



Commissioned Personnel Center CYBERFLASH

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Message from the Director

Good afternoon, NOAA Corps!

On Wednesday and Thursday of this week, all of the NOAA Corps Captains met in person in Silver Spring for the second annual Captains Summit. During this Summit, I was reminded multiple times about the importance of the personal and professional relationships we develop throughout this career. These relationships help us establish a sense of belonging and camaraderie, enable us to leverage the knowledge and skills of our friends and coworkers, allow us to glean information on what motivates each other, and drive us to help others grow and succeed. So much of our personal, unit, and organizational successes are dependent on cultivating these strong relationships.

In a service as small as ours, we constantly have the opportunity to meet and get to know such a large percentage of our NOAA Corps brothers and sisters. We cross paths with so many familiar faces as we rotate through assignments, or attend meetings or training such as MOLS, AOC Safety Seminar, REFTRA, Mid- and Early-Grade Leadership Training, NOAA Dive Training, and so many more. While each of these events have their own very unique and critical purposes, the opportunity they provide us to share ideas and perspectives with our fellow officers, and to cultivate personal and professional relationships with each other cannot be understated. I can't even begin to count the number of times I have relied on these friends and colleagues for counsel, as a listening partner when I needed to vent, or simply as a mariner buddy who I know would appreciate a good sea story. These relationships have sustained me over a long career, and have kept me coming back for more!

Perhaps more important are the relationships we cultivate with officers we are charged with leading. I have been incredibly lucky to serve under multiple leaders that have truly cared about my growth as a mariner, officer, and a leader. Conversely, a somewhat common response on the NOAA Corps exit survey is that the departing officer did not feel supported by their leaders at some point in their career. This mentorship, coaching, and support of more junior officers is critical to ensuring that NOAA and the NOAA Corps are in capable hands long after we retire or separate. These types of leadership and mentorship relationships are not reserved for just senior and mid-grade officers. One clear early-career example is when a shipboard JO gets qualified as an OOD. You might have 1-2 projects standing watch by yourself, but then you are called upon to pass your substantial watchkeeping knowledge on to a JOOD. Always look for opportunities to help mentor, lead, support, and grow others throughout your entire career.

Unfortunately, not all of our professional relationships will be positive or uplifting. It is unrealistic to think that we will get along perfectly with everyone we work with. This can be particularly challenging if the person you don't see eye-to-eye with is your supervisor. In these situations, it is important that we put forth our best effort to keep the

On the Horizon

- 4 Feb 2026 Officer Assignment Board
- 26 Feb 2026 BOTC 147 Billet Night
- 4 Mar 2026 Command Advisory Board
- 2 Apr 2026 BOTC 147 Graduation

Approved Resignations, Separations and Retirements

- VADM Nancy Hann 01 Mar 2026
Terminal Leave: 22 Dec 2025
- CAPT Kurt Zegowitz 01 Mar 2026
- RDML Benjamin Evans 01 Apr 2026
Terminal Leave: 16 Jan 2026
- CDR Stephen Barry 01 Apr 2026
- CDR Elizabeth Mackie 01 Apr 2026
Terminal Leave: 16 Jan 2026
- CDR Lecia Salerno 01 Apr 2026
- CAPT Sarah Duncan 01 May 2026
- LT Carly Robbins 01 May 2026

relationship professional, and respect the chain of command. Early in life my father gave me a strategy for growing from these relationships, and many of you have heard me say this before. "Every leader you encounter is a good example. They are either a good example of how to do something, or how not to do something." The key is to observe closely all of the leaders you encounter, and remember how their actions and leadership styles made you feel. As you build your own leadership style and philosophy, try to internalize and mimic the behaviors that had a positive impact on you, and strive to exclude from your own style those behaviors that had a negative impact.

As you navigate your career, I encourage you to be intentional about fostering these connections-both up and down the chain of command, and across all assignments. Seek out mentors, be a mentor, and remember that our collective success is built upon the strong foundation of our relationships with one another.

