

Admiral Allen's Blue Tsunami

By Art Pine

The Coast Guard's dynamic, no-nonsense Commandant is roiling the waters at Headquarters off Buzzard Point. Can he succeed in steering the Coast Guard into the 21st century?

The Coast Guard is quietly undergoing its most dramatic restructuring since before World War II. Over the past two years, the nation's oldest sea service has begun thoroughly revamping its basic headquarters structure and major field-level commands, redesigning its logistics and maintenance systems, streamlining its bureaucracy, and replacing its antiquated budgetary and financial processes. It has been modernizing its approach to writing doctrine and ensuring readiness. And it has been strengthening its traditional "surge" tactics for handling emergencies by establishing a new Deployable Operations Group that resembles the adaptive-force-package approach long used by other military services.

It is also expanding and solidifying its role—and influence—in the Department of Homeland Security, increasing its day-to-day involvement with other services, becoming visibly more active in international maritime security efforts, and slowly repairing its relations with Congress, which were damaged during the 2006-2007 Deepwater uproar.

Behind this gargantuan new effort is Admiral Thad W. Allen, the service's 23rd Commandant, who assumed the post in May 2006 as a military superstar after bailing out the federal government's foundering rescue and recovery effort after Hurricane Katrina,

which decimated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast in August 2005.

Although the Coast Guard emerged as the hero of the Katrina debacle—its personnel rescued 33,000 people who had been stranded or left homeless by the storms and flooding—Allen saw its performance as having "raised some red flags" that displayed some of the service's weak points and vulnerabilities as well as its strengths. When he was tapped for the Commandant's job five months later, he immediately began laying the groundwork for the restructuring. The government's response to the next Katrina will be much more efficient and more effective, his supporters assert.

Angst on the Anacostia

Expectedly, the massive revamping, which is hitting the service like a Coast Guard-blue tsunami, is causing some angst among more senior ranks—flag officers, captains, commanders, and some civilian workers—particularly at the Coast Guard's dowdy headquarters building at Buzzard Point on the Anacostia River in Washington, where insiders say the change-fatigue is palpable. Even so, Allen remains a popular figure among rank-and-file Coasties of all stripes, and both Coast Guard personnel and outside critics appear to be largely behind the new Commandant, applauding his drive for change.

"He's a tremendous leader," says Robert Work, a retired Marine Corps officer who keeps tabs on the Coast Guard for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a defense-oriented research group in Washington. "A lot

of service chiefs come in and have all sorts of projects in mind, without any broad idea of what they want to do during their terms in office. Allen came in with a very clear idea of where he wanted to go. He has reinvigorated and re-energized the Coast Guard.”

Almost no one argues that a revamping wasn't necessary. Structurally, the Coast Guard has been a jumble through much of its history. It was begun in 1790 as the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, a seagoing force under the Treasury Department. In 1915, it merged with the U.S. Life-Saving Service to form the modern-day Coast Guard,

and it absorbed the U.S. Lighthouse Service in 1939. After operating under the U.S. Navy during World War II (and absorbing the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation in 1942), it was shunted to the new Department of Transportation in 1967 and then transferred to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003.

Hodgepodge Structure

Even more eclectic than its history, however, is the hodgepodge structure under which the Coast Guard has been operating. While the service has thrived because of the authority and initiative it permits even its junior enlisted personnel, its overall operating structure has been a mare's nest. The service's budgetary and financial system has been so fragmented that it has been unable to get a handle on what's really being spent—either for a big-picture view or for tracking individual units.

