



# Realignment 1987:

## The new structure and how we got there

The project manager's report on the Coast Guard's  
adjusted support and management functions

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By RADM Marshall E. Gilbert, Chief, Office of Research and Development, Headquarters

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**A**DM Paul A. Yost Jr.: "I have given conceptual approval to consolidating at a higher level those various support functions that are common to all our districts ... Develop a detailed implementation plan ... A staffing reduction target of 25 percent is expected."

Anyone familiar with the Coast Guard knows that this means things will not be the same!

Realignment translates into three basic changes: Coast Guard Districts will be reduced from 12 to 10; two new Regional Maintenance and Logistics Commands (RMLCs) will be created to assume most support functions formerly done by districts; and the two area commanders will assume operational and administrative control of ships larger than 180 feet and communication stations.

### Why was it started?

In 1986, Secretary Dole asked the Commandant to conduct a serious review pointed toward combining Coast Guard districts and regionalizing support functions. She also asked him for periodic progress reports.

We have discussed combining districts many times in the Coast Guard on our own initiative and in response to external pressures. For a variety of reasons, we have not done it. However, some district functions have been consolidated over the years.

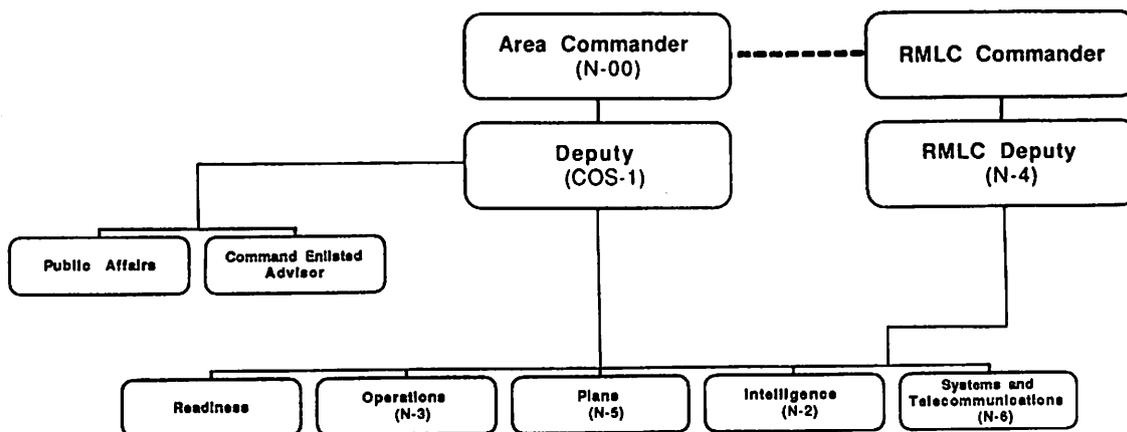
In the early '70s, district radio stations were replaced by fewer, more modern communication stations. Later,

civil engineering acquisition, construction and improvement (AC&I) programs were regionalized into Facility Design and Construction Centers (FD&CCs) at Seattle and Norfolk, and recently, civilian personnel administration has been combined to some extent with one district providing support for several others.

In the spring of 1986, there were a number of mini-studies done to regionalize several other support functions. No action was taken, partly because the budget pressures causing these initiatives eased — and the new Commandant was concerned about directly giving area commanders major support functions. A later proposal to establish RMLCs as coequals to district commanders appealed to ADM Yost because this provided an umbrella organization for various support efforts outside the area commander's staff.

Continued pressures for additional operational personnel and the Commandant's desire to improve our operations to support ratio caused a new look and the appointment of the Realignment Group. This appointment followed an Aug. 4 decision to kick off the effort.

The people requirements are real. During this decade, our military Full Time Equivalent (FTE) resources provided by Congress have stalled out at around 39,000. Meanwhile, demands for military personnel have grown because of the new 270-foot cutters, 110-foot patrol boats, post-FRAM 378s, new C-130s, HU-25s, and E2Cs, law enforcement detachments, and anti-terrorism needs. OMB management initiative A-76 and other



**Typical area organization  
(with MDZ and RMLC interface)**

contracting efforts provided some relief by substituting contractors for Coast Guard people, but there were still serious shortages projected into the 1990s, with little or no optimism that the 39,000-FTE-resources hurdle could be overcome.

### Thus, the study team

Therefore, the Commandant appointed a team to develop an implementation plan to merge the 11th and the 12th Districts, split the 3rd District into the 1st and 5th Districts and establish two RMLCs to assume support functions previously done by district staffs. Concurrently, they were asked to define a new structure with 25 percent fewer district and area staff billets and positions. This equates to a savings of about 1000 people to be used elsewhere. This initiative was not pointed at reducing our total personnel strength.

I was able to select a group of truly outstanding people and start work in September. The team included: Ms. Catherine Waldal, Headquarters (G-CP); CAPT Rudy K. Peschel, 7th District (osr); CAPT Richard R. Bock, commanding officer, Base Honolulu; CAPT Thomas E. Yentsch, Headquarters (G-FP); CDR Paul E. Busick, 12th District (dpl); CDR James A. Kinghorn Jr., 8th District (ene); LCDR Thad W. Allen, 3rd District (dpl); LT Kevin G. Ross, Headquarters (G-CPA); and LTJG Vincent M. Weber, Headquarters (G-RSA); and Mrs. Audrey Pickup, clerical support.

The basic structure of our product was fixed by the charter. Getting from this basic structural concept to a

fully described new organization with functional statements and staffing, while saving significant people, was the challenge.

Early on, we faced the basic choice of doing this in a smoke-filled back room with minimal consultation or doing it in cooperation with all flag officers and a cross-section of current and former commanding officers of units that received support from district staffs.

I chose the latter for a number of reasons.

Our group was deliberately kept small. We didn't have enough people to do the entire job. Further, such a fundamental change should be developed only after wide consultations with all the Coast Guard's leadership to create the best possible product and climate for its acceptance. Further, up-front consultation allowed leaders to make informed recommendations to the Commandant and to fully acquaint them with what was proposed so that implementation would be easier.

We also consulted with all the other services, obtained an organizational expert and talked to the Canadian Navy as well. These consultations proved invaluable and improved our product significantly.

### Rumors, concern and unpopularity

However, they were not without risks and problems. Rumors and concern grew in direct proportion to our consultations. At times our reception was less than wonderful, and we gained a lot of respect and sympathy for those selling unpopular ideas. Furthermore, we and those interacting with us were plagued by the lack of

detailed functional descriptions of who would do what and where in the new organization.

