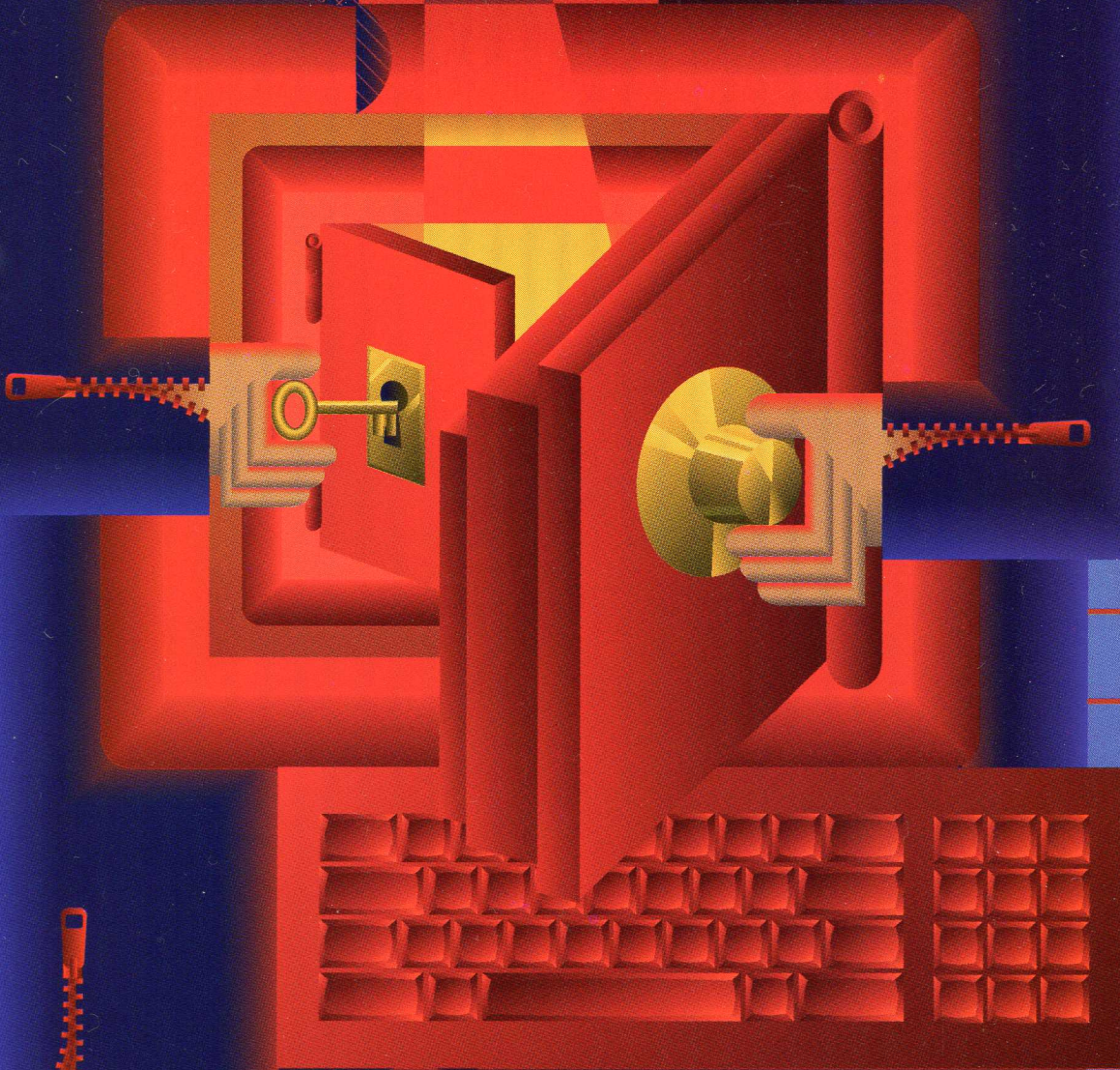


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Info Warfare

"Nineteen, talk to me!"

By Lieutenant Commander Barrett T. Beard, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

U.S. Coast Guard rescue swimmer Michael Odom, dropped earlier from a helicopter, knows he is going to die.

