



## NSBW IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER



Flotilla 15-8 members Mike Bollinger and Kitty Dolan display the Life Jacket Zone stencil prior to painting.

Photo by  
Vera Bystry-Wells

## Division 15 Bridge

Division Commander	Division Vice Commander	Immediate Past Division Commander
Diane Berman <a href="mailto:dhberman@uscgaux-fl.org">dhberman@uscgaux-fl.org</a>	Andrew Render <a href="mailto:andy.render@uscgaux-fl.org">andy.render@uscgaux-fl.org</a>	Paul Pelletier <a href="mailto:paul.pelletier@uscgaux-fl.org">paul.pelletier@uscgaux-fl.org</a>

## 2016 Division 15 Flotilla Bridge Officers

### 15-1

Linda Jones, FC  
Ralph Altavilla, VFC

### 15-4

Robert Currie, FC  
D. Rusty Hays, VFC

### 15-2

Leslie Moore, FC  
John Caddigan, VFC

### 15-7

Josef Weiss, FC  
Donald Sorli, Sr., VFC

### 15-3

Mary Patton, FC  
Randy Patton, VFC

### 15-8

James Nastelli, FC  
Bruce Ristich, VFC

## April Division Meeting Notes

The meeting began at 9:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Diane Berman, DCDR, began her remarks by welcoming guests LCDR David Negron-Alicea, USCG, Chief of Waterways Management for Sector St. Petersburg, and BM1 Michael Shallue, USCG, XPO for Station Yankeetown. She thanked those members who covered when Rescue 21 was down and for activating the E.A.R.S. program. On mandated training, Ms. Berman said members can test out—online—without taking the whole course. The national average is a 38% completion rate, but in District 7, the completion rate is 48%. She covered the problem of some members waiting over 700 days for their BQ status, and in a couple cases over 800 days. Admiral Zukunft, USCG, Commandant, has directed that this lengthy process to get Auxiliarists' PSIs completed must be reworked to move more quickly. BM1 Michael Shallue, USCG, reported that Station Yankeetown appreciates the Auxiliary Watchstanders and Food Service volunteers very much. He also thanked the Auxiliarists who use their facilities to help the active duty members accomplish two-boat training activities. There will be a promotion ceremony on June 1 at

the Station for Chief Whitmore, who is being promoted to Chief Warrant Officer.

He thanked George and Patricia Dooris for doing an outstanding job when Rescue 21 was down, filling in until the system was back up and running. The Fish & Wildlife Commission states that people who need mandatory training because they received a ticket, can do the training course online. However, if they have more than two offenses, they have to take the course in person. LCDR David Negron-Alicea, USCG, presented a Meritorious Team Commendation award for ATON verification to retired member Ray Koeppel and to George and Patricia Dooris, Flotilla 15-4.

Joe Weiss, SO-VE, reported on new Vessel Examiner District award certificates:

25 VSCs-Blue, 30 Paddlecraft VSCs - Blue  
50 VSCs-Silver, 50 Paddlecraft VSCs - Silver  
75 VSCs—Bronze  
100 VSCs—Gold

Larry Berman, DDC-P, reported there is a new Bravo Zulu (BZ) award. It's not official (no ribbon), but it is a way to say "Thank You" for all of a member's hard work.

Paul Pelletier, IPDCDR, received

a Marine Safety BZ award. Mary Patton was presented with a certificate for having passed her Public Affairs Oral Boards and has been designated an AUXPA3. Tricia Dooris gave a report on PATON verifying and asked anyone who is interested in becoming an ATON verifier to contact her. Paul Pelletier can now sign off on Marine Safety PQS tasks.

At the Yankeetown Second Annual Chili Taste-Off, 35 Auxiliarists attended with 11 entries. The winners were: Karina Ghisays & 15-8 member Alfonso Diaz DelCastillo—who received *Auxiliarist's Choice*; Bruce Ristich, Flotilla—15-8, *Coasties' Choice*; Frank Hoff, Flotilla 15-8—*Chief's Choice*. Each winner received a Division 15 apron with the Auxiliary logo.

