

**Charting  
the**

**State of the**

**Coast Guard**



In command,  
on course — ADM Robert Kramek

To our distinguished guests and to the men and women of Team Coast Guard, welcome to the annual State of the Coast Guard Address.

It is a privilege for me to see so many people I work with and work for in the audience today. Some of you bear the responsibility for training me, others for assisting me in putting together my visions and goals. I'm also honored to see so many of our fellow law enforcement agencies with us today. We work together all the time in great collegiality, especially in the war on drugs.

Let me begin by saying thank you to everyone. Whether you are in the Coast Guard or in the Department of Transportation or working in a staff job on the Hill, all of you contribute in some way to the Coast Guard's ability to maintain its reputation as lifesavers and guardians of the sea.

In his inaugural address and in the state of the union, the president laid out a plan of action for the nation as we approach the 21st century. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater has vigorously adopted the president's plan and has also outlined his three main goals for the department which are as follows: first, safety; second, infrastructure investment to ensure that America's transportation system meets the needs of the American people; and third, a common-sense approach to running the department so it works better at less cost. The Coast Guard's goals, missions and direction are completely supportive of the president's and the secretary's goals.

As you know, when I became commandant I shared with you my vision and goals. I put together a sail plan that laid out our course that would steer Team Coast Guard through the rocks and shoals that challenged our ability to remain *Semper Paratus* in serving our most valued customer — the American public.

As I look out at the audience this afternoon, I am honored to stand before you and report that the State of the Coast Guard is strong. It's strong because we are living our vision and goals. We have demonstrated to the nation that our performance exemplifies our leadership culture of honor, respect and devotion to duty.

Because of your performance, we have remained on course as we continue our journey to being the world's premiere maritime service. Around the clock, 365 days a year, the Coast Guard works to make a difference for America.

Today, I want to share with you the

State of the Coast Guard in three separate areas. First, some sea stories about our mission performance. Second, the status of some key initiatives that are underway. And last, our strategic plan for the future, a first peak at Coast Guard Vision 2020.

First, I would like to describe the Coast Guard's accomplishments in terms of the five major missions that we perform — missions that the citizens of the United States look to us to provide.

The first and most important is maritime safety. The American public counts on us to save their lives and their property. As the federal agency having responsibility for



PAC Alastair Worden, AMVER, previous photo by PA1 Telfair Brown, G-CP-1a

maritime search and rescue, this last year we responded to more than 44,000 search-and-rescue cases, we saved over 4,900 lives, while assisting another 88,000 people and saving \$3.7 billion in property.

Every eight minutes, Team Coast Guard conducted a search-and-rescue mission. By their nature, search-and-rescue cases usually happen in stormy weather, in the middle of the night and even worse, in the dead of winter.

Indeed, this was the setting just a couple of months ago in the 1st District when two fishing vessels sank during a severe nor'easter of howling winds, heavy seas, deep darkness and frigid cold. Late on the night of Jan. 16, the fishing vessel *Trinity* broadcast a distress call saying it was sinking 63 miles south of Long Island, N.Y. The CGC *Seneca* was on patrol and quickly diverted to the scene. Air Station Cape Cod launched a Jayhawk helicopter. When the helo arrived at the scene, it found that the *Trinity*'s five crewmembers had abandoned ship into a life raft, which was being brutally tossed about in 45-knot winds and 20-foot seas. At great risk, the helicopter lowered its only rescue swimmer into the treacherous high seas. The rescue swimmer assisted in lifting three of the crew to safety.

The weather was so severe and forbidding, that even the rescue swimmer, a young man in top physical condition, was completely exhausted.

Two of the *Trinity*'s crew were still awaiting rescue. One of the toughest decisions was made by the flight crew. They were exhausted, they couldn't do anymore. They had to call for help. However, by this time the *Seneca* was on the scene and swiftly proceeded to rescue the remaining two crewmembers. Of particular note was the exceptional seamanship displayed by *Seneca* in moving alongside a life raft in extremely heavy seas. Seamanship so skillful, it was admired by the oldest salts in the Coast Guard.

About the same time, the crew of the *Trinity* was being rescued, approximately 200 miles away to the east of Cape Cod, the fishing vessel *Commodore* activated its emergency locator beacon and radioed for help as its crew aban-

doned ship into 15-foot seas and 30-knot winds. A Coast Guard *Falcon* aircraft, already airborne and assisting yet another vessel off the coast of Maine was immediately diverted to the scene. A Jayhawk helicopter was launched. It located the *Commodore*'s crew in a life raft. Two rescue swimmers were deployed into the water. They quickly proceeded with a daring and successful rescue of all six crewmembers.

Consequently, in the span of a few hours on a single wintry New England night, our Coast Guard saved 11 people from certain death. We're glad to have with us today the rescue swimmer from the SAR case involving the fishing vessel *Trinity* and the aircraft commander from the SAR case with the fishing vessel *Commodore*. ASM2 Ronald Eigenmann and LT Felix Danz, please stand and be recognized.

Our impact on American citizens and families isn't reserved for stormy nights, it is constant and continuous. An estimated 76 million Americans participate in recreational boating. A major activity with, unfortunately, too many injuries and deaths. The single most important safety intervention is for boaters to wear life jackets. Nine out of 10 boating-fatality victims drown because they aren't wearing a life jacket. We have to work hard to continue to get this important safety message out. The states are vital to helping us in this situation. They are our boating-safety partners. In January of this year, the president of National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, Ed Carter, and I signed a memorandum of agreement formally validating a long-standing cooperative partnership between the Coast Guard and the states. Our mutual goal is to provide safe and enjoyable use of our nation's waterways. Ed is here with us today. Ed, please stand and be recognized. Thanks again for your tremendous support and for joining me in this partnership.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is 34,000 members strong. They have joined with State to support recreational-boater training in reducing boating fatalities. In 1996, these extraordinary volunteers taught over 68,000 boating-safety courses, reaching over 550,000 Americans. They held 174,000 courtesy-marine exams of vessels. Auxiliaryists, such as Janet Teller, a qualified auxiliary coxswain, play a key role in getting the message out by teaching water safety. Throughout her community in the state of New Jersey last year, she provided instruction to over 200 boaters. Janet will you please stand and be recognized.

