



**TESTIMONY OF REAR ADMIRAL SANDRA STOSZ
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ON THE COAST GUARD RESERVE PROGRAM

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL**

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Good afternoon, Chairman Webb, Senator Graham and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Service Subcommittee. It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Coast Guard Reserve; its contribution to national defense and homeland security; the issues that face the men and women of our Coast Guard Reserve; and the Coast Guard's ability to sustain our current high quality staffing.

As one of the five Armed Forces of the United States, the Coast Guard has a long and distinguished history of service at home and abroad as a military, maritime, multi-mission service that is always ready for all threats and all hazards. Because of its mix of military and civil law enforcement authorities, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to serve as the lead federal agency for maritime homeland security and response to natural and man-made disasters, while acting as a supporting agency for national defense.

Founded in 1941, the Coast Guard Reserve is the force multiplier for the operational Coast Guard. During the last decade, we have completely integrated our Selected Reserve Force into active component units. Over 80 percent of our 8,100-member Selected Reserve Force is directly assigned to active duty Coast Guard shore units, where reservists hone readiness skills through classroom instruction and on-the-job training side by side with their active duty counterparts. The remainder of our Selected Reserve Force is dedicated primarily to supporting defense operations, the majority of whom are assigned to our eight deployable Port Security Units (PSUs). The principal mission of the PSUs, which are staffed by both active and reserve duty personnel, is to support the combatant commanders in strategic ports of debarkation overseas. The remaining personnel are assigned to Department of Defense (DoD) units, such as the Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadrons and combatant commanders' staffs.

OPERATION UNIFIED RESPONSE:

Over the past two decades the Coast Guard has focused on an integrated workforce with deployable force packages. In support of the recent earthquake recovery efforts in Haiti, the Coast Guard Cutter FORWARD arrived on scene within 24 hours of the earthquake; PSU 307, augmented by individuals with select specialties from several other PSUs, deployed, for approximately 8 weeks, as a unified force to provide port safety and security in Port-Au-Prince and nearby Haitian ports. The Coast Guard Reserve's PSU force package was vital to ensuring the safe passage of relief supplies and shipping commerce in the port and surrounding waters of Haiti.

INTEGRATION:

The 8,100 operational reserve personnel act as a surge capability ready and able to respond to any national or domestic contingency. They responded magnificently to the attacks of September 11, 2001, and all contingency operations that have followed. Since 2001, there have been over 6,900 cumulative recalls of Coast Guard reservists under title 10 of the United States Code. Reservists have served at home as part of the Coast Guard's Maritime Homeland Security mission—usually as part of PSUs—and overseas in direct support of the combatant commanders—in early 2003, at the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom, approximately half of Coast Guard personnel deployed overseas were reservists.

POST 9/11:

Since September 2001, when we embarked on the largest mobilization of Coast Guard reservists since World War II, we have redoubled our efforts to ensure a Reserve Force with the right people, skills and training for the missions of the 21st century. We have examined our systems for recruiting, training, mobilizing and demobilizing reservists to identify and close readiness gaps. More significantly, we undertook a comprehensive review of the Coast Guard Reserve; upon completion, our Commandant, Admiral Thad Allen, issued a policy statement that embodies the three core strategic functions of the Reserve Force: maritime homeland security; domestic and expeditionary support to national defense; and domestic man-made or natural disaster response. The Reserve Employment and Analysis Working Group has further developed this policy statement into employment doctrine that will focus on training and augmentation.

TITLE 14:

None of this post-9/11 activity represents a radical change for the Coast Guard Reserve, but rather an affirmation of the vital role our Reservists play as the Coast Guard's operational surge force. One key component of this ready surge force is availability and accessibility of individuals for mobilization. As with members of the other Reserve Components, our men and women are subject to involuntary mobilization under Title 10 for national security contingencies. However, unlike members of the other Reserve Components, Coast Guard Reservists can also be involuntarily mobilized for up to 60 days at a time for domestic contingencies, including natural and man-made disasters and terrorist attacks. This unique authority provided under Title 14 has been used over a dozen times since the 1970s to mobilize Coast Guard Reservists for a wide range of emergencies ranging from the 1980 Mariel Boat Lift to floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters.