Under New Business, it was announced that the annual Memorial Day service will occur on May 28 at Memorial Park in Crystal River. National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) is set for May 21-28.

BM1 Mike Shallue, USCG, said the Station will be doing pyrotechnic training, most likely in June or July, and welcomes Auxiliarists to join them. He will notify the meeting was 10:30.



# April Division Meeting Photos



BM1 Michael Shallue, USCG, Executive Petty Officer at Station Yankeetown, thanks the Auxiliary for all of its assistance. Photo by Mary Patton



LCDR David Negrón-Alicea, USCG, Chief of Waterways Management at Sector St. Petersburg, right, presents a Meritorious Team Commendation award for ATON verification to retired member Ray Koepfel and to George and Patricia Dooris, Flotilla 15-4. Photo by Mary Patton



Diane Berman, DCDR, right, presents an AUXPA3 certificate to Mary Patton, FC and FSO-PA/PB, Flotilla 15-3. Photo by Randy Patton



Josef Weiss, FC 15-7 and SO-VE, reporting on the new District 7 award certificates for performing various levels of Vessel Exams. Photo by Mary Patton

# Division Commander's Report

by Diane Berman, DCDR



Team Coordination Training (TCT), is an essential part of Team Coast Guard. The four-hour TCT is repeated every five years. Some specialists must retake TCT every two years. It may sound like a "drag" but, *pay attention!* You can learn something new every time and understand how it works in real life, as well.

This past Saturday was the Division 15 Quarterly meeting which was held at the West Citrus Community Center. Not a one-time occurrence at all. The schedule is set up almost a year in advance to insure the dates are available. Enter TCT...

**Mission Analysis:** We entered the building and found all of the tables and chairs and everything needed to hold a division meeting had been removed from the room. Additionally, there was to be a Rescue and Survival (R & S) meeting afterwards. The floors were due to be waxed that day.

**Leadership:** Early arrivals worked hard to set up the tables and chairs for the meeting. I want to take this opportunity to thank George and Patricia Dooris, Andy Render, Paul Pelletier, Bruce Ristich, and Larry Berman for efforts above and beyond. There were designated and

functional leaders, and both stepped in to set up for the meeting.

**Adaptability and Flexibility:** After the division meeting adjourned, the floor waxers arrived and there was now a need to relocate the R & S meeting. The leaders looked around and found a couple of *small* carpeted rooms that weren't really suitable but could be used in a pinch. Which we did! *Ever adaptable. ever flexible!* No bathrooms, no water, not much space but we all persevered and got the job done.

**Situational awareness:** Saw the need, met the need, success! We made sure there was a usable entrance so no one would have to use the non-usable front entrance.

**Decision Making:** Weighed alternatives and decided to stay at the Center and use the smaller rooms. There were other options, but we felt this was the best one.

**Communications:** The lack thereof caused the problems to begin with. Parks and Services did not communicate to the Center's staff, nor with the Auxiliary. A couple of simple signs indicating that the R & S meeting had been moved, plus folks sitting outside, communicated the change to the arriving Auxiliarists.

**Assertiveness:** Not an issue once

the decision was made. We were jammed in. We were in a state of chaos. But the job was completed!

Thanks to BOSN O'Hara who came up from Sector St. Petersburg to conduct the training and thanks to U.S. Coast Guard members Shallue, Kohl, Housand, and Ball for giving up a leave day to help us set up our vests and equipment. The R & S system was applied to the Auxiliary for the first time. All Operations personnel must comply to the guidelines set up in the manual.

The Coast Guard has not required the Auxiliary to follow the R & S policies until now. This is their way of saying we are truly Team Coast Guard and they want us to stay safe on the water. We may not appreciate some of the new rules, but follow them we must. NSBW is coming soon. It may be only a week, but the message should, and does, continue throughout the year. Much of what we, as Auxiliarists, do on the water. *Let's all be safe out there!*



## Division Vice Commander's Report

Our division is off to a great start this year. While we are doing an outstanding job across the board, I'd like to recognize three areas where your performance has stood out during the first quarter.

