

So you want to help America  
The Coast Guard Auxiliary is more than just boats...  
*Four years later*

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In December, 2001 I wrote my first article for the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. In that article, entitled “So you want to help America; The Coast Guard Auxiliary is more than just boats...” I said:

“A few short months ago, life for America changed forever. Just as it did some 60 years ago, Americans were shaken from complacency by acts so horrific, they belie simple explanations. Even back then, the USCG Auxiliary (then called the Reserve) was playing a major role in recreational boating safety and search and rescue.

Today, more than ever, the Auxiliary may be just the place you want to be, helping both your neighborhood and your country in a time of need. Make no mistake about it, both the Coast Guard and your country need all the help it can get, and not just for Homeland Defense, or to fight terrorism, but in everyday aspects that we still take for granted.”

Well, a few short months ago, life for many Americans changed forever. Just as it did four years ago, Americans were shaken from their complacency by acts of nature so horrific, they belie simple explanations. Just as the Coast Guard Auxiliary played a role in the response to September 11<sup>th</sup>, where my original article anchored, so it is true that Auxiliarists played a role in the Search, Rescue and Recovery efforts of those who were the victims of both Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

Thousands of Auxiliarists responded to the Hurricanes. Some did so as Auxiliarists, serving in a diverse responsibilities and jobs. Others responded for a call for assistance and became Disaster Assistance Employees of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), whence they then provided support and aid directly to the victims of the Hurricane.

And still other Auxiliarists, in their roles as private citizens, responded in a variety of ways, always mindful of the Auxiliary slogan and the Coast Guard motto - *Semper Paratus* – meaning always ready. They responded as part of private search and rescue companies and foundations, faith based organizations and as individuals.

They proved their mettle, each and every Auxiliarist, whether they sat behind a plane yoke, flying sortie after sortie, delivering supplies and personnel, or taking pictures for damage assessment.

They proved their mettle whether sitting behind a computer screen and telephone, sending and receiving messages to bring the Auxiliary and Coast Guard story to the public or were part of the Integrated Command Centers assisting in making the largest Coast Guard response in its 215 years.

They proved their mettle, whether responding as trained medical personnel with state-run agencies or arranging for donations of much needed boats, and delivering them across half the continent.

These men and women proved their mettle by having Honor, Respect and showing Devotion to Duty, whether the duty was with America’s Volunteer Lifesavers or with other organizations.

What makes Auxiliarists unique is that when they respond to a disaster, as an Auxiliarist, they must negotiate with their employers since members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary are not covered by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) as are National Guardsman and members of the Reserves.

America has been a land of volunteers since Revolutionary days. "Soon after it [a fire] is seen and cry'd out, the Place is crowded by active Men of different Ages, Professions and Titles who, as of one Mind and Rank, apply themselves with all Vigilance and Resolution, according to their Abilities, to the hard Work of conquering the increasing fire.", wrote Benjamin Franklin in a Pennsylvania Gazette article of 1733.

Some two hundred and seventy years later, America still relies upon the volunteer spirit. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary embodies that sprit, and you too can be a part of a multi-mission, multi-faceted organization that isn’t just about boats and boating.

Let’s see if some of the roles that the Coast Guard Auxiliary is involved with meets your desires...

<b>United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Opportunities</b>	
<b>Desire</b>	<b>Fulfillment in the Auxiliary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>You want to help our country with Homeland Defense.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operations</li> <li>Air Operations</li> <li>Communications</li> <li>Marine Safety</li> <li>Health Care Service Opportunites</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>So, you’re not really a boater, but your all for the environment.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marine Safety And Environmental Protection</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Search and Rescue intrigues you.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search and Rescue</li> <li>• Air Operations</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>You're interested in marine science, and feel that the fishing industry isn't safe.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Fishing Vessel Operation</li> <li>• Operation Safe Catch</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>You a history buff and you want to help the Library of Congress record oral histories of World War I and World War II veterans.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library of Congress Interviewers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>You've always wanted to teach, but never had the opportunity.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Boating Safety</li> <li>• Member Training</li> <li>• Public Education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Role Model for young adults/teenagers</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Counselors</li> <li>• Project AIM (Academy Introduction Mission)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>You're a Kayaker and you want to help</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot programs are underway for kayak marine safety patrols</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I'm a Personal Water Craft/Jet Ski person.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PWC operators work along side Auxiliary boats in Maritime Domain Awareness patrols</li> </ul>

You can make your opportunity in the USCG Auxiliary. That's right, the Auxiliary can provide you the opportunity to both learn new skills and provide public service right where you live! All they ask is that you volunteer. All you need to do is ask.

Some positions may require outside education and licensure. Coast Guard and/or Auxiliary training may take some time, and some of the qualifications you may earn require additional maintenance time, but with those exceptions there is no minimum number of hours you need to commit.

So here we are - it is now four years later. The one thing in this world that is certain is that the need for volunteers is not diminishing, but increasing. Why not call for more information about safe boating courses, or to inquire on how to join the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary at [www.cgaux.org](http://www.cgaux.org) or call **1-877-875-6296**.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of Team Coast Guard. Founded in 1939 by an Act of Congress as the US Coast Guard Reserves and re-designated the Auxiliary in 1941. The 31,000 volunteer members (men and women) donate thousands of hours in support of Coast Guard missions.