



# REPORT TO THE COMMANDANT

Items of interest reported by District Commodores and National staff

August/September, 2005

## Continuing Hurricane Rita and Katrina response

1. RITA: Elements of the Coast Guard Auxiliary are currently returning to their area of operations following Hurricane Rita's coming ashore Sept. 23/24 in the East Texas/West Louisiana region. As of the date this memo was filed, there is little specific information available.
2. KATRINA: There are currently more than 600 Coast Guard Auxiliary members under orders that are assisting in the rescue effort in New Orleans and the surrounding areas. In addition to the members involved that are under orders, there are 26 surface operational facilities, 43 radio facilities and 17 aircraft. The aircrews have flown 56 sorties for a total of 209 hours as of Sept. 13. FEMA has contacted 619 of the 785 Auxiliarists that have signed up for the FEMA Disaster Assistance Employee Program. Of that 619 that have been contacted, 50 have reported to training. That number should increase sharply and may already be much higher pending updating information available for this report. Reliable information is still sketchy from the area because of downed infrastructure, even at this late date.

What follows is some of the Auxiliary's early response to Hurricane Katrina.

- ❖ In order to focus Auxiliary relief efforts relating to Hurricane Katrina, the Department of Public Affairs developed **Operation Life Ring**, partnering with Coast Guard Mutual Assistance. This program identifies the ways people can assist with the relief effort, including volunteering services, goods, cash donations, and blood. The supporting web site for **Operation Life Ring** at [www.operationlifering.org](http://www.operationlifering.org), includes a links to Coast Guard sites, to the Auxiliary Association donation page, a photo gallery, a web log (blog), chronicling Auxiliarists participation in rescue/recovery operations (either with FEMA or USCG D8), a press room (with links to related press releases), and a listing of success stories that **Operation Life Ring** has been a part of. The next *Navigator* will cover and dedicate approximately 20 pages to Hurricane Katrina. The Auxiliary Press Corps is also providing content for Coast Guard Magazine's special (double-sized) edition on the incident.
- ❖ Within hours after receiving specifics from HQ the Information and Communications Services Department (IT) established a targeted online recruiting application system for IT support as requested by FEMA: [http://www.projects.auxidept.org/hk\\_tech\\_support\\_form.htm](http://www.projects.auxidept.org/hk_tech_support_form.htm). Within eight hours of launch 68 Auxiliary applicants had applied, and within five days the number was over 400. Many of the applicants came with outstanding qualifications, ready and able to fill the need. The system worked so well that HQ requested it be cloned for Command Center requested assistance.

- ❖ It is very difficult to get a definitive number on the members of District 8 Coastal Region who responded and are still responding to Hurricane Katrina. The estimate that on any given day, 100-150 of our members were/are involved with Katrina operations. Some of the documented efforts include the following.
  - The Motor Vessel ARGO, a 41-foot trawler, was dispatched from Dauphin Island, AL to Biloxi, MS for several days. ARGO was used for radio relay and as a refueling facility for the Coast Guard 25-foot boats working in the area. Crews from Division 3 manned the facility. Auxiliarists were asked to back-fill at CG Stations whose crews and equipment had been sent to the Mississippi and Louisiana areas devastated by Hurricane Katrina.
  - Auxiliary Aviation performed superbly during the period from 30 August to 13 September. There were 18 aircraft involved that flew 82 sorties and approximately 361 hours. These flights were from Alexandria, LA and Mobile, AL.
  - The District had volunteers with boats and crew standing by prior to the storm. Some of the communications facilities were used to fill in for lost communications on the eastern side of the AOR. All of these stand-by people were eager to assist but were not called into harms way.
  - Several members from Division 4 assisted the Integrated Management Team in Alexandria, working along side their Coast Guard counterparts for several days. Other members of the division repaired radio antennas to the south of New Orleans and on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain so that communications could be resumed in the area. The Vice Division Captain, Division 4, Mike Howell, stayed on his 53-foot boat at Station New Orleans and after the storm used the generator on his boat to provide electrical power to portions of the station. Many Division 4 members remain unaccounted for. Division 3 has accounted for all members.
  - There are many Auxiliarists working at evacuee shelters established by various organizations such as the Red Cross, state and local agencies and churches. While not exactly an Auxiliary mission, these people are rendering valuable assistance such as providing food and preparing it, serving as security personnel, helping with medical needs and providing transportation.
  - Communications remain a major problem after a devastating storm such as Katrina. Electrical power was lost and with it goes telephone and e-mail service. Cell phones are only good for the duration of the charge. The volume of traffic often overwhelmed the circuits. This is a major, major problem and is not peculiar to this district. We will continue to look for ways to solve or at least improve the communications available to us.

