



**Jorge A. Gomez, Jr.**  
**Boatswains Mate Second Class Petty Officer (BM2)**  
**USCGC VALIANT (WMEC 621)**  
**2012 Sailor of the Year Award**



*Commander Stephen V. Burdian, Commanding Officer of USCGC VALIANT (WMEC 621) takes great pride in naming Petty Officer Second Class Jorge A. Gomez as VALIANT's 2012 Sailor of the Year!*

Petty Officer Jorge Gomez is assigned to USCGC VALIANT (WMEC 621) home ported at Naval Station Mayport where he serves as the primary pursuit coxswain and supervisor of sixteen non-rates in the Deck Department. His collateral Duties include: Deck Watch Officer, Unit Rescue and Survival Systems Petty Officer, Pursuit Coxswain, Senior Coxswain and Boat Crewmember Board Member, Helicopter Tie Down member, Unit Helicopter Equipment Petty Officer, Boarding Officer, Unit Respiratory Instructor, and Deck Department Property Officer.



**USCGC VALIANT (WMEC 621) 2012 Sailor of the Year:  
Petty Officer Second Class Jorge A. Gomez.**

Petty Officer Gomez was raised in Miami, Florida, and at age 14 became a volunteer with the Miami-Dade Police Department as a Police Explorer. He served the department and his community by attending the Explorer Academy, participating in weekly ride along assignments, and community police sponsored functions. Petty Officer Gomez relished the opportunity to learn about law enforcement and serving his community. These experiences led him to join the U.S. Coast Guard.

His first assignment was on board the USCGC MOHAWK (WMEC 913) in Key West, Florida, where he served as an integral member of the Deck Department. During this tour of duty, he served as a Spanish interpreter and participated in UNITAS, a multinational naval exercise conducted annually in Atlantic and Pacific waters around South America. While on deployment, Petty Officer Gomez displayed keen intellect while teaching Coast Guard boarding tactics and techniques to over 300 members of the Chilean & Ecuadorian Coast Guard. Petty Officer Gomez then attended Boatswains Mate A-School, initial training, at Yorktown, Virginia.

Upon graduation, Petty Officer Gomez reported to Coast Guard Station Yankeetown where he performed duties as a Tactical Coxswain and Boarding Officer. He also served as the Auxiliary Liaison for flotilla 15-5 in Gainesville, Florida. In January 2010, Petty Officer Gomez was selected to attend Airman Leadership School at MacDill Air Force Base for 5 weeks, a noteworthy achievement as he was the only Coast Guard petty officer among U.S. Air Force non-commissioned officers.

In May 2010, Petty Officer Gomez reported to USCGC VALIANT (WMEC 621) in Miami, Florida, where he quickly became a leader within the Navigation Division and Deck Department. During Petty Officer Gomez' time onboard, he has successfully contributed to the cutter's success and overall readiness as he prepared for two Command Assessment and Readiness (CART) inspections and assisted the ship earn outstanding reports as outside inspectors found zero discrepancies among more than 600 lines of assessed items in the navigation and seamanship areas of responsibility. Furthermore, Petty Officer Gomez played an integral part in two shipboard Boat Standardization Inspections yielding impressive scores among Atlantic Area units as VALIANT became the first and only cutter to earn the coveted Sumner I Kimball Award for Small Boat Readiness.

In 2012, Petty Officer Gomez has demonstrated extraordinary operational proficiency at sea. During VALIANT's February- April 2012 Windward Pass Patrol, he showed superb decision making when VALIANT interdicted 93 Haitian migrants off the coast of Great Inagua, Bahamas. He immediately recommended to the Commanding Officer a course of action to safely and effectively transfer the migrants to VALIANT without incident. Furthermore, during VALIANT's May-June 2012 Joint Inter- Agency Task Force South Patrol (JIATFS), he displayed exceptional leadership during a late night high speed go-fast interdiction resulting in the detention of five narco -traffickers, and the recovery of 43 bales of cocaine, valued at \$32.5 million. Most impressively, his calm demeanor and Spanish language skills de-escalated an intense weapons drawn situation and preserved relationships with a counter drug partner nation. He also qualified this past year as an Officer of the Deck, a watch position normally held by more senior petty officers or junior officers on board a Coast Guard medium endurance cutter. Lastly, during an unusually challenging period from May to September 2012 which included rotation of senior Deck Department personnel, Change of Command, and a cutter homeport shift from Base Miami Beach to Naval Station Mayport, he demonstrated stalwart and unflappable leadership as he directed, trained, and supported junior personnel through major shipboard evolutions.

Petty Officer Gomez is constantly looking for new ways to excel and accept greater responsibility on the ship, among his shipmates, and the Coast Guard. He truly embodies the Coast Guard's Core Values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty.



**Commander Stephen V. Burdian , Commanding Officer of USCGC VALIANT (WMEC 621), presents Petty Officer Second Class Jorge Gomez with the 2012 Sailor of the Year Award.**