In 2005, this special authority was used by the Secretary of Homeland Security to allow the Coast Guard to mobilize approximately 700 reservists for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, providing a ready force for rescue and recovery operations in New Orleans and other stricken areas of the Gulf Coast. It was used again in 2008 for nearly 70 members in response to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. In all, members of the Coast Guard Reserve mobilized under Title 14 for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita performed nearly 20,000 person-days of duty in support of Coast Guard rescue and recovery operations. Most served alongside their active-duty counterparts as individual augmentees. For instance, several reservists assigned as Coast Guard Investigative Service special agents were mobilized to augment active-duty and civilian agents deployed to New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Gulfport, where they provided armed security for senior officials and personnel disbursing cash to Coast Guard staff. In addition to individual augmentees, the Coast Guard also activated two PSUs to provide physical security in New Orleans and Gulfport and to aid in the distribution of relief supplies. These activities are a testament to the ability of our reservists to mobilize when and where needed to increase Coast Guard forces responding to an emergency.

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006 expanded the Secretary of Homeland Security's Title 14 recall authority to permit mobilization of Coast Guard Reservists "to aid in prevention of an imminent serious natural or manmade disaster, accident, catastrophe, or act of terrorism." Other language included in the bill extended the limits on the period of recall to not more than 60 days in any four-month period and to not more than 120 days in any two-year period. This significantly enhanced our ability to mitigate major natural disasters and thwart terrorist attacks by enabling us to bring Coast Guard Reservists on active duty even before disaster strikes.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE:

A major component of the Coast Guard's success in responding to disasters is the Coast Guard's decentralized command and control structure. The authority and responsibility to move forces, including reservists, establish response readiness levels, and direct operations is vested in the regional District and Area Commanders. This provides the most direct oversight of operations at the field level and avoids delays in executing our missions. However, the most important factor contributing to the Coast Guard's effectiveness in disaster response is the fact that our forces are engaged in this type of mission on a daily basis. As the nation's maritime first responder, Coast Guard men and women—active, reserve, civilian and auxiliary—plan for, train and execute missions every single day.

AN ARMED FORCE:

The Coast Guard possesses several unique features that help to integrate its efforts with those of the DoD, other federal agencies, the National Guard, and state and local authorities. As an armed force, our communications systems, planning processes, personnel training and even our command structures have much in common with the DoD services. Coast Guard commanders can be either supported or supporting commanders for military operations, with extensive experience working in and with DoD Joint Task Force Headquarters. This capability allows for easy integration of forces and unity of effort when working together during major catastrophes. Today, we enjoy our closest relationship with DoD since World War II, with numerous active duty and reserve personnel assigned at our combatant commands and various other DoD organizations.

JOINT FORCES:

The Coast Guard maintains excellent working relationships with all of the Armed Forces, providing support and leveraging expertise through mutual agreements. At Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, the Coast Guard has partnered with the Marine Corps to develop the Coast Guard Special Missions Training Center, which is tasked to provide training, doctrine, and testing/evaluation in support of mission requirements of the Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps operational forces. The Special Missions Training Center offers specialized courses for Coast Guard Reserve deployable units, and inclusion of Coast Guard personnel in formal training conducted by the Navy and Marine Corps.

In today's joint environment, the spirit of cooperation and common purpose is exceptionally high. The Coast Guard welcomed the opportunity in February 2010 to participate in PATRIOT HOOK when PSU 312, working jointly with the 452nd Air Lift Control Flight, leveraged the opportunity to complete required underway live-fire, anti-swimmer grenade training, and personnel and equipment movement by land and air. During the four-day exercise, held at San Clemente Island, California, the U.S. Air Force transported over one-half million pounds of cargo from various airfields to San Clemente Island.

And, as I report to you here today, one hundred and twenty members of PSU 312 are deployed to Southwest Asia as an integral part of the Navy's Maritime Expeditionary Squadron, providing vital water and shore-side security for ports of strategic importance in Kuwait and Iraq.

INTERAGENCY:

In addition to our work with DoD, the Coast Guard works on a daily basis with other federal, state and local partners. The Coast Guard's port, waterway and coastal security mission requires the Coast Guard to interact daily with state and local law enforcement and emergency response organizations, exercising command structures and building the trust critical to effectively executing an emergency response. Coast Guard Captains of the Port provide a critical link through Local Emergency Planning Committees, Area Maritime Security Committees, Harbor Safety Committees, Area Planning Committees, Regional Response Teams and other venues that allow the Coast Guard to build close relationships with key partners in disaster response. Because of the integrated nature of the Coast Guard, individual reservists play a key role in these efforts. Their dual status as Coast Guard members and residents of their local communities frequently enables them to leverage organizational and personal relationships that yield immeasurable benefits during a crisis situation.

COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE (CNGR):

The Coast Guard has participated from the start of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve process, providing both a dedicated staff member as well as testimony to the Commission, participating in each of the fact-finding sessions. Upon completion of the study, the Coast Guard worked with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs in evaluating the impact of the Commission's 95 recommendations. The Coast Guard continues to participate in follow-on work groups with the other reserve components as well as the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs as the services work to implement many of the Commission's recommendations.

WORKFORCE:

The Coast Guard takes a unique approach to staffing a Reserve force by performing both reserve and active duty recruiting through a single Recruiting Command. The Coast Guard Reserve supplements recruiting offices with reservists on active duty (Temporary Active Reserve Recruiters) under the concept that reservists are best suited to recruit reservists. In addition to the Reserve recruiters, the Recruiting Command has found success in the use of In Service Transfer Teams to ensure that all active duty personnel being released from active duty are briefed on the benefits of the Coast Guard Reserve and offered an opportunity to affiliate with assignment.

IMPROVED BENEFITS:

The Post 9/11 GI Bill, implemented in 2009, offers our reservists who have served extensively on active duty since September 11, 2001, an important benefit that will improve the education and professionalism of our already stellar workforce. This benefit has also contributed to current retention rates, which remain high and virtually unchanged from fiscal year 2009.

The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, along with changes to DoD and Coast Guard policy, provide continued improvements in benefits for members of the Coast Guard Reserve. Authority was extended to the service secretaries to provide our dedicated reservists with legal assistance for an extended period of time following their release from mobilization orders, which will assist them in resolving issues that may have occurred while they were deployed. Early TRICARE benefits increased from 90 days to 180 days, providing early access to TRICARE medical and dental care when members are notified of upcoming mobilizations, and thereby improving reservists' readiness. The new TRICARE Retired Reserve benefit will provide our retirees with health care options during the period where they do not yet qualify for TRICARE Reserve Select or TRICARE Standard at age 60.

The Coast Guard Reserve often operates in a joint environment with its sister service, the Navy. The two services are working to implement joint instructions for the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, which will ensure demobilized reservists are properly transitioned to civilian employment.

The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act authorized early retirement benefits for eligible reservists who serve on active duty during a period of war or national emergency, including active service under various sections of Title 10, and Title 32 in the case of National Guard Reservists, for incidents or a National Special Security Event as designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security. Active service under Title 14 was inadvertently omitted as qualifying service supporting the same incidents where National Guard service would qualify.

RETENTION

Retention in the Coast Guard Reserve is at 93 percent for officers and 87 percent for enlisted personnel in fiscal year 2010. These retention rates have held solid for a number of years, indicating that members see the Coast Guard Selected Reserve as an attractive option and, once they join, they want to continue serving.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT/JOB SECURITY

The Coast Guard is actively engaged with Employer Support of the Guard and the Reserve (ESGR). Each year, the Coast Guard Reserve actively encourages reservists to nominate their employers for the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award. These concerted efforts have resulted in a substantial increase in nominees over previous years.

NEXT STEPS:

The Coast Guard has demonstrated its ability to prepare for and respond to a wide range of contingencies, including natural disasters and a terrorist attack, while executing more routine missions, such as maritime law enforcement and search and rescue. To continue to meet these challenges, the Coast Guard continuously examines best practices and takes steps to adapt. In 2008, the Coast Guard Reserve Program developed an initiative called the Reserve Force Readiness System, which is aimed at increasing readiness of Coast Guard Reserve Forces. Under the Reserve Force Readiness System, many billets have been realigned at the operational level providing improved oversight, day-to-day management, and readiness of our Reserve Forces. This new organizational construct also provides additional leadership opportunities for senior reservists (officer & enlisted), provides increased mentorship and training for junior personnel, and optimizes the placement of Full Time Support personnel.

The Coast Guard is the nation's premier maritime law enforcement agency with broad, multi-faceted jurisdictional authority. It is on behalf of the men and women of the Coast Guard that I thank you for your continued support of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Reserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.