



# THE EAGLE



Issue One

A Periodic Communication for the West Coast of Florida  
Coast Guard Auxiliary Southeast District

## Introducing Your DCAPT-W

Karen Miller has been a proud member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary for more than 30 years. Over that time, she's held a wide range of leadership positions — from her local Clearwater flotilla all the way up to the national organization, supporting the missions of the Coast Guard in both elected and appointed roles.



For more than twenty-five years, Karen served as a radio watchstander and Officer of the Day at Coast Guard Station Sand Key. Every Thursday, she could be found at the radio console, listening for boaters in distress and coordinating Coast Guard crews heading out to help.

Karen also held a 50-ton Coast Guard captain's license. Back in the 1990s, she worked for Sea Tow, assisting boaters in need, much like Triple A (AAA), only on the water instead of the highway.

Originally from Brooklyn Heights, New York, Karen moved to Palm Harbor in the early 1990s after selling her telecommunications company to her business partner. That early retirement opened the door to a life filled with volunteer work. She spent years at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary helping in the hospital and intake area, and later volunteered with



SPCA Tampa Bay, posting photographs of adoptable pets and writing creative bios to help them find homes.

Karen is passionate about boating safety and the life-saving missions of the Coast Guard and Auxiliary. She continues to share that passion through her community outreach and education efforts.

On a personal level, Karen shares her home with her rescue chihuahua-yorkie mix, Zulu.



# Watchwords for District Captain West

*Motto: Be the Best, Then Get Better*

## Excellence

Excellence is the standard we set for ourselves and the commitment we make to the Coast Guard and to one another. It reflects our professionalism, our preparedness, and our devotion to missions. To “Be the Best” begins right here—with the choices we make, the skills we sharpen, and the pride we take in every task, large or small.

## Service

Service is who we are. It encompasses our readiness, our support for our Coast Guard partners, and our dedication to our communities. Service means stepping forward with purpose, humility, and heart. It requires us to continually “Get Better,” growing our abilities so we can better support those who depend on us.

## Respect

Respect guides how we treat each other, how we lead, and how we build the next generation of Auxiliary members. It is the foundation of strong teams, clear communication, and a welcoming, professional environment. Respect ensures that every member feels valued and empowered to contribute their best.



# Meet Tony Hooper, Commander, Division 7

Joined the Auxiliary in July 2012  
17,500 hours of service. 1,406 hours underway.

## **Prior Offices held:**

Flotilla Staff Officer for Finance, Materials, Member Training, and Navigation Systems

Flotilla Vice Commander 2014 – 2016

Flotilla Commander 2017 – 2018

Division Staff Officer for Materials and Navigation Systems 2016 – 2022

Vice Commander, Division 7 2023 – 2024

## **Current Offices**

Commander, Division 7 2025 - current

Assistant District Staff Officer, Navigation Systems – Sector St. Petersburg (2021 - current)

Lead Instructor – Navigation Systems – District 7 (2022 - current)

## **Certifications**

Boat Crew Coxswain (night certified)

Aid Verifier PQS

Instructor

Telecommunications Officer

Vessel Examiner

TCTAUX (TCT Instructor)

AUXOP

## **Principal Awards**

Auxiliary Commendation Award

Auxiliary Achievement Award (2x)

Commandant's Letter of Commendation (3x)



**Tony Hooper**

# Meet Trevor Evans, Commander, Division 8

Originally from Wyoming, Trevor Evans moved to Florida in 2017 and joined the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Manatee County shortly thereafter. Now serving his second term as Division Commander for Division 8 in the Southeast District, he remains committed to strengthening member engagement, expanding outreach, and supporting operational readiness across the division.

Trevor is a registered nurse who currently works in sales, bringing a strong blend of communication, leadership, and service-oriented experience to his Auxiliary roles. He is the proud father of two daughters in middle and high school.

An avid boater and fisherman, Trevor enjoys spending time on the water and sharing that passion through his Auxiliary service. He is particularly dedicated to supporting Coast Guard Station Cortez, including providing culinary assistance and participating in activities that enhance station morale.

Trevor continues to serve with enthusiasm and professionalism, focused on supporting the missions of the Coast Guard and the boating public throughout Manatee County and the greater Gulf Coast region.



