

# 11 North- wind

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary  
District 11, Northern Region

Vol. 28 | Issue 4  
Oct – Dec 2021



*Santa and Mrs.  
Claus visit  
ASSF!*

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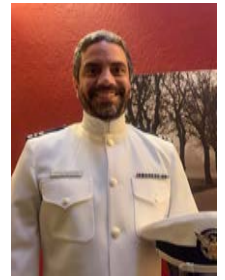
**Photos herein** are provided by the author, by the subject, or by the staff, or are in the public domain and/or free to use.

**Cover Photo:** U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists Tiffany Townsend and Pete Gorenberg at Air Station San Francisco. (Dr. Townsend and Dr. Gorenberg, like Mr. and Mrs. Claus, share a household; thus their unmasked proximity on the cover and on page six.)

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## From the Editor:



"If you'd like to be of assistance to me..." That's how a mentor of mine began his sentence when he was asking me for help when I visited him in his retirement community. I imagine it was a mix of pride and modesty that caused him to lead off his request that way. He could have said, "Would you..." or "I can't seem to..." or "Hey, you!" But, for some reason, he phrased it as an opportunity for me to help him - something he knew I'd be honored to do. "If you'd like to be of assistance to me..."

Often, our opportunities to help others are not phrased that way. Rather, they take the form of radio dispatches, frantic gesticulations, panicked looks, or shouts for help. And, yet, they are still opportunities for us - to be of assistance, to render to someone in need the kind of aid we hope would be rendered to us, were the tables turned (which they might one day be.)

In this issue of *Northwind*, you'll find articles about various ways of being of assistance. Ensuring safe boating, spreading cheer, preparing for eventualities, supporting the Gold side, assisting the public, recognizing each other's good deeds, and more - these are all examples of the varied work that the Auxiliary does for Team Coast Guard. I hope you'll enjoy this issue, and give some thought to how you might "be of assistance" to someone today.

Peace,

Gregory O. Schaefer, *Editor*  
Flotilla 46, Redwood City  
DSO-PB, D-AD (Awards),  
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# From the District Commodore

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Ahoy D11N Shipmates! I hope you are all doing well and were able to safely enjoy the holiday season with friends and family.

**So, what's happened in past three months?** The last quarter of 2021 was challenging, yet rewarding. All of our Divisions and Flotillas were able to hold virtual elections and elect leaders for 2022. Congratulations to all of the new and returning elected leaders. Thank you for “*choosing*” to be an elected leader in our Coast Guard Auxiliary. I cannot express my thanks enough as without active and attentive leaders at the helm, we will not be able to keep headway and stay on course.

We were also able to hold several in-person Division Changes of Watch (in Divisions 4, 5, and 6) and several more virtual COW events (in Divisions 1, 3, 8, and 12) over the past few months, each unique and well attended by members and our gold side partners. And above all, each one was fun. The remaining Divisions are assessing risk vs gain in making their decisions to move forward or wait. No matter the decision, I am happy to say that they are making member safety their primary consideration.

We as a District definitely had our successes and challenges during the late months as well. The Financial System update did end up impacting our last quarter as the expected completion date of 15 Nov came and went. This prevented us from requesting most reimbursable operational orders through the end of the year and into the beginning of 2022. In retrospect, the timing of the update couldn't have been better as we were in our slow time of the year and it also allowed our members to continue performing mission critical tasking and non-reimbursable support to our recreational boating safety and Coast Guard operational/support programs. BSX is currently looking at the member impact on operational and other currency requirements and will be putting out guidance in early 2022.

Even with the Financial System update impacting our operational tasking in Q4, our District still showed that we could be productive and the face of the Auxiliary, and interact with the public to the extent possible. Overall, D11N contributed 93,924

volunteer hours to the Coast Guard in 2021. Up a full 15.6% from 2020. This may not seem significant to some; however, we must take into account that we are still in COVID-19 Reconstitution Plan Phase III and have not returned to full strength. I want to commend all of our members who returned to authorized tasking. I also want to commend those members who temporarily did not return. I know this is has been a difficult decision but all of us need to think about our personal and family health. I do look forward to the time when we won't have to make this difficult decision. Hopefully it is soon!



