

**2026 CGNRC Meeting Kick-Off – RADM Danko (CG-WM)**  
**TEAMS Voice to Text Transcript**

**Retired RADM Austin, CGNRC Flag Co-Chair** – Hi, good morning, I'm Merrie Austin. I'm the Flag Co-chair of the National Retiree Council, saying next to me is retired MCPOCG Jason Vanderhaden. Thanks everyone for coming and thanks for everyone online who are listening online. I know people had challenges getting in, so thank for those of you who are in person. Thank you for bearing with all the flight delays and coming in, actually very early this morning. It's always good to come in person, so I know earlier in the year when I was talking to Bob about this, they said, you know, his bosses were like, hey, you hosted a virtual meeting last year. That seems to work out pretty good. Why don't you do that again? And we're like, no, it's important to be a person. It's also really great we're being hosted again at CG PPC. When we talk to other retirees, folks in our regions or just emails that Jason and I get, we'll get comments about PPC like "you they've had this for weeks and weeks." And so it's great to come here because then you can see the reality. Oh, that department's one person. Oh, and it's been vacant for the last three years. So we know that you all at PPC are trying as hard as you can and we appreciate everything that PPC does for us, we understand their challenges and if we can articulate that back to folks that that would be very helpful. Couple interesting things. Coast Guard has been going through a lot of changes. We have Rear Admiral Danko who we'll introduce here in a couple of minutes. She's the Assistant Commandant for Workforce Management. And if you're like, huh? I wonder what that is. It's the old CG-1 (Assistant Commandant for Human Resources). So there's that. So there's, you know, new operational things going on, which we'll not be getting into probably much. The important thing is that you know the charter of this group (CGNRC) is to maintain open communication between the Coast Guard and the retiree and annuity community. So this meeting helps with that endeavor. With that, let me throw it to Jason Vanderhaden.

**Retired MCPOCG Jason Vanderhaden, CGNRC Co-Chair** – RADM Danko, thank you for being here and I want to thank everybody for taking the time out of their schedule to come in and be a part of this. I want to thank you personally for your leadership. You make RADM Austin's and my job easy because we have so many experienced leaders here. We have so many caring and you know folks that really put the retirees at the top of their priority list and, we just want to say, I just want to say thank you to you for your leadership. We'll do this for a while and then we'll roll up hand the reigns to VADM Nunan and I'm thankful that she is willing to take this on. She's got a an incredible amount of experience and both from men and women. She just has great experience over at the Merchant Marine Academy that she brings to the to the retiree council. So thank you for your willingness to step up and and take this position. A lot of you will continue to do this after we've moved on. You're the continuity. You will continue to be the Retiree Council Co-chairs in your respective AOR's and we couldn't do it without you. To those that are here personally and those of you that

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are taking the time online, you know, I just want to thank you. We look forward to a productive few days here and we can get our work list. Also, Bob (Hinds), I'd be remiss if I didn't thank you Sir. You give us our work list, you kind of keep us organized. You are our mouthpiece to the Coast Guard. And you do an excellent job of kind of leaning in and being just assertive enough to get the job done without being overbearing. So thank you, I hope we never lose you. Again, thanks to all of you for your leadership. I look forward to seeing you and talking to everybody in the next couple days.

**Retired RADM Austin, CGNRC Flag Co-Chair** – The meeting agenda looks kind of similar to the last time, but subjects that get discussed have changed. But it's important that we have, you know, the continuity of here's the work that we've been doing. Here's where we've made progress. Here's where I've made progress. And then day two, there will be some new initiatives that that we'll talk about. One of the things you probably well, Bob (Hinds) sent out an e-mail about the final affairs handbook. I think, Bob, you were maybe able to scrape up a little bit more change from under the couch cushions for another mailing. And so that's why it's not like we just finished that. We have an opportunity to refresh the handbook a little bit. Because we're going to be printing and mailing to retirees & annuitants who didn't get it on the last blush (age 65 years and older), which I think is great. And Jo (VADM Nunan), you'll get to write that later to introduce it. Unless we have any burning questions, I'm going to go ahead and and throw this over to Rear Admiral Danko. But let me let you know a little bit about Rear Admiral Danko's background. So I first worked with Admiral Danko when we were both over at HHS, Joint Coordination Council, which was a construct during COVID, to help the secretary of HHS understand what all the components in HHS were doing. Because no one was telling the Secretary what was going on. And then they have these cabinet meetings and all the different components would say stuff and blindsided the Secretary, which was not a great place for him to be. So they brought in Admiral Abel, who is a great person at keeping track of stuff and very nicely jabbing you with a stick to get you to do it and so. That accurate Admiral Danko? RADM Danko – “I would say that's very accurate.” RADM Danko is a *rock-star* and I just want you to know a little bit about her background. So again, currently the Assistant Commandant for Workforce Management, previous assignments include director of the Reserve, Assistant Commandant for the Reserve. She was the senior reserve officer to the Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (DCMS). She was in charge of the reserve unit at TRANSCOM, Senior Coast Guard liaison with the Navy Coastal River in Group One, CO of PSU 312 in San Francisco, she was deployed to Cuba. She served as the Maritime Security Detachment commander for JTF GITMO. She's had numerous operational tours, beginning as plank owner USCGC JUNIPER. Yeah, you had a baby tour. Multiple Navy tours. SOUTHCOM, and SRO for Jacksonville. RADM Danko is also an adjunct professor at the