Every 8 minutes team Coast Guard is making a difference in someone's life. On an October afternoon in Memphis,

and eliminate interruptions to the economic movement of goods and people.

People often ask me why the Coast Guard is in the Department of Transportation. Well, this is one of the many reasons.

We work around the clock to enhance the safe flow of commerce along America's shores and major waterways — from breaking ice on the Great Lakes, where we assisted or escorted nearly 700 vessels last year, to helping restore navigational markers on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers after the tremendous floods that are taking place there today — to the replacement of our buoy tender fleet. The development and deployment of more efficient aids to navigation have improved our service to the mariner and achieved substantial savings at the same time. This includes the construction of 30 new buoy tenders.

One of the new services that we are very proud of doesn't take any people to man. It is called Differential GPS. Since January 1996, when Secretary Peña helped throw the switch for this new 48-station unmanned system, the Coast Guard has operated a nationwide maritime differential global positioning service which augments the GPS standard positioning service. To quote a chief petty officer from the 13th District, 'Differential GPS is the best of the best!' This statement highlights the efficiency that this system has brought to our day-to-day missions. Navigational accuracy to within five meters within 200 miles of the coast, day or night, clear weather or fog ... it's a great success.

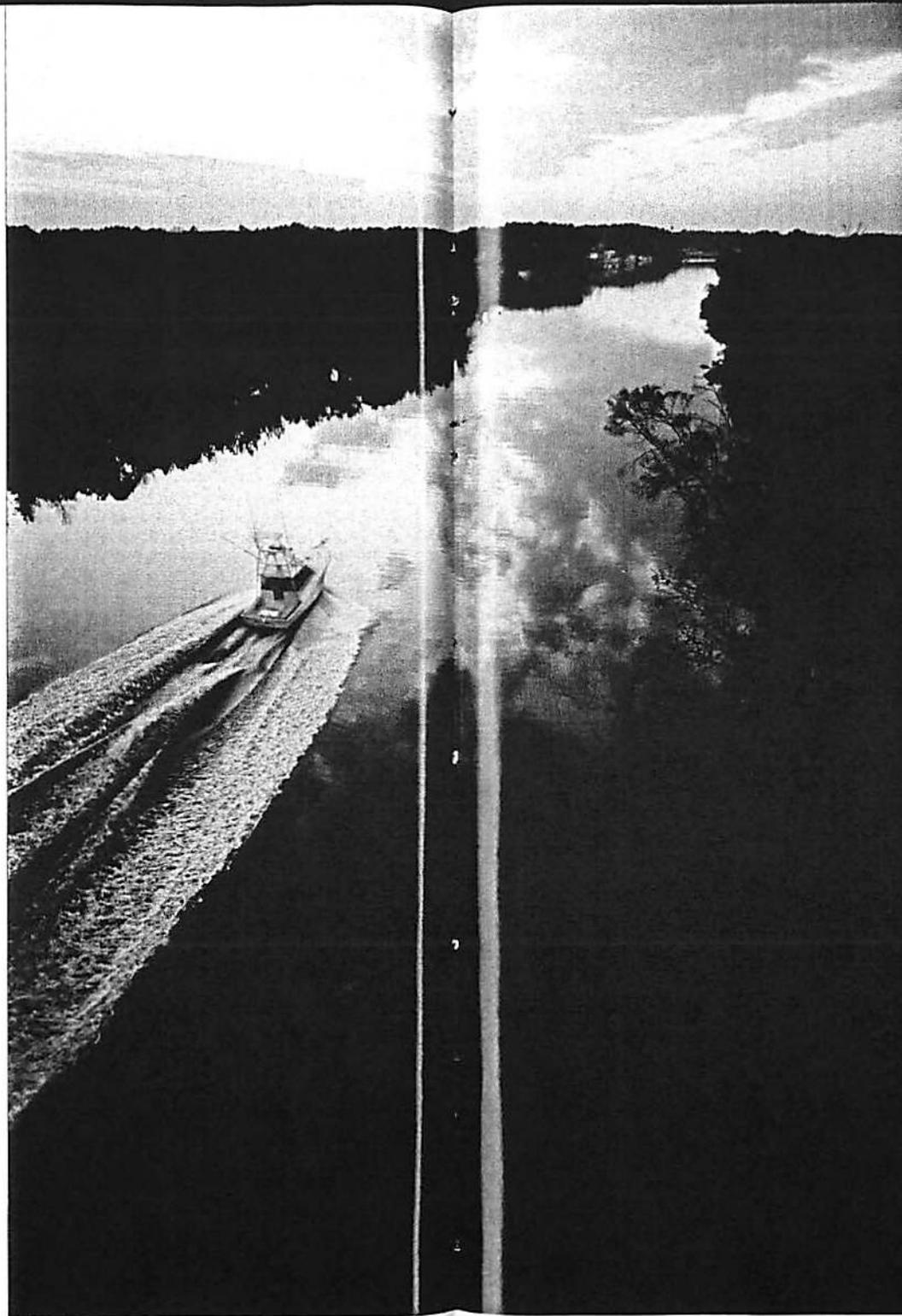
In turning to the fourth critical service, maritime law enforcement, I can truly say that the Coast Guard is always there to protect our maritime borders from all intrusions, whether by halting the flow of both illegal drugs and aliens or by enforcing fisheries. All together, these law enforcement operations account for a third of everything we do.

