



# U.S. COAST GUARD



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#### SHIELD OF FREEDOM PINS FOR CIVILIAN EMPLOEES

ALCOAST 209/03 announced the "Shield of Freedom" message to be a simple but powerful descriptor of the character of our service. Active and Reserve military members of the Coast Guard have always worn the federal shield on their uniforms. It is on the crests of the enlisted and officer hats, on the sleeve of the Service Dress Blue uniform, and an integral part of most of our insignia. It is also included in the same uniform items for the Auxiliary.

While Active, Reserve and Auxiliary members of our workforce regularly display the Shield of Freedom, there was one vital component that did not have this opportunity, our civilian employees. They comprise close to one-fifth of our workforce and without their contributions we would not have achieved our current level of success. Civilian employees have served in every major American war since the Revolution, freeing service members to concentrate on winning battles. That tradition continues with us today, as roughly 7,200 civilians serve the Coast Guard throughout the United States and some foreign countries. We are also served by about 1,500 Non-Appropriated Fund Activity employees.

According to a 1998 Rand Corp. report, there are two main reasons civilian workers are such a benefit to the military. First, military members are moved in and out of jobs frequently, so there are high turnover and training costs. Second, military members do not spend 100 percent of their time performing their assigned functions, but also have training requirements and other military duties. Civilians can focus on the special requirements of their job. Civilians provide stability to our organization. As military members rotate between assignments every three years or so, civilians are necessary to provide vital continuity to keep pace with the high demands of the nation on the Coast Guard.

To commemorate the continued contributions of the Coast Guard's civilian workforce, a Shield of Freedom pin has been created and enough are being sent to each command to provide to each civilian worker on their staff. Pins are being distributed to each unit accompanied by a letter from the Commandant. Pins for our NAF employees will be distributed on receipt of the next shipment. With civilian contributions being critical to Coast Guard mission success, they too should be able to wear the Shield with the same pride as their Active, Reserve and Auxiliary shipmates. The pins should be presented in a suitable setting.

Regards,

*RADM Kenneth J. Venuto*  
Ken Venuto

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