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Officer Candidate School

The Coast Guard's Officer Candidate School (OCS) has been the proving ground for testing and adapting social developments in diversity to the military structure of the service. As OCS provided African American men the first post-war prospect for leadership as officers it also enabled women the same opportunity. Upon the 1973 congressional legislation asserting that women could serve their country alongside men, the Coast Guard became the first service to open its officer candidate program to women. Margaret R. Riley, Lynn W. Smith, Sue E. Jennings, Bonnijill McGhee, and Shelia E. Denison reported to OCS class 2-73 in Yorktown, Virginia. From those first five women of Class 2-73 to today, OCS continues to produce female officers of formidable quality.

Captain Margaret R. Riley

On 8 June 1973, OCS Class 2-73 graduated from their training at Yorktown, Virginia. The entire class was twenty-nine strong. In their ranks at graduation for the first time were five women. One of those women graduates was Margaret R. Riley. During her thirty-year career CAPT Riley served as the Executive Officer of the Integrated Support Command, Boston, Massachusetts and was later assigned to the Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC. She also served as the Commanding Officer of the Supply Center, Baltimore, Maryland; and the Commanding Officer of the Integrated Support Command, Boston and retired in 2003 as Director of the Leadership Development Center at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. Riley died in January 2008 following a long illness.



Vice Admiral Vivien S. Crea

Throughout her career, VADM Crea broke new ground for women in the Coast Guard. The first woman to serve as the Vice-Commandant under Commandant Admiral Thad W. Allen, in July 2004, Crea assumed command of the Atlantic Area, a post responsible for Coast Guard activities spanning five Districts, involving over 33,000 military and civilian employees and 30,000 auxiliaries. Crea, as Commander, First Coast Guard District, oversaw all operations in the northeastern United States, from the Maine-Canada border to northern New Jersey. Formerly, she had performed as Director of Information and Technology and oversaw the Coast Guard's Research and Development program. As a Lieutenant Commander, Crea had become the first woman from any service and the first Coast Guardsman to serve as Presidential Military Aide; she carried the "nuclear football" for President Ronald Reagan for three years. An aviator, Crea became the first female awarded the honorary title of Ancient Albatross, a role she held until her retirement in June 2009.



Vice Admiral Sally Brice-O'Hara

In May 2010 VADM Brice-O'Hara became the Coast Guard's second woman to serve in the prestigious role of Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard. Brice-O'Hara received her commission upon completion of Officer Candidate School in 1975. Her previous positions have included Deputy Commandant for Operations, Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington D.C.; Commander of United States Coast Guard Fourteenth District in Honolulu, Hawaii; Commanding Officer of Training Center Cape May; Deputy Commander of Activities Baltimore; Commander of Group Baltimore; Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Station Cape May, New Jersey; and Assistant Director of Admissions at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.



Vice Admiral Jody A. Breckenridge

In July 2009, VADM Breckenridge became the first woman to assume command of Coast Guard Pacific Area, encompassing over 73 million square miles throughout the Pacific Basin to the Far East. A 1976 graduate of Officer Candidate School, Breckenridge's previous service included the National Response Center; the Pollution Response Branch of the Marine Environmental Protection Division at Coast Guard Headquarters; Assistant Port Safety Officer and first Group Operations Officer for Group Seattle; and Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Recruiting Command. From 2005-2006, Breckenridge commanded the Eleventh Coast Guard District in Alameda, CA. During her tenure, the Eleventh District stepped up its interagency collaboration leading to record drug seizures, including the M/V GATUN, the largest maritime interdiction in US history; and the arrest of Francisco Javier Arellano Felix, head of the Arellano Felix Drug Cartel.

Captain Beverly Kelley

CAPT Kelley graduated Officer Candidate School in June, 1976. At the time of her commissioning, the Coast Guard was preparing an experiment with mixed-gender crews. Two cutters, *Morgenthau* and *Gallatin*, were each staffed with a crew that included ten enlisted women and two female officers. Kelley served as one of these officers. Despite initial misgivings, the experiment was a success. Two years later, in April 1979, Kelley, then a Lieutenant Junior Grade, became the first woman to command a cutter, the *Cape Newhagen*. Kelley continued to make history and break new ground for women in the Coast Guard when she received command of the *Northland* in 1999 and the *Boutwell* in 2000. Kelley's command of the *Boutwell* made her the first woman to command a high endurance cutter. She retired in 2006.



Lieutenant Colleen Cain

LT Cain, a Coast Guard Reservist, received her commission upon completing OCS in 1979. She attended flight school, becoming the Coast Guard's third female aviator and first female HH-52A pilot. On 7 January 1982, at Air Station Barbers Point, Hawaii, the helicopter she was co-piloting crashed into the side of a mountain in the Wailua Valley while responding to a distress call from a fishing vessel. Cain, along with two other crew members, CDR Horton W. "Buzz" Johnson and ASM David Thompson, was killed. She is the first female Coast Guard aviator lost in the line of duty. Cain Hall, a 100-room residence at Reserve Training Center Yorktown, was dedicated in her honor 25 October 1985. She is remembered as an exemplary Coast Guard officer, patriot, and human being. *Lieutenant Cain and her fellow crewmembers made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their nation and fellow countrymen, striving to protect life at sea.*

Captain June McIntee Ryan

CAPT Ryan enlisted in the Coast Guard Reserves in 1982 and attained the rank of Boatswain's Mate Third Class before attending and graduating from Officer Candidate School. Ryan's operational assignments include a Commanding Officer of the *Cape Morgan* of Portland, Maine and Commanding Officer of the *Neah Bay* of Cleveland, Ohio. She served as Group Commander, Charleston, South Carolina; Deputy Group Commander, St. Petersburg, Florida; and Deputy Sector Commander and Alternate Captain of the Port Charleston, South Carolina. Other assignments include Senior Instructor, Maritime Law Enforcement School then located in Yorktown, Virginia and three tours in Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC. Ryan has also served as the Military Aide to the President, only the third woman in U.S. history to do so. She represented the United States of America during many high profile White House events and various International Summits and Head of State meetings. Following the Change of Command, Ryan will report back to Coast Guard Headquarters as the Deputy Director for Response Policy (CG-53).



Commander Diane Durham

CDR Diane Durham, commanding officer of the *Forward*, and her crew were the first American vessel on scene after a catastrophic earthquake devastated Haiti on January 12, 2010. The *Forward* immediately rendered assistance, acting as air traffic control, providing reconnaissance, and assessing port conditions for the incoming international humanitarian effort. Durham received her commission in 1989, following graduation from Officer Candidate School at U.S. Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown VA. Her tours afloat include Deck Watch Officer on *Rush*, in Honolulu, Hawaii; Operations Officer on *Decisive* and *Resolute* in St. Petersburg, Florida; and Executive Officer on *Tampa*, in Portsmouth, Virginia. She most recently became Executive Assistant to the Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area.

USCGC Forward off the coast of Haiti

CAPT Beverly Kelley aboard the Cayuga

CAPT June Ryan reporting to President Clinton

The first five female Officer Candidates of OCS Class 2-73 aboard the Unimak.



LT Colleen Cain during fire training drills



CAPT Margaret R. Riley



VADM Vivien Crea in her role as the Ancient Albatross



VADM Sally Brice-O'Hara speaking in Cleveland, Ohio

