



All Hands Messages

Accident Involving CG-6505

To the Men and Women of the Coast Guard:

It is with great regret that I inform you of a tragic loss of three of our shipmates. Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Andrew Wischmeier, Aviation Survival Technician First Class (AST1) David Skimin and Aviation Maintenance Technician Second Class (AMT2) Joshua Nichols lost their lives when their HH-65 helicopter crashed five nautical miles south of Honolulu, Hawaii. A fourth member of the crew was also in the aircraft but is still missing. Coast Guard, Navy, Air Force, Hawaii Air National Guard and local fire and police assets will continue searching and we will make every effort to locate our shipmate and wingman.

The incident occurred while the aircrew of CG-6505 was performing small boat hoist operations with a Station Honolulu 47' motor life boat during the early evening hours of 04 September. Immediately after the crash, a Honolulu Fire Department Response Boat recovered LCDR Wischmeier, AST1 Skimin and AMT2 Nichols without any vital signs. The Fire Department boat crew performed CPR and the three Coast Guardsmen were medically evacuated to a local hospital but they did not survive.

Our highest priority now is the families, friends and shipmates of the fallen aircrew. Each one was married with children. Our hearts go out to their loved ones during this difficult time. All of the families have been notified. The entire Coast Guard will provide whatever support services are necessary for the families and crew of Air Station Barbers Point. We will conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the accident to determine the cause and help prevent future incidents.

This terrible accident is a reminder that we operate in an extremely hazardous environment. Coast Guard men and women go into harm's way to train and conduct operations each day. In difficult times, we must re-dedicate ourselves to performing operations safely and effectively. The aircrew of CG-6505 epitomized the Guardian Ethos and the Nation is grateful for their service.

Please join Secretary Chertoff, me and all who serve in taking a moment to reflect on the loss of these Guardians. Please keep their families and fellow crew members in your thoughts and prayers. Find time to also recognize the value of your own loved ones, friends and teammates. Details of the memorial services and how you can express your condolences to the families will be provided when available. I will also notify you of the

search results for the missing member of the aircrew. Thank you for your dedication to the Coast Guard and to each other.

Admiral Thad Allen
Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard

