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**SOS**

**Winter Newsletter 2015**

## **RESCUED AFTER A SIXTEEN-HOUR ORDEAL AT SEA**

**Three men were lost for sixteen gruelling hours, on a slippery rocky outcrop that was underwater at high tide. Their boat had sunk and they had no way of calling for help.**

At around 2am, the day after Boxing Day, three men were reported missing. Volunteers from Coastguard Northland Air Patrol and Coastguard Houhora started preparing for a difficult rescue mission. The stakes were high: all they knew at that point was that the three men were lost in the Rangauru harbour – a large area of rough sea and jagged rocks less than 70km from Cape Reinga.

The conditions were foul; extreme easterly winds and rain meant that the sea state was rough – and with few boats on the water, no one had seen them get into trouble.

At first light, the Northland Air Patrol team scrambled their aircraft, and started their search over popular fishing spots in the areas they'd pinpointed with the search team on the ground.



They were stranded for sixteen hours, but your donations brought them home

But then they took a decisive step that may well have saved three lives; they broadened their search over the more remote and wilder parts of the bay.

**After twenty minutes of patient observation, success: they spotted the partially submerged boat along with the three men.**

The air patrol volunteers radioed the co-ordinates to base, and two Coastguard Houhora rescue crews launched into the rough seas to try and bring the men safely home.

**Coastguard Houhora have only been part of the Coastguard family for three years. Like many rescue crews in smaller communities, they face a**

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**struggle to recruit volunteers, and do not have the use of a dedicated Coastguard rescue vessel. At the time of the rescue they had just six trained crew who used their own boats to answer the call for help.**

The journey across the choppy water took a full two hours for the first rescue vessel, and when they arrived on the scene they were the first faces the stranded men had seen since the previous afternoon. The top priority was to find out how the men were. One of them was quite poorly; he'd swallowed a lot of sea water, his head and legs were cut, and he was experiencing hypothermia. All were suffering from the effects of spending a night on a rock in bad weather, battling the tide.

**The men told the Coastguard crew that their boat had rolled at 4pm the previous day. They had swum to the safety of the rocks, remaining there overnight as a high tide washed over them.**

The second Coastguard rescue crew then arrived on the scene with food and warm clothing. After getting some of his strength back, one of the survivors, a strong swimmer, swam safely to the boat where he received immediate medical attention.

But the ordeal wasn't over for the two other men; the Coastguard crews decided that it would be too risky to try and transfer them by sea. They knew what to do: they radioed for a rescue helicopter, kept the men's spirits up and monitored their health, and at 10am the Northland Electricity helicopter winched them to safety.

**Sixteen hours after they set out, and after a dire emergency in a remote and wild sea, the men were heading home.**

The Coastguard volunteers involved on that day were later awarded for their professionalism and skill, receiving a NZSAR Certificate of Achievement for Operational Activity.

The crews at Coastguard Houhora and Coastguard Northland Air Patrol are great examples of what makes Coastguard great: passionate, skilled, determined volunteers doing their best for their small communities, using their limited resources to save lives – simply because it's the right thing to do.

**Thank you so much for supporting them.**



Rescued: A survivor spots Coastguard Northland Air Patrol

***“They were waving, really waving. Where they were, at high tide you couldn't see the rocks and they had been there overnight. The Coastguard air patrol crew found the men where no-one else had thought to look.”***

- Murray Miskelly  
*President, Coastguard Northland Air Patrol*

## GET YOUR NEXT WOF FROM VTNZ AND SUPPORT COASTGUARD!

# vtnz

Simply quote "Coastguard New Zealand" or the account number 308228 next time you're getting your WOF and VTNZ will donate 10% of the fee to Coastguard.

With 82 VTNZ testing stations throughout New Zealand there is one near you!

To find your nearest VTNZ station call 0800 88 88 69.

## SUPPORT COASTGUARD WITH VODAFONE



If you have a Vodafone home line, you can easily support Coastguard without it costing you a cent!

