

Frontline

U.S. Customs and Border Protection ★ Vol 5, Issue 3



**A FORCE
TO BE
RECKONED
WITH**

An inside look at CBP's Quick
Reaction Force **page 14**



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★ ON THE COVER

CBP Quick Reaction Force members practice helicopter landings in varied situations. Delivering personnel by helicopter to D.C.-area sites speeds tactical response in emergency situations.

cover photo by James Tourtellotte



CBP in Photos

★ A student examines an insect sample during CBP agriculture specialist training at the Department of Agriculture Professional Development Center in Frederick, Md.



photo by James Tourtellotte



photo by James Tourtellotte

★ A CBP officer deploys an underwater robot that attaches itself to the hull of a ship for inspection to detect any potential anomalies.

★ Two CBP officers prepare to board a fuel tanker at the Red Hook Terminal in New York City. The tanker was delivering fuel right after Hurricane Sandy hit the region.



photo by Josh Denmark

★ A Border Patrol agent in Nogales, Ariz., examines an illegal tunnel created to smuggle drugs and people into the U.S.

photo by Josh Denmark



photo by Josh Denmark

★ A CBP officer climbs steep stairs inside the engine room while searching a cargo ship at the Red Hook Terminal in New York City.



photo by James Tourtellotte

★ The CBP Office of Air and Marine supports a joint agency training fast-rope exercise at the Advanced Training Center in Harpers Ferry, W.V.



photo by Josh Denmark

★ CBP Special Response Team officers in New York remove a cargo container panel during a search.

★ A team of CBP officers prepare to board and search a ship.



photo by Josh Denmark

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CBP Takes on the Cyberthreat

Cyberattacks are one of the most significant threats that CBP and other government agencies face today. Foreign intelligence services, criminal enterprises and terrorist groups continually launch sophisticated attacks in an attempt to infiltrate CBP computer networks, steal official and personal information and hinder the agency's ability to accomplish its mission. The growing number of attacks on America's information networks has become, in President Barack Obama's words, "one of the most serious economic and national security threats our nation faces."

America's adversaries are relentless in their efforts to gain access to CBP computer networks, so CBP must be vigilant in order

to deter this threat to our national security. America's cybersecurity is inextricably linked not just to the nation's security, but also to its economic vitality. IT systems are interdependent, interconnected, and serve as critical infrastructure to everyone's daily lives—from communication, financial, transportation, and electric power systems, to running the economy and obtaining government services. This interconnected world of cyberspace cannot be protected by CBP alone. Ensuring cybersecurity is a shared responsibility.

CBP takes charge

CBP cybersecurity oversight is a shared responsibility of its Office of Information Technology and the Office of

Internal Affairs. CBP has an obligation to the American people to protect the data it's been entrusted with. Even though new technical capabilities and information-sharing initiatives have improved CBP access to timely and actionable information about current cyberthreats, CBP faces the daily task of repelling the ever-evolving intrusion attempts, which are often initially targeted directly at CBP employees.

To combat these threats, the CBP Office of Internal Affairs counterintelligence group has joined forces with the Security Operations Center in CBP's Office of Information and Technology to create a program to enhance detection of foreign intelligence threats, respond to cyberincidents, increase user awareness and improve system security.

CBP's Frontline IT Defense

At an undisclosed location inside a CBP facility, an elite team of computer security analysts is hard at work protecting CBP's computer networks and sensitive information. The Security Operations Center, known as the SOC, is part of CBP's Office of Information and Technology. The team operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that information technology security policy and controls are followed throughout CBP and other DHS components. In this way the SOC analysts are the frontline of defense for the department's information and IT resources.

Securing the various DHS computer networks is no small task. The SOC focuses its efforts in several major areas: network monitoring, incident response, vulnerability management and integrated applications security.

SOC analysts use a combination of sophisticated computer network monitoring tools and expertise to monitor CBP networks and Internet traffic. Network security monitoring can identify attacks from external computer hackers, computer viruses and cyberthreats, as well as IT security threats from individuals inside DHS. The SOC also monitors DHS employee Internet use to ensure that the workforce follows acceptable computer use policies.

Identifying problems isn't enough. The SOC coordinates the response to information and IT incidents throughout DHS. The SOC receives incoming incident reports, then categorizes, prioritizes and assigns tasks as part of an incident triage process. The center team then conducts a risk-based analysis to verify the reported events and tracks the incidents until they are resolved and closed. Security incidents can range from loss of sensitive government information to suspected computer hacking or even loss of a laptop.

An effective incident response program requires effective communication. The SOC team keeps CBP executives and the DHS Office of the Chief Information Officer informed of matters concerning network security and incident response.

Incidents regarding employees' personally identifiable information, such as Social Security numbers, are considered to be a high priority to report and resolve. The SOC coordinates closely with the CBP chief privacy officer for reporting about suspected or confirmed privacy incidents and submits an annual incident report to the Office of Management and Budget. The center's team also coordinates with external entities, such as the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, various law enforcement officials, and other federal agencies.

Many computer security incidents require further analysis to examine malicious programs or to recover potential evidence. For these incidents, the SOC Computer Forensic Specialists use specialized computer forensics tools to inspect computer hard drives in greater detail.

The SOC team's vulnerability management program tracks software patches and updates, issues alerts, and scans computer systems for compliance. DHS systems are protected by this anti-virus scanning, which supports CBP's IT certification and accreditation.

As CBP relies more and more on its digital information systems, it becomes more and more important to ensure that CBP detects and mitigates all cybersecurity threats. The SOC team of cybersecurity analysts, engineers and managers is leading this effort as CBP progresses in today's digital age.

—Alma R. Cole

“We read in the news almost every week about how sophisticated cyberattacks from various adversaries have resulted in the theft of intellectual property, personal information, sensitive financial sector data and, in some instances, classified information, said Special Agent in Charge Michael C. Mines of CBP's Counterintelligence and Operational Liaison Group. “There is no question that cyberattacks pose a significant threat to national security of this country,”

The CBP security team has implemented procedures for cybersecurity analysis, incident response and reporting, and vulnerability detection and assessment. To further strengthen cybersecurity, CBP is also moving all of its Internet connections

to DHS Trusted Internet Connections to improve detection and blocking of Internet and email-based threats. Connecting to the Internet only through trusted gateways allows CBP to focus its threat-detection and protection resources on standardized gateways using enterprise security tools. Before, multiple systems and programs had implemented varying levels of protection using tools that may not have been the most current or effective for ongoing threats.

The primary goal of the Counterintelligence and Operational Liaison Group is to identify and mitigate the cyberthreat posed to CBP. One of their goals is to raise employee awareness that will enable them to recognize suspicious emails and use cybersecurity countermeasures.

The group has undertaken several steps to strengthen CBP's cybersecurity posture, including numerous awareness briefings, training sessions, employee interviews and threat assessments.

“Awareness is the key to effective cybersecurity,” said Mines. “An educated workforce is a vital part of CBP's defense against the cyberthreat.” ■

—Jason McCammack

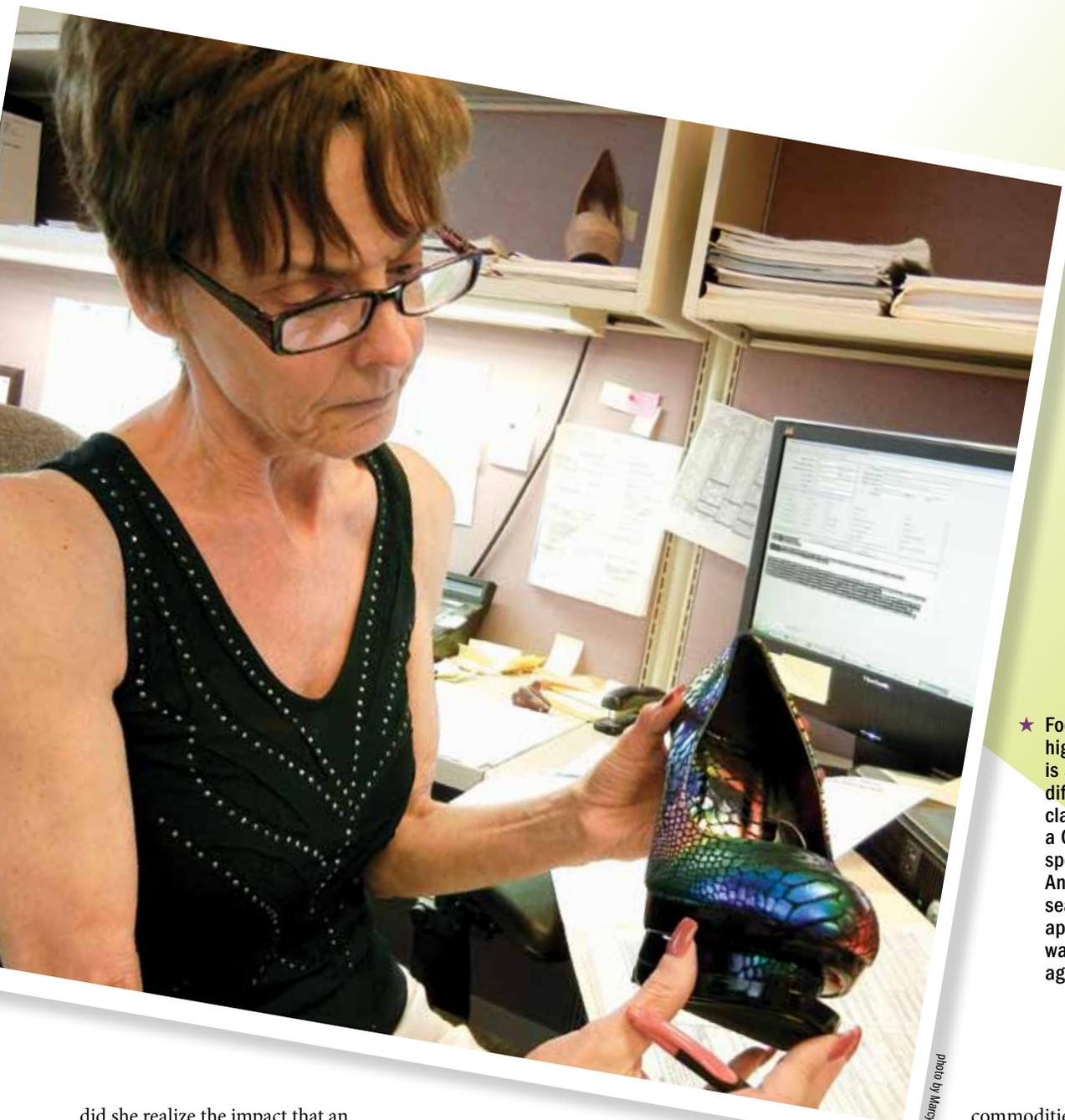
★ Import specialists are responsible for making sure that the correct duties are paid on all products that are imported into the U.S. During fiscal year 2012, more than \$168 million in revenue was collected because of the work of import specialists.

CBP's Behind-the-Scenes Trade Enforcers

How CBP's import specialists protect the U.S. economy

BY MARCY MASON

When Luba Reagan, a 20-year veteran of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, was starting her career as an import specialist at the port of Cleveland, she visited an importer with her supervisor and the two were asked if they were armed. Reagan quickly replied, “Only with our wits and our red pens.” But her clever retort was lost on the company’s receptionist who had no idea that Reagan was referring to the import specialist’s signature tool, a red pen. Nor



★ Footwear has one of the highest duty rates and is also one of the most difficult commodities to classify. Barbara Weeks, a CBP senior import specialist at the Los Angeles-Long Beach seaport, classifies and appraises a shoe that was targeted during an agency sting operation.

Photo by Marcy Messer

did she realize the impact that an import specialist has on enforcing U.S. tariff and trade laws.

While few outside the trade community are aware of what import specialists do and the vital role they play in protecting Americans and the U.S. economy, their work is critically important to the health, safety and financial security of the nation. Their commodity expertise and innovative thinking are essential to making sure that imported goods are sold competitively at a fair market value and that the country's revenue is protected.

There's nothing simple about the import specialist's job. It's highly technical and complex, but in the most basic terms, import

specialists are responsible for making sure that the correct duties are paid on all products that are imported into the U.S. Their skill set runs the gamut and as far as technical expertise, import specialists are the lynchpin for CBP's trade functions. "I haven't found another discipline that has that all-encompassing view," said Ben Whitney, a program manager at the Los Angeles Field Office, who began his career as an inspector with the U.S. Customs Service, CBP's legacy agency, and then became an import specialist for several years.

"When I have a question, I go to the import specialists who handle the

commodities that I'm dealing with because they're the ones who will know," said Whitney. "They have a finger on everything that's going on within a particular industry. They know who's good, who's bad, who's compliant, who's not compliant, what the risk factors are, and how to evade CBP's enforcement efforts. I don't know any other discipline that can even attempt to do that," said Whitney.

The real art of the import specialist is the classification of imported goods for revenue collection purposes. Since 1989, the U.S. has used an intricate classification system called the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States. The tariff



★ At the Los Angeles-Long Beach seaport, Senior Import Specialist Ken Price, right, examines footwear shipments with CBP Officer Stephanie Frost, to look for intellectual property infringements and lost revenue.

duty rates for footwear range from 6 to 48 percent, but we also have a compound duty rate, which is 37.5 percent plus 90 cents a pair. That equals about 67 percent, and you're going to see that mainly on tennis and athletic shoes.”

