



# Diversity & Inclusion Corner

## 11<sup>th</sup> District-South Region



### 2023 Diversity & Inclusion Team



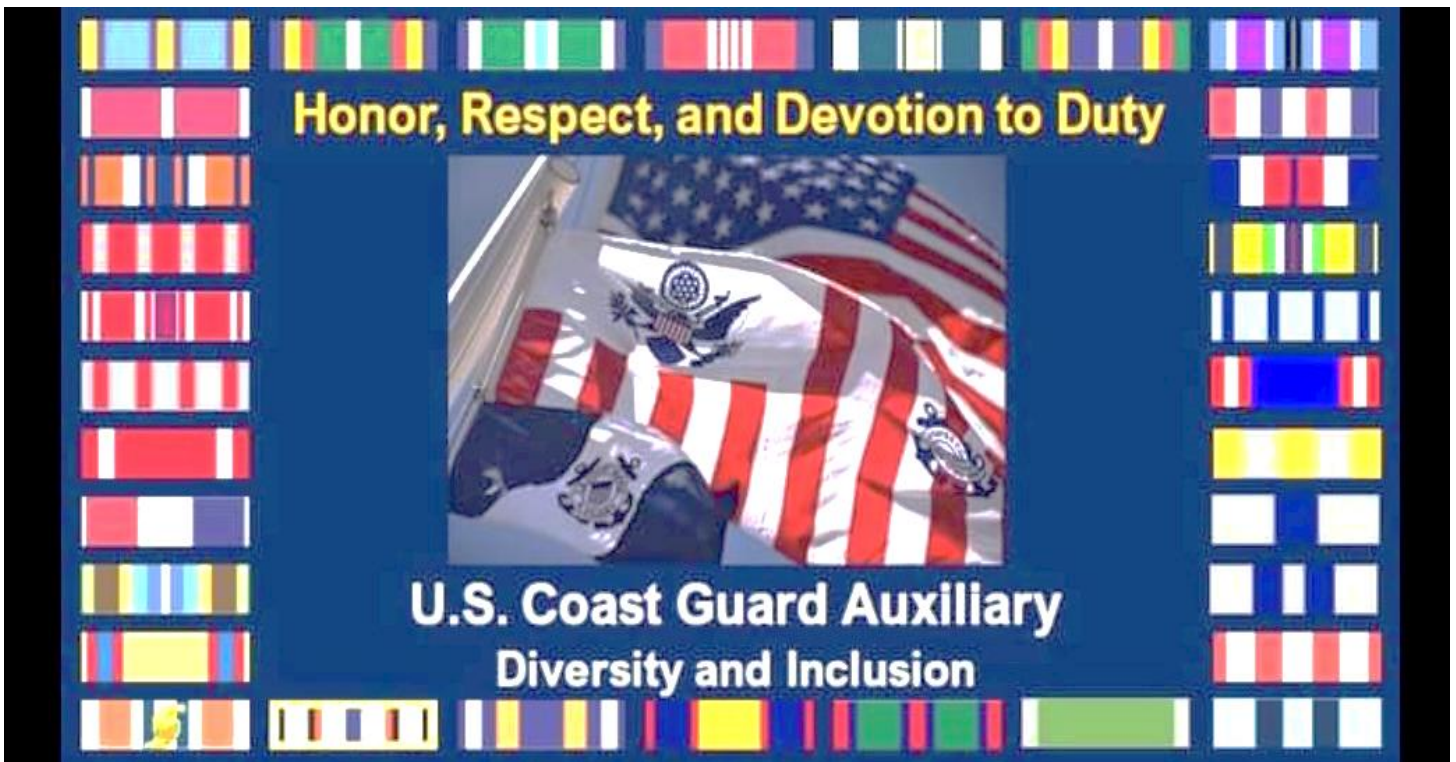
**Felix B. Lopez**  
DSO-DV

**David Lieberman**  
ADSO-DV South

**Ronald Lindsey**  
ADSO-DV North

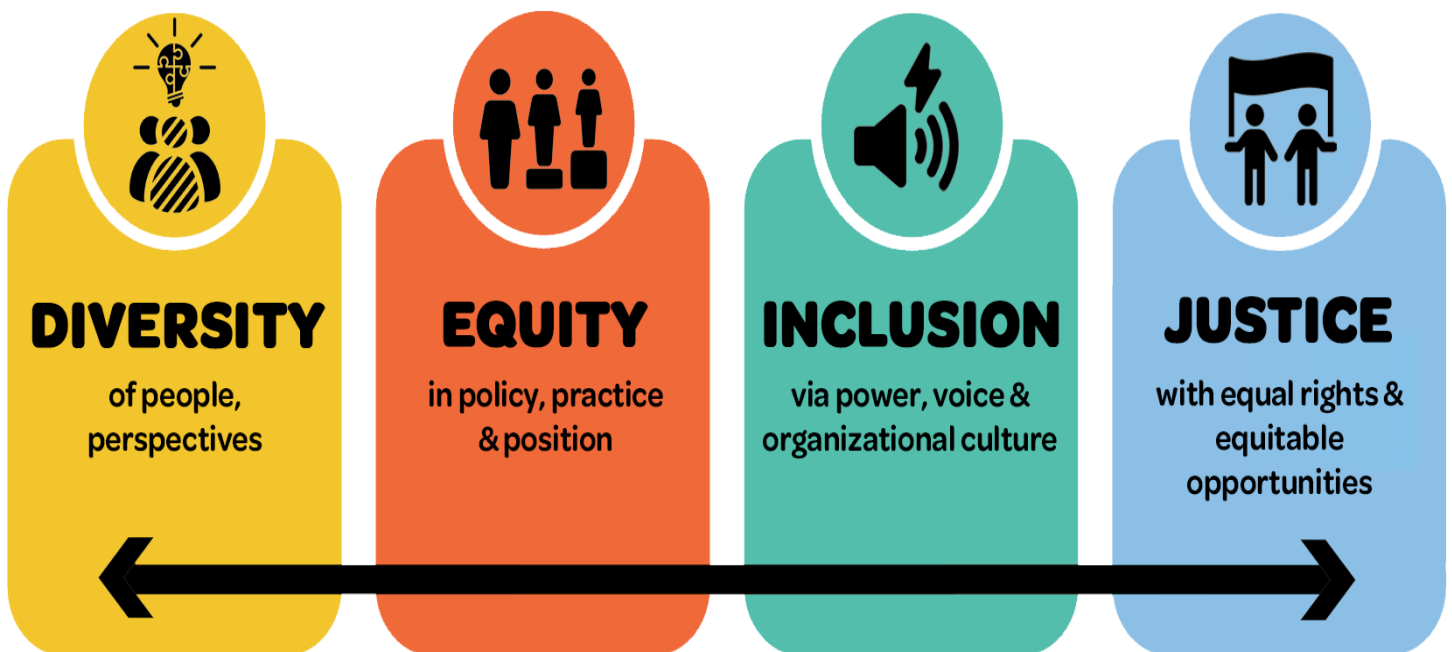
**Eyvaine Walker**  
ADSO-DV Newsletter

11<sup>th</sup> District-South Region



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## AUXILIARY COMMANDANT LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Presented to:

1. ADSO-DV South David Lieberman
2. ADSO-DV North Ronald Lindsey
3. ADSO-DV Newsletter Eyvaine Walker



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD  
WASHINGTON 20593

12 April 2023

From: Commandant

Subj: AUXILIARY LETTER OF COMMENDATION

1. I note with pride and am pleased to commend you for your performance of duty during the period 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2022, while serving as Assistant District Staff Officer-Diversity and Inclusion. During this period, you worked diligently to achieve both the highest number of new NACO Three Star Awards and the highest percentage increase in the nation of units receiving the Eagle Awards from the National Diversity and Inclusion Directorate. Your accomplishments created a significant positive impact within the district, which, in large part due to your direct efforts, was ranked second overall in the entire Auxiliary. Out of the nine divisions in the district, you assisted four divisions with achieving the coveted 100% NACO Three Star Awards and with the lauded Eagle Award from the National Diversity and Inclusion Directorate. You also orchestrated and monitored the "Diversity Moments" exercise, an interaction and discussion of the division and flotilla diversity activities during their monthly meetings. This exercise proved instrumental toward the completion of the NACO Three Star Award application process. You further assisted in publishing and distributing the "Diversity and Inclusion Corner" newsletter, the first newsletter of its kind, focusing on diversity and Inclusion in the Auxiliary. You further assisted in creating the "Diversity Personality of the Quarter," another first in the auxiliary. This recognition awarded recipients a Certificate of Recognition signed by the District Commodore, a Diversity Challenge Coin as well as featured them in the Diversity and Inclusion Corner newsletter.

2. You are commended for your outstanding performance of duty. By your meritorious service, you have upheld the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

3. You are hereby authorized to wear the Auxiliary Commandant's Letter of Commendation Ribbon Bar and Miniature Medal.

For the Commandant,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christina M. Jones".

C. M. JONES

Commander, U. S. Coast Guard  
Director of Auxiliary, Eleventh Coast Guard District

