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**Contingency Communications
 the other side of Telecomm**

By William Scholz, DVC-OT

There are two main "operational" parts to the activities of the Telecommunications Division of the Operations Department. The first, and the one that most Auxiliary members participate in, is "Operational" communications which is designed to provide command and control between AUX vessels, aircraft and shore based stations. The shore stations "carry the guard" for safety and control purposes while facilities are operating under orders.

The second large effort is referred to as "contingency communications". It's a bit more complex to describe since it may involve several distinct activities. In its purest terms, the definition of contingency comms is: *provision of voice and data communications to replace "normal" communications services when those services are unavailable for any reason.* The complication in planning, discussing and implementing contingency comms arise because they are multiple dimensions: the "customer", the radio spectrum and modes used, and the specifics of the situation which caused the "unavailability of normal services".

In the Auxiliary Telecommunications services there are two distinct customers – the

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Fit for Flight?

**Robert Hampton, MD
 Flight Surgeon (BC-OAA)**

This article while directed at aviators has application to everyone who participates in surface or air operations. Please consider his words about fitness for duty and working as part of a team: a crew. It is all part of the basics of both TCT (Team Coordination Training) and CRM (Crew Resource Management).

Fly and boat safe, David Elliot, DC-O

A situation recently occurred on an Auxiliary Aviation mission that has inspired me to remind all Auxiliary aviators of the need for self-awareness and self-management in the area of fitness for flight. The issues seem, from the report, to be based on a failure of an individual crewmember to adhere to existing ORM (Operational Risk Management) and self-management procedures with respect to crewmember's physical/medical fitness for a mission.

Spring is here and in many parts of the country that means increased flight times are ahead. **Are you fit for that flight?** Self-fitness is a critical segment of the required risk management assessment prior to flight duty. All crewmembers have a critical obligation to assure that they are in adequate physical and emotional condition to complete a mission without being a hazard to themselves, their crewmates, or the public.

There is no shame in admitting that you may be below the top of your game for a particular mission; however this must be taken into account at the pre-mission briefing and risk assessment discussion. This discussion may result in identifying ways to address the condition, thus mitigating the impact on the

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"Semper Paratus" (Always Ready)

By Murrianna K. Thomson, BA-OIM

Are you Semper Paratus?

Are you ready for the next emergency or disaster? Are you ready to protect yourself, your family and respond to a call for help?

It is really much less complicated than you might think. It takes some time to think about your personal situation, review what you will need, make a plan, and then set about putting your family kit together.

Guides for emergency preparation are available in many places on the Internet. Two important sites are www.Ready.gov and <http://www.fema.gov/plan/index.shtm>. These sites offer ideas and suggestions for the everyday American, business, senior citizens and for kids.

In each there are online planning tools, articles, downloadable publications, checklists, sections for persons with pets or disabilities, and for senior citizens. There are special sections for military families. Take time and explore these sites. They are loaded with useful information.

Once you have become familiar with the contents of the sites, make your personal plan. When you have a personal plan, you have taken an important step in being prepared for the safety of your family. Do not forget to test your plan and keep your family kit handy and renewed, some items will get stale or outdated. Knowing your family is safe, will free you up to concentrate on assisting the Coast Guard.

With your personal emergency plan complete, you are now prepared to take that knowledge and those skills and apply them to your duties in the Auxiliary. What emergencies or disasters might the Coast Guard/Auxiliary respond to in your area and what is the Surge

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Leadership

By: Jim Mc Carty, BC-OEI

How do crewmembers and coxswains exhibit good leadership? We all know that Auxiliary boat and air crews do not function in the same way as their counterparts in the active military. Coxswains do not "order" their members to perform tasks. We rely on leadership to gain the willing cooperation of our shipmates towards the completion of the mission. Effective leaders avoid issuing stern orders when circumstances permit a more collaborative process. Today, they rely on establishing a trusting relationship with and among their subordinates.

