



Heartland Guardian



A Newsletter of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, District 082

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STORM STORIES SPECIAL EDITION Part Two The Day of the Tornadoes

By now everyone has heard or read something about the April 27th tornado outbreak in the Southern U.S. but many of you might not realize that this one day of storms affected 4 of our 16 districts (5SR, 7th, 8CR and 8ER). One storm track alone traveled through 3 districts leaving devastation along its path. This storm (storm tracking is from the internet) was reported to have lasted 7 hours and 24 minutes, traveling for 380 miles.

On April 27th, multiple sites on the internet reported 211 tornadoes documented (53 in north Alabama alone) and 309 storm-related fatalities from multiple states. The photo of the tornadoes below was on the Internet. This photo was dubbed the Buck Island twin tornadoes, (but if you look closely at the photo, you can see a third tornado forming on the back right side of the larger tornado). One of the smaller tornadoes in this photo



hit Richard and Lynn Miles's property causing 14 large trees to fall and minor structural damage to home, garages and boathouses.

Auxiliarist Bob Siemens, FSO-MA of 24-02 lives in the Miles's neighborhood. Bob lost most of his property (photo left taken by Lynn Miles) along



with some damage to his home. Bob's area of the neighborhood still remained without power, water, phone, cable or internet until after May 18th, 2011. Bob and his wife Wilma are okay and received a lot of help from volunteers and the Corp of Engineers in cleaning up his property. He lost 100+ trees from his yard. Attempts to reach personnel by road were made and in some cases was not possible. The photo above left (taken by the Lynn Miles) is Richard Miles, ADSO-OP walking the long path of debris after checking on Bob Siemens.

Volunteers cleared off his driveway to get to Bob and his wife Wilma. It took 3 days for volunteers to cut their way through the trees blocking the road on Buck Island. The Guntersville Fire Department, Marshall County Rescue Squad, and Alabama Marine Police spent 3 days checking on the residences of Buck Island by water. After the road reopened, access was restricted by the National Guard to prevent looting.



(Editor's Note: All photos unless identified differently are courtesy of Lynn Miles)

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Other areas in Division 24 were also without power for about a week and were hit hard by this storm. There were many members reporting damages exceeding \$25,000. While Division 24 was dealing with the aftermath of cleaning up the debris from the tornados, DCO Rick Washburn and DCAPT-S Jim Myers worked diligently to account for all of their members in Division 24. It would take 7 days for all members to be accounted for in Division 24 and it was reported that there were no fatalities or injuries to any members. The difficulty in contacting our members of Division 24 was caused by degraded communication capabilities from widespread power outages, phone lines down, cell phone towers down or out of generator fuel, no Internet, road closures, and curfews. DCDR Walt Whitacre, VDCDR DeAnne Rodenburg, VFC 24-05 Carl Rodenburg, IPDCDR George Chesebro, FSO-FN Carol Chesebro, Auxiliarist Sandra Merlo, ADSO-OP Richard Miles, and DSO-PA Lynn Miles spent hours trying to contact their members by either phone or by going to their homes.

Turning the attention to Division 12 & 16

Division 12 in the Knoxville, TN area was hit hard by the storms with devastating hail and trees were down across Knoxville.. Division 12 Flotilla 07 was also sent the Everbridge message on the morning of the 28th. All of these members were accounted for by that evening with no injuries reported.

Division 16 in the Chattanooga/Cleveland, TN area was also hit hard by tornadoes. Read about Division 16 in FC Jim Armour's story below. Authorization for Flotilla 16-09 to assist Bradley County EMA in performing door to door searches was requested and received through Division 16 DCDR to District Captain South to DCO to Chief Director of Auxiliary in ten minutes. DCO Rick Washburn was given the autonomy to "Do the right thing." DCO Washburn stated "This shows how much respect the CG has for our people and the decisions we made. This was not just an 8ER success, but all the way up to Washington".

Flotilla 16-09 Responds to April 27th Tornadoes

James Armour FC-Flotilla 16-09

In the Eighth Eastern District, Division's 12, 16 and 24, were hit the hardest by the tornados, straight line winds and hail storms while 8 and 11 dealt with floods in some areas and potential flooding in other areas of our district.

DCO Rick Washburn put into action our new communication tool "Everbridge" system sending out a automatic communication via phone/email and texting to everyone in Division 24. One problem was all means of communications were wiped out in most of Division 24's AOR. Only about 60+ of our 115+ members of Division 24 were able to respond to the Everbridge request.

Later on, we were informed that, with the EMS Communications Center set up, we would be moved to assist the Salvation Army and the Southern Baptist Association. We then reported into their location center in Cleveland and then were sent out to the Tunnel Hill Area to help as needed.

Flotilla 16-09 Guido R. Achata was doing neighborhood assisting (after receiving approval from the Flotilla Commander); he helped out 2 elderly gentlemen in his area, cutting trees and helping clear up their drive ways and roads.

Two members of the Flotilla, Dr. Gregory Johnson and Professor Virginia Johnson, also assisted the EMS Communication center for 3 days. They are ham operators and worked at the emergency ICS HQ in Cleveland TN.

