

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**United States
Coast Guard**



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

Washington, DC 20593
Staff Symbol:
Phone:

PREPARED STATEMENT
OF
ADMIRAL PAUL A. YOST
COMMANDANT, U. S. COAST GUARD
BEFORE THE
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE

JULY 30, 1986



Admiral Paul A. Yost Jr. Commandant United States Coast Guard



Admiral Paul Alexander Yost, Jr. became the 18th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard on May 30, 1986. He was nominated to that position while serving as Commander of the Atlantic Area, Commander Maritime Defense Zone Atlantic, and Commander Third Coast Guard District in New York City where he was assigned in 1984.

In these roles, the Admiral was responsible for Coast Guard operations in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico including drug interdiction, maritime law enforcement, and search and rescue, as well as maritime coastal defense under the authority of the Commander Atlantic Fleet, United States Navy.

Prior to his Third District assignment, Admiral Yost was Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard for three years at Headquarters in Washington, DC, where he managed planning, programming, and budgeting for the service. He was promoted to flag rank in 1978 and served as Eighth District Commander in New Orleans, Louisiana for three years.

Admiral Yost's management and operational positions included Chief of Staff and Chief of Operations for Seventeenth Coast Guard District in Alaska (1975), and Commander Task Group 115.3, a combat command in Vietnam (1969). In addition, he served as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary Department of Transportation and an Alternate Delegate on the U.S. Law of the Sea Delegation.

Admiral Yost was Captain of The Port, Seattle, Washington (1974), Special Assistant to the Chief Counsel, Coast Guard Headquarters (1972), and Chief, Bridge Branch, Aids to Navigation Division, Headquarters (1970). Seagoing duty included command of the cutter *Resolute* in San Francisco, California (1966).

Admiral Yost graduated from the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1964. He received master's degrees in international affairs from George Washington University (1964) and in mechanical engineering from the University of Connecticut (1959). He also completed course work toward a master's in business administration. Admiral Yost received a Bachelor of Science Degree from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, in 1951.

The Commandant's awards include The Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit with combat "V", a gold star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Korean Service Medal, and United Nations Service Medal. He also received The Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star (RVN), Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Distinguished Service Medal (RVN).

A native of St. Petersburg, Florida, Admiral Yost is active in church, school, and community affairs. He was awarded the Silver Beaver Award by the Boys Scouts of America. Admiral Yost is married to the former Jan Worth of Wakefield, Massachusetts. Mrs. Yost earned a degree in communications from the University of Maryland. They have five children: Linda L., Paul A. III, David J., Lisa J., and Christopher J. The Yosts reside in Chevy Chase, Maryland.



Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I am pleased to have the opportunity to meet with you today to provide an overview of the Department of Defense's contribution to the Coast Guard's drug law enforcement program. I would like to begin by briefly touching on the nature of maritime drug trafficking and current trends that are being noted.

The Coast Guard maritime law enforcement program is recorded as one of the first and primary responsibilities of the Revenue Cutter Service established in 1790. These responsibilities are still extremely important today to stem the flow of drugs into the United States. The Coast Guard has devoted substantial time and resources to this effort, and drug smugglers are reacting accordingly. As law enforcement pressure in the maritime region has increased, there has been some shift by drug smugglers to other modes and methods of transportation. As you know, there has been a substantial increase in drug smuggling on our Southwest Border. There has been an increase in airdrop activity, the use of hidden compartments (compartments incorporated into the design of a boat or ship for the express purpose of hiding contraband), the use of tug and barge combinations, and attempts by smugglers to circumnavigate our interdiction resources through counterintelligence and the use of their own surveillance aircraft. These tactics confirm the fact that we are having a noticeable effect on maritime smuggling. We are causing it to become more difficult and expensive. In view of the more varied and complex tactics used by smugglers, the operational efforts to stem the overall flow of drugs have become increasingly dependent on the coordination of all law enforcement agencies' interdiction and intelligence gathering activities.

No phase of maritime law enforcement is more important to the success of the drug interdiction program than boarding vessels at sea. Analysis shows that while we must keep pressure on all facets of the maritime drug scenario, interdiction of "motherships", which deliver contraband to smaller boats well off our coast or fast contact boats near shore, has the greatest potential for disrupting the maritime flow of drugs. In addition to removing other contraband, one mothership seizure may remove as much marijuana from the market as would 10-20 contact boat seizures. Therefore, Coast Guard drug interdiction operations have continued to concentrate on these large motherships. In addition to large quantities of marijuana, large quantities of other drugs (primarily cocaine) are being found, indicating a distinct shift in trafficking trends. Previously, we were rarely able to seize these higher value, low volume, drugs because they were usually disposed "over the side" prior to the at-sea boarding of the vessel. However, last year we seized over 6,500 pounds of cocaine, up from the 1,967 pounds seized in 1984, and well above the high of 46 pounds in previous years. This year, as of June 30, we have seized 3,290 pounds of cocaine.

