Katrina
The 10th Anniversary
Reflections on the Reserve's Role in the Aftermath of the Storm of the Century
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Dear Editor:

I look forward to reading the excellent articles in the Reservist, yet I must express concern about the cover of issue 3/2015. I know that tattoos are becoming a more common occurrence in society and in the military, yet to see one prominently displayed on the cover distracts from the recognition due to our newest REPOY. Unless there has been a revision in the Commandant Instruction 1000.1B the MCPOCG’s hand tattoo does not conform to the regulations, and even if allowed under a waiver or grandfather clause, it is hardly worthy of a cover photo.

Capt. George Elliott, USCG (ret.)

EDITOR: Captain, thank you for your letter and thoughts about the cover photo. As you have correctly assumed, the tattoo on the MCPOCG’s hand is indeed grandfathered under current Coast Guard policy. In our editorial judgment, the significance of the Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year being pinned simultaneously by his spouse and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard is both news worthy and worthy of being featured prominently in the magazine.
Dear Editor:

First off, I really enjoy getting the reservist magazine and I encourage people to submit things all of the time. It is very well done. Volume LXII Issue 3, 2015 with the REPOYs is a great way to recognize the great people in the USCGR. Unfortunately, PA1 Shawn Eggert from D17 listed ME1 Joseph “Pete” Harwell as an ME3 and he is actually a ME1. It certainly will not affect his performance but I am sure he was disappointed to see that, I was. I am the Sector Mobile Reserve Silver Badge and the reason I am writing is because he just transferred here to begin drilling and I noticed it. I certainly do not desire for anyone to get in trouble but just to have awareness of the mistake. It will be a bit odd when he sticks it in his “me box”, you know the stuff our kids will look through and laugh at.

Thanks again for all that you guys do. I use the magazine to show people what we do.

Very Respectfully,

BMCS Scott Bannon

EDITOR: Senior, thank you for your letter and bringing the misprint to our attention. We apologize for not catching the error prior to publication and are grateful that you have helped correct the record.

Dear Editor:

In the 3rd edition of Reservist magazine for 2015 there is an incorrect name used in the caption at the bottom of page 31. The admiral mentioned in the caption is Rear Adm. Fred M. Midgette, not Rear Adm. Thomas Midgett. I attempted to find the photo in DVIDs to correct the caption for any future use, but was unable to find it. If you have access to the photo and/or the source of the photo, would you update it with the corrected information.

Very Respectfully,

Lt. Comdr. Marvin Kimmel, 9th District Public Affairs Officer

EDITOR: Sir, we have personally apologized to the admiral and we have requested that the information be corrected.

Dear Editor:

Not only is the “Racing Stripe” (Reservist, Issue 3, 2015) a unique branding for the United States Coast Guard, but it seems that it may have become an international brand for other nation’s coast guards. I point to the news coverage of the Italian Coast Guard and their rescue activities in the Mediterranean Sea. The “Racing Stripe” translates very well!

Capt. Richard J. Kiessel, USCGR (ret.)

EDITOR: Our annual note from Ms. Lois Bouton “The Coast Guard Lady” wishing the Coast Guard Reserve a “Happy Coast Guard Day!” on the service’s 225th anniversary.

Dear Editor:

Thank you for printing the story of my personal hero, Capt. Michael Healy, past captain of the USCGC BEAR. If I could have accomplished what he did during my USCG duty, I would be forever grateful to my Creator. I first read about Capt. Healy in James Michener’s book Alaska. He was a superb navigator, and knew the Arctic, Bering Sea, Siberian peninsula and the coast of Alaska like the back of his hand. Upholding the law, he was dedicated to stopping rum runners who were stealing furs and destroying the lives of the native Alaskans. As a humanitarian, he could “think outside the box”, and tried to solve the plight of starving Alaskan villages by transporting reindeer from Siberia to establish an Alaskan herd. After reading about Capt. Healy, I was truly astounded to find he was a black man, and would normally have passed into history unknown, except for the actions of his parents, his own actions, and the opportunity given him by the USCGR (Revenue Marine). He was eventually court martialed, but exonerated, and his enlisted crew of the BEAR stood behind him to a man, the ultimate compliment. He truly exemplified the USCGR core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. One New York Sun article called him “the greatest man in America.”

BMCS W. R. “Bill” Antonowicz, USCGR (ret.)
Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, Postmaster General Megan Brennan and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Steven Cantrell participate in the unveiling of the Postal Service’s U.S. Coast Guard Forever stamp Aug. 4, at the Coast Guard’s Douglas A. Munro Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Postal Service commemorated the Coast Guard’s 225 years of service to the nation by creating a Forever Stamp to honor its role in protecting the security of the nation and advancing vital U.S. maritime interests.

Photo by PA2 Sara Romero
I was surprised and honored when Vice Admiral Neffenger asked me to serve as Director of Reserve and Military Personnel. I believe my assignment to this position confirms senior leadership’s faith in the Reserve Program. I also believe it is good to have a reservist advocating for the Reserve Program, as has occurred several times in the past. Thanks to all of your hard work, I have the benefit of representing a component of the service that is highly respected.

Significant progress has been made in determining and managing our contingency operations requirements. As you know, these requirements underlie the statutory-based mobilization intent of our Reserve Component (RC). They are the key to determining our RC mission requirements. They also drive the location of our Reserve positions, and the skills, knowledge and abilities that our Reserve Component trains to achieve and maintain.

The Concept of Reserve Employment (CORE) initiative began in 2011 and was implemented via a series of seven ALCFAOST messages released through June 2013. It completed its task of assigning mission requirements, translated into competency codes, to Reserve positions in Direct Access. This historic accomplishment enables us to manage Reserve personnel allowances, mobilization training, and our budget. It also allows us to maintain an optimal mix of skill sets for operational commanders and align our resources to support maritime homeland security, domestic and expeditionary national defense, and domestic disaster operations.

The Atlantic and Pacific Areas are engaged in a joint study that will refresh CORE’s initial products as it analyzes and determines the best methods to reduce operational risk. This effort will balance and align our needs for both domestic and expeditionary mission sets and skills.

In support of this initiative, the Deputy Commandant for Operations is structuring the requirements management process into a force planning system that allows us to regularly manage these contingency operations requirements and maintain a tight alignment of our training focus with our prioritized mission requirements. These efforts include incorporation of Reserve requirements into the Strategic Operational Planning and the Global Force Management processes, as well as continued implementation of the Funding, Orders, and Requirements Management (FORM) system that provides critical management and analysis capability.

The data coming from these systems and processes enables the Office of Reserve Affairs (CG-131) and the Area-1 staffs to develop and implement a variety of workforce and personnel policy options. Some of the options currently being considered include the policies governing assignments and reasonable commuting distance, augmentation opportunities that creatively balance mobilization obligations with traditionally active duty roles and missions, and attaining better integration and leverage for the Director of Operational Logistics in the Mission Support arena.

This force planning approach provides the Coast Guard with an ability to continue developing, determining and managing manpower and workforce initiatives. It allows the Coast Guard to identify what it needs, what it has, and what it can afford.

Your contributions are critical to the continued success of these initiatives. The Individual Training Plan (ITP) outlines how our reservists will meet the mobilization training requirements of their positions, establish professional development expectations, and provide the Coast Guard with the data necessary to manage requirements and shift strategic priorities as necessary.

The ITP also provides key resource data to determine Class C-school quota needs, identifies additional training costs and trends as it confirms potential budget needs, and maintains budget priorities. The ITP is a valuable tool for maximizing our return on investment in our Reserve force.

A properly completed and submitted ITP supports our hard working reservists, their commands, and their families. When used to plan training across a three-year period, the ITP effectively ensures that each period of Inactive Duty for Training (IDT), Additional Training Periods (ATP) and Active Duty for Training (ADT) are appropriately charted toward attaining and maintaining training goals that are aligned to the Coast Guard’s highest mission priorities.

Semper Paratus.
To the men and women of the Coast Guard Reserve, thanks for your commitment to excellence and your devotion to duty! All of you are inspirational and make me proud to wear the cloth of our great nation.

This year and next are loaded with noteworthy anniversaries, some deserving of celebration, while others worthy of pause and solemn remembrance. The 225th birthday of the Coast Guard recently passed and the 75th birthday of the Coast Guard Reserve will be celebrated early next year. The 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War is being observed, as is the 25th anniversary of the Desert Shield/Storm conflict. Ten years ago the states along the Gulf Coast were devastated by hurricane KATRINA only to be victims of the DEEPWATER HORIZON incident just 5 years later.

The common thread that links national emergencies and our Reserve force is our Nation’s reliance on reservists for the surge capacity required to respond effectively to what are often unscheduled, but not necessarily unanticipated, contingencies. Both the Coast Guard and the Department of Defense understand the value-added aspect of our “part time” workforce and are committed to keeping it strong and ready to answer all bells.

Recently I had the honor and good fortune to meet with the Chief Petty Officer Academy Reserve Class 39. This class was made up of thirty-two E-7’s who proved to be outstanding in every way. They demonstrated that they are ready to lead and ready to serve.

It seems like every time I write an article I find myself stating how impressed and excited I am with our CPO Academy; the CPOA is a gem and the staff makes it easy to be a huge fan. If you are a graduate tell others about your experience, and if you are a new Chief reach out to a graduate and find out about their experience. Two graduates who really shined were the Altus Tendo (Reaching Higher) Award recipient YNC Tracie Harrison and the Spirit of the Chief Award recipient BMC J. Quincy Lawton. What an outstanding job leading from the front by both!

Most of you have seen the last several Enlisted Reserve Advancement Announcements. The lists have been robust and it is certainly an opportune time for those of you seeking to take the next step in your career. Often times there are periods when advancements are slow and upward mobility is difficult. We are not at that point now. So please take the tests, gain the skills and challenge yourself. It can be said, that if you are completely comfortable in your job or position, you are not in the right place.

It has become evident that the Coast Guard succeeds through the hard work of the crew and the crew succeeds through relationships. We all would like to think that an enterprise as mature and organized as the Coast Guard would not have to rely on old fashioned human relationships, but we do, and I don’t see it going away anytime soon. At one point reservists, particularly enlisted members, were deeply engaged in long-term connections at the unit level providing a bridge of continuity enjoyed and leveraged by our active duty counterparts. Steps have been taken to rethink how transfers are made to ensure the benefit of continuity is taken into consideration during the assignment process. Getting our assignment process adjusted continues to be one of my top priorities; finding the balance between needs of the service and the needs of the member is a moving target, but I believe we are getting closer to hitting the mark.

Last month two hard charging Chiefs reached out to me and suggested I up my game regarding social media and communications. I appreciated the feedback and am committed to stepping out of my comfort zone and embracing some of the modern methods of interacting with those in the field. I may need training wheels and some encouragement but I will test the waters. Thanks to SKC Heather Sands and PAC Rachel Polish for the push. You two are rock stars!

Finally, thanks to all of you for your continued support. We are steaming in the right direction and making way. I am here to serve you and ensure you have the resources to succeed. Please use your Chain-of-Command and Badge Network to raise concerns and have your voice heard.

God Bless our Troops!

Semper Paratus.
After word came a few years ago that Station Holland in western Michigan would no longer be staffed by reservists participating in the 9th District’s Summerstock program, it would have been easy to simply shrug and shut the doors.

But what if there was another way to keep the Coast Guard Auxiliary Operated (AUXOP) station staffed seven days a week, instead of just on weekends and holidays?

That’s when Chief Eli Paquette, Station Holland’s Officer-in-Charge (OIC), had an idea. He got together with the previous OIC at Station Grand Haven, Mich., along with Chief Zach Roberson, the Senior Enlisted Reserve Advisor at Station Grand Haven, to create a template by which boat forces reservists from several stations on the west side of Michigan could completely augment Station Holland, using members’ drills and active duty for training days to keep the station staffed all summer long.

Sect or Lake Michigan and Sector Field Office Grand Haven quickly offered much-needed administrative support to ensure the station had the flexibility it needed for the plan to succeed.

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Sector Lake Michigan and Sector Field Office Grand Haven quickly offered much-needed administrative support to ensure the station had the flexibility it needed for the plan to succeed. Officers-in-Charge of nearby stations graciously allowed their reservists to participate in the plan, and Station Grand Haven offered the services of two active duty crewmembers.

“There are five AUXOP stations in the Coast Guard. Holland is the only one that can run three days a week in Bravo Zero status, and we couldn’t do it without the reservists,” Paquette says. Bravo Zero status means the station, which fields a single 25-foot Response Boat-Small, can get underway for search and rescue work within 20 minutes. The rest of the week it’s in Bravo Two status and can launch within an hour.

Maintaining such a high state of readiness isn’t easy. Like most reservists, those working at Station Holland are limited to 48 drill periods per fiscal year, so maintaining qualifications while retaining enough time to work at the station requires a high degree of coordination — and motivation.

“We ask for the best, highly motivated reservists,” Paquette says. “We find that most reservists are. They want to be the crew. They want to do this high level search and rescue (SAR) mission.”

To succeed, participating reservists need to keep on top of their qualifications, which include boat crew, SAR boat crew, and coxswain, among others. They also need to maintain weapons qualifications. The summertime operations tempo is so high that reservists must get their qualifications squared away in the wintertime—so-called “hard water time” in the 9th District. That’s also the time when several chiefs sit down by their phones and begin putting together the summer schedule.
“We start this process in February, getting dates on the calendar,” Paquette says. “That’s a long day, a lot of phone calls. Everyone is very flexible, and when we’re done, everyone knows when they’re drilling and with who. We’ve more or less made this program a well-oiled machine.”

With the passage of months between creation of the schedule and members’ actual drill dates, of course, changes come up. Crewmembers are always flexible, Roberson says, swapping out conflicting dates to ensure seamless coverage. “It’s a lot of work, but it pays big dividends,” he adds.

This year’s crew of 20 came from five Michigan stations – Holland, St. Joseph, Manistee, Ludington, and Grand Haven – and included 17 reservists, one auxiliarist and two active duty members. Reserve participation is up this year, as is the number of units sending members. Paquette and Roberson attribute the increased participation to exceptional support all the way up the chain of command.

Typical drill weekends begin at 4 p.m. Friday and run until 8 a.m. Monday — but the extended hours don’t seem to bother anybody. “Guys pull in the parking lot, drop their bags, and get on the boat,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Geoff Parkinson, the station’s summer Executive Petty Officer. “And, if they get a boating while intoxicated (BWI) complaint late on a Sunday, they’re up all night with paperwork, and they also have to be back to work their civilian job on Monday morning.…”

“Well, there’s never a complaint because they’re doing the job,” Paquette says, completing Parkinson’s thought. “They’re doing what they signed on the line to do.”

“It’s that kind of attitude that earned last year’s team of active duty, Reserve, and auxiliary personnel a Meritorious Team Commendation, Paquette says. “A lot of people would be tempted to check it back,” he says. “But these guys don’t check it back. They go all weekend and then they go perform at their civilian jobs, as well.”

Paquette says he expects reservists to spend a minimum of six hours and a maximum of seven hours underway to retain flexibility in the event of a SAR case. And such cases are not rare at Holland, the home of numerous marine events and one of the greatest concentrations of boat registrations in the district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sar Cases</th>
<th>Boardings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 (to AUG 24)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The station’s area of responsibility extends 10 miles out into Lake Michigan and stretches along the west coast of Michigan from Saugatuck to Port Sheldon, a distance of about 15 miles.

The cases aren’t always simple, Roberson says. The first case of 2015, in May, was a fatal collision involving a powerboat and a break wall. Last year a crew, comprising a reservist, an active duty member, and an auxiliarist, “undoubtedly saved a life” in another mishap, Paquette says.

“I would put our Reserve coxswains up against any active duty coxswain,” Paquette says. “They are good. They are really good, and so are the crews.”

That’s what makes Station Holland a success.”

Such was the case this summer as Roberson got underway with Chief David Hild, Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Randall, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Nagelkirk, the coxswain, for a Friday afternoon patrol. All are assigned to Station Grand Haven, and most were freshly arrived for their drill weekends, going directly to the RB-S from Paquette’s briefing.

Some had come straight from their civilian jobs and, although they noted that fact in their pre-patrol risk assessment, fatigue had no effect on their work. The crew conducted several routine boardings, assisted the Ottawa County Sheriff with a damage complaint and later in the evening assisted on arrests for BWI and simple possession.

“The whole station concept here is just very, very unique in the Coast Guard,” Paquette says. “They are doing the job any active duty crew would do, and they’re doing it very, very well.”

Parkinson, the summer XPO, agrees.

“It’s one team, one fight here,” Parkinson says. “That’s the way we look at it.”

— Story by PAC John Masson, 9th District External Affairs

### 2015 Station Holland Crew Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BMC</th>
<th>Billy Cline</th>
<th>Manistee</th>
<th>BM3</th>
<th>Kevin Fleek</th>
<th>St. Joseph</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMC</td>
<td>David Hild</td>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>BM3</td>
<td>Ryan Huber (AD)</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMC</td>
<td>Scosh Koran</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
<td>BM3</td>
<td>Shane Parent</td>
<td>Ludington</td>
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<tr>
<td>BM1</td>
<td>Brandon Hines</td>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>BM3</td>
<td>Christopher Riester</td>
<td>St. Joesph</td>
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<tr>
<td>BM1</td>
<td>William Parkinson (AD)</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>Zachary Roberson</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
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<tr>
<td>MK2</td>
<td>Joshua Sanders (AD, EPO)</td>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>MK2</td>
<td>Ryan Parrish</td>
<td>Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM1</td>
<td>Kevin Snyder (AD)</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
<td>MK2</td>
<td>Douglas Ford</td>
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<tr>
<td>BM2</td>
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<td>MK3</td>
<td>Alex Randall</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
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<tr>
<td>BM2</td>
<td>Ryan Nagelkirk</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
<td>AUX</td>
<td>David Gaylord</td>
<td>Flotilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM3</td>
<td>Angela Bollin</td>
<td>Grand Haven</td>
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Everyday Heroes tasked with Extraordinary Duties

U.S. Coast Guard Port Security Unit (PSU) 313, based out of Everett, Wash., recently conducted a readiness exercise with their entire crew. The unit gathered together to ensure that it is able to meet expectations as an expeditionary unit capable of being called upon at a moment’s notice.

The inherent design of a PSU is to be a deployed and operational anywhere in the world within 96 hours. Outside of the continental United States (OCONUS), they conduct port security operations and provide waterside security for key assets that include pier areas, high-value vessels and harbor entrances.

One unique feature about a PSU compared to other Coast Guard units is that it consists primarily of Reserve members. These are men and women who have careers outside of the Coast Guard and still are able to effectively complete their expansive PSU mission.

“The PSU is a valuable asset for the U.S. Coast Guard,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Jordan Gere, boatswain’s mate and lead petty officer for the unit’s waterside security division. Jordan, who is also a middle school special education teacher, says the crew’s outside experience helps when conducting their Coast Guard missions. “Each member of the unit, whether they are police officers, corrections officers, musicians, teachers or college students, brings something beneficial to the table.”

Some members are also gaining valuable insight and experience while stationed at the PSU. “We do have a lot of people from various backgrounds, including law enforcement, firefighters and other fields that bring some great qualities and insight from their civilian career to their jobs here at the PSU,”
says Chief Petty Officer Ryan Olson and security division chief at
the unit. “It works the other way too because some of these folks
are learning skills here at the PSU that they are taking back to
their civilian jobs.”

Being limited to 60 drills per year, which comes out to 30 days,
plus their two weeks of active duty, PSU members are actually
performing Coast Guard duties for a little more than a month
every year. Considering the amount of time members typically
spend at the PSU, excluding time spent on deployment, outside
experience is highly appreciated.

