

THE SIGNAL BRIDGE



Newsletter for Flotilla 14-2, Arlington

Vol. L - No. 6 September 2025

Bill Sekeres, FSO-PB

FROM THE PILOT HOUSE

A portion of my remarks are copied from an email I sent to the members who participated in a youth PE opportunity last Tuesday.

At the request of Station Mayport we moved our September flotilla meeting from last Tuesday to September 9th to allow us the opportunity to join the active duty, who trailered a 25ft fast response boat, at Ponte Vedra High School for the first meeting of the year for multiple Cub Scout packs. During the evening fifty cub scouts rotated through stations comprised of the CG boat, knot tying, kayak safety and a line toss to a dummy outfitted in an anti-exposure suit.

My point here is to follow up on how we became involved, how it developed and turned out. In the beginning there was confusion among some of the “principals” which caused anxiety, to be sure. With that in mind I wrote to our participating members before the event the following, in part: *There has been some "discussion" about this event coming up quickly and causing last minute frustrations in securing gear and travel. As you can see above, the development of this was not the linear process that we as individuals prefer in how our days go by. Our days don't always go as planned. Nor do they, as they present them self to us. Because of that I'd like to relay some perspective in how we all should treat the unknown.*

The three bywords of the USCG honor guard in Arlington, VA are Pride, Poise and Professionalism. That word poise is described by the honor guard as adjusting to whatever happens when events don't go as planned or expected. But as we adjust to the unknown, professionalism and pride are never sacrificed. What I just explained fits tomorrow in that "unknowns" developed outside our control. But, none the less, our pride and professionalism requires us to adjust "on the fly" in planning and execution in order to provide a meaningful, professional experience for those to whom we have made a commitment.

My message last week also applies to all members of 14-02. I see it often in how we rise to the occasion in executing our routine (is there ever such a thing?) activities and especially special events that afford us only a short term planning window; such as last week.

I want you to know I appreciate you.

Bill Sekeres, FC

Staff Officer Reports

Communications (FSO-CM):

FC NOTE- Jeff has made significant progress in becoming certified in the use of radios as well as setting up equipment at his house. We'll get details at our meeting this Tuesday.

Communication Services

Our Flotilla website and calendar are up to date at the present time. We are working on adding the Monthly Meeting Minutes (will be added after approved).

If you would like something added to the calendar, feel free to contact me. After approval from the FC, we will add the information. Please review our site, any comments are welcome. Flotilla Website URL: [Welcome to the Flotilla 14-2, District 7 Web Site](#)

Tom Anderson, FSO-CS

Finance

The September meeting related to finance will center around a review of this years balance sheet, the budget and dues for 2026.

Bill Sekeres, FSO-FN

Information Services

Copied from email by our DSE Commodore:

Martin S. Goodwin, Ph.D.
District Commodore
U.S. Coast Guard
Auxiliary
Southeast District

Southeast District Members,

The National Information Technology Directorate has advised that AUXDATA II is likely to become unavailable beginning 20 September 2025 due to a contract issue. At this time, we do not know whether the outage will last only a few days or extend for several weeks.

What This Means

- **Backups:** National staff will download and securely store a static backup of the AUXDATA II database. Note that this will be a static backup that will not accept inputs or updates during the AUXDATA II shutdown. Units do not need to perform their own backups, but should be prepared to download important information necessary to sustain activities and operations.
- **Reports:** National will run a set of critical reports, but flotillas, divisions, and districts should also run any reports needed for day-to-day operations before the shutdown.
- **Training:** The National Testing Center (NTC) and Moodle Online Classroom will remain online. Members may continue training, but course completions cannot be uploaded into AUXDATA II until it is restored. Completions should be stored locally for later upload.

REYR corrections and competency certifications will require paper tracking during the outage.

- **Hours Reporting:** Members should keep track of their hours for later entry. Encourage use of the 7029 webform. 99-coded hours may be consolidated into a single YTD entry to save time. Members should update their hours and close out any open Activity Logs ahead of the 20 September cutoff.
- **Patrols:** Patrol Orders approved through 15 September should be completed promptly with paperwork filed. Follow the recently released patrol order guidance distributed by the OTO.
- **AUXDirectory:** AUXDirectory will be static as of 20 September. Contact lists and certification rosters will be available but not updated. Units should take this opportunity to update phone calling trees in the event that a pre/post storm member accountability effort is required.
- **New Members:** Since AUXDATA II is required to assign member numbers, enrollment of new members will be on hold until further notice. National will be looking at a couple of options to get new members temporary member numbers for purposes of access to core training classes in Moodle, but details on that are not yet known.

