



AFRAS Newsletter

Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc.

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Summer 2009

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AFRAS Announces 2009 Awardees



Gold Medal Award

Abram A. Heller

Aviation Survival Technician Second Class

United States Coast Guard

For the heroism and bravery shown during a rescue on 23 March 2008 of eight survivors from the sunken Fishing Vessel ALASKA RANGER, 125 miles west of Dutch Harbor Alaska.



Silver Medal Award

Jeffrey R. Brooks Edward W. Parish

William M. Shepard Robert O. Wells William E. Winfrey

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

The individual actions of the coxswain and crew of MAC-ATTACK combined to perform an exceptional rescue of 2 swimmers caught in a rip current south of Laguna Beach, Florida on 24 May 2008.

Amver Plaque



M/V PARTHENON

For the outstanding efforts and decisive actions under extremely difficult conditions on 28 September 2008 which resulted in the saving of four mariners from the distressed S/V SUN CHASER.

The annual AFRAS Award Ceremony will take place on Capitol Hill 23 September of this year and these awards will be presented during a formal reception in which the Chairman of AFRAS, VADM Terry M. Cross, USCG (Ret.); the Commandant of the US Coast Guard, ADM Thad Allen; and the Honorable Howard Coble will congratulate the award winners.

Read about the award ceremony and the full rescue stories of these heroes in our fall newsletter.

Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends of AFRAS,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the AFRAS Newsletter. We have had some very important developments within AFRAS, and you will see more about them later in this Newsletter.

First, I am very pleased to report that AFRAS is in better financial health than it has been in quite a while. This is certainly due in large part to the very generous support of our Platinum corporate sponsors: Lockheed Martin, EADS North America and General Dynamics. I think it speaks very highly for the sense of community and humanitarian spirit of these major corporations that they are willing to support AFRAS and the work that we do to provide recognition and support to the Search and Rescue community, both here at home, and in other parts of the world. With that said, the backbone of AFRAS continues to be the loyal members and other donors who provide us with the ongoing ability to accomplish our goals. I'd like to personally thank all of our supporters, at all levels, for your contributions, encouragement, and continued interest and support... "BZ". Quite naturally, we are always looking for additional members, donors and sponsors, so I encourage everyone who reads this to reach out to friends, colleagues and others and to "Spread The Word" on AFRAS, and encourage them to help us in our work.

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On the cover you were introduced to the winners of this year's AFRAS Awards; some true heroes whose stories we will tell in detail in the fall newsletter. Considering the high caliber of the nominations that we received, it was very hard for the AFRAS Awards Committee to decide on the winners, but I think you will find that their stories are truly exceptional examples of the finest lifesaving traditions and principles. I would point out that our Gold Medal Winner, AST2 Abram Heller, USCG, has also received international recognition for his heroic rescue by receiving the International Maritime Organization (IMO) "Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea" for 2009.

We have also expanded our recognition program for other instances of exceptional lifesaving incidents. In this issue you'll see the story of our recognition for a group of the first responders to the emergency landing of US Air flight 1549 in the Hudson River. We are also working closely with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), C-PORT (a national organization on non-emergency towing firms), and the SAR organizations in the Caribbean, to recognize their members who have made exceptional rescues of mariners in distress.

AFRAS has also continued work with the international SAR community, and we've established a very close working relationship with the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF), which is the international non-governmental SAR organization recognized by the IMO that includes member organizations from over 65 countries around the world. I am very pleased that we've been able to lend our support and expertise to IMRF by attending a number of the International Maritime Organization's Committee and Sub-Committee meetings that deal with SAR as part of the IMRF Delegation. In the future we hope to be able to expand our program of helping developing SAR organizations. We would certainly like to hear from any of our AFRAS members that are aware of worthy lifesaving organizations that need some help to accomplish their vital work to save lives.

In conclusion, thank you again for your support and interest in AFRAS as we continue to help those who dedicate themselves to helping mariners in distress.

Captain Gabe Kinney, USCG (Ret)

AFRAS Presents Award to NY Waterway

On 18 May 2009 AFRAS director Rick Kenney presented a plaque to NY Waterway for the company's role in the rescue of passengers from US Air Flight 1549 which had crash landed in the Hudson River on 15 January 2009.