**Trevor Evans**



# Sector St. Petersburg

## 2026 Meeting Dates

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**0930 January 12, 2026**

**0930 May 11, 2026**

**0930 August 19, 2026**

**0930 November 9, 2026**

**For those of you who can't attend these meetings in person with Captain Sergent and BOSN Watt, we will set up Zoom using a hotspot**

Sector St. Petersburg encompasses West Central Florida from Apalachicola to Everglades City. The area includes 500 miles of coastline with year-round commercial and recreational boating and a large Port Complex in the Tampa Bay area. These activities require continuous Coast Guard vigilance, capability, and response for Search and Rescue, Marine Safety, Aids to Navigation, Law Enforcement, Migrant Operations, Recreational Boating Safety, and associated mission areas.

Sector St. Petersburg consists of five Coast Guard Stations and each station is represented by a related Auxiliary Division. Additionally, there are six Coast Guard Cutters homeported in the area.

### **Sector Goals**

- To effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of the active duty units
- To ensure our members are ready, relevant, and responsive
- To proactively prepare for potential future missions

### **Coast Guard Stations in Sector St. Petersburg:**

St. Petersburg: Division 7

Cortez: Division 8

Ft. Myers: Division 9

Sand Key: Division 11

Yankeetown: Division 15

# Meet Michael DiPierro, Commander, Division 9

Michael DiPierro is Division 9 Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and a member of Flotilla 96 at Wiggins Pass, Florida. He joined the Auxiliary in March 2008, intrigued by the idea of on-water patrols to help local boaters learn and practice safety in all their maritime activities. A lifelong boater himself, DiPierro developed his marine skills at a very young age in challenging, typical two-to-four-foot seas around Cape Cod.



**Michael DiPierro**

Beginning with Partner Visitations, Vessel Examinations, and Radio Watchstander, DiPierro eventually qualified for boat crew and then coxswain by April 2012. He brought his Cape Cod vessel, Pegasus, to Florida in 2010. It has served as a training platform for numerous crew and coxswain candidates over the ensuing years. DiPierro calls training his passion, and he soon became an Instructor, certified in Search Coordination and Execution, among others. In May 2013, he achieved the status of Operational Auxiliarist (AUXOP), reserved for those who acquire the highest skill levels in the Auxiliary.



In October 2016, he was elected Flotilla Vice Commander of Flotilla 96, Wiggins Pass. He was elevated to Flotilla Commander in June 2017 upon the mid-term departure of the commander then in place. DiPierro held that post through 2019. Returning to leadership in 2023 and 2024, again as Flotilla Commander, DiPierro uses his marine experience and organizational skills to further the mission of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in Southwest Florida.

# Meet Chris Juall, Auxiliary Sector Coordinator

Chris Juall has served in the Auxiliary for over 25 years. He currently serves as the Sector Coordinator for USCG Sector St. Petersburg, the District Staff Officer for Operations, and is the National Branch Chief of Surface Safety. Chris is a Qualification Examiner, Past Flotilla Commander, and a USCG Licensed Captain (Masters). He is an Auxiliary Coxswain, USCG-Certified Boat Crewman, and a National Safe Boating Council Certified On-Water Instructor. With over 30 years of boating experience, Chris has also served as the Auxiliary Unit Coordinator for CG Station Cortez, contributing significantly to Auxiliary operations and surface safety.

Under the leadership of the District Staff Officer—Operations, the Auxiliary Surface Division strives to integrate seamlessly with every USCG Unit in the Southeast District, fostering stronger collaboration, improving operational capabilities, and enabling our members to thrive both in quality and quantity. By preparing proactively for future missions and expanding our role in Auxiliary operations, we aim to continually elevate our service and uphold the highest standards of member satisfaction and mission effectiveness.



**Chris Juall**

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The CG Auxiliary Sector Coordinator (ASC) acts as the primary link between the Auxiliary and a Coast Guard Sector, coordinating Auxiliary resources (like boats and personnel) to support the Coast Guard's missions in search and rescue, marine safety, and homeland security within the Sector's area. Essentially, they ensure the Auxiliary effectively serves as a "force multiplier," integrating volunteer efforts with active-duty operations under the direction of the District Commodore and Sector Commander.

The ASC is crucial for translating the Coast Guard's needs into actionable volunteer support, ensuring the Auxiliary is a reliable and responsive partner in maritime safety and security.

