BOAT CREW TRAINING EVENT

APRIL 28 - 30, 2017
FLOTILLA ISLAND, LAKE MURRAY, SC
Hosted by Flotilla 12-3
SURFACE OPERATIONS

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary boat crew members are subject to qualification standards as directed by the Coast Guard.

Candidates must undergo a great deal of training and study in readiness for a Qualification Examination (QE) Audit in District 7.

To become qualified in the Surface Operations program, visit National Response website.

MK1 Sean Florane, USCG Station Charleston, observes the flare demonstration on April 28, 2017, at Flotilla Island.

Photos in this Boat Crew Training Event Special Issue were taken by John Mezynski and Barbara Burchfield, Flotilla 12-3.
The training provided standardization of policy and best practices for successful mission objectives:

- Team Coordination Training
- Risk Management & GAR Score
- First Aid & Survival
- Flare Shoot
- Dock-side pre-underway checks and briefings
- Practice with lines, knots, hitches and bends
- Man Overboard exercises
- Anchoring
- Search Patterns: expanding square and vector search
- Towing: stern and side tows
- Crew transfer boat to boat
- VHF Radio Communications
- PATCOM coordination
MISSION OBJECTIVES (Short Term and Long Term):

- Standardization of surface operations policies
- Advancing surface operations best practices
- USCG guidance for procedures and techniques
- Improved Auxiliary skills, proficiency and performance
- Upgrade trainee status to qualified Boat Crew members
- Develop working relationships with AD, flotillas and divisions

- Multiple flotillas in cross training exercises
- Expand fellowship across flotillas and divisions
- Auxiliary and Active Duty synergy

USCG Station Charleston
BM2 Brandon Sanford
BM1 Daniel Torres
MK1 Sean Florane
Necessity and commitment drove this event.

Boat crew training in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is historically a long and arduous commitment by the candidate and with the help of mentors.

We had put together a three day training program at Lake Murray in 2014 with multiple flotillas and Active Duty instructors that was highly successful. It was time to do it again.

It all started in January with a conversation with BM1 Mahire A’Giza, USCG Station Charleston Auxiliary Liaison Officer. BM1 A’Giza never flinched in accommodating our request for training by Active Duty. He went to BMCS Longval, Officer in Charge USCG STNCHS, and received endorsement to proceed with the training.

Logistically, there was a lot to be done before even announcing the BCT event. After nailing down a three day weekend that wasn’t already committed, we reserved Flotilla Island facilities that we share with Lake Murray Power Squadron.

Understanding that USCG Active Duty are heavily tasked at Station Charleston, we wanted the BCT event to be worthwhile and productive for both the Coast Guard and our members.

In consideration of CG fiscal responsibilities and needs, we expanded the BCT to include other flotillas who otherwise may have little contact with CG Active Duty and this type of training opportunity. Flotillas 12-1 Lake Marion, 25 Lake Hartwell and 22 Lake Allatoona, Georgia, members signed up, quickly filling the 25 person capacity for Flotilla Island facilities.

In April BM1 A’Giza was promoted to BMC (congratulations, Chief!) and received transfer orders to Juneau, Alaska, as the Officer In Charge. That meant he wouldn’t be here for the BCT. BMC A’Giza passed the ball to BM1 Daniel Torres, who made the commitment to proceed and was also appointed AUXLO about the same time.

BM1 Torres enlisted the support of BM2 Brandon Sanford and MK1 Sean Florane to conduct the classroom, dockside and on-water training sessions. MK1 Florane was one of the instructors in 2014 and a good friend of Flotilla 12-3.

Since we were able to commit four Auxiliary operational facilities, Coast Guard decided not to tow a Coast Guard vessel from Charleston to Lake Murray. All AUXFAC launched from Lighthouse Marina since the launch ramp at Flotilla Island is still closed due to lack of structural integrity. Reconstruction should take place in winter when the lake level is lowered.

A lot of miles were driven - from Charleston and Lakes Altoona, Wateree, Hartwell and Marion. The longest drive was over 275 miles one way made by Robert Miller from Carrollton, Georgia. None of the USCG Auxiliary members received reimbursements for meals and lodging expenses. That’s definitely member commitment.

Grateful appreciation goes to many people who made the BCT event an enormous success and also to all who participated. Special thanks to Flotilla 12-3 for hosting and to the Bowens and Burchfields for cash donations for supplies and food.

We learned a lot. We worked together. No one left hungry. No accidents, incidents or injuries to report. A lot of fellowship took place and some playful bantering at times. We got to see some old friends and we made new friends. Thanks for coming and doing your part.
FROM NEAR AND FAR

Crew candidates came from as far away as Northeast Georgia to participate in the training by USCG Active Duty from Station Charleston.

There were 4 Coxswains, 6 Boat Crew members and 11 members in Trainee status.

