

DEFENDING THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM:
A LOOK AT THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S ONLINE RECRUITING STRATEGIES

by

SUZANNE RENEE GALLOWAY KERVER, LT, USCG

(Under the Direction of Maria Carolina Acosta-Alzuru)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to answer the question: *What* key messages does the Coast Guard disseminate to the public through online recruiting tools and what is the relationship of this online recruiting material to the new recruit's perception of the Coast Guard? Information was gathered from the Coast Guard's main recruiting Web site (www.gocoastguard.com) and analyzed through textual analysis. The results of this project revealed that consistent themes such as bravery, patriotism, honor, respect, and devotion to duty were prevalent. While the public perceives the Coast Guard in a 'positive' light and considers it a viable employer, a gap exists between the Web site's messages and the realities of the organization's image, identity and operations. Striving to increase diversity and attract members through online recruiting, the Coast Guard should alter its online messages to reflect an accurate picture of the organization at-large.

INDEX WORDS: Armed Forces, Careers, Culture, Employment Web Site, Homeland Security, Identity, Image, Impression Management, Maritime Domain, Media Representation, Military Training, Officer Personnel, Online, Perception, Recruiting, Recruiting Web Site, Retention (General), United States Coast Guard

DEFENDING THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM:
A LOOK AT THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S ONLINE RECRUITING STRATEGIES

by

SUZANNE RENEE GALLOWAY KERVER, LT, USCG

B.A., University of Denver, 1996

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2008

© 2008

Suzanne Renee Galloway Kerver

All Rights Reserved

DEFENDING THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM:
A LOOK AT THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S ONLINE RECRUITING STRATEGIES

by

SUZANNE RENEE GALLOWAY KERVER, LT, USCG

Major Professor: Maria Carolina
Acosta-Alzuru

Committee: Janice Hume
Karen Russell

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2008

DEDICATION

Dad - I dedicate this work to you because, from a very early age, you taught me that perseverance, diligence, hard work, and education are all necessary factors in the completion of my Journey. This part of the path has been quite bumpy – but worth every twist, turn, and uncertain step. I thank you so very much for your wisdom and guidance. I know I found your sage words advice and strong feelings of encouragement coursing through my soul many times throughout this process. Your fatherly wisdom now finds a quiet place of repose in the depths of my heart. Thanks for always pushing me to do what seems like the impossible, and reminding me to do it with confidence and grace.

Service is an important component of one's Life Purpose. So, to all those men and women who have served, are currently serving, and are contemplating serving in our nation's Armed Forces, I also dedicate this work to you and offer my sincerest pledge of gratitude. It has not gone unnoticed that your collective efforts, sacrifice, honor and willingness to fight for peace and justice allows us, as a country and as a united human race, to open our hearts and our collective consciousness to creating a truly compassionate world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Often we don't realize we are destined to achieve insurmountable feats until God presents them and wills us to fly. Thank You God for the wings and the ability to soar.

Dr. A – I am grateful to you for your direction and wisdom. An astute teacher and an inspiring mentor, I could not have contemplated the finish line without your guidance and support throughout the process. Thank you so very much for your time, patience, energy and dedication in seeing me through to the completion of one of my lifelong goals.

Drs. Hume and Russell – My deepest appreciation for taking the time to sit on my committee, consider this study, and provide valuable feedback and insights. Without your tutelage throughout other courses, this document would never have come to fruition.

Sarah – You kept me on-track and engaged throughout this process, even though you had SO much going on in your life. Your beautiful light continues to shine. There are no words to express my deep love for you and my gratitude for our friendship and your support and encouragement. Thanks for helping me reconnect with Purpose and Truth.

Lucy – Your endless source of love, gratitude and patience are qualities we all should strive to find abundance of in our lives. Thank you for your ceaseless devotion and love.

Amy – One of my biggest cheerleaders. Thanks for listening, for giving me confidence, for daring me to have faith enough to believe in the Higher Purpose of all things.

Steve – Your accompaniment along this arduous part of my Journey has taught me so much. You have reminded me that adventures, filled with love, respect, and kindness are all part of the Divine plan – even if we are unsure of exactly where that will take us.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study.....	1
The Coast Guard Organization.....	2
Significance of the Study	7
Organization of the Study.....	10
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Recruiting for Military Forces.....	11
The Coast Guard.....	19
Internet Recruitment Research	25
Recruitment Web Sites	30
Research Questions	39
3 THEORY AND METHOD.....	40
Theoretical Framework	40
Methodology	60

4	DATA ANALYSIS.....	71
	Overview	71
	Initial Analysis	72
	Coast Guard Recruiting Home Page	76
	Discovering Our Missions.....	85
	Find Your Fit	102
	Get the Answers	120
	Overarching Themes and Patterns.....	124
5	CONCLUSION.....	127
	Research Questions Addressed	128
	Links to Impression Management	145
	Links to Theories of Representation	150
	Limitations of the Study	155
	Future Research.....	156
	Recommendations	156
	REFERENCES	163
	APPENDICES	175
	A COAST GUARD RECRUITING WEB PAGES	175
	B ENLISTED JOB RATINGS.....	198

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1-1: Coast Guard Demographics.....	8
Table 1-2: Average Time-in-Service and Service Member Age	8
Table 3-1: Coast Guard Google Analytics.....	69
Table 4-1: Coast Guard Academy Demographics, 2006	113

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2-1: U.S. Coast Guard’s Shield of Freedom.....	24
Figure 2-2: U.S. Coast Guard Home Page: Job Opportunity Link at Bottom of Page	32
Figure 3-1: Two-component Model.....	45
Figure 3-2: The Circuit of Culture	58
Figure 3-3: Google Analytics Dashboard, January 1, 2008 – June 10, 2008	67
Figure 3-4: Google Analytics Dashboard, October 1, 2007 – October 1, 2008	68
Figure 4-1: Abbreviated Snippets on the Coast Guard Recruiting Home Page.....	78
Figure 4-2: Coast Guard Recruiting Home Page	79
Figure 4-3: Discovering Our Missions Home Page.....	82
Figure 4-4: Find Your Fit Home Page	83
Figure 4-5: National Defense.....	89
Figure 4-6: Maritime Security	92
Figure 4-7: Protection of Natural Resources	95
Figure 4-8: Maritime Safety.....	100
Figure 4-9: Find Your Fit Enlisted.....	106
Figure 4-10: Find Your Fit Enlisted Opportunities.....	107
Figure 4-11: Officer Career Fields.....	110
Figure 4-12: Listing of Officer Programs	114
Figure 4-13: Find Your Fit Reserve Opportunities.....	120

Figure 4-14: Get the Answers	122
Figure 4-15: Get the Answers – Find a Recruiter	123
Figure 5-1: Being a Coastie: For Parents	133
Figure 5-2: Being a Coastie: Coastie Profiles	160

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Two thousand eight has been a challenging year for many Americans. With ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as a presidential election and an unstable economy, Americans are looking for security and consistency from their local and federal governments. Recruiters for the U.S. Armed Services promise just that. Military recruitment efforts are on the rise during this time of economic and political uncertainty. The Coast Guard faces similar challenges, which have increased since its transfer from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security in 2003. As pointed out in a 2003 report, the organization faced multiple challenges with recruitment, training and retention:

The Coast Guard, like the 21 other agencies moving to DHS, will have to adjust its own culture to work effectively within the department. The Coast Guard also faces other important new human capital challenges. For example, to deal with its expanded homeland security role and meet all of its other responsibilities, the Coast Guard expects to add thousands of new positions over the next 3 years. The Coast Guard acknowledges that such a large increase could well strain the agency's ability to hire, develop, and retain talent. Coast Guard officials acknowledge that providing timely training for the 2,200 new personnel it plans to bring on by the end of fiscal year 2003 and the additional 1,976 staff it plans to add by the end of fiscal year 2004 will likely strain its training capabilities (United States General, 2003, p. 9).

In June 2008, I had an in-depth conversation with the civilian director of Coast Guard Recruiting in Washington D.C. He supplied me with data from 13,733 post-recruitment

surveys, which clearly backed up his hypothesis that the Coast Guard's Recruiting Web site (www.gocoastguard.com) is considered the organization's primary recruitment tool.

With this in mind, I chose to examine Coast Guard's use of online recruiting methods through textual analysis, using Impression Management and Media Representations as the theoretical foundations. Specifically, the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site was chosen as the primary unit of analysis for the following four reasons:

1. Coast Guard's recruiting Web site is a fairly new tool yet it has the potential to reach a vast audience. Therefore, it is beneficial for the Coast Guard to know if the messages contained in its Web site are in line with the image the Coast Guard seeks to portray to its publics.

2. As an active duty Coast Guard Officer, I have consistently dealt with newly enlisted members who are disgruntled because they feel their work-life is drastically different than the presented recruitment images. It is imperative to understand how much of this disillusionment stems from online messages. If the online messages differ drastically from the real story, the Coast Guard needs to be aware of this so that the organization can adjust its strategies to appropriately and accurately recruit qualified candidates.

3. Attrition rates for Coast Guard members choosing to "get out" or do "five and fly" after the completion of their initial enlistment periods are rising. It behooves the Coast Guard to understand *why* this phenomenon is occurring and see if there is any correlation between attrition rates and the Web site's representation of key messages.

4. Finally, on a personal note, I underwent a relatively arduous recruiting process when I chose to enlist as a Seaman six years ago. Accurate information was *not* easily available online and I, therefore, turned to personal research and interviews to make my enlistment decision. While everything ended up working out, the process was long, strenuous, and in many respects contained elements that were completely unnecessary. Because the recruiting Web site is a fairly new phenomenon, it is important to examine how online resources have impacted the recruiting process.

The Coast Guard Organization

The Coast Guard has long been considered the "Guardians of the Sea," and, over the last 218 years, has morphed into *the* lead federal maritime organization. What

originated as the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service (tasked with enforcing import tariffs and minimizing piracy and illegal trade) merged into the U.S. Life Saving Service in 1915 and then into the modern-day Coast Guard in 1939 (United States Coast Guard, 2008c).

The Coast Guard's primary missions have traditionally centered around law enforcement, commerce, and safety of life at sea; but, it was the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center disaster that pushed the Coast Guard to become internationally recognized as a "military, maritime, multi-mission service, committed to protecting America" ("U.S. Coast Guard: History and Mission"). Touted as a lead Federal agency called on during times of national crises and emergency situations, the Coast Guard has upheld this standard, showing its capabilities during the immediate and unprecedented response to 2005's Hurricane Katrina. Coupled with the timely 2005 release of the search and rescue-based movie, *The Guardian*, favorable press from both areas resulted in the Coast Guard becoming fodder for dinnertime conversation. However, the press coverage and the cinematography only told part of the organization's story, leaving much more for a potential recruit to discover.

Guiding Principles

The Coast Guard has a long-standing history of being the nation's predominant maritime force, the 911 emergency response for America's waterways, and this organization continues to grow and thrive in part because of its underlying foundations of strong core values and principles.

Three Core Values

Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty: these are the United States Coast Guard's core values which the organization seeks to instill in all of its members. These three core

values are defined on the recruiting Web site's "Being a Coastie: For Parents / Personal Growth" page as follows:

Honor: We instill in all Coasties a high standard of integrity. Coasties are taught to never lie, cheat or steal. We want our men and women to always make the right moral choices.

Respect: We teach Coasties to respect every person he or she meets. To treat everyone equally, no matter who they are or what they do.

Devotion to Duty: No matter where a Coastie serves or what duties he or she are assigned, each is held accountable to do his or her job to the best of that Coastie's abilities. No excuses. No alibis. The public needs us, and we understand that responsibility.

The Coast Guard's main Web site explicates the necessity of instilling these three values in every member and states:

These core values are more than just Coast Guard rules of behavior. They are deeply rooted in the heritage that has made our organization great. They demonstrate who we are and guide our performance, conduct, and decisions every minute of every day. Because we each represent the Coast Guard to the public, we must all embrace these values in our professional undertakings as well as in our personal lives (United States Coast Guard, 2008b, original emphasis).

The "Creed of the United States Coast Guardsman," written by Vice Admiral Harry G. Hamlet, puts the Coast Guard's core beliefs and principals into a memorable format. The beliefs in this Creed translate into the expectations which the Coast Guard organization places on every member, regardless of rate, rank or time in service. It reads:

I am proud to be a United States Coast Guardsman.
I revere that long line of expert seamen who by their devotion to duty and sacrifice of self have made it possible for me to be a member of a service honored and respected, in peace and in war, throughout the world.
I never, by work or deed, will bring reproach upon the fair name of my service, nor permit others to do so unchallenged.
I will cheerfully and willingly obey all lawful orders.
I will always be on time to relieve, and shall endeavor to do more, rather than less, than my share.
I will always be at my station, alert and attending to my duties.

I shall, so far as I am able, bring to my seniors solutions, not problems.
I shall live joyously, but always with due regard for the rights and
privileges of others.
I shall endeavor to be a model citizen in the community in which I live.
I shall sell life dearly to an enemy of my country, but give it freely to
rescue those in peril.
With God's help, I shall endeavor to be one of His noblest Works...
A UNITED STATES COAST GUARDSMAN ("Creed of the United
States Coast Guardsman").

The inception of these core values begins at one of two Basic Recruit Training centers. Newly enlisted recruits must complete a rigorous eight week training program in Cape May, New Jersey. Officer candidates train in New London, Connecticut, and either complete a 17-week training program known as Officer Candidate School or attend a four-year college program at the Coast Guard Academy. At the culmination of these training programs, most Coast Guardsmen and women enter the fleet with a comprehensive understanding of Coast Guard's core values and are prepared to complete their assigned missions.

Localities

With these strong values and principles guiding its missions, the Coast Guard successfully operates both domestically and abroad. "We are a military service whose usual theater of operation is the United States, but we'll go anywhere we are needed to defend our nation's freedoms at sea and on land. We operate during times of peace and times of war" ("Discovering Our Missions"). While most members are stationed within the continental United States, Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, there are also Coast Guard personnel actively serving in Asia, Cuba, Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In fact, as part of an aggressive international training program, the Coast Guard is involved in assisting with training international Coast Guards the world

over (“U.S. Coast Guard: History and Mission”) and is an integral part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Liberty Shield / Noble Eagle.¹

Missions

The United States Coast Guard is allotted about \$9 million annually, and, working within this budget, is responsible for five primary mission areas: (a) National Defense; (b) Protection of Natural Resources; (c) Maritime Safety; (d) Maritime Security; and (e) Maritime Mobility (“Coast Guard Snapshot”). The Coast Guard’s daily docket is filled with activities related to Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE), servicing Aids to Navigation (ATON), Icebreaking, Military Readiness, and Environmental Protection and Port Security. Even with minimal funding, manpower and resources, on an average day the Coast Guard:

- Conducts 74 Search and Rescue Cases
- Saves 14 lives and assist 98 people in distress
- Performs 18 examinations on commercial fishing vessels
- Boards 17 vessels to enforce domestic fisheries and marine protected species regulations
- Boards 193 vessels for safety, security and law enforcement reasons
- Seizes and / or removes over 1,000 pounds of illegal drugs (\$12.9 million value)
- Interdicts 17 illegal migrants at sea
- Performs 31 Port State Control safety and environmental exams on foreign vessels
- Responds to 12 oil pollution or hazardous chemical spills
- Services 135 aids-to-navigation and correct 23 aids-to-navigation discrepancies
- Guides 2,557 ships in and out of port (“Coast Guard Snapshot”).

Completing these missions while simultaneously managing the public’s impression of the organization is a never-ending job.

¹ “Operation Iraqi Freedom consists of military operations in Iraq and neighboring states; Operation Enduring Freedom consists of military operations in and around Afghanistan and other overseas counterterrorism activities. Operation Noble Eagle refers to domestic homeland security missions, such as combat air patrols over major metropolitan areas, undertaken by the Department of Defense in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001” (Congressional Budget Office, 2006, p. xi).

Significance of the Study

It seems that bad impressions are easier to make and much harder to expel than positive ones. Therefore, the Coast Guard, as with any organization, must be cognizant of its publicized image and the resulting impressions stakeholders and publics form from created and disseminated messages. With the Coast Guard's primary stakeholders encompassing politicians, community members, professional mariners and environmentalists, the organization must be diligent in considering the manner in which messages are relayed, as well as the representations that these written and visual messages create. The manner in which messages are managed has an effect on how publics feel about any organization. With recruiting, messages can affect the number and quality of potential employees (or Coast Guard recruits). This is why impression management plays a critical role in the way the Coast Guard manages its image.

Recruitment Strategies: Increasing Diversity

As an all-volunteer (non-draft induced) force, the Coast Guard faces human capital challenges for recruiting diverse, qualified, and dedicated members. Recruitment messages are an important consideration in this area as well. As the smallest of the five Armed Forces, the Coast Guard strives to attract qualified men and women to supplement its comparatively small workforce. However, as illustrated in Table 1-1, diversity is of paramount consideration because minority groups comprise only 20% of the Coast Guard's total population. In addition to the need for more ethnic diversity, it should be noted that there is a tremendous gender gap within the Coast Guard. As evidenced in Table 1-2, only 12% of the 40,000 members are women.

Table 1-1: Coast Guard Demographics

Workforce		Race / Ethnicity		Commissioning Sources (%)	
Civilian	7,396	American Indian	2.6%	Academy	45%
Officers	8,051	Asian	0.6%	CWO to LT	5%
Enlisted	32,647	Black	6.1%	OCS Prior Enlisted	13%
Reserve	10,787	Hispanic / Latino	10.2%	Direct Commission	14%
		Pacific Islander	0.5%	OCS Reserve	20%
		Caucasian	78.4%	EAD (Extended Active Duty)	3%

("Coast Guard Snapshot")

The Coast Guard continues to expand its recruiting efforts as a way to broaden the workforce and generate more diversity within the ranks. Using Web sites, brochures, television commercials, radio ads, school visits and word-of-mouth communication, the Coast Guard avidly recruits about 4,000 new members annually ("Coast Guard Snapshot"). According to a 2008 Coast Guard fact sheet, 284 Officers, 3,850 enlisted members and 992 reservists were recruited in 2007 to serve in the areas of law enforcement, aviation, information technologies, intelligence, administration and environmental preservation ("Coast Guard Snapshot"). Currently, the United States Coast Guard has about 40,150 men and women on active duty, making the organization about as large as the New York Police Department ("Coast Guard Snapshot").

Table 1-2: Average Time-in-Service and Service Member Age

Active Duty		Average Age (Yrs.)		Average Time in Service (Yrs.)	
Men	87.8%	Officer	37	Officer	14.6
Women	12.2%	Enlisted	29	Enlisted	7.8

("Coast Guard Snapshot")

With such homogeny in the ranks, the Coast Guard must look for alternative ways to recruit a diverse workforce while maintaining the high standards it expects from all of its members. These recruiting initiatives must consider both the enlisted and the officer corps. Table 1-1 illustrates that the Coast Guard's main body consists of enlisted personnel (32,647 men and women), whereas officers only account for 8,051 people. So, the majority of the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site is devoted to attracting enlisted members. However, there is still a need for leadership positions and, as a result, the site contains a small group of initiatives intended to pull in potential officer candidates.

Recruitment Strategies: Officer Programs

Of the seven programs geared specifically towards the officer corps, four are marketed and used as a way to attract a more diverse pool of officer candidates. This small group of initiatives includes Coast Guard's College Student Pre-Commissioning Program (CSPI), the Maritime Academy Graduate program (MARGRAD), Officer Candidate School (OCS), and the Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative ("Find Your Fit: Officer Opportunities and Programs"). These four niche programs are worthy of examination because, as illustrated in Table 1-1, diversity amongst the ranks is waning and the officer corps is no exception. With such a small contingency of officers graduating from these programs (about 20%), it is important to examine the key online messages relayed via these specific recruiting Web pages and analyze what these messages say to potential Officer Recruits.

With a more technologically-savvy workforce, it is imperative that the Coast Guard keep abreast of modern technology – especially in the area of recruiting. People often utilize the Internet as a research tool and a fact-verifying source; therefore, it is

important that the Coast Guard ensure its messages and representations are accurate, complete, and comprehensive.

This thesis is significant in that it examines Coast Guard's online recruiting efforts as a way to determine (1) if the messages on the Web site are consistent with the Coast Guard's publicly portrayed image and (2) if they stray from the reality of Coast Guard service. If the Coast Guard intends to heighten recruiting numbers and increase diversity in its ranks, it is imperative that the organization's leadership understand the images relayed via its most commonly used recruitment tool.

Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized into four major components, commencing with the literature review. The literature review looks at previous studies and research conducted regarding military recruitment efforts, dedicated employment Web sites, and the construction of image and reputation. The study then takes a thorough look at the theoretical framework which is the foundation of this thesis - specifically focusing on Impression Management and Theories of Representation. The data analysis of the recruiting Web site follows, and I conclude by addressing the research questions introduced in Chapter Two and discussing implications for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruiting for Military Forces

In any organization, recruitment is a necessary function to attract qualified human capital to its workforce. What once rested in brochures, newspaper advertisements and word-of-mouth recommendations has found root in Internet-based Web sites. Now more than ever, corporations and military factions are incorporating technology to draw the best and the brightest talent to their personnel pool.

Recruiting Issues

For over 30 years, the United States has relied on an all volunteer force to defend the nation at home and abroad. Before that, the nation relied on the draft to ensure that it had enough soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen in wartime...[Current] operations have greatly increased overseas deployments. Moreover, they are the first long-term major overseas combat missions since the advent of the all volunteer force in 1973 (United States Government, 2007b, p. 9).

Because the military is based on an all volunteer basis, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must “recruit and retain hundreds of thousands of servicemembers each year to carry out its missions” (United States Government, 2005, introductory page). In addition, Congressional legislation mandates that “each military component...meet its authorized personnel requirements for each occupational specialty” (United States Government, 2005, introductory page). Finding hundreds of thousands of qualified personnel comes with a price. Congress

bankrolls the process and provides funds specifically aimed at subsidizing recruiting and retention efforts.

Military recruiting is big business. For example, annually the Army “spends approximately \$17,000 to recruit and process one applicant, and as much as \$57,500 to recruit and train that applicant through basic training” (United States Government, 2006, p. 26). With individual expenditures so high, it is imperative that the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security recruit quality, qualified candidates who will make it through Basic Training and then devote several viable years to the service of choice. “DOD can no longer afford to take a ‘business as usual’ approach to managing its force” (United States Government, 2005, p. 36). Bearing this in mind, both Departments have incorporated incentives to help plus up numbers and compete with Corporate America for qualified talent. As a way to compete, the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security offer substantial enlistment bonuses:

Enlistment bonuses...provide incentives for new recruits to join the military. The service branches may offer greater incentives when they require larger number of recruits to build a growing force or when they encounter an unusual degree of competition with the private sector (Congressional Budget Office, 2006, p. 7).

But, bonuses and service contracts are not given to just anyone. Standards are in place as a quality assurance measure. According to the Congressional Budget Office (2006) report, the Department of Defense expects that at least 90% of recruits (without prior service) hold a high school diploma and at least 60% score above the 50th percentile on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). Attracting an educated workforce is not an easy task. The Department of Defense must compete with the private sector for

talent because most young, educated people are inclined to pursue higher education or seek better paying jobs (Congressional Budget Office, 2006).

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks spurred the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security to increase their numbers and provide personnel for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Noble Eagle. However, since both Departments have been highly involved in these Operations, several components have been challenged to meet their recruitment goals and obtain enough human capital to fulfill the predetermined numbers. Furthermore, military recruiters have found that a new challenge involves garnering the confidence of influencers – including parents, teachers, pastors and employers.

Public Perception

The public's perception about military enlistment and military service has changed with the inception of these overseas initiatives, creating a more challenging environment for military recruiters. "Youth and their parents believe that deployment to a hostile environment is very likely for servicemembers... [and] adults who influence a prospective applicant's decision about whether to join the military are increasingly fearful of the possibility of death or serious injury to the applicant" (United States Government, 2006, p. 22). This notion is not far-fetched. According to a 2006 Congressional Budget Office report, "[A]s of July 31, 2006, about 180,000 active-duty service members and another 60,000 national guard and reserve members were deployed in support of those operations" (p. xi). However, not all who are recruited to fill these positions have the background, time in service, or aptitude to adequately complete their tasks. These elements take time to develop. But, with heightened pressure by

Congressional and political factions, time is a precious commodity and seems to be in short supply.

Overall Competency

Encouraging people to sign up for military service is only one aspect of military recruitment. A second is ensuring those who do sign on the dotted line are qualified and competent enough to excel in their assigned positions. “Recruitment of high-quality personnel is a tough proposition, made even more challenging in the current environment when the nation is engaged in combat operations” (United States Government, 2006, p. 1). Exacerbating the problem is the increasing inability of potential members, ranging in age from 16 to 21, to meet medical, physical and academic standards:

DOD officials stated that the inability to meet medical and physical requirements accounts for much of the reason youth are ineligible for military service. Additionally, many youth are ineligible because they cannot meet service standards for education, as indicated by DOD’s preference for recruits with a high school diploma; mental aptitude, as indicated by receipt of an acceptable score on the armed forces vocational aptitude test; and moral character, as indicated by few or no criminal convictions or antisocial behavior (United States Government, 2006, p. 23).

With the need for additional personnel post-September 11, 2001, the all-volunteer military force has become strained. And, because the five military services are responsible for recruiting and training all of their leaders, finding people with the skills and leadership needed to retain a healthy officer corps is tough.

All military organizations are founded on a chain-of-command structure, which demands the need for competent leaders. Recognizing the need for more leadership amongst the ranks, “Congress increased the authorized end strength of the Army by 30,000 since 2004 and the Marine Corps by more than 7,000 since

2002” (United States Government, 2007b, p. 3). While the increased numbers are a step in the right direction, one must remember that an officer can be commissioned after a relatively short period of time (17 weeks in the Coast Guard’s Officer Candidate School), but “it takes years to grow experienced leaders,” which therefore “presents a different officer career management challenge - officer retention” (United States Government, 2007b, p. 3).

Officer Retention

Much like their enlisted counterparts, officers are bound to specific service obligations including:

- A minimum of four years on active duty and an additional four years on active duty or in the reserves for ROTC scholarship recipients
- A minimum of five years on active duty and up to an additional three years on active duty or in the reserves for graduates of the service academies
- A minimum of six years, often extending to eight years, for pilots, navigators and flight officers (United States Government, 2007b).

Unlike the enlisted side however, recruiters are not bound by monthly or yearly goals for officer recruits. Instead, they “adjust the enrollment in OCS/OTS throughout the year to meet higher or lower than expected demands for newly commissioned officers by the various occupational specialty groups of importance to the service” (United States Government, 2007b, p. 11).

When adjusting enrollment numbers, recruiters must consider diversity numbers. Across the board, all four DOD services experienced problems trying to meet the goal of maintaining a racially and ethnically diverse officer corps. And, as evidenced in Chapter One, the Coast Guard experienced these same issues. In addition to minority groups, attracting and *retaining* women was also a problem. According to a 2007 report to the Committee on Armed Services:

While the services did well retaining African Americans and Hispanic officers, they did not do as well retaining women. The services want to retain a diverse, experienced officer corps to reflect applicable groups in the nation's population. For the fiscal years...African American and Hispanic officers usually had higher continuation rates than white and non-Hispanic officers, respectively; but female officers more often had lower continuation rates than male officers (United States Government, p. 35).

The Human Side of Recruiting

For minority groups, women, and all other recruits, military recruiters have traditionally been the face of the Armed Forces – the first point of contact between a potential service member and the service of choice. The recruiter's job has been to "sell" the service while simultaneously matching a candidate's skills and experience to a viable rate within the service. However, recruiters have traditionally been bound by monthly quotas, non-traditional work hours, and the numbers game. Recent reports exposed an increase in recruiter wrongdoings (or recruiter irregularities) over the past several years. Recruiter irregularities span the gamut from "administrative paperwork errors, to actions such as failing to disclose disqualifying eligibility criteria or instructing applicants not to reveal medical conditions or prior civil litigation, to criminal violations committed by a recruiter" (United States Government, 2006, p. 3). Data shows that "between fiscal years 2004 and 2005, allegations and service-identified incidents of recruiter wrongdoing increased, collectively, from 4,400 cases to 6,600 cases; substantiated cases increased from just over 400 to almost 630 cases; and criminal violations more than doubled from just over 30 to almost 70 cases" (United States Government, 2006, p. i).

Recruits who are brought into the Armed Services under these pretenses have the potential to waste thousands of dollars in taxpayer money through non-completion of basic training or early attrition. As a result, DOD and DHS strive to provide adequate

training and leadership for frontline recruiters. “In general, training for frontline recruiters is similar in all services and has focused on ethics and salesmanship, with a growing emphasis placed on leadership and mentoring skills to attract today’s applicant” (United States Government, 2006, pp. 9-10). But, even with adequate training, recruiters remain under a tremendous amount of pressure to meet established numbers while working demanding, often odd hours. And, with performance evaluations often linked to the number of personnel recruited, some recruiters resort to unethical or overly aggressive tactics, which have the ability to adversely affect recruiting strategies for all services and erode public confidence (United States Government, 2006).

In an effort to restore waning confidence, recruiters have begun to consider a recruit’s influencers, or “those individuals who play a pivotal role in a potential recruit’s decision to join the military, including parents, teachers, coaches, other school officials, and extended family members” (United States Government, 2005, p. 30). Furthermore, the military services have begun to embrace emerging technology and are beginning to use it as a way to introduce the missions, expectations and opportunities of America’s Armed Services to potential recruits.

The Technical Side of Recruiting

With the emergence of Web-based technology, many Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security factions are relying on Internet recruiting to alleviate some of the recruiter irregularities while broadening each service’s reach and scope. However, it should be noted that Web sites can not entirely take the place of face-to-face contact with a recruiter. Instead, they are used as a supplemental tool, often providing initial or ancillary information to interested candidates. And, with enhanced video,

attractive graphics, text and hypertext links, incorporation of multimedia and social-networking tools into recruiting Web pages can make these sites an extremely enticing way to complement a recruiting program.

In November 2005, the United States Government Accountability Office conducted an investigation regarding recruitment and retention challenges for enlisted personnel. They found that almost all of the four services which fall under the DOD umbrella (including the Army; the Navy; the Marine Corps; and the Air Force) focused their efforts on enhancing their recruiting Web sites by using “real life” stories. For example, the Army “focused efforts on using its recruiting Web site as a vehicle to provide video testimonials of soldiers explaining, in their own words, what it means to be a soldier and why others should enlist” (United States Government, p. 30).

The Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site follows suit and uses “real life Coasties” to market the Coast Guard as a cutting-edge organization seeking cutting-edge employees. In two separate Web pages in the “Being a Coastie” section, browsers can access “Real-Life Stories” or look at “Coastie Profiles,” both of which are geared towards marketing the Coast Guard as an authentic service with a diverse group of people. “Some of us come from New England. Others from the Midwest,” the page states. “Some of us have been around boats our entire lives; others had never been on a boat until they joined the Coast Guard...We think what you'll discover is that no two of us are the same” (“Coastie Profiles”).

However, because the Coast Guard operates with limited funding, it allots a minimal amount of its operating budget to the design, upkeep, and maintenance of its online sources. Even with this limitation, the Coast Guard has a responsibility to uphold

a positive public image and, in doing so, broaden its identity in an effort to reach expanding global markets.

The Coast Guard

In the Public's Eye

The Coast Guard:

[I]s one of the oldest organizations of the federal government and, until the Navy Department was established in 1798, we served as the nation's only armed force afloat. We continued to protect the nation throughout our long history and have served proudly in every one of the nation's conflicts. Our national defense responsibilities remain one of our most important functions even today. In times of peace we operate as part of the Department of Homeland Security, serving as the nation's front-line agency for enforcing our laws at sea, protecting the marine environment and our vast coastline and ports, and saving life. In times of war, or at the direction of the President, we serve under the Navy Department ("U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office").

In 2003, the Coast Guard's identity underwent a major change. Traditionally, Coast Guardsmen and women have been referred to as the "Guardians of the Sea," with mission focus placed on maritime search and rescue (SAR) and recreational boater safety. However, shortly after President George Bush's inception of the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (2002), the Coast Guard shifted its goals and sought an identity which had not been at the forefront of its publicly held image. While the Coast Guard continues to actively execute SAR cases, and is highly engaged in recreational boater safety, its primary missions now encompass those pertaining to national defense and maritime safety and security. These modifications have the potential to alter public opinion and publicly held images and impressions. Furthermore, the organization also transitioned from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security and

changed its adage from the “Guardians of the Sea” to the “Defenders of the Homeland” (“Coast Guard Snapshot”).²

Image Defined

Contrary to popular belief, image and identity are not synonymous concepts, just as organization and corporation are not one-in-the-same. In considering this study, it was easy to identify with research that involved vertical corporate management structures because the Coast Guard is vertically structured, with a top-down managerial alignment. However, organizations which operate with horizontal structures (such as many non-profits) might find that the image and identity research presented here is not applicable to their structure and operations. So, while a distinction can be made between a corporation and an organization, the true distinction for applicability lies in the managerial structure of the company.

In the business realm, corporate identity and corporate image vary tremendously. Meech (2006) states that image is the term “most widely used by practitioners to signify the impression these groups have of an organization” and is used to “signify the sum impression gained of an organization by an individual” (p. 390). Bromley (1993) defines image (as used in terms of public image or brand image) as “the pattern of beliefs and feelings associated with the literal image that give it its meaning and psychological significance” (p. 158). While corporate image is affected by the way an organization chooses to communicate with its respective publics via graphics, visual materials and

² DHS was established as a result of the Homeland Security Act in 2002 and became functional in 2003 with the consolidation of 22 separate governmental agencies. These 22 agencies were “formerly subordinate to eight departments: Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Justice, Transportation, and the Treasury, and two independent offices (FEMA and the General Services Administration)” (United States Government, 2007a, p. 8). With the restructuring came “numerous human capital challenges related to recruiting, retaining, and managing its workforce of nearly 171,000 employees” (United States Government, 2007a, p. i). Challenges involved (a) aligning the present workforce and (b) developing long term strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining additional personnel to achieve these new missions and goals (United States Government, 2007b).

verbal messages, image is also formed through face-to-face encounters with employees and customers, as well as media coverage, interpersonal communication, hearsay and gossip (Meech, 2006). Because image is composed from the multiplicity of these elements, a corporation may be conceptualized differently from one person to another, depending upon how an individual interprets the messages to find meaning.

Based on memory research, Hjelmquist (1990) posits that the interpretation of meaning is a contextual phenomenon. “Meaning is to be regarded as a relational concept in which linguistic expression and context...are the two anchoring points” (p. 314). Therefore, it is difficult to determine how one might interpret language and how meaning will be created based upon a specific word or grouping of words, in any given situation. Hjelmquist (1990) also states that reality is conceptualized and imagined and no single entity or collective group has access to everyone’s mental representations. However, symbols such as text, words and a metalanguage can be used to help interpret meaning, which are ever-evolving concepts. But, these representations are fluid and can change with time and circumstances. “[I]ndividually specific circumstances of message reception interact with the changing behavior and communication activities of an organization to produce a plurality of corporate images” (Meech, 2006, p. 391).

Using Image to Recruit

A positive public image is especially crucial in the recruitment field because the Armed Services are not only competing with one another, they are competing with the civilian sector as well. Because most enlisted members enter the Coast Guard between the ages of 18 and 21, the organization should market its recruiting materials to this portion of the nation’s population. Referring back to Tables 1-1 and 1-2 in Chapter One,

the Coast Guard only has 40,000 members and the average mean age for enlisted personnel is 29 years, with an average of 7.8 years in the service. These statistics make it imperative for the organization to recruit members who have the potential to exude strong leadership skills because, within a few years, most young enlisted members advance into managerial roles which include vast amounts of responsibility.

Diversity is a key part of the recruiting message so representations included on employment Web sites need to reflect this. Like most companies, the Armed Services feel that building and maintaining a diverse workforce is both a strategic and ethical imperative. As Cober, Brown, Keeping and Levy (2004) reflect, “recruitment activities cannot simply be evaluated in terms of their ability to attract the appropriate number of applicants, but instead, must also be considered in light of their ability to generate a diverse applicant pool, one that accurately reflects the broader society from which the applicants are drawn” (p. 640). Recruiting messages should be attractive to multiple cultures while effectively presenting an image that exudes a keen sense of corporate identity and an authentic representation of working within the organization’s structure.

Identity Defined

Corporate identity differs from corporate image in that it is often more visually-based. Bernstein (1984) states that corporate identity “...is the sum of the visual cues by which the public recognizes the company and differentiates it from others” (p. 156) and Bromley (1993) expands on this by adding, “[Identity] is a set of attributes that distinguish an organization from others with which it might be compared” (p. 160). Differentiation comes from the identification of logos, as well as other aspects of a corporation including its standard layouts, typography, color schemes and interior design

(Meech, 2006, p. 391). All of these items can be summarized as a company's visual identity. Most of the focus of a corporation's identity can be placed on publications such as newsletters, annual reports, and Web sites. In this respect, a corporation's identity embraces both internal and external textual and visual communications and, as with its image, varies with time and circumstances.

Meech (2006) posits that corporate identity is an all-encompassing aggregate of everything a corporation says and does, both deliberately and unintentionally. This accounts for the discrepancies between how a company thinks it is being perceived (or would like to be perceived) by various publics and how it actually is perceived. Perception is important in identifying how a corporation must react to its internal and external publics. "A recognizable corporate identity is considered a potential asset in an increasingly competitive environment, since it functions simultaneously to distinguish the organization in question from others and to provide its own members with a collective sense" (Meech, 2006, p. 396). Therefore, in studying organizational effectiveness, zeroing in on a corporation's identity is an integral part of understanding its overall position in a competitive market.

A company's image is formed *externally* as a result of the feelings and beliefs the public harbors towards an organization, which results in a company's reputation. Bromley (1993) explicates the idea of reputation and posits that it is the attitudes and expectations people will form about a person or organization based on provided information. "Organizations that rely heavily on their reputation to maintain a strong market position are likely to react strongly to threats to their public image" (p. 157). Furthermore, Bromley feels that reputations vary in duration, from brief to long-lasting,

and vary in extent from little-known to widespread. “Persons and organizations risk failing badly if they do not live up to their reputation, because their public react adversely if their expectations are frustrated” (p. 24).

Identity, on the other hand, is manufactured *internally*, by the company, through its logos, color schemes, and designs. This study examines Coast Guard’s identity in the way the organization chooses to communicate with its publics via graphics, visual materials and verbal messages, via its recruiting Web site. It also considers the publically-created image and reputation resulting from the recruiting Web site’s key messages and representations.

Visibility in the Coast Guard

The Coast Guard uses symbology, visual elements, and an orange and blue color scheme to make itself visible to multiple publics and diverse cultures. The highly recognizable “Shield of Freedom,” incorporated in 2003 and illustrated in Figure 2-1, encompasses Coast Guard’s logo and adopted color scheme. The shield and color scheme decorate every written correspondence, from internal memos to external documents, as well as tangible resources such as the organization’s uniforms and ships.



Figure 2-1: U.S. Coast Guard’s Shield of Freedom

While this study primarily focuses on the Coast Guard’s use of textual elements on its recruiting Web pages, it is interesting to note that Keen and Warner (1989), like Meech (2006), feel that visual identity, as part of a corporation’s identity, is signified by “not just

its logo, but the various other aspects of its physical presentation, such as its standard layouts, typography, colour schemes and interior design” (p. 13). It is through these visuals that organizations, including the Coast Guard, identify themselves and uphold a long-standing image and reputation within the public sphere.

Internet Recruitment Research

As the use of the Internet has grown dramatically over the past 15 years, there have been several research studies conducted in the area of online development of organizational-public relationships (Broom, Casey, & Richey, 2000; Callison, 2003; Esrock & Leichty, 1999; Hallahan, 2003, 2004, 2008; Kent, 1998; Kent, Taylor & White, 2003; Marken, 1995, 1998; Sisodia & Wolfe, 2000; Taylor & Kent, 2004; White & Raman, 1999). Although there has been a marked increase in companies (including the U.S. military) using Internet Web sites to recruit potential employees, Internet recruitment studies and literature has not followed this trend (Cober et al., 2004). In fact, much of the available literature and research on recruiting strategies discuss job advertisements and brochures – not online media. According to Cober et al. (2004), the literature that is available is commonly criticized because it lacks sufficient theory. For example, a LexisNexis data bank search, using the key words “recruiting” and “web site” resulted in over 1000 newspaper, magazine, journal and industry trade press articles. While it was not feasible to read all 1000, a quick glance at the titles and sources showed that the content of these articles was geared towards a managerial public and lacked theoretical groundings. Most involved helpful hints for attracting potential employees or best practices for Web site design. Using the same data base, a search with the key words “web site,” “military,” and “recruiting” yielded 224 articles and “web site,” “Coast

Guard,” and “recruiting” yielded ten. However, of the 10 articles found in the last search, only four contained the phrase “Coast Guard” and, in those four, the emphasis was on the Coast Guard Auxiliary program.³ None of the ten articles discussed online media, the Coast Guard as an organization, or Internet recruiting.

The Missing Link

Despite conducting multiple searches in multiple data banks, I found very little empirical data or research based on corporate recruitment Web sites and/or their effect on organizational attraction. Instead, most of the literature reflected studies regarding a Web site’s navigational usability, style and content (Dineen, Ash & Noe, 2002; Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Marschall, 2002). In addition, several studies considered how usability, style, and content affect organizational attraction (Cober, Brown, Levy, Keeping & Cober, 2003; Cober et al., 2004; Williamson, Lepak & King, 2003). Young and Foote (2006) state that “Few scholars have analyzed career - or job-related content on the Web, and those who have done so focused primarily on want ads posted on newspaper sites...or online job banks” (p. 46). Although there have been several studies which have explored the effectiveness of online career sites (Cober et al., 2003; Cober et al., 2004; Williamson et al., 2003), little attention has been placed on how these sites attract potential candidates. More research is needed from a rhetorical perspective which advances the discussion beyond usability, utility, and efficacy (Young et al., 2006).

Even without the research or theoretical foundation to build on, online recruiting is a burgeoning phenomenon. Cappelli (2001) points out, 90% of large U.S. companies use the World Wide Web for recruitment purposes and 12% of these companies use

³ The Auxiliary program is an all volunteer, supplementary force that assists the Coast Guard with non-law enforcement missions such as vessel safety checks and safe boating education programs.

online screening tools. And, a 2001 survey reported that the majority of organizations found that their career page was the second most visited section of their Web sites, after the general home page (Peters, 2001). Utilization of these career/recruitment pages has a tremendous impact on a company's budget because it reduces the costs associated with hiring new employees. Marschall (2002) reports that 86% of companies intended to increase spending for online advertising and many companies proposed cutting back on print advertisement and using that money to beef-up their online recruitment efforts. In fact, as of the year 2000, more than 90% of *Fortune 500* companies were using the Web to recruit employees (Marschall, 2002). And, the military is following suit.

Organizational Attractiveness

Increasingly, job seekers are utilizing recruiting Web sites to search for jobs, research organizations, prepare resumes, and submit applications. So, for many job seekers, an organization's Web site can attract or repel him or her from proceeding with these functions. This is known as organizational attractiveness and a company's identity.

