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Recognition for Chesapeake Bay rescue

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US Sailing's Safety at Sea Committee awarded the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to Ed Tracey, Dewey Ward and Ray Racine, the crew of Incommunicado, for their 2016 rescue of Patrick Seidel on October 23.

Presented on December 7 by Jonathan Wright, United States Naval Academy Sailing Squadron's Vanderstar Chair, the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal is awarded to skippers of boats or race support vessels who assist in rescues of victims from the water.

Above photo: (L to R) Dewey Ward, Ed Tracey, Jonathan Wright, Patrick Seidel

Rescue Report:

Patrick Seidel, a United States Naval Academy graduate, retired submarine commander and highly-experienced racer, along with first-year crew Janet Gawler, was post-race delivering .45, his Capri 22 from Baltimore, Md. to the Magothy River.

In 10-15 knot winds, seas of two feet, air temperature in the high 50s and 60° waters, Seidel turned .45 toward the entrance to the Magothy River and moved outboard across the deck when the pelican hook on the lifeline opened and he went overboard. Clinging to the tiller extension, Seidel injured his shoulder, could not hold on, and consequently separated from his boat.

He tried to coach Gawler to drop the sails and return. On one pass, Seidel was able to grab a stanchion, but bent it and, again, lost his grip. "I was in the water for about 20 to 25 minutes

when I realized I was losing strength and if I didn't do something aggressive I would likely drown," Seidel explained.

Seidel stripped down to boxers, swam about 500 yards to a buoy, hung on and waited for help. While several boats passed by, "only one, a Vanguard, stopped but he didn't have a ladder to get me out and frankly," Seidel said, "I was getting delirious and should have asked for a life jacket."

Ed Tracey, skipper of Incommunicado (Omega 36), and crew members Dewey Ward and Ray Racine, were returning from the same race when they spotted .45's flogging sails. Using a ladder, Tracey, Ward and Racine successfully pulled Seidel out of the water and onto the deck. Hypothermic and in danger of drowning, Seidel was then clothed and blanketed while Ward boarded .45 and drove home to Gibson Island Marina.

The award is made for rescues in U.S. waters, or those which occur in races originating or terminating in a United States port. The purposes of the award are to recognize the significant accomplishment in seamanship which has saved a life, and to collect further case studies in rescues for analysis for the US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee which will eventually be incorporated into the extensive educational programs of US Sailing.