The Coast Guard is the only armed force with law enforcement authority and therefore is in a unique position to balance the military capabilities of the armed forces and the law enforcement efforts of other federal agencies. This is probably why I have been given a collateral duty as U.S. interdiction coordinator. Collateral duties are not just reserved for ensigns, I found that out.

As the U.S. interdiction coordinator, I work with our federal counterparts in putting together a coherent strategy for dealing with the counter narcotics flow into the United States.

I want to thank the law enforcement agencies that are here today. You work together with the Coast Guard in such a supportive and collegial way.

The Coast Guard is the lead agency for maritime interdiction of drugs and co-lead with Customs for air interdiction. More important,



Tom Gillespie

we are a close knit team of professionals dedicated to keeping drugs out of this country and away from our children. We are on the front lines of our nation's drug interdiction effort. During Thanksgiving, I visited with our men and women participating in Operation Frontier Shield, which complements Customs Operation Gateway and Drug Enforcement Agency operations also underway in Puerto Rico. As you know, Frontier Shield is a prototype effort to deny drug smugglers trafficking routes into Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Coast Guard ships from as far away as California, aircraft from up and down the East Coast and the Great Lakes and personnel from all over America have been pulled together to augment the existing Coast Guard forces in the Caribbean.

Not all of our people are operating ships, boats or planes. Many are working at forward operating bases to provide maintenance and logistics support. They have the less visible jobs such as our auxiliaries and reserves; backfilling for personnel who are forward deployed. While they are not in the limelight, their work is critical to the operation's success. Their tireless efforts keep the planes flying and the cutters underway.

From Oct. 1 to March 1, the first five months of Operation Frontier Shield, we have sighted 17,968 vessels, and we have boarded 892 of them. The results were 19,000 pounds of cocaine seized, 11 vessels seized, 35 arrests, 24,000 pounds of cocaine was aborted and thrown over the side, and we intercepted 2,237 illegal migrants trying to enter Puerto Rico. We kept 195 million cocaine doses off the streets of America!

Our joint efforts with Customs, DEA, DOD and foreign governments to interdict drugs is paying off. The seizure of the fishing vessel Don Celso is a fine example of international cooperation and joint interagency operation.

Based on law enforcement intelligence last October the U.S. Navy Cruiser Ticonderoga intercepted the Ecuadorian fishing vessel Don Celso a 165-foot tuna seiner in the Eastern Pacific, off the coast of Columbia.

A Coast Guard boarding team deployed from the Ticonderoga. Initially, the Don Celso refused efforts to board. Finally it allowed a consensual boarding. The master was very evasive. The boarding team discovered that the crew had filled the voids and fish tanks with ammonia, making the boarding very dangerous and complex.

After receiving a statement of no objection, the ship was escorted by our forces to meet with the Ecuadorian navy, which then escorted the ship into Ecuador.

GM2 Thompson, the boarding officer, and two other law enforcement detachment members, were left on the Don Celso to assist the Ecuadorians with the search. The crew of the

you can run, but you can't hide.

cocaine



bad guys

"We're going to hunt you down, we're going to kick you out and we're going to keep you out"  
— ADM Robert Kramek on Operation Frontier Shield

always there, always protecting AMERICA

Don Celso kept filling up the voids with ammonia each night. U.S. and Ecuadorian officials were very concerned about the threats to our boarding crew.

After six days of searching, the law enforcement detachment team located all the cocaine in hidden compartments. The team found 15,000 pounds of cocaine, the second largest maritime cocaine seizure in Coast Guard history. I had an opportunity to meet with Thompson and I would like for you to meet him also. Petty Officer Thompson, please stand and be recognized.

Migrant interdiction remains a high-profile mission for us. This last year, our migrant interdictions increased to over 9,000. This increase is a direct result of an extensive operation mounted by the Coast Guard, the Border Patrol and Customs in the Mona Pass to interdict migrants attempting to enter Puerto Rico.

Last month, while on a routine patrol, an aircraft located a 35-foot yola, that is a wooden canoe with an outboard motor on it, with 105 migrants on board. The yola was trying to make its way across the rough Mona Pass to Puerto Rico from the Dominican Republic.

The CGC Courageous was diverted to the scene. When it arrived, the Courageous found the overloaded yola on the verge of sinking. While the cutter's small boats were being lowered, the passengers got anxious, shifted weight in the vessel and capsized it, putting 105 people in the water. Quickly assessing the situation, the Courageous crew rescued 104 people. This was an interdiction effort that also resulted in saving the lives of 104 people.

In looking at our fifth critical service, national defense, I can proudly state that for over 207 years of war and peace we have protected America's interest. We have and will always be there to support our country's national security. Our role in jointness with our sister services in the Department of Defense has never been better. As General Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated, 'Your people perform superbly. You are right there when needed. We can always rely on the Coast Guard.'

And that is true whether it is off the coast of Cuba or in other parts of the world. Our preparedness was exemplified by our performance during the deployment of the high-endurance cutters Gallatin and Morgenthau this last year. The Morgenthau deployed to the Arabian Gulf to help enforce the embargo against Iraq. The cutter also conducted professional seminars in Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Qatar and SAR exercises in Hong Kong. The Gallatin deployed to the European command and conducted operations with the U.S. 6th Fleet as well as multinational operations with many nations in the Mediterranean, Baltic and Black Seas including the Republic of Georgia, Estonia and Bulgaria. The Gallatin conducted operations with many former Eastern Bloc

nations. It not only paved the way for follow-on multi-national naval operations, but assisted these nations in developing a maritime service, rather than power-projecting navies.