Four of the trainees are actually Coxswains who transferred from District 5 to District 7 late last year. In order to be certified in District 7, each must undergo a Qualification Exam (QE) in District 7 to regain Coxswain status. Until then, they remain in Trainee status.

Seven Trainee candidates had varying degrees of previous training and knowledge. All candidates benefited from learning directly from Coast Guard Active Duty and working with Auxiliarists outside of their own unit.

The time, travel, expense and study from every member in attendance attests to the commitment and dedication of each member. Thank you.

NOTICE: MEMBERS NEED TO SUBMIT 7029 MEMBER ACTIVITY FORM FOR HOURS THAT ARE NOT ACCOUNTED FOR ON THE AOM-7030 FORM.
Classroom training sessions included instructions in search patterns, first aid and survival, team coordination, Green-Amber-Red (GAR) risk calculation checklists, line handling and practice with knots, hitches and bends.

BM2 Brandon Sanford draws out a vector search (VS) pattern prior to the on-water exercise.

BM1 Daniel Torres makes a point about the importance of each crew member contributing to the GAR score with crew fitness, medical information and any other factor that would affect the results of the GAR score.

John Bradley (FL 12-3) tries his hand learning a new hitch.
Photo above, from left: Robert George (FL 22) works on tying a knot as MK1 Florane looks on. Linda Warren (FL 12-3) secures her line on a folding chair being used as a training aid. Photo below, left: BM2 Sanford displays knots to Susan White, Tom White and Perry Moses (FL 12-1) Kent McCoin (FL 12-3) and Randy Williams (FL 25). Photo below, right: Perry Moses (FL 12-1), Kent McCoin (FL 12-3) and Randy Williams (FL 25) listen intently for instructions by BM2 Sanford.
Festus Burchfield, BCT Coordinator, advised Lexington County Sheriffs Department (LCSD) of the flare shoot, and LCSD relayed the information to other agencies who might receive calls notifying them of flare sightings in the area.

Station Charleston instructors gave thorough coaching on the correct way to handle the flares with emphasis on safety of the person and the boat.

Each member was given an opportunity to light a flare and/or launch a flare. For many, this was the first time they had experienced handling flares.
“Fire in the hole!”

The warning was yelled out loud and preceded the launch of a “parachute” flare high into the air over Lake Murray from the west end of Flotilla Island. We were genuinely surprised at the height and visibility of the flare despite it being a clear, sunny day.

It was quite a display of flares, orange smoke and small ‘rocket’ launchings during the flare shoot demonstration on Friday, April 28. The flare shoot was a valuable part of the safety training while also taking care of the disposal of unwanted, expired flares.

Curiosity brought several recreational boaters to the area to watch the demonstration while maintaining a safe distance.
BM1 Torres displays the Coast Guard approved black and orange flag showing the international distress signal.

Far left: John Mezynski (FL 12-3) has his camera at the ready to capture the training exercises at Flotilla Island.

Festus Burchfield (FL 12-3) sends a clear message on safety to all members just prior to the flare demonstration.
Boat crew training at the flotilla level often has the challenge of getting two or more boats for towing exercises. In this BCT event, there were four AUXFAC available for training, providing opportunities for a series of two-boat towing evolutions for the trainees and a good refresher for crews.

With eleven members in trainee status, another challenge was getting each AUXFAC equipped with legal coxswain, crew and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Festus Burchfield, Al Crothers (FL 12-3) and Bruce Lindsey (FL 25) were coxswains on their AUXFAC. Perry Moses (FL 12-1) travelled from Sumter all three days to coxswain on AUXFAC “Valerie”, owned by Randy Williams (FL 25).

Boat crew members Barbara Burchfield, Roger Deaton, Robert Falsetti and Kenny Uschelbec (FL 12-3) with William Hayes (FL 12-1) and Randy Williams (FL 25) were legal crew members for the four AUXFAC.

Kenny Uschelbec (FL 12-3) heads out to AUXFAC for the pre-departure briefing and checklists.

The new Auxiliary dock was a welcome sight, thanks to the help and hard work of several Flotilla 12-3 members.
Coxswain Al Crothers (FL 12-3) at the helm of AUXFAC “Wanderer”, heads out to the training area for towing exercises. From left: Rebecca Connelly (FL 12-3), MK1 Florane, Tom White (seated) and William Hayes (FL 12-1). Roger Deaton (FL 12-3) is positioned on the stern’s starboard side.

Four AUXFAC supported the training:

“VOYAGER” Festus Burchfield (FL 12-3)
“WANDERER” Al Crothers (FL 12-3)
“STARBURST” Bruce Lindsey (FL 25)
“VALERIE” Randy Williams (FL 25)
AUXFAC “Voyager” leaves the dock with a full boat. From left: Kenny Uschelbec (FL 12-3) handling line #4, Robert George (FL 22) and Linda Warren (FL 12-3) at the stern; Coxswain Festus Burchfield at the helm, John Bradley holds line #1 and Barbara Burchfield gives a wave (FL 12-3 members).

