DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON
1343 DAHLGREN AVE SE
WASHINGTON NAVY YARD DC 20374-5161

5041
Ser N00/015
19 Jan 23

MEMORANDUM

From: Commandant, Naval District Washington
To: Inspector General, Naval District Washington

Subj: RESPONSE TO REFERRAL OF HOTLINE COMPLAINT-NIGHTS 202204730 AND 202205296

Ref: (a) Your letter 5041 Ser N00G/32 of 31 Oct 2022
(b) OPNAVINST 11210.02D, DOD Transportation Engineering Program
(c) United States Department of Transportation's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)
(d) Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command Transportation Engineering Activity (SDDCTEA) Pamphlet 55-17 Better Military Traffic Engineering (2016)
(e) SDDCTEA Pamphlet 55-15 Traffic and Safety Engineering for Better Entry Control Facilities (2019)
(f) Naval Air Station Patuxent River Instruction 5560.2M Administration of Traffic Regulations

1. In response to reference (a), I directed an investigation into the allegations made in the complaint. The following is a summary of findings from that investigation.

2. Reference (a) cited two confidential complaints which alleged that the Commanding Officer of Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River failed to support the tenant commands by wasting government funds through excessive expenditures in pursuit of safety protocols the complainants deemed unnecessary. Specific allegations include:

a. Slowing gate traffic: personnel required to hand over or "give up" Common Access Cards (CACs) to sentries at control points, unnecessary lane closures, creating soft targets and traffic hazards off base, wasting base population time, and taking time from fleet activities/requirements.

b. Slowing base traffic: wasting base population time and taking time from fleet activities/requirements, excessive speeding tickets, forcing unsafe traffic flows, and the improper installation of speed bump/hump/tables. Two documents were also provided with additional details including that a traffic study was not conducted and the implemented measures installed do not meet DoD requirements.

c. Wasteful spending for new traffic patterns

d. Misappropriation/misuse of Naval Security Forces

e. Decreasing workforce retention

f. Improper crosswalk implementation

g. Lack of signage denoting hours of operation on gates that do not operate 24 hours/7 days a week

h Thousands of lost personnel hours

i. Increase wear and tear on vehicles

j. Decreased morale

3. The investigation consisted of personal interviews, review of complaints, review of records related to the allegations, review of social media, and review of applicable portions of references (b) through (f).

4. Based on the findings from the investigation and my review of the facts, I have determined that:

a. The allegation that the command is improperly slowing gate traffic cannot be substantiated with available evidence. Entry control points (ECPs) and the security personnel manning those positions must balance safety, security and traffic flow.

(1) The recent gate hardening/traffic calming project met most, but not all recommendations in reference (e) in regards to number and placement of speed humps. At Gate 1, there is a speed hump in the response zone which goes against Surface Deployment and Distribution Command Transportation Engineering Activity (SDDCTEA) recommendations. At Gates 1 and 2, there are two speed bumps in the approach zones. The SDDCTEA states that a single speed bump in the approach zone is appropriate in most cases, however, it does not recommend against having two. With the particularly long approach zones at Gates 1 and 2, it is reasonable the command would elect to install two.

(2) In addition to the physical changes made to the ECPs, occasional lane closures are sometimes necessary based on staffing availability. NAS Patuxent River Security Department is not fully staffed and is further impacted by both military personnel and civilian police officers who are unable to stand sentry duties due to light duty status.

(3) Personnel attempting to access the installation are not asked to "give up CACs" at the gate. Individuals seeking access are asked to provide their CAC for identification verification which is authorized by DODI 1000.13.

(4) While there may be some "soft target" risk when traffic is backed up off base, installation security forces must ensure they follow proper security protocols for each person

they grant access to the base. These security measures may, at times, increase the amount of time it takes to access the base during periods of high traffic volume, and tenant command personnel and visitors should build this time into their commuting plan.

b. The allegation that the traffic was slowed on base was supplemented with two attachments detailing alleged improprieties. It is accurate, the installation commander ordered decreases in speed limits and ordered the installation of speed tables at various locations throughout the base. These orders were based on multiple factors to include: his personal observations of unsafe driving behaviors; safety office observations of unsafe driving behaviors; review of mishap records and near miss reports; the observation that roads are shared by cars, commercial traffic, bicycles, pedestrian, and low speed airfield ground support equipment; his judgement that swift action must be taken to prevent a catastrophic mishap; and the limited funding readily available to make traffic safety improvements.

