



**USCG Auxiliary District 11 North - Surface Operations Report  
July 2022**

To: COMO Dean McFarren, District Commodore  
 Curtis Han, District Chief of Staff  
 District 11 North Board & Staff  
 From: COMO Wally Smith, District Staff Officer – Operations (DSO-OP)

This report covers D11N surface activities for the month of June.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

1. Check Ride Due Dates – Updated
2. OPTREX Calendar
3. OPTREX Planning
4. “MiniOPTEXs” will be approved on a case-by-case basis only.
5. ‘QE Corner’ reviews committing Auxiliary facilities to events.

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**DETAILS**

1. With several ALAUXs issued over the past many months concerning check ride due dates, we requested clarification of check ride due dates. The OTO from D11S, BOSN Jared Esselman, consulted with BSX and learned that boat crew and coxswains that last qualified in 2017, 2018, or 2019 are due for check rides this year. This came as a surprise to many as we had “assumed” incorrectly that those who last qualified in 2017 & 2018 would be due this year and those who last qualified in 2019 would be due in 2023. As of 30 June 2022, the number of members due for check rides this year stands at 124 not including initial qualifiers. Of this number, 49 are in REYR / REWK status and may not be seeking requalification. Please the “QE Checkride Due Dates Report” as of 25 June posted on the Response / Surface page on the District website.

2. Upcoming OPTREXs currently listed on the District Calendar are below:

**OPTREX CALENDAR - 2022**

<u>Division</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	CG Station San Francisco	16 July
12	Marina Bay YC, Richmond	22-23 July
5	CG STA Vallejo	29-30 July
7	Jordanelle Reservoir	5-6 August
6	Santa Cruz	09-10 September
10	Millerton Lake	24-25 September



With the developments described in Item 1, it will be incumbent on all of us to accommodate as many candidates as possible. This may include not qualifying candidates this year if they are not due for a check ride ... at this time, there are zero requalifiers due in 2023 (no one qualified in 2020). Support will be needed from all quarters including facility owners ... more vessels may be needed to successfully host an OPTREX. If a Division has not already done so, it is recommended to reserve a date on the District Calendar if you are planning to hold an OPTREX in 2022.

3. We are in the “OPTREX Season”! Please contact our Chief QE Coordinator COMO Angelo Perata at least 30 days in advance ... more advanced notice is preferable ... and let him know how many candidates are expected, the dates QEs will be needed, and the venue. This information will provide for adequate staffing of QEs. Also, please be sure that all candidates are fully vetted prior to an attempt to qualify; this is the responsibility of the Flotilla Commander.

4. Revised Item: While we were hamstrung during the pandemic with severe surface operations restrictions, “miniOPTREXs” were a great way to get a few members certified or recertified in the boat crew program. At the Qualification Examiner (QE) meeting at D-TRAIN, this topic received a good amount of attention. It was agreed that miniOPTREXs would be approved only on a case-by-case basis and only for ‘good cause’ e.g., a new facility owner needs coxswain qualification, or there is a crew shortage in a particular area and a couple of check rides are necessary to get facilities underway. Well, we now have ‘good cause’ to schedule not only additional OPTREXs but also mini-OPTREXs as opportunities are presented to requalify a few crew or coxswains ... it doesn’t take a lot ... a couple of boats, legal crew, and a QE or two. Also keep in mind that 31 December is the cut-off date for requalification but also be advised that planning for an event in early October is “iffy” due to the Federal fiscal year ending on 30 September, and then Fleet Week, and then Changes of Watch begin, and so does deteriorating weather!

QE Corner

5. The Qualification Examiner Corner (Q.E. Corner) contains various tips on best practices that will be featured monthly (hopefully). Please send me your best tips / suggestions for an on-the-water evolution and ... maybe ... your write-up will show up here.

**Committing Auxiliary Assets** (Written by Terry Blanchard with minor edits by DSO-OP)

The relevant group in this is Sector, not DIRAUX or the OTO. Auxiliarists make this mistake from time to time and it is a serious one and the Aux doesn't do enough to make sure every member, not just coxswains or boat crew, understand what is at stake here. No one in the Aux has the authority to commit CG/Aux assets for any purpose. We are reimbursed with taxpayer



funds and also have liability coverage when on an authorized mission. Only a duly authorized member of the CG can authorize commitment of government funds.

