AUXILIARISTS IN ALASKA:
Work hard, study hard

On-Scene Coverage from Miami:
CARIBBEAN SEARCH & RESCUE CONFERENCE
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 King Salmon Tournament became disabled. Pictured is Craig Forrest, DSO-PV 17, at the stern of a — this time off Homer, Alaska — when a recreational vessel in the Chamber of Commerce Winter

Against the backdrop of a rapidly deteriorating cold front, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary’s 27-foot SAFE boat, piloted by Auxiliary members, moved with precision to safely and skillfully transport a disabled vessel back to safe harbor. The Coast Guard Auxiliary’s role in maritime safety and service continues to be an integral part of the nation’s maritime safety infrastructure.

The Auxiliary members, dedicated to the mission of saving lives, ensuring safety, and protecting the environment, demonstrated their commitment to operational excellence and teamwork.

的故事和照片由Ray Arsenault

F50-PA 11-3 D5SR

“Airport 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. 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 aircrew 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, hence the intercept.

No arrests. No lawyers. No loss of license.

Still, for the three pilots aboard, Auxiliary Air Facility ICE, 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.), BPC 11-3 DSSR – 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

Airsta Atlantic City welcomed us warmly and escorted us into a confer-
ence 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 parameters, 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 during the exercise, and other pertinent details.

With all questions and concerns discussed to everyone’s mutual satisfaction, the aircrew members were ready to conduct their respective pre-flight inspections and have a bite of lunch.

At 1205, Early engaged the starter on the Beechcraft Bonanza, and the Auxiliary portion of the exercise began. Charlie 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 at exactly 1230, and our designated holding area along the coastline, north of Atlantic City.

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STORY & PHOTOS BY RAY ARSENAULT

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The “rabbit” was entering the hunting
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 Kalo Reservoir, sitting on a 100-year-wide river of water, debris and mud rushing toward the Pacific Ocean. The huge landslide swept dwellings — and seven people along with the debris field. The huge load of debris that came down from the mountain to the sea was a scene that will be remembered for years to come. The debris was so massive that it created a river of water, debris and mud rushing toward the Pacific Ocean. The huge landslide swept dwellings — and seven people along with the debris field. The huge load of debris that came down from the mountain to the sea was a scene that will be remembered for years to come. The debris was so massive that it created a river of water, debris and mud rushing toward the Pacific Ocean. The huge landslide swept dwellings — and seven people along with the debris field. The huge load of debris that came down from the mountain to the sea was a scene that will be remembered for years to come. The debris was so massive that it created a river of water, debris and mud rushing toward the Pacific Ocean. The huge landslide swept dwellings — and seven people along with the debris field. The huge load of debris that came down from the mountain to the sea was a scene that will be remembered for years to come. The debris was so massive that it created.
Who Will Be Our Future Leaders?

YOUR DECISIONS CHART THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

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 Fleet Commander, 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.

Eliciting leaders may not be as exciting as participating in those programs areas that are of interest to you, but your 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 our one- or two-year watch can impact the direction and productivity of a unit – now, and in future eras.

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?

Whither 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 by the same level of thinking we were in when we created them.”

It comes as a surprise to any of us that we have experienced – are experiencing! – a cultural shift, which occurs when a series of dramatic events cause us to be factoring in 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 figurehead.

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 the 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 MARESC 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 must be ignored. The results of the dramatic events, the shift in the Coast Guard, establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, and the changing makeup 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 success and success in the near- and long-term.

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

Colin Powell, when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, referenced to some critical success factors as traits/characteristics of outstanding leaders. I suggest you use the following traits as a checklist before visiting 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 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 Simple, Stupid) principle, and think from the heart.

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 Fleet 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 we make today will ultimately impact the direction of the Auxiliary of tomorrow.

ON THE WEB
You can go to the National Commodore’s page at www.auxnaco.org for more information on the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

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, MCCOM, and Senior SES Rep in advising me on all issues of strategic importance.

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

COMO Seibert is a regis- tered member of the National Contract Management Association, and he holds advanced degrees in procurement and international contracts. After 34 years of service, he recently retired from Lucent Technologies, where he served as the Director of International Government and Domestic Contract Management. We welcome COMO Seibert to the Leadership Council.
How to Address Your Concerns Using the Chain of Leadership

Whether you've been in the Auxiliary for years or are new to the organization, eventually you will have a question, concern, or sensitive issue, how can you get it answered expeditiously.

Auxiliarists are expected to use the chain of leadership and management. Likewise, all Auxiliarists are expected to use the chain of leadership and management for giving an accurate and consistent accounting for any issue, concern, or complaint. [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, the chain of leadership and management for giving an accurate and consistent accounting for any issue, concern, or complaint.
- Auxiliarists should keep in mind that the Director is the 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.

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ARIZONA OPEX 2006
‘A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS’

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 26-27, 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 summer 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 firefighting, communications, first aid, emergency damage control, and Inland Rivers regions traveled last summer 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 firefighting, communications, first aid, emergency damage control, 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 crew members chosen at random by the event organizers the evening before the competition. The events were SAR planning, SAR exercise (SAREX), emergency damage control, communications, and emergency towing.

