

River Currents

Division 11 District 8ER

Cumberland River 107 to 385 and Middle Tennessee

Division Commander: Paul Fernandez, III Division Vice Commander: Ramon Llorens, Jr.

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082-Division 11 Change of Watch 2022

Written by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

OLD HICKORY, Tenn. – Division 082-11 Change of Watch ceremony and dinner was held on January 15 at the Hermitage Golf Course and Country Club. The live gathering was a welcomed change from last years in which we had a virtual online Change of Watch. Outgoing Commander Chris Jones began the event with an official welcome. This was immediately followed by the presentation of colors by members of the 1102 Sea Scouts. This was especially poignant as The Coast Guard Auxiliary and Sea Scouts organization are working together to develop a working relationship on land and sea. We all stood

have crossed the bar with an explanation of the elements found on the Honor Table followed by a toast with our water glasses.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB
IPDCDR Commander Chris Jones opening the event as Sea Scouts of Ship 1102 Color Guard Present the Colors. Left to Right: Boatswain, Dawson Bell; Sea Scout, Kaleb Worthington; Boatswain Mate, Jermery Porter; Yeoman, Connor Gargus; and Media Specialist, Samuel Brabson.

and recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by an invocation delivered by one of our newest Auxiliarists, Rev. Dr. William A. (Gus) von Dohlen, II. Keeping with tradition we then honored those Auxiliarists who



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB
Division Master at Arms, Larry Carter officiating the Honor Table Ceremony and toast while Sea Scout Boatswain, Dawson Bell of Ship 1102 stands watch.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Immediate Past Division Commander Chris Jones saluting incoming Commander Paul Fernandez, III during the change of watch ceremony. Left to Right: Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Robert Gay, MSD Nashville; Coast Guard Auxiliary Commodore Randy Ventress; Paul Fernandez, III; and Christopher Jones. (photo by Carolyn Llorens)

Shortly there after, we broke away from the scripted portion of the evening and shared a fabulous meal and conversation with those seated around us.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Once the dinner hour was over we reconvened as IPDCDR Jones introduced the speakers for the evening. First to speak was Betsy Woods, TWRA Boating Education Coordinator. Betsy has often been a speaker at our Change of Watch events and always brings important statistics to share. The Coast Guard Auxiliary does not have a direct method of measuring our effectiveness in saving lives and preventing tragedy



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

in the recreational boating community. However the TWRA does track statistics such as, Boating While Intoxicated, boat accidents and drowning on our local waters. Some of the statistics were grim. While one cannot prove a negative, while the Auxiliary was on partial stand down as we wrestled with Covid-19 safety protocols, accidents and fatalities went up substantially. Betsy surmised that the Auxiliary presence along with the other agencies really does save lives. Betsy went on to share the strategies the TWRA have employed to do their job to get boaters educated and certified during the pandemic. Tennessee is one of the few states which require a proctored boating safety exam. The year 2020 was almost shut down, but then there was such a demand by the boating public they moved outdoors and began teaching and proctoring exams in parking lots, outdoor pavilions and the front porches of public libraries. This strategy got about 5,500 boaters through the process which was down





Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

about 50%. 2021 was a lot better with about 10,000 boaters successfully passing the course but still short of the target which was estimated at 11,000 or more. 2022 is looking to be more optimistic, with the born after date of January 1st 1989, everyone 33 years old or older will have to go through the Boater Safety certification process. This targets a strong demographic, young families with good jobs, disposable income and a desire to own a boat. However, the highest accident rates still remain with the 46 to 50 year old's who are still not required to take and pass the test. Law enforcement has a few new policies to make the waters safer for everyone. One is the Move Over Law which is similar to the law on the road. A boater must move over and slow down to no wake speed within 100 feet of any vessel with flashing blue lights. Tennessee also has a new law on the books that will stiffen the penalties for boating under the influence (BUI). Tennessee BUI laws will now mirror our current DUI laws. The only difference is you won't lose your driver's license for a BUI.

Any boater with a blood alcohol reading of 0.08 is considered to be boating under the influence. A first offence will result in serving 48 consecutive hours in jail. Anyone caught with 0.2 or higher will have to serve a minimum of 7 consecutive days. A second offence will result in 45 days and a 3rd offence 120 days. This law also applies to a boating accident which results in injuries and fatalities, meaning an impaired boater can be charged with vehicular/vessel assault or vehicular/vessel homicide charges.

To be clear, it is not illegal to have alcohol on the boat, but you should have a designated driver. The last point Betsy mentioned was these laws have changed quite rapidly in the last few years, almost every printed copy of Tennessee boating safety rules out there are outdated. We should strive to get fresh copies into boater's hands as we do vessel exams and always refer them to the TWRA website for the absolute latest boating laws.