Coyle and Thorson (2001) noted that the Internet has provided potential employees with a "dynamic experience that unfolds over time, requiring more active interaction with recruitment material rather than passive receipt of information" (Cober et al., 2004, p. 624). This dynamic experience is created by the integration of specific features such as color, images, sound, video, animation, and interactivity. More importantly than the features, it is the *way* that a company chooses to incorporate these features that makes each recruiting Web site unique. And, it is the uniqueness that contributes to organizational attractiveness.

Organizational attractiveness is not the only element playing a role in attracting potential applicants to a Web site. There are instances when job seekers may have predispositions to a company; these can be based on the company's reputation, the applicant's familiarity with the company, or one's historical interactions with the organization. In the case of predisposition, these elements will influence how an applicant reacts to one's initial exposure of an employment Web site. But, even with preconceived notions, Cober et al. (2004) posit that a job seeker will be exposed to the company's "façade" when entering the Web site and will therefore need to "adjust their initial affective reactions to reflect this interaction with the façade" (p. 630). Furthermore, Cober et al. state that as an applicant navigates through the employment site, gaining information about a company, he or she will form a strong opinion and attitude towards the Web site which may "influence the impressions job seekers form of an organization, and ultimately, applicant attraction" (p. 633).

Modality

With the expansion of Internet usage, modality becomes an important concept to consider when designing a site for organizational attractiveness. Modality, typically thought of as a way of doing something, can be defined (in the fields of communications and information technology) as, "a path of communication between the human and the computer" (Kleck, Reese, Behnken & Sundar, 2007, p. 9). In this context, modality "communicates a message between the computer and the user or multiple users through the computer" (Kleck et al., 2007, p. 9) and is often referred to as a Web site or home page. Web sites can encompass multiple modal methods, including text and animation, as well as videos and pictures. And, in the modern business world, Web sites and virtual,

online tools have become essential components to image-building strategies. Connolly-Ahern and Broadway (2007) ascertain that “Web sites have become important impression management tools for corporations because they represent a constantly available source of information for an organization’s publics” (p. 343).

In 1992, Walther introduced the Social Information Processing Theory (SIP) which furthers the idea of social cues to encompass the time it takes for these cues to be exchanged. Because the virtual world is instantaneous and high-speed, an organization’s ability to remove, add or update information results in almost immediate feedback and meaning interpretation. “With the ability to quickly and constantly update and upgrade your impression of yourself on your personal Web site...you have more managing power over your image” (Kleck et al., 2007, p. 5). Impression management is an important theory to consider when examining recruiting messages on Coast Guard’s Web sites.

Varying modalities in the transmission of communication provides multiple ways for information seekers to obtain information about a person or organization. Wynn and Katz (1997) posit that modality “will vary the expressive nature of a person’s home page and this has the potential to create alternative impressions of an individual interpreted by different users” (Kleck et al., 2007, p. 10). Tidwell and Walther (2002) postulate that the more modality a Web page contains, the more information can be given (and received) by various online communicators. Vazire and Goaling (2004) linked modality directly to impression management by arguing that “perceptions of one another are altered when people manipulate the methods and modalities used to represent themselves” (Kleck et al., 2007, p. 10). Therefore, it stands to reason that a text-only Web site will limit information transmission, while one enhanced with video, audio and photographic

modalities may provide a rich and much more significant understanding of the underlying purpose or meaning. And, when one constructs, monitors and manages impressions, it is important to consider the source, mode, manner and means in which the impression is first communicated.

Recruitment Web Sites

Many Web sites are designed and built to attract potential customers, generate commerce, and obtain a loyal following. According to the PEW Internet Project Data Memo (2002), the following candidates are the most likely to utilize online sources when searching for jobs:

- *Young Internet users between the ages of 18 and 29*
(61%, compared to 42% of those ages 30-49 and 27% of those ages 50-64)
- *Men*
(50%, compared to 44% of women)
- *The unemployed*
(51% of the unemployed have Internet access)
- *African-Americans and Hispanics*
(60% of African-Americans and Hispanics have sought job information)
- *Those in sales-related jobs*
(55%, 44% of online executives and professionals, 49% of wired clerical and office workers)
- *Those in higher income brackets and with high education levels*
(People with household incomes over \$75,000)

Types of Recruiting Web Sites

Employment Web sites ultimately serve two functions: (a) recruiting new applicants and (b) screening those who are interested in posted vacancies. While some sites do both, Williamson et al. (2003) determined that the recruiting sites were found more favorable than the screening sites because “individuals perceived recruiting-oriented web sites as containing more useful information than screening-oriented web sites” (p. 259). There are three different types of recruiting Web sites prevalent on the

Internet. These include (a) dedicated career sites such as www.Monster.com or www.careerbuilder.com; (b) links from corporate sites; and (c) dedicated recruiting sites such as www.gocoastguard.com.

Dedicated Career Sites

Dedicated career Web sites are essentially data banks, offering a variety of job opportunities from a multitude of employers. In addition, many of these Web sites present much more than job openings. As a strategic way to attract potential employees, Young and Foot (2006) posit that dedicated career Web sites “present compelling descriptions of the company, employee benefits, workplace culture, along with other information which may increase the likelihood that individuals will adopt a positive image of the organization and perhaps submit an application” (p. 45). People who choose to use dedicated career Web sites have to follow established “rules” associated with them. For example, one is required to register and divulge personal information such as name, address, e-mail and degree status. However, with registration come perks such as posting an e-resume, applying for jobs, receiving job recommendations or becoming alerted when a specified job is posted.

Dedicated career sites are strategic in that they highlight an idealized company and portray an image close to “how an organization sees itself, or at least, how it wants prospective employees to see it” (Young et al., 2006, p. 46). This is representative of an important part of external organizational communications as well as useful in impression management.

Links from Corporate Sites

Many corporate Web sites offer easy connections to their Human Resources pages via a direct link on the home page. On the Coast Guard's home page, for example, there is a direct link to the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site (see Figure 2-2).

However, with or without this direct link, corporate sites serve as recruitment tools. As Stephanie Cook, an Internet recruiting consultant, explains:

A corporate site is the first opportunity to make an impression on a prospective candidate. The new breed of Web-savvy, generation X job seekers will scour your site to get an indication not only of your business and direction, but also your "vibe" and gather some cultural cues (Young et al., 2006, p. 47).

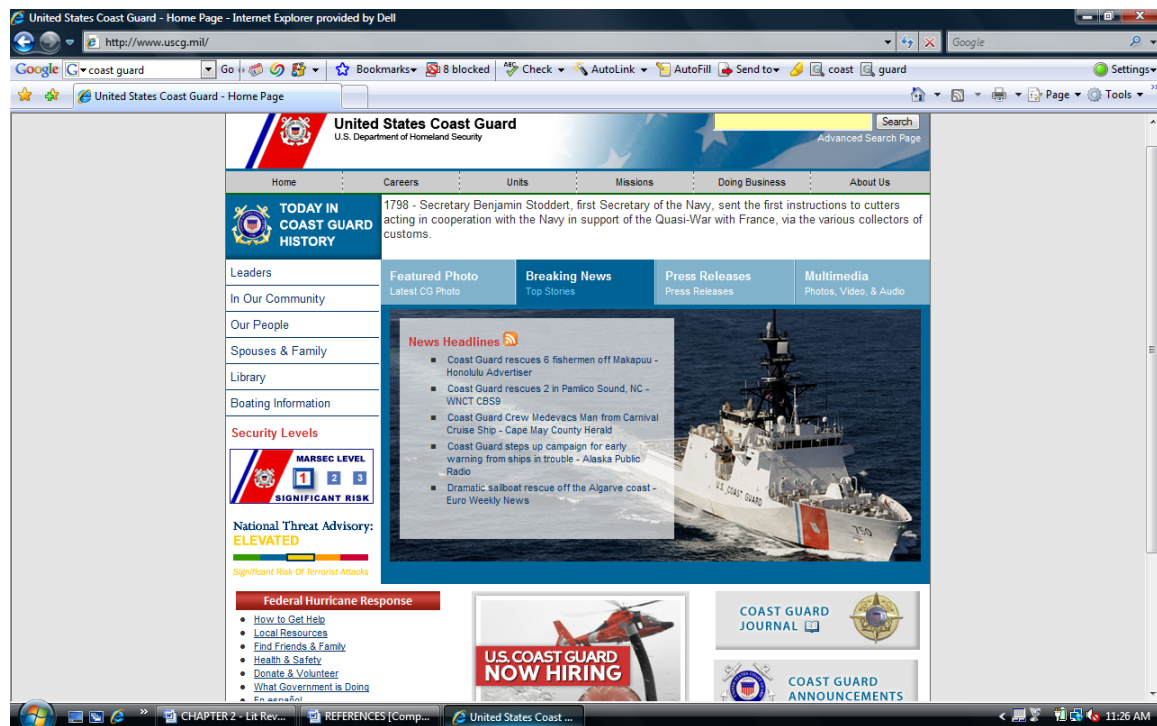


Figure 2-2: U.S. Coast Guard Home Page, with Job Opportunity Link at Bottom of Page

Company Recruiting Web Sites

Dedicated company recruiting sites have "become a key tool for companies to generate applicants, often serving as the primary vehicle by which job applicants initially

gather information about the attributes of organizations, learn about job openings, and submit employment applications” (Williamson et al., 2003, p. 243). Serving as a key component which often precedes face-to-face interaction with the company, a recruiting Web site strives to accomplish three main functions which include:

1. Promoting or selling the company to prospective applicants
2. Evaluating and screening job applicants based on their qualifications
3. Recruiting and/or screening individuals (Williamson et al., p. 244).

With this in mind, corporations must ensure that they are transparent in providing an accurate picture of the company and the job when presenting it to the public. Images and representations inherent in a Web site’s messages can represent “psychological contracts made to potential employees. If after joining the company, employees believe these contracts have been violated, employees are more likely to be unsatisfied with the organization, perform less effectively, or even quit” (Young et al., 2006, pps. 65-66). This is of consequence in analyzing the Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site because, as previously mentioned, I have consistently dealt with new recruits who feel that recruiting images misrepresented the Coast Guard’s true identity, and who are therefore frustrated with the day-to-day expectations placed on them.

Organizational Culture and the Human Experience

In addition to transparency, an organization’s culture plays an important role in attracting and retaining potential talent. When a company’s culture, which can include a company’s vision, missions, internal relations and communication structures, aligns with an applicant’s nature, goals, values and morals, it is more likely that the job seeker will find a good fit and become a productive, long-term employee (Young et al., 2006). Furthermore, by making the organizational culture transparent on a recruiting Web site,

those applicants who do not feel that they mesh with the organization may be deterred from submitting a resume, thereby saving a company (and, in the case of the military, taxpayers) thousands of dollars in recruitment efforts.

However, online recruiting is not a viable substitute for face-to-face interaction – especially for the job seeker looking to get a feel for a company’s culture and internal organization. But, with enhanced elements such as audio, video, and hyperlinks, an online experience can inhabit a personal feel. Dineen et al. (2002) suggested that when organizations provide the human element, applicants are more apt to process and understand the information provided. And, Young et al. (2006) state that “When companies create a warm, personal experience on their career site, they enhance their presence, and in doing so, help the user to transcend a mediated-communication interaction and move one step closer to creating a human-to-human experience online” (p. 54).

Dineen et al. (2002) empirically examined how the level of person-organization (P-O) match the feedback provided by a Web site’s self-assessment tool. In this experiment, the self-assessment tool was embedded into a fictitious company’s Web site and prospective job applicants’ perceptions of the organization and organizational attraction were measured. Williamson et al. (2003) extended this study and found that the results showed “a significant positive relationship between the level of P–O feedback provided by a recruitment web site and individuals’ perceptions of organizational attractiveness” (p. 243).

Despite the lack of empirical data and research, most can agree that the World Wide Web is an important channel for communicating with others. Esrock et al. (2000)

propose that “the Internet has the potential to revolutionize and reform the interaction between organizations and their publics.” Furthermore, they claim that “Although observers differ on the potential of the Internet and the World Wide Web, there is widespread agreement that they have rapidly become important communication media” (p. 326).

Web site Design

Creating the human experience and integrating the organizational culture is all part of creative Web site design. “For a recruitment message to be processed by a job seeker, he/she must be motivated to search through the web site” (Cober et al., 2004, p. 634). Motivation is often spurred by a site’s attractiveness. Young et al. (2006) claim that Web sites are considered attractive because of their:

1. Organization –navigate through pages to find information (usability)
2. Messages – text and graphics
3. Visuals – aesthetic attributes to attract attention and generate interest

As Young et al. (2006) explain, “Companies produce well-developed pages with powerful texts, images, and audio/visual presentations, user-friendly interfaces, customized features, and robust databases and tools” as a means to attract talent (p. 46).

In fact, Dineen et al. (2002) suggest that the effectiveness of employment and recruitment Web sites are influenced by the type of information on the sites, and the way in which this information is displayed. Furthermore, they posit, the design of a site has the ability to shape potential applicants’ perceptions and their fit into a company’s organizational culture.

Therefore, a well-built Web site can be an effective marketing tool for a company, and the flashier and more interactive the components, the higher the potential traffic flow.

However, a designer must ensure that the site's showiness does not interfere with one's ability to easily navigate through a Web site's pages.

Navigation and Usability

A University of Wisconsin-Stout (2001) study defines usability as "the extent to which a site can be used by a specified group of users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction in a specified context of use" (p. 5). In Web site design and navigation, the concept of usability is an important one because often it determines if browsers will choose to remain in a site and explore it further or "bounce" to a more attractive Web site for further surfing.

According to the U.S. Department of Health's Web site on developing useful Web sites, the federal government has an obligation to the public to create and maintain user-friendly Web sites because it is "the largest single producer, collector, consumer, and disseminator of information in the United States." The Coast Guard, as part of the Department of Homeland Security, falls under this large umbrella. However, as the U.S. Department of Health points out, DHS is one of the few governmental factions working with making cutting-edge technology user-friendly:

Forward-thinking Web managers at many agencies, like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, General Services Administration, Social Security Administration, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Homeland Security, and the Internal Revenue Service, are making sure usability is built into the Web development lifecycle. It's being incorporated into e-government initiatives, public-facing Web sites, Web applications, intranets, and hand-held devices to ensure they are highly responsive and meet both agency and user needs ("Your Guide for Developing Usable & Useful Websites").

Several of the existing studies (Cober et al., 2003; Cober et al., 2004; Dineen et al., 2002; and Williamson et al., 2003) show that a company's organizational attraction is

increased when Web sites are easy to navigate, include useful content, and provide enough information that an interested candidate can find a fit within the company's culture.

With this comes the need for a strong home page which focuses on selling the company and includes "compelling information about training and development, corporate culture, and compensation" (Young et al., 2006, p. 47). A well-designed home page can be likened to the electronic version of a company's lobby, where the first impression is made before one actually navigates into the heart of the site (Liu, Arnett, Capella & Beatty, 1997). As explicated by Esrock and Leichty (2000):

Web experts warn that the first page of a site is an important content gateway that strongly influences whether or not a visitor will stay and investigate or leave for another cyberspace destination. Accordingly, first-time visitors who experience usability or slow load problems sometimes will fail to return to a site, rendering the medium a virtually useless communication tool (p. 330).

As a result, usability is associated with the desire to continue to surf a Web site and the total amount of energy and time expended exploring the company's messages.

Messages

"Research using traditional recruitment material has demonstrated that information relating to compensation, culture, and career development opportunities are robust predictors of organizational attraction" (Cober et al., 2003, p. 159). And, as previously discussed, these messages are what draws a potential applicant to a company or, conversely, what makes one realize that one does not fit into the organization's structure.

Through their analysis of corporate Web sites, Connolly-Ahern and Broadway (2007) found several strategies necessary for a Web site's success.

These are (a) competence; (b) feedback; (c) scanning; and (d) two-way communications. Of the four, the opportunity for two-way communications was the most important and successful Web sites provided some kind of e-mail link for visitors to correspond with the organization. Furthermore, the two-way paradigm allowed companies to enact scanning efforts by encouraging applicants to fill out customer profiles and demographic data collection. Connolly-Ahern et al. (2007) found that nearly 40% of these corporate Web sites “rewarded visitors who shared information through a personal profile with some form of enhanced access to the Web site” (p. 345).

It should be noted that, even though corporations are intent on recruiting applicants from a diverse pool, “only about one-third of the sites...provided information in a language other than English” (Connolly-Ahern et al., 2007, p. 345). The most common language used (other than English) was Spanish, which may be a strong indication of some corporations trying to increase their minority numbers.

Visuals

As previously mentioned, appearance and design of a Web site can be important influencers on the public’s initial impressions and follow-on attitudes towards both the Web site and the company it seeks to represent (Cober et al., 2004). A 2002 study on retail and recruiting Web sites found that “individuals preferred jobs posted on ‘higher quality’ web pages relative to those posted on ‘lower quality’ web pages” (Cober et al., 2003, p. 160). Additionally, Dineen et al. (2002) examined public perceptions of corporate Web sites and determined that many people’s perceptions drastically changed after they viewed a company’s Web site *if* the Web site was designed in such a way that it positively related to applicant’s intentions.

Lastly, unity is a large contributing factor in creating a positive impression. As Cober et al. (2004) explain, unity focuses on three core concepts including: (1) repetition; (2) alignment; and (3) proximity. They posit that repetition occurs when a Web site repeats visual elements (such as colors, shapes and textures). Alignment deals with the intentional placement of design elements, leading to a visual flow throughout the site (instead of an appearance of arbitrarily-placed visual elements) and proximity refers to how items are grouped both on Web pages as well as throughout the site, in an effort to control clutter and make sense of content management. Using all three elements in a Web site creates a sense of harmony and accord, instead of one of chaos and disarray. Unity creates harmony, which is an attractive element that can encourage a job seeker to spend more time surfing a Web site.

Research Questions

In considering Coast Guard's use of online recruiting tools, I chose to focus on four specific questions which seemed most pertinent to understanding what information the Coast Guard disseminates to the public:

RQ1: What representation(s) of the Coast Guard is (are) present in the recruiting Web site?

RQ2: Are the Coast Guard's traditional themes (such as patriotism, duty, self-discipline, personal growth, honor, respect and/or devotion to duty) present on the recruiting Web site? Are any of these themes recurring? If so, which ones?

RQ3: How does the Web site communicate key messages for the four niche Officer programs and what are these key messages?

RQ4: What is the relationship of the material on the Web site to the U.S.'s publicly held image and reputation of the Coast Guard? Do the representations in the recruiting Web site mirror the Coast Guard's three core values and five overarching missions?

CHAPTER 3

THEORY AND METHOD

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I review, via sociology and interpersonal communication literatures, impression management and media representation theories. These constitute the theoretical framework for the textual analysis of the Coast Guard recruitment Web site.

Impression Management

“The proverb, ‘Many a man would not recognize his reputation if they met it on the street,’ reminds us that our knowledge of what other people think about us is at best partial and indirect” (Bromley, 1993, p. 101). Impression management, with its roots in psychology and sociology, is based on the idea that a first impression, whether accurate or not, often becomes reality. This is important because “people form first impressions...quickly and unconsciously...mak[ing] assumptions about you based on the initial things you say and do” (Demarais and White, 2004, p. 31). These first impressions, Demarais et al. claim, are not about self-fulfillment but really about meeting others’ needs.

Impression management was first explored in depth by Erving Goffman (1959), a sociologist who examined several classic theories and applied them to everyday life. Goffman said, “Impression management involves attempts to establish the meaning or purpose of social interactions, and that it guides our actions, and helps us anticipate what

to expect from others” (Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1995, p. 4). Furthermore, Bromley (1993) stated that “we carry out specific acts of impression management to achieve, maintain, or improve an image that other people have of us” (p. 113). Using communication and feedback to sell and manage images, these images, coupled with an organization’s reputation, are often what publics base their decisions on. Organizations are concerned with image, identity, and appearance and may utilize impression management as a way to construct a sense of self and sell this self to their publics.

In Goffman’s seminal work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, he developed a drama metaphor to explain how individuals and organizations conduct and portray their public selves. Goffman believed that people are actors, and their main tasks are to play several different roles to construct social identities (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). Johansson (2007) posits that “organizations, like individuals, are ‘actors’ engaging in ‘performances’ in various ‘settings’ before ‘audiences’” (p. 278), and claims that impression management is the way that people manage their created impressions.

Goffman’s work has come under scrutiny, being the “target of criticism for relying almost exclusively on keen observation and lacking any hard empirical evidence” (Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1989, p. 2). Smith (1999), an ardent critic, claimed that Goffman’s work was fragmented, lightweight and inconsequential, giving it “the impression of always wanting to race onto the next issue or topic rather than consolidate what he had achieved” (Johansson, 2007, p. 276). Nevertheless, researchers such as Jones (1964) and the duo of Schlenker (1980) and Tedeschi (1981) expounded on Goffman’s work and created several viable and utilitarian definitions of impression management.

Goffman originally posited that an integral part of impression management focuses on communication and feedback. Further research modified this definition, although both communication and feedback remain important components. Basing their definition on Schlenker's earlier work (1975, 1980, 1992), Rosenfeld et al. (1995) state that impression management is "the regulation of 'information about some object or event, including the self'" (p. 7). Johansson (2007) furthers this idea by claiming that impression management is often divided into two parts: those that are "easy for the individual to manipulate at will" such as verbal communications and those that are "more unconscious and difficult to control" such as non-verbal communications (p. 278). Talor (2007) states that impression management is often utilized because people or corporations "want to appear competent, likable, and at times even intimidating or incapable" (p. 1) and posits that it can become an important tool during times of crisis because "a damaged reputation can sometimes be repaired by reputation management and public relations efforts" (Bromley, 1993, p. 105).

In fact, impression management, commonly referred to by public relations practitioners as reputation management, has so far only been studied as it relates to organizational crises (Johansson, 2007). It should be noted that Bromley (1993) makes the distinction between impression management and reputation management. While they interact with one another, Bromley states, "Impression management is immediate and tactical, reputation management is pre-planned and strategic" (p. 110). Furthermore, Bromley postulates, "*Impression* management on one occasion and with one audience may be carried on in the wider, long-term interests of *reputation* management" (p. 110, original emphasis), explaining that the impression individuals and organizations wish to

convey to key publics is often one's self-concept or image. This, Bromley claims, is the strategic and long-term aspect of reputation management.

In 1994, Allen and Caillouet developed a typology of impression management strategies for use by an organization in crises. With this typology, the pair concluded that “strategies similar to those used by individuals emerged in the organization's external discourse as employees drew upon their own repertoire of communication strategies” (Johansson, 2007, p.278). In addition, Allen et al. (1994) argue the importance of studying the multitude of complex messages in the public sphere because these messages shape an organization's legitimacy and public perception (Johansson, 2007). Modern thought extends impression management beyond the crisis mode and stresses that people actively carry out impression management in ways which help them achieve their objectives and goals as individuals and as part of organizations (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). This current perspective also suggests that organizations are more apt to manage impressions which market them in positive and desirable ways. Marketing can be done via face-to-face interactions, written correspondence or Internet-based modalities.

However, even if a person or organization remains unchanged, its reputation can change due to interest groups or changes in the composition of relevant publics. “Reputations, whether at the individual, organizational (corporate) or national level, reflect the effects of competition in their particular field” (Bromley, 1993, p.162). While competition may seem inconsequential to this study, the Coast Guard does have four other military organizations (and the civilian sector) it competes against in attracting potential recruits. In this competitive marketplace then, the Coast Guard's aim for recruitment has to be to “establish a consumer habit that makes it difficult for competing

products or services to catch the attention and hold the interest of consumers” (Bromley, 1993, p. 168). One way to do this is through the use of multiple modalities, including traditional methods and online recruiting tools.

Impression Motivation, Construction, and Monitoring

Leary and Kowalski (1990) proposed a two-component model (Figure 3-1) which attempts to explain why and when people engage in impression management:

[W]hat has been called impression management involves two discrete processes... The first process involves what we call *impression motivation*, the second *impression construction* (p. 35, original emphasis).

The model, based in self-reflection, assists in the understanding of how individuals and organizations may manage perceived impressions. Perception is an important consideration because, as Bromley (1993) points out, “[W]e may know little of what other people think of us, not only those with whom we have no direct face-to-face contact but also those with whom we interact frequently” (p. 105). The two components are comprised of impression motivation and impression construction. Impression motivation is driven by the need for people or organizations to ensure that their public persona is intact and incorporates the goals, values, and understanding of the current and sometimes desired image of one’s self (Kleck et al., 2007). “Under certain circumstances...people become motivated to control how others see them. This impression motivation process is associated with the desire to create particular impressions in others' minds, but may or may not manifest itself in overt impression-relevant actions” (Leary et al., 1990, p. 36).

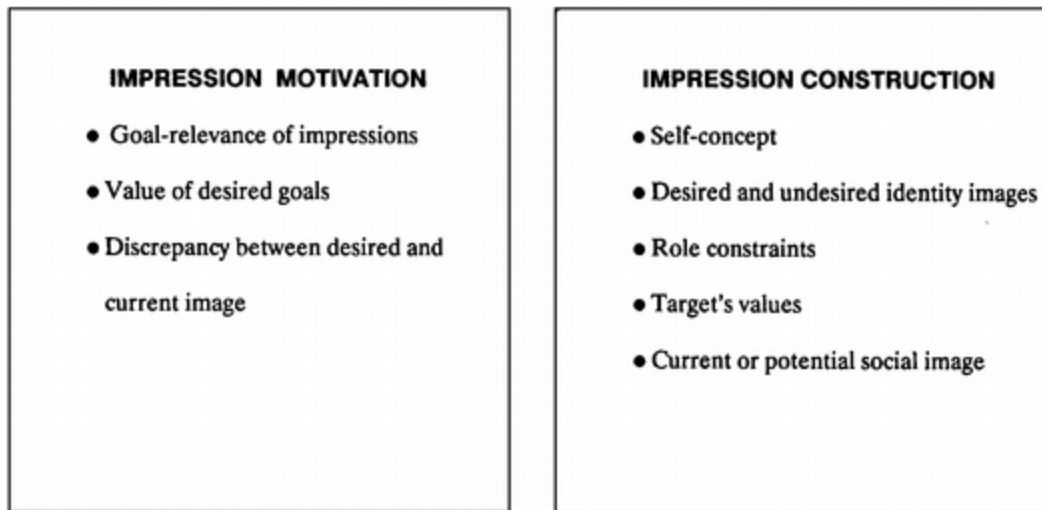


Figure 3-1: Two-component Model (Leary et al., 1990)

Once motivated to create certain impressions, people may alter their behaviors to affect others' impressions of them, which is the basis of impression construction. This part of the model centers around a person's (or in this case an organization's) self-concept, target images and perceived images. Impression construction "involves not only choosing the kind of impression to create, but deciding precisely how they will go about doing so" (Leary et al., 1990, p. 36). The concept of power plays an important role in this decision. Leary et al. (1990) stated that the amount of power an actor needs to engage in impression management - specifically impression construction - depends on five factors: (a) self-concept; (b) desired/undesired identity image; (c) role constraints; (d) a target's values; and (e) current or potential social images. These factors correlate with one's ability to maximize desired outcomes (or avoid undesired outcomes), enhance one's self-esteem and create an identity (Pratt, 1996). Therefore, the logical conclusion can be made that when an organization is interested in exploring these five factors, motivation to engage in impression management is high. Conversely, when it is not necessary to fulfill these goals, or the goals have already been fulfilled, motivation to monitor impressions is low.

Impression management involves the degree of discrepancy between the image one would like others to hold of oneself and the image one believes others already hold. People have latitude of images that they regard as acceptable to project. When they believe that the impressions others have of them fall outside this latitude, they become motivated to actively manage their impressions (Leary et al., 1990, p. 39).

Motives

Following Goffman's (1959) seminal work, further research regarding impression management has been completed. All of the modern research points to the idea that all entities (whether individual or organizational) seek to manage and publically present some form of identity. "In managing reputation, one needs to define the target audiences (publics) because it is usually necessary to cultivate different reputations in different groups, and to use appropriate methods in each" (Bromley, 1993, p. 105). In this capacity, it seems that modern impression management research encompasses four main bodies of thought. (These are sometimes referred to collectively as the self-preservation theory.) The first body of thought explores how particular behavior is affected by people's concerns with others' impressions; the second investigates underlying factors of impression management behaviors; the third deals with factors that affect the types of impressions people and companies try to portray; and the final group examines the emotional and behavioral consequences that occur as a result of people worrying about their perceived impressions (Leary, 1995, p. 14).

Sallot (2002) notes that preceding research (Tedeschi & Riordan, 1981; Beck, 1990) identifies four levels of impression management motives: (a) altruistic (behaviors intended to benefit others without any known return or benefit); (b) prosocial (intended to benefit others as well as the company); (c) selfish (benefits primarily the organization without much consideration to the publics); and (d) no motive identified.

Politics also helps explain why organizations employ impression management when reaching out to salient publics. “The need to deal with different publics can bring problems” (Bromley, 1993, p. 121) and organizations need to be aware that there may be the need to cultivate different reputations when working with different publics.

Organizational politics can be defined as:

[A] social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short-term or long-term self-interest, which is either consistent with or at the expense of others’ interests (where self-interest maximization refers to the attainment of positive outcomes and the prevention of negative outcomes) (Ferris, Gail & Fandt, 1989, p. 145).

An organization’s existing reputation can affect policy-making – especially if the particular policy is thought to benefit or harm an existing reputation. In the Coast Guard, recruitment numbers can be influenced by proper or improper policy and impression management techniques – especially in the virtual world because organizational politics drives the content, material and design of all of the Coast Guard’s Web sites.

Impression monitoring assists organizations in maintaining current and authentic perceptions because they are continually monitoring the public’s reactions to visual and textual cues. When one considers the multiple awards, threats and rewards available to organizations, it only makes sense that an organization may find it advantageous to manage the impressions that others (salient publics) form (Ferris et al., 1989). In addition to these reasons, failure and embarrassment may increase motivation for organizations to engage in impression monitoring:

On one hand, people who have failed or been embarrassed will seek to repair their damaged images in others' eyes. They may do this, for example, by stressing their positive attributes (Baumeister & Jones, 1978; Schneider, 1969), doing favors for others (Apsler, 1975), associating themselves with other successful people (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980), or making self-serving attributions for their failure (Baumgardner, Lake, &

Arkin, 1985; Frey, 1978; Weary & Arkin, 1981). People facing a possible threat to their social image may even engage in such behaviors preemptively—before actually failing—as a precaution (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Paisley, 1984; Leary, Barnes, & Griebel, 1986) (Leary et al., 1990, p. 39).

Several studies (Baumeister et al., 1978; Baumgardner et al., 1985; Cialdini et al., 1980; Frey, 1978; Leary & Schlenker, 1980; Schlenker, 1975; Schneider, 1969) have shown that people and organizations were led to believe their public images were tarnished (or negatively perceived) when, in reality, many of these cases hinged on false impressions. Bromley (1993) states that “if a person or organization is unaware of their public image, then such failures are more likely; hence the need for individuals to monitor their reputation(s), and for large organizations to maintain a public relations facility” (p. 24).

Schlenker’s (1980) research, which assumes that people are motivated to use impression management as a way to control how others see them - especially in the public limelight - considers these ideas as well. After constructing an impression, image and/or reputation, the careful and consistent monitoring of them is vital. As Bromley (1993) points out, “Unsuccessful impression management does not merely fail to create the intended impression, it can have the opposite effect” (p. 106). For example, if an organization appears to be friendly when it typically is standoffish, publics may view this as ingratiation. And, when a company’s reputation does not convey a spirit of assertiveness or strength, sudden behavior in this vein may be publically viewed as a sign of weakness (Bromley, 1993).

When considering impressions and the management of them, Leary et al. (1990) believe there are five situational factors to consider:

1) *Is the communication public or private?* In the case of Coast Guard's recruiting Web sites, the communication is public.

2) *Is there a dependency on the target for valued outcomes?* It can be argued that there is dependency, in that the Coast Guard relies heavily on online recruiting methods to garner new members.

3) *Is there an anticipation of future contact?* It is assumed that people who are interested in pursuing a career in the Coast Guard will repeatedly visit the Coast Guard's recruiting Web sites for information and research purposes.

4) *Is there a strong goal value in place?* This question will be explored through the context of this study and revisited in Chapter Five.

5) *Is the discrepancy between the desired image and the believed image (if there is one) beyond the limits of acceptability?* Again, this question will be considered through the study and revisited in Chapter Five.

The Relevance of Impression Management

When considering impression management, one of the significant underlying questions is *why* a person or organization would want to engage in impression management. "In most instances," Leary (1995) states, "they do so because they believe, rightly or wrongly, that important outcomes are riding on the impressions they make on others" (p. 40). Rosenfeld et al. (1995) agree, concluding that the incorporation of impression management in modern organizations is vital because it has to be understood in order to fully understand organizational life.

Communications and visual imagery play a key role in establishing and managing an organization's image and identity. Impression management offers a way for companies to seek feedback from others to better manage these identities and maintain impressions that are congruent with the perceptions conveyed to salient audiences (Goffman, 1959). Salient audiences can be found both internally and externally, as impression management is as much an internal function as it is an external one.

“Impression management is...an interesting phenomena in communication between managers and organizational members” (Johansson, 2007, p. 278) and allows for an understanding of *how* an organization’s identity is created and the composition of the significant actors. Impression management is a “goal-directed activity of controlling information about a person, object, entity, idea or event” in an attempt to “increase the chances that they will be able to fulfill their financial and societal goals, secure cooperation or support from others, vie effectively with or discourage competitors, and avoid the consequences of negative actions” (Connolly-Ahern et al., 2007, p. 1).

Ingratiation and Self-Presentation

People and organizations value their reputations and have to be aware of potential risks which may harm this reputation. Therefore, they put a great deal of effort into monitoring the public opinion. This means that businesses may believe (or pretend to believe) and act (or pretend to act) in ways which will garner public support (Bromley, 1993). The basic premise of impression management is aiming behavior at influencing the perceptions of others (Ralston & Elsass, 1989). And, when publics know an organization is intentionally engaging in impression management, the observer is likely to view the company (actor) as “self-interested, manipulative, and deceitful, and to distrust the actor, even when the actor’s goals are beneficial to society” (Sallot, 2002, p. 152).

Jones (1964) termed this behavior “ingratiation” and defined it as being a “class of strategic behaviors illicitly designed to influence a particular other...concerning the attractiveness of one’s personal qualities” (p. 11). In this definition, the use of the word “illicitly” denotes behavior which does not fall into standard and acceptable societal

norms. While some organizations may purposefully engage in ingratiation strategies to intentionally and purposefully generate an unsubstantiated, positive reputation, impression management is not intrinsically deceptive (Sallot, 2002). Yet, despite its negative connotation, ingratiation, with its three main tactics: (a) other enhancement (flattery in its most common form); (b) opinion conformity (matching values and beliefs to mirror the salient publics); and (c) self-presentation (Jones, 1964; Ralston et al., 1989), is an important part of impression management. While other enhancement and opinion conformity are important, self-presentation is the most often referred to in the literature.

Self-presentation is behavior conducted by an organization which the publics will most likely find appealing. Self-presentation can focus on both public and private identities and is designed to “either secure rewards from others or avoid punishing consequences controlled by them” (Stone, 1989, p. 191). Cialdini and Richardson (1980) explored the idea of self-presentation in relation to the public-self and drew a definite distinction between indirect and direct self-presentation tactics. Cialdini et al. (1980) assert that direct tactics refer to ways in which people and organizations present information about one’s own traits, accomplishments and abilities, while indirect tactics can enhance or protect an image by managing information associated with the person or organization. Cialdini et al.’s indirect tactics studies can be tied to the phrase, “basking in the reflected glory” of another’s accomplishments. Through mere association, people may find it easy to manage positive public impressions by simply hanging onto the coattails of another’s accomplishments and tying their personal reputation into the accomplished person’s likability and ability.

Leary et al.'s (1990) research detailed a number of factors that impact the relevance of impression management and highlighted three functions of self-presentation: (1) to define the individual's place in social order; (2) to set the tone or direction of an interaction; and (3) to facilitate the performance of role-governed behavior (Pratt, 1996). Additionally, because behaviors can be interpreted in multiple ways, depending on the receiving audience, individuals and companies "run the risk of conveying images other than those they wanted to make" (Leary, 1995, p. 11). Publics and salient audiences are most concerned with an organization's ability and likability and seek to avoid negative attributes such as an organization's lack of ability and disapproval (Arkin & Shepperd, 1989). Part of this may result from beliefs, which are often unspoken but highly considered when interpreting meaning (Bromley, 1993). The resulting perception is completely dependent upon the receiver or groups of receivers (publics). A receiving public may be sincere and believe the impression or be cynical and create a negative association of the impression. This is precisely why communication and culture must be considered as two mutually exclusive (yet intertwined) factors when considering how impression management affects the transmitted and received messages.

Consistency

Consistency is an important consideration when we speak of impression management. Piggybacking on work by Goffman (1959), Leary (1995) states that consistency, a general self-presentation norm, dictates that "people should behave consistently with their beliefs and attitudes, as well as show a reasonable degree of consistency in how they behave across different situations" (p. 71). This includes consistency in what people say and do and consistency within cultural norms. People or

organizations which are not or do not appear to be consistent are “viewed as weak, unreliable, hypocritical, deluded, or even mentally unstable” (Leary, 1995, p. 72).

Additionally, Demarais et al. (2004) found that people and organizations which disclose more information, and are transparent, are liked more than those who share less.

As previously stated, negative impressions are easier to make and much harder to expel than positive ones. Schlenker (1980) refers to this phenomenon as self-preservation predicaments, and sees these as “situations in which events have undesirable implications for the images people have claimed or desire to claim” (Leary, 1995, p. 118). Arguably, some of the gravest predicaments are concealment and lack of consistency, which is why it is imperative that the Coast Guard be fully transparent and consistent in its recruiting messages.

Even with these considerations, the concern remains that audiences may be largely dependent upon others to explain or explicate issues that they are largely unfamiliar with. Fortunato (2005) discusses the concept of selection at length and indicates, “Selection and framing are important because of the potential influence on how the issue might be perceived by the audience...” (p. 53). If the receiving audience is unfamiliar with a topic, the framework must be relied upon to make the topic or message more salient and understandable. In this case, the Coast Guard has the ability to mitigate recruiting messages and, through impression management and representation, portray solid, positive, and consistent messages to potential employees.

Theories of Representation

While a large and integral part of impression management focuses on communication and feedback (Goffman, 1959), communication relies on shared meaning.

Representation, as a concept, focuses on how language, discourse and symbology construct meaning and connects this meaning to culture (Hall, 1997b). However, this can be tricky because there are multiple ways to interpret language, discourse and symbology. Meaning comes from the symbology (words) used and is largely dependent upon various lenses, including one's culture, education and background. Symbols of a language (often letters or words) take the place of and simultaneously stand for ideas, concepts, and implied meanings (Hall, 1997b). The concept of representational structure is rooted in writing and language, focusing primarily on alphabets (Hjelmquist 1990). "What is preserved over a long time is usually called 'meaning,' 'gist,' 'content,' etc., and this is what...became codified in alphabetical writing" (p. 315). Humans use language and alphabetical writing, which is a grouping of signs and symbols, to "represent our concepts, ideas and feelings in such a way as to enable others to 'read,' decode or interpret their meaning in roughly the same way that we do" (Hall, 1997a, p. 5).

Representation theories can be organized in three groups:

1. reflective (does language represent a meaning which is already present?)
2. intentional (does language express what the speaker or writer wants to say?)
3. constructionist (is meaning constructed through language?) (Hall, 1997a).

Regardless of the view one subscribes to, meaning is formed by understanding the relationship between things, concepts and signs. According to Hall, meaning is dependent upon how people, objects, concepts and events are conceptualized and represented as images formed in our individual thoughts. Furthermore, thoughts are categorized into a "system of representation," where individual concepts are organized, arranged and clustered in an attempt to create complex relationships between them (Hall, 1997b, p. 17).

The constructionist approach specifically focuses on the public and social meaning of language. With these theories, “things don’t *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs” (Hall, 1997b, p. 25). Hall argues that constructionists believe that the language system used is what conveys meaning via representation of our mental concepts. “[S]ocial actors...use conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others” (Hall, 1997b, p. 25).

The connection between meaning and verbal / nonverbal language has been studied for a long period of time. In the early 1970’s, researchers examined memory-based linguistics, where questions arose regarding written languages. The research suggests that in “traditional illiterate cultures, linguistic communication was about content, not form” (Hjelmquist, p. 316), making a structured language unnecessary. However, Hall (1997b) asserts that the “relation between ‘things’, concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in languages” (p. 19). Furthermore, meaning does not stem from the object or person or thing, nor is it in the word. “Meaning is *constructed by the system of representation*” (Hall, 1997b, p. 21, original emphasis).

One might wonder why complex languages exist and contemplate which complex language to use to decipher a particular meaning. “Visual signs and images, even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted” (Hall, 1997b, p. 19). Interpretation comes via codes. The code reflects culture and sets up a correlation between a conceptual system and a language system (Hall, 1997a). These codes help define cultures and tell us which

language to use to convey the meaning behind an idea. “One way of thinking about ‘culture’ ...is in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the *codes which govern the relationships of translation between them*” (Hall, 1997b, p. 21, original emphasis). Therefore, the ways in which ideas are worded and decoded impacts how meaning is conceptualized through cultural interpretation.

Hjelmquist (1990) suggests that “different wording actually does matter for meaning in the sense that it can give rise to different conceptualizations in the short run, but that somehow these conceptualizations rapidly change and converge in some more basic representation of the meaning” (p. 317). And, Nuyts (1990) reiterates this by going back to traditional Saussurean definitions by claiming that “language is a system of forms and meanings which are conventionally linked together” in which formal symbols – or words – are used by humans to communicate and transmit information to other humans (p. 273). This information can be used to transmit ideas lurking behind relatively complex concepts. “People have concepts of whatever is a discrete phenomenon to them, while in reality these phenomena can be complex, composed of more fundamental elements” (Nuyts, p. 279). Two examples are patriotism and freedom.

The problem, however, is that, according to Culioli (1995), text and written language does not specify the nature of the relationship or mental image, leaving much open for interpretation. As a result, a metalinguistic system of representation is established, which connects textual symbols to representative meaning (Liddle, 1995). However, “it is a historical fact that there has never been any linguistics where the problem of representation has not arisen” (Liddle, 1995, p. 298), and not every concept has a representation. As Culioli points out, “linguistics works on regularities, studying

problems that are not only syntactic, but also dealing with partly fleeting phenomena – either because they are subjective or for reasons of dialect, etc.” (Liddle, 1995, p. 310).

This makes any interpretation of text a subjective process.

Mead (1909) posits that there are generalized meanings of words, thus allowing individuals to have access to the social process as a whole. Furthermore, the generalized reality we convey with written and oral language exists because of language (Gramont, 1990). Hall (1997b) agreed, stating that representation does use language in that it:

[I]s the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to refer to either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events (p. 17).

