



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY
America's Volunteer Lifesavers®

SUMMER 2006
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Navigator



AUXILIARISTS IN ALASKA: Work hard, study hard

On-Scene Coverage from Miami:
CARIBBEAN SEARCH & RESCUE CONFERENCE



Navigator

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ON THE COVER

Photo: McKibben Jackinsky, FSO-PA 21 D17

Despite rapidly deteriorating weather, the Coast Guard Auxiliary once again rode to the rescue – this time off Homer, Alaska -- when a recreational vessel in the Chamber of Commerce Winter King Salmon Tournament became disabled. Pictured is Craig Forrest, DSO-PV 17, at the stern of a 27-foot USCG SAFE Boat operated by local Auxiliarists, keeping a close eye on the tow-line as the disabled vessel is pulled through Kachemak Bay, enroute to safe-haven at Homer Harbor. Additional coverage from Alaska can be found on Page 17.

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EDITION DEADLINES

FALL
AUGUST 15

WINTER
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FEBRUARY 15, 2007

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:

Joel A. Glass, BC-APN
P.O. Box 1628
Portland, ME 04104

EditorNavigator@aol.com

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'YOU HAVE BEEN INTERCEPTED...'

A Coast Guard Auxiliary Aviator's Worst 'Nightmare'

STORY & PHOTOS BY RAY ARSENAULT
FSO-PA 11-3 D5SR

"Aircraft operating northeast of Atlantic City at 5,500 feet, you have been intercepted. Safely and gradually turn your aircraft to the right and take up a heading of 0-6-0 degrees..."

Intercepted!

A cold lump formed in the pit of our stomachs.

Since the imposition of air defense measures in the aftermath of 9/11—and apart from actually crashing an airplane – this is the general aviation pilot's worst nightmare.

Despite the need to continue safely flying the plane, visions of all sorts of dire consequences filled our heads: Will we be arrested? Do we need to hire an attorney? Will our pilot lose his license to fly? Where did we go astray? How could this have happened?

Luckily, this intercept was a well-controlled training evolution staged for the pilots and aircrews of U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City. We Auxiliary aviators were simply providing our active-duty counterparts with a realistic "target" for their training scenario.

No arrests. No lawyers. No loss of license.

Still, for the three pilots aboard Auxiliary Air Facility 1CE, the experience was a sobering one, to say the least, and it was a lesson that formed a lasting impression.

Our mission began at Frederick Municipal Airport in Maryland. Here, the Aircraft Commander – Calvin Early, M.D. (Ret.), IPFC 11-3 D5SR – met up with his co-pilot, Charlie Rose, also from Flotilla 11-3.

After fueling the Beechcraft Bonanza, checking the weather, and conducting a thorough crew mission briefing, Early departed Frederick and navigated to Atlantic City.

The pilots and aircrew members at



Aloft in AuxAir Facility 1CE, flying a course toward their assigned rendezvous with Coast Guard helicopters, Calvin Early (left), the aircraft commander, checks charts with Charlie Rose, co-pilot, in the cockpit of Early's Beechcraft Bonanza. (Below left): Coast Guard helicopter 'Dolphin 68,' preparing to display its YOU-HAVE-BEEN-INTERCEPTED sign, forms up off port wing of 1CE.

AIRSTA Atlantic City welcomed us warmly and escorted us into a conference room to conduct the pre-mission briefing. All mission participants were present, as was Air Station Atlantic City's outgoing and incoming Auxiliary Liaison Officers, Lieutenant John Hall and LTJG Ben Walton, respectively.

The briefing was conducted by Lieutenant Sean Roche. He professionally outlined important mission param-

eters, such as the general scenario of the exercise, the limits of the exercise area, the weather forecast, the risk assessment, and a safety briefing. He also discussed the communications plan in detail, emphasizing aircraft call signs, frequencies, specific code words to be used and their meanings.

With all questions and concerns discussed to everyone's mutual satisfaction, the aircrews separated to conduct their respective pre-flight inspections and have a bite of lunch.

At 1205, Early engaged the starter on AuxAir 1CE – his beautiful Beechcraft Bonanza – and the Auxiliary's portion of the exercise began. Co-pilot Rose handled the radios and assisted with navigation.

We departed Atlantic City's active runway at 1217, bound for our designated holding area along the coastline, north of Atlantic City. The plan called for us to depart our holding area at exactly 1230 to enter the exercise area southbound. Early guided us expertly to our holding area, and we began our "in-bound turn" precisely on time.

The "rabbit" was entering the hunting

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Will we be arrested?
Do we need to hire an attorney?
Will our pilot lose his
license to fly? Where did we go
astray? How could this
have happened?

grounds.

Meanwhile, our “hunters” – LT Kevin d’Eustacio (aircraft commander), LT Sean Roche (co-pilot), and AET Darren Freeman, of USCG helicopter “Dolphin 68” – were relaxing in the ready room back at the air station.

When the alarm suddenly sounded, indicating a mission, LT d’Eustacio and his crew dashed out to bring their aircraft to life. Within minutes, Dolphin 68 was airborne and speeding toward us on a bee-line intercept course, guided by radar controllers.

The hunt was on!

Aboard AuxAir 1CE, we flew a steady course, following our briefed flight plan as though we might be an aircraft that had unwittingly strayed into controlled airspace, or more ominously, a hostile aircraft flying with malicious intent.

Nowadays, a “temporary flight restriction” can pop up at any time, virtually anywhere – even after a pilot has departed on a flight. Professional pilots who have done all their pre-flight planning “by the book” can conceivably be caught unaware, resulting in an airspace incursion.

Aircraft of various federal and local agencies, including the Coast Guard, respond to every single one of these incursions. Hence, this training was of timely importance to our active-duty friends, who may be called upon to react to such an incident at any time.

Aboard Dolphin 68, the aircrew was steered – with surgical precision – directly toward its prey – *us!*

LT d’Eustacio planned to intercept us at our “one-o’clock” position, at a slightly higher altitude, converging nearly head-on with all his lights blazing. His intent was to retain a safety margin for all involved, yet get our attention.

And get our attention he did!

Seeing the bright orange Dolphin helicopter flash overhead at a high converging speed was an eye-catching experience. Seemingly out of nowhere, a Coast Guard helicopter appeared alongside our aircraft as we continued to cruise along.

The Dolphin 68 crew worked to identify our aircraft from this position. They tried to contact us, while remaining in a safe location, able to react to our next move – no matter what it might be.

“AuxAir One Charlie Echo, Dolphin Six Eight: Knock off and re-set via right turn,” radioed AET Freeman when his helo had completed the intercept. “Roger, AuxAir One Charlie Echo reset-



Calvin Early, IPFC 11-3 D5SR, stands atop wing discussing his AuxAir Operational Facility with an aircraft mechanic, prior to taking off for a joint mission with Coast Guard helicopters.

ting; right turn,” replied co-pilot Rose. (These were set phrases discussed at the briefing to prevent confusion and a possible accident during what could be a dicey aerial maneuver.)

AuxAir 1CE participated in two more intercepts for the Dolphin 68 crew, with each intercept using a different converging and identification technique.

During one of these intercepts, LT d’Eustacio stationed his helo off our left wing, close aboard, and had AET Freeman activate an electronic sign in Dolphin 68’s right doorway that read: YOU-HAVE-BEEN-INTERCEPTED!

This technique might work in situations where authorities are unable to reach the “target aircraft” on the radio, for whatever reason. The objective is to bring the situation to a safe resolution without having to take drastic measures to stop an errant pilot.

AIRSTA Atlantic City ordered us to return to our staging area once again, this time to put another helicopter and crew – “Dolphin 81” – to the test.

Dolphin 81 – under the command of CDR Bob Makowsky, assisted by LCDR Rusty Sloane and AMT2 Robert Bennett – repeated the nearly-head-on intercept that we had experienced earlier in the day, with no less reaction from those aboard AuxAir 1CE.

Once again, Dolphin 81 readily “found” us from all angles. Our final intercept culminated in that harrowing radio call: “...you have been intercepted...”

For Auxiliary aviators who normally augment the Coast Guard by providing aerial patrols, this was a chance to oper-

ate in direct support of our active-duty counterparts. It is a recurring mission for the pilots of Flotilla 11-3 and the Auxiliary air crews that rotate responsibility for these flights. Owing to the increased safety concerns and pilot workload, each mission requires two qualified Auxiliary pilots.

For the active-duty aircrews, this is but one of many maneuvers they must be capable of performing on any given day. Recertification on these various maneuvers takes place regularly. According to LT d’Eustacio, the frequency of recertification for the aerial intercept mission depends on what type it is. Aircrews recertify once every six months for day-light intercepts and once a month at night. How valuable is AuxAir participation in the recertification process?

Any time two aircraft are converging, the chances of accidents rise exponentially. One would not want to try this type of maneuver on an unsuspecting pilot unless it was a real-world situation. In fact, Federal regulations prohibit formation flight unless all participating pilots have been briefed on the maneuver — on the ground, beforehand.

Where else, and at what expense, would the Coast Guard find a trained, competent air crew that could be relied upon to conduct a safe practice operation of this type? “We couldn’t do this without you,” stated Commander Makowsky.

The pilots of “The Flying Flotilla” are more than happy to provide this service. We welcome the chance to help keep the crews of Air Station Atlantic City on their toes. 🦋

Kauai Auxiliarists Assist USCG with SAR Operation

BY MAXINE CAVANAUGH
DSO-PA 14

In the early morning of March 15, while people were sleeping in their homes near the town of Kilauea on Kauai’s north shore, the Ka Loko Reservoir levee breached, sending a 100-yard-wide river of water, debris and mud rushing toward the Pacific Ocean.

The huge landslide swept dwellings — and seven people — toward the ocean...and to their death.

The Coast Guard responded to the call for assistance, launching search and rescue operations. A C-130 aircraft and an HH-65 helicopter began an aerial search, and USCG Station Kauai sent its 25- and 30-foot SAFE Boats to assist.

Auxiliarists from Flotilla 3-15 D14 (Kauai) were asked to assist. Coxswain John Rosario, IPFC, and crewman Jim Jung, RCO-OS 14, arrived at STA Kauai ready to go to work. They were tasked to bring body bags, food and water from Nawiliwili to the on-scene Coast Guard vessels, and to do anything they could to assist the Coasties. They also picked up water and pizza to take to the other crews.

The Auxiliarists headed out on their mission aboard Rosario’s OPFAC, the 21-foot *Kai Lio*. Traveling at 10 knots, they covered the 20 or so miles around the coast in just under two hours.

First, they rendezvoused with the 30-foot SAFE Boat and transferred a body bag for one of the victims lying on the deck. It was an especially sad sight for Jung, who lost his wife just a couple of months earlier.

Carefully making their way around the debris field, the Auxiliarists assisted in the search for more bodies. Several miles offshore, they met up with the 25-foot SAFE Boat and delivered the pizza and water, and body bags – just in case – to a crew that was happy to get something to eat, even if it was cold pizza.

Mud-browened water and debris covered the area as far as the horizon, as well as trees, vegetation and building materials. There even was a bed cover for a pickup.

Rosario and Jung continued to search for any potential clumps of debris throughout the day, until the 110-foot USCGC *Washington*, out of Sector Honolulu, arrived to take over surface ops. With daylight waning and the weather changing, the small



Photo: BM3 Eric Flannelly, USCG Station Kauai

Jim Jung (left), RCO-OS 14, and John Rosario, IPFC 3-15 D14, relax following their response to a Coast Guard call for assistance when a levee was breached at the Ka Loko Reservoir, near Kilauea, Kauai. Jung served as crew and Rosario was coxswain of his OPFAC – the 21-foot *Kai Lio* (‘Sea Horse’).

boats were instructed to return to base.

The *Washington*, C-130 and HH-65 continued operations for two more days, until the SAR was called off. Although seven people were missing, only three bodies were eventually recovered.

The unforgettable day ended as Auxiliarists Rosario and Jung returned to Nawiliwili [Lihu’e] in the dark, following their track on GPS.

The flashing glow of Nawiliwili Lighthouse brought them comfort and a feeling of personal satisfaction, knowing they were there when needed – ready, willing, and able to assist.

Looking back at that day’s events, Jung expressed both pride and satisfaction:

“My impressions [of the mission] were positive and uplifting,” he said. “It was unusual for the Coast Guard to call us for operational assistance. They had only two boats and needed help, which we could – and did – provide.

“At the end of the day, the Coast Guard saw that we could do what they needed and they saw our willingness to do it. Our capability was upgraded, in their eyes. We both felt good at being ready, willing and able to support their search and recovery mission.

“We felt especially good about their having [had enough] confidence in us to have made the request.” 🦋

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Who Will Be Our Future Leaders?

YOUR DECISIONS CHART THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



COMMODORE
GENE M. SEIBERT
NATIONAL
COMMODORE



During the September-to-November time frame this year, we will be selecting our future leaders.

Have you realized that in 18 years, a decision you made *this* year could determine who the National Commodore will be?

That's the kind of power you have. Yes, *you!*

Elections are coming up soon, and as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, you have a vote. Depending on what position you hold, you may have more than one opportunity to elect tomorrow's leaders.

If that future National Commodore follows the elected path, in all likelihood, he or she will serve two years each as Vice- and Flotilla Commander, two years each as Vice- and Division Captain, two years each as Rear Commodore, two years each as Vice- and District Commodore, two years as a National Area Commodore, and two more years as the National Vice Commodore.

Electing leaders may not be as exciting as participating in those program areas that are of interest to you, but our elections are, nonetheless, one of the most critical things we do as Auxiliarists.

Why do our elections matter so much?

We need to choose our elected leaders carefully because their one- or two-year watch can impact the direction and productivity of a unit – now, and in future years.

Most of us have a limited hands-on concept of how the Auxiliary – as a

whole – works. We know and understand our own units and their leaders. When election time comes around, we vote for people we think will do the best job.

