

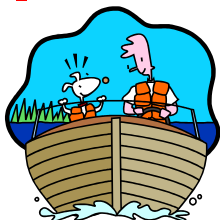


Up Top In Operations

October 2002

Monthly Newsletter of the National Operations Department

Volume 10



Who's Driving?

By: Mark Simoni, DVC-OS

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While those not actively involved in the Boat Crew Program may think that "the Coxswain's job is to drive the boat," this is not the case. In fact, each crew member is required to stand a proper helm watch as part of the crew qualification process. There are several reasons for this requirement.

First, someone needs to be able to handle the boat if the coxswain becomes incapacitated or falls overboard. There may be times when the mission dictates that the coxswain's attention be focused elsewhere, or they may simply want a break. In these cases, a crewman must be prepared to take the helm and drive the boat in an efficient manner. What kind of things is a helmsman responsible for? Here is a short list.

- Safely steering the boat
- Maintaining a course
- Carrying out all helm commands given by the coxswain

There are some guidelines that the helmsman is expected to follow:

- ☺ Check with the coxswain for any special instructions and for the course you will steer
- ☺ Repeat all commands given by the coxswain
- ☺ Execute all commands given by the coxswain
- ☺ Maintain a given course within 5°
- ☺ Remain at the helm until properly relieved
- ☺ Execute maneuvers only when expressly ordered; however, minor changes in heading to avoid debris, which could damage propeller or rudders, are essential
- ☺ Properly inform the relief person of all pertinent information

If you are the coxswain on an OP-FAC that you own, take the time to instruct your crew on how to safely and efficiently operate your boat. If you are crewing on someone else's boat, show an interest in how the boat handles, learn all you can about it, and don't be afraid to volunteer for the next helm watch.



Term Comes to an End

By: COMO Robert C. Colby, DC-O
rccolby@ameritech.com

My term as Department Chief-Operations is about to end. Effective November 1, 2002, Linda Nelson, DC-Od, will become the new Department Chief of Operations. Linda may be reached at NelsonL@uphs.upenn.edu or echopeep@ixpres.com.

I have enjoyed my term as your National Department Chief, and have enjoyed working with all of the 64 DSO's and 20 National staff officers within my department.



I have done my best to do things to make all of the operations areas, Air, ATON, Communications,

Surface Operations, and Operations Education, better and more user-friendly to the members.

I would still enjoy hearing from you; however, after 11-01, please direct all "official" Operations-related communications to Ms. Nelson. I will remain on the ISAR Committee as games (events) chairman. You may continue to direct any ISAR-related questions/comments to me.

Linda Nelson, new DC-O,
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My email address has also changed to rccolby@ameritech.net, effective immediately.

Very best regards,
Como Bob

**Robert C. Colby,
DC-O**

On Deck Communications



By: Charles Ford, BC-OSS
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When operating a boat, docking, undocking, picking up a mooring, coming alongside another craft or almost any other maneuver involving action by a crewmember, there is need for communication. The crewmember must know what to do and exactly when to do it.

On smaller boats, 30-feet and under, there may be no difficulty communicating— but with larger boats with a fly bridge or enclosed wheelhouse, it is very difficult to explain the exact action you want over the sound of wind and engines. Under some conditions instructions must be given with a minimum of words and with words that are clearly understood over background noise.

Some of these words have been selected and tested by the maritime services...Navy, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine. These words are not cast in stone but are offered as suggestions. You and your crew may select you own words, agree upon their meaning and use them regularly, even when conditions are not severe. Use them until they become second nature to the speaker and the listener.

The following are some examples:

“STAND BY YOUR LINES” Your line handlers may have been on the bow or stern for some-time while you found your assigned slip; they may have been distracted. This should wake them up.

“PASS the (bow, stern spring) LINE” This means hand, heave, or throw the named line ashore to someone waiting to receive it. It is important that the line not be passed before the command. Passing the line too soon may mess up the skipper's plans. The skipper may

be planning to back down or go forward some distance before lines are passed.

“TAKE A TURN AND HOLD” This does not mean tie the line to the bitt or cleat. The skipper wants to wait and adjust the line later after other lines are passed, but they want you to hold the line tight so it won't slip if they should back or go forward on it as needed.

“MAKE THE (bow, stern, spring) LINE FAST” This means tie the specified line to the appropriate cleat or bitt in a proper manner.

“CAST OFF () LINE.” This means to untie the specified line and pass ashore or to wherever else it is tied.

TAKE IN () LINE This means to have the line cast off from ashore or wherever and taken aboard.

“SECURE ALL LINES” This means untie them from the boat, coil them neatly and stow them where they belong.



A competitor's viewpoint...

Big ISAR Fun in Milwaukee!

By: Jerri A. Smith, BC-OEE
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As the editor of this publication, I usually don't write articles for the Up Top in Operations, but, this month I feel the need to share all the fun, excitement, and pride (not to mention hard work) that being a competitor at the International Search and Rescue (ISAR) competition can bring.

