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AUXILIARY REC SURGE OPERATION

By David Hand, DC-M

The urgent call for help from the USCG is not often heard by the Auxiliary; however, when the call goes out, and there is a need we can help meet, we have always answered this call.

This was true historically, back to the very beginnings of our organization and this was true more recently during the 9/11 crisis, and even more recently during the devastation of the Gulf Coast by Ivan, Katrina, and Rita.

When called, we have answered.

The call has gone out again and we need to answer.

Every one of more than 35,000 Merchant Mariners must be fingerprinted and have their documents verified by the USCG Regional Examination Centers (REC). The USCG needs our help desperately to accomplish this task.

The Auxiliary REC Surge operation is designed to provide this help and to answer this call.

The next terrorist event on US soil could easily come from the sea. It is vital that we work to support the USCG to assure a safe and secure maritime workforce.

Your active support and participation could make the difference, and help prevent another tragedy from happening.

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Background

As part of the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) requirements to assure that maritime America remains safe and secure, an interim rule went into effect on January 13, 2006 requiring nearly all Merchant Mariners to present themselves to the Coast Guard for ID verification and fingerprinting. This has resulted in an increase of approximately 40 percent in walk-in traffic at the Coast Guard's 17 Regional Examination Centers (RECs) and burdened the staffs with processing this additional business. The RECs are not adequately staffed to process these applications and delays have occurred, all giving rise to voluminous complaints from mariners, maritime industries and Congress.

This operation is of the highest importance and essential to maintaining the safety and security of our ports and waterways and is an opportunity for the Auxiliary to make a needed and appreciated contribution of direct support to the USCG. This surge operation is expected to be of 12 to 18 months duration and is of the utmost importance to the USCG Homeland Security Mission.

Needs Assessment

The possibility of the use of the Auxiliary in meeting the needs of the RECs was discussed with the Auxiliary M Department by Capt. Smith (G-PCX) and Capt. Fink, CO of the National Maritime Center. This discussion resulted in a survey of each REC to identify and quantify their ideas of how the Auxiliary could supplement their staff to meet this new challenge. The results of this survey are available on the M Department website at

http://www.auxmdept.org/latest_ms.htm#Direct_Support_Opportunities_at_RECs.

The REC needs vary from REC to REC and may be influenced by their prior experiences, good or not so good with the Auxiliary. Their perception of how the Auxiliary can help them may also be limited by this experience and could be expanded and improved by a positive new experience with the Auxiliary.

In addition to the survey, Capt. Fink met with all the REC Chiefs/ Assistant Chiefs on April 25th and asked them to be prepared to work directly with the Auxiliary. The response from the RECs is overwhelmingly positive and they are ready to begin.

There appear to be at least two, if not more, potential areas of Auxiliary direct support to the RECs. One area is on-site at each REC, where trained and qualified Auxiliarist would take over the finger

printing and document verification tasks, under the direct supervision of their designated REC supervisor. The second area is providing the same service at a Coast Guard installation (Station, or Sector) remote from the REC. This opportunity would be especially helpful in those areas where there are licensed mariners in locations distant from an REC.

Program approach

In order for this operation to be successful, it must be fully supported by the Auxiliary, the National Executive Committee (NEXCOM) and the District Commodores. Specifically, the National Area Commodores and District Commodores must actively support and monitor this operation.

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Each District DIRAUX is also essential to the success of this operation. They must be actively involved and in support of this program. They have access to the pool of talent already trained to perform the fingerprinting of the Auxiliarists, and have the equipment with which the work may be accomplished. In addition, they may be called upon to assist in the issuance of orders and the guidance to the RECs in the “care and feeding” of the Auxiliary

The success of this program will depend directly upon the quality of and the dedication and dependability of, the members recruited and assigned to lead and participate in this operation.

Auxiliary REC Coordinators have been appointed by the District Commodores to directly interact with each REC. The initial purpose of this Auxiliary REC Coordinator is to meet with the REC Chief/ Assistant Chief and discuss the needs of the REC and how the Auxiliary may assist in meeting these needs. The Auxiliary REC Coordinator would be the link between the REC and the Auxiliary. They would become the communications link to the rest of the Auxiliary in recruiting members to assist at the REC and in communicating the needs of the REC to the Auxiliary, and of the Auxiliary to the REC.