An example: A fireworks sponsor in Sausalito should have filed a Marine Event Permit Request with the appropriate department at Sector. When filling out the request there is a question about requesting CG assets (which would include any Aux assets). Sector decides if the event is something they want to support, with CG assets, Aux assets or both, and if so, they should pass the word to most likely LT Kenney, our OIA, or possibly LTJG Connell, our AUXLO. They could then pass that to Sue Fry, our ASC, who would usually reach out to me (Terry Blanchard as he coordinates facilities on the SF Bay), or they might copy Sue and ask me to find an asset. If the sponsor had contacted an Auxiliarist (you) first, they could remind them of the correct process, but they could also tell Sue or me and you would most likely be the one assigned after it is approved. Hopefully, Sausalito filed a request and maybe our AUXLOs could have checked to see if they asked for CG help. If they didn't file a permit request or didn't ask for CG help, then they might have a problem. The AUXLOs would deal with either of those situations. If a permit request is on file, but they didn't ask for CG/Aux assistance, I suppose Sector could still authorize you to help out, but it would be up to them.

I will make a further comment for the Aux. This can be embarrassing at times. Over the years, there were times when an Aux member who belonged to a yacht club, a rowing or swim club, a Scout organization, or another charitable group, wanted to conduct some water event. The Aux member wanting to help out, or sometimes just act important, would commit Aux resources (and sometimes CG assets), often boats, but it could be something else, to assist in some event. No marine event permit request would be submitted. The area coordinator would then hear about this situation and have to go back and say they couldn't do that. The member would then look like a fool when they said help would not be forthcoming as by then it was too late to go through the permit process. Understanding how this works I think should be something mentioned in the annual Ops Workshop for boat crew, and maybe made known to those not in the boat crew program via some other means. Maybe a mention that should be put in all annual workshops or in the BQ training process.

*Note from DSO-OP – Thank you Terry!*

## Division Reports

### **Division 1**

From Nancy Marion, SO-OP

### **Highlights**

1. Annual Operations Workshop Provided by Flt 01-04
2. Division 1 OPTREX Planning Update
3. On the Water Operations Activities Update



## Details

1. **Annual Operations Workshop Provided by Flt 01-04:** With the Annual Ops Workshop completion deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, we were fortunate to have the class offered by COMO Mary Kirkwood during Flotilla 01-04s regular meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The Class was presented during a hybrid meeting, with participants from several Flotillas attending.
2. **Division 1 OPTREX Planning Update:** By the Registration deadline we had received requests from eleven Members for Training rides on June 9<sup>th</sup>, and ten Member Vetting Forms for QE Check Rides have been received for the July 16th component. The QE Request Form with Vetting Information for all Check Ride Registrants was submitted to Head QE COMO Perata more than 30 days in advance of the event.

We have four OPFAC's committed to provide event support for the Div-1 OPTREX:

- SEAHORSE, Coxswain Peter Shamray
- SILVER CHARM, Coxswain Terry Blanchard
- "76", Coxswain Bruce Martin
- SERVANT-Subject to Completion of Repairs

SO-CM Carol Paz has reserved the ACV (Auxiliary Communications Vehicle) to provide OPCOM for our OPFAC's and TCO/COMs training for both days.

3. **On the Water Operations Activities Update:** Cox Terry Blanchard on OPFAC SILVER CHARM participated in the Annual Alcatraz Swim event on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Following completion of the Swim, OPFAC SILVER CHARM rendezvoused with Coxswain Tommy Holtzman on his OPFAC to conduct towing evolutions.

OPFAC SILVER CHARM will be participating in both Division 1's OPTREX on July 9 and 16<sup>th</sup>, and the Division 10 OPTREX on July 22-23.

## Goals:

- Rotating members into training patrols for OPTREX preparation and building underway hours.
- Providing training opportunities for our current crew members and initial qualification candidates.

## Division 3

From John Hardin, SO-OP

No report submitted.



