

## Lesson 7

# The United States Coast Guard and Merchant Marine



### Key Terms

commerce  
cutter  
ecosystem  
flagged  
intermodal  
logistics  
maritime  
Operations Plan  
sealift  
strategic

### What You Will Learn to Do

- Explore the organization and mission of the U.S. Coast Guard and Merchant Marine

### Linked Core Abilities

- Do your share as a good citizen in your school, community, country, and the world

### Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Describe the organization of the U.S. Coast Guard
- Explain the five major missions of the U.S. Coast Guard
- Explain how the Coast Guard is unique among the uniform services
- Describe the composition of the U.S. Merchant Marine
- Explain the role of the Merchant Marine in peacetime and war
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

## **Introduction**

Since its start as the Revenue Cutter Service in 1790, the Coast Guard has provided unique benefits to America through its distinctive blend of humanitarian, law enforcement, diplomatic, and military capabilities. Whether equipped with 19th century wooden lifeboats or 20th century high endurance cutters, the Coast Guard has continuously served as America's shield of freedom.

The Merchant Marine is a fleet made up of a nation's commercial ships, both cargo and passenger, and those who operate them. It carries a nation's commerce (imports and exports) during peacetime and becomes a naval auxiliary to deliver troops and material in times of war.

In this lesson, you learn about both the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marine. You also learn about their places in war as well as in times of peace.

## **The United States Coast Guard**

On August 4, 1790, Congress created the Revenue Cutter Service under the Treasury Department to enforce customs laws. In January 1915, Congress combined the Lifesaving Service and Revenue Cutter Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard.

The mission of the U.S. Coast Guard is the safety of lives and property at sea. The Coast Guard's five operating goals include maritime security, maritime safety, protection of natural resources, maritime mobility, and national defense. The official seal of the U.S. Coast Guard is shown in Figure 2.7.1.

## **Organization**

Located within the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard is also one of the nation's five armed services. The Coast Guard is headquartered in



*Figure 2.7.1: The official seal of the U.S. Coast Guard.*

Courtesy of the US Coast Guard.

Washington, D.C. The Coast Guard's field operating units are divided into two regions: the Atlantic Area, based in Portsmouth, Virginia, and the Pacific Area, in Alameda, California. Each of these Areas is further broken down into Districts, with District headquarters located in nine key cities around the country, as shown in Table 2.7.1.

**Table 2.7.1: Coast Guard Field Operating Units**

1st District	Boston, Massachusetts
5th District	Portsmouth, Virginia
7th District	Miami, Florida
8th District	New Orleans, Louisiana
9th District	Cleveland, Ohio
11th District	Alameda, California
13th District	Seattle, Washington
14th District	Honolulu, Hawaii
17th District	Juneau, Alaska

### Key Note Term

**cutter** – small armed vessel in government service

Each District, in turn, includes a wide range of facilities, including Marine Safety Offices, Groups, Air Stations, boat stations, and **cutters**. With 38,000 active duty personnel, supported by 9,000 reservists and 34,000 auxiliaries, the Coast Guard is well positioned to be the first on scene—bringing the right people, equipment, skills, and partnerships—to respond to any local, regional, national, or international crisis. The Coast Guard commissions officers through the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut (see Figure 2.7.2).

### Operations

For more than two centuries, the U.S. Coast Guard has protected the American public, the environment, and economic and security interests in U.S. waterways and any **maritime** region in which U.S. interests may be at risk. This wide range of Coast Guard missions can be categorized into five core roles:

- **Maritime security**
- **Maritime safety**
- **Protection of natural resources**
- **Maritime mobility**
- **National defense**

These five core roles are discussed in the following sections.

### Key Note Term

**maritime** – of, relating to, or bordering on the sea



Figure 2.7.2: The Coast Guard Academy.

Courtesy of CACI.

### **Maritime Security**

Maritime law enforcement is the oldest of the Coast Guard's numerous responsibilities. As a member of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard is not subject to *Posse Comitatus* and may conduct law enforcement activities. The Coast Guard's maritime security role consists of seven primary missions: homeland security, drug interdiction, alien migrant and mass migration interdiction, treaty enforcement, domestic fisheries enforcement, and general maritime law enforcement.

