

FIRST QUARTER | 2026

THE AUXILIARIST

THE NATIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY



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Auxiliary Photos By Lisa Repetto

**U.S. COAST GUARD
FORCE MULTIPLIERS**

The Auxiliary supports the Coast Guard in its vital missions to safeguard lives and protect the environment across our nation's waterways. As America's Volunteer Guardians, we stand dedicated, vigilant, and always ready to serve on behalf of our fellow citizens.

**HOW WE
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

Today's U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary—**approximately 19,000 strong**—is a unique volunteer force serving almost every aspect of the maritime environment. Guided by the Coast Guard's motto, Semper Paratus ("Always Ready"), Auxiliarists stand prepared to meet a wide range of responsibilities.

The Auxiliary's mission is to enhance the safety and security of our citizens, ports, waterways, and coastal regions. Balancing Recreational Boating Safety and Coast Guard support with

Maritime Homeland Security, members also adapt to new challenges shaped by the post-9/11 era.

Since its founding in 1939, the Auxiliary has protected America's maritime interests across inland waters, ports, coastlines, and beyond. Volunteers from all walks of life bring their skills, training, and commitment as proud members of the uniformed volunteer component of the United States Coast Guard.

**RECREATIONAL
BOATING SAFETY**

The Auxiliary's leading mission is promoting Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) for the public. To support this, it offers a variety of programs, including one of its most recognized efforts—free Vessel Safety Checks for recreational boaters, a tradition that has remained a cornerstone of service for decades.



**Really Know
Social Media?
Then we'd like to know you!**

Our Digital Media branch is offering positions to well-experienced, self-initiating team players committed to the missions of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, our dedication to providing mission support to the Coast Guard, and advancing recreational boating safety to the public. Minimum requirements include completion of AUX-20 Introduction to Public Affairs, computer literacy, including proficiency in Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, email clients, social media platforms, and familiarity with web publication standards.

For further information and to apply for an interview email:

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National Division Chief of Communications



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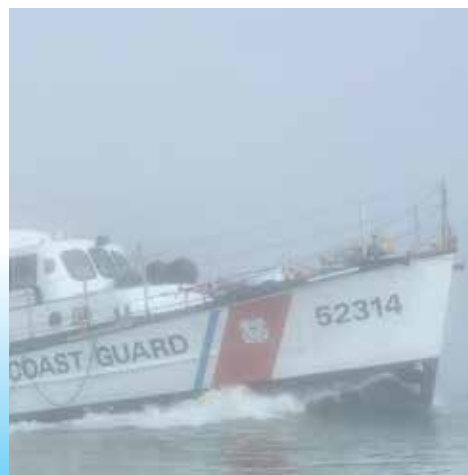
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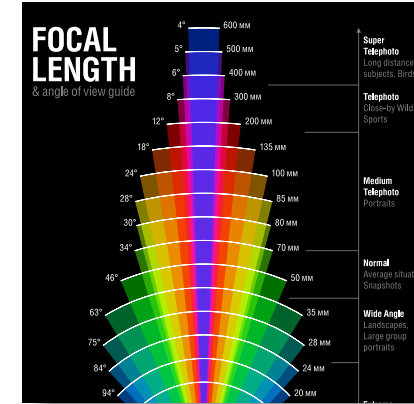
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Resilience, Service, and Growth: Celebrating the Auxiliary's Journey

An Inspirational Reflection on 2025
and the Promise of 2026

· *COMO Mary Kirkwood,*
· *National Commodore*
· *U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary*



As I reflect on 2025, I'm amazed at the dedication and resilience of our Auxiliary members. We were immediately tasked with responding to Executive Orders that directly affected our organization. We eliminated the word "gender" from all websites and documents, including our Member Enrollment form and the Change in Membership Status Form. We eliminated our Diversity program, which directly affected about 350 of our Diversity Officers across the country, and in some ways affected all members. And there were significant changes to our AUX Travel process, and new requirements around speaking engagements.

Despite these challenges, our members responded with unwavering determination. They adapted to new policies, often setting aside personal preferences for the greater good of the organization. The strength we displayed in meeting these demands is a testament to our shared commitment to mission and community. Even as procedures changed and familiar programs were restructured, the Auxiliary's spirit never wavered. Instead, we chose to focus on what unites us: our dedication to service, safety, and the Coast Guard's mission. This unity allowed us to weather uncertainty and step forward as leaders in support and innovation.

But we made a few course changes and had an incredible year! Our ability to embrace change and remain focused on our goals has proven essential to

our continued success. Every challenge became an opportunity for growth, and each member contributed their unique strengths. It's easy to feel overwhelmed when circumstances shift, but the Auxiliary has shown that we thrive under pressure and adapt quickly. We are not just an organization—we are a community, bound by commitment, integrity, and the power of collective action.

Last year, our organization ended with 18,548 members, reflecting a decrease of 1,200 from the previous year. Despite this, our volunteers contributed over 2.2 million hours and drove 3.5 million unreimbursed miles. We had 147,500 operational hours, during which we provided 263 assist cases and saved 181 lives, with nearly \$1 million worth of property protected.

Let those numbers sink in for a moment. Behind each hour volunteered, each mile traveled, and every life saved lie stories of commitment, compassion, and courage. Our members showed up when it mattered most, sacrificing time, energy, and resources to ensure the safety and well-being of others. This is what defines us: not just statistics, but the extraordinary heart and effort that make those statistics possible.

For Recreational Boating Safety (RBS), we performed 51,000 vessel safety checks, 72,000 program visits, 589 fishing vessel exams, and more than 32,000 paddlecraft examinations. Culinary support accounted for almost 43,000 hours, while chaplain services provided over 13,000 hours. Interpreter support totaled 3,200 hours, and health services contributed nearly 12,000 hours.

These numbers highlight the breadth and depth of our impact. Whether ensuring boating safety, supporting health needs, or providing spiritual comfort, our members consistently go above and beyond. It's this commitment that makes the Auxiliary indispensable to the Coast Guard and our communities. Each contribution, no matter how small, builds a legacy of excellence and service that inspires others to join and to serve.

What a great year it was! And as we look forward, we see even greater promise ahead.

This year promises to be even more incredible as we continue to augment the Coast Guard and its missions. We very much have a seat at the table, as I sit on the Senior Leader group for the Coast Guard, meeting weekly with the Commandant, Vice Commandant, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG), Secretary of the Coast Guard, and about eight other members of the group. We have Auxiliary representation on "sprint groups" for Force Design 2028 and are routinely asked for input on how we can provide additional support.

Looking to the future, the Auxiliary continues to earn trust and respect at the highest levels. Our expertise is valued, and our voices are heard. We are actively shaping the Coast Guard's direction and priorities, bringing fresh ideas and perspectives to the table. This recognition is not just a reward for past achievements—it's a call to action for every member to continue pushing boundaries and striving for excellence.

Let us carry forward the momentum and lessons from 2025 into 2026. Each member's contribution matters, and together, we have the power to create lasting positive change. As we face new challenges and opportunities, let's remember the strength we've shown, the lives we've touched, and the difference we've made. The journey ahead is bright, and with our unwavering resolve, the Auxiliary will continue to inspire, serve, and lead.

Thank you for your dedication, your resilience, and your commitment to our mission. Let's make 2026 another remarkable year—together! 🌟

MEET NOAA LTJG AMBER PORTER, AUP GRADUATE AND DRONE PILOT

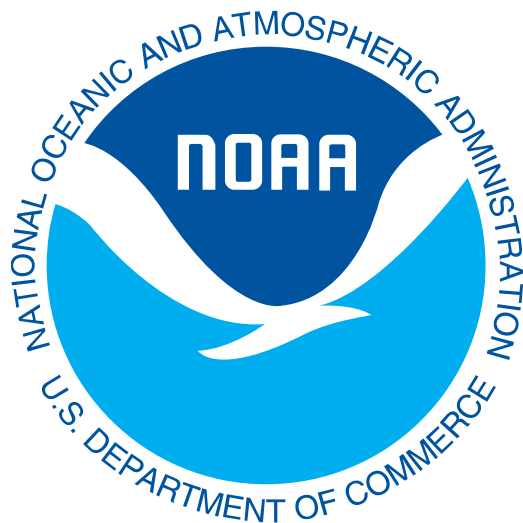
by M.D. Schlitt, AUXPA3
and Contributing Editor, *The Auxiliarist*

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Deck Watch Officer and Drone Pilot, LTJG Amber Porter, summed it all up when I interviewed her via Zoom at her then duty station in Honolulu, HI. “Joining the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary (USCGAux) opened doors to opportunities I never could have imagined. I truly would not be where I am today without my experience with the USCGAux and U.S. Coast Guard, Sector St. Petersburg (USCG-SSP). Becoming an Auxiliarist set everything else in motion in a manner that I could not have charted alone.”

Porter’s “journey” began in 2020 while she was attending the University of Tampa (UT), Fla. where she majored in Marine Science and Biology. While attending, she discovered the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) “College Student Pre-Commission Initiative” (CSPI) and applied with the intention of joining the USCG. Unfortunately, that program was not available at her school.

