



# MERITORIUS SERVICE AWARD

presented to

## Station 34 – Yzerfontein

for the prompt and effective action taken by Station 34 Yzerfontein duty crew at 12:59 on 6th July 2022 when they responded to the NSRI rescue station and the NSRI rescue craft Spirit of DHL II was launched into 3m swells and a Force 3 wind, causing the sea conditions to deteriorate in the entrance to the Yzerfontein harbour.

NSRI Yzerfontein were activated following a distress phone call from a lady reporting that she, her husband, her dad and her son were on a boat capsized 200 meters off-shore of Yzerfontein harbour and they were clinging onto the upturned hull of the capsized boat in rough sea conditions.

On arrival on the scene by the Rescue Craft, all 4 casualties were promptly rescued onto the NSRI rescue craft in difficult sea conditions and were brought to shore safely.

They were treated at the NSRI rescue station for hypothermia before being released requiring no further medical assistance.

Our NSRI rescue craft then returned to the capsized catamaran pleasure craft that was adrift off-shore. Attempts were made to right the craft at sea before towing the capsized craft to the Yzerfontein harbour slipway.

It appears that the family, skipper, Bertus Engelbrecht 43, his wife, Dorita Engelbrecht 39, their son, Christian Engelbrecht 8, from Durbanville, and father-in-law Otto van der Merwe 65, from Yzerfontein, after a morning recreational fishing trip, were returning from Dassen Island.

On their approach towards Yzerfontein harbour in the growing swells, their boat capsized near to the Dolosse sea wall after a breaking wave washed over their boat.

After being thrown off the boat they were able to swim towards the upturned hull of the boat and clamber onto the upturned hull but there was no sign of the 8-year-old. Despite struggling to hold

onto the hull the dad and grandfather were removing their jackets and shoes to initiate a search for the child when at that moment the child emerged from under the boat.

The child had been trapped under the boat in a pocket of air and realising that the buoyancy of his lifejacket would prevent him from escaping from under the hull he removed his lifejacket which enabled him to dive under the boat and swim out from under the boat.

He popped up from underwater to the relief of his family. They hauled him onboard the upturned hull of the boat. All four casualties were clinging onto the upturned hull of the boat adrift in heavy sea swells that were washing over them.

The female, using her phone that she had in her jacket pocket, which to their surprise was working despite being submerged in seawater, phoned NSRI, raising the alarm.

NSRI commend the child for his quick thinking to remove his life jacket to enable his escape from under the capsized boat.

NSRI recognises that the training, professionalism and ethos of those crew at Station 34, Yzerfontein resulted in the successful execution of this remarkable rescue operation, undoubtedly saving 4 lives, and must be congratulated for their meritorious service in the best traditions of NSRI.

We salute you.

The following crew took part in the Mass rescue operation:

**Spirit of DHL II Crew:** Andre Livingstone Louw, Willem van Staden, Jacques Rossouw, Gerhard Visagie

**Shore Crew:** Junre Marais, Justin Loedolff, Peter Scott, John Coleshill, Helene van Zyl

Dave Macready  
Chairman of the Board of Directors



21 July 2023

Date