



NOMINATION FOR GOLD LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP
CWO (SKC) MARK T. TAHTINEN, USCG

It is our great honor to nominate Chief Warrant Officer Mark Tahtinen as a Gold Lifetime Member in the CPOA in recognition of his many years of faithful service to our Association.

CWO Tahtinen enlisted in the Coast Guard as an SK2 in 1998 following nine years in the U.S. Navy. Upon advancing to Chief and completing CCTI in March 2006 (CMC/GLM Kevin Isherwood was Chief of the Mess & Judge at his CCTI in Honolulu), he joined the CPOA, subsequently becoming a Silver Lifetime Member in 2009. A graduate of CPO Academy Class 122, he was promoted to CWO2 and CWO3 in 2015 and 2019, respectively.

On 23 May 2012, then CPO Tahtinen assumed the duties as the CPOA's National Treasurer, serving until August 2021. It is an understatement to say he walked into a trial by fire. The National Board of Directors (BOD) conducted a thorough review of the CPOA's financial situation in May 2012 and discovered no record of annual audits ever having been performed, years of overpayments & underreporting of wage compensation provided to CPOA employees, as well as a variety of IRS difficulties. These issues served to occupy much of the BOD's first two years in office, and without CWO Tahtinen's expertise and guidance, resolving these and other financial problems would have been next to impossible.

In coordination with the new CPOA Executive Director, CWO Tahtinen transitioned the CPOA's accounts from an antiquated software program to QuickBooks and received approval from the BOD to contract with a payroll services company to ensure employee wages and taxes were paid timely. CWO Tahtinen had the National President, Vice President, Treasurer and Executive Director added to all CPOA accounts and provided them with on-line access to improve financial oversight, thus avoiding the potential for a single point of failure. CWO Tahtinen coordinated the transition of over \$25,000 of General Fund dollars into a standalone account for the CCCAF to correct the twenty-plus years of improper allocation of CPOA donations and set up a designated account for the Silver Lifetime Membership Reserve Funds. CWO Tahtinen also updated the CPOA travel reimbursement process to align with the Coast Guard travel and per diem guidelines.

During his tenure, CWO Tahtinen prepared Proposed Annual Budgets, submitted comprehensive annual budget reports to the CPOA membership, and served as Budget Standing Committee Chair, all while tackling a myriad of budget issues. CWO Tahtinen streamlined the entire budget process to provide CPOA members with a comprehensive understanding of information by including the previous two years' budget/actual expenses alongside the annual proposed budget. The newly formatted budget format provided such transparency that the CPOA membership approved the 2014 Annual Budget at Convention in less than three hours, a record given that budget approval had often taken days to achieve. He amended the budget request process for the Convention and Standing Committee Chairs so their recommendations could be included in the Annual Budget immediately with approval from the membership.

By 2014, due in large part to his outstanding budgetary efforts, the CPOA was able to report a budget surplus, and the findings of a formal Financial Review by the CPOA's new CPA reflected our Association was on strong financial footing, with no discrepancies reported regarding our accounting practices.

CWO Tahtinen was always available to assist Chapter and Branch Treasurers in documentation/process issues, and mentored members of the CGEA. He provided guidance to the CGEA National President during the editing of the CGEA Procedures Manual and mentored the Lone Star Branch President (Sector Houston) on best practices to encourage junior enlisted members to join the CGEA and participate in their events.

CWO Tahtinen has been an active member at the Chapter level: Hawaiian Islands, Galveston (serving as President, Vice President, and Treasurer), Low Country, Hampton Roads and currently Mobile Chapter. His support of his community extends well beyond his work with the CPOA. He has participated in the Annual Houston' Chiefs Mess "Chiefs Giving Lunch", preparing and serving Thanksgiving meals for Sector Houston/MSST Houston members, and worked as a volunteer to clean up downed trees and repair buildings after the 2021 Gulf Coast storms. He currently volunteers with the Gulf Coast and Greater Mobile Area Chiefs Mess, cleaning up and identifying grave sites on over twenty acres of the Oaklawn Cemetery - historically important, as the Cemetery holds the remains of more than 2,000 Veterans dating back into the 1800's. CWO Tahtinen is a member of VFW Post 4010 in Missouri City, TX (serving as a Trustee from 2017 and reelected through 2024), and a member of the American Legion Post 146 in Houston, TX. In further service to our Association, CWO Tahtinen assumed the position of Treasurer for the Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Foundation in January 2023, volunteering his time and expertise to this very worthwhile organization.

CWO Tahtinen is a proud member of the CPOA, exemplifying the motto, "Once a Chief, Always a Chief". His actions during his many years of membership provide ample evidence of his loyalty and support for the Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association. CWO Tahtinen has always answered the call to serve the Coast Guard and our Association. Whether volunteering in his community, playing TAPS at CPOA Convention Opening ceremonies, or spending countless hours of personal time caring for his fellow Coasties, CWO Tahtinen's dedication to our Association and our Service is unmatched.

We respectfully request the GLM Ad Hoc Committee's favorable consideration of his nomination, and if approved, that CWO Tahtinen be presented with Gold Lifetime Membership at the CPOA's 2023 Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Yours in Service ~

//s// CPO Alex Chapman (Ret.)
17TH CPOA GLM / Past National Vice President

//s// SCPO Bruce Garrison (Ret.)
31ST CPOA GLM / Past National Secretary/Regional Advisor

//s// CPO Kim Lorigan (Ret.)
35TH CPOA GLM / Immediate Past National President