
AFRAS NEWS



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ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA, INC.

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Honoring Heroes, Supporting Volunteers – AFRAS is a 501(c)3 charity.

2019 ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA ANNUAL SEARCH AND RESCUE AWARDS



U.S. COAST GUARDSMAN, PROFESSIONAL MARINERS LAUDED FOR AT-SEA HEROICS

A U.S. Coast Guardsman, a cruise ship captain and crew and the captains and crews of four commercial ships will be formally recognized for saving mariners in peril at the Association for Rescue at Sea annual Capitol Hill Gold Medal awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., Wednesday.

The annual event will be held at the Rayburn House Office Building Oct. 30, and is hosted by Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney. The Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as other senior maritime and congressional officials, will also attend.

This year's honorees include:

- Coast Guard [helicopter rescue swimmer](#) Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Kelly, [who rescued four mariners in distress off the Maine coast in November](#).
- Captain Pietro Sinisi and the crew of the cruise ship [Costa Luminosa](#), [who saved 11 lives from a burning fish carrier](#) in the Aegean Sea.
- The captains and crews from four [Amver-participating](#) commercial ships – the vessels [Green Lake](#), [New Century 1](#), [Genco Augustus](#) and [Venus Spirit](#) – who joined forces and [saved the lives of 15 people who had to abandon ship from a burning car carrier in the Pacific](#).

AFRAS helps protect mariners from the perils of the sea by providing monetary and in-kind donations to world volunteer maritime search and rescue organizations. The charity also recognizes and honors extraordinary maritime rescues through its awards program and annual ceremony. AFRAS is a 501(c)3 non-profit charity. Visit [AFRAS online](#) to learn more about the organization, or [to make a charitable donation](#).

AMVER AWARDS



Crews from four commercial ships rescued 15 people who abandoned a burning car carrier in the middle of the Pacific Ocean in January. The captains and crews

of these ships will be awarded the Association for Rescue at Sea Amver Award for their heroic actions.

Japanese counterparts alerted the U.S. Coast Guard Fourteenth District, in Hawaii, that the m/v Sincerity Ace, a 650-foot car carrier with 21 crewmembers aboard, was on fire and the crew was preparing to abandon ship, Dec. 31, 2018. The Sincerity Ace was approximately 480 nautical miles north northwest of Wake Island, and about 1,800 nautical miles from Honolulu.

The U.S. Coast Guard launched search and rescue assets and diverted the four commercial ships to assist on-scene, using the Amver system – the captains and crews of the motor vessels Green Lake, New Century





Hill Gold Medal Ceremony, to be held at Washington, D.C., Oct. 30. Representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard-operated Amver program will be on-hand to help present the award.

"Our Capitol Hill awards ceremony provides an opportunity to recognize heroes who have shown unfailing

1, Genco Augustus and Venus Spirit all volunteered to help their fellow mariners, and made way to the Sincerity Ace's location.

On-scene, the ships' crews faced winds gusting to 30 knots and 17-20 foot waves. The captain and crew of the Green Lake - the first ship to arrive at the Sincerity Ace - assumed On-Scene Coordinator duties. Eventually, the Sincerity Ace broadcast that the onboard fire had grown beyond the crew's ability to control it. It was time to abandon ship.

Unfortunately, not everyone from the Sincerity Ace survived the ordeal. The crews of the four commercial ships were able to safely rescue 15 members of the 21-person crew. It was not an easy job, due to weather conditions and aspects of the ships themselves. Captain William Boyce, of the Green Lake, told gCaptain.com that, "Due to the sea state and our high freeboard, it was very difficult to maneuver, bring the ship alongside each survivor, and get them on board with limited retrieval resources."

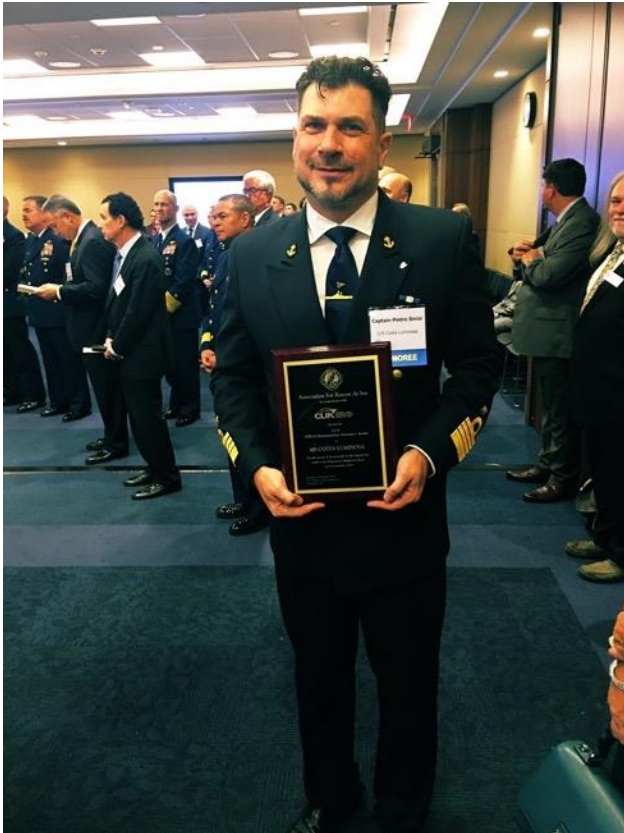
The captains and crews will be honored at the annual Association for Rescue at Sea Capitol

courage and selflessness in continuing the long and proud tradition of saving those in peril on the seas. I am excited to recognize and celebrate members of the merchant marine fleet for their extraordinary action in aiding fellow mariners in distress," said Capt. Joe Re (USCG Ret.), AFRAS President.

