
AFRAS NEWS



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ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA, INC.

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ADMIRAL CHARLES W. RAY TAKES HELM OF ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA



Adm. Charles Ray speaks during the vice commandant change of watch ceremony at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C., May 24, 2018. During the event Ray became the 31st vice commandant of the Coast Guard. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Kelley.



NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, ADMIRAL CHARLES W. RAY

Admiral Charles W. Ray, former Vice Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, has joined the Association for Rescue at Sea, taking command as the maritime non-profit's Chairman of the Board of Directors. Admiral Ray retired as the 31st Vice Commandant of the service in 2021.

Admiral Ray, a native of Newport, Ark., graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1981. After an assignment as a deck watch officer aboard Coast Guard Cutter Acushnet, he was selected for Naval Flight Training and earned his wings in 1984.

and at the Aviation Logistics Center. He commanded Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico, from 2002 through 2005. Admiral Ray was also the Coast Guard's 25th Ancient Albatross, a designation for the service's longest serving active duty aviator.

His staff assignments included a tour as Chief of the Office of Performance Management at Coast Guard Headquarters and a tour as the Chief of Staff of the Fourteenth Coast Guard District in Hawaii. Admiral Ray earned a Master of Science Degree in Industrial

Administration from Purdue University and a Master of Science Degree in National Resource Strategy from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington, D.C.

Admiral Ray's personal awards include the Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal, five Legion of Merit Medals, one Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, one Coast



Admiral Charles Ray and honorees at the 2019 AFRAS Capitol Hill Gold Medal Ceremony.

He served at six Coast Guard Air Stations from Alaska to the Caribbean, accumulating more than 5,000 hours of helicopter flight time. Admiral Ray was designated as an Aeronautical Engineer in 1988 and served as Engineering Officer at three stations

Guard Air Medal, three Coast Guard Commendation Medals, and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal. He succeeds Rear Admiral Joseph Nimmich (USCG ret.) as Chairman of the AFRAS Board of Directors.



LIFESAVER RECIEVES AFRAS AWARD AT C-PORT CONFERENCE IN SAVANNAH

Captain Greg Giggi was formally recognized for his leadership, acute situational awareness, keen judgement and expert seamanship skills under extreme circumstances, resulting the effective rescue of eight souls facing imminent peril. Captain Giggi conducted a single-handed rescue of eight people in Lake Moultrie, S.C., June 19, 2021

The award was presented Jan. 18, 2022, during the Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing (C-PORT) Awards Banquet Gala in Savannah, Ga. Presenting the award was AFRAS President Captain Joe Re, USCG (retired), to Captain Giggi, of Allwater Marine Services/TowBoatU.S. Charleston.

Joe Abeyta, co-owner of Allwater Marine Services, nominated Giggi for the award. He said, "Displaying the characteristics and traits of a true lifesaver without regard for his own safety and placing himself in danger, so that other's may live, Captain Greg Giggi has brought great credit upon himself, Allwater Marine Services, and the entire marine assistance industry." AFRAS President Joe Re added, "It was an added bonus to learn he is a former USCG Chief Boatswain's Mate!"

This award represents the decade long relationship between C-PORT and AFRAS. In 2010, AFRAS had expressed a desire to establish a program, in



AFRAS President Joe Re presents Captain Greg Giggi with a lifesaving award in Savannah, Ga., Jan. 18, 2022.

cooperation with C-PORT, to annually recognize a deserving member of C-PORT that has shown exceptional skill and determination to save lives during a rescue incident in the maritime environment. The Award is to be conferred on an individual or group of individuals who perform exceptional acts in attempting to save life. Instances where the rescuer places their own life at risk are given highest consideration.



MARITIME HEROES HONORED AT 2021 CAPITOL HILL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

Awards for [heroic rescues at sea](#) were bestowed on ship captains and crews and individual maritime professionals at the AFRAS Capitol Hill Gold Medal Ceremony in Washington D.C. Tuesday, Nov. 2nd, 2020.

A U.S. Coast Guard member, two U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliaries, a cruise ship captain and crew and the captains and crews of two commercial ships involved in a joint rescue comprise the 2021 class of the [annual AFRAS event](#)*. U.S. Rep. [Salud Carbajal](#) hosted the event at the Rayburn House Office Building, with senior maritime leaders in attendance, including the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard [Adm. Karl Schultz](#). Rep. Carbajal is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

All these rescues recognized occurred during calendar year 2020.

