



# Coast Guard Retiree Council — Northwest



# RETIREE NEWSLETTER

*"They Also Serve"*

VOLUME XII ISSUE 1

## RETIREE FAIR IN APRIL!

What: Coast Guard Retiree Fair

When: Saturday April 14, 2012, Time: 0900 - 1430

Where: Coast Guard Base Seattle Gymnasium

1519 Alaskan Way South

Seattle WA 98134-1102

### Agenda:

1. Opening Remarks and CG Update from Thirteenth District Commander, RADM Keith Taylor
2. Update from TriCare
3. Update from Retiree Dental
4. Update from Veterans Administration
5. Update Pacific Medical (PacMed)
6. Update D13 Legal

We plan to have tables booths from:

- USAA
- TriCare
- Retiree Dental
- PacMed
- Veterans Administration
- American Legion

We are planning on having a light lunch, sandwich buffet, and refreshments.

David J. Sweeney

Transition Relocation Manager (TRM)

Ombudsman Coordinator

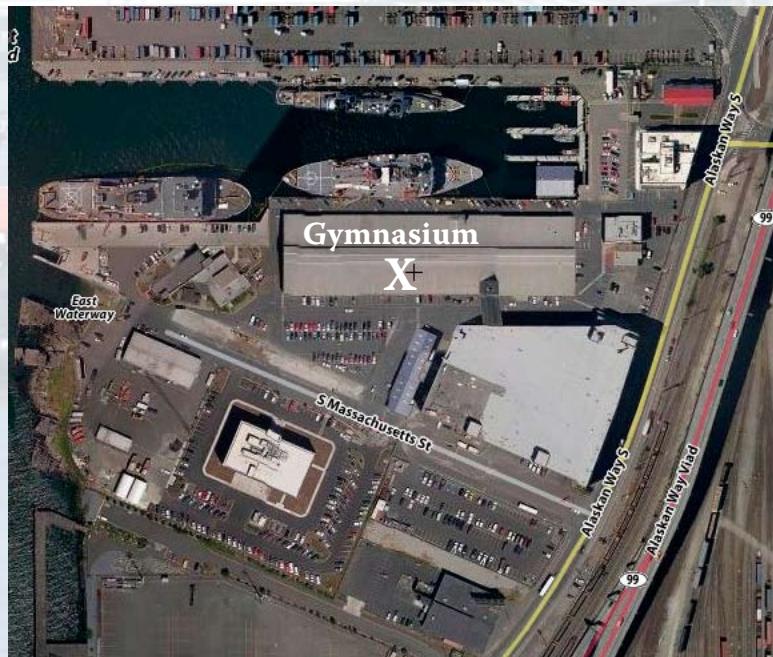
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We also hope to have present:

- Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW
- Fleet Reserve Association - FRA

U.S. Coast Guard Base Seattle  
1519 Alaskan Way South  
Seattle, Washington 98134-1102

## A TWIST TO OUR NORMAL TALE, CGC HEALY'S RESCUE MISSION TO THE CITY OF NOME

by: LT Stephanie Young

The Coast Guard has a long history of braving harsh Alaskan elements to rescue mariners in distress, protect the U.S. interests in the international waters, conduct Arctic research as well as bring much needed supplies to remote Alaska villages.

The Service's latest Arctic mission was for the USCGC *Healy* to help bring desperately need fuel to the ice-encrusted harbor of Nome is just one of the ways we continue to honor those traditions.

The Coast Guard Cutter *Healy*, our nation's only operating polar icebreaker, broke ice to lead the way for the Russian-flagged tanker vessel *Renda* into

Nome. The ice stretched from the harbor for about 360 miles. *Healy* broke a path to within a half mile of the entrance to Nome but was unable to get any closer due to the depth of the water. From that point, there are a number of options explored to get the fuel the remainder of the way including using a fuel hose from the barge to shore.

"This was to be a highly orchestrated effort between all stakeholders to ensure the mission's success," said Rear Adm. Thomas Ostebo, commander 17<sup>th</sup> Coast Guard District. "Our daily discussions



Approximately 3,500 Nome residents await the arrival of the 370-foot Russian tanker *Renda*. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Charly Hengen.



*The Coast Guard Cutter Healy escorts the Russian-flagged tanker vessel Renda 250 miles south of Nome, Alaska, Jan. 6, 2012. The vessels are transiting through ice up to five-feet thick in this area. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Sara Francis.*

included federal, state, local, tribal partners and the marine industry to ensure the highest standards of safety and compliance were in place to mitigate risks to the people of Nome, the crews of the vessels and the environment."

Nome had arranged to have a barge deliver fuel in the fall, but the historic November storm delayed the delivery. By the time the weather cleared, Nome was iced-in and faced the long arctic winter desperately short of vital fuel. CGC *Healy* set out from Dutch Harbor Jan. 3, to clear a path for the tanker *Renda* through the ice. Daring to do what other ships ardently avoid, *Healy* is purposely designed to run into things – specifically,

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THE RETIREE NEWSLETTER – A Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Publication authorized IAW COMDTINST 1800.5D & COMDTINST M5728.2C. Published at: U. S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Seattle, Work-Life Office, Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest, 1519 Alaskan Way South, Seattle, WA 98134 Phone: (206) 217-6188. Published four times yearly and circulated to retirees throughout the Pacific Northwest via electronically and on web site ([www.cgretirenw.org](http://www.cgretirenw.org)). The Retiree Newsletter contains news of general interest, suggestions, and information for Coast Guard retirees, spouses, annuitants and retired Coast Guard reservists. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Homeland Security or the U. S. Coast Guard. Material is informational only and not authority for action. Editor - Patrick Wills.

