



AFRAS Newsletter

Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc.

PO Box 565 • Fish Creek, WI 54212-0565 • (920) 743-5434 tel & fax • www.afras.org

Autumn 2008

AFRAS Board of Directors

Chairman

VICE ADMIRAL T. M. CROSS,
USCG (Ret.)

Chairman Emeritus

ADMIRAL J. S. GRACEY,
USCG (Ret.)

Chairman Emeritus

VICE ADMIRAL T. R. SARGENT III,
USCG (Ret.)

President

CAPTAIN G. KINNEY, USCG (Ret.)

Secretary

ANNE KIFER

Treasurer

DAVID CHOMEAU

Assistant Treasurer

ANNE SKELTON

Directors

CAPTAIN J. CHOMEAU, USN (Ret.)
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER S. CLENDENIN,
USCG (Ret.)

SA J.A. CORRY, US Secret Service (Ret.)

CAPTAIN J. C. FUECHSEL,
USCG (Ret.)

R. KENNEY

Executive Director, NY Navy League
N. KERIGAN, National Commodore
USCG Auxiliary

N. L. LUDINGTON

J. J. MARIE, President & CEO,
ZODIAC North America, Inc.

E. O'BRIEN

CDR J. B. QUINN, USCG (Ret.)

CAPTAIN S. SAWYER, USCG (Ret.)

R. SCHWARTZ

President, BOAT/US

W. D. WILKINSON

Director Emeritus

The Mariners' Museum

CAPTAIN R.W. WITTER,

USCG (Ret.)

International Advisory Group

ANDREW FREEMANTLE, CBE

Chief Executive

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

IAN VENTHAM

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), ret.

SIP WIEBENGA

International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF)

25 September 2008 AFRAS Award Ceremony and Reception



Congressman Howard Coble



ADM Thad Allen



Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends of AFRAS,

Hello, I'm Gabe Kinney. I consider it a great honor that I was elected President of AFRAS by the Board of Directors at our meeting on 25 September, the day of our annual Awards Ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. This year's event was another outstanding success, where we recognized some true heroes who went in harm's way, and risked their own lives, that others may live. You'll find details of the awards and the ceremony in this Newsletter, so I won't recount them here. I will however, take this opportunity to thank the members of Congress, Admiral Allen, and the other leaders of our Coast Guard who joined us to recognize these outstanding lifesavers.

Before I go any further, I have to salute my predecessor as President of AFRAS, Captain John Chomeau, USN (Ret). As many of you know, John has served as President of AFRAS for the past 7 years. Throughout that time he worked tirelessly to make AFRAS the vital part of the world's Search and Rescue community that it is today. Under his leadership, AFRAS increased membership, brought new talent to the Board of Directors, and it is particularly significant that AFRAS has become more financially healthy and capable of helping others to save lives. Just a few of the particular initiatives that he has personally spearheaded have been to develop closer cooperation with the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF), support the Caribbean SAR initiative (CAR-SAR), foster our historic relationship with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in the UK, and advance our close working cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and USCG Auxiliary. I am very glad that John has

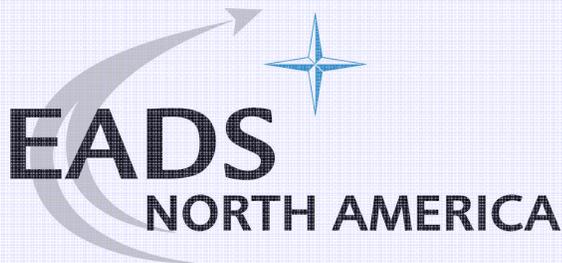
agreed to remain on the AFRAS Board of Directors. He has done a great job, and certainly set a very high standard for me to follow.

I'd like to share with you just a bit about my background. I'm very proud of my 28 year career in the U.S. Coast Guard, most of it in the SAR mission, and retired in 2001 as the Chief of Search and Rescue. I have three wonderful daughters, and a fantastic wife (who also happens to be a retired Coastie). We live in the woods of upstate New York with our 3 Newfoundlands and two attack cats, but I spend a fair amount of time traveling around the world in my full time job of Business Development for Lockheed Martin. Fortunately I've been able to maintain my connection with the SAR mission through my work with the IMRF, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and being a Visiting Professor at the World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden and Dalian Maritime University in China. I've worked with AFRAS for almost 20 years, and joined the Board of Directors in 2001.

