



Duco Verheijen (left) and Menno Schröder (right) pictured at the helm of X-Yacht 4.9 Brainstorm in 2022 ARC before an emergency was declared.

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Dutch Sailor Forced to Abandon Yacht in 2022 ARC Emergency Highlights Lifesaving EPIRB

February 1st, 2023 – Speaking out to urge all sailors to carry an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), Dutch captain Menno Schröder recounts the rescue of X-Yacht 4.9 *Brainstorm* during last year's ARC (Atlantic Rally for Cruisers).

A year later as the 2023 ARC January participants complete the course, the

experienced sailor says the ordeal highlighted how the yacht's 406 MHz Ocean Signal rescueME EPIRB1 device can provide a reliable lifesaving connection to the rescue authorities when needed most.

On January 18th, 2022, first-time ARC participant Menno, who was one of four crew members onboard, was nine days into the rally from Gran Canaria to St Lucia when an emergency was declared, forcing them to activate the EPIRB.

After a frustrating start to the race with light winds, Menno recalls a "perfect day for sailing" with wind measuring around 15kt and a 2.5m swell when the crew lost control of the steering.

He said: "As we took down the sails to investigate, we soon discovered that the rudder was no longer in the top bearing and the yacht had suffered some structural damage, with water coming in. It was dark and we were taking on more water than we could pump back out."

With the nearest land 1000km away, the decision to activate the EPIRB was indisputable.

Upon activation, the lifesaving device is designed to provide a near instantaneous alert and position report to rescue authorities, in this instance to MRCC Ponta Delgada, who then proceeded to alert ARC Rally Control.

"The EPIRB was extremely easy to activate, and I received a call from MRCC Delgada Portugal within minutes," added Menno. "I would definitely recommend an EPIRB for offshore sailing, but also closer to shore."

Fellow ARC yacht participants *What's Next*, seven hours away, and *Rhapsodie VI*, 15 hours away, were contacted by MRCC Ponta Delgada, informed of the situation and directed to *Brainstorm's* location, approximately 1,200 nautical miles from the Canary Islands.

The crew on board *Brainstorm* managed to control the situation by successfully stabilising the rudder and attaching a new hose to create extra bilge pump capacity, meaning they could wait out the night.

In daylight the next morning on January 19th, the transfer of the crew to

Rhapsodie VI and *What's Next* was safely carried out – just in time, with the situation likely to worsen due to structural damage and no steering. *Brainstorm* was salvaged almost one week later.

EPIRBs are a requirement in order to participate in the ARC Race. The crew on board *Brainstorm* acquired their Ocean Signal rescueME EPIRB1 through distributors [Shipton Trading](#). One of the most compact EPIRBs on the market, the device leverages communication capabilities via the 406MHz Cospas-Sarsat satellite system with integrated 66-channel GPS receiver and 121.5MHz homing beacon to aid final location by search and rescue craft. This device features built in high intensity strobe lights to maximise visibility in low-light conditions and a huge 10-year battery life.

In order to meet the needs of the market, Ocean Signal has recently launched its next generation AIS EPIRBs, the Ocean Signal rescueME EPIRB3 and the SafeSea EPIRB3 Pro. These fully-featured innovative beacons, which integrate Automatic Identification System (AIS), Near Field Communication (NFC) technology for use with the free Ocean Signal mobile app, and compatibility with Return Link Service (RLS) alerting, are now shipping to Ocean Signal's network of dealers and distributors across Europe.

Ocean Signal provides a free replacement beacon for all owners of its EPIRBs and PLBs who activate their beacons in an emergency.

For more information about the rescueME EPIRB1 and other Ocean Signal products, please visit www.oceansignal.com.

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About Ocean Signal

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