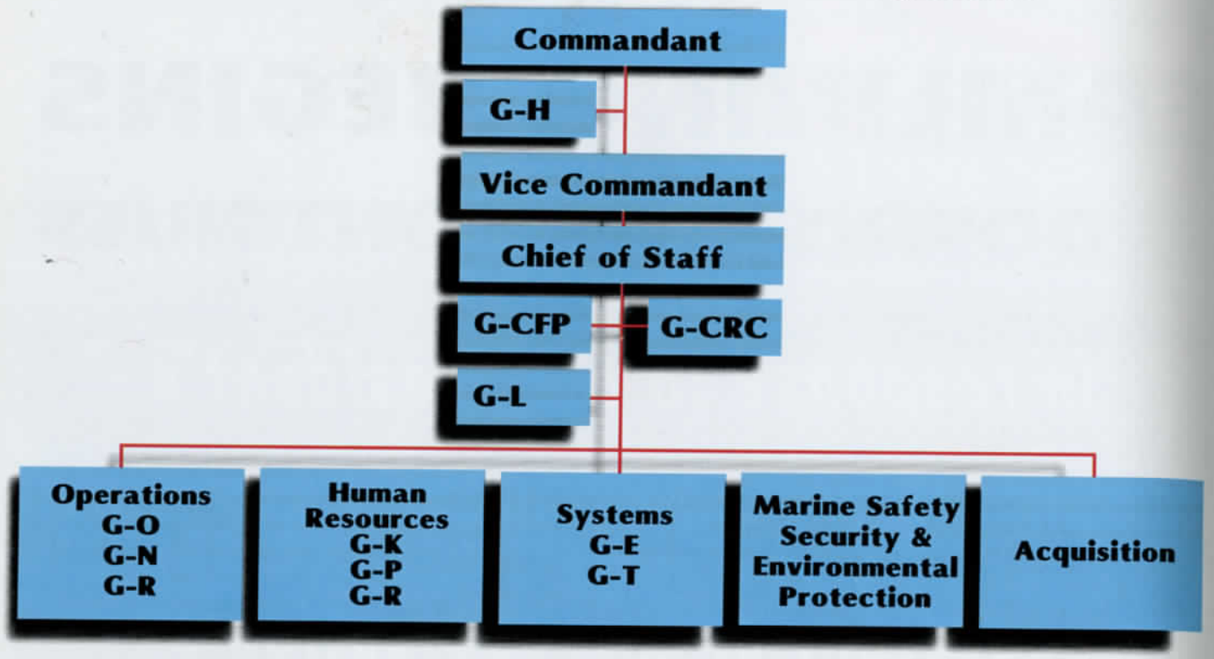
Photo by PA3 Trent Jones

SEAMLINING BEGINS

DOWNSIZING CONTINUES

In response to the president's mandate for change and the secretary of transportation's determination to meet the goals of the National Performance Review and the Government Performance Results Act, the Coast Guard positions itself for the next decade's challenges ...

Proposed Headquarters structure



Headquarters, the districts, maintenance and logistics commands and support centers are about to be streamlined. This is the latest part of a four-year belt-tightening initiative required of the Coast Guard and other federal agencies.

Between 1994 and 1998 the Coast Guard must cut about 4,000 people and save $400 million. The Coast Guard will accomplish the cuts by downsizing and streamlining. Downsizing will account for 75 percent of the reductions. Streamlining will account for 25 percent.

Downsizing involves cuts without changing the basic structure of the service. An example would be what happened to recruiting field offices. Several recruiting offices were cut. The remaining offices had to cover large geographic areas.

Streamlining involves changing the organization without affecting the public. An example would be what happened to the recruiting-support system. Several years ago there were district recruiting supervisors overseeing and supporting that district's recruiters. This support system was reduced to three regional offices and recently reduced to one office. During each of these changes, the Coast Guard was able to reduce recruiting-support staff without cutting field recruiters. The public did not notice the change.

Fiscal 1994/'95 cuts were part of downsizing. Approximately 2,300 civilian and military members, 15 cutters and 14 aircraft were cut and $149 million saved without changes to the structure of the Coast Guard.

For fiscal 1996, the Coast Guard is proposing to continue downsizing by cutting an additional 870 people, three cutters, three aircraft and 23 smallboat stations. At press time this proposal had not been passed by Congress.

The Coast Guard will also cut 1,400 positions and save $100 million through streamlining during fiscal 1996/'97. These changes will affect the way Coast Guard units are supported but should be invisible to the public. This proposal has been accepted by the administration and is now with Congress.

Streamlining changes

Headquarters will be reduced from 2,400 people to about 1,800. Three hundred people will move out of the building.

"Almost all of the people who interact with the public will be moved out of headquarters," CAPT Jim Doherty of the Streamlining Implementation Team, said. "Headquarters will deal with the administration and Congress, and provide policy, planning and resources to the field. Resources involve money, replacement of assets and changes in billets."

The Engineering and Logistics Center at the Yard, Curtis Bay, Md., and the National Maritime Center, Arlington, Va., are examples of commands created by moving people from headquarters.

"Neither one of these commands make policy," Doherty said. "The Engineering Logistic Center implements policy to support Coast Guard units, and the National Maritime Center deals directly with merchant mariners, shipyards and other external customers."

Area and district offices will also be streamlined. The districts will concentrate on command and control of operational units.

The 2nd District office in St. Louis will be merged with the 8th District in New Orleans. A senior captain will remain as director of western rivers operations in St Louis. The 11th District office in Long Beach, Calif., will move to Alameda, Calif., and merge with the Pacific Area office. Atlantic Area and MLCLant will leave Governors Island, N.Y., and merge with the 5th District office in Portsmouth, Va.