### **Homeland Security**

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, highlighted the fact that the Coast Guard is also ideally positioned and equipped for the critical mission area of ports, waterways and coastal security. When America was attacked, Coast Guard National Strike Teams participated in rescue and recovery operations in New York City and Washington, D.C. Additionally, Coast Guard boats, cutters, planes, port security units and reservists were mobilized to protect America's vital ports and waterways. This response signaled the largest homeland port security operation since World War II. Homeland security now stands alongside search and rescue as a priority mission for the Coast Guard.

### **Drug Interdiction**

As the designated lead agency for maritime drug interdiction under the National Drug Control Strategy, the Coast Guard maintains round-the-clock patrols of cutters and aircraft at sea working closely with U.S. and foreign law enforcement agencies and militaries to deny drug traffickers key maritime smuggling routes.

### **Alien Migrant Interdiction**

Alien migrant interdiction operations are an increasingly important area of U.S. national security concern particularly in the post 9-11 environment where control of

America's borders is critical. During the past 20 years, the Coast Guard has interdicted more than 140,000 illegal migrants, primarily from Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the Peoples Republic of China, and Ecuador. Far too often, these migration attempts pose safety risks to the undocumented migrants themselves. Smugglers of human cargoes often use ships that are unseaworthy and even ship migrants in sealed cargo containers. Under these conditions, many interdiction missions rapidly evolve to search and rescue and humanitarian aid missions (see Figure 2.7.3).

### *Mass Migrations*

The Coast Guard is always poised to conduct surge operations as crises erupt. In 1994, for example, mass migrations brought migrant interdiction into the national spotlight, when more than 21,000 Haitians and 30,000 Cubans were recovered in four months.

### *Treaty Enforcement*

The Coast Guard faces the daunting challenge of protecting over 3.4 million square miles of Exclusive Economic Zones and 95,000 miles of coastlines.

### *Domestic Fisheries Enforcement*

The objective of the Coast Guard's fisheries law enforcement program is to provide the on-scene presence necessary to protect America's \$52 billion commercial and recreational fishing industry (see Figure 2.7.4). The Coast Guard's priorities are to eliminate illegal encroachment by foreign fishing vessels in Exclusive Economic Zones and to enforce domestic fisheries laws on the 110,000 U.S. commercial vessels harvesting critical fish stocks.

### *General Maritime Law Enforcement*

The Coast Guard is also the primary federal agency responsible for enforcing all maritime laws and treaties. The Coast Guard possesses the unique authority to board any vessel subject to U.S. jurisdiction to make inspections, searches, inquiries, and arrests.

*Figure 2.7.3: Search, rescue, and humanitarian aid is part of the mission of the Coast Guard.*

Courtesy of CACI.





*Figure 2.7.4: The Coast Guard enforces fishery laws.*

Courtesy of AP/Wide World Photos.

### **Maritime Safety**

One of the basic responsibilities of the U.S. government is to protect the lives and safety of Americans. On the nation's waterways, the Coast Guard strives to preserve safety at sea through a focused program of prevention, response, and investigation. The Coast Guard's maritime safety role consists of four primary missions: search and rescue, licensing and inspection, recreational boating safety, and the International Ice Patrol.

#### **Search and Rescue**

Search and rescue can be broken down into two basic categories: ocean rescue and flood response.

Ocean rescue involves safety on the sea. The sea can be unforgiving and even the most professional mariners can easily find themselves in peril. From its origins as the U.S. Life-Saving Service, the Coast Guard has a long and proud tradition of responding immediately to save lives in peril. The Coast Guard currently responds to more than 40,000 calls for help each year.

Coast Guard search and rescue operations are not limited to the high seas. In coastal and inland areas, it often assists in areas of flooding, as when North Dakota's Red River flooded in 1997, and Hurricane Floyd made landfall along the East Coast in 1999.

#### **Licensing and Inspection**

Licensing and inspection includes commercial fishing vessel safety, vessel inspection and prevention, the global merchant fleet, and the Port State Control.

In some areas, such as the Gulf of Alaska, commercial fishing is 10 times more deadly than any other occupation in the country. Through a combination of regulatory, inspection, and education efforts, the Coast Guard strives to prevent tragedies before they occur.

As part of the Coast Guard's inspection efforts, it enforces a wide range of regulations to ensure U.S. and foreign vessels operating in U.S. waters are structurally sound, competently operated, and outfitted with adequate safety systems. Coast Guard safety inspectors track most U.S.-flagged vessels from shipyard construction to final voyage, and emphasize the Prevention through People initiative, which helps mariners to improve safety and decrease the number of accidents and casualties.