“One of the biggest issues that we run into with footwear is misclassification,” said Weeks. “We get a lot of misclassifications where the upper part of the shoe is not over 90 percent rubber or plastic. The manufacturer has added glass or wooden beads or other adornments such as textile embroidery

or metal ornaments. That will usually jump the duty from 6 percent to 37.5 percent or higher,” said Weeks. Same holds true with the lining in rain boots. Polyvinyl chloride lined boots have a 4.6 percent duty. “But the majority that we see have textile linings and that raises the duty to 37.5 percent,” she said.

And this can add up to a lot of money. “The additional revenue on one shipment could be \$10,000,” said Weeks. “It could be more. It could be less. It just depends on the size of the invoice value.”

Because footwear has such high duty rates, there's a lot of potential for fraud. One of the typical scams is to “misdescribe” goods and not declare them with correct descriptions to customs. For example, “if the duty rate on a shoe is 6 percent versus 48 percent on a \$100,000 shipment, that's a \$42,000 difference in duty,” said Whitney, who was a senior import specialist on the shoe team for two years at the port of Los Angeles-Long Beach, the nation's largest

photo by Marcy Mason

schedule, which is approximately 12 inches thick and still growing, is published annually by the U.S. International Trade Commission.

The schedule is based on an international, standardized system for classifying traded products known as the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System or the Harmonized System for short.

Approximately 5,000 commodity groups are included in the Harmonized System. Each is identified by a six-digit international code. CBP import specialists classify goods using a 10-digit code. More than 200 countries and economies use the Harmonized System, administered by the World Customs Organization in Brussels, as a basis for their customs tariffs.

Recovering lost revenue

CBP's import specialists recover a sizeable amount of revenue for the U.S. because of their finely honed skills. During fiscal year 2011, nearly \$96 million in revenue was collected because of the work of import specialists. The figure skyrocketed in 2012. More than \$168 million was collected during the fiscal year. This money, like all duties, was deposited into the U.S. Treasury's general fund, which is used to pay for core functions of the U.S. government.

Footwear has one of the highest duty rates and is also one of the most difficult commodities to classify. “There are a lot of different factors to consider when you're looking at footwear. It can get complicated,” said Barbara Weeks, a CBP senior import specialist who has been classifying and appraising footwear for nearly 24 years at the Los Angeles-Long Beach seaport. “Normal

seaport where 43 percent of containerized shipments enter the country. “It’s not uncommon for us to identify a shipment that’s \$20,000, \$30,000, or \$40,000 off in duty,” he said.

Footwear sting operation

Realizing that there was a lot of potential for lost revenue, Whitney spearheaded a two-month sting operation during the summer of 2011. He knew that the port was already looking at specific cargo for trademark violations to protect intellectual property rights owners, so he thought: Why not also examine the cargo from a revenue standpoint? “I wanted to make sure that we weren’t losing any of the revenue that’s due to our nation,” said Whitney.

“CBP officers are generally the ones who are doing the physical exams for intellectual property and security reasons, but they don’t have the commodity expertise. That’s one of the roles of the import specialist,” he said. “Import specialists know each commodity—what’s normal and what’s not. They know about classification and duty rates and where the revenue pitfalls are.”

During the operation, 94 footwear shipments were examined and more than \$216,000 in potentially lost revenue was found. “That may not seem like a significant number,” said Whitney, “but it’s the result of only a two-month effort at a single port. If you break it down, that’s about \$100,000 a month, or \$1.2 million a year.”

On grander scale, the shoe team at the Los Angeles-Long Beach seaport identified nearly \$3.3 million in lost revenue last year. “That \$3.3 million is a product of six people examining

footwear, looking at classification,” said Whitney. “That’s a lot of revenue. It represents almost 2,100 shipments that were looked at during the fiscal year.”

Verifying trade agreements

Another way that import specialists protect the country’s revenue is by conducting free-trade agreement verifications to make sure that importers are allowed to claim duty-free treatment on goods. For example, in July, Steven Durschlag, an import specialist at the Los Angeles International Airport, suspected that a shipment of gold earrings with precious stones didn’t qualify for duty-free treatment. The earrings had been imported from Australia, but Durschlag wasn’t sure if the jewelry met the requirements of the Australian Free Trade Agreement. So he requested more detailed information from the importer.

Durschlag wanted to know how the earrings had been made and if all of the component parts were from Australia. Based on what he learned, Durschlag determined that the earrings were formed in Thailand and then shipped to Australia, where they

were embellished with precious stones and an Australian pearl. The pearl was the only part of the earrings that had originated from Australia. Durschlag knew that to qualify for the agreement only a small percentage of the item could be made of parts that did not originate from Australia or the U.S. Since the earrings were not truly a product of Australia, they weren’t exempt from duty.

The shipment was valued at \$2,034. However, the importer needed to pay the lost revenue on similar shipments for the entire year. As a result, the U.S. will collect more than \$266,000. “Our main objective is to make sure that any trade preference that is claimed is a legitimate claim. It’s important for the economic strength of the country,” said Christine Hogue, CBP’s acting assistant director for trade at the Los Angeles International Airport, who oversees 20 import specialists. “The work that import specialists do is vital because it makes sure that everyone is playing by the rules and that competitively no one has an unfair advantage.” During fiscal year 2011, more than



Photo by Sean Smith

- ★ The expertise of import specialists is critical to the enforcement of trademarks, copyrights, and patents. CBP Import Specialist Stephen Banea and CBP Officer Brian Murphy inspect a shipment of DVDs at the Boston seaport to determine if the product is counterfeit.



★ **Import specialists protect the country's revenue by conducting free-trade agreement verifications on goods.** Steven Durschlag, an import specialist at the Los Angeles International Airport, suspected that a shipment of earrings from Australia didn't qualify for duty-free treatment.

The last time I checked, the team was still in Indianapolis," said Toole.

The goods were seized and the caps were counted. "There were 21,000 baseball caps with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$600,000," said Toole. "It was one of my biggest counterfeit seizures to date."

Not all fake merchandise is so blatantly obvious. In June, Stephen Banea, an import specialist at the Boston seaport, uncovered a shipment of DVDs that appeared authentic. "We have DVD seizures up in Boston pretty regularly, but most of the time they're fairly obvious. Typically, the disks are poor quality and a prudent consumer would be able to tell right off the bat that he or she is buying something that's not genuine," said Banea.

But this shipment was different. The DVDs were professionally packaged and looked like they could be sold in a retail store. However, Banea wasn't convinced. He thought it was odd that the shipment was addressed to an individual rather than a distribution center for one of the big box stores. "It just looked kind of fishy," said Banea, who inspected the DVD intently. "I ended up finding a really small typographical error that was reproduced in a particular way that basically told me this was counterfeit, so we ended up seizing it."

The shipment had a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$6,000. This year, as of August, more than 1,800 DVD shipments were seized by CBP nationwide with a manufacturer's suggested retail price of more than \$23 million.

"Counterfeiting is often seen as a victimless crime because it's been popularized by pirating movies and music," said Banea, "but now it's branched out to things like power strip outlets, electrical circuit breaker boxes, medication, and

\$16 million was collected for the U.S. because of issues associated with trade agreement programs that were reviewed by import specialists.

Finding fakes

Import specialists also protect the intellectual property rights of individuals and businesses. Their expertise is critical to the enforcement of trademarks, copyrights, and patents. They are the ones who determine if a product is counterfeit or not.

One of the key tools that import specialists use to find shipments they suspect are counterfeit or contain infringing merchandise is CBP's automated targeting system. "It's a live system that enables us to see any shipment from around the world

that comes into the U.S.," said Patrick Toole, an import specialist at Miami International Airport. "I narrow my searches to countries that usually have a high volume of counterfeit goods. Once I put my search parameters into the system, it alerts me when a shipment comes in. Then I place the cargo on hold until we've had a chance to examine it."

In July, Toole used the system to target a shipment of baseball caps from China that were transiting through the U.S. to Colombia. "When this shipment came through our targeting system, I thought there was a good chance that it could have some type of violation," said Toole. "So I zeroed in on it."

As it turned out, Toole's hunch was right. "I knew immediately that it was counterfeit," he said. "Some of the sports teams had the wrong cities sewn on the hats. The goofiest was a cap that said, 'Atlntn Dodgers LA.' Another had a logo for the 'Baltimore Colts.'

things that could really harm people if they don't know that it's fake."

Protecting the public

Case in point was a shipment of counterfeit laundry detergent that arrived at the Philadelphia seaport in July 2010. The import specialist conducting the exam saw that the shipment looked peculiar. "At a glance, I knew there was something wrong because the packing was not up to Procter & Gamble's standards. The printing and design on the packaging was a little fuzzy. It was a little off," said Desiree Nicholls, an import specialist at the port of Philadelphia.

Then Nicholls noticed something else that was strange. The outside of the shipping container was marked, "Made in China," but the boxes packed inside the container were marked, "Made in Mexico."

"You can't do that," said Nicholls. "The goods need to be clearly marked where they're made. They're either made in China or they're made in Mexico. The consumer has a right to know."

From the training that she had received from Procter & Gamble, Nicholls knew that Ariel, the brand of laundry detergent in the shipment, wasn't manufactured in China. "The product is only made in Latin America," said Nicholls. "P&G has certain labels that they put on their products and each label corresponds with a different manufacturing plant to distinguish where it's coming from."

Nicholls sent a sample of the detergent to the CBP laboratory in New York. She also sent a sample to Procter & Gamble to do its own testing. "We were able to conclude that the item was counterfeit and we seized it," said Nicholls.

"Had this shipment crossed the border into the U.S., unsuspecting consumers would have paid full price for a product that does not meet genuine Ariel standards," said DeeJay Smith, Procter & Gamble's brand protection manager for North America. "Upon testing the laundry soap, harsh abrasives were found that could easily cause damage to clothing." The lab tests also revealed that fragrances and chemicals were used in the counterfeit soap that are not found in the genuine product.

"Import specialists play a critical role in protecting the U.S. consumer from the harmful effects of counterfeit products," said Smith. "Each year P&G travels to various

ports to conduct training with import specialists on how to identify fake goods. We are grateful that import specialists at the port of Philadelphia and many other U.S. ports understand how to identify fake products."

Rigorous training

Currently, there are 990 import specialists, a mere fraction of the more than 21,000 uniformed CBP officers that comprise the agency. According to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the number of import specialists cannot fall below 984. "Congress was very concerned that CBP's revenue functions would not get the same attention as our antiterrorism mission, so within the act it says that the agency's revenue positions cannot fall below the levels they were at on the day that the Department of Homeland Security was created," said JoAnne Colonnello, the branch chief of trade programs at the Field Operations Academy in Charleston, S.C., where CBP's import specialists are trained.

The training for import specialists is rigorous. The 33-day course, which runs approximately seven weeks, is held three to four times a year, depending upon attrition rates. "Many import specialists are promoted into other jobs within the agency," said Colonnello. The typical class size is 22-24 students, which translates to 75-96 graduates a year.

"We give them an overview of the trade process," said Colonnello. "They

learn what happens when goods enter the United States all the way through the examination process. We want legitimate trade to enter the country. We don't want illegitimate trade to enter," she said.

Then students undergo more intensified training. Twenty-six hours of the 218-hour curriculum are devoted to classifying goods. Forty-nine hours are dedicated to value and how to appraise merchandise. "It's very complicated. This is where we start to lose students," said Colonnello. "It's because of the math skills. You have to know what to add, what to deduct and how much," she said.

The training all leads to what's known as "liquidation," or the final assessment of duty and appraisal of the merchandise. "That's when we tell the importer, 'We've decided how much the value of your merchandise is and we agree or we disagree on how much duty you should pay,'" said Colonnello.

Uncovering fraud

Import specialists also play an integral role in finding fraud. For example, one import specialist discovered that a Toronto-based company that imported tea products into the U.S. wasn't appraising its merchandise correctly. "They were averaging the cost of all of their products rather than listing them at their individual unit prices," said Mark Wisniewski,

'We rely on the knowledge of import specialists. In a lot of good criminal investigations it's the import specialist who actually finds the illegitimate act.'

—James Klink, special agent, ICE/Homeland Security Investigations

'The work that import specialists do is vital because it makes sure that everyone is playing by the rules...'

—Christine Hogue, CBP acting assistant director for trade,
Los Angeles International Airport

a senior import specialist at the port of Buffalo, N.Y. “We found that the unit price of their tea kettles was \$24 instead of the \$15 that they had indicated. They were undervaluing their products to avoid paying additional duties.”

Wisniewski asked the company to correct its invoices.

“We gave them a list of all of their entries for the last five years and told them that we wanted corrected invoices,” he said, “but it’s been more than a year and they’ve refused to do so.”

As a consequence, Wisniewski issued the company a record keeping penalty. “That’s where it stands now,” he said. “They owe the U.S. government \$7.8 million.”

Protecting U.S. industry

Some fraud cases involve protecting U.S. domestic industry. For instance, last June, when a shipment of fructose syrup from China arrived at the port of Norfolk, Va., the import specialists on the port’s food team were suspicious. “We were aware of antidumping evasion schemes with honey that were happening at other ports,” said Donna Hart, the supervisory import specialist in charge of the team.