New operational commands, called Activities, will be opened in New York, Baltimore, Corpus Christi and San Diego. Activities will merge operations centers, communications centers and support staff of groups, marine safety offices and other units where possible. The goal is to draw together port operations and better use resources.

District support to units will move to MLCs and support centers. Personnel, financial and industrial support will be provided by these units.

Integrated Support Commands will be created. They will be super support centers for Coast Guard units. The ISCs will be located in Boston, Portsmouth, Va., Miami, Cleveland, New Orleans, St. Louis, Honolulu, San Pedro, Calif., Alameda, Calif., Seattle, and Ketchikan and Kodiak, Alaska.

"The support centers and MLCs already have support functions," Doherty said. "By concentrating support functions there instead of at the districts we will be able to decrease personnel and save money without hurting service to the field."

Because of the changes, $15 to $20 million will be saved.

All operations will be moved from Governors Island by the end of fiscal 1997. The *CGCs Dallas* and *Gallatin* will move to Charleston, S.C., and a new activity will be established on Staten Island, N.Y., to handle the needs of New York harbor.

The research and development program, and electronic, communications and computer-support systems will also be streamlined. There will be a combined military and civilian personnel command in the Washington, D.C. area. From these initiatives, $3 to $4 million will be saved and a total of 1,350 positions will be eliminated.

Training

Along with the streamlining initiative, a training plan was released. The plan will not save money or lead to personnel reductions, but it will improve the way the Coast Guard trains and teaches leadership.

A new Performance Technology Center will be established at Yorktown, Va. The center will develop job-performance aids, correspondence courses, resident training, computer-based training and unit-level training.

A leadership program for military members, civilian employees, reservists and auxiliarists will be established at the Academy, New London, Conn.

The Coast Guard will also combine similar components of different "A" schools. For example, this is being done with the electronic rates. Similarly needed skills in nonelectronic rates could also be taught with the electronic rates.

The future

The downsizing and streamlining moves should be completed by 1998. But the service will continue to become more efficient beyond 1998. The first of the new seagoing buoy tenders, for example, is ready for duty. This class of cutter will be bigger, faster and have smaller crew complements. By using the new tenders, the service will be able to provide the public with the same level of service and cut 500 people. These gains in efficiency will continue with other cutters.

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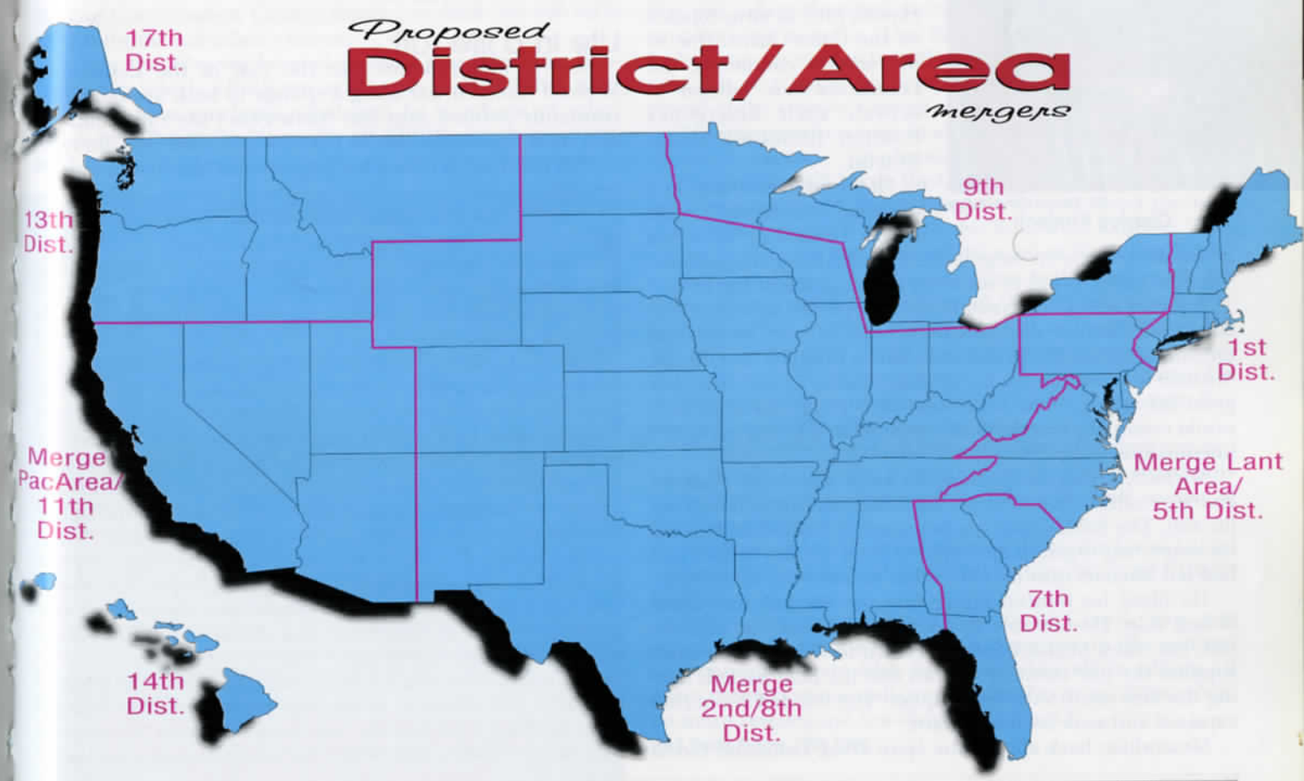
Proposed District/Area mergers