Actions Required Before 15 September

- Review and submit all open Activity Logs by 10 September.
- Submit any outstanding hours, especially 7030 entries, as soon as possible.

Final Notes

This is not the first time we've faced a system outage. Most will recall the transition to AUXDATA II. While it will be challenging, we will continue operations, maintain accurate records, and resume normal processing when the system is restored.

If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out directly to your chain of leadership or your IS officer.

Very Respectfully,
Martin

With the following mind, It'll be important to use the Monthly Cumulative Hours spreadsheet I've sent to you in the past but has now been updated for you to track hours from September through December. I'm recommending, starting with columns G-J (add more if you need them) that you change the column headings for hours related to your certifications.

The spreadsheet will be attached to the email used to send this publication.

Bill Sekeres

Materials

1. Received stamps from ANSC and provided them to the FSO-PE.
2. Provided 20 USCG Activity books to Station Mayport for there PA Event.
3. Took Garbage Placards from the Trailer Supply for the next future PE classes. The Trailer still has plenty for PA events.

Marc Lang, FSO-MA.

Marine Safety

Proposed Events:

Oct 9th FL. DEP Safety Fair

Oct 24-26 Jax Beaches Air Show- Application Submitted

Nov 11 Jax Veterans Day Parade- Application Submitted And Approved

1. USCG Marine Safety Items

A. 3 March 2023- New Orleans La. A Barge was being pushed through a Bridge by a Tug at Night. The type of Bridge was a Swing bridge. Because the navigation lights were unlit on the swing part, the Barge hit the bridge. It took 6 days to repair the bridge so it could be able to be used. The USCG was Not notified of the Nav. Lights being out, so they could not issue a Notice To Mariners.

B. 30 November 2022- On the Ohio River a Barge was being pushed by a Tug. The Deckhand on the front of the Barge lost his balance and fell overboard. The Life Jacket he was wearing was unstrapped, and the jacket was seen floating, but his body was never recovered. If you are going to wear a Life Jacket, you Need to Fasten the Straps Holding It To your Body. In this case the Life Jacket came off the deckhand, the Jacket Floated, the Deckhand did not.

2. Bridge Discrepancies

Between 0500-0600 I checked the lights on the J. T. Butler Blvd, Beach Blvd, Atlantic Blvd, Wonderwood and the Sisters Creek Hecksher Drive Bridges.

I reported these findings to the SE District Bridge Section Supervisor.

3. Whale Protection Case

A judge refused to allow Conservation Groups to defend a lawsuit between NOAA and a Boat owner. The boat owner is challenging the legitimacy of the Speed Limit Rule requiring vessels not to exceed 10 MPH in a certain area during certain times. The boater went at a speed of 18 knots for 200 miles. Right Whales are one of the most endangered species. The boater contends that NOAA did not have the authority to issue the rule or access him a fine of \$14,250. The Conservation Groups wants to protect the whales and assist NOAA in the case. The Judge refused to allow them to help.

4. New Products

A. Imtra.com- Distributor for various Companies, one of which is

zipwake- Automatic Out Board Motor Trim Control System

B. Ultrasonic Sender- A liquid Level Sensor for Diesel, Gas, Oil, Water or Sewage. It mounts to the top of the tank with No tank Penetration. Includes gauge and wiring harness. USMarineProducts.com

C. Monterey Bay Dog PFD- 2 flotation pontoons roll the dog upright if he goes in the water upside down, chest flotation to keep the dogs head elevated above the water and it has 2 handles to easily lift the dog from the water using both hands. baydog.com

D. Marine Safety Graphics Decals. Ex: Gas, Oil, Diesel, Water, Sewage, Rod Holder Do Not Fill! and others and different sizes. marinesafetygraphics.com E. HullJacket- Clear Epoxy Coat your boats bottom. s-g-marine.com

F. RockerBall 2" Trailer Ball Coupler, for a smoother tow as it gives forward and back- curtmfg.com

G. Solar Powered Boats Bilge Pump- never wear down your boats batteries
raintakerusa.com

H. Liquitube- never get a flat tire on your trailer or vehicle. Amazon.com

1 800 526 5555

I- Stugeron or Cinnarizine- for anti-nausea (seasickness) vertigo, chemo patients etc. Sold at yachting ports around the world.

5. Better Ice Retention

A cooler needs to be cold before you use it. Store it in a cool place and place a bag of ice in it the night before. Air Pockets accelerate the time for the ice to melt. Add more ice or a towel to fill the space. Keep openings to a minimum and for a short time. Keep the cooler out of the sunlight or cover it with a towel. Do not drain the water, it is very cold and will keep the contents chilled. Block ice lasts longer than cubed or shaved ice.