A "Bravo-Zulu" goes out to our Auxiliary Radio Watchstanders. For the second time this year (or was it the third?), we were asked to stand up our Auxiliary radio stations while the Rescue 21 network was checked, tuned, and updated. Each time, our TCOs brought our radios online to

help cover while the remote towers underwent maintenance. George Dooris, SO-CM, reported that the coordination of our radio stations in working with Station Yankeetown was smoother each time we came online. Not only have these "planned outages" been beneficial in the quality of the Rescue 21 system, but they have allowed us to fine tune our Division 15 Emergency Auxiliary Radio System (EARS). That's teamwork!

Kudos also need to go out to our Member Training officers We have any number of training sessions being conducted ranging from our mandated programs up to and including several AUXOP classes. AND not to be outdone, have you noticed the number of Public Education classes we

have conducted and that are planned within the next month? It looks like Dolores Spain, SO-PE, and Ray O'Connell, SO-MT, are doing a fantastic job working with our FSOs to make things happen. Well done to all of you who have been involved!

All in all, it's a pleasure to work with our Division Staff Officers. They are a dedicated team who have donated a lot of time and energy to help make our division successful. It looks like we will continue our success this year in meeting the needs of the boating public and in supporting the Coast Guard.

A special THANKS to all of you in the division who have helped get us off to a great start in 2016.

# Flotilla Commander Reports



## 15-1 Crystal River by Linda Jones, FC

### Coast Guard Support:

We continue to provide 2 Watchstanders for Station Yankeetown two days a week. Vince Maida accumulated over 863 hours preparing meals on the CGC Diligence during the month of January. In addition, each week Diane Berman continued to prepare meals for CG Station Yankeetown staff.

### Operations: 201 hours

There were 25 patrols during the first quarter. We participated in a QE for one new coxswain for 15-7 and one new crew member for 15-1. Coxswain passed, crew member did not. At present, we have two crew trainees and one coxswain trainee. Within our flotilla we have held several trainings. In January, Mandatory Trainings were discussed. At February's meeting, we reviewed the Hurricane/Disaster Plan discussing the calling tree and responsibilities. In March, our Member Training officer held the annual Operations refresher training. In addition, every month, Operations personnel must complete a review quiz on different topics related to their responsibilities as crew/coxswain. We are working on setting up a night mission to complete ATON verifications with the U.S. Coast Guard Yankeetown. On March 8, members of Flotilla 15-1, the USCG Station Yankeetown (2 vessels), and Flotilla 15-7 FC, Josef Weiss and family, participated in a commissioning of the newly refurbished Zero-One (our old flotilla vessel now owned by Josef Weiss.) After this, the USCG and one of our flotilla facilities participated in training exercises on the Crystal River/ Kings Bay. Our flotilla held 7 VSC events this first quarter. 64 PV visits were made this quarter

### Public Affairs/Public Education:

For Recreational Safe Boating, we have participated in several events. In January, we staffed our Boating Safety display for two days at the Manatee Festival in Crystal River. In February, we staffed our Boating Safety display for the Citrus County Parks and Recreation Kid's Fishing Clinic, joined by two members of the USCG from Station Yankeetown along with a USCG vessel. The crew members who came conducted themselves in a professional manner. They were very patient and pleasant with the public and Auxiliarists. Chief Whitmore and his staff have been very supportive, and we truly appreciate all they do for us.

Our Public Education program is off to a great start for the first quarter of 2016. In February, we held the Paddlesports America course with the help of Matt and Sue Clemmons of Aardvark Kayak in Crystal River. In March, we held two About Boating Safely classes. We had 12 Naval Sea Cadets complete the program. In addition, we held a class for the public in which there were 10 students.

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## 15-3 Ocala by Mary Patton, FC

Flotilla 15-3 had no direct support activity to the Coast Guard.

We staffed a PA booth at Miller's Boating Center's Boat Show on March 11, 12 & 13.

We conducted an About Boating Safely class with 12 graduates, thanks in large part to Dolores Spain, FSO-PE.

