

Fall 2024

Volume 121, Issue 3

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

Official Newsletter of Coast Guard Auxiliary 5th District, Northern Region



topside



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Leadership of 5NR

- Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX)**
CDR Laura Moose
- Operations Training Officer (OTO)**
CWO4 Mickey T. Price
- District Commodore (DCO)**
Kurt P. Sarac, Sr
- District Chief Of Staff (DCOS)**
Noreen Schifini
- District Captain Central (DCAPT-C)**
Joseph R. Matthews
- District Captain East (DCAPT-E)**
Thomas H. Brouillard
- District Captain West (DCAPT-W)**
Michael B. McElwee
- Immediate Past Commodore**
COMO Joseph J. Giannattasio
- President Past Captains Association**
Alfred O. Grimminger
- Division \ Commanders**
- DCDR 04** Andrew C. Crowley
- DCDR 07** Lawrence J. Nolan
- DCDR 08** Lorraine Bianco
- DCDR 12** Roy L. Zimmerman
- DCDR 15** Kimberly A. Weber
- DCDR 16** Anna M. Ackaway
- DCDR 17** Kenneth J. Sylvester
- DCDR 18** Robert M. Dimarco
- DCDR 19** Daniel J. Benny
- DCDR 20** William R. Turner
- DCDR 21** Walter Conway

- D-AD** Jason C. Flynn
- D-AD** J. Douglas Willwerth
- DSO-C** Jason C. Flynn
- DSO-C** COMO Ken Brown, Janet Brown
- DSO-DV** Elizabeth A. Pittinger
- DSO-FN** Mark F. Letavish
- DSO-LP** Francis P. Bigley
- DSO-SL** Harry W. Otto
- DFSO** Thomas Callahan III
- DDC-Logistics** Robert G. Vanderhook
- DSO-CS** Douglas R. Hoffman Sr.
- DSO-CA** Andrew C. Crowley
- DSO-HR** Ruth A. Bearce
- DSO-IS** Harry F. Dyer
- DSO-MA** Jeffery L. Wilt
- DSO-PB** Timothy P. Marks
- DSO-SR** J. Douglas Willwerth
- DDC-Prevention** Alfred O. Grimminger
- DSO-AS** James Robert White
- DSO-MS** Gregg R. Bollinger
- DSO-MT** Terry F. Bearce
- DSO-NS** Lorraine Bianco
- DSO-PA** COMO K. C. Murphy
- DSO-PE** Pamela L. Thompson
- DSO-PV** Russell M. Galson
- DSO-VE** Edwin W. Seda
- DDC-Response** Vacant
- DSO-EM** Diego Herrera
- DSO-CM** Richard B. Taylor II
- DSO-AV** Carl S. Longenecker
- DSO-OP** Donald W. Merrill

Front Cover:

Harry Dyer is "piped ashore" during his retirement ceremony, marking the end of an incredible 50 years of service in the Coast Guard Auxiliary. In the U.S. Coast Guard, the "piping ashore" tradition, also known as "manning the side," is a ceremonial farewell. A Boatswain's Mate pipes the sailor ashore, while the crew salutes and stands at attention to honor the service and dedication of their shipmate.
Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Donna Doyle.

Information from Around the District



Incoming EXCOM



District Commodore

Commodore-elect Noreen Schifini



District Chief of Staff

Michael McElwee



District Captain-East Thomas Brouillard

District Captain-Central Joseph Mathews

District Captain-West Walter Conway

Frocking

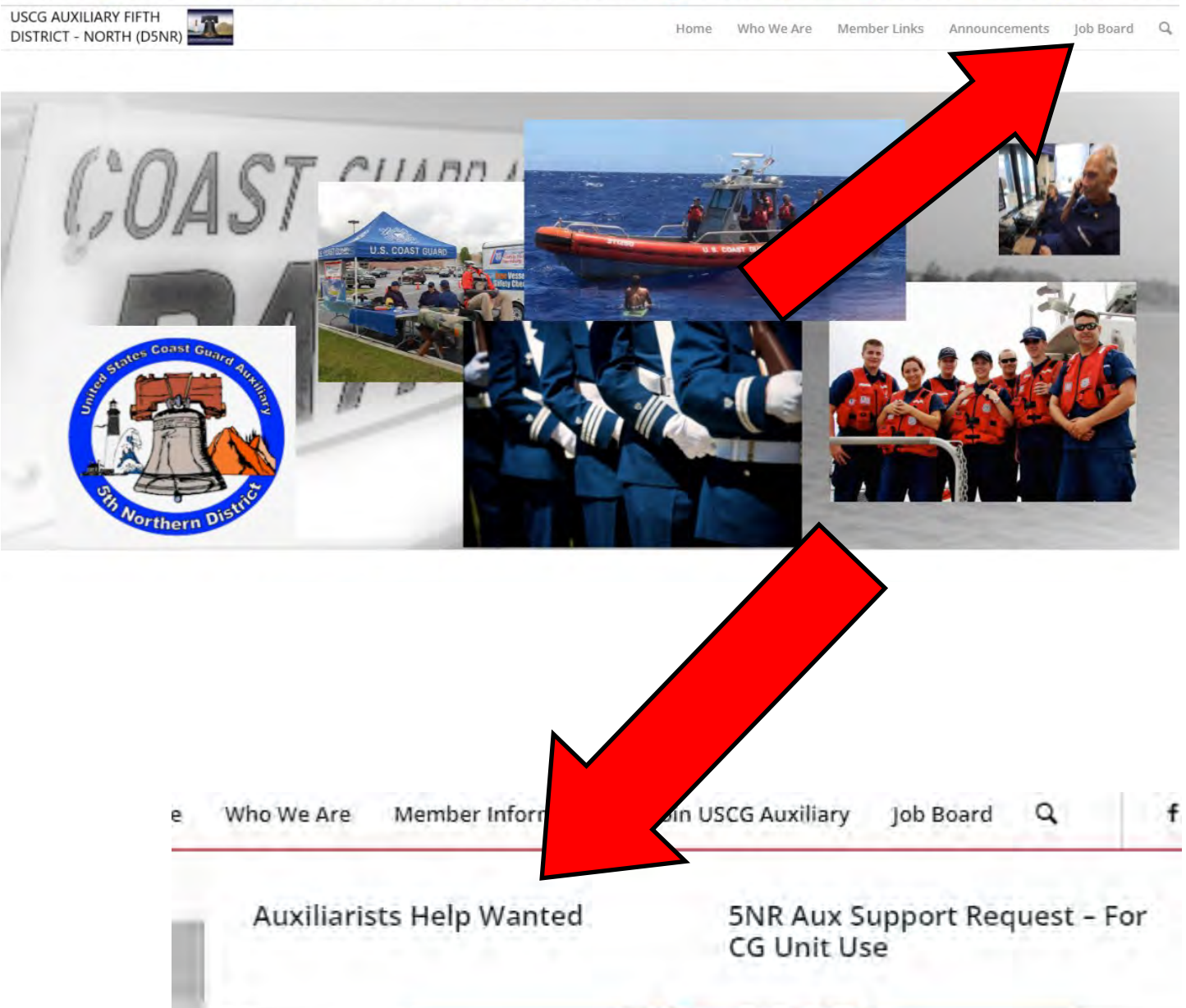
These officers were installed with a tradition termed frocking at the Commodore's Banquet at Fall D'TRAIN in Wilmington, Delaware on Saturday, 7 September. At that time they received their symbols of office which they are entitled to wear from that event onward. Their respective terms commence on 1 January, 2025. Until that time, the currently serving EXCOM member continue with their duties and full authority.

