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## iCommandant



*Web Journal of Admiral Thad Allen*

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

### Commandant's Change of Command

Guardians,

Later today, I will be relieved as Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard by Admiral Robert Papp. It has been an honor to serve as your Commandant for the past four years and I am confident in Admiral Papp's ability to lead the Service during a period of tremendous changes, challenges, and opportunities. The value of the U.S. Coast Guard has never been greater than it is today and it is the men and women of our great Service who truly make it all possible.

After the Change of Command ceremony, I will continue to serve as the National Incident Commander for the Gulf of Mexico oil spill for some period of time but I wanted to take this final opportunity to thank you for your tremendous commitment, dedication, and courage over the past four years.

When I became the Commandant in 2006, I issued a number of orders that I thought were necessary to meet the challenges we faced then and set the conditions for future success. With your help we have accomplished a great deal. We transformed our acquisition process, enhanced our marine safety capability and capacity, created a new and more effective support structure for our Reserve Forces, stood up the Force Readiness Command and Deployable Operations Group, created the Maritime Enforcement Rating, and transformed our maintenance and logistics processes. At the same time we met operational challenges in piracy off the Horn of Africa, the tsunami in America Samoa, the earthquake in Haiti, and more recently the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. We accomplished all of that without losing focus on our broader mission set. We continued to interdict drugs and made major strides to eliminate the use of self propelled semi-submersibles. We deployed wireless biometric capability to significantly reduce illegal alien migration. At the same time we saved countless lives.

In the last six years, we have also strengthened our relationships within the Department of Homeland Security. Through the completion of the first Quadrennial Homeland Security Review, we helped mature the Department and build the Nation's homeland security enterprise.

In the process we enhanced our ties to the Department of Defense. We held unprecedented staff talks with the Navy, Air Force, Marines, Army Corps of Engineers and the National Guard Bureau. The Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps and I cosigned "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower" and Naval Operating Concepts. We forged stronger bonds with our interagency partners in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, Maritime Administration, Drug Enforcement Administration, National Transportation Safety Board, and the Department of the Interior. Finally, we strengthened our international ties with our hemispheric partners and through the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum and North Atlantic Coast Guard Forum. Together, we raised the visibility of Coast Guard missions to our external stakeholders and our international partners.

The common thread connecting each of these of initiatives and actions, and my overarching goal as Commandant, was for the Coast Guard to become more change-centric - to sense changes in our operational environment and have the courage to make course corrections before problems overwhelm us or we have terms dictated to us externally. To do that we must become more diverse, adapt to new technologies, and embrace social media as well. I believe we have become more change-centric and a learning organization that capitalizes on lessons learned. Nowhere has this been more evident than in our responses to the devastating earthquake in Haiti and in our leading role to the ongoing oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The world has seen the value of the U.S. Coast Guard in action. We protect, defend, and save America's maritime interests wherever they are at stake - that is the legacy you have left for our future Guardians to embrace.

In spite of our operational successes, challenges remain. Our operations are not risk free and we have known the pain at the loss of shipmates from USCGC HEALY, MSST Anchorage, CG 6505, and CG 1705. Our promise to them is to prevent future accidents and insure we create the safest possible environment for our personnel. The Coast Guard will meet future challenges because of our multi-mission nature, bias for action, and the incredible talent and dedication of our people. As we look to the future, I encourage each of you to be insatiably curious, to be life-long learners, to look after your shipmates, and, finally, to seize every chance to apply your leadership skills, talent, and competencies when the opportunity presents itself.

I am incredibly proud of all our active duty members, reservists, civilians and auxilliarists. No matter how fiercely the winds of change swirl around us, our people stabilize the Service. You are America's Maritime Guardians and your country needs you now more than ever. It has been my extraordinary honor to have been your Commandant and I am excited to see where you will take the organization in the future. Fair winds.

