District Seven Auxiliary Aviation

Operations and Safety Newsletter

Jan – Feb 2014

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Introduction – DSO-AV

D7 AuxAir Team,

Welcome to the first issue of a new breed of Newsletter to keep everyone abreast of recent and current events and plans, applications of technology and promulgation of flight safety information.

This Newsletter will be working in parallel with the AuxAir web site that is under construction. More details of both will be available at each of the upcoming Workshops, but the general idea is to use the Newsletter to "push" operational and flight safety information to everyone's inbox, while using the web site as a resource for anyone (including new recruits) to "pull" policy, procedures and archives.

DSO-AV Ken Plesser and Lt "Rafy" Ramos fly the MH-65

Lee Bertman, the new ADSO-AVX, is to be commended for such a substantial undertaking. As Lee will be telling you: this is your newsletter... contributions from any and all of the D7 AuxAir Team is solicited.

The Workshop season is finally here. The DFSO and I plan to attend all four, and we look forward to greeting everyone at their home Air Station.

Ken Plesser

Introduction – ADSO-AVX (Technology)

Welcome to the new District 7 Aviation Newsletter. This is a continuation of an e-publication Aviation Newsletter developed several years ago. The re-birth of this project is a joint effort of our DSO—AV Ken Plesser and DFSO Doug Armstrong.

What is new in the Newsletter is the inclusion of Operations and Safety in one e-pub. The Newsletter will be integrated with the new D7 AuxAir Resource Website, which will expand the availability of Operations and Safety materials. This is the introductory Newsletter intended to get the e-pub re-started and encourage the contribution of materials (including photos) from the ADSOs and AACs. All Members, including Active Duty aviators, are encouraged to submit materials.

You need not be an expert writer nor spend endless hours perfecting your prose. We are happy to work with descriptive materials especially where supplemented with photos. As a matter of OPSEC and Policy the identity of crews and aircraft will not be disclosed where missions are of an LE or sensitive nature. While we encourage you to share this in with Auxiliary and Active Duty Coast Guard, wide circulation in social media is not approved.

The lead article details a multi-agency $3.5 million drug bust in the Mona Passage, PR. The drug boat was found by an Aux crew from AirSta Borinquen. An important find in Miami was the location and rescue of 39 migrants southwest of Key West by a Miami Aux crew. Our Aviators continue to make a difference providing a "Force Multiplier" to the active duty Coast Guard.

Any suggestions (and/or pictures) would be most welcome. Please submit your writing and materials to: lbertman@comcast.net. If need be, you can reach me at 772-492-7187.

Lee Bertman, Editor

Headline - CGNEWS

Major Drug Bust in Puerto Rico with Auxiliary Support

The Coast Guard Auxiliary aircraft departed at 1320 on January 20, 2014 for a pre-briefed mission to fly a West Coast patrol covering the Mona Passage (the body of water between Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic). After departure the Aux aircraft proceeded along the coastline to the west, circled and photographic several boats.

Suspected TOI NW of AirSta BQN – intercepted by AuxAir and Cutter Farallon

Before reaching Aguadilla, Sector San Juan tasked the Aux aircraft to search for a white and blue sport fishing vessel with three persons on board. As the Aux aircraft approached Desecheo, Sector re-tasked it to fly directly to meet the Cutter. Communication was established with the Cutter and shortly thereafter the Cutter gave the Aux aircraft a new position to search for a TOI described at a 20 foot Yola with three men on board. Vessel was not at position provided but was found approximately four miles north heading eastbound at a high rate of speed. When spotted the Yola turned west toward the Dominican Republic.

Upon reaching the vessel, the Aux crew took several photos which positively identified the boat as the actual target specified by Sector. The Aircraft immediately called Sector with position and description of the TOI while photos were transmitted to Sector. The Aux aircraft was advised to maintain its distance. The Coast Guard dispatched a MH-65 Dolphin helicopter and an HC-144 Ocean Sentry twin-engine aircraft. Upon arrival of the two aircraft, the Auxiliary aircraft was released to continue its patrol.

