



Pacific Ocean Emergency Response Team



UPDATE: The Flotsam Mayday Distress Call - 13/6/17

0130 on the 12/04/14 the Hawaii Coast Guard in Honolulu received a distress mayday call from the survey vessel "Flotsam". The ship is believed to have been in the area collecting scientific marine samples when they were caught in a fast moving storm. The crew indicated they were abandoning ship and taking refuge in well provisioned life raft. The Flotsam's emergency EPIRB was activated.

A search and rescue helicopter crew was unable to be dispatched immediately due to the extreme distance the ship was from shore. Fixed wing aircraft were already in use investigating another vessel in distress. The Flotsam EPIRB signal was lost at around 0530 when the ship presumably capsized and sunk. Aircraft were dispatched at 0600 on that day, but no trace of the Flotsam has been found. Its final fixed position was 21 deg N by 139 deg W.

The crew of three in the life raft had provisions (flares/food/fresh water/medical supplies) for approximately 13 days. No SART emergency beacon signal was received despite one being accounted for in the life raft manifest. We conclude that the SART was either damaged or lost overboard during the evacuation. Two of the crew are possibly in poor health.

An expansive search and rescue operation over 1000 square kilometres has been in operation for the past 14 days with no sightings of the crew or life raft. With extremely strong prevailing winds and currents in the area of the Flotsam's last confirmed location, it is possible the crew could have drifted significant distance.

At 0815 yesterday morning, a fishing crew working out of Kaho'Olawe reported finding a single container in Kanapou Bay with belongings from the Flotsam. The container arrived at POERT head quarters this morning for investigation.

Your team is charged with leading the investigation and piecing together information about:

- Who the crew are (names, professional qualifications, origins, roles etc)
- The purpose of the expedition (including using data/samples collect to plot whereabouts)
- Making sense of samples/data & building a timeline of the crew and ships movements prior to and during the voyage
- Charting the Flotsam's sailing course, and suggesting the **3 most likely search areas** for a final rescue effort.

