

March 12, 2010

**MAINTAIN THE CURRENT LEVEL OF FUNDING
FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

The Coast Guard budget for FY 2011 will not support the level of service the nation expects and needs. It is the beginning of the effective demise of critical services and must not stand as presented to the Congress.

President Obama has proposed a federal spending freeze that does not include the Department of Defense. We believe this should apply to the United States Coast Guard as well, since as an armed force, one of their core missions is the protection and defense of our homeland.

The President's budget proposal for FY2011 represents a substantial reduction in the Coast Guard budget from 2010. This completely undermines Admiral Allen's plans to keep the recapitalization and missions of the Coast Guard on track. Consider the following facts:

1. The proposed budget will require a 1% reduction in operating expenses. However, a 4-6% increase is required simply to maintain current services.
2. It will reduce acquisition, construction, and improvements (AC&I), the capitalization account, by 10%, thus delaying or effectively canceling the critical recapitalization program.
3. A net reduction of 1112 full time military positions will be required. We believe this is the reason for the decommissioning of 5 MSSTs and 4 Hamilton Class WHECs, our 378' high endurance cutters, as well as taking 5 HH-65Cs out of service. The units are sorely needed to meet operational requirements but we all know the only way to get quick funding cuts is to cut people. So, the operational and support capability will suffer.
4. There is an increase of 338 civilian full time positions, but this still yields a net reduction of 774 military and civilian full time positions. This reverses the current plan to increase end-strength.

And the backdrop for this is an increase in the Department of Homeland Security budget of 2% from 2010 to 2011.

The facts on their face are startling: the Coast Guard is being driven well below what is needed, especially in this post-9/11 world. It should be obvious how critical funding is for the Coast Guard; you only have to make note of the recent mission to Haiti. Of 12 major cutters assigned to Haitian relief efforts over January/February 2010 time frame, 10 suffered mission altering breakdowns and three were forced to return to port or dry dock with propeller or propeller-shaft problems. This is one-fourth of the Coast Guard's fleet of vessels of that size.

It is even more ludicrous when you consider the following:

- a. Military positions offer the best return on investment in personnel this country has. Our military personnel are, by definition, on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is how we can respond to disasters like Katrina and the Haiti earthquake so quickly and efficiently despite the age and condition of the fleet. Yet, under this budget proposal, the Coast Guard will lose over 2% of its military workforce in one year...in addition to the corresponding much-needed operational capability. These are JOBS THAT MATTER,

and they are being cut at the same time the federal government is appropriating unthinkable amounts in jobs bills. Compared to the jobs bill this is a very small investment in not only jobs but JOBS FOR DEFENSE.

- b. The Service cannot perform its missions without the tools it needs to do so. The decimation of the AC&I account is completely unacceptable. While we are talking about the need for more cutter hours both at home and overseas and while we have documented evidence that the 50-year old 378' fleet is in need of replacement, we are taking these ships scheduled to go out of commission in 2014 out of service three years early, without adequate replacement. In addition, major safety and search & rescue programs like the Nationwide Automatic Identification System (which is essential to Maritime Domain Awareness, i.e., knowing where ships are at sea and in our littorals in real time) and Rescue 21 (a major update of our search & rescue capability) are being truncated well short of their intended end states.

ACTION REQUIRED:

We request that the current level of services of the Coast Guard be maintained in the 2011 budget, adjusted for inflation. We also request there be a true augmentation of funds and no reapportionment of the already scarce funds be made.

This budget situation cannot be permitted to endure through the congressional vetting process. The future of our Coast Guard and of our nation depends on it.

Sheila M. McNeill
President
The Camden Partnership
Past National President
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March 12, 2010

Retain MSST 91108 St. Marys, Georgia

Situation: On February 2, 2010, the Coast Guard, in response to a budget reduction for FY11, stated they would decommission five of the 12 Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs). The MSSTs were established after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in response to heightened security levels. The current threat assessment is as high, if not higher, than when the teams were commissioned after the 9/11 attacks. Now is the wrong time to be reducing any anti-terror units. The number of MSSTs should remain at 12.

Background: The Coast Guard operates under the Department of Homeland Security. Before the 9/11 terror attacks, 38% of its operational hours were devoted to homeland and maritime security missions. Today, because of the 9/11 terror attacks, it spends more than 57% of its operational hours on homeland security missions.

Part of the increase is attributable to the commissioning of 12 MSSTs located at strategic locations on the nation's coasts. Each team is comprised of approximately 85 Coast Guard personnel and six high-speed tactical boats. The teams are trained as a quick-response unit for a broad range of port security and harbor defense missions, and to perform maritime law enforcement and interdiction, support and protect U.S. and allied forces and detect weapons of mass destruction and explosives. During major marine events, the teams can conduct operations through all maritime-security levels in the U.S. and overseas. They are capable of operating under the threat of chemical, biological or radiological attacks. The team can be sent quickly to trouble spots by air, ground or sea transportation. For MSSTs, versatility and rapid response is an understatement.

MSST 91108, located in St. Marys, GA, is one of the five teams slated for decommissioning. The other east coast team slated for decommissioning is New York City. If enacted, the east coast would be left with MSSTs only in Boston and Miami. From a rapid response scenario to Group Two ports in Jacksonville, FL, Savannah, GA and Charleston, SC as well as Group Three port, Brunswick, GA, it makes no sense to eliminate the St. Marys MSST. There are many other considerations which highlight why MSST 91108 should not be decommissioned:

DOD related aspects:

1. Adjacent to Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, high profile east coast Trident ballistic-missile submarine base
2. Close to a large Navy complex in Jacksonville, FL where Mayport Naval Station's fleet of warships is expected to gain a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier

Location attributes:

1. Strategic location – I-95 North-South corridor, I-10 East-West corridor, close to Group Two and Group Three Ports
2. Training opportunities – Trident Training Facility, local river systems, joint training with Navy and Marine Corps personnel, weapons ranges on-base and at Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick
3. Immediate back-up to the Coast Guard's Maritime Force Protection Unit, Kings Bay mission if needed
4. Proximity to NSB Kings Bay – exchange, medical, commissary, MWR for Quality of Life issues
5. Cost-of-living in Camden County is lower than any other MSST location; the Government gets the most "bang for the buck" in Camden County
6. Duty station of choice for USCG personnel – community, climate, low cost-of-living

Economic impact to area

1. \$8.6 million annual economic loss
2. 9,000 % greater when compared to Boston; the impact to Boston is hardly a blip on their screen

Action Required: Request the Coast Guard's funding for 2011 be at least at the 2010 level adjusted for inflation, if not higher. Also, request there be a true augmentation of funds and no reapportionment of the already scarce funds be made.

It would be obvious to any researcher there was critical and sound reasoning for the site selection of each of the 12 MSSTs. The attributes of MSST 91108 located near Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay have unique value not replicated elsewhere, and that is true of all the MSST locations. We respectfully request, as citizens of America, that the country not lose this battle to save our Coast Guard. However, if the MSSTs are to be decommissioned, we, as concerned citizens from Camden County, request reconsideration of the extensive attributes MSST 91108 offers.

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