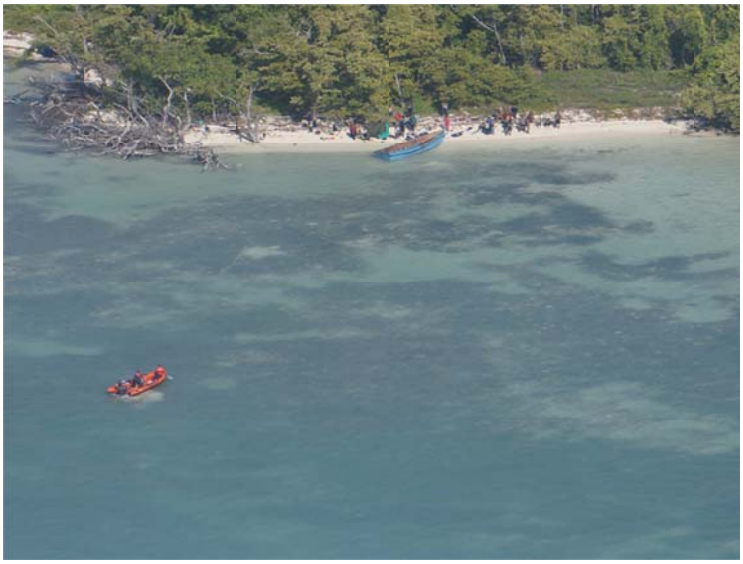
Continuing with a Coast Guard press release dated January 30, 2014 “The suspected smugglers became complaint as the Coast Guard Cutter Farallon arrived on scene, the Cutter small boat and came along the suspect vessel which was taking on water and sinking.” The contraband was identified as cocaine with a street value of $ 3.5 million.

The vessel, crew and drugs were turned over to Drug Enforcement Administration special agents and Customs and Border Protection agents — an example of interagency cooperation and excellent support from the AirSta Borinquen Auxiliary Air Team (http://coastguardnews.com/coast-guard-cutter-farallon-offloads-3-5-million-cocaine-shipment/2014/01/30/)

Further, CHDIRAUX CAPT Tom Boross opened his remarks Friday morning at NTRAIN by reading a Sector San Juan press release emphasizing the role of the Auxiliary aircraft in this important multi-agency drug bust.

Air Station Miami Aux Report

On January 11, 2014, a single engine AuxAir aircraft was on a Coastal Chug patrol in support of Sector Key West. The aircraft, piloted by Peter Hecht, with Air Crew Marty Rosenberg in the right seat, received tasking from Sector Key West to investigate a Good Samaritan report of a group of migrants ashore on the Marquesas Keys. Upon arrival the Aux crew located a large blue rustic vessel next to a substantial group of migrants on the beach.



USCG moves in to aid migrants

The AuxAir facility remained on scene for over an hour until the Cutter Nantucket arrived to rescue the migrants. The AuxAir team stayed to assist with communications between the cutter and the small boat, which were having radio communications issues.

One of the migrants was seriously injured while attempting to disembark the vessel being struck by vessel's the propeller. An Air Station Miami MH-65D was launched to medevac the injured migrant to Jackson Memorial hospital.

A total of 39 migrants had landed in one of the largest single migrant events in several years in the largest rustic vessels ever seen in the Key West AOR. The remaining migrants were transported to Sector Key West where they were turned over to Customs and Border Patrol for "Dry Foot" processing.

