



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 1, 2018

Contact: Tina Cardone
(954) 261-2012

C-PORT Presents Distinguished and Meritorious Service Awards

C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) presented its Distinguished Service and Meritorious Service awards at the 31st C-PORT Conference Awards Luncheon held on January 16, 2018 at Jupiter, FL. Tina Cardone, C-PORT executive director, commented, "We are honored to present lifesaving awards to these deserving representatives of the marine assistance industry. They demonstrate the professional standards and dedication to the boating public that our association promotes." C-PORT was honored to have Captain Christina Davidson, Chief, USCG Office of Search and Rescue, present the awards.

Distinguished Service Awards are presented to those exhibiting Extraordinary Assistance:



(Pictured are James Freeman, Captain Christina Davidson, Cody Catapano, and Nathan Lins)

Captains Cody Catapano, Zachary Willis and Raven Bolster, Sea Tow Crystal Coast- On November 4, 2016, the three captains responded to a sailing vessel that was hard aground and sinking on Cape Lookout Shoal in breaking surf. The rescuers attempts to secure the passengers from the sinking vessel were to no avail, as the breaking surf made it too dangerous. Keeping watch on the passengers while waiting for the US Coast Guard rescue helicopter, the vessel sank completely with its inflatable life raft being ravaged by the seas. With the situation dire, Willis tried to reach the vessel only to have pieces of the raft entangled in his lower unit. Immediately, Catapano threw a line to Willis and secured the towboat before it was thrown on to the sunken boat and passengers. Teamwork and skilled actions enabled the group to rescue the three passengers from the surf.

Captain James Freeman, TowBoatU.S. Tampa Bay- On September 22, 2017, TowBoatU.S. Tampa Bay's dispatcher received a call that a vessel was taking on water and sinking approximately seven miles offshore. Freeman immediately made way at maximum speed towards the distressed vessel in the stiff 2' to 3' chop. After a short search, he found the nose of the vessel sticking up above the surface, but did not see the two passengers reported to be onboard. After notifying the US Coast Guard, Freeman located the two distressed people in their lifejackets approximately 1 mile from the sunken vessel, being swept out to sea on the ebb tide current. It was not until they were safely ashore did Freeman discover that the vessel did not have a working VHF radio and the boater was only able to make one cellular call before being swept away.

Captain Nathan Lins, TowBoatU.S. Catalina- On September 11, 2017, Lins heard a MayDay call come over the radio for that someone had fallen overboard. Lins spotted a sailing vessel about 4 miles away. They were in the middle of nowhere, so Lins felt confident that was the boat making the distress call. Lins caught up to the sailboat and was told that a man had fallen overboard without a life jacket, and the crew struggled to get the boat off of autopilot and now they were disoriented and unsure where the person had fallen overboard. Luckily the woman had taken a picture of he GPS when the man fell overboard. Lins climbed to his tower and began his search, combing the area and using binoculars to



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

hunt for the man in the water. It was blowing 15 knots making it very choppy, and the water temperature was about 71 degrees creating an immediate concern of hypothermia. Lins finally spotted the man's head, barely above water. He Lins estimated the man had been in the water at least 45 minutes and was struggling to survive. Standing on his swim platform, Lins pulled the man onboard. The man was exhausted and of no help in getting himself out of the water. With the man safely onboard, Lins notified US Coast Guard and returned the man to his sailboat.

C-PORT Meritorious Awards were presented for Exemplary Assistance:



(Pictured are Shawn Brule, accepting for London Walker, Captain Christina Davidson, Will Beck, accepting for Chris Allen, and Cody Catapano.)

Captain Chris Allen, Sea Tow Palm Beach- On June 21, 2017, Allen was patrolling the Jupiter Inlet when he was notified via VHF radio that six divers were separated from their dive boat around three nautical miles east of the Jupiter Inlet. The divers were reported missing around 1500 after they were separated from their diving. At that time, U.S. Coast Guard crews from Lake Worth Inlet Station, a Coast Guard helicopter from Miami, and Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office marine units all began their search. Within minutes of receiving the call, Allen had located all six stranded divers and brought them aboard his vessel. Allen, under Coast Guard escort, then safely returned the divers back to the dive boat waiting at the inlet.

Captain Cody Catapano, Sea Tow Crystal Coast- On June 10, 2017, Catapano heard a distress call for a vessel that had hit a shoal, resulting in an injury to one of the crew members on board. Upon impact, the man had fallen and hit the back of his head on a table, leaving him bleeding and unresponsive. Upon arriving on-scene, Catapano realized the Coast Guard was searching in the wrong area and radioed to have them follow his lights to his location. As the Coast Guard approached, Catapano tied his vessel to the port side of the vessel and jumped aboard to check on the injured crew member. The man had a pulse, but was barely breathing and was severely bleeding from the back of his head. With the Coast Guard vessel now on-scene, Catapano helped load the injured man onto a back board and transferred him onto the Coast Guard's rescue boat. The injured man was then transported back to the dock where an ambulance was waiting. A few hours later, Catapano learned the injured man was awake and responsive, only needing some staples to help mend his head injury.

Captain Charles "London" Walker, TowBoatU.S. Cape Cod- On August 13, 2017, Walker was patrolling just off Browns Bank. This is a popular destination for boaters who enjoy rafting and anchoring while enjoying the warm New England summers. A ten-foot tidal range creates swift currents in some of the deeper pockets surrounding Browns Bank, which can catch swimmers and boaters by surprise. Walker noticed three adult men swimming approximately 30 feet behind their boat, normal for the area. About 30 seconds later, he took note that the three appeared to be struggling as they were now over 100 feet from their vessel and being swept quickly in the three knot current. Without hesitation, he maneuvered his towing vessel up to the first two men to assist them aboard. The two men quickly shouted for him to "get their friend first....he is struggling". The third swimmer had become separated and was barely keeping his head above water. Walker immediately turned his vessel to recover the man that was struggling. All three swimmers were rescued in less than four minutes.



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

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. 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. They are professionals, dedicated to the growth and development of their respective businesses and committed to furthering the advancement of our waterways and the boating community. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit www.cport.us.