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INDEPENDENT

Coast Guard Aux NEWS

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**Coast Guard
Auxiliary News**

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Towns "Out East" Proclaim June 23rd, 2009 USCG Auxiliary Day!

Seventy years ago, on June 23rd, 1939, just a few weeks before Nazi Germany rolled into Poland and World War II began, the US Congress authorized the creation of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. This corps, like today, was made up of men and women, patriots all, who gave their time, without pay, – on land and sea and, today, in the air – in support of USCG Forces nationwide. This column is about that – and the recognition that the Towns of Brookhaven, East Hampton and Southampton undertook to shine up Auxiliarists "Out East."

In the Beginning...

In 1939, Rear Admiral Russell Waesche, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, charged Lt Commander Alfred Richmond and Lt Commander Merlin O'Neil, along with a civilian from the Lifesaving Service, with writing the regulations for the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Many years later, (then) Admiral Richmond said that "was probably one of the weirdest jobs I ever had in the Coast Guard because, when we stopped to analyze it, what we were creating was a cross between a reserve

organization, a Trinity House in England and a religious organization. There were no guidelines!" His teammate, Lt Commander Merlin O'Neil, became the first Chief Director of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Following America's entry into World War II, recruits flooded into Auxiliary flotillas nationwide in a flurry of patriotic fervor (just as they did after "9/11.") As the ranks grew, active-duty Coast Guard members were freed up for duty overseas, just as it happens today. By the 1950's, the four cornerstones of traditional Auxiliary duties were firmly established – boating education, on-the-water patrols, vessel safety exams and fellowship. Then, under legislation passed in 1996, Coast Guard Auxiliary responsibilities were expanded to allow members to assist in any Coast Guard mission, save military or police activity, as authorized by the Commandant. Thus, Auxiliarists can be found actively involved in all USCG duties – from cooks in galleys to search-and-rescue – on land, sea and in the air.

Since Then...

Over the intervening decade, Auxiliary members:

- Contributed 44,417,850 hours of volunteer time serving the USCG
- Taught 1,678,946 people with 980,000 hours of classroom work.
- Conducted 1,170,535 Vessel safety Checks (VSCs) over 579,000 hours, including more than 167,000 first time VSCs and over 158,000 high risk VSCs
- Made over 418,000 visits Recreational Boating Safety Program Visits spending more than 279,000 mission hours
- Served 4,297,312 hours underway on safety patrols
- Worked 56,188 hours on 25,377 missions, verifying 138,867 ATONs
- Examined over 10,223 Commercial Fishing Vessels
- Provided 1,587,646 hours of Coast Guard Operational Support on over 197,000 Support missions
- Performed Search and Rescue for over 723,000 hours, resulting in 5,083 lives saved, 141,980 persons assisted, & \$1,460,055,940 in property saved.
- Spent more than 700,000 hours on Marine Safety and Environmental Protection missions

Last year alone, in "District 1, 1SR", which broadly includes NJ, NY and CT waters, USCG Auxiliarists saved 16 lives, assisted 527 people, saved over \$14mm in property, conducted over 10,000 recreational Vessel

Safety Checks, conducted over 6,000 Marine Dealer visits and taught over 5,600 hours of boating safety instruction. The 140+ Auxiliarists that make up USCG Auxiliary Division 18, which covers the creeks, rivers, bays and ocean waters from William Floyd Parkway to the End(s), contributed significantly to those numbers – 26 people assisted, nearly \$1mm in property saved, 371 Vessel Safety checks, and 235 hours of boating safety instruction.

On its 70th birthday, The Auxiliary received letters of commendation from President Barak Obama, ("I congratulate you for your steadfast commitment to the highest standards of citizenship, patriotism, and community service"), The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen, ("Auxiliary performance has been nothing short of stellar, and its greatest impacts are readily reflected by Auxiliarists spirit of patriotism and dedication to the Coast Guard men and women with whom they serve"), The National Commodore of the USCG Auxiliary, Commodore Nicholas Kerrigan, ("We provide the biggest bang for the buck for the American taxpayer... Each of us should take pride in knowing that we are special group, making a unique contribution to the Coast Guard and our Nation... Thank you for your service...") and Mayor Michael Bloomberg of the City of New York, ("For all the Coast Guard Auxiliary has done for our city, it is more deserving of our thanks and praise. On behalf of all New Yorkers, I'm proud to join in commemorating this milestone anniversary") as well as our own District Commodore, Stephen Ackerman, and our Director of the Auxiliary, Commander Elizabeth Young, ("As we celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, we are proud to lead the best Auxiliarists in the nation, D1SR First and Foremost!")

But it is noteworthy to take notice that our elected officials, the town boards of Brookhaven, lead by Supervisor Mark Lesko, East Hampton, lead by William McGintee and Southampton, lead by Supervisor Linda Kabot, took the time to create and grant proclamations making June 23rd, 2009, Coast Guard Auxiliary Day throughout their jurisdictions. Space precludes me from mentioning by name all the councilmen and councilwomen who also sit on the town boards and who equally and warmly recognized the work of their fellow citizens and patriots, the members of Division 18, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Post Script

I wish to acknowledge the article that CDR John Richmond, (retired), wrote in the Auxiliary magazine named "The Navigator" (Winter 2008/2009) entitled "How the Coast Guard Auxiliary was Conceived", which I liberally extracted text and facts from!

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2009@aol.com or go direct to Lisa Etter, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..." If you'd like a copy of any of the columns cited, email me and I send it to you.

