

Good evening Shipmates!

Mr. Sean O'Keefe – it's great to see you here sir,

Vice Adm. Cross – thank you for hosting this wonderful awards ceremony!

Rep. LoBiondo, (R-2<sup>nd</sup> NJ),

Rep. Henry Brown (R-1st/SC), thank you for your continuing support,

Vice Adm. Vivian Crea (ret.) – thank you for attending,

Distinguished Guests,

Shipmates,

I am always pleased to attend an event that recognizes what I call *heroes in our midst* – especially when those heroes include, as they do this evening, Coast Guard men and women, as well as professional mariners who

we rely on heavily, through programs like AMVER, to assist with Search and Rescue!

AST1 “Pepe” Carire (CAREER-A), U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists Robert M. Joseph, Leo G. Lake, Paul G. Sadeck and Rodney P. Thomas, and the Captain and crew of the M/V ANDES are all shipmates. For people who serve on or over the water, the term “Shipmate” represents the unique bond that is formed when the people you serve with, and their families, become part of your extended family. How else would you describe persons you spend 24 hours a day with, 7 days a week, operating vessels and aircraft sometimes in the most treacherous of circumstances...

The term “Shipmate” also encompasses the adrenaline and emotion of performing Search and Rescue: the great joy and satisfaction of a rescue well performed; the deep sorrow when, despite your best efforts, you cannot save someone from the perils of the sea. It’s weathering these storms and

difficulties, the crests and troughs, laughing and working—and yes, sometimes crying—giving it your utmost while cold, wet and tired that forges the bond that is Shipmates.

Clearly, the dedication, determination and emotion of performing Search and Rescue is fertile ground for forging shipmates. Demanding environments, and ever-changing weather, force you to rely upon one another – to lean on one another – as crewmembers, as families, to accomplish the mission. And by doing so, you form that lifelong bond of being shipmates.

There is no greater compliment than being known as a great shipmate, and no better goal than to become a good one.

By all definitions, AST1 “Pepe” Carire (CAREER-A), U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarists Robert M. Joseph, Leo G. Lake, Paul G. Sadeck and

Rodney P. Thomas, and the Captain and crew of the M/V ANDES are all great shipmates!

There's another Shipmate who has recently crossed the bar, but is with us this evening I'm sure – and that's VADM Thomas Sargent – the first President and long time President Emeritus of this distinguished organization. I could not be more pleased that you have decided to rename your Gold Medal award in his honor. VADM Sargent certainly knew what it took to perform Search and Rescue. He served a good portion of his long and distinguished career at sea, including conducting WWII convoy escorts in the U-boat infested waters of the Atlantic, and as Commanding Officer of a Coast Guard crewed Navy sub-chaser...I am sure he is looking down on you with great pride this evening.

In my 35 years of Coast Guard service, 14 of which was at sea, I learned early on, and first-hand what goes into a Search and Rescue Case.

Search and Rescue is NOT a reality T.V. show.

Rather, it's the stuff of hard work, performed by regular people – who step forward, and put themselves in extreme situations where they face the real possibility of dying – all so that others might live. Tonight's citations once again tell this familiar story...

When you listen to the extraordinary deeds performed by these men and women, YOU can almost see them in action – faces wind and weather burned, but also seared with determination.

YOU can see into their eyes – windows to minds riding an emotional roller coaster, consumed with a search for survivors – while working to overcome wind, waves and weather –

These are the true *heroes in our midst* – and it's wonderful to be in their company this evening...

Tonight, I am delighted to recognize some of these extraordinary heroes ...

I would like to start off, however, by not only recognizing these heroes – but also their families and representatives...

AST1 “Pepe” Carire – his wife Leslie, Daughter Lei Ann, Father Salvadore—who travelled all the way from Puerto Rico to be here this evening – (and wife Leslie’s cousin Katherine Saavedra) – thank you for traveling to be present at this wonderful event – and thank you for your support of AST1.

His Flight Crew...Pilot LCDR Sean O’Brien

Flight Mech: PO James Althouse

(Pilot 2, LT James Kenshalo, is presently standing the watch)...

And Representatives from AIRSTA Atlantic City:

Master Chief (AETCM) Daniels

Senior Chief (AETCS) Ozuna

Senior Chief Mille (who is an AST)

Auxiliarists Mr. Leo and his wife Ms. Judy Lake,

    Their Son Jason and his wife Lynn Lake,

    And their Mother, Celeste Lake...Thank you.

Mr. Robert Joseph, (Award Recipient) and his wife Margie,

Mr. Paul Sadeck, (Award Recipient) and his wife Lorraine Sadeck,

Mr. Rodney (Award Recipient) -- Thank you...

    And the Captain and Crew of the M/V ANDRES, representatives of the Tsakos Group, and their Friends and Family – thank you for your extraordinary efforts, for your presence here this evening – and for carrying forward the AMVER program – which has been responsible for saving the

lives of hundreds of mariners when they are in peril from the sea, and far from any Coast Guard assets – but close to your shipping lanes...!

It's great to have you here! You are truly valued partners and shipmates!

Now, on to our heroes.

What is striking and noteworthy is that all of these awardees went that extra step in performing their duties...

When AST1 “Pepe” Carire’s (CAREER-As) came upon an empty overturned raft on that freezing, dark blustery Christmas Eve night, with the seas raging 12 feet high, he could have concluded that a visual search was sufficient – or that it was otherwise too risky to deploy. He did not. His aircrew did not. Instead, they took the extra step. Not because they had to – but because AST1 Carire ***insisted*** on deploying. If you asked him why, he would simply and humbly tell you...he was just doing his job.



Similarly, the Auxiliary crew aboard Auxiliary facility M/V AMYJULIE was not required to get underway in the heavy New England winds and choppy seas of August 26, 2009 – but they did. And, they used their local knowledge to patrol areas they knew to be frequented by fisherman – finding two in a swapped vessel, and overcoming the barriers of language, stress and exposure to the elements, they elicited critical information from the two survivors – that led to finding a third survivor over a mile away...

And, the Captain and Crew of the M/V ANDES, willingly answered the call. A call to assist a fellow mariner in distress. They unhesitatingly deviated their tanker from its commercial voyage, to search for fisherman...

In taking this extra step, all of this crews also gave something...they gave these distressed mariners the gift of life – of living another day – the opportunity to be with family, loved ones and friends one more time. And, perhaps they gave something even more – they gave the gift of hope and

faith in our fellow man. Their extraordinary actions reassure all of us, that when our vessel falters on the sea, or we are in peril from the sea – someone – some hero like those recognized here this evening -- will step forward to search for and save us...

Thank you all for your outstanding and selfless service.

*Semper Paratus*