We are presently updating our international strategic plan and creating an international engagement plan to more efficiently and effectively match our abilities with the foreign policy and national security needs of the United States. Last year, we trained personnel from over 100 nations, from the jungles of Peru and Bolivia to the coast of Africa. This May, the first Russian student will graduate from the Coast Guard Academy in our international program.

As I said earlier, I wanted to update you on some key Coast Guard initiatives that are underway.

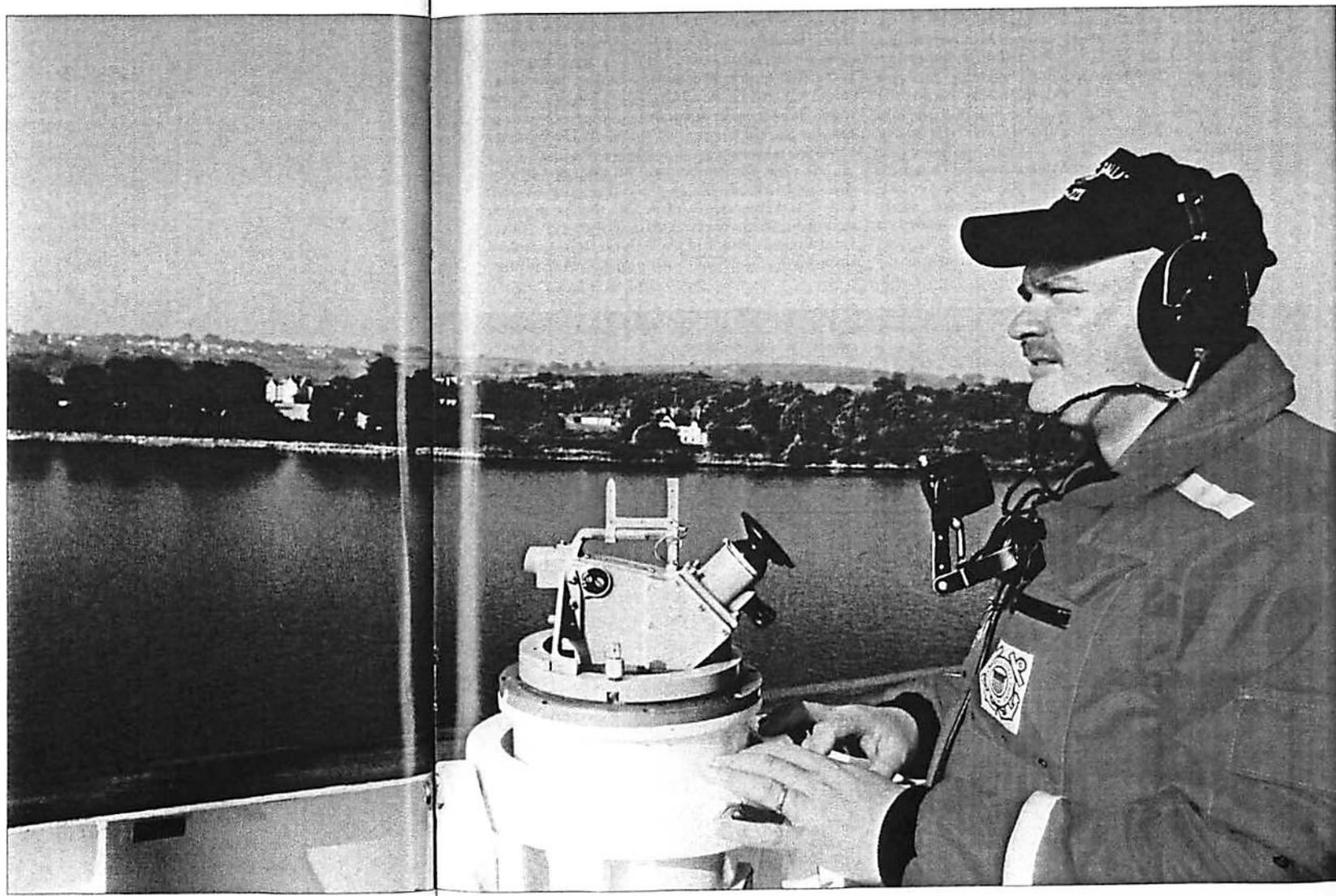
Quality management. How are we doing? How are we coming along with our leadership development program? What is the status of our Workforce Cultural Audit? How are we doing on some of our personnel support issues? Are we done with streamlining? These are the questions most often asked as I visit the men and women throughout the Coast Guard.

In reviewing the status of quality management, our principles of quality are more important than ever to our success as an organization.

Earlier this month I met with the quality council to establish three themes that we will concentrate on to improve our program for the coming year — leadership, alignment and innovation. We have begun a leadership development program and we are setting up a leadership development center at the Coast Guard Academy.

We are in the early stages of that journey, but it is time that all our leaders are trained with one faculty in one place. This gives us that great advantage of using the academy 365 days a year, and it also lowers student cost significantly.

My leadership goal is to promote and develop quality leadership and management throughout



PAC Alastair Worden, ANVER

the entire organization. This morning I had the opportunity to present the John Witherspoon Leadership Award to LT Russell Davidson.

Davidson was nominated for this award by his commanding officer, CAPT Cornell, who said, "Lieutenant Davidson continually exhibits the highest degree of personal integrity and ethical conduct, setting an example in his daily life that is a true inspiration to others. His devotion to duty is unmatched. He is the most dedicated, adept, hard-working, and professional junior officer I have ever seen. I am struck by the fact that he is a mentor as we all should be. The personnel that he has mentored are having tremendous success; one was selected for Officer Candidate School, one is going to be commanding officer aboard a 65-foot harbor tug, and one is going to be officer in charge of a shore station. They were all enlisted personnel. Davidson is to be commended for his high degree of personal integrity and professionalism. He has truly carried on the ideals of CAPT John Witherspoon and is an example for all of us to follow. Lieutenant Russell Davidson please stand and be recognized."

