

SOUTH SOUNDINGS

USCG Auxiliary Division 3

**June 2025
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SOUTH SOUNDINGS

Is the newsletter for Division 3 of the USCG Auxiliary. Division is located in the Southern Puget Sound from Des Moines to Olympia, WA

2025 DIVISION BOARD

Division Commander Robert Hamilton
Division Vice Commander Steven Kristrom
Imm Past Div Commander Neil Christenson
Flotilla 32 Commander Craig Brown
Flotilla 33 Commander Jeff Bocott
Flotilla 38 Commander Michael Tilson

DIVISION 3 STAFF

Communications Vacant
Communication Services Vacant
Finance Anthony Merola
Human Resources Robert Hamilton
Information Services Vacant
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Marine Safety Steven Kristrom
Member Training Steven Kristrom
Navigation Systems Vacant
Operations Steven Kristrom
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Public Education Anthony Merola
Publications Roger Malmberg
Program Visitor Anthony Merola
Secretary/Records Jeff Greenwell
Vessel Examination Vacant

Cover Photo

Intercepting a tug and barge on
Lake Washington
Photo by
Ivan Dubro

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Next Deadline: June 25, 2025

Submit to:

rdmalmberg@comcast.net

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JUNE DIVISION MEETING



The Division meeting will convene on 6 June, 1830 hours, via Zoom. We discussed moving the meeting date due to Friday traffic impacting member's ability to get to Tacoma, but since this month's meeting is via Zoom it's a moot point. This meeting is for both the Division Board and Division staff officers. All members are requested to wear either Troops or the Winter Dress Blue uniform.

DIVISION OFFICER

We continue to experience several vacancies – please consider your capabilities & schedule and sign up for any office you can support. Remember – you hold the pen, we'll move the paper. Free training provided! Vacancies in priority of fill are:

1. Information Services
2. Vessel Examination
3. Materials
4. Navigation Systems
5. Communications
6. Communication Services

USCG BARQUE EAGLE

The Auxiliary will be escorting the Coast Guard Cutter Eagle from Smith Cove (near Elliot Bay Marina) to Pier 66 from 0830 to 1000 on 9 July, and from Pier 66 to central Puget Sound at 1000 on 11 July. The Coast Guard doesn't have any assets to

dispatch for this mission, so it will be a 100% Auxiliary show! The Commodore is requesting that every AUXFAC support – please contact Mike Allert, ADSO-OP-N, ASC-SECPS if you can support either as crew or with a facility.

FORCE DESIGN 2028 (FD28)

The Coast Guard released the new force design to “urgently fix Coast Guard deficiencies, run Coast Guard operations, make lasting transformational change, and grow Coast Guard capacity and capability.” You can find the FD28 Executive Report at <https://links-1.govdelivery.com/CL0/https%2F%2Fwww.uscg.mil%2Fleadership%2Fcommands-initiatives%2Fforcedesign2028%2F1%2F010001971cb85ad9-fd7c7788-10bb-4a5a-bfa9-80dbb59a6d37-000000/Nu0zzyboPOMw4oPkqJgkFjJDQ1FsIv39al8CPa7m0cE=407> . The document does not make specific references to the Auxiliary – this is all gold-side focused. However, as the Coast Guard shifts personnel and money to focused operational missions, we remain an incredibly valuable force multiplier for them, and they are anxious to use us. New opportunities for the Auxiliary continue to pop up – keep an eye out for something that scratches your itch to participate!



VE ACADEMY

by Ivan Dubro, VFC 33



This year, Flotilla 33 decided to increase the number of Vessel Examiners. Jeff Bocott, Flotilla Commander, proposed the idea of a Mini-VE Academy. This academy provides both online VE training and includes a complete in-person training session which allows members to become certified Vessel Examiners at the successful completion of the Mini-VE Academy. Both the online VE training and the in-person training have been designed for easy accessibility and navigation. In addition, the various training guides provided help ensure that completing the online training and signing up for the in-person sessions is a straightforward process.

