



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

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Family Rescued From Small Boat in Strait of Juan De Fuca AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) Honors Member of C-PORT with Lifesaving Award



C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) and AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) celebrated and presented lifesaving awards to a number of marine assistance operators at the 24th Annual C-PORT Conference Awards Banquet held on January 25, 2011 at Long Beach, CA. "This is the first year AFRAS attended and presented an award to one of our operators," Tina Cardone, Executive Director stated. "It was a great honor to have Captain Gabriel Kinney, USCG (Ret) and President of AFRAS (Association For Rescue At Sea) present this award." Cardone explained that AFRAS had expressed a desire to

establish a program, in cooperation with C-PORT, to annually recognize a deserving member of C-PORT that has shown exceptional skill and determination to save lives during a rescue incident in the maritime environment. The Award is to be conferred on an individual or group of individuals who perform exceptional acts in attempting to save life in the maritime environment. Instances where the rescuer places their own life at risk were given highest consideration. In addition to the AFRAS Award, Captain David McBride, Chief, USCG Office of Search and Rescue presented Distinguished Service and Meritorious Service Awards to a number of deserving individuals on behalf of C-PORT.

Receiving the First AFRAS Award presented in conjunction with C-PORT were Roger Slade and his daughter Andrenika (Nika) Slade of Marine Assist of Port Hadlock/Vessel Assist Port Hadlock. On July 23, 2010, at the convergence of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Admiralty Inlet, Washington State, is a notorious bar or tidal rip at the entrance to Puget Sound. That night winds were out of the NE at 25-30 knots gusting to 45 knots. Seas were 10' to 15' with a strong (2 knot) ebb current opposing. The story began at approximately 8:00 PM. Roger received a call from US Coast Guard Group Port Angeles advising that they had received a report of a 10-15 foot open boat adrift off the beach at Fort Warden State Park with four people on board "waving their arms". Slade deployed their 26' Munson *Negotiator* while East Jefferson County Fire and Rescue also alerted to the small vessel adrift, dispatched their 22' rescue boat *Volunteer* with four crewmen aboard to respond. Slade stood by as *Volunteer* first attempted to bring the small boat in tow without success. Slade saw the difficulty the *Volunteer* crew was having and was concerned that the stricken boat was about to capsize with the rescue boat being thrown down up on it. Slade advised *Volunteer* to cast-off the line and made the attempt to secure the vessel onboard *Negotiator* with *Volunteer* standing by to act as backup.

Roger maneuvered *Negotiator* to leeward of the drifting boat enabling the small boat to drift down, beam to beam, while Nika placed herself on deck to receive it. Nika was able to secure the stricken boat to *Negotiator's* port beam. Roger was too occupied keeping station in the heavy seas to assist. The small boat was nearly awash. The passengers, a mother, two children, and an adult female friend,



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were in a panic, had no PFD's neither donned nor on board, and were clearly suffering from exposure in the high winds and the 55° water.

In the midst of this rapidly escalating scenario, Nika calmly assisted the passengers and lifted each one from the nearly swamped boat to the deck of *Negotiator*, injuring herself in the process. Nika led each passenger inside the heated wheelhouse and forward compartment and wrapped them in blankets, constantly assuring them they were safe now. All were suffering from hypothermia. One of the survivors was having an anxiety attack and was having a great deal of difficulty breathing. A younger child, a diabetic, was quiet and the boy's mother stated he was about to go into insulin shock. One woman was vomiting, while the mother just seemed to be exhausted. Roger had his hands full piloting through the rip and could do nothing to help Nika with the passengers. Nika administered First Aid, comforting all until Roger was able to safely maneuver the vessel back to safety. Only after the passengers were safely transferred to the waiting EMTs did Nika seek attention for her own injuries. After the incident, at the debriefing with East Jefferson County Fire and Rescue, the Chief graciously pointed out that without Slades' participation, there could well have had eight people rather than four to rescue.

"C-PORT congratulates Roger and Nika Slade and is very proud to have them as members of our association," remarked Chris Shaffner, C-PORT Chairman. "This is what we do and it's great to have one of our members recognized for their service with this prestigious award."

C-PORT was founded in 1986 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. The association was created in part to afford a means of cooperation with the government in matters of national concern; to provide an objective, self-regulating body for the marine assistance industry; and to promote, through legislative, regulatory, and governmental initiatives, the maintenance and expansion of the marine assistance industry. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit www.cport.us.

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