

Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System
U.S. Coast Guard



Press Release

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Vive Amver!
French sailors rescued by Amver ship near Bermuda
Video/photos available

NEW YORK – Three French sailors will be home for the holidays after being rescued from their capsized sailboat 600 miles east northeast of Bermuda early Sunday morning December 13, 2009. Fortunately the yachtsmen were well prepared with survival equipment and a 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon, or EPIRB.

The French trio first encountered trouble when their 40 foot sailboat, F Et Mer, capsized the evening of December 12th. According to survivor reports, they sent a distress signal but were unable to deploy the lifeboat due to damage sustained in the capsizing.

Rescue officials, having received the distress beacon's signal, requested the Bahamian flagged cargo ship Wellington Star to divert and steam towards the last known position of the F Et Mer. Captain Eduard Rogov, master of the Amver participating cargo ship, was only 92 miles from the location of the French sailors when he set a course to rescue them.

Amver, sponsored by the United States Coast Guard, is a unique, computer-based, and voluntary global ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea.

Once Captain Rogov was on the scene he quickly saw the yacht had also suffered a broken mast, damaged rudder, and hull damage. "They were taking on water at about five gallons an hour," said Captain Rogov. "The weather and night conditions complicated the rescue. I estimated the winds to be Force 9 on the Beaufort Scale [47-54 mph] with waves in excess of 26 feet," he added.

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Despite the challenging conditions, Captain Rogov's crew was able to rescue all three Frenchmen. The crew of the Wellington Star quickly evaluated their condition, gave them dry clothes and food. The Wellington Star is managed by Dobson Fleet Management Ltd. of Cyprus.

"The Coast Guard provides the technology to coordinate the Amver alerts, but it is the commitment of our partners in the commercial shipping community that makes this program successful," said Rear Admiral Wayne Justice, Commander of the United States Coast Guard's Fifth District and the command center responsible for coordinating the rescue.

The fate of the sailboat was not as fortunate. The F Et Mer was left adrift and marked as a hazard to navigation. The survivors were taken to the Wellington Star's next port call, New Bedford, MA, where Customs and Coast Guard personnel would assist in their repatriation.

With Amver, rescue coordinators can identify participating ships in the area of distress and divert the best-suited ship or ships to respond. Prior to sailing, participating ships send a sail plan to the Amver computer center. Vessels then report every 48 hours until arriving at their port of call. This data is able to project the position of each ship at any point during its voyage.

In an emergency, any rescue coordination center can request this data to determine the relative position of Amver ships near the distress location. On any given day there are over 3,700 ships available to carry out search and rescue services. Visit <http://www.amver.com> to learn more about this unique worldwide search and rescue system.

Video: http://cgvi.uscg.mil/media/main.php?g2_itemId=730775

Video credit: USCG video

Photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/amver/4192093291/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/amver/4192854442/>

Photo credit: crew of the M/V Wellington Star

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