Commodore Sarac wishes to acknowledge all of the candidates who were successfully vetted and ran for District Offices and commends their dedication and service to the Auxiliary and the U.S. Coast Guard.

5NR Job Board

To get to the 5NR job board:

- First, get on the 5NR website: <https://5nr.org>
- Next, hover over “Job Board” on the top right (see below):
- Then, in the dropdown, click on “AUX Help Wanted - For AUX Member”



Lucky Bag - Hours

Days and hours for Auxiliarists to access Lucky Bag:

Every Wednesday 0900-1100

Every Thursday 1000-1300

Every Friday by appointment



Useful Resources

HURRICANE RELATED

National Hurricane Center <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Mike's Weather Page (one-stop shop with tons of information) <https://spaghettimodels.com/default.htm>

Tropical Tidbits <https://www.tropicaltidbits.com/storminfo/>

MEASURED RAINFALL

Interactive Daily Measured Rainfall Amounts Map <https://cocorahs.org/>

CLICKABLE MAPS FOR WEATHER and MARINE FORECASTS

NWS Weather Forecast Map (all US) <https://www.weather.gov/jetstream/wfos>

NOAA NWS Marine Weather Forecasts <https://www.weather.gov/marine/>

CLICKABLE MAPS AND HYDROGRAPHS FOR RIVER LEVELS AND FORECASTS

NWS River Forecast Centers (Entire US) <https://www.weather.gov/jetstream/rfcs>

Mid-Atlantic RFC River Hydrographs – S. NY to VA

[Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center Map](#)

Southeast RFC River Hydrographs - Wilmington NC to Key West, FL

[Southeast River Forecast Center Map](#)

Marine Safety Article

Something “Fishy” About These Fishing Boats

Along with the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the China Coast Guard; the Maritime Militia or “Fishing Militia,” comprise the means by which the People’s Republic of China (PRC) conducts maritime operations. The U.S. military’s name for the Maritime Militia is the “People’s Armed Forces Maritime Militia” or PAFMM.

The Maritime Militia has been around since the beginning of the PRC in 1949 with the outlook that a “people’s sea war” would include fishermen and other maritime workers. In the 1950’s, the Bureau of Aquatic Products began the process of organizing and strengthening the PAFMM by collectivizing fisheries. The Soviet influence was felt by adoption of the Soviet-developed “Young School” military theory emphasizing coastal defense rather than projection of naval power for communist countries just starting out.

By the late 1970’s, the PAFMM began to move away from the “Young School” model and increasingly ventured farther into the South China Sea. In the 2000’s, the PAFMM stepped-up its practice of harassment of U.S. and other nations’ fishing, merchant and naval vessels. Through the help of the PAFMM with its harassment of foreign fishing vessels, there has been an increase in illegal, unreported fishing. Recent satellite images reveal over one hundred militia vessels operating on a daily basis in the South China Sea.

The “Fishing Militia” combines maritime militia fishing vessels (MMFVs) with regular fishing boats or what are termed Spratly Backbone Fishing Vessels (SBFVs). These vessels range in size from 147’ to 213’. With most of the SBFVs owned by private individuals, the crews maintain jobs in the maritime economy sector as well as being prepared at any time to serve as a militia force. These vessels mainly rely upon ramming techniques (being fitted with reinforced bows), water cannons and anti-aircraft weapons (mainly on the MMFVs), naval mines and small arms to harass foreign fishing, merchant and naval vessels.

Maritime sovereignty-assertion missions occupy a great deal of the attention of the PAFMM. These disputes revolve around islands as well as freedom of navigation claims. The PAFMM and the China Coast Guard are actually deployed more often than the PLAN in these operations referred to as “gray zone operations.”



Gregg Bollinger
DSO - Marine Safety

Continued on the next page...

Marine Safety Article

Sometimes, due to the relatively unclear Command and Control guidelines, some PAFMM members frequently advance their own fortunes contrary to government wishes such as when some members used Maritime Militia rationale for going after endangered and/or protected species in disputed waters. The PAFMM or “Fishing Militia” is a “maverick arm of Chinese military power which is growing, requiring increased vigilance to protect U.S. naval and maritime interests.

A recent example of the activities and tactics of the PAFMM has been occurring since April of 2024. Most recently (26 AUG 2024), a re-supply mission to the Philippine Coast Guard’s flagship, BRP (Barko ng Republika ng Pilipinas) Teresa Magbanua (MRRV-9701) has been and as of this writing, continues to be blocked from free navigation by some 40 Chinese vessels including PAFMM or “Chinese Fishing Militia” vessels. A Chinese PLAN Type 075 “flattop” and Type 071 amphibious vessel have also been spotted near the South China Sea Island of Escoda, scene of the standoff.

On 26 AUG, a re-supply mission was blocked by the Chinese. It was to bring food, supplies, a group of journalists and even a “special ice cream treat” from Commandant Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan for the Teresa Magbanua’s beleaguered crew to celebrate Philippine “National Heroes Day.”

