



Commissioned Personnel Center CYBERFLASH

Edition:
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Message from the Director

Good afternoon, NOAA Corps!

Last Thursday I had the opportunity to attend Billet Night at the USCG Academy where our 13 new officer candidates learned what their first assignments will be. This is one of my favorite nights of the year. I was honored to have been present to celebrate this important milestone with them as they embark on their NOAA Corps Careers, and am excited to see them excel and flourish in their assignments to come!

Shifting gears, as the ship and aircraft field seasons begin to ramp up, I want to remind officers at all levels of the critical importance of taking time to recharge after long periods at sea or on the road. Field seasons are inherently demanding and tiring, and we must all use the tools at our disposal to keep ourselves fresh and in the game. Throughout my sea-going career, I always made a point to try to take at least one leg off during the field season. This was not always possible due to operational need, or remoteness of assignments, but I was able to take a leg off during 8 out of 10 of my NOAA field seasons. These mid-season legs off were always incredibly restorative, and I always returned to the ship ready to face the rest of the season head-on. Fortunately, I was blessed with COs and XOs that supported granting legs off, provided I identified an augments to keep the ship mission-ready, of course.

I also remember how I felt when my XO informed me that my previously-approved 28 day foreign leave was going to be cancelled because he needed me to stand inport OOD watch while he attended a friend's wedding. I ended up being allowed to go to Chile on leave, and it is one of the best trips I've ever taken! However, the feeling of almost losing that opportunity (and the money I had already spent on flights) so the XO could attend a friend's wedding has always stuck with me.

I have also been in the unfortunate position of having to cancel JOs' leave in order to get the ship underway on a critical mission. Those kinds of decisions always ate away at me, because I know how important time off is. With those two stories juxtaposed against one another, I'm reminded of a quote from Harvey Dent, "You either die a hero, or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain."

I tell you all of this to communicate (in a hopefully relatable way) the following: 1) we are all often required to make sacrifices for the mission, 2) time away from the ship, flight deck, or desk is critically important to keeping ourselves fresh and in the game, and 3) to encourage junior and senior officers alike to work together to make sure our teams are getting enough time off.

- Take / grant annual leave whenever possible.
- Make use of the [96 hour special liberty periods](#) authorized by RADM Cary.

On the Horizon

2 Apr 2026 BOTC 147 Graduation
8 Apr 2026 Officer Assignment Board

Approved Resignations, Separations and Retirements

LTJG John Brostowski	15 Mar 2026
	01 Apr 2026
RDML Benjamin Evans	Terminal Leave: 16 Jan 2026
	01 Apr 2026
CDR Stephen Barry	Terminal Leave: 01 Feb 2026
	01 Apr 2026
CDR Elizabeth Mackie	Terminal Leave: 16 Jan 2026
	01 Apr 2026
CDR Lecia Salerno	01 Apr 2026
	01 May 2026
CAPT Sarah Duncan	Terminal Leave: 20 Mar 2026
	01 May 2026
LT Carly Robbins	01 Jun 2026
	01 Jun 2026
CAPT Marc Moser	Terminal Leave: 02 Apr 2026
	01 Jun 2026
CDR Jonathan Heesch	01 Jun 2026
	01 Jun 2026
LTJG Connor Healy	01 Jun 2026
	15 Jun 2026
LTJG Justin Weeks	15 Jun 2026
	30 Jun 2026
LTJG Benjamin VanDine	30 Jun 2026
	01 Jul 2026
CAPT Joe Bishop	Terminal Leave: 14 Apr 2026
	01 Jul 2026
LT Thomas Cervone-Richards	01 Jul 2026
	01 Jul 2026
LT Luke Petzy	01 Jul 2026
	01 Jul 2026
ENS Noel Anderson	01 Jul 2026
	10 Jul 2026
LCDR Aaron Colohan	10 Jul 2026

- If you can't grant liberty during the specified periods, work with your officers to identify alternate periods, as encouraged in the memo.
- Proactively work to identify augmenters so that you can take some time off while keeping the ship mission-ready.

We have an incredibly important job to do, and at times the mission will have to take priority, but we are all much more capable of giving our all to the mission if we are rested, fresh, and ready to meet it head-on.

Fly and sail safe out there!!

All the Best,



Captain Ryan Wattam, NOAA
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

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In Memoriam: Captain Donnie M. Spillman, NOAA (Ret.), 1936-2026



Captain Donnie M. Spillman, NOAA (Ret.)

It is with a heavy heart that I share Captain Donnie M. Spillman, NOAA (Ret.), passed away at the age of 80 on January 27, 2026. Born in St. Joseph, Missouri, he graduated with honors from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1968 with a degree in mechanical engineering. In 1969, he joined the Commissioned Corps of the Environmental Science Services Administration Corps (ESSA Corps) transitioning to the modern-day NOAA Corps, and rising to the rank of captain.