Air Station Borinquen

Quarterly Auxiliary/Sector/AirSta Coordination Meeting

On December 14, 2013 AuxAir BQN hosted their Quarterly Sector/AirSta/AuxAir meeting at Sector San Juan. A total of 31 members of Team Coast Guard attended with 21 AuxAir members and 10 USCG Active Duty officers present. Attending from Sector San Juan were the Commanding Officer, the Chief of Enforcement, and officers from Enforcement, Facilities Inspections, Communications, and Intel. Attending from Air Station Borinquen were the Operations Officer, the Assistant Operations Officer and the Auxiliary Liaison Officer. Opening Remarks from the Sector SJ CO were followed by a briefing from OPS at AirSta BQN and an Awards presentation. This was followed by short presentations from the Auxiliary's National Division Chief for Aviation and AirSta BQN's Auxiliary Aviation Coordinator. Other presentations included Operational Communications, a Search and Rescue Case Study from the Mona during December 2013, and recent Intelligence Trends. Much of the afternoon session was devoted to an AuxAir Workshop, which focused on mission safety. Topics included Operational Risk Management, Environmental Prerequisites for Ordered Missions, and Crew Qualification Requirements.

CDR Torres recognizes Chuck Fisher

Doug Armstrong DFSO and LCDR Dill presenting

Migrant Apprehension and Support to Customs and Border Protection

An 18 ft yola with seven illegal immigrants on board was spotted by an Auxiliary crew in the Mona Passage. Immediately after being spotted the boat crew the tarped up to become less conspicuous. The Auxiliary Aircraft remained on scene for one and one-half hours until darkness set in at which time they had to return to base. Shortly thereafter, a Caribbean Air and Marine Dash 8 aircraft reacquired the TOI based on the position provided by Auxiliary Aircraft. The CAM aircraft was then joined by a CG Cutter and helicopter plus a CBP fast boat. When the yola resumed its high-speed journey to make landfall on the north shore of Puerto Rico, the CBP fast boat shot out its engines and the illegal immigrants were detained. Members had an opportunity to view the videotapes of the CBP intercept and disabling of the boat at the Quarterly Meeting referenced above.

Migrant Yola NW of PR.

Introduction to the New DFSO

"Perspective" – is a word used by our DSO-AV in his regular communications to the team. For our first newsletter I thought it worth considering how our perspective of ourselves, the USCG, our missions and our crews affect our performance and the safety of our operations.

As your new District 7 Flight Safety Officer I think it's appropriate I share a few of my perspectives on being a safe and effective AuxAir member. First, I am pleased to be working with all of the departments in D7 and National aviation to promote safe effective mission execution. A safety culture is not developed in a vacuum and we have a first rate D7 team.

I am an Aircraft Commander, IP/FE with over 500 USCG mission hours, and 4200 hours of total time including a single pilot type rating in my AuxAir facility a Citation Mustang. I have been the ADFSO and an AAAC at Borinquen for three years. In 2013, I flew 303 airborne mission hours for the USCG including over 180 hours of LE support and multiple international missions including flights to GTMO, the DR and Great Inagua.


Active Duty and Auxiliary Crews brief before flying a patrol on an MH-65

Having the privilege of serving alongside my active duty friends has shaped my perspective of what it means to be a volunteer Coast Guard Aviator and how to get the job done safely. When we talk about a safety culture we are really talking about a USCG safety culture, one that acknowledges the special challenges we face and the training required for us to be effective in the field every day. This year will be focused on supporting this culture in AuxAir.

Being a Coast Guard aviator requires a different mindset than being a GA pilot or a fighter pilot or an airline pilot. Auxiliary pilots are more than "pilots" flying for AuxAir, we must always see ourselves as professionals who are held to the Coast Guard standard. Regardless of how we choose to fly when we are not flying under orders, we are expected to be members of the Coast Guard and conduct ourselves according. Our actions on and off duty reflect on the service as a whole.

During a recent presentation my Sector CO told a group of 200 military professionals and volunteers, "When I send an auxiliary aircraft out on a SAR mission, I know I can expect the same level of proficiency from that crew as I do from an active duty crew." In 2013 I flew over 35 hours on eight SAR cases; some quick math suggests that over 75 people were lost on these cases. I would hate to think my crew overflew a PIW who later died because we failed to see him. This level of AD/Aux interoperability is hard earned but comes with major responsibilities; we protect it every day through the good decision making used on the next AuxAir mission we fly. The lives of people who need our help are in our hands; our devotion to duty must be without question.

