

Certification to Access: the Navy's COOL and Sheriffs Hot

Professionalism is a security tool more valuable than a camera or burglar alarm. It is also a tool that always needs sharpening. It is good to see people committed to improving their skills, especially through certification and training exercises.

I have two super examples.

As you may know, I was an Army military police officer in Viet Nam and sometimes tangled with Navy chaps. They talked odd – BBs were battleships and a bird-farm was an aircraft carrier. Today I think the Navy's COOL as in its Credentialing Opportunities On-Line program.

Overall, the credentialing program develops the personal and professional capability of the total Navy force through appropriate outside certifications and licenses while enhancing force readiness. Thanks to the International Foundation for

Protection Officers (IFPO) and especially my good friend Tom Conley, COOL now offers four IFPO certification programs to all enlisted active and reserve Navy personnel and even provides "Navy bucks" to pay the certification fee. Just Google Navy COOL.

A Perfect Certification Fit

In the Navy Reserve and a Master-at-Arms – the Navy's rating for their police, Conley, who heads The Conley Group in the famous seaport of Des Moines, Iowa, has a long-time relationship with IFPO, insisting that all of his officers have appropriate certification credentials. "I saw IFPO as a perfect fit for the mission of the Navy program and the men and women who are served by it." He helped maneuver the IFPO offerings through Navy consideration.

It was no easy sail.

Programs must be recognized by high-level credentialing organizations. IFPO credentials have to "map a minimum of 80 percent to either the Navy Master-at-Arms rating duties or training," says Keith Boring of the U.S. Navy Credentials Program Office in Pensacola. "The credentials we list on COOL must be attainable and testing locations convenient," Boring adds. Most importantly, COOL offerings such as those from IFPO must make sense to the current assignments and career potential of a sailor applying for it as well as "show credible value in the civilian workforce" when a sailor retires or leaves the

Navy, according to Boring.

Partnerships such as COOL's listing of IFPO go to the heart of the Navy's readiness, points out Conley. "Whether you are in the armed forces or not, skills are perishable and you just do not want to go stale."

"Sailors in the Master-at-Arms (MA) rating are stepping up their effort worldwide when it comes to personal and professional development. The MA community leads the Navy in civilian professional credentialing with the majority being obtained in homeland security and related fields. The MA community is also taking advantage of a new security specialist apprenticeship program where they receive credit for work performed in their trade by the Department of Labor. The combination of pursuing college degrees, civilian certifications and apprenticeships is not only helping build a brighter future for our individual sailors, it helps to professionalize the force," concludes Commander William K. Hommerbocker, director and functional integration manager for the Navy's Center for Security Forces.

Identity Management at Disaster Sites

Another example of partnering and training comes from another industry friend, Peter Harlick of Global Elite Group, who alerted me to an early April demonstration of a new access control system that will help the Gulf Coast region recover more effectively from disaster events such as hurricanes, hazardous material spills or even a terrorist attack.

This partnership was between the nation's sheriffs and the InfraGard National Members Alliance and involved sheriff's offices in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

"This is critical. Too many times we plan an exercise after a crisis. This time we worked together before a crisis takes place so we can respond more efficiently with law enforcement and private sector companies," says Richard Garcia, chairperson of the InfraGard National Members Alliance Crisis and Exercise Committee.

Evaluation and use of the Emergency Responder – ID Trust Network (ER-ITN) showed how it could help communities recover more quickly by allowing law enforcement the ability to manage the flow of critical private infrastructure sector personnel into affected areas. "As important as it is to get vital systems up and running following a disaster, it's even more important that we make sure that the right people get where they need to be with as little distraction and interference as possible," adds Sheriff Craig Webre of Lafourche Parish, La.

With ER-ITN system, checkpoint operators successfully validate the identification and skills of those exercise participants for entry while also ensuring unauthorized personnel were stopped. The demonstrations simulated an actual response to a crisis event. **SECURITY**



By Bill Zalud, Editor Emeritus



Tom Conley was instrumental in helping bring together the certification programs of the International Foundation for Protection Officers with COOL, the U.S. Navy's Credentialing Opportunities On-Line program. Conley, a security industry executive, is in the Navy Reserve and a Master-at-Arms.