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This month, the Civil Rights on Deck newsletter commemorates its 14th anniversary. Since its launch in 2006, 168 publications were enjoyed by internal and external subscribers. Monthly, this publication offers information and guidance on various civil rights topics, such as: alternative dispute resolution, equal employment opportunity/equal opportunity, reasonable accommodation, anti-harassment, and their respective policies and procedures. Additionally, it features special emphasis events that take place at Coast Guard units throughout the year. The Civil Rights Directorate appreciates all who contribute and subscribe to this publication. Archived editions of Civil Rights on Deck can be found by visiting the CRD Newsroom at https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/Newsroom/.

Fair Winds and Following Seas to a Coast Guard Trailblazer  
The first African American woman in Coast Guard’s history to achieve the rank of Captain, Lucinda Cunningham, retired on May 21, 2020, at a ceremony held at Coast Guard Headquarters. She enlisted in the Coast Guard after graduating from North Carolina A&T University in 1990. Her first tour was on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter LEGARE. It was there she was encouraged to apply for Officer Candidate School. She did so and was accepted. For her first assignment following OCS graduation and commissioning, she was selected and became the first female African American to head a U.S. ceremonial honor guard, the CG’s Ceremonial Honor Guard. Prior to her retirement, she served as the Deputy Director, Civilian Human Resources, Diversity and Leadership (CG-12). Previous assignments also include Commanding Officer of CG Base New Orleans, Executive Assistant for the Assistant Commandant for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology, and a tour on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter BUTTONWOOD. Captain Cunningham is widely known for supporting and mentoring other CG members, her way of giving back for everything that she accomplished.

We also acknowledge, RADM Erica G. Schwartz, a member of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, made Captain and then achieved the rank of Rear Admiral while serving with the CG as its Chief Medical Officer from 2015 to 2019.

Pictured the Presiding Official for the ceremony, CG Commandant, Admiral Karl Schultz and Captain Cunningham. On behalf of the Civil Rights Directorate, we salute CAPT Cunningham on her great accomplishments.  
By Ms. Deborah Gant, CRD, USCG HQ

FAPAC-Coast Guard Chapter Celebrates AAPI Heritage Month  
In this COVID-19 pandemic environment, the manner by which cultural and special observances are conducted Coast Guard–wide has transitioned temporarily to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Recently, the Federal Asian Pacific American Council–Coast Guard (FAPAC-CG) chapter hosted a virtual event for the CG workforce in observance of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AAPIHM). In keeping with the theme Unite Our Nation by Empowering Equality and commemorating the 45th Anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, Ms. Lauren Vuong, a Vietnamese-American Refugee, lawyer and film producer of the documentary “Finding the Virgo,” delivered the moving keynote speech for the event.

Pictured, FAPAC-USCG President LT John Santorum’s virtual view of the event. To watch the observance, go to https://fapac.org/AAPI-Resources. By LT John Santorum, CG-FAPAC Chapter President, USCG HQ

Nominations for the 2020 Latina Style Distinguished Military Service Award are open. Deadline July 1, 2020 (ALCOAST 184/20).
Meet U.S. Coast Guard Women Who Made History

USCG Captains: Lucinda Cunningham (retired) (center), Zieta Merchant (left) and Lexia Littlejohn (right) are the first African American Coast Guard women to have risen to the rank of O6. Your CRD family is proud of your accomplishments and wish you continued success.

New Shipmate Joins the CRD Team

Mr. Elliott Colón joined the Coast Guard as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Specialist with the Solutions and Complaints Division in D.C. Previously, Mr. Colón was the Wing Equal Opportunity Program Director with the New York Air National Guard’s 105th Airlift Wing. He was hand-picked to oversee the EEO/EO Programs for all 91 Air National Guard wings while stationed at the Air National Guard Readiness Center-Joint Base Andrews, to include all 50 states, three territories (Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands), and the District of Columbia. Prior to his EEO service, then Major Colón supervised maintenance operations on the largest aircraft in military inventory, the C-5 Galaxy. Also, speed mentoring events that he pioneered in 2014 continue to be held, encouraging junior members for future leadership. Mr. Colón resides in Maryland with his wife and children, spending as much time as the weather permits with outdoor activities such as hiking, bicycling, or seeking out new adventures. By Mr. Eduardo Zayas, CRD, USCG HQ

Civil Rights Directorate Pocket Guide - Download the App Now!

The Civil Rights Directorate (CRD) Pocket Guide App for both Apple® and Android® smart devices is now available. To download the App, search for “Coast Guard Civil Rights” in the Apple Store or Google Play, or go to https://apps.apple.com/us/app/cg-civil-rights/id1096290893 or https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.quickseries.CoastGuard&hl=en. The point of contact for the CRD App is BMC Bryan Paplinski, at Brian.M.Paplinski@uscg.mil, or (206) 220-7281. Please continue to share it with your commands.

Changes to the Defense Equality Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS) are on the Horizon

The Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS) is an excellent tool that allows Commands to proactively assess critical organizational climate dimensions that can impact the mission. The DEOCS brings awareness to potential civil rights issues, as well as other unit command climate concerns. As illustrated in the chart at right, since FY2017, the Coast Guard has experienced a steady rise in the number of participants answering the survey, which is encouraging as our Service continues moving toward fostering healthy commands and increasing readiness. Hopefully, the increase endures with the shifting of the DEOCS to a new platform planned for the end of July 2020, and its subsequent launch of new survey content in October 2020. To ensure the questions address units’ needs, improved DEOCS will be customizable to include the option for service-specific content. Another plan in the works entails making the survey confidential instead of anonymous. In a confidential survey, only “invited” members complete the survey which increases accuracy and usability of data, while maintaining the inability for commands to identify an individual’s responses. Changes to the length of the survey are being considered as well. Your Civil Rights Service Providers will remain available to assist you with the new platform and tool. By Ms. Amy Stiles, CRD, Region 4