## District 1 North

In July three Auxiliarists inspected 18 Massachusetts State Police boats stationed in Boston Harbor. This is the first time that this has been done in this area. Boats inspected ranged from PWCs to a former CG 41. Seventeen of the 18 passed and were awarded VSC decals.

## District 1 South

1. A U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary crew, in conjunction with the fire departments of Ossining and Irvington N.Y. and the New York City Police Aviation Unit rescued three people from the dark, cold waters of the Hudson River on July 20. The call for help was monitored by an off duty Auxiliarist on a hand held radio and forwarded to Sector New York. An Auxiliary vessel from Ossining was authorized to respond and within 35 minutes the Auxiliary vessel found the distressed boaters.

2. In conjunction with Kid's Day, an annual Burlington parks parade and celebration aimed at the kids, Ronald McDonald visited Station Burlington, went for a boat ride wearing a USCG PFD and was part of the formal presentation of the coupons to representatives of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary. McDonald's hamburger chain provides 1000 free "Happy Meal" coupons to children wearing PFDs in the Lake George and Lake Champlain area in a program implemented by Division 15 members.

## District 5 North

District Vice Commodore Robert Amort was on a fishing trip with his grandson and a friend 35 miles off shore of Indian River July 23. About 0900 they heard the boat *Jay Elle* call the Coast Guard saying that they were sinking and gave their position six miles away. Arriving on scene at about 0935 they identified themselves as an Auxiliary vessel. A Coast Guard helicopter from Atlantic City arrived and placed a rescue swimmer in the water to swim to the *Jay Elle*. A pump was passed from the helicopter to the *Jay Elle* and helped stabilize the situation.

The rescue swimmer asked Amort (ex-fisherman and now Auxiliary Coxswain) if he could take the *Jay Elle* in tow and start heading to Ocean City to meet a 47-footer dispatched by Group Eastern Shore. The helicopter stayed with the two vessels until about 1100 when it needed to depart for fuel. One of the men aboard the *Jay Elle*, Dr. Bower, had injured. The rescue swimmer decided to airlift Dr. Bower to safety and leave Dr. Bower and his other son on board along with the CG dewatering pump. The 47221 from Ocean City Coast Guard Station arrived on scene at about 1120 and transferred a crewmember to the *Jay Elle* along with a second pump. The Auxiliary Coxswain was asked to continue the tow as an Auxiliary Vessel.

At about 1315 the *Jay Elle* radioed they would need more pumps since the two on board were not working well. Group Eastern Shore was called and the 47-footer was again dispatched with two pumps. At about 1340 all pumps on board the *Jay Elle* had quit; after calling Group Eastern Shore it was determined it would be 40 minutes until the 47-footer would, for the third time, be on scene. The position by then was 15.9 nautical miles off shore and the *Jay Elle* had to be cut loose from the tow.

The mission now changed to rescue those on board before the boat sank.

The Auxiliary coxswain and crew and removed all the equipment possible from the *Jay Elle* and put the stern swim platform at the starboard aft gunnels of the *Jay Elle* to enable Dr. Bower, his son and the Coast Guard Petty Officer to board the Auxiliary facility. Dr. Bower's son boarded the *Jay Elle*, which was going down quickly. The grandson, Justine Green, grabbed Dr. Bower by his life jacket and held on to him even though the outrigger from the *Jay Elle* came down on both of them. Justin pushed it

aside as best he could, not letting go of Dr. Bower. The outrigger snapped and the *Jay Elle* went to the bottom in less than 30 seconds.

Thanks to the good training received as coxswain and crew in the Auxiliary they were able to help a family in need as well as the Coast Guard when they were overloaded with cases.

## District 7

1. In Charleston, South Carolina, the opening of the Arthur Ravenal Jr. Bridge linking Charleston to Mt Pleasant, S.C., involved flotillas 12-6 and 12-8 with three AUXFACs assisting the Sector and police department securing the waters in prevention of a possible terrorist attack. In total 45 vessels, CG, police and Auxiliary were involved in maintaining the security during the grand opening.

