



CIVIL RIGHTS ON DECK



Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Patrick Z. Alston (middle) poses with Adm. Karl L. Schultz (far left), Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, Dr. Terri Dickerson, Civil Rights Director, (fourth from left), Rear Adm. Mark J. Fedor, MLK Day Executive Champion (fifth from left) and members of the planning team. Cultural observances promote respect, celebrate our differences, and help unite and educate us.

IN THIS ISSUE

2

DEOCS: Building A More Positive Work Environment

3

Winners Announced for 2020 Student Art Contest

4

Understanding Actions Protected Under Law

5

Looking Forward: African American History Month

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

By Patrick Ferraris, CRD, USCG HQ

“No matter what I echo or say today, I truly feel that it would not give honor to the occasion for which we are gathered here for: To celebrate such an important moment and figure in our Nation’s history.”

Referring to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Army Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Patrick Alston modestly spoke these words as he welcomed over 200 socially distanced and virtual guests to the United States Coast Guard Headquarters’ Martin Luther King Jr. Day event on January 11th. The event, the theme of which was “Moving Forward Together; the Time is Now,” paid tribute to the life, achievements, and message of Dr. King.

Alston served as the keynote speaker, and along with Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz and Executive Champion Rear Adm. Mark J. Fedor, reflected on the legacy of Dr. King, his leadership, and how his teaching can help move the service and the Nation forward.

“Today, we honor a leader that is not only recognized for his oomph, for his drive, and for his passion, but a leader that is also recognized for his ability to bring people together,” added Alston.

Dr. King led campaigns to end racial segregation and focused his efforts on the vision for a future where it is acknowledged that all men and women are created equal and are treated with mutual dignity and respect.

continued on page 3

DEOCS: BUILDING A MORE POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

By Patrick Ferraris, CRD, USCG HQ



Fostering a work environment with a positive command climate is critical to the Coast Guard's readiness and mission success. An encouraging work environment not only motivates and inspires the workforce, but also creates an inclusive workplace that supports the values and needs of our team. The utilization of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), a management tool that measures climate factors related to readiness, can help commands establish an inclusive workplace.

DEOCS must be administered within 180 calendar days of a change-of-command or change in

Directorate or office head, and at least annually thereafter.

It is important to follow and embody the core values of the Coast Guard, and leaders must ensure that these values are upheld so that a healthy, respectful, and inclusive workplace climate may prevail. Our mission success demands it and we are stronger together because of it.

To learn more about DEOCS and to obtain resources on building a positive command climate, please visit: <http://www.defenseculture.mil/Assesment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home>. You can also find more information in ALCOAST 468/20.

Complaints Corner

By Eduardo Zayas
CRD, USCG HQ



A Complainant alleged that she was subjected to gender and disability discrimination by her Agency. The Agency accepted the complaint and launched an investigation that required an official statement from the Complainant. Having never received the official statement, the Agency then dismissed the complaint finding that the Complainant failed to cooperate with the investigation.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) investigated the matter and reversed the Agency's decision. The EEOC found the Complainant's explanation for her delayed response to the investigator was compelling enough to warrant another review: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school and daycare of her children were closed; their father, grandparents, and aunt fell ill with the virus, and this all happened while the Complainant was nine months pregnant.

Noting the unique situation at the time of her initial complaint, the improved conditions of her familial and personal life, and her full willingness to participate further, the EEOC ordered the Agency to continue investigating the complaint.

*Natalya B. vs U.S. Postal Service.,
EEOC Appeal Number. 2020005270
(Nov. 30, 2020)*

CIVIL RIGHTS NEWS? TELL IT!

We are always looking for stories, images, events, or ideas that we can include in future editions of the "Civil Rights on Deck Newsletter." You can highlight your organization and its workforce by emailing patrick.j.ferraris@uscg.mil



continued from page 1

He is widely regarded as one of the greatest leaders and civil rights activists in our Nation's history.

While reflecting on recent events that only further demonstrate the ongoing discourse evolving within our Nation like Black Lives Matter and the Capitol insurrection, Alston remained optimistic about a more inclusive and just future for all, saying that difficult times can sometimes be a strong catalyst for change.

