
AFRAS NEWS



AUTUMN 2015

ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA, INC.

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WWW.AFRAS.ORG

The Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc., helps protect mariners from the perils of the sea by providing monetary and in-kind donations to world volunteer maritime search and rescue organizations. AFRAS is a 501(c)3 non-profit charity.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

To the supporters, members, and friends of the Association for Rescue at Sea worldwide:

It is a great honor to have been chosen to lead an organization as meaningful and venerable as the Association for Rescue at Sea. As a lifelong Search and Rescue operator, I cannot think of a more fulfilling charge than taking the reins of this organization. I would like to personally thank Captain Steve Sawyer for his years of dedicated service. AFRAS is a strong organization because of his leadership and the worldwide SAR community owes him a great deal.



I have been meeting frequently with our Chairman Dana Goward, reviewing the status of AFRAS and looking toward the future. As we move toward that future, we intend to take the following steps:

1. We need to expand our donor base. Even though AFRAS is currently financially solvent, we will not be able to sustain operations, including our annual awards ceremony, without a focused fundraising effort. As we move into the new year I will be asking that each Director reach out within their span of influence and try to bring at least one new supporter into the AFRAS fold. Comparatively speaking, our needs are not great but we all need to be active in this area. In addition, if we hope to be able to expand our operations in support of worldwide volunteer search and rescue efforts, we will need additional funds to do so.
2. In anticipation of a larger donor pool, we want to be smart about how we are going to spend it. We are working on a strategic plan for AFRAS. A roadmap that will keep us focused on objectives that will make the most impact on our mission.

("From the President" cont.)

3. We will continue to aggressively seek opportunities to support and recognize volunteer search and rescue efforts. We will be strategic and will use our roadmap to accomplish this. I see this as the main purpose of AFRAS, and by seeking out new opportunities, our relevance to those we serve and our donor base will increase.

Thank you all for your support. I am looking forward to a great year. I wish you all a safe and happy Holiday Season.

Best regards,

Skip Bowen
President, Association for Rescue at Sea
Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast
Guard, USCG (Ret.)

AFRAS HISTORY AND HERITAGE PROGRAM

By CDR Gary M. Thomas, USCG (Ret.)

During the AFRAS Annual meeting in September, I had the honor of being elected to the Board of Directors. Having retired from the U.S. Coast Guard, I am excited about being a part of an organization devoted to supporting and providing assistance to volunteer maritime rescue services, some of which I worked with during my Coast Guard career. Equally exciting for me is the chance to serve in an additional capacity for AFRAS. At the same meeting, the Board voted to establish a new position of Vice President for History and Heritage and asked me to serve in that role.

I am an amateur historian by avocation and run a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history of the U.S. Coast Guard. I hope to use this position both to help the volunteer maritime rescue services we assist to document their own history and, more importantly, to share those histories with a wider audience. We at AFRAS have no doubt there are many individuals and organizations that have stories needing to be told. While we may know them as the "sea stories" shared over drinks in

quiet company, the rest of the public needs to learn of them as deeds worthy of greater recognition.

I look forward to reaching out to the historians of the rescue services we are associated with to ensure their stories get told. If you have a story you think needs to be told to a broader audience, please feel free to contact me at: heritage@afras.org

FOLLOW AFRAS ON SOCIAL MEDIA



If you only visit with us at the annual awards ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., or just receive our annual newsletter, you're missing out on more news and information. AFRAS uses our website and various social media platforms to share news and info about worldwide maritime search and rescue organizations and operations.

In addition to the association website, we are active on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Here's how to connect with us to interact with Directors and receive the latest search and rescue news:



Visit:
facebook.com/afras.org/
and "like" the page!



Search: "Association for Rescue at Sea," and connect with us!



Navigate to:
twitter.com/afras_inc and follow us!



2015 AWARDS CEREMONY AND RECEPTION

U.S. Congress members and their staffs, corporate sponsors, the commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and other flag officers, and AFRAS's officers and board of directors gathered at the Rayburn House Office Building in the Washington D.C. Sep. 9, 2015, to honor heroes who performed extraordinary acts of valor to rescue people in peril at sea.

A U.S. Coast Guard petty officer and the crews of two commercial ships were presented with

water and had suffered engine failure in rough seas 440 miles off the coast of Guam.

The crew of the Bahamian-flagged ship Peruvian Reefer was honored with a special award for volunteering to rescue 210 migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Libya, from two boats in distress – one that capsized before the Peruvian Reefer's crew could get their rescue boat in the water.



