

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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Ninth Coast Guard District

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5440
02 April 2009

MEMORANDUM

From: 
K. P. Dunn
CGD NINE (dpw)

Reply to (dpw)
Attn of: CDR K. P. Dunn
(216) 902-6064

To: Distribution

Subj: 2007-2008 GREAT LAKES WINTER OPS SPECIAL OPERATIONS SERVICE
AWARD

Ref: (a) CCGDNINE memo 1650 dtd 05 Jan 2009

1. Ref a. authorizes the award of the Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon to deserving members of specified units of the Ninth and First Coast Guard Districts, identified in enclosure (1), for their participation in the Great Lakes winter operations from 3 December 2007 to 25 April 2008. I request that you deliver the enclosed ribbons to each member and confirm that the award has been entered into direct access.

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Enclosure: Award Roster

Distribution:

Sector Detroit
Sector Lake Michigan
Sector Sault Ste. Marie
CGC Mackinaw (WLBB 301)
CGC Alder (WLB 216)
CGC Hollyhock (WLB 214)
CGC Biscayne Bay (WTGB 104)
CGC Bristol Bay (WTGB 102)
CGC Neah Bay (WTGB 105)
CGC Katmai Bay (WTGB 101)
CGC Mobile Bay (WTGB 103)
CGC Penobscot Bay (WTGB 107)



1650

JUL 5 2008

MEMORANDUM

From: *Peter V. Neffenger*
PETER V. NEFFENGER
CGD NINE (d)

Reply to (dpw)
Attn of: CDR B. DUNN
(216) 902-6064

To: *Approved R. J. Papp, Jr.*
R. J. PAPP, JR.
CG LANT AREA (A)

Subj: **2007-08 GREAT LAKES WINTER OPS; RECOMMENDATION OF AWARD**

Ref: (a) CCGDNINE Memo 1650 dtd 20 May 2008
(b) CG LANTAREA (Acs) Memo dtd 10 July 2008
(c) Domestic Icebreaking Policy and Reporting Requirements, COMDTINST 16151.1C
(d) Medals and Awards Manual, COMDTINST M1650.25D

1. I recommend the Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon be awarded to the deserving members of specified units of the Ninth and First Coast Guard Districts, identified in enclosure (1), for their participation in Great Lakes winter operations from 3 December, 2007 to 25 April, 2008.
2. This is a resubmittal of a similar award recommendation transmitted by reference (a). Reference (b) returned the award recommendation because the eligibility criteria was not completely met and suggested additional justification to meet the criteria for the award.
3. During the winter of 2007-2008, the Great Lakes region experienced an early onset of winter weather which produced conditions that resulted in the highest percentage of ice coverage since 1996. A Herculean bi-national icebreaking effort from the U. S. and Canadian Coast Guard fleets and personnel stationed at Coast Guard Sectors and the Canadian Coast Guard Regional Operations Centre in Sarnia, Ontario was put forth. The Coast Guards' ability to keep the vitally important Great Lakes marine transportation system functional and moving commerce was extensively tested.
4. In anticipation of a prolonged ice season and above average ice conditions in the St. Lawrence Seaway region, an additional U. S. Coast Guard icebreaking cutter was requested and the First District's CGC PENOBSCOT BAY was dispatched to the Great Lakes theater of operations and significantly contributed to the mission.
5. This undertaking became more challenging as the winter progressed. Coordinated planning by all participating units was essential. At the District level, brokering and leveraging of icebreaking assets and force lay down decisions took place through daily conference calls with Canada and the maritime industry. An above average amount of engineering casualties, which reduced our capacity below full strength nearly half of the recognized period, produced scheduling challenges. At the Sector level, tactical direction was developed and improvised as dynamic weather and commercial vessel employment schedules created a requirement for more icebreaking assets than were available. Remarkably, this enormous domestic icebreaking operation was executed in between the Fall 2007

removal and Spring 2008 restoration of over twelve hundred aids to navigation; the largest seasonal aids to navigation mission in the United States.

6. In our increasingly globalized world the boundary between the traditional concept of national security and economic security have blurred. Winter operations in the Great Lakes require close coordination between one of our most important trading partners Canada. In the critical waterways, these operations are flag blind to the mutual benefit of both countries. The safe, secure and reliable movements of these ships, and the ores and coal they carry, are essential to our countries' manufacturing heartland where heavy industry produces the steel and other critical products needed for our economic prosperity and national security.

7. In addition to the facilitation of navigation, icebreaking operations are conducted for search and rescue, other emergency operations, and flood control [reference (c)]. The complexity and multi-mission nature of this bi-national operation are highlighted by several examples. Following the collision between the two U.S. Lakers, the CASON J. CALLOWAY and the AMERICAN REPUBLIC, Sector Sault St. Marie closed the Straits of Mackinaw and dispatched a team to investigate the casualty and assess the damage to both vessels and their ability to continue.

8. At the request of the Army Corp of Engineers, both U.S. and Canadian cutters participated in flood relief operations in extremely difficult ice conditions in Lake Erie preventing flood damage to several communities in northern Ohio. In addition, heavy ice conditions in the St. Claire River impeded the operations of the Harsens Island Ferry. For two weeks, a WLB and WTGB alternated flushing ice in the vicinity in order to keep the community connected to the main land. Heavy ice conditions and gale force winds trapped a vessel in Goderich, Ontario putting it in immediate danger of capsizing. The SAR standby cutter was recalled from Port Huron, MI to respond to this potentially life threatening situation.

9. It is important to also note that as noted in Enclosure 19 of reference (d), units participating in this operation were awarded the Special Operations Service Ribbon on three occasions in the past for winter operations in 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96 which like this past year were especially difficult ice seasons

10. I request that you reconsider and approve this award in recognition of the outstanding work completed last winter.

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Enclosure: Award Roster