



Five survivors pictured after boat sinking rescue with US Coast Guards

Jul 12, 2024 15:15 BST

## Girlfriend's 21st birthday present saves Five Lives off Mississippi Gulf Coast on Memorial Weekend

*Survivors of [memorial weekend boat sinking](#) are urging fellow boaters not to be complacent and prioritize safety with the purchase of a Personal Locator Beacon*

**Mary Walker Marina, Mississippi Gulf Coast**– On May 26, 2024, five men participating in the annual Mary Walker Marina Snapper Showdown fishing tournament were rescued by the Coast Guard from waters off the Mississippi Gulf Coast, after their 28-foot fishing boat sank 17 miles from Petit Bois

Island. The unexpected and rapid sinking of the boat left the experienced crew in the cold Gulf waters for five harrowing hours before being saved, thanks to an ACR ResQlink 400 PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) that was provided last minute by the girlfriend of one of the survivors.

Despite the severity of the incident, all survivors, including one with a recent surgery, reported no lasting physical effects but all have learnt many lessons from the traumatic event. The group consisted of Connor, Stephen, Easton, Dusty and his 21-year-old son, Cody. Collectively, they had thousands of documented hours on the water, were highly experienced and had completed all the boat safety checks before setting off, which may explain their initial lack of alarm when the boat's warning system activated.

“Alarms go off. Initially, I thought it was a motor issue, maybe one had turned off, but then I heard someone shout, ‘the boat is sinking!’” recalled Stephen, whose father owned the boat.

Within moments, the boat was submerged, and the men didn't even have time to put on their life jackets which they had managed to grab as the boat began to sink. “By the time we got life vests pulled out on to the deck, we were stepping into the water. I firmly believe it sank in as little as 30 seconds, none of us had life jackets on when we went into the water.” said Stephen.

Connor had fortunately remembered that his girlfriend had packed her ResQlink 400 PLB in his bag having been concerned for his welfare after his recent surgery. Sarah had told Connor that she packed him her PLB and it was in the top zipper of his bag before he left, so he managed to access the beacon very quickly as the boat began to sink. Connor was the last one to enter the water, standing on the bow of the boat as it was sinking, attempting to activate the PLB.

The ResQlink 400 PLB was the only emergency equipment that the crew had access to, and a lot relied upon the activation of the beacon; “I remember seeing it do something and as soon as I saw it react, I went in the water” said Connor “the little green light flashing to show it had satellite fix provided reassurance.” There were flares on the boat but unfortunately, they weren't easily accessible during the very rapid sinking of the boat.

With five men overboard in cold water the situation was serious, and the

group tried their best to stay close to each other and check on each other regularly. “We tried to keep our cool for the guy next to us, but the negative thoughts and the doubt crept in after a few hours. By hour three we were all cramping, and it didn’t look good.” said boat captain, Dusty.

After approximately five hours stranded in the vast expanse of choppy waters with 3+ft waves and a South Easterly wind, the men finally saw the reassuring light of the Coast Guard vessel approaching to rescue them from the water.

Thankfully this scenario ended with a positive outcome for all those involved but the crew have all been left with a strong message they want to share with fellow sea-users. “We did so much right, but so much wrong at the same time. We had all the equipment, but we just didn’t have the accessibility. Had we been able to access the flares I am certain we would have been rescued a lot sooner,” said Connor.

ACR recommend that every crew member should carry a Personal Locator Beacon to help preserve the lives of all concerned and increase the chances of rescue for each and every member of a group/crew. The storage of these devices is very important and proper preparation is key. There was another PLB onboard during this incident but the Captain had put it in his tackle bag which went down with the boat.

Always keep a PLB within a life vest or in a holder on your person or even in a pocket. Ensure you have knowledge of how to operate your own life saving equipment and know the proper light sequence associated with your unit for optimal survival chances. Additionally, boats should always be equipped with an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon or EPIRB.

Connor reiterated how regular sea users and boat crew can often become complacent and how this can create situations such as the one they went through; “We know what to do, what leaving the docks looks like, what bilge pumps are supposed to do, how to check a boat down...everything was the way it was supposed to be, and it still happened. We got complacent, and we just want to encourage others to not do the same.” The message the crew want to get across is that it can happen to anyone, so always prepare beforehand and cooperate with Coast Guards to ensure your safety.

Each of the men actively urge people to carry their own life saving equipment

such as a PLB or to have an EPIRB onboard and to ensure that everyone aboard knows what equipment is onboard, where it is, how to use it and for the Captain/Skipper to ensure it is easily accessible. “It needs to be a figured expense, not an optional extra. If you have a boat, you have to have the essential safety and emergency equipment also, no excuses,” said Captain Dusty. “ACR saved my life. I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for that beacon.”

Secure your ACR EPIRB or PLB for enhanced marine safety. Visit <https://www.acrartex.com/> for detailed product information and ordering options.

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### **About ACR Electronics, Inc.**

As a world leader in safety and survival technologies for 65 years, ACR Electronics, Inc., manufactures and supports cutting-edge rescue beacons and survival equipment for the aviation, marine, outdoor and military markets. It is the foremost development center for emergency beacons that are designed with one purpose: to save lives.

Its leading aviation brand, ARTEX, designs and manufactures a wide array of

Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs), as well as battery packs and ELT accessories, for general, business, commercial and military aviation applications.

ARTEX products are selected by the world's largest airframe manufacturers, airlines and governments, as well as private pilots, and are suitable for every type of fixed wing and rotorcraft aircraft. Engineered to work in all conditions when needed the most, ACR Electronics aviation products span a portfolio of brands including ACR, ARTEX, Skytrac, Flight Data Systems, Latitude Technologies, NAL Research, FreeFlight Systems and Bivy. The complete portfolio by ACR and ARTEX also includes Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs), iridium tracking and communication distress beacons, megaphones and distress lighting, and Flight Data Monitoring.

For more information go to [www.ACRARTEX.com](http://www.ACRARTEX.com)

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