Let me say a word about alignment, which means that your crew knows their mission and the requirements of their job. It means that your crew works together, that the leader has broken down barriers that prevent cooperation and efficiency. It basically means they do the right thing right the first time.

Creating alignment and commitment to innovation are the responsibility of all of our leaders, from chief petty officers to district commanders. Everyone is in a leadership position in the Coast Guard.

Innovation is critical. We must, through both technology and process improvement, find ways to do things better and do things for less cost. One of the ways we are going to achieve this is to take quality operational. What does that mean? In the Pacific Area, the CGC Munro will take the lead as the Exemplar Project, and the CGC Dependable has been chosen as the laboratory for the Atlantic Area's Paragon Project. These vessels will examine shipboard processes using a quality approach to explore innovation in technology, revisions to doctrine and smarter ways of doing business.

Basically, all operations on our cutters are processes. Every operation, whether it's getting underway for sea, conducting a boarding, launching or landing a helicopter, or preventative maintenance to machinery, will be described in terms of processes.

The crew and captain will be given great freedom and flexibility to improve processes or even redesign them. So much freedom that we're going to relieve them of the burden of current Coast Guard regulations and procedures that we've had since World War II. It's time to get on with our

new technology. Let's get on to making process improvement work operationally, where 66 percent of our costs are people costs.

The goal of the projects is to determine methods to safely and effectively operate our ships, while maintaining current operational standards, and with less workload for our personnel. To do this, I have complete trust and confidence in the ability of these cutter crews to develop new innovative methods to work smarter and more efficiently.

We must seek out new and innovative methods to provide excellent and efficient service to the public and still retain a balanced work-life environment for all employees. I do not want you to work harder than you already are. Rather, we will channel our energies to implement technology and quality management to improve how we work.

What is the status of the workforce cultural audit? This is a key initiative that 6,000 of us had an opportunity to participate in. I feel it was a very brave thing for the Coast Guard to conduct this survey. The survey asked over 300 questions, which included some measurement of 23 different dimensions in our work environment. We received a lot of data. We have hired some consultants to help us analyze it. The dimensions were broken down into 13 areas of concern. A number of core problems were identified that prevent us in our working environ-

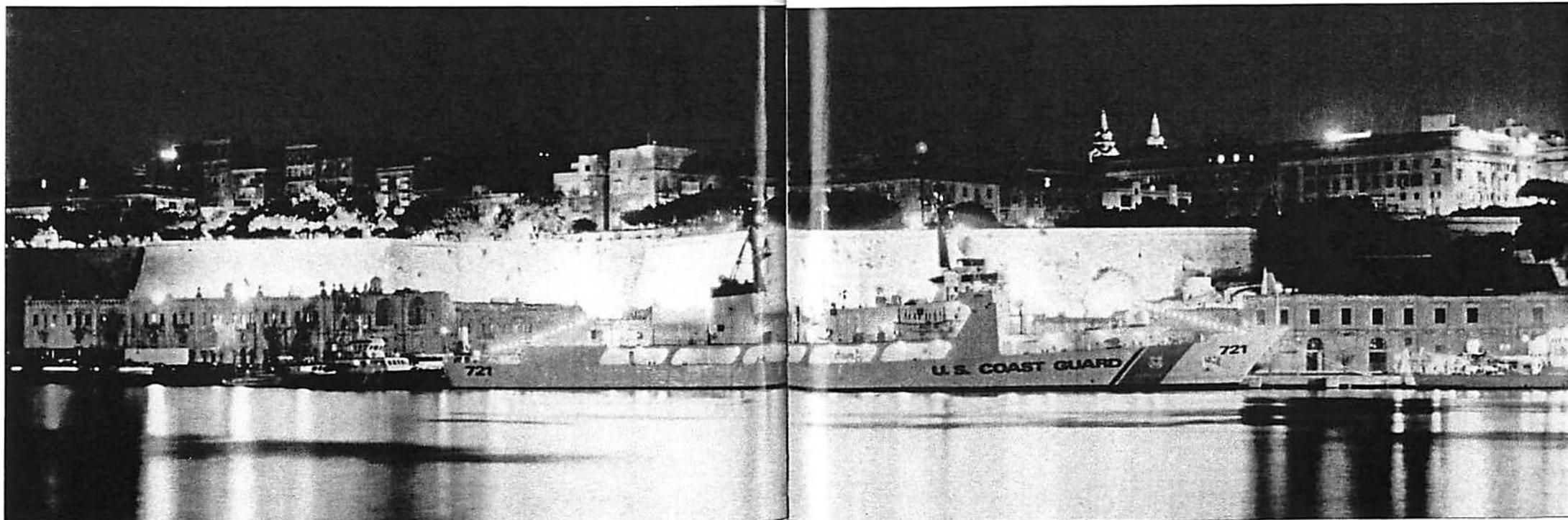
ment from achieving our full potential.

We identified the problems not just by the surveys, but also by holding 40 focus groups throughout the Coast Guard. We asked our men and women why they answered the questions the way they did. The why is now being published as the core type of problems we have in our work force and working environment.