Alone, tossed by a winter storm in the Atlantic Ocean 350 miles east of Savannah, Georgia, he lies exhausted after struggling to save three lives. Waves buffet him repeatedly, cartwheeling him from the raft; ingested saltwater empties

his stomach; his body is cramping, after violent retching; his core temperature is approaching a fatal low level.

For 50 minutes, he had struggled, pulling panicked sailors to the rescue basket from seas piling as high as three-story buildings, driven by 40-knot winds. One by one, he watched the sailors soar to safety and disappear inside Coast

Guard helicopter 6019 above him.

Suddenly, as the third man reached the rescue helicopter, the hoist cable—Odom's lifeline—broke. Minutes later, he could only watch, bewildered, as the helicopter vanished into the storm-filled night.

There is no rescue for the rescuer. He knows it. He can only wait and prepare for his death.

In Coast Guard helicopter 6019 on 23 January 1995, Odom completed his checklist for the rescue of survivors from the sailboat *Mirage*. The sailors were briefed on the radio by Lieutenant Matt Reid, the pilot of a circling Coast Guard HC-130H Hercules, and Lieutenant Jay Balda, the pilot the HH-60J Jayhawk, twin-turbine helicopter. Odom had intended to be in the water just aft of the sinking sailboat and to grab each sailor as he jumped. However, just before the five sailors began their leaps into the sea, the sailboat's captain radioed that he would not leave.

The unexpected radio call was relayed to the Coast Guard search and rescue (SAR) coordinator in Miami by the C-130. Immediately, the SAR coordinator responded: "The helo will rescue all of them or none." The SAR coordinator's conclusion from the sailboat's radio message was that conditions were stable, since the storm had passed, and the risk of pulling five men from the sea was greater than having them stay with the boat.¹ Odom waited for the *Mirage* crew's next response. He sat in the crew entrance door of the hovering helicopter, his legs and feet with frog-like flippers dangling in space. He watched the *Mirage* churn in the waves, illuminated by the helicopter's search light. The situation had assumed the appearance of a non-event.

Hours earlier, terror had numbed the crew of the 40-foot racing sailboat on its third day out from St. Augustine, Florida, en route to the Virgin Islands. A strong winter front was sweeping down the Atlantic coast, and the men had little experience for coping with its effects. On the second day out the engine failed, the batteries could not be charged, and their food supply was thawing. *Mirage* crewman Mark Cole thought—and hoped—that the storm would pass as quickly, but it did not stop. Three days passed, and it just got worse.

The electric autopilot did not work because of corrosion in the boat's electrical system. More insidious effects erupted from neglected maintenance. Each man took turns

steering the wildly surging boat, and this routine took its toll. First, they steered in two-hour shifts, but fatigue later drove them to their bunks more frequently. Appetites abated, and rest was impossible.

Then, the savagery of the storm finally hit. "It just started picking up and picking up and picking up, and the waves kept getting bigger and the skies darker," Cole said. Down in the cabin where three crewmen cowered, Cole says the noise was "... just incredible?; you just can't imagine being on a boat and having these kinds of sounds."

The winds reached 50 knots when the front passed, then instantly shifted direction from their southwesterly course to the west-northwest. A confused wave pattern surged from the new, arctic-driven winds, whose galloping waves imposed themselves on the diminishing rollers from the steady tropical winds of the past three days, creating a confusing tumble of dangerous peaks among already mountainous waves.

Allen Brugger, the sailboat's captain, took the helm and steered for about three hours until a confluence of waves that towered 50 feet broke over the small fiberglass shell and plunged it beneath tons of roiling water. The boat rolled to about 120° as the wave tumbled over it, shoving it beneath the surface. The wave passed, and white water boiled in its wake. Slowly, the white hull struggled upright as it popped back to the surface, with everything lashed to the deck swept away.

Cole, trying to sleep, was thrown across the cabin when the wave rolled over them. Two to three feet of water sloshed throughout the bottom of the nearly upright boat, and cabin lights started going out, shorted by salt water in the electrical system. Cole burst out of the cabin and into the cockpit, expecting to find it empty—with Brugger and his friend Fred Neilson washed away. Brugger was still at the wheel, holding on, staring ahead; Neilson was washed overboard, dragging along behind the boat, hooked on by his safety harness. Next, in a devastating vision, Cole watched their life raft disappear into the dark-



