



ABOVE BOARD

CHQ'S QUARTERLY NEWS

What IS CHQ? It stands for CGJROTC Headquarters. CHQ falls under FORCECOM and is located in Norfolk, VA. FORCECOM has an impact on every Coast Guard mission and is responsible for managing all training in the CG. CHQ consists of a team of eight Coasties who manage the CGJROTC Program, under the direction of CDR Clay Cromer aka Commodore.

Cadet of the Quarter

JOHN SCHIRMER PINELLAS PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Originally from Brazil, CADET LTJG John SCHIRMER immigrated to St. Petersburg with his family at a young age. Following the loss of his mother and the absence of his father, he has been raised by his grandparents for the past 10 years. Despite these challenges, John has demonstrated remarkable resilience, maturity, and determination. John joined Coast Guard JROTC during his sophomore year and quickly established himself as a motivated and capable cadet. His dedication and leadership have led to his assignments as Administration Officer, Platoon Commander, and Academic Team Captain. He was also a member of last year's National Champion Raider Team.

Cadet LTJG Schirmer has distinguished himself through exceptional leadership, academic excellence, community service, and dedication to the Coast Guard JROTC program. He serves as the Administration Department Head, Captain of the Academic Team, and a leader on the Varsity Raider Team. He has competed in three Raider competitions this quarter and consistently demonstrates teamwork, determination, and professionalism. John has represented the program with pride during multiple color guard ceremonies, including presenting the colors at a Tampa Bay Rays Major League Baseball home game. He has also completed more than 12 hours of community service, demonstrating his commitment to serving both his school and the surrounding community. John consistently makes time to assist other cadets and can always be counted on to support his classmates, and personally recruited 4 cadets this year. His leadership has contributed significantly to Delta Platoon's success. Delta Platoon currently leads the Honor Platoon competition and raised more than \$4350, during the unit's 99Pledges fundraiser—the highest amount of any platoon. As recognition for this outstanding achievement, Delta Platoon earned a pizza party. John continued developing his knowledge and leadership skills over the summer by attending the JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl National Competition and the National Flight Academy. In addition to his extensive JROTC responsibilities, he maintains an outstanding 4.0 grade point average. Cadet Schirmer's academic achievement, leadership, commitment to service, and positive influence on others exemplify the highest standards of Coast Guard JROTC.



Thank you to all who submitted!
Please follow the QR code to complete
your submission form to nominate
your cadet. (Each school may only
submit one candidate per quarter)



BRAVO ZULU, CADET LTJG SCHIRMER!



ANCHORS AWEIGH ON A BRAND-NEW SCHOOL YEAR!



**BACK
TO
SCHOOL**



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR YEARBOOK? CHQ YEARBOOK 25-26 SY



NIOT - 2026

**NEW INSTRUCTOR
ORIENTATION TRAINING
(NIOT)**

**ON JULY 13-16TH, THE
CGJROTC PROGRAM HOSTED
NIOT AT INNOVATION HIGH
SCHOOL, ORLANDO,
FLORIDA.**

**THIS PROGRAM WOULD BE
NOTHING WITHOUT OUR
DEDICATED INSTRUCTORS.
WE WERE HONORED TO
SPEND TIME TRAINING OUR
NEWEST INSTRUCTORS AND
PREPARING THEM FOR A
REWARDING CAREER.**



SEMPER PARATUS

Please join us in welcoming SCPO Frank Kuras to the team! He is now serving as the MSI at Clinton High School, and is our first Navy instructor!

Senior Chief is a native of Coventry, Rhode Island, and enlisted in the United States Navy in December 2003. Upon graduation, he reported for duty with the USS Ashland (LSD 48), Little Creek, VA and served as an undesignated seaman in deck department and then struck into the Gunners Mate rate. Senior Chief retired as the Senior Enlisted Leader and Fleet Liaison at Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey.

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree with a major in Social Science from Roger Williams University and a Master's of Science in Strategic Leadership. Additionally, Senior Chief Kuras is a graduate of the U.S. Navy Senior Enlisted Academy Class 215 and has earned his Enlisted Expeditionary Warfare and Surface Warfare. Also a published author.