In the two photos at left, AUXFAC “Starburst” is coxswained by BM1 Torres with Robert Falsetti (FL 12-3) as forward lookout.

Jonathan Dawe (FL 22) and Bruce Lindsey (FL 25) are at the stern, with Robert Miller (FL 22) not entirely visible.

As the weather approached 90°F, it was determined that ODU jackets could be removed to provide a cooler, more comfortable environment for training.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT:**
The first thing a Qualifying Examiner (QE) will look at is if the boat crew candidate is in the proper, standard USCG Auxiliary uniform during a QE audit. Your appearance at the start will determine what happens next!
Each AUXFAC performed Expanding Square and Vector Search patterns, the more commonly used searches to locate persons in the water. Coxswains are required to demonstrate proficiency in these search patterns at a Qualification Examination audit every three years.

Coxswain SAR Reference Guide
USCG SAR Fundamental Study Guide

Kenny Uschelbec (FL 12-3) keeps the forward watch on “Voyager” while BM2 Sanford delivers instructions for a search pattern exercise.
MK1 Florane puts a line on the dock as Coxswain Al Crothers (FL 12-3) maneuvers “Wanderer” to the dock.

Kenny Uschelbec (FL 12-3) holds line #4 on the dock and waits for Coxswain instructions along with Robert George (FL 22) onboard “Voyager”.

Al Crothers and Rebecca Connelly work together at the helm as Roger Deaton stows a fender after leaving the dock. All are Flotilla 12-3 members.
Mk1 Florane holds line #1 while Coxswain Festus Burchfield (FL 12-3) pivots away from the dock at Lighthouse Marina while Roger Deaton (FL 12-3) looks on from the stern.

Photo below: AUXFAC “Voyager” gets launched at Lighthouse Marina for a short trip to Flotilla Island.

All boats were moored and all trailers were parked at the island during the event.
Hiroko and Calvin Bowen, Flotilla 12-3 AUX-FS members in training, served up hot lunches on Saturday and Sunday, April 29 and 30, for about thirty hungry and grateful people each day.

From start to finish, they were fully engaged in deciding the menu, did the purchasing from local grocery stores, took advantage of store sales and did all meal preparation. Hiroko and Calvin prepared the delicious meals at home, then carried everything to Flotilla Island where they set up and served everyone. They cleaned up all the dishes and the kitchen, then hauled the equipment back to their home where there was another kitchen cleanup waiting for them!

*We can’t thank them enough for their part in making the Boat Crew Training event a great success!*
Festus Burchfield for his leadership and organization of the event

Flotilla 12-3 for hosting the three day training at Flotilla Island

BMCS Justin Longval, Officer in Charge who supported the three day training event

BMC Mahire A’Giza who took initial action to get the training approved and set up for April.

BM1 Daniel Torres, Operations Petty Officer, BM2 Brandon Sanford and MK1 Sean Florane for their outstanding instruction.

Festus Burchfield, Al Crothers, Bruce Lindsey and Randy Williams for their AUXFAC use in support the training event.

Perry Moses for serving as legal coxswain for AUXFAC “Valerie” which meant three roundtrip drives from Sumter.

Bruce Lindsey for organizing AUXFAC, boat crew and candidates from Division 2 flotillas.

Hiroko Bowen and Calvin Bowen, Auxiliary Food Service members, for purchasing, preparing and serving lunch on Saturday and Sunday.

John Mezynski who served not only as photographer, but also as security officer on Flotilla Island while on-water training exercises took place.

Barbara Burchfield for photography, logistics, after-action activities and reports and this special newsletter edition.

Linda Warren, Paula Scaglione, Festus Burchfield, John Bradley and Robert Falssetti for cleaning up and hauling off trash.

Every person who helped another member with moving the boats and trailers around, who helped with car parking, carried equipment into and out of the building, cleaned up the boats, docks and building and otherwise spread kindness around.... THANK YOU!
On Sunday, April 30, 2017, we all gathered for a group photo taken by John Mezynski.

Front row, kneeling, from left: Festus Burchfield, Susan White, Calvin Bowen, Randy Williams, Robert Miller, Linda Warren and Bruce Lindsey.

Second row: Barbara Burchfield, Tom White, Hiroko Bowen, Rebecca Connelly, William Hayes, Paula Scaglione, Robert Falsetti, Robert George, BM1 Daniel Torres and MK1 Sean Florane.

Third row: BM2 Brandon Sanford, John Bradley, Kent McCoin, Perry Moses, Al Crothers, Roger Deaton, Jonathan Dawe and Kenny Uschelbec.