To be safe and effective members of AuxAir, we must first embrace the Coast Guard Ethos, the best known words which describe this "spirit of a culture" are honor, respect and devotion to duty. One good way to embrace this ethos, as Coast Guard Aviators, is to be professional in all things AuxAir. Decision making in the context of this Ethos allows disciplined initiative while focusing our attention on the safe conduct of each evolution.


Change of Command, AuxAir represented with three aircraft.

Like many of you, I anchor my thinking beginning a few hours (or even days) before each mission by developing a big picture perspective for the operation, thinking it through and asking a few questions like the ones below:

1) Am I ready for this mission?
2) Is my aircraft the right asset for the mission?
3) Can I get my mission done under the current environmental conditions?
4) Do I have the right crew for my mission?
5) What should my crew brief look like – what do they need to know and what do I need from them?
6) Have I mitigated the risks I can?
7) What can I do to be the as effective as possible?
8) Can I do this safely?

As my crew assembles for the mission, I imagine the OPS boss is on the flight, what would he say about how we performed as a crew and how we did on our mission? The Coast Guard culture of respect, safety and the commandant's directive of disciplined initiative guides our decision making process. On the flight, if in doubt, I imagine myself explaining my actions to the XO, if the conversation goes well I consider moving forward, if not we change our plans.

From my perspective, the next time you put on your flight suit it's appropriate take a moment and consider, you are representing Coast Guard Aviation. Your performance reflects on those who went before us, with us and those who will follow. We honor the service by conducting ourselves as safe professionals. Wear the uniform proudly, get the mission done and come home safely.

I will be attending all four workshops this year and I look forward to meeting everyone. Please reach out to me if you have any safety concerns.

Doug Armstrong DFSO – District 7 AuxAir doug@ratio.com

Air Station Savannah Photography

No doubt a capable camera and trained crew are critical components to equip a mission. The camera/crew combination permits:

- Taking multiple photos documenting the TOI, pollution event, rescue etc.
- Ability to examine to "blow up" the event on the camera screen or transferred to an iPad to evaluate the image(s).
- Possibility of transmitting photos to the AirSta or Sector for their evaluation and response. Transmissions can be on the ground or while airborne.
- Binoculars can be a useful supplement to surveillance and acquisition of targets. But it can be difficult to use binoculars which can induce air sickness.

David Cristol AirSta SVN – Wreck of the Christina Leigh

Super-zoom and full sized cameras which can achieve a 20X or more zoom are needed for best performance. But any camera is better than none. Some factors to consider in taking photos include:

- Make sure the crew is trained with the use of the camera and input initial settings. Clean camera lenses and aircraft windows. Charge the camera batteries.
- Do not touch your camera or upper body to the aircraft window or interior. That will transmit vibrations to the camera.
- An initial setting of 1/500 and f12 makes sense. ISA probably should not exceed 300-600 depending on the camera model.
- Make sure that the camera has acquired its autofocus target before taking the photo(s). The f12 depth of

David Cristol AirSta SVN – Wreck of the Christina Leigh

field (or greater) can be helpful since shooting through the aircraft window seems to adversely affect autofocus. Shoot at a direct (90 degree) angle through the window to minimize distortion.

- Keep your arms tight to your body to help stabilize the camera.
- Watch for lighting and the position of the sun which will change dramatically as you circle the TOI.
- The crew needs to vector the pilot with reference to the TOI position using the "clock" (target a 3 o'clock) method and suggesting heading changes and rate of turns.
- **The pilot needs to fly the aircraft not look for or at the TOI.** The crew needs to monitor airspeed, altitude and bank angles communicating variances to the pilot promptly and vigorously.