Its command structure has been hobbled by a stovepipe bureaucracy that has seriously impeded efforts to respond to new missions and challenges. Logistics and maintenance have been so decentralized that, except for the aviation arm, there's been almost no standardization Coast Guard-wide. And the service's division into separate Atlantic and Pacific area commands has created two separate cultures that have often



KATRINA BRAIN TRUST Admiral Allen (right) achieved near-rock-star status for his no-nonsense approach to recovery operations in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. He conferred on 13 September 2005 with soon-to-be FEMA Director R. David Paulison (left) and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (B. BAHLER)

Things You Don't Know about the Coast Guard

By Joe DiRenzo III and Chris Doane

Television personality Chris Matthews loves to end his weekly syndicated show by asking his panel of journalists to “Tell me something I don't know [about a specific topic, usually from the world of politics].” To complement the 2008 Proceedings Coast Guard edition, we present a wide range of highlights and factoids that would not normally make it into a traditional service “year-in-review” article (see the May 2008 issue). Following are some things you may not know about America's smallest armed service:

- Lieutenant Commander Chris Kluckhuhn, the innovations and process improvement officer at the First Coast Guard District in Boston, was awarded the American Red Cross Adult Good Samaritan Hero Award on 7 March for pulling two people from a burning car and then extinguishing the fire. Kluckhuhn climbed

through the back door of the vehicle and, with the help of another Good Samaritan, carried the two unconscious victims to safety.

- Within the past year the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Coast Guard conducted a pilot law enforcement project known as Shiprider. Accord-

ing to an RCMP press release, the program is designed “to prevent cross-border criminal activity and to further strengthen both countries' response capability in the St. Lawrence Seaway. Shiprider represents a truly integrated approach to conducting joint maritime law enforcement operations in shared waterways.” This program involves the cross-designation of peace officer status and powers to both participants, allowing the RCMP and Coast Guard to conduct seamless law enforcement operations against cross-border smuggling. Command authority for all law enforcement operations is based on jurisdiction.

left the two regions going their separate ways on both procedures and practice, with headquarters having to referee disputes. The Coast Guard has had little formal doctrine to guide it—at least as the other services know the term.

Moreover, the array of new missions successive administrations and Congresses have piled on the service, particularly since 9/11, have exacerbated the problems. Besides its traditional search-and-rescue, marine safety, fishing regulation, and icebreaking missions, the Coast Guard has responsibility for pollution control and enforcement in harbors and waterways, policing immigration and smuggling at sea, drug interdiction, and inspection of liquefied natural gas carriers. More recently, it has taken on maritime and port security—which requires inspecting domestic and foreign ports and vessels—and has broadened cooperation with Customs and Border Protection and other federal agencies.

‘Heading Over a Cliff’

“The big challenge that the Coast Guard had after 9/11 was that it was heading over a cliff,” says Stephen Flynn, a retired Coast Guard officer who has become the top homeland security expert at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. “Its ships and other assets were aging, and the number of people it had was declining. Basically, the organization was at a breaking-point.”

Allen’s reorganization effort isn’t the first the service has launched. Besides the hodgepodge outlined previously, it was reorganized in 1946, at the end of World War II, and again in the mid-1980s. Three years ago, the service created 35 sector commands in an attempt to combine its marine safety and operations units at U.S. port cities.

But none of those reshufflings was as sweeping—or complex—as the one Admiral Allen is currently carrying out, and none was

actually completed. The revampings inevitably got diverted as Coast Guard commanders were forced to cope with still more new missions, demands for budget cuts, and various other emergencies. At the same time, the service’s total complement shrank. Today, it stands at 42,000 active-duty personnel—about 5,000 more than in 2001.

Admiral Allen’s restructuring plan has several objectives. He wants to reorganize the Coast Guard’s major components to consolidate operations, unify operational command-and-control, and place new emphasis on readiness and doctrine. He wants to make the service more flexible and better able to respond to current demands. And he wants it to be able to anticipate new requirements and shift its own resources to meet them before the new missions become overwhelming.

Changing the Culture

“I’m trying to change the culture and structure of the Coast Guard to make it a change-centric organization that’s more capable of sensing the external environment and very subtle changes in demand signals from our constituencies,” he said in an interview.

