

Breeze

DISTRICT 7
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Issue 1 2025



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DISTRICT BRIDGE

District Commodore (DCO)
Commodore Martin Goodwin

District Chief of Staff (DCOS)
Murray D. Price

Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX)
LCDR Benjamin Tuxhorn

District Captains (DCAPT)
Jeffery Barnes (East)
Charles Leroux III (North)
W. Tom Sawyer, Jr. (West)

Immediate Past District Commodore (IPDCO)
Commodore John Holmes

DISTRICT DIRECTORATE CHIEFS

Logistics Nicole Betterson
Prevention..... Daniel J. Helou
Response..... Douglas Armstrong

DISTRICT STAFF OFFICERS

Aviation Wilson Riggan Jr.
Culinary Assistant Patrick McAlvey
Communications (CM) Joe Blanchard II
Communication Services (CS) Carlos Arenas
Emergency Management (EM)..... Efrain I. Sora
Finance (FN) Donna Miller
Human Resources (HR) Faron Petteys
Information Services (IS) Kevin S. Wilcox
Legal/Parliamentarian (LP) J. Michael Williams
Materials (MA) Jon A. Hunt
Marine Safety (MS) William Saltenberger
Member Training (MT) Karen L. Miller
Navigation System (NS) John R. Frassanito
Operations (OP) Chris Juall
Public Affairs (PA) Mary B. Patton
Publications (PB) Dorothy J. Riley
Public Education (PE) Sean E. Hunt
Program Visitor (PV) Patrick McGowan
Scout (AS) Daniel Muelhaupt
State Liaison (SLO) Anda A. Ray
Secretary/Records (SR) Julie Bouchard
Vessel Examinations (VE) Patricia McGowan
Special Advisor Phillip Poole

COMMODORE'S AIDES

Awards (D-AA-DAC) William Ballard
Letters (LT) Donna Saunders
Special Projects (SP) Dennis McBride
Statistics (ST) COMO Robert Weskerna
Conference Coordinator (CC) Jim Nickels Jr.
Safety Officer (D-AD-Safety) .. Noah Kalemkiewicz
Member Relations Angela Pomaro
Performance Measurement Susan Hastings
Member Outreach Randy Patton
Marine Safety Advisor Mark Wronowski
Force Augmen. and Mission Support Gary Gray
RBS Outreach Natalie Bunting
Strategic Planning Jonathan Javitt

SECTOR COORDINATORS

Charleston (CHA) William Hayes
Jacksonville (JAX) Gregory Hendricks
Key West (KW) Ed Pratt
Miami (MIA) Natalie Bunting
San Juan (SJ) Ramses M. Rodriguez
St. Petersburg (SP) Chris Juall

DIVISION COMMANDERS

Division 1 Aracelis Mass
Division 2 Pat McMenamin
Division 3 Harry Silverman
Division 4 Kaivan Rahbari
Division 5 Marcus Kiriakow
Division 6 Ronald J. Kaplan
Division 7 Anthony Hooper
Division 8 Trevor Evans
Division 9 John Montville
Division 10 David Bird
Division 11 Matthew Copeland
Division 12 John Swink
Division 13 David Green
Division 14 Sean Flynn
Division 15 Chester Bowman
Division 16 Karl Peterson
Division 17 Paul Thompson

FUTURE ISSUES OF BREEZE

Photos, stories, and updates are always welcome. Please send all submissions to DSO-PB for review via email to:

dso.pb.d7@gmail.com

DEADLINE FOR ISSUE 2: June 10, 2025

Breeze Editors: Dorothy Riley and Michael Stringer

DIRECTOR *of* AUXILIARY



LCDR Benjamin Tuxhorn, DIRAUX

New Year Update

In 2024 alone, the Seventh District Auxiliary dedicated over 18,000 hours promoting public boating safety programs, reaching thousands of boaters in schools, community centers, and through online webinars.

These efforts have led to a significant increase in the number of recreational boaters understanding basic safety protocols, such as the use of life jackets, emergency preparedness, and navigation rules. These programs have resulted in measurable decreases in boating accidents and fatalities in the region.

The Seventh District excels in performing vessel safety checks (VSCs), a vital service that ensures recreational vessels meet safety requirements. In 2024, the Seventh District conducted 17,994 VSCs. These examinations help ensure that boats are equipped with the necessary safety equipment, including life jackets, fire extinguishers, and distress signals. Auxiliary members conduct these checks at local marinas, boat ramps, and events, providing boaters with valuable information on improving the safety of their vessels.

While the Seventh District's Auxiliary members are primarily volunteers, their contributions to search and rescue operations are nothing short of professional. In 2024, our Auxiliary Aircraft flew over 500 missions totaling 2,100 hours, while surface

vessels conducted over 1,100 patrols for 4,800 hours. When an emergency arises, Auxiliary members are often the first to respond, providing key support to the USCG. They help locate distressed vessels, offer on-the-water assistance, and participate in communications coordination during search and rescue (SAR) missions.

Digital Correspondence

One example of our innovative initiatives is our ability to accept digital correspondence, such as enrollment application submissions. These member applications previously had to be mailed to our office, which incurred costs, prolonged the enrollment timeline, and potentially reflected negatively upon new members. Receiving these applications securely through electronic means will speed up the enrollment process, improve member satisfaction, and enable the enrollee's leadership to focus efforts on training the new member. Our Digital Correspondence Guide will be published and shared soon.

Director's Administrative Assistant (DAA) Program - 2025

Beyond direct services to the public, the Seventh District's Auxiliary plays a vital role in supporting Auxiliary training and operations behind the scenes. The Director's office recognizes these members by designating them Director's Administrative Assistants (DAA). These DAAs are given helpdesk administrative access to provide critical administrative, logistical, and communication support to our entire District 7 Auxiliary workforce, working tirelessly to ensure that the Coast Guard's mission is carried out seamlessly.

In 2024, Bill Ballard led the District 7 Helpdesk team in processing over 5,100 helpdesk tickets. As we enter 2025, Donna Saunders has taken on the challenge and responsibility of leading our helpdesk support team. We have full confidence in her ability to manage the task, and we look forward to supporting her on the path to success.

(Continued on page 5)

DIRECTOR *of* AUXILIARY

The table on the following pages lists our 2025 designated DAAs.

I forgot the most important piece of the article:

A Celebration for Vickie Aponte:

I would like to celebrate and honor an incredible woman, Vickie Aponte, as she retires after 25 years of dedicated civilian service supporting the Coast Guard Auxiliary in the Seventh District.

For a quarter of a century, Vickie has been the backbone of our operations, providing unwavering support, guidance, and expertise to ensure the success of the Auxiliary's mission. Her commitment to excellence, her professionalism, and—most importantly—her kindness have left a lasting impact on everyone who has had the privilege to work with her.

Vickie, your dedication has not gone unnoticed. You have been more than just a colleague, you have been a mentor, a friend, and a true example of service and selflessness. Your work has strengthened the Auxiliary and, in turn, helped safe-

guard our waters and communities.

As you step into this well-earned retirement, know that your legacy will endure in the lives you've touched and the work you've accomplished. We will miss you dearly, but we are excited for you as you embark on this next chapter of relaxation, adventure, and time with loved ones.

On behalf of The Seventh District's Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary, thank you for 25 years of outstanding service. Congratulations, and best wishes for a joyful and fulfilling retirement!

