

# Coast Guard

## Sector New Orleans Informational Newsletter for the Maritime Industry

*"As we begin 2007, let me take a moment to thank our industry partners for the great work that's been accomplished this past year and for your continued support of the Coast Guard. Since Katrina, Sector New Orleans has spent considerable time rebuilding our units and infrastructure while doing our utmost to remain customer focused. I greatly appreciate your patience during this trying period and I am pleased to report that we are operating on all cylinders. Similarly, you have spent the better part of the year reestablishing your businesses back to their pre-Katrina levels. You are to be commended for not only bringing the thriving Mississippi River industrial complex back into full operation, but for ensuring that our 5 Port Authorities, 4 Pilot's Associations, more than 250 facilities, numerous barge fleets, harbor tugs, service industry and thousands of vessels all operate with both safety and security at the forefront. It has been especially rewarding for me to see cruise ships back in port, to see our Area Maritime Security Committee come together to make our region more secure from terrorist threats, and to work in concert with the maritime industry to improve navigational safety along the Mississippi River. In my 10 years in this area, I have never seen better cooperation among the industry and the Coast Guard. We are truly a unique port, and it is remarkable to witness the blue water, brown water, and Outer Continental Shelf industries safely share one of the busiest and most economically important waterways in the world. Here's wishing a prosperous and safe 2007 for those who make their living along the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast."*

Captain Frank Paskewich  
Captain of the Port

## Cruise Industry Returns to New Orleans

By MST3 Brandi Rapalee

On October 15, 2006, the Port of New Orleans unveiled its brand new cruise ship terminal at Erato Street with the arrival of the Norwegian Sun. The boat was the first of several to return to the city. Norwegian, Carnival and Royal Caribbean cruise lines now regularly stop in the city. Additionally the Queen Elizabeth II, one of the world's best known cruise ships, made a port stop in New Orleans. The city, trying to revive the tourist industry, hopes the cruise ship industry will help. Prior to Katrina, the cruise industry brought in 700,000 tourists annually.

The return of cruise ships to New Orleans was the culmination of months of hard work and a reflection of the solid cooperative partnership between the Port of New Orleans and Coast Guard. The week before the first ship's arrival, there was considerable work remaining to be completed on the terminal building and there was some concern as to whether it would be ready in time to receive the vessel. From construction delays to facility security issues, U.S. Coast Guard Sector New Orleans Facilities Compliance Branch and the Port of New Orleans worked as a team to address and



Norwegian Sun. Photo courtesy Donn Young, Port of New Orleans.

resolve outstanding issues and concerns and, after a week of around-the-clock construction, the building was prepared to greet disembarking passengers. Overall, facilities compliance personnel spent many months working with the Port of New Orleans to ensure that the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) regulations were met. This involved making sure that the facility security plan for each cruise line was approved and a complete MTSA compliance verification exam was conducted to make sure that security measures were in place in time for the ships' arrival. This inspection, usually taking a few hours, took several weeks due to ongoing construction at the new facility.

On the day that the Norwegian Sun arrived, members of the Coast Guard Sector New Orleans Facilities Compliance, and Enforcement Branches were at the facility at 5:00 a.m. to ensure regulatory compliance and address any security related issues if they arose. As with any new facility, the first day presented some challenges, however the countless hours of hard work invested by the Facilities Compliance Branch and the Port of New Orleans ensured the safe arrival of the first cruise ship to return to the Big Easy.

## *Rescue 21- Taking some of the "Search" out of Search & Rescue*

By LTJG Jeanita Jefferson

The U.S. Coast Guard is perhaps best known worldwide for its Search and Rescue (SAR) expertise, dating back over 200 years to the earliest days of the Revenue Cutter and Life Saving Services. Today, despite the nation's best efforts to prevent maritime accidents, the Coast Guard responds to more than 60,000 emergency calls and saves nearly 5,000 lives annually. The Coast Guard's new coastal Command, Control and Communications (C3) acquisition program, known as Rescue 21, is designed to help take the "search" out of Search and Rescue. This new C3 system is more robust, more reliable, and more capable than the Coast Guard's legacy National Distress Response System (NDRS).