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## 15-4 Homosassa by Robert Currie, FC

Flotilla 15-4 is still four staff officers short, but other members are filling in as needed. There has not been as many patrols as requested due mainly to weather, winds and low tides. Rusty Hays has offered his 27' Boston Whaler as a facility vessel and it has been approved. The first patrol will be on April 16. On March 19 and 20, we participated in the Homosassa Marine Boat Show. Unfortunately, Saturday was mostly rained out, but Sunday had a much better turnout. We met with two new potential members, a husband and wife who have just retired. We will be meeting with them this week to start the paperwork. Hopefully that will go smoothly. Mike Mooney, who assumed the FSO-IS position from George Dooris, has been accepted at the AUX10 "C" School in Durham, NC. He will be leaving in April. We are fortunate to have him step up to this as our flotilla is short an IS person. As requested, our TCOs have manned the flotilla radios a number of times when Rescue 21 has been down for updates. We will be on station March 28 and 29. The AUXCOM course is about complete at this time. There is one individual from our flotilla who will be following up to complete the TCO requirements, which will bring us up to 5 watchstanders. We continue to work with Flotilla 15-1 to provide instructors as needed for their PE courses. We participated in the March ABS course for the Sea Cadets and again for an ABS course for the public. The intention is to utilize the instructors from both flotillas for the programs. We anticipate April, May, and June to be busy months for patrols and requalification of boat crew and coxswain prior to scallop season.

## 15-7 Suwannee by Josef Weiss, FC

Flotilla 15-7 started the year off welcoming our new flotilla staff officers, and wiped the slate clean by relocating our meetings to a nice, clean, friendly environment that was close to a majority of our active members at the Newberry Public Library. We constantly discuss the importance of training, and supporting and growing our membership base. We are working on expanding our training and meeting capabilities with internet access. We have gained a new coxswain, and also lost a coxswain and crew member. We have accepted one new member into the flotilla. With 3 active members, the only activity the flotilla has conducted is a series of VSCs.

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## 15-8 Hernando by James Nastelli, FC

The first quarter of 2016 was a relatively quiet one for the members of Flotilla 15-8 in Hernando Beach.

- One member, Jim Nastelli, FC, achieved AUXOP status.
  - The flotilla COW was held on 9 Jan with Division Commander Diane Berman as honored guest.
  - Students from the Best Academy attended boating safety training.
  - Our public education program continued with eight courses offered including ABS, BS&S, and Basic Kayaking and Canoeing (Paddlesports).
  - Swamp Fest was supported with a manned booth, color guard, and invocation daily.
  - In the area of member training, two AUXOP courses - Auxiliary Patrol and Communication – were run with John Hughes and Dave Lemon as instructors. In addition, three mandated member training courses were offered in a workshop setting immediately prior to our flotilla meetings. Approximately 30 members took advantage of each of those courses.
  - Flotilla 15-8 continued to maintain an operational presence in our AOR. Routine safety patrols were conducted along with night boat training exercise with Station Yankeetown.
  - Our annual St. Patrick's Day dinner was held on 18 March.
  - Two issues of the Tripod Times were published.
  - In recognition of their service to the CG Auxiliary, two names were placed on the Memorial Board.
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### Staff Officer Reports



#### SO-CM, George Dooris—Communication Services

Flotilla 15-4 is holding a joint AUXCOM class with Flotilla 15-1. The class has only three students and only one has indicated any interest in becoming a TCO. We have one instructor from 15-1 and three instructors from 15-4. One student is from 15-1 and two are from 15-4. It is becoming difficult to offer AUXOP classes due to the lack of interest on the part of members and the amount of work required of instructors for such a small number of students.

There were two requests from the Coast Guard to stand up AUX radio facilities during maintenance of the Jena and Cedar Key Rescue 21 antennas. The first occurred on March 14 and 15 and Auxiliarists manned the Crystal River and Homosassa radio facilities. Unfortunately, the maintenance was cancelled and the AUX facilities were manned for more than two hours before they were informed of the cancellation. The second planned maintenance occurred on March 28 and 29 and went according to plan with Auxiliary radio facilities manned and operating as requested both days. Auxiliarists manning the Homosassa and Crystal River facilities in both episodes: Frank DeLucia, Bob Currie, Rusty Hays, Tricia Dooris, George Dooris.