To do this, Allen wants to scrap the current top-level organizational chart, which consists of a vice commandant, a chief of staff, and Atlantic and Pacific area commanders, all of them three-stars. In their place will go a new four-star vice commandant (the first time in its history that the Coast Guard has had a second four-star admiral), and two three-star deputy commandants. A deputy commandant for mission support would oversee acquisitions, logistics, information technology, and human resources, and a second, for operations, would develop new plans, policies, and regulations for marine safety, security, capability, and international affairs. Also on the new organization chart will

• The U.S. Coast Guard Academy made history in multiple ways this past year. Two graduates, Ensigns Kristen Ambors and Patrick Penella, were selected as Fulbright Scholars. Both intend to study in subject areas that will directly benefit the service. Penella will explore maritime intelligence cooperation between the United States and Canada, while Ambors will compare the way the Coast Guard conducts search and rescue with tools used by Sweden’s coast guard and navy. The 2008 valedictorian, now-Ensign DeCarol Davis, was the first African-American female Coast Guard cadet to graduate at the top of her class. And finally, the men’s basketball team reached the NCAA Division III Elite 8 for the first time in the school’s history.



U.S. COAST GUARD (S. J. FELGAMIEL)

DOING HIS DUTY Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Chris Kluckhuhn received the 2007 Adult Good Samaritan Hero Award from the American Red Cross, Cape Cod and Islands Chapter, on 7 March in Hyannis, Massachusetts.

• According to a Coast Guard Pacific Area press release, “an Arctic awareness deployment involving several Coast Guard commands is planned for Barrow [Alaska] from 27 July to 11 August in anticipation of the Coast Guard’s increasing role in the Arctic.” Rear Admiral Gene Brooks, commander of the 17th Coast Guard District, said, “My first year in Alaska proved the Arctic is not an issue 10 to 20 years into the future. The Arctic is upon us now.”

Dr. DiRenzo and Mr. Doane are long-time *Proceedings* contributors. Both are retired Coast Guard officers, senior visiting fellows at the Joint Forces Staff College, and mentors at Northcentral University.

be two three-star force commanders. One, for operations (OPCOM), would be responsible for overseeing Coast Guard districts and sectors, and the other (FORCECOM), would be charged with all aspects of fleet and force readiness, from intelligence and doctrine to maintaining and providing resources for the operating forces to use.

In emergencies such as Katrina—or terrorist activities like port explosions—local commanders would be able to call on the Deployable Operations Group (DOG), which will draw specially trained units from a prearranged force package. The DOG command will be able to mix and match forces from the Coast Guard's Maritime Safety and

Almost as soon as Allen took the oath, he began issuing the first of what are now the Ten Commandant's Intent Action Orders, or CIAOs (see accompanying chart), that outlined the steps he planned to take and gave all-hands an overview of where he was heading. And he has issued regular situation reports that amount to a scorecard of what's been accomplished so far.

While the reshuffling has had many senior officers wringing their hands, it hasn't sparked much discontent and complaining from younger Coasties—either officers or enlisted personnel. Part of it is that while the changes Allen is planning eventually will have an impact on almost every Coastie, those he has implemented so far have primarily affected his flag officers and senior field commanders. Rank-and-file Coast Guard personnel are only beginning to see the changes in their own daily jobs.

Another major factor in keeping things calm has been the way Allen has presented his restructuring plans—clearly, openly, and with a personal style that has won converts, or at least wait-and-seers, from the most skeptical chiefs.

From the day he took office, Allen has deluged the rank-and-file with all-hands e-mail messages and regular updates in which he provides plain-language explanations of what he thinks needs fixing, what he is doing about it, and how it will affect them. He has made contact with some 30,000 of the service's 42,000 members, partly through



ADOPTING THE PLAN Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Charles Bowen (second from right) listens to Admiral Allen (far right) address the crew of the service's new showcase, the National Security Cutter USCGC *Bertholf* (WMSL-750) on 27 June in Baltimore. Despite his proposed changes, Allen is popular among the rank-and-file.