During my tenure as a Philadelphia police commander I strove to create an environment of trust among my officers. I knew that barking orders, even in times of crisis on the street, did not always produce the best results. I relied on my officers to make good decisions by ensuring that they were well trained and that they had confidence in my judgment so that they need not wait for me to be directly involved in their every move and action. Admittedly, this environment of trust comes with time and experience. It also comes when our crews see that leaders take their responsibilities seriously by avoiding shortcuts in procedure. Leaders taking shortcuts can create a complacent atmosphere that leads to injury or worse, whether it occurs among police officers on the streets of a large city, or on the rivers, lakes and oceans where we as Auxiliarists conduct our safety patrols.

The key and possibly best way to establish a trusting environment, instill confidence in leadership, reduce complacency, and improve safety on the water is to instill a sense of purpose by conducting a **thorough pre-underway check, including risk assessment, of the mission, crew and facility before they embark on a patrol.**

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Leadership cont.

The Auxiliary Seamanship manual COMDTINST M16114.5C is explicit. It requires, in part that the Coxswain:

- Ensure that all crew members are physically capable of performing the mission.
- Provide a thorough briefing on the boat, its equipment and its operation.
- Specifically address possible hazards, risk awareness and situation awareness.

This is accomplished by using the “Pre-Underway Check Off” (Auxiliary Boat Crew Qualification Guide Vol. II), and under some commands a risk assessment program.

How many times have we participated in patrols where we arrive at the dock, immediately climb aboard the facility, free up all lines and leave the dock without completing the basics? Does the coxswain review all required equipment and point out their locations on board? Does he or she review the crewmembers individual physical fitness and training qualifications for the day's activities? Does he/she establish look-out watches, describe the mission and review the risks, weather and other pertinent factors?

Our crewmembers must have the self-belief that their leaders respect them and are looking out for their welfare. At the same time Auxiliary coxswains must ensure that they exhibit the leadership crewmembers need to keep them safe by resisting the temptations of complacency. *We must conduct the risk assessment, when required, and pre-underway for each and every patrol no matter how many times this crew has shipped out together.* When crewmembers see that a coxswain has failed to follow procedure, the crew needs to “assert” the need for the checklist to be completed (TCT component); this is the Auxiliary leadership model and when its' followed, we all can accomplish the mission and return safely to port.

Fit For Flight? cont.



mission. The mission may still be accomplished in that case; however the assigned risk number for the crew element may need to be elevated to account for the status of one or more crewmembers.

Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) specifically prohibit acting as a pilot-in-command or a required crewmember if there is a known medical deficiency that would make a person unable to meet the requirements for medical certification (FAA FAR 61.53 – cited below). This caution certainly logically applies in Auxiliary Aviation to our Air Crew and Observers equally.

All personnel aboard a patrol aircraft must assure themselves and their crewmates that they are fit for that flight. A simple personal health status checklist like the “I'M SAFE” checklist that various aviation safety organizations promote, listed below, can remind us of the important points to consider:

I – Illness Do I have an illness or any symptoms of an illness?

M – Medication Have I been taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs?

S – Stress Am I under psychological pressure, as from my job? Worried about financial matters, health problems, or family discord?

A – Alcohol Have I been drinking within 8 hours? How much within 24 hrs?

F – Fatigue Am I adequately rested?

E – Eating Am I adequately nourished / hydrated?

Remember! Everyone aboard every facility, surface or air, has an obligation to make sure they are in good enough physical condition to conduct the mission without being a hazard to themselves, their crewmates, or the public.

FAR 61.53 – Prohibition on Operations During Medical Deficiency

(a) Operations that require a medical certificate

Except as provided for in paragraph (b) of this section, a person who holds a current medical certificate issued under Part 67 of this chapter shall not act as pilot in command, or in any other capacity as a required flight crewmember while that person:

Knows or has reason to know of any medical condition that would make the person unable to meet the requirements for the medical certificate necessary for the pilot operation, or

Is taking medication or receiving other treatment for a medical condition that results in the person being unable to meet the requirements for the medical certificate necessary for that operation.

