

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM COMMODORE ALFRED J. VERDI
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 south to the border with Mexico, encompasses all of Arizona and parts of Utah and Nevada including Las Vegas and the Hoover Dam and 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 providing 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 all 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 Robert J. Papp, Jr. Today, your Auxiliary has over 32,000 men and women nationwide and 2,000 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 you and your neighbors with jobs, families and an array of skills and interests. Like many Americans they are 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 recognize an elevated level of volunteerism and duty that, in my view, sets them apart. For all that is done by the Auxiliary 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, whether on the ocean or the inland lakes and waterways, and pursue those activities in the Auxiliary by offering their vessels as Coast Guard facilities when under orders, by qualifying as Coxswains (patrol boat commander), Boatcrew and Personal Watercraft Operators and soon, Paddlecraft Operators. Many members relish the shoreside support activities including Information Technology and website support, 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.

Many members undertake augmentation support roles on Coast Guard bases and stations to directly stand with the active duty to provide logistical, administrative and some operational support such as communications watchstanding, public affairs services, air operations, maritime surface patrols, marine environmental protection patrol support, foreign and domestic ocean-going 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 following link 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 is priceless.

As District Commodore, I am always available to discuss with you the organization, its mission and the role you can play by joining. Please do not hesitate to contact me at averlaw@aol.com.

Sincerely,

COMO Al Verdi