

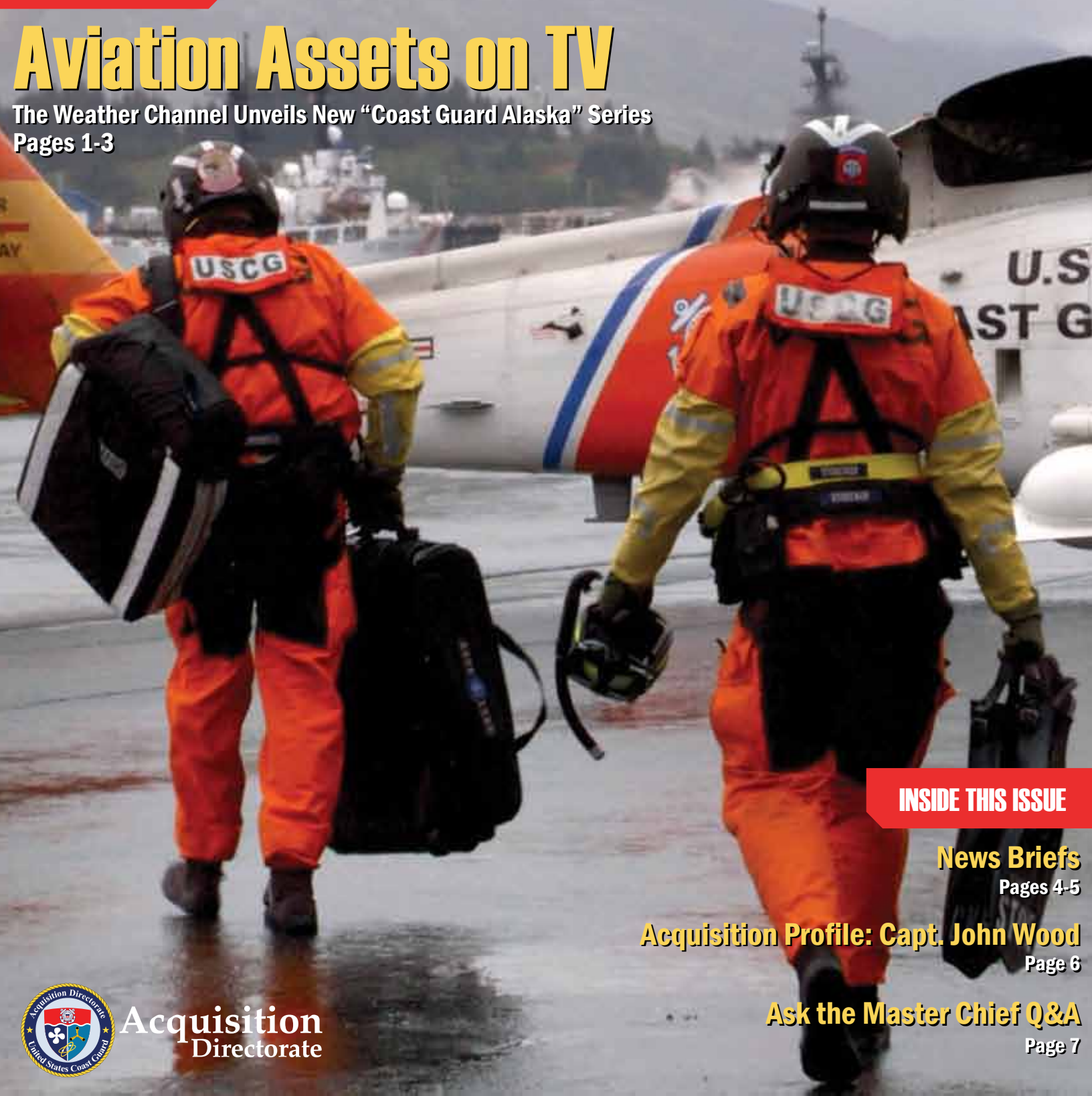
# DELIVERING THE GOODS

Winter 2011/ISSUE 1

FEATURE ARTICLE

## Aviation Assets on TV

The Weather Channel Unveils New "Coast Guard Alaska" Series  
Pages 1-3



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### News Briefs

Pages 4-5

#### Acquisition Profile: Capt. John Wood

Page 6

#### Ask the Master Chief Q&A

Page 7



Acquisition  
Directorate

# “Coast Guard Alaska” Television Series Highlights Upgraded Aviation Assets

By Michael Valliant

It is unlikely that an aircraft would be nominated for an award in a supporting actor role on a TV show, but in The Weather Channel's new series, “Coast Guard Alaska,” the service's airplanes and helicopters are showcased for the integral role they play in helping the Coast Guard save lives. Part of the Coast Guard Acquisition

and development, the MH-60T Medium Range Recovery helicopter in particular has become something of a star on the show.

“Filming aboard the helicopters, the Coast Guard and the helicopter crews specifically have been fantastic,” Dingley said. “The helicopter has really been like a secondary



**A TV crew from “Coast Guard Alaska” captures the conversation of an aircrew from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak, Alaska, as they gather in front of one of the station's upgraded MH-60T helicopters. Photo courtesy of The Weather Channel.**

tion Directorate's portfolio of recapitalization projects, these upgraded aircraft are used by the men and women at Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak, Alaska, whom the show follows as they respond to emergencies, train and raise their families. According to Michael Dingley, The Weather Channel's senior vice president of content

character, and we've even incorporated it into the graphic that we use for 'Coast Guard Alaska.'”

A series airing on The Weather Channel is a good indication that the weather is going to play a major role in the action. The formula that drives the show involves people, the weather and the way

*Continued on Page 2*

*Continued from Page 1*

the two interact. The weather's presence on screen is a part of what made the show appealing for Al Roker Entertainment, the company that produces the series. "Alaska and the Coast Guard, it's a true-blue brand, a combination of good people doing good things, with the weather basically being a character as a backdrop," Dingley said.

