



January 2025

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THE ALAMO CITY GUARDIAN



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Welcome to 2025 and a fresh year with the USCG Auxiliary! Are you thinking about New Year Resolutions or perhaps how to benefit the Coast Guard this year? There are various opportunities available. Keep reading and you may find an area in which you have skill or just sparks your interest! The Auxiliary provides training so you can rest assured you can learn how to perform duties related to your interests. We all need to encourage, motivate and educate another so we can have a positive impact on our Active Duty Coast Guard!

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBER STEVE DUCHARME

Steve Ducharme joined our Flotilla in the spring of 2024 and is currently active duty serving as a Navy Officer Recruiter at Fort Sam Houston. He was born in Massachusetts but grew up in Orlando, FL. Steve has served on multiple tours in Afghanistan including trainer of Afghan soldiers and drill instructor for the recruits. The Navy Reserves was his "home" for 33+ years. Steve served as a Senior IT/Telecommunications Engineering Manager.



Married with 2 adult daughters whom reside in Austin and a stepson attending UTSA. Steven is an active league tennis player in San Antonio.

Community support and educating civilians on boat safety is just one of the reasons Steve joined the Auxiliary. "I wanted to give back and provide the CG with my years of Navy/CW05-level experiences and skills and maintain my maritime-related training readiness," stated Steve. He suggests new recruits speak with a "seasoned" CGAux member about opportunities for training and operational support.

His goals are to become a VE, OPS-level qualified, perform watchstanding, support the CG underway as well as Search and Rescue operations. Steve looks forward to supporting our Flotilla and enjoys interacting with fellow shipmates! We welcome such a dedicated Auxiliarist.



Flotilla 7-4 San Antonio:

Coast Guard Auxiliary

Cornerstones: Recreational

Boating Safety, Member

Services Operations and

Marine Safety, and Fellowship

What we do! "America's Volunteer

Lifesavers". Our primary mission is promoting and supporting recreational boating safety and that includes involvement in Search and Rescue efforts, Maritime Domain Awareness, Underway Operations, Marine Safety, Public Education, and Vessel Safety Examinations, both recreation and commercial. In addition to that, we have members with special skills like radio operators, webmasters, computer specialists, pilots, public affairs specialists, and language interpreters. <http://wow.uscgaux.info>

The purpose of the Uniformed Auxiliary:

Our purpose is to assist the Coast Guard. To promote safety and to effect search and rescues on and over the high seas and on navigable waters. To promote efficiency in the operation of motorboats and yachts. To foster a wider knowledge of, and better compliance with, the laws, rules, and regulations governing the operation of motorboats and yachts through safe boating classes. To facilitate other operations of the Coast Guard.

Why Join? <http://join.cgaux.org/> When you join the Coast Guard Auxiliary, you could find yourself on patrol saving lives and property, assisting in marine safety and environmental protection, radio watch-standing, educating the public in boating safety and much more. That's what our members do. We don't just train. We train and perform. Since 1939 the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary has safeguarded our Nation's maritime interests in the heartland, in the ports, at sea, and around the globe. Members from all walks of life bring their training and experience as a member of the uniformed volunteer component of the United States Coast Guard. <http://wow.uscgaux>.

Flotilla Member Activity:

New Activity:

Vladimir Gerasimenko is in BQ status.

Larry Lopez is currently in AP status.

Thanks to Jeannemarie for following up on potential members!

2025 Scheduled Events:

January 11, 9:00 am, Division Mtg, Sector Corpus Christi

January 18, 10:30 am, Flotilla Meeting, Blue Skies West, 5100 John D. Ryan Blvd, S.A.

February 8, 10:30 am. Flotilla Meeting, Blue Skies West, 5100 John D. Ryan Blvd, S.A.

February 20-23, D-Train, League City, TX

March 8, 10:30 am, Flotilla Meeting, Blue Skies West, 5100 John D. Ryan Blvd, S.A.

WATCH YOUR EMAIL FOR ANY CHANGE OF MEETING LOCATION.

Public Education:

Boat Crew – contact Alex Shapovalov

Culinary Assistant – contact Tom Duryea

Boating Safety Classes – contact Alex

Vessel Examinations:

We will have a VE Workshop in February during our meeting. VE's in Canyon Lake & JBSA will be scheduled soon.