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ice. Icebreakers are designed with a rounded, blunted bow that enables them to ride up on top of the ice. As the bow raises up and the stern sinks below the water, the force of buoyancy acting on the submerged portion of the stern – think of putting a basketball underwater! – creates a lever-like action bringing *Healy*'s 16,000 tons down onto the ice and breaking it. Depending on the type of ice, the energy can radiate out from the ship, creating a swath of broken ice two or even three times the width of the vessel.

Once the ice is broken, the shape of *Healy*'s hull then facilitates turning the ice on its side to make room for the vessel where the ice used to be. This also creates an open area behind the *Healy* where the ice has been broken into smaller pieces that can be more easily moved aside by another ship – like the tanker vessel *Renda*. While moving at three knots, *Healy* can continuously break 4 1/2 feet of ice. When encountering thicker ice, *Healy* can break up to 8 feet through a process called “backing and ramming,” repeatedly striking the ice in a controlled manner to break through a ridge.

While significant engineering goes into designing an icebreaker, breaking ice is based on two simple principles: (1) a sledgehammer



The Coast Guard Cutter Healy breaks ice near the city of Nome Jan. 14, 2012. The Healy is breaking ice near Nome to assist the Russian tanker Renda move into final position for offloading nearly 1.3 million gallons of petroleum products to the city. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Chief Petty Officer Kip Wadlow.

is better than a butter knife and (2) two objects cannot occupy the same space at the same time.

After arrival off Nome, crews waited up to 12 hours after the arrival of the ships to ensure that all the broken and disturbed ice has refrozen allowing safe operations to take place around the ships. Two hoses were then used to complete the transfer of the much needed fuel across more than 500 yards of ice. Fuel transfer operations began Monday and continued until all the fuel was safely delivered to an on shore fuel tank storage facility.

Coast Guard icebreaker *Healy* and tanker *Renda* completed their mission to Nome, Alaska, on January 20<sup>th</sup> after the safe delivery of an estimated one million gallons of diesel and 300,000 gallons of gasoline to the iced-in city.



The Coast Guard Cutter HEALY (WAGB - 20) is the United States' newest and most technologically advanced polar icebreaker. HEALY is designed to conduct a wide range of research activities, providing more than 4,200 square feet of scientific laboratory space, numerous electronic sensor systems, oceanographic winches, and accommodations for up to 50 scientists. HEALY is designed to break 4 ½ feet of ice continuously at three knots and can operate in temperatures as low as -50 degrees F. The science community provided invaluable input on lab lay-outs and science capabilities during design and construction of the ship. At a time when scientific interest in the Arctic Ocean basin is intensifying, HEALY substantially enhances the United States Arctic research capability. As a Coast Guard cutter, HEALY is also a capable platform for supporting other potential missions in the polar regions, including logistics, search and rescue, ship escort, environmental protection, and enforcement of laws and treaties.

## CG AWAITS RADIATION CLAIMS FROM LORAN WORKERS



*LORAN stations, including this one in Middletown, California, stopped broadcasting in 2010. The service says some Coast Guardsmen who helped maintain the stations may have been exposed to radiation.*

By [Sam Fellman](#) - NavyTimes Staff writer

After years of pressure from veterans, the Coast Guard acknowledged Nov. 17 that some people who worked at long-range navigation stations may have been exposed to harmful radiation, clearing the way for current and former service members to apply for compensation.

Veterans hailed this as a chance for the service to come clean after decades of hiding the risks of radiation from LORAN personnel, some of whom have suffered from or died of cancer.

In all likelihood, dangerous levels of radiation affected only a small portion of the approximately 10,000 Coast Guardsmen who served at LORAN stations during the nearly seven decades they were in operation, according to a 2011 report by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Those most at risk were electronics technicians and other maintainers who performed “exceptional” repairs to the vacuum tubes, 2-foot-tall devices that amplified the stations’ signals.

At close range, vacuum tubes release harmful levels of X-rays, which can cause cancer.

“We didn’t find any significant exposure,” said Dr. Paul Blake, the report’s lead author and a senior health physicist at DTRA. “The challenge

is, though, LORAN units were different than even the most high-powered AM and FM radio and television stations in this country.”

Before the 1990s and the arrival of the satellite-based GPS, LORAN was the nation’s primary electronic navigation system. At its height, more than 150 transmission stations around the world beamed it at high power, according to the report.

Users ranging from merchant ships to ballistic-missile submarines depended on it for precise navigation. There was little tolerance to take towers offline.

The byproducts of high power in the vacuum tubes were low-energy X-rays.

“In most cases, you can shield effectively,” Blake said of the X-rays. “The difficulty is when you don’t have a shield in place and people are working close to it. There were some anecdotal cases where people had to do some work to keep these things going.”

Shields weren’t routinely installed until 1995, 53 years after LORAN stations began transmitting; LORAN was shut down in 2010 in a round of budget cuts.

The Coast Guard is aware of a “handful” of cases in which a member or veteran has reported radiation sickness or cancer stemming from LORAN exposure, Coast Guard spokesman Lt. Paul Rhynard said. He was unable to provide statistics or an estimate for how many people have come forward.

“We have no reliable way to estimate the numbers of those exposed or susceptible, but the report has helped to define a specific scenario where a member might be a risk,” Rhynard said. “We strongly encourage anyone who performed the maintenance task[s] described to follow up with their doctor and take the necessary steps to identify or address any health concerns.”

