



# BILGEWATER

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 39-02, Des Plaines, IL 9<sup>TH</sup> WR  
FC Arcia Moss VFC Ruben Howard FSO-PB Chas. Hague

Our URL: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=095-39-02>

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FLOTILLA MEETING – DON'T COME

There will not be a Flotilla meeting this month. Instead, the Bridge decided to hold an **END-OF-SEASON GET-TOGETHER**. This will be held on September 24, the Saturday following the third Wednesday usual meeting day. The location will be Tim's place, Riverview Auto Brokers, 1871 Busse, just ESE of downtown Des Plaines. (The advantage is that, if it rains, the party can be held indoors!) The Flotilla is buying burgers, brats, and hot dogs. We are asking for attendees to bring a dish to share. Watch for an announcement from Arcia with more details.

### MIKE'S MEDALS

Our longest standing member is probably Mike Valente. Although unable to participate much in Flotilla activities, he retained his membership and always was ready to help where he could. A few months ago our Flotilla earned an Outstanding Flotilla Award, including a medal for all current members. Your Editor mentioned this to Mike, who commented that he didn't know how many medals he was entitled to. Mike may not have known – but FSO-IT (and resident miracle worker) Bob Reczek could find out. He sent me the list of the five medals Mike has earned, and I located each, along with a five-slot medal holder. Last month I went out to Mike's place and informally presented him with his medals. I am pleased to say that he was delighted to have them. This is my favorite picture of Mike. In 2017, he was game to try Boat Crew, and took the swim test. He calls it, "I Survived!"



### DUES ARE DUE

For those of you (like your Editor) who got the notice but keep forgetting, Dues for the upcoming year should be sent to Ron Tragasz. If you no longer wish to be part of the Auxiliary, please inform Bob Reczek – don't make the Bridge guess.

### UPCOMING ELECTIONS

There will be changes in the Bridge this coming year. Arcia Moss, who has done an outstanding job as Flotilla commander this past year, will be running for Division Vice Commander. So, if things go smoothly, Ruben Howard will run for Division commander a year earlier than tradition call for. Dennis Waugh and Ryan Joslin, both worthy candidates, are running for Vice Commander.

**Coast Guard Auxiliary offers  
adventure, seeks skills beyond  
maritime experience**



(*Flotilla Commander Arcia Moss thought this article would be of interest to members of the Flotilla.*)

A 74-year-old man recently jumped from a U.S. Coast Guard small boat onto a China-flagged fishing boat off the coast of Fiji. His will to help his country and his ability to speak two languages put him alongside the active-duty Coast Guard Cutter *Munro* team who made sure he got on safely. He smiled and greeted his new friend, Lin, a 64-year-old woman who'd just made the same jump.

Willem Loupatty and Hua Lin McCaffrey joined the Coast Guard Auxiliary with visions to volunteer in support of boating safety in their local communities. Both had an idea of what the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary did.

"I thought I'd teach some basic navigation classes and maybe help out with next week's boat parade," Loupatty laughed.

"I joined to learn and help out where I could," said McCaffrey.

What neither Auxiliarist foresaw, was getting a call asking for help on an active-duty Coast Guard mission because of their ability to speak two languages.

Loupatty is fluent in Indonesian, and McCaffrey in Mandarin Chinese.

Both soon found themselves next to Coast Guard Cutter *Munro* boarding officers, in the high seas of the Pacific Ocean, thousands of miles from the nearest U.S. port.

Volunteers with skills like Loupatty and McCaffrey are in high demand in the Coast Guard Auxiliary, to help the Coast Guard detect and deter illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

IUU fishing is a pervasive global maritime security threat. By undermining international agreements and fisheries conservation measures, IUU fishing jeopardizes food security and economic security, with pronounced destabilizing effects on vulnerable coastal states. The U.S. Coast Guard is responsible

for patrolling the high seas of the Pacific Ocean, along with the territorial waters of many countries in the Indo-Pacific, to help combat IUU fishing.

The Coast Guard relies heavily upon the Coast Guard Auxiliary to tackle this daunting endeavor. The Auxiliary, made up of approximately 26,000 volunteers throughout the U.S., supports all active-duty Coast Guard missions.

During Operation Blue Pacific, Coast Guard Cutter *Munro*'s 2022 spring patrol to combat IUU fishing in the Indo-Pacific, these two temporarily-deployed Auxiliarists were critical for *Munro*'s mission success.