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Members assisted throughout the day's checking houses, assisting with tree limbs, putting on tarps (once roofs were cleared), assisting in cutting down trees, removing tree limbs as needed, and reporting back to EMS of needs in the area they were assigned.

In this photo on right you have Keith Herrin, lady and child then behind her is Rick Llewellyn, Stephen McLain, then in front of tree Tommy Lunsford, Rick Waters and Doris Armour picking up logs from cut tree and Ray McKnight cutting tree.



(photos by Jim Armour)



Members reported to Bradley County EMS where they then were sent to the Charleston/Calhoun area to do a house to house search and check back with EMS on what was needed in the area. During the check members assisted an

elderly man get help and called EMS to respond. Stephen McLain and William J. McGarvey stood by with the gentleman until EMS arrived.

While checking the area James Armour noticed at a major intersection a gentleman was passing out food and water free (at his expense). After talking with the gentleman, members called back to EMS explaining what this person was doing. Jim Armour (after talking with EMS and the gentleman) established this as a major check point for the personnel working in this area and persons living in this area. The teams could have a place to gather, receive information, and have a center location in this area for food and water. EMS agreed and sent in trucks with food and water. Our team then continued doing checks and sending victims to this center location.

Flotilla 16-09 had members working and assisting Wednesday April 27th (night of the Tornado) through Sunday May 1st, 2011.

From Division 24's Perspective

This year has been a turbulent year for Division 24. Everything was fairly routine until April 27, 2011 the night of the tornadoes. Numerous tornadoes crossed northern Alabama on that night and changed the schedules for almost everyone in Division 24.

The members of the division responded by quietly reaching out to help those in need. When the final tally was generated it showed that 18 members of the division reported having contributed a total of 457 hours in support of the tornado recovery. I believe the amount of time contributed is much more than shown as not all of it was reported. The Division 24 members supported the tornado recovery as Auxiliarists, as members of the Alabama State Guard, as Boy Scout Leaders, as members of various church groups, and as ordinary citizens. The outpouring of support by Division 24 in time and in money was enormous.

Some of the reported tasks performed by Auxiliarists were: tracking down our own membership to determine their status and need for help, delivering food to tornado victims, preparing and distributing meals to approximately 700 people over a four day period, assisting the feeding of relief crews, provision of a field kitchen capable of feeding 100 persons at a time, helping victims find temporary housing while their homes are being repaired, and providing temporary transportation.

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In addition, two members (Lynn and Richard Miles) provided assistance when a small plane crashed in the front yard of their home (which had burned in December) just after takeoff from the local airport, just about 1000 feet from the house. Two adults died in the crash, one child died later, and one child survived. The Auxiliarists helped get the people out of the wrecked plane and utilized fire extinguishers to handle the fire that erupted from the crash.

During all of this time, April to July, the Division 24 members continued with their ordinary tasks of regatta support, vessel safety checks, public education, and member training.

Where Does Your Hard Work End Up???

Taking the Story one step further.....

Doris Riley, DSO-PB from District 7 down in Tampa, FL decided to do something for Coast Guard Mutual Assistance so she created a flyer to put out in ads in her area and in different publications.

Shown here is the flyer Doris created. Doris Riley used one of my photos along with one of Jim Armour's photos from the article I wrote "Our Perfect Storm" along with the "Buck Island Twin Tornado

photo that I got off of the internet (it is on the middle right). The photo of Richard walking down the path of debris and of Division 16 members assisting in the community. There is a small statement in the lower corner of the flyer with information about these photos.

This just goes to show that you never know who is going to see your work and where it might end up at by the end of the day!

Lynn Miles

To Our Readers:

Please pass on through your Division Staff Officer for Publications or your Division Commander any articles of interest to District 8 Eastern Region as well as Auxiliary members and the Public that may read this newsletter.

Please submit photos with captions, and also give credits for the photos and articles sent.

The newsletters can be best viewed using Adobe Reader at 100% viewing.

Please send your articles, questions, comments to: Randy Ventress ADSO-PB
(email) randyv19@comcast.net

Thanks and hope to hear from you soon.

Randy

I am sure that many members of the Coast Guard family, which of course includes members of the Auxiliary, are in need of financial help because of the powerful tornadoes that ripped through the South and leveled entire towns. In order to make as much financial help as possible available to those in need because of this devastation, I encourage our members to donate to the Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) program. Any amount, large or small is greatly appreciated. Please make an appeal through your publications, meetings, etc.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the CGMA program.

Sincerely,
COMO Joe Lanz, Past National Commodore
USCG Auxiliary Coast Guard Mutual Assistance National Chairman

"WE LOOK AFTER OUR OWN"

Photographs of left and center right courtesy of NOAA. Top right: Richard Miles, Division 24, District 8, ER, showing one of fellow members who's. Bottom right: Florida 10-11 members assist with clean-up. Photographs provided by Lynn Miles, District 8, ER, Public Affairs Officer.