Fair winds and following seas, Vickie! Ω

Ramses M. Rodriguez, Auxiliary Sector Coordinator-Sector San Juan with Vickie Aponte at D-Train, 2023.
USCG Auxiliary photo by Dorothy Riley



U.S. Coast Guard Seventh District – Director Of Auxiliary

DESIGNATION AS DIRECTOR'S ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (DAA)

Duty / Assignment	Responsibility
Administrative (ADM) <i>Nichole Betterson</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues ID cards
<i>Julie Bouchard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review applications and perform subsequent new enrollment data entry into AUXDATA II. Assist in converting original personnel documents' text and graphic images to digital data
<i>Yvette Perez</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General office admin - mailings, certificates, awards, hardware
<i>Carolina Filgueiras</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in converting original personnel documents' text and graphic images to digital data, allowing immediate access to select Auxiliary Branch staff through the D7 network server. Process initial enrollment packages.
Awards (AW) <i>William Ballard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all awards submitted in the D7 Help Desk to include citation, CG-1650, awards checklist and summary of action (SOA) *when required. Submit award nominations to DIRAUX through the Help Desk.
Air (AIR) <i>Joseph Ego</i> <i>John Tyson</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter AV qualifications in AUXDATA II Process offers for use aircraft Initial certifications / recertifications AUXDATA II entry Deliver certificates of completion Deliver facility decals and hardware Subject matter expert - research answers and recommend policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IQ/BQ/AUXOP status changes processing. Enrollments - enter Boating Safety Class completions in AUXDATA II. Enter Marine Safety Certifications in AUXDATA. Enter CPR / First Aid skill in AUXDATA II - Members enter their own skills not a competency but a skill Surface Ops Annual Currency Maintenance entry Run AUXDATA II reports monthly for members who qualify for change of status AUXOP, RBS Insignia, Annual Service Performance awards for OP, PE, VE/RBSVP, Sustained Service Awards, and Membership Anniversaries. Enter these awards in AUXDATA II, forward the list to Auxiliary Affairs Assistants in the DIRAUX office for printing / mailing of certificates, and associated hardware.
Human Resources (HR) <i>Angela Pomaro</i> <i>Assistant</i> <i>Faron Petteys</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process disenrollments, transfers, retirees, and deceased in AUXDATA II. Subject matter expert - research answers and recommends policy. Submit all re-collected documents from disenrollments, transfers, retirees, and deceased members to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistants.
Incident Command (ICS) <i>Robert Cook</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter ICS course completions in AUXDATA II Provide copies of documentation to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistant in the DIRAUX office for scanning into personnel records files via D7 Help Desk. Enter ATON PQS in AUXDATA.
Information Technology (IT) <i>Chris Haarer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist Director with IT related task. Assist with accountability during contingency operations Subject matter expert - research answers and recommends policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify Auxiliary aviation member qualifications and competencies and make the necessary AUXDATA II entries for all aviation program competencies. Process and forward certificates that award competencies to members meeting established criteria to DIRAUX. Maintain historical files of all letters and certificates issued to Auxiliary aviation members, to include a monthly summary and detailed reports for check rides, exams, and certifications. Subject matter expert - research answers and recommend policy. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>I hereby grant "By Direction" signature authority to you for the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AUXDATA II entry of ANSC 7015 (Pilot/Air Crew/Observer Qualification) Competencies and Certifications "By Direction" authority is nullified for cases where a known physical limitation exists. Such cases shall be referred to the Director or Operations Training Officer for final disposition
Food Service (FS) <i>Brenda Burger</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter in AUXDATA II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys Scouts of America / Youth Program Training Certifications. Cuterman certification. Auxiliary Food Services Personal Qualification Standards (PQS) and FP Tech certifications. Provide copies of completed forms or other documentation to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistants in the DIRAUX office for scanning into personnel records files.
Help Desk (HD) <i>Donna Saunders</i> <i>Assistant</i> <i>William Ballard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative Manager of AUXDATA II in D7. Administrative Manager of Help Desk. Reviews all Help Desk tickets and assigns to DAA or DIRAUX personnel. Entry of Awards in AUXDATA after presentation, except for Sector awards

Marine Safety (MS) <i>Jane Sabbagh</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter in AUXDATA II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine Environmental Education Specialist. Marine Safety Administrative & Management Specialist. Assistant Life raft Inspector. Assistant Container Inspector. Assistant Pollution Investigator. Assistant Pollution Response Specialist. Assistant Port State Control Examiner. Auxiliary Assistant Contingency Preparedness Specialist. Auxiliary Assistant Barge Inspector (AUX- BI). Auxiliary Assistant Facility Inspector (AUX - EU). Auxiliary Assistant Foreign Freight Vessel Examiner (AUX-FFVE). Auxiliary Assistant Foreign Passenger Vessel Examiner (AUX-FPVE). Auxiliary Assistant Hull Inspector (AUX-HI). Auxiliary Assistant K- Boat Inspector (AUX- KI) Auxiliary Assistant Machinery Inspector (AUX- MI). Auxiliary Assistant Machinery Inspector (Steam) (AUX-MS). Auxiliary Assistant Marine Casualty Investigator (AUX-FO). Auxiliary Assistant Maritime Enforcement Investigator (AUX-EO). Auxiliary Assistant T-Boat Inspector (AUX TI). Auxiliary Assistant Waterways Management Representative (AUX-WM). Auxiliary Port State Control Dispatcher. Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiner. Uninspected Passenger Vessel Examiner. Uninspected Towing Vessel Examiner. Provide copies of completed forms or other documentation to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistants in the DIRAUX office for scanning into personnel records files.
<i>Patricia McGowan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter in AUXDATA II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor (IT)

U.S. Coast Guard Seventh District – Director Of Auxiliary

DESIGNATION AS DIRECTOR'S ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (DAA)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational Boating Safety Visitor (PV) Vessel Examiner (VE) After entering Certifications, forward the list of members to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistants in the DIRAUX office for printing / mailing of certificates and associated hardware. Provide copies of completed forms or other documentation to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistants in the DIRAUX office for scanning into personnel records files.
Rescue and Survival Systems (RSS) <i>Chris Juall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure D7 Flotillas are assigned PPE managers and designated in AUXDATA II. Provide guidance and training to PPE managers on PPE enrollments and recurring inspections Respond and take for action on any Help Desk tickets regarding RSS PPE. Monitor reports from the PPE dashboard and direct corrective action to PPE managers. Authority to make PPE entries and edits in coordination with PPE managers. Subject matter expert - research answers and recommend policy regarding RSS and PPE.
Telecommunication (TC) <i>Thomas Alvord</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify Auxiliary member qualifications and competencies and make the necessary AUXDATA II entries for radio facilities. This will include both initial Offers for Use and Re-Offers for Use for Auxiliary facilities. Respond and take for action on any Help Desk tickets regarding radio facilities. Manage the certification process and competency entries for Telecommunications officers. Make any necessary minor corrections or return the Offers of Use that do not meet the required standard to the owner of the facility for correction. Subject matter expert - research answers and recommend policy regarding telecommunications and radio facilities.

	<p>reservations using the Coast Guard's designated Travel Management Company (TMC) such as CWT SATO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange travel in the Electronic Travel System (ETS) for Auxiliary travelers. Arrange vouchers in ETS for Auxiliary travelers.
Welcome Packages (WP) <i>Anthony Hooper</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit electronic new member welcome packets. List of new members and welcome packets template will be provided by DIRAUX office on a bi-weekly basis at a minimum. Provide bi-weekly list of welcome packets completed to the Auxiliary Affairs Assistants, in the DIRAUX office.