Why We Do What We Do:

KIDS DON'T FLOAT!

Texas law requires all children under 13 years must wear a life jacket (PFD) while a vessel is underway. The PFD must fit properly, be in good condition and USCG approved.

AUXILIARY NEW SLOGAN!!

A-Directorate Director, Barry Denton, was pleased to announce the new official slogan of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the beginning process of the rebranding, by AuxPA1 Rick Corrales.

Proud Traditions



Worthy Missions

Auxiliarists Answer “The Call to Mission”!

The Auxiliary’s elections were held in November wherein Members answered the call to a Leadership Mission. Below are the new Leaders and FSO’s.

New Division Commander Div 7 – Alex Shapovalov

Congratulations to our own Alex Shapovalov being elected as the new Division Commander of Division 7!!



Alex is honored and excited to lead our division in 2025.

Alex’s goal is to grow the operation readiness of our division by providing training opportunities. His command words are recruitment, retention and recognition.

New Flotilla 4 Commander – Charles Manley



Charles has been voted in to our new FC. Congratulations Charles! Charles has outlined some goals for 2025:

1.) Recruitment

One of the primary goals for 2025 is recruitment. We are down considerably from where we were a few years ago. Part of this is because people have moved, part of this is still related to recovering from the pandemic, part of this has to do with the status of the lakes, and part of it is just economics. \$80 is a lot of money right now regardless of your financial situation. We need to start getting more involved in public affairs within the community, whether it be parades, hobby shows, university outreach, etc. We also need to work on our social media and online presence, this will help too. These are some of the ways to get more people and we will discuss those in more detail as time moves forward.

2.) Public education / Vessel safety

Our primary way of helping people in our community is through our knowledge on and off the water. We currently have one place to do training events @ REI off Huebner Oaks. I would like to expand that especially as the boating license is now starting to become a requirement (finally) in the state of Texas for those born after 1993. I would also like to continue building on our vessel safety examinations even though the lake is down. We need to go by the local marinas and let them know that we can inspect vessels when they are on their trailer. They don't have to be in the water to be inspected. Also, we need a FSO-PV if you know someone that would be willing to step into that role.

3.) Culinary arts program

We are fortunate enough to have the SO-CA in our Flotilla. I want to take advantage of that.

This really ties back into #1 but this is a great way for individuals that may not have been eligible to join the Coast Guard (that are eligible for the Auxiliary) and for people that are veterans but still want a way to be a part of the service. You do not have to be a chef to be a part of the Culinary program. Most of your training is OTJ.

4.) **Administrative assistance for CG**

We have several roles in the Coast Guard Active Duty that they are constantly looking for assistance with. From watchstanding to marine safety, I really want to focus on how we can help Sector. We have the DCDR in our flotilla, that's another part I want to take advantage of. Utilize the knowledge given to us from Division and build the support that the CG asks us for. Our motto is "Semper Paratus", I want to show Sector we really are always ready.

5.) **Fourth Cornerstone**

We have to remember that we are a volunteer unit. Yes, our primary responsibility is to assist the Coast Guard and our community. However, if you want a volunteer organization to thrive, you also have to cater to the member. I want to establish a 4th cornerstone (Fellowship) piece within the Flotilla. This will eventually be passed down as part of the responsibility of the diversity officer once they are appointed. This role has been purposely left open as the right person needs to be the one to fill that role. Diversity is a segment that in the Coast Guard Auxiliary is largely misunderstood and I would like 7-4 to set the example for Division 7, if not District 8 Coastal.

New Flotilla Vice Commander - Robert Puharic



Robert "Bob" Puharic was voted in as FVC. He has been busy assisting the active-duty Coast Guard at the Recruitment Station in San Antonio as well as performing watchstanding duties at Station Port O'Connor.

Bob will be FC Charles' back up as needed.