NDRS was established more than 30 years ago as a VHF-FM-based radio communications system that provided a coverage range of up to 20 nautical miles offshore along most of the U.S. shoreline. While this system had served the Coast Guard well over the years, it became outdated and has several limitations including a lack of direction finding capability, numerous geographic communications coverage gaps, limited interoperability with other emergency response services, and single-channel radio operation, which prohibits the ability to receive multiple radio calls simultaneously.

Rescue 21 links a modern VHF-FM radio system to a Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) network that facilitates digital communications using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). This system enables the Coast Guard to respond faster and more accurately to maritime emergencies. It receives Digital Selective Calling transmissions that instantly provide a vessel's identity, exact location, and other vital information when properly registered and used in conjunction with an integrated Global Positioning System receiver. It also provides the Coast Guard with much needed direction-finding capability, which greatly reduces response times to mariners in distress and helps lo-

cate hoax call sources resulting in better utilization of Coast Guard assets and taxpayer money.

General Dynamics C4 Systems is the prime contractor for this vital command and control project. Rescue 21 equipment is currently being installed in the Sector New Orleans Area of Responsibility (AOR). A total of ten Remote Fixed Facilities (RFF), or VHF-FM high sites, are scheduled to be installed, tested, and operationally accepted by November 2008. The RFF's will be brought on line two or three at a time and will be used in conjunction with the legacy NDRS system until the installation project is successfully completed. For more information about Rescue 21, please visit the Rescue 21 webpage on the Coast Guard's website at: [www.uscg.mil/rescue21/](http://www.uscg.mil/rescue21/).

Rescue 21 at a glance:

- Incorporates direction-finding equipment to reduce time required to locate mariners in distress.
- Improves interoperability amongst Federal, State, and local agencies.
- Enhances clarity of distress calls.
- Allows simultaneous channel monitoring.
- Upgrades playback and recording feature of distress calls.
- Reduces coverage gaps for coastal communications and along navigable rivers and waterways.
- Supports Digital Selective Calling for registered users.
- Provides portable towers for restoration of communications during emergencies or natural disasters.

## *Traffic Controllers Take to the River* *New personnel and an expanded training program for the Lower Mississippi River*

By LCDR Jerry Briggs

For these new Coast Guard civilian vessel traffic control specialists it is an eye opening experience. Luc Bodenheimer and Les "Bosco" Ledet III found themselves on a line tow from Baton Rouge heading down river to Davant, Louisiana, aboard TECO Barge Line's vessel Girlie Knight. Pushing twenty-five loaded barges these new traffic controllers were to get a unique understanding of the inland towing industry's concerns and the challenges facing vessels working this unique waterway.

Luc and Bosco are two of the new vessel traffic controllers that have been hired at the Vessel Traffic Center in downtown New Orleans. Seven new controllers from diverse maritime backgrounds have been hired to augment the staff at New Orleans Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). There are

twelve existing controllers who handle operations in the New Orleans harbor, the primary focus being the safe transit of Algiers Point in the heart of New Orleans. During low river stages controllers make traffic management recommendations to vessels rounding Algiers Point. During high water controllers operate the traffic control lights and control vessels approaching Algiers Point.

The controllers utilize several types of sensors which include the vessel's Automatic Identification System and the traffic center's computers, radar and closed circuit television. The VTS is planning to expand operations in the Mississippi River Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) which begins at mile 252 above the head of passes (AHP) at Port Hudson Light and runs downriver to a point twelve miles off Southwest Pass Light. Both the maritime industry and the Coast Guard have worked together to identify areas of particular hazard. One such area is Eighty – One Mile Point (MM 178 AHP). Once the necessary equipment and training are in place the VTS will begin to monitor river traffic in this area and provide a traffic advisory service.

The center's traffic controllers who are fully qualified have recently gone back into training. They are in the process of qualifying in the Expanded Qualification Program that will encompass our expanded area of service. Full qualification will require additional vessel rides and the successful completion of a river study guide followed by testing with ten pilot type charts of the whole RNA. The VTS expects their watch standing personnel will meet the new training standards by January 2007 in large part due to the opportunity to get experience aboard the vessels on the river.