All the Best,

Captain Ryan Wattam, NOAA
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

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BOTC 147 Underway

Basic Officer Training Class (BOTC) 147 is officially underway! The class, along with their Coast Guard shipmates in Officer Candidate School (OCS) 2-26, have completed Indoctrination week. BOTC 147 has learned military customs and courtesies, drill and ceremony, the NOAA Corps Core Values, and important NOAA policies and regulations. They will kick off their leadership training next week with the Coast Guard beginning with the "Leadership Challenge: Orienteering & Model the Way," various leadership scenarios, Basic Safety, and Wellness and Survival at Sea.

The class will have their first Sponsor Engagement this week with one of three sponsors, VADM Jo-Ann Burdian USCG, further emphasizing the importance of inter-agency partnerships.

Upcoming important dates include Billet Night: February 26th, Graduation: April 2nd, and BOTC Mariners completing post-graduation training April 6th- May 8th.



NOOTC Staff are joined by NOAA Corps Recruiters at the Head Table during Check-In Day for OCS 2-26/BOTC 147. PC: USCGA Public Affairs, USCG



BOTC 147 during Indoctrination week. PC: LTJG McQuillan, USCG

Congratulations to the officers who were selected for the 2024 ACO Awards!

Junior Officer of the Year: LT Kelly Wooten

Her efforts on the internal processes of CPC had a direct impact on the betterment of the NOAA Corps. She spearheaded the overhaul of CPC's intranet, established a standardized NOAA Diver Insignia issuance process, and supported the first comprehensive billet review in over a decade, coordinated the first Biennial Officer Review Board since 2017, and engaged and represented CPC in the field by travelling on behalf of the Officer Personnel Management Division and Officer Career Management Division.

Science Award: LT John Stephens

For leading a project on the study of geochemical impacts of bottom trawling on a sandy area in the eastern Bering Sea. His research resulted in a significant publication in the ICES Journal of Marine Science.

Engineering Award: LT Matthew Chonka and LT Timothy Montera

For their pivotal role in researching, developing, and implementing the Electronic Shipboard Administration and Information Log (eSAIL) system to replace the obsolete system that was being used across the fleet.

Engineering Award: LT Michael Fulton

For playing a critical role in implementing a camera system for a new King Air 360 Aircraft. He successfully integrated photogrammetry equipment to launch operations, further improved the system by diagnosing start up issues, and removed 16 lbs of cabling. Additionally he supported emergency response efforts for the Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse, Hurricane Helene, and Hurricane Milton to facilitate the largest data collection event in RSD history.

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Keep an eye out for an upcoming cyberflash for solicitations for the 2025 ACO Awards!

Invitation: Medical Affairs Branch Open Office Hours

Do you have questions regarding **medical readiness**, **TRICARE access**, or general **Medical Affairs Branch** policies? The Office of Health Services Medical Affairs Branch invites you to join our monthly open forum. These sessions are held the **second Wednesday of every month from 1300-1400 EST**.

Next Session: February 11, 2026

- **Time:** 1300-1400 EST
- **Google Meet Joining Info:**
Medical Affairs Office Hours
Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/cqj-vfad-xww>
Or dial: +(US) +1 609-438-1293? PIN: ?237 614 405?#
- **Join the Live Webinar:** Participate in the open discussion to hear updates and get real-time answers.
- **Can't Attend?** Submit your questions in advance via our [Google Document Link](#). We will address these pre-submitted questions during the meeting and answer the questions on the Google Doc prior to the meeting.
- **Personal Questions:** For personal medical issues or specific case inquiries, please do not use the public forum. Instead, email us at noaacorps.medical@noaa.gov to schedule a private tag up.

Legislative Update: Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) Eligibility for NOAA Corps

The Alaska State Legislature has passed [Senate Bill 77 \(SB 77\)](#) and its companion legislation, [House Bill 75 \(HB 75\)](#), which include significant updates regarding Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) eligibility for NOAA Corps officers starting in 2026.

The new legislation amends Alaska's PFD laws to expand the definition of "allowable absences." Crucially, HB 7 was amended to explicitly include NOAA Corps Commissioned Officers and U.S. Public Health Service officers. This change ensures that officers who are Alaska residents can maintain their PFD eligibility while serving on orders outside of the state, similar to protections previously afforded to other uniformed services.

