

# JEAN M. BUTLER

On June 28, 1976, Jean Butler, an independent young woman of 17 years, reported to New London, CT, one of the first women to attend USCGA. The thought of doing something unique appealed to her. Little did she know it would lead to a long and fulfilling career. A Physical Science major, Jean ran on the first Women's Cross-Country Team and sang in the first women's singing groups. Four years later, on May 21, 1980, Ensign Jean Butler became the first woman to graduate from a U.S. Military Service Academy.

ENS Butler's first duty station was Deck Watch Officer on the Coast Guard Cutter ALERT (WMEC 630) homeported in Cape May, NJ. Jean remembers how exciting it was to conn the ship through an Atlantic gale en route to a sinking wooden sailboat to save the six persons on board.

Next, LTJG Butler was assigned to Training Center Cape May, where she established the unit's first Information Resources Management Staff. Highlights of this tour include helping deliver a breech birth baby of a Coast Guard woman on the Garden State Parkway on a cold, dark January night (mom and baby were fine) and installing a new computerized phone system,

replacing a telephone switch that required an operator to connect incoming calls to the correct extension. Remember Lily Tomlin's operator on Laugh-In? ("Is this the party to whom I am speaking?")

Then the years flew by with assignments as the CG Search and Rescue Data Systems Manager, to George Washington University in Washington, DC to earn her MS in Engineering Management, and to the Radionavigation Division at CGHQ. There she provided management oversight of the Omega navigation system and was a Differential Global Positioning System project officer (the oldest and the newest worldwide radionavigation systems at the time - both obsolete today). After planning billets at both CG and Department of Transportation (DOT) HQ, she was assigned as District 17 Contingency Plans & Exercises Branch Chief where her first oil spill exercise was the first Spill of National Significance exercise on the west coast. After promotion to O6, it was back to CGHQ as Executive Assistant to the Chief of Human Resources. Rewarding and busy, this tour included the largest increase in personnel since World War II, the move of the Coast Guard from DOT to the newly formed Department of Homeland Security, and the creation of CG Sector Commands. CAPT Butler's last tour was CG's Diversity Staff Chief and acting Deputy Director of Personnel Management. She retired in 2006 after 26 years of active duty. Personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service, Commendation, DOT 9-11, and Achievement Medals, plus the DOT Secretary's Outstanding Achievement Award.

After retiring to Juneau, AK, Jean joined the CG Auxiliary to continue serving. She remains an active member teaching boating safety courses, conducting underway patrols, and training new members. Jean also enjoys singing with the Juneau Symphony Chorus and competing in local sprint triathlons.

