



Up Top In Operations

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The Air Auxiliary is Ever Changing

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On the first of February 2001 the Air Auxiliary lost two of our finest crewmembers in a crash off the Florida coast. I hasten to add that the crash was not mission related but nonetheless it was a tragedy.

Our Pilot and Observer were breaking off of an air intercept mission with a CG Falcon Jet aircraft when they inadvertently went IMC while at 1500 feet. It was getting dark and they were over water. This held all the ingredients for any of us as pilots, to suffer spatial disorientation. Recovery was not made and the aircraft hit the water with two fatalities.

From this tragedy two things happened. The NTSB conducted an investigation, while at the same time a Coast Guard Safety Investigation was convened.

This mishap prompted a comprehensive top to bottom review of auxiliary aviation, the governing doctrine and the relationship to active duty Coast Guard Forces. Although many of the changes this brought about had nothing to do with any causal factors in this accident, they will unquestionably produce a safer partnership with the Forces.

The Coast Guard Commandant and the Chief of Staff both noted "... The Commandant and I remain committed to a vigorous Auxiliary Aviation program that is valued as a force multiplier in prosecution of varied Coast Guard missions".

The NTSB representative assigned to this accident investigation requested a review of the Memorandum of Understanding (dated 1987) between the Coast Guard and the NTSB. This agreement outlined the investigative jurisdiction for Auxiliary mishaps. Prior to this mishap, the NTSB and the USCG reviewed the MOU and agreed that it was no longer needed. The 1996 legislative changes now require the NTSB to investigate all "public use" aircraft mishaps.

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New DVC Appointments

Linda Nelson, DC-0

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The Department of Operations is pleased to announce the appointments of Edwin (Ned) Kroeker as DVC-OT and Gary Miconi as DVC-OE.

Ned Kroeker brings a wealth of Auxiliary as well as technical experience to the Communications post. Ned has been in the Auxiliary for more than 15 years (and a ham radio operator for longer), and is very active in operations (including as a qualification examiner). He has served as an RCO, DSO, and in national staff positions.

Ned can be reached via email at ekroeker@seaqueue.com.

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The Readiness Challenge Puzzle Solution

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S + + + + T C P + A + + M + +
C U S F W S S O E E + C C E +
I + + + + + N G R O A H A R
M E D E V A C C I A T P T O C
A + + U S O I C G T R I + + P
R + M I M J + F M N D D S O C
B I R M A N A S D A + M L C E
B H S H E E R N S L O R O G R
C M S D R P A C S D E W D C C
C O H A + S I P C P A C O E L
+ S C M E P C R E O A E P T A
T A S R A S + U B P O + O I +
P + + S N C P F D A N S B C W
T R R O + K S O N S C + M + A
U R S P L + + + + + D + +
    
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(Over, Down, Direction)

ACOE (15, 14, NW)	MER (13, 1, SE)
AOR (12, 3, W)	NCP (5, 13, E)
CAC (15, 4, NW)	NOAA (11, 13, N)
CDO (9, 10, NE)	NRC (6, 7, SE)
CERCLA (15, 6, S)	NSFCC (8, 8, N)
CGC (14, 9, N)	OPA (10, 11, S)
CHOP (12, 2, SE)	OSC (13, 12, SW)
CHRIS (1, 9, NE)	OSHA (2, 10, NE)
COGARD (7, 1, SE)	PACAREA (1, 13, NE)
COMDTINST (14, 9, NW)	PFD (7, 13, E)
COMMS (7, 4, SW)	PIW (13, 11, SE)
COTP (15, 4, W)	POB (13, 11, S)
DHS (4, 9, SW)	POD (13, 11, N)
DMB (13, 15, N)	POLREP (15, 5, SW)
EOC (14, 10, W)	RRT (3, 14, W)
EPA (9, 11, NW)	SARSAT (6, 12, W)
EPIRB (5, 8, SE)	SITREP (13, 6, NW)
GMDSS (9, 5, S)	SMC (3, 8, SW)
ICS (1, 3, N)	SONS (7, 14, E)
JIC (6, 6, NE)	SOP (4, 13, S)
LANTAREA (10, 8, N)	SRU (3, 15, W)
LKP (5, 15, NE)	TOW (14, 11, NW)
MARB (1, 4, S)	UCS (8, 12, NW)
MEDEVAC (1, 4, E)	UMIB (4, 5, SW)
MEP (4, 11, E)	USFWS (2, 2, E)

The Air Auxiliary is Ever Changing

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From this Investigation, it was recommended that the Commandant initiate a Commandant Aviation Safety Board. This Board was convened with the senior Coast Guard aviator as the President. The Board consisted of Active duty aviators, medical doctor, civilian and military staff of the USCG Safety Office and one Auxiliarist. The lone auxiliarist was your DVC-OA. The Board was in session for one week at Coast Guard Headquarters. The President of the Board opening statement was "I'm here to make our Auxiliary aviation a better and safer place in which we can function as a team..."