Sincerely,

Admiral Thad W. Allen

Posted at [5/25/2010 08:44:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#)



Monday, May 24, 2010

## Vice Commandant Change of Watch Ceremony

Earlier today, VADM Sally Brice-O'Hara relieved VADM David Pekoske as Vice Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard during a Change of Watch ceremony held at Fort McNair. Here is the text of the All Hands email that VADM Pekoske released to mark the occasion:



[Vice Commandant Change of Watch Ceremony](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

"To the Men and Women of the U. S. Coast Guard:

It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve as your Vice Commandant. We are all part of an extraordinary integrated-mission Service and, because of your hard work and resiliency, our workforce is our greatest asset. Your performance following the devastating earthquake in Haiti, your ongoing response to the Gulf oil spill and your daily execution of our broad mission set world-wide exemplifies the Coast Guard's value to the Nation. Thank you for all you do.

Under Admiral Allen's leadership, we have made great strides. We modernized our organizational structure, drastically improved service delivery and support for mission execution and we're developing a change-centric culture. Our services have never been in greater demand and I am extremely proud that, now more than ever, the Coast Guard is a model for the federal government.

Later this morning, I will pass the watch to Vice Admiral Sally Brice-O'Hara. You are in great hands. VADM Brice-O'Hara is an outstanding leader who brings to the job superlative expertise and commitment. The transition of senior leadership offers the organization the opportunity for healthy change and improvement. I encourage you to embrace the change and provide VADM Brice-O'Hara the same remarkable support that you provided to me.

Semper Paratus,

VADM David Pekoske  
Vice Commandant"

Posted at [5/24/2010 03:15:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)



Friday, May 21, 2010

## Navy SEAL Graduation - First Coast Guard Graduates

It could not have been a better day in San Diego as I attended the graduation of Navy SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) Class 277. I had the distinct honor of pinning Navy SEAL insignia on Coast Guard blue for the first time. Two Coast Guardsmen were among the newly designated Navy SEALs and made history as the first uniformed personnel ever assigned to an operational SEAL team while a member of another branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.



[Navy SEAL Graduation](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

The two Coast Guard officers volunteered to attend Navy SEAL training under an agreement signed in July 2008 by the Coast Guard, Navy and Special Operations Command. The historic agreement allows up to four Coast Guardsmen a year the opportunity to train and integrate with an operational SEAL team before returning to their Service. The agreement is an extension of the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower, which was signed by all three U.S. sea services in October 2007.

In the words of RADM Gary Bonelli, Deputy Commander of the Naval Special Warfare Command, who presided over the graduation ceremony, "Naval Special Warfare is proud to team with the nation's first U.S. Coast Guard officers qualified as U.S. Navy SEALs...During the past fourteen months, they have proven their mettle and have truly earned the right to be called our teammates. Cooperation among all services is a critical component of the National Maritime Strategy. Today's graduation is just one more example of the many integral ties that bind our maritime services."

Congratulations to SQT Class 277!

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/21/2010 05:00:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)





## MCPO-CG Change of Watch Ceremony

Earlier today, MCPO Michael Leavitt relieved MCPO Charles Bowen as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard. The ceremony was held at TRACEN Cape May and widely attended by members of the Coast Guard family. Representative Frank LoBiondo also attended as part of the official party.

Here is the ALCOAST marking the change of watch ceremony:

R 211935Z MAY 10  
FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//VCG//  
TO ALCOAST  
BT  
UNCLAS //N01321//  
MSGID//OTHER//  
ALCOAST 259/10  
COMDTNOTE 1321

SUBJ: MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COAST GUARD

1. I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MASTER CHIEF MICHAEL P. LEAVITT HAS RELIEVED MASTER CHIEF CHARLES W. BOWEN AS THE ELEVENTH MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COAST GUARD AT 1300 TODAY.

2. MASTER CHIEF LEAVITT HAS DEMONSTRATED HIS COMMITMENT TO OUR CORE VALUES BY HIS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE DURING A 28-YEAR COAST GUARD CAREER. MASTER CHIEF LEAVITT MOST RECENTLY SERVED AS SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR TO THE DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS AT COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS. HE HAS SERVED IN VARIOUS AFLOAT AND ASHORE ASSIGNMENTS INCLUDING OFFICER IN CHARGE (OIC) OF STATION MAUI (HI), USCGC POINT DORAN (WA), STATION HATTERAS (NC), STATION OCRACOKE (NC), STATION HUMBOLDT BAY (CA), STATION TILLAMOOK BAY (OR), AND STATION CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT (WA). BASED ON HIS PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, COMMITMENT TO THE ENTIRE WORKFORCE, AND DEDICATION TO THE SERVICE, HE WILL BE A GREAT ADDITION TO THE COAST GUARD SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM.

