



# U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

## John B. Hayes

1978-1982



Admiral John Briggs Hayes was born on 30 August 1924 in Jamestown, NY. He entered the US Coast Guard Academy as a cadet from Bradford, PA on 14 July 1943. Though listed as a member of the Class of 1947, Hayes actually graduated and received his commission on 5 June 1946. His first command was of the LORAN Transmitting Station in Matsumae, Japan. His first command afloat was that of USCGC *Ariadne* in November 1952. He also commanded the cutters *Sagebrush* and *Vigilant* along with the Coast Guard Base at Key West. In August 1959 he entered the US Naval War College at Newport, RI and afterward was stationed in Washington, DC. In June 1964 he earned a Master of Arts degree in International Affairs from George Washington University. In March 1966 he became Commander, Naval Task Group 115.4 and Commander, Division II, Coast Guard Squadron One, Republic of Vietnam.

After his tour in Vietnam, Commander Hayes returned to Coast Guard Headquarters. He was promoted to Captain on 1 October 1968 and became Chief, Planning and Evaluation Staff, Office of Boating Safety. After this tour in Washington, Captain Hayes reported to the US Coast Guard Academy as the Commandant of Cadets. In 1973 he returned to Washington and was subsequently promoted to Rear Admiral on 1 August 1973. In July 1975 he became Commander, 17th Coast Guard District in Juneau, AK. On 1 June 1978 he became the 16th Commandant of the Coast Guard and was concurrently promoted to the rank of Admiral.

During his tenure as Commandant Admiral Hayes led the service through difficult budget battles each year. He also thwarted attempts to transfer the USCG to the Navy and saw the service through a Roles and Missions study that outlined its multiple missions. As a result the Navy/USCG Board was created to increase the military preparedness of the Coast Guard and improve ties with the Navy.

Representative of the service's multiple missions were several high-profile operations that received worldwide attention. Foremost among these was the *Prinsendam* rescue off the coast of Alaska. The crash of Air Florida Flight 90 in Washington, DC saw the USCG conduct a major SAR effort under the watchful eyes of the nation's capital. Congress and the Executive Branch also ordered the USCG to increase its drug interdiction efforts. The USCG, in cooperation with Customs and the DEA, conducted Operation TIBURON in order to interdict marijuana smuggling at sea. This led to record seizures.

Even during the extremely difficult budgetary problems, the service continually proved its versatility. In 1980 Admiral Hayes led a conference with Caribbean leaders in order to coordinate USCG cooperation in SAR, drug interdiction, safety at sea, and other maritime concerns. In response to an increasing number of Haitians attempting to enter the U.S. illegally, the USCG received authority to search any vessels suspected of carrying illegal



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Haitian immigrants on the high seas. Coast Guard cutters responded to the Mariel Boatlift and saved thousands of lives. Each case proved that the USCG could carry out unanticipated missions very successfully.

Admiral Hayes crossed the bar on 17 January 2001.