

U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Carolina



2010
Year in Review



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Commander's Overview

Captain Anthony Popiel



As I look back on my first year as Sector Commander in North Carolina, I feel privileged to have been afforded the opportunity to serve here. North Carolina has a unique environment that presents a variety of operational challenges. Developing strong working relationships with our Federal, State, Local, and Industry partners has been essential to the successes we experienced in 2010.

Our successes in 2010 may be directly attributed to the active cooperation of our port and community partners. Incidents, such as the PETN spill in Morehead City, Hurricane Earl, Tropical Storm Hannah, USS Gravely commissioning, and numerous other vessel groundings, search and rescue cases, and pollution incidents have validated the need for the tight coordination that we have worked so diligently to foster.

I am especially proud of the accomplishments of our Coast Guard personnel in 2010, and our response to the Haiti earthquake and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In both events, Coast Guard members were deployed from every Sector to assist with the response, cleanup, and recovery. At any point last summer approximately 15% of my Sector staff was deployed, in support of the DWH spill response, in addition to deployments from our subordinate units. In total, 16% of all Active Duty North Carolina Coast Guardsmen were deployed to the oil spill, and 46% of our Reserve personnel were recalled to Active Duty. Despite the reduction in manpower we did not miss a single operational mission, and continued to provide seamless professional services to the maritime community. A silver lining from the DWH response is that it gave us the opportunity to tighten our Area Contingency Plan, invigorate state and local partnerships, and educate the public on tar balls and oil spill response.

My focus over the next year will be to continue to provide the same quality service for which we are known. We are closing on the completion of a reorganization that will move the Sector and Command Center to Wilmington in order to be closer to the majority of our port partners. This move will improve interactions with port partners and reduce operating and travel costs. We will continue our focus on port security initiatives through our Area Maritime Security Committee, Port Readiness Committee, and Port Security Grant Program. We will capitalize on lessons learned from the Deepwater Horizon response through the experience and expertise of our Area Committee members. Through our numerous boating safety and marine environmental protection initiatives such as Operations Bow Rider, Safe Catch, Right Speed, and Striper Swiper we will continue to promote the safe operation of vessels, increase awareness of dangerous inlets and sea conditions, and strive to reduce our impact on the environment. Finally, but most importantly, we will continue to provide the same level of exceptional service to mariners by focusing on our three primary roles: Maritime Security, Maritime Safety, and Maritime Stewardship.

Anthony Popiel
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Commander, Sector North Carolina

Sector North Carolina at a Glance

Sector North Carolina has oversight of operational Coast Guard missions throughout the entire State of North Carolina. Our primary missions include Search and Rescue, Marine Safety, Ports and Waterways Coastal Security, Marine Environmental Protection, Aids to Navigation, Maritime Law Enforcement, and Recreational Boating Safety.



There are 472 Active Duty and 159 Reserve personnel staffed throughout 15 subordinate commands under the direction of Sector North Carolina, which include:

- 2 Aids to Navigation Teams
- 1 Aids to Navigation Cutter
- 8 Small Boat Station
- 2 110' Patrol Boats
- 1 Marine Safety Unit
- 1 Sector Field Office

The State of North Carolina is home to some of the nation's most diverse aquatic habitats, including 23 species of threatened sea turtles, birds, whales, fish, and sea grasses. North Carolina's busy waterways boast a robust commercial ferry system, two major international ports, and a commercial fishing fleet of over 9000 vessels. The challenging environment beset by shifting sands, shallow inlets, and the constant threat of hurricanes make North Carolina waterways some of the most difficult to navigate.

Our History



The Diamond Shoals Light Ship preceded the lighthouse. The ship in this photo was sunk by a U-boat, but not before Coastguardsmen onboard radioed to warn nearby ships.

The roots of the Coast Guard lie in the United States Revenue Cutter Service established by Alexander Hamilton under the Department of the Treasury on 4 August 1790. The modern Coast was created in 1915, when the Revenue Cutter Service merged with the United States Life-Saving Service and Congress formalized the existence of the new organization. In 1939, the U.S. Lighthouse Service was brought under its purview. In 1942, the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation was transferred to the Coast Guard. In 1967, the Coast Guard moved from the Department of the Treasury to the newly formed Department of Transportation, an arrangement that lasted until it was placed under the Department of Homeland Security in 2003.

Along North Carolina's Outer Banks lies a stretch of dangerous waters that mariners referred to as "The Graveyard of the Atlantic". The unique hazards of North Carolina's waters necessitated the construction of several lighthouses along the coast, as well as the organization of life-saving stations. The story of the Life-Saving Service on the Outer Banks dominates the service's history. At its peak, the service employed 32 manned rescue stations in North Carolina.