## Diversity & Inclusion Directorate 11<sup>th</sup> District-South Region

### “Eagle” Certificates of Special Recognition



## AUXILIARY COMMENDATION MEDAL

Presented to: DSO-DV Felix Lopez

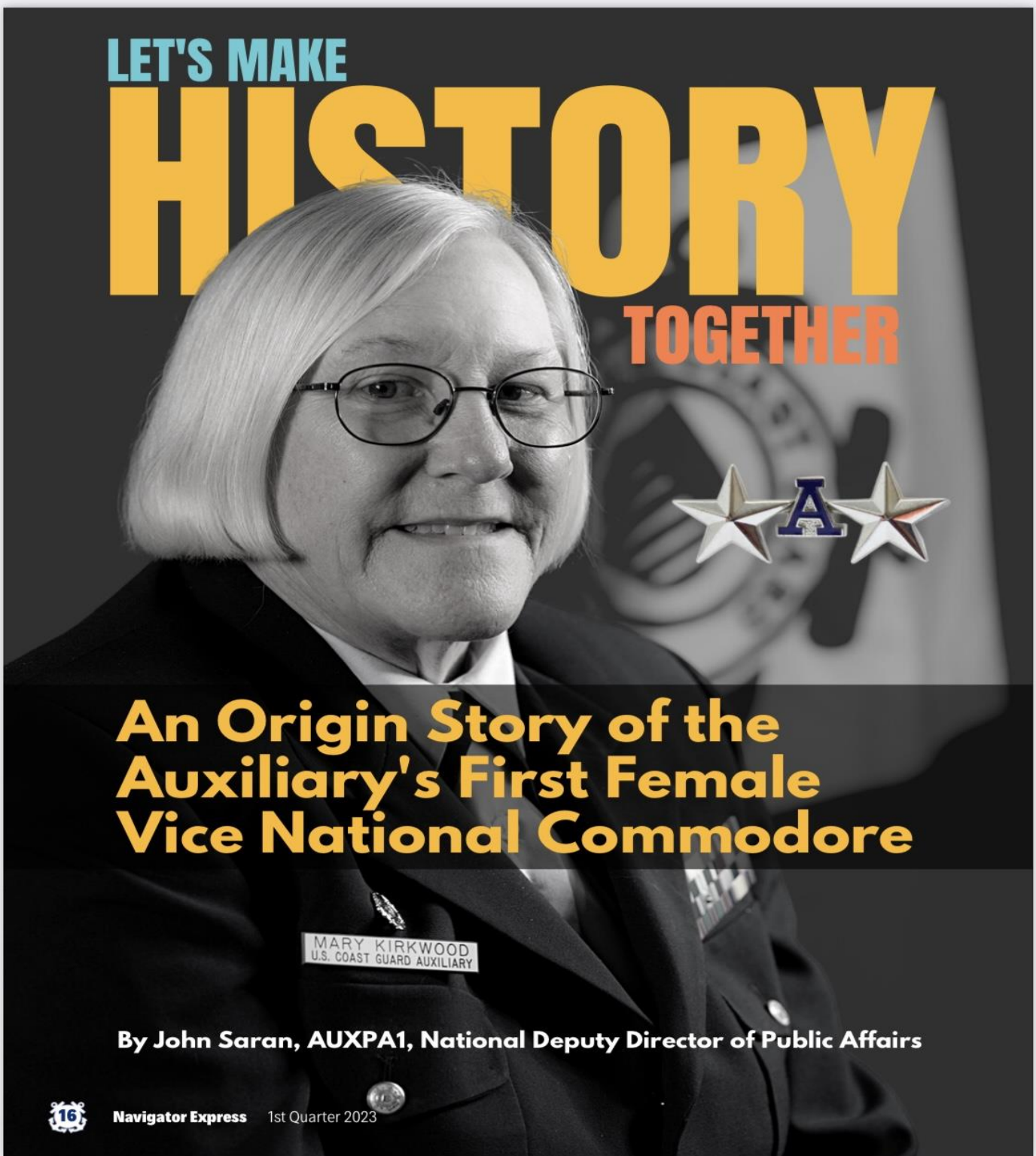
CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE AUXILIARY COMMENDATION MEDAL  
TO  
FELIX B. LOPEZ  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Auxiliarist LOPEZ is cited for outstanding achievement while serving as the District Staff Officer for Diversity and Inclusion, Eleventh Coast Guard District Southern Region from January 2018 to December 2022. During this period, Auxiliarist LOPEZ enhanced the National Commodore’s (NACO) Three Star Award Flotilla and Division performance with a 260% participation increase. District 11 Southern Region earned second place in the entire Coast Guard Auxiliary and earned the coveted Eagle Award from National Diversity and Inclusion Directorate, enabling the Auxiliary to achieve its strategic goal. Auxiliarist LOPEZ championed a “Diversity and Inclusion Corner” newsletter focusing on Diversity and Inclusion from around the district. Auxiliarist LOPEZ was also instrumental in creating the “Diversity Personality of the Quarter,” which awarded members a challenge coin. These contributions sparked awareness and improvements at the highest levels of the Directorate and Auxiliary. Auxiliarist LOPEZ dedication, judgement and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.



# COMO Mary Kirkwood

## Vice National Commodore



Commodore Mary Kirkwood rose through the ranks of Auxiliary leadership over a twenty year-period by leveraging her forty years of nursing experience and her passion for teaching. Her initial entry to the National Bridge started with her term as Deputy National Commodore, Operations & Pacific Area. Her Auxiliary experience in operations and network of commodores made the transition from district leadership seamless. She then made history on November 1, 2022, starting a term as the first female Vice National Commodore of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Her success and leadership are an inspiration to us all and will guide future generations of Auxiliarists toward leadership. COMO Kirkwood agreed to do a virtual Zoom interview with the Auxiliary's Public Affairs Directorate prior to the 2023 NTRAIN in honor of Women's History Month:

### ① What inspired you to join the Auxiliary in 2002?

I was drawn to serve in the Auxiliary in the aftermath of the tragic events of 9/11. I had a profound sense of patriotism, especially being a Girl Scout all of my life and wanting to give back throughout my whole life. I felt I had to do something and make the world a little better. We were all hurting in those few months and it motivated me to join and ultimately become boat crew qualified in a month period. I also had two really good friends in the Auxiliary and heard great things of what they accomplished. What I came to realize very quickly is that we are the eyes along the vast coastline in the San Francisco Bay area. There are several active duty and reserve units in the area, but they rotate every two years. We are here all the time and sometimes for our entire lives. We are that consistent presence that can always be called upon. The last thing I will say is that I love the training, camaraderie, and fellowship in the Auxiliary.

### ③ How have the first five months of the term gone as the first woman to serve as VNACO in the Auxiliary?

It has been a steep learning curve. My scope of work has expanded more and more. Going from DCO to DNACO was a big jump and required getting to know the other districts, but I knew the role. The VNACO position is more involved than I thought. There is no official job description, and most folks down the chain don't know what I do. But I am enjoying it now, more than three months ago when I was just getting my bearings. I really appreciate working with the NACO, COMO Gus Formato. His insight into inclusion and supporting women in our organization is paramount. I look forward to helping him implement the strategic plan over the next two years.