The missions the Coast Guard carries out in Alaska especially lend themselves to television, but all parties involved know that, with the Coast Guard, operations come first. Air Station Kodiak Commanding Officer Capt. William Deal was adamant that the show couldn't interfere with the station's operations, and the channel obliged. "We wanted to make the show a fly on the wall as much as possible to make you think you're there," Dingley said.

**“Coast Guard Alaska’ can offer the American public a real glimpse into the everyday jobs of our people, the aircraft and the assets they use to do their missions.” - Cmdr. Sean Carroll**

The format appears to be resonating with audiences, he added. On Dec. 14, The Weather Channel announced that it is ordering two more seasons of the series.

"Response has been nothing short of very strong and positive from the viewers," Dingley said. "Our ratings have increased in double digits at times. And we're seeing folks who don't normally come to The Weather Channel for this type of content. We are thrilled with the performance of the show and the whole experience of working with the Coast Guard."

### **Aviation Assets Key on the Frontier**

Cmdr. Joe Deer, Air Station Kodiak's executive officer, is well aware of the unique challenges that Alaska's geography presents and the resulting need for well-equipped surface and air assets to carry out the Coast Guard's missions there. "There is not a lot of infrastructure in Alaska, so we are more dependent on



**A rescue swimmer jumps from a Coast Guard helicopter into icy waters off the coast of Alaska, where a new series for The Weather Channel is being filmed. Photo courtesy of The Weather Channel.**

our assets," Deer said. "Tools for increased situational awareness are key."

Mission execution is a particularly high-stakes endeavor in Alaska.

"Alaska is vast and remote. On the edge of the frontier up here, there is no messing around. What we do is very serious business," Deer said. "The tools that the Acquisition Directorate gives us to do our mission are just critical. And in the end, they save lives."

The aviation assets used at the air station include the HC-130H Long Range Surveillance aircraft, the MH-65D Short Range Recovery helicopter and the MH-60T. These assets have recently been modernized through the Acquisition Directorate's aviation recapitalization program, enabling pilots and aircrews to more effectively carry out their missions.

"The upgrades from the Acquisition Directorate give us greatly improved situational awareness, improved flight direction and modern electronic upgrades," Deer said. "They really increase the safety of our crews, as the ability to find and get to people quickly is paramount."

