

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM COMMODORE THOMAS J. STODDARD
District Commodore – 11th District, Southern Region
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary



On behalf of all of the members of the 11th District- Southern Region of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, I extend the warmest welcome to you. Our district extends from Morro Bay southward to the border with Mexico, and encompasses all of Arizona, parts of Utah and Nevada – including Las Vegas, the Hoover Dam and the Colorado River. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is a multi-faceted organization serving the general boating public as the Coast Guard’s provider of Recreational Boating Safety services, while at the same time offering augmentation support to the active-duty Coast Guard mission. We are a uniformed membership and adhere to Coast Guard regulations and policies in carrying out our tasks. The number of programs supported by the Auxiliary and the vast array of free training and qualifications available to members are far too many to include in this message. What I can tell you about in some detail are the qualities and interests of our members, which should help you identify with them and to relate to the reasons they joined the Auxiliary.

First, how was the organization established? The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary was created on June 23, 1939 by an act of Congress as the United States Coast Guard Reserve. Two years later, in World War II, a military reserve was established, and the volunteer, civilian component was officially designated the [U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary](#) which serves under the direction of the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, currently [Admiral Karl L. Schultz](#). Today, your Auxiliary has approximately 26,000 men and women nationwide and nearly 1,600 members in District 11 SR, devoted to assisting you to be safe and have fun while on the water. Additionally, our members stand side by side with active duty Coast Guard men and women in fulfilling the various essential Coast Guard missions in protecting our shores from hostile and environmental threats.

Our members are all regular folks who lead lives much like yours and your neighbors’, with jobs, families and an array of skills and interests. Like many Americans, they were interested in joining an organization as a volunteer to give back and make a difference. However, being the only congressionally-sanctioned volunteer arm of a military service, our U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members achieve an elevated level of volunteerism and duty that, in my view, sets them apart. In recognition of all the Auxiliary has done to support the Coast Guard mission, we have earned the nickname *“America’s Volunteer Guardians”*.

Many of our members are boaters, boat owners or water-activity enthusiasts, both on the ocean and inland lakes and waterways, and the Auxiliary offers members rich opportunities to parlay these interests into public service. Some members offer their boats as official Coast Guard “facilities” for use in recreational boating safety patrols. Others – often boating enthusiasts with no boat of their own – qualify to participate in such patrols as Boat Crewmembers, or in the coveted position of Coxswain (patrol boat commander). There’s even qualifications for patrols on Personal Watercraft and paddle boats.

But the Auxiliary is much more than that. Over 85% of our members focus exclusively on our shore-side missions and activities, such as teaching public education classes, giving vessel safety checks, visiting marine dealers to supply safety information or work public affairs booths at boat shows and regattas. In addition, many members undertake *augmentation support roles* on Coast Guard bases and stations to directly stand alongside the active duty Coast Guard, to provide logistical, administrative and some operational support. This might include communications watch standing, public affairs services, air operations, maritime surface patrols, marine environmental protection patrol support, foreign and domestic oceangoing ship inspections, container inspection support, maritime domain awareness patrols and navigation aids inspections, to name just a few. Some members do many of these activities.

I encourage you to start at our website's [home page](#), and review the three department links for [Boating Safety](#), [Operations](#), and [Staff](#) and scan the opportunities that are available to you. I guarantee that you will come across one or more, if not many, categories that spark an interest. When that happens, and you have questions, go to the link below to find nearby flotillas, and be contacted by a member in your neighborhood who can answer your questions: <http://join.cgaux.org>. Remember, Coast Guard Auxiliary training is free to all members, and the experience – and fellowship – is priceless.

/s/ COMO Tom Stoddard