



MS Operational Update

By Greg Kester, DC-M

N-TRAIN 2007 opened a whole new era for the Auxiliary OMS Directorate. The first change came about when NEXCOM changed the name of the Directorate to the Operations Directorate. In so doing it opened the door for reviewing the rest of the Directorate and how it relates to Coast Guard Sectors and Coast Guard Headquarters alignment. As a result, the M Department stood up a new Incident Management Division. This Division will be responsible for Contingency Planning and Incident Response. Incident Response includes environmental/oil spill response as well as response to other incidents of Coast Guard interest, such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, etc. We continue to review the M Department for opportunities to better align ourselves with the active duty Coast Guard.



The District Staff Officers for Marine Safety were provided updates on the various M Department programs and opportunities for exchange of

information. We have already seen the results of this exchange with sharing of Best Practices and training materials developed by individual districts. All DSOs were given copies of the N-TRAIN materials for customization and use within their own districts.

The M Training Ribbon continues to progress. At N-TRAIN, CAPT Barry Smith, Chief DIRAUX, indicated that the first sample ribbons had been received by his office. This is great news, but it does not mean that they are ready for distribution. Once the sample is approved it must still go through procurement and we have not yet received a timeline for that procurement. Please be assured that as soon as we have more information we will ensure the widest distribution possible.

We have received several questions regarding a Trident sew-on device for ODUs. At this time the ONLY authorized sew-on device for ODUs is the Coxswain device. We are advancing a request to have the Auxiliary Manual changed to allow a sew-on Trident. Until, and unless, a change to the Auxiliary Manual is approved no sew-on Trident is allowed. Please continue to wear the pin-on device proudly.

We are continuing to work on updates to courses, PQSs and other training materials. This is a high priority but lengthy process. We welcome suggestions for materials needed “in the field.” Not everything can, or should, be incorporated into national materials but please let us know your thoughts.

The M Department continues to evolve. As a Department that directly augments the Coast Guard and their programs we must change as they change. The Commandant has implemented what he calls CIAOs (Commandant Intent Action Orders.) These CIAOs are designed to develop an operational network to better facilitate the timely and accurate flow of information and direction between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of mission execution. Some of these CIAOs may directly, or indirectly, impact how we do business and how we interact with the Coast Guard. The M Department continues to monitor CIAOs and will continue to make adjustments as necessary.

This is a very dynamic period in the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary that requires all of us to be both flexible and committed to the missions, goals and objectives of both. The missions aren't changing, only the structure which manages them.

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“Saving the Sea from People and People from the Sea”

America's Waterway Watch on an Upbeat Note at Year's End

By Mary Larsen, DVC-MW

In a cooperative effort with the AWW Program Manager for the Coast Guard side a letter was produced introducing the program to boating law administrators throughout the country.



In part, the letter gave a brief overview of America's Waterway Watch and asked the recipient for assistance in reaching boat owners. Specifically, we asked that information on the AWW program or a brochure and decal be included in boater registration materials mailed out by the state agency.

Currently there are over twenty-two million registered boaters in America; going on the assumption that they must renew their registration every three to five years, this would get several million decals a year into the hands of boaters.

The letter was signed by the Commandant and mailed out the first week in December.

If the responses from the boating law administrators are as positive as we expect them to be, we will be well on the way to increasing visibility of the program by a huge percentage.

The boating law administrators for Georgia have already “signed on” and asked for an initial shipment of fifty thousand brochures and decals to be

included in their mailing to registered boaters.

It has been said that “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery,” if so, then we should be flattered that our AWW program is being imitated by other non-maritime groups.

In New York State, a program named “Trail watch” has been instituted. Their brochures, decals and trail signs all bear a somewhat familiar eagle and flag background and the material is based on ours.

This is a commendable effort to make snow mobile riders alert to anything or anyone out of place.

Airport Watch, an effort by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association has been in place longer. Like AWW, it enlists the aid of general aviation pilots through a program of training and brochures.

