



# REPORT TO THE COMMANDANT

## Items of interest reported by District Commodores

July, 2005

### District 1 North

1. Auxiliarist Charles Chaples, an Auxiliary Coxswain, was out fishing with his two sons when they heard and responded to a MAYDAY call. A vessel with five persons onboard was being towed by another vessel attempting to traverse a “rip” when it capsized and was released by the towing vessel. All five persons were in six- to eight-foot seas with water temperature not much above 50 degrees. Auxiliarist Chaples made an approach with his vessel *Mary & Phyllis*. With the assistance of his sons he was able to pull three of the five survivors into his vessel with the aid of a life ring. One of the five was clinging to the capsized vessel and would not let go. Auxiliarist Chaples maneuvered his bow up to the capsized vessel and his sons got the fourth survivor on board. The fifth person was pulled on to another vessel but later died. All four of the rescued persons were transported to Station Memensha where there were waiting ambulances.

2. Two Auxiliary facilities and crews participated in special training day involving local RI police departments, Rhode Island (RI) State Police and seven members of CG Port Security Unit 301 from Cape Cod, MA. The two auxiliary OPFACS were used to sharpen law enforcement teams’ assault and search tactics at the dock and to chase and board while underway. The Auxiliary boat crews say they were stormed, boarded, searched, questioned, restrained, briefed and debriefed time after time. This exercise was under the supervision of two professional instructors.

3. Scenario: Bar Harbor Maine. *THIS A DRILL, THIS IS A DRILL*: A T/V (Tank Vessel) is in trouble, after a collision in the Gulf of Maine-US side of the Hague Line- taking on water and spilling gas or diesel into number three starboard wing tank. With foul weather nearing from the south, the captain has requested a place of refuge to attempt repairs and possible lighter cargo.

With this scenario the CANUSLANT joint response Team (JRT) launched into a four day comprehensive drill. The JRT included 150 stakeholders including various Canadian and US federal, state, local and private organizations.

Team Coast Guard was an integral player and consisted of personnel from D1, MSO Portland, Group Southwest Harbor and five Auxiliarists. The Auxiliarists served as registrars, equipment porters, meeting hall set up and breakdown, furniture arrangers and runners. One Auxiliarist served as legal break-out member and one served as secretary. On the last day the Auxiliarists were tasked with managing the on-the-water tour to observe the equipment deployment in Frenchman’s Bay.

## **District 1 South**

1. On the water and shore-side training was provided for the New York Port Authority Police Department by the Auxiliary. Over 18 members and six vessels provided training and platforms for the Port Authority Police in all facets of boating safety, seamanship and communications for this 10-day, all-inclusive course.
2. Auxiliarists around the country participate in Fleet Week operations but in what might be a first; Auxiliarists brought orphaned children by boat to Fleet Week in New York City for a day. During the event, 140 Auxiliarists volunteered over 1,100 hours that included standing watch at security booths, gave guided tours on the vessels in port, operated “Coastie” for the children and stood watch in the Public Affairs booth every day.

## **District 7**

1. Blue Hammer is a new surge operation being supported by AUXAIR units from Air Station Miami and Air Station Clearwater. Air Coordinator, CDR Steve Reynolds from Air Station Miami, works through Sector Key West to improve air coverage in their AOR. Clearwater is supplementing daily flights from Miami, with flights from Clearwater allowing expansion of coverage of different areas and profiles that do not overlap. The information about routes and schedules is still classified. Auxiliary aircraft located a “go-fast” boat previously reported beached on the northwest beach at Anguilla Cay. The first flights were May 21, 2005 from Miami and Clearwater.
2. The *Waterwise* program with the Marco Island YMCA and the Marco Island Fire Department was started by the YMCA to educate third graders in the area with water and boat safety. Through the efforts and funding from Flotilla 95 this year, the program was expanded to include minority children from the Manatee School District doubling the students educated this year to 350 during 10 separate days of approximately three hours each. Flotilla participants were involved in a three-hour training program prior to the start of the program to become familiar with the program objectives and the learning points to be stressed.
3. An environmental Sea Partners training presentation to 625 elementary school children from six schools in the Miami-Dade County area teaches that animals and plants that live in the water can be harmed if they do not guard against pollution.
4. Auxiliarist Erick Nakonechnyj, of Flotilla 11-7, served as a Russian language interpreter for U.S. Immigration and Customs Agency, and the U.S. Coast Guard Group Mayport. This was high-profile alien migrant interdiction operation onboard the Ukrainian sailing vessel *Grace*. Nakonechnyj traveled to Coast Guard Station Brunswick and then was transported to the USCG Cutter *Shrike*. His communication skills and caring demeanor defused a potentially volatile situation. Additionally, Auxiliarist Nakonechnyj helped administer first aid to one of the migrants with chest pains and continued to Savannah, GA, where he helped process the 12 migrants. Nakonechnyj’s support resulted in the arrest, prosecution and sentencing of the vessel’s captain.

