



Commissioned Personnel Center CYBERFLASH

Edition:
March 20, 2026

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Message from the Director

Good afternoon, NOAA Corps!

Promotion season is here! Promotion boards are scheduled for the week of 20 April and the promotion zones were broadcasted via Director's Message on 27 February. This time of year is very exciting as we look to recognize the significant accomplishments and outstanding performance of so many of our officers. It can also be a very stressful time for officers in the competitive zones from LT to CAPT. To help with this, I wanted to provide you with some tools / tips / tricks for how to prepare yourself for promotions.

Probably the most important step is to ensure your OPF is up to date with accurate and complete information. Make sure your OER records are complete and ensure all of your awards and qualifications are accurately captured. A note on Personal Biographies - this is the only document in your OPF that you have complete creative and content control over. Make use of this. The promotion board members will have ample access to your performance and accomplishments via your OERs and Awards record. As you write or update your biography, think of things you want the board to know that might not be included explicitly elsewhere in your OPF. What drives you as an officer and person? What is your leadership / command philosophy? What are your goals and aspirations? What makes you "you"? This is an optional document, but I would urge you not to overlook or dismiss the opportunity it presents.

There are many resources available to help you prepare for promotion. The [Promotion & Appointment section](#) of the CPC Intranet has a wealth of information such as historical Promotion Evaluation Criteria, a link to the OCMP, past promotion board Precept Letters, the NOAA Corps Leadership Development Framework, and a guide on how promotion boards rate officers using the promotion matrix during the boards.

We also have periodic CPC webinars covering the promotion process in great detail. CAPT Rose hosted one this past Wednesday, actually. The recording of this webinar will be posted to the CPC intranet site early next week. If you are chomping at the bit to view a promotion webinar now, there are two older (but still relevant) promotion webinars in the [webinar archive](#) that were hosted by a strapping young CDR from DEC 2020 and AUG 2021.

Additionally, the Chief of the Officer Career Management Division, CAPT Emily Rose, is a fantastic resource for helping review your record with you and providing guidance on how to prepare for promotion. Feel free to reach out to her any time at chief.careermgmt.cpc@noaa.gov.

I wish you all the best of luck as you prepare for promotions, whether you are in the zone this year, or will be in the future!

All the Best,

On the Horizon

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

Approved Resignations, Separations and Retirements

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

Captain Ryan Wattam, NOAA
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

BOTC 147 Student Entry

[Written by BOTC 147 Officer Candidates]



BOTC 147 with the Twin Otter. PC: CDR Jason Clark, NOAA

This week BOTC 147 started their practical training. Mariners and aviators split off into their respective groups for career specific coursework. Mariners have started their shiphandling and RADAR practice in the simulators. The aviators had the unique opportunity to receive instruction on various courses, including an in-depth overview of operations from NOAA Corps Aviators, a flight director, and a flight surgeon from AOC. Thank you to LCDR Wood, LCDR Palmer, LCDR Feeley, LCDR Parker, LCDR Miyano, and Dr. Zawislak for providing your valuable mentorship and instruction. Furthermore, the Officer Candidates got to spend the entire afternoon with CDR Clark and Ensign Benedict while they received a tour of the DHC-6 Twin Otter (N57RF). NOAA Mariners got hands-on helm and conning practice with our partners at Project Oceanology. Next week is the last week of a formal classroom setting, after which BOTC 147 wraps up with a week of Basic/Advanced firefighting training. BOTC 147 is getting excited for graduation as April 2nd quickly approaches.

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REFTRA 101- That's a Wrap!

REFTRA 101 concluded three weeks of training today. The second week in Newport, RI the group got a tour of the Newport, RI MOC-A construction site. After surviving Long Island Sound for a basic safety and survival at sea refresher, the second week wrapped up with Bridge Resource Management. The group of twelve said their goodbyes, and seven officers continued onto Convington, LA.

In Louisiana at Maritime Pilots Institute, the prospective COs and XOs started on the manned models, 1:25 scale replicas of tanker and cargo vessels. Factors such as wind and speed are experienced at a scale of five, meaning 3 knots of headway is as if the ship is making 15 knots! The prospective OPS officers headed to the simulators to practice maneuvering on single, twin screw, and azipod vessels. On Wednesday, the groups swapped training locations to apply the knowledge they learned. The week ended with a lot learned, and a happy hour with some Gulf Coast NOAA employees.



Thank you to Mr. Hill and LT Freed for the tour of the future of MOC-A!
From left to right: LT Freed, LCDR Levano, LCDR Yannutz, LCDR Dwyer, LTJG Venuti, CDR Zygas, LT Ruhl, LCDR Boeck, LCDR Rock, CDR Milton, LCDR Walker, LT Meadows, CDR Kidd, and Mr. Hill.

This concludes the first REFTRA of 2026, with REFTRA 102 gathering in May, and REFTRA 103 scheduled for October. For questions regarding REFTRA attendance, contact LCDR Melissa Trede assignmentbranch.cpc@noaa.gov.