Porter subsequently met with a USCG recruiter who told her about the “Auxiliary University Program” (AUP), and about the CG Auxiliary. Porter initially joined the Tampa Flotilla and, through that flotilla, the AUP. Unfortunately, this was also the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, and she could not attend flotilla meetings.

Porter subsequently learned of the St. Petersburg Flotilla. She took her CPR and first-aid classes at that flotilla, and she subsequently transferred there. As the pandemic eased, Porter became active in



the St. Petersburg Flotilla, performing outreach duties and being appointed the Flotilla Staff Officer-Human Resources (FSO-HR), all while continuing her studies at UT.

She noted that UT did not have its own AUP unit and instead joined a “Remote Collaborative Unit” (RCU), attending weekly Zoom meetings. As part of the AUP and to graduate from the program, Porter was required to obtain FEMA and curriculum credits (i.e., FSO positions). In addition, to graduate from the program with distinction, she needed to obtain an internship, and the fact that the St. Petersburg Flotilla was co-located at Sector St. Petersburg (SSP) proved instrumental in securing that internship.

She started her training with SSP’s Incident Management Division (IMD), specifically in pollution response, where she was mentored by Auxiliarist Russell Gasdia who helped her connect with the right people. SSP’s Commander issued Porter temporary duty (TDY) orders for 4 months to work with the IMD, where LTJG Whip Blacklaw was her mentor. She was required to submit weekly reports and an “Officer Evaluation Report” while working towards qualifications as a Pollution Responder.

During her summer internship, Porter trained with the IMD, Monday–Friday, 0600-1500, and at the direction of the COTP. She was treated as a USCG officer. It was during that time that Porter stated that she became involved with “Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS),” commonly known as “drones.”

Porter added that LTJG Blacklaw was helping to get the UAS program, figuratively, “off the ground,” and he invited her to enter the program as he possessed a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) “Part 107 (Drone Pilot License).”

Porter started training for the USCG Performance Qualification Standard, created by Blacklaw in May of 2022, which included “hands-on” training and online courses. Blacklaw encouraged her to become qualified as a UAS pilot, as it is a huge part of pollution post-disaster responses.

In July of 2022, she passed her proctored FAA examination, which licensed her to fly UAS. At SSP, she became qualified to fly the following drones: Typhoon, EVO, and Parrot Anafi.

Porter emphasized that her UAS PQS was an active duty program and not part of the Auxiliary Drone Program, which had not yet been created.

After her internship was completed, Porter continued to work with the IMD on a part-time basis as an Auxiliarist, on pollution cases, and on harbor patrols. She worked on three federalized pollution cases and two hurricane response strike teams, she would use the drones to obtain video footage of the scenes and to provide long-range views of the affected area. When her classes at UT were canceled due to the storms, she would perform mission work for the IMD as an Auxiliarist, charging Code 70M.”

Porter stated that she always wanted to become an officer in the USCG, and then she heard about the NOAA Corps, and with her educational background, she believed that it could be a consideration as well. Accordingly, upon graduation from UT, she applied for Officer Candidate School (OCS) for both the USCG and NOAA Corps.

Porter opted for NOAA Corps, and she entered

the “Summer 2023 Basic Officer Training Course” (BOTC) at the USCG Academy in New London, Conn., as a NOAA Corps cadet. After 22 weeks, newly minted Ensign (O-1) Porter was sent off to her first assignment as a Deck Watch Officer aboard the T-AGOS Class research vessel NOAA Ship Oscar Elton Sette, which is homeported in Pearl Harbor, HI.

The Oscar Elton Sette was originally built for the U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command as the U.S. Naval Ship (USNS) Adventurous, in service from 1988 to 1992. The 224-ft. ship was subsequently transferred to NOAA, where it was converted into a research ship. It now has a crew of 46, consisting of seven officers, 14 professional mariners, with the remaining crew consisting of federal scientists and researchers. Porter’s



LTJG Amber Porter, NOAA Corps, with two of the more compact drones.
Photo: LTJG Whip Blacklaw, USCG.

collateral duties on board included: navigation, environmental compliance, and damage control. NOAA utilizes drones, has a UAS program, which provides a wide range of capabilities, including hurricane research, emergency response, marine mammal operations from the Aleutian Islands to Antarctica, and a multitude of other capabilities that provide scientists, other government agencies, and academic and industry partners with data in some of the world's most remote and harsh environments. Porter is assisting the agency by working with the NOAA Aircraft Operations Center in Lakeland, Fla., using the USCG PQS.

In the Spring of 2024, Porter participated in the Drone Assessment and Response Tactics (DART) held by New Mexico Tech at Sector Honolulu, training jointly with USCG Sector Honolulu, Honolulu PD, FBI, and the FAA. Porter noted that she was the only NOAA representative. She added that she still meets and mentors (albeit remotely) students currently enrolled in the AUP, including one located in the Florida Keys.

In 2025, the Sette sailed to the Mariana Islands for a 6-month assignment, where Porter worked again with LT Blacklaw, stationed at Sector Guam, whose duties include being in charge of the UAS program in the Pacific. While there, she and Blacklaw conducted UAS training for both CG and NOAA personnel. The training used a "Skydio X-10" drone, which is manufactured in the U.S. Porter is helping personnel gain experience as drone pilots to become qualified, in coordination with the USCG, utilizing its resources to obtain NOAA shipboard resources.

Right: NOAA Ship Oscar Elton Sette (R335) homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Photo: LCDR Matthew Wingate, NOAA Corps.



August 2022—St. Petersburg, Florida—Training conducted with Sector St. Petersburg Incident Management Division (IMD) with Typhoon. Photo by LTJG Whip Blacklaw, USCG.



Right: Pearl Harbor, Hawaii—ENS Amber Porter, NOAA Corps. Photo by LTJG Whip Blacklaw, USCG.

As of this writing, Porter has been re-assigned from the tropical paradise of Hawaii to Washington, DC. where she is now the "Flag LT." to Rear Admiral Chad Carey, Director of NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and Assistant Administrator for NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations.

Porter stated that she has nothing but the fondest memories of her time as a member of the Auxiliary. I, personally, and I'm sure her entire Auxiliary family wish her well in her career and future endeavors!

Below: Skydio X-10—one of several Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), commonly known as "drones" utilized by NOAA and USCG. Photo by Skydio, Inc.



Above: October 2022—Port Charlotte, Florida—Hurricane Ian post-storm marina damage assessment conducted by Amber Porter, USCG Auxiliary for Pollution Response operations. Photo by MST3 Wyatt Pfaff, USCG.



May 2024—Honolulu, Hawaii—Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program Development (UASPD) Course joint agency training hosted by New Mexico Tech at U.S. Coast Guard Sector Honolulu. LT Whip Blacklaw, USCG and ENS Amber Porter, NOAA Corps. Photo by LT Whip Blacklaw, USCG



Right: August 2022—St. Petersburg, Florida—Amber Porter, USCG Auxiliary, and class training with Typhoon at Sector St. Petersburg Incident Management Division (IMD). Photo by LTJG Whip Blacklaw, USCG.

Guarding The Digital Waterfront: Auxiliary Cybersecurity Takes Center Stage at S-TRAIN Miami

By Susan Wetzel,
Stuart Flotilla, Florida

A comprehensive session on emerging threats, new Coast Guard regulations, and how Auxiliarists are becoming America's maritime cyber defenders

On Saturday, January 31, 2026, Auxiliarists gathered in Miami for one of the most forward-looking sessions at the Sector Miami S-TRAIN: a deep dive into the rapidly expanding world of maritime cybersecurity. The presentation, conducted by Cliff Neve, Director of the Cybersecurity Directorate, illuminated both the Coast Guard's evolving regulatory mission and the Auxiliary's critical, and robust, role in protecting America's ports, waterways, and critical maritime infrastructure from digital threats.

The Threat Is Real and Growing

The session opened with a stark reality check: cyber vulnerabilities in maritime systems are expanding at an alarming rate, driven by artificial intelligence, increased connectivity of operational technology, and persistent nation-state interest in disrupting U.S. infrastructure.

"Just like there are physical threats to ports and waterways, there are threats inside," the presenter explained. "Things like propulsion systems on ships used to be isolated. Now they're networked. Pumps, navigation systems, everything is getting connected as bandwidth increases."

The implications are profound. A cyberattack on a port facility, offshore oil platform, or vessel control system could disrupt commerce, threaten safety, and compromise national security, all without a single physical intrusion.

The Coast Guard Steps Up

Auxiliarist Cliff Neve traced the Coast Guard's journey into cybersecurity regulation, beginning with the **Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA)** of 2002 (enacted post-9/11), which focused primarily on physical security.

In 2020, the Coast Guard officially accepted responsibility for regulating maritime cybersecurity. Then, in January 2025, the service published its landmark Final Rule on Cybersecurity in the Marine Transportation System, which went into effect last July.

The rule establishes baseline cybersecurity standards for thousands of MTSA-regulated entities, including U.S.-flag vessels, outer continental shelf facilities (especially oil and gas platforms in the Gulf of Mexico), and port facilities nationwide.

Key requirements include:

Designated Cybersecurity Officers: One person, named in writing, must be individually accountable for the facility's cybersecurity; no more passing the buck between IT staff and Facility Security Officers.