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**LORAN Workers Continued from page 4****A first step**

Dave Hans said he believes his four years at LORAN stations altered his life. Hans, a retired electronics technician first class, has battled cancer since 1976, two years after leaving his LORAN station in Yap, Micronesia.

He said surgeons have removed cancerous tumors from his prostate gland and lungs. Cancer has repeatedly attacked his thyroid.

"Every one of these is a radiogenic disease," said Hans, who earned a master's degree in pathology after leaving active duty in the 1970s. "Going back and recalling the type of work that we did on our transmitters and amplifiers, there was no protection that we had."

Station personnel didn't wear dosimeters, designed to measure radiation exposure, he said, or any protective garments. They weren't even aware there was a risk of exposure — no warning signs were posted, and there was no mention of radiation risk at LORAN school.

Hans said his crew tried to keep the signal going at all costs on Yap.

"We were the master station for the southeast Asian chain. And we were still thick in the Vietnam War at that time," he said. "And the last thing you want to have is your master station going out."

Reflecting on this and his subsequent cancer, Hans said the report is a good first step but thinks the service must go further.

"The Coast Guard has to acknowledge that they erred in how people were trained in LORAN, that they erred in keeping information from LORAN personnel, even after they knew of the radiation danger," Hans said.

"My first claim was put in in 1977," he added. "And since then, mine has been remanded any number of times. I will file for my claim to be reopened. For what it has cost me in a lifetime, I will go after what I'm entitled to."

'More common than they realize'

Cases of radiation exposure may be more common than the Coast Guard would like to admit, according to one LORAN veteran and a co-author of the DTRA report.

"I don't think it's very exceptional," retired Master Chief Electronics Technician Chuck Severance said of the risks of exposure. "I think it's going to be more common than they realize."

Severance, who spent 16 years stationed at LORAN stations over his career before retiring in 1992, said what the report characterizes as "exceptional" maintenance was routine — procedures such as preparing new vacuum tubes or troubleshooting high-voltage breakdowns, which required technicians to get very close to the tubes. He also said it was standard for maintainers to bypass another safety measure known as interlocks.

Interlocks disable the transmitter when the cabinet housing the vacuum tubes is opened. In 1982, military health physicists discovered dangerously high levels of radiation one foot away from the cabinet and recommended that interlocks should not be bypassed, according to the report.

But Severance, who eventually wrote LORAN maintenance procedures, said the findings were never shared with the LORAN workforce and that there were standard procedures for operating the transmitters with the interlocks bypassed.

For many military units, LORAN was mission-critical, and the institutional emphasis was on keeping it transmitting.

"When the equipment goes down, you do maintenance with the interlocks bypassed," Severance said. "You do what you have to do to keep the equipment running while you fix the problem."

Severance led the effort to get the Coast Guard to examine radiation exposure, a campaign

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**LORAN Workers Continued from page 5**

prompted by watching fellow LORAN vets die of radiogenic diseases, including retired Senior Chief Electronics Technician John Milohnick, who died of leukemia in 2006. Severance said he "couldn't think of anybody that got exposed to radiation much more than I had," but declined to say whether his health has been affected by this exposure.

"Reason I got involved with this is, I was a master chief," Severance said. "I wrote a lot of maintenance standards, and wherever I worked, I always required our equipment to run at 100 percent. I put people in harm's way, and when John got sick — the LORAN community is very, very tight — I really suffered this guilt complex."

He continued: "I really felt that I had to do something about this."

## **FAREWELL TO DALLAS – A WORD FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER**

FEBRUARY 21, 2012

by: LT Stephanie Young

*After nearly 45 years of service to the nation, Coast Guard Cutter Dallas is being decommissioned. From performing naval gunfire support missions off Vietnam to being the command ship during the 1980 Mariel Boatlift, Dallas has truly seen it all. As Dallas is decommissioned, a new fleet of national security cutters are coming on the line to protect and serve our nation. They stand at the ready to perform homeland security missions at sea, just as Dallas did for decades.*

*Written by Capt. Jim Munro, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter Dallas.*

Endings usually stir a little melancholy. I am not talking about the end of a long deployment – which is normally reason for some celebration – but something a bit more weighty: the last patrol for a Coast Guard ship in a nearly 45-year-long career. Such is the case aboard *Dallas* as we sail homeward bound for the last time as a Coast Guard cutter.

Through most of this more than 90-day patrol

we have focused on simply getting underway and staying underway; a greater feat than one may think. After four decades of service, *Dallas'* equipment failures have impacted our ability to perform missions on a daily basis and throughout this patrol the crew has worked through some amazing challenges.

During months of preparation, a hole was cut in *Dallas'* hull and a main diesel engine block was replaced. The crew then worked to pull together systems that were dormant during a long in-port period and breathed life back into them. They fought through a flurry of last-minute equipment casualties and the material challenges of an old ship were felt immediately as we experienced problems with the reduction gear lubrication systems.

After diverting to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for repairs, we were back underway. A long stint of operations followed, 30 days worth, and it felt good to get that under our belt, especially as two go-fast interdictions occurred in that intense period.

In the first half of *Dallas'* final patrol there was not too much talk of "endings." We were simply too busy. But as we neared the end of our patrol, endings began coming back up as a topic of conversation. "Lasts" were first on folks' minds again: the last time in "GTMO," the last time *Dallas* will be seen in a foreign port call, the last time a Coast Guard helicopter would land on our flight deck.

