

VFW Wishes the Coast Guard a Happy 231st Birthday

We salute the service and sacrifice of America's past and present Coast Guardsmen

Aug 04, 2021

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The more than 1.5 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Auxiliary congratulate the U.S. Coast Guard, America's oldest continuous maritime service, on its 231 years of service and bravery defending our great nation.

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.

The role of today's Coast Guard has grown far beyond enforcing federal tariffs and preventing smuggling, and while the smallest among the Armed Forces, it has the largest area of responsibility. 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.

Today's Coast Guard is comprised of nearly 41,000 active-duty personnel, 7,000 reservists, 8,577 civilian employees, and 31,000 Coast Guard Auxiliary members. The Coast guard is the smallest of the Armed Forces and the only military branch under the Department of Homeland Security.

Together, the VFW and its Auxiliary wish all our past and present Coast Guardsmen a very

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happy 231st birthday, and we thank you for your continued dedication to protecting our nation and its borders.