Annual Assessments: Regular evaluations of cyber risk and readiness.

Written Cybersecurity Plans: Including risk assessments, incident response protocols, and recovery strategies.

Operational Compliance: Organizations must actually follow their plans, not just file them on a shelf.

Notably, the Coast Guard's focus is not on protecting corporate data or trade secrets. "What the Coast Guard cares about is resilience," the presenter emphasized. The mission is to ensure that ports can continue operating and commerce can flow, even in the face of cyber incidents.

The Problem: 40 People, Thousands of Facilities

Here's where the challenge becomes clear: to regulate and support thousands of maritime facilities nationwide, the Coast Guard has assigned approximately 40 civilian cybersecurity specialists, one per sector or Marine Safety Unit, stretched from the continental United States to Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"Do you see the mismatch?" the presenter asked. The answer was obvious.

Enter the Auxiliary.

Three Pillars of Auxiliary Cybersecurity

The Auxiliary's cybersecurity ecosystem, developed over just the past three years, operates on three distinct but interconnected levels:

1. The National Staff Office

Responsible for protecting the Auxiliary's own network and IT infrastructure and serving as the program office that matches supply (skilled Auxiliarists) with demand (Coast Guard needs).

2. Auxiliary Cybersecurity (AUXCYBER)

A vetted corps of cybersecurity professionals throughout the Auxiliary who contribute to Coast Guard and Auxiliary cyber missions. Members are credentialed experts, engineers, analysts, penetration testers, and compliance officers, who undergo a qualification process to join.

3. The Cyberspace Flotilla

Chartered in 2023 with 19 plank owners, (Eastern District-Southern Region, Flotilla 22-12) this administrative flotilla was created specifically to attract new members who want to serve in cyber roles but may have no interest in traditional boating safety missions.



Dispelling a common myth, the presenter clarified: "Ninety percent of the Cyberspace Flotilla are new accessions, people who would never have joined otherwise." The flotilla is not meant to pull members away from traditional flotillas; in fact, four members have transferred out to join traditional units after discovering they enjoyed the broader Auxiliary mission.

The demographics are striking: the average age in the cyber flotilla is 42 years old, far younger than the national Auxiliary average, and only two members are at or above the typical age range.

Elite Talent, Real-World Impact

The caliber of talent within AUXCYBER is formidable. Members include cybersecurity professionals with extensive experience in military/government, public sector, private sector, and academia.

These Auxiliarists are now embedded in 13 sectors across the country, with the goal of covering all 37 by the end of 2026.

What AUXCYBER Does

AUXCYBER's mission breaks into two main operational lines:

Supporting Active-Duty Coast Guard:

- Shield Risk assessments and authorization for systems like **Rescue 21**
- Shield Red team/blue team exercises to test network defenses
- Shield Vulnerability assessments
- Shield Cyber Protection Team augmentation and remediation support
- Shield Teaching at the Coast Guard Academy

Supporting the Maritime Transportation Sector:

- Shield Partnering with CG-5P (Coast Guard Prevention Directorate) and sector-level Maritime Transportation Security Specialists (MTSSCs)
- Shield Conducting non-punitive, courtesy cybersecurity inspections (similar to vessel safety checks)
- Shield Hosting webinars on topics like AIS/GPS hacking, artificial intelligence threats, and building cyber programs
- Shield Publishing white papers to raise awareness and capability across the maritime sector

The presenter stressed that AUXCYBER currently accepts only certified cybersecurity professionals, no beginners. "I can't hand an untrained Auxiliarist to a busy MTSSC and say, 'Can you babysit them?' That's a recipe for program failure," he explains. "But if people want to learn, there are certifications and pathways to get there."

Personal Cybersecurity: Practical Tips for Auxiliarists

The session's second half focused on actionable advice for protecting personal devices and accounts, a topic that resonated deeply with attendees.

Top Recommendations:

1. Use a Password Manager

The presenter admits he only knows one password: the 32-character master key to his password manager. Everything else is randomly generated and stored securely. He recommended tools like 1Password or Bitwarden (he no longer recommends LastPass after its acquisition). The Coast Guard now requires active-duty personnel to use KeePass.

Hackers exploit password reuse. If a defunct site like MySpace is breached, attackers will try those credentials everywhere, banking, email, shopping sites. Unique passwords for every account eliminate that risk.

2. Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) Everywhere

MFA, requiring "something you know" (password), "something you have" (phone/token), or "something you are" (fingerprint), stops the vast majority of attacks. Even imperfect MFA (like SMS codes) is vastly better than none.

"Unless you're being individually targeted, and none of us in this room are that important, hackers are casting a wide net," he said. "MFA makes you a much harder target."

3. Beware of Phishing and Social Engineering

The presenter shared chilling examples, including a friend's mother who lost \$29,000 to a scam involving fake DHS credentials, gold purchases, and Bitcoin. He also described «sextortion» schemes where attackers send emails with old passwords in the subject line, claiming to have compromising videos.

His advice: "If someone calls you, do not give them any information. Hang up and call the organization directly." Microsoft will never proactively call about a Windows problem. Your bank will never ask for your debit card number over the phone.

He even runs drills with his mother in Florida, calling to ask for her card number, training her to reflexively refuse.

4. Keep Software Updated

Microsoft's "Patch Tuesday" is followed by "Hack Wednesday," when hackers analyze disclosed vulnerabilities and exploit unpatched systems. Automatic updates are essential.

5. Avoid Public Wi-Fi Without a VPN

The presenter demonstrated a device called a WiFi Pineapple—a \$150 tool that tricks devices into connecting to a fake hotspot, allowing an attacker to intercept unencrypted traffic. On travel, he always uses a VPN or his phones hotspot instead of public Wi-Fi.

6. Remove Admin Access from Your Daily User Account

By creating a separate administrative account used only for software installations, users can prevent most malware from executing even if they click a malicious link.

A Culture of Vigilance

Throughout the session, the presenter emphasized that cybersecurity is not a technical problem, it's a human behavior problem. Attackers prey on urgency, fear, curiosity, and trust. Education, skepticism, and good digital hygiene are the best defenses.

One attendee raised a concern about Auxiliarists using Gmail accounts with birth years in the address (e.g., "JohnSmith1967@gmail.com"). The presenter was blunt: "That's a problem. Controlling personal information is critical."

The Road Ahead

As the session concluded, it was clear that maritime cybersecurity represents both an urgent challenge and a tremendous opportunity for the Auxiliary. With only 40 Coast Guard specialists covering thousands of facilities, the need for skilled, vetted, mission-ready Auxiliarists has never been greater.

The Auxiliary is no longer just about life jackets and courtesy vessel exams. It's about defending the nation's economic lifeline, the maritime transportation system, from invisible, relentless, and increasingly sophisticated threats.

As one participant remarked during Q&A: "This isn't just IT support. This is national security."

And the Auxiliary is answering the call.

For Auxiliarists interested in learning more about AUXCYBER or improving their personal cybersecurity posture, contact information and resources are available through district leadership and the national AUXCYBER program office. 📍



U.S. Coast Guard 52' motor lifeboat Triumph II crosses Columbia River Bar one last time to its final home

By Dave Haugsten,
Cape Disappointment Flotilla



On March 24, 2025 motor lifeboat 52314 (MLB), Triumph II, crossed the Columbia River bar to be placed on display in its final home at the Columbia River Maritime Museum's new addition.

The Triumph II has a long and rich tradition of mariner rescue in the Pacific Northwest at Coast Guard Station Cape Disappointment.

From 1961 until 2020, the Triumph had responded to as many as 3,000 search and rescue cases. That is a lot of fishermen and recreational boaters that were, and still are, glad it was there. Including the Captain Raleigh, a 72-foot commercial fishing vessel, which after a call for help, caught a nine-hour tow from the Triumph in 2019. Possibly Triumph's last tow was April 30th of 2020 when the MLB towed the Captain St. James, a 58-foot fishing vessel, whose prop was fouled by a fishing net.



Many of those folks, their friends, and relatives will now be able to visit it at its new and forever home. The historic 52-foot Triumph II motor lifeboat, which served at Cape Disappointment and operated at the mouth of the Columbia River, will be the centerpiece in Mariners Hall, the new building at the Columbia River Maritime Museum, showcasing our incredible maritime history.

MK1 Keith Bryan, who was there in May of 2021 when the Triumph was pulled from active service, was also aboard for the final trip across the Columbia River on Tuesday. He understandably has a strong connection to the Triumph as do many more coxswains, engineers, and boat crew who served on the vessel during her many years of service. 🇺🇸

(Editor) Further information about the Triumph II CG 52314 and its predecessor, Triumph CG 52301, can be found at the links below. 52-foot Motor Lifeboat (Type F)—Wikipedia

The Long Blue Line: Lest we forget—the Triumph-Mermaid tragedy 60 years ago.

Photos: U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary



DO YOU LOVE RBS?

Earn the Recreational Boating Safety Device!

The Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Device Award recognizes extraordinary effort of Auxiliarists who consistently provide strong support to RBS programs. It requires significant activity in boating safety programs over a minimum period of two years.



