U. S. COAST GUARD

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is the nation's oldest continuous seagoing service. It traces its history to 1790 with the introduction of the Revenue Cutter Service, whose mission was the enforcement of the first congressional tariff laws enacted under the Constitution. Today's Coast Guard is a combination of five former Federal agencies: the Cutter Service, the Lighthouse Service, the Steamboat Inspection Service, the Bureau of Navigation, and the Lifesaving Service. [Footnote 1] The multiple missions and responsibilities of today's Coast Guard can be traced back to these initial agencies with nearly a dozen prevention, protection, recovery and response missions. [Footnote 2]

In March of 2003, USCG jurisdiction changed from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security. Though situated in the Department of Transportation, it is at all times an armed force—a full-time military organization with a true peacetime mission. During times of war or at the direction of the President, the USCG functionally transfers to the Department of the Navy. USCG priorities shifted after the September 11th terrorist attacks and funding shifted from its traditional mission to support large-scale port security operations. In fact, During FY 2003, Congress passed the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA). The MTSA was enacted to ensure that American ports, vessels, and facilities each have a plan to protect against terrorist attacks. [Footnote 3]

In this chapter, the characteristics of both the Active and Reserve Components of the USCG are presented. Comparisons are presented for applicants (active enlisted only), accessions, and end-strength for enlisted members, officer corps, and warrant officers. Where applicable, comparisons include overall DoD [Footnote 4] figures and comparable civilian data for reference.

[Footnote 1] URL: http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-cp/history/h_USCGhistory.html [back to paragraph]

[Footnote 2] In *United States Coast Guard Fiscal Year 2004 Report.* URL: http://www.uscg.mil/CG_2004_html/goals.html [back to paragraph]

[Footnote 3] In *United States Coast Guard Fiscal Year 2004 Report.* URL: http://www.uscg.mil/CG_2004_html/message.html [back to paragraph]

[Footnote 4] Overall DoD refers to the combined total of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. [back to paragraph]

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