“Some members of the crew bring expertise, both gained in
their Coast Guard craft and acquired from their civilian careers,
that helps advance training opportunities,” said Lt. Cmdr. Nan
Silverman-Wise, PSU 313 Executive Officer “Often our members
will add to our baseline training with their personal experiences
and expertise,” said Silverman-Wise. “They demonstrate their
leadership abilities, share their diverse set of skills and
experiences, and exhibit an incredible desire and drive to be here
and help our team as a whole to be the best at what they do.”

Balancing the two careers is an issue faced by most reservists.
According to Nan-Silverman the Reserve personnel at the PSU
are no different. “It is two careers, no question there. And I think
our civilian experiences help us manage the two careers. But the
discipline inherent to the Coast Guard helps folks manage time
and set priorities.” Silverman-Wise should know. Her assignment
at PSU 313 brings her all the way from Maryland where she is a
project manager. “It can be tough, but the unit camaraderie at a
PSU makes coming to drill enjoyable - you want to see your ‘Coast
Guard family’ and check in with them. When it comes down to it,
I think members really inspire and support each other.”

—Story and photos by PA1 Zachary Crawford,
13th District External Affairs
Reserve senior leadership visit highlights importance of PSUs to national security

Sharpshooters locked their gaze on activity around the perimeter, armed guards intercepted a simulated improvised explosive device at an entrance gate, and crews on the water engaged in a high-speed chase to halt a suspicious boater.

These scenarios played out in June when members of Port Security Unit (PSU) 305 staged an eight-day deployment exercise at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina.

Rear Adm. James M. Heinz, then Director of Reserve and Military Personnel, visited the exercise accompanied by Coast Guard Reserve Force Master Chief Eric Johnson.

The mission, dubbed Operation Iron Aegis, showcased the high-level expertise of the Fort Eustis, Virginia-based PSU in establishing a base of operations and conducting important security operations, noted both Heinz and Johnson.

PSUs are an integral part of national security, they said, with highly trained members who rapidly deploy for waterside and shoreside security missions around the globe.

There is a great deal of visibility in the Coast Guard and the Department of Defense about what the PSUs are doing, Heinz said. "Whether you're on the front lines, whether you're preparing to go, (there is) lots of interest on what this is," Heinz told the members in an All Hands meeting. "We understand and the commandant gets told how important this mission is with his DoD counterparts."

PSU 305 deployed to New York Harbor after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Other deployments since 2001 include Kuwait, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Rota, Spain.

PSUs, which are staffed by reservists and supported by an active duty support staff, are designed for sustained operations in support of military and humanitarian operations worldwide. The units can deploy within 24 hours and establish operations within 96 hours.

Heinz noted how he and Johnson visited PSU 312 at Guantanamo Bay in October and that Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul Zukunft traveled in April to Guantanamo and met with members of PSU 308.

In a question and answer session, Heinz and Johnson covered a variety of topics, including current budget challenges, the critical role of reservists in the Coast Guard, priorities for the commandant, readiness, and entitlements.

Grateful Nation

The world continues to be unsafe and the men and women of the PSUs will again be called upon to safeguard the nation's interests, Johnson said. "If you don't think we need a strong defense, we absolutely do," he said. "From the bottom of my heart, thank you for what you do and how you do it." The most important thing, Johnson said, is for reservists to maintain readiness so they can answer the call for service when it comes.

For excellence in their rates, the PSU selected five members for recognition: ME1 Derek Gawrilow, BM1 Damuel Infanti, SK1 Zachary Prince, MK2 Eric Zupan, and OS3 Ryan Carden.

Johnson called up the five and presented each of them with a coin. "Although we're recognizing five individuals, I wish I could dedicate 150 coins today to each of you," he said.

Real World Training

The Cherry Point exercise provided valuable experience that satisfied training requirements and exposed members to a myriad of situations they could face when deployed, according to Lt. Patrick Hanley, PSU 305's future operations officer. "We invented a mock environment where we really wanted to inject a bit of realism of what it may be like if they were in a host nation dealing with an adversary," he said.

The PSU base had berthing, power, climate control, and a tactical operations center with a fully operational deployable field communications package. As part of the mission, members conducted tactical training on land and water, including machine gun training for the Waterborne Security Division. "Our goal was to do a mock deployment and really test our ability to get our equipment out, stage it, put it up, and run through a full deployment and movement," Hanley said.

Members of the PSU did a tremendous job in meeting the logistical challenges of setting up a base and expertly carrying out their security mission, said Cmdr. Michelle Watson, the commanding officer of PSU 305. "I commend the entire crew for the successful planning and execution of this exercise," she said. "Our members are ready to deploy at a moment's notice. I am extremely proud and have absolute confidence in their expertise and abilities."

PSU Command Master Chief William Gillis also complimented members for meeting the challenges of the deployment while demonstrating professionalism, enthusiasm and flexibility. According to Gillis, the training exceeded the unit's goals for the exercise. "I was awed by the team effort I witnessed throughout the pre-deployment, deployment, and redeployment to Fort Eustis," he said.

— Story and photo by PA3 Lisa Ferdinando, 5th District Public Affairs Detachment Baltimore
The Coast Guard’s Port Security Units (PSUs) are a globally deployable maritime force that provides waterborne security and shoreside anti-terrorism/force protection in support of overseas and domestic contingency operations. They are manned by reservists, supported by a small cadre of active duty Full Time Support staff. They are capable of deploying within 96 hours and sustaining operations for two weeks before receiving logistical support.

Reserve members of the PSU train for their mission during Inactive Duty for Training and Active Duty for Training periods. These provide the opportunity for earning qualifications and meeting recertification requirements, but typically do not provide for integrated unit training or experiential deployment training. Port Security Unit 305 addressed this gap by planning and executing an 8-day deployment exercise at Marine Corp Air Corp Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. The Advanced Echelon (ADVON) left from Fort Eustis, Va. on June 27th, 2015. The main body followed on June 30th, 2015.

Planning
Lt. Pat Hanley led the planning for the deployment exercise, which started nine months prior to the exercise. His team of subject matter experts in boat operations, engineering, weapons, logistics, and administration integrated the unit’s training requirements and identified the equipment, supplies and support necessary to meet those training requirements in the field. Supported by members of PSU 305 who had recently attended the Virginia Army National Guard’s Unit Movement Officer course, his team loaded and transported 9 ISU-90 shipping containers of equipment and supplies, along with 118 crewmembers and their personal equipment to MCAS Cherry Point and redeployed it to Fort Eustis.

A critical element of the planning process was the assignment of a survey liaison, reconnaissance, and planning (SLRP) team to visit Cherry Point. This visit allowed the SLRP team to survey the campsite, pier facilities, and training ranges to ensure they met the unit’s needs. The team was also able to establish working relationships with the Officer-in-Charge of the Navy Utility Boat Squadron and his staff, as well as the support units at Marine Corp Air Station Cherry Point. These relationships later proved invaluable to accomplishing critical activities, such as offloading and positioning the ISU-90 containers by forklift, disposing of hazardous material, and arranging for weapons to be drawn from the armory before dawn.

An equally critical element of the planning process was the months of detailed logistical work that preceded the deployment. The Logistical Support Cells focused on three objectives: the unit’s training plan, led by Lt. Rebecca Boice; the mobilization plan, led by Ensign Chad Luettel and Petty Officer 1st Class Gerren Jones, and the transportation plan, led by Petty Officer 1st Class Zachary Prince. Each functional leader worked with their respective staff to ensure the smooth execution of the overall plan. Lt. Boice brought together representatives from every division of PSU-305 to craft a training plan that provided real-world deployment experience and contained provisions that allowed each member to complete individual ADT-AT training mandates. Her detailed analysis of the individual and billet competency requirements ensured members gained critical skills that will serve the unit in the years to come. Ensign Luettel and Petty Officer 1st Class Jones worked numerous hours, on and off duty, to recall 120 Reserve and active duty members from units and locations as far away as San Francisco, Calif. This required months of painstaking analysis of each member’s personal entitlements and readiness metrics to ensure members were fit for duty and that pay and allowances were appropriately calculated. Glitches in the Coast Guard’s newly human resource management software significantly complicated their work. Petty Officer 1st Class Jones led the unit’s Administration Division as they spent hundreds of hours identifying and troubleshooting pay and other personnel issues.
The deployment would not have happened without the logistical and procurement expertise of Petty Officer 1st Class Prince. Prince worked with a diverse group of stakeholders and agencies, including the Coast Guard’s Director of Operational Logistics, General Services Administration (GSA), and a rental car company to execute the deployment exercise. The nature of this full-scale unit movement, outside of a traditional contingency or deployment scenario, required local efforts that are typically reserved for other Service entities within the wider Coast Guard or DoD enterprise. Petty Officer Prince was successful in procuring the entire unit’s lodging, supplies and transportation needs. This was clearly evident by his unflappable response when, just days before the exercise, the vendor providing field showers and toilet facilities declined the contract. Petty Officer Prince quickly identified an alternate source of supply that could meet the unit’s need, despite the vendor having to travel 12 hours to the exercise site to do so. This type of quick thinking and reaction to last-minute developments was the hallmark of the entire Logistics Department during the exercise.

Deployment Exercise

The ADVON led the main body to Cherry Point by several days and took responsibility for offloading most of the unit’s equipment and establishing the camp, allowing the main body to begin training almost immediately upon arrival. For the Waterborne Security Division, the underway Machine Gun Boat Course (MGBC) was a top priority. The MGBC is an annual requirement for TPSB crews, requiring them to fire both the M240 and M2HB machine guns. Access to an offshore range, complete with ship targets, within an hour sail from the pier made Cherry Point an ideal location for completing the MGBC. The proximity of the camp to the piers and marine training areas also allowed the boat crews to engage in realistic tactical exercises for stationary and moving security zones.

The deployment exercise provided the Shoreside Security Division with the opportunity to establish entry control points and weapons emplacements to provide seaward and landward security for the camp. They were also able to take advantage of the many training ranges to conduct land navigation training, engage in security-specific military operations on urban terrain (MOUT), and complete teambuilding obstacle courses. The Division also played an essential role in establishing the camp security watch and training new crewmembers in proper watchstanding.

The Communications Division, under the guidance of Lt. Mark Whisenant and Petty Officer 1st Class Eliud Garastegui, established and maintained the Tactical Operations Center, complete with a fully operational deployable field communications package which provided UHF, VHF, and satellite communications for oversight and situational awareness of the various field activities that occurred during the week. The Tactical Operations Center was also essential for training exercises that emphasized interoperability of the various PSU elements, including discovery of simulated vehicle borne improvised explosives at the camp’s Entry Control Points, responding to suspicious activity on boats and vehicles in the vicinity of the camp, and asylum seekers fleeing ahead of a hostile crowd. Integration of the operational elements of PSU 305 was on full display for Rear Adm. James Heinz, Director of Reserve and Military Personnel, during his visit to the camp [see accompanying article issue].

Training and living in the field depends on functioning equipment, including TPSBs, generators and electrical distribution systems, weapons, vehicles, potable water and sanitation supply, and shelter. Responsibility for the operation of the camp lies with the Camp Mayor. In his debut in this role, Chief Petty Officer Martin...
Kenner performed admirably. He kept power, light, and cooling supplied to the berthing and operations tents without failure, while responding quickly to daily quality of life issues such as minor leaks in the tents exposed by the North Carolina summer storms.

Careful planning also ensured that the Engineering Department kept up with maintenance of the TPSBs so that they were available for training, and demonstrated their capabilities to the Director, Reserve and Military Personnel. Working into the night, and occasionally the early morning hours, the Engineering Department completed the routine maintenance and emergent repairs to keep the Waterborne Division where they belong; underway. TPSB maintenance is tracked and scheduled through Asset Logistics Management System. This system was developed for Coast Guard Air Stations and is not well-suited to field operations, but through careful preparation, the Engineering Department was able to project the maintenance requirements of the TPSBs in the field and update the ALMIS database upon returning to Fort Eustis.

The inclusion of an underway Machine Gun Boat Course placed a heavy demand on the understaffed Weapons Division who had to load, track, and distribute 200 training weapons and more than 25,000 rounds of ammunition. During the three days that the MGBC was conducted, members of the Division awoke before dawn to retrieve weapons from the armory and assign the necessary ammunition to each TPSB, oversaw the day’s courses of fire, and worked into the night to record ammunition expenditures, clean the weapons for the next day, and prepare ammunition for issue. Due to their efforts, sixty crewmembers completed the Machine Gun Boat Course.

Port security units often deploy in support of U.S. Navy overseas operations and two Coast Guard Reserve officers stationed with DDE-Group 2, the headquarters unit for U.S. Navy’s Coastal Riverine Units, attended the exercise to evaluate the opportunities for joint training exercises. Lt. j.g. Kyle Pope, one of the liaisons and a former PSU 305 crewmember, also found it useful to evaluate how the skills and experience he has gained from the US Navy applies to PSUs.

The deployment exercise was demanding on every member of PSU 305, but there was also time for morale. Lt. Mark Whisenant, Petty Officer 2nd Class Adolfo Rodriguez, and Petty Officer 1st Class Eliud Garastegui worked with MCAS Cherry Point’s Morale, Welfare, and Recreation staff to provide a large grill, and each Division took advantage of it to grill out, providing a welcome break from MREs. Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Gresham organized several challenging morning workouts and many of the crew participated in evening games of football and volleyball.

Conclusions
Planning and executing this deployment exercise challenged every member of PSU 305 and provided a unique opportunity to test training, plans, and operating procedures in a field environment. Cmdr. Michelle Watson, PSU 305 Commanding Officer, notes that “The crew gained a real appreciation for the level of effort it takes to mobilize, execute a mission, and redeploy a unit the size of a PSU. That knowledge, coupled with intangibles such as the camaraderie that developed, will be invaluable to the newest members of PSU 305 as they prepare for future deployments. I’m extremely proud of the entire crew for coming together to plan and execute this exercise in such a short period of time. I have no doubt that when the time comes, they will live up to our mantra, ‘whatever it takes,’ and execute their mission flawlessly.”

— Story by Lt. Ian G. Brosnan, PSU 305

Active Duty and Reserve Personnel Part of Joint Task Force - West

In February 2015, a team of Coast Guard Active Duty and Reserve members joined the newly formed Joint Task Force-West (JTF-W) in San Antonio, Texas. JTF-W is one of three Joint Task Forces to address the objectives laid out in the Southern Borders and Approaches Campaign (SBAC). The remaining Task Forces are JTF-East in Portsmouth, Virginia, and JTF-Investigations in Washington, DC. Active Duty and Reserve Coast Guard members are participating in all Task Forces.

JTF-W is a first-of-its-kind DHS joint task force designed to specifically address migration on the southwestern border. The team of five Coast Guard members that joined in February became part of a team from the Border Patrol (BP), Office of Field Operations (OFO), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), working to prevent and respond to potential mass migration events, disrupting and degrading Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), and integrating and aligning intelligence resources and information across the Joint Operating Area (JOA). The Task Force Director is Robert L. Harris of the United States Border Patrol, and the two Deputies representing the components of the task force are Ms. Janice Ayala from Homeland Security Investigations and Rear Adm. Joseph Servidio for the USCG. The Task Force will be fully mission capable on July 31, 2015, and will have a final strength of eight Coast Guard members.

The Coast Guard members assigned to the Task Force are filling important positions as Section Chiefs, Deputy Section Chiefs, and Maritime Operations, Planning and Intelligence Officers. Currently, the mix of Active Duty and Reserve members are fulfilling 180 day temporary duty assignments away from their permanent duty stations. Future positions will continue to be advertised on the MRTT and via message traffic.

— Submitted by Lt. Cmrd. Rebecca Albert, JTF-W Deputy J2, Maritime Intelligence Officer

Pictured here are members of the Coast Guard team during a visit by Rear Adm. Servidio (11th District Commander and JTF-W Deputy) and Rear Adm. David Callahan (8th District Commander). In the back row from left to right are: Rear Adm. Servidio, Maritime Planning Officer Lt. Kyle Stone, USCGR, Maritime Operations Officer Lt. Rob Ornelas, USCG, Maritime Operations Officer Lt. Michael Sternes, USCGR and Rear Adm. Callahan. In the front row from left to right are Lt. Pablo Prado, USCGR, Maritime Operations Officer Lt. Gary Demetreon, USCGR, Deputy Intelligence Section Chief/Maritime Intelligence Officer Lt. Cmrd. Rebecca Albert, USCGR, and Planning Section Chief Capt. Jerry Nauert, USCGR. Not present Intelligence Section Chief Capt. Jim Spotts.
Progress and Possibilities for Women in the Military: The Future is Now

When Vice Adm. William Moran, the U.S. Navy’s Chief of Naval Personnel and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Personnel, stepped onto the main stage to deliver remarks for the 2015 Joint Women’s Leadership Symposium, he looked out at the vast audience of over 700 military women and said, “I feel uncomfortable.” He then asked the men present to stand. About 12 did. To them Moran said, “This is what it feels like for women when they walk aboard a Navy ship.” He said 17.8% of United States Navy is female. He then pivoted on stage, held up his smart phone and asked everyone to reach up with his or hers and join him in taking a “selfie” of this profound moment.

“This is about looking forward. You are a key component,” Moran said. “Diversity is fundamental for our ability to be successful going forward.” He wrapped up his remarks by asking for the audience’s perspective and input from the two-day symposium saying, “several ideas you gave us are going to be implemented.”

Reserve and active duty members from the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, National Guard, U.S. Coast Guard, Swedish and South Korean Navy were in San Diego for the 28th symposium, also known as the largest gathering of military women in the world. Recognizing, respecting and celebrating the strengths and talents women bring to the Armed Forces, as well as discussing pertinent issues, providing professional development, mentorship and networking, is the purpose of the Sea Service Leadership Association’s Joint Women’s Leadership Symposium. Held on June 11-12th, 2015, guest speakers, workshops and Service breakout sessions were offered daily complimenting the theme, “Progress and Possibilities – Embrace Our Future Now.”

This is a pivotal time for women in the military. Across the Services, Members of Congress and military leadership are focusing on issues impacting military women – opening all operational billets to women, such as special forces and ground combat billeting in the infantry course, increasing the length of maternity leave and improving policies that will attract and retain the best and the brightest women across all Services. Progress within the last decade includes lifting the combat exclusion law for women on surface ships and the recent decision to assign women on submarines. The first woman was promoted to the rank of four-star general in 2008. Considering women began serving on the battlefield in 1775, this trend toward expanding opportunities and affording women key leadership roles, as well as the study of additional specialties for inclusion of women in units that historically restricted them, are encouraging more women to serve. The Sea Services Leadership Association’s JWLS is one of a kind in that it is the premier event across all Services. JWLS takes the time to enhance progress and provide inspiration. Input from attendees challenges senior leadership to make changes and support
proposals that modernize policies to encourage the retention of female military women.

After Vice Adm. Moran’s opening address, the morning program included a presentation about the challenges of retaining women beyond the 10-year career point and recruiting the next generation of women leaders – teenagers. One point was clear; the U.S. military is unfamiliar to the majority of high school students who would likely sign up.

Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, author of Ashley’s War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield, gave an account of her experiences writing this book, a story about a pilot program and team of women who gained acceptance from this exclusive military community after being given a chance. Their work mattered during the war for the missions of the Green Berets and Army Rangers.

Breakout sessions, including effective leadership, inspiring leaders and financial management tips, wrapped up the morning. The Joint Leadership Awards Luncheon showcased and recognized female leaders from each Service. Rear Adm. Cari B. Thomas, USCG, and Chair of the Sea Service Leadership Association board, presided.