In the past, the Coast Guard was primarily concerned with the safety of U.S. vessels. Today, however, the Coast Guard has increasingly shifted its focus to foreign commercial vessels, as 95 percent of passenger ships and 75 percent of cargo ships operating in U.S. waters are foreign flagged. The Coast Guard is also the lead U.S. representative to the International Maritime Organization, an arm of the United Nations. In the wake of 9-11, the Coast Guard spearheaded the United States' efforts to increase international maritime security through IMO, resulting in sweeping changes to international security measures. Domestically, these changes were codified in the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. The Coast Guard is a driving force behind the implementation of measures to improve the training and safety standards of all mariners and vessels plying U.S. waters.

Unfortunately, not every country enforces international standards. To address this reality, the Coast Guard has effective Captain of the Port and Port State Control mechanisms in place that are designed to bring substandard ships into compliance with international standards, or exclude or remove them from U.S. waters.

### *Recreational Boating Safety*

In addition to commercial vessels, nearly 13 million recreational boats cruise American waterways each year (see Figure 2.7.5). Consequently, recreational boating is second only to highway travel in the number of transportation fatalities. As the National Recreational Boating Safety Coordinator, the Coast Guard works to minimize loss of life, personal injury, and property damage through a variety of prevention, education, and enforcement efforts. The all-volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliary plays a central role in this effort.

### *International Ice Patrol*

The Coast Guard is also responsible for the International Ice Patrol. This effort, which primarily takes place in the North Atlantic, is focused on monitoring shipping lanes to warn transiting ships of dangers posed by icebergs.

### *Protection of Natural Resources*

America's marine waters and their **ecosystems** are vital to the health, well being, and economy of the nation. The Coast Guard's protection of natural resources role focuses on two main mission areas: marine environmental protection and marine protected species law and treaty enforcement.

### *Marine Environmental Protection*

There are many diverse and harmful threats and challenges to our environment, including oil and chemical spills, hazardous materials dumping, and marine habitat destruction.

#### **Key Note Term**

**ecosystem** – a community of organisms and its environment functioning as an ecological unit



*Figure 2.7.5: Recreational boaters are protected by the Coast Guard.*

Courtesy of Corbis Images.

To address shipping regulation challenges, the Coast Guard closely regulates the shipping industry to prevent or minimize the environmental damage caused by oil and chemical spills and the dumping of wastes at sea. The Coast Guard's mandate to do so was significantly strengthened by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, which was passed in response to the devastating Exxon Valdez oil spill the year before. As a result of these efforts, oil spills have decreased by two-thirds during the past five years.

### **Marine Protected Species Law Treaty Enforcement**

Along with the marine environment, the Coast Guard also protects sensitive marine habitats, marine mammals, and endangered marine species. For example, the Coast Guard is currently working with the marine industry to safeguard the endangered Right whales as they transit the Atlantic shipping lanes, as well as endangered sea turtles in the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Marine Mobility**

The U.S. Coast Guard works to ensure an efficient and effective U.S. Marine Transportation System. The U.S. Marine Transportation System includes all of America's waterways and 361 ports, through which more than two billion tons of foreign and domestic freight and 3.3 billion barrels of oil move each year. The Coast Guard plays a key role in an ongoing initiative aimed at building the public and private partnerships necessary to support a world-class waterway system that improves our global competitiveness and national security.

In today's global economy, the United States remains dependent on ports and waterways for our economic survival. Excluding Mexico and Canada, 95 percent of the nation's foreign trade and 25 percent of its domestic trade depends on maritime transportation. The Coast Guard conducts four maritime mobility-related missions that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. Marine Transportation System: aids to navigation, domestic icebreaking, bridge administration, and waterways/vessel traffic management.

### *Aids to Navigation*

To aid ships transiting congested and complex waterways, the Coast Guard maintains the world's largest system of long- and short-range aids to navigation, with more than 50,000 buoys, fixed markers, and lighthouses. The Coast Guard also maintains the differential global positioning system and Loran C radio navigation systems, enabling mariners to electronically determine their position.

### *Domestic Icebreaking*

Coast Guard domestic icebreakers and buoy tenders ensure that ships carrying essential supplies are able to safely navigate U.S. waterways, especially on the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay, and rivers of the Northeast, regardless of weather conditions (see Figure 2.7.6).