The evasion schemes were prompted by an additional duty that in 2001 the U.S. government had added to Chinese imported honey to protect the domestic honey industry. China had been “dumping” or shipping honey into the country at a value below market cost and American honey businesses couldn’t compete. Today, current dumping duty rates run as high as \$2.63 per

kilogram for imported Chinese honey. The high dumping rate has made it much more expensive to ship Chinese honey into the U.S., which has led to deceptive illegal trade practices including shipping honey through other countries, mislabeling shipments, and setting up shell corporations to avoid paying U.S. duties.

Hart’s team sent samples of the shipment to the CBP lab in Savannah, Ga., for testing. The results came back indicating that the shipment was 100 percent pure Chinese honey. The antidumping duties that were owed on the shipment were approximately \$244,000.

Nationwide effort

At that point, the team expanded the universe of their targeting efforts. “We wanted to see if there were additional shipments from the same importer going to other U.S. ports,” said Hart. The team found other shipments headed to Charleston, Savannah, and Miami, and contacted the ports to alert them.

In August 2011, Hart’s team found two other importers who were shipping fructose syrup from China. Again, samples were taken and sent to the CBP lab. The results came back as Chinese honey and nearly \$600,000 in duties were owed for the combined shipments. The Norfolk team expanded its search and found more shipments on their way to Baltimore, San Francisco, New Orleans, Mobile, Ala., and Jacksonville, Fla.

In October 2011, the Norfolk port learned that an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations, HSI, was underway in Jacksonville for a honey dumping scheme. Three people representing honey importers were arrested for misclassifying Chinese

honey as rice fructose to avoid paying more than \$1 million in duties. CBP and HSI agents worked together to seize or detain 123 containers of the misdescribed honey at 11 ports throughout the country. The loss of duty to the U.S. government on the containers was estimated at \$1.15 million.

“We rely on the knowledge of import specialists. They are critical to commercial fraud investigations that deal with commodity-specific information,” said James Klink, an HSI special agent and a national program manager at the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center in Arlington, Va. “They’re the ones who are able to explain and show the special agent exactly how the laws were possibly broken and what the scheme might have been to get the merchandise into the country—whether duties were evaded or values were underreported or in higher quantities than what was actually declared,” he said.

“In a lot of good criminal investigations it’s the import specialist who actually finds the illegitimate act. They’re the ones who find the information and then our agents will do what they need to do for a criminal case. All the while they’re going back to the import specialist asking, ‘Hey, what about this? What about that?’ The agents need to learn and understand in great detail everything the import specialist knows because the agents need to testify in the case,” said Klink, who was a former import specialist himself. “I would not be nearly as effective as a special agent today if I didn’t have my import specialist background on commercial fraud.”

Despite the complexities of the job, many import specialists still find the work very appealing. For Stephen Banea, a first-year import specialist who recently graduated with a master’s degree in public administration and is part of the agency’s next generation, it was a career he wanted to pursue. “I wanted to work on the frontline and be in the field,” said Banea. “I wanted to make a difference and I believe I am.”

For Mark Wisniewski, who has been an import specialist for more than 22 years, the rewards have been great. “I love being an import specialist,” said Wisniewski. “American businesses are hurting and if we don’t do our job, we will lose these businesses to foreign competition. I want to do my part in helping to protect the economy of the United States.” ■

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operations need*

A FORCE to be Reckoned With

BY SUSAN HOLLIDAY

**“Open door right.
Need one.”**

The point man down the hallway spoke this firm, clear warning to the squad members behind him.

“Open door right. Need one,” the squad commander responded. Without another word, the group of men

‘We have the expertise within the force to immediately start addressing any threat.’

—Use of Force Assistant Director John Mansell

moved into position around the near doorway, rifles ready.

On the commander’s unspoken cue, two men swept through the door of the small room, the others hanging back to secure the hall. The men moved through the room as if choreographed, already knowing the actions to take in relation to each other and their surroundings. In moments, they covered the whole space and moved toward the door.

“All clear.”

The members of Customs and Border Protection’s Quick Reaction Force progressed to the stairwell to demonstrate how to sweep the building, part of the simulated urban environment exercise at the agency’s Advanced Training Center in Harper’s Ferry, W.Va.

CBP’s Office of Training and Development launched the force in early 2012 to serve a different kind of special operations need specific to CBP in the

Washington, D.C., national capital area, which includes nearby Maryland and Virginia. “The goal of the team is to support CBP leadership and personnel on continuity of operations and continuity of government,” said CBP Advanced Training Center Director James W. Cobb.

Continuity of operations, referred to as COOP, is a common term in government parlance. Each federal agency is mandated to develop viable contingency plans for the continuity of its operations in the event of any emergency. These cover the full scope of possible urgent situations, from a water-main break that shuts down an office building to a large-scale terrorist attack.

Continuity of government focuses on the “bigger picture” according to Cobb, the federal government beyond CBP operations. During a major national crisis, continuing CBP operations means fulfilling its mission to keep the country functioning.

★ Force members practice helicopter landings in varied situations. Delivering personnel by helicopter to D.C.-area sites speeds tactical response in emergency situations.



photo by Kelli King

The force augments, rather than replaces, CBP's more established special operations teams.

★ Drills conducted on varied terrain at CBP's Advanced Training Center prepare the Quick Reaction Force to act in demanding environments.

Foreseeing any emergency that can close CBP headquarters operations, the agency pinpointed the need for a group of tactical operators just outside of the D.C. metropolitan area that can respond with speed. Anyone who was in Washington on 9/11 or following 2011's minor earthquake can attest to the traffic gridlock following any D.C.-area calamity. If CBP headquarters is incapacitated, its leaders and key operations personnel need to be relocated to continue agency functions. "We have to go get them," said Cobb, "wherever they are."

Ready reserve

Special operations units are nothing new. Police departments began forming SWAT teams, or special weapons and tactics units, in the 1960s, some say in response to local riots. The U.S. Border Patrol established its first specially trained

team in 1984. The Border Patrol Tactical Unit, known as BORTAC, became the granddaddy of CBP's subsequent special operations groups.

The Border Patrol Search, Trauma and Rescue team, called BORSTAR, started in 1998 to respond to Border Patrol agents in distress, isolated, missing or lost. The Special Response Team of CBP's Office of Field Operations began in 2006 after Hurricane Katrina to meet special operations needs at ports of entry.

The Quick Reaction Force, or QRF, is different not only because of its D.C.-area mission focus, but also its makeup. Force personnel come from CBP Border Patrol and Field Operations and coordinate their actions with CBP Air and Marine. They all are certified members of BORTAC, BORSTAR or the Special Response Team. And they all serve as highly qualified instructors in pre-deployment, personnel

recovery, defensive tactics, firearms, advanced leadership and more, and all are assigned to the Advanced Training Center.

"Various components' tactical organizations are brought together here, working together, regardless of what their parent organization is," said Cobb. "They're housed in one place and available to respond to this mission. We depend on all the components for success."

"We're ready reserve," he added. "In a crisis, we'd be in downtown Washington within the hour."

All QRF personnel must maintain their certifications for BORTAC, BORSTAR or SRT, "but we come together for a very specific tactical requirement of protection of CBP personnel and infrastructure in the national capital region," said Use of Force Assistant Director John Mansell, who leads the QRF. "We're that 72-hour tactical fill for

the special operations community in the national capital region.”

The QRF serves CBP in the Washington, D.C., region as first responders, attending to immediate needs and stabilizing the situation. Then if the emergency is ongoing and one of the agency’s other special operations teams arrives, the QRF would cede command.

The QRF augments, rather than replaces, CBP’s more established special operations teams. It builds on the instructor and special operations assets already in place at the training academy to benefit the agency. “We have special people here,” said Cobb. “It’s an efficient use of manpower.”

Unique and the same

In a training center classroom, four members of the larger QRF talked about their experience on the force. Mansell requested that the QRF members mentioned in this article be referred to by first names only, keeping in line with standard practice for CBP special operations team members. They also asked that they not be identified by their original team certifications. “We’re from BORTAC, BORSTAR and SRT, but we’re unified now as QRF members,” said Jack, the squad commander.

The men feel a kinship with the other CBP special operations units and at the same time unique. “This is not the creation of anything new,” said Mansell. “This is a coming together of the existing special operations units within CBP for an identified mission need.”

Force members hold special operations expertise in differing environments—a variety of border, port-of-entry and search-and-rescue situations. Their disparate backgrounds in CBP Border Patrol or Field Operations present an advantage. “Because we have all been working together, we can step into any of those environments, on either side of the house,” said Mansell. “We have the expertise within the force to immediately start addressing any threat. Because the language is the same within the QRF, we can walk into that environment and start coordinating that tactical response.”

Working all angles

Pick an environment in which a special operations response may be needed in the Washington, D.C., region. Odds are that the Advanced Training Center offers

★ The Quick Reaction Force demonstrates interior tactics at an Advanced Training Center practice site. The inside use of sunglasses helps obscure individuals’ identities.

photo by Kelli King





★ CBP's Quick Reaction Force practices small-team movement at the Advanced Training Center's simulated port of entry.

photo by Donna Burton

that scenario or something close, and the QRF is trained to tackle it.

In addition to a simulated urban environment, the force runs exercises in a replicated port of entry, in fields and woods, from the air and on a river. They train during the day and at night. They train a lot.

“We work together every day instructing,” said Jack. “Tactics and techniques and procedures that we use as a team, we’re reinforcing them every day. No other team or force trains more than we do.”

Each member learns to lead, to follow, to work independently and as a team. During each exercise, they switch roles wordlessly. When one moves forward, another falls back. When one pulls right, another angles left. They cover each other and the terrain as if the exercise is engraved on their physical memory.

“It’s all about angles,” Jack explained after one demonstration. “You want to use angles to work for you and to be a negative for the bad guys.”

The QRF trains so it’s always ready. “You never know when ‘it’ may occur,” Jack added.

Cross-germinating best practices

Much as the U.S. military is split into different services, CBP frontline personnel are segmented into three components: Air and Marine, Border Patrol and Field Operations, which is responsible for upholding the CBP mission at ports of entry. Sometimes working across the components presents challenges, but for the QRF “there really weren’t any,” said Chuck, another QRF member. “We all know what it took to get here from our legacy teams, how difficult the selection course was, how seriously we all took it. There’s an instant bond right there.”

A fourth team member, Chris, agreed. “We’d been friends and working together for years before the QRF. We didn’t pay attention to uniforms. Every day we show up in our tan pants and black polos [the apparel for Advanced Training Center instructors] and that’s how we see each other.”

“Obviously, we have our friendly ribbings,” added Chris as he disparaged Chuck’s support for the Red Sox and made everybody laugh.

All of the QRF members see the Advanced Training Center, or ATC, as a CBP unifier, cross-germinating best practices among all agency components. Operated by

★ A Quick Reaction Force member works in camouflage in the woods at the Advanced Training Center.



photo by Kelli King

photo by Kelli King

the CBP Office of Training and Development, the ATC integrates CBP's mission across the agency workforce spectrum, providing specialized training and development to all CBP operational components.

"The ATC is the coming together of all the source-material expertise from all the different sides of the house," said Mansell.

"The one face at the border," added Jack.

"Yes, the one face at the border," Mansell agreed, "and we're all working toward one mission."

Given the top talent of the QRF members, "we're never going to say we're the end-all and be-all of knowledge," said Chuck. "Honestly, the greatest strength we bring as instructors is that we know what we don't know. We're always seeking other avenues to learn. Open-mindedness is huge."

"Everyone is an equal player when it comes to the capabilities brought to the table," said one QRF member, who paused and added, "but BORTAC is a little better," and everyone laughed.

'Various components' tactical organizations are brought together here, working together...'

—Advanced Training Center Director James W. Cobb

"The good-natured ribbing is never going to stop," said Chuck, "but the fact that we're all doing the job shows that, regardless of the color uniform you came here in, the respect is there."

As the group nodded its agreement, Mansell said, "The QRF has the unique capability of speaking all the languages of CBP" ■

'Another Day in Paradise'

As National Geographic cameras roll, CBP Air, Marine teams lead fight to secure Puerto Rico, cut off cartels' 'trampoline' to the States

★ Stefania Buonajuti, a producer working on National Geographic's *Drugs, Inc.* shoots footage of the sun setting in the Caribbean Sea off the west coast of Puerto Rico. The documentary show came to Puerto Rico to view how CBP's air and marine operations combat drug smuggling.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERIC BLUM

A summer afternoon breeze, cooled by the expansive waters of the Caribbean Sea, comes ashore at the northwest tip of Puerto Rico, crosses the tarmac at Rafael Hernandez Airport in Aguadilla, and flows through the wide-open hangar of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection air branch. The gentle wind eases the August heat and humidity and seems to fuel activity in the hangar. Mechanics complete maintenance work as pilots and crew

conduct final checks and compare notes on the coming night's mission.

Greeting team members as they emerge from the hangar is a rainbow, arcing from the Black Hawk helicopter at left, rising high above the landing strip and reaching back down toward the DASH-8 surveillance plane at right. "Nice rainbow," a crew member remarks. But he and his teammates do not break stride to admire it as they head to their assigned aircraft.

As the sun sets, another day on the job begins. The men will take to the skies to do their part to secure this populous island. As a commonwealth, or unincorporated territory of the U.S approximately a thousand miles from South Florida, it presents one of America's most demanding border security challenges.