The afternoon sessions included a frank speech by Kristen Kavanaugh, President, Trident Analytical Solutions, about her military service after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2002. A former Marine, she faced the difficulty of wanting to continue to serve but struggled with the requirements to hide that she was gay under Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. She served as a positive example of how far the military has progressed.

The Senior Female Leaders Panel, moderated by the author (Capt. Martha LaGuardia, USCGR), included Brigadier General Tammy Smith, USA, Sergeant Major Jennifer Simmons, US Marine Corps, Fleet Master Chief JoAnn Ortloff, USN, Lt Cmdr. Charlotte Pittman, USCG, and Col. Laura Yeager, National Guard. Each was asked to answer tough questions about their decades of service. Nothing was off limits. They spoke of their times of difficulty, spoke of “speed bumps” viewed not as roadblocks and were delighted to talk about their proudest career moments. While providing moving, career insights, the audience rejoiced hearing candid remarks from these role models who each served successfully over two decades.

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul F. Zukunft, the only Service chief to attend, helped conclude the first day speaking of his support for women in the military. He expressed concern for the loss of many females around the 10-year point and offered that he was determined to figure out how to improve retention.

On Day 2, when each Service had its own breakout rooms, Adm. Zukunft spent the morning with the U.S. Coast Guard attendees and speakers reiterating his plan to develop more child care options and asked for ideas on how to improve retention. Presentations included Capt. Jonathan Spaner, Sector Commander Sand Diego, CWO 4 Amy Cerino and CWO2 Tracy Randall for an officer-enlisted leadership panel, mentoring sessions and a spotlight by Capt. Melissa Bert, 7th District Chief of Staff about “Progress and Possibilities.” Capt. Bert talked about focusing on talents, not weaknesses. “Top companies are now recognizing that taking advantage of people’s strengths is the most motivating for the individual and is more productive for the business,” Bert said. Analytics, like Strengthfinder, help outline the individual’s strengths. “We all have the opportunity to focus our talents, strengths and passions in the choices we make about assignments and the way we lead people.”

— Submitted by Capt. Martha J. LaGuardia-Kotite

The Sea Service Leadership Association, a national non-profit and non-political organization, is for all Service members. Offering professional development through networking and education as well as expanding SSLA chapters across the nation. To learn more about SSLA or the 2016 JWLS to be held on the East coast in June, please go to http://www.sealeader.org.

Capt. LaGuardia is a Coast Guard Reserve officer, SSLA USCG Board of Directors representative and author of four books including the Senior Coast Guard Leaders reading list: So Others May Live: Coast Guard Rescue Swimmers Saving Lives, Defying Death; and Changing the Rules of Engagement – Inspiring Stories of Courage and Leadership from Women in the Military. Her new book, Innovators – Rock Stars of STEM will publish this fall, www.marthakotite.com.
Yellow Ribbon: Guiding Our Guardians through Deployments

With regular frequency reservists assigned to a deployable unit set off on a year-long mission, leaving family and friends behind to care for children, parents, homes and finances. Everyone involved goes through a whirlwind of emotions and uncertainty of what to do and where to get help when things just don’t go right. Just as the servicemember needs the right tools and training to do their job, so do the people maintaining the home front. For Port Security Unit (PSU) 313 based in Everett, Wash., the information and resources needed to successfully manage a deployment were provided at a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event, Aug.15 and 16, 2015.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) was created in 2008 by the Department of Defense to provide personnel in each Reserve Component and their family members with the resources and information to support them before, during and after a deployment. The program has been making its rounds to the Coast Guard’s eight PSUs every since, providing families with legal, financial, and emotional information and contacts to help with challenges faced during deployments. There are usually six events including the main pre, during, and post deployment as well as smaller briefings in between.

According to Lt. Stephen Cheng of the Reserve Communications Division, each of these events can take two to three months to plan and will last a weekend. According to Cheng the goal is to align with unit training and a weekend that is most beneficial to the servicemembers and their families. Events are held at off-base locations and are business casual dress to make the event more welcoming and comfortable. During the events, representatives from various non-profits and support organizations attend including the Red Cross, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Coast Guard Support, Tricare, American Legion and many more depending on the location. Each organization representative speaks about the services they provide to military families whether the member is deployed or not.

While the financial and legal aspects of deployment are crucial to the stability of the family when a member deploys, what families and friends seem to take away from the most is the networking and emotional support gained by attending as a unit. Chief Petty Officer Joel Burkherdt, a gunner’s mate, has been on four deployments in his career and finds attending Yellow Ribbon events still better prepare him for going and returning from deployments.

“While the information is not new to me, I like to support my members;” said Burkherdt. “I need the most up-to-date information. I also like to see them outside of work with their families.”

Also included in the event was training on the emotional cycle of deployments and question-and-answer panels for the servicemembers, family and friends. Wives, husbands and parents were able to discuss fears and anxieties. Topics including childcare and loneliness were covered with the unit ombudsman, work life representatives and family members of senior-ranking members with deployment experience. Servicemembers were also able to sit down with senior enlisted members and officers to discuss the balance of completing the mission while still being a part of the family back home.

“It’s a fantastic resource and great introduction for all members, not just those who deploy,” said Julia Skrabacz, both a PSU 313 member and Coast Guard spouse. “Meeting other members and their families makes me more aware of others needs, some are new and don’t know what is available to them.”

While the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program does not visit all Coast Guard units with reservists, all of the resources presented at the events are available to reservists and their families. However, its mission to support those affected by deployment is accomplished not only by the presentations and information booths provided, but by support networks that develop between families and friends who attend.

“The Coast Guard demonstrates that it values our members and the support of their families is critical to us,” said Master Chief Petty Officer Eric Johnson, the Coast Guard Reserve Force Master Chief. “Its importance cannot be overstated.”

— Story and photos by PA2 Ayla Kelley, 13th District Public Affairs
PARENTING CAN BE STRESSFUL. Turn to CG SUPRT for confidential counseling, coaching, and resources on:

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Coast Guardsmen and other local rescue crews rescue victims from a flooded neighborhood in New Orleans, one of countless rescues performed in the city in the aftermath of KATRINA.

USCG photo.
The 10th Anniversary: Reflections on the Reserve's Role in the Aftermath of the Storm of the Century

Story by PA2 Sara Romero
One of the largest search-and-rescue operations in the history of the United States occurred in 2005, when hurricane KATRINA wreaked havoc across the nation’s Gulf Coast. Nevertheless, during the chaos, fear, and uncertainty of that time there was one shining light, one government agency that received nothing but accolades for its efforts: the United States Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve. On the following pages, we have attempted to provide historical context as we take a look back at an event that will forever be one of the crown jewels in the long and storied history of the world’s premier maritime service, the United States Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard’s ability to coordinate effectively with local, state and federal authorities has always been a key aspect of the service’s success during all disaster relief efforts and was never more evident than during the response to this historic storm. KATRINA came ashore near Buras, La., on the morning of August 29th as a Category 4 hurricane, with sustained winds of 145 mph. It impacted over 93,000 square miles of the United States as it made landfall and continued to move further inland.

One immediate threat was a 30-foot storm surge that overwhelmed the levees protecting New Orleans. The surrounding levees were breached and there was significant damage to the drainage canals, resulting in the flooding of about 80 percent of the city. In addition to the flooding, the destruction created an enormous amount of environmental and health hazards across the region.

“My definition of what happened in New Orleans was the equivalent of a weapon of mass effect used without criminality that resulted in a loss of continuity of government with decapitation of leadership. The city lost its emergency operations center and with it its ability to communicate with its forces. The fire and police departments were fragmented due to losing their base operating capabilities. The best thing we could do was restore the basic elements of a civil society which had been lost and allow the city to carry out its legal responsibilities,” said Adm. Thad Allen, 23rd Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

More than 5,000 Coast Guard men and women from various units around the country responded to thousands of hazardous spills totaling over nine million gallons, repaired navigational aids, and restored waterways in and around some of the country’s most vital ports. Additionally, Coast Guard pilots “worked around power lines, flying debris, and other obstacles not routine to maritime rescues to hoist individuals from rooftops.”

By the second week following KATRINA’s arrival, the search and rescue (SAR) operations were virtually concluded and anyone that wanted or needed to be rescued was out of harm’s way. The shift then was made to responding to the myriad of problems posed by the destruction left by the hurricane.

“We had reservists in all these different functional areas, and in every single interaction I was involved with, the reservists were both capable and professional. You couldn’t tell who was an active duty member and who was a reservist. They were filling a critical need in a professional way,” said Rear Adm. John C. Acton, USCG Reserve (ret.).

The role of the Coast Guard Reserve during hurricane KATRINA was very much the same as the active duty component in that all members were in response mode. Prior to KATRINA, there was no authority to recall reservists to active duty in advance of an event. An event had to have actually happened before any reservists could be involuntarily recalled under Title 14 orders.

PARATUS 14:50

PARATUS 14:50 is a feature-length documentary on the United States Coast Guard’s response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The story focuses on Coast Guard air rescues carried out by Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans and Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile across southern Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi in the first two weeks of the response. These men and women helped contribute to rescuing more than 33,000 people from the impacted areas; the greatest single rescue in our nation’s history.

The documentary was produced by a team of students and recent graduates from the University of Alabama, under the direction of Kaitlin Smith, a New Orleans native and the daughter of an active-duty Coast Guardsman.

To learn more:
http://www.paratus1450.com/

To watch the film:
http://video.aptv.org/video/236552604/
“We were 48-72 hours behind the active duty component (for KATRINA); the change in Title 14 recall authority was a major change that happened because of KATRINA. Not only did we get the authority to recall people before an event, but we also got double the amount of time (reservists could be mobilized) changed as well. We now have more time to use the Reserve under Title 14 orders. It used to be 30 days in any 4 month period and 60 days in a 2 year period, and now it is double that,” said Cmdr. Alexander Foos, Reserve Programs Division Chief, CG-1312.

The long-term response efforts, almost invariably, rely on the Coast Guard Reserve. The Reserve force is the only component ready and capable to do an elongated sustainment mission such as KATRINA, which went on for several years. When the Coast Guard picked up the debris removal management from the Army Corps of Engineers, it required members of the Coast Guard Reserve to serve on voluntary active duty orders until the mission finally closed down in the fall of 2013.

“The Reserve has gotten smarter and we are going to get even smarter as the years go by and events continue to occur. We do a really good job learning and advancing the program so we remain relevant. The kinds of competencies you need in a national level event are similar, if not the same, as those needed for a regional and local-level event. The Reserve, unlike the active duty work force, does not have a dynamic workforce employed in a relatively static location. Rather, the Reserve is a static workforce with a dynamic work location. Reservists train and augment primarily where they live, developing and honing competencies, which can be applied anywhere, anytime,” said Foos.

The Coast Guard’s success during KATRINA was due to a number of factors. One of the most important factors proved to be the standardized training that service members undergo, including both the aviation and boat force community. For example, during the hectic days of the SAR response it was not uncommon to find CG helos being launched with mix-and-match crews from around the country.

“We learned that the Reserve has to be nimble, flexible and available. As an entity, the Reserve has to really understand and embrace what it has to give. The time to figure out when you need experienced pollution investigators is not when you actually need the investigators; it is before the disaster happens. We need to really remember that our most likely adversary does not exist as a tangible being… it is Mother Nature or events that are going to have a significant environmental component to it. We need to be ready; we need to know what response-ready looks like and be ready to mobilize at a moment’s notice,” said Foos.

As you will see in the stories which follow, this was truly an “all hands on deck” evolution as search and rescue teams from many different organizations came to New Orleans to assist the response effort during KATRINA. From the proverbial 30,000-foot perspective of Adm. Thad Allen, who served as the Principal Federal Officer in charge of the response, to the thousands of dedicated individuals at the ground, these stories reflect, in a small way, what extraordinary things ordinary people working together under the most adverse conditions can accomplish.

In addition to the dramatic search and rescue operations, which millions around the world witnessed in real-time, there were many lesser known, but no less significant aspects that constituted the hurricane KATRINA response and recovery efforts. They ranged anywhere from animal rescue and recovery, to the work of the PSUs, to the Salvage and Debris Removal team, to the post-KATRINA exposure research study.

“We, the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve, are a selfless organization. It’s part of our DNA. We’re all about service to others. That’s what our missions are focused on, and it’s what we’ve done for 225 years;” said Acton.
Coast Guardsmen and other local rescue crews assist in relocating residence and their pets after hurricane KATRINA.

USCG photo
A DOG'S TALE
AMID THE CHAOS OF KATRINA
WHO RESCUED WHO?

STORY BY PAC SUSAN BLAKE
know. I know . . . you’ve heard many stories of animal rescues during KATRINA, but you haven’t heard my dog’s tale.

When hurricane KATRINA went barreling through New Orleans, I had been living in a small studio apartment in New York City for over 15 years. It was the talk of the town as everyone watched in disbelief when emergency response teams, volunteers, the Coast Guard and other military services descending upon the flooded city pulling people from their homes and ferrying them to safety. And, of course, there were those airdales, which hoisted stranded people from their rooftops, capturing national attention.

I had enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserve only two years before. As a third class public affairs (PA) specialist with very little experience, I thought this was my chance to go on my first deployment. Unfortunately, I was told that every PA in the Coast Guard wanted to go to KATRINA and they didn’t need me.

I thought, “Rats! I’m going to miss out on the biggest natural disaster this country has ever seen?”

While my deployment dreams with the Coast Guard were dashed, I did end up going down to New Orleans with the Battery Park Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which was based in New York City. The CERT was established as a result of the attacks on 9/11. The team was composed of an eclectic group of people; a New York City cop, a street vendor and an entertainment coordinator just to name a few on our team.

We all caravanned down to the “Big Easy” in our own vehicles and it was a grueling trip. Catching a couple hours of sleep at each stop and snacking on fast food or whatever we could scrounge up during our pit stops.

As we headed south there were other caravans of first responders headed to New Orleans. Army trucks loaded with water, troops and supplies; fire, EMS and law enforcement; all were headed down to help. With no power in some parts of the Gulf Coast, we as well as others filled up multiple gas cans, not knowing when and where we’d be able to fill up again.

As we got closer to our destination, the twisted and downed trees, blown out buildings and debris strewn all over the road became more intense.

When we finally arrived at our destination, outside of the gate of Naval Support Activity New Orleans at Algiers Point it was pitch black dark; the downed trees blocking the gate were impenetrable. Fortunately, we ran into a local deputy sheriff that led us to another entrance to base. After a day of non-stop driving, we staked our claim in a parking lot and set up shop assisting the US Army 82nd Airborne. It just so happens that we were camped out next to the USS TORTUGA, a Navy ship home-ported in Norfolk, Va. The TORTUGA is a 610-foot dock landing ship that can lower its stern, flooding the well deck, this allowed boats from the Coast Guard and other military services to ferry the stranded citizens of New Orleans to safety. Once onboard the TORTUGA, the people were fed and provided medical assistance.

Most of these people were not willing to leave their pets behind. As a result, the TORTUGA’s crewmembers were tasked with building makeshift kennels with plastic street barriers, lattice and anything they could find in the dumpsters or lying around the base. It was hot and those sailors had double duty caring for the dogs, cats and various other pets brought to the ship by the evacuees. During a conversation with one of the crewmembers, I mentioned that we had a veterinarian with our team that would be more than happy to assist with caring for the animals. By then, there was an influx of first responders, food and supplies to the incident and my team had shifted gears to helping the animals.

Then the call came; it was the Coast Guard! At last, my opportunity to be deployed on an actual mission in support of hurricane KATRINA was finally here. It didn’t matter that I was already in New Orleans. I had to make it back to my home unit, PA Detachment NY in order to prepare for my KATRINA assignment.

This is where the dog tail comes in. While some pet owners were able to evacuate with their furry companions, others abandoned their pets and entrusted them to the crew of the TORTUGA. After all, when you lose everything in an instant, it’s hard enough to take care of yourself, much less a dog. Food and shelter were limited, even for humans.

It was a desperate situation and I started to think that this was the time to adopt a pet. “I’m thinking, ‘I can do this.’ I think? Maybe? The beagles are kinda cute.”

Just so happens that Petty Officer Anthony Graves of the TORTUGA was thinking about those beagles too. Graves was one of the crewmembers we worked closely with to feed and care for dogs.

I agreed to take the beagles with me as our group headed back to New York. The plan was to stop off in Norfolk and drop off all the beagles with his wife and decide later who would adopt which dog.

We had one heck of a time packing up my Dodge Caravan. That car would never be the same, camping equipment, survival gear and four very lively beagles. It was slow going and team members were trickling out. Even the Navy Seabees lent us a hand taking charge of the beagles while we were making last preparations to make our escape. In the end, it was another team member, four beagles and I that headed out that day.

Not knowing New Orleans and way before the smart phone phenomenon, we struggled to find our way out of the city. “Map you say?” We all learn from our mistakes.

Not getting very far due to our very slow start, we ended up in
Camp Shelby, Miss., the first night. We were so tired; we just slept in the car with the beagles and at first light we got on the road again.

We made the decision not to name the beagles because we didn’t know who would get what dog. It was quite clear during our journey that these four beagles were family. While I was perfectly willing to adopt one, I made the decision that if someone in Norfolk were willing to adopt all four to keep them together, that would be the best possible outcome.

Our next stop was a hotel in Augusta, Ga. The thought of having a real shower and sleeping in a real bed, really appealed to me. We took the beagles for a walk when we arrived, knowing that they would have to sleep in the van. We lucked out the temperature was really cool. Like most hotels, no dogs allowed, but many people took a liking to the four beagles.

One guest at the hotel even said, “Your dogs seem well behaved. Just bring them in through the side, no one will ever know.”

Whoa, that was a mistake. When we sneaked them into the room, those beagles went crazy! They jumped on the bed, the nightstands and dresser; ran into the bathroom jumped up and pulled down the towels off the towel racks. It was sheer chaos, add to that their barking frenzy! It was back to the van for those four crazy dogs.

As we continued through Georgia to North Carolina, one little beagle took a liking to me. The male dog, now known as PT, would conveniently snuggle up in my lap while I was driving. Knowing PT, as I do today, I think he knew exactly what he was doing.

Slowed down by the beagles and the lack of food, lodging and gas, it took us three days to get to Norfolk. Add to that, one of the beagles needed medical attention along the way. An infection in his foot was spreading, so we stop in at a local veterinarian in Carthage, N. C. While we insisted on paying for his services, the veterinarian would not accept our money. It was through the help and assistance of total strangers that made our journey with the beagles possible.

By the time we made it to Norfolk, I was completely sucked in. PT was mine. Throughout my career in the Coast Guard, I’ve taken PT with me on many assignments. If you know me, you know PT. He’s even been invited to a retirement ceremony at the 8th District. Today, PT is over 10 years old and we have survived many things together: When I brought him back to New York he had severe heartworms, which took him years to get over. My landlord wanted to evict me because of him. Most recently, he had a chronic condition that local veterinarians couldn’t diagnose. While there was some speculation that he may have had COPD or even lymphoma, University of Florida Small Animal Hospital was able to diagnose and prescribe medication for bronchitis.

For an old timer, PT is better than he’s ever been; my husband and I have a new rescue from the Apalachicola National Forest; her name is Penny, a two-year-old hound dog. It’s funny how age is just a state of mind. Now that Penny is around, PT thinks he’s a pup again.

