission Radio Operators should not be given only cursory training at actual message traffic simply because it is old fashioned, and the practice of passing messages in a formal way should become a part of our ongoing training
- NOC and C4 Support. It should go without saying that the support given to the ICP staff, when it is requested, should not be second guessed, altered, or delayed, but unfortunately each of these occurred to the detriment of our ability to respond to this incident.
- Expense Centralization – Aviation Fuel. On this mission the major cost of aircraft fuel was arranged early on by the purchase of a large quantity of fuel at the primary FBO at Jackson Hawkins airport. This was an excellent decision on the part of the mission staff that preceded me. However, in the future, a better choice would be to provide a CAP National credit card billing information to pilots or to selected FBO's at all airports where our aircraft may operate. This way we do not wind up with an excess of fuel, and our aircrews will not find themselves paying considerable sums out of pocket for later reimbursement if they find themselves in need of fuel at some other airport.
- Expense Centralization – Ground Team Vehicles. In some cases arriving ground teams had to drive distances as great as 800 miles in order to arrive at their forward staging areas. Once they were deployed there were fuel cells available to them. However, while enroute the ground teams faced a situation similar to pilots who were operating out of an airport other than Jackson where the fuel had to be paid for out of pocket and then reimbursed. This continues to be a lot to ask of volunteers, so an arrangement similar to the one discussed above with respect to aircraft should be implemented.

PERSONAL COMMENTS

(Author – Maj Owen Younger)

Speaking for myself I am compelled to say again that many of the Mississippi Wing members who were present on 5 Sep 2005 when I arrived were actually residents of the southern part of the state who had been commuting daily up to Jackson or who had just moved into a cot somewhere in the building. These members, and in particular many of the pilots and aircrew, who continued to make themselves available over many days had damage to their own homes and lacked electricity or drinkable water for many days after the storm. In spite of that they each put aside their own personal tragedies and needs in order to perform their missions to assist others. These individuals exemplify the best and

greatest examples of volunteers in our organization, and in my opinion they have truly risen to the level of our parent service's core value of "Service Before Self". With members of such caliber and depth of character, we could not help but be successful in our task of bringing assistance to those in need.

As of the close of this mission over 200 people were signed in, but numerous others provided assistance and coordination. The CAP-USAF representatives at the mission base and elsewhere, the state directors, members of other wings who coordinated the inbound ground teams and aircrew, and the personnel at the NOC and C4 facilities all have provided assistance to this mission in order to make it a success. I would like to give my personal thanks to each person who was involved.

This has been one of the most difficult and challenging missions I have ever worked on. I am proud to have served beside some of the finest CAP officers I have ever met. I know I speak for all four Incident Commanders when I say that it was a privilege to be involved in this operation.

Owen Younger, Maj, CAP
Incident Commander
5SEP2005 to 11SEP2005
MS-35-05A

Chris Cook, Capt, CAP
Incident Commander
28AUG2005 to 3SEP2005
MS-35-05A

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