Culture

Culture is complex. In Raymond Williams’ words, it is “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, [or] a group” (1976, p. 90) which has led scholars to explore the ways in which people construct and live life according to societal boundaries, expectations, and notions. In this sense, culture is about shared meanings:

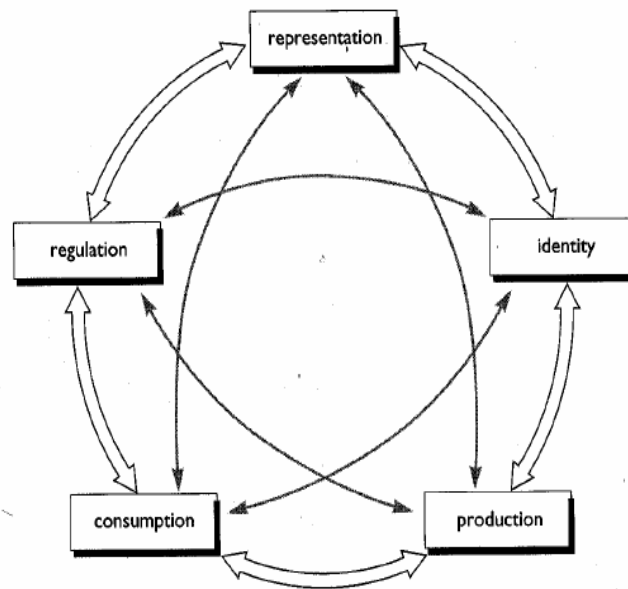
To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other. Thus culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and ‘making sense’ of the world, in broadly similar ways (Hall, 1997, p. 2).

And these meanings are in constant redefinition and negotiation. Hence, culture is also the arena where struggle over meanings occur.

Understanding Culture through the Circuit of Culture

In 1997, du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay and Negus developed *The Circuit of Culture* (Figure 3-1) to analyze cultural products. In this model, meaning is produced

and negotiated in each of its key components, namely (a) representation; (b) identity; (c) production; (d) consumption; and (e) regulation. Furthermore, every component exerts influence on the others. While du Gay et al. argue that one must “go the whole way around [the circuit] before your [cultural] study is complete” (p. 4), extracting meaning from the Coast Guard culture, disseminated in the form of recruiting messages, focuses on understanding the representation element.



The circuit of culture

Figure 3-2: *The Circuit of Culture* (du Gay et al., 1997)

Representation: Meaning and Identity

Stuart Hall (1975, 1997a, b) states that meanings are social constructions which emerge through language. Because objects and ideas do not organically or inherently hold specific meanings, language must be considered as a way to comprehend the representations, images, and messages lurking below the surface.

Representation considers how meanings are constructed through oral and written language (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 60). However, because meanings are subject to one's

environment, background, education, understanding, and interpretation of reality, meanings are constantly in flux. As Hall explains, “Meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world—people, objects, and events, real or fictional—and the conceptual system, which can operate as *mental representations* of them” (1997b, p. 18, original emphasis).

Putnam (1988) underscores the constructive aspects of language. Words do not have fixed references and most change over time. For example, 200 years ago the word *plant* may have referred to a green organism. However, the concepts of chlorophyll and the plant’s dioxydeoxygen cycle did not exist 200 years ago. So, the modern reader would be bringing a level of interpretation that the writer did not intend (Gramont, 1990). Additionally, words are often associated with meaning that readers are not familiar with. For example, the whole meaning of the word *gold* (including the scientific notations and the ways to test for it) may be only known to a group of experts. However, the common person might only think of a precious yellow or white metal (Gramont, 1990). Nevertheless, language is in place to refer to things which are out there by describing and defining these things. But, the definitions and interpretation of meaning “depend entirely upon how the words are used in a sentence, not on the things per se” (Gramont, 1990, p. 57). This means that we, as humans, are entirely dependent upon interpreting a coordinate system of terms to find meaning, information and understanding. Language permits us to communicate ready-made generalizations about what we do.

Representations, as revealed through language and graphics, assist with creating a culture’s identity. This identity can be influenced by the way an organization chooses to communicate with its publics via graphics, visual materials and verbal messages, and

examines how publics interpret the meanings encoded in these graphics, visual materials and verbal messages. Much like culture, it can be argued that identity is also unstable, in that it is ever-changing and morphing. Yet, identity can be temporarily stabilized by social practice, including a culture's viewing, interpreting, and using an organization's messages and modes thereof to make sense of themselves and figure out where they fit into the bigger picture.

Analyzing representations can be difficult because of the slippery nature of meaning. Nevertheless:

Representation can only be properly analysed in relation to the actual concrete forms which meaning assumes, in the concrete practices of signifying, 'reading,' and interpellation; and these require analysis of the actual signs, symbols, figures, images, narratives, words, and sound—the material forms—in which symbolic meaning is circulated. (Hall, 1997a, p. 9)

Bearing this in mind, I chose to use textual analysis as a method of examining the Coast Guard culture and organization, as represented in its recruiting Web site.

Methodology

As Meech (2006) explained, the inclusion of visual images as part of corporate identity is an important consideration. However, the primary focus of this analysis focused on the Coast Guard's main recruiting Web site's textual representations. (Some of the Web site visuals were considered in the analysis because they enhanced the understanding of underlying messages and implications.) The second major part of the analysis involved examining the strategic placement of language, which created a specific tone for each page while furthering the overall understanding of the Coast Guard organization.

To answer the four research questions posed, I chose a qualitative methodology. Qualitative methods allow naturalistic inquiry into meanings and representation. There are a number of distinct differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. Quantitative researchers assume an objective reality “out there” to be studied. Qualitative researchers believe that realities are multiple, subjective and socially constructed. A quantitative researcher uses an experimental setting to test a “few variables and many cases,” where, conversely, qualitative research relies on a “few cases and many variables” (Creswell, 1998, pps. 15-16). In other words, quantitative research simplifies reality for study purposes, while qualitative research examines its object of study within its full complexity. Because the qualitative researcher is the instrument, it is important for him/her to reflect on the research process. “The validity of an interpretation depends on a more universal confidence in the scholar’s expertise and sensitivity, his or her legitimacy and authority, or perhaps an appreciation of the interpretation as original and stimulating” (Jensen, 1991, pps. 31-32).

Textual Analysis

The purpose of this study was to understand how meaning is created through text and, in its interpretation, unearth the representations, images and identities disseminated by the Coast Guard’s recruiting messages. Textual analysis was chosen for the primary analysis tool as it allowed me to examine the text and analyze the rhetorical context of features inherent to words and phrases. Going beneath the denotative, surface meanings, textual analysis provided me a way to examine text for connotative features and use the information gleaned to construct additional meaning. “[Textual analysis] seeks to understand the ways in which these forms of representation take place, the assumptions

behind them and the kinds of sense-making about the world that they reveal” (McKee, 2003, p. 17).

McKee (2003) states that “Texts are the material traces that are left of the practice of sense-making--the only empirical evidence we have of how other people make sense of the world” (p. 15). Analyzing these texts is interpretive in nature because it has to consider the author’s intent before even beginning to reflect on the meanings and representations the written text may or may not contain.

In this study, the object of analysis was a portion of the Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site. The Web site’s obvious intention is to recruit viable candidates for Coast Guard positions. However, the purpose of this study is to determine if the Web site goes deeper than that by uncovering underlying notions which may or may not have been intentional in the Web site’s implementation. To discover such an occurrence is not uncommon because, as Dodds explains, “The text analyst’s position is somewhat different in that his task is to describe and assess what is readily observable in the text whether or not such data fits in with what we know about the author’s intention” (1985, p. 23).

An author’s intention for Web site construction is different from one’s intention in literature in that Web site construction must consider fundamental characteristics of the World Wide Web, including hypertextuality. In an online discourse about the creation of employment-based Web sites, Marschall (2002) points out:

[C]ritical textual analysis of linear texts (e.g. literary works and cinema) presuppose that their intertextual meanings are often hidden, buried in the texts through stylistic and narrative techniques, and need to be unearthed by the expert cultural analyst...In contrast, given the centrality of hypertextual links in Web pages, the ideologies of their manufacturers are expressed in a more overt fashion through their conscious choice of which

outside pages to link to their productions. The intentionality of the constructors of Web pages thus becomes more transparent in a hypertextual environment. In addition, the multimedia capabilities of the technology enables Web page constructors to integrate sounds, real-time 'chats,' visual images and video into their productions, offering a powerful platform to convey mythical concepts and enhance the sense of involvement and community-building among users.

After intention is uncovered, the "logical starting point for analyzing texts is to consider the meaning of the text. All texts are about something (i.e., they have content)" (Huckin, 2004, p. 13).

Content Analysis vs. Textual Analysis

Quite often, content analysis and textual analysis are confused, with many using these terms interchangeably. However, they are two distinct research methods, with one strictly qualitative in approach and the other a variation of qualitative and quantitative methods. It would be an egregious error to make the assumption that content analysis is entirely a quantitative or entirely a qualitative process. In fact, it can be either, depending on the nature of the research and the design of the project. Berelson (1952), one of the forerunners in content analysis explication, defined content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). Huckin (2004) deepened Berelson's explanation by positing that content analysis is "the identifying, quantifying, and analyzing of specific words, phrases, concepts, or other observable semantic data in a text or body of texts with the aim of uncovering some underlying thematic or rhetorical pattern running through these texts" (p. 14). Although primarily used as a quantitative tool, content analysis can take a qualitative approach and focus on "both explicit and implicit concepts, and empowers the researcher to use his or her judgment in determining, on a case by case

basis, whether a particular linguistic token references a particular concept in the given context” (p. 15).

A huge distinction between content analysis and textual analysis is that content analysis seeks to uncover patterns evident in the discernible content, where the qualitative method of textual analysis explores the latent meaning of the text. Furthermore, content analysis, even the qualitative kind, starts from a pre-set list of themes. It’s deductive. Textual analysis is totally inductive. Hall (1975) posits that, “Literary-critical, linguistic and stylistic methods of analysis are...more useful in penetrating the latent meanings of a text” because methods such as textual analysis “preserve[s] something of the complexity of the language and connotation which has to be sacrificed in content analysis in order to achieve high validation” (Hall, 1975, p. 15). In the search for intention, representation and meaning from the Coast Guard culture, textual analysis “point[s], in detail, to the text on which interpretation of latent meaning is based; they indicate more briefly the fuller supporting or contextual evidence which lies in hand” (Hall, 1975, p. 15).

Another primary difference between content analysis and textual analysis lies in the object of analysis. Textual analysis “recognizes a fundamental assumption: that meaning is a social production...the object of analysis is not the meanings of the text, but rather the construction of those meanings through the text; more concretely the text itself” (Acosta-Alzuru and Roushanzamid, 2000, p. 315).

In line with this argument, Hall pointed out that there are no true meanings to any text, thereby making textual analysis an interpretive, objective process:

Since there is no law which can guarantee that things will have 'one, true meaning', or that meanings won't change over time, work in this area is bound to be interpretative--a debate between, not who is 'right' and who is

'wrong', but between equally plausible, though sometimes competing and contested, meanings and interpretations.

One soon discovers that meaning is not straightforward or transparent, and does not survive intact the passage through representation. It is a slippery customer, changing and shifting with context, usage and historical circumstances. It is therefore never finally fixed (1997a, p. 9).

Procedure

In this study, I followed Stuart Hall's technique for textual analysis, as outlined in his introduction to *Paper Voices* (1975). The procedure was as follows:

1. A preliminary run-through, also referred to as a "soak." Beginning with an initial scan of the entire Web site and its text, I embarked on the textual analysis with an overall idea of the site's layout and design in mind. Hall (1975) posits that an initial soak allows the researcher to "select representative examples which can be more intensively analysed" (p. 15).
2. A closer reading of the text.
(At this point, graphical representations were also considered.) With this closer reading, themes and patterns of textual placement started to emerge. Hall (1975) believes this occurs because the "analyst learns to 'hear' the same underlying appeals, the same 'notes', being sounded again in different passages and contexts. These recurring patterns are taken as pointers to latent meanings from which inferences as to the source can be drawn...Position, placing, treatment, tone, stylistic intensification, striking imagery, etc., are all ways of registering emphasis" (p. 15).
3. Interpretation of the text (and graphics).
Considering the themes and patterns noted in step two, a final examination of the text allowed me to reflect on and explicate the constructed meanings and representation of those meanings.

Sample Selection

In selection of the analysis sample, my primary decision-making strategy stemmed from an in-depth conversation conducted with Mauro Cooper, the director of Coast Guard Recruiting in Washington D.C. This conversation identified the use of recruit surveys, as well as Google Analytics, to track recruiting efforts. In fact, the

conversation pinpointed three specific areas of importance to the Coast Guard when considering recruiting messages:

1. Niche Officer Programs – including (a) the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI); (b) Officer Candidate School (OCS); (c) Maritime Academy Graduate; and (d) the Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative
2. Growing Diversity within the Coast Guard organization
3. The Coast Guard's Recruiting Web site – which is considered the organization's primary recruiting tool

With this in mind, I examined data gathered from 13,733 surveys and found that approximately 90% of newly enlisted active duty respondents reported using the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site to find initial and additional information about the organization prior to joining. However, the surveys did not report any information for newly recruited officer candidates. But, the Coast Guard's main officer recruiting Web site ("Find Your Fit - Officer") contains ample information about the four niche officer programs and was therefore used as the vehicle to further explore messages regarding the officer component.

Taking into account all of these factors, I chose to focus solely on the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site as the primary focus for this study. Given academic time constraints, it would have been unreasonable to examine the *entire* Web site, so I chose to narrow the sample by considering Google Analytics, which has actively tracked the public's usage and viewing of specific pages within the Web site.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics is an online, Web site tracking tool which allows an organization to trace a Web site's usage metrics, including detailed visitor statistics. According to the Search Engine Optimization online glossary, Google Analytics "can be

used to track all the usual site activities: visits, page views, pages per visit, bounce rates and average time on site etc.” (“Google Analytics”).

Examining data from January 1, 2008 through June 10, 2008, the Google Analytics report showed 777,506 visits to the site’s home page, with an average 4,793 visits per day (Figure 3-3).

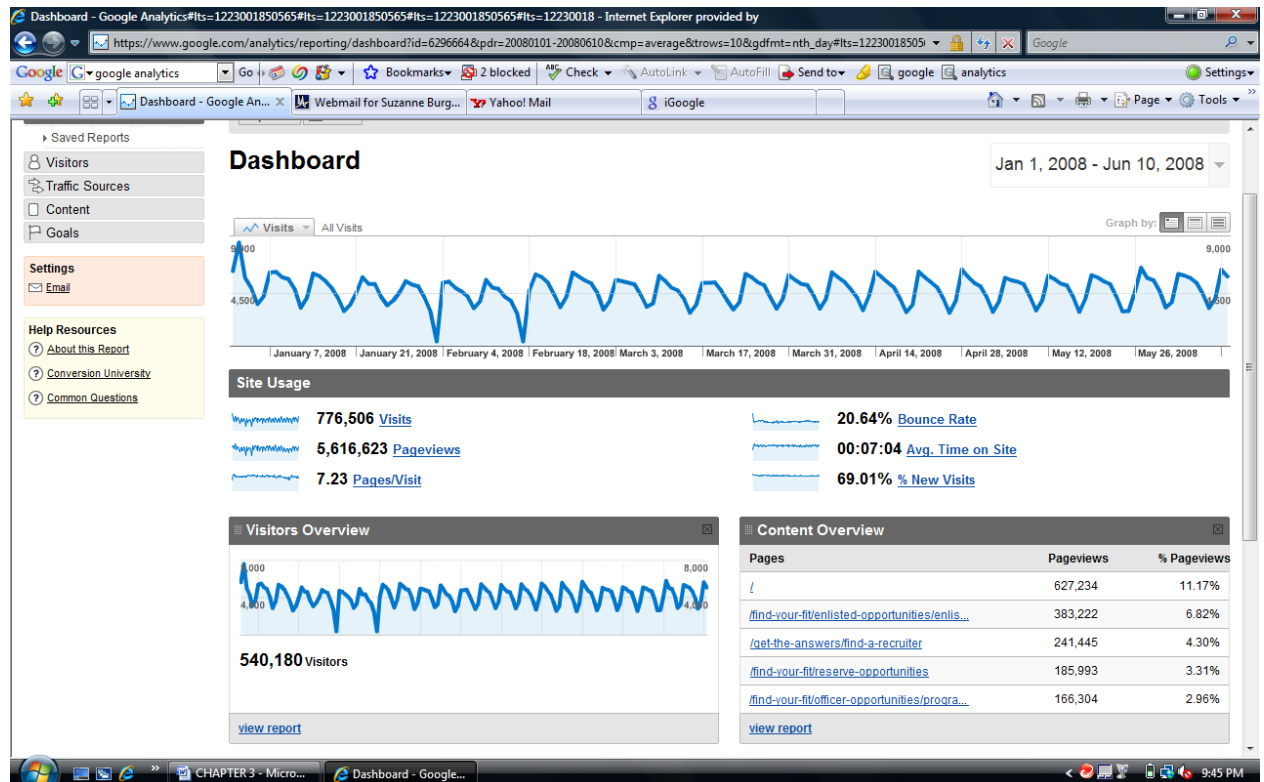


Figure 3-3: Google Analytics Dashboard, January 1, 2008 – June 10, 2008

The timeframe of January 1, 2008 through June 10, 2008, was selected for numerous reasons. This study commenced on June 11, 2008, which made June 10, 2008 a viable ending date for gathering data in Google Analytics. January 1, 2008 was chosen as the jumping-off point because it was the beginning of the 2008 year and, considering New Year resolutions and a typical time for life-changes, a sensible point to begin the data collection. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that Google Analytics was simply a

tool in determining which areas of the Coast Guard recruiting Web site to focus on for further examination.

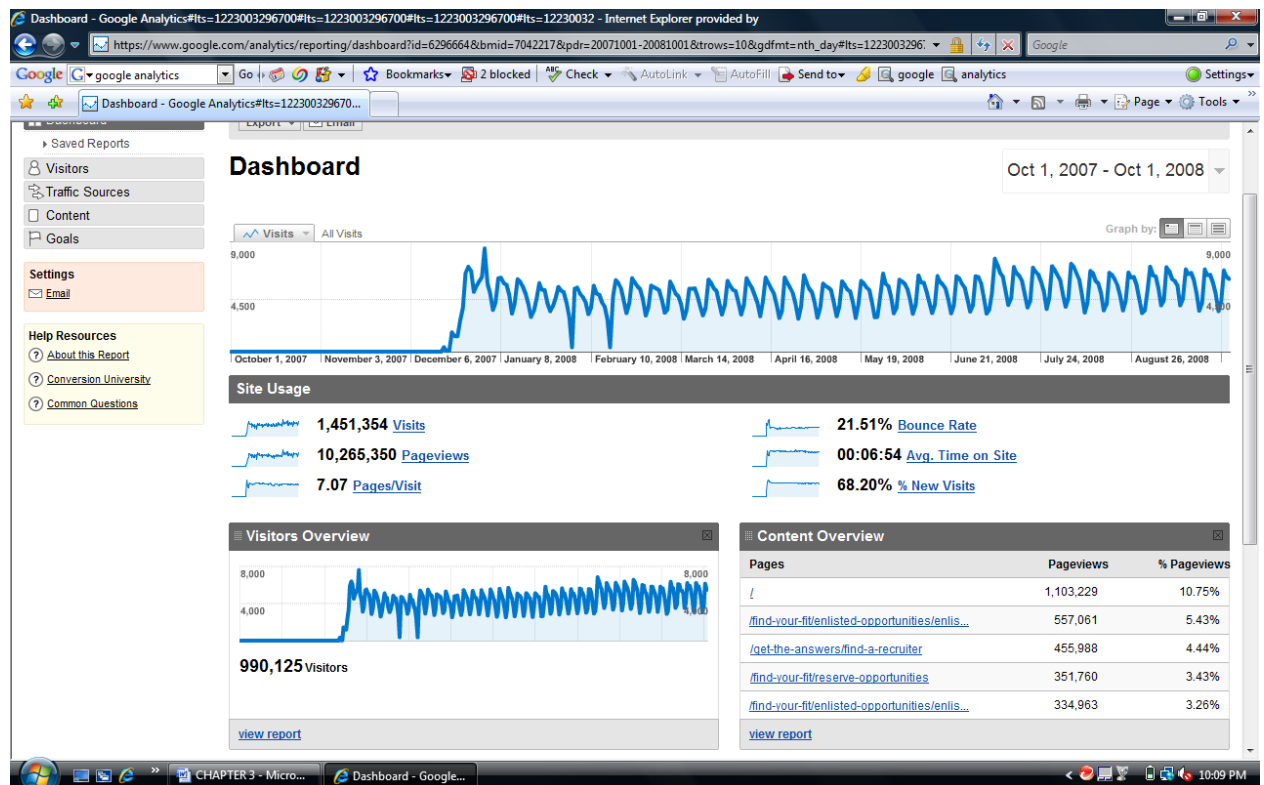


Figure 3-4: Google Analytics Dashboard, October 1, 2007 – October 1, 2008

Figure 3-4 shows that plugging in arbitrary dates (for example October 1, 2007 – October 1, 2008 - both dates marking the beginning of the Federal Government’s Fiscal Year), produced similar benchmarking results, which were almost identical to those in the January 1, 2008 – June 10, 2008 timeframe. Therefore, using January 1, 2008 – June 10, 2008 to ascertain the significant pages of the recruiting Web site proved to be viable and reasonable for this study.

The January 1, 2008 – June 10, 2008 Google Analytics Dashboard outlines the top five pages (including the home page – as indicated by the solitary slash mark) visited by Web browsers. Table 3-1 shows the specific content overview, indicating that “Find

Your Fit” Enlisted, Officer and Reserve pages, as well as the “Get the Answers – Find a Recruiter” page were all deemed significant and worthy of a closer look.

Table 3-1: Coast Guard Google Analytics

<u>Pages</u>	<u>Pageviews</u>	<u>% Pageviews</u>
/	627,234	11.17%
/find-your-fit/enlisted-	383,222	6.82%
/get-the-answers/find-a-	241,445	4.30%
/find-your-fit/reserve-	185,993	3.31%
/find-your-fit/officer-	166,304	2.96%

The Coast Guard Recruiting Web Site

Based on this determination, three specific pages (and eight sub-pages) of the Coast Guard recruiting Web site were analyzed for meanings and representations. These included:

1. The Home Page
2. Find Your Fit
 - Enlisted Opportunities
 - Officer Opportunities
 - i. College Student Pre-Commissioning Program
 - ii. Officer Candidate School
 - iii. Maritime Academy Graduate
 - iv. Blue 21 Flight Initiative
 - Reserve Opportunities
3. Get the Answers
 - Find a Recruiter

However, a short ways into the initial soak, it was evident that I needed to include a fourth page, and its five sub-pages, in my analysis. The following were key components of a complete and thorough textual analysis of the Web site:

4. Discovering Our Missions

- National Defense
- Maritime Security
- Protection of Natural Resources
- Maritime Safety
- Maritime Mobility

Per my conversation with Mr. Cooper, I knew it was important to include the four niche Officer Accession programs in my study because this would help me determine key Coast Guard recruiting messages as well as the dissemination of these messages to potential Officer recruits. Bearing this in mind, I also examined the “Find Your Fit – Officer Opportunities” pages, specifically focusing on: (a) the College Student Pre-Commissioning Program; (b) Officer Candidate School; (c) the Maritime Academy Graduate program; and (d) the Blue 21 Flight Initiative.

This thesis uses impression management and representation theories to decipher the underlying meanings of textual cues found on the Coast Guard’s recruiting Web sites. The goal is to ascertain if these online recruiting messages align with the Coast Guard’s five primary mission areas and if the Coast Guard has been able to maintain its historic reputation despite going through a tremendous amount of transition and restructuring.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Overview

Before examining the verbal - and a few of the visual - portrayals of the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site, it is necessary to note several relevant factors about the organization and the study. It has been my experience during my six years of active duty service that America's public is relatively uninformed about the Coast Guard's primary missions, duty stations and overall purpose.

Having served in Connecticut, Washington, Guam, Oregon, and Georgia, I have found that on more than one occasion, many individuals have been unaware of the true breadth and scope of the Coast Guard organization and missions. While many have had some interaction with the Coast Guard, most of these stories involve a Coast Guard small boat arriving on-scene with fuel or a tow for the unprepared Saturday afternoon boater, or a Coast Guard helicopter deploying a rescue swimmer to save a mariner facing the perils of a relentless and unforgiving maritime environment. However, very few people seem to realize that the Coast Guard is tasked with much more than being a floating gas station or a search and rescue entity.

While these missions are important because they keep the public safe, the Coast Guard serves both locally and globally in a much broader capacity. The organizational missions include Maritime Security, Maritime Safety, Maritime Mobility, Maritime

Environmental Protection and, with the on-going threat of terrorism to our nation's security, National Defense.

Initial Analysis

After speaking with the head of recruiting efforts at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C., and considering the information gleaned from Google Analytics, four specific Web pages (and 13 sub-pages) were analyzed for this study. These pages include:

1. The Home Page
2. Discovering Our Missions
 - National Defense
 - Maritime Security
 - Protection of Natural Resources
 - Maritime Safety
 - Maritime Mobility
3. Find Your Fit
 - Enlisted Opportunities
 - Officer Opportunities
 - i. College Student Pre-Commissioning Program
 - ii. Officer Candidate School
 - iii. Maritime Academy Graduate
 - iv. Blue 21 Flight Initiative
 - Reserve Opportunities
4. Get the Answers
 - Find a Recruiter

An initial overview of these 17 pages uncovered some unexpected observations. At first glance, Coast Guard's entire recruiting Web site appears structured and uniform, mirroring the image of Coast Guard's internal structure and organization. However, upon further consideration, the analysis revealed multiple layers which, when broken down and contemplated individually, exposed a complex web of interwoven ideas, concepts, themes, representations and messages. Themes such as action, adventure, bravery, dedication, devotion to duty, heroism, honor, patriotism, personal growth, pride, self-

discipline, and respect are common and repetitive, as they emerge through language use and placement. Additionally, the Coast Guard is represented as a lead, premier agency, a domestic and international force with the tremendous responsibility to protect America and her maritime domains. All of these notions are intertwined and work to create the notion that, by joining the Coast Guard, one has the opportunity to become part of something great – something bigger than oneself.

The text's top layers were examined during the initial soak. These top layers explain the Web site's overall construction and the placement of the language. Each Web page is integrated with the next, thereby creating an evolutionary process of content and structure. As one explores the Web site, beginning with the home page, one experiences a transformation from an uninformed observer to a willing and educated participant. This evolution begins on the site's home page. Through the use of text and well-placed graphics, the home page gives the impression that the reader does not know much about the service and needs a very basic, unassuming, non-threatening starting point to begin to gather information about the Coast Guard. As the Web pages progress, and the reader clicks through the series (in order), each Web page morphs into much more complex matters such as the Coast Guard's mission areas ("Discovering Our Missions") and program offerings ("Find Your Fit"). As the reader takes the time to navigate through, a natural progression occurs and the novice reader is slowly transformed from an observer to someone who is well-versed and may be a potential member of this military service.

The Audiences

The Web site creates the potential, from the inception of the home page, for individuals to become viable candidates for Coast Guard employment, simply by

navigating the site and gleaning a plethora of important information during the journey. However, this recruitment tool also makes it abundantly clear that the Coast Guard is a prestigious organization which is only interested in recruiting the cream-of-the-crop. Top performers are necessary because everyone in the organization can be (and often is) called upon to save a life or defend the country. One might consider the Coast Guard as the maritime 911. So, while the nature of many of the Coast Guard's jobs are "blue collar" by definition, those who step-in and get dirty do so knowing that they are putting their own lives, limbs, and futures on-the-line to be of service and help those in immediate danger or need.

Bearing this in mind, the recruiting Web site is quite clear that not everyone has what it takes to be a United States Coast Guardsman. Although one may take the time to fully navigate and understand all of the Web site's data, a connection may not happen between a Web site surfer and the organization. Taking this into consideration, the Web site has been constructed in such a way that the target audiences are clearly identified. The text and the visuals help construct these audiences and, in doing so, powerfully convey the message that, if this is a fit and the Coast Guard is for you, it is the best thing you will ever decide to do.

Language Placement

The second major layer of analysis involved examining the strategic placement of language, which created a specific tone for each page while furthering the overall understanding of the Coast Guard organization. (Although focused on the verbal text, some images were considered, as they enhanced the understanding of underlying messages and implications.) With the advancement of the site through each new page, it

was found that the language gradually became more complicated, increasingly technical and much more assertive. Even with the change in language, as each main section transitions into the next, the feeling created by the visuals and the language becomes less formal, more personal, and results in a more congenial tone.

With this progression came the assumption, as evidenced through the deliberate placement of language and the resulting creation of a congenial tone, that the *qualified* reader has been transformed into a schooled recruit, armed with the necessary knowledge to begin actively assisting the Coast Guard in its objectives and missions. If done in the intended structured way, a potential recruit will have sifted through (at a minimum) 17 pages before reaching the “Get the Answers” tab, where he or she is finally afforded the opportunity to search for a recruiter and join. This is analogous to the Coast Guard’s hierarchical organization in that it is expected that one will take the time to fully become immersed in one’s job (rate) before trying to advance to the next level. Eventually, after a lot of time, dedication, and steadfastness, one will be rewarded with the opportunity to advance to the next level.

It should be noted that there are opportunities to find a recruiter on nearly every page. So, one does have the opportunity to opt out of perusing the entire Web site and find a recruiter directly. However, these links do not lead directly to the “Get the Answers” section, which is special in that it offers flashy graphics and specific outside resources. It is only on the “Get the Answers” page that one can find phone numbers and names of Coast Guard recruiters to assist with the process. (The names of area recruiters are not offered in any other section within the Web site.) So, it can be argued that it is worth one’s time to stick with the established system and navigate through the entire Web

site before trying to find a recruiter to sign-up for the service. This is perhaps why the “Get the Answers” page is the last navigable page on the Web site and, while accessible at any point, it is most effective when one has read and understood all of the previous material. After all, not everyone is going to make the cut. So, it is better to understand the requirements and expectations *before* talking with a recruiter rather than *after* making the initial phone call.

Coast Guard Recruiting Home Page

At first glance, the Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site hones in on the service’s ability to act as America’s “Shield of Freedom,” defending the Homeland against potential maritime threats. Upon closer examination, however, one realizes that the Web site’s layering components originate on the home page, as it serves as the gateway for the public to interact with and understand the Coast Guard organization. The home page is broken down into five main categories and assumes that any potential member needs to first understand the inherent missions of the Coast Guard before moving on to consider life in the service. These categories are:

1. Discovering Our Missions
2. Being a Coastie
3. Find Your Fit
4. Download Stuff
5. Get the Answers

Looking at the order of appearance of these categories, the Coast Guard seems to say that one shouldn’t contemplate “Being a Coastie” until one has spent time “Discovering Our Missions.” Once educated in the missions and daily life, the potential recruit can ponder where he or she fits into the organization (“Find Your Fit”) and eventually locate a recruiter (“Get the Answers”) to take the final plunge.

This organizational pattern is logical and consistent with military structure. Just as it is unrealistic for a service member to expect to advance without first immersing him or herself in the fundamentals of a given job, it is implausible (although not impossible) for one to expect to navigate the Web site and transition from one key concept to the next without fully comprehending Coast Guard's foundational elements. Therefore, the site is constructed in such a way that one can appreciate more complex issues after "Discovering Our Missions" because one has a better grasp on what the Coast Guard does and the publics it serves.

However, the Coast Guard understands that brevity is, at times, of utmost importance. When dealing with emergency situations and operating during times of peril, concision is key. The Web site adopts this key philosophy and offers abbreviated, vague snippets of the five main Web pages on the home page for those who do not have time, or the need, to navigate through the entire site. These home page snippets, as illustrated in Figure 4-1, provide just enough information to direct one towards the specific information one is seeking without forcing the navigation through each topic.

Furthermore, mirroring a sense of urgency (which is reiterated in real-life Coast Guard situations such as Search and Rescue and Law Enforcement Operations), the home page also hosts a series of topic-based hyperlinks, as well as a search engine option, which provide an easy way to navigate around the information-laden portions of the Web site and hone in on critical data. Additionally, every Web page contains a bright red "Get More Info" button, allowing the reader to bypass reading the entire page and get quick, specific information. So, while the home page is structured and orderly, it allows for some deviation, based on the circumstances and one's perceived need.

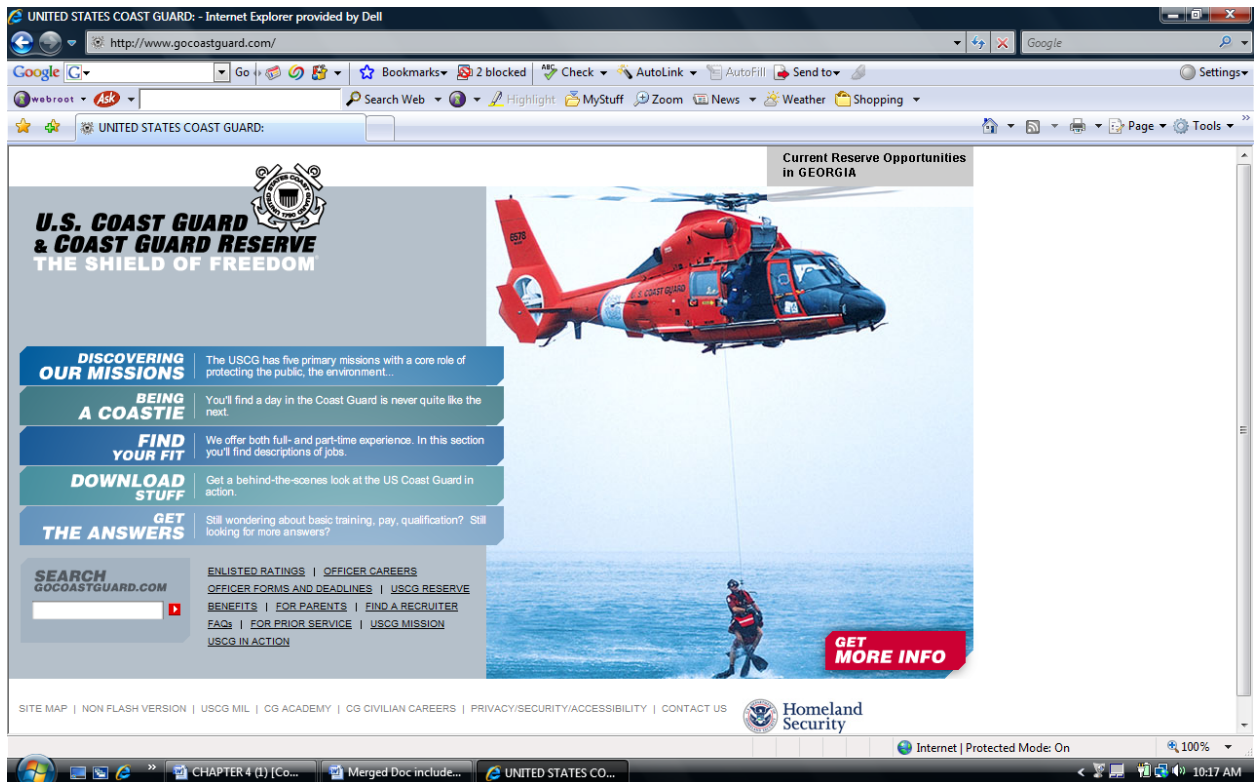


Figure 4-1: Abbreviated Snippets on the Coast Guard Recruiting Home Page

It is interesting to note the graphical representation on the recruiting home page. As the first page that any potential applicant will navigate, the chosen visual representation is one that mirrors the publicly held image of the Coast Guard, as presented by Hurricane Katrina footage and *The Guardian*. There are two pictures of an HH-65 helicopter deploying a rescue swimmer – with one (as seen in Figure 4-1) showing the actual rescue in action. While this is not the only job the Coast Guard does, it is ironic that the first few images which appear on the recruiting Web site clearly depicts that which the American public readily identifies with – “Guardians of the Sea.” The reality is that only a very small percentage of Coast Guard enlisted members make it through the rigorous rescue swimmer training. According to an article on About.com (2004), “The [Coast Guard] rescue swimmer training school...has one of the highest student attrition rates of any special operations school in the military. Roughly 75

students go through the school each year, and fewer than half make it out.” With such a high drop-out rate, it is interesting that the Coast Guard would choose to advertise one of its most elite and prestigious jobs directly on the front page because this could be considered misleading. Right from the beginning of the Web site, one can see that the Coast Guard is interested in recruiting only “the best.” While some may see this as an opportunity to find thrill and excitement by jumping out of helicopters, audience construction is occurring and these visuals make it clear that the jobs and expectations the Coast Guard offers may not mesh with everyone’s abilities, skill levels or desires.

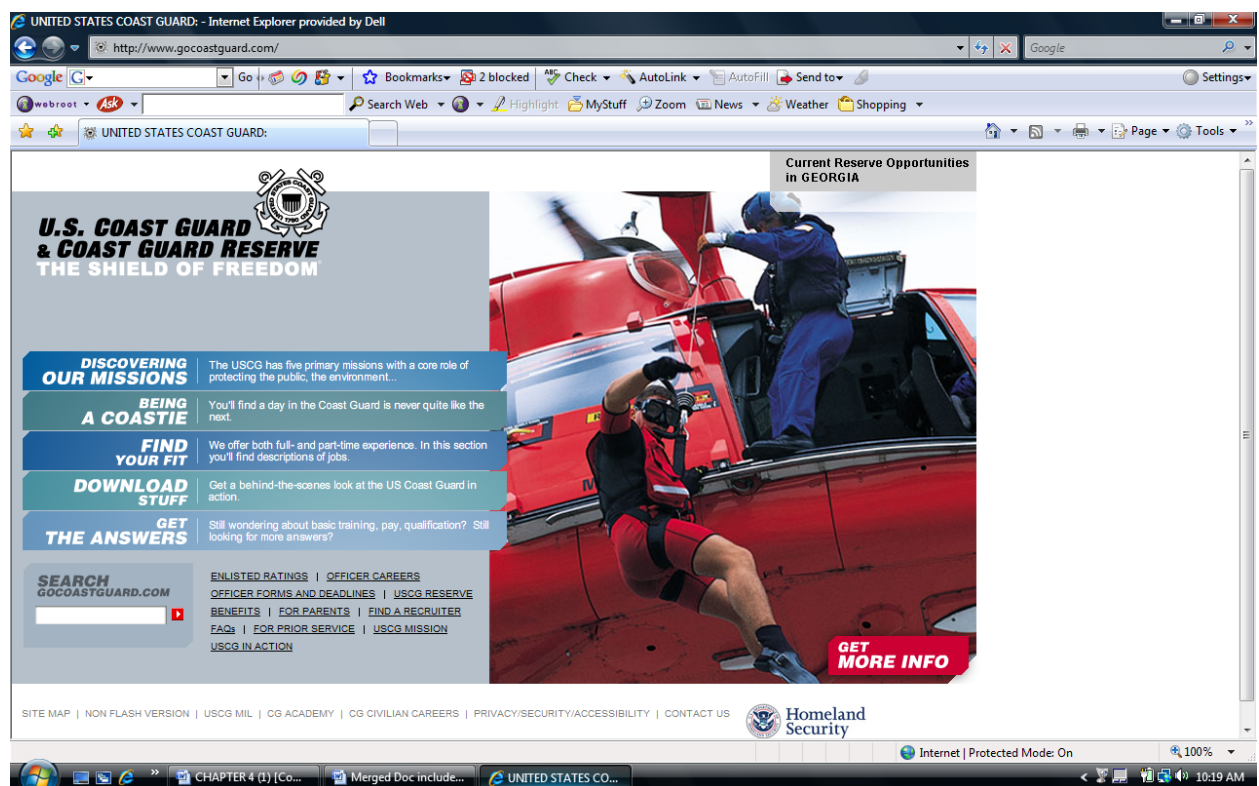


Figure 4-2: Coast Guard Recruiting Home Page

The Home Page's Introductory Paragraphs

If one chooses to proceed and clicks on any of the five snippets on the home page, a related introductory paragraph appears, giving the reader more information about that particular area. Themes such as bravery, heroism, dedication, devotion to duty, pride, patriotism and being a part of something bigger than oneself are evidenced.

The Home Page: Discovering Our Missions

The first of the five paragraphs clearly defines the Coast Guard as an agency which is “Taking a Lead Role in Homeland Security” (“Discovering Our Missions”). It is in this paragraph that representations of the Coast Guard first start to emerge. Phrases within this paragraph portray the Coast Guard as a lead or premier agency, America’s protector, and an organization wrought with responsibility for the maritime domain. It notes the Coast Guard as the premier Homeland Security agency, with a core obligation to protect “the public, the environment and the U.S. security interests in any maritime region” (“Discovering Our Missions”). However, the use of the word “any” in this context is not entirely accurate. According to the Coast Guard’s Maritime Law Enforcement Manual (COMDTINST M16247.3, series) and United States Code 14 (U.S.C.) 89a, the Coast Guard exercises law enforcement authority under specific jurisdictional regions. These regions include specific maritime domains such as:

1. The High Seas (depending on the vessel’s flag state)
2. Portions of the Great Lakes
3. Navigable and Territorial Waters of the U.S.
4. Special Maritime and Territorial Jurisdiction of the U.S.
5. U.S. Territorial Seas
6. U.S. Exclusive Economic Zones
7. U.S. Customs Waters
8. U.S. Contiguous Zone

Laws in other maritime domains, such as

1. Exclusive State Waters (U.S. or foreign)
2. Foreign Territorial Waters (with a few exceptions)
3. High Seas (depending on vessel flag state or violations of international laws)
4. Internal Waters (U.S. or foreign)
5. Land or Water not within or between any of the 50 States

are enforced by different law enforcement entities such as State and Local Law

Enforcement Agencies (for example, a state's Department of Fish and Game) and foreign

Coast Guard and Naval organizations. Because the Coast Guard does not have

jurisdiction and law enforcement authority in *all* maritime domains, using the modifier

"any" when referring to maritime regions is misleading. Potential recruits may be led to

believe the Coast Guard is the sole law enforcement entity in any and all maritime

environments. Clearly this is not the case and the all-encompassing "any" seems to

misrepresent the jurisdictional capabilities of the organization.

Nevertheless, part of the Coast Guard's mission is to protect "the public, the environment and the U.S. security interests" ("Discovering Our Missions"). While the public and the environment are relatively clear-cut ideas, this paragraph does not expound on the term "security interests," thereby creating a sense of intrigue which begs the reader to delve into the five mission areas for a more in-depth explanation of each. As evidenced in Figure 4-3, the notions of intrigue and exploration continue as the reader is challenged to "Find out" what the mission areas are and discover how he or she "can be a part of them" ("Discovering Our Missions") by clicking on the provided links and exploring the Coast Guard's missions in depth.



Figure 4-3: Discovering Our Missions Home Page

The Home Page: Being a Coastie

As previously stated, it is difficult for one to become a Coastie if one does not truly understand the organizational missions. This is why the “Being a Coastie” section comes directly after “Discovering Our Missions.” This section integrates “real-life stories” and gives a face to the Coast Guard. Personalizing the Coast Guard provides a defined sense of realism while creating a more intimate look at the organization. Verbiage used in this introductory paragraph is less formal, more personal, and more congenial. The term Coastie is itself a term of endearment, usually reserved as a familial reference when one Coast Guard member is addressing or referring to another Coast Guard member. It is evident that a shift is occurring and the reader is well on the way to begin actively assisting the Coast Guard in its objectives and missions. The assumption is made that he or she is signing-up, as evidenced by phrases such as “you’ll find” and

“one day you could be” (“Being a Coastie”). The National Defense and Maritime Safety mission are referenced as exciting, adventure-filled opportunities, allowing one to “sav[e] a life at sea” and “defend...our nation’s waterways,” being part of the bigger picture. Being a part of this premier organization may lead to “new experiences even adventure” everyday because “a day in the Coast Guard is never quite like the rest” (“Being a Coastie”). “Being a Coastie” is not something one just does. It is something that is earned, as a result of hard work, dedication and devotion to duty.

