



# United States Coast Guard Auxiliary FLOTILLA 7-16 Gulfport, Florida



Volume XIV  
2025 2nd Quarter

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Howard Bush, FC



# THE BEACON



## "RBS for Dogs and Cats"

Boaters have pets. Some dogs and cats, just like humans, really love boating. In late February, Gulfport held a day long dog rescue and assorted other activities and vendors related to dogs. 7-16 member, Dorothy Pratt, suggested focusing RBS for pets! Pratt secured a space, obtained special materials including 7 sizes across multiple styles of doggie pfd's, learned how to use them in order to demonstrate them on visitor's pups. Pratt also collected more than 100 names of people who are interested in the Auxiliary which will be added to our database of interested public in Auxiliary 7-16.



Tent at "Get Rescued" festival in Gulfport, FL. 2/25/28. Photo by Howard Bush

# OFFICERS:

## Flotilla Commander:

Howard Bush

## Vice Flotilla Commander

Marty Richardson Jr.

## FSO-CS & SR:

C. Anderson

## FSO-CS & IS & PA:

T. Steiger

## FSO-FN:

W. Melnyczenko

## FSO-HR & PV & VE

H. Bush

## FSO-MA:

FSO- PB

W. Hoover

## FSO-PE & MT



Dorothy Pratt, FSO-MA, staffing the tent at "Get Rescued." Photo by Howard Bush

## THE ORIGINS OF FLOTILLA 7-16's Gulfport Home

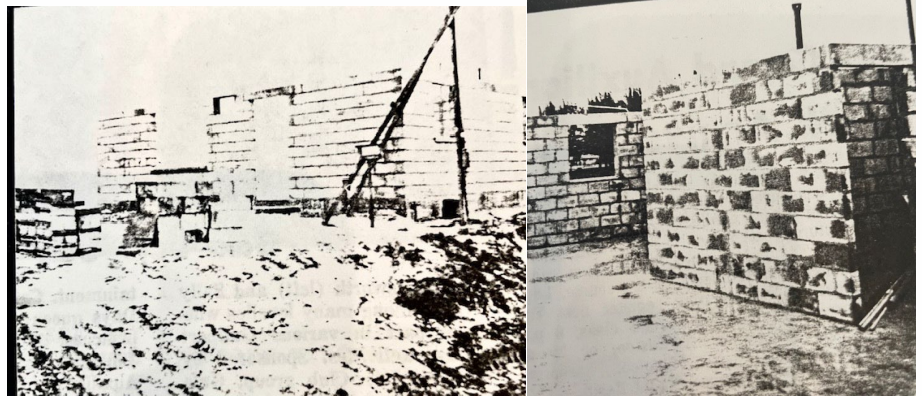
(adapted from "This is a History of Flotilla 7-16" by William A. Burke, undated) by Wayne Hoover, FSO-MT & PB.

During 1960-61, a group of men and their families became friends in Gulfport. All had ties to the water, some commercial, some pleasure. Looking for a way to provide service, they settled on the idea of creating a new flotilla in the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. On May 5, 1961, Flotilla 070-07-16 was born. Henry Falk, a retired Senior Pilot on the Panama Canal, was elected Flotilla Commander, and F.D. Fantz Vice Commander.



Keep your contact information current at AUX DATA II. Use link.

<https://uscg.experience.crmforce.mil/auxcommunity/s/login/tto://f>



Photos of early construction of Flotilla 716 (top row) the finished product, 1960s. Finished (second row). (Photos courtesy of Gulfport (FL) History Center.

Initially, the Flotilla met twice each month in a room provided rent free by the City of Gulfport. But the room was only available if not used by a paying customer. Also, it had no storage for Flotilla equipment. So, in 1962 a plan was created for building a Flotilla building. The estimate for materials needed was \$3,000. This money was borrowed from Union Trust Co. and paid back over four years at \$2/month/member. On July 31, 1962 the Flotilla was incorporated with the state as the Gulfport Marine Training and Rescue Group, a non-profit.

## Contact Us:

### Telephone:

630-674-5352

### Email:

[716auxgulfport@gmail.com](mailto:716auxgulfport@gmail.com)

### Website:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=070-07-16>

### "The Beacon" or Facebook

### Submissions:

[716tts@gmail.com](mailto:716tts@gmail.com)

A land lease at the current location was negotiated with the City of Gulfport on June 6, 1962. The city land was in an excellent location, except that it was underwater at high tide. At a cost of \$50, the channel was dredged and the spoil placed to raise the building location to three feet above high tide.

Flotilla members spent every weekend for nearly a year working on building the new flotilla building. With the exception of erecting the block wall and the licensed plumbing, all work was done by members, including digging the foundation. An emergency seawall was built with discarded telephone poles (later replaced with a true seawall by the city).

The new building was used by Flotilla 070-07-16 until unfortunately severely damaged by Hurricane Helene in the fall of 2024.



The morning after Helene. Photo by Wayne Hoover



# Instructor Marty Richardson



Photo by Tom Steiger

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Steiger: This is an interview with Marty Richardson, one of our instructors in Flotilla 7-16. Tell me why do you do the instructor role?

Richardson: Two reasons. One, I really enjoy being an instructor. I've done it for years. And two, one of our goals is to be an advocate for recreational voting safety.