The review and use of the photos is a critical stage in supporting the patrol:

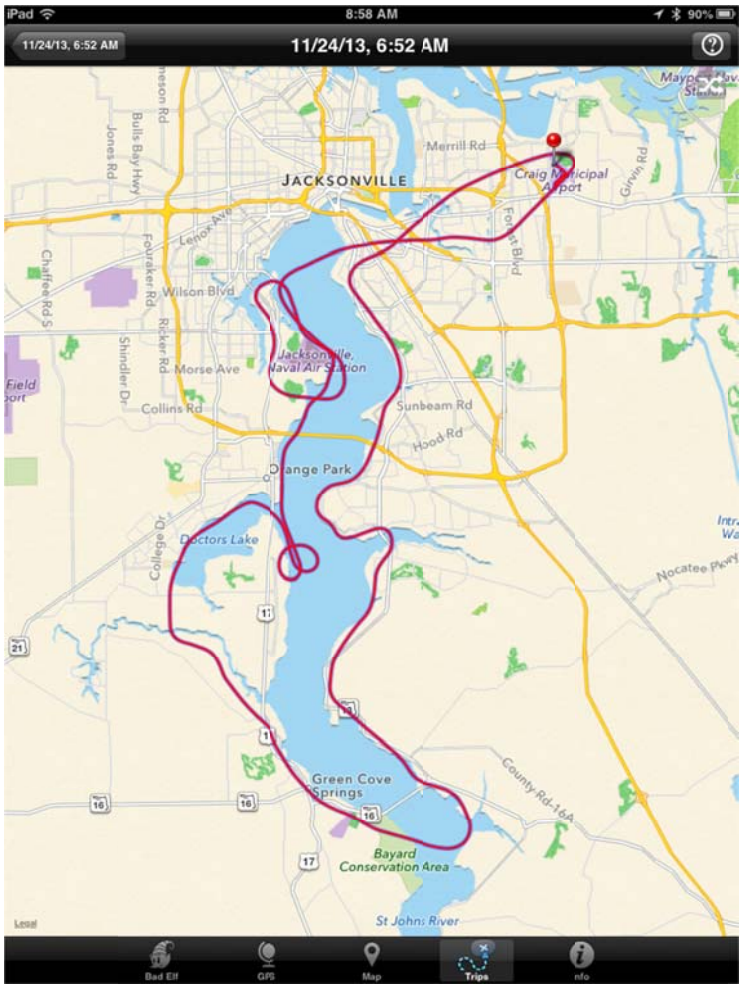
- Initial review the back screen of the camera using the controls to identify and "blow-up" the target. The pilot needs to fly the aircraft not review the photos or manipulate the camera. The crew needs to be fully trained in the manipulation of the controls for each camera.
- Photos can be transferred to the iPad or Android equivalent for better viewing.
- Once on an iPad (which has 4G or LTE connectivity) the photos can be transmitted from the aircraft to Sector or the AirSta. There might be issues as to the megapixel size of the photos. Photos can be edited on-screen to minimize this problem.

David Cristol AirSta SVN – Wreck of the Christina Leigh. Note: Oil Slick.

- Contrary to some reports it is legal to transmit photos while airborne. However service can be spotty depending on location and service provider.
- You need to make prior arrangements with the recipients to secure the right email addresses and permitted attachment size.
- These techniques have been proven very effective operationally all across the District.

Technology Apps for Tracking

David Cristol uses the bad ELF GPS engine and associated App producing the attached mission track. Another powerful App is GPS Tracks HD. It records GPS altitude, ground speed, heading and long/lat for the entire mission! This information is available for any moment in the mission.



One possible application is linking timestamped photos with the lat/long at the time the photo is taken, along with the information detailed above. This is a potentially powerful tool. Another is as an aid when requiring a TOI is required.

A screenshot (attached) shows the information and hints at the full functionality of the GPS Tracks App. The "bar or vertical line" can be moved to show the full information as any point of time in the mission. If the receiving party has the App then fully functioning information can be emailed in .gpx format. This provides a full documentation of the mission.

A car trip used to illustrate the App. Obviously the use in an aircraft would provide different results.