



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-0001

JAN 12 2007

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL THAD W. ALLEN, COMMANDANT OF THE U.S.  
COAST GUARD, REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION  
INTO THE 17 AUGUST 2006 COAST GUARD CUTTER HEALY MISHAP**

Earlier this week I took final action on the administrative investigation into the diving accident in the Arctic aboard USCGC HEALY on Aug. 17, 2006, resulting in the deaths of Lt. Jessica Hill and Petty Officer Second Class Steven Duque.

My deepest sympathies are with the families of Lt. Hill and Petty Officer Duque as the entire Coast Guard continues to mourn the loss of these hard working, dedicated service members. Consistent with my personal commitment to them, each family was provided a copy of the investigation and was personally briefed on its facts and findings earlier this week.

The investigation into this accident revealed failures in oversight at every level aboard HEALY, as well as numerous departures from standard Coast Guard policy. This mishap further highlighted the need to improve diving expertise at units with dive capabilities and missions, address shortfalls in training and experience, and elevate program management and oversight on par with other high risk, training intensive Coast Guard operations such as aviation.

As a result, I have mandated specific actions to improve program management, leadership, training and overall experience in our dive program to ensure it is as well-managed and safe as such inherently dangerous operations allow.

We cannot prevent every Coast Guard casualty. Despite the professionalism, bravery, and dedication of our workforce, in rare cases we suffer serious injury or death in the line of duty. As Coast Guard men and women we accept that risk, but we will not accept preventable loss or injury. When it comes to dangerous operations such as diving, "good enough" is never good enough. Across the Coast Guard, we will honor Lt. Hill and Petty Officer Duque through the actions we are taking at all levels to prevent a tragedy such as this from occurring in the future.

The sacrifice these individuals made in service to their Nation will never be forgotten. Their loyalty and dedicated service will forever be appreciated by the U.S. Coast Guard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thad W. Allen', written in a cursive style.

THAD W. ALLEN  
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commandant