AFRAS awards to formally recognize their successful search and rescue efforts. Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Leon – an aviation survival technician –received the AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III Gold Medal for his role in rescuing four people.

The crew of the Panamanian-flagged commercial ship Tohmisan Maru received the AMVER Award, for voluntarily rescuing 24 mariners who were forced to abandon their ship, which was taking on

U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter, who was the congressional sponsor for the event, gave opening remarks. U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul F. Zukunft also spoke, and was joined by Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Steven Cantrell, as well as other senior leaders from the service.

VICE ADMIRAL THOMAS R. SARGENT III GOLD MEDAL



AFRAS President Steve Sawyer presents the Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III Gold Medal to U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Survival Technician 2nd Class Christopher Leon.

It was, indeed, a dark and stormy night when U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Christopher Leon rescued four mariners in distress. Leon and the rest of the aircrew from Air Station San Francisco answered a call for help and were dispatched to the ocean rower Britannia, which was damaged and near sinking, and had a crew in need of rescue.

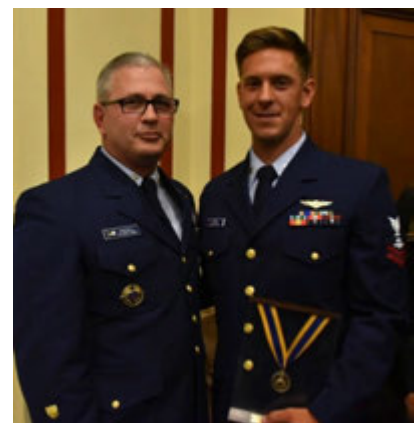


Petty Officer Christopher Leon gives remarks after receiving the AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III Gold Medal.

Once on scene, Leon was deployed from the rescue helicopter into the frigid waters 60 miles offshore of California and battled 30-knot winds and 15-foot seas to reach the foundering vessel. At one point

while swimming the first three survivors to the helicopter rescue basket for hoisting, Leon was swept 500 yards from the vessel.

Leon voluntarily stayed with the last survivor while the pilot of the rescue helicopter, low on fuel, was forced to return to base. Leon provided aid for two hours until the helicopter crew returned to complete the final rescue.



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Steven Cantrell congratulates Leon at the AFRAS awards ceremony.

AMVER AWARD

When 24 Chinese mariners were preparing to abandon the motor vessel Rich Forest, Rescue Coordination Center Guam utilized the Amver system, and the crew of the motor vessel Tohmisan Maru answered the call. Coast Guard cutters were dispatched from Guam by the RCC after receiving a distress call, but wouldn't arrive at the scene for days, because the Rich Forest was 440 miles away. The 500-foot log ship had experienced both engine and generator failure in 20-foot seas with winds in excess of 40 knots. The ship was flooding at a rate of 160 tons per hour.



AFRAS President Steve Sawyer presents the AMVER Award to Mr. Toshiya Konishi, Managing Executive Officer, Chief Executive Representative, Americas, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd., accepting on behalf of the crew of the m/v Tohmisan Maru

The crew of the Panamanian-flagged Tohmisan Maru, owned by Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd., arrived



Coast Guard Cutter Assateague approaches the disabled 500-foot container ship Rich Forest, Jan. 22, 2014. Twenty-four crewmembers on board abandoned ship, Jan. 20, 2014, after the cargo vessel engine room flooded. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Coast Guard Cutter Assateague)

on scene to rescue the crew that had abandoned ship and informed RCC Guam that, "... we are in a dangerous situation and will update you shortly." The next radio transmission from the crew was to inform the RCC that all 24 mariners had been safely rescued and were aboard the Tohmisan Maru.



("AMVER AWARD" cont.)



Coast Guard Cutter Sequoia approaches the disabled vessel Rich Forest, Jan. 22, 2014. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Coast Guard Cutter Assateague)

Amver, sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard, is a computer-based voluntary global ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to people

in distress at sea. During emergencies, any rescue coordination center can request the computer-based Amver surface picture – which gives positions of all Amver-registered ships – to determine the relative position of vessels near the distress location and divert the best suited ship or ships to respond.

SPECIAL AWARD



AFRAS President Steve Sawyer presents a special award to Mr. Kostas Petrakis, Designated Person Ashore for Chartworld Shipping Corporation, accepting on behalf of the crew of the motor vessel Peruvian Reefer.

The crew of the 425-foot reefer Peruvian Reefer spotted two boats loaded with migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Libya, June 8, 2014. They immediately notified Italian authorities at Rescue Coordination Center Roma and proceeded to rescue those in need.