These new functional descriptions were slow in emerging because they had to be developed by an interactive process and then tested for validity.

Staffing caused another major problem. I had originally hoped to avoid the development of a detailed staffing for the new structure, but no such luck. We learned early-on after a few brutal sessions with field commanders that we would have to develop and defend detailed staffing for all elements of the new structure.

There were more than 4,000 billets and positions to move around, and as noted earlier, many were to be eliminated. We did not have good workload measurements to balance against staffing needs, and this created a major problem. Staffing was finally developed by several iterations with program directors and district and area commanders. Naturally, each round of consultation created more rumors and concern. As the staffing structure emerged, we worked closely with the Office of Personnel to assess impacts on rates, officer promotion, civilian opportunities and pyramids. Concurrently, personnel policies were drafted for use during implementation.

## No duplications or layers

A few fundamental concepts guided us as we put the new organization together. With fewer people to provide support, duplications and layers had to be avoided. There was no room for checkers and helpers. Field commanders must have one-stop shopping at the support commands. The ability to do things at lower organizational levels must grow and money management must be simplified.

The following concepts emerged, and were revised and polished by several iterations with district and area commanders.

Consolidation of support functions in a regional command and removal of these responsibilities from the district commander left the district commander with three main jobs: operational and administrative oversight of his district and remaining district units; his role as a high-level representative of the Coast Guard; and his Maritime Defense Zone (MDZ) role. We then tried to establish a new district structure to accommodate these needs while saving significant numbers of people for staffing the RMLCs and for use elsewhere.

## The new district structure

Organizationally, we initially proposed a Chief of Staff with divisions for search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, readiness and reserve, aids to navigation, boating safety, maritime safety and administration and

planning, and also staffs for C3/IRM (Command, Control, Communications/Information Resources Management) and operational legal advice.

This was roundly booed on several counts.

Elimination of the District Chief of Operations caused major concerns because many thought the Chief of Staff's span of control would be too great. Critics also contended that the structure would provide inadequate senior-level experience, and that the proposal eliminated an important career ladder for grooming senior officers.

Counter arguments were that the span of control was no greater than that of many others in our organization, that the Chief of Search and Rescue (a 20-year Captain) should not need two other Captains between him and the District Commander, and that senior Captains should not need additional grooming!

Ultimately, the Commandant reinserted the district Chief of Operations position, based on the strong recommendations of his district commanders (see "The Typical District Organization").

All inspection programs were consolidated at the RMLCs. This caused major anxiety in the districts that contended that district inspectors (DIs) played a key role in assessing the operational readiness of units. Ultimately, the Commandant approved our concept, based on his belief that group commander inspections, REFTRAs, training visits, and program manager oversight should be enough to assure a district commander that his commanding officers, who are ultimately responsible for the readiness of their units, are in fact doing their jobs.

Our intent was to leave a district commander and his staff able to provide operational oversight in his area of responsibility, and to streamline the support structure.

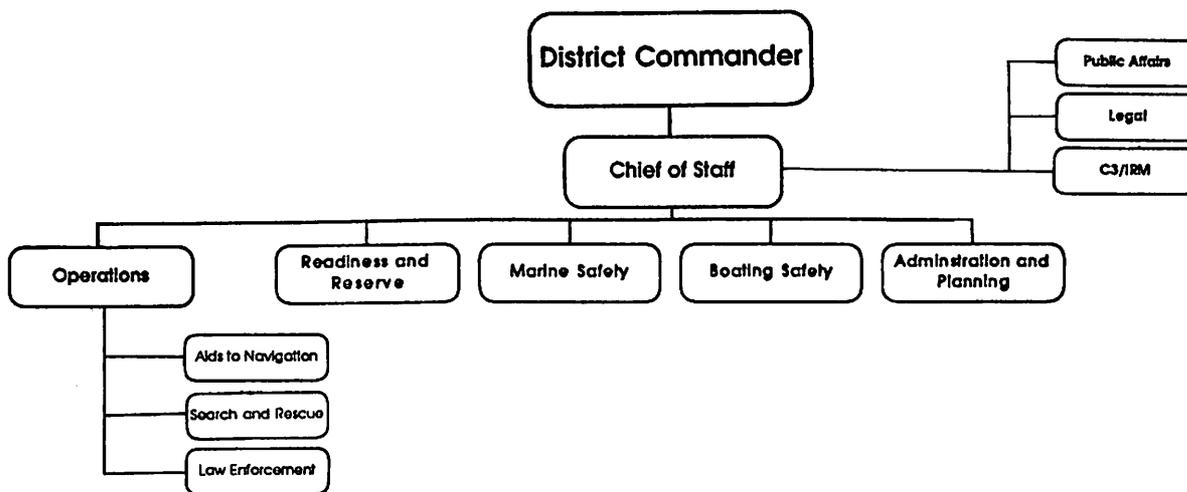
Over the years, some layers have grown between field commander and ultimate decision-maker, particularly in the personnel area. Also, a number of helpers have been added to staffs to help field commanders execute their responsibilities. While these probably have been of value, they are unaffordable in a cutback environment.

District commanders will retain a smaller legal staff for operational legal advice, and the government side of the military justice system. All other legal support will be regionalized.

Full-time, family-advocacy personnel currently on district staffs were left in place, as well as all personnel-reporting units.

Early in our study we concluded that the Coast Guard's accounting functions cannot be regionalized or centralized at this time.

The new 11th District will contain all of California, and



### Typical district organization

other areas previously in the 12th District. This was a trade-off between the operational desirability of including all of California, "44-footer country," in the 13th District because of the similarity of operations, against the desire to include all of California with its extensive local coordinating groups in one district.

The latter alternative was chosen with concurrence from all the district commanders involved and the Commander, Pacific Area.

The Commander of the Atlantic Area and his affected district commanders recommended Toms River, NJ, as the boundary between the 1st and the 5th Districts, and this was accepted by the Commandant. This places the port of New York and its approaches in the 1st District, and all of Chesapeake Bay, as well as Philadelphia, in the 5th District.

### The new RMLC structure

The new RMLCs were organized and staffed as a result of our studies and extensive inputs from program directors and district and area commanders (see "The Typical RMLC Organization"). Technical support (naval, civil and electronic engineering) will be provided by a cadre of professionals at the RMLCs and local support units for hands-on work. The Technical Support Division for Vessels will have its own contracting personnel for naval and electronic engineering contracting for vessels.

