

Returning to Active Weather Observation

By John Berger, LT, USN (Ret.)

After retiring from the Navy in 2000, I began a second career in cybersecurity, spending the next 22 years securing networks. It was a natural transition, particularly after serving “behind the green door” during my final tour.

Despite the career shift, I never lost my connection to meteorology. Like many of us, I continued to follow the weather closely—but mostly as an interested observer. After retiring in Maryland and finding myself with more discretionary time, I decided it was time to reengage and contribute once again to the science that shaped our careers.

Personal Weather Station Installation

In 2024, I installed a Personal Weather Station (PWS), carefully sited away from obstructions in accordance with proper exposure standards—bringing back memories of my MOETLO days at NEOC.

The station continuously transmits data to:

- **Weather Underground**
<http://www.wunderground.com/wundermap>
- **Citizens Weather Observation Program (CWOP)**
<https://www.weather.gov/cle/CWOP>

CWOP data is ingested into NOAA systems and made available to meteorologists nationwide, providing valuable surface observations that supplement official reporting networks.

CoCoRaHS Volunteer Reporting

In January 2025, I joined the **Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network (CoCoRaHS)**:

<https://www.cocorahs.org/>

CoCoRaHS is a nationwide volunteer network that collects daily precipitation measurements. Observers check their 4-inch gauge once daily—between 0400 and 0900 local time—and submit reports online. The data supports climatology studies, flood monitoring, drought assessment, and severe weather verification.

It’s simple, structured, and impactful—something many former AGs/METOC would find both familiar and rewarding.

NWS SKYWARN Spotter Training

<https://www.weather.gov/skywarn/>

Most recently, I completed National Weather Service spotter training (SKYWARN) . The course covers identification and reporting of significant weather phenomena and establishes direct communication channels for time-sensitive reporting during severe weather events.

For those of us with an AG background, the material is very straightforward—basic observational awareness and reporting discipline that we practiced throughout our careers.

A Call to Shipmates

If you have the time and inclination, I encourage fellow NWSA members to consider participating in one of these programs. Whether through a full Personal Weather Station, CWOP participation, CoCoRaHS reporting, or SKYWARN spotter service, these volunteer efforts provide meaningful contributions to operational meteorology and climatological research.

For many of us, weather was never just a job—it was a profession and a calling. Participating in these programs offers a practical way to stay connected to that community and continue supporting the mission.

Very respectfully,
John