A North Carolina Coastguardsman patrolling the shore.



Coast Guard Station Pea Island, NC was the first station to be staffed by an all black crew.

Its life-saving presence in North Carolina uniquely positioned the Coast Guard to perform lifesaving and security duties during the first and second World Wars. On August 11, 1918, the lookout at Nag's Head Station spotted a British tanker hit by a torpedo. The station crew initiated a rescue, saving the lives of all 42 survivors. Later, during WWII, the Coast Guard would employ over 2000 trained dogs to patrol the Carolinas for spies and saboteurs. The waters near Cape Hatteras were nicknamed "Torpedo Junction" where German U-Boats successfully sank hundreds of vessels. In 1942, Coast Guard Cutter ICARUS sank a much larger, faster and better armed U-Boat off of Cape Hatteras. True to their life-saving roots, the Coast Guardsmen aboard the ICARUS rescued the 33 German men, and became the second US Ship to sink a U-Boat, and the first unit to capture prisoners.

These poor, plain men, dwellers upon the lonely sands of Hatteras, took their lives in their hands, and, at the most imminent risk crossed the most tumultuous sea...and all for what? That others might live to see home and friends.

— Annual Report of the U.S. Life-Saving Service, 1885

Maritime Safety

Marine Safety Mission

In partnership with other federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, marine industries, and individual mariners, we improve safety at sea through complementary programs of mishap prevention, vessel/facility inspections, and accident investigation. Marine safety officers perform public education events, conduct inspections on commercial vessels, investigate incidents at sea, and pursue legal action against unlawful activities. To ensure compliance, we review and approve plans for ship construction, repair, and alteration. Our Port State Control program, aimed at eliminating substandard vessels from U.S. ports and waterways, is a key element. This program is critical since the majority of the passenger and cargo ships operating in U.S. waters are foreign flagged.



The State's 21 ferries are inspected annually by Sector North Carolina



Chief Warrant Officer Keith Stegall performs a courtesy examination on a Commercial Fishing Vessel

Nearly all Coast Guard prevention activities are designed to protect mariners. For example, our commercial fishing vessel safety programs are designed to safeguard commercial fishermen, many of whom earn their living performing some of the most dangerous work in the world.



Marine Safety Officers from Wilmington inspect cargo as well as vessels

2010 Marine Safety Accomplishments

Marine Safety Inspections		Marine Safety Investigations	
Barge	23	Allision	10
Bulk Carrier	103	Collision	6
Fishing Vessel	12	Damage to Env.	35
Dry Cargo Ship	97	Fire	5
Passenger Ship	628	Flooding	4
Recreational	8	Fouling	3
Research Ship	7	Grounding	57
Ro-Ro Cargo	9	Loss of Electrical Power	5
Tank Ship	74	Material Failure	75
Towing Vessel	10	Personnel Casualties	16
Other	10	Sinking	5
Facilities	161	Unspecified	29
All Inspections	1142	Vessel Maneuverability	8
		All Investigations	264

Source: Coast Guard Business Intelligence CY2010

Maritime Safety

Recreational Boating Safety Mission



A Sector North Carolina Small Boat Station patrols a safety zone with the help of the Coast Guard Auxiliary at one of 61 Marine Events in 2010

As National Recreational Boating Safety Coordinator, the Coast Guard works to minimize loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and environmental harm associated with this activity. Our boating safety program involves public education programs, regulation of boat design and construction, approval of boating safety equipment, and vessel safety checks for compliance with federal and state safety requirements. The all-volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliary plays a central role in this program.

With the help of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Sector North Carolina conducted 2,570 Recreational Boating Safety boardings and examinations, finding over 285 life threatening discrepancies.

Safety Recommendations

- Wear a personal flotation device. This is the #1 measure to save lives.
- File a float plan with family or friends
- Carry a marine radio (should be integrated with a GPS unit to function with DSC)
- Wear a kill switch when underway
- Know your vessel (i.e. stability, limitations, etc.)
- Check the weather (constantly)



