



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE
AT THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD CHANGE OF COMMAND, MONDAY, JUNE 1, 1970
11:00 A.M., THE NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, D.C.

It is a privilege for me to attend this inspiring ceremony. Inevitably one is reminded of the long history of the Coast Guard, of her many Commanders, of the thousands of heroic defenders who have risked their lives to safeguard this Nation in war and peace.

The Coast Guard is surely an American institution, and one of which we can all be proud.

I have always been happy that the Coast Guard is one of our operating arms, because the nature of modern transportation demands the closest possible coordination of all land, air and sea modes.

Indeed, it is hard to remember that it was ever any other way. The Coast Guard has become a member of the Transportation family, whose services ensure that America will prosper and that millions of Americans can enjoy the pleasures of boating in relative safety.

Of course, I need not remind this audience of the vast and varied activities of the Coast Guard in marine safety, hazardous cargo operations, port security, and marine law enforcement. Nor need I remind men of commerce of how vital these services are. But the public does need to be reminded because it thinks pretty largely in terms of men in slickers and rowboats rescuing Sunday sailors from the follies of their enthusiasm. That is too simplified a picture.

That's why I am delighted that this splendid cutter, the Coast Guard Cutter Gallatin, has been here for the past several days to give the American people a chance to see and hear from Coast Guard personnel what the Guard is all about. It's a story well worth the telling.

Obviously, an organization with complex and interlocking assignments like the Coast Guard's demands a strong managerial hand. The Commandant of the Coast Guard really has to wear a number of hats. He needs a solid background in Marine Engineering. He has to be a modern manager in the systems sense of the word. He has to be a leader of men. He must know how to work with related transport

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modes. He must always keep in mind the big picture and he must have a philosophy of service to the American people.

The career of Commandant Willard J. Smith exemplified this rich profile of abilities. Admiral Smith entered the Coast Guard as a Cadet in August of 1930. Over the years his outstanding performance of his duties was rewarded by regular promotions and ever-greater responsibilities. He was an aide to the Commandant in 1936, took flight training and helped plan and construct the Coast Guard Air Station at San Francisco, held numerous line positions after the war, and was recognized for exceptional leadership performance by being appointed Commandant of the Coast Guard with the rank of 4-star Admiral in 1966.

The Coast Guard is more than a job -- it is a way of life, and one which provides generation after generation of officers and men who rise to the most challenging tasks.

We are fortunate that another such man will assume command of the Coast Guard today -- Admiral Chester R. Bender.

Admiral Bender has distinguished himself as a Coast Guard aviator early in his career and as Commander of the Western Area during years when responsibility for Coast Guard operations off the Vietnam coast were added to the normal far-flung duties of the job.

Admiral Smith will be able to retire in confidence that the Coast Guard remains in good hands.

And now I would like to introduce Admiral Smith to you, the man who is reputed to know just about everything there is to know about nautical affairs.

And I am most happy to tell this audience that Admiral Smith's distinguished service is going to be formally recognized here today by a special award.

I am pleased to announce on behalf of President Nixon, that Admiral Willard J. Smith has been designated for the Distinguished Service Medal for his many years of meritorious service and particularly for his leadership of the Coast Guard during the last four, difficult transition years. Admiral Smith, my heartiest congratulations.

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