We had many adventures with those beagles along the way and let me give you a little insight if you find yourself in my position. Tip one; attaching four beagles, each to a retractable leash does not work. I don’t think we ever got those leashes untangled. Tip two; sea bags do work. Mine was urinated on numerous times and no liquid penetrated the bag. Tip three; when someone comments that your dogs are well behaved, they’ve just jinxed everything!
KATRINA: A DECADE LATER

ADMIRAL THAD ALLEN

LEADING FROM THE FRONT WITH CLARITY AND COMPASSION

INTERVIEW BY JEFF SMITH, EDITOR
Vice Admiral (VADM) Thad Allen, in charge of Katrina Recovery efforts, views damage left by the hurricane. VADM Allen was touring Hancock County, Mississippi.

Mark Wolfe/FEMA
As the 10th anniversary of the devastation hurricane KATRINA wrought on the Gulf Coast and specifically the city of New Orleans nears, the Reservist sat down with the 23rd Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen, to revisit the early hectic days of that historic response.

RESERVIST: Admiral, could you give us a synopsis of your experience during hurricane KATRINA including how you came to be involved?

ALLEN: The storm came ashore on the 29th of August (2005) and I was Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard at the time. I think that everyone at Coast Guard Headquarters, along with the rest of the world, watched over the next week and were amazed at how things weren’t working in New Orleans. There were the issues with the Super Dome and convention center, the media giving interviews all around the city, and images of human remains being shown on television. Frustration was the order of the day. I remember being at meetings over at the Pentagon and other places where there were discussions about whether posse comitatus (allow the military to act as local law enforcement) should be waived or if the Insurrection Act (allowing the president to deploy troops within the U.S. to provide law enforcement) should be invoked. In both cases, there was a standing mayor and a standing governor so therefore no legal ground for preemption of their authority. While it was discussed generally, I would say it was not discussed exhaustively as everyone pretty much understood that the people (governing) down there (in New Orleans) were responsible for the response.

My direct involvement began mid-morning on Labor Day, September 5, when I received a call from DHS Secretary (Michael) Chertoff. He asked me if I would go down to become the Deputy Principal Federal Official to FEMA Administrator Mike Brown to focus on New Orleans and the surrounding area. After a long discussion with my wife Pam, we decided that I should go. Frankly, it wasn’t that easy of a conversation. We both felt that there had been windows of opportunities that had been missed, like the Super Dome, that couldn’t be revisited again to try and fix things. But in the end, we both agreed I should do it.

Being a holiday there was no one at Headquarters. I called the Commandant (Adm. Thomas Collins) and Vice Commandant (Vice Adm. Terry Cross). Then I called my Deputy Chief of Staff (Capt. Cyndi Coogan) and I said, “I’ll be going to New Orleans this evening.” It had been arranged that a CG Falcon would pick me up later that day. After the phone calls my aide, Lt. Katrina Harper, and I went into Headquarters and had the Exchange opened up. Not sure how long we would be away we basically got every item within two sizes of us so we would have enough uniforms. I then had a long conversation with Cyndi Coogan. She was going to function as the de facto Chief of Staff in my absence, for what turned out to be six months, which was an extraordinary responsibility to place on her. Once all that was settled we flew to Baton Rouge, La. In route to the airport I called three individuals I wanted as part of my team: Capt. Tom Atkin, who was working for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale; Lt. Cmdr. Ron Labrec, who had just departed as Commander, Group Chincoteague in route to Training Center Yorktown for assignment as Chief of the Search and Rescue (SAR) School; and Lt. Cmdr. Adrian West, who was at the Recruiting Command and had run my Operations Center when I was Atlantic Area Commander. I gave them all one task: find me in New Orleans the next day.
They all did. Along with Lt. Katrina Harper, they became the core team we establish in New Orleans.

When we got to Baton Rouge later that evening we immediately went to the emergency operations center where Mike Brown had set up the FEMA command post. Outside the operations center there were Mobile Emergency Response Systems (MERS) units from FEMA, which were basically portable or transportable command and control vans. There was a huge command and control trailer nicknamed “Red October” which had been brought from the FEMA Region 6 facility in Denton, Texas. It was along the line of an expandable double-wide trailer with a full suite of communication equipment. I went inside the operations center and asked to speak with Administrator Brown. Chief of Staff told me I had an appointment with him at 8 a.m. the next day.

In the meantime, I went into the operations center and reconnected with a number of people from the State of Louisiana who I had gotten to know during a (2002) Spill of National Significance (SONS) drill that I took as the Atlantic Area Commander, which, prophetically, was an oil well blowout about 45 miles from where the DEEPWATER HORIZON disaster would occur five years later. Because of that drill I had pre-existing relationships with many of the emergency responders in Louisiana and that is something you just can’t buy.

The next morning I met with Mike Brown who had set up an office in the Red October trailer. After a very brief conversation, I said I was going to go to New Orleans to assess what was going on and I would get back to him. He told me they would be moving into the new Joint Field Office which was being located at an old Dillard’s warehouse and store in central Baton Rouge that afternoon. As I got to the door of Red October, I turned and asked him what was going to be done with all of “this” referring to the trailer and the MERS units. He said that it would be retrograded (sent) back to Denton. To which I said, “Can I have them?” He said, “Sure.” I went outside and located one of the communications techs from FEMA. I told him that Administrator Brown had given me access to all the command and control equipment.

He asked what I wanted done with it. While I wasn’t 100% sure, I knew we were going to need command and control capability. Again, not being sure exactly where it should go, I directed him to put it on the dock at the New Orleans cruise ship pier where I understood the USS IWO JIMA was moored. My thinking was that being close to the IWO JIMA and being able to do joint planning was probably going to be to our benefit. I asked how quickly he could get the equipment to New Orleans. He said he could get it there and have it up and running later that day. And he did. Turns out those were two of the best decisions I made; getting the command and control equipment and being right next to the IWO JIMA. The IWO JIMA also provided logistics support and had a flight deck for access in and out of downtown New Orleans.

Later that morning I got in a CG helo and headed to New Orleans streets are flooded to the top of the wheel wells in this ground level photograph. New Orleans was under a mandatory evacuation order as a result of flooding caused by hurricane KATRINA.

Marty Bahamonde/FEMA
Orleans. Heading south from Baton Rouge we flew over Lake Pontchartrain. One of the first areas we saw were the collapsed drainage canals at London Avenue and 17th Street. What many people don’t understand is that the water that got pushed into the lake by the hurricane was forced into those drainage canals which were compromised and failed. The bulk of the flooding in the city was not caused by levy failure but rather by a failure of the drainage canal walls that were not constructed as levees. As we flew in, we saw all that. The Army Corps of Engineers were trying to repair the canal walls and levees on the other side of town because they could not pump out the city until they had secured the perimeter. This was still going on a week later. We landed downtown at a temporary landing zone (LZ) just to the west of the convention center. Flying in was stunning as the city was filled with black water. It was clear that there was no electricity. The odor in the air was pretty strong. When I got off the aircraft at the LZ and looked towards the convention center, I could see the divided two-lane street which passes in front of it. The two inside lanes were covered with trash piled two to three feet high that had been removed from the convention center. It was a pretty dramatic sight. At that point I began to put a notion together. It occurred to me that we may have been trying to solve the wrong problem. The government had responded based on emergency and disaster declarations to a hurricane. This was something else.

A week had gone by with tens of thousands of resources flowing into the area. By the end of that day, I came to the conclusion that the city did not have the command and control capability to take those resources that were being deployed and apply them with any kind of coordinated mission effect. You can respect the local authorities and jurisdictions of the mayor and the governor. However, if they had no capacity to utilize the resources with any sort of mission effect. That’s a different problem than making an emergency disaster declaration and pouring in resources. For instance, we all know how superb the CG was that week; over 30,000 lives were saved between the boat crews and the air crews. But, the fact of the matter was, they were reporting back to their own chain-of-command. There was no central, joint or unified authority that was coordinating everything that was going on in the city. The same was happening with the urban SAR teams, law enforcement resources, and emergency medical personnel.

A good example was all the law enforcement personnel that flowed into the area. They brought their own tactical equipment so they had communications with each other, but there was no place from which to efficiently operate. The Harrah’s Casino, which sits at the intersection of Poydras and Canal Streets, has a very large overhang which you can drive under. Prior to the restoration of power and the ability to move to an inside facility, they had actually made an outdoor command post under it to stay dry. Law enforcement operations going on in the city were coordinated because everyone went there and worked things out as best they could. However, there wasn’t much command and control coordination over the whole area, especially for all the things that needed to be done that were not law enforcement related.

As I have said many times since, my definition of what happened in New Orleans was the equivalent of a weapon of mass effect used without criminality that resulted in a loss of continuity of government without decapitation of leadership. A very complex statement for sure so let me break it apart. First, I don’t think anyone would doubt that KATRINA was the equivalent of a
weapon of mass destruction when you look at what happened to the city. Metaphorically speaking, had it been a situation where terrorists had blown up the levees, the FBI Special Agent in Charge would have been in charge and we would have been doing consequence management. There would have been no doubt as to jurisdiction and legal preemption of local authorities. Since there was no illegal act but rather Mother Nature, the rebuttal presumption was that the legal authorities for the response rested with Mayor Nagin and Governor Blanco. The issue was addressing their capability and capacity to manage the resources. In light of that, the real problem was that the city had lost continuity of government. The city lost its emergency operations center and with it, its ability to communicate with its forces. The fire and police departments were fragmented due to losing their base operating capabilities. It was my feeling that the best thing we could do was restore the basic elements of a civil society, which had been lost, and allow the city to carry out its legal responsibilities. So my approach to the response that first week was different in that we tried to create an environment for them to carry out their responsibilities.

We started that process by establishing a command post on the dock with the equipment that had been moved from Baton Rouge. One of my first meetings was with Lt. Gen. Russ Honore, who was leading Joint Task Force KATRINA. Being from Louisiana, he was of a like mind in trying to figure out how we could make things work without preemptioning the local leaders. Working together we created a joint planning cell. He and I agreed that, for our purposes, I would be the “supported commander” and he would be the “supporting commander.” We would be the unified federal entity that people would deal with and I would be the Deputy Principal Federal Official for New Orleans. The next thing I did was meet with Terry Ebert, who was Mayor Nagin’s Homeland Security Director. We started immediately trying to determine what he needed. He said his highest priority was to find a place for his firemen and policemen to live while we tried to deal with the response. That ultimately led to the decision to move a cruise ship from Galveston to New Orleans to become a berthing platform for the local responders and law enforcement personnel in New Orleans.

What finally evolved was a concept where we divided the city into sectors with each sector assigned to one of Russ Honore’s components. For instance, the 82nd Airborne had the central business district. We had a hand-shake agreement with the Louisiana National Guard, which was working under the direction of the governor, by which they voluntarily agreed to join our planning cell so we would have unity of effort. With these elements in place we began the process of methodically canvassing the city. Each day we would create an operations plan for the following day. The goal was to touch every dwelling in the city, as soon as possible, to make sure there wasn’t anyone left to be saved, then begin the difficult issue of remains recovery. You’ll remember the images of the circle with the Xs and the icons that indicated a house had been touched. The first sweep we called a “hasty sweep.” It was done as quickly as we could. We did it by providing rubber boats or high water vehicles and teams of between 20 to 30 people, including either local or state law enforcement, that would go door to door and make the decision whether or not to enter and establish what the dwelling’s condition was. In that way, we systematically swept the city and touched every dwelling enabling the locals to carry out their responsibilities and get to the hard work that lay ahead.
RESERVIST: How would you assess the impact KATRINA had on the Coast Guard?

ALLEN: The impact on the CG is multi-faceted. It validated a couple of things we have always believed. First, were the principles of CG operations that are contained in our doctrine, especially the principle of on scene initiative: no one had to be told what to do. Second, was the process we have for evacuating dependents and relocating our assets before a storm so we can re-enter from the safe quadrant as soon as conditions permit. As you know, our first rescues were just after noon on the day the hurricane came ashore. That’s a testament to the planning of the folks in the 8th District. Most notably, Air Station New Orleans pre-deployed its aircraft and personnel so they could come back in and fly. I must say we all develop personal heroes as we go through our lives. Mine are (Capt.) Bruce Jones, Commanding Officer of Air Station New Orleans and (Capt.) Dave Callahan at our Aviation Training Center in Mobile (Miss.) and their crews. We brought in aircraft from all over the country. I remember getting on an HH-60 from Cape Cod, with a pilot from North Bend (Ore.), a co-pilot from San Diego and a rescue swimmer from a third unit. If we had not had the logistics, configuration management and standardized training of our air assets, I don’t know how we would have done that. So it also re-affirmed the structure of our aviation logistics system and how we train. I didn’t realize it fully at the time, but our air response to KATRINA was the indicator that convinced me that we had to change the rest of the CG in terms of maintenance and logistics.

RESERVIST: When you are in the midst of something as complex as KATRINA how do you project the clarity necessary to get the mission effect you want?

ALLEN: There were a couple of phases to this. First, I was engulfed by the press when I arrived. I’m not sure how many press events I was doing a day; how many follow-on interviews; interviews for network nightly newscasts; Sunday talk shows; everything. For the first 24 to 36 hours my message was, “I’m here to cut through the bureaucracy, eliminate red tape and increase the velocity of the response.” I must have repeated that a hundred times. I wanted to project that someone was there. Someone was accountable and what our intent was generally. But I needed to gain situational awareness and figure out how to actually put things together with Lt. Gen. Honore. In effect, I was buying time by making clear, unambiguous statements about my intent while coming up with enough information to put more meat on the bone, if you will.

One of the key inflection points came a few days in. By mid-day on Thursday, Sept. 8, we had stabilized how we were going to run operations. The sweeps weren’t completed but we had developed a battle rhythm and had linked up with most, if not all, of the stakeholders including the parish presidents. The following morning I received a call from Secretary Chertoff saying he wanted to see me immediately in Baton Rouge. Since arriving in New Orleans on Tuesday, I had been communicating directly with the secretary so I figured whatever it was the meeting would be consequential. I arrived at the operations
center in Baton Rouge and went into an office with the secretary. After closing the door he told me there would be a news conference in 30 minutes and I was going to relieve Mike Brown as the Principal Federal Official for the entire response. Frankly, I was a little taken aback as I had only been in New Orleans three days and there was a considerable amount of work to be done. The secretary then called in Mike Brown and told him what would happen. He was quite upset by this, feeling he would be treated harshly by the press, and that it was his intention not to stand there and take it. The secretary said that he would be doing all the talking. It was probably one of the most uncomfortable press conferences I have been involved in.

Following the press conference, the secretary left, Mike Brown left and I assumed my new duties over the 5,000 plus people at the Baton Rouge command center. On the way to see the secretary I had stopped to speak with a FEMA worker and asked her how she was doing. She told me how much she appreciated the opportunity; how rewarding it was, how much she understood the gratitude of the people she was working with down there (New Orleans), and, how much the FEMA effort meant to them. Then she said, “But I have a problem. When I go back to my hotel room every night I cannot turn on the television because all I see is our agency, our department and our leaders being vilified.” She said it was really hard to take. The look on her face and the tone in her voice was one of great sadness.

This interaction was on my mind after everyone left. At that point my aide, Kristina Harper, looked at me and asked, “What are you going to do now?” As I thought about her question, I thought about that worker and said I wanted to have an All-Hands meeting. About 40 minutes later I was standing on a desk in the Dillard warehouse holding a loud-hailer (microphone) looking out over a sea of faces, many with the same expression as the woman I had spoken with earlier. I sensed shock, dismay and hopelessness. Some had heard about Mike Brown, some had not. I told them that I had to go back to New Orleans for 24 hours to ensure everything that had been put in place so far remained intact. If you need me, here’s who you call and here’s how you get a hold of me. I will be back. In the meantime I am giving you all an order: You are to treat everyone you come in contact with who has been impacted by the storm as if they are a member of your own family. If you do that, two things are likely to happen: one, if you make a mistake you will probably error on the side of doing too much and, at this point in the response, I am okay with that. The second thing is if someone has a problem with what you are doing their problem is with me because I told you. At that moment the change in human emotion was palpable. It was as if a collective sigh of relief changed the barometric pressure in the entire building. Until that moment no one had explained, in the simplest of terms, what the mission was. No one had explained the values by which to carry out the mission. The values which we (in the CG) take for granted and are embedded in our DNA – how we think about who we are and how we do things. Finally, it is equally important to not only know the why and the how, but to also know someone has your back. A person can and will do extraordinary things if they know that someone cares and is standing behind them.
Having been involved in at least two significant disaster responses impacting thousands of individuals, what advice would you offer those who find themselves in a similar circumstance?

Allen: There are many different definitions of leadership and I don’t subscribe to one over the other. However, one of my favorites is: leadership is the ability to reconcile opportunity and competency. We all have a skill set. We all have passion to do things. Sometimes, however, we need to understand when the opportunity presents itself (how) to actually apply those skills in situations which are really meaningful and consequential. Be aware, in a general sense, that your time will come. Will you be ready?

In my mind there are two overarching issues which make you capable of addressing these situations and being as successful as you can be when they happen. The first is great leaders are great learners. Life-long learning is critical to both keeping yourself intellectually refreshed and current with what is going on in the world. This enhances your ability to deal with complex problems, challenge assumptions and create a new paradigm, if need be. The second is emotional intelligence. I was not the epitome of good order and discipline when I was a junior officer. Somewhere along the line you have to start understanding what makes you angry. You have to be able to empathize. You need to understand how people interact with one another on a level that allows you to make decisions in isolation. In a stressful, emotionally charged atmosphere creating the mindset to do that in an even-handed way is something you only learn over the years. I thought I was a pretty good leader as a junior officer, but as I’ve mentioned I lost my temper a lot. I did things I should not have done. By emoting and acting out when you shouldn’t and getting feedback from others that it didn’t work very well, I learned that it is necessary to treat your personal leadership skills as a craft, one in which you hone your competency over time.

If you think about all that collectively you can actually turn it around and it almost becomes emotional adrenaline. It can drive you to stand up and say, “I’m in charge. I’ll take care of this. And if I can’t, I’ll be held accountable for my failure.” Many people have a problem making that statement because it almost sounds like aggrandizing yourself. But if you think about the fact that someone has demonstrated, by their behavior; their willingness, to put skin in the game and be personally committed to the outcome that is when people will follow. You cannot do that without first understanding your own frailties: what makes you mad and what makes you angry as well as knowing that you have to deal with that privately and not act out in public. How you manage those pressures will ultimately impact the effectiveness and integrity of what you are attempting to accomplish as a team.

In closing, can you offer any personal “lessons learned” from KATRINA?

Allen: Regardless of the support from your superiors and that of the team you are leading, which for me during KATRINA was comprised of extraordinary individuals, there are times when you have to manage your own morale. There are instances when you must make decisions in isolation. With a stressful, emotionally charged atmosphere creating the mindset to do that in an even-handed way is something you only learn over the years. I thought I was a pretty good leader as a junior officer, but as I’ve mentioned I lost my temper a lot. I did things I should not have done. By emoting and acting out when you shouldn’t and getting feedback from others that it didn’t work very well, I learned that it is necessary to treat your personal leadership skills as a craft, one in which you hone your competency over time. In the end, it is important to realize that by committing to being a life-long learner means you will always be in a training billet.
Residents wade through the flooded streets of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane KatrIna.

Jocelyn Augustino/FEMA
RESERVIST MAGAZINE

KATRINA: A DECADE LATER

CAMOFLAGE TO CG BLUE

PSU’S NEAR AND FAR, JOIN TOGETHER IN THE RESPONSE EFFORT

STORY BY PA1 MICHAEL ANDERSON
PSU 309 patrolling Bayou Bernand in Mississippi, to assess damage in the aftermath of hurricane KATRINA, Sept. 7, 2005.

