

---

# AFRAS NEWS

---



SPRING 2023

ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA, INC.

PO BOX 565 • FISH CREEK, WI 54212-0565 • (920) 854-5253 TEL & FAX  
WWW.RESCUEATSEA.ORG

*HONORING HEROES, SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS – AFRAS IS A 501(C)3 CHARITY*

## MARITIME RESCUE HEROES HONORED AT CAPITOL HILL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY



*Members of the AFRAS Board of Directors welcomed search and rescue award recipients and their guests, elected officials and staff members, senior maritime officials, including the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and National Commodore of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and generous AFRAS sponsors to the annual Capitol Hill Gold Medal Ceremony, held at the Capitol Visitors Center November 16, 2022. AFRAS photo.*

# RESCUES AT SEA SELECTED FOR RECOGNITION

A U.S. Coast Guard aviation rescue swimmer, three U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliaries, the captains and crews of a tanker and a cruise ship and the captains and crews from a joint civilian/U.S. Coast Guard rescue were the 2022 selectees for maritime search and rescue awards.

The rescues accounted for more than 160 lives saved, and spanned from the U.S. east coast, to the Atlantic off Africa to the Mediterranean Sea off Greece to the Gulf of Mexico, all undertaken during calendar year 2021.



*The crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Glenn Harris, a pre-commissioned 154-foot Fast Response Cutter, pulls a person from the water April 13, 2021 after a 175-foot commercial lift boat capsized 8 miles south of Grand Isle, Louisiana. The Coast Guard and multiple good Samaritan vessels responded to the capsized vessel and searched for multiple missing people in the water. U.S. Coast Guard photo courtesy of Coast Guard Cutter Glenn Harris*

Awards for these heroic rescues at sea were bestowed on the ship captains and crews and individual maritime professionals at the annual AFRAS Capitol Hill Gold Medal ceremony in Washington D.C., Wednesday, Nov. 16th.

## VICE ADMIRAL THOMAS SARGENT III GOLD MEDAL

U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Adam J. Via – a helicopter rescue swimmer at Air Station Cape Cod, Mass. – rescued five mariners from a disabled and ablaze trawler 100 miles offshore, in high winds and rough seas, April 30, 2021.

The Cape Cod helicopter crew responded to the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon from the 100-foot trawler Nobska, which had suffered a hydraulic casualty and subsequently caught fire.

Once on scene, Via deployed via a sling in 50 knot winds and 15-foot seas. After swimming 50 yards toward the burning vessel in 45-degree water, he successfully completed basket hoists to rescue the crew of the stricken vessel – which became increasingly difficult with each successive rescue, due to on-





*U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Survival Technician First Class Adam Via, Nolan Via and Jennifer Via pose with the Gold Medal. AFRAS photo.*

scene conditions Via had to battle and the bulky survival suits of the crew.

Via provided medical care for the survivors during the transit back to Cape Cod, despite the extreme fatigue from the in-water rescue operations.

### AFRAS SILVER MEDAL

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary members Robert E. Bohm, William F. Jacobs Jr. and Harvey M. Miller evacuated the crew of a fireworks barge after the large commercial fireworks aboard

began igniting and firing without warning in Great South Bay, Long Island, N.Y., July 2, 2021.

The Auxiliary crew quickly responded to a fire aboard the barge and fireworks unexpectedly started igniting, during a patrol of a Coast Guard Sector Long Island Sound security zone with local law enforcement and fire rescue partners during the Point of Woods Fireworks show.

The rescue boat members directed the fireworks barge crew to abandon the barge, because of the potentially life-threatening situation, then rescued all seven crew, in coordination with the Suffolk, N.Y., Police Department. The Auxiliary crew was then able to communicate via radio with a nearby Coast Guard station, who contacted a local fire department, which deployed a vessel to extinguish the fire aboard the barge.

### AMVER AWARD

The captain and crew of the Marshall Islands-flagged tanker Aristofaniz rescued 150 migrants in the Mediterranean Sea from a wooden boat that was taking on water 80 miles off the Greek island of Schiza, Sept. 23, 2021.

The Aristofaniz reported to Maritime Rescue Coordination Center Piraeus, Greece, that they had located the wooden migrant vessel and raised the SAR alarm and began SAR operations. The Amver ship rescued 150 people before Hellenic Coast Guard surface and air assets joined in the rescue operations.

### CRUISE SHIP HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AWARD

The captain and crew of the cruise ship Mein Schiff 1 rescued two mariners from a disabled and adrift sailboat in rough seas in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Africa, Nov. 28, 2021.

Mein Schiff 1 received a call from Maritime Rescue Coordination Center Griz Nez, France, to proceed in support and rescue of the sailing vessel Agecanonix. The MRCC reported one deceased crew, another person with a severe back injury and the third person unable to handle the boat by himself. Additionally, the vessel suffered damage rendering it disabled and adrift.

The Agecanonix was approximately 300 miles from the Mein Schiff 1's position.



*U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Fagan, Commander Brad Winans, U.S. Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists Commodore Gus Formato, National Commodore, Robert E. Bohm and William F. Jacobs Jr., and AFRAS President Captain Joe Re (USCG ret.) during the presentation of the AFRAS Silver Medal. AFRAS photo.*

Once on scene after steaming all day, the cruise ship was maneuvered to create a lee for the rescue operation and a small boat was launched – conditions included darkness, 40 knot winds and 12–15-foot seas, which prevented the success of the initial attempt.