### *Bridge Administration*

The Coast Guard also is responsible for regulating and ensuring safety and proper operations for approximately 18,000 highway and railroad bridges that span navigable waterways. The Coast Guard routinely issues permits for new bridge construction, orders obstructive bridges to be removed, and oversees drawbridge operations.

### *Waterways/Vessel Traffic Management*

To facilitate the more than \$1 trillion worth of domestic and foreign goods that move through U.S. ports and waterways each year, the Coast Guard operates a comprehensive network of precision electronic navigation systems and vessel traffic services aimed at reducing the risk of collision and ensuring the safe, efficient passage of people, ships, and goods.

### *National Defense*

Despite its many roles and missions, the Coast Guard is fully prepared to execute essential military tasks in support of joint and combined forces in peacetime, crisis,

*Figure 2.7.6: Icebreakers break ice to facilitate safe U.S. waterway passage.*

Courtesy of CACI.



and war. The Coast Guard has five specific national defense missions in addition to its general defense operations and polar icebreaking duties: maritime interception operations; military environmental response operations; port operations, security, and defense; coastal sea control operations; and peacetime military engagement.

### *General Defense Operations*

Like the other U.S. armed services, warfare is one of the Coast Guard's core missions. It commands the U.S. Maritime Defense Zones around the nation and maintains a high state of readiness in order to perform as a specialized branch of the Navy in times of war. Coast Guard forces and capabilities are incorporated in the Unified Combatant Commanders' **Operations Plans**. As part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Coast Guard sent 11 cutters and 1250 personnel to secure ports and support coalition forces.

### *Maritime Interception Operations*

Coast Guard maritime interception operations leverage its extensive training and expertise in stopping, boarding, searching, and seizing vessels to enforce international sanctions overseas, such as in the Arabian Gulf against Iraq.

### *Military Environmental Response Operations*

Coast Guard military environmental response operations enable the Coast Guard to serve as the tip of the military's spear in responding to environmental disasters. Coast Guard experience with the containment and cleanup of environmental disasters has given its three National Strike Teams the specialized training necessary to respond wherever needed, whether in the burning oil fields of Kuwait or Ground Zero in New York City.

### *Port Operations, Security, and Defense*

The Coast Guard port operations, security, and defense mission leverages unique legal authorities, assets, and expertise to protect U.S. and overseas ports, facilities, and vessels from hostilities. Port security units, manned primarily by reservists, play a prominent role in this effort.

### *Coastal Sea Control Operations*

The Coast Guard coastal sea control operations mission, which was added to the Coast Guard's portfolio in July 2001, is designed to ensure the unimpeded use of designated coastal areas by friendly forces while denying the use of those areas by enemy forces. Specific duties include surveillance and reconnaissance, interdiction of enemy shipping, and protection of friendly forces.

### *Peacetime Military Engagement*

The Coast Guard's peacetime engagement efforts include all activities involving other nations that are intended to shape the security environment in peacetime before military crises can arise. International engagement and training initiatives foster healthy relationships with other countries, thereby promoting peace and stability, democracy, and the rule of law.

#### *Key Note Term*

**Operations Plan** – military plan of action for future potential crisis or contingencies

### *Polar Icebreaking*

The Coast Guard is also responsible for polar icebreaking operations. This is essential to ensure U.S. scientists in the Arctic and Antarctic have the access, equipment, and supplies they need, while providing them with a floating laboratory from which to conduct vital scientific research.

## *The United States Merchant Marine*

The Merchant Marine is a fleet made up of a nation's commercial ships, both cargo and passenger, and those who operate them. It carries the nation's commerce (imports and exports) during peacetime and becomes a naval auxiliary to deliver troops and material in times of war.

The Merchant Marine has been an important part of the nation since the Revolutionary War period when the government issued letters of marque to privately owned, armed merchant ships and commissions for privateers, which the government outfitted as warships to prey on British merchant ships. The modern Merchant Marine was conceived by Congress with the Merchant Marine Act of 1936.

The mission of the U.S. Merchant Marine is to carry the greater portion of the United States commerce at sea, and serve as a naval or military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency. The official seal of the U.S. Merchant Marine is shown in Figure 2.7.7.

### *Organization*

The U.S. Merchant Marine is an essential component of national defense. It augments the basic sealift capacity necessary to meet defense requirements. Experience gained during previous conflicts has emphasized the importance of Navy coordination with all segments of the maritime industry.