Civil engineering managers at the RMLCs, working with expanded FD&CCs and six, newly-formed, civil engineering field offices, will provide civil engineering support. FD&CCs will continue to execute the AC&I program, and they will pick up operating-expense

projects exceeding \$100,000. They will have contracting personnel and a legal staff for procurements. The Field Engineering Offices will perform operating-expense projects of \$100,000 and below, and will have procurement authority for this amount.

Similarly, the C3 division will provide support through the staff of the RMLCs and the local units throughout the Coast Guard.

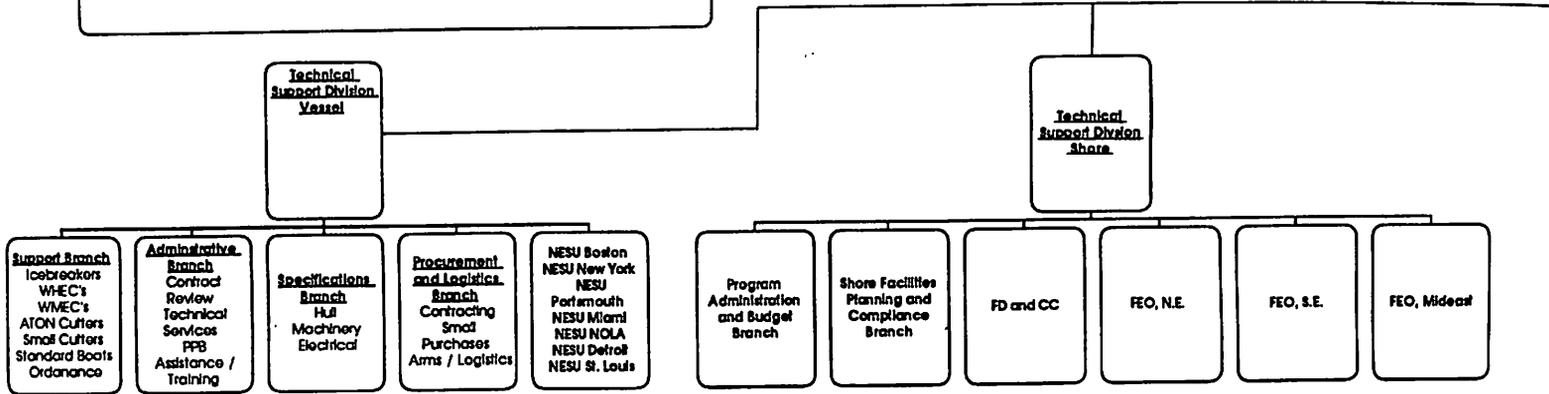
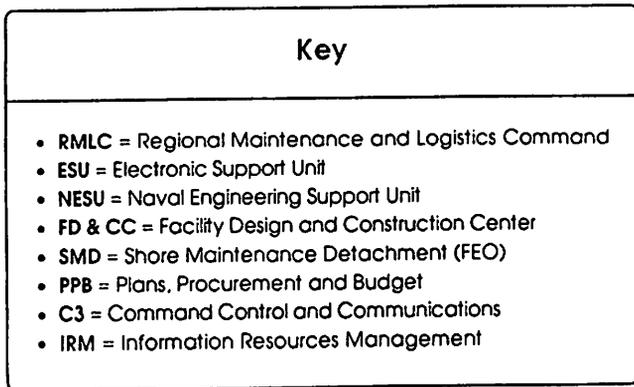
The RMLC's finance division will monitor planning, programming, budgeting, procurement, accounting and non-appropriated-fund functions for the RMLC. RMLCs will administer all funds in the maintenance operating guides (42-electronics program, 43-shore unit program, 45-vessel program and 46-ocean engineering program) formerly managed by the district, and they will receive OG-30 (operating and maintenance) funds for area and RMLC units.

Health services are regionalized, and the drug and alcohol program will now be managed by them.

The Civil Rights/Human Resources Program will continue to be administered at the district level, under the direction of a collateral-duty, civil rights officer. A full-time, military civil rights counselor/facilitator will be located on each RMLC staff. The Office of Civil Rights will continue to provide program guidance and assistance.

### The new area structure

Area commanders received additional personnel to manage cutters and communication stations (see "The Typical Area Organization")



**A typical RMLC organization**

## Location, location, location

Location of the two RMLCs was a major issue, especially for the East Coast. We own significant space on Coast Guard Island in Alameda and on Governors Island in New York. Both currently host area, district and MDZ commands.

Dissolution of the 3rd and 12th District eliminated many billets and positions, and freed substantial space. Establishment of the RMLCs at Governors Island and Coast Guard Island will provide some reemployment opportunities for some displaced people. The vacant spaces and other existing areas will allow the new commands to move in without delay. Further, both area commanders felt a strong need for the new command to be physically close to them, especially during their formative stages.

Counter arguments included the prevailing feeling that there are more desirable locations in which to live and work, and the concern about attracting the kinds of quality civilians needed to staff the new structure.

After reviewing these and many other factors, the Commandant decided to locate the RMLCs on Governors Island and Coast Guard Island.

The net impact of disestablishing the districts and adding the RMLCs is a few more people in New York and Alameda.

## Pertinent questions

Naturally, this reorganization will cause a fundamental

change in the Coast Guard. The obvious question is "Will it work?" The obvious answer is "Yes." But that begs the point.

Coast Guard people are adept at making almost anything work. More useful questions are "Will it work better?" and "What baggage goes along with a change such as this?"

Will it work better? Ultimately, I believe it can and will, but we would be foolish to minimize implementation problems. We will have problems in the short-term, especially executing programs and applying available funding to unmet needs while we are reorganizing.

