

U.S. Coast Guard Awards Ceremony  
Secretary of Transportation Andrew Card  
Alexandria, Virginia  
December 11, 1992

[Thank you Arthur .... if citation is read first.]

Admiral Kime ... Vice Admiral Nelson ... Master Chief Lloyd ... men and women of the Coast Guard Team. It's a great honor and pleasure for me to be here with you today on this special occasion -- the presentation of the Humanitarian Service Medal to the U.S. Coast Guard.

Before coming to Washington, I thought I had a fairly good knowledge of the Coast Guard. They were the ones with the flashy red racing stripe on their boats who made the news every so often -- with either a dramatic rescue off Georges Banks or the containment of an oil spill in Boston Harbor. Overall, they seemed like a good group to have around off shore ... they took care of business when needed.

When I worked later at the White House, I learned a bit more about the Coast Guard. They were the key players in fighting the growing war on drugs. They were the ones we turned to when the Exxon Valdez went aground. And they were among the brave young men and women of America who went to war in Desert Storm. I came to see the Coast Guard now in a completely different light ... as a necessity to our

nation's security.

And since becoming your Secretary, you have all grown in my respect and admiration ... I don't know what the American people would do without you. And it's hard to describe the absolute pride I feel when I am able to say instead of "THEY were the ones," to say, "WE were the ones."

We were the ones who helped the victims of Hurricanes Andrew and Iniki and Typhoon Omar ... and who rescued the Haitians. We are the ones protecting the marine environment for future generations ... and who are ensuring that mariners make it safely home from the sea. We are the ones on duty enforcing the embargo on Iraq and Yugoslavia ... and who are now steaming off to join the international armada off the coast of Somalia. We are the United States Coast Guard!

We are successful in carrying out all of our duties because we work as a team. On our training barque EAGLE, it takes each of the sails and all of the rigging, working together, to make her such a majestic sailing ship. And it's that same type of magnificent orchestration and teamwork that has made the Coast Guard so great -- and so ready to serve our country and humanity.

Besides outstanding professionalism, the Coast Guard has something extra special that makes it unique ... it has not only courage, but compassion. The Coast



Guard has the courage to care.

When I visited our Coast Guard units in Guantanamo Bay -- when I first became Secretary -- I was struck by the heartfelt concern that everyone had for the Haitians. When the cutters docked at GITMO, many Coasties made a beeline for the exchange -- not to buy anything for themselves, but for the poor men, women, and especially, the children, who arrived with next to nothing.

This compassion for the Haitians, was also brought home to me when I saw a recent copy of the Commandant's Bulletin. Inside, was a picture of a small boy being lifted onto a cutter. He was obviously scared -- you could see it on his face. But all around him, gently lifting him aboard, were the faces of young Coasties -- full of dedication and compassion, though tired and drained from so many hours and days on duty.

This determination and effort ... this compassion and character ... this giving your all to help others in times of great danger or stress, defines the Coast Guard. And is the reason we are gathered here today.

The Coast Guard, time and time again, has demonstrated selfless acts of heroism -- whether rescuing Haitians or assisting Hurricane victims. Every time you have been called upon to assist in a man-

made or natural disaster or emergency, the entire service pulled together and did an outstanding job.

Whether behind the wheel, on the deck, or on the phone, you have all -- active duty, reserve, civilian -- performed far beyond the call of duty. And that's why as Secretary of Transportation I am honored to present members of the service the Humanitarian Service Medal.

This award does not belong to any one or group of people -- it belongs to all of you.

There are no individuals in the Coast Guard, everyone is part of a team effort. You don't have to be serving on a ship or flying a plane to be a part of the action. Those who serve at home in technical or administrative positions -- yes, often behind a desk -- deserve equal credit for making sure the mission gets done. Without their help, the rescue efforts in the Windward Passage and beyond would have ground to a halt. Everyone deserves credit for a job well done.

Today, we have seven people with us who truly represent what the Coast Guard stands for: professionalism AND compassion.

These seven members of the Coast Guard represent the service's humanitarian spirit. They embody the entire team effort-- they are the Coast



Guard family. And like a proud member of the family let me tell you a bit about them:

1. Chief Frank Hinson was the lone corpsman on the ESCANABA when, with a storm building, three overcrowded Haitian vessels were encountered one evening. As he worked to transfer the migrants, he noticed a young woman who was obviously about to become a mother very soon. With the help of fellow crewmen he got her safely aboard the Cutter. Under the Chief's watchful care, the next morning a baby boy was delivered to a grateful Haitian couple. They named him Thomas ESCANABA Leon.

