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Coast Guard locates missing boater 15 miles west of Town of Suwannee; *Trenton native saved*

A rescue boat from a commercial salvage crew approaches the 22-foot boat with Jerry Driggers on it.

By the U.S. Coast Guard
7th District PA
Detachment Tampa Bay
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at 7:08 p.m.

CLEARWATER, Fla.

— The United States Coast

Guard located a missing boater 15 miles west of the Town of Suwannee on Friday (Sept. 21).

Rescued was Trenton native, Jerry Driggers, 71.

At 10:57 p.m. Thursday (Sept. 20), Sector St. Petersburg watchstanders received a report from Driggers' wife stating Driggers was due back from a fishing trip aboard his 22-foot boat by sunset and had not returned. Driggers' wife gave watchstanders a complete float plan, including where he was leaving from, where he was going, and when he planned to return.

An Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew was launched, and at 5:27 a.m. Friday, located Driggers aboard his boat. After the air crew lowered a radio to Driggers, he stated he was OK, but his boat was disabled.

An HC-130 Hercules also was launched and maintained communications with Driggers.

A commercial salvage boat crew went to Driggers location and towed him back to shore. There were no reported injuries.

"Mr. Driggers did everything right," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Amanda Walker, a Sector St. Petersburg watchstander. "Float plans dramatically decrease the search area for emergency responders. We urge every boater to prepare a float plan and give it to a family member or friend before leaving the dock."



The rescue boat from a commercial salvage crew prepares to tow the boater in distress

*Still Shots From Video By
USCG Petty Officer 2nd
Class Ashley Johnson*