

DISTRICT 31



History

District 31

was the first district to be formed out of District 50.

This "catch all district" had squadrons that were not located in any specific region or in close proximity to each other, but geographically were actually rather far-flung in nature.

Read how some dedicated USPS® members worked to bring District 31 into existence.

Our thanks to our past District Historian of many years, D/lt Mickey Corley, SN, (deceased) and Dot Sherman for this fine written record.

[And away we go.....](#)

District 31 of the United States Power Squadrons® is originally made up of seven squadrons located in Oklahoma and Arkansas. The formation of these squadrons is due to forward-thinking USPS members who through dedication and hard work enthusiastically spread their boating knowledge and expertise in USPS public boating courses, teaching others how to boat safely. The successful students of this formerly called "Piloting" course often wanted to learn more than just the basics of boating, so they became members and soon formed divisions, then squadrons in their own areas and eventually formed their own district.

Charter Members of our District

In Memoriam

P/C David S. Shumake, JN

October 18, 1926 - June 28, 2006

Dave Shumake was Oklahoma City Sail and Power Squadron's first Commander after it was chartered in 1971 and had worked tirelessly on its behalf ever since. In the 1980s, Dave also served on the National Rules Committee for a while, but for those of us in other squadrons in District 31, he may be best remembered for his work on the district level. He was very supportive of the formation of our district which finally took place, after being a division of District 50 for several years, at the 1975 USPS Annual Meeting. He also served on the District Bridge as its Treasurer in 1977-78; later on he served faithfully as its Law Officer for decades. Dave was a life member of the United States Power Squadrons and had supported the organization with his service on all levels, Squadron, District, and National. Dave was a fixture in our district and will be missed for who he was and all he did. He was a man of strong opinions but was big enough to admit when he was wrong (which was not often) and apologize. He was full of enthusiasm and made his squadron's hosting of District Conferences much fun. He was helpful in his many USPS activities, often going out of his way to furnish needed information.



The beginning...

In November 1962, a USPS member moved to the Stillwater Oklahoma area and requested a change of address from the United States Power Squadrons. The Office Manager at National Headquarters suggested the possibility of a new Power Squadron being formed in the Oklahoma - Stillwater - Tulsa area as there were several unattached members living in the area at that time. In February of 1964, the District 50 Commander wrote to the eight members living in the area and asked if they would be interested in forming a new Squadron.

L to R: Tom and Louise Davis of Tulsa Power Squadron, Billie and Dave Shumake of Oklahoma City Power Squadron; and Carolyn and Bill Foster of Pine Bluff Power Squadron enjoy the long awaited and momentous occasion of becoming members of the brand new District 31 at USPS Annual Meeting in 1975

In September 1964, the Tulsa Daily World newspaper carried the notice of a class in Piloting (now called the Public Boating Course) to be held at the Naval Reserve Training Center. Seth Henderson, the Austin Power Squadron member who moved to Stillwater, drove regularly from Stillwater to Tulsa to teach the course. He was assisted by Robert Baker, a St. Louis Power Squadron member and Ray Brady, a Wilmington Squadron member (both members were then living in Tulsa, OK). In December of 1964, eight students took the examination and passed.

The first Squadron organized in the area was **Tulsa Power Squadron**, District 50, with a membership of 19. They received a charter on March 15, 1965 .

In 1969, National Headquarters was approached by six members of various squadrons who wanted to form a Squadron in the Bull Shoals/Norfolk lakes area. A Piloting (Public Boating) Course was held in Mountain Home Arkansas with Fred Roberts, Russell Bugeon, and Harold Harris as instructors. In April of 1970, the exam was given with 3 ladies and 11 men passing. They received their Charter as the Twin Lakes Squadron, District 50, on September 13, 1970 with 6 members from other Squadrons, 18 new members, and 4 women Certificate Holders.

Also in 1969, Franklin Wedge and 7 other members who were living in the Memphis, Tennessee area were considering the organization of a new Squadron in Memphis. In 1970, they conducted a Piloting (Public Boating) Course with approximately 25 students attending. Their Charter was presented to them on May 9, 1971 with a total of 27 charter members.

About this time, there was a desperate need for boating education in the area. Man-made lakes and the navigable Arkansas River (to be completed in 1971) and the Mississippi River made it one of the fastest growing boating areas in the world. Anyone could buy a boat, put it in the water, and take off without the faintest idea there were safety rules and regulations. Weekends and holidays become nightmares on all of the bodies of water. This small nucleus of dedicated Power Squadron members in the Oklahoma - Arkansas - Tennessee area set out to correct this deficiency.

In 1970, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Pine Bluff, Arkansas and Little Rock, Arkansas became Divisions of the **Tulsa Power Squadron**. Will Dyer, Bob Baker, Hub Hubbell, and Jack Owens traveled weekly to these Divisions as instructors for the Piloting (Public Boating) Course.

Tulsa Power Squadron's first Division to become a Squadron was Oklahoma City Power Squadron, District 50. At the time the Charter was applied for, there were 18 members and by the time it was received on October 8, 1971, there were 68 members.

