



**Mr. Jason Neubauer**

Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis Deputy Chief

Mr. Neubauer has served as the deputy chief of the Office of Investigations and Analysis (CG-INV) at Coast Guard Headquarters since June 2023. He is responsible for overseeing marine casualty investigations, suspension and revocation cases involving credentialed mariners, violation investigations, and data analysis for the Coast Guard's prevention operations.

Prior to his retirement as a captain in the Coast Guard, Mr. Neubauer served as the chief of CG-INV from August 2014 to June 2018 and again from July 2019 until June 2023. During his tenure in CG-INV, Mr. Neubauer served as the chair of three Commandant-level Marine Boards of Investigation, including those into the sinking of the steamship El Faro, the fire on the small passenger vessel Conception, and the implosion of the submersible Titan.

Mr. Neubauer's previous assignments included serving as the commanding officer of Marine Safety Unit Chicago from July 2012 to July 2014, where he was responsible for prevention operations spanning 300 miles of Lake Michigan coastline and 180 miles of the Illinois River and its tributaries.

He also served as the prevention department chief and deputy commander at Coast Guard Sector Honolulu from July 2008 to June 2012, where he was responsible for overseeing Coast Guard operations throughout a 1.5 million square mile Captain of the Port zone that includes the entire Hawaiian Islands and American Samoa.

Mr. Neubauer also served as the supervisor of Marine Safety Detachment St. Paul, Minnesota, from August 2000 until June 2003. In St. Paul, he worked closely with the Army Corps of Engineers and the tug and barge industries that transport vital commerce on the Western rivers.

Mr. Neubauer was commissioned as an ensign after graduating from the United States Coast Guard Academy in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science in marine engineering and naval architecture. After completing an initial marine inspection training tour in Seattle, he transferred to Marine Safety Office Morgan City, Louisiana from 1996 to 2000, where he inspected vessels supporting the offshore drilling industry and spent three years investigating a wide variety of marine casualties.

###



## **Mr. Keith Fawcett**

### U.S. Coast Guard Marine Accident Investigator

Mr. Fawcett began his career on active duty in the U.S. Coast Guard, where he served aboard three cutters and at various duty stations, before leaving the Coast Guard as a Chief Quartermaster.

In 1979, Mr. Fawcett joined the offshore industry with Gulf Fleet Marine as a mate on offshore supply vessels. He holds a 1600-Ton Near-Coastal Mate's and 100-Ton Master credential. While working for Gulf Fleet, he supported diverse oil field operations in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida. In 1981, he became a Vessel Traffic Control Specialist at the LOOP Marine Terminal, twenty miles offshore of Grand Isle, Louisiana, a key facility for offloading ultra-large crude oil carriers.

In May of 2000, Mr. Fawcett rejoined the Coast Guard as a civilian supervisor at the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) in New Orleans, overseeing vessel traffic control for the lower Mississippi River and Algiers Point. He also served as the Training Coordinator and was selected to attend the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities Symposium in Rostock, Germany. In September of 2010, he accepted a position with the Investigations National Center of Expertise in New Orleans, assisting Marine Casualty Investigators with the Marine Safety Program. Mr. Fawcett's area of expertise includes shipboard navigation and operations and their associated human factors components.

In 2015, Mr. Fawcett received the Coast Guard Investigations Sener Award for his work on the Mobile Offshore Drilling Rig Kulluk Grounding Investigation. He served on the Marine Boards of Investigation (MBI) for the SS El Faro sinking in 2015 and the fishing vessel Scandies Rose in 2019, for which he also received the 2023 Sener Award. Mr. Fawcett is a lecturer at the Italian International Maritime Safety, Security, and Environment Academy in Genoa, Italy. He has been published in numerous professional publications and is currently supporting high-profile marine casualty investigations, including the Titan MBI.

###



## **Lieutenant Commander Tom Whalen**

### **Investigations National Technical Advisor**

Lieutenant Commander Tom Whalen has served as the national technical advisor for the Investigations National Center of Expertise since 2023. In this role, LCDR Whalen responds to and provides technical support to investigating officers for marine casualty investigations worldwide.