The VTS has had a vessel ride program since its inception, but the program has recently been expanded: in addition to riding on deep draft and inland towing vessels the controllers spend training time on dredges, fleet vessels, trip boats and operational Coast Guard vessels in the VTS operating area. The rider program gives the VTS personnel the opportunity to canvas the industry, solicit ideas and bring back recommendations to improve the service. It also gives VTS personnel the chance to share information about the services directly with the mariners.

All of the watch standing personnel at the traffic center are civilian employees of the Coast Guard, including the watch supervisors. Though it's not a requirement for employment, many of these watch standers hold Coast Guard issued cre-

entials such as pilot licenses for various stretches of the Mississippi River.

The VTC welcomes visits from members of the maritime community. To arrange a visit call the duty watch supervisor at 504-589-2780. The VTC is located in the Canal Place Office Tower at 365 Canal Street.

## *Huey P Long Project Update*

By LT Barbara Wilk

Massman Construction, LLC is currently renovating the Huey P. Long Bridge to widen the vehicle traffic lanes. The current construction project, which commenced in May 2006, and is expected to run until June 2008, involves reinforcing the bridge piers to support the larger load of the new road surface. This project is divided into four phases designed to allow larger ships to pass at any time during the renovation. Currently the project is in Phase III, scheduled to last until Mid-March 2007. During this phase there will be barges moored up to all four piers, with only those barges moored up to piers II and IV remaining moored overnight. The minimum width for the main span is 640 feet and for the alternate span, 400 feet. The piers will be enhanced by an additional layer of steel reinforced concrete. Barges will be used through out the process in support of the project. Barges remaining overnight at the pier to protect critical infrastructure will be lit with 360-degree, high-intensity white lights.

For any updates or changes in construction phases, Coast Guard Sector New Orleans will release information via Marine Safety Bulletins (MSB), Safety Broadcast Notice to Mariners (SBNM), and Local Notice to Mariners (LNM). For more information contact LT Barbara Wilk at (504)-589-6196 extension 237.

## *MTSA/UTV Compliance Project Completed*

By LT Nathan Cowall

Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) regulations in Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 104 (33 CFR 104) require towing vessels over eight meters in length and engaged in towing barges subject to 33 CFR 104 to develop vessel security plans (VSP) and to have been operating under their approved VSPs by July 1, 2004. To verify compliance the Coast Guard Atlantic Area Command issued a re-

quirement for the Captain of the Port (COTP) to conduct security compliance examinations of all such vessels by December 31, 2006. In order to minimize the impact of these exams on the towing industry, the Coast Guard and industry agreed to place the full responsibility of scheduling exams on the owner/operators.

Sector New Orleans tracked the completion of examinations on vessels whose operating companies are headquartered in the New Orleans COTP zone. While the completion of examinations was being tracked by Sector New Orleans, the actual examinations could take place in any COTP zone.

The Coast Guard conducted random, unannounced boardings of towing vessels operating on the Lower Mississippi River within the New Orleans COTP Zone to conduct MTSA exams. Although VSP implementation was the primary focus of the boardings, Marine Inspectors also verified compliance with other regulations applicable to the vessel and crew.

Sector wide exams were completed on 1,052 vessels - the entire fleet with the exception of those vessels out of service for various reasons. Towing vessels that did not have their compliance examinations by December 31<sup>st</sup> would have been restricted from pushing barges subject to 33 CFR 104

The most common discrepancies found during MTSA exams on towing vessels related to the documentation required by 33 CFR 104. Frequently occurring deficiencies included not keeping records of security drills, exercises, and audits on board the vessel. For some vessels, the required Vessel Security Assessment Report has not been kept on board as part of the VSP.

Company Security Officers are highly encouraged to contact the COTP office nearest to where their vessels will be operating in order to schedule MTSA compliance exams for each vessel still requiring one. For more information or to schedule an exam please call (504) 589-6196, extension 258 or 241, or contact LT Nathan Cowall via email at [Nathan.E.Cowall@uscg.mil](mailto:Nathan.E.Cowall@uscg.mil).