2. Commander Pat Shuck and his crew of Cutter STEADFAST worked to help the people of Haiti well before the Coup by sponsoring clothing drives for an orphanage in Port Au Prince. As the tempo of operations rose, STEADFAST continued to show wonderful kindness and compassion at every turn for the hundreds of men, women and children that they rescued from unseaworthy boats.

3. Petty Officer Raymond Murphy and other crew members of the Cutter BEAR worked overtime -- in one example, helping rescue some 100 refugees packed into an overloaded 65 foot boat. As they approached the Haitian vessel, the migrants, in excited anticipation, crowded to one side, and several fell into the water. As it continued to rock, more were thrown overboard.



Petty Officer Murphy suddenly saw amid the confusion a woman too weak to swim. Even too weak to hang onto a life vest. As she sank below the surface, he reached down, and with his considerable strength pulled her to safety.

4. Not all our heroes were on the cutters. Ms. Mae Murphy is a budget analyst at the Seventh District. She has been the person who tracked the Coast Guard dollars spent rescuing the Haitians. You can imagine the thousands of tons of equipment, food and supplies, and the wide range of units, that this has involved. Through her efforts, millions of dollars in reimbursement were obtained.

5. Natural disasters have also brought out the heroes among us. Chief Warrant Officer Mike Leslie exemplifies the selfless efforts of our "support" people. From New York, he set up an expeditious claims fund to help our victims of Hurricane Andrew. And then when the need arose, logged over eighteen hundred miles himself on the devastated streets of the Miami area to get help to those in need.

6. Not all heroes were Active Duty. Master Chief Robert Gauthier, a reservist, has served aboard Cutters CAMPBELL and MOHAWK in the Windward passage. I'm sure that he never thought as he was growing up in a French-Canadian neighborhood of Manchester, New Hampshire that his ability to speak French would

be so important to so many people. In many cases he was the only way to communicate with the Haitians.

7. Rear Admiral Paul Versaw, Chief Counsel of the Coast Guard, was certainly a key player. His work with the other federal agencies, and his legal advice, have been extremely important to assisting those in distress. Our boats and planes couldn't have done it without Paul and his lawyers.

Now, that you have heard about some of your fellow Coast Guard members, it's time to meet them.

It gives me great pleasure to present to them -- as representatives of the entire Coast Guard family -- the Humanitarian Service Medal. Will each of you please come up and receive your awards on behalf of your team effort. And will Admiral Kime please join me in this ceremony.

[ Secretary gives medals ... returns to dias for Kime remarks]

Every team has a coach ... a team leader. And Admiral Kime possesses the essential qualities of leadership: character ... courage ... and compassion. He knows what is right and he does it. He has the inner strength to forge ahead ... to make that tough decision.



And he is a leader with heart. He deeply cares about the welfare of the men and women who service with him.

When I came to the Department, I already knew the Admiral from my White House days ... and I was more than delighted to have him as a member of my team.

[Personal story or joke.]

You can always depend on Bill Kime ... it's that simple. So when the extraordinary was demanded of him -- of the Coast Guard -- of rescuing thousands of Haitians at sea, or assisting an equal number of Floridians made homeless by the most deadly Hurricane to date, we had no worries he would get the job done.

He is a remarkable man, serving with a remarkable group of people. He exemplifies the Coast Guard motto, Semper Paratus.

The question is, what can we possibly do to demonstrate our -- the nation's -- gratitude for his commitment to service?

The answer was a difficult one ... but a solution was found. We would go to the President and propose an executive order for a Transportation Distinguished Service Medal. And I'm pleased to announce to you



today, that the President just signed off to give us the authority to strike a medal and add a ribbon.

The Transportation Distinguished Service Medal is the highest non-combat award the Secretary of Transportation can make to a member of the Coast Guard who has provided "exceptionally meritorious service. "

I'm sure we would all agree that Admiral Kime is a worthy recipient for the Department's, highest and first ever, Transportation Distinguished Service Medal.

Will Deputy Secretary Arthur Rothkopf please read the citation to accompany the awarding of the Medal. And will Admiral Kime please join me.

[Rothkopf reads citation ]

[Secretary then reads special note.]

Ladies and gentleman, on the behalf of the President of the United states and a truly grateful nation, I take pride in awarding you, Admiral William kime, this distinguished medal.

[Pin Award ... Return to seat ... Kime makes his remarks]

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