
AFRAS NEWS



SUMMER 2016

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.

AFRAS CONTINUES FUNDRAISING FOR MEDITERRANEAN & AEGEAN RESCUERS

“I’ve been alone in a life raft out of sight of land, and it’s not a good feeling – even when it’s just training and you know they’re coming back for you,” said retired U.S. Coast Guard Captain and helicopter pilot Dana Goward. “I can’t imagine what it’s like if you’re also fleeing for your life, have your children with you and have no idea if you will be rescued.”

Goward is Chairman of the Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS), a US charity that supports volunteer humanitarian maritime rescue organizations around the world.

“Most people in America don’t realize it, because we have such a strong Coast Guard,” said Charles “Skip” Bowen, President of AFRAS, “But most of the world’s sea rescue services are charities with volunteer crews. They rely almost entirely on donations from individuals and companies for funding.” Bowen’s last posting during his active duty military career was as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, the service’s highest ranking enlisted member.

Volunteer services from across Europe have responded to the maritime refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and Aegean seas by deploying boats



Madeline Brewer, *The Rescued and the Lost*, paper and balsa wood, 2016.

AFRAS Continues Fundraising (cont.)

and crews. They have saved tens of thousands of lives. “While governments run the Rescue Coordination Centers and issue press releases, it’s often the charities and their volunteers who are actually pulling survivors from the water,” said Goward. “They do many, if not most, of the rescues.” Responding to the crisis for the last few years has strained the budgets of these charities, many of which are operating far from their home bases.

AFRAS raises money in the United States to

support these organizations. “People in the U.S. can make tax deductible donations to AFRAS, and we use it where it is critically needed worldwide,” said Bowen. “Donors can specify which maritime rescue service they want to support, or leave it to us to ensure it gets where it’s needed most.” Bowen likes to quote retired Admiral Thad Allen, former Coast Guard Commandant, who once said, “Beyond any other consideration, safety of life at sea is paramount.”

Individuals and organizations wanting to make donations can do so through the organization’s website at www.AFRAS.org.

TANZANIA SEARCH AND RESCUE UPDATE

In our Spring e-newsletter, we told you about that Tanzania had a new Maritime Rescue Coordination Center, but no rescue service – no more! The East African nation now has volunteer rescue service personnel and has recently taken possession of their lifeboat station in Dar es Salaam, thanks in part to funding provided by AFRAS donors.

AFRAS friend Rob Pettit reported that Tanzania Search and Rescue took possession of the lifeboat station, received their lifeboat (via truck from Uganda), and recently underwent training with maritime SAR professionals from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute.



(Clockwise, from above) Royal National Lifeboat Institute members train Tanzania Search and Rescue volunteers in navigation, search patterns and TSR members train in water survival. Photos courtesy Rob Pettit.



2016 SEARCH AND RESCUE AWARD WINNERS

A U.S. Coast Guard rescue swimmer, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary member, a cruise ship crew and the crew of a maritime academy training ship will be formally recognized at the annual AFRAS awards ceremony and reception in Washington D.C.



Screenshot of U.S. Coast Guard video of the sinking freighter Minouche.

Congressmen Duncan Hunter and John Garamendi will host the Capitol Hill event on Sep. 21, 2016, at the Rayburn House Office Building. Members of Congress, senior Coast Guard, MARAD and industry leaders, including Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard Adm. Charles D. Michel, will join the AFRAS Board of Directors to bestow medals and awards to these heroes who went above and beyond the call of duty to save lives at sea last year.

Petty Officer Benjamin Cournia, a helicopter rescue swimmer from Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater, will receive the Vice Admiral Thomas Sargent III Gold Medal for a rescue Oct. 1, 2015, during which his heroic actions saved 12 lives from the sinking 212-foot freighter Minouche. The crew of the Minouche abandoned ship 60 miles west of Haiti, and just 90 miles from the eye of Hurricane Joaquin, which was a raging category four storm. Cournia and the other rescuers aboard two Coast Guard H-60 Jayhawk rescue helicopters battled 15-foot seas and 50-knot winds to complete the rescues.

Auxiliarist Patrick Porter will receive the Silver Medal for actions that potentially prevented critical injury or death to two people at the 2015 Bullhead City River Regatta, an event in Arizona that attracted more than 35,000 participants for tube floating on a six-mile stretch of the Colorado River. During his patrol, Porter witnessed a person swimming against the current of the river without a personal flotation device, and then go under the water three times, due to fatigue. Porter rescued the individual by pulling him aboard his personal watercraft. Later, he witnessed another participant, among thousands of people in the water, unconscious and foaming at the mouth – he rescued this person and transported her to another vessel with emergency medical technicians aboard. During both rescues, Porter had to navigate carefully through the throngs of participants crowding the river, ensuring his own safety, the safety of others and the safety of the rescuees.

The Amver participating ship Veendam's crew rescued a pilot after he ditched his aircraft in the ocean, after experiencing fuel and engine problems, 200 miles off Hawaii, Jan. 25, 2015. U.S. Coast Guard authorities launched rescue assets after the initial call for help, but found the Veendam was in the path of the aircraft, using the Amver system. After the aircraft hit the water, the pilot got into his life raft and was quickly recovered by the crew of the Veendam. The pilot was uninjured and remained on the ship until it reached its next port of call.

The Amver participating ship State of Maine's crew rescued a mariner after his sailboat began taking on water 520 miles off Halifax, Canada, June 10, 2015. After the initial call for help, U.S. Coast Guard authorities launched search and rescue aircraft from both the U.S. and Canada, but soon discovered, using Amver, that the State of Maine was only 29 miles away from the sailor in distress and was willing to divert to attempt a rescue. Cadets aboard the ship readied rescue equipment, fast rescue boats and rigged a Jacob's ladder to allow the sailor to board the ship. Within a few hours of the initial notification, the survivor was safely aboard the training ship.

Join AFRAS

AFRAS provides you with a means of supporting world volunteer maritime search and rescue services with a U.S. tax-deductible donation.

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 (or, make a donation at www.afras.org/donation.html)

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.

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