

USCG AUXILIARY 8th Coastal Region

District Diversity Newsletter

February 2020

1st Edition

"Moving Beyond Simple Tolerance"

Promoting an inclusive atmosphere of acceptance and respect and creating an environment, which fosters an appreciation of the values, skills, and abilities of each individual member.



Diversity Across the Auxiliary

By Michael Smith
8th Coastal Region DSO-DV

The Auxiliary as a whole, has made leaps and bounds towards diversity for many years. Along the West Coast, Hawaii, Alaska, & the U.S. Territories, we see diversity that is not found among divisions and flotillas of the 8th Coastal Region. Demographics show in 8th Coastal, we are lacking in the areas of minorities in the Auxiliary, only 18.04% of the District consist of minorities & only around 15% are female. We must strive to make changes in our target audience when it comes to recruiting. We also must look beyond barriers to elect more diverse leaders. Outreach in many areas are also nonexistent which is something all of us should strive to improve. One idea, from one of our SO-DVs, was to go into the schools in out lying areas and in low income areas and provide boating education.

The Boy Scouts of America partnership of Sea Scouts is a great opportunity also to improve diversity in the District. This program is coed and involves youth from 14-21. This is where we will get our next group of Gold Side as well as Silver Side members from! It is an exciting time to be in the Coast Guard Auxiliary as we step foot in what many are calling again the New roaring 20s! Let us all take a page from our Scouts and Do our Best, to do our duty! Semper Paratus!



March is National Women's History Month

Taken from USCG History PDF:

Nineteen-year-old twin sisters Genevieve and Lucille Baker were the first US Coast Guard women to serve in uniform. They transferred from the old US Naval Coastal Defense Reserve during World War I. Before 1919 there was a push by the Navy Reserve, that extended to the Coast Guard to enlist women as yeomen or what would be called "yeomanettes". Because of the scarcity of records, we only know of a handful of "yomanettes" that served during the 1st World War. Over the following years women would continue to grow in number in the Coast Guard. The United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve, known as the SPARS, was the World War II women's branch of the USCG Reserve. Dorothy Stratton a US Naval Reserve Officer was made the first director of SPARS and given the rank of Lieutenant Commander. In 1944 the US Coast Guard officially opened its doors to African American women. The five African-American women who served in the SPARS were: Olivia Hooker, D. Winifred Byrd, Julia Mosley, Yvonne Cumberbatch, and Aileen Cooke.

Cont. on pg. 2



Capt. Dorothy Stratton

Olivia Hooker & Aileen Cooke aboard U.S.S. Commodore during boot training.



National Women's History Month Cont.

Women's roles in the US Coast Guard continued to grow and in December of 1973 the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard was abolished allowing women to join the Active Coast Guard and Reserves along side men. A few years later in 1976 the first female cadets would attend the academy and graduate 13 young ladies in the summer of 1980. This new area of women in the Coast Guard would give new opportunities for women in the coming years. LtJG became the first female to commanding officer afloat a year earlier in 1979 when she took command of the USCGC Newagen! Women continue to this day to make landmark changes and 1st in the Coast Guard!

Meet your ANACO-Diversity

Commodore David G. Porter



Our Assistant National Commodore of Diversity is a Graduate of LaSalle Military Academy Class of '83. Has a MS in Protection Management and has worked for the NYPD as a Training Sargent. Before taking this position, he was a DSO-Marine Safety for 1st District 1st SR.

African Americans in the US Coast Guard

adapted from USCG African Americans in Coast Guard pdf.

