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POLICY CHANGES / MAJOR EVENTS & THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE MISSIONS & CAPABILITIES OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD AND ITS PREDECESSOR SERVICES:

Federal control of lighthouses, 1789

An Act of Congress (1 Stat. L., 53), only the ninth law passed by the newly created Congress of the United States and the first one to make any provisions for public work, created the Lighthouse Establishment as an administrative unit of the Federal Government, when it accepted title to, and joined jurisdiction over, the lighthouses then in existence, and provided that "the necessary support, maintenance and repairs of all lighthouses, beacons, buoys and public piers erected, placed, or sunk before the passing of this act, at the entrance of, or within any bay, inlet, harbor, or port of the United States, for rendering the navigation thereof easy and safe, shall be defrayed out of the treasury of the United States.'

Establishment of "system of cutters" to enforce customs' laws, 1790

Congress authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, to create a maritime service to enforce customs laws (1 Stat. L. 145, 175; 4 August 1790). Alternately known as the *system of cutters*, *Revenue Service*, and *Revenue-Marine* this service would officially be named the *Revenue Cutter Service* (12 Stat. L., 639) in 1863. This service was placed under the control of the Treasury Department.

Quasi-War with France, 1799-1801

The Revenue Marine was first charged with protecting the nation's coasts and its interests on the high seas.

Post-War of 1812 enactments:

Congress authorized the revenue cutters to enforce the slave trade restrictions, combat pirates, enforce quarantine and neutrality laws, prevent plundering, and remove dangerous wrecks from navigable waters.

Timber Reserve Act, 1822:

The Revenue Cutter Service was ordered to protect certain federal timber reserves in Florida.

Winter cruises authorized, 1832:

Secretary of the Treasury Louis McLane ordered revenue cutters to conduct special winter cruises along the coast to assist mariners in need. Congress codified the practice in 1837.

Seminole Wars, 1836-1842:

Revenue cutters conducted combined naval and land operations for the first time, adding to their national defense responsibilities one task that proved their versatility.

Explosion of the steamboat *Pulaski*, 1838:

The lack of a shore organization convinced Congress to create the Steamboat Inspection Service instead of giving the new regulatory functions to the USRCS.

Loss of the Austrian brig *Terasto* (1840s):

William A. Newell witnessed the sinking of the *Terasto* and the death of her 13-man crew. He became a congressman and pushed for the creation of a federal government supported life-saving service, beginning in 1848.

Loss of the steamer *Metis*, 1872

The *Metis*, after being struck by a coastal schooner off the coast of Watch Hill, Rhode Island, sank with a heavy loss of life. But Lifesaving Service and lighthouse personnel, along with the cutter *Moccasin*, rescued the survivors. The rescue signified the growing interaction among the three services, which played a factor in their later mergers.

Passage of the *Posse Comitatus* Act, 1878

The 45th Congress enacted a rider on an Army appropriations bill that became known as the *Posse Comitatus* Act (Chapter 263, Section 15, U.S. Statutes, Vol. 20). This act limited military involvement in civil law enforcement, leaving the Revenue Cutter Service as the only military force consistently charged with federal law enforcement on the high seas and U.S. waters.

Loss of the USS *Jeannette*, 1879:

Inauguration of the Bering Sea Patrol; USRC *Corwin* charged with locating the lost vessel.

International Marine Conference, Washington, 1889:

Congress became involved with safety at sea issues and passed anchorage laws. Congress charged the Revenue Cutter Service with enforcing them. The first is New York harbor and the cutter *Manhattan* was detailed to enforce the new laws (Act of March 6, 1896, 29 Stat. L., 54).

Boarding of the steamer *George E. Starr*, August 31, 1890:

A boarding party from the USRC *Wolcott* discovered a quantity of undeclared opium in the first recorded instance of narcotics seizure, only because the opium had not been declared, not because of anti-narcotic laws.

May 19, 1896, Act of (29 Stat. L., 122):

In addition to the anchorage laws, Congress authorized the Revenue Cutter Service to enforce rules for insuring the safety of life and property at regattas and marine parades and to render aid in case of accidents at such affairs.

Spanish-American War, 1898:

The Navy tasked the US Life-Saving Service with coast watching.

Motorboat Act passed, 1910:

Congress gave the Revenue Cutter Service jurisdiction over the new regulations, this is the beginning of what would become the Coast Guard's regulatory responsibilities over pleasure boating in the U.S.

Sinking of the *Titanic*, 1912:

Congress authorized the International Ice Patrol.