I am very excited about this new opportunity to work toward the purpose of AFRAS, which according to our By-Laws is "to foster traditional search and rescue values through suitable recognition, to facilitate international cooperation in search and rescue and to sustain voluntary search and rescue organization through dissemination of information and provision of financial support." With everyone's help, I am confident that we can advance the fine work of AFRAS, and build an even stronger and more effective Association For Rescue At Sea.

Captain Gabriel Kinney, USCG (Ret)

Thank you to our 2008 Platinum Sponsors



GENERAL DYNAMICS



AFRAS Gold Medal Award

2008

Aviation Survival Technician First Class Willard L. Milam United States Coast Guard

Petty Officer Willard Milam was awarded the prestigious AFRAS Gold Medal for his actions while serving as a Rescue Swimmer aboard Coast Guard helicopter CGNR 6525 on 10 February 2007.

On a dark and drizzly winter morning, CGNR 6525 boldly launched from Air Station Kodiak in near-zero visibility to locate the source of a distress signal in the vicinity of Makushin Bay near Unalaska Island, Alaska. Upon arrival, the crew of the Coast Guard helo spotted a flare from a life raft and AST1 Milam deployed into the frigid, 15 foot swells. After a difficult swim to the raft, Milam climbed in and found four drenched survivors without protective clothing, one of whom was severely hypothermic. AST1

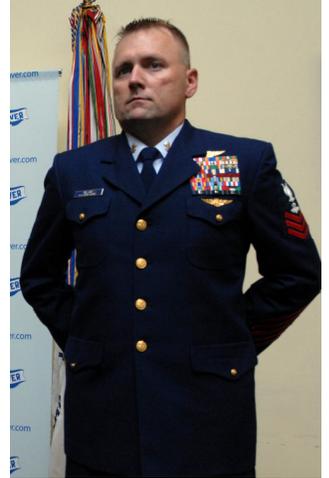
Milam radioed the helicopter, and the crew quickly deployed the aircrew's personal survival suits. After retrieving two of the suits which had been swept away, Milam clambered back inside the life raft to assist the hypothermic survivors into the protective gear.

The rescue basket was delivered and Milam secured the first survivor after a brief struggle and radioed for hoist. Swimming back to the raft, he felt his legs going numb and signaled for emergency pickup. Back on board CGNR 6525, petty officer Milam discovered his motor functions were deteriorating from the cold water which had leaked into his dry suit. Because fuel levels were getting uncomfortably low and the crew would be facing a headwind on the return trip, Milam valiantly opted to return to the 40-degree water and expeditiously loaded the next two survivors who were hoisted to safety.

While conducting the final hoist, the remaining survivor jumped into the basket knocking it from Milam's hands. As he swam toward the basket with the survivor, a wave broke over them causing the man to panic. As a result, the hoist cable inadvertently wrapped around the survivor's neck. Milam carefully untangled the cable while maintaining control of the basket and expertly subdued the survivor, placing him in the basket and signaling for pick-up. Now extremely fatigued and hypothermic, AST1 Milam mustered up strength to climb into the basket himself to be hoisted aboard CGNR6525. On the return trip, Milam faded in and out of consciousness and was transferred to an awaiting ambulance along with the survivors.

Willard Milam's extraordinarily valiant efforts to save these four mariners with little regard for his personal safety are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the US Coast Guard.

Aviation Survival Technician First Class Willard L. Milam, USCG, center; with ADM Thad Allen, Commandant US Coast Guard and AFRAS Chairman VADM Terry Cross, USCG (ret.)



2008 AFRAS Silver Medal Awards

Richard Liebe

Raymond Miller, Jr.

Shane Taylor

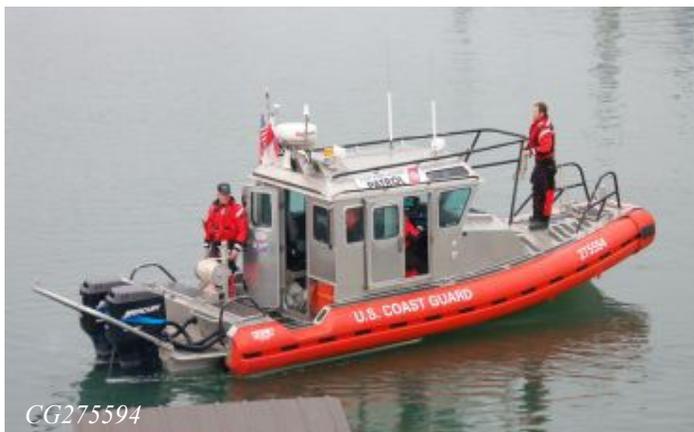
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

Michael Cupit

Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary



(l-r) Taylor, Cupit, Liebe, Miller



An AFRAS Silver medal was awarded to US Coast Guard Auxiliarists Shane A. Taylor, Richard H. Liebe and Raymond F. Miller and to Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliarist Michael Cupit for outstanding achievement in the performance of duty while serving as coxswain and crew aboard CG275594 on 25 April 2007. During a training exercise in Homer, Alaska the crew overheard a distress call from the 39-foot charter vessel HALIBUT ENDEAVOR stating they were rapidly taking on water and making way toward the nearest shore. The crew noted the position of the vessel and immediately responded. Transiting through 3-foot seas and 20-knot winds, the Auxiliary team arrived on scene in 20 minutes.

Assessing the situation, the crew noted the vessel was listing to port and passengers were on the bow trying to balance her movement. Shane Taylor, the auxiliary coxswain, brought his vessel alongside the port bow of the sinking boat and directed his crew and the master of HALIBUT ENDEAVOR to disembark all 13 passengers to the bow of CG275594. Mr. Miller and Mr. Cupit assisted passengers over the railing and safely onto the foredeck of the auxiliary vessel. Seconds after 11 of the 13 passengers were brought safely on board CG275594, Mr. Liebe who was stationed on the stern to fend off, reported that the charter vessel was rolling toward them. Mr. Taylor responded immediately, breaking away from HALIBUT ENDEAVOR.

The three auxiliary crewmembers worked together to coax the passengers from the bow to the cabin, checking each for signs of hypothermia and injuries. Meanwhile, Mr. Taylor nosed his bow up to the partially overturned vessel and held position while his crew pulled the two remaining survivors onboard, just minutes before HALIBUT ENDEAVOR rolled again and sank.

Coxswain Taylor and crewmembers Liebe, Miller and Cupit exhibited extreme skill and superior decision making that made the rescue successful. The heroic and skillful actions of the crew of CG275594 were instrumental in saving the lives of 13 people.



Photo by McKibben Jackinsky as printed in the Homer News

"At the right place at the right time," is how Coast Guard Auxiliarists Ray Miller of Fairbanks; Shane Taylor of Anchorage; Mike Cupit, a Canadian Auxiliarist from Vancouver, B.C.; and Rich Liebe of Anchorage describe their timely response to the sinking of the Halibut Endeavor on Kachemak Bay. The 13 people aboard the Halibut Endeavor were transferred to the Auxiliary's SAFEBoat (pictured above) shortly before the Endeavor sank.

