



Up Top In Operations

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Search and Rescue An Auxiliary Perspective

by Nevin L. Lantry, BC-OEW

To become an Auxiliary coxswain each of us had to have the knowledge to define the phases of a Search and Rescue (SAR) incident, know and explain the Coast Guard maritime SAR assistance and general salvage policy, plot and execute an expanding square, unit sector, parallel track, track line return, single barrier search, and participate in a night exercise.

These were exciting times for us. We were well prepared for the task, and anticipated the time when we would participate with the Coast Guard in an authentic SAR incident. According to the SAR background statistics/information which is provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, Yorktown, Virginia, 95% of all Coast Guard SAR occurs less than 20 nautical miles offshore. Approximately 90% of all SAR cases involve assist/rescue only. Another 8% of cases involve a minor search of less than 24 hours, and only 2% of all cases involve major searches of greater than 24 hours. As a matter of interest, the 10% of cases involving searches, both major and minor, cost the Coast Guard more than \$50 million dollars annually.

As you can see from these statistics, the majority of SAR cases are assistance and rescue with minimal search re-

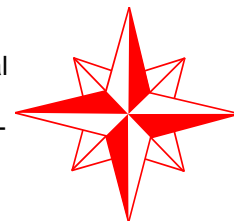
quired. With the advent of very accurate GPS, reliable VHF-FM radios with DSC calling features (not yet monitored by the Coast Guard) and personal EPIRBs, finding the exact location of a boater in trouble is relatively easy.

While the SAR efforts seem to be greatly improved by modern electronics, the Coast Guard Training Center continues to teach and refine the skills of its members. The goal is to reduce time spent in searching to save more lives, save Coast Guard resources, and place fewer personnel at risk. The school provides search planners with the skills and practice they need to become SAR detectives and information analysts. Coast Guard members are taught to aggressively pursue leads and obtain all information to successfully prosecute cases.

The current Coast Guard goal for all SAR incidents is to save at least 93% of those people at risk of death, and prevent the loss of at least 80% of the property at risk on the waters over which they have SAR responsibility. Auxiliary coxswains are active participants in achieving these goals each and every time we undertake a routine patrol. Because Auxiliary coxswains may not spend a great deal of time thinking about and practicing the more involved SAR skills that were necessary to become a coxswain, the information may slip away, or at best become just a bit

hazy. Each of us should review the more advanced SAR tasks to keep this information fresh and ready in the event we must participate in the less than 10% of all SAR incidents requiring a minor or major extended search.

There are several good ways to review this information. One is to take or teach the CG Auxiliary Search and Rescue (AUXSAR) course (COMDTPUB P16794.35B).



Consider becoming a mentor for an aspiring new coxswain and in the process of teaching these skills they will again become sharp and clear for the instructor. The Training Center Yorktown has a web page at <http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/ops/sar/index.shtm> that has good information available which is interesting and current.

Another source of SAR information is at www.auxtrain.org/esar.htm presented in power point and flash formats. The bottom line is that because a skill was once learned, it must be refreshed if it is to stay current. Our job as Auxiliarists is to be ready for the call to assist, and hopefully we will be up to the task by keeping our skills and information current.

LINE HANDLING COMMANDS

by Charles Ford, BC-OES



"What do I mean commands -we are not in the Navy or even the Coast Guard.!" Nevertheless when you tell (ask) someone on your boat to "make that line fast" you really mean it and you expect it to be done properly, correctly, and now.

The seagoing services have developed short concise and clear words for the actions expected of line handlers. We can do well to use these tools, they are effective.

TAKE A STRAIN ON (bow line) - Pull on line until . it is taut.

HEAVE ON (bow line) - Pull on line until is tight as you can make it.

EASE ON (bow) line - Slack off a little on line.

TAKE A TURN AND HOLD (bow line) - Wrap one turn of line around bitt/cleat and hold tight.

SLACK (bow line) - Let line run free.

AVAST HEAVING (bow line) - Stop pulling but hold the tension you have got.

HOLD WHAT YOU HAVE GOT (on bow line) - Take a turn or two on bitt / cleat and hold line but do not make it fast (tie).

LET GO (bow line) - Let line loose so those at other end can cast off.

CAST OFF (bow line) - Free the line so it can be taken aboard.

MAKE (the bow line) **FAST** - Secure the line to cleat/bitt with turns but no hitches.