Coast Guard rescue swimmer Odom is seen here in an image taken from video footage shot by a Coast Guard C-130 directly above—notice the large reflective tape on his helmet top as he looks toward the upper left of the frame. The rough seas of the Atlantic storm quickly depleted the swimmer's strength.

a waiting rescue swimmer and loaded into the rescue basket. The water was too wild for the men to get into the rescue basket unaided. Lieutenant Reid told the *Mirage's* crew, if "you don't come off now, you will be beyond the range of helicopter rescue."⁴

Then came the unexpected call from the boat: The captain refused to jump overboard. This, however, was unknown to the boat's other crew members—already as-

ness, rolling and tumbling with the winds across the spume-washed waves. Brugger and Cole pulled a panic-stricken Neilson back aboard.

Sometime after 2000, and shortly after the boat righted itself, crew member Dave Denman, a private pilot, figured out how to operate the SSB HF radio (single-side-band high-frequency transmitter). At 2030, the Coast Guard radio stations at Hampton Roads and Cape May copied a MAYDAY from the *Mirage* and alerted Coast Guard units from Miami to Norfolk, but that offered no solace to the crew. The boat was sinking; their life raft was gone; and in the storm, they believed that no one could offer any aid, even if they could have arrived in time. Three hours later, the sight of a HC-130H (CGNR-1502) from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina, brought the first relief from the helpless panic.

Lieutenant Reid guided Lieutenant Balda of the H-60, trudging along the track at half the C-130's 300-knot pace, to the sailboat. The Jayhawk, CGNR-6019,² arrived over the *Mirage* at 0110, watching the boat being whipped by the storm. The helicopter had enough fuel to remain on station for about 50 minutes. Lieutenant Reid reported to Lieutenant Balda that the "master of vessel declined pumps and survival kits . . . (and) requested to be removed from vessel," because of flooding from an unknown source.³

Lieutenant Balda could not hover over the boat to retrieve its occupants, and lowering the rescue basket to the deck of the sailboat was impossible. The wildly whipping mast was like a rapier thrust skyward, deftly probing at intruders through the boat's violent lunging in the 25-foot waves and 40-knot winds. The helicopter crew's only option for recovering the distressed sailors was to have them jump into the water one at a time, to be grasped by

sembled on deck, preparing to leap. They already had strung a line as instructed, about 50 feet long, trailing aft with a boat fender tied to its free end. Odom planned to hold onto this line and grab each man as he went overboard. This procedure, however, meant three hoists for each man lifted. The first hoist would place the rescue swimmer in the water; the second would pull the survivor into the helicopter; and the third would recover the rescue swimmer for the move back to the boat for the next cycle. Confounding this recovery plan was Brugger's decision to keep the sail up; the sailboat barreled along with the tethered float skipping off the water like an abandoned water ski rope towed behind a speedboat.

With the captain refusing to jump, the helicopter crew aborted their plans. The Coast Guard's official response from Miami was transmitted to the *Mirage*: "All are to remain on board if one intends to stay."⁵ Lieutenant Balda moved the helicopter away from the sailboat to wait, consuming critical fuel. Watching the sailboat spotted by the helicopter's light, the Coast Guard crew was stunned to see the next unexpected scene in the waves: Cole jump into the water.

Cole struggled to hold onto the line, but the boat was going too fast. Odom was not in the water as planned; there was no rescue basket waiting for the survivor. As dark waters enveloped Cole, Odom was still sitting in the cabin door, watching with the same disbelief of his crew. Lieutenant Balda quickly pushed the helicopter forward and pressed on the left rudder peddle, spinning the nose into the wind, holding a hover to keep Cole in sight. Odom was lowered hurriedly into the water with the cable end snapped to his harness. The cable was retrieved, the basket attached, then lowered for him to catch after he swam to Cole.

As the crew members of Coast Guard helicopter 6019 raced after the sailboat *Mirage*—cutting through the stormy Atlantic—they never imagined that they nearly would end up sacrificing one of their own. After Petty Officer First Class Odom's harrowing near-death experience, Coast Guard helicopter 6034 flew the rescued swimmer to the guided-missile cruiser *Ticonderoga* (CG-47) for medical attention.



The boat sailed away and was out of Cole's sight almost immediately. The 53° water was shockingly cold, with the air temperature falling to 40°. Almost before he could add new fears to his already terrified mind, Cole felt Odom's touch. "It was a great feeling when that fellow put his arm around me," he remembered. His new world was one of flooding light from above, noise, the blast of air and spray from the helicopter's downwash, and a comforting voice saying that he was okay.