2. During Space Shuttle launches, the Auxiliary was on scene to secure the waters around the Kennedy Space Center for the scheduled 13 July Space Shuttle flight. The area was secured 12 hours in advance of lift off with the mission to prevent any unauthorized vessel to enter the zone, when unauthorized vessels could jeopardize the lift off and stop the launch. The AUXFACs were on scene on the 13th at 0400 to 1539, 12 boats and two jet skis with 14 coxswains and 27 crew were used to support the planned lift off at 1539. Lift off was cancelled. On 26 July with the rescheduled flight and a lift-off planned for 1045, the waters were secured from 2230 on the night of 25 July to 26 July. The Auxiliary assisted with 11 boats, 11 coxswains and 18 crewmembers.

3. In Sarasota, FL, an AUXFAC on pre-storm patrol was called and notified of a vessel in distress. The AUXFAC immediately responded and found an overturned vessel with three persons in the water without lifejackets. The coxswain and crew pulled them out of the water and are credited with saving the three men.

4. The Boy Scout's Sea Base in the Florida Keys, in Division 13 AOR, has been providing on-the-water experience to over 10,000 Boy Scouts a year. To provide this service and support, Sea Base had been operating under a MOU with the Coast Guard that allowed the Sea Scouts to carry six scouts and two adult scout leaders. If this MOU were superseded or cancelled, the numbers of Scouts that could be serviced by the Sea Base would decrease by one-third.

In order to put a permanent solution in place, the Boy Scouts of America, Florida National High Adventure Sea Base, petitioned the Coast Guard for a waiver to allow Sea Base vessels to carry six Boy Scouts plus one adult Scout leader and one adult representative of the vessel owner. Auxiliarist Owen McCulloch and the Boy Scout team worked closely with Coast Guard headquarters to help word the waiver request and to guide it through Congress. It passed as H.R. 2443 SEC. 628 Waiver.

The Coast Guard chose to use the regulations applicable to vessels in Uninspected Passenger Vessels (6PAC) service. The task of inspecting the vessels was passed to the Preventing Department, Sector Key West, FL., and to USCGAUX Flotilla 13-8 of Key Largo, FL. Two senior Auxiliary Commercial Vessel Examiners were requested to examine the fleet of 36 sailboats and 25 power vessels. This has been an excellent example of being a proactive to create a win-win situation and created an excellent relationship between the Sea Base, Coast Guard and Auxiliary.

## District 9CR

1. U.S. Coast Guard Station St. Ignace and Sector Sault Ste. Marie contacted Auxiliary Radio DeTour, Auxiliary Radio Paradise and Auxiliary Radio Grand Island August 10 to maintain communications on the low level sites after a power outage with MCI Networks. Auxiliary Radio DeTour came on the air 0030 hrs to monitor communications in Northern Lake Huron and St. Mary's River to maintain communications for CG STA St. Ignace until 1630 hrs.. Auxiliary Radio Paradise and Auxiliary Radio Grand Island came on the air 0800 hrs to assist with communications for Sector Sault Ste. Marie until 1530 hrs. The MCI network was restored at 1530 hrs and Auxiliary Radio Stations ordered to stand down.
2. Auxiliary OPFAC. 232436 from the Cedarville Flotilla was contacted by CG STA St. Ignace August 10 to assist in the search for two persons in the water after a report was received after a boater reported a 27-foot cabin cruiser adrift with no persons on board. This search involved Auxiliary Radio Cedarville, Canadian CG C-130, CG Air Stations, county sheriff departments (who search shore line from land) and CG Cutters. The search continued into the night and all day on 12 and 13 August with negative results.

## District 11SR

1. Increased Auxiliary Support for Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach and ISC San Pedro is the result of the close work of Captain Peter Neffenger, CO Sector LA/LB, and Captain J. Kip Louttit, CO of ISC San Pedro, and their respective Auxiliary Liaison Officers (AUXLOs) since Title 10 reservists were removed at the beginning of this year. The number of Auxiliarists working at both commands has increased over 300 percent since Jan. 1, 2005. Their jobs include administration, working in engineering on motors, mail delivery, helping Coast Guard members with continuing educational plans, and sitting on the Waterway Management and Security Board as Auxiliary representatives. In addition, the Auxiliary conducts four HARPATs each week at Sector LA/LB, and one HARPAT at Marina Del Rey each week.
2. The Trident program in District 11SR has seen wanted growth during the past seven months. Appointed Marine Safety officers are promoting the MS/Trident program and picked up seven Auxiliarists working toward their Trident pin while being mentored by Coast Guard personnel. There are presently 14 Auxiliarists waiting to begin the mentoring stage.

