

Inside the Uniform and Awards Board

A primer

CDR Mark Van Waes
CDR Doug MacIntyre
November 14, 2019



What is the UAB?

The NOAA Corps Uniform and Awards Board (UAB) provide the Director, NOAA Corps recommendations with regard to decorations, medals, and uniform issues.

- NCD 10010A

- Volunteer body of at least 3 but usually 8-10 officers (open to all ranks)
- Reviews award submissions and makes recommendations to the Director
- Advises NOAA Corps officers on procedures for awards and recognition
- Advises and reports on uniform matters; proposes revisions to uniform directives
- Meets monthly (phonecon), and as needed to address emergent issues

Who is on the UAB?

Co-Chairs:

CDR Mark Van Waes and CDR Doug MacIntyre

Members:

CDR Patrick Didier

LCDR James Rosenberg

CDR Rebecca Waddington

LT Bart Buesseler

LCDR Fionna Matheson

LT Melissa Trede

LCDR Jonathan Heesch

LT Patrick Debrousse

LCDR Tracy Miller

Mariners, Aviators, Hydro, Fisheries, Oceanography... All represented.



Awards



UAB Awards

Not every award is routed through the UAB

UAB	DOC	Line Office	Other
Meritorious Service Medal (NCMS)	Gold	Unit Citation (CD-326)	Administrator's Medal (NAO 202-451)
Commendation Medal (NCCM)	Silver		ACO Junior Officer of the Year
Achievement Medal (NCAM)	Bronze		ACO Science
Director's Ribbon (NCDR)	(NAO 202-451)		ACO Engineering
National Response Deployment Medal (NRDM)			SAME Colbert / SAME Karo (NOS)
Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (NCOV)			Service awards (CPC)



UAB Award Process

Draft Award

Award drafted by submitter (usually officer's supervisor*) on NOAA Form 56-63.

* Any individual may submit an officer for an award

Route to UAB

Forward award through the appropriate chain to the UAB Chair. Each award should have at least one routing step after the submitter.

Awards received by the end of the month are reviewed at the next month's meeting.

UAB Review

UAB receives award submission and checks for completeness.

Awards are reviewed by each UAB member and voted on prior to the meeting. Each is discussed as needed during the meeting.

RADM Approval

Recommendations from the UAB are forwarded to the Director, NOAA Corps for review and approval.

Present to Officer

UAB notifies submitter, and, CPC prepares and mails certificates, ribbons and/or medals. Service record entry follows (1-2 month delay to allow for time to present award). Award is usually sent to officer's current supervisor.



Award Submission Process

Complete and submit NF 56-63

- Usually completed by the supervisor
- May be submitted by anyone (e.g. for/by a peer)
- Route through the appropriate chain
 - Ship: XO >> CO >> MOC XO
 - Shore: Supervisor >> 2nd Line Sup. >> LO Liaison

[Awards How-To*](#)

* How-To to be updated in the coming months

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA FORM 56-63 (Rev 08-16)		NOAA COMMISSIONED OFFICER CORPS RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD	
For use of this form, see NCD Chapter 12; the proponent agency is the NOAA Corps Commissioned Personnel Center			
1. RECOMMENDED OFFICER DATA			
1. LAST NAME, FIRST NAME, MIDDLE INITIAL:			2. GRADE:
3. ORGANIZATION:		4. REASON FOR AWARD (INDICATE ACH OR SVC):	
5. BRANCH OF SERVICE:	6. RECOMMENDED AWARD:	7. PERIOD OF AWARD: From: To	
8. PREVIOUS AWARDS: (During this period)			
2. JUSTIFICATION AND CITATION DATA (Use Specific Bullet Examples of Meritorious Acts or Service)			
9. ACHIEVEMENT			
9a. ACHIEVEMENT 1:			
9b. ACHIEVEMENT 2:			
9c. ACHIEVEMENT 3:			
9d. ACHIEVEMENT 4:			

Civilian Supervisor?

Many civilian supervisors don't fully understand the awards system. You can help!

Direct them to CPC resources:

[Supervisor's Guide to NOAA Corps Officers](#)

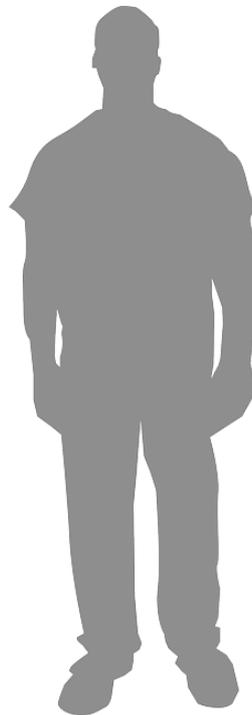
[Letter of Guidance to Civilian Supervisors](#)

[NOAA Corps Directives](#)

Put them in contact with the UAB:

noaacorps.uab@noaa.gov

We're happy to assist.



