



# AFRAS Newsletter

Association for Rescue at Sea, Inc.

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Summer 2003

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## Letter from the President

The past few months have been very busy for AFRAS. Our beloved Chairman, Jim Gracey has retired, but has agreed to remain on as a chairman emeritus. We found an outstanding replacement in VADM Roger Rufe, Jr. USCG (ret.) who served as Coast Guard Atlantic Area Commander prior to his retirement and is now the CEO of the Ocean Conservancy. His USCG experience and work with the Ocean Conservancy provides the continuity and know-how needed to keep AFRAS moving in the right direction.

### Admiral Gracey retires as Chairman of Afras.



In late April, AFRAS purchased 25 alphanumeric pagers for the CITRO volunteer rescue service in Curacao. This represents a major step forward in our Caribbean Initiative and we thank our donors who have made possible our support of the volunteer rescue services in the Caribbean.

Our board member, Captain Gabe Kinney, USCG (ret.) represented AFRAS at the recent International Lifeboat Federation (ILF) conference in South Africa. Please see his report on the conference on pages 5 & 6.

In May, I was able to travel to Iceland and the UK for discussions with the Icelandic Association for Search and Rescue (ICE-SAR) and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Our friends from ICE-SAR have been asking me to come for a visit the past few years, but always something seemed to get in the way. This was also my first opportunity to visit Poole. In both places my wife, Maria, and I were treated like royalty.

Of even greater importance, I gained a lot of knowledge about programs and operations of these two outstanding volunteer rescue services. Let me address ICE-SAR first.

Iceland is a small country with a rocky coast and many storms. It has a population of only 285,000 and ICE-SAR operates 101 volunteer rescue teams, plus 91 accident prevention branches and has 49 youth groups. It has 4,000 rescue team members and 18,000 overall members. ICE-SAR is the official search and rescue unit for Iceland. Although they are volunteers, they are thoroughly integrated into the maritime, urban, glacier, mountain and other SAR operations. It



ICE-SAR All-Weather RHIB at Westmann Islands.

operates nine all-weather lifeboats, thirty-five rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIB's) and has fifty-nine small inflatables. On the dry-land side, it operates 170 modified trucks, 150 snow mobiles and 24 snow cats. I had the opportunity to ride a RHIB on the Westmann Islands and an Arun class All-weather lifeboat in Grundavik.

## Letter from the President (cont.)

Fundraising for ICE-SAR can be problematic. Each of their local stations must raise funds for itself—meaning some do quite well and others have a tough time. Their major sources of funding are a split with the Red Cross and other charities of the income derived from slot machines found in most small Icelandic markets and the sale of fireworks (used mainly to celebrate New Year's Eve). ICE-SAR stations also sell Christmas trees. There is only a token amount of government funding.

I discussed at length with ICE-SAR officials strategies for AFRAS to help raise funds for their operations. We settled on three programs. I will contact Icelandic societies here in the States to solicit donations from their members. ICE-SAR will contact US corporations doing business in Iceland to solicit donations through AFRAS, and, happily, the third program has already been implemented. We visited the senior chaplain at the US Navy base at Keflavik and they have agreed to apportion part of their Sunday offerings to the support of ICE-SAR and will also help ICE-SAR with a PR campaign on the base. ICE-SAR is an excellent volunteer rescue organization, with many great programs already in place. We believe they are an excellent partner for AFRAS.

I then went on to the UK for meetings with RNLI officials in Poole and to attend the RNLI Annual General Meeting and Awards Ceremony in London. Since this was my first visit to Poole, I



got to meet many people with whom I had heretofore only exchanged e-mails. Andrew Freemantle and Ian Ventham in a meeting on my first day in Poole brought to my attention the changing financial situation in the RNLI. In the midst of a major capital improvement effort including the construction of several large buildings at the headquarters complex such as the RNLI college and the replacement of many lifeboats, the British economy (as all others) has headed south. This, and uncertainties over the continuing flow of legacies and gifts, suggested that the RNLI can benefit from renewed AFRAS fundraising efforts.

Although I spent a good bit of my time visiting RNLI departments such as operations, training, logistics, technical, and a visit to the outstanding Inshore Lifeboat Center (construction and repair of



RHIB's), I also benefited from comprehensive discussions on fundraising, including legacies and gifts. AFRAS will explore with the RNLI various approaches to raising additional support, but at the moment the best approach (and one recommended by the RNLI) appears to be to focus on raising funds for the International Lifeboat Federation (ILF). Until now, the operations and staffing of the ILF have been funded by the RNLI. As a result of the recent conference in Cape Town, however, the ILF is working

towards becoming a truly independent, international organization funded by its members. By helping with ILF funding, AFRAS will help take some of these financial pressures off the RNLI.