It was a long road to Milwaukee. It began immediately after the ISAR try-

outs in 2001, when two of our flotilla members competed at Selfridge ANG Base. They didn't make the team, despite their valiant efforts, but were inspired to get a team of four flotilla members together for the 2002 competition. Because of his experience with ISAR competitions, (as member of the 2002 National Team from 9CR), our flotilla's Vice Commander, Mike Skowronski, concentrated his efforts on pulling together a competitive team. He wrote several articles for our flotilla's newsletter, praising the merits of the ISAR competitions.

He pulled four of us together, later known as the “Saginaw SARDOGS,” and we began practicing in early May. We practiced diligently throughout the summer months, but hit a snag when one of our team members had to undergo surgery. We had to scramble to get a replacement team member in late summer.

Due to busy work schedules and other personal commitments, the “new” team of four didn't get the opportunity to practice very much together.

We did, however, get together enough to go over the basics of what would be covered in the competition: SAR planning and execution; we ran search patterns in my AUXFAC out in Saginaw Bay; practiced assembling, starting, dewatering, and disassembling the P-5 pump at Station Saginaw River until we

“Big Fun” continued on page 3...

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could do it in our sleep; we practiced basic first aid; and also threw a heaving line, throwing, and throw-bag more often than we cared to admit. (I still think that my one arm is still a little longer than the other from the weight of that doggone throw ring!) We also practiced marlinespike and splicing.

We knew that the competition would be intense, and we were as ready as we could be. We were going to give it the "old college try," and put forth our best effort. We were proud to be able to represent our District in Milwaukee.

We rented a large van, piled in, and headed to Milwaukee on Thursday, October 3. It was a long 9-hour ride, and on the way, we discussed the proposed competition events. We also enjoyed each other's company, and celebrated Auxiliary fellowship and camaraderie.

On Friday morning, the day before the competition, we gathered up our chart of Milwaukee Harbor, our binoculars, our still and video cameras, and headed to the Milwaukee waterfront in a downpour.

We got our bearings, figured out where all the ATONs were located, found Group Milwaukee, all of the anchorage locations, and other useful information which would help us during Saturday's competition.

Friday afternoon, the weather finally broke, and we headed outside at the hotel to practice more heaving line, life-ring and throw bag tosses. We were practicing hard, but we were also having FUN! Training for an event such as ISAR is hard work, but it's also a heck of a lot of fun. Not all of our throws were perfect, and light-hearted editorial comments could be heard from fellow team members. Of course, most of the throws were right on the mark, and the cheering and support given by fellow team members made hearts swell with pride from a job well done.

After the comprehensive ISAR briefing on Friday evening, we had a much better idea of what was going to be happening the next day. COMO Bob Colby (events chairman) and Mark Simoni, DVC-OS, did an awesome job in disseminating information.

After the Opening Ceremony on Saturday morning, it was time to get serious about SAR. Our first event was SAR planning, and despite one mistake, we still scored 55 out of

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60 points! (There were two scoreboards on scene which were updated after scoring was completed.) Our Commodore, Ken Koeppen, came to Milwaukee to cheer us on. He was very supportive and let us know how proud he was of us.

After SAR planning, we got underway in Milwaukee Harbor to execute what we had just spent the last 45 minutes charting. As our team's coxswain, I had the opportunity to direct our boat to a vessel in distress with an onboard medical problem. Once first aid was administered to the "injured" crewman, we took the disabled boat into a stern tow.

After lunch, we all gathered in the same location for the mystery event; it was an exercise in line splicing. (Two pieces of line, one short splice to join them, and an eye splice at each end, to fit over posts.) The scores for the mystery event were not posted or announced until the banquet.

Our next event was pump operations. We were (excuse the pun) "pumped!" We had been practicing with the P-5 pump for many months, and knew this would be **OUR** event. (Well, rather than reliving the disappointment yet another time, I'll just say that this particular P-5 pump was not a good friend of our team.) I pulled and pulled, as did my other two teammates, Mike and John, but that darn pump didn't even TRY to start. It was a great disappointment, and truly took the wind out of our sails.

Of course, now that we had pulled a pump's starter cord till our arms were



limp and our shoulders were nearly dislocated, what is our last competitive event? The

heaving line and throw bag event! Needless to say, even though we put forth our best effort, some of our throws fell a little short.

Exhausted, we piled into our van and headed back to the hotel.

The awards banquet was a lot of fun — International Auxiliary fellowship at it's finest! Our team did not win any National awards, but we were extremely proud of our efforts. We could not have tried any harder. The fourth member of our team, who competed on an International Team, shared a trophy for the paddleboat/water balloon (TCT) event, so 9CR did not return to Michigan empty-handed!

The moral of this story? Get a team together; practice, practice, practice; have fun; learn a lot; have fun; become more knowledgeable and skillful; and **have fun!**

All weekend long we heard: "*When everyone competes together, there are no losers — there are only winners.*" That's so true! Everyone wins when skills are increased and knowledge is gained. By studying, practicing, and competing, everyone becomes stronger members of Team Coast Guard. **Everyone wins.**

Next year's competition goes back to Canada — Newfoundland, to be exact. Get your team together now. You'll work hard, and you'll play hard, and you'll learn a lot. But, mostly, you'll have fun! And, is there anything better than that?

**See ya in
Newfoundland!**