The four members of each team were 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 DSSR, 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 Fred 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.

ARIZONA OPEX 2006 (Arizona/Southern Utah) recently held the area’s first-ever division-level OPEX, at which boat crew, coxswain and PWG 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.
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, SOCS 2 D11SR, and this trainee launched the Auxiliary Operational Facility, Fear Not, 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 guard, rotation of duties among the crew, a man-overboard drill with a fender guard, rotation of duties among the crew, a man-overboard drill with a fender guard, rotation of duties among the crew, a man-overboard drill with a fender guard.

Near the end of our scheduled patrol, I was at the helm, taking instruction from Rich, while Mike and Joe covered watch. 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, SOCS 2 D11SR, and this trainee launched the Auxiliary Operational Facility, Fear Not, 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 guard, rotation of duties among the crew, a man-overboard drill with a fender guard, rotation of duties among the crew, a man-overboard drill with a fender guard.

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 situation 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—the 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.

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.
Promoting The Safety Message

BY HARRIET HOWARD

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 at Paseo de la Princesa, in Old San Juan, NSBW proclamations were signed by the Commonwealth Governor and the Mayor of San Juan.

### D1NR: Another NSBW highlight was a PFD exchange took place at the Sacramento, CA area’s 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. Holo rescues, flare and fire demos were held, and there were giveaways for the kids and adults.

### D11NR: A PFD exchange took place at the Sacramento, CA area’s 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.

### 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”

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

**During National Safe Boating Week 2006 (NSBW) activity in Puerto Rico, José Pérez, VFC-17 D7 (Aquadilla), discusses Personal Flotation Devices with a customer at Wal-Mart Plaza Isabella. Puerto Rico Auxiliarists also secured NSBW proclamations from both the Commonwealth Governor and the Mayor of San Juan.**

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

**In Cleveland, OH, daily newspapers, 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.**

**Wear It!**
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.”

“Weak, 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.

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

ANNUAL TRAINING IN ALASKA COMPLETES SIXTH YEAR

Continued on Page 18
“...said Marie Scholle, RCO-17, who...”

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 Auxiliarians 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 Folker, Alien, Borough of Juneau; Gary Taylor, IPDCO-17, of Anchorage; Shane Taylor, VCP3, of Anchorage, and Stewart Sterling, FSO-17, of Whittier.

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

Day One of the academy in Homer had a leisurely start time of 0700, but in the following days, work began at 0000 sharp and continued until 1800, breking 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, under/way/sea patterns, close-quarter maneuvering, POMS, rescue and assistance 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. Homer Auxiliarists also provided three approved facilities for training.

Two nights were devoted to night navigation lessons. “The highlight was successfully completing the night navigation exercise and actually driving the 27-foot SAFE Boat on a full throttle and overcoming my fear of the boat,” said Marie Scholle, RCO-17, who was paired with Fairbanks for the night navigation 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 man,” 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 away from the slip the GPS came up and we had all of our electronics, including the chart plotter, working for us.”

Brian Grennon, 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, Grennon’s participation in the academy is a perfect example of good communication. COMO Folkeris 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 CCGA-P President Malcolm Dunderdale. Grennon is the first Canadian Auxiliary to attend the D17 Coxswain Academy.

“With the Support of our 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 – 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.”

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.

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 we are to be involved directly to be in command of the on-scene Auxiliary rescue boat when a helicopter airfall 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, direct hoist, trail line, and direct basket hoist. I have even had the opportunity to be hoisted in the bucket myself, at a safety demonstration in the Waukegan, IL, area.

However, operating the Auxiliary vessel engaged in such an evolution would be a different story. What would it be like with only Auxiliarists on board? What would navigating a 26-foot Auxiliary Operational Facility (AUXAF), not equipped like a 44-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 Auxiliary 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 switch,” I was instructed. “Remember all your Personal Protective Equipment, especially the earplugs,” explained BM2 Jake Chatfield of STA Kenosha.

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

Shortly before the planned training, the helo crew was diverted to another job, executing 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 officer watched with a cautious eye. As Bruhn reached out to unlock the line from the basket, crew member Larry vanGoethem, FSO-MTS 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.
Memorial Day Magic

CA AUXILIARIST APPLAUDS ‘AMAZING’ USCG AIR CREW

(Woman’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

PHOTOS BY PATRICK J. MULLEN

FL-51 D11NR

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 Stephen; LT Chris Kendall; AMT1 John Younkers; AET3 Chuck Helms; AET3 Wes Savage; and AET3 Erik Baker.

We met at the aircraft, an HC-130, on Friday afternoon, and took off for a short training flight, en route 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 that’s what 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 had to get up at 0600.

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 flight home was short and uneventful. We landed back at USCG and Auxiliary participants, along with visiting Bay Scouts and other youth at the Moffett Field (CA) Air Show, are greeted 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

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

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.

PHOTOS BY PATRICK J. MULLEN

STORY BY RON CLARK

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.

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 rechecked.