It is interesting to note that Auxiliarists (Larry Berman and Richard Culp) were on duty as watchstanders at Station Yankeetown during the second episode, which may explain why the second episode went so well.

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## SO-MT, Ray O'Connell—Member Training

### March Member Training Activities:

Worked with 2 transfer members who were IQ to pass the ABS course and then receive their BQ status. Mission accomplished.

We did not have an MT session after the March 8<sup>th</sup> flotilla meeting due to low attendance.

### Member training events scheduled:

Plan on working with an IT trainee during an evening the week of April 4<sup>th</sup>. Trainee needs to prepare to teach at the April 16<sup>th</sup> ABS class. Had work schedule conflicts in March.

After the 12 April flotilla meeting: Randy Patton will present an AUX websites program to the members.

### Progress on Mandated Training:

Progress on mandated courses has not changed since our last report.

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## SO-OP, Andy Render—Operations



We spend hour upon hour training in surface operations. We rehearse what to do under a number of different situations. We do all of this to be ready “just in case” we are called upon to help a boater needing assistance.

Flotilla 15-1's facility, Zero 2, was on patrol one day during the first quarter with Vince Maida, Dan Farrar, and Mark Henehan aboard. Here is a brief portion of their SAR report.

*At 1415 hours on the Crystal River at approximately Marker 30, we were waived down by a boat in distress. We responded to their request for assistance. There were 8 people aboard the boat, including two young children, three males, and three females. We could see smoke coming from the engine compartment, and we also smelled fiberglass burning and heard crackling noises from inside the hull.*

Our crew successfully evacuated the people on board, summoned assistance and turned a possible disaster into simply an uncomfortable day on the water for these eight boaters. This incident of boater assistance truly demonstrates that training really does pay off. The SAR was an outstanding performance and a job well done!

Fortunately, we are not called upon that often to respond to an emergency situation. Our efforts are generally more in the areas of “preventative search and rescues”: public education, marine dealer visits, vessel safety checks, ATON patrols and a number of other actions. But bad things can and do happen, and it's encouraging to know that our crews are ready to assist when called upon!

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## SO-PA, Michael Moore—Public Affairs

### U.S. Coast Guard Support:

15-1 Crystal River: no report. 15-2 Yankeetown: Support of Station Yankeetown with release and recovery of unmanned research/teaching vessel 15-3 Ocala: nothing to report. 15-4 Homosassa: no report. 15-7 Suwanee no report. 15-8 Hernando Beach: no report.

### Flags and Ceremonies:

no reports.

### Community Support:

15-1 Crystal River: no report. 15-2 Yankeetown: Boating Safely class was given at Yankeetown School with children and adults attending. Support of Station Yankeetown with an unmanned research/educational vessel launching. 15-3 Ocala: *About Boating Safely* class conducted 16 April with 12 graduates. 15-4 Homosassa: n/a. 15-7 Suwanee: n/a. 15-8 Hernando Beach: n/a.

### Local Media Involvement:

15-1 Crystal River: no report. 15-2 Yankeetown: Articles published about research/unmanned craft in 3 local media outlets. 15-3 Ocala: 4 hrs COMREL; 4 hrs Print Media; 1 hr Speech. 15-4 Homosassa: no report. 15-7 Suwanee: no report. 15-8 Hernando Beach: no report.

## SO-PE, Dolores Spain—Public Education

### **Flotilla 15-1**

*About Boating Safely* course was held on March 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> for 16 Naval Sea Cadets. Since several cadets were older and had their boating ID cards, 9 Sea Cadets took the test, with 7 passing the test. An ABS (public) course was held with 10 students passing the course on 21 March. A *Boating Safety and Seamanship* course was started on April 6<sup>th</sup> and will end on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Flotilla 15-2**

A boating safely course was held at Yankeetown School for 54 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students & 6 adults on March 17 & 19. 5 students did not pass the course.