### ② What was your best Auxiliary-related experience in over 20+ years of service?

Highlights for me include moving up the chain over the past few decades focusing on member training and public education. I was a District Staff Officer - Member Training for several years. I love helping people get another competency or qualification. It comes down to understanding what they are struggling with and helping them achieve their goal. I love the challenge of finding ways to connect with people. I also love the people – as I mentioned, my two good friends are still here and have 25-30 years each in the Auxiliary. The friendships and teamwork to solve issues, such as towing a boat or explaining another course, make this all worth the time. Over the years, I have loved seeing people excel, look good, and feel good for what they are doing.

I have also had some fun times on night patrols where we would get wet and cold. But we had fun and would laugh with our shipmates. Even later, every time we bring the seas stories up, we start laughing. Those are the memories that you hold on to.

### ④ What should be the underlying theme or guidepost for 2023?

We have talked a lot about it today, but the main initiative should be inclusion. That will help us with recruitment and retention. The more we include people and recruit/retain our talent, the better off we will be. For all decisions, leaders should ask themselves whether it advances inclusion. Decisions should be made to lift people up and help our members succeed.

[www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org)



### ⑤ What have we done well for women in the Auxiliary as an organization? Are there areas where we can do better?

Advancing women into senior leadership positions is what the Auxiliary has done well recently. COMO Linda Merryman has been a DNACO for over six years, and then me as DNACO and VNACO. I was elected from a pool of two strong male candidates. I think my election may be a message for the future of our organization; that women are respected and women can make it to high leadership positions. With me in this role and any woman in this role, it gives our more junior Auxiliary leaders hope that they can get there too.

We have not done well in some areas. I have heard stories of women being blocked from elections as FCs or other positions in flotilla leadership. Since the flotilla is the entry point, these women are then shut out of leadership forever. I have also heard stories of coxswains saying they will not allow females on their boats. These stories are not great, and we are working on getting to a point where this does not happen.

As an organization, we need to focus on inclusion. It is part of our National Commodore's watchwords and is a key imperative in the 2023-2024 National strategic plan recently published by our NACO. We have an Auxiliary representative on the U.S. Coast Guard's Women's Leadership Initiative. We are making women more aware of opportunities and will support them as we go forward. We need to make sure they are getting the support they need and clear any obstacles. We cannot tolerate any roadblocks when moving forward in lifting up women and other minority communities.

### ⑥ Is women-driven and focused training, fellowship, and mentorship opportunities being considered by leadership?

We are working on something that is in the beginning phases. We are forming an advisory group to help us become more inclusive for women and other minority communities. We have had one meeting thus far, and the goals are to provide support and training. We do not want to exclude anyone. Is there a need for training women – yes! There is a huge opportunity to improve our mentorship programs at all levels. Our Training Directorate is revising our mentorship program and following in the footsteps of the active duty who recently revised their program. The Commandant is set on trying to build our talent in the Coast Guard.

It comes down to finding out how we can help support our minority communities at the lower levels. The main thing is to make sure people are able to obtain what they want – certification, qualification, or position. Mentorship is the key for that. Every person in the Auxiliary has something to give. We need to try to match people with mentors who can help them achieve their goals. The initial advisory group will be expanded into a broader working group that will ensure representation from diverse groups in our membership.

### ⑦ What can the Auxiliary do to recruit more women?

Targeted recruiting is the key right now. We need chaplains, so we recruit from theology institutes. We need food service, so we target those culinary schools. We are in need of research to see how other volunteer organizations draw women and then we can tap into that. Perhaps we could find a way to recruit from women's sorority programs. We also need to focus on retention. Twenty percent of our members are female. We cannot afford to lose our workforce. Mentorship is key. From exit interviews, we have learned that most people leave in the first two years due to leadership in the flotilla. Nobody helped them succeed. Mentorship can help retain, while targeted recruiting can help supplement areas that we are looking for. The International Affairs Directorate is a good example of that – they have a list of languages that are missing in their arsenal, so they do targeted recruiting to find interpreters.



## ⑧ What is your vision for the Auxiliary in this immediate term and beyond?

We are going to see some changes in the next two years. Our NACO wants to ensure we are prepared for the future. Inclusion will help strengthen the Auxiliary by ensuring we have the talent to support new missions and activities. We are working on a new mentorship program that will help our members become more productive. We also want to make sure our members are ready – we are augmenting our Training Directorate for new missions. We also must adjust leadership training at every level to take on new projects and missions. RBS will always be our #1 mission, but we are being tasked to do more and need to be ready for the next set of missions. If we don't expand and extend our skill set, we won't be able to answer the call from the Coast Guard. I am glad that our Directorates are working with their counterparts at Coast Guard HQ – finding out what is coming down the line and building the skills and training necessary for it.

We are one Coast Guard – one big family of talented members and need to make sure we have skill sets that are competitive and help us in the future. We cannot sit back on our laurels.

It is an incredible time to be an Auxiliarist. We are being asked to do things that we couldn't have imagined five years ago. We need to be ready for the next challenge and growth will be crucial for our organization to remain relevant. As we do more, we will have more success in recruitment. We need to target different groups with different skill sets. Each of the Directorates has their work cut out for them – we are being asked to do more and more. But I know our members are up to it – when you give them a task, they will find the way. We are 21,000 strong and an active force multiplier for the Coast Guard.



## BACKGROUND



Commodore Mary Kirkwood resides in northern California and joined the Auxiliary in 2002, following the tragic events of 9-11. She has served as the Deputy National Commodore for the Pacific Area and Operations, supporting five Pacific Area districts as well as the Operations Directorates of Response, Prevention, International Affairs, and Emergency Management before assuming the office of Vice National Commodore.

