

Philip R. Merrill

Auxiliary Member from 1990 to his death in September 2015.

An honorable man, who lived his life with honor. A career Navy man, who fought for and served our country for 33 years, Philip retired, moved to Florida, and joined the US Coast Guard Auxiliary.

In the 1990s, he canvassed flotilla membership, then implemented a training program yielding 36 new AUXOPS graduates. A Congratulations Party was organized to honor all the participants. Philip loved to promote individual and organizational training initiatives that involved everyone. His initiatives made Flotilla 98 a better organization.

Philip was an elected leader. He served as Vice Flotilla Commander, Flotilla Commander, Division Vice Captain, Division Captain. His last held office was as Rear Commodore West, District 7. He served each year to its fullest, working hard to help make the Western Region of District 7 the "Best in the West."

As an anecdote: During his tenure as Rear Commodore West, he orchestrated a 'Sing Team' for the fall conference. Two groups were provided packages which included records of old-time songs, flags, and other patriotic items for the Sing-A-Long. As the 8 Singers serenaded the outgoing Commodore, Mary Larson, with "Mary's a Grand Old Name," a background screen ran photos depicting Auxiliarists engaging in a variety of normal activities. COMO Larson was honored by Philip's thoughtful and humorous production. There has yet to be a Fall Conference Meeting to top that one.

Philip offered his personal (and beloved) 25' Parker, named "Seahorse," as an operational facility to the Flotilla. In response to reports that female auxiliary members were experiencing difficulties obtaining on the water training, Philip instituted a training program to specifically promote and advance women into crew and coxswain positions. All members, regardless of gender, who trained under his tutelage, mastered the challenges and became qualified crew members. Even in his last years, Philip was dedicated to training & mentored several members who become radio qualified.

His last Auxiliary action was attending the September General Membership meeting, via Skype, while in the Care Facility. He was there, watching and listening to the events, before he fell asleep.

Philip was a true leader, genuine and unselfish. He could operate from the lead, from the side lines, or even behind the lines, whatever was best. He was personable, approachable, possessed the ability to motivate, make people laugh, and feel good about themselves. There will never be another like Philip Merrill, he was one of a kind! Thus, the membership created the Philip Merrill Award - a Flotilla level award recognizing a Flotilla member who goes "Above and Beyond" in service to our Flotilla and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.