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# U.S. Coast Guard

## History of the Coast Guard Reserve

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The Coast Guard Reserve was established by the passage of the Coast Guard Reserve and Auxiliary Act of February 19, 1941. That act also established the Coast Guard Auxiliary under its present name (the Auxiliary had originally been called the 'Coast Guard Reserve'). The new Coast Guard Reserve was modeled after the Naval Reserve as a military component. It was composed of two broad classifications: Regular Reservists and Temporary Reservists. Regular Reserve members served on active duty during World War II "for the duration," while Temporary Reserve members consisted of volunteers and former Auxiliary members whose paid and unpaid services were still needed in a military capacity for coastal patrols and port security work.

On November 23, 1942, Congress enacted Public Law 773 establishing the Women's Reserve as a branch of the Coast Guard. Members of this branch became known as SPARs, an acronym drawn from the Service's motto, *Semper Paratus, Always Ready*. More than 92% of the 214,000 personnel who served in the Coast Guard during World War II were Reservists, with an additional 125,000 personnel serving in the Temporary Reserve. They served in all Coast Guard mission areas.

At the conclusion of World War II, most Reservists were released to inactive duty or discharged. The Women's Reserve was terminated in July 1947 but reestablished in August 1949. By 1950, funds were earmarked by Congress for the establishment of a paid drilling Reserve in support of the Coast Guard's recently expanded port security responsibilities. The first organized Coast Guard Reserve unit was formed in Boston in October 1950, setting the framework of today's Coast Guard Reserve. The Selected Reserve reached a peak post-WWII strength of 17,815 in 1969, during the Vietnam Conflict.

In the Spring of 1973, the Reserve exercised its first involuntary recall to support flood response operations in the Midwest. Some 134 Reservists were recalled. Between then and 1990, only one other involuntary recall was invoked—for the Mariel Boat Lift exodus from Cuba in 1980. The 1980s also included augmentation of the Active Component to enforce Security Zones for space shuttle operations in Florida, logging over 5900 person-days from 1981 to date. The decade finished with major Reserve augmentation for the massive cleanup operations in Alaska following the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill where 65% of personnel used in that operation came from the Reserve.

The 1990s saw a growing demand for the Coast Guard's unique domestic recall authority under 14 USC 712. The Reserve has provided personnel to the Active Component to support 12 hurricane and six major flood operations, including Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Late that year, the Coast Guard also received authorization to recall reservists to respond to possible Y2K-related contingencies, but did not do so. Reservists volunteered for the 1999 search-and-recovery efforts following the crashes of a light plane piloted by John F. Kennedy Jr. and Egypt Air 990. During 2000, approximately 1,000 reservists served on active duty in support of Operation Sail.

In the Coast Guard's national defense role, 1,650 Reservists, over 15% of the Selected Reserve, participated in Operations Desert Shield/Storm. Reserve-staffed Port Security Units also participated with the joint community in Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti and they continue to participate in joint military exercises worldwide.

One unique and highly successful Reserve-sponsored program, Sea Partners, has earned high marks around the country since its inception in 1994. Its primary objective has been to educate communities at large in developing awareness of marine pollution issues and improving compliance with marine environmental protection laws and regulations. Over 300 Coast Guard Reservists have participated in the Sea Partners campaign, in which teams of Reservists are assigned to each of the 47 USCG Marine Safety Offices across the country. New members are recruited through on-the-job or formal training at Coast Guard Marine Safety Offices. Since June 1994, Sea Partners teams have reached over 2 million individuals in personal contacts and many thousands more through print media, radio and television coverage. They have distributed over a million pieces of printed literature on various marine pollution topics. The popular *Officer Snook* campaign has educated hundreds of thousands of children on marine pollution prevention. Through the Sea Partners program, Reservists coordinated numerous beach and shore cleanups around the country in FY 00. Working relationships have been established with community and local government groups, such as the North Carolina Big Sweep, the Dade County, FL Dept. Of Environmental Resource Management and the Pacific Oil Spill Prevention Education Team.

With most Coast Guard Reservists assigned to the same active duty command that they would augment upon mobilization, they are better-prepared both administratively and operationally to report, in most cases, within 24 hours of call-up. The exceptions to this are the Coast Guard Port Security Units, which are nearly 100-percent reserve staffed, and Naval Reserve Harbor Defense Command Units, which have Coast Guard Reservists assigned. Under the Title 14 recall authority, the Secretary of Homeland Security may involuntarily recall Reservists to serve in domestic emergencies, in which case the local district commander determines which specialties and number of personnel to recall.

In Fiscal Year 2000, Coast Guard Reservists contributed nearly 316,000 days of duty in all Coast Guard mission areas. In February 1998, the administration, in response to heightened tensions in the Middle East, invoked a Presidential Selected Reserve Callup (PSRC). Five hundred Reservists from all the military services were placed on standby status, including 130 Coast Guard Reservists assigned to PSU 305 at Ft. Eustis, VA. Coast Guard Reservists represented 26% of the entire authorized PSRC total. In August 1999, the commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District and the commander of the Coast Guard Atlantic Area requested and obtained authority for the involuntary call-up of 350 reservists in anticipation of damage and floods caused by Hurricane Floyd. Reservists from outside the projected area of impact were the first to be identified. Again, Reservists answered the call which allowed the Coast Guard to fulfill service needs.

The Reserve Component continues strengthening its ties with the other members of the "Team Coast Guard." The 1997 Coast Guard Reserve Roles & Missions Study has validated the need for a Selected Reserve strength of over 12,000 to meet current national defense taskings, operational contingency requirements and certain "mission critical" functions. The need for Active Duty for Special Work (both ADSW-RC and ADSW-AC) to support Coast Guard domestic surge operations will continue. In addition, Reservists are increasingly answering the call to fill Active Component shortfalls in day-to-day operations through performance of both ADSW and Extended Active Duty as the Coast Guard strives to meet its motto, *Semper Paratus, Always Ready*.

## **History of Coast Guard Reserve Involuntary Recalls to Active Duty**

The Coast Guard has recalled reservists for two defense contingencies and ten non-defense emergencies since 1973. Between 1973 and 1990 Coast Guard reservists were involuntarily recalled on just three occasions. Hurricane Andrew's devastation of South Florida in September 1992 changed all that. It is now routine for districts to request involuntary recall authority whenever a

hurricane threatens the coastline of the U.S. or its territories. Authority to recall reservists was granted by the Secretary of Transportation six times during FY 1995. A total of 263 reservists were actually recalled to augment active duty forces for these emergencies. Authority was granted once in FY 1996 for Hurricane Opal, authorizing the recall of 275 reservists.