



WELCOME TO THE COAST GUARD FOUNDATION

TRIBUTE TO THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

HONORING THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

FRIDAY ★ MARCH 8, 2024 ★ NEW ORLEANS

**COAST GUARD FOUNDATION
TRIBUTE TO THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT**

PROGRAM FOR THE EVENING

WELCOME

JJ Raterink
Master of Ceremonies

**PRESENTATION OF COLORS
AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM**

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Tom Allegretti
*Chairman
Coast Guard Foundation*

2024 HONOREE

Walter E. Blessey, Jr.
*Chairman
Blessey Marine Services, Inc.*

DINNER

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Susan Ludwig
*President
Coast Guard Foundation*

**2024 COAST GUARD FOUNDATION
AWARD PRESENTATION**

Air Station New Orleans

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Admiral Linda L. Fagan
*Commandant
United States Coast Guard*

AFTER PARTY

At BB's Stage Door Canteen

**TRIBUTE TO THE EIGHTH
COAST GUARD DISTRICT
DINNER COMMITTEE**

DINNER CO-CHAIRS

Nicki Candies and Cherrie Felder

DINNER COMMITTEE

Ben Bordelon
MCPOCG Charles "Skip" Bowen, USCG (Ret.)
CAPT Michael Brandhuber, USCG (Ret.)
Naresh Copeland
Skye Durant
Mario Muniz
RADM John Nadeau, USCG (Ret.)
Robert Scott
Clark Todd



ADMIRAL LINDA L. FAGAN

**COMMANDANT
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Admiral Linda L. Fagan assumed the duties as the 27th Commandant of the United States Coast Guard on June 1, 2022. As Commandant, she oversees all global Coast Guard operations and 42,000 active-duty, 7,000 reserve, and 8,700 civilian personnel, as well as the support of 21,000 Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers.

She previously served as the 32nd Vice Commandant. Prior flag assignments include Commander, Pacific Area, and Commander, Coast Guard Defense Force West; Deputy Commandant for Operations, Policy, and Capability; Commander, First Coast Guard District; and a joint assignment as Deputy Director of Operations for Headquarters, United States Northern Command.

Admiral Fagan has served on all seven continents, from the snows of Ross Island, Antarctica to the heart of Africa, from Tokyo to Geneva, and in many ports along the way. Operational tours include Commander, Sector New York, more than 15 years as a Marine Inspector, and sea duty in USCGC *Polar Star*, a 399-foot heavy polar icebreaker. Staff assignments include Executive Assistant to the Commandant and Vice Commandant, and Division Chief of the Foreign and Offshore Compliance Office.

Possessing extensive interagency as well as intergovernmental experience, Admiral Fagan has worked with both the International Maritime Organization and International Labor Organization on flag state and port state issues. This work includes the development of the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS), and the Consolidated Maritime Labor Convention.

Admiral Fagan holds a Bachelor of Science in Marine Science degree from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, a Master of Science in Marine Affairs degree from the University of Washington, and a Master in National Resource Strategy degree from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. She has earned numerous personal and team awards during her 37 years of Coast Guard service. Admiral Fagan is the longest serving active duty Marine Safety Officer and holds the distinction of being the Coast Guard's first-ever Gold Ancient Trident.



ADMIRAL STEVEN D. POULIN

**VICE COMMANDANT
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Admiral Steven D. Poulin assumed the duties as the 33rd Vice Commandant on May 31, 2022. As the Vice Service Chief and Chief Operating Officer, Admiral Poulin executes the Commandant's Strategic Intent, manages internal organizational governance and serves as the Component Acquisition Executive.

He reports to Coast Guard Headquarters from a tour as the Commander, Atlantic Area, and Commander, Coast Guard Defense Force East. He concurrently served as Director, Department of Homeland Security Joint Task Force East. Prior flag assignments include U.S. Southern Command's Director of Operations, Commander of the First Coast Guard District, Judge Advocate General and Chief Counsel of the Coast Guard, and the Director of Governmental and Public Affairs.

He served as Commander of Coast Guard Sector Mobile, where he directed Coast Guard operations in Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida panhandle and was the Incident Commander for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response operations in that same geographical area from April to October 2010. His previous operational tours include Deputy Commander, Coast Guard Sector Mobile, Alabama; Deputy Commander, Coast Guard Group Galveston, Texas; Law Enforcement Officer and Assistant Operations Officer at Coast Guard Group Mobile, Alabama; and as Deck Watch Officer on USCGC *Dauntless* (WMEC-624).