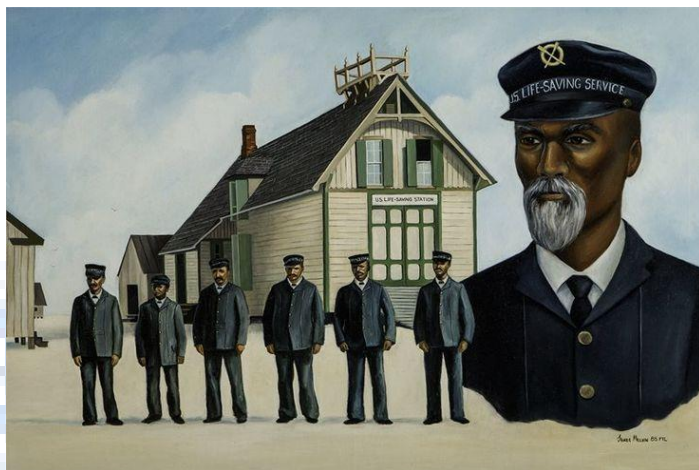
One of the first government services to break the color barrier was the forerunner of the US Coast Guard, The Revenue Service of the United States. In the year 1831 it was ruled that that the Revenue Service could employ persons of color that were born free. In another big first President Abraham Lincoln signed the commission for the first black officer in the Revenue Service in the year 1865. Michael Healy was commissioned a 3rd Lieutenant and was never truly recognized as a "person of color" during his lifetime. Five years later the first black men who were not born free would be given duty at Cedar Point Light station in Maryland. On 1 March 1876 African-American Surfman Jeremiah Munden went in harm's way as part of the Outer Banks' Jones Hill Station crew attempting to rescue the crew of the grounded Italian bark Nuova Ottavia. All the surfmen were killed when the Italian ship's crew scrambled onto the surfboat and capsized it in very heavy surf. Munden and the rest of the Jones Hill men were the first U.S. Life Saving Servicemen to die in the line of duty and Munden became first African-American Coast Guardsman to give his life in a rescue case. In another landmark 1st the Revenue Service was the 1st to give command afloat to a man of color when the afore mentioned now Lt. Michael Healy was given command of the Cutter Chandler. Making him the first African-American to command a United States Vessel! In keeping with ground breaking changes to federal standard at the time five years later the Revenue Service would give command of Pea Island Life Saving Station to Richard Etheridge, making him the first man of color to command a U.S. Government installation! Over the next 50 years African Americans would make leaps and bounds in the Revenue Service, earning Bronze Stars during the Spanish American War. In 1915 when the U.S. Life Saving Service was merged with the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service to form the Coast Guard, Lewis Wescott would be the Coast Guards first African American shore facility commander.

African Americans in the Coast Guard Cont.

Clarence Samuels, a Hispanic African-American, enlisted in the Coast Guard as a Seaman, Second Class in the year 1920. Segregation was the common practice in all the services, as indeed it was throughout much of American society. From 1920 to 1928, the Coast Guard was engaged in the apprehension of the rum runners seeking to circumvent the Prohibition laws. Samuels served aboard various vessels, among them the USCGC Earp (twice), USCGC Swift, USCGC Shawnee, USCGC Mojave and USCGC Argus during those years. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States on July 21, 1923. On July 18, 1928, he assumed command of the Coast Guard Patrol Boat AB-15, operating out of Savannah, Georgia. This cemented his spot in history, becoming the first African-American to command a Coast Guard vessel since Michael Healy. In 1942 Samuels was promoted to the rank of Warrant officer in response to a wartime act of congress. He was then reassigned to the Coast Guard Training Station at Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, New York and served as the Director of Visual Signaling for Recruits. His position was one of great responsibility because it was part of a major innovation in the Coast Guard's manpower policy. On August 14, 1943, Samuels was sent to the North Atlantic where he served aboard the USS Sea Cloud, a vessel which operated as a weather station. Samuels, who became the damage control officer on sea Cloud, was promoted to the rank of lieutenant junior grade on August 31. After the war Samuels lieutenantancy was revoked and he was reduced in rank to chief photographer's mate.

In February 1943, Louis C. Etheridge, Jr. and an all African-American gun crew on board the USCGC Campbell played a key role in sinking the German submarine U-606. Etheridge was later awarded a Bronze Star and a Letter of Commendation from the Commandant for his heroic actions.

On 14 April 1943 Joseph C. Jenkins graduated as Ensign in the Coast Guard Reserve, becoming the first recognized commissioned African-American officer in the Coast Guard and the first to graduate from Officer Candidate School at the Coast Guard Academy. More history to follow in next newsletter!



Lewis Wescott & the men of Pea Island



LtJG Clarence Samuels



Ensign J. Jenkins

Coast Guard Pilot makes History!