Auxiliarists must earn 120 points for two consecutive years (240 in total) to earn the RBS Device Award. Points are awarded as follows:

Vessel Examinations

1 point per paddlecraft exam
1 point per vessel exam

Paddlecraft Operations

1 point per patrol hour

Program Visitation

1 point per visit

Legislative Outreach

1 point per hour
Federal Legislature
State Legislatures
State Boating Admins

Public Education

1 point per hour as lead*
1/2 point per hour as aide*

*This includes AUXPAD Ashore instruction

Public Affairs

1 point per hour
External Print Media
Broadcast Media
Speeches/Talks
Community Relations



bdept.cgaux.org | edepartment.cgaux.org | vdept.cgaux.org



Always Ready

The spirit of the Coast Guard Auxiliary

by Tiffany Townsend, AUXPA2

Semper Paratus, the enduring motto of the United States Coast Guard, means “always ready.” It reflects a strong commitment to keeping our nation’s waterways safe, secure, and environmentally protected. It symbolizes a mindset of service and the time, skills, and heart each Coast Guard Auxiliarist dedicates to the cause. As we reflect on another year of Team Coast Guard missions, we are reminded that readiness is more than a state of response. It’s a pledge to our maritime community and to one another.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary augments Coast Guard missions through the Four Cornerstones of recreational boating safety, operations and marine safety, member services, and fellowship. This is our purpose and our practice.

All Photos: Tiffany Townsend, AUXPA2, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Recreational Boating Safety: Prevention First

Recreational boating safety is our primary mission. By educating boaters of all skill levels, we help the public navigate America’s waterways confidently, responsibly, and safely. As the world’s largest volunteer boating safety organization, we have honored this responsibility since 1939. Every day, Auxiliarists across the country help ensure that recreational boaters return home safely. We teach public education courses, conduct vessel safety checks, administer commercial fishing boat exams, distribute lifesaving boating information, and serve as ambassadors for maritime safety. These efforts save lives before emergencies occur.



Operations and Marine Safety: Readiness to Respond

The Auxiliary is a force multiplier for the U.S. Coast Guard, meaning we enhance the effectiveness, reach, and capabilities of Team Coast Guard. Auxiliarists trained as surface, air, and radio watchstanders serve alongside active-duty and reserve members. Conducting safety patrols, verifying aids to navigation, supporting search-and-rescue efforts, and protecting the environment are just some of the ways we support Coast Guard operations. We offer our boats, aircraft, communication systems, knowledge, skills, and time to help safeguard America’s waterways, protect the marine environment, and respond to those in need. With over 2.2 million Auxiliary service hours each year, our readiness to serve helps save 500 lives and 15,000 mariners in distress annually.

Member Services: Strengthening the Organization from Within

Behind every patrol, boating safety course, and public outreach effort is a network of Auxiliarists working to train, mentor, coach, and support one another. We apply our knowledge and skills as instructors, finance officers, materials and logistics managers, information services providers, public affairs specialists, and leaders at every level of the organization. Our training, learning, and growing together prepare the next generation of Auxiliarists to serve.



Fellowship: The Heart of Volunteer Service

Volunteering with purpose, fellowship is the spirit that unites us. The bonds we create during meetings, debriefs, mentorship, meals, and ceremonies bring members from all across the country together. Fellowship boosts morale, fuels teamwork, and builds friendships that can turn volunteers into family. Through awards, recognition, and appreciation of volunteer service, we continue to uplift each other while strengthening the Auxiliary.

As we celebrate the end of the first quarter of service, we honor every Auxiliarist who stood watch, taught boaters, mentored shipmates, maintained a facility, or was otherwise ready and available to serve. 🇺🇸

To America’s volunteer guardians, Semper Paratus is more than just a motto. It is who we are.



Partnership In Education (PIE): A Three-Decade Coast Guard Commitment to Student Success

By Barry Denton, ANACO-FCd, FORCECOM



A Legacy of Community Engagement

Since its inception in 1991, the U.S. Coast Guard's Partnership In Education (PIE) program has forged enduring collaborations among the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and educational institutions—from kindergarten classrooms to college campuses. Rooted in the federal commitment to community engagement, PIE was inspired by the National Year of Partnerships in Education (1983–84) and later supported by the National and Community Service Act of 1990 and 29 C.F.R. § 1614.

The PIE program mobilizes Coast Guard members to support academic achievement, promote civic responsibility, and expose students to various career opportunities—both within and beyond military service.

Hands-On Learning with Real-World Impact

At its core, PIE thrives on simple yet transformative actions. Volunteers from the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary nationwide engage in a wide range of school-based activities, including:

- Reading books to elementary school students
- Providing instructional support in STEM subjects
- Coaching youth sports teams
- Assisting in science fairs, robotics clubs, and school gardens
- Hosting interactive field trips to Coast Guard stations
- Organizing school-supply and coat drives

These efforts translate classroom concepts into tangible, real-world experiences, helping students understand how mathematics, science, leadership, and communication play essential roles in a wide range of careers.

Benefits for Students, Educators, and Volunteers

The PIE program benefits all participants. Students gain confidence, develop teamwork skills, and experience mentorship from positive role models. Educators receive valuable support for classroom enrichment, tutoring, and extracurricular activities. For Coast Guard and Auxiliary members, volunteering sharpens leadership, communication, and teaching skills while deepening their connection to the communities they serve.

As CAPT Nicole Rodriguez of Sector Houston-Galveston explains, *“By involving Coast Guard Auxiliary members in our Partnership in Education Program, we tap into a highly skilled and community rooted volunteer force. Their maritime experience, commitment to public service, and strong local ties make them ideal role models for promoting safety, STEM education, and Coast Guard values in schools and youth programs.”*

Collectively, these partnerships create stronger educational outcomes and foster a new generation of informed, inspired, and service-minded citizens.

A Nationwide Network of Support

PIE is implemented by hundreds of Coast Guard units across the country who oversee the program, each guided by local coordinators who ensure volunteer activities align with school needs and schedules. Participation is open to active-duty, reserve, auxiliary, civilian, and retired Coast Guard personnel—as well as their family members.

Recently, Glenn Colaco, an Auxiliarist from Heartland Coastal, Division 6, during the recent Sector Houston-Galveston Change of Command ceremony, was awarded the Auxiliary Commendation Medal by RADM David C. Barata (Heartland District Commander) and CAPT Keith M. Donohue (Sector Commander, Houston-Galveston). The award recognized his cumulative service to the Sector since June 2020, highlighting his involvement with the Partnership in Education (PIE) program and the Houston Science Fair. Auxiliarist Colaco had been involved in Sector PIE activities when he proposed the idea of forming a Special Awarding Agency (SAA) judging teams for the Science & Engineering Fair of Houston (SEFH), one of the largest science fairs in the country with over 950 students from grades 7–12. As a former SEFH participant and longtime volunteer judge along with his wife, he was inspired during the 2021 fair when he saw a team of doctors arrive in white lab coats, instantly capturing the attention of the students. He realized then that the Coast Guard could have a similar impact by arriving in uniform as a unified team. Working with the Sector PIE Coordinator, he launched a Coast Guard judging team that same year. Since then, the initiative has grown steadily, now involving five major units: Sector Houston-Galveston, AIRSTA Houston, MSU Texas City, Base Galveston, and MSST Houston.

Expanding to Meet Tomorrow's Needs

PIE's longevity is rooted in its adaptability. Activities are customized for the specific needs of each participating Coast Guard unit and its school community—whether that means teaching coding in city schools, promoting marine ecology in coastal towns, or mentoring in underserved rural districts.

In recent years, PIE has expanded its offerings to address evolving challenges, such as:

- Navigating digital learning tools
- Participating in cybersecurity workshops
- Promoting environmental sustainability
- Encouraging interest in emerging technologies

This forward-thinking approach ensures PIE remains relevant in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

Looking Ahead: Sustaining the Mission

As PIE enters its fourth decade, the Coast Guard remains committed to expanding the program's reach. Future goals include increased integration across the Coast Guard, Coast Guard Reserves, and Auxiliary as well as deeper collaboration with national education initiatives, strategic partnerships with STEM organizations, and a renewed focus on preparing students for careers in science, technology, engineering, and leadership.

From reading with first graders to mentoring high school robotics teams, PIE volunteers exemplify the Coast Guard's enduring commitment to education, service, and community. More than a program—it's a promise to help safeguard not only our nation's shores, but our shared future.

For schools and educators, getting involved is as easy as reaching out to a local Coast Guard unit. For broader program guidance or national coordination, those interested should contact Edward Stoker, the PIE National Program Manager, who can be reached at PIE@uscg.mil.



At the time of the photo:
Left: RADM David C. Barata - Heartland Commander
Glenn Colaco, DCDR Heartland Coastal District Division 6 (081-06)
Center: CAPT Keith M. Donohue - Sector Commander Houston-Galveston (now Ret.)
CAPT Nicole D. Rodriguez - Deputy Sector Commander Houston-Galveston (now Sector Commander)
Right: LT Izaak D. Toliver - USN Chaplain Corps, Chaplain Sector Houston-Galveston
Photo Credit: LTJG William H. McCown

Behind the Screens: An Auxiliarist's Role in Coast Guard Cybersecurity

By Lisa Repetto

"Cybersecurity is the practice of protecting your critical systems, data, and networks from digital attacks."

