

# 9th District

The Ninth District's boundaries encompass the shores of the Great Lakes states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. The Great Lakes basin cover 295,000 square miles of land and water including nearly 6,700 miles of American shoreline and over 1,000 miles of international border with Canada. Twenty-six million Americans and Canadians rely on the Lakes for both recreation and their livelihoods. Economically, its one of the most important areas in North America.

Serving the needs of the public within the Ninth District are 1,837 active duty personnel, as well as 144 civilian employees, 625 reservists and 4,150 auxiliarists. The district facilities include 88 units, of which 47 are stations dotting the shoreline from Alexandria Bay, N.Y., to Duluth, Minn. These 47 stations represent 25 percent of the Coast Guard's entire complement. There are also two air stations, two air facilities, 10 cutters, and two loran stations.

While the boating season on the Great Lakes is short because of the harsh winters and ice covered waters, Ninth District search and rescue units, aided by reservists and auxiliarists, handle close to 7,500 cases annually. There are more than 11.5 million recreational boaters on the Great Lakes, one of the highest concentrations of boaters in the world.

The fresh water environment of the Great Lakes represents a unique ecosystem that supports not only commercial shipping, sports and commercial fishing, and recreational boating, but also is the drinking water for over 2.3 million Americans. Even the smallest discharge of hazardous material can cause severe damage if not responded to immediately. Personnel at eight Marine Safety Offices

and three Marine Safety Detachments routinely respond to more than 90 such incidents each year. This same cadre also performs vessel inspections, port state control inspections, casualty investigations, harbor patrols and facility inspections.

When the lakes ice over the Ninth District employs five 140-foot ice breaking tugs, the 290-foot icebreaker Mackinaw, and three 180-foot ice breaking buoy tenders. During an average winter season, the cutters, working closely with the Canadian Coast Guard, clear the way for approximately \$62 million worth of commercial cargo. Our cutters also relieve ice jams, which can threaten to flood homes and waterside property, saving homeowners and businesses along the waterways thousands of dollars in damages.

The District's six buoy tenders and ten aids-to-navigation teams service, repair and maintain 5,700 buoys, navigational lights and fixed aids throughout the Great Lakes. The District is also host of the world's largest concentration of lighthouses rich in maritime history.

In 1818 the Coast Guard established the first lighthouse, the Buffalo Light Tower. The first officially recognized Revenue Cutter on the Great Lakes was the Revenue Cutter Erie, which was built in Presque Isle., Penn., in 1832. Since that time the Great Lakes has grown into one of the most economically important areas in North America.

The Ninth District Coast Guard is part of the world's best Coast Guard, providing premiere search and rescue, marine safety and environmental protection, maritime law enforcement, aids to navigation and icebreaking services to the entire Great Lakes region.