But these moments were not easy for Odom. He swam hard for the basket swinging below the helicopter, while holding onto Cole. Lieutenant Balda had no visual reference to hold a position, and the plunging waves conveyed a false sense of movement to him even when the helicopter was motionless. The 35- to 40-knot winds also were trying to blow the basket away from that tiny spot on the water where Odom's arm was reaching, grasping.

Lieutenant Balda's guidance came from Mark Bafetti, the Coast Guard flight mechanic and hoist operator. He was viewing Cole and sighting down the cable from the helicopter's open doorway aft of the cockpit on the starboard side. Bafetti was leaning in space and kneeling on the cabin floor, restrained from pitching out only by a strap around his waist clipped to the helicopter. He called

out in steady, calm tones through the internal communications system, "back ten—right, back, back—hold, hold, hold—left five—hold." Balda applied slight pressures on his control stick, almost wishing the helicopter in the directions called for by Bafetti. It was a world of inches.

Bafetti tried swinging the basket to Odom while at the same moment controlling its up-and-down movement, matching the wave heights with a push button controller. Loose slack can be fatal to those in the water if the cable should make a loop and wrap around body parts and then go tight suddenly. Odom, swimming frantically and holding on to Cole, just managed to get the basket at his fingertips when suddenly a wave dropped him several feet and it was jerked away.

After several more attempts, Odom captured the basket and got Cole into it. But Cole would not sit down; he froze and stopped responding to instructions. Cole wrapped his arms around the bail, placing his head, arms, and torso next to the whipping cable. Suddenly, the basket was jerked out of the water violently as a wave passed. Odom feared they had broken his neck, but Cole miraculously was still in the basket and not injured. After a 20-minute struggle, Cole was recovered safely. However, four *Mirage* crewmen still had to be retrieved—but only 30



minutes worth of fuel remained for the helicopter to stay on station. Odom was hoisted aboard, and the helicopter did a quick turn and chased after the sailboat, which was nearly a mile away downwind.

Mirage crewman Steier was the next to jump. At one point, however, he nearly refused. "Not that I'd want to go down with the boat," he later explained, "but jumping off the boat into that black water was the most difficult thing to do." Odom, back in the water, grabbed him and said, "Hey, as long as I got you nothing's going to happen to you." Steier had difficulty squeezing his six-foot two-inch frame into the rescue basket in the tumbling seas. When Odom released the hoist and the basket got up about ten feet, a huge wave overwhelmed Steier. "All of a sudden, I was under water" being jolted and jerked "and I had a snap when I came out of the water." Coming up in the air, he swung in circles, banging the bottom of the helicopter and fuel tank before he was pulled to safety.

"Here is where a weird thing happened," explained Odom. The wave that swallowed Steier "scared me to the point where I was swimming like heck to get out of the way of the aircraft. I've never seen water so close to a helicopter. It was a good 25- to 35-footer." Odom, back on board the aircraft, recommended a higher hover altitude for the next hoist; Lieutenant Balda needed no encouragement. Backup rescue swimmer Mario Vittone observed Odom during their short passage together in the back of the helicopter and saw that he was fatigued. He asked, "Are you ready for me to go, Mike?" But Odom responded with the portentous words, "One more. Let me have just one more."

Time and fuel were becoming critical. Nearly 40 minutes had elapsed during the recovery of the first two survivors. Less than ten minutes' fuel remained, with three more survivors on the disabled sailboat.

The helicopter CGNR-6019 moved about a half mile to the next survivor and climbed to a 100-foot hover to keep away from any more rogue waves. Denman, the third crewman from the *Mirage*, was in the water. As Odom went down this time, swinging at the end of the long cable, he hit the water hard, gasped for air, and sucked seawater. He coughed and vomited while struggling to reach Denman and work him into the basket. Bafetti, the hoist operator, worked hard to keep dangerous slack from forming loops in the cable, while at the same time allowing enough slack to keep the basket from being jerked from Odom's hands. As Denman finally was hoisted in the basket, Vittone assisted the hoist operator to control the cable and keep it away from the aircraft. As the basket climbed toward the aircraft, it swung in wide circles, slammed into the 120-gallon fuel tank, swept between the tank and fuselage, slid along the edge of the cabin door frame, flew out, hit the side of the tank, then repeated the arc.

