



The Coast Cutter

August-September 2022

*U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary - District 7 - Division 11 - Flotilla 9
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689*



Message from the Commander

Miraculously, we suffered no damage or injuries from Hurricane Ian, the worst hurricane to hit the Tampa Bay area in a century. Tarpon Springs, according to local lore, is under the special protection of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of seamen and the sea. At the turn of the last century, a group of 105 hard-hat sponge divers came from the Dodecanese Islands in Greece to settle in Tarpon Springs, joining the resident Bahamian sponge hookers to increase their wealth from a lucrative crop. Surprisingly, at one point, more money was brought into Florida from sponges than oranges. The spongers donated money to build the Greek Orthodox Cathedral dedicated to Saint Nicholas and he's provided protection from storms ever since. He certainly came through for us this year.

Damages to the southern part of the state, however, resulted in billions of dollars in damages from wind and water with a number of fatalities and destruction of homes, businesses, boats, and marinas. The US Coast Guard, Semper Paratus, was among the team of responders transporting those who were stranded on isolated barrier islands, their only means of access destroyed by the storm. The role of the Auxiliary is to stand in to cover the posts of regular "Coasties" who have left their posts here to provide their help and expertise where it is needed most. This points out the critical role that we, as volunteers, play in such times of crisis. We can be watchstanders and continue to keep our local boaters safe by doing vessel examinations and boating safety classes.

Just like the damaged coast of southeastern Florida, we continue to rebuild our flotilla. COVID, the loss of our meeting space, and the expense of storage of our equipment have depleted us but we are coming back and we are coming back strong! We have enthusiastic new members who are doing their qualifications at a quick pace; applications are being processed, as are new and replacement ID cards. Our quarters at the American Legion Post 46 are being renovated and the work is nearing completion. We have at least one possible location to resume our Boat America classes and have qualified instructions to do the courses.

We need our members to take on leadership roles. I took on the duties of Flotilla Commander (FC) last year, with Tom Maloof as Vice Flotilla Commander (VFC). I am hoping that someone will step up and take over, with all the help I can give them. If you are interested in ANY leadership role in our flotilla, please send a letter of intent, which can be an email to joanjenn@gmail.com, at your earliest convenience. We will have our flotilla elections at the November flotilla meeting on Monday, November 21.

Semper Paratus!

Joan Jennings, Flotilla Commander



Flotilla Staff Officer Reports:

Communications: Vacant, FSO-CM:

- No report.

Diversity Report: Constantine Beyko, FSO-DV/CS:

- No report.

Computer Services Report: Constantine Beyko, FSO-DV/CS:

- No report.

Human Resources Report: Art Chelsey, FSO-HR:

- No report.

Information Services Report: Vacant, FSO-IS:

- No report.

Materials Report: Joe Tartaglia, FSO-MA:

- August pretty uneventful. September a lot of ordering from central supply.

Marine Safety Report: Tom Luncher, FSO-MS:

- August FSO-MS report: Collected Red Tide water samples for Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) off the west side of Anclote Key and Three Rooker Key.

- Studied for upcoming Oral Board test for MSAM (Marine Safety Administrative Management) Professional qualification standard (PQS) on September 8.

-Gave fellow shipmate, Roman, Florida Fish and Wildlife contact information to start red tide water sampling (in July).

-September FSO-MS report: Collected Red Tide water samples for FWC off the west side of Anclote Key.

- Passed my Oral Board test for MSAM PQS with Bill Saltenberger Assistant district Staff Officer - Marine Safety District 7 (ADSO-MS D-7), on September 8, 2022 via Zoom meeting.

- Will send in my application papers to D-7 for my MSAM Training Ribbon this week .

Member Training: Tom Maloof, VFC:

August

1) Boat crew trainees Tom Luncher and Ernest Cannon continue making progress.

September

- 1) FSO-MS Tom Luncher successfully completed PQS for Marine Safety Administration and Management (MSAM).

-2) New member Marianne Christensen completed AUXCT and BQII and is now BQ. progress.

-3) We have several new applicants whose interest was piqued due to our National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) displays.

Finance Report: Gary Davis, FSO-FN/OPS:

- The Finance report was given at the meeting.

Public Affairs Report: Joan Jennings, FSO-PA:

- No report.

Publications Report: Ernest Cannon, FSO-PB:

- *The Cutter* was published.

Public Education Report: Vacant, FSO-PE:

- No report.

Program Visitor Report: Mike Vaughn, FSO-PV:

- Program Visitors (PVs) had 24 marine location visits in August. Any flotilla member interested in becoming a program visitor or to learn more about what we do can contact me (mva1102@yahoo.com.) for more information.

Secretary Report: Joan Jennings, FC,FSO-PA/SR:

- No report.

Vessel Examinations Report: Bob Gailey, FSO-VE:

- We had 19 vessel exams for August. So far weather has affected September VE count. We had 6VEs.