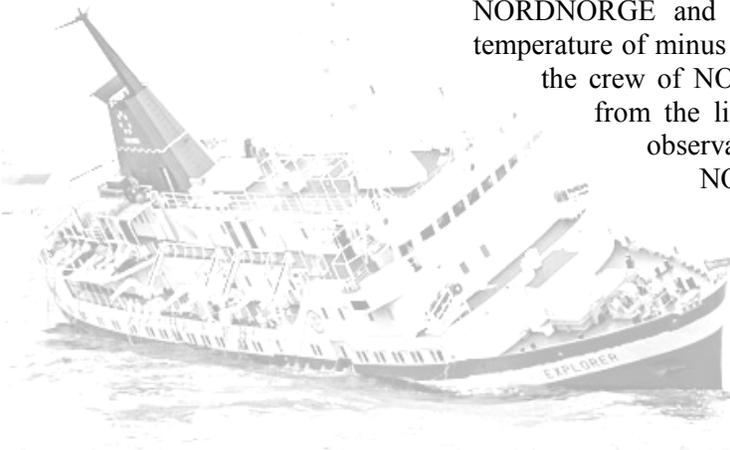
AFRAS Amver ²⁰⁰⁸ Plaque



C/S Nordnorge

AFRAS presented the captain of the C/S NORDNORGE, a 400-foot Norwegian Cruise Ship the Amver plaque for the rescue of 154 passengers from the Cruise Ship EXPLORER on 23 November 2007. The EXPLORER, the first cruise ship designed specifically to sail the icy waters of the Antarctic Ocean, reportedly struck an iceberg and was sinking 500 nautical miles south of Argentina near Antarctica. All passengers and crew safely abandoned ship into lifeboats.

Answering an Amver distress call, Captain Arnvid Hansen altered course of the C/S NORDNORGE and steamed approximately 5 hours to the area. Despite air temperature of minus 5 degrees Celsius and water temperatures of 1 degree Celsius, the crew of NORDNORGE was able to rescue all 154 passengers and crew from the lifeboats. The crew then brought the survivors to the ship's observatory where they were counted and examined by the NORDNORGE's medical staff. Passengers of the C/S NORDNORGE donated dry clothing for the wet survivors. The ship then ferried survivors to King George Island where they would fly back to the South American mainland.



Thanks to the willingness of the captain and crew of C/S NORDNORGE to divert from course and expertly come to the rescue of the passengers from the sinking cruise ship EXPLORER, 154 lives were saved.



Captain Arnvid Hansen, Master of the C/S NORDNORGE accepts the Amver plaque from AFRAS Chairman Terry Cross



Kerigan becomes the Auxiliary's 29th National Commodore



National Commodore (NACO) Kerigan renders a salute to outgoing NACO Budar as Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen looks on (U.S. Coast Guard Photo)

At a ceremony held at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington on October 31st, Commodore Nicholas Kerigan relieved Commodore Steve Budar to become the 29th National Commodore for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

The ceremony, which was presided over by ADM Thad Allen, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, also swore in other national leaders for the 2 year term ending October 31, 2010.

While serving as National Commodore, Nicholas Kerigan will also be serving on the AFRAS Board, replacing Steve Budar. The officers and directors would like to welcome Commodore Kerigan to the board, and thank past Commodore Budar for his tremendous help with AFRAS while serving as National Commodore.

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed civilian component of the United States Coast Guard. Created by an Act of Congress in 1939, the Auxiliary directly supports the Coast Guard in all missions, except military and direct law enforcement actions.

Join AFRAS

Afras is here to provide you with a means of supporting worldwide voluntary lifeboat services and at the same time, providing you with a tax deduction here in the United States.

AFRAS offers two basic membership packages:

The first, a joint membership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for dues of \$100 per year will provide you with a quarterly subscription to the RNLI's *Lifeboat* journal, their annual *Watermark* catalogue and other RNLI press releases and mailings throughout the year. We will also send you periodic AFRAS newsletters, press releases, and an invitation to our annual Gold Medal/Silver Medal/Amver award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The second, a sole AFRAS membership for \$20 per year will entitle you to all Afras mailings including newsletters, press releases and miscellaneous information from our counterparts throughout the world.

All dues and donations given to AFRAS are tax deductible in the United States.

If you are interested in joining AFRAS please fill out the information below and send along with your dues/donation to
Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc., P. O. Box 565, Fish Creek, WI 54212-0565.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ (day) _____ (evening) E-mail _____

Membership (check one) _____ AFRAS/RNLI (\$100 dues) _____ AFRAS (\$20 dues)

Dues enclosed _____ (amount) Donation enclosed _____ (amount)

I would like to find out more about AFRAS. Please send me more information.

