



FLOT Lines

Flotilla 74, Brandon

District 7

USCG Auxiliary

Issue 1 2025

New Year
New Member
Special
Edition





FLOT Lines

Newsletter Flotilla 74, Brandon
Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander
Christopher Hunt, Flotilla Vice Commander
Meeting: Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
3006 South Kings Ave., Brandon, Florida

Flotilla Staff Officers

Tanner Piliego
Information Systems

Earl Abbott
Finance

Christopher Hunt
Communications
Member Training

August Miller
Navigation Systems
Materials

Brett Skaggs
Secretary of Records
Human Resources

Dottie Riley
Publications (Editor)
Public Affairs

Matt Stephen
RBS-Partner Visitation
Vessel Examinations

*Note: Articles without
by-lines are written by
the editor.*

Background photo: Steve Williams, Dean Bell, coxswain, and August Miller aboard "Ms. Daisy," Flotilla 74, Brandon Auxiliary facility. USCG Auxiliary photo by George Papabeis



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We're on the web!



www.cgaux74.org



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Flotilla74/>

A dolphin surfaces near a channel marker in Tampa Bay. USCG Auxiliary photo by George Papabels



From the Helm



*Matthew Stephen
Flotilla Commander*

As your new Flotilla Commander, I want to welcome you to the start of 2025. My goal for the flotilla this year is to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to get training in their areas of interest. Finding an interest and getting involved will stave off stagnation and help build flotilla variability.

Our upcoming S-TRAIN, scheduled for Feb. 15, 2025 at Airstation Clearwater, is a good introduction to what is available.

As our flotilla continues to get more members qualified, there will be more opportunities for mentoring and getting new members qualified. Some of these available qualifications are Program Visitation, Vessel Examiner, Telecommunications Operator, Emergency Management Incident Command System staff, and Instructor, to name a few. I encourage you to seek out your interests; they won't find you. With that said, let's have a fantastic year. Ω

S-TRAIN 2025



**Feb. 15, Air Station
Clearwater**



From the Helm

Rising Above Challenges

Life is full of moments that test our strength. Whether it's a personal setback or an unexpected hardship, our ability to rise to the moment, adapt, and move forward defines our true character. This quality – resilience—separates those who merely exist from those who thrive.

However, resilience is not merely about avoiding difficulties but also about facing them with passion and courage. It is about choosing to overcome rather than being defeated. These challenges are not meant to break us in the natural course of our lives but to create a foundation to build strength, wisdom, and perseverance. Success is not measured by the destination, but the adversity we face in our journey and a refusal to give up is the mark of genuine success.

Alexander Hamilton, American Founding Father of the U.S. Coast Guard, understood the power of resilience. Born into poverty and orphaned at a young age, he made a choice not to surrender to his circumstances but instead rise to the moment and use his intellect and determination to shape his future and this nation. It is this lesson in resilience that is instilled in the heart of the U.S. Coast Guard. In his June 4th, 1791, Letter of Instructions to the Commanding Officers of the Revenue Cutters, he stated, "They will endeavor to overcome difficulties, if any are experienced, by a cool and temperate perseverance in their duty," and reminds us that while challenges are expected along the journey, it is persistence and courage to face those

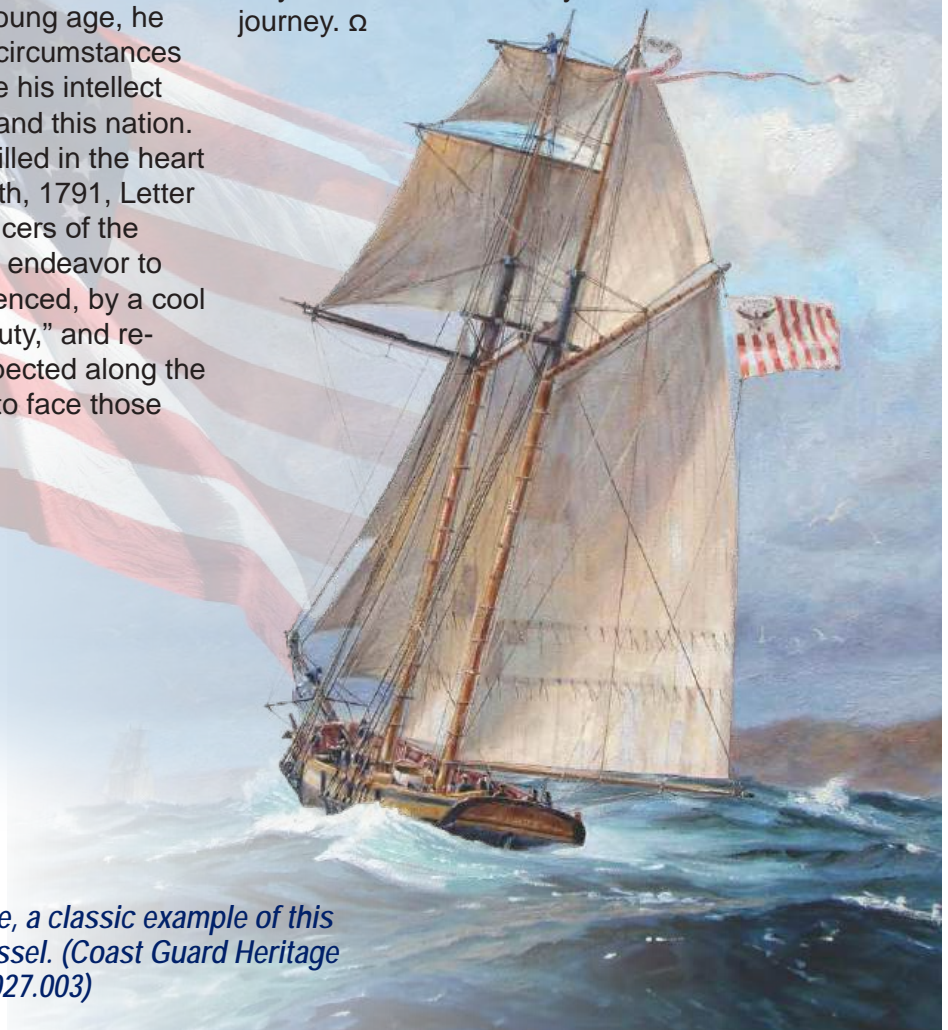
difficulties that lead to perseverance.

Let us embrace Hamilton's spirit as we face challenges and remind ourselves that obstacles and difficulties are not the end but a part of the voyage. By channeling our personal and collective resilience, we can transform obstacles into stepping stones, paving the way to a stronger, wiser, and more successful version of ourselves. Stand tall, push forward, and let your resilience define your journey. Ω



*Christopher Hunt
Flotilla Vice Commander*

U.S. revenue cutter Eagle, a classic example of this type of coastal patrol vessel. (Coast Guard Heritage Asset Collection #2012.027.003)



Articles of Interest

Blackthorn Remembrance Ceremony:

Auxiliary members participate in annual ceremony.

By Dorothy Riley

Every year, Sector St. Petersburg holds a remembrance ceremony to honor the 23 Coast Guardians who lost their lives on January 28, 1980. The annual ceremony in St. Petersburg is held at the Blackthorn Memorial at the northern approach to the Skyway Bridge. What happened on that day 45 years ago?

Few Coast Guard or Coast Guard Auxiliary members who served during the tragedy remain. The average age of today's members of the Coast Guard is thirty years old, which means most were not born when this tragedy occurred. Given that the average age of Auxiliarists is considerably higher, even fewer Auxiliarists survive who remember first-hand the events of that day that should not be forgotten. Not only did it constitute the most tremendous loss of life through a single event by the Coast Guard in peacetime, but it also changed how it trained its command-level officers and senior enlisted members for duty afloat.

The Blackthorn tragedy sent shockwaves throughout the Coast Guard. It was unthinkable that a sturdy buoy tender would sink within minutes and even more disturbing that nearly half of its crew drowned. Subsequent investigations by the United States Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation concluded that while both the captains of the Blackthorn and the Capricorn were at fault, primary responsibility rested with the captain of the Blackthorn.

"The board determined that the cause of the casualty was the failure of both vessels to keep well to that side of the channel which lay on their starboard (right) side. Concurring with the marine board's determination of the cause, the Commandant emphasized in

his "Action" that the failure of the persons in charge of both vessels to ascertain the intentions of the other through the exchange of appropriate whistle signals was the primary contributing cause. Additionally, attempts to establish a passing agreement using only radio-telephone communications failed to be an adequate substitute for exchanging proper whistle signals.

"The collision occurred on the evening of January 28, 1980, near the junction of Mullet Key and Cut "A" Channels approximately three-quarters of a mile from the Sunshine Skyway Bridge in Tampa Bay. The vessels collided nearly head-on, and as a result, the port anchor of Capricorn became embedded in the port side of the Blackthorn.

The momentum of the two vessels caused the Capricorn's anchor chain to become taut, resulting in the Blackthorn's capsizing. The Capricorn ran aground north of the channel, and the Blackthorn sank. Twenty-seven of the 50 Blackthorn crew members were rescued." *1

The sinking of the Blackthorn and the subsequent investigative report provided the impetus for establishing the Command and Operations School at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. Commanding officers are now required to assess risks such as transiting an unfamiliar port at night and are encouraged to say no if they feel the risks involved are unnecessary. Additionally, the Coast Guard developed new training requirements, spent more money on safety equipment, and changed navigational aids in and around Tampa Bay.