The blockade has consisted of three (3) PLAN warships, six (6) cutters and 31 PAFMM vessels which underscores the fact, previously-cited, that the “Chinese Fishing Militia” has the most interaction among the Chinese naval forces of a hostile nature with foreign vessels.

Using the previously-mentioned standard Chinese Fishing Militia tactics, on 22 AUG the Philippine BRP Cape Engano (MRRV-4411) was rammed, making a 1.5-meter-wide hole in its hull. That marked the sixth incident since April.

A provisional agreement eased the tense situation temporarily but hostilities have bubbled-up once again when a Philippine Navy Seal lost a finger during an incident at the Second Thomas Shoal. Re-supply attempts of the Philippine flagship have also ramped-up tensions.

N.B.: Information for writing this article was drawn from The Maritime Executive of 24 FEB 2024, the Wikipedia entry for the PAFMM and the United States Naval Institute (USNI) website.



Members Discover Early Auxiliary Murals Concealed Behind a Wall

By COMO Joseph Giannattasio

CAPE MAY, NJ - It's always fascinating to discover hidden treasures like the Coast Guard-inspired wall murals that were recently found during the renovation of the Auxiliary Cape May Flotilla's headquarters building. These large murals offer a glimpse into the early history of the Coast Guard and serve as a reminder of the pride and dedication of those who served before us.

Murals have been used for centuries to depict important events or cultural themes and can be found in many different settings, both inside and outside buildings. In this case, the murals were painted directly onto the walls of the building, which has a long history of serving the Coast Guard.

The building, which was first used in 1890 by the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment, served as a Coast Guard Life Boat Station in 1939 when the Lighthouse Service was amalgamated with the Coast Guard. Since 1947, it has been licensed to the Flotilla, and it is affectionately referred to as "The Shack" by its resident members.

The artwork is not signed and flotilla records don't provide any clues to who the artist is, but the fact that these murals have survived for so long, mostly intact, is truly remarkable. It's wonderful that one of the murals, depicting USCGC Point Caution - CG-82301, will remain on display in the building's galley where it can be appreciated by current and future members. The other mural, depicting USCG Cutter Cape Kiwanda - CG-95329, will be safely stored until a suitable home can be found for it in an area museum.

Overall, the discovery of these murals is a testament to the rich history of the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary, and the dedication of those who served. They serve as a tangible reminder of the sacrifices made by those who came before us and the importance of preserving our shared history.



Uncredited mural painting of USCGC Point Caution - CG-82301. Commissioned in 05OCT1960 and stationed in Galveston, TX. In 1970 was assigned to CG Squadron One, Division 12, South Vietnam as Nguyen An.

*Coast Guard Auxiliary photo
by IPDCO Joseph Giannattasio.*



Uncredited mural painting of USCGC Cape Kiwanda - CG-95329. Commissioned in 29APR1959 and stationed in Cape May, NJ.. Decommissioned 1968. The painting's Coast Guard slash and hull numbering-lettering do not conform to the standard, and a close observation of the slash indicates that it was likely added afterward. This suggests that the artwork was originally painted between 1960, when the cutter was stationed in Cape May, and April 1967, the date the Coast Guard slash appeared throughout the Coast Guard.

*Coast Guard Auxiliary photo
by IPDCO Joseph Giannattasio.*

Flotilla 053-19-05: An Intense Rescue

by David Blechertas, AUXPA3 edited by Kevin Behr, Flotilla Commander

On August 3, 2024, the on duty crew from Flotilla 19-05, York Pennsylvania, had an unexpectedly intense day of SAR cases that showed how good training and risk management can result in mission success despite difficult challenges.

The crew for the day consisted of Coxswain Kevin Behr, and TCO Wendy Behr with Coxswain David Blechertas in the role of crew member. A second stand by facility was on hand with Coxswain David Firestone and Crew Lori Ann Black available if needed. All crew members had years of experience together on their Flotilla's AOR, Lake Clarke; a lake created by a hydroelectric dam on the Susquehanna River in Southern Pennsylvania. The risk assessment planning for the day took several factors into account. The weather was hot and sunny with high humidity and a heat index near 100 degrees. Strong storms were expected in the afternoon and the valley where the lake is located is known for sudden cloud bursts. In addition, a third facility would arrive later in the day in preparation for a planned night training mission. Finally, it was the day of the Division Picnic and Station Long



Level would be busy with many guests. The original risk assessment score of Low/Medium was agreed upon by the crew and an initial patrol of the lake was done primarily focusing on locating water hazards (sunken logs) with latitude and longitude coordinates so that the night mission could avoid those areas later. Periodic light rain was in the area but conditions were mild. The facility returned to the Station at approx. 1315hrs for a rest.

At 1330hrs, the first phone call came into the Station requesting assistance. A boater on a personal watercraft had strayed into a shallow area of thick vegetation which was taken into the propulsion system rendering the vessel inoperable. The two person crew set off and located the distressed vessel approximately 3 miles north of the Station. Navigating to the PWC was not easy due to the very shallow conditions and substantial plant material. With gentle maneuvering and good communication from the crew member acting as lookout for the coxswain, the facility was able to safely close the distance. The boater heaved a line with a float to the Auxiliarists who were able to secure a stern tow and return the boater to his marina. The rescue was technical but was completed in a patient, efficient manner.

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Flotilla 053-19-05: An Intense Rescue

Continued

Again the facility returned to Station Long Level for a rest. At this time, approx. 1430hrs, the Division Picnic was underway but before the crew could take a bite, a second call for assistance was received by TCO Behr. The original phone call seemed simple, a boat with two people on board had an unknown engine issue and needed towed back to the public boat ramp. The crew set off but after arriving at the reported location, no distressed vessel could be located. The crew communicated back to the TCO who reached back out to the distressed vessel who then gave a completely different location report. The crew set off in the opposite direction and located the vessel. A straightforward stern tow was quickly established and upon arriving at the public boat ramp, other boaters were able to assist the distressed vessel with trailering the boat.



Again the facility returned to the Station and the crew was able to partake in some of the picnic lunch around 1530hrs. Unfortunately, the macaroni and cheese ship had pretty much sailed but the crew persevered. By this time, the sky was starting to turn dark in patches and winds were picking up. The station phone rang for the third time on the day and TCO Behr took down a report of another PWC with a 2 person crew who had just left a popular beach area on the opposite shore of the lake. They were trying to return to the marina ahead of the oncoming storm. However, the PWC was still over a mile away from safety when reportedly the kill switch had come off not only from the PWC but also from the driver. The duty crew had been checking the radar and knew storms were lose. The PWC was only about a mile and a half from the Station. An adjustment to the risk assessment, making it medium/high, was agreed to by the crew and TCO and reported to Sector .