Having supported the implementation of the Mini-VE Academy, I was excited to participate and try out the training format myself! The online portion was fairly straightforward, taking about a cumulative total of seven hours to complete. This included reading the entire VE manual, completing the practice test, and taking the final exam. For anyone considering the test, I highly recommend taking the practice test. It offers excellent practical questions and provides thorough explanations for any incorrect answers.

Moving on to the in-person training, I was impressed with the variety of training aids and materials available. The session began with an hour-long lecture that covered the basics of conducting Vessel Examinations, appropriate uniforms, and PPE classification.

(continued on page 5)



VE Academy
Photo by Ivan Dubro

(continued from page 4)

After the lecture, we moved on to the practical portion, where we conducted five vessel examinations. This was my favorite part of the training, as it provided practical experience in physically inspecting several vessels. I had the opportunity to ask many questions and review how to fill out the 7012 form. In addition, the mock interview with the instructor, who played the role of the vessel owner, was particularly insightful in how to talk to the vessel owners about boating safety and vessel recommendations. The in-person training lasted about four hours, but during this time, I gained a lot of experience and knowledge about how to conduct VE. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the academy, as the easy training format, stress-free environment, and practical real-

life training scenarios made the experience insightful and very informative.

I am also very happy to report that by the end of the Mini-VE Academy's final training week, Flotilla 33 had more than tripled its number of Vessel Examiner (VE) members, and approximately 60% of the active flotilla members are now VE certified. The following individuals have successfully completed the Mini VE Academy and have become Volunteer Examiners (VEs): Jeff Bocott, Tad Santino, Ivan Dubro, Jeff Greenwell, and Dain Hansen. Thank you all for your hard work! Both Jeff and I are considering expanding the Mini VE Academy, and I encourage anyone interested in becoming a VE to join the next academy class!



VE Academy
Photo by Ivan Dubro

PHONE NUMBER CHANGES



The USCG District 13 disseminated a press release on 29 May related to updated phone numbers for the District beginning 01 June and running through 31 December. Expect more press releases, but please note that the emergency numbers will not change:

*Sector Puget Sound: (833)449-0369
(Puget Sound and Washington coast North of Grays Harbor County)

*Sector Columbia River: (833)769-8274
(Oregon, Columbia River, and Washington Coast South of Jefferson County)

*District 13: 866-498-0713

ICS OPPORTUNITIES

Our comrades in Idaho and Oregon are offering several Incident Command System (ICS) courses – please refer to the District Calendar to sign up.

All Hazards Planning Section Chief Course (Portland, OR): 2-5 June

All Hazards Planning Section Chief Course (Tangent, OR): 23-26 June

ICS-400 (Wilsonville, OR): 5-6 June

ICS 400 (Bend, OR): 25-26 June

ICS 400 (Boise, ID): 17-18 June

Please contact Leslie Nichols

(202)596-9816,

nicholasuscgaux@gmail.com to register.

AUXDATA II CHANGE

There is a change to AUXDATA II that will be transparent to most members, but more senior Auxiliarists may be interested. The Member Status Change Automation is now complete. A member who has completed AUX-CT, BQCII and has submitted a Boating Safety certificate will now be automatically updated to BQ Member Status (IQ Status if they are missing the Boating Safety certificate). This may cause a bit of a wrinkle in that Jennifer MacArthur (Auxiliary Affairs Specialist) will no longer receive an automated email when members attain BQ status (important, since that's when she requests their ID Card). For the immediate future your SO-HR will monitor BQ status changes and notify Jennifer via email.

FLOTILLA 33 STUDY HALL

F33 operates a monthly study hall on the fourth Thursday of each month from 1830-2000 HRS. This is open season for any questions you may have – Jeff Bocott (FC) and Ivan Dubro (VFC) will be online to answer any questions you may have. Log in at:

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fus06web.zoom.us%2Fj%2F85920352359%3Fpwd%3Du4524NYDW3j8TUTmKilOYX6tzFzg60.1&sa=D&ust=1748369820000000&usg=AOvVaw2-aMDzitCw7axSs69AVE3Q>

