

Note: November 2022.

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COMDTINST 16798.1
JAN 30 1997

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16798.1

Subj: AUXILIARY AVIATION PROGRAM

- Ref: (a) Auxiliary Manual, COMDTINST M16790.1 (series)
(b) Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (series)
(c) Auxiliary Aviation QAT Results

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction promulgates the policy for upgrading the Coast Guard Auxiliary Aviation Program.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, commanding officers of headquarters units and assistant commandants for directorates shall ensure that units under their command that oversee or direct Auxiliary operations adhere to the provisions of this instruction. Coast Guard Auxiliarists who participate in the Auxiliary Aviation Program shall be aware of the contents of this instruction and conform with its provisions.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. As appropriate, the changes outlined in this instruction will be incorporated into the next change to references (a) and (b), and all other appropriate manuals, instructions, and publications.
4. DISCUSSION.
 - a. MISSION STATEMENT. The mission of the Coast Guard Auxiliary Aviation Program is to assist the Coast Guard in any mission(s) or operation(s) authorized by law and authorized by the Commandant.
 - b. BACKGROUND. Auxiliary aviation continues to provide the Coast Guard with a superb source of volunteer aviators and aviation assets to augment Coast Guard aviation.

However, since its inception, Auxiliary Aviation has operated without a standard command and control network or a standard aircrew training program. That lack of standard may have been adequate in years past, but as the program matures and the drawdown in active duty forces continue, it is imperative that Auxiliary aviation be consolidated into a cohesive force multiplier for "TEAM COAST GUARD." A Quality Action Team (QAT) was chartered to propose recommendations which would provide Auxiliary aviation aircrews (pilots and observers) and their customers with the tools to effect a standard, finely tuned program; one that maximizes flight safety, focuses on correcting long-standing deficiencies, improves internal as well as external communications, and instills pride and a sense of ownership in a pro-active program which provides an essential service to the Coast Guard. Therefore, the following changes are effective immediately:

5. IMPLEMENTATION.

- a. **NATIONAL STAFF.** The current Auxiliary Aviation National Staff is insufficient to properly manage the Auxiliary Aviation Program. The current staff positions are the Air Operations Division Chief (DVC-OA), the Flight Safety Branch Chief (BC-OAS), the Air Augmentation Branch Chief (BC-OAA), and the Air Facilities Branch Chief (BC-OAF). Conversion of two of the four current positions and the addition of a single position to oversee Auxiliary Aviation administration management are seen as the first stage of phased upgrade to the Auxiliary Aviation Program. Only the two converted positions and the new administration position will be discussed below. The omission of any discussion concerning the Flight Safety Branch in no way diminishes its importance. On the contrary, the Flight Safety Branch as well as the entire national staff will be charged with molding the Auxiliary Aviation Program into an effective force multiplier. Once the modifications and additions to the national staff are in place, a primary goal of the Air Operations Division Chief (DVC-OA) will be to review the existing Auxiliary aviation organizational structure(s) to maximize availability and use of Auxiliary aviation assets (i.e., pros/cons of aviation only flotillas, command and control within districts, affiliation with Groups, Air stations, etc.).

- (1) Convert the Air Augmentations Branch (BC-OAA) in the Department of Operations to the **Aviation Training Branch (BC-OAT)**. Branch responsibilities will include the establishment of a standardization and training program similar to the one used in the active duty's aviation program. The branch will develop, coordinate, and insure the standard

implementation of all Auxiliary aviation training. It will be tasked with reviewing initial qualification and training requirements for new Auxiliary aviators and observers. The branch will be tasked with developing doctrine to provide each Auxiliary aviation customer with a definitive guide that maximizes mission effectiveness.