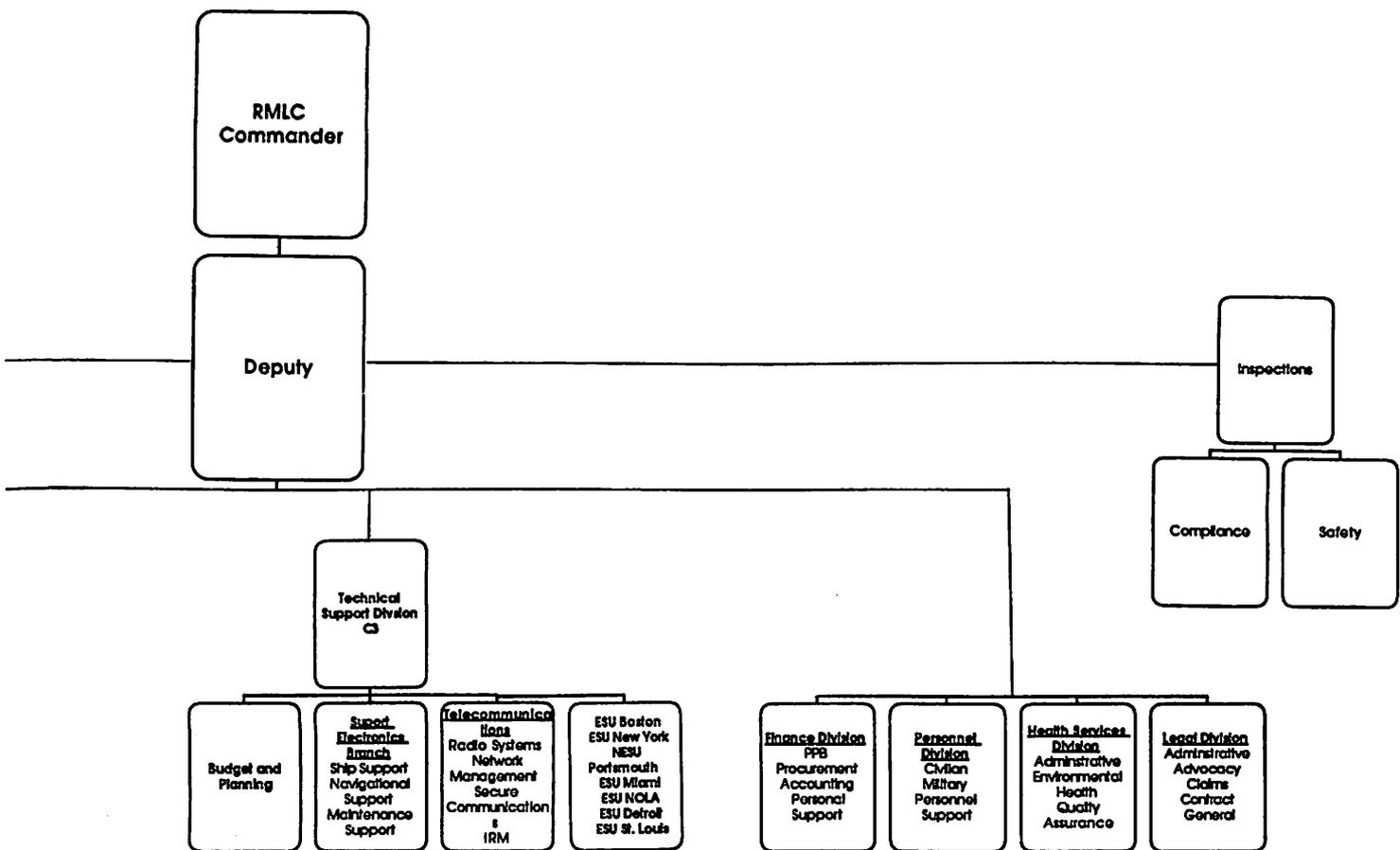
The RMLCs ultimately can become high-level, articulate representatives for support programs, and give an effective balance to our resource allocation decisions. Concentration of technical talent in one place should cause a sharper focus on different technical issues.

What is the baggage? Certainly, in the short-term, there will be some turmoil as we completely sort out who does what.

## The civilian work force

The impact on our civilian work force is obvious. Many dedicated employees who served us well over the years will have to relocate or lose their jobs. In some cases there will not be opportunities even for those willing to relocate.

On the bright side, there will be some expanded



opportunities because there are high-level civilian positions in the new structure, and the concentration of resources allows higher grade structures and more opportunities for progression than we've had before. In setting up the new structure, we made significant managerial opportunities available to our civilian work force.

There were 760 civilian positions abolished and 638 created as a result of the realignment. Of the abolished positions, 123 were vacant on 15 October 1986. Another 155 personnel filling abolished positions were eligible for retirement. Of course, some displaced employees will be able to compete for new jobs in their local area, but there are not meaningful opportunities for all.

## The military

On the military side, the realignment will reduce the number of senior officer billets, and affect some rates. These impacts were studied by the Office of Personnel, which concluded that they were manageable.

Realignment has not reduced our total size by a single person, so the net personnel impact cannot be assessed until all the freed resources are allocated, positions classified and the rank structure for the new jobs determined.

We tried to establish the correct billet/position levels of the required jobs in the new structure and then we worked with the Office of Personnel to determine the impact of our changes on our force structure. The net

impact will be a slight increase in the average civilian grade structure and a slight decrease at the top of our officer and enlisted pyramids. This should be expected because the new RMLCs, with a concentration of technical talent, will create more high-level positions. The movement of military people from staff to operational billets will tend to lower the average grade. For example, the post-ram 378 requires 19 more people but no additional captains or E-9s.

There will be a fundamental change in the role of the District Commander, whose autonomy will be reduced. There has been a long-standing perception that the District Commander must control those things that determine his success, such as not only operationally overseeing his units but getting them ready to operate as well. In many cases, this control is more perceived than real because district commanders do not, in fact, control many of the factors that determine their success.

Personnel assignments, funds, aircraft, communications support, Alaska Patrol cutters and other agency units are a few examples of items with at least part of their control elsewhere. Further, the new structure in the short-term may be less responsive to quick-reaction requests for support. Unfortunately, we tend to equate quick reaction with adequate support; but, of course, they are different.

## Study submitted, reviewed, discussed and adopted

Our draft report was submitted to the Commandant in

early December 1986 and distributed to all flag officers for comment. It also was reviewed by the Chief of Staff's office, which consolidated comments from all the flag officers and conducted a review.

The Commandant discussed the report during a conference call with his field officers and convened a meeting of all flag officers on Jan. 16. Our report was discussed for a full day. Various alternatives short of full realignment, such as just combining districts, were discussed extensively. The Commandant required each flag officer to make a recommendation for or against the adoption of various portions, including full realignment. Although there certainly was no unanimity, the majority favored full realignment.

Subsequent to this meeting, the Commandant announced his decision to go forward with the realignment.

The study provides a framework of functional statements, staffing impacts and an implementation plan. It is a living document that will need adjustments as we implement it.