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Flotilla 053-19-05: An Intense Rescue

Continued

Then the facility left for its third tow of the day. Arriving the at location of the PWC, one of the passengers was swimming in the water about 30 yards away in an attempt to locate the kill switch. The Aux crew urgently had the swimmer get back onto the PWC and a stern tow was quickly attached. No sooner had the tow line gone taunt then the sky opened up and the storm hit with high winds, heavy rain, and lightning. Coxswain Behr set his course due west but within seconds, horizontal rain dropped visibility to zero. The rain was so intense that even under the facility's Bimini top, Aux Blechertas later noted that he felt like his contact lenses would be washed right out of his eyes. As the crew struggled with the blinding conditions with no visible landmarks, Coxswain Kevin Behr checked his compass and realized that the brunt of the storm had put the facility 90 degrees off course and that he was now headed 180 degrees south. Steering the boat entirely by the compass, the course was corrected and the tow proceeded at 5 knots west directly into the storm toward the marina. Coxswains Behr and Blechertas discussed options but there was no safe area on the river any closer than the marina that was the goal of the tow. Keeping in contact with Station on the radio and keeping a close watch on the PWC and its huddled occupants, the only way to complete the rescue would be to proceed. Lightning struck the area throughout the tow, temporarily illuminating the shore line. After several minutes underway, Coxswain Behr achieved radio contact with the marina and asked them to put all possible outdoor lights on but neither the marina or the USCG Aux facility could obtain visual confirmation of the other. Time passed slowly but eventually the western shore of the lake came into view and the tow was just slightly north of the marina. Approaching the docks, the rain let up nearly as suddenly as it had begun and navigation and visibility problems eased considerably.

Marina staff and friends of the PWC occupants were waiting at the dock to assist. The PWC was docked and the Auxiliary crew made another risk assessment with the decision to come off the water immediately and revert to stand by condition since lightning and heavier rain was still visible across other areas of the river. The rescued passengers were grateful and relieved to be back on land and shouts of, "That was incredible" and "Thank you for saving our lives" were directed to the boat crew. One person commented, "They're the Coast Guard, that's what they live for". When the group had it explained to them that as Auxiliarists we are the volunteer, uniformed, civilian branch of the Coast Guard, they were shocked and even more grateful.

The first two search and rescue efforts of the day each had their own challenges but were relatively routine for an AOR that has no commercial towing and sees the Auxiliary crews of Division 19 perform well over 30 assistance tows per year from May to October. The third search involved risk, the crew knew that before they ever left the dock. The risk was mitigated by frequent radio communication with Station, frequent training that allowed a stern tow to be underway in mere minutes after arrival on the scene, and finally through familiarity with the AOR and good seamanship in steering to the marina successfully using only the compass. Additionally, the crew didn't push beyond what was necessary. As soon as they could come off the water, they did.

The boat crew that day knew the dangers, their skill sets as coxswains, the facility, and the AOR. Using the risk assessment process each step of the way, the risks were collectively deemed acceptable and more importantly, manageable, when viewed against the gain of a life saving event for two individuals in harm's way. This article should not be viewed in any way as glorifying risk taking. Rather, the mission was a testament to continuous training and adherence to Coast Guard Auxiliary Risk Management principals. Avoiding all risk results in mission failure. When risks are identified and mitigated however, the result on August 3 was the rescue of life and property on Lake Clarke in the 5NR Western Region.

Lancaster Flotilla Presents Lifesaving Awards

Article by Lawrence Butts

Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 053-19-04 recently recognized three of their members for their heroic rescue of a foundering kayaker on the Susquehanna River. Auxiliarists James Cawley, William Cookson, and Anthony Madonna were awarded the prestigious Auxiliary Medal of Operational Merit for their efforts in rescuing a capsized kayaker on Lake Clarke in the lower section of the Susquehanna River on June 4 2023. While patrolling fifty yards off of Shank’s Mare on the western shore in the flotilla facility River Guardian II, Anthony Madonna, the forward lookout spotted a person struggling to keep afloat further downstream who was only able to keep his head above water. The lookout notified the coxswain, William Cookson who immediately notified the communications watchstander at Auxiliary Station Long Level of the situation while concurrently adjusting their course for the pending rescue of the struggling boater. James Cawley and Anthony Madonna maintained constant visual contact and effective crew coordination to provide critically important maneuvering guidance for an approach from downstream. Constantly assessing the person’s condition as the rescue vessel approached, the crew skillfully brought the person aboard. After stabilizing the condition of the kayaker, the crew proceeded to rig the kayak for towing and began their return to shore. During the transit the exhausted kayaker even acknowledged that he did not know how to operate his inflatable life jacket. The rescue vessel River Guardian II proceeded to the public boat ramp where an Auxiliarist dispatched by Auxiliary Station Long Level lent further assistance to the rescue getting the boater the help that he needed. This event graphically illustrates that boaters not only need to wear their protective equipment, also they need to know how to use the equipment in a stressful emergency situation.



Auxiliary facility River Guardian II. File image courtesy of Anthony Madonna.

The River Guardian II crew displayed exceptional teamwork which allowed them to quickly recognize the boaters’ dire situation, where they effectively assessed the steps needed to safely rescue the struggling boater and smoothly



pull the boater out of the water and secure the wayward kayak. Their efforts were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Left to right James Cawley, William Cookson, Anthony Madonna.

Photograph taken by Lawrence Butts

Bags Fly at CWO Association Cornhole Tournament

Article and photos by COMO Joseph Giannattasio

In May, numerous Auxiliarists from District 5NR infused an extra dose of competition into the inaugural Cornhole Tournament organized by the Independence Chapter of the Chief Warrant Officers Association (CWOA). Sector Delaware Bay orchestrated a fantastic day filled with spirited cornhole matches, lively music, delicious pulled pork lunch, and a vibrant camaraderie among Active Duty personnel, Reservists, Civilians, Retirees, and Auxiliarists.



Clockwise from Top Left:

(Left to Right) Auxiliary members Bill Turner, Nick Russo and Thomas Siedenbühl enjoying fun and fellowship.