LT Meadows practicing a water rescue via basket hoist.



Manned models meeting in a narrow channel to experience bow cushion, bank suction, and squat effects. Photo credit: Grant Begley.

Call for Applications - National ACO Scholarship

The Executive Committee of National ACO Scholarships, Inc. is issuing its annual call to high school seniors and college undergrads for applications for scholarship awards for the 2026/2027 academic year. The [application form is available here](#), with [instructions here](#). These links and other information are also available on the [National ACO Scholarships page](#). Applications are due by 5 pm on April 15, 2026.

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For questions or issues about the form, or more information, please contact the Executive Committee of National ACO Scholarships at NationalACOScholarships@gmail.com.

Attention all Retirees (or soon to be!)

There exists an interest in creating a NOAA Corps Retiree Group to increase communication among retirees and also between retirees, CPC, OMAO and active duty NOAA Corps Officers. To address this, a group of dedicated retirees have developed a new organization called [Benchmarks](#). On the top bar of their website you will find a link to a Directory. This directory contains the contact information for retirees that have voluntarily opted in to being listed on the directory through the Benchmarks site. Only the retirees that opt in to the directory have access to the directory. You are not required to share your contact information in order to opt in to the directory. Participation in this directory is strictly voluntary, and no personal contact information will be shared with Benchmarks by CPC. The Benchmarks organization is a work in progress, and the team encourages you to check it out if you would like to get involved and/or provide feedback.

Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Selection Awardees!

After a thorough review of several outstanding and competitive nominations, we are excited to share that the 2025-2026 SAME award winners are Samuel Harper Umfress (Colbert Award) and the NESDIS Field Operations Branch made up of Kevin Jordan John May, Jim Harrington, John Galetzka, Ben Gavin, Luke Downey, Jack Larter, Justin Dahlberg, and Trevor O'Bryan (Karo Award)!

SAME will honor Harper Umfress for his outstanding contributions to engineering through achievement in research, development, and administration. Mr. Umfress's work, specifically his creation of the DriX positioning tool and his personal oversight of multibeam integration for the entire NOAA fleet, were critical in continuous operations and integration. His efforts ensure that the nation's hydrographic fleet remains operational, accurate, and ahead of the curve.

For the SAME Karo Field Unit Award, the NESDIS Field Operations Branch Team will be honored for The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) Field Operations Branch (FOB) is recognized for establishing and advancing efforts in the precise collection, management, and dissemination of foundational geospatial data that has had a profound and far-reaching impact on NOAA's ability to support national security, safe navigation, critical infrastructure, and inform coastal resilience efforts.

Awardees will be honored in person at the SAME [Joint Engineering Training Conference](#) Society Ball in Portland, Oregon on May 21, 2026. Thank you to all who nominated their colleagues for these awards. This year marks the

third time in over a decade that NOAA Corps has participated in the SAME awards. The excellent caliber of accomplishments by all nominations should make all NOAA Corps officers and employees proud of the important work we accomplish together for NOAA and the Nation.

For questions about the annual SAME NOAA Awards or the conference, reach out to CAPT Sam Greenaway, SAME NOAA Service Principal and LCDR Nick DeProspero, SAME NOAA Service Liaison (SLO). The next round of award solicitations will be announced in January 2027.

Further, LCDR DeProspero will be looking for the next NOAA SLO to SAME in the winter of 2026-27 so be on the lookout for more information.

U.S. Coast Guard Policy Updates for Mariner Credentials

The U.S. Coast Guard released two policies that are effective immediately that make changes to obtaining and renewing national maritime endorsements.

Both of these policy changes are intended to reduce administrative burdens and enhance career progression for mariners. Officers whose credentials may be affected by these updates are encouraged to review the policy letters in their entirety.

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1. The updated policy ([CG-MMC Policy Letter 05-25](#)) on recent sea service for all mariners applying for national officer endorsements on their Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) changed. The recency period for all applicants is now seven years, bringing it in alignment with the requirement for civilian mariners with that of uniformed service members. Applicants must have at least three months of qualifying service on appropriate vessels within seven years immediately before submission of their application.
2. The new policy ([CG-MMC Policy Letter 01-25](#)) reduces the examination requirements for mariners upgrading from a limited tonnage Master endorsement to an unlimited Third Mate endorsement.
 - Mariners holding a national officer endorsement as a Master of vessels less than 500 or 1,600 GRT can now qualify for an endorsement as Third Mate of Unlimited Tonnage for the same route (Near Coastal or Oceans) without further examination. Examination is still required if you are increasing the scope of credentials from Near-Coastal to Oceans.

Your Benefits

As a NOAA Corps officer, you are covered under the **Active Duty Dental Program (ADDP)**. This includes:

- **Two routine exams and 2 cleanings** every 12 months with NO preauthorizations needed besides an Account Control Number

Before Your Appointment

You **must** request an **Account Control Number (ACN)** before you head to the dentist.