Security teams, which protect vessels and port facilities; Maritime Security Response teams, which handle law enforcement; the National Strike Force, which deals with hazardous substances and weapons of mass destruction; Port Security Units, which deal with sabotage and attack on materiel and handling facilities; and Tactical Law Enforcement Teams, which work with other branches of the armed forces on drug interdiction, port security, and immigration interdiction.

The Ten CIAOs

Admiral Allen began developing the plan well before he actually took office. As soon as he learned he'd be named Commandant, he set up a modest transition team that outlined the issues and analyzed the options. Once in office, he set up a special Strategic Transformation Team to oversee the restructuring and appointed Rear Admiral Jody Breckenridge to head it. (She expects to leave it soon to head the service's human resources operation.)

hundreds of speeches and personal appearances at Coast Guard units. A new "Commandant's Corner" Web site (www.uscg.mil/comdt/) features talking-points Allen wants to get across to the troops.

'We Have to Manage That'

"I would be disingenuous if I said there was no resistance to change in the Coast Guard," Allen conceded during a wide-ranging interview in his spacious office overlooking the river. "But I think it's in layers. As you start to move up from a senior O-4, O-5, O-6, they have a career invested in a certain pattern of learning and experiences on which they're creating their expectations or aspirations for future success in the Coast Guard. They feel that's changed. That's a threat. That's a concern for them, and we have to manage that."

What has really won over many Coasties is the admiral's own dynamic style and personality. A no-nonsense man who reflects broad experience in the nation's oldest

sea service and exudes confidence about what he's doing, Allen is able to speak knowledgeably and in detail about the Coast Guard's problems and challenges without resorting to the cautious phrasing that's often the hallmark of senior officials. Pointed questions are answered with straight-from-the-shoulder replies.

While the Commandant is known for his all-business demeanor, he nevertheless has his human side—and some quirks. He often rides a bicycle about 11 city miles to work from the Commandant's House in suburban Chevy Chase, Maryland (to indulge himself, he just bought a new aluminum-frame Cannondale Adventure commuting bike). A music buff, he strums a respectable banjo and has placed a list of the Commandant's favorite CDs on his Web site. And he has set up his own account on Facebook, the social networking Web site (to call up his profile, search for *thad.w.allen@gmail.com*). His wife, Pam, is an assistant dean at the George Mason University School of Management in nearby Fairfax, Virginia.



U.S. COAST GUARD (K. J. NEFF)

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION TEAM To head up his new restructuring team Admiral Allen went to Rear Admiral Jody Breckenridge, who as Eleventh Coast Guard District commander oversaw the largest maritime drug interdiction in history, the seizure of 19 tons of cocaine from the *M/V Gatun* in March 2007.

The 10 CIAOs: Where They Stand

As soon as Admiral Thad W. Allen took office as Commandant in May 2006, he issued 10 Commandant's Intent Action Orders outlining what he planned to do to restructure the Coast Guard. Here they are, and what has happened to them.

#	Short Name	What it Does	Status
1	Set Up Deployable Operations Group	Rapid-response command designed to draw adaptive force packages from now-separate tactical law enforcement, antiterrorism, pollution control, and port security teams, and put them under a single force commander who can train and deploy them in times of emergencies or threats.	Completed
2	Develop USCG Maritime Strategy	Sets strategy for how the Coast Guard will perform its missions and establish priorities for carrying them out.	Completed
3	Revamp Logistics System	Replace the present decentralized logistics system with a Coast-Guard-wide structure that will help improve accountability and control costs.	Begun
4	Adapt Numbered Staff System For Hq	Reorganize the Coast Guard headquarters hierarchy into numbered staffs (CG-1, CG-2, etc.) to bring them into line with the system used by the Navy and other services.	Completed
5	Revamp Acquisition System	Centralize acquisition for Deepwater and other surface vessel and aircraft purchases under a new directorate, headed by a three-star admiral, to avoid the kinds of problems that Deepwater encountered in the past.	Completed
6	Revamp Financial, Accounting System	Replace the current hodgepodge accounting system with a modern, centralized arrangement that allows policymakers to see what actually is happening within the USCG's budget and enable the service to meet auditing standards.	Begun
7	Revamp Command And Control	Develop a new framework for the Coast Guard to carry out its missions more effectively.	Begun
8	Set Up New Human Resource Strategy	Revamp the Coast Guard's human resources practices to enable the service to manage its staffing decisions more effectively and prepare its workforce for future needs.	Begun
9	Strengthen Reserve Component	Improve training and administrative support for reservists to enable them to play a wider role. The Coast Guard currently can call up reservists without first obtaining permission from higher authority.	Begun
10	E-CG Version 2.0	Improve the use of information technology for command, control, communications, and computers.	Begun



THE 9/11 ATTACKS While the Coast Guard performed valiantly in New York Harbor when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center fell, Admiral Allen immediately saw that the service hadn't been keeping pace with the times, not functioning as seamlessly as it should have. Here, smoke rises the afternoon of 9/11.

U.S. COAST GUARD (T. SPERDUTO)

Unpacking the Bag

His fix-it-now approach—and direct personal involvement—have extended to the Coast Guard's occasional mistakes as well. When Coast Guard units in San Francisco failed to perform competently in last year's tanker-caused oil spill in San Francisco Bay, Allen concurred in forcing a total overhaul of the local command structure. And after an August 2006 diving accident on board the polar icebreaker USCGC *Healy* (WAGB-20) killed a young officer and a petty officer, Allen made the incident the nub of a renewed service-wide safety push that's still under way today. A sexual harassment scandal at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 2006 led to similar quick action.

The result has been a general acceptance in the field that after years of to-ing and fro-ing, the service is moving ahead and beginning to deal with its problems. "He's a gale of fresh air," says a senior active-duty officer who has been watching Allen's restructuring from a field command.

The admiral's current conviction that the Coast Guard needs to change didn't come as a bolt of lightning the day he became Commandant. Like many senior officers, the Tucson, Arizona, native, whose father was a Coast Guard chief petty officer, had been collecting examples of good and bad policies throughout his career. He had been figuratively "putting them in a little bag" to be taken out if he eventually rose high enough in rank to do something about them. "To some extent," he says, "I've been unpacking that bag."

Allen says his first realization that the Coast Guard's operational side hadn't kept pace with the times began to emerge just after the September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York. Although the service—which was thrust into operations in New York Harbor after the Twin Towers fell—quickly mounted a multi-pronged effort, Allen saw that its strike teams, law enforcement components, and rescue units weren't well enough integrated to function as seamlessly as they should. Also, the Coast Guard hadn't made close contacts with other federal, state, and local agencies in the area. Putting the force together was a haphazard operation.

The Katrina Response

The shortcomings also were apparent in the aftermath of Katrina, Allen says. "What you saw was an overwhelming response by the Coast Guard," which pulled in helicopters, small-boat units, and strike teams from all over the country to help with disaster relief, he says. On one hand, "it showed the genius of the Coast Guard, with an all-hands-on-deck effort. But the response wasn't opti-

Playlist For Coasties

Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad W. Allen's efforts to create a 21st-century Coast Guard include a playlist of musical selections he's recommended for Coasties. Here are his ten top tunes and his rationale for selecting them.

Short Description: Information behind the selections made by the Commandant.

I grew up in a family who sang when they traveled in a car and embraced every tradition in music. There are so many records and CDs in our house that I couldn't begin to select the top ten. The following list represents music that has had an impact on me for one reason or another. The complete list is too long to publish but also includes opera, jazz, blues, reggae, rock, gospel, and bluegrass. Two things bridge cultures and unite us like nothing else, music and food. Both are universal languages that need no translation.

"Bitter Tears," Johnny Cash (1964)

Johnny Cash is an American icon and has hundreds of songs that the world knows. My father brought this album home when I was in junior high. Johnny broke new ground in publicly singing and speaking about Native Americans and their issues. Being from Arizona, my family always felt close to this album. "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" has new meaning following the popular and critical success of Clint Eastwood's movie, *Flags of our Fathers*.

