

3rd Edition, December 2024

 **Flotilla 69**
Newsletter



Service with Pride, Enthusiasm, and Professionalism

Flotilla 69, Opa-Locka

Jorge Ramirez, FC - Sadri Medina, VFC

Gustavo Montano, Editor/Publisher

The Life-Saving Importance of Wearing a Life Jacket While Kayaking

See Pg 4 Article



Photo by: Freepik.com

Table of Contents

Staff Officers & Bridge	Pg 2
New Members	Pg 2
Important Websites	Pg 2
The AuxScout Program	Pg 3
The Safety Corner	Pg 4
November Flotilla meeting	Pg 5
ASM Holiday Party	Pg 7
Aviators in Action	Pg 8
Upcoming Events	Pg 9
Editor's Note	Pg 10

Staff Officers & Bridge

FC	JORGE RAMIREZ
VFC	SADRI MEDINA
IPFC	DAVID PATLAK
FSO-HR	FRED ROSS
FSO-IS	GUSTAVO MONTANO
FSO-CS	GUSTAVO MONTANO
FSO-PA	OMAR PAEZ
FSO-FN	EDWARD KIRSH
FSO-PV	PHILIP CASTORO
FSO-PB	MOSHE TEITELBAUM
FSO-MA	ANGEL AULET
FSO-VE	SADRI MEDINA
FSO-MS	SADRI MEDINA
FSO-OP	RICARDO MANZANO
FSO-PE	GEORGE ZIMA
FSO-AS	DANIEL MUELHAUPT
FSO-CM	TEODORO TUNDIDOR
FSO-SR	ALBERT SOLIS

New Members Welcome

The Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Vice Commander, Flotilla Staff Officers, and members eagerly extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our flotilla:

- Rene Alberto Santana
- Nicolas George Sakelis
- Lucas Arteaga
- Apolo Lagarde IV

Important Websites

- Coast Guard Auxiliary Website: www.cgaux.org
- National Testing Center: <http://ntc.cgaux.org/>
- 7029 Webform: <https://webforms.cgaux.org/forms/7029/>
- AUXDATA II: <https://uscg.experience.crmforce.mil/auxcommunity/s/login/>
- District 7 Website: <http://www.uscga-district-7.org/>
- Distric 7 Help Desk: <https://helpdesk.uscga-district-7.org/>
- Flotilla 69 Website: <http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-06-09>
- Flotilla 69Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067640187135>

THE AUXSCOUT PROGRAM

By Daniel Muelhaupt, FSO-AS

The AUXSCOUT program has successfully recruited our first Auxiliarist from the Sea Scouts into Flotilla 69, Opa-Locka, Lucas Leon. Welcome Auxiliarist Leon!



All photos by scouting.webdamdb.com

The official youth program for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, AUXSCOUT, has as one of its goals, to recruit new members from the Sea Scouts into the Auxiliary. Sea Scouts 14 to 17 years old can enroll in the Coast Guard Auxiliary. A significant amount Auxiliary training parallels Sea Scout badge qualification training, so they not only earn credit for their Auxiliary training, but also qualify for Sea Scout badges. Our goals are to recruit as many Sea Scouts as we can, which will not only benefit the Sea Scouts themselves, but the Coast Guard as a whole because we are hoping these young Auxiliarists will choose a career in the active-duty Coast Guard or another maritime career.



All photos by scouting.webdamdb.com

In addition to this success, we are making progress on getting the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) unit at MAST Academy to charter a Sea Scout Ship, and in turn recruit more Auxiliarists.



All photos by scouting.webdamdb.com



High Adventure In, On, Around, and Under the Water

Sea Scouting is an inclusive program through the Boy Scouts of America for all youth aged 14-21 (or 13 and completed the 8th grade). It's operated through Sea Scout Ships, units of youth and advisors just like you! Find a ship near you and join the fun!

For more information regarding AUXSCOUT please contact Daniel Muelhaupt at danielmuelhaupt@aol.com



Stay Afloat: The Life-Saving Importance of Wearing a Life Jacket While Kayaking

Article by Gustavo Montano

Kayaking is an exciting way to explore nature and enjoy time on the water, but it comes with risks that should not be underestimated. In 2024 alone, tragic incidents across the United States, including Florida, have highlighted the critical importance of wearing a life jacket. Too many lives have been lost in accidents that could have been prevented with this simple safety measure.

In South Carolina this August, a 19-year-old kayaker drowned during a storm when he fell into the water without wearing a life jacket. Similarly, in Oklahoma, a 20-year-old's kayak capsized during a family outing, and he, too, drowned without a flotation device. These are just two of the many preventable tragedies that serve as stark reminders of how quickly a fun day on the water can turn fatal without proper safety precautions.



Florida is no stranger to kayaking accidents. With its vast waterways and year-round boating activities, the state sees a significant number of recreational boating incidents every year. According to U.S. Coast Guard data, drowning accounts for 75% of all boating fatalities, and in 85% of these cases, victims were not wearing life jackets. Florida's calm waters can often create a false sense of security, leading kayakers to forgo this essential piece of safety equipment.

Wearing a life jacket isn't just for beginners. Even experienced paddlers are at risk of capsizing due to unexpected factors like sudden storms, strong currents, or hidden obstacles beneath the water. A life jacket can keep you afloat if you're injured, fatigued, or caught off guard.

Life jackets are lightweight, comfortable, and widely available, making it easier than ever to prioritize safety on the water. For families, ensuring that children wear properly fitted life jackets is particularly vital. Parents and guardians can set a strong example by wearing one themselves, reinforcing the importance of this life-saving habit.