*Commodore Dean McFarren*

D11N continued to focus on the Request for Forces (Needs Assessment) program, working with our Coast Guard partners and our ASC's/AUC's to define job descriptions and locate members to fill active-duty vacancies or augment current station forces as needed. As of the end of 2021, we have identified and assigned Aux members to fill 39 of 64 requests with five pending. The RFF program goal is to foster collaboration between Active-Duty units and Auxiliary personnel and we have been successful at placing Auxiliary members in many non-traditional Aux roles across the District.

**What is happening now?** We enter 2022 with new additional COVID-19 guidance being sent out in ALAUX 001/22 on 3 Jan, which updates Auxiliary COVID-19 Reconstitution Guidance requiring Auxiliary members to be fully vaccinated (2 shots Pfizer/Moderna or 1 shot J&J) IF they plan to come into contact with other members of the Auxiliary, Coast Guard personnel, or the public. Being fully vaccinated is not required to perform duties and tasking where you will not come into contact with the aforementioned people. As per DIRAUX subsequent instructions, all blanket Assignments to Duty authorized by our DIRAUX for unvaccinated members have been rescinded at this time.

Please note that this is a temporary restriction on a member's ability to volunteer for public facing



assignments in order to ensure the health and wellbeing of unvaccinated Auxiliarists, Coast Guard personnel, and members of the public that the Coast Guard is obligated to protect. According to our NACO Alex Malewski, medical and religious exemptions are being developed and reviewed. I don't have a date that these will be rolled out, but given the focus on this matter, there should be an answer sooner than later. I urge all members to take a deep breath and let this new guidance play out. It is not permanent and we will once again all be able to return to tasking.

Our annual Elected Officer Training was held at Base Alameda on 15 Jan. A full day of training was conducted for 12 in-person and 24 remote Flotilla and Division leaders by a fantastic lineup of instructors. Thank you to all who participated in this hybrid training event as it shows that we can meet safely and use technology to fulfill our mission.

In addition to the Elected Officer training, we also held our annual Auxiliary Memorial ceremony at Base Alameda where we recognized and remembered D11N members that passed over the bar in 2019-2021. Our PCA President Jim Losi and his team put together a very stirring and memorable outdoor event that was attended by several family members and approximately 40 Auxiliary members and gold-side partners. The event was live streamed which allowed non-local family members and Auxiliarists to attend.

Lastly, I encourage all members to review the status of their Core Training (CT). There are five courses that need to be taken every five years to remain current. Falling out of compliance does have implications. You will automatically go into REYR status for all of your certifications until you have completed the coursework. Unfortunately, there is no alarm or trigger in AUXDATA II to notify you that you will fall out of currency at the end of the year. Fortunately, this can all be done quickly online. We also plan to hold instructor-led virtual and in-person training for members that prefer a personal touch.

**What is coming up?** I'm excited as we move into the new year. We continue to plan for our premier

District event, DTRAIN 2022, which will be held at the Nugget Hotel & Resort in Sparks, NV, on 25-27 March. This is a fantastic venue with recently remodeled hotel rooms and a great space for our conference. All at a very good price!!! This is truly an event that shouldn't be missed. We will be having our ever-popular Friday night Member Appreciation event (Fun Night) which is old-west themed this year, many classes, and cap the weekend off with a formal awards banquet. So, dust off your Dinner Dress Blues and put a spit shine on your shoes as this looks to be another great event. Event/hotel booking links are now on our District web site, where class information is also being updated weekly.

All indicators point to the Financial System update being completed in the coming days which will allow members to request reimbursable operational orders once again. This is the perfect time to inspect your PPE, revisit anything that you might be a bit rusty on, and get any maintenance done on your OPFAC. The key is to be prepared for the new year and ready to hit the ground running.

I am encouraged and appreciative to see so many of our members reengage in Auxiliary activities. Even though we remain in Phase III, it has allowed us to resume doing what we're passionate about but we must remember that COVID-19 has not gone away...yet. It is still incumbent upon all of us to ensure we take appropriate safety precautions to safeguard ourselves, our fellow Auxiliarists, and the general public.

Before closing, I would like to remember Auxiliary family that passed over the bar in the past three months; dedicated Auxiliarists that made lasting contributions to our District: William (Bill) Burns (FL 17, Pt. Bonita), Alan M. Haydis (FL 10-02, Modesto), Rory O. Neumann (FL 31, McClellan Park), and Daniel Tinney (FL 51, Vallejo). Fair winds and following seas.