Simply register as a Friend of Coastguard and every month Vodafone will make a donation to Coastguard of 3% of your monthly account total.

Visit [coastguard.co.nz/vodafone](http://coastguard.co.nz/vodafone) or call 0800 438 448 to sign up.

## RUN THE AUCKLAND MARATHON FOR COASTGUARD!



The Auckland Marathon is back again for 2015 and we'd like you to be part of our running crew!

Every step you take will raise funds for Coastguard's kiwi heroes to continue to save lives at sea!

Call us on (09) 905 4760 or contact Deb Brown at [marathon@coastguard.org.nz](mailto:marathon@coastguard.org.nz) if you're up for a challenge or just a bit of fun.



Run the Auckland Marathon for Coastguard!

## MAYDAY RESCUE APPEAL RAISES VITAL FUNDS FOR VOLUNTEER CREWS

When three fishermen were faced with a nine-hour fight for survival in the churning Firth of Thames, they thought they'd never see their wives and families again. **But your donations brought them home.**

The Coastguard Thames crew sped to the scene and hauled them out of the cold sea. **Thanks to you,** Coastguard volunteers were able to rescue three good men and bring them home safely.

**Coastguard's Mayday Rescue Appeal raises funds to train all 2,300 Coastguard volunteers around the country, helping them save lives when no-one else can help. Thank you!**



Firth of Thames survivors and Coastguard crew.

# SOLO SAILOR ORDEAL

**“I felt absolute relief and joy when I saw Coastguard approaching”.**

The conditions were calm when **Connell Couchman** steered his new yacht out of Tauranga harbour for the long journey home to Wellington. It was an exciting day for Connell; his boat, the Celtic Dawn, was to become a dream home for Connell and his wife. Normally Connell would have sailed with a mate or two, but no-one could make it this time and he went alone. He waited for a weather window and headed off.

With sailing you can often expect the unexpected, and at the East Cape Connell's luck started to run out. The sea conditions had worsened and he was having difficulty with his sails. To make matters worse, the autohelm (his yacht's autopilot) blew, and the engine started sending out excessive fumes.

**Connell realised he was in trouble – so he contacted Coastguard for help.**

Back at Coastguard Gisborne, skipper Adrian Brown took Connell's call. By radio, he guided Connell to a safe anchor point at Tokomaru Bay. Connell anchored his yacht, inspected the damage and carried out repairs. He also desperately needed a rest – he was exhausted after hours of battling the conditions.

After spending a night at anchor, Connell set off the following morning. But somewhere between Tokomaru Bay and Tolaga



Connell Couchman: “I am truly indebted to these volunteers.”

Bay, a distance of 15 nautical miles, his engine died. Connell was stranded in the middle of the sea. Weary, worried and stressed, he contacted Coastguard again. Recognising the danger, Adrian and his Gisborne volunteer crew of Andrew Shelton and Tony Watson went out to find Connell. They kept in radio contact touch with him throughout.

**“The communication from Coastguard was great and kept me going. I was absolutely exhausted prior to being rescued and overcome by fumes. I felt absolute relief and joy when I saw Coastguard approaching, it was awesome to see the guys,” Connell told us.**

When the crew arrived, Connell was drained and weary. But he managed to hook the towline up and the crew towed the yacht safely to Gisborne. Connell is so appreciative: *“they came out and got me, and managed to tow me back to Gisborne. It was no mean feat – Celtic Dawn is an 11 metre, nine-tonne sloop.”*

**The whole ordeal lasted around 15 hours, from the first phone call to when Coastguard brought Connell safely back to shore. Connell wrote a heartfelt letter of thanks to the crew: “I wish to convey my sincere thanks to the members of Coastguard Gisborne and also commend them on their high levels of professionalism; I am truly indebted to these volunteers. They are a credit to the organisation.”**

**Coastguard crews are able to rescue people like Connell because of you. Your gifts help our volunteers save lives. Thank you.**



Volunteers on board Gisborne Lion Foundation Rescue

# COASTGUARD KAIKOURA'S LIFE-SAVING RESCUE

**“Thank you for saving my dad Wade and my uncle Dylan. I don't know what I would do without them.”**

It was about 7pm on Sunday evening when Christchurch brothers Wade and Dylan Campbell launched their dinghy back out into South Bay, Kaikoura.