Chief Kuras is married to the former Maritchil Alob of Honolulu, Hawaii and has two daughters: Liachell (24) currently a USN LTJG and Alexis (17) attending Mississippi College in the fall of 2026.



A Hui Hou



**FAIR WINDS & FOLLOWING SEAS TO
CAPTAIN JOHN RIVERS**



Thank you

**FOR YOUR SERVICE TO
KALANI HIGH SCHOOL &
THE CGJROTC PROGRAM.**

You will be missed!



HONOR RESPECT

DEVOTION TO DUTY



**IT'S A SMALL COAST GUARD!
CONGRATULATIONS TO RETIRED COASTIE,
CHIEF GEOFFREY DUFUR.**

**CHIEF DUFUR WAS NAMED TEACHER OF THE
YEAR AT PORT CHARLOTTE HIGH SCHOOL'S
NJROTC PROGRAM IN FLORIDA!**

DID YOU KNOW CGJROTC OFFERS SKILLBRIDGE?



SKILLBRIDGE IS A CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAM THAT HELPS ELIGIBLE TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS GAIN VALUABLE CIVILIAN WORK EXPERIENCE, DEVELOP NEW SKILLS, AND PREPARE FOR EMPLOYMENT BEFORE LEAVING THE MILITARY. IT CREATES AN OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY THE LEADERSHIP, TEAMWORK, AND TECHNICAL SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH MILITARY SERVICE TO CAREERS IN THE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE.

WE ARE PROUD TO SHARE THAT CGJROTC HAS HAD 2 SUCCESSFUL SKILLBRIDGE INTERNS! THEIR SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS THE VALUE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY AND OUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING SERVICE MEMBERS PREPARE FOR THEIR NEXT CHAPTER. WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING MORE PARTICIPANTS INTO THE PROGRAM, SUPPORTING THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, AND HELPING THEM BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR LONG-TERM CAREER SUCCESS.

CADETS, YOU MAY NOTICE A SKILLBRIDGE INTERN SERVING AT YOUR SCHOOL IN THE NEAR FUTURE! AS YOU SEE THEM AROUND CAMPUS, REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN IMPORTANT TRANSITION, STARTING A NEW CHAPTER AND LEARNING NEW SKILLS AS THEY PREPARE FOR LIFE BEYOND MILITARY SERVICE. THEIR JOURNEY IS A POWERFUL REMINDER THAT LEARNING NEVER STOPS, NO MATTER HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE OR HOW REWARDING YOUR CAREER HAS BEEN, THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM TO GROW, TRY SOMETHING NEW, AND EMBRACE NEW OPPORTUNITIES. WE HOPE YOU'LL WELCOME OUR SKILLBRIDGE INTERNS, SUPPORT THEM AS THEY LEARN, AND RECOGNIZE THE COURAGE IT TAKES TO STEP INTO SOMETHING NEW!

Please join us in welcoming CPO Nicholas Saporito to the team! Chief Saporito is now serving as the MSI at Topsail High School following the successful completion of his SkillBridge internship in June 2026 and his official retirement from the CG after 20 years of honorable service.

Throughout his career, he served as both a Storekeeper and a Talent Acquisition Specialist, a relatively new CG rating established only a few years ago, making him one of a select group to hold this title.

His notable assignments include serving as a Company Commander from 2012 to 2015, as well as recruiting assignments at Recruiting Office Atlantic City and Recruiting Office Wilmington, where he worked closely with JROTC programs across multiple military branches. He was enlisted person of the year at Training Center Cape May (2014) and the Leadership Development Center/ CG Academy (2016).

Originally from West Babylon, New York, Chief Saporito enjoys hiking and cooking in his free time and is a proud husband and father of two. He shares that his family has seen firsthand how happy this next chapter has made him. He finds the role incredibly fulfilling and appreciates the opportunity to learn something new every day. For Chief Saporito, this transition has been more than a new career; it's an opportunity to continue serving in a meaningful way while making a difference in the lives of the next generation. Chief is only one of two who have successfully completed our SkillBridge program! Thank you for paving the way for future interns!