For me, it started with our fourth stop in Cuba, which brought back memories of when I first saw Coast Guard Cutter *Dallas*. Prior to taking over as *Dallas'* last commanding officer I had last seen her moored in Guantanamo Bay around Thanksgiving of 1991. I was aboard one of three 110-foot patrol boats dispatched from Puerto Rico to assist in the latest round of Haitian mass-migration. As we rounded Corinaso Point, I will never forget the sight. A Navy "gator" boat appeared overrun by migrants. It looked like a large Haitian village

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**Dallas Continued from page 6**

with a grey background, people everywhere and laundry hanging all over. Certainly the most colorful Navy ship I had ever seen.

There were other vessels there – Navy and Coast Guard – all covered with Haitian migrants. *Dallas* was moored there, too. At that time Capt. Robert C. Olsen, a former commanding officer of mine, was skipper of *Dallas* and serving as commander of the task unit, coordinating rescue operations during this crisis – something the ship was called upon to do repeatedly in its history. That scene of managed chaos in Guantanamo Bay, migrants everywhere, uniformed folks mixed in randomly and news crews scattered over the docks, comes to mind nearly every time I have pulled into GTMO since.



The Coast Guard Cutter *Dallas* sails at dusk Feb. 14, 2012. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.

However, I can never dwell too long on “lasts” without considering what is coming next. *Dallas’* commissioning pennant will be lowered and retired. But it is when the crews go – without that previous stream of earnest replacements – that is when the ship truly fades away.

Endings also mark beginnings of course. *Dallas’* current crew moves on to its next place of duty as does the ship. I wonder as I sit writing this on the starboard bridge wing chair – my favorite place on the cutter – who will be sitting here next. Where will they be? I am watching the



horizon as *Dallas* sails through the Caribbean the last time as a Coast Guard cutter, wondering if she will be fighting pirates in the Malaccan Strait – the boy in me hopes so – with other regional nations, or establishing a sovereign strategic presence in foreign waters. Wherever she is, *Dallas*, under another flag, will still have a purposeful duty at sea.

Despite *Dallas’* last patrol with the U.S. Coast Guard, our service’s missions will still be carried out. *Dallas*, and the 11 other original high endurance cutters, are being replaced by national security cutters. Faster, better equipped and more efficient than their predecessors, the crews aboard the new national security cutters will honor *Dallas’* tradition of protecting American interests, today and for decades to come.

## TRICARE ADDS MORE VACCINES TO RETAIL PHARMACY COVERAGE

By Tyler Patterson

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

It's flu season, and you know what that means: time for your flu shot.

You probably already knew that TRICARE covers seasonal flu, H1N1 flu and pneumonia

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vaccines at retail pharmacies. And you probably also knew that TRICARE covers those vaccines at 100 percent, with no copay. Combined, that means you and your family can get any of those shots at any retail pharmacy in the TRICARE network. It's convenient and there's no copay. So how can the benefit get any better?

It's a tough question, but one that TRICARE's got an answer for: they've added more vaccines to the list.

**Expanded Vaccination Coverage**

Now, in addition to flu and pneumonia vaccines, you can also head to any TRICARE-network retail pharmacy to get immunized against measles, mumps, shingles and many other preventable diseases. Be sure to visit [www.tricare.mil/vaccines](http://www.tricare.mil/vaccines) to see the full list.

Once you've made the decision to get the shot, finding a network retail pharmacy couldn't be easier. [Find a pharmacy online](#) or just call 1-877-363-1303. You'll also want to get in touch with the pharmacy itself to make sure it actually carries the shot you need.

**Even More No-Copay Benefits**

Don't forget, vaccinations aren't the only no-copay preventive care benefits. TRICARE covers most recommended health screenings, too. Check out [TriWest's Screening Guide](#) to see what screenings are recommended for you. Keep in mind that while the care itself is covered, you may still need to pay a cost share or copay for the office visit. Check your TRICARE plan for details.

While you're online, you should also visit [www.tricare.mil/homedelivery](http://www.tricare.mil/homedelivery) and find out how to have 90 days of most generic prescription drugs delivered right to your door, with no copay!

**MYTH-BUSTING! TOP 4 MYTHS ABOUT PAP TESTS**

*By Alyssa Whetstine*

*TriWest Healthcare Alliance*



Did you know that cervical cancer was once a leading cause of cancer death in American women?

In fact, in many developing countries, it still is. However, cervical cancer deaths in the U.S. fell by about 70 percent between 1955 and 1992, according to the American Cancer Society.

What caused this difference? One life-saving exam: the Pap test.

Yet many women don't go for their Pap tests, often because of misunderstandings about the exam. Avoiding this test boils down to one important thing: not having it could take you away from life's most important moments with your family.

Let's take a few minutes to debunk some common myths:

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**Myth:** I can skip a few Pap tests without serious consequences.

**Reality check:** According to the American Cancer Society, 60 to 80 percent of women diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer haven't had a Pap test in the past five years. Skipping just a few of these exams can allow cancer to develop without you knowing.

**Myth:** If I'm going to get cervical cancer, a test won't make a difference either way.

**Reality check:** When found early, cervical cancer is highly treatable. Nearly 90 percent of diagnosed women survive because of early detection, according to the American Cancer Society. That's why getting your Pap tests can mean the difference between life and death.

**Myth:** Once I'm done having children, I can stop getting my Pap tests.

**Reality check:** If you've given birth to three or more children, you have a greater chance of developing cervical cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Plus, this cancer often forms after a woman's child-bearing years.

**Myth:** If I've had the HPV vaccine, I can't get cervical cancer, and I don't need any more Pap tests.

**Reality check:** The HPV vaccine only protects against the few strains of the virus which cause most cervical cancers. However, they're not the only causes. Getting vaccinated is highly recommended, but it does not mean you will never get cervical cancer.

So take the time, make the time. Call for that appointment.