Or do we?

Sometimes, we simply vote for the person who is next in line, as if we are rewarding them for having served so far, or possibly because we simply like one person better than another. And, of course, there are times that we vote for a person because no one else is willing to run for a position.

I think we've all been *there*.

But now, I am asking you to stop and consider just how important it is that we choose wisely, pick those who have the competencies of leadership and management, and pick those who are risk managers, but also risk-takers.

With the changing environment in the post-September 11 era, we are experiencing cultural shifts not only in the Coast Guard, but in the Auxiliary as well. Now, more than ever, we need the right leaders to help chart our future course

Fact: We are not the same Coast Guard Auxiliary we were five years ago, so selecting a visionary leader is even more important now than ever.

Perhaps Albert Einstein hit the nail on the head when he said, "The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were in when we created them."

It comes as no surprise to any of us that we have experienced – *are experiencing!* – a cultural shift, which occurs when a series of dramatic events are so impacting an organization that it cannot continue to operate the same way and expect to achieve its mission.

There is simply no room for candidates who want to pursue business as usual. Moreover, we should not elect someone to a leadership position simply because

it is their turn to serve. The leaders we elect must be ready, willing and able to serve and not appear as simply a figure-head.

September 11 brought sweeping changes to our operational environment, and these changes only reinforce the importance of the fact that we must increase interaction and co-ordination between operational Coast Guard commands, inter-agency partners, and our units. We need to bring a new focus to the values of planning and sustainment of our operational readiness.

We need to recognize fully that, in a broad sense, all of our operational activities need to be focused on prevention of an incident through Operation Patriot Readiness, Maritime Domain Awareness, Recreational Boating Safety, and Community Outreach programs. Or, in response to mitigate the undesired effects of an incident through our surge capabilities and capacity under MARSEC 2 or 3 conditions. Or, if called upon to perform a search and rescue mission.

I feel, overall, that our organization must begin the transformation, in view of what we know today. This cannot be ignored. The results of the dramatic events, the shift in the Coast Guard, establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, and the changing make-up of the recreational boater, all need to come into play as we move our organization forward.

Today is the "New Normal." We cannot become complacent; we must realize that things will never be like they were pre-September 11.

Now, more than ever, we need to provide our organization with the depth and breadth of operational, personal, team and strategic leadership that is critical to our sustained success in the near- and long-term.

See why your selection of this year's leaders is so important?

Gen. Colin Powell, when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, referred to some critical success factors as traits/characteristics of outstanding leaders. I suggest you use the following traits as a sort-of checklist in evaluating the candidates running for office in your flotilla, division, or district elections:

• **Visionary** – A visionary leader sets goals, looks ahead and sees what the

challenges are ahead of time. (Powell calls this 'seeing around corners.') A visionary leader plans now for tomorrow. Visionary leaders are proactive, rather than reactive. Lastly, a visionary leader doesn't accept the status quo as OK.

• **Motivator/Achiever** – Leaders who are high-energy and are motivated to do more, do better than what has taken place in the past. They do not rest on the laurels of previous accomplishments. More importantly, they have an ability to motivate others to buy into this same philosophy. Successful leaders give 100 percent effort and are continually striving for excellence.

• **Communicator** – A leader must be able to communicate their ideas, values, visions and goals. A successful leader's decisions are crisp and clear, so everyone knows where the unit is going, and how it will get there.

• **Solutions-Oriented** – You may have heard the saying, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." Successful leaders don't simply see problems as unsolvable; they work to find solutions. They use the KISS (Keep It Super-Simple) principle, and they have a can-do attitude. They always exhibit a situational awareness capability that enables them to think fast on their feet.

• **Perpetually Optimistic** – Leaders who are perpetually optimistic have a ripple effect on their organization. They see what can be done, as opposed to simply seeing the roadblocks to progress.

• **Know How to Have Fun** – Successful leaders surround themselves with people who take their work – but not themselves – seriously. They know how to work hard and play hard, and they value the fourth cornerstone.

• **Leaders Are Willing to Make the Tough Decisions** – You have heard the saying, "The buck stops here." Successful leaders stand fast to this philosophy, even when it seems unpopular.

Therefore, in this year's election cycle, no matter whether you are electing a Flotilla Commander, Division Captain, or any other of the elected leadership positions, please choose carefully, and please choose wisely.

Like the ripple effect of the wake from a boat, the leadership choices that we make today will ultimately impact the direction of the Auxiliary of tomorrow. 🌊

NACO Appointed to USCG Leadership Council

FROM: ADM THAD ALLEN
COMMANDANT
United States Coast Guard

Excellence in mission execution is the foundation of my Commandant's Intent and will factor into all decisions. The contributions of the Auxiliary to Coast Guard mission execution are significant and invaluable. I have, therefore, decided to include the Auxiliary in my senior advisory team.

It is with great pleasure that I announce that NACO Gene Seibert will be the first Auxiliary member of the Coast Guard Leadership Council. COMO Seibert will join the Vice Commandant, Chief of Staff, Area Commanders, MCPOCG, and Senior SES Rep in advising me on all issues of strategic importance.

COMO Seibert is uniquely qualified to serve on the Leadership Council. Since joining the Auxiliary in 1984, he has served in all elected positions and in numerous critical staff assignments. As the National Commodore, he has guided our Auxiliary through transformational change with a steady hand and tremendous dedication to service.

COMO Seibert is a registered member of the National Contract Management Association, and he holds advanced degrees in procurement and international contracting. After 34 years of service, he recently retired from Lucent Technologies, where he served as Director, International Government and Domestic Contract Management.

We welcome COMO Seibert to the Leadership Council.

How to Address Your Concerns Using the Chain of Leadership



CAPTAIN
**BARRY
SMITH**
CHIEF DIRECTOR
OF AUXILIARY
(G-PCX)



Whether you've been in the Auxiliary for years or are new to the organization, eventually you will have a question, concern, or idea you would like addressed. Hopefully, when you first entered the Auxiliary, you received training on the proper way to obtain appropriate answers.

As a new Auxiliarist myself, I recently received this training, and I wanted to share with you some helpful information that may assist you in getting your questions answered expeditiously.

Most of the questions you might have are simple and can be answered by flotilla members. Sometimes, a question comes up that isn't easily answered and requires additional effort to find the answer.

Who is the correct person to answer your question? What do you do if your question goes unanswered, or the question is not answered completely? If it is a contentious or sensitive issue, how can you get it addressed with the least amount of provocation?

The first thing I recommend you do is try to find the answer yourself. Numerous sources of information are available that can assist you in educating yourself. Regional and locally produced publications, or nationally distributed publications, such as *Navigator*, can help keep you informed.

Two excellent sources of Auxiliary information are the Office of the Chief Director site, http://www.cgaux.info/g_ocx/index.asp, and the Auxiliary site, <http://nws.cgaux.org/index.html>. They contain a variety of information, including publications, links, and search tools.

If you don't have a computer at home, most public libraries have computers with Internet access, and a librarian can quickly show you how to access information.

A helpful feature that both sites contain is a contact section that allows you to submit a question via e-mail. I recently asked my staff to pose a question to each site to see how long it would take to get an answer. The question posed to the Auxiliary site was answered in an amazing 21 minutes. Both sites strive to make a

response within 24 hours.

Most Directors of Auxiliary (DIRAUX) maintain sites with features similar to the Chief Director and Auxiliary sites.

If you can't find the answer to your question on your own, I urge you to use your Chain of Leadership (COL). It is worth emphasizing the guidance in Chapter 1, Section C of the Auxiliary Manual, COMDTINST M16790.1F. The Auxiliary Manual can be easily found on the Chief Director's site in the Manuals section. This very important section states the following:

- In the Auxiliary, the phrase "chain of leadership and management" describes a system of communication and responsibility providing for an effective and efficient path for relaying information through all organizational levels. The process is best described as a chain of leadership and management, rather than a chain of command, as no military command authority exists.

- Auxiliary elected leaders must convey policy accurately and consistently to Auxiliary unit members via the chain of leadership and management. Likewise, *all Auxiliarists are expected to use the chain of leadership and management for giving and getting information and voicing appropriate concerns.* [Emphasis added.] All members should recognize that the elected leader's experience offers a great potential to solve problems.

- When correspondence is submitted via another Auxiliary elected or appointed leader in the chain of leadership and management, that Auxiliarist is obligated to rapidly endorse and forward correspondence as required. Good leadership and management demand the existence of proper channels for Auxiliarists to follow and respect, except as otherwise provided or directed. This process assures that every activity is well monitored and carried out by the ablest members, prevents confusion and delay of actions, and allows for orderly and courteous flow of information.

- Auxiliarists should keep in mind that the Director is a vital source of Coast Guard information who provides the latest

guidance on special projects and routine Auxiliary administration. Auxiliarists must utilize the chain of leadership and management in communicating ideas, information, and requests. This process is important for the orderly conduct of organizational activities and is proven to actually speed work results, since many solutions are found directly at the flotilla or division leadership level.

What does this reference from the Auxiliary Manual boil down to?

Auxiliarists, upon entry and when appointed to higher office, "pledge to abide by the governing policies established by the Commandant." Thus, Auxiliarists have pledged to make use of the chain of leadership to have questions, concerns, and ideas addressed. The chain of leadership is required to rapidly act on issues presented to them.

What should an Auxiliarist do if he, or she, believes the COL is unresponsive, or is the source of the problem? The process to get a response is actually quite simple, even if the COL is perceived as a problem. The following paragraphs explain how to best handle those situations.

The next step is to document your request in writing. Depending on the matter, an e-mail may suffice. If you choose to send an e-mail, I strongly recommend you send it to one individual only. Include others on the e-mail only if necessary, and definitely do not send it to a distribution list. If you send a letter, it should be clear and concise, and include all information necessary to clearly explain the issue.

Both e-mails and letters should be sent up the COL, starting at the lowest level possible, and the COL is responsible for rapidly moving your correspondence up the chain, as required. If you perceive a problem with the chain, I do not recommend automatically skipping a link in the chain or going outside of the chain.

Always allow sufficient time for action to be taken, and try sending follow-up correspondence at least once more, if required. If you do not get a response to your inquiry after writing twice, don't give up; just move on to the next step. Send correspondence to the next level of the COL. When moving to this step, be sure to explain what actions have already been taken to get your issue resolved. Also, when moving up the COL, include the leader you are going above on the copy line. This informs them you are continuing your request for assistance—and you are not going outside the chain.

You could continue this process up the chain to the National Commodore or beyond, to the Commandant's Chief

Director of Auxiliary, but going that far usually isn't necessary. If the links of the COL from the member to the Commandant are unfamiliar to you, I recommend you review Figure 1-1 of the Auxiliary Manual.

One point to remember is that sometimes the official response the COL provides to a question, concern, or idea isn't the one you may have hoped for. Thoughtful consideration must be given before requesting that the COL reconsider the issue. Unless there is additional information that substantially amplifies the issue, I do not recommend requesting a second look. When an official reply is made to an issue, it is normally upheld and supported if an appeal is made to a higher authority.

Here, in the Office of the Chief Director (G-PCX), we receive correspondence, on a regular basis, that Auxiliarists send to various government officials, including the President, Congressmen, Senators, Cabinet Secretaries, Governors, and the Commandant.

The questions range from very simple, such as uniform item questions, to complex funding and personnel issues. In most cases, the information that the individual sought could have been answered easily without seeking the aid of senior government officials. Additionally, by the time a letter is routed through official channels and is received in G-PCX, it has been in the system for some time and we are tasked with a quick, "drop all we are doing to support others," reply in order to route it back through the system.

There is a very formal process that must be followed when these letters are answered, and valuable staff time is taken away from other Auxiliary projects to answer what often are routine questions more appropriately directed to the COL.

A letter routed "up" the Auxiliary COL allows more flexibility and research time than one being routed "down" from a Senator for immediate action. If a letter routed up the chain is received and requires research that will take more than a few days, I will send correspondence to the originator, acknowledging receipt of the letter and informing them that I will provide a thorough answer as soon as possible.

A common factor shared by the vast majority of the letters written to government officials answered by G-PCX is that they contain incomplete, or inaccurate, information. In some cases, the issue is distorted enough that if the government official receiving the letter took the individual at their word, they might not get the "big pic-

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

ARIZONA OPEX 2006 'A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS'



Photo: Tom Nunes, SO-PA 10 D11SR

Division 10 D11SR (Arizona/Southern Utah) recently held the area's first-ever division-level OPEX, at which boat crew, coxswain and PWC operator candidates could complete or update qualifications. OPEX 2006, at Roosevelt Lake Marina, was declared 'a tremendous success' as 45 of the 48 registered participants earned their quals. Pictured learning P-1 Pump operation are, from the left: Nelly Doran, Flotilla 10-1; John Doran, FSO-CM 10-1; and Michael Devine, FSO-PB 10-8, taught by David Cotner (right), FSO-SR 10-8, all D11SR. The weekend event included 10 Vessel Safety Checks and three Recreational Boating Partner visits.

◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

ture," or might think the Coast Guard unworthy of their support.

Unfortunately, the individual writing the letter seldom has all of the facts. Even well intentioned letters to government officials can have adverse effects. For instance, requests for funding for a specific Auxiliary initiative can cause funds to be cut from another Auxiliary or Coast Guard project. That is one reason the COL is so important; so we can coordinate efforts to ensure funding

for the projects most beneficial to the Auxiliary.

There are times when seeking the aid of a senior government official to resolve an issue is the right course of action—especially if the COL is not responsive. This article is not an attempt to discourage the choice to take that action, but it should be regarded as a remedy of last resort.

I encourage you to send the National Commodore, or myself, a note outlining your concern, and allow us an opportunity to respond to it before going to

your Congressman or the President. My personal experience as an active-duty Coast Guardsman, and as an Auxiliarist, supports my belief that the Chain of Command and Chain of Leadership—when given the opportunity—will take appropriate action to meet the needs of its members and support the best interests of the organization.

