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MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS PART 4

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Continuing our thoughts from last March on Maritime Domain Awareness on patrols or anytime you are out on, or near the water.

If a person was spoken to, describe the person. Give their name (if known), sex, and your best attempt at a description. If you can get a feeling for the person's education, that may be helpful (well-spoken, articulate, etc.). Did the person speak English, and was it with a foreign accent? Physical description, height, complexion, hair color and identifying marks such as tattoos can help identify the person should it be necessary.

How long was the person or vessel under observation? It is important to note the time that the suspicious person or activity

was first noticed, and when observations ceased.

Report any personal contacts that may be suspicious. If you observe anyone taking photos or making diagrams of US Government facilities, report it. If someone asks questions about access to facilities, particularly inquiries about security, personnel, or operational procedures, be cautious and make a report. Aircraft operating in proximity to government facilities or HVAs may be a cause for concern. Suspicious email should be forward to security personnel or the Officer in Charge of your usual command. Bottom line: report any unknown or suspicious activities around a facility.

Sometimes indications may be observed that are not sufficient to be considered cause for suspicion, but should be noted. A coxswain launching a trailerable vessel may notice activity that is inconsistent or unusual for the area. It is important to be aware of one's surroundings.

Reporting procedures for MDA relevant information.

Know the difference between a routine and a tactical report. Make tactical

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**GET THE FIX
SWITCH TO 406**

By Bob Shafer DC-Od

The first day of February will mark a significant change in the Search and Rescue business. On that date, the International Cospas-Sarsat Program will terminate satellite processing of distress signals from 121.5 and 243 MHz emergency beacons. (SARSAT is the U.S. component of the international Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking System.) After this date, mariners, aviators and other persons will have to switch to emergency beacons operating at 406 MHz in order to be detected by satellites.

This change won't affect mariners much, as 121.5 and 243 MHz EPIRBs have been prohibited since the beginning of 2007. But pilots should take note, because, aircraft are still permitted by the FAA to carry 121.5 MHz Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs). It is important to note that after February, 2009, existing 121.5-MHz ELTs, although still legal from the FAA's perspective, will provide extremely limited assistance if

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reports by the most secure method available, usually a cell phone. Besides limiting the exposure of the information, the level of detail required is not appropriate to VHF radio. Whether or not a tactical report was made, if suspicious people, vessels, or activity were observed, make a routine report (usually in writing) at the conclusion of the patrol. Take time to recollect as much detail as possible and include original notes that were taken on scene. If you wish to retain notes for your records, keep a photocopy, but turn over the originals.

On a Wednesday afternoon a coxswain on patrol notices a person in the water wearing a mask and snorkel. The location is a sandbar not far from a Naval Supply Depot. There is a cruising sailboat anchored on the bar.

The coxswain knows that the local yacht club has a Wednesday-night race twice each month, and correctly deduces that the swimmer is cleaning his hull in preparation for the race. The matter is included in a routine report at the end of the patrol, as it may

be of use to future Coast Guard patrols in the area.

Just before dark on another day a person is seen in deep water wearing a mask and snorkel, in the same general vicinity at the previously reported sailboat. The swimmer is not near a boat. The coxswain should immediately make a tactical report to his controlling station, preferably by cell phone. The Coast Guard or the Navy may consider this worthy of immediate investigation. The Auxiliary patrol should be cautious. This could be a person in distress, or it could be someone up to no good. The coxswain has a difficult decision to make; should the patrol attempt to assist the person, or back off to a safe distance and continue to observe. Only the coxswain on scene and his command authority can make that determination.

Some commands require specific information be reported at the end of a patrol, regardless of whether suspicious activity was observed. Sometimes we are asked to hand out fliers describing the Naval Vessel Protection Zone, and the number of these distributed may be important to your command. The specifics of

the post-patrol report should be known prior to undertaking the patrol.

If your command has specific forms, ask for copies in advance so that you may be familiar with them. In particular, note the special information that is called for, so that you may gather it while on patrol. Any particular information that should be obtained from your crew (such as member numbers) should be noted, so that it will be at hand while completing the form.

Conclusion:

MDA is the job for all Americans. Coast Guard Auxiliarists can help our fellow Americans by our direct contributions to MDA. We can help by making others aware of the need for information, and by educating them on how to report it. In making contact with boaters, we can hand out business cards with the America's Waterway Watch phone number (1-877-24-WATCH, 1-877-249-2824). We can educate people about the Naval Vessel Protection Zones. And, we can offer people the opportunity to join the USCG Auxiliary.

All of our patrols are multi-mission patrols. MDA should be considered to be part of every mission.