As tragic and unnecessary as were the lives lost in



The Blackthorn Memorial located near the northern approach to the Skyway Bridge. USCG Auxiliary photo by Matthew Stephen

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Articles of Interest

(Continued from page 6)

the 1980 Blackthorn and the Capricorn collision, crews aboard Coast Guard cutters and Auxiliary operational facilities today know that safety comes first, and our training reflects this all-important worth.

**1 Marine Casualty Report, USCGC Blackthorn - SS Capricorn, Collision in Tampa Bay with Loss of Life on January 28 1980, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation Report and Commandant's Action. Ω*



Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 74, Brandon poses beside Rear Admiral Schofield, Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District. USCG Auxiliary photo

The Flotilla Holiday Gathering that Almost Wasn't

By Dorothy Riley

Flotilla 74, Brandon held its annual holiday gathering on December 12, 2024, at 6:30 PM at the Masonic Lodge at 11807 N. 56th Street, Temple Terrace, Florida. The party was poorly attended for many reasons, including late notice and distance. Those of us who did attend enjoyed each other's company and had fun with the "Dirty Santa" gift exchange. Our usual photographer, Dorothy Riley, was asleep on the job and took only two photographs. Pictured is Nicole Piliego, wife of Tanner Piliego, showing off her gift. USCG Auxiliary photograph by Dorothy Riley



(Background photo royalty free to use image from Unsplash.)++++



Articles of Interest

Meeting News

Flotilla 74, Brandon held elections during the November business meeting, and members elected Matthew Stephen and Christopher Hunt as Flotilla Commander and Flotilla Vice Commander, respectively.

The flotilla did not hold a regular business meeting in December. Instead, we held our annual holiday gathering on Dec. 12, 2024. Also in December, Division 7 held its annual Change of Watch and Award Ceremony, during which elected leaders took their oath of office.

Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander, swore in the Flotilla staff officers at the flotilla business meeting held on Jan. 14, 2025. Ω

Top: Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander (on the left- not visible), swears in Flotilla 74, Brandon Flotilla Staff Officers at the flotilla meeting on Jan. 14, 2025. From left are Dorothy Riley (Publications, Public Affairs), Christopher Hunt (Communications, Member Training), August Miller (Navigation Systems, Materials), Earl Abbott (Finance), and seated is member Vishrut Amin. USCG Auxiliary photo by Brett Skaggs



Below: Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander, presents a certificate of completion to Brett Skaggs, current Flotilla Staff Officer Human Resources. (Stephen came directly from work and is not in uniform.) USCG Auxiliary photo.



Member Activities

Flotilla Members Attend Division 7 Crew Training

Flotilla 74, Brandon members Matthew Stephen and Christopher Hunt are attending the current Division 7 Boat Crew Training program. The two are our elected leaders for a reason. They are highly motivated and eager to complete many qualifications. The best part is that their qualifications are more than accomplishments on their Auxiliary 'resumes.' They are active in each of these qualifications and are responsible for most of the flotilla's Vessel Examinations and Partner Visits.



Top: Christopher Hunt (center) attends Boat Crew trainee aboard an Auxiliary vessel during the Gasparilla Pirate Invasion on Jan. 25, 2025.

Below: A North River Fire District marine unit ties up alongside an Auxiliary vessel during the Gasparilla Pirate Invasion. USCG Auxiliary photos by Matthew Stephen



Articles of Interest

Member Activities



Above: Matthew Stephen ties off at the Gandy dock during crew training on Feb. 4, 2024. USCG Auxiliary photo



Matthew Stephen continues to conduct Vessel Examinations at the University of South Florida and other locations despite his busy schedule. USCG Auxiliary photo by Matthew Stephen



Left: Brett Skaggs made a new friend late November, 2024 when he visited the Harbor Town Lighthouse and Museum located on Hilton Head Island. The location is a national Coast Guard museum and is free to all Coast Guard and Coast Auxiliary members. Photo provided by Brett Skaggs



Articles of Interest

In case you hit that 'Delete' key too quickly...

24 JAN 2025
FM: CHDIRAUX
TO: ALAUX
ALAUX 005/25

Subj: 2025 NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

Ref: (a) Auxiliary Manual, COMDTINST M16790.1 (series)

1. **National Operations Workshops.** The Surface and Telecommunications Workshops are required for 2025. The Air Operations Workshop is a mandatory task included as part of the Air Station Safety Workshop. Similar to 2024, the National Operations Workshops (Surface/Air/ Telecommunications) may be completed via webinar. The workshop training material(s) must be delivered by an Auxiliarist qualified in the respective operations program provided they are either a certified instructor or are under the supervision of a certified instructor. Instructors may use any webinar delivery platform that is available in their region. Instructors are encouraged to work with their Chain of Leadership and Management (COLM) to determine the proper delivery platform. Self-Attestation is NOT permitted for any of these National Operations Workshops. The workshops will relay significant, needed information, and will take longer than one to two hours to complete so please plan accordingly. Details for the 2025 National Operations Workshops are listed below:

a. **Surface Operations Workshop.** This workshop is required for all boat crew coxswains, boat crew members, personal watercraft operators, paddle craft operators, associated Qualification Examiners (QE), and those currently training for any of these competencies, including members in Required Yearly Not Met (REYR) status who intend to regain their certification.

b. **Air Operations Workshop.** The Air Operations Workshop is a required element of the annual Air Station Safety Workshop and must be completed by 31 Dec 2025. It is required for all pilots, air crew, air observers, Instructor Pilot/Flight Examiners (IP/FE), and those currently training for any of these competencies, including members in REYR status who intend to regain their certification.

c. **Telecommunications Workshop.** This workshop is required for all operators and owners of Auxiliary radio facilities. It is strongly recommended for those currently holding Telecommunications Operator (TCO), in training for TCO qualification, and using AUXCOM as their "grandfathered" qualification for radio operation. This does not apply to the operation of radios on aircraft or vessels which are covered by crew certification.

d. The 2025 National Operations Workshop presentations (Air, Surface, and Telecommunications) are located at the following link: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=R-DEPT&category=operations-workshops-1>.

e. Instructors of these workshops must submit a Workshop Mission and Attendance Report (ANSC-7039) to their IS officer for entry into AUXDATA II.

2. National Vessel Examiner, Program Visitor, and Instructor Workshops. The Vessel Examiner (VE) and Program Visitor (PV) Workshops are recommended for 2025. The Instructor (IT) Workshop is strongly encouraged. These workshops are intended to be viewed by members and completion logged via a self-attestation form as described below.

a. **VE Workshop.** This workshop is recommended for all certified Vessel Examiners, and those currently training to become Vessel Examiners. The VE Workshop presentations are located at the National V-Directorate website (in the Member Zone) at: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content>.



Articles of Interest

php?unit=V-DEPT&category=member-training.

b. **PV Workshop**. This workshop is recommended for all certified Program Visitors, and those currently training to become Program Visitors. The PV Workshop presentations are located at the National V-Directorate website (in the Member Zone) at: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT&category=member-training>.

c. **IT Workshop**. This workshop is strongly encouraged for all certified Instructors and those currently training to become Instructors, including members in Required Yearly Not Met (REYR) status who intend to regain their certification. The IT Workshop presentation is located in the "What's New!" Page at: wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=E-DEPT&category=WHATSNEW.

d. Members who individually view the VE, PV, or IT Workshops in their entirety must submit a Workshop Attestation Form to their Flotilla Staff Officer-Information Services (FSO-IS) for entry into AUXDATA II (this form is located in the same location as the VE, PV, and IT Workshop presentations listed above). In order to make data entry easier, IS officers may collect forms for all their members required to complete these workshops and make one entry into AUXDATA II using the last day of the month of the Activity/Task Completion date. Note: When adding the VE Workshop task to Activity Logs in AUXDATA II use the task named "Vessel Examinations Workshop" in the Workshops task category list. Similarly, when adding the IT Workshop to the Activity Logs in AUXDATA II, use the task named "Instructor Workshop" in the Workshops task list.

e. If the workshop is facilitated by an instructor in a webinar or group setting, the instructor must submit a Workshop Mission and Attendance Report (ANSC-7039) to their IS officer for entry into AUXDATA II.

3. **National Culinary Assistance Specialists Exam and Sanitation Workshop**. The AUX FS_SAN exam is required for all Auxiliary Culinary Assistance Specialists 1 and 2 (AUXCA-1/2) and those currently training for these competencies, including members in REYR status who intend to regain their certification. The AUX FS_SAN exam is available through the following website: <https://ntc2.cgaux.org/NTC/membersHome.php>. After passing the required exam on the National Testing Center, course completion will be logged into AUXDATA II via the National Testing Center course results upload.

There is no need to create separate activity logs for completion of this course in AUXDATA II.

The 2025 Sanitation workshop is recommended for all Auxiliary Culinary Assistance Specialists 1 and 2 (AUXCA-1/2) and those currently training for these competencies, including members in REYR status who intend to regain their certification. The 2025 Sanitation Workshop will soon be available through the Human Resources Directorate Training Catalog on the Auxiliary Online Classroom/Moodle: <https://classroom2.cgaux.org/moodle/>. There is no need to create a separate activity log for completion of this workshop in AUXDATA II.

4. Per chapter 8.B.1.g of reference (a), all required workshops must be completed no later than 30 June 2024. If not completed by that date, members required to

complete those workshops will have their affected competencies placed in Required Workshop Not Met (REWK) status. If the required workshop is not completed by 31 December 2025, the affected competencies will be placed in REYR status.