—Source: Microsoft (quoted by Scott Kostreba)

Auxiliarists in the Cyber Domain

Many Auxiliarists serve as vessel examiners, program visitors, culinary assistants, instructors, crew members, and more. In addition to these familiar missions, the Auxiliary also supports the U.S. Coast Guard mission in the cyber domain.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary Cybersecurity Directorate initiated the AUXCYBER program as a mission about 3 years ago. Their webpage tagline, "SECURE – PROTECT – DEFEND," could be appropriate for a military battalion, but it is clearly a virtual reference. Their website explains:

"We are responsible for a full spectrum of information and cybersecurity services within the Auxiliary. Our divisions are comprised of complementary branches staffed by Auxiliarists bringing significant professional experience from the public, private, and academic sectors."

Their mission is to proactively protect Coast Guard Auxiliary Information Technology (IT) assets, respond to cybersecurity incidents, deliver cybersecurity awareness and educational materials to Auxiliarists, and partner with the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Cyber Command to plan, staff, and execute cybersecurity support.



Meet Southeast District Auxiliarist Scott Kostreba

Auxiliary Cybersecurity Division Chief Scott Kostreba has been an active member of Clearwater, Florida Flotilla, since 2018, serving in both division and flotilla staff officer positions. He also served as Flotilla Vice Commander and is a certified Telecommunications Operator (TCO) and Vessel Examiner (VE). Scott served 4 years on active duty in the U.S. Coast Guard and grew up in Clearwater, Florida. In June 2025, Scott retired from his position as Senior Information Technologist for the Pinellas County, Florida, Sheriff's Office after 39 years of service.

How Kostreba Joined AUXCYBER

Given Kostreba's extensive background in cybersecurity, there was no formal mechanism to connect Kostreba to Auxiliary Cybersecurity. I asked him how he became aware of Auxiliary cybersecurity. His response:

"It was a phone conversation with [former Auxiliarist] Dick Erwin." During the phone call—as Scott explains—"Dick said, 'Hey, the Coast Guard really needs help with cybersecurity because they are now required to do cybersecurity audits and inspections. Would you be interested in going to Sector St. Petersburg and helping out?' Scott responded, 'Absolutely, I would love to do that!'"

Subsequently, Kostreba met Mike Pierno, a Coast Guard civilian Marine Transportation Security Specialist–Cybersecurity (MTSS-C), at Sector St. Petersburg, Fla., where a productive meeting between two former Coast Guard active-duty members took place, and the connection was instant. Soon after this meeting, Kostreba joined the team as an Auxiliary cybersecurity advisor, conducting cybersecurity inspections, reviewing security plans, discussing compliance at vendor facilities, and assisting with staff training. This directorate was a perfect fit for Scott, and he was soon appointed Branch Chief–Cybersecurity Prevention Operations (BC-YVO).

Roles and Responsibilities

Kostreba has several roles; locally, he serves as an Auxiliary cybersecurity advisor, and his responsibilities include:

"Reviewing Coast Guard security policies for compliance and providing advice on correctly adhering to these policies; providing answers on stakeholder audits (vendors and facilities); helping interpret and responding to audit instructions and responses. In conjunction with the MTSS-C, an Auxiliary cyber adviser can assist an IT specialist with cybersecurity as well."



Photo by Lisa Repetto,
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Recently, the Coast Guard enacted new cybersecurity requirements for port stakeholders (vendors and facilities), and the need to provide additional cyber support is skyrocketing. As Kostreba mentions: “Auxiliary cyber advisors are currently in 13 sectors around the country and growing rapidly.” In addition to Coast Guard and Auxiliary personnel, civilian contractors and other resources are used to meet Coast Guard cybersecurity requirements successfully.

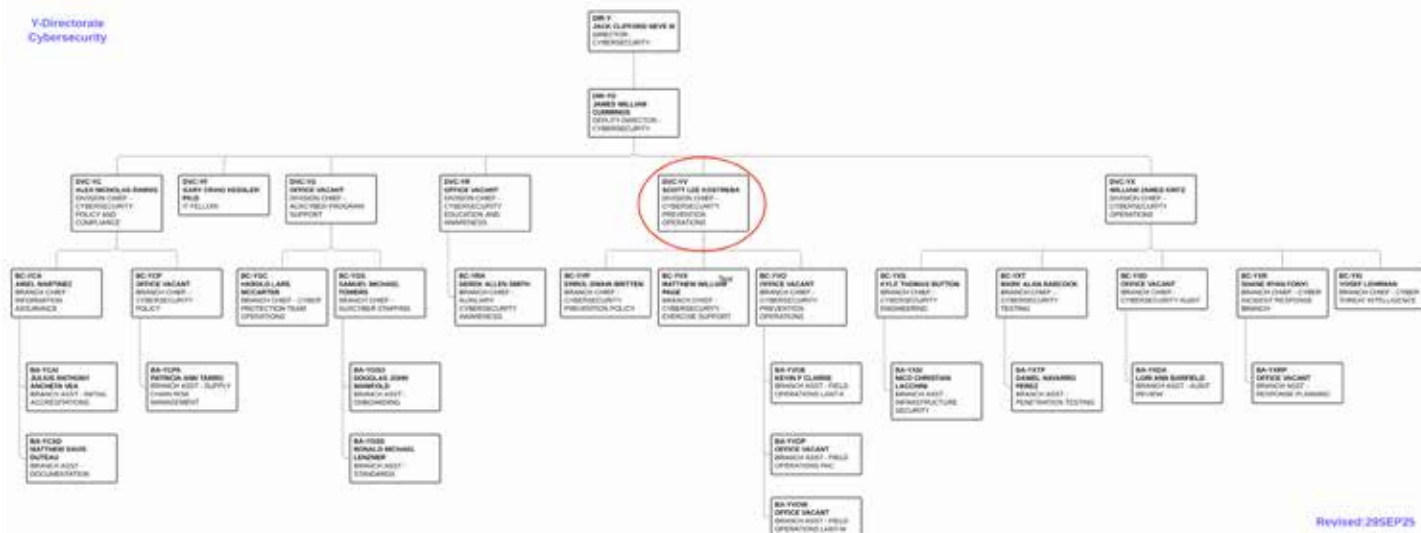


Photo by Lisa Repetto, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

National Leadership

Kostreba’s second role occurs at the national level. He recently accepted the position of Division Chief-Cybersecurity Prevention Operations for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Cybersecurity Directorate, previously serving as Branch Chief, Cybersecurity Field Operations. He oversees three branches: Cybersecurity Prevention Policy, Cybersecurity Exercise Support, and Cybersecurity Field Operations. Scott explains his main functions: “Provide leadership as part of the chain of leadership and help provide resources to the reporting branches, ensuring that they complete their assigned tasks.”

In addition, Kostreba also “works on the onboarding and recruiting process, matching up Auxiliary Cybersecurity Advisor candidates and Coast Guard sectors (MTSS-C) throughout the Coast Guard.” Cybersecurity positions require applicants to have a background in cybersecurity and a DOD cybersecurity certification. “Most cybersecurity advisors are referrals, and then you earn your stripes. Reputation is important for this activity area.” Kostreba added.



Revised: 29SEP25

Capturing Character: Portrait Techniques for the Auxiliary Photographer

by Tiffany Townsend, AUXPA2
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary photos by Robin Priestley

Portrait photography is a powerful tool that can seem challenging to master. A well composed portrait does more than just show a face; it conveys personality and purpose, supporting the story. Whether documenting a U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary instructor teaching a boating safety course, a coxswain on deck, or an elected leader in a moment of reflection, the camera can reveal who they are as much as what they do. For portraits meant for publication, the goal is to create images that are authentic, respectful, and impactful, engaging the audience to want to learn more.

One of the easiest ways to improve portrait photography is to use a medium telephoto lens in the 80-135mm range. Similar to a small telescope, magnification increases as focal length grows, helping isolate subjects to create close-up images that fill the frame while maintaining a comfortable distance. People tend to relax more when the camera isn’t too close to their faces, resulting in more natural expressions and posture.

Portraits can be either posed or candid, and the best photographers develop skill in both styles. Posed portraits allow control over background, lighting, angles, and composition. This control should be used thoughtfully, positioning subjects where the environment enhances the story without overwhelming it. Whether a portrait is taken at a marina, with an aircraft, or in a classroom, it should showcase the subject’s character, not look like a landscape with a person added as an afterthought. Simple backgrounds with natural light from a window or shaded outdoor areas can provide soft, flattering illumination.

Candid images require readiness and instinct, with the camera powered on, settings dialed in, and eyes trained and ready to capture that special moment when gesture, expression, and context align. Dockside preparations, patrol briefings, and training room exchanges can provide rich candid opportunities when you’re ready.

