

DISTRICT ELEVEN NORTHERN REGION

NORTHWIND



U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps & Division 5 Team Up for Sea Cadet OPTREX

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, America's Volunteer Lifesavers

DEPARTMENT OF >>>
The Uniformed Volunteer Component of The
United States Coast Guard
(Authorized by Congress in 1939)



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mishaps and incidents resulted. The Task Force was presented with the Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation at the District 11NR Training Conference in 2009.



Napa Sheriff's Deputy is hoisted aboard H30

Inter-agency operations take place every day among first responders, and yet the interaction can often be limited, due to the focus required in attending to the in-

cident at hand. Joint training events allow discussion of operational doctrine and order of drill in advance of the next incident, whatever that may be. Deputies, firefighters, pilots, and boat crews are more effective when they respond to an incident with a full understanding of how their counterparts and colleagues operate. As a result of the training on 28AUG, Lake Berryessa's visitors and residents are that much safer. ©



U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps & Division 5 Team Up for Sea Cadet OPTREX

Bill Kinsey ADSO-PB, (Photos) Shannon Gomez, USNSCC

Diablo Squadron/Training Ship Concord of the USNSCC and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Division 5 teamed up at Brannan Island State Recreation Area on August 21, 2010 to conduct an Operations Training Exercise (OPTREX) for the benefit of the Squadron's cadets. The Division provided instructors, safety personnel and assets, and planning support, and the Squadron provided boats, instructors, provisions, and most important, the cadets. 24 cadets, ages 11 through 17, took part in the event, which included a two-night bivouac on the island as well as a full day of small boat operations and shoreside instructional stations. 17 Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel in various capacities ashore and afloat served alongside 12 of the Squadron's officers and staff. LTJG Brian Luttrell is the Squadron's commanding officer, and Chuck McCarty, Division 5's Vice Commander served as the OPTREX Operations Chief.

The OPTREX curriculum centered on Search and Rescue principles and practices and the skill sets necessary to execute a search plan underway. The objective of the event was to provide hands-on experience in search planning and navigation, boat operations, radio communications, heaving line, and marlinspike. An orienteering course was added for the purpose of providing greater familiarity with map and compass, and with time-speed-distance calculations.

Underway activities included a multi-unit search and rescue exercise (SAREX). Cadets had the opportunity to actively scan the tules for a pre-positioned search object, a simulated person in the water, while the vessels were operated by the Squadron staff officers who owned the boats. The vessels, with call signs Sierra Charlie 1 through Sierra Charlie 4, each carried an operator, a safety observer/navigator, and two cadets who were tasked with radio operations and chart plotting.

In addition to the Sierra Charlies, Auxiliary Vessels 381454 *String O' Pearls* and 211225 *Mars* provided a safety presence, tended the search object, and served as the underway photography platform.

Planning for the OPTREX commenced in December 2009, shortly after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the USNSCC, USCG, and USCGAUX. The event was developed in accordance with the dictates of the MOU, and was planned using the Incident Command System. A fully-staffed ICS hierarchy was established, and the OPTREX was executed accordingly.

The Squadron made camp on Friday, 20AUG, and were joined early on 21AUG by the Division's set-up team. Instructional stations, land-mobile communications vehicles, and the First Aid station were all positioned and readied for the commencement of activities.

The OPTREX commenced with a preliminary

briefing which covered the plan of the day, instructional objectives, safety considerations, and assignment of duties. Once done with the preliminaries, instruction began with an all-hands SAR briefing. At this point the cadets were briefed on the fundamentals of SAR operations and phases, while the vessel operators were briefed on the location of the search area and the duties of each vessel.

The cadets were formed into companies of eight, and the companies rotated through the instructional stations. Three SAREX sorties were conducted. While one company of cadets was underway, the other two rotated through the shore-side activities.

All hands reported a full and engaging

OPTREX. In the words of one cadet, “this is awesome!”

Today’s U.S. Naval Sea Cadets are tomorrow’s Coastguardsmen, Sailors, and Marines, and it’s a privilege to assist in providing some of the foundational experiences of their preparation for those future roles. Enthusiasm for underway operations and the desire to serve America through the Sea Services is a common and profound characteristic in the members of both organizations. At Brannan Island, these cadets got a full dose of these forces, which should propel them into adulthood with enthusiasm and sea-going desires of their own. ©





Division 5 Sea Cadet OPTREX