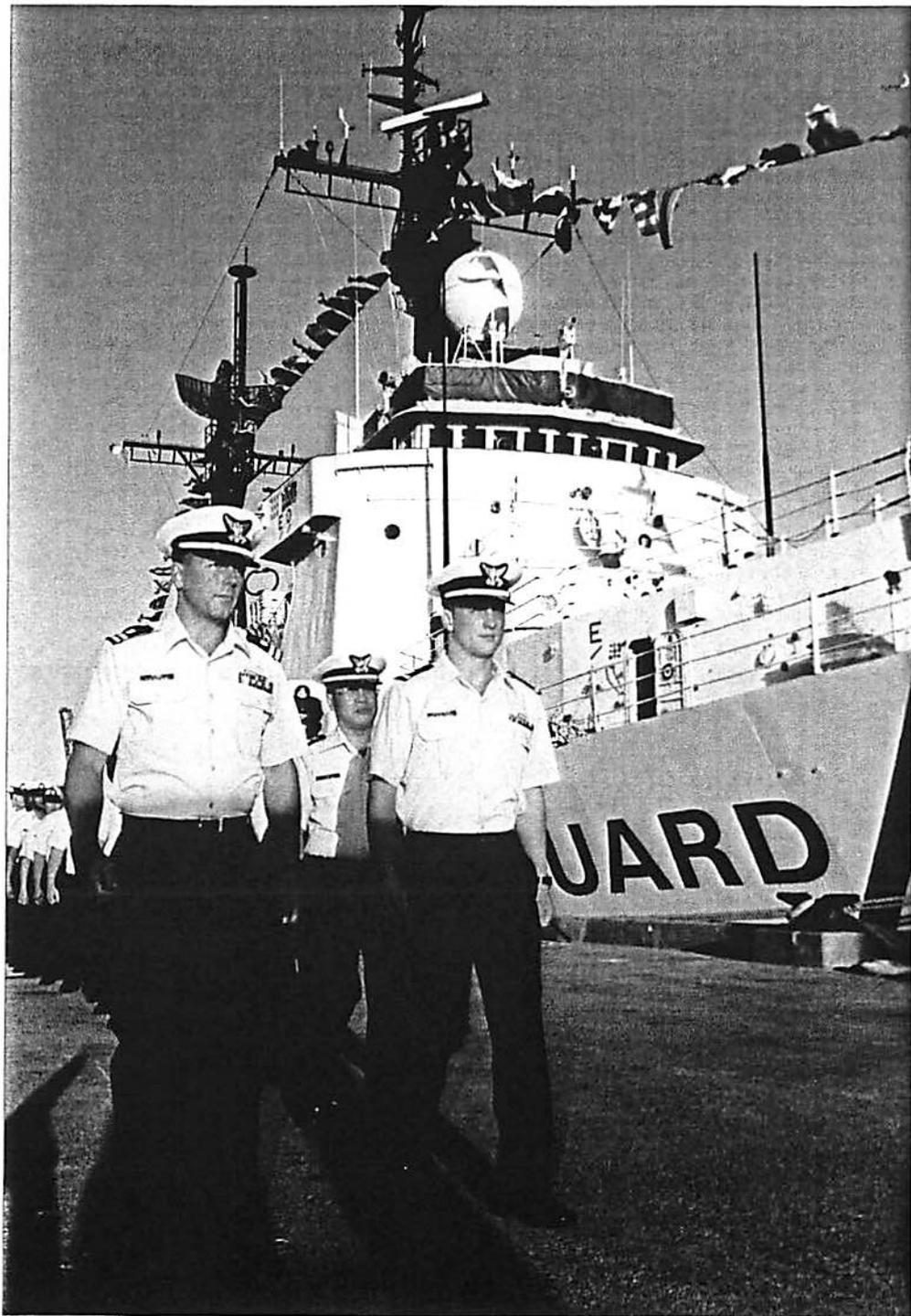
Through the chief of staff, I have tasked the entire flag corps in the next 60 days with listing every core problem and developing a time-oriented plan for the solutions. This will be presented to you two months from now, so that all men and women of the Coast Guard will know both the answers to the workforce cultural audit and what is the Coast Guard's plan to eliminate every one of the barriers that are preventing us from being successful in our work place.

I hope that what we have done is a model for the Department of Transportation. When we first undertook this effort, I did it with the great encouragement of Secretary Peña. It was to be a model for the other modes. So I am hopeful that based on our success, the other modes will conduct their own work force cultural audit and make their working environment as healthy and challenging as the Coast Guard's will be.

I want to mention several other personnel support issues because they are important to our people. There are a lot of retirees in the audience and



PAC Alastair Worden, AMVER



we are going to make sure your retired pay keeps coming. We're also going to make sure that our health care is preserved.

As a member of the TriCare system, you have to know that we're meeting day and night with DOD to make sure the Coast Guard has total equity as far as our compensation, our health care and our entitlements are concerned.

There are people in the audience who are members of the military coalition, which represents over 4 million personnel in the armed forces. Although many of them are retired, they help to get the message across to the administration and to Congress, that even though we're a member of the Department of Transportation and paid out of Function 400, we are a member of the armed forces. We have been since 1790. We need the compatibility and the entitlements that all the other members of the armed forces have. I want to thank all those members who are here from both the retirees' council and the military coalition that help us in this regard.

We have major new programs underway in housing. It's improving!

We have 38 chaplains, and they are all as good as Chaplain Skip Blancette, who gave the invocation today. They are a fired-up bunch. Our chaplains made over 3,000 visits to Coast Guard units. Most of them were underway at sea. They personally counseled over 8,000 people this last year and conducted over 1,000 worship services. They are a tremendous addition to our work-life staff support.

We have just gotten authorization for enhancing our child development centers. This will provide some subsidizing and payment to teachers which will lower the cost of child care for parents of infants and parents of children with special needs. This authorization will make the centers more affordable for enlisted or civilian personnel who can't afford child development centers.

