

# **THE ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA**

## **C-PORT Award**

**2022**

### **Presented to:**

**Captain Greg Giggi of TowBoat US Charleston/Santee Cooper Lakes, South Carolina**

Captain Greg Giggi, TowBoatU.S. Charleston / Santee Cooper Lakes regarding the single-handed rescue of eight people in Lake Moultrie, SC on June 19, 2021.

At approximately 1530 Captain Giggi was dispatched in tow boat Cleo Belle, a 20' Dusky center console with a single outboard, to assist a disabled pleasure craft dragging anchor approximately 100 yards from the rocks of a levee wall. On scene weather was winds west/southwest at about 15mph with a sea state of 2-3 foot and building with a very intense storm approaching from the west that would impact this call.

Upon arriving on scene, Captain Giggi observed the vessel's anchor line fully deployed, under heavy strain and the vessel was taking water over the bow as larger waves would approach. With the impending storm front and after consultation with the master it became imperative that they needed to quickly get the people and the vessel to safety. Of most concern to the master was the safety of his minor aged deaf daughter with down syndrome.

Due to the building sea state, an alongside approach to remove the people safely was not achievable. Gravely concerned with the rapidly approaching storm front, Captain Giggi made the decision to immediately put the vessel into a stern tow and move them to sheltered waters in the lee of a nearby peninsula. Captain Giggi passed the towline to the vessel without incident and began to take the vessel in tow.

After a few moments, Captain Giggi noticed the vessel taking more water over the bow and asked the master to bring some of the passengers off the bow and if the bilge pump was energized, which the master stated it was.

Keeping the vessel in-step, Captain Giggi then lengthened the tow, improving the ride and safety of the passengers. At this point the weather was deteriorating by the minute with winds increasing to 35-40 knots as the stormfront began to impact the operation.

Significantly constrained by the onslaught of the seas, now building to 6-7 feet, off his bow and the rock levee wall just 200 yards astern of the vessel in tow, Captain Giggi faced the almost insurmountable task of making any headway to the safety of the peninsula just

barely a quarter mile away. It was during this time Captain Giggi heard the master yell and began waving his arms saying the vessel was beginning to sink.

Within seconds the vessel's stern went under and violently rolled to port, tossing all eight people into the water. Without a second to spare, Captain Giggi immediately came to all stop, cut the tow line, brought his tow boat about, and began recovering the victims who were now drifting towards the rocks.

After recovering the second person, he returned to the helm and attempted to throttle out of the debris field. As if the weather, the sunken vessel and eight persons in the water weren't enough, the towing vessel Cleo Belle's single outboard engine became fouled with debris. Captain Giggi and his vessel with two survivors were now in danger of being slammed into the rocks less than one hundred feet away.

Remaining calm under pressure with a disabled vessel of his own, battling 5–6-foot seas and 35 kt winds with six remaining PIW's, Captain Giggi immediately set anchor keeping his vessel from danger. He then cleared the fouled prop but was only able to achieve 2100 rpms on the engine or it would shut off.

With limited steering/propulsion of his own, and victims in the water, Captain Giggi confident of his seamanship skills and the capabilities of his vessel, took the calculated risk to de-anchor and continue to rescue the remaining six victims who would have most assuredly perished from drowning or suffered life threatening injuries from the rocks if no action had been taken. Once all personnel were accounted for and a quick assessment of potential injuries was completed,

Captain Giggi requested emergency personnel to meet him at the nearby Joint Base Charleston Recreational Facility where they were safely transferred to shore with only minor injuries.

Displaying the characteristics and traits of a true lifesaver without regard for his own safety and placing himself in danger, "so that other's may live", Captain Greg Giggi has brought great credit upon himself, Allwater Marine Services, and the entire marine assistance industry.

Captain Giggi is recognized for his leadership, acute situational awareness, keen judgement and expert seamanship skills under extreme circumstances, resulting the effective rescue of eight souls facing imminent peril that day.