In summary, a different Coast Guard will emerge as a result of the Commandant's decision to perform this study and his acceptance of our product.

About 500 people will be diverted from support to operational billets. Our charter required a structure with 25 percent fewer people, a savings of about 1000; but we could not define a credible structure with this great a cut in people.

There will be fundamental changes in the way we do business. Implementation teams are already off and running, civilians are being hired, orders are being issued and, hopefully, we will have a smooth transition.

The Coast Guard's top leadership was extensively involved in this important initiative. After intimately consulting with them, the Commandant decided to restructure the Coast Guard so that some resources devoted to support could be applied to operational units.

We may not be able to do all the things in all the places with all the thoroughness that we used to do them. However, we will have more people operating and fewer supporting. //

## New commands

Two new regional commands are opening to perform maintenance and selected support functions formerly done by the 3rd and 12th District staffs. Their creation, and the concurrent realignment of the Coast Guard's district structure, will release some 500 personnel from support and staff positions to fill operational billets aboard new cutters and aircraft.

Under the new structure, technical — naval, civil and electronics engineering — finance, personnel, health services and legal support will be provided by the MLCs while operational — Aids to Navigation, Search and Rescue, and Law Enforcement — Readiness and Reserve, Marine Safety, Boating Safety and administration and planning functions will remain with the districts. The area commanders will manage all communications stations and all cutters larger than 180 feet with the exception of *Mackinaw*, an icebreaker operating solely on the Great Lakes.

MLCA will be commissioned July 1 and commanded by RADM George D. Passmore and staffed by more than 800 Coast Guard and civilian employees, most of whom will be located on Governors Island. Direct technical support to operational field units will be through local ship repair detachments and electronic maintenance detachments located at Boston, Governors Island, Portsmouth, Miami, New Orleans, Detroit, and St. Louis, and through three regional shore maintenance detachments located at Cleveland, New York and Portsmouth.

RADM Walter T. Leland commissioned and assumed command of the Maintenance and Logistics Command Pacific June 24 on Coast Guard Island. MLCP will provide engineering and engineering-contracting support throughout Pacific Area, using a staff of almost 600 Coast Guard and civilian employees. The staff includes FD&CC West and engineering detachments in Long Beach, Alameda, Seattle, Juneau, Kodiak and Honolulu.



# The 3rd District

The 3rd Coast Guard District traced its roots to Revenue Cutter Service General Order Number 22 of 1913 which established the New York Division, among others. In the beginning the Division Commander acted as an inspector of cutters within his division and performed administrative duties. Gradually, he acquired operational authority over all units within the division which, at the outset, stretched from Gay Head, Massachusetts to Lewes, Delaware and also included Puerto Rico.

Over the years, the boundaries of the various Coast Guard Divisions were adjusted to approximate those of the U.S. Naval Districts. For example, in 1938 Puerto Rico was made a separate district (the 10th) and in 1941 the New York District was split, with the southern half becoming the Philadelphia District. Also in 1938, the divisions were renamed districts and in the closing years of World War II a district numbering system was adopted. With the merging of the Lighthouse Service and the Coast Guard in 1939, the

Tomkinsville, Staten Island Lighthouse District was incorporated into the New York District, bringing with it numerous tenders, lightships and several hundred personnel. In 1947 the 4th (Philadelphia) District recombined with the 3rd District; in the years since, the boundaries have remained substantially unchanged.

The 3rd District was one of the Coast Guard's largest, encompassing almost 42,000 square miles of the eastern United States from Vermont to Rhode Island to Delaware. It was staffed by some 3,700 Coast Guard personnel, nearly 10 percent of the entire service, and included over 70 operational units ranging from five-person aids to navigation teams to large 378-foot high endurance cutters in addition to several administrative and support units. Its headquarters has always been in New York City. It was located first in the Custom House in lower Manhattan, then relocated to Governors Island in 1966.

## Highlights in history

### 1924

The Coast Guard linked all its Long Island installations by telephone, thus completing a national coastline communication system between all lifeboat stations and lighthouses.

### 1935

The first 52 foot motor life boat was placed in service at Sandy Hook, NJ. The boat was meant to supplement the less capable 36 footer at more demanding stations.

### June 1942

Near Amagansett, Long Island, Coast Guard Beach Patrolman Seaman 2/C John C. Cullen discovered Nazi saboteurs coming ashore from a U-boat. All were arrested by the FBI and later executed.

### March 1943

While on patrol near *Ambrose* Lightship, CG-85006 exploded, killing all six aboard.

### November 1943

Coast Guard Air Station Brooklyn, at Floyd Bennett Field, was designated the first helicopter training base.

### January 1944

A Coast Guard helicopter delivered plasma from Manhattan to Sandy Hook in just 14 minutes, helping to save the lives of survivors from USS *Turner*, which had exploded in Ambrose Channel.

### August 1946

Coast Guard Receiving Station Ellis Island was decommissioned. During its 7-year history, the station served as a training center and assembly point for over 60,000 Coast Guardsmen as they were formed into crews for hundreds of cutters and Coast Guard-manned Navy ships.

### January 1949

*Eastwind* and a merchant tanker collided in fog off the New Jersey coast, killing 13 Coast Guardsmen.

### December 1954

An Italian DC-6B airliner crashed on approach to Idlewild Airport (JFK); an Air Station Brooklyn helicopter was on scene within four minutes and rescued three survivors, while Coast Guard small boats assisted in recovering 16 of 31 passengers.

### September 1958

A Jersey Central Railroad passenger train plunged into Newark Bay through an open drawbridge, submerging two coaches. Coast Guard small craft and helicopters helped rescue 43 survivors and recover 29 bodies.

### June 1960

While serving as relief lightship for the *Ambrose* station, the *WAL-505* sank after it was rammed by the S.S. *Green Bay*. All hands were saved.

## January 1961

Texas Tower No. 4, an early warning radar station located in the Atlantic some 70 miles southeast of New York City, collapsed and sank during an intense winter storm. All 27 U.S. Air Force personnel aboard the tower were lost despite rescue efforts by Coast Guard and Navy units.

## November 1964

The Israeli cruise liner *Shalom* collided with and sank the Norwegian tanker *Stolt Dagli* off Barnegat, New Jersey. Coast Guard and other rescue units saved 28 crewmen from the tanker, 19 were lost.