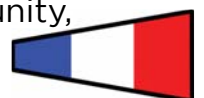
Betsy finished her speech by thanking all of us for being there and doing what we do for recreational boater safety and a special thanks for including her in our program.

Next to the podium was Chris Whitacre. With the threat of winter storms and the ongoing pandemic risks, some participants were not able to be at the Change of Watch in person. But there is one thing we have learned is to always have a plan B. Chris brought with him, a message from our Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX), Commander Suzanne Hemann, which he read aloud.

"Hello once again from the Director's office. We remain generally healthy and happy, our families are well, and we hope the same for you.



I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued efforts and devotion to my Coast Guard, to your community, and to our national safety.



Despite two very hard years, you continue to show up, to work, and to care for our country. I'm privileged to share the thanks and gratitude of our District Commander, Admiral Timme (Timmy) for your continued support and devotion to professionalism, and mission execution.

As we move into a third year affected by pandemic I regret having to ask you for more, but I must. I must ask you for more focus, more attention, more dedication. The good news is that at the same time your national staff is working to give you all the tools and opportunities you need to maximize your workforce. Not to do more with less, but to do more with better tools.

I encourage you to review the national website regularly and engage your staff officers to learn about the exciting changes. Now more than ever technology like Zoom, and Moodle, allow for flexible meeting and training opportunities I encourage you to continue using remote options to attend your regular meetings, this will maximize your connection and membership engagement.

Moving forward, many units continue to face shrinking membership numbers, I challenge you to stop that slide. Americans are as generous and perhaps more generous than in recent history. We have more boat owners, of varied ages, economic and social backgrounds, and even more families are vacationing to locations to rent boats specifically. There are future members waiting for your engagement, just waiting for an Auxiliarist to say hi at the boat show.

Only you can reach these potential members. As you begin planning for the 2022 boating season, I implore leaders and staff to think critically about how and in what ways your units can engage our new boating public.

Lastly, as we embark on a new year of leadership and new rolls, as your DIRAUX, I'll challenge each and every member to be peer leaders, and to be faithful followers of your leadership chain, both elected and appointed. It's only through this mutual respect and devotion to each other as

shipmates, as leaders, and as followers that we will succeed. Be well, enjoy this celebration, and I'll hope to see you on the water soon!"



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

District Chief of Staff (DCOS) Chris Whitacre.

Having delivered the message from CDR Hemann, DCOS Chris Whitacre shared with us the remarks he had prepared for the evening. "Greetings and thank you for all you do for the Auxiliary Family! Historically, the Auxiliary's primary missions were:

Vessel Safety Checks (VSCs)
Public Education (PE)
Operations (OP)
Fellowship

Today, the four cornerstones are as follows:

Member Services
Recreational Boating Safety
Operations and Marine Safety
Fellowship



One of the things this change shows us is that the Auxiliary is always changing to meet the needs of its customers. When I started, I tried to cover at least 75% of the cornerstones. The 25% for Fellowship caused me the most trouble, as I was more interested in the technical aspect of the program. However, I was quick to learn that I did not need to be an expert in every aspect of the Auxiliary as there were other teammates that were better at other parts of the program.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

[District Chief of Staff \(DCOS\) Chris Whitacre.](#)

Teamwork is what makes the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary work so well, because none of us can know everything about everything, but we can all be very good at something. The more programs we get involved with the more we will need subject matter experts and the more we will need to work as a team to get the whole job done. For example, let's look at operations, a crew and coxswain handle the boat, but a Vessel Examiner has to approve the vessel as a facility before that can happen.

The radio on board may need to be checked out by a Telecommunications Operator to ensure that it is functioning correctly. If we are going to be out for a long time we may want to get a Culinary Assistant involved to be sure we have the right food on board or available.

None of us works in a vacuum. We all work with other people, our teammates; to be sure, the job is done and is done right. During 2022, there will be the usual tasks to accomplish and my guess is there will be some new tasks or new ways to do the old tasks and we, as a team will need to do the best we can to support each other and the Coast Guard as we progress through the year.

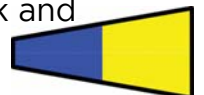
“Teamwork is what makes the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary work so well.

None of us can know everything about everything but we can all be very good at something.”

Sometimes who makes up the team will be clear and sometimes not so clear, but in each case, we need to consider the task and the best way to get the task done. Remember asking for assistance is not a bad thing. It's a way of getting more people involved and sharing the load and building a great team. We want to involve as many people as needed, but not so many that they get in each other's way.

As far as exactly what will happen in 2022 and what skills will be needed, I do not know. However, I do know that teamwork will be required and that we will all benefit from working together. That does not mean we will all agree on what needs to be done, or how to do it, but by working as a team we can figure out the best way to do whatever it is we decide to do!