A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS IN OREGON AND ALASKA



On September 15th and 17th, the CGJROTC program proudly established two new units through formal establishment ceremonies at Marshfield High School in Coos Bay, Oregon, and Kodiak High School in Kodiak, Alaska.

These ceremonies marked a significant milestone as each school represents the first CGJROTC unit of its kind in its respective state and Coast Guard district.

The CGJROTC program sincerely appreciates the presence and support of Steven Keck, Chief of the Career and Investment Division, Force Readiness Command. His participation helped recognize and celebrate this important milestone and the dedication of everyone who contributed to bringing these programs to life.

A special recognition also goes to GM2 Brett Salter and CDR James Kenshalo, the instructors who have helped pave the way for these new CGJROTC programs. Through their leadership, dedication, and commitment to their cadets, they have played an important role in establishing a strong foundation for these units and creating opportunities for the next generation of leaders--Coast Guard and beyond!



Commodore's Corner

Good day, Cadets!

One of the most uplifting parts of my job is hearing about the things you're accomplishing and the people you're becoming. I was deeply encouraged by all our Cadet of the Quarter nominations – every one of you was deserving!

I wanted to give a special shout-out to Cadet Sydney Johnson from Topsail High School. Over the past three years, she has served in JROTC as Platoon Commander, Administrative Officer, and Community Service Officer—in addition to being captain of the basketball team. Recently, she demonstrated poise and leadership in her community during a moment of danger. After witnessing a serious car accident that left an SUV overturned on its side, she calmly took charge of the situation, directed the trapped mother and son to safety through the sunroof, and stayed by their side until first responders arrived.

In a moment when many bystanders would hesitate, her quick thinking and decisive action provided critical reassurance until emergency medical personnel could assume care. She exemplified our service's core values and lived the JROTC Cadet Creed.

BZ, Cadet Johnson!



Sector Houston-Galveston PIE Integration with CG Aux

2026 Greater Houston Science & Engineering Fair



Every year, Sector Houston-Galveston & surrounding area CG Units create a special award agency team to provide judges for the Science & Engineering Fair Houston (SEFH). This event is one of the largest science fairs in the country where the high school winners advance to national & international level science fair competitions. Over 1000 junior & high school aged students enter the fair (7-12th grades) with over 850 projects. The judging team comprises of both Active Duty & AUX members & selects several junior & high school projects that stand out in several categories including Applicability to the Maritime Domain, Applicability to Coast Guard Missions, & Most Innovative in High School & Junior High School categories. The student winners are invited to an awards ceremony at Sector Houston-Galveston to meet the Sector Commander & have a Unit visit to see VTS Houston, Sector Commander Center, MSST Houston & their service dogs, & Air Station Houston for tours. Members from Auxiliary Heartland District Coastal Region, Station Galveston Flotilla supported the 2026 team.

LOGS LOGISTICS



****ANNOUNCEMENT****

**New Dynamic Unit Budgets
have been sent out for FY27.**

**FY27Q1 Program
Requisitions and
Reimbursements are due
NOVEMBER 15TH. Please
account for a potential
lapse of funding for Q2
procurement needs.**

Get REQD!

**Receive, Email, Quantity,
and Date when you receive
your items. Email SK1 after
physical receipt of the items
and ensure you mark the
quantity and date on the
respective Google order
spreadsheet. Lastly, ensure
you reply to all receiving
request emails.**



AUP: The Auxiliary's Bridge to the Future



The Auxiliary University Program (AUP) provides a Bridge to the Future for both the Auxiliary, by targeting a younger demographic than the Auxiliary traditionally attracts, and active-duty Coast Guard, by providing officer candidates who are well-versed in the Coast Guard's culture, standard operating procedures, organizational hierarchy, and foundational qualifications.

AUP was founded to offer college-age men and women a focused but reduced commitment alternative to traditional ROTC programs that are offered by other military services. The AUP curriculum steps its members through prescribed basic and advanced Auxiliary competencies such as Auxiliary regulations and policy, Incident Command System (ICS) qualifications, and courtesy protocols, followed by challenging them to become certified in qualifications such as radio watchstander, public affairs, Auxiliary Weather (AUXWEA), Auxiliary Seamanship (AUXSEA), and Marine Safety and Environmental Protection (IMSEP). Program leaders encourage all students to pursue AUXOP status. For young men and women preparing for officer commission or other maritime careers, the AUP provides an opportunity to test their mettle and acquire leadership skills and Auxiliary competencies as they explore career opportunities.