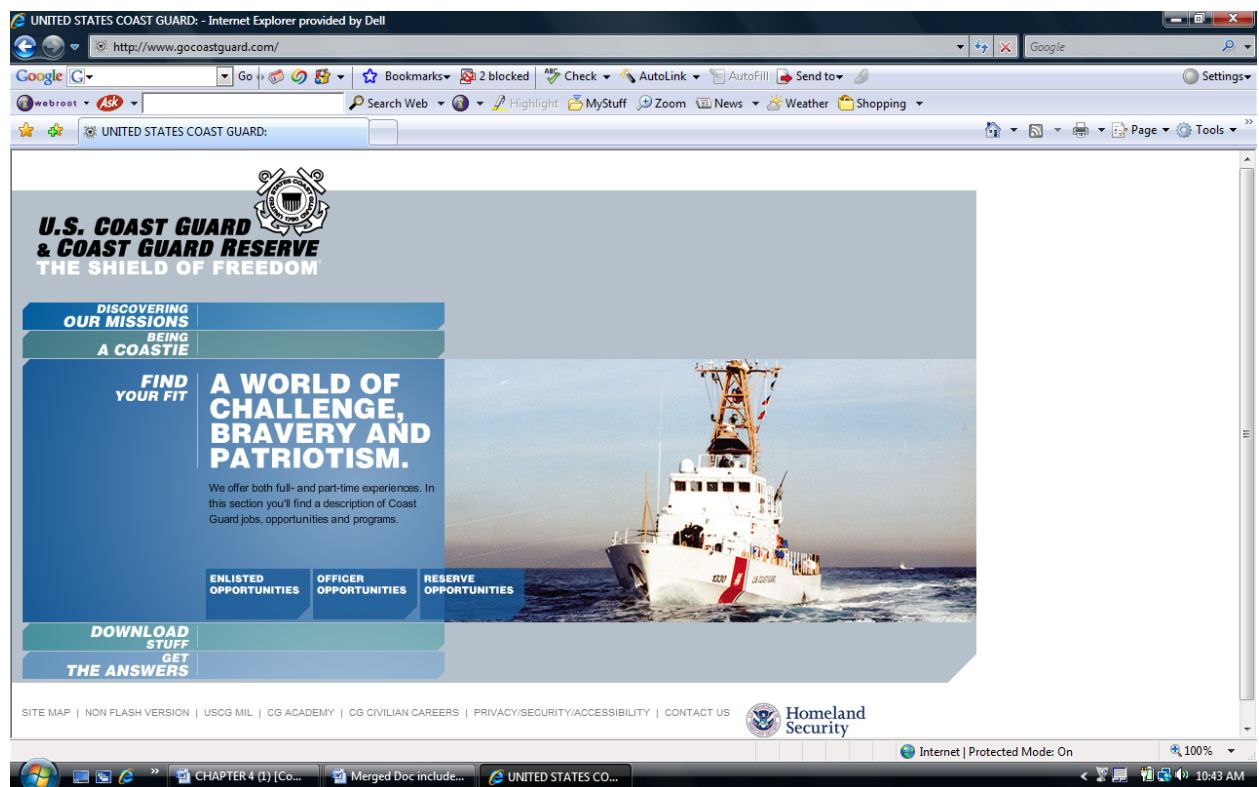


Figure 4-4: Find Your Fit Home Page

The Home Page: Find Your Fit

As the introductory paragraphs move into “Find Your Fit,” the language gradually becomes assertive and the transition is made from explaining the Coast Guard to determining if the reader has what it takes to be part of it. This section is the heart of the site – where the Coast Guard represents itself as a “World of challenge, bravery and

patriotism,” (“Find Your Fit”). It is here where one decides whether one truly belongs in the Coast Guard and if there is an applicable place within the organization to grow and excel. The “Find Your Fit” introductory paragraph provides two succinct ways to be a part of the action (specifically through “full- and part-time experiences”). Additionally, it lists what one can do within the organization (“Coast Guard jobs”), what one might be able to do in addition to one’s primary position (“opportunities”), and ways to do these things (“programs”).

The Home Page: Get the Answers

The final introductory paragraph on the home page affords the opportunity for the now-seasoned reader to become part of something bigger. Offering high-tech options such as “chatting online with a live recruiter” and “post[ing] your questions for an emailed response” (“Get the Answers”), this section embraces the idea that the Coast Guard truly lives up to its reputation of being *Semper Paratus* – or “Always Ready.” It removes any potential excuses that the reader might have for not being aware of important information (such as those related to basic training, qualifications and pay) and reiterates the need for any Coastie to take full responsibility for one’s own career. This section is structured around the idea that there is no excuse for one not knowing. There is no excuse for one misunderstanding, because one has access to up-to-the minute information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Coast Guard operates under these basic premises and expects its employees to be assertive enough to take the initiative and “Get the Answers” for any matter of concern or uncertainty.

Discovering Our Missions

Navigating past the home page, and the initial impressions, one delves into discovering just what makes the Coast Guard an influential, maritime organization. Just as each Coast Guardsman is unique, each of Coast Guard's mission areas is unique. The "Discovering Our Missions" page is broken down into five key parts, which explicate Coast Guard's five key mission areas. Its layout includes the layering of detailed explanations regarding the five primary mission areas: (a) National Defense; (b) Maritime Security; (c) Protection of Natural Resources; (d) Maritime Safety; and (e) Maritime Mobility. While these may appear to be listed arbitrarily, it is striking that the more intense, dangerous missions are listed first (National Defense and Maritime Security). The list tapers off and becomes gradually less extreme and severe in terms of the nature of work and danger, and the potential for a member's loss of life or limb.

Each of Coast Guard's mission areas carry out an individual purpose and, in the Web site, each remains distinctive. By separating each mission area into an independent Web page within the site, each mission is explicated using verbiage appropriate to its distinguishing duties, tasks and operations. While all five of Coast Guard's missions are integrated, they have separate functions and, in some ways, serve as sub-cultures to the Coast Guard's larger community. Not every Coast Guard member will have the opportunity to participate in and experience each mission during a given career, but most of these mission areas blend together to form the overarching "Mission" for a unit. (Therefore, it is not uncommon for Coast Guard members become an expert in one field or area and – especially in the Officer Corps - dabble in a few of the others.) It should be noted, though, that the majority of Coast Guard members are, at some point, involved in

National Defense (listed first) *and* Maritime Security (listed second) because the blended missions almost always contain elements of both.

Because involvement in mission areas are directly related to one's training, job skills, qualifications and assignment, the "Discovering Our Missions" Web pages differentiate these distinctions and allow the reader to find the best fit within the organization. It should be noted though that this fit is much different than the fit explained in the "Find Your Fit" pages. "Discovering Our Missions" is much more of an intricate, job-specific pairing, where the basic question of *Is this organization for you?* is addressed by focusing on the overarching duties and responsibilities of the organization. The "Find Your Fit" pages, on the other hand, lean towards matching a potential recruit with an appropriate tier and job within the organizational structure. "Find Your Fit" is still very clear that the Coast Guard is not for everyone. However, the section assumes that if an applicant has navigated through the "Discovering Our Missions" pages, one has enough knowledge about the Coast Guard organization to make a reasonable determination in deciding if the organization is going to be an appropriate match for one's desired career aspirations.

Discovering Our Missions: National Defense

The first of the five mission areas is National Defense. Its primary function is to address specific questions regarding Coast Guard's role, as a military organization, in defending the United States. The idea of defending an entire nation against potential harm evokes a tremendous sense of pride and patriotism, which is evidenced through verbal representations on the Web page. The first sentence states that the Coast Guard is an "organization that for more than two centuries has served proudly as one of our

nation's five military services" ("Discovering Our Missions"). The phrase "two centuries" was used in lieu of "two hundred years" which is noteworthy because when conceptualizing ideas in a time-space continuum, the idea of "centuries" (as compared to "years") evokes a sense of infinite time and a feeling of forever, and symbolically links to the overarching idea of layering. Furthermore, the term "served proudly" suggests patriotic, pride and duty-based themes, corresponding to the fact that the Coast Guard primarily depends on patriotism, pride, and duty to operate smoothly.

The Coast Guard is the only one of the five military branches to function under the Department of Homeland Security - a department clearly separate from the Department of Defense, which houses the other four services (Air Force, Army, Marines and Navy). Coast Guard's transition to the Department of Homeland Security was made in 2003, as a reaction to President Bush's War on Terror and Bush's efforts to bulk up America's Homeland Security forces ("Coast Guard Snapshot"). Prior to 2003, the Coast Guard was an active part of the Department of Transportation. This is interesting because, on the "National Defense" page, the claim is made that the Coast Guard works "alongside the other military services" and occasionally becomes a "specialized service under the Navy," clearly representing the Coast Guard as a maritime powerhouse. In fact, in the first three sentences, the word "military" is used three times, reiterating the idea that the Coast Guard has a duty to serve as part of the Nation's first line of defense and, above all, act as a premier military organization. While some may balk at the idea of the Coast Guard being a true military organization because it is not housed under the Department of Defense, Rod Powers, a military expert, makes the argument that "[T]he Coast Guard is considered a military service because, during times of war or conflict, the

President of the United States can transfer any or all assets of the Coast Guard to the Department of the Navy. In fact, this has been done in almost every single conflict that the United States have ever been involved in” (“U.S. Military 101”). As a prime illustration, immediately following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, “[S]ix U.S. Navy Cyclone-class patrol coastal warships were assigned to Operation Noble Eagle on 5 November 2001. This was the first time that U.S. Navy ships were employed jointly under Coast Guard command” (“United States Coast Guard: Who are these Silent Heroes?”).

While the Coast Guard can be articulated as one of the nation’s five military services, the “National Defense” page does a poor job at attempting to explain what the Coast Guard’s “four national-defense missions” encompass. Words do not clearly identify or define these mission areas, referring to them only as “essential military duties” which a potential recruit may be “selected to help the Coast Guard fulfill” (“National Defense”). In these early stages of the recruiting Web site, there is the notion that the reader has not yet evolved to the point where he or she knows enough about the Coast Guard organization to truly integrate and become part of the Coast Guard family. In fact, with four additional “Discovering Our Missions” pages to navigate before considering “Being a Coastie,” it is obvious that a potential recruit still has a lot to learn about the Coast Guard organization. The use of impartial phrases such as “you may be selected” and “you could be” and pronouns such as “we” and “you” delineate the Coast Guard organization from the potential recruit.

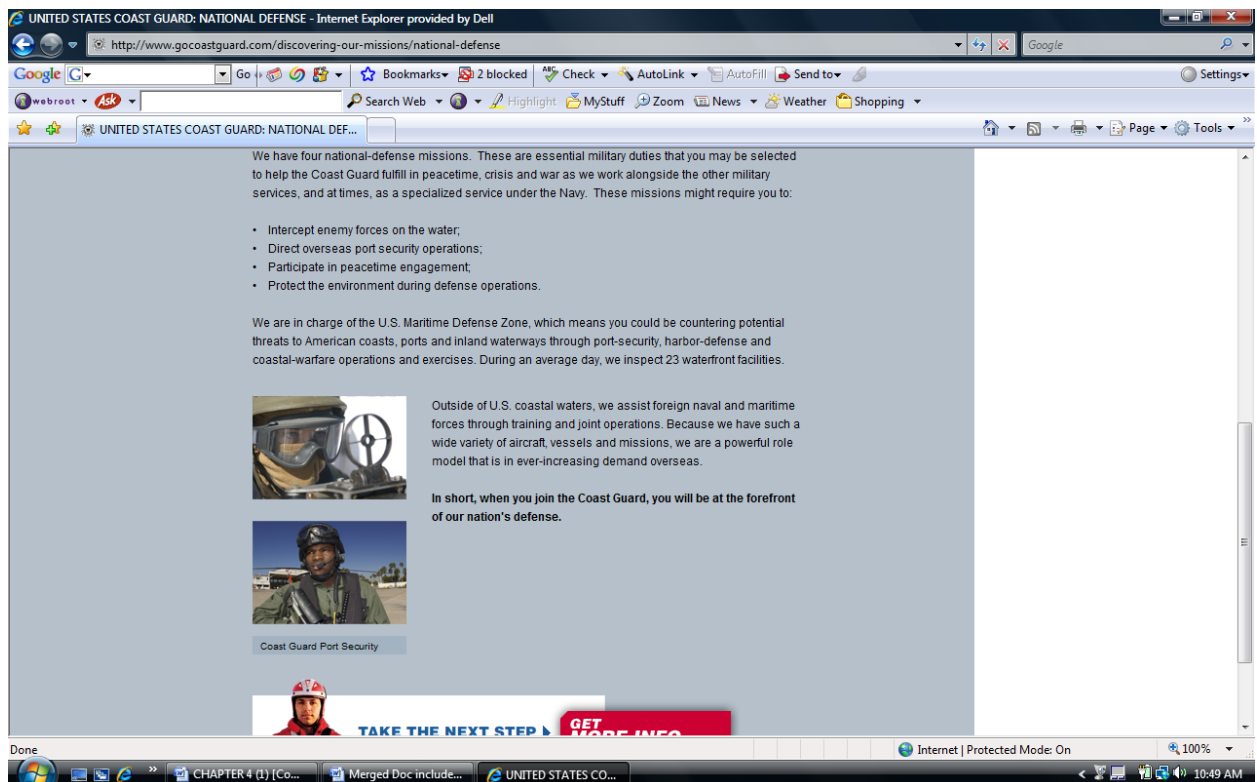


Figure 4-5: National Defense

While these phrases gear one up for becoming part of the mission, they in no way guarantee that the reader has what it takes to be part of such an elite organization. This theme is recurrent throughout the Web site and helps clearly define the intended audiences the Coast Guard strives to target. The “National Defense” page outlines four requirements recruits must fulfill, if they are selected to be “at the forefront of our nation’s defense” (“National Defense”). The four requirements include having the ability to:

- Intercept enemy forces on the water
- Direct overseas port security operations
- Participate in peacetime engagement
- Protect the environment during defense operations (“National Defense”).

This phraseology makes it sound as if each new Coast Guard member will be solely responsible for engaging in and fulfilling the requirements of each of Coast Guard’s

mission areas. But, the reality is that all of the aforementioned elements are part of Coast Guard's larger operational picture and can only be accomplished through teamwork and a unified effort. So, measuring a potential employee against these four criteria is not a true indicator of how well one may fit into the organizational whole.

The Coast Guard also claims to be "in charge" of the U.S. Maritime Defense Zone. However, the explanation of what this zone entails is vague and no specifics of the U.S. Maritime Defense Zone's boundaries are given. The Web page also states that the Coast Guard has "a wide variety of aircraft, vessels and missions" (which can be viewed at the "Download Stuff" page), making the organization a "powerful role model" which is in "ever-increasing demand overseas" ("National Defense"). While Coast Guard has begun to establish itself as a premier organization, using phrases such as "lead role" and "core role" on the home page, these notions increase that distinction and help to establish a sense of elitism and superiority. The text continues to suggest that the Coast Guard represents itself as a leading, prestigious law enforcement agency. This is further explicated by the claim that "outside of U.S. coastal waters," the Coast Guard participates in training and joint operations with "foreign naval and maritime forces" ("National Defense"). Textual elements on this page, and throughout the Web site, suggest that the organization surpasses a simple military organization and is, in fact, *the* premier Homeland Security entity. "In short," this page states, "when you join the Coast Guard, you will be at the forefront of our nation's defense" ("National Defense"). Considering that there are four other armed services working to help protect America from terrorism and unknown threats, this statement is a powerful one in that it induces a strong sense of

duty and patriotism while simultaneously reaching out to a constructed audience which is willing to serve in defense of something greater than one's self.

Discovering Our Missions: Maritime Security

While the thought of joining a military service may evoke ideas of conformity, obedience, and compliance, it is human nature to want to be selected as part of something exclusive, elite, and influential. The Web site steers clear of any phraseology which might evoke thoughts of conventionality and instead represents itself as a premier law enforcement agency. Since 1790, the Coast Guard has been “the ‘law of the sea’” and, according to the “Maritime Security” page, works diligently to defend the United States from potential maritime threats – including “terrorism.” Terrorism is, in and of itself, a powerful word, as it holds connotations from the September 11, 2001 attacks and America's dedication to wage war on anything that has the potential to disrupt America's freedom. Along with the image of defending against terrorist attacks comes a strategic shift in wording and tone. Here, the themes of devotion to duty, determination and becoming part of something bigger than oneself are evidenced and expanded. Employing a spattering of informal language brings the reader closer to Coastie status and further away from civilian realities. For the first time, as this informal language is introduced, a sense of kinship, familiarity, and collective presence is established. The Coast Guard clearly makes the assumption that the reader will want to become part of this elite law enforcement group and further assumes he or she has the drive and determination that it takes to do so.

Nevertheless, this page does not mince words and it is made crystal clear that “drug runners” and “migrant smugglers” are a clear threat to America's security and must

be prevented from continuing to do business. In fact, when one considers the statistics, “roughly half of the heroin, cocaine and marijuana targeted for U.S. neighborhoods reaches our shores by boat” (“U.S. Coast Guard: History and Mission”). However, working together with state, local and other federal agencies, the Coast Guard is stemming the flow of the insurgence of illegal drugs into the country and, on an average day, interdicting “26 undocumented migrants at sea” and seizing “\$2.4 million worth of illegal drugs” (“Maritime Security”). As part of America’s frontline against drug smuggling, more assertive phrases such as “apprehending modern-day pirates,” “enforcing fisheries,” and “tracking and arresting drug runners” give a no-nonsense approach to the law enforcement mission.

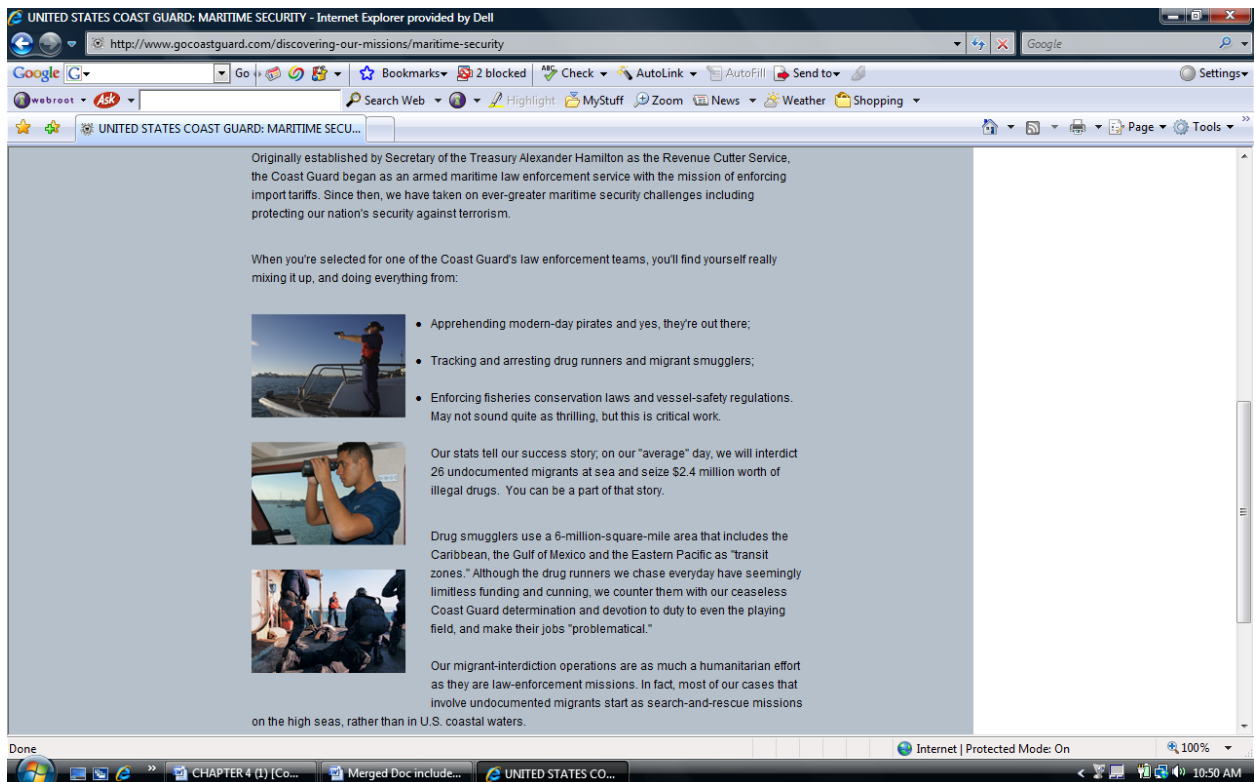


Figure 4-6: Maritime Security

It is interesting to note that, as illustrated in Figure 4-6, two of the three identifiable personnel are women and both are handling weapons. While the Coast Guard

is building the reputation as an elite law enforcement organization, the visuals on this page make it clear that gender is not a factor when considering applying for and performing any position in the service. It has been my personal experience, as a 5'2" Boarding Officer, who has participated in and led multiple fisheries boardings, migrant interdiction operations, drug seizures, and port security boardings, qualifying with and carrying a weapon is an inherent part of the job. Physical stature and gender are inconsequential, as long as one passes all physical fitness requirements, completes the appropriate training, and shows prudent judgment for using force if, and when, the use of force is necessary. While the law enforcement mission is not for everyone, it is one of the "bread-and-butter" missions of the organization and is growing in importance and consequence. The introductory history lesson advances this posture, in that it clarifies the Coast Guard's origins. "Originally established...as an armed maritime law enforcement service...we have taken on even-greater maritime security challenges including protecting our nation's security against terrorism" ("Maritime Security").

Phrases such as "When you're selected as one of the Coast Guard's law enforcement teams" and "you'll find yourself mixing it up," suggest that the reader *must* find a fit within this mission area in order to have the potential to become a useful member of the organization. As stated previously, because this mission area is one that almost everyone in the service participates in (in one form or another), one *must* find a fit with this mission area to even be considered a viable candidate. Again, constructing an intended audience by stating that the Coast Guard is not for everyone, this page does claim that, if a fit is made, and the reader feels that he or she has what it takes to "be part of that story," he or she will be engaging in a story of privilege, honor and opportunity.

Discovering Our Missions: Protection of Natural Resources

“The Coast Guard must not only protect people from the sea, but also protect the sea from people” (“U.S. Coast Guard: History and Mission”). With three of the five mission areas left to examine, the explanations and verbiage used to explain the Coast Guard’s missions are shifting. More emphasis is beginning to be placed on the Coast Guard as an organization, and less on the recruit’s potential as an individual. It is becoming an overt assumption that if the reader has gotten this far, he or she is probably a good fit and intending to join the service. Therefore, the language used is becoming much more technical and friendly. This shift is also indicative that the reader is transitioning from a civilian individual to a Coast Guard team player – which is a necessary component to all five mission areas.

Part of this transition is evidenced by the use of the word “Coasties,” which, as explained earlier, is a term of endearment often used by a Coast Guard member to refer to one’s Coast Guard brethren. It is unusual for people outside of the Coast Guard to use this term, as it is a nickname often kept and used solely within the Coast Guard family. By introducing this term in this section, well before the “Being a Coastie” portion of the Web site, it is apparent that the overall mood and tone is changing. Because the reader has taken the time to navigate and understand the Coast Guard through three of the five mission area pages, he or she is now considered as a potential service member instead of an outsider.

In addition to congenial phrases, more complex and technical terminology is introduced in this section. Phrases such as “biomass,” “U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone,” “closed fishing grounds,” and “high seas drift nets” all support the notion that the reader

has established a better understanding of the Coast Guard's missions and the processes necessary to execute them. These technical terms also appeal to a logical person who may hold the penchant to think in scientific terms or enjoy a specialization. Unlike the previous section, where the assumption was made that the reader would be "selected for one of the Coast Guard's law enforcement teams," this page uses more conditional clauses such as "If you are involved," as well as "you could find yourself," and "you may be assigned." This is indicative of a somewhat exclusionary populace in which one has to be well-qualified or harbor the skills necessary to excel in this area.

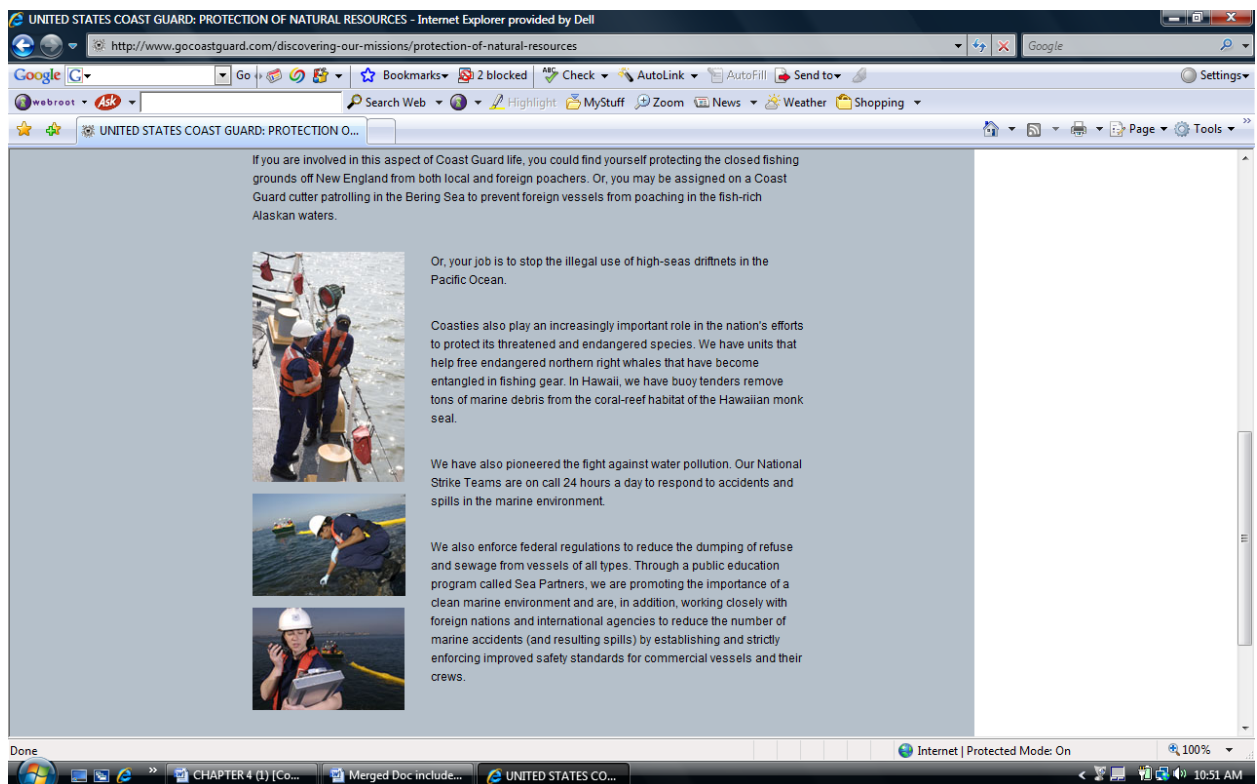


Figure 4-7: Protection of Natural Resources

The "Protection of Natural Resources" page expands on the themes already presented and places much more emphasis on what the Coast Guard does rather than what the potential recruit will do. For example, the fourth, fifth and sixth paragraphs in Figure 4-7 discuss the specifics of this mission, incorporating the infrastructure and

available resources to further the discussion. The Coast Guard discusses their “units that help free endangered northern right whales” as well as the buoy tenders which “remove tons of marine debris from the coral-reef habitat of the Hawaiian monk seal” (“Protection of Natural Resources”). Up until this point, no real discussion of Coast Guard resources (or units) - aside from mentioning them as “high tech” - has been included in the Web pages. This is the initial introduction to these elements and is fabricated in such a way that the terminology and word choice are indicative of the humanness of the organization.

The continued representation of the Coast Guard as a premier and superior organization is further evidenced on this page. The Coast Guard posits that it “pioneered the fight against water pollution” while continuing to work “closely with foreign nations and international agencies to reduce the number of marine accidents.” The concept of inter-agency cooperation was first introduced on the “National Defense” page and these themes of cooperation and good-will continue to expand. However, the term “enforce,” used twice on this page, reinforces Coast Guard’s Maritime Security mission – but shows that, in this capacity, law enforcement does have a softer side and incorporates marine life and humanitarian issues.

However, key pieces of information regarding this mission area are omitted from the page. This has the potential to create confusion as the reader grapples to clearly define an accurate picture of Coast Guard’s role in the Protection of Natural Resources. For example, the text mentions the “fight to protect the biomass within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone” (“Protection of Natural Resources”) but never clearly discusses the scope of this zone. The U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone extends 200 nautical miles seaward of U.S. land and is so named because it is rich with fish, marine

life, protected species and other marine biodiversity. The Coast Guard is charged with protecting this vast area from overfishing, poaching, and chemical (including oil and petroleum) spills and routinely deploys cutters and National Strike Teams to monitor the seas and respond quickly and effectively to large accidents if necessary.

While the graphic representations give some indications that one might be deployed at sea, the only textual clues infer that at-sea deployments occur in far-away duty stations, including being assigned to “a Coast Guard cutter patrolling in the Bering Sea to prevent foreign vessels from poaching in the fish-rich Alaskan waters” or being stationed on a buoy tender in Hawaii to “remove tons of marine debris from the coral-reef habitat of the Hawaiian monk seal” (“Protection of Natural Resources”). In reality, at one point or another, most people in the Coast Guard should expect to be stationed aboard any of the Coast Guard’s 500 plus cutters.⁴ These cutters, which vary in size and capabilities, deploy from both coasts, as well as Hawaii and Alaska. Depending on the nature of the mission and the deployment objectives, most of these cutters average about 240 days of underway time annually.

Discovering Our Missions: Maritime Safety

When the U.S. Life Saving Service was merged with the Revenue Cutter Service in 1915, Maritime Safety became one of Coast Guard’s hallmark missions. Therefore, it is interesting to note that the Maritime Safety page is listed next to last in the line-up of five. Conversely, National Defense and Maritime Security, which are also more dangerous, are first to be explained, which may be representative of how the Coast Guard

⁴ “A cutter is any Coast Guard vessel 65 feet in length or more. Larger cutters (over 180 feet in length) are under control of Area Commands (Atlantic Area or Pacific Area). Cutters at or under 180 feet in length come under control of District Commands, except for Patrol Boats that come under the control of the Group Commands. The high and medium endurance cutters...are used for conducting law enforcement and defense operations, marine science and search and rescue missions and coastal surveillance” (“Coast Guard Cutters”).

values or prioritizes its missions. Nevertheless, throughout all five mission areas, the Web site has crafted the Coast Guard as an outstanding maritime force. On this particular page, the Coast Guard is touted as the “lead U.S. representative to the International Maritime Organization,” which carries a tremendous amount of responsibility, especially as the service is accountable for the “implementation of international safety and pollution standards” (“Maritime Safety”).

As an organization with centuries of practice, “When the rescue alarm sounds,” the page states, “we are at our best.” This simple statement reiterates the fact that maritime safety is the foundation of the Coast Guard organization and is one of the more long-lasting traditions of the service. “Put quite simply,” the page brags, “we provide the world’s fastest and most effective response to distress calls.” It is no surprise when one considers the Coast Guard to be the maritime 911, available at a moment’s notice to “save 15 lives, assist 114 in distress and conduct 82 search and rescue operations” daily (“Maritime Safety”).

Language on this page is much more colorful, informal and vibrant than has been previously seen. Descriptive phrases such as “we jump into action” as well as “dangerous seas” and “harm’s way” paint a vivid picture of the duty, dedication and self-discipline (all reoccurring themes) required of Coast Guardsmen and women – especially when responding to life-threatening situations.

Unlike preceding pages, this is the first page that contains specific statistics regarding the outcome of one’s efforts. Hard numbers, such as the aforementioned “15 lives” and “114 in distress” as well as “82 search and rescue operations” make tangible what has, up until this point, been somewhat ethereal and indefinable. Additionally,

these statistics help build up the organization, eliciting a desire to join and be part of the bigger picture (again, a reoccurring theme). This page also uses specific theme words, such as “bravery,” “heroes,” and “dedicated effort” to represent the idea that members of the Coast Guard organization are devoted individuals, who are committed to working as a team for the protection of human lives and material property. In looking for a potential fit in the service, this page beckons those energetic souls who embody these ideals and who may be called to action to serve humanity through a less threatening avenue.

Surprisingly, however, there are no graphic depictions of helicopters or rescue swimmers on this page. If there is an appropriate placement for such graphics in the Web site, this page is certainly a strong candidate. While many of Coast Guard’s maritime safety missions are handled via small boat operations, aircraft are an integral part of the search and rescue function. And, as the public’s perception of the Coast Guard is often centered around search and rescue and maritime safety, it is surprising that the two most prominent visual representations (the HH-65 helicopter and the deployed rescue swimmer) seem conspicuously absent.

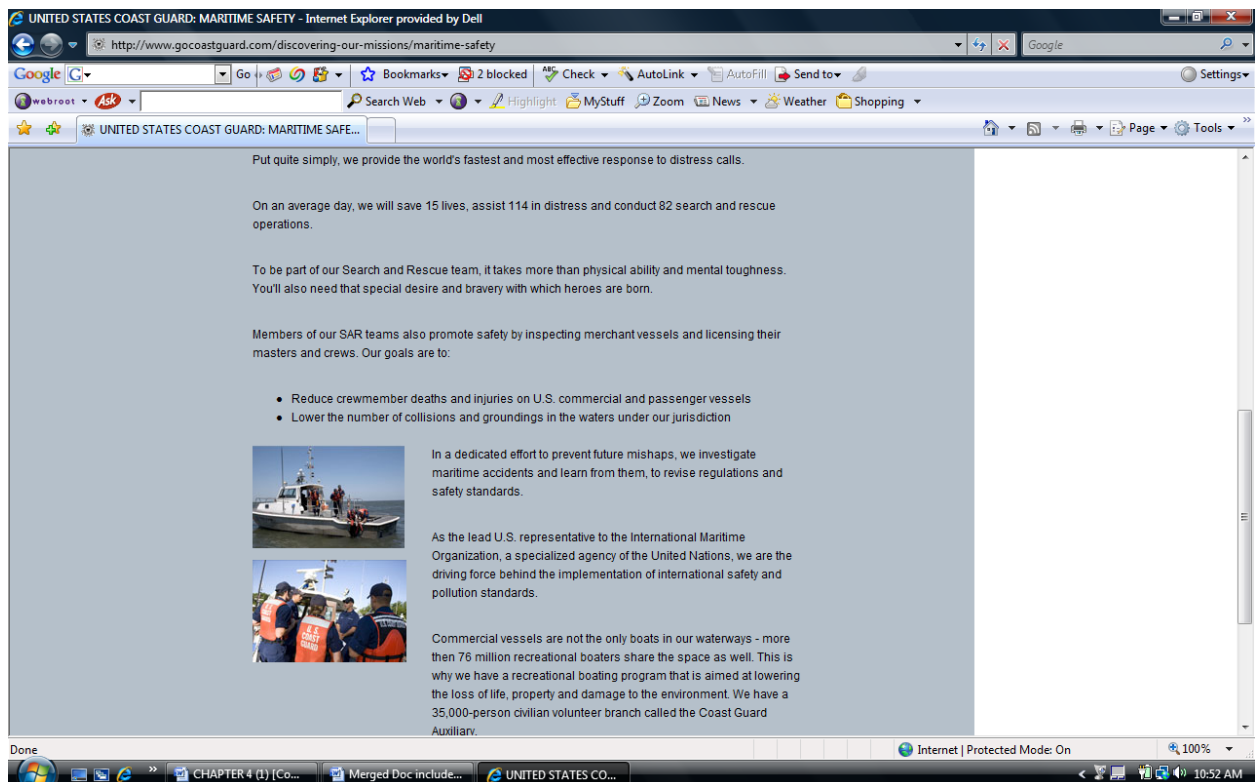


Figure 4-8: Maritime Safety

Discovering Our Missions: Maritime Mobility

The last of the five primary mission areas, maritime mobility, is one of the Coast Guard's original charges. Even in the 1790s, as America's Revenue Cutter Service, the Coast Guard "protected out nation's cargo and shipping." Now, as a modern day entity overseeing the protection of \$4.9 million in property, the Coast Guard is the "lead agency for waterways management, port safety and security, and vessel-safety inspection and certification" ("Maritime Mobility") and is charged with ensuring the safe flow of maritime commerce. In fact, 95% of America's international trade relies on ships and barges and more than a quarter of America's domestic trade moves by way of water ("U.S. Coast Guard: History and Mission"). The organization takes this charge seriously and, using the word "responsibility" three times here, reiterates the fact that the Coast Guard is still responsible for overseeing the U.S. Marine Transportation System, which

serves to “allow the nation’s various modes and types of transportation to move people and goods to, from, and on the water” (“Maritime Mobility”). With more than 50,000 federal aids to navigation in U.S. waters, the Coast Guard is busy with ensuring these “signposts” and “traffic signals” remain on station and watching properly.

What this page fails to mention, however, is the intricate Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), which is akin to a series of air traffic control towers – but for vessels. Monitoring busy waterways and ports, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and New York, Coast Guard personnel monitor inbound and outbound vessel traffic 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure commercial and recreational mariners remain safe while traffic continues to move smoothly in what can often be compared to the intensity of “rush hour” traffic. Having navigated through multiple VTS areas, and having a full understanding of the necessity of this service, I find it shocking that mention of this important element of the Maritime Mobility mission area is absent from the Web page.

Furthermore, of the five mission areas, the Maritime Mobility page is the first which provides almost an entirely descriptive representation of the Coast Guard mission. Unlike the other pages, there is not the element of what a potential recruit can and will do with regards to maritime mobility. Instead, the page focuses on the nature of the mission, using historical components to explicate the characteristics of it. Informal language (such as “signposts” and “traffic signals”) is used to appeal to a wider audience. However, at this point, the notion seems to be that the reader has gleaned enough information about the Coast Guard to fully understand technical jargon (“Differential Global Positioning System”) as well. The page comes full circle and links Coast Guard’s responsibility for Maritime Mobility for its responsibility for National Defense. The second paragraph

states that part of the Maritime Mobility function is to “ensure the continued availability of the military sealift fleet required for national defense.” When considering the actual execution of the Coast Guard’s missions, it seems that this connection is no accident. Every mission in the Coast Guard tends to bleed into another. While differentiated in the Web site as five separate entities, in reality, often two, or three, or even all five are intermingled and become part of the greater picture, known simply as “accomplishing the mission.”

Find Your Fit

It may be assumed that the point of putting “Discovering Our Missions” before any of the “Find Your Fit” pages is to allow an interested candidate to see if the Coast Guard offers the type of job he or she might be interested in. As the most basic part of any job search, there is no point in continuing to explore a company, or one’s fit within the organizational structure, if the nature of the job is not conducive to one’s ambitions, goals or interests. Now that one has taken the time to understand Coast Guard’s mission areas, one can focus on finding a fit within the organizational structure. As stated earlier, this section is the heart of the recruiting Web site because it is here where the reader transcends the statistics and decides whether he or she truly belongs in the Coast Guard.

The “Find Your Fit” section boasts of opportunities, which include everything from full-time leadership (Officer) and followership (Enlisted) positions to part-time (Reservist) jobs. However, the layout and tone of each section (Officer, Enlisted and Reservist) are drastically different and certainly geared towards assumed educational and experience levels as well as one’s potential. These assumptions assist in constructing specific audiences for each of the three sub-groups. The “Enlisted” pages were the first

to be examined and were found to contain undertones that encourage the reader to become part of the Coast Guard experience through a stimulating entry-level position. The language and graphics used target those who have minimal (if any) higher education and are inexperienced in the working world. For example, as exhibited in Figures 4-9 and 4-10, the graphics depict young sailors, all wielding weapons, and all participating in thrilling and exciting tasks. Phrases such as “Full-time High Seas Challenges,” “bust drug traffickers,” and “track and catch polluters” jump off of the page as prime opportunities for building one’s resume while working towards completing a mission that has ramifications bigger than oneself.

While the “Find Your Fit - Enlisted” pages elicit participation from a vast pool of potentially qualified applicants, the “Find Your Fit - Officer” pages exude a feeling of exclusivity and elitism, making the assumption that not everyone will be qualified or have what it takes to become a distinguished leader in the Coast Guard. In the “Officer” pages, the Coast Guard does not expend a tremendous amount of effort selling itself, which is ironic for a group of pages included on a recruiting Web site. Instead, these pages focus on the potential of an Officer candidate and maintain the clear message that, if interested, one must find a way to prove one’s worth to the Coast Guard’s middle-management tiers. Much like the “Find Your Fit - Enlisted” pages, the “Find Your Fit - Officer” pages show pictures of fresh young faces, from a myriad of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, engaged in more technical elements of the missions, including inspections, piloting ships and helicopters, and driving small boats. While all of these positions are feasible for an officer to hold, most are not positions which would be immediately available to a newly commissioned Ensign. It can be argued that the graphical

representations lack the realism of the officer corps because there are no depictions of older officers who have been in the service for a while, or those who come in on a Direct Commission (as a result of prior armed services experience and / or professional experience) and, therefore, exceed the younger age limits. Referring back to Table 1-2, the average age for a Coast Guard officer is 37 years old, with an average time in service of 14.6 years. Understandably, this is a recruiting Web site, geared towards hiring young applicants. However, not exhibiting a complete and accurate representation of the organization is a disservice to the Coast Guard and potential employees.

The “Find Your Fit - Reservist” pages sell the idea of working for the Coast Guard part-time, and promote the ideas of minimal commitment with the prospect of truly making a difference. “Some part-time jobs come with good pay,” the “Find Your Fit - Reservist” page states, “others come with good hours, but how many come with action, adventure, and the chance to make a difference?” A recurring theme throughout the Web site, making a difference and participating in something bigger than oneself, now is directed at one’s pocketbook and one’s sense of purpose. With the younger generation striving to find inspiration in their professional choices, the appeal of doing “something about the environment” or “saving lives” without the obligation of a four, six, or eight year contract makes the Coast Guard an attractive part-time opportunity.

Three different approaches in tone, word choice, and graphical representations identify the types of personality and character required to successfully integrate into one of the three tiers within the Coast Guard. Drastic differences among the Enlisted, Officer and Reserve pages aid in the construction of specific audiences and provide potential

recruits with the information and context needed to find their fit within the military structure.

Find Your Fit - Enlisted

When Google Analytics for the Coast Guard recruiting Web site were reviewed, the “Find Your Fit - Enlisted” Web page reported 382,216 page-views, accounting for 6.84% of the overall Web site’s page-views. Appealing to a younger demographic, typically having little to no work experience, words such as “training,” “responsibility,” and “pay” are effective motivators for anyone considering these entry-level positions. Furthermore, recurrent themes, as shown in Figure 4-9, specifically spelled out as “Excitement, Adventure and Fulfillment” reiterate the concept that Coast Guard offers multiple opportunities for self-growth and personal achievement. On the Enlisted recruiting pages, on-the-job training is stressed, alleviating the need for a potential recruit to have specific skill-sets in place prior to joining the service. “You’ll receive the best training in your field,” the page states, with the likelihood of going “right to work, relying on what you’ve learned” (“Find Your Fit - Enlisted”).