For more information about cervical cancer prevention, visit [www.triwest.com/Pap](http://www.triwest.com/Pap).

## What's the Difference between an M.D. and a D.O?

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

Have you ever been searching for a doctor, and found one labeled as an "M.D." while another is listed as a "D.O.?"

You may have wondered what this means. Well, here's the answer.

There are *two* basic types of medical schools: Allopathic schools and Osteopathic schools. Doctors who attend the Allopathic schools become M.D.s. And if they graduate from the Osteopathic schools, they become D.O.s. Because of these differences, doctors vary in their views on medicine and treating patients.

So, which is right for you?

### **Similarities**

Both types of degrees produce medical doctors, who can prescribe you medicine and diagnose a condition. Here is what M.D.s and D.O.s have in common:

Had to earn a four-year degree with core science classes.

Attended four years of medical school (this is where the differences come into play, since there are two types of medical schools).

Went through a residency program that lasted three to seven years.

Required to pass licensing exams and obtain a state license.

Can practice in accredited hospitals and clinics.

Work side by side in the Military Health System to benefit service members and families entrusted to their care.

### **Differences**

Doctors who earned a D.O. often focus on primary care or family practice, although

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many do choose a specialty and train in the same residency programs as M.D.s.

D.O.s also receive training in something called Osteopathic Manipulative Training (OMT). OMT is similar to chiropractic work, but it's not the same. This treatment manipulates the body's muscles and bones to help with problems like back pain, shoulder pain, and tension headaches. M.D.s do not receive this training.

Over time, the differences between these two types of medical schools have faded. More and more, both schools train doctors to view their patients as a whole, while promoting health, preventing disease, and treating when necessary.

So which is right for you? Now that you know the differences, it all comes down to your personal preference. Which highlights your values, and the way you want to be treated?

## **EXCERPTS FROM COAST GUARD COMMANDANT ADMIRAL BOB PAPP'S STATE OF THE COAST GUARD ADDRESS**

*February 23, 2012*

### ***Navigating Uncertain and Stormy Seas***

There is ... reason why I chose to address you from Alameda....from our vantage point, here at the edge of the Pacific Rim - we can see the future.

To the North of our compass lies the Bering Sea - one of the richest fishing grounds in the world - and farther north, the maritime frontier of the Arctic. In the summer, an entire new ocean is emerging. The promise of shorter shipping routes, petroleum discoveries and tourism are propelling an increase in human activity.

To the South, along the Americas, lies the Eastern Pacific transit zone - an area that smugglers continue to exploit to carry drugs to



*Coast Guard Commandant, Adm. Bob Papp, issues his second State of the Coast Guard address aboard Coast Guard Base Alameda, Calif., Feb. 23, 2012. The State of the Coast Guard is the commandant's annual address to the Coast Guard community about the progress on the Commandant's Direction 2011, assessing the current strategic environment and describing the way ahead. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Patrick Kelley.*

our shores and streets.

Looking to the East, across the Heartland, lie our Inland Rivers and Great Lakes -- the arteries of our maritime transportation system. The Gulf of Mexico with its vast, resources and farther still, the Atlantic Ocean, which, for the past two centuries, has dominated the focus of our operations.

To the West, lies the deep Pacific, a vital source of fish the world depends upon - and beyond . . . the Asia Pacific - the world's fastest growing region - home to more than half the global population - whose emerging markets and global trade (most of it carried by sea) are creating new jobs and opportunities. For trade to flow, shipping lanes must remain open, ports must be safe, and cargo secure.

...Our Coast Guard has patrolled these waters for over a century and half. In 1849, the first cutter arrived on the west coast. And, in 1867, on the day Alaska became a U.S. territory, it was a Revenue Cutter that transported the U.S. delegation into Sitka.

Our crews sounded and charted the Pacific as we enforced federal law, aided distressed mariners, fought and died in wars, and

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maintained a continuous sovereign presence. While conducting these missions we developed strong, and what are now long-standing partnerships.

As the United States looks to expand its leadership in the Pacific, our combination of maritime, military, and law enforcement authorities, and experience in Pacific operations makes us even more valuable to the Nation.

...The renewed strategic focus on the Pacific further validates our decision to retain separate Atlantic and Pacific Area commands.

Our experience has also taught us that what you need to operate on the high-seas - whether it's in the Atlantic or Pacific - are modern, capable, multi-mission high-endurance cutters and aircraft. We are working hard to get them. ....Of course, I know that your hard work is taking place not just in the Pacific - but throughout the maritime domain . . . Coast Guard men and women - active duty, reserve, Auxiliarists and civilians - are on watch, ever vigilant.

America is, first and foremost, a maritime nation. 95% of our foreign trade arrives - or is shipped by sea - the Maritime Transportation System accounts for nearly 700 Billion dollars of the U.S. gross domestic product and 51 Million U.S. jobs. Our Nation's economy and its security depend upon maritime commerce. And our Coast Guard provides for its safe and secure approach to our shores.

I have long believed that the greatness of a nation can be measured by the resources that it provides for mariners to safely and securely approach its shores. By that measure, our Nation is the undisputed world leader in that it produced the United States Coast Guard . . . a unique merger of military, maritime, law enforcement, regulatory, marine safety and first response capabilities . . . it's no coincidence that so many other countries seek to emulate our Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard's value to the Nation has never

been greater.

So where are we? What is the State of the Coast Guard today?

A year ago we took a fix and charted a course. This year's fix finds us on track, with a good speed of advance . . . but we are Navigating Uncertain and Stormy Seas.