- (2) Create the **Aviation Administration Management Branch (BC-OAM)** in the Auxiliary Department of Operations. Branch responsibilities will include managing all aspects of Auxiliary aviation administrative support. The branch will create a standard program to handle records management. Members of the branch will work closely with the Department of Information Services to ensure proper accountability and tracking of aircrew and aviation facility data via AUXMIS II and beyond. They will also liaison with members of Commandant (G-OCC) to ensure operational data is "mainstreamed" into the Coast Guard's Abstract of Operations reporting system. The branch will work closely with the Aviation Training Branch (BC-OAT) to support concepts such as distant learning via the Internet. It will establish a standard program for acquisition, distribution, tracking, and accountability of all aviation equipment (e.g., life rafts, vests, radios, etc.) distributed to Auxiliary aviation by the Coast Guard. The branch will use facility data to track Auxiliary aviation operating expenses and develop/recommend innovative methods to offset the high operating and maintenance costs of aviation facilities. Auxiliary aviation facilities must meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) mandatory annual inspections which can average \$1,200.00 for a single engine aircraft and \$2,100.00 for a twin engine aircraft. Facility owners are also well advised to comply with the engine manufacturer's recommended time between overhaul (TBO) which can average \$25,000 for a single engine aircraft and \$60,000.00 for a twin engine aircraft, inspections not required of vessel facilities.
- (3) Convert the Air Facilities Branch in the Auxiliary Department of Operations to the **Air Facilities/Liaison Branch (BC-OAF/L)**. Branch responsibilities will include coordinating "national" level assessment of need and facility/aircrew recruitment. The branch will develop contingency plans to support regional mission requirements which may draw Auxiliary

aviation support from multiple districts (i.e., for major disasters, etc.). Members of the branch will liaison with external agencies or organizations at the federal and regional level (CAP, FAA, FEMA, State emergency management programs, etc.) and will act as intermediary for coordinating regional and out of district outreach efforts by each of the district staff officers with responsibility in Auxiliary aviation. For example, through the MOU with the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the branch will facilitate joint operations throughout the country and will assist each district staff officer's efforts to coordinate CAP/AUX operations which cross district boundaries. The branch will be responsible to ensure a proactive, focused effort for joint operations.

- b. **DISTRICT STAFF.** Most Auxiliary aircraft and aircrew are spread throughout an AOR and therefore require a more regional (district level) approach to management. The recommendations contained in reference (c), especially the establishment of a District Aviation Board, are based on that premise. Sufficient flexibility is provided to effectively manage a program which spans large distances, using diverse resources and talent pools.
 - (1) For purposes of delineating the relative size of district Auxiliary Aviation Programs, the following criteria will be used: (a) Small - less than fifteen aircraft. (b) Large - greater than fifteen aircraft. The upgrade of the assistant district staff officer for aviation (ADSO-OP(A)) to the district staff officer for aviation (DSO-AV) and the creation of the two additional assistant district staff officer positions are designed to support those districts having large numbers of aircraft and aircrew, or particular geographic, personnel or resource issues. For those districts with smaller Aviation Programs, the required assistant district staff officer positions may be consolidated and held by one or two persons. At the discretion of the district commodore (DCO), the small Aviation Program may be administered by an assistant district staff officer. If the DCO does elect to administer the Aviation Program with an ADSO vice DSO, he/she should be aware that the program may not receive the level of recognition and/or support that is vital to effectively manage such critical operational assets. As the program matures and crosses the threshold from a small program to a

large program, the upgrade of the ADSO-AV to DSO-AV will be mandatory. Short term fluctuations in aviation assets which may temporarily downgrade a program to "small" shall not be grounds to downgrade the DSO-AV to ADSO-AV. Only a long-term, sustained decrease in assets requiring designation as a small program will warrant the downgrade. Once a program reaches the "large" status, the full compliment of upgraded staff positions and boards are mandatory. Provisions may be made by directors and district commodores to align a small Aviation Program with a larger adjacent program, or consolidate small regional programs into one district program to facilitate mutual support. If the latter approach is taken, the combined regional programs shall be administered by a DSO-AV. An ADSO-AV shall represent each region within the district and report directly to the DSO-AV.

