

Admiral Thomas H. Collins
Deepwater Announcement
June 25, 2002

Distinguished guests, fellow flag officers, ladies and gentlemen Good afternoon and welcome to our Integrated Deepwater Systems contract award ceremonies. Thank-you for joining us today.

I'd especially like to acknowledge the presence of Chairman LoBiondo and the Honorable Michael Jackson, Deputy Secretary of Transportation. Thank you both for your endorsement of this project, for your guidance, and for your direct efforts to navigate among the rocks and shoals to ensure this project stayed on track.

And I would be remiss if I did not recognize Adm Jim Loy, our immediate past Commandant, who has been so instrumental in getting us where we are today ... the success of our deepwater modernization program ... our effort to shape the Coast Guard future is, in large measure, due to his personal efforts. I know of know one on this room that is more excited about this award then Jim Thanks for your tireless efforts.

The Coast Guard has a proud history of meeting this Nation's needs, of being *Semper Paratus* – Always Ready for the call. Since 1790, we have been providing military, multi-mission, maritime services wherever and whenever needed.

That tradition has carried on through out current security crisis. Our nation has been through tremendous trials during the past year, and the Coast Guard has risen to meet those challenges. President Bush, Secretary Mineta, and both houses of Congress have offered us tremendous support in meeting our expanded responsibilities, both in this fiscal year and next. We look forward to their continued support in the coming years.

These are remarkable times...unprecedented times for us. None of us serving today on active duty in the armed forces can remember a previous time when the security of our homeland was under direct attack. And the threat remains. We must be ever mindful of that fact.

It changes everything.

We must adapt to that change. For the Coast Guard that means building the strategy, capabilities, resource base, and organizational construct to lead the maritime component of Homeland Security. Today, the mission of homeland security makes up a greater portion of our mission set, but this mission is not new to us. Perhaps it is more urgent today than it was in the

early days of last year, but it remains just as important today as it was in the early days of our new Republic.

Our many successes in performing these many missions during the past decades have come through the hard work, and sometimes at the expense of the Coast Guard's greatest asset – our people.

As the President noted yesterday in Port Elizabeth, in our continued efforts to protect the American people from harm, we must make sure that our people ... our men and women on the front lines ... have the best available technical and operational systems with which to perform their duties. And these systems must be fully integrated from the high seas to the shores of our great nation.

Looking ahead, the demand for our services will surely increase. The Coast Guard is planning for these new challenges, but there are obstacles.

Even as the scope of our mission grows, our fleet of ships and aircraft is aging. Some of our cutters saw action in World War II, and most of them date from the 1960s. And some of our aircraft are older than the men and women who fly them.

An aging fleet presents significant challenges, both to our operational performance and our logistics support.

The Coast Guard also needs a more dynamic capability to detect, intercept and interdict potential threats on the high seas, using a layered defense of major cutters, patrol boats, and maritime patrol aircraft.

Our service has taken enormous strides to protect our ports and waterways, but the front lines of our homeland security efforts lie far from our ports and harbors.

The Coast Guard must have the capability to meet America's threats and challenges before they reach our shores.

As the leader in Maritime Homeland Defense, the Coast Guard must have the most capable ships, aircraft and command and control technology available to protect our nation and carry out our many missions.

This is an important day for our Service and the security of our nation. The Deepwater Program will give us the necessary tools to create an effective, layered defense of our nation's maritime interests.

With this award, we are embracing a culture of innovation, technology and effective management practices, while strengthening our stewardship of the public trust.

With this award, we are delivering 21st century capability to face America's 21st century challenges.

With this award, we are providing our personnel who defend America on the seas with the assets and technology needed to perform our essential missions.

With this award, we are delivering on our commitment to our heritage...delivering on our duty to America...and providing a successful future for our service and our nation.

I am very pleased that the Administration and Congress have taken significant steps to help transform us into the Coast Guard of the 21st century, demonstrating unwavering support for our Service and the Deepwater Program.

As Coast Guard men and women, we enthusiastically embrace the heritage of *Semper Paratus* and our continuing responsibility to uphold the values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty. We are heirs to this proud tradition as America's Maritime Guardian.

Through the success of this new program, the U.S. Coast Guard will continue to do our duty, and to uphold our heritage with pride.

I look forward to a very fruitful partnership with the winning industry team ... and I look forward to a future that is bright and full of promise for both the United States Coast Guard and America.

Thank you.