I encourage you to follow the procedures I have outlined to have your questions, concerns, or ideas addressed. *Semper Paratus*—and have a great Coast Guard day. 🇺🇸



Obverse and reverse of District Commander's Commemorative Coin awarded to winning members of ISAR Team 2005 by RADM Larry L. Hereth, Commander, Fifth Coast Guard District.

U.S. Going for the Gold at ISAR '06 Competition

VIRGINIA TO HOST BI-NATIONAL AUXILIARY TEAMS

STORY & PHOTOS BY DIANE GILMAN
ADSO-PA (Central Area) D5SR

Each year for the past six years, Coast Guard Auxiliary search-and-rescue teams from throughout the U.S. and Canada have vied for the championship at the International Search and Rescue (ISAR) competition.

This year, it is America's turn to play host to the hotly-contested competition, beginning October 27, at the North Ferry Landing Seawall in Portsmouth, VA.

Teams throughout the U.S. are now hard at work training for the event. The six best teams from each country will be challenged with a variety of events that mirror distress situations they conceivably could encounter.

This year's preparation and competition closely resembles ISAR 2005, for which U.S. teams began competing in late spring [last year] at the local level before progressing through division and district competitions.

The two best teams from the east and west coasts, and the Great Lakes and Inland Rivers regions traveled last September to the Canadian Coast Guard Base at Dartmouth, NS, to face the six best Canadian teams. The three-day competition involved SAR planning, on-the-water searches, dewatering and firefight-



ISAR 2005 Team from Division 12 D5SR won the communications written test, damage control, and Can-Am line toss events in Dartmouth, NS. Flanked by CWO2 David Lukasik, Operations Training Officer (left), and CDR Robert Engle, DIRAUX, are team members (from the left): Jerry Perez, FSO-VE; Dick Hall; Warren Peake, FC; and, Fred Gilman, VFC, all with Flotilla 12-6 D5SR.



Jerry Perez, Flotilla 12-6, signals the start of semaphore competition at ISAR 2005 in Dartmouth, NS.

ing situations, marlinspike seamanship, first aid, emergency damage control, communications, and emergency towing.

Each of the 12 teams came to the competition with four members – a coxswain and three crew members.

For each of the eight ISAR events, each team competed with their coxswain and two crewmembers chosen at random by the event organizers the evening before the competition. The events were SAR planning, SAR exercise (SAREX) or execution, communications during the SAREX, communications written test, dewatering pump operation, Lifeline-throwing, marlinspike, and damage control.

The fourth member of each team was chosen randomly and placed on four international teams consisting of three participants each for the five so-called Can-Am events. These are dewatering pump operation, marlinspike, Lifeline-throwing, Medevac, and visual communications.

Jerry Perez, FSO-VE 12-6 D5SR, participated on one of the Can-Am teams that took first place in the Lifeline-throwing event.

Canada honored The Year of the Veteran and those lost in past SAR operations. Perez and one of his Canadian Can-Am team members were selected to carry the wreath in the opening ceremony.

Division 12, which encompasses Virginia's Eastern Shore and lower Maryland, has sent a team to the East Coast competition every year since 2002. Last year, Flotilla 12-6 (Chincoteague, VA) represented the district and won first place in two events. Team members were Fred Gilman, coxswain, and crewmembers Dick Hall and Warren Peake.

Three first place trophies came home with the FL 12-6 team. It was the third time in ISAR's six years that a Div-12 team participated at the international level – a record not equaled by any other division in the United States. 🇺🇸

‘Routine’ Patrol Turns Out to be Anything *but* Boring

New Auxiliarist Gets Unexpected On-the-Job SAR Training

BY SHEILA GILMORE
FSO-PB 29 D11SR

Saturday, Nov. 19, 2005, was a long-awaited day for me. Not only was I to be sworn in as an Auxiliarist at our Dana Point (CA) flotilla’s meeting that morning, but I had been invited along as trainee on a routine safety patrol following the meeting.

The coxswain/boat-owner Joe Tambe, Flotilla-29 D11SR, crew members Rich Lagrand, FC-29, and Michael Newman, SO-CS 2 D11SR, and this trainee launched the Auxiliary Operational Facility, *Fear Naut*, and headed out to cover our AOR.

Conditions were calm and clear; it was a perfect day on the waters of Southern California.

One of the men aboard had advised me to expect “a boring four-hour boat ride.” The first part of our patrol was, indeed, routine. We contacted a few boats to ask if they had seen an overdue sailboat heading south from San Francisco, chatted with a pair of kayakers about Personal Flotation Device requirements, and cruised our area looking for anyone in need of assistance.

I was busily absorbing *all* the details – the radio calls to check in with the Coast Guard, rotation of duties among the crew, a man-overboard drill with a fender as the “person-in-the-water.”

Near the end of our scheduled patrol, I was at the helm, taking instruction from Rich, while Mike and Joe covered watch duties in the cockpit. Suddenly, Mike called out: “Aircraft in the water! We have an aircraft in the water!”

His tone-of-voice told me that this situ-



© NBC Universal Photo: NBC4.tv

Image broadcast by KNBC-TV, Los Angeles, shows Auxiliary OPFAC *Fear Naut* (top) forming part of the search team looking for airplane crash survivors. Other vessels are from the Orange County Sheriff’s Department Harbor Patrol and the California Department of Fish & Game.



Photo: Rich Lagrand, FC-29 D11SR

Author Sheila Gilmore, FSO-PB 29 D11SR, relaxes after her SAR experience.



Photo: Robert J. Dennis, BC-AIF

Crew checks equipment on Flotilla-29 D11SR’s *Fear Naut* during a patrol that was considerably ation was *not* a drill.

I leapt from the helm and Rich took control of the boat, simultaneously bringing us around and turning on the safety lights. He radioed Sector Los Angeles to report the situation and our latitude and longitude. Then, he broadcast a Mayday call, and sped us to the scene of the crash.

By the time we arrived on-scene - approximately two minutes after Mike had sounded the alarm – small pieces of debris and personal effects and a fuel slick were all that remained on the surface. The plane had plunged into the ocean nose first and sank in about 30 seconds.

more-routine than the Nov. 19, 2005 patrol.

My *first* day on the water with the Auxiliary! My *first* real-life search-and-rescue!

Varied thoughts crowded my mind during that quick trip over to the crash site:

Would we find survivors? Bodies? *Parts* of bodies? Would my First Aid training serve me well, if the need arose?

What if my actions were *essential* to a victim’s survival and I didn’t know what to do? How late would we be on-scene? Had I eaten enough lunch to sustain me? Who were the people aboard the aircraft? Who was awaiting their return? Where had they been? What if entering the water made the difference between a victim’s

survival and death?

I offered a brief, silent prayer for their survival and for our courage.

We searched for survivors, but found none. We then turned our attention to recovering floating debris and monitoring the fish-finder for indications of the downed aircraft’s location.

When the Harbor Patrol arrived, we surrendered the recovered debris, which included a flight plan containing the craft’s tail number, and we gave statements to the officers. Later, Rich used his onboard radio to relay transmissions between USCG and Sheriff’s helicopters, which were having difficulty establishing direct radio communications with each other.

Sector Los Angeles released us from the scene at approximately 1600. We returned to the launch ramp. We had alerted Norma Lococo (our then-flotilla commander) by cell phone, so she was at the ramp to discuss the incident with our crew. Later, the USCG Critical Incident Stress Management unit contacted us about scheduling a debriefing to evaluate our post-incident condition.

Now that I’ve been an Auxiliary member for a short while, participated in more training missions, and completed a few qualifications, I realize that I learned a number of important and lasting lessons from that early experience...

First: *Semper Paratus* is *not* an empty expression. Anything can happen out there, and one must be prepared. I recall – vividly! – thinking as we sped to the scene, “I hope I’m not called upon to do something that I haven’t yet learned to do!”

Second: Training drills *work*. Our crew responded to the emergency swiftly, decisively and appropriately. That comes from *practice*. Had any of the plane’s occupants survived, we could have quickly rescued them.

Third: The U.S. Coast Guard *really* does see us as an integral part of their organization. This was demonstrated in our contact (via radio) with the USCG helo dispatched to the scene and with the crew of the Defender Class patrol boat that arrived later. It was further displayed in the follow-up contact and meeting with the crisis-management team.

I expect that over the course of my career as an Auxiliarist, I will have the opportunity to participate in many more safety patrols. But the lessons learned on this very first patrol will stay with me and guide my every action while on future patrols. ☸

NSBW 2006: Promoting The Safety Message

BY HARRIET HOWARD
DVC-AS

It was the year for mascots – from Coastie®, to PFD Panda, to Myrna the Mermaid – promoting recreational boating safety, with emphasis on the *Wear It!* message throughout the nation. In National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) proclamations issued across North America and beyond, local and state dignitaries pointed out the importance of wearing Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) when on board recreational boats.

Life Jackets Save Lives!

Judging by reports received from Canada to the Hawaiian Islands, this year's North American Safe Boating Campaign was a big success. Following are the NSBW highlights:

D1NR: In New England, birthplace of National Safe Boating Week, 36 Auxiliarists in dress-white uniforms attended the annual “Auxiliary Night at the Pops” in Boston. Conductor Keith Lockhart led the group in singing “Semper Paratus.”

D1SR: Yankee Stadium was the scene of a major NSBW event. At the Yankees vs. Royals game, 50,000 fans cheered Division 2's Color Guard presentation, and *Wear It!* graphics flashed on the Diamondvision screen.

D5SR: In Philadelphia, a Coast Guard Drill Team from Cape May, NJ, performed for the crowds. The Greater Philadelphia SAR Team and the rescue dogs also put on a show. A tugboat parade was led by the water-spraying Philadelphia Fireboat. A rabbi and a priest blessed the boats, and USCGC *William Tate* held an Open House.

Meanwhile at Sandy Point State Park, MD, a Coast Guard 41-foot UTB and

a helicopter performed a simulated search-and-rescue demonstration. Vessel Safety Checks (VSC) were conducted, and NSBW proclamations were signed throughout the district.

D7: The South Florida Boating Safety Campaign was kicked off on May 26 at the World Wide Sportsman Complex in Islamorada, Florida Keys. Auxiliarists and Power Squadron members participated in the event.

In St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, hundreds of people watched as a Coast Guard helo performed three at-sea rescues between the waterfront and Hassel Island.

In Puerto Rico, an Auxiliary Marine Safety Booth demonstrated required safety equipment, at the Wal-Mart Plaza Isabella.

At Paseo de la Princesa, in Old San Juan, NSBW proclamations were presented by representatives of the Mayor of San Juan and the Governor of Puerto Rico.

D8ER: Coastie® put on a Safety Day



Photo: Diana Figueroa, DCP-1 D7

on the Water seminar for the students of the Stephen F. Austin Fine Arts Academy in north-central San Antonio, TX.

K-2 kids participated in a PFD fashion show, and *Wear It!* stickers and coloring books were distributed to the youngsters.

D8CR: In Corpus Christi, TX, the media covered events at the downtown city marina, including swimming demonstrations, VSCs and life jacket use.

D8WR: A number of blessing-of-the-fleet ceremonies were held, and information booths were set up at West Marine stores.

D9ER: In Cleveland, OH, daily newspapers, news-radio and TV news did features on life jacket usage. Also, two volunteers from the media entered the water (an indoor swimming pool) to find

out what a boater might face if he or she were involved in a boat-sinking.

D9CR: VSCs were given at district parks and marinas, including the Yacht Basin Marina on Lake Macatawa in Holland, MI.

D9WR: VE blitzes were mounted at the South Milwaukee Yacht Club on May 20.

D11NR: A PFD exchange took place at the Sacramento, CA-area Sam's Club on May 26. Old, non-serviceable PFDs were exchanged for new ones. The new life jackets were provided by the California Department of Boating and Waterways, while the old jackets were inspected by Auxiliarists for serviceability.

D11SR: The First Annual Channel Islands Harbor Safe Boating Day was held by Division 7 on May 20. Coast Guard Station Channel Islands was open for a tour of boats, including the 87-foot USCGC *Blackfoot*. Various SAR demos were held. Helo rescues, flare and fire demos were held, and there were giveaways for the kids and adults.

D13: Auxiliarists conducted numerous VSCs on recreation boats at South Beach Marina in Newport, OR. Members also did VSCs on Coast Guard boats at Station Yaquina Bay. CWO4 Rick Gallagher, Commanding Officer, said, “What better way to support safe boating and the Coast Guard Auxiliary than to have our vessels pass a VSC and display a decal!”

Also, several Albertsons stores in the Spokane area distributed NSBW flyers in their shopping bags.

D14: NSBW was officially kicked off at Kuhio Elementary School in Honolulu, HI, with Coastie®, the half-boat and PFD try-ons. On Guam, there was a blessing of the fleet and a PFD fashion show at Micronesia Mall.

D17: Throughout Alaska's Seward Boat Harbor, there was a celebration of boating and fishing to kick off the boating season.

Everywhere, during NSBW 2006, the boating public was reminded to take a boating safety class, get a Vessel Safety Check, and – *Wear It!* 🦺



Coxswain Academy students Pat Fairbanks (left), FSO-PS 32 (Anchorage), and Don Brand, IPFC-11 (Juneau), both D17, learn the ropes during towing evolution on the waters of Kachemak Bay, Alaska.



