

# FRONTLINE

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

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KERLIKOWSKE

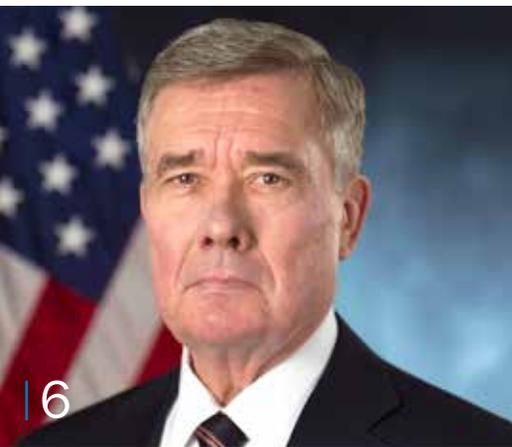
CBP's Commissioner  
in his own words as he  
prepares to depart the agency



# We are CBP

An Air and Marine Operations AS-350 flies over downtown Cleveland during the 2016 Republican National Convention. Photo by Kris Grogan

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COVER  
Photo composite by Ozzy Trevino



# U.S. Customs and Border Protection



## FRONTLINE

SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
Jeh Johnson

COMMISSIONER,  
U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION  
R. Gil Kerlikowske

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER (ACTING),  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
Michael J. Friel

EDITOR  
Laurel Smith

MANAGING EDITOR  
Jason McCammack

PRODUCTION MANAGER  
Tracie Parker

STAFF WRITERS  
Paul Koscak, Marcy Mason

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Donna Burton, Glenn Fawcett

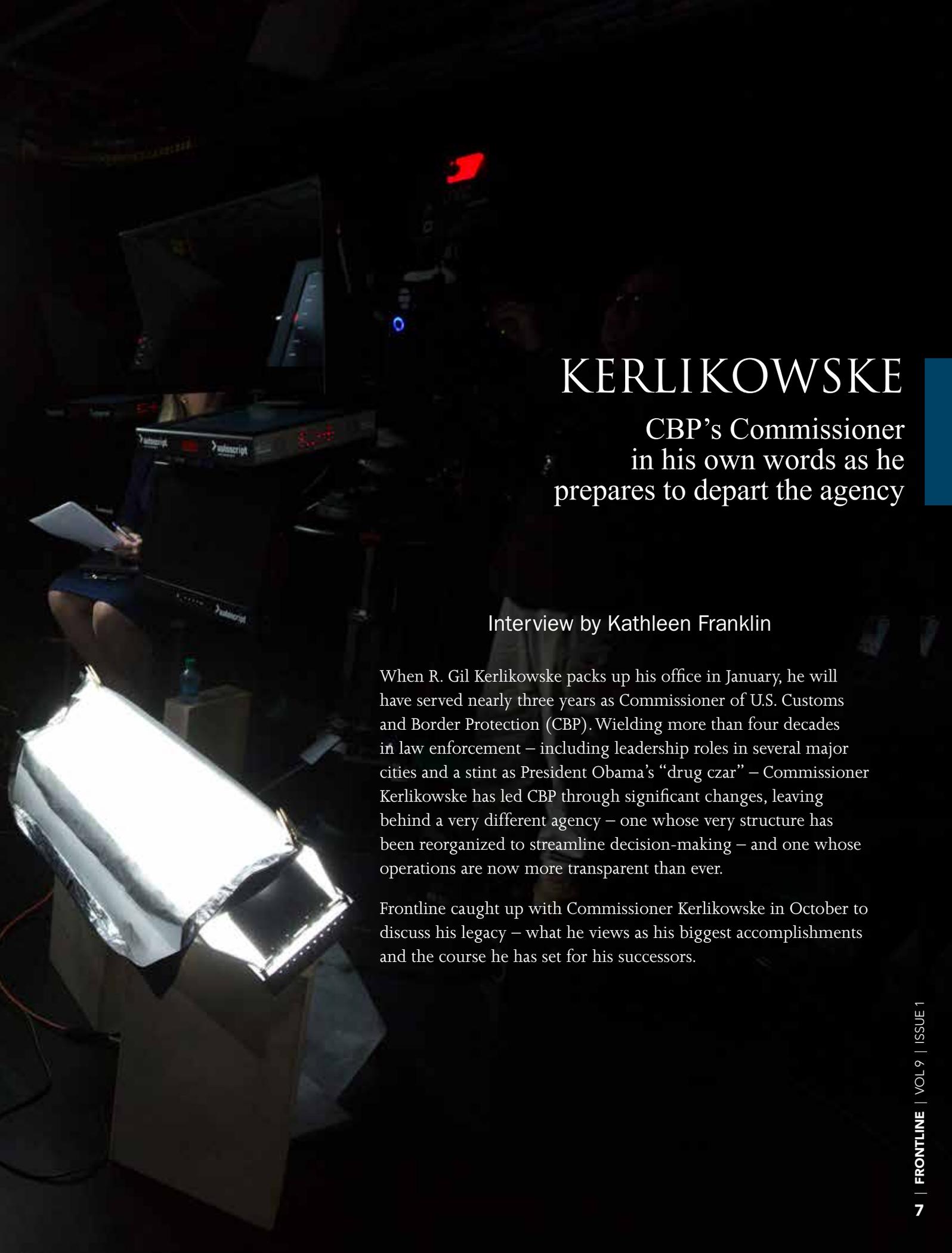
ART & DESIGN DIRECTOR  
Ozzy Trevino

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
Commissioner, R. Gil Kerlikowske is  
interviewed before departing the agency.  
Photo by Donna Burton



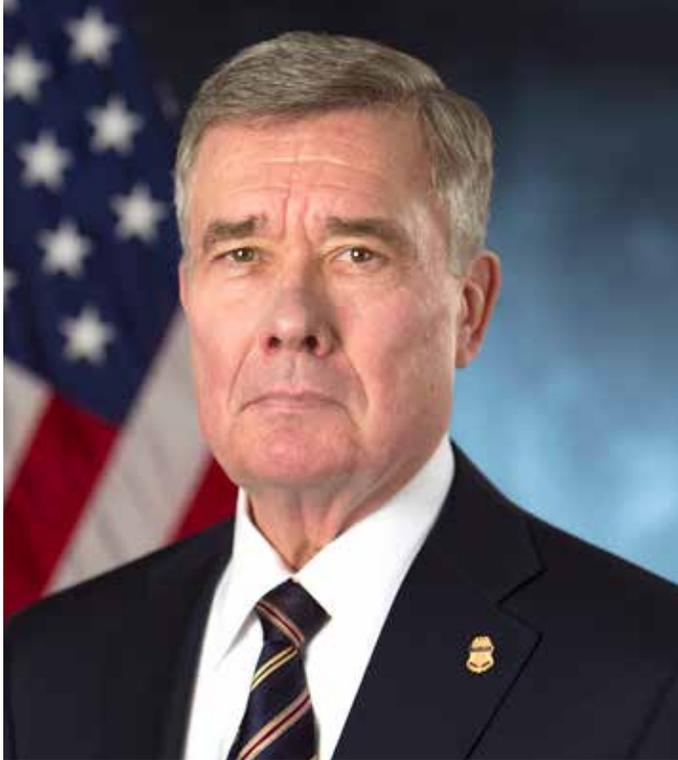
# KERLIKOWSKE

CBP's Commissioner  
in his own words as he  
prepares to depart the agency

Interview by Kathleen Franklin

When R. Gil Kerlikowske packs up his office in January, he will have served nearly three years as Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Wielding more than four decades in law enforcement – including leadership roles in several major cities and a stint as President Obama's "drug czar" – Commissioner Kerlikowske has led CBP through significant changes, leaving behind a very different agency – one whose very structure has been reorganized to streamline decision-making – and one whose operations are now more transparent than ever.

Frontline caught up with Commissioner Kerlikowske in October to discuss his legacy – what he views as his biggest accomplishments and the course he has set for his successors.



**Q:** You're unique among CBP commissioners in that you are the first to have led a police department and the first to have served as a law enforcement officer for a municipal police organization. What is it about that background that has been most relevant to your tenure here as CBP commissioner?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** Working in law enforcement has really helped, because, you know, we are first and foremost a law enforcement organization. I can really relate to the experience of our officers and agents. For example, I've worked many holidays and Christmases during the course of my career, so I've tried to visit our personnel during those times. People often forget that our folks work 24/7, 365 days a year.

**Q:** How has your experience here differed from what you were expecting when you came on board? In other words, what has surprised you the most about being Commissioner?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** Well, CBP has probably the most complex and the broadest mission of any of the DHS components – in fact, I'd say it has the most complex mission among all of the federal agencies. We collect \$46 billion in revenue every year. CBP inspects tens of thousands of cargo containers every year. Every international traveler is screened by us. Oh, and not only do we keep people and cargo moving, on top of that we also have a border security mission. It's intense, it's complex, and it's relentless, and it's an amazing group of people that perform that [mission] every day.

**Q:** Speaking of employees, you have met with CBP officers and agents at dozens of ports of entry and stations along our borders. What are some of the more memorable encounters that you have had with members of CBP's workforce?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** I've been fortunate to be able to travel all over the world and meet our people. I've visited many of our ports of entry – and I've logged more than 200,000 miles each year and everywhere I go I've tried to get out to see them and listen to what they have to say. And they've offered great suggestions. In fact, we recently expanded our Employee Assistance Program from offering six free



counseling visits per year to 12 visits per year. That was actually the suggestion of an employee at a town hall we held in Tampa. So in terms of how to run things better, more efficiently, and to improve the lives of our personnel, we really do listen to them and we try to implement those suggestions. I've also been so impressed by their patriotism and the tremendous energy and enthusiasm they bring to what is one of the most important missions of any government agency, and that's border security.

**Q:** Not only have you traveled all over the country, you've visited about two dozen foreign countries, significantly amplifying CBP's international engagement and signing numerous agreements covering trade and travel facilitation and enforcement. What has been your most challenging experience on the global stage?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** I think the greatest challenge has been explaining what CBP actually does. In many countries, Customs is very unique, and they're really interested only in revenue collection. In other countries, of course, they do have border security initiatives woven into different components. CBP does it all – border security, immigration inspection, agriculture screening, revenue collection, trade and travel facilitation and enforcement – and other countries look at that and they say, gee, that's the kind of integrated approach we should take. And we work hard to try and help them do that.

**Q:** What do you think have been CBP's biggest achievements in terms of global engagement during your tenure at CBP?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** Well, we've greatly expanded the number of attachés, the number of liaisons, and that's thanks to the support we get from the Department of State. CBP personnel are excellent resources and partners for our ambassadors overseas. For example, when the State Department's visa system crashed and went down for about two weeks, if you had a CBP person in your embassy, they could actually implement a manual system to help people get through. Every time I turn around and meet with an ambassador somewhere, they tell me, we're so appreciative of having CBP personnel in our embassy.

**Q:** The escalation of violent extremism is unprecedented in modern times, and CBP is on the front line of preventing terrorists and weapons of terror from entering the country. What steps is CBP taking to meet this challenge today, and what more can or should be done?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** We know that the threat picture in the United States is significant, not only from what people call "home-grown terrorists," but also from people who may try to come into this country and do us harm. There are several ways we address that challenge. One is pushing our borders out – having a much broader global footprint through programs like Preclearance and the Immigration Advisory Program. Another way is by sharing information with other countries about potential threats. But the most basic way is through the work that our people do every single day – when they question somebody coming into this country to find out their purpose and to make sure they don't pose a threat, or in screening a cargo container or mail package.

**Q:** CBP has faced some criticism regarding our enforcement of our nation's immigration laws. How do you respond to that criticism, and what nuances or realities are these critics missing?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** You know, I think one of the things that often gets missed when it comes to our United States Border Patrol is the fact that, every single day, particularly in those summer months, they rescue migrants who try to make that incredibly dangerous trek into the country, who then often fall prey to either violence or to the environment itself. There isn't a day that goes by that the Border Patrol doesn't rescue people. And that means that they're putting their lives at risk. There was no greater example of this than the first year I was in office, in the summer of 2014, during which 68,000 unaccompanied children came across our border, mostly in the Rio Grande Valley. The Border Patrol agents and the Customs and Border Protection officers at those ports of

entry really did an incredible job of taking care of them, protecting them, feeding them, making sure that they got to see a health professional. I was suitably impressed with what they did.

**Q:** When you became commissioner in early 2014, you vowed that transparency and accountability were going to be top priorities for CBP. You took significant steps to fulfill that promise. For example, you ordered the release of the Police Executive Research Forum report, you began making information about use-of-force incidents more publicly accessible, and CBP became the first federal agency to conduct a feasibility study on body-worn cameras. What have been the greatest obstacles in terms of CBP's transparency and accountability efforts?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** I think the obstacles have less to do with CBP or its personnel and more to do with government bureaucracy in general. We work hard to maintain good relations with the rest of our executive branch colleagues and with the members of Congress. But within CBP, the leadership really embraced the concept of accountability. And when it came to answering tough questions and explaining what happened in a very difficult situation, such as an agent or an officer using force, they did a great job. I don't know of a single other federal agency that addresses these types of really sensitive issues as openly and in such an excellent fashion as CBP.



| CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske addresses the media at Washington Dulles International Airport. Photo by Josh Denmark

**Q:** What work remains to be done here along those lines?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** Well, I think we have to institutionalize it. I'll be leaving in January at the end of the administration, and it's very important that these things continue on. But you know, in a way, we will have made this a part of CBP's DNA: openness, accountability, transparency, meeting with those whose messages can often be critical about us. That's the way I believe this agency will continue to do business.

**Q:** Commissioner, do you worry that the level of transparency and accountability that you've managed to achieve here at CBP might gradually disappear?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** I don't think it will. I think that the work that has been done to assure the public that we are going to be open and honest about what has occurred – even about the most serious incidents – is solid. Our professionals in the Office of Public Affairs have done an outstanding job in mass media, social media, and many other ways of getting the message out that we're going to answer questions and that we're going to be open about what has occurred. And I don't see that changing.