Flotilla 07-4's FSO's

FSO-CM	Robert Puharic
FSO-CS	Charles Manley
FSO-FN	Steve Ducharme
FSO-HR	Jeannemarie McNamara
FSO-IS	Thomas Duryea
FSO-MS	Alex Shapovalov
FSO-MT	Ken Bain
FSO-OP	Siler Monk
FSO-PA	Jeannemarie McNamara
FSO-PB	Karen Duryea
FSO-PE	Alex Shapovalov
FSO-SR	Barbara Manley
FSO-VE	Darlene Beeson



(Photos by K. Duryea, AUX/PB & V. Gerasimenko, AUX)

Further Missions

Culinary Assistance

During November Tom Duryea was underway for ten days on the Harry Clairborn, out of Galveston, preparing meals for the crew as they were repairing buoys. He joined the SGC Hachet upon his return to Galveston to cook for that crew. Then in December, he joined the Clamp, also in Galveston, filling their bellies. Tom is looking forward to serving the active duty in 2025. Thank you Tom!

Tom is also working with new Culinary Assistants to be sure they receive training and are placed on cutters to serve.

Coast Guard Recruiting Assistance

Steve Ducharme has been advocating for the CGAUX, since he returned to active duty recruiting Reserve Officers for the U.S Navy. He is seeing a lot of Navy personnel who are planning to retire in the SA region. He advises them that the Auxiliary is an option if they would like to continue to serve and also

leverage their prior service skills and experiences in a maritime setting. Thank you Steve!

Alex Shapovalov and Bob Puharic continue to assist our active-duty Coast Guard by answering phones, doing errands and anything they are asked to do at the Recruiting Office in San Antonio! Thank you Alex & Bob!

We have been informed that Fort Sam Houston and Lackland are planning to conduct some upcoming, "volunteer open houses" in Spring 2025. Anyone interested in assisting with any CGAUX outreach/recruiting efforts, please advise FC, VFC or Steve.

CHANGE OF WATCH

Our Change of Watch ceremony was held on December 21, 2024 at the VFW Post in San Antonio, TX. Even though a small number of our Flotilla attended the Change of Watch, it was a nice ceremony installing the new FC Charles Manley and VFC Robert Puharic, as well as the FSO's that were present. Various awards were handed out as well.



Fellowship amongst the members was prominent as we feasted on an Italian meal!



(Photos by K. Duryea, AUX/PB)

Coast Guard adds first polar icebreaker to its fleet in 25 years, By Kathy Murray, Senior Writer, MyCG

12/23/24. The Coast Guard has officially welcomed its first polar icebreaker in more than 25 years – the recently acquired Aiviq, a commercial vessel that will be renamed CGC Storis.

Storis means "great ice" in Scandinavian. The name is also a nod to the original CGC Storis, a legendary light icebreaker and medium endurance cutter commissioned in 1942 that patrolled for submarines and ran convoys during World War II and led the first American transit of the Northwest Passage. In 1948, Storis was moved to Alaska where it conducted law enforcement, search and rescue, and humanitarian relief for 59 years until its decommissioning in 2007.

The new CGC Storis has undergone limited changes since its acquisition last month. These included painting the hull red and labeling the ship as WAGB-21. The vessel will be permanently homeported in Juneau, Alaska once the shoreside infrastructure is ready. The design and construction work for the homeporting project will take several years.

“The Coast Guard is thrilled to acquire this icebreaker,” said Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan. “Like its namesake, this cutter highlights the Coast Guard’s long history of operating in the Arctic and demonstrates our commitment to assert and protect U.S. sovereignty in the region.”



How it came about

The Coast Guard received appropriation for a commercially available polar icebreaker in 2024 to supplement mission readiness and capability in the polar regions while Polar Security Cutters (PSC) are built. At a time of heightened activity in the area – including the first joint Russian/Chinese patrol passing near Alaska this summer – the Service only has two operational polar icebreakers. Our medium polar icebreaker, CGC Healy, was temporarily sidelined after experiencing an electrical fire in July. Meanwhile, the CGC Polar Star, a heavy polar icebreaker, is nearly 50 years old.

On Nov. 20, the Coast Guard purchased the M/V Aiviq, a 360-foot U.S.-built polar class 3-equivalent icebreaker for \$125 million in a deal with Offshore Surface Vessels LLC. The vessel, which was constructed in 2012, has supported oil exploration in the Chukchi Sea off

the coast of Alaska in the Arctic Ocean, and has deployed twice to the Antarctic. As a polar class 3-equivalent icebreaker, the future CGC Storis is expected to be capable of operating in waters that are otherwise inaccessible to most Coast Guard cutters.

