Solo Yachtsman Triggers GME PLB off Lizard Point

A 54 year old solo yachtsman participating in Plymouth to Azores Jester Challenge was successfully rescued last week after activating his Australian made GME Personal Locator Beacon after running into unexpected severe weather conditions off South West England.

Around 30 nautical miles south of Cornwall’s Lizard Point with his 22’ vessel Federwolke battling a Force 9 gale and incredibly rough seas, the single handed sailor made the wise decision to activate his GME MT410 beacon. The emergency signal was received by Falmouth Coastguard, prompting a search and rescue mission to find the distressed sailor.

Falmouth Coastguard subsequently issued a Mayday relay message to ask for assistance from vessels in the area, which was responded to by two vessels, the Grace II and the Baltic Advance. The Coastguard also despatched a Sea King rescue helicopter from RNAS Culdrose along with the Lizard lifeboat to the location of the beacon’s emergency signal.

Shortly after 9am the Panama registered Grace II confirmed they had spotted the stricken vessel, with the Baltic Advance and Royal Navy helicopter all arriving minutes later.

Under the command of Capt Birtie Cross the crew on board Rescue 193 helicopter were able to communicate with the yachtsman over VHF radio, with the skipper confirming that he wanted to be winched off the vessel, which was being swamped by the violent seas and high waves. The lone sailor was then transferred to RNAS Culdrose. Sadly the UK built Westerly Cirrus Federwolke had to be abandoned.

After the rescue, Terry Collins, Falmouth Coastguard’s watch manager, commented: “The locator beacon was crucial in the ability to rescue this person, as it was the only form of distress received ashore.”

GME EPIRBs and PLBs are designed and manufactured in Australia and distributed in the UK by Sartech Ltd.

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