I look forward to seeing everyone at DTRAIN 2022, if not sooner. Please continue to stay safe and remain *Semper Paratus*.

V/R

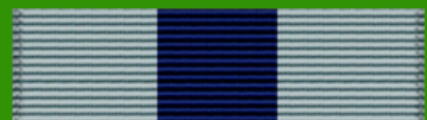
COMO Dean McFarren, DCO

# JOIN THE AUXILIARY VESSEL EXAMINER PROGRAM



This photo was taken before Covid restrictions.

## CONTACT YOUR FSO-VE FOR MORE INFORMATION





## Mission: Joy!

by Tiffany Townsend, photos by David Beltran

Santa Claus gave his reindeer the day off, arriving by MH-65 Dolphin helicopter at U.S. Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco for the annual family holiday party on Saturday, 4 December. Mr. and Mrs. Claus granted Christmas wishes, presenting a specially selected gift for each child.

Crew assignments for the day included U.S. Coast Guard Commander Corey Braddock as sleigh driver, flight mechanic Annelin Acosta, and Auxiliarists Pete Gorenberg as Santa Claus, Tiffany Townsend as Mrs. Claus, David Beltran as photo elf, and Terry Blanchard as Santa’s ground support.

Auxiliary support at the Air Station San Francisco (ASSF) holiday party began in 2018, when Coxswain Terry Blanchard volunteered a member to participate as Santa. With two Santa suits available, one was worn by a Coast Guard flight crewmember, who waved at children as the helicopter circled the hangar. Children were ushered in as the helicopter landed and the hangar doors closed. Completing the switch, Auxiliarist-Santa entered via a side door, magically greeting the children from his chair.

Family members provided pre-wrapped gifts, which were stored in a display helicopter for distribution. Santa called out to each of the children, who were delighted to receive exactly what they’d wished for Christmas. The festive occasion was enjoyed by all, even Aux-Santa who did not log any flight hours.

Blanchard was asked again in 2019 if he could provide another Santa. This time, Santa Claus enjoyed a helicopter ride from the general aviation terminal, circling multiple times around the hangar and landing, with families watching from the open doors. Another celebratory occasion was enjoyed and a tradition was established.

While the COVID-19 pandemic dashed any plans for a holiday event in 2020, conditions were looking brighter in 2021. In the interest of promoting Team Coast Guard diversity, this time a female Auxiliarist was invited to participate this year. Gorenberg and Townsend volunteered to fill the roles, with new “his and hers” costumes.



With the original sleigh and flight crew called away for a search and rescue case, a backup helicopter was readied and CDR Braddock kindly piloted the special mission. Santa and Mrs. Claus experienced an aerial tour of the San Francisco Bay while Coast Guard families arrived and enjoyed a holiday brunch and a safety demonstration by the San Francisco Airport fire department.

The sleigh’s landing and Santa’s arrival were greeted by some very happy children. Mrs. Claus was well received, perhaps not as intimidating as the jolly fellow with his generous beard and eyebrows. Parents were assured the merry couple work as physicians when not spreading cheer, and that both are fully vaccinated and boosted. Taking place in an open airport hangar, local COVID-19 health and safety guidelines were followed for the environmental conditions.

Air Station San Francisco looks forward to welcoming the jolly couple at future holiday celebrations. Promoting the spirit of joy is just one way Coast Guard Auxiliarists support Team Coast Guard missions.

Happy Helo Days!

*Tiffany Townsend, Deputy DSO-PB, is Flotilla Commander of Flotilla 12, Sausalito-Tiburon.*



## Recognizing Service Through Awards by Vicki Hudson

*Awards are a tough nut – they are difficult to write well and they require advance effort to document what actions merit acknowledgement.*

The final quarter of the calendar year has arrived, and elected leaders and appointed staff officers have completed their terms. Some will choose to stay on in staff positions, others will run for different offices. Change of Watch rituals are impacted by COVID still and, overall, the work of the Auxiliary will continue. By choice, we have volunteered to invest our time, energy, and (at times) funds into the United States Coast Guard as the civilian, unpaid force that augments the recreational and safe boating program as well as many Active Duty operational missions.