Thank you for inviting me to speak and I hope you have a great 2022!"



Our next speaker was a bit of a surprise to us as well as to him. COMO Randy Ventress was called upon to address the assembly in lieu of a couple of speakers who were not able to attend. He had some profound words to share with us about tools. One tool COMO Ventress employed on this night was to always have a speech prepared for just such an occasion. Semper Paratus!



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Commodore Randy Ventress, Member 082-11-05

"To our newly elected and appointed officers I congratulate you all for stepping up and taking on the tasks that you will be faced with in the coming year. Some of you will at times feel overwhelmed and that you are trying to fill your cup with water coming over Niagara Falls. Rest assured that there are several clichés if you will, that never have truer words been spoken.

First, you are not the first to take this step. There are many that have blazed the trails ahead of you. Each of these survived and you will as well, and you will be blazing a trail of your own.

Second, you are not alone in this venture. Look around you, there are those who have plowed the row before you, and you should tap their knowledge.

(Right or Wrong you can learn from Them)

We as leaders, both elected and appointed, have a considerable number of tools in our leadership toolboxes for our use. When asked to speak with leaders, many times I will ask which tools the leader needs. What would make your job better?

At a workshop several years back, I was co-hosting the workshop and my partner in this endeavor asked the group, what tools do you wish you had been given when you took office? Answers varied toward all points of the compass, with the number one answer being more leadership training.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Task yourself with taking advantage of the leadership training available to us in this organization. So, which tools do you have at your disposal that would make your leadership position function better, and bring you into a more comfortable



position in your decision making? Yes, the number one answer is leadership training, followed by... (insert your own answer here.)

For me, the answer is simple, "what I don't want to be as a leader". We can take a look at those leaders that have productive, and in our eyes successful leadership abilities and follow along that path.

So, let's build your toolbox. Would you like to know some of the tools available to you? I offer to you several that cost nothing, and that you already have readily available.

Let's take a look at a few.

I have five personal watchwords that I use to guide me while I do my daily duties.

First of all, I suggest that you put the tool of watchwords in your personal toolbox.

I would like to share mine with you.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Let's start with **Communication**. Nobody likes to live in the dark in this organization. As leaders communication is very important, not only for yourself to gain information, but to share what you know with your membership. Keep the information cycle going and let everyone know what's going on.

How about **Energy**? Can you remember that one teacher in school that literally would put you to sleep while lecturing? Leadership is about energy and energy leads to motivation. Members will come closer to following a leader that has more than just a pulse. Put some life into your leadership and let your actions speak.

Resilient (I sometimes swap this watchword with relevance) is an important tool to have in your toolbox. We as leaders should be fluid enough in our thoughts and actions that we can open opportunities for not only ourselves but our membership as well. There will be times when you see only one way to proceed. This would be a good time to go back into the toolbox and pull out the communication tool and talk to those that have been there, done that, and bought the tee shirt. Look outside your own area of responsibility and talk to members and leaders in other areas. When I go to a District or National Event I always try to find time to sit down and strike up conversations with people I have never met before. You would be amazed at what you can find out just by listening from someone with a viewpoint driven by his or her own locality.

Relevance as a watchword and tool is a pretty heavy-duty word to use. As leaders we should be strong in the fact that everything we say and do must be relevant to our members and others that we serve.

My last watchword, **Visible**, is my guiding light tool in my personal toolbox. Throughout history we have read that great leaders are out in front of the troops leading the charge. Our members expect us to roll our sleeves up and get our hands dirty so to speak, alongside them as they go through their duties. Visibility is a very important tool in team building.

Where many leaders go wrong is to lose the reason she or he is in the leadership position. If we lose sight of our members needs, we have lost the way. Our members have to come first and foremost in each decision we make. Our members are our reason for serving.



Remembering this is one of the most important tools in your toolbox.

To toss another thought I have, in closing, is to remember that our members are our most important resource for our toolbox. Putting the above mentioned tools into our toolbox (and these are only some of the tools you already have) and using the resources of our membership will greatly help you succeed as a leader.

The final Speaker of the evening was, Berry Hill Police Chief Tim Coleman. He opened his speech with an illustration describing the patch on his police uniform which contains a Torch and an open Book. The book represents the past and the future,



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Chief Tim Coleman, Berry Hill Police Department the torch in the middle being the present. The chief acknowledged the Sea Scouts as the future and the 26,000 Coast Guard Auxiliarists as the present. The Chief had obviously done his homework.

He proceeded to give a great elevator speech on the history of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary from 1939 to the present. He affectionately referred to the Coast Guard as “The Forgotten Service”.