USCG Photo
When Port Security Unit 307 mobilized from Saint Petersburg, Fla., the rain surrounding hurricane KATRINA was still falling on the streets of the Gulf Coast. The 140-member Coast Guard Reserve unit had never been used for domestic disaster response. They were designed for overseas security missions supporting the Department of Defense, but their ability to operate self-sufficiently for up to ninety days meant they didn’t need to worry about a logistics chain for food, power or fuel that no longer existed.

With that capability in mind, the order was issued. The Coast Guard needed all hands, and PSU 307 was ready in less than 24 hours.

They pulled on their camouflage uniforms, loaded their gear onto flatbed trucks, climbed aboard buses, and trekked through the Florida panhandle to New Orleans.

There they constructed their expeditionary camp. They raised tents, opened their portable galley and fired up their generators. Before long, they were mission ready.

Even as they continued to set up their infrastructure, they assumed the watch for Sector New Orleans. This backfill allowed local active duty members to focus on their families while the watch was maintained.

On the other side of the Mississippi River, entire neighborhoods were buried under 10 feet of dirty, polluted water. Random debris including personnel effects and live power lines was scattered everywhere. Yet nearby areas were untouched, silent and eerily empty of people.

First responders from local, state and federal agencies motored through the flooded streets in boats to search for people trapped in their homes or clinging to their rooftops. Looters and vandals shot at rescuers.

“When we first began volunteering at the FEMA staging area, the shallow-draft rescue crews from around the country were being shot at by gang members, looters and criminals,” said Petty Officer 1st Class Glen Hamann, a port security specialist with PSU 307. “It was like a war zone. The urban search and rescue teams needed protection so they could focus on rescuing KATRINA’s victims. There was no downtime. There was no sleep. We had to help people. We would volunteer to help during our off time.”

PSU 307 members quickly fell into a three shift day routine: eight hours of watch at the sector, eight hours of sleep, and eight hours of volunteering at the FEMA staging area at the New Orleans Saints’ Practice field.

One Coast Guard member would embed with a three-to-four man rescue team. Over the next three weeks, the 30 shore-side security members ended up making 15-20 patrols each. And after PSU members began providing security for the rescue teams, there was not a single report of the boats being engaged by gunfire.

“During those patrols, the boats I was on rescued about 10 people,” Hamann said. “It was surreal. The entire city was quiet. There was no traffic on the interstate. Nothing seemed to move except the rescue teams slowly expanding out during our searches.”

During the initial days the Coast Guard rescued 33,500 storm victims. They were airlifted by helicopter, small boat, ferry, barge and even bus.

Imagery of Coast Guard rescue and relief operations began streaming to the world.

North in Port Clinton, Ohio, Port Security Unit 309 was preparing for a full unit mobilization to help the victims farther down the Gulf Coast. They loaded a flatbed truck with 50-tons of gear and climbed into two buses to make the 1,000-mile journey.
“There was more to this deployment than just getting on scene and providing aid to the KATRINA victims,” said Capt. Andrew Mckinley, PSU 309’s commanding officer during the KATRINA response. “We had to change our mindset, appearance and operating rules from an overseas security force to a domestic humanitarian mission.”

At the direction of Coast Guard Atlantic Area Commander, PSU 309 arrived on scene at Gulfport, Miss., in the blue Coast Guard operational dress uniform instead of their normal camouflage uniform. Among their ranks they had 30 police officers and 10 firefighters, plus a variety of other civilian occupations from culinary to legal.

Their first mission began 90 miles east of New Orleans. KATRINA’s destruction had extended far beyond the waterlogged streets of the Big Easy.

From Morgan City, La., to Mobile, Ala., wind, rain, and up to a 20-foot storm surge steamrolled the Gulf Coast. After the skies had cleared, more than 93,000 square miles across 138 parishes and counties were impacted. The storm had flattened entire towns; not a single building was left standing.

A small flotilla of Vietnamese-decent shrimpers had tried to hide from the storms in back bays that had sheltered them during previous storms. Now, they were trapped in the Industrial Waterway, a canal between Gulfport’s bayous and back bays.

They were surrounded by sewage-tainted water and rotting shrimp; their exit to the Gulf of Mexico blocked by sunken boats and a collapsed bridge. Their boats were damaged and water logged. Plus they had run out of food and water.

PSU 309’s boat crews began weaving through the channel’s navigational hazards to get food and water to the stranded shrimpers. Their nimble Boston Whalers were light and able to avoid debris. Before long, the channel was clear and the shrimp boats were set free.

“It was definitely the most rewarding experience of my life,” said Lt. Robert Vespi, an ensign at PSU 309 at the time. “I had never done a humanitarian mission before. It taught me to think about what people really need: food, water and shelter.”

PSU 309 personnel performed more than 20 different humanitarian missions around Gulfport. They provided initial medical care; distributed water, ice and MREs (meals ready to eat); and helped clean and repair damaged homes.

The success of their first attempt at disaster response triggered a unit evolution. PSUs now deploy for humanitarian missions as a regular unit function.

“This was a watershed moment for the PSUs,” Mckinley said. “The Coast Guard looked at the capabilities of this type of Reserve unit and realized how they can expand their mission set. Now PSUs are on the front lines of humanitarian missions like the Haitian earthquake.”

An estimated 1,833 people lost their lives due to the storm and roughly a million people were displaced. Most chose to return to their homes. Homes, business, bridges and schools were reconstructed. Boats were lifted from their resting place on highways and perches in trees. More than $150 billion dollars were used to right the Gulf Coast.

The damage is still being repaired, but the next event could happen tomorrow.

“Be ready, truly ready,” Hamann said. “Watch the news. When you see people in need, you’ll know the Coast Guard is going to get the call. You saw that during KATRINA, Deepwater Horizon and even the Haitian Earthquake. It’s not if we get the call. It’s when. Just be ready.”

Chief Petty Officer Carey Bollinger loads cases of meals, ready-to-eat (MREs) into a helicopter where they were transported to Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans in Belle Chasse, La., for the ongoing rescue mission of New Orleans citizens after hurricane KATRINA.

Photo by P&L Kyle Niami
A bridge in Empire, LA was closed due to congestion for almost 60 days in the aftermath of hurricane KATRINA.

Robert Kaufmann/FEMA
THE DEEP CLEAN
THE HARD WORK AND COMPASSION OF
THE COAST GUARD'S SALVAGE, WRECK
AND DEBRIS REMOVAL TEAM

STORY BY PA1 PAM BOEHLAND
When Master Chief Sam Allred arrived in New Orleans in December 2005, it had been 3 months since hurricane KATRINA tore through the Gulf Coast states. He surveyed the scene and thought it looked like Louisiana had survived a nuclear blast.

Steel fishing boats were lifted from their moorings and parked on lawns and littered the sides of roads. Horse and cow carcasses hung in trees like grotesque ornaments. Poured concrete slabs marked the remains of thousands of houses that had been washed away by the storm. People walked around with a dazed look, searching for what was left of their homes. Buildings along the shore were pushed into waterways and marinas were destroyed. Debris and wreckages blocked the bayous and the marine-based economy of Louisiana was at a standstill until Coast Guard members were able to answer the question—how do we open up the waterways?

Though the rescue operations were long over and the floodwaters had receded, the recovery mission was just getting started. Allred was deploying to help with this cleanup. The Vietnam War veteran had more than 30 years of military experience, yet he said he was not prepared for the devastation that he witnessed.

“I have never seen destruction on that scale,” he remembered thinking.

Though his Reserve experience in the Coast Guard was concentrated on maritime law enforcement and port security, Allred had worked in construction during his civilian life. The North Carolina native became the senior enlisted advisor and safety officer for the Salvage, Wreck and Debris Removal Team based out of a hotel in downtown New Orleans. The team was responsible for assessing the damage of seemingly wrecked boats, case logging the vessels that needed to be salvaged, overseeing salvage operations and debris removal, and clearing the waterways and bayous to help fishermen get back to work.

The scope of work was enormous recalls Allred. His team of more than 60 reservists from all over the country started their work in Empire, La., and moved outward from there. They marked the hulls of grounded boats with spray paint and documented every boat that needed salvaging. They recorded the condition of the boats and locations. Some boats were wedged into bridges, some were sunk and others rested miles away from the nearest water.

Salvage operations were complex. The salvage team’s major mission was to oversee the work the contractors were doing and to ensure that all missions were done safely. Every salvage operation needed its own safety plan and every precaution
needed to be taken to ensure no one was hurt during the cleanup operations.

Boats that blocked the waterways and roads were the priority. They were lifted with cranes and wires. Some boats were half sunk and had been rotting in the bayous for months. Those jobs required special care. When lifted from the water those vessels were in danger of breaking apart. The vessels that were salvageable were taken to triage sites for repair. The ones that were not, were considered wrecked and had to be disposed of.

Allred noted that, “Tactics changed every day as we learned better ways to do things.”

Reservist Chief Gregory Guy, a marine science technician from Ohio, joined the response in January 2006, and stayed on until June of that year. He served as the assistant operations officer in New Orleans and worked with Allred in the field. He said his years spent as a Cincinnati police officer did not prepare him for the widespread devastation he had seen in the wake of the storm.

“The job we were doing sounded exciting, but we learned how difficult it was going to be,” said Guy.

“Twelve-to fifteen-hour days were the rule rather than the exception.”

With no end to the clean up in sight, Allred asked to stay on past his initial deployment orders. He spent more than a year and a half in Louisiana. He said that his team oversaw the salvage of more than 3,000 vessels and the removal of countless amounts of wreckage and debris.

Additionally, Allred worked with fishermen and local leaders to help build trust and gain support for the Coast Guard’s efforts. In an area traditionally wary of the federal government, and especially cautious after the storm, Allred found his role evolving into a liaison position. He became known as a reliable source for help.

“Grown men were coming up to me and crying on my shoulder,” Allred said as he remembered how fishermen and mariners were looking to the Coast Guard to save their way of life and help them repair their boats so they could make a living.

“Sam got to knowing the whole family, that’s how good we got on,” said Jim Dixon, the co-owner of Bait Inc, a bait shop in New Orleans. He said Allred and his team helped him salvage his 25-foot flat boat and a 33-foot shrimp boat. The Coast Guard members also cleared the debris from Dixon’s restaurant, which had washed into the water.

“That was a really big help to us,” said Dixon. Dixon and Allred remain friends and they talk to each other regularly.

After the hurricane destroyed so much of the Gulf Coast, restoring the waterways had a powerful healing effect on the community and the responders. “The most rewarding part for me was seeing a boat we salvaged going back out to sea,” said Allred.

As cleanup efforts progressed and the responders found themselves with some time off, Allred said that they would volunteer to help rebuild houses. First they worked on houses of Coast Guard members who were impacted by the storm. Then they would help rebuild homes for other community members. Allred also volunteered to go out on a shrimp boat to lend a hand and to just get away from the stress that awaited him back on shore.

Louisiana is a state with a history divided by the time before KATRINA and the time since. Salvage operations were complex and the scope of the work for the responders was greater than what anyone could have prepared for. However, salvaging wreckage is an important part of every recovery effort. Without salvage there can be no rebuilding. Ten years later Louisiana may still be rebuilding, but it is also still standing. That is something that is due, in no small part, to the hard work and compassion of the Salvage, Wreck and Debris Removal Team.
The corner of Arts and Humanity Streets in New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane KATRINA.

USCG Photo
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

RESERVISTS LOOK BACK ON THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE STORM OF THE CENTURY
It was chaos... It was real chaos during and after KATRINA down here in Louisiana. But I did what I had to do... We all did,” said Coast Guard reservist Potenciano ‘Paul’ Ladut. The 66 year old Ladut is now retired, but during the events of hurricane KATRINA he was the Reserve Command Master Chief for the Coast Guard’s 8th District. Born and raised in New Orleans, Ladut has been living in Walker, La., with his family since March of 2006.

“Master Chief Ladut was always the first one to volunteer. He could always be counted on,” said retired active duty Command Master Chief Carlos Najera, 56, from San Antonio, Texas. Ladut and Najera worked very closely together during KATRINA. “Master Chief Ladut was always very assertive to help out. He was very passionate and very involved with the welfare and well being of the men and women of the Coast Guard, especially those that got hit hard during hurricane KATRINA.”

Najera had observed from initial reports that projected KATRINA was expected to swing east, more to the Florida panhandle area. But, as soon as it became clear where KATRINA was going to make landfall, Najera knew he would have to make some important, quick decisions. One of those decisions was who to fill the position as Reserve Command Master Chief.

"Ladut was there at the right time, with the right knowledge and the right experience. He was very valuable of keeping me informed about what was going on," said Najera.

One of the things that struck Najera about Ladut was that he knew he had a powerful personal story. "I knew that he had lost his house. Here was an individual who had lost his entire house and had moved his family over to Texas, yet he volunteered to come back from Texas all the way into New Orleans."

The Coast Guard had forces from all over the United States come to the area. Najera described Ladut as having incredible concentration and the ability to know exactly what needed to be done in the district to coordinate search and rescue operations.
KATRINA created severe devastation along the Gulf coast from Florida to Texas, mostly due to the storm surges. The most significant amount of destruction and death occurred in New Orleans, which flooded as the levee and drainage canal system failed. hurricane KATRINA also displaced over one million people, creating the largest displacement of American citizens in United States history.

"People were stranded," said Ladut.

One of those people was Ladut himself, having lost his home to the flood waters. In August of 2005, Ladut and his family were living in Meraux, La, approximately 11 miles from 8th District Office.

"We watched the forecast and then we evacuated to Lufkin, Texas," Ladut said.

With his family safe in Texas, Ladut received a phone call from a Senior Chief asking if he could go down to Baton Rouge to the command center. At that point, Ladut didn’t even have a uniform; he left most if his worldly possessions in his evacuated home. But still, called to serve, he managed to make it back to the command center and started working on an overtime watch for the Coast Guard.

Because of the extreme and immediate nature of the emergency, Ladut didn’t even have orders at the time, only the say-so of the Senior Chief.

The command center was receiving phone calls from people that were stranded in Louisiana, mainly New Orleans. Ladut became an essential part in sorting and communicating the large amounts of information that was coming in through the phone lines. Extremely short-handed, he worked long shifts and long days, coordinating search and rescue efforts with his shipmates off of information or reports or sightings of people stranded and trapped by the flood waters.

Ladut would take all of the information and relay it to other members of the staff. "I was very familiar with New Orleans and Louisiana," he said. Ladut could easily direct search and rescue crews with his thorough knowledge of the terrain and geography of the area. People would also call in from California or Colorado and other places saying that a family member of a friend of theirs was in danger. And, he was doing this all while knowing that his family’s home with all their worldly possessions had been destroyed in the tempest winds and the deluge flood.

After the hurricane, Ladut and his family came back to see their destroyed house. "Our house was completely flooded. We lost everything," he said. "After that, the Coast Guard put me on active duty for a year. The Coast Guard was very good to me and my family. They provided services not just to reservists and active duty people but also to civilians. They really took care of their people."

After six weeks, Ladut and Najera started visiting units throughout the district. They were concerned for the morale and well-being of the troops, civilians and their families, Ladut did the best he could to help resolve any issue. Morale and welfare was important to the Coast Guard in the aftermath of such a devastating event. Many of the men and women in affected areas had also lost their homes and were also displaced. Their concerns and things they needed were being voiced to him and up the chain-of-command of the Coast Guard. They needed to know the status of training, morale and welfare to meet future missions. Just after KATRINA, they had RITA and other storms on the horizon. There was a tremendous amount of work being done. “You can’t forget that you have to take care of your people,” said Najera.

It was a long recovery for New Orleans and a long recovery for Ladut and his family. Ladut officially retired from the Coast Guard in August of 2008, after forty years of dedicated service. He is also retired from the General Services Administration. Ladut spends his retirement with his family in Walker where he loves saltwater fishing and riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

“The Coast Guard took care of its people. We took care of each other. It didn’t matter who you were. Everyone worked together. We really looked out for each other,” said Ladut.

— Story by PA3 Joseph Betson

Reservists help clean out damaged homes all along the Gulf Coast, like MCPO Ladut’s, after Hurricane Katrina.

Photo by PA1 Donelle DeMarino.

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In August 2005, I was in my fifth year of recalled active duty as Homeland Security Chief at the 8th District Headquarters in New Orleans. One of my duties was ensuring the Incident Management Team (IMT) was prepared to activate and redeploy, if necessary, to the alternate command site at Integrated Support Command St. Louis.

As Hurricane KATRINA approached as a monstrous Category 5 storm, it appeared New Orleans would receive a direct hit. The IMT was activated in New Orleans and all units prepared to evacuate.

On Saturday, August 27, 2005, I led the IMT advance party on a “red tail” flight to St. Louis. We established the alternate command center/Rescue Coordination Center, and IMT, so the District Command Center and remaining IMT staff could pass control of the district from New Orleans and join us in St. Louis.

I assumed my role as Incident Commander (IC) on the day watch. On the morning of Monday, Aug. 29, we breathed a sigh of relief that the storm did not directly hit New Orleans, although it had caused devastation to the eastern portion of the district, centered on Gulfport, Miss.

Our relief was short lived as the reports trickled in that the levees were breaching throughout New Orleans and massive flooding was filling the bowl where the city sits.

IMT members watched as their own neighborhoods were washed away, the fates of their loved ones unknown. District Commander Rear Admiral Robert Duncan had evacuated to Alexandria, Louisiana, with his Operations boss and the Sector New Orleans staff.

As soon as the storm passed, he returned to New Orleans to lead from the front. As aerial rescues ramped up, pilots reported poor flying conditions. The stifling humidity robbed helicopters of lift, radio towers were unlit, smoke from uncontrolled fires and the dense fog obscured obstacles, and trees and power lines fouled rescue swimmers’ lines.

There was marginal control of the airspace as helicopters from multiple organizations freelanced rescues. Boat crews had it just as bad as they encountered desperate survivors, toxic floodwaters, human and animal remains, and brutal heat.

Other nations, including Canada, Mexico and Germany, sent resources into the devastated areas. At the IMT we established
twice daily phone conferences between the IMT leadership, the district commander, each impacted sector and air station, and partners such as the U.S. Navy, Department of Public Health, Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering Support units and commercial shippers.

We had daily conferences with the LantArea Commander and Area staff, then with the Commandant and Headquarters staff. By way of these calls, the top leadership had a firm grasp on the real conditions on the ground and the needs of operating crews in the crisis areas.

Working through Area and Headquarters staff we orchestrated a massive movement of aircraft and aviators, boats and operators, cutters, security teams and hundreds of recalled Reservists. Resources came from throughout the United States, including Alaska, California, Massachusetts, the Great Lakes and Puerto Rico.

The needs of survivors for food, water and shelter overwhelmed civil authorities, so the Coast Guard made arrangements with bottlers for donations of water, and dipped in their own pockets for other needs, and then flew supplies in to be carried along on rescue flights.

As texted pleas came in from survivors or their loved ones, the street locations were converted to latitude/longitudes and passed to the aircraft as missions. I remember at one point, every CG helicopter on the east coast, with the exception of one, was flying missions along coastal Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Over 33,000 rescues were accomplished by helicopters and boats. Auxiliarists brought in motor homes from surrounding states to serve as command posts and berthing.

Law enforcement and firefighters from multiple states relieved the exhausted local first responders.

U.S. Forest Service helicopters made water drops on urban fires when engines couldn’t get through. Huge mobile feeding facilities filling a city block, normally used out west at large wildfires, were established in the French Quarter. Bodies were still being recovered and displaced residents were now living in places like Colorado, Iowa, and Texas.

