

Nations-led attempt to restore democracy to the impoverished nation. The agreement reached on the island became known as the Governors Island Accord and was the first step in restoring the right-fully elected government to Haiti.

Besides the new buildings and uniforms on the island, the Coast Guard brought with it a new set of missions. In 1968 the Coast Guard base at St. George on Staten Island closed and transferred all its operations to Governors Island. In June 1973 the operational readiness of the Governors Island Coast Guard forces was put to the test when the container ship *Sea Witch* rammed the anchored Belgian tanker *Eso* Brussels just north of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, causing a huge explosion. A witness to the subsequent fire, Frank Schubert, the Coney Island Lightkeeper said the blaze "turned the night into day over the harbor." Coast Guardsmen from Group New York saved 64 crewmen from the two boats.

In 1993, the Captain of the Port responded to another tragic case off the coast of Rockaway Beach, N.Y. A Chinese alien-smuggling ship, the *Golden Venture*, had grounded itself in heavy surf a hundred yards off the beach. Desperate Chinese nationals, seeking freedom, jumped into the frigid water and tried to swim ashore. Nearly 300 aliens were pulled from the surf and the foundering freighter by the Coast Guard.

The winter of 1993-94 required Group New York to save lives in a more indirect way. Record snow falls coupled with freezing temperatures froze the Hudson River and Upper Bay for months. The Hudson, the main highway for home heating oil to much of upstate New York, would have been rendered un navigable if not for the ice-breaking efforts of the Captain of the Port vessels. The cutters *Sturgeon Bay* and *Penobscot Bay* along with the harbor tugs *Line*, *Wire* and *Hawser* freed ice-

trapped barges tirelessly through the winter.

In addition to the traditional search-and-rescue missions of the service, the Eastern Region and its successor, the Atlantic Area, have led all major Coast Guard activities from the Rocky Mountains east. (The Eastern Region became Atlantic Area in 1987 when the Third Coast Guard District was dissolved. The Third District responsibilities were divided between the Fifth District in Portsmouth, Va. and the First district in Boston.)

Major operations conducted by Atlantic Area from Governors Island include the 1980 Mariel boat lift, the war on drugs in the Caribbean of the 1980s and 1990s, the coordination of Coast Guard forces for Operation Desert Storm in 1991, and the rescue of thousands of Cuban and Haitian refugees in the Caribbean throughout the early 1990s.

Group New York provided a different sense of security to a different group of people in the summer of 1995. The United Nations celebrated its 50th anniversary in New York with speeches and appearances from hundreds of world leaders. Group New York forces provided around-the-clock security on the East River near the U.N. headquarters.

Also in 1995, Governors Island residents were given another chance to show off its community. King Harald and Queen Sonja, the ruling monarchs of Norway, visited the island in October. The King visited the island to follow in the footsteps of his father who had made a successful tour of America some years earlier.

King Harald undoubtedly had a similar view of Governors Island as Lord Cornbury centuries before. Under the United States Coast Guard, Governors Island has continued to change to meet its new missions, while retaining its small town charm in the shadow of the Big Apple. Even with the changes, however, it remains "the smiling garden" that Lord Cornbury dubbed it.