## District 17

1. This year's Northern Edge exercise occurred in many parts of Alaska and the focus was on federal, state and local government coordinating during times of natural disaster or terrorist attacks. A simulated train hijacking and terrorists aboard a state ferry were the primary scenarios in Whittier, Alaska. The Coast Guard's MSST 91111 were the primary players along with other government agencies. The Coast Guard Auxiliary found themselves coordinating activities with the MSST, providing opposing force activities, providing security for the CG helicopters and lending their Auxiliary Station to the exercise.

2. Operational training, safety patrols and HARPATS continue throughout Alaska with notable rescues by Alaska-based SAFEBoats in Seward and Homer. Whittier's SAFEBoat is still at a contractor for aluminum replacement and is not expected to return to service this season.

## National staff reports

### Recreational Boating Safety Directorate

1. Discover Boating Tour – The Auxiliary, in partnership with the National Marine Manufacturers Association continues to be marketing's flagship medium for promoting RBS to the boating public. Auxiliarists staff the exhibit promoting basic RBS, lifejacket education, G-OPB-2 boating safety initiatives, and *America's Waterway Watch*. The mobile marketing tour reached out to well over 200,000 boaters nationwide since May 2004.
2. National Auxiliary RBS Industry Partnership Awards – The awards were presented by NACO at NACON 2005 and are for individuals and organizations that support and further the programs, activities and missions of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary, or to those that have made major contributions to the Coast Guard Auxiliary Association to further any of the recreational boating safety missions and programs of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. This year's awards went to:
  - State Farm Insurance Company for their outstanding, sustained, financial support and promotion of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary's, Vessel Safety Check program.
  - National Marine Manufacturers Association for their outstanding support of recreational boating safety with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Discover Boating Tour.
  - West Marine, Inc. for their outstanding support and promotion of the U.S. Coast Guard's and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's Vessel Safety Check program and educational products.
  - Nationwide Insurance Company of America for their outstanding, sustained, financial support and promotion of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's America's Waterway Watch program.
  - Trans World Publishing, Inc., (publishers of Boating World Magazine), for their outstanding promotion of recreational boating safety and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary to the boating public in their magazine.
  - Boater's World, Inc. for their outstanding promotion of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary's Vessel Safety Check, Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitor, and America's Waterway Watch programs.
  - Boat Owners Association of the United States' BOATUS Foundation for their outstanding, sustained, financial support and promotion of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, direct support of the Beacon newsletter, and other Auxiliary member benefits and services.
3. Boating World Magazine and TransWorld Publishing, Inc. MOU – The publisher pledges to give a free one-year subscription to each person that passes a boating safety course offered by Auxiliary and

provide a free one-year subscription to any individual who joins the USCGAUX. The parties will coordinate a joint annual campaign promoting National Safe Boating Week. In addition, Boating World Magazine will participate in the promotion of *America's Waterway Watch*.

4. Boater's World Marine Centers MOU – Key provisions of this new Alliance include providing recreational boaters a 10 percent discount on any items needed to pass a vessel safety check; Publishing articles regarding Auxiliary boating safety courses and vessel safety checks in Boater's World catalogs, retail flyers, store signage as well as public service announcements; Promoting cooperation and interaction between Boater's World store managers and local flotilla leadership; Promoting America's Waterway Watch program through dissemination of literature through Boater's World stores and catalogues; and making store space available for presentations of boating safety classes, booths and vessel safety check stations.

5. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers MOU – This memorandum of understanding is entered into by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary for establishing a mutual framework governing the respective parties for providing coordinated homeland security efforts and advancing public water safety and security awareness.

6. Award of CY 05 BoatUS. Recreational Boating Safety (formerly Grass Roots Grants) Grant Program – Forty-one applications were received by BoatUS to date, totaling over \$117,853.86 in local flotilla RBS needs that were currently unfunded. Actual funding awards made totaled \$12,538 with the average grant award increased from \$1,600 to \$2,089.67.

7. The BoatUS. Clean Water Grants Program – This program offers up to \$4,000 to fund projects that educate boaters on a variety of clean water/boating topics. To date, three applications will be funded.