# Meet Matt Copeland, Commander, Division 11

## A Commitment to Service

My journey with the Coast Guard Auxiliary began in 2013, when I joined a small flotilla in Northeast Georgia. The path led me to Hudson, Florida, in 2018, where I found a vibrant community and expanded opportunities for service.

Initially, I contributed through core activities such as Vessel Examinations and Public Education, and further developed my skills by becoming an instructor and a certified pollution responder.

A turning point came in 2021 when I stepped into a leadership role as Flotilla Commander, an office I proudly held for two years. My desire to grow within the Auxiliary brought me to the division level, where I accepted the position of Division Vice Commander.

In late September 2024, a significant personal challenge—losing my family home to four feet of seawater—coincided with an unexpected call to leadership. Following the Division Commander's illness, I agreed to cover the role and was subsequently elected Division Commander for the 2025 term and again for the 2026 term

I am proud to serve in this leadership capacity, grounded and guided by the exceptional people around me who help shape Division 11. Our division thrives through the efforts of five dedicated flotilla leaders who have also answered the call to lead.

Training and leadership are the cornerstones of our existence: Leadership sets the path, and training defines it.



**Matt Copeland and Captain Courtney Sergent**

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# Meet Matt Copeland, Commander, Division 11 (continued)

I have always sought to deepen my understanding of the Auxiliary, and I now challenge our members to do the same. Two achievements stand out as particularly meaningful:

- Operational Auxiliarist (AUXOP): This designation signifies my commitment to knowing more about the Auxiliary and the broader Coast Guard mission.
- Recreational Boater Safety Device (RBS Device): This accomplishment reflects my dedicated effort toward meeting the goals of the Auxiliary's primary mission of enhancing recreational boating safety.

With almost 13 years of voluntary service to the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard, the missions I have undertaken remain profoundly rewarding. I continue to find immense value in the work we do.

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## Florida West Coast Division Meetings

### 2026

**Division 7: 1900 the first  
Monday of each month**

February 2  
March 2  
April 6  
May 4  
June 1  
July 6  
August 3  
September 7  
October 5  
November 2  
December 7

**Division 9**

January 10 Keiser University  
February 7 Keiser University  
March 7 Keiser University  
April 4 Keiser University  
May 2 Keiser University  
June 6 Zoom  
August 1 Zoom  
September 5 Keiser University  
October 3 Keiser University  
November 7 Keiser University  
December 5 Change of Watch

**Division 11 0900  
on the Third Saturday  
of Even Months**

February 21  
April 18  
June 20  
August 15  
October 17

**Division 15  
Quarterly at 1000**

January 10 Hernando Beach HQ  
April 11 Hernando Beach HQ  
July 11 Hernando Beach HQ  
October 10 Change of Watch

# Meet Shaune Hunter, Commander, Division 15

I have been a member for 35 years, starting back before my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. I had watched a program on the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary on our local PBS station. Because of having a lazy eye, I could not join the active military, so I thought this would be the next best thing. Living near Oceanside, California, I knew there was a Coast Guard ship moored in the harbor. I went and talked to one of the guys there, who told me about the flotilla that met once a month at the Oceanside yacht club and he gave me a contact number.

## Crew Training

Frank Young, a man I will never forget, had me join them for one of Flotilla 16-6's meetings and did a short interview. I told him of my eyesight and that it had kept me from joining the military, but I wanted to serve our country anyway I could. He told me that the Auxiliary did not have to meet military physical standards, and that I would have no problem fitting in. I took the Boating Skills and Seamanship (BS&S) class, filled out the paperwork, and was sworn in a few months later. Frank had me start with crew training and I completed it the week before my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Several of us from that division went through it together. Frank was a former Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC) and spent over 40 years in the Marine Corps. He caught the tail end of WW II, was at the Chosin Reservoir in Korea, and served four tours of duty in Vietnam, including Kason and the battle of Hue City, before being recalled to MCRD in San Diego.

