Kodiak Guardsman Spends 25 Years at Sea

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Erik Wander/KMXT

A Coast Guardsman stationed in Kodiak received the Coast Guard's newest honor during an informal ceremony in Kodiak when he was named "Master Cutterman." While many members of the Coast Guard wear the cutterman's insignia, which represents five years of sea service, the title of master cutterman is awarded to those having served more than 20 years at sea.

Chief Warrant Officer Randy Salenski is currently stationed aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Alex Haley and has served 25 years at sea.

He talked about what the honor means to him.

-- (Master Cutterman 1 15 sec. "It means a lot ... meant quite a bit to me.")

Salenski said he was surprised by the honor and that his son, who serves in the Coast Guard in Homer, surprised him too by coming to Kodiak for the ceremony, which was held at Coast Guard Base Kodiak with his shipmates.

-- (Master Cutterman 2 12 sec. "It was very much ... the ceremony as well.")

Salenski talked about the different levels of cutterman designations the Coast Guard awards, including the new honor of master.

-- (Master Cutterman 3 31 sec. "You get a temporary ... eligible for the award.")

The first master cutterman certificate was presented to Chief Warrant Officer Paul Dilger upon his retirement on July 27th, 2007. Since then there have been 11 certificates awarded making Salenski's the 12th. Salenski, a native of Syracuse, New York, has served in the Coast Guard for a total of 36 years and plans to retire in the summer of 2010.

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