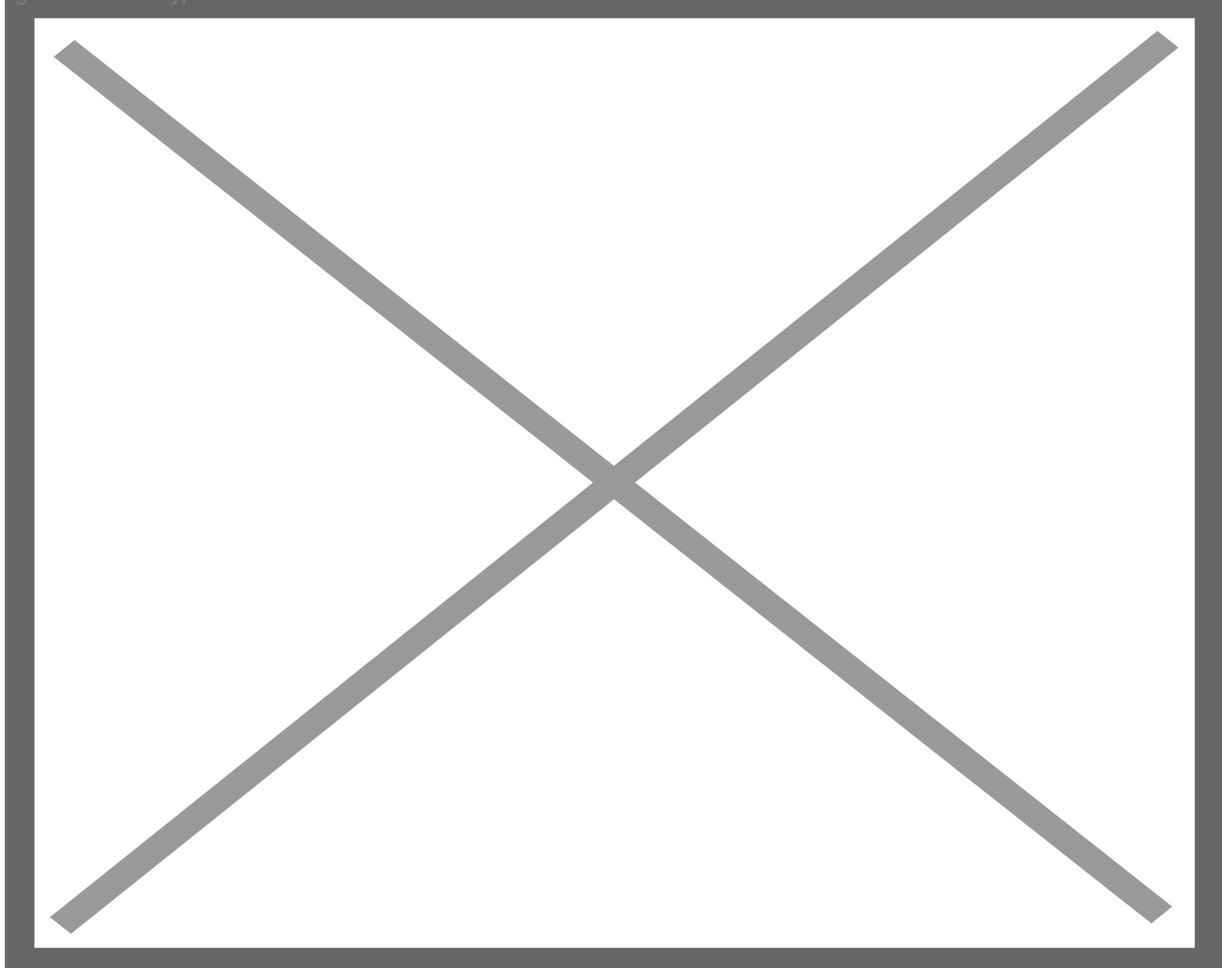


Diver in Distress Rescued by Coast Guard off Dutchcap Cay in St. Thomas

Accidents / **Published On May 26, 2021 01:12 AM /**

Staff Consortium **May 26, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



Coast Guard Boat Forces Detachment St. Thomas and Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen crews combined efforts to rescue a diver in distress off Dutchcap Cay in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands May 24, 2021. By. U.S. COAST GUARD PHOTO

ST. THOMAS — The U.S. Coast Guard's 7th District, which covers the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico along with Florida and some other states, has announced that the Coast Guard's air and surface crews rescued a diver in distress Monday just off Dutchcap Cay in St. Thomas.

Rescued is a man, a U.S. citizen reported to be in his 60's, after he went missing during a diving trip with his wife and friends aboard the sailing vessels Divine and Playtime off the west side of Kalkun Cay, the Coast Guard said.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan received a VHF Channel 16 radio call from the vessel Playtime at 12:50 p.m. reporting both sailing vessels were searching with their dinghies for a missing diver last seen about an hour and half before. The rescued man went out on a 100-foot dive with three other divers, who did not see him resurface. He was wearing a blue and black camo wetsuit and a silver colored oxygen tank.

Coast Guard watchstanders diverted a Coast Guard MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Borinquen, while a Coast Guard Boat Forces Detachment St. Thomas 33-foot Special Purpose Craft-Law Enforcement also responded. Once on scene, the Coast Guard aircrew began searching and deployed a Self-Locating Datum Marker Buoy to measure surface ocean currents in the area, according to the release.

The Coast Guard aircrew located the missing diver at approximately 3:15 p.m. Monday just off Dutch Cay, over 1.7 nautical miles north of his original position. The helicopter hovered over the diver as the Coast Guard boat crew came alongside and recovered him from the water. The man appeared to be in good although quite exhausted. The Coast Guard boat crew returned the diver to the sailing vessel Divine, after he declined to receive any medical assistance.

“There is nothing more rewarding than seeing someone’s face of relief knowing that they are safe in Coast Guard hands after believing they were not going to survive,” Petty Officer 2nd Class Andrew Koelle, Boat Forces St. Thomas coxswain for the case. “The efficient teamwork and coordination between Coast Guard responding units and our watchstanders at Sector San Juan achieved a successful outcome in this case.”