Admiral Poulin has served in numerous staff and special assignments including, the Chief, Office of Maritime and International Law; Special Advisor for Border and Transportation Security in the Office of the Vice President; the Coast Guard's liaison to the State Department's Office of Ocean Affairs; Legal Counsel for the Coast Guard's Port Security Director; and Legislative Counsel in the Coast Guard's Office of Congressional Affairs. He also served on the U.S. delegation to the Legal Committee of the IMO and the Coast Guard's General Law Division.

Admiral Poulin graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science in Management. He was awarded his Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from the University of Miami School of Law in 1992. Other degrees include: Master of Law (Environmental Law), with highest honors, from the George Washington University Law School in 2002; Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College in 2005; and Master of Public Administration from the University of South Alabama in 1989. His military decorations include the Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal (two awards), Legion of Merit (five awards), Meritorious Service Medal (four awards), Coast Guard Commendation Medal (three awards), and Coast Guard Achievement Medal.



MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER HEATH B. JONES

**MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COAST GUARD
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Master Chief Heath B. Jones assumed the duties of the 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard on May 19, 2022. Master Chief Jones is the senior enlisted member of the Coast Guard and the principal advisor to the Commandant on all personnel matters.

Previous CSEL assignments include the Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, where he led the 17,000 member workforce that provides support that enable global Coast Guard mission execution. Prior to that he served as the CSEL to the Pacific Area Commander, where he advised on all personnel and operational matters from the Rocky Mountains west to the east coast of Africa, including both the Arctic and Antarctic regions. He also served as the CSEL for the Eighth Coast Guard District, spanning 26 states and covering all missions from the vast inland river system to the outer continental shelf.

Command Master Chief Jones is a native of Covington, Louisiana. He enlisted in the Coast Guard in August of 1995. His previous assignments include Command Master Chief, Sector Hampton Roads; Officer in Charge, USCGC *Sea Horse*; Officer in Charge, Station Pensacola; Officer in Charge, USCGC *Bollard*; Officer in Charge, Station Cape Charles; Executive Petty Officer, Station Little Creek; Executive Petty Officer, USCGC *Seahawk*; First Lieutenant Station New Orleans; First Lieutenant USCGC *Kanawha*.

Command Master Chief Jones's personal awards include the Legion of Merit, five Meritorious Service Medals, five Coast Guard Commendation Medals, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, and various service, unit, and team awards. He wears the Commandant Staff Badge, Command Afloat and Ashore Devices, and the permanent Cutterman, Coxswain, and Advance Boat Forces insignia. He is the recipient of the 2012 Signalman First Class Douglas Munro Inspirational Leadership Award and the 2006 Master Chief Petty Officer Angela McShan Inspirational Leadership Award.

Command Master Chief Jones is a proud graduate of the Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Academy Class 124, the Coast Guard Senior Enlisted Leadership Course class 48, and he is a Keystone 18-1 Fellow. He holds a Bachelor and Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Management with a specialty in Human Resource Management. He also holds a Certificate of Apprenticeship as a Master Homeland Security Specialist from USMAP. He proudly serves as a member of the Training Center Cape May Board of Advisors and the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Board of Directors.

He has been married to the former Carol Ann Clarke of Folsom, Louisiana, since 1996. They are the very proud parents of son Christian and his wife Katherine, and daughter Sidney and her husband Thomas.



REAR ADMIRAL DAVID C. BARATA

**EIGHTH DISTRICT COMMANDER
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Rear Admiral Barata serves as Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District and is responsible for Coast Guard operations spanning 26 states, including the Gulf of Mexico coastline from the Florida panhandle to United States border with Mexico, the adjacent offshore waters and outer continental shelf, and the inland waterways of the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Tennessee River systems.

His previous Flag assignment was as Commander of the Coast Guard Personnel Service Center, where he was responsible for executing the Coast Guard's human resource policies. In this role, he led projects focused on recruiting, accessing, assigning, developing careers, maintaining well-being, compensating, separating, and retiring the nearly 45,000 members of the active duty and reserve military workforces.

Rear Admiral Barata's prior field assignments included serving as Commanding Officer of Activities Europe, as well as tours at Sector Jacksonville, Marine Safety Office Providence, and Marine Safety Office Miami where he served for over 13 years in various capacities conducting marine safety, Office in Charge of Marine Inspection/Captain of the Port (OCMI/COTP), prevention, and incident response/emergency management missions. Rear Admiral Barata also served as the plank owner Executive Officer of Maritime Safety and Security Team Boston (MSST 91110) and as Deck Watch Officer aboard USCGC *Seneca* (WMEC 906).