Advantages: providing students a boating vocabulary list prior to class to help them become familiar with the terminology.

Challenges: knots- needed additional time to teach 3 basic knots.

CG Station Yankeetown, FL, brought their boat to the school with students being able to climb aboard and ask questions of the crew.

### **Flotilla 15-3**

An *About Boating Safely* course for 12 pre-registered students was held on 16 April at Master the Possibilities Learning Center in *On Top of the World* Communities in Ocala. Twelve graduates.

### **Flotilla 15-4**

An *About Boating Safely* course was held on April 4,7,11, and 14. Flotilla 15-4 is working with fFlotilla 15-1 to share instructors for the proposed PE courses for the year.

### **Flotilla 15-7**

An *About Boating Safely* class is scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup>.

### **Flotilla 15-8**

The *Boating Safety and Seamanship* course was completed on 15 March with 11 students.

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## SO-PB, Mary Patton—Publications

Three flotillas published newsletters during the quarter. The winter issue of the Division 15 publication, **Charlie Noble**, was published.

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## SO-PV, Ralph Altavilla—RBS Program Visitor

The following are the counts of PVs completed for the month of March.

- 15-1 33 visits
- 15-2 nothing to report
- 15-3 14 visits
- 15-4 3 visits
- 15-7 nothing to report
- 15-8 no report received

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## SO-VE, Josef Weiss—Vessel Examination

**15-1:** Nothing to report

**15-2:** No VE activity this month. We are planning a VE blitz in the Yankeetown area for next month, and also activities around NSBW. Will be working with additional business in Cedar Key shortly, which should yield additional VE's.

**15-3:** No report

**15-4:** Flotilla 15-4 is in the planning stages for NSBW May 20-28. One event in front of Homosassa Walmart including advertised free Vessel Safety Checks on Saturday, 21 May.

**15-7:** Nothing to report.

**15-8:** No report received



# The Second Annual Great Chili Taste-Off

by Linda Jones, FC, 15-1 and Division 15 Fellowship Officer

Photos by Robert Fabich, Sr.



Fire in the hole! At least it felt like it in your throat, after eating some of the chili that was prepared for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Great Yankeetown Chili Taste-Off. Eleven different kinds of chili were submitted by Auxiliaries for the Coast Guardsmen to judge.

The entries were judged in three categories: Chief's Choice, Coasties' Choice, and Auxiliaries' Choice. As the chilis arrived, each was labeled with the type and name of the entry. This year's entries included 2 vegetarian and one chicken chili per requests from the Coast Guardsmen.

In addition, FS1 Keith Kimmons, USCG, and his trusty AUXFS, Vince Maida of Flotilla 15-1 Crystal River, made sure there were plenty of toppings for the chili like grated cheddar cheese, sour cream, rice and more.

Several Auxiliaries brought bottled water, chips, dips, and delicious desserts like maple-bacon cookies topped with maple-bacon frosting, and frosted chocolate chip scones to round out the menu. An anonymous donor provided a container of TUMS, just in case.

The award for *Coasties' Choice* went to Bruce Ristich of Flotilla 15-8 Hernando Beach for his Medium Spicy Chili with Jalapeño Muffins, *Chief's Choice* was earned by Frank Hof of Flotilla 15-1 Crystal River with "Ain't Yo Mama's Chili", and Alfonso Diaz DelCastillo won *Auxiliaries' Choice* with a Colombian chili made by his friend Karina Ghisays. Each winner received a special apron with Division 15 and the Auxiliary logo printed on them.

Approximately 35 Coast Guardsmen and Auxiliaries took part in the annual event.

Master Chief Daniel Pesnell, USCG, from Sector St. Petersburg; Diane Berman, DCDR, Division 15; and Andy Render, VCDR, Division 15; were there to help judge and thanked everyone for participating.

Coast Guardsmen and Auxiliaries had a great time sampling the different chilis and enjoying the fellowship.