Continued on the next page



mal.” The force participation “had to be brokered by field commanders,” who plucked personnel and assets from other locations wherever they could find them, without a pre-set concept or plan. Coast Guard units hadn’t been fully trained in how to operate jointly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Guard, and state and local governments. The new Deployable Operations Group, or DOG, was a result.

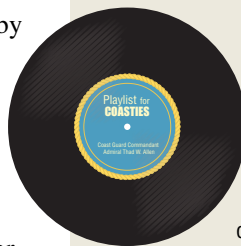
As Allen describes it, when the next Katrina approaches, the Coast Guard will be able to move quickly into a state of heightened alert, activate the command element of the DOG, pre-position assets and supplies close to the expected landfall point, set up a command-and-control network, and bring in the forces it needs in advance. That includes reservists, whom it now has authority to call up without first obtaining permission from the White House. It also will be able to interact with FEMA and other agencies, and to work more effectively with volunteer groups, who were often left unused after Katrina.

Congress: Rocks and Shoals?

For now, the most immediate potential impediment that Allen’s restructuring plan faces is whether Congress will grant him authority to implement it fully. Although the Commandant insists that much of the overhaul can be accomplished using existing authority, he needs passage of the Coast Guard authorization bill now pending on Capitol Hill to create the new top command slots that he envisions.

Whether that will come this year—and in the form that Allen wishes—isn’t certain. Coast Guard officials expect no major opposition in Congress to Allen’s restructuring plan. But lawmakers, especially in the House, want to include prescriptions for coping with the flaws uncovered two years ago in the Deepwater program, which Allen considers no longer necessary in view of the improvements he’s made in the acquisition process. As *Proceedings* went to press, the House had passed the bill (with some provisions that Allen doesn’t like). The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation has reported out a similar measure, but there was no indication when it might come to the floor—or whether the two houses would complete work on the legislation this year. Despite Allen’s public front, insiders say failure to pass the authorization bill this year would be a setback to the restructuring effort.

Admiral Allen’s relations with Congress have had their ups and downs. When he was nominated to become Commandant, lawmakers all but fawned over him as the hero of Katrina in an effort to share the spotlight. But the Deepwater brouhaha, in which the Coast Guard found it had erred by letting defense contractors police themselves in keeping tabs on major shipbuilding projects, darkened the mood on Capitol Hill. The Department of Homeland Security’s inspector-general issued a scathing report on the Coast Guard’s performance on the contract.



Playlist For Coasties Cont.

“Maori Songs,” Dame Kiri Te Kanawa (1991)

A very personal album from one of the great sopranos of our generation. With Maori singers from her native New Zealand, Kiri Te Kanawa sings the songs of her country. She is better known for her impressive operatic works. I found this album while visiting New Zealand en route to Antarctica. I always buy regional music when I travel—the best souvenir.

“Graceland,” Paul Simon (1986)

A breakthrough achievement for Simon and unlike anything he had done previously. Incredible diversity in this man’s music from the use of Peruvian pipes of Urubamba in “El Condor Pasa” earlier in his career to the talents of Africa’s Ladysmith Black Mombazo on “Graceland.”

“Irish Hearbeat,” Van Morrison and Chieftains (1988)

Any album with Van Morrison and the Chieftains has to be a winner. I wore the vinyl and cassette tape versions out. I am told the Allens have roots back to County Cork. When I listen to this music, I believe it.

“Songs of the Trail,” Don Edwards (1992)

A brilliant collection of cowboy songs from arguably the best cowboy singer of our generation. “Cowboy Song” reminds me of our Coast Guard people who work under extreme conditions. I used this song as the basis for a tribute to our aviation forces and those who have crossed over Jordan.

“Culture Swing,” Tish Hinajosa (1992)

Tish Hinajosa is a national treasure. Her musical influences include mariachi, corridos (border Mexican folk songs), and traditional country music. “Something in the Rain” is a powerful commentary on our fragile environment.