**Q:** During your tenure here, there has been an escalation of tensions between local communities and law enforcement all over the country. How has this escalation informed your decision-making about the use of force here at CBP?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** There's nothing more important than a community's trust in its law enforcement agency, and the loss of that trust puts people that are the most vulnerable at the greatest risk. We've revamped our training curriculum for our officers and agents, emphasizing de-escalation and less lethal approaches – and we're definitely not making these changes in a vacuum. I think CBP has worked very hard with the people we serve and we've worked hard with non-governmental organizations, the media and others to make sure that we're being open and honest about what we do. That includes admitting our mistakes. And we need to continue in that fashion.

**Q:** In your previous leadership roles as police chief and as head of the White House's Office of National Drug Control Policy, you were in charge of a few hundred employees as opposed to tens of thousands. What have been the biggest challenges of running such a large bureaucracy, and how have you addressed those challenges?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** Well, I think you have to surround yourself with incredibly talented people. We've gone through a realignment so that those who have the talent and the expertise are able to make decisions and have greater autonomy. Too many things were waiting for the Commissioner's signature, or the Deputy Commissioner's signature. The realignment helps eliminate decision-making bottlenecks by delegating authority and streamlining the organization.

**Q:** The latest results from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey were encouraging. Are there any steps CBP could take that it has not already taken to improve workforce morale and employee satisfaction?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** So many components of CBP have contributed to the improvement and much of that work has been under the direction of Linda Jacksta, assistant commissioner of Human Resources Management. I also think things have improved because our supervisors, our managers, our executives are on the road all the time, interacting with the workforce. They're meeting with employees, they're listening to employees, and I think that is reflected specifically in the significant improvement under the survey questions involving leadership engagement.

**Q:** Okay, it's March 2014 again. Knowing what you know now, what's the one thing that you would do differently, and why?

**Commissioner Kerlikowski:** I would have probably attempted the reorganization a little bit sooner. I think that I was busy with the kinds of unexpected challenges – the influx of unaccompanied minors across the Southwest border, the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa and its impact on travel – that become all-consuming. Those things take time away from thinking about the strategic plan of the organization. On top of that, you can't control those kinds of crises; you have to be visible as a leader. So I visited every one of the five airports designated

for screening travelers from Ebola-afflicted countries and I talked with our employees there – because there is obviously concern about their health and well-being too.



A CBP officer conducts an interview with a passenger arriving from Sierra Leone during an enhanced Ebola screening at Washington Dulles International Airport.  
Photo by Josh Denmark



U.S. Border Patrol along the south Texas border provides assistance to unaccompanied children and families after they have crossed the border into the United States.  
Photo by Barry Bahler

**Q:** On a typical day, CBP officers and agents intercept nearly five tons of narcotics. What is the biggest narcotics threat that we're seeing at the borders and at our ports of entry?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** We really have a “multilevel” kind of narcotics threat. In the transit zone – in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean – our cocaine seizure numbers were up significantly in this past fiscal year. But we also, of course, have club drugs and other dangerous substances, including synthetic marijuana. One thing we are very alarmed about is illicit fentanyl, which is a very high-potency, addictive and really oftentimes quite fatal painkiller. It's been coming in through air cargo shipments and through our ports of entry – only a couple of pounds were seized in 2013, but nearly 200 pounds were seized in 2015. The more that we can do to interdict, the safer people are in this country. But we have to realize we're only one tool; our efforts can go only so far. That's why excellent prevention programs, making treatment available to people who need it, are so important. As you know, at many of our ports of entry our CBP officers carry something called Narcan, so that if they encounter somebody who has overdosed on an opioid, they can reverse that and save a life.

**Q:** Commissioner, in your travels around the country and meeting with employees, is there any standout experience about an employee engagement?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** I write about five or six personal notes a week to our employees, about great work that they've done and things that I've heard about. I also try to schedule five or six phone calls a week with them. And just recently, I talked to an inspector who had made a very important civil case. He had spent about three years investigating a company that was really defrauding our taxpayers, our government. He worked very hard on it. Two of his colleagues actually retired during the process, but he kept at it. The U.S. attorney took on the case and not only filed civil charges against that company, but was also able to make a criminal case. And when I thanked the employee, he said, “You know, it's this kind of work and this kind of effort that I undertook that makes me just want to continue to do the job that I'm doing for the people of America.” And I thought I was thanking him – and then he turned around and was thanking me for the opportunity to make a difference.

**Q:** What advice do you have for your successor as CBP commissioner, and why?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** Well, the first thing for a new transition team would be to find a skilled candidate, get them nominated and work closely with the Senate to get that person confirmed. When I leave in January, I will have been the first permanent CBP chief since 2011 when former Commissioner [Alan] Bersin – a recess appointee – stepped down. That means that we went nearly five years without having somebody other than an “acting” commissioner in that position. Frankly, Senate confirmation is quite helpful when it comes to international negotiations. When it comes to working with your interagency colleagues, it’s a great help knowing that the Senate, along with the president’s support, is there.



CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske testifies before a U.S. Senate Committee in Washington, D.C. Photo by Glenn Fawcett

**Q:** Can you share with us what’s next for you?

**Commissioner Kerlikowske:** I think I’d like to make a contribution in the teaching field, in other areas besides just government. I just think the level of intensity and the number of air hours might be something I’d like to reduce a little bit. 📺



CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske completes his interview with Frontline. Photo by Donna Burton



# LAW ENFORCEMENT ON A CONSTITUTIONAL SCALE

## SWEEPING USE OF FORCE REFORMS REINFORCE CBP'S COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND OFFICER SAFETY

By Paul Koscak

Two Border Patrol agents set off into the Arizona desert to intercept several individuals reported to have slipped through the nearby border. One tracked signs through a wash. The other searched the higher ground.

The agent in the wash soon spotted five men. They carried burlap sacks, commonly used to smuggle narcotics. Outnumbered, the agent concealed himself and radioed his partner, but got no response. At one point, the agent could no longer remain concealed and so he identified himself and ordered the group to stop.

Startled, four of them ran. The fifth man stood his ground and challenged the agent. He picked up a rock and cocked his arm, ready to throw.

Alone and threatened with serious bodily harm or worse, the agent fired a shot from his rifle. The subject wasn't hit, but he dropped the rock and fled.

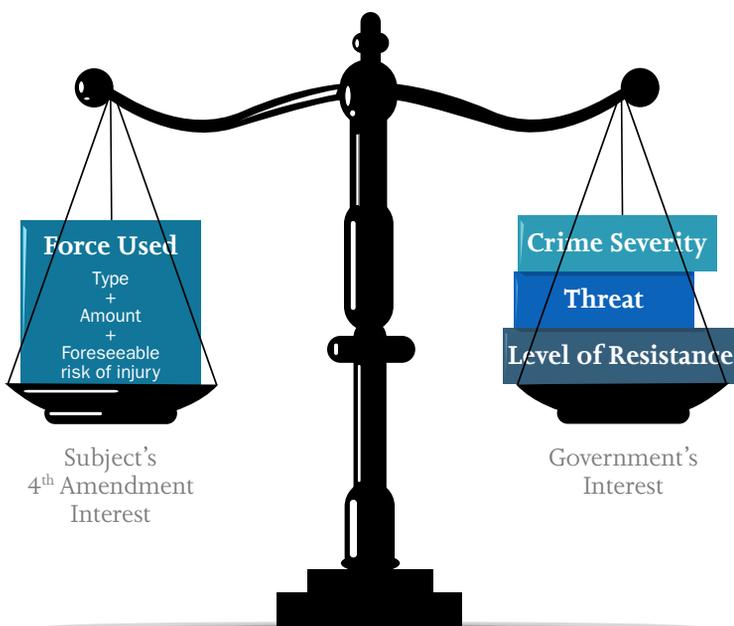
This use of force case is one of eight that U.S. Customs and Border Protection investigated, reviewed and published its conclusions about, as part of a sweeping series of reforms initiated in May 2014 to fulfill the agency's commitment to accountability and transparency when officers and agents use force.

# Enforcement law

Deadly force is authorized anytime there's a reasonable belief a subject "poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the agent or another person," according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection policy.

Legally, an officer's use of force is about balance. It must be in proportion to what's called the "totality of circumstances."

Picture a scale. The type and amount of force must not out-weigh the threat, level of resistance and severity of the crime, said Bryan Downs, an agency attorney at the Law Enforcement Safety and Compliance Directorate at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.



## Force Decision Factors

Graham v. Connor  
490 U.S. 386 (1989)

Balancing the scale centers on balancing those factors against the risk of injury to both the officer and the subject against the need to apply some degree of force.

These essentials become the totality of circumstances that drive how an officer or agent chooses the type and amount of proportional force.

Sometimes, it's a tough call. The Border Patrol agent in the desert facing the rock thrower had only a second to weigh those factors. An investigation concluded the agent's action was within policy.

Incidents are tense, uncertain, rapidly evolving and many times life-threatening and begin with the way a subject responds to an officer's commands. Most subjects comply, but some run, resist or even assault officers.

"This can be one of the most terrifying moments in an officer's life and they have just seconds to make a decision," said Austin Skero, director of the Law Enforcement Safety and Compliance Directorate. "Meanwhile, the courts have years to debate the decision that was made."

The U.S. Supreme Court considers that burden and gives officers the benefit of the doubt.

In *Graham v. Connor* (1989), the court ruled that an officer will be judged by what's considered reasonable force at the moment force is applied, not from hindsight. Use of force policy is built on such cases, said Downs.

It's also built on the Fourth Amendment: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated..."

"When you use deadly force, you're basically seizing someone's life," said Skero.

## Line of duty

Across the nation, violent, targeted attacks against law enforcement officers are increasing. In 2016, 64 officers nationwide were killed by gunfire, a 56 percent increase over 2015. More officers died in the line of duty in 2016 than during any year since 2011, according to the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund.

Border Patrol agents are among the most attacked law enforcers in the country. According to the U.S. Border Patrol, there were 7,542 assaults against agents since 2006; 1,996 rock attacks since 2010.



Considering the totality of circumstances, these agents used detention to maintain control. Photo courtesy of JTF-West

“There are times in law enforcement when some level of force must be used to safeguard the public or protect an officer or agent,” said Matthew Klein, CBP’s Office of Professional Responsibility assistant commissioner. “Whenever significant force is used, accountability and transparency are critical,” he said. “The public’s trust depends upon it.”

## Independent reviews

That public trust was tested following a series of deadly use of force incidents involving CBP law enforcement personnel in 2011 and 2012. Public concern over those incidents spurred CBP to launch a comprehensive outside review of its use of force policies through the Police Executive Research Forum, an independent panel of nationally recognized leaders in law enforcement.

PERF reexamined incidents, reviewed claims from advocacy groups and then presented a number of policy, tactics and training recommendations. CBP reassessed 67 incidents reviewed by the forum. Of those, one case resulted in an indictment and another is under review by the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division.

At the request of Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske in 2014, the Homeland Security Advisory Council formed the Integrity Advisory Panel to recommend ways CBP can increase transparency and accountability in the ranks. Panel members visited CBP locations, interviewed employees and executives, met with

union leaders and reviewed policies, practices and guidelines.

In March, the panel released a final report, which included 39 recommendations. It commended the agency’s actions to counter corruption and foster integrity. “CBP is one of the few agencies in the world that carefully studies all instances of corruption,” stated the 43-page narrative that also offered a candid evaluation of the agency.

For example, the panel determined that CBP’s Office of Professional Responsibility was “woefully understaffed.”

It concluded that CBP needed 550 special agents to conduct timely and adequate investigations and called for an increase of 300.

To ease the shortage, ICE’s Office of Professional Responsibility detailed special agents to CBP to assist with internal investigations. FBI-led task forces and the DHS inspector general’s office are also engaged.

Some of the nation’s most distinguished law enforcement experts served on the panel, which was co-chaired by former New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton and Karen Tandy, a former administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Members included Robert C. Bonner, former CBP commissioner and federal judge; John Magaw, former director of the U.S. Secret Service; former

U.S. Rep. from Arizona Ron Barber; Rick Fuentes, superintendent, New Jersey State Police; Walter McNeil, past president, International Association of Chiefs of Police; Roberto Villaseñor chief of police, Tucson, Arizona; and Paul Stockton, a former assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense.

Within the agency, CBP now trains and employs officers and agents to join investigators with CBP's Office of Professional Responsibility to rapidly respond to and investigate use of force incidents. Training began in December 2014 and as of October, approximately 450 CBP law enforcers are now qualified.

As of October, these use of force incident teams traveled to 36 locations to participate with federal and local law enforcement agencies to review circumstances, gather facts and report findings to a board established by CBP to make conclusions about the incident.

Cases involving a firearm, death or serious injury that were declined for prosecution are referred to the newly formed National Use of Force Review Board, which determines "whether the actions taken were within" CBP's use of force policy. The board includes senior officials from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, as well as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the DHS Office of Inspector General and CBP.

Based on the review, the board recommends changes in policy, training, tactics or equipment

to the senior executive of the relevant operational component, deputy commissioner and ultimately to the commissioner for a final decision. So far, CBP has completed eight reviews of significant use of force incidents.

## Building trust

"From the start of my tenure, addressing our agency's use of force has been one of my top priorities," said Commissioner Kerlikowske.

Making good on his commitment to transparency and continually earning the public trust, the Commissioner reached out to representatives from Northern and Southern border groups and other non-governmental organizations to listen and discuss CBP's commitment to accountability and outreach.

CBP leaders discussed U.S. law and use of force policy with officials from the Government of Mexico. They formed a working group to exchange information, monitor cases, suggest preventive measures and improve training and outreach.