5. Questions should be directed to the appropriate COLM.

6. Internet release is authorized. Ω

*From National:
In light of the new Executive Order regarding Diversity and DEI...*

We have temporarily shut down the following courses in Moodle, any course material, and the NTC to purge all Diversity, DEI, and related National Testing Center test questions for the following areas:

- 1. All Leadership Courses*
- 2. Civil Rights Course*
- 3. National Staff Officers Course*

We also consider permanently removing the Auxiliary University Program Basic Introduction Course (BIC) from the National Testing Center.

The Basic Qualification Course II (BQC II) and Auxiliary Procedures Course (APC) are back on line.

We will get everything purged and back online as soon as possible.



Articles of Interest

Division 7 Change of Watch

Article by Dorothy Riley
Photos by Thomas Steiger, Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport

The Division 7 Change of Watch and annual award presentation ceremony mark the end of one year and the beginning of new leadership, new goals, and an opportunity to acknowledge past accomplishments and appreciation to former members.

Division 7 Tampa Bay held its Change of Watch on December 14, 2024, at Flotilla 79, Tampa. Distinguished guests included Captain Michael Kahle, Commander Sector St. Petersburg, LCDR Benjamin

Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary, District 7, LT Andrew Grady, Chief, Enforcement Division, Auxiliary Liaison Officer. Senior Chief Daniel Whitby, Officer in Charge Station St. Petersburg, BMC Ross Treiber, XPO Station St. Petersburg, and BM1 Tyler Hudson, Operations Petty Officer, Station St. Petersburg. Commodore John Holmes and Dan Helou, District Captain West, represented District 7 Coast Guard Auxiliary leadership.



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Articles of Interest

(Continued from page 12)

The Change of Watch Ceremony is a purposeful, dignified, time-honored tradition integral to the transfer of command. The formality of the occasion is an acknowledgment of respect for leadership, which is vital to the Auxiliary organization. Captain Kahle and Commodore Holmes administered the oath of office to the 2025 elected division leaders, Anthony Hooper, Division Commander, and Charles Lambeth, Division Vice Commander. LCDR Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary, and Daniel Helou, District Captain-West, next swore in the 2025 appointed division staff officers. (Their names appear on subsequent pages.)

Members who served as division staff officers and flotilla-elected leaders in 2024 received certificates of appreciation. Dean Hoskin, Division Commander, and Anthony Hooper, Division Vice Commander, expressed gratitude for these officers' willingness to take on such important roles and their valued service.



The most anticipated awards were the individual and flotilla historical awards. These are listed on subsequent pages; however, we note that Flotilla 74, Brandon, earned the McKendree and Captain's Jug.

As of 2025, the division will revert to its former practice of scheduling the annual awards ceremony in Spring and the change of watch at year's end. This will allow more time to recognize our members' accomplishments and efforts. It will also mean another opportunity for fellowship with members from other flotillas. Ω

Previous page: COMO John Holmes and Captain Michael Kahle swear in the 2025 elected flotilla leaders at the Change of Watch ceremony on December 14 in Tampa. They are (not listed in order) Cathy Campbell-Heroux, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 72, St. Petersburg; Martin Jordan, Flotilla Vice Commander, Flotilla 72, St. Petersburg; Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 74, Brandon; Christopher Hunt, Flotilla Vice Commander, Flotilla 74, Brandon (second and third from right); Mark Babcock, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach; Ariel Rodriguez, Flotilla Vice Commander; Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach; Ronald Ramos, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 77, Polk County; Todd Thuma, Flotilla Vice Commander; Flotilla 77, Polk County; Walter Behrendt, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 78, St. Pete Beach; Raul Lopez, Flotilla Vice Commander; Flotilla 78, St. Pete Beach; Angel Urbina, Flotilla Commander, Flotilla 79, Tampa; Corey Berardicurti, Flotilla Vice Commander, Flotilla 79, Tampa; Howard Bush, Flotilla Commander Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport, and Martin Richardson, Flotilla Vice Commander Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport. USCG Auxiliary photo by Thomas Steiger

Above: LCDR Tuxhorn, Director of Auxiliary, and Daniel Helou, District Captain-West, swear in the 2025 appointed division staff officers. From left: Gilbert Thomas, Staff Officer-Human Resources; Brenda Burger, Staff Officer-Information Services; Martin Jordan, Staff Officer-Secretary of Records; Howard Bush, Staff Officer-Communications; Dorothy Riley, Staff Officer-Publications; Ariel Rodriguez, Staff Officer-Partner Visitations. USCG Auxiliary photos by Thomas Steiger



Articles of Interest

2025 Division 7 Staff Officers

Patrick McAlvey, Culinary Assistant
Howard Bush, Communications
Michael Lacey, Communication Services
Jack Lee, Finance
Gilbert Thomas, Human Resources
Brenda Burger, Information Services
Paul Ruckert, Materials
John Laurent, Marine Safety
Ron Shouse, Member Training
Anthony Hooper, Navigation Systems
Valerie Fernandes, Operations
Dionne Delsignore, Public Affairs
Dorothy Riley, Publications
Thomas Perry, Public Education
Ariel Rodriguez, Partner Visitations
Martin Jordan, Secretary of Records
Raymond Langley, Vessel Examinations

Todd Thuma, Flotilla Vice Commander

Flotilla 78, St. Pete Beach

Wally Behrendt, Flotilla Commander
Raul Lopez, Flotilla Vice Commander

Flotilla 79, Tampa

Angel Urbina, Flotilla Commander
Corey Berardicurti, Flotilla Vice Commander

Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport

Howard Bush, Flotilla Commander
Martin Richardson, Flotilla Vice Commander

Awards for Individual Achievement

(Hours logged during the 2023 calendar year.)

Public Education Lead Instructor Hours

Thomas Perry, Flotilla 78 – 102.9 hours

Public Education Aide Hours

Tracy Adkins, Flotilla 72 - 97.5 hours

Member Training Instructor Hours

Dean Bell Flotilla, 79 – 76 hours

Telecommunications Operator Hours

Howard Bush, Flotilla 7-16 – 168.2 hours

Coxswain Underway Hours

Dean Bell, Flotilla 79 – 171.1 hours

Public Affairs Hours

Dorothy Riley, Flotilla 74 – 306 hours

Special Recognition for Dorothy Riley, whose division newsletter –

INTERCOM won 2nd place in the District Publications contest, and the District 7 newsletter – BREEZE won first place.Ω

2025 Elected Flotilla Officers

Flotilla 72, St Petersburg

Cathy Campbell Heroux, Flotilla Commander
Martin Jordan Flotilla Vice Commander

Flotilla 74, Brandon

Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Commander
Christopher Hunt, Flotilla Vice Commander

Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach

Mark Babcock, Flotilla Commander,
Ariel Rodriguez, Flotilla Vice Commander

Flotilla 77, Polk County

Ronald Ramos, Flotilla Commander



Articles of Interest

2024 Honor Roll

(Hours logged during the 2023 calendar year.)

Dean Hoskin	(Flotilla 72)	2,811 hours
Martin Jordan	(Flotilla 72)	2,304 hours
Tony Hooper	(Flotilla 72)	1,922 hours
Dan Helou	(Flotilla 72)	1,838 hours
Dean Bell	(Flotilla 79)	1,741 hours
Terry Hickox	(Flotilla 79)	1,587 hours
Charles Lambeth	(Flotilla 78)	1,485 hours
Gordon Hornby	(Flotilla 72)	1,439 hours
David Rockwell	(Flotilla 72)	1,396 hours
Sean Buckmaster	(Flotilla 72)	1,128 hours
Gilbert Thomas	(Flotilla 77)	1,113 hours
Howard Bush	(Flotilla 7-16)	1,054 hours
Don Gerhart	(Flotilla 72)	892 hours
Rollin Shouse	(Flotilla 78)	825 hours
Dennis Smith	(Flotilla 77)	824 hours
Terry Hershman	(Flotilla 78)	822 hours



Articles of Interest

2024 Historical Commemorative Awards

(Awards based upon activities logged in 2023)

The Mike Award: Donated by Mike Adams, a past member of Flotillas 77 and 79, this award recognizes a flotilla's success in retaining and enrolling members. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport** with a 29% increase in membership.

The Oalmann Award: Donated by William Oalmann, past Staff Officer-Member Training and member of Flotilla 78, St. Pete Beach. This award recognizes the flotilla with the highest member training (MT) hours per instructor. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 72, St. Petersburg** with 18.1 MT hours per instructor.

The Nettling Award: Donated by Mr. Nettling, a charter member of Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport and very active in search and rescue as well as being instrumental in the construction of the flotilla building in Gulfport. This award recognizes the flotilla with the highest operational hours per qualified member. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 79, Tampa** with 200.7 hours per qualified member.

The Award for Coast Guard Support: This award recognizes the flotilla with the highest Coast Guard support hours. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 78, St Pete Beach** with 960 Coast Guard support hours.

The Prescott Award: Donated by members of Flotilla 7-16, Gulfport in honor of Mr. Prescott, an outstanding member and instructor. This award recognizes the flotilla with the highest number of Vessel Safety Checks (VSC) per examiner. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach** with 135.2 VSC per examiner.

The Shingledecker Award: Donated by Dwight Shingledecker, a past Division Commander and District Captain-West, and founder of former Flotilla 71. This award recognizes the flotilla with the highest number of Program Visits (PV) per Visitor. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 72, St. Petersburg** with 40.2 PV per Visitor.



Articles of Interest

The Krough Award: Donated by Ed Krough, a past Division Commander and member of former Flotilla 73. This award recognizes the Flotilla with the highest Public Education (PE) hours per Instructor. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 72, St Petersburg** with 24.9 hours per Instructor.