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University of Southern California Bauer College. She has a PhD in Organizational Leadership from Northeastern University. RADM Danko is a Naval War, College Command and Staff graduate. A Master of Arts. RADM Danko is a graduate of the Coast Guard Academy. So the reason I wanted to go through all that is a lot of times you know us like to kind of roll in and say yeah what do Flag Officers know? She's got a lot of operational background as a reserve person. She knows a lot about personnel systems. She knows how to get stuff done. And, you're very busy right now. So with that, let me turn this over to RADM Danko.

**RADM Danko – Assistant Commandant for Workforce Management (CG-WM), CG Retiree Services Program Director, Executive Agent for the CG National Retiree Council (CGNRC).**

Thank you very much, Admiral Austin. And I will say it was definitely a privilege to work for Admiral Ausin and Admiral Abel at HHS. What she didn't say is she's the one who kept everything at the HHS building running with a very sharp stick. Yeah, a sharp stick, so I feel trapped here by the microphone, but I know we have people online, so I will stay here where I'm supposed to. Thank you. I want to say thanks. On behalf of DCP (Deputy Commandant for Personnel), unfortunately, he's at the DHS Human Capital Summit. Sorry, I forgot the name, but the human capital thing with DHS, so he won't be able to join us this morning. So I'm representing workforce management and DCP, but on behalf of him, thank you for everything that our retirees continue to do for our Coast Guard community. We know that you're out there advocating for the Coast Guard. You're advocating for our families. You're helping us with everything from recruiting to how we care for our current Coast Guard members and those who are retiring. So thank you for that. It means something. We know that there's an impact. We see the impact we hear about it. So thank you for that and thank you for what you're doing and for your service. I just recently took over workforce management. Yeah, we changed the name because why not? But there's a lot going on in today's Coast Guard. Obviously, you've probably heard about a lot of it. Force design continues to roll on. With the new Secretary, we dropped the 28 part. So we're just calling it Force Design now, but that does continue, mentioning this because that's really where the Coast Guard is going for the future. Obviously, we got a massive investment that we are working very hard in. Acquisitions is pulling their hair out trying to spend \$23 billion in a very short period of time. But they're spending it. We are replacing a ton of things that need to be replaced a long time ago. Everything from our new waterways commerce cutters to the Arctic security cutters, we're finally getting a chance to fix all the things that you had to deal with. The leaky roof. The pier that needed massive repairs, all those things were underway right now, I will say, but we didn't get as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA) year three. I bring this up because this really hits on the personnel. (See [U.S. Coast](#)