- (2) Upgrade the **Assistant District Staff Officer- Operations (air) ADSO-OP(A)** to the **District Staff Officer-Operations (air) DSO-AV**. This upgrade ensures proper representation for the air program within the district and facilitates the establishment of critical assistant district staff officer positions needed to execute program goals. The DSO-AV will be the district liaison for dealing with external agencies/organizations at the district, state, and local level as part of the overall Auxiliary aviation liaison outreach effort of the Air Facilities/Liaison Branch (BC-OAF/L). The DSO-AV will work with the BC-OAF/L as required to coordinate regional liaison efforts, should attend the Coast Guard district's aviation planning and scheduling conference, and will oversee the recruitment of Auxiliary aircrews and aircraft facilities. The DSO-AV will serve as the senior member of the Auxiliary's District Aviation Board, or in the case of a smaller program, the DSO-AV or the ADSO-AV will serve as the senior member of the District Aviation Board.
- (3) Create the **Assistant District Staff Officer for Aviation Training (ADSO-AVT)**. The responsibilities of the ADSO-AVT will include the establishment of a district standardization and training program that will carry out the Auxiliary's aviation standardization and training program. They will develop, coordinate, and ensure the standard implementation of all district Auxiliary aviation training. The ADSO-AVT will be tasked with developing a district addendum to the Auxiliary

aviation doctrine which will provide the district Auxiliary aviation customer with a definitive guide which maximizes mission effectiveness.

- (4) Create the **Assistant District Staff Officer for Aviation Administration Management (ADSO-AVM)**. The responsibilities of the ADSO-AVM will include managing all aspects of the district Auxiliary aviation administrative support. The ADSO-AVM will implement the standard program to handle aircrew and aviation facility records management. They will work closely with their district staff officer-Information Services to ensure proper accountability and tracking of aircrew and operational aviation data via AUXMIS II and beyond. The ADSO-AVM will liaison with the BC-OAM to ensure operational data is "mainstreamed" into the Coast Guard's Abstract of Operations reporting system. They will work closely with the ADSO-AVT to support the district's Auxiliary aviation standardization and training program. The ADSO-AVM will establish a district standard program for acquisition, distribution, tracking, and accountability of all Coast Guard provided aviation equipment (e.g., life rafts, vests, radios, etc.) as part of the overall Auxiliary equipment management program. They will use facility data to track Auxiliary aviation operating expenses within the district and assist the BC-OAM in developing/recommending innovative methods to offset the high operating and maintenance costs of aviation facilities.
- c. **DISTRICT BOARDS.** Establishing a District Aviation Board is a necessary upgrade to ensure a standard Auxiliary aviation training program. Auxiliary pilots and observers must be trained to the standard set by the district, which in turn conforms to the standard set by the Auxiliary. There is no set standard now. In the early 1980s, the Federal Aviation Administration transitioned to the Practical Test Standard (PTS). This was a quantum improvement in establishing a "national standard" for each certificate or rating. Prior use of Test Guides left too much to individual instructor and examiner interpretation. Active duty Aviation Programs have long recognized the need for a set standard which has vastly improved flight safety and provided the services with highly qualified aircrews. The Auxiliary has to follow suit.

- (1) **DISTRICT AVIATION BOARD.** Each director of Auxiliary will establish a District Aviation Board composed of the DSO-AV (senior member); the ADSO-AVT; the district flight safety officer (DFSO); the senior member of the Flight Examining Board (FEB); and, as operations permit, the active duty aviator designated as the Auxiliary aviation liaison officer. The District Aviation Board's function will be to advise the director of Auxiliary and the district commodore on matters pertaining to district aviation standardization, aircraft, recommendations for flight examiners and instructor pilots, crew performance, aircrew appeals, and other related topics.
 - (a) **FLIGHT EXAMINING BOARD.** The Flight Examining Board (FEB), as a sub-set of the District Aviation Board, will be composed of Flight Examiners (see paragraph e.2 for selection criteria) and **selected** observers. Pilot SAR procedures checks shall be given by a Flight Examiner or a Coast Guard Aircraft Commander. The Flight Examining Board will be responsible for ensuring adherence to standard operating procedures; evaluation of the aircrew training program; providing initial, upgrade, requalification, and refresher training; and enhancing professional knowledge of pilots and observers. The Flight Examining Board will monitor/review changes in pilot/observer status and act as the first level in the review process for aircrew appeals of mandated changes in status. The senior member of the Flight Examining Board will be a member of the District Aviation Board and will report directly to its senior member (DSO-AV).
- d. **AUXILIARY AVIATION LIAISON OFFICER.** To provide connectivity to the active duty Aviation Program, each Coast Guard district shall, operations permitting, appoint an active duty aviator as a point of contact (POC) to act as liaison and mentor to the District Aviation Board. When practicable, the designated individual shall be qualified and current as a Flight Examiner (FE), an Instructor Pilot (IP), or an Aircraft Commander, with the Flight Examiner being the preferred choice to provide advice on current procedures, techniques, trends, etc. in standardization and training.
- e. **INSTRUCTOR PILOTS AND FLIGHT EXAMINERS.** Instructor pilots and flight examiners are, perhaps, the critical element of the Auxiliary aviation standardization and