We in the Auxiliary led the way and will continue to do so. During the America’s Waterway Watch portion of N-Train, we plan to bring you new developments.



Officer Snook visits Wyoming
Photo by John Buffington

Diary of an Integrated Post-Katrina Natural Disaster Response

By Mary Ann Chapman, Sector Seattle Auxiliary Coordinator

Lessons Learned from Katrina have been heavy on the minds of Auxiliarists over the past year. In District 13 and Sector Seattle, natural disaster plans are evolving for all segments of the Coast Guard, including the Auxiliary.



The D13 Bridge has emphasized the Katrina lesson of keeping track of our members from the start of an incident and the need to be tightly integrated with the Sector.

As Sector Auxiliary Coordinator (AUX-C), I have consulted with Sector Active Duty to identify Auxiliary roles in disasters. Wearing my other hat -- Auxiliarist staff member of the Sector Seattle Planning Department -- I am developing the Sector Seattle natural disaster plan.

All of us have focused on the scenario of “the big one” – the magnitude 9 earthquake believed to be due in the Pacific Northwest.

No one anticipated that our first test would be major floods. This is not a story of dramatic heroics – rather it is

one of careful, integrated management of a natural disaster, with a good outcome.

Western Washington is filled with a network of rivers that carry water from the Cascade Mountains down through the coastal plains.

Every fall, we hear a litany of flood warnings for a list of rivers that sound



like a line from a Bob Dylan song – the Snoqualmie, Snohomish, Skokomish, Skykomish, Skagit, Stillaguamish, Tolt, Cowlitz, Puyallup, and Raging Rivers. But usually it's two or three at a time.

Sunday, Nov. 5: Weather forecasters predicted that an incoming storm would bring enough rain to Western Washington to cause “a series of rivers to flood on Monday.”

That sounded fairly routine until we heard that over a 24-hour period we could expect about 6 to 9 inches of rain to fall in the Cascades, plus 2 to 3 inches in the Seattle Metro area. That portended more than the usual fall flood scenario. In the end, most of the rivers from the Dylan-like song had overflowed their banks.

Monday, Nov. 6: It was raining, all right. Not the famous Seattle mist, but

heavy, soaking rain. Newscasts throughout the day carried flood warnings.

I made my way to Sector Seattle through gridlocked traffic on flooded streets for the usual Monday morning brief and some work on the natural disaster plan.

But when the day should have been winding down, a “battle tempo” was developing next door in the Response Department, with the word “Auxiliary” filtering into the discussion.

I wandered over and learned that the number of available Station Seattle boats were low, so most on-water work for the increasingly ominous forecast would require Auxiliary and other local government agencies’ (OGAs) assets.

As rivers started to overflow, discussion turned to pre-staging of Auxiliary vessels for potential problems the next day. I notified Bob Hays, the Auxiliary Point of Contact (POC) to the Response Department.

Bob requested a status report of vessel availability from the four SO-OPs in the western portion of the Sector AOR, and replies started coming in within the hour.

The location of highest concern was the Everett and Snohomish County area.

We had two vessels nearby, Mike Allert (FL 12) had an hours run down what was already a debris-filled river to get to Puget Sound.

Malcolm Lamay (FL 18) was on a mooring and couldn't get out until high

“Saving the Sea from People and People from the Sea”

tide early the next morning. We decided to dispatch Marshall Collins' facility from Anacortes (FL 17).

Collins had a three-hour run to get to Everett, but we needed the backup. Thanks to quick canvassing by the SO-OPs, we had a list of additional facility vessels that could also be called upon.

The primary Auxiliary mission would be to stand by for SAR, while the OGA vessels ran the treacherous rivers if needed.



Meanwhile, the Sector Operations Center experienced an up-tick in phone calls and asked for Auxiliary augmentation starting at 2200. The Auxiliary OPCEN POC called members experienced as Assistant Watchstanders and developed a 24x7 schedule.

