THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-0001

JUN 20 2013

Dear Dr. Sullivan,

I understand the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is conducting a ceremony on June 21st to honor the 20 sailors who lost their lives on June 21st, 1860, in the sinking of the U.S. Coast Survey steamer *Robert J. Walker*. I want to add my tribute to the memory of the sailors who perished in that accident. Coast Guardsmen are always saddened by the loss of life at sea and especially so when those lost were working to make the lives of other mariners safer by charting the waters of the United States.

On behalf of the United States Coast Guard, I further honor those lost on the *USCS Robert J. Walker* because the steamer on which they served was originally built as a Revenue Cutter. The United States Coast Guard is the successor service to the Revenue Cutter Service and, as you know, the cutter was named after 18th Secretary of the Treasury, Robert J. Walker. The Coast Guard continues that tradition and still has an active class of High Endurance Cutters named for Secretaries of the Treasury. Moreover, upon its completion, the next National Security Cutter will be named the *Hamilton* after the first Secretary of the Treasury and founding father of the Revenue Cutter Service in 1790.

The *Walker* was built as a *Legare*-class iron steamer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1847 and subsequently transferred by the Revenue Cutter Service to the U.S. Coast Survey in 1848. The *Walker* represented an important early transition of the Revenue Cutter Service from sail to steam, reflecting the enduring need of the United States to harness to power of new technology to promote its maritime interests. I am pleased *Walker* carried out the missions of both our organizations before it was lost.

On the anniversary of the *Walker's* sinking, it is certainly an appropriate tribute to read the names of those who are lost, and for the NOAA survey vessel *Thomas Jefferson* to lay a wreath off the coast of New Jersey near the site of the accident. I commend your actions to honor the memory of the *USCS Robert J. Walker* and those who died in the service of our Nation that morning 153 years ago.

Sincerely,

R. J. PAPP, JR.
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard

Dr. Kathryn Sullivan
Acting Administrator
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