The captain and crew agreed that the best option for rescue was for the victims to enter their sail boat's life raft for a first light attempt.

Next morning, directions were given to the survivors aboard Agecanonix and the cruise ship's rescue boat was deployed, which proved successful.

## SPECIAL AWARDS

Two mariners were rescued from a capsized ship by civilian and U.S. Coast Guard crews in the Gulf of Mexico, off Port Fourchon, La., April 13, 2021.

The liftboat Seacor Power was underway and the crew was attempting to secure the ship from high winds and heavy seas that had built-up during an incoming storm when the ship capsized. Nearby, the Coast Guard Cutter Glen Harris was underway conducting sea trial training with a captain and crew from Bollinger Shipyards and Chand maritime logistics – and the prospective commanding officer and crew of the cutter. Because the cutter had not yet been



*Captain Nikolaos Lazakis, Greek Naval Attaché, accepted the Amver Award on behalf of the captain and crew of the motor vessel Aristofaniz. AFRAS photo.*





*Admiral Fagan, Boatswain's Mate First Class Anthony Abbatte, of U.S. Coast Guard Station Grand Isle, La., Boatswain's Mate First Class Lacey Miller, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Glen Harris, Chief Warrant Officer (Boatswain) Ian Thompson, Cutter Glen Harris, Geoffrey Green, of Bollinger Shipyards, and AFRAS President Captain Joe Re (USCG ret.) during the presentation of the Special Award for the joint Coast Guard/civilian SeaCor Power rescues. AFRAS photo.*

commissioned, the captains and crews onboard essentially responded to the emergency as a Good Samaritan vessel.

Once on-scene, the Glen Harris joint crew got as close as they safely could – submerged structures and equipment aboard the capsized liftboat, like cranes and jack legs, presented unknown hazards for the cutter, as well as it's small boat that launched to get closer, but had to turn back due to the heavy conditions. The civilian and Coast Guard crew were able to spot five survivors clinging to debris or part of the capsized ship.

One of the survivors was washed from the Seacor Power, and the Glen Harris crew successfully rescued him from the water.

A rescue helicopter from Bristow – a commercial maritime search

and rescue organization – arrived on-scene and attempted to save survivors with a lowered rescue swimmer, but the conditions and structures of the capsized ship rendered that unsafe. The crew of the rescue helicopter lowered lifejackets and a handheld radio to the survivors.

Rescue boats from Coast

Guard Station Grand Isle arrived on-scene and rescued another survivor that was washed from the Seacor Power. Four other Good Samaritan vessels had rescued four survivors while searching a debris field, one per vessel.



*Captain Omar Caruana, Master of Mein Schiff 1, delivers remarks after accepting the Cruise Ship Humanitarian Assistance Award. AFRAS photo.*

**AFRAS THANKS THE CORPORATE SPONSORS OF  
THE 2022 CAPITOL HILL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY**

**GOLD DONATION LEVEL**



**SILVER DONATION LEVEL**





AFRAS THANKS THE CORPORATE SPONSORS OF  
THE 2022 CAPITOL HILL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

BRONZE DONATION LEVEL



#### AFRAS Officers

##### Chairman

ADM CHARLES RAY, USCG (Ret.)

##### President

CAPT JOSEPH RE, USCG (Ret.)

##### Vice President & Chief Information Officer

MR. WAYNE SPIVAK

##### Vice President for History and Heritage

CDR GARY M. THOMAS, USCG (Ret.)

##### Vice President for Public Information

CWO4 BRANDON S. BREWER, USCG (Ret.)

##### Secretary

MRS. ANNE C. KIFER

##### Treasurer

MRS. ANNE SKELTON

\* All Officers also serve as Directors

#### Board of Directors

MCPO-CG CHARLES "SKIP" BOWEN, USCG (Ret.)

VADM JODY BRECKENRIDGE, USCG (Ret.)

CAPT MICHAEL BRANDHUBER, USCG (Ret.)

MR. JOHN C. COOPER

CAPT JOHN FUECHSEL, USCG (Ret.)

CDR DONALD JACCARD, USCG (Ret.)

CDR FAIR KIM, USCG (Ret.)

RADM JAMES C. OLSON, USCG (Ret.)

CDR KENNETH S. PRIME, USCG (Ret.)

COMO ROBERT SHAFER, USCG Auxiliary

RON TREMAIN, USCG (Ret.)

RADM JAMES VAN SICE, USCG (Ret.)

#### International Advisors

MARK DOWIE, CEO, RNLI, United Kingdom

JOS STIERHOUT, Director, KNRM, The Netherlands

TIM de WET, Director, Safe Waters Foundation Africa



*Capitol Hill Gold Medal Ceremony sponsors, from left, Harkcon CEO Kevin Harkins, Captain Charley Diaz (USCG ret.), of Huntington Ingalls Industries, Hamid Salim, of Lockheed Martin, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Linda L. Fagan, AFRAS President Captain Joe Re (USCG ret.), AFRAS Director Commander Ken Prime (USCG ret.), also of Lockheed Martin, Jennifer Williams, Vice President, Maritime Policy, Cruise Lines International Association, Patrick Host, of Insitu, and Phil Crigler, of Austal USA.*