On June 5, 1971, the McClellan-Kerr Waterway was completed to Tulsa Port of Catoosa opening up the area drained by the Arkansas River for possible boating to anywhere in the world. The need for educating the area's public to water safety became essential. Most boaters in the area had never seen a buoy, daymark, or lock and dam such as were now on the Arkansas River. Education on what they were and their proper usage to navigate a river were high priorities in our educational classes.

Then, Tulsa presented its second Division, Pine Bluff of District 50, with its Squadron Charter, dated December 22, 1971.

During the summer of 1972, our most western squadron, Oklahoma City Power Squadron, cruised down the Arkansas and up the Mississippi to the most eastern squadron, Memphis Power Squadron, in Tennessee - a distance of some 475 miles. What an adventure!

With 5 squadrons of District 50 geographically contiguous, they began thinking about becoming a new district. The first Conference ever held in District 50 was in September of 1972, hosted by the Tulsa Power Squadron at Shangri-la Lodge on Grand Lake O' Cherokees, Oklahoma. National officers were in attendance as well as the District 50 Commander and Bridge Officers, and our area's Squadron Commanders of Tulsa, Twin Lakes, Memphis, Pine Bluff, Oklahoma City, along with a Squadron Commander of Mile High Power Squadron of Colorado. A tentative discussion was held concerning the possibility of the inland squadrons becoming a district. The National and District officers who attended undoubtedly could not visualize the need for a separate district so far from "blue" water in the middle of farming country.

On March of 1973, District 50 held its second Conference at the Sheraton Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee - again in our area of what would in the future become District 31. A petition was drafted requesting a District be formed of the above-named Squadrons (with one exception) to be presented to the Governing Board at Pittsburgh in May 1973. The Mile High Power Squadron had declined to be included in the petition as most of their members boated on Lake Powell or the West Coast. The proposal for a new District was not approved.

Little Rock Power Squadron, the last Tulsa Division at that time, was granted a Charter on April 4, 1973. Now the prospective District was 6 Squadrons strong with 403 members.

The other 15 squadrons of District 50 were scattered to the four corners of the world. This caused great difficulties in communication and understanding of the needs of this small core of inland boaters. It was imperative that a new District be formed, drawing officers from members who were familiar with their unique boating problems; who could communicate directly with National; and who could attend District Conferences without under hardship.

The middle.....

In August of 1973, another petition was resubmitted to National. When it was presented at the Louisville Governing Board Meeting in September, an interim resolution was presented to organize a Division of District 50. After an objection by Oklahoma City and a long discussion, Chief Commander Cosdon stated, "...your six Squadrons are not strong enough to survive at this time as a District and we are trying to give you an interim period as a Division of District 50 so that you can receive directly from National all of the communications that your Squadrons will need in

a District capacity until such time, whether it be a year or two years from now, that you have established enough strength to warrant full membership as a District organization."

After still more discussion in which operating procedures under Division status were discussed as pertained to correspondence with National, V/C Lucey stated "...I don't think that we can clarify all your questions at this time.As of now we have nothing officially recognized, at any place in USPS as a "Division" of a District." They never had a need for one before.

On September 10, 1973, the District 50 Commander authorized the Squadron Commanders of River Division 50/1 to organize the Division and elect officers. A general membership meeting was convened at Oklahoma City on March 23, 1974 for the purpose of electing permanent officers, and to discuss and adopt a Constitution, By-Laws and Budget. The Division Officers elected were: Commander, Robert Baker, AP; Executive Officer, Franklin Wedge, N; Educational Officer, William Johnson, AP; Administrative Officer, Don Reed, AP; Secretary, Jack Owens, AP; and Treasurer, Harold Naylor, S. Another petition for District status was drafted requesting action by the Spring Governing Board scheduled to meet in Memphis.

During 1974, Division 1 of District 50 was very active. Memphis hosted the May Governing Board; the first Division Newsletter -- the DAYMARK (later to become the District Newsletter) was issued; the Division's 1st rendezvous was held at Piney Creek on the Arkansas river; and the first (and last) official Division Conference was held at Dogpatch, Arkansas and was hosted by the Twin Lakes Power Squadron.

The end.....

No record is available concerning the action taken by the Spring Governing Board concerning the Division's petition, but the Fall Governing Board convened on September 7, 1974 in Seattle, Washington, and recommended that District 50, Division 1 be granted District status to become effective at its Annual Meeting the following year. At the Annual Meeting which was held on January 18, 1975 at the Hotel Fontainebleau at Miami Beach, Florida, the Resolution was introduced and approved that our new District be named District 31 and would consist of Little Rock Power Squadron, Memphis Power Squadron, Oklahoma City Power Squadron, Pine Bluff Power Squadron, Tulsa Power Squadron and Twin Lakes Power Squadron. Persons holding Division Offices in Division 50/1 were to hold the equivalent rank in District 31.

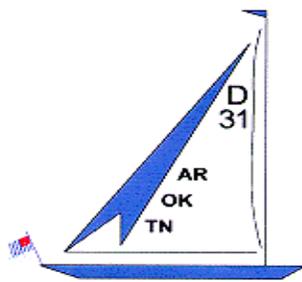
DISTRICT 31 was finally a fact – six squadrons with a total of approximately 460 members in 1975. Over the years the district underwent many changes, losing some squadrons and adding new ones.....