Merger of the Life-Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service to create the Coast Guard, 1915

The Coast Guard was created by the merger of these two services, effective in 1915. The law specifically stated that the Coast Guard "shall constitute a part of the military forces of the United States."

President Woodrow Wilson creates the Interdepartmental Board on International Service of Ice Observation, Ice Patrol, and Ocean Derelict Destruction, 1916:

The Board was directed to prepare a systematic program of scientific observations to be carried out by the cutters serving on the International Ice Patrol, thus inaugurating the practice of oceanography with the USCG.

World War I, 1917-1918:

Cutters are first assigned to escort of convoy duties in European waters, a role they fulfill admirably and again carry on in World War II.

Passage of the Espionage Act, June 1917:

The Coast Guard is given powers to prevent sabotage at the nation's harbors.

Explosion of the *SS Mont Blanc*, 6 December, 1917:

Congress empowers the Coast Guard to control shipping in major U.S. ports. Combined with the Espionage Act powers, the Coast Guard creates "Captain of the Ports" in major U.S. ports.

Enforcement of Prohibition, 1920:

Expansion of the service, its missions, and its authority.

Whaling Convention Act passed, 1932:

The Coast Guard was assigned the responsibility for enforcing the Act.

Winter of 1933-34:

Severe icing blocked navigation in the nation's northeast rivers. Coast Guard cutters were pressed into service to clear channels for oil barges; first icebreaking attempts by the service.

Burning of the *Morro Castle*, 1934:

Gives rise to further regulations regarding passenger vessel safety.

President Franklin Roosevelt's declaration of neutrality, 1939:

Navy assets were insufficient to carry out the patrol effectively, USCG adds cutters to the Neutrality Patrol.

Dangerous Cargo Act, 1940:

Port Security responsibilities are undertaken again for the first time since World War I when President Franklin Roosevelt invoked the Espionage Act of 1917. The Coast Guard was to govern anchorage and movement of all vessels in U.S. waters and to protect vessels, harbors, and inland or coastal waterways of the U.S. The Dangerous Cargo Act gave the Coast Guard jurisdiction over ships with high explosives and dangerous cargoes.

World War II, 1941-1945:

Many of the Coast Guard's missions are augmented and expanded during the conflict. New missions and responsibilities are added as well, including the operation of Long Range Aids to Navigation facilities, the addition of the responsibilities of merchant vessel inspection and documentation, and the licensing of merchant marine personnel.

U.S. Navy terminates its participation in Ocean Weather Stations, 1946:

Coast Guard took up the duty and mans five open-ocean stations, providing meteorological, oceanographic, and search and rescue services for the next 30 years.

Public Law 519 passed, 1956:

All uninspected vessels that carry six or more people fall under Coast Guard jurisdiction.

Camarioca Boatlift, 1965:

First large-scale exodus of Cuban immigrants attempted to enter the U.S. Migrant interdiction becomes a policy concern.

Transfer to the Department of Transportation, 1967:

The Coast Guard transferred from the Department of the Treasury to the newly created Department of Transportation.

Bridge Administration, 1967:

In 1967, the Bridge Program was transferred from the Army Corp of Engineers to the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard was thereafter responsible for approval of the location and plans of bridges and causeways constructed across navigable waters of U.S. In addition, the Coast Guard was responsible for approval of the location and plans of international bridges and the alteration of bridges found to be unreasonable obstructions to navigation.

Water Quality Improvement Act passed, 1970:

Congress broadens Coast Guard authority over pollution clean-up efforts.

Federal Boat Safety Act passed, 1971:

The Coast Guard's regulatory authority over recreational boats is increased.

200-mile Fishery Zone created, 1976:

Coast Guard operations regarding the regulation of fisheries in U.S. waters is increased tremendously by the new Zone.

***Argo Merchant* oil spill, 1976**

This Liberian tanker grounded off Nantucket in December, carrying 7.3 million gallons of fuel oil. CGCs *Sherman*, *Vigilant*, *Spar* and *Bittersweet* were on the scene and prepared to use the ADAPTS system on the vessel. However, deteriorating weather, 30-knot winds and heavy seas, prevented removal of its cargo before the hull began to buckle. The bow was wrenched from the hull and opened the cargo to the sea. This was the largest spill up until then in American waters. Northwesterly winds dispersed the oil out to sea. The *Argo Merchant* accident and 14 more tanker accidents in or near American waters over the next 10 weeks caused great concern about tanker safety, leading to a large tanker safety movement.