Navigation Services Report: Vacant, FSO-NS:

- No report.



Boaters who were found ‘fending off sharks’ have a moving reunion with their Coast Guard rescuers

By Scott Stump

Just seeing the face of Coast Guard Seaman Andrew Stone moved Luan Nguyen to tears Wednesday as the fisherman remembered Stone pulling him from the water to end a harrowing 28-hour ordeal of floating in the Gulf of Mexico over the weekend.

“I just remember him picking me up, pulling me out the water. It was like, ‘Wow, made it,’” Nguyen said.

Nguyen and fellow fisherman Phong Le shared gripping hugs in a heartwarming, surprise reunion on NBC's "TODAY" show with three Coast Guard members who helped bring them and one other fisherman to safety.

When crews aboard a helicopter and a 45-foot Coast Guard boat found them in the water around 2 p.m. Sunday, the boat crew “witnessed two of the boaters fending off sharks,” along with injuries to both boaters’ hands, the Coast Guard said.

The ordeal began the morning of Oct. 8 when Le said their boat capsized off the coast of Empire, Louisiana. The boat was tied to a nearby oil rig and started to get hit by large waves, causing the back of the boat to take on water, according to Le.

“It was like the perfect storm, the perfect accident,” he said.

Once the boat started sinking, Nguyen, Le and fellow fishermen Son Nguyen, who’s still recovering from the ordeal, all grabbed their life vests and tied together two ice chests with a bandanna as a makeshift raft.

Le said they initially tried to swim to the oil rig in the hope of making a distress call on Le’s cellphone, but they ended up floating in the water for hours in the darkness overnight.

“That was a pretty scary thing,” Luan Nguyen said. “Good thing there was a full moon out so we had light, but we couldn’t see. We could barely see anything. So we just drifted at night.”

The Coast Guard ended up recovering a life vest that was eaten through by a shark.

“The shark hit the life vest, and I tried to push him off,” Nguyen said. “He wouldn’t go away so I jabbed him in his eyes. ... Put my thumbs in his eyes, and he took off. I got a couple scars, but you know ...”

In addition, Le said that every 15 to 20 minutes the men were “constantly being stung by jellyfish.”

“And it wasn’t small,” Le said. “In the middle of the night I woke up with a jellyfish this big in my lap.”

The men also endured sunburn, dehydration and signs of hypothermia.

They didn’t speak much, instead clinging to each other for warmth. After the sun came up on Oct. 9, Le decided to make one last-ditch effort to get help with 5% of the battery left on his cellphone.

He said he swam about 4 miles toward a shrimp boat, but the vessel motored off in the opposite direction. Le then opened up his phone in its waterproof case, and text messages poured in, alerting him to the fact that he had a signal.



Le took a screenshot on Apple Maps of their location and texted it to a friend with a message saying their boat sank and they were floating out at sea.

The Coast Guard had already been searching for the men after being told by a family member the previous night that the fishermen had not come home from their trip. Le's text message allowed them to pinpoint their location and rescue them about 25 miles offshore.

On Wednesday, the men reunited with Lt. Cmdr. Kevin Keefe, who coordinated the effort in the command center, Lt. Katy Caraway, who was the co-pilot of the craft that hoisted them to safety, and Stone, who was in the boat that rescued two of the men directly from the water before they made it to the helicopter.

"It's absolutely incredible to be able to look Phong here in the eyes again," Conway said.

"It's one reason why I joined the Coast Guard," Stone said. "I love this branch because we're able to do stuff like that. I can be able to see him alive and recovering, it's awesome."

Oct. 12, 2022, 12:16 PM EDT

Source: TODAY

By Scott Stump

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/rcna51872>



**1254 S Pinellas Ave, Tarpon Springs, FL
34689**

October 23: Auxiliary Barbecue 1200

November 21: Flotilla Meeting

December 4: Holiday Party 1400

**To enhance communication between our
flotilla and the public, we now have a new phone
number with automated answering.
Please make a note of it!**

727-279-5426



*The Coast Cutter is published by:
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**TARPON SPRINGS
FLOTILLA 11- 9**

OFFICERS:

- Joan Jennings,
Flotilla Commander
- Tom Maloof,
Flotilla Vice Commander

FLOTILLA STAFF OFFICERS:

- FSO-CM Vacant
- FSO-CS Constantine Beyko
- FSO-DV Constantine Beyko
- FSO-FN Gary Davis
- FSO-HR Art Chesley
- FSO-IS Vacant
- FSO-MA Joseph Tartaglia
- FSO-MT Tom Maloof
- FSO-MS Tom Luncher
- FSO-OP Gary Davis
- FSO-PA Joan Jennings
- FSO-PB Ernest Cannon
- FSO-PE Vacant
- FSO-PV Vacant
- FSO-SR Joan Jennings
- FSO-VE Bob Gailey
- FSO-NS Vacant
- IPFC Tandy Brown