

USCG Auxiliary
Division 081-07 Meeting – 25-27 JUL 2025
San Antonio TX
Host Flotillas: San Antonio and Austin

By Jeanne McNamara, PA1, FSO/SO-PA

On Friday evening the Bridge and Division Board members (PNACO, Vass, DCAPT Hughes, and Flotilla FCs or VFCs) met in the 'Vista' Conference Room located at the Blue Skies of Texas West Campus, just outside Castroville. After business concluded, the group with their guests reconvened then in the Sunroom of the Vista for a mouth-watering BBQ dinner of Smoked Turkey and Brisket with all the trimmings from Tommy Joe's BBQ in Lytle and enough libations for all to be satisfied. Housing was available at Blue Skies' two campuses and many local area motels.

On Saturday, we returned to the Sunroom where approximately 40 members of Division 7 then conducted a brief meeting. In addition a message was presented from our DIRAux by our new district OTO, BOSN Elizabeth Uitdenhewen. This was followed by AUXOP training in the areas of AuxWEA (taught by the FCs from 7-5, BH Galvan and 7-9, Phil Harkey) and Aux COM (ably taught by SO-CM, Bob Puharic). After a box lunch social provided by H-E-B, AUXOP training continued until 1400 hrs.

The highlight of the afternoon was a panel discussion led by the FC of 7-4, Charles Manley with a report on the Guadalupe River Flood Disaster. Since the Auxiliary was not formally activated to assist with the response with the active-duty Coast Guard and other agencies, members of 7-4 living closest to the affected area were able to assist in several capacities including that of concerned citizens in the supplies warehouse, and as members of the Ham Radio Club assisting with communications. Two members of the flotilla actually work for TDEM (Texas Department of Emergency Management) and were part of that agency's response efforts. They worked alongside local CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members, including their leader, Mr. Frank Dickey, who was also part of the discussion panel. Charles acted as the moderator and posed many questions to various team members. This panel discussion was followed by a lively Question & Answer session.

Several auxiliarists asked why the auxiliary was not mobilized for the operation. Answers varied but it all boiled down to us, which is that we currently lack the proper training to help in more meaningful ways. Efforts to change that within the division, therefore, will be made to provide more of this training which will include individuals taking ICS 100/200/700 and 800 (which can be taken as a group or online) and 317 (CERT response) which must be taken in person. The members of Division 7 want to be ready and able to

properly assist if the need arises in the future. Auxiliary members of the panel were: Jonathan “JP” Esquivel (TDEM), Tracy Huff, Seth Burnett (TDEM), Bob Puharic and FC Charles Manley. The flotilla currently has two other members who are currently trained in the above courses and were part of the Hurricane Harvey response in 2017 that affected much of the Heartland District. They were unavailable to assist with this disaster.

After the discussion concluded, we transitioned to Sammy’s Restaurant in Castroville for a Fourth Cornerstone event honoring the Coast Guard’s 235th birthday and Awards Ceremony. No one stayed out too late, because AUXOP proctored exams were given on Sunday morning. All in all, it was a very successful meeting and Boat crew training was going to take place Monday and Tuesday following the meeting in Port O’Conner under PNACO and Coxswain Jim Vass.



SAN ANTONIO TX, JUL 2025, (l-r) VCDR Geoff Souris, CDR Alex Shapovalov, OTO BOSN Liz Uitdenhoven from district HQ and DCAPT Jeff Hughes listen intently as PNACO, COMO Jim Vass shares the need to train more boat crew and coxswains within Division 7. He is currently the only trained COXSWAIN in the division.

Flotilla Commanders of Division 7 - Board Members (l-r) FC Cynthia Eisenberg (7-11), FC Phil Harkey (7-9), FC BH Galvan (7-5), FC Charles Manley (7-4), FC Jeff Arntz (7-1) and FC and SO-SR Bessie Souris (7-10) listen intently to the OTO’s greeting from the DIRAux of the Heartland Coastal District, formerly, 8th Coastal District, located in New Orleans.





Attendance numbered over 40 new and seasoned auxiliarists for this quarter's Division meeting. Business, meaningful training, and passionate dialogue were all part of the weekend.



Members seeking AUXOP designation were given two test review courses in AUXWEA (pictured to the right – Aux BH Galvan is instructing) and AUXCOM over the weekend. Proctored exams were given on Sunday Morning.



The discussion panel regarding the Guadelupe River Flooding Disaster consisted of (l-r): Mr. Frank Dickey (CERT), and members of flotilla 7-4 who assisted as concerned citizens and members of TDEM – JP Esquivel (TDEM), Tracy Huff, Seth Burnett (TDEM), Bob Puharic (also local Ham Radio Club member) and FC Charles Manley.

CASTROVILLE TX, Saturday evening (l-r) VCDR Geoff Souris, Kristen Shapovalov (wife of Alex) await their 'slice' as CDR Alex Shapovalov cuts the cake with precision. You would expect nothing less from a General Contractor! This took place at our Fourth Cornerstone Event celebrating the USCG's 235th Anniversary and Awards dinner at Sammy's Restaurant. Twenty-four auxiliarists, their spouses and friends attended the dinner.



Guest CERT Leader, Frank E. Dickey, Jr.

(Discussion Panel on the Guadalupe River Flood Disaster, 4 July 2025)

CERT G-317 Basic Course Instructor Mini Biography

Frank E. Dickey, Jr., KF5ZHR; WQQH418; CERT Volunteer & Instructor (14 years).

CERT Courses:

FEMA IS-317 (2007); IS-100, IS-200, IS-700 & IS-800 (2011); IS-300 & 400 (2015). CERT G-317 Basic (2011); CERT G-428 Train The Trainer Instructor (2012); CERT G-517 Master Instructor (2014); CERT G-427 Program Manager (2016); CERT G-317 Hybrid Basic (2020). Hybrid CERT Skills Instructor (2020)

CERT Experience:

Wilson County TX CERT as Team Leader & Program Coordinator in 2012-2017. Bexar County TX CERT as Assistant Team Leader & Training Coordinator in 2014- 2023. National CERT Association as Charter Member (0109) in 2020 – present. New Braunfels CERT as Volunteer and Assistant Instructor in 2022 -present. Alamo Area Texas CERT Trainers as Preparedness Instructor in 2023- present.

Related Experience:

Fire/Rescue Service: 40 years; EMT/Paramedic: 30 years; Safety Specialist: 15 years.
US Navy Hospital Corpsman (1971-1976) Trauma Specialist in Emergency Room & EMS.
US Army Medic (1986-2002) Cardiovascular Technician/ Medical & Military Instructor.
American Society of Safety Engineers- Member 1984 - Construction Safety Specialist
South Texas Safety Council: AHSI CPR-AED-First Aid-BBP & TEA Driver Safety Instructor
Until Help Arrives (FEMA) & Stop The Bleed (ACS/ DoD) Instructor from 2017.

