

The 67th Anniversary of the Coast Guard Auxiliary

On 23 June 2006, we will observe the 67th birthday of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. There were four purposes of the Coast Guard Reserve Act first passed in 1939; (1) safety of life upon navigable waters, (2) promotion of efficiency in the operation of pleasure craft, (3) improved knowledge of and compliance with applicable laws, and (4) support to the Coast Guard. The threat of war led to other operational missions, ultimately including anti-submarine patrols by the “Putt-Putt Navy” or “Splinter Fleet.”

Much has changed in the years since the Auxiliary came into being; new Auxiliary uniforms, more modern and sophisticated training programs, and greater professionalism. Terrorism has replaced world war as a threat to our nation’s survival.

But much has remained the same. Then as now, the Coast Guard faced budget and personnel shortfalls, and the Auxiliary provided a key force multiplier. Then as now, men and women volunteered their services in support of the Coast Guard. Then as now, we rallied to such words as “Duty, Honor, Country.” Then as now, we were a key component of the Coast Guard and in many of the inland areas, we are “the Coast Guard.” Admiral Allen said the following about the Auxiliary:

“As the finest all-volunteer organization in our Nation, I consider each of you an integral part of our Coast Guard. We simply could not meet the challenges we face or conduct the missions we do on a day-to-day basis without your selfless devotion to duty, as was so vividly demonstrated most recently in the Coast Guard's extraordinary response to the many hurricanes we responded to last year.”

When the Coast Guard was recently awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the Auxiliary, specifically named in the citation, was seen a vital part of the team and shared the honor.

On this, the occasion of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary’s 67th birthday, let us celebrate our past but focus on the future. There is much to do, few to do it, and many challenges ahead. But we have the talent, commitment, and direction to go forward with confidence.

Thank you for your dedicated service and for your future efforts.

Semper Paratus!

Gene M. Seibert
National Commodore