To assist the Districts and the Auxiliary REC Coordinators in identifying the best candidates for meeting the RECs needs, a national Auxiliary media campaign is envisioned. By utilizing the talents of all Auxiliary Departments to marshal and focus our resources towards a common goal and objective, we should be able to rapidly put this operation into action.

Training

The USCG, under the leadership of Captain Ernie Fink, CO of the National Maritime Center is preparing and “fast-tracking” the approval of the training program for the Auxiliarists to participate in this operation. This fast action is being directly supported by RDML Craig Bone.

In addition to the special training that may be required of Auxiliary participants, many Auxiliarists already have received training in fingerprinting and document examination while being trained to perform these services for the Auxiliary as a part of the PSI operation. These trained members are a natural source of talent to meet this new need, especially as their level of operations is decreasing.

REC support to the Auxiliary

As a part of the comprehensive survey completed by the RECs, the importance of support to the Auxiliary members who would be supporting them was addressed. The results are shown on the survey.

The need to provide the Auxiliarist who supported the REC with basic “out of pocket” reimbursement was addressed and each REC’s response is included in the survey results available on the M Department website.

National Program Oversight

National program oversight will be through the Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Department.

A Branch Chief under the Marine Safety Division will be appointed to liaise with the District Auxiliary REC Coordinators, through the DSOs-MS.

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The purpose of this activity is to provide a venue to gather and publicize “Best Practices”, share and disseminate information, and to provide a resource for supporting and expanding the program as the opportunities and needs are identified.

WORKING WITH REGIONAL EXAM CENTERS

Kim Cole, BC-REC (acting)

Working with the Auxiliary and the REC (Regional Exam Centers) can be an extremely satisfying position. If you are just starting in the efforts its best to start with the basics. Take the time to meet the Auxiliary staff that works there, they have a vast source of knowledge and can provide an extreme amount of assistance if asked. Make sure to contact the POC (Point of Contact) for the Coast Guard as soon as possible. Making these first contacts is the cornerstone of a working relationship with the Regional Exam Centers.

In 9th Central we are in the process of coordinating our resources for Remote Fingerprinting Program that is now a live program within the Coast Guard and will be a live program with the Auxiliary soon. Now is the time to make contacts throughout the remote areas in the District. Enlist the aid of the Division Captains and Vice Captains in finding members that may be interested in joining the program when it becomes live. Members of the District Staff can also be a very important aid in promoting this new venue. The members that decide to assist with this program will find themselves in the unique position of becoming part of a new and worthwhile program.

We are also in the process of making sure to have POC’s in the different Sectors in our District. When this program becomes live, we need to be sure to know who we need to contact in the different Sector’s and stations. Keeping all of the Coast Guard Stations informed of to the progress we are having is a must. When the program becomes live, all of the different areas will be a part of this, finding the contacts now make that job easier. Don’t think that you are being ignored if you do not get an answer right away. Keep letting them know that you are there and willing to assist.

In 9th Central we have a great team (Auxiliary) that works out of REC/MSU Toledo, they are a tremendous help and have helped in laying the starting points within our District. I also have found that in speaking with different members of the Coast Guard at REC/MSU Toledo, the working relationship that has been established is one of joint respect and a strong sense of unity within the REC.

While the above program is extremely important, it is by no means the only thing that is available to the REC’s. Take the time to find out what is being done at your Regional Exam Centers and what assistance they may need. Establishing a good working relationship starts there.

THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM – ICS

By Kevin J. Cady, Division Chief -MO

Perhaps one of the most important training issues confronting the CG Auxiliary is the certification of individual members in ICS or Incident Command System.