## Working for the Coast Guard

After completing crew training, I had a meeting with Master Chief Dennin Toudy, who was the OIC of what I now know as the USCGC POINT HOBART (WPB-82377), and asked if I could volunteer with the cutter. He set me up with a training schedule, and some of the crew had me do office duties,



# Meet Shaune Hunter, Commander, Division 15 (continued)

like logging unclassified messages, answering the telephone, and general clean-up. The Master Chief had me work with one of the cutters' engineers to learn to do rounds both in port and underway. The first thing I had to learn was the engine room, how things worked, and how to spot problems. I also stood helm watches and basic navigation. I also found out that I was prone to seasickness, especially at night while chart plotting. It did not help that the cutter was built like a top-heavy bathtub.

## **Desert Shield / Desert Storm**

Being close to the Marine Corps Camp Pendleton and San Diego Bay, the heart of the Pacific fleet, we were tasked with patrolling the waters around the area and also looking after the nuclear power station at San Onofre and the conventional power station in Carlsbad. The Carlsbad station took on fuel oil via oil tankers that were moored offshore and attached to a fuel line that ran to the plant. Both are no longer there, but were considered high-value targets for terrorists. We were also tasked with escort duty for naval ships entering and exiting San Diego Bay. Because of our close proximity to Oceanside beach and our vehicles parked in the open, the Coast Guard Group Commander considered moving the cutter to the boat basin on Camp Pendleton. This was rescinded since the war was over.

## **IACC and America's Cup**

I worked with the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter (USCGC) POINT HOBART during the 1991 International America's Cup Class races held off San Diego, leading up to the America's Cup held in May of 1992. I was also a guest aboard the USCGC RESOLUTE (WMEC-620) and had the opportunity to take the helm on the way back in after watching the races.

## **Way up North**

After being transferred to Washington State with the company I was working for and being from there as well as having family that still lived there, it was a good fit. I transferred to Flotilla 38 in Olympia and worked with a reserve unit out at Lifeboat Station Grays Harbor. Building on my basic crew training, I honed my skills working on the 44' and 52' motor lifeboats. I also completed my Auxiliary Coxswain training with the flotilla. As with most training evolutions, you never know when that training will be called upon.

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# Meet Shaune Hunter, Commander, Division 15 (continued)

One evening, while doing bar navigation and plotting, a Search and Rescue (SAR) came into the station. Since we were already underway, they had us go 75 miles offshore to tow in a fishing boat that was taking on water and had no power. With seas building from 14' to 18' and a breaking bar, things got a little hairy. Battling the seas and seasickness, we finally tied up around 0330 and saved the crew of four.

## **Bound for New Orleans**

After leaving the company I was with, I had the opportunity to meet more of my family that lived just outside of New Orleans. I transferred to Flotilla 43, one of the oldest continuously active flotillas in the country. They were formed just after Pearl Harbor and were known as Temporary Coast Guard Reserve Unit 1. My training continued with the active and reserve crews at Station New Orleans and with the flotilla. Fast forward to September 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina came ashore and almost wiped out the garden center I was employed with, along with the lower half of Plaquemines Parish. My dad and I lived in the northern half of the parish. His house was lifted off its blocks by the wind, and my house had 3 feet of water in it. I evacuated to Iowa for nine months before returning home. Unfortunately, my coxswain recertification was due during this time, and it was not waived, even due to the hurricane.



**Shaune Hunter**

## **Deepwater Horizon / Baton Rouge Flooding**

April 20, 2010 brought another disaster to the Gulf Coast. The explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon was one of the worst oil spills outside of the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. Affecting almost all of the US Gulf Coast. I was part of the clean-up logistics team for a company my brother worked for, and helped the Coast Guard Station New Orleans move pallets of cleanup gear to different areas. On August 15, 2016, I worked with the Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's SAR team and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to help flood victims relocate to higher ground. Again, my brother, being a member of the sheriff's office SAR team, used his airboat to get into places regular boats could not.

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# Meet Shaune Hunter, Commander, Division 15 (continued)

As he brought people to different staging areas, I helped load them onto National Guard Army trucks and made sure his truck and trailer remained ahead of rising floodwaters. We rescued several dozen people and their pets. I was the only Coast Guard and Auxiliary member there and was placed under orders as the on-scene commander until active-duty and reserve units arrived the following day.

## Welcome to Florida

I left New Orleans in December of 2017, relocated to Spring Hill, and transferred to Flotilla 15-8, Hernando Beach. I have been an active member holding the position of Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Affairs before taking a few years off (still paying my dues) to continue my education. I recently graduated with two degrees: an Associate of Science in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Operations Management from Southern New Hampshire University.

