

## **An Outrageous Voyage in honor of three fallen Heroes to keep a 29 year old promise.**

**It can't sink, It can't sink**, It can't sink, trust your equipment, trust your equipment, Don't Panic, Don't Panic, Help us Lord Jesus, Help us Lord were the words I kept repeating to myself as the giant waves broke into our boat pushing us closer and closer to the rocks that I knew were there but I could not see. It was pitch black out, completely cloud covered, and surrounded by sea fog as 15 foot waves surged upwards and slammed down into our tiny boat. I was standing in knee deep water as our boat was completely filled with water. As each giant wave broke bashing anything loose out of the boat and slamming a wall of water against my chest with no where to hide, I kept repeating those words out loud; "It Can't Sink, Trust Your Equipment, Don't Panic and Help us Lord, please."

I was afraid for the failure of the mission, I was afraid for my life. Ten minutes earlier we were driving in rolling 10 to 12 foot seas. Ten minutes earlier we were looking at lights at a small town on the island, ten minutes earlier there were two fishing trawlers passing nearby. Now we were fighting for our lives as 12 to 15 foot waves were bashing our tiny boat closer and closer to the shoals that we did not see. I was seriously afraid.

We had just finished the 560 mile leg from Reykjavík Iceland to the Faroe Islands, with a storm hot on our heels. We passed one of the outer islands that had a light house and a small town on it. I had been driving and was totally exhausted. I woke up Bob and asked him to drive. He was tired too, I suggested the idea of going back to the small town anchoring in their harbor and going on to Torshavn in the morning. Bob liked the idea. Only one small detail, there was no harbor at the small town.

On our way back to the small town we passed two fishing trawlers. When we got to the small town we looked for the harbor that did not exist. After making several passes staying out past the breakers we decided to wait on the fishing trawlers to see where they went. They never showed up. Instead they went between the islands. We decided to follow them then they disappeared in the fog. About that same the waves got much bigger and started breaking into the boat. At first, we both thought the storm had caught us. Bob was trying to get behind the island that we could barely see the occasional silhouette. I on the other hand was scared to death that we were going to be thrown up against a rocky cliff and killed.

I asked Bob for the helm and he gladly let me take the helm again. I felt like I was the one ultimately responsible. If we wreck, it was going to be me driving. As I tried to turn the boat back out to sea, a gigantic wave bashed into us filling the boat completely with water, another

and another came right behind them. Each one was pushing us closer and closer to certain destruction. We tried to call the fishing trawlers on the radio. Everyone is supposed to monitor 16 but few do. The search and rescue command center comes on the radio. They want our coordinates; I don't want to change pages on the GPS. It is hard enough to track your progress when you are being slammed around by waves.

It is black out, the fog limits the spot light to only a few feet as it glares back in your face making things worse not better. The GPS indicator has a slight delay so when you turn the helm to port (left), or to starboard (right) it sometimes takes a second or two to register. When it is dark out and the boat is being twisted around by gale force winds, changing currents, and giant breaking waves it is easy to get off course or sometimes to spin completely around while chasing the needle.

I was trying to get back out to sea without hitting any rocks or getting pushed up against the cliffs. I simply wanted to follow the same path we came in on. That is a lot easier said than done. I found myself driving around in circles more than one time. It is like having a blind fold on and being spun around then being pushed around by participants, almost impossible in total darkness.

I kept saying, "It can't sink, trust your equipment, don't panic, and help us lord Jesus," Ten minutes ago, we were safe. Ten minutes ago seemed like a life time away. Suddenly a bright star shone through the clouds. I was able to use it for a reference point and lock my position in then follow the GPS out. As soon as we were safe Bob got on the radio and called search and rescue told them we no longer needed directions.

I was not going back in there. One minor detail, in all the bashing of the waves, our antenna had fallen. A few minutes later the fog lifts and we saw a helicopter with a spot light shinning down about where we were. Bob climbs out and fixes the antenna. We call Search and Rescue, they were looking for us.

When we got to shore the next morning the guys in Faroe Islands started calling us, "The Last Vikings." Turns out we had wandered into the area knows as Tindholmur one of the deadliest patches of water in the world. The Volvo Marine dealer described a night time storm in Tindholmur as a throwing a raisin into a pot of boiling water in the dark. It was nothing short of a miracle that we made it out alive. I agreed, if it was not for that star, I thought we would have been toast.

I am writing this while back home safe and sound. My brother Bob and I have just crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the smallest powerboat in the history of the world. We not only did it in a

smaller boat but in a flats boat. A flats boat is a tiny open fishing boat designed for shallow water. By definition it does not have a cabin or a keel. This particular flats boat, an Intruder made by Dream Boats, floats in six or seven inches and runs in three or four inches of water, including the engine. Seems impossible? That is what many a critic said when we left Tampa. Our path took us from Tampa, Florida to Germany an incredible 8,312 miles up through the Arctic then back down to London, Rotterdam, and to Wiesbaden, Germany.

We then rented a car and drove to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and received one of the most humbling experiences in our lives. Two young men who just got blown up two days earlier and were covered with burns asked to see us. Their nurse said no, but the doctor said yes. You could tell they were in a lot of pain, yet, they asked for our autographs, Wow. The starting of the voyage near MacDill, AFB, Central Command and ending at the Landstuhl Hospital near Frankfurt Germany was symbolic as it was the I AM SECOND Wounded Hero Voyage presented by Interstate Battery, who provided some of the initial funding.

The total voyage took 76 days. The voyage is honor of the men who died in Operation Eagle Claw. I was in the US Marines 29 years ago and was told I was going to Iran to take back the Embassy from the terrorists who took the Ambassador and his staff hostage. I did not have to go, they went they died. It is our goal to find 150,000 people to join our team and help us to Do More than just say thanks to the wounded hero and the family left behind. If we are able to find 150,000 people to join our team we will be able to donate \$3,000,000 to several Wounded Hero Foundations in honor of John Harvey, Dewey Johnson, and George Holmes. I made a sacred promise that their names would not be forgotten. When you join the team with a donation of \$30 we send you a Do More shirt. They can be a real nice polo/ golf shirt or you can choose a T Shirt with front and back slogans. These make great gifts. I hope you will decide to help me?

There were several other serious moments on the voyage including the time when Her Majesty's Search and Rescue helicopter videotaped us in 10 to 12 foot breaking waves with gale force winds and hurricane strength gusts between the Shetland Islands and the Orkney Islands. You can also read about us being run over by an iceberg, being slammed against rocks by gale force winds, almost running out of fuel 200 miles from Greenland, and more, on the blog at [www.CrossTheAtlantic.com](http://www.CrossTheAtlantic.com) that is also the web site to go to join our team. You may also call me at 352-346-2365 for other ways to help the cause.

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