Auxiliarist Willem Loupatty, Vice Division Commander, Division 9, District 11 South, volunteered for a Coast Guard active-duty solicitation to get underway aboard *Munro* for seven weeks as an Indonesian interpreter. Though many fishing vessel masters *Munro* encountered on the patrol spoke Mandarin Chinese, fishermen on the boats sometimes spoke Indonesian. Loupatty was critical in communicating with crew members during several boardings. Not only did his communication abilities help put fishermen at ease while *Munro* boarding teams did their job, but his conversational skills also helped *Munro*'s crew gather information about the fishing boats' onboard environments. IUU fishing often happens in concert with other illicit activities, including the atrocities of human trafficking and forced labor, and the trafficking of illegal substances. Having Loupatty on boardings better prepared *Munro*'s crew to detect any illegal activity, in addition to fishing violations.

Loupatty was born in the city of Balikpapan, on the Island of Borneo—one of the approximate 13,000 islands that make up the country of Indonesia.

"I came to the U.S. on a student visa in 1970," said Loupatty. "I eventually joined the Marine Corps and through my service, I became an American citizen." After six years in the Marines, Loupatty joined the Army after he realized the service offered extensive maritime opportunities. He eventually made the rank of Warrant Officer and became commanding officer of several patrol boats, where he served at sea during the Persian Gulf War.

After retiring from the military, Loupatty began a new career with the Army Corps of Engineers. But

he said his passion for teaching navigation to eager sailors, something he'd learned to love in the Army, drove him to join the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

"When I volunteered for this deployment, I was excited," Loupatty chuckled. "But when I found myself on a Coast Guard small boat in 8-foot swells, taking sea spray in the face and timing my jump to get over the gunwale of a 50-meter commercial fishing boat that was actively long lining for yellow fin tuna, I thought to myself, 'Okay, this is getting real, man.'"

Auxiliarist Hua Lin McCaffrey, District 7, Division 9, Flotilla 1, in Fort Myers Beach, is a retired civil engineer who lives in Fort Myers, Florida. She was born in Beijing, China. Like Loupatty, she came to the U.S. on a student visa, but to pursue a master's degree in structural engineering at Cal State Polytechnic University at the Pomona Campus. Her student visa eventually led to a work visa. She became a U.S. citizen after getting married.

McCaffrey said she joined the auxiliary due to the options and learning opportunities she'd have as a volunteer. But she was very surprised to learn about the option to serve as a volunteer interpreter.

"I didn't join to be an interpreter, but found out right away how valued and in demand my skills as a fluent Mandarin Chinese speaker were," said McCaffrey.

"The Coast Guard Auxiliary needs more Mandarin Chinese speakers. I encourage anyone with this skill to reach out to their local Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla to explore the options for volunteering. You don't need to own a boat, or to have maritime experience to join. I've had so much fun with my local flotilla, and on my active-duty mission supporting Operation Blue Pacific aboard *Munro*." Her skills in both interpreting spoken and translating written Mandarin were essential for *Munro*'s crew to conduct boardings at sea. The majority of fishing vessels *Munro* encountered had Mandarin-speaking masters. McCaffrey's expertise was required first in *Munro*'s pilot house before each boarding.

"There's a checklist of inquires the Coast Guard must ask a vessel's master over the radio before going aboard," said McCaffrey. "Before boardings, I'd hail the vessel's master over the radio and run through the required questions, with assistance from

*Munro*'s crew members."

During dozens of boardings over treacherous waters, in sweltering heat, McCaffrey's endurance was every bit as paramount as her ability to interpret. But perhaps her interpersonal skills were what stood out to the fishing boat masters and crews she encountered.

That's what stood out most to *Munro*'s crew.

"She's spry as an Auxiliarist can possibly be," said Petty Officer 1st Class Trey Lee, a boarding team member on *Munro*. "But what shines most about Ms. McCaffrey, is her people skills. The captains and crew members smiled and sometimes laughed when she engaged with them. That goes a long way during these boardings, which can be very stressful for fishing boat masters and crews—even those who are operating legally. They're out in the middle of the ocean and suddenly our ship shows up and we want to come aboard, sometimes while they're in the middle of actively fishing, trying to earn a living. Having someone like her who can talk to them at all is an absolute necessity, but having someone with her personality makes our team that much stronger. We're out there to keep everyone honest, and she's able to explain that we're helping them when we enforce laws. They understand we're here to protect their way of life and the fish who make their living possible."

Both Loupatty and McCaffrey, while only aboard a few weeks, became part of *Munro*'s crew in ways that transcended their assigned mission.

"It was a pleasure to have these two special Auxiliarists aboard for my last few weeks as commanding officer of this cutter, and to see them become part of team *Munro*," said Capt. Blake Novak, *Munro*'s commanding officer until May 20, 2022. "The Coast Guard will continue to draw from the diverse backgrounds and skillsets of our members and the volunteers who support us. *Munro*'s crew, made up of about 150 sailors out of Alameda, California, understands that mission success depends on how well they care for one another. Loupatty and McCaffrey couldn't have volunteered on a better boat.