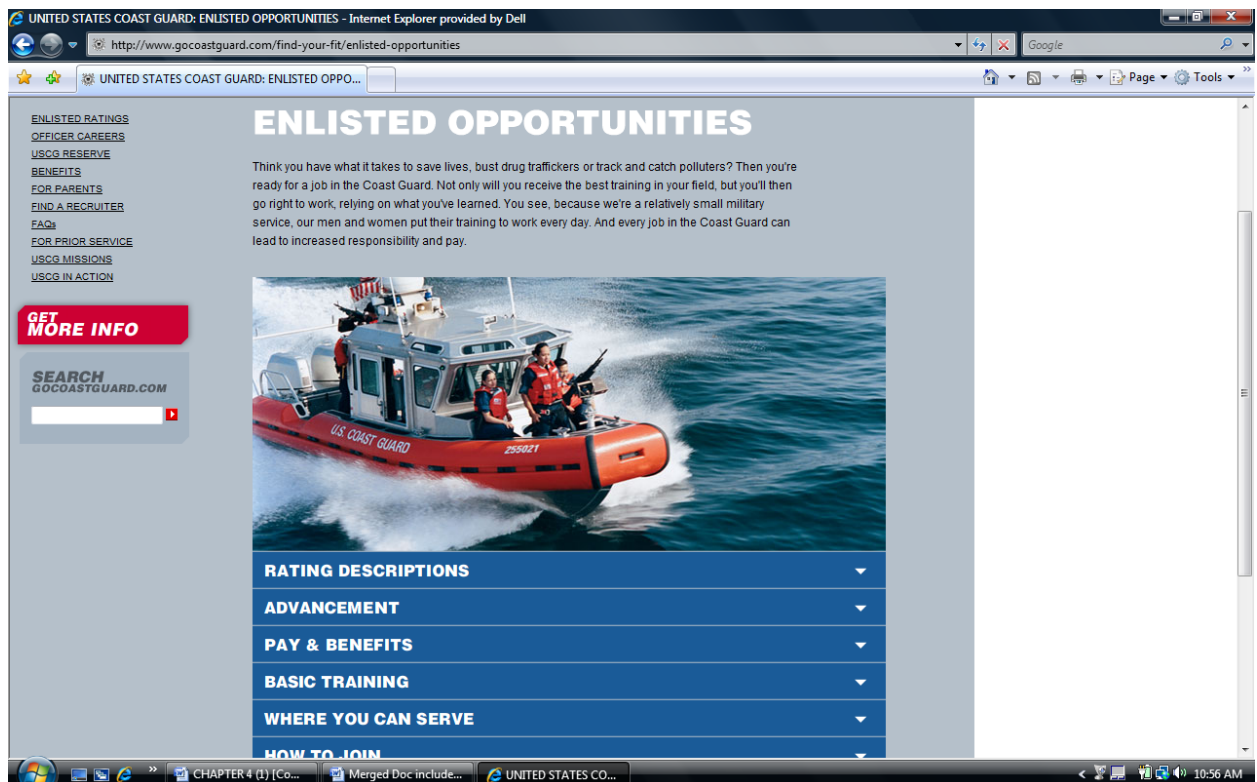


Figure 4-9: Find Your Fit - Enlisted

As with any other organization, advancements and increased responsibility do not just happen. They are earned, and often come as a result of repetitive training and dedication. Coast Guard's representation as an establishment which holds fast to a policy of repetition is evidenced throughout the "Find Your Fit - Enlisted Opportunities" pages. On these two Web pages, the same paragraph appears three times. In fact, as evidenced in Figure 4-10, the same statement appears twice on a singular page:

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing you definitely won't lack – opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement; maritime patrol; environmental operation; aviation; and more ("Find Your Fit").

Repetition is important because the Coast Guard operates on the premise that one will perform in an emergency according to one's training and instruction. As a result, the service spends a great deal of time and energy on repetitive instruction through hands-on exercises and drills. In addition to running drills, this training includes conducting mock training scenarios and adhering to strict Practical Qualification Standards which must be understood and demonstrated before one can advance to the next pay grade.

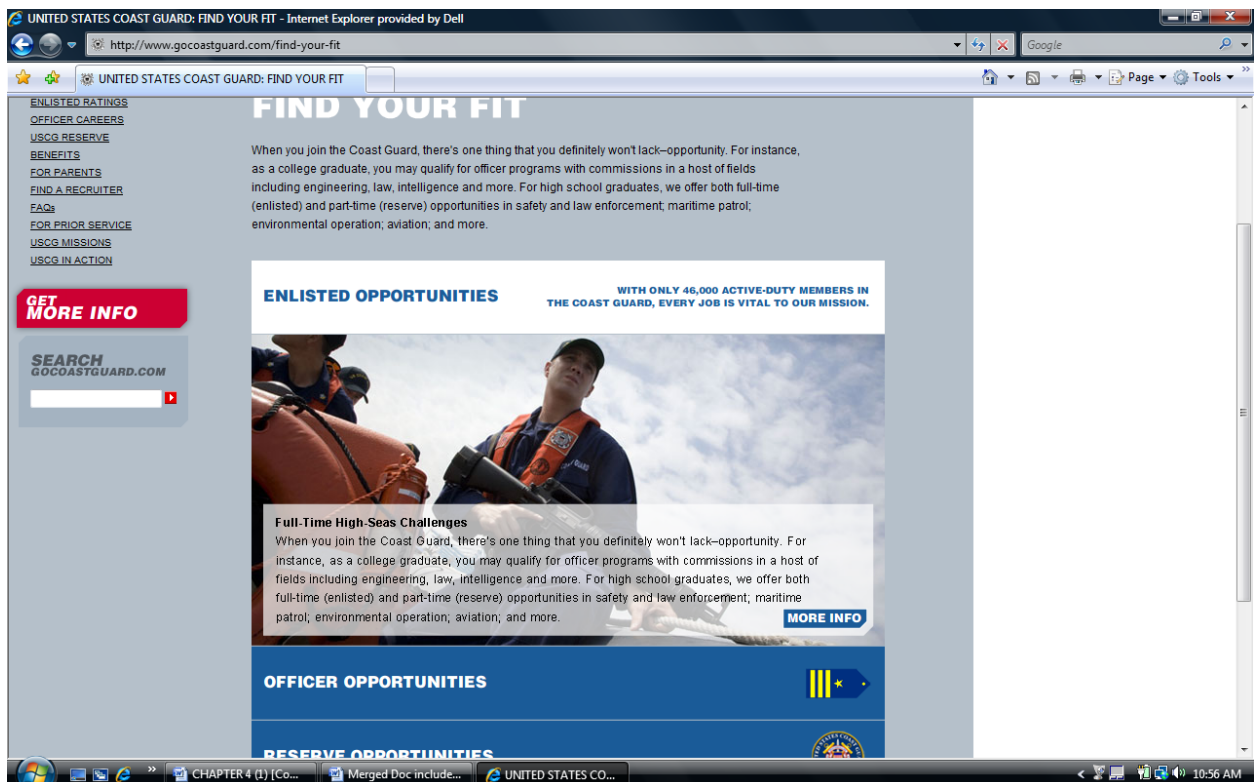


Figure 4-10: Find Your Fit - Enlisted Opportunities

Find Your Fit - Officer

The “Find Your Fit - Officer” pages have a drastically different tone than the “Find Your Fit - Enlisted” pages. Google Analytics reported these pages were viewed 165,493 times (2.96%), making it apparent that the Officer programs and opportunities appeal to a much more specific section of the population. Strong language and strategic placement evoke a sense of urgent responsibility and, in accepting an Officer position, a

need to have established maturity and reliability. Life experience also plays a tremendous role and the messages on these pages stress the fact that one's previous job skills, training, and leadership ability can ultimately mark the difference between life and death. While the themes of excitement, adventure and fulfillment are reiterated here, they are not presented as obviously as they are on the "Find Your Fit - Enlisted" pages. Instead, themes of excitement, adventure and fulfillment appear more subtly as themes of leadership, personal growth and being part of something more important than oneself.

While leadership, personal growth, and responsibility are stressed, it is surprising to note that the same reoccurring paragraph from the "Find Your Fit - Enlisted" pages (see Figure 4-10) appears four times throughout the "Find Your Fit - Officer" pages. As with the enlisted world, Officer advancements and increased responsibility do not just come to pass. However, unlike the enlisted side, where advancement is based on demonstrated understanding of task-related concepts, Officers do not take rate-specific tests and must therefore rely on obtaining outstanding evaluations for advancements.⁵ Officer advancements occur as a result of premeditated timelines. Enlisted members do not have premeditated timelines but must have a certain amount of time in rank. Once this requirement is completed, an enlisted member can advance if task-specific qualifications have been met.

Because Officers are expected to be generalists, they are placed in management positions where they are expected to act as leaders – not operators. The "Find Your Fit - Officer" pages outline this distinction by using the word "lead" (or a derivative thereof) six times. Other phrases such as "be in charge," "hone your management abilities,"

⁵ The job requirements mandate that enlisted members become rated in a specific field, and are evaluated on their knowledge through testing. On the other hand, Officers are expected to be generalists and are never tested specifically on rate-specific concepts.

“taking charge,” and “the right experience” (“Officer Opportunities”) show that Coast Guard Officers are expected to come into the service with specific skill-sets, experience, and education. “From the get-go,” the page states, “you’ll be in charge of situations where your decision can make the difference between life and death” (“Find Your Fit - Officer”). While this may seem like a dramatic declaration, the intended result of reiterating the responsibility of an Officer’s position is evident, and necessary, given the Coast Guard’s five core missions.

While the Web site has used verbiage which sets the Coast Guard apart from other organizations, the “Find Your Fit - Officer” pages draw a direct correlation between management opportunities in the Coast Guard and management opportunities within the civilian sector. As previously noted, these pages do not make the assumption that everyone will be qualified for Officer positions and constructs the target audience accordingly. As with the civilian sector, there is an interview process used to weed through the applicants. But, unlike the civilian world, if one is accepted, one will “get opportunities unmatched by any offered by an entry-level civilian job” (“Officer Opportunities”). As these opportunities are described, the themes of excitement, adventure and fulfillment reemerge, giving a qualified applicant the potential to be part of a “life saving search and rescue mission,” “overseeing the design, construction and maintenance of Coast Guard vessels,” or “protecting the environment from corporate oil and chemical spills” (“Officer Opportunities”). However, unlike the enlisted pages, where on-the-job training is offered, Officer opportunities are only open to people with the right experience and the right background. “If you have the right experience,” the page states, “we have your fast track to the top” (“Officer Opportunities”).

The concept of the “right experience” is arbitrary and, aside from the brief mentions of (a) the importance of experience, (b) education and (c) one’s background, is never fully explained. “Discover the right fit for you based on the education level you’ve reached and officer specialty you’re interested in” (“Officer Opportunities”). As outlined in Figure 4-11, the Coast Guard offers certain specializations. But, the construct of these pages emphasize that the organization is only interested in developing leaders and managers within the Officer corps – not on training operators and technicians upon acceptance.

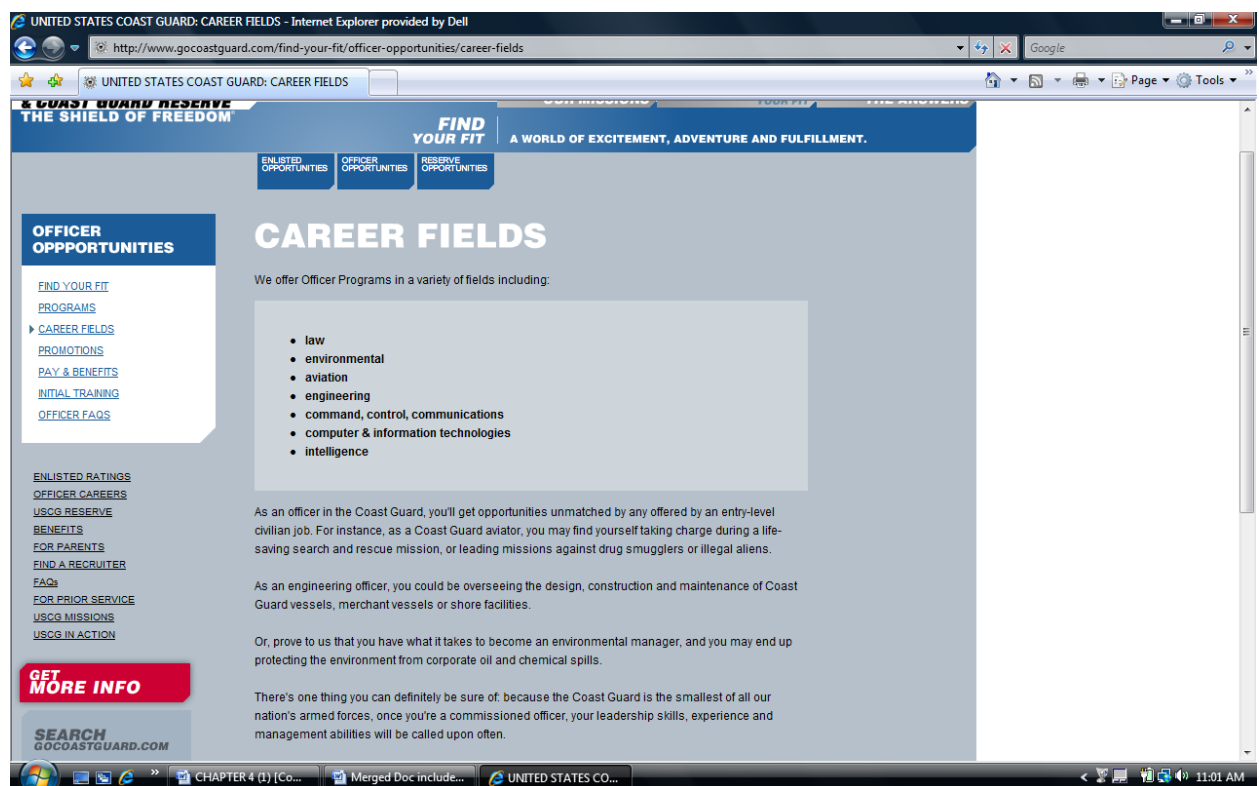


Figure 4-11: Officer Career Fields

The Coast Guard does recognize that because Officers start from the ground-floor (hence the references to “entry-level civilian job”), not everyone who embodies the potential of being an outstanding leader comes with the qualifications and skill-sets needed to adequately manage an operational group. Although the focus is not on intense

training, some schooling is provided through seven distinct programs designed to integrate and develop Coast Guard's future leadership. Under the umbrella of "Officer Programs," the Coast Guard offers seven ways for civilians and enlisted members to merge into the Officer corps. These include: (a) the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI); (b) Officer Candidate School (OCS); (c) Direct Commissioning Programs; (d) Maritime Academy Graduate; (e) the Coast Guard Academy; (f) Pre-Commissioning for Enlisted Personnel (PPEP); (g) and the Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative. Four of these will be explored in depth, as they compose the identified niche Officer programs.

Niche Officer Programs

The four programs which have been identified by Coast Guard Recruiting Command as the most important and influential means for attracting potential leaders are (a) the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI); (b) Officer Candidate School (OCS); (c) Maritime Academy Graduate (MARGRAD); and (d) the Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative. Looking back at the initial research questions, RQ3 is concerned about how the Web site communicates key messages about these programs and looks to identify what the key messages are. While the four programs are in no way the same, they do hold similarities with regard to Coast Guard's expectations of hiring a qualified candidate who already encompasses leadership and management qualities.

Additionally, there are undercurrents of a hierarchical structure amongst these four niche programs. Examining the number of Web pages dedicated to each program, and the tone of the individual Web pages, one can ascertain that the Blue 21 program, ironically listed last in the series, is the most important of the four programs. With four

distinct pages dedicated to it, the Blue 21 program seeks diversity in the aviation program by appealing to audiences “who have graduated from a college or university with a minimum 25% minority population of U.S. citizens” (“Blue 21”). Conversely, the CSPI program, which also recruits minority populations, is listed first and has only two pages explaining its requirements. It should be noted that of the four niche programs, Blue 21 and the Maritime Academy Graduate are the two which require the most experience, educational training and expertise. “Maritime Academy Graduates have education and training that enhances the Coast Guard’s ability to carry out its operational missions” (“Maritime Academy Graduate”). CSPI specifically targets current college Sophomores and Juniors and OCS looks to the Coast Guard active duty Enlisted pool (and a small, select civilian pool) to satisfy its billet requirements. Interestingly, the CSPI and OCS programs are listed first and second respectively and contain a minimal amount of pages (two each) explaining their requirements. But, as revealed in Figure 4-12, the Blue 21 and Maritime Academy Graduate programs, which require the most training, are listed last in the line-up. Considering representations, the Coast Guard seems to be saying that CSPI and OCS are not as technically specific as their counterparts and therefore are more open to recruiting from a larger, perhaps less diverse, qualified applicant pool.

Diversity is an important element in all of Coast Guard’s recruiting efforts. As discussed in Chapter One (see Table 1-1), 78.4% of the Coast Guard’s active duty workforce is Caucasian and, according to Table 1-2, only 12.2% of the workforce is comprised of women. Moreover, the Coast Guard Academy’s demographics (see Table 4-1) show that 851 of the 995 college undergraduates are Caucasian and 717 are male. (The Coast Guard Academy is not considered one of the four niche programs because it

is one of the fundamental sources for Officer commissioning. Nevertheless, each year the Coast Guard Academy graduates and sends approximately 350 newly commissioned Ensigns into the fleet.)

Table 4-1: Coast Guard Academy Demographics, 2006

Student Body (Fall 2006)					
Total Student Population (995 students)		Attendance Status of All Undergraduates		Demographic Breakdown of Full-Time Undergraduates	Gender Breakdown of Full-Time Undergraduates
Undergraduates	995	Full-Time	995	African American	Male 717
Total Students	995			Indian	Female 278
				Asian American	
				Caucasian	
				Hispanic American	
				International	

(“Coast Guard Academy”)

Examining the visuals on the “Officer Programs” page (see Figure 4-12), Caucasian males are conspicuously absent. Only two of the seven program images contain Caucasian males, and, interestingly enough, neither one of these two programs (Direct Commissions and Pre-Commissioning Program for Enlisted Personnel) fall under the four niche programs. Furthermore, one might wonder why the graphical representation of the Coast Guard Academy program is a building - and not the Cadets who graduate from it.

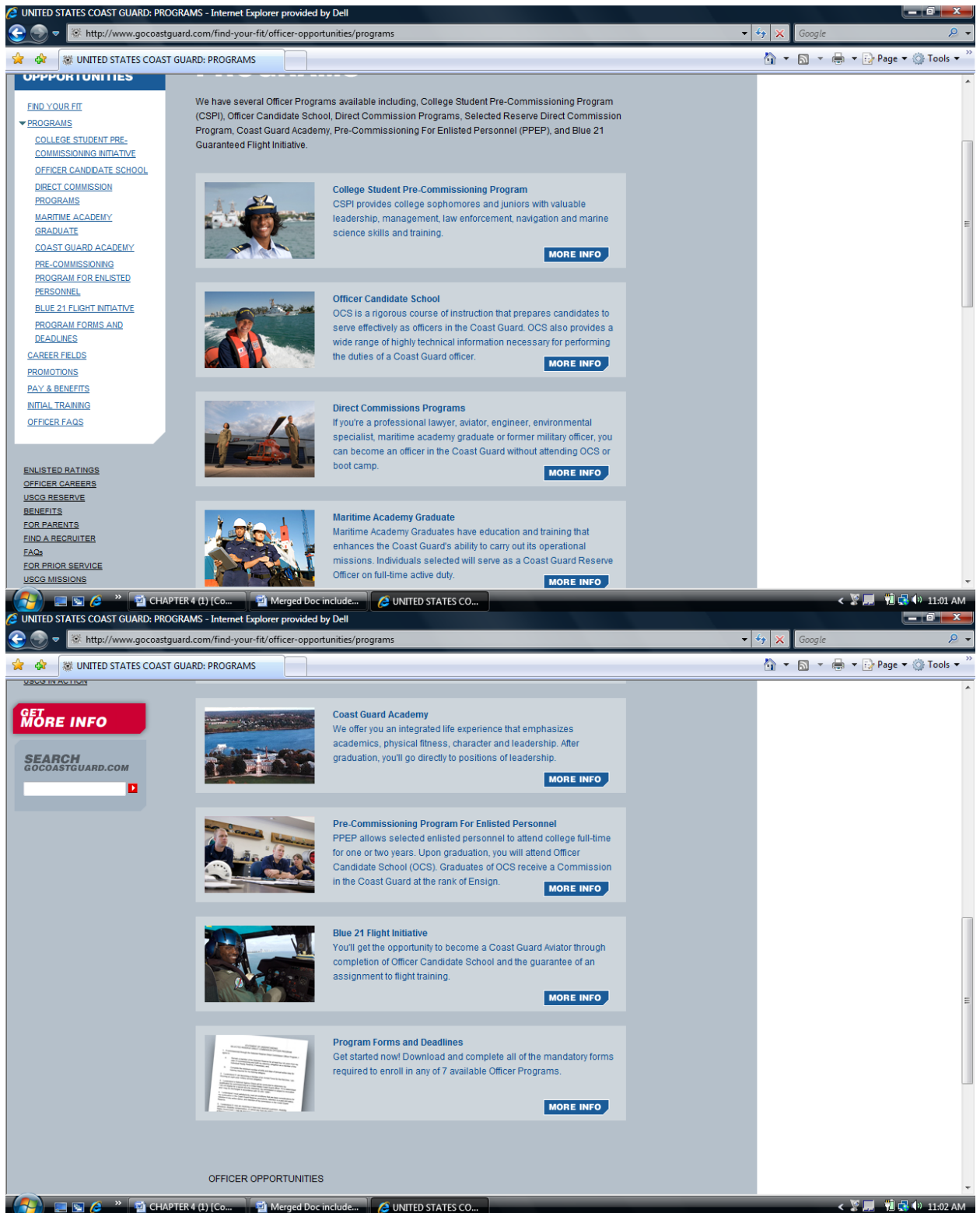


Figure 4-12: Listing of Officer Programs

This push for diversity is not surprising. Considering the statistics introduced in Chapter One (referring back to Table 1-1), minority populations only make up 20% of the Coast Guard's total members. And, of the four niche Officer programs, two are *specifically* geared towards recruiting minority populations. CSPI and Blue 21 mandate that an applicant attend a "qualifying four-year institution" with a "25% or greater minority population of U.S. citizens" ("Blue 21"). Encouraging a diverse applicant pool, the Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative takes the application one step further by making one of the few guarantees made throughout the entire Web site. "You'll get the opportunity to become a Coast Guard Aviator," the page boasts, "...and the guarantee of an assignment to flight training" ("Officer Programs"). In examining most of the recruiting Web site, this is one of the few times the Coast Guard uses the word "guarantee" to refer to any area or possibility. In fact, most of the programs, jobs, and opportunities come with caveats and use conditionals such as "may" and "might" to describe the outcome of a situation. Here it is evident that growing a diverse membership is so important to the Coast Guard that the organization is willing to offer this security blanket in order to grow the applicant pool.

While CSPI also looks for diversity in the ranks, there is no guarantee of a specific follow-on position to entice potential applicants. The CSPI program promises of enhanced leadership opportunities and "management, law enforcement, navigation and marine science skills and training" ("College Student Pre-Commissioning"). Yet, the only guarantee is that one who successfully completes one's Bachelor's Degree will earn a spot in Officer Candidate School (OCS). However, the benefits of this pre-commissioning program are overshadowed by conditional and phrases such as "may pay

up to two academic years of college tuition” and “most if not all of approved textbook costs” (“College Student Pre-Commissioning”). However, while this language generates uncertainty (as far as what the Coast Guard may or may not pay for), there is a clear-cut sense of expectation for the applicant participating in the CSPI program. “Each student is expected to complete his or her degree and all Coast Guard training requirements,” the page states. Furthermore, it says that “each student will be required to serve on active duty (full time) as an officer for four years” (“College Student Pre-Commissioning”). While these expectations may seem strict, they are couched by gentler language at the beginning of the page, where an applicant is encouraged to “imagine having your college junior and senior years fully funded” while “getting a salary while you attend college” (“College Student Pre-Commissioning”). Appealing directly to any college student’s pocketbook is an effective tactic.

Another effective tactic is making the applicant take full responsibility for one’s initial research as well as the application process. Symbolic of Coast Guard’s typical operating procedures, the niche Officer pages offer specific directions for applying for these key programs. Although seemingly complicated, the directions – all different in approach – outline a specific order of processes, procedures and methods for applying. This structured approach is akin to Coast Guard’s internal operations in that Officers are expected to be forward-thinking and access needed information via (a) Coast Guard manuals; (b) Coast Guard instructions; (c) the internal message board; and (d) Coast Guard Central (an internal Web-based database) without much guidance from superiors.

The “CSPI” and “Blue 21” pages leave it up to the applicant to do the following in determining if one’s current school qualifies for the diversity initiative:

- Call your local recruiter or click here
- Enter your school's name...click "results"
- Follow the link to your school and click on "college overview"
- Read through the stats
- See if your school has at least 25% minority enrollment

These directions are more complicated than others found within the Web site, and they place the bulk of the research responsibility on the applicant. He or she needs to take the initiative and do the leg-work prior to contacting a recruiter. The idea of being assertive enough to take initiative is indicative of the expectations placed on a typical Coast Guard Officer. As an Officer, one will not be led by the hand and given all of the answers. An Officer is expected to be dependable enough to gather required or needed information without much prompting or assistance. As mentioned, internal procedures, manuals, and online sources have been put into place to assist with the process. Yet, it still falls to the individual to complete the necessary steps.

Find Your Fit - Reserve

If one does not find a fit within the full-time Enlisted or Officer ranks, the Coast Guard offers the Reserve option as a "good-paying, part-time job that comes with impressive benefits including action, adventure and the chance to make a difference" ("Reserve Opportunities"). While these themes are recurrent throughout the entire Web site, the "Reserve Opportunities" page is one of the sole links between these themes and additional spending money. In the previous pages, the "Enlisted Opportunities" appealed to those looking for starter opportunities which may lead, with additional training and education, to positions of higher responsibility and pay. The "Officer Opportunity" pages honed in on leadership and management and sought applicants considering taking on managerial roles because they already had education and experience. The "Reserve

Opportunities” pages, however, reach out to those who want the adventure without the commitment and, with this, seek the chance to earn a little extra money. Phrases such as “extra cash,” “good pay,” “extra income,” and “some financial help” are evidence of this approach.

The “Reserve Opportunities” page, which was viewed 184,971 times (encompassing 3.31% of the overall page-views) appeals to a less educated public, with a slant towards vocational training and skills. The Coast Guard is willing to provide training for Reservists in the fields of “computer processing, mechanics or radio communication” and provides the “opportunity to participate in real-life Coast Guard operations” (“Reserve Opportunities”). Although Reservists typically don the uniform two days a month and two weeks a year, they are expected to jump in and fill the Coastie role while in blue. Choosing the phrase “real-life” is interesting. How would one participate in anything less than “real-life Coast Guard operations” when in uniform? This word-choice does not make a lot of sense, yet is used a tool of persuasion to convince one to be part of the never-ending adventure.

As with the other pages, the Coast Guard makes no guarantees regarding placement, assignments, or jobs. And this page in particular makes no bones about the fact that a Reservist may or *may not* serve close to home. It is all dependent upon the needs of the service. What the page fails to mention is that the needs of the service often result in a Reservist deploying and serving far from home. Admiral Thad Allen, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, reiterates this by stating that the Coast Guard’s Reserve forces must have the competencies necessary to perform in the following three areas:

- Maritime Homeland Security;
- Domestic and expeditionary support to National Defense; and,
- Response to domestic disasters, both natural and man-made.

Furthermore, Admiral Allen states that the Coast Guard's Reserve force will only be successful if it:

[R]emains ready for mobilization at any time. Training, including drills and two weeks of annual active duty, must focus on building and honing the skills and knowledge required to mobilize quickly and execute missions effectively. Because of their full integration into many shore-based units, reservists are available to augment active duty forces for the full continuum of daily Coast Guard missions as they train and prepare for future mobilization. Employment of Coast Guard Reserve forces in routine operations, therefore, must always reflect a relentless pursuit of mobilization readiness ("Coast Guard Reserve").

The key word here is *mobilization*. According to the *Coast Guard Reservist Magazine*, "There are more than 500 active duty and reserve Coast Guard members serving in Iraq and the Middle East including six patrol boats, several law enforcement detachments, marine safety and support personnel" (p. 17).

The term "typically" (as shown in Figure 4-13) is used twice in the "Find Your Fit - Reservist" pages. Other conditionals such as "could," "may," and "chance" reiterate the ongoing sense of uncertainty and ambiguousness which has been characteristic of the recruiting Web site.

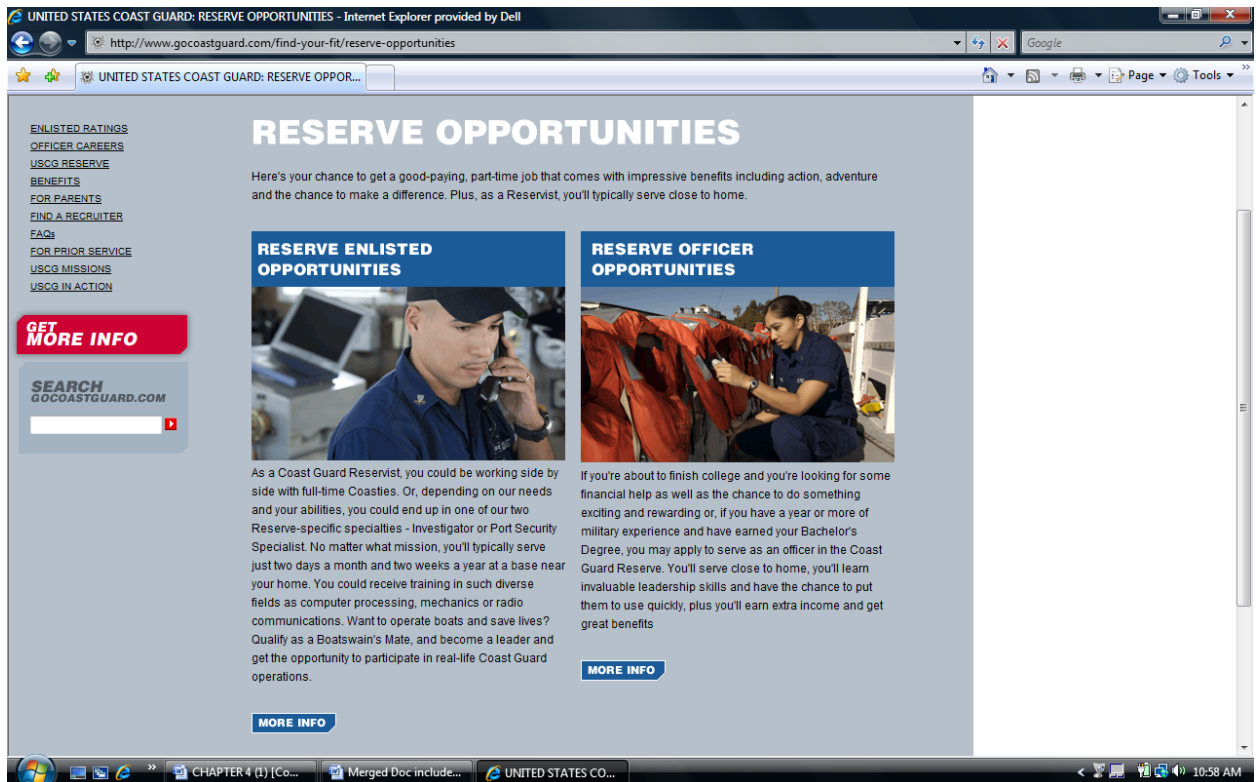


Figure 4-13: Find Your Fit Reserve Opportunities

Get the Answers

The final introductory paragraph on the home page affords the opportunity for the now-seasoned reader to become part of something bigger. Offering high-tech options such as “chatting online with a live recruiter” and “post[ing] your questions for an emailed response” (“Get the Answers”), the “Get the Answers Section” embraces the idea that the Coast Guard truly lives up to its reputation of being *Semper Paratus* – or Always Ready. It removes any potential excuses that the reader might have for not being aware of important information (such as those related to basic training, qualifications and pay) and reiterates the need for any Coastie to take full responsibility for one’s own career. This section is structured around the idea that there is no excuse for one not knowing. There is no excuse for a misunderstanding, because one has access to up-to-the minute information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Coast Guard operates under

this same basic design and expects its employees to be assertive enough to take the initiative “Get the Answers” for any matter of concern or uncertainty.

Second only to the “Enlisted Opportunities” page, the “Get the Answers” page had the highest number of page views (382,216), as shown by Google Analytics. As discussed in Chapter One, the United States Coast Guard has about 40,150 men and women on active duty, which includes 284 Officers, 3,850 enlisted members and 992 reservists (“Coast Guard Snapshot”). Considering these statistics, it is not shocking that the number of page views for the various sections correlate to the number of incipient personnel.

The “Get the Answers” page allows a potential recruit to (a) ask a question; (b) get more information; (c) look up frequently asked questions; or, if “READY,” (d) find a recruiter. With multiple ways to reach a recruiter for information or signing up, the “Get the Answers” page boasts of ways to “e-mail us your question” or “schedule an appointment with a recruiter.” Instructions at the top of the page walk an applicant through the process, stating that one should “take a few minutes to scroll through this list of FAQs” before “simply go[ing] to the ‘Ask a Question’ section.” If all of this makes sense, one can close the deal by “use[ing] the map to find a recruiter” in the area.

The map, as shown in Figure 4-15, is a high-tech collaboration of graphics and moving visuals. After “click[ing] on the state...to find the recruiting office nearest you” (“Find a Recruiter”), a Coast Guard HH-65 helicopter flies in over the state of choice and vertically inserts a Coast Guard male into the state. After the drop, names and locations of available recruiting offices pop-up, allowing the potential recruit to find a recruiter and sign the paperwork.

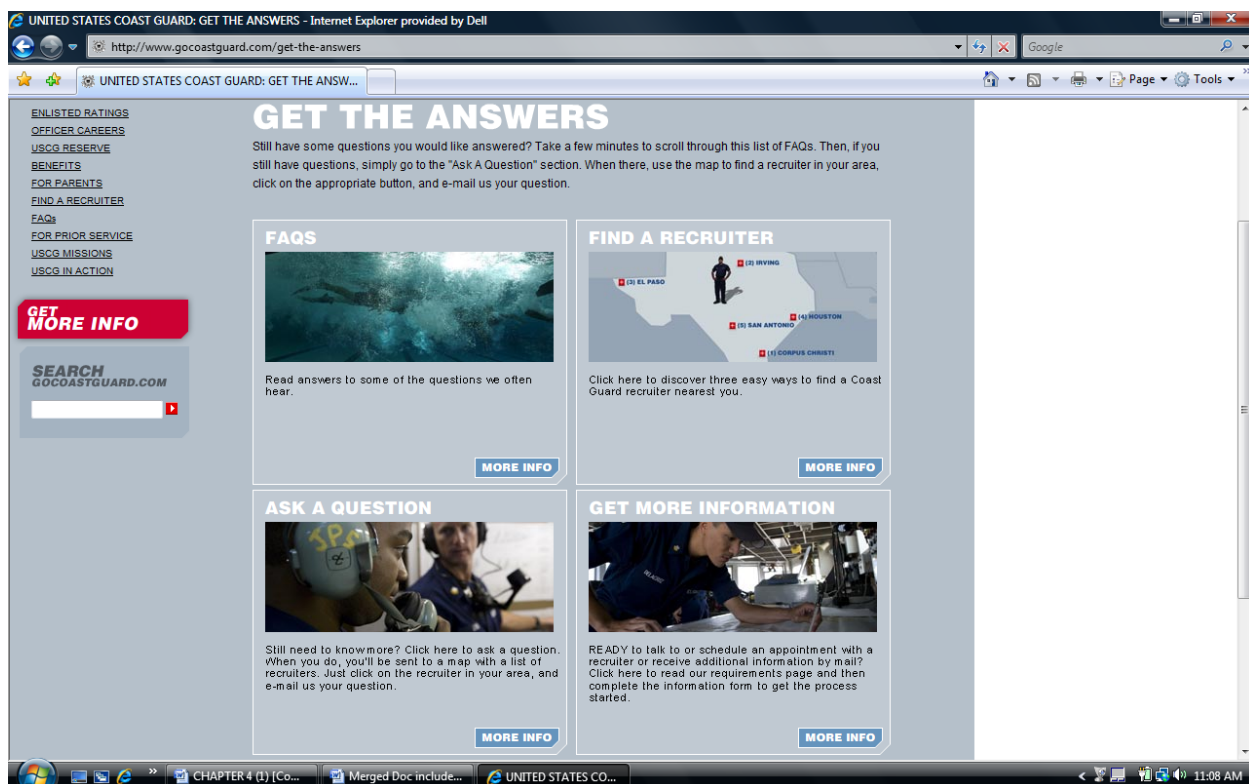


Figure 4-14: Get the Answers

It is interesting that the Coast Guard recruiting Web site begins and ends with the most publicized image of the organization – the HH65 helicopter and a deployed Coastie. This image leads one to consider some pertinent and important questions. Why not have a cutter or small boat deposit the Coast Guard member instead? And, if trying to grow a diverse workforce, why is the Coastie who is dropped from the helicopter a Caucasian male instead of an Asian female or an African-American male? While grappling with these questions may seem inconsequential, the reality is that their answers lead to a disturbing reality. The Coast Guard's recruiting Web site depicts the organization as the emergency response organization of America's maritime domain. However, in doing so, it effectively reaches out to young males, and seems to exclude any feminine traits or qualities which may attract the opposite sex.

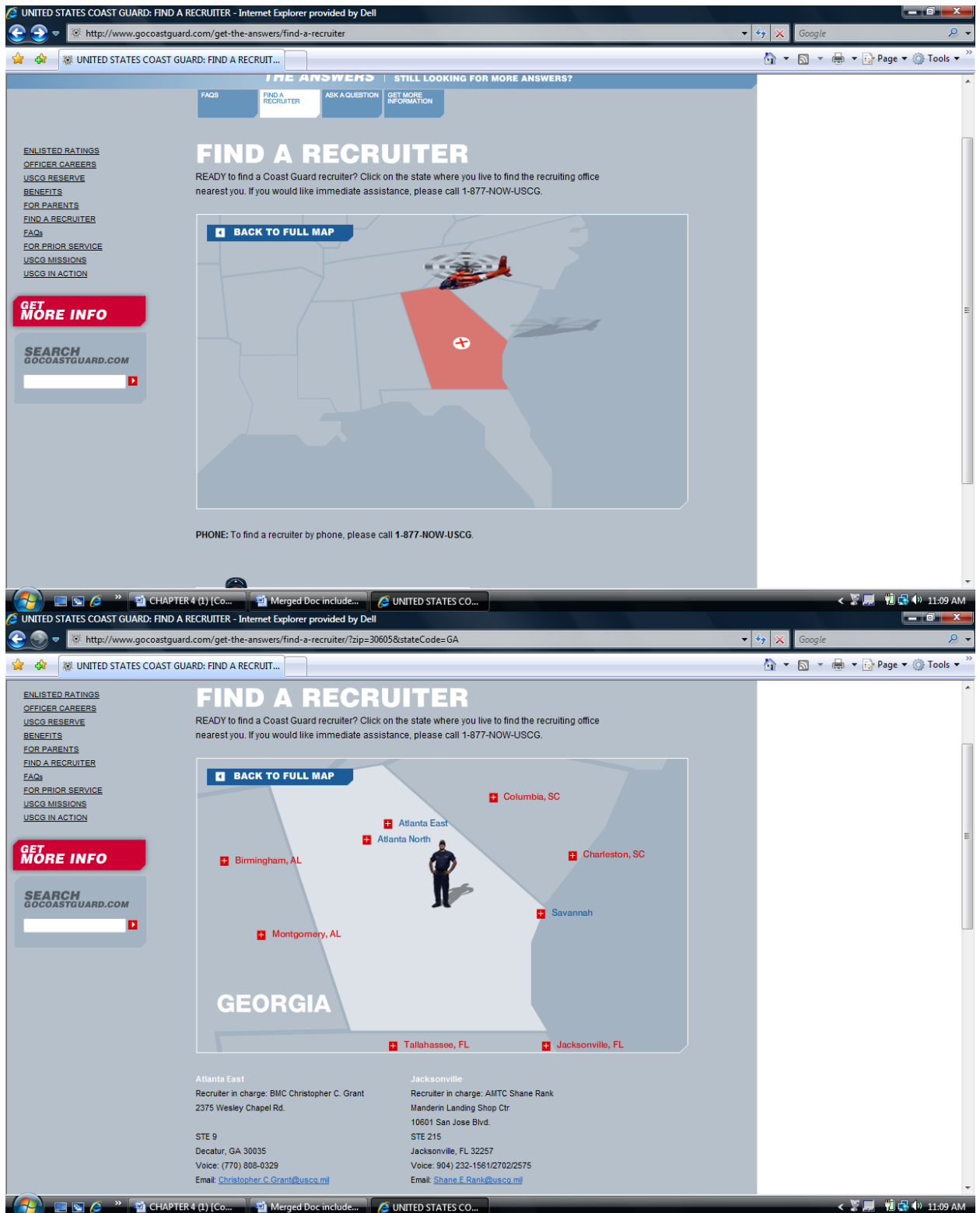


Figure 4-15: Get the Answers – Find a Recruiter

Overarching Themes and Patterns

Like all other branches of the military, the constructs of the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site appeal to those who are adventurous by nature – blue collar workers who are willing to get their hands dirty and reach out to sailors in peril. In depicting the Coast Guard as the premier maritime law enforcement authority, with hints of Search and Rescue and Environmentalism thrown in, the message that one can save a life, bust a drug smuggling operation, and save an endangered species all in the same day is effective (and true). The graphics which accompany the "Maritime Safety," "Maritime Mobility," and "Protection of Natural Resources" phrases are simplistic in nature and depict everyday men and women in Blue, driving boats, toting weapons, setting oil booms and saving lives. Grabianowski (2008) summed up this typical public perception by stating that the Coast Guard's hallmark perceptions include a "strong sense of tradition, an underdog mentality and a 'make do with less' attitude." However, even with a blue-collar approach, the Web site does not mince words and makes it very clear that this choice organization is not a perfect match for everyone. The pictures, even with a blue-collar approach, relay a very clear message: *If you are part of the Coast Guard, you are the maritime emergency response – the 911 of the ocean. You may bust someone or save someone's life, but either way, it's fun, exciting, and worth doing.*

What is lacking in the Web site, however, are the undercurrents of warmth, compassion, kindness and emotion – all important traits for a Coastie to have, yet traits which seem to be well-hidden, barely hinted at, and not readily advertised. Warmth, compassion, kindness and emotion are feminine qualities – *not* qualities that an organization charged with carrying out Homeland Security and National Defense would

exude. Yet, in reality, the humanness and inherent kindness of Coast Guardsmen and women are pillars which help create and solidify the organization's structure. Without these characteristics, lives would be lost at sea and marine life would dwindle to the point of extinction. So, while the Coast Guard is represented throughout the Web site as a lead, premier law enforcement agency, and a domestic and international force not to be reckoned with, the site seems to miss the mark with regards to *depicting* the true nature of the organization and the people who love it dearly.