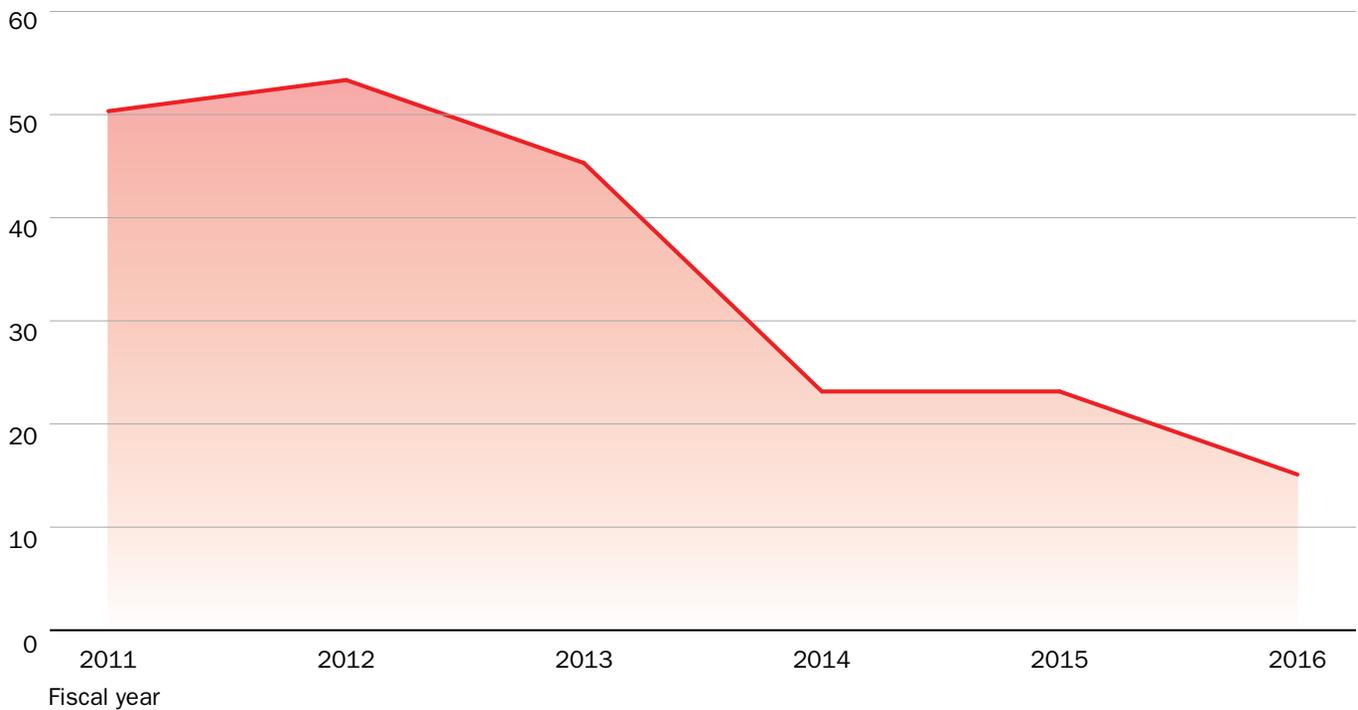
At the same time, CBP increased basic training by six days, focusing on the Constitution, court decisions, de-escalation techniques, officer presence and communication.

Recurrent training in less-lethal devices, conflict solutions and force policy is now required up to four times per year and simulator training is an annual requirement.



CBP's use-of-force simulator presents almost endless challenges. Photo by James Tourtellotte

## Firearms use by U.S. Border Patrol, fiscal year 2011 - 2016



Commissioner Kerlikowske spoke about those reforms during a recent National Public Radio interview, explaining “in particular with the Border Patrol their use of firearms over the last two fiscal years is down by almost half. They have increased the length of their academy. They’ve been given a lot of less-lethal technology. And I think the most important part is that we’ve been very transparent about all of this.”

Less-lethal applications have varied over the past five years but they remain substantially higher in contrast to firearms, according to statistics from CBP’s Law Enforcement Safety and Compliance Directorate.

It’s important to note that annual less-lethal figures are not the number of incidents; they’re uses-of-force, according to Director Skero. One or several uses-of-force can be counted in a single incident. For instance, if a pepper compound is fired at five assailants, that’s five uses-of-force. The CBP use of force ratio is about one-tenth of one percent of all subjects detained, or 1 in 730.

CBP established a process to release information to the public within an hour after headquarters notification. As more facts are confirmed, CBP is committed to issuing the information within the next 12 hours,

preferably through a press conference.

This improved, proactive communication with the public about use of force incidents sets a standard in law enforcement for transparency and accountability, said Commissioner Kerlikowske.

“For years we did not allow field leadership to quickly address the media,” said Director Skero, who commended the Commissioner for setting the new approach.



Dan M. Harris, then Blaine Sector Chief Patrol Agent, briefs the media following a fatal use of force incident in Sumas, Washington, in March 2015. He is joined by Sheriff Bill Elfo, Whatcom County Sheriff’s Department, and Chief of Police Chris Haugen, Sumas Police Department. Photo by Philip A. Dwyer / Bellingham Herald

He cited the March 2015 news conference then Chief Border Patrol Agent Dan Harris from the Blaine Sector held after a man who attacked an agent with a chemical spray was fatally shot while trying to illegally cross the U.S. – Canada border. The 20-year-old murder suspect refused orders to stop, and as Harris explained in a press conference, “displayed erratic and threatening behavior.”

“The simple act of the chief publically acknowledging that a use of force incident occurred relieved much of the tension,” Skero said.

Adding another step in the process of increasing accountability and transparency, CBP released the conclusions of its internal review of four cases in June and another four in November.

CBP has also committed to releasing more information about recommendations made by the national use of force review board and publishing a report of workforce discipline.

“As committed as we have become to transparency and accountability, we understand that more needs to be done to strengthen dialogue with communities and organizations,” said U.S. Border Patrol Chief Mark Morgan. “We are more transparent than ever before about agents’ use of force. However, communities and organizations also should know about all we

are doing to ensure migrants’ safety, the safety of communities and the safety of our agents who put themselves in harm’s way.”

## Air pressure, electricity and hands

Imagine yourself as a law enforcement officer. You encounter a subject who becomes combative after you ask for some identification. What would you do?

Law enforcement officers are trained to gain and maintain control through a variety of less-than lethal responses at CBP’s Advance Training Center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Instruction covers everything from self-defense to a series of less-lethal devices.

“We must ensure our officers and agents have the proper use of force training, tactics and equipment,” said Commissioner Kerlikowske.

CBP law enforcers learn to counter attacks at close distances, using hand-to-hand grappling and striking techniques.

“At arm’s length, someone can pull a knife and cut you in about 0.4 of a second,” said John Mansell, assistant director for less-lethal training. “Given the proximity of an assault, officers may be unable to



Tactics to stop a knife-wielding offender are among the special strategies taught at the Law Enforcement Safety and Compliance Directorate.  
Photo by Kelli King

create the time or distance needed to access their weapon or use a less-lethal option. In those encounters, they need to know how to use their hands.”

Agents and officers also train to use a variety of less-than lethal responses to an attack, including an electronic control weapon, which immobilizes an assailant through an electric shock to the body, and launchers that deploy projectiles filled with a pepper or chemical compound up to 450 feet.

Agents also learn to use the collapsible straight baton and the Nighthawk, a device designed to puncture tires in the event that a dangerous, reckless driver flees from law enforcement and poses a threat to other drivers or pedestrians.

The Nighthawk came about after Senior U.S. Border Patrol Agent Luis Aguilar of the Yuma Station in Arizona was murdered in 2008. Aguilar was trying to deploy a tire deflation stick to stop a suspected smuggler fleeing to Mexico in a Hummer when the driver intentionally swerved into Aguilar. Tragically, he died at the scene.

These technologies and techniques give officers more ways to maintain control in proportion to the threat.

When Skero began his career in state and local law enforcement over 25 years ago, he remembers when a written use of force policy didn't exist. “Things have certainly changed,” he said, “and it's good that they have.” 📌



U.S. Border Patrol agents practice defensive tactics appropriate for a resistant subject. Photo by Kelli King



The FN303 is an air-powered weapon that shoots plastic projectiles containing pepper compound or paint to mark subjects. Photo by Kelli King



## PRACTICING FOR THE UNEXPECTED: WHEN SECONDS COUNT

A participant experiences the tension of real-life incidents inside CBP's use-of-force simulator. Photo by Josh Denmark

Picture an officer reacting to an incident, and an instructor critiquing the result. That happens as dozens of incidents are played out in CBP's use-of-force simulator.

This powerful tool with its five screens replicates the landscape, sights and sounds of the field with the clarity, fidelity and depth of an IMAX theater. But in this interactive movie, trainees control the ending as their judgement is put to the test.

"It will draw you in quickly," said Peter Lobur, one of the directorate's assistant directors.

Achieving that level of realism can involve months of planning, site visits and video editing. But the details are there, right down to the puffs of dirt kicked up from bullets slamming into the ground.

Actors play roles in these prerecorded dramas - a bystander, a rock thrower, a shooter, a confrontational subject - compelling participants to choose the appropriate level-of-force.

Sessions last from 30 seconds to two and a half minutes can accommodate up to four people and replayed just like instant replay at a football game. Afterward, instructors evaluate the outcome in Socratic-style debriefings requiring participants to justify their actions," said Lobur. Constitutional law and DHS and CBP force policy is also reviewed.

Scenarios may involve:

- A narcotics interdiction
- An illegal alien interdiction
- An armed bandit encounter
- A stolen vehicle stop
- An airport encounter with a mentally disturbed person

And they're lifelike. Just ask the participants.

Spokane Sector Border Patrol Agent Derek Haynes worked with a partner practicing cover techniques. "It was the most realistic training I've had," he said. "Extremely interactive."

"Completely immersive," noted Jason Wagner, a Tucson, Arizona, Border Patrol agent. Thrust into an urban environment for just a minute and a half was enough to get his heart pounding and his breathing rushed, he said.

Considering how the simulator quickly builds experience and the lives it potentially saves, the investment is priceless. CBP operates 27 simulators.

Locations are Arizona: Tucson, Yuma, Nogales; California: San Diego, El Centro, Los Angeles; Florida: Miami; Georgia: Atlanta; Illinois: Chicago; Louisiana: New Orleans; Maine: Houlton; Michigan: Detroit; Montana: Havre; New York: Buffalo, Massena; North Dakota: Grand Forks; Puerto Rico: Ramey; Texas: El Paso (2), Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, Big Bend, Del Rio, Hidalgo; Vermont: Swanton; Washington: Spokane, Blaine; 



# PHOTO FROM THE FIELD

Photo by:  
Joshua Williams  
Marine Interdiction Agent  
Air and Marine Operations  
Fort Pierce, Florida

AMO agents from the Fort Pierce Marine Unit hosted a one-day training event where agents briefed state and local partners on marine tactics and prior cases. Following the briefing, agents launched two CBP Midnight Interceptors along with multiple marine assets from partnering agencies.

Agents use these events to strengthen the agency's capability and improve its partnerships to further the CBP mission. Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, Martin County Sheriff's Office, Port St. Lucie Police Department, Fort Pierce Police Department, U.S. Border Patrol, and U.S. Coast Guard were among the participants.

Submit your photos to [frontline@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:frontline@cbp.dhs.gov)

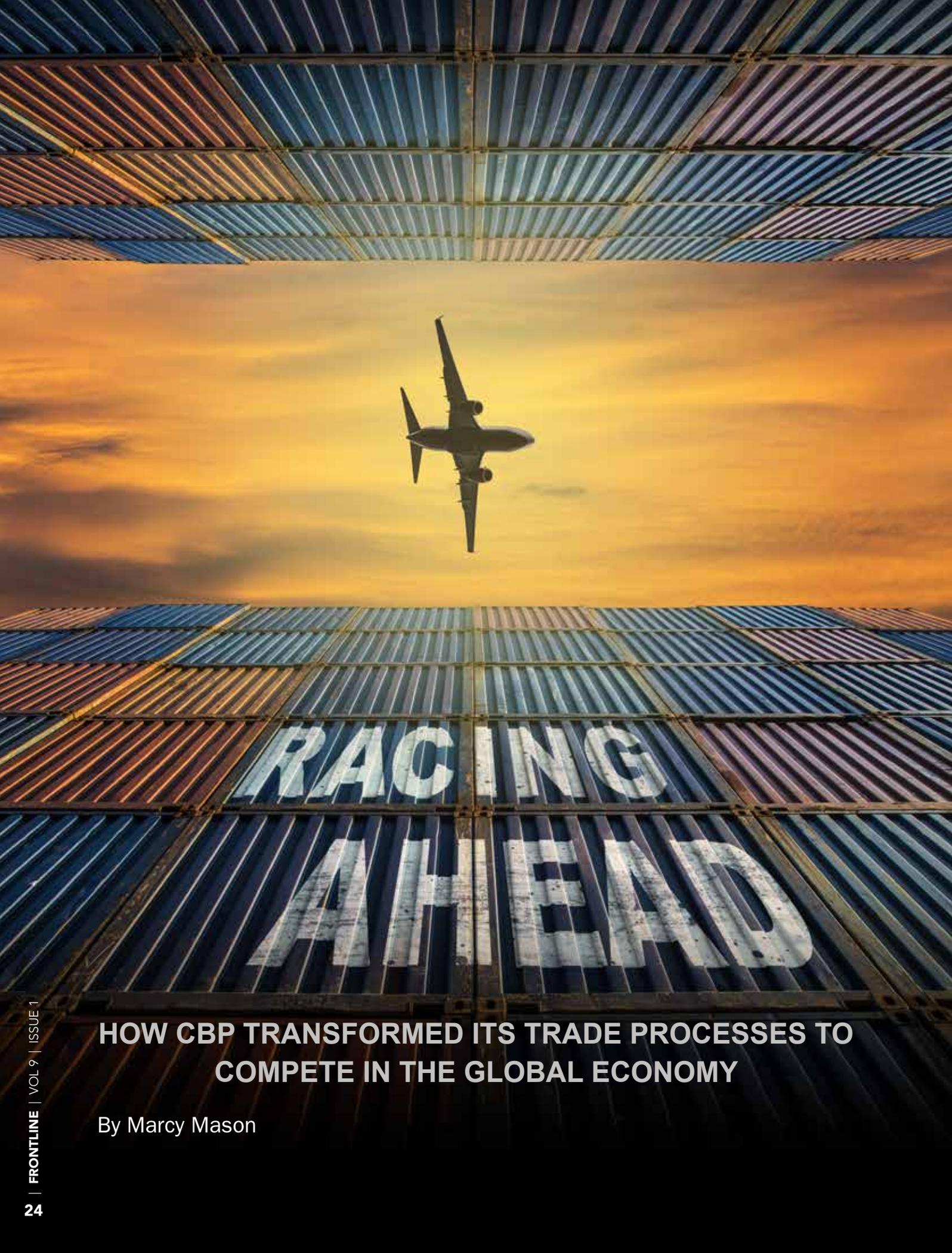


FURUNO



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection

MERCURY



**RACING  
AHEAD**

**HOW CBP TRANSFORMED ITS TRADE PROCESSES TO  
COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

By Marcy Mason

Over the last five years, the global economy has been changing. Consumers are buying more goods online, e-commerce is flourishing, and supply chains are moving at a breakneck speed. At the same time, the number of trade agreements is growing and countries are increasingly more focused on regulations, supply chain security, and the movement of cargo across their borders.

