

**Admiral Farragut to Secretary of the
Navy Gideon Welles (in reference to
mines)**

**“I HAVE ALWAYS DEEMED IT
UNWORTHY OF A CHIVALROUS
NATION,**

**BUT IT DOES NOT DO TO
GIVE YOUR ENEMY
SUCH A DECIDED
SUPERIORITY OVER
YOU.”**

(EMPHASIS ADDED)

MOBILE BAY

THE LEGEND:

ADM FARRAGUT, boldly directing the battle from the rigging of his Flagship, HARTFORD, ordering “Damn the Torpedoes, Full speed ahead, Drayton”, disregarding any danger from mine fields. FARRAGUT was the Hero of his day and is memorialized in stained glass window in USNA Chapel.

REALITY:

KNOWLEDGEABLE: ADM FARRAGUT was on record about his view of “torpedoes” (mines). He had much experience with mines prior to Mobile Bay as a result of the Mississippi River campaign. He knew that Fretwell Singer mines’ tin construction often led to failure after lengthy deployment.

INTELLIGENCE: Reports that the entrance to Mobile Bay between Fort Gaines and Fort Morgan were mined

SURVEILLANCE: Noted Confederate Navy reseeded mine fields near daily.

RECONNASANCE: Sent LT. WATSON on several nighttime forays to reconnoiter minefields.

EXPLOITED MINES: Lt. Watson noted many mines were deactivated, and he brought back captured mines for study. His actions confirmed problems with Fretwell Singer mines.

SWEPT MINES: Lt. Watson’s teams drilled holes in buoys holding up mines / rendered others harmless.

MAPPED MINE THREAT: Carefully plotted Confederate reseedings after last nighttime foray. Plotted line of attack to avoid all “new” mines.

AFTERMATH: 8 ships sunk by mines in Mobile Bay / 50 ships sunk by mines in Civil War – 40 were UNION NAVY ships.

As we consider the US NAVY’s First ADMIRAL,

might these be two of the lessons he left for us:

- 1. Mines and mine countermeasures are too important to our naval superiority to allow our adversaries to acquire and sustain any advantage.**
- 2. Mine warfare is a multifaceted undertaking. When the battle begins, the warrior must face all the challenges of mine warfare, including those aspects of mine warfare that the NAVY support structure has not yet solved.**

SUPERIORITY

COME AS YOU ARE

CHAMPIONS

COMMUNITY

POST CIVIL WAR

Admiral Porter

USNA

“Torpedo Corps” under BUORD

**Advocated separate naval force
R&D and training gradually declined**

Admiral Dewey/Admiral Sampson

Admiral Dewey vs Mahan

General Board advisor to SECNAV

New Office of Mining and Mining Operations

But only got NWC officer to study mining

Minesweeping destroyers to tugs and sweep

Packages for faster DD's

World War I

4 minesweeping tugs became Atlantic Fleet

Mining and Minesweeping Division

Add 3 tugs, ID fishing vessels, collateral duty

Growing interest with allied help

Minesweepers built, but at end of war

Reserve units disbanded

Minesweepers laid up

New ship design shelved

Leadership interest; promotions drop

POST WORLD WAR I

USN back to individual interest – “unpleasant work for a navy man, an occupation like that of rat-catching”

UK/GERMANY

Bottom mines/Influence sweeping

Degaussing/ Ship counters

Combination fusing, including pressure

US research focused on mines

WORLD WAR II

Followed British lead

Developed capability on the fly

**Reserves recalled, training begun, run out of
CNO office**

No fleet expertise – liaison officers

US coastal defense – 260 fishing boats

1941 – US minesweeper construction

Significant events and campaigns

Aug 42 - Atlantic command

Oct 44 – Pacific command

POST WORLD WAR II

**Demobilization – Reserve core of experts go
home (lessons learned went home too). 374 PAC
minesweepers reduced to 14**

Other priorities – Soviets, Nuclear weps, DOD

1945 – Lab at Panama City established

1946 – MINELANT replaced wartime org

**1947 – MINECRAFT, Pacific disestablished
(became collateral duty of service and
CRUDES)**

**Perceived success of “quick fix” approach to
MCM led to ignoring those who counseled
1947 priority program to counter influence
mines**

1948 prevention of minelaying

1949 minehunting developments

1950 “mainstreaming” MCM through training

1951 fragmented chain of responsibility

**REORG OPNAV - MCM compete with DD/SS
R&D, new systems, ship designs shelved**

KOREA – COME AS YOU ARE MCM

POST KOREAN WAR

1951 – MINEPAC reestablished

Shipbuilding program

**Equipment improvements/focused research
Use of air MCM**

**1971 – COMINELWARFOR formed/TYCOM
and Operational Tasking**

**Vietnam/Suez
Rise of Air MCM
Support Ship**

**1974 NAVSEA REORG
Mining and systems/ship acquisition split**

**1975 – COMINELWARFOR to
COMINELWARCOM (adviser) – ships to
Surface type commands**

**1978-1982
Shipbuilding program/AMCM developments**

POST DESERT SHIELD/STORM

COMINELWARCOM, N85, PEO REORG

**FOCUS OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE IN INGLESIDE**

MINE WARFARE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

As we consider our past and point toward our future, we can evaluate our performance with a variety of yardsticks – completion of the last budget submission, company quarterly performance, grade on a recent exercise or exam, etc. It may be also useful to consider the yardsticks that Admiral Farragut (and others) have placed before us.

**DOES THE US NAVY HAVE SUPERIORITY
OVER OUR POTENTIAL ENEMIES IN THE
VARIETY OF MINE WARFARE
CONSTRUCTS WITH WHICH WE MIGHT
BE FACED?**

**DO THOSE OF US IN THIS ROOM WHO
PLAY A ROLE IN SUPPORTING OUR MINE
WARRIORS PROVIDE THEM THE TOOLS
THEY NEED OR WILL THEY BE
REQUIRED TO FACE THE NEXT “MINE
CHALLENGE” WITH LESS THAN OUR
BEST AND THEIR OWN INGENUITY AND
COURAGE?**