



A.B.S.A.R.



ANTIGUA & BARBUDA SEARCH AND RESCUE

Antigua Yacht Club Marina

Falmouth Harbour

Antigua, West Indies

E-Mail: absar@candw.ag Visit: www.absar.org

Tel: (268) 562-1234 VHF: Channel 16

"So that others may live"

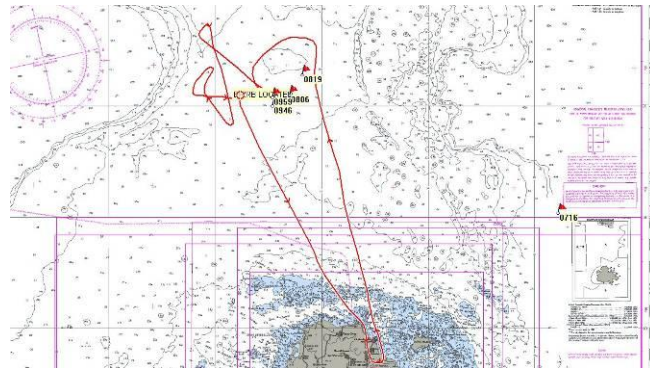
406 EPIRB ACTIVATION

AUGUST 2, 2007

0425L Thursday August 2, 2007 ABSAR receives a fax from MRCC FF (Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Fort de France, Martinique). The fax informs us that there is a 406 Mhz EPIRB (Emergency Positioning Radio Beacon) activated approximately 10 nm north of Antigua. The beacon was unregistered which prevented any possibility of contacting either the vessel or owner directly to determine the nature of the activation.

Following several more faxes and phone calls with MRCC FF, Jonathan Cornelius contacted Caribbean Helicopters for their assistance to search for the EPIRB. Arrangements were made for Caribbean Helicopters to pick up Jonathan at the VC Bird Int. Airport at 0700 to conduct the search.

0713L Caribbean Helicopters with Pilot Jeff and Jonathan from ABSAR lift off from VC Bird. At 0720 the helicopter enters the search area. A visual scan of the area revealed no vessels, liferafts, or debris. Jonathan began tracking the EPIRB with a Vecta 2 hand held locator and had the pilot criss cross the area in order to obtain a fix on it's location.



0743L Jonathan instructed the pilot to stop and hover. "We should be right on top of it," said Jonathan. Jeff began a slow circle of the area and the EPIRB was spotted almost immediately.



EPIRB 080207 LOCATED
17 20.5 N 061 53.8 W
0743L

After Jonathan took several photos, and since there were no signs of any distress situation in the area Jeff turned the helicopter back to VC Bird Airport. The control tower was notified of the position and outcome of the search for the EPIRB.

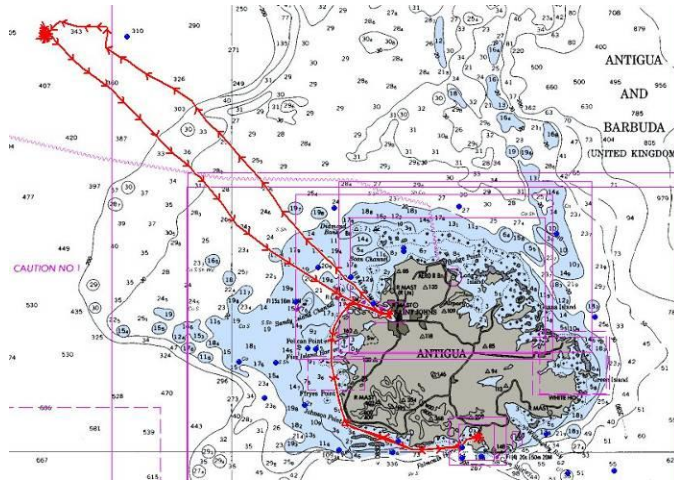
0745L upon landing at VC Bird, Jonathan notified both MRCC FF and the Antiguan CG on the outcome of the search operation. Jonathan notified them that he was unable to retrieve the EPIRB from the helicopter, and the EPIRB remains adrift.

Later in the same day a French Customs aircraft searches an area just over 600 square nm. They confirm that no distress situation was noted; however, they did find a dispersant at the surface covering an area 50m X 400m up wind from the location of the EPIRB.

0900L Friday August 3 MRCC FF contacts ABSAR to request that we retrieve the EPIRB. Jonathan informs them that since there is no distress situation associated with the EPIRB, that he is hesitant in going over 25 nm out to locate and retrieve the drifting EPIRB. However, several phone calls later, Jonathan found a willing crew to undertake a long distance "training" mission.

1020L ABSAR Rescue RIB departs Falmouth Harbour with Coxswain Luke Preesly and navigator Jonathan Cornelius on board. They stop in St. John's Harbour to pick up a third crew member Steve Archibald of the

Antiguan Fisheries Dept. After checking in with the Antiguan CG and Pete Lucas at ABSAR Base, they begin heading out to the search area.



1214L upon entering the search area they began an electronic search for the EPIRBS homing beacon. "Initially only a disturbance in the static was heard", says Jonathan, "so we moved 1/2 nm closer and repeated the scan." Eventually they arrived in an area that gave them a very strong signal. As they slowed down to begin their search they saw what appeared to be a large diamond back squid just beneath the surface of the water. "We looked at it curiously", says Jonathan, but continued our search for the EPIRIB. Using the same technique utilized the day before, Jonathan began sweeping the area with the Vecta 2 EPIRIB tracker. "It was very frustrating", says Jonathan, "we would follow the signal to it's strongest point, and it would disappear. We would circle back and pick up the signal after a few minutes and try again. Each time we thought we were close, it would disappear again." They continued the search for over 1 1/2 hours without finding the EPIRIB. Eventually at 1400L the search was abandoned.

1530L ABSAR Rescue RIB arrived back in St. John's Harbour. The Antiguan CG and ABSAR Base were notified of their safe return, and of the mission status.

1630L ABSAR Rescue RIB arrives in Falmouth Harbour.

So what happened to the EPIRIB? Steve from Fisheries and several others agree that it is possible that the squid may have taken the EPIRIB. Apparently it is similar in shape and color to lures used in fishing for squid. "Well that's our story, and we're sticking to it!" said Jonathan.