

## **2004 AFRAS AMVER Award**

The Association for Rescue at Sea was pleased to present its AMVER plaque to the captain and crew of M/T STOLT CAPABILITY, a 600-foot, specialized tanker.

On 21 October 2003, off Vietnam, STOLT CAPABILITY received a call on VHF Channel 16, reporting a vessel sinking about 8 miles from the ship's position. The Captain came to the bridge and altered course toward the vessel in distress. Deck hands were called and other crew put on standby. The ship then received a Digital Select Call (DSC) distress alert from the HOANG DAT 35. The Captain made contact with the stricken ship via VHF radio. The ship reported 16 crew members.

On arrival, STOLT CAPABILITY noticed the vessel was listing heavily to her port side. With winds at approximately 30 knots and seas at Force 5, the tanker maneuvered as close as possible to the sinking vessel. The crew began to abandon ship. A first group of nine persons was sighted in the water and recovered, then three more. Two more crewmen were sighted along the port side, but were not responding and appeared unconscious. Upon recovery, the Chief Officer and Medical team reported there were no signs of life after applying CPR and first aid.

Rescue Coordination Center Hong Kong then designated STOLT CAPABILITY as on-scene coordinator for search and rescue of the 2 remaining crew. A search plan was coordinated with other ships arriving on scene. One additional crew member was sighted in the water and recovered. For approximately 10 hours, four ships conducted area search patterns with no signs of the last remaining crew member. STOLT CAPABILITY proceeded to the nearest port, Nha Trang, and disembarked the rescued seafarers.

Captain Ivan Vukovic remarked: "We all feel flattered and proud in serving to best professional standards in the maritime industry, and it is our responsibility to maintain that level and help anyone out at sea when in distress."

AFRAS salutes Captain Vukovic and the crew of M/T STOLT CAPABILITY for responding in the tradition of AMVER and for coordinating this extensive and successful rescue.