



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. www.afras.org

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COAST GUARDSMAN, SHIP CREWS TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR HEROIC SEA RESCUES

A U.S. Coast Guard petty officer and the crews of two commercial ships will be honored by the Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS) at an awards ceremony in Washington D.C. Wednesday, Sep. 9, 2015.

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Leon – an aviation survival technician – will receive the AFRAS Gold Medal for his role in rescuing four people. During the rescue, he was deployed from a helicopter into frigid waters 60 miles offshore of California and battled 30-knot winds and 15-foot seas to reach a foundering vessel. At one point while swimming the first three survivors to the helicopter rescue basket for hoisting, he was swept 500 yards from the vessel. He voluntarily stayed with the last survivor while the pilot of the rescue helicopter, low on fuel, was forced to return to base. He provided aid for two hours until the helicopter crew returned to complete the final rescue.

The crew of the Panamanian-flagged commercial ship Tohmisan Maru will receive an award for voluntarily rescuing 24 mariners who were forced to abandon their ship, which was taking on 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 will be honored for volunteering to rescue 210 migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Libya, from two boats in distress – one which capsized before the Peruvian Reefer's crew could get their rescue boat in the water.

The awards ceremony will be held at the Rayburn House Office Building, Gold Room 2168, Wednesday Sep. 9, 2015, from 6 - 8 p.m. Rep. Duncan Hunter will host the event and U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Paul F. Zukunft is scheduled to speak.