Auxiliarists Dave Sedlak and Marty Sannino demonstrate their impressive tossing technique, it's like poetry in motion!

Handmade competition trophies await cornhole competition winners.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Lends a Hand: Supporting Safety and Success at the New York City Marathon

Article by Christopher Orlando, AUXPA1

For the 2024 New York City Marathon (NYCM), over 53,000 runners representing over 150 countries converged on U.S. Coast Guard Sector New York & Fort Wadsworth. An event this size and magnitude calls for planning, teamwork and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

According to District Captain East (E) and Auxiliary Project Officer for the NYCM, David Mooney, “The Auxiliary was a true force multiplier for this event. Every year thousands of runners travel to run in the NYCM and it all starts on the grounds of USCG Sector New York.”

Mooney said, “Our primary mission is the safety and security of the sector buildings and personnel while the runners transit through the area to begin their 26.2 mile journey. We also provide a Communications team, Culinary Assistants, EMT's and Public Affairs Specialists for the event.”

Mooney, who has been Auxiliary Project Officer since 2017, said, “It is my job to make sure everyone has the most up to date and detailed information for the mission including logistics, base access, communications, culinary and more.”

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary had 79 members who assisted as shuttle drivers, AUXCA's, EMT's, and a force multiplier for general security tasks assisting Coast Guard Security Forces, according to Michael S. Klacik, District Commodore - elect (DCO (E)) of United States Coast Guard Auxiliary District 1 Southern Region.

“My role as the current District Chief of Staff is to support Mooney and make sure he has everything he needs to increase the number of Auxiliarists participating in the event,” said DCO (E) Klacik. “I work to promote the event by spreading the message to our members, that this is a fantastic way to help augment the Coast Guard and other government agencies present to provide a safe, fun. environment for the 53,000+ runners.”

The day starts early for members assisting with this event, especially Mooney. “The days leading up to race day are hours upon hours of planning, last minute fixes, emails, phone calls, walk throughs. I dedicate my time to make sure everything is flawless and perfect. More importantly it's my job to make sure everyone traveling to work this event can get there safely and without issue.”

He continued, “I arrive just after the two hour Security Sweep is done and I make sure all our shuttle vans are up and running. Between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. the Auxiliary Culinary Assistants arrive and head to the galley to begin to prepare breakfast. By 4:00 a.m. all personnel, Auxiliary and Active Duty must be on base as they shut down vehicle traffic. Breakfast starts at 4:30 a.m. and the intel briefing starts at 5:00 a.m. All Auxiliarists are assigned posts and arrive at their assignments by 5:30 a.m..”



Auxiliary photograph by Anna Ackaway

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Coast Guard Auxiliary Lends a Hand: Supporting Safety and Success at the New York City Marathon Continued

“The hours were harsh, but the payoff of smiley first responders and Auxiliary coming for a hot meal was best” said AUX Bert Ongkeo, an Auxiliary Culinary Assistant (AUXCA) and Flotilla Commander for Flotilla Lower Manhattan, who worked at the NYCM. “In New York, we have a chief who is willing to assist us in training our culinary members at Station New York. Consequently, our opportunity to work in an active-duty galley is now available for the Auxiliary. The more we can recruit and train, the more we can send our members to be part of the action.”

Mooney said that the success of the event comes down to planning. “Planning officially starts the day after the marathon as the New York Road Runners who manage the Marathon always announce the date for next year's race. By June whispers of the Marathon begin and once September hits we begin bi-weekly meetings. It takes weeks to plan our logistics and by the time October hits we have begun to form a duty roster. Requests for Duty closes one week prior to the Marathon and during that time is when post assignments are created and detailed instructions are sent out.”

AUX Ongkeo explained that partnership with the active duty Coast Guard really makes this event a success. “This year, most of the prep was helped by the Active Duty culinary services team. They prepped the bacon, sausages on a sheet pan, and supplied us with eggs in a 16-quart Cambro container. Our AUXCA members made the pancake mix, the potato hash, and cooked the rest of the prepped items. As for lunch, we marinated the chicken, roasted out the vegetables, and fried the potatoes.”

“This year was one of the smoothest running events that I have participated in during my 17 years in the Auxiliary. The team of Auxiliarists that showed up, some starting before midnight on November 2nd and working through noon on November 3rd are truly phenomenal, and I am proud to call them shipmates,” said DCO (E) Klacik via an email to participants. “This all with the added benefit of having to deal with the time change. This year was extra special because we had members from both D1NR and D5NR take time out of their lives to come and assist us in making this massive event safe, fun, and a success.”

“I'd like to commend the four D5NR Auxiliarists who participated in the New York City Marathon mission in D1SR,” said Noreen Schifini, DCO (E) for U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary 5th District Northern Region. “We have a great relationship with our shipmates in D1SR and we were honored to assist with such an important event. We look forward to continuing that partnership in service of Team Coast Guard.”

AUX Larry Nolan from 5NR Division 7 said, “It was a unique experience based on the size and scale of the facilities, support and security personnel needed to safely and efficiently allow 53,000 runners to start the race over a three-hour period. There were rows of approximately 50 portable toilets on block after block to give a sense of the scale. The teamwork and camaraderie among the approximately 100 active Coast Guard members and Auxiliarists was at a high level and allowed for a pleasant experience. The careful planning and processes were evident as the coordination and performance of the team was excellent. It was a one-of-a-kind experience that will remain a memorable one.”

Mooney said, “Over the years I have personally spoken with Chiefs, Captains, Admirals, and they all say the same thing, this event could not succeed without the help of the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary members that volunteer for this event triple the amount of Active Duty personnel assigned for the event. A true force multiplier.”

“The First District Southern Region has approximately 2,600+ Auxiliarists serving three Coast Guard Sectors. This event allowed us to be visible to 53,000+ runners from around the world, who may never have heard of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Our presence initiated a lot of conversation between our members and the runners, and neither group were shy in engaging

Coast Guard Auxiliary Lends a Hand: Supporting Safety and Success at the New York City Marathon Continued

in conversation promoting not only what we do, but what led them to be participating in running the famous NYCM,” said DCO (E) Klacik. “As for the gold side, it may be the first time they really ever worked with the Auxiliary, and it is a great educational experience for both them and us. They get to observe the Auxiliary in action and hopefully see the benefit of working together to build a stronger team.”



