



SERAT

Squadron Emergency
Response Assistance
Team

For more information on SERAT
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United States Power Squadrons

History behind SERAT

As all USPS members know assisting vessels in distress is nothing new to the United States Power Squadrons. In fact the rescue of sailing vessels by power boats in 1914 played a major role in the formation of USPS.

Approximately 9 years ago at a Squadron Safe Boating Course, Captain Tim Barrett of the Sanibel Fire/Rescue District approached Course Instructor Jim Strothers with a concern. His concern was "What if there was a plane crash in our area and what types of resources are available?" This vision occurred a few years later in the crash landing of the US Airways jet on the Hudson River.

After many years of planning by members of the Sanibel Captiva Sail and Power Squadron along with Sanibel Fire/Rescue District, SERAT was officially presented to the public in September 2005 as the Sanibel Emergency Response Assistance Team. Since its beginning the dedicated members of the Team have developed a highly organized response unit that incorporates many of the programs within USPS bringing the original rescue of vessels in distress into the 21st Century.

What is SERAT?

The Squadron Emergency Response Assistance Team is a sanctioned arm of the local Power Squadron whose mission is to render volunteer assistance to local fire departments, law enforcement and other agencies in the event of a water related emergency. The duties are to provide a Team of qualified and experienced boaters with knowledge of local waters who are willing to donate time and effort to assist in the event of an emergency. These may include water rescue, water search and rescue, water related patrols and help in securing an area in the event of an emergency.

Many of the standards developed by the Team may require that the members have more specialized or additional equipment that the average boater would have on board, such as special identifying life jackets, identifying lights and flags and expanded first aid kits.

Additionally the standards developed by the Team require that, depending on the level of participation, the members have completed advanced Squadron Courses. All vessels used by SERAT are required to have a current vessel Safety Check sticker as part of the program.

Benefits of SERAT

The benefits of a Squadron having a SERAT program are many. While the Squadron may be known for its Boating Education and Safety programs, they may not be recognized as a community service group. There may be many people who are not specifically interested in USPS but may have an interest in performing this type of community service. Providing this community service the Squadron's name becomes highly visible to other areas of the public thus increasing the potential for additional members. SERAT also provides a mechanism to promote Advanced Educational Courses as part of the membership level requirements as well as a means for its members to practice and hone their boating skills.

The community will benefit by knowing that they have a highly trained and skilled group of volunteers that are able to provide assistance for on water emergencies. Local fire departments may not have water rescue assets or may be very limited in the ability to handle a large emergency. Knowing they can rely on SERAT to assist is very important.