

Sailor of the Year

VALIANT's Sailor of the Year is chosen from the pool of members selected as Sailor of the Quarter. These members serve as VALIANT's representatives for the Coast Guard's Enlisted Person of the Year Award.



VALIANT's Sailor of the Year for 2011 was Petty Officer First Class Nathan Purinton from the Deck Department. Below is his citation, which was presented on January 31, 2012.

Congratulations Petty Officer Purinton, you have been selected as CGC VALIANT's Sailor of the Year (SOY) for 2011! You are cited for outstanding performance of duty onboard VALIANT from 01 January 2011 to 31 December 2011. During this period, you consistently demonstrated unwavering loyalty to your ship and shipmates, and were a shining example of a sailor who embodies the Coast Guard Core Values of "Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty."

Exhibiting unrivaled professionalism and diverse operational expertise, you were a major catalyst in every major operational and inspection success enjoyed by VALIANT during 2011, sustaining her outstanding reputation among Atlantic Area cutters. Your leadership and judgment as the cutter's primary Non-Compliant Vessel Coxswain, most experienced Landing Signal Officer (LSO), as well as an exceptional Boarding Officer, and in-port and underway Officer of the Deck directly bolstered VALIANT's overall success.

Demonstrating outstanding anticipation and initiative in advance of VALIANT's February 2011 Aviation Standardization Team Inspection (AVSTAN), you pre-determined success by tirelessly drilling, training and testing helicopter tie-down teams until they were inspection ready. You also personally ensured all Deck Department aviation gear was in pristine condition, including all preventive maintenance completed. You then stepped up as primary LSO for the operational portion of the inspection, achieving passing scores all around and praise from the inspectors. At the conclusion of AVSTAN, Aviation Training Center Mobile Ship-Helo Branch Chief noted, "VALIANT and her crew have far surpassed the standard qualification for this visit. Your test scores - ATT Members, Tie Downs, Fuel, and Fire Teams - far exceeded the fleet averages. Well Done!" The Senior Inspector also commented that VALIANT was the "best 210' I've seen in 20 years."

Your vast experience and knowledge were called upon again in October for an Atlantic Area "Deck Landing Qualification Round-up" when you volunteered to assist CGC SENECA who had no qualified Night LSO. In two days underway on SENECA you trained six LSOs and eight tiedown personnel through 200+ helo evolutions. You additionally corrected maintenance issues on critical helicopter deck safety gear, leaving them mission ready for their ensuing patrol.

In preparation for VALIANT's 2011 Command Assessment of Readiness for Training (CART), you again exhibited remarkable planning, preparation, and dependability as you meticulously researched and verified over 113 Deck checklist items, resulting in an unprecedented three minor discrepancies in helping VALIANT achieve only 30 shipwide discrepancies; the Afloat Training Group (ATG) senior inspector noted that the previous 18 month low was 68. This tremendous performance continued through VALIANT's follow-on Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA). You held pivotal positions during each drill; chiefly, you were a Repair Locker Leader for General Quarters and the Damage Control Central Plotter for General Emergency. Additionally, ATG ship riders were so impressed with VALIANT's line handling skills that they filmed a mooring evolution to use for training other cutters. Your leadership and enthusiasm during this exhaustive three-week evaluation contributed to VALIANT scoring 97% overall and earning the Operational Readiness Award. The ATG Coast Guard Liaison Officer noted in our inspection log that VALIANT's performance was, "The best I've seen in the year I've been here."

In August 2011 you showcased your resilient composure and leadership as the Boarding Officer for the boarding and eventual seizure of the Honduran F/V MISS ERINN. During the exhaustive two-day search, you overcame constant disinformation and attempted deceit by the crew as you discovered a stow-away linked with a known drug trafficking organization and \$175,000 cash in illicit proceeds earmarked for drug trafficking expenses.

Throughout 2011 you demonstrated superior proficiency during towing and astern refueling operations. VALIANT successfully conducted five fueling at sea operations with patrol boats that had little experience with this challenging evolution. Your supervisory efforts on deck ensured each evolution was conducted in a timely, safe and

successful manner. Most notably, during the rescue and assistance of the F/V CAPT NEPHI in April, you were transferred to the vessel to assess the vessel's stability and develop a towing plan for the flooding vessel. You again used keen judgment and ensured the best plan of action was taken to ensure the safety of all members involved in the operation during the 100 mile tow and dewatering of the disabled vessel.

Your dedication to your shipmates was equally exemplified by your time commitment and leadership in extra-curricular events, specifically, your enthusiastic and valued input at all Morale Committee meetings and with your leadership of VALIANT's morale softball team. As Assistant Coach you made reservations, coordinated all practices and lead the team to a second place finish in the Annual Coast Guard District Seven Softball Tournament.

Displaying great pride in Coast Guard history and a commitment to community service you eagerly volunteered over 40 hours of your time to the Hillsborough Lighthouse Preservation Society. You donated your time and truck to the task of removing old broken furniture and properly disposed of old paint stored on the property. You also utilized your Boatswains Mate expertise to replace and splice the halyard lines for the lighthouse's flagpole, and successfully enlisted the help of the local Fire Department to assist with their bucket truck, saving valuable donated funds.

Finally, for the second half of 2011, VALIANT did not have a First Lieutenant. With BMC acting as the "de facto" department head, you seamlessly assumed a much greater leadership and management role. With absolute dependability and hard work you kept a forty-five year old cutter always looking her best. Through meticulously managing the Deck personnel work list, planning for needed supplies and always keeping an eye on quality control, you ensured VALIANT's exterior appearance truly reflected the pride and commitment of her crew. This was never more apparent than the official visit of the Commandant of the Coast Guard and Senator Collins (R-ME), who both enthusiastically praised VALIANT's materiel condition.

Over the last year, you have demonstrated exceptional professional expertise, dependability, and leadership well beyond your pay-grade, and are commended for your outstanding performance. Bravo Zulu on this outstanding achievement, shipmate!

J. C. Dettleff, CDR
Commanding Officer