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[Guard receives historic investment to rebuild under President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill > United States Coast Guard News > Press Releases](#) ) We didn't get any more money for personnel, support or operations. So this is very much earmarked infrastructure money, which is fantastic because we've been trying to make up for that for a very long time out of all of this other funds that we need just to operate. But I wanted to mention this because I know this impacts you and it impacts all of our members who are here right now. We are still working towards that. We're obviously waiting to find out what our budget's going to be for next year. You know, are we going to get the big money or the little money? We don't know. If we get the big money that's great. We are still working to grow the service itself. Some of these new assets, some of the replacement assets regardless of what the Coast Guard want, whether we wanted to go or not, we're going to have to because we're going to man all those things and we're working on that. Now we do still have the goal of a 15,000 larger workforce. That encompasses no firm numbers here, but approximately 10,000 ish active duty and 5000 reserve. None of those numbers are firm. There's a lot that comes into play, so it all depends on what budget they come down with and what they do with our NDAA. But we are looking to grow even this next year. We already have some new bills on how we're working on that right now as to what are we billing and what is the priority. Like I said, we didn't get a ton of money for personnel, so we are focusing on that foundation level. We've been very constrained on the sessions. You're all 100% aware of that. That's not a new thing for the Coast Guard. We're very constrained on training, so that's where a lot of those people are initially going as well as how we man those new assets. So that's really like what's happening with force design right now and in the near future. Because that's a major focus of the service. And how we will be going forward in the next year or two is manning those assets building up our training and assessing infrastructure that support the personnel side and then the next level is how do we continue to support all of those new people? That's the Workforce Management DCP side and how we get after that we are in the process of some other reorganization and how we realign things like BASES. You know the past is the future. Those of us who've been around a while remember the BASES being aligned under a DISTRICT. So we're looking at realigning those right now in process. But that's really trying to get after. How do we support our current Coast Guard members to go forward? So a tremendous amount happening there. It impacts every one of our members in the Coast Guard and how we go forward. There's also a lot of initiatives for how we're personally caring for our members and their families. We have some very recent things that have just come out for how, for example, we're supporting our spouses, the spouse works program. There's a lot happening. Before you ask me about it, yes, the Coast Guard actually started a brain health initiative program in April. Long before the recent New York Times article addressing that topic came out, and that initiative continues. It's a very intensive look at how we support our members who are in communities with the blast

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pressure that may impact their overall brain health. The Chief Medical Officer and the team are working on everything from instrumentation to cooperative studies with the Department of War on how we can evaluate potential impact to our members. We are looking at how we can make sure that's documented not just in the medical record because obviously that doesn't help those who retired five years ago. If it wasn't in your medical record, it wasn't in your medical record. So we're also looking at paths for administrative documentation and as soon as we get that finalized, we're we're working on it. Right now we have to make sure the lawyers agree that we've crossed all our T's and dotted our I's. But we are looking at how we make sure that that same administrative documentation is available to our retiree community as well. So that they have that to support them through, whether it's VA claim or anything else that we can document that for members who've already retired, who were involved in those communities. Obviously one of our first priorities, SURFMAN, but we are also looking at other communities. Gunners dealt with much of that blast pressure for a lot of years. So that is a big push right now. There's a lot working and happening on that to make sure that we're supporting our current members, those who have already retired and our future members who are coming into the Coast Guard so that we're documenting it appropriately for them. There is a lot happening on how we hire civilians and I know that our retiree community has been really fantastic in helping us with recruiting. You're constantly advocating for the Coast Guard. You're talking about us. You're saying what a great service it is and how important it is to be part of our service. We are working right now from a significant deficit on our civilians. It does impact our team here at PPC. Unfortunately, offices that should have you know four or five people have one right now because repeated shutdowns and furloughs have every time that happens, we stop hiring civilians. It's not a Coast Guard choice, it's guidance under the federal government. So we're in a 22% vacancy. So please, I'm telling you this so that you understand where we are as a Coast Guard working very hard to update our entire civilian hiring process. Ms. Laura Collins, one of your fellow retirees, is our new head of Civilian Personnel Management and she is working very hard to bring our system into the year 2026, not the year 1986. As to how we hire civilians so that we can track that process throughout and do it in a much more expeditious manner and keep track of it and hire civilians faster. And I say this to ask you to continue to advocate for our service, not just for our uniformed members, but for those who may be interested in working for the Coast Guard as civilians. Obviously some of our best members have been prior Coast Guard military personnel because they already have a leg up. We have an amazing civilian workforce, whether they started in uniform or not. And I just ask you to continue to advocate for us, not just for our recruiting, not just for our sessions, but for those who may be interested in coming to work for the Coast Guard as civilians, because we've got to fill that 22% vacancy rate and we know that you're out there talking about what a great service we are every day. Obviously

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we have a whole lot else going on, but I actually wanted to leave some time for some questions. Whether you have them about where we're going as a service overall or anything specific with regards to retiree affairs, DCP, what we're doing with our workforce management and how we work. To support all of our members across the Coast Guard, there's a lot happening right now. We have a lot of operations, not just the ones that we've been doing for a long time. Some others that are very specifically targeted to administrative priorities. We have about 800 reservists mobilized in support of numerous operations along the border that are providing border security for the United States and fulfillment of our administration's top priorities, as well as our cutters underway and how we're reallocating what they're doing and how. So I'm going to pause and turn it over to you for questions.