The Richie Award: Donated by Charles Richie who considered Public Affairs the sales force of the Auxiliary. This award recognizes the Flotilla with the highest Public Affairs (PA) hours. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 78, St Pete Beach** with 547 hours of PA mission time.



The McKendree Award: Donated in memory of Lee McKendree by Guy Webert, past Division Commander and member of Flotilla 72, St. Petersburg, this award goes to the flotilla with the highest number of Specialty Courses completed per member. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 74, Brandon** with 0.12 courses per member.

The Captain's Jug is the oldest of Division 7's awards. "Fathered" in 1959 by Harry Bomford of Flotilla 79, the Jug represents excellence in these categories:

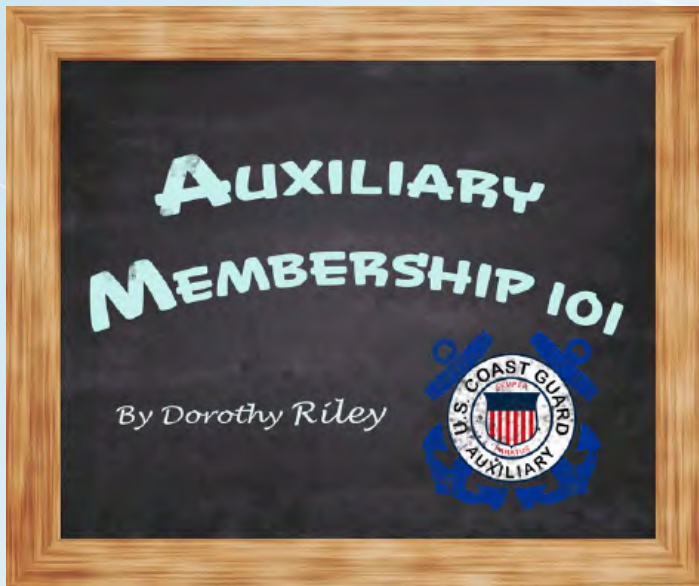
- Increase in Public Education graduates
- Increase in Vessel Safety Checks
- Increase in Program Visits
- Increase in Member Training hours
- Increase in Operations hours
- Increase in Membership

The calculation is made by attributing points in each of the six benchmark categories. For example, 50 Public Education graduates is worth 50 points; 150 Vessel Examinations is worth 150 points. Using a percent change in points year over year removes the bias of flotilla size and equally values all six factors. This year's award goes to **Flotilla 74, Brandon** with a 74% improvement.

Flotilla 72, St Petersburg earned the District 7 award for Best Flotilla of the Year featured in the fall issue of INTERCOM 2024.



Special Edition: Member Information



Hopefully, by the time you receive your member number, you already have an inkling of what you want to do next. Here is where we ask, “Why did you join the Auxiliary?” What initially appealed to you enough so you stuck with the demanding process of becoming a member?

While the answer to that question is as varied as our members, your answer will point you toward what you should do next. Many new members are lured by the excitement of our boat crew program and the opportunity to become coxswain or crew member. Some are more interested in our Recreational Boating Safety programs, while others prefer the more sedentary administrative or computer-related skills.

Some prefer to work directly alongside the Coast Guard by serving aboard a cutter as a culinary assistant, becoming an Ombudsman, working in the Auxiliary Health Services, or as an Interpreter. With the advent of climate change and awareness about marine debris, our Marine Safety and Environmental Protection missions are also growing in popularity. The best part is that we provide free training for you to assume any qualification or position, and as a volunteer, you decide how much time you are willing to commit.

- The Auxiliary operates in
- Safety and Security Patrols
- Search and Rescue
- Mass Casualty or Disasters
- Pollution Response and Patrols

- Homeland Security
- Recreational Boating Safety
- Commercial Fishing and Vessel Exams
- Platforms for Boarding Parties
- Recruit for the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary

Our Mission

- To promote and improve Recreational Boating Safety
- To provide trained crews and facilities to augment the Coast Guard and enhance the safety and security of our ports, waterways, and coastal regions
- To support Coast Guard operational, administrative, and logistical requirements

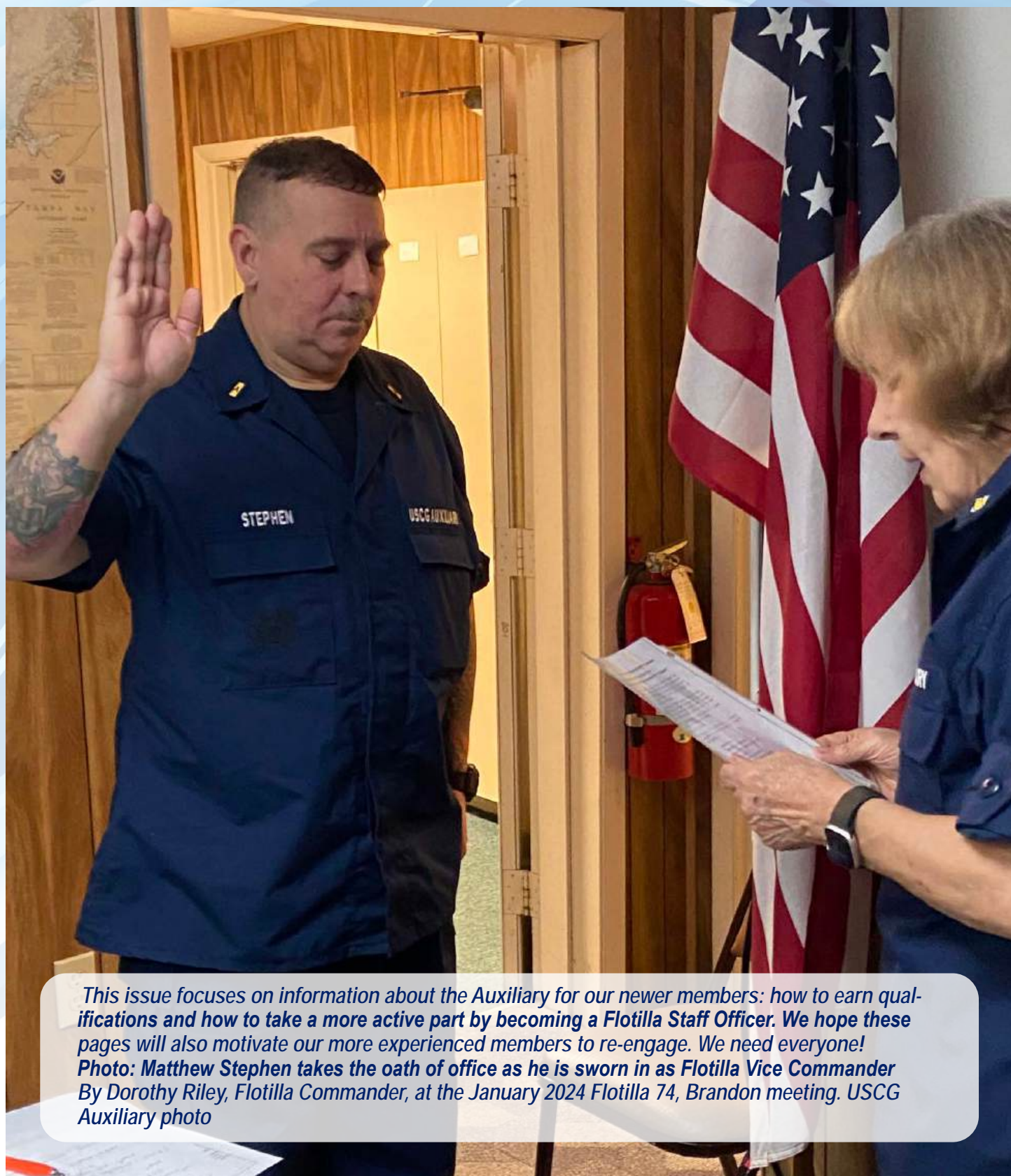
The ‘Four Cornerstones’ of the Auxiliary are essential in keeping us focused on our missions and securing our commitment to the Coast Guard and each other. These are

- Member Services
- Recreational Boating Safety
- Operations and Marine Safety
- Fellowship

The following pages will introduce the jobs (qualifications) most commonly found at flotilla levels and our Flotilla Staff Officers currently holding these positions.Ω



Special Edition: Member Information



This issue focuses on information about the Auxiliary for our newer members: how to earn qualifications and how to take a more active part by becoming a Flotilla Staff Officer. We hope these pages will also motivate our more experienced members to re-engage. We need everyone!

Photo: Matthew Stephen takes the oath of office as he is sworn in as Flotilla Vice Commander
By Dorothy Riley, Flotilla Commander, at the January 2024 Flotilla 74, Brandon meeting. USCG Auxiliary photo



Special Edition: Member Information

So, you joined the Auxiliary What's next?

Whether you walked in for your first meeting or requested membership information online, chances are you were next flooded with a barrage of information and forms. This barrage likely included directives about the enrollment process, our personal security investigation process, uniforms, several handbooks, and new member study guides; Federal Emergency Management Agency Incident Command System courses, and lastly, the enrollment application along with instructions about what forms of identity you will need to complete the enrollment process.

It can feel overwhelming, but it does not have to be. Do it in steps and keep in touch with your Flotilla Commander or another member. Read the New Member Handbook and complete the Form 7001 Enrollment Application. Ask for help if needed. You can complete most of the process with the assistance of the Flotilla Commander or other available staff. Attend monthly meetings. That is the best way to ask questions or schedule time for one-on-one help.

Once you complete the application, next comes the "required training." These are what we call the CORE training courses found at <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=T-DEPT&category=core-training>.

