



# AFRAS *Newsletter*

*Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc.*

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*Autumn 2010*

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## *Letter from the President*

Dear Members and Friends of AFRAS,

I'd like to start off by sincerely thanking everyone that was involved in making our annual Awards Ceremony such a success! On the evening of 30 September, Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. was truly alive with the wonderful stories of the dramatic rescues of our heroic Active Duty Coast Guard, our vigilant Coast Guard Auxiliaries, and our dedicated partners in the maritime industry, all of which contributed in such a superb way to our common goal of saving lives at sea.

I also want to express the deep appreciation of AFRAS and indeed, everyone involved in the event, to our wonderful Corporate Sponsors. Without the outstanding public-spirited support of EADS of North America, Lockheed Martin Corporation, and Westport Shipyards, we wouldn't have been able to arrange such a fine event to recognize our heroes. I think it speaks very highly for the corporate personalities and principles of these organizations that they were willing to support AFRAS despite today's tight budgets and bottom-line focus. As always, we would sincerely welcome additional corporate sponsors so that AFRAS can continue "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."

I would also like to thank Congressman Coble (Captain, USCGR Ret), who helped arrange the wonderful venue as the Rayburn House Office Building but unfortunately couldn't attend, and Congressman LoBiondo of New Jersey, Ranking Member of the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, for his participation and very welcome and supportive remarks for these exceptional lifesavers. I think I speak for everyone that was there when I say that it certainly added to the evening to have the Commandant, Admiral Papp; the Vice Commandant, Vice Admiral Brice-O'Hara, and the other senior leaders of our Coast Guard, attend to help thank these true heroes who put their own lives at risk to save others.

Your AFRAS Board of Directors continues to move forward on various initiatives, and look for ways that we can contribute to our mission, and we greatly appreciate the on-going support of our loyal members and contributors. Your support has made AFRAS as strong as it is today. Please help us to continue the fine work of the Association For Rescue At Sea.

Captain Gabriel Kinney, USCG (Ret)

# 2010 AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent Gold Medal Award

*Aviation Survival Technician First Class*

*Salvador Carire*

*United States Coast Guard*

Aviation Survival Technician First Class Salvador Carire of US Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City received the prestigious AFRAS Vice Admiral Thomas R. Sargent Gold Medal for his heroic life-saving actions on the night of 23-24 December 2009.

On that night, the Coast Guard received a distress signal from the 38 foot Fishing Vessel ALISHA MARIE. The vessel had rolled over after being hit by a rogue wave, automatically inflating the vessel's liferaft. The sole survivor of the incident, wearing only a t-shirt and shorts swam out of the wreckage and climbed into the raft as the ALISHA MARIE slipped beneath the waves taking two victims with her.

Meanwhile, Petty Officer Carire and his crew launched their helicopter into the stormy night after a first helicopter returned from the scene for fuel, reporting a debris field spotted 36 nautical miles southeast of Barnegat Light, New Jersey. Arriving on scene amidst decreased visibility, high wind and confused seas, the crew began to search for survivors. As his helicopter neared the limit of its fuel endurance Petty Officer Carire noticed a faint flashing glow in the water. He directed the pilots toward the light and deployed into the frigid water when he noticed an overturned liferaft.

Carire swam 50 yards to the raft, occasionally losing sight of it as he slowly closed the distance. Once at the raft, he realized that he could not access the inside while it was inverted. After several attempts at righting the raft in the high winds and rough seas, Carire succeeded only to find that the zipper was lodged and he could not get inside. Cutting through the raft with a knife petty officer Carire discovered a barely conscious, hypothermic man. Carire signaled the helicopter to return for pick-up and deftly maneuvered the 280-pound fisherman out of the raft and into the rescue basket.

Now experiencing early stages of hypothermia himself, Carire stayed in the water until the aircrew recovered the fisherman and returned the hoist hook to the water. Once aboard the aircraft, Petty Officer Carire utilized his emergency medical training, treating the survivor and keeping him conscious while questioning him about other potential survivors.

Petty Officer Carire's courageous and heroic actions were instrumental in saving the life of the fisherman and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.