Reports (RP) <i>Susan Hastings</i> <i>Assistant</i> <i>Kevin Wilcox</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide backup administration support to AUXDATA II issues and the Help Desk in D7. Enter FLC course completions in AUXDATA. Subject matter expert - research answers and recommends policy. Research and process re-certifications / REYR / REWK.
Surface Competencies (SURF-C) <i>John Tyson</i> <i>Assistant</i> <i>Larry Cook</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify Auxiliary surface operations member qualifications and competencies and make the necessary AUXDATA II entries for all surface operations program competencies. Process and forward certificates that award competencies to members meeting established criteria to DIRAUX. Maintain historical files of all letters and certificates issued to Auxiliary surface operations members, to include a monthly summary and detailed reports for check rides, exams, and certifications. Subject matter expert - research answers and recommend policy.
Surface Facilities (SURF) <i>Harry Bruno</i> <i>Ruth Bruno</i> <i>Assistant</i> <i>Larry Cook</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult prior to entry of new offers for use – PWC Process new offers for use PWC after consult Process Offers for Use - Vehicles Deliver decals surface facilities for PWC Deliver decals surface facilities other than PWC Subject matter expert – research answers and recommends policy offers for use / operations
Travel Arranger (AUXTA) <i>Nichole Betterson</i> <i>Martin Goodwin</i> <i>William Ballard</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Augment travel process for routine mission and training travel, including Coast Guard-funded "C" schools. Augment for mission travel and deployments as requested by the Coast Guard Surge Staffing Branch and other similar entities. Assist Auxiliary travelers with making air, hotel, rental car, and other necessary travel



BRIDGE NOTES



COMO Martin Goodwin, D7

District 7 has long stood as a beacon of service, excellence, and unwavering dedication. As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening our mission and expanding our impact. The District 7 2025-2026 Strategic Plan, now available on our website, serves as a dynamic roadmap for the future – one that builds upon our

legacy while embracing new opportunities for innovation, operational excellence, and member engagement.

The strategic plan is more than just a document – it is a bold vision for the future, designed to enhance our service to our members, the Coast Guard, and the communities we serve. It establishes five key strategic priorities that align with the National Commodore's vision while addressing District 7's unique challenges as one of the busiest maritime regions in the country.

Strategic Priorities: A Blueprint for Success

1. Strengthening Recreational Boating Safety

With a growing number of recreational boaters throughout our district, the need for enhanced boating safety has never been more critical. To reduce preventable accidents and fatalities, we are expanding public education programs, increasing safety examinations, and strengthening partnerships with boating organizations. These efforts will ensure that

we continue to lead the charge in promoting safe and responsible boating practices.

2. Investing in Member Growth and Development

Our people are our greatest asset, and their success is the foundation of our mission. To attract, develop, and retain a highly skilled volunteer force, we are refining our recruitment strategies, enhancing training opportunities, and restructuring policies for greater clarity and accessibility. A strong, well-supported membership ensures that District 7 remains a trusted partner to the U.S. Coast Guard and a leader in boating safety.

3. Enhancing Member Engagement

A motivated and engaged membership is the key to our success. We are launching new recognition programs, expanding training workshops, and improving internal communication tools to foster deeper connections. Member satisfaction surveys and engagement initiatives will help us continuously strengthen morale and participation, ensuring every member feels valued and empowered.

4. Advancing Operational Readiness

Whether conducting surface and air operations, supporting environmental protection efforts, or executing critical missions, operational readiness is at the core of our success. This strategic plan outlines enhancements in training, mission support, and organizational capabilities to ensure our members are always prepared to meet challenges with confidence and expertise.

5. Embracing Technology and Innovation

As the maritime landscape evolves, so must we. By prioritizing digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and integrating emerging technologies, we are positioning District 7 for the future. AI-powered communication tools, interactive information plat-

(Continued on page 10)

BRIDGE NOTES-COMO Martin Goodwin (Continued from page 8)

forms, and cutting-edge training resources will revolutionize our operations, ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects of our mission.

Looking Ahead: A Collaborative Future

To drive these initiatives forward, we have established Strategic Advisory Groups – expert teams dedicated to ensuring our priorities remain on track and responsive to the district's evolving needs. Through forward-thinking solutions, risk assessments, and policy development, these groups will play a crucial role in shaping the future of District 7.

Leading with Purpose and Passion

The District 7 2025-2026 Strategic Plan outlines the vision, direction, and resources needed to elevate our impact and reinforce our commitment to service. However, its success depends on every one of you. Your dedication, initiative, and passion are what

make this district exceptional.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the members who contributed their expertise and insights to this plan. Your efforts have helped create a strategy that is both ambitious and achievable. Now, it is up to all of us to embrace this vision, take action, and drive meaningful progress.

We stand at the threshold of an exciting future filled with opportunity and promise. Through, we will continue to achieve great things together.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to District 7.

Semper Paratus,

Martin Goodwin

District Commodore,
Seventh District Coast Guard Auxiliary



STAFF BRIEFINGS



Murray Price, DCOS, D7

Welcome to this issue of our District 7 Breeze publication. I want to thank all our elected and appointed District Staff for agreeing to lead our fellow members. By reading our stories and looking at the pho-

tos of our members in action, you can learn a lot about our activities and opportunities available to you as a member of our Auxiliary community.

Every day, the U.S. Coast Guard looks to its Auxiliary members to help meet its many missions, with a primary focus on Recreational Boating Safety. However, there are many more opportunities to take on active-duty tasks directly. These are growing due to the limited resources and people the USCG has to meet its goals.

I recognize that we learn from the knowledge, skills, and experience each new member brings to our organization. Similarly, it is fun for us to teach and share our hard-won knowledge to meet the variety of missions we have been tasked with. I thank each and every one of you for what you do and for completing the missions and activities you are engaged in.

Where I am going with all of this is an acute understanding that all we do can only happen with people. Each new member expands our ability to reach the boating public and contribute a diverse range of skills and expertise to the Auxiliary. That said, please prioritize recruiting for each of your flotillas. Talk to people at boat shows, friends, and colleagues about how much being a member means to you. Just letting people know we exist and the opportunities we provide for them to serve their country and their neighbors is powerful and has meaningful value.

Volunteers typically join for one of three reasons: to learn new skills, enhance existing ones, or connect with like-minded individuals. Failing to recognize and support their motivations may lead them to leave just as quickly as they arrived.

Reach out to Member Training (MT) and Human Resources (HR) staff. There are many tools available to help guide you in presenting our expectations and responsibilities to prospective members. The HR Passport, visiting the CG Exchange with a candidate to see uniform expectations, and making prospective members feel welcome and a part of every flotilla meeting will go far in making these folks feel valued and a part of your team.

I thank you for your recruiting and retention efforts and for spreading the stories of what we do and why we do it.

Very Respectfully,

Murray Price

District Chief of Staff,
Seventh District Coast Guard Auxiliary

PUBLICATIONS CONTEST



*"Recognizing Excellence in Storytelling
and Information Sharing!"*

DEADLINE MAY 1, 2025

"Everything You Need to Know to Win!"

Contest Rules:

- Must have published at least three newsletters during the contest period.*
- Entries must comply with the USCG Auxiliary Publication Manual.
- Judging panel consists of Public Affairs officers and experienced editors.
- Newsletters must include an editor's name and unit identification.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Content Quality – Informative, engaging, and well-researched.
- Visual Appeal – Effective use of layout, images, and typography.
- Clarity and Readability – Easy to read, structured well.
- Adherence to USCG Guidelines – Proper formatting and official tone.

Additional Notes:

- Winners will be featured in District 7 News and Social Media.
- All publication officers are encouraged to submit their work to the National Public Affairs Contest as well.

"Great stories deserve to be told – Make yours stand out!"



Submit your best three Issues to:

Dorothy Riley, DSO-PB at dso.pb.d7@gmail.com

*Contest period: May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025

District 7 S-Train

By Dorothy Riley

Sectors Miami, St. Petersburg, Key West, and Charleston conducted Sector Training (S-Train) January through March at Air Stations, Sectors, and hotels. Hundreds of District 7 Auxiliary members participated. Sector Jacksonville conducted S-Train on March 29, 2025.

S-Train has several objectives, including introducing members to various ways in which the Auxiliary can support the Coast Guard. Due to the current workforce shortage within the Coast Guard, numerous roles and skills have opened up for Auxiliary members. These areas include Emergency Management, Aids to Navigation Verification, Telecommunications, Culinary Assistance, and commercial vessel activities. Workshops such as Operations and Boat Crew certification, Telecommunications, Team Coordination Training, and Auxiliary Leadership were designed to enhance members' skills and broaden their knowledge.

