



FLOTILLA 04-76
March 2019

LIFELINE NEWSLETTER
Volume #2



Shipmates, good day and welcome Spring-finally! As we approach warmer weather we should all be thinking about what opportunities are ahead of us to start gearing up for boating season. Our mission, as usual, is to be pro-active in educating the public on water recreational safety. Communicating this will be a tremendous task if we are to reduce the likelihood of fatalities along the coastal waterways. Vessel Safety checks play a key role in allowing us to increase our presence as well. **Remember-We Are The Guardians of the Waterways!**

Semper Paratus

Charles J Miller, II FC-
FSO-PB
Editor

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.

Harry S Truman

NEW 04-76 BRIDGE

During our February meeting, we swore in the new bridge. Along with this celebration, our special guests included-DCDR Pete Lacey, VDC Scott Graham and DC-Capt-C Kurt Sarac, who spoke to the membership offering their insights and appreciation of 04-76 activities over the years. It truly was a great evening and we appreciate their support and encouragement.



Shown: FSO-VE Scott Sigman, VDC Scott Graham, FSO-HR-PE-SR Ralph Onesti, VC Dot French, FC Charles Miller, FSO- MS Justin Morgan, DCapt-Kurt Sarac, FSO-CM Jim Weiler, FSO-IS Hank Harrison, FSO-VP Glenn Oldak, FSO-CS-Op Ash Kernan, FSO-FN Allen Stiteler, and DCDR Pete Lacey.

Shipmates, I encourage you all to try to attend our meetings going forward. We have an aggressive agenda ahead, and need all members to participate. The work requires 100% support by us all in order to achieve our goals. Do your best to lend a hand!

We are Team Coast Guard



WOMENS HISTORY MONTH

March is Women's History Month and in recognition of this here is an article to highlight our comrades' achievements in Armed Services and particularly- the Coast Guard.

Making history in the sky

Originally Posted by Diana Sherbs, Monday, March 4, 2019

Written by Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Kelley



Coast Guard Lt. Ronaqua Russell flies an Air Station Corpus Christi HC-144 in support of Hurricane Maria response efforts in October 2018. Photo courtesy of Lt. Ronaqua Russell.

Aviation history was made last week when Lt. Ronaqua Russell, a native of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, became the first African-American female aviator in the Coast Guard to receive the Air Medal. The first of two ceremonies to honor her

achievement took place at Tuskegee's Moton Field Thursday, Feb. 21. This is the same location where, 77 years ago, the first African-American aviators in the U.S. Armed Services broke down racial barriers to earn their wings, and later go on to fly several heroic and critical combat missions in World War II. One of these Tuskegee Airmen was 1st Lt. Henry E. Rohlsen, Russell's Great Uncle and namesake for the international airport in St. Croix.

The Air Medal is awarded to an individual who distinguishes themselves by heroic or meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. Russell received this honor in recognition for her actions in response to Hurricane Harvey, one of the most destructive storms in U.S. history.

Having a knack for "being the first", her Coast Guard HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft was the very first in the sky following behind the Category 4 storm's destructive track. Russell along with Cmdr. Steve Pittman, the aircraft commander, piloted the plane through the outer bands of Harvey, hitting tropical storm force winds, and zero visibility conditions. Navigating landings on partially flooded runways, they delivered critical supplies and personnel in support of the ongoing rescue and port recovery efforts.

"Leaving Corpus there was not a single aircraft in the sky," said Russell. "And on our approach into the Houston area there were only a few helicopters. It was eerily quiet."



Photo Illustration of Coast Guard Lt. Ronaqua Russell standing beside Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry, coupled with undated photo of her Uncle and Tuskegee Airman Henry E. Rohlsen. U.S. Coast Guard graphic.

Russell continued flying supply and damage assessments for the next several days, and then served at the Incident Command Post for the Corpus Christi area helping from the ground as well.

Shortly after a week and a half into the response she couldn't help but take notice of news reports of a storm brewing in the Atlantic. The eyewall of another hurricane was taking shape and looking to be much stronger and bigger than Harvey. A few days later, her home in the Virgin Islands would take a huge hit from the Category 5 Irma with winds topping off at 225 miles per hour.

Unable to evacuate, her family took shelter in their homes. Throughout the storm Russell tried to call her mom with little success, until one point a call finally started to ring. Then it

picked up, for just a brief second she heard her mom's voice ... then the call dropped.

"This was a really tough moment, because I wasn't sure if that was a cry for help, or excitement, or what," said Russell. "I just knew I needed to do everything I could to get to them."

After more than 36 hours of desperate attempts, Russell was finally able to reconnect with her family and verify that while there was some damage around the home, they were okay. That moment of relief was interrupted by another storm that started to build in the Atlantic, Hurricane Maria.

Russell took to the sky again, assisting with evacuations and large supply movements and doing all she could to help. Between performing these missions she simultaneously arranged for her mother and grandmother to get to Puerto Rico by boat, and fly commercially to Texas. Here they would live with her for several months while homes were repaired and the islands recovered. Her grandmother accompanied her when she transferred to her new duty station in Miami.

"She keeps me on my toes," said Russell, about her grandmother Annette Chinnery. "I'm really a miniature version of her."