**Retired VADM Joanna Nunan, USCG (Ret), new CGNRC “Flag” Co-Chair** – Thank you very much for that update. I mean, I have so many questions. So, so many things sound so familiar. What's all this new? I'll just say a few things, When I was CG-1, I came to visit PPC. I was in shock at the lack of tools we had given to PPC. So they had all of the retiree pays and then the adjustments. And the error worksheets and the somebody's VA percentage goes up there. So then you need to redo everything and when I and I know we're going to walk around. I really want us to see. Hopefully it's different because what I came through (not many years ago) they were using little tiny computers. I'm back at headquarters and I have two giant screens and I don't have a box of paperwork that I'm trying to, you know, manage data in. You know, it seems like we the Coast Guard, always do things backwards. Let's get the big, beautiful new cutter and then we'll figure it out later. Like, how are we going to maintain the cutter, drive the cutter? So we really need to focus on the foundational piece. Bob (Hinds), I'm just going to tell you like one of my mantras for the next two years is Bob cannot be by himself running our entire program. There's many ways to do this, so this is going to be partly back at the Coast Guard looking at it. Are you looking? In some of your reorganizing, there's other parts of the Coast Guard that care about retirees, so maybe there's a way to combine some offices, but at the very least, Bob needs an assistant program manager. Because you can't have an entire program where you're supporting all of us with one person, and you know, one of the reasons why I took the job is that Bob was here. So I want to be here with Bob and if Bob leaves, I want him to feel that, you know, it got left in a good place, not just with one person who is willing to after working for the government for over 50 years. But my question I guess has to do with. You know, it's all about talent management, recruiting, retention, you know, upward mobility and all that. And it's funny. Like we go through all these cyclical things and this isn't just the Coast Guard. It's also the other services. Hey, we're filling our mission at the recruiting command, so we're good, right? And I'm thinking like, no, you're never good. You

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constantly have to be thinking that's your number one thing and oh, the really important thing is how do you retain people? Because if you just keep putting them in and flushing them out, then you never catch up. You have to put a stopper in the hole you know. So what are we doing for retention? Are we focused on that and how are we going to keep the energy going for recruiting even if we think we're right today meeting our mission?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – That was a lot of questions, so I'm going to take it piece by piece. One is yes, Bob's amazing. That's part of that, that 22% vacancy rate has a major impact on our organization here and we're working to try to build those goals as quickly as possible. Let's just hope we don't shut down again this year, but is there actually a position that is not being filled? Or is what you're talking about finding people to move to that position? Yes. We don't have additional positions here. We currently are not in a position to be able to expand the civilian workforce under the current budget, we're advocating for it in future budgets and that is part of the list of many things that we hope to expand. Trying to fill all of the many vacancies here at PPC gives us more flexibility, even if it is supporting CG Retiree Services through indirect support. In regards to retention, that's a great question, because a week ago like 8 days, we actually had a Campaign to Retain big Sprint, brought in stakeholders from across the Coast Guard Headquarters programs to take a look at what are we doing as a Coast Guard for retention. And what we mean Campaign to Retain, we don't just mean, hey, we're going to ask everybody at all the commands to just say, hey, you want to stay in the Coast Guard? That's not a campaign, We're looking at short term medium and long term things that we can concrete things we can do with regards to retention, there's some short term things we can do we all have. We've all filled out a career intensions worksheet. We also all know that those don't involve like an actual conversation. In many cases about, OK you may not want to reenlist, have you thought about the Reservists? Have you thought about coming to work for the Coast Guard as a civilian? Let's talk about the benefits of either one of or both of those. That's not part of that process. We can make it part of that process very quickly. To increase our ability to keep members in the Coast Guard family. With regards to perhaps maybe keeping them on active duty, the Coast Guard has recently changed our multiple for BRS. Obviously, we here all in the old retirement system. Things are changing rapidly under the new Blended Retirement System. So that's one of the many tools we have. We did change our multiple for retention and we're actually as part of the Campaign to Retain also looking at how we communicating that. And getting better positive control to make sure people understand. Hey, if you remain, you are eligible for this very significant payout under the new Blended Retirement System because that has to be a very positive communication tool and not just, hey, I hope they read the all CG messages from four years ago, because that's not really helpful, particularly for some of our E5s and LTs who may or may not have even had the