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

Story by Mary T. Larsen
PARCO-A(E)

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 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 Everett 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 W. Kunkei, Commander, Seventh U.S. Coast Guard District, welcomed the attendees to work with one another and to learn from each other. "Failure is not an option; it is our intent audience through the basics of search strategies and procedures. He concluded his remarks by challenging the audience to ask, "How do you determine a need?"

Auxiliarist Jim Campbell, a veteran instructor at the Coast Guard Search and Rescue School, Yorktown, VA, guided the participants as they brought out the many voices for establishing volunteer life-saving agencies in the Caribbean during her 12-year tenure with British Virgin Islands SAR.

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 Hewitt-Jones. 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 develop and risk management.
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 VanOsloel, National Chief, Maritime Domain Awareness. Clinchy was assisted by Curt 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.

VanOsloel’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. Interpersed 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 Curacao, Aruba, Sint Maarten, St. Eustatius, 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 NASILA, NSBC and others.

Gerry Kreling, 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 Coordination Center, to evaluate how well they could handle the situation.

The exercise was designed to simulate a SAR scenario that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico involving 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 68° 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.

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 Charlon Winter, considers all Operational Excellence members “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, and Don Frasch, DCP-11, watch closely to make sure he’s doing it right.

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 Selibert built on Captain Moore’s presentation.

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

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.

Findings: he is critical in the 68° F water.

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

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

The Operational Excellence team 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.

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.

Operational Excellence Team ‘Takes Over’ in Florida

USCG STATION SAND KEY USED FOR WEEKEND EXERCISES

STORY & PHOTO BY KAREN L. MILLER

STORY & PHOTO BY KAREN L. MILLER

WOOP!  WOOP!  WOOP! 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 68° 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.

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.

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What’s in a Name?

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 watch standing 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, PRCC DSSR, 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.

Bob 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 William (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 D5SSR, 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 eight-hour shift.

Bob Maple was recognized by Station personnel for his years of service. (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 DSSR came as a complete surprise to Bob.

A great honor!
COMO Oliver Brand, 76, Celebrates 40 Years in the Coast Guard Auxiliary

SEPTUAGENARIAN STILL GOING STRONG

BY CRAIG D. SMITH, PH.D.
VFC-87 DSBCR

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 1955-98. But at the age of 76, Brand, IPFC-87 DSBCR, 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 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, 1929, 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. Navy Reserve. A year-and-a-half later, Brand moved to the regular Navy and, by 1951-1952, was serving as a dental prosthetic technician in the regular Navy and, by 1951-1952, was serving as a dental prosthetic technician on the hospital ship USS Comfort, off the coast of war-torn South Korea. For those efforts, he was awarded the MERIT Citation Gold Award, Auxiliary Meritorious Service Award, USCG Mitigation Team Commander Award, National Water Safety Congress Award, and the Award of Merit.

After discharge from the Navy, Brand 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 Diplomat 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, 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 DSBCR. 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-6, including newly chartered units at Columbus, MS, and Cameron, 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 DSBCR. 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 Auxiliary, Betty, FSN-87, BCNR. 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.

BY JO SCHNEIDER
FSD-14 HR-11 DSBCR

AND GERALD SCHNEIDER
FPC-4-11 DSBCR

On Dec. 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II. Roland Y. Brunet, Sr, 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 volunteers 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 took part 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 welcomed. They patrolled because of the military equipment that was being shipped. They were the only group in the area doing this type of work. Brunet had a 28-foot cottonwood-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. They patrolled all day and all night. The men 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 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. They used radio to find any sign of the plane.

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. These novelists have learned about these 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.

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Central Florida Auxiliarists and Paralyzed Veterans Reap Benefits Helping One Another

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 pub-

lic service heaven!

With the PVA, he began a journey that would lead to the formation of an auxiliary flotilla.

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.

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.

Auxiliarist Mike Combs (right), FSO-SR 45 D7 and vice-president of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, 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.

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.

On April 22-23, Auxiliarists assisted PVA members in hosting a bass tournament for handicapped fishermen on a 30-mile stretch of the St. John's 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 Auxiliary Operational Facility boats and four Off-Location 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 bass tournament.

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

The 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 AIDON ‘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.

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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 renamed Division 1, encompassing both Puerto Rico 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 1993. 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 flotilla.

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.

As a team, our goal is to maintain a good standing, with great effort and dedication, in support of the United States Coast Guard.
Florida’s Clean Marina Program has spread throughout the Sunshine State. There are now 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 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.

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).
**A PERSONAL VIEW...**

**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 DNSR**

Unknown to me, my friend – CDR Greg Sanial, USCG – had followed my involvement in the Coast Guard Auxiliary and was aware of the offices and qualifications I had. 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, 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 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-recovery. 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 Area of Operation, far to our west. 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 USCGC 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 a ship of active-duty professionals. However, I disarmed 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.

From the bridge, I observed the beautiful morning only enhanced by the magnificent 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.

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

**Joseph Giannattasio, VFC-82 DNSR, prepares for ‘liberty’ during Hamilton, Bermuda, port call by USCGC Forward.**

**CDR Greq 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 under way in seven-foot seas.

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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, virtually anywhere in the world.

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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