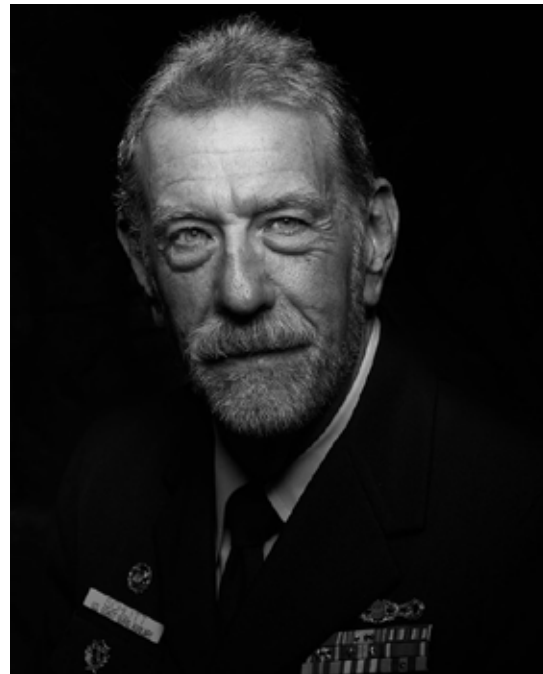
Expressions matter more than uniform items or backdrops. A portrait is more impactful when the viewer understands something about the person, not just their role. Building rapport with the subject is essential. Engaging in conversation, showing interest, and allowing subjects to participate in the process will make them feel more relaxed. People who are comfortable may offer feedback and shift into poses that feels natural to them. Your job is to observe, gently guide, and capture the moment when their identity becomes visible.

Lighting is crucial for high-quality portraits. Soft, diffused light smooths features, while side lighting adds shape and depth. Simple reflectors, whether store-bought or homemade from a white board or aluminum foil, can lift shadows and brighten the face. A traditional four-light studio setup (main, fill, background, and rim) provides control and a polished look, while an off-camera or bounce flash can mimic natural light and create textures that direct frontal flash cannot. Regardless of the technique used, keep the eyes sharp. A subtle catchlight from a reflector or bounce card adds sparkle and engagement, bringing the portrait to life.

Shoot generously. Taking multiple images allows time for nerves to relax, expressions to evolve, and variety to emerge. Portrait work is the art of patience and observation, waiting for the moment when a face tells a story. Every Auxiliarist has one worth sharing. The job of a public affairs specialist is to capture it while revealing their true character.



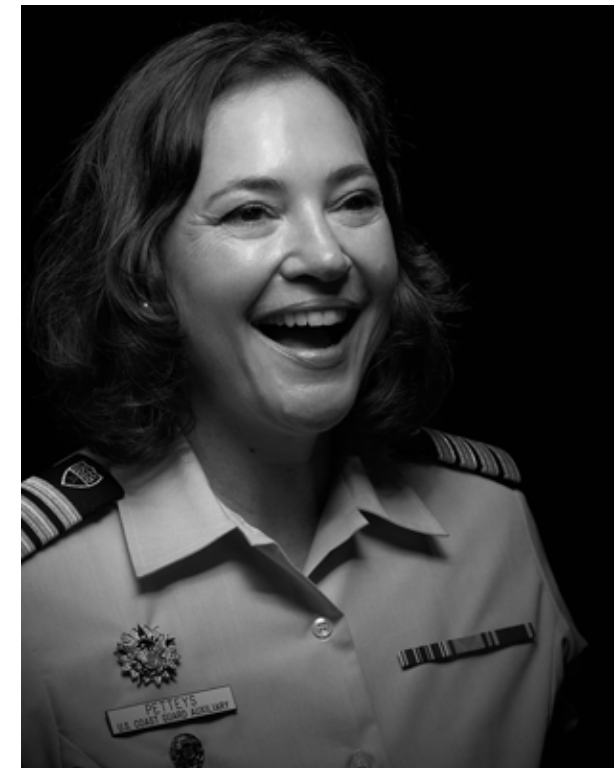
Selective focus and exposure direct the viewer's eye. In the left color image, the bright, sharply focused blouse distracts from the subject's face. In the middle image, the darker uniform and background draw attention to the face. The black-and-white portrait shows how recording only light and shadow enhances detail. Clear tonal separation and sharpness draw attention to the eyes as the natural point of focus.



With much of the frame in sharp focus in this color portrait, brightness guides the viewer's eye to the face, which stands out against the darker background. In the black-and-white version, a simple composition with light gradually fading into the shadows keeps attention where it matters. A handheld flashlight adds a crisp highlight and sparkle to the eyes, giving the portrait immediate impact.



This series demonstrates how moods evolve as comfort grows over the course of a long portrait session. In the color image, brightness, rather than focus, captures attention. Raising the light could shift the focus from the blouse to the face. The center black-and-white image illustrates the use of catch-lighting to draw attention to the eyes. Notice the difference in the eyes on the right when the flashlight is not used.



A portrait is most successful when the subject feels at ease. Humor can help dissolve tension. With trust established, authentic expressions emerge naturally. This moment of laughter is a reminder to pause, trust the process, and allow the subject's personality to shine.



Proper lighting is essential for portrait composition. Photographer Robin Priestley used this setup for black-and-white portraiture at the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary 2025 National Training Summit in Dallas, Texas, and shares insights for capturing the shot. Even small adjustments in angle or distance can significantly change the results.



The 22" hard reflector is the main and key light. The narrow grid prevents the light from spreading broadly and uncontrolled. This controls how deep the shadows are under the eyebrows

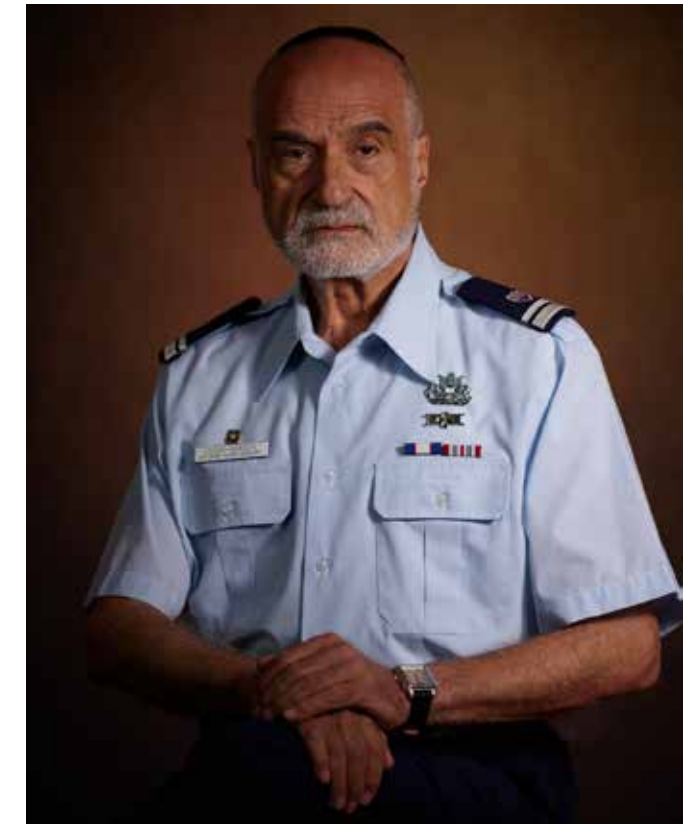
Robin's "retina-detaching 1000" flashlight is shined directly into the victim's eyes.

Depending on position, the curved "eyelighter" reflector can brighten the lower portion of the iris, or soften the scene.

The tripod mounted camera is focused and framed manually.



Moving the light closer and slightly spreading the reflector's focus softens the image. Increasing the light's apparent size produces gentler shadows and a flattering fade from the face into the shadows, without sharp transitions. Notice how the ribbons are slightly blurred with the limited depth of field. This shorter focal distance makes the subject stand out more.



A portrait should allow the face to tell its story. Here, the eyes convey the weight and experience of service, a depth captured by the image and presented for the viewer to interpret.



Click [HERE](#) for a video demonstrating the creative process of capturing the Auxiliary portrait on the left by Robin Priestley. The dramatic, clean, and eye-catching portrait on the right shows how lighting, composition, and focus all draw attention to the face and eyes. A slight turn of the head avoids the common distraction of a cover appearing slightly off-center when viewed head-on.



Tiffany Townsend is a physician anesthesiologist, Division Vice Commander in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Communications Division Chief for the Auxiliary Emergency Management and Disaster Response Directorate. She looks forward to an Auxiliary portrait session with her photography mentor, Robin Priestley.

Robin Priestley is a U.S. Navy veteran and has been a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary for nearly 30 years. As a child, Robin loved his father's Kodachrome 64 slide shows. Discovering the art and science of photography in seventh grade in his school's darkroom ignited a lifelong passion for the visual arts.



Learn more about photography and lighting techniques with the online course: [AUX-26 - Introduction to Digital Photography.](#)

Taking the mystery out of the magic of photography...

Choosing the Best Focal Lengths For Portraits

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary photos by Robin Priestley

With the advancing technologies in today's cellphones, there is no doubt that the most often used cameras are mobile phones. As the saying goes, the most valuable camera you have is the one that is with you.

When folks look to get "more professional" with their photography they often turn to cameras with interchangeable lenses. But which lenses to buy? Here is a guide to help you navigate the choices to consider if you want to improve your portraits.

