



MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Presented to

START

From 11 to 13 April 2022, days of heavy rain across KwaZulu-Natal led to deadly floods. Particularly hard-hit were areas in and around Durban. At least 435 people died across the province, with an unknown number of people still missing as of 13 April 2022. Several thousand homes were damaged or destroyed. Critical infrastructure, including major roads, transportation, communication and electrical systems, were impacted by the flooding, and this damage greatly hampered rescue, recovery and relief efforts.

START, a Specialised Tactical Accident Rescue Team, is a Non-Profit Organisation of volunteers that forms a synergy between private and volunteer emergency organisations during times of need. START, represented by founder Konrad Jones, is being recognised for their courage and determination on 11 April 2022 when they and members of local NSRI Stations, along with the national and local emergency services, rendered aid and assistance in multiple flood-related incidents along the KwaZulu-Natal coastline and inland areas caused by the heavy rainfall and devastating floods in the Durban and surrounding areas.

In particular, this amazing group of volunteers on the night of the floods worked tirelessly assisting everywhere they could, helping remove people from washed-away buildings to safety. START set up a control room where all the calls for assistance were directed to be able to coordinate reaction to trapped people. Konrad worked with NSRI to co-ordinate and pair up teams to work together, dispatching them to the upper highway areas where the help was most needed. A WhatsApp group was then created including all the persons responding, and casualty information was fed to that group from the START control room as to where help was needed next. In the days after the floods their volunteers worked to retrieve bodies, searching for them in washed-away buildings, rubble and riverbeds, wanting to give closure to the hundreds of families that were missing their family members.

Konrad Jones and the START Team's collective dedication and bravery that day, going to the aid of persons in trouble, in known dangerous conditions, without concern for their own safety, was in the very finest traditions of the National Sea Rescue Institute, which we are pleased to recognise with this Meritorious Service Award.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Velloza'.

Jonathan Velloza
Chairman: Board of Directors



19 July 2024

Date