3. I THANK MASTER CHIEF BOWEN FOR HIS 32 YEARS OF EXCEPTIONAL MILITARY SERVICE TO THE COAST GUARD AND THE NATION. HIS LEADERSHIP, PROFESSIONAL SKILL, AND WISE COUNSEL WILL BE MISSED. HE WAS TRULY DEDICATED TO THE WELFARE OF THE ENTIRE COAST GUARD WORKFORCE AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. HE WORKED DILIGENTLY TO ENSURE PAY AND BENEFITS PARITY WITH OUR DOD COUNTERPARTS AND TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE DETERIORATING CONDITION IN SOME OF OUR AGING HOUSING UNITS. HIS EFFORTS WILL BEAR FRUIT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF COAST GUARD MEN AND WOMEN. THROUGHOUT HIS TENURE, HE ELEVATED THE VALUE OF THE SERVICE TO NEW HEIGHTS IN THE EYES OF OUR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS. AS A LEADER, HE EPITOMIZED THE GUARDIAN ETHOS. THOSE WORDS ADORNED THE WALLS OUTSIDE HIS OFFICE BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE LIVED THE GUARDIAN ETHOS IN HIS DAILY ACTIONS. HE LEAVES AN ENDURING LEGACY FOR ALL OF US TO EMULATE AND I WISH HIM AND HIS WIFE JANET ALL THE BEST IN RETIREMENT.

4. RELEASED BY VADM DAVID PEKOSKE, VICE COMMANDANT.

5. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

BT



[MCPO Bowen, ADM Allen, MCPO Leavitt](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [5/21/2010 04:25:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)



Wednesday, May 19, 2010

## CGA Class of 2010 Graduates

Guardians,

Earlier today, I presided over the 129th Commencement ceremonies at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Despite the overcast skies, the Academy grounds sparkled and the class of 2010 brightened the scenery in their dress whites. 193 cadets received their commissions as Ensigns and their Bachelor of Science degrees as they prepared to report to their first units later in June. Three international cadets also graduated and they will serve in their home countries.

It's always a pleasure to return to the Academy but this one was a little more special as I was delivering my last set of remarks to the Corps of Cadets before my own change of command on 25 May. My time as Commandant coincided with the class of 2010 so we shared a special connection. They have achieved amazing academic and athletic achievements while gaining valuable operational experience during their summer training programs. The Distinguished Graduate, First Class Matthew Delahunty, talked about the class of 2010's journey and he inspired everyone in attendance.



[CGA Class of 2010](#)

Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

I fashioned my remarks on a similar theme emphasizing that these new Ensigns have a duty to reconcile future leadership opportunities with the competencies they will gain throughout their journey as officers. They have an obligation to live up to their class motto "Eternal Guardians of the Sea" and I'm confident they are up for the challenge. Their country needs them now more than ever as the value of Coast Guard missions increases with every passing year. I also took the opportunity to present the Academy with a Unit Commendation to recognize their outstanding efforts to educate and train future Coast Guard leaders.

It was a great Coast Guard day and one that I will always remember. Good luck to the class of 2010!

Admiral Thad W. Allen

Posted at [5/19/2010 09:47:00 PM](#) @[comments](#) 



## AMVER Awards Ceremony

Last night I spoke at the awards ceremony for the Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue (AMVER) System held at the National Press Club. AMVER originated in 1958 and its primary mission is to maintain and provide information on commercial vessel locations across the globe for use in search and rescue operations.