We are doing a lot about making sea duty more desirable for our people. You know, you can't do away with all the shoreside billets for cooks, send them all to sea and expect that you're going to have a lot more cooks signing up. These initiatives include carry-over of accrued leave for cutters deployed for periods in excess of 60 days; career sea pay for crews of 65-foot cutters; and authority to delay administration of service-wide examinations because of Optempo.

We also have a new performance plan for all of our civilian employees, whether you are just starting out as a civilian employee, or you are a GS-15. The new performance plan we're going to put together for you will be fair and represent the goals and objectives you are working on.

I would like to end this session with a word about streamlining. What is the status? As I travel around the Coast Guard, people are very fearful that we are going to reduce the force even more than we have already.

We successfully responded to the president's mandate for better government at less cost. We

have achieved that goal. It's been a team effort, and we have received tremendous support from the Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and our authorization and appropriations committees.

Without the staffers' support on putting together the four-year multi-year budget strategy, this plan would never have been successful. The Coast Guard has saved in gross terms nearly \$400 million annually. More than 4,000 positions have been eliminated. We are the smallest we have been in personnel since 1963.

When streamlining savings are considered cumulatively, the Coast Guard will have saved the American taxpayers more than \$2.6 billion by the year 2002, all at a time that when service demands have been increased.

We have not eliminated any service to the public. However, I am concerned that we are still doing business the old way. Not with the new streamlined process, not taking enough advantage of quality management or new information technology systems and equipment. We need to adapt and we need to accelerate the use of new technology such as the new ships that are coming on line, new information systems such as Standard Work Station III, and the use of new technologies such as GPS.

Now the future. What does the future look like for us? What's on the other side of that bridge to the 21st century for the Coast Guard? Our view of the future will be reflected in our new strategic plan called vision 2020.

There are some members here today from the Center of Naval Analysis who are helping us to describe that plan. This plan envisions the Coast Guard having increased value to our nation in the 21st century.

The United States isn't going to change geographically. We'll still be an island nation. The Coast Guard's role will be as traditional as it was in 1790. But maritime commerce will triple in the next 20 years in our ports and waterways. Mega-ships will require mega-ports and safe and efficient waterways for us to maintain our competitiveness in the global market.

Information technology will continue to grow significantly, impacting our transportation system.

Depletion and restoration of the world's fisheries will continue to need increasing management and enforcement.

Protection of the maritime environment will require greater compliance and restoration. We will move from response to accidents toward prevention of accidents.

Illegal immigrants, especially by sea, will continue to flood toward our shores. The Dominican Republic, China, Haiti, Cuba and Mexico are all seeking a better economic life and are headed toward the land of milk and honey. Drug smuggling will continue to be a major threat, especially by maritime routes.

Large increases of people moving to the coastal areas will require increased safety for boaters and

marine traffic as the demand for multiple use of waterways increases.

The threat of global war will continue to diminish, but operations other than war, which we're perhaps more familiar with as a limited intensity conflict or peacekeeping, will increase. These are non-traditional missions for the Department of Defense, but traditional missions for the Coast Guard.

The need for our expertise, operating jointly as a member of the armed forces, is increasing, especially for our training of foreign nations and the skills we possess.

The Coast Guard of 2020 will continue to be a service that saves and protects lives and property, and protects the environment. We'll safely and efficiently provide the leadership to properly manage America's waterways. Ninety-five percent of our import and export tonnage, and 25 percent of all domestic commerce, flows on the waterways of the United States.

We'll always be prepared to defend our nation by maintaining a ready force of military professionals and platform, with experience and expertise to be made immediately available, either individually or jointly with the other armed forces.

We'll continue to be known and recognized as a leader in government for our commitment to quality management, and a recognized Baldrige Award winner. We will be an armed force and more. We will achieve our goal of being the world's premier maritime service.

As I look over the bridge to the 21st century, I see a new Coast Guard fleet of cutters and aircraft, optimally designed and sized to meet our deep water and coastal zone responsibilities. The buoy tenders, coastal patrol boats, motor life boats and buoy boats are already contracted for and under construction and are arriving in the fleet.

The CGC Juniper and Keeper-class tenders, 30 in all, are replacing our 50-year old buoy tender fleet. These cutters are automated, efficient, powerful and very capable. They are manned with only two-thirds the crew size to half the crew size of our existing ships.

The Barracuda-class 87-foot patrol boat will replace our aged 82-foot patrol boats with innovative boat handling installations, tremendous sea-keeping ability, automation, high speed and accommodation for mixed gender crews.

You know about the new 47-foot motor lifeboat that's under construction to replace the 30-year old 44-foot MLB, and the 49-foot BUSL, under construction at our own quality award-winning shipyard, the Coast Guard Yard. But more replacements are needed. The 378-foot high endurance cutters and 210-foot medium endurance cutters are over 30 years old,

and will soon be at the end of their service lives. The same will soon be true for our C-130 aircraft.

I am accelerating Concept Exploration for replacement of these cutters and aircraft. The designs will have high endurance and 'long legs' to operate in the Aleutians, the Bering Sea, the Pacific, the North Atlantic, the Gulf of Alaska and the deep Caribbean.

I envision cutters that can stay underway for 60 days without replenishment, are capable of sprint speeds in excess of 30 knots, are flight-deck equipped, fully automated, and outfitted with

combat systems that provide the capability to meet our assigned joint responsibilities as members of the armed forces. These cutters will be inexpensive, perhaps only one-fourth the cost of current Navy designs, and be crewed with less than 80 people. All of our new cutters and aircraft will incorporate the latest command, control, communications computers and intelligence systems to ensure total compatibility with our sister services as we contribute jointly to meeting future threats.

What else, you ask? Well, the first scientific polar icebreaker, the CGC Healey, is under construction now and will launch this fall. It will bring America's scientists to the furthest reaches of the Arctic and Antarctic.