### **MH-60T Upgrades and Sustainment**

A number of upgrades to the HC-130H have been completed, including installation of state-of-the-market surface search radar, an airborne digital communications system for asset tracking and long-range satellite communication capabilities critical to safe operations in the vast Alaska operating area, as well as

*Continued on Page 3*

Mission execution begins [here](#).

[www.uscg.mil/acquisition](http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition)

*Continued from Page 3*

a Rockwell Collins DF-430 direction-finding system. In addition to improved capabilities, the Acquisition Directorate's aviation program provides improved sustainment for assets, said Aviation Program Manager Capt. Jim Martin.

"If you look at the helicopter projects for both the H-60 and H-65, we call them conversion and sustainment projects. Not only are we adding capability that is immediately helpful for the aircrew flying it, but we are also enabling the Coast Guard to sustain that aircraft for much longer," Martin said. "And with fewer maintenance man-hours required and fewer parts removed for repair than was previously the case, it will allow us to keep the assets flying well into the 2020s."



**An upgraded MH-60T flies over Alaska, where it plays a critical role in helping the Coast Guard execute its missions in the vast geography of the frontier. Photo courtesy of The Weather Channel.**

Upgrades to the MH-60T include a modernized cockpit with new avionics that share a common architecture with the U.S. Army's Blackhawk helicopter, a new electro-optical/infrared sensor system, and new dynamic components to extend the aircraft's service life. To date, 23 of the service's 42 MH-60Ts have been upgraded with new avionics suites, and 20 MH-60Ts have also been upgraded with the enhanced electro-optical/infrared sensor system. The four MH-60T helicopters at Air Station Kodiak have received both.

### Opportunity for Transparency

For the Acquisition Directorate, "Coast Guard Alaska" serves to highlight the benefits of the service's hard

work to deliver assets that help the men and women in the field execute their many missions.

"We are delivering new capabilities and increasing the sustainability of our assets that are going to serve the Coast Guard for the next 15 to 20 years," Martin said. "Our operators, like those aircrews at Air Station Kodiak, can fly safer and they can spend more time concentrating on mission execution."

One of the Coast Guard's top priorities is to recapitalize its fleet of cutters and aircraft while simultaneously maintaining front line operations—a priority aptly illustrated by "Coast Guard Alaska," said Cmdr. Sean Carroll, the commanding officer of the Coast Guard's Motion Picture and Television Office.

"We are going through a real renaissance right now, where we are reinvesting in and recapitalizing our assets," Carroll said. "It was a great opportunity with the show. Just as the air station was transitioning to the MH-60T model, The Weather Channel was able to put their TV cameras on board as well as share images collected from the MH-60T's sophisticated electro-optical, infrared and hoist-mounted cameras to show the American public what they are getting for their tax dollars. That kind of transparency is invaluable."

The show also provides a means for letting the public know that the Coast Guard is responding to the needs of the nation overall, Carroll added.

"We are entering an austere budget time and there is a clear imperative for transparency in how we, and all federal agencies, conduct our missions," Carroll said. "Coast Guard Alaska' can offer the American public a real glimpse into the everyday jobs of our people, the aircraft and assets they use to do their missions and what they mean to the country."

For more information on The Weather Channel's "Coast Guard Alaska" series, please visit <http://www.weather.com/tv/tvshows/coast-guard-alaska>.

For more information on the Coast Guard Acquisition Directorate or the MH-60T helicopter, please visit <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition>.

## Lead FRC Completes Acceptance Trials

The Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter (FRC) project recently achieved two important milestones as part of its efforts to recapitalize the Coast Guard's aging patrol boat fleet.

On Dec. 16, the lead ship in the Sentinel class, the Bernard C. Webber, successfully completed acceptance trials, a series of rigorous tests conducted by the Coast Guard. Acceptance trials of the cutter ensure that it meets all of its contractual requirements and is ready for delivery. The shipbuilder completed builder's trials for the Webber on Dec. 2.

The government is expected to take delivery of the cutter from the shipbuilder in January.