The Fleet Crucible: Active-Duty Internships

The catalyst that transforms college students into maritime leaders is the program's robust internship opportunities. As AUP students reach Senior Status, they can step into the crucible of active-duty operations via summer internships. Whether shadowing a deck officer on a major cutter, collaborating with marine inspectors at a busy port, or participating in remote operations with specialized teams, these internships provide genuine hands-on experiences.

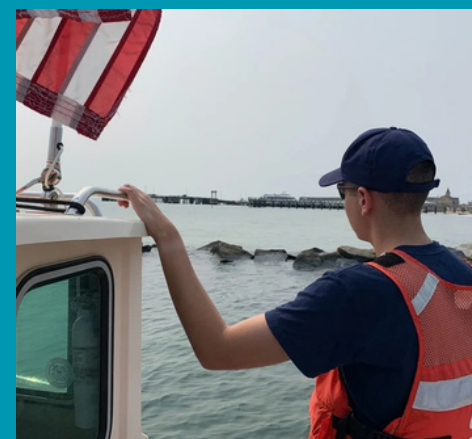
For the active-duty personnel tasked with training them, these students arrive with a distinct advantage: they are already well-versed in standard operating procedures, organizational hierarchy, and foundational qualifications. This makes the AUP intern an immediate asset to the hosting station. For the students, these intense, real-world deployments solidify their classroom learning, assess their adaptability, and cement their commitment to the Coast Guard's vital humanitarian and defense missions.



The AUP program supports just under 300 students at approximately 20 schools, including six senior military colleges, five of the six state maritime academies, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, as well as general education universities around the country (full list at www.cgauxedu.us/units). Students attending schools that do not have enough members to support a stand-alone unit can participate via the Remote Collaborative Unit. The program recently celebrated a milestone, graduating a record number of AUP alumni as direct commission officers. This highlights the program's accelerating momentum as a premier sourcing tool for Coast Guard recruiters. The AUP is developing new units at several universities. The focus is on schools with curricula that advance the Coast Guard's needs. In evaluating potential institutions, the AUP prioritizes four-year undergraduate schools offering major studies aligned with Coast Guard missions, including maritime studies, engineering, and cyber and maritime security.

The single biggest factor in determining the success of an AUP unit is an Auxiliary flotilla that is willing to commit to the growth and success of the unit. In return for the flotilla's time and resource commitment, AUP students support the flotilla by bringing in a young and vigorous demographic with modern technical skills who are dedicated to pursuing basic and advanced Auxiliary competencies.

Because program recruitment targets university undergraduates, the AUP Division primarily promotes the AUP through social media that attracts that students. Flotillas, divisions, and districts interested in hosting an AUP unit should consider what resources they can provide to the AUP program including personnel and then visit the AUP website at www.cgauxedu.us/start-a-unit. Review the AUP Program of Study and, if still interested, contact the AUP Division Chief, who will assign a national staff member to guide them through the AUP unit development process.



Notes From the Editor...



Did you know...?

During WWII, Walt Disney created a special logo for the Coast Guard's Corsair Fleet during World War II, featuring Donald Duck. The nickname "Corsair Fleet" was given to the thousands of Coast Guard and Coast Guard Reserve boats that patrolled the coast watching for U-boats and saboteurs.



CALLING ALL CADETS! Do you have a nautical story, cartoon, or joke to share that you would like to see in an *Above Board* issue? We would love to include content from **YOU**, the cadets, in our newsletter. Stories about your unit, a special team your program hosts, or a special event your unit participated in; original cartoons you create to encapsulate the spirit of your unit, the Coast Guard, or something related to the program; an original or cited nautical or military-related joke that could be included. All content must be appropriate and SMSI-approved before submitting. To submit, please have your instructor submit your content to InstructorAdmin@cgjrotc.com.

NOTE: We will not consider any submissions sent directly from a cadet or parent.



This comic was created by the editor using AI.

What kind of vegetable is not allowed on ships?

LEEKS!

