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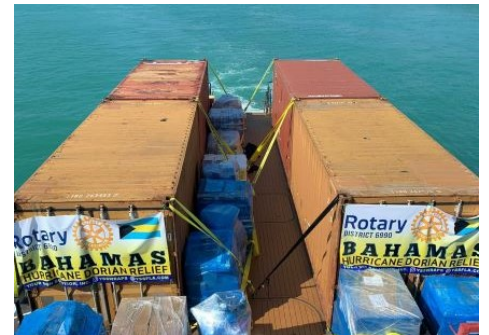
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Making a difference with Yacht Support

Owners Carl and Gigi Allen put their hearts — and yachts — into helping the Hurricane Dorian relief effort

When the devastating category 5 hurricane Dorian battered the Bahamas beyond comprehension in September, Carl and Gigi Allen, owners of Yacht Support vessel *AXIS*, did not hesitate in pulling all the resources possible together to provide yacht support in its most literal form. Our *Finest Moments* guest writer Bill Springer of *Forbes* and *Ocean Home* magazine, caught up with Mr Allen at the recent Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show to find out more about how he has and still is “putting his heart — and yachts — into helping people in the Bahamas.”

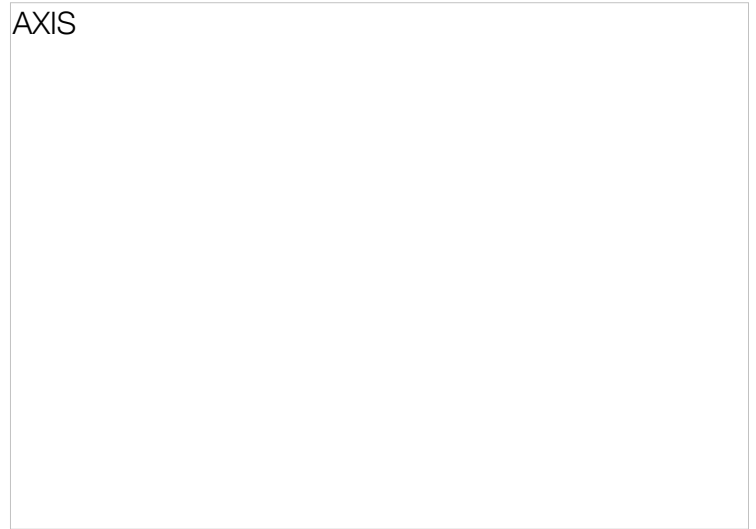
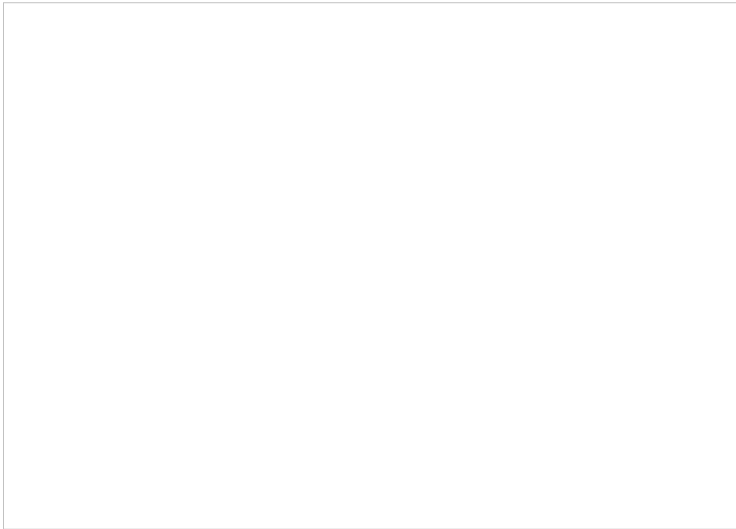
Story by Bill Springer



“Mr Allen’s team have transported and unloaded hundreds of tonnes of material and equipment – everything from generators, construction materials, tools, medical supplies and food.”

