



Why We Patrol Gig Harbor, Washington

Robert Hamilton
DCDR, Division 3

September 11 dawned with a clear sunrise and calm seas – excellent weather for the scheduled QE patrol in Gig Harbor. After conducting the routine crew briefing and safety assessment, M/V Shaquil departed with a crew of Auxiliarists David Martin, John Edwards, Mike Allert, Dana Miller, and Bob Hamilton.

After running up the engine outside the harbor and allowing Dana time to familiarize with the throttle and handling of the vessel, we threaded our way back into Gig Harbor to meet Auxiliarists Bill Cotter, Tom Bliss, and Ed Madura on Tom Bliss's AUXFAC. The day was textbook. We completed John Edwards' 3-year Coxswain QE with no issues, and began working on Tom Bliss' 3-year Coxswain QE. Again, everything went smoothly, and we were able to rapidly and efficiently progress through the QE tasks.

Something was amiss though. In the distance I saw a small motor craft – in itself nothing unusual, but someone was amidship with a single long paddle, trying to make way with muscle power. Both facilities made way to her and discovered Dana Flaskerud and her partner desperately in need of a tow. Since Tom Bliss and his crew were next up for the tow evolution, they took control of her craft and provided able assistance.

In Dana's words, "The Coast Guard Auxiliary Team were my heroes today! After a long day of stressful motor trouble, they noticed we were on our last legs and in need of a tow. They safely and quickly approached. They expertly rafted with us, tied us to their rig, and gently delivered us to the public boat launch where we could take our boat out. Thank you so much to this friendly team. Your work is essential to our communities!"



Gig Harbor, Washington. (Sept. 10, 2025) — U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists conduct a side tow of a disabled recreational vessel aboard an Auxiliary facility, ensuring safe recovery and return to port.

L-R: Dana Flaskerud (foreground) Auxiliarists Bill Cotter, Tom Bliss, and Ed Madura. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Dana Flaskerud

This is indeed why we patrol – to provide safety and assistance to mariners when they need it most. We assisted a vessel in distress, alleviated discomfort and stress of the crew, and received a significant sense of satisfaction and accomplishment in knowing that we were there to help.

We can't wait for the next one!