The events followed Commodore Goodwin's guiding principles: Enthusiasm, Engagement, and Excellence. Photos from S-Train appear on subsequent pages.

 Ω 

Sector Charleston



Sector St. Petersburg



Sector Miami



Sector Key West



District 7 S-Train



S-Train Sector St.
Petersburg
Feb. 15, 2025

Commodore Martin Goodwin, District 7 Commodore, took this 'selfie' with the S-Train attendees in the background at Air Station Clearwater. USCG Auxiliary photograph by COMO Martin Goodwin



S-Train Sector Charleston
Jan. 18, 2025

Dressed for the Change of Watch dinner after S-Train are from left: Charles Hayes, Auxiliary Sector Coordinator, Sector Charleston; Captain DelRossa, Commander, Sector Charleston; John Swink, Division 12 Commander; and Ensign Kyle Hector. USCG photograph

District 7 S-Train



S-Train Sector Miami
Mar. 13, 2025

Commodore Martin Goodwin, District 7 Commodore took this 'selfie' with the S-Train attendees at Sector Miami. USCG Auxiliary photograph by COMO Martin Goodwin.



S-Train Sector Key West
Mar. 1, 2025

LCDR Benjamin Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary, District 7 addresses the Auxiliary members attending S-Train at Sector Key West. USCG Auxiliary photograph.



More District 7 S-Train

S-Train is a conference and training event tailored for members at all Coast Guard Auxiliary experience levels. These events covered various missions and disciplines, offering invaluable opportunities to learn, connect, and grow as Auxiliarists. The introductory presentations covered everything from Human Resources, Aids to Navigation, Telecommunications Operator, to Boat Crew certifications where permissible.Ω



Sector
St. Petersburg: Tony Hooper
presents an introduction to Aids to
Navigation. USCG Auxiliary photo
by Lisa Repetto.



Sector
St. Petersburg: Karen Miller
presents 'Uniform Practices and Trivia.'
USCG Auxiliary photo by Lisa
Repetto.



Sector Miami:
Sector Miami Coast Guardians intro-
duce Auxiliary members to Boat Crew Operations.
USCG Auxiliary photo by Gustavo Montano.



Sector Miami:
Scott Szczepaniak, Recreational
Boating Safety (RBS) specialist brought plenty of
RBS materials for the members to hand out. USCG
Auxiliary photo by R. Michael Stringer.



Sector Key West
offered both classroom and on-the-water intro-
ductory classes. LCDR Benjamin Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary,
D7 made presentations at several S-Train locations including
Key West. USCG Auxiliary photo.



Sector
Miami: If S-Train was not fun, then
these participants would not be smiling! USCG
Auxiliary photo by R. Michael Stringer.

VIEW FROM THE DECKPLATE

DIVISION 17

Flotilla 17-9, North Brevard, Members Participate in Titusville Touch-a-Truck.

Submitted by Ramiro Antorcha

Touch-a-Truck is a free, family-friendly event where kids and the young can get up close and personal with an incredible array of vehicles from agriculture, construction, commercial logistics, defense, emergency services, and more. Explore, climb aboard, honk the horn, and snap photos with these awe-inspiring machines. Meet the operators, ask questions, and experience the excitement of hands-on learning in a fun and interactive environment!

Flotilla 17-9, North Brevard members took advantage of this event held on Mar. 1 at Sand Point Park by setting up a Public Affairs table. In keeping with the interests of the younger audience, members created activities like throwing a life ring and were stocked with water and marine safety materials to share with children. Participants included Ramiro Antorcha, Nicholas Faraco, James Hutson, and Evelyn Spencer. Ω



As a reward for a successful rescue, at the Mar. 1 "Touch-a-Truck" event, Evelyn Spencer (at right) gives a child a backpack with pollution awareness coloring books and other items. At the table, James Hutson and Nicholas Faraco talk to visitors about water safety.

Evelyn Spencer helps a young 'rescuer' as members James Hutson and Nicholas Faraco look on.

"I'll rescue you, Mommy!" A child throws a life ring to her mother, posing as the drowning victim. USCG Auxiliary photos by Ramiro Antorcha.



VIEW FROM THE DECKPLATE

Flare Exercise Training at Ft. Pierce

DIVISION 5

By John Froehler

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members and Sea Scouts (AUXSCOUTS) participated in the flare deployment training. A VHF Radio Guard was established with Sector Miami, providing a weather report and signaling the commencement and conclusion of the drill.

Karl Hontz, Flotilla Commander, conducted the flare exercise drill at Flotilla 58, Fort Pierce, Florida. This drill is essential training for U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members. It focuses on enhancing skills in flare recognition, flare deployment, and effective search and rescue procedures in maritime emergencies. During the exercise, Auxiliary members simulate real-world distress scenarios, testing their ability to locate and respond to flare signals. This drill provides valuable hands-on experience in flare operations, ensuring that responders are prepared to save lives during emergencies. Ω

Top right: After notifying Sector Miami of the training, Karl Hontz, Commander, Flotilla 58, Fort Pierce, lights a flare during the exercise. Notice to the Coast Guard is crucial to avoid confusing a training exercise with a real-life emergency requiring their response.



Right: Before the hands-on exercise, members of Sea Scouts receive classroom instruction in flare recognition and effective search and rescue procedures in maritime emergencies. USCG Auxiliary photos by John Froehler.



A Heartwarming Flight for Kendall: A Story of Hope and Triumph

By Brian Hand, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 10-11, Hilton Head/Bluffton

As the commander of Flotilla 10-11, Hilton Head and Bluffton, South Carolina, I have witnessed countless acts of bravery, dedication, and community spirit. One memorable experience was a flight I shared with a courageous young girl named Kendall.

The Spark of Hope

Kendall's story is one that touches the deepest corners of the heart. At an early age, she faced a battle that no child should ever have to endure – a courageous fight against cancer that spanned two long years. Throughout this challenging period, Kendall's spirit remained unbroken, a testament to her incredible strength and resilience.

During this challenging time, I had the fortune of promising Kendall a flight in my Piper Lance, a small but remarkable aircraft that has seen many adventures. As both a pilot and the flotilla commander, I wanted to offer Kendall a brief escape from her struggles and a reminder of life's beauty and possibilities.