I issued a report on Auxiliary deployments to the District and Northern Area Bridge, Bridge-elect, and current Division Captains, and it was excerpted in Sector's SITREP to the D13 OPCEN.

Some rivers were scheduled to crest by 0400 the next morning. The Skagit River, at flood stage at 18 feet, was predicted to crest at 46. It was a late night, with an early morning to follow.

Tuesday, Nov. 7: Back at the Sector by 0600, we learned that all rivers were still rising – none had crested. We gave the go-ahead to the three pre-selected Auxiliary facilities to make way toward Everett.

Other facilities were on 45-minute dispatch standby at Bremerton and Tacoma/Puyallup. By 0730, Allert and Lamay had made it to Everett and were moored. Collins was halfway there, near the Skagit Peninsula, where the Skagit River was rising. We decide to have him moor in Penn Cove and stand by. I updated the Auxiliary chain and continued updates throughout the event, and our updates were always included in the SITREP to D13.

Sector Seattle's representative at the State Emergency Operation Center (EOC) fed us information as the rivers continued to rise throughout the day. OGAs effected several rescues.

A Coast Guard helicopter pulled two people and two dogs off the top of a van. We had a little levity when the Coast Guard set a new historical record, rescuing eight rabbits. Our facilities continued to stand by.

Our database guru, Clay Gravelle (FL 23), used AUXDATA to plot all Northern Area members on a MapPoint file. We planned to match up the plots with report of flooding rivers to see if any Auxiliarists might need assistance.

In a Sector Department Head meeting, the Command asked the Incident Management Division (IMD) to call marinas and ensure that they were walking the docks.

Unattended vessels that fill with water and sink are a frequent cause of pollution during heavy rains. We took that tasking -- two Auxiliarists split up the list of 150 marinas and started making calls from home. They learned that many marinas had staff out on the docks, but some hadn't thought of it. One had already had a boat sink and hadn't reported it to IMD or the NRC.

At daylight's end, some rivers hadn't yet crested. We sent Lamay's vessel and crew home but kept Allert staged at Everett and Collins at Coupeville. Auxiliarists were scheduled in the OPCEN all night and into the next day.

Wednesday, Nov. 8: Two rivers continued to rise, but more slowly, and the others began to recede. Auxiliarists were released from OPCEN duty. The Aux facilities staged at Everett and Coupeville remained on standby until noon and then were released.

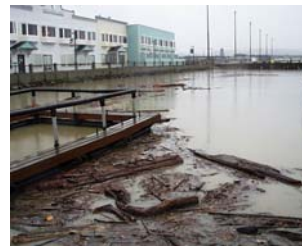
Lou Herrick (FL 19) mapped the flooded areas, matched them with Auxiliarist addresses, and phoned all members who seemed to be in the way of the waters.

Those he reached were high, dry, and fine. He left messages for the others. When they didn't return the calls, we notified their flotillas.

Summary: We felt that lessons from Katrina were successfully applied, and our Sector Support process worked well, but as always we had our own lessons learned. Twenty-two members from nine flotillas and three divisions participated, not counting all those who made calls for vessels and stood by. Our successes:

- 1) We worked hand-in-hand with Sector Response OPs from beginning to end, as well as with the Sector OPCEN and IMD.
- 2) Early pre-staging and other facilities on stand-by would have been invaluable if the situation had worsened.
- 3) Our local knowledge was useful in helping Response OPs develop their response plan.
- 4) We quickly cataloged our available resources and applied them to meet all requests from Sector.
- 5) We took responsibility for one task that would have taxed IMD -- contacting marinas -- and uncovered information that they needed.
- 6) We proactively checked on the welfare of our own members.
- 7) Thanks to our preparedness, the response was orderly, almost uneventful, and we were poised to do more if necessary.

CDR Leonard Tumbarello, Head of the Sector Seattle Response Department,



expressed his appreciation by email: "This is awesome.

Thanks for making this happen so quickly. I am

continually amazed by the can-do attitude and responsiveness of our outstanding volunteer workforce. This is just another glaring example. Thanks so much."