The AMVER Awards Program was inaugurated in 1971 to recognize those vessels which regularly participate in the AMVER system. Ships flying the various colored AMVER pennants are a constant reminder of that ship and company's commitment to safety of life at sea. Prominent display of AMVER Certificates of Merit in company boardrooms and on the bridges of ships attests to the prestige accorded these awards. The AMVER Awards program serves the dual purpose of rewarding ships already participating in the program and assists in the recruitment of new ships.



[AMVER Awards Ceremony](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

In 2009, AMVER registered vessels saved an amazing 237 lives. On average, more than 3,600 AMVER ships were available "on plot" each day. December 2009 also holds the all-time record with 3,809 vessels on plot during a 24-hour period.

The IMO has designated 2010 as the "Year of the Seafarer." The commercial shipping interests and vessels that participate in AMVER demonstrate their strong commitment to the safety and life of seafarers world-wide through their constant readiness and willingness to assist those in need. I commend their efforts and thank them for their service!

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/19/2010 05:39:00 PM](#) @[comments](#) 



## PAC Change of Command and VADM Breckenridge Retirement

On Monday, VADM Manson Brown relieved VADM Jody Breckenridge as Commander, Pacific Area and Coast Guard Defense Forces West. I had the distinct honor of presiding over both the Change of Command ceremony and VADM Breckenridge's retirement ceremony. Enduring true Coast Guard weather, the ceremonies proceeded smoothly at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, CA with our newly-commissioned CGC WAESCHE moored bow-to-bow with CGC MORGENTHAU.



[PAC Change of Command](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

The entire Coast Guard thanks VADM Breckenridge for her career of Service to the Coast Guard and the Nation. In addition to her responsibilities in the Pacific Area theater of operations, VADM Breckenridge oversaw continued development of the Force Readiness Command (FORCECOM), the Deployable Operations Group (DOG) and our Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron (HITRON), all National-level commands. Prior to reporting to PAC Area, VADM Breckenridge served simultaneously as the Assistant Commandant for Human Resources and the Director of the Strategic Transformation Team, responsible for synchronizing and aligning the Coast Guard's modernization efforts. Her performance, and the accomplishments of the women and men she has led, have been outstanding.

Congratulations to VADM Breckenridge (Ret.), and best of luck to VADM Brown!

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/19/2010 05:36:00 PM](#) @[comments](#) 



Monday, May 17, 2010

## MCPO-CGRF Change of Watch

On Saturday, 15 May, MCPO Mark Allen relieved MCPO Jeffrey Smith as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Reserve Force (MCPO-CGRF). Here is the ALCOAST on the Change of Watch ceremony:

R 151606Z MAY 10

FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//VCG//  
 TO ALCOAST  
 BT  
 UNCLAS //N01321//  
 MSGID/OTHER//  
 ALCOAST 247/10  
 COMDTNOTE 1321  
 SUBJ: MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COAST GUARD RESERVE FORCE  
 1. I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MASTER CHIEF MARK H. ALLEN HAS RELIEVED MASTER CHIEF JEFFERY D. SMITH AS THE FIFTH MASTER CHIEF OF THE RESERVE FORCE AT 1030 TODAY.  
 2. MASTER CHIEF ALLEN HAS DEMONSTRATED HIS COMMITMENT TO OUR COAST GUARD CAREER. MASTER CHIEF ALLEN MOST RECENTLY SERVED AS SUPERVISOR JACKSONVILLE RESERVE COMMAND MASTER CHIEF. HE HAS SERVED BOTH AT CGHQ AND IN THE FIELD. HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE NATURE OF THE RESERVE FORCE AS HE HAS BEEN RECALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY IN RESPONSE TO THE 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS, AIR FLORIDA FLIGHT 90 CRASH, AND THE MARIEL BOAT LIFT. HE HAS ALSO SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE COAST GUARD RESERVIST MAGAZINE EDITORIAL BOARD. DUE TO HIS VAST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND DEDICATION TO COAST GUARD MEN AND WOMEN, HE WILL BE A GREAT ADDITION TO THE COAST GUARD SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM.  
 3. I THANK MASTER CHIEF SMITH FOR HIS 38 YEARS OF EXCEPTIONAL MILITARY SERVICE TO THE COAST GUARD AND THE NATION. HIS LEADERSHIP, PROFESSIONAL SKILL, AND WISE COUNSEL WILL BE MISSED. HE WAS TRULY DEDICATED TO THE WELFARE OF THE ENTIRE COAST GUARD WORKFORCE AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. THROUGHOUT HIS TENURE, HE ELEVATED THE VALUE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESERVE FORCE TO NEW HEIGHTS HELPING THE COAST GUARD MEET ITS COMMITMENT AS AMERICAS MARITIME GUARDIAN. HE HAS LEFT AN ENDURING LEGACY FOR FUTURE GUARDIANS, BOTH ACTIVE DUTY AND RESERVE, TO EMULATE AND I WISH HIM AND HIS WIFE MARILYN ALL THE BEST IN RETIREMENT.  
 4. RELEASED BY VADM DAVID PEKOSKE.  
 5. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.  
 BT