## *McMoRan's Proposed Main Pass Energy Hub*

By LT Barbara Wilk

U.S. Coast Guard Sector New Orleans has been working closely with McMoRan in McMoRan's development of the

Main Pass Entergy Hub (MPEH) proposal. McMoRan is pursuing plans to develop the MPEH which will be used for the receipt and processing of liquefied natural gas (LNG), as well as the storage and distribution of natural gas. The plan is to utilize existing sulfur mining structures which are located 38 miles east of Venice, LA in 210 feet of water, and near established shipping lanes. The terminal would be capable of receiving LNG and conditioning 1 Billion cubic feet (Bcf) per day of natural gas. The design includes an on site 28 Bcf of initial cavern storage and the capability of delivering from storage 2.5 Bcf per day. At this time, there are no LNG facilities in the Sector New Orleans area of responsibility. The proposed MPEH facility will increase the number of vessels doing business within the AOR which will increase the number of vessel boardings conducted by Sector New Orleans. U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters final approval is expected early 2007. Upon approval, McMoRan projects that the facility will be operating within 4 years.

## *Port Security Grants*

By CDR Greg Depinet

On September 25, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security published its list of Port Security Grant recipients for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Port Security Grant Program (PSGP). Through the PSGP, 101 ports nationwide qualified to receive a share of \$168,052,500 to be used for maritime domain awareness and risk reduction. Five ports within the U. S. Coast Guard Sector New Orleans area of responsibility received a combined total of \$22,990,705 which accounted for approximately 13.68 % of all funds awarded to ports in FY2006.

Since 2002 ports in the Sector New Orleans Captain of the Port area of responsibility received \$52.8 million in port security grant money. Some of the projects financed through the PSGP were:

- construction, improvements and repair to "all river stage" boat ramps,
- construction of communication towers,
- upgrades in communication and redundant communication systems,
- surveillance systems and improved monitoring capability,
- construction and refurbishing security vessels, and
- construction of a mobile floating command center.

The Department of Homeland Security is expected to begin the Fiscal Year 2007 Port Security Grant Program in early January 2007. In addition to the 101 ports that were eligible for Port Security Grants in Fiscal Year 2006; Port Fourchon, facilities listed under 33 CFR Part 106 regulations, and the

Louisiana Offshore Oil Port will be eligible to compete for a portion of the \$203,200,000 of appropriated funds. The Fiscal Year 2007 Port Security Grant Program is geared to directly address six of seven national priorities:

1. Expanded regional collaboration.
2. Implementing the National Incident Management System.
3. Implementing the National Infrastructure Protection Plan.
4. Strengthening the information sharing and collaboration capabilities.
5. Enhancing interoperable communications capabilities.
6. Strengthening chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive detection and response capabilities.

The Department of Homeland Security Grants and Training and the U. S. Coast Guard have embarked on an aggressive outreach program designed to educate Area Maritime Security Committees and port stakeholders on aspects of the Port Security Grant Program, clarify and identify problem areas associated with the grant application process, and discuss national priorities. Sector New Orleans together with the Department of Homeland Security Grants and Training and members of the U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters will host an outreach meeting on January 11, 2007 at the Port of New Orleans Auditorium. The POC for the outreach program is Mr. Roy Ford who can be reached by telephone at (504) 589-6196 X-240 or via electronic mail at Roy.J.Ford@uscg.mil.

## *Port Security Training Exercise Program (PortSTEP)*

By Roy Ford

The Port Security Exercise Training Program (PortSTEP) was established to develop port security exercise and evaluation services and solutions for maritime and surface industry partners under the guidance of the Transportation Security Administration, in association with the U. S. Coast Guard. The program involves the entire port community, including public agencies and the private sector, and focuses on the port's Area Maritime Security (AMS) plan. PortSTEP provides strategic support, planning, analytical and technical services for the delivery of a series of port security training exercises for the transportation security community.