The CGC Mackinaw, our 52-year old Great Lakes icebreaker, may soon be replaced, perhaps with a dual draft icebreaker that will operate in the Great Lakes during the winter, and the eastern Arctic in the summer. All large buoy tenders in the Great Lakes, the Northeast and Alaska will be ice strengthened to facilitate domestic commerce, besides tending aids to navigation.

We'll have fewer aircraft, and ships and

boats because we'll be able to see in the night, maneuver in the fog, and navigate within 5-meter accuracy using GPS. We'll be using novel integrated logistic support systems that will reduce crew sizes. GPS alone will eliminate the need for many of our floating aids to navigation, requiring fewer service vessels.

Vision 2020 describes a Coast Guard that is a quality organization, uses the best information technology, is an example of smaller government at less cost, but meets customer service requirements. A Coast Guard that is even more Semper Paratus than it is today. A Coast Guard that has the best working environment of any organization in America, that has a work force that is fully supported, productive, and looks like America! A Coast Guard that is proud of being the lifesavers and guardians of the sea, and maintains our reputation as the premier maritime service in the world.

I am excited by what I see on the other side of that bridge, but I need your help to get there; your talent, your leadership and your hard work. You and I know that our success now and into the next century depends on our people; Team Coast Guard working together, all of you, with all the attributes that made our predecessors successful, including honor, respect and devotion to duty. I thank you for all that you do for America.

I would like to conclude with a short prayer. Prayer for the Coast Guard: To breathe upon the waters and give life, to safeguard the law, to rescue the floundering souls from their private peril. these are the traits of the God of history.

In their own ways, dear Lord, the men and women of the Coast Guard have worked to imitate your ways and manner since those first cutter ships set sail in 1790. Their boldness and courage have encircled this land with a new prayer of hope, a cry of salvation rising from your imperiled, abandoned and lost, a phrase cherished by all the people of this land of promise. It resounds from coast to coast with the simple declaration, 'Here comes the Coast Guard!'

Therefore, on this day we invoke your blessing upon this, the oldest continuous sea-going service of this young nation. Bless our ships and our crews. Bless those who command and those who serve. Since in your timelessness, you are as present in 1790 as you are in the present day. Bless this new world, laden with old sins, bless our president, bless our secretary, bless our country and especially bless our Coast Guard.

And we promise you, dear Lord, that if you do not abandon these turbulent waters, then neither shall we. Amen. ☆☆☆

State of the Coast Guard is an insert to the April 1997 issue of Coast Guard. Creative design and editing by PAI Pete Milnes, G-CP-1b. Cover photo by PAC Alastair Worden, AMVER

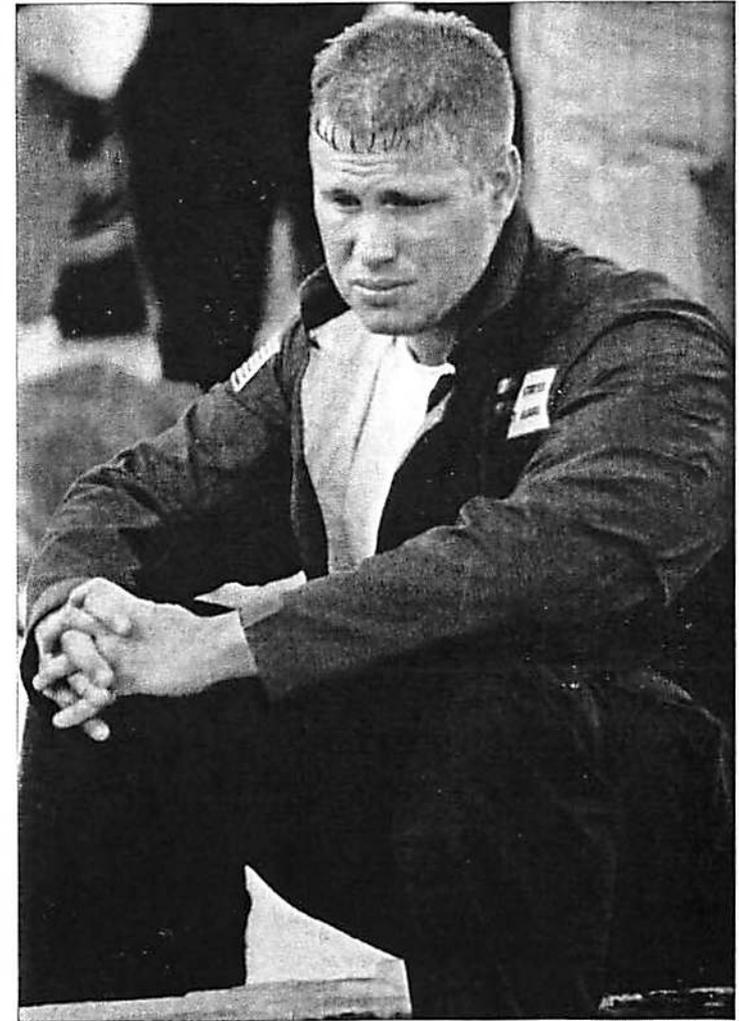


PA2 Al Bennet, ACP

189 people die when Alas Airlines Flight 301 crashes into the sea 13 miles off the Dominican Republic.

1,215 passengers die when a ferryboat capsizes off the coast of Haiti.

TWA Flight 800 plunges into Long Island Sound shortly after takeoff, killing all 230 passengers on board.



Courtesy Miami Herald photo department

Exhilaration,  
anticipation,  
hope,  
then despair —  
search-and-rescue  
work often is an  
emotional  
roller coaster for  
Coast Guard  
men and women.



around the clock • around the world • the U.S. Coast Guard