

**Did my experience shape me?**

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### **Did my experience shape me?**

I would've never expected this to happen. It was 2023, and we had just started going underway with the USS Bataan. This was my first time walking, let alone living on board a ship. As the only IT in my squadron, I was the liaison who made the bridge between Automated Data Processing (ADP), aka the ship's ITS, and my squadron. I never really knew how long I had planned to stay in the Navy. I figured I would complete at least my sea then shore rotation, but after this, I knew I had to get out.

Theatre Battle Management Core System (TBMCS) is a critical air command and control system that the military uses to complete flight operations. On board the USS Bataan, this system wasn't up and running properly, but I didn't know that at the time. My Assistant Officer in Charge (AOIC) and Department Head (DH). Asked me to get an account on TBMCS and learn about it, so I began to inquire with ADP about what TBMCS was and who could teach me some basic things to do with it. Unluckily for me, the Sailor who was the subject matter expert worked nights, 0000 to 0800, while I worked 0800 to 1600. It wasn't easy getting them to sit down with me and train me, no, quite literally it was difficult considering they were the Information Systems Watch Officer (ISWO) and they were getting out of the Navy.

### **Progress?**

My AOIC and DH see me at different times, and I tell them both the same thing, which consisted of what I learned, followed by them telling me what they desired, which was almost always never the same thing. Time goes by, and they begin to get more aggressive, irritable, and impatient. I thought I was doing what they asked, but how could I when they didn't even know how to tell me what it was that they actually wanted....They began questioning what I was doing and telling me not to do anything but TBMCS. At this point, I felt overwhelmed and no longer wanted to be here anymore. I decided to change my work schedule to nights I needed more time with them. My department head would talk badly about me when I wasn't in TACC, the space my command worked out of. He would talk so poorly of me that all

of my shipmates would tell me he was looking for me, but not to go there. I felt genuine fear. I no longer knew what to do because the place where all my real coworkers worked, not the ones I was forced to work with, but my squadron mates, I felt I couldn't hang out with them because being in TACC put me at risk for encountering the big bad wolf (my DH). Eventually, I found out that they wanted CAOC Central to have an application in TBMCS to work on the assets that we brought to the ship. This was infuriating because I kept using my account in ADP on a ship's asset, thinking What the hell do they want?

### **Realization**

Even when I had my lightbulb moment and realized CAOC Central didn't work only on our assets, I knew that was really out of my hands and more of the ships' IT's fixing their server. Nevertheless, my AOIC and DH began to talk directly with the chain of command (COC) in ADP to get answers on how to make it work on our assets that we brought from ashore. All the ISWOs get together and troubleshoot day in and day out, making comments to me about how annoying this is and how it's not important. I couldn't agree more. I was just relieved that it was no longer in my hands. Eventually they tell my AOIC and DH that they can't fix it, the server needs to be completely rebuilt. So what do we do? What the Navy does best, we fly out a contractor for an excessive amount of money, and he builds the server in 2 days....wow!

### ***Is that it?***

Fast forward to the end of deployment, we just spent the last 9 months floating out to sea, and now we're on the sands of some beach in North Carolina, loading up on buses to head back up to Virginia. That feeling was so surreal, as ironic as it may seem, the only other thing I feel may compare with finishing a deployment is serving your time in jail lol. After a bit of time off work, it was finally time to head back to work. While all the deployed people were on leave, everyone who was not deployed went to the ship to remove all of our things that my command brought on the deployment. Sooner rather than later, it came to my attention that we brought more laptops on the ship than I had seen and

currently had. I reached out to the sailor from my division who had PCS'd pretty much as soon as we came back, and he had no clue where they could be, but let me know that it had to be on the ship.

**Operation: find the missing assets.** I completely searched every PUC we brought on the ship, my storage room, my division's space, looking in every nook and cranny, hoping they would come up. Meanwhile, my Department Head calls me into his office. The look on his face speaks for him; he doesn't have to say anything, I already know he's upset. He tells me that if we don't find the laptops, we will have to start an investigation with NCIS. We were missing 5 HP and 2 Toshiba laptops. I go to the ship on two different endeavors, and I come out with nothing. I couldn't make this up, I thought, haven't I gone through enough? I was bullied by grown men to the point where I started self-harming, but I guess not. Here I was being told that I was going to get masted if we didn't find them, I was going to have to pay if we didn't find them, and he would make sure the investigation finds me at fault. We decide to take one last trip together to the USS Bataan, and suddenly we find the 5 HP laptops, but 1 Toshiba laptop. I wasn't the person in charge of any of those assets; it was actually an LCDR, but once I presented that paperwork to them, they no longer cared about doing an investigation? Funny, but not funny haha. Funny weird!

**All for what?** Everything I had done on deployment, from getting all three warfare devices to even now, it all gets overshadowed by trivial matters. The proof is there, the forms show that one of our LCDRs took custody of the assets and brought them to the ship, how was I supposed to know if I wasn't told? Yeah, I don't know either. So why was I made the blame? I can't answer that either. Some things that really stuck were my DH saying, "he's not an IT2, he's an IT3, he's too fucking incompetent." Which, if you knew me then, you know that's nowhere near true. And my DH just a different to my DIVO "He's a thief, I'm telling you he had something to do with those laptops." We ended up finding them, so I guess I didn't, and through all of this, after whatever got them so upset, I never received any apologies, just

hate. Everyone's experience in the military will be drastically different. I'll tell my story, but never tell anyone what to do. I just realized exactly what I needed to do, get out and become a civilian IT.

## References

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