## June 1966

The tankers *Alva Cape* and *Texaco Massachusetts* collided off Staten Island in Kill Van Kull, resulting in an explosion and fire which killed 37 seamen from the ships and two assisting tugs. The naphtha laden *Alva Cape*, judged too dangerous to off-load, was eventually towed to sea and sunk by gunfire from *Spencer*.

## July 1966

The U.S. Army lowered its flag over Fort Jay, as command of Governors Island passed to the U.S. Coast Guard. Over the next three years units previously scattered over the New York metropolitan area were relocated to Base New York, as was Coast Guard Training Center, Groton, Ct.

## August 1967

Ambrose Light Station commissioned. This modern offshore tower with its six-man crew replaced the last of many lightships which had marked the approaches to New York Harbor since 1823.

## June 1973

The container ship *Sea Witch* rammed the anchored Belgian tanker *Esso Brussels* just north of the Verrazano Narrows bridge. 16 crewmembers of both ships died in the ensuing fire, although 64 were saved by tugs and other rescue units.

## July 1976

Coast Guard and Auxiliary units from Maine to the Carolinas patrolled New York Harbor as one of history's largest gatherings of tall ships and men-of-war to date honored the U.S. Bicentennial.

## Fall 1977

12 enlisted women and two officers reported for duty aboard *Gallatin*, as the Coast Guard became the first of the U.S. Armed Services to assign women to duty on an unrestricted basis.

## May 1979

*Pt. Francis* boarded the freighter *Olaug* off the New Jersey coast and discovered 41,580 pounds of hashish, the largest such seizure in U.S. history.

## April-June 1979

All New York Harbor tugboat companies were shut down by a strike. After New York's mayor declared a health emergency, nine Coast Guard tugs and a buoy tender were pressed into service to transport garbage barges from Manhattan and Brooklyn to the Staten Island landfill.

## May 1981

The ferryboat *American Legion* and Norwegian freighter *Hoegh Orchid* collided in dense fog in upper New York Harbor, injuring 60 commuters.

## February 1982

The gasoline tanker *Boling Bros. No. 9* exploded and burned in the East River, killing one crewman. Flying debris from the tanker immobilized a subway train passing above it on the Williamsburgh Bridge. City fireboats and Coast Guard cutters extinguished the flames, but the vessel later sank.

## May-June 1982

Citing poor working conditions and no pay, crew members of the Liberian tanker *Ypapanti*, anchored off Indian River, Delaware, mutinied and took their officers hostage. After nearly six weeks of stalemated negotiations and, ultimately, the mutineers' threats to blow up the ship, a Coast Guard/FBI SWAT team from *Alert* overpowered the crew and took control of the ship.

## May 1983

Off the south coast of Long Island, *Evergreen* seized 27 tons of marijuana from the fishing vessel *Glenda Lynn* as the former oceanographic ship settled into her new role as a medium endurance cutter.

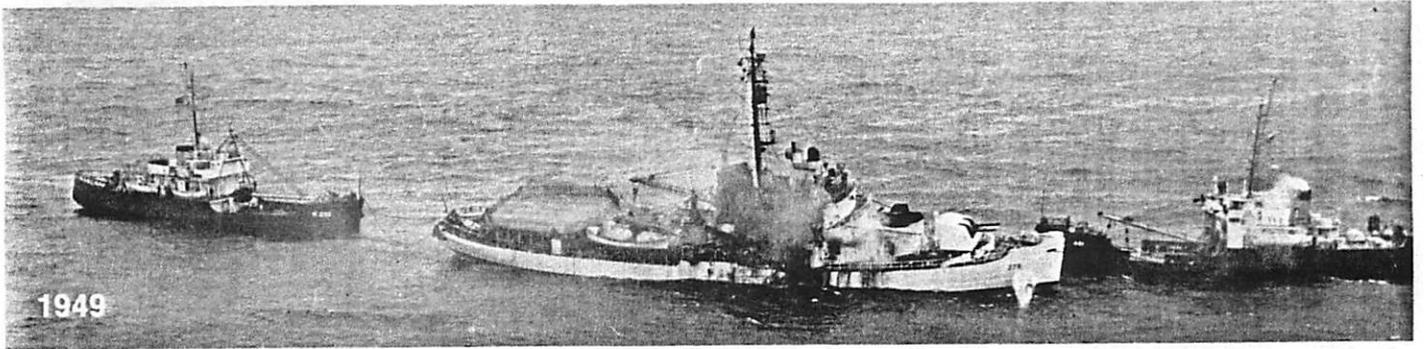
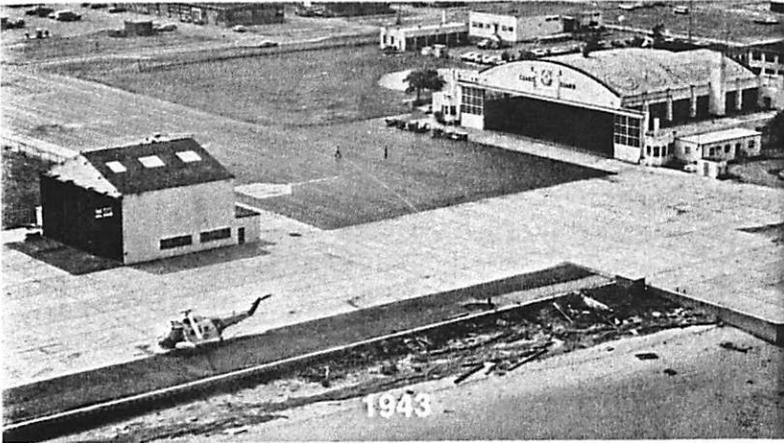
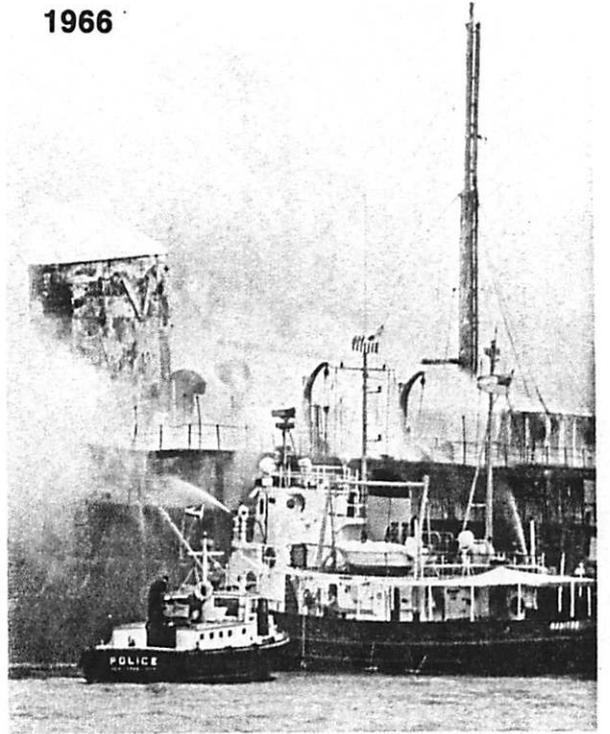
## May 1986

In one of the most difficult salvage operations in recent years, Coast Guard, Navy, and commercial salvage experts successfully righted and raised the 240 foot oil barge E-24, which had sunk upside down in 185 feet of water off Fishers Island, NY during the fall of 1985. The barge, loaded with 840,000 gallons of fuel oil, was refloated with a loss of only 180 gallons, nearly all of which was recovered.