Maríel Boatlift, 1980

Boats with Cuban migrants on board begin departing Maríel, Cuba. The first two boats arrive in Miami the same day, marking the largest Cuban migration to the U.S. Cuban leader Fidel Castro then declared the port of Maríel "open", increasing the number of boats involved in the exodus and giving the exodus its name. By the time the boatlift came to an end, over 125,000 Cubans had made the journey to the United States. It was the largest search and rescue operation conducted by the Coast Guard since World War II and gave the service an indication of the increasing role the service would play regarding migrant interdiction in upcoming years.

Formation of Law Enforcement Detachments, 1982

On 9 August 1982 the Department of Defense approved the use of Coast Guard law enforcement detachments on board US Navy vessels during peacetime. The teams conducted law enforcement boardings from Navy vessels for the first time in U.S. history.

National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS) began operations, 1983

The NNBIS began operations on 17 June 1983 under the direction of Vice President George Bush and the executive board consisting of the secretaries of State, Transportation, and Defense, the Attorney General, the Counselor to the President, the Director of the CIA, the Director of the White House Drug Abuse Policy Office. Coast Guard anti-narcotic operations were reinforced when needed by military forces. The new system provided a coordinated national and international interagency network for prioritizing interdiction targets, identifying resources, recommending the most effective action, and coordinating joint special actions.

National Narcotics Act, 1984

The National Narcotics Act led to Coast Guard participation in the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System, under Attorney General policy guidelines.

U.S. Maritime Defense Zone established, 1984

The MDZ was established as a contingency planning group for military defense readiness. MDZ operations are joint Coast Guard and Navy responsibilities involving all five U.S. armed forces. Coast Guard concerns are defense, safety, and security of ports, harbors, navigable waters, and offshore assets. Coast Guard has military and regulatory authority and is responsible to Navy Fleet Command for peacetime planning and training for wartime programs. The Coast Guard was directly responsible for command and control, coastal defense, harbor defense, port safety and security, search and rescue, salvage, surveillance, and interdictions. The Coast Guard supports other commands with antisubmarine warfare, mine counter-measures, naval control, and protection of shipping. The FBI is the lead domestic agency and the State Department is the international lead, supporting Coast Guard readiness operations.

Exxon Valdez oil spill, 1989

Oil spill leads to creation of Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA-90). In this act, Congress addressed tanker construction, personnel licensing and the emergency rapid-response capability. The act called for mandatory double hulls on new tankers and gradual phasing out of non-complying vessels. The licensing requirements for ship's officers were strengthened in the area of drug and alcohol testing. The rapid-response capability was expanded nationwide, and new emphasis was placed on oil pollution research. The act has given the Coast Guard its single largest legislative tasking in history. The major responsibility is the creation of response groups (known as Strike Teams) capable of responding to spills and other disasters.

Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, 1990

President George H. W. Bush, on 22 August 1990, authorized the call up of members of the selected reserve to active duty in support of Operation Desert Shield. Three port security units (PSUs), consisting of 550 Coast Guard reservists are ordered to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Desert Shield. (This was the first involuntary overseas mobilization of Coast Guard Reserve PSUs in the Coast Guard Reserve's 50-year history). Coast Guard LEDETs also served in theatre along with oil-spill responders.

Terrorist attacks on the U.S., 2001

On 11 September 2001, terrorists from the Al Qaeda network hijacked four commercial aircraft, crashing two into the World Trade Center in New York and one into the Pentagon in Washington, DC (the fourth aircraft crashed around Shanksville, PA when passengers on board attempted to regain control of the aircraft from the terrorists). USCG units from Activities New York were among the first military units to respond in order to provide security and render assistance to those in need. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks President George W. Bush proposed the creation of a new Cabinet-level agency, eventually named the Department of Homeland Security. The Coast Guard was foremost among the agencies slated to become a constituent of the new department. On 25 November 2002, President Bush signed HR 5005 creating the Department of Homeland Security. Soon after, Tom Ridge, former governor of Pennsylvania, was confirmed as the department's first Secretary. On 25 February 2003, Transportation Secretary, Norman Mineta "symbolically" transferred leadership of the U.S. Coast Guard to Secretary Ridge, recognizing the change in civilian leadership over the Coast Guard and ending the Coast Guard's almost 36 year term as a member of the Department of Transportation. The transfer became official on 1 March 2003. As a result of the attacks, homeland security moved to the fore-front of the service's primary missions.

Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003

Coast Guard units deployed to Southwest Asia in support of the US-led coalition engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom early in 2003. At the height of operations, there were 1,250 Coast Guard personnel deployed, including about 500 reservists. This included two large cutters, a buoy tender, eight patrol boats, four port security units, law enforcement detachments and support staff to the Central (CENTCOM) and European (EUCOM) Command theaters of operation.