Yet as a Law enforcement officer and a recreational boater he recognized the vital work we do on and off the water. He then shifted the conversation quite artfully.

***“You are volunteers
who heard the call,
who stand for the flag,
and give the
pledge of allegiance
with your hearts”***

He stated he was actually bothered by the fact the members of the Civil Air Patrol and the National Guard have certain workplace protections in place, should they be called up for deployment in times of disaster response and other emergencies.

Through a recent experience he came to realize in the State of Tennessee this courtesy is not extended to members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. As a member of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police and a sitting board member of the executive and legislative side of the organization, he has made it a personal mission to lobby our state to get that changed.

He reiterated, the Coast Guard Auxiliary’s function is to support the Gold Side with far reaching abilities to do so.

He scanned the room and recognized the fact that we are volunteers “who heard the call, who stand for the flag and give the pledge of allegiance with our hearts”, he could see it by our presence and particular service ribbons on our Bravos which indicate past military service. To the Sea Scouts, he stated, you are the future and valuable members with new and different skill sets to push the mission forward. He charged them with teaming up with Auxiliary Staff officers to apply those skills to be relevant and push the mission forward.

2021 Individual Member Awards

The 2021 Awards were also presented
There were 3 awards given in each category:

1st - Division Commanders Award

2nd - Division Vice Commanders Award

3rd - Flotilla Commander Award

OPERATIONS COXSWAIN

- 1st - Brad Cochrane
- 2nd - Paul Fernandez III
- 3rd - Randy Ventress

OPERATIONS CREW

- 1st - Randy Ventress
- 2nd - Dave Knapp
- 3rd - Patrick Brown

VESSEL EXAMINER

- 1st - Charles Bader
- 2nd - Randy Ventress
- 3rd - Fred Gilman

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- 1st - Randy Ventress
- 2nd - Ramon Llorens
- 3rd - Diane Gilman

PUBLICATIONS

- 1st - Ramon Llorens
- 2nd - Randy Ventress
- 3rd - Diane Gilman

INSTRUCTOR

- 1st - Randy Ventress
- 2nd - Michael Brzezicki
- 3rd - Paul Fernandes III

PROGRAM VISITOR

- 1st - Joseph Trapp
- 2nd - William Welty
- 3rd - Fred Gilman & Diane Gilman

AVIATION

- 1st - Steven Campbell
- 2nd - Kevin Gallagher & James Williamson

082-11 AUXILIARIST OF THE YEAR

Presented by Chris Jones DCDR

An engraved Compass in a wooden box
with a plaque to: Clifton Ogden

Clifton showed great initiative in 2021 taking the courses needed to enhance his skills that would qualify him to advance to Coast Guard Auxiliary Coxswain. He is a great example to our current and new members in Division 11. He also showed us that it's what you put into yourself to be of use to the Auxiliary and Division 11. Clifton made time for teamwork, leadership, and shared his knowledge with others as he was training to advance to Coxswain. He also added two more vessels to our Division. His efforts are well appreciated by the Division.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

DIVISION COAST GUARD SUPPORT

Fred Gilman Certificate for 2021 Division Coast Guard Support USCG Auxiliary 082-11. In recognition of your outstanding and valuable services rendered beyond the call of duty in support of MSD Nashville.



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Diane Gilman In recognition of your outstanding performance in the activities and support of the USCG Auxiliary missions of Public Affairs and Change of Watch coordination, for USCG Auxiliary Division 11.

SPECIAL AWARD MARINE SAFETY RECOGNITION

Crew of Auxiliary Facility: Fred Gilman, William Welty, and Michael Miller 082-11-07, for pulling a stranded vessel from harms way as a barge was bearing down on it.

SPECIAL AWARD MARINE SAFETY RECOGNITION

Sea Scout Crew 1102 for rescuing a pair of stranded boaters and towing them to safety.



FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

Chief Tim Coleman. The chief took this time to acknowledged the, support, and sacrifice of the spouses of those in the Auxiliary as a valued members of Team Coast Guard.



RETIREMENT OF KENNETH KINGDON

Kenneth Kingdon joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary in 2005. He attained AUXOP II while training and serving honorably for over sixteen years.



Photo by Ramon Llorens, Jr. DSO-PB

Kenneth Kingdon receiving his official retirement pin from Charles Bader Flotilla Commander 11-02

THE ACTUAL CHANGE OF WATCH

Lieutenant Commander Robert Gay, Supervisor MSD Nashville, officiated as he led members, right hands raised, in their oaths of elected and or appointed officers for 2022. With that done, Change of Watch was officially done. Bravo Zulu to All who accepted the responsibility of leadership, and a special thanks to all who participated.

