



The Officers, Directors and Members of
US SAILING
are pleased to present the
ARTHUR B. HANSON RESCUE MEDAL
to
Ken Gurganus and Jeff Thomas

On September 12, 2015 a short-lived 60 knot microburst hit the first race of the Flying Scot Atlantic Coast Championship in a fleet of 23 at Blackbeard Sailing Club in New Burn, NC.

The Race Committee onboard a Sabreline 36 *Piccolo* quickly became the Incident Command Center, calling for additional rescue boats from shore, as well as directing the other race support boats on the water.

Ken Gurganus and Jeff Thomas were onboard an Aquasport 19 performing leeward gate duties as the storm hit and they had to lower their Bimini top.

Immediately Gurganus and Thomas began checking on all Flying Scots in their area. All waived them off saying they were Ok. As they circled around a second time, sailors had quickly tired attempting to right their boats. At one point they had rescued at least five sailors having brought them aboard their powerboat.

After rest, the sailors were returned to their boats. With so many turtled boats close to one another, collectively as a group they figured out the only way to recover their boats was to disconnect the shrouds and mast from the boat. Then Gurganus and Thomas assisted in righting them tying lines to the capsized boats to help roll them over. There were lines in the water everywhere and great care was taken to keep from fouling their propellers.

It was 2-1/2 hours before everyone was back ashore. This signaled the end of the regatta with no races run. It took two hours for the shore crew to complete the head count, with a sigh of relief and smiles all around. In the initial storm as boats turtled in 10' of water, their masts went into the mud and the 3'-4' waves on the hull pounded the mast deeper into the mud. Next the wind shifted 180-degrees making it almost impossible to extract the mast out of the bottom. There were no injuries, and the water was cleared of all hazards by the end of the following day.

For the rescuing the lives of at least five sailors pulled from the water, and assisting in clearing the waterway of navigation hazards, US Sailing is pleased to award the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal to Ken Gurganus and Jeff Thomas.

Chuck Hawley, Chairman
US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee
By Direction

On January 9, 2015 at the Blackbeard Sailing Club in New Burn, NC, Joleen Rasmussen, SAYRA Race Management Chair, a US Sailing Club Judge and a US Sailing Race Officer made the presentation of the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medals on behalf of the US Sailing Safety at Sea Committee.

Club members were entranced during the stirring telling, most of them had no idea the severity of what had taken place. The full presentation was nearly an hour long, and kept the audience. Joe Brake's story really set the stage well for the awards. People learned a lot during the ceremony.



Left to Right: Joleen Rasmussen, Eric Rasmussen, Robin Schaffer, Malcolm Shaffer, Ken Gurganus, Richard Schott, Eddy Parker, Mark Brennesholtz, Jeff Thomas, Skip Bynum, Jim Zahradkah, Clare Brock, Roger Brake, Joe Brake...and Sam the Dog.

NOMINATION

Date of Incident 09/12/2015

What was the nature of this Incident? Up to 60mph microburst capsized 23 of 20 boats in the Neuse River.

What Happened? Race 1, last leg of a WD2, Microburst formed, high wind, heavy rain. 20 boats capsized. Wind left as quickly as arrived. All sailboats boats in survival mode during the wind. 5 RC Motorboats at a standstill, nose to the wind, went into recovery mod as soon as winds abated. First, confirmed people in the water OK. Then started assisting with boat recovery. Shallow venue, turtle boats damaged masts. Additional motorboats from the community launched to assist with recovery. Shore personnel readied incoming boats. Sailors returned to the racing area to assist. Estimated duration form wind to last boat under tow, < 3 hrs.

Event Name Flying Scot Atlantic Coast Championship

Sponsoring Yacht Club Blackbeard Sailing Club

Event State NC

Event City New Bern

Body of Water Neuse River

Day or Night? Day

Air Temperature warm

Water Temperature warm

Wind Speed from 10-12 knots < 60mph is seconds

Wave Height 3-4'

Name Most racers

Boat Name several

Boat Length 18'

Boat Make & Model Flying Scot

What Position(s) was/were the victim working before they went in? Skipper & Crew

Was a PFD worn by the victim(s)? Yes

What recovery method was used (Quickstop, Reach Method, Figure 8, etc)? motor to the boat

Did the victim's boat lose sight of the victim? yes, in two cases

What search pattern was used? Visual, and the search area last known location

Was GPS or other electronic MOB function used to track or help locate the victim? No

How much time did the victims spend in the water? 20mins - 2 hrs

Did a Mayday call go out? in a way yes,

Who responded? Fairfield Harbor, Local residents

Nominator Name Joleen Rasmussen

Do you give permission to have this story published? Yes

Can you provide copies of articles published about this event? Yes

Ken Gurganus	Jeff Thomas	<p>I believe Ken was the one who reported that they had to take their bimini down during the storm.</p> <p>First time Ken checked in on the sailors, the sailors said no, they were fine, no help needed. Ken continue to circle around the various boats, checking back in. Sailors soon discovered that they tired quicker than expected while working to right their boats. 10-15 minutes later, the sailors knew they needed to rest. At one point, Ken had 4-5 sailors out of the water, resting on his boat. Ken assisted with righting the boats, after collectively, the group figured out the only way to right the boats was to disconnect the shrouds. Ken put tension on the boat to help roll the boat over. There were lots of lines in the water, motor boats had to take care to not foul their props. Had a couple props fouled.</p>
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