



## **NEWS** From -

### Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

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#### **Lifesaving Awards Presented C-PORT Honors Five Marine Assistance Operators**

C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) presented lifesaving awards to a number of marine assistance operators at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual C-PORT Conference Awards Luncheon held on January 14, 2013 at Clearwater Beach, FL. Tina Cardone, C-PORT Executive Director, announced, "We are pleased to present five lifesaving awards to these representatives of the Marine Assistance Industry. They demonstrate the professional standards that our industry promotes." C-PORT was honored to have Captain Peter Martin, Chief, USCG Office of Search and Rescue, present the C-PORT Distinguished Service and C-PORT Meritorious Service Awards to these deserving individuals. Captain Steve Sawyer, USCG (Ret), President of AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea), was also in attendance to present an AFRAS Lifesaving Award at the banquet held later that day. "We congratulate all of these captains for their heroic efforts in serving the boating community," stated Chris Shaffner, C-PORT Chairman.

Distinguished Service Awards are presented to those exhibiting Extraordinary Assistance and were presented to the following operators:



TowBoatU.S. Fernandina Captain Joe Burkett was cited for his performance on October 3, 2012. At approximately 1430, Burkett was contacted by BoatUS Dispatch regarding a disabled boat near the mouth of the St Mary's Entrance Channel. A female onboard the vessel went for a swim and was caught in the strong current and immediately swept away from the boat. She was not wearing a PFD. Burkett immediately responded while dispatch contacted USCG Sector Jacksonville who in turn contacted Nassau County Sheriff's Department.

Burkett was on scene in 15 minutes, quickly located the disabled vessel and started the search for the female in the water. He found her nearly one mile from the vessel, near the mouth of the jetties. Burkett stated it was difficult to locate her with just her arms breaking the water as she attempted to swim to the jetty. A short distance further and she would have been in open ocean. Burkett quickly got her onboard his vessel, ascertained she did not need any immediate medical attention although she had been in the water for over 20 minutes fighting the current. Accepting for Captain Burkett was company owner, Doug Schultz, pictured here with Captain Peter Martin, USCG.



Sea Tow South Shore, Massachusetts's Captain and owner, Ethan Maass is cited for his performance on June 30, 2012. At approximately 1720, Maass was dispatched to a disabled boat adrift in Cape Cod Bay. After communicating with the vessel, Maass ascertained their location to be 23 nautical miles from his position in Scituate Harbor, and roughly a one-hour run. Once at the location provided by the persons on board the disabled boat, Maass discovered the disabled boat was nowhere in sight. Utilizing his navigation skills and understanding of set and drift, Maass ran down the expected



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drift line and in time was attracted to an object on the water reflecting sunlight. As he got closer, he realized that the disabled boat had over-turned and the two men were sitting on the hull, not wearing shirts or lifejackets. Maas came alongside the over-turned boat and rescued the two people. He provided each person with a sweatshirt and a lifejacket. Maass immediately briefed Coast Guard Station Provincetown, which dispatched a vessel to retrieve the victims. Maass no doubt ensured that those two men were able to be with their families once again.



Sea Tow Fort Lauderdale's Captain Greg Mallek is cited for his performance on March 12, 2012. At approximately 1800 while returning from an offshore patrol and heading into Hillsboro Inlet, Mallek observed an open 23 foot boat attempting to make the approach inbound through the inlet. Small craft warnings had been posted for most of the day, with winds southeast at 15knots, and a strong ebbing tide that created seas of four to six feet in the inlet. He saw the boat being pushed towards the rock and coral reef south of

the inlet. Mallek immediately responded to provide assistance. Before being able to get near, the recreational boat was caught by a larger wave ejecting a female person off the boat and into the inlet. She was not wearing a PFD. Mallek notified Sea Tow Fort Lauderdale dispatch of his situation, maneuvered his vessel through the rough seas, and located the woman as she drifted around the reef. He managed to get her to his swim platform and safely hauled her aboard. The woman was in shock, injured with lacerations to her head and legs. Mallek made arrangements to meet an ambulance at the inlet marina, and transferred her ashore. Once at the hospital, the woman had a large amount of water pumped from her lungs and ultimately made a full recovery.

Receiving Meritorious Service Awards for Exemplary Assistance were the following operators:



TowBoatU.S. Yankeetown Captain Matt Fleming is cited "For Meritorious-Exemplary Assistance" for his performance on June 25, 2012. Responded to a call from BoatUS dispatch regarding 3 young men stranded on an island southwest of Yankeetown during Tropical Storm Debby. Their pontoon boat had developed a leak overnight during the high winds and flooding tides. Captain Fleming immediately responded to the reported location but was unable to find the men. He located them 2 miles farther southwest on a spoil bank in the Cross Florida Barge Canal. Captain Fleming

rescued the men and returned them to Yankeetown Marina where they were met by USCG and local Sheriffs Department.



TowBoatU.S. Big Pine Key, Captain and owner Kevin Freestone, is cited for his performance on 3 occasions in 2012: On October 20, 2012 at approximately 2200, Freestone heard a call to USCG reporting a boat collision in Newfound Harbor involving 3 vessels, 2 anchored and rafted together. Reportedly, neither boat anchored was occupied nor were they displaying anchor lights. Freestone, familiar with the location and very nearby, responded immediately. Upon arrival found that one person had been ejected and



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trapped between the 2 anchored boats and the other person had been thrown violently to the deck of their skiff suffering head, neck and back injuries. The woman had successfully freed her husband from his trapped state before collapsing.

Freestone reported all to USCG and contacted EMS for an ambulance. Freestone stabilized the victims, went to Dolphin Marina to retrieve the waiting EMS and took them to the victims. He then took all parties back to the marina where the ambulance transported to a local hospital. The severely injured woman was later airlifted for further medical care.

On March 6, 2012, Freestone heard a call to USCG from a distressed individual stating his wife was in her kayak and he had lost sight of her and it had been over an hour. He said she had been blown out of the canal system through the small shallow islands and flats into the back country of Big Pine Key and he could no longer see her. The winds that day were about 25 knots and chilly. Freestone immediately launched his shallow draft vessel and began to search for the missing kayaker. After a short time he found her a couple of miles away hanging on to the mangroves to keep from blowing further out into the back country. She was so numb and weak from cold and exhaustion that she needed assistance getting on Freestone's vessel. Freestone ascertained she did not need immediate medical assistance and returned her to her the dock and her waiting husband.

On March 10, 2012, at approximately 1900, TowBoatU.S. Big Pine Key was notified that a teenage boy was thrown from a boat in a high speed grounding accident at Content Keys. Freestone, returning from a tow, immediately launched his shallow draft vessel and taking the young man's father with him, searched for him. The tides were extremely low and it was a very dark night making the search more difficult. Freestone found the grounded vessel but it was too shallow to get close to it. The boy's father walked to the grounded vessel with spotlights from the skiff lighting the scene. The father and another uninjured passenger assisted and they got the teenager to the skiff. The young man had a laceration to the foot and was disoriented. His friend stated that at the time of the grounding, the teenager was thrown through the bow rail onto the flat and was knocked unconscious. He has since made a full recovery.

C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional and timely assistance to all boaters and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. They are professionals, dedicated to the growth and development of their respective businesses and committed to furthering the advancement of our waterways and the boating community. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit [www.cport.us](http://www.cport.us).