For U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the effects have been staggering. “Everyone wants everything now. You order something online today; you want it at your home tomorrow,” said Todd Owen, the executive assistant commissioner of CBP’s Office of Field Operations.

But with speed and immediacy come logistical challenges. The number of shipments entering the country by air, rail, truck, and sea is rapidly increasing, especially by air. In 2015, CBP inspected more than 275 million parcels at express courier hubs and international mail facilities. Cargo coming into the U.S. through other modes of transportation was also high. “In the last five years, the economy has grown much stronger, so we are seeing the benefits of that,” said Owen. “Trade is up, e-commerce is going through the roof, and we have far more shipments coming into the U.S. The numbers are huge. But that also increases our workload and our staffing has struggled to keep up.”

CBP realized that the changes had a direct impact on the U.S. economy and the ability for American businesses to compete globally. “We don’t want to be a roadblock,” said Owen. “We want to make sure that we meet our security concerns, but to do so in a way that allows the economy to continue to prosper.”

As a consequence, over the last few years, the agency has been transforming its processes to increase efficiency and to make CBP more nimble as a customs organization so the country would not be left behind.

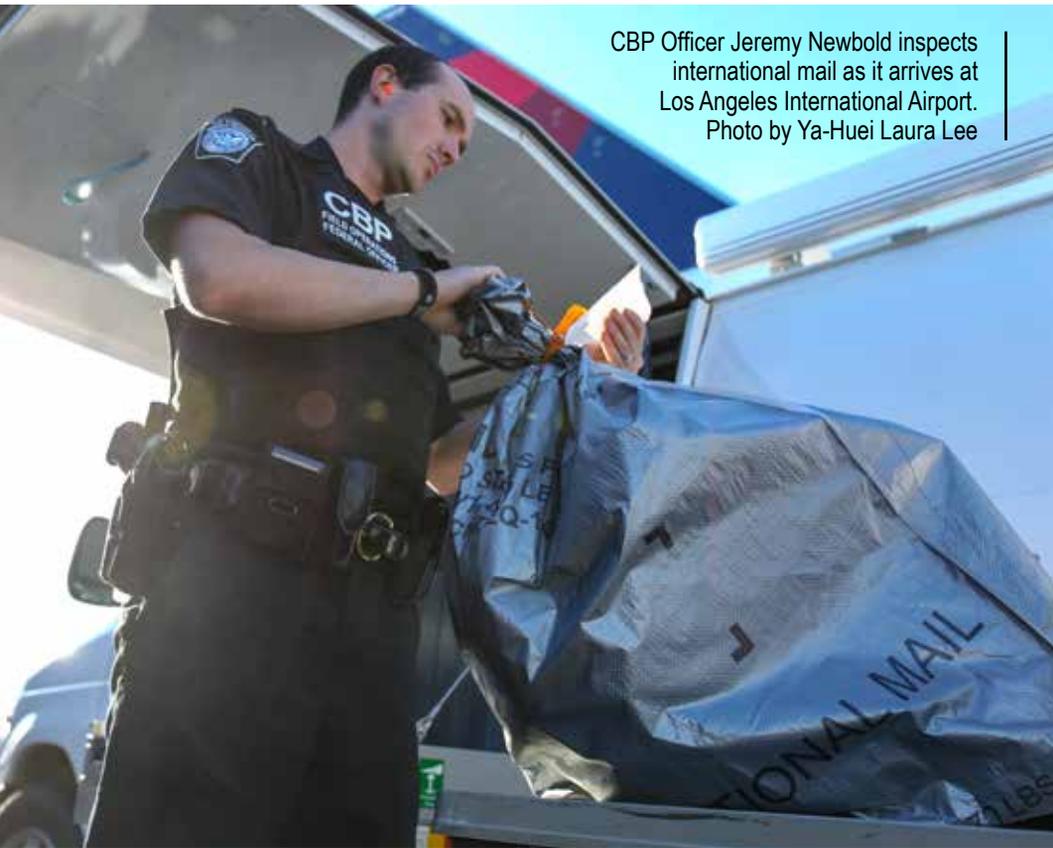
When CBP was formed in 2003 as part of the newly created Department of Homeland Security, it was an outgrowth of the events of Sept. 11, and its primary focus was protecting the homeland from terrorism. This was a major shift from the agency’s roots as the U.S. Customs Service. “Our traditional mission of facilitating and enforcing trade was not as strong as it had previously been,” said Brenda Smith, the executive assistant commissioner of CBP’s Office of Trade.

But by 2010, things started changing. The worldwide recession; several new trade agreements; and a significant growth in e-commerce, where goods are bought and sold easily over the Internet, prompted CBP to elevate trade. “We took a look at the strategic gaps in how we were conducting our trade mission,” said Smith, a chief architect of the transformational plans.

CBP officers at the port of Philadelphia use mobile non-intrusive inspection technology to scan import containers for contraband.  
Photo by James Tourtellotte



CBP Officer Jeremy Newbold inspects international mail as it arrives at Los Angeles International Airport. Photo by Ya-Huei Laura Lee



One of the obvious findings was that the government wasn't conducting business the same way as industry. "We weren't operating at the speed or the technology level," said Smith. "We were still stuck in the 20th century. There were a lot of things that we had oversight over that hadn't kept up with the times. Business was moving very quickly to modernize supply chains, to use technology, to use information, and we weren't there."

A major sticking point was paper. "Our trade processes were very cumbersome because everything was done with paper," said Smith. But it was much more than that. "It's not just getting rid of the paper. It's actually using the information in those documents to make decisions. We didn't have the visibility or the tools to do that," said Smith.

CBP identified significant gaps in other areas. For example, importers weren't viewed as accounts. "We were still at the transaction level," said Smith. "Every time we dealt with a company, even if the company had an excellent track record and we had dealt with them many times before, we looked at the company as if we had no idea who they were. It was slowing

us down and when we made our decisions about the risk of a particular transaction, we didn't consider all of the other information that we knew about the company. So importers couldn't bring their goods into the U.S. quickly. We were holding their goods, trying to decide if they were safe to let into the country," she said.

It soon became apparent that CBP needed to collaborate with the trade community to get a fresh perspective. It wasn't something that had typically been done. "We recognized that if we brought the trade community to the table to work with us, we could both benefit," said Smith. "Not only could they help us define what the problems were, they could help solve what was slowing things down and making us less efficient. It would save time, drive the economy and better protect the American consumer."

## Automating processes

Automation was at the heart of CBP's transformation efforts. "So much of what we do is driven by data, it's essential that our trade processes are automated," said Smith. The agency began automating its cargo

Preparing to inspect international air cargo, CBP Supervisory Officer Joseph Morris, right, and CBP Officer Javier Tamai, direct the offloading of shipments from a plane at Los Angeles International Airport. Photo by Ya-Huei Laura Lee



processing system during the early 1980s, when the legacy U.S. Customs Service built the Automated Commercial System. Significant progress was made, and in 1993, the Customs Modernization Act was passed, which gave legal authority to develop the next generation of automation. Starting in the mid-1990s, plans were made for a new cargo processing system, the Automated Commercial Environment, or ACE. ACE was intended to help the U.S. government collect duties, analyze and assign risk, and process international shipments coming in and out of the country.

Development of the new system was slow because of multiple challenges. “It was a constantly changing environment,” said Smith. “It was no longer just about collecting revenue. We had to be able to identify and manage terrorism threats, import safety threats, and ensure compliance with free-trade agreements, which have exploded over the last 10 years. At the same time, we were building the automated systems under some very challenging budget constraints.”

But over the last four years, there’s been a dramatic turnaround. Buoyed by the strength of political

support, additional funding, and a herculean effort by those involved, ACE has catapulted to near-completion. Working in concert with a host of other initiatives, CBP’s automated cargo processing system has begun to shine. “ACE has given CBP the ability to look at information on shipments nationwide,” said Heidi Bray, the manager of U.S. customs compliance at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, one of America’s top three auto manufacturers. “That helps us because we use ports all over the country.”

“When I started doing customs work almost 30 years ago, it was all paper-driven and you had to plan ahead. It was hard to get something shipped in or out of the country without there being a slowdown at the border,” said Bray. “We have plants in Canada, so we have a lot of suppliers that cross through Detroit. It’s a major port for us, and when a driver has to hand a paper document to a CBP officer at the booth, it takes a lot of time,” she said. “In a just-in-time environment, we don’t hold a lot of our parts in the plant anymore. We don’t want to carry inventory costs. If we can bring those parts in, use them in production immediately, and not have to wait in long traffic lines at the border, that’s huge for us. The automation has helped us do that, and it really has had a positive impact.”

Another area that CBP tackled was simplifying processes, which has been a welcome relief for many importers and exporters. “There’s an increasing complexity in global trade,” said Alexandra Latham, the director of customs compliance at Costco Wholesale Corporation, an American membership-based retailer with warehouse stores in nine countries around the world. “When we purchase goods, they need to meet the regulatory requirements for all nine countries that Costco is doing business with.” But as Latham pointed out, it’s costly. “The increased complexity in requirements makes it prohibitive for a business to continue to import goods. It drives up the cost for consumers,” she said.

CBP addressed the issue and found a way to simplify the process for goods entering the U.S. “We were asking for quite a bit of data to make decisions about whether goods could come into the country,” said

Smith. “Over the preceding 10 years or so we had layered many new information requirements on top of each other and we hadn’t figured out where there was duplication. So we sat down with representatives from the trade community and asked them how we could do this more efficiently,” she said. “They put some ideas on the table and we listened.”

In the end, CBP found a way for importers to submit a simplified version of the required entry information earlier in the importing process. “It allowed us to let importers know early on if there was a problem with their cargo, so that they had an opportunity to fix it,” said Smith. “It also gave them a greater degree of predictability with their supply chains. Were we going to stop and inspect their shipments? If so, companies could make decisions about their inventories and their logistical movements.”

## Industry centers

In 2011, CBP introduced the Centers of Excellence and Expertise, a sweeping, transformational change in how CBP worked with the trade community. Operating on a national scale, the centers became the primary point of processing for importers within a specific industry. Today, there are 10 centers, which

focus on a range of industries including electronics, pharmaceuticals, automotive, petroleum, consumer products, apparel, and others. Staffed by experts who are linked virtually across the country, the centers are based at locations strategic to the industries they serve.

The idea for the centers was one of several suggestions proposed to CBP in a 2009 paper written by the congressionally mandated trade advisory committee known as COAC. Most of the paper’s suggestions centered on a “management by account” concept, which viewed companies as accounts rather than on a transaction by transaction basis where each shipment was reviewed separately. The trade community believed that the account-managed process would help products enter the country more quickly and that there would be more predictability on when merchandise would be on store shelves.

“We interact with the Automotive & Aerospace Center in Detroit almost daily,” said Bray. “If we have delays at any of the ports, they help us. The center has visibility of all of our shipments throughout the country, which has been extremely beneficial to us.”

One of the centers’ goals was consistency. “The lack of uniformity at the ports has been a huge complaint



In 2015, CBP inspected more than 275 million parcels at express courier hubs and international mail facilities throughout the U.S. Above from left, CBP Officers Frank Muzio and Patricia Guarnieri examine shipments at a DHL Express facility at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Photos by Marcy Mason



Workers load newly manufactured 2016 Jeep Wranglers onto rail cars at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' assembly complex in Toledo, Ohio for export out of the U.S. Photo courtesy of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles

of the trade community,” said Bray. “We’ve had shipments that come in through a port and a customs officer there will ask us a question. Then a week later, a different customs officer at a different port will ask the same question. No one has time to answer the same question over and over again at different ports. It’s burdensome and it’s costly for any business to duplicate its efforts,” she said.

“But the beauty is—now the centers are addressing this. For Fiat Chrysler, the lack of uniformity has virtually been eliminated. They know us now. We’re treated as an account instead of having each of our transactions processed separately,” said Bray. “So when we have shipments come through Baltimore or Los Angeles or any other port and we need help with something, the centers can go into ACE and look at that shipment and help us troubleshoot. They give us guidance on what needs to occur in order to expedite the release of our goods.”

## Single window solution

Satisfying requirements for the multitude of regulating agencies is a major hurdle. “Even if CBP would say, ‘Your shipment looks good,’ one of 47 agencies with regulatory responsibilities could stop the shipment and tell us, ‘You can’t bring this into the country,’” said Bray.

The underlying problem is a lack of unity. “We see the inconsistencies across government agencies because we work with different cargo processing systems.

Some still use paper and faxes,” said Ted Sherman, senior director of global trade services at Target, one of the largest mass merchandizing retailers in the U.S. and importers of containerized freight.

“The fact that a company has to navigate 47 agencies to get goods into the U.S. is very problematic and challenging. The way it’s been done historically will not work going forward. You can’t efficiently move freight across borders when you’re running the gauntlet of 47 agencies acting independently,” said Sherman. “If we’re going to compete, if we’re going to get goods into the country at a reasonable cost and expect to export to foreign markets, the government has to develop a more consistent, customer-friendly approach. CBP has done a great job with that. Now, it’s just extending it out to the rest of the government.”

One of the ways CBP proposed to solve the problem was to build an information system that enabled all of the agencies to view the information simultaneously. “We recognized that there really needed to be a guiding vision for the whole of government,” said Smith. “But that was something that could not be driven solely by CBP. It needed to come from the administration because it required the agreement and support of 47 different government agencies that had a stake in the project.”

The support came through in February 2014, when President Obama signed an executive order to streamline the U.S. import/export process, creating a single window for businesses to electronically

transmit the data required by the U.S. government to import or export cargo. The new system would speed up exports of American-made goods so that the U.S. could compete more effectively in the world marketplace. Completion for the single window system was set for December 2016 when the administration ended.

In March 2014, CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske was confirmed. He understood President Obama's vision and within weeks reached out to industry to listen to their concerns. At the top of the list were worries about how the other government agencies were going to implement the single window. The trade community was concerned that the agencies might start asking for more information. They also had concerns about how the timing of the new system would impact their supply chains and the economy. Furthermore, they questioned whether the system would be useful and fit in with their operations.

"Because of his former position as the director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy at the White House, Commissioner Kerlikowske had access to all of the Cabinet members," said Maria Luisa Boyce, CBP's senior advisor for trade and public engagement. "He was able to leverage those relationships to open doors for industry to have a better dialogue with the agencies implementing the project. He asked the heads of the Food and Drug Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission and others if their agencies could meet with COAC, our trade advisory committee, to talk directly with industry about the changes that were needed to modernize the process so the new system would be successful."

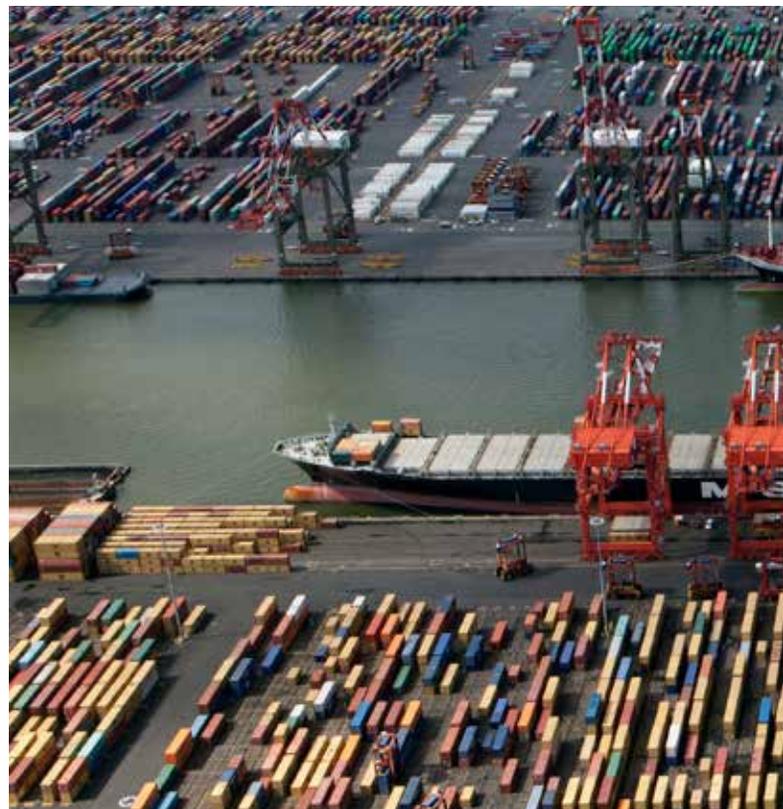
Last year, when the FDA met with COAC, the discussion was fruitful. "We opened up more to industry about how we do things than I think we have ever done before," said Douglas Stearn, director of the FDA's Office of Enforcement and Import Operations. "We talked about our struggles and they gave us a lot of advice, a lot of recommendations for us to consider. Mainly what they wanted was more guidance and information about our requirements," he said. "We have endeavored to do a lot more in that area. We are

increasing the number of our import webpages; we've done a lot of outreach; and within the single window effort, we have been extremely explicit about our business requirements—probably to a greater degree than we have ever been before."

## Increasing exports

Exports were another key area of focus. In 2010, shortly after President Obama launched a National Export Initiative to revitalize and promote American exports abroad, CBP asked COAC to help the agency improve the country's export process. From an industry perspective, members of the trade advisory group mapped out the obstacles to a smooth, flowing process. Eighty were identified.

"We discovered that paper documents are a major reason that shipments are held up," said Julie Ann Parks, the director of global trade organization for the Raytheon Company, a defense, civil government, and cybersecurity firm headquartered in Waltham, Massachusetts. "As a defense company, most of the exporting challenges that we face relate to manual processes with licenses."



For security purposes, the U.S. Department of State regulates and issues licenses for military-related shipments sent overseas. “Depending upon the license type, we have to get paper documents signed by CBP before we can import and export shipments,” said Parks. “This can become very problematic and time-consuming in terms of logistics. For example, we’ve shipped cargo out of the port of Los Angeles and then brought the shipments back through the port of Phoenix because it made logistical sense. The paper license needed to travel between the two locations before the shipments were signed-off. This is probably the biggest pain point in our industry,” said Parks.

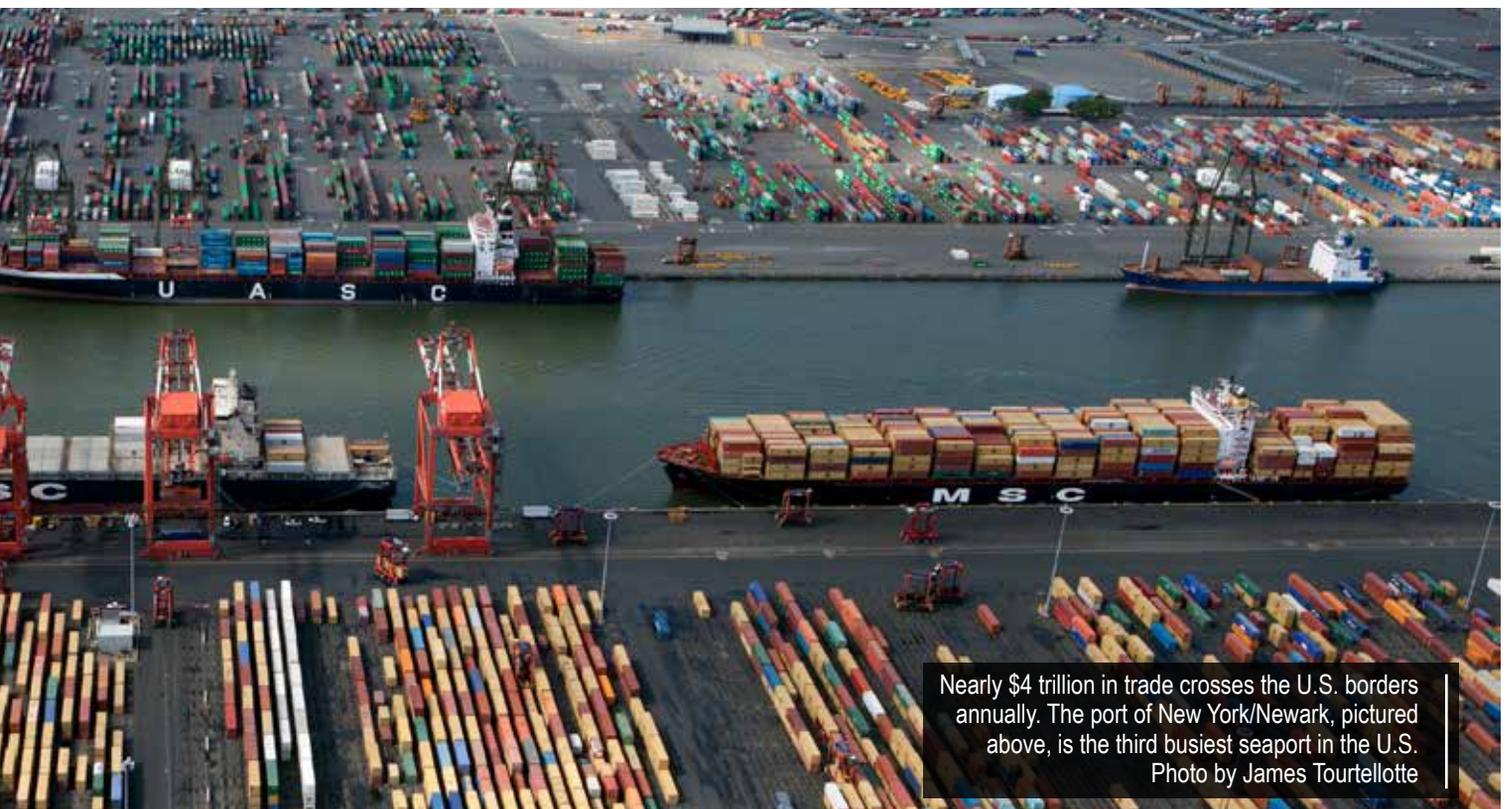
However, all of that is changing. “The government is now using the single window to share licensing information between agencies,” said Parks. “It started last December and it was a beautiful thing.”

Efficient movement of exports is critical from an economic standpoint too. “It’s important that we keep commerce moving,” said Bray. “We have customers overseas and we need to meet their needs. We can’t do that if our parts and our vehicles are stopped at a port because customs doesn’t know what we’re shipping out of the country and they don’t have

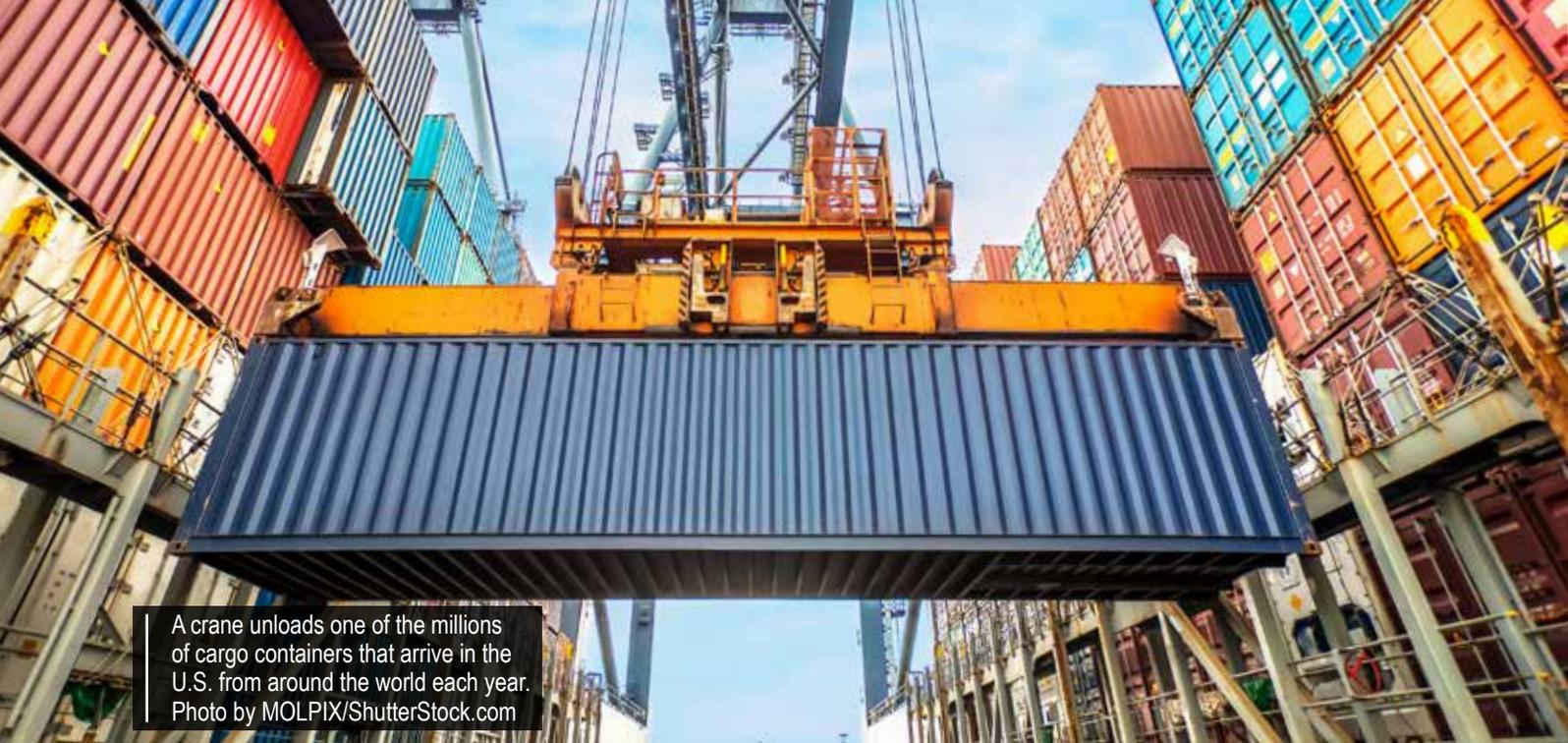
any information on us. If we don’t meet a certain sailing schedule, then we have to wait another week or two until we can get space on another boat,” she said. “The bottom line is we need to compete economically. And if we don’t have efficiencies in our supply chain, then it’s just not going to happen. If we can’t get goods out of the country to meet the demands of our global customers, then we’re not going to be able to compete and they will buy cars from someone else.”

