

Gilt Cross – Example Citation

During the evening of 17 June 2001, the New Beach surf club launched their yacht for the purpose of a training exercise. The yacht was launched at 1800hrs, and the exercise was intended to last for two to three hours. The helmsman had a crew of two.

At approximately 2000hrs they picked up a radio message. Local coastguards were calling for auxiliary coastguards as it was reported that people were trapped on the rocks at the Cove. Adam, one of the yacht's crew, radioed the local coastguard and told him who they were, offering to assist if required. The coastguard welcomed this offer and gave the location and further details; they also said that they were preparing to launch the local lifeboat.

Having received information regarding the exact location of the emergency, they made their way to the Cove and on arrival were informed that two people were stranded. Fifteen minutes after arrival, details of the rescue plan came over the radio. Initially the coastguard requested the yacht crew to stay with the people once the lifeboat had rescued them from the rocks.

The lifeboat was launched from the shore as a large set of waves came through. After the waves had passed, the lifeboat made its exit out to sea, at a point about thirty metres from the rocks.

Adam swam out to the rocks and made his way to the stranded people. He made contact and assessed their condition. Confirming that they did not require medical attention, he shouted to the local lifeboat to pick them up. However, as the lifeboat came for them, the bow of the boat hit the rocks, slewing it sideways. This turned the lifeboat onto oncoming waves and capsized it.

As soon as the lifeboat capsized Adam immediately told the casualties to move back on the rocks to a safer position. As the coastguard prepared to launch a second lifeboat Adam realised that he would have to complete the difficult rescue himself.

Meanwhile, the surf club yacht had towed the capsized lifeboat and its crew out to sea, beyond the surf zone to a place of safety. When this task was completed, the yacht returned to the scene of the incident. Adam informed the second lifeboat crew that he intended to lower himself and the stranded people into the water one by one, swimming the thirty metres to the yacht. Successfully completing the swim with the first person, Adam was asked if he was happy to carry out the second rescue and he duly agreed.

Once the casualties were on board, they were transferred to the lifeboat and winched to safety by helicopter. His actions in rescuing both people from the rocks, with great risk to his own safety, were both heroic and truly exceptional.