By Hope Hodge Seck on Military.com

March 9, 2019

(submitted by Eric Beck SO-HR 081-03)



When Hurricane Harvey slammed into southeast Texas with Category 4 intensity in late August 2017, causing devastating flooding and damage, many in the Houston metropolitan area struggled to find a way out of town. But with airports closed and flights grounded, Coast Guard Lt. Ronaqua Russell and her counterparts out of Coast Guard Sector/Air Station Corpus Christi were on the way in. Russell, 28, was one of eight Coast Guard pilots to be awarded the prestigious Coast Guard Air Medal for operations in the wake of the deadly hurricane. And the award, presented Feb. 21 in Tuskegee, Alabama, made history: she is the first African-American woman in the service to ever receive the Air Medal. But despite what she calls the "surreal experience" of receiving the award, her focus is still on the mission ahead and her love of the job.

An HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft pilot, Russell had already been at work in the days before the storm made landfall Aug. 25, flying along the beachline south of Galveston down to Brownsville with Cmdr. Steve Pittman, the aircraft commander, and linking up with maritime search-and-rescue. The team would be back in the air just hours after the storm hit, conducting damage assessments and transporting people and gear in conditions too rough for most.

"We were tasked with doing damage assessment from the Brownsville area up to Port O'Connor, Russell told Military.com, describing a coastal port about midway between Corpus Christi and Galveston. "But when we got to Port O'Connor, the hurricane was still there ... it was so bad we ended up turning back."

The weather would not stop them, however, from making a first landing in Houston amid stormy conditions, on a partially flooded runway.

"That approach and landing into Houston was the worst weather that I'd seen up to that point," Russell said. "The visibility was low; it was raining really hard."

But though the circumstances were frightening, the pilots knew it was up to them to complete the logistics and transport mission: nobody else was flying in and out of Houston. The Coast Guard was in the air alone.

It would be a multi-day marathon for Russell and the other pilots, who weren't sure when backup and rest would arrive. They ended up flying for nearly five days before new pilots, recalled to assist with the hurricane, arrived.

But for Russell, the challenges that came with the hurricane did not end there. Shifted from her flying role to a position at the Harvey incident command post as air coordinator, her attention was pulled to another hurricane making landfall 2,000 miles away in the Virgin Islands. Russell grew up in the Virgin Islands; her mother and grandmother still lived there.

"During that time, that was when [Hurricane Irma] hit and I didn't hear from my mom for a bit," Russell said. " ... I was really stressed out; everybody knew that they just got hit by a Category 5."

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Her first instinct was to make her way to the Virgin Islands to find her family members, but members of her chain of command convinced her it wasn't wise. Ultimately, she was able to help negotiate travel for them from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico via boat, and ultimately to the states. While her mother soon returned home, her grandmother, Annette Chinnery, decided to stay with Russell, even moving with her eventually to her next duty station in Miami.

"My grandma's really resilient ... she's my buddy," Russell said.

Still on the job, Russell would ultimately be sent to support storm relief in the wake of yet another hurricane, Maria, which cut an ugly swath across Puerto Rico in September 2017.

Following the storms, life would move on and Russell would leave Corpus Christi and transfer to Air Station Miami. But late last year, she was notified that she would receive the Air Medal for her actions in response to Harvey.

The medal is awarded for acts of heroism or meritorious achievement during flight. Russell said she was excited to learn of the award but didn't realize she had made history by earning it.

"My supervisor ... he was sitting next to me, and he said, 'Ronny, do you realize you're going to be the first black woman to get this?' It was actually because of him, he was the first one to bring it to my attention. Then it blew up.

" At a ceremony at Tuskegee, famous for being the training ground for a group of African-American pilots who performed heroically in World War II, Russell received her medal from Adm. Charles Ray, vice commandant of the Coast Guard.



We look forward this year to seeing divisions and flotillas in 8th Coastal submitting articles for our Newsletters!

There will be 3 more this year.

Submit your article today to the DSO-DV!

We look forward to seeing what you SO-DVs and FSO-DVs have, to show us!

SEMPER PARATUS!