District 17 Coxswain Academy graduates, from the left, are: BM1 Kevin Smith, USCGC *Mustang* (Seward); Mike Coffing, FSO-OP 21 (Homer); Brian Glennon, Oak Bay Sea Rescue Unit 33, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (Pacific), Victoria, BC; Dean Terencio, BC-EHA/DSO-PE 17 (Anchorage); Marie Scholle, RCO-17 (Fairbanks); Shane Taylor, VCP-3 (Anchorage); Chris Conder, FSO-PA 11 (Juneau); Pat Fairbanks, FSO-PS 32 (Anchorage); Tom Kane, FSO-OP 24 (Whittier); Don Brand IPFC-11 (Juneau); Gary Taylor, FSO-MS 32; Stewart Sterling, FSO-CS 24, and, BMC Bob Gross (kneeling), Seventeenth Coast Guard District Operations Training Officer, Juneau.

DIRAUX Lauds Coxswain Academy As ‘The Jewel of the 17th District’

ANNUAL TRAINING IN ALASKA COMPLETES SIXTH YEAR

**STORY & PHOTOS
BY McKIBBEN JACKINSKY**
FSO-PA 21 D17

After months of ice and snow – and more sub-zero days than residents of Alaska’s southern Kenai Peninsula cared to remember – April 22 dawned clear and blue.

A buzz of activity in the Homer Small Boat Harbor began early in the morning, as sports fishermen headed toward Kachemak Bay and Cook Inlet, hoping to hook into a halibut or king salmon.

Before summer ends, thousands of fishermen will do just that. Most will return safely. Others will find themselves in harm’s way.

Boating safety, not fishing, was the reason that eight U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists, representing six Alaska flotillas, and the Canadian Coast Guard

Auxiliary (Pacific), were in Homer. By the end of eight days, they would all successfully complete the 6th Coxswain Academy, run by District 17.

“The Coast Guard in Alaska depends upon our three Auxiliary-Operated Stations in Whittier, Homer and Seward for critical search and rescue response in those communities,” said LCDR Sue Albright, D17 Director of Auxiliary.

“This annual academy produces a steady stream of future boat operators for those three stations, thus providing a robust readiness and response capability in those communities. Our Auxiliary Academy is a force-multiplier for the Coast Guard in Alaska.

“Through the years, the Coxswain Academy has gained a stellar reputation for operational excellence. [It] has become the jewel of the 17th District,”

she said.

Crew-qualified Pat Fairbanks, FSO-PS 32 (Anchorage), attended the academy to increase her skills. “I joined the Auxiliary because I wanted to learn more about the ops program and to help fellow boaters,” she said. “I also wanted to better myself, and being boat crew just wasn’t enough.”

The academy’s rigorous schedule appealed to Don Brand, IPFC-11 (Juneau). “I really wanted to become coxswain-qualified, but it was pretty tough sledding on my own,” he said. “I thought the academy’s intense course of study would give me the push I needed to complete the work.”

Whatever their reasons for attending, the trainees benefited from the academy’s six-year history.

► CONTINUED ON **PAGE 18**

For its first two years, the academy was at USCG Station Juneau, relying entirely on active-duty crews to provide training. The third and fourth years were in Seward, and Auxiliarists played a more predominant role as instructors. Last year, the academy moved to Homer.

Instructors for the 2006 academy were selected for their expertise by BMC Bob Gross, D17 Operations Training Officer. All instructors are Auxiliarists. They include BM1 Kevin Smith, who is stationed aboard USCGC *Mustang* in Seward; Mike Folkerts, DCO-17, of Juneau; Gary Taylor, IPDCO-17, of Anchorage; Shane Taylor, VCP-3, of Anchorage; and Stewart Sterling, DSO-CS 17, of Whittier.

“We’ve moved from being totally ‘dependent’ upon active-duty to more independence by utilizing prior academy grads to teach and utilizing our own ‘AUXSTA’ locations for hosting the class,” said Lieutenant Commander Albright. “This is a good thing.”

Day One at last year’s academy in Homer had a leisurely start time of 0900, but in the following days, work began at 0700 sharp and continued until 1800, breaking only for meals. Evenings were spent completing homework assignments.

The curriculum included trailering, personal protective equipment, an operations workshop, classroom and dockside electronics orientation, vessel handling, personnel recovery, navigation and search planning, underway search patterns, close-quarter maneuvering, POMS, rescue and assistance, pump operations, boat fire and anchoring.

Members of the Homer Volunteer Fire Department provided Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training.

Some classroom time was spent indoors, but most was spent in actual hands-on activities underway on one 27- and two 25-foot SAFE Boats owned by the Coast Guard and dedicated for use by the Auxiliary Stations (AUXSTA) in Whittier, Seward and Homer. The Homer Auxiliarists also provided three approved facilities for training.

Three nights were devoted to night navigation lessons.

“The highlight was successfully completing the night nav course, actually driving the 27-foot SAFE Boat at full throttle and overcoming my fear of the boat,” said Marie Scholle, RCO-17, who was paired with Fairbanks for the night



During a Coxswain Academy training session, BMC Bob Gross (left), Coast Guard District 17 Operations Training Officer, and Mike Coffing, FSO-OP 21 D17, grab some fresh air as their trainee-crewed Coast Guard SAFE Boat slices through the waters of Kachemak Bay, past the Kenai Mountain Range’s snow-covered slopes.

nav exercise.

“The best part [of the academy] was when Marie and I came back from our night nav. We just nailed it right on the mark and did better than the men,” Fairbanks laughed. “I thought, ‘Not too bad for a couple of old ladies.’ Yeah, that was the best one for me!”

Mike Coffing, FSO-OP 21 (Homer), faced a different sort of challenge during the exercise.

“The GPS failed to initialize, meaning our chart plotter would be useless and we would have to rely on the paper chart and the compass,” he recalled. “Fortunately, once we began to move the boat way from the slip, the GPS came up and we had all of our electronics, including the chart-plotter, working for us.”

Brian Glennon, training officer with Unit 33, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (Pacific) in Victoria, BC, agreed that clear, concise communication was one of the academy’s most important lessons.

“Perhaps the most valuable thing that I learned personally was the value of communication,” he said. “Because of different terminology and measurements used in Canada, it was important for me to be extremely clear in my communications.”

In fact, Glennon’s participation in the academy is a perfect example of good communication.

COMO Folkerts recently attended the

Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary-Pacific (CCGA-P) Annual General Meeting in Vancouver. During the meeting, he came up with the idea of an exchange program for both Auxiliaries to attend their respective boat training academies. His suggestion was readily agreed to by CCCGA-P President Malcolm Dunderdale. Glennon is the first Canadian Auxiliarist to attend the D17 Coxswain Academy.

Asked what was the most challenging subject to teach, COMO Taylor responded: “Loud and concise communication among the crew while doing evolutions, both providing communications and giving back receipt that the communication was heard and understood. Good communications lead to successful evolutions – and no damage or injuries.”

With a week of hard study behind them, the final morning was devoted to Chief Gross presenting trainees with their Certificates of Completion and praising them for a job well-done. “You’re going to surprise your flotillas with what you’ve learned,” he insisted.

Lieutenant Commander Albright noted, “The more coxswains we can get fully qualified to operate the three SAFE Boats, the more robust our readiness and recall abilities will be to respond to search and rescue, as well as Coast Guard support missions.” 🚢

SEMPER PARATUS *COULD* MEAN ‘ALWAYS TRAINING’

Auxiliary Helo-Helpers Hailed

STORY & PHOTO
BY RANDY D. PODOLSKY
IPDCP-3 D9WR

It is something that we have all seen on TV, in a newscast or, perhaps, in person – especially those who are boat crew qualified. But what is it like to be involved *directly*, to be in command of the on-scene Auxiliary rescue boat when a helicopter airlift is required?

I wanted to know from the perspective of a coxswain.

Having undergone crew training on a Coast Guard 41-foot UTB in Kenosha, IL, I have experienced myriad helo ops evolutions – direct pump deliveries, trail line, and direct basket hoists. I have even had the opportunity to be hoisted in the basket myself, at a safety demonstration in the Waukegan, IL, area.

However, operating the Auxiliary vessel engaged in such an operation would be a different story. What would it be like with only Auxiliarists on board? What would navigating a 26-foot aluminum Auxiliary Operational Facility (AUXFAC), not equipped like a 41-foot UTB, be like? How would we handle any deviations?

The air rescue team wanted to know too.

After conceiving the idea, I contacted Air Station Traverse City operations. After all, the Waukegan Air Facility was only minutes away. Why not engage in a joint team training session? Often, boat crew members miss out on the very exciting helo ops training evolutions.

With the support of BMC Terry LaThrope and his co-operative personnel at USCG Station Kenosha, as well as the Air Station, the training was approved.

First came a training video and dockside training session.

“Pull the trail line hard, use the ‘dead man’s sticks,’ and remember all your Personal Protective Equipment, especially the earplugs,” explained BM2 Jake Chatfield of STA Kenosha.

One hour later, we were on-scene, a mile offshore Kenosha Harbor, receiving our pre-hoist briefing.

Shortly before the planned training, the helo crew was diverted for a person-in-the-water. Fortunately, they were quickly stood down and, therefore, were still available.

But wait...the ‘41’ had now left with the necessary PPE that we required. Whew! They were still in the area and returned just in time for the helicopter’s arrival.

AUXFAC 252359 is a modest ship. She is 10-feet, 6-inches wide and just under 26-feet long, with a tow reel and rail astern and a tow post amidships, behind the modest helm. Only three sides are enclosed.

Helo ops are exciting and challenging, and they get your blood pumping – not to mention getting your uniform



Coast Guard Rescue Helicopter 6512, out of Air Station Traverse City (IL), is positioned to hoist a rescue-basket to FL-35 D9WR’s 26-foot, aluminum-hulled Auxiliary Operational Facility.

drenched!

Once the vessel was steering its designated course at five to seven knots, the helo hovered some 35-40 feet above. The rotor wash was intense; the noise even more so. As the trail line descended to the boat, the crew took it aboard and tugged at the basket trailing behind. “Get her on board smoothly and safely, and watch for line on the deck around your feet,” warned safety observer Jim McInnis, VFC-51 D9WR.

Two trail line and two direct basket hoists were completed that day, executed almost without a hitch. But on the second direct hoist the basket got snagged by the tow line’s hook. “This can’t be good,” surmised crew member John Bruhn, FSO-MT 35 D9WR. “We’re now connected to the helo.”

I held course and speed....Everyone remained calm....The safety observer watched with a cautious eye.

As Bruhn reached out to unhook the line from the basket, crew member Larry vanGoethem, FSO-MS 35 D9WR, grabbed his backstrap to secure himself and provide support. Bruhn worked the hook, which was wedged tight against the tow reel and basket for what seemed like forever, but actually was less than a minute.

Eventually the hook came loose, the basket was placed on the deck. Everyone felt a sense of relief and great accomplishment.

The evolution concluded with our crew having gained that much more from the experience. Despite the “shower” and unusual twist of events, the evolutions ended safely.

The training was complete, but our hearts were pumping strong as we cruised back to home port. 🚢

A PERSONAL VIEW...



USCG and Auxiliary participants, along with visiting Boy Scouts and other youth at the Moffett Field (CA) Air Show, are dwarfed by the Coast Guard HC-130 brought to the Memorial Day 2005 weekend, delighting thousands of visitors -- and the accompanying article's author.

Memorial Day Magic

CA AUXILIARIST APPLAUDS 'AMAZING' USCG AIR CREW

[Editor's Note: The author tells us that he wrote this article because, "I want people to see what these (USCG) guys are really like. They are phenomenal; just amazing!"]

STORY BY RON CLARK
FC-31 D11NR

PHOTOS BY PATRICK J. MULLEN
FL-51 D11NR

With Labor Day Weekend 2006 rapidly approaching, I am reminded of how wonderful last year's Memorial Day was for myself...and lots of others.

Last year, you see, I had the marvelous opportunity -- and privilege -- of participating in the Moffett Field (CA) Air Show with a crew from Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento.



Dressed in his flight suit and ready to go, Ron Clark, FC-31 D11NR, catches a few California rays while mulling how to write his blow-by-blow account of Memorial Day Weekend 2005 at the Moffett Field Air Show.

I was accompanied by another Auxiliarist, Patrick Mullen, of FL-51 D11NR. I need also to identify the active-duty crew because they contributed greatly to my experience: CDR Douglas Stephan;* LT Chris Kendall;* AMT1 John Younkers; AET3 Chuck Helms; AET3 Wes Savage; and, AMT3 Erik Baker.

We met at the aircraft, an HC-130, on Friday afternoon, and took off for a short training flight, enroute to Moffett Field. Once we arrived, the fun started...*fun* being work!

I had asked the crew to think of me as one of them. I think they thought I meant it.

John [Younkers] told the crew to meet in the lobby of our hotel at 0715 Saturday. Since I had stated I was one of them, I showed up too. We ate breakfast before leaving, which meant I actually had to get up at 0600.



At least one kid was really enjoying the day, surrounded by the flight crew from USCG Air Station Sacramento during the Memorial Day Weekend 2005 Moffett Field (CA) Air Show.

Hey, I'm retired; I'm not used to that!

Once we found our way back to the plane, we got right to work. Everybody knew what to do -- except me. The whole crew kept me busy. I was surprised at how much had to be done to get the plane ready for the show.

We had to make the aircraft "unflyable" so it would be safe for the public to visit. We finished just as people started to line up to view the plane.

There were 50,000 show visitors on Saturday, of which 3,000 went through the aircraft. On Sunday, some 75,000 showed up, of which 5,000 went through. That should give you an idea of how busy we were.

Those are the facts. Now for the *real* story -- the people and kids of all ages, shapes and sizes. The numbers indicate how many actually went through the aircraft. I have no idea of how many came just to look and say "hi."

Some came to tell of their service experiences. One told of the time he had to jump out of a B-17; another, of being the only survivor of his ship.

Several said they flew in C-130s long ago. They talked about how the plane had changed. Others could not believe how many switches, gauges, levers, buttons, and gadgets it had.

What is all the stuff in the plane for? How could anyone possibly know what they all did? How long did it take to learn to fly it? What kind of missions did we do?

