

**Admiral Thomas H. Collins
2004 Ellsworth P. Bertholf Award
To Senator John Breau
17 November 2004**

Good evening! Thank you for joining us this evening as we honor a great public servant, Senator John Breau [“BRO”].

[Recognize VIPs]

Co-hosting this event tonight is the National Capitol Council of the Navy League. I thank Ms. Sheila McNeil, President of the National Chapter of the Navy League, Admiral Mack Gaston, President of the National Capitol Council, and all National Capitol Council members for their sponsorship of this event, and for all their support of and dedication to the Coast Guard.

In a few moments I'll talk about Senator Breaux's great work in Congress and how he's championed the maritime industry, Coast Guard, and other maritime stakeholders throughout his years on the Hill. Thanks to his consistent and positive oversight, the Coast Guard has been positioned to provide the best service possible to the American people.

And I'm proud to report that we've had a banner year -- the past year has been extremely busy but productive, thanks to the efforts of all Coast Guard men and women -- active duty, reserve, civilian, and Auxiliary:

- We had a record year in counter-drug operations, seizing over 240,000 pounds of cocaine last year, shattering the previous record by over 100,000 pounds or 72%. Keeping these drugs off our streets helps save innumerable lives which will now not be impacted by the tragedies of illegal drug use.**

- **On July 1, we began enforcing the Maritime Transportation Safety Act, one of the most important pieces of legislation in Coast Guard history and critical to increasing the security of our Nation's ports.**
- **We accomplished all this while meeting our increased homeland security responsibilities, preventing a possible mass migration from Haiti when that government collapsed, handling responses to multiple hurricanes, and fighting the war on terror both at home and abroad. I'm very proud of all Coast Guard men and women and I am thankful for the support of Senator Breaux, members of the Coast Guard caucus, and all our friends on Capital Hill.**

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

Thank you.

END (for the moment)

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

Presentation of the Award:

This evening, I am pleased to present the Bertholf Award to a distinguished member of the United States Senate and a long-time friend and supporter of the Coast Guard, Senator John Breaux.

Senator Breaux has spent 32 years in public service, representing the concerns of his Louisiana constituents first in the House of Representatives for 14 years and then moving to the Senate in 1986 where he has served since. From his first

days on the Hill, Senator Breaux has been a key advocate for the Coast Guard. In his 7 terms in the House and 3 in the Senate, he has supported the Coast Guard through numerous changes. In my initial comments, I mentioned the Maritime Transportation Security Act as one of the most critical pieces of legislation in Coast Guard history – Senator Breaux was one of the sponsors of that landmark legislation, so critical to ensuring the Nation’s maritime security. More recently, he championed efforts that increased the Coast Guard’s operating budget by 2 billion dollars over pre-9/11 levels. His efforts were key to the much-needed 28% increase in personnel strength in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2004.

Senator Breaux is not just a supporter of the Coast Guard – he is a true protector of the oceans and the vital resources they provide to the American people. In his early days on the Hill as a member of the House, he was instrumental in establishing a stable funding stream into the

Aquatic Resources Trust Fund, also known as the Wallop-Breaux Trust Fund. He also championed the passage of the Sustainable Fisheries Act in 1996, updating the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Management Conservation Act, capping fishery harvests at the maximum sustainable level and requiring the rebuilding of overfished fisheries.

Senator Breaux co-sponsored the Oceans Act of 2000, establishing comprehensive legislation to protect our oceans; he helped form the Senate Boating Caucus; and he was awarded the National Safe Boating Council's Boating Safety Hall of Fame Award in 2000.

His focus has not just been on safety, however – he also saw the need for maritime security. In 2000, a year before the tragic events of September 11, Senator Breaux introduced seaport security legislation to address deficiencies identified in an interagency commission report on crime and security in

U.S. seaports. After September 11, Senator Breaux led port inspections and field hearings across the country; as a result of his on-site inspections nationwide, he introduced legislation that was incorporated into the Maritime Transportation Security Act.

Support for the Coast Guard in the Breaux family is not just limited to the Senator, either. Senator Breaux's lovely wife, Lois, is part of the Coast Guard family, as sponsor to Coast Guard Cutter PELICAN, homeported in Louisiana – and named after Louisiana's state bird. Senator Breaux can also boast that he is an honorary Coast Guard coxswain, having been certified by my predecessor for demonstrating exceptional ship-handling skills while conning Coast Guard Cutter HAMMERHEAD on the Potomac River.

Senator Breaux is well known for his work as a coalition builder on the Hill. We in the Coast Guard have benefited

greatly from his ability to find common ground across the aisle and his work has earned him praise from conservatives, liberals, and moderates. Senator Breaux's diligence as a champion of the Coast Guard and of the maritime security, safety, and environmental protection work we perform on a daily basis has resulted in broad support for our service among members of Congress.

Like Commodore Bertholf, Senator Breaux understands the unique position the Coast Guard occupies within the federal government as both a military and humanitarian service. 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 Senator Breaux to thank for sustaining that vision of national significance.

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

RADM Gaston rises to join you.

Senator Breaux ...

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, on behalf of the entire Coast Guard and with the support of the Navy League of the United States, I am proud to award you the 2004 Commodore Ellsworth P. Bertholf Award.