Auxiliary photograph courtesy of D1SR



COMO Giannattasio Honored with the Prestigious Daniel Maxim Instructor Award

by Timothy P. Marks, DSO-PB

Immediate-Past District Commodore Joseph Giannattasio was honored with the 2023 Commodore Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education during District Fifth Northern's (D5NR) fall DTRAIN. This esteemed award, presented by CDR Laura Moose, DIRAUX and DCO Kurt Sarac, is a national recognition established by the Coast Guard Auxiliary Education Directorate to celebrate top-tier instructors.

A dedicated member of the Cape May flotilla, COMO Giannattasio has devoted 20 years to instructing over 800 hours in Public Education classes and more than 900 hours in Auxiliary Member and Operational Training.

The Commodore Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education aims to inspire and motivate instructors to exceed the ordinary and achieve the extraordinary. The award seeks to enhance the diversity and number of courses offered, improve the effectiveness and performance of Public Education and Member Training Instructors, foster mentorship for less experienced instructors, and encourage innovative teaching methods and aids.

Dr. L. Daniel Maxim, also a member of D5NR, was highly esteemed within the Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) community. COMO Maxim served as ANACO-RB and was the Chairman of the National Boating Safety Advisory Council (NBSAC).



Giannattasio. IPDCO (center) is presented the Commodore Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education by CDR Laura Moose, DIRAUX and COMO Kurt Sarac, DCO at D5NR Fall DTRAIN.

Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Leon DeFulgentis.



COMO Giannattasio conducting a Boating Safety Class for the public.

Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Lorraine Bianco.



Photo of the 2023 Commodore Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education.

Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Joseph Giannattasio.

History of the District and Auxiliary



Saving 5 NR History

By Tim Marks, DSO-PB

Previously ran summer of 2023:

In talking with Steve Marthouse, our 5NR Historian, he thought it would be interesting and more valuable to you, the members, if he would have your input as to what you might like him to write about, cover, or explain rather than him trying to write something that he thinks you would be interested in.

The idea is that Steve would create a column in each newsletter such as "Ask the Auxiliary Historian" or "Ever wonder why the Auxiliary _____?"

So, here is your chance! The Coast Guard Auxiliary and 5NR have a long and storied history, with the Coast Guard having a history as old as the country. Is there something you were wondering about? Is there a topic you wanted to learn more about? Is there a piece of Coast Guard or Auxiliary history that you wish you knew more about?

Feel free to ask your questions directly to Historian Marthouse. He will then address them in future issues of Topside.

Email: sjmarthouse@gmail.com



*Steve Marthouse
5NR Historian
ADSO-PB History*



The History of the District Fifth Northern Flag

by **COMO Joseph Giannattasio, History Branch**

Each one of the sixteen Coast Guard Auxiliary districts are represented by their own unique district flag that represents the special aspects of their region.

District Fifth Northern's flag features a lighthouse, mountains and the Liberty Bell with lettering on a blue background with gold fringe. Why and when was our flag designed?

In 1998 the Auxiliary National Board requested each District to design and present a flag the following year for the Auxiliary's 60th Anniversary at the National Conference held in Orlando, Florida. District 5NR, as with many other Districts, held a design competition for the flag to represent the district. The creator of our flag was the late Mel Borofsky, then the DSO-PB. Mel recalled, "There were many entries, each excellent in their own right. The design chosen by the District Executive Committee was submitted by yours truly. The flag I designed was then manufactured under the direction of DSO-PA Ron Boice and was delivered to our District Commodore in Florida. I was in attendance when COMO Locasale carried our flag into the conference hall and I have to tell you, it was a very exciting and proud moment of my life."

Over the few months afterwards the 5NR flag was exhibited at 5NR District conferences, Elected Officers Training Sessions and at various changes of watch throughout the District.

Most Auxiliarists on viewing the flag understand the symbolization of the various elements thereon. Some have wondered about color and placement and in a 1999 TOPSIDE article Mel shared the thoughts that went into its design. "a) The background of blue represents the air and sea on which we patrol' b) The lettering is in silver to represent the membership of our Coast Guard Auxiliary' c) The fringe is gold to represent the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard, our parent organization' d) Both colors appearing together on the flag represent the unity and the family relationship of our two organizations' e) The lighthouse (which is Old Barney) and the pounding ocean waves represent the Eastern Area of our District, self-explanatory f) The Liberty Bell in the center, of course, represents the Central Area with its cultural and historic heritage in and around Philadelphia; g) The mountains and trees represent our Western Area with its lakes, rivers and streams."

Mel passed away earlier this year, and his contribution remains a cherished memory.

For twenty-five years our district flag has proudly represented not only our district, but also our dedicated members who have proudly served the Auxiliary for eighty-five years. The next time you attend a district conference, avail yourself of the opportunity to examine our distinguished standard. Stop and reflect. Take just a moment to bask in the Coast Guard's and the Auxiliary's pride and testimony for all that you as Auxiliarists do on a daily basis, and for those who have led the way for us. Enjoy, reflect and carry on.



Left to Right: Noreen Schifini, District Chief of Staff and Jason Flynn, Conference Coordinator display the Fifth District-Northern Region flag during the spring D'TRAIN.

Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by IPDCO Joseph Giannattasio.

The Lightship, HURON

By David Bronson

How many times have we been in a vicinity where a lighthouse stands, and it has captured our attention even to the point of wanting to climb the steps and see the view from the top? Today there are still many lighthouses still standing but there is only one Lightship in existence. Since 1832 there have been many Lightships that have warned other ships of the dangerous shoals and shore lines of the Great Lakes. This is the only survivor, the HURON

Commissioned in 1921, the Huron began service as a relief vessel for other Great Lakes lightships. She is ninety-seven feet long, twenty-four feet in beam, and carried a crew of eleven. On clear nights her beacon could be seen for fourteen miles (23 km). After serving in northern Lake Michigan, the Huron was assigned to the Corsica Shoals in 1935. These shallow waters, six miles (9.7 km) north of Port Huron, were the scene of frequent groundings by lake freighters in the late nineteenth century. A lightship station had been established there in 1893, since the manned ships were more reliable than lighted buoys. After 1940 the Huron was the only lightship on the Great Lakes. Retired from Coast Guard Service in 1970, she was presented to the City of Port Huron in 1971. The ship is now a museum and is open in the summer months.