The USCG 2020-2026 Strategic Plan 11-1-20 cites repeatedly the importance of the Auxiliary for successful execution of USCG operations, and emphasizes how to identify, increase, and leverage the force multiplier that is the volunteer, financially-uncompensated force. Only on the very last page (28) does this plan mention what should be a key factor for retention of the volunteer force – recognition of members: “Proceduralize the process for recognition of members, especially flotilla leaders.” The stated milestone is to “automate” the process of Flotilla and Division Commanders to receive letters of appreciation from the National Commodore.

Which raises the question – what about the “process for recognition for members” aspect of the goal?

This is the time of year when individual flotillas that want to process awards in time for Change of Watch/end of year events should have forwarded up recommendations for such tokens of acknowledgement as the Auxiliary Commandant Letter of Commendation, the Auxiliary Achievement Medal, and the Auxiliary Commendation Medal. These are the equivalent of active-duty awards typically approved by the first field grade CG Commander, or approved by a Division Chief at

DIRAUX. The Strategic Plan acknowledges that recognition is good for the Auxiliary to the point that it intends to administratively ensure every Flotilla Commander or District Commander receives a letter of appreciation. They have certainly earned that minimal bit of recognition. Lower-level leaders must follow through with recognition that is personal and appropriate to their chain of leadership subordinate members.

What merits a formal award of acknowledgement and recognition for the individual member that gets the work done at the flotilla level? What is a “superior act of service” (Aux Commandant Letter of Commendation) or “Individual sustained and superior service” (Aux Achievement Medal) executed by a volunteer? What is the difference between an Auxiliarist that just does their job and one that does more than their job, enough to make a significant impact on the organization or mission accomplishment, or realistically, just makes stuff happen?

Let’s assert that when the minimal requirements for a staff officer position is executed, that is meeting their job standard or in other words “doing the job.” When beyond the minimum is consistently and sustainably a standard met by the FSO – that warrants recognition. When someone holds a position for numerous years and then departs, that warrants the equivalent of an end of tour award for the active duty which at Flotilla level would be the Auxiliary Commendation Medal or Auxiliary Medal of Operational Merit. When members volunteer to serve on committees that execute and complete requirements beyond the minimal outcome (not actions defined in the job description) – recognize that effort with an ACLOC or CGAAM.

Awards are currency of acknowledgement and pride for volunteers, and an active awards program contributes to retention -- especially now, when many members are executing duties beyond the minimal expectation because of COVID. If not recognizing superior actions now, what environment will provide for such recognition to occur?

Awards are a tough nut – they are difficult to write well and they require advance effort to document what actions merit acknowledgement. If recognition of members is important enough to be in the Strategic Plan 2020-2026, then it is important enough to merit every leader elected and appointed to identify who is getting the work done beyond the minimal standard and nominate those members for formal recognition. Make the effort to calibrate your perception of what deserves recognition accurately to the level and the job. What is the rubric? Push that down so it is known and understood at all levels. Showing up and meeting minimal requirements as defined in the manual is doing the job; finding an alternative way of doing something, showing that it works, and

looking to get it implemented to a broader audience, all under extraordinary circumstances, (which regrettably is today’s environment with a global pandemic), deserves formal recognition. A specific event or project completion that entailed significant investment of time; members who don’t hold office yet always contribute or volunteer when needed; this is all beyond the minimal of the job. And please remember, is all done as a volunteer. Every hour beyond the minimum standard is time the member redirects from job, occupational/professional development, other passion hobbies and life demands, family, and self-care, traded for an investment in the mission of the Coast Guard and its Auxiliary.

Those ribbons have power. Let’s leverage that. "A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon," said Napoleon Bonaparte. Volunteers in the Auxiliary don’t invest their personal time, effort, and resources for colored ribbons, yet acknowledgement as represented by the awards program does much for stewardship of human capital that are our volunteers.



*Vicki Hudson serves as ADSO-PB and is a member of Flotilla 12-1, East Bay.*

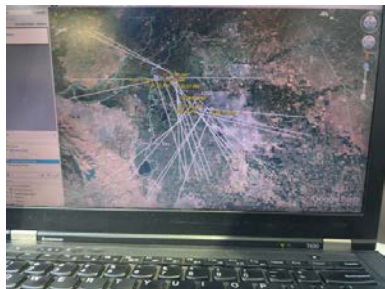


## Correcting Locating a Disruptive Hot Mic by Kevin Sellstrom

**From the Editor:** *In last quarter's Northwind, Auxiliarist Terry Blanchard was credited with writing an article that he didn't write! Auxiliarist Kevin Sellstrom was the originator and narrator of that story, which was turned into an article by the Editor. The article appears again here, with my apologies and my thanks to both Aux. Blanchard and Aux. Sellstrom.*