(b) Operations that do not require a medical certificate

For operations provided for in 61.23(b) of this part, a person shall not act as pilot in command, or in any other capacity as a required flight crewmember, while that person knows or has reason to know of any medical condition that would make the person unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner.

Semper Paratus cont.

Plan for these conditions? What are your Auxiliary skills and how can they be put to use? How will you be effective in the event of an emergency or disaster? When you have completed a thorough review, you can begin to draft your own personal Auxiliary surge plan and prepare your response kit. Share and discuss your plan with your fellow Auxiliarists. Is it logical? Have you overlooked something? Encourage others to prepare their own plans.

Remember we are Semper Paratus.

Contingency Comms cont.

Auxiliary and the Coast Guard. While these may be operating separately, they are often very closely interconnected. Perhaps the easiest way to understand the relationship is to look at recent situations. One is the flooding that took place in March of 2009 in North Dakota. The CG was deployed from Air Station (AIRSTA) Traverse City (MI) to provide rescue services to the civilian population located in and around Fargo and Bismarck. When the helicopters deployed to that area, there was no communications infrastructure available to support the CG's operations. As a result, two Auxiliary (CGAUX) communications teams were deployed to the area together with other support functions. For a period of more than a week, the CGAUX teams provided the command and control communications for the helicopter rescue operations.

A second contingency communications situation arose on the Gulf Coast as a result of the "hurricane trio" in August and September of 2008 on. In that situation, there was a loss of commercial communications infrastructure over a wide area and CGAUX radio facilities, both fixed and deployable, were used to maintain contact between the CGAUX elected leadership and individual members.

The inference is that Auxiliarists in Telecommunications at all levels must be prepared to step in and provide whatever communications services are needed based on the situation at hand.

Another dimension of contingency communications is focused on the specific tools needed to achieve communications. The CGAUX is extremely fortunate to have some very specific radio spectrum allocations assigned for its use. These are both high frequency, (HF) and very high frequency (VHF) channels. Consequently the Auxiliary has the ability to provide not only "local" coverage, but also communications services over wide areas

sometimes encompassing multiple counties and multiple states. This means that CGAUX is a unique resource for the CG because unlike them, Auxiliarists have the capability to cover whole CG Districts in real time at low or minimal cost to the CG. To illustrate this capability consider the flooding situation mentioned above. Not only were our deployed communications teams providing VHF command and control services for the helicopters, but one of the teams was able to maintain a consistent link, via HF radio, between North Dakota and the controlling Sector (Upper Mississippi River) located in St. Louis.

The third dimension of contingency communications has to do with geography and station capabilities. There are a significant number of AUX communications stations scattered throughout the US along the coasts and throughout the "inland river and lake" areas. Consequently, the Auxiliary has resources that are much broader than those normally available to the CG with regard to the coverage of our country. In addition to that fixed resource aspect, Auxiliarists have multiple resources that are "deployable". Some of those resources are completely self contained and self supporting and others require logistical support, but the fact remains that Auxiliarists can send communications resources to an affected area if that area does not have fixed resources available.

The final dimension playing a role in contingency communications is "interoperability" which is the ability to provide radio links between multiple agencies responding to a particular situation. This is important for smaller events. There is often not time for agencies such as FEMA and other parts of DHS to bring in the resources to establish inter-operational networks. With CGAUX communications resources permanently located in affected areas, they can more readily provide the required inter-agency links.

In summary, CGAUX Telecommunications, operating in a "contingency mode" is becoming an important part of what the "comms guys" do. This is true largely because the CG's (and hence the AUX's) missions have expanded dramatically in terms of non-traditional activities. While our "ops normal" activities of command and control hold a key place in our work, more and more attention is devoted to building, perfecting, and exercising these "contingency comms" resources.

