

If You See Something, Say Something...

WESTHAMPTON, NY (By Vincent Pica, Division Commander, Division-18, 1SR, USCG Auxiliary)



Most Out East'er's, as well as many other Americans, have heard the WW-II story of how Germans "invaded" Long Island. The night of June 12, 1942, a young Coast Guardsman, 21-year old John Cullen, was walking his patrol along the beach in Amagansett when he saw lights ahead. Thinking that they were fishermen night-fishing (prohibited during the war for obvious reasons), he confronted 4 men dragging materiel up the beach. During the exchange, young Cullen realized that they were

German saboteurs and, being out-numbered, turned heel and ran 3 miles back to his base, starting what turned out to be a full scale investigation by US forces. The team was captured, as well as a parallel operation in Ponte Vedra, FL, within two weeks. All thanks to a member of US Coast Guard Forces who was walking the beach. (In fact, Cullen received a personal Thank-You and handshake from J. Edgar Hoover.)

While we don't have to worry about Nazi U-boats off of Long Island anymore, the Nation is at war in every sense of the word. And the US Coast Guard has implemented a rigorous program, not unlike young Cullen's foot patrol 65 years ago, called Maritime Domain Awareness for US Coast Guard Forces to implement. The 'regulars' have primary responsibilities for high-value assets – fuel depots, ferry stations and the like – and the Auxiliarists have primary responsibilities for everything else – marinas, boat ramps, dive shops – wherever the private boater congregates. Nation-wide, the Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) Program has been implemented and is in full swing – by car, plane, boat or on foot...

Brr... Winter is Here...

During our most active months, MDA patrols and observations by your fellow Out East'er's of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Division-18 number in the hundreds. Now, with winter but a wink away, everyone – including Auxiliarists – find less time and opportunity to be outside.

However, the threat is still out there. I doubt terrorists hibernate for the winter, to be frank about it. What to do about it?

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First, there are 70,000 members of US Coast Forces and 70,000,000 registered boaters. Who is more likely to see something? Without knowing the numbers, if you lined our shores with all our military forces, militias and police and fire-fighting forces, it is still a small fraction of the boating community. There are 95,000 miles of shoreline and over 290,000 square miles of water... we can't do it alone, no matter how much better we are since 9/11...

But what is the "something" that would cause you to say something? The odd thing is this: you'll know it when you see it. You know what is "normal" for your marina or community. The way someone is asking questions or perhaps taking pictures may just strike you as "out of character." Don't for a minute think that anyone intent on harming Americans on US soil is anything other than a very devilishly clever and dedicated operative. They don't wear signs on their backs that say, "Terrorist." They want to blend; they want to be unobtrusive; they want to seem "normal." But something may just raise the hairs on back of your neck... Call it in. Don't take matters into your own hands. Call it in. The Coast Guard will not accuse you of being "Chicken Little" if it turns out to be nothing more than an over-active imagination... As we say, "People are not suspicious. Behavior is."

Why? Simple. Just as in John Cullen's day, we all are in this together. As Benjamin Franklin wrote to the Continental Congress in 1776, "We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang

separately." So, you can be part of it.

To Report Suspicious Activity:
Call the National Response Center at 877-24WATCH.

If There Is Immediate Danger to Life or Property, Call 9-1-1 or Call the Coast Guard on Marine Channel 16.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."