UAB Review Process

Once checked for completeness (dates of award, routing signatures, etc.), the UAB reviews the awards against the criteria in the NOAA Corps Directives (Chapter 12).

- Does the write-up fully reflect the accomplishment?
- Does the accomplishment meet the criteria for the requested award?
- Should the award be upgraded?
- Is more information/support required for the award?

Most awards are recommended for approval by the UAB as written. The UAB has the authority to recommend upgrading to a higher award, or downgrading to a lower (the latter is not used directly by this UAB).



UAB Review Process - Award Criteria

Award criteria is purposefully general and often is comparative in relation to other awards.

This has pros and cons.

- Permits flexibility, adapting the same award to various situations
- Can make it difficult to determine what award is appropriate

This is one reason why a broad cross-section of the NOAA Corps is represented on the UAB.



Self-Advocacy

The person most concerned with your success is **YOU**. Be your own advocate.

It isn't always easy or comfortable. And no, you *shouldn't* have to suggest your own awards.

ASK about your supervisor's awards plan.
OFFER to assist by providing them input.
BE your own best cheerleader.



Uniforms



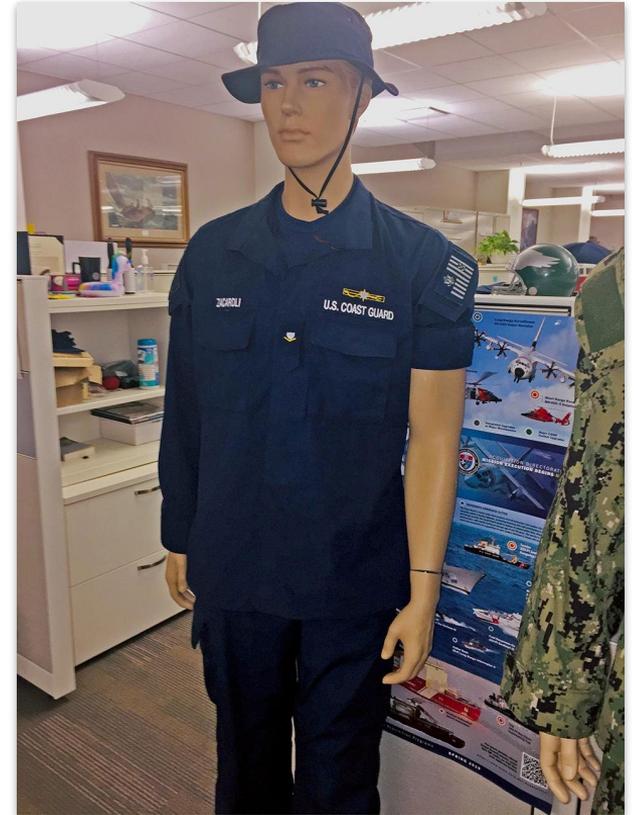
Upcoming Uniform Changes

New USCG ODU (CDU Type III)

- Timeline: 2-3 years
- Transition along with USCG (guidance will be provided in advance)
- No embroidery... Will be able to purchase at any USCG uniform shop

Boonie Hat

- Expect authorization in upcoming Directives update
- Field wear only, per unit commander approval



Upcoming Uniform Changes

Updated female hair regulations

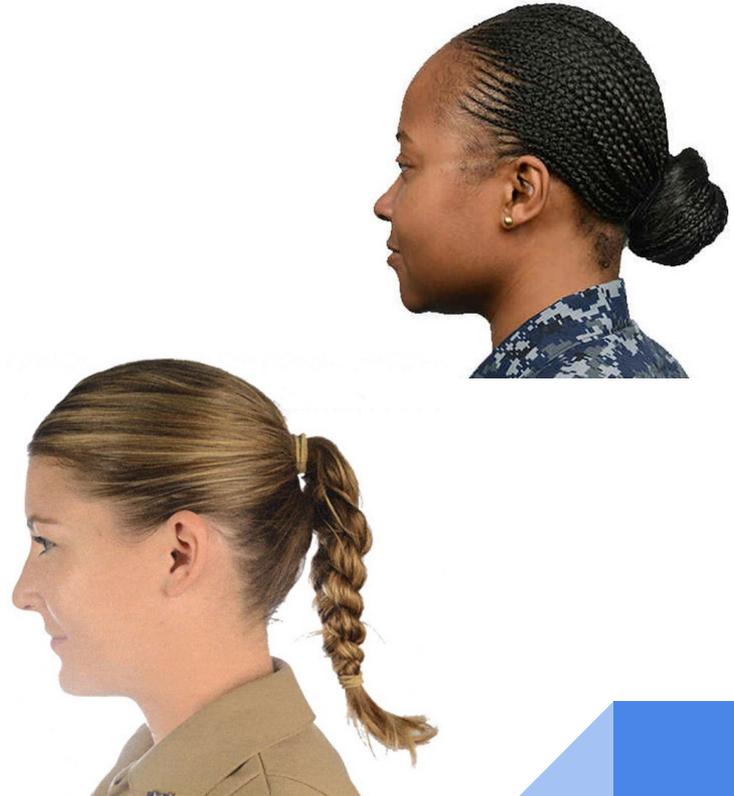
- Match new USN/USCG regs
- Will include in upcoming Directives update
- Applicable for Service and Working uniforms (not Dress uniforms, excepting Dinner Dress)