This opens another topic: Navigating Auxiliary websites and finding what you need.

Too often, seasoned members respond to every new member's question with, "You can find it online." That may be true, but that answer is not always helpful. Where does one look? What does one use for search criteria or keywords? We forget

that this is a whole new world for newcomers. Let's start with how to navigate Auxiliary pages.

It isn't easy to access many Auxiliary pages without a member number. For instance, without signing in with a member number, one cannot access a link to the Auxiliary national pages from the District 7 website. For this reason, we suggest you bookmark either the Division 7 webpage (<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-07>) or the Flotilla 74 webpage (<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-07-04>).

Bookmark the Flotilla 74 webpage. From this page, one can easily navigate to other Auxiliary pages.

Arrow #1 on the Flotilla page at right points to the national Auxiliary homepage.

For new member information, click on the Directorates link at the top of the national page. (Large arrow). On the drop-down menu, select "Human Resources."

On the left-hand side of the Human Resources page, select "New to the Auxiliary?" Everything you need to know as a new member is found on this page.


Arrow #2 points to links to the division and district homepages.

Arrow #3 is where you will sign in to access other pages once you receive your member number.

You are off to a great start! Remember to keep in touch with other members, to participate as much as possible in scheduled events, and to attend meetings! ☺



Special Edition: Member Information



United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

AUXHOME JOIN US NOW! LEADERSHIP AUX MEMBERS DIRECTORATES UNITS AUX ASSOC.

COAST GUARD

Sunday, January 12, 2025

USCG AUX AUXWeb
Flotilla 7-4
Brandon

Division 7

District 7

About Flotilla 7-4

Boating Courses

Calendar

Join Us

Contact Us

Vessel Safety Exams

Waterway Watch

Members Only ☐

Links

Local boating announcements

FLOT LINES NEWSLETTER

New Member Info

National Help Desk

Sign In/Up with USCGAUX

Sign Up/In with USCGAUX
Help Video - Job Aide

SEARCH NATIONAL SITE

Enter Search Term(s):

Search

SECURITY LEVELS

Welcome to the Flotilla 7-4, District 7 Web Site

ABOUT THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed, all-volunteer component of the United States Coast Guard. The Auxiliary was created by an Act of Congress in 1939, and has grown to over 32,000 members who daily support the Coast Guard in all its non-military, and non-law-enforcement missions. We have members and units in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Guam.

Auxiliary members conduct *safety patrols* on local waterways, assist in *Search and Rescue*, teach *boating safety classes*, conduct *free vessel safety checks* for the public, provide *boating safety literature* to dealers, as well as *many other activities* related to recreational boating safety.

The Coast Guard considers the Auxiliary its *primary resource* for recreational boating safety outreach and prevention, and each Coast Guard district around the nation has established a senior officer and staff to provide tight liaison and coordination between the active-duty Coast Guard and the various Auxiliary units in that district.

And in many inland portions of the country, where the majority of U.S. recreational boating occurs on lakes and rivers, the Auxiliary is the *sole Coast Guard presence*!

But the Auxiliary is *more than recreational boating safety*; we regularly serve alongside our active-duty shipmates serving as *communications watchstanders*, *uninspected passenger vessel inspectors*, *training resources* for air and sea operations, numerous duties related to *environmental protection* and *homeland security*, and even as *chefs*! In fact, there are nearly *two dozen "qualifications"* open to Auxiliarists willing to put in the time and training. Collectively, Auxiliarists volunteer over *4.5 million hours per year* and complete nearly *500,000 missions* – a true force multiplier for the Coast Guard!

Membership in the Auxiliary is open to persons 17 years of age and older. We are organized into 16 districts nationwide, comprised of 171 divisions with approximately 980 flotillas. No matter where you live, there is a flotilla near you. Find the unit nearest your Zip Code by clicking on "Units" at the top of this page. And for dozens of reasons why you should join, visit "Recruiting". You will not be sorry!

PLEASE LEARN MORE ABOUT US BY EXPLORING OUR SITE. IT'S FOR EVERYONE!

Find the Flotilla 74, Brandon webpage at: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-07-04>



Special Edition: Member Information

Become Involved in Your Flotilla

We Need Your Participation!

New members of the Auxiliary are encouraged to first acquaint themselves with the organization of the Flotilla unit, its functions, and its purpose, then review the different offices and qualifications that cause the unit to function. You must first complete the CORE courses to serve as a Flotilla Staff Officer. The following is an overview of Flotilla Staff Officer positions, duties, and information on earning qualifications in each specialty.

To learn more about each position, Consult the Auxiliary Manual (AUXMAN) or go to <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=130-06-06&category=flotilla-staff-positions>. Members who are interested in earning qualifications in any of these areas should contact the Flotilla Staff Officer for that specialty or the Flotilla Staff Officer-Member Training.

Communications (FSO-CM): Encourages the use of VHF-FM radio and promotes participation in communications drills, including training exercises in search and rescue communications for vessels and aircraft. Works with units to provide qualified Auxiliarists for standing communications watches.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-CM is Christopher Hunt.



Communications Services (FSO-CS): Serves as Webmaster and maintains the flotilla's website for inclusion of the Auxiliary National website. Provides the electronic interface for the flotilla, including downloading important information from the Auxiliary websites. Accepts email for members without email addresses.

This position is currently vacant.

Finance (FSO-FN): Supervises all financial matters; maintains complete and understandable records of all financial transactions; maintains an annual budget; ensures that a yearly unit audit is performed.

The current FSO-FN is Earl Abbott



Information Systems (FSO-IS): Maintains a system to record all members in each mission category (i.e., Operations, Public Education, Member Training, AIM Project, etc.) and supervises reporting to higher Auxilia-



ry levels and the individual member.

The current FSO-IS is Tanner Piliego

Materials (FSO-MA): Maintains an inventory of current Auxiliary forms and literature; assists the flotilla and members in ordering educational materials and uniform items as requested; and keeps operations equipment and uniforms inspected and serviceable.



The current FSO-MA is August Miller

Marine Safety and Environmental Protection (FSO-MS): Ensures the Flotilla educates the public on the benefits of clean waterways and helps provide a pollution-free environment.

This position is currently vacant.

Member Training (FSO-MT): Encourages a continuous program of training activities to provide members a higher level of knowledge in subjects relating to Auxiliary programs and qualifications.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-MT is Christopher Hunt.

Navigation Systems (FSO-NS): The FSO-NS Officer oversees the flotilla's Chart Updating (CU) and Aids to Navigation (ATON) efforts. The job includes checking Private Aids to Navigation (PATONs). Many flotillas also appoint the FSO-NS as the Aids Verifier Examiner (AVE). The AVE qualifies potential Aids Verifiers.) Reports are sent to the Coast Guard.

(Continued on page 23)



Special Edition: Member Information

(Continued from page 22)

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-NS is August Miller.

Operations (FSO-OP): Coordinates activities such as safety patrols, regatta patrols, chart updating patrols, support missions, etc., performed under current Coast Guard policy orders.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-OP is Christopher Hunt.

Public Affairs (FSO-PA): Develops and directs media activities internally and externally and obtains publicity for the flotilla's activities.



The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-PA is Dorothy Riley.

Publications (FSO-PB): Edits and publishes the flotilla newsletter and assists in preparing other articles for

other publications.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-PB is Dorothy Riley.

Public Education (FSO-PE): Is responsible for scheduling, organizing, and conducting all public education programs and activities.

This position is currently vacant.



Human Resources (FSO-HR):

Promotes the growth of the flotilla by assisting it to obtain new members; develops programs and activities to retain current members.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-HR is Brett Skaggs.



Program Visitor (FSO-PV): Makes courtesy calls on area marine retailers and marine organizations dealing with boaters to provide safe boating and marine safety materials and information.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-PV is Matthew Stephen.

Secretary/Records (FSO-SR): Records and publishes minutes of meetings; maintains mailing lists, rosters, and current copies of standing rules.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-SR is Brett Skaggs.

Vessel Examinations (FSO-VE): Oversees and coordinates the Flotilla's Boating Safety Equipment and Vessel Safety Check program and awards decals, and educates the boating public about required safety equipment. The FSO-VE schedules specific vessel examination stations and activities.

The Flotilla 74, Brandon FSO-VE is Matthew Stephen

Notice anything? **SEVEN members fill fifteen of the eighteen listed Flotilla Staff Officer positions.** Seven participating members are insufficient to run our critical Recreational Boating Safety programs. **We need you!**

We remind you of the final words of the prologue to the new member pledge:

"...The satisfaction that you derive from your Auxiliary membership will be in proportion to your level of participation in the organization's activities. The success of the Coast Guard Auxiliary will depend upon the extent of your participation and upon the quality of the leaders that you, the member, select.

"If you feel that you can be an active and productive member of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, please raise your right hand and repeat after me:..."

This year, recommit to that pledge and be an active and productive member. Take a flotilla staff office position. Fear you are not ready? We all learned via on-the-job training, and senior members are ready to help you succeed.

What will be expected of you?

All appointed Flotilla Staff Officers are expected to state their goals upon accepting their position, report progress and activities regularly to the Flotilla Vice Commander, and work closely with their equivalent Division Staff Officer. Many positions require a personal qualification standard sign-off and certification before accepting the position. All require completion of Auxiliary CORE training. Ω



Special Edition: Member Information

Flotilla Meetings

Flotilla meetings are essential to both the flotilla's functioning and our members. The flotilla must have a quorum present to vote on business- everything from approving budgets and minutes to planning future events and elections. Without a quorum, the flotilla hangs in limbo. We continue to plan and conduct activities without a vote, but these are without formal member approval.