Posted at 5/17/2010 10:48:00 AM 1 comments



Friday, May 14, 2010

## D1 Change of Command and RADM Nimmich Retirement

Earlier today, RADM Dan Neptun relieved RADM Joe Nimmich as the First District Commander in an outstanding ceremony at Boston's historic Faneuil Hall. The Change of Command is a time-honored tradition that represents a transfer of total responsibility, authority, and accountability from one individual to another. VADM Parker, our Atlantic Area Commander, was the presiding official.



First District Change of Command and RADM Nimmich Retirement  
 Originally uploaded by uscgpress

It was my honor to preside over RADM Nimmich's retirement ceremony. Having known and served with RADM Nimmich for more than 37 years, I had the distinct pleasure of highlighting his career of dedicated service and his unmatched commitment to the well-being of those that have worked both with and for him. His performance and the extraordinary work of the men and women of the First District is second-to-none.

Congratulations to RADM Nimmich (Ret.), and best of luck to RADM Neptun!

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at 5/14/2010 08:13:00 PM 0 comments



Thursday, May 13, 2010

## Coast Guard and Navy Staff Talks

Guardians,

On April 27th, the Coast Guard hosted our shipmates from the U.S. Navy for our semi-annual Staff Talks. Admiral Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, and his staff of senior Flag Officers, met at Coast Guard Headquarters where we aligned on strategic matters and reinforced the many facets of our daily, joint operational activities. The Navy and Coast Guard truly work together each day to assure our national security along many fronts ranging from Caribbean and Eastern Pacific counterdrug patrols to joint operations in the Central Command Area of Operation in the Arabian Gulf. These staff talks serve as a continual navigational fix to ensure our respective staffs are focused on key initiatives and that they understand each Service Chief's clear direction.

Together, we celebrated the recent successes of the first Littoral Combat Ship, [USS FREEDOM](#), on her deployment in support of Southern Command, and Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATFS). FREEDOM sailed with a Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, along with specially trained counterdrug pursuit boat operators, and a Navy airborne use of force helicopter. The effective team netted three large interdictions of cocaine and offered a preview of how effective the LCS and CG Team can be for the future.

We discussed the value of Navy-Coast Guard Joint Cryptologic Operational Concepts and the importance of Service interoperability between the two services. A common understanding on operational design and capabilities, but also the importance of sharing information, resources, and support. Enhanced interoperability is even more important in the future as meaningful coordination of maritime operations will involve a wider range of multi-service and multi-agency primary team effort.

Our thanks again, to Admiral Roughead and his team of professionals for the extraordinary team effort and the future Coast Guard and Navy collaboration.

VADM David Pekoske



Admiral Roughead and Admiral Allen  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Posted at [5/13/2010 04:50:00 PM](#) @[comments](#)



## 2010 Elite Athlete and Inspirational Leadership Awards

On Monday afternoon I had the privilege of presenting the 2010 Inspirational Leadership Awards and recognizing our two Elite Athletes of the Year in an outstanding ceremony at Coast Guard Headquarters. These distinguished women and men set a high standard for excellence and serve as an example for all. I enjoyed the opportunity to congratulate each of them and meet their family and friends. I encourage everyone to take a minute to consider their remarkable performance:



Inspirational Leadership Awardees and Elite Athletes of the Year  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Elite Athletes of the Year:

LT Allison Middleton from Training Center Yorktown, Virginia, distinguished herself by participating in the All-Armed Forces Softball Championship and was selected as the first Coast Guard member to participate in the All-Tournament USA Armed Forces Women's softball team, placing second nationally at the Amateur Softball Association of America Championship. She maintained an amazing .575 batting average and an outstanding fielding average.