While in London for the AGM and the awards ceremony, I was able to meet with many key RNLI members as well as representatives from other international lifeboat services. I was particularly impressed with the awards ceremony—as a model for what we do here in AFRAS. One of the awardees was an off-duty RNLI lifeguard who made a heroic surf rescue. Since beach protection along with SAR on the Thames River are new programs for the RNLI, I had a special interest in their progress. I was able as well to visit the lifeboat station at the Tower pier in London and take a ride on their 40 knot RHIB. Quite an impressive operation with the great tidal range, fast currents, and congested river traffic. I was most impressed with the cooperation between the RNLI crews and other water safety entities such as the Coast Guard, pilots, fire and police boats.

*-John Chomeau  
President*



## Meet VADM Roger Rufe, Jr. New AFRAS Chairman



I was delighted and honored when Admiral Jim Gracey called me a few months ago to ask if I would consider replacing him as Chairman of the Board of the Association for Rescue at Sea. The three chairmen that AFRAS has had in its 27-year history are all men that I greatly admire. It is a privilege...and a challenge...to follow them. During my 34 year Coast Guard career, I was motivated by the great sense of accomplishment that comes with performing all of the Coast Guard's varied missions. But like many of my Coast Guard shipmates I was first drawn to the service by the opportunity to save lives at sea. Some of my most vivid and satisfying Coast Guard memories are of participating in successful search and rescue cases at sea and as a Rescue Coordination Center Controller. So I eagerly accepted when Jim Gracey and the Board offered me the opportunity to join an organization with the mission of supporting rescue at sea.

My full-time job as President and CEO of The Ocean Conservancy keeps me focused on the health of the oceans and protecting and preserving marine wildlife. It is a richly rewarding second career. But as someone once commented, "sailors are marine mammals too". With that in mind I am excited to be joining with all of you, the loyal supporters of AFRAS, in the important work of saving human life at sea. There are few higher callings. It is good to be back in the business.

# **Mass Maritime Cadets Play Key Role in Bouchard 120 Oil Spill**

*by Ed O'Brien, AFRAS board member*

Cadets from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy SAR team have been playing a major role in the response and clean up efforts on the shores of Buzzards Bay. The team was mobilized on April 27 when notification was received that a Bouchard 120 barge was leaking oil. The cadets manned their two rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIB) and deployed immediately to board the barge and commence efforts to mitigate the effects of the spill. The cadets also set up a shore-based command center equipped with telephones, fax machines, VHF radio, etc. ready for the USCG and state officials to man the following morning.

Two young MMA cadets distinguished themselves throughout this long spill response. Richard Holcroft, the lead coxswain demonstrated outstanding skills in seamanship and navigation and most importantly a good measure of common sense in operations designed to get key responders to the scene. Many days he put in 16 hours working on the spill, and still attended to his studies at MMA.

Another outstanding cadet, Mason Wilcox, played a key role in setting up and operating communications systems and a mobile command capability at the command center. His knowledge of communications gear and various electronic "gadgets" proved to be invaluable to the clean-up operations. His endurance and enthusiasm proved to be remarkable and he earned the respect of many skilled professionals.

The following members of MMA-SAR also participated in the Bouchard 120 Spill. They have all gained valuable operational experience during this response to a major oil spill and their contributions are greatly appreciated by all.

1/C Adam Pereira  
2/C Christopher Pinkerton  
3/C Stephanie Griffin

3/C Whitney Griffin  
4/C Christopher Hooper  
4/C Sean Lundy

4/C Andrew Greco  
Brian McCormick  
Third Officer, US Merchant Marine

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# **Rescue!**

*AFRAS board member and a 1994 AFRAS Gold Medal winner, CWO Scott Clendenin, USCG (ret.) has provided the following account of a rescue off Nye Beach (near Newport, OR) on 6 June 2003.*

Two young girls age 8 and 10 were pulled out by a strong rip-tide and two by-standers (a father & son) entered the surf to attempt a rescue but got caught in the same rip-tide. Coast Guard Station Yaquina Bay sent two 47' MLB's, and a helo from Newport Air Facility (without a rescue swimmer) was dispatched along with Newport Fire Rescue and a local ambulance company.