Rear Admiral Barata's staff assignments include Director, Inspections and Compliance (CG-5PC), Deputy Director, Marine Transportation Systems (CG-5PW), Chief, Office of Budget and Programs (CG-82), AC&I Coordinator and Program Reviewer (CG-821), and Senior Marine Safety/Prevention Assignment Officer at the former CG Personnel Command (CGPC OPM-2). Rear Admiral Barata is a 1993 graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Management. RDML Barata earned a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, in 2014 and served as a Senior Military Fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in Washington, D.C., from 2014 to 2015.

Rear Admiral Barata's personal awards include the Legion of Merit (4), the Meritorious Service Medal (4), the Coast Guard Commendation Medal (2), the 9/11 Medal, the Armed Forces Service Medal, and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal. He was selected as the Navy League Southeastern MA/RI Junior Officer of the Year in 2001.

Rear Admiral Barata is a native of Jacksonville, Florida. He and his wife, Barbara have three children, James, Caroline, and Annie.

**COAST GUARD FOUNDATION
TRIBUTE TO THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT**

HONOREE

WALTER E. BLESSEY, JR.



Walter E. Blessey, Jr is founder and owner of Blessey Marine Services, Inc., located in Harahan, Louisiana. Walter earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering, a J.D. in Law, as well as attended classes for a Master's in Business Administration at Tulane University in New Orleans. While at Tulane, he was elected to Tau Beta Pi and Omicron Delta Kappa, and was co-captain of the Golf Team for several years and also elected student body president. He also attended the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and the University of Washington in pursuit of said degrees.

Walter began his career at what is currently Entergy, with responsibility for fuel purchasing and transportation. He founded what is now Blessey Marine in 1978. Today, Blessey Marine owns and operates one of the youngest and largest multi-faceted inland tank barge and towing vessel fleets in the United States, employing over 750 people. Today, 84 inland push boats and nearly 170 tank barges carry residual fuels, asphalt, lubricating oils, petroleum feedstocks, refined petroleum products, petrochemicals, alcohols, and LNG cargoes across the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway, throughout the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys, and across Lake Michigan. An affiliated company, WEB Fleeting, LLC, operates a fleeting operation, located on the San Jacinto River Basin in Channelview, Texas. This state-of-the art operation is within minutes of virtually every dock facility in the Houston Harbor.

Walter has served on the Board of Directors of American Waterways Operators and has been a member of their Executive Committee. He also served as past Chairman of AWO's Inland Liquid Sector. In 1999, Walter was inducted into the Louisiana Business Hall of Fame; and then in 2013, he was awarded Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year for the Gulf States. He has participated in

numerous non-profit activities in the New Orleans community and served on the Board of Directors of Junior Achievement; which he is now a director of Emeritus. In the past years Walter has raised over \$2.25 million for Junior Achievement. In 2018, Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans has named their building in his honor "Walter E. Blessey, Jr. Free Enterprise Center of Learning."

Over the last thirty years, Walter has served on various boards including St. Martin's Episcopal School. St. Martin's recently gave him the Martin de Tours award for an outstanding graduate, and Tulane University has bestowed upon him the Life Time Achievement Award for the class of 1967. He is currently on the Board of Overseers for the Hoover Institution, the Oak Alley Plantation Foundation and the Coast Guard Foundation. In 2019 Walter was presented with a Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award to honor his contributions to the inland marine transportation industry, navigation safety, environmental stewardship, and homeland security during his decades-long involvement with the American Waterways Operators. He was given the 2019 Icon Award and chosen as an honoree for the 2020 Driving Forces by New Orleans CityBusiness.

Walter was featured in *Boss Magazine* in September of 2019 and has been interviewed twice by NPR for National Broadcast. He also received an appreciation award for Santa Rosa Golf and Beach Club where he was the president for four years. Most recently he was honored by The Seaman's Church with their prestigious lifetime achievement award.

Walter is married and has two grown daughters, three step-daughters, six grandsons and five granddaughters. He and his wife, Jane Ann, enjoy traveling between their homes in Mandeville, Louisiana, Big Sky, Montana, Destin, Florida, Carmel, California and Wadmalaw, South Carolina. Walter has many hobbies, including reading, politics, working out and chess. He is a member of the Old Capital Club, New Orleans Country Club and Monterey Peninsula Country Club.

COAST GUARD FOUNDATION TRIBUTE TO THE EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

AWARDEE

AIR STATION NEW ORLEANS

The Coast Guard Foundation is proud to recognize Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans and their search and rescue partners for the lifesaving medical evacuations (medevacs) they perform to save mariners and passengers in the Gulf of Mexico. From rescuing injured and ill patients from oil rigs, commercial ships, fishing vessels and recreational boats, medevacs frequently take helicopter crews far from shore, often in poor weather, to conduct difficult hoisting operations from a variety of vessels that present unique challenges.