Our Nation has made hard decisions to cut our deficit - and to put our fiscal house in order - these decisions include reductions in defense spending - reductions in our Department's spending - and after a decade of significant budgetary growth . . . they will likely include reductions in Coast Guard spending.

The de-commissioning of high endurance cutters and patrol boats and the tightening of staffs in 2013 budget will reduce our personnel strength by over 1,000 people . . . but this is necessary to make room to bring on our new assets. ....

We will not allow our Service to become a hollow operational force.

We will not allow our mission support capacity to be reduced to the point where we cannot maintain acceptable levels of readiness. ....

So, today I'm going to speak to you as a sailor . . . I don't apologize for that . . . after all, we are a maritime Service. My experiences as a ship captain, navigator and cutterman have formed my view of the world.

And in my career as a sailor, I have found that no matter how severe the storm, no matter how difficult the problem, you continue to work, struggle, and fight . . . and you rely on your shipmates . . . because ultimately the weather will change, and conditions will improve. ....

In my experience, there are four consistent lessons for what it takes to safely navigate uncertain and stormy seas:

**Lesson one**, you need a well trained crew that is proficient in their jobs;

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**Lesson two**, you need well crafted Standing Orders to guide the crew;

**Lesson three**, you need a sound ship, that is equipped to take on all threats and hazards; and,

**Lesson four**, YOU need to take care of your crew - and their families.

... How will we continue to carry out our operations in the face of heavy weather?

As we describe in Pub 3, we've organized our operational assets into a maritime trident of shore based, maritime patrol, and deployable specialized forces.

We will deploy these forces individually, or in combination, throughout the maritime domain. Our core operational concept is Prevention - Response.

We seek to prevent dangerous or illicit maritime actions as far from our shores as possible, while providing safe navigation for mariners in legitimate commerce. When undesirable or unlawful events do occur - we will respond to protect the Nation, minimize the impact, and recover.

Preventing and responding to threats before they reach our ports is not a new idea. In 1787, the father of our Service, Alexander Hamilton wrote, "A few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at a small expense be made useful sentinels of the laws."

Hamilton's vision remains true today. It's just that in today's globalized and interconnected world - the functional entrances to our ports are no longer at the mouths of our harbors, but far offshore. To effectively accomplish Hamilton's objective - and our current mandate



- we have to be in overseas ports, on the high seas, along our coasts and in our domestic ports... we must be able to capably operate in all areas of the maritime domain.

We feel prepared to take on these challenges because we have adaptable cutters and aircraft, and proficient crews . . . we will employ them on a seasonal basis - while we continue to define our requirements for permanent Arctic infrastructure.

The Coast Guard is unique - we have the experience to participate in, and lead where appropriate, the development of our National Arctic strategy - but, the imperative for expanded Coast Guard capabilities in the Arctic is now - not 20 years from now.

Recently, the eyes of the Nation were focused on Cutter *Healy* as she broke through hundreds of miles of Arctic ice to enable a tanker to deliver fuel to Nome, Alaska.

Coast Guard polar icebreakers are the only ships in our national inventory capable of performing this mission, and right now, *Healy* is our only operational polar icebreaker.

We are working hard to return *Polar Star* to operations

in 2013 -  
and when  
she returns,  
we will  
regain one  
of the most  
powerful  
conventional  
icebreakers  
in the



world - and  
another 10 years of service from her. ... Early in my career . . . there was a time when the Coast Guard operated 8 polar icebreakers. How did that happen? In 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt passed a hand written note to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau

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- Morgenthau passed the note on to the Commandant, Admiral Russell Waesche, - it simply read, "Henry I want the world's best icebreakers, [signed] FDR"

I guess Federal acquisition Rules must have been easier then!

Times are different now, but FDR's order is the kind of action a visionary leader takes to prepare a Nation to navigate stormy seas.

In even more difficult circumstances, in the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the President and the Congress chose to invest in America's Coast Guard. They built a class of 7 new major Coast Guard cutters - the 327-foot Treasury class. Why?

Because leaders foresaw that America in the future required capable multi-mission ships to meet its challenges - the challenges that were known

- but more

importantly, future challenges that could not be known - but were certain to come.

These seven major cutters carried out missions never imagined in their original concept of operations. Most of these cutters served for more than 40 years -- The last was decommissioned at over 50 years of age.

They were able to do this because national leaders with vision foresaw that capable ships with . . . speed . . . endurance . . . and versatility were a sound investment against an uncertain, and what proved to be menacing, half century to come.

... The story of our 378-foot high endurance cutters is strikingly similar... they are also a class of ships that, though they are failing, survive

today - they have served for more than 40 years... in combat off Vietnam

- in coalition operations off Iraq - protecting our fisheries - interdicting drugs - working to prevent mass migrations from Haiti and Cuba - and saving countless lives . . . the 378s have served well beyond their time.



378 cutter Rush (WHEC 723)

We know from experience that building multi-mission cutters and aircraft is a proven WAY to prepare for uncertain times - doing so keeps our Nation safe, our Service ready, and our domestic industries - which create American jobs - skilled and strong.

Most importantly, we know that the ships, aircraft and boats we buy today will not just shape . . . But . . . in large part, will define the Coast Guard's next 50 years of capability - They will be the primary tools that we rely on to do our job - responding to all threats, and all hazards throughout America's maritime domain.

So, what are these Uncertain and Stormy seas?

Dynamic and evolving threats are increasing in the global maritime domain: illicit drug and human trafficking, piracy, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, illegal fishing, environmental crimes, and belligerent nation-states.

These stormy seas are also budget driven. The current national deficit demands change. On our current trackline, we will likely see the Coast Guard get smaller.