5. Members of Division 3 were part of the Security Force that protected the participants of the Organization of American States Conference (OAS) that was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida from 3-8 June 2005.

Sixty eight members and 21 OPFACS responded to the Station's request for help. In addition to the surface facilities, various members were utilized to augment Station personnel at radio watch standing, Station's galley, acting as dock masters and working at the Station's gate. Large OPFACS were anchored north of a restricted navigation zone (RNZ) in the area of Port Everglades and were used by CG Vessels and Law Enforcement Partners as rest platforms, food, drink and facilities were available 24 hours each day.

Choke points were established North and South of the restricted navigation zone and Auxiliary Vessels patrolled these areas 24 hours a day alerting all mariners of the RNZ and advising anyone in a jet propelled craft or a of vessel less than 16 feet in length that they would not be allowed in Port Everglades, vessels greater then 100 feet were advised to contact the Marine Traffic Safety unit on VHF 12 to receive instructions on transiting the port. Eight hundred total support hours were provided by members of Division 3 and 6.

6. Five D7 Instructors were re-certified to instruct, for the Coast Guard, Incident Command System (ICS) courses 100,200,300,400,700 and 800. Certification followed four days of concentrated training by the Coast Guard National Strike Force – Gulf Strike Team at CG Air Station, Mobile, AL. The CG National Strike Force funded the training. Comments by the Gulf Strike Team Training Instructors indicated that they knew of no other Auxiliary Team involved in ICS training in the USA. They requested the Auxiliary team members promote this concept of Auxiliary Team Training in other Districts

### **District 9 Central**

Extracted from a letter from the Commanding Officer of the Coast Guard Cutter *Katmai Bay*, these comments underscore the tradition of cooperation between the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard.

“ Thank you for the outstanding support and hospitality you extended to several member(s) of CGC *KATMAI BAY*'s crew during our recent St. Martin Reef Light rehabilitaci3n project. A vendor failed to deliver critical engine parts to *KATMAI BAY* on time, necessitating a last-moment change in the cutter's schedule. This change caused our lighthouse renovation work to occur three months earlier than originally planned. You were also notified of the project with less than a week of notice and I appreciate your flexibility in accommodating Chief Emerson's requests. As a result, this mission was a great success, professionally preserving the lighthouse at a fraction of the cost of marine contractors.

“You quickly offered your assistance and coordinated the transfer of personnel and equipment from Cedarville, Michigan to Martin Reef Light. Despite the fact that you helped us on the first day your boat returned to the water from winter lay up, you allowed us to fill it to capacity. Over the course of two days you safely transported 15 crew members, 1500 pounds of

equipment, and transited approximately 60 nautical miles between your dock and the lighthouse.

“Due to the depth of water near the lighthouse. the cutter would have been unable to approach Martin Reef Light, and our small boat would have experienced great difficulty in delivering personnel. gear, and supplies. Through your assistance, you saved the Coast Guard several thousand dollars of operating costs. Furthermore, without your help, I would have been forced to implement other costly and more dangerous plans to renovate Martin Reef Light.

“Thank you for your hospitality, generosity, and flexibility. I look forward to working with you and your Auxiliary unit in the future.

