



Press Release

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HELP ARRIVES JUST IN TIME

Coast Guard Auxiliary saves 13 people from a sinking charter vessel

HOMER, Alaska - The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary was in the right place at the right time yesterday, and arrived just in time to rescue 13 people from a charter vessel, just before the vessel sank in in 39 degree waters.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary District 17 (Alaska) Coxswain Academy happened to be out on the water with two Auxiliary non-standard boats doing towing drills. On board Auxiliary vessel 275594 were Shane Taylor - coxswain, and his crew Ray Miller and Richard Liebe, along with Michael Cupit from Vancouver BC - a Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliarist attending the District 17 Coxswain Academy as an exchange student.

According to Taylor, "We had just completed a training evolution towing a sailboat when we heard the call about a vessel taking on water." Auxiliary vessel 275594, a 27 foot Safeboat - immediately responded, as it was the fastest platform with twin 250 horsepower outboards.

"We made the twenty mile transit at 40 knots," said Taylor, " and arrived on scene to see a 40 foot charter vessel with 13 people aboard making way at about 6 knots. The rear deck was awash, and all passengers on the forward deck trying to balance the boats movement."

"We came alongside the stricken vessel and all eleven passengers were pulled aboard to the forward deck of the Auxiliary vessel," Taylor said, "We removed all 11 passengers; then the vessel rolled over on its side within 30 seconds after the last passenger was removed. We backed away momentarily to clear the sinking vessel while the two remaining people on board, the master and his crewmember, climbed the hull as it rolled. We then approached again and nosing up to the overturned vessel, we pulled the two remaining survivors aboard."

"Within a minute of the last survivor boarding our boat, the stricken vessel sank completely," said Taylor "The sunken vessel's life raft deployed and broke the surface approximately one minute later."

Within five minutes of the sinking and recovery of all 13 people by the Taylor and his crew, the **USCG Cutter Roanoke Island** arrived on scene. The cutter's small boat was deployed, and all the survivors were transferred from Auxiliary vessel 275594 to the **USCG Cutter Roanoke Island**. All 13 people from the sunken vessel were then transported safely back to Homer Alaska, shaken but unharmed by the experience.

No members of the sunken vessel were forced to enter the water, thanks to the timely arrival and skills of the Auxiliary. "A disaster like this is something we train for, but we hope it never happens," said Taylor. "I couldn't be more pleased about how we responded - the crew performed flawlessly under such adverse conditions. Our training really paid off. And best of all, everyone got to go home safe"

The cause of the sinking remains unknown.

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PHOTO CAPTION: Survivors disembark from the **USCGC Roanoke Island** in the Homer small boat harbor- Homer Alaska, after they were rescued by the Coast Guard Auxiliary, when their 40 foot chart boat unexpectedly sank in 39 degree waters.

Photo by Stewart Sterling, USCG Auxiliary, District 17.

High resolution photos are available - contact Ed Sweeney at DC-A@auxpa.org .

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary is composed of uniformed, non-military volunteer's who assist the Coast Guard in all of its varied missions, except for military and direct law enforcement. These men and women can be found on the nation's waterways, in the air, in classrooms and on the dock, performing Maritime Domain Awareness patrols, safety patrols, vessel safety checks and public education.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary was founded in 1939 by an Act of Congress as the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and re-designated as the Auxiliary in 1941. Over 27,000 members donate millions of hours annually in support of Coast Guard missions.

For more information on the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, visit us at www.cgaux.org or www.axupa.org