We may also encounter those who seek to sacrifice long term investments - like recapitalizing our cutters, aircraft and boats - for short term budget gains.

But, we have faced tough times like this before . . . And, as any ship Captain can tell you, the

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most important element to weathering a storm is a great crew. And, we are truly blessed to have one in you.

We all come from a long blue line of Coast Guardsmen who have confronted heavy weather and prevailed in the face of seemingly in-surmountable challenges.



Petty Officer 1st Class Bernie Webber takes the helm of CG 36500 once again for the 50th anniversary commemorating his crew's heroic efforts to save 32 seaman from the doomed tanker Pendleton in February 1952 off the coast of Chatham, Mass. The then 24-year-old Webber was the coxswain that fateful night.

USCG photo by PA3 Amy Thomas

60 years ago this month, Boatswains Mate First Class Bernie Webber, was the coxswain of a 36-foot motor lifeboat . . . his crew headed out into 60 foot seas . . . and 70 knot winds . . . in near blizzard conditions off Cape Cod to rescue 32 men, one by one, from the tanker Pendleton . . . broken in two by the storm.

I am honored that the first of our new Sentinel Class response cutters will be named after this heroic Boatswain's Mate.



The Coast Guard Cutter Webber, the Coast Guard's first Sentinel Class patrol boat, arrives at Coast Guard Sector Miami Feb. 9, 2012. The 154-foot Webber is a Fast Response Cutter capable of independently deploying to conduct missions such as ports, waterways, and coastal security, fishery patrols, drug and illegal migrant law enforcement, search and rescue, and national defense along the Gulf of Mexico and throughout the Caribbean. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jennifer Johnson.

Richard Etheridge was the first African-American to command a life saving station - Station Pea Island - this was also the first life saving station crewed entirely by African Americans. Keeper Etheridge never backed down in the face of adversity. Soon after taking command, his lifesaving station burned to the ground. He did not hesitate. He rebuilt it.

He also understood the importance of proficiency - he developed rigorous lifesaving drills. He constantly tested his crew until he was satisfied they could take on any mission - the Pea Island surfmen would go on to rescue hundreds of souls from stranded ships in the most extreme conditions - Etheridge's station became known as the best on the Carolina coast - and he became a legend.

It is a point of personal pride that our second fast response cutter will be named Richard Etheridge - who is not only a Coast Guard icon - but for me, a model for the importance of proficiency.



CGC Blackthorne (WLB 391)

And, Seaman Apprentice William Flores, who died while saving the lives of his shipmates after the Cutter *Blackthorn* collided with the tanker Capricorn.

"Billy" as his shipmates called him, was just 19 years old. He was less than a year out of boot camp - one of the least experienced crewmen on board. But, when *Blackthorn* capsized, he took off his belt, strapped open a lifejacket locker door . . . which freed lifejackets to float

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to the surface . . . he then remained behind to assist other crewmembers.

In doing so, he displayed amazing courage. He also gave his own life to save others.

I am deeply humbled by his service and sacrifice - our third fast response cutter will bear the name William Flores as a constant reminder of the heroic deeds even our youngest Coast Guardsmen are capable of.

What a Service we have . . . to name an entire class of ships after enlisted heroes . . . it's extraordinary... but this is our heritage...And it continues today.

With people like Aviation Survival Technician 3rd Class Thomas McArthur. .

. who, in an incredible display of bravery, made 12 consecutive rescues of individuals overcome by strong rip currents in Lake

Michigan . . . for his actions he was awarded the Silver Lifesaving Medal.

...Your efforts - and those of the long blue line of Coast Guardsmen who have gone before us - stand as a testament to human courage, seamanship, airmanship and skill . . . you showed the Nation once again what a small crew of dedicated Coast Guardsmen can do - and how our Service remains true to our motto - Semper Paratus - Always Ready to assist those in distress!

I feel so proud, yet so humbled to be your Commandant . . . you protect people on the sea, you protect our country against threats delivered by the sea, and YOU even protect the sea itself.



*Aviation Survival Technician 3rd Class  
Thomas McArthur*

It is the strength of you - our crew - that allows us to keep doing it... and if we can continue to provide you with the cutters, boats and aircraft you need to perform our missions, we will ensure America's Coast Guard remains Semper Paratus well into our 3rd century of service to the Nation.

Now I'm an optimist . . . but during the few times I start to get discouraged, it's only because too many in our country seem to view these uncertain and stormy seas as reasons for doom and dismay - they claim our country is in decline - and that our best years just might be behind us. One thing I'm sure of . . . these people have never met anyone from my crew.

Because as we prepare for and proceed into heavy weather it is your commitment to excellence, your spirit, and your professionalism that will continue to fuel my optimism . . . eventually the weather will improve.

The key to navigating safely through uncertain and stormy seas is the same today as it has been for centuries - it's having a crew of strong, dedicated and disciplined men and women - and fortunately we have you in abundance in the Coast Guard.

When the storm clouds drive others for safe harbors, we head out...

To those who doubt our ability to navigate through the years ahead, I have a message for you:

We do not fear uncertain and stormy seas - that's when you need us most!

And, that's when we're at our best!

We're Coast Guardsmen.

This is our chosen profession. This is our way. This is what we do.

Thank you.

Semper Paratus.