The exercises are geared to achieve several performance objectives aimed at improving the intermodal transportation industry's ability to prepare for and contend with a transportation security incident (TSI). These objectives are centered on increasing awareness, improving processes, creating partnerships, and delivering port incident training through a mix of basic tabletop, advanced tabletop, and functional exercises.

40 Coast Guard units were selected to host port security training exercises between August 2005 and October 2007. Sector New Orleans was one of the units selected and has scheduled a Functional PortSTEP Exercise for June 21, 2007.

As part of the exercise play, Sector New Orleans will test its notification procedure for MARSEC level increase. Facilities applicable to 33 CFR 105 may fulfill their three-month drill requirement by implementing the "response to change in MARSEC Level" portion of their Facility Security Plan. Vessels applicable to 33 CFR 104 may fulfill their three-month drill requirement by implementing the "response to change in MARSEC Level" portion of their Vessel Security Plan. Facilities and vessels subject to MTSA regulations may satisfy their annual exercise requirement by voluntarily participating in the Sector New Orleans PortSTEP exercise. Criteria for receiving exercise credit are outlined in MTSA/ISPS Policy Advisory Council Policy 59-05 at [www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mp/policy.html](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mp/policy.html).

For questions concerning the PortSTEP exercise or information on receiving drill and exercise credit as per 33 CFR 105.220 and 104.230, please contact Mr. Roy J. Ford at roy.j.ford@uscg.mil.

## *Sector Investigators Review the Year's Maritime Incidents*

By LCDR C` Ben-Iesau

Lieutenant Junior Grade Tara Hunter's duty phone rings. Her dog briefly opens an eye in annoyed protest before going back to sleep. She looks at the clock: it's that time of night when even the French Quarter is asleep. She's been called to look into allegations of a vessel being operated by an inebriated captain.

Working with the Jefferson Parish Sheriff, Ms. Hunter responded when a NOBRA pilot reported that Yuriy Roshka-

lyov, master of the M/V LEEDS CASTLE, smelled of alcohol. Ms Hunter administered a sobriety test and Roshkalyov, a Ukraine national, tested .252: well above the legal limit of .040. Roshkalyov spent 14 days in jail, was suspended from sailing in US waters for a year, placed on probation for five, and was levied a \$25 special assessment.

Ms. Hunter is one of 8 Marine Casualty investigators responding round the clock to commercial vessel casualties in the New Orleans area. Coast Guard investigators are guided by the regulations in 46 CFR 4 & 5 to investigate with an eye for trends or actions that can be corrected to make the waterways safer. New Orleans is busy: *individually* these 8 investigators responded to accidents equaling the annual workload of over ¼ of the nation's other Sector investigations branches.

Sector New Orleans has marine investigation branches in Houma, Morgan City, and Baton Rouge in addition to New Orleans. Collectively these units within Sector New Orleans investigated over 550 reportable marine casualties. In addition almost 200 new personnel action investigations were initiated- the majority of these being drug related with the remainder primarily due to acts of negligence or misconduct by licensed mariners. Ten mariners were scheduled for full administrative hearings to look at revoking their licenses, and one Marine Board of Investigation (commonly referred to as a One Man Formal) was conducted as a result of a collision between two tankers at 81 mile point.

One glaring problem seen this year was the number of mariners discovered operating commercial vessels with expired, revoked, improper or non-existent credentials. Marine employers looking at new hires are strongly encouraged to call the local Coast Guard investigations branch to check on the validity of mariner credentials. Marine employers are subject to civil penalties up to \$10,000 for hiring improperly or unlicensed mariners.

