The Mobilization Readiness Tracking Tool

Modernizing Coast Guard response efforts.

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Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike—four natural disasters that showed U.S. Coast Guard response at its best, exemplifying courage, tenacity, perseverance, and a commitment to help fellow Americans.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Coast Guard responded with more than 5,000 active duty and reserve personnel and sent numerous civilians on temporary duty to response sites. Hurricanes Gustav and Ike saw a smaller-scale repeat, with approximately 800 individuals (300 reservists and civilians) sent to Texas for response efforts.

While providing resources to the affected areas, however, there was redundancy in effort, and the Coast Guard was found somewhat lacking in effectively mobilizing, tracking, and demobilizing its response personnel. As a result of lessons learned from these and other response efforts, the Coast Guard moved to improve its readiness.

Improving Response Readiness
In 2006, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant ADM Thad Allen issued a set of Commandant Action Intent Orders (CIAO) that set the stage for this effort:

- CIAO No. 8, Human Resource Strategies to Support Coast Guard Maritime Strategy, encouraged implementation of an automated information system to compare competencies held with competencies required. This issue was a result of problems with mobilization during Operation Iraqi Freedom and also occurred during the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- CIAO No. 9, Reserve Component Mission Support System, focused on resourcing to requirements, attaining and maintaining readiness, and recall to active duty.
- CIAO No. 10, e-CG-Oriented Architecture Implementation, opened the door for an automated Coast Guard mobilization system.

Mobilization readiness tracking tool (MRTT) system development began in earnest in October 2006. This tool was designed to accomplish all mobilization-related management tasks that were heretofore done manually, matching personnel to requirement criteria in minutes instead of the hours of effort the manual system required.
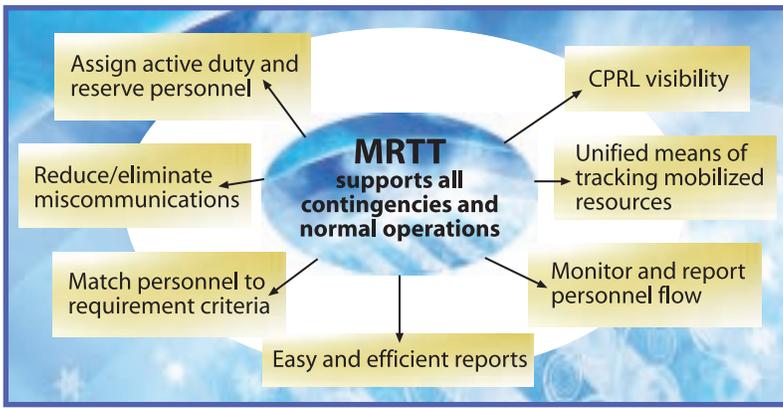

MOBILIZATION READINESS TRACKING TOOL

The Coast Guard's mobilization readiness tracking tool represents a modernization of force readiness. Adapted from the Navy-Marine Corps mobilization processing system, MRTT is a web-based tool that:

- streamlines mobilization of Coast Guard personnel forces (active, reserve, auxiliary, or civilian);
- captures mobilization-related data in a single system;
- provides all stakeholders with end-to-end visibility of the process;
- is capable of tracking active duty personnel assigned temporary duty, and will (as of this writing) have the capability to advertise short-term assignments for both active and reserve personnel via a "request for forces" volunteer bulletin board.

MRTT supports contingencies and normal operations. USCG graphic.

The MRTT will take a request, match an appropriate individual (or individuals), assign them to a billet, and, through a quick approval process, fill that position. In doing so, it will also prevent others from filling the same position. Once assigned, the system will track an individual if he or she is sent elsewhere and ultimately ensure that the individual is demobilized properly. The system is also capable of creating force packages (such as hurricane incident management teams and joint field office support teams) to facilitate response efforts.

MRTT will operate as a "cradle-to-grave" force package processing system as part of the Coast Guard's family of automated systems. Drawing on information located in the Coast Guard's enterprise data warehouse, the mobilization readiness tracking tool will be able to access the appropriate files and records to satisfactorily match people to requirements.[1]

The Contingency Personnel Requirements List
The mobilization readiness tracking tool will help tie the Coast Guard's personnel database to the contingency personnel requirements list (CPRL), a systematic process to analyze what personnel and equipment support a unit will need for a contingency response. CPRL development is an integral part of the deliberate planning process and provides a tool for crisis action planning and response efforts. The MRTT matches the requirements from a unit meeting a surge situation to those that are on the contingency personnel requirements list. CPRLs can be uploaded into the MRTT, and the planner or requestor can then either download the appropriate list or create force packages from that list to meet the response efforts.

The Voyage Ahead
The mobilization readiness tracking tool is flexible and can easily adapt to use within the National Incident Management System's Incident Command System. By providing an automated mechanism by which ICS requirements can quickly match selective criteria, the MRTT enables the Coast Guard to quickly meet the needs associated with a given incident. Logistics section chiefs can remain at their stations within the incident command post and fulfill requests for personnel by simply entering the web-based system and requesting the appropriate competencies.

The trend has been set for future mobilization for Coast Guard reserve component personnel, more temporary duty orders for active component personnel, and to send Coast Guard civilian resources to help meet the operational requirements of surge operations.

ADM Allen wants the best tools for his people so the Coast Guard can continue to serve the American public—and the world—as we have done for over 200 years. He recently stated: "Modernization is a change in business process and command and control … it is driven by the necessity to change and adapt to ensure future readiness."[2] The mobilization readiness tracking tool will help the Coast Guard to do that, and to remain always prepared.

About the author:
Mr. Korson is a program analyst in the Cross-Contingency and Incident Management Division in the Office of Incident Management and Preparedness at U.S. Coast Guard headquarters. He has been a civilian employee for the past 17 years and has worked in the contingency preparedness field for almost 20 years. A 1971 graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration, he also holds a diploma from the U.S. Naval War College in command and staff, and a master's degree in liberal studies from Mary Washington College. Mr. Korson served 22 years on active and reserve duty with the Coast Guard before retiring in 1996.

Endnotes:
1. As the enterprise data warehouse is continually updated, MRTT will continually have access to current information, ensuring that the mobilization system is accurate and that there is a proper match between requested resources and those that arrive on scene.
2. The State of the Coast Guard Address, National Press Club, March 2009.

HURRICANE IKE RESPONSE

In September 2008, the MRTT was put to use a few short months after its deployment to the field. During Ike response, the mobilization readiness tracking tool provided a methodical method to ensure that:

- the right people were assigned to the right billets,
- multiple individuals weren't assigned to the same billet,
- ordering commands were aware which billets were filled and by whom,
- reserve personnel were appropriately demobilized and active duty personnel sent back to their home units.