## Keeping current

CBP is also updating some initiatives. The Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, or C-TPAT, program is one of them. Launched in the wake of Sept. 11, C-TPAT was created in partnership with seven major companies to ensure that America’s supply chains are secure. Internationally, the program has had a significant impact, providing the world with supply-chain security protocols. It also is the prototype for an “authorized economic operator,” or trusted trader program that voluntarily works with corporate citizens to help ensure the highest degree of supply chain security.



Nearly \$4 trillion in trade crosses the U.S. borders annually. The port of New York/Newark, pictured above, is the third busiest seaport in the U.S. Photo by James Tourtellotte



A crane unloads one of the millions of cargo containers that arrive in the U.S. from around the world each year. Photo by MOLPIX/Shutterstock.com

Today, nearly 12,000 companies participate in C-TPAT voluntarily. Those who participate in the program are considered low-risk and enjoy fast-track privileges at the nation's border crossings and ports. In return, the companies, which are certified by CBP, must agree to enforce security throughout their supplier networks, provide a profile on the security measures their companies have in place, and undergo a risk assessment by CBP.

"We're retooling the program so that it stays current. There are a lot of factors that have changed throughout the years," said Elizabeth Schmelzinger, CBP's C-TPAT director. "We wanted to make sure that the minimum standards are still relevant. We're also restructuring the program so that it is more in line with the structure of other countries' programs that have security and compliance components."

C-TPAT will also include exporters. "Our supply chain program initially only focused on imports. Now, we've added other entities such as exports," said Schmelzinger, noting the benefits this will bring. "We have agreements with countries that have similar supply chain security programs. As part of those agreements, those countries will honor a commitment to our exporters who are low-risk," she said. "What that means is we will look at their trusted exporters less and they will look at U.S. trusted exporters less in terms of inspections. Our goal is to create conditions

that will help U.S. exporters establish a foothold in these other markets."

Some aspects of the program have not changed. C-TPAT's standards remain high. "It's not all about joining the program. We also suspend companies and remove them from the program. So there is a constant churn of evaluation that goes on," said Schmelzinger. "Americans want to know that the companies they buy merchandise from are not supporting terrorist activities. They want to know that companies are looking at their supply chains, vetting their suppliers, and not buying trinkets from somewhere in the world blindly."

C-TPAT also continues to help CBP with enforcement. "If we've invested our time, our energy, and our resources to prove to CBP that we are trustworthy, then they don't have to worry about us. They can focus their limited resources on who they don't know," said Bray. "We know our supply chain. We've got it secured. We know what's coming in. Don't worry about us. Worry about the unknown."

According to CBP's Smith, enforcement is another way the initiatives are helping U.S. businesses compete. "It's not just about moving trade. It's important to have a level playing field to ensure everyone is adhering to the same rules," said Smith. "So those with the best product at the lowest prices eventually win." 



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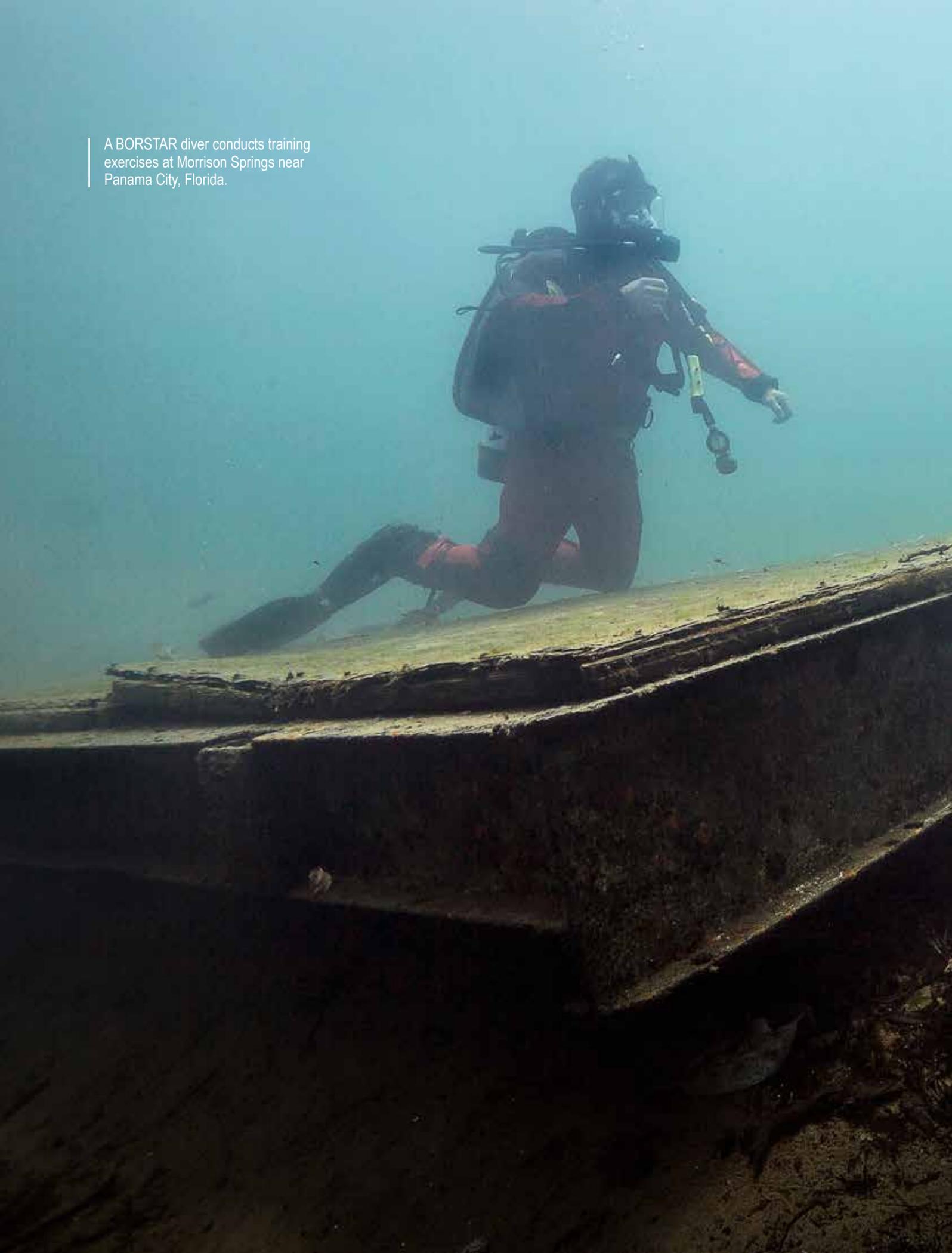


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U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection

A BORSTAR diver conducts training exercises at Morrison Springs near Panama City, Florida.



An underwater photograph showing a large, dark metal structure, possibly a shipwreck, extending from the top left towards the center. The ocean floor is covered in dark, tangled debris, including what appears to be a piece of driftwood. The water is a deep, murky blue-green, and the lighting is dim, creating a somber and mysterious atmosphere.

# INVESTIGATING THE DEPTHS

CBP DIVE TEAM EXPLORES  
THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN

By Warren Byrd, photos by Glenn Fawcett

While some fear the unknown, the more daring embrace it.

That best describes a specialized U.S. Customs and Border Protection unit, the Border Patrol's BORSTAR underwater search and recovery dive team.

To grasp just how demanding the job is for these multiskilled diving experts, imagine blindly negotiating deep, cold, murky – and sometimes toxic – water, possibly dodging lethal marine life lurking about, or dangerous, hidden foreign objects.

## A difficult but rewarding job

Dive teams conduct search-and-recovery operations and inspect under vessels for narcotics and explosives sometimes attached under the hulls of ships. Typical targets could be a corpse, weapon, vehicle or a container loaded with illegal narcotics, all of which are difficult to spot in water where visibility is many times measured in inches.

Diving is an advanced collateral duty requiring a lot of dedication because agents still perform their regular BORSTAR duties when they're not in the water. To stay on the team, divers must be proficient in core specialties: tactical medicine, rope and swift-water rescue, land navigation, air operations and

other Border Patrol requirements. They must also maintain annual certifications with dive equipment, maintenance, and search-and-recovery operations.

Just 60 divers assigned to CBP's Southwest Border Patrol sectors and in the Blaine Sector make up the team.

"The type of diving that we do requires commitment, determination and a unique personality," said Marcus Adkinson, supervisory Border Patrol agent and BORSTAR dive team program manager who joined the team in 2012. "Divers have to perform their duties under a variety of hazardous environments and conditions.

"Being a team player is the most important requirement to be a BORSTAR diver," he said.



A BORSTAR diver glides over a submerged log at roughly 40 feet as he enters the mouth of a subterranean spring at Morrison Springs near Panama City, Florida.

“You have to rely on your teammates to complete all missions, and your life may depend on them. A diver may get entangled in rope or line and his teammates are there to help him. There is always a possibility of equipment failure, and we may have to share air to get to the surface.”

## Making the cut

The standards to become a BORSTAR diver have evolved since the program started in 2002. Agents must have at least two years of service and successfully complete the BORSTAR selection and training course. Candidates are evaluated on the core specialties and their ability to work in a cohesive unit.

Once they make the cut, there’s considerable training—emergency medicine, tactical medicine, emergency medical technician, paramedicine and austere medicine. Agents apply these skills in remote areas or in developing countries or during widespread disaster or mass casualty events.

Other training includes load planning, helicopter rope suspension, operating rescue watercraft and other boats. There’s also, cold-weather operations, personnel recovery, small-unit tactics, combat casualty care, and managing and planning operations.

In addition to certifications, divers must maintain and service equipment. “It’s considered life support equipment because our lives depend on it to work properly,” Adkinson added.





U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brady Pratt of the elite BORSTAR dive team adjusts his full-face dive mask as he prepares to descend on a training dive at Morrison Springs near Panama City, Florida.



While diving may sound like fun, the reality is quite different. “It’s a lot of hard work. It’s maintenance, intensive training and hazardous. Basically, it’s not a walk in the park. You have to be willing to work hard. Everything we do is done for a reason. Everything has a checklist. When someone’s 90 feet under water, there’s no room for error,” he pointed out.

## Equipped for the challenge

BORSTAR divers use two types of gear: Equipment that pumps air from the surface and scuba.

The Extreme Lightweight Diving System, is a surface-supplied diving system and the only type CBP uses. An umbilical cord secured to the diver’s helmet supplies surface air and hard-wired communication. Monitors on the surface, oversee depth and air consumption. The equipment allows for longer dives. It’s engineered for rapid set up and deployment and used with the standard helmets, face masks and other diving gear.

Scuba, which stands for self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, is the other ensemble. This is the typical equipment most people envision—divers breathing air from a pressurized tank strapped to their back.

Scuba divers can reach depths up to 130 feet. They use full face masks and rubber-like wet suits that keep divers warm or dry suits for better protection in exceptionally cold or contaminated water. They use hand signals to communicate. Scuba allows for rapid deployment, freedom of movement and simpler preparation compared to the surface-supplied diving equipment.

However, there are cautions when using scuba gear and surface-supplied diving equipment. Dive-related illnesses such as decompression sickness and arterial gas embolism, a blockage caused by air bubbles in the blood, can occur. Many of these ailments are brought on by rapid ascents where the body doesn’t adjust to the changing pressure. U.S. Navy dive tables provide decompression times for specific depths.

## Ceaseless training and testing

Recently, 12 of the dive team members met in Panama City Beach, Florida, for a course on using the advanced surface-supplied diving equipment. They also coordinated the largest joint diving exercise working with Air and Marine Operations (AMO), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,



Rocky Heikkinen of Dive Lab checks over U.S. Border Patrol Agent Carl Newmayer of the BORSTAR dive team as Newmayer dons a hazmat dry suit near Panama City, Florida.

Bay County Sheriff's Department, Panama City Beach Fire Department and Florida State University's Evidence Recovery Program.

The exercise involved vehicle and evidence recovery using sound navigation ranging, better known as sonar. Sonar uses transmitted and reflected sound waves to locate submerged objects.

Other recovery exercises took place at Morrison Springs and St. Andrews Marina near Panama City Beach. One scenario near a sunken vessel in the Gulf of Mexico concluded with a foreign vessel inspection and hull search with assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard.

Diver Carl Newmayer from the Tucson Sector, evaluated a hazmat helmet, designed for chemical,

biological, nuclear or radiologically contaminated water. He said testing the helmet and a dry suit that enclosed the entire body was exciting.

"I always love diving with the helmets and to be the first one to do it [as a BORSTAR diver] is pretty cool," said Newmayer, who has helmet dived many times. "It's a little bit quieter, you can think clearer."

"With this [dry suit and helmet], you could dive in raw sewage and have no exposure to it," he added.

The equipment "worked like a champ. It worked perfect," Newmayer said.

It was also the first open-water test, according to Rocky Heikkinen, the Dive Lab training director.

## Not your typical work schedule

Diving days are long and grueling and can stretch into night. Typically, work begins early in the morning where the team loads gear onto a big truck, drives to the location and unloads it. There's a lot of manual labor.

The next day, everything is loaded onto boats – usually, AMO's Secure Around Flotation Equipped (SAFE) boat or the 28-foot Intrepid. Divers often work with AMO agents during training and exercises.

"Every person has their role," Newmayer said. That could be driving the truck, arranging for the boats or unloading the gear. Tasks hinge on the equipment required for the mission.

"Are we going to do the surface supply?" he offered. "If we go into that, then there's a bunch of different people who have different jobs to set that up. If you go in scuba mode then you just individually grab the gear you need to set that up."

After the mission, there's sometimes a long boat ride back to the dock where the work continues. Gear needs to be loaded back on a truck, returned and

cleaned. "To keep us alive it's very important that we clean our gear properly," said Newmayer.

Having the motivation to work under these conditions takes a special individual," he remarked. "Not everyone is cut out to do it. It can be a little disturbing to be down there and you can't see anything," although Newmayer considers it a "tranquil experience."

"Me, I find it more peaceful," as he describes it. "I might feel something, maybe try to figure out what it is...you just close your eyes and go with it."

Adkinson, the dive team program manager, who began diving in 2004 as a hobby, said that it's paramount divers stay focused on their task and potential hazards and not think about surrounding threats from marine life.

