

# Bravo Zulu

Flotilla 17, Point Bonita District 11NR-Division 1  
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

Volume 1 Issue 1 Spring, 2012

## **Flotilla Commander's Message**



It is my pleasure to contribute to this premier issue of Bravo Zulu, Flotilla 17's new newsletter. Why Bravo Zulu? Because what we do as a Flotilla is to always strive for excellence.

As you read this newsletter, we as a Flotilla have just come off of a very exciting month. It included our first dinner meeting of 2012 where we were honored to have Captain Gary Spenik, Commanding Officer of Base Alameda as our special guest speaker.

Within days of that dinner meeting, many of our members attended D-Train in Monterey where they participated in a variety of classes as well as in a fun "Pirate Night".

But the highlight of the month was clearly the Commissioning ceremony of the USCGC Stratton (WMSL 752). I had the good fortune of watching a full dress rehearsal of the ceremony the day before the actual event when the skies were sunny and clear. It was a moving ceremony to watch. The next day, for the real thing, it rained cats and dogs. My job was to drive one of the golf carts and pick up anyone in need to transport to the ship and/or other areas on the base. When the actual ceremony began I was privileged to watch it and see First Lady Michelle Obama give the keynote address as the ship's sponsor to activate the ship and its crew. Watching the

entire crew of the ship manning the rail as the music played was something that was awe-inspiring. Those of us that participated in the event did so under very difficult conditions, but we were an asset to the Gold Side and they were very appreciative of our service.

I am looking forward to sharing many more exciting experiences with you throughout this year.

## **March 14<sup>th</sup> Flotilla Dinner Meeting**



Talk about Diversity! Oh, what a night for Flotilla 17's monthly meeting at O'Reilly's in San Francisco on March 14<sup>th</sup>! It all began with Flotilla Commander Joel

Hammer welcoming the group in the meet and greet hour for families, friends and members of Flotilla 17 before the dinner meeting. We have a transfer member from Hawaii that has joined 17.

There were several highlights, notably the presence of Captain Gary Spenik, Commanding Officer of Base Alameda. His credentials are outstanding and meritorious in a variety of areas. His accomplishments are unparalleled. His credentials are outstanding and meritorious in a variety of areas. "He was very approachable and down to earth" as stated by Ann Niemi, a Guest and wife of Division 12-01 member Dick Niemi. She thanked him for his service to our country.

Captain Spenik talked about the Diversity Vision and Policy as related to CG and the



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Auxiliary with Flotilla Diversity Officer Sonia Foster and several other members. We shared our vision of an all inclusive environment and how we draw on the talented group of Auxiliarists. He was interested in what we are doing to bring in diverse groups within the Auxiliary. Arlene Huber FSO-FN remarked that we have not done a study yet in the Auxiliary but it would be a good idea. We discussed outreach to diverse populations in the San Francisco Bay area. That includes training diverse populations with capabilities of distributing bilingual materials and utilizing translators whenever necessary and during Public Education and Vessel Examinations.

Captain Spenik discussed the opportunities available in a variety of areas to assist the Gold Side at Coast Guard Island. He is the Point of Contact (POC).

He discussed the upcoming commissioning of the Dorothy Stratton which will be a very high profile event at Coast Guard Island on March 31st. He stated the expectation is that First Lady, Michele Obama will be performing the ribbon cutting in her role as the ship's sponsor. He described the procedures for getting into the event and areas to muster at Oakland Airport and to bring appropriate identification in view of the heightened security measures for the event.

This was a truly delightful evening, enjoyed by all. *A special thanks to the Neil & Joanna Nevesny for putting this event together*

By Sonia Foster, PA

### D Train - Monterey

Friday night was Pirate Night (but what else?). There were many parrots, swords, eye patches, fun and camaraderie.

Some of the classes that I attended were an Aviation Workshop, Joint SAC (Surface, Air, Communications), Standing Paddle Board (a kind of new 'snowboard' of the water) and the very exciting Modern Maritime Piracy with an emphasis on the Arabian Sea off the coast of Somalia and the Straights of Malacca between Malay and Sumatra. According to our instructor, who lives among the pirates, French vessels are targeted more, since France pays ransom. You can't know who orders the hit – maybe a corrupt government, ship owner for insurance purposes or maybe a random selection.

Sunday morning there was a rainy tour of Station Monterey. It all started with a great breakfast made by Capt. Richard Thomas.