Previously, LCDR Whalen served as a staff member for the First Coast Guard District since 2019. As a member of the Inspections and Investigations Branch, LCDR Whalen led the inspection and investigation efforts to ensure compliance for over 10,000 commercial vessels across 8 states, while overseeing over 800 marine casualties annually.

LCDR Whalen previously served as the supervisor of Marine Safety Detachment Belfast in Belfast, Maine. As the unit supervisor, LCDR Whalen was the senior Coast Guard representative for over 1500 miles of coastline and the Canadian border, overseeing compliance of domestic and foreign vessels, regulated waterfront facilities, and pollution responses. As the liaison to the State of Maine, LCDR Whalen managed multi-agency responses to oil and hazardous materials pollution cases and directed investigations into marine casualties and mariner misconduct.

From 2014 to 2016, LCDR Whalen served at Sector New Orleans as a port state control officer and an apprentice marine inspector. As a foreign vessel examiner and a domestic vessel inspector, he conducted safety and security inspections, determined compliance with U.S. and international regulations and treaties pertaining to vessel manning, lifesaving, firefighting, pollution prevention equipment and navigation safety to ensure vessel's fitness for route & service.

In 2013, LCDR Whalen attended Officer Candidate School at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. Prior to his commissioning, LCDR Whalen was a chief machinery technician stationed aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Thetis (WMEC-910) in Key West, Florida where he oversaw the operation and maintenance of the propulsion plant as the main propulsion chief.

Prior units include Coast Guard Station Marblehead in Marblehead, Ohio in 2010 as the assistant engineering petty officer and lead boarding officer, Tactical Law Enforcement Team South in Opa Locka, Florida in 2007 as training and boarding officer, Coast Guard Station New London in New London, Connecticut in 2003 as small boat engineer and boarding officer, machinery technician "A" School in Yorktown, Virginia, and Coast Guard Boot Camp in Cape May, New Jersey in 2003.

LCDR Whalen earned a Master of Science Degree in Transportation and Logistics Management with an emphasis in Marine Engineering from American Public University and Bachelor of Science in Business from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois.

###



## **Lieutenant Commander Gim Kang**

### **Investigations National Center of Expertise Attorney Advisor**

Lieutenant Commander Gim Kang currently serves as an attorney-advisor for the Coast Guard Investigations National Center of Expertise in New Orleans, Louisiana. In this role, he provides legal counsel in support of the nationwide operational needs of Coast Guard marine investigators.

LCDR Kang began his Coast Guard career as a reserve officer in 2008. His previous reserve assignments include serving as a reserve staff attorney for the First District, as a watchstander for the Ninth District Command Center, and as a logistics officer for Port Security Unit 309. LCDR Kang has also served on active duty in numerous assignments to include being a command duty officer for the Ninth District Command Center where he earned his journeyman Search and Rescue qualification; a reserve force readiness contingency planner for Sector Sault Sainte Marie; an admissions officer for the Coast Guard Academy Office of Admissions (recruiting the Class of 2018 and Class of 2019); a policy analyst for the Office of Search and Rescue (CG-SAR); and as a staff attorney for the Coast Guard Academy Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, both the Eighth and Ninth Coast Guard districts, and the Office of General Law (CG-LGL) at Coast Guard Headquarters.

In addition, LCDR Kang has also deployed as a contingency planner for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, as a liaison officer to Eighth Army for the C/JLOTS 2015 expeditionary deployment exercise in Korea, as a SAR controller for Sector Houston/Galveston during Hurricane Harvey, and as a surge staffing team leader at Atlantic Area for Hurricane Irma.

LCDR Kang graduated college in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Purdue University. He earned his Juris Doctor from the Chicago-Kent College of Law in 2008 and is admitted to the Illinois Bar. He earned a certificate in Naval Command & Staff in 2018 from the Naval War College-College of Distance Education.

###



## **Lieutenant Commander Kathryn Williams**

### **Outer Continental Shelf Branch Chief and Vessel Security Division Chief**

Lieutenant Commander Kathryn Williams is the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) branch chief and the Vessel Security division chief at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Center. In this role, she leads the engineering plan reviews, including structural and stability assessments, for floating OCS facilities, liftboats, portable accommodation modules, and groundbreaking projects like the first Jones Act compliant self-elevating wind turbine installation vessel. As the Vessel Security division chief, she manages the review and approval of approximately 700 vessel security plans annually.