#### **Division 4**

From Paul Verveniotis, SO-OP

- Completed sign offs for one crew candidate that intends to attend the OPTREX in Richmond.
- Two crew requal candidates are preparing for checkrides at either the YBI or Richmond OPTREXs
- Jimmin Chang is working facility on completing outfitting and inspection of Willy to become active again as an OPFAC.
- Several members who are interested in starting training for their crew qualification.

#### **Division 5**

From Lew Derfuss, SO-OP

We have scheduled a Division 5 OPTREX 29-30 July at the new Station Vallejo—it is finalized and on District calendar. We have been working hard to complete trainees mentoring and signoffs. List of Initial Boat Crew Candidates has been forwarded to QE and COS Curtis Han for vetting. I have sent out multiple emails to establish from the list of Requals due this year who plans on Requaling as well as those who are dropping out of Boat Crew Program. We are encouraging maximum participation in Division 5 OPTREX to Requal as many as possible. Working on finalizing list for QE request form. I will also send updated info to clean up list by removing those dropping out to DSO-OP Wally Smith when all responses are received.

We plan on starting training of new members interested in Boat Crew Program with hopes of getting some of them ready for QE check rides along with additional Requals after the OPTREX. We are losing several Boat Crew Program Members and are seeking to train replacements. Job Security in OPS Training!!

BRAVO ZULU to Tom Hurley, Glenn Hunter, Ron Nathan, Randy McCormick and anyone else who helped, including Station Vallejo Crew that came out to help us with Two-Boat Training Towing tasks. This is truly a team effort!

Anyone interested in Boat Crew Operations or getting patrol time please advise Lew Derfuss SO-OP 5 with your contact information and I will try to find slots on upcoming patrols as space allows. Additionally, Tom Hurley FL 52 has been conducting patrols on Audrey L -so more opportunities. With our Operational Fleet of AUXFAC's Coxswains and Crews we need to work together to maximize opportunities and fill our AUXFAC on as many patrols as possible. Flotilla 53 sometimes have some open opportunities for crew and trainees. Take advantage of these opportunities. The OPTREX will be here before you know it so it is important for trainees to participate in as many patrols as possible when they are offered so you will be successful during QE check rides.

#### **Division 6**

From Mark McLaughlin, SO-OP

No report submitted



### **Division 7**

From Mike Thompson, SO-OP

#### **Highlights:**

1. Get out on a patrol and practice
2. OPTREX is Aug 5-6 at Jordanelle State Park
3. The District Operations report

#### **Details:**

1. Practice and prepare for yourself while on patrol now for requalification with a QE in August (one month and a day away). The standard is that you must be proficient and able to do all tasks without prompting or hesitation. Here are suggestions to practice while on patrol.
  - a. Man (person) overboard
  - b. Side tow
  - c. Stern tow
  - d. Using your electronics
  - e. Search patterns
  - f. Anchoring
  - g. Navigation
  - h. Knots
2. Our OPTREX is Aug 5-6 at Jordanelle State Park. We have 8 coxswains and 7 crew the need requalification check ride. **Flotilla commanders, please find out who is if any in your flotilla members are currently planning on going for a New qualification.** You will need to make sure they have done all the prerequisites and get their name sent into Diraux for vetting, pre-reqs found [HERE](#). Please encourage them to get out on the water as much as possible.
3. The District Operations report is an important way to get information on all things operations that are coming up in our District. [Here](#) is the link to the current and the past reports.

### **Division 8**

From Dave Johnson, SO-OP

No report submitted

### **Division 10**

From Rod Rollins, SO-OP

No report submitted



**Division 11**

From Tom Henderson, SO-OP  
No report submitted

**Division 12**

From Jim Losi, SO-OP  
No report submitted

**\*\* END OF REPORT \*\***

Respectfully submitted,  
COMO Wally Smith, DSO-OP



**SEMPER GUMBY!**

**BONUS MATERIAL**



25 June 2022 – Santa Cruz, CA – OpFac 301219 (C.R.A.F.T. Moment) moored at the Fuel Dock with the all-women crew on deck consisting of (l. to r.) Gwen Hammer, Ingelise Rowe, Jane Smith, Mary Kirkwood, and Cassandra Mani, and coxswain Wally Smith (4<sup>th</sup> from left).