

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

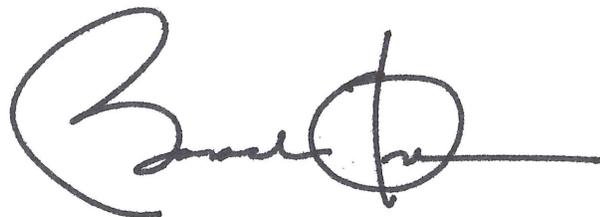
August 4, 2011

I send greetings to all those celebrating the 221st birthday of the United States Coast Guard.

In 1790, Alexander Hamilton established a modest system of cutters to enforce tariffs and prevent smuggling along our young Nation's shorelines. In the more than two centuries since, this small force has grown in size and scope, evolving in ways our Founders could not have imagined. Today, members of the Coast Guard are a unique and indispensable part of the finest military the world has ever known, serving with honor and distinction at home and around the globe.

No matter what we ask of them, the men and women of the Coast Guard are always ready to defend America with courage and professionalism. They are our neighbors, friends, and family members, and their tremendous service reminds us that our heroes are all around us. We owe a debt of gratitude to these service members and their families, and their commitment and sacrifice humble us all.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, I thank you for your service. May God bless and protect you and your families, and may God bless the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned at the bottom center of the page.