Themes such as action, adventure, bravery, dedication, devotion to duty, heroism, honor, patriotism, personal growth, pride, self-discipline, and respect are common and repetitive. All of these concepts are intertwined and work to create the notion that, by joining the Coast Guard, one has the opportunity to become part of something great – something bigger than oneself. Nevertheless, there were glaring oversights as the Web site failed to include important missions and jobs within the Coast Guard.

While the Coast Guard has remained the lesser known of the five military services, America became more familiar with its existence and missions since Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005. It was during the Coast Guard's Gulf Coast rescue efforts that the service adopted the lead role and began to put itself in the public limelight. Ironically, very little mention of Hurricane Katrina was evidenced in the text of the recruiting Web site; yet, this image of the rescue swimmer and helicopter, which dominated mainstream media during this period, was recurrent at the beginning of the Web site ("Home Page") as well as at its closure ("Find a Recruiter").

One Coast Guard pilot tells his story of assisting during the Hurricane Katrina rescue efforts. However, a potential recruit must dig through the Web site, search the

“Being a Coastie” page, and then scroll through the “Being a Coastie: Coastie Archives” page to get the following glimpse of this Coast Guardsman’s heroic efforts:

“The Katrina rescues were the highlight of my career so far. To be able to help so many people at one time was amazing. An experience like that probably won't happen in my career again, or at least I hope that it doesn't," Lieutenant Dorval stated.

Dorval piloted the helicopter through tropical-storm-force winds, mostly at night, to hoist stranded hurricane victims to safety. Rescue efforts became increasingly precarious when victims had to be hoisted through broken windows and crude access holes in roofs of flooded buildings.

After performing numerous rescues in the state of Mississippi, Dorval and his air crew were diverted to Louisiana to aid in rescue efforts after the levees of New Orleans gave way, flooding over 80 percent of the city. On Sept. 1[2005], Dorval and his crew rescued 40 patients from a hospital that had become flooded after the levees had broken. Dorval says that rescue accounted for the most hoists he had ever performed in a single location.

The overall analysis of the recruiting Web site showed that the Coast Guard represents itself as an elite Federal agency, willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done and keep America’s public safe from harm. Perhaps this is why the recruiting site makes it clear that not everyone who wants to join has what it takes. However, it also makes the thought of being part of such a leading service appealing and enticing. Because the site is constructed in a structured, logical fashion, it is easy to navigate through the layers and determine if the Coast Guard is indeed the right fit.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site, it is prudent to revisit the research questions posed in Chapter Two. And, because the analysis in Chapter Four uncovered strong theoretical links to Impression Management and Representation theories, more explanation for linking the Web site to these theoretical foundations is needed. Furthermore, the analysis of the recruiting Web site revealed a great amount of insight into the constructed language and structure of its pages. This chapter will highlight that insight and, in conjunction with personal vignettes from my own Coast Guard career (chosen to better illustrate some of the analysis points), give more insight into the messages the recruiting Web site relays to key publics. Additionally, because the nature of textual analysis is to not only delve deeper into latent meanings, but also discover and take into account what is missing, this chapter will discuss both of these parts of textual analysis.

With this in mind, the focus of this chapter is tri-fold: all four research questions will be revisited and addressed, and the Web site's links to Impression Management and Representation theories will be further explicated. Additionally, because there are always limitations and opportunities for further research, these will be considered in this chapter as well. Lastly, recommendations garnered from the analysis of this recruitment site will be mentioned as a way for the organization to strengthen its primary recruitment tool.

Research Questions Addressed

RQ1: What representation(s) of the Coast Guard are present in the recruiting Web site?

The constructionist approach to theories of representation was part of the foundation for this study. This viewpoint specifically focuses on the public and social meaning of language, where “things don’t *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs” (Hall, 1997b, p. 25). The question then becomes, what concepts and signs were present on the recruiting Web site and what are the social meanings of such representations?

To examine concepts and signs, one must first consider the structure of the site. “Simply placing information on a web site does not necessarily mean that it is seen, not to mention comprehended or remembered” (Hallahan, 2001, p. 236). Web site design is a critical component in one deciding to stay and browse or bounce and surf. A site that is well organized and easy to navigate can bolster a positive image of the organization. “On the basis of links on the page, Web sites can be viewed to infer which publics the corporation considers to be important and which one are regarded to be of secondary significance” (Esrock and Leichty, 1999, p. 331). With this in mind, when viewing employment-based sites, employees or perspective employees often are searching for information regarding possible openings, work-life issues, human resource contacts, departmental information, and general contact information.

The Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site provided *most* of these elements and was arranged in a logical, hierarchical way, with the pattern of progression moving from rudimentary basics to complex features. The Web site’s layering components, which originate on the home page, mimic the hierarchical chain-of-command structure present

within the Coast Guard organization. The Web site's sensible layering construction allows one to browse through it in a controlled, logical order. Much like the military chain-of-command, it is most effective to go through the process (or through the Web site) step-by-step, gaining information in incremental portions. While it is possible to skip around from one page to another, losing track of orderly navigation, it is just as possible to jump the chain-of-command. However, doing so, in most cases, results in the dissemination of incomplete information and/or miscommunication. There are times, however, when circumnavigation is appropriate. As with the internal Coast Guard structure, the Web site builds in the alternative to go around the established structure and gives one the option to click the big red "Get More Info" button for immediate gratification.

In addition to the physical construction, attention must be paid to the use of specific language, well-thought-out phrases and the calculated placement of words for meaning construction. The Web site educes images of superiority and elitism, representing the Coast Guard as *the* lead Federal agency operating within the maritime domain. As a premier agency, it is imperative for the Coast Guard to recruit and retain top-quality personnel. As a result, the Web site relays specific audience constructs and makes it very clear about the type of person the organization wishes to attract. All Coast Guard recruits must be dedicated, driven, assertive, patriotic and, above all else, have the ability to persevere.

In this respect, the construction of the Web site parallels the reality of Coast Guard life. One who perseveres and navigates through the entire recruiting Web site obviously has the determination and dedication needed to fit into such an elite service.

As with the chain-of-command, and jumping ahead to “Get More Info,” one does not have to surf the entire site to find a recruiter. But, if he or she intends on being a good fit, it is advised that the recruit navigate through the site in order to become conversant in the missions, and lifestyle(s) of the Coast Guard.

I reflect on my own Coast Guard career and compare the perseverance needed to navigate through the entire Web site akin to the reality of transferring to a new job (referred to as filling a billet). Even though a Coast Guard member can expect to be transferred every two to four years, a learning curve always exists when one arrives at one’s new billet and it takes a great deal of perseverance to navigate through the transition process. For example, when I arrived at the USCGC STEADFAST (WMEC 623) in 2005, I faced a whole different set of circumstances from my previous Coast Guard positions. I had never been stationed on a cutter and, up until this point, had spent my entire Coast Guard career ashore, where my primary responsibilities encompassed Search and Rescue missions, Maritime Law Enforcement training and execution, and Resource Scheduling. Much like the incipient recruit who is still at the “Discovering Our Missions” pages, I was well behind the learning curve (as compared to my Coast Guard Academy graduate counterparts) when it came to driving a 210’ ship and landing HH-65 aircraft on its flight deck.

However, prior to reporting aboard the USCGC STEADFAST, I had taken the time to learn *about* the service, through two other operational tours and multiple training opportunities. As a result, the overarching culture, jargon, and command structures utilized in the Coast Guard were not foreign to me. Much like utilizing the recruiting Web site, I found the longer I stuck with learning these positions, and the more immersed

I became in the process of uncovering the next new section. And, as a result, the qualification processes became easier. It took a great deal of personal resolve, perseverance and diligence to eventually earn the Deck Watch Officer (OOD) and Helicopter Landing Signals Officer (LSO) designations. However, much like the Web surfer who makes the decision to continue to navigate through the recruiting Web site, the resolve required to manage through two two-month deployments as a break-in Officer of the Deck and break-in LSO had a tremendous and agreeable payoff. The more time I spent on the bridge conning and navigating the ship through anchoring, mooring, unmooring, and regular steaming evolutions, as well as on the flight deck giving direction to land and launch aircraft, the more comfortable I became with the mechanics of both jobs. Similarly, with more time and practice navigating the recruiting Web site, one who is unfamiliar with the Coast Guard will eventually gain a comfort level with the jargon and culture of the Coast Guard organization. Therefore, the verbal and visual representations evidenced on the recruiting Web site's pages become easier to interpret and understand.

Even with perseverance, not everyone who has a desire to join has what it takes to be a life-saver and defend the Homeland from enemies – both foreign and domestic. So, not everyone will make the cut. But, for those who do, the site confirms that the Coast Guard is a tough job worth doing, and one that allows individuals to become part of something bigger than the self. The messages relayed from the Web site's text makes the idea of being part of such a leading service appealing and enticing. Like all other branches of the military, the constructs of the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site appeal to those who are adventurous by nature – young men and women who are willing to get

their hands dirty, fight terrorists, and reach out to sailors in peril. The implications that one can save a life, bust a drug smuggling operation, and save an endangered species all in the same day are effective (and true) and the graphics and words relay this representation. The site essentially says:

If you are part of the Coast Guard, you are the maritime emergency response – the 911 of the ocean. You may bust someone or save someone's life, but either way, it is fun, it is exciting, and it is definitely worth doing.

As an elite Federal agency, the Coast Guard represents itself as willing to do whatever it takes (within Federal laws and regulations) to get the job done and keep America's public safe from harm. Reiterated on the "Being a Coastie" page, this representation is clear: "That's our job – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. That's life in the Coast Guard. We don't just train. We train and perform."

RQ2: Are the Coast Guard's traditional themes (such as patriotism, duty, self-discipline, personal growth, honor, respect and/or devotion to duty) present on the recruiting Web site? Are any of these themes recurring? If so, which ones?

Throughout the Web site, the Coast Guard represents itself as an elite service, where men and women are expected to keep tradition alive and continue to do what the Coast Guard has always done: assist with emergency situations, serve the maritime public, intercede during life or death circumstances, and gain control of disastrous situations. The repetitive representations of the service as the nation's premier maritime law enforcement authority, the emergency provider for America's waterways, and the unique and purposeful "Guardians of the Sea" reflect the tried and true motivators of Coast Guard's daily operations.

But, the Coast Guard could not continue to succeed as a maritime powerhouse without the internalization of its three core principles: Honor, Respect and Devotion to

Duty. Throughout the Web site, the idea that these core values are an integral part of Coast Guard operations was apparent. In the 17 pages I analyzed, there was only one overt use of any of these three terms, which occurred when talking about busting drug smugglers: “[W]e counter them with our ceaseless Coast Guard determination and devotion to duty” (“Discovering Our Missions – Maritime Security”).

It should be noted that the three core themes were evidenced on the “Being a Coastie – For Parents” page (Figure 5-1). This is of interest because this page is primarily geared towards parents of soon-to-be enlisted members. However, the three core values, and the allusion to them throughout the Web site is applicable across the board – to both officers and enlisted.

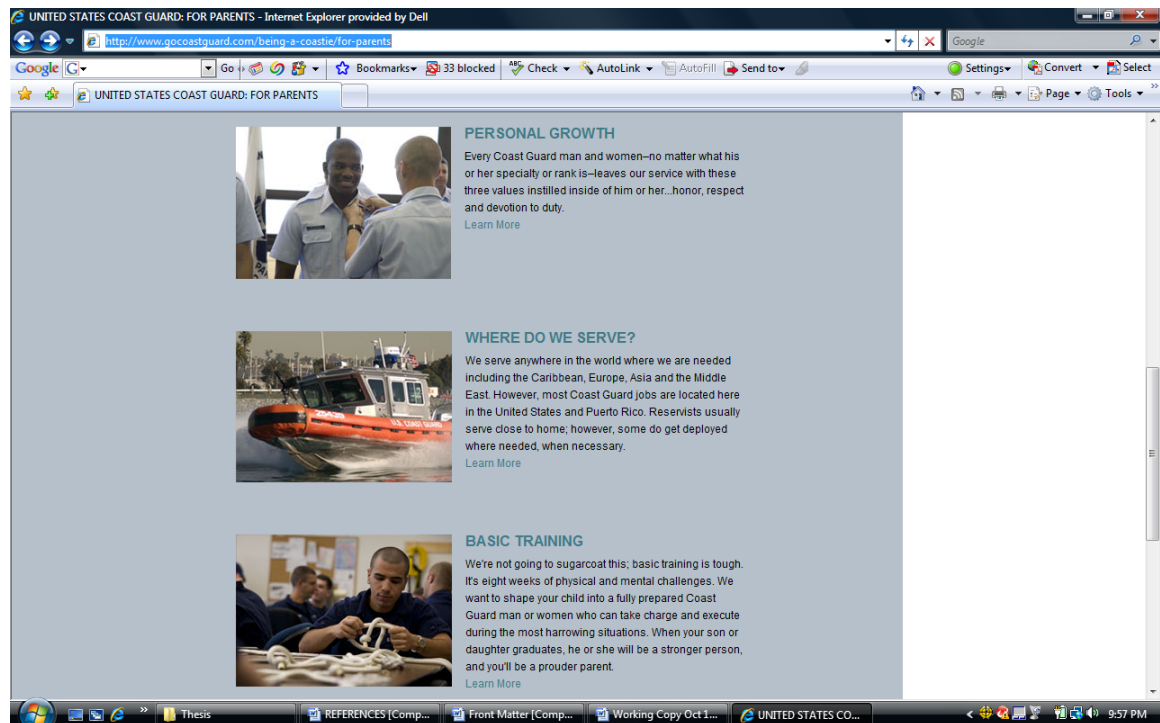


Figure 5-1: Being a Coastie: For Parents

While not part of the analysis, the “Being a Coastie - For Parents” page addresses some key considerations, including where the service operates, the nature of basic training, and, under the “Personal Growth” sub-section, the assurance that one’s son or daughter

“leaves our service with these three values instilled in him or her...honor, respect and devotion to duty.”

While the words “Honor,” “Respect,” and “Devotion to Duty” were not repeatedly used, the use of these three values surfaced through other recurring themes. Recurring themes such as action, adventure, bravery, dedication, heroism, patriotism, perseverance, personal growth, pride, and self-discipline were common and repetitive. In line with the Web site’s layering and structure, these recurring themes all fell under one of the three core values. While not a perfect fit, the themes were placed into the following categories for the following reasons: (1) Honor included action, adventure, bravery and heroism because, through these actions, one brings distinction to the service; (2) Respect incorporated themes such as patriotism and pride as a way to give particular attention to the country and people the Coast Guard serves; and (3) Devotion to Duty involved dedication, personal growth, perseverance and self-discipline because one’s conduct, devoted service and function as part of the organization often results in a combination of these elements. Furthermore, it is of note that these core values and recurring themes echoed Admiral Thad Allen’s (Commandant of the Coast Guard) direction for the organization: (a) Readiness; (b) People; and (c) Stewardship.

The “Discovering Our Mission” pages illustrate these themes in a layered, structured fashion. The first sub-section, “National Defense,” includes all three overarching themes through verbiage such as, “an organization that for more than two centuries has served proudly” (perseverance / devotion to duty / readiness); “you could be countering potential threats to American coasts” (action, adventure, bravery / honor / readiness); and “we are a powerful role model that is in ever-increasing demand

overseas” (patriotism, pride / respect / stewardship). The next page, which is the “Maritime Security” sub-section, focuses solely on honor. “We have been the ‘law of the sea,’” it states, and continues by saying, “we have taken on ever-greater maritime security challenges including protecting our nation’s security against terrorism.” Focusing on the ideas of action, bravery and heroism, this page promises that a recruit may participate in

- Apprehending modern-day pirates
- Tracking and arresting drug runners
- Enforcing fisheries conservation laws

Furthermore, the page promises action, and illustrates this by placing quotation marks around the word “average” (when describing an average day). As the home page points out, there is no average day. Anyone who chooses to join the service will find that “[A] day in the Coast Guard is never quite like the next.” As a hero, a potential recruit may find him or herself as part of migrant interdiction operations, which “are as much a humanitarian effort as they are law-enforcement missions.”

Continuing with the structured layers, the “Protection of Natural Resources” sub-page (which is the third in the series) reflects solely on the themes of respect and stewardship, focusing primarily on pride. Phrases such as “Coasties also protect the country’s valuable natural marine resources;” “protect [our nation’s] threatened and endangered species;” “pioneered the fight against water pollution;” and “enforce federal regulations to reduce the dumping of refuse and sewage from vessels of all types” reflect a great deal of respect for the environment, living species, and the cohabitation of humans and the natural world.

“Maritime Safety,” which is the fourth “Discovering Our Missions” sub-page, combines action and bravery (honor) with dedication and perseverance (devotion to

duty). “We jump into action, going into the dangerous seas and harm’s way,” the page states. Furthermore, it claims, “It takes more than physical ability and mental toughness. You’ll also need that special desire and bravery with which heroes are born.” Coupling this notion of perseverance with one that appears later on the page (“we are the driving force behind the implementation of international safety and pollution standards”), these themes work together to create the overarching idea that, in joining the Coast Guard, one has the opportunity to become part of something great – something bigger than oneself.

The final “Discovering Our Missions” page, “Maritime Mobility,” focuses on a Coast Guard member’s devotion to duty. “Beginning in 1790,” the page states, “we’ve protected our nation’s cargo and shipping.” With themes such as dedication, personal growth, perseverance, and self-discipline, this page examines these themes in its discussion of the maintenance of “more than 50,000 federal aids to navigation” and “18,000 highway and railroad bridges that span navigable waterways throughout the U.S.”

Peppered throughout the remaining 13 pages, one will find example after example of the recurring sub-themes. The “Being a Coastie” snippet on the home page, for example, promises a guarantee of “new experiences even adventure” (honor) while the “Find Your Fit” snippet speaks of “A world of challenge, bravery and patriotism” (honor and respect). With so many recurring themes, layered under the umbrella of three overarching values, the graphics and text of Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site allude to the idea that Coast Guard members strive to uphold these key values through hard work, perseverance and mission accomplishment.

RQ3: How does the Web site communicate key messages for the four niche Officer programs and what are these key messages?

As with the enlisted side of recruiting, the Coast Guard holds extremely high standards for the quality and caliber of people it anticipates recruiting to its officer corps. Leadership, life experience, maturity and assertiveness are all key attributes needed in a worthy candidate and the recruiting Web site reiterates this standard through text and graphics. The “Find Your Fit – Officer” pages make it apparent that the Coast Guard is interested in recruiting only the cream-of-the-crop, and only those people who will be innovative, embrace change, and be assertive enough to solve problems using their prior experience, education, and knowledge.

In his guidance to Coast Guard members (in reference to promotions and service-related opportunities), Admiral Allen addressed leadership and the Officer Corps:

Never has there been a more exciting or rewarding time to serve in the Coast Guard... We must be forward looking, adaptive, flexible and responsive to emerging concerns and trends to succeed. We must build a Coast Guard that continually senses change and continually adapts.

Building a Coast Guard is not limited to reforming our infrastructure and transforming the organizational chain of command. It means building leadership that will best position the Service for today and the future. It means continually assessing our skills and being engaged in lifelong learning regardless of rank or time in Service. Optimal mission execution requires much more than monitoring operations. Intelligence, curiosity, preparedness and critical thinking skills are prerequisites to success.

We need officers who excel in this rapidly changing climate – leaders who employ innovative methods to solve problems; who work with partners within the government and their communities to best serve the American people; who understand the concept of managed risk, and who create an environment for subordinates that embraces change, diversity of thinking, and Coast Guard core values (as quoted by Stinson, 2007).

Admiral Allen’s convictions are clear, and the messages presented for Coast Guard’s four niche officer programs echo his instruction. The recruiting Web site makes it apparent

that there is not a lot of leeway when hiring the organization's future leadership. The three core values are expected in every insipient officer because he or she has the responsibility and the duty to uphold and further the Coast Guard's missions, standards and values.

While the Coast Guard's programs are structured in such a way that leadership can be developed, management skills are presented as a quality an applicant should already exude. The "Find Your Fit - Officer Opportunities" page entices an applicant to "develop your leadership skills. Hone your management abilities. All while serving your country." Keying in on the idea of patriotism (respect), the same page promises that "If you have the right experience, we have your fast track to the top."

Coast Guard is looking for experience and leadership because, as the "Find Your Fit - Officer" page states, a Coast Guard officer will be "in charge of situations where your decision can make the difference between life and death." Because officers are placed in such extreme positions, the Coast Guard expects that each one will have the maturity and assertiveness to take initiative and make rational, calculated decisions. "Change is hard," Admiral Allen states, "but not as hard as recovering from a missed opportunity or the loss of confidence that comes when leaders fail to act." The structure and words used in the four niche officer program Web pages relay this sentiment.

"Intelligence, curiosity, preparedness and critical thinking skills" are not only "prerequisites to success," they are prerequisites for an officer candidate. Admiral Allen also mentions the need for "diversity of thinking." While diverse thinking often results from one's experiences, it can also be cultivated from one's background. The Coast Guard's four niche programs: (a) the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative

(CSPI); (b) Officer Candidate School (OCS); (c) Maritime Academy Graduate (MARGRAD); and (d) the Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative consider one's background to be a key factor in recruiting minority groups. Targeting the ashore (CSPI); prior enlisted (OCS), afloat (MARGRAD) and aviation (Blue 21) communities, the four niche programs are strongly geared towards expanding diversity among Coast Guard's ranks and make no qualms about this primary undertaking.

Two of the four niche programs (CSPI and Blue 21) specifically focus on increasing diversity within the service's ranks. Leaning towards recruiting people who attended a college or university with a "minimum 25% minority population of U.S. citizens," ("Blue 21"), these two programs push to diversify the applicant pool. However, common sense dictates that just because one attends school with a quarter minority population, one does not necessarily have to be part of that 25 percent. These programs specifically target the school, not the applicant's race or background (which would be considered profiling and a completely unethical practice). So, the question arises, if one *is* part of a minority population, will one find a fit within the current Coast Guard population?

The "Find Your Fit - Officer" pages show pictures of fresh young faces, from a myriad of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, engaged in more technical elements of the missions, including inspections, piloting ships and helicopters, and driving small boats. Only one of the four niche programs specifically *mentions* diversity as a goal. The "Blue 21" page states, "The goal of the BLUE 21 Flight Initiative is to build greater diversity in the aviation community through targeted recruitment at colleges and universities with strong minority populations." While all of the programs have this goal, CSPI is the only

other program that targets colleges and universities with strong minority populations.

Yet, the diversity disclaimer is not evidenced anywhere on the “CSPI” page. (The only information that comes close to this provision is information regarding the eligibility status of one’s college or university.)

In recruiting for diversity, age is also a factor and a key representation in these four niche programs. Each program has varied age requirements, but most target professionals in their early twenties to early thirties. In the case of the Maritime Academy Graduate program, an applicant can be as young as 21 or as old as 40 by the time the decision-making panel convenes. An applicant for OCS must be between the ages of 21 and 34, where CSPI targets the 19 – 27 year-old group and BLUE 21 the 21 – 31 year-olds. However, in examining the graphical representations on these four pages, the reader might think all four programs lean towards a young, twenty-something officer corps. In fact, in examining the graphical representation on all 17 pages, the assumption might be made that the entire Coast Guard consists of nothing but young 18 – 24 year-olds. These graphical representations lack the realism of both the enlisted and officer corps because there are no depictions of older officers or seasoned enlisted members who have been in the service for awhile. While, understandably, this is a recruiting Web site, geared towards hiring young applicants, the reality is (as depicted in Table 1-2), the average age for an officer is nearer to forty, not twenty-one.

Furthermore, the visuals on the “Officer Programs” page show one African-American woman (representing CSPI), two African-American men (BLUE 21 and MARGRAD), and two Caucasian women (OCS and MARGRAD). Caucasian males are conspicuously absent, even though the Coast Guard is comprised of 78.4% of Caucasians

and 87.8% men. The visuals on this page show two of the seven program images with Caucasian males, and, interestingly enough, neither one of these two programs (Direct Commissions and Pre-Commissioning Program for Enlisted Personnel) fall under the four niche programs. Lastly, the Coast Guard Academy program, which, in Fall 2006 housed 851 Caucasians and 717 males (out of a total 995 student population), uses the building, not the Cadets who graduate from it, as its visual representation.

Once in the service, the Coast Guard does an excellent job of affording women and/or minorities the same opportunities as their qualified counterparts. The challenge does not lie in how to handle a diverse workforce. The challenge, instead, is in recruiting and retaining it.

RQ4: What is the relationship of the material on the Web site to the U.S.'s publicly held image and reputation of the Coast Guard? Do the representations in the recruiting Web site mirror the Coast Guard's three core values and five overarching missions?

The simple answer is yes – the Web site does reflect aspects of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty. Additionally, there are multiple verbal and graphical representations depicting (a) National Defense; (b) Maritime Security; (c) Protection of Natural Resources; (d) Maritime Safety; and (e) Maritime Mobility. However, the Web site's pages do not tell the entire story.

The U.S. military is now about seven years into the war on terrorism and more than five years into Operation Iraqi Freedom. The reality is that people joining the Armed Services (especially those which fall under the Department of Defense) will probably be deployed at least once during their first term of enlistment. And, the Coast Guard is no different. According to an article found on the About.com (2008) Web site, "US Coast Guard units deployed to Southwest Asia in support of the US-led coalition engaged in

Operation Iraqi Freedom early in 2003. At the height of operations, there were 1,250 Coast Guard personnel deployed, including about 500 reservists. This included two large cutters, a buoy tender, eight patrol boats, four port security units, law enforcement detachments and support staff to the Central (CENTCOM) and European (EUCOM) Command theaters of operation.”

With a service of only 40,000 people, 1,250 members assisting with these operations account for a significant portion of its personnel (almost two percent of the service). However, the recruiting Web site only mentions these operations in passing and states “we work alongside the other military services, and at times as a specialized service under the Navy...We are a powerful role model that is in ever-increasing demand overseas” (“National Defense”). It does not mention that two percent of the Coast Guard’s members served as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. On the “Find your Fit – Enlisted Opportunities – Where You Can Serve Page,” the information clearly discusses duty stations which are domestically located:

There are approximately 46,000 active duty Coasties currently serving. If you choose to join their ranks, you may find yourself hanging from a helicopter to save a boater in the Atlantic, running down drug runners off the Florida coast, or stopping polluters from ruining our inland lakes.

As a Coastie, you could be flying in a helicopter over a hurricane disaster area or sailing in a cutter guarding the New York harbor. You could be cruising in a high-power Defender Class boat in the Pacific or breaking through an ice-laden port in Alaska.

If you become a Coastie, know that you will serve where your Coast Guard skills are most needed.

If you choose to become a reservist, you'll usually serve close to home; however, you may get deployed when necessary. In general, reservists live within 100 miles of their Coast Guard Reserve unit.

But, with the nature of a world in conflict, more and more Coast Guard members continue to be called to serve as part of these operations overseas:

We serve anywhere in the world where we are needed including the Caribbean, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. However, most Coast Guard jobs are located here in the United States and Puerto Rico. Reservists usually serve close to home; however, some do get deployed where needed, when necessary (“Being a Coastie - For Parents”).

Longer overseas deployments and multiple tours in war-torn countries have led to the public’s concerns regarding military recruiting and the government’s ability to retain an all-volunteer force. However, even with these stumbling blocks, “feelings of patriotism and a desire to serve may have increased many youths’ propensity for military service. For the first time, the military is recruiting and retaining an all-volunteer force during a drawnout war” (Congressional Budget Office, 2006, p. 25).

All of the themes discussed in RQ2 (such as action, adventure, bravery and heroism) can be daunting to a parent or caregiver. And, influencers, such as parents, family members, clergy members, teachers, and employers, all play a huge role in influencing one’s decision to join the Armed Forces. Because the priorities for the influencers are different than the potential recruits’ when browsing a recruiting page, the perceptions are likely to be different as well. The Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site reaches out to the parental layer and, in the “Being a Coastie” page, offers a tab leading to the “For Parents” sub-section. While this was not included as part of the analysis, it is important to note that this section includes information for parents regarding (a) Coast Guard opportunities; (b) pay and benefits; (c) personal growth; (d) localities of service; (e) basic training; and (f) frequently asked questions.

With little information to base their research on, the Congressional Budget Office analyzed several surveys to determine the influencers' perceptions of military and recruiting. "The surveys show changing attitudes toward military service. While one indicator of the recruiting climate improved since September 11, 2001, another worsened in recent years" (Congressional Budget Office, 2006, p. 25). Additionally, in his article "How the U.S. Coast Guard Works," Grabianowski states that "[T]he Coast Guard is perpetually on active duty, chronically underfunded, entrusted with a vast array of responsibilities, but often overlooked."

The Coast Guard's recruiting Web site addresses only a modicum of these issues. It does not explore funding or the commonly-held public perception of the service doing more with less. However, the Web site does expand on the idea that the organization is tasked with a tremendous amount of responsibility for Homeland Security and it also mirrors the idea that it is an organization which can be counted on to be always ready, always on duty, and always waiting for the alarm to sound.

The Coast Guard, historically known to many as the "Guardians of the Sea," had to transfer this catchphrase when the organization was restructured and transferred to the Department of Homeland Security. Even though the Coast Guard's recruiting home page seeks to replace this age-old adage with one that depicts the Coast Guard as America's "Shield of Freedom," the Web site's text and graphics only partially represent the organization in this fashion. There are still strong ties to the "Guardians of the Sea" maxim. But, considering the tremendous increase in the breadth and scope of the post-September 11th mission areas, the Web site's design does do a good job of marketing Coast Guard's "new" philosophy. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the more intense,

dangerous missions are listed first (National Defense and Maritime Security) and then the list gradually tapers off as the missions become less extreme and severe in terms of the nature of work, risk factor, and the potential for a member's loss of life or limb. In addition to this hierarchy of missions, phrases such as "Maritime Safety," "Maritime Mobility," and "Protection of Natural Resources" are sprinkled throughout the site but notably are found as page headings in the earlier portions of the Web site. These titles represent the Coast Guard as America's Maritime emergency response, ready to answer the call and deal with whatever peril exists.

Links to Impression Management

As a result of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington D.C., Coast Guard's role, missions, and *raison d'être* underwent a great transformation. The "Guardians of the Sea," were forced to shift focus to a Homeland Security-centered role and become America's "Shield of Freedom." This shift necessitated a reexamination of the organization's identity and image due to the possibility of a change in public perception.

As stated in Chapter Three, a company's identity is the representation the company portrays to the public and results in the public being able to differentiate the organization from similar companies. Meech (2006) explained it as the aggregate of all a company says and does. The image, on the other hand, is the impression an individual creates based upon a company's reputation and representation. Identity is an *internal* creation disseminated to the public, while image is an *external* creation by the public. And, as Bromley (1993) claimed, in some cases, impression management can be used to manage or improve an image that publics hold of an organization.

Bromley (1993) stated that impression management can be used to “achieve, maintain, or improve an image that other people have of us” (p. 113). Using communication and feedback to sell and manage images, these images, coupled with an organization’s reputation, are often what publics base their decisions on. Over the last five years, the Coast Guard has been able to begin the transition from a distinct caretaker role to defenders of the Homeland. Using components of impression management, the organization has altered and/or improved the image that rests in public perception.

Impression Motivation

Leary and Kowalski (1990) identified a two-component model (see Figure 3-1) which explains impression motivation and impression construction. Using both parts of the model, including the impression motivation process and the impression construction process, the Coast Guard has created a new identity which portrays an updated, modern image and reflects its heightened contribution to the War on Terrorism.

Impression motivation, which is driven by the need for people or organizations to ensure that their public persona is intact, incorporates the goals, values, and understanding of the current and sometimes desired image one desires to portray (Kleck et al., 2007). On the recruiting Web site, the Coast Guard’s values, missions and goals are clearly defined. However, it is not the definitions that are of consequence. It is in the way that the information is presented that makes a difference. Cialdini et al. (1980) discuss the difference between direct tactics and indirect tactics when presenting information to salient audiences. Direct tactics, they posit, refer to ways in which people and organizations present information about one’s own traits, accomplishments and

abilities, while indirect tactics can enhance or protect an image by managing information associated with the person or organization.

The Coast Guard's recruiting Web site uses primarily direct tactics in disseminating information and recreating its public image. Using all capital letters and bright white font, the Coast Guard identifies itself clearly on every page as "THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM." This consistency is carried through from page to page, as the headings mimic the font, color, and characteristics of this primary slogan. With a no-nonsense approach to the Web site, and to recruiting in general, the simplistic font and standard colors (black for text, white for important headings, blue for the windows, and splashes of orange from the images of Coast Guard boats, helicopters and personal flotation devices) as well as the Coast Guard's shield can be found on almost every page.

This Coast Guard's shield, a key identity piece, is present on the personal flotation devices (PFDs) worn, uniform items – such as hardhats, and the walls of buildings and aircraft hangars. Additionally, as part of Coast Guard's logo, the shield of freedom adorns the sides of aircraft and cutters, and is incorporated into the familiar Coast Guard racing stripe.⁶ While the racing stripe and the shield have been around since 1967, the idea of the Coast Guard emulating the Homeland protector role did not fully emerge until 2003.

⁶ President John F. Kennedy hired the industrial design firm of Raymond Loewy/William Snaith, Inc. to improve the world-wide visual identification of the U.S. government. In 1964, the firm recommended that the Coast Guard adopt a symbol that would distinguish it from other government agencies and be applied to ships, boats, aircraft, stations, vehicles, signs and printed forms. The design was a wide red bar to the right of a narrow blue bar, both canted at 64 degrees, with a new emblem in the center. Impression management studies were done to see the impact on the public and ensure the new identity was compatible with Coast Guard's missions and traditions. The reaction was overwhelmingly favorable. Three years later, on April 6, 1967, the racing stripe appeared throughout the Coast Guard ("Traditions of the United States Coast Guard").

Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, issued a decisive statement in 2003, specifically addressing Coast Guard's new missions, goals and focus:

Confronting tremendous new demands of Homeland Security and the Global War on Terrorism, the Coast Guard supported Operation Liberty Shield to defend America's ports, coasts, and infrastructure. Deployed Coast Guard forces executed Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom...At the same time, we successfully met unabated and unrelenting demands for search & rescue, marine safety, environmental protection, drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, fisheries enforcement, aids to navigation, and domestic and polar icebreaking during one of the worst ice seasons on record...And on March 1, 2003, as part of the largest government reorganization in more than 50 years, we moved smoothly from the Department of Transportation to the new Department of Homeland Security.

Key to our success in these historic events was the hard work, integrity, professionalism, and adaptability of our people; the military character of our Service; and the multi-mission capability embedded in our cutters, aircraft, boats, and systems...our focus on Readiness, People, and Stewardship is exactly on target. It is how we will sustain our Service, transform it to meet evolving demands, and preserve our enduring character ("Commandant's Direction: 2003").

Impression Construction

With the transition, it was inevitable that the Coast Guard would need to create certain public impressions. As a result, the organization altered its approach to recruiting as a way to affect the public's impressions of the organization. This is the basis of impression construction. This part of Leary et al.'s (1990) two-component model centers around a person's (or in this case an organization's) self-concept, target images and perceived images. Impression construction "involves not only choosing the kind of impression to create, but deciding precisely how they will go about doing so" (Leary et al., 1990, p. 36).

Leary et al. (1990) stated that engaging in impression management - specifically impression construction - depends on five factors: (a) self-concept; (b) desired/undesired

identity image; (c) role constraints; (d) a target's values; and (e) current or potential social images. Additionally, as first explored in Chapter Two, Leary et al. (1990) believe that in image construction, there are five situational factors to consider: (1) Is the communication public or private? (The Coast Guard's recruiting Web site is public.); (2) Is there a dependency on the target for valued outcomes? (The Coast Guard relies heavily on online recruiting methods to garner new members.); (3) Is there an anticipation of future contact? (Recruits who are interested in the Coast Guard will repeatedly visit the recruiting Web sites for information.); (4) Is there a strong goal value in place?; and (5) Is the discrepancy between the desired image and the believed image (if there is one) beyond the limits of acceptability?

While the first three questions are relatively easy to address, the last two questions delve deeper into impression management and the Coast Guard's use of its recruiting Web site to alter public perception. Focusing on desired identity and image, as well as the Coast Guard's values, Admiral Allen's primary goal value, as expressed in his aforementioned statement, is (a) Readiness; (b) People; and (c) Stewardship. Aligning with Coast Guard's three core values of (a) Honor; (b) Respect and (c) Devotion to Duty, these goal values, like their counterparts, are embedded in recurring themes and evidenced throughout the Web site.

Even with the restructuring and the attempt to transition from the "Guardians of the Sea" to America's "Shield of Freedom," there is not a tremendous discrepancy between these two images. In fact, the Coast Guard very much remains the "Guardians" and only needs to enhance its image in the Homeland Security role. Nevertheless, with this identity shift comes the need for advertising and buy-in to re-create the publicly held

image. As previously mentioned, the “Shield of Freedom,” which is the Coast Guard’s new identity, is evidenced in text and graphical representations in the top left corner of each page on the recruiting Web site. However, the text continues to tout the Coast Guard as the maritime 911, which mirrors the commonly-held perception of the organization being America’s “Guardian of the Sea.” The “Maritime Safety” page clearly states (in bold letters), “When the rescue alarm sounds, we are at our best.” It is evident that the Coast Guard has constructed its identity in such a way that the public’s image will see the organization as a combination of the two elements – both “Guardians” and “Defenders.” In this capacity, given its broader scope of missions and goals, the Coast Guard’s primary concern lies in maintaining its likability and seek to avoid negative attributes such as lack of ability and disapproval.

Links to Theories of Representation

Hall (1997b) states that representation, as a concept, focuses on how language, discourse and symbology construct meaning and is interpreted accordingly by an interested culture. And, because meaning is created by the relationship between things, concepts and signs, Hall expounded on his ideas by claiming that representation “[I]s the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language” (1997b, p. 17).

Constructionist theories of representation assume language is a way to construct meaning, which is neither fixed, nor naturally associates signifiers and signifieds. Theories of Representation consider how meanings are constructed through oral and written language (du Gay et al., 1997; Hall, 1997a, 1997b) and argue that the language system used is what conveys meaning via representation of our mental concepts. “[S]ocial actors...use conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other

representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others” (Hall, 1997b, p. 25). However, because meanings are subject to one’s environment, background, education, understanding, and interpretation of reality, meanings are constantly in flux. Representations, as revealed through language and graphics, assist with creating a culture’s identity. It can be influenced by the way an organization chooses to communicate with its publics via graphics, visual materials and verbal messages, and examines how publics interpret the meanings encoded in these graphics, visual materials and verbal messages. “Visual signs and images, even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted” (Hall, 1997b, p. 19). Interpretation comes via codes. The code reflects culture and sets up a correlation between a conceptual system and a language system (Hall, 1997a).

These codes help define cultures and tell us which language to use to convey the meaning behind an idea. Because objects and ideas do not organically or inherently hold specific meanings, language must be considered as a way to comprehend the representations, images, and messages lurking below the surface. The resulting perception is completely dependent upon the receiver.

Consider, then, the ambiguous nature of the Web site’s language. Sprinkled throughout the text, words such as “may,” “could,” and “chance,” keep the Coast Guard from making any promises or guarantees regarding duty locations, jobs, or admission to officer programs. What appears to be a one-sided conversation relays the message that having excitement, adventure, heroism and being part of *the* elite maritime organization

comes at a price. The Coast Guard takes on the parental role and assumes responsibility for dictating where one will live, how one will act (via its Code of Conduct) and the jobs one will do. Of course, as in most family situations, free will is not entirely stripped away. Each Coast Guard member is expected to take responsibility for his or her actions, his or her career, his or her advancements, and his or her education. So, while the organization has a lot of say in the outcome, the member has complete control over the foundational elements.

Language is also used to construct culture and, from the constructionist viewpoint, culture plays an important part in creating meaning. Throughout the recruiting Web site, the Coast Guard organization is depicted as a premier force, called upon to save lives and defend the country. While this representation is accurate, it is not all together complete. Hence, the recruiting Web site's representation of the Coast Guard lacks some of the elements that comprise the organization.

Coast Guard Cultures

The Coast Guard is actually composed of several sub-cultures which work together to make the entire organization. Each culture has inherent traits, values, and ideals that align with the Coast Guard as a larger organization, but also differentiate it from its counterparts. These sub-cultures include: (a) afloat units; (b) ashore divisions; (c) the aviation community; and (d) marine safety entities. Buried within each of these Coast Guard components are even more sub-cultures, based on rate, job-specifics and specialties. Although there are layers of groupings within the internal organization, all of these sub-cultures work together to comprise an institution which strives to complete the mission with (as compared to its DOD counterparts) little funding and minimal resources.

An example of the internal sub-culture layering is evident in the ashore community. This community includes Small Boat Stations, Sectors (including Search and Rescue Command Centers), Area and District offices and Headquarters. Taking, for example, a small boat station, this community is a mecca of sub-cultures working together. Depending on the Station's locality and missions, it may have a myriad of rates, including Boatswain Mates (BM), Machinery Technicians (MK), Gunners Mates (GM) and Operational Specialists (OS). Each of these ratings serve as a sub-culture.

However, job-specific cultures can also be found. Every small boat station will house coxswains (a sub-culture) and boat forces personnel (another sub-culture). And, based on the station's locality, it may also have surfmen (a third sub-culture). A Coast Guard member who has earned the surfman qualification is considered the most prestigious of the three because he or she is essentially a consummate small boat coxswain. And, along with prestige, comes an inherent culture that sets surfmen apart from other Small Boat Station personnel. With the motto, "The book says that you've got to go out, but it doesn't say a word about coming back" ("U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office"), the 161 Surfmen of the United States Coast Guard make up the smallest operational specialty in this small service.

As illustrated in the above example, each sub-culture has its own unique codes, language and graphics, which help set it apart from other internal sub-cultures. For example, mirroring the Coast Guard at-large, the surfmen's tiny sub-sect lives by a creed which sets its culture apart from others in the organization. It reads:

I will to the best of my ability, pursue each mission with the commitment, compassion, and courage inherent in the title **"SURFMAN"**. I will endeavor to reinforce the worldwide reputation of our forefathers in the Lifeboat Community. I will

maintain a guardian's eye on my crew at all times, and keep a cool, yet deliberate, hand on the throttle. I will give of myself and my knowledge as those who gave to me; so as the line of Coast Guard Surfman will live forever I will ensure that my supervisors rest easy with the knowledge that I am at the helm, no matter what the conditions. I will never unnecessarily jeopardize myself, my boat, or my crew; but will do so freely to rescue those in peril. I will strive with dedication and determination to bring credit upon Coast Guard Surfmen past and future ("U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office").

Sub-cultures are significant because the meanings which are created from the visual and verbal representations are only part of the whole Coast Guard picture. The recruiting Web site gives no indication that sub-cultures such as surfmen or cuttermen (one who has been recognized as spending a great deal of time afloat and earning qualifications associated with being underway for extended deployments) exist. Instead, the images and text presented on the recruiting Web site are constructed in such a way that the interpreter might assume that becoming part of the Coast Guard means becoming part of a large, unified maritime organization. While this is true, the omission of the Coast Guard's internal communities leaves out quite a bit of information which is integral when making a non-biased, accurate decision to join the service. If one makes this decision based solely on a version of constructed meaning taken from the Web site's representations, one is making a decision based on partial and incomplete information.