We got to see their powerful, rough riding aluminum single hulls and Zodiac boats with dual outboards the size of refrigerators. We were told these ride like a Cadillac because of the suspension. There are about 30 people on this base – 3 of whom are women.

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By Cynthia Dragon, PA

## Member of the month...

Meet Julie Vincenzini - who joined the Auxiliary in June of 2010 because she wanted more training than CERT could offer. She is already a Vessel Examiner, the Division PB and wants to continue Boat Crew Training and other training. She calls herself a 'real people person' (and I must agree!). Julie is a retired finance department worker and mail courier of So. S. F. Her father was Navy, her brothers were Sea Scouts and Julie was a Girl Scout. She loves to bowl and to go to ball games - especially the Giants and the 'A's'. She has 2 sons, one of whom joined with her and she is working on getting her second son and her husband on board...

## Ship of the month...



USCGC Stratton (WMSL 752) was commissioned on Saturday, March 31st. There was said to be 3,000 guests featuring First Lady Michelle Obama, the sponsor of the ship as the keynote speaker. The rain hardly let up but spirits did not seem dampened. The ship is 418' with a crew of 112 and bears the name of Capt. Dorothy C. Stratton - first Director of the CG SPAR's (women in the CG during WWII). What an honor for Flotilla 17 to have taken part in this ceremony.

## Coastie Training



Coastie Training which took place at the recent PCA Fair is not as easy as it looks. Getting Coastie to 'float' in a straight line is pretty difficult. This puppy is valued at about \$10k and that doesn't include its trailer! It is so much fun to see the faces of small children when Coastie rides alongside and talks to them. Give it a try for something really fun, entertaining and educational! With a bit more practice, you may call me Coastie Whisperer. - C Dragon

## SAR off the Florida Keys

Florida Keys Coast Guard Auxiliary Aircraft Commander Jerry Metcalf and Co-pilot Elsie Metcalf welcomed Sonia Foster Air Observer trainee for 3 extensive days of training last Dec. During training in the Piper Cherokee 140, trainee Foster assisted in searching for a missing snorkeler; a missing vessel and its owner and spotted a small craft dead in the water.

It sounded like a lot of exciting and very good work from one of our very own.



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## **Calendar of Events**

### **March**

18-19 D- Train Monterey

31 Dorothy Stratton Commissioning, CGI

### **April**

10 Deadline for Antlers

12-15 Strictly Sail, Jack London Sq,  
Oakland

14 Flotilla meeting / Aviation Swim Test

09:00-11:00, YBI-Bldg. 100 IOC Room

15 VE at Berkley Yacht Club 08:00-11:00

21 CGI Casino Night

27-29 Antlers

29 Parade of Boats

### **May**

5 OPTREX Berkeley Yacht Club

12 Flotilla meeting / tour of Vessel Traffic

Service, 09:00-11:00, YBI-Bldg. 100 IOC  
Room

19-26 NSBW

### **June**

16 Pacific Strike Team, Novato (combined  
with Flotilla meeting)

22 Tour of new Bay Bridge span

*(Note: Some future meetings will be held at  
the Treasure Island Yacht Club)*

## **Welcome New Members!**

Dick Niemi, transfer from Flotilla 01-12-1  
Waimen Chee, transfer from 140-01-18  
(Hawaii)

## **2012 Flotilla Leadership**

Flotilla Commander (FC) Joel Hammer

Flotilla Vice Commander (VFC)

Julie Vincenzini

Immediate Past Flotilla Commander (IPFC)

Diana Serchia

Communications (CM) A J Thorsson

Communication Services (CS) A J Thorsson

Diversity Advisor (DV) Sonia Foster

Finance (FN) Arlene Huber

Human Resources (HR) Joel Hammer

Information Services (IS) Joel Hammer

Materials (MA) Ron White

Marine Safety (MS) William W Burns

Member Training (MT) Paul Charlton

Navigation Systems (NS) Paul Charlton

Operations (OP) Paul Charlton

Public Affairs (PA) Jim McDermott

Publications (PB) Cynthia Calhoun Dragon

Public Education (PE) Julie Vincenzini

Program Visitor (PV) Gerald K Norton

Secretary of Records (SR) Robin Stewart

Vessel Examinations (VE) Julie Vincenzini

*Please submit your photos and stories to  
Cynthia Dragon: [sergequeen@aol.com](mailto:sergequeen@aol.com)*