Cable strands started popping. Vittone yelled to Bafetti as he felt sharp spurs of small wires peeling off the cable. Denman was 60-70 feet above the churning seas, dangling in the basket. Bafetti reacted and ran the hoist at full speed, winding in the snarled cable to recover Denman before the cable could snap and drop him to his death. Denman was trundled safely aboard as the copilot, Lieutenant (junior grade) Guy Pearce, announced "Six minutes 'til bingo." Only six minutes' fuel remained until the heli-

copter must leave. Broken cable strands jammed the hoist mechanism; the hoist no longer worked.

Odom was still in the water and could not be recovered. Bafetti attempted to signal Odom by flashlight to call back on his radio, but Odom did not respond. The pilot then flashed hover lights—a signal meaning that the aircraft crew no longer sees the rescue swimmer. It is their only signal to indicate a problem with the man in the water. Odom, confused and believing the crew had lost sight of him, fired a flare and attached his strobe light to the top of his head. The copilot called "Bingo."

Next, Odom saw the rescue basket drop into the sea. The Jayhawk was drifting around in a hover about 200 yards away. They then dropped a datum marker buoy, a floating radio transmitter used to track drift of objects in the vicinity. "I looked at that, and it didn't look right." Odom recalled. Fear gripped him. He did not know what was happening. With a sinking heart, he muttered a choked, "Oh, no."

The Jayhawk moved back over him. Through the glare of lights overhead, Odom could not see the faces looking back from 25 feet away. The 6019 crew tried to figure a method to recover Odom, but they had run out of time. At seven minutes past bingo, they had to leave for their own survival; Odom had to be left behind. Vittone, Odom's best friend, kicked out a life raft and closed the cabin door. Odom inflated the raft and climbed aboard.

Darkness surrounded Odom on the tumbling surface, as the lights vanished with the helicopter. "There's a lot of stress at this point," Odom says. Emotion etches his voice. "I knew how far offshore I was, and I knew there were no other rescue resources backing them up. I saw them disappear into the night. At that point, I got on my radio and began screaming, 'Nineteen—talk to me! What's going on? Nineteen—talk to me!' I was talking to them on the radio, but wasn't hearing back from them." Both were trying to talk at the same time, blocking each other's transmissions.

The rescued passengers knew their two crew mates remained on the sailboat and that Odom was in the water, but "had no idea what was going on," said Steier. "I looked over at one of the Coast Guard lieutenants in the back, and he had tears in his eyes."

Odom, alone except for the seemingly impotent Hercules circling overhead, sat in his raft, one he had recently re-packed for use in saving other lives. A large swell hurled him back into the sea—now he was the survivor. Odom grabbed the raft before the winds and seas could snatch it away forever. He clambered aboard and was trying again to find the lanyard to attach himself to the raft when it was struck violently once more, tossing him back into the tumbling water. Recapturing the raft once more, he slithered aboard, exhausted, physically ill, unable to talk to the helo, having no idea what had happened, and knowing that he was 300 miles offshore—and that another helo couldn't reach him for at least four hours.

Lieutenant Reid, piloting the C-130, CGNR-1502, had been out just more than four hours, and low fuel state was a concern. A relief Coast Guard C-130 was being readied to fly out from Clearwater, Florida, but it could not arrive in time. Lieutenant Reid was ordered to return to base, but, instead, he shut down two of his four engines

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to conserve fuel and continued to circle Odom for as long as he could.

Odom finally attached himself to the raft, as seasickness and depression consumed him. He knew the only two Jayhawks that might reach him were both out of commission in the hangar at Elizabeth City. The Marines at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point had nothing that could come this far to sea. The guided-missile cruiser *Ticonderoga* (CG-47) had a SH-60B Seahawk on board, but since she was out of range, she began steaming toward Odom's position to close

the gap. Meanwhile, crew members from the cruiser pushed the helicopter from the ship's hangar and readied it for flight. The task was onerous, because the *Ticonderoga* was being buffeted by the same storm. Also in the vicinity, the merchant ship *Diletta F* was alerted by the Coast Guard through the Automated Merchant Vessel Reporting System. She also turned and began steaming toward the lone swimmer.

The copilot of the C-130, Lieutenant Russell, then told Odom that another plane at that time was on the way, but that was not true. "You can make it," Russell asserted with unfounded boldness, before asking if Odom wants any equipment dropped—and then saying they will drop flares. Together on the radio, they recalled a rumored incident months earlier where a Coast Guard aircraft dropped a flare that accidentally fell into a raft full of Cubans. "Remember, I'm not a Cuban," Odom reminded Russell.

But the reverie ended suddenly when another wave knocked Odom back into the water. This time, he did not have to swim for the raft, being attached by the lanyard. But Odom was much weaker, and it was harder for him to clamber back into the raft. The seas were wearing him down, and he wondered how much longer he could fight them.

Odom was reaching a critical stage in survival. The numbing coldness overwhelmed him. He passed through the shivering stage, a cause for alarm. He knew the signs from his training as an emergency medical technician; he had little time left. Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class Berry Freeman stayed on the radio and kept a spark of life going during this critical period. But that fragile electronic link soon was severed. Odom's limbs were numb, and his hands were drawing up so that he could no longer lift the small hand-held radio to his mouth.

He tried to focus on the low-flying C-130 as it swept toward him in its racetrack pattern low overhead, but he was losing his vision. Seeing the lights, he thought for a time that the helicopter finally coming, but when the plane rolled out and he saw the lights at the wingtips



After spending two days recovering on board the *Ticonderoga*, a thankful Petty Officer Odom receives a well-deserved hero's welcome from his Coast Guard family at Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Within a week of his experience, he was on another rescue mission.

plotted by Lieutenant Commander Bruce Jones. Station policy required a fixed-wing aircraft cover when helicopters ventured beyond 50 miles offshore at night. The Clearwater C-130 escorted the H-60, CGNR-6034, for 30 minutes, passing its covering responsibility to the Elizabeth City Hercules, CGNR-1504, and diverting to search for the *Mirage* at 0545. After relocating the *Mirage*, it took up its vigil there, orbiting until the *Mirage* distress case could be resolved.

The crew of the Hercules, CGNR-1504, looked closely to see whether Odom was still with the raft and if he might respond by waving or moving as the aircraft flew low overhead. He had been off the radio for too long. In the glare of their landing lights, they saw an apparently lifeless body. The helicopter was still 50 minutes away.

Lieutenant Commander Dan Osborn, pilot of the relief Hercules overhead, directed Lieutenant Jones's helicopter to the raft. The merchant vessel *Diletta F* also arrived at the scene as the storm-filled eastern sky began to lighten with the dawn. Although it could not pick up Odom, the merchant vessel acted as a wind and sea break to assist the hovering helicopter in Odom's retrieval.

The Jayhawk settled in a hover above the drifting life raft at 0613—4 hours and 50 minutes after Odom first went into the water, and more than an hour since he transmitted his last words: "I'm cold. I'm cold."

Rescue swimmer Jim Peterson dropped down from the hovering CGNR-6034 into the raft with his friend, Odom. Straddling him, he shouted in Odom's face and rubbed his chest vigorously. Odom remained motionless, his head rigid, twisted to one side. Next, Peterson inserted his hand beneath the Odom's hood to check the carotid pulse. At that moment, Odom's arm came up in an unconscious effort, reaching out to his rescuer. He was alive!

Quickly, Peterson snapped Odom's harness to his own harness and the two were lifted together. As they started up, the life raft's webbing tangled and snagged Peterson's arm. The raft, loaded with water, added a critical load to the helicopter's hoist and cable. After several sharp tugs,

spread wide apart, he lost hope of rescue. Odom did not want to be thrown from the raft when he died, so he tied himself in, face up. At least they would be able to find his body. He did not want the Coast Guard wasting days searching for his body.

The relief Hercules, CGNR-1504,⁶ arrived from Elizabeth City at 0436 and relieved CGNR-1502.⁷ Lieutenant (junior grade) Dan Rocco, Odom's boss, was the copilot. The Clearwater Hercules, CGNR-1714,⁸ diverted north to intercept the Elizabeth City Jayhawk, CGNR-6034,⁹ pi-

Peterson freed them from the deadly trap, and the two were hauled into the hovering helicopter, with Odom still unconscious.