From this Boards meeting and subsequent recommendations to the Commandant a Commandant Review was held in CG headquarters. This review was attended by not only the Commandant and Chief of Staff but also a room filled with aviator Flag Officers and senior civilian staff concerned with aviation. Some forty people were in attendance.

Your DVC-OA and our national Flight Safety Officer, Wayne Peters, were included at the table. We were not passively invited, we were encouraged to fully participate and disagree with anything we thought was not in the best interest of Auxiliary Air.

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New Appointments

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Gary Miconi brings substantial experience to his new post in Operations Education, having been involved in training development and delivery for over 20 years in both the military and law enforcement communities. Gary's diverse background is "value added" in today's Coast Guard Auxiliary and will help us achieve our goal of excellence in all operational sectors while strengthening our commitment to Homeland Security. Gary can be contacted via email at mico1989@comcast.net.

"Up Top in Operations" is the monthly newsletter of the National Operations Department of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.



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Results of Commandant Review

1. Reorganize auxiliary aviation operations consistent with the "Squadron Concept". This concept operationally aligns auxiliary aviation with an active duty Coast Guard Air Station. Organizational placement and lines of responsibilities and accountability shall be clear. Respective Air Station C.O.'s will hold the authority to initiate, approve and direct auxiliary flights. Management of auxiliary aviation training, facility inspections, SAR checks, Medical and FAA Qualifications will remain with the Auxiliary program.
2. COMDT COGARD Washington, D.C. 141737Z Mar 01 message outlined the preliminary change that we now know as the 2-pilot rule prohibiting single pilot auxiliary aviation night or IMC. COMDT COGARD Washington, D.C. 301500Z SEP 02 requires two instrument rated pilots required for all operational auxiliary aviation missions conducted during night or IMC, as defined in the FAA Regulations. This new guidance to be incorporated in the 16798.3 series.
3. Mandate initial and recurrent training requirements for auxiliary pilots.
4. Expand auxiliary doctrine to include unique risk assessment matrix prior to flight. This meant to assist the Air Station Commander to select the appropriate aircraft/crew for a specific mission.
5. Assign an "Auxiliary Pilot" as the designated Auxiliary Aviation Coordinator (AAC) to each Air Station.
6. Develop and implement a training course for AAC's and Auxiliary Liaison Officers (AUXLO). The AUXLO being the active duty counterpart.
7. Leverage wherever possible ATC Mobile' facilities as a training resource in support of auxiliary aviation.
8. Utilize AUXDATA to allow easier access to aircraft and pilot data.
9. Rewrite mishap reporting requirements of air aux doctrine.
10. Update the Auxiliary Air Training Manual & Policy Manual to clearly state which Coast Guard FAA Exemptions apply to Auxiliary pilots.

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The Commandant not only personally welcomed the two of us, but he made a point of valuing our participation as a part of the Coast Guard Team. I cannot express the genuine feeling we received from the Commandant's remarks but to say, that we felt like one of the family.

The result of the Commandant's Review mandated some changes in the way we will operate in the future. In his words, "the following actions will be accomplished through a re-prioritizing, within existing resources or the resource proposal (RP) process." (see the box at left)

Out of tragedy will come a safer and more efficient Air Auxiliary. This comes with a price and that price is a more structured environment. CG Air Stations will direct all air assets wherever that request may come from. A safety matrix matching crew and aircraft to a mission will be instituted and with that change safety will be enhanced.

We can expect more in the way of pilot training from many different sources.

The best of both worlds come together as we share our Active Duty pilots experiences and training, to make us a more viable source for increased mission responsibility.

With all that has preceded these changes and as we mature as a force multiplier, there is still one constant and that is:

FLY SAFELY!

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