

The Association for Rescue at Sea

AMVER Award

2002

The Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS) is pleased to present its AMVER plaque to the captain and crew of the Norwegian-flagged M/V TAMPA. The AMVER Safety Network is a voluntary, worldwide ship reporting system, which is operated by the United States Coast Guard and involves ships from over 140 nations.

On 26 August 2001, in the Indian Ocean off Indonesia, the master and crew of the 800-foot combination roll-on/roll-off and container ship M/V TAMPA were advised via a distress alert from Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) Australia of a grossly overloaded 20-meter wooden boat with a disabled engine that was taking on water.

Upon diverting and making visual contact, Captain Arne Rinnan observed that, fortunately, most of the people were below deck or otherwise the vessel would have capsized. Captain Rinnan provided a lee for the distressed vessel, and backed down alongside. Using his main engine and the forward and aft thrusters, he brought his major vessel skillfully alongside the stricken vessel without endangering further its overload of Afghan migrants.

The transfer of survivors was accomplished via the ship's accommodation ladder. Because the ladder had to be kept above the boat for fear of it getting fouled, the passengers had to be lifted by hand one at a time from the distressed vessel. Three strong crewmen of M/V TAMPA took turns lifting each person from the boat onto the ladder. This personal effort and splendid ship handling helped avoid panic and a disastrous capsizing. It took fully two hours to embark everyone on board. The final count of survivors was 438: 369 men, 26 women and 43 children. Despite the poor physical condition of the survivors, the rescue was accomplished without injuries.

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AFRAS salutes Captain Rinnan and the crew of M/V TAMPA for responding in the tradition of AMVER, for the great skill and seamanship involved, and for having in the crew three men capable of lifting 438 people to safety in two hours.