

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to the crew of

KOKOMO

for the rescue as follows:

On July 21, 2002 at 8:30PM during the Chicago Yacht Club Race To Mackinac, in the Straights of Mackinac, the 44-foot Chris White Explorer, Caliente, was impaled by a squall with 50-80 knots of wind, 5-7 foot seas with 70-degree water temperature. The screecher and main sheets were let run, however, the wind pushed the nose of the trimaran into the water, and the boat tripped over one ama and capsized.

Tim Doran was separated from the boat with an inadequate PFD and hailed for help. Mark Muehler jumped, and the two clung together, supported by Muehler's PFD. The upturned hulls acted like sails, pushing the boat out of sight until its mast ran aground, ¼ mile away.

The remaining four crewmembers gathered on the upside down boat. They cut the netting to retrieve their ditch kit. At 9:15PM, they fired a flare, called a "Mayday" and turned on the EPIRB.

Doran and Muehler had swallowed and inhaled a lot of water, coughing hard. Their strength was being zapped by the wave action, shock and the cool water. They turned on a personal strobe light. The storm was abating and the waves dropped to 2-4 feet. However, Doran was succumbing to shock and his breathing shallowed. In his own words, he was "clearly at the end of my rope."

Algomarine, a 730-foot Canadian freighter that was beyond this scene, saw the flare, then turned around in the narrows of the Straights while radioing the United States Coast Guard of the flare sighting. The shallows of the reef prevented Algomarine from approaching Caliente, or the two separated victims.

At 9:31PM, Kokomo, a Shock 55, after seeing the flare and hearing the Mayday, arrived, with Algomarine radioing and pointing at Doran and Muehler with their high powered arc spotlight. This shortcut got Kokomo to Doran and Muehler quickly and they hauled the soaked sailors over their stepped transom. The spotlight then swung to Caliente, Kokomo turned and picked up two more pairs of sailors, with all recovered successfully by 9:55PM. Kokomo provided dry clothes, sleeping bags for warmth and hot lasagna to the victims. Kokomo received redress from the Protest Committee, for the time spent saving her fellow sailors, maintaining her first place finish.

Congratulations to the Crew of Kokomo, including Dr. Wesson Schulz, Dr. Rob Lovell, Dr. Kerry Kaysserian, Greg Beck, Myles Cornwell, Tom Cowell, Eugene Miller, Dan Lisuk, Mike Fisher, Erik Nelson, Ken Stepnitz, Adam Veltman, and Chuck Wyres for their lifesaving rescuing of six sailors at night, providing first-aid and comfort, in a prompt efficient manner. US SAILING is pleased to present the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal in recognition of this event.

Ron Trossbach, Chair
Safety at Sea Committee
by direction

US SAILING Board Member and Safety at Sea Committee member Gene T. McCarthy presented the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to the Crew of Kokomo at Chicago Yacht Club on Saturday, November 2, 2002.

Photos by Nick Hawkins

DETAILS:

The United States Coast Guard provided the following to Kokomo:

Dr. Wesson Schulz
Owner, S/V KOKOMO

Dear Dr. Schulz,

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to you and your crew for the assistance rendered on July 21st, 2002, to the six-man crew of the sailing vessel CALIENTE. While participating in the Chicago to Mackinac Race, you assisted in recovering the crew of the CALIENTE after it capsized in the Straits of Mackinac.

Coast Guard Search and Rescue operations were clearly enhanced by your professional actions and those of your crew. By virtue of your collective efforts, you have become members of SAR Team 9, the network of individuals who perform Search and Rescue on our Great Lakes. Once again, please convey my thanks to all of those involved for heeding the distress call.

Sincerely,
R. F. SILVA
Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard

Nominators Name: Tim Doran, also nominated by Dean Cady on behalf of Chicago Yacht Club and Bill Luksha.

Event Name: Chicago Mackinac Yacht Race

Sponsoring Yacht Club: Chicago Yacht Club

Date of Event: 7/20/02

Event City: Chicago

Event State: IL./MI.

Date of Incident: 7/21/02

Body of Water: Lake Michigan

First Victims Name: Tim Doran

First Boat Name: Caliente

First Boat Length: 44'

First Boat Make Model: Chris White Explorer 44

Second Victims Name: Mark Muehler

Second Boat Name: Caliente

Second Boat Length: 44'

Second Boat Make Model: Chris White Explorer 44

Rescuing Skipper 1: Wesson Schulz

Rescuing1 Boat Make Model: Schock 55

Rescuing1 Boat Name: Kokomo

Rescuing1 Boat Length: 55'

Rescuing Skipper 2: Neil Olsen

Rescuing Boat2 Make Model: ALGOMARINE

Rescuing Boat2 Length: 730'

What was the nature of this incident: Capsize

Did a Mayday call go out: Yes

Who responded: ALGOMARINE & Kokomo

Was any injury sustained by the victim: N

Can your story be published: Y
Can you provide articles about this event: Y
Was a PFD worn: Y
What type: Musto "Bubble Pack"
What type1: Mustang Inflatable
What position was the victim working before they went in:
Furling Screacher
Was this day or night: Dusk.
Wind speed: 50-60+
Wave height: 2-4 feet
Water temperature: 70 F
Air temperature: 80F
How much time did the victim spend in the water: 90 minutes
What recovery method was used: Motor to victims then hauled aboard from stern.
Did the victims boat lose site of the victim: Y
Did the victim have a strobe light or whistle: Yes, both
What color clothes were visible above the water: Not sure
Was a Lifesling aboard: Y
Was it used: N
Was the race sailed under ISAF regulations: Y
If so what category: 2

What happened:

We were caught in a Micro-burst approx. 30 miles from finish. Trimaran Caliente pitch-poled and threw 5 of 6 crew into Lake Michigan at Gray's Reef. Mark Muehler and I were in the water for 90 minutes. I stayed afloat by hanging onto Mark. Mark was wearing a Mustang inflatable which was enough to keep us both barely afloat.

What type of injuries, hypothermia included:

About the last 10-15 minutes my breathing started to get shallow and I knew that shock was starting to set-in.
How did the victim get hoisted onto the deck: From stern of Kokomo.

Thanks for the reply. To the best of my knowledge the Captain of the ALGO MARINE was the first vessel to respond to the S.O.S. sent by Caliente. I believe he was responsible for guiding Kokomo to where Mark and I were in the water using his spotlights and radio communications. His involvement expedited Kokomo's rescue of Mark and myself. By the time Kokomo picked us up I was clearly "At the end of my rope", and any delay in retrieving at least myself would have made the difference.

In reading some of the statements from the Coast Guard personnel the fact that he maneuvered his ship in very tight quarters as well as the risk of running it aground should at least garner honorable mention for his efforts.

I was also wondering if there was a way to get a recording of the radio transmissions from the vessels that participated in the search and rescue. It might be useful as a teaching tool for how to execute a successful rescue.

Look forward to your response and good luck this weekend, sail fast.

Best regards,
Tim Doran

I believe Kokomo would have seen our strobe light. However, having the Algo Marine shine its search beacon on us made Kokomo's job a lot easier. Certainly it would have taken Komoko longer to reach us. How much longer is hard to estimate, but as you read in the article we didn't have much time to spare. The Algo Marine's presence was crucial for even it was about one half before we were hauled from the water, we at least new rescue was on the way. I don't know what the wind speed was at the time of our recovery other than to say it was considerably less than when the storm hit us and capsized the Caliente.

When Mike Steck return home on Monday evening, there is a message from the Coast Guard waiting for him on his answering machine.

Tim and I tried to bolster each spirits, especially prior to Algo Marine's arrival. We prayed and did a lot of burping caused by the water we had swallowed.

Mark Muehler