The third FRC, the William R. Flores, was launched Nov. 29 at Lockport, La. With construction 82 percent complete, the Flores is scheduled to be delivered to the Coast Guard next summer. After commissioning, the Flores will be homeported in Miami, with a crew of 24 to conduct a variety of missions.



**The first Fast Response Cutter, the Bernard C. Webber, gets underway during builder's trials, which were completed Dec. 2 in the waters off of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Photo courtesy of Bollinger Shipyards.**

The third FRC's namesake, Seaman Apprentice William "Billy" Ray Flores, gave his life to save his shipmates in the frenzied moments after a collision between Coast Guard Cutter Blackthorn and the 605-

foot oil tanker Capricorn in Tampa Bay off the coast of St. Petersburg, Fla., on Jan. 28, 1980.

Flores, who was 19 years old and less than a year out of boot camp, remained aboard the Blackthorn as it was sinking. He used his belt to strap open the life-jacket locker door, which allowed additional lifejackets to float to the surface. Tragically, 23 shipmates, including Flores, perished aboard the submerged buoy tender, but 27 crew members survived. Flores was posthumously awarded the Coast Guard Medal, the service's highest award for heroism during peacetime.

The second FRC, the Richard Etheridge, was launched in August and is now 85 percent complete, with delivery scheduled for next spring.

For more information on the FRC project, please visit <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/sentinel>.

## Final HH-65 Begins Upgrades

The Coast Guard's H-65 Short Range Recovery (SRR) helicopter program marked a historic occasion when the conversion project received its final HH-65C airframe from Coast Guard Air Station North Bend, Ore, on Nov. 8th. The last HH-65 is being upgraded and receiving new equipment, which means the entire SRR fleet soon will be comprised of MH-65Cs and MH-65Ds.

A short ceremony was held at the Aviation Logistics Center in Elizabeth City, N.C., to commemorate the retirement of the HH-65 airframe and to mark the beginning of work on the final phase of the project, which will convert the helicopters to MH-65Es.

For this last phase, the service recently signed contracts with Rockwell Collins to begin the Common Avionics Architecture System (CAAS) cockpit development and with Turbomeca to assist with engine integration and verification for the CAAS cockpit. The first MH-65D was also recently delivered to the

*Continued on Page 5*

Continued from Page 4



At a commemorative retirement ceremony, water trucks create a celebratory arch over the final HH-65C helicopter to be converted to an MH-65. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron in Jacksonville, Fla., an armed helicopter squadron specializing in airborne use of force and drug interdiction missions.

For more information on the H-65 project, please visit <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/mch>.

## First HC-144A Aircraft Delivered to Mexico

The Coast Guard's Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program recently accepted early delivery of the first of four CN235-300M maritime patrol aircraft—which are based on the Coast Guard's HC-144A Ocean Sentry—on behalf of the government of Mexico.

Mexico purchased the CN235-300Ms through the FMS program, which awarded a \$157.9 million contract in October 2010 to EADS North America to produce and configure these aircraft.

Mission execution begins *here*.

Delivery of the first aircraft took place on Nov. 5 at the EADS facility in Seville, Spain, with delivery of the fourth and final aircraft expected by April. The contract also includes aircrew and maintenance training, ground support equipment and initial spare parts.

These sales resulted from the Mérida Initiative, a security cooperation agreement between the U.S., Mexico and Central American countries to increase collaboration and shared responsibility for combating drug trafficking, organized crime and money laundering.

For more information on the FMS program, please visit <http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition/international>.

# did you know



*The Coast Guard's Research and Development Center in New London, Conn., currently has two Cooperative Research and Development Agreements with industry to study ways to reduce a ship's carbon footprint by using blended fuels in outboard engines.*

[www.uscg.mil/acquisition](http://www.uscg.mil/acquisition)

## Acquisition Profile: Capt. John Wood C4ISR Acquisition Program Manager

By Linda M. Johnson

Purchasing information technology (IT) systems that can support the Coast Guard's newest assets is one of the most difficult challenges acquisition professionals encounter. Yet this challenge is exactly what Capt. John Wood—the Coast Guard's acquisition program manager for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems—enjoys most about his job.