"There is a line, about 12 miles from [the Puerto Rican] shore, that when you cross it, you have crossed into the United States," says Melvin Figueroa, supervisory air interdiction agent for the station. "It is just like crossing the line from Mexico to the U.S. As our success on the southwest

border increases, drug and human smugglers are looking at Puerto Rico as a better route to the U.S. It is a very demanding security challenge."

Indeed, although they do not know it yet, as crews strap in and prepare for takeoff, a vessel with more than a million

dollars worth of cocaine is speeding toward western Puerto Rico.

Closing the 'open road'

Caribbean nations have a reputation as conduits for illegal drug movement from South America to consumers in the U.S. and Europe. But what might have been viewed decades ago as fairly benign illicit activity is now much more serious. Cartels from Colombia and El Salvador, gangs within Mexico and the U.S., and organized crime syndicates from as far away as China all reportedly look to the region as a potential soft spot in U.S. security.

Puerto Rico officials are concerned by the trends and have requested help, and the U.S. Congress has noticed. In September, the U.S. Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control published a report entitled "Preventing a Security Crisis in the Caribbean." A House of Representatives' homeland security subcommittee held a hearing this past summer entitled "U.S.-Caribbean Border: Open Road for Drug Traffickers and Terrorists."

The lure for smugglers is clear. Once illegal drugs make it ashore in Puerto Rico, they can be more easily smuggled into



★ CBP air interdiction agents start the engines on the new Black Hawk helicopter to prepare for the night's mission. Along with two other crewmembers, the agents patrol the Caribbean Sea around Puerto Rico to prevent smugglers from penetrating American shores.



★ A CBP air interdiction agent aboard a surveillance plane synchs radar images and powerful cameras to monitor vessel movement around Puerto Rico. The plane's cabin is lit in green to make it less visible from below.

the U.S. on domestic flights. There are no CBP officers greeting arriving flights, no immigration or criminal background checks and no baggage inspections upon arrival.

“Puerto Rico has always been looked upon as a bridge to the U.S. by the smugglers,” one CBP crew member says as he fires up his radar unit on the surveillance plane. “Now they look at Puerto Rico more like a trampoline. They’re coming at us.”

A team approach

A call for assistance comes from the Coast Guard soon after the surveillance plane is airborne. The propeller-driven DASH-8 has taken off from Aguadilla and is heading

east along the shoreline, this night patrolling clockwise along the north side of the island. The Black Hawk is just about ready to take off and plans to head in the opposite direction, south down the western shoreline. Because of the nature of the aircraft and fuel capacity, the helicopter typically stays in the air less on a given mission.

The call for assistance indicates that the Coast Guard is tracking a suspicious vessel south of the Dominican Republic and that it appears to be heading, lights off and at a high rate of speed, toward Puerto Rico.

In the Caribbean, the key enforcement strategy is for law enforcement organizations to coordinate as a single team. “No one entity can

‘We can zoom in on a Coast Guard cutter five miles away and see how rough the seas are by seeing its splash.’

—Melvin Figueroa, supervisory air interdiction agent

tackle these transnational criminal enterprises,” Department of Homeland Security officials testified at the House subcommittee hearing. “Rather, it requires a multi-agency, multinational and layered approach.”

These layers include CBP’s air, marine and Border Patrol forces, as well as officers at Puerto Rico’s incoming ports of entry. CBP works with the Coast Guard and agents and investigators from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Agency and local Puerto Rican police. The U.S. military also provides support. This night would take contributions from most of these organizations.

The Coast Guard soon radios that the vessel it is trailing has taken evasive action, turning away from Puerto Rico and appears to have dumped bundles overboard. The cutter commander wants to continue pursuit, but hopes not to lose the evidence. How quick could the Black Hawk get there?

A closer look

The unique security enhancement CBP’s air branch provides is situational awareness: the understanding of what is heading toward Puerto Rico, particularly at night. Vantage point, advanced optic and radar technology, speed and range all help, as does cultivated knowledge of the area. Crews don’t just pick out a suspicious boat and track it, they attempt to scope out every vessel on the sea that could come ashore. They identify non-threatening fishing boats based on size, location and makeup of the boat. And they take a closer look at those they can’t immediately identify.

From the air, two main tools provide the advantage: high-powered radar and dual cameras, one with infrared optics with heat detection for night use. The radar tracks anything that moves, showing direction and speed. The cameras provide detail of vessels or abnormal items in the water. Two crew members operate computer consoles that link the radar and images, so that moving vessels appear stationary on their monitors to aid in tracking and assessment.

The combination is so powerful, the crew often will be able to verify that what caught their attention was a floating piece of wood, or a cooler or even a clump of seaweed. “We see stuff from up to 14 miles away, that’s how powerful this radar is,” says Figueroa, the air branch supervisor. “We can

zoom in on a Coast Guard cutter five miles away and see how rough the seas are by seeing its splash.”

With night-vision capabilities, darkness is an ally, the darker the better. Bright moonlight decreases the effectiveness of the camera and the goggles worn by helicopter crew members. Clouds are problematic, forcing planes and helicopters to fly under the cloud cover. CBP planes immediately after takeoff rise to 8,000 feet and check out systems, temperatures and all gauges. If clouds are present they drop to 3,000 feet, and will go as low as 1,500 feet if necessary.

CBP planes and helicopters fly with external lights out, to conceal their movements from the water. The surveillance plane is only illuminated by a green interior light. Inside the helicopter, some light is emitted from the computer monitors and control panel in the cockpit, but not enough to be visible from the ground. Puerto Rico air traffic control knows their flight plans, tracks their movement and keeps other aircraft away.

Another basic ingredient guiding enforcement activities here is intelligence. A number of information sources direct aircraft to suspected criminal activity. This can narrow the area of patrol and alert the team to look out for a human-smuggling attempt or an armed and dangerous drug run. These intelligence sources report that Colombian cartels in particular have shifted tactics from the Mexican border to Puerto Rico. The vessel speeding toward Puerto Rico this night is thought to have originated from Colombia, less than 400 miles away.

National Geographic takes a look

The ongoing struggle being played out in Puerto Rico has caught the attention of *Drugs, Inc.*, a National Geographic documentary series. In its third year of production, *Drugs, Inc.* takes an unfiltered look at the world of illicit narcotics from many angles: from the lure of cocaine, the downward spiral of the addict and, most recently, the global narcotics smuggling enterprise.

This season the show tells how tourist demand in Las Vegas fuels Mexican cartels and the impacts of heroin and alcohol use in Alaska. Video crews are in Puerto Rico to

The two new Black Hawk helicopters deployed in Puerto Rico are **‘the safest, best configured, most capable I’ve ever flown.’**

—CBP Air Interdiction Agent Mark Thomas



determine how CBP's air and marine operations are meeting increasing challenges in the region.

A two-person crew embedded with CBP operations plans to fly along with the surveillance plane and the Black Hawk over a two-week period. They also will film throughout the island, capturing the culture and population centers.

As the Black Hawk speeds its way to coordinates the Coast Guard provided in hopes of locating the suspected bundles, a Drugs, Inc. cameraman holds his camera tightly on his lap, the wind whipping through the helicopter's open window.

A new, better 'Hawk'

The helicopter speeding toward the scene is a new and improved version of the famous workhorse, the Black Hawk. A

military favorite for more than 30 years, the powerful four-blade, twin-engine helicopter is spreading to non-military uses and is a major tool in CBP's border security and disaster recovery missions.

But the Black Hawk newly in use in Puerto Rico is "the safest, best configured, most capable I've ever flown," says CBP Air Interdiction Agent Mark Thomas. Thomas had flown combat missions in the Black Hawk in Iraq and was an instructor pilot at the Army Black Hawk training battalion in Ft. Rucker, Ala. At the end of his tour he did not want to end his time with the "Hawks" so he joined CBP as a pilot and trainer.

There are two of these newest helicopters in Puerto Rico and two more in South Florida. The two in Aguadilla ironically replaced one of the first Black Hawks to come off the assembly line in the 1970s. It has gone

back to the mainland for retrofitting, and is expected to be back in service.

The new models feature bullet-resistant panels to protect the pilot, crew and passengers. The main and auxiliary fuel cells are self-sealing, which gives them bullet-resistant qualities as well. They use infrared cameras that lock on a moving target. They have a 360-degree rotating, variable beam spotlight with 22,500 lumens that "can light up the sea," Thomas says, adding that this capacity is an important show of force in dissuading resistance.

From new rescue hoists to stronger engines and improved durability drive-train, the new version boasts an array of important enhancements for CBP, Thomas says, but the best may be a new flight management system and autopilot. "These have three hover sub-modes, settings that



★ Pilots Mark Thomas, left, and Armando Martinez discuss capabilities in the newest Black Hawk in the hangar of the CBP Air and Marine Branch, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

the pilot can use to assure that the Black Hawk holds its position,” Thomas says. The pilot can set the Black Hawk to hold a predetermined altitude and position, or can drift above a boat under surveillance.

“This is a key enhancement for the way CBP uses these helicopters. These hover settings allow the pilot greater situational awareness, decrease pilot workload and create a much safer flying environment,” Thomas says.

As the Black Hawk responds to the Coast Guard call and nears the scene, its cameras clearly reveal what appear to be rather large, light-colored sacks floating in the water. The Drugs, Inc. cameraman reaches out of the open side window and records the find.

‘No place I’d rather be’

As late afternoon approaches, the helicopter crew drops chemical lights into the sea to alert the high-powered CBP boat, a Midnight Express, which was bumping across the choppy Caribbean. The marine crew hoped to be able to seize the suspected drugs before they took on too much water and sank.

For vessel commander Isidro Linares, patrolling the waters of the Caribbean while chasing smugglers is where he believes he was meant to be.

“I always dreamed of being an agent,” Linares says. Years ago he was grateful to get an interview for an intern position with the U.S. Customs Service, an interview that never happened, a circumstance he would never forget. He was on the subway in Washington, D.C., as a plane hit the Pentagon. It was the morning of Sept. 11, 2001.

He did get the job and started as an aviation operations analyst. He became a marine interdiction agent, originally hired for the Washington, D.C., unit but that unit disbanded. “So I asked them to send me to the most challenging assignment they had,” Linares says.

He’s been in Puerto Rico ever since, based at CBP’s marine branch at Mayaguez, in an out-of-the way marina in Cabo Rojo, on the southwest tip of the island, about 35 miles south of Aguadilla. “We have challenges and obstacles to overcome every day,” Linares says. “But we learn every day, and we make a difference every day. There is no place I’d rather be.”



★ On a late and foggy night in southwest Puerto Rico, Vessel Commander Isidro Linares answers questions from the Drugs, Inc cameraman on how he and his crew managed to recover four sacks of cocaine afloat in the Caribbean. The sacks can be seen in back of boat.

With precious little daylight left, the vessel spots the chemical light and quickly retrieves four white sacks that once held pinto beans. But the sacks now have a familiar look. The crew has little doubt that the sacks hold cocaine—a lot of cocaine.

Counting up the damage

As Linares backs into a slip at the end of the dock at Mayaguez, the Drugs, Inc. cameras are there to record it. The cameraman pans from the four bundles in the back of the boat to the vessel commander, who soon would be interviewed on camera, explaining how they located the bundles and what happens next.

Responding to calls Linares made as the

CBP boat returned to shore, federal partners now arrive at the marine base. Agents from the Border Patrol, ICE and DEA are there in the foggy darkness of the isolated dock. Several agents step up to help load all four heavy sacks on a cart and guide it to nearby trailers that serve as offices.

Inside the air conditioned offices, the agents dump the sacks on the floor, on a rug with the insignia of the Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands Air and Marine Branch. Linares and a member of his crew ignore the draw string and slice open the side of the sack. As other agents look on, Linares reaches his hand inside and pulls out a light-colored block encased in plastic. Not only does it have



★ CBP Agent Rony Chinchilla takes one of the 66 bricks removed from the sacks to test it. Chinchilla shaved some of the contents, inserted it in a liquid-filled tube and confirmed it to be cocaine.



★ Agent Chinchilla allows the cameraman to capture the results of the test. As the clear liquid turns blue, confirmation is provided that the substance seized was cocaine.

the appearance of a “brick” of cocaine, it has markings from the cartel that sent it.

Linares and a crewmember remove another package, this one with a smiley face

Inc. cameraman, then shaves a tiny amount onto the blade of the knife.

He drops the shaving into a small, liquid-filled plastic bag. He gently shakes it,

insignia on it. “Oh, yeah, they send along greetings and messages all the time,” one agent says. As agents empty the sacks, each brick is placed on a conference table. It is not a quick process as it is repeated 66 times.

Now it comes time to test it. CBP agent Rony Chinchilla pulls out a small knife, selects one package and begins carefully sawing through the layers of plastic. Chinchilla reaches a white surface, almost like a bar of soap. He pauses to show the Drugs,

taps it with his fingers and holds it close to the camera lens. “If the liquid turns blue, it is positive for cocaine.” Before he completes the sentence, the liquid transforms to a light blue and soon darkens to a royal blue.

Next, the agents weigh a few of the bundles and begin doing the math. The DEA agent in the back speaks up first with the estimated value: \$1.2 million. Others nod in agreement. A significant seizure, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Soon CBP completes the paperwork and turns the drugs over to DEA. The agents load it into one of two black SUVs that then drive slowly through an eerie early morning fog along the shore as the Drugs, Inc. cameras follow. Soon the tail lights disappear.