8. CY 05 NSBC Local RBS Grants – This program offers up to \$1,000 to fund projects that educate boaters on a variety of recreational boating safety topics. Four grant projects were awarded for a total of \$3,840 for CY 05. This compares to funding during CY 04, where three units received a total of \$1,857.28; thus the funds received represent a 106.75 percent increase.

### Member Services Directorate

1. The Auxiliary Public Affairs Department continues its assistance to National departments and the Coast Guard G-IPA. Their support and services in community and boater outreach programs, including creative services, special projects, marketing, history resources, a national press, photographic and video corps and web-based content and technical programs, continues to evolve and grow. The year continues to see major gains in continuing an inclusionary and professional relationship with G-IPA.

2. The Auxiliary Public Affairs Department provided support to the Coast Guard at the Boy Scout Jamboree, Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, July 23 to Aug 3, with 60-plus Auxiliarists participating. Members assisted in staffing a variety of Coast Guard and Auxiliary booths, featuring topics such as the Deepwater Project, Fishing Vessel Stability, ATONs and buoy tenders, America's Waterway Watch, You're in Command, Coastie the Safety Boat, Recruiting, AIM, and the Coast Guard Academy. Due to unusually hot weather, Auxiliary personnel were called upon to establish a makeshift hospital facility that treated hundreds of Scouts for heat exhaustion.

3. Auxiliary participation in the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program is now gearing up in support of Coast Guard families both at stations and on cutters. The core program is administered by the Coast Guard, uses Auxiliary personnel as appointed by the Coast Guard commander on site.
4. The Personnel Department is currently re-aligning a division in support of the Coast Guard Academy's new admissions volunteer partners program, which replaces the long-standing CGATE program. Under direction from the director of admission this division is standing down and will support the new mission as directed.
5. Eight qualified Auxiliary LAMS instructors have taught the Coast Guard Leadership and Management School in 35 programs throughout the country. Their target audience is active duty and reserve members. The Auxiliary LAMS instructors usually pair up with an active duty counterpart to team teach the course, and have traveled from ISC Sand Island, HI to ISC Boston, MA supporting the Coast Guard's leadership training effort.
6. Working in collaboration with G-OCX, the Department Chiefs and the Districts, the Auxiliary has dramatically reduced the C School Lapse Rate from 26 percent in FY 04 to seven percent in FY 05. This reduction was the result of improved processes, targeted and frequent communication, detailed follow-up and the establishment and utilization of the C School Portal on the Internet.

#### Operations and Marine Safety Directorate

1. Recreational, governmental and commercial vessels within the US 200-mile territorial limit need to be able to receive Coast Guard voice and non-voice broadcasts, including Urgent Marine Information Broadcasts (UMIB). These transmissions must be error-free to help ensure the safety of life and property at sea. The USCG regards the end users of the broadcasts as its customers and considers itself in a provider/customer relationship. Therefore, maintaining a high standard of broadcast quality for the broadcasts (the product) is important to the USCG. Customer satisfaction is dependent upon timely, quality data that is received aboard a vessel in a readable and error-free format.

At the request of the USCG Communication Area Master Station Atlantic (CAMSLANT), the USCG Auxiliary will support the US Coast Guard's efforts to help ensure GMDSS HF/MF broadcasts meet quality standards by monitoring and reporting the quality of received broadcasts across a wide area. The USCG Auxiliary will utilize a group of members with the training, desire, technical expertise and equipment to monitor the USCG GMDSS broadcasts (with an emphasis on the WEFAX, SITOR and NAVTEX broadcasts) to ensure the broadcasts meet the US Coast Guard's quality standards.

It is thought this support will provide a "no cost" solution to the problem of quality assurance of the critical transmissions made by CG communication stations.

#### *Quotable:*

H.D. Greenway's column in Sept. 19, 2005 *Boston Globe*, titled *The Future is Now*:  
[http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2005/09/13/the\\_future\\_is\\_now/](http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2005/09/13/the_future_is_now/)

"The gold standard for a cadre of trained civilians is the Coast Guard Auxiliary, many of them retirees with valuable skills to donate along with their time. Auxiliarists, as the Coast Guard calls them, can be

found in every Coast Guard facility in the country, manning phones and radios, cooking meals, doing office work, and going to sea as well, performing every conceivable non-combat or law enforcement role the Coast Guard is assigned. Some donate their boats -- even aircraft -- along with their time. It is arguably the most successful volunteer program in America, and the Coast Guard could not function without them."

Very respectfully,

*Gene M. Seibert*

Gene M. Seibert  
National Commodore