The Coast Guard's traditional drug interdiction strategy has been mainly directed toward intercepting motherships as they transit the major Caribbean passes. Starting in the fall of 1984, new tactics were employed, facilitated by a new awareness by other cooperating countries of the international ramifications of drug trafficking. Operation Wagonwheel, conducted in November and December, 1984, was the key element of a larger national and international operation, Operation Hat Trick, coordinated by the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS). Operation Hat Trick was the first of several multiagency, international operations employing the maximum of flexibility and deception to complement the anti-drug operations being carried out by foreign

in-country forces ashore and afloat. The operation involved two to three times the Coast Guard cutters used in previous efforts, and, among other DOD assets, included seven Navy ships under Coast Guard tactical control.

The latest Coast Guard effort, known as Winter Operations, provided a key element of Operation Hat Trick II and was very similar to Hat Trick I, but on a more massive scale. Again, planned and coordinated through NNBIS, the Coast Guard, supported by the U.S. Navy, provided the primary maritime surveillance and interdiction forces, while the Customs Service, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Army and Marines conducted air operations. Maritime forces included more than 40 Coast Guard and Navy ships. In addition to the crews permanently assigned to the cutters and aircraft, personnel were temporarily reassigned from their regular duties to the operation as law enforcement teams aboard the 5 to 9 Navy ships, to augment intelligence staffs, to provide in-country liaison, and as the squadron commander's staff.

The successes of these operations point out the advantage of occasional offensive tactics against trafficking organizations, and they also show the value of DOD assistance to these operations.

In 1981 Congress passed legislation clarifying statutory restrictions on the use of Department of Defense resources for law enforcement purposes. As a result, the Department of Defense now has greater freedom to support federal law enforcement agencies. DOD resources have been playing an important role in the federal drug interdiction program by providing surveillance and support services, such as using aircraft to search for smugglers and Navy ships to tow or escort vessels seized by the Coast Guard to the nearest U. S. port.

Additionally, Navy ships have been deploying with Coast Guard law enforcement teams aboard - a successful program that contributed greatly to the success of the joint operations I've just touched on. These personnel conduct boardings of suspect vessels from their Navy hosts in the same manner as they do from Coast Guard vessels. To increase further the number of surface assets available for interdiction, the Coast Guard has been routinely deploying personnel on Navy Pegasus-class Hydrofoil Patrol Boats operating out of Key West. These hydrofoils are being used for short notice, fast response situations such as interdicting fast drug smuggling contact boats.

Scheduled law enforcement teams totalling 55 persons were deployed on Navy ships for 3,956 person-days during the first eight months of FY86, and used 236 travel days to meet and return from Navy ships. In addition, 1,267 deployed days were spent by over 200 temporarily reassigned personnel during Hat Trick II. Since 1981, the Navy has assisted the Coast Guard in the seizure of 50 vessels, 1.1 million pounds of marijuana and 46 pounds of cocaine. Coast Guard boarding parties on Navy vessels have made 27 seizures (six, so far, this fiscal year).

Section 1421 of the Department of Defense Authorization Act of 1986 (P. L. 99-145) authorized 500 military personnel for the Coast Guard to be assigned to naval vessels at sea in drug interdiction areas. This provision was enacted into law on November 8, 1985 and the funds were transferred to the Coast Guard on March 31, 1986.

The Coast Guard and the Navy have endeavored to comply with both the letter and spirit of P. L. 99-145 by working closely together to ensure that the maximum number of Navy vessels are applied to drug interdiction, consistent with their military readiness responsibilities. As a result of Coast Guard operational experience over the past few months, it has become apparent that restricting the use of 500 additional personnel solely to Navy vessels would significantly limit their potential effectiveness. For a number of reasons, including rapid fluctuations in Navy fleet operations, short transit periods in drug interdiction areas, and changes in ship deployment schedules, such a large number of Coast Guard law enforcement personnel cannot be used productively aboard Navy ships.

To comply with the direction of P. L. 99-145, the Coast Guard has expanded the recruiting and training of personnel for law enforcement duties this year. Upon completion of training and with proper experience, these additional personnel could be ready for augmentation of law enforcement detachments in future years. In the interim, maximum use of Navy ships for both regular and special operations will continue. Although P. L. 99-145 calls for 500 Coast Guard personnel to be assigned to Navy ships, our experience indicates that Coast Guard law enforcement teams are most productive on Navy ships that do not have other high priority national security missions and are operating in drug interdiction areas.

This concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to answer any questions you or the members of the committee may have.