As we continue to enjoy Florida's beautiful waterways and beyond, let's make a collective commitment to safety. Always wear a life jacket when kayaking, and encourage your friends and family to do the same. It's a simple step that can save lives and prevent devastating tragedies.

Stay safe, stay afloat, and remember—your life is worth it.

Flotilla Meetings

November Meeting

The November meeting was a memorable event, featuring the presentation of multiple awards to Auxiliarists, including recognitions for 40 and 15 years of dedicated service. The meeting also held the elections for the 2025 Flotilla Commander and Vice Commander, marking an exciting transition for the upcoming year. Congratulations to all award recipients and the newly elected leadership!



From left: David Simmons, Jorge Ramirez, Flotilla Commander. Presenting An special award for 40 years of service. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left: Jorge Ramirez, Flotilla Commander, Michael Okeeffe, Presenting the Awards of Commodore's Certificate of Excellence and Auxiliary Performance Award. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left: Jorge Ramirez, Flotilla Commander, Fred Ross, Thomas Powers, Presenting the awards for Commodore's Certificate of Excellence. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left: Jorge Ramirez, Flotilla Commander, Theodore Tundidor, Presenting the Auxiliary Performance Award. Photo by Gustavo Montano

Flotilla Meetings (continued)



From left: Jorge Ramirez, Flotilla Commander. Apolo Lagarde IV. Presenting the certificate of Membership. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left: Jorge Ramirez, Flotilla Commander. Ruben Paz. Presenting an special certificate of Auxiliary Membership Service Award for his 15 years of service. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left: Lucas's father, Lucas Leon, Lucas's Mother, Daniel Muelhaupt, Raquel Ramirez. Presenting the Certificate of Basic Qualification Training. Photo by Gustavo Montano

ASM Holiday Party

Air Station Miami hosted its annual holiday party for children, bringing joy and holiday cheer to the community. Auxiliary members played an active role in the festivities, with a special highlight being Gustavo Montano arriving as Santa Claus—flying in on a helicopter! The event was a wonderful celebration of the season, showcasing the strong bond between the Auxiliary and Air Station Miami.



Gustavo Montano as Santa flying over Miami Beach before landing at the Air Station Miami to celebrate and take pictures with the children. Photo by Alex Johnson, AET3.



Gustavo Montano Holiday Party, Air Station Miami. Photo by Guillermo Deza.

**Safe Boating Campaign...
Take the pledge**

**FREE
Vessel Safety Check
& Decal**

cgaux.org/boatinged



cgaux.org/vsc



Aviators in Action

These photos were submitted by our dedicated Flotilla Aviators, who play a vital role in supporting air operations. Through their efforts, they patrol countless missions and log an impressive number of hours, making a significant impact. Thank you for your invaluable service and commitment.



Thomas Powers performing the pre-flight check at North Perry Airport. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left to right: Ted Kowalchuk, Observer; Tom Powers, Aircraft Commander; and Chris Werley, Second in Command Pilot at North Perry Airport, Pembroke Pines Fl. Photo by Gustavo Montano



From left to right: Tom Powers, Aircraft Commander and Ted Kowalchuk, Observer. Photo by Gustavo Montano



Gustavo Montano, Observer Trainee, flying over the Keys. Photo by Gustavo Montano



Thomas Powers, performing the brief before flying out of North Perry Airport. Photo by Gustavo Montano

Upcoming Events

2025 USCG Auxiliary Division 6 Change of Watch and Awards Brunch

Dear Division 6 Members,

You are cordially invited to the 2025 USCG Auxiliary Division 6 Change of Watch and Awards Brunch, where we will celebrate the accomplishments of 2024 and honor our newly elected officials for 2025. Let's come together to show our support for the new leadership and enjoy a memorable event with fellowship and camaraderie. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Ronald J. Kaplan, Commander
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Division 6**

cordially invites you to the

**2025 Change of Watch for Division 6, and all the Flotillas FCs and VFCs
and Awards Brunch**

at which

**Ronald J. Kaplan, Division Commander (elect)
and
Henry Kaufman, Division Vice Commander (elect)**

will resume the watch of
Division 6, USCG Auxiliary District 7
Event Details:

Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025
Time: 10:00am to 1:00pm
Location: Miami Shores Country Club
10000 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami Shores, Florida 33138

Cost:
\$25 per person (via PayPal or check) by January 3
\$35 per person at the door

R.S.V.P. by 3 January 2025
POC: Nichole R. Betterson, SO-PA

Military: Tropical Blue
Civilian: Business Casual

To remit payment by check, please make payable and mail to: USCG Auxiliary D7/Division 6, Attn: Edward Kirsh, SO-FN, 10023 Bay Harbor Terrace, Bay Harbor Island, FL 33154-1509.

Editor's Note



Gustavo Montano, FSO-CS, SO-IS
Photo by Gustavo Montano

As we close out the year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who submitted photos and articles for this year's Flotilla 69 newsletter. Your contributions were instrumental in making the newsletter a valuable source of information and connection for all of us.

Looking ahead to 2025, I invite all Auxiliary members, especially Flotilla Staff Officers, to join me in supporting and strengthening our newsletter efforts. Your photos, articles, and stories are vital to ensuring the continuation and growth of this publication. With your help, we can produce newsletters more frequently and make them even more engaging and informative.

Please consider sharing your experiences, program updates, and memorable moments throughout the year. Every contribution helps showcase the incredible work we all do and keeps our flotilla connected and inspired.

Wishing everyone a joyous holiday season and a wonderful New Year in 2025! I remain committed to improving the newsletter and bringing you even more valuable content in the year ahead.

FREE Vessel Safety Check & Decal



cgaux.org/vsc