SECURE ALL LINES -Tie all lines to respective bitts or cleats with suitable turns and hitches.

SEND THE (bow line ashore) - Take that action.

STAND BY YOUR LINE (S) - Get ready to pass a line ashore or as directed.

Be sure to visit the **Operation Patriot Readiness web site for the most recent information and updates on our efforts on behalf of the Coast Guard in Homeland Security!**
<http://www.uscgaux.org/~opr/index.html>



WATER IN THE BILGE

by Charles Ford, BC-OES

A little water in the bilge never hurt a boat, so long as you know where it came from and that it is under control.

When you are under way on a trip of many hours it is vital that you know about increasing amounts of water in the bilge. I am sure you have an adequate number of automatic electric bilge pumps. You may even have pilot lights to warn you they are operating. All of that is good, but is it enough?

Sources of a sudden unexpected flow of water to the bilge are myriad...To name a few:

- Rupture or disconnected cooling water hose
- Leaking drive shaft packing gland
- Leaking rudder shaft gland
- Leaking sea cocks
- Spray coming in an open porthole or window in unoccupied space.
- Spray coming in an engine room ventilation cowl or portlight

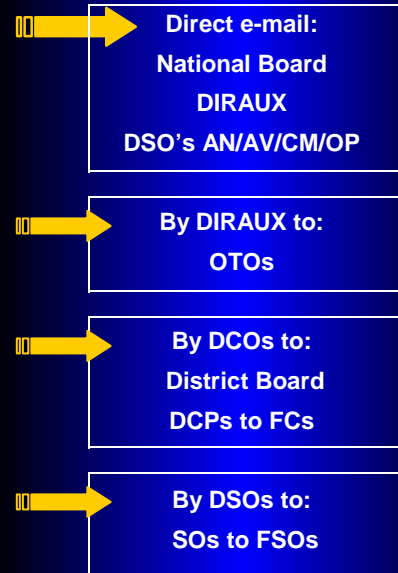
As unlikely as some of the above may seem, of the six listed above I have had personally encountered four of them. It is a shock to have an engine sputter and stop, drowned out in water while you are cruising along peacefully or worse, when you are fighting heavy seas or entering a rough inlet.

The solution is very simple. Install a reliable float switch in a low spot where water will collect in your engine compartment when underway. Connect this to a buzzer or bell that you can hear over engine noise at cruising RPM.



THE NATIONAL OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT WISHES YOU THE HAPPIEST OF HOLIDAY SEASONS AND A JOYOUS NEW YEAR.

DISTRIBUTION:



A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF A RESCUE

Editor's Note: In the Summer 2003 Edition of The Association for Rescue at Sea Newsletter, CWO Scott Clendenin, USCG (ret.) provided the following account of a rescue off Nye Beach (near Newport, OR) on 6 June 2003. Reprinted with permission.

Two young girls age 8 and 10 were pulled out by a strong rip-tide and two by-standers (a father & son) entered the surf to attempt a rescue but got caught in the same rip-tide.

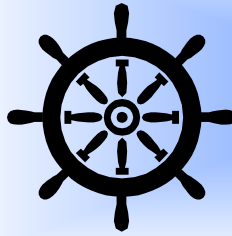
Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay sent two 47' MLB's, and a helo from Newport Air Facility (without a rescue swimmer) was dispatched along with Newport Fire Rescue and a local ambulance company. I was the rescue swimmer for the Newport Fire Department, and was able to assist the father, through the surf to the beach as the first to arrive 47' MLB started pulling the young girls on board.

As the girls were being pulled aboard the MLB, the 21 year-old son went under and our spotters lost track of him. The helo started searching and spotted the man below the water, but since there was no helo rescue swimmer, I entered the beach surf and swam out -- but got caught in the surf as well. Seeing that I was fighting the surf, the helo dropped a basket and hoisted me up for the search. Once we located the man, I was lowered back down and started an underway search and finally located the man about five feet below the water.

I dove down and after several attempts in a dry suit, I was able to pull the man to the surface and swim him to the basket. The helo hoisted him and delivered him onto the beach for fire and ambulance personnel to start medical attention. The man was rushed to the hospital, but, unfortunately, did not survive.

I was again picked up out of the water and returned to the beach. I spent a total of 32 minutes in the surf; total rescue from time of dispatch to the fourth man on the beach receiving medical assistance was 42 minutes.

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



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