



## All Hands Messages

### *State of the Coast Guard (2008)*

To the Men and Women of the Coast Guard:

This afternoon, I will deliver my second State of the Coast Guard address at the National Press Club here in Washington, DC. It will focus on our future – the strategy, legislation, and budget we need to build a 21st Century Coast Guard.

Since becoming Commandant, I've traveled across the country and around the world to meet with many of you personally. You asked questions and shared what was on your minds. In turn, I made a commitment to you that we would provide the equipment, support and training you need to do your jobs more efficiently and effectively. I pledged to continue to recapitalize our aging fleet and command and control systems, and we are seeing the results of those efforts right now, with CGC BERTHOLF completing sea trials this week, and with the missionization of three new HC-144 Ocean Sentry maritime patrol aircraft. We are well underway in our reorganization of the force structure to make us more agile, flexible and adaptable in an ever-changing environment.

I asked you to be patient and embrace change, because it is an enduring part of our lives in the Coast Guard. You heard me and stepped up to the plate. We've made significant progress across all fronts to modernize and transform the service over the past year and a half. More importantly, we've stayed focused on mission execution, making 2007 another incredible year that will go down in the record books.

However, we cannot rest on our reputation or remain fixated on our wake. Now is the time to build a 21st Century Coast Guard, one that will be responsive to the environment as it evolves around us. As a unique instrument of national security, we will work closer than ever with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to put our cooperative maritime strategy in action. As America's lifesavers and guardians, we will enhance our marine safety program, develop our intelligence and maritime domain awareness, and take action to restore our polar icebreaking fleet, as we prepare to operate in an open Arctic. We also need to grow the Coast Guard. We cannot continue to meet the ever growing needs and higher expectations of our citizens with a workforce that is essentially no bigger than it was 50 years ago. That is why I will fight for every penny of the President's FY09 \$9.3 billion budget request. It is a down payment on the future of America's Coast Guard.

As much as I have talked about change, some things never change, like our Guardian Ethos. Each of you has been integral to our success this year and the milestones we reached, such as the removal of a record-breaking 350,000 pounds of cocaine at sea, and

our celebration of a million lives saved since 1790. Never before has this Nation relied so heavily on our oceans and waterways for the safety, security and prosperity of all Americans. And never before has this Nation relied so much on its Coast Guard to protect the environment and our keep our communities safe and secure. We will answer that call.

All threats. All hazards. Always ready.

Admiral Thad Allen  
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

