

## Eight from Air Station Kodiak to Recieve Prestigious Award

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Eight Alaska-based Coast Guardsmen from Air Station Kodiak will be awarded the American Helicopter Society's prestigious William J. Kossler Award at the American Helicopter Society Forum in Phoenix in May for saving the lives of seven commercial fishermen during two different rescues in 2009.

Commander Shawn Tripp, Lieutenant. David McCown, flight mechanic Dennis Dewinter and rescue swimmer Eric Stoecker are being recognized for their rescue of two men from the fishing vessel American Way, grounded on Aghiyuk Island on January 4, 2009.

The crew battled 500-foot ceilings, three-mile visibility, driving snow, and zero degree temperatures to rescue the stranded fishermen. They were safely hoisted from a narrow strip of beach next to a 300-foot vertical cliff in steady 58 mph winds.

And in a grounding on Saint Paul Island in March a year ago, Lieutenant John Bartel, Lieutenant Commander Craig Neubecker, flight mechanic Chad Redmond, and rescue swimmer Alexis Torres, rescued five crewmembers from the fishing vessel Mar-Gun.

The men were hoisted in visibility of a half mile, with a 200 foot ceiling, and blowing snow, as waves rocked the vessel and crashed over its decks.

The Captain William J. Kossler Award is given for achievement in practical application or operation of rotary wing aircraft. This program was initiated in 1944 and over the years has paid tribute to the leaders in the vertical flight industry.