The Coast Guard Auxiliary performs a courtesy dockside safety examination

Maritime Safety

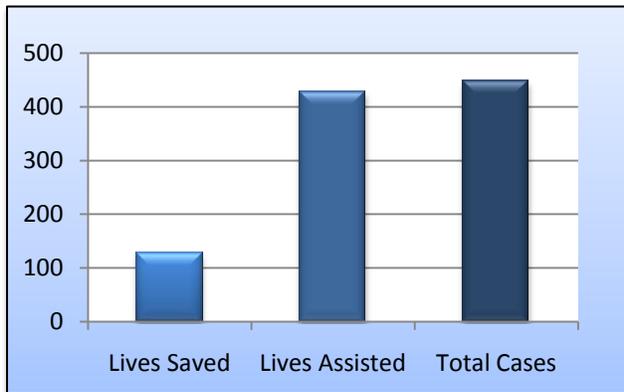
Search and Rescue Mission



A 47' Motor Lifeboat crew practices nighttime helo operations with an HH-60 from Elizabeth City

A fundamental responsibility of the U.S. government is to safeguard the lives and safety of its citizens. In the maritime realm, this duty falls mainly to the Coast Guard. Sector North Carolina's 9 Small Boat Stations and two 110' Patrol Boats provide Search and Rescue capabilities in the state. Air support for Search and Rescue missions is provided by HH-60 and C-130 from Air Station Elizabeth City.

2010 Search and Rescue Accomplishments



The 25' Defender Class small boat has a max speed of 45 knots and can operate in up to 6 foot seas

Maritime Security

Ports Waterways and Coastal Security Mission

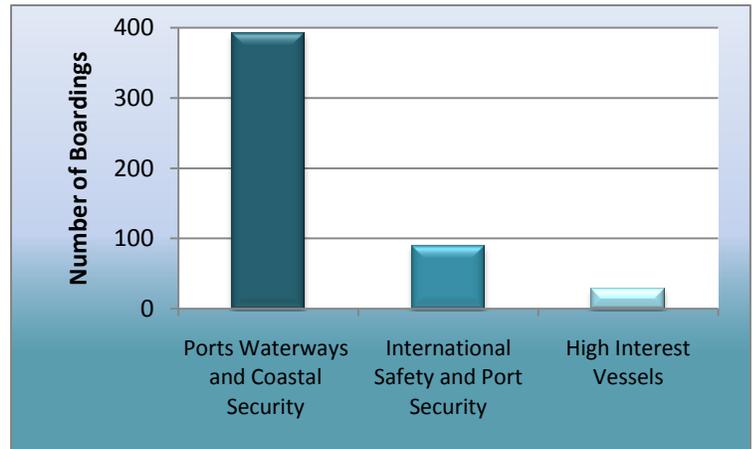


Sector Boarding Team Members scale a ladder to conduct a security boarding on a High Interest Vessel

Our authorities were further strengthened with the passage of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. This designated Coast Guard Captains of the Port as the Federal Maritime Security Coordinators. The Coast Guard thus became the lead agency for coordinating all maritime security planning and operations in our ports and waterways. These activities encompass all efforts to prevent or respond to attacks.

Maritime law enforcement and border control are the oldest of the Coast Guard's numerous responsibilities. The Coast Guard has been responsible for the security of the ports and waterways of the United States during times of war since the enactment of the Espionage Act of 1917. After World War II, the Magnuson Act of 1950 assigned the Coast Guard an ongoing mission to safeguard U.S. ports, harbors, vessels, and waterfront facilities from accidents, sabotage, or other subversive acts. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, these authorities took on grave new importance. This includes denying terrorists the use of the U.S. maritime domain and the U.S. Maritime Transportation System to mount attacks.

2010 Port Security Accomplishments



Sector North Carolina units conduct scheduled and random boardings of oceangoing vessels, perform land and waterside security patrols, and escort vessels to safe berthing. These activities are critical to securing maritime infrastructure.

Station Oak Island enforces a Naval Protection Zone around the USS Gravelly during her commissioning in Wilmington

Maritime Stewardship

Marine Environmental Protection

Our nation's waters are vital to its well-being and economy. The marine environment of the United States is one of the most valuable natural resources on Earth. It contains one-fifth of the world's fishery resources. It is also a region of extraordinary recreation, energy and mineral resources, and transportation activities. Finally, it is an inseparable part of our national heritage and daily fabric of life in our coastal communities. Coastal Carolina is famous for its pristine beaches and diverse natural habitats. In addition to its invaluable contribution to the coastal ecosystem, Coastal Carolina receives over \$6.2 billion in income from tourism.

North Carolina Oil Spills - 2010

	Spill Size (Gallons)				Total
	0- 10	10 - 100	100 - 1000	>1000	
Pollution Incidents	51	8	2	0	61



Coast Guard Personnel respond to a vessel fire posing a significant risk to safety and the environment.