*Figure 2.7.7: The official seal of the U.S. Merchant Marine.*

Courtesy of CACI.



The Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration is charged with ensuring a viable U.S. Merchant Marine and maritime industry to meet national security needs. The Maritime Administration, in cooperation with the Navy, supports programs directed toward sustaining the maritime infrastructure, including maritime education and training; national defense features and Title XI loans, operational differential subsidies and maritime security agreements, and the development of technologies and industrial processes.

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy was established in 1938 as a result of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. It operates under the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration to graduate qualified mariners.

## Operations

In peacetime, the Merchant Marine transacts the nation's **commerce**. In crisis and war, the Merchant Marine supplements the Navy as an arm of the national defense. Merchant vessels become naval cruisers and naval auxiliaries for the transport of troops, munitions, fuel, and supplies necessary to support and maintain military units. The Merchant Marine constitutes a reserve from which a body of trained sea going men are available to augment the personnel of a naval fleet.

The U.S. Merchant Marine provides U.S.-flag civilian-crewed commercial ships and civilian crews to government-owned support ships to deploy U.S. forces overseas and resupply them. These **sealift** assets account for about 95 percent of all the tonnage delivered in support of military requirements in peacetime and during times of crisis. Over 4,800 civilian mariners crew the 200 commercial vessels with military features that are included in the Afloat Preposition Force, Fast Sealift Ships, Ready Reserve Force ships, Maritime Security Fleet, and Navy Fleet Auxiliary Force. Over half of these sealift ships are actively deployed or are in commercial service around the globe.

There are several advantages to using sealift. Unit for unit, ships have a higher hauling capacity than aircraft. Ships can also carry heavy or outsized equipment. Ships can pre-position at sea near a projected threat area. They do not need over-flight rights, and waters more than 12 miles from land are free for navigation.

The Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC) provides ocean transportation for Department of Defense (DoD) cargo and U.S. forces around the world. More than 70 **strategic** sealift ships transport military equipment, supplies, and petroleum to support U.S. forces overseas. This number is expandable and includes both government and privately owned vessels. In peacetime, more than 95 percent of DoD cargo is transported by U.S.-registered (**flagged**) ships.

MSC ships are noncombatant vessels, operating behind battle lines, and are not considered likely enemy targets. Their noncombatant status enables MSC ships to maintain average crews less than half the size of combatant vessels, therefore they are more economical to operate.

### Key Note Terms

**commerce** – the exchange or buying and selling of commodities on a large scale involving transportation from place to place

**sealift** – ocean transportation

### Key Note Terms

**strategic** – of great importance within an integrated whole or to a planned effect

**flagged** – a ship registered to a particular nation

- **MSC ships' merchant mariner crewmembers can also be hired as necessary, while the Navy, even in peacetime, must employ a large number of Navy combatant personnel in case of war.**
- **The skill levels of MSC's merchant mariners also enable MSC ships to operate with smaller crews.**

MSC is able to provide rapid, sustained response in a changing world with three operational strategies: repositioning, surge, and sustainment sealift.

### *Afloat Repositioning Forces*

The Military Sealift Command Repositioning Program provides operationally ready ships to the military services and the Defense Logistics Agency. MSC's Afloat Repositioning Force consists of 37 ships, with 35 operating at repositioning sites in the Mediterranean Sea, Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and Guam in the Western Pacific. The Afloat Repositioning Force is divided into three parts:

- **Maritime Repositioning Ships operated for the U.S. Marine Corps**
- **Combat Repositioning Ships operated for the U.S. Army**
- **Logistics Repositioning Ships operated for the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Defense Logistics Agency**

### *Surge Sealift*

Surge includes ships from the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM)-controlled fleet; for example, the Fast Sealift Ships (FSS), the Ready Reserve Force (RRF), Large Medium Speed Roll-On/Roll-Off (LMSR) vessels, and the commercial market when contracted by USTRANSCOM for support of U.S. forces. Surge shipping delivers the heavy combat power and accompanying supplies in order to facilitate the deployment of predominantly continental U.S. (CONUS) based forces to anywhere in the world.

### *Sustainment Sealift*

To sustain military operations overseas, Military Sealift Command may activate any of three reserve fleets and crew them with mariners from the Merchant Marines: National Defense Reserve Fleet, Ready Reserve Force, Maritime Security Fleet, and Voluntary **Intermodal** Service Agreement program.

