



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDER NAVY RESERVE FORCE  
1915 FORRESTAL DRIVE  
NORFOLK VIRGINIA 23551-4615

COMNAVRESFORINST 1650.12  
N01A  
25 Apr 2023

COMNAVRESFOR INSTRUCTION 1650.12

From: Commander, Navy Reserve Force

Subj: VICE ADMIRAL JOHN COTTON AWARD FOR INNOVATION EXCELLENCE

1. Purpose. To issue policy and procedures for the Vice Admiral John Cotton Award for Innovation Excellence. The Vice Admiral John Cotton Award for Innovation Excellence recognizes Navy Reserve Sailors whose contributions promote innovative ideas and concepts resulting in substantial and quantifiable benefits to the Navy Reserve mission, while enhancing the warfighting readiness of the Navy Reserve Force.

2. Background

a. Vice Admiral John Cotton graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a degree in Aerospace Engineering in June 1973, earning his wings as a Naval Aviator in October 1974. His father was also a Naval Aviator and his grandfather flew with the Lafayette Flying Corps in World War I.

b. Accumulating over 15,000 flight hours as a Navy and commercial pilot, his global joint experience includes assignments as a light attack, reconnaissance, strike fighter and adversary pilot, and command leadership positions of an FA-18 squadron, Naval Air Station Keflavik, Iceland, and the Pentagon Navy Command Center. He served as Chief of Navy Reserve and Commander Navy Reserve Force (COMNAVRESFOR) in the Pentagon from 2003-2008, followed by his service at Leonardo DRS as a Corporate Senior Vice President from 2008 to 2013.

c. Previous Flag Officer assignments include Deputy Commander, Joint Task Force Southwest Asia; Deputy Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations Warfare Requirements and Programs; and member of the Secretary of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board. He is a graduate of many military and civilian senior executive leadership and business programs, and personal awards include the Navy Distinguished Service, Legion of Merit and Defense Meritorious Service Medals. VADM (Ret) Cotton served as a civilian member of the Reserve Forces Policy Board, a Senior Fellow at the Joint Forces Staff College, as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation, and as a member of the Executive Masters of Business Administration Adjunct Faculty at George Mason University School of Business.

d. In 2022, the Navy Reserve held its inaugural I3 Waypoints Contest, soliciting ideas from the Reserve Force that achieve one of the following: 1) innovate something new; 2) improve on something already established; or 3) integrate several ideas, products or processes rendering the former collective workflow obsolete. The goal of the contest is to fast-track actionable ideas to improve or create new capabilities, procedures, or platforms for the Navy Reserve, and to eliminate low-value administrative or bureaucratic procedures. The positive feedback and success of the pilot drove the decision to establish it as an annual contest.

3. Eligibility Requirements. Nominees may submit more than one idea. Contestants must be a member of one of the following categories:

- a. The Reserve Component.
- b. The Active Component, while attached or assigned to a Navy Reserve unit.
- c. A Navy civilian under the employment of the Navy Reserve.

4. Selection Criteria. Winning submissions must meet the following criteria:

- a. Nominees must submit their ideas in accordance with the annual contest criteria, as prescribed in the solicitation message.
- b. All nominations must be submitted through the I3 Waypoints Portal in the format delineated in the solicitation message on or before the submission deadline.
- c. The individual whose contributions would result in the greatest benefit to the Navy Reserve based on the board's evaluation will be awarded. Specifically, nominees will be judged based upon the following criteria:

- (1) Innovative planning and execution that merits adoption for standard usage due to the quantifiable success and benefit of the proposed outcome.

- (2) An idea whose implementation can be enacted immediately, given existing technologies.

- (3) An idea that can be resourced through year of execution funding without impacting Program Objective Manager forecasts.

5. Award Guidelines. COMNAVRESFORCOM will select the five finalists and notify them of their selection. All finalists will be invited to the National Capital Region (NCR) for a taped interview before a panel of judges as part of the final selection round to be aired via Navy Reserve social media channels. The winning finalist will be recognized with a trophy which will be presented after the interview.

6. Support. All finalists will be issued Active Duty for Training orders, with pay and allowances, for a period not to exceed five days including travel. Hotel accommodations in the NCR will be directed and all vehicle transportation needs will be provided by COMNAVRESFOR.

7. Records Management. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be managed per Secretary of the Navy Manual 5210.1 of September 2019.

8. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, COMNAVRESFOR N01A will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance to ensure applicability, currency and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 120 years, unless reviewed or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.



J. B. MUSTIN

**Releasability and distribution:**

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via COMNAVRESFORCOM website, <https://www.navyreserve.navy.mil/Resources/Official-RESFOR-Guidance/Instructions/>