One of the easiest ways to improve portrait photography is to use a medium telephoto lens in the 80-135mm range. Similar to a small telescope, magnification increases as focal length grows, helping isolate subjects to create close-up images that fill the frame while maintaining a comfortable distance. People tend to relax more when the camera isn't too close to their faces, resulting in more natural expressions and posture.



Extreme Wide (exaggerates perspective)

Even a fisheye lens can be used in environmental portraiture. Distortion can work for you

Wide angles are popular in street photography and the "wide normal" 35mm lens can work quite well when distances between subject components are managed. Note the size of the sleeve closest to the lens.



Wide/Normal



Normal

The 50mm lens (equivalent in full size 35mm film and digital camera) is generally considered to match the human eye's perspective.

The 50mm cannot compress facial features, yet it is quite pleasing and similar to a 75mm at f16.

The 75 mm image "stopped down" to f16 softened the flags a bit.

You can predict the magic a lens can bring to your work using an MTF chart.

Modulation Transfer Function or "MTF" measures optical performance. Reading the chart provides valuable insight prior to buying a lens.



Medium Telephoto (ideal for portraits)



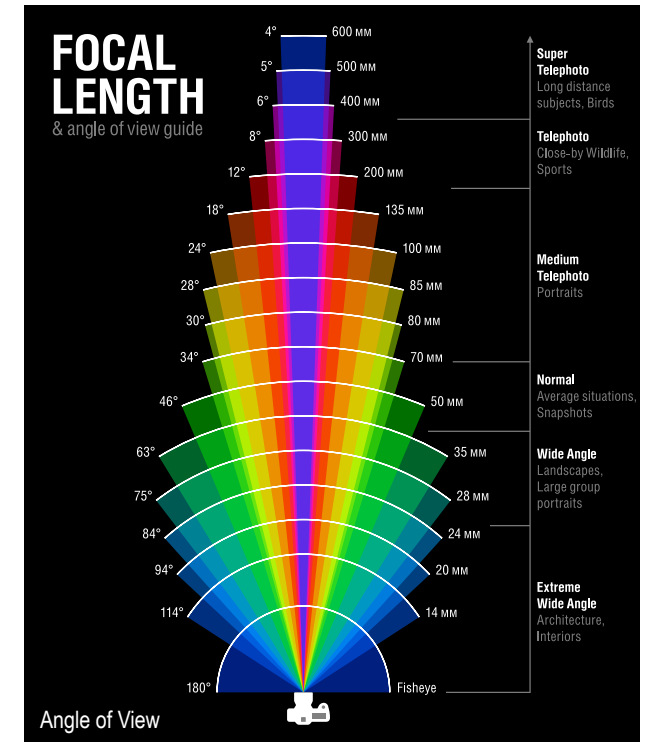
Medium Telephoto (preferred for portraits)



Medium Telephoto (ideal for portraits)



Telephoto (suitable for portraits)



Lens Performance Charts

Helping 1 in 7 members of our Coast Guard community each year



That's the Power of CGMA



For more than 100 years, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) has provided aid to members of the U.S. Coast Guard community. Whether it's disaster relief, rental assistance, uniform replacement or education support, we unite as one to serve many. Since we're 100% funded by donations, your support is critical to helping our members in need.

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"We had 43 inches of water [in my house] ... I cannot thank CGMA ... enough for their support. I've never felt more taken care of in my life."

LT JOE RIZZARDI, CGC RESOLUTE



Superbase Charleston



Building a Superbase... Ways for Auxiliarists to contribute abound

By William Garvey, AUXPA3, East Cooper Flotilla



Each wanted what the other had, and without which, neither could move forward with plans they regarded as critical to their respective futures. The division between the two was clear, mostly straight and even paved, and named Bainbridge Avenue.

Where? A main road on the former U.S. Navy shipyard in North Charleston, South Carolina, ran through land on the north side that belonged to the State Ports Authority (SPA). In contrast, the acreage on the south side was controlled by the U.S. Coast Guard/Department of Homeland Security. The SPA sought to create a rail yard for transferring large shipping containers between a new maritime terminal and the rail line. As for the Coast Guard, it wanted

The U.S. Coast Guard Base Charleston, South Carolina Piers Papa, November and Mike (left to right) showing work in November 2025, well advanced. Drone photo by USCG Base Charleston.

to expand its facilities and homeport for the forthcoming Legend-class National Security Cutters (NSCs).

The problem? The new container ship terminal was to the south of Bainbridge and the Cooper River waterfront, and former USN piers were to the north.

But rather than scheme, threaten, cajole, or overwhelm with political and fiscal allies, the two sides met, talked, and ultimately agreed to exchange their respective land holdings. The results of that symbiotic super swap five years ago are looking to be spectacular.



The new \$400 million rail yard—a first for the Charleston port—is set to open next year and promises to facilitate freight movement throughout the southeast while easing the city’s heavy road traffic.

The Base Consolidated Administration Facility, now under construction, is expected to welcome staff and visitors by the end of 2026. Artist’s rendering by RQ-AECOM JV, a contractor.

As for the Coast Guard, it is constructing an all-new complex on a cleared 64-acre parcel abutting the Cooper River while simultaneously rebuilding the first of several former Navy piers. Once completed, those 1,190-foot-long concrete and steel quays could ultimately serve ten or more large cutters, with the first four NSCs already homeported in Charleston. The reconstructed Pier November (N) is slated to begin welcoming cutters by late 2026, with work on Pier Mike (M), which formerly serviced submarines, to follow. Reconstruction of the service’s 1940s-vintage Pier Papa (P) is likely but not yet scheduled.



Mayor Reggie Burgess of the City of North Charleston, addresses the audience during a Coast Guard groundbreaking ceremony for a new Base Charleston campus in North Charleston, South Carolina, Jan. 26, 2024. The 64-acre campus along the Cooper River will support the five Charleston-based national security cutters, their crews, and the support personnel. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Moreno.

Meanwhile, construction of an all-new Base Consolidated administration building is well underway and set to accommodate staff and visitors by late 2026 as well. The 51,100-square-foot facility—to be named in honor of retired Gunner’s Mate First Class Willis Goff, a Vietnam combat veteran, Silver Star recipient, and South Carolina native—will provide secure spaces for admin support, fisheries training, a CGX Mini Mart, and cutter support. And that’s just for starters. The next building phase will include a medical facility, dental clinic, an electrical substation, site and road work, plus access and control, and physical security. That work is expected to be contracted next spring. And there’s yet more.

Planned are an Unaccompanied Personnel Housing facility, an accompanying galley and exercise space, an engineering complex for maintaining the assets on the waterfront, plus storage, shipping and receiving facilities, and additional vehicle parking. And once its rework is completed, Pier Mike (M) could become home to as many as five Offshore Patrol Cutters (OPC), with the first arriving about five years from now. “Base Charleston has grown steadily since its establishment in 2015,” says Captain Eric Jones, the complex’s commanding officer. He explained that Charleston was designated a base because of



Craig Rayner, Vice President of Whiting-Turner, left, George Rogers, President and CEO of RQ Construction, Capt. Neal Armstrong, Facilities Design and Construction Center commanding officer, Capt. Eric Jones, commander of Coast Guard Base Charleston, Mayor Reggie Burgess, City of North Charleston, Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant of the Coast Guard (at the time), Master Chief Heath Jones, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Rear Adm. Laura Dickey, Deputy for Materiel Readiness, Rear Adm. Carola List, commander of Operational Logistics Command, Rear Adm. Douglas Schofield, commander of Coast Guard District Seven, break ground during a Coast Guard groundbreaking ceremony for a new Base Charleston campus in North Charleston, South Carolina, Jan. 26, 2024. The 64-acre campus along the Cooper River will support the five Charleston-based national security cutters, their crews, and the support personnel. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Moreno)



Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant of the Coast Guard (at the time), and Capt. Eric Jones, commander of Coast Guard Base Charleston, address the audience during a Coast Guard groundbreaking ceremony for a new Base Charleston campus in North Charleston, South Carolina, Jan. 26, 2024. Growth estimates show that the Coast Guard workforce will double in the Charleston area by 2030. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Moreno.

the high concentration of Coast Guard personnel and resources in the region. The designation allows the service to consolidate and support Coast Guard operations and the increasing demand for services both locally and regionally. The decision was further supported by plans to homeport more major cutters and related operational logistics functions there in the future.

But what has evolved is something much broader. Base Charleston is now home to a variety of tenant commands including Sector Charleston, Station Charleston, the Maritime Law Enforcement Academy, the Southeast Regional Fisheries Training Center, the Office of Chief Prosecutor, Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) Charleston and NSCs JAMES, HAMILTON, STONE, KINGFISHER, and CALHOUN, as well as construction and buoy tenders ANVIL and WILLOW, respectively. The base has



Capt. Eric Jones, commander of Coast Guard Base Charleston, addresses the audience during a Coast Guard groundbreaking ceremony for a new Base Charleston campus in North Charleston, South Carolina, Jan. 26, 2024. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Moreno.

two sites, one downtown on Charleston Harbor and another at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, which is adjacent to the third new campus now under construction.

