

# Happy Birthday US Coast Guard!

## The VFW salutes America's oldest continuous maritime service

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**WASHINGTON** — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) joins with our grateful nation in celebrating the birthday of the United States Coast Guard, which has saved countless lives and protected U.S. interests at ports, inland waterways, along coastlines and in international waters for the past 232 years.

On Aug. 4, 1790, President Washington signed the Tariff Act into law, establishing the Revenue Cutter Service. Up until the reestablishment of the U.S. Navy in 1798, Revenue Cutters were the only naval vessels protecting U.S. shores. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Revenue Cutter Service would continue law enforcement and customs duties, as well as fight alongside the U.S. Navy in conflicts, to include the American Civil War. In 1915, the branch was merged with the U.S. Life-Saving Service and officially renamed the U.S. Coast Guard.

Now under the Department of Homeland Security, today's Coast Guard operates to fulfill three broad roles: maritime security, maritime stewardship and maritime safety. Along with protecting and defending more than 100,000 miles of U.S. coastline and inland waterways, the Coast Guard ensures the safety of an Exclusive Economic Zone of 4.5 million square miles. This EEZ is the largest in the world, encompassing nine time zones, reaching from the Arctic Circle to south of the equator, and across from Puerto Rico to Guam.

Of course, who can overlook one of the Coast Guard's oldest missions - search and rescue. Coast Guardsmen are the best in the world at helping seafarers in peril, from rivers to oceans and every body of water in between. When the risk to life is great, the Coast Guard is at its finest.

Please join the more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary in saying happy 232nd birthday and "thank you" to Coast Guardsmen both past and present – members of the U.S. Armed Forces with the biggest area of responsibility.

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