



USCG Auxiliary District 11 North Surface Operations Update November 2020



Virginia Luchetti – DSO-OP

District Staff Officer – Surface Operations 2021

I have really enjoyed serving as the D11N SO-OP. I'm delighted to announce our 2021 DSO-OP Commodore Wally Smith! Please welcome Commodore Smith as our 2021 District Staff Officer for Surface Operations 2021!!!

Phase II Reconstitution Plan

It is likely that some surface operations will be able to occur assuming all necessary guidelines are followed and required approvals received. Remember to have PPE inspected prior to going on patrol.

2021 OPTREX Calendar

We will begin work on the OPTREX Calendar for 2021. Please email possible dates to DSO-OP.



Thank you to our Operational Training Officer, BOSN2 Dustin Finkleson, QE Paul Verveniotis, ADSOs Michael Brown, Gary Kaplan and John Hardin for your monthly contributions to the D11N Surface Ops Report.

Boat Crew and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Information from our District PPE Manager, Michael Brown

Shipmates, as we begin to venture back out on the water, please make sure your gear has been inspected prior to going underway. Defects and other issues may have cropped up in our long hiatus, so double-check everything, make sure your gear still fits, and review your crew duties as laid-out in the BCREW manual. I will be back at DIRAUX weekly starting 18NOV to process the PPE orders. Please make arrangements with me via email on when/how to pick up any item, as most Auxiliary members are still restricted from CGI.

Paul's Tips

Navigation and Safety Reminders from Qualification Examiner Paul Verveniotis

Paul is taking a break this month.

Bravo-Zulu to Paul for all of the excellent “how-to” articles he provided this year!!



Cutterman's Corner

Helpful Tips from Gary Kaplan

Coast Guard Auxiliary Cutterman

Boat Crew Academy Instructor

District 11 NR Assistant Staff Officer - Operations (Training)



Just What Are Operations Anyhow?

Recently, while thinking about how to present surface operations to Auxiliarists who are not operational, I was confronted with the problem of defining just what operations are. It first seemed like an easy enough task, but further thinking led me to the realization that it would not be so easy. Sure, operations is going out on patrol, under Coast Guard orders, and undertaking a variety of missions. Sometimes we just motor or sail around on a marine observation mission, a MOM.

Sometimes we secure a perimeter around a safety zone, a safety mission. Sometimes we are directed to locate a vessel in distress, a SAR mission. Sometimes we work with helicopter crews on Coast Guard support missions. And sometimes we work with or our own trainees or other Auxiliary facilities and crews, on training missions.

The short answer is that surface operations entails operating under orders and doing a variety of things. While we who are involved in surface operations have a pretty good idea of what we do, it is too vague to give a decent understanding to those who do not do it, and may not be sufficient enough to entice them to want to become involved in operations. A more complete explanation was in order.

Turning to the internet, I found that there was enough information at my fingertips to construct a bigger picture view of what we do and how it fits into the larger scheme of operations. What follows is a brief overview of operations that provided me with a fuller understanding of operations. I hope it will do the same for you, and I hope it will provide a fuller understanding, and perhaps entice other Auxiliarists to get involved in surface operations.

I first turned to dictionaries to get an idea of how they defined the term operations. The following is a good sampling of what they had to say.

Operations Defined

A military or naval action, campaign, or mission.

An action, mission, or maneuver including its planning and execution

A naval action (or the performance of a naval mission) that may be strategic, operational, tactical, logistic, or training.

The process of carrying on or training for naval combat in order to gain the objectives of any battle or campaign.

This led to a look at the different kinds of operations.

Strategic Operations are big picture operations. The invasion of Normandy during World War II was a strategic operation.

Tactical Operations are the smaller parts which make up a strategic operation. Getting the troops to the Normandy beaches from the troop ships was a tactical operation. BTW, it was Coastguardsmen who drove the landing craft since the navy recognized them as better small boat handlers.

Logistical Operations are operations that support other operations or missions, for example making sure that the required materials are available for use.

Training Operations are operations undertaken for training purposes.

Operational Operations is loosely defined as any operation that supports another operation.

The primary mission of the Coast Guard Auxiliary is to support the Coast Guard in its missions, and we in surface operations do just that, taking a significant load off their shoulders. While we are operating under orders, we are considered Coast Guard, not Coast Guard Auxiliary, and our facilities are considered Coast Guard Facilities, not Coast Guard Auxiliary facilities.

Here's hoping that we are back in operation soon and enjoying doing what we do.

News from the Field

From ADSO-OP and SO-OP Division 3 John Hardin:

Power Distance?

If you haven't heard of the term "Power Distance", join the "club". I recently encountered it while reading a report of the P/V NIPPON MARU striking a U.S. Navy fuel dock in Apra Harbor, Guam. Power Distance, as explained in this report, exists when there is a large gap in the level of authority or experience between crewmembers.

The effects of Power Distance are twofold. First, ignoring, downplaying or ridiculing the input of a junior crewmember deprives the senior crewmember of critical information the junior crew may have. Second, Power Distance can discourage or intimidate junior crew from even attempting to provide essential information necessary for the safe completion of the mission. Say "goodbye" to RM2 and to an enjoyable patrol.

In the case of the NIPPON MARU mishap, the master insisted on placing the thruster in reverse over numerous objections and physical interventions of the very much junior third officer. Making matters worse, the master may have been under the influence of alcohol. As a result, the 550' vessel backed into the Navy fuel dock causing over a million dollars in damages and punching a hole in the stern of the NIPPON MARU. Fortunately, there were no injuries.

Read more about this mishap at

<https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/alcohol-and-power-distance-led-to-nippon-maru-allision>

On recreational vessels, a related form of Power Distance exists when a dominant spouse simply ignores critical input from the other spouse. Spousal Power Distance mishaps I have witnessed include attempting to get underway with mooring lines or power cords attached and delayed responses to repeated spousal warnings of flooding and fires.

No one knows everything, but everybody knows something.

As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome.

Happy patrolling soon.

Reminders from our Operational Training Officer

Now that we are in Phase II of the reopening process, we can conduct facility inspections. Please see the attached instructions to help you through the new process.

A few reminders about training for Boat Crew and Coxswains. The reference material for Boat Crew and Coxswain training is the set of 5 handbooks.

Here is a list of the 5 handbooks. Use this link to access the handbooks:

<http://www.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=R-DEPT&category=divisions>

Log in with your member ID and password. Click on Surface Documents (in the Response Directorate). Scroll down to the handbooks.

Do not use the out-of-date Boat Crew Training Manual.

- 1 – Boat Operations
- 2 – Rescue and Survival
- 3 – Navigation and Piloting
- 4 – Seamanship Fundamentals
- 5 – First Aid

There have been some questions about the proper way to make a working turn on a cleat.

This is from Handbook 4, page 2-55 – Seamanship Fundamentals.

D.2.e. Securing a Line to a Cleat

The following procedures describe how to secure a line to a cleat when mooring:

Step Procedure

1. Make a complete turn around the cleat.
2. Lead the line over the top of the cleat and around the horn to form a figure eight.
3. Make two or more additional figure eights to secure the line.



End of Report