training program. They are the District Aviation Board's link to the front line Auxiliary aviator. Each instructor pilot and flight examiner will be responsible for ensuring the standards of the Auxiliary Aviation Program are maintained. In establishing these two qualifications, the QAT realized each district may have to waive some of the prerequisites for the initial designation listed below. However, the initial designee will complete those missing elements within six months of designation to remain designated. From that point on, the requirements for designation will not be waiverable.

(1) **INSTRUCTOR PILOTS**

- (a) Only designated instructors shall provide formal SAR procedures flight syllabus instruction.
- (b) Each director of Auxiliary shall designate in writing each instructor in their AOR. Prospective instructors must meet the minimum qualification requirements in the following categories:
 - 1. Judgment. Each instructor must possess superior judgment.
 - 2. Personal Qualities. Each instructor must have patience, tact, understanding, and a desire to instruct others. Each instructor must have a personality which inspires confidence and wins the respect of each "student."
 - 3. Technical Knowledge. Each instructor must be thoroughly familiar with aircraft systems and equipment, normal and emergency procedures, and aircraft performance under all conditions of flight. Recognizing the diversity of aircraft in the Auxiliary fleet, it is incumbent upon each instructor to become familiar with the specifics of the aircraft in which the training will be conducted.
 - 4. Proficiency and Experience. Each instructor must have sufficient experience to ensure the desired standard of knowledge, judgment, and proficiency. Each instructor must have been qualified and current as a aircraft commander for at least six months prior to designation

as an instructor pilot. Although highly desirable, it is not necessary that an instructor hold FAA qualifications as a certified flight instructor.

5. Methods of Instruction. Instructor pilots must have received formal military, auxiliary, or civilian training in methods of instruction.
6. Instructor syllabus. Prior to designation, each instructor shall complete an Auxiliary and Commandant (G-OCX-2) approved flight and ground syllabus.
7. Designation Checks. A ground and flight check is required prior to designation as an instructor. Ground and flight checks shall be conducted by a member of the Flight Examining Branch.
8. Recommendations. Recommendation for designation as an instructor pilot will be forwarded to the Director of Auxiliary via the Auxiliary chain of communications from the District Aviation Board.

(2) **FLIGHT EXAMINERS.**

- (a) Flight Examiners are to the air program what the QEs are to the surface program. The examiner will be the Auxiliary aviation expert. As a member of the Flight Examining Board, and in the case of the senior member, a member of District Aviation Board, each examiner will carry out the policies and guidelines which ensure the Auxiliary Aviation Program is held to the highest standards. Prospective flight examiners must meet the minimum qualification requirements in the following categories:
 1. Qualifications. Flight Examiners will fulfill, to a higher degree, all the requirements of an instructor pilot. When practicable, each examiner should hold an FAA certified flight instructor-instrument (CFII) certificate. If the SAR procedures check is to be conducted

in a multi-engine aircraft, it is desirable each examiner hold the FAA multi-engine instructor (MEI) certificate as well.

2. Proficiency and Experience. Each examiner must be a highly experienced aviator to ensure the standards expected from the Auxiliary Aviation Program are maintained. They must be qualified and current as an instructor pilot for at least six months prior to designation as an examiner.
3. Examiner Syllabus. Prior to designation, each examiner shall complete an Auxiliary and Commandant (G-OCX-2) approved flight and ground syllabus.
4. Designation Checks. A ground and flight check is required prior to any designation. Ground and flight checks for each examiner will be conducted by the senior member of District Flight Examining Branch.
5. Recommendations. Recommendation for designation as a Flight Examiner will be forwarded to the Director of Auxiliary through the Auxiliary chain of communications via the Auxiliary Aviation Board.

N. T. SAUNDERS
Assistant Commandant for Operations

NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

NAVCO-CG/SS

DC-O

All Auxiliary Pilots and Observers

All Flotilla Commanders