

Meritorious team commendation award given flotilla members

By Ollie T. Moye

Editor In Chief

Eighteen members of Coast Guard Auxiliary 12-3, headquartered at Flotilla Island on Lake Murray, were recipients of the Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation award during the quarterly Division Meeting and Change of Watch of Division 12 of the Seventh District, last Saturday.

The commendations, signed by Rear Admiral T. W. Allen, US Coast Guard Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District, were presented by Commander Alan Marsilio, executive officer for Marine Safety at Group Charleston.

Also during the meeting, Joe Richbourg, who currently is commander of Flotilla 12-3, received the Coast Guard Auxiliary Award of Merit, signed by Commander Peter DiNicola, USCG, Commanding Officer Group Charleston.

Jay Dahlgren, Rear Commodore-North D7 and a member of Flotilla 12-3, who presented the special award to Richbourg, said the Award of Merit is awarded by the Coast Guard to members of the Auxiliary in recognition of sustained professional and/or leadership achievements, which in the case of Richbourg's honor, was in operations.

The Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation was given to the 18 members who participated in the spill of



Joe Richbourg (center), commander of the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary, is being congratulated by Coast Guard Commander Alan Marsilio, executive officer for Marine Safety at Group Charleston, after receiving the special Coast Guard Auxiliary Award of Merit at last week's Division 12 meeting, hosted by the Lake Murray Flotilla. Jay Dahlgren, Rear Commodore-North D7, presented the award to Richbourg

-- Photo by Ollie T. Moye

■ Award

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more than 1,000 gallons of highly flammable gasoline at Lighthouse Marina on Lake Murray in September of last year.

Rear Admiral Allen said in the citation that "Upon learning of the spill at the marina through your vigilant monitoring of distress radio frequencies, you immediately dispatched available Auxiliary resources to the scene to support the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the County Sheriff and the private contractor's cleanup effort.

The citation recognized that "within one hour, 18 Auxiliary members, five Auxiliary operational facilities and one Auxiliary personal watercraft were in position near the entrance channel leading to the marina, helping to keep boaters out of danger and ensuing response personnel had the best conditions for conducting the cleanup."

As a result, the citation notes that "...you diverted hundreds of boaters from harm's way and thereby kept external ignition

sources from causing a major catastrophe due to the volatile ambient atmosphere. Your substantial efforts also saved more than 500 private craft moored at the marina. Your selfless involvement throughout this two-day ordeal permitted the safe and effective removal of the spilled gasoline and prevented further environmental and personal harm to all users of Lake Murray.

The citation said the "dedication, pride and professionalism displayed by Coast Guard Auxiliary Lake Murray Flotilla reflects credit upon each team member, the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and the United States Coast Guard."

Certificates were presented to the following members: William Turner, Joe Richbough, George Crouch III, George Summer, Steve Davis, Boykin Roseborough, Donald Hare Jr., Juanita Mendenhall, George Mendenhall, Lenard Dutuelo, Michael Mikutaitis, Albert Morgan, Carl Brown, Jeanette Brown, Jay Dahlgren, Albert McCallister, Donald Davis and John O'Farrell.

During the presentation of the special citation to

Commander Richbough, Dahlgren observed that in the four divisions he oversees, this is the only time the award has been made. To earn the special honor, he said that Richbough provided outstanding operations support and leadership for Flotilla 12-3 during a busy summer patrol last year. He said that Richbough was personally involved in 23 assists and aided 59 persons, two of whom were recovered from the water.

He said that the commanding officer of the Charleston Coast Guard Station recently cited Richbough for his superb planning and successful prosecution of a night search and rescue resulting in the rescue of four children.

"Mr. Richbough has played a key role in formation the efforts of the Auxiliary to work with all elements of the SC State in carrying out the safety of the lake Murray area," said Dahlgren. "The relationships and personal courtesy shared by this group is unprecedented in 53 years Flotilla 12-3 has patrolled Lake Murray. Mr Richbough's outstanding administrative achievements as a flotilla staff officer have also resulted in

an increase in Flotilla membership of 28 percent. His diligence, perseverance and call to duty are to be highly commended. They reflect the highest tradition of the US Coast Guard.

A special guest at the meeting was Lt. Mike Williams, head of hunter and boating safety for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. He told the Coast Guard Auxiliary that "in the field of boating safety education, you definitely have been an asset to our department, especially since the new boating law became effective last year. We appreciate what you've done in helping us with towing and assisting boaters in need. You've been a great help and we can't tell you how much we appreciate it."

The quarterly meeting was hosted by the Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary at the South Carolina Forestry Service on Broad River Road, Columbia, last Saturday morning. Following the business meeting, change of watch ceremony and presentation of awards, members were treated to a barbeque meal served by Hawg Haven of Prosperity.