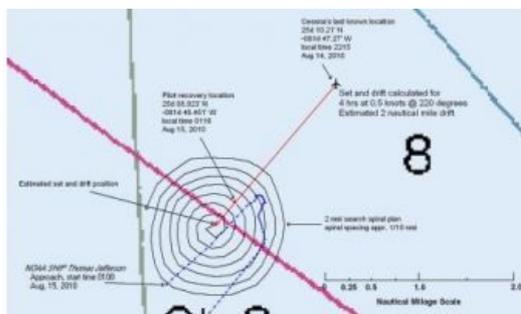


Thomas Jefferson Rescues Downed Pilot



The pilot of a small aircraft that crashed about thirty miles from NOAA Ship Thomas Jefferson last week was rescued from the sea. The NOAA vessel was conducting mapping surveys west of Key West, FL, when it was contacted by the Coast Guard and immediately changed course to join a search and rescue operation.

The crew, using the ship's Doppler speed log and GPS positioning equipment, was able to estimate the ocean current and focus their search area around a location approximately two nautical miles south-southwest of the reported crash site.

The captain posted extra personnel as lookouts and used the searchlights in a sweeping pattern all while keeping a quiet bridge so we could hear any calls of distress from the pilot. Shortly after 1:00AM EDT, the ship's crew heard cries for help off the port side of vessel, immediately brought the ship to an emergency stop and deployed a rescue boat. By turning the ship in the direction original sound came from, the crew was able to locate the person in the water using the searchlight, and guide the rescue boat to pick him up. The pickup position was about a quarter mile from the ship's estimated search position.

The pilot was reported to be in fine shape, except for a cut lip, according to medical personnel from the *Thomas Jefferson*. He was transferred to a Coast Guard boat that was in the area for a return visit to Key West, where he was met by his anxious father, who had been waiting at the airport to pick him up when the news of the crash reached him.

Image: the search plan implemented by the NOAA Ship *Thomas Jefferson* on 15th August 2010.