*Photos*

*Top: ASTI Carire*

*Left: Amanda & Diane Ryan, granddaughter and daughter of VADM Thomas Sargent congratulate Carire as AFRAS Chairman Terry Cross presents the Gold Medal*

*Bottom: H-65 Dolphin short range recovery helicopter*

# AFRAS Silver Medal Award

# 2010



***Robert M. Joseph***

***Leo G. Lake***

***Paul G. Sadeck***

***Rodney P. Thomas***

***United States Coast Guard Auxiliary***

*l-r Jim Vass, National  
Commodore US Coast Guard  
Auxiliary; Robert M. Joseph;  
Rodney P. Thomas; Leo G. Lake;  
Coxswain Paul G. Sadeck;  
Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr.,  
Commandant US Coast Guard*

An AFRAS Silver medal was presented to US Coast Guard Auxiliarists Robert M. Joseph, Leo G. Lake, Paul G. Sadeck and Rodney P. Thomas for their heroic actions in the performance of duty while serving aboard Auxiliary vessel AMYJULIE.

While patrolling in Buzzard's Bay, Massachusetts the morning of 26 August 2009, the crew of AMYJULIE spotted a white 17-foot center console vessel which was submerged to the gunnels. The boat had been swamped in the four-foot rolling seas and 25 knot winds. On board were two men crouched in waist deep water with life jackets hanging improperly around their necks. One of the boaters spoke only Spanish and the other broken English. Fortunately, Rodney Thomas, a trainee on the Auxiliary vessel spoke to them in Spanish and was able to understand that there was a third man missing in the water.

The Auxiliary crew contacted Coast Guard Station Menemsha and was directed to remove the two men from the boat and continue to search for the third victim while the Coast Guard boat made its way to the area in the rough seas. The only information the Auxiliarists had was that the man had fallen off the boat "near a red buoy". The crew knew that the nearest red buoy was nearly 1.25 nautical miles southwest – directly into the oncoming waves.



The AMYJULIE headed for the buoy and spotted the third man, near exhaustion, with his left arm around a child's orange life jacket and a cushion tucked under his right arm. They threw him a life ring and pulled him aboard – conscious, but lethargic, shivering and holding his chest in pain. The crew transported the three victims to shore where the Fairhaven Fire Department ambulance met them and took the victim with chest pains to the hospital.

The coxswain and crew of AMYJULIE are most heartily commended for their heroic and skillful actions which resulted in rescuing the three men in peril.

*2010 AFRAS Silver Medalists*

*Photo courtesy SITREP US Coast Guard Auxiliary*



# 2010 AFRAS Amver Award

## *M/V Andes (Greek) Tsakos Shipping*



AFRAS presented its Amver plaque to the captain and crew of M/V ANDES, a Greek flagged tanker managed by the Tsakos Group for the rescue of seven Ecuadorian fishermen on 5 June, 2009.

En route to Esmeraldas to load product, the captain of ANDES was notified by the US Coast Guard through the Amver system of an Ecuadorian fishing vessel that had sunk 170 miles off the Columbia Ecuador coast. A Coast Guard aircraft dropped liferafts and survival equipment to the seven fishermen in the water and circled over the area to direct the tanker to the location.



*Admiral Papp, Commandant US Coast Guard congratulates Captain Theo Vassilakis, accepting the award on behalf of the Captain and Crew of M/V Andes.*

*The master expertly maneuvered the tanker alongside the life rafts and the crew began rescue operations.*

The master of the ANDES quickly mustered the crew and turned his ship in the direction of the sinking fishing boat. Within two hours of being notified, crewmen on the Greek tanker observed flashing lights near the distress position. The master expertly maneuvered the tanker alongside the life rafts and the crew began rescue operations. Due to the elderly crew in the lifeboats the master

readied a rescue boat in case they were unable to climb the high freeboard. But with the help of ANDES crewmen, all survivors were able to make the transfer between the life rafts and tanker.

The Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System (Amver), sponsored by the United States Coast Guard, is a unique, computer-based, and voluntary global ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea. AFRAS commends the expert actions of the captain and crew of ANDES for their role in this dramatic rescue.

*The seven crewmen from the sunken fishing vessel Cindy.  
(Photo courtesy of Amver)*





## *Sean O'Keefe thanks Coast Guard for Rescue*

Sean O'Keefe, CEO of EADS North America, former Administrator of NASA and former Chancellor of Louisiana State University took the podium at the AFRAS Awards Ceremony to personally thank the Coast Guard – especially those of Air Station Kodiak, Alaska – for their efforts in the rescue of Mr. O'Keefe, his son, and two other survivors of the Otter sea plane which crashed on a mountainside near Aleknagik Alaska on August 9, 2010. United States Senator Ted Stevens and four others perished in the accident.

## **Thank you to our 2010 Corporate Sponsors**

*Platinum*



*Gold*



*Silver*





*AFRAS will present its first Caribbean Search and Rescue (CAR-SAR) Award in December of this year. AFRAS will continue to take nominations of heroic rescues made by CAR-SAR organizations and will award organizations of note worthy rescues when applicable. The presentation of such awards will generally be made at the annual CAR-SAR conference. Nominations will be received in January for rescues made in the previous calendar year.*



## ***2010 CAR-SAR Award MRCC Fort de France***

On 14 October 2009, the MRCC FORT DE FRANCE coordinated the medical evacuation of an injured crewmember of the M/V ROSBORG situated approximately 240 miles north east of Guadeloupe.

A call was received from the US Coast Guard in San Juan Puerto Rico that a man had fallen 5 meters aboard the M/V ROSBORG and was seriously wounded. Because of the position of the ship the MRCC FDF took over coordination of the operation. MRCC FDF called the ROSBORG for additional information and put them in contact with the T-MAS in Toulouse for medical consultation. T-MAS recommended a medical evacuation as soon as possible. MRCC FDF sought help from the air force based in Fort De France who had the only helicopter capable of flying over 200 nautical miles off the coast and immediately instructed the ROSBORG to proceed toward Guadeloupe.

With sunset fast approaching the operation required great precision and urgency. Accurate

communications between the M/V ROSBERG, the MRCC FDF watchmaster and the pilot of the PUMA helicopter were imperative and were aided by an air force transport plane as the PUMA had only military radio equipment on board. It was decided that a doctor from an emergency medical service in FDF would be picked up enroute to the ship.

Just before sunset the PUMA arrived on scene and hoisted the doctor onto the M/V ROSBERG. With only 30 minutes to complete the operation, the doctor administered first aid and both the patient and the doctor were winched into the helicopter. Just after midnight on 15 October the PUMA landed at Pointe-a-Pitre hospital where casualty services took over the care of the patient.

During this type of operation the pilot and doctor have no margin for error, time is of an essence and any misjudgement can be fatal. The coordination and performance of all involved in this operation are to be highly commended.



*MRCC Fort-de-France helicopter and the rescue crew including the attending doctor (in white)*



# The Sinking of the *Prinsendam* History's Greatest Sea Rescue

October 4, 2010 marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the greatest air-sea rescue in maritime history. The *Prinsendam* was a 427-foot cruise liner built in 1973 at a cost of \$20 million dollars. The liner was cruising with 524 passengers and crew members on board through Gulf of Alaska waters when fire broke out in the engine room around midnight. One hour later, the master of the vessel declared the fire out of control and sent a distress call to the Coast Guard requesting immediate assistance. The Coast Guard's rescue coordination center in Juneau immediately sent aircraft to the scene including an HH-3 helicopter and a C-130 turbo prop maritime patrol aircraft. Several US Coast Guard cutters and a 1000-foot supertanker were also diverted from their patrols to render assistance.