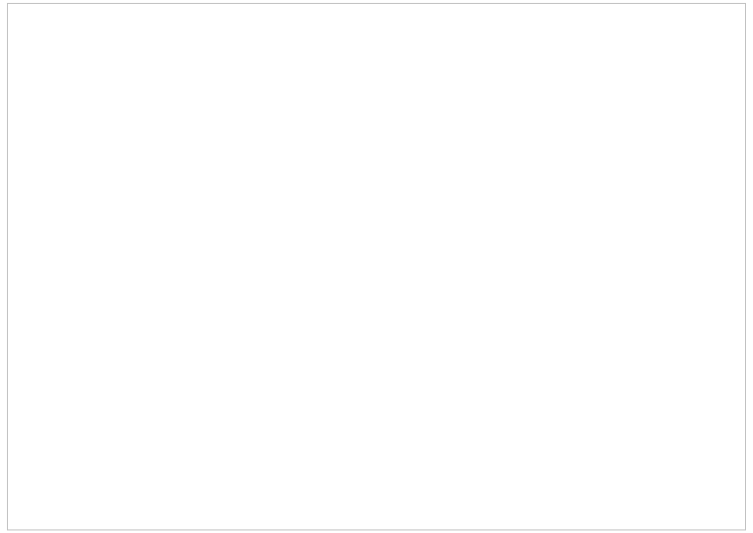
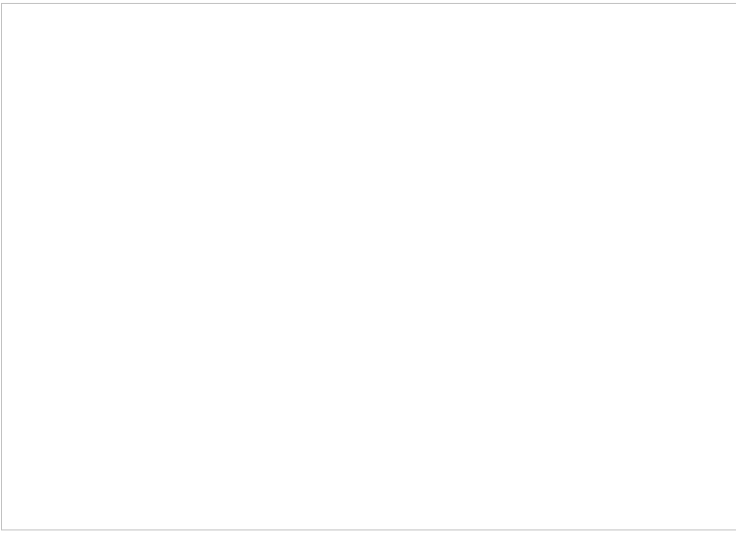
Hooked on a feeling

“I’ve been going to the Bahamas since I was 12 years old,” Carl Allen tells me over drinks on board the 50-metre-long mothership of his fleet on a steamy day in Ft. Lauderdale recently. “We came across the Gulf Stream on an old trawler and I still remember the how colours of the Bahama banks hit me like a wave. I’ve been hooked ever since.”



In fact, “hooked” may be the perfect description of this curious Texan who’s spent a good chunk of the last three years on board his impressive fleet of yachts in his beloved Bahamas. We met aboard the 2010 Westport he bought for his wife Gigi as soon as he sold his rather valuable company several years ago. But GIGI isn’t even the largest yacht in his fleet.

“Nothing was better suited to rush large quantities of supplies to the areas that were hit the worst than Mr Allen’s massive armada.”



A deep love of the ocean

His 55-metre-long Damen Yachting Yacht Support *AXIS* is there to shadow *GIGI*, but more importantly, *AXIS* is there to feed his need to “look for stuff underwater” and carries everything from a Triton submarine and Icon A5 seaplane to a state-of-the-art dive centre so he can “look for stuff” in the Bahamas in comfort. His new Viking 68’ Convertible fishing boat *FRIGATE* feeds his love of fishing. And his two custom-made Hell’s Bay flats boats, tenders, jet skis, and other water toys can turn any anchorage into a virtual ocean playground.

Oh, yeah, he also purchased [Walker’s Cay](#), the northernmost island in the Bahamas in late 2018. It was the very first place he saw in the Bahamas on that trip when he was 12. And his team was in the preliminary planning stages to rebuild the marina and infrastructure at the storied Bahamas destination (that had been closed for well over 10 years) when the category 5 Hurricane Dorian hit last August.

Trials of devastation

Once the devastating winds finally died, nothing was better suited to rush large quantities of supplies to the areas that were hit the worst than Mr Allen's massive armada. And no one was more committed to helping the locals than Mr Allen and his team from [Allen Exploration](#). "We arrived on Little Grand Cay five days after the hurricane hit," he says. "And the people looked like ghosts. Thankfully no one died. Our local caretaker over at Walker's said he'd been through some bad hurricanes. But nothing like Dorian. He thought he was a goner."

