

GUEST COLUMN

## Coast Guard Leveraging GEOINT to Support Diverse Mission

BY ADM. THAD ALLEN, COMMANDANT, U. S. COAST GUARD

Today our nation faces threats unlike any we have experienced before. Aside from the constant challenge of protecting the homeland from those who desire to do us harm, we must concern ourselves with piracy, illegal immigration and smuggling, terrorism, arms proliferation, natural disasters and environmental crimes. With 95 percent of the U.S. international commerce moving through our ports, our nation's economic health is also dependent on ensuring our coasts, ports and inland waterways are secure. As the principal federal agency charged with maritime safety, security and stewardship of U.S. waters and coastlines, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is always ready to protect and respond.

Over the past five years, collaboration between NGA and USCG has increased considerably. We are working side by side to best identify ways to leverage NGA's support to the diverse mission areas of the Coast Guard. Through the NGA Support Team assigned to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and direct support to Coast Guard units, NGA's geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) products are providing commanders, planners and operators with the situational awareness needed prior to and during operations. Several recent examples demonstrate this successful partnership.

Take, for example, NGA's recent partnership with Coast Guard Search and Rescue to successfully locate an overdue vessel. As a result of this mission success, the two agencies now realize that NGA has much to contribute to search and rescue operations. I foresee these efforts expanding to other mission areas of the Coast Guard where access to intelligence information in a timely manner is critical to mission success.

NGA has also provided a number of GEOINT products that have given operational advantage to the Coast Guard. Two NGA-specific products that provide invaluable situational awareness, Geospatial Intelligence for Operations Support and the Battlefield (GIB) and HarborView, have become an integral part of the deployment package supporting the Maritime Safety Response Teams. With the GIB, a mobile visualization tool provided on DVD, users have the capability to define the area of operations and



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Susan Blake

Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, climbs the foremast of the Coast Guard Cutter Barque Eagle during a cruise along the Potomac River. The Coast Guard is partnering with NGA and other members of the Intelligence Community to ensure information and analytical capabilities are best leveraged to improve maritime domain awareness.

visualize intelligence information in a geospatially precise manner. HarborView is a three-dimensional scene-visualization model used to familiarize operators with ports prior to actually sailing there. Not only does it provide for safety of navigation, it also enables operational training, mission planning and mission rehearsal.

Improving maritime domain awareness (MDA) is one of the Coast Guard's strategic priorities. All-source intelligence capabilities, combined with traditional sources and methods, provide unprecedented MDA about vessels, people, cargo, weather, environment and infrastructure. The Coast Guard Intelligence Program is partnering with NGA and other members of the Intelligence Community to ensure information and analytical capabilities are best leveraged to improve MDA. DHS and the Department of Defense are co-leading the MDA Implementation Team, which is working to develop a more collaborative intelligence- and information-sharing environment, including both systems and processes, for sensing, collecting,



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Public Affairs Specialist 3rd Class Jonathan R. Cilley

A Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security team, from Coast Guard Island in Alameda, Calif., demonstrates boat tactics in San Francisco Bay.

fusing, analyzing and disseminating information. NGA has the lead to provide the geospatial foundation, or common operational picture, for this effort.

NGA's support to the Coast Guard during and after Hurricane Katrina cannot be overstated. NGA deployed numerous analysts and two Mobile Integrated Geospatial

Intelligence Systems to provide on-the-ground support. Additionally, on behalf of the Coast Guard, NGA's World Wide Navigational Warning Service radio desk transmitted navigation safety messages to the U.S. Navy and U.S. Merchant Marine about port closures and waterway conditions in the New Orleans area while we repaired systems damaged by the hurricane.

Our NGA-USCG partnership is important, not just in responding to natural disasters, but also in preparing for natural disasters. This year, in support of the Environmental Protection Agency and USCG co-sponsored "Spill of National Significance 2007 Exercise" (SONS 07), NGA will forward-deploy the Domestic Mobile Integrated Geospatial Intelligence System. SONS 07, the first exercise to use a national disaster as a major incident, will focus on issues pertaining to catastrophic oil and hazardous substance releases within the Ohio River Valleys, triggered by a major earthquake along the New Madrid, Mo., fault and a tornado in the Great Lakes region.

These examples are just a sample of the numerous success stories demonstrating the synergy of the NGA-Coast Guard relationship. As we continue to safeguard America against the threats and hazards of today and tomorrow, partnerships with agencies like NGA are vital to continued success. I look forward to our ongoing collaboration as we work together to help keep America safe, secure and prepared. P



A Coast Guard helicopter passes over Washington, D.C., during an air defense training mission. The Coast Guard has been tasked with intercepting low-flying, slow speed aircraft in restricted air space over Washington, D.C.

U.S. Coast Guard photo by Public Affairs Specialist 1st Class John Edwards