During his career, CAPT Spillman sailed aboard two different ships of the NOAA fleet, the *McArthur* and *Ferrel* (Commanding Officer). He held numerous operational and shoreside positions, mainly with National Ocean Service programs, OMAO Headquarters, and Marine Operations.

CAPT Spillman received countless accolades throughout his career including the DOC Silver Medal, the NOAA Corps Commendation

Medal, and nine NOAA Corps Special Achievement medals.

After his retirement in 1998, CAPT Spillman remained committed to the NOAA Corps, serving as a civilian for ten years in OMAO Headquarters.

A celebration of life will be held at Boyds Presbyterian Church in Boyds, Maryland, on Saturday, March 14 at 11:00.

The NOAA Corps family honors and remembers CAPT Spillman's service as he crosses the bar, and our collective thoughts and hearts are with his family and friends. We have the watch, sir.

Force Protection Following Strikes on Iran

The Department of War and United States Coast Guard have issued increased force protection guidelines for their services following the strikes in Iran. As members of a Uniformed service, it would be prudent for our officers to consider similar force protection precautions during times of conflict. In light of this, the NOAA Corps is recommending officers consider the following actions:

- **Increased Vigilance:** Personnel practice heightened situational awareness in all aspects of daily life. This includes potentially varying commute routes and limiting public conversations about work.
- **Uniform Wear:** To minimize exposure, NOAA Corps officers should consider limiting transiting to and from work in uniform. When traveling on official business, NOAA Corps officers should limit the wear of military uniforms in airports or other public transit centers.
- **Service Items:** Limit or obscure the use of easily identifiable service-related luggage (e.g., sea bags) and tags.
- **Government ID Cards:** Secure CACs or other identification badges when outside of your workspaces.

Cybersecurity: The Department of the Navy has advised that adversary cyber actors are actively targeting military personnel and families via social media and phishing. All servicemembers should consider taking the following actions to protect themselves and their families from potential cyber attacks:

- Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) on all accounts.
- Strengthen passwords with unique passphrases.
- Set social media profiles to the highest privacy settings.

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BOTC 147 Student Update

[Written by BOTC 147 Officer Candidates]



BOTC 147 at billet night. PC: LCDR Chelsea Parrish

This past Thursday, February 26, marked Billet Night. After weeks of anticipation, NOAA Corps and Coast Guard officer candidates eagerly awaiting their assignments were finally rewarded with an evening of celebration and surprises. Class sponsor RADM Cary and his spouse joined the evening's festivities to offer encouragement and support to the officer candidates as they embark on their careers as NOAA Corps officers.

Additionally, the NOAA officer candidates as a platoon won the academic award for passing ROTR with the highest score among their respective Coast Guard Platoons. In the upcoming

weeks the officer candidates will continue to develop leadership skills and strengthen their knowledge required to graduate.

OC Kaleena Davis	NOAA Ship <i>Rueben Lasker</i>
OC Joseph McIntyre	NOAA Ship <i>Pisces</i>
OC Eric Stein	NOAA Ship <i>Gordon Gunter</i>
OC Katherine Wagner	NOAA Ship <i>Henry B. Bigelow</i>
OC Madeleine Giordano	NOAA Ship <i>Henry B. Bigelow</i>
OC Alexis Provencal	NOAA Ship <i>Fairweather</i>
OC Alexandra Strelkow	NOAA Ship <i>Rainer</i>
OC Kaitlyn Lera	Staff Officer - OMAO Operations
OC Jan-Paul Morillo Acevedo	Science Branch at AOC
OC Bo Yang	Science Branch at AOC
OC Joshua Murdock	Science Branch at AOC
OC James Messersmith	UAS Officer at AOC
OC Austin Foote	RSD Operator at AOC



OCS 1-26/BOTC 147 after winning the Drill Down competition against the USCGA cadets. PC: LT Victoria Sparacino, USCG

Welcome REFTRA 101!

This week, REFTRA 101 began their refresher training in Middletown, RI. The team spent the week studying the Rules of the Road, RADAR and ARPA, firefighting, and catching up on the latest and greatest from Marine Operations, Medical, and CPC.

Next week, the group will tour the MOC-A construction site in Newport, RI; review basic survival techniques at sea, ship handling simulators, and engage with BOTC 147. For the third week, the majority of the group will transition to Convington, LA to train in Manned Models, operating a fleet of ships at a 1:25 scale, while also working in the Shipboard Simulators.



