

## BMCM ROBERT HILL

I'm a retired USCG 06 of 24 years. Now I teach USCG JROTC in Camden NC. I'd like to nominate my mentor, BMCM Bobby Hill as one of the 100 great CG Chiefs. I met Master Chief Hill soon after I reported to my first duty station as an Ensign in Fort Macon NC. Master Chief Hill was retired by then, but was the President of the Crystal Coast CPO Assn. Though retired, and fully employed outside the CG, Bobby Hill took me under his wing and helped me to fully understand and appreciate how to look out for my enlisted subordinates, and really how to be a great teammate and leader. I didn't realize it at the time, but Master Chief Hill was a retired legend of sorts...see the citation for the CG Medal below;

# Robert Earl Hill

### **Coast Guard Medal**

Service: Coast Guard

Rank: Boatswain's Mate First Class GENERAL ORDERS:

U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Coast Guard Medal to Boatswain's Mate First Class Robert Earl Hill, United States Coast Guard, for heroism on the morning of 19 January 1968 while serving as coxswain of the CG-253072, attached to the U.S.C.G.C. ABSECON (WHEC-374), engaged in the perilous rescue of 16 persons from the disabled motor vessel OCEAN SPRINTER in the North Atlantic Ocean. The ABSECON, diverted from Ocean Station Delta to assist, assumed on-scene command and advised the crew of the stricken vessel of the evacuation plan. Due to the severity of the weather, winds over 40 knots, and seas constantly in excess of 20 feet, rescue operations were delayed awaiting daylight. At daybreak, despite heavy seas and freezing temperatures, the CG-253072, manned by volunteers, was dispatched from the ABSECON on three separate trips. Petty Officer Hill skillfully maneuvered the boat through the heavy seaway to a position alongside the OCEAN SPRINTER from which the crew of the ship could enter the boat from a Jacob's ladder. On the second and third trips the rescue boat, which was leaking excessively, had to be repaired and dewatered prior to return to the heavily listing ship. All crewmen of the ship were rescued and evacuated to the ABSECON. During this hazardous rescue operation, Petty Officer Hill, by his prompt actions, helped save the life of a fellow Coastguardsman who was thrown from the rescue boat. Petty Officer Hill demonstrated initiative, fortitude, and daring in spite of imminent personal danger. His unselfish action, courage, and unwavering devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Coast Guard.

I simply knew Master Chief Hill as a seasoned BMCM with a lot of wisdom who, for some reason, decided I was worth mentoring. I credit several CPOs that I served with for having ensured my success as an officer in the CG, but Bobby Hill is #1 among those. Throughout my 24 year career, and then well into my current job as the Senior Maritime Science Instructor of one of the CG's only two JROTC programs, Bobby kept track of me, and kept tracking me down to see how things were going and to offer his help in any way possible. In his last job, before his untimely death in 2018 at only 75 years of age, Master Chief Hill was the head of security for the NC Ferry system. In that capacity he arranged for my cadets to get regular rides on the Currituck Ferry so they could see how reall mariners operated and to get some helm time!

I could go on and on about this man and the positive impact he had on everyone he worked with, but this email would never end. Suffice it to say that Master Chief Bobby Hill proved his mettle, and leadership ability in every conceivable manner in and out of the CG. His friendship and mentorship helped this young Officer Candidate School (OCS) graduate survive and succeed in the CG at a time when OCS grads weren't expected to make it past 04! More important than helping ensure that I made rank, Bobby Hill helped make me the best leader of CG professionals that I could possibly be, and his lessons continue to inform my mentorship of high school student cadets to this day.

Note: The CG JROTC program is actually called Junior Leadership Program (JLP)...for claritie's sake.

v/r

Algernon J. Keith CAPT USCG (ret)