People were *really interested* in what the Coast Guard did. To most of them, Coast Guard meant boats. A lot of people had their eyes opened; they learned something new that weekend.

Here is how they learned it:

The crew that came, came to teach. They didn't *think* they did, but they did! All of these guys were fantastic public relations specialists. To them, there was no such thing as a dumb question. Whatever the query, they figured out what the person meant and took the time to answer. They did it with a story, an explanation, a demonstration, or any way they could think of to help people understand.

Who were the people? I've already described them briefly, but let me tell you who they *really* were:

They were individuals who are grateful for what we do. Not just the Coast Guard, but all of the men and women who serve their country, or who have served in the past.

Many thanked us, and said how grateful they were. They were proud of us for what we do. Many said they would not be alive today were it not for the Coast Guard. Some had been saved many times.

The thousands who visited the plane left with a smile because of the crew. The line was extremely long. The waiting time was 30-45 minutes, from opening right up to closing time. One of the crew walked the line, talking with the waiting people. They loved speaking with him. He had them all smiling.

Not one complained about the wait. Many insisted it was worth it. I believe it was not the plane they were talking about, but the crew. Most of the time, the crew was in or near the plane. They were

there to talk to the people. We had fun with everybody.

We were asked to have pictures taken with sons, daughters, babies, sisters, brothers, moms, dads, and even grandparents. The ones that really stood out were the kids. They appeared to be fascinated with us. They didn't want to leave. They loved the crew.

Parents seemed to understand, and let them stay around as long as possible. While the people made this a memorable trip, it was the kids who put the seal on it.

As we were closing-up on Sunday, we tried to get a crew photo. As soon as we got through taking the pictures of each other, visitors wanted to take *our* pictures. Pretty soon, they were running up to have their pictures taken with us. The photo session lasted for almost 30 minutes.

We had to make the plane flyable again, in order to return home. That meant going over the plane, position by position, checking every thing that could be touched, moved, or changed to be sure they were in their right place or position. Once that was completed, the battery was connected and everything was re-checked.

The flight home was short and uneventful. We landed back at McClellan, secured the aircraft, said a quick good-bye, and left for home. Everyone was tired. It had been a long weekend.

It was an honor and a privilege to have been selected to accompany the crew to the air show. They *did* make me work, but I enjoyed every minute of it. They are an example of what our country is all about. With crews like this, our country is in good hands.

The crew will probably remember that event for a while. For them, it was just doing their job. But they were heroes to the people who came to the Air Show -- including me. 🇺🇸

*** Commander Stephan was not then, but is now, Executive Officer of AIRSTA Sacramento. Lieutenant Kendall was not stationed at Sacramento, but flew in specifically to participate in the event.**



COMO Everett L. Tucker, Jr., PNACO
Director, International Affairs Directorate
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary



COMO Gene M. Seibert
National Commodore
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary



RADM David W. Kunkel
Commander
Seventh U.S. Coast Guard District

ON-SCENE REPORT

Third Caribbean SAR Conference Attracts More Than 80 Delegates Representing 24 Different Nations

STORY BY MARY T. LARSEN
PARCO-A(E)

PHOTOS BY MEL BOROFKY
DVC-AP

They came to Miami from all over the Caribbean and Central America – some from as far away as the United Kingdom; others from the United States. Clearly, the much anticipated Third Caribbean Volunteer Maritime Search and Rescue Conference (CSAR) had become an international bellwether for Caribbean nations committed to improving safety of life at sea.

Building upon the success of two previous Miami CSAR conferences (2002 and 2004), this year's June 8-10 event increased participation to over 80 delegates, representing 24 countries.

The event was hosted by the Coast Guard Auxiliary International Affairs Directorate, in conjunction with the U.S. Southern Command and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Commodore Everette L. Tucker, Jr., PNACO, Director of the International Affairs Directorate, said the purpose

of the conference was to “enhance the security, stability, and safety of life at sea in the Caribbean Region through the establishment and/or strengthening of government-affiliated volunteer maritime search and rescue [SAR] organizations, and the strengthening of existing volunteer SAR organizations.”

It was also, “to institute boating safety education and public awareness programs, and to develop maritime domain awareness programs,” COMO Tucker said.

A mixture of languages reflected the diversity of both the delegates and the area. Spanish, French, Dutch and English could be heard as participants shared ideas and successes (and an occasional failure).

Over the conference's three days, delegates attended sessions on SAR techniques, leadership development, and establishing a marketing and outreach program. And, they shared ideas in sessions on local control of SAR operations and risk management.

All the attendees participated in a

table-top SAR exercise led by CWO Scott Clendenin, USCG (Ret.), and other SAR and risk management experts.

One of the high-points was an on-the-water demonstration of towing procedures, arranged by D7 Commodore Peter Fernandez.

The towing evolution, handled by Auxiliary vessels, was followed by a USCG helicopter demonstration in which a diver was dropped and retrieved. The demonstrations concluded with the “chase” of an Auxiliary vessel by a USCG rigid-hull inflatable boat.

RADM David Kunkel, Commander, Coast Guard Seventh District, welcomed participants at the opening session. He concluded his remarks by challenging attendees to work with one another and to learn from each other. “Failure is not an option,” he insisted. “Failure means lives are being lost, and that is a statistic that none of us want to hear about.”

SAR services updates were provided by representatives of various Caribbean countries and the U.S., and Auxiliarist Stuart L. Robinson reported on the 2006



South Florida Auxiliary members aboard Operational Facilities in Biscayne Bay demonstrate a side-tow for delegates attending the Third Caribbean Volunteer Maritime Search and Rescue Conference in Miami.

Tradewinds Exercise, held in Jamaica.

Participants then had a choice of breakout sessions. One of these – Assessing the Need for SAR Capabilities and Prevention – was led by Alex Hewitt-Jones. She has been one of the strongest voices for establishing volunteer lifesaving agencies in the Caribbean during her 12-year tenure with British Virgin Islands SAR.

Beginning with the first step – “Determining the need for a volunteer organization” – she involved the audience by asking, “How do you determine a need?”

Auxiliarist Jim Campbell, a veteran instructor at the Coast Guard Search and Rescue School, Yorktown, VA, guided an intent audience through the basics of search strategies and procedures. He began with the premise that, ideally, we can prevent recreational boaters from becoming SAR targets. But, as the participants knew, this is not always possible.

Hewitt-Jones and LT Brian Beltz, USCG Rescue Co-ordination Center (RCC), Sector San Juan, addressed Local Control of SAR Operations and Risk Management. After an overview of how a SAR case works at the local level, they covered various procedures.

In response to questions, Lieutenant

Beltz explained that Coast Guard personnel are limited to “rote” questions and answers, whereas the local response agency can get right to “the heart of the matter.”

He said that Sector RCC personnel are not permitted to give boating advice, such as steering information, to callers. Within the framework provided, participants used the forum for a lively exchange of information and ideas.

Training of SAR Crews & Coxswains–Risk Management in SAR Operations, was led by CAPT John Chomeau, USN (Ret.) and president of the Association for Rescue at Sea, and Warrant Officer Clendenin. They brought home, in a dramatic way, the consequences of inadequate preparation.

After a brief overview and explanation of the material they were about to run, an amateur video showed the tragic results of a SAR gone wrong. Gasps from those in the packed room were followed by shocked silence.

The presenters drew audience comments as they brought out the many misunderstandings, lack of preparation, and lack of communication that had such tragic results. Both used the GAR (“Green, Amber, Red”) method to

► CONTINUED ON **PAGE 24**

ROLL CALL

*Third Caribbean Volunteer
Maritime Search And
Rescue Conference
delegates represented:*

Antigua	St. Eustasius
Aruba	St. Kitts & Nevis
Bahamas	St. Lucia
Barbados	Sint Maarten
Belize	St. Martin
Bonaire	St. Vincent & Grenadines
British Virgin Islands	Trinidad & Tobago
Costa Rica	Turks & Caicos
Curaçao	United Kingdom
Grenada	United States of America
Guadeloupe	U.S. Virgin Islands
Jamaica	
Martinique	
Panama	
Puerto Rico	

evaluate risk levels. GAR can be used to rank a SAR mission, from low- to high-risk.

COMO Carol Urgola, Auxiliary National Chief of Staff, conducted the workshop, Leadership and Management for Volunteers. She explained that it was a brief excerpt from the full three- and four-day leadership workshops conducted by the USCG Auxiliary.

There also were practical workshops conducted by Auxiliarists Richard Clinchy, Chief, Department of Education, and John VanOsdol, National Chief, Maritime Domain Awareness. Clinchy was assisted by Curd Everstz, an honorary USCG Auxiliarist and Vice President of CITRO (Curaçao).

The Clinchy/Everstz workshop focused on, Creating a Caribbean Boating Safety Program and Public Outreach. Clinchy described how the USCG Auxiliary public education programs could be adapted to meet the needs and local laws of several Caribbean nations.

VanOsdol's presentation focused on Marine Domain Awareness. He was joined by CDR Armin Cade, USCG District 7. They described the use of the Incident Command System and the America's Waterway Watch program.

Interspersed among the breakout sessions were presentations on such organizations as the French MRCC in Martinique; National Sea Rescue volunteer lifeboat operations in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Martin; and, the Caribbean SAR Federation in the Netherlands Antilles. The latter consists of volunteer lifeboat organizations in Curaçao, Aruba, Sint Maartin, St. Eustasius, Saba, and Bonaire.

Auxiliarist Jeff Mahl, Department Chief, Information and Technology, presented an update on Resources Available via Electronic Means, and introduced the attendees to NASBLA, NSBC and others.

Gerry Keeling, CEO, International Lifeboat Federation, addressed changes over the last three years that will transform ILF into a new organization, The International Maritime Rescue Federation.

Saturday morning was allocated to the Table-Top SAR Exercise, led by Chief Warrant Officer Clendenin and other SAR and risk management experts.

The exercise closely simulated an actual SAR case. Participants were divided into groups to run the RCC, Rescue



USCG helicopter hovers over an Auxiliary Operational Facility in busy Biscayne Bay, as part of on-water demonstrations for attendees at the Third Caribbean SAR Conference in Miami.

Boats 1 and 2, a police boat named "Sparks," and a fire boat. The various units communicated from separate rooms via VHF radio.

Evaluation of the exercise was that it was close to reality and, although some changes could have been made, the "case" was well handled.

An afternoon closing session included a presentation by Florida Boating Administrator, Capt. Richard Moore, on

their assistance following Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. Remarks by Auxiliary National Commodore Gene Seibert built on Captain Moore's presentation.

CAPT Robert Hurst, Chief of Response, Seventh Coast Guard District, and Brig. Gen. Ricardo Aponte, USAF, J-7, U.S. Southern Command, gave the final remarks, which closed the conference. 🌀

Operational Excellence Team 'Takes Over' in Florida

USCG STATION SAND KEY USED FOR WEEKEND EXERCISES

STORY & PHOTO BY KAREN L. MILLER
VCP-11 D7

Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!

At that sound, the crew responds by quickly noting the position of the distress and gets underway. In this case, it's a person in the water, separated from his boat and floating somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico without a life jacket.

Finding him is critical in the 60° F water.

What was that sound?

It's the search-and-rescue alarm at USCG Station Sand Key (FL). It is activated about 400 times a year.

So what's different this time?

The responders: The Auxiliary has "taken over" the Coast Guard Station.

Stretching from Clearwater to Hudson, along Florida's west coast, Division 11 has a very active Operational Excellence (O/E) program. Its members were the first in District 7 to earn the O/E ribbon and decal, and we will continue to qualify members until about five percent of the entire division has been qualified in this program.

Div-11 has administered the program differently than others.

All of its O/E candidates are tested by the active-duty command at Station Sand Key, rather than by Auxiliary Qualification Examiners. As a result of this unique process, the station's Officer in Charge, BMCM Charlton Winter, considers all Operational Excellence members capable of "seamlessly integrating" with active duty personnel, and even acting in their place.

To encourage more division members to participate in the O/E program, Master Chief Winter appointed Jeff Jennings, a member of Flotilla 11-1 (Clearwater), to train at least one team in each flotilla. Then, those teams could train additional teams.

Jennings came up with the idea of taking over the Coast Guard station for the weekend. Master Chief Winter heartily endorsed it. The idea took hold, and Greg Gamache, FC 11-1, proceeded to organize the activities and work with station personnel to bring the entire Operational Excellence Weekend Exercise to fruition.

So, from Friday through Sunday (February 24-26, 2006), nine O/E members took over small-boat response for Station Sand Key. Almost all of the active-duty members were sent home (except for a '47' crew that included law-enforcement



Mel Manning, FSO-PE 11-1 D7, splices fender lines during Operational Excellence exercise, as Greg Gamache, FC 11-1, and Don Frasch, DCP-11, watch closely to make sure he's doing it right.

personnel), and the 25-foot SAFE Boat was pulled from the water and trailered.

Fortunately for the Auxiliary crew, FS2 LeAmber Thomas remained assigned to the station to cook all the meals!

The Operational Excellence team members handled all SAR calls, most radio watches, and even the Officer of the Day duty.

They spent their "down time" plotting and running search patterns, completing their annual currency maintenance, and splicing three-strand line.

The debriefing on Sunday brought out the many positive benefits of this exercise, along with resounding agreement to do it again in about six months.

By the time the three Auxiliary facilities and nine O/E members left the Station, everyone was of two minds: While it would be nice to get home and sleep in their own room without roommates and bunk beds, they thought, the lessons learned had been exciting.

And so, each team member was eagerly anticipating the next 48-hour O/E exercise. 🌀

THE THREE FACES OF BOB



Photos: Judy Hills, FC 20-4 D5SR

What's in a Name?

FOR COMO BOB MAPLE, THE
ANSWER IS: A GREAT HONOR!