As the agents exchange farewells, news comes over one of the radios. The Coast Guard overtook the boat and arrested all on board. This night’s work is complete and brings a sense of quiet satisfaction.

“Just another day in paradise,” an agent says as he leaves the group and heads to his car for the early-morning ride home. ■

Heading For The City That Never Sleeps?



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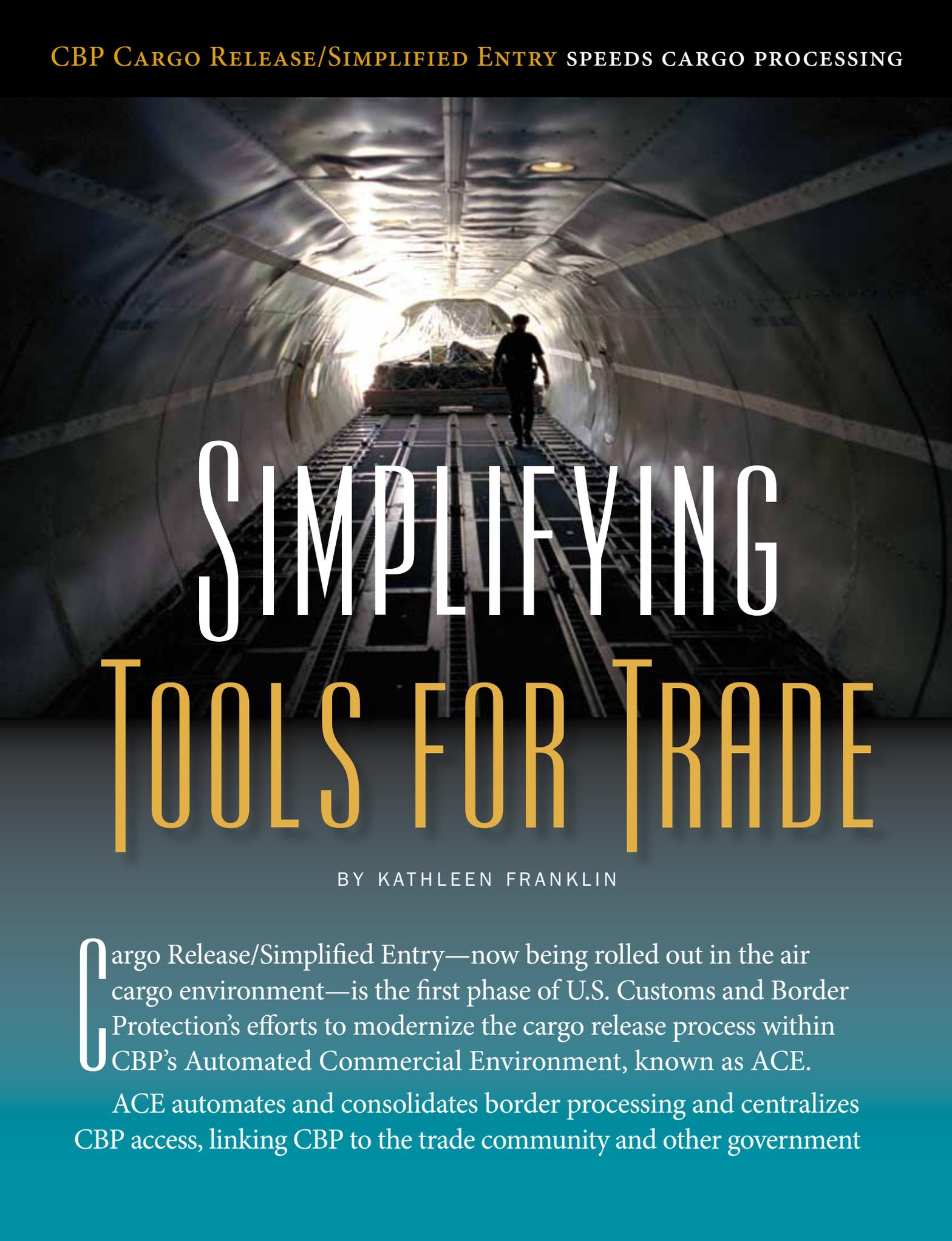
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The Easy Way to the USA





SIMPLIFYING TOOLS FOR TRADE

BY KATHLEEN FRANKLIN

Cargo Release/Simplified Entry—now being rolled out in the air cargo environment—is the first phase of U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s efforts to modernize the cargo release process within CBP’s Automated Commercial Environment, known as ACE.

ACE automates and consolidates border processing and centralizes CBP access, linking CBP to the trade community and other government

agencies. ACE provides CBP personnel with enhanced tools and information to decide—before a shipment reaches U.S. borders—which cargo may pose a risk and which cargo should be expedited.

The stakes are high. In fiscal year 2011, CBP processed approximately 23.5 million cargo containers arriving by land, air and sea. In 2012, CBP expects to have facilitated approximately \$2 trillion in legitimate trade, while enforcing U.S. trade laws that protect the economy as well as the health and safety of the American people.

The success of this program depends on close collaboration with the trade community that draws on the best practices of both government and industry.

Valarie Neuhart, director of trade operations for CBP's Office of Field Operations' Cargo and Conveyance Security Division, explained that "the overwhelming response from our trading partners is that this new process will greatly improve how they are able to handle releases and arrange for cleared cargo to quickly depart the airport/terminal and be delivered to the importer."

Cargo Release/Simplified Entry has been hailed by industry participants. "Simplified Entry is an innovative approach to the import entry process and Boeing was eager to partner with CBP in the pilot program," said Kathryn Greaney, vice president of global trade controls for the Boeing Company. "Boeing has been impressed with tangible results of the Simplified Entry process and looks forward to the program's expansion."

Participants in the Cargo Release/Simplified Entry pilot must be certified as brokers under CBP's Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, known as C-TPAT, or as C-TPAT Tier 2 (or above) certified importer/self-filers and have the relevant system requirements.

By the end of September 2012, more than 18,000 simplified entries had been filed for more than 490 different importers.

Win-win

Cargo Release/Simplified Entry offers numerous benefits to trade stakeholders:

- Drives down transaction costs;
- Streamlines and expedites the release of cargo;

- Enables importers/filers to update transportation and entry information in real-time, earlier in the transportation chain;
- Enhances cargo security.
- The new program also helps CBP employees work more efficiently:
- Enables CBP personnel to apply more time and resources to the identification of potentially high-risk shipments;
- Provides CBP and other government agencies with more accurate and timely data.

Cargo Release/Simplified Entry helps Boeing achieve its core goals of moving cargo efficiently and predictably. "We anticipate this program will not only enhance cargo

security, but help to streamline our entry process and supply chain," said Greaney. "Boeing has been a participant in the Importer Self-Assessment program for several years. We appreciate the compliance-based partnership with CBP through the ISA, and this new simplified entry process is one more benefit of that enhanced cooperation."

"FedEx Express is pleased to be working with CBP on this progressive pilot program," said Andy Shiles, U.S. regulatory compliance manager for FedEx Express U.S. Global Trade Services. "Simplified Entry is a positive example of CBP's ability to work closely with the trade industry to co-create new procedures that will allow all of us to work more efficiently and effectively. FedEx is looking forward to full implementation of Simplified Entry at all U.S. clearance locations."



★ Because data is filed in advance, CBP can perform critical targeting functions earlier in the process, ensuring that cargo gets to its destination faster and more securely.

*'Boeing has been impressed with **tangible results** of the Simplified Entry process and looks forward to the program's expansion.'*

—Kathryn Greaney, vice president of global trade controls, Boeing

Cargo Release/Simplified Entry also eases the burden on CBP, helping its frontline officers better ensure the safety and security of the supply chain and the people it touches.

“The Cargo Release/Simplified Entry program is a huge safety benefit for the public because CBP is able to evaluate the security risks at an earlier date. It also has benefited the trade community by enhancing the efficiency of shipments being released,” said Brooke Jensen, CBP port director in Indianapolis, one of the sites where CBP first tested the program.

From concept to functionality

The delivery of Cargo Release/Simplified Entry moved from concept to actual functionality in less than a year, which reflects the program’s ease of use and its appeal to the importing community. The Simplified Process Joint Industry-CBP Workgroup met for the first time in June 2011; in May 2012, the first simplified entries were filed under the pilot program.

The response to CBP’s Nov. 9, 2011, Federal Register notice announcing the

Cargo Release/Simplified Entry pilot was encouraging and enthusiastic: CBP received 40 applications almost immediately. In December 2011, CBP selected nine companies to participate in the Simplified Entry pilot for air cargo: A.N. Deringer; Expeditors; FedEx TradeNetworks; FH Kaysing; Janel Group of New York; Kuehne& Nagel, Inc.; Livingston International; Page & Jones, Inc.; and UPS .

CBP’s Office of International Trade worked closely with the pilot participants to develop a pilot schedule that allowed for robust systems’ testing for both CBP and the trade prior to going live.

The first Cargo Release/Simplified Entry pilot began on May 29, 2012, at three ports (Indianapolis, Chicago and Atlanta) to test the program’s capabilities. On July 25, CBP opened the pilot for volume testing of simplified entries by the initial pilot participants in the three pilot ports.

Based on the initial pilot’s success, on Aug. 14, 2012, CBP published a second Federal Register notice announcing the further expansion of the Cargo Release/Simplified

Entry pilot for additional participants in the air mode of transportation. CBP also expanded the pilot to 10 additional airports: Boston; Dallas-Ft. Worth; Houston; JFK-N.Y.; Los Angeles; Miami; Newark; Oakland; San Francisco; and Seattle.

Advantages: time and money

The goals of Cargo Release/Simplified Entry are to reduce transaction costs, expedite cargo release and enhance cargo security. A key feature of Cargo Release/Simplified Entry is that it separates the collection of shipment data and transportation data. The carrier submits the manifest/Air Cargo Advanced Screening security filing (as appropriate), and the broker or importer/self-filer submits the Simplified Entry data set.

The broker submits the shipment data, called the “entry” and the carrier submits the transportation data in the form of the “manifest.” Before creating Cargo Release/Simplified Entry, brokers submitted certain transportation data along with the entry. CBP already receives these transportation data from the carrier, resulting in a duplication

★ Public-private partnerships to improve data quality make the process for shippers more efficient.



photo courtesy Deutsche Post AG

of effort. With Cargo Release/Simplified Entry, CBP has streamlined the entry process for trade stakeholders. In addition, because brokers often have shipment data well before transportation arrangements are finalized, brokers can provide this information to CBP earlier in the process.

The result? Instead of having to wait for the carrier to submit transportation information to include on the entry, brokers or importers/self-filers can submit the entry at any time prior to the cargo's arrival in the U.S.

Furthermore, instead of supplying 27 data fields on CBP Form 3461, Cargo Release/Simplified Entry filers need only to submit 12 data elements (plus three optional ones), cutting the paperwork almost in half. Because the brokers or importers/self-filers can file



Photo courtesy FedEx

‘We welcome the use of Simplified Entry for other modes of transport such as ocean freight, and we look forward to the possible inclusion of the Importer Security Filings into Simplified Entry’.

—Kathryn Greaney, vice president of global trade controls, Boeing

their data in advance, CBP can perform critical targeting functions earlier in the process, ensuring that cargo gets to its destination faster and more securely.

“We’re finding that the early transmission of fewer data elements prior to export is resulting in faster clearance times and delivery,” according to Boeing Vice President Kathryn Greaney.

“Simplified Entry filings for Boeing’s Charleston location have been a huge success. Due to a limited inland freight movement schedule, if freight arrives after hours, expedited freight arrangements must be made and freight dispatch times are affected. Simplified Entry allows CBP to provide information on the likely disposition of the imported cargo prior to arrival, allowing for greater predictability and efficiency. It also reduces the need for costly delivery arrangements,” Greaney said.

Next steps

CBP is exploring options for adding additional functionality to the pilot, such as the ability to electronically accept supporting documentation via the Document Image System and the inclusion of the Participating Government Agency Message Set, which will consolidate the data needs of all 46 government agencies involved in the import and cargo release process.

Finally, CBP is developing a plan to expand Cargo Release/Simplified Entry to the maritime cargo environment. “The major reason that Simplified Entry is not in the marine environment today is that we wanted ACE eManifest for rail and sea to be fully deployed before implementing a new system or process. Consequently, CBP elected to begin the Simplified Entry testing in the air environment. So far, that testing has gone extremely well, and we anticipate moving into the marine environment as soon as possible,” said CBP’s Neuhart.

That’s a move eagerly anticipated by importers. “We welcome the use of Simplified Entry for other modes of transport such as ocean freight, and we look forward to the possible inclusion of the Importer Security Filings into Simplified Entry,” said Greaney.

Recognizing the role that trade plays in our nation’s economic health, CBP is committed to streamlining the release of goods while enhancing cargo security. By enabling CBP to apply more time and resources to identifying high-risk shipments, this risk-segmented approach potentially reduces transaction costs for the trade community and enables CBP to carry out its complex mission more efficiently. Cargo Release/Simplified Entry is now being rolled out in the air cargo environment, the first phase of CBP’s effort to modernize the cargo release process within CBP’s Automated Commercial Environment, known as ACE. ■



photo by Jennifer Bradshaw

★ Miami Director of Field Operations Vernon Foret, left, and Miami Sector Chief Patrol Agent Matthew A. Zetts view the convention hall for the RNC in Tampa.