The captain of the ship, which is owned by Chartworld Shipping Corporation, noted in an email after the rescue that as the ship approached the second boat in distress the survivors were so anxious to be rescued they capsized their small boat and it sank. "Due to the capsizing two people went under water," the captain stated, "we immediately lowered a rescue boat but the current made the bodies drift away."

The Peruvian Reefer's crew safely rescued 210 survivors, who were provided first aid, food and water by the crew.



2015 AWARDS CEREMONY PHOTOS



AFRAS President Steve Sawyer, Chairman Dana Goward, Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Leon, Leon's wife, Emily, Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Zukunft and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Steven Cantrell.



Petty Officer Leon displays the AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III Gold Medal.



Incoming AFRAS President Charles "Skip" Bowen congratulates Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent III Gold Medal Award recipient Aviation Survival Technician 2nd Class Christopher Leon



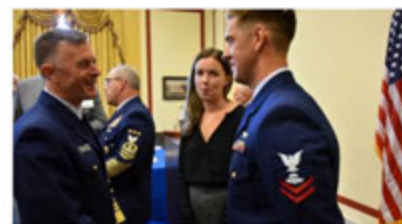
U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Paul Zukunft speaks at the Association for Rescue at Sea awards ceremony at the Rayburn House Office Building, Sep. 9, 2015



Admiral Paul Zukunft gives remarks about Petty Officer Leon's rescue.



U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter speaks at the AFRAS awards ceremony. Hunter was the congressional sponsor of the event.



Admiral Zukunft congratulates Petty Officer Leon as his wife, Emily, a Coast Guard rescue boat coxswain, looks on.

All photographs courtesy U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Patrick Kelley



THANK YOU! 2015 AWARDS CEREMONY SPONSORS

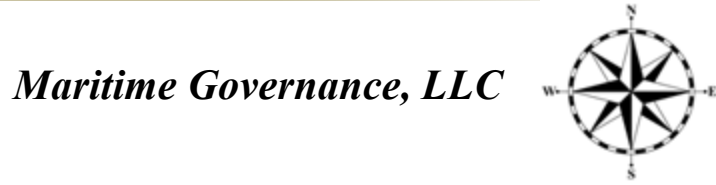
GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



AFRAS DIRECTORS DEPART, RECEIVE AWARDS



AFRAS Chairman Dana Goward and U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Paul Zukunft present David Chomeau with a Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award during the AFRAS annual awards ceremony on Capitol Hill, Sep. 9, 2015.

Three AFRAS Directors left the organization this year – with a combined 71 years of service to the association – and received U.S. Coast Guard Public Service Awards for their important contributions to worldwide volunteer maritime search and rescue organizations and, "... outstanding leadership, management skills and dedication."

Mr. David Chomeau, Mr. Nicholas Ludington and Captain Steve Sawyer, USCG (Ret.), all left their posts with the association after many years of raising funds and arranging for equipment donations for search and rescue organizations, and annually recognizing the heroic rescue efforts of U.S. Coast Guard and civilian mariners from across the globe. As all three men step down, they have been installed as "Directors Emeritus" of AFRAS.

Dave Chomeau became an AFRAS Director in 1987, but after less than a year as a board member, he became a principal donor and took on the responsibilities of Executive Vice President and later AFRAS President, devoting countless hours to ensure the continuity of the charity and its mission.

During his time with the organization, Chomeau became an informal ambassador US maritime lifesaving, personally visiting and working with the International Lifeboat Federation, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and similar organizations around the world. The exceptional personal and professional relationships he developed continue to pay dividends for the United States today. During his time as an AFRAS board member,

hundreds of donations totaling over \$2,000,000 were provided to over a dozen volunteer maritime rescue organizations around the world.



U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Linda Fagan, Commander of the First Coast Guard District, and AFRAS Chairman Dana Goward present Nick Ludington with a Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award.

("AFRAS Directors Depart ..." cont.)

Nick Ludington is one of the "Founding Fathers" of AFRAS, serving as an ardent supporter, director of AFRAS since its inception in July of 1976. Meeting at the American embassy in London with then-Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Owen Siler and others, Mr. Ludington helped develop the plans for a charity in the United States that would soon become AFRAS. Vice Admiral Sir Peter Compston addressed the gathering, which included Ludington (then serving as the President for the UK Council for the Navy League of the United States and a charter member of AFRAS), on the role of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, and from that gathering the seed was planted for a complementary organization based in the United States.