Oil and Hazardous Material pollution incidents come from a multitude of sources

DEEPWATER HORIZON

At 9:45 PM on 20 April 2010 an explosion on the offshore drilling vessel Deepwater Horizon resulted in a free-flowing release of natural oil that lasted over three months. 9 months later remediation efforts continue in the Gulf of Mexico. Reports on the spill estimate that over 4,900,000 barrels of oil were released into the gulf, impacting over 320 miles of coastline. Deepwater Horizon prompted us to work with the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and local partners to better prepare for a major spill in North Carolina Waters.

The impact of the spill demonstrated the flexibility of Coast Guard units to provide trained, capable response personnel to the incident while continuing regular operations. Sector North Carolina deployed 76 Active Duty and 80 Reserve personnel to assist with the relief efforts, along with our buoy tender ELM.



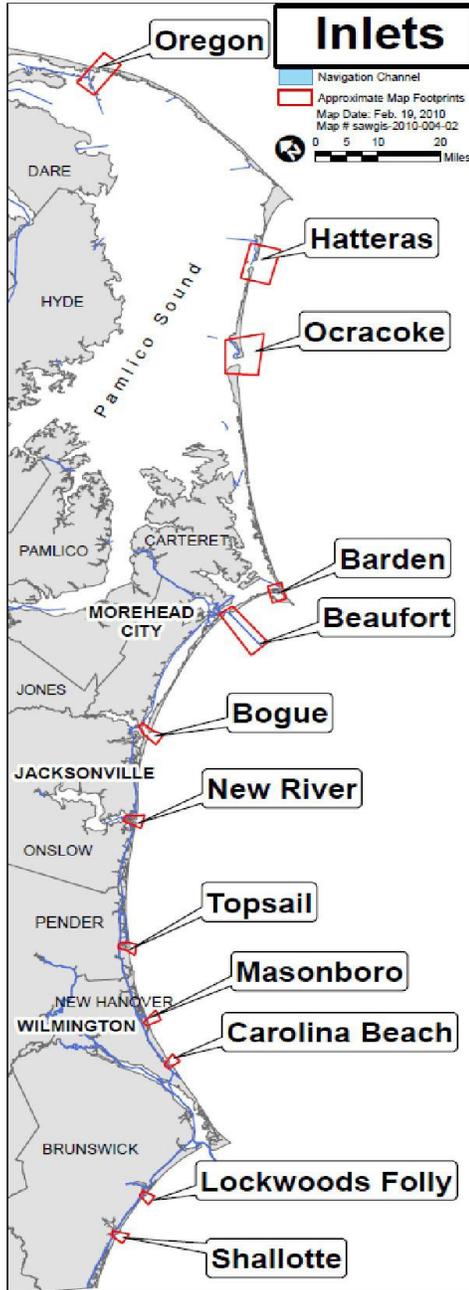
Above: Workers recover tar balls and oiled materials for removal.



Left: A commercial fishing vessel acts as a "Vessel of Opportunity" by deploying boom to contain oil.

Maritime Stewardship

Aids to Navigation Mission/Waterways

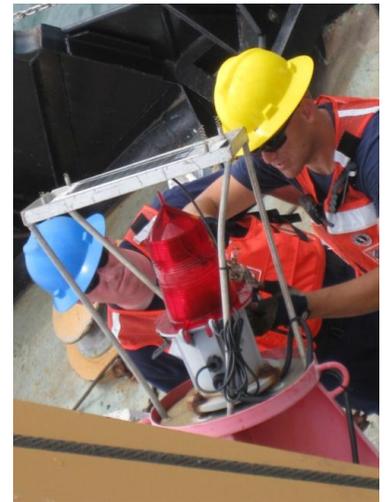


Wind conditions, erosion, and tides create dangerous shoaling conditions in the above inlets. Channels are subject to continual change and increase the potential for capsize or grounding.

The Coast Guard carries out numerous port and waterways management tasks. In conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers we are responsible for providing a safe, efficient, and navigable waterway system to support domestic commerce, international trade, and military sealift requirements for national defense. Sector North Carolina manages the aids to navigation for the ports of Wilmington and Morehead City, Cape Fear River, Pamlico, Albemarle, and Currituck sounds, and 306 miles of the Intercoastal Waterway.

Sector North Carolina Total Aids:

Fixed: 1523
Floating: 280



Aids to Navigation Team member from Fort Macon perform repairs on a buoy light



Exposure to salt water, waves, and animals necessitate frequent repairs to the areas aids.

2010 Aids to Navigation Availability:
98.17%



Army Corps Dredge FRY is well suited to operate in areas with strong currents and high winds.

Maritime Stewardship

Living Marine Resources Mission



The Cutter Staten Island conducts boardings to ensure compliance with federal fisheries laws.

