

“Sea Force One”
By Bob Newbert
USCG Master Captain, AP-IN

The D26 Cruise around Bull Island was an adventure. Our out-of-town guests learned of people & places embedded in the rich history of the Lowcountry – stories that make our waterways as exciting –and foreign– as Oz was to Dorothy. For sure they knew they “weren’t in Kansas anymore, Toto.”

To wit: We stopped at Devil’s Elbow Island to learn about a massacre and three knots in a cord around your waist. They heard a 1st person account of why Pat Conroy used a pseudonym for Daufuskie Island in The Water Is Wide. They got a third person account of the man who shot South Carolina’s last free roaming buffalo and where it hangs today (and where its mother hangs as well). They heard about Emily Post’s Etiquette “The Blue Book of Social Usage” and its connection to our cruise. They learned why the May River is “saltier than the Atlantic Ocean.” And they discovered to their amazement that all the oysters we eat are females.

Yes, they weren’t in Kansas anymore.

And neither was I because one of my D26 guests was Ralph Bernard, Chief Commander of the United States Power Squadrons. I knew there is a protocol involved when a Commander-In-Chief travels because, in a prior life, I was Advance Man for the Vice President of the United States. I flew around on Air Force One and Air Force Two.

Actually, they are the same plane. If the President is aboard, it’s “Air Force One.” If the Vice President is aboard, without the President, it’s “Air Force Two” but in truth, the never fly together on the same plane.

In any event, I had the USPS Commander-In-Chief on my boat which I promptly dubbed “Sea Force One.”



CHIEF COMMANDER Ralph Bernard (on right) with Bob Newbert

Adding to the pressure on me as captain, Vice Commander David Allen and his wife Debra joined me as well. David is 2nd in line for command when Ralph steps down. He is a heartbeat from the USPS Oval Office.

I had the entire USPS Brain Trust entrusted to me as captain, navigator, pilot and tour guide. Thankfully, I didn't get lost, run aground or embarrass myself when docking in a rip current.



VICE COMMANDER David Allen and his wife Debra

But...in a gross dereliction of duty, I had both the Chief Commander AND the Vice Commander together on my boat – a grave security risk. Apparently, I learned nothing from the Secret Service back in the 70's when I was flying high on Air Force Two.

The responsibility of command with VIP passengers was very stressful. So, after disembarking my honored guests, I celebrated with relief. There were no incidents at sea on my watch with the top brass aboard.

Sadly, however, “Sea Force One” is no more. She's back to plain old “Bailey,” 21 ft Scout Dorado. I guess even little boats can have their 15-minutes of fame.

Me, too. Because for a brief, magical moment I was giving orders to the Commander-In-Chief.

I was not in Kansas anymore.

Additional Photos from Other D26 Cruises