BY JUDY HILLS
FC 20-4 D5SR

It's not every day that a Coast Guard unit names its communications center after an Auxiliarist, but that is precisely what occurred recently at USCG Station Hobucken, which sits astride the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway at Hobucken, NC.

The Station re-named its newly remodeled comms facility the William "Bob" Maple Communication Center to honor a Past Rear Commodore who has devoted an estimated 5,850 hours to standing watch at STA Hobucken over the last 15 years.

Referring to the comms center, BMC Jeremy McConnell, Station Officer in Charge (OINC), said, "We called it 'the dungeon,' because the room had always been just a small, closed-in space with painted concrete walls, dated paneling and a dingy carpet. Rough cabinets, an old desk, and a dilapidated chair rounded out the accessories.

Hardly a place one would want to call "home." But it *was* home to Bob Maple, PRCO D5SR, every Monday for 15 years.

Bob faithfully took his weekly turn standing watch to provide some relief to the Station's small active-duty staff. He did it without complaint and without any fanfare. "He just went quietly about his work," said Chief McConnell.

Maple had retired after 41 years as a research forester with the USDA Forest Service. For all of those 41 years, he also served as a U.S. Navy Reservist, reaching the rank of Captain by the time he ended that career. Post-retirement, Bob taught at Williamston (NC) Community College for 10 years.

At a neighbor's urging, Bob joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1977, rising through the positions to Southern Region RCO. (He now serves as FSO-CM 20-4, and SO-MT and QE for Division 20 D5SR, as well as a coxswain.)

Bob decided to serve the Coast Guard as a watchstander after being encouraged to do so by Paul Bordon, STA Hobucken's Executive Petty Officer (XPO). Bob took a liking to the activity and decided to stick with it, and the Station counted on him to show up each Monday for his eight-hour shift.

Critical incidents to which Station personnel have responded include a plane crash, several groundings, and drownings. "The most exciting thing that I experienced was trying to calm an excited lady somewhere in Bogue Sound, or the Newport River," Maple recalled. "I never could find out where because she had the mike in her mouth—or very near it."

Maple said he once acted as note-taker when there was a grounding

several years ago. BMCS Daniel Lamont was OINC, and he and the XPO both came in to handle the situation. Senior Chief later told Maple that he took better notes than the Station personnel—a *real* compliment that Bob still remembers.

The scariest thing to Maple about watchstanding was the anxiety about his on-the-job performance when still learning the ropes.

"Having a Petty Officer of the Day aboard to back you up is a comforting feeling," he said. "It can be a little frightening when Station personnel are under way and you have the watch by yourself. Fortunately, the members who lived aboard made themselves available on call, if necessary, which was a relief.

"The most rewarding thing about being at Station Hobucken is being with young folks," he said. "It really hurts to see them transfer out, and a real thrill for them to call the Station and visit, having remembered you."

Maple's best advice to fellow Auxiliarists about watchstanding is to get involved early-on, especially on patrols. He insisted, "Once you get used to talking on the radio, the stage-fright is over. You only have to learn the local techniques and where to find the information you might need. Once you feel confident, things become easier and you can relax and enjoy it all."

Maple continued standing watches until last year, when he had some serious medical problems that forced him to slow down. He no longer felt able to meet watchstander requirements. This saddened Bob, but it was the Station personnel who really missed his presence. He hoped to return to duty at the Station on a limited basis.

Meanwhile, while Maple was out on medical leave, Station personnel remodeled the Communications Room. Renovations were completed last April.

Chief McConnell then contacted Bob's flotilla commander to reveal that Station personnel wanted to do a surprise special presentation for Bob at our May 4, 2006 meeting. I conspired with Bob's wife, Auxiliarist Dottie Maple, to ensure that her husband arrived on time.

May 4 was a big meeting for our flotilla. It was an indoor picnic. Our regular meetings usually draw about 25 people, but there were over 70 there that night, including guests, and there were 18 of the 25 CGSTA Hobucken personnel.

Chief McConnell gave an excellent speech and presented Bob with a plaque that would forever identify "the



Photo: Lisa Kirby, PDCP-18 D5SR

BMC Jeremy McConnell (right), OINC, Station Hobucken (NC), presents Bob Maple, a past Rear Commodore, with the plaque that is now permanently affixed to an outside wall of the newly-renamed Robert "Bob" Maple Communication Center. The presentation at a meeting of FL 20-4 D5SR came as a complete surprise to Bob.

dungeon" as the William "Bob" Maple Communication Center. "That plaque is going to stay there until the Station no longer exists," the OINC said.

Looking back at that meeting, Bob remembered, "It really was a surprise to be called forward at the meeting to be recognized by Chief McConnell and to find the Station crew present to share in the ceremony. I did not expect to be so identified, since there were several other Auxiliarists who have served Hobucken almost as long as I. It did make me feel

as though I had done something worthwhile, and made me more anxious than ever to get back with my young people."

This is an excellent example of how the U.S. Coast Guard values our assistance. Most good station chiefs will take the time to recognize Auxiliarists for the role they play in helping their units.

Bob Maple certainly has earned such recognition, but it took the leadership of the Station chief and the interest of his shipmates to make this special presentation happen. 🇺🇸

COMO Oliver Brand, 76, Celebrates 40 Years in the Coast Guard Auxiliary

SEPTUAGENARIAN STILL GOING STRONG

BY CRAIG D. SMITH, Ph.D.
VFC-87 D8CR

Sept. 15, 2005 was a landmark for COMO Oliver Brand, M.D. That date marked 40 years of service in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

One might think that those four decades culminated when he became NAVCO-MS, a position held from 1995-98. But at the age of 76, Brand, IPFC-87 D8CR, does not seem to be slowing down much at all.

He still works full-time as a physician at his clinic in Forestdale, AL, and he spent this past spring team-teaching the Advanced Coastal Navigation course to new members of FL-87 (Birmingham, AL).

And that only represents the *current* stage of Brand's long career.

Born on Jan. 7, 1930, the ocean and things pertaining to the Coast Guard were far away from the farm in rural Fayette County, AL, where he was born and raised. But in February 1947, he set his sights on the sea and joined the U.S. Naval Reserve.

A year-and-a-half later, Brand moved to the regular Navy and, by 1951-1952, was serving as a dental prosthetic technician on the hospital ship *USS Consolation*, off the coast of war-torn South Korea. For his service there, he was awarded the United Nations Ribbon and the Korean Ribbon with two stars.

After discharge from the Navy, he obtained a B.S. degree from the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa and, in 1961, he earned his M.D. at the Medical College of Alabama.

Brand has worked continuously since 1962 as a family physician. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Practice and a Diplomate of the American Academy Board of Family Practice.

Even after leaving the Navy, Brand retained his love of the water and boating. On Sept. 15, 1965, he joined FL-87, which then was located at Smith Lake, near Jasper, AL.

During the subsequent four decades, Brand held a slew of Auxiliary positions, including Flotilla Commander,



Photo: Joan Beth Smith, FSO-SR 87 D8CR

Dr. Oliver Brand, PNADCO-MS and IPFC-87, with his wife, Betty, FSO-FN 87, D8CR.

Division Captain, Rear Commodore, Vice Commodore, and District Commodore. He served in many staff and committee posts and coordinated many special projects.

One particularly noteworthy accomplishment of which Brand can be proud occurred during his 1987-88 watch as DCP-8 D8CR.

At the time he was elected, the division was down to four flotillas with 60 members and was in danger of being disestablished. Brand began a revitalization program that, over the next few years, led to division-wide expansion to 10 flotillas with some 200 members. He recruited, organized, and chartered six flotillas in Div-8, including newly chartered units at Columbus, MS, and Camden, Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Demopolis, and Rainbow City, AL.

His many years of distinguished service to the Auxiliary have been rewarded many times.

While a Flotilla Commander, Brand received Division 8's coveted Silver Oars Award four times, and in 1981, his flotilla

also won the first National Safe Boating Week Trophy for D8CR.

He also won the ACE (District Commander's Active Contribution to Excellence) Award, the Award of Merit, Award of Administrative Merit (twice), USCG Bicentennial Unit Commendation, USCG Unit Commendation (twice), DOT Citation Gold Award, Auxiliary Meritorious Service Award, USCG Meritorious Team Commendation Award, National Water Safety Congress Regional Award, and the Group Action Award.

Despite all the time he has devoted to the Auxiliary, Brand has been very active in the community and his church. He has been happily married for 53 years to his wife and fellow Auxiliarist, Betty, FSO-FN 87. They have four children and six grandchildren.

After doing so much for so many, Brand is still a bundle of energy. Every day, he continues seeking to make his community and the world a better place to live by being an encourager and a strong supporter of the Auxiliary. 🏆

Pioneering Auxiliarist Seen As 'Quiet Hero of Bygone Era'

BRUNET HELPED SECURE THE HOMELAND IN WWII

BY JO SCHNEIDER
FSO-FN 4-11 D8CR
AND GERALD SCHNEIDER
PFC 4-11 D8CR

Roland Y. Brunet, Sr. is a 90-year-old resident of Ponchatoula, LA, some 55 miles from New Orleans. One day, his wife, Glennie, read a local newspaper article about Flotilla 4-11's charity work. She contacted Gerald Schneider, then-flotilla Commander, to inform him that Roland had formed the first flotilla on the North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain. This narrative is based on our subsequent interview with Mr. Brunet.

• • •

On Dec. 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II, and Roland Y. Brunet, then 26 years old, along with 17 friends developed what was known as The Hammond-Ponchatoula Group of the Eighth Naval District's Coast Guard Auxiliary.

This group of men lived up and down the waterways of Southern Louisiana and knew the waters like a master mechanic knows an engine. Collectively, there were eight or nine boats that were volunteered for the group. Junior Commander John Hansen, whose business involved renting skiffs, took care of the flotilla's boats.

Their patrol area was quite large because, at that time, they were the only group in the area doing this type of work. They patrolled Slidell, highway bridges and Irish Bayou, near Strangers Wharf, so-named for the fact that everyone was welcome. The boatman would hold up a card with a number on it to verify that the patrol members were authorized to be in the area.

Brunet had a 28-foot cypress-wood boat that moved at about 15 mph. His and another boat would alternate eight-hour patrol shifts. The railroad bridge was the most important area they patrolled because of the military equipment that was being shipped.

His crew included two armed Coast Guard personnel for law-enforcement, a medical doctor and two crewmen.

Brunet's aid in securing the homeland was not to end there. He was soon employed by the U.S. Army for field operations. He would patrol as fresh recruits learned to fly and land their PBY aircraft. Roland said that, at first, the PBYs lacked wheels.

The aircraft would land by an apron. Then, the men would have to don wetsuits, go into the water, and drag the planes to where they could be secured. With the aid of an electric motor, they would put the wheels on so that aircraft maintenance could be done for the next flight.

Roland claimed that these young recruits knew little about



Photo: Gerald Schneider, PFC 4-11 D8CR

Roland Y. Brunet, Sr. – The 'quiet hero' in Louisiana.

flying, which sometimes proved disastrous.

These novices had to learn night maneuvers and how to fly in all weather. When the wheels were added for landing gear, the recruits would sometimes forget to pull them up. The wheels would be torn off and the planes would flip over.

Brunet and his crew would aid in whatever way they could, either spotting for the PBYs or towing them ashore. He worked at this job for three years, never missing a day.

His most memorable operation was in February 1942, when a plane exploded. It was dark, and no one was sure if the pilots had been using their instruments to fly. This made pinpointing the exact location of the plane difficult. They believed it had gone down on the north side of Lake Maurepas.

Roland, along with two deckhands and a medical doctor, searched all night for signs of the downed plane. They began their search at Manchac, and went to the Blind River and Amite River in a desperate attempt to find any sign of the plane.

Toward dawn, another boat came to relieve them. Five or six years ago, in the swamp between the mouth of the North Pass Lighthouse and the Tangipahoa River, the plane was finally found.

Roland said that many people do not realize that there were boys who gave their lives, right here at home, just trying to learn to fly these planes.

• • •

Roland is a quiet hero of an almost-bygone era. He and many others worked at home to help keep the world free. We were honored to interview him about his work in the war effort. 🏆



Auxiliary Operational Facility Get 'N Deep tows a disabled bass boat during Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida tournament on the St. Johns River, near Sanford. Manning the OPFAC are crewman Michael Berry, VFC-45 (left), and coxswain Mark Balance, FL-45, both D7. Get 'N Deep was one of two FL-45 vessels patrolling the 30-mile fishing area during the three-day competition.

Central Florida Auxiliarists and Paralyzed Veterans Reap Benefits Helping One Another

STORY & PHOTOS
BY ROB WESTCOTT
DVC-AX

When Mike Combs, a member of the Central Florida Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and cousin of Flotilla 45 D7 member John Bennett, joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary in September 2005, he could see a match made in public service heaven!

On the one hand, FL-45 (Sanford, FL) was looking for a reliable place to hold its meetings and conduct public education classes and member training.

On the other hand, the PVA Central Florida Chapter had a 10,000 square foot building that needed regular maintenance its members could not provide. It also needed able bodies to help at some events, such as its annual bass tourna-



Bruce Card, FSO-AN 45, and George Kacmarik, IPFC-45, both D7, paint the well-known dark-blue Handicap Parking symbol in an automobile space at Central Florida Paralyzed Veterans of America headquarters in Sanford, FL.

ment, which attracts paraplegic and quadriplegic fishermen from all over the country.

Combs, FSO-SR 45, first went to the other PVA board members to see if there was interest in working with the Auxiliary. When he got an enthusiastic green light, he approached the Flotilla.

After Sue Smith, FC-45, Mike Berry, VFC-45, and Combs' cousin, John Bennett, FSO-PS 45, saw the PVA building and met with chapter leadership, the full Flotilla was approached and approved the proposal. The two organizations began working under one roof, and the first FL-45 meeting was held there on Jan. 12, 2006.