## ***Change to Address for Submitting Inspection Fees***

In the past, CG Inspection Fees were sent to Bank of America. They now must be sent to Wachovia bank in Charlotte, NC. The Bank of America will only forward fees until April, 2007. Please make sure that you are sending checks to the following address:

Overnight courier service payments should be mailed to:

Wachovia QLP Wholesale Lockbox NC0810  
Lockbox # 70952  
1525 West WT Harris Blvd.  
Charlotte, NC 28262

VIF Payments should be mailed to:

USCG Inspection Fees  
PO Box 70952  
Charlotte, NC 28272-0952

### **Contact Information**

Customer Service for Vessel Inspection User Fees (VIF)

Phone: 757-523-6958

Toll Free: 1-800-941-3337

Fax: 757-523-6734

Email: [FIN-DG-COIUSERFEES@uscg.mil](mailto:FIN-DG-COIUSERFEES@uscg.mil)

## ***New E-mail for Ship Security Alert System Notices-***

The US Coast Guard issued a notice advising owners, operators and masters of US vessels of a change in the e-mail address that should be utilized in the ship security alert system (SSAS). The old e-mail address will remain viable until May 2007, but the new e-mail address ( [ssas@uscg.mil](mailto:ssas@uscg.mil) ) is already in operation. The SSAS on most ships is programmed to immediately upon activation send an e-mail to the flag administration. It is therefore important that the e-mail address utilized in the device be correct. The new e-mail address should also be reflected in the vessel security plan (VSP). 71 Fed. Reg. 69580 (December 1, 2006).

## ***Marine Casualties***

By Mr. Ron Fogan

In the past months, Sector New Orleans has seen a rise in vessels experiencing marine casualties while transiting in the Mississippi River. For the most part, these casualties were the result of main engine or auxiliary engine failures. To date in 2006, there have been over 100 propulsion losses or power irregularities. For clarification, a propulsion loss is when the main engine shuts down or fails to start. It could also be the result of the vessel losing electrical power causing the main engine to lose the essential auxiliaries, i.e. lube oil, cooling water or fuel oil pumps. A power irregularity is when the main engine suddenly loses revolutions, fails to achieve requested revolutions, or goes into an automatic slow down because of an alarm.

Analysis of these failures showed that fifty percent were due to malfunctioning main engine air systems including both the start air and control air sub-systems. The other fifty percent were the result of malfunctioning main and auxiliary engine cooling water systems, fuel systems, engine control systems, and operator error with regards to system alignment. In several instances, these failures led to a secondary casualty, i.e. collision and/or grounding.

Based on the above, the COTP New Orleans is requesting that all vessel masters ensure that their vessel's propulsion plants are in proper operating order prior to transiting in the Mississippi River.

As a reminder 33 CFR 165.810 designates the Mississippi River below mile 233.9 above Head of Passes including South Pass and Southwest Pass as a Regulated Navigation Area (RNA). The section prescribes rules for all vessels operating in the RNA to assist in the prevention of collisions; collisions and groundings to ensure port safety and protect the navigable waters of the Mississippi River from environmental harm resulting from those incidents, and to enhance the safety of vessels moored or anchored in the River.

Of note, each self-propelled vessel of 1,600 or more gross tons subject to 33 CFR 164 shall also:

- While under way in the RNA, have an engineering watch capable of monitoring the propulsion system, communicating with the bridge, and implementing manual-control measures immediately when neces-

sary. The watch must be physically present in the machinery spaces or in the machinery-control spaces and must consist of at least a licensed engineer.

- Before embarking a pilot when entering or getting under way in the RNA, the master shall ensure that the vessel complies with 33 CFR 164 to include the tests required before entering or getting underway in United States waters.
- Ensure that the chief engineer has certified that the following additional operating conditions will be satisfied so long as the vessel is under way within the RNA:
  - The main propulsion plant is in all respects ready for operations including the main-propulsion air-start systems, fuel systems, lubricating systems, cooling systems, and automation systems;
  - Cooling, lubricating, and fuel-oil systems are at proper operating temperatures;
  - Main propulsion machinery is available to immediately respond to the full range of maneuvering commands any load-limiting programs or automatic acceleration-limiting programs that would limit the speed of response to engine orders beyond that needed to prevent immediate damage to the propulsion machinery are capable of being overridden immediately.
  - Main-propulsion standby systems are ready to be immediately placed in service.



This 21 x 9 foot mural, located in the foyer of the Sector building at 201 Old Hammond Highway in Metairie, Louisiana, was painted to commemorate the men & women of Sector New Orleans and their response to hurricane Katrina. Photograph by MK1 Wilbert Mitchell.