Bravo Zulu to all who cooked, brought drinks, desserts, or came to taste and judge the chili.



Bruce Ristich, 15-8, wins the *Coasties' Choice* award and is presented with the division special apron by Linda Jones, 15-1.



Karina Ghisays, co-winner, along with Auxiliast Alfonso Diaz DelCastillo, 15-8, of the *Auxiliaries' Choice* award for her Colombian chili and Linda Jones.



Linda Jones presents Frank Hof, 15-1, with his special division apron as winner of *Chief's Choice* for his "Ain't Yo Mama's Chili."



Active duty personnel of Station Yankeetown were treated to the best chili dishes the Auxiliary has to offer from Division 15 chefs.



# In Memorium



Ken Hollsten at the April 2013 Division 15 meeting. Photo by Mary Patton

Flotilla 15-1, Crystal River, lost one of its longest-serving members on April 12 when Kenneth Hollsten crossed the bar. Mr. Hollsten had served as Division 15 Captain, Division Vice-Captain, Staff Officer-Finance, and Staff Officer-Marine Safety.

On the flotilla level, he served as Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice-Commander, FSO-Career Counseling, and FSO-Materials. He was qualified as crew and coxswain, Aids to Navigation Verifier, Vessel Examiner, and Radio Watchstander over the 26 years of his membership.

Ken received numerous awards including: three Auxiliary Achievement Awards, two Auxiliary Commandant Letters of Commendation, two Membership Service Awards, the Operations Program Ribbon, five Operations Service Awards, the Coast Guard Bicentennial Unit Commendation, two Meritorious Team Commendations, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, four Coast Guard Unit Commendations, the Department of Transportation Secretary Outstanding Unit Award, a Presidential Unit Citation, six Sustained Service Awards, and the Transportation 9-11 Award.

He volunteered almost 3,000 hours in Auxiliary activities. Of course, we all know that many of the hours Auxiliary volunteers put in are often not recorded. I'm sure Ken had many more than those 3,000 hours to his credit.

Ken was a very dedicated, informed, well-trained leader in our flotilla. His previous experience as a Chief Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy certainly was beneficial to the Auxiliary. He was a mentor, a walking-talking-flotilla-history book, a leader, and a friend. He will be sorely missed.

Linda Jones, FC, Flotilla 15-1

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## Hurricane Information

by Michael Casey, Flotilla 15-3, Retired Air National Guard

Weather Specialist

Here are the names and pronunciations for the 2016 Tropical Cyclones in the Atlantic Basin. The first storm of the season was Hurricane ALEX which formed in January 2016. The next storm will be named BONNIE. The high season for hurricanes runs from June 1 to December 1.

Alex (AL-leks)  
Bonnie (BAH-nee)  
Colin (KAH-lihn)  
Danielle (dan-YELL)  
Earl (URR-ull)  
Fiona (fee-OH-nuh)  
Gaston (ga-STAWN)  
Hermine (her-MEEN)  
Ian (EE-an)  
Julia (JOO-lee-uh)  
Karl (KAR-ull)

Lisa ( LEE-suh)  
Matthew ( MATH-yoo)  
Nicole (nih-KOHL)  
Otto (AHT-toh)  
Paula (PAHL-luh)  
Richard (RIH-churd)  
Shary ( SHAHR-ee)  
Tobias (toh-BEE-uss)  
Virginie (vir-JIN-ee)  
Walter (WALL-tur)

# Deborah Thomas, Flotilla 15-1, Celebrates 35 years in the Auxiliary

by Linda Jones, FC & FSO-PA, 15-1



Deborah Thomas holding her 35-year plaque.