The rescue of a passenger from the cruise ship *Carnival Dream* in April 2023 brings into sharp focus the difficulty and risks inherent in this important work.

At 4:21 a.m. the morning of April 29, 2023, the Coast Guard received word from the cruise ship *Carnival Dream* of a 76-year-old man with heart attack-like symptoms. At the time the ship was approximately 300 miles offshore Fort Morgan, Alabama.

Search and rescue specialists at Coast Guard Sector Mobile coordinated the launch of an HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane from the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center in Mobile and an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans to assist.

The helicopter aircrew arrived on scene and lowered their rescue swimmer to prepare the patient and a nurse to be hoisted into the helicopter. While conducting a hoist from the cruise ship, a severe squall caused the aircrew to conduct an emergency break away from the ship. The helicopter crew then battled a severe downwind that nearly forced it into the ocean. If not for the quick thinking, skill, and professionalism of the crew, the helicopter would have crashed.

“Yesterday, Air Station New Orleans responded to a medical evacuation from the cruise ship *Carnival Dream*,” said Cmdr. Keith Blair, commanding officer, Air Station New Orleans. “During the rescue, the aircrew experienced severe and rapidly deteriorating weather that forced them to abort the mission. Through exceptional real-time risk management, crew resource management, and superb piloting, the aircrew was able to safely recover the aircraft and land at the air station without further incident.”



A second helicopter crew from Air Station New Orleans returned to the ship several hours later when the weather improved, hoisted the patient and rescue swimmer, and transferred the patient to awaiting emergency medical personnel at University Medical Center.

This case demonstrates the preparation, skill, and bravery Coast Guard crew members bring to this important activity along the Gulf of Mexico. The work of Air Station New Orleans is in keeping with the highest traditions of bravery, service, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

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COAST GUARD FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR THE COAST GUARD

YOUR IMPACT IN 2023

The Coast Guard Foundation strengthens the Coast Guard community and service where and when Coast Guard members and families are most in need.

- We aided 79 Coast Guard members and families impacted by natural disasters last year, including those who lost homes and property to the wildfire in Maui, Typhoon Mawar in Guam, and Hurricane Idalia in Florida.
- Twelve Coast Guard families received tragedy assistance after they suffered the death of their Coast Guard members and immediate family members, providing comfort and solace during their time of great need.

EDUCATION

- We awarded 186 scholarships from \$2,500 to \$5,000 to Coast Guard kids pursuing their degrees at college and technical/trade schools. This year marked the first time we increased all scholarships across the board to a minimum of \$2,500 and expanded our scope to reach more college-age children of enlisted and commissioned officers.
- Nine surviving children of Coast Guard members who made the ultimate sacrifice received Fallen Heroes scholarships and booster grants. Booster grants allow school-aged children of the fallen to participate in enrichment throughout the year, like academic support and summer camp activities, while scholarships cover 100 percent of expenses for those attending the college of their choice.
- We addressed many priorities at the Coast Guard Academy, including academic enrichment, cadet activities, athletics, waterfront activities, and a refueling station for student-athletes to recharge after workouts.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Workforce development programs provided classes and materials to 290 Coast Guard members pursuing professional certifications, including aircraft maintenance and captains' licenses. This program better prepares them for their Coast Guard missions and their transition into the civilian sector when their service is over. We also awarded 115 grants to Coast Guard members to support their off-duty education.
- We awarded education grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 to 302 Coast Guard spouses pursuing their college degrees and professional certifications and running their own in-home childcare businesses.

MORALE AND WELLNESS

- The Foundation funded 212 national projects to support health and wellness at Coast Guard units and help members remain *always ready* by maintaining their physical and mental well-being while at sea or stationed in remote areas.
- The crews of four new fast response cutters brought into service received grants of \$5,000 to establish their health and wellness priorities.
- A national initiative that provides life skills resources for Coast Guard families, through a partnership with the Coast Guard Chaplain Program, helped families connect and build positive, supportive relationships. We funded suicide prevention peer training classes, resiliency outings, marriage retreats, and other services for Coast Guard and family members around the country.
- Resiliency programs for the Coast Guard provided support for sexual assault survivors. A first of its kind "Wellness Day" at the Coast Guard Academy featured workshops on physical, mental and emotional health, social and family relationships, and substance abuse.