Let's talk about ICS and NIMS. NIMS is the National Incident Management System and a national plan for various responding agencies required to work together to resolve an incident, exercise or drill. Incidents can be as innocuous as an OPSAIL event or a visit by the Queen Mary II that require intra-agency coordination for a successful outcome. NIMS is a national plan, integrating many concepts for potential responding agencies and organizations in order to effectively work together.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers over 50 courses in conjunction with the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) related to ICS. The course work that applies to the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary includes ICS 100, 200, and IS 700 and 800. ICS 300 and 341 pertains to certain members of Team Coast Guard involved in planning during an on-going incident. These courses are available from FEMA at <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>. Forward all completion certificates to your IS officer for entry into AUXDATA. If you do not have access to a computer the requisite courses can be obtained through the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC) through your Materials staff officer.

Who should take the ICS courses depends on what you do to support the US Coast Guard. Those that pledged to perform certain duties in direct support of Coast Guard missions have gone through the extensive Personnel Security process and have received a Direct Operational (DO) designation you will need to complete the ICS 100 and 700 series. In addition, if you are a coxswain, pilot, team leader, National Staff member, or elected to a leadership role in the organization, then you will need to take ICS 200, 210, and IS 800. The reason for the additional requirement is simple. You may well be in a position to work with the Coast Guard to gather resources or be exposed to critical sensitive information and helping to manage these resources. There for you will need to know how the Coast Guard operation shifts to become a bigger part of the operational posture.

All members working in the Trident program are required to complete the additional ICS courses. Hypothetically, if you are assigned as "resource leader" or "demobilization leader" during an incident, you have the responsibility for accepting orders from the Incident Commander while directing and performing a function within a response. In order to function effectively within the system you need to know how the system functions; particularly when the Incident Commander you take orders from is a local fire or police chief.

The time table is critical for the required members to complete the ICS courses both the Active Duty and Auxiliary. Keep these deadline dates in mind: ICS-100 by 30 June 06, ICS 200 by 30 Sept 06, IS 700 by 30 June 06, IS 800 by 30 Sept 06.

The critical time table for each deadline has a ramification that includes the preclusion of Auxiliary members to further engage in direct operational activities with the Coast Guard. There is no consequence for completing courses until 30 December 2007 when a member will then be considered REYR if courses are not completed. These courses are intended for all Coast Guard Auxiliary members potentially involved in response to incidents in a leadership role or involved in the Trident program.

Individual Coast Guard commands may ask selected Auxiliarists to take part in ICS-300 and ICS-341 which pertains mainly to Planning activities during an ICS related incident or exercise. ICS-300 and ICS-341 requires seven full training days and is somewhat demanding but rewarding.

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ICS-210 is a course currently in the works and is not yet required but will be in the near future. ICS-210 will have course content on how to fill-out paperwork and response activities. ICS-210 is anticipated to be a four hour in-service class taught by an ICS certified instructor. Anyone required to take ICS-200 and IS-700 will be required to complete ICS-210 once it is rolled-out.

The Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System helps Team Coast Guard to mobilize, work efficiently, and partner effectively with other involved agencies. Auxiliarists should be aware that having the knowledge of ICS / NIMS will enable the Auxiliary as a whole to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Coast Guard.

As the newly appointed Division Chief of the Education and Communications Division, I look forward to assisting Coast Guard and Auxiliary members involved in traditional "M" activities, and promoting the Trident program nationwide.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION OPENINGS

POSTED BY: GREG KESTER, DC-MD <GREG@DRAGONSKNOT.COM>

DATE: 5/17/2006 08:39

The M Department's Environmental Protection Division requests interested persons to apply for the positions of Branch Chief and Branch Assistant in the Education and Prevention Branch. Qualified applicants will have significant experience in the administration of environmental education programs. To ensure full consideration, applications should be received by COB June 05, 2006. Applicants are requested to submit a letter of interest detailing their relevant experience, a resume covering their Auxiliary activities, and completed copies of Auxiliary Forms 7062, 7063 and CGAuxA-7 available on the web. Application letters should indicate which position(s) the applicant is interested in. All materials should be sent to
Carl Childs, DVC-ME
20026 32nd Avenue NE
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155

WEBLINK OF INTEREST

<http://auxmdept.org/links.htm> - <http://auxmdept.org/links.htm>

Contains many weblinks related to the "M" Department along with information about "references" in the Trident PQS's.