REFTRA 101 completed Advanced Firefighting at Rhode Island Fire Academy. Standing row, left to right: LCDR Boeck, LT Meadows, CDR Kidd, CDR Zygas, LCDR Yannutz, LCDR Dwyer, LCDR Walker. Kneeling row, left to right: LCDR Levano, LCDR Rock, LTJG Venuti, LT Ruhl, CDR Milton.

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|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| CDR Jesse Milton | NOAA Ship <i>Oregon II</i> |
| CDR John Kidd | NOAA Ship <i>Thomas Jefferson</i> |
| CDR Aras Zygas | NOAA Ship <i>Rueben Lasker</i> |
| LCDR Laura Dwyer | NOAA Ship <i>Ron Brown</i> |
| LCDR Brian Yannutz | NOAA Ship <i>Oscar Dyson</i> |
| LCDR Laura Rock | NOAA Ship <i>Nancy Foster</i> |
| LCDR Justin Boeck | NOAA Ship <i>Oscar Elton Sette</i> |
| LCDR Michelle Levano | NOAA Ship <i>Fairweather</i> |
| LCDR Collin Walker | <i>Five year Refresher</i> |
| LT Mark Meadows | NOAA Ship <i>Thomas Jefferson</i> |
| LT Emily Ruhl | NOAA Ship <i>Henry Bigelow</i> |
| LTJG Gemma Venuti | NOAA Ship <i>Ron Brown</i> |

Duty Status for NOAA Corps Officers

Uniformed Service Human Resource policies are comprehensive multi-level regulations, instructions, and procedures with varying levels of detail and lengthy layered definitions that have led to possible misunderstandings and or assumptions by the reader. CPC would like to share one reminder, distilled to a level of hopefully fostering a better understanding and clearer picture of your duty status as a service member. NOAA Corps Officers are

considered on duty 24-hours a day, which are divided into duty and non-duty hours. You are in one of three different duty statuses at all times:

On Board/On Duty at Permanent Duty Station (PDS) - Present at or in the immediate vicinity of the assigned official station whether ashore or afloat.

Authorized Absence - Permission to be away during a period where the member is expected to be present at their permanent duty station (see NCD Chapter 6), including non-duty time referred to as "Liberty hours".

Temporarily Duty (TDY) - On official duty/business at one or more locations away from the PDS providing for return to the old PDS/official station.

Additionally, NOAA Corps officers are authorized to telework in the vicinity of your PDS in accordance with the NOAA Corps Directives. This policy mirrors that for civilian employees of NOAA. NOAA Corps officers are not allowed to work remotely from their PDS.

References: [Joint Travel Regulations](#), Appendix A, Definitions and Acronyms [NOAA Corps Directives](#), Chapter 6

Physical Activity Safety Guidelines for Officers

According to NOAA Corps Directives 16004,(A),(1),(a), and to support operational readiness, injury prevention, and personal safety, officers are required to complete a minimum of 180 minutes of physical activity per week. Whether training on or off duty, safety must always remain the top priority.

1. Train Smart

1. Choose activities that match your current fitness level and gradually progress in intensity.
2. Warm up before exercise and cool down afterwards to reduce injury risk.
3. Listen to your body-pain, dizziness, or unusual fatigue are signs to stop and seek medical attention if needed.

2. Stay Visible

1. When running, walking, or cycling before sunrise, after sunset, or in low-light conditions, wear high-visibility reflective gear.
2. Use reflective vests, bands, or clothing that allows drivers, cyclists, and others to see you from all directions.
3. Consider wearing a headlamp or using LED safety lights when training at night.

3. Choose Safe Environments

1. Train in well-lit, well-maintained areas whenever possible.
2. Use sidewalks, designated trails, tracks, or fitness facilities instead of roadways.
3. Be aware of uneven terrain, traffic, wildlife, and environmental hazards.

4. Use Proper Equipment

1. Wear footwear appropriate for your activity to support joints and prevent slips or falls.
2. Use helmets for cycling and appropriate protective gear for strength training, sports, or tactical fitness.

5. Hydrate and Fuel

1. Drink water before, during, and after physical activity.
2. Adjust hydration and intensity for heat, humidity, cold, or altitude.
3. Eat balanced meals and snacks to support performance and recovery.

6. Weather and Environmental Awareness

1. Modify workouts during extreme heat, cold, storms, or poor air quality.
2. Wear clothing appropriate for the conditions and avoid training in unsafe environments.

7. Personal Security

1. When training alone, tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
2. Carry identification and a phone when possible.

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3. Consider using GPS tracking apps or training with a partner.

8. Recovery Matters

1. Allow time for rest and recovery to reduce injury risk.
2. Include stretching, mobility, and low-impact activities as part of your weekly 180 minutes.

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