Because her family could not attend the ceremony in Tuskegee they came to a separate one in Miami, Florida, Wednesday.



Coast Guard Lt. Ronaqua Russell stands with her family and Coast Guard Vice Adm. (Ret) Manson Brown after Air Medal ceremony at Air Station Miami, Opa Locka, Fla., Feb. 27, 2019. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

“It is an honor to be here, to see her get this recognition,” said Aquannette Chinnery, Russell’s mother. “I’m just very thankful that our family could come from near and far to be here, it’s a historic moment.”

While Russell attributes much of her drive and recent success to her family, there is another group affectionately called “The Fab 5,” that has played a huge influence too. This is the group of the five African-American women pilots in the Coast Guard. They were also all present at the ceremony at Tuskegee.

“We have all been the first at something,” said Russell. “And they have all mentored me and helped me get to where I am today.”

For centuries people have looked up and wondered about the possibilities, especially in difficult times. Whether it’s the blue vastness in daytime or the night’s star-covered dome, there is something about the sky that holds our gaze. People search this sky for hope and they can find it just off the horizon where you will see pilots like Lt. Ronaqua Russell, or like her uncle Henry E. Rohlsen, who carry that hope on the wings of the aircraft they fly, proving that the possibilities are endless.

Russell is currently stationed at [Air Station Miami](#) as an [HC-144 Ocean Sentry](#) aircraft commander. She is a 2012 graduate of the [Coast Guard Academy](#) and a 2006 graduate of Ivanna Eudora Kean High School in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands.



The “Fab 5” standing on historic Tuskegee’s Moton Field after attending Lt. Ronaqua Russell’s Air Medal Ceremony, Feb. 21, 2019. Pictured from left to right are Coast Guard HC-130 fixed wing pilot Lt. Cmdr. Jeanine Menze, MH-65 helicopter pilot Lt. Cmdr. LaShanda Holmes, HC-144 fixed wing pilot Lt. Angel Hughes, MH-60 helicopter pilot Lt. Chanel Lee, HC-144 fixed wing pilot Lt. Ronaqua Russell. U.S. Coast Guard photo.

According to a 2017 Hurricane Season Summary published by FEMA, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria are estimated to have caused more than \$265 billion in damage to the United States. The Coast Guard’s search and rescue efforts in Hurricane Harvey alone resulted in more than 11,000 lives saved.

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[COAST GUARD Auxiliary Live](#)

Official Blog of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Father William Rex Performs CLEAT Baptism





In his new capacity as Chaplain-Auxiliarist William Rex performed his first USCG Auxiliary Baptism on March 2nd along the waterfront. We are so proud of him and wish him the best in his new position. Here he and FSO-VE Scott Sigman who accompanied him take a moment after the ceremony. Thanks shipmates for your support to the Gold side.

Photo: Scott Sigman

DIVISION UPDATE:

L2

Auxiliary Leadership Link

The digest of US Coast Guard Auxiliary activity



18 March 2019

To: Elected Leaders, DSO-HRs, SO-HRs, and FSO-HRs



A key demographic in the Auxiliary's recruiting and retention efforts are those people who are on the point of joining us, and those who have just joined. These newcomers are compelled to ingest a torrent of nautical jargon, flotilla minutiae, new names and titles, and bewildering acronyms from the proverbial fire hose.

National Staff has developed a "one stop shopping" web page just for them. It is called "New to the Auxiliary?" This page is easily accessible from the Auxiliary's front page – it is a drop-down selection in the gray "Aux Members" tab. There is also an on-ramp from MyCGAux.

This page is directly accessible at:

<http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=new-members>

"New to the Auxiliary?" demystifies the New Member Exam, the PSI process, member IDs, uniforms, the Basic Qualification Course, the boating safety course,

AUXCT, our many missions, and even a peek ahead to AUXOP. This page will often be updated, but will always be in ready reach of your newcomers. It is not designed to replace a flotilla's mentoring process, but rather, to be a useful resource for flotilla newcomers and their mentors alike.

We need the help of the flotilla bridges and FSO-HRs to alert new personnel to this page, and how to navigate to it. If you have any questions or comments, please contact DIR-H via your chain of leadership and management.



DIVISION MEETING UPDATES: 03-19-19



At Tuesday's Division Meeting, VDC Scott Graham reiterated the need to ensure all members complete their Mandated Training before the April 30th deadline in order to fully participate in our respective missions. Those in **REYRS** must be updated ASAP.

AUXILIARY HONOR GUARD



As I mentioned at last month meeting, there is a plan to develop an ***Auxiliary Honor Guard*** for fallen members. The goal is to organize and show our respect to deceased Auxiliarist during their funeral. If you have any interest, please email me of your interest. Wendell Clendening is coordinating this group and will have a training session on the proper protocol that we will use.

PIRATES DAY AT TRACEN MARCUS HOOK



On September 20th & 21st, there will be a Pirates Day Festival at TRACEN Marcus Hook. If you would like to participate, please email me and I will advise those in charge at Division.

MEETING REMINDER:

March meeting scheduled for 7:00 pm on Tuesday, March 26th.

Mark your calendar... We look forward to seeing you!