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opportunity to read the messages. So we need to communicate that a lot better. So the Campaign to Retain, actually they're literally out briefing me next week so that we can brief it up the chain. As far as the concrete actions, we're going to take. But we had already started those within WM taking a look at what we can do to better retain our members. We do also continue to open new recruiting offices. We've stood up the Talent Acquisition Rating which is specific to recruiters and how we are working to make sure that they are more skilled and knowledgeable at their job. Along with a lot of work around that to make sure that they have the opportunity to go back and do it again and to continue to build those skills to do a better job for recruiting because we know that we had a lot of challenges in the past. Because we have to keep the flow coming in and we have to do a better job of keeping people in the Coast Guard family, whether it's active reserve or civilian, we still keep you as part of our Coast Guard team. And that's what we're really focusing on as part of the Campaign to Retain and where we go forward with that, I don't have more details because we literally just met about it. But there will be more about that coming in the future. Because, there's a lot more we can do right now that doesn't cost a ton of money, doesn't cost a lot for us to push out. Information to the field and say every time someone fills out a career intensive worksheet a command level representative, not the E5 sign, the E4's form, a command level representative, whether it's CO, XO senior enlisted leader, is sitting down with them and having a real conversation. About staying in the Coast Guard in some way shape or form, and what the benefits to that are. Hope that answers some of your questions. Thank you.

**Retired MCPO Sean McPhillamy, Northwest RRC** - Is there any action on the hill right now regarding the Pay our Coast Guard Act?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – No, thank you. I wish I had a better answer. I appreciate the clarity. It's come up in both the House and the Senate more than once and we've gotten fairly far down the line. It hasn't actually made it through. I don't think it was brought up again at the most recent and obviously everyone's in recess right now. Obviously, we will continue to advocate for that to come up again in the fall when everybody comes back. But so far it hasn't made it anywhere. It does continue to be a significant concern, not just for our military members, but our civilians who were furloughed and are civilians who are still working. We're not paid and our military members, PPC literally jumped through blaming hoops. Really tiny flaming hoops to try to fit through in paying our members because, well, there was a lot of hard work to try to make sure that we can pay our military members this year. In most cases we didn't know we were getting a paycheck until 2:30 the day before, and it's a testament to the work PPC did and the accommodation of treasury here. It's not just the Coast Guard, it's a handshake agreement with Treasury and how we make that happen. But everybody made that happen. Both between the Coast Guard and Treasury,



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and to make sure our members actually got paid, there are no guarantees in the future. We don't know how that's going to roll out. We do have. It looks like a CR (Continuing Resolution) through December. But please continue to talk about it in your communities. Pay. Our Coast Guard is really important and we don't know what's going to happen in future. I wish I had better news on that. If I can have follow-ups, I'll start.

**Question on BRS multiplier.** Is that the one time at 12 years?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – We've actually expanded that and changed the time frame. In fact, we're looking at opening it up at that aperture to 7 to 12 years, which is actually what the other services have done. Members can opt in earlier. We know where those first cliffs are. And it comes before 12 years. And so we're looking at changing a lot of those points. It's actually work in progress right now. We do continue to have the workforce incentives, everything we've done in the past, bonuses the rest of that, but we're looking very hard at what we can do with BRS. Some of the other services are extraordinarily targeted. You know the army, for example, target specific MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) and specific pay grades. Quite frankly, we don't have the data to get that specific. But we are looking at how we can use the data we have to better leverage PR apps for retention, but it doesn't do us any good if we don't do a better job communicating to our people what it means to them. And so we're also trying to look at that as well.

**Retired CWO4 Ray Bryant, Charleston RRC** – What is the ratio of senior officer and senior enlisted retirement? Is it high?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – We've had a slightly higher number of retirements in our O6s and senior enlisted leaders. Some of that reflects folks who stayed for a little bit longer than they would have, but that's based on, you know, conversations we've had people remain in the Coast Guard for a variety of reasons. The pandemic changed a lot of the numbers. For a few years, there was some real impacts for people leaving or not leaving. It really did skew some of our data. When we go back and look at it, things got a little wonky first some years and we're seeing some of that play out right now. But in general, we do continue to assess and and bring people up, but we have had a slightly higher than normal number of retirements. Our promotion points on the officer side have gone down. Some folks are getting promoted a little bit earlier, but some of that also reflects the billing growth. So if we are growing the Coast Guard, which we w

ave actually added quite a few village on the officer side, obviously not thousands, but even adding a couple hundred starts impacting our promotion points and maybe even for folks a little bit earlier in order to meet those requirements.

