



**PNACO Peter W. Melera
1995-1996**

Peter W. Melera was born in Jersey City, New Jersey on February 19, 1942. He was raised in Sharon Springs, New York, where he graduated from high school in 1960 and still owns a home. He attended the Pennsylvania Military College in Chester; The State University of New York at Cobleskill; and the University of Georgia, in Athens, where he obtained the Ph.D. in 1969. Melera has held faculty positions at the Sloan Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York City; the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland; and is now Professor of

Medicine and Associate Dean for Research at the Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine in Camden, New Jersey, where he is also the Deputy Director for Basic Science at the Cancer Research Institute of Cooper University Hospital.

Dr. Melera joined Flotilla 62, of the [former 3NR] 1SR, Rye, New York, on July 18, 1974. During the ensuing 21 years, he served in appointed positions at the Flotilla, Division, and District levels and in elected positions at all levels, including serving on the National EXCOMM as NARCO-East and NAVCO from 1992-94. He earned the AUXOP device in 1983 and became certified as an Auxiliary Coxswain in 1985 and a Boat Crew Qualification Examiner in 1987. At NACON 1994, he was elected to the position of NACO for 1995-96.

The years from 1993 to 1997 saw great changes in the Coast Guard, as required by the Congressional mandate to downsize and streamline. Best business practices were adopted: Total Quality Management (TQM), as formulated by the use of Quality Action Teams (QATs), was implemented service-wide and that by necessity included the Auxiliary. This provided an opportunity for COMO Melera to propose to the National Board an extensive reorganization of the NAEXCOM and the National Staff. Upon approval by the Board and the Commandant, a Directorate style of management, similar to that adopted by the Coast Guard was activated on February 29, 1996, to promote better operational alignment with the parent service. During his term COMO Melera oversaw the dismantling of the Area Conferences and stand up of N-TRAIN and the National Area Planning Meetings to enhance training and communication at all levels.

On June 27, 1995, Melera, in conjunction with the CHDIRAUX, CAPT. A. A. Sarra, promulgated the Auxiliary Business Description and Direction (ABD&D) that provided guidance for Auxiliarists to undertake Coast Guard missions beyond those historically associated with recreational boating safety, a trend that had been ongoing for a decade. As a consequence of the ABD&D, the Goal Attainment Program (GAP) was terminated, thus freeing Auxiliarists to carry out missions they wanted to do, as opposed to being tasked to carry out more traditional Cornerstone missions in order to receive rewards. Thus so-called "GAP Ribbons" became a thing of the past. Streamlining the Coast Guard also claimed the Second Coast Guard District and due to its closure in 1996, COMO Melera oversaw the merger of the Auxiliary Central and Eastern Areas into the Atlantic Area. In addition on February 15, 1996, he initiated a monthly, sometimes biweekly, Memorandum for the Commandant on Auxiliary Affairs. This report was sent to all Flags and Senior Executive Service members in an effort to keep the Auxiliary "Front and Center" with the Coast Guard leadership. The report was also distributed to the National Board and Staff to maintain awareness of Auxiliary activities across the organization.

Perhaps COMO Melera's most important contribution to the organization was his testimony on April 25, 1996, to the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, which helped to assure passage of the "Auxiliary Act" into law. This piece of legislation redefined the Auxiliary and provided authorization for the Commandant to utilize Auxiliarists to ". . . assist, the Coast Guard. . . in performing any. . . function, power, duty, role or mission or operation authorized by law," and, most importantly, it provided the legal protection for them to do so. The Act had been in preparation for several years and had first been submitted during COMO Lanz's tour, but it had not moved beyond Committee review. However as a direct result of the persistence of the Commandant, Adm. Robert E. Kramek, and his recognition of the importance of the legislation to the Auxiliary, the Act was packaged as part of the 1997 Coast Guard Budget, and through the efforts of his legal and congressional staffs and in

close collaboration with the Chief of the Auxiliary Department of Legal Affairs, Como Joseph Gordon, the Act was finally signed into law on October 19, 1996. This was indeed a watershed event for the Auxiliary and laid the legal groundwork for the truly multi-mission organization it is today and further enfranchised it as a member of "Team Coast Guard".

For his efforts during a period of great change for the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and for his strong support of the concept of "Team Coast Guard," COMO Melera was presented with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Distinguished Service Award by Admiral Kramek at NACON96.

Presently Dr. Melera continues his service to the Coast Guard as an Auxiliarist, having been appointed to the Board of Trustees of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut in 1996. Since 2004, he has chaired its Admissions Committee. He is now the senior member of the Board in terms of longevity. In the past he has also been a member of two Deans Search Committees. Says Melera, "The Academy is a wonderful institution and I have been privileged to serve as a Trustee and to contribute my academic expertise to help its administration, faculty, and staff achieve their mission."

Dr. Melera is married to the former Barbara A. Plantholt of Baltimore, Maryland, with whom he owns the D. Landreth Seed Company. Founded in 1784, it is the oldest seed house in America and the fourth oldest corporation in U.S. history. Together they have four children: three boys and one daughter, and three grandchildren.