"We are not a Nation that is struggling. We are a Nation that is looking for an opportunity to do better. Tomorrow is going to be better than today because each and every one of us will make it better than today."

The Coast Guard carries the same vision of togetherness that Dr. King strived to achieve and his message acts as an inspiration within the Service.

"Looking within our organization, we have an ongoing opportunity and an obligation to do what is right," Schultz declared. "We are stronger together when we lock arms and everyone to our right and left sets a clear path towards building greater inclusivity in the world's greatest Coast Guard."

Recognizing and honoring cultural observances like this is a vital part of the Coast Guard's Civil Rights programs. Valuing cultural and religious observances helps us to achieve our objectives for the promotion

of equality, dignity, and respect for all members of our workforce.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated every third Monday in January and Dr. King's birthday is also celebrated this month on January 15th.



Rear Adm. Mark J. Fedor, MLK Day Executive Champion, Army Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Patrick Z. Alston, Keynote Speaker, and Adm. Karl L. Schulz, Coast Guard Commandant, pose together after the event on Jan. 11, 2021. Over 200 virtual and socially distanced guests attended the event to pay tribute to the life, achievements, and message of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR 2020 STUDENT ART CONTEST

By Shawntell Williams, CRD, USCG HQ

Every year, the USCG and other maritime partner organizations celebrate the artistic talents of children and young adults throughout the Americas in an art contest open to students in grades K-12. Students design a poster related to a different theme (2020's theme was "Sustainable Shipping for a Sustainable Planet") and then submit their artwork into the competition. Last year's grand-prize winners are pictured on the left and all submissions were from truly talented children and young adults. You can find all of the finalists' artwork by visiting <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/studentartcontest/>.

The 2021 Student Art Contest is currently open and this year's theme is "Seafarer's: At The Core of Shipping's Future." The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2021.

You can find the information to enter into the contest here: <https://namepa.net/education/art-contest/>.



Student Art Contest Grand Prize Winners

Top: Hsing-Yu L., Grade 2, Oster Elementary School, California, U.S.

Bottom: Ailed Ivana P., Grade 12, Centro, de Bachillerato, Tecnológico Industrial, y de Servicios 43, Mexico

UNDERSTANDING ACTIONS PROTECTED UNDER LAW

By Amy Stiles, CRD, Region 4

Employees are allowed to engage in certain activities without having to fear retaliation from their supervisors or employers. These activities are protected by law and help to ensure that employees feel safe opposing and responding to discrimination in their workplace.

It is important to understand and recognize the activities that are protected for all workers. The Coast Guard does not tolerate retaliation against members for reporting harassing conduct under this or any other policy or procedure, or for assisting in any inquiry about such a report.

The two types of protected activity includes participation and opposition. Participation in a discrimination investigation includes filing a discrimination or harassment complaint, cooperating with investigation protocols, or serving as a witness in an investigation.

Opposition refers to directly or indirectly opposing discrimination in the workplace. An example includes refusing to obey an order that you believe to be discriminatory. All forms of opposition must be reasonable and based on a



good faith belief that the conduct opposed is, or could be, unlawful.

Acts of retaliation or reprisal for reporting harassment or participating in an investigation of harassment are prohibited. If a member believes he/she/they are subjected to retaliation/reprisal for participating in complaint activity, they may file a complaint regarding the retaliation or reprisal issue.

Contact a Civil Rights Service Provider (CRSP) to learn more about protected activity or other civil rights functions. The list of CRSPs is available here: <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/Service-Providers/>.



DID YOU KNOW?: REASSIGNMENT

By Carolyn Hunter, CRD, Region 1

Did you know that reassignment is referred to as the reasonable accommodation of last resort?

A reasonable accommodation (RA) is a change in work conditions or how things are normally done that enable an individual with a disability to benefit from equal employment opportunities. Agencies are required by law to provide RA to qualified individuals.