MST2 Peter Calori from Sector Guam distinguished himself by winning the gold medal in Guam's 2009 Outrigger Canoe Long Distance Race in the Iron Man Division over a distance of 27 miles, and won first place in the Men's Open Long Distance Offshore Race in Micronesia. These milestones earned his selection to the Guam National Outrigger Paddling Team and a spot in the 2010 South Pacific Games.

Inspirational Leadership Awards:

Mr. James McReynolds, Commander of Flotilla 37 in Biloxi and Ocean Springs, Mississippi, was awarded the Commodore Charles S. Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award as an outstanding leader from our Auxiliary workforce. Upon election as Flotilla Commander, he set an unparalleled pace to rejuvenate a flotilla that had minimal membership and was on the brink of disestablishment due to the tremendous losses from Hurricane Katrina. Initiating a highly successful outreach and recruiting campaign, he led the steady revitalization of the Flotilla, established training programs to rapidly qualify Auxiliaries and nearly doubled Flotilla membership in less than a year.

Mr. Jerome Popiel of the Ninth Coast Guard District in Cleveland, OH, was awarded the George R. Putnam Inspirational Leadership Award as an outstanding leader from our civilian workforce. Ascending to the position of Ninth District Incident Management Branch Chief, an unexpected vacancy of an O-6 billet, he demonstrated extraordinary program management, leadership, and judgment. He bolstered the District Command Center training program for efficient and methodical qualification of duty officers during a critical period of high turn-over. He personally mentored every new member through the qualification process. His personal commitment and professionalism won command recognition for national best practices and inspired his subordinates, peers and superiors.

MKC Michael Petras of CGC VALIANT was awarded the Master Chief Angela McShan Inspirational Leadership Award as an outstanding leader from our Chief Petty Officer workforce. His expertise and professionalism aboard VALIANT were instrumental in executing the cutter's critical training programs to respond to any contingency. During a multi-day search for survivors from a wrecked Haitian sail freighter, MKC Petras volunteered to relieve fatigued boat crew members and to recover the remains of several Haitians so they could be returned home. Demonstrating extraordinary leadership and strong moral character, Chief Petras embodied the Guardian ethos which inspired his subordinates to pursue continued education, advancement, and continued sea duty.

CDR Diane Durham, Commanding Officer of CGC FORWARD, was awarded the Captain John G. Witherspoon Inspirational Leadership Award as an outstanding leader from our officer workforce. CDR Durham created a command climate that fostered success by encouraging shipmates to be prepared, exceed standards, and continually improve. Demonstrating strong leadership, she inspired her crew to perform and excel through one of the most challenging years in the cutter's history: a year marked by providing care, comfort and support during the stressful challenge of a shipmate's serious illness, a rewarding rescue that saved the lives of three mariners, and critical cooperation with Panama to build partnerships and improve mission execution for drug interdiction. In January, 2010, CDR Durham led FORWARD as the first cutter on scene following the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Congratulations to all of the awardees. Each exemplifies the Coast Guard's Core Values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty!

Semper Paratus,

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/13/2010 07:53:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#) 



Tuesday, May 11, 2010

## Workforce Management

This afternoon I released the following All Hands email on workforce management issues and measures:

To the Men and Women of the U.S. Coast Guard,

The Coast Guard is facing a situation in which we have more active duty military members than funded billets. As a result, we have already scaled back Selective Reenlistment Bonuses, waived up to 12 months time-in-grade requirements for retirements, reduced enlistment accessions to their lowest recorded levels, and reduced officer accessions. Even with this careful management, the active duty workforce still remains above our funded level in FY10 and, based on the President's proposed budget for FY11, we anticipate the loss of 1,112 additional funded billets. Therefore, additional workforce management actions are necessary.