*However – the annual ceremony was cancelled in 2020, due to COVID-19. Those who would have been honored then were invited to be part of this year's ceremony, with awards for [mariners and aviators](#)



U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Karl Schultz and U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal.



From left, Captain Gregory Johnson, Fleet Superintendent of Pasha Group, U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman and Captain Mark Tuck, Master of m/v Horizon Reliance.

[making daring rescues](#) during calendar 2019 being bestowed. Four individuals and the captains and crews of a commercial ship and a cruise ship were selected for the 2020 induction class of SAR award winners, honored along with the 2021 class in Washington.

The awards for at-sea rescues that occurred during 2019 comprise more than a dozen souls saved – from St. Simons Sound, Ga., to the waters of the North Atlantic and Caribbean to the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) in Florida. Two active duty U.S. Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmers, two Florida-based U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members and the captains and crews of a bulk carrier and a cruise ship were the AFRAS awardees for the 2020 class.

AMVER AWARDS

The captain and crew of the motor vessel Virtuous Striker, a Bahamian-flagged bulk carrier owned by Safbulk Maritime SA, rescued a lone sailor from his disabled catamaran in heavy weather 330 miles south of Nantucket, July 24, 2019.

Voting for 2020's Amver Award was close, and the AFRAS Officers and Board of Directors agreed the achievements of the captains and crews of the motor vessels Cap Papatele and Front Leopard were noteworthy.



The captain and crew of the Cap Papatele rescued a sailor beset by extreme weather aboard his 60-foot double-masted sailboat more than 1,000 miles east of Hilo, Hawaii, April 11, 2019.

The captain of the Front Leopard agreed to divert to assist a lone sailor 500 miles southeast of Nantucket after receiving a request from the U.S. Coast Guard-staffed RCC in Boston May 23, 2019.

After an aircraft ditched in the Pacific Ocean more than 1,000 miles from Oahu, Hawaii, the crews of the commercial ships Ariel and Horizon Reliance rescued the two survivors from a life raft, in rough seas, Nov. 7, 2020.

Amver, or the Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System, sponsored by the United States Coast Guard, is a computer-based voluntary global ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea.

CRUISE SHIP HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AWARDS

Six sailors – adrift and without power on a disabled boat for more than three weeks in the Caribbean Sea – were rescued by the crew of the Princess Cruises Island Princess, after transmitting a mayday when they started taking on water, Jan. 2, 2019.

The captain and crew provided the sailors medical treatment, showers, rest and a steak dinner before disembarking them on arrival to their next port of Cartagena, Colombia.

In 2020, the captain and crew of the cruise ship [Carnival Ecstasy](#) saved a life after responded to a mayday while departing an anchorage at Great Stirrup Cay, Bahamas. The crew effected a transfer of an injured yacht crewmember in rough seas, while observing COVID-19 safety protocols, and provided overnight medical care aboard the cruise ship until a helicopter arrived to



U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists Shelley and Gary Markle and U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Steven D. Poulin. At the time of the photo, Admiral Poulin was Commander, Atlantic Area – he is now Vice Commandant of the Coast Guard.

medically evacuate the victim the next morning. The rescue was executed Nov 17, 2020.

SILVER MEDALS

Two U.S Coast Guard Auxiliarists – off-duty and cruising recreationally with family on the ICW – rescued four people from a burning pleasure boat, July 3, 2019.



Crew members from Station Yaquina Bay gather for a photo after rescuing a fisherman from 10-foot breaking seas near South Beach State Park south of Newport, OR, early Tuesday, Sep. 8, 2020. Shown are BM2 Tyler Hurst, BM3 Matthew Roque, MK2 Rachel Robbins, BM1 Wallace Qual, and BM1 Jacob Hylkema. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Clark



Gloria and Stephen Wyatt, both of Auxiliary Flotilla 44, were cruising with family and friends, on two vessels, when they observed thick black smoke coming from the vessel Daydreamer.

They discovered four people in the water approximately 25 feet from the burning vessel – close enough for the Wyatt's to feel the intense heat from the fire. All four people were pulled aboard the two rescue vessels, as a propane tank aboard the burning boat exploded.

The rescue boats immediately pulled back and a family member – a doctor – examined the victims for injuries, with no significant findings beyond the shock of having to abandon a burning boat.