**Administration-Proposed TRICARE Fee Increases for FY2013-17****TRICARE Prime for Retired Beneficiaries Under Age 65 (Family Rate)\***

<b>Retired Pay**</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017***</b>
\$0-22,589	\$520	\$600	\$680	\$760	\$850	\$893
\$22,590-\$45,178	\$520	\$720	\$920	\$1,185	\$1,450	\$1,523
\$45,179 or more	\$520	\$820	\$1,120	\$1,535	\$1,950	\$2,048

\*Single rate is 50% of family rate

\*\* Retired pay thresholds to be indexed to COLA increases

\*\*\* Fees for FY18 and outyears to be indexed to health cost inflation

**TRICARE Standard Annual Fees (Family Rate)\***

<b>Enrollment Fee</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017**</b>
	\$0	\$140	\$170	\$200	\$230	\$250
<b>Deductible</b>	\$300	\$320	\$400	\$460	\$520	\$580

\*Single rate is 50% of family rate

\*\* Fees for FY18 and outyears to be indexed to health cost inflation

**TRICARE-for-Life Annual Enrollment Fee (Per Individual)**

<b>Retired Pay*</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017**</b>
\$0-22,589	\$0	\$35	\$75	\$115	\$150	\$158
\$22,590-\$45,178	\$0	\$75	\$150	\$225	\$300	\$317
\$45,179 or more	\$0	\$115	\$225	\$335	\$450	\$475

\*\* Retired pay thresholds to be indexed to COLA increases

\*\*\* Fees for FY18 and outyears to be indexed to health cost inflation

<b>Pharmacy Copays</b>	<b>FY 2012</b>	<b>FY 2013</b>	<b>FY 2014</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>
<b>Retail (1 mo fill)</b>						
Generic	\$5	\$5	\$6	\$7	\$8	\$9
Brand	\$12	\$26	\$28	\$30	\$32	\$34
Non-Formulary*	\$25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Mail-Order (3 mo fill)</b>						
Generic	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9
Brand	\$9	\$26	\$28	\$30	\$32	\$34
Non-Formulary	\$25	\$51	\$54	\$58	\$62	\$66

\* Non-Formulary pharmaceuticals will have limited availability in retail pharmacies

**Exceptions:** Medically retired servicemembers and survivors of members who died on active duty would be exempt from fee increases.

**Chart provided by the MOAA**

## COAST GUARD RESERVE – 71 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AMERICA

Sunday, February 19, 2012  
Written by Rear Adm. David Callahan, director of Reserve and Leadership.

Today marks the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Coast Guard Reserve. Since its founding, the Coast Guard Reserve has been a flexible, responsive and cost effective workforce that has maintained its primary purpose of providing surge capacity for Coast Guard missions worldwide.

During World War II, more than 90 percent of the 214,000 personnel serving in the Coast Guard were reservists. Another 125,000 members served in the Temporary Reserve, which consisted of volunteers and Auxiliary members whose paid and unpaid services were needed in a military capacity for coastal and port security details.

*The Coast Guard Reserve was established by the passage of the Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary Act on Feb. 19, 1941.*



Today's Coast Guard Reserve consists of nearly 8,000 dedicated men and women who support Coast Guard roles of maritime homeland security, national defense (domestic and expeditionary) and response to natural and man-made domestic disasters. Reservists are always ready to mobilize with critical competencies in boat operations, contingency planning and response, expeditionary warfare, marine safety, port security, maritime law enforcement and mission support.

Since 2001, Coast Guard reservists have performed more active duty days than at any other time since World War II. More than 8,000 have served in support of Department of Defense overseas contingency operations, including our eight port security units, which continue to deploy on a rotating basis to forward operating locations. Additionally, nearly 4,000 reservists were mobilized in response to the annual spring floods in the Midwest, hurricanes and Deepwater Horizon.

Whether it is major hurricanes or major oil spills, the standard procedure for Coast Guard operational commanders is now to request reservists sooner, a change from common practice just a decade ago. This tendency is likely to continue as tight budgets and increasing workloads squeeze the active component's capacity. Through astute programs and budget management the service is ensuring the "force in garrison" is staffed, trained and supported to remain agile and ready to mobilize.

In 2008 the Reserve Force Readiness System was implemented. This initiative has achieved notable efficiencies in the management of reservists assigned to drill at active duty units and made full-time support billets more closely focused on Reserve training requirements. In addition, the Concept of Reserve Employment initiative ensures training is better aligned to deliver the specific competencies required by the evolving manner in which operational commanders employ the Coast Guard Reserve.

As the Coast Guard celebrates this 71st anniversary of the Reserve, it should be emphasized that mobilization is the Coast Guard Reserve's primary purpose and function; and every day, through training and augmentation, reservists provide the vital surge capability the citizens of our Nation expect from the United States Coast Guard. Despite the current decremental budget climate likely to be encountered across government over the next few years, the Coast Guard Reserve will continue to fill a vital role in the commandant's overall strategy to deal with the threats and challenges of the future. The Coast Guard has adequate strength and readiness to meet current requirements, and the service continues to manage resources prudently to preserve this ability.

**Coast Guard Retiree Council Northwest Newsletter**

c/o COMMANDING OFFICER

USCG Base Seattle

Attn: Work Life (Retiree Council)

1519 Alaskan Way South, Bldg. 1

Seattle, Washington 98134



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U. S. COAST GUARD

PERMIT NO. G-157

**How We Served...  
Yesterday in The  
U. S. Coast Guard**



*"To do anything in this world worth doing, we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in, and scramble through as well as we can." by Sydney Smith (1771-1845)* In this photo a Sailor braves an obviously frigid sea on the bow of the USS Glacier (AGB-4) as the ice breaker pounds her way through heavy swells in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, on 9 February 1956. The ship, commissioned the previous 27 May, was on her shakedown cruise and maiden voyage, which coincided with her participation in Operation Deep Freeze I.