What this means for future icebreakers

Buying the future CGC Storis won't affect the acquisition of the PSCs. The Coast Guard still needs a mix of eight to nine polar icebreakers to meet its operational requirements. In a congressional hearing last month, Vice Adm. Peter Gautier, the Deputy Commandant for Operations, noted the challenges in the region were mounting. “I acknowledge we have a national security threat now from the increased threat of competitors who are working together in ways we have not seen,” he said, adding that the U.S. would be at risk without these new icebreakers.

The Coast Guard is authorizing the shipbuilder, Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding, to build the first 16 modules that will be incorporated in the first PSC, CGC Polar Sentinel, with estimated delivery in 2030.

In the interim, the future CGC Storis is expected to help bridge the gap and provide additional capability in support of national security in the region.

How was the new icebreaker named?

Before the future CGC Storis was acquired, a working group generated a list five potential names that were submitted to an official naming committee composed of senior officers and enlisted personnel. This group ranked their top three choices.

“Storis” was an early favorite given the long history and accomplishments of its namesake. In addition to its previously mentioned activities, the original CGC Storis:

- was first to arrive to the scene of the sinking CGC Escanaba in 1943, which was believed to have been torpedoed or hit a mine

- became the first U.S. registered vessel to circumnavigate North America
- was on scene for the largest U.S. earthquake (magnitude 9.2) in Alaska in 1964
- was the oldest commissioned cutter in the Coast Guard during its tenure, earning the title "Queen of the Fleet"
- participated in the 1990 rescue of the M/V Alaskan Monarch off of St. Paul Island, which was immortalized in the movie, "The Guardian"

How big will the crew be on this new icebreaker?

The initial commissioning crew of the future CGC Storis will consist of approximately 60 officers and enlisted personnel. They will be assigned in the summer of 2025.

I hear FISHING is good all year in Texas! January & February are Redfish months; Trout is abundant to March, then onto Big Bass Month all through March! Remind those FISHERMAN to wear their PFD'S – Personal Flotation Devices! There is a reason they are called LIFE JACKETS! (By Auxiliarist Karen Duryea)



COAST GUARD SAVE LIVES!

Coast Guard rescues 4 from sinking vessel Press Release, Jan. 5, 2025

MIAMI - A Coast Guard Station Marathon boat crew rescued four people, Sunday, after their

27-foot vessel began taking on water approximately 11 miles north of Marathon, Florida. No injuries were reported.

Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders received a distress call around 5 p.m. of a vessel taking on water. Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders launched a Station Marathon boat crew who arrived on scene and embarked four individuals.

All four were taken ashore at the 33rd Street boat ramp.

"Our crews consistently prepare to respond to these situations day and night" said Petty Officer 3rd Class Zachary Aparo, a Sector Key West watchstander, "Thanks to their prompt call for help, we were able to get on scene quickly and conduct a successful rescue before they entered the water."

Noteworthy:

Meetings!

There has been low attendance at our Flotilla meetings as of late. We need a quorum to enable us to vote on any new items. Please make an effort to attend the Flotilla meetings.

We will be discussing a new meeting location at our next meeting, so please be present! We are now allowed to hold virtual meetings. Watch your email for the Zoom link.

Vessel Examinations:

A VE Workshop will be held during our February meeting. Please be present if you wish to become a Vessel Examiner. We will be scheduling VE's at Canyon Lake and JB SA soon.

Please note that National has directed us to wear our PFDs whenever we are on a dock. That means during all boat safety checks! New PFDs have been ordered for all Vessel Examiners.

Uniforms: Our Flotilla has some new & used uniforms in our storage. Feel free to ask to check them out!

Trainings: Training sessions to meet PQS requirements will start being offered at our monthly meetings so members can start making their qualifications! If you have an idea for a training, please let our FC and VFC know!

Emails! Please watch your emails for further events. We need your help in furthering our mission of boating safety and coming alongside the active-duty Coast Guard!

Training Opportunities

Below is a list of training opportunities for all Auxiliarists. The sections refer to the Division 8 Coastal Region Qualification Job Aid booklet our FC, Charles Manley, sent out via email in the fall of last year. For more information, please refer to his email attachment.

