

# Coast Guard's Kiefer Takes The Helm

## Capt. O'Malley Retires as Baltimore's Sector Commander



Capt. Kevin Kiefer



Capt. Mark O'Malley

BY NANCY MENEFEE JACKSON

Capt. Mark O'Malley has retired after three years as the Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector Baltimore and is being succeeded by Capt. Kevin Kiefer.

"The Port of Baltimore has been extremely fortunate to have someone of the caliber of Capt. O'Malley as commander of Sector Baltimore," said Maryland Port Administration (MPA) Executive Director James J. White. "We have made significant progress in Port security in the last few years, and much of that is due to Capt. O'Malley and his team. We wish Capt. O'Malley the very best and look forward to working with Capt. Kiefer."

Kiefer is excited to be serving in such a time-honored port. "It's such a diverse port, and so rich in history," he said, adding that he's been reading books about the Port's past. "I like its history — and I like crab cakes!"

Kiefer was offered other assignments, but he chose Baltimore because he was intrigued by its mix of container, bulk and cruise ships, plus historic landmarks such as Fort McHenry, and its strong maritime tradition.

"I'm humbled to be able to work with

such an outstanding community," he said. "I think partnerships and communications are two things that I look forward to continuing and enhancing."

Kiefer most recently served as Chief of the Office of Port & Facility Compliance in Washington, D.C., taking responsibility for policies that safeguard the nation's 361

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seaports. A specialist in marine safety and security, he focuses on issues such as port recovery capability. His planning skills were put to the test shortly after September 11, 2001 when he was stationed as the Chief of the Port Management Department in Corpus Christi, Texas, where one of the nation's largest military outload operations took place, sending the equipment for the 4th Infantry division to Iraq.

"It was a huge military move," he recalled, noting that tanks, Humvees and

helicopters were among the cargo filling 32 military command ships. "Wars can be won or lost by their logistical supply chain."

In 2010, the oil rig *Deepwater Horizon* lost five million barrels of oil in the Gulf of Mexico. It was declared a spill of national significance; the first time the national plan for such an emergency was put into use. In addition to his regular job, Kiefer was a Staff Director in Washington, responsible for gathering accurate information from the Gulf that ultimately would be delivered to the White House. "We call it 'the lost summer' because we worked seven days a week," he said. "I went in thinking I would do a three-week hitch and it would be over — I spent probably five months doing that and still keeping tabs on my old job."

He worked with an interagency team of scientists seeking the best way to stop the oil gushing into the Gulf. "BP tried to cap the well, but everything they did, we oversaw it; everything they did they had to run by us," he said.

Earlier in his career, Kiefer, who grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, served as Commanding Officer of the Port of Huntington, W.Va., the largest inland port in the country by tonnage; that cargo includes coal loaded from trains onto barges and often exported through the Port of Baltimore.

Kiefer, who holds two master's degrees in engineering from the University of Michigan, one in naval architecture and marine engineering and the other in manufacturing, chose the Coast Guard Academy for college. "I was interested in the military services, but the more peacetime mission of the Coast Guard

appealed to me," he said.

Kiefer, who enjoys running and biking, is married to wife Jennifer. His oldest daughter Kristen, 21, attends the University of Dayton, while 8-year-old son Brandon and 5-year-old daughter Alaina keep him busy with soccer and baseball.

The family got its first taste of Baltimore earlier this summer when visiting the Inner Harbor to see the Coast Guard's *Eagle*, a visiting, 295-foot sailing vessel. They look forward to more Maryland adventures.