An Un-Conventional Mission

BY JAY MAYFIELD AND ELEE ERICE

CBP supports security efforts at Democratic and Republican national conventions

Over the course of two weeks in August and September, U.S. Customs and Border Protection played a key role in the work of American democracy as representatives from throughout the agency took part in security operations during the Republican and Democratic national conventions.

The quadrennial conventions were designated by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano as National Special Security Events, and the U.S. Secret Service took the lead role in coordinating the security for these massive gatherings.

For a sense of scope, there are roughly 10,000 to 12,000 direct participants in these events, with delegates typically including nearly every member of Congress, every governor, many Cabinet officials and other dignitaries. Beyond these participants, media members, vendors, support staff, volunteers and members of the public who come to express their views swell these numbers as much as 10 times.

For cities like Tampa, Fla., which hosted the RNC, and Charlotte, N.C., which hosted the DNC, the security needs of events this size go far beyond the resources available locally. The federal government steps in to provide specialized assistance, and that's where CBP comes into play.

At each of the conventions, CBP resources from the Offices of Field Operations, Border Patrol and Air and Marine used their specific expertise to support security efforts. In each case, significant numbers of CBP personnel were assigned to directly support the events, and local and regional staff provided support for those personnel.

Miami Director of Field Operations Vernon Foret was named the CBP incident commander for the RNC in Tampa, and Atlanta Director of Field Operations Robert Gomez was named the CBP incident commander for the DNC in Charlotte.

“The work of the men and women of CBP in Charlotte was exceptional across the board,” said Gomez. “There were long hours and challenging conditions, but our people showed why they are regarded so highly in federal law enforcement.”

In the case of the Republican convention in Tampa, the arrival of Hurricane Isaac in the days leading up to the event led to a number of logistical challenges, including shortening

- ★ **Vessels from CBP's Tampa marine Unit assisted in patrolling the waterways around the convention venue at the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla.**
- ★ **A Border Patrol Mobile Intercept unit member and Office of Field Operations Special Response Team member conduct perimeter security at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C.**



photo by Jennifer Bradshaw



photo by Larian Guzman



photo by Jay Mayfield

- ★ **CBP Officers from the Port of Savannah, Ga., prepare to screen a tractor-trailer at the DNC's remote scanning site. Units from throughout the Atlanta Field Office traveled to Charlotte to manage the screening process.**

the convention by a day. Those issues did not, however, get in the way of CBP's mission at the event.

"I am especially proud of the performance of the CBP team during the days leading up to the convention when predictions showed the storm making a direct hit on Tampa," said Foret. "Our personnel did not flinch at the possibility of dealing with the worst-case scenario. They stood ready to handle any situation that unfolded."

The inside picture

Teams from CBP's Office of Field Operations were included for their particular expertise in conducting vehicle searches. At each of the conventions, CBP officers manned remote delivery sites, where they used non-intrusive inspection equipment to determine whether the contents of vehicles were safe to

be brought into the convention site.

The massive logistical needs for the conventions meant screening included a huge variety of vehicles, including passenger buses, catering trucks and more. In addition, screening sites were open for operation 24 hours a day during the conventions, since food and supplies were often restocked in the late hours of the night.

In spite of the unique environmental challenges faced by the teams at the conventions, though, the fundamentals of the screening work were the same as always: find what doesn't look right.

"We heard before we came here that people were talking about the inspections being a source of major backup for the city," said Supervisory CBP Officer Trevor Snyder, who led a team of officers from the port of

Savannah, Ga., at the DNC in Charlotte. "Since we got here, we have heard from multiple people that our efficiency and professionalism made the difference in keeping that from happening."

Standing watch

Both the DNC and RNC drew law enforcement support from a large number of agencies representing local, state and federal government. In fact, agencies as distant as the New York and Chicago police departments sent officers to assist in the massive security effort.

★ **CBP's Office of Air and Marine provided aerial support to the Democratic National Convention with live video surveillance of the convention site in uptown Charlotte and the surrounding areas.**

photo by Jay Mayfield



As part of that effort, CBP was asked to provide personnel to assist in direct security support for the conventions by standing guard on perimeter locations and within the secure areas to ensure that the “bubble” surrounding the events was not breached. To respond to the need, CBP activated members of the Border Patrol’s Mobile Intercept Unit in Miami and the Office of Field Operations’ Special Response Team from across the country. Their advanced training made them especially prepared to deal with the dynamic environment found in the heart of these events.

In the days leading up to the conventions, warnings were issued about the possibility of violent protesters and others seeking not just to disrupt the proceedings, but to cause harm to the attendees and dignitaries. While neither city saw violent demonstrations and the number of peaceful



photo by Jennifer Bradshaw

★ Members of the Border Patrol Mobile Intercept Unit and Office of Field Operations Special response Team are briefed before the RNC. These team members served at both conventions.

*‘Our people showed why they are **regarded so highly** in federal law enforcement.’*

—Robert Gomez, CBP incident commander, Democratic National Convention

protesters was lower than expected, the security posture remained high. In both cases, CBP team members had been temporarily deputized as U.S. Marshals to ensure they had the broad authority needed to deal with these complex situations.

An eye in the sky, and on the sea

In the air over both events, CBP aircraft provided a vital visual link to the nerve centers managing the security efforts for the conventions. Four AJ-350 helicopters stood watch over the proceedings day and night. CBP’s ability to provide real-time monitoring proved invaluable to maintaining safety and security.

CBP pilots and sensor operators flew more than 150 hours in support of each convention, and while they were airborne provided video feeds of events on the ground to local and federal law enforcement partners. In addition,

CBP supported the Federal Aviation Administration in managing approach control in the restricted airspace around the events.

In Tampa, the agency’s marine assets also had a role to play. Since the convention site was located directly on Tampa Bay, the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies established a marine operations center, ensuring that waterways were not used as an avenue to conduct a terrorist attack.

Members of the CBP Tampa marine unit worked in partnership with other agencies to maintain the secure zone around the event and address any possible threats that presented themselves.

A rewarding challenge

For all the CBP personnel involved in supporting the conventions, the agency’s role was rewarding and its mission successful. The nature of the events means that the

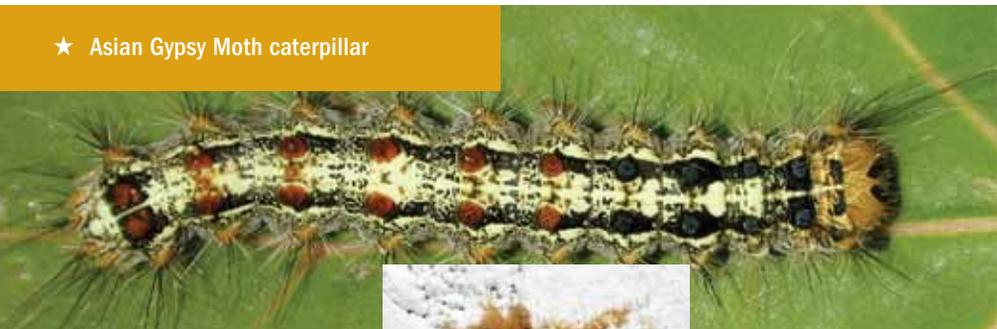
security stakes are higher than nearly any other gathering in the country, leaving no room for error.

In spite of the pressure, though, CBP’s unique strengths as an agency in monitoring, assessing and responding to threats make it the ideal agency for this role. Men and women from CBP’s operational offices as well as from the offices of Administration, Information and Technology and Public Affairs came together to support the overall national security mission.

“My advice to any CBP personnel who may be involved in future convention events would be to come prepared to carry out the mission in a dynamic environment, maintaining the utmost vigilance in carrying out their duties in a professional manner,” said Gomez. “This event once again demonstrated that CBP is a premier law enforcement agency.” ■

Invasive Asian Gypsy Moth Demands CBP Vigilance

★ Asian Gypsy Moth caterpillar



★ Asian gypsy moth egg mass.



photo by David Holden, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Among the many challenging duties for U.S. Customs and Border

Protection agricultural specialists is boarding and inspecting international vessels to detect a destructive and invasive exotic pest: the Asian gypsy moth.

The Asian gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar* ssp) is a voracious insect that can defoliate trees and shrubs. It has never become established in North America, but there have been instances where monitoring and trapping programs have identified introductions of the moth. The Asian gypsy moth was first identified in 1991 in Portland, Ore., Tacoma, Wash., and Vancouver, B.C., prompting a costly campaign of trapping and eradication. As global commerce accelerates, the potential threat increases apace.

Like most moths, the Asian gypsy moth has four life stages: egg; larva (caterpillar); pupa (cocoon); and moth. Unlike the relatively flightless European gypsy moth, which arrived in the U.S. nearly 150 years ago, the Asian female moth can fly up to 25 miles per day. And while the European caterpillar feeds on 300 plant species, the Asian caterpillar chows down on 500 plant species. Moths, which do not feed, primarily lay eggs between June and September—

the months when CBP agricultural specialists are most likely to find egg masses on vessels and maritime containers. Dormant in winter, eggs begin hatching during the following spring. Egg masses—each of which can contain more than 1,000 eggs—are extremely weather-hardy and can travel on logs, pallets, containers, vessel hulls, masts, winches and decks, and even in ropes and rigging.

There were only three interceptions of gypsy moth—either European or Asian—from 2006-2007. Then, in 2008, Asian gypsy moth interceptions on vessels spiked significantly. Between 2008 and 2012, there were 48 interceptions, all of them in the maritime environment, either on ships' surfaces or on containerized cargo carried by ships that had docked in eastern Russia, Japan, South Korea, and China. In many instances, the ship had docked in all of those countries during the same voyage. However, today more foreign nations are stepping up efforts to detect the pest, and CBP constantly improves and refines its inspection techniques and outreach efforts to boost awareness of the threat posed by Asian gypsy moth.

CBP agricultural specialists can make a risk-based recommendation to remove the vessel from port when high infestation levels indicate a likelihood that Asian gypsy moths could spread. In these cases, vessels are ordered into international waters for cleaning. This can delay cargo discharge and clearance, resulting in revenue losses.

CBP urges shipping company stakeholders to be vigilant in inspecting their vessels and cargo, to avoid painting over egg masses, and to limit or modify lighting that attracts moths. Egg masses should be scraped off and destroyed in alcohol, boiling water or an incinerator. The affected areas should then be treated with emulsified soybean oil products that smother egg masses, preventing them from hatching.

CBP agricultural specialists vigilantly inspect ocean carriers to detect and prevent Asian gypsy moths from destroying U.S. forests, nursery stock, and other natural resources. Working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and foreign trade stakeholders, CBP is determined to keep these moth pests out of the U.S. ■

—Kathleen Franklin



★ Asian gypsy moth egg masses found on vessel mooring ropes.

Exploring **CBP**

★ CBP Puerto Rico Explorer Post 818 arriving for the closing ceremony at the National Law Enforcement Exploring Conference hosted at the Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo.

Explorers—people who seek to discover new things or places. The word may conjure up an image of hardy seamen sailing across oceans—or of browsing the cyber-landscape for new information. However, it’s also an apt name for the young men and women, aged 14-21, who are part of the Law Enforcement Career Exploring program.

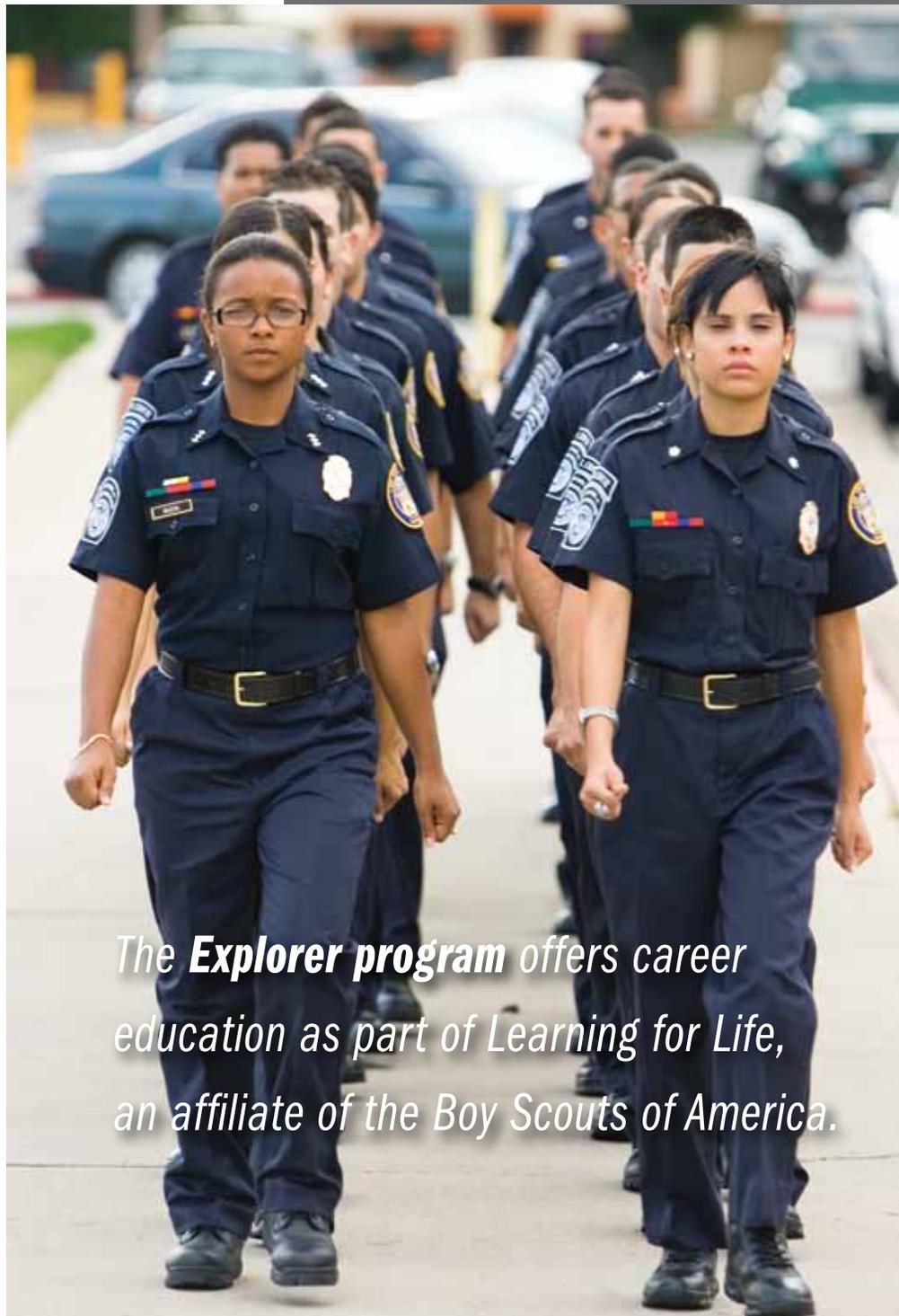
The Explorer program offers career education as part of Learning for Life, an affiliate of the Boy Scouts of America. The CBP program is a “school to work” program that prepares young adults for the transition from academics to the world of work.