D8CR Qualification Job Aid

Section I: Introduction and Overview

Section II: Different Levels of Membership

Section III: Auxiliary Administrative Procedures Course (APC)

Section IV: Qualifications – Auxiliary Instructor (IT)

Section V: Instructions for Instructors

Section VI: Qualifications - RBS Program - Program Visitor

Section VII: Instructions for RBS-PVs to Maintain Certification or to Regain Certification if In REWK Or REYR

Section VIII: Qualifications - RBS Program - Vessel Examiner

Section IX: Instructions - RBS Program - Vessel Examiner

Section X: Qualifications - Boat Crew – Crewmember

Section XI: Qualifications – QE Check for Boat Crew-Crewmember

Section XII: Qualifications - Boat Crew – Coxswain

Section XIII: Qualifications - Boat Crew – Personal Water Craft Operator (PWO)

Section XIV: Qualifications - QE check – Coxswain and Personal Watercraft Operations (PWC-IT)

Section XV: Qualifications Process - QE Guidelines

Section XVI: Qualifications – ATON Verifier – Navigation Program

Section XVII: ATON Verifier- Navigation Program

Section XVIII: Qualifications – Watchstander

Section XIX: Qualifications -

Telecommunications Program (TCO)

Section XX: Marine Safety Training

Section XXI: Qualifications – Marine Safety

Section XXII: Trident Program

Section XXIII: Qualification Process – Trident Program

Section XXIV: Qualifications - Public Affairs Specialist

Section XXV: Qualifications - Air Crew Program

Section XXVI: Qualifications – Cutterman

Section XXVII: Specialty Courses

Section XXVIII: Qualifications – AUXOP Award Process

Section XXIX: Qualifications – AUXOP Progress Check

Section XXX: Qualifications – AUX Culinary Assistance (CA)

Section XXXI: Qualifications – Finger Print Technician

Section XXXII: Qualifications Interpreter Corp Program

Section XXXIII: Clarification of Incident Command System (ICS)

(Articles by K. Duryea, AUX/PB, unless specified otherwise)

Questions? Who Do I Contact?

Flotilla Commander (FC), Charles Manley
Charles.r.manley@gmail.com
Vice Commander (VFC) Robert Puharic
Wf3h@comcast.net
HR/PA, JeanneMarie Mc Namara
mcnamara.uscgaux@gmail.com

Semper Paratus

*Staff Officer Reports Due: no later than the last day
of the month!*

Flotilla Meeting: 2nd Sat. of Month,
10:30 am, Location: Blue Skies, 5100 John D Ryan
Blvd, San Antonio, 78245
Virtual meetings are now available.

Division 7 Meeting: January 11, at Sector HQ,
Corpus Christi, TX or virtually.

8CR District Meeting: 2 times/year. Locations vary
within the District's 8 states.

District 8 Website:
<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=081>

**Follow us online for flotilla date additions,
events and changes.**

Boating Safety -"Boaters should remain
vigilant on the water as most incidents
occur when you might least expect them –
in good visibility, calm waters and little
wind," said Capt. Amy Beach, Inspections
and Compliance director. "The most
frequent events involve collisions with other
vessels, objects or groundings, which is why
it is so important to keep a proper lookout,
navigate at a safe speed, adhere to
navigation rules and obey navigation aids."

Deaths occurred predominantly on vessels
operated by individuals who had not
received boating safety instruction,
accounting for 75 percent of fatalities.
Drowning accounted for 75 percent of
deaths, with 87 percent of those victims not
wearing life jackets. The Coast Guard
reminds boaters to wear serviceable,
properly sized and correctly fastened life
jackets. In addition to wearing a life jacket
and taking a boating safety course, the
Coast Guard recommends all boaters attach
the engine cut-off switch, get a free vessel
safety check and boat sober.

SPREAD THE WORD.....

.....KIDS DON'T FLOAT!!!

(NEITHER DO ADULTS!)

**Find us on Facebook, YouTube®
and on our Website:**

Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 7-4 San Antonio
<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=081-07-04>

2025 Diversity Holidays:
<https://www.diversitybestpractices.com>

FEMA Training Online: <https://training.fema.gov>
CGAUX.ORG is the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
official web portal.

All Photos are taken by members of the
flotilla & are considered property of the CG
Auxiliary unless otherwise designated.

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