6. Dredging or Are You Deep Enough?

Your boat needs at least 2-3 feet of water under it at low tide. You do not want it sitting in the mud and being unable to use only at specific times.

Sound the area around the boat to determine where it needs to be dredged.

Dredging costs run about \$35 to \$65 per cubic yard. About 100 cubic yards would be needed to impact water depth around and under a typical boat dock.

7. Coast Guard to the Rescue

Years ago the military services had amphibious type aircraft. The plane was called the HU-16. The U.S. Air Force used the HU-16 to retrieve rocket parts after being fired from Cape Canaveral. On a mission, the HU-16 landed and got the parts, but the seas became too rough and the plane could not take off. It taxied back to shore instead. But it soon ran low on fuel and would run out before it got to land. The Air Force had no way to get fuel to the plane. They asked the USCG for help. A USCG idea came to mind! They could put a fuel truck with Av-gas on a buoy tender and refuel the plane that way. The truck was put on the buoy deck with the ship's crane and after arriving at the plane, a hose was sent over and the plane refueled. It was the first time a plane was refueled from a tank truck out at sea. You can correctly guess, it was not covered in any of the manuals.

8. Florida Sales Tax Holidays Related to Boating and the Outdoors

HB 7031 Permanent All Year Round

Life Jackets

Fire Extinguishers

Dry Cell Batteries EX: AA, C, D etc

Portable Gas Cans 5 Gallons or Less

Insert Repellent

Sunscreen

Tax Holidays Dates Every Year 8 Sept- 31 Dec: Hunting, Fishing and Camping items

9. Sharks may Help with Hurricanes

The University of Delaware with a grant from NOAA is placing sensors on Blue and Mako Sharks because of their movement and the way they dive. NOAA will be able to observe parts of the ocean unable to be seen before. The sensors will gather temperature and how it changes with depth. Ocean heat content drives Hurricanes. With this info, they can predict strength, intensity and the direction of the storm. The tags will not remain on the shark permanently; with time the sensors will fall off.

10. A Little About Storms and the Sea

Buys Ballots Law- In the Northern Hemisphere, Hurricanes turn Counter-Clockwise.

With your back to the wind, extend your arms to form a T. The left Hand points to the Low, The Right Hand points to the High. The Low is the hurricane's center.

Wind speed- 1 mph-35 mph wind is 6 to 9 times the velocity.

110 MPH = it goes to 18 times the velocity which is 375 tons of wind velocity trying to push over a vessel.

Rough Guide- wind to wave heights = 2 to 1
60 mph winds = 30 foot wave heights

Afterthoughts:

- If you want to do great things in your world, spend some time in ours.
- How to tell if Sharks are in the water- Dip your Finger in the Water, if it is Salty, there are Sharks.
- If It Can Be Done Incorrectly, It will!
- Thoughts on Retirement- Age is simply the number of years the world has been enjoying you.
- When you run a race and reach the finish line take 2 more steps- The message- Do Not stop at your goal, go further.

Marc Lang, FSO-MS

Member Training

Breast Insignia

What are they and how do I qualify to get one?

Breast Insignia (or Badges) are uniform devices that represent full qualification and experience in Mission areas. These devices are worn on the left side of the uniform above (and sometimes below) your medals or ribbon rack. Breast Insignia are used by all branches of the US Military. The very first breast insignia established was the Naval Aviator Insignia (their Wings) in 1917. Followed by the US Army Air Corps Insignia in 1919. The first Maritime Breast Insignia was the Submarine Qualification Badge (aka Dolphins) in 1924. Today we will look at a few US Coast Guard Breast Insignia and how you can qualify to receive them.



Auxiliary Cutterman

The Auxiliary Cutterman Insignia is intended to identify and recognize the commitment of Coast Guard Auxiliaries providing direct support of the USCG Cutter Fleet. Requirements: 52 days per year (24 of which must be underway) aboard a cutter, 65 feet in length or greater, for a minimum of 2 years. PQS qualify in Damage Control NAVEDTRA 43119 301-308. Qualify in one Watch Quarter Station Bill (WQSB) position.



Recreational Boating Safety

The Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Insignia Award recognizes extraordinary effort of Auxiliaries who provide strong support to RBS programs. Auxiliaries must earn 120 points for two consecutive years (240 in total) to earn the RBS Device Award. Points are awarded as follows.

vessel Examinations

1 point per inspection

Program Visitation

1 point per visit

Legislative Outreach

1 point per hour

- Federal Legislature
- State Legislatures
- State Boating Admins

Public Education

1 point per hour as lead

½ point per hour as aide

Public Affairs

1 point per hour

- External Print Media
- Broadcast Media
- Speeches/Talks
- Community Relations

Breast Insignia (part 2)

In this article we will continue to look at the various Breast Insignia of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. Last time we looked at some of the Breast Insignia of the Surface operations mission set.