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**Retired CDR Don Goldstein, Tampa Bay Area RRC** – Do you have the ability to hire to vacancies?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – The part one of the challenges we have right now is because every time we shut down, we have to completely stop hiring. The backlog just gets bigger. But the team that does the hiring is the same size. So we can't even shop or advertise every one of those. Those positions at once because the team literally cannot physically process that number of hiring actions at anyone time. We are prioritizing them. The top priority is those with a direct operational life safety impact. For example, if it's a command center watch standard that is at the top of the list for hiring and it kind of goes down from there. Unfortunately, what that means is some of our personnel things are a little bit further down the list, but we do still have to prioritize. Like the operational mission and our ability to execute that, but we do have the ability to hire all that. We are working very hard to get through that list and start shopping and advertising those positions. Our time to hire is going down. One painful step at a time as we work to modernize our system for how we go through that. Thank you

**Retired CAPT Kathy Tiongson, Capital Area RRC** – You mentioned the Pay our Coast Guard bill as one of the areas where we could potentially provide awareness and support. Anything else that you can think about that the Councils can do or any other areas where we can support you in any?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – I think that continuing the support, the tremendous support we have received from the Councils on helping people be aware of what our Coast Guard. You've all done a lot of great work. Our Councils have done great. Work to support the recruiting efforts and bringing awareness to the community of Coast of the Coast Guard and how we bring people in. And so I think that's one of the big ways that I see our retirees being able to speak to the great things that are about the Coast Guard and not just on recruiting, but on our civilian side as well come work for the Coast Guard. This is actually a really great place to be, and aside from the Pay our Coast Guard, I think that's probably one of the biggest things we need because getting back up to full strength helps us solve a whole lot of problems. We all know how that is.

**Retired CAPT Paul Kirkpatrick, St. Louis RRC** – We think that there's evidence out there that the average reservist does not understand the retirement system. And the biggest problem, of course happens when you transition from RET-2 to RET-1 after 17 years of not even looking at Coast Guard emails. And so I wonder if you're aware of this. I don't think it's an education problem. I don't know that activity duty commands understand and can deal with all the mechanics of reserve retirement. But neither does the average reservist. The

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Reserve Officer Corps generally does, but I'm not sure. That's something we lost in integration when it was killed.

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – You are entirely correct. A lot of our reservists really don't understand how reserve retirement works. We know our active duty members, no offense, do not understand how reserve retirement works unless for some reason that you touched it in some way because the reserve is barely understand it. So asking your active duty members to understand what is a really weird system is a stretch. Yes, articles in any education you can do is fantastic. We actually are also looking at how we can do that. I will say that. So you all know you didn't get your reservist magazine much this year, because if we're shut down, so is the entire staff. You also can't pay to do it. If we're shut down. So you got like one magazine this year? We know we're trying to catch up with the staff right now. The next Reservist magazine is actually going to be focused on retirement and the entire magazine's going to be focused on retirement. The process, what it means, how to how to come back and tell people, say hey, by the way, I have finally hit my time. Send me the money. So that's one education piece. We know that these are things that people come back to time after time. If we can put it out in a really concrete form. I had already actually talked to the PPC team about how we can update a retirement guide. We know that there used to be one in the past. But we do not have one right now and we've already talked about how we can update that as a congratulations. You're retiring. Here you go. That would have a little bit more detail both for our active and reserve members about the paperwork you need, how you contact PPC. Hey reservists, here's how you reach out. So when you finally hit your time and those kinds of issues, we can't just rely on the TAPS class to do it, especially because like 70% of our members go to someone else's TAPS class, you know, based on where they're stationed. An Army one, who knows? So just saying TAPS is not the answer. We have to come up with a better means of communication, so we are looking at that. You know, y'all come up with ideas for how we can support and put out more communications because we know it's really complicated, we're trying to do better communication within the service. That's why we're putting out an entire addition of the Reservist focused on retirement.

**Retired CAPT Paul Kirkpatrick, St. Louis RRC** – Just one more follow up question. It's been 25 years, but one of the things that I mentioned earlier when we integrated back in the 90s. Is this potentially a sign of a larger issue with the care and feeding of Reserves?