Meetings are where our officers present member awards, swear in our new members and present critical program updates and information about upcoming events and activities.

Members benefit from meetings as much as the flotilla. It is where members learn what is going on, what is planned, and what new opportunities arise in training and activities. The relationship is symbiotic. A flotilla cannot exist without its members. Ω



Meetings are where our elected leaders present member awards, swear in our new members and staff officers, and where officers present critical program updates and information about upcoming events and activities. Christopher Hunt accepts a certificate for a newly acquired qualification at the January 2024 meeting of Flotilla 74, Brandon. Behind him are August Miller (standing) and Earl Abbott (seated.) Facing front is member Kelly McMahon. USCG Auxiliary photograph

Flotilla 74, Brandon regular / business meetings are held every second Tuesday at 1900 (7:00 PM)

Guardian's Ethos

We are extremely proud to be counted as a valuable force-multiplier by the United States Coast Guard.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ETHOS

I AM A COAST GUARDSMAN.
I SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.
I WILL PROTECT THEM.
I WILL DEFEND THEM.
I WILL SAVE THEM.
I AM THEIR SHIELD.
FOR THEM I AM SEMPER PARATUS.
I LIVE THE COAST GUARD CORE VALUES.
I AM PROUD TO BE A COAST GUARDSMAN.
WE ARE THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD.

Homeland Security



Special Edition: Member Information

Recreational Boating Safety

Recreational Boating Safety is the primary mission of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. The three Recreational Boating Safety Directorates are **Vessel Examinations, Public Education, and Recreational Boating Safety Outreach**. These directorates work in tandem to reduce the number of boating accidents and casualties that occur in the U.S. each year. Each offers flotilla-level positions or qualifications to help spread the boating safety message.

Vessel Examinations and Recreational Boating Safety Program Visits

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT>

The Vessel Examinations Directorate (Dir-V) includes two program areas: Vessel Examinations and Recreational Boating Safety Partner Visitations. New members are most often encouraged first to earn the Vessel Examiner qualification.

As the name 'Vessel Examiner' implies, a Vessel Safety Check entails checking recreational vessels to ensure that they carry the necessary safety equipment recommended by the National Safe Boating Council and meet federal and state laws. These include but are not limited to life jackets, emergency flares, etc. As a certified Vessel Examiner, you will have the unique opportunity to work with and educate the recreational boating public. This one-on-one interaction will provide a vital op-

portunity to enhance a boater's knowledge and help ensure they have a safe, fun-filled day on the water.

The key to becoming a great Vessel Examiner is all in the training. Becoming a Vessel Examiner can be done through classroom instruction and hands-on training or by self-study and some hands-on training. We recommend, however, that you first accompany one of the flotilla's Vessel Examiners and watch. They will enjoy the company, and you will have the opportunity to learn and ask questions.

portunity to learn and ask questions.

Our flotilla needs more qualified Vessel Examiners. We often talk about our 'low number' of Vessel Safety Checks, but the impact on our statistics is unimportant. The importance lies in what is not said: every Vessel Safety Check not performed is a missed opportunity to educate the boating public and save a life!

Wonder if you have the time? Like all our volunteer jobs/qualifications, you set your schedule, and you need only complete five Vessel Safety Checks a year- pass or fail- to retain your qualifications.



Members Christopher Hunt and Brett Skaggs completed their Vessel Examinations training at the Riverwalk Boating Company behind the Tampa Convention Center on Sept. 15, 2024. Matthew Stephen, Flotilla Staff Officer-Vessel Examinations (and Flotilla Vice Commander) supervised Hunt and Skaggs for the Vessel Examiner qualification process. United States Coast Guard Auxiliary photograph

Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitors are the Auxiliary's "ambassadors" to the recreational boating public. Key to the Auxiliary's dealer/partner outreach program is a cadre of trained Auxiliarists who visit our partners regularly to drop off or restock boating safety literature displays or to discuss upcoming

(Continued on page 26)



Special Edition: Member Information

(Continued from page 25)

ing special events.

Partners may include bait shops, insurance agencies, marinas, or a branch of one of the world's largest marine chandleries. In short, our partners are establishments frequented by boaters.

Program Visitors distribute free literature, including the latest Federal and State boating safety brochures, booklets, and handouts. Additionally, Program Visitors provide distinctive literature easels to display this literature.

After the initial visit, Program Visitors may visit in civilian clothing. Once you develop a relationship with these partners, they may call you to tell you what brochures they need most. This is one of the most

straightforward qualifications to earn and maintain. Becoming a Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitor makes sense if you are already a Vessel Examiner.

Talk to other members about becoming a Vessel Examiner or Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitors and hear what they do. You need not be qualified to accompany Vessel Examiners or Program Visitors while they perform these jobs. "Going along for the ride" offers you the opportunity to learn and ask questions and helps build a sense of camaraderie.

Ask to be trained as a Vessel Examiner or take the course online. <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=V-DEPT&category=job-aid-kits>

Recreational Boating Safety Outreach

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=RB-GROUP>

- The Auxiliary urges boaters to wear life jackets whenever they go on the water.
- The Auxiliary urges boaters to avoid alcohol when boating.
- The Auxiliary offers a variety of boating education classes to provide boaters with the knowledge they need to operate their boats competently and safely. To take a boating education class, go to https://www.cgaux.org/boatinged/class_finder/index.php.
- The Auxiliary offers free Vessel Safety Checks so boaters can check to see that they have all the required boating safety equipment aboard.
- The Recreational Boating Safety Directorate page is where you will find all boating safety and outreach programs. We collaborate with many partners to bring the boating safety message to the recreational boating community. Ω

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

AUXHOME JOIN US NOW LEADERSHIP AUX MEMBERS DIRECTORATES UNITS AUX ASSOC COAST GUARD

U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY
RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY GROUP
LEAVE SAFELY ▶ STAY SAFE ▶ GET HOME SAFELY

Auxiliary Home Page
RBS Outreach
Public Education
Vessel Examination
USCG Boating Safety
RBS Job One
Follow on Facebook
National Help Desk
Sign Up/In with USCGAUX
Sign Up/In with USCGAUX Help Video - Job Aide
SEARCH NATIONAL SITE
Enter Search Term(s):

Recreational boating safety is the first of the many missions of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Boating should be fun! But too often, fun turns into trouble and that trouble becomes tragic. The Recreational Boating Safety directorates, linked on the left, are busy working to reduce the number of boating accidents and casualties in the U.S.

How do things go wrong?

The biggest causes of boating accidents and deaths are all too familiar:

- No life jacket.
- Alcohol.
- Lack of boating knowledge.
- Lack of necessary equipment.

The Auxiliary urges every boater to **wear life jackets** each and every time you go out on the water. We also urge all boaters to **avoid alcohol** whenever boating. Danger never takes a holiday.

What can I do to be safe?

The Auxiliary offers a variety of **boating education classes** to give you the knowledge you need to operate a boat safely. You can find a class by **visiting the Public Education website**.

We also offer **free vessel safety checks** so boaters can have a trained expert make sure you have all the right safety measures aboard. You can arrange a safety check by **visiting the Vessel Examination website**.



Special Edition: Member Information

Public Education

The Third Recreational Boating Safety Directorate.

The Auxiliary offers arguably the best boating safety courses in the nation. Our classes are tailored to boaters, from paddleboards and personal watercraft to powerboats. We aim to promote and improve Recreational Boating Safety by providing exceptional boating safety education to the American public, eliminating loss of life, personal injury, and property damage.

The most popular boating courses are 'Boating Skills and Seamanship,' 'Boat America,' 'Weekend Navigator,' and 'A Paddlers Guide.' Flotilla 74 offered 'Boating Skills and Seamanship' year-round and 'Boat America' three to four times yearly. Our goal is to begin offering these classes again.

To teach our boating courses, a member must become an Instructor. Becoming an Instructor (IT) is not that difficult but requires commitment.

The Auxiliary Instructor program qualifies members as Instructors for public education (PE) and member training (MT) courses. To qualify as an Instructor, the member must pass the current IT Qualification Examination (an open-book three-hour time limit examination with a score of 90% or better) and satisfactorily teach two classes under a qualified instructor's supervision. The first presentation should be of 10-30 minutes in length, and the second presentation should be of one to two hours in length.

Completing the Instructor training program makes you a productive flotilla member almost immediately upon completion. Currently, qualified Instructors are one of our greatest needs.

You can find the instructor training program on the Public Education Directorate website.

If you prefer individual or classroom training, please ask our Flotilla Staff Officer-Member Training or Flotilla Commander.

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=T-DEPT&-category=e-public-education>. Ω



Auxiliarist Patricia Stone from Flotilla 75, Apollo Beach, registers students in a Boat America course in Sun City Center on June 17, 2023. United States Coast Guard Auxiliary photo



Special Edition: Member Information

Information Technologies

If Operations and Response missions are a bit too physical for you, the Auxiliary also offers more sedentary, computer-based qualifications.

The vast majority of the Auxiliary information technology community serves their shipmates directly at the flotilla level. These **Flotilla Staff Officers of Communication Services (FSO-CS)** and **Information Services (FSO-IS)** play a vital role in making each Auxiliarist effective.

Communication Services officers maintain Auxiliary webpages, and many administer the flotilla's social media pages. The web platform is easy to learn and requires no previous knowledge of building web pages or computer coding. The necessary skills are taught via online classes, through one-on-one mentoring, attending a Coast Guard C-School (at no cost to the member), or through a combination of these learning methods.

