



Pictured L-R are: NCOA President Garry McClure, CSM (Ret) Diahann White of the Korean Defense Veterans Association, Kathleen Deer, ME1 Joseph Deer, Command Master Chief Shawn Burns representing the 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Heath Jones, and NCOA Chairman of the Board Robert Barnett.

The 2024 NCOA Coast Guard Vanguard Award, sponsored by Korean Defense Veterans Association, was presented to Maritime Enforcement Specialist First Class Joseph P. Deer in honor and memory of Medal of Honor recipient Signalman First Class Douglas Munro.

On 08 July 2023, ME1 Deer dispatched to Station Pensacola to assist with safety zone enforcement for the Pensacola Beach Airshow featuring the U.S. Navy Blue Angels. At approximately 1410 while underway on the 29-foot Response Boat Small (RB-S II), ME1 Deer noticed passengers on several boats in a highly congested area waving their arms frantically and yelling for help from the Coast Guard. ME1 Deer helped the coxswain navigate through the shallow, overcrowded waters of Quietwater Beach to the distress location. As their RB-S II approached, one person gestured to a woman on the swimming platform of another vessel and yelled, “we need a medic, she’s opened wide up.” Due to the high concentration of watercraft, ME1 Deer jumped from his craft to an adjacent vessel and traversed across multiple other recreational vessels to reach the woman in distress. Once onboard, ME1 Deer observed the victim laying on her back with multiple, blood-soaked towels and an ineffective, improvised tourniquet wrapped high on her right thigh above a life-threatening laceration caused by a boat propeller strike.

Demonstrating a calm demeanor, confidence, and assertiveness, ME1 quickly took control of the scene. He directed all civilians to clear the swimming platform aside from an off-duty EMT and began to conduct his initial assessment of the victim. Leveraging his Tactical Combat Casualty Care expertise as a result of his

past training with the Coast Guard's Deployable Special Forces (DSF), ME1 Deer immediately recognized the need to apply a better tourniquet. As a previous member of the Coast Guard's DSF community, ME1 Deer carried a North American Rescue Combat Application Tourniquet during law enforcement operations. ME1 Deer cut the improvised tourniquet free and expertly applied his tourniquet to the victim's right thigh. As he tightened the tourniquet, he provided emotional support to the victim to keep her as calm as possible despite her severe pain. When the bleeding stopped, ME1 Deer instructed the off-duty EMT to check for a pedal pulse. The EMT informed ME1 Deer that they could not feel one which indicated that the tourniquet was applied effectively.

Exhibiting exemplary leadership and decisive actions, ME1 Deer directed the transfer of the victim to his RB -S II which was now alongside for transport to Emergency Medical Services for a higher level of care. When the victim collapsed and was unable to walk, ME1 Deer carried the semi-conscious victim the rest of the way onto the RB-S II and to the aft seat. ME1 Deer braced the victim as the coxswain carefully navigated to the Quietwater Beach Pier where a Fire and Rescue Boat was standing by. Upon arrival, ME1 Deer assisted EMS personnel with transferring the victim onto the Fire and Rescue Boat and remained with the victim. EMS personnel immediately put the victim on oxygen and began to apply dressings to the wound. ME1 Deer continuously assessed the wound and tightened the tourniquet to control the bleeding until the shore-based medical team arrived. ME1 Deer assisted the team with back-boarding and carrying the victim to a modified side-by-side on the beach. Once secured in the bed of the vehicle, paramedics took the victim to a waiting helicopter where she was life-flighted to Baptist Hospital in Pensacola, Florida. She was released from the hospital just two days later, a testament to the lifesaving efforts of ME1 Deer.

The victim's ability to survive this severe injury was a direct result of ME1 Deer's prompt and resolute actions and advanced first aid knowledge. ME1 Deer's heroic actions on that fateful day epitomize the spirit of the Vanguard Award, which celebrates exceptional courage and selflessness in the face of adversity. His unwavering commitment to excellence and readiness proved pivotal in the lifesaving effort.

Petty Officer Deer's dedication, judgement, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.