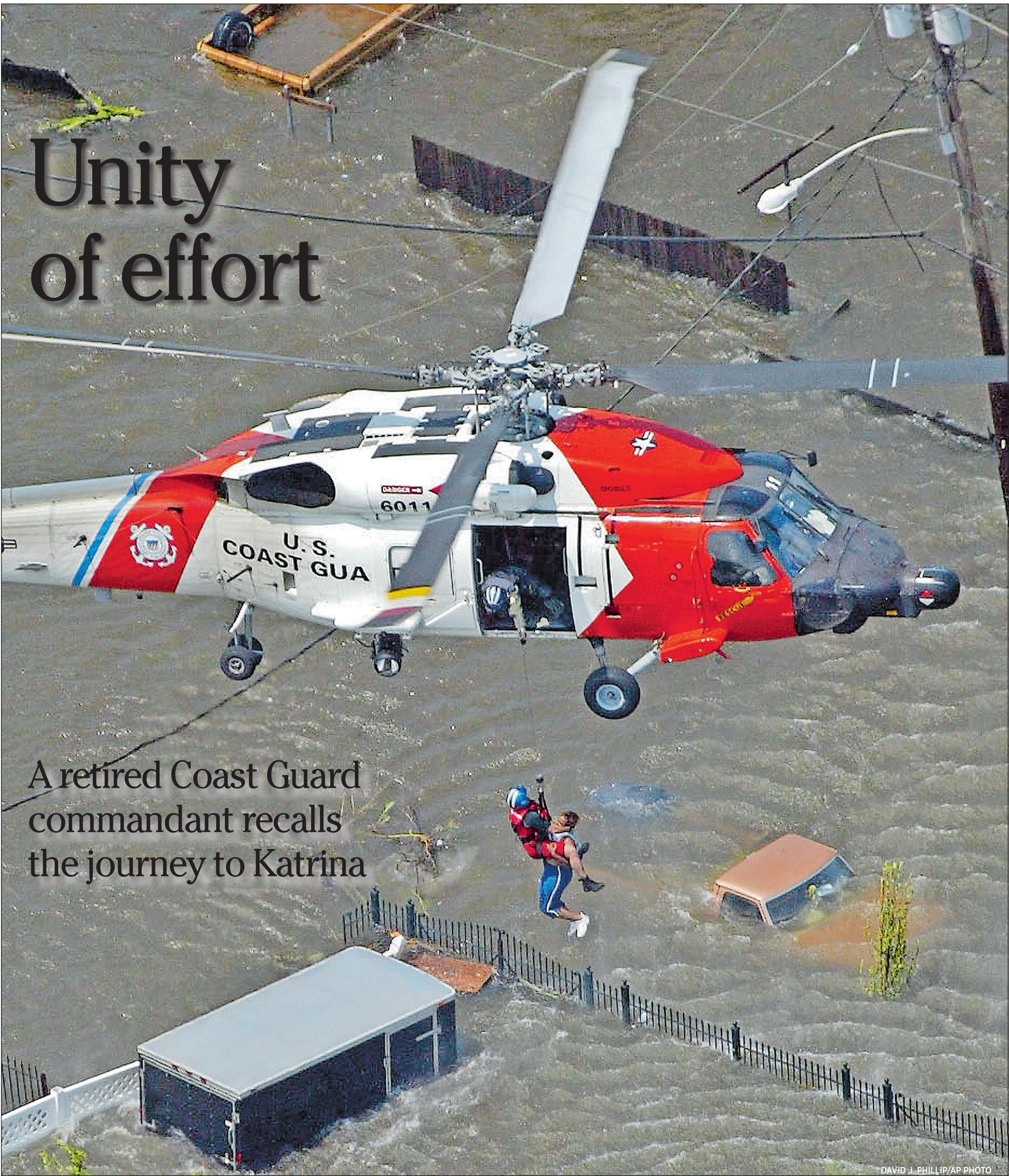


PERSPECTIVE



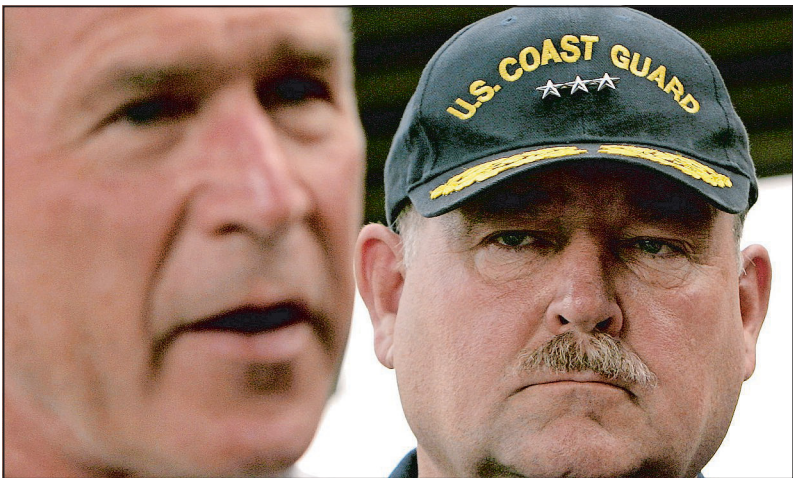
Unity of effort

A retired Coast Guard commandant recalls the journey to Katrina

By THAD ALLEN

THE CALL CAME AT 10 A.M. ON LABOR DAY, 5 September 2005, one week after Hurricane Katrina had made landfall on the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts. A distraught nation was trying to come to grips with the unfolding tragedy in New Orleans; anguished people on rooftops frantically waving to be rescued, deaths in nursing homes, flooded parking lots full of school buses, and the decimation of the Lower Ninth Ward due to a levee collapse.

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Above, a rescue in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Left, Thad Allen listens to President Bush in the storm's aftermath.

SUSAN WALSH
AP PHOTO

Eastern Connecticut's growing importance to the Republican party

Eastern Connecticut is increasingly the nucleus of Republican support in the state, particularly of the Trumpism variety, yet you wouldn't know that from the list of delegates appointed to what turned out to be a convention in name only last week. Not one at-large delegate came from New London or Windham counties. Yet drive through interior New London and much of Windham counties and you will see plenty of Trump signs. More significantly for the party, unlike some traditional Republican suburbs in Fairfield County that went for Democrats in 2018 two years after President Trump's



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election, Republican lawmakers east of the river largely held on. Two state senatorial seats that were once solidly Democratic have been in the hands of Republi-