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – I'm glad you brought that up, because here in the middle of realigning the entire administrative support structure for our Reserve component. We just actually got all the approvals literally months ago. That was part of the package I handed to my successor, said hey, I got the approvals. Here you go, you get to implement. We are

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realigning the Reserve Force Readiness Staff (RFRS). At the sectors with the districts, we're making sure that the BASES are supported because they were never included in the RFRS rollout. We're changing that entire process and we're standing up a Reserve SPO. I spoke with PPC and the team is working through that right now to stand up a reserve only SPO so that our poor Yeoman aren't going back and forth from an active duty process. So it's like one page for active duty to a reserve process that's like a whole binder. We're not helping them. That's a systemic problem, not an individual level training problem. We can't build an entire Yeoman force who are experts in Reserve administration. So let's concentrate on the people who actually are doing administration for reservists. We can target it while they're in the job and make sure that they have the information they need. So we are trying to address that to make sure that they can call their Yeoman and talk about retirement with someone understands the reserve process. We've had a lot of initiatives in the last few years. I'm saying, for example, every year we bring all the new Silver Badges in and there is actually an entire block of Reserve now. So we're trying to make sure we're working very closely with our senior enlisted leaders to build that tie better. The Silver Badge orientation is in two weeks at Headquarters and both I and the Director of Reserve will be speaking to them as well as MCPO CG Reserve Adams. As our companion for Reserve Officers, we do actually have reserve blocks in things like the Commanding Officer's course. They are all relatively recent.

**Retired CPO Rob Davis, Sector Ohio Valley RRC** – When I first left active duty and got in the reserves there in Sector Ohio Valley, we had the Reserve unit in Owensboro, KY, a reserve unit in Cincinnati, OH, and we had the one in Louisville, KY, and then they got all combined. And at that time, I'd say Owensboro probably had close to 50 or so people, Cincinnati had probably a little bit more than that, and we there in Louisville had probably 65 or so. Then they combined them all altogether. Last month I went to a retirement for a reserve Warrant Officer and he told me that there are now less than 50 Reserves in Sector Ohio Valley.

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – Well, that was pretty much well, one of our constraints and this is an active and a reserve constraint is our training capacity. Its entry level training capacity, bringing them into Cape May or the Academy depending on whether officer enlisted and our ability to send in through an A school. We have unfortunately extremely low waits for some a schools right now. That's why we bought Birmingham Southern. You probably saw we bought a whole new training center. Very exciting. We're in the process of getting it completely manned. I think the intent is to have the first class graduate just to get through this fall.

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So it can be a bit of a show game of what training is held where as we try to expand this, but beyond that, the training capacity in the field is a constraint. It's a constraint for our active members and it's a constraint for our reserve members, especially because our reserves have to have training capacity at the locations they are. Quite frankly, the upper Midwest. The units that we have there and their alignment with the reserve mission by law is limited that there's not a lot of training capacity. So our ability to recruit and have reservists drilling there, it's only so much, you know, sector. Lower Mississippi River is not a very big unit on the active side. So expecting a training capacity for the reserve to even be close to that. It is not in alignment, particularly with what our reserve missions are. We are working right now to expand the training capacity in some very targeted ways. In fact, the Reserve is literally next week taking over the flood plot mission in the Upper Midwest and the Western Rivers region, which greatly expands our training capacity and takes us back to a mission that is 100% contingency based. So it's great alignment with that. We're putting reservists back at some units that they haven't been in more recent years, so that gives our active units a little more flexibility. And when they're in a surge and it gives us more training capacity for how we can recruit and retain those members in specific places.

**Retired VADM Nunan, new CGNRC Co-Chair** – Four years ago when I retired, we had just launched this cool mentoring app. Is that still going? We could all be members of this Mentoring app. It would allow for quite a bit of things where you could go on and say, hey, I want to be a mentor, I need a mentor. Some of the mentoring could be one-on-one. I'm a senior person, but I need a junior mentor because I need to figure out what's going on in the world. It could be I want a group of mentors in my rating. It maybe I want to talk to somebody who's actually been through retirement as a reservist. And so I don't know if we've gotten in on that.

**Retired RADM Austin, CGNRC Flag Co-Chair** – I'll give you an offline. The whole background of retirees and mentoring. It's a technology problem. We tried to do our own. We never caught fire because it's intensive, but maybe that we can talk about. People not on the dot mail in access the dot mail.

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – That's a great point. And that is something I just put a note that we can sit down and include that in the Campaign to Retain or something and it may be a dot.mil issue but it also gives us a chance to look at how can we do something about it. There's a whole point.

**Retired VADM Nunan, new CGNRC Co-Chair** – Hopefully it's not a dot mail issue, because the whole point we try to get it off the dot mail so that it was something that people could use. How did you navigate this whole reserved career in retirement and you

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know, so we could be part of that mentoring network if you could figure it out. And I'll just say, you would need to figure it out for us and invite us in. Yeah. And then we'll be there.