When I was able to return to New Orleans about a month later, I found a wild-west atmosphere. The few watering holes that were open were filled with an odd mix of state troopers, bikers, military, FEMA, “Blackwater-type” private security, firefighters and folks who had remained to weather the disaster, all sitting at a common table.

In the following year, I sat on the DB Awards Board, which approved all awards for those responding to Hurricane KATRINA, regardless of their home unit or district.

The hundreds of nomination narratives revealed the suffering they witnessed and the many unheralded acts of bravery and self-sacrifice of service members that marked the Coast Guard’s historic and remarkable response to Hurricane KATRINA.

Prior to KATRINA, I thought 9/11 was the most horrific event in my career, in terms of how it impacted me personally. But knowing with every hour more and more people were suffering and dying from KATRINA led to days upon days of extreme urgency. Many of my IMT staff had lost everything they owned including their home and, in some cases pets, so it was a challenge to keep them focused on our mission while accommodating the occasional meltdown. Of course, as a CG member I had never been more proud of my organization and the people who give their all for the sake of survivors so desperate for our help. While others seemed to be fumbling the “response ball”, we showed our countrymen that training and devotion to our calling made us succeed when we were needed most.
Hurricane KATRINA was my first unplanned mobilization with many more to follow. I was a new Reserve Program Administrator at CG Headquarters and received message traffic to mobilize as the Liaison Officer (LFOR) for Sector Mobile. I mobilized on the next flight out, less than 12 hours later.

On the local “puddle jumper” aircraft were four other military members and a decorated member in a casket draped with the American flag. We learned about the disembarkation of the fallen hero and waited to render military honors to the soldier, who had made the ultimate sacrifice.

The check-in process at Mobile was smooth; members of the Atlantic Area Incident Management Assist Team (IMAT) had been there for three weeks. Nine members arrived for the one LOFR position, identifying a gap in the resourcing process. However, there was plenty of work to be done and the others were utilized within the Logistics Department. Berthing was my first challenge due to the area being evacuated. I joined about six other exhausted members in a hotel room with my sleeping bag, lucky and glad to have a safe place to rest.

The morning brief was a traditional ICS brief. I was most impressed that despite the high operational tempo Captain Bjostad took the time to recognize a mobilized member with a departure award. To see formal recognition executed during turmoil set the stage for the weeks to come.

In my LFOR assignment, we built relationships to transport critical supplies such as trailers, generators, school supplies, insulin and other temporary berthing facilities to units and the public. In addition, we coordinated mission assignments with the Joint Field Office and Emergency Operation Center, travelled to evacuated areas and units throughout Louisiana and Alabama, coordinated VIP visits, and formed relationships with everyone possible to assist with recovery. I answered Reserve specific mobilization questions and worked with the Finance Team to correct orders and create contracts. We worked like a team that had been together for years versus only a few days.
The destruction to the city was indescribable. Large barges had been picked up like small toys and tossed several miles inland. The waterline of debris filled the highway at least 25ft high and sewage and animal carcasses filled the flooded streets. Entire communities had been washed away, including beautiful historical landmarks and places of worship. I remember seeing several religious crosses and statues of the Virgin Mary that had remained in places where everything else was ruined, a very remarkable sight. Even with my faith of Judaism, I was astonished by what seemed to be little miracles around the desolate landscape.

I remember on one day Sector Mobile was being cleaned up for a wedding. The site where the original wedding was to be held was destroyed, so the soon-to-be newlyweds were married on the pier next to a buoy, with immediate family, in a small and beautiful service.

When travelling to Coast Guard unit Gulfport, I finally released true emotion. Metal scraps and a doormat were all that remained of the unit. The doormat was turned over with a picture of a Coast Guard boat on it and said "U.S. Coast Guard Station" underneath. It was easy to carry out the horrific mission with the evacuation in place, but now witnessing my Coast Guard Family suffer was extremely hard. We worked harder and longer to make things happen. Soon Gulfport had the best trailer site set up and a tent-style mess hall with the best lunches served. I could see signs of breakdown with the active duty members who continued to work while rebuilding their lives with loved ones. We had professional resources on-site to help members who had sacrificed so much.

I remember visiting one shore side area and was shocked that the National Guard was rebuilding the boardwalk when so much destruction remained. I asked why and was told it was because people were returning to their homes shortly and needed a positive way to release their emotion, and simultaneously see the beauty of the shoreline.

Mobile was on their way to recovery, so I volunteered to deploy to hurricane RITA and work for another outstanding leader Mrs. Kristy Plourde, IMAT Team Leader and Deputy Planning Section Chief. My new role would be the Documentation Unit Leader in Houston and then MSU Port Arthur.

When I think of hurricanes KATRINA and RITA, I think of the most horrific events in my Coast Guard career. We had the best Coast Guard Team; worked long hard hours together, ate together and lived together. We knew our mission, didn’t need any direction, and executed it superbly. However, my heart goes out to those who resided or had loved ones in the impacted areas.

Lt. Cmdr Melissa Ransom, Resource Manager for Reserve Programs Division (CG-1312), reflects on her own experiences during her mobilization to hurricane KATRINA as the Liaison Officer for Sector Mobile.
was nearing the end of my fourth year of recalled to active duty in the aftermath of 9/11 when I began preparing the Atlantic Area Armory for a possible hit from KATRINA. Due to the storm’s devastation, I was extended for another two years to help with the recovery efforts.

On August 27th, I contacted Atlantic Area for evacuation instructions and ordered all seven of my armory staff members to proceed to a safe haven and await my instructions. After all the armory assets were secured, it was time for me and my family to evacuate to Houston, Texas.

Nearing midnight, I received a call from my son, Gunnery Sgt. Chad Cogan, USMC Reserve, that we needed to evacuate immediately. The National Hurricane Center had just reported that New Orleans was going to receive a direct hit. I gathered my wife, daughter, mother, mother-in-law and our dog together and immediately headed to Houston. When everyone else woke up to the news that KATRINA was going to hit they all tried to evacuate the city at the same time. We were moving at a pace of 2 miles per hour...what a nightmare!

A few days later I returned to New Orleans, leaving my family in New Iberia, La, and proceeded to the armory to check on the conditions and security of the facility. While on my way back to the armory, I noted damage to the power lines, trees in the outlying parishes and the damage on the west bank of the river in Algiers and Belle Chase was even more devastating. There was major wind damage to the homes and businesses all throughout the city.

The Atlantic Area Armory is located in Belle Chase, La., which borders New Orleans and is on the West Bank of the Mississippi River. This was the only section of New Orleans that was not flooded, due to the river dividing the city. When I arrived at the armory, access to the armory and the communications station’s main gate was impossible due to the large amount of downed trees, power lines and debris blocking the entrance. I had to walk the river levee to gain entrance. When I finally arrived, I found the communications station and armory to be completely deserted. I then took the armory vehicle and proceeded the two miles to our bunkers and found them secure. I also discovered that there was no damage to any of the structures, just a lot of downed trees.

After assessing the damage to area, I proceeded to Plaquemines Sherriff’s office to inform them of my findings: all Coast Guard assets were secure. With the lack of power, provisions and all communications being down, I spent the next few days with my family. It wasn’t until the 17th street Canal levee broke and the flooding started did I realize it was going to be a long, hard road to recovery.
I returned to New Orleans but was unaware of the looting that had begun, as well as, the thousands of people needing to be rescued from the rooftops of their homes. As I approached the city I noticed the destroyed roof of the Super Dome and was shocked to see the plumes of smoke arising from the burning buildings. My staff and I proceeded to attend to the downed trees around the area while three Coast Guard Station Venice boat crews (evacuated from the storm to my unit) assisted the short-handed Plaquemines Sherriff’s office with manning security at the two highways to the parish. I made sure the CG members were armed (due to the knowledge that looting had begun in the city) and had what they needed to complete their mission.

Looting was taking place mostly in the downtown area of New Orleans and not in Plaquemines Parish where my staff and the armory were located. However, when assisting the Plaquemines Sheriff’s with security we were armed for safety and security reasons. We were never shot at, but I do remember someone shooting at a CG helicopter near the waterway along the communications station property where we were located.

Later that morning I was visited by a DEA agent, a New Orleans Police Department Detective and a Louisiana National Guard Master Sergeant, looking for ammunition and insisting that I was authorized to give it to them. I explained to them that since they were not in the U.S. Coast Guard I was not authorized to provide any weapons or ammunition. However, after reaching Atlantic Area by satellite phone I received authorization to issue whatever they needed. By September 5th, the city suffered severe damage and the City of New Orleans government had moved to Algiers on the west bank, about a half a mile from our armory. Army Chinooks and CG helicopters were transporting huge sandbags to help with flooding, enough to fill the soccer field next to the communications station. I later learned that these sandbags were being transported to the breaches in the levees to seal them, and these eventually did stop the influx of Lake Pontchartrain water into the city.

On September 7th, we met with Adm. (Thad) Allen’s security detail at a dock in the French Quarter where the command cutter (IWO JIMA) was docked. We received their weapons and arranged for transport of those weapons so that they could fly commercially back to their units and receive their weapons when they returned home.

By now, all armory personnel had reported in and we then proceeded to make a recovery plan and to secure the area. Our first job was to secure the armory perimeter fence that had been crushed by fallen trees. For the next several weeks the armory staff, along with the communications station staff, spent 10 hour days clearing falling trees and opening the blocked roads on the 1,600 acre property. The armory was operating normally within 30 days. At one point message traffic was sent out “closing” our range, which was basically destroyed. It remains closed to this day.

KAITRINA revealed how vulnerable we truly were, there was no communications or electricity. We had little to no food and water; it really caused me to re-think how to truly be prepared for other disasters. However, as a Coast Guard member my response to KATRINA gave me an opportunity to implement my training to assist those who needed the most help. My involvement with the hurricane allowed me to reflect on how vital the Coast Guard is and how proud I am of our members for saving so many lives.
Thousands of hurricane Katrina survivors from New Orleans are bussed to refuge at a Red Cross shelter in the Houston Astrodome.

FEMA photo/Andrea Booher
THE DELICATE BALANCE
AN INTERVIEW WITH
REAR ADM JOHN C. ACTON

BY CWO ANASTASIA M. DEVLIN
Ten years ago, Rear Adm. John Acton (who retired in 2009) was one of those reservists carefully watching the coverage of hurricane KATRINA unfold on every news channel. As a prior commanding officer with 30 years of experience in the Coast Guard, Acton recognized the operational challenges of the storm. But when the levees broke on August 29th, he knew it was a whole different level of disaster. He was ready when the text came through from Vice Adm. Vivian Crea, the Coast Guard’s Atlantic Area Commander at the time. Acton left Boston that day on the next flight down to Baton Rouge, La.

Acton would spend the next few months filling positions, as needed, in a complicated command structure: dozens of agencies across many levels of government, spread out over multiple states, in a delicate, sometimes volatile, political nightmare. He jumped right into the fray levels of government, spread out over multiple states, in a delicate, sometimes volatile, political nightmare. He jumped right into the fray on that day on the next flight down to Baton Rouge, La.

TRINA unfold on every news channel. As a prior commanding officer with 30 years of experience in the Coast Guard, Acton recognized.

CWO: How did today's technology affect the response?

ACTON: The challenge for leadership in making fact-based decisions comes in trying to discern what’s real and what’s not. During KATRINA, we had a clear chain of command for coordinating operational activities, and one of our responsibilities was to collect information, verify it as fact, and push it up the chain as quickly as we could. Yet we had people in the area on social media who were uninformed and didn’t understand the facts, and yet they were blasting a constant stream of social media communications out to everyone, including the White House.

It really became a huge operational distraction, and we spent a lot of time and energy getting to ground truth. We found if you don’t get your arms around it and get the true story out quickly, you could spend a lot of time and resources trying to keep up. I didn’t anticipate social media having such a distracting role.

CWO: How did reservists contribute to the response?

ACTON: One of the things that most impressed me was the performance of our reservists. On one hand, you have local reservists who are victims themselves: they’d lost their car, they’d lost their house, they were as much a victim as anyone else. Yet a number of them reported for duty in the only uniform they had left, to help others. There was a selflessness of the Coast Guard in general, and especially the Reserve. It was inspirational.

In addition, our reservists were fully integrated into each of the ESFs [External Support Functions], including: government relations, public affairs, planning, operational watch standers, intelligence. We had reservists in all these different functional areas, and in every single interaction I was involved with, the reservists were both capable and professional. You couldn’t tell who was active duty and who was a reservist. They were filling a critical need in a professional way.

In hindsight, I think the Reserve experience during KATRINA really helped the Reserve respond more effectively once Deepwater Horizon happened. A lot of reservists were recalled for Deepwater Horizon. They showed up and hit the ground running. I think, in large part, that’s because we had the hurricane KATRINA experience under our belt.

Continuing the training and investment in our Reserve force will make sure [the Reserve is] ready to go for the next contingency.

CWO: Were there any anecdotal experiences that affected you significantly? People you saw, moments that were salient?

ACTON: Several come to mind:

1. One of the most impactful was seeing the Coast Guard helicopters operating 24/7 on TV, with, I think, about 35,500 [people] rescued in two weeks. We basically did seven years worth of search and rescue in two-plus weeks. I remember the helicopters not even shutting down. The pilots that were coming off duty would walk into the operations center exhausted, and fresh pilots would climb into the helos and keep going. It was 24/7 operations during the search and rescue phase. It was phenomenal to see and it made me very proud.

2. Now, although New Orleans suffered from the catastrophic levee break, the strongest part of the storm actually hit Mississippi. I’d been CO of PSU 308 in Gulfport, so I was familiar with the area. Days after the storm, when I went by Station Gulfport, the two-story building which sat maybe 50 yards from the water was completely gutted, the walls were completely blown out. All that was left was the steel frame of the building and the roof. The building was surrounded by wreckage and debris. But in the middle of that devastation there was this six-foot pole standing alone with an American flag on it. I still find that image; very moving every time I think of it.

So although Station Gulfport was decimated, one of the Reserve PSUs (309) deployed to Gulfport to assume the SAR coverage was almost seamless.

3. I deployed while Mike Brown was still down there as the FEMA Administrator and the situation was very difficult. There was a short-notice press conference where Secretary Chertoff announced that Adm. Allen would be taking over as the PFO for the entire hurricane KATRINA response. After the press conference, Adm. Allen left the stage in front of the cameras and went into an adjoining warehouse-sized space where the JFO [Joint Field Office] staff was working. They were just shell-
shocked. They’d been working very hard, getting pretty beat up in the press, and morale was understandably low.

Adm. Allen grabbed a bullhorn, climbed up onto a table, and called the hundreds of JFO staff to gather around him. He made some heartfelt remarks that “we are going to turn this thing around!” and directed those responders to “treat the victims as you would your own family.”

You could just feel the morale start to improve under leadership like that. Seeing him stand there with that bullhorn was pretty impactful.

4. [And maybe one last recollection was when] I was coming out of an elevator in Baton Rouge, headed to the JFO, and there was a very elderly lady, perhaps eighty or ninety years old, obviously a victim of the storm, entering the elevator. I was in my ODU (by this time, everyone in Louisiana recognized a CG uniform), and she paused, looked at me and said, “You look like hope.” I’ll never forget her face.

I took that as a reflection not necessarily of me personally, but rather what that CG uniform represented to her – all the good, hard work being done to turn the situation around by all of us who wore that uniform.

**CWO: What’s the biggest piece of information you’d wished you’d known walking into the response?**

**ACTON:** We, the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve, are a selfless organization. It’s part of our DNA. We’re all about service to others; that’s what our missions are focused on, and it’s what we’ve done for 225 years.

Something I wish I’d appreciated more going in is that not all organizations act like that. They don’t have the same DNA we do.

So in situations like this, even when it’s obvious that unity of effort is critical to accomplishing the mission, there still were people, leaders, and organizations that hung onto their own stove-piped parochial perspectives. They were so focused on their own limited agendas that they couldn’t see the bigger picture and where they could best contribute to the greater good. For me, that was a disappointment.

One other surprise for me was that some organizations self-deployed, they just showed up. They were well-intentioned and just wanted to help, but the effect on the operational commander was: “How am I going to feed 300 more people? Where are they going to get berthing? How am I going to get fuel for their vehicles?” That can complicate an operation instead of helping it.

**CWO: In your opinion, how did the reservists contribute to hurricane KATRINA in a way that a larger active duty force would not have?**

**ACTON:** The Coast Guard Reserve provides a surge capability to the active duty force. We are clearly a force multiplier. Our active duty members are busy with their day-to-day Coast Guard missions, which don’t go away just because a hurricane makes landfall somewhere. So, when something like KATRINA happens, you often need a lot more capacity, quickly, than the active force can provide. And that’s where the Reserve force is very effective, at responding with a strong skill set and in a much more cost effective way. It’s a good bargain for the Coast Guard, and the nation.

It’s easy to cut the Reserve dollars, but operationally, that may come back to bite the organization, because that operational capability will atrophy over time.
PICKING UP THE PIECES

THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS TO FIRST-RESPONDERS
Coast Guardsmen wade through the debris along the road leading to Coast Guard Station Gulfport, Mississippi left behind by hurricane KATRINA.

Photo by Lt.j.g Earl Lingerfelt.

STORY BY CWO ANASTASIA M. DEVLIN
| Health Effect         | Deployment of 30+ days | Locals | Less than 5 hours sleep | Involved in SAR via boat | Involved in SAR via ground | Involved in building cleanup | Body recovery mission | USCG rescue swimmer job | Administrative | ICS support |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Confusion             | 2.66                   | 2.13   | 1.43                    | 2.3                      | 2.2                         | 2.5                        | 3.3                    | 3.1                    | 1.5                     | 0.4          |
| Difficulty concentrating | 2.09                 | 1.87   | 1.8                     | 1.2                      | 1.5                         | 2.2                        | 2.6                    | 1.2                    | 3                       | 1.2          |
| Depression            | 2.7                    | 3.32   | 1.97                    | 1.3                      | 1.6                         | 1.9                        | 2.1                    | 1.4                    | 1.7                     | 1.2          |
| Infected skin         | 1.84                   | 0.7    | 1.6                     | 1.5                      | 2                           | 1.3                        | 2.2                    | 3.8                    | 1.5                     | 0.9          |
| Skin rash             | 1.03                   | 0.86   | 1.34                    | 1.9                      | 2.2                         | 1.9                        | 2.5                    | 3.4                    | 1.4                     | 0.8          |
| Penetrating injury    | 1.33                   | 1.24   | 1.23                    | 2                        | 2.3                         | 3.3                        | 3.7                    | 3                      | 0.8                     | 0.6          |
| Injury from slip + falls | 1.25                 | 1.13   | 2.12                    | 1.4                      | 1.9                         | 2.3                        | 0.9                    | 2.5                    | 0.8                     | 0.6          |
| Muscle strain         | 1.37                   | 1.92   | 2.18                    | 1.6                      | 1.7                         | 1.5                        | 2.2                    | 2.5                    | 1                       | 0.5          |
| Dehydration           | 1.19                   | 1.23   | 2                      | 1.8                      | 2.1                         | 1.3                        | 2.7                    | 6.2                    | 1                       | 0.5          |
| Heat stress           | 0.73                   | 0.93   | 1.68                    | 2.5                      | 2.9                         | 2.2                        | 2.4                    | 3.6                    | 0.7                     | 0.6          |
| Sun burn              | 0.91                   | 1      | 1.63                    | 3.7                      | 3.2                         | 2.4                        | 3.3                    | 0.8                    | 0.7                     | 0.5          |

To read the table above, find the health effect in question along the left side (in green), and look across to the categories of people who are more likely to have suffered them. For example, the top left number, 2.66, indicates that someone who had a deployment of 30 days or more is 2.66 times more likely to suffer from confusion than someone with a deployment less than 30 days. Significant differences (about twice as likely, or more) are highlighted in pink. Those with a reduced significance (about half as likely, or less) are highlighted in blue.