Commodore Kirkwood retired from nursing after a 40-year career in Critical Care and Nursing Management. She currently volunteers 1-2 days per week at the TRACEN Petaluma Health Services clinic, and once per week at the DIRAUX office of District 11N. In addition, she teaches First Aid, CPR/AED, Pediatric First Aid/CPR, Police Officer's Safety Training (POST), Child and Babysitting course, and Advanced Cardiac Life Support.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Each Auxiliary office, past and present, is represented by a distinct flag and pennant. The pennant to the left represents the current Vice National Commodore of the Auxiliary.

[www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org)





## Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month

1 May - 31 May 2023



## 2022 Federal Asian Pacific American Council Uniformed Services Award announced

By Patrick Ferraris, Coast Guard Office  
of Civil Rights / Published June 22, 2022

Lt. Maria Villanueva, Port State Control Division Branch Chief, Sector Delaware Bay, is the Coast Guard's recipient of the 2022 Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) Uniformed Services Award. This honor recognizes military members who have made significant contributions to the advancement and promotion of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) within their respective services.

Growing up in Baguio City, Philippines, Villanueva notes her father as the person who motivated her towards military service and taught her various principles that sparked her desire to serve others.

"My dad inspired me to join the U.S. Coast Guard. He's a proud, retired Army sergeant first class who served in the Vietnam War," Villanueva said. "He also founded the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 124 in Baguio City, Philippines. He was committed to supporting and uplifting the members of his community and he



220610-G-JQ448-001

Lt. Maria Villanueva, Port State Control Division Branch Chief, Sector Delaware Bay, is the Coast Guard's recipient of the 2022 Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) Uniformed Services Award.



May is Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month. During this month and throughout the year, the Coast Guard celebrates the innovative contributions and accomplishments of [Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders \(https://www.history.uscg.mil/Browse-by-Topic/Notable-People/Minorities/Asian-Pacific-Americans/\)](https://www.history.uscg.mil/Browse-by-Topic/Notable-People/Minorities/Asian-Pacific-Americans/) to our nation and to the military. The Coast Guard AANHPI community includes more than 50 ethnic groups that speak more than 100 languages. In addition, the Coast Guard Academy Class of 2022 had the highest number of Asian American and Pacific Islanders graduate in its history.



(<https://www.dvidshub.net/image/7264817/coast-guard-announces-2022-fapac-award-recipient>)

The Federal Asian Pacific American Council designated the 2023 theme as "Advancing Leaders through Opportunity." In the Coast Guard, we create career opportunities for our current members and new recruits with a focus on building the next generation of leaders.

This includes people like Lt. Maria Villanueva, the [2022 USCG winner of the Federal Asian Pacific American Council \(FAPAC\) Uniformed Services Award \(https://www.mycg.uscg.mil/News/Article/3061080/2022-federal-asian-pacific-american-council-uniformed-services-award-announced/\)](https://www.mycg.uscg.mil/News/Article/3061080/2022-federal-asian-pacific-american-council-uniformed-services-award-announced/). In May, we will share MYCG news stories featuring some of the great members of the Coast Guard.

### Source:

Civil Rights awards like the FAPAC Uniformed Services Award helps to maximize the Coast Guard's overall mission effectiveness through recognition of members' accomplishments and contributions to Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity in minority communities and Partnership in Education (PIE) programs. For more information, please contact [Juan Torres](#).

The FAPAC-USCG Chapter is a non-profit organization and Coast Guard affinity group dedicated to the AAPI workforce and community. You can visit [uscgfapac.org](https://uscgfapac.org) and join the growing FAPAC-USCG community.

For more Civil Rights news and information, subscribe to the "On Deck" monthly newsletter through [GovDelivery](#). Read archived copies of the newsletter in the Civil Rights Directorate's [newsroom](#).



May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This year's theme, selected by the Federal [Asian Pacific American Council](#), is "Advancing Leaders Through Opportunity," which builds on a leadership advancement theme.

As we celebrate this month, we remember that the Coast Guard Auxiliary is stronger together with a diverse and inclusive workforce, with all members valued for their skills and contributions.

Today, we spotlight Jihwan Baek, an Auxiliarist since 2008. Serving out of 054-22-01 (Flotilla Curtis Bay), she currently holds the positions

of International Affairs Outreach, Branch Chief-INDOPACOM and Public Affairs Photo Corps, Branch Assistant-Archivist. She is certified as an Auxiliary Interpreter and has earned the advanced AUXOP award.

### *What does Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage month mean to you?*

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month resonates deeply within my being, carrying profound significance. It stands as an exuberant tribute, casting a radiant light upon the extraordinary contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in shaping our society. This momentous month ignites an unyielding fire within me, a fire that reminds me of the power of my unique identity, one that is not merely acknowledged, but fervently celebrated. It infuses me with an indomitable sense of empowerment, a firm pride in being Asian American. With joy in my heart, I offer my skills and services through my lens, eager to be an integral part of organizations that fervently raise awareness. Together, we kindle the flames of change, illuminating the path towards a brighter future, where diversity is embraced, celebrated, and woven into the very fabric of our collective existence.

