MEMORANDUM

From: S. A. Carter, BMCS
CG STA Kauai

To: COMDT (CG-1112)

Thru: (1) CG SECTOR Honolulu
(2) CGD FOURTEEN

Subj: 2014 WANDA ALLEN-YEAROUT OMBUDSMAN OF THE YEAR NOMINATION

Ref: (a) 2014 Wanda Allen-Yearout Ombudsman of the Year Award Solicitation,
ALCOAST 485/14

1. Ms. Annie Leighton has earned my strongest possible recommendation for the 2014 Wanda Allen-Yearout Ombudsman of the Year Award. “Auntie” Annie has gone out of her way to ensure that the needs of 20 members and their families were met with great care and selflessness. She goes above and beyond the call of a “traditional” ombudsman, adding her own sense of aloha to everything she does, and is truly an integral person to the unit’s overall readiness and success. Ms. Leighton spends over 25 hours a week at the unit, which has undoubtedly enhanced effective lines of communication, and ensured support services and work-life concerns are promptly addressed for Station Kauai’s members and families.

2. Ms. Leighton has exhibited the highest standards of professionalism and confidentiality. The motherly influence she provides allowed members and families to comfortably voice their concerns in a safe environment, which has undeniably improved morale and fostered a positive work environment. Her insight and knowledge are often sought out and her awareness to issues that arise is unmatched. On one occasion a member approached “Auntie” Annie with an alcohol related concern for their spouse. Without hesitation, she referred the member to regional work-life staff so that the appropriate services and assistance could be provided, all while keeping the members utmost privacy secure. I’m convinced that her frequent presence at Station Kauai is a contributing factor to not having a personnel alcohol or drug related incident since January 2012.

3. Ms. Leighton has been a positive role model for newly reported members and their families. She routinely makes contact with new members well in advance to guarantee a smooth transition overseas. This year she has welcomed six new members and families at the airport with a warm smile and flower lei. She willingly ensured transportation, lodging, and childcare were arranged to help ease some of the apprehensions associated with such a large move. Her selfless actions have inspired those around her and ensured all new members and their dependents received a warm welcome and assistance in settling in to the remote island unit.

4. Ms. Leighton enhanced communications between the command and its families by coordinating a monthly get-together with spouses and family members. These gatherings were held at various restaurants where food, fun, and friendships transpired all the while passing
pertinent information to all who attended. She provided a detailed column in the unit’s quarterly newsletter and regularly forwarded informational emails to dependents emphasizing awareness to unit and community activities, voting information, tax assistance, sexual assault, and emergency preparedness. She maintains an active list of station personnel and their families’ names, dates of birth, phone numbers, and anniversary dates. “Auntie” Annie never misses a birthday, making sure that there is a cupcake and happy birthday song at quarters. She also sends out anniversary cards to members and their dependents thanking them for their dedication to the Coast Guard and our great country.

5. Ms. Leighton has provided essential work-life support, specifically she immediately recognized several new spouses were experiencing relocation anxieties, and having troubles with getting connected in the community. Ms. Leighton eagerly met directly with the spouses to hear their concerns, and provided information on community clubs, sports leagues, churches, and gatherings ultimately assisting them in getting settled in their new home.

6. Ms. Leighton has passionately facilitated and promoted a healthy sense of community. As a longstanding resident of Kauai, her strong relationships in the community have allowed members and families to attend various sponsored events such as Kauai Historical Society events, Kauai Raceway Park, and “Taste of Hawaii”. She excitedly helped organize the Holiday Party which was a joyous occasion for friends and families, especially in a location where a large majority of the crew does not have immediate family to celebrate the holidays with. She was an integral part of choosing the venue, menu, and night’s activities. The white elephant gift exchange and “ugly sweater” contest she planned was light hearted, and a huge morale booster. She was incredibly generous in financially sponsoring the station’s MWR watercraft program, understanding the ability to preserve the morale watercraft equipment is essential in uplifting the spirits of the unit’s families. Ms. Leighton’s cooking for the duty section has been a huge hit for all and usually consists of a “recipe of the week” that is published in the unit newsletter. Members not on duty, and on frequent occasion with their families, often come in for this delicious home-cooked meal. The camaraderie that Ms. Leighton helped foster allowed members to fully focus on work because she assures that our families are always cared for.

7. During this past hurricane season, “Auntie” Annie helped prepare station members and families for three separate Tropical Storms/Hurricanes including ISELLE, JULIO, and ANA. Having been through two major hurricanes on the island of Kauai, she provided critical first-hand knowledge to members and families on what to expect, and the items needed in order to put together a complete Hurricane Preparedness Kit. During the storms, she anxiously ensured full accountability of crew and dependents. After she confirmed all of her “ohana” were safe, she spent countless hours telephoning families in the continental United States to inform them that their loved ones were out of harm’s way, allowing the crew to remain focused on the mission.

8. I could fill pages with all of the amazing things Ms. Leighton has done for the command and families here, but the one thing that truly makes her special is her humility. She is the type of person who genuinely cares about each member and truly enjoys doing things for “her coasties”. Ms. Leighton doesn’t consider her time here as servitude, rather each person stationed here is part of her close family. “Auntie” Annie, will always be considered “ohana” at this unit and throughout the District. Ms. Leighton’s steadfast dedication to the crew, the families, and her longstanding commitment to the Coast Guard personifies the characteristics represented by this prestigious award. She has earned my strongest possible nomination.