References:

[USN \(interactive viewer\)](#)

[USN Grooming Standards](#)

[USCG \(Uniform Regulations\)](#)



Upcoming Uniform Changes

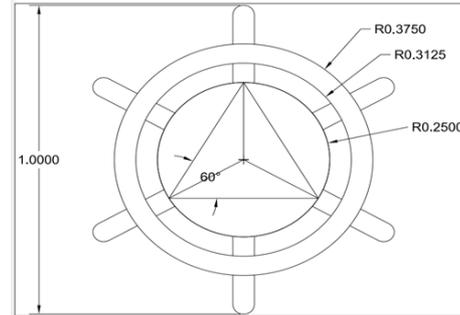
Dive pin

- No change in design from existing pin
- Remaining single color (gold)
- Reducing large size to 1 1/8" diameter



Coxswain Qualification Pin

- Proposal moving to RADM for approval
- May not make upcoming Directives update, but authorization will be announced separately



New Awards/Badges Proposals

The UAB has recently received proposals/suggestions for numerous new awards and service/qualification badges:

- Aviation service awards
- OOD qualification insignia
- Identification badges (e.g. Director's staff, etc.)

The board is reviewing these proposals and will engage with the submitters. Current award review, Directives updates, and uniform concerns take priority due to limited time and resources.

Survey Q&A



Q:

Why don't we do (X, Y, Z) that
the USN/USCG/etc. do?

A:

We're not the USN/USCG/etc.

Q:

Why isn't there more transparency in the approval process?

A:

There can be. Hence this webinar, as well as some additional efforts currently underway. Please contact the UAB if you have questions.



Q:

Are there new awards on the horizon?

A:

Maybe. Some have been discussed, such as an Air Medal. Nothing concrete at this time.

Q:

Is there a means of “recycling” uniform items/insignia to new officers?

A:

Nothing formal. Great opportunity for a JO to organize an effort with NCOTC...



Q:

What if your command doesn't put you in for an award that you deserve?

A:

Talk with your command.



Q:

Awards for completion of
billets?

A:

No award is “automatic.”
Awards are recognition of
service/accomplishment
“above and beyond.”

Q:

Why don't senior officers write awards for junior officers? Are JOs expected to write their own awards?

A:

Senior officers *should* write JO awards, though JOs can often expect to provide input, much like OERs.

Q:

How important are awards for promotion?

A:

Not very. Promotion boards look much more closely at performance documented in OERs. Awards rarely, if ever, enter into consideration.

Q:

What is the status of the previous UAB's revisions to the Directives?

A:

Incorporating those with additional ones from this year. Will be forwarding for Directives update soon.

Q:

How can we make the awards process more timely?

A:

Earlier submission! End-of-tour awards should be submitted two months before rotation to give enough time for approval.

Q:

Recognition for people who speak out/up regarding sexual harassment/bullying?

A:

Such actions should be recognized, whether through the awards process or OERs.

Q:

Training for XO's on writing awards?

A:

Little to no formal training. This is a skill that officers develop through experience, and seeking out advice from others.

Q:

Are awards written “up” with the expectation that they’ll get knocked down?

A:

No evidence of that in the NOAA Corps. Expectation is that award submissions genuinely reflect a deserved
_____ accomplishment.

Q:

Shaving chits?

A:

Not addressed in the Directives. If directed by medical, commands should honor these.

Q:

Feedback on award
submissions?

A:

Any award that is not
recommended for approval by
the UAB is returned to the
submitter with an explanation.

Q:

How many awards are received per month? Does the board review all of them?

A:

March to November:
High: 36 / Low: 4 / Total: 149
Average: ~17 per month
The UAB reviews every award
submitted.

Q:

How are award notifications made?

A:

The UAB notifies the submitter by email once the award is approved. CPC follows with the certificate and hardware. OPF entry delayed 1-2 months.

Questions?

Contact us at:
noaacorps.uab@noaa.gov