During his tenure, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance and the Coast Guard Auxiliary

Association have received large grants from the organization. AFRAS also established an awards program to recognize noteworthy rescues. Beginning with the Gold Medal for an enlisted Coast Guard member, awards for rescues by vessels participating in AMVER, by Coast Guard Auxiliarists, by commercial assistance providers, and by Caribbean volunteer rescue organizations were subsequently added.

Steve Sawyer served as AFRAS President from 2011 to 2015, working tirelessly with his board, corporate sponsors, the U.S. Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary and international maritime search and rescue organizations to support volunteer organizations and recognize noteworthy rescues

Under Sawyer's leadership, more than 50 financial and in-kind donations were provided to volunteer rescue organizations around the world, such as AFRAS arranging for the damaged engines on the Grenada Coast Guard Auxiliary's boat to be replaced. The Grenada Auxiliary is now back in



AFRAS Chairman Dana Goward presents President Steve Sawyer with a U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award during the association's annual Board of Directors meeting Sep. 9, 2015.

service and regularly assisting mariners. Sawyer was also a principal mover for 16 award ceremonies that have recognized more than 20 noteworthy rescues performed by merchant vessels, volunteer organizations in the Caribbean, commercial assistance organizations in the United States, U.S. Coast Guard auxiliaries and active duty Coast Guard members.



CARIBBEAN INITIATIVE UPDATE: VOLUNTEER SAR ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE VITAL LIFESAVING GEAR FROM RAYMARINE

Two Caribbean volunteer maritime search and rescue organizations received mission-critical equipment through the efforts of AFRAS in September.

The association recently received requests for assistance from both the Antigua and Barbuda Search and Rescue (ABSAR) organization, and St. John Search and Rescue, in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Both organizations were in dire need of communication equipment for their rescue boats. AFRAS reached out to its network of affiliated organizations and sponsors and contacted Raymarine, Inc., which agreed to donate VHF Marine Band radios to each group for their primary search and rescue boats. This equipment gives both organizations an enhanced ability to communicate, while at sea, with both mariners to whom they are providing assistance and sea- and land-based search and rescue units with which they coordinate operations.



In a letter to Raymarine, AFRAS Chairman Dana Goward wrote, "As a part of our mission to support volunteer maritime search and rescue efforts, we regularly poll Caribbean organizations regarding their needs. This year we discovered that St. John Search and Rescue (and, later, ABSAR), along with other equipment, was sorely in need of new radios. Raymarine's gift will greatly help them perform their humanitarian and sometimes lifesaving missions. Thank you again for your support."

ABSAR's crewmembers include volunteers holding medical qualifications. Their crews are available around the clock throughout the year and respond to about 25 rescue calls a year. St. John Search and Rescue is an active organization whose 25 responding members are all qualified as certified emergency first responders, at a minimum. They respond to 50-70 calls for help per year. Both organizations work closely with full-time regional maritime search and rescue authorities

CARIBBEAN SEARCH AND RESCUE AWARD



Capt. Robert Warren, Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan, Puerto Rico, presented the AFRAS Caribbean Search and Rescue Award to Auxiliarist Sergio Cipolla, of Auxiliares Navales Dominicanos.

The Dominican Naval Auxiliary was awarded the AFRAS Caribbean Search and Rescue Award for an operation that saved 14 lives. Auxiliarist Sergio Cipolla led a rescue boat crew on the mission May 1, 2014, in response to a report of a capsized boat on the southern coast of the Dominican Republic. Upon arriving on scene, the crew found the first survivor hanging on to a floating fuel drum, then found another survivor also clinging to a fuel drum as the search continued. The rescue crew kept searching and found 12 more survivors clinging to their swamped boat. Cipolla's and his crew's quick actions ensured the 14 survivors did not meet the same fate as six victims of the accident.

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. We will 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 through 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 _____

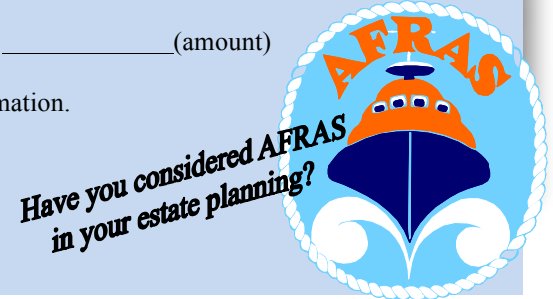
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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.



Due to high shipping costs, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution will no longer be providing AFRAS with copies of their magazine, Lifeboat, for distribution to AFRAS members. If you'd like to read the latest news on the RNLI, please visit:
www.RNLI.org/magazine