On Friday morning, 2 April 2021, I was contacted as the Auxiliary Watch Officer for the day by PO Robb at the Sector San Francisco Command Center. We were requested to attempt to locate a stuck "hot" microphone on VHF Channel 16 that was blocking the Sector San Francisco and Station Rio Vista Rescue 21 systems from receiving other signals in the area. The Sector staff had attempted to DF it using the Rescue 21 system but were only able to locate it as "somewhere South of Walnut Grove and East of Antioch." I contacted Auxiliarist Larry Stanton, also in Elk Grove, and within 30 minutes we were underway to Walnut Grove with RDF equipment in place to attempt to identify the location of the signal.

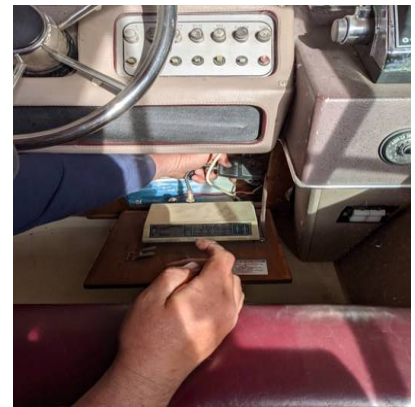
We began to pick up a weak and unreadable signal in sporadic locations South of Walnut Grove, and proceeded to attempt to locate the origin for the remainder of the day. After 6 hours and over 150 miles, we were able to identify it as somewhere approximately South of Bouldin Island and East of Owl Harbor Marina in the Sacramento River Delta area. We had run to our limit of fuel and alerted



Sector SF we would resume DF operations at first light the next day. Beginning at 0630 on Saturday, 3 April I resumed RDF operations from the farm roads on Bouldin Island. After 6 more hours of chasing extremely weak signals I was able to narrow down the lines of bearing and locate the source of the

signal as a stuck marine radio located in a private cabin cruiser berthed at RiverPoint Landing Marina in Stockton.

With the assistance of the harbormaster's staff we isolated the vessel. The harbormasters staff boarded the vessel and located a very old VHF marine radio that was stuck on transmit. The radio was extremely hot and impossible to touch after transmitting on "high" power for 48+ hours. The antenna was folded



down and the boat was located in the middle of a steel boat shed, in the middle of the marina, making DF'ing difficult at best. The harbormasters staff removed the microphone and unplugged the battery power to the radio, and I was able to confirm with Station Rio Vista and Sector San Francisco watchstanders that the signal of the past 36 hours had been eliminated. The harbormasters staff promised to contact the owner of the vessel and inform her of the incident, and assist her in repairing the issue before she got underway again.

Larry Stanton and I spent over 21 hours and more than 300 miles traveling Delta roads and levees over two full days to successfully locate and extinguish this signal, using personally owned DF equipment on loan from Peter Todebush.


*Kevin Sellstrom is a member of Flotilla 3-10, Cosumnes River.*

# Cold Water Boating

- Cold-water immersion is the cause of many boating-related fatalities.
- The danger increases as water temperature decreases below normal body temperature of 98.6° F.
- Do make sure everyone is wearing a life jacket.
- Even experienced swimmers will experience shock within one minute in the frigid water and lose muscle control within 10 minutes.

## File a Float Plan here before departing

- Dress for the water temperature and the weather, not the air temperature.
- Wear layers and bring extra clothes in case you get wet.
- Remember to use your navigation lights in fog and low light conditions as well as at night.
- Winter buoys are smaller and less visible than summer buoys and make navigation more difficult, especially at night.
- There are fewer boats on the water, keep communication devices charged and dry.
- Don't panic if you fall into the water. Stay afloat with the help of your life jacket, regain control of your breathing and keep your head above water in vision of rescuers.
- If you're in the water with others, huddle together facing each other to help everyone stay afloat and keep warm.

- 
- ✓ Take off heavy boots in the water.
  - ✓ Don't apply heat to extremities like arms and legs of a rescued victim.
  - ✓ This sudden change in temperature could cause cardiac arrest.

## Cold-Water Immersion

- You have one minute to adjust to the cold shock response - DON'T PANIC.
- You have 10 minutes of meaningful movement to get help and get out of the water.
- You have about one hour before you become unconscious from hypothermia.