Sincerely,

E. E. HOERNEMANN  
Lieutenant, U. S. Coast Guard Commanding Officer  
USCGC KATMAI BAY (WTGB 101”

### **District 11 South**

The use of life-size man-overboard mannequins (MOBs) has introduced an in-the-water rescue training program aimed at increasing the speed and effectiveness of in-the-water rescue and recovery operations. Taking the lead on this project was Jeff Piolet, a 28-year Coast Guard Auxiliary member and qualification examiner. The five-year effort, using grant monies from Boat U.S., has five life-size man-overboard mannequins (MOBs) that simulate the weight and feel of a real victim. Used to simulate in-the-water victims, they are being employed to train crews in rescue and recovery in the Auxiliary as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Marine group and the Los Angeles County Fire Department lifeguards and fireboats. To add another dimension to this training, each MOB recovered has a sealed envelope on it that describes a medical condition that needs attention.

### **District 13**

Broken communications were received of possibly four persons in the water south of Strawberry Point in Skagit Bay, north of Seattle, WA. CG 47299 heard the call and diverted to assist. Communications were extremely broken and much time was spent repeating information. CG Auxiliarist O’Conner (Sta B-ham) was driving on Whidbey Island with a mobile VHF-FM radio and overheard transmission. O’Conner established clear comms with vessels in the area and acted as relay for Gru PA. A 26-foot Cobalt had swamped and sank, stern first, leaving a father and two teenage girls in the water, all wearing PFDs. A pleasure craft in the area arrived on scene and pulled all persons out of the water then transported them to Oak Harbor. Auxiliarist O’Conner met the pleasure craft and debriefed the subjects. The owner/operator said that while underway a large wave came over bow dumping a lot of water in the vessel. He started the bilge pump and opened the engine hatch to investigate. While the hatch was open another wave came over the stern flooding the vessel, which began to quickly sink, stern first in approximately 70 ft of water with approximately 60 gals of gasoline on board. Some debris including PPE and seat cushions remained floating in area.

## **Caribbean Initiative**

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary with the support of United States Southern Command and the United States Coast Guard (Sector San Juan) conducted a CSMEE with selected Caribbean coast guards, police forces, and volunteer organizations on 23 – 25 June in Santo Domingo. The purpose of the CSMEE was to support the efforts of the Auxiliary's Caribbean Initiative to strengthen the existing volunteer organizations, foster the establishment of new volunteer organizations, and enhance volunteer support for the government organizations in the Caribbean Region.

Attendees were: SOUTHCOM, USCG and USCGAUX, Antigua – Barbuda Search & Rescue organization, Bahamas Air-Sea Rescue Association, Association for Rescue at Sea, British Virgin Islands Search & Rescue, Citizens Rescue Organization of Curacao, Dominican Republic Navy, Grenada CG & CGAUX, International Lifeboat Federation, Jamaica Defense Force & Jamaica Search & Rescue organization, Panama Navy/CG, St. Lucia CG, St. Lucia Marine Industries Association, St. Vincent CG, Royal Turks & Caicos Marine Police, and Turks & Caicos Rescue Association.

The discussions focused on determining and identifying the need, establishing a volunteer organization, leading and managing volunteers, organizing and equipping to conduct SAR, ensuring coordination and cooperation with the government, public boating safety education and outreach, volunteer support of other government missions, to include Maritime Domain Awareness, and other key topics.

Thus far, the Auxiliary's Caribbean Initiative has succeeded in fostering the establishment of a volunteer SAR organization in Jamaica and a CG Auxiliary in Grenada, resurrecting a volunteer SAR organization in the Turks & Caicos, establishing a public education program in the Bahamas and Aruba, and most recently the decision in St. Lucia to establish a volunteer SAR organization. Attendees from Curacao, Grenada, Jamaica, and St. Lucia also expressed interest in having a USCGAUX team visit and provide "instructor train the trainer" in order to initiate public boating safety education programs.

Very respectfully,

*Gene M. Seibert*

Gene M. Seibert  
National Commodore