If you have an interest in being a part of the "contingency comms" team for Auxiliary Telecommunications, please contact your District Staff Officer for Communications via the Chain of leadership and management to learn of your district's plans and how you can become involved.

Do you know?



"Bravo Zulu"

Submitted by: Gary Taylor

This is a naval signal, conveyed by flag hoist or voice radio, meaning "well done"; it has also passed into the spoken and written vocabulary. It can be combined with the "negative" signal, spoken or written NEGAT, to say "NEGAT Bravo Zulu," or "not well done."

There are some "myths and legends" attached to this signal. The one most frequently heard has Admiral Halsey sending it to ships of Task Force 38 during World War II. He could not have done this, since the signal did not exist at that time.

"Bravo Zulu" actually comes from the Allied Naval Signal Book (ACP 175 series), an international naval signal code adopted after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949. Until then, each navy

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had used its own signal code and operational manuals. World War II experience had shown that it was difficult, or even impossible, for ships of different navies to operate together unless they could readily communicate, and ACP 175 was designed to remedy this.

In the U.S. Navy signal code, used before ACP 175, "well done" was signaled as TVG, or "Tare Victor George" in the U.S. phonetic alphabet of that time. ACP 175 was organized in the general manner of other signal books, that is, starting with 1-flag signals, then 2-flag and so on. The 2-flag signals were organized by general subject, starting with AA, AB, AC, ... AZ, BA, BB, BC, ... BZ, and so on. The B-signals were called "Administrative" signals, and dealt with miscellaneous matters of administration and housekeeping. The last signal on the "Administrative" page was BZ, standing for "well done."

At that time BZ was not rendered as "Bravo Zulu," but in each navy's particular phonetic alphabet. In the U.S. Navy, BZ was spoken as "**Baker Zebra**." In the meanwhile, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) had adopted English as the international air traffic control language. They developed a phonetic alphabet for international aviation use, designed to be as "pronounceable" as possible by flyers and traffic controllers speaking many different languages. This was the "Alfa, Bravo, Charlie, Delta..." alphabet used today. The Navy adopted this ICAO alphabet in March 1956. It was then that "Baker Zebra" finally became "**Bravo Zulu**."

090402-G-4899B-635 Team secures rescue vessel after conducting safety checks on stranded North Dakota residents

MANVEL, N.D.-Petty Officers 3rd Class Jeremy Sergey (right) and Danny McDorman from Coast Guard Station Sault Ste Marie, Mich., use ratchet straps to secure an 18-foot airboat, a

fan-propelled vessel designed to be able to operate in a minimum of six inches of water, after a safety patrol near Manvel, N.D.,



Thursday, April 2, 2009. The Coast Guard, Grand Forks County Sheriff's Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have conducted safety checks on residents who were stranded by the recent flooding in North Dakota. **As this edition is being prepared the Auxiliary Communications Response Teams are again in the Dakotas providing support to the Guardians.**

| US Coast Guard Auxiliary Operations Contact Information | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| Program Area | Staff Member | E-Mail Address |
| Department Chief | David A. Elliot | DC-O@cgaux.us |
| Deputy Department Chief | Robert T. Shafer | DC-Od@cgaux.us |
| Incident Management | Linda Nelson | echopeep@cgaux.us |
| Aviation | Wilson Riggan | cgauxwilson@rigganrpgroup.com |
| Communications | William H. Scholz | w1hjcw@aol.com |
| Surface Operations | Gary A. Taylor | gtaylor@alaska.net |
| Education | Bruce C. Pugh | DVC_OE@yahoo.com |
| CG-5421 Operations Division Chief | LCDR Kathryn C. Dunbar, USCG | Kathryn.C.Dunbar@uscg.mil |
| CG-5421 Surface Operations Branch Chief | BMC Russell Woodill, USCG | Russell.Woodill@uscg.mil |