Young people making a difference

CBP boasts the second largest Explorer program in the country with more than 60 chartered posts serving more than 1,200 Explorers. CBP’s Office of Field Operations manages the posts that are located at ports of entry while Border Patrol sectors operate posts between the ports with Office of Air and Marine support where available. Border Patrol posts are concentrated along the southwest border and Field Operations posts function nationwide and include posts in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Learning and earning badges

Exploring is not a passive education program. Led by an advisor and supported by other employees who serve as leaders and role models, the posts give enrollees a hands-on law enforcement orientation and insight into CBP’s role in our communities. To earn their Law Enforcement Exploring badges and become a senior Explorer, program participants must pass a basic law enforcement training course, a probationary period, and work a certain amount of hours at prescribed activities.



The Explorer program offers career education as part of Learning for Life, an affiliate of the Boy Scouts of America.



★ Puerto Rico Explorer Post calling cadence.

★ Chief CBP Office encourages CBP Explorers to participate in training and competition.

CBP Explorers participate in academies, conferences and other activities that feature **training and competition.**

Training is at the heart of the program and is specifically related to the activities of a particular post, which tend to be geographically determined. An Explorer at a post along the Southwest border may learn desert-patrolling techniques and tracking skills, while an Explorer at a northern border port of entry may learn how to conduct vehicle stops safely. Explorers engage in the full range of agency activities: participating in searches and ride-alongs; assisting in name and license plate checks at ports of entry; reviewing export-control documents; and manning remote cameras that monitor sensors that alert to security breaches along the border.

Training and competition develops character

CBP Explorers participate in academies, conferences and other activities that feature training and competition. The premier event, the biennial National Law Enforcement Exploring Conference, offers Explorers and their advisors opportunities for learning, leadership development and interpersonal growth. The 2012 conference was held at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo.

The conference features team and individual competitions such as air pistol, bike policing, bomb response, burglary in progress, crime prevention, crime-scene search, crisis negotiation, domestic-crisis intervention, pistol shooting, shoot/don't

shoot, traffic investigations and stops, and white-collar crime, in addition to basketball and volleyball team competitions.

The Explorers' on-the-job training gets put to the test in competitive events. For example, in a crime-scene search competition, Explorers are evaluated on how they handle staged scenarios like searching an apartment occupied by suspected drug dealers. Competitors are graded on effective entry; situation control; searching, locating, identifying and preserving evidence; and proper field, or on-site, identification of narcotics seized.

This year, CBP's Chicago post won second place in the team volleyball competition and third place in the

individual female physical techniques competition. CBP's Explorers from Puerto Rico distinguished themselves by having numerous Explorers rank in the top 20 in shooting competitions. "It is great to see all the training, teamwork and just plain sweat and tears pay off," said Steven Artino, CBP acting director of Field Operations in Chicago. "I cannot think of a more important program to the life of a young person today."

Explorers are also provided with other opportunities for development and competition. For example, on July 29, 2012, the Border Patrol Academy hosted the first Border Patrol Explorers Best of the Best Challenge. The ten top-performing Border Patrol Explorer posts from stations across the Southwest border traveled to Artesia, N.M., for a four-day challenge representing a wide range of law enforcement scenarios and events. The Rio Grande City post was named this year's "Best of the Best" top performing post.

An effective recruiting tool

It's not at all uncommon for Explorers to join the program, finish school and pursue careers as CBP officers, agents, intelligence specialists and canine enforcement officers.

Jose Venegas, chief of staff for the CBP Chicago Office of Field Operations, started as an Explorer in Chicago in 1995. After graduating from college and working in other federal jobs, he came to work for the U.S. Customs Service. Venegas said, "The program really gave me direction. I had phenomenal mentors who showed me the path and how to accomplish my goals." Venegas has been associated with the program ever since and manages four field office Explorers posts, two in Chicago and posts in Cleveland and Cincinnati.

A win-win for all

Recognizing the program's value, CBP leadership has long supported the Explorer program. CBP Deputy Commissioner David

Aguilar early in his career started a post at the Hebbbronville, Texas, station in the Laredo Sector and served as post advisor. In addition, several former commissioners have been actively involved in the program, including former CBP Commissioner W. Ralph Basham who served as the chair of the National Explorer Committee.

The Explorer program is not only educational. It also serves as an outreach effort in the communities where CBP is located. Border Patrol Explorer Program Coordinator Michael Paul explained, "When a young man or woman becomes an Explorer, their whole family learns about CBP, its mission and programs. Through the Explorer's involvement, Mom, Dad, brothers, sisters and grandparents, come to know about and support agency programs."

Community activities, such as CBP Explorer participation in fairs, exhibitions and charitable events, highlight the program and show CBP as an integral part of the community. This outreach activity can have

a positive impact on the mindsets of those who come into contact with the program and foster informed compliance and support for CBP programs. ■

—Linda Kane



★ Chief CBP Officer Whyte encourages CBP Explorer Amanda Zamora of Chicago Explorer Post 9706 during the physical techniques test at the National Law Enforcement Exploring Conference at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo.



★ The tragedy of 9/11 and the war in Iraq prompted Pohlmann to join the U.S. Marines.

A Marine's Challenge

CBP Office of Human Resources Management supports recovering service members through Operation War Fighter

When Marine 1st Lt. Kevin Pohlmann walked through the door in May 2012 at U.S. Customs and Border Protection, he was also entering a new phase of his life. Instead of serving in the field with his fellow Marines, he would now be working in an office building in downtown Washington, D.C., as part of a unique internship program through Operation War Fighter, known as OWF.

OWF is a temporary, non-paid, assignment/internship program developed by the Department of Defense for service members who are convalescing at military treatment facilities throughout the U.S. The program provides recuperating service members with meaningful activity outside of the hospital environment and offers a formal means of transition back to the military or civilian workforce.

It is fitting that Pohlmann's internship is with an agency that was created due to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks—the same horrific event that guided Pohlmann in his decision to join the military and defend the U.S. On that September day, Pohlmann was beginning the day at Bloomington (Ill.) Junior High School, where he attended eighth grade. His teacher was notified of the tragedy unfolding in New York City and turned on the classroom television for her students to watch.

"It was an eerie day," Pohlmann recalled. "A few days later it really hit me just how big a deal 9/11 was."

At age 16, Pohlmann was inspired by the return of his brother's friend who had just completed a tour of duty in Iraq, and he became determined that he, too, would become a Marine one day.

As a college sophomore, Pohlmann was accepted into the Marines' Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Va., and he began spending his summers in Quantico at the Marine Corps Platoon Leader's Course. He entered active duty upon his graduation from college and is now stationed permanently at Quantico.

Pohlmann recently learned that his military career would be cut short. Before he could deploy to the Middle East, medical issues arose, and he found out that he would be medically discharged from the military by the end of the year.

"I was disappointed for a few months," Pohlmann said. "But then I started looking at

what I could do after the military. I've tried to turn a negative into a positive."

An important part of Pohlmann's adjustment to his new future was his internship with CBP. The OWF program gave Pohlmann and many others the ability to gain practical experience in the civilian workforce while they heal emotionally and physically. At the same time, many are undergoing a lengthy medical board review process, which is required for those leaving military service. The process lasts an average of 295 days, what Pohlmann called "a giant limbo period." He has had numerous medical appointments with the Veterans Administration and DOD to determine his disability rating and, to a certain degree, his future.

"The internship has allowed me to start exploring job opportunities in preparation for when I leave the Marine Corps," Pohlmann said. "It has helped me become more familiar



★ Pohlmann visits the U.S. Marine War Memorial, which honors his fellow Marines who gave their lives for their country, near Washington, D.C.,

with the civilian workforce. The transition hasn't been easy, but it has been good."

Pohlmann's transition began with trading his uniform for a suit, but the changes certainly go beyond that. He appreciates the more relaxed office atmosphere and the opportunity to network with coworkers, who have provided referrals to potential jobs at various federal agencies, think tanks, and congressional offices.

Pohlmann also worked at career fairs that recruit veterans to work as Border Patrol agents, CBP officers and in administrative positions throughout CBP. Recently he arranged a meeting with Marine Maj. Brian Bilski, who leads the Wounded Warrior Program at Quantico. They discussed ways of promoting OWF to commanding officers so that more eligible service members would be able to participate.

Pohlmann also contributes to the veteran's page on www.CBP.gov, writing from a service member's perspective. He's also developed standard operating procedures for the CBP's veteran recruitment programs.

Pohlmann said that his favorite part of the internship is his work as an OWF liaison to military bases. Using the special camaraderie that exists among service members, Pohlmann helps wounded warriors navigate the complicated system of applying for federal jobs, reviews their résumés, offers encouragement and urges them to check out OWF.

"It's inspiring when you see those who are missing a limb or dealing with severe emotional problems. They don't give up," Pohlmann said. "While I'm trying to climb up a hill, some of these men and women are climbing Mount Everest. The motivation that made them succeed in the military hasn't left—they are determined to succeed after the military, no matter how hard it is [for them]."

Since CBP began participating in OWF in 2005, 34 service members have interned at CBP headquarters and field offices. Three of those have moved into permanent federal positions, and one more is currently making the transition. CBP's goal is to have OWF interns represented in all program offices.

Upon Pohlmann's military discharge, he will be able to pursue a federal job or



★ Pohlmann was commissioned as a second lieutenant and served at Quantico in Virginia until health issues interfered.

apply to graduate school. His goal is to earn a master's degree in social work and help at a veterans' hospital or military base where he can assist wounded veterans during their recovery and prepare them for some of the challenges they will face during their transition to civilian life.

His new calling helps to soften what Pohlmann described as his "big regret"—his inability to deploy to the Middle East.

"I feel best if I can give back, and I feel so comfortable working with other service members," Pohlmann said. "I'll still be serving my country, just in a different capacity. OWF has helped me realize that there are opportunities [to serve] outside of the military." ■

—Pamela Pearson Wong

*OWF has helped me realize that there are **opportunities** [to serve] outside of the military."*

—Marine 1st Lt. Kevin Pohlmann

Customs Appraiser

Established as Official Federal Position

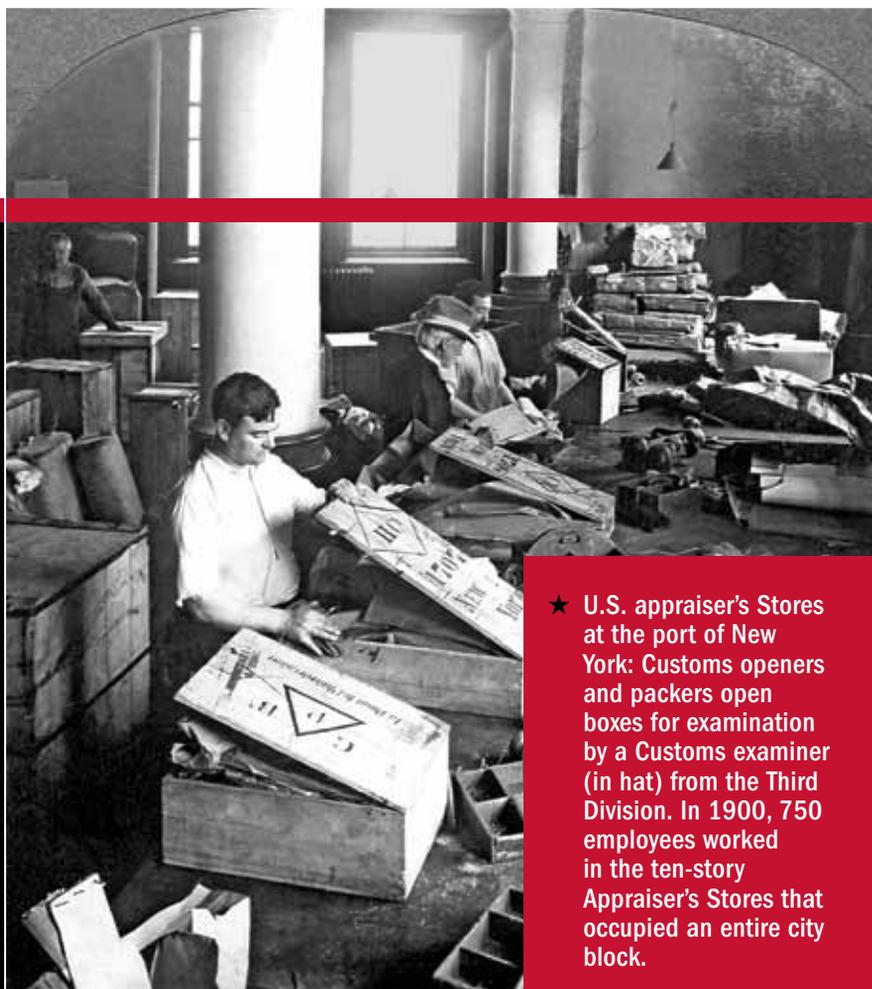
The collection of customs duties on the tonnage of ships and on goods imported into the U.S. dates to the establishment of the federal government. But when Congress created the structure and outlined the U.S. customs staff in 1789, it failed to create a federal position to determine the value of imports for imposing duties. Instead, Congress allowed the customs collector at individual ports to appoint a “reputable merchant” to appraise value and determine duties on

imports. This changed in 1818 with the establishment of customs appraiser as a professional position based on expertise. This position ultimately evolved into CBP’s import specialist.