"There is always a chance of encountering dangerous marine life," he said, "but if you are afraid of what's going to hurt you in the water, then you are not able to do your job. All BORSTAR divers are EMTs and BORSTAR paramedic divers attend a specialized dive medical course with the U.S. Navy. There is always a dedicated dive medic and equipment on every operation or training to mitigate the risk of injury."

Phil Vanous, supervisory Border Patrol agent and dive



I A BORSTAR diver conducts training exercises in Panama City, Florida.

team medic at the Laredo Sector Special Operations Detachment, also put the job in perspective.

“Sometimes when you mention scuba dive operations to other coworkers they think you’re down in clear water playing with fishes,” he said, “when the truth of the matter is, this is probably the most dangerous job anyone in CBP will do.”

Risking a bacterial infection from contaminated water, becoming entangled in debris, and limited visibility are just a few of the dangers divers face, Vanous pointed out. “If you have limited amount of air, if your tank runs empty, that’s it. That’s why we use the surface supply dive equipment for the more high-risk missions. That way if a diver does get entangled, we can keep providing him air.”

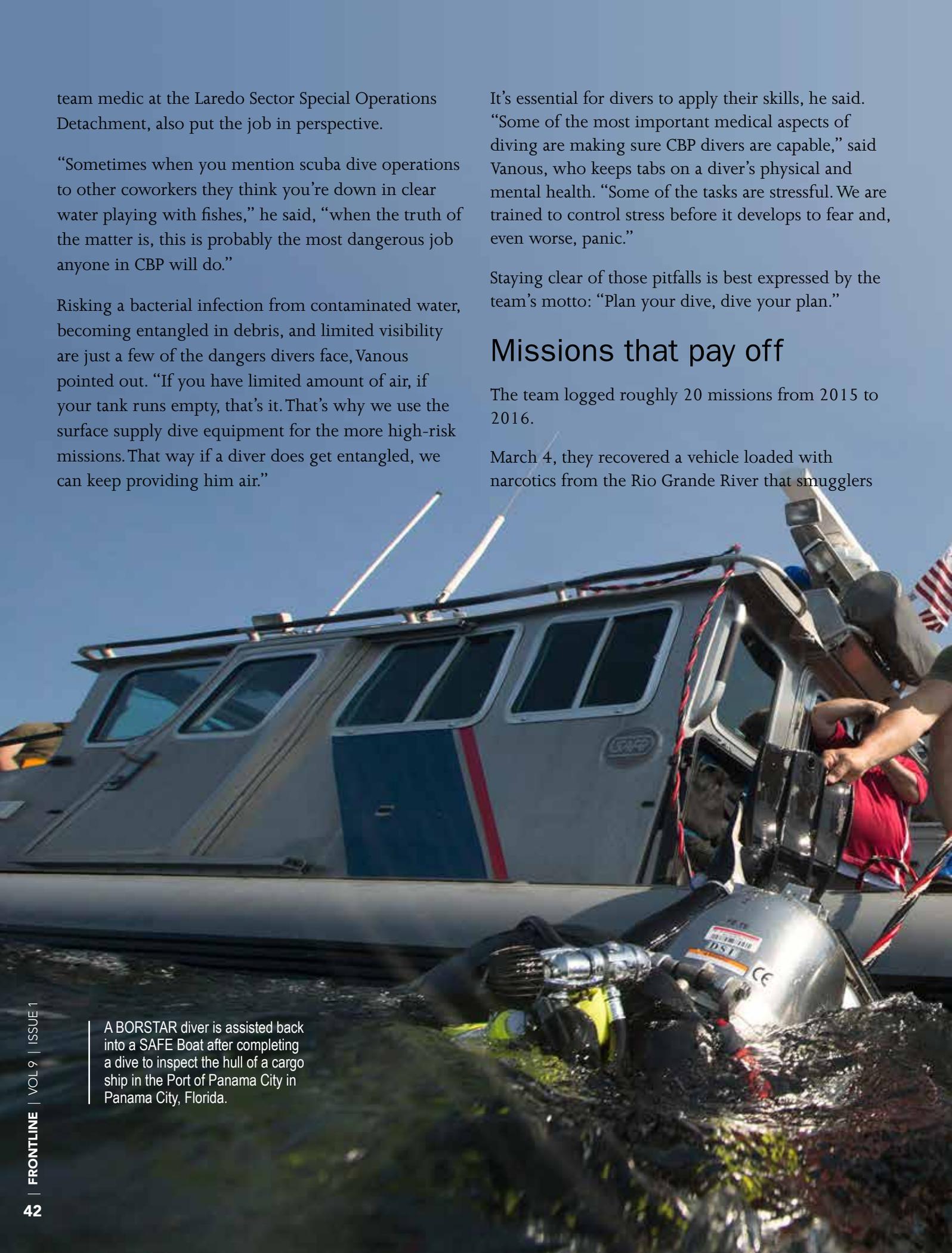
It’s essential for divers to apply their skills, he said. “Some of the most important medical aspects of diving are making sure CBP divers are capable,” said Vanous, who keeps tabs on a diver’s physical and mental health. “Some of the tasks are stressful. We are trained to control stress before it develops to fear and, even worse, panic.”

Staying clear of those pitfalls is best expressed by the team’s motto: “Plan your dive, dive your plan.”

## Missions that pay off

The team logged roughly 20 missions from 2015 to 2016.

March 4, they recovered a vehicle loaded with narcotics from the Rio Grande River that smugglers



A BORSTAR diver is assisted back into a SAFE Boat after completing a dive to inspect the hull of a cargo ship in the Port of Panama City in Panama City, Florida.

attempted to float across near the Fort Brown Station, Rio Grande Valley Sector. Smugglers placed the vehicle on a floating trailer and towed it with a small boat. The trailer tipped, and the vehicle plunged into the river. The smugglers, however, retrieved the contraband.

The Rio Grande Valley special operations detachment dive team, working with other agencies and Border Patrol stations, recovered the vehicle after the dive team leader evaluated the conditions.

Submerged about 12 feet in zero visibility water, the vehicle needed to be lifted and floated down the river and removed by a wrecker. To do that, lift bags were attached to the vehicle, then filled with air, creating floats to lift the vehicle from the river.

May 12, another vehicle loaded with marijuana was recovered from the river by the Rio Grande Valley Sector special operations detachment, BORSTAR dive team. Divers used a special search pattern to find the vehicle and attached a chain to hoist it from the river. Five bundles of marijuana weighing 377 pounds were recovered.

In December 2015, BORSTAR divers from Special Operations Group headquarters, Yuma, Laredo and Tucson Sectors recovered an airplane that crashed into Lake Heron near Chama, New Mexico, four years earlier in April 2011. Twenty-three kilos of cocaine were recovered after washing up on the shore.

The recovery wasn't attempted in 2011 because the mission was too complex and hazardous. Working with divers from the New Mexico State Police and



Albuquerque Police Department, the BORSTAR team recovered two large sections of the small, multi-engine, piston-driven aircraft, a Cessna 320F. Most of the wreckage was buried in layers of mud and silt, in the zero visibility 40-degree water. BORSTAR's sonar and surface-supplied dive equipment made the task less hazardous.

"The New Mexico mission was definitely the most in-depth, extensive and dangerous mission that I've been part of," Newmayer said. "Every aspect of it was trying, in some way, for myself and every diver."

Tim Sullivan, chief patrol agent with the special operations group based in El Paso, noted the dive team is critical to national security.

"The threat to our ports and water borders is very real," he said. "The BORSTAR dive team provides CBP and DHS with another special operations capability to mitigate these threats." ■



U.S. Border Patrol Agent Matt Solosabal snugs the straps to his full-face dive mask shortly before entering the water as he and other BORSTAR divers conduct training exercises in Panama City, Florida.





# NOW HIRING

[cbp.gov/careers/apply-now](https://cbp.gov/careers/apply-now)

**U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** is the premier law enforcement agency charged with keeping terrorists and their weapons out of the U.S., while facilitating lawful travel and trade. As the world's first full-service border entity, CBP combines customs, trade, immigration, agriculture and counter-terrorism into one activity.

#### KEY HIRING REQUIREMENTS

- > Candidates must be referred for selection prior to their 40th birthday (waiver for qualified veterans)
- > Be a U.S. citizen and a resident for the past 3 years
- > Have a valid state driver's license
- > Pass a written exam, medical exam, physical fitness tests, video-based test and drug test - more than 600 testing locations offered nationwide
- > Pass a thorough background investigation and polygraph examination

#### KEY BENEFITS

- > Competitive salary
- > Federal benefits
- > Paid training
- > Veterans Preference



**U.S. Customs and Border Protection**



## BORDER PATROL AGENTS

U.S. Border Patrol is focused 24/7 on securing our borders and safeguarding the American people from terrorism, drug smuggling and illegal entry. Border Patrol Agents use both time-honored skills and cutting-edge technology to safeguard nearly 6,000 miles of land border and more than 2,000 miles of coastal waters.

### Training:

BPA Academy: Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), Artesia, NM. 11 weeks Basic Training + 8 weeks of Spanish if needed



## CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OFFICERS

CBP Officers work in a fast-paced environment at more than 300 ports of entry throughout the U.S. and overseas. They have broad law enforcement authority to screen all foreign visitors, returning American citizens and imported cargo entering the U.S.

### Training:

CBP Field Operations Academy: FLETC, Glynco, GA, 19 weeks Basic Training + 6 weeks of Spanish if assigned to the southwest border, Port of Miami or Puerto Rico



## AIR AND MARINE AGENTS

Air and Marine Operations (AMO) is the world's largest aviation and maritime law enforcement organization with more than 1100 Federal Agents, operating from 79 air and marine locations. The mission of OAM is to protect the American people and Nation's critical infrastructure through the coordinated use of integrated air and marine forces to detect, interdict and prevent acts of terrorism and the unlawful movement of people, illegal drugs and other contraband toward or across the borders of the United States.

### Training:

Air and Marine Basic Training Program is located at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA. It is approximately 16 weeks + 6 weeks of Spanish. For pilots, this is followed by specialized training at the National Aviation Training Center in Oklahoma City, OK and for mariners, specialized training at the National Maritime Training Center in St. Augustine, FL.



## VETERANS

CBP is committed to hiring qualified veterans and transitioning service members.

### Key Benefits

- > Expedited hiring
- > Age exemption
- > Veterans Preference
- > Retirement credit for military service



**AMERICA'S FRONTLINE**  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

# 2016 CBP AWARDS

The CBP awards program is designed to recognize CBP personnel who distinguish themselves among their peers through demonstrated leadership, outstanding conduct, exceptional contributions and excellence in service.

We thank you, and wish you great potential for continued success in U.S. Customs and Border Protection.





## Medal of Honor for Heroism Award

Awarded to an employee or any individual/citizen supporting U.S. Customs and Border Protection who performed an act of extraordinary bravery, gallantry, or valor (while on or off duty). The act must be: above and beyond the call of duty; present an imminent and personal danger to life; and the individual must have knowledge of the risks involved and voluntarily assume them. This is CBP's highest valor award.

### **Christopher Voss**

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent,  
U.S. Border Patrol, El Paso, Texas

Christopher Voss, Supervisory Border Patrol Agent, led the Border Patrol tactical unit (BORTAC) in the apprehension of two convicted murderers, Richard Matt and David Sweat, who escaped from the Clinton County Correctional Facility in New York.

Voss and the team responded to a report of shots fired southwest of Titus Lake. The New York State Police confirmed that an unknown subject, likely one of the fugitives, was in the area firing on police and bystanders.

A state trooper reported hearing a human cough coming from the woods near the area. Voss instructed the trooper to remove all officers from the area and maintain the perimeter. Voss knew the subject had already shown an intent to shoot at law enforcement. He also knew that he and his BORTAC team were highly trained and capable of dealing with this high-risk situation.

Voss and his BORTAC team came upon a subject who was taking cover behind a log. Agent Eric Cavazos and Voss identified themselves and ordered the subject to show his hands. The subject did not comply. While repeating their commands and maneuvering on the subject, Voss noticed he was aiming a long arm at him. Voss fired his M4 at the subject until the threat was eliminated.

The subject was later identified as fugitive Richard Matt. It was apparent that the fugitive was lying in wait, intent on ambushing law enforcement. If not for the leadership, tactical mindset, and presence of mind maintained by Voss, the situation would have led to injuries and/or deaths to law enforcement officers and civilians.



## Medal of Honor for Heroism Award

### **Craig Colquitt**

Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

### **Chad Daley**

Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

### **Morgan Humphrey**

Supervisory Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

### **William A. Stewart**

Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

Marine interdiction agents from the St. Thomas Marine Unit, United States Virgin Islands, intercepted a narcotics smuggling vessel and arrested three subjects.

While on patrol in the M-792 39-foot Midnight Express interceptor, the agents pursued a suspect vessel laden with narcotics as it attempted to enter into the United States through British Virgin Island waters. When the vessel failed to stop, M-792 began a high-speed chase during which the smuggling vessel made several attempts to evade and violently ram the M-792. While continuing the evasive maneuvers, the vessel's operator began firing at the agents with an AK47 rifle striking the M-792 several times.

The M-792 maintained a position that gave the agents an advantage in returning fire. The crew then applied disabling fire in stopping the vessel, allowing them to board and clear the craft of additional threats.

After arresting the vessel's three occupants, the agents began treating the subject who had previously fired at them. While rendering aid for gunshot wounds, the agents arranged for his emergency medical evacuation to Tortola, British Virgin Islands. The M-792 commander and the rest of his crew remained with the subjects. The smuggling vessel, which was secured by British authorities, contained 16 bales of cocaine.



## Meritorious Service Award for Valor

Recognizes an employee who demonstrated exceptional courage while on or off duty and displayed valor in a dangerous, life-threatening situation to save another person's life or to protect property. This includes any act that posed a danger or risk to the employee.