Previously, LCDR Williams served as the port state control branch chief at Sector Boston, Massachusetts. As a journeyman marine inspector, she ensured that foreign-flagged vessels adhered to domestic and international regulations, overseeing the safe operation of over 1,100 foreign vessels each year, including cruise ships carrying more than 450,000 passengers in New England's largest port. She also played a key role in securing the safe importation of oil, chemicals, and liquefied natural gas, which accounted for 50% of the region's energy needs.

Before her assignment in Boston, LCDR Williams was a marine safety engineer in the Office of Design and Engineering Standards at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters. There, she collaborated with industry and third-party organizations to develop and implement design and engineering standards for the construction and inspection of commercial vessels, with a particular focus on human factors in ship design.

From June 2012 to August 2015, she served as an apprentice marine inspector at Sector Mobile where she conducted safety and security inspections to ensure compliance with U.S. and international regulations on vessel manning, lifesaving, firefighting, pollution prevention equipment, and navigation safety, ensuring vessels were fit for their intended routes and services.

LCDR Williams was commissioned as an ensign after graduating from the United States Coast Guard Academy in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. She also holds two Master of Science degrees—one in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering and the other in Industrial and Operations Engineering—from the University of Michigan.

###



## **Lieutenant Commander Lars T. Okmark**

### **Waterways Management and Facilities Division Chief**

Lieutenant Commander Lars T. Okmark currently serves as the Waterways Management and Facilities Division chief at Sector Upper Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri. In this role, he oversees the safe and efficient navigation and maintenance of the Upper Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois rivers. His responsibilities include managing aids to navigation, regulating maritime traffic, ensuring the safety and security of port facilities, and coordinating with various stakeholders to support commerce and environmental protection.

LCDR Okmark previously served as the senior staff attorney in the Office of Maritime & International Law (CG-LMI), Prevention Law Division, where he provided legal advice and counsel on marine inspections, investigations, enforcement, facility and waterways management, as well as domestic and international law.

Prior to this assignment, LCDR Okmark earned his journeyman marine inspector qualification while assigned as a marine inspector and investigator at Sector Corpus Christi, Texas where he conducted inspections and examinations on domestic and foreign vessels and conducted marine casualty investigations and personnel investigations of licensed mariners. LCDR Okmark also served as a staff attorney in the office of Maritime and International Law, Response Law Division, advising field units on maritime law enforcement cases, counterterrorism operations, and capabilities, and working with interagency partners for maritime law enforcement case dispositions. In his first assignment, LCDR Okmark served as an appellate prosecutor in the Office of Military Justice. LCDR Okmark served as the military aide for the former Judge Advocate General of the Coast Guard, and former Vice Commandant, Admiral Steven D. Poulin.

LCDR Okmark enlisted in the Navy Reserve as a legalman following his enlistment in the United States Army in 2004 as a Blackhawk helicopter crew chief. In 2005, he was accepted to assess for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment where he earned the rank of staff sergeant and served as a shop supervisor, deploying multiple times in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

LCDR Okmark earned his bachelor's degree from Austin Peay State University and attended graduate school at Eastern Kentucky University. He graduated with honors from Northern Illinois University Law School in May 2014, where he served as a Notes and Comments editor of Law Review. He also completed Joint Professional Military Education at the Naval War

College and is pursuing a graduate degree from the Air War College. LCDR Okmark is currently authorized to practice law in Illinois.

###





## **Lieutenant Commander Nicole Emmons**

### **Assistant Inspections and Investigations Branch Chief**

Lieutenant Commander Nicole Emmons currently serves as the assistant branch chief at the Fifth Coast Guard District's Inspections and Investigations Branch. As an investigating officer and journeyman marine inspector, she is responsible for reviewing marine casualty investigations, handling enforcement cases, and providing oversight for facility, container, and explosive load-out inspections across six states.