However, this oversight confirms that representation is a construction: a version of reality. The differences between the Coast Guard organization, the experience of living and working within it, and the recruiting Web site's construction of this reality are apparent. Take, for example, Coast Guard's five overarching missions. The recruiting Web site presents these as five mutually exclusive areas. Yet, the reality of Coast Guard

life is that these missions bleed into one another and, often, are not distinguishable as separate entities. In fact, often they are collectively referred to as “the Mission.”

There are, however, realistic parallels between the Web site and Coast Guard life. Most of these were found in the layered, hierarchical construction of the site. But, as meanings are being created and negotiated throughout the site, a relatively realistic picture emerges of life within the service. One can expect to become more disciplined, understand the nature of leadership, and cultivate one’s sense of honor and bravery through humanitarian and patriotic duties. One can expect to take responsibility for one’s career, actions, and duties.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the analysis does not include some of the sub-pages of the recruitment Web site. Instead, this thesis considered the 17 pages that are most visited (based on recommendations from Coast Guard recruiting headquarters and Google Analytics). Additionally, graphics were not explored in-depth. By focusing on the representation aspects of the Web site, this study does not assess the reactions of actual users to the navigability and attractiveness of the site. And, it does not address Search Engine Optimization or dialogic features issues, both related to how one initially finds an organizational Web site on the Internet and then how one navigates that site. Nevertheless, it is likely that people visiting specific recruiting Web sites have some knowledge of the organization because it can be assumed that they are on the site looking for more specific employment information.

The study has the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research. Hence, it strives for depth instead of statistical breadth, and is interpretive in nature. Lastly, the

study was limited in that it did not measure actual public perceptions about the Coast Guard organization. In the place of such measurement, public perception was assessed via prior research, information from other Web sites, and first-hand knowledge of working with the Coast Guard and the publics it serves.

Future Research

There is a need for more studies examining Internet-based recruitment instruments, such as the Coast Guard's Web site. Because current research focuses on job advertisements and brochures, instead of online media, the need for further research in the online sector is tremendous. It would be valuable to compare corporate messages, as represented on employment sites, to both public perceptions and current employee perceptions, through the use of surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Lastly, because there is so much research lacking in the field of military recruitment strategies and e-cruiting, it would be beneficial to all five Armed Services to investigate how prospective recruits interpret and respond to the messages, represented through visuals and verbals, employed on their career sites. As an extension of this study, it would behoove the Coast Guard to consider an in-depth content analysis of graphical representations as well as the dialogic features used on its recruiting Web site as a means to garner more insight into the effectiveness of the tool.

Recommendations

Shortfalls

Themes such as action, adventure, bravery, dedication, devotion to duty, heroism, honor, patriotism, personal growth, pride, self-discipline, and respect are common and repetitive. All of these concepts are intertwined and work to create the notion that, by

joining the Coast Guard, one has the opportunity to become part of something great – something bigger than oneself. Nevertheless, there were oversights as the Web site failed to include important missions and jobs within the Coast Guard from the onset.

Because the site is constructed in a layered, structured fashion, it is easy to navigate through the layers and determine if the Coast Guard is indeed the right fit. Yet, the Web site misses its mark in recruiting for *all* rates. References to heroism through being part of a Search and Rescue team or a Law Enforcement team recruits those action-based individuals whose interests lie in driving boats and wielding weapons. Most often these missions are fulfilled by Boatswain Mates (BMs), Gunner's Mates (GMs), Damage Controlman (DCs) and Machinery Technicians (MKs). The Web site also leans heavily towards recruiting for the Marine Science Technicians (MSTs) in the "Protection of Natural Resources" pages. Even in the "Find Your Fit" pages, the Web site clearly states: "For high school graduates we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement; maritime patrol; environmental operation; aviation; and more." Furthermore, in the "Find Your Fit – Reserve" section, the text discusses receiving training in "diverse areas such as computer processing, mechanics, or radio communications." However, the reality is that the Coast Guard has specific full-time, active duty enlisted ratings for these areas of expertise (respectively being Yeoman [YN], Information Systems Technician [IT] and Operations Specialist [OS]).

It takes digging deep, and getting into the meat of the "Find Your Fit – Enlisted / Rating Descriptions" pages to discover that there are four job groups (the Deck and Ordnance Group; the Hull and Engineering Group; the Aviation Group; and the

Administrative and Scientific Group) that a recruit can choose from when enlisting (see Appendix B). In total, the Coast Guard offers 20 job-specific ratings. But, in the basic areas of the Web site I explored, which included

1. The Home Page
2. Discovering Our Missions
 - National Defense
 - Maritime Security
 - Protection of Natural Resources
 - Maritime Safety
 - Maritime Mobility
3. Find Your Fit
 - Enlisted Opportunities
 - Officer Opportunities
 - i. College Student Pre-Commissioning Program
 - ii. Officer Candidate School
 - iii. Maritime Academy Graduate
 - iv. Blue 21 Flight Initiative
 - Reserve Opportunities
4. Get the Answers
 - Find a Recruiter

I found the majority of the administrative ratings (Food Service Specialist [FS], Health Services Technician [HS], Public Affairs Specialist [PA], Storekeeper [SK], and Yeoman [YN]) and engineering group (Damage Controlman [DC], Electrician's Mate [EM], Electronic's Technician [ET], and Information Systems Technician [IT]) were overlooked. However, a great amount of emphasis was placed on the aviation (specifically the Aviation Maintenance Technician [AMT] and the Aviation Survival Technician [AST]) as well as the deck and ordnance groups (including Boatswain's Mate [BM], Gunner's Mate [GM] and Operations Specialist [OS]).

Perhaps these were stressed because America has become more familiar with the ratings within the Coast Guard family since 2005's Hurricane Katrina. It was during the extended rescue effort that America saw images of the aviation group as well as the deck

and ordnance groups in action. In fact, “[T]he U.S. Coast Guard [rescued] 27,243 people from rooftops and flooded neighborhoods devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, Coast Guard personnel assisted with the evacuation of an additional 9,462 patients and medical personnel from hospitals and nursing homes” (“United States Coast Guard: Who are These Silent Heroes”). These Gulf Coast rescue efforts catapulted the Coast Guard into a lead role where it exceeded expectations and was captured in the public limelight. Ironically, no mention of Hurricane Katrina was evidenced in the recruiting Web site; yet, this image that America created of the Coast Guard as a result of that incident was recurrent at the beginning of the Web site (“Home Page”) as well as at its closure (“Find a Recruiter”).

Diversity

A human touch, not electronic contact, is vital in the last steps of a successful hiring process. A recruiting Web site does not take the place of face-to-face contact with members from the organization. While the Coast Guard is incorporating cutting-edge technology to find, and ultimately recruit potential members, the site does not tell the whole story. Like all other branches of the military, the constructs of the Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site appeal to those who are adventurous by nature – blue collar workers who are willing to get their hands dirty and reach out to sailors in peril.

What is lacking in the Web site, however, are the undercurrents of warmth, compassion, kindness and emotion – all important traits for a Coastie to have, yet traits which seem to be well-hidden, barely hinted at, and not readily advertised. Warmth, compassion, kindness and emotion are feminine qualities – *not* qualities that an organization charged with carrying out Homeland Security and National Defense would

exude. After all, the Coast Guard is a “Shield,” ready to deflect all things that seem harmful or uncertain. Yet, in reality, the humanness and inherent kindness of Coast Guardsmen and women are pillars which help create and solidify the organization’s structure. Without these characteristics, lives would be lost at sea and marine life would dwindle to the point of extinction. So, while the Coast Guard is represented throughout the Web site as a lead, premier law enforcement agency, and a domestic and international force not to be reckoned with, the site seems to miss the mark with regards to *depicting* the true nature and heart of the organization as well as the people who love it dearly.

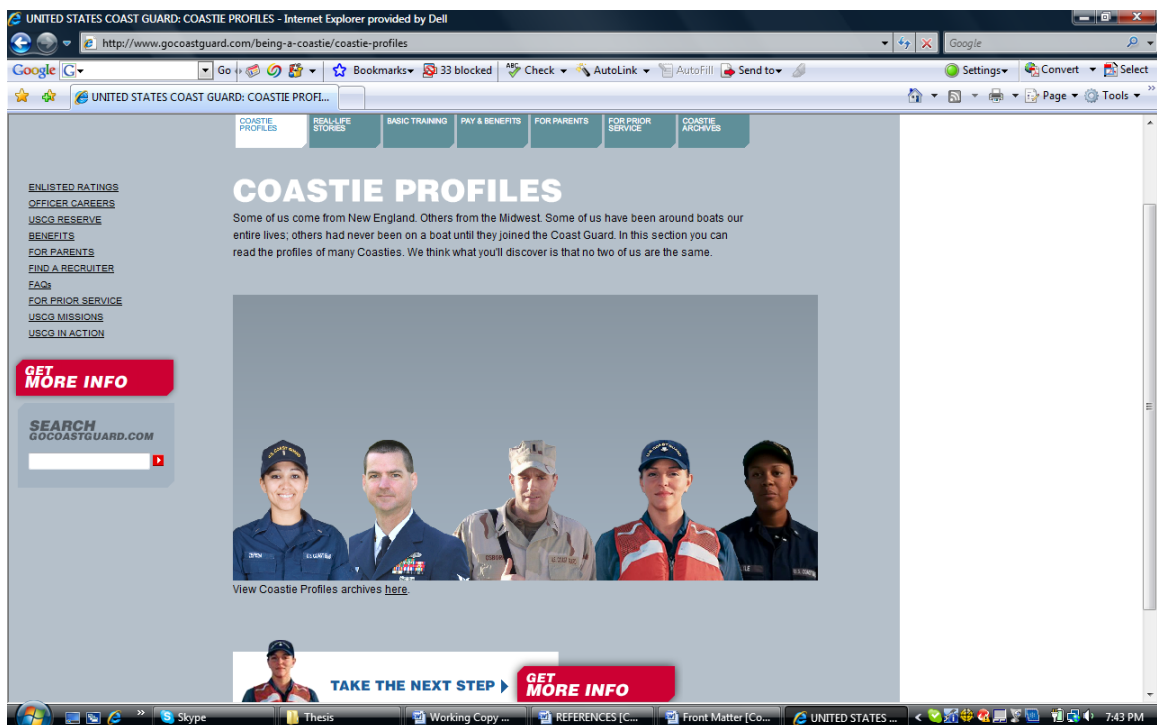


Figure 5-2: Being a Coastie: Coastie Profiles

Currently, the recruiting Web site is not marketed to women or minority groups. With male-centered, machismo language, themes and graphical representations, the Coast Guard fails to appeal to the audiences it is needing most to attract. Furthermore, it misses the mark in utilizing the Internet to its full potential. In a simple comparison of the other four Armed Forces, the Coast Guard’s recruiting Web site falls far short in using the

Internet's capabilities to market to the younger, technologically savvy generations. With simple strategies such as the inclusion of games, downloads (such as ringtones and podcasts), video contests, chat rooms, discussion boards, on-line commercials, and interactive personal accounts, the four DOD Armed services do a far superior job of tailoring the Internet's technological capabilities to their 18 – 24 year-old niche audience.

Furthermore, because the Coast Guard's Web site is constructed only in English, it excludes sectors of the population (including influencers) who may operate better in Spanish. Incorporating links for Spanish-speakers would enhance the site's usability and increase minority usability. While the Coast Guard is an organization which operates primarily with the English language, Spanish speaking service members are an integral part of mission effectiveness. The Coast Guard often works in conjunction with foreign law enforcement branches (including those from Central and South America), and communications rely on the effectiveness of a qualified interpreter.

The Coast Guard must also consider influencers as part of their publics. Because this tiny service is competing with the four bigger branches for qualified men and women, it needs to market to a broader range of people. If the Coast Guard is serious about increasing its minority populations and establishing long-lasting relationships with these publics, a better approach would be to appeal to the teachers, clergy, coaches, parents and grandparents who often assist in the decision-making process using an array of language options.

If aligned with the capabilities offered by the World Wide Web, the Coast Guard's recruiting Web site could be an effective and appropriate tool for recruiting qualified personnel. However, the current construction and composition of the recruiting

site, which is wrought with ambiguity and misrepresentations, only scratches the surface in trying to use the Internet as a multi-media, interactive tool. The Coast Guard markets to the 18 – 24 year-old audience. However, the Web site's marketing strategy does not align with the needs or wants of that particular public. Considering this generation has grown up immersed in technology and interactivity, it is imperative that the Web sites they choose to view offer elements of the same. Web sites must attract and hold the browser's interest through interactive media such as games, videos, chat rooms, and Web casts. Therefore, in addition to incorporating these elements into the recruiting Web site, it would behoove the Coast Guard to further follow in DOD's footsteps and design the site where a browser has the ability to create and log into one's personalized account, and individualize pages which reflect one's specific interests.

The days of walking into a recruiting office with little or no information are history. Now an interested candidate is armed with the Internet and the means to garner all of the information he or she needs to make an informed career decision. While the Web site does not absolve the duties and responsibilities of a qualified recruiter, it does make gathering information about the service a whole lot easier. With more interactive tools and less ambiguity regarding Coast Guard's rates, cultures, duty stations, and inherent nature of the service, the Coast Guard can draft qualified personnel and remain *Semper Paratus* – Always Ready.

REFERENCES

- About.com: U.S. Military (2004). *Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer Training*. Retrieved September 14, 2008, from <http://usmilitary.about.com/od/coastguard/a/cgrescueswimmer.htm>.
- About.com: U.S. Military (2008). *United States Coast Guard: Who are these silent heroes?* Retrieved October 22, 2008, from <http://usmilitary.about.com/od/coastguard/a/uscghistory.htm>.
- Acosta-Alzuru, C., & Roushanzamir, E. L. (2000). All you will see is the one you once knew: Portrayals from the Falklands/Malvinas War in U.S. and Latin American newspapers. *Journalism and Mass Communication Monographs*, 1(4), 301-345.
- Allen, M.W., & Caillouet, R. H. (1994). Legitimation endeavors: Impression management strategies used by an organization in crisis. *Communication Monographs*, 61, 44-62.
- Apsler, R. (1975). Effects of embarrassment on behavior toward others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32, 145-153.
- Arkin, R., & Shepperd, J. (1989). Self-presentation styles in organizations. In R. A. Giacalone and P. Rosenfeld (Eds.), *Impression management in the organization* (pp. 125-139). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Jones, E. E. (1978). When self-presentation is constrained by the target's knowledge: Consistency and compensation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 608-618.
- Baumgardner, A. H., Lake, E., & Arkin, R. M. (1985). Claiming mood as a self-handicap: The influence of spoiled and unspoiled public identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 11, 349-357.
- Beard, J.W. (1996). *Impression management and information technology*. Westport, CN: Quorum Books.
- Beard, J.W., Ed. (2004). *Managing impressions with information technology*. Westport, CN: Praeger.
- Beck, R.C. (1990). *Motivation: Theories and principles*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (3rd edition).

- Berelson, B. (1952). Content analysis in communication research. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Bernstein, D. (1984). Company image and reality. Eastbourne: Holt, Rinehart & Winston/Advertising Association.
- Bromley, D. B. (1993). Reputation, image, and impression management. Chichester, England ; New York: Wiley.
- Broom, G. M., Casey, S., & Richey, J. (2000). Toward a concept and theory of organization-public relationships. In J. A. Ledingham, & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management. A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations* (pp. 3-22). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Butschi, G., & Stein, B. (2006). Theory on strategic management is the key to unlocking the boardroom. *Journal of Communication Management*, 10, 106–109.
- Callison, C. (2003). Media relations and the Internet: How fortune 500 company web sites assist journalists in news gathering. *Public Relations Review*, 29(1), 29-42.
- Cialdini, R. B., & Richardson, K. D. (1980). Two indirect tactics of image management: Basking and blasting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 406–415.
- Coher, R. T., Brown, D. J., Keeping, L. M., & Levy, P. E. (2004). Recruitment on the net: How do organizational web site characteristics influence applicant attraction? *Journal of Management*, 30(5), 623–646.
- Coher, R. T., Brown, D. J., Levy, P. E., Keeping, L. M., & Coher, A. B. (2003). Organizational Web sites: Web site content and style as determinants of organizational attraction. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 11(2/3), 158–169.
- Congressional Budget Office. (2006). “Recruiting, retention, and future levels of military personnel” (Publication number 2777). Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 2, 2008, from <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/76xx/doc7626/10-05-Recruiting.pdf>.
- Connolly-Ahern, C., & Broadway, S. C. (2007). The importance of appearing competent: An analysis of corporate impression management strategies on the world wide web. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 343-345.
- Coombs, T. W. (2001). Interpersonal communication and public relations. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *The handbook of public relations* (pp. 105–114). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Coyle, J.R. and Thorson, E., 2001. The effects of progressive levels of interactivity and vividness in web marketing sites. *Journal of Advertising* 30 3, pp. 65–77.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Demarais, A. & White, V. (2004). First impressions: What you don't know about how others see you. New York: Bantam Books.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dineen, B. R., Ash, S. R., & Noe, R. A. (2002). A web of applicant attraction: Person-organization fit in the context of Web-based recruitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 723–734.

Dodds, J.M. (1985). The theory and practice of text analysis and translation criticism. Italy: Campanotto Editore.

du Gay, P., Hall, S., Janes, L., Mackay, H., & Negus, K. (1997). Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony Walkman. London: Sage.

Esrock, S. L., & Leichty, G. B. (1999). Corporate World Wide Web pages: Serving the news media and other publics. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 76(3), 456-467.

Esrock, S. L., & Leichty, G. B. (2000). Organization of corporate Web pages: Publics and functions. *Public Relations Review*, 26(3), 327–344.

Ferris, G., Gail, R. & Fandt, P. (1989). Politics in organizations. In R. A. Giacalone and P. Rosenfeld (Eds.), *Impression management in the organization* (pp. 143-170). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Free Republic (2006). "U.S. Coast Guard Featured in Pentagon Channel Documentary and Hollywood Film." Retrieved October 17, 2008, from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1706691/posts>.

Frey, D. (1978). Reactions to success and failure in public and in private conditions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 14, 172–179.

Giacalone, R., & Rosenfeld, P. (1989). Introduction – Impression management in organizations: An overview. In R. A. Giacalone and P. Rosenfeld (Eds.), *Impression management in the organization* (pp. 1-4). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Giacalone, R., & Rosenfeld, P. (1991). Applied impression management : How image-making affects managerial decisions. Newbury Park, CA.: Sage Publications.

GlobalSecurity.org: Military (2008). *Coast Guard Cutters*. Retrieved November 1, 2008, from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ship/cutter.htm>.

Gramont, P. D. (1990). Language and the distortion of meaning. New York, NY: University Press.

Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, J., & Paisley, C. (1984). The effect of extrinsic incentives on the use of test anxiety as an attributional defense: Playing it cool when the stakes are high. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 47, 1136–1145.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor.

Google Analytics. (2008). *Dashboard*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <https://www.google.com/analytics/reporting/dashboard?id=6296664>.

Grabianowski, E. (2008). "How Stuff Works: How the U.S. Coast Guard Works." Retrieved October 17, 2008, from <http://science.howstuffworks.com/coast-guard.htm>.

Gramont, P. (1990). *Language and the distortion of meaning*. New York, NY: University Press.

Hall, S. (1975). Introduction. In A. Smith (Ed.), *Paper voices: the popular press and social change, 1935-1985* (pp. 11-24). London: Chatto & Windus.

Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997a). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage.

Hall, S. (1997b). The work of representation. In S. Hall (Ed.) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. (pp. 13-74). London: Sage.

Hallahan, K. (2001). Improving public relations web sites through usability research. *Public Relations Review*, 27(2), 223-240.

Hallahan, K. (2003). *A model for assessing web sites as tools in building organizational-public relationships*. Presented at International Communication Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, California.

Hallahan, K. (2004). Online public relations. In H. Bidgoli (Ed.), *The Internet encyclopedia* (pp. 769-783). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Hallahan, K. (2008). Organizational-public relationships in cyberspace. In T. Hansen-Horn, & B. D. Neff (Eds.), *Public relations: From theory to practice* (pp. 46-73). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Hartley, J. (1994). Meaning. In O'Sullivan, T., Hartley, J., Saunders, D., Montgomery, M., & Fiske, J. (1997). *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* (p. 174). New York: Routledge.

Hayward, P. (2006). You never get a second chance to make a first impression. International Communication Association.

Hjelmquist, E. (1990). Context and language. In J. Nuyts, A.M. Bolkestein, and C. Vet (Eds.), *Layers and Levels of Representation in Language Theory* (pp. 313-325). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Huckin, T., (2004). An introduction to analyzing texts and textual practices. In C. Bazerman & P. Prior (Eds.) *What writing does and how it does it*. (pp. 2-16). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Jensen, K. B. (1991). *Handbook of qualitative methodologies for mass communication*. London : Routledge.

Johansson, C. (2007). Goffman's sociology: An inspiring resource for developing public relations theory. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 275-280.

Jones, E.E. (1964). *Ingratiation*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Keen, C., Warner, D., Ed. (1989). *Visual and corporate identity*. Banbury: Heist.

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (1998). Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, 24(3), 321-335.

Kent, M. L., Taylor, M., & White, W. J. (2003). The relationship between web site design and organizational responsiveness to stakeholders. *Public Relations Review*, 29(1), 63-78.

Kleck, C., Reese, C., Behnken, D., & Sundar, S. (2007). The company you keep and the image you project: Putting your best foot forward in online social networks. 57th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association. San Francisco, CA.

Leary, M. R., & Schlenker, B. R. (1980). Self-presentation in a task-oriented leadership situation. *Representative Research in Social Psychology*, 11, 152–158.

Leary, M. R., Barnes, B. D., & Griebel, C. (1986). Cognitive, affective, and attributional effects of potential threats to self-esteem. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 4, 461–474.

Leary, M.R. (1995). *Self-presentation: Impression management and interpersonal behavior*. Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark.

Leary, M.R. & Kowalski, R.M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 34- 47.

Liddle, M., Ed. (1995). *Cognition and representation in linguistic theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Liu, C., Arnett, K., Capella, L., & Beatty, R. (1997). Web sites of the Fortune 500 companies: Facing customers through home pages. *Information & Management*, 31(6), 335–345.
- Marken, G. A. (1995). Getting the most from your presence in cyberspace. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 40(3), 36-37.
- Marken, G. A. (1998). The Internet and the web: The two-way public relations highway. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 43(1), 31-33.
- Marschall, D. (2002). Ideological discourses in the making of Internet career sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 7(4). Retrieved October 9, 2008, from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol7/issue4/marschall.html>.
- Mead, G. H. (1909). Social psychology as counterpart to physiological psychology. *Psychological Bulletin*, 6, 401-408.
- Meech, P. (2006). Corporate identity and corporate image. In J. L'Etang and M. Pieczka (Eds.), *Public relations: Critical debates and contemporary practice* (pp. 389-403). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mesmer, H.A. (2008). Tools for matching readers to texts. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Michels, L. C., and University of Georgia (2004). "Self-deception, impression management, and motivating contexts: Revisiting the substance versus style debate." Retrieved July 24, 2008 from <http://purl.galileo.usg.edu/uga%5Fetd/michels%5Flawrence%5Fc%5F200405%5Fms>.
- Nuyts, J. (1990). Linguistic and conceptual representation. In J. Nuyts, A.M. Bolkestein, and C. Vet (Eds.), *Layers and Levels of Representation in Language Theory* (pp. 263-293). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Park, N. & Lee, K. (2007). Effects of online news forum on corporate reputation. *Public Relations Review* 33, pp. 346–348.
- Paul, C. (2005). Re-imagining web analysis as circulation. *First Monday* [Online] 10 11.
- Peters, K., 2001. Five keys to effective e-cruiting. *Ivey Business Journal* 65 3, pp. 8–10.
- Pew Internet and American Life Project. (2002). *Online job hunting*. Retrieved October 8, 2008, from http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Jobhunt_Memo.pdf.
- Pratt, L. A. (1996). "Impression management in organizational E-mail communication." Retrieved July 23, 2008 from <http://www.public.asu.edu/~corman/scaorgcomm/pratt.htm>.
- Prieto, L. J. (1968). *La semiologie*. Martinet.

- Putnam, H. (1988). *Representation and reality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Ralston, D.A. & Elsass, P.M. (1989). Ingratiation and impression management in the organization. In R. A. Giacalone and P. Rosenfeld (Eds.), *Impression management in the organization* (pp. 235-252). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rieber, R.W. (1983). Dialogues on the psychology of language and thought: Conversations with Noam Chomsky, Charles Osgood, Jean Piaget, Ulric Neisser and Marcel Kinsbourne. In R.W. Rieber (Ed.), *Cognition and language: A series in psycholinguistics*. New York, Plenum Press.
- Rosenfeld, P., Giacalone, R., & Riordan, C. (1995). *Impression management in organizations: Theory, measurement, practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Sallot, L. (2002). What the public thinks about public relations: An impression management experiment. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 79(1), 150-171.
- Schiffrin, D. (1994). *Approaches to discourse*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Schlenker, B. R. (1975). Self-presentation: Managing the impression of consistency when reality interferes with self-enhancement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32, 1030–1037.
- Schlenker, B.R. (1980). *Impression management : The self-concept, social identity, and interpersonal relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Schlenker, B.R. (1992). Interpersonal processes involving impression regulation and management. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 43, 133-168.
- Schneider, D. J. (1969). Tactical self-presentation after success and failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 13, 262–268.
- Scollon, R. & Scollon, S. (2001). *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Semper Paratus (2008). *Creed of the United States Coast Guardsman*. Retrieved September 27, 2008, from <http://www.semparatus.com/creed.html>.
- SEO Glossary.com (n.d.). *Google Analytics*. Retrieved October 2, 2008 from, <http://www.seoglossary.com/article/626>.
- Sisodia, R. S., & Wolfe, D. B. (2000). Information technology. Its role in building, maintaining, and enhancing relationships. In J. N. Sheth, & A. Parvatiyar (Eds.), *Handbook of relationship marketing* (pp. 525-563). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Smith, G., Ed. (1999). *Goffman and social organization: Studies in a social legacy*. London: Routledge.
- Stinson, P. (2007). "Coast Guard Commandant's Guidance to PO08 Officer Selection Boards and Panels." Retrieved October 17, 2008 from, <http://base.google.com/base/a/1047965/D13756960577435882061>.
- Stone, E. (1989). Self-presentation biases in research. In R. A. Giacalone and P. Rosenfeld (Eds.), *Impression management in the organization* (pp. 189-202). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Storey, J. (1996). *Cultural studies and the study of popular culture: theories and methods*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Strauss, A.L., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA Sage.
- Talor, N. (2007). Impressions formed of self-promoters who create a context for their boasts. *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, 1-1.
- Taylor, M., & Kent, M. L. (2004). Congressional web sites and their potential for public dialogue. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 12(2), 59-76.
- Tedeschi, J.T. (1981). *Impression management theory and social psychological research*. New York: Academic Press.
- Tedeschi, J.T. & Riordan, C.A. (1981). Impression management and prosocial behavior following transgression. In J.T. Tedeschi (Ed), *Impression management theory and social psychological research* (pp. 223-244). New York: Academic Press.
- Tidwell, L.C., & Walther, J.B. (2002). Computer-mediated communication effects on disclosure, impression and interpersonal evaluations: Getting to know one another one bit at a time. *Human Communication Research*, 28(3), 317-348.
- Titscher, S., Meyer, M., Wodak, R., & Vetter, E. (2000). *Methods of text and discourse analysis*. California: Sage.
- Truex, D. (1996). "Text-based analysis: A brief introduction." Retrieved August 26, 2008, from <http://www.cis.gsu.edu/~dtruex/Presentations/tbintppr.pdf>.
- United States Coast Guard. *Being a coastie*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/being-a-coastie>.
- United States Coast Guard. *Being a coastie: Coastie profiles*. Retrieved October 27, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/being-a-coastie/coastie-profiles>.

United States Coast Guard. *Being a coastie: For parents*. Retrieved October 27, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/being-a-coastie/for-parents>.

United States Coast Guard. *Blue 21 flight initiative*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/blue-21-flight-initiative>.

United States Coast Guard. *Coast Guard snapshot*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from http://www.uscg.mil/top/about/doc/uscg_snapshot.pdf.

United States Coast Guard. *College student pre-commissioning initiative*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/college-student-pre-commissioning-initiative>.

United States Coast Guard. *Commandant's Direction: 2003*. Retrieved October 31, 2008, from <http://www.uscg.mil/history/collins/newcomdt.pdf>.

United States Coast Guard. *Discovering our missions*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/discovering-our-missions>.

United States Coast Guard. *Discovering our missions: Maritime mobility*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-mobility>.

United States Coast Guard. *Discovering our missions: Maritime safety*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-safety>.

United States Coast Guard. *Discovering our missions: Maritime security*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-security>.

United States Coast Guard. *Discovering our missions: National defense*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/discovering-our-missions/national-defense>.

United States Coast Guard. *Discovering our missions: Protection of natural resources*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/discovering-our-missions/protection-of-natural-resources>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit: Enlisted job ratings*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-rating-descriptions>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit: Enlisted opportunities*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit: Officer career fields*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/career-fields>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit: Officer opportunities*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit: Officer opportunities and programs*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs>.

United States Coast Guard. *Find your fit: Reserve opportunities*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/reserve-opportunities>.

United States Coast Guard. *Get the answers*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/get-the-answers>.

United States Coast Guard. *Get the answers: Find a recruiter*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/get-the-answers/find-a-recruiter>.

United States Coast Guard. *Home page: Being a coastie*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com>.

United States Coast Guard. *Home page: Discovering our missions*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com>.

United States Coast Guard. *Home page: Download stuff*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com>.

United States Coast Guard. *Home page: Find your fit*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com>.

United States Coast Guard. *Home page: Get the answers*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com>.

United States Coast Guard. *Maritime academy graduate*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/maritime-academy-graduate>.

United States Coast Guard. *Officer candidate school*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/officer-candidate-school>.

United States Coast Guard. *Traditions of the United States Coast Guard*. Retrieved October 31, 2008, from <http://www.uscg.mil/history/articles/Traditions.asp>.

United States Coast Guard. *U. S. Coast Guard & Coast Guard Reserve: The shield of freedom*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from <http://www.gocoastguard.com>.

United States Coast Guard. *U.S. Coast Guard Core Values*. Retrieved July 25, 2008, from <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wtl/values.htm>.

United States Coast Guard. *U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office*. Retrieved July 29, 2008, from <http://www.uscg.mil/history/>.

United States General Accounting Office. (2003). "Homeland Security: Challenges facing the coast guard as it transitions to the new department" (Publication number GAO-03-467T). Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 14, 2008, from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03467t.pdf>.

United States Government Accountability Office. (2005). "Military personnel: DOD needs action plan to address enlisted personnel recruitment and retention challenges" (Publication number GAO-06-134). Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 2, 2008, from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06134.pdf>.

United States Government Accountability Office. (2006). "Military recruiting: DOD and services need better data to enhance visibility over recruiting irregularities" (Publication number GAO-06-846). Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 2, 2008, from <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=gao&docid=f:d06846.pdf>.

United States Government Accountability Office. (2007a). "Homeland security: DHS's actions to recruit and retain staff and comply with the vacancies reform act" (Publication number GAO-07-758). Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 2, 2008, from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07758.pdf>.

United States Government Accountability Office. (2007b). "Military personnel: Strategic plan needed to address army's emerging officer accession and retention challenges" (Publication number GAO-07-224). Washington, D.C. Retrieved October 2, 2008, from <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=gao&docid=f:d07224.pdf>.

University of Wisconsin-Stout Website Usability Testing Center. (2001). "Website usability evaluation of uwstout.edu." Retrieved October 16, 2008, from <http://www.uwstout.edu/webusabilitycenter/StoutEvaluation.pdf>.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). *Your guide for developing usable & useful web sites*. Retrieved October 16, 2008, from <http://www.usability.gov/government/makingcase.html>.

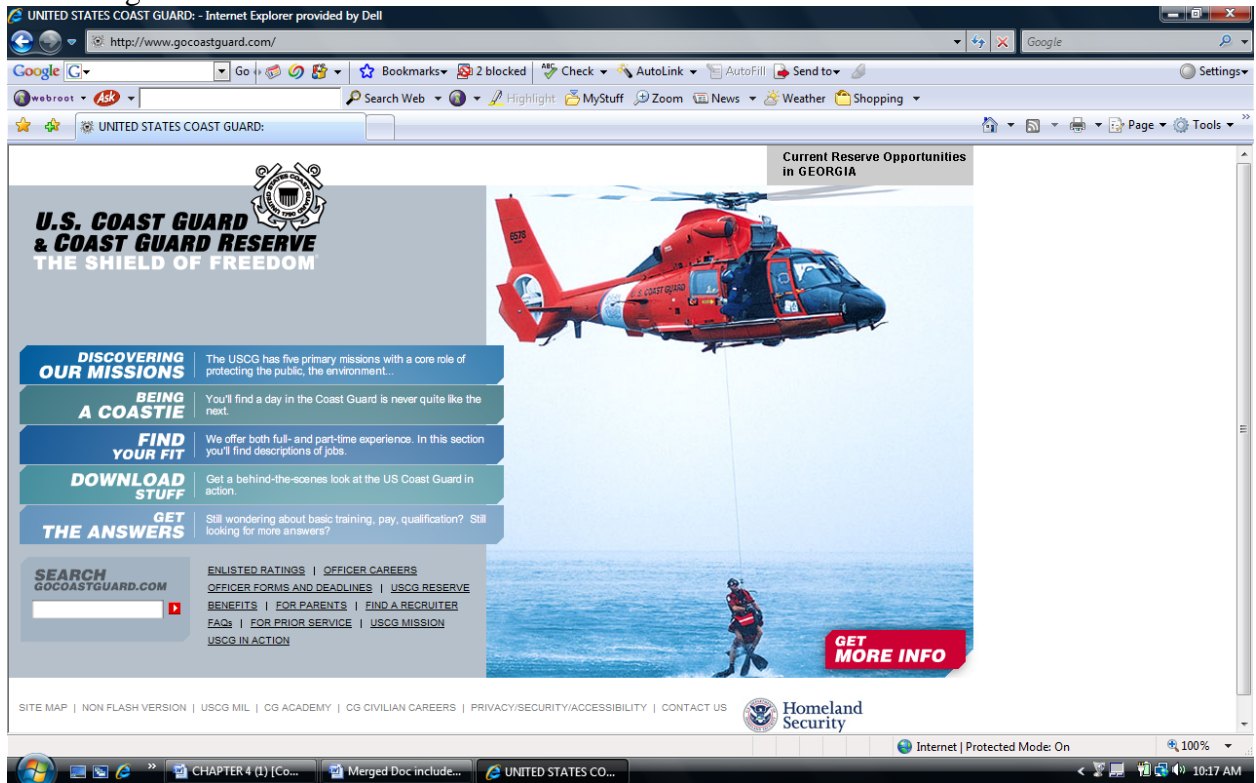
US Military (2008). *U.S. Military 101: The "Basics" of the United States Military*. Retrieved August 25, 2008, from <http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/generalinfo/a/military101.htm>.

- Vazire, S., & Goaling, S.D. (2004). E-perceptions: Personality impressions based on personal websites. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (1)87, 123-132.
- Weary, G., & Arkin, R.M. (1981). Attributional self-presentation. In J.H. Harvey, W.J. Ickes, & R.I. Kidd (Eds.), *New directions in attribution research*, Vol. 3 (pp. 223–246). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- White, C., & Raman, N. (1999). The World Wide Web as a public relations medium: The use of research, planning, and evaluation in web site development. *Public Relations Review*, 25(4), 405-420.
- Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords*. London: Fontana.
- Williamson, I., Lepak, D., & King, J. (2003). The effect of company recruitment Web site orientation on individuals' perceptions of organizational attractiveness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 63(2), 242–263.
- Wynn, E., & Katz, J.E. (1997). Hyperbole over cyberspace: Self-presentation and social boundaries in Internet homepages and discourse. *The Information Society*, 13, 29-327.
- Young, J. & Foot, K. (2006). Corporate e-cruiting: The construction of work in Fortune 500 recruiting web sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11 (2006), 44-71.
- YouTube (2008). *U.S. Coast Guard: History and Mission*. Retrieved September 22, 2008, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDFHBXCT34o>.

APPENDIX A

COAST GUARD RECRUITING WEB PAGES

Home Page



Home Page (Continued)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD:

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS
The USCG has five primary missions with a core role of protecting the public, the environment...

BEING A COASTIE
You'll find a day in the Coast Guard is never quite like the next.

FIND YOUR FIT
We offer both full- and part-time experience. In this section you'll find descriptions of jobs.

DOWNLOAD STUFF
Get a behind-the-scenes look at the US Coast Guard in action.

GET THE ANSWERS
Still wondering about basic training, pay, qualification? Still looking for more answers?

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

[ENLISTED RATINGS](#) | [OFFICER CAREERS](#)
[OFFICER FORMS AND DEADLINES](#) | [USCG RESERVE](#)
[BENEFITS](#) | [FOR PARENTS](#) | [FIND A RECRUITER](#)
[FAQs](#) | [FOR PRIOR SERVICE](#) | [USCG MISSION](#)
[USCG IN ACTION](#)

Current Reserve Opportunities in GEORGIA

GET MORE INFO

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

Homeland Security

Internet | Protected Mode: On

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... | Merged Doc include... | UNITED STATES CO...

10:19 AM

Discovering Our Missions

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD:

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS

TAKING A LEAD ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY.

The USCG has five primary missions with a core role of protecting the public, the environment and the U.S. security interests in any maritime region. Find out what those are and how you can be a part of them.

NATIONAL DEFENSE | **MARITIME SECURITY** | **PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES** | **MARITIME SAFETY** | **MARITIME MOBILITY**

BEING A COASTIE

FIND YOUR FIT

DOWNLOAD STUFF

GET THE ANSWERS

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

Homeland Security

Internet | Protected Mode: On

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... | Merged Doc include... | UNITED STATES CO...

10:41 AM

Discovering Our Missions - National Defense

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: NATIONAL DEFENSE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/national-defense

Google

Go

Bookmarks

2 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Search Web

Highlight

MyStuff

Zoom

News

Weather

Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: NATIONAL DEF...

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS

BEING A COASTIE FIND YOUR FIT

DOWNLOAD STUFF GET THE ANSWERS

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS

TAKING A LEAD ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

MARITIME SECURITY

PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MARITIME SAFETY

MARITIME MOBILITY

ENLISTED RATINGS

OFFICER CAREERS

USCG RESERVE

BENEFITS

FOR PARENTS

FIND A RECRUITER

FAQs

FOR PRIOR SERVICE


USCG MISSIONS

USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH GOCOSTGUARD.COM

NATIONAL DEFENSE



U. S. COAST GUARD

When you join the Coast Guard, you become a member of an organization that for more than two centuries has served proudly as one of our nation's five military services.

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...]

Merged Doc include...

UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: NATIONAL DEFENSE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/national-defense

Google

Go

Bookmarks

2 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Search Web

Highlight

MyStuff

Zoom

News

Weather


Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: NATIONAL DEF...


We have four national-defense missions. These are essential military duties that you may be selected to help the Coast Guard fulfill in peacetime, crisis and war as we work alongside the other military services, and at times, as a specialized service under the Navy. These missions might require you to:

- Intercept enemy forces on the water;
- Direct overseas port security operations;
- Participate in peacetime engagement;
- Protect the environment during defense operations.

We are in charge of the U.S. Maritime Defense Zone, which means you could be countering potential threats to American coasts, ports and inland waterways through port-security, harbor-defense and coastal-warfare operations and exercises. During an average day, we inspect 23 waterfront facilities.



Outside of U.S. coastal waters, we assist foreign naval and maritime forces through training and joint operations. Because we have such a wide variety of aircraft, vessels and missions, we are a powerful role model that is in ever-increasing demand overseas.



Coast Guard Port Security

In short, when you join the Coast Guard, you will be at the forefront of our nation's defense.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

GET MORE INFO

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...]

Merged Doc include...

UNITED STATES CO...

Discovering Our Missions - Maritime Security

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME SECURITY - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-security

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME SECURITY

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS

BEING A COASTIE
FIND YOUR FIT
DOWNLOAD STUFF
GET THE ANSWERS

TAKING A LEAD ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY.

NATIONAL DEFENSE
MARITIME SECURITY
PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MARITIME SAFETY
MARITIME MOBILITY

MARITIME SECURITY

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

Since 1790, we have been the "law of the sea."

Originally established by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton as the Revenue Cutter Service, the Coast Guard began as an armed maritime law enforcement service with the mission of enforcing import tariffs. Since then, we have taken on ever-greater maritime security challenges including protecting our nation's security against terrorism.

When you're selected for one of the Coast Guard's law enforcement teams, you'll find yourself really mixing it up, and doing everything from:

- Apprehending modern-day pirates and yes, they're out there;
- Tracking and arresting drug runners and migrant smugglers;
- Enforcing fisheries conservation laws and vessel-safety regulations. May not sound quite as thrilling, but this is critical work.

Our stats tell our success story; on our "average" day, we will interdict 26 undocumented migrants at sea and seize \$2.4 million worth of illegal drugs. You can be a part of that story.

Drug smugglers use a 6-million-square-mile area that includes the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Eastern Pacific as "transit zones." Although the drug runners we chase everyday have seemingly limitless funding and cunning, we counter them with our ceaseless Coast Guard determination and devotion to duty to even the playing field, and make their jobs "problematical."

Our migrant-interdiction operations are as much a humanitarian effort as they are law-enforcement missions. In fact, most of our cases that involve undocumented migrants start as search-and-rescue missions on the high seas, rather than in U.S. coastal waters.

Discovering Our Missions - Protection of Natural Resources

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/protection-of-natural-resources

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROTECTION O...


NATIONAL DEFENSE MARITIME SECURITY PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES MARITIME SAFETY MARITIME MOBILITY

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES



Besides protecting people and boats, Coasties also protect the country's valuable natural marine resources.

In the fight to protect the biomass within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, we are working on many different fronts. On average, we respond to 11 oil or hazardous chemical spills a day.

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

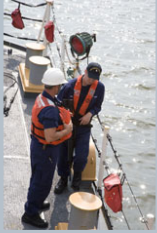
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/protection-of-natural-resources

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROTECTION O...


If you are involved in this aspect of Coast Guard life, you could find yourself protecting the closed fishing grounds off New England from both local and foreign poachers. Or, you may be assigned on a Coast Guard cutter patrolling in the Bering Sea to prevent foreign vessels from poaching in the fish-rich Alaskan waters.




Or, your job is to stop the illegal use of high-seas driftnets in the Pacific Ocean.

Coasties also play an increasingly important role in the nation's efforts to protect its threatened and endangered species. We have units that help free endangered northern right whales that have become entangled in fishing gear. In Hawaii, we have buoy tenders remove tons of marine debris from the coral-reef habitat of the Hawaiian monk seal.

We have also pioneered the fight against water pollution. Our National Strike Teams are on call 24 hours a day to respond to accidents and spills in the marine environment.



We also enforce federal regulations to reduce the dumping of refuse and sewage from vessels of all types. Through a public education program called Sea Partners, we are promoting the importance of a clean marine environment and are, in addition, working closely with foreign nations and international agencies to reduce the number of marine accidents (and resulting spills) by establishing and strictly enforcing improved safety standards for commercial vessels and their crews.



Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

Discovering Our Missions - Maritime Safety

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME SAFETY - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-safety

Google

Go

Bookmarks

2 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Search Web

Highlight

MyStuff

Zoom

News

Weather

Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME SAFE...

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS

TAKING A LEAD ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

MARITIME SECURITY

PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MARITIME SAFETY

MARITIME MOBILITY

ENLISTED RATINGS

OFFICER CAREERS

USCG RESERVE

BENEFITS

FOR PARENTS

FIND A RECRUITER

FAQs

FOR PRIOR SERVICE

USCG MISSIONS

USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH

GOCOSTGUARD.COM

MARITIME SAFETY

1.4_MarSafe_03 Coastie lifesaver

When the rescue alarm sounds, we are at our best.

We jump into action, going into the dangerous seas and harm's way – on sea and in the air – to save others.

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...]

Merged Doc include...

UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME SAFETY - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-safety

Google

Go

Bookmarks

2 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Search Web

Highlight

MyStuff

Zoom

News

Weather

Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME SAFE...

Put quite simply, we provide the world's fastest and most effective response to distress calls.

On an average day, we will save 15 lives, assist 114 in distress and conduct 82 search and rescue operations.

To be part of our Search and Rescue team, it takes more than physical ability and mental toughness. You'll also need that special desire and bravery with which heroes are born.

Members of our SAR teams also promote safety by inspecting merchant vessels and licensing their masters and crews. Our goals are to:

- Reduce crewmember deaths and injuries on U.S. commercial and passenger vessels
- Lower the number of collisions and groundings in the waters under our jurisdiction

In a dedicated effort to prevent future mishaps, we investigate maritime accidents and learn from them, to revise regulations and safety standards.

As the lead U.S. representative to the International Maritime Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations, we are the driving force behind the implementation of international safety and pollution standards.

Commercial vessels are not the only boats in our waterways - more than 76 million recreational boaters share the space as well. This is why we have a recreational boating program that is aimed at lowering the loss of life, property and damage to the environment. We have a 35,000-person civilian volunteer branch called the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...]

Merged Doc include...

UNITED STATES CO...

Discovering Our Missions - Maritime Mobility

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME MOBILITY - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-mobility

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME MOB...

COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS
TAKING A LEAD ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY.

NATIONAL DEFENSE | MARITIME SECURITY | PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES | MARITIME SAFETY | MARITIME MOBILITY

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

MARITIME MOBILITY



Keeping boat traffic, both private and commercial, moving safely and securely - through everything from congested harbors to ice-laden waters - is a responsibility that falls directly on us. We are the nation's lead agency for waterways management, port safety and security, and vessel-safety inspection and certification.

we are responsible for maintaining and patrolling the safe and efficient navigable waterways system needed to support domestic commerce, facilitate international trade, and ensure the continued availability of the military sealift fleet required for national defense.



Beginning in 1790 with the establishment of the Revenue Cutter Service, we've protected our nation's cargo and shipping. Today, we protect upward of \$4.9 million in property daily. Then, as now, we charted waters and kept an eye out for threatening ships at sea.

In 1789, Congress created the Lighthouse Service (another of several of our predecessors) to establish and maintain maritime aids to navigation.

Presently, the U.S. Marine Transportation System consists of a complex mix of waterways, ports, and intermodal landside connections, which collectively allow the nation's various modes and types of transportation to move people and goods to, from, and on the water.



And we continue to maintain the "signposts" and "traffic signals" - more than 50,000 federal aids to navigation, including buoys, lighthouses, day beacons, and radio-navigation signals - on the nation's waterways. Our maritime Differential Global Positioning System network provides boaters and mariners with the most accurate, electronic maritime navigation system available.

We are also responsible for about 18,000 highway and railroad bridges that span navigable waterways throughout the U.S. We issue permits for bridge construction, order obstructive bridges to be removed, and oversee drawbridge operations.

Done

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... | Merged Doc include... | UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME MOBILITY - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/discovering-our-missions/maritime-mobility

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME MOB...

Internet | Protected Mode: On

10:53 AM

Done

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... | Merged Doc include... | UNITED STATES CO...

Internet | Protected Mode: On

10:54 AM

Being a Coastie

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocoastguard.com/

Google G

Go

Bookmarks 2 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Search Web

Highlight

MyStuff

Zoom

News

Weather

Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD:

**U.S. COAST GUARD
& COAST GUARD RESERVE**
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

**DISCOVERING
OUR MISSIONS**

**BEING
A COASTIE**

**WHEN THINGS ARE
AT THEIR WORST,
WE'LL BE AT OUR
BEST.**

You'll find a day in the Coast Guard is never quite like the next. One day you could be saving a life at sea, the next, defending our nation's waterways. There's only one sure thing â€œ each day can bring new experiences even adventure. Here are a few real-life stories from Coasties themselves.

COASTIE PROFILES

REAL-LIFE STORIES

BASIC TRAINING

PAY & BENEFITS

FOR PARENTS

FOR PRIOR SERVICE

COASTIE ARCHIVES

**FIND
YOUR FIT**

**DOWNLOAD
STUFF**

**GET
THE ANSWERS**

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

Homeland Security

Internet | Protected Mode: On

100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...

Merged Doc include...

UNITED STATES CO...

10:45 AM

Find Your Fit

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/

Google

Bookmarks 2 blocked Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to Settings

Search Web Highlight MyStuff Zoom News Weather Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD:

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS
BEING A COASTIE
FIND YOUR FIT

A WORLD OF CHALLENGE, BRAVERY AND PATRIOTISM.

We offer both full- and part-time experiences. In this section you'll find a description of Coast Guard jobs, opportunities and programs.

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

DOWNLOAD STUFF GET THE ANSWERS

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

Homeland Security

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

FIND YOUR FIT

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

Find Your Fit - Enlisted

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES


ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

Think you have what it takes to save lives, bust drug traffickers or track and catch polluters? Then you're ready for a job in the Coast Guard. Not only will you receive the best training in your field, but you'll then go right to work, relying on what you've learned. You see, because we're a relatively small military service, our men and women put their training to work every day. And every job in the Coast Guard can lead to increased responsibility and pay.



RATING DESCRIPTIONS
ADVANCEMENT
PAY & BENEFITS
BASIC TRAINING
WHERE YOU CAN SERVE
HOW TO JOIN

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...]
Merged Doc include...
UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

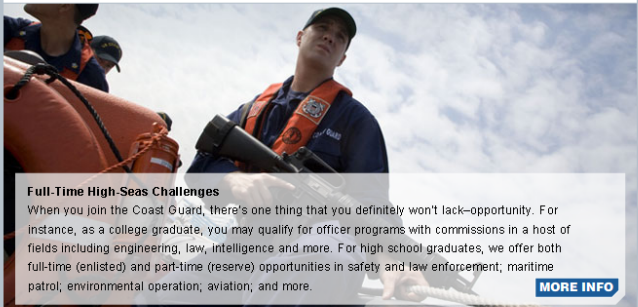
SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

FIND YOUR FIT

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement; maritime patrol; environmental operation; aviation; and more.

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

WITH ONLY 46,000 ACTIVE-DUTY MEMBERS IN THE COAST GUARD, EVERY JOB IS VITAL TO OUR MISSION.



Full-Time High-Seas Challenges

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement; maritime patrol; environmental operation; aviation; and more.

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co...]
Merged Doc include...
UNITED STATES CO...

10:56 AM

Find Your Fit - Reserve Opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT

USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

HOW MANY PART-TIME JOBS COME WITH THE CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

VIEW ENLISTED RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

VIEW RESERVE OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

Gain Experience and Extra Cash

Some part-time jobs come with good pay, others come with good hours, but how many come with action, adventure and the chance to make a difference? As a Coast Guard reservist, you could receive training in computer processing, mechanics or radio communications, just to name a few areas. Want to do something about the environment? Qualify as a marine science technician and become a leader in environmental response and cleanup.

MORE INFO

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/reserve-opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: RESERVE OPPOR...

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

Here's your chance to get a good-paying, part-time job that comes with impressive benefits including action, adventure and the chance to make a difference. Plus, as a Reservist, you'll typically serve close to home.

RESERVE ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

RESERVE OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

As a Coast Guard Reservist, you could be working side by side with full-time Coasties. Or, depending on our needs and your abilities, you could end up in one of our two Reserve-specific specialties - Investigator or Port Security Specialist. No matter what mission, you'll typically serve just two days a month and two weeks a year at a base near your home. You could receive training in such diverse fields as computer processing, mechanics or radio communications. Want to operate boats and save lives? Qualify as a Boatswain's Mate, and become a leader and get the opportunity to participate in real-life Coast Guard operations.

MORE INFO

If you're about to finish college and you're looking for some financial help as well as the chance to do something exciting and rewarding or, if you have a year or more of military experience and have earned your Bachelor's Degree, you may apply to serve as an officer in the Coast Guard Reserve. You'll serve close to home, you'll learn invaluable leadership skills and have the chance to put them to use quickly, plus you'll earn extra income and get great benefits

MORE INFO

Find Your Fit - Officer Opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND YOUR FIT

USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO LEAD IN SITUATIONS WHERE SPLIT-SECOND DECISIONS CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

Learn to Lead. Be in Charge.
For people graduating college, leaving a civilian job or already serving in the military services, we offer the opportunity to get an officer's commission in the Coast Guard. From the get-go, you'll be in charge of situations where your decisions can make the difference between life and death. It's the kind of experience that no entry-level civilian job can match.

RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPOR...

THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

FIND YOUR FIT | A WORLD OF EXCITEMENT, ADVENTURE AND FULFILLMENT.

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES | OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES | RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

FIND YOUR FIT

PROGRAMS

Find Your Fit - Officer Opportunities (Continued)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO


SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack--opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

FIND YOUR FIT

DEVELOP YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILL'S, HONE "YOUR" MANAGEMENT ABILITIES. ALL WHILE SERVING YOUR COUNTRY.



Discover the right fit for you based on the education level you've reached and officer specialty you're interested in. **MORE INFO**

PROGRAMS

CAREER FIELDS

PROMOTIONS

FAQ & BENEFITS

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO


SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack--opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

FIND YOUR FIT

SEVEN OFFICER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO THOSE QUALIFIED TO LEAD IN THE COAST GUARD



We have "Officer" Programs available including College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI), Officer Candidate School (OCS), Direct Commissioning Programs, Selected Reserve Direct Commission Program (SRDC), Coast Guard Academy, Pre-Commissioning For Enlisted Personnel (PPEP), and Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative. **MORE INFO**

CAREER FIELDS

PROMOTIONS

FAQ & BENEFITS

Find Your Fit - Officer Opportunities (Continued)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER OPPOR...

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

When you join the Coast Guard, there's one thing that you definitely won't lack—opportunity. For instance, as a college graduate, you may qualify for officer programs with commissions in a host of fields including engineering, law, intelligence and more. For high school graduates, we offer both full-time (enlisted) and part-time (reserve) opportunities in safety and law enforcement, maritime patrol, environmental operation, aviation, and more.

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

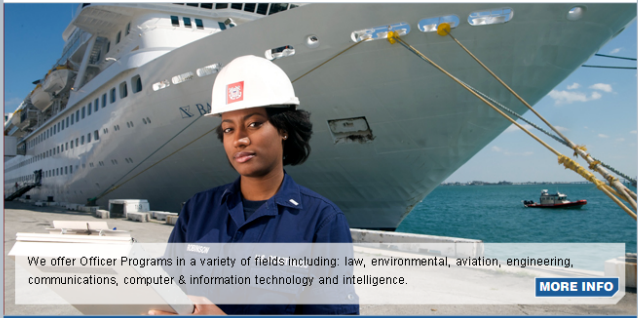
GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
 GOCOSTGUARD.COM

FIND YOUR FIT

PROGRAMS

CAREER FIELDS **IF YOU HAVE THE RIGHT EXPERIENCE, WE HAVE YOUR FAST TRACK TO THE TOP.**



We offer Officer Programs in a variety of fields including: law, environmental, aviation, engineering, communications, computer & information technology and intelligence.

PROMOTIONS

PAY & BENEFITS

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: CAREER FIELDS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/career-fields

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: CAREER FIELDS

THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

FIND YOUR FIT **A WORLD OF EXCITEMENT, ADVENTURE AND FULFILLMENT.**

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES **OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES** **RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES**

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

FIND YOUR FIT
PROGRAMS
CAREER FIELDS
PROMOTIONS
PAY & BENEFITS
INITIAL TRAINING
OFFICER FAQs

CAREER FIELDS

We offer Officer Programs in a variety of fields including:

- law
- environmental
- aviation
- engineering
- command, control, communications
- computer & information technologies
- intelligence

As an officer in the Coast Guard, you'll get opportunities unmatched by any offered by an entry-level civilian job. For instance, as a Coast Guard aviator, you may find yourself taking charge during a life-saving search and rescue mission, or leading missions against drug smugglers or illegal aliens.

As an engineering officer, you could be overseeing the design, construction and maintenance of Coast Guard vessels, merchant vessels or shore facilities.

Or, prove to us that you have what it takes to become an environmental manager, and you may end up protecting the environment from corporate oil and chemical spills.

There's one thing you can definitely be sure of: because the Coast Guard is the smallest of all our nation's armed forces, once you're a commissioned officer, your leadership skills, experience and management abilities will be called upon often.

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
 GOCOSTGUARD.COM

Find Your Fit - Four Niche Officer Programs

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROGRAMS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROGRAMS


OPPORTUNITIES

FIND YOUR FIT

- PROGRAMS
 - COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE
 - OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL
 - DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS
 - MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE
 - COAST GUARD ACADEMY
 - PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL
 - BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE
 - PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES
- CAREER FIELDS
- PROMOTIONS
- PAY & BENEFITS
- INITIAL TRAINING
- OFFICER FAQs

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS

We have several Officer Programs available including, College Student Pre-Commissioning Program (CSPI), Officer Candidate School, Direct Commission Programs, Selected Reserve Direct Commission Program, Coast Guard Academy, Pre-Commissioning For Enlisted Personnel (PPEP), and Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative.




College Student Pre-Commissioning Program
CSPI provides college sophomores and juniors with valuable leadership, management, law enforcement, navigation and marine science skills and training.

[MORE INFO](#)



Officer Candidate School
OCS is a rigorous course of instruction that prepares candidates to serve effectively as officers in the Coast Guard. OCS also provides a wide range of highly technical information necessary for performing the duties of a Coast Guard officer.

[MORE INFO](#)



Direct Commissions Programs
If you're a professional lawyer, aviator, engineer, environmental specialist, maritime academy graduate or former military officer, you can become an officer in the Coast Guard without attending OCS or boot camp.

[MORE INFO](#)



Maritime Academy Graduate
Maritime Academy Graduates have education and training that enhances the Coast Guard's ability to carry out its operational missions. Individuals selected will serve as a Coast Guard Reserve Officer on full-time active duty.

[MORE INFO](#)

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...


UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROGRAMS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: PROGRAMS


GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM




Coast Guard Academy
We offer you an integrated life experience that emphasizes academics, physical fitness, character and leadership. After graduation, you'll go directly to positions of leadership.

[MORE INFO](#)



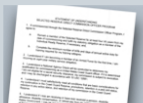
Pre-Commissioning Program For Enlisted Personnel
PPEP allows selected enlisted personnel to attend college full-time for one or two years. Upon graduation, you will attend Officer Candidate School (OCS). Graduates of OCS receive a Commission in the Coast Guard at the rank of Ensign.

[MORE INFO](#)



Blue 21 Flight Initiative
You'll get the opportunity to become a Coast Guard Aviator through completion of Officer Candidate School and the guarantee of an assignment to flight training.

[MORE INFO](#)



Program Forms and Deadlines
Get started now! Download and complete all of the mandatory forms required to enroll in any of 7 available Officer Programs.

[MORE INFO](#)

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gcoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/college-student-pre-commissioning-initiative

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: COLLEGE STUDE...

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

- COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE
- OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL
- DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS
- MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE
- COAST GUARD ACADEMY
- PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL
- BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE
- PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES

COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE

Imagine having your college junior and senior years fully funded. Now imagine getting a salary while you attend college.

That's what the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative (CSPI) offers college sophomores and juniors. Better yet, CSPI provides students with valuable leadership, management, law enforcement, navigation and marine science skills and training. It also provides full payment of school tuition, fees, textbooks, a salary, medical insurance and other benefits during a student's junior and senior year of college. The CSPI program guarantees training at Officer Candidate School (OCS) upon successful completion of all program requirements.

Each student is expected to complete his/her degree and all Coast Guard training requirements. Following the completion of OCS and commission as a Coast Guard officer, each student will be required to serve on active duty (full time) as an officer for four years.

Benefits:

- May pay up to two academic years of college tuition
- Most if not all of approved textbook costs
- Approved essential miscellaneous fees paid for up to two academic years
- Monthly salary of approximately \$2,200
- Medical and Life Insurance
- 30 days paid vacation per year
- Leadership training

Application Eligibility Requirements:

- Score a 1000 on the SAT, 1100 on the SAT I, 23 on the ACT, or ASVAB GT of 109 or higher
- Be between 19 and 27 (applicants must have reached their 19th birthday, but not their 28th birthday as of 30 September in the year the panel convenes)

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gcoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/college-student-pre-commissioning-initiative

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: COLLEGE STUDE...

- Must be a sophomore or junior (with at least 60 college credits completed toward your degree)
- Enrolled in a four-year degree program at an approved institution with a minimum 25% minority population
- Meet all physical requirements for a Coast Guard Commission
- Maintain a GPA of 2.5 or better
- Must be a U.S. Citizen

To find out if your school qualifies for CSPI, call your local recruiter or [click here](#). Enter your school's name in the search window and click "results." Follow the link to your school and click on "college overview." Read through the stats on college enrollment to see if your school has at least 25% minority enrollment (not including international students).

Your college or university not eligible for CSPI? You may be eligible for some of the Coast Guard's other commissioning programs, including Officer Candidate School. Talk to your recruiter or check out all of the Officer Programs.

Need to download a CSPI handout to print? [Click here](#).

If you are ready to apply for a Coast Guard officer program, you must [download the forms](#) and complete all of those appropriate to the program of interest.

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

- COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE
- OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL
- DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS
- MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE
- COAST GUARD ACADEMY
- PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL
- BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE
- PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES

Officer Candidate School (OCS)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/officer-candidate-school

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER CANDI...

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

- [COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE](#)
- [OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL](#)
- [DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS](#)
- [MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE COAST GUARD ACADEMY](#)
- [PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL](#)
- [BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE](#)
- [PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES](#)

OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL

So you're just out of school, and you're ready to take your shot in the big world. You're ready for responsibility and recognition. Only every employer you talk to is giving you the old "you'll have to start at the bottom" speech.

We're different. We give willing, able college graduates who can pass the tests of our Officer Candidate School (OCS) the chance to be in charge of missions, in just 17 weeks.

OCS is a rigorous course of instruction which prepares candidates to serve effectively as officers in the United States Coast Guard. In addition to indoctrinating students into a military lifestyle, OCS also provides a wide range of highly technical information necessary for performing the duties of a Coast Guard officer.

Graduates of the program receive a commission in the Coast Guard at the rank of Ensign and are required to serve a minimum of three years of active duty. Graduates may be assigned to a ship, flight training, to a staff job, or to an operations ashore billet. However, first assignments are based on the needs of the U.S. Coast Guard. Personal desires and performance at OCS are considered. All graduates must be available for worldwide assignment.

Eligibility Requirements:

Age:

- Temporary commission: between the ages of 21 and 34 (applicants must have reached their 21st birthday, but not their 35th birthday as of 30 September in the year the panel convenes)
- Reserve commission: between the ages of 21 and 30 (applicants must have reached their 21st birthday, but not their 31st birthday as of 30 September in the year the panel convenes)

Military Status:

If you are currently serving in another branch of the U.S. Armed Forces or are enrolled in a ROTC program, you must provide a release from your service obligations prior to entering the Coast Guard. Applicants with six or more years of non-Coast Guard active duty service are not eligible.

Citizenship:

All applicants must be United States citizens.

Qualifying Tests:

All applicants must provide a qualifying score on the SAT, ACT, or ASVAB. No waivers will be considered. Minimum qualifying scores are as follows:

- SAT: combined score 1000 on verbal and math
- SAT 1: combined 1100 on verbal and math
- ACT: 23
- ASVAB: 109 on ASVAB General Technical (GT) Aptitude Area after 1 July 2004; 110 prior to 1 July 2004. The GT score is obtained by combining the VE (Word Knowledge and Paragraph Comprehension) and AR (Arithmetic Reasoning) test scores.

Physical:

A full medical screening will be conducted in accordance with your application.

Educational Qualifications:

Reserve Commission Applicants must be in their senior year or hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or university with a cumulative GPA of 2.5.

Temporary Commission Applicants (active duty Coast Guard personnel E-5 and above with at least four years of active duty in any Armed Forces) must have a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or university, or 25th percentile scores on general CLEP exams, or have completed at least one year of college (30 semester or 45 quarter hours) at an accredited college or university. Temporary Commission Applicants must also have completed one college-level math class or pass the general math CLEP exam. Contact your unit Educational Service Officer for additional information.

If you are ready to apply for a Coast Guard officer program, you must [download the forms](#) and complete all of those appropriate to the program of interest.

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH GOCOSTGUARD.COM

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/officer-candidate-school

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: OFFICER CANDI...

Maritime Academy Graduate Program (MARGRAD)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/maritime-academy-graduate

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

- [COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE](#)
- [OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL](#)
- [DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS](#)
- [MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE](#)
- [COAST GUARD ACADEMY](#)
- [PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL](#)
- [BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE](#)
- [PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES](#)

MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE

The Direct Commission Maritime Academy Graduate Program is available to individuals who hold a degree from a qualifying state or federal Maritime Academy and hold a Third Mate or Third Assistant Engineer license, or a degree major in Marine Environmental Protection or a related field. Maritime Academy Graduates have education and training that enhances the Coast Guard's ability to carry out its operational missions. Individuals selected will serve as a Coast Guard Reserve Officer on full-time active duty.

As a Coast Guard Officer, you will join a growing team of marine safety specialists enforcing U.S. and international laws and regulations. You will inspect commercial ships and port facilities, investigate marine casualties, check for dangerous or illegal cargo, conduct harbor safety patrols, and license and certify marine personnel. Later, you may be able to serve in other mission areas of the Coast Guard to broaden your experience.

Rank and Length of Service:

You will attend a five-week Direct Commission Officer School in New London, CT at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. You will have the privilege of being a Coast Guard Officer from the outset. No Boot Camp. No Officer Candidate School.

Full-time active duty lasts for a period of three years, after which you may apply for extensions. Based on experience, education and qualifications, selected applicants will be commissioned as Lieutenant junior grade (O-2), or Ensign (O-1) in the Coast Guard.

If you elect to remain in the Coast Guard after your original three-year contract, you may integrate into the regular Coast Guard after selection for Lieutenant (O-3).

[Click here](#) for the DCO School Reporting Guide.

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

Eligibility Requirements:

- Be between the ages of 21 and 40 (applicants must have reached their 21st birthday but not their 41st birthday as of 30 September in the year the panel convenes)
- To be considered for appointment to Lieutenant junior grade, applicants must also have sailed for one or more years on board vessels of the United States in the capacity of a licensed officer
- Applications may be initiated during the applicant's final year at the maritime academy, if all other requirements are met
- Have graduated from a qualifying state or federal Maritime Academy and hold a Third Mate or Third Assistant Engineer license, or a degree major in Marine Environmental Protection
- Not be on active duty in any other U.S. Armed Service. However, you may apply while on active duty, provided you submit a discharge statement. Applicants in an Inactive Reserve program must submit a conditional release
- Pass a Coast Guard physical
- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Be able to perform unrestricted service on a 24-hour, 7-day-per-week basis. Any person who is a conscientious objector, whether or not so classified, is not eligible
- GPA: Have at least a 2.2 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Additional Training:

After one year of your initial three-year contract, you will have the opportunity to apply for full-time university graduate or post-graduate training. If accepted, the Coast Guard will pay all tuition expenses and salary while studying.

After the Program:

For those who prefer not to remain on active duty after the initial three years, this program provides valuable experience in the maritime field. The challenge of regulating day-to-day maritime operations, and the supervisory experience you will receive in the Coast Guard are highly regarded in the private sector.

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

11:04 AM

Maritime Academy Graduate Program (Continued)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/maritime-academy-graduate

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE


How to Apply:

To find a recruiter near you or to obtain additional information about the DCO-MARGRAD Program, click on our [Recruiter Locator page](#) or [fill out our Request Form](#) and more information will be sent to you. If you would like to speak directly with your local recruiting office, call our toll-free number 1-877-NOW-USCG and you will be connected to an office near you.

If you are ready to apply for a Coast Guard officer program, you must [download the forms](#) and complete all of those appropriate to the program of interest.

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES


- [COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE](#)
- [OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL](#)
- [DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS](#)
- ▶ [MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE](#)
- [COAST GUARD ACADEMY](#)
- [PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL](#)
- [BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE](#)
- [PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES](#)



TAKE THE NEXT STEP ▶

GET MORE INFO

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

 **Homeland Security**

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

11:05 AM

Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative Program

The screenshot shows the United States Coast Guard's Blue 21 Flight Initiative website. The browser is Internet Explorer, displaying the URL <http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/blue-21-flight-initiative>. The page features a sidebar with navigation links for Officer Opportunities, including College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative, Officer Candidate School, Direct Commission Programs, Maritime Academy Graduate, Coast Guard Academy, Pre-Commissioning Program for Enlisted Personnel, Blue 21 Flight Initiative, Program Forms and Deadlines, Enlisted Ratings, Officer Careers, USCG Reserve, Benefits, For Parents, Find a Recruiter, FAQs, For Prior Service, USCG Missions, and USCG in Action. A red button labeled 'GET MORE INFO' and a search bar for 'GO COST GUARD.COM' are also present. The main content area is titled 'BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE' and describes the program's goal to build diversity in the aviation community. It outlines eligibility requirements, including a minimum 25% minority population for U.S. citizens, and details the training process, from OCS to flight training in Pensacola, FL. A section titled 'Your college or university not eligible for BLUE 21?' provides information on alternative commissioning programs. The 'BLUE 21 Eligibility Requirements' section lists criteria for age, citizenship, education (minimum 2.5 GPA), and standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, ASVAB). The Aviation Selection Test Battery (ASTB) is also mentioned.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

<http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/blue-21-flight-initiative>

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: BLUE 21 FLIGHT ...

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

- [COLLEGE STUDENT PRE-COMMISSIONING INITIATIVE](#)
- [OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL](#)
- [DIRECT COMMISSION PROGRAMS](#)
- [MARITIME ACADEMY GRADUATE](#)
- [COAST GUARD ACADEMY](#)
- [PRE-COMMISSIONING PROGRAM FOR ENLISTED PERSONNEL](#)
- [BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE](#)
- [PROGRAM FORMS AND DEADLINES](#)

ENLISTED RATINGS

OFFICER CAREERS

USCG RESERVE

BENEFITS

FOR PARENTS

FIND A RECRUITER

FAQs

FOR PRIOR SERVICE

USCG MISSIONS

USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GO COST GUARD.COM

BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE

Qualify for the The BLUE 21 Flight Initiative, and you'll get the opportunity to become a Coast Guard Aviator through completion of [Officer Candidate School](#) and the guarantee of an assignment to flight training.

In the exciting and challenging world of Coast Guard Aviation, you will have the opportunity to save lives, enforce laws, respond to natural disasters and conduct Homeland Security Operations, in addition to providing airborne support for all of the missions of the United States Coast Guard. Coast Guard Aviators are assigned to Air Stations all along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Great Lakes, where they fly one of five high-tech aircraft.

The goal of the BLUE 21 Flight Initiative is to build greater diversity in the aviation community through targeted recruitment at colleges and universities with strong minority populations.

To be eligible for BLUE 21, applicants must have graduated from a college or university with a minimum 25% minority population of U.S. citizens in addition to the academic and physical requirements listed below.

Upon completion of OCS, you will receive a commission as an Ensign in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and be assigned immediately to flight training in Pensacola, FL. After earning your "Wings of Gold," you will be assigned to an Air Station and begin your career as Coast Guard aviator.

Those who successfully complete OCS and flight training will incur an active duty obligation of 11 years. Those who complete OCS but are unable to complete flight training will be reassigned to another Coast Guard unit where they will continue their career as a commissioned officer and complete three years of obligated service in addition to any obligated service incurred during advanced training.

To find out if your school qualifies for BLUE 21, call your local recruiter or [click here](#). Enter your school's name in the search window and click "results." Follow the link to your school and click on "college overview." Read through the stats on college enrollment to see if your school has at least 25% minority enrollment (not including international students).

Your college or university not eligible for BLUE 21? You may be eligible for some of the Coast Guard's other commissioning programs, including Officer Candidate School. Attending OCS may even lead to a flight training assignment. Talk to your recruiter or check out all of our Officer Programs.

BLUE 21 Eligibility Requirements:

Reached 21st but not 31st birthday as of 30 September of the year in which the panel convenes
Must be a U.S. citizen

Education

To be eligible, applicants must have a minimum 2.5 GPA and meet one of the following degree requirements:

- Have a degree in any aviation, aeronautical and aerospace program from a qualifying four-year institution (25% or greater minority population of U.S. citizens)
- Have a degree in any engineering-related program from a qualifying four-year institution
- Have a degree in any computer-related program from a qualifying four-year institution
- Have a degree in any technical or technology-related program from a qualifying four-year institution
- Have an Associate's Degree in an aviation, aeronautical or aerospace specific program from a Junior/Community College accompanied by a baccalaureate degree in any major course of study from a qualifying four-year institution
- Have a Private Pilot's License (or higher rating), in conjunction with a degree from a qualifying four-year institution

Additionally, applicants must meet minimum scores on one of the following standardized tests:

- SAT --- Combined score of 1000 or greater
- SAT I --- Combined score of 1100 or greater
- ACT --- Composite score of 23 or greater
- ASVAB --- GT score of 109 (110 prior to 1 July 2004)

Aviation Selection Test Battery (ASTB)

Blue 21 Guaranteed Flight Initiative Program (Continued)

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: BLUE 21 FLIGHT INITIATIVE - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocoastguard.com/find-your-fit/officer-opportunities/programs/blue-21-flight-initiative

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: BLUE 21 FLIGHT ...

Aviation Selection Test Battery (ASTB)

The ASTB is an exam that tests your general knowledge in the areas of Math, Science, English and Aviation. Applicants must receive a minimum Academic Qualification Rating (AQR) of 4 and Pilot Flight Aptitude Rating (PFAR) of 4 in order to qualify for BLUE 21. The ASTB is administered by the U.S. Navy and must be completed with a passing score prior to applying. This test may be scheduled through local Coast Guard recruiting offices.

Military Service
An applicant with six or more years of non-Coast Guard active duty time is not eligible to apply.

Physical Qualifications
BLUE 21 applicants will be required to pass both MEPS physical as well as a Class I Flight Physical conducted by a military flight surgeon. Physicals can be scheduled through a local Coast Guard recruiter.

Applicants must also have uncorrected visual acuity not poorer than 20/50 in each eye with the ability for correction to 20/20 in each eye.

Security Clearance
BLUE 21 applicants must be eligible for a security clearance.

Waivers
No waivers will be granted for age, degree requirements or flight physicals. Medical waivers will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

If you are ready to apply for a Coast Guard officer program, you must [download the forms](#) and complete all of those appropriate to the program of interest.

OFFICER OPPORTUNITIES

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

11:07 AM

Download Stuff

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocoastguard.com/

Google | Go | Bookmarks | 2 blocked | Check | AutoLink | AutoFill | Send to | Settings

webroot | Ask | Search Web | Highlight | MyStuff | Zoom | News | Weather | Shopping

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD:

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS
BEING A COASTIE
FIND YOUR FIT

DOWNLOAD STUFF
VIDEOS, SCREEN SAVERS AND MORE. FREE.

See the USCG in action & download videos, screen savers, pictures of our high-tech equipment and much more. You'll even find our "Career Guide" where you can find out more about the experiences that await you.

MULTIMEDIA LITERATURE COAST GUARD SCREENSAVERS AND WALLPAPERS COAST GUARD ASSETS & EQUIPMENT DOWNLOAD ARCHIVES

GET THE ANSWERS

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

Homeland Security

Internet | Protected Mode: On | 100%

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

10:47 AM

Get the Answers

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/

Google

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD:

U.S. COAST GUARD & COAST GUARD RESERVE
THE SHIELD OF FREEDOM

DISCOVERING OUR MISSIONS
BEING A COASTIE
FIND YOUR FIT
DOWNLOAD STUFF

GET THE ANSWERS

STILL LOOKING FOR MORE ANSWERS?

Still wondering about basic training, pay, qualifications? Post your questions for an emailed response, or get answers right now by chatting online with a live recruiter.

FAQS FIND A RECRUITER ASK A QUESTION GET MORE INFORMATION

SITE MAP | NON FLASH VERSION | USCG MIL | CG ACADEMY | CG CIVILIAN CAREERS | PRIVACY/SECURITY/ACCESSIBILITY | CONTACT US

Homeland Security

Internet | Protected Mode: On

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: GET THE ANSWERS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/get-the-answers

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: GET THE ANSWERS

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOSTGUARD.COM

GET THE ANSWERS

Still have some questions you would like answered? Take a few minutes to scroll through this list of FAQs. Then, if you still have questions, simply go to the "Ask A Question" section. When there, use the map to find a recruiter in your area, click on the appropriate button, and e-mail us your question.

FAQS

Read answers to some of the questions we often hear.

MORE INFO

FIND A RECRUITER

Click here to discover three easy ways to find a Coast Guard recruiter nearest you.

MORE INFO

ASK A QUESTION

Still need to know more? Click here to ask a question. When you do, you'll be sent to a map with a list of recruiters. Just click on the recruiter in your area, and e-mail us your question.

MORE INFO

GET MORE INFORMATION

READY to talk to or schedule an appointment with a recruiter or receive additional information by mail? Click here to read our requirements page and then complete the information form to get the process started.

MORE INFO

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

11:08 AM

Get the Answers - Find a Recruiter

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND A RECRUITER - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/get-the-answers/find-a-recruiter

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND A RECRUIT...

THE ANSWERS STILL LOOKING FOR MORE ANSWERS?

FAQS FIND A RECRUITER ASK A QUESTION GET MORE INFORMATION

FIND A RECRUITER

READY to find a Coast Guard recruiter? Click on the state where you live to find the recruiting office nearest you. If you would like immediate assistance, please call 1-877-NOW-USCG.

[BACK TO FULL MAP](#)

PHONE: To find a recruiter by phone, please call 1-877-NOW-USCG.

ENLISTED RATINGS
OFFICER CAREERS
USCG RESERVE
BENEFITS
FOR PARENTS
FIND A RECRUITER
FAQs
FOR PRIOR SERVICE
USCG MISSIONS
USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH
GOCOASTGUARD.COM

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND A RECRUITER - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/get-the-answers/find-a-recruiter/?zip=30605&stateCode=GA

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: FIND A RECRUIT...

FIND A RECRUITER

READY to find a Coast Guard recruiter? Click on the state where you live to find the recruiting office nearest you. If you would like immediate assistance, please call 1-877-NOW-USCG.

[BACK TO FULL MAP](#)

GEORGIA

Atlanta East
Recruiter in charge: BMC Christopher C. Grant
2375 Wesley Chapel Rd.
STE 9
Decatur, GA 30035
Voice: (770) 808-0329
Email: Christopher.C.Grant@uscg.mil

Jacksonville
Recruiter in charge: AMTC Shane Rank
Manderin Landing Shop Ctr
10601 San Jose Blvd.
STE 215
Jacksonville, FL 32257
Voice: (904) 232-1561/2702/2575
Email: Shane.F.Rank@uscg.mil

Other locations shown on map: Columbia, SC; Charleston, SC; Savannah; Tallahassee, FL; Jacksonville, FL; Montgomery, AL; Birmingham, AL; Atlanta North.

CHAPTER 4 (1) [Co... Merged Doc include... UNITED STATES CO...

APPENDIX B

ENLISTED JOB RATINGS

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-rating-descriptions

Google

Go Bookmarks 31 blocked Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to Settings Convert Select

UNITED STATES COAS... UGAMail Login Page (1 unread) Yahoo! Mail iGoogle


▼ ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS


- [AVIONICS ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN \(AET\)](#)
- [AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN \(AMT\)](#)
- [AVIATION SURVIVAL TECHNICIAN \(AST\)](#)
- [OPERATIONS SPECIALIST \(OS\)](#)
- [BOATSWAIN'S MATE \(BM\)](#)
- [GUNNER'S MATE \(GM\)](#)
- [INTELLIGENCE SPECIALIST \(IS\)](#)
- [DAMAGE CONTROLMAN \(DC\)](#)
- [ELECTRICIAN'S MATE \(EM\)](#)
- [ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN \(ET\)](#)
- [INFORMATION SYSTEM TECHNICIAN \(IT\)](#)
- [MACHINERY TECHNICIAN \(MK\)](#)
- [FOOD SERVICE SPECIALIST \(FS\)](#)
- [HEALTH SERVICES TECHNICIAN \(HS\)](#)
- [MARINE SCIENCE TECHNICIAN \(MST\)](#)
- [PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST \(PA\)](#)
- [STOREKEEPER \(SK\)](#)
- [YEOMAN \(YN\)](#)
- [ADVANCEMENT](#)
- [PAY & BENEFITS](#)
- [BASIC TRAINING](#)
- [WHERE YOU CAN SERVE](#)


Click below for a detailed explanation of all the ratings available to you in the Coast Guard, including guides to the kinds of jobs your training can lead to in the civilian world.

BROWSE ALL RATINGS Select Ratings Category ▼

Deck & Ordnance Group
Jobs relating to the operation of the Coast Guard vessels.

**BOATSWAIN'S MATE (BM)**
Are you looking for a real hands-on seagoing experience? Boatswain's mate may be the experience for which you're looking.
[MORE INFO](#)

**GUNNER'S MATE (GM)**
For those interested in the technical inner-workings of small arms, weapon systems, and pyrotechnics, becoming a gunner's mate can provide the opportunity to learn all there is to know.
[MORE INFO](#)

**OPERATIONS SPECIALIST (OS)**
Interested in the field of military tactical command, control and communications? Then the operations specialist rating is a great way to pave that road.
[MORE INFO](#)

CHAPTER 5 - Concl... UNITED STATES CO...

11:24 PM

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-rating-descriptions

Google

Go

Bookmarks

31 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Convert

Select

UNITED STATES COAS...

UGAMail Login Page

(1 unread) Yahoo! Mail

iGoogle

Page

Tools

HOW TO JOIN

PRIOR SERVICE PROCESS

ENLISTED FAQS

ENLISTED RATINGS

OFFICER CAREERS

USCG RESERVE

BENEFITS

FOR PARENTS

FIND A RECRUITER

FAQs

FOR PRIOR SERVICE

USCG MISSIONS

USCG IN ACTION

GET MORE INFO

SEARCH

GOCOSTGUARD.COM

back to top

Hull and Engineering Group

Jobs related to the upkeep and operation of Coast Guard vessels.

INTELLIGENCE SPECIALIST (IS)

With the Coast Guard taking an increasingly larger role in homeland security, we've established a new and vitally important rating, intelligence specialist (IS). As an IS, you will be one of the first defenders of our ports and waterways.

MORE INFO

DAMAGE CONTROLMAN (DC)

DCs are the Coast Guard's maintenance and emergency repair specialists.

MORE INFO

ELECTRICIAN'S MATE (EM)

Electricity is the lifeline of any system, and EMs are the ones the Coast Guard counts on most to keep it all connected and running.

MORE INFO

ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN (ET)

ETs are in charge of maintaining virtually all of the Coast Guard's electronics systems from navigation systems to command, control and communication (C3) systems.

CHAPTER 5 - Concl...

UNITED STATES CO...

11:24 PM

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-rating-descriptions

Google

Go

Bookmarks

31 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Convert

Select

UNITED STATES COAS...

UGAMail Login Page

(1 unread) Yahoo! Mail

iGoogle

Page

Tools

INFORMATION SYSTEM TECHNICIAN (IT)

ITs are the managers of all information that circulates throughout the Coast Guard.

MORE INFO

MACHINERY TECHNICIAN (MT)

Are you a gearhead? Do you like horsepower? Come work on some of the most powerful engines the Coast Guard has to offer.

MORE INFO

back to top

Aviation Group

With the exception of the pilots, all jobs related to the maintenance and operation of Coast Guard fixed-wing and rotary aircraft.

AVIONICS ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN (AET)

AETs are the Coast Guard's aircraft surgeons.

MORE INFO

AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN (AMT)

Have you ever wanted to learn about aeronautics and aviation, or how to repair and maintain sophisticated aircrafts?

CHAPTER 5 - Concl...

UNITED STATES CO...

11:25 PM

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-rating-descriptions

Google

Go

Bookmarks

31 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Convert

Select

UNITED STATES COAS...

UGAMail Login Page

(1 unread) Yahoo! Mail

iGoogle

Page

Tools

AVIATION SURVIVAL TECHNICIAN (AST)
The duties of ASTs include saving lives, providing emergency medical support, and maintaining the survival equipment their shipmates depend upon in emergencies.

[MORE INFO](#)

[back to top](#)

Administrative and Scientific Group
Jobs that provide operations support, take care of Coast Guard personnel and conduct environmental inspections.

FOOD SERVICE SPECIALIST (FS)
Learn about the various aspects of the restaurant or catering industry while serving your country.

[MORE INFO](#)

HEALTH SERVICES TECHNICIAN (HS)
Do you want to learn hands-on medical skills? Do you want to save lives? These technicians care for individuals in distress or life-threatening situations.

[MORE INFO](#)

MARINE SCIENCE TECHNICIAN (MST)
Do you want to get out there and help save and protect the environment?

[MORE INFO](#)

CHAPTER 5 - Concl...

UNITED STATES CO...

11:25 PM

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD: ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS - Internet Explorer provided by Dell

http://www.gocostguard.com/find-your-fit/enlisted-opportunities/enlisted-rating-descriptions

Google

Go

Bookmarks

31 blocked

Check

AutoLink

AutoFill

Send to

Settings

Convert

Select

UNITED STATES COAS...

UGAMail Login Page

(1 unread) Yahoo! Mail

iGoogle

Page

Tools

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST (PA)
If you have an interest in photography, writing and crisis communications, you could be the main link between the Coast Guard and the public.

[MORE INFO](#)

STOREKEEPER (SK)
Good with numbers? Managing money? Apply your skills to help serve the Coast Guard.

[MORE INFO](#)

YEOMAN (YN)
As with any large organization, good human resources management is vital to the Coast Guard.

[MORE INFO](#)

[back to top](#)

ENLISTED OPPORTUNITIES

▶ [ENLISTED RATING DESCRIPTIONS](#)

[ADVANCEMENT](#)

[PAY & BENEFITS](#)

[BASIC TRAINING](#)

[WHERE YOU CAN SERVE](#)

[HOW TO JOIN](#)

[PRIOR SERVICE PROCESS](#)

CHAPTER 5 - Concl...

UNITED STATES CO...

11:25 PM