

The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to
The Rescuing Crew on Summerwind
for the rescue as follows:

A 100-foot Alden schooner built in 1929, Summerwind was recently restored and donated to the academy in Kings Point, N.Y. With a crew of 16 USMMA midshipmen and staff, Summerwind was competing in the Castine Yacht Club's 'Castine Classic Yacht Race' on August 8, 2010. As the schooner sailed closehauled in a thick fog off Islesboro, Maine, another boat crossed Summerwind's bow on the other tack. At just that moment, a sailor fell overboard from the other boat. Several midshipmen spotted the accident and shouted, "Man overboard!"

As the schooner's helmsman altered course to avoid the swimmer, Midshipman Tim Higgins secured a life jacket from deck stowage and tossed it to the man in the water. Well trained in rescue procedures, the midshipmen lined the rail and pointed at the swimmer as Summerwind's navigator plotted the positions of the boat and the swimmer. A "pan-pan" alert was broadcasted over the vessel's radio to signify urgency on the craft.

Summerwind's Sailing Master was Chris Gasiorek, a Commander in the United States Maritime Service and the director of waterfront activities at the Merchant Marine Academy. Determining that the nearly 200,000-pound schooner would be unable to turn back quickly, he jumped into the 12-foot wooden tender that Summerwind was towing in accordance with a rule of the Castine Classic Yacht Race. Only after casting off did he discover that the oars had been removed, so he paddled the tender to the swimmer.

After several minutes in the 58-degree water, the swimmer was exhausted and needed a short rest before he felt strong enough to be rescued. Commander Gasiorek rolled the rail down to the water and pulled him into the tender. When the man's sailboat reappeared and came alongside, he stepped up on deck and went below to get into warm clothes. Borrowing oars from the crew, Commander Gasiorek rowed over to Summerwind, which had returned to the scene under power, commanded by Captain Jonathan Kabak.

As dangerous as it was, the incident did have one humorous moment. Worried that the man in the frigid water might become unconscious, Commander Gasiorek started a conversation to keep him alert. "I introduced myself, and commented that I felt a bit of a fool for having to paddle to him without oars," Gasiorek recalled. "When he replied that he felt a bit of a fool for falling off his ship, I remarked that he had me beat."

Commander Gasiorek praised the crew: “I believe that the training and practice that our midshipmen receive made this rescue a success. All hands stepped up and performed admirably.”



Left to Right- CDR Chris Gasiorek, Midshipman Amos London, Midshipman Erik Madsen, Midshipman Chris Leach, Midshipman Tim Higgins, Captain Jonathan Kabak.

US SAILING’s Safety-at-Sea Committee awarded the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to the crew of United States Merchant Marine Academy’s (USMMA) sail training vessel Summerwind for this rescue.

Dr. Gino Bottino, MD
Chairman, Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction