

## **The 'Other Side of the Fence' Part II (Continued)**

Since the water was really choppy, we had a hard time getting tied onto the ship. We threw lines to the men on the open hatch, who tried to pull us in, but it took nearly six of us to muster enough strength to close the gap. I dropped fenders down the side of our boat to help prevent hull damage as one of the enlisted members jumped onto the cruise ship and helped haul the victim over. I was then handed luggage, which I put down in the survival compartment so that it was out of the way. Luckily, the only two other people we took with us was the victim's father and one of the ship's doctors, who had managed to stabilize the patient. I helped his father with his PFD and gave him a seat. We laid the victim amidships inside the cabin, with the doctor at his head, and once everyone was settled we casted off from the *Fantasy*.

As we pulled away I craned my neck up to see a crowd of curious children and families. They cheered and we sped off. An overwhelming sense of gratification engulfed me as we made our way back. The sea had calmed to three-foot swells and the sky had become a canvas of orange and red. Once back in port, we pulled into a bar/restaurant on the water and met with the fire department. I helped get the father and his luggage off as the men lifted the victim onto a stretcher and wheeled him away. We were told that he would be just fine.

As a cadet, your exposure to the operational side of the Coast Guard is somewhat minute. However, what you do manage to experience can be worthwhile. I knew I wanted to serve in the Coast Guard for a variety of reasons; for one, I wanted to be a part of something exciting and unpredictable. This one experience has definitely reaffirmed my decision to do so. After I graduate I will get to immerse myself in many more adventures. And knowing that I have the opportunity to help prevent an unfavorable outcome is more than worthwhile to me.