cans for several years. Sen. Paul Formica was first elected in 2014 to the 20th District, which includes the towns of Bozrah, East Lyme, New London, Old Lyme, Salem, Waterford and portions of Montville and Old Saybrook. Democrat Andrea Stillman held the seat prior to Formica, before retiring. Sen. Heather Somers won her 18th District Senate seat in 2016, succeeding Democrat Andrew Maynard, forced to retire for health reasons. That district includes Griswold, Groton, North Stonington, Plainfield, Preston, Sterling, Stonington and Voluntown, with those northern, Trump-backing towns, pro-

viding her critical votes in 2018. Both Stillman and Maynard were substantial players in the Democratic majority. The Republican incumbents face the same Democratic challengers they defeated in 2018, with New London Democratic Town Committee Chairwoman Martha Marx again running against Formica and Somers facing off against Bob Statchen, a colonel in the Connecticut Air National Guard. Democrats are counting on anti-Trump turnout and general dislike for the president to help their down-ticket candidates. But a couple of things undermine that optimism in

eastern Connecticut. First, Trump remains popular with a lot of voters in the suburbs and rural interior towns. Also, candidates using the state's publicly financed campaign program (almost all) cannot drop the names of other candidates, including Trump, in their campaign literature, they can only take aim at their opponents. I had hoped to talk with Sue Hatfield of Pomfret, the vice chair of the state Republican Party and a convention delegate from our Second District, about the strength of the party in eastern Connecticut as opposed to elsewhere in the state. A prosecutor

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