At approximately 0630 the master of *Prinsendam* ordered the vessel abandoned. Crew and passengers filled the lifeboats leaving only 15 passengers and 25 crewmembers aboard the cruise liner. The supertanker arrived at 0745 and the Coast Guard helicopter immediately began transferring passengers

and crew from the lifeboats to the tanker's deck. Later that afternoon and evening, as CG cutters arrived on scene, those in critical condition were transferred and taken to Sitka for treatment and medical teams were provided on board the tanker to provide assistance to others. At around 2100, 20 passengers and 2 Air Force aviator technicians were still reported missing in one of the *Prinsendam*'s lifeboats. A CG cutter and an HC-130 Hercules were directed by CG Command in Juneau to search for the missing lifeboat. At around 0100 the next morning, some 18 hours after the ordeal had begun, a flare from the lifeboat was spotted and the passengers were recovered. The rescue was over with no deaths or serious injuries and all 324 passengers and 200 crew from the *Prinsendam* accounted for.

On October 11, after drifting and burning for 6 days the *Prinsendam* rolled on its side and slid bow first to the bottom in 8,820 feet of water.

For more details on this incredible rescue visit <http://www.explorenorth.com/library/ships/prinsendam-1980.html>



***The AFRAS board has suffered a significant loss of two prominent board members within the last year. Board members extend their thoughts and prayers to the families of these two exceptional men.***



William D. Wilkinson

In the spring of 1976, Bill Wilkinson and seven other American executives living in London agreed to serve as US trustees for an American-based charity set up to support the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in Great Britain. This was the beginning of AFRAS, the Association for Rescue at Sea. Bill continued to serve as a valuable board member of AFRAS for 33 years until his death this past December.

Bill served on staff of the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, VA where he achieved the position of Executive Director. During his 19-year tenure he made extensive improvements to its collections, building facilities and exhibition and education programs. At his retirement in 1991, the board president Thomas Hunnicutt III, stated, "this man's knowledge and experience is probably greater than anyone's when it comes to undersanding our collections and our educational goals."

Mr. Wilkinson co-authored the book *American Coastal Rescue Craft: A Design History of Coastal Rescue Craft Used by the United States LifeSaving Service and the United States Coast Guard*. This title, published in 2009 receives 5 stars from Amazon.com. Bill is also a recipient of the Heritage Award from the Foundation for Coast Guard History for his contributions to life-saving and service history.



VADM Thomas R. Sargent  
11<sup>th</sup> Vice Commandant USCG  
1970 - 1974

In November of 1976 VADM Tom Sargent agreed to become the first president of the American Friends of the RNLI – later AFRAS. Since that time, ADM Sargent has been one of the greatest supporters of the organization. The prestigious AFRAS Gold Medal Award was created in 1982 by the Vice Admiral to recognize an enlisted member of the Coast Guard for an outstanding rescue made the prior year.

Admiral Sargent's long and distinguished career at sea was not only beneficial to the US Coast Guard, but the RNLI as well, as told in this excerpt from a letter from James Vaughan, Corporate Services Director of the RNLI to Tom's wife Lucy Sargent.

"Tom spearheaded the collaboration between the USCG and the RNLI and was instrumental, along with (AFRAS director) Bob Witter, in arranging the generous gift of a USCG 44 footer lifeboat to the RNLI. This was a real step change in the operational strategy of the RNLI. After trials, we adopted the design and it became the highly successful Waveney class lifeboat in our fleet.

So the inspiration and wonderful generosity showed by your husband was hugely important in developing the modern RNLI. Furthermore, you can be proud to know that that generosity lives on because although all the 'Waveneys' are now retired from RNLI operation, many still operate in different roles as harbour boats and indeed around the world as lifeboats – continuing to save lives at sea."

Thomas Sargent is survived by his wife Lucy, two sons, one daughter, seven grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.





## *AFRAS receives the RNLI Gold Badge*

AFRAS was delighted to have Paul Boissier, Chief Executive of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in attendance at the annual board meeting in Washington, DC. Mr. Boissier addressed the officers and directors of AFRAS and thanked them for the many years of service AFRAS has provided to the RNLI. He presented David Chomeau, past president and current treasurer of AFRAS with the RNLI Gold Badge for past, present, and continued support.



*David Chomeau, left receives the  
RNLI Gold Badge from the Chief  
Executive of the RNLI Paul Boissier*

### **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 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.