UP TOP IN OPERATIONS

MARITIME OBSERVATION MISSION "MOM"

By Bruce Pugh DVC-OE

What is a **M**aritime **O**bservation **M**ission? As more and more of the gold side resources are focused on maritime safety and security, we as Auxiliarists are being asked to assist in, or to take on more and more of the non-law enforcement activities. This includes areas of Marine Safety and Environment Protection as well as on-water and in-air missions.

To clarify Auxiliary roles in Coast Guard missions, the Chief Director issued [ALAUX of 19 January 2006, Subject: Clarification of Auxiliary roles in Homeland Security -033/06](#). This defined the newly renamed Maritime Observation Mission (MOM).

The ALAUX memo link above clarifies what an Auxiliary vessel cannot and should not engage in. So what can we do? Just what is a MOM? It is similar to the former Safety Patrol, or Harbor Patrol with the inclusion of activities such as observation, recording, and reporting of hazards or threats to the waterways and infrastructure, but no active intervention. No action should be taken that

puts the Auxiliarist at risk or that could be viewed by the boating public as an Auxiliarist acting in any form of law enforcement capacity.

MOM is considered an "overarching" mission of all CG Auxiliary activity in the maritime environment ... on land or on foot or in the water or air. Every patrol should have MOM as a mission component. The goal of MOM is to provide increased maritime domain awareness by observing areas of interest and reporting findings to the Operational Commander. It encompasses a variety of missions that were formerly called out separately for all Air, Boat and Radio facilities:

- ♥ Safety Patrol
- ♥ Homeland Security Patrol
- ♥ PWCS Missions
- ♥ "MDA" Patrol
- ♥ Harbor Patrol

What are we to observe, record, & report? MOM may be a bit different in different ports and sectors. The four basic elements are constants:

- ♥ Ports & Waterways
- ♥ Vessels
- ♥ Land Base Infrastructure
- ♥ Targets and Vulnerabilities

For ports and waterways, observations should include:

- ♥ Accesses, entrances, approaches, anchorages, maneuvering/berthing areas

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- ♥ Port vessel traffic management systems
- ♥ Hazards to navigation
- ♥ Aids to navigation
- ♥ Environmentally sensitive areas
- ♥ Locations of potential sources of pollution
- ♥ Bridges, railways

For vessels, observations should include:

- ♥ Vessel markings – load line, name, home port, etc.
- ♥ Bunkering/lightering operations

On the land based infrastructure side observe:

- ♥ Waterfront facilities including container, bulk ro-ro, cruise ships, and ferries
- ♥ Facility security
- ♥ Facility firefighting and lifesaving readiness

Some other targets and vulnerabilities to report:

- ♥ Electrical distribution systems, radio, telecomm and computer systems and networks
- ♥ Nuclear plants, power plants, cargo transfer piping, and water supplies
- ♥ LPG/LNG

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- ♥ Passenger cruise ship – passengers / crew and baggage screening areas
- ♥ National symbols/treasures

MOM execution

Land mobile patrols are carried out as a patrol with communications via a VHF-FM facility in a vehicle under orders from the OIA (Order Issuing Authority).

The **M**aritime **O**bservation **M**ission is the major activity for patrols on or over the water, as well as on land, combining our efforts in a multi-mission environment.

406 SWITCH

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an aircraft crashes, especially in a remote location.

406 MHz beacons offer many advantages over the older 121.5 and 243 MHz emergency beacons. They are more powerful, individually identifiable, instantly detectable, have global coverage, and have almost no false alarms. They provide much more accurate positioning information, especially when coupled with GPS. Search areas are reduced from several hundred square miles with 121.5 MHz beacons to just a few hundred

square yards with 406 MHz beacons.



The NASA Goddard Spaceflight Center estimates that “134 extra lives and millions of dollars in SAR resources could be saved per year if aircraft switched to 406 MHz ELTs.” The Coast Guard Office of Search and Rescue says that “Due to the obvious advantages of 406 MHz beacons and the significant disadvantages of the older 121.5 MHz beacons, all pilots are highly encouraged to consider making the switch to

406 MHz ELTs now”.

Auxiliarists, especially Auxiliary Aviators, should make every effort to educate general aviation pilots about the advantages of 406 MHz ELTs. Encourage them to “Make the switch to 406” by installing a 406 MHz ELT, or at least by carrying a 406 MHz Personal Locator Beacon as a back up to their 121.5 ELT.

Reminder – ICS-210 must be completed by all Coxswains, Pilots, & PWOs by 31 Mar 2009. Contact your FSO-MT to find a course if you have not completed it yet.

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