### *Who is your inspiration?*

My inspiration is not confined to a single individual; rather, it arises from the collective tapestry of people I've encountered throughout my life. Each person, whether they brought goodness or challenges, has left an indelible mark on my spirit. Yet, it is through my volunteer career that I have found extraordinary inspiration. The camaraderie of fellow shipmates and the unwavering

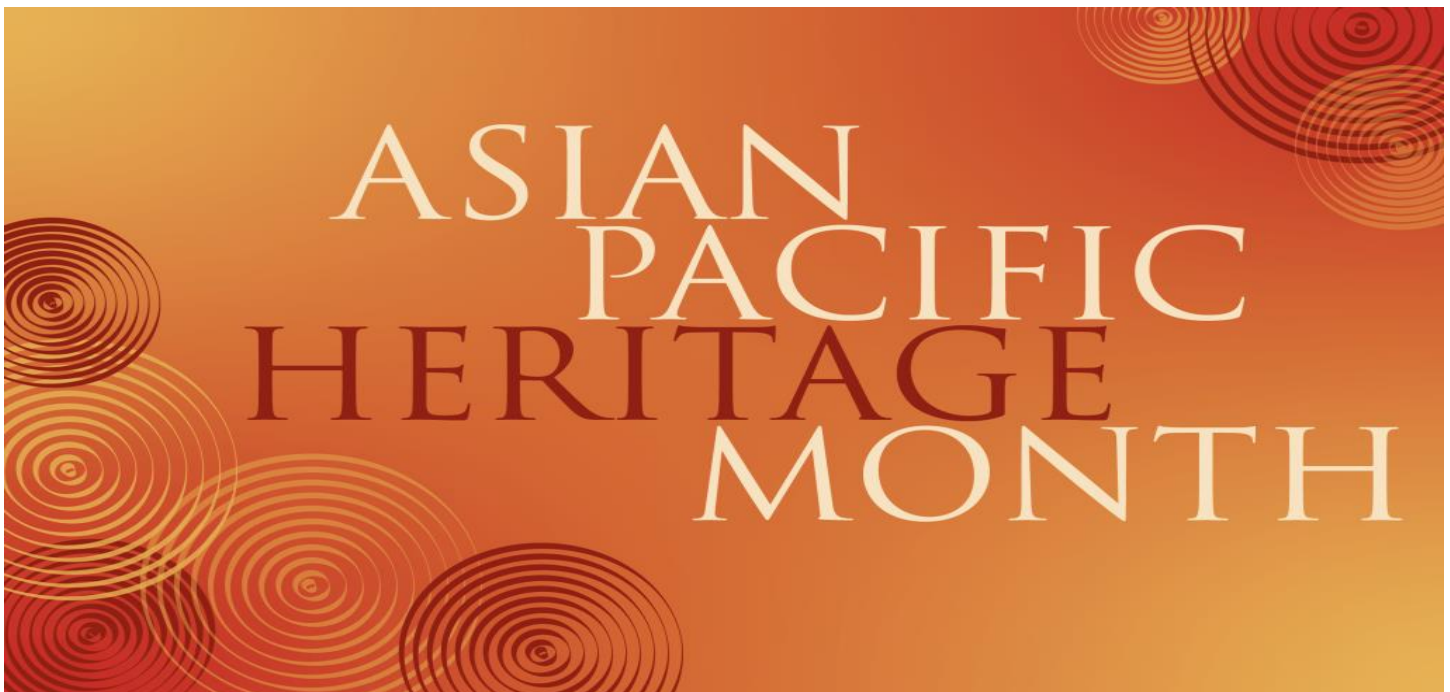
dedication of those with profound spirits of service have truly awakened my passion. Witnessing their selflessness and deep commitment to making a difference gratifies me with hope and belief in the innate goodness of humanity. I encourage each reader to embrace the power within to inspire others because it can create a ripple of inspiration that shapes a better world.

***What does it mean to you to be in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary?***

Being an Auxiliarist means much more than volunteering—it signifies a steadfast commitment to serving my country in a unique and impactful way. My journey commenced 15 years ago, driven by a deep longing for meaningful influence. Little did I know that it would guide me to the pinnacle of my career as a Branch Chief within the International Affairs Directorate, where I discovered my true passion and purpose.

In my role, I embrace daily growth and challenges that transcend limits, enabling personal and professional development. By willingly devoting my time, being part of this remarkable team enriches me beyond measure.

Standing shoulder to shoulder with fellow Auxiliarists, entrusted with demanding responsibilities, is a humbling honor. It is also a testament to the profound meaning of dedication and service, molding our characters and purposes. Through my journey in the Auxiliary, I have learned that genuine fulfillment arises from what we give and gain—the wisdom, growth, and great sense of purpose accompanying our extraordinary expeditions.



Source: Interview and photo illustration by Deborah Heldt Cordone, AUXPA1



# US Coast Guard Auxiliary Eleventh District-South Region DTRAIN in Woodland Hills, California

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TEAM



Left to Right: ADSO-DV Ronald Lindsey, ADSO-DV Newsletter Eyvaine Walker, DSO-DV Felix Lopez, ADSO-DV David Lieberman

DSO-DV Felix Lopez received a USCG Auxiliary Commendation Medal

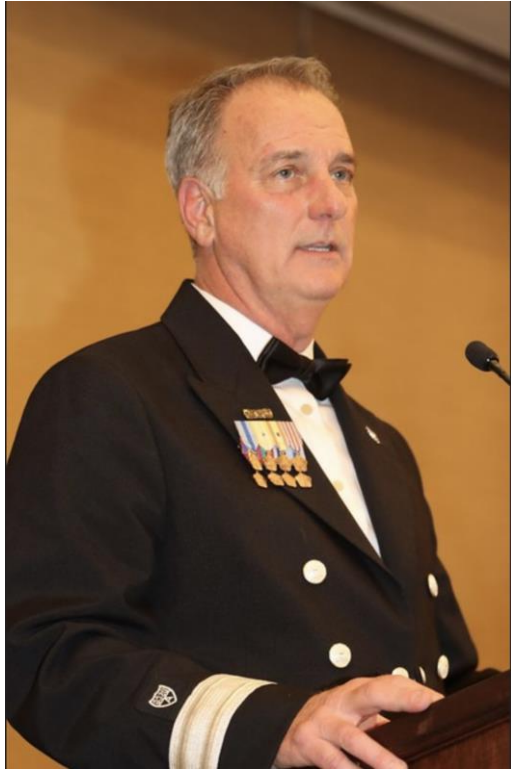
## Eagle Awardees



Left to Right: ADSO-DV Ronald Lindsey, DCapt San Diego/Inland Robert Yslas Jr., DSO-DV Felix Lopez