Our retention and recruitment rates are higher than any other time in recent history and current voluntary measures to reduce the impacts of high retention and the projected billet losses have not solved our body-to-billet overages. While Congress has not yet passed our final FY11 budget, we must prepare now to match the number of active duty members to the number of funded billets in the President's proposed budget. To do this, CG-PSC will consider waiving obligated service requirements for active duty members based on needs of the Service; we will create additional military billets by in-sourcing work presently conducted by contractors that is inherently governmental in nature; and we will more aggressively communicate available opportunities for active duty members to voluntarily transfer to the Coast Guard Reserve.

If additional measures are necessary to solve the body-to-billet imbalance, we will reduce opportunities of selection in officer continuation and promotion boards and conduct performance-based retention panels for the enlisted workforce.

To date, we have released the following ALCOASTs about workforce management measures:

ALCOAST 173/10: Obligated Service Requirements For Enlisted Personnel  
ALCOAST 165/10: Active Duty Military Workforce Management - SITREP One  
ALCOAST 621/09: Selective Reenlistment Bonus Multiples and Kickers Cancelled  
ALCOAST 619/09: Critical Skills Training Bonus Program

Semper Paratus,

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/11/2010 04:31:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#) 



## DHS Fitness Challenge

Earlier today I sent the following email to all hands about the DHS Fitness Challenge:

To the Men and Women of the U.S. Coast Guard,

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. To encourage a "healthy" competition between components, DHS has initiated a three-month fitness challenge for all DHS employees. Personal fitness programs help prevent obesity, improve employee resilience and productivity, improve morale, help to reduce health care costs, and prevent chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, strokes, and other preventable illnesses.



[Coast Guard Physical Fitness](#)  
Originally uploaded by [uscgpress](#)

Please join me in helping the Coast Guard meet this DHS challenge: together we can become more physically fit, healthy, motivated, productive, and resilient. Track your fitness activities using the President's Challenge website at: [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org) from May 1 through July 31, 2010. You can choose more than 100 different types of physical activities that fit their lifestyles. The Active Lifestyle program is available for those seeking to initiate or improve their fitness regimen, while the President's Champions program is for already active individuals to seek a new fitness challenge.

At the end of the competition, DHS will recognize the component with the highest percentage of employees who have pledged to join the President's Challenge and the most points (per each person) accumulated between May 1 and July 31, 2010.

Getting started is easy:

Log in at: [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org)

Click on the left hand group that best describes you

Click on "Sign me up!" [bottom, middle of page]

Enter your 'user name' and 'password' and ensure to fill in the Coast Guard Group ID number = 53106

Our Group Member/ID Name = Coast Guard.

Fill in the rest of the form and get started logging your activities. You can enter activities that they have tracked since May 1, 2010 until July 31, 2010. If you are already tracking your fitness activities using the President's Challenge website, please add yourself to the Coast Guard group (53106).

Semper Paratus,

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/11/2010 09:04:00 AM](#) [0 comments](#)



## 2009 Enlisted Persons of the Year

Guardians,

Earlier today, the selection of MST1 Carrie L. Grady of the National Strike Force Pacific Strike Team as the Active Duty Enlisted Person of the Year and ME1 Christopher M. Pupo of Port Security Unit 301 as the Reserve Enlisted Person of the Year was announced by ALCOAST.

I had the privilege of calling them with the good news before the ALCOAST was released. They both truly reflect the attributes that make the Coast Guard a great organization. Each is a self-starter, seizing leadership opportunities, and living our core values. Their efforts, enthusiasm, and spirit of camaraderie were infectious among their shipmates which is a common trait for great leaders.

MST1 Grady started the year at MSST Seattle where she qualified as a coxswain, played a critical role in helping that unit excel at their Ready for Operations and Standardization inspections, and accelerated the law enforcement training program to meet upcoming deployment schedules. Once she arrived at the Pacific Strike Team, she quickly qualified as a Response Member and demonstrated exceptional specialty knowledge during a deployment to Guam following Super Typhoon Melor which wreaked havoc across the island.