Flotilla Staff Officer-Information Services provides a wide range of member services – including information on opportunities to serve, recording mission accomplishment, counseling on training requirements, and much more. They ensure the hours our members report and completed training are entered into the



Illustration made with royalty free image from Unsplash

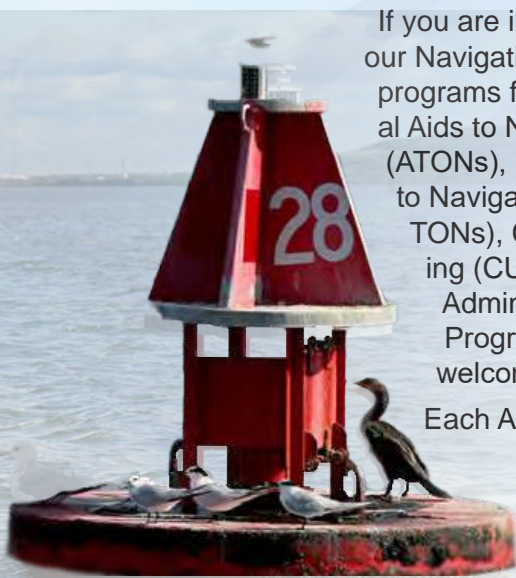
Auxiliary Data System.

At the Division, District, and National levels, our Information Technology (IT) community transitions from direct member support to envisioning, developing, and supporting the systems that support our membership.

From Flotilla Staff Officer to the National IT leadership, our mission is the same. We support our members so they can efficiently, effectively, and safely accomplish their missions.

For more information about Information Technology training and C-Schools, visit <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=it-group> Ω

Aids to Navigation



If you are interested in our Navigation Systems programs for Federal Aids to Navigation (ATONs), Private Aids to Navigation (PA-TONs), Chart Updating (CU), and Bridge Administration Program (BAP), welcome aboard!

Each Auxiliary Coast Guard District or Coast Guard Sector

establishes its procedures for Aids Verifier qualification. Members should check on the process in their area by contacting their Navigation Systems (NS) Chain of Leadership and Management, beginning with August Miller, Flotilla Staff Officer-Aids to Navigation, or Christopher Hunt, Flotilla Staff Officer-Member Training. More information may be found at: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=P-DEPT&category=navigation-systems>

The Aids Verifier program was updated in 2024. The new COAST GUARD AUXILIARY AIDS TO NAVIGATION PROGRAM HANDBOOK, 16500.16, 28 Mar 2024, guides employed by the Coast Guard Auxiliary District Commanders and in the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation Program. The manual includes the revised Aids to Navigation (ATON) Verifier Performance Qualification Standard (PQS). You must be signed in to access this manual. Ω

(ATON photo by George Papabeis)



Special Edition: Member Information

Human Resources

And the Auxiliary Food Service

Human Resources officers help to recruit and enroll new members, and as the first contact most new candidates have with the Auxiliary, are critical to getting new members off on the right foot. This is where that barrage of emails enters in- the ones discussed on page eight of this issue, "So, You Joined the Auxiliary. What's Next?"

As a new member, you have probably visited the National Human Resources Directorate several times, looking for specific links on the left-hand side of their webpage. These likely included:

New to the Auxiliary?: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=new-members>

Coast Guard Auxiliary Uniforms: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxiliary-uniforms>

This issue includes an article about uniforms, and both our new and experienced members should periodically review uniform wear.

Human Resources lists several areas of interest, including job descriptions for working directly for or on behalf of the Coast Guard. One that should be mentioned here is the **Auxiliary Culinary Assistant (AUXCA)**, a qualification that members can earn to work as chefs in Coast Guard facilities, including sectors, station galleys, and aboard Coast Guard cutters.

All AUXCA members are trained using the Coast Guard Approved Auxiliary Food Services Guides. Training includes classroom lectures and culinary skills work followed by a standardized performance qualification completion within one year of the initial class. Medical screenings and Hepatitis A vaccines, along with yearly sanitation and team coordination training are also required. Due to strict guidance



Brenda Burger and Valerie Fernandes, members of Flotilla 78, Gulfport, are two Auxiliary Food Service qualified members of Division 7. United States Coast Guard Auxiliary photo provided by Howard Bush.

from the Coast Guard, no waivers are granted under any circumstances.

Several members of our division have earned this qualification and gone on tours aboard cutters for up to three months as far south as Puerto Rico and north as far as Alaska. The training is worth the experience!

<https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=what-we-do>

The Auxiliary Manual and other essential manuals are found at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxiliary-manuals> Ω



Pot: Royalty free image from Pixabay



Special Edition: Member Information

Surface Operations

The Auxiliary Seamanship or Auxiliary Boat Crew program is likely one of the leading interests of new members. New members have seen us on the water or at Public Affairs events or read about our members in action. Yes, participating in our varied on-the-water missions can be fun and exciting! It is also demanding and requires more time and commitment than our other programs.

While it is possible to take the online course, it is not practical or recommended. In addition to completing the course, one must complete the performance qualification standards and pass the qualifying examination. These require hands-on training and practice. The program relies heavily upon instructors and mentors to produce seaworthy, knowledgeable crewmembers and assets for the Auxiliary Boat Crew program.

Because the course places a high demand on instructors, mentors, and Auxiliary facilities (it takes a minimum of two boats and crews to practice towing evolutions), our division offers this course once a year for all members wishing to become crew-qualified. Also, there are several prerequisites for taking the course. You must be a member in good standing and have completed the required CORE courses, including Incident Command System (ICS) 100, 700, and Team

Coordination Training.

While the Auxiliary Boat Crew program requires significant commitment and effort, the rewards are just as great! Interested members should talk to Christopher Hunt, Flotilla Staff Officer-Member Training, and find more information at <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=R-DEPT&category=becoming-qualified.0>



Captions: Top: Don Hebert inputs data on the electronic radio log. Larry Binder writes the OPS (operational status) of the Auxiliary vessel as he listens to a radio call. Elliott Seda is on the radio taking a call from an Auxiliary Vessel checking during the Gasparilla boat parade on Jan. 27, 2024. USCG Auxiliary photo by James Keene

Bottom: Lewis Evans heaves a line during a training mission on Feb. 11, 2024. Dean Hoskin was coxswain of "Duty Calls", and Amy McPherson and Valerie Fernandes served as crew. Trainees for this mission were Lewis Evans, John Madril, and Bob Witty. USCG Auxiliary photographs by Valerie Fernandes.

Communications

Communications is one of three operational specialties.

Telecommunications Operators stand radio watches for Auxiliary on-the-water missions. Experienced Telecommunications Operators may also stand watches at Coast Guard stations to augment station personnel.

Learning which frequencies to use, the language specific to radio communications, and whom to notify in an emergency is critical. To become involved in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Telecommunications program, applicants must become certified as Telecommunications Operators (TCO). You can find additional details of the qualification requirements at this link:

<http://rdept.cgaux.org/documents/BeQualified/BecomingQualifiedAuxiliaryTelecommunicationsProgram.pdf>

Flotilla 74 does not have a radio facility or Communications room. Our Telecommunications Operators stand watches at flotilla locations that have radio facilities. This is a boon for new members as it allows them to meet members from other flotillas within our division. 0



Special Edition: Member Information

Qualification Requirements for All Operations Programs

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized, on-scene, all-hazards incident management approach that:

- *Allows for the integration of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.*
- *Enables a coordinated response among various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private.*
- *Establishes common processes for planning and managing resources.*

Members seeking qualifications in an Auxiliary Operational Program, including Surface Operations, Air Operations, and Fixed / Mobile Radio Facility Operators, must complete ICS 100 prior to certification by the Director of the Auxiliary.

Members cannot participate in any Coast Guard exercise, drill or response event without this certification.

Find more information at: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=R-EPT&category=becoming-qualified>

Marine Safety

Help Keep America's Waterways Safe and Secure

AMERICA'S WATERWAY WATCH



Four Divisions in the Prevention Department are devoted to the Marine Safety program: Commercial Vessel Activities, Port and Facility Activities, Prevention Outreach, and Communication and Education.

Earning one of the many qualifications in either Commercial Vessel Activities or Port and Facilities Activities is primarily controlled by each Coast Guard Sector based upon their local needs. These Auxiliarists are trained to work for the Coast Guard and perform activities regulated by the Coast Guard, such as inspecting commercial and fishing vessels and container inspections in our ports.

At the flotilla level, we most commonly promote Marine Safety and Environmental Protection programs like America's Waterway Watch, Sea Partners, Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Resources, Living Marine Mammals Resources, and the Good Mate Program. With the increased awareness of marine debris and its impact on our marine environment, this is a good fit for many members.

Auxiliarists often spread our environmental protection messages at Public Affairs events and schools. Several programs are geared toward children.

Are you interested in protecting our marine environment? Let us know!

Visit <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=P-DEPT&category=marine-safety> to explore these areas of opportunity. ☺



Special Edition: Member Information

Public Affairs and Publications

"Public Affairs is every member's business!"

Public Affairs promotes the Auxiliary and its missions through marketing and public relations. Public Affairs offers three qualification levels mirroring those awarded to members of the Coast Guard. Still, members not interested in completing one of the three

qualifications should be aware of Auxiliary Public Affairs policies. The easiest way to do this is to take the on-line course "Introduction to Public Affairs (AUX-20)." You can find this course at the [Public Affairs e-learning portal: http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=A-DEPT&category=online-training](http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=A-DEPT&category=online-training)

Why do we say, "Public Affairs is every member's business?"