LCDR Emmons previously served as the senior investigating officer at Sector Ohio Valley in Louisville, Kentucky. In this role, she prosecuted negligence and misconduct suspension and revocation cases against U.S. Coast Guard credentialed merchant mariners and reviewed marine casualty cases spanning over 8,000 river miles across 10 states. From June 2015 to June 2019, LCDR Emmons served as the Port Safety and Security Branch chief and investigating officer at Sector San Francisco, where she supervised facility and container inspections and explosive handling operations at the nation's fifth largest container port.

LCDR Emmons was commissioned as an ensign after graduating from Officer Candidate School at the United States Coast Guard Academy in 2012. She began her career as an apprentice marine inspector at Sector Boston, where she earned qualifications in the domestic and port state control inspections branches. Prior to commissioning, LCDR Emmons graduated from Marine Science Technician "A" School in 2008 and served for four years at Marine Safety Unit Lake Charles, Louisiana, as a marine science technician. There, she performed duties as a boarding officer, pollution responder, facility inspector, and contingency planner.

LCDR Emmons holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Peace, War, and Defense from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also earned a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Louisville.

###



## **Lieutenant Kelly N. Steele**

### **Vessel Incidental Discharge Act Subject Matter Expert**

Lieutenant Kelly N. Steele currently serves as the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA) subject matter expert at the Commandant Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis. In this role, she works with Coast Guard Headquarters directorate staff to develop forthcoming VIDA regulations.

LT Steele previously served as an investigations officer for Sector Maryland National Capital Region, Curtis Bay, Maryland. As an investigative officer, her role involved determining causative factors of marine casualties; suspension and revocation proceedings; and enforcement actions. From 2016-2019, Steele was assigned to Sector Delaware Bay in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as an apprentice marine inspector, where she gained six prevention qualifications and became a journeyman marine inspector. LT Steele's role as a prevention officer consisted of inspecting foreign and domestic vessels ensuring compliance with U.S. laws and regulations while operating in the navigable waters of the U.S. She has inspected over 500 vessels and has restricted operation of more than 100 vessels found in non-compliance.

LT Steele was commissioned as an officer in November 2016 after serving ten years as an enlisted Yeoman.

LT Steele earned a Master of Science degree in Management Leadership from Purdue Global University in the fall of 2019.

###



# National Transportation Safety Board

An Independent U.S. Federal Government Agency

## MARCEL MUISE

*Marine Accident Investigator, Office of Marine Safety*

Mr. Muise serves as a Marine Accident Investigator for the Office of Marine Safety at the National Transportation Safety Board. In his position, he is responsible for the nautical operations aspects and the management of marine casualty investigations conducted by the NTSB.

He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Nautical Science from Maine Maritime Academy in 1995. After graduation, Mr. Muise served worldwide on ocean going offshore supply vessels, drillships, and car carriers, from Able Seaman to Master and Offshore Installation Manager.

Mr. Muise retired from the U.S. Coast Guard reserve in 2009 as a Lieutenant Commander with qualifications as deck watch officer, marine inspector, and casualty investigator.

Following his shipping career, he joined the NTSB's Office of Marine Safety as an investigator in 2018 and has launched to and participated in numerous high-profile major marine casualty investigations, including *Stretch Duck 7*, *Conception*, *Seacor Power*, *Titan*, and *Dali*.

Mr. Muise maintains an unlimited tonnage Master's license, which he achieved during his merchant marine career. Mr. Muise is a native of Nova Scotia and resides in the Virginia, with his wife. They have three adult children.



**Donald E. Kramer, Ph.D.**  
**Materials Engineer, Office of Research and Engineering**

Dr. Kramer is a materials engineer in the NTSB Materials Laboratory, part of the Office of Research and Engineering. In his position, he is responsible for determining the cause of failure and evaluating material properties of structures and components that are involved in transportation accidents.

He received a Bachelor of Science in Metallurgical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1994 and Doctor of Philosophy in Materials Science and Engineering from the University of Minnesota in 2000.

Since 2008, Dr. Kramer has been employed at the Safety Board where he has conducted over 100 failure analysis investigations in aviation, rail, marine, highway, and pipeline. Some of his notable contributions include a Natural Gas Transmission Pipeline Rupture and Fire in San Bruno, CA, a Turbine Disk Rupture and Uncontained Engine Failure in Chicago, IL, and a Natural Gas Conflagration and Subsequent Building Collapse in West Reading, PA.