Air Station Brooklyn, New York

1938-1998

By Leon C. DeFulgentis, AUXPA2

On July 9, 1936, plans were made to construct a Coast Guard air arm on Floyd Bennett Field at a cost of \$399,800.00. Floyd Bennett Field was used by the United States Coast Guard and the United States Navy beginning in the 1930's. Dedication ceremonies were set for April 23, 1938, and were conducted by Rear Admiral Russell R. Waesche, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard. The activities of the Air Station were mainly concerned with air-sea rescue until the outbreak of World War II. Famous figures include Amelia Earhart and Howard Hughes who frequently flew in and out of the airport. In the early days of World War II, patrol and utility aircraft were armed with depth charges. These aircraft harassed submarines when combat planes were unavailable. During this time period the Air Station operated helicopters and a large variety of fixed wing aircraft.

By a directive of the Chief of Naval Operations, in 1943 the station was designated a helicopter training base. Three Sikorsky HNS helicopters were assigned. CDR Frank A. Erickson was placed in charge of helicopter training and became commanding officer of the Air Station from December 1943 until February 1945. By the end of the first year of operations, over one hundred pilots and one hundred and fifty mechanics had been trained to fly and service aircraft. Over 3,000 hours had been flown by the HNS helicopters attached to Air Station Brooklyn. This air station was also the birthplace of the helicopter rescue hoist and sling. This equipment received its first real test at the Navy's air-sea rescue demonstration held off Manasquan, NJ on October 2, 1944. Four men were picked up from a rubber raft and landed aboard the Coast Guard cutter Cobb in less than ten minutes. CDR Erickson developed the idea and techniques of power hoist equipment for practical use in helicopters. On August 11, 1944, in Jamaica Bay, New York City, Erickson was the first pilot to pick up a man in a helicopter. On August 14, 1944, Erickson demonstrated the first pick up of a man floating in water and the first pick up of a man from a life-raft on September 25, 1944. CDR Erickson received an official commendation for these demonstrations. Erickson's techniques in the use of the hydraulic hoist and related lifesaving equipment proved invaluable to military and non-military applications in the use of the helicopter for rescues, lifting of personnel, equipment, and cargo.



Above: Aerial view of Air Station Brooklyn Source: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Below: Air Station Brooklyn Source: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office



Continued on the next page...

Air Station Brooklyn, New York

1938-1998

By Leon C. DeFulgentis, AUXPA2



Above: Patch Air Station Brooklyn Source: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Below: Captain Frank Arthur Erickson Source: U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

On January 3, 1944, CDR Erickson received an official commendation after he piloted a Sikorsky HNS -1 helicopter that carried two cases of blood plasma lashed to the helicopter's floats. He was transporting them from New York City to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, for the treatment of Navy crewmen of the Navy destroyer USS Turner, which had exploded and burned off of New York harbor. Erickson performed this heroic deed in fierce snow and winds which grounded all other aircraft. He became the first pilot in the world to operate a helicopter under such conditions. This was considered the first "lifesaving flight" ever performed by a helicopter.

Air Station Brooklyn continued to operate and celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on May 13, 1988. Mayor Koch thanked the Coast Guard and the Air Station for fifty years of service to the City of New York and its surrounding areas. A proclamation was presented at the ceremony proclaiming, "Coast Guard Air Station Brooklyn Fiftieth Anniversary Day in the City of New York." Coast Guard Air Station Brooklyn was decommissioned in May 1998 and its resources transferred to the newly established group-Air Station Atlantic City which became operational on May 18, 1998.

Sources:

www.uscg.mil, Arthur Percy. *A History of U.S. Coast Guard Aviation*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989. U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office.



USCG Air Station Atlantic City Source: Leon C. DeFulgentis, AUXPA2

5NR Obscura



"The Blob" Movie Theater

One can debate whether The Blob is a Philadelphia movie, but it's undoubtedly a District 5NR movie. The 1958 schlock sci-fi classic, which stars Steve McQueen in his big role, was filmed in Phoenixville, Downingtown, Chester Springs, and other parts of Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Colonial Theater

In 1958, the classic science fiction movie, The Blob, the Colonial Theatre was featured in a pivotal scene of the movie as the creature starts to attack the town. A commemorative plaque is located on the rear wall of the balcony in honor of the film's projection-room scene, in which The Blob oozes through the projection openings. The plaque reads:

"Through this wall in the year 1958 Shorty Yeaoworth's THE BLOB brought the monster into the movie theater and Phoenixville's COLONIAL THEATRE into the annals of film history."

Downingtown Diner

Remember the scene in the original 1958 movie where Steve McQueen and pals make a desperate stand in a diner against the giant alien jello? The Downingtown Diner, scene of the movie's climax, stood at 81 West Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown, about 12 miles southwest of Phoenixville. There's still a diner on the site but it's unfortunately not the original seen in the film. The original diner was reportedly moved to Hollywood around 1960 to be used as a set in other movies.



TOPSIDE presents the District 5NR Obscura platform as a space for members to exchange discoveries of unique, hidden, and extraordinary attractions within Auxiliary District Fifth Northern. If you're aware of a captivating, intriguing, or lesser-known spot in your area of the district, please share a couple of photos along with a concise description with our Editor. This way, fellow members can savor these gems and perhaps experience them during their own journeys.

Photos from Across the District



Photograph taken by Jennifer Bayer, one of the students in Flotilla 12-03's Boat Delaware class held at the Memorial Fire Company in Slaughter Beach, DE. She really appreciated the materials and presentation.

Pictured from left to right are Ernest Stevens and Warren Huff.



Division 12. A PA Booth was staffed at the Delaware Marine Dealers Boat Show held in Milton, Delaware on July 19-21, 2024. Pictured from L to R are Ernest Stevens (12-03), Michael Geletej (12-03) and Greg Barth (12-09).

Photo by Warren Huff.