“IT procurement is one of the most difficult things, not only for government but for industry as well, because it's so quickly evolving. It's very difficult to manage projects and have them be successful. Even in industry, there's a very high failure rate for IT development, so it's very risky,” Wood said.

**“It's the challenge of IT procurement that lends itself to good systems engineering discipline that I really like.”**

“On the positive side, it's really the technology that makes us more effective in our missions,” he explained. “It's the challenge of IT procurement that lends itself to good systems engineering discipline that I really like.”

He grew up in Buffalo, N.Y., sailing the Great Lakes and Chesapeake

Bay as a teenager. His love of all things nautical led him to apply to both the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard academies, but he opted for the smaller service with a humanitarian focus.

Wood graduated from the Coast Guard Academy with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He received a master's degree in electrical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., and later a master's degree in business administration from Virginia Tech.

Wood believes his previous four tours at Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., have prepared him well for his current position. From 1999 to 2003, he served as the C4ISR systems architect for the Deepwater acquisition program, taking a system-of-systems perspective to develop the interoperable electronics and architecture that allow operators to communicate with each other and with shore commands.

From 2004 to 2006, Wood worked for the Coast Guard's chief information officer as a quality assurance engineer, managing the acquisition and development of new IT systems. Next, he served for two years as the Coast Guard's acquisition liaison to the Office of Naval Research, working to leverage support for areas where the services' missions overlap, such as port security.



**Capt. John Wood, C4ISR Acquisition Program Manager. U.S. Coast Guard photo.**

He was most recently the project manager for the Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS), which helps the Coast Guard identify and track vessels using the Automatic Identification System. That tour, from 2009 to 2010, allowed him to earn the acquisition certifications necessary for his present job.

Currently, Wood oversees all of the Coast Guard's C4ISR acquisition projects, including NAIS, Interagency Operations Centers and Rescue 21, the service's search and rescue communications system that acts as the maritime 911 distress system.

“All of these projects increase our coastal maritime domain awareness and bring the best technologies to our sectors, which help operators do their jobs,” he said. “I find this very satisfying.”



*Master Chief Petty Officer  
Brett Ayer*

## ASK THE MASTER CHIEF

**Q.** My engineering officer told me that there is not enough money to get everything done that we want to get done in our next dry dock availability. Why can't we take some of the money you guys get to build new ships and use it to fix our old ones?

**A.** I'm not so sure that would be a good idea; borrowing from Peter to pay Paul rarely works out well in the long run. Even if we wanted to, it would literally take an act of Congress to do it (really). The fact is that it's all about the type of money we get, and not all money we receive in the budget can be spent on whatever we want.

The government slices our budget up into different chunks, each with a different purpose.

The money we receive in our acquisition budget is not the same as the money the rest of the Coast Guard receives to operate and maintain our current fleet of cutters, boats and aircraft. That money is called Operating Expenses (OE). Our money is called Acquisition, Construction and Improvements (AC&I).

The important thing is that each chunk can only be spent on what Congress and the President authorize us to spend it on. We cannot move money between the different budget slices without going back and asking for the law to be changed.

Now having said all that, we do use AC&I money to improve and upgrade our older assets. In fact, we spend a lot of AC&I money for that purpose. Major repair projects, such as mid-life overhauls or our Mission Effectiveness Project (MEP) that we are conducting at the Coast Guard Yard for our older cutters, are AC&I funded.

The difference is in planning and scope—most work done at a dry docking is routine maintenance and does not meet the minimum requirements to be budgeted as an AC&I project.



**The Coast Guard Cutter Diligence, a 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter, undergoes major refurbishment at the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore as part of the Mission Effectiveness Project. U.S. Coast Guard photo.**

*To submit a question for an upcoming Acquisition Directorate newsletter, please e-mail Master Chief Petty Officer Brett F. Ayer directly at [Brett.F.Ayer@uscg.mil](mailto:Brett.F.Ayer@uscg.mil).*

*Please send any feedback or story ideas to [acquisitionweb@uscg.mil](mailto:acquisitionweb@uscg.mil).*

*Front cover: Photo courtesy of The Weather Channel.*