A Special Connection

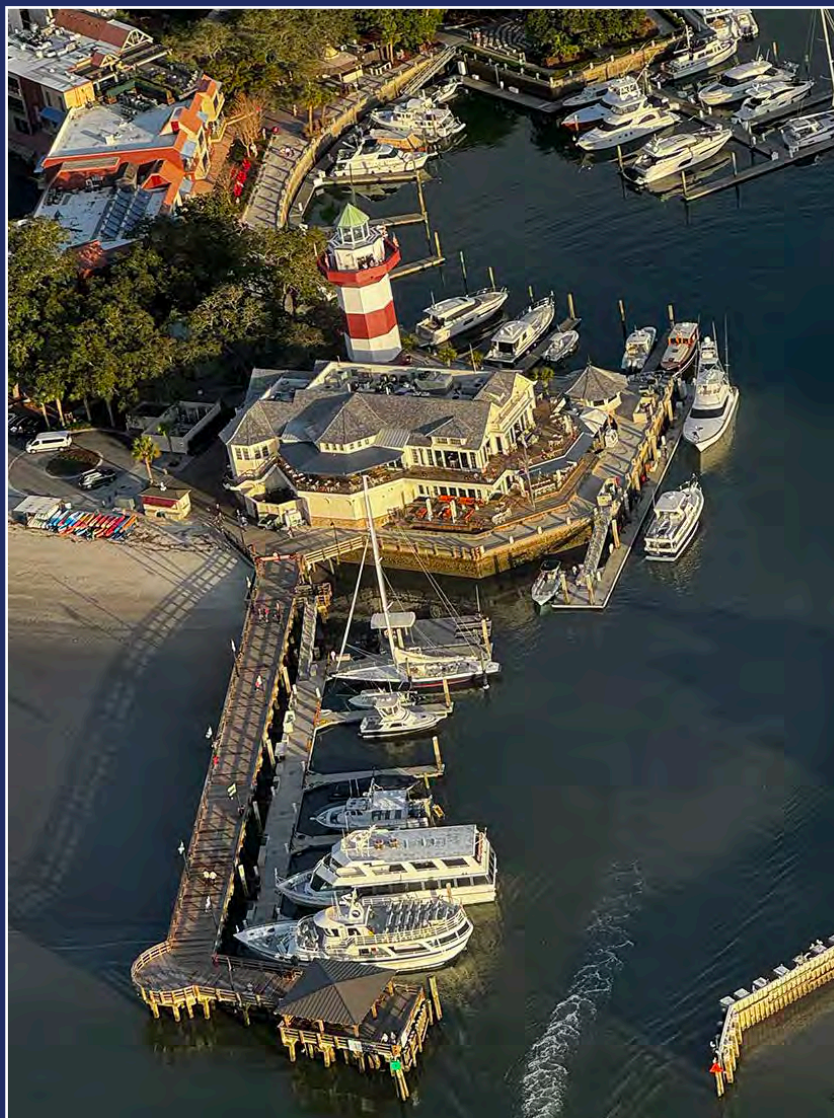
Kendall is not just any child; she is the beloved grandniece of my dear friend and colleague, Nadia Wagner. Nadia oversees the Coast Guard Museum and lighthouse on Hilton Head Island – a place that stands as the pride and joy of Flotilla 10-11. The museum, with its rich history and captivating displays, symbolizes the dedication and service of the Coast Guard, values that we hold dear.

Throughout Kendall's battle, Nadia remained a pillar of strength and support, providing unwavering love and care. Her connection to Kendall brought our flotilla closer together, as we collectively

hoped and prayed for Kendall's recovery.

The Moment of Joy

As the holiday season approached, a wave of joy and relief washed over us with the news that Kendall
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dall had received a cancer-free diagnosis. It was a moment of triumph, a victory against a formidable adversary. Nadia's call sharing this wonderful news was a gift that needed a special celebration.

With great excitement, I found a small garrison cap in our locker and adorned it with pilot wings – a symbol of the journey that Kendall was about to embark upon. The weather was favorable, and I hurriedly prepared the Piper Lance for the long-awaited victory flight.

The Flight of Dreams

On the day of the flight, the air was filled with anticipation and joy. Kendall, accompanied by her father, arrived with a radiant smile that reflected her newfound health and vitality. As we boarded the Piper Lance, I could not help but feel a deep sense of gratitude and privilege to be part of this special moment.

The flight was a magical experience that allowed Kendall to soar above the world and leave her worries behind. As we navigated the skies, her laughter and excitement were contagious, a reminder of life's simple joys.

Kendall's flight cap, adorned with pilot wings, and her festive Rudolph socks were a sight to behold. They symbolized her triumph and her journey – a journey that culminated in this moment of pure, unadulterated joy.

A Community United

As we flew over Hilton Head Island, we were greeted by a heartwarming sight—Nadia and her friend enthusiastically waving from the top of the lighthouse. It was a moment of connection and celebration, a testament to the strength of our community and the bonds that unite us.

Standing tall and proud, the Coast Guard Museum and lighthouse served as a backdrop to this beautiful moment. They reminded us of the dedication and service of Flotilla 10-11, Hilton Head/Bluffton, and the unwavering support we provide to one another.

Reflections and Gratitude

As we landed safely and concluded our flight, I couldn't help but reflect on the journey that had brought us to this moment. Kendall's story is one of hope, resilience, and triumph—a story that inspires



Brian Hand poses with Nadia.
(Photos by Brian Hand)

us all.

I appreciate the opportunity to share this experience with Kendall and her family. It is moments like these that reaffirm the importance of our work and the impact we can have on the lives of others. Kendall's flight was more than just a journey through the skies; it was a celebration of life, hope, and the incredible strength of the human spirit.

Looking to the Future

As we look to the future, I am filled with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to serving our community. Kendall's story reminds me that even in the face of adversity, there is always hope and the possibility of a brighter tomorrow.

Flotilla 10-11 will continue to stand as a beacon of support and service, dedicated to making a difference in the lives of those we serve. We are united by our shared values and the bonds that connect us, and together, we will continue to soar to new heights.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Nadia, Kendall, and her family for allowing us to be part of this incredible journey. It is an experience I will cherish forever and continue to inspire and uplift us all. Ω

Change of Watch In District 7:

A new year brings new leadership.

By Dorothy Riley



DIVISION 11: CAPT Michael Kahle, Commander, Sector St. Petersburg, swears in Thomas Maloof, Division Vice Commander, and Matthew Copeland, Division Commander 11, at the change of watch ceremony held Dec. 7, 2024, at the Red Tail Lounge, Clearwater Air Station. USCG Auxiliary photo by Karen Miller



The presentation of certificates and awards is a central element of change of watch ceremonies. USCG Auxiliary photo by Lisa Repetto

Background, right: The food spread at the Division 11 change of watch ceremony held Dec. 7, 2024, at the Red Tail Lounge, Clearwater Air Station. USCG Auxiliary photo by Karen Miller

A "Change of Watch" ceremony is a formal event that marks the transfer of leadership from outgoing to incoming officers. It is conducted to formally install newly elected officers and maintain continuity of leadership within the Auxiliary. The ceremony recognizes the service and accomplishments of outgoing officers and is a time for members to gather.

The ceremony is modeled after the Coast Guard's formal "Change of Command" ceremony, reflecting the Auxiliary's close ties to the active-duty Coast Guard. The tradition emphasizes the importance of leadership and the smooth transition of authority and responsibility.

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary units hold them to ensure a clear and structured transition of leadership, which is crucial for the effective operation of the Auxiliary, and to provide a platform for recognizing the contributions of those who have served in leadership roles.

Change of watch ceremonies foster a sense of tradition and camaraderie among Auxiliary members and provide an official setting for the new officers to assume leadership roles. These ceremonies often include formal proceedings, such as the reading of orders and the transfer of authority, and may involve the presentation of awards and recognition for service. They are also often a social event with opportunities for members to connect and celebrate.

Change of watch ceremonies are most frequently held at the division and district levels within the Auxiliary. However, some flotillas also choose to hold them. In essence, the change of watch is a vital ritual that reinforces the Coast Guard Auxiliary's organizational structure and values.

Our units hold these ceremonies in different venues and with unique traditions. Ω





Above: **DIVISION 5** held its annual change of watch on January 19, 2025, at Monarch Country Club, Palm City, Florida. Friends and spouses are invited guests.

Top right: The division sets a 'Missing Man Table' before the ceremony meant to remind attendees of those fallen, missing, or imprisoned U.S. Military Service Members. USCG Auxiliary photographs by R. Michael Stringer



Left: **DIVISION 16** held its change of watch on Jan. 15, 2025, outdoors under a tent in St. Johns, US Virgin Islands. and COMO Martin Goodwin and Doug Armstrong present the Auxiliary Achievement Medal to Karl Peterson, Division Commander. It was, by the way, the only change of watch where the guests of honor arrived via a USCG helicopter. USCG Auxiliary photograph



DIVISION 6: LCDR Benjamin Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary, administers the oath of office to the staff officers of Division 6. Right: LCDR Tuxhorn presents an award to Jeffrey Barnes, District Captain-East. USCG Auxiliary photos by Gustavo Montano

Auxiliarist Efrain Sora Brings His Skills to the Coast Guard Reserve

By R. Michael Stringer

Efrain Sora shares his personal and professional journey, highlighting his 21 years of service in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and his decision to apply for the Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI) program at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, ultimately leading him to join the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve. He reflects on his experiences in emergency management and disaster response, his path to the Coast Guard Reserve, and the vital roles of teamwork and leadership. Additionally, Efrain shares his professional goals and guides Auxiliarists on participating in Coast Guard mission-related exercises. He also supports those interested in the application process for reserve or active-duty roles.