The m/v Green Lake is owned by Seabulk Fleet Management USA; m/v New Century 1 by Toyofuji Shipping Co Ltd Japan; m/v Genco Augustus by Genco Ship Management LLC USA; and, m/v Venus Spirit by Nissan Motor Car Carrier Japan.



CRUISE SHIP HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AWARD WINNER



A cruise ship crew rescued eleven seafarers from their burning ship in the Aegean Sea Nov. 20, 2018. The captain and crew of the Italian-flagged Costa Luminosa have been selected to receive this year's Association for Rescue at Sea Cruise Ship Humanitarian Assistance Award for their heroic actions.

The Costa Luminosa was underway with passengers when the crew was contacted by Joint Rescue Coordination Center Piraeus (in Greece) notifying them that the crew of the Turkish-flagged fish carrier Kilic 1 was in distress, due to an engine room fire. Captain Pietro Sinisi diverted the cruise ship to the Kilic 1, just five nautical miles from their position.

On-scene conditions were not optimal for a rescue mission – it was just after midnight, so darkness was a factor, as well as 30-knot winds and six-foot seas.

Captain Sinisi activated the ship's emergency response plan, and the crew – at risk to their own safety – was able to launch one of the Costa Luminosa's tender boats. The small boat crew fought through the conditions, including dense smoke emanating from the burning Kilic 1, was able to maneuver alongside and safely rescue all 11 crewmembers. The survivors were safely transferred to a nearby cargo ship.

"I just saw firsthand the amazing efforts of the crew working together to provide aid in a time of need," said passenger Michele Jackson in a social media post, as reported by Maritime Executive Nov. 21.

Captain Sinisi will accept the AFRAS award at the organization's annual Capitol Hill Gold Medal Ceremony, held at Washington, D.C., Oct. 30., from event sponsor Cruise Line International Association, will be on-hand to help present the award to Captain Sinisi.

"Our Capitol Hill Awards Ceremony provides an opportunity to recognize heroes who have shown unfailing courage and selflessness in continuing the long and proud tradition of saving those in peril on the seas. I am excited to recognize and celebrate members of the cruise ship industry for their extraordinary action in aiding fellow mariners in distress," said Capt. Joe Re (USCG Ret.), AFRAS President.



VICE ADMIRAL THOMAS R. SARGENT III GOLD MEDAL WINNER



U.S. Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmer Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael W. Kelly has been selected as this year's AFRAS Gold Medal winner for saving four mariners aboard a sinking boat in a Nor'easter of the Maine coast in November.

Kelly, an Aviation Survival Technician stationed at Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, will receive his medal at the association's annual Capitol Hill awards ceremony.

The Coast Guardsman was the rescue swimmer aboard the MH-60 Jayhawk rescue helicopter that was dispatched Nov. 14, after mayday calls and an active Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon signal was received from the

fishing vessel Aaron and Melissa II, which was beset by 50-knot winds and 30-foot seas, 60 miles southeast of Rockland, Maine. The fishing vessel's crew of four had donned survival suits and entered a life raft after it became clear that their boat would sink in the powerful Nor'easter.

Kelly employed his knowledge of maritime search and rescue while the helicopter crew were enroute to the scene, discussing rescue options and developing contingency plans. He was hoisted into near gail-force winds and roiling seas, once on-scene, and began his arduous swim to the life raft with fishing vessel's survivors aboard. Kelly had a fight against nature to get to the raft, with a line cutting through his gloves and cutting his hands wide open in the process.





Kelly triaged the weary mariners and briefed them on the order of operations when he finally made it to the raft. The rescue swimmer had to pull each mariner through the water, one-by-one, far enough away from the raft so it wouldn't be blown over by the helicopter's rotor wash to get them safely to a lowered rescue basket for the hoist to safety. Two of the victims were unable to swim. After the final hoist, the exhausted Kelly sank the life raft and was, he himself, hoisted to the safety of the Jayhawk.

Petty Officer Kelly will be honored at the annual Association for Rescue at Sea Capitol Hill Gold Medal Ceremony, to be held at Washington, D.C., Oct. 30.

"Our Capitol Hill Awards Ceremony provides an opportunity to recognize heroes who have shown unflinching courage and selflessness in continuing the long and proud tradition of saving those in peril on

the seas. I am excited to recognize and celebrate this active-duty U.S. Coast Guard member for his extraordinary action in aiding fellow mariners in distress," said Capt. Joe Re (USCG Ret.), AFRAS President.

The VADM Thomas Sargent III Gold Medal was initially awarded in 1982 and firmly established for annual presentation since 1987. First called "The AFRAS Gold Medal," its name was changed in 2009 to honor the Association's first Chairman, VADM Thomas Sargent, a former Vice Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. The prestigious award is presented annually to a Coast Guard enlisted man or woman for an act of extraordinary bravery during a rescue at sea.



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