Flotilla leadership soon met with PVA leadership to assess building needs. An initial work-day was set for Saturday, January 21.

The work-day arrived, and a dozen Auxiliarists descended on the Sanford PVA property like a crew from "Extreme Makeover Home Edition" – armed with everything from chain saws to pressure washers.

While one Auxiliary crew pressure-washed the roof, other Auxiliarists trimmed trees and bushes, and cleared the grounds of leaves and rubbish. Yet another Auxiliary crew replaced interior light bulbs and set up computer equipment. Exterior walls of the building were pressure-washed, as was the facility's parking lot.

No work-day is complete without a healthy helping of good chow and fellowship at table. Paralyzed Veterans members were quick to show the hungry Auxiliarists that Emeril Lagasse has some serious local competition, especially when it comes to barbecued chicken,



John Bennett, FSO-PS 45 D7, repairs the lighting around an entrance sign at the Central Florida Paralyzed Veterans of America headquarters in Sanford, FL.

hamburgers and hot dogs!

A second work-day, on March 4, attracted a similar number of Auxiliarists. That time, they focused on painting lines and handicap-parking spaces in the PVA lot, and on doing electrical repairs.

Since then, work-days at the PVA have been a regular part of the Flotilla schedule, and the building is in top shape.

On April 22-23, Auxiliarists assisted PVA members in hosting a bass tournament for handicapped fishermen on a 30-odd mile stretch of the St. Johns River, near Sanford, with over 40 angler boats hitting the water.

Hosting a fishing tournament for veterans was nothing new for FL-45. For years, it has worked with the USCG



Auxiliarist Mike Combs (right), FSO-SR 45 D7 and vice-president of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Central Florida Chapter, tells Mike Berry, VFC-45, and Sue Smith, FC-45, both D7, how painting parking-space lines is done, during a work-day at the Sanford headquarters of the Central Florida Paralyzed Veterans of America.

District 7 Morale, Rec Well-Being, and Recreation staff in conducting a military bass tournament, held in recent years on the Butler chain of lakes near Orlando.

Conducting a fishing tournament for paralyzed fishermen presented some rather different dynamics.

Paralyzed fishermen were paired with non-impaired fishermen on boats owned by either of the pair. A number of local bass fishermen volunteered their boats – and their time – to be a part of the tourney.

Auxiliarists assisted with boat-launching and debarking. At the start of each day, they checked the boat wells for live bait and live fish (a standard part of fishing tournament procedure).

During the tournament's three days, two Auxiliary Operational Facility boats and four OPFAC personal watercraft patrolled the 30-mile fishing area, always prepared to come to aid of fishermen. When a bass boat broke down on the second day, the Auxiliary team was there to tow it into port.

At the end of each day, Auxiliarists helped trailer the tournament boats.

FL-45, in its collaboration with the PVA, has found a new way to serve the boating public and America's veterans. And, in this case, the Auxiliarists also found a creative solution to its needs for a flotilla home.

Similar opportunities may well exist for other flotillas. All it takes is a heart for service and a little thinking outside the box. 🌟

Auxiliarists from Flotilla 10-2 D7 (Savannah) go over files at ANT Tybee Island as part of their voluntary mission to help reorganize the small ATON facility in Georgia. From the left, are: Don Funderburk, FSO-AN; Ann Bennett, VFC 10-2; and, Mike Campbell, FC 10-2.



Photos: John Tysse, SO-PA 10 D7

Savannah Flotilla Assists Short-Handed ANT Unit

STORY BY RON LURETTI
FL 10-2 D7
AND JOHN TYSSE
SO-PA 10 D7

When the U.S. Coast Guard issues a clarion call for augmentation, the Auxiliary—invariably—responds quickly and efficiently.

Case in point:

Early last year, the Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) at Coast Guard Station Tybee Island, in Georgia, issued an urgent call for help from Flotilla 10-2 (Savannah).

Due to transfers, the complement of active-duty ANT personnel had shrunk to four, from six. It was difficult enough for the remaining Coasties to do all the required regular maintenance in timely fashion, but they were also tasked to make preparations for the unit's first ready-for-operations (RFO) inspection.

The Station Tybee AOR is extensive – a total of more than 300 nautical miles! The AOR runs from the Coosaw River (South Carolina) to the southern tip of St. Catherine's Island (Georgia), and westward, on the Savannah River, to its ocean outlet at Augusta.

There are lighted and unlighted channel buoys on the major shipping lanes, and lighted and unlighted day markers on the Intracoastal Waterway and the region's many rivers and creeks. There are a total of more than 600 such Nav aids in this AOR.

BM2 John Brinkley, the then-Executive Petty Officer of ANT Tybee Island and a regular guest at Flotilla 10-2's monthly

meetings, asked for help. Three members volunteered immediately: Don Funderburk, FSO-AN, a retired electrical engineer; Mike Campbell, FC, a retired airline operations executive; and, Ann Bennett, VFC, a retired U.S. Navy officer.

Since then, the trio has donated one day each week to ANT Tybee Island.

Their first task was to assist Coast Guard personnel inspect the Aids to Navigation (ATON) files. Each of the 600 ATONs has a separate file, and there is a strict protocol for what these files must contain and how they are organized.

Each file must include an up-to-date photo of the ATON. During the RFO inspection, the team found that very few of the files contained current pictures. Funderburk enlisted help from other flotillas in Division 10 and two area Power Squadron units.

In less than three months, new photos of more than half the ATONs were obtained and filed.

The ANT unit passed its RFO inspection with high marks, thanks in part to the Auxiliarists' efforts in updating the files. The inspectors were particularly impressed with the plans that had been put into place to complete the photo updates and keep the files current on a continuing basis.

Successful completion of the inspection did not mark the end of Auxiliary involvement with the unit, however. In following months, Auxiliarists took on several additional tasks, including responsibility for weekly updating of the



Some members of FL 10-2 D7 have been trained by the Coast Guard to assist the under-staffed ANT Tybee Island personnel with maintenance on Tybee Island Light, seen here reaching for the 'stars.'

unit's operational charts and *Light Lists*.

It was also discovered that there were no files for Private Aids to Navigation (PATON). A plan now is in place under which the Division 10 flotillas and Power Squadron units develop files for all PATONs in the Tybee AOR.

Auxiliarists were also given the task of inspecting Station Tybee's operational safety and operational equipment. Inflatable PFDs, EPIRBs, flares, and other pieces of emergency equipment were inspected and repaired, or replaced, as necessary.

The Auxiliarists now are also participating in some operational patrols with the ANT unit.

More recently, members have been trained to assist with maintenance of Tybee Island Light. Funderburk was to attend ATON 'C' School this year so that eventually, he will be able to assist with Navaid repairs.

It is evident that ANT Tybee Island's call for help on one project has led to an ongoing partnership involving a wide range of activities.

BM1 Barry Pierce, the ANT Tybee Island OIC, praised the volunteers, writing in a letter, "Your attitudes and work ethic are in line with the Coast Guard core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. Thank you again for all your hard work in assisting ANT Tybee during this stressful time. Bravo Zulu." 🚩

KATRINA UPDATE...

Spirits Remain High at Louisiana Flotilla Despite Devastation of Two Hurricanes

BY KT PORTER
FSO-PA 48 D8CR

"You know you're in Flotilla 48 (Eden Isles, LA) if your mailbox has a NO WAKE sign and you carry a recipe for mold remediation in your wallet," quips Bob Woods.

Bob, FSO-IS 48 D8CR, has a sense of humor and willingness to help others that has helped to buoy the spirits of his fellow flotilla members in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and her sister, Hurricane Rita.

FL-48's base in Eden Isles, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, is an easy commute from New Orleans. The eyewall of Katrina passed right through this area and created major havoc with the lives of our members. Nothing has been the same since.

Telling the story of each of our members would take up this entire issue and probably the next one, too, so this article will barely scratch the surface of the trials and tribulations of Flotilla 48.

Jeff Huse, FSO-AN, who serves as a St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's deputy, says,

"On our post-storm surveys in the days following Katrina, it was difficult to convince people that they literally couldn't return to their homes. The roads were impassable, blocked by large pine trees and tons of debris."

So much destruction occurred that, without familiar landmarks and street signs, it was easy to become disoriented and "lost." By day, the quietness was eerie, and day's end brought an unfamiliar degree of darkness. It was a surreal experience, to put it mildly.

Never having been through a major disaster, FL-48 did not have a plan to account for its members, but the Coast Guard Commandant sent two FBI agents and three special investigators to help locate all our members. It was reassuring to find all of us accounted for.

Every member sustained damage to their home and/or boat. Most had flooded homes and/or damage from fallen trees.

For those who remained in the area, a strictly cash society developed.

Without power and phone service, no credit cards were usable. No banks were open.

Very few stores were open, and those that were limited the numbers of people allowed inside at one time, creat-

ing long lines and seemingly interminable waits.

The Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Program, which provided grants to 15 of our members, enabled them not only to begin the long remediation process, but also to buy food and clothing. So where are the members of Flotilla 48 now?

Some are still living out-of-state. No one whose home was flooded has been able to move back in yet. Most are living in cramped trailers on their property. Some are still in the process of determining whether their home will be razed.

But don't count us out yet.

Jim Liverett, FC-48, and Bruce Mullen, IPFC, have vowed to rebuild our flotilla. In January, CAPT Frank Paskewich, commanding officer, Sector New Orleans, and his wife, honored us by attending our Change of Watch dinner, where Jim was sworn in, and LT Sam Johnson, AUXLO, gave the invocation.

At the dinner, Liverett said that his primary goal for this year was to provide support to the membership by having our monthly meeting for fellowship. Priority-one is getting our lives back together.

Our lives may have been devastated, but we are Flotilla 48 – and we *will* survive! 🚩

The deadly eyewall of Hurricane Katrina roared through Eden Isles (LA), which is on Lake Pontchartrain's north shore. One disastrous result, shown here, was a brown blanket of storm-debris that completely covered the water at Oak Harbor Marina. Other than surrounding buildings, only two things were left standing – the marina dock's white-tipped pilings and Kyle Bowser's sailboat. His boat miraculously remained upright and in position – the *only* boat at the marina that did so! A past Commodore of the Tammany Yacht Club, Bowser had to place a ladder across the debris in order to access his boat. Photo: Courtesy of Kyle Bowser





Photos: José L. Figueroa, FSO-PA 1-1 D7

Congratulations were recently passed around to award-winners in Division 1 D7 flotilla competitions. Celebrating in San Juan, PR, are, from the left: Diana Figueroa, DCP-1; Andres Acosta, IPFC 1-18 (Cabo Rojo), whose unit took First Place in the Best Flotilla competition; Rafael Miranda, FC 1-12 (Santurce), holding the COMO Miguel A. Colorado Cup Trophy won by his flotilla; Nestor J. Tacoronte, VCP-1; and, CAPT Raymond J. Perry, Deputy Commander, USCG Sector San Juan.

LETTER FROM SAN JUAN

It's a Sweet-Sixty 'Party' at Puerto Rico's Division 1

BY DIANA FIGUEROA
DCP-1 D7

We here in Puerto Rico are proud of the fact that this year, our Division 1 (D7) is celebrating its 60th Anniversary. And we are equally proud of our past accomplishments, as well as the goals we have set for 2006.

A quick historical note: Division 1 was chartered in September 1946 as the 10th Naval District, Puerto Rico. Two years later, it was merged with the Seventh Coast Guard District and re-named Division 1, encompassing both Puerto

and the US Virgin Islands.

In 1997, members of Flotilla 1-2 D7 (Congrejos, PR) were asked to copy documents, such as letters, reports and photos, for a published history that included material from all Div-1 flotillas.

We also are honored by the fact that one of our members – Miguel A. Colorado – holds the distinction of having been the first Hispanic to become a District 7 commodore, having been elected to that office in 1963.

His dedication to the district (and to Division 1) inspired the creation of a

major award – the COMO Miguel A. Colorado Cup Trophy – which each year is given to “the best flotilla” in our division.

This award was established for many reasons. One of the most important is to motivate members (retention) and to involve new members (recruiting) in our programs. Another reason is that Cup rules require members to report their time devoted to Auxiliary activities during the 30-day period to be considered for this award.

The award program also gives flotilla

commanders the opportunity to develop a plan to achieve their unit's goals.

Points are accumulated during the calendar year. For special events, such as Mega Weeks, points are granted to the flotilla that scores the greatest number of Vessel Safety Checks during this summertime period. This helps to motivate our VEs to head down to the docks and ramps.

Points are also earned for attending and assisting at Div-1 meetings and other events during the year. A roster is maintained of members that attend our events, and points are credited to their respective units. Points are also awarded to the flotilla that completes division goals for our Recreational Boating Safety programs (PE, VE and PV).

Last year, we launched a new vision: The Commitment of Excellence. Its primary goal is to educate new members and re-educate old members by involving them in different events or programs. Our organization needs to keep its members and leaders informed of all new changes in our programs, to do our missions properly, and to support Coast Guard units.

We also have created a Division

Captain's Certificate of Appreciation for the best instructor, best vessel examiner, best program visitor, best coxswain and best crew. These certificates are awarded each quarter at Div-1 meetings. We hope these awards will encourage our members to report their hours on time.

Our projects for this, our 60th year, include:

- Printing 20 signs for installation at the most-frequently used boat ramps around Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, under a grant from BoatUS. These signs will be maintained 24/7 with information about the VSC program, where to call for an examination, and what the 15 Federal requirements are to obtain a VSC decal. We hope to have a press presentation to announce our project, and we will invite the public to the ramps for boating safety information.

- Each flotilla is creating a newsletter announcing its programs, including photos of members working on them. We encouraged each flotilla to include specific information, such as meeting hours, where boating courses will take place, and other flotilla events and activities.

