

# Good News Department

## A Mid-Ocean Phone Call That Saved Lives

(NAPSA)—You never know how important communication can be. Sometimes, it can save your life, as was the case for six businessmen on the high seas. Bob Unnold, co-founder of i3 Mobile, Inc. of Stamford, Conn. and five other executives, set out into the Atlantic on Unnold's 43-foot catamaran, *Solitude*, in early May. The boat was equipped with two maritime communications radios and a Globalstar satellite phone, which ultimately helped the men avoid near-certain disaster.

Last spring, the boat and crew left Bermuda for the Stamford Yacht Club on Long Island Sound. Weather reports that morning forecasted less than ideal conditions, but the crew, eager to start their journey, set sail. Twenty-four hours later, they found themselves in stormy waters and high-speed winds, battling 30-foot waves. They immediately lowered the sails. Equipped with life jackets and secured by ropes to the boat, the crew fought to maintain their course. Then something gave way—the mast broke, snapping in two and crashing through the cabin window, injuring a crew member and destroying the crew's two radio antennas. Without a mast, the crew had no way to sail to safety and could barely control the boat under diesel power. Without the radios, the crew had only one way to call for help: the Globalstar satellite phone.

Within minutes, the crew was able to place calls to Bermuda officials and the U.S. Coast Guard. The calls were made as simply as if they were using a cell phone, even though they were hundreds of miles from the nearest cellular service. Over the Globalstar phone, the U.S. Coast Guard informed them that the nearest ship was one hundred miles away—not close, but not so far that there wasn't hope. But then, the worst that could possibly happen, did. The steering failed.

Again, the crew called for help on their Globalstar satellite phone. The Bermuda officials



**Communication played a crucial role in the rescue of Bob Unnold's crew.**

answered their calls for help and reviewed possible options. The crew needed to be able to send radio signals out to other boats to identify a vessel closer than the one a hundred miles away. The main radio antenna was wrecked from the falling mast. The officials wanted to know if there was any way to rig up an alternative. In the urgent atmosphere aboard the boat, the crew had overlooked that they had a small portable radio in a drawer at the navigation station. Without the suggestion from the Bermuda officials, they might never have remembered.

Following the officials' suggestion, the crew radioed out a may-day signal, and soon received a response from a container ship, *SeaLand Performance*, that was only nine miles away. An hour and a half later, *SeaLand Performance* rescued the crew. As they made their way towards shore, the crew used their Globalstar satellite phone to arrange flights home, file insurance claims and most importantly, call home to reassure their families of their safety.

The boat's owner, Bob Unnold, had bought the Globalstar satellite phone for cost-effective communication in the islands and for emergencies such as this. But until the day comes, you never know how important emergency communication can be.