Every member should know how to answer questions posed by the public at events or by news media, write articles for either external publications or internal Auxiliary newsletters, and know what to post and what not to post to social media. Without basic knowledge, it can be a quagmire!

A member can serve as Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Affairs without earning a Public Affairs qualification, but a Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Affairs should at least complete the introductory course! Public Affairs has its own rewards. You learn more about the Auxiliary, its missions, and its history and understand it faster than in any other field within the Auxiliary.

Publications

Everything already stated about Public Affairs applies equally to Publications. At the national level, they are both in the same directorate, and members earn the

same qualifications. There is, however, a distinct difference below the national level: Public Affairs officers are our public face and release external news sources, while Publications officers write and publish for Auxiliary (internal) newsletters.

One more difference is that Publication Officers need to be more computer savvy to compile a newsletter.

I want to convince you that it is as tricky as learning magic (that would make what I do more impressive), but it is not! Every office productivity suite has built-in templates for newsletters and spell and grammar checkers. You only need to be brave enough to try it and determined enough to stay with it. Like any other skill, improvement comes with experience.

The best part about newsletters is that they

acknowledge our members' efforts and help boost morale. Like everything else in the Auxiliary, someone (likely me) is willing to mentor you if you are willing to try. Ω Ω



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Special Edition: Member Information



The 'Four Cornerstones' of the Auxiliary are Member Services, **Fellowship**, Operations and Recreational Boating Safety. These areas are critical in keeping us focused on our missions and securing our commitment to the Coast Guard, the Auxiliary, and each other. What we have not yet discussed is Fellowship.

Miriam Webster Dictionary defines Fellowship as "a community of interest, activity, feeling; a company of equals or friends; or the quality or state of being com-

radely meaningful communication for building trust and fellowship." That describes the Auxiliary. We are bound together by our interests in serving the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary, and we are equals. It matters not what we do for a living, our level of education, or how much we earn in our personal lives. Within the Auxiliary, we serve equally. We are comrades and friends and enjoy

each other's company.

Fellowship occurs at flotilla meetings and events specifically designated for that purpose. It behooves us to attend meetings and participate in activities and events.

When we are together, we enjoy each other's company. We may focus on the task but do not fail to joke,

laugh, or share stories and meals. That sense of camaraderie binds us together as much as our mutual desire to serve the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary.

*Good advice before a mission:
Stay safe and have fun out there!"*



For several months in 2023, Flotilla 74, Brandon held staff and flotilla meetings at a local restaurant. The relaxed atmosphere helped members bond. From left are August Miller, Tanner Piliego, William Sage, and Dorothy Riley. USCG Auxiliary photo

Often, leaders end every meeting and briefing, saying, "Stay safe and have fun out there." Wise words. We must enjoy our volunteer hours, or we lose interest. Ω



Special Edition: Member Information

Mastering the Operational Dress (ODU) and Alternative Work (AWU) Uniforms

By Christopher Hunt (Reprinted from FLOTLines, Issue 1, 2024)

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary plays a crucial role in maritime safety and security. Members are often tasked with surface operations, requiring them to adhere to specific uniform regulations for professionalism and safety. Understanding how to properly wear the Operational Dress or Alternative Work uniforms is paramount. Let's delve into the intricacies of these uniforms and the appropriate footwear choices.

The Operational Dress (ODU) and Alternative Work (AWU) uniforms are donned primarily for surface operations, though specifics may vary by district. Members are also permitted to wear these uniforms during their commute, ensuring readiness at all times. The Operational Dress Uniform (ODU) comprises the ODU blouse, ODU trousers, blue crewneck t-shirts, ODU ball caps, boots, and a black riggers belt. The Alternative Work Uniform comprises the AWU polo, ODU ball cap, black riggers belt, 5.11 ripstop long tactical pants (dark navy blue), and boots or boat shoes. Here's a breakdown of eight key elements and guidelines for wearing these uniforms:

1. Sleeve Wear:

- Sleeves can be worn up or down, offering versatility based on individual preference and environmental conditions. However, in a group setting, everyone must wear their sleeves similarly.

2. Auxiliary Ball Cap (ODU ball cap)

- The Auxiliary ODU ball cap is authorized for both uniforms. Only the official ball caps obtained from the USCG Exchange or AUXCEN are authorized. A small metal office of insignia or member device must be worn in the center of the cap.

3. Footwear Options:

- Operational Dress Uniform (ODU): High-top lace-up boots are the standard footwear choice for the



ODU, ensuring protection and stability during operations. Boots should be clean and polished to avoid visible scuff marks. The ODU footwear must be worn with black socks.

- Alternative Work Uniform (AWU): The AWU offers a broader range of footwear options, including boat shoes, ODU boots, and even postal walking shoes in black (no sneakers or tennis shoes). As with the ODU boots, they must be clean and free of scuff marks, but they are worn with black socks.

4. Trouser Blousing:

- ODU trousers are typically bloused with boots for a polished appearance. However, they may remain unbloused when paired with boat shoes under specific circumstances, such as conducting vessel safety checks or commuting to patrol activities. However, the authorized use of unbloused trousers with boat shoes is subject to the discretion of district leadership.

5. Nametapes and Insignia Placement:

- Sew-on cloth nametapes and insignia must be positioned directly above the pocket for visibility and identification purposes on ODUs. For AWUs, the last

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(Continued from page 34)

ODU is no longer authorized, ensuring uniformity and adherence to current regulations.

8. Purchasing and Access:

- The Operational Dress Uniform (ODU) can be procured online through the USCG Exchange (<https://shopcgx.com/>) or in person at designated exchange locations.

- For the Alternative Work Uniform (AWU), members can purchase through the Auxiliary Association Member Store (<https://auxcen.com/>), ensuring access to authorized components.

Upholding uniform standards is paramount for United States Coast Guard Auxiliary members, reflecting their dedication to professionalism and readiness. By adhering to the guidelines outlined above

What is the Alternative Working Uniform Pilot Program?

The Alternative Working Uniform Pilot Program (AWUPP) is being conducted in the 1st Southern and 8th Coastal Regions of the USCG AUX from 1 OCT 2021, through 31 DEC 2022. The Program's purpose is to introduce the new Alternative Working Uniform that any members may opt to wear instead of ODU's or the Coast Guard CGU being rolled out over the next two years to active duty.

The tucked ODU will no longer be an authorized uniform after 12/31/21. The CGU will be made available to Auxiliarists in Fiscal Year 2024 when the Untucked ODU will begin to be phased out. The program will allow members of the 1st Southern and 8th Coastal regions to evaluate the AWU's performance. The uniform is authorized anywhere the ODU is currently authorized for wear.

AWU BASICS



Long and short sleeved polos are authorized. Tucked for men and either tucked or untucked for women.

Pant is the 5.11 Ripstop tactical pant. Dark Navy in color.

How to find the components: Click on this link <https://www.cgaua.org/>



Auxiliary Alternate Working Uniform Pilot

October 2021-December 2022

name is embroidered in upper case sans-serif type on the right side of the polo shirt, aligned with the Auxiliary logo on the left side.

- Collar devices on the ODU, whether sew-on or Velcro, should match the cap devices for uniformity—no collar devices on the AWU.

6. Additional Components:

- A dark blue crew neck tee-shirt is required as the base layer for the ODU, providing comfort and adherence to uniform regulations.

- Belts are essential accessories, with the ODU requiring a black web belt with a subdued open-faced buckle or basic riggers belt, while the AWU mandates a black web belt with a non-decorative buckle.

- Headgear options include the USCG Auxiliary ball cap (ODU & AWU), boonie hat (AWU only), or Tilley hat (ODU & AWU), offering protection and identity display as per regulations.

7. Tucked Version of ODU:

- It's essential to note that the tucked version of the

and selecting appropriate footwear options, Auxiliary members can confidently fulfill their operational duties while maintaining a cohesive and professional appearance. Whether donning the traditional Operational Dress Uniform or opting for the versatile Alternative Work Uniform, each element contributes to the overall readiness and effectiveness of the Auxiliary's mission. More information can be found under the New Member Info tab on the USCG Auxiliary Human Resources Directorate's website: <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT.>

(Note: You must be signed in to access this page.)



WE WANT YOU TO BE A DEDICATED VOLUNTEER IN THE U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



**Find out how you can be
a member by contacting
the number below.**

(813) 644-2894

USCGA-P

FLOT is a military acronym meaning "forward line of own troops." FLOT line or "forward edge of battle area" (FEBA) are technical terms used by all branches of the U.S. armed services to designate the forward most friendly maritime or land forces on the battlefield at a given point in time during an armed conflict.

We are not a military force engaged in armed conflict. We are, however, the front-line of the struggle to save the lives of recreational boaters, and we face this great endeavor armed with Vessel Safety Checks, Public Education classes and all the other Recreational Boating Safety programs in our arsenal. Our newsletter banner serves as a reminder of this mission.

FLOT Lines is a publication of Flotilla 74, Brandon, District 7 United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, located at 3006 S. Kings Ave., Brandon. The Auxiliary an organization of dues-paying unpaid, civilian volunteers whose mission is to assist the U.S. Coast Guard in promoting boating safety. Articles may be reprinted with the express consent of the author or photographer with proper credit given to same. For permissions or for more information, please contact the editor, Dorothy Riley, SO-PB, Email address: dottieriley@gmail.com

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Be sure to attend flotilla meetings

When: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m.

Where: Flotilla 74, Brandon

3006 S. KINGS AVE, Brandon, FL

***Why: Membership is more rewarding
when you participate-
and bring a friend!***