Representative Jeremy Bynu introduced the companion legislation to Senator Kiehl's bill and supported the amendment to ensure NOAA and USPHS officers were included in the final version. The legislation also updates

allowable absence requirements for U.S. Merchant Mariners and college students taking breaks outside of Alaska.

Officers maintaining Alaska residency are encouraged to review these changes to ensure their PFD applications reflect their eligible status under the new law.

COLA Living Pattern Survey (LPS)

The 2026 COLA Living Pattern Survey (LPS) is designed to collect data on shopping patterns of Service members and their families and will be used to assist in the determination of Overseas and CONUS Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) rates.

The survey is open to participants from January 1 through March 31, 2026. Service members and their families may access the survey at the following link:

<https://dod.go.mil/2026-lps>

This is an opportunity for the service community at-large to participate in the COLA process. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and only one survey per household should be completed by the primary shopper. Service members will be asked to select which goods and services they regularly purchase and the percentage of shopping they complete off-base, on-base, and online.

Your continued support in promoting the survey within your communities is greatly appreciated.

Updating Billet Descriptions (NF 56-28A)

As you work through your end-of-year packages, all NOAA Corps officers are reminded to review and update their current billet descriptions. The [NF 56-28A \(Billet Description\)](#) was significantly revised in **April 2025**. This updated version is shorter and more concise, designed to make annual updates easier for both officers and supervisors.

Currently, the vast majority of our active billets are still documented on outdated forms. Of the **396 active billets**, our current transition metrics are:

Form Revision Date	Number of Billets	Percentage
August 1994	7	1.7%
September 2009	353	89%
April 2025 (Current)	36	9%

CPC is coordinating directly with ships and aircraft to facilitate this transition, all officers are encouraged to work with their commands to move their billet descriptions to the April 2025 version.

Updating these descriptions ensures that your primary duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications are accurately reflected in your Official Personnel File (OPF). Instructions on completing the NF56-28A can be found on the [CPC intranet](#).

From the Assignment Desk: Call for Snow Survey Sensor Operators!

The NOAA National Water Center is inviting junior officers to the Soil Moisture and Snow Survey Program. As a sensor operator on the King Air N67RF, you'll handle and maintain remote sensing equipment, playing a key role in environmental monitoring and analysis. No aviation experience is required!

There are multiple spots to support the program in two week increments from February 1st to May 16th (some flexibility due to aircraft hours and weather). This opportunity is funded by the National Water Center.

If you are interested, please contact shawn.carter@noaa.gov. If you are selected, reach out to the assignment coordinator, assignmentbranch.cpc@noaa.gov, for the process of getting a detail letter.

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From the Assignment Desk: OAR - Billet #3447/3448 - South Pole Station Chief

Applications due by 06 February!

The OAR Global Monitoring Laboratory (GML) is seeking a junior officer to fill an emergent need at the South Pole portion of this billet. The selected officer would spend roughly 5 months in Boulder, Colorado training to operate instruments and completing an extensive medical fitness screening before deploying to the South Pole in late October 2026. The officer would spend 13 months at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station in Antarctica running a suite of instruments at NOAA's South Pole Observatory, coordinating shipping logistics, and assisting with other station duties. This is an abbreviated assignment of roughly 18 months to meet program mission needs.

GML operates four remote Atmospheric Baseline Observatories strategically positioned around the globe. The long-term datasets collected at these observatories track atmospheric constituents that drive climate dynamics, stratospheric ozone depletion, and baseline air quality.

This challenging billet provides independent, self-starting, adventurous individuals with the opportunity to experience six months of light and six months of darkness in Antarctica, and earn the Chief of Party Pin, International Service Ribbon, and Antarctic Service Medal.

Interested officers should update their billet preferences and send their biographies and resumes no later than 06 February 2026 to Christy Smith at Christine.Smith@noaa.gov. Interviews will be scheduled between January 24th and February 13th.

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