



**US Coast Guard Auxiliary
East Bays Flotilla 7-11
Aids to Navigation Team, Bristol, Rhode Island
June 2023**

I hope you find this newsletter useful, informative, and maybe even amusing. Suggestions and comments are always welcome.

Very respectfully,

Don Fennessey

Your humble FSO-PB editor

Flotilla Meeting Notes

No meeting this month, but that doesn't mean that there's nothing going on in the AUX and Gold Side Coast Guard.

- Our 17 June Vessel Safety Checks at New England Boat at Melville in Portsmouth were rained out. Our gallant Dennis Chaves had to throw in the towel (literally). We'll try to reschedule for July 8.
- **Castle Hill Day** 19 August (Rain Date 20 August) Lunch for all, maybe music kids' activities, games, crafts. Family fun – touring a cutter, probably rides on a cutter or facility. Marlinspike for all. Demonstrations and Training, Games. Meet the Gold Side Coasties. We need an estimate of the number of people who might attend so let Morgan or Mark know if you plan to go.

Reminders from Mark

If you need an **Ops or TCT workshop**, you must complete it by 30 June 2023 or go into REYR. Let Mark know and we will try to find one with another Flotilla.

Boat Crew Trainees: You must take action to get your qualifications done under the current boat crew manual. Charlie Jenison has training events coming up—get your ashore and afloat requirements SIGNED OFF and then book a qualifying examiner ride. Dennis, Kevin, Raven, Brian... let me know ASAP if you plan to complete your qualification!

The first **on-water Auxiliary Paddlecraft Operator Training** was conducted last weekend. We have five Operator Trainees who passed, and two new kayaks submitted as OPFACs. Mark will be conducting another operator training in RI in late August. Anyone is welcome to join if we have space.

Coast Guard News

House Hearing Uncovers Concerning Recruitment and Retention Trends in the Coast Guard

By: René Campos May 16, 2023



Coast Guard members conduct training from the deck of the cutter Waesche (WMSL-751) off the coast of San Diego on March 29, 2023. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Taylor Bacon/Coast Guard)

Stark revelations of recruitment and retention challenges faced by the Coast Guard surfaced May 11 at a House Maritime Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee hearing – issues which leave the service well below authorized end strength and put its overall mission at risk.

“The Coast Guard has been unable to meet its recruiting goals for the past four years and is unlikely to meet targeted goals again this year,” Coast Guard Deputy Commandant Vice Adm. Paul Thomas told committee members. “The current Coast Guard workforce shortage threatens the service’s ability to conduct missions which are vital to national security and prosperity.”

The service’s 57,000 active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel, along with **21,000 auxiliary volunteers**, support vital homeland security and defense missions around the world. In partnership with the U.S. Merchant Marine, the Coast Guard conducts transportation operations across the nation’s waterways. Its work provides contributes to economic prosperity in America by ensuring safe, secure, and efficient flow of cargo through the Marine Transportation System, which includes over 360 ports and more than 25,000 miles of river and coastal waterways that serve as a gateway for 90% of all U.S. overseas trade.

Like most of the other military services, the Coast Guard struggles to meet recruiting accession goals. It missed by more than 25% in FY 2022 and is now 10% below authorized enlisted end-strength; a figure expected to reach 13% by the end of this fiscal year without immediate mitigation measures.

Recruiting shortages for the Coast Guard started well before the COVID pandemic and continue to worsen, which could hurt the service's operational capability.

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Assessment

Personnel and quality-of-life support services are key to maintaining a strong and viable all-volunteer force, and Coast Guard leaders recognize housing, health care, and childcare services are among essential programs to help prevent personnel losses. In its assessment of various recruiting and retention reports, the GAO stressed the need for the service to balance recruiting new members and retaining already trained personnel to accomplish its mission.

Several quality-of-life factors also may be affecting the Coast Guard's ability to retain servicemembers, according to GAO.

"In April 2023, GAO found that Coast Guard personnel stationed in remote areas may experience challenges accessing medical care," Heather MacLeod, director of Homeland Security and Justice at GAO, noted in her testimony. "Specifically, 17 of 43 Coast Guard clinics are in medically underserved areas and 11 of 43 were in at least one type of health provider shortage area."

To a lesser extent than the other military services, the Coast Guard has a limited understanding of its workforce needs, having conducted assessments of only 15% of its units.

GAO recommended the Coast Guard improve its workforce planning processes and data monitoring and collection, including health care and other quality-of-life program data, to better identify and address potential access concerns which could impact retention.

Further, GAO recommended DoD establish and implement a process to set housing allowance rates to help ensure they reflect current housing costs — the agency found in January 2021 that DoD had not consistently relied on quality data to set accurate housing rates for the military services. The Coast Guard uses DoD rates in its housing allowance calculations.

RAND Assessment

Many point to two key factors contributing to recent recruiting challenges: The propensity of youth to enlist, and the low number of youth who would be eligible to enlist if interested.

However, Dr. Beth Asch, Ph.D., a senior economist for the RAND Corporation, said in written testimony that these weren't the main reasons for the recent recruiting crisis.