Efrain's decision to join the Coast Guard Auxiliary was inspired by a high school friend's father, a dedicated Auxiliarist and experienced boat owner. His introduction to the Auxiliary came through the Boating Skills and Seamanship course, a rigorous seven-week program offered at the time, meeting twice a week for two-hour sessions. Through this course, he built strong connections with the instructors, who encouraged him to get involved and make a meaningful impact. Drawn to the Auxiliary's commitment to community service, Efrain also found motivation in his family's legacy of missionary work and their deep dedication to serving others.

Efrain joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 2003, quickly earning his boat crew qualification and then becoming a qualified coxswain the following year. Auxiliarist Sora says, "If you join the Auxiliary as a motivated and capable young person, you'll quickly find yourself entrusted with meaningful and impactful responsibilities." He dedicated his first 13 years of service to Operations, frequently conducting Marine Observation Missions (MOM) that often evolved into rescue operations, including towing disabled vessels back to shore. Over time, the Aux-

iliary and active-duty personnel dynamic became increasingly strained as the search and rescue (SAR) landscape shifted. The rise of commercial entities like TowBoatUS and Sea Tow, motivated by financial incentives, led to a decline in rescue and towing missions assigned to the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Auxiliarist Sora put his name in for a program called AMROS (Auxiliary Mass Rescue Operation Specialist). This groundbreaking program was designed to leverage the Auxiliary as a force multi-



Ensign Efrain Sora

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plier for District 7's Mass Rescue Operation (MRO) program. A Mass Rescue Operation refers to any response effort that surpasses the capabilities of law enforcement or local emergency services. Two examples of AMROS would be a passenger plane ditching offshore or a cruise ship running aground. It is a question of how you get 200 people off an aircraft or 5,000 passengers from a cruise ship and bring them safely ashore while maintaining the accountability component.

Retired Master Chief Paul Culver, then the Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist for the U.S. Coast Guard 7th District, and Bill Hanlon, who served as District 7 Staff Officer-Emergency Management and now directs the Q-Directorate for Emergency Management, played key roles in leading the first AMROS program. Efrain Sora's outstanding reputation in operations preceded him because he was one of only 15 Auxiliarists selected from over 80 applicants to join the AMROS program as a plank owner. Serving as exercise planners, their specialization focused on search and rescue operations, landing site management, communications, and family reception center coordinators, with a primary emphasis on executing the search and rescue component. This training and expertise enabled the AMROS team to deploy to Jamaica under orders to support the Jamaica Defense Force (JDF) and the Jamaica Department of Emergency Management (JDEM). Their mission was to assist in developing an emergency plan or to evaluate and test existing plans through various exercises.

Over four consecutive years, the AMROS team conducted training missions in Jamaica, focusing on the Incident Command System (ICS) structures.

The team organized and facilitated tabletop exercises at various ports, bringing together key stakeholders aboard a cruise ship. On one side of the table sat the ship's captain and bridge staff, while representatives from the Jamaican Department of Emergency Management and the Jamaican Defense Force sat on the other. These sessions were designed to facilitate dialogue, ensuring a shared understanding of response protocols both onboard and ashore. This process ultimately leads to full-scale exercise.



"The initial full-scale exercise out of Freeport was BLACK SWAN, a Royal Caribbean cruise ship out-of-revenue with 400 federal employees aboard acting as survivors of a cruise ship disaster. This was a first-of-its-kind exercise for the Auxiliary doing something like this on such a large scale." The AMROS Team went through the process of initial notification of an emergency on the ship. Efrain participated as one of the exercise

evaluators for the search and rescue portion of the evaluation. He was positioned aboard the USCGC DIAMONDBACK, an 87-foot cutter out of Miami. The survivors were rescued and brought ashore using life rafts, where they were registered at the landing site management area to fulfill the accountability component of the mission.

This exercise led to further deployments throughout the Caribbean. Efrain recognizes the immense value of collaborating with partner agencies to gain a broader perspective on emergency response and to bring



Left: Efrain Sora, his wife Vanessa, and their children pose for a photo upon his graduation from Recruit Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI) school in New London, Conn., July 2024. USCG Auxiliary photograph submitted by Efrain Sora.

(Continued from page 23)

valuable insights back to the Auxiliary. “It has been my honor to work alongside partner agencies, observing a wide range of exercises and improving plans to protect the Critical infrastructure through the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process.”

Reflecting on the experience, he recalls, “Having done all this Emergency Management work, I had direct access to active-duty Coast Guard personnel at the district level. Everyone was incredibly supportive when I told them I was applying, and I received plenty of pointers and advice”. His efforts paid off, and he was accepted into the June 2024 ROCI class (ROCI 1-24) at the Coast Guard Academy.



Efrain Sora volunteers at the Jacksonville District Emergency Management office August 26-31, 2023. Efrain is a valuable member of the Auxiliary Emergency Management Directorate at National and serves as District 7 Staff Officer-Emergency Management. USCG Auxiliary photograph.

Drawing from his experience working alongside active-duty personnel, Efrain prioritized sharing his knowledge with his classmates, many of whom were raw recruits. He also introduced them to key skills from his time in the Auxiliary, including uniform protocols, proper saluting, and how to shine boots. “This class isn’t just about me—it’s about all of us,” he says. “You want to give your all but ensure everyone is progressing together.”

“One of the greatest challenges was dealing with the consequences of others’ mistakes. It quickly became clear that responsibility extends beyond yourself—helping a struggling classmate improve their grades, refining their skills, or even teaching them how to press their uniform properly. As you advance, ensuring your peers progress alongside you is just as important as your success”.

U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI)

Efrain was in the Auxiliary for six years when he first submitted his paperwork for the Coast Guard Reserve, but a torn ACL prevented him from passing the medical examination. As COVID-19 emerged, a hiring freeze took effect, and with the age cap set at 35, he reluctantly accepted that his opportunity had slipped away. That changed during a hurricane exercise (HUREX) when Efrain collaborated with then-LCDR Mosley, USCG, the Emergency Force Readiness (EMFR) Chief at Sector Miami. During a lunch break, Mr. Mosley asked, “Why aren’t you trying to get into the Coast Guard and finally getting paid for this?” Efrain explained that he had aged out. “Well, that’s not true,” Mosley replied. “They just changed the max-age to 41.” Wasting no time, Efrain got to work that very day.

The graduation ceremony occurred in a grand auditorium at the Academy, with families gathering to celebrate the milestone. Efrain’s wife, two children, sisters, brother-in-law, and nephew watched proudly in the audience. On the podium, his father, a retired Air Force Staff Sergeant, presented him with his diploma and certificate. “I even got to give my father one of our class challenge coins,” Efrain recalls.

As part of his current reserve officer duties, Efrain is working toward qualifying as a pollution responder while also pursuing his Planning Section Chief and Operations Section Chief qualifications—key milestones on becoming an Incident Commander. He intends to bring this expertise back to the Auxiliary. Ω



April Marks National Volunteer Month

District 7 Members,

April marks National Volunteer Month, and there is no better time to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary contributions you make as members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

District 7 thrives because of your unmatched spirit of volunteerism. You generously give your time, talents, and heart to support the Coast Guard and serve your communities. From conducting vessel safety checks, educating the public, supporting active-duty operations, and standing the watch at Stations and Sectors, your dedication is evident in every mission you undertake. You serve not for recognition, but out of a shared commitment to public safety, patriotism, and the greater good. Your impact is meaningful, lasting, and deeply appreciated.