The results of a study documenting effects of hurricanes KATRINA and RITA on the acute health of Coast Guard responders were published last year in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. The study was entitled “Disaster-related exposures and health effects among U.S. Coast Guard responders to hurricanes KATRINA & RITA” (Vol. 56(8), 2014).

Dr. Jennifer A. Rusiecki, a doctor of epidemiology and a former Coast Guard Reserve officer, was assigned to lead the effort in designing the study and analyzing the data. Rusiecki is also an associate professor of preventive medicine at the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, Md.

Early in the hurricane response, one of the first agencies to begin identifying possible human hazards was Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. The agency determined that the most significant hazards to people responding to the hurricane devastation were likely floodwaters, dust and dried flood sediment, carbon monoxide, mold and physical safety hazards.

“In addition to the physical health hazards, the emotional stressors were abundant,” Rusiecki said. Long hours, lack of sleep, intense heat, and lack of social support networks could potentially take their toll on responders.

The Coast Guard’s Directorate of Health, Safety & Work Life put together an exit survey for the KATRINA and RITA responders called the “Significant Event/Acute Exposure Tracking Tool.” This survey provided a registry for acute and potentially chronic health issues resulting from conditions during the response. It gathered data on deployment timing, missions, exposures, health effects, reasons for seeking medical treatment, and lifestyle factors.

Rusiecki discovered that making the survey available to the participants was a challenge in itself because there was no accurate list of responders.

“We had thousands of personnel responding to this disaster,” she said, “and although we had an indication of what those hazards might be, we didn’t have a program in place to capture what people were actually exposed to; some kind of registry of where they were and what hazards they may have been exposed to.”

Through the demobilization process, more than 2,800 workers completed the survey between November 2005 and November 2006. People could record their exposures and their health effects and they could also request access to deployment-related health care.

There’s no way to know the percentage of responders who completed the survey since the total population of responders is unknown. A report published in 2005 by the General Accounting Office estimated the Coast Guard’s participation at 5,500, which would make the response rate of the study approximately 50%.

Rusiecki and her colleagues carried out a cross-sectional
study, which evaluates exposures and health effects at the same point or period. Causation isn’t able to be addressed – i.e., it’s impossible to know whether the exposure or health effect occurred first – but potential associations between the exposures and the health effects could be made.

More than 40% of responders answered that they had no exposures and no ill health outcomes, but there were myriad factors to be assessed for those who did.

To investigate the associations between demographics, missions, and exposures and health effects, Rusiecki used a technique called “multiple logistic regression analyses.” From those categories, she calculated prevalence odds ratios (POR), which would tell the reader the likelihood of a health effect occurring among those who experienced various lifestyle conditions, worked in particular missions, or were exposed to various hazards.

Below are some of the study’s statistically significant findings:

- **The most frequent exposure reported was animal/insect bite, mostly attributed to mosquitoes. However, the most frequently reported reason for seeking medical treatment was injury from slips, trips, or falls.**

- **The most frequent health effects reported were sunburn and heat stress.**

- **The strongest exposure-health effect associations were for mold exposure and sinus infection. Those who reported mold exposure were 10 times more likely to report sinus infection compared to those who did not report mold exposure.**

- **Those who reported exposure to flood water were twice as likely to report a skin rash, compared with those who did not report flood water exposure.**

- **Those involved in administrative missions had one of the strongest positive associations for difficulty concentrating and had an elevated likelihood of reporting depression.**

- **The study also found that responders with deployments longer than 30 days were three times more likely to report depression, compared to those with shorter deployments.**

- **Local responders (e.g., those hailing from one of the five Gulf states, comprising 50% of the study population) were three times more likely to report depression than responders from states outside the Gulf region.**

The effects of sleep, or lack thereof, were significant. People who slept five hours or less per night were twice as likely to report depression as compared to those that got at least six hours per night. Lack of sleep was also associated in the study with elevated reporting of injury from slips, trips, and falls, as well as elevations for reporting all other health effects.

The findings from this study on sleep deprivation were so notable that the authors recently completed a more in-depth analysis of average nightly sleep combined with length of deployment. The sleep study was led by a former student of Dr. Rusiecki’s from USU, Dr. Timothy Bergan.

Bergan, a Naval commander and a physician specializing in occupational medicine, found that with each increasing category of sleep deprivation (less and less sleep) disaster responders were increasingly more likely to report a wide variety of adverse health effects.

Rusiecki and her team have been involved in a similar but larger study of the Deepwater Horizon responders. She said, “Even five years after KATRINA and RITA happened, it was still challenging to identify who was involved in a response.”

### Baseline Characteristics of Coast Guard KATRINA and RITA responders who participated in responder exit survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 or less</td>
<td>1,497</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 or more</td>
<td>1,314</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deployment length</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 31 days</td>
<td>1,803</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 days or more</td>
<td>1,031</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-local</td>
<td>1,374</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average sleep</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 hours</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 5 hours</td>
<td>1,754</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the KATRINA/RITA survey there was no centralized system in place to identify people, and relying on secondary sources (such as data from the National Pollution Fund Center or even official Coast Guard orders) was unreliable. The problem persists even today.

“We need a way to identify disaster responders,” said Rusiecki. “Maybe some kind of application, or a check-in method based on social media. The Coast Guard has a critical need, a responsibility, to capture 100% of its people involved in disaster responses. Identifying who was where and when would be ideal, but at this point, the Coast Guard still needs a system for identifying ‘who’.”

The data will be further sorted at some point, but Rusiecki’s current findings were briefed to Adm. Paul Zunkunft in April.

The Katrina paper, published through the Journal of Occupational And Environmental Medicine can be found, for a limited time, on the CG-11 webpage:


as well as the Environmental Health page:

When people think of the Coast Guard, the first thing that comes to mind is most likely not building roads and establishing infrastructure half a world away. But that’s just one of the many skill sets possessed by personnel at Coast Guard units like Port Security Unit (PSU) 313 in Everett, Wash. Chief Warrant Officer Anthony Slowik, assistant engineering officer at PSU 313, put that expertise to good use to serve his community in more than one uniform leading to his selection as the top Reserve Warrant Officer for all military branches.

Slowik was selected as the 2014 Coast Guard Reserve Chief Warrant Officer of the Year this spring. He traveled to Washington, D.C., in July, where he competed for and ultimately won the Chief Warrant Officer Michael J. Novosel Award, an annual award presented by the Reserve Officers Association to a high-performing military Reserve Chief Warrant Officer. “I am very honored to receive this prestigious award,” said the 19-year veteran. “It is a culmination of the teamwork of the unit and strong support of my family and my faith.”

When Slowik was 20-years-old, he decided he wanted to serve his country. The Oak Harbor, Wash., native chose the Coast Guard because he liked the idea that everyone started at the ground level and was able to learn about the service before choosing a rating.

Slowik was stationed at Station Neah Bay, Wash., as a seaman before attending electrician’s mate “A” school. He served in Alaska and Seattle, and completed work on CGCs ALEX HALEY, POLAR SEA and POLAR STAR.

“I love the mission of the Coast Guard,” said Slowik. “It’s all about helping people in your community. I also enjoy the creativity of figuring out how we’re going to complete our mission. If you view your job, your attitude, and your perspective through your core values, you can accomplish great things.”

It was that love of community that inspired him to apply for a position at his hometown police department when he completed his active duty service. “I love serving the community, especially the community I grew up in,” said Slowik. “As any emergency service provider or first responder, you have the ability to make a difference. I feel very blessed.”

Two years later, the newly minted police officer joined the Coast Guard Reserve. He served at the Naval Engineering Support Unit in Seattle before transferring to PSU 313 as a first class petty officer in 2012. He quickly advanced to chief petty officer and earned his commission as a chief warrant officer.

“Chief Warrant Officer Slowik has been the calm in the storm and the voice of reason when planning major operational evolutions,” said Lt. Cmdr. Monica Hernandez, force readiness
officer at PSU 313. “He has definitely become a subject matter expert on all things engineering related and takes initiative to become knowledgeable in everything he possibly can.”

Slowik has been on active duty orders to the PSU since October. In the months since, he has taken on major responsibilities as the assistant engineering officer, due in large part to the unit’s engineering officer also being a reservist who is only in the office a few days each month.

“I’ve been a part of some great teams that accomplished a lot in the last year,” said Slowik. “If it wasn’t for the people I work alongside with, it wouldn’t be possible.”

“This award could not have gone to a more deserving person,” said Hernandez. “He has been a rock to me and has stood up to become a real leader to my staff.”

Whether he’s wearing Coast Guard insignia or a police officer’s badge, Slowik is always dedicated to the mission at hand. His unwavering commitment to serving his shipmates and community members is recognized and appreciated by all.

Mentorship and Humility Define 2014 Witherspoon Winner

For Lt. Cmdr. Gerald D. Stanek dedication and professionalism are second nature. So when it came time to nominate candidates for the 2014 Capt. John G. Witherspoon Inspirational Leadership Award, Stanek was an obvious choice who went on to win the coveted award.

Capt. Witherspoon has been described as a man who commanded respect and led by his own honorable example. He served as a quartermaster in the enlisted ranks, before graduating with honors from Officer Candidate School in 1971. In 1982 he became the second African-American officer to command a Coast Guard cutter when he took command of the CCG MALLOW.

Each year an active duty and Reserve officer are chosen for the leadership award named in his honor.

Stanek, a reservist who worked for the prevention department and the Reserve Force Readiness System (RFRS) staff at Sector Detroit at the time of his nomination, also volunteered to take on the duties of acting Senior Reserve Officer. He handled the increased workload skillfully as he mentored sector reservists. He also strengthened the coordination and support offered by the sector’s RFRS staff, according to Lt. Cmdr. Scott Smith, who worked on Stanek’s nomination.

His approach to the Coast Guard is a study in devotion to duty. Smith noted that Stanek embodies both exceptional capability and great humility – two character traits that don’t always go together. Stanek has always worked closely with both officers and enlisted personnel to help them develop their skills. During his time as the Reserve Prevention Department head, for example, he partnered with the maritime industry and helped develop a groundbreaking in-house training program that helped reservists, active duty members, and auxiliarists obtain more than 20 qualifications. He also put together a Reserve-only exercise that helped 20 reservists attain position-based qualifications.

After taking on the additional responsibilities of acting Senior Reserve Officer, Stanek’s approach to the job included participating in weekly conference calls with the sector’s Senior Enlisted Reserve Advisors and improving the means of measuring Reserve readiness. He also co-authored Sector Detroit’s original Reserve Program Management Instruction. The efforts resulted in Sector Detroit earning the District Commander’s Trophy for Reserve Readiness, and helped the district earn its third consecutive Admiral Russell R. Waesche Award, reflecting the preparedness of the district’s reservists.

A dedicated spouse and father, Stanek states that his overall philosophy is simple. “Always put forth your best efforts, never settling for mediocre results,” he said. “And, at the end of the day, you will positively reflect on your achievements.”
Two Eagles and a Bronze Star Bring History to Life
As told by Ms. Laurie Smith Wood

Editor’s note: At the Tall Ships Philadelphia Camden port call on June 27, 2015, the cadets and crew of the COAST GUARD CUTTER EAGLE had a very special guest. It was Noah, an actual eagle from the Elmwood Park Zoo. Noah is a Philadelphia landmark. He goes to the Philadelphia Eagles’ home football games and takes photos with the players. When he came by the EAGLE with his handler Laurie Smith Wood, we learned about Noah’s Coast Guard connection as well. It turns out that Laurie’s father, James Park Smith, served during World War II as a Coast Guard reservist and won a Bronze Star for his heroic action during the Normandy invasion. It was Laurie who initially reached out to the EAGLE to set up the visit, and we are so glad she did. Her story of her father below reminds of us our service’s past heroes. Heroes who saw great tragedy, then returned home to be community leaders, homeowners, and mothers and fathers. Their first person accounts of history are being lost to time, and we are thankful to Laurie for taking a few moments to write down what she recalled about her dad’s Coast Guard service and the legacy that lives on his grandchildren who are currently serving in the Coast Guard. This is her story.

Dad never spoke of the horrors of the Normandy Invasion. He only told the funny stories. It was not until I was an adult that I realized just what they all went through. He was 40 when I was born and was by that time serving in the Reserve on various Wednesday evenings and weekends. I remember silly things like the fact that Dad hated chicken, rice and spinach. So on the Wednesdays when Dad was not home, we would have that for dinner.

He could identify any plane in the sky by looking up at it. “How do you do that?” I would ask. He said if you were on a ship during the war you had better to be able to immediately determine friend from foe. He also blamed the arthritis in his hands from being on a ship on the North Sea for far too long.

During the summer months growing up in New Jersey, Dad and I would sit out on the steps of the house after dinner. That’s when I would hear the stories. He would clear his throat and then treat me to a snippet of the lighter side of the war. He told the story of a big German cannon. Apparently, the Germans kept it hidden in a cave on a beach in France and rolled it out once each day to fire off at the Allied ships waiting in the English Channel. He said the only time he thought he was going to die was when a cannon ball headed straight for the bow of his ship. Fortunately, it went right over the bow and into the water.

His ship was nicknamed the DICK TRACY SPECIAL, because every time the cartoon Dick Tracy ran into trouble, so it seemed did his ship.

He told me about the barrage balloons that were raised all over to help keep aircraft from flying too low and too accurate. Either out of sheer boredom or by accident, a soldier on one of the ships in the English Channel shot one of the balloons down. The next thing you know, soldiers on all the ships were using them for target practice. They all got in trouble for that one.

Dad was stationed off of Cape May, N.J., for a while on a sub-chaser. Dirigibles or Zeppelins would be patrolling the air nearby and would spot schools of fish. They would yell down to Dad’s sub-chaser and ask them to set off a depth charge so that they could all eat fish for dinner. The dirigibles then lowered buckets into the water to collect the fish.

My brother Bruce told me that he and Dad used to watch the television documentary “Victory at Sea” which aired in the early 1950s. Dad would search for his ship and would give Bruce a play-by-play during each episode. My sister Alesia reminded me of how much Dad loved the raisin bread they would get aboard ship...until he realized that it was not all raisins in the bread. They used plenty of white icing to hide other things that made it into the dough.

By treating me as well as my brother and sister to these stories, I believe Dad was able to share a part of himself and his days of active duty leading up to the Normandy Invasion. It has sparked my interest in U.S. history to this day. The fact that he is a Bronze Star recipient and was in the Coast Guard has opened up the eyes of many of my friends who never knew the importance of the Coast Guard during WWII. It is also nice to see his legacy live on, as two of his grandchildren, Philip and Andrew Smith, are both currently serving.

Footnote: Smith’s Coast Guard boat number was 83321, later changed to CG-4 during the D-Day invasion. It was an 83-foot wooden cutter and was one of 60 cutters of that class that participated in the invasion as part of Rescue Flotilla 1. The cutters were transported to the U.K. piggy back on freighters prior to the invasion. The call sign for his cutter was NLUX. Smith crossed the Equator on the USS WAKEFIELD on May 29, 1942, and became a member of the “Ancient Order of the Deep”. We have a card attesting to that crossing. Smith’s heroics are mentioned on page 250 of the book “US Coast Guard in World War II” by Malcolm F. Willoughby copyright 1957.
The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their support of their employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve. The award was created to publicly recognize employers who provide exceptional support to their Guard and Reserve employees.

Nominations must come from a Guard or Reserve member who is employed by the organization they are nominating, or from a family member.

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OCT. 1-DEC. 31, 2015

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Heroism and Survival: Activities of U.S. Lighthouse Service Personnel during the Deadly Galveston Hurricane

Story by William H. Thiesen, PhD, Coast Guard Atlantic Area Historian

The devastation wrought on Galveston, Texas, in 2008, by Hurricane Ike serves as reminder of the destruction the oceans can bring to coastal regions of the United States. However, Ike also showed us how modern weather, communications and disaster response systems have greatly reduced the number of casualties resulting from hurricanes. The number of deaths caused by Ike is a mere fraction of those lost to the Galveston Hurricane of September 1900. Estimates for those killed in Galveston alone by the 1900 hurricane range from 6,000 to 8,000. It is believed, that as many as 4,000 died in the rest of the Gulf Coast area. This number is more than the combined casualty figures for the 1941 Pearl Harbor attack, 2005 Hurricane KATRINA, the 2001 terrorist attacks on 9/11 and Hurricane Ike.

In 1900, the Galveston area boasted three screw-pile lighthouses, whose design combined the keeper’s quarters and lantern room on top of iron legs augured into the shallow waters below them. Of the three, only the newly commissioned Redfish Bar Lighthouse managed to escape the wrath of the 1900 Hurricane, but just barely. At the height of the storm, a large steamer in Galveston Harbor broke her moorings and drifted directly toward the lighthouse. Just as it loomed close to the beacon, the large ship veered slightly and passed silently only a few feet away from the lighthouse. While it survived the 1900 Hurricane, this light would suffer severe damage from a hurricane that battered the Galveston area in 1915.

In the aftermath of the storm, capsized ships and floating wreckage line Galveston’s shores. (Library of Congress)
The 1900 Hurricane devastated Galveston’s waterfront.
(Library of Congress)
Located about ten miles south of Redfish Bar, the Halfmoon Shoal Lighthouse did not share the same fortune of the Redfish Bar Light. On the night of the hurricane, the storm surge drove several steamers against the hull of the British freighter KENDALL CASTLE. Dislodged from its mooring, the large British cargo vessel blew down on top of Halfmoon Shoal Lighthouse and drifted for another ten miles to Texas City. The ship's collision with the Halfmoon Shoal Light resulted in the obliteration of the lighthouse and the death of its keeper, Captain Charles K. Bowen, whose body was never found. As one witness indicated, "we passed within a few hundred yards of where the Halfmoon Lighthouse once stood, but could see no evidence of the lighthouse, it being completely washed away." If this were not bad enough, three generations of Bowen's family were wiped out at the same time as the storm killed his father, wife and daughter, who lived together in the city of Galveston.

The thirty-six year old lightship LV-28 had been blown off station by hurricanes before, but not by one as strong as the 1900 Hurricane. The eighty-two foot wooden ship relied on sails for motive power and was at the mercy of the storm. LV-28 sustained severe damage as the storm tore the vessel from its moorings and parted the anchor chain. The lightship's windlass and whaleboat were completely destroyed and the storm brought down one of the ship's two masts. The hurricane drove the vessel several miles up into Galveston Bay before the crew could drop the spare anchor, which held fast until the hurricane abated. Fortunately, no lives were lost on board the vessel and she did not wash ashore.

The story of the Fort Point Lighthouse was one of survival in an area devastated by the storm surge. The screw-пile lighthouse got its name from Fort Point, which had served as the strategic location for fortifications over many years. In fact, the U.S. Army had nearly completed work on a system of modern forts and ordnance just before the storm struck. The most important of these was Fort San Jacinto, which stood closest to the Fort Point Light. In addition, only two hundred yards away from the lighthouse stood the U.S. Life-Saving Service station supervised by its veteran keeper, Captain Edward Haines.

