

2023 AFRAS Amver Award

Presented to:

M/V SILVER MUNA

The 2023 AMVER Award was presented to the M/V SILVER MUNA who rescued two men and pet dog from their powerless sailboat, more than 200 miles off the coast of Delaware.

The Americans Kevin Hyde, 65, and Joe Ditomasso, 76, were sailing in cold wintry conditions from Cape May, New Jersey, to Marathon, Florida, when they ran into trouble. Their sailboat had run out of fuel and power, which rendered its radios and navigation equipment inoperable.

After their families hadn't heard from them for many days, the U.S. Coast Guard launched a wide-scale search and rescue operation – including Coast Guard cutters and aircraft, ships from the U.S. Navy and commercial and recreational vessels.

On Tuesday 13 December 2022, the Second Officer, Raul Jr Deocadez, of Hong Kong-flagged SILVER MUNA spotted the dismantled sailboat on starboard side around two nautical miles away. The Master, Captain Neeraj Chaudhary, then diverted the ship to reach it and led his crew in embarking on a challenging rescue operation.

In heavy swells of 4-5 metres, the crew successfully brought the men – who had not eaten anything for around five days – onboard by using the tanker's crane with safety net and pallet. Their little dog Mim Mim, in her own sailing vest, was also lucky to be held in their arms while being winched up together to safety.

After enjoying hot showers, water and hearty meals, Kevin, Joe and Mim Mim remained onboard for 26 hours and were cared for by crew until SILVER MUNA reached its next port in New Jersey, New York.

At a US Coast Guard press conference upon arrival, survivor Joe said "For this Captain, to find us out there – it was more than a needle in a haystack. This gentleman – the Captain – and his crew were amazing."

"This is an excellent example of the maritime community's combined efforts to ensure safety of life at sea," Daniel Schrader, a Coast Guard spokesman said.

In reflecting on the rescue, Captain Chaudhary said “It was a very emotional moment for me when I saw them reunited with their families. I thank all my crew for their tremendous efforts in the rescue operation and in saving three lives.”

Kishore Rajvanshy, Managing Director of FLEET, said: “Captain Neeraj Chaudhary and all crew onboard SILVER MUNA deserve the highest praise for upholding the maritime tradition of rescuing people in distress. We take great pride in our people, and it’s fantastic to see how our FLEET crew took action and deployed their skills and training to deliver this successful outcome.”

The SILVER MUNA enrolled in Amver on June 16, 2016 and has earned seven Amver participation awards.