Left to Right: ADSO-DV Ronald Lindsey, Division 7 DCDR Robert Hamming, DCapt-North, Rudy Cortez, DSO-DV Felix Lopez

DSO-DV Felix Lopez with Division 6 DCDR Mark Forster



**COMO Michael Bozarth-District Commodore**



**DCOS Rodney Donohoo**



**CAPT Ryan Manning- Los Angeles/Long Beach Sector Commander**





**Widow of the late IPDCO COMO Charlie Geiger receiving the Aux Meritorious Medal (Posthumous)**



**Lighter Moments with the DCO**

**Left to Right: DCapt -N Rudy Cortez, DCOS Rodney Donohoo, San Diego/Inland Robert Yslas Jr., Front: COMO Michael Bozarth**



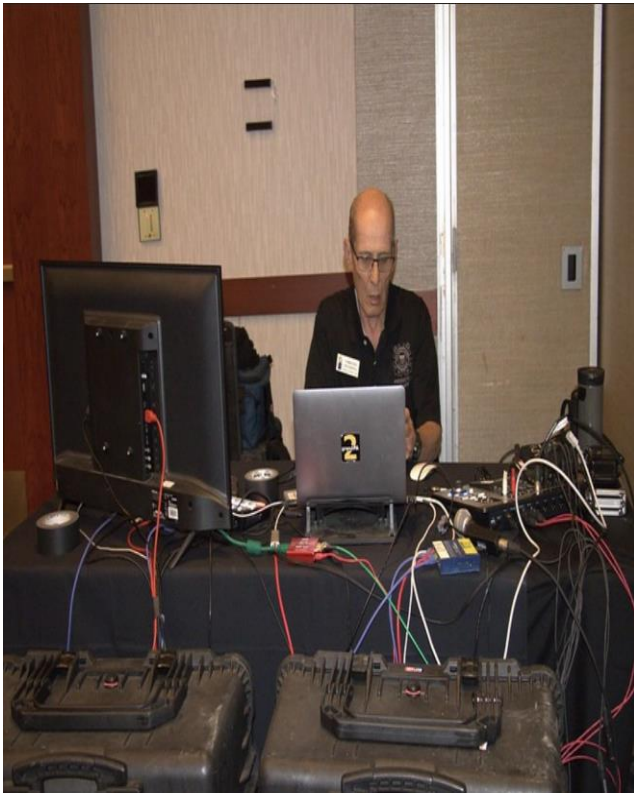
**Banquet Food**



**11<sup>th</sup> District-South Region Auxiliary Honor Guards in Action**



**Ringling of the bell for those who has crossed the bar**



COMO Chris Harshfield at the Command Center



Welcome Desk



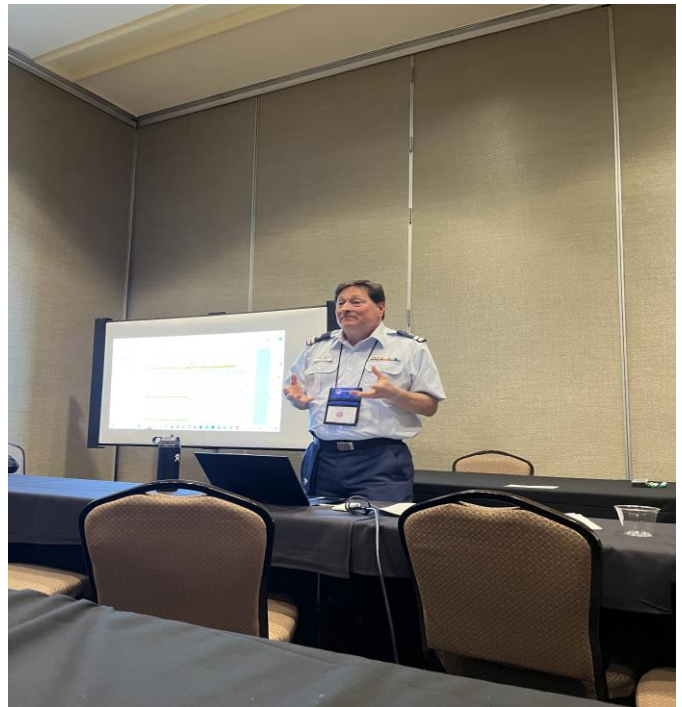
Materials Center



Coastie with its Certified Operators lead by Rick Weiss



**Auxiliary Flotilla Leadership Academy  
Participants and Instructors**



**ADSO-DV David Lieberman conducting a D & I workshop**



**Invocation Time at DTrain**



**Invocation Time with Senior Leadership in prayer**





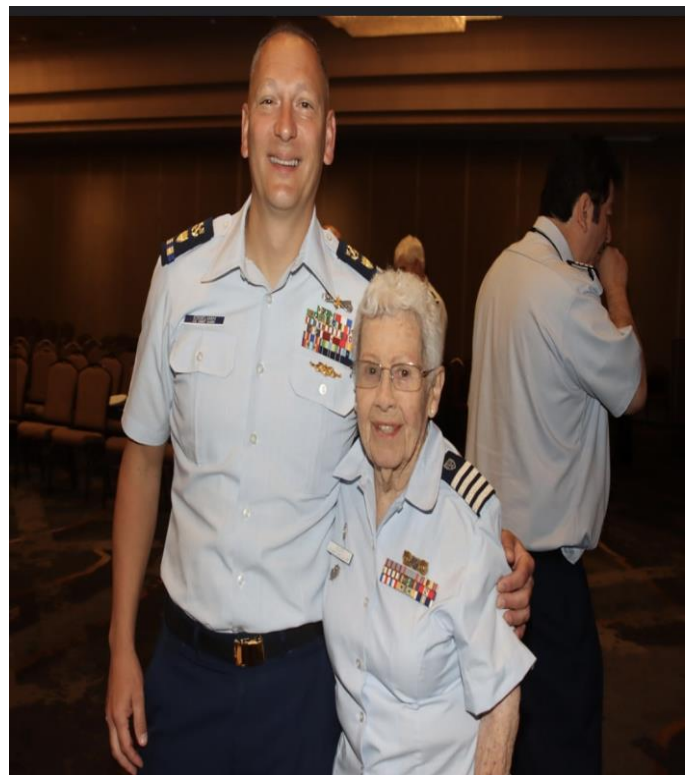
Left to Right: DSO-DV Felix Lopez, DNACO Tiney Singler, ADSO-DV Newsletter Eyvaine Walker



DDC-Log Debbie Allen, DSO-PB Sydney Hay



DSO-PA Rudy Lopez, DSO-DV Felix Lopez



OTO Jared Esselman with Pat Swoopes (D11-SR Grand Old Lady)



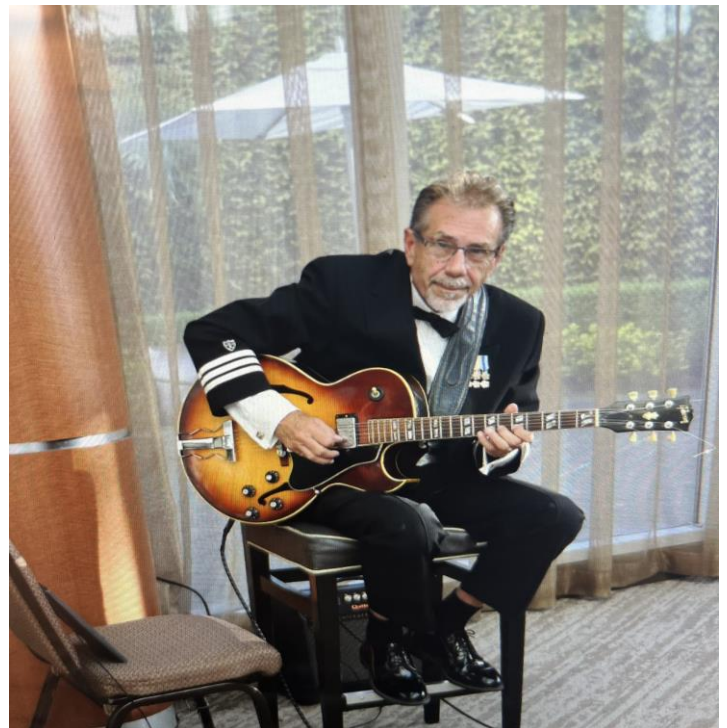
