

August 26, 2009 Auxiliary patrol 90615 end with a rescue :

Our Auxiliary safety patrol started at 0800 from Flotilla 65 on this sunny warm Wednesday. Winds were out of the southwest at 10 to 15 Kts and sea conditions in Buzzards Bay were 2 feet.

Leaving the New Bedford hurricane barrier we headed southeast to the area of "Black Rock" and checked on two vessels. One was a 24 foot center consol that was trolling and the other was a 21foot cabin boat anchored with three men onboard. Initially, we thought that they may have needed assistance but as we got closer we realized they were hand lining. A quick wave from both boats and we turned southwest toward South Dartmouth.

The wind was now gusting; the sea was still around 2 feet with an occasional 3 footer. We had an incoming tide and with the southwest wind I expected the rolling bay waves to be around two to four feet until the current changed. We continued heading southwest with our next destination "The Sandspit" just southeast of Dumpling Rocks. When we arrived the waves were rolling pretty well over "The Sandspit". There were few boats out, mostly large sail boats enjoying the benefit of the good wind.

We continued toward Salter's Point to check that area and then made our way back to Dumpling Rocks and tucked in behind to get in the lee and away from the rolling waves. We proceeded northerly along the east shore of South Dartmouth toward Rickerson's Point and then into Clarks Cove in New Bedford. We went to the northern end of the cove near the hurricane barrier and back out along the New Bedford beaches. The wind had stiffened to about 20 Kts.

Next we headed across the cove and around Rickerson's Point breakwater and into Padanaram Harbor. We continued into the harbor to the road bridge and headed back out. Once we cleared Rickerson's Point my plan was to continue on to Wilber's Point at the southern end of Fairhaven. The wind was now blowing around 25 Kts. and we had a 4 foot rolling beam sea that had no effect on my patrol boat.

As we continued southeast, I commented to the crew that I was just going over Bent's Ledge, Leo Lakes' favorite fishing spot.

Shortly after, Leo and Bob observed a small boat and thought they saw people waving. I turned the patrol boat northeast and approached a white 17 foot center consol that was submerged to the gunnels. Two men were aboard waist deep in water. Both had life jackets around their neck but not tied around them. The captain's life jacket was on backwards. One man spoke Spanish and the captain spoke broken English. Rodney Thomas, a trainee on our boat, spoke to him in Spanish but did not get much of a response. The captain kept pointing south saying another person was in the water.

I immediately called Station Menemsha and advised them of the situation and our position: 41° 34.6 N and 070° 53.9 W. The time was 1200 hrs. I asked them for assistance and asked them to contact the New Bedford police boat and the Fairhaven Harbor Master. I advised the station that the built-in flotation on the 17 footer was keeping the two men afloat. The station asked us to attempt to locate the person in the water. We did a quick search of the immediate area and didn't find the person. I advised the station of our search and they directed us to get the two people off the submerged boat. The station also told me their 25 footer was in route but due to sea conditions it would take them about 45 minutes.

On our first attempt to remove the men from their vessel they appeared too afraid to leave the vessel. We talked them through securing their lifejackets and I made a second approach. The 17 footer almost rolled over in a large wave. At this point both men wanted to get off of the submerged boat. The vessel owner received our life ring first and jumped into the water. We pulled him to our vessel and lifted him aboard.

I made a third approach and the second man jumped into the water and our life ring landed next to him. He was pulled to our vessel and lifted aboard. Neither man was injured.

The captain told us that a third man had jumped or fallen off the boat near a red buoy and that they had been swamped about an hour ago. Both men were frantic about their friend who had fallen into the water. They kept telling us that he fell near a red buoy.

The closest buoy, Bents Ledge buoy, was about 1.25 nm southwest of us directly into the oncoming waves. We headed for it hoping to see orange because the two rescued men said that their friend had an orange life jacket.

From a distance we spotted something orange in the waves but it was an orange lobster buoy. We continued on our southwest route. Bob and Leo spotted another orange item in the wave's dead ahead. This time it was the third man. He had his left arm around a child's orange life jacket and a white fish cooler cushion was tucked under his right arm. The Bent Ledge buoy was about .5 nm ahead of me.

He looked exhausted and as we approached him he lost the white cushion. We threw him the life ring and it landed right over his arm. We kept yelling to him to hold on to the life ring. We pulled him to the boat and lifted him aboard. Our position was approximately 41° 34.4N 070° 54.6 W.

He was shivering and holding his chest. He was conscious but very lethargic. It was 1221 hrs. I called the station to advise them that we had the third party, but he needed medical care and he was complaining about chest pain. The station arranged to have the Fairhaven Fire Department and Ambulance meet us at Flotilla 65. The crew tended to him as I headed for New Bedford harbor.

Bob contacted Tow Boat US and advised them that the boat was adrift across the main New Bedford shipping channel. Tow Boat US was on the way out as I passed the drifting vessel on my way in.

I called 911 as we passed through the dike and was routed to the Fairhaven Police Department. I asked them to contact the ambulance and have them meet us at the Pease Park boat launch pier to make it easier to get the stretcher to the boat. The boat ramp is adjacent to Flotilla 65.

When we got to the pier the Fairhaven ambulance and fire department and police department were waiting. The injured man was transported to St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford for treatment. The two other men refused medical treatment. They were brought to Flotilla 65 to contact their families.

Auxiliary Crew: **Robert M. Joseph #1143720 – Crew**
Leo G. Lake #1214303 – Crew
Rodney P. Thomas #1143450 – Crew Trainee
Paul G. Sadeck #1143170 – Coxswain



Picture taken by William Farnham #1156120



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