# Sailboat Rescue Training

by Tiffany Townsend

*Auxiliarists conducted rescue training for helicopter pilots and aviation survival technicians throughout November, focusing on safely approaching sailboats during rescues from the air.*

AuxAir crewmember Pete Gorenberg led a "Sailing & Helo Operations" presentation for Coast Guard helicopter pilots at Air Station San Francisco on Thursday, November 4. The meeting was attended virtually by pilots from Coast Guard Forward Operating Base Point Mugu. Sailboat classifications, rigging, sails, deck hardware, points of sail, sail aerodynamics, keel hydrodynamics, hazards, and sailing vessel terminology were reviewed. Best practices were considered for both the vessel in distress and the helicopter rescue team. Approaches to hoisting from a sailboat and boarding from the water were also discussed.



In compliance with AIRSTA San Francisco COVID policies at time photo was taken

Unique hazards to sailboats include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Limited hoisting area                        | Mast, rigging, boom                            |
| Less steady platform (heeling, moving parts) | Deck hardware                                  |
| Hatches (open, slick)                        | Stanchions and lifelines (weak, frayed, sharp) |
| Less maneuverable than power boats           | Flogging lines and sails                       |
| Accidental gybe <sup>1</sup>                 |  |

<sup>1</sup> An **accidental gybe** (or jibe) happens when the stern accidentally passes through the eye of the wind, causing the mainsail boom to swing violently to the other side of the boat. The uncontrolled boom may inflict serious injury and even knock crewmembers overboard. The mainsheet and traveler (lines controlling the mainsail) may also cause trauma and significant damage.



Subsequent rescue swimmer training took place on the San Francisco Bay at U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco on Yerba Buena Island. On the water exercises with Operational Facility (OPFAC) *Aquamarine* were conducted under the direction of Auxiliary Coxswain and sailing instructor Virginia Luchetti on November 6 and 20. Techniques for boarding a sailboat from the water and securing the vessel for safe hoisting were explored. Coxswain Terry Blanchard and the crew of OPFAC *Silver Charm* provided surface support and documentation of the training exercises.



Best practice considerations include:

Tying down loose articles prior to helicopter approach  
Avoidance of accidental gybe from rotor downwash  
Use of a sea anchor or drogue <sup>2</sup>

Dropping sails and using the motor  
Rescue from the water or a life raft  
Use of a preventer <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Deployed from a sailboat in heavy weather, a sea anchor from the bow or drogue off the stern stabilizes the vessel and limits progress through the water. They provide drag and prevent a vessel from turning broadside to the waves, reducing the risk of broaching and crew-overboard.

<sup>3</sup> A preventer is a line used to secure the boom from accidentally gybing during sudden wind shifts.



Interactive discussions with the pilots and spirited participation from the rescue swimmers were enjoyed by all who participated. This pilot program for U.S. Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crews at Air Station San Francisco was the first of its kind, and well-received.

“Tell me and I forget,  
teach me and I may remember,  
involve me and I learn.”

— B. Franklin



Those Who Have Crost the Bar – Sept/Oct/Nov

*“Crossing the Bar” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Alan M. Haydis  
Flotilla 10-02, Modesto

Rory O. Neumann  
Flotilla 31, McClellan Park

William W. Burns  
Flotilla 17, Point Bonita

Daniel Tinney  
Flotilla 51, Vallejo

*Rest easy, shipmates; we've got the watch.*

*Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,  
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.  
Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;  
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.*

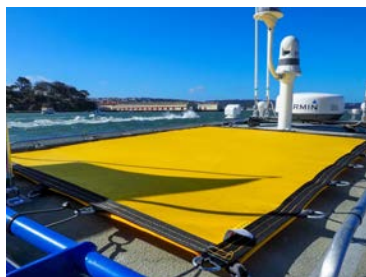


# The Return of Fleet Week by Pete Gorenberg, photos by Tiffany Townsend

*Fleet Week returned to the City by the Bay in October to the delight of many, including members of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.*

Participating in the event has always been an annual highlight, and returning following the COVID-19 event cancellation in 2020 was especially appreciated. As a longtime aviation enthusiast, pilot and member of the District 11N AuxAir squadron, I have always been fascinated with flying. Since I wasn't invited to sit in the back seat of Blue Angel 7 for a demonstration ride, it freed me up to crew from the water for all four days of the event.

