



Admiral James M. Loy

Association for Rescue at Sea Awards Ceremony

Rayburn House Office Building

September 23, 1998

Introduction/Acknowledge AFRAS:

Going to sea is an inherently dangerous undertaking. But go to sea we must because the seas connect the world. Some go to sea because they have cargoes to move. Some go to sea to draw from its bounteous resources. Some go to sea because there the handiwork of our creator is most beautifully revealed. And some go to sea because duty draws them there—to protect their country or to protect the sea itself.

Tonight we honor those who go to sea to relieve the suffering of those imperiled by the sea's vast power.

Admiral Gracey, I thank you, the directors, and contributors to the Association for Rescue at Sea for your dedication to voluntary life saving organizations throughout the world.

Congressman Coble . . . Chairman Livingston . . . Congressmen LoBiondo, Petri, and Spence . . . Other distinguished guests . . . Thank you for joining AFRAS and the United States Coast Guard in honoring Petty Officer Beyer and the Captain and crew of the *Sea Wolf*.

Acknowledge Award Recipients:

Mr. Fortunato and Mr. Simpson [and the captain of the *Sea Wolf*, if present], thank you for Crowley Maritime's participation in AMVER. I know that the marine industry is a very competitive business. I know what a huge capital investment is represented in your ships, your cargo, and your crews. I know that every minute diverted from your intended course represents substantial sums of money.

Thank you for running an organization suffused with such commitment to humanitarian principles that the *Sea Wolf* diverted immediately and made best speed to reach the stricken sailboat. Thank you for remaining on scene despite the utter improbability of providing meaningful assistance from such a large ship to such a small boat in such rough weather.

Thank you for manning your ships with such superbly professional sailors that they could find the means of saving those six people from the 25-foot seas. Other vessels were responding to the plight of the *Alegria*. Somebody else might have been able to help. You made sure. I salute you tonight.

Petty Officer Beyer . . . Congratulations on receiving the AFRAS Gold Medal. Well done. I am proud of you and proud to serve with you in a United States Coast Guard that so vividly preserves its tradition of humanitarian service.

Your selflessness, your fortitude, and your seamanship have earned you a place in the front ranks of Coast Guard heroes.

Remain assured both of our gratitude . . . and of our prayers for a full recovery from the injuries you sustained.

As you heal, I ask you to let me know—personally and directly—if the care and consideration that you receive ever fails to reflect the full measure of devotion that you gave on our behalf. I acknowledge tonight that the medals you received from the Coast Guard and from AFRAS are only surety for —only a down payment on—the debt that the Coast Guard will forever owe you.

Readiness and Congressional Support:

There are many voluntary rescue organizations around the world that depend on AFRAS to support their operations. The Coast Guard is not one of them. We depend on the wisdom and tender mercies of the United States Congress to keep men and women like Petty Officer Beyer on watch—properly trained, properly rested, and properly equipped.

Over the past few weeks, I have shared my concerns with many of you about obtaining adequate funding to sustain Coast Guard operations. Tonight you see that my concern is not merely a political or a managerial issue. Coast Guard men and women like Petty Officer Beyer join the Coast Guard with the expectation of risking their lives to serve their country . . . and they fulfill that expectation every day.

An under-funded Coast Guard won't recruit enough young people like Michael Beyer or offer them opportunities that encourage them to stay. An under-funded Coast Guard will ultimately cost lives because somebody will get in trouble, and Michael Beyer will be too far away or his boat will be too old and slow . . . I ask for your collective help to ensure that never happens.

Semper Paratus.

