

FEATURE ARTICLES

The United States Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School

By

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The Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) traces its history to 1961 when a United States Coast Guard Mobile Training Team (MTT) was sent to the Panama Canal Zone following agreements made during the Alliance for Progress Conference in San José, Costa Rica. During this initial deployment, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) recognized the need for a permanent training facility. In May 1963, the USCG based the Small Craft Inspection and Training Team (SCIATT) at the United States Naval Station, Rodman, Panama.

In June 1969, SCIATT was transferred to the United States Navy, re-designated Small Craft Instruction and Technical Team, and placed under direction of United States Naval Station, Panama Canal as a department. At the time, NAVSCIATTS was one of three original Panama Canal Area Military Schools (PCAMS) whose mission was:

In conformance with the United States Security Assistance Program, [to] foster increased level of professionalism and readiness in the Naval and Coast Guard Forces of Latin America and Caribbean Island nations through formal courses of instruction and Mobile Training Teams in the operation of small craft including employment, maintenance, and logistic support.

With the school's success, continual training demands, and increasingly large enrollment, the school was eventually established informally as a naval shore activity on October 19, 1982. Chief of Naval Operations Note (OPNAVNOTE) 5450 009B2E3/314089 of October 29, 1982, officially established NAVSCIATTS as a shore activity on United States Naval Base, Panama, effective on October 19, 1982. NAVSCIATTS was assigned to Commander Training Command Atlantic Fleet, a



functional command for the Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET). Continued success and further expansion led to NAVSCIATTS official establishment as a Naval Shore Command on July 21, 1983, under President Reagan's directives to enhance United States security forces relationships in Latin America and the Caribbean. Commander Richard James Flanagan (United States Navy Retired) was its first Commanding Officer.

NAVSCIATTS remained a component of CNET until disestablished in January 1999.

(Chief of Naval Operations [CNO] LTR N09B22C/20 November 1998) as a result of the closure of Rodman Naval Station in the Republic of Panama (Torrijos-Carter Treaty). Naval Special Warfare (NSW) and United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM or SOCOM) decided to take NAVSCIATTS as part of the "NSW Coastal and Riverine Training Center" concept leading to fiscal year (FY) 1999 Program Budget Decision (PBD) 715 signed 21 December 1998 that assigned USSOCOM the responsibility to establish and operate NAVSCIATTS and ultimately relocate the command to National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. Possessing some of the finest riverine and littoral training areas in the world, Stennis Space Center provides an ideal training area for NAVSCIATTS.

NAVSCIATTS was re-established during a ceremony onboard the John C. Stennis Space Center, MC on October 1, 1999, and commissioned an Echelon IV shore command with Operation Control (OPCON) and Administrative Control (ADCON) through Commander Naval Special Warfare Center and Naval Special Warfare Command to USSOCOM (shifted C2 from under CNET). NAVSCIATTS' first day of classes was held on January 10, 2000. Only eight students from Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) graduated on Class 1-00.

In 2006, the Commander of United States Special Operations Command assigned NAVSCIATTS the following new mission:

NAVSCIATTS conducts Foreign Internal Defense (FID) in support of Combatant Commanders in accordance with Commander, United States Special Operations Command, priorities using Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) and in-residence training to prepare partner nation forces to conduct small craft operations in riverine or littoral environments.

On September 19, 2008, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) designated USSOCOM the Joint Proponent for Security Force Assistance; and two months later, on December 19, 2008, Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM) shifted NAVSCIATTS from Naval Special Warfare Center (NAVSPECWARCEN) to Naval Special Warfare Group-4 (NSWG-4) as its SFA component.

October 1, 2009, marked the close of NSWG-4's first ever Maritime Security Force Assistance Symposium and commemoration of NAVSCIATTS establishment ceremony under USSOCOM October 1, 1999. NAVSCIATTS' success over the last decade has resulted in the school expanding from its SOUTHCOM focus to every other Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) area of operation. NAVSCIATTS has enjoyed a 200 percent increase in countries attending NAVSCIATTS, 375 percent increase in student throughput, and 150 percent increase in Mobile Training Teams (METs).

It has been a long journey; but teamwork, hard work, and perseverance have paid off. We have accomplished more than we ever imagined, stated Mr. Felix Arrieta, Director of Mobile Training Teams and one of NAVSCIATTS' original members integral in the school's transition from Panama to Mississippi.

Under NSWG-4, the next decade promises improved coordination and increased growth to meet USSOCOM and GCC requirements globally.

About the Author

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