

As delivered

**Admiral Thomas H. Collins  
Ellsworth P. Bertholf Award  
To Congressman Frank A. LoBiondo  
September 17, 2003**

Preliminary Remarks:

Good evening! I'm glad all of you were able to join me this evening as we honor a great public servant, Congressman Frank LoBiondo.

[Recognize VIPs]

Also hosting this event tonight is the National Capitol Council of the Navy League. I thank Admiral Mack Gaston and all National Capitol Council members for their sponsorship of this event, and for all their support of and dedication to the Coast Guard.

We have a "two-fer" tonight ... the Bertholf Award recognizes a Representative or Senator and is presented at or near our August 4<sup>th</sup> birthday, as a way to recognize individuals and honor our past and our tradition. So in addition to recognizing a distinguished member of Congress for his visionary leadership and support to the Coast Guard, we also celebrate the Coast Guard's birthday and its long and distinguished heritage in service to the United States.

This past year has been as challenging and dynamic as any in Coast Guard history:

- Confronting tremendous new demands of Homeland Security and the Global War on Terrorism, we supported Operation Liberty Shield to defend America's ports, coasts, and infrastructure.
- Deployed Coast Guard forces executed Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom as America's superb military and our coalition partners liberated Iraq.
- At the same time we successfully met unabated and unrelenting demands for search and rescue, marine safety, environmental protection, drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, fisheries enforcement, aids to navigation, and domestic and polar icebreaking during one of the harshest ice seasons on record.

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- We initiated the two largest procurements in Coast Guard history: the Integrated Deepwater System and Rescue 21.
- We stood up an Assistant Commandant for Intelligence.
- We led the international effort to adopt a new maritime security code and began implementing major new federal maritime legislation, the Maritime Transportation Security Act.
- And on March 1, 2003, as part of the largest government reorganization in over 50 years, we moved smoothly from the Department of Transportation to the new Department of Homeland Security.

Key to our success in these historic events was:

- the hard work, integrity, professionalism, and adaptability of our people;
- the military character of our Service;
- the multi-mission capability embedded in our cutters, aircraft, boats, and systems; and
- the support of leaders like Congressman LoBiondo.

As we celebrate the Coast Guard's birthday, we can look back with pride on 213 years of service to our great country.

We can also look forward to a bright future, because the value of the Coast Guard has never been clearer in the eyes of our nation, and the public regard has never been higher for every mission that we perform.

Now to the business at hand. Captain Joel Whitehead will provide a bit of background regarding the Bertholf Award.

Thank you.

END (for the moment)

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CAPT Whitehead reviews Bertholf's & Bertholf Award's History

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Presentation of the Award:

Today, I am pleased to present this award to a distinguished member of the United States House of Representatives and a long-time friend and supporter of the Coast Guard, Congressman Frank LoBiondo.

Congressman LoBiondo has spent 18 years in public service, representing the concerns of his fellow New Jersey constituents at the county, state, and now, the federal level. In his five terms in the House, he has supported the Coast Guard through numerous changes. His efforts were key to ensuring that the Coast Guard transferred into the Department of Homeland Security in its entirety. Like Commodore Bertholf, Congressman LoBiondo understands the unique position the Coast Guard occupies within the federal government as both a military and humanitarian service.

I know that Congressman LoBiondo is effective on the Hill on our behalf, often working quietly behind the scenes with his colleagues. Thankfully, his work speaks loudly for itself. Part of his work behind the scenes includes his many visits to the Coast Guard commands in his district in New Jersey, so he doesn't just know the Coast Guard as an organization, he knows individuals in the Coast Guard – from Admirals to seamen. His deck plate support of the men and women of the Coast Guard is second to none . . . oh yes, and by the way, Mr. Chairman, this award is not a bribe so that you'd take it easy on Air Station Atlantic City the next time you're on their basketball court.

Congressman LoBiondo's diligence as a champion of the Coast Guard and of the maritime security, safety, and environmental protection work and we perform on a daily basis has resulted in broad support for our service among members of Congress.

As I said earlier, the value of the Coast Guard has never been clearer in the eyes of Congress and the citizens of this great country, and we have Congressman LoBiondo to thank for sustaining that vision of national significance.

Admiral Gaston (or Mack), will you join me at the podium to make this presentation?

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RADM Gaston rises to join you.

Congressman LoBiondo ...

You have been a true advocate of the Coast Guard, and because of your support, the Coast Guard will continue a proud tradition of service to the American people.

In honor of our first Commandant, and on behalf of the National Capital Council of the Navy League of the United States, I am proud to award you the 2003 Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf Award.