

The U.S. Coast Guard & Hurricane Katrina

Historical Index



Overview

Hurricane Katrina was one of the worst natural disasters to ever strike the United States. The U.S. Coast Guard played a significant role in the planning, response, and recovery efforts of the government in three mission areas: search and rescue, marine pollution response, and the management of maritime commerce. Of the estimated 60,000 people that needed to be rescued from rooftops and flooded homes, Coast Guardsmen saved more than 33,500, including rescuing from peril 24,135 lives and evacuating 9,409 medical patients to safety. The rescue and the response efforts were some of the largest in Coast Guard history, involving units from every district. Over 5,600 Coast Guardsmen participated in the Coast Guard's response efforts.

Efforts to document the service's efforts during Katrina began almost immediately after the storm struck the Louisiana coast. The Katrina Archives and Historical Records Team (KART) was formed to capture all historically significant documentation, both written and photographic, generated during the response. Additionally, recalled Reserve and civilian personnel were deployed into the field within days of the hurricane's passage to collect oral histories from as many responders as possible. In the end, KART collected over 614 gigabytes of information as well as 240 oral histories.

Our thanks to all Coast Guardsmen who assisted KART and the Historian's Office in preserving the Service's experiences and memories during Katrina operations.