“Research indicates that only 23% of American young adults in 2020 would meet the enlistment standards of the military services without a waiver, but a fraction of the eligible population has been low for decades,”

RAND offered short-and long-term solutions to help the Coast Guard address its recruiting crisis. In the short term, the service should:

- Meet end-strength requirements by increasing retention.
- Offer more enlistment bonuses and increase the dollar amount of those payments.
- Increase advertising and the size of the recruiter force.
- Increase the share of recruits without high school diplomas by staying within the DoD guidelines to enlist at most only 10% in this category.

In the long term, the service should:

- Gain a better understanding of the factors causing the decline in labor force participation of young people and other labor market shifts.
- Gain a better understanding of why public trust in the military has declined and how such factors affect recruiting.
- Identify how to optimize marketing and advertising in the age of social media and develop effective messaging to connect with target markets.
- Open the aperture of enlistment eligibility by validating current standards to determine if they are out of date or if they are screening out applicants who would otherwise be successful in the armed services.

Coast Guard Recruiting and Retention Work

The Coast Guard's work to combat the recruiting crisis has included:

- Establishing an incident management team focused on service-wide recruiting resources.
- Upgrading messaging and recruiting logos to resonate with Generation Z and marketing through nontraditional media outlets. This would include a focus on removing barriers to enlistment (changes to accession standards, age limits, financial, and dependency statuses, and adoption of DoD standards for medical waivers, for example).
- Opening additional recruiting offices.
- Working to establish additional training resources/incentives for recruiters.
- Expanding the number of JROTC units.

The Coast Guard has also been addressing retention challenges, looking to provide servicemembers more flexible assignments and careers. Other workforce and quality-of-life

enhancements include modifying policies to allow for dual-military assignments, expanding the childcare fee assistance subsidy program, and improving health care services and access.

“Access to health care particularly in remote areas is an acute challenge,” Thomas told lawmakers. “In the past we relied on DoD for medical care, but we need to build our own organic capacity, so we have started hiring doctors and dentists in the Coast Guard, to wear the uniform, something we’ve never done before. We will need authority from Congress to treat that workforce differently. For the first time there is a pathway from our boot camp at Camp May, N.J., to medical school.” The service also is training behavioral health technicians with corpsmen and using medical mobile units to get more care out into the field.

Coast Guard Cutter commissioned in Newport

Newport Daily News



The Coast Guard's newest cutter, the Coast Guard Cutter Maurice Jester (WPC-1152), was commissioned at Fort Adams State Park on June 2.

Lt. Terry Netusil, assumed command during a ceremony presided over by Vice Adm. Kevin Lunday, the Coast Guard Atlantic Area commander. The Maurice Jester is the third of six Fast Response Cutters that will be homeported in Boston, serving in the 1st Coast Guard District.

The Sentinel-class fast response cutter (FRC) is designed for multiple missions, including drug and migrant interdiction; port, waterway and coastal security; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense. The Coast Guard has ordered 65 FRCs to replace the 1980s-era

Island-class 110-foot patrol boats. The FRCs feature advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance equipment; over-the-horizon cutter boat deployment to reach vessels of interest; and improved habitability and seakeeping.

Born in Chincoteague, VA, Lt. Cmdr. Maurice Jester enlisted in the Coast Guard in 1917, rising to the rank of Chief Petty Officer Boatswains Mate by 1936. As the United States entered World War II in 1941, Chief Jester was promoted to Lieutenant and given command of the USCGC Icarus (WPC 110). Only one year later, LT Jester along with his crew, became the first U.S. ship to capture the crew of a German U-Boat U-352 after its sinking. For his heroics, LT Maurice Jester was awarded the Navy Cross and promoted to Lieutenant Commander for his leadership.

US Coast Guard seizes cocaine worth \$186 million in Atlantic and Caribbean

By Raja Razek, CNN June 17, 2023



Petty Officer 3rd Class Brandon New, a crew member of Coast Guard Cutter Bear, stands security watch as seized drugs are offloaded at Miami, Florida, on June 16, 2023.

Petty Officer 3rd class Eric Rodriguez/US Coast Guard

The US Coast Guard has seized more than 14,153 pounds of cocaine worth more than \$186 million, according to a news release.

Authorities said the drugs were intercepted during nine separate cases in international waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.



Bales of illegal narcotics, worth an estimated \$186 million in, are offloaded off US Coast Guard Cutter Bear (WMEC 901) in Miami, Florida, June 16, 2023.

Twelve suspected smugglers were also apprehended and face prosecution.

“The contraband offloaded today represents the professional expertise and dedication of U.S. defense and law enforcement agencies working together to combat the flow of illicit drugs through the Caribbean Region into the United States,” Lt. Peter Hutchison, duty enforcement officer at Coast Guard District Seven said in the release. “This teamwork is imperative to the identification, interception, and seizure of vessels engaged in illicit trafficking and a testament to the hard work of these crews.”



Globally, both cocaine production and demand have jumped dramatically over the past two years, according to a United Nations report released in March. Interceptions by law enforcement agencies around the world have also risen, with a record of almost 2,000 tons of cocaine seized in 2021, according to the report.

Next Flotilla Meeting – Wednesday, 12 July at 7:30 PM in person or on Zoom.
Please join us for fellowship, fun, food, and service.

Semper Paratus!