Colonel Charles D. Anderson manned the Fort Point Light along with his wife. Anderson was a former Confederate officer who attended West Point and attained the rank of lieutenant before the outbreak of the Civil War. He joined the Confederacy and received the command of the 21st Alabama Infantry. His last command was Fort Gaines, in Mobile Bay, when naval forces under the famous admiral, David G. Farragut, captured the fort in August of 1864. By 1900, Anderson was a man in his mid-seventies; however, he must have enjoyed a sense of security from storms with a fully manned life-saving station on one side and modern U.S. Army outpost on the other.

As it turned out, Colonel Anderson and his wife would be the only ones left on Fort Point after the storm passed and seas subsided. The ferocity of the hurricane combined with the low-lying topography of Fort Point devastated the other installations. As the seawater rose, Captain Haines and a crew tried to row a surfboat the mere two hundred yards to the screw-pile lighthouse to rescue the elderly couple; however, the wind and sea conditions proved too dangerous for the brave men and they had to turn back before they reached the lighthouse.

The worst of the storm arrived the evening of September 8th. Floodwater carried off equipment on the lighthouse's lower deck,
including the lifeboat and storage tanks for fresh water and the light’s kerosene fuel. The rising water also destroyed or covered all other man-made structures in the area and it appeared for a time as if the Fort Point Lighthouse were adrift on a stormy sea. True to his mission, Anderson kept the light burning throughout much of the storm despite the fact most ships on the open water were out of control or washing ashore at points along the coast. Late in the evening, the wind grew so intense that it peeled off the lighthouse’s heavy slate stone roof tiles. Eventually, some of the flying tiles shattered the lantern room windows and the high winds snuffed out the light for good. Anderson had tried his best to maintain the light, but facial wounds from the flying glass drove him below. With the lighthouse’s lowest level flooded, the light extinguished, Anderson wounded and no way to escape, the keeper and his faithful wife made their way to the parlor room, sat down and waited in silence for the end to come.

Miraculously, the couple survived the apocalyptic storm. What they witnessed the morning of September 9th nearly defied description. As they emerged arm-in-arm onto the lighthouse gallery, they saw the human toll of the storm as the ebbing tide carried away dozens of bodies to the Gulf of Mexico in a silent watery funeral procession. Where the Fort Point Life-Saving Station once stood, only four or five broken pilings remained. Captain Haines had lost his wife and a crewmember when the station collapsed into the sea, yet he and the rest of the crew floated several miles to the safety of the Texas mainland. During the storm, seawater had completely submerged the fortifications at Fort San Jacinto and, in a matter of hours, had rendered useless the fort’s state-of-the-art defenses. Many of the outpost’s army personnel were also lost; however, one of the army regulars survived by perching on a wooden door and floating over fifty miles to a point located across Galveston Bay.

The tower lighthouse at Bolivar Point fared better than the screw-pile lighthouses. Bolivar Point keeper Harry C. Claiborne had stored up a month’s supply of provisions before the storm struck. Floodwater from the hurricane covered Bolivar Point with a foot of water and 125 individuals found shelter in the iron encased brick tower while the wind and water swirled around it. At one point in the storm, a few passengers found their way from a train stalled in the floodwater not far from the sanctuary of the lighthouse. The rest of the riders chose to remain on board the train and perished in the storm.

Claiborne did his best to care for his flock of storm survivors. While he had food to feed them, he had no way to provide fresh water. He tried to fill buckets with rainwater from the gallery at the top of the 120-foot lighthouse tower, but the buckets only filled with windborne salt water. When the storm subsided, the survivors emerged from the tower only to find the lighthouse surrounded by the bodies of those drowned trying to find their way to the safety of the tower. The storm survivors had consumed all of Claiborne’s provisions and when he returned to his quarters to take stock of his belongings, he found that the storm had wiped out his household and worldly goods as well. Today, Claiborne’s name adorns one of the Coast Guard’s Keeper-Class 175-foot buoy tenders.

For years, the U.S. Life-Saving Service boasted the unofficial motto of “You have to go out, but you do not have to come back.” This refers to the fact that many Life-Saving Service personnel went in harm’s way to save the lives of others and many Service personnel lost their lives because of this dangerous service. Members of the U.S. Lighthouse Service showed the same devotion to duty by manning the lights in all sorts of sea and weather conditions and storm survivors whenever possible. This proved true for the brave lighthouse keepers in the 1900 Galveston Hurricane as it has for personnel throughout the history of the U.S. Lighthouse Service and modern Coast Guard.
Chief Cheryl Borg honored for 30 years of service

Chief Yeoman Cheryl A. Borg officially retired from the Coast Guard Reserve on April 1, 2015, after serving for 30 years. Chief Borg was honored in a ceremony held at the Navy’s Coastal Riverine Squadron ELEVEN in Seal Beach, Calif., in February 2015. Units at which Chief Borg served include: CG Base Astoria, Ore.; CG ATON Teams in Astoria and Coos Bay, Ore.; CG Station Los Angeles – Long Beach, Calif.; personnel units in Ketchikan and Juneau, Alaska; CG Rescue 21 Project Resident Office, Ariz.; Maritime Expeditionary Security Group ONE and Coastal Riverine Group ONE in San Diego. Her two most recent assignments have been as a Coast Guard reservist serving with the U.S. Navy in the Coastal Riverine Force – an assignment which strengthens partnerships and increases operational experience and cooperation between the Coast Guard and the Navy.

During her remarks Chief Borg made the following observations and comments, “I had the opportunity to serve my country at some outstanding units, working alongside some of the best sailors in the Coast Guard, as well as the Navy, who would become life-long friends. I was lucky to have some of the best mentors and guidance in the Coast Guard and Navy that I will never forget. I wore the uniform with pride and hope that our young men and women will do the same. I would like to send a heartfelt ‘Thank you’ to my parents, James and Barbara Holland, and my daughter, Marissa Borg, for always supporting me. Semper Paratus”

— Submitted by Capt. Andy Grenier, USCG, Coast Guard Advisor, Navy Coastal Riverine Group ONE, San Diego, Calif.

Base Portsmouth Bids Farewell to Chief Noorigian

MKC Aram Noorigian retired September 1, 2015, after 24 years of service in both the United States Navy and United States Coast Guard Reserve. Chief Noorigian’s final assignment was at Base Portsmouth’s Naval Engineering Department. Pictured here from left to right are: EM2 Jamie Hudson, MK1 T.O. McCullough, DC2 Matt Lappin, MKS Paul Ziegengeist, MKC Noorigian, MKC Bill Boyle, MK1 Joe Clifford, MK2 Christina Kuehhas and DC1 Phil Prisco. Photo by DC1 Prisco

Sector Northern N.E. Silver Badge Retires

On Sunday, 9, 2015, Master Chief Andreas Apenburg, 1st District Reserve Command Master Chief, presented Master Chief Andrew Jaeger with a shadow box given by the Chiefs Mess upon his retirement following 25 years of Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve service. MCPO Jaeger had served as the Sector Northern New England Reserve Silver Badge prior to his retirement. Photo by MST1 Christopher Thomson
Standing the Watch for Over 40 Years

Cmdr. Dennis Brown retired with over 40 years of service during a ceremony held on Friday, June 26, 2015. It is rare to see a member serve more than 40 years. In this case, when “The Watch” was read it really was true that he stood it before many of us were born.

On Sunday, August 9, 2015, the Sector held a retirement ceremony for MSTC Michelle Dennis and MK2 Kevin Redd at the Bridges Center located in Memphis, Tenn. Shown from left to right are, Cmdr. Laila Grassley, Lt. Cmdr. Corneda Boyd, MSTC Michelle Dennis, MK2 Kevin Redd, MSTCM David Schacher, and Lt. Corey Linen. Photo by YN1 Brian Smith

Fifth District Sends Off Reservist in Style

Capt. Lee Scruggs, USCGR, retired following 28 years of service during a ceremony held June 7, 2015, adjacent to the USCGC EAGLE, which was in-port for the Hampton Roads Harborfest. Rear Adm. Steven Andersen was the presiding official. Enlisting as a Seaman Recruit in 1987, Scruggs advanced to Port Security Specialist Third Class before receiving his commission. His last tour was with the 5th District Planning and Force Readiness Division, during which time he served on active duty for 6 months as the Department Head of the Intelligence Information Systems Processing Center at the Intel Coordination Center. Capt. Scruggs (left) is shown here as Capt. Mark Eyler presents him with the 5th District’s departing gift.

1988 REPOY Serves as Grand Marshall

Grand Marshal Todd and his wife Debbie wave from the U.S. Coast Guard boat that served as the Grand Marshal float for the 2015 Ludington Area Jaycees Freedom Festival Parade. The theme this year was Portraits of America. Mr. Reed is a retired BMCM with over 30 years of service in the Coast Guard Reserve. He was selected as the Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year in 1988.
GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?

Necessity is the mother of invention!
Internal innovations made by Coast Guard members can become standard issue. After all, who better to solve Coast Guard problems than Coast Guardsmen themselves?
If you have an idea of how to solve a problem, please check out the Coast Guard’s Innovation Council’s new crowd-sourcing tool called ECIP Connect

The 9th Annual 2015 Coast Guard Retiree Council Holiday Party
Coast Guard Active, Reserve, Retirees, Officer, Enlisted, Civilian, and Auxiliarists are cordially invited to attend the Capital Area Coast Guard Retiree Council's Retiree Holiday Party: A "Get-Together" and reception with the Commandant and Senior Staff.

Sunday, 13 December 2015
4:00 PM - 6:30 PM
Vinson Hall - Penthouse Lounge
6251 Old Dominion Drive
McLean, Virginia 22101

ATTIRE: Men - Suit or Jacket with tie;
Women - Holiday Festive

COST: $35.00 per person
If you wish to attend please respond by E-mail reply to: bopakom@verizon.net
Please provide your Name, Address, Home Telephone Number, E-mail address, and name of accompanying spouse and/or guests and make the subject of your E-mail "SEMPER PARTY".

5th District DXR Recognized for Support
Capt. Karl Leonard, Commanding Officer, CG Reserve Unit Joint Staff South recently presented a plaque to the 5th District DXR staff in appreciation for their outstanding support to the CG Reserve Unit. Pictured here left to right are: Capt. Leonard, Lt. Alisa Harkins (DXR), Lehan Crane (DXR), and Capt. Mike Glander (CG-OLO, Program Manager for CGRU JSS).
Deployed Reservist’s Family Hosted by DHS Secretary

In April 2015, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Jeh Johnson, hosted Cmdr. Ronzelle Green’s family for “Take Your Child to Work Day” at DHS. The Green Family is shown here with Secretary Johnson (far right) and escorted by Capt. Kofi Aboagye (far left). Family members (l-r) are youngest daughter Pamela, spouse Marlena and daughter Teairrah. Cmdr. Green is currently deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with Port Security Unit 308.

Photo by PA2 Jetta Disco, DHS

U.S. Coast Guard AST2 Christopher Leon, stationed at Air Station San Francisco, receives the Association for Rescue at Sea Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent Gold Medal award at the Rayburn House on September 9th, 2015. The award is presented by Captain (Ret.) Steve Sawyer, past President of AFRAS and Mr. Dana Goward, SES (Ret.), Chairman of AFRAS, AST2 Leon’s wife, BM3 Emily Leon, stands proudly by his side as he accepts his award.

“The Association for Rescue at Sea was pleased to present Petty Officer Leon with the Association’s Gold medal during our annual Congressional reception. Heroism of this magnitude should be celebrated. One of our most important missions at AFRAS is to recognize such bravery,” said Charles “Skip” Bowen, USCG Master Chief Petty Officer (ret.), and newly elected President of the Association for Rescue at Sea.

Photo by PA2 Sara Romero.

TO CHANGE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS:

Selected Reservists:
Please use Direct Access www.uscg.mil/ppc/ps/, or send your address change to your unit Servicing Personnel Office (SPO).

Individual Ready Reservists (IRR):
Please contact the IRR Personnel Support Unit via email at:
ARL-DG-CGPSCIRR@uscg.mil or at:
Commander (rpm-3)
Personnel Service Center
U.S. Coast Guard Stop 72004200 Wilson Blvd
Ste. 1100 Arlington, Va 20598-7200

Retired Reservists:
Please send e-mail to Personnel Service Center (ras) at:
ppc-dg-ras@uscg.mil or use Direct Access www.uscg.mil/ppc/ps/, or use self-service at www.uscg.mil/ppc/ras/directoryassistance.asp#one or call 1-800-772-8724.

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Photo by PA2 Sara Romero.
Schacher Advanced to MSTCM
Sector Lower Mississippi River’s MSTCM David Schacher was formally advanced in a pinning ceremony held on June 13, 2015. Shown here preparing to pin on Master Chief Schacher’s (in TROPS) new collar devices are BMC Brian Satterfield (left) and MSTCM Gary Dennis (right). The advancement certificate was read by Lt. Cmrd. Corneda Boyd (center).  

Photo by YN1 Brian Smith

Senior Leaders Gather for CPOA Graduation
On Friday evening, August 21, 2015 senior enlisted members of the Coast Guard took time to celebrate the graduation of both active duty and Reserve chiefs from the Chief Petty Officers Academy in Petaluma, Calif. Shown here from left to right are: Coast Guard Reserve Force Master Chief Eric Johnson, Training Center Command Master Chief Devin Spencer, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Steven Cantrell, and Capt. Chuck Fosse, Commanding Officer, USCG Training Center Petaluma.

Former Reserve Force Master Chief Shows ‘em the Ropes
Master Chief William “Bill” Phillips, 2nd Master Chief of the Reserve Force, poses (center in white shirt) with Chief Petty Officer Academy’s Reserve Class 38 ‘Team Phillips’ members during their time on the high ropes course.

Photo by SKC Heidi Vancil

BOSN’s Promotion a Family Affair
Chief Warrant Officer Fred Eshelman was promoted to BOSN4 in a ceremony held at CGHQ on Wednesday, July 1, 2015. He is shown here having his new shoulder boards properly attached by daughters Marina (left) and Phoeibe.

Reserve Master Chiefs Rub Elbows at Annual CPOA Meeting
The Honorable Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin poses with retired CGRF-MC # 1 Forrest Croom (left) and CGRF-MC #6 Eric Johnson during a break at the 47th Annual Chief Petty Officer Association Convention held in Oklahoma City, Okla., August 2015.
**Family and Colleagues Share in Promotion**


**Birthday Bash for CG Fan Norm Paulhus**

Long-time Coast Guard fan Norm Paulhus, seated center, is surrounded by many Coast Guard friends in Brookeville, Md., June 28. Coast Guard members from near and far converged on Brookeville to help him celebrate his 65th birthday. During much of his 35-plus years of Government service, Paulhus has voluntarily provided an informal Coast Guard communications service which became known as “Norm Net.” Daily e-message recipients now include Coast Guard Active, Reserve, Auxiliary, civilian, retired, and contractor members and their families who request them. He also maintains some 500-plus LinkedIn connections, including USCG members and alumni. The birthday bash was organized by John J. Jaskot, John P. Flynn, and Timothy A. Cook, “because Norm will love it” -- and he did! “I appreciated all of the food, cards, presents (and balloon) that everybody brought,” said Paulhus. “I had a truly wonderful time, and I’ll remember it for a long, long time. You folks are just plain wonderful!”

Norm’s email is: otterx@earthlink.net.

**New Arrival Recognized at MSU Chicago**


**8th District Recognizes Departing Branch Chief**

On Monday, August 3, 2015, 8th District Commander, Rear Adm. David Callahan (right), presented Cmdr. Jerry Saddler, USCGR, with the Meritorious Service Medal upon his departure as the District’s DXR Branch Chief. Saddler was joined by his children Grace, and Grant, and his spouse, Cmdr. Emily Saddler.

**Sta. Atlantic City Reserve Personnel Part of CoC**

Station Atlantic City reservists pose for a group photo during the unit’s Change of Command on July 2, 2015 when Lt. Noel Johnson relieved Lt. Cmdr. C.K. Moore. Shown here are: BMC Robert Mayer, Senior Enlisted Advisor, MKC Anthony Fazio, MK1 Ralph Ricapito, MK2 Holly Shelson, MK2 Dennica Ricciardi, MK3 Edward Klein, MK3 Ian Fenwick, BM3 Dennis Miller, BM3 Amanda Bal.
From the Office of Boat Forces
Submitted by Mr. Donald P. Hartmayer, Program Analyst, CG-731

The Office of Boat Forces congratulates the following graduates from the Reserve Response Boat-Small (RB-S) Boat Crew Member Course, the RB-S Coxswain Introduction Course, the Response Boat-Medium (RB-M) Operator Course, and RB-M Organizational Maintenance Course. These students will continue developing proficiency in their craft to become certified in their respective competencies. MK1 Michael Gallagher, MK1 Raul Ramirez, MK2 Steven Gonzalez are the first Reserve Force members to attend the RB-M Organizational Maintenance Course. Even though all three of these MK’s were already certified RB-M Engineers, they all gained a more in-depth knowledge of troubleshooting and repair of the RB-M platform. BZ to ALL!!

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<td>BM3 Taylor Abram – Station Fort Lauderdale</td>
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CWO Theodore S. Golda, 86 USCGR (ret.), a retired Border Patrol officer and veteran of the Coast Guard, died at the Batavia VA Medical Center on July 14, 2015.

Born in Niagara Falls on Sept. 27, 1928, Mr. Golda was raised on a small dairy farm in Utica. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard in January 1947, and spent six years on active duty from 1947-1953. He was stationed in Hawaii, Guam, the Philippine Islands, and Japan. In 1952, he stood Honor Guard for then-President Harry S. Truman when he visited the Coast Guard Academy. He retired in September 1988, as a Chief Warrant Officer after 37 years of active and Reserve duty.

In the Border Patrol, Mr. Golda worked in Del Rio, Texas, before transferring to Buffalo in 1967. He was promoted in 1974, to Supervisory Border Patrol Agent. In 1980, he was appointed Patrol Agent in charge of the Buffalo Border Patrol Station.

He retired in December 1984, after 26 years in government service. After retirement, he spent some time living in Mystic, Conn., where he worked as a shipwright at Electric Boat Shipyard in Groton.

His son, Steven Golda, took a similar path and is a Border Patrol agent stationed in Temecula, Calif. In addition to his son, he is survived by his wife, Marlene; two daughters, Lisa Bookhagen and Jacqueline; a sister, Helene Motyka; and four grandchildren.
Coast Guard Cutter SEQUOIA (WLB 215) crewmembers aboard one of the cutter’s two small boats deliver nearly 10,000 pounds of powdered milk donated by the Ayuda Foundation to islanders in Namonuito Atoll, a chain of shallow coral islands approximately 170 miles northwest of Chuuk Lagoon in the Federated States of Micronesia, August 2015. In addition, SEQUOIA also brought school supplies, fishing equipment, children’s toys, soap and medicine.

Photo by Lt. Jeffrey West, USCG
Capt. Karl Leonard (right), commanding officer of Coast Guard Reserve Unit, Joint Staff-South in Suffolk, transfers command to Capt. James “Tory” Cobb (left) and prepares to retire during a change of command and retirement ceremony in Portsmouth, Saturday, Sept. 12, 2015. Vice Adm. William “Dean” Lee (center) presided over the ceremony at Coast Guard Base Portsmouth where Virginia Rep. James R. Forbes also attended.

Photo by PA2 Nate Littlejohn

A 47’ Motor Life Boat from Station Chatham, Massachusetts prepares to conduct helo ops with a Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Cape Cod.

Photo by FA Ricardo Alvarez Serrano

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard’s Maritime Security Detachment, Port Security Unit 308, and Air Station Cleawater get underway at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, July 8.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Daryl T. Madrid