“The Man from God Knows Where,” Tom Russell and others (1999)

An extraordinary folk opera about the immigration of Europeans to the United States. The Amazon review notes, “Russell creates a rustic vision of hard-luck America that is both a coherent artistic statement as well as an extremely powerful history lesson.”

“Duets: An American Classic,” Tony Bennett (2006)

An instant classic with duets from a vast array of pop musicians, Stevie Wonder, Elton John, and the Dixie Chicks. Tony shows us you can age with class and remain connected with a new generation.

“Genius Loves Company,” Ray Charles (2004)

A series of duets recorded just before his death. Incredible. I bought my first Ray Charles 45 rpm vinyl record, “I Can’t Stop Loving You,” when I was in junior high. Ray had the courage to sing any type of song and proved it by recording country and western songs in 1962. No one has ever sung “American the Beautiful” better.

“Our New Orleans: A Benefit Album for the Gulf Coast,” various artists (2005)

This album was intended to raise money for Hurricane Katrina victims. I can’t think of my time down there without hearing Irma Thomas sing “Black Water Blues.” Randy Newman’s “Louisiana 1927” describes the Great Flood of 1927, which was prophetic. I had the extraordinary opportunity to visit the Mounds Landing Crevasse near Greenville, Mississippi in 2006. The scar remains from the 1927 levee breach.

Allen has been working steadily to rebuild relations on the Hill, keeping lawmakers fully briefed and inviting them to special Coast Guard events, such as the recent port visits of the USCGC *Bertholf* (WMSL-750) the service's new and first National Security Cutter. But the political momentum from his success in Katrina clearly has slowed.

Straight-Shooter

Nevertheless, Allen's performance as Commandant still engenders respect among the congressional figures who count in determining how the restructuring will fare. Representative Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation that oversees the authorization bill, says that while he has disagreed with Admiral Allen on

Not everyone is enthralled with what Allen is doing. Many older Coasties believe that the service's current decentralized structure has provided the flexibility that has allowed it to succeed as an emergency responder. They argue that tinkering with that will only damage the Coast Guard's culture—the attribute it prizes most—and impede its ability to cope with emergencies.

And the Council on Foreign Relations' Flynn worries that the changes Allen is making will only move decision making in the Coast Guard farther from the ports and waterways it's charged with policing and erode its contribution to the homeland security effort.

Cop on the Beat

"The fact is, what the mission really needs is an on-going cop-on-the-beat," Flynn asserts. "If you don't really know the neighborhood well, then there's a problem."

But Allen insists that his changes won't so much centralize the Coast Guard's command structure as modernize and standardize what it does.

And he denies it will erode the service's flexibility.

"The autonomy will still be with field commanders," he says, "and the on-scene initiative will remain the most enduring doctrinal empowering concept. The difference will be in standardizing our maintenance and logistics and in financial and business practices."

Allen estimates he's carried out "between 30 percent and 40 percent" of what he's envisioned. Many of the new acquisition procedures he has mandated already are in place.

'He came in with a great reputation, with people believing that he'd make a good leader, and there's no doubt that he has.'—Representative Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD)

some aspects of the restructuring, he thinks that overall the Commandant is on the right course, and he trusts him enough to give him some leeway in such cases.

"He came in with a great reputation, with people believing that he'd make a good leader, and there's no doubt that he has," Cummings said in an interview recently. "He's a straight-shooter, and I like him because I trust him. When you trust someone, you're willing to give him more slack."

The Restructuring Plan

Admiral Allen's proposal for restructuring the Coast Guard would revamp the entire service, from the top hierarchy to operations, logistics, maintenance, and finance. Here's what it includes.