Photo by Don Jones

Flotilla 15-1 honored Deborah Thomas for her 35 years of service to the Auxiliary. Thomas moved to Crystal River after residing in St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, for 40 years. She joined the Auxiliary in 1980 while living in St. Thomas. During her tenure there, she served as Flotilla Commander of Flotilla 16-2 and later Division Captain of Division 16, District 7. Throughout her 35 years as an Auxiliarist, Thomas has achieved AUXOP status and is TCO-qualified. She has been awarded numerous commendations, including the Auxiliary Achievement Medal, Auxiliary Membership Award, Coast Guard Bicentennial Unit Commendation, Meritorious Team Commendation, Coast Guard Unit Commendation, Department of Transportation Secretary's Outstanding Unit Award, Presidential Unit Citation, several Sustained Auxiliary Service Awards each one denoting 750 volunteer hours. Presently, Thomas serves as FSO-SR for Flotilla 15-1. In her spare time, she is an Amateur Radio operator and volunteers her skills with AARP Tax Services.

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## Did You Know... Author Alex Haley Was a Coast Guardsman?

Born in Ithaca, New York, August 11, 1921, Alex P. Haley graduated from high school at 15, attended State Teacher's College in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, for two years and, at the urging of his father, enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1939 as a steward, assisting cooks. Steward was the only rank in which most African Americans could enter the Coast Guard at the time Haley enlisted. During his years of service Haley developed and honed the writing skills that made him the first Coast Guard journalist. He continued to write the worldwide best selling book, *Roots*, which received the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* based on Haley's extensive conversations with the former chief spokesman for the Nation of Islam.

Serving as ship's cook in the Pacific during World War II, Alex Haley spent most of his Coast Guard duty in long months at sea. While at sea on the cutter *Mendota*, Haley took up letter writing, and in one week could knock out 40 letters and receive just as many replies. His mail-call success prompted shipmates to enlist his help with their letters, including love letters.

During his time at sea on various cutters, Haley set down sea stories recounted by old salts aboard. Eight years and hundreds of rejection slips later, he had his first story published. In 1944, Haley was assigned to edit *Out Post*, the official Coast Guard publication. In 1945 he won the Ship's Editorial Association Award and served as assistant to the public relations officer at Coast Guard headquarters until 1959.



Alex Haley, circa 1950

Haley transferred to the journalist rate in 1949 and was the first Coast Guardsman to attain the rank of Chief Petty Officer in that rate when the Coast Guard promoted him in 1950. His primary job was writing stories to promote the Coast Guard to the media. Toward the end of his tenure with the Coast Guard, Haley researched and wrote about the history of the Coast Guard's Revenue Cutter Service and the Life-Saving Service, which demonstrated the talent that would make him a fa-

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mous journalist and author. His ability to transform meticulous research into informative, interesting narrative became his trademark.

After 20 years of service, Haley retired as Chief Journalist in 1959 after serving in World War II and Korea. He never forgot the Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard never forgot one of its more accomplished veterans. Their paths continued to cross as Haley spoke at various Coast Guard functions. Haley said of the Coast Guard, "You don't spend twenty years of your life in the service and not have a warm, nostalgic feeling left in you. It's a small service, the Coast Guard, and there is a lot of esprit de corps."

After retiring from the Coast Guard, Haley continued to write professionally, including articles for *Reader's Digest* and *Playboy*, and best-selling books and TV mini-series. *Roots* has been translated into 37 languages and sold 6 million copies in hardcover and millions more in paperback. The blockbuster television mini-series *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, was broadcast on ABC in 1977 and was watched by an estimated 130 million viewers.



Author Alex Haley, 1921-1992.  
Photo Coast Guard Archives

Since his Coast Guard days, Haley completed much of his writing at sea. He wrote *A Different Kind of Christmas*, the story of a slave's escape on the Underground Railway, during a freighter voyage from Long Beach, California to Australia. In 1973 Haley was presented with the Distinguished Public Service Award and a citation from Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Chester R. Bender and Rear Admiral John F. Thompson, Superintendent of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Haley worked to promote literacy and participated in programs that encouraged young people to remain in school. To this day, thanks to the famous Coast Guard veteran, eight students, selected on the basis of economic need, not race, are supported from freshman year through graduate school by Alex Haley's scholarship fund.

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Special thanks to Maia Jefferson, SO-HR, for sending in this wonderful article on this very famous member of the U.S. Coast Guard.

