

AL AUX 07-14 - SHIPMATES 29 AND FINAL - WE ARE COAST GUARDSMEN

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From: Papp, Robert ADM

Sent: Thursday, May 29, 2014 6:01 PM

Subject: SHIPMATES 29 AND FINAL - WE ARE COAST GUARDSMEN

Shipmates:

Four years ago we set the watch and committed ourselves to Steady the Service, Honor our Profession, Strengthen our Partnerships, and Respect our Shipmates. These were not new, but enduring principles that reflected a return to our essential character as a Service and as Coast Guardsmen. There were many people urging me to re-brand our Service: my response was, we have one of the most respected and recognized brands in the world, the United States Coast Guard.

My highest priority was to sustain mission excellence, with a focus on Proficiency in Craft, Proficiency in Leadership, and Disciplined Initiative. But another unwritten, unstated purpose behind my focus on those enduring principles was to break down barriers between communities and get us thinking as one Service, as Coast Guardsmen.

As Coast Guard men and women, we share a bond of pride in our rich heritage and a common purpose to uphold our honorable traditions. We are defined by unsung heroism and selfless service. We protect our Nation. We risk our lives to save others. We give our utmost when cold, wet and tired. Countless times, we have extended our arm down into the water to rescue those in peril from the sea. We will always extend that same arm to help a shipmate in need.

Coast Guardsmen are always ready. We perform our security, humanitarian and environmental response missions with an unrelenting sense of pride. When disaster strikes, whether natural or manmade, we are first on scene. We are often the last to depart.

Coast Guardsmen are agile, adaptable, ready to perform every mission and answer every call. Born as revenue cuttermen, lighthouse keepers, steamboat inspectors and surfmen, we have expanded to meet the maritime needs of our Nation. We are still the keepers of the lights, but we also now patrol far more distant waters. We readily go wherever there are important, difficult and dangerous maritime duties to be performed.

As we look to the future, we must never forget our past, our history, or our heritage. We revere that long blue line of Coast Guardsmen who by their devotion to duty and sacrifice of self have made it possible for us to be a member of a service honored, respected, and imitated around the globe.

This is our chosen profession. This is our way. This is what we do. We are privileged to be members of a very unique Service that, due to our collection of missions and legacy agencies sometimes defies logic when someone attempts to classify us or place a label on us. For this reason, whenever I am asked to describe what I am, I always reply with pride: I am a Coast Guardsman. We are the men and women of the United States Coast Guard.

As we take in the lines and shove off on our next voyage, the Coast Guard's First Lady, Linda, joins me in wishing each and every one of our Coast Guard men and women, and their families, fair winds. I have always referred to you as shipmates. That is and will remain shorthand for members of the Coast Guard family, active duty, reserve, civilian, and Auxiliary. Thank you, it has been our greatest honor to serve all of you, and our Nation, as the leader of the world's greatest Coast Guard.

Stand a taut watch. Semper Paratus.
ADM Bob Papp, Commandant