I was the rescue swimmer for the Newport Fire Department, and was able to assist the father, through the surf to the beach as the first to arrive 47' MLB started pulling the young girls on board. As the girls were being pulled aboard the MLB, the 21 year-old son went under and our spotters lost track of him.

The helo started searching and spotted the man below the water, but since there was no helo rescue swimmer, I entered the beach surf and swam out -- but got caught in the surf as well. Seeing that I was fighting the surf, the helo dropped a basket and hoisted me up for the search. Once we located the man, I was lowered back down and started an underway search and finally located the man about five feet below the water. I dove down and after several attempts in a dry suit, I was able to pull the man to the surface and swim him to the basket. The helo hoisted him and delivered him onto the beach for fire and ambulance personnel to start medical attention. The man was rushed to the hospital, but, unfortunately, did not survive.

I was again picked up out of the water and returned to the beach. I spent a total of 32 minutes in the surf; total rescue from time of dispatch to the fourth man on the beach receiving medical assistance was 42 minutes.

# ***Report on the International Lifeboat Federation Conference Held in Cape Town, South Africa – 16-21 March, 2003***

*Captain Gabe Kinney, USCG (Ret)*

The International Lifeboat Federation (ILF) was founded in 1924 to bring together lifeboat services, both volunteer and state-administered, from countries throughout the world, and to promote the saving of lives in distress in the maritime environment. Since its founding, the International Lifeboat Federation has grown, particularly in recent years, to the point where there are now 89 ILF member organizations from 62 countries representing all regions of the world. AFRAS is an Associate Member of the ILF and an active supporter of its work.

The ILF is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, and in 1985 was granted consultative status by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN). The ILF regularly attends meetings of the Committees and Subcommittees of IMO to provide expert advice on lifesaving and Search & Rescue issues. In 1998, the award of the IMO's "International Maritime Prize" recognized the ILF's important contributions to world Search & Rescue efforts. This is the first time that this prestigious award has been presented to any organization.

The ILF's vision is to be recognized as the foremost international authority on lifeboat Search & Rescue. Its purposes are: To promote saving of life on water world-wide; To provide an innovative forum for cooperation in

lifeboat SAR; With IMO, to promote the establishment and efficient operation of lifeboat services; and to enhance safety on water through awareness and education.

One of its on-going programs has been to sponsor major international conferences to address issues of safety of life at sea, Search & Rescue, lifeboats, and related topics. These conferences have been held every four years, drawing together experts from maritime Search & Rescue services from every corner of the globe. In addition to the major conferences every four years, informal exchanges take place between members on a very regular basis and

include technical meetings that are held between main conferences.

The 19<sup>th</sup> International Lifeboat Federation Conference was recently held in Cape Town, South Africa, 16-21 March, 2003. A very full and productive program of both



substance and social events was coordinated by Gerry Keeling, the ILF Secretariat, and the gracious hosts of the Conference, Ian Wienburg and the National Sea Rescue Institute of South Africa. Over 100 delegates attended the event, representing the full range of member organizations, from every region of the world.

Some of the topics that were addressed included: Promoting Safety Of Life At Sea; Technological Challenges In Lifesaving; Effective SAR Training; Improving Survivability For Rescuers And Victims; Challenges To Operational Capabilities; Meeting Operational Requirements; Management And Growth Of Rescue Organizations; and many others. Other sessions focused on the latest technologies and methods of operation for; Boats and Machinery, Equipment and Methods, and Electronics & Information Technology (IT) Systems.

This ILF conference also marked a major milestone in the development and growth of the organization itself, as well as setting the pace of world Search & Rescue advancements in technology and SAR management for the next century. The Conference decided to establish an "International Forum", within the ILF, to provide more dynamic and real-time interaction between member organizations. Structures will be established to allow member organizations to contribute toward the development of SAR capability at national, regional and global levels. Members will also be invited to participate in global interest groups on SAR related topics. In order to facilitate the tasks facing the ILF, the Conference decided to establish and elect a 14-member "Council", composed of globally-recognized Lifeboat SAR experts, to create a framework for the future of the ILF. Rolf Westerström, head of the

Swedish Sea Rescue Society, was elected Council Chairman. Captain Gabe Kinney, USCG (Ret), who represented AFRAS at the Conference, was also elected to the Council. Among other responsibilities, the Council will be drafting an ILF constitution, by-laws, working procedures, membership rules and recommending new structures for the ILF.