**They weren't out for long when the motor stopped dead.**

Without power, their boat drifted 300 metres away from shore – and then without warning, a large wave crashed on top of the boat. Both men were suddenly dragged underwater.

Later on, Wade would recall how panic gripped him as they floated helplessly in the water: *“I thought, if the sun goes down we'll be dead; they'll never find us.”*

Coastguard skipper John MacPhail and his crew launched Kaikoura Rescue into the bay. Two aircraft, including the Coastguard Kaikoura Air Patrol, went up to search for them. Kaikoura Helicopter pilot Dave Armstrong, knew what they were up against:

**“The light gets flat and the sea goes black and you can't see anything on the water. They were extremely lucky they were found.”**

Wade remembered what he first thought when the rescue crew found him: “I didn't want to survive if my brother died.



Kaikoura Rescue heads out on an urgent call

I wasn't going home without him.” Wade asked them to leave him and save his brother first. But a recreational fisherman had already rescued Dylan. Wade recalled, “the three people on the Coastguard boat kept me calm, they told me my brother had been picked up, that he was OK.”

Both men were freezing cold, in shock, and suffering from severe hypothermia, but alive and safe. Later on, Wade's son Zenith wrote a touching letter to the rescuers, thanking them for bringing his dad and uncle home. It was a fitting tribute to the rescue teams and a moving reminder to all of us how precious life is.



## Thank you so much for helping our heroes save lives at sea!

**Patrick Holmes** Chief Executive Officer  
Coastguard New Zealand



**Royal New Zealand Coastguard Inc is the charity saving lives at sea.**

Charity Registration No CC 36138

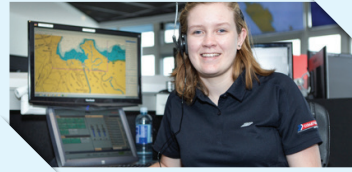
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# A GIFT FROM DESMOND!



Desmond would have heard voices like that of Radio Operator Rochelle on Coastguard radio.

Des was one of three brothers who grew up by the sea in Bayswater, Auckland, on a section that ran down to the beach. The boys spent endless days building yachts and rafts on the beach, seeing who could make the best boats and be the best sailor.

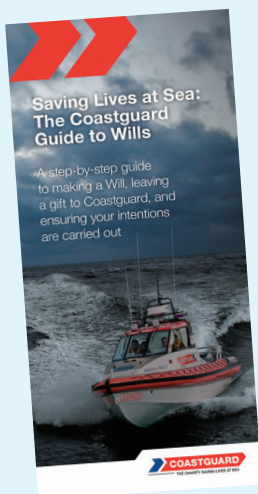
As a grown man, Des volunteered on a mountain rescue team and with St John Ambulance, with whom he spent many years providing first aid at rugby games. He was also a

'ham' radio man and would tune in most nights. He followed Coastguard's activity on the airwaves and was a silent witness to many feats of daring and bravery at sea.

After his death in 2014, Coastguard was notified that he had left a generous gift in his Will. His life, like so many others, was touched by the heroism of Coastguard volunteers, and his own very personal contribution is a lasting tribute to our dedicated volunteers. **Thank you Des!**

TEAR HERE >

## If you would like to know more about leaving a gift in your Will that will support Coastguard into the future then please tick one of the following.



- Please send me information about how I can leave Coastguard a gift in my Will
- I have already included Coastguard in my Will
- I intend to include Coastguard in my Will
- I would welcome the opportunity to speak to someone about the best way to help Coastguard through a gift in my Will

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