Carl Allen talks about AXIS

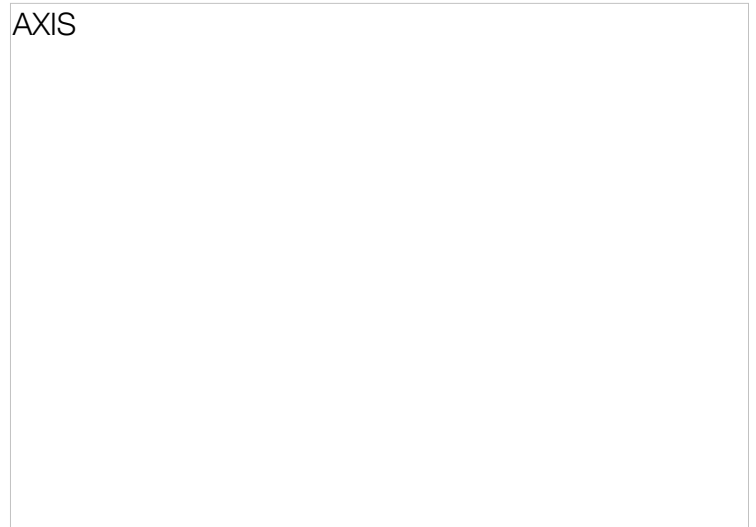
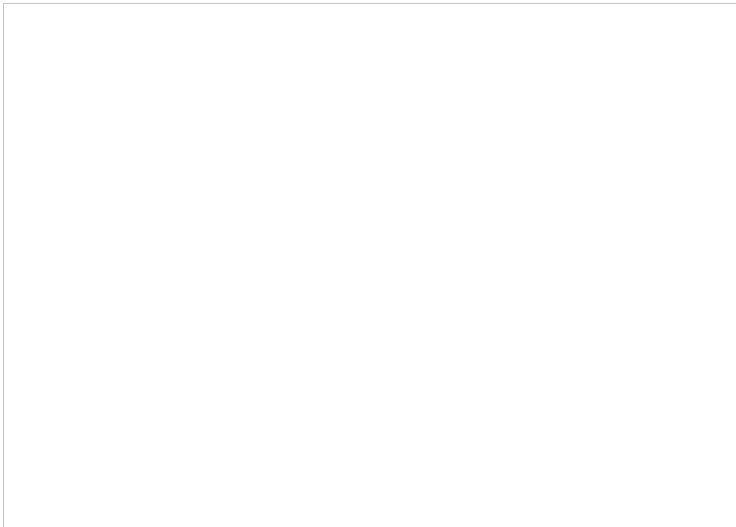
The story behind
his unique vision
and creating the
Allen Exploration
fleet.

“No one was more committed to helping the locals than Mr Allen and his team from Allen Exploration.”

Recovery and aid

And since virtually everything was destroyed on Little Grand Cay, the locals needed... well, everything. During the early days of the recovery efforts, Mr Allen's fleet transported and unloaded well over 50 tonnes of material and equipment. AXIS's Captain Les Annan reports delivering everything from generators, construction materials, tools, medical supplies and food in those early days.

And just as importantly, since AXIS and the rest of Mr Allen's fleet was so involved from the beginning, Captain Annan helped make sure the huge outpouring of donations that was organised in part by National Marine Suppliers, Bradford Marine, the Bahamas Rotary Club and other marine businesses, yacht owners, captains and crew who donated money and supplies made it to the people who needed help the most.



Handli ng the afterma th

Captain Les Annan
shows us the
hurricane relief
activities on board
AXIS

*Mr Allen may love “looking for stuff underwater.”
But what he’s doing on land is pretty special too.”*

Ongoing support

One of the many cool things about Carl Allen is that I could tell he was both proud and grateful for the ability to help the people on Little Grand Cay and the surrounding area recover from Hurricane Dorian. He not only dedicated his fleet, he personally funded a significant portion of the recovery efforts in the early days after Dorian hit. Even all these months later, he's still funding clean up crews on Little Grand Cay and has also pledged to match every dollar raised for hurricane relief (up to \$500,000).



Mr Allen may love “looking for stuff underwater.” But what he’s doing on land is pretty special too. And I’m sure the people he’s helped in the Bahamas will agree.

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