District 31 Historian Remembered

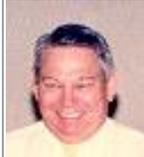


Our retiring District Historian, D/Lt Mickey Corley, SN, whose interesting narrative of our district history has been printed above for your information is lauded for her many years of dedication by D/C Steven Johnson, AP at our District Spring Conference in 2000.

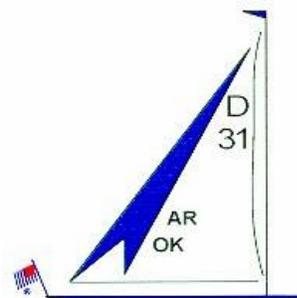
Our heartfelt thanks to our past Historian, D/Lt Mickey Corley, SN for her expertise and many years of dedication to careful preservation of our district history. The written record of our district's history on this page was taken from her pamphlet, "District 31 History", a very interesting, factual narrative written and compiled by Mickey, our District's first woman Senior Navigator. Mickey earned this top USPS educational achievement by her successful completion of all advanced courses and elective courses offered at the time to become a USPS "Full Certificate" SN member.



Original Design



Winning logo was designed by PDC Bill Sherman, SN in 1998. It has since been modified to reflect changes in the district.



Present Design

District 31 also added a provisional squadron in Fort Smith, Arkansas as well as one in Norman, Oklahoma in 1999. Norman Sail and Power Provisional Squadron earned its charter as a full status squadron on 29 November 2000. At the end of 2000, District 31 had a total of eight squadrons and one provisional squadron. However, in January 2001, Memphis Sail and Power Squadron in Tennessee transferred to District 17 which brought our number of squadrons back down to a total of seven full squadrons and one provisional squadron, all located now within the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma with a total active and family membership of close to 750 members. At the Fall GB in Des Moines IA, on 14 September 2002, the River Valley Power Squadron received their Charter. The district now has eight squadrons, four in Arkansas and four in Oklahoma.

As time passes.....

At the Spring 2003 conference in Normal OK we heard the sad news that another of the charter squadrons of the district had decided to dissolve. Cdr W.F. Foster, AP (Pine Bluff) advised the D31 Squadron Commanders that Pine Bluff was relinquishing its charter at the end of this dues year, May 31, 2003. As a parting gesture the Pine Bluff Squadron presented D31 with a Pine Bluff Trophy for the Vessel Safety Check Program. This will be a perpetual trophy presented annually by D31 to the squadron which has the most noteworthy VSC program for the preceding year. The District now has seven squadrons, four in Oklahoma and three in Arkansas.

More bad news. At the NYC Governing Board in August 2006, the Operating Committee accepted the charter of the Little Rock Squadron (one of the charter squadrons in D31) and the River Valley Power Squadron. This reduced the number of squadrons in D31 to five, four in Oklahoma and one in Arkansas.

Then the really crushing news that the Tulsa Power Squadron relinquish it's charter to the Operating Committee of USPS at the September 2010 Governing Board meeting in Bellevue, WA. Tulsa was the catalyst for many of the squadrons in district 31, as noted above and was the one of the last two charter squadrons in D31. This has reduced the number of squadrons in D31 to four. Three in Oklahoma and one in Arkansas. Not a good sign for our district.

The end nears

Apparently the loss of the Tulsa Power Squadron signaled the demise of the district. At the October 2014 Fall Conference the members voted to dissolve D31 in 2015. As the squadrons would have to choose a new district it was determined appropriate to recommend to USPS the Norman Squadron charter be pulled as there were no officers or bridge defined by the squadron. The charter was revoked at the 2015 USPS Annual meeting in Jacksonville.

The actions necessary to dissolve the district had thus begun. We relinquished the charter of the district at the USPS Fall GB in San Diego CA on August 25, 2015.

SPECIAL HONORS FOR DISTRICT MEMBERS



P/D/Lt/C Arthur Corley, SN (above on right) had served in an elected office in the District Educational Department for eleven years, both as District Education Officer and as an Assistant District Educational Officer several different times while training others in the department. Art was honored upon retirement from the District Educational Department with a special recognition plaque in 2002 (presented by DEO William Sherman, SN) in grateful appreciation for his leadership and service in USPS education on behalf of the district. Art also contributed to the district in other ways - as its award-winning editor of the DAYMARK in its early years and as its Co-operative Charting Chairman in more recent years. In 1982, Art earned the district's highest honor, the District Helmsman Award. Clearly, Art is a man of many talents and interests. The district is indebted to him for his long-standing dedication and diverse contributions. Our thanks to a remarkable member.



During the Spring 2003 D31 conference in Norman OK, Cdr W.F. Foster, AP is recognized for his long service to USPS, the Pine Bluff Power Squadron and D31. During ceremonies, pertaining to the dissolving of the Pine Bluff Squadron, Cdr Foster presented a Pine Bluff Trophy to D31 to be used with the VSC program. A picture of the trophy is below.