In establishing the position of appraiser at major U.S. ports of entry, Congress was reacting to the issue of undervaluation of imports by exporters and importers. Prior to 1818, the value of goods was determined by the sworn statement of the importer and the invoice that accompanied the

shipment. Appraisals were done only in cases of forfeiture for cause, goods damaged in transit, and non-invoiced or improperly invoiced items. Recognizing that not all shipments were accurately represented in the paperwork, Congress moved to supplement an earlier law with legislation titled an “act to regulate the collection of duty on imports and tonnage passed the second day of March, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine.”

This legislation, which was enacted on April 20, 1818, outlined when and how appraisals would be undertaken by customs officials. For the first time, Congress specified the appointment of “well-qualified” appraisers at six major ports. These appointees could also be called



★ U.S. appraiser's Stores at the port of New York: Customs openers and packers open boxes for examination by a Customs examiner (in hat) from the Third Division. In 1900, 750 employees worked in the ten-story Appraiser's Stores that occupied an entire city block.



photo provided by Keystone View Co. stereoview V26131

★ A Customs appraiser with the Third Division examines ladies apparel on the fourth floor of the massive U.S. Appraiser's Stores at 412 Washington Street in the lower West Side of Manhattan.



In establishing the position of appraiser at major U.S. ports of entry, Congress was reacting to the issue of **undervaluation of imports by exporters and importers.**

into service in districts where there was no resident appraiser. For this service, Congress detailed that the appointee would receive a per diem of five dollars with an additional five dollars “for every twenty-five miles in going to or returning from” the district. Congress also set the appraisers’ salaries at \$1,500 per year, except for the New York City appraisers who received \$2,000.

In addition, the legislation outlined the circumstances under which appraisals were required. Now, appraisals were undertaken when the imports were suspected of being undervalued. Other categories included

goods subject to duty belonging to nonresidents, goods salvaged from wrecks, and goods damaged in transit.

Congress gave the president the power to appoint, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Before the appointees took their positions, the legislation required them to “make an oath diligently and faithfully to inspect and examine such goods” and “truly to report the true value thereof.” According to the Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United

States, President James Monroe nominated the first appraisers on Nov. 27, 1818. They were William Dickinson and William Haslett for Baltimore; Isaac Waters and William Little for Boston; Abraham Lawrence and Ichabod Prall for New York; and Samuel Ross and Thomas Stewart for Philadelphia. James Hepburn and Robert Welman were nominated for New Orleans on Dec. 7, 1818.

The new appraisers did not exercise their authority unilaterally. The law maintained that the appraiser should work with a resident merchant, “chosen by the party of interest,”



photo provided by D.W. Kellogg & Company, printer; Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

★ President James Monroe appointed the first federal appraisers in 1818.

★ Huge volume of international mail at New York’s Varick Street Appraiser’s Stores awaits Customs examination and duty assessment.



photo provided by CBP

★ Circa the 1930s: A Customs examiner in the mailroom of the port of New York’s new Appraiser’s Stores at 201 Varick Street considers whether the doll should be sent to an appraiser for determination of duty to be assessed.



photo provided by Associated Press photograph

★ Lakehurst, N.J.: U.S. Customs inspectors and two Customs examiners from the New York Appraiser’s Stores examine salvaged baggage items from the German zeppelin Hindenburg that crashed and burned on May 6, 1937.



Photo by Wally Gaezler, 2010.

approval of import specialist as a civil service classification in 1967.

One of the most significant changes for the position of appraiser occurred in 1932 when local appraisers were no longer appointed by the president and were moved under the jurisdiction of the collector. In 1937, administrative oversight of the 32 appraisers at ports of entry was shifted to the newly-created Division of Appraisal Administration.

A bureau-wide reorganization of the U.S. Customs Service in 1965 abolished the position of appraiser. In its place, commodity teams were created that consisted of a port's entry officer, liquidation officer and examiners in order to streamline the clearance, valuation and assessment on imported goods. Two years later these positions were replaced by the import specialist. The import specialist determined the appropriate basis of valuing and classifying merchandise. This role quickly expanded to include detecting fraud and other violations in commercial shipments.

Seven years later, import procedures were evaluated, and import specialists began a more cooperative approach to valuation and classification. The specialists interacted with importers to exchange information on goods to assure effective examinations. Legislation once again changed the role of the import specialist with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act of 1993 as part of the concept of shared responsibility. The law changed the specialist's responsibilities from "appraise merchandise," "ascertain the classification" and "fix the amount of duty" to "fix the final appraisement," "fix the final classification" and "fix the

amount of duty." This change placed the responsibility of the appraiser on the importer or broker with CBP determining if this appraisal and classification is correct. If CBP disagrees with the importer or broker's appraisal, CBP may issue a bill or a refund to the importer. If the importer or broker disagrees with CBP's determination, the importer or broker may file a protest.

When CBP was created in 2003, the authors of the legislation were careful to ensure that the role of the import specialist would not diminish. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 required that CBP maintain its traditional customs functions at the same levels. Today, import specialists not only continue a proud tradition of federal service that dates back to 1818, but also work with organizations and federal agencies like the Consumer Product Safety Commission to ensure that imported goods pose no threats to American consumers. ■

—David D. McKinney, Ph.D.,
Chief Historian

★ By the 20th century, the Appraiser's Stores were erected in the major ports of entry like this building in Baltimore, Md. The unabridged Merriam-Webster Dictionary also added "appraiser's store" to its entries and defined it as "a storeroom or building where goods are held by U.S. customs officials for appraisal."

to examine and report the value of the property. This requirement created a public-private relationship with the trade community that involved them directly in the enforcement of customs laws. But the involvement of a resident merchant in the appraisal process was short lived. Congress acted in 1823 to eliminate merchant appraisers (except in the ports that had no resident appraisers) while reaffirming the position of federal appraisers appointed by the president. In addition, the Congress added two appraisers at the port of Savannah.

Subsequent acts over the next 200 years modified the role and number of appraisers. This evolution was documented by the Office of the Comptroller for the U.S. Customs Service in 1984 in a "History of Customs through Job Titles." This history traced the role of the appraiser from 1818 to the



★ An import specialist at the Port of Long Beach, Calif., examines a child's toy gun to determine if it meets the requirements for importation.



CBP

FACILITATING TRADE

for a Stronger U.S. Economy



AIR



RAIL



SEA



LAND



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Border Busts



Lukeville CBP Officers Seize 16 Packages of Pot in Spare Tire

Lukeville, Ariz. — A Glendale man was arrested in October for attempting to smuggle nearly \$26,000 worth of marijuana into the U.S. through the Lukeville port of entry.

CBP officers referred Erick Gaxiola Jr., 25, for an additional inspection of his Ford SUV. A CBP narcotics detection canine alerted to the presence of drugs inside a spare tire. Officers inspected the tire and found more than 51 pounds of marijuana hidden inside. The drugs and vehicle was seized and Gaxiola was turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations.



Dulles, Baltimore CBP Fine Passengers for Concealing Prohibited Agriculture Products

Baltimore — CBP agriculture specialists at Washington Dulles and Baltimore/Washington Thurgood Marshall international airports fined two travelers \$300 each for attempting to smuggle prohibited agriculture products in their luggage.

The BWI passenger concealed four guavas inside the lining of a purse inside her baggage and two peppers inside the liner of her suitcase. The Washington Dulles passenger, who arrived from Mongolia, was even more creative, concealing about 12 pounds of raw beef and pork sausage inside juice boxes and other food containers.



CBP Officers Intercept 'Date-Rape' Drug

Nogales, Ariz. — A Mexican woman was apprehended in October after CBP officers at the Mariposa port discovered that she possessed animal tranquilizers often

used in the commission of sexual assaults.

Officers referred Josefina Irene Dominguez, 51, for additional questioning and a vehicle search when she attempted to enter the U.S. Officers found 310 vials of ketamine inside the vehicle.

The Drug Enforcement Administration describes ketamine as a clear, odorless and tasteless liquid developed in the early 1960s to replace phencyclidine as an anesthetic. Since ketamine also induces amnesia, it is sometimes given to unsuspecting victims prior to the commission of sexual assaults. This illegal practice is referred to as “drug rape” or “date rape.”

CBP seized the drugs and vehicle and Dominguez was referred for prosecution.



Border Patrol Seizes Cash Stashed in Baby Wipes Package

San Diego — Border Patrol agents stopped a 35-year-old male U.S. citizen driving a 2009 Ford Econoline along with his 36-year-old male Mexican passenger on the I-15 south near Rainbow, Calif. A Border Patrol K-9 team performed a cursory inspection of the vehicle resulting in a positive alert. A subsequent search of the vehicle revealed a total of \$17,863 concealed inside packages of baby wipes, shop towels and gloves. The suspected smugglers were booked into Vista County Jail on bulk cash smuggling charges. The currency and vehicle were seized by the Border Patrol.

To prevent illicit smuggling of humans, drugs and other contraband, CBP maintains a high level of vigilance on major U.S. egress corridors.

RESOURCES

NEED ANSWERS?

CBP has more than 600 answers to your most frequently asked questions, as well as a few that aren't so common. Please use this page to research the information you need. If you do not find it, or have additional questions, contact CBP.

<https://help.cbp.gov> or call (877) 227-5511 or (202) 325-8000.

U.S. PORTS OF ENTRY

Locate a Port of Entry – Air, Land, or Sea.

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/contacts/ports/

TRAVEL INFORMATION

CBP provides helpful information about the entry process, travel program and more for U.S. citizens and international visitors.

www.cbp.gov/travel

Trusted Traveler Programs

For expedited travel for air and land border crossing, enroll in one of the following programs.

- Air travel – www.globalentry.gov
- Northern land border crossing – www.nexus.gc.ca
- Southern land border crossing – www.senri.gov

For international Visa Waiver Travelers

Electronic System for Travel Authorization

<https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>

TRADE INFORMATION

CBP provides information and resources to the trade community about basic importing and exporting, cargo security and more.

www.cbp.gov/trade

CAREERS WITH CBP

If you are interested in a career with CBP, check out the “Careers” website for more information.

www.cbp.gov/careers

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security – www.dhs.gov

DHS TRIP – www.dhs.gov/trip

U.S. Customs and Border Protection – www.cbp.gov

Transportation Security Administration – www.tsa.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency – www.fema.gov

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

- I-551, Permanent Resident Card (“Green Card”) – www.uscis.gov

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – www.ice.gov

United States Coast Guard – www.uscg.mil

U.S. State Department

- Passports – www.travel.state.gov/passport
- Visas – www.travel.state.gov/visa
- Visa Waiver Program – www.travel.state.gov/visa
- Cultural property – www.exchanges.state.gov/culprop

United States Department of Agriculture/APHIS

- Traveler Information – www.aphis.usda.gov/travel
- Importing Agricultural Items – www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export

STOP AND THINK!



Visit www.CBP.gov for agricultural requirements before your trip!

For more information you may also visit the APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine website at www.aphis.usda.gov

WE UNDERSTAND WHY YOU MAY WANT TO BRING A BIT OF BEAUTIFUL MEXICO TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT BE AWARE THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN ITEMS YOU CANNOT BRING ACROSS THE BORDER. SO BEFORE YOU TRAVEL, VISIT THE U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION'S WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT AGRICULTURAL REQUIREMENTS.

CAUTION:

**YOU MUST DECLARE
ALL MEATS, FRUITS,
VEGETABLES, PLANTS,
SOIL OR ANIMAL OR
PLANT MATERIAL
PRODUCTS.**



CBP



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