**DCapt -South Paul Saba and Spouse**



**Division 5 DCDR Salvador Gonzalez and Spouse**



**Dave and June Esparza enthusiastically waiting for the start of the District session**



**The Guitar Man**



**11TH DISTRICT-SR DISTRICT CAPTAINS**

**Left to Right: D11 SR DCapt's San Diego/Inland Robert Yslas Jr., DCapt -N Rudy Cortez, DCapt -S Paul Saba**



**The Flotilla Commanders**

**Left to Right: FC Ronald Lindsey, FC Diane Vandruff, FC James Bradley**



**USCG Auxiliary Pilots with DVC-DU Denver Driberg**



**DSO-DV Felix Lopez & Michael Brzezicki, Lead Instructor-Auxiliary Flotilla Leadership Academy**



**District Top Brass**

**Left to Right: COMO Michael Bozarth, DCapt -N Rudy Cortez, DCapt -S Paul Saba, San Diego/Inland Robert Yslas Jr., DCOS Rodney Donohoo**



**Past District Commodore Burt Blanchette, Present District Commodore Michael Bozarth**



**Division 9 Elected and Appointed Officers**



**Before the sessions start**



**Senior Leadership at the head table**

**DNACO Tiney Singler, DCO Michael Bozarth, DCOS Rodney Donohoo, OTO Jared Esselman**

All Photo Sources: District DTrain Photos and DSO-DV Felix Lopez



JUNETEENTH (SHORT FOR “JUNE NINETEENTH”) MARKS THE DAY WHEN FEDERAL TROOPS ARRIVED IN GALVESTON, TEXAS IN 1865 TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE STATE AND ENSURE THAT ALL ENSLAVED PEOPLE BE FREED. THE TROOPS’ ARRIVAL CAME A FULL TWO AND A HALF YEARS AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION. JUNETEENTH HONORS THE END TO SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES AND IS CONSIDERED THE LONGEST-RUNNING AFRICAN AMERICAN HOLIDAY. ON JUNE 17, 2021, IT OFFICIALLY BECAME A FEDERAL HOLIDAY. JUNETEENTH 2023 OCCURRED ON MONDAY, JUNE 19.



Source: URL <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth>