As District 7 Commodore, I am inspired daily by the strength, professionalism, and pride you bring to every assignment. Your volunteerism makes a real and measurable difference throughout our dynamic region. This month, and every month, I thank you for your service. You exemplify the Coast Guard's core values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty, as well as our District ethos of Enthusiasm, Engagement, and Excellence. Our success is built on your commitment.

Stay safe. Stay engaged. Stay Semper Paratus.

Very Respectfully,

Martin S. Goodwin

District Commodore
Seventh District Coast Guard Auxiliary

Enthusiasm - Engagement - Excellence

District 7 Auxiliarist of the Year.

District 7 Members,

With great pride and sincere appreciation, we announce that Christopher Juall of Flotilla 84, Sarasota, has been selected as the District 7 Auxiliarist of the Year for 2024! This recognition is a testament to his unwavering dedication, exceptional leadership, and enduring commitment to District 7 and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Chris exemplifies the very best of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and his contributions have had an extraordinary impact across all levels of the organization. Since joining the Auxiliary in 1999, Chris has continuously set the standard for excellence. Over his 25+ years of service, his initiatives have significantly advanced our mission. Highlights of his contributions include:

National Impact:

Spearheading the update of the 2025 Surface Operations Workshop and creating a fast-track certification program for licensed captains.

Leading an initiative to assess real-world expenses for Auxiliary operational facility owners, ensuring accurate SAMA tracking.

District-Level Leadership:

Implementing a PPE management initiative that now serves as a model nationwide.

Developing a personalized email reminder system to improve member retention by reducing REYR status.

Producing the "How to Make Your Surface Program Thrive" instructional video, significantly enhancing operational readiness.

Sector Support and Emergency Response:

Directing operations during Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton to ensure timely deployment of Auxiliary assets.

Serving as the Surface Operations and Communications Branch Chief during critical events like the



Chris Juall
District 7 Auxiliarist of the Year

Gasparilla Pirate Festival.

Flotilla and Division Leadership:

Revitalizing his unit as Flotilla Commander with modern training, facility enhancements, and innovative recruitment strategies, including securing a \$30,000 grant for future programs.

Mentoring new boat crew members and boosting operational capabilities by certifying new Coxswains and crew.

In 2024 alone, Chris logged over 1,086 volunteer hours and 260 underway hours,

served in multiple leadership roles including DSO-OP, Flotilla Commander, and ASC Sector St. Petersburg, and helped certify 20 new Coxswains and crew. His initiatives have raised the bar for operational excellence and member support across District 7 and beyond.

We also extend our heartfelt congratulations and sincere thanks to our other outstanding nominees, whose contributions are equally commendable and whose service has greatly enriched our flotillas and divisions:

Henry Seiden, Flotilla 14-7, St. Augustine

Gary Gray, Flotilla 14-1, Amelia Island

Tracy Antorcha, Flotilla 17-9, North Brevard

Each member has demonstrated remarkable commitment to the Auxiliary's mission, and we thank them for their outstanding contributions to our community, members, and district.

To all our nominees, thank you for your service, leadership, and passion. And to Chris, congratulations on this well-earned honor. You represent the very best of who we are.

Semper Paratus,

Martin S. Goodwin

District Commodore
Seventh District Coast Guard Auxiliary



Commodore Martin S. Goodwin
District Commodore
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
Seventh District

District 7 Members,

I am thrilled to announce that Flotilla 17-6, Central Brevard, has been selected as the District 7 Flotilla of the Year and submitted as a candidate for the National Flotilla of the Year award.

Flotilla 17-6 has set the standard for excellence with its top-tier training, impactful community engagement, and outstanding operational support. Their commitment to boating safety, environmental stewardship, and mission readiness has had a profound influence on maritime safety and security in their area of responsibility.

Their spirit of service, dedication to supporting fellow flotillas and divisions, and outstanding contributions to Coast Guard missions make them truly deserving recipients of this prestigious award.

Please join me in congratulating Flotilla 17-6 for their incredible work and well-earned recognition. Let's celebrate their success and continue striving for excellence across District 7.

Very Respectfully,

Martin S. Goodwin

District Commodore
Seventh District Coast Guard Auxiliary

Enthusiasm - Engagement - Excellence

Deployment Aboard the USCGC Paul Clark

By Sandy Lee Goldberg



The USCGC Paul Clark in berth. USCG Auxiliary photo by Sandy Lee Goldberg.

"Captain's Log"

Day 1: A Rough Start

Sandy Lee arrived the night before to set up her bunk and be ready to cook first thing in the morning. She spent the night power walking around the base and catching up with some Auxiliarist friends. Unfortunately, the first day was a complete wash as Sandy struggled with seasickness and couldn't perform up to her usual standards. Despite feeling ashamed, the crew was supportive and assured her that it happens to everyone. They picked up seven migrants from another cutter and fed them rice and beans. Sandy couldn't eat all day and felt pretty useless, only managing to clean a couple of rounds of dishes before falling asleep in her clothes.



Sandy Lee Goldberg shows her berth, her 'home' aboard the USCGC Paul Clark during her deployment in early December 2024. USCG Auxiliary photo by Sandy Lee Goldberg.

Day 2: A Fresh Start

The boat rocked hard throughout the night, which actually helped Sandy sleep better. She woke up refreshed and ready to go, heading down to the galley at 6:30 am to prepare breakfast by herself. She made chocolate chip pancakes with bacon, sausage, hash browns, and eggs to order. Sandy even made her station famous eggs over medium with grilled cheese on top, raspberry muffins with leftover pancake mix, and sugar cookies from scratch. The crew was happy, and Sandy was even happier. They went to Nassau to drop off the migrants and watched a small boat launch from the cutter. Sandy made lunch with CS2 Alexa, an adorable person who loves her job and is a prize baker. After lunch, Sandy held a yoga class on deck and

napped. The waters were much calmer, and she felt more on task as they headed towards Key West. Sandy made dinner of spaghetti and meatballs, and spent the evening on deck with CS2, looking at the stars and sharing stories.

Day 3: Settling In

Sandy slept amazingly well and got to work in the galley 6:30 am, feeling confident. She made bacon, sausage, hash browns, and waffles from

scratch. CS2 came in later and was immediately grabbed to help with new migrants. They tried to figure out what to feed the baby and finally settled on rice and beans. For lunch, Sandy made Buffalo

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chicken wraps, curly fries, string beans, and salad, along with brownies with cookie dough topping and pineapple mango smoothies. After lunch, she took a nap on deck and made jewelry in the cool mess area. For dinner, they had CS2 Alexa's late grandmother's chicken stew over rice with beans, plantains, and broccoli. Sandy enjoyed sharing stories with Alexa and getting to know her better.

Day 4: A Good Day at Sea

Sandy started another early morning by running up to the bridge to watch the sunrise. She made cinnamon rolls, bacon, sausage, hash browns, and eggs to order for breakfast. Since the crew jokingly complained about getting fat, Sandy made various smoothies throughout the day instead of baking. She tried to stay out of the way during drills and watched the crew work. After cleaning up the galley, they dumped the perishable food overboard, attracting a swarm of dolphins. For dinner, they had steaks, which made the crew very happy. Sandy hung out on the bridge after dinner to learn about the radar panel and aids to navigation.

Day 5: Mixed Emotions

Sandy slept well on the rocking boat and woke up early, knowing it was her last full day. She made a quick breakfast for the crew and cleaned up the galley. After lunch, they

had drills all day, and Sandy made smoothies for everyone. For dinner, they had stuffed shells and Italian marinated chicken. After dinner, Sandy took a nice shower and hung out on the bridge, chatting with the Chief.

Day 6: The Final Day

Sandy couldn't believe it was her last day underway. She packed up her bedding and laundry early and made breakfast burritos for the crew. After watching the sunrise, she attended the morning brief on the bridge and thanked everyone for the experience. They arrived at the Key West base, and Sandy went with CS2 Alexa to Publix to stock up for the next trip. Later, they met up with a few others and had a beverage or two on Duval Street before Sandy headed home.