### **Christopher Hunter**

Supervisory Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, San Diego, California

### **Craig Jenkins**

Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, San Diego, California

### **Arian Linscott**

Marine Interdiction Agent, Air and Marine Operations, San Diego, California

While on patrol, marine interdiction agents of the San Diego Marine Unit attempted to stop a vessel believed to be smuggling illegal aliens into the United States. During the pursuit, the smuggling vessel's operator made several attempts to evade the agents. The suspect vessel maneuvered violently and after making an abrupt, sharp turn, it rammed the CBP vessel. The smuggling vessel capsized, spilling all the occupants into the Pacific Ocean.

The agents rescued 20 aliens from the water while coordinating a call for assistance. Meanwhile, they discovered that an unconscious female victim was trapped under the hull. The agents lifted part of the capsized vessel to remove her and then performed two-person CPR for 90 minutes.

When a U.S. Coast Guard rescue helicopter arrived, the agents hoisted the unconscious woman into the aircraft. They then coordinated with an additional interceptor vessel to help evacuate the remaining aliens and the operator to shore. The illegal aliens were afterwards turned over to the U.S. Border Patrol for further processing.



## Meritorious Service Award for Valor

### **Philippe Gorgue**

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent, U.S. Border Patrol, Yuma, Arizona

### **Nathan Kimball**

Border Patrol Agent, U.S. Border Patrol, Yuma, Arizona

On May 14, 2015, Border Patrol Agents Philippe Gorgue and Nathan Kimball showed exceptional

courage, valor, and commitment to save lives regardless of their personal safety.

While patrolling along the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona, Gorgue responded to a sensor activation. While investigating, he noticed footprints leading east across the road toward the Salinity Canal, a rapidly moving irrigation channel approximately 23 feet wide and up to six feet deep.

Gorgue relayed that the prints showed that possibly two subjects entered the canal. The small shoe impressions pointed to a woman or adolescent and the other set most likely belonging to a child.

Additional agents and air support joined the search and spotted a back pack floating in the canal. Retrieving the bag, they found it contained diapers and baby formula. Gorgue and Agent Kimball then turned their vehicles toward the canal and illuminated the water using the headlights. Gorgue spotted an adult female with a child strapped to her chest floating just below the surface and moving downstream by the current.

Both agents jumped into the canal dangerously near the location where the channel submerges for approximately 500 yards. They pulled the woman and child out of the water and performed life saving measures until emergency medical services arrived.



## Integrity Award

Recognizes an employee who clearly demonstrated work habits and devotion to integrity that are above reproach and exemplified by CBP's core values and ethical standards while on duty, e.g., participated in an undercover operation which led to the arrest of an individual or addressed a potential incident of terrorism or corruption.

### **Oscar F. Sanchez**

Customs and Border Protection Officer, Office of Field Operations, San Juan, Puerto Rico

In April of 2015, Customs and Border Protection Officer Oscar Sanchez was offered a bribe to help smuggle aliens. Sanchez immediately reported the overture to his superiors and the CBP Office of Internal Affairs. He voluntarily agreed to meet with the individual to learn about the plans and capture evidence.

During the course of a year, Sanchez successfully helped secure evidence against two individuals, Miguel Emilio Rodriguez-Ramirez and Angel De Jesus Marrero, by wearing a recording device during two meetings. The smugglers were arraigned at the United States District Court in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Rodriguez-Ramirez was charged with five counts of encouraging illegal aliens to enter and stay in the United States; five counts of transportation of illegal aliens for private financial gain; and one count of bribery of a public official. De Jesus Marrero was charged with five counts of encouraging illegal aliens to enter and stay in the United States and five counts of transportation of illegal aliens for private financial gain.

Officer Sanchez's quick reporting of the bribe helped to further serve the integrity of CBP operations and displayed great personal courage by taking action that ended in the arrest of two individuals.



## Integrity Award

### **Brandon Law**

Border Patrol agent, U.S. Border Patrol, Billings, Montana

Border Patrol Agent Brandon Law applied his experience and skill in shutting down numerous dangerous drug trafficking organizations operating along the Mexico-California border and the Montana Interstate-15 corridor. His work resulted in shared intelligence, joint investigations and prosecutions.

Law was assigned as a full-time task force officer for the last three years, including two years working with the Drug Enforcement Administration. During that time, he built a network of professional relationships with officers and agents from state and local agencies in California, Utah, Idaho, and Montana.

Law primarily investigated methamphetamine cases. He carried 17 active cases as the primary case agent for DEA, performing the full range of investigative activities. They included interdiction, warrant service, arrests, interviews, electronic tracking and surveillance and using cooperating sources of information.

Agent Law was instrumental in forming the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force to pursue a case that became a DEA priority. He led the task force's investigation of a Mexican drug trafficking organization transporting methamphetamine from California to Montana. The investigation led to a T-III wiretap and ended in the indictment and arrest of 33 individuals and the seizure of approximately 24 pounds of methamphetamine.

Agent Law's hard work and thorough investigation also led to the conviction and life sentence for Eduardo Ocegueda-Ruiz for methamphetamine and gun trafficking and immigration offenses.

# OVERSIGHT PROGRAM EVALUATES AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

By Paul Koscak, photos by Erik J. Modisett

Keeping Air and Marine Operations aircraft safely in the air begins on the ground. AMO's maintenance contractors service 225 fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft. They coordinate repairs, perform inspections and follow day-to-day upkeep with an on-site aviation maintenance officer.

Clearly, a lot of servicing is taking place throughout AMO's 36 locations conducting air operations. To ensure the work is being done right and aircraft are maintained according to the contract, a unit maintenance inspection program was launched in July 2014. It's carried out by a five-member team of AMO and contractor experts who inspect all locations every two years.

"Prior to the program, the contractors were performing self-inspections," said Don Sperling, AMO's director of standardization and evaluation. "The site inspections focus on contract compliance."

The team has abundant aviation experience and contract expertise. Four members hold both A & P (airframe and power plant) certificates and Federal Aviation Administration authorizations to inspect aircraft and perform or supervise maintenance. To provide an unbiased, independent assessment, contractors on the inspection team are not from the same company as the contractors they evaluate.

During the three-day inspections the team probes for compliance with federal regulations, contractor policies and AMO requirements. They peruse records, trace repairs, ensure documents are current and query technicians. Program management, logistics, quality control and safety are also evaluated. Findings and recommendations are then reported to AMO and contractor managers.

With 28 inspections since the program began, the team keeps up an ambitious goal of an audit every other week. Locations slated for inspection are given a 60-day notice to explain the procedures and point out what will be evaluated, so "there are no surprises," explained John Weicht, unit maintenance inspection program manager and team leader.

So far, the audits haven't revealed any "show stoppers," as he describes big problems. But they have shown where improvements are needed, such as new forms for smoother administration and tool control along with eliminating outdated publications and practices.

## Standards rule

Overall, the team promotes standards, the core of AMO's maintenance program. Having each job and task completed and documented alike throughout CBP locations—standardization—accomplishes multiple



Contractor inspector Michael Hartigan, left, discusses quality control procedures with Ted Schwarz, a contractor supervisor.

goals. It ensures safety, proves FAA requirements are met and work is completed according to AMO contracts. Standardization requires discrepancies and corrective actions to be properly recorded, allowing evaluators to detect trends. Most importantly, it ensures aircraft are well maintained and aircrews have the assurance of flying a reliable aircraft, said Weicht.

Whenever standard procedures are overlooked, safety is compromised and money and time are wasted. Installing the wrong parts or the right parts installed incorrectly or using parts beyond their limits are typical examples. Tools left around engines and flight controls as well as incorrect or incomplete records are more examples, he pointed out.

During inspections, minor flaws are corrected on the spot. But significant findings are quickly shared with all AMO air branches and units by email. These alerts allow locations to check their aircraft and immediately fix the problem before the team visits. That strategy

enables sites to continually improve maintenance well before an audit is pending, said Sperling.

While the inspection team confirms if aircraft maintenance is performed the same way, the team also follows its own standard procedures to assure every location receives an identical and evenhanded review. To accomplish that, the directorate of standardization and evaluation publishes a comprehensive checklist that guides the team through every detail of an inspection. It also allows maintenance contractors and management to continually assess their own operations.

## A detailed look

Evaluations are thorough. A sample of previous audits provides some examples.

The team checks if technicians are using FAA-approved parts with documentation that traces their

Hartigan checks the condition of an oxygen cart used to refill supplemental aircraft oxygen tanks.



origin. They will look for a library of current manuals, technical publications and airworthiness directives for all aircraft and equipment. Airworthiness directives, or ADs, are notices issued by the FAA requiring inspections or part replacements at certain times to correct a hazardous condition. ADs help keep aircraft safe and airworthy, meaning legal to fly.

The team checks for records confirming that technicians are receiving training in everything from proper aircraft fueling to safely towing aircraft to correctly handling hazardous materials. It reviews records showing the contractor inspects aircraft for corrosion and repairs any damage according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Inspections and maintenance must be recorded in the aircraft logbooks. Airframes, engines and propellers each have logbooks and the team reviews them all. The team checks if the contractor maintains an oil analysis program.

An oil analysis looks for metal particles in oil taken from the aircraft's engine. Metal particles reveal damage that can lead to engine failure.

Confirming documents and tags proving that life rafts, survival kits, life vests and air bottles that allow aircrews to breathe after a water crash have been regularly inspected, is also part of the audit.

In all, 227 items are reviewed. But the checklist isn't rigid. Updates are foreseen to make sure items remain relevant as the program grows, said Sperling.

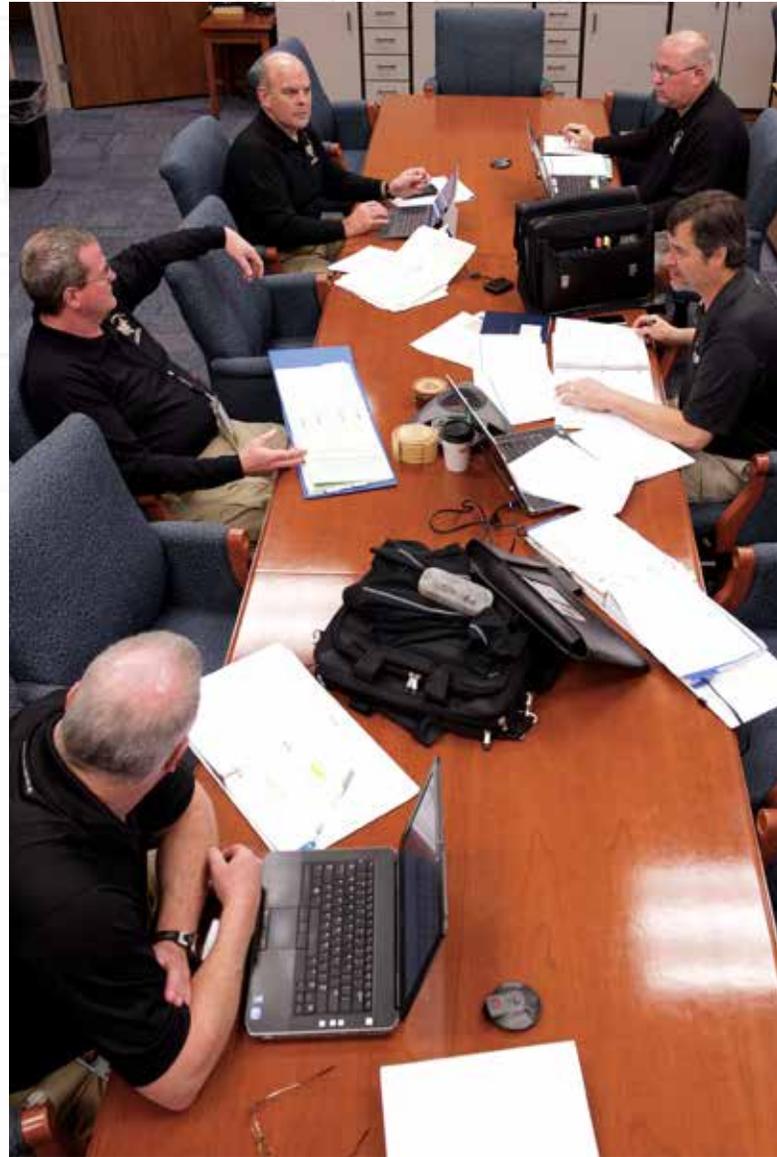
As the program evolves, the directorate plans to automate the audits. Inspectors will enter their findings onto a tablet while conducting evaluations, which instantly formats a final report of their findings and recommendations.

Automation will allow anyone with access to AMO's logistics and maintenance website to quickly find specific items, search for trends and detect shortcomings, explained Sperling.

AMO's unit maintenance program is more than just audits. The program is building a stronger partnership

with AMO's maintenance contractors by producing a team environment where standardization, safety and excellence are shared goals, noted Director Sperling.

"Maintaining a standard ultimately guarantees the delivery of safe and airworthy aircraft to our pilots in order to perform CBP's mission of safeguarding America's borders," he said. 



The audit team organizes in Hammond, Louisiana. Clockwise from left: Contractor Bruce Dawson; Air and Marine Operations (AMO) Supervisory Aviation Maintenance Officer Edward (Ed) Schroeder; AMO Team Leader John Weicht; AMO Team Evaluator and Inspector Mike Everman; and Contractor Rick Gepford.

# TAKE THE MEMORIES, LEAVE THE REST THE REST



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**So take memories - not restricted items!**

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For more information visit the CBP website at [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) or the  
APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine website at [www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq)

# We are the guardians of our nation's borders.

## U.S. Border Patrol

The United States Border Patrol is the primary federal law enforcement organization responsible for preventing terrorists and their weapons from entering the U.S. between official CBP ports of entry.

The Border Patrol is specifically responsible for patrolling the 6,000 miles of Mexican and Canadian international land borders and 2,000 miles of coastal waters surrounding the Florida Peninsula and the island of Puerto Rico to prevent the illicit trafficking of people and contraband between the official ports of entry. Agents work around the clock on assignments, in all types of terrain and weather conditions.



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection