

Diary of a shipwreck: Paolo Rizzi's rescue in the middle of the Atlantic

By Matteo Caccia

The imagined diary of Paolo Rizzi, a skipper from Trieste shipwrecked in the Atlantic Ocean and saved thanks to the intervention of Europ Assistance.

21st April 1993

Beef Island – British Virgin Islands

Just set off. Bow to the east, the Atlantic awaits us.

28th April 1993

In the middle of the Atlantic

For two days we've been sailing into headwinds and are struggling to grind out the miles, unfortunately the forecasts are not good for the next few days, we're ready to increasingly reduce the sail and navigate safely.

8th May

The barometric situation has become more and more worrying. We are lying to because the conditions are very difficult, strong winds and rough seas.

13th May

It's a miracle that I can write these lines in the notebook kept in the pocket of my waxed jacket.

We have been shipwrecked. We were hit by a storm with winds of 50/55 knots and very rough seas. The barometer was in free fall, the waves were up to 20 metres high and suddenly a wave hit us from the stern, capsizing the boat and catapulting me into the water no less than 20 metres away, breaking my safety harness. I managed to reach the last piece of the tow line and was hoisted aboard with Andrea's help.

But we promptly decided to abandon the boat, now ripped open on the left side.

Using the self-inflating life-raft and managing to collect only a few things.

17th May

The days on the raft go by very slowly. We are constantly soaked and the low temperature makes life even more difficult. We have sighted a few ships but no one has been able to see us.

19th May

Through the emergency radio, we have managed to establish contact with a French airliner!

We await rescue shortly.

20th May 1993 2.30 a.m. GMT

Finally saved!

We are on board the *Alidon*, thanks to the timely intervention of the American Coast Guard, the Oscar 1504 aircraft, and Commander Hermanus G. J. Eickholt and the crew of the *Alidon*, our adventure has come to an end.

We are now en route to Aberdeen in Scotland with our arrival scheduled for the 27th of this month.

Special thanks to Europ Assistance which, thanks to its valuable work, has allowed us to forward all our news.

Paolo Rizzi

Loosely based on the text *From aboard the Alidon, 21st May 1993*, written by Paolo Rizzi once on board the ship that rescued him and his travelling companion.

HISTORY

Europ Assistance's mission, since its foundation in 1968, has been to "make customers' lives easier everyday", providing concrete and effective answers that meet their needs in all life's circumstances, from emergencies to daily life, travel, health, home, and mobility, "always and everywhere". Ready availability with an immediate global response "24/7", reliability in a safe solution, efficiency for a quick and easy response.