COMMUNITY

- We provided 588 grants to Coast Guard kids, allowing them to attend summer camps and invest in online enrichment activities during summer breaks.
- A new endowment created permanent support for Coast Guard K-9s and their handlers so we can care for and honor the service's most faithful companions.
- Foundation supporters nationwide raised funds for Fallen Heroes scholarships and tragedy assistance support for Coast Guard families through Run to Remember events and the Workout to Remember campaign.
- We partnered with "The Catch," a celebrity fishing show on CBS Sports, to highlight the service's value to our nation and featured Coast Guard Foundation support for our Coast Guard heroes.
- We celebrated Coast Guard heroism and mission excellence at events in New Orleans, Fort Lauderdale, Washington, DC, Honolulu, Seattle, New York City, and Houston.
- We participated in key Coast Guard events around the country, including the 75th anniversary of the Training Center in Cape May, the 25th anniversary of Air Station Atlantic City, the Coast Guard Marathon in North Carolina, and Coast Guard Festival in Michigan, among others, to recognize the Coast Guard members and their families.

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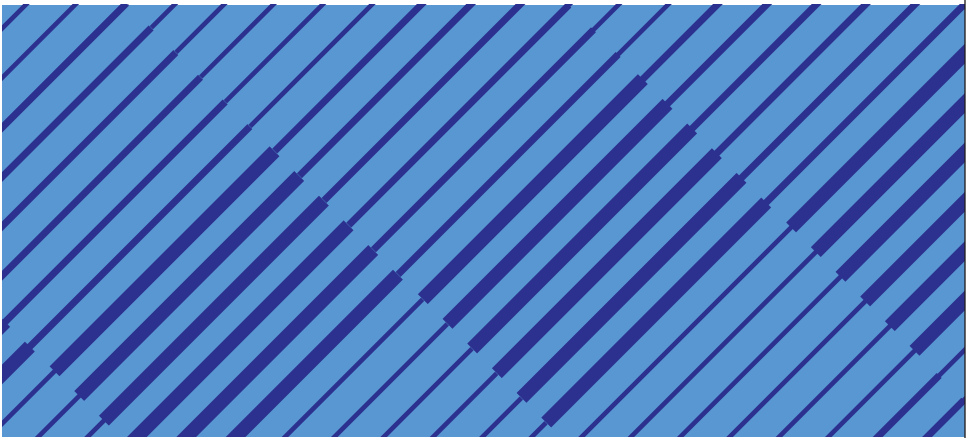
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WE ARE THE COAST GUARD FOUNDATION



For more than 50 years, the Coast Guard Foundation has been a vital partner of the U.S. Coast Guard, assisting the service and its members through the toughest challenges confronting our heroes and their families. The Foundation's work strengthens the entire community. Through close collaboration with Coast Guard leadership, our investments support families, bolster unit morale, honor the Coast Guard's service, and more. Since our founding in 1969, we've provided more than \$105 million in services to Coast Guard members and their families. The Coast Guard Foundation ensures Coast Guard members are always ready, and their families are taken care of while their loved ones serve our country.

Thanks to our generous partners, the Coast Guard Foundation has:

- Funded \$49 million in education initiatives, helping thousands within the Coast Guard community — members, spouses, and children — achieve their dreams of higher education
- Awarded more than 18,700 grants to Coast Guard members for college tuition or professional training, enhancing their duties and setting them up for success after their service ends
- Invested \$29 million in fitness and wellness services for Coast Guard members' physical and mental health
- Provided \$5 million in direct support for families who have suffered the tragic loss of a loved one or needed critical support during natural disasters and emergencies

The brave members of the Coast Guard sacrifice so much to serve our nation. The Coast Guard Foundation is committed to providing them and their families the resources they need to build resilience throughout their lives when it's needed most.

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COAST GUARD FOUNDATION 2024 EVENTS CALENDAR

TRIBUTE TO THE SEVENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

THURSDAY, APRIL 18 | FORT LAUDERDALE | MARRIOTT HARBOR BEACH RESORT

NY/NJ SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, MAY 6 | STATEN ISLAND | SOUTH SHORE GOLF CLUB

WASHINGTON D.C. SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, MAY 20 | FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA | ARMY NAVY COUNTRY CLUB

TRIBUTE TO THE COAST GUARD IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL

TUESDAY, JUNE 18 | WASHINGTON, DC | NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

TRIBUTE TO THE FOURTEENTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

SATURDAY, JULY 27 | HONOLULU | HO'OKUPU CENTER

ALASKA AWARDS DINNER

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13 | ANCHORAGE | THE HOTEL CAPTAIN COOK

NEW YORK SALUTES THE COAST GUARD

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 | NEW YORK CITY | THE LIGHTHOUSE AT PIER 61

TEXAS SALUTES THE COAST GUARD

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 | HOUSTON | HOUSTON MARRIOTT MARQUIS



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

coastguardfoundation.org/events



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