

“My First Salute Opened a Door”

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I was standing in front of Officer Candidate School barracks at then-Reserve Training Center Yorktown waiting for my ride home. I'd been an ensign for approximately an hour and had a silver dollar burning a hole in my pocket for my first salute. Down Lincoln Hall's steps came the leanest, most weathered chief I had ever seen. He would have probably preferred to avoid the

brand new butter bars, but he rendered the appropriate salute and greeting. I called him over and handed him the silver dollar. “Chief, you gave my first salute,” I said. The chief explained that in his 19 years in the Coast Guard, he'd never been given a silver dollar. He thanked me enthusiastically and went on his way.

A few minutes later, he was back. He told me when I got to my duty station to look up the command chief and tell him another chief said to help me out, and that I'd be well taken care of. I didn't know it yet, but I'd just entered the chief's network.

I began to meet chiefs, Active and Reserve, at my first drill a few weeks later. They took it upon themselves to help the new ensign get acclimated to military life. They gave me a

wealth of knowledge, arranged for training, helped me learn how to interact with enlisted members, and offered an amazing amount of encouragement.

Undoubtedly, I learned a great deal from officers as well. An outstanding commanding officer, executive officer and some great junior officers mentored me. But the chiefs helped in ways they couldn't. Chiefs allowed me to make some mistakes without fear of my evaluation. They had knowledge of the interaction with the troops that officers didn't. There were times that I had questions that I'd rather not ask my supervisor for fear of looking stupid. Chief might give a chuckle, but usually said something to the effect of, “That's OK, sir. You're not the first JO to ask that question, and you won't be the last.”

Our service is in great need of leaders. We have many young members who need leadership. Our junior officers are no exception. Chiefs, we need your experience. Offer the benefits of your knowledge to our new members. Junior officers, be open minded and receptive to the experience that senior enlisted personnel possess.

It hasn't changed much for me. I still get advice from the chiefs. It's a fair trade: experience for the occasional good laugh. If you're still out there, Chief, that silver dollar was the best I ever spent.

This essay was first published in The Leadership News, Fall 2000 issue. For information on the Leadership Essay Program, visit www.uscg.mil/leadership.htm (click on “Leadership Essays”).

ARMED FORCES RESERVE MEDAL UPDATE



Eligible Reserve component members may be awarded the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with bronze “M” mobilization device for service connected with current mobilization operations. To qualify for the medal with the “M” device, members must have performed active duty service in support of a call-up or a designated contingency operation on or after Aug. 1, 1990. This means that Reserve component members who participated in *Operation Noble Eagle* and *Operation Enduring Freedom* may be awarded this medal.

Any Reserve component member called to active duty for one or more of these operations is eligible for this award.

General guidance concerning wear of the Armed Forces Reserve Medal and ribbon, with and without accompanying “M” device, was published in ALDIST 211/96 and is also included in the upcoming revision to the Coast Guard *Medals*

and Awards Manual (COMDTINST M1650.25), due to be distributed later this year. The guidance states that members ordered or called to active duty under sections 12301(a), 12302, 12304, 12406 of Title 10, U.S.C., or Chapter 15, or in the case of the United States Coast Guard Reserve, Section 712 of Title 14, U.S.C., or members who serve voluntarily under the provisions of Section 12301(d) of Title 10, U.S.C., in support of any of the operations cited above may be awarded the medal with “M” device.

The Commandant has delegated authority to unit commanding officers to award the Armed Forces Reserve Medal to eligible personnel. Armed Forces Reserve Medals and devices should be procured in accordance with Article 1.A.14.b of the *Medals and Awards Manual*, except they can be obtained through Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, 700 Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5092 (www.dscp.dla.mil/) instead of ELC Baltimore.

ALCOAST 060/02 (131742Z FEB 02) clarifies policy for issuance of the AFRM pending changes to the *Medals and Awards Manual*. Answers to frequently asked questions concerning this medal can be found on the Coast Guard Reserve Web site in the October 1996 issue of *The Reservist* magazine (www.uscg.mil/reserve).

Remember, there are no “naked” Armed Forces Reserve Medals!