### *National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF)*

The National Defense Reserve Fleet, under the custody of the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, is an inactive reserve source of basic Merchant-design-type ships that could be activated within 20 to 120 days to meet the shipping requirements of the United States during national emergencies. This fleet of about 100 ships consists mostly of World War II merchant vessels that are available for use in both military and nonmilitary emergencies, such as a commercial shipping crisis. Ships of the NDRF are located in three fleet sites: James River, Virginia (East Coast); Beaumont, Texas (Gulf Coast); and Suisan Bay, California (West Coast).

#### *Key Note Term*

**logistics** – the aspect of military science dealing with the procurement, maintenance, and transportation of military matériel, facilities, and personnel

#### *Key Note Term*

**intermodal** – being or involving transportation by more than one form of carrier during a single journey

### *Ready Reserve Force (RRF)*

The Ready Reserve Force (RRF) is a quick response subset of the NDRE. The RRF is a government-owned, inactive fleet of former commercial ships of various types that can respond rapidly in any contingency. RRF ships are maintained in a readiness status such that they can be activated for service within 4 to 20 days. RRF ships are colocated at the same three sites with the NDRE.

### *Maritime Security Fleet*

The Maritime Security Program maintains a U.S.-flag merchant fleet crewed by U.S. mariners to serve both the commercial and national security needs of the United States. In accordance with the Maritime Security Act of 1996, the Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration entered into agreements with 10 shipping companies to participate in a program that would provide the DoD access to U.S.-registered commercial ships, their crews, and other related transportation assets in a time of national emergency. Maritime Security Program payments are paid to vessels operating in U.S. foreign commerce. Vessels include containerships, lighter-aboard ships (LASH) and Roll-on/Roll-off (RO/RO) vessels.

### *Voluntary Intermodal Shipping (VISA)*

The Voluntary Intermodal Shipping Agreement allows U.S.-flag carriers to provide ships and trained crews in three stages depending on the severity and expected duration of the contingency. VISA calls for comprehensive and integrated peacetime planning and exercises by the Maritime Administration, USTRANSCOM, and the Navy's Military Sealift Command. After activation, the commercial carrier is to proceed to the nearest port and disembark their civilian cargo, then proceed to the nearest military port to pick up its designated government cargo. Commercial carriers are paid a subsidy to participate in the VISA program.

## *Conclusion*

The U.S. Coast Guard operates as part of the Department of Homeland Security to fulfill peacetime missions in maritime security, maritime safety, protection of national resources, and maritime mobility. The Coast Guard also fulfills roles vital to national defense throughout peacetime, crisis, and war: general defense operations; maritime interception operations, military environmental response operations; Port operations, security, defense; coastal sea control operations; peacetime military engagement; and polar icebreaking. In times of crisis and war, the Coast Guard will be given over to the U.S. Navy and work at the direction of the Unified Combatant Commands.

The Merchant Marine is a fleet made up of a nation's commercial ships, both cargo and passenger, and those who operate them. It carries the nation's commerce (imports and exports) during peacetime and becomes a naval auxiliary to deliver troops and material in times of war. The Merchant Marine augments the basic sealift capacity necessary to meet defense requirements. The Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration is charged with ensuring a viable Merchant Marine and maritime industry to meet national security needs. Toward this end, the Merchant Marine plays a vital role with respect to Military Sealift Command's requirement to support military operations overseas with Afloat Prepositioning Forces, Surge Forces, and Sustainment Forces. The Merchant Marine crew Navy ships of the Afloat Prepositioning Forces and Fast Sealift Ships are forward deployed around the world. The Merchant Marine stands ready to reactivate and crew ships of the National Defense Reserve Fleet and the Ready Reserve Fleet. The Merchant Marine serves aboard the Maritime Security Fleet and commercial vessels participating in the Voluntary Intermodal Service Agreement, ready to come to the service of their country when called on by the president.

In the following lesson, you will learn about the opportunities you can find in the Peace Corps. You will learn about the origins of the Peace Corps as well as its many divisions, one of which might appeal to you.

### *Lesson Review*

1. To which executive department does the Coast Guard report?
2. What are the five major missions of the Coast Guard?
3. Why is the Coast Guard able to conduct law enforcement activity?
4. What is the Merchant Marine?