ME1 Pupo was the Leading Petty Officer for the Landside Security Division within PSU 301. Prior to an upcoming deployment to the Middle East, ME1 Pupo coordinated a complex interagency training evolution to ensure the PSU was fully prepared to meet the challenges they would face overseas. Once in theater, he led the effort to integrate 25 U.S. Navy personnel with a subset of PSU 301 to form a specialized security task force. In addition, he reached out to other DOD units to leverage competencies, take advantage of cross-training opportunities, and align their responsibilities to ensure the most adequate distribution of security forces in their respective areas of responsibility.

Congratulations to both MST1 Grady and ME1 Pupo for their outstanding achievements. Here is the [ALCOAST](#) which includes the names of the other individuals who deserve recognition for being considered for these awards. And thank you to all the commands who submitted nominations: I salute you for championing leadership at your units.

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/11/2010 08:16:00 AM](#) [1 comments](#)



Saturday, May 8, 2010

## National Incident Commander

Guardians,

The response to the DEEPWATER HORIZON oil spill has truly been an all-hands effort and I am incredibly proud of the performance of our men and women since this crisis started. The location, size, and complexity of this oil spill prompted an extraordinary need for interagency coordination across the federal government and with the state and local entities throughout the affected regions. To meet this demand, Secretary Napolitano named Admiral Allen as the National Incident Commander (NIC) on 30 April.

In that role, Admiral Allen will lead the federal government's coordination efforts with state and local officials, appropriate members of the maritime industry, and international resources to stop the oil leak and mitigate the environmental damage. We will devote all the resources required to this oil spill but also must remain vigilant to our other mission areas. This will be a challenging period for all of our Guardians so please look after your shipmates.



[NIC Org Chart](#)

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For those not familiar with the NIC role, that position is designated under the National Contingency Plan and reports directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security who is responsible for Domestic Incident Response. View the picture on the right for a more detailed view of the NIC's organizational structure.

For current NIC information, visit [www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com](http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com).

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/08/2010 04:09:00 PM](#) [2 comments](#)



Friday, May 7, 2010

## WAESCHE Commissioning Ceremony

Guardians,  
Earlier today, I presided at the commissioning ceremony for our 2nd [National Security Cutter](#) (NSC), WAESCHE. The event was very well orchestrated and widely attended by local officials, industry members, and Coast Guard men and women from around the country. While much of our organizational focus has been on the DEEPWATER HORIZON oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, this ceremony served as a reminder of our multi-mission nature and the urgency for recapitalizing our aging fleet of cutters.

Congratulations to the crew of WAESCHE and all the people who diligently worked to make this ceremony happen.

WAESCHE is one of the most technologically advanced ships ever introduced into the Coast Guard and represents a much needed injection of new capabilities into our fleet. WAESCHE also serves as another positive milestone for our acquisition program. Upon acceptance, WAESCHE had 50 percent fewer trial cards (work items) than BERTHOLF did at the same period. We're confident that the third NSC, STRATTON which is scheduled to be christened on 23 Jul 2010, will continue that trend.

It was an honor to have Marilla Waesche, the granddaughter of [Admiral Russell Waesche](#), as the cutter's sponsor. During my remarks, I highlighted Admiral Waesche's legacy. He is the longest tenured Commandant, having served from 1936-1945, and led the Service through the darkest days of World War II. At the height of the War, he directed the largest expansion in our history when the Service had over 176 thousand people, and operated over 750 cutters, 290 Navy vessels, 255 Army vessels and scores of small boats. He also successfully integrated all of the marine safety functions into the Service and oversaw the development and implementation of the Coast Guard Reserve and the Auxiliary. He was arguably the most influential Commandant in our history and it is an honor to have a ship named after such a great leader.

Today's ceremony was a proud moment for the entire Coast Guard. Bravo Zulu to WAESCHE and to all of our men and women working on the Gulf Coast. Just as Admiral Waesche demonstrated over 65 years ago, we are proving once again why we are America's Maritime Guardian.

VADM David Pekoske

Posted at [5/07/2010 06:11:00 PM](#) [0 comments](#)



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