



Association for Rescue at Sea • Inc.

THE AWARD OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA

VADM THOMAS SARGENT III GOLD MEDAL

TO AST1 RACHID A. ARNICK, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Petty Officer ARNICK is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 21 September 2013 while serving as Rescue Swimmer aboard Coast Guard helicopter CG6003. CG6003 launched from Air Station Kodiak in response to a distress call from the 50-foot F/V CHAOS, which went aground offshore on the west side of Unalaska Bay, leaving all four members stranded on the jagged cliffs. With the crew of CHAOS clinging to the wind battered cliff face, a deployed MH-65D attempted several times to reach the stranded individuals but 80-knot winds and falling rocks from the nearby cliffs thwarted each attempt and forced the MH-65 crew to depart. Dispatched from Kodiak, CG6003 transited over 500 miles and arrived on scene just before sunrise. While Petty Officer ARNICK made preparations to deploy to the water 130 feet below, the aircraft experienced severe downdrafts forcing the pilots to depart from a hover to maintain control of the aircraft. After the pilots reestablished a hover, Petty Officer ARNICK alerted the crew that the survivors had entered the tumultuous Bering Sea and were swimming toward the helicopter. Without hesitation he readied himself for deployment and battled the extreme winds and churning sea, safely recovering all four crewmembers. As the final survivor was entering the helicopter, the unrelenting turbulence once again forced the helicopter downward towards Petty Officer ARNICK and the rolling seas, requiring the pilots to execute another fly out maneuver. CG6003 reestablished a hover, expeditiously recovered Petty Officer ARNICK and departed for Dutch Harbor for higher level medical care. Petty Officer ARNICK immediately tended to the survivors, with one suffering from knee injuries after impacting the shoreline in the rough surf. Petty Officer ARNICK's selfless actions and skill were instrumental in the rescue of four lives. His courage, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard. The Award of the VADM Thomas SARGENT III Gold Medal is authorized.

Steve M. Sawyer

President, Association for Rescue at Sea