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21 July 2017

Association of Naval Services Officers
National President, RDML William Rodriguez, USN (Ret)
134 Berry Creek Dr
Flat Rock, NC 28731

Dear RDML Rodriguez,

I am writing to request your organization's support for a new initiative sponsored by the Coast Guard Headquarters Office of Cutter Forces (CG-751), the "Heart of the Service." CG-751 is sponsoring Eight Bells – A Sea Service Celebration that honors the everyday traditions common aboard Coast Guard cutters, highlights shared experiences across all afloat platforms and recognizes the hard work done by members on board every cutter. The tolling of eight bells is one of our most lasting of nautical traditions as it symbolizes the beginning of the next watch. In early sailing days, a half-hour glass of sand would keep the time and as it was rotated, an individual stroke would be added to the tolling of the bell; two strokes for every hour of a four-hour watch.

Our Coast Guard grew from Alexander Hamilton's ripple of an idea that "a few armed vessels, judiciously stationed at the entrances of our ports, might at small expense be made useful sentinels of the laws" to a mighty groundswell as today's world premiere maritime service through the efforts of dedicated professionals serving in and supporting all types of cutters. On 18 October 1974, the Office of Personnel promulgated the Coast Guard Cutterman Insignia program, to "recognize the contributions and qualifications of our personnel..." Today, the Cutterman pin represents the personal fulfillment of the professional training and sea service associated with a seagoing Coast Guard career. Personnel who achieve this distinction stand out as significant contributors to the seagoing Coast Guard. Additionally, there are many serving who do not wear Cutterman's pins yet make considerable contributions to the cutter community, and the Sea Service celebration calls special attention to their contributions as well.

As a Service, the Coast Guard has numerous awards to recognize stellar performers across all communities, but this celebration is the first to recognize all cutters. Eight Bells – A Sea Service Celebration is intended to recognize the hard work done by everyone who serves on a cutter, including career cuttermen, cuttermen-to-be, and those that support cutters, every day, all week, all year, on every type of cutter. Despite the diversity in missions and capabilities among the cutter classes, the time-tested sea going traditions unite and bind the entire cutter community together. A new crewmember can go aboard a cutter of any size or class and be comforted by the shared traditions of ringing of eight bells and testing the ship's alarms and whistle at noon, completing underway checklists, checking the setting of material condition Yoke, the closing of the brow at first call to morning and evening colors, and, of course, 1000 coffee break for the crew among many others.

As part of Eight Bells – A Sea Service Celebration, CG-751 is encouraging all Cuttermen, operational commanders and cutter support functions to participate in the following events:

a. Local events: All commands are encouraged to host appropriate functions that celebrate sea service traditions at some point during the month of October. Suggestions include: local Cuttermen's Calls, Dinings-In, or cutter round-ups with friendly competitions (DC Olympics, Shiphandling challenge, etc.). These local events are where your organization's local chapters can offer the greatest impact by assisting local units with coordination, or sponsoring some type of local recognition effort. CG-751 will maintain a list of local events, promote all events enterprise-wide, and coordinate social media coverage of all events.

b. An audio/video contest: we are soliciting submission of original audio or video submission of no more than 4 minutes around the theme of Eight Bells: A Sea Service Celebration. Submissions must incorporate the actual sounding of eight bells, and should highlight cutters' sea service traditions. All submissions will be posted on social media platforms; winning submissions will earn exclusive bragging rights.

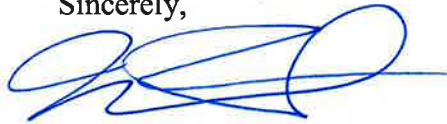
c. Additionally, we are requesting senior leadership, including the Commandant, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Gold and Silver Ancient Mariners, and Ombudsmen at Large, make phone calls to select cutters to express their appreciation to the individuals who live and support life at sea.

You are key stakeholders in the cutter community, and we need your support in making this inaugural Sea Service Celebration a success! We understand we are working on a short time line, but your efforts supporting the celebration will be invaluable as we formally recognize and pay tribute to the sacrifices of our sea going and sea supporting community.

My points of contact for the Sea Service Celebration are LCDR Natalia Best (Natalia.M.Best@uscg.mil, 202-372-1041) and CDR Charlotte Mundy (Charlotte.Mundy@uscg.mil, 202-372-2328). Please contact them with any questions or suggestions.

Thank you for your continued and generous support of Coast Guard members over the years!

Sincerely,



Mark A. Frankford
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Office of Cutter Forces