The full proceedings of the ILF Conference will be available on CD from the ILF Secretariat in the near future at a nominal cost.

The next (20<sup>th</sup>) International Lifeboat Federation Conference will be held in Göteborg, Sweden in June of 2007, to coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Swedish Sea Rescue Society, who will host the event.

Organizations that own and operate boats for maritime SAR or which otherwise provide a SAR Service, and are recognized by their

government as providing a rescue service, may apply for membership. AFRAS and the ILF would encourage all countries and organizations that provide maritime rescue services to consider membership. Captain Gabe Kinney, USCG (Ret), represented the Association For Rescue At Sea (AFRAS) at the Conference through the support of Lockheed Martin Corporation.

Following this event, Captain Kinney also represented AFRAS at the *SAR-The Americas 2003* Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and gave a presentation on the ILF Conference.

*Look for further news on developments from the ILF Council in future issues of the AFRAS Newsletter. AFRAS will continue to work closely with the ILF in many areas of joint interest.*



*AFRAS Director Bill Wilkinson has informed us of a new book that he says, "will be an absolutely outstanding publication. It is a book all lifeboat people will want to keep on their desks as a ready reference and source for information on Lifeboat Organizations, Lifeboats, Lifeboat people and Lifeboat History." Mr. Wilkinson also says of the author, "Clay Evans is a wonderful person, a dedicated lifeboatman, an outstanding coxswain and an excellent scholar of his subject."*

# Rescue at Sea

By Clayton Evans

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- **Published with the full support of the International Lifeboat Federation, and the RNLI.**
- **Provides an international perspective on rescue at sea on a scale never before published, including comprehensive profiles of today's rescue organizations around the world.**
- **Detailed technical descriptions of historical and high-tech modern rescue craft.**
- **Evocative historical and contemporary heroism and rescue.**
- **Highly illustrated with photographs, scale plans, paintings and historical engravings throughout.**

# CITRO Curaçao (Citizens' Rescue Organization)

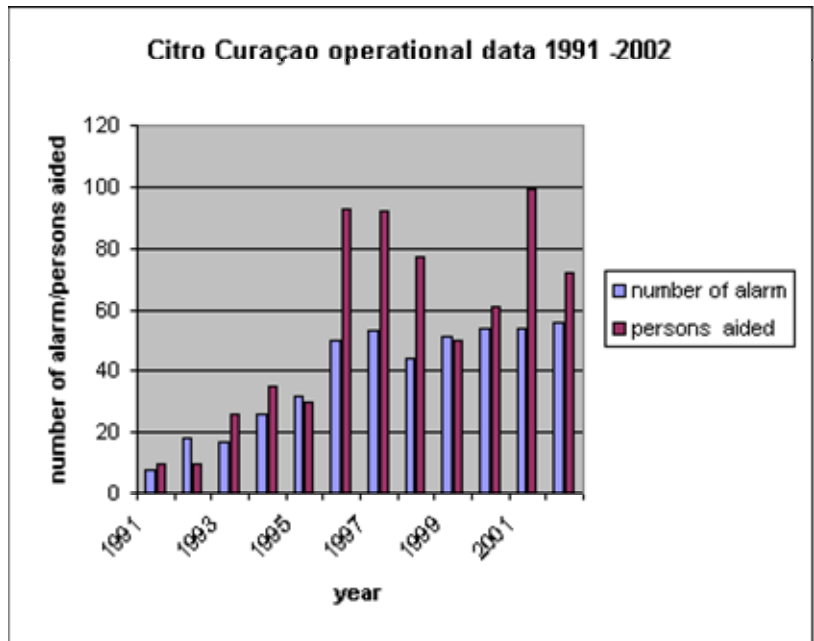
*Submitted by Adriaan van der Hoeven, CITRO*

When you think about a search and rescue organization, it is usually about ships at sea in distress. On the whole this is correct, but apart from ships in distress, CITRO Curaçao is also involved with other incidents, like fishermen, fishing from the rocky shores, who are dragged into the sea by a wave, jet ski accidents, and missing persons snorkeling or diving. CITRO Medico in Curaçao also renders medical advice, mostly to merchant ships at sea.