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – I'm going to note that. I can hand it over the Campaign to Retain, so that'll be part of the team and what they're looking at.

**Retired CWO4 Ray Bryant, Charleston RRC** – Talking about planning for retirement, we need to start earlier with the junior folks on planning retirements. I use as an example a Command Master Chief who recently retired from Charleston. I sat down with him to discuss his retirement plan. He had always been living in the moment. He and his family. So their financial status wasn't as great as they wanted. And they really didn't have any idea where they were going. So I mean, we got to start earlier

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – Unfortunately, that is a story that we hear more often than we wish and and that's part of where we're looking at on the campaign to retain, particularly with the growth of the blended retirement system. It changes the entire ballpark, you know, for those of us under the legacy system, it's 20 or bust. That's not the case under BRS. And so that's part of why we're looking on the Campaign to Retain. The importance of a lot of really direct communication about what that means for their ultimate retirement. What are they doing? What their entitlements are and when they retire, if they want to stay Coast Guard, be part of our Coast Guard civilian family, a lot of opportunities there that work with how we can make sure that we're communicating earlier better because not everyone is in the same situation.

**Retired YN1 Robert Keogh, Hawaii RRC** – Very quickly. I'd like for the Reserve Yeoman to have a designated C School and maybe a different A School.

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – It's on our wish list right now. Our short term is publications. PPC's done an amazing job of trying to fit out some very targeted training on really specific things and we are working with FORCECOM on a reserve administration Online World of Learning (CG-OWL) kind of course, including some of the great material that's already been developed so that we can at least target it while we wait. Quite frankly, money is needed to have more dedicated training.

**Retired VADM Nunan, new CGNRC Flag Co-Chair** – Hi everybody. I'll get introduced later, but just real quick, I wanted to do something before RADM Danko left and it's a great example of retirees continuing to serve and also sometimes how challenging it is to get our service to the thing that we want to do. So just right off the top. I'm wearing a scarf that Captain Joanne McCaffrey, class of 1980 from the Coast Guard Academy, designed. And it involves all the federal service academies and 50 years of service. And so, in any case, that was wonderful. You can still buy them also wearing the belt, but another retiree and

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some of you may know him. His name is Commander John McCarthy and he was really just inspired by, you know, the service and the resilience of the women that started at the Coast Guard Academy in 1976 and to this day. And so this is a 50 year anniversary for women from that moment. So John, on his own, has made these little special pins and I'm going to give out three of them today. So part of what I'm going to have to figure out, now that I have like thousands of them in my house, is how to get them out. So this is like a perfect example of what we're trying to do. How do we get these great things we want to do to help people? So I have three I'm going to present today. I'll just read it real quick, celebrating 50 years of Coast Guard Academy women. Tougher than Teague, this commemorative PIN honors female graduates of the Coast Guard Academy classes 1980 to 2026. Each pin contains a piece of the original teak deck of the Coast Guard cutter Eagle. The attributes of teak wood are toughness, stability, and resilience in the maritime environment. Teak links these attributes with the fortitude of the female graduates. And on the back, it says the historic value of the wood parallels the significant contribution of female graduates of the Coast Guard Academy to the Coast Guard and the nation. Each pin is handcrafted from original Eagle deck, teak and American holly. The teak was salvaged from scraps discarded after the 1979 renovation of the eagle and privately held since then, and this is his note to the lawyers, all materials in labor for the occasion of the pins have been donated for the project. So I have a few I'm going to present today for the Flag officers. John actually made these little eagles that are like a bouquet of the eagle. And if you wear the pin straight, it's actually on the correct angle of the bowsprit. So I would like to present one to Rear Admiral Austin Coast Guard Academy class of 1985. I would like to present another Eagle pin to Rear Admiral Tiffany Danko, class of 95, and really feels like a full circle moment for you. Being here as CG-WM. And then the thing I have thousands of are these round pins and Kathy is going to have to show people her. It's almost like a Polaris pin and same thing with the teak and with the holly and it's pretty special. So I'd like to present this PIN to Captain Kathy Tiongson class of 89.

**RADM Danko (CG-WM)** – Presentation of Meritorious Public Service Awards to two NRHD volunteers and thank-you letter to all NRHD volunteers, with all mailed with CG-WM challenge coin to NRHD volunteers.