- We are working very hard to promote the Auxiliary and our specific flotil-

las. We are co-coordinating interviews with local newspapers to announce our services, as volunteers, in order to find qualified people to join our organization. Part of this will be special open-house events at Coast Guard units, during which members of the public will be asked to join.

- To continue our efforts to promote boating safety, we will produce and place a special four-page, full-color publication in a local newsletter, showing photos of members working on Auxiliary programs. Again, we will be emphasizing that our services are performed by volunteers.

- We have a Diving Team pilot-plan that is pending approval at the National level. It would consist of a specialized group of members that hold Commercial Dive-Master licenses and do an exceptional job of supporting Coast Guard units. Among their duties as a diving team are cleaning hulls of cutters, inspecting decks, and helping with ATON work.

As a team, our goal is to maintain a good standing, with great effort and dedication, in support of the United States Coast Guard. 🇺🇸



Diana Figueroa, DCP-1 D7, checks the records to answer a question posed by visitor to the division's Vessel Safety Check booth at a National Safe Boating Week event at Puerto del Rey Marina, in Fajardo, PR. Also manning the booth are, from the left: Lydia E. Valles, FC 1-1 (Fajardo); Nestor J. Tacoronte, VCP-1; José A. Rivera, PVCP-1; and, Reinaldo Torres, PFC 1-2 (Congrejos).

Sunshine State Marinas Meet the Cleaners

[Editor's Note: The author has submitted this report on how one state is handling the increasingly important Clean Marina Program as a template that others may duplicate, or modify, to suit local or regional circumstances.]

STORY BY PATRICIA PATERSON
ADSO-MS 7 (Special Projects)

PHOTOS BY GERDA FLETCHER
SO-PA 13 D7

Florida's Clean Marina Program has spread throughout the Sunshine State. There are now some 125 Clean Marinas and 25 Clean Boatyards, and many more are in the queue.

Boaters entering our state are greeted by the Clean Marina banner. At designated marinas, they are furnished with a copy of *Clean Boating Habits*, which shows locations of other marinas and boatyards offering environmentally clean services and facilities.

The goal of the program: To maintain a pollution-free environment.

Program manager Brenda Leonard describes the effort this way: "Florida's Clean Marina program is a voluntary participation program administered by the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Law Enforcement (DLE). It encourages and assists marina and boatyard facilities around the state to become clean facilities by meeting 125 environmental measures.

"Facilities that achieve the designation have exceeded environmental regulations required by law and have made a commitment to be good environmental stewards of Florida," she said.

"The Clean Marina Program provides an extensive network of support to facilities that make this commitment, including best management practices, incentives, mentoring, Web-based education, etc. The Department of Environmental Protection [DEP] philosophy is that greater environmental compliance can be achieved by establishing a partnership with industry."

In April 2000, DLE created the Clean Boating Partnership (CBP) as a public-private effort to guide the Clean Marina Program's focus and growth. The Partnership is comprised of DEP, marina and boatyard owners and operators, the Marine Industries Association of Florida, the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary, and Florida Sea Grant, at the University of Florida.

The partnership operates under a Memorandum of Understanding signed by representatives of the Seventh Coast



District 7's Clean Marina crew meets with state and Coast Guard representatives at Plantation Yacht Harbor in the Florida Keys. From the left, are: Ed Russell, Florida Department of Environmental Protection;

Joe Welty, BC-MVS; Cathie Welty, DSO-PV 7; Scott Parker, Plantation Yacht Harbor dockmaster; MST3 Jason Muñoz, USCG Sector Key West; and BM2 Paul Barry, USCG Station Islamorada.

Guard District, the Auxiliary's Seventh District, Florida DEP, and the chairman of Florida's Clean Boating Partnership.

"The CBP has been, and continues to be, an example of successful partnering of government and private industry, and has received recognition on the local, state, and federal levels," Leonard added.

The Coast Guard, Sea Partners and the Auxiliary are in an ideal position to help with the project.

No one knows this better than Joe Welty, BC-MVS, and Cathie Welty, DSO-PV 7, who attended a Clean Marina Workshop in Islamorada, FL, in July 2004. The speaker was Ed Russell of the Monroe County (Florida Keys) DEP. His presentation provided the spark that started it all.

Since then, Joe and Cathie have worked closely with Russell and Laura Comer of the Ft. Myers DEP. After initial training and supervised marina surveys, the Weltys have become active members of a designation survey team and mentors to

local marinas.

The couple explained that the assistance they offer includes explanation of the Clean Marina Program principles, requirements and procedures, technical assistance with preparation of the facility "panic" book for environmental emergencies, walk-through inspections to identify problem areas and proposed remedies; and, encouragement and support for the facility staff.

The materials provided to the participating marinas are well designed and easy to follow. They can be supplemented by materials from facilities that have achieved Clean Marina status and are willing to share their innovations.

So what is Florida's Clean Marina Program?

The Weltys sum it up this way: "The Clean Marina initiative is an incentive-based program promoted by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, and others, to encourage environmentally sound operating and maintenance procedures by marina operators and boaters to protect the water quality." 🦋



Florida's Clean Marina Program has brought about desirable results such as these, in which oil waste (upper photo) and trash (middle) are neatly stored and protected, and a special sign informs visitors about pet waste (lower photo).

Virginia Auxiliarist Joins Cuttermen For a 32-Day Patrol in the Atlantic

Only Known Member Ever to Sail on USCGC *Forward*

STORY & PHOTOS
BY JOSEPH GIANNATTASIO
VFC-82 D5NR

Unknown to me, my friend – CDR Gregory Sanial, USCG – had followed my involvement in the Coast Guard Auxiliary and was aware of the offices and qualifications I had earned.

So, it came as a surprise when I received an e-mail from him stating that I had been granted permission to join the next patrol of the vessel he commands, USCGC *Forward*.

A 270-foot Famous Class Cutter with displacement of 1,820 tons, *Forward* usually spends her 185 days a year at sea tasked with drug and migrant interdiction, fisheries enforcement, and search-and-rescue.

I would be the only known Auxiliarist to serve aboard her.

On an unseasonably warm and sunny January day, I joined *Forward's* crew formed up on the helicopter flight deck for quarters, where departing crew were acknowledged and new crewmembers were introduced.

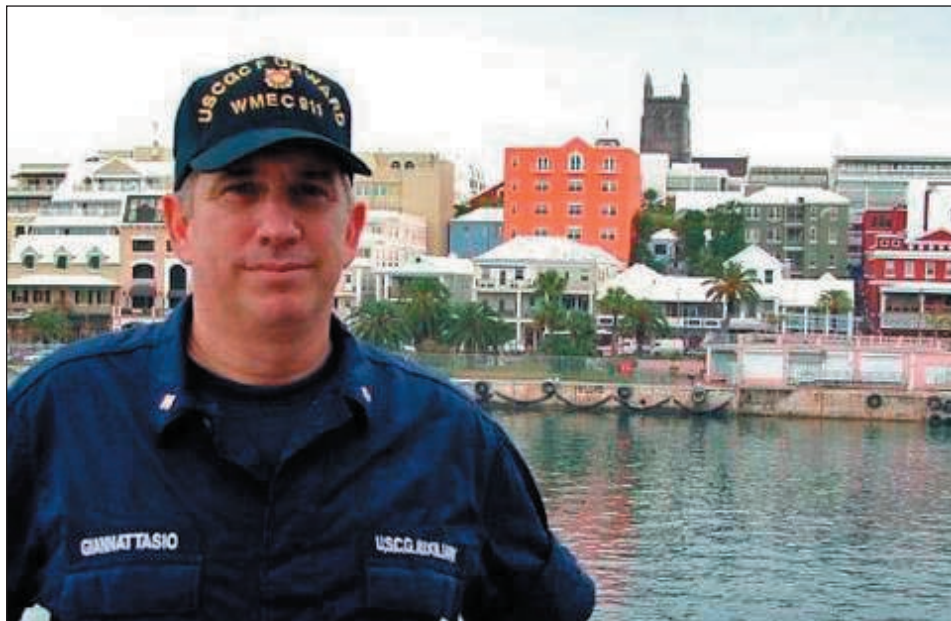
An informal part of the getting-underway ceremony included having new crewmembers introduce themselves to the entire complement, stating their name, rank and rate, where they came from, and their favorite football team.

Not only was I the only Auxiliarist on board, but also the sole Rutgers University football fan!

Somewhat similar to Auxiliary patrols, getting underway included a number of operational and navigation briefs, plus reviewing duties and schedules at crew quarters.

From the bridge, I observed the skilled efficiency with which the crew and dockhands got the ship away from the pier. Being a qualified coxswain, I appreciated witnessing the bridge team in disciplined action as they navigated the complex channels of Portsmouth (VA) Harbor, leading out to sea.

Initially, I thought this patrol was going to be a cinch for me, based on the idyllic afternoon and picturesque transition of



Joseph Giannattasio, VFC-82 D5NR, prepares for 'liberty' during Hamilton, Bermuda, port call by USCGC *Forward*.

the harbor, but by evening we were experiencing more "traditional" January seas and weather.

I'm not sure if I had a hard time falling asleep because of the excitement of beginning a new adventure, or because of the ship's pitching and rolling on the rough sea.

Crew safety being the number-one priority, the first full day underway was tasked with familiarizing the crew with emergency procedures. We simulated drills necessary for fire, damage control, man overboard, and abandon-ship.

We then began training evolutions for what was to be the primary focus of this mission – boarding commercial fishing vessels for safety and fishery regulation violations.

When first told that I would be doing this patrol, I informed the Commanding Officer that I wanted to participate in as many ship functions as feasible, being an Auxiliarist. After reviewing my AUX quals and experience, the CO decided I could participate and qualify for Quartermaster of the Watch (QMOW).

From what was expected of me, I was

grateful that I had recently completed the Auxiliary Navigation Specialty Course!

Training exercises were scheduled when boardings were not conducted. Though not utilized on this patrol, *Forward* usually has a helicopter assigned to it for her patrols. The ship's superstructure includes an expanding hangar on the flight deck to shelter helos from the elements.

One day, an HH-65 "Charlie" helicopter from Air Station Atlantic City rendezvoused with us at sea to run through a number of scenarios to train both the helo crew and the ship's flight deck team. Helo ops included guiding in and landing the aircraft on the pitching flight deck. Some evolutions included a "hotel refuel" – refueling with the helo on deck, engines running and rotors spinning.

The exercise also involved Helicopter In-Flight Refueling, with the helo hovering about 50 feet above the flight deck and hoisting up a fuel line for refueling, and Vertical Replenishment – picking up supplies loaded in a slung cargo net.

As a private pilot and member of the Auxiliary Air Program, I was greatly



CDR Greg Sanial, commanding officer of USCGC *Forward*, displays Passing Honors to a nearby U.S. Navy vessel in Norfolk (VA) Harbor.

impressed by the fact that all of this was accomplished while underway in seven-foot seas!

Another afternoon included firing of the ship's main battery – a 76 mm cannon mounted on the bow, able to fire up to 100 rounds per minute. The entire ship reverberated from the thunderous report of the gun as it cycled through mock combat scenarios.

After six hard days at sea conducting boardings and training exercises, we made a port call in Bermuda for a scheduled two days of rest-and-recuperation. However, it seems Mother Nature never received a copy of our schedule... extremely bad weather and rough seas in our planned patrol area lengthened our visit to five days.

It was a glorious Bermudan morning when we finally pulled out from the Port of Hamilton and headed to our Area of Operation, far to our west in the Atlantic.

It was amazing to witness the advanced technology that is utilized throughout the cutter in a multitude of functions. And *Forward's* satellite television and Internet connection eases the hardship of being at sea by allowing the crew to keep in touch with family and loved ones via e-mail, vir-

tually anywhere in the world.

After two more weeks of combat simulations, general emergency drills, and fishery boardings in all types of weather, and seas up-and-down the mid-Atlantic seaboard, we pulled into New York Harbor.

The beautiful morning only enhanced the experience of sailing past the Statue of Liberty and the majestic Manhattan skyline that preceded a weekend of well-deserved R&R.

We then headed south again for another week of patrol, safety drills, and boardings – the normal routine. Having performed 27 boardings, the patrol neared completion with the additional tasks and reports required for wrapping-up a mission.

This was an invaluable experience from which I learned a great deal, not only from my instruction, but also by observations from the unparalleled access I was granted. This learning experience will not only enhance my abilities as an operational Auxiliarist, but will also be shared with my "shipmates" at the flotilla, division and district levels.

I was constantly impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the young men and women I met on board

Forward.

For 32 days, I felt a part of this diverse family. I was readily-accepted and encouraged to participate in most functions. I was often asked about the Auxiliary and my experiences in our organization.

I met several crewmembers who first learned about USCG opportunities from Auxiliarists. In fact, my onboard roommate – ENS Luke Grant – joined the Auxiliary before he was accepted into the Coast Guard Academy. And he is still a member!

Several crewmembers fondly recounted the selfless hospitality they received from Operation Fireside families that shared their homes with the Coasties over the holidays, when they were far-from-home recruits at boot camp.

I embarked on this adventure looking forward to experiencing, learning and working onboard a Coast Guard Cutter, though a part of me wondered whether this Auxiliary volunteer could actually be accepted on a ship of active-duty professionals.

However, I disembarked with the gained insight that not only is the Coast Guard Auxiliary *truly* a part of Team Coast Guard, but that *every* Auxiliarist is a member of the Coast Guard family. ☺

CARIBBEAN CONFEREES



Photo: Mel Borofsky, DVC-AP

The Third Caribbean Volunteer Maritime Search and Rescue Conference (CSAR) set a new attendance record as more than 80 delegates, representing 24 countries, descended on Miami for the event. CSAR was hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary International Affairs Directorate, the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Southern Command. Delegates (above) take a break between conference sessions in Miami.

COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGE 22

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