Today we will look at the Aviation operations mission sets.

USCG Auxiliary Aviator Breast Insignia



A Coast Guard Auxiliary Aviator is a volunteer civilian pilot who uses their own approved aircraft to support U.S. Coast Guard missions, such as search and rescue, maritime safety, and pollution response, under official U.S. Coast Guard orders. To earn the Aviator Breast Insignia you must join the AUXAIR program, become a certified pilot with sufficient flight hours, pass aviation qualification exams and required training like the Crew Resource Management course and emergency egress, and meet medical and security requirements. For more Information please refer to Auxiliary Operations Manual COMDTINST M16798.3

USCG Auxiliary Aircrew Breast Insignia



A Coast Guard Auxiliary Air Crew Member, or "Air-Crew," is a specially trained non-pilot volunteer who serves as part of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Aviation (AUXAIR) program, performing duties such as observation, communication, and active searching during airborne missions alongside a qualified pilot. To earn the Air Crew Breast Insignia you must first become "Basically Qualified" (BQ), next you must become certified as an Air Observer. You will then need to pass the Air Crew training syllabus, complete a minimum of five hours of air crew flight training, and pass the necessary National Testing Center exams, all while meeting the ongoing requirements for medical screening and safety training.

Aviation Mission Specialist Badge



The Coast Guard Aviation Mission Specialist handles specific, technical, or mission-focused tasks that do not fall under traditional aircrew roles but are crucial for mission success. Examples include Sensor System Operators, Aerial Ice Observers, Tactical Systems Operators, and Aviation Medical Technicians. To earn the USCG Aviation Mission Specialist (AMS) Badge, you must complete the required training for your chosen specialty, such as sensor systems, tactical systems, or ice observation, and pass Aviation Test A and Test B, followed by a final examination on a specific mission platform. This is achieved by fulfilling the requirements for the specific platform and mission chosen, which also involves passing a Class II Flight Physical, completing the AMS and specialty syllabuses, and demonstrating competency in the air to a qualified flight examiner. For more information see COMDTINST M3710.1.

Noah Kalemkiewicz

Public Education

Our most recent BA course on 30 August was very successful with good student participation.

Evaluation Report	Student Comments
1. Class Impression	Very good; Informative; Great Info.
2. Impression of Instructors	Extremely experienced; Very experienced & Helpful; Knowledgeable & engaging.
3. Student Participation	About right, Good; Perfect.
4. Less time on:	NA, NA, No change
5. More Time on:	No change; NA; NA.
6. Suggestion for improvement	NA; Not sure.
7. enjoyed the most	Navigation, always learn about more..ATON; The information was clearly delivered.,
8. Additional comment	CG personnel are a very professional group; I personally like the props. Video is overrated.

Opportunities

Approach area schools & scout groups to present our youth programs

Challenges

Convincing schools to find the time to hold a 45-minute Safe Boating class.

Making use of course toolkit resources to introduce programs to schools.

Offering elected officials' activities to fulfill the proclamations made during Safe Boating week later this Spring.

Silver Lining

Setting up for our most recent Boat America (BA) course, I was surprised to see on the TV monitor screen the no signal message. Repeated attempts checking wiring, and then going to settings on the computer attempting to find a display setting solution provided no success. After three tries via the

settings route and recalling the saying doing the same thing and expecting different result is insanity, often attributed to Einstein but in actuality comes from the 1983 Rita Mae Brown book Sudden Death that defines ineffective persistence. Thoughts toward alternatives went toward a projector. Marc Lang within seconds produces one from the store room and connecting all wires provided, still yielded no signal to the TV monitor.

Enter BA student Ethan Wright.

Within seconds, Ethan realizing that the projector connections lacked a VGA cable for the proper signal, turned his attention to the laptop computer and immediately found the F8 function key for Displays and made the proper setting to give us signal, literally saving the class day. Thank you, Ethan with a hearty welcome to 14-02!

Lessons learned: for secondary systems not in daily use such as the laptop, a full-dress rehearsal including device connections is necessary. We will also find a VGA cable to test and ensure that the projector is a viable backup if needed. "Positivity" leads to greater "positivities".

Frank Samperisi, FSO-PE

By The Way-



Above- Bill Sekeres, FC, congratulates Russ Lambert for 15 years in the USCG Auxiliary.

Right- A Cub Scout tries his hand at life saving by tossing a throwable.