## July 1986

Tall Ships, warships from 35 nations and more than 30,000 pleasure boats converged on New York Harbor for the Statue of Liberty Centennial celebration. Governors Island played host to President Reagan, President Mitterrand of France, several thousand dignitaries and more than 40 media organizations as some 350 Coast Guard and Auxiliary vessels and more than 1000 Coast Guard and Auxiliary personnel patrolled the harbor in the largest operation of its kind since World War II.

1966



1935





# The 12th District

The 12th District, just before its abolishment June 30, included most of Utah and Nevada, and California from near San Luis Obispo to the Oregon-California state borders. The district extended seaward about 1,200 miles. At one time the 12th included all of the territory of what later became the 11th and 14th Districts.

Units under district control included three groups, three air stations, four high endurance cutters, one medium endurance cutter, a buoy tender, a communications station, a huge training complex at Petaluma, CA, and three captain of the port offices, as well as numerous Reserve units and Auxiliary divisions.

At one time the district tended 500 aids to navigation, including 27 manned light stations and two lightships, along its 600 miles of coastline and in the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers.

A base was established on Government Island, off Oakland, CA, in 1931. A training center opened there in 1942. Until a few years ago, almost all recruits from the western half of the United States went to boot camp at TraCen Alameda. The training center was closed on June 1, 1982, and a support center opened there the same day. District headquarters, which had been located in San Francisco, moved to Government Island later that year.

## Highlights in history

**1849**

Revenue laws were extended to include the Oregon and California territories and a new customs district established. The revenue cutter *Lawrence* was assigned to the new district under the command of CAPT Alex Fraser, the first Commandant.

**1855**

Fort Point Lighthouse, the second oldest light on the west coast began operation.

**1867**

William H. Seward purchases Alaska from the Imperial Russian government. In July 1867, the revenue cutter *Lincoln* left San Francisco bound for Sitka and the first U.S. exploration of the waters and resources of Alaska.

**1884**

The cutter *Bear* rescues the Greely expedition and upon return was declared unfit for further service in the Navy and was subsequently transferred to the Revenue Cutter Service — the beginning of an illustrious career in the Alaskan Patrol.

**1906**

The crew of the cutter *Bear* saves the Customs House in San Francisco during the great fire and earthquake of 1906. Additionally, the revenue cutter tug *San Francisco* took supplies and funds from the Customs House across the bay and out of harms way.

**1913-1985**

A 67-acre island was formed from the dredgings of the tidal basin canal. The Coast Guard began using the island in 1926 as a ship refit and repair depot, calling it Base 11. Permission was granted in 1985 for Government Island to be renamed Coast Guard Island.

**1941**

Port of San Francisco serves as the debarkation point for Pacific Theater operations during World War II.

**1956**

Coast Guard cutter *Pontchartrain* rescues 24 passengers and seven crewmen from a Pan American passenger plane which ditched at "the half way point" between Honolulu and San Francisco. A minute after the last passenger was removed from the plane it sank.