[Coast Guard Auxiliaries](#) Shelley and Gary Markle responded to a radio call for help while on a training mission on Lake Michigan, off Chicago, Aug. 8, 2020.

The Markles took charge of the hectic scene of a missing swimmer, who was located underwater and brought back to the surface, where Shelley performed CPR until fire and EMS personnel arrived on scene.

Gary used his PWC to transport emergency medical personnel and gear from the seawall to the scene, to assist the victim, who was confirmed revived when eventually transferred to a shoreside ambulance.

VICE ADMIRAL THOMAS SARGENT III GOLD MEDALS

The 656-foot Golden Ray, with 23 crew and a pilot aboard – and a cargo of 4,200 vehicles – rapidly capsized in St. Simons Sound, Ga., shortly after

midnight, Sep. 8, 2019. The ship listed dangerously to port, caught fire and was at risk of imminent rollover.

Two rescue helicopter crews from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Savannah responded to the scene. Petty Officer 1st Class Eric F. Young, an aviation survival technician, was aboard the first on-scene helicopter. Young identified light signals from a survivor trapped on the slick starboard bridge wing, who was in peril of falling 100 feet to the sea below. Remaining connected to the helicopter's hoist cable after being lowered to the ship, Young traversed the near-vertical surface and rescued the crewmember.

Back in the helicopter, the pilot repositioned the aircraft after spotting a group of survivors further aft.



Petty Officer Nathan Newberg, a Coast Guard rescue swimmer stationed at Air Station Savannah, Georgia, poses for a photo at Air Station Savannah Dec. 21, 2019. Newberg rescued two people from the Golden Ray, a car carrier ship that capsized offshore Brunswick, Ga. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Travis Magee

Young was lowered again, 130 feet to three trapped crewmen. Using hoist tension and vertical surface rescue techniques, Young navigated treacherous snag hazards and identified one of the survivors as severely injured. He stabilized the patient and they were hoisted aboard the helicopter to deliver him to awaiting medical professionals.

Young's helicopter left the scene and the second craft moved-in, with Petty Officer 1st Class Nathan E.





Lt. Cmdr. Taylor Smith and BM1 Qual at Rayburn.

Newberg aboard as the aviation survival technician, who was lowered to the stricken vessel. He secured sections of fire hose to the ship's railing and rappelled into the bridge – using unorthodox techniques for which he was neither trained nor experienced – to locate the vessel's captain and the harbor pilot. Newberg swung the fire hose to the pilot and lowered him through the bridge, 60 feet down to a rescue boat below.

Newberg then returned to the bridge, while his helicopter above was minutes from “bingo” for fuel, approaching the minimum level needed to safely return to base or another re-fueling spot. Newberg extracted the captain and hoisted him to the rescue helicopter.

Meanwhile, Young's aircraft returned and he was again lowered to the ship, to rescue the two other survivors from his previous time aboard. An explosion rocked the ship after he completed two hoist recoveries. Undaunted, Young joined surface assets in the search for remaining survivors.

Young and Newberg were both awarded Coast Guard Air Medals for their actions.

The AFRAS Gold Medal is named for the organization's first chairman, who was also a former Vice Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Coast Guard Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Wallace C. Qual led a [beach rescue team](#) that responded to a vessel grounding at Yaquina Bay, Ore., saving a life Sep. 8, 2020.

Petty Officer Qual went into action after the captain of the 44-foot fishing vessel Legend abandoned ship in weather so heavy that both surface and air search and rescue (SAR) craft could not safely attempt a rescue. Once on scene, Qual and his crew from Station Yaquina Bay faced 60-70 knot winds, 6-8-foot surf, poor visibility – and smoke from a local wildfire.

Qual, in survival gear and swimmer harness tended by his team beachside, entered the water and fought heavy surf to save the captain and bring him back ashore. Qual not only risked his life to save that of the captain, but once safely ashore – coughing up seawater and exhausted – instructed his crew to provide first aid to the stricken mariner first.



Rear Adm. Eric Jones, Coast Guard 7th District commander, and Master Chief Petty Officer Devin Spencer, 7th District command master chief, present Air Medals to Petty Officers Eric Young and Nathan Newberg, both aviation survival technicians stationed at Coast Guard Air Station Savannah, Feb. 21, 2020. Young and Newberg, along with Station Brunswick and port partners, helped rescue 20 people aboard the Golden Ray, a car carrier ship, after it was reported the vessel was disabled and listing in Brunswick, Ga. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Dickinson



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