



Maritime Mobile Service Network

Press Release

“Where Emergency Communications is a Commitment”

Maritime Mobile Service Network
For Immediate Release, 5/15/17
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On 5/12/17 at approximately 1825 UTC, Members of the Maritime Mobile Service Network assisted with a Mayday call heard on 14.300 MHz. Net Control Station Ken Porter, AC0ML with the assistance of fellow Net Control Station Scott Roberts, KK4ECR received the Mayday call from Brian Stipak, KF7QCX aboard the Sailing Vessel “Ubiquity”.

Captain Stipak reported that he received a distress call on Marine Channel 16 from a 32 foot commercial fishing vessel named “Free Spirit” approximately 50 miles from his position. The captain of “Free Spirit” advised that he was quickly sinking with four persons on board and that they were abandoning the ship into life rafts. KF7QCX attempted to reach coastal stations via VHF Marine radio to no avail. He then went to 14.300 khz where he quickly gave a position report to AC0ML. The vessels were in Mexican waters in the Sea of Cortez at the time of the distress call.

AC0ML notified the United States Coast Guard in San Diego, California to relay this information to them. The Coast Guard also turned their transmitters on and attempted to raise the vessel “Ubiquity” on 14.300 mhz but band conditions were changing rapidly and there was no further contact or updates. The US Coast Guard simultaneously relayed the information to the Mexican Navy who dispatched Vessels to the last position of the “Free Spirit”

The assisting Net Control Station Scott Roberts, KK4ECR followed up with the disposition of the “Free Spirit” and spoke with the Coast Guard in San Diego. The lieutenant on duty was able to contact the Mexican Navy and it was reported was that the fishing vessel “Free Spirit” was towed to the Port of San Carlos. All persons on board were safely at the port as well as the vessel being saved thanks to the quick response of all involved. Quick reaction and cool heads provided a great resolution to a very intense situation!

The Maritime Mobile Service Network net control stations are accustomed to assisting stations with routine reports, weather information and emergencies both on land and at sea. This incident represents just one of many rescues due to the effective response of Net Control Stations. They dedicate their time and equipment for the good of their fellow amateur radio operators on the high seas that depend on this service each and every day. The Maritime Net has been in operation since 1968 and this is the 50th year it has been on the air.

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