



# Whittier Soundings



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**Operation Nobel Eagle** - The District 17 USCG Auxiliary had the honor of participating in Operation Nobel Eagle, assisting the US Coast Guard protect the Valdez oil terminal. Several members of the Whittier Auxiliary, including Tony and I, had the opportunity to go to Valdez and participate in the Operation. The Auxiliary acted in a support capacity, informing boaters and residents of Valdez about the Security Zone established around the oil terminal. We also acted as extra eyes for the Coast Guard, using Auxiliary Vessel 256611 (611, SAFE boat) to patrol the Port of Valdez and the Valdez Narrows, going out as far as Galena Bay. The Auxiliary would report to the Coast Guard on any unusual sightings, such as unauthorized buoys or unusual boats in the vicinity. Although the Auxiliary was working while in Valdez, we also received some very good training. The active Coast Guard crew was more than willing to participate in training exercises with the Auxiliary. There were towing exercises and man-over-board drills.

The Auxiliary was proud to play a role in Operation Nobel Eagle, but the duties and the SAFE boat were turned over to the Coast Guard in October. There was certainly some risk involved in the patrols, and it was determined that active Coast Guard crews should run 611. The Coast Guard called up Coast Guard Reserves after the September 11th attack, and there are now enough active Coast Guard crewmen to support 611. So, on October 17th, the worn but proud Coast Guard Auxiliary flag was lowered from the mast of 611, and a brand new United States Coast Guard flag was raised. It was certainly a solemn moment. Although the Auxiliary's role in Operation Nobel Eagle was short lived, we may be given another opportunity to serve our nation against the war on terrorism. There may come a day, maybe sooner than later, that there will be a place for the Auxiliary in the Department of Homeland Security. We are certainly not being overlooked while the new Federal program gets up and running.

**Plans for Next Summer** - There are plans in the works for a NEW SAFE boat for the Auxiliary to use

next summer. Of course (as true boaters) we are hoping for a bigger and faster boat. There is a possibility of receiving a new 27 footer with two hefty outboards that could pull about 4 G's in a turn, so they say. (It better come with strong seat belts with that kind of power!)

It looks like Polaris is going to come through with two Personal Water Crafts (PWC's) to assist in boating safety and Search-and-Rescue in Prince William Sound. Because of legalities, the PWC's will probably be given to the City of Whittier-Police Department, and the Auxiliary will train and assist the police in using the PWC's. These water crafts will be excellent tools for searching small coves and rough shoreline, which Prince William Sound has an over abundance.

**"From the Poop Deck" - by Mark Poe, 10/7/01**

*The Draw Bridge has been raised! Storm windows added to the upper windows have stopped the water from flooding in. Braces were added to the flag staff and the antenna mast in prep for winter winds. A small heater is running keeping it warm and drying it out. Some rain is still driving in under the door, but that will be dealt with soon. With the late run of silvers, many fishermen were present. Even poor fishermen were able to catch some. One orange jacket walking the dock seemed to bring out more life jackets on the little ones. Ice formed early in the morning and made the dock very slippery. No one was observed in the water. Rain and wind were common with some fabulous weather on occasions. A dusting of white on the peaks adds to the flavor. Many boats have been pulled out the last two weeks. If you want a slip with power, there are some available. Many people have asked about the SAFE boat and where it is. It is missed. Many thanks to a passer by named Jay, from Soldotna, who helped install the braces this week-end. The Station is closed until the snow needs removed. Thanks to all who make it such a prominent landmark in Whittier. Mark Poe*

**COMING EVENTS:**

NOV. 14 - 5:30 pm, BP Building