Susan Rose Salvage

Photographs by Leon C. DeFulgentis, AuxPA2



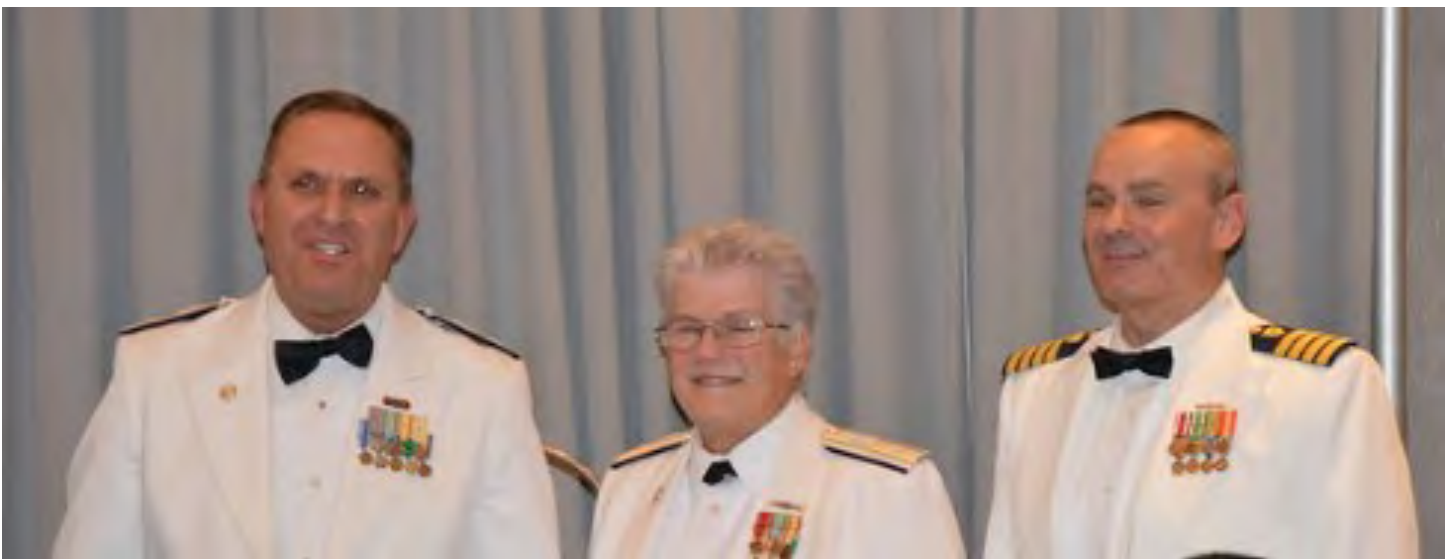
Fall 2024 DTRAIN

Photographs by Donna Doyle



Fall 2024 DTRAIN

Photographs by Donna Doyle



Fall 2024 DTRAIN

Photographs by Donna Doyle



COASTIE ROBOT PA EVENT

Photographs by COMO Joseph Giannattasio

Coast Guard Auxiliary members Nick Russo, Dave Sedlak, and Marty Sannino of Division 08 recently joined Coastie The Safety Boat 'underway' at a Coast Guard Auxiliary Public Affairs kiosk. Their active participation contributed to the success of the Burke Motor Group's Car, Truck, and Cycle Show held at their Cape May Court House location this Labor Day weekend. This exciting event, which supports the Cape May County Coast Guard Community Foundation, featured live music, a diverse range of vendors, and tasty food trucks. It's a fantastic opportunity to celebrate cars, trucks, and motorcycles while supporting a worthy cause!

The 44-Inch Low Endurance Coastie Cutter class, the smallest cutter ever created for the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary, is powered by electric motors and controlled remotely. It boasts independent directional drive wheels and is equipped with a full duplex two-way voice system, water squirter, MP3 player, siren, and more. Since its introduction in 1997, this cutter has continued to be a part of the Coast Guard and Auxiliary fleet, with ongoing production.

This program has already educated thousands of children and engaged with families at boat shows, schools, parades, and community events throughout District Fifth Northern.



Coast Guard Auxiliary Group photo by Ms. Marla Brown.

Coast Guard Auxiliary Coastie.
Photo by COMO Joseph Giannattasio.

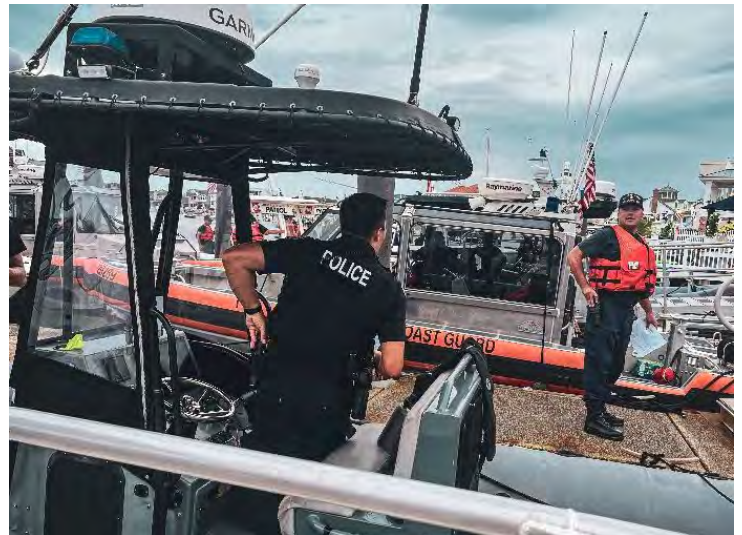


Night in Venice Boat Parade

Photographs taken by Paul Whitman

The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, New Jersey State Police Marine Police, and a number of surrounding police departments provided safety/support for the Night in Venice Boat Parade this past weekend in Ocean City, NJ.

The Night in Venice Boat Parade draws over 100,000 spectators to the bayfront to enjoy house parties and watch Ocean City's premier summer event.



A Message from the Editor

Good Day 5NR,

I hope this finds you well this season. Thank you to all who contributed to this newsletter. Please continue to supply content, even during the winter months

Speaking of the winter, I wish you all a fantastic holiday and a super new year. I can't wait to see what wonderful things 5NR accomplishes when we put our minds together.

Enjoy this time with your family,
Tim Marks
DSO-PB



Timothy Marks
District Staff Officer -
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United States Coast Guard Auxiliary 5th District, Northern Region

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Come Visit us on the Web

Coast Guard Auxiliary homepage:

<http://www.cgaux.org/>

5NR Website:

<http://www.5nr.org/index.php>



Parting Shot



Our DDC-Prevention, Al Grimminger, jamming out during the Fall D-Train's themed "Friday Fun Night."

Coast Guard Auxiliary Photograph by Donna Doyle