Office	Current Structure	Under the New Plan	Status
#2 billet	Vice Commandant (three-star), Chief of Staff (three-star)	Vice Commandant (four star). Abolish Chief of Staff's job	Ready, Awaiting Passage of Legislation
Top Hierarchy	Separate commands for Atlantic Area (LANT) and Pacific Area (PAC)—both three-stars—who oversee all units and operations in their regions	Abolish LANT and PAC commanders' jobs.	Ready, Awaiting Passage of Legislation
Mission Support	Handled under LANT and PAC commanders.	Establish new Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (three-star), responsible for acquisitions, information technology, logistics, and human resources.	Ready, Awaiting Passage of Legislation
Operations	Handled under LANT and PAC commanders.	Establish new Deputy Commandant for Operations (three-star), responsible for marine safety, force capability, and international affairs.	Ready, Awaiting Passage of Legislation
Force Readiness	Handled under LANT and PAC commanders.	Establish new Commander, Force Readiness Command, FORCECOM (three-star), responsible for Deployable Operations Group, shore forces.	Ready, Awaiting Passage of Legislation
Field Operations	Handled under LANT and PAC commanders.	Establish new Commander, Operations Command, OPCOM (three-star), responsible for field operations in districts and sectors.	Awaiting Passage of Pending Legislation

The Coast Guard has completed a broad strategic plan, and this past spring set up its new Deployable Operations Group. The headquarters reorganization is ready to go as soon as Congress approves the changes. The financial restructuring, although under way, probably will be the most difficult, Allen concedes. “But we’re on track,” he says.

Neither the restructuring plan nor the legislation specifies how many more people the Coast Guard will need to carry out its current missions. Although some say it ought to grow by as much as 10,000 officers and enlisted personnel, Allen says only that the service could probably accommodate between 1,500 and 2,000 new people a year under its present structure, and he shies away from suggestions that Congress should increase the complement all at once.

“I want to start the debate,” he says, but “I’ll be moving forward incrementally.”

Will It Work?

How well the reorganization will work isn’t likely to be clear until after Admiral Allen leaves. He figures he’ll be lucky to get the foundation laid before his term expires in 2010, and the service will need several more years to work out the glitches and get used to how the new structure operates. It may take years after that, he says, before anyone can really evaluate whether this reorganization has succeeded.

He’s also aware that the Coast Guard will be subject to more oversight, both by Congress and by the general public. His prescription is “more transparency”—acknowledging problems and moving to head them off before they turn into *causes célèbres*.



COURTESY OF REPRESENTATIVE ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

CAPITOL HILL INROADS Among the legislators who respect Admiral Allen is Representative Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation. “He’s a straight-shooter,” says Cummings, “and I like him because I trust him.”

Meanwhile, Admiral Allen is determined that the restructuring will be his legacy. “That’s all I’m going to do as Commandant,” he says. “This is my work. This is what we have to do.”

Mr. Pine, a former naval officer, is a veteran journalist who has worked as a Washington correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Los Angeles Times*. He is a frequent contributor to *Proceedings*.

The Restructuring Plan (Continued)			
Office	Current Structure	Under the New Plan	Status
Deployable Operations Group	Separate quick-response teams for law enforcement, counterterrorism, pollution, and national defense missions.	Establish single command that organizes, trains, and equips these units to operate under a single force structure that can be tapped and deployed quickly in tailored force packages to handle emergencies.	Completed
Logistics	Responsibility for logistics now spread across separate area commands and individual maintenance and logistics commands, with separate arrangements for aviation.	Establish single integrated logistics organization for the entire Coast Guard.	Planning Stage
Finance	Hodgepodge system of decentralized financial and business authority.	Centralized budgeting, financial, and business system designed to give headquarters a better idea of spending levels and costs.	Planning Stage
Doctrine	No formal doctrine.	Crafting new doctrine to be major responsibility of new FORCE COM	Planning Stage
Maintenance and Repairs	Tri-level system in which maintenance repairs are carried out by (1) local units, (2) sector or intermediate level, and (3) Coast Guard yard or aircraft repair and supply centers.	Shift to two-level system in which all but routine maintenance will be performed by depots or service centers, which will provide faster service for aircraft, surface vessels, electronics, and personnel services.	Just Begun