

Press release: British naval team comes to assistance of family in search and rescue mission

In the early hours of the morning, the Royal Navy vessel launched her Wildcat helicopter to search for a ship reported missing off the south east coast of the island of Vieques.

The team of UK personnel spotted an upturned hull along with some debris and a life raft in the surf. Three people then clambered up onto the up turned hull and waved for assistance, which was spotted by a US Coastguard C130 aircraft. The Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter was then tasked to rescue the three people. They were transported safely to RFA Mounts Bay where they were treated for minor injuries.

Commanding Officer of RFA Mounts Bay, Captain Steve Norris, said:

My ship and crew demonstrated exceptional teamwork today to save these lives, and I am immensely grateful to them all for their efforts in this operation.

It is with regret that we understand that a fourth individual at the scene is missing, presumed dead. Our thoughts go out to their family at this difficult time.

Currently engaged in the UK government response to the devastation left behind by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, RFA Mounts Bay continues to deliver emergency relief to affected islands. Pre-positioned in the region, she provided initial assistance to Anguilla to clear the runway and helped fix basic infrastructure and provide shelter to people in the British Virgin Islands. A specialist FCO team is on the ground to provide assistance to the individuals involved.