- **Get your ACN:** [Generate one online here](#).
- **Find a Provider:** If you need help finding a local dentist, call United Concordia at **1-866-984-2337**.

Learn More: 2026 Webinar Sessions

Medical Affairs recently attended an ADDP webinar and found it incredibly helpful. We've updated our Dental Page with fresh information based on what we learned.

If you want a deeper dive into your benefits, sign up for a state-specific webinar:

1. Visit the **Forms and Resources tab on the [ADDP website](#)**.
2. Scroll to the bottom to find the 2026 Webinar Schedule.
3. Contact the representative for your specific time zone to register.

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Questions? Check our updated Dental Page first, or reach out to the **Medical Affairs Branch at noaacorps.medical@noaa.gov**.

Medical Documentation & Requirements Updates

We've updated how you can submit your medical documentation and how your readiness is tracked in your Official Personnel Folder (OPF). Please review the following changes to ensure your records remain current.

- **Submission:** The "HR Action Request" for medical documents has been disabled. All medical documentation will continue to be submitted through the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal.
- **Contact:** Email noaacorps.medical@noaa.gov or message the Medical Affairs Branch via the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal for questions.
- **Grace Periods:** New medical requirements from the updated NOAA Corps Directives, Chapter 3 may show a temporary "Grace Period" status in your OPF. This allows officers time to complete the required medical readiness item. Check your OPF medical tab for the specific deadline to complete the requirement.
- **Periodic Medical Examinations (PME)** is a physical exam with your TRICARE Primary Care Provider (PCP) and is now due every 2 years or yearly for those officers who are 50 and over. The Marine Medical Branch is unable to complete the Periodic Medical Exams and Behavioral Health Survey. Your PCP has the ability to follow up, order additional testing, and place referrals if needed.
- **Sea Duty Immunization Tracking:** We are actively monitoring sea duty immunizations per OMAO Policy 1006. If your OPF is missing vaccine dates, please upload your current immunization record via MHS GENESIS to ensure accurate sea duty readiness status.
- **Questions:** You can review information and FAQs on the [Medical Affairs Branch Intranet](#) page or contact us at noaacorps.medical@noaa.gov

Immunization Records Update

To maintain ship readiness and medical compliance, all NOAA Corps Officers must submit updated immunization records to Medical Affairs via MHS GENESIS.

Required Vaccinations:

- Tetanus (Tdap/Td)
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)

- Hepatitis A & B (**Required for those in MPIC roles**)

Submission Details:

Please upload the following documents to Medical Affairs in MHS GENESIS Patient Portal:

- **New Records:** Documentation of all current, up-to-date vaccinations.
- **Historic Records:** Any previous immunization history you have on file. These are vital for reconciling and accurately updating your MHS GENESIS chart.

Medical Affairs will review all submissions and manually enter historic data to ensure accuracy. Contact noaacorps.medical@noaa.gov with any questions or to discuss your medical records.

Alaskan Permanent Dividend Fund: Application Instructions

The [January 23, 2026 Cyberflash](#) included a legislative update about the passing of [Senate Bill 77 \(SB 77\)](#) and its companion legislation, [House Bill 75 \(HB 75\)](#), in the Alaska State Legislature. This legislation included significant updates regarding Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) eligibility for NOAA Corps officers starting in 2026.

Thank you to the officers who submitted questions to CPC regarding the PFD process. NOAA leadership has met with representatives from the State of Alaska: Department of Revenue to ensure NOAA Corps officers are represented and have the resources needed for smooth submissions.

To qualify for the PDF for 2026, officers must have arrived in Alaska on or before December 31, 2025, and claim Alaska as your state of legal residence with NOAA Corps Payroll by December 31, 2025. This means, you would need to submit a request to payroll, to change your legal residence to Alaska in time for it to be processed before January 1, 2026. Officers should be aware that changing their legal state of residence could have impacts with their current state of legal residence. In addition, the officer needs to take one of the following actions:

1. Obtain an Alaska driver's license,
2. Register to vote, OR
3. Sign a non-governmental housing lease or purchase a home

The officer needs to maintain Alaska residency at all times during the qualifying year and intend to remain an Alaska resident indefinitely.

Applications are due by 2359 on March 31, 2026, and [can be completed online](#). Officers should be prepared to submit a certified birth certificate, passport or naturalization papers, a Leave and Earnings statement with the officer's Alaskan address on it, and/or their Permanent Change of Station or Assignment (PCS/PCA) orders. Please refer to State of Alaska: Department of Revenue, Permanent Fund Dividends pages on [Eligibility](#) and [Military/Uniformed Eligibility](#).

Aviation Augmentation

Just a reminder that aviators can submit their augmentations to fight operations in their OPF. Officers are encouraged to get their "Compact Printable Voucher" from E2 and have a member of the Operations Branch sign it to validate their augmentation dates. Upload signed orders to your OPF via the TDY/Detail Tab. If you have any questions, you can reach out to LCDR Trede at assignmentbranch.cpc@noaa.gov, or CDR Clark at aoc.chiefadmin@noaa.gov.

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