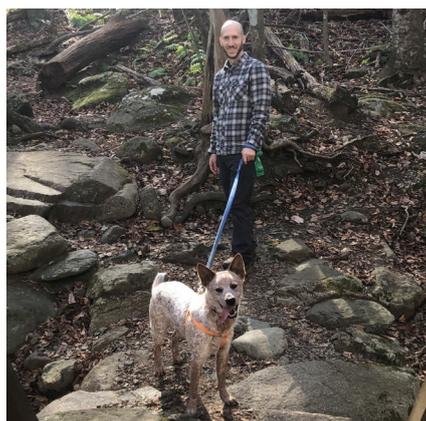
Reassignment is only an option if an employee with a disability can no longer perform the essential functions of

their current position and no other viable, accommodating alternatives exist. Reassignment as a form of RA can only be offered to Coast Guard civilian employees and is not available as an accommodation to job applicants.

Federal agencies have an obligation under the Rehabilitation Act to inform an employee about vacant positions for which the employee may be eligible as an accommodation.

It is important for leadership to be proactive in their responsibility and accountability in ensuring that civil rights laws and program standards are applied and enforced within their commands. Leadership should contact Human Resources, General Law, and Civil Rights if faced with reasonable accommodation dilemmas.

More information about Coast Guard reassignment and RA can be found in the Coast Guard Civil Rights Manual at: https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/sites/externaldata/Directives/CIM_5350_4E.pdf.



CRD WELCOMES VETERAN AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST TO ITS TEAM

By CDR Charlene Forgue, CRD, USCG HQ

Mr. Patrick Ferraris joins the Civil Rights Directorate after supporting communication efforts for multiple Army organizations as a contractor. Patrick enlisted in the U.S. Army as a Public Affairs Broadcast Journalist following graduation from Radford University in 2012. During his five years of service, he served at Fort Bliss, Texas, and Camp Casey, South Korea. Upon transitioning from the Army, he received his M.S. from Purdue University in Strategic Communications. A native of Springfield, VA., Patrick enjoys playing soccer, traveling, and cooking.



Civil Rights Directorate

Dr. Terri Dickerson

Director

CDR Charlene Forgue

Executive Assistant

Ms. Francine Blyther

Assistant Director and Chief, Civil Rights Operations

CAPT David Dubay

Assistant Director and Chief, Planning, Policies, and Resources

Mr. James Ellison

Senior Advisor

Ms. Dayra Harbison

Division Chief

Mr. Eduardo Zayas

Division Chief

CDR Brian Chambers

Division Chief

Mr. Patrick Ferraris

Communications Specialist

Contact Information

2703 Martin Luther King Jr.
Ave., S.E.

Washington, DC 20593-7000

Phone: (202) 372-4500

Fax: (202) 372-8303

Visit us at:

[https://www.uscg.mil/
resources/civil-rights/](https://www.uscg.mil/resources/civil-rights/)

NEW POLICY UPDATES FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

Courtesy, EEOC



Veterans of the Coast Guard and other branches of the military should take note of recent revisions to documents that address the employment of veterans with disabilities. The revisions, made by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), discuss how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) apply to veteran employees and those who employ them. Revisions include updated references and links for organizations that serve veterans and new data points about employment discrimination claims brought by veterans, among others.

The revised publications include:

- [EEOC Efforts for Veterans with Disabilities](#),
- [Understanding Your Employment Rights Under the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Veterans](#), and
- [Veterans and the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Employers](#).

Many federal laws are in place that provide important protections and information for veterans with disabilities. More information can be found at www.eeoc.gov.

LOOKING FORWARD: AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

By Juan Torres, CRD, USCG HQ

In February, our Nation celebrates African American History Month. During this time, we recognize the history, accomplishments, and contributions that African Americans have made and continue to make for our Nation. The theme for 2021 is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.” We encourage you to participate in Coast Guard events commemorating this observance by organizing and attending programs that highlight the history, culture, and structure of African American families and communities. We ask that you share your events with us at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/CG0011/2/CGSEP2018/SitePages/home.aspx>.

