

# Speaker: Carl Earl Saylor

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My name is Carl Earl Saylor. I retired US Coast Guard as an AD1. I enlisted back in the Coast Guard in July of 1977. At the time, I really didn't have any other options. My dad kind of pointed me in that direction. I always wanted to be a helicopter crew member. Loved the thought of flying. I went into the recruiter and got a guaranteed ADA school billet, being a mechanic on helicopters. But I had to wait for the billet to become available. So while I waited, I was stationed on board Coast Guard Cutter Morgenthau, which did LE patrols in the Gulf of Alaska. While I was doing that, I was also able to, we carried a helicopter on board, so I was able to experience some of the operations of the helicopter and the crews that flew on them.

In August 7th of 1980, I earned my wings while stationed at air station Sitka. I was there from 1980 til 1981. At that time, I was 18 years old. Got my first SAR case October 4th, 1980. It was part of the motor vessel Prince and Dom, it was a cruise ship that was on fire, 25 to 30-foot seas in the Gulf of Alaska off of Yakutat. There were 522 people on board. I woke up the morning of the rescue to the news on the radio that the cruise ship was on fire and went into work and was told that I would have to be flown out on a Canadian aircraft and would take over a helicopter in Yakutat.

The crews had been flying it all night. And then I was to be relief crew and take it over and continue with the rescue. We flew blankets, was the first thing we did and a medical team to the tanker, Williamsburg, which was a huge oil tanker that was traversing the area. They were dropping off the survivors on the tanker because it was too far for us to fly back and forth into Yakutat. We took the blankets and the med team there. And then I proceeded to fly with our rest of the crew to hoist 21 survivors from the lifeboats.

Then after all the survivors were said to be rescued, we then transferred the ship's captain and his officers from the Williamsburg to the coast guard cutter, Boutwell. From there, they were taken back to shore. We were awarded the distinguished flying cross for the rescue, 522 people were saved, and there were no injuries, nobody got hurt. The motor vessel Prince and Dom, eventually sank while it was undertow, it was damaged beyond any kind of repair.

In 1983, I was transferred to ... I'm sorry. In 1981, I was transferred to air station Borinquen, Puerto Rico. I was there from '81 to '83. We did law enforcement, interdiction, and some search and rescue. Basically, it was my vacation paid for by the coast guard. It was an enjoyable time, but I missed Alaska so in 1983, I went

back to air station Sitka. Was there from '83 to '88.

December 10th, 1987, I was involved in my second major rescue. I had many in between but this was my second major rescue. Was a 26-foot fishing vessel called a bluebird. It was sinking off the coast of Sitka. 30-foot seas. 70-knot winds gusting to 100, 110. There was a dad and his six-year-old son were on board. They were trying to get protection behind one of the islands to ride out the storm, but it just didn't turn out real well.

It was the first time, the first real time, that deployment of the rescue swimmer program was actually used. We were awarded our, I actually got my, well, everybody on the aircraft got another DSC. I was awarded my second DSC. We were awarded the Coast Guard Foundation Award, The Naval Helicopter Association Air Crew of the Year Award, Alaska Medal of Heroism. We were also read into the Congressional Record of the 100th Congress, second session.

My little girl, at that time, was less than 30 days old. It was a tough mission. Only by the grace of God are we here today. In fact, this morning as I was preparing for this, I got a message from Clint, the six-year-old boy that we saved. He is now a father. His son is two years old. The picture showed him and his son looking at the pictures of us after the rescue with his dad. He was teaching his little boy our names and what we had done to save them and make it possible for them to be here today. So, kind of ironic.

After that rescue, I was unable to fly anymore. I had to make some decisions in my career. I got myself transferred to ATC as an A school instructor where I taught new Coast Guard personnel to do what I had been doing for the last 11 years, to be mechanics and flight mechs on Coast Guard aircraft. I did that from, like I said, from '83 to '93 I was a course developer, course designer, and an instructor.

From '93 to '97, I transferred to Yorktown, Virginia where I taught SAR school. We basically taught the search planners how to figure where to send the aircraft when they get a distress call or an emergency indication that something's going on. They are what we call the SAR planners in the ivory towers because they're nowhere near the water. They have no idea what's going on. They just have the computers and the information to be able to send the aircraft where they need to be to perform the rescues that we do.

July 15th, 1997, I was medically boarded out/retired just shy of 20 years. Kind of not a good way to end your career as a crewman flight mechanic and unable to perform those duties, but I felt in my way being an instructor and teaching others to follow my footsteps, it was a good way to go. The Coast Guard was good to me and my family. I hope that others can learn from the things that we were able to

accomplish and do, and just to learn from our duties.

Anyway, that's pretty much it.