



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

MAY 17 2007

Dear Steve Kroft,

Each day, Coast Guard men and women put themselves in harm's way to save lives while protecting and preserving America's vital maritime interests. Since its inception in 1790, the Coast Guard has saved more than 900,000 lives from the perils of the sea. Today, more than 40,000 Coast Guard men and women at home and abroad are dedicated to securing our borders, rescuing mariners in distress, responding to oil spills, maintaining our waterways, interdicting illegal drugs, protecting our ports from terrorism, and strengthening our national security alongside the other four branches of the Armed Forces.

However, to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, especially with the new realities after 9/11, the Coast Guard must replace its aging fleet of obsolete ships and aircraft – a fleet that is one of the oldest in the world. In February, I decommissioned the Coast Guard Cutter *Storis* after 64 years of service. Our solution to this aging fleet is the Deepwater program. Deepwater is the largest and most complex acquisition the Coast Guard has ever undertaken; nearly 100 new ships and 250 new or modernized aircraft will replace our entire offshore fleet, along with the command and control systems that will tie them together, in the next 20 years

Since assuming my duties as Commandant last May, I've directed a number of significant changes in the program intended to change the course of Deepwater as we improve our management and oversight of this vital program. I've spent many hours testifying before Congress, meeting with industry CEOs, and personally visiting the shipyard and manufacturing facilities building these new ships, aircraft and systems. On April 17, I announced the Coast Guard will assume a greater role in leading the integration of new Deepwater platforms and systems, relieving industry of many of those management responsibilities, as we work even harder to ensure that our Coast Guard men and women get the tools and technology they need to do their job as soon as possible and the American people get what they are paying for.

Deepwater has truly reached a turning point. With 84 HH-65C helicopters now flying operational missions, two National Security Cutters under construction, our first long range interceptor in the water, eight new maritime patrol aircraft on contract, and command and control upgrades completed on 39 legacy cutters and at three communication centers, the Deepwater program is already making the Coast Guard more ready and capable to conduct its many missions.

I remain committed to keeping Congress and the American people fully informed on the status and progress of the Deepwater program. In addition, my previous offer to provide a live interview with *60 Minutes* stands. Please let me know if you wish to schedule one.

America's maritime safety and security depend upon a ready and capable Coast Guard. Modernizing the Coast Guard's fleet is absolutely vital to sustaining the Coast Guard's readiness – now and into the future – to save lives, secure our maritime borders, respond to natural disasters and preserve the health of our oceans and fragile marine ecosystems.

Sincerely,

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

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