**1981**

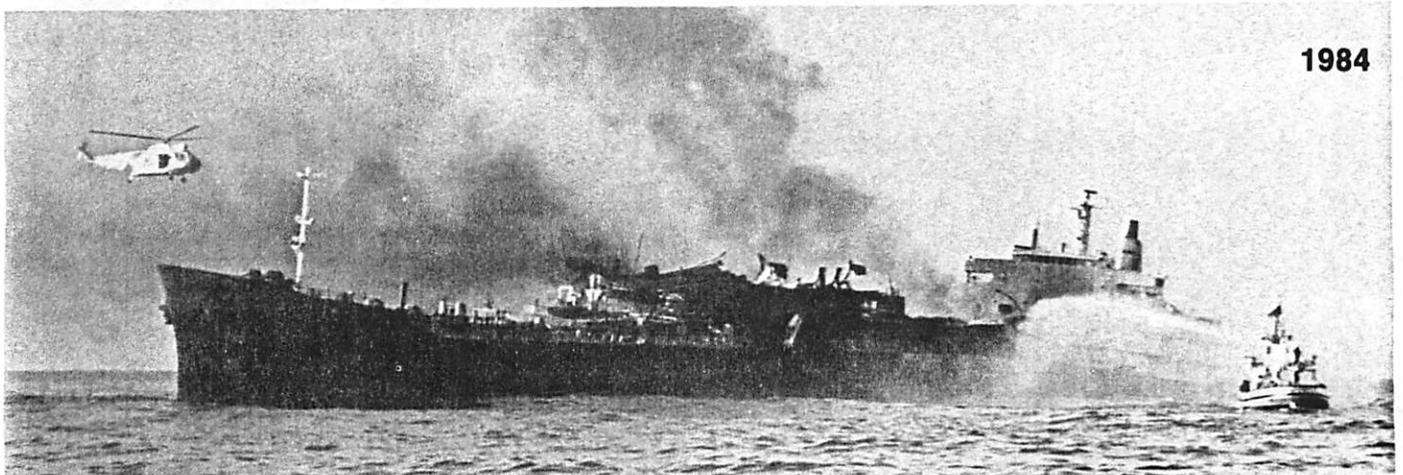
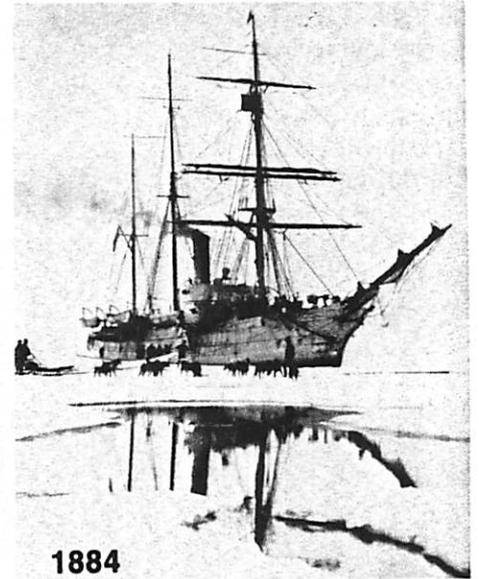
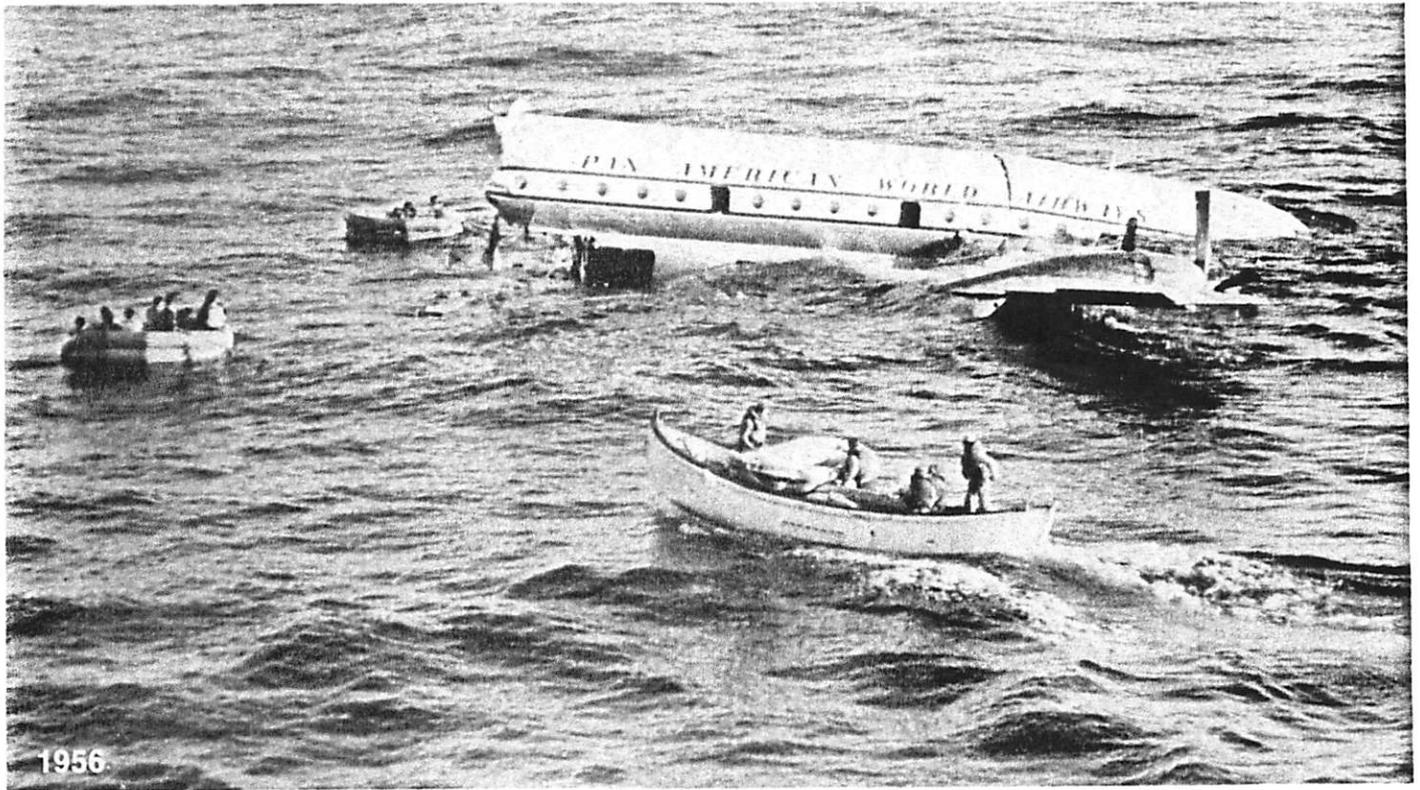
12th District Operations center served as the nerve center and coordinator when the 610-foot car-carrier *Blue Hawk* caught fire in the Pacific. Participating in rescue and firefighting was a C-130 aircraft from Air Station Sacramento, the cutter *Morgenthau*, research vessel *Cayuse*, tanker *Thamesfield* and the motor vessel *Antiochia*. *Morgenthau* arrived two days after being recalled and relieved the civilian vessels, by that evening the fire was out.

**1983**

12th District Law Enforcement agents participated in the biggest cocaine seizure on the West Coast. There was 430 pounds of contraband worth an estimated \$500-750 million was found in a Colombian freighter in the port of San Francisco.

**1984**

An Air Station Sacramento C-130 crew witnesses the explosion of the tanker *Puerto Rican* 10 miles outside the Golden Gate Bridge. Station Fort Point boat crews were on scene in 40 minutes. Most of the 29 people on board were picked up by a tugboat. Coast Guard and Navy units were on scene for several days fighting the raging fire.



# \*\*\* COMMANDANT'S \*\*\* BULLETIN

Issue 13-87

June 26, 1987

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★ **Fore:** LCDR Bruce E. Melnick, our first astronaut trainee. Photo: PA3 Mike Milliken, 9th District (dpa).

★ **Aft:** New ensigns share a moment after graduation. Photo: PA3 Frank Jennings Jr., Academy (dpa)

### This is your magazine!

*Commandant's Bulletin* needs your news. Send double-spaced, typed articles written in "plain English" and photos (5x7 black-and-white prints preferred) to help tell your story. Be sure to include the author's name and phone number. Please do not send negatives — we can't always send them back. Call us for our writer guidelines!

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### U.S. Coast Guard

ADM Paul A. Yost  
Commandant

VADM James C. Irwin  
Vice Commandant

MCPO-CG Allen W. Thiele  
Master Chief of the Coast Guard

### Bulletin Staff

LT Dale Puckett  
Chief, Internal Information Branch

PA2 Carolyn Feldman  
Editor

PA3 Trellis Moore  
Assistant Editor

PA3 John Guzman  
Production Manager/Illustrator

