



## **NEWS** From -

### Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 27, 2022

Contact: Tina Cardone  
(954) 261-2012

#### **Single-handed Rescue of Eight Lives AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) Honors C-PORT Member with Lifesaving Award**



C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) and AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) celebrated and presented its distinguished lifesaving award at the 35<sup>th</sup> C-PORT Conference and Membership Meeting held January 17 – 19, 2022 at the Hyatt Regency Savannah, GA. The award was announced on Tuesday, January 18 during the C-PORT Awards Banquet Gala. Presenting the award was AFRAS President, CAPT Joseph Re, USCG (retired), to Captain Greg Giggi, Allwater Marine Services/TowBoatU.S. Charleston.

This award represents the decade long relationship between C-PORT and AFRAS. In 2010, AFRAS had expressed a desire to establish a program, in cooperation with C-PORT, to annually recognize a deserving member of C-PORT that has shown exceptional skill and determination to save lives during a rescue incident in the maritime environment. The Award is to be conferred on an individual or group of individuals who perform exceptional acts in attempting to save life. Instances where the rescuer places their own life at risk are given highest consideration.

Joe Abeyta, co-owner of Allwater Marine Services nominated Giggi for the award. He said, “Displaying the characteristics and traits of a true lifesaver without regard for his own safety and placing himself in danger, “so that other’s may live”, Captain Greg Giggi has brought great credit upon himself, Allwater Marine Services, and the entire marine assistance industry.” Joe Re added, “It was an added bonus to learn he [Giggi] is a former USCG Chief Boatswain's Mate!”

On June 19, 2021, Captain Greg Giggi conducted a single-handed rescue of eight people in Lake Moultrie, SC. The incident began at approximately 1530 when Giggi was dispatched to assist a disabled vessel dragging anchor approximately 100 yards from the rocks of a levee wall. On scene weather was winds west/southwest at about 15mph with a sea state of 2-3 foot and building with a very intense storm approaching from the west that would impact this call.

Upon arriving on scene, Giggi observed the vessel's anchor line fully deployed, under heavy strain and the vessel was taking water over the bow as larger waves would approach. With the impending storm front and after consultation with the master it became imperative that they needed to quickly get the people and the vessel to safety. Of most concern to the master was the safety of his minor aged deaf daughter with down syndrome.

Due to the building sea state, an alongside approach to remove the people safely was not achievable. Gravely concerned with the rapidly approaching storm front, Giggi made the decision to immediately put the vessel into a stern tow and move them to sheltered waters in the lee of a nearby peninsula. He passed the towline to the vessel without incident and began to take the vessel in tow. After a few moments, Giggi noticed the vessel taking more water over the bow and asked the master to bring some of the passengers off the bow and if the bilge pump was energized, which the master stated it was.



## **NEWS** From -

### Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

---

Keeping the vessel in-step, Giggi then lengthened the tow, improving the ride and safety of the passengers. At this point the weather was deteriorating by the minute with winds increasing to 35-40 knots as the stormfront began to impact the operation. Significantly constrained by the onslaught of the seas, now building to 6-7 feet, off his bow and the rock levee wall just 200 yards astern of the vessel in tow, Giggi faced the almost insurmountable task of making any headway to the safety of the peninsula just barely a quarter mile away. It was during this time he heard the master yell and began waving his arms saying the vessel was beginning to sink.

Within seconds the vessel's stern went under and violently rolled to port, tossing all eight people into the water. Without a second to spare, Giggi immediately came to all stop, cut the tow line, brought his tow boat about, and began recovering the victims who were now drifting towards the rocks. After recovering the second person, he returned to the helm and attempted to throttle out of the debris field. As if the weather, the sunken vessel and eight persons in the water weren't enough, the towing vessel's outboard engine became fouled with debris. Giggi and his vessel with two survivors were now in danger of being slammed into the rocks less than one hundred feet away.

Remaining calm under pressure with a disabled vessel of his own, battling 5–6-foot seas and 35 kt winds with six remaining people in the water, Giggi immediately set anchor keeping his vessel from danger. He then cleared the fouled prop but was only able to achieve 2100 rpms on the engine or it would shut off. Assessing the risks, his training, his vessel's capabilities, and the danger to the victims still in the water, Giggi de-anchored and continued to rescue the remaining six victims who would have most assuredly perished from drowning or suffered life threatening injuries from the rocks if no action had been taken. Once all personnel were accounted for and a quick assessment of potential injuries was completed, Giggi requested emergency personnel to meet him at the nearby Joint Base Charleston Recreational Facility where they were safely transferred to shore with only minor injuries.

Cited by AFRAS: Captain Giggi is recognized for his leadership, acute situational awareness, keen judgement and expert seamanship skills under extreme circumstances, resulting the effective rescue of eight souls facing imminent peril that day.

C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage, and other marine-related operations. C-PORT represents, promotes, protects, and defends its member companies through communication, relationship development, and education. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional, and timely assistance to all boaters, and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit <https://cport.us>.