For CITRO on Curacao, it is not always necessary to put to sea to effect a rescue. In the situation where a local fishing vessel, distracted by a good catch or a sudden change in the weather does not know its position anymore and cannot see any land, it can contact us by radio and then the Citro Mobile Base can track down the position of the ship using a radio direction finder. Often, we can direct the boat in distress to safe harbor, just by means of the VHF radio.

## Operational data

| Citro Curaçao data 1991 - 2002 |                          |               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Year                           | number of calls for help | persons aided |
| 1991                           | 8                        | 10            |
| 1992                           | 18                       | 10            |
| 1993                           | 17                       | 26            |
| 1994                           | 26                       | 35            |
| 1995                           | 32                       | 30            |
| 1996                           | 50                       | 93            |
| 1997                           | 53                       | 92            |
| 1998                           | 44                       | 77            |
| 1999                           | 51                       | 50            |
| 2000                           | 54                       | 61            |
| 2001                           | 54                       | 99            |
| 2002                           | 56                       | 72            |



*Looking at the operational data, we see an average of fifty distress calls over the last couple of years. Yet again, the number is growing. The number of persons aided or involved is variable, due to the small number of rescue operations.*

## Working together with other organizations

Citro is very pleased to have the full cooperation of the local governmental organizations working in the maritime field as well. The Coast Guard of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba man on a 24/7 basis the RCC (Rescue Coordination Center). The RCC monitors all distress calls coming in by phone (telephone-number 913) or VHF, channel 16. They assess the nature of the problem and then the Coast Guard decides what kind of action to be taken. Sometimes an airplane (Orion) or helicopter is first sent on a scouting mission, or a Coast Guard vessel is directed to the designated spot at once. When it is determined that Citro Curaçao can be instrumental, an alarm is given to Citro, by means of paging.

## Paging system.

Just recently, a contribution from AFRAS made it possible for CITRO to buy a new paging system. This system is activated by the Coast Guard in case of a distress situation in which CITRO expertise can be of help. The volunteers, each of whom has a pager, get a call and interrupt their activities, rushing to the boat house. The average response time is an hour, meaning a rescue boat is on her way within that time.

## Citro rescue assets.

The generous help of the KNRM (Royal Dutch Rescue Organization) and local sponsors have made it possible for Citro Curaçao to have at its disposal a new, fast and very modern, state of the art, rescue boat: the “Antje”.

Technical data: Rescue boat, self-righting, length 30 feet RHIB (rigid-hull inflatable).  
Engines: 2 x 230 HP Volvo Penta Diesels – 2 PP water jets.  
Speed: transit 25- 30 knots; search 10 – 20 knots.  
Range: 30 nautical miles  
Capacity: 6 hrs (tanks 2 x 200 liters)  
The boat is fully equipped with all modern navigational and search-and-rescue instruments.



*The “Antje” loaned to CITRO by the KNRM (Royal Dutch Rescue Organization), here navigated by two Citro Curaçao volunteers.*

Since 1994 CITRO Curaçao has operated the “Cornelius Zwaan”. This is a flat-bottomed craft that was formerly used in Holland’s tidal marshes. This vessel is very useful in finding and towing in small fisherman’s boats and recreational yachts. She is also equipped with all modern instruments such as RDF, GPS, radar, and a depth finder.



## CITRO-team.

CITRO Curacao is made up of forty dedicated men and women, who are 100% volunteers. They are divided over the following assignments: skippers (9), crew (12), technical team (6), Citro Mobile base (5), Citro Medico (9).

These crews cooperate with yet another part of CITRO Curaçao, the Sea Auxiliary. This is a group of eight (private) yacht owners. They are willing to pitch in whenever the regular Citro boats are busy elsewhere or otherwise not available.

*These are just four of the forty CITRO volunteers.*

## Finance.

CITRO Curaçao does not receive any money from the government of the Netherlands Antilles or other cooperative funding. The budget is derived totally from private donations of companies and individuals. Should you want to support the activities of CITRO you can transfer your donation to account # 87.22.21.08 of Maduro & Curiel’s Bank Curaçao, c/o Stichting Citizens Rescue Organization of the Netherlands Antilles (CITRO). US donors can contact AFRAS to make a tax-deductible contribution to CITRO. We thank you very much; it is for a very good cause.

## Website Citro.

Citro can be reached by website at: [www.citro.org](http://www.citro.org).

## Your reaction.

Should you have questions or wish to contact us, this is most welcome. E-mail questions on operations to [operations@citro.org](mailto:operations@citro.org). For more general information send e-mail to [info@citro.org](mailto:info@citro.org)