So what we do in our class is teach people how to be safe boaters. And teach them all the latest information and all that so that they can go out and hopefully stay out of trouble.

Steiger: Alright. What's involved in, both becoming an instructor and then your preparation and everything for the classes you teach?

Richardson: Well, each specialty in a auxiliary is, is also based on the qualifications and certification process that you have in active duty Coast Guard. So we go through a number of courses online, and then we go in and teach classes a total of four hours. And then we get certified and that becomes our specialty, one of the specialties that we can, we can do so, and then you teach classes on a regular basis and keep your certification current.

Steiger: thanks. What goes into your preparation to teach a class?

Richardson: A specific class. Most of our courses specifically are, uh, PowerPoint or video based, so we take time to learn that. Uh, we think about any stories we like to tell from experiences. Different instructors have different stories, so we spend time not just learning the material. Each student gets books and flyers. We give a verbal presentation based on [USCGAUX approved] PowerPoint or other video. And that is an eight hour course (Boat US) and it also qualifies you for the state of Florida's. Boating ID card.

Steiger: last question. Where do you do this instruction?

Richardson: Currently we're temporarily located at 617 49th Street South in Gulfport, the Gulfport Community Center. And we do that usually every second Saturday of the month. And to get on the roster, you merely contact me or email me through phone or email or text.

Call or text: (630) 674-5352 or email:

[merichardsonjr.mr@gmail.com](mailto:merichardsonjr.mr@gmail.com)





## ON GOING COURSES:

A \$40 course (BS&S) that includes textbook, One day class and your certificate.

Special DISCOUNT rates are available for couples, families and groups of two or more! Call 630-674-5352 or 716auxgulfport@gmail.com

(Auxiliarist's come the 2nd Saturday of each month and coteach)

## AVIALABLE COURSES ON LINE:

Welcome to the New National Testing Center

List of Training Courses, Exams, and Manuals... and take a course.

<http://ntc.cgaux.org/TrainingCourses.php>

Don't forget to visit our Facebook page... leave a comment!

<https://www.facebook.com/uscgauxflotilla7.16/>  
E-Directorate What's New!

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=E-DEPT&category=WHATSNEW>

## Who is new member Laurie Cooper?

Ever since a visit to Gulfport in 2017, I have been interested in spending more time in the area. An Oklahoman native, I have frequently moved due to career opportunities or military deployment. During a 30-year career, I worked for both the manufacturing industry and private utilities. From 1993 to 2000, I served in the USNR Medical Service Corps as an Environmental Health Officer. After retirement as a Environment, Safety ,Health and Security Manager in 2021, I lived in northern NJ until my move to Gulfport this March.

During one of my visits in 2024, I stopped at the Flotilla 7-16 booth while attending the Tuesday Gulfport Market. This visit led to attending a Safe Boating Class (SBC) in May taught by Flotilla VCDR Marty Richardson. I was intrigued by the opportunities the USCGAUX provided to members for involvement and service to the Gulfport community. After further



discussion with Flotilla CDR Howard Bush, I decided to join the Flotilla with a long-term goal to move to Gulfport as a permanent resident.

I believe in service to the community. Whether this involves planning blood drives, serving as a volunteer firefighter, working as an election poll worker, or engaging with the community on Safe Boating initiatives, I am committed to volunteer my time, as a new Gulfport resident, to causes that improve the quality of life and safety for community members.

Participation in the USCGAUX also provides unique opportunities for training. I am currently studying and performing on-the-job training to become a Telecommunications Operator (TCO). Certification as a TCO enables me to support missions and training that serve to support the overall mission of the Coast Guard.

My hope is people will stop by the Flotilla 7-16 booth, visit the Flotilla website and/or pick up one of the safe boating brochures provided at local businesses. I would like for citizens to be motivated in ensuring safety for themselves, family and friends on or near the water.



TCO Trainee Laurie Cooper Photo by Wayne Hoover

## Welcome new members: Eric Denne

716 Members Achievements:

Laurie Cooper, Program Visitor April 23, 2025

Tom Steiger Boatcrew Member May 17, 2025

## Did you know the Coast Guard has a marching song?

<https://www.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=081-07-04&category=song>



Commander Bush

### From the Center Console

Steering without a building since September of 2024 Hurricanes has been a challenge to say the least. Because of the active members of USCG Auxiliary 716, we have stayed on course . We are over 90% productivity with VEs and over 20 PV in Gulfport alone, RBS classes at the Gulfport Community Center and flotilla meetings as well . May 29 we had the Hurricane Seminar at the Catherine Hickman Theater .Our Booth at the Gulfport Tuesday Market ,now going on 5 years, is going strong and has been renewed for September - December 2025. June market will be our kick off for Hurricane Season and last one for the summer. WE are the only fully active radio facility in Division 7 with over 17 Radio Guards since November of 2024. NSBW was May 17-23 and we received a Proclamation from Mayor Love on May 6. R/A Supervisor Shannon Farrell had no updates on the USCGA Building. Like I said it's because of you ,the active members that have taken on multiple staff positions, BZ to Chris Anderson, Laurie Cooper, Wayne Hoover, Bob McCormick ,Wally Melnyczenko, Marty Richardson, Tom Steiger keeping our course steady and true.



Howard Bush, FC

