



## All Hands Messages

### *Commandant's All Hands Message – Commandant's SITREP 3*

To the Men and Women of the Coast Guard:

On Wednesday our Commander in Chief told the Coast Guard Academy Class of 2007, “Trust in the power of freedom...show leadership in freedom's defense, and character in all you do. Be ready for anything.” His words underscore the guidance I provided you one year ago today at my change of command. I pledged to the American public that our Coast Guard would strive for mission excellence in all we do. As I told you then, “we cannot, nor will we, retreat from our commitment to mission execution. Together, we will sustain the high level of performance that Americans have come to expect from their Coast Guard.”

In the last twelve months you have done just that; from the evacuation of hundreds of passengers from the cruise ship EMPRESS OF THE NORTH near Juneau, to the courage of Master Chief Michael Leavitt and BM3 John Duncan in rescuing an individual swept off the jetty in Humboldt Bay, to the selfless acts of Petty Officers John Peters and Michael Damren in saving a woman and her child from a burning building while off duty in Michigan. I thank you.

Together we have also done the hard things that are required by those who “guard our coasts.” Faced with the reality that our operational forces are sometimes in a stern chase with available resources, you have managed risk and made those countless day-to-day decisions that ultimately save lives. In the process we have become more transparent and demonstrated we have the courage of our convictions. We are accountable for our performance, not only to the nation we serve, but most importantly to our shipmates and ourselves. You have demonstrated honor, respect and devotion to duty, often in ways you probably did not realize. Again, I thank you.

However, no one can see the future in a ship's wake ... nor will I steer by it. The demands of the present and the press of operations do not relieve me, or you, of the responsibility to create our future. We owe it to those who will follow. During my State of the Coast Guard Address, I told you that we needed to make some important changes. We are making those changes:

We published the Coast Guard Strategy for Maritime Safety, Security, and Stewardship.

We completed the reorganization of Headquarters into numbered staffs to align with our DOD partners and unify Coast Guard operating programs.

In the month of July we will stand up our new acquisition organization, CG-9, and the command element of the Deployable Operations Group.

We are prototyping new small boat logistics support systems at Sector Baltimore and Sector San Francisco. These leading efforts are part of our transition to a bi-level system of maintenance for the Service.

We are changing the course of Deepwater to improve oversight and performance of this vital program. I have reasserted the Coast Guard's position as the customer. I walked the decks of the National Security Cutter yesterday and met with our people on site. The BERTHOLF is the best "first of class" cutter that has ever been built. We must now demonstrate by performance that this cutter is up to the task ... we will.

We are also modernizing other critical systems through Rescue 21 and the Nationwide Automated Identification System programs to enhance our capabilities across all our missions.

Over the next year we will finalize the structure of our new field and mission support organizations. At the same time we will assess staffing at Sectors to see if any adjustments are needed as we transition to a mission execution focused organization.

In short, we are modernizing our Coast Guard.

We are underway, making way and this is an "all hands" evolution. As we navigate our course into the future, we need everyone onboard. Whether you are a Reservist deployed in the Arabian Gulf, a civilian at the Finance Center, an Auxiliarist conducting a fishing vessel safety exam inport, or a helo pilot prosecuting a case in the Bering Sea, each of you plays an important role in moving the Coast Guard forward. Just as the Commanding Officer issues Night Orders to the watch, this is what I need from each of you.

1. Be flexible. Modernizing means adjusting to new ways of doing things, and that is not always easy. For the Coast Guard to remain agile, flexible and responsive, you need to be agile, flexible and responsive as well.
2. Trust in leadership. We have made great progress in the past year planning how we will modernize the Coast Guard. I committed to being transparent in this process. However, we are not to the level of mapping changes to billets and positions yet. Accordingly, I need you to accept some ambiguity in exchange for this transparency. As we develop the details of this change I will provide them.
3. Understand what we are doing. You need to understand what it is we're doing and how we will improve mission support and mission execution to better serve the Nation. Take a look at CG Central to learn more about where we are going. If you are new or returning to the Coast Guard, ask your supervisors about these initiatives and what you can do. The State of the Coast Guard speech and my remarks at the Coast Guard Academy in January are available in video format.
4. Talk about it. If you are a Commanding Officer, Officer in Charge, or supervisor, it's your duty you to personally educate your folks on their role in this

modernization. In addition, talk to your community about the Coast Guard and explain to your partners why this modernization is necessary. We will continue to update CG Central with the most recent materials and information we have to support you in your efforts to engage all of your stakeholders.

5. Be professional. Always remember that we serve the American people. As Alexander Hamilton charged, "Keep in mind that your countrymen are free men and as such are impatient of everything that bears that least mark of a domineering spirit." The Coast Guard's superb reputation today, just as it was back in 1790, is built upon your competence, professionalism, and a humanitarian spirit. We cannot ever take that for granted. Security is critically important in today's threat environment, but we have enduring safety and stewardship roles and a public that expects us to remain competent and responsive.
6. Stay focused on the mission. All of our missions are critically important. The technology is changing; the way we support our missions is changing; and we have a new strategy. However, our purpose will never change. We are America's lifesavers and guardians.
7. Most importantly - take care of each other; take care of your family and take care of yourself.

Thank you for your service. I will continue to seek your support and earn your trust. I will continue to travel and meet with you personally. In this first year, I have met with over 16,000 of our people in every district and in Iraq, China, and Japan. Whether you are standing the watch or enjoying time with family and friends this Memorial Day, keep in mind those who have gone before us to preserve our freedom and make the Coast Guard what it is today.

Admiral Thad Allen  
Semper Paratus!

All Hazards...All Threats...Always Ready