AUXILIARY PATROLS

In a meeting with Division commanders on 29 May, Commander McGrew (Dept Head for Response) stated that there were 8 deaths in the last 8 weeks. The Coast Guard has limited response boats, and they simply can't dispatch them to the South Sound quickly enough to have a real operational impact, which means they desperately need our assistance in patrolling the waters. Solitude, moored at Foss Harbor Marina in Tacoma, is now designated as an Auxiliary Facility and is ready for patrol ops. If you are working on your crew quals (or wish to start), please contact Bob Hamilton (Robert.hamilton4907@gmail.com) to work out a schedule for completion. For new members that want to get started, we can do so as soon as you complete your Basic Qualification training. If any of you have a vessel, please consider setting it up as an AUXFAC (Auxiliary Facility) to supplement Coast Guard operations.

GIG HARBOR MARITIME FESTIVAL

Divisions 3 and 4 will support the Gig Harbor Maritime Festival on 7 June. They need watch standers to assist in answering questions from the public, and Vessel Examiners to conduct Vessel Safety Checks at the local dock. The event will begin at 1200 at 3211 Harborview Drive, Gig Harbor, and terminate at 1630 hours. The uniform is ODU with boots or boat shoes.

If you wear boots, please ensure they are shined and your pants are bloused (either

with blousing bands or tucked into the boot – tuck laces so they cannot be seen). Per the Aux Manual, boots must have 6" or 8" tops. If you wear boat shoes, please ensure your pant legs are pressed.

Recommend you bring a folding chair, drinks, sunscreen, and sunglasses. Coordinate with your respective FSO-VE for decals.

Be sure to sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054FADAB2EA4F9C70-56987715-gigharbor> so you receive parking information and passes.

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD SUMMER EXPO AND FISHING DERBY

JBLM will host a Fishing Derby at American Lake on 7 June at 0700 (sorry – you have to get up early for the fish!). Leadership is tracking that this conflicts with the Gig Harbor Festival, but JBLM expects a headcount of about 500 folks – that's a lot of potential VE's and new members. If we can just get three watch standers to sign up, we should be able to run this well. Please sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4CABAC29A4F4C07-57041539-jblm>.



DRONE PROGRAM



Flotilla 130-03-03 is in the process of establishing a drone program and these are the current requirements needed to be eligible for USCG drone training:

- *Auxiliary member is in AP, BQ or AX status

- *ICS-100, ICS-200, ICS-210 (or ICS-300) and ICS-800 completed

- *Current for Auxiliary Core Training (AUXCT)

- *Has submitted Direct Information (DI) Personnel Security Investigation (This step i)

- *Pass the FAA Part 107 knowledge test and obtain a Remote Pilot Certificate

- *Current for Risk Management training (Intro to Risk Management and Annual RM/TCT Refresher completed)

If drones are your thing, start working on any requirements you still need to fulfill.

The DCDR discussed this topic at the May Sector Commander/Division Commander meeting – D13 is still actively researching the requirements, process, and training method to make this happen. The DCDR provided several publications (SOP, checklists, etc.) to facilitate creating the operation. District understands our desire to get this activity moving, and they are equally vested in making it work. More data to follow!

TWO-BOAT TRAINING

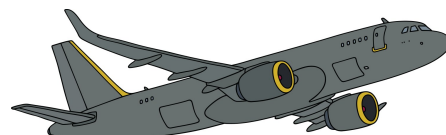
Bill Cotter (AUC Sector 13) is working with the Active Component to schedule

side-by-side Active/Auxiliary surface training events for this Spring and Summer, using Coast Guard small boats. SO-OP will release information on this opportunity as it becomes available. Either way, it will be a great opportunity for both qualified members and trainees to validate their skills against active-duty processes. More to follow!