Capt. Warren expressed the NY Waterway's appreciation to AFRAS for recognizing the company's role in a "once in a lifetime situation for which there was no script or precedent."

The plane, having just taken off from New York's LaGuardia Airport and bound for Charlotte, North Carolina, reported engine problems after striking a flock of geese. Realizing that the aircraft would be unable to make it to the nearest airport, the pilot prepared

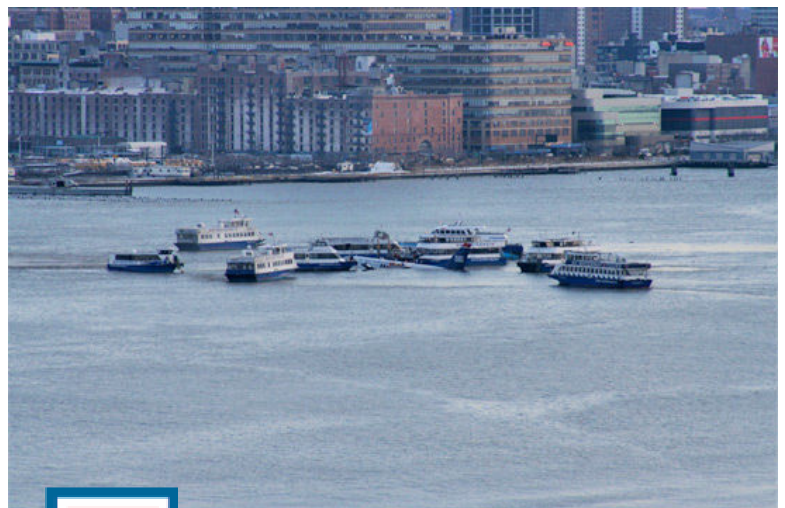
for a crash landing in the Hudson River. All on board survived the crash due to the plane remaining intact on impact and the near immediate assistance from water taxis and tugs which swarmed around the jet. NY Waterway was reportedly the first responder; arriving on the scene in less than four minutes.

Captain Alan Warren, Director of Ferry Operations for NY Waterway accepted the AFRAS award on behalf of all members of the company. A career merchant mariner, CAPT Warren remarked that the award is a "testament to the value of the time and resources invested in training and drills required by the company for its 140 crew members aboard 27 ferry craft of various speeds and sizes." This rescue evolution was a "textbook case of rapid response, advance preparation, and coordinated execution by the crews of the various ferries to get survivors



out of the water as expeditiously and safely as possible." Capt. Warren expressed the NY Waterway's appreciation to AFRAS for recognizing the company's role in a "once in a lifetime situation for which there was no script or precedent."

The Association for Rescue at Sea is proud to recognize exceptional rescues of mariners in distress – or as in this case, those who might find themselves in the unlikely position of needing a marine rescue. The passengers from US Air Flight 1549 survived this horrific event largely due to the quick response and professional conduct of the employees of NY Waterway.



NY WATERWAY®

Photo courtesy of Ron Jeffers

AFRAS Attends IMO COMSAR Subcommittee

The Communications and Search and Rescue (COMSAR) Subcommittee of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) met at IMO Headquarters in London, UK during the week of 19-23 January, 2009. AFRAS President, Captain Gabe Kinney, USCG (Ret), had the honor and privilege of leading the delegation of the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) to the COMSAR meeting. The meeting was attended by delegations from most of the 168 member countries of IMO (which is a specialized agency of the UN), and addressed various topics including the modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS); revision of the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search And

Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual; Safety of Persons Rescued at Sea; continuation of the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group; the World Maritime University project on SAR Research; the Long Range Identification and Tracking of Vessels; the IMO's initiative on E-Navigation; new distress beacon and communications technologies; and other items and topics relevant to mariners, maritime authorities and SAR services. During the meeting, Captain Kinney also had the opportunity to meet with the Secretary General of the IMO, Admiral E. E. Mitropoulos, and various members of his staff. Based on his SAR expertise, Captain Kinney was asked by the Secretary General to continue his role as the IMRF nominee on the six-member Assessment Panel for the IMO's annual Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea. Gabe's participation in this meeting was underwritten by his full-time employer, Lockheed Martin.



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.