Conclusion

Sandy Lee had an amazing experience during her deployment, despite the rough start. She enjoyed getting to know the crew, learning new skills, and sharing stories. Sandy looks forward to doing it again and appreciates the support and camaraderie of her fellow crew members. Ω

(Note: Original article edited for clarity.)

The ship's galley decked out for Christmas.

Sandy Lee in the cooking area. USCG Auxiliary photos by Sandy Lee Goldberg.



Coast Guard Auxiliary Support for the 2025 Gasparilla Pirate Invasion: *An Emergency Management Perspective*

By Chris Juall, ASC/SSP, and Dave Rockwell ADSO-EM/SSP



The Pirate Ship Jose Gasparilla II ready to dock at Tampa Convention Center (U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Jonathan Laronge.)

Chris Juall, ASC/SSP, and Dave Rockwell
ADSO-EM/SSP

The Gasparilla Pirate Fest

Every year, on the last two Saturdays in January, the City of Tampa hosts the Gasparilla Pirate Fest, presented by Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla, which includes a Children's Parade held on the next to the last Saturday, the Pirate Invasion and the Parade of Pirates both on the previous Saturday. This year, the Children's Parade was held on Jan. 18, and the Invasion and Parade on Jan. 25.

The Pirate Fest is based on the local legend of Jose Gaspar and his crew of pirates who allegedly ranged from the West Coast of Florida in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The story for the

Pirate Fest is that Jose Gaspar (also known as Gasparilla) and Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla, his pirate band, come to the City of Tampa and ask the mayor to surrender the key to the city and provide a bounty as ransom. The mayor always refuses and sends the band of scallywags on their way. As they depart, they warn that Tampa will be invaded in the next few days. The pirates' fleet assembles opposite Ballast Point in Tampa Bay and proceeds up Hillsborough Bay and the Seddon Channel to the Tampa Conventions Center, guns blazing. The mayor, who has set up command at the Convention Center, awaits the inevitable arrival of the pirates. When the pirate fleet arrives, the mayor asks for a parley and offers the key to the

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city. The mayor asks that the city be spared violence and bloodshed. She asks the pirates to stage a parade and share their bounty (mostly brightly colored beads) with the citizens of Tampa. Every year, the pirates agree.

The Pirate Invasion is one of the largest moving water parades in the country. The Coast Guard, the City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have formed a Unified Command to ensure the safety and security of the parade fleet and the vast number of spectator recreational boaters (the so-called "mosquito fleet"). Over 20 agencies participated, with more than 60 marine vessels providing escorts for the 17 parade vessels carrying the krewes and dignitaries. We estimate about one thousand boats in the mosquito fleet this year.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Support to the Gasparilla Pirate Invasion

Over the past 25 years, the Coast Guard Auxiliary has provided safety zone patrol vessels to monitor "No Wake" zones, provide manatee watches, and mark off restricted areas of the Port of Tampa. Members of our Auxiliary team have gained experience with the Incident Command System (ICS) through participation in Gasparilla. The Coast Guard has come to rely on the Auxiliary to provide critical communications support for the event. Additionally, Auxiliary members have achieved the qualifications to become integral members of the Incident Management Team (IMT). This year, Chris Juall, the Auxiliary Sector Coordinator-Sector St. Petersburg (ASC-SSP), served as Auxiliary Branch Director within the Operations Section of the general staff. Auxiliarist Juall directed two Groups, the Boating Safety Group and the Command, Communications, and Control (COMMS) Group.

The COMMS Group was divided into two divisions. The first division, designated AUXCOM, operated the VHF radio communications from the Incident Command Post (ICP). The COMMS BASIN division provided communications support to the Basin Group Leader. Additionally, Dave Rockwell, Sector St Petersburg's Assistant District Staff Officer for Emergency Management (ADSO-EM/SSP) was asked to serve as Deputy Incident Commander for the Coast Guard within the Unified Command. The four Unified Commanders asked Auxiliarist Rockwell to be the on-scene commander at the ICP while they joined their respective units on the water.

The Boat Safety Group deployed four vessels to assist in enforcing the safety zone, monitoring manatees, and restricting access to critical locations in the port.

Members of the Unified Command rated this year's Gasparilla Pirate Invasions highly successful. FWC officers issued 46 boating warnings and 13 citations and arrested five impaired captains from their vessels. These numbers are significantly lower than in many previous years. There is clear evidence that the well-integrated response team, following ICS principles, makes this event safer and more enjoyable for all participants. Our Auxiliary members are proud to contribute fundamentally to making this a safe and exciting event. Ω



Auxiliarist William Krulac operating at the Auxiliary Communications center on Seddon Channel. (USCG Auxiliary photo by Howard Bush)

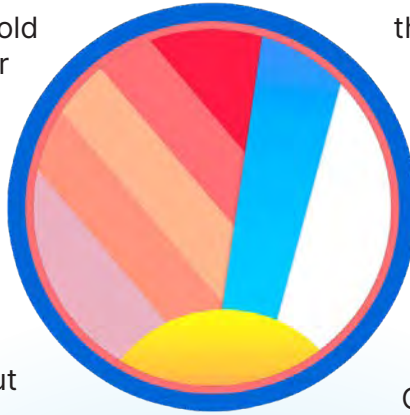
The Lucy Fernandez Foundation: Honoring a Legacy Through Boating Safety

By Gustavo Montano

In September 2022, 17-year-old Lucy Fernandez tragically lost her life in a boating accident near Boca Chita Key, Florida. She was among 14 passengers celebrating a friend's birthday when their vessel struck a channel marker, causing the boat to capsize. The crash also injured several others, highlighting the dangers of boating without proper safety measures.

In the wake of this tragedy, Lucy's parents, Melissa and Andy Fernandez, established the Lucy Fernandez Foundation to honor their daughter's memory and promote 'boating safety education. Their "Learn for Lu" campaign advocates increased safety training and legislative changes, addressing gaps in Florida's current boating regulations. One of their key goals is to ensure that all boat operators receive proper training, regardless of their birth year.

As part of its commitment to boating safety, the 'Lucy Fernandez Foundation' has partnered with Flotilla 69, Opa-locka, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, sponsoring its Public Education Program. With additional support from the Pinecrest Police Department,



this sponsorship covers the costs of teaching boating safety classes to the community. In 2024, George Zima, Staff Officer-Public Education, led multiple courses under this program, successfully certifying 33 students free of charge.

In 2025, Flotilla 69 will expand the program to northern Miami-Dade County to offer these safety courses to a broader audience. With the continued sponsorship of the foundation, residents in North Miami and surrounding areas will now have access to these life-saving classes at no cost.

Through this collaboration, the Lucy Fernandez Foundation and Flotilla 69, Opa-locka are working together to make boating safer for everyone and ensure that Lucy's legacy has a lasting impact on the community. Ω



Photo: George Zima, Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Education, Flotilla 69, Opa-locka poses with graduates of the boating safety course funded by the Lucy Fernandez Foundation. USCG Auxiliary photo



Donations are down,
requests are up

THE POWER OF US IS RISING TO THE CHALLENGE



When Coast Guard members need help, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) is always there. We're 100% funded by donations, and allotments are at an all-time low — even as requests for support keep rising.

Your allotment is more vital than ever.

DONATE TODAY



Scan here to
donate or visit
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Countdown to

NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK May 17-23, 2025



- Are you ready? Is your to-do list finished?
- What are your plans? What events have you scheduled? Have you reserved space where needed?
- Have you requested National Safe Boating Week proclamations from local officials?
- Find ideas and materials at <https://safeboatingcampaign.com/>
- Contact Scott Szczepaniak, Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) District 7 for more National Safe Boating Week materials.
- Participate in Wear Your Life Jacket at Work Day on Friday, May 16, 2025. Share on social media with the hashtag #wearyourlifejacketatwork-day. Be sure to tag @BoatingCampaign on Facebook and Instagram too!