Meanwhile, miles away, the two *Mirage* crewmen still awaited evacuation from the sailboat in distress. Lieutenant Jones, with Odom safely in the helicopter, was ordered to pick up these two. He reported the condition of Odom and the urgency for medical attention and was then directed to take Odom to a hospital more than two hours away. He proceeded instead to the *Ticonderoga*—150 miles away—to drop Odom off for more immediate medical attention, refueling at the same time. After this mid-ocean stop, he was able to continue back to the *Mirage* with his escort, the CGNR-1504, make the pickup, and get back to an airport.

Odom's body temperature was 92.5° Fahrenheit when he was pulled aboard the helicopter. The crew members cut off his survival suit and clothing, wrapped him tightly in blankets, and started him breathing oxygen. The copilot in CGNR-6034, Lieutenant (jg) Dan Molthen, ran the cabin temperature controller up to maximum heat "which was just smoking those fellows in survival suits." Odom later remarked, "It must have been a hundred-plus degrees inside the cabin." During the 70-minute flight to the cruiser, Odom recovered consciousness, and his temperature climbed to 97.1°. Navy corpsman on board the *Ticonderoga* treated Odom for his exposure. His recovery was rapid, but he remained on board for the next 24 hours.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the two crewmen on board the *Mirage* were still claiming distress and wanted helicopter evacuation. Lieutenant Jones was unaware of the sailboat captain's previous refusal to jump from the vessel, so he proceeded to retrieve the two. Neilson was suffering from his being tossed overboard 13 hours earlier and was eager to leave the boat, but Brugger again refused the helicopter's

evacuation when it arrived. (*Mirage* crew member Cole claimed later that, as a possible reason, Brugger had personal belongings on board for his move to the Virgin Islands. Some items were family heirlooms.) After recovering Neilson, Lieutenant Jones told Brugger that no other assistance would be provided and left the scene.

The following day, the Navy's SH-60B Seahawk from the *Ticonderoga* returned Odom to MCAS Cherry Point where he was fetched home by his unit's aircraft to a welcome by all hands and a cup of hot chocolate offered by Captain Walz. Odom returned to work the next day; three days later, he was flying on another rescue mission.

"Captain" Brugger sailed and arrived safely at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, after a 17-day passage. He then began readying his boat to haul passengers for hire in the popular winter charter service.

¹Message 272139Z, Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, January 1995.

²Crew on board CGNR-6019: Lt. Jay Balda, Lt.(jg) Guy Pearce, AD3 Mark Bafetti, ASM1 Michael Odom, ASM3 Mario Vittone.

³Message 241530Z, Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, January 1995.

⁴Michael Odom, author telephone interview.

⁵Message 272139Z, Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, January 1995.

⁶Crew on board CGNR 1502: Lt. Matt Reid, Lt. Mark Russell, AD1 Berry Freeman, AT1 David Ebert, AT3 Steve Rost, AM2 James Washington, AD2 Keith Browne.

⁷Crew on board CGNR-1504: Lt.Cdr. Dan Osborn, Lt.(jg) Dan Rocco, AE2 Matt Elliot, AT3 Kent Hammack, AT3 Ron Mitchell, AD3 Mike Gardner, AM3 Cory Gibbons, AM3 James Josey, AD3 Damien Hopkins.

⁸Crew on board CGNR-1714: Lt.Cdr. Larry Cheek, Lt.Cdr. Norville Wicker, AE1 Frank Saprito, AT3 John Browning, AT2 Stephen Twardy, AM3 Jerrod Bowden, AD3 Jon Johnson.

⁹Crew on board CGNR-6034: Lt.Cdr. Bruce Jones, Lt.(jg) Dan Molthen, AD3 Chris Shawl, ASM3 Jim Peterson, AM3 Warren Bernard.

¹⁰Message 272139Z, Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, January 1995.

Lieutenant Commander Beard is a former naval aviator and a retired Coast Guard aviator. He is writing a book with the Naval Institute Press on the history of U.S. Coast Guard helicopters.

“ . . . In the Face of Great Danger ”

Coast Guard rescue swimmer Michael Odom received the Distinguished Flying Cross before Congress on 4 May 1995 for his heroic actions in the rescue of the crew members of the *Mirage*. Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR), Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman, and Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Robert E. Kramek presented the award. The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to persons who distinguish themselves by heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. An act in the face of great danger—well above normal expectations—is required to be eligible for the award.



U.S. COAST GUARD