

Public Service Commendation

to

Captain William A. Burket, Jr.

Captain Burket is congratulated for his superior support to the Coast Guard by ensuring local municipalities were well-equipped and trained to successfully conduct marine firefighting, search and rescue (SAR) and pollution response operations within the Port of Hampton Roads. In 2008 and 2009, Captain Burket worked alongside Sector Hampton Roads to plan and host the Port's annual Search and Rescue Forum. Each year, he organized and oversaw the training of 157 emergency responders from 16 different municipalities over an extensive three-day period. He gathered a team of expert instructors to conduct on-water rescue training drills including underwater sonar searches, towing, search patterns and mass rescue operations, resulting in the development of standardized training for participating marine units. Captain Burket also ensured that the firefighters of Hampton Roads were well versed in the latest marine firefighting techniques and apparatus during the area's 16th Annual Marine Fire Fighting Symposium. He organized a week of intense firefighting training specifically tailored to working in the shipboard environment for over 80 firefighters from throughout the country. Captain Burket unified Hampton Roads' marine firefighting training plans and revised individual municipality standard operating procedures to efficiently support cross jurisdictional emergency response. His efforts ensured that at least two fireboats could respond to any marine fire in the Tidewater area providing essential redundancy in the case of equipment casualties. Captain Burket was a key member on the Area Committee and ensured that Hampton Roads was prepared for fire fighting operations. The effectiveness of Hampton Road's fire fighting plan proved successful when Captain Burket directed the attack and safely extinguished major fires on the MAERSK DOHA and USS HARRY W. GILMORE in 2006. On May 15, 2008, Captain Burket's quick actions saved the life of a cruise ship passenger suffering from acute respiratory distress when he organized the use of a Virginia Beach Fire Department advanced life support team and a Coast Guard Cutter to transfer the patient while simultaneously maintaining emergency air ventilation during the transit. His efforts have significantly advanced marine firefighting capabilities and prepared local municipalities for augmentation of Coast Guard pollution and SAR response assets within an area of responsibility stretching over 360 square miles. Captain Burket's actions have saved lives, improved professional relationships with port partners and will continue to have long lasting, positive effects on the Port of Hampton Roads. Captain Burket's diligence, perseverance and devotion to help others are heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.