The service currently has approximately 1,300 active duty and civilian personnel in the Charleston area. Still, that figure is expected to double over the next five to ten years as its staffing and count of homeported cutters grow.

Indeed, Charleston has been forecast to become an operational “center of gravity” for the service. Since it will be the only base able to support up to ten major cutters, it will be the Coast Guard’s largest homeport. And, according to CAPT Jones, those newcomers assigned to Charleston will be super pleased.

“The people here love it and love working here,” he says, adding “the support we receive from the Charleston area community is tremendous,” a fact underscored by Charleston’s tri-county recent designation as an official Coast Guard community. And Jones adds that the new facilities coming online will “make this locale even more desirable.”

As more active-duty members and their families move to Charleston, as the cutter count grows, and as commands there expand, Jones agrees that the opportunities for and the welcome of Auxiliary support increase as well.

Currently, Auxiliarists assist Charleston and Southeast District operations and personnel in numerous ways. These include service as ombudsmen, culinary

assistants, gangway officers of the watch, event ushers, contractor monitors, air crews on active Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) searches and intercept exercises, boat crews ensuring vessel safety at public events, and more. And this is in addition to the regular on-water and air patrols, public safe boating education, vessel inspections, and program visitor roles with which the Auxiliary is so closely identified.

John Swink, Charleston-based commander of Auxiliary Southeast’s Division 12, says the evolution of the “superbase” is a special call to action and a chance for area Auxiliarists to apply their broad range of skills and knowledge, as well as their time, to helping the Gold Side accomplish its varied and critical missions.

“By Auxiliarists stepping in as relief,” Swink notes, “active-duty members can focus on their critical tasks and, hopefully, get home a bit earlier to spend more quality time with their families.”

And that’s a simple but sensible swap by every measure. 🇺🇸



USCGC Argus (WMSM-915), Heritage Class Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC), artist rendering, image credit: Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG).



Forgotten Aviation History Discovered

By Joseph Feldman, AUXPA3 & Matthew Thompson, AUXPA1

Rediscovering History

Tucked away in cabinets and closets at Coast Guard Air Station Miami was a collection of photographs and videos that the world seemed to have forgotten. That was, until Auxiliariest Joseph Feldman decided to open that first cabinet in October of 2023. What he found jumpstarted a history project that has now entered its third year in researching and sharing Air Station Miami's visual history. This find is also considered to be one of the most significant discoveries in Coast Guard aviation history with many images and videos never seen before or thought lost to time.

Feldman was invited to become Air Station Miami's Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist in 2020 and took on the role of content creator and social media manager with their External Affairs Department. Since then, he has sought out historic images of the unit and of Coast Guard aviation to add to the content he publishes for the unit. With the discovery of this archive, Feldman had exactly what he needed to start this project: negatives, prints, VHS and cassette tapes... some images capturing significant events like their 1985 H-52 to H-65 transition and some going all the way back to the units commissioning in 1932. In addition to the archival footage, Feldman found the unit's 1982 film camera and a large cache of expired film and dozens of rolls waiting to be developed. With the help of the air station's MH-65 maintenance shop, he restored it to working order and started delving into film photography.

MIAMI – All four types of aircraft flying in formation from AIRSTA Miami, circa early 1990s. From left to right: Schweizer RG8, CASA-212, Eurocopter HH-65A, Dassault HU-25 Guardian. This now restored photo was found in the Command Master Chief's office among over 1,000 prints, negatives, and slides. AIRSTA Miami Archives.

Air Station Miami is currently the only unit regularly shooting and posting film photography in addition to digital, capitalizing on a social media trend of shooting expired film and a resurgence in film photography in general.

Subsequent discoveries in 2024 in various locations on base netted over a thousand more photographs as well as hundreds of video tapes, cassettes, and DVDs of cases and events involving the unit. He even found flight manuals, uniform items and artifacts on display in other locations on base. The question now was how to preserve the historic footage for future generations of Coasties? Using connections with the Coast Guard Foundation and Coast Guard Aviation Association, Mr. Feldman researched and coordinated the funding and preservation of this historic archive with tools that the air station acquired and outsourced portions requiring professional level handling with local photography and videography business partners. This careful coordination enabled the unit to recover footage previously thought too far gone to save, thus preserving important events and images for many years to come.

Just when Mr. Feldman thought he was done with one portion of the project, he came across online resources that yielded even more historic footage. The National Archives provided historic footage of the unit dating as far back as 1935 and even found videos of their first flying lifeboats being test flown in 1931. Just when he completed his research in that archive, he came across the archive run by Miami Dade College. Working closely with their archivist, this repository of news videos, home films and other collections has yielded over 70 years of video from every decade of operation from 1951 to the present and they have graciously allowed the unit to share this history with the public.

Feldman has also located and acquired historic images and videos across various websites and platforms that include images of rare aircraft that the Coast Guard has very little footage of, as well as located artifacts from movies the unit appeared in, such as two 007 James Bond films: Thunderball starring Sean Connery and License to Kill starring Timothy Dalton.

Feldman states that sharing the photos and videos has reunited former shipmates with each other and with families, which has been extremely heartwarming and that his posts have even facilitated artifact donation to the unit from veterans that include images, videos, flight gear and historic documents. His most prized artifact is a flight helmet donated by a retired flight mechanic that the unit has preserved for display. He also states that the friendships with veterans he has connected with have been some of the most meaningful ones he has formed while working on this project.



MIAMI – United States Coast Guard flying boats ACAMAR, Amphibian SIRIUS, and flying boat ARCTURUS, from the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Miami, flying in formation over the USCGC Pandora (WPC-113), a recently commissioned Thetis-Class Cutter, in December 1934. U.S. Coast Guard photo.



MIAMI – Auxiliariest Joseph Feldman, AUXPA3, catalogs lost aviation photos that were found in 2023 inside a forgotten cabinet at the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Miami. U.S. Coast Guard photo.



Mr. Feldman's favorite phrase during this project is "History is all around you, you just need to know where to look." He found this photo of the Air Station Miami H-52 Seaguard final flight hanging in the old Chief's Mess in the Galley building during lunch one day. USCG Photo, unknown photographer.



MIAMI – June, 1951, AIRSTA Miami's first helicopter, a Bell HTL-1 seen here hovering over the Everglades responding to an aircraft crash. U.S. Navy photo.



MIAMI – Two U.S. Coast Guard Grumman UF-1G Albatrosses. The lead aircraft is sporting an experimental livery (orange and white paint scheme), flying in formation over Miami in October 22, 1958. With permission, Miami Herald photo.



MIAMI – A Eurocopter HH-65A Dolphin sits on the ramp at the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Miami with an older Sikorsky H-52 Seaguard amphibious helicopter parked in the background. The new Dolphins replaced the older Seaguards at Air Station Miami in 1985. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

MIAMI – Coast Guard Auxiliary Joseph Feldman, AUXPA3, holding a 1950s framed photo of a U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Miami Grumman HU-16 Albatross seaplane taking off from the water with a visible plume of exhaust from Jet Assisted Take Off (JATO) rockets. U.S. Coast Guard photo.



At this point, you might ask what the plan is with all these artifacts and images. Feldman, now the designated unit historian, states he has shared historic images with the Coast Guard Museum for display, and the current goal of the unit is to put these artifacts on display locally.

Most recently, in coordination with his department head, Lieutenant Commander Bryce Monaco and the new commanding officer, Captain Aaron Ortensio, they identified a hallway frequently travelled by visitors in the Operations Building as a prime location to start construction of the unit museum. The unit acquired its first display case in November and Feldman quickly filled it with various artifacts, models and images of the unit's 93-year history. Feldman states his favorite portion is the "James Bond corner" that has foreign lobby cards, film transparencies, and trading cards from the movies. Feldman also cleverly utilized a digital picture frame that he programmed to share videos and photos while they wait for additional display cabinets to be constructed. The goal now is to create a chronological display through the decades with artifacts and images.

Feldman states that he has no plans to stop his research and recently discovered another archive with videos of the unit in the 1930s. He has obtained copies of those videos, as well as contacted the USCG Historian's Office, the Coast Guard Museum, and other archives to see if they have artifacts or footage, they could loan to the unit to put on display.

With the unit's centennial in 2032 as his long-term goal, Feldman is confident that he has gotten a sufficient head start on preparing for the commemoration. 🇺🇸

You can see historic images and videos posted weekly on the Air Station Miami Facebook and Instagram pages.



MIAMI – 1965, AIRSTA Miami's first turbine-powered helicopter, a Sikorsky HH-52A, at the station's former location on Dinner Key. Photo by LT. Weems, USCG, donated by his family.

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COVER



**NOAA Corps
LTJG Amber Porter**
Pilots a Typhoon UAS (Drone) while training with Sector St. Petersburg Incident Management Division (IMD). Photo: LTJG Whip Blacklaw, USCG. Photocomposite: K.C. Murphy, Branch Chief, Publications

BACK COVER



Admiral Kevin E. Lunday, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard aboard a Coast Guard Auxiliary Facility while attending the 2025 Coast Guard Festival, Grand Haven, Michigan. Photo: Dean Christy, AUXPA3.



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