In 1976, Congress passed what is now known as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This legislation extended our exclusive rights out to 200 nautical miles for fisheries and other natural resources. The Coast Guard patrols these areas to uphold U.S. sovereignty and protect precious resources. Our stewardship role has expanded to include enforcing laws intended to protect the environment for the common good. As a result, we safeguard sensitive marine habitats, mammals, and endangered species. We enforce laws intended to protect the environment, encourage growth of threatened species, and prevent the introduction of non-indigenous invasive species.

In 2010 Sector North Carolina Units conducted 453 fisheries boardings, resulting in the discovery of 198 violations



CGC Block Island crewmembers release turtles at sea after they were stranded in cold shallow waters

Community Service



The Sector Honor Guard marches in the Morehead City Veteran's Day Parade



Petty Officer Greg Overall helps build a roof for needy families through Habitat for Humanity.

Giving back to the community is an important aspect of national service for our Coast Guard members. Through formal volunteer programs such as Habitat for Humanity, Honor Flight Network, and Partnership in Education, or informal service projects, Sector North Carolina has participated in hundreds of hours of volunteer service.

In 2010 Sector North Carolina personnel participated in:

52 Parades/Special Events
293 Unit Tours
28 Military Funeral Honors
12 Burials at Sea



Commander Derek D'Orazio works to build oyster beds with a local organization.

Planning, Training and Exercises

Contingency Planning and Force Readiness

Planning and preparing for emergencies is an essential part of our ability to serve the public during natural or man-made disasters. Through tabletop and field exercises we test our emergency response plans and improve them for use during real-world incidents. The Sector North Carolina Area Committee and Area Maritime Security Committee enable us to meet with our port partners, communicate concerns and changes, and

develop relationships with the individuals who will likely represent their agency or company during a disaster.

2010 Exercises

Cape Fear Chaos
Point Defender 2010
Eastern Endeavor
Clean Land and Harbors Tabletop
Ocracoke Tabletop Oil Spill
2010 Sector NC Hurricane Exercise
2010 State of NC Hurricane Exercise
Quarterly community Notification Drills
Sector Recall Drill
H1N1/Communicable Disease Exercise
Operation Adaptation



Community members participate in a tabletop port security exercise



Chief Petty Officer George Bryson inspects personal protective equipment during an RFO inspection to ensure strict compliance with CG Standards

A critical part of mission readiness is training. Through Sector's Ready for Operations (RFO) program, mission experts review each unit annually to ensure proper training and mission readiness. The RFO team audits training records, administers tests, and evaluates performance of underway drills. Units are rigorously tested and evaluated to ensure peak mission performance.



Gunnery Mate First Class Peter Labarbera instructs trainees during range training

Logistics

Supporting the Coast Guard's activities in North Carolina requires the support of a very active logistics force. Sector North Carolina's Logistics Department handles an array of personnel, administrative, finance and supply issues throughout the state. The engineering staff maintains the 36 small boats and three cutters under the Sector as well as each unit's facilities. This effort requires a significant coordination between Sector engineers and the numerous support staffs that provide electronics, IT, and naval engineering services.



Left: Machinery Technician First Class Aaron Butcher works on the engine of a 41' Utility Boat

Right: Information System Technician First Class Elizabeth Reid replaces a defective hard drive.



Looking Forward

Many challenges that were present in 2010 will persist into the near future and beyond. The economy has created a difficult budget environment that will challenge the Coast Guard's initiatives to modernize its aging fleet and shore facilities. Threats to the maritime domain, both domestic and foreign, require our devout vigilance and require ever-increasing resources, training, and manpower. Catastrophic events such as the 9/11 Attacks, Hurricane Katrina, and Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill will continue to necessitate personnel deployments.

Despite these challenges and others, the Coast Guard is committed to ensuring we have the most capable personnel, current equipment, and adequate facilities. We will continue to foster relationships that improve our ability to mitigate risks to security and the environment. The greatest and most anticipated step towards meeting these objectives will come to fruition in May of 2011 when Sector North Carolina will relocate from its current headquarters in Atlantic Beach to Wilmington. The move to Wilmington will place the Captain of the Port in the same vicinity of other DHS, state, and local law enforcement partners.

"No one else can do everything that we do. We protect citizens at sea, we protect America from threats delivered by sea, and we protect the sea itself. We are a military service, federal law enforcement agency, and our Nation's lead maritime first responder with the mandate and bias to act. We are locally based, Nationally deployed, and globally connected."

Admiral Robert Papp, Commandant, USCG