

RADM Meredith Austin, USCG (RET)

The Commandant takes great pride in presenting the Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award to RADM Meredith Austin, USCG (Ret), for her extraordinary achievements and substantial contributions to the Coast Guard and its retiree community, serving as Flag Co-Chair of the CG National Retiree Council (CGNRC) from August 2023 – August 2026. RADM Austin remained in cooperative lockstep with two Master Chief Petty Officer co-chairs, strengthening the Retiree Services Program and its value to the Coast Guard and retiree community. She championed publication of the Retiree Services Program Commandant instruction, refocusing the program’s mission and strategic objectives and reducing administrative demands on dedicated volunteers with the CGNRC and Regional Retiree Councils. RADM Austin led Council efforts resulting in publication of a much-needed Coast Guard handbook providing guidance to ALL Coast Guard members and family in estate planning and final affairs—highlighted in a *Flag Voice* sent to all active-duty and retired Flag Officers. Her steady “tone at the top” inspired retiree volunteerism and contributed to chartering of three new Regional Retiree Councils and outreach to more than 16,000 retirees. RADM Austin tirelessly served as a critical bridge between the Coast Guard and retiree community, rallying retirees in support of CG Force Design and recruiting efforts and keeping CG leadership attention on key retiree issues—notably, the processing Audit Error Worksheets (AEWs) and payment of VA benefits, leading to planned deployment of Automated Veterans Affairs Compensation (AVAC) providing more timely processing. RADM Austin kept retirees informed on changing programs, benefits, and issues of importance, engaging through her social networks and authoring 12 quarterly articles for *The Long Blue Line*. As a retired Flag Officer, her leadership remains vital to sustaining a mutually beneficial relationship between the Coast Guard and the retiree community. RADM Austin’s legacy of public service is most heartily commended and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.