(1) In accordance with reference (d), the changes directed by the installation commander should have been preceded by a formal traffic safety survey. The base commander was not advised that such a study was needed prior to implementing his proposed traffic calming measures.

(2) The allegation that the speed tables do not meet the requirements of reference (d) was partially validated. Signs warning of the speed tables were not initially placed to warn drivers. The signs have since been placed. Communication between NAS Patuxent River and the SDDCTEA reveal that the best speed hump design was not chosen, however, the installed speed tables do not violate the requirements of reference (d).

(3) There is no evidence that the number of speeding tickets written on base has increased or is excessive since the implementation of the traffic calming measures.

c. The implemented measures were completed with the intent to improve safety aboard the installation. Additional time is required to determine if the measures have the intended effect.

d. There is no evidence that any of the traffic changes have resulted in misappropriation or misuse of the security force. Security forces are assigned based on posts validated through the Mission Profile Validation – Protection (MPV-P) process. NAS Patuxent River uses available personnel, which is significantly less than validated, to staff ECPS, patrols, and other positions throughout the base. There is no evidence that shows security forces were diverted from validated posts to increase speed enforcement. Of note, the installation Security Officer stated security forces are often pulled from other posts to assist at ECPs to reduce traffic backups.

e. The allegation that the traffic changes are decreasing workforce retention are unable to be validated due to lack of available data.

f. There is no evidence to substantiate the allegation that crosswalk changes were improperly implemented. While it is accurate to state that the best possible design for crosswalk enhancements were not used due to time and cost considerations, the crosswalks installed do not violate the guidance contained in reference (d).

g. The allegation that gates that do not operate 24/7 do not have signs stating the hours of operation was substantiated. The requirement for signage was added as a new requirement in the 2019 update of reference (e) and would apply to Gates 2 and 3 at NAS Patuxent River. Gates 2 and 3 operate from 0530-1800 Monday – Friday, with occasional changes for holiday periods or other special events. Due to resource limitations, there currently is no traffic engineer assigned to NAS Patuxent River or the Region (Naval District Washington). As a direct result of this gap, the local Public Works Officer/Department was not aware of the signage requirement and did not create a project for the installation of signs. The Commanding Officer of NAS Patuxent River proactively communicates changes in gate hours though e-mails to staff and tenant command leadership and on official social media accounts.

h. The slowing of traffic on the base does slightly increase commuting time for personnel, adding an estimated 4 minutes per day. While additional study and data would be required to determine whether 4 minutes/individual constitutes unacceptable waste when weighed against potential safety improvements, it is reasonable to conclude that 4 minutes each day does not have significant impact on the overall production of individual employees.

i. If not traversed at a safe speed, the speed tables on the base could potentially increase wear and tear on individual vehicles. Data is not currently available to determine the future frequency and cost of this potential outcome.

j. There is evidence that the traffic safety measures have negatively affected the morale of some personnel on base. Specific complaints at installation and tenant command town hall meetings, complaints on NAS Patuxent River's Facebook page, and Interactive Customer Evaluation complaints are evidence of increased displeasure with the changes. The scope of the morale decrease cannot be measured at this time due to the sparse data and often anonymous complaints. An interview with one of the complainants revealed no additional information on morale is currently available. A more detailed assessment would need to be completed to determine the true scope of the impact of the increased safety measures on morale, and would require survey of all individuals who live and/or work on the installation.

5. Based on the findings of this investigation, the following actions will be taken by the Commanding Officer of NAS Patuxent River:

a. Request a traffic engineering study from the SDDCTEA Command Transportation Engineering Agency to determine if any implemented traffic calming measures should be modified, removed, and or if additional measure should be implemented.

b. Highlight the presence of speed tables using signs, rumble strips, and other methods as recommended by the SDDCTEA.

c. Continue to review on a regular basis mishap and near miss reports, as well as traffic violation data to monitor the effect of traffic calming measures.

d. Coordinate with Public Works to ensure proper signage is installed at gates that are not operating 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

6. My point of contact for this matter is CAPT (b) (6) [redacted] Chief of Staff, Naval District Washington who can be reached at 202(b) (6) [redacted] or via email at (b) (6) [redacted].mil@us.navy.mil.

N. S. LACORE