PUGET SOUND HONOR FLIGHT

Auxiliarists from Western Washington are needed to help provide assistance and honor the veterans participating in four Puget Sound Honor Flights out of Seatac Airport in 2025. The number of veterans traveling on each flight is increasing significantly this year so we need more Auxiliary and active duty and reservist volunteers to help. The USO provides a lounge for us to wait if there is down time, particularly on the Monday evenings as we are waiting for the veterans to return. This service means a great deal to our veterans, many who were never properly welcomed home. Please search your schedules to see if you can make time for this critical event. Sign-ups, uniform requirements, and other data is at the link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44AFAA2BA6F9CE9-56216951-2025#/>



CHANGE TO PROCTORED AUXOP EXAMS

Auxiliary Operations specialty courses were required to be proctored, closed-book examinations prior to COVID. ALAUX 027-20 temporarily suspended the proctor requirement and increased the passing score from 75 to 90 percent. Per AUAUX 012/25 issued on 18 April 2025, that suspension is rescinded effective 19 May 2025. That means, effective 19 May, exams for AUXOP courses will be closed book, with a minimum passing score of 75%.

COMO has requested that each Flotilla qualify at least one member as AUXOP this year. Each interested member should consider completing the qualification examination requirements prior to 19 May to take advantage of the open book format. Detailed information about the AUXOP program is located at <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=T-DEPT&category=auxop-courses>

OPERATIONS TRAINING WORKSHOP

Division 4 is offering the Operations Workshop and TCT/RM training to Division 3 members:

TCT/RM:

June 7th: 1000 – 1300 hours Pacific
(Saturday)

Contact Information:

(VFC) James DiIanni [130-04-01]

Email: jdiianni@msn.com

OPERATIONS PLAN

Did you ever wonder if there is an ultimate plan or goal for the District? All of the operational details, mission, and goals are contained in the Operations Plan which you can view from https://wow.uscgaux.info/Uploads_wowII/130/Draft_d13_format_pMaxfield_3.pdf This document provides our Commodore's vision, culture statement, and operational direction. It truly is a great read, and will help Flotilla leadership in developing their own objectives.

SET THE DATE FALL DTRAIN



DTRAIN will take place 19-21 September at the Monarch Hotel & Conference Center in Clackamas, OR. It's way too early in the planning phase to determine training opportunities but set the dates aside on your calendar now. If you do have training ideas or requests, please pass them on to the VDCDR.



NEW SKILLS ADDED!

Congratulatory notes are listed here as a result of email notifications. If we missed acknowledging anyone's achievement, please let Bob Hamilton know so we can be sure to recognize you!

Jeffrey Greenwell for completing the Vessel Examiner exam on 24 March!

Tad Santino and Richard Wilcox for completing VE certification – Bravo Zulu!

Bob Hamilton – completed AUX Weather Operations and Aux Seamanship courses, as well as receiving Auxiliary Operations certification

MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES

The years of service that are a basis for our ability to support the Coast Guard and the public are astounding. We all thank you for your past service and look forward to your future contributions. Service Anniversaries in April:

Flotilla 32:

Ivan Dubro – 1 year

Flotilla 38:

Nicole Shouder – 20 years

Ron Holtcamp – 20 years

Arsenio Escudero – 17 years

JUNE MEETINGS

Division Meeting 6 June (Division Staff and Flotilla FC/VFC attend) - Zoom

Flotilla 32 (Des Moines): 16 June

Flotilla 33 (Tacoma): 12 June

Flotilla 38 (Olympia): 18 June

Northern Area Leaders Meeting: 9 June (DCDR, VDCDR, FC, VFC attend)

Division 4 Social Zoom: 0800 every Thursday. Optional for all, but a great opportunity to network and find out what's going on across the District).


Open to anyone that wishes to dial in – 100% Zoom, no uniform. [https://](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88623252042?pwd=NwXE3dcklIZjfVHO1AxlzkbDasDCGQ.1)

[us02web.zoom.us/j/88623252042?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88623252042?pwd=NwXE3dcklIZjfVHO1AxlzkbDasDCGQ.1)
[pwd=NwXE3dcklIZjfVHO1AxlzkbDasDCGQ.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88623252042?pwd=NwXE3dcklIZjfVHO1AxlzkbDasDCGQ.1)

JUNE 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6 Div 3 Meeting	7
8	9 N. Area Leaders Meeting	10	11	12 FL33 Meeting	13	14
15 Father's Day	16 FL32 Meeting	17	18 FL38 Meeting	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JULY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4  Independence Day	5
6	7	8	9	10 FL33 Meeting	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 FL32 Meeting	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		