The airshow exclusion "box" runs along the city's waterfront, just east of the Golden Gate Bridge. It is off limits to boaters once the airshow commences. For safety, surface facilities from multiple agencies, including Auxiliary boats, assist the Coast Guard in maintaining the perimeter, each assigned to a specific coordinate. Three vessels take up fixed positions in the middle, with one boat moored to the center point buoy. Another two maintain station near opposite ends as "tarp boats," displaying easily



visible yellow targets to assist aircraft in orientation during aerial maneuvers. Oversight this year was provided by USCGC Pike along with Cutters Tern and Hawksbill as support.

On day one, I crewed with newly-certified Coxswain Peter Shamray of Flotilla 14, Central Marin, aboard OPFAC *Seahorse*. Assigned as the east tarp boat, we checked in via radio upon arrival and took our designated position. We maintained station despite noise, wind, and waves by ranging off city landmarks and with glances at the GPS. Fun but fatiguing, we switched helmsman, watch, and radio guard positions frequently throughout the day. This was the



crew's first experience serving as a tarp boat inside the box, in the middle of the action. You couldn't miss our ear-to-ear smiles as the airplanes zoomed closely overhead.

On day two I headed out with Coxswain Robert Golden (Flotilla 12, Sausalito-Tiburon) aboard OPFAC *Ranger*, assigned to the west perimeter. Often congested with traffic, this is a popular spot for party boats full of airshow fans wanting to be close to the action. "Holding the line" can be a challenge, especially with a flooding tide and westerly wind. Patrolling back and forth in our area, we managed to gently remind boaters to stay clear as needed. One boat seemed to be ignoring our instructions, but on second pass we learned the vessel had lost power and was adrift. Just as we were given the clearance to assist with a tow, a commercial operator arrived.

Our initial sense of a missed opportunity quickly disappeared and our pride was soon restored: Rescue of a baseball hat overboard with deft return to its owner was met with shouts of "We love the Coast Guard!" (Sometimes it's not worth explaining the



“Auxiliary” patrol signs.) The cheers and horn-blowing of those who witnessed this “save” was only rivaled by ones heard later in the day as the Blue Angels made their final pass.



Day three was a break from patrolling, serving as an Auxiliary liaison and crew support aboard the USCGC George Cobb. After a tour of the ship at Station San Francisco, we departed to watch the airshow from a vantage point just east of Alcatraz. Primarily tasked with welcoming Coast Guard guests and looking out for their safety, we also had the opportunity to enjoy lunch with the crew. Observing the airshow from the bridge, I was given a short lesson on their navigation systems. Although for only a few hours, it was a privilege to watch, learn, and be a small part of the crew that day. I remain in

awe of the young men and women who serve our nation with such selflessness and skill.

On the fourth and final day, I was back out on the water, this time aboard OPFAC *Servant* with Coxswain James Losi of Flotilla 12-91, San Ramon Valley. We were once again assigned back inside the box as a “tarp boat,” except this time on the west side, off of Crissy Field. Losi has been a member of the Auxiliary for over a decade and has participated in Fleet Week many times. On this last day of San Francisco Fleet Week 2021, he and the rest of the crew were perhaps a bit worn out. We had all been out on the water daily, with little rest, for many hours, performing the same support mission. Now, the team was experienced. We had served aboard a tarp boat, inside the box, in the middle of the action... And you couldn’t miss our ear-to-ear smiles as the airplanes zoomed closely overhead.



Pete Gorenberg is FSO-OP and IPFC of Flotilla 12, Sausalito-Tiburon.



## Spotlight Question

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by Greg Schaefer

This page encourages you to explore Auxiliary websites. The first one to answer correctly will be spotlighted in the next issue AND will choose the Spotlight Question for the following issue of *Northwind*! Good luck!

**Last quarter's question** was not answered correctly by anyone in the District! So, we are running it again to give you another chance.

This quarter's question:

According to a national Auxiliary website, how many 1) Members, 2) Units, 3) Hours, 4) Vessels, 5) Aircraft, and 6) Radio Facilities does the Auxiliary contribute to Team Coast Guard? And, as always, 7) where did you find this information?

Send your answer in an email to [gregschaefer.uscgaux@gmail.com](mailto:gregschaefer.uscgaux@gmail.com).



# Save A Life. Wear It!

