



# The Amver Bulletin

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Summer 2006

## Special points of interest:

- Amver celebrates record breaking year
- Irish Rowers Rescued
- Numerous Amver vessels perform rescues

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## Amver, breaking records in 2006

The Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System has seen an incredible increase in participation, award eligible vessels, message traffic, and lives saved in 2006.

So far this year the average daily on plot has surpassed the 3,100 level every day! The highest all time daily on plot average was May 13, 2006 with 3,348 vessels available to divert and assist mariners in distress.

Message traffic has increased significantly as well. On July 26, 2006 over 6,000 messages were processed by the Amver data center in West Virginia. This is a 69% increase over the same day last year.

As of July 28, 2006 Amver has saved 286 lives with an additional 124 lives assisted. Amver rescued 177 lives in 2005. This should serve as a clear reminder of the dangerous nature of the seas.

As of June, 2006 an additional 529 vessels have been enrolled in Amver. This underscores the value of Amver and signals the emphasis placed on this vital system by those willing to ensure they are available to assist when called upon.

Amver awardees are up 11% as well for 2005. Almost 4,500 ships will receive the coveted Amver recognition award for maintaining 128 days, or more, on plot for a calendar year.

Together, we can emphasize the positive side of shipping. Together, the world can learn the value of vessels on the high seas and the spirit of cooperation between government and industry.

Amver has approximately 10 percent of the worlds ocean going vessels enrolled in its safety network. Let us work together to increase participation. If we cannot make the oceans more forgiving, perhaps we can increase the likelihood that a fellow mariner will be available to assist when necessary.

If your vessel is not enrolled, visit [www.amver.com](http://www.amver.com) and sign up today.

## Atlantic Challenge Rowers Rescued



On January 8, 2006

Gearoid Towey and Ciaran Lewis were rowing as part of the Atlantic Challenge when their ocean going rowboat capsized and broke apart in heavy seas. The Amver participating M/V HISPANIA SPIRIT was di-

verted by the United States Coast Guard's Atlantic Area Rescue Coordination Center, recovered the rowers and returned them to Spain where they were reunited with their friends.

Photo courtesy of Woodvale Events

## GREENWICH MAERSK Rescues 77 Refugees

On February 15, 2006 the United States Coast Guard's Eleventh District received a telephone call from the United States Embassy in Ecuador stating a vessel with approximately 47 refugees was adrift 155 nautical miles west of El Salvador.

The Amver participating M/V GREENWICH MAERSK was diverted to assist. When the GREENWICH MAERSK arrived on scene they immediately began rescue operations. A total of 77 refugees were embarked, given a medical check up and provided food and water. The refugees stated they had been adrift for 15 days.



The United States Coast Guard coordinated the transfer of the refugees from the GREENWICH MAERSK to a United States Navy vessel who, in turn, transferred the refugees to the United States Coast Guard Cutter MORGENTHAU.

The M/V GREENWICH MAERSK

continued to her next port of call in Japan.

In a message sent to the master and crew of the GREENWICH MAERSK, United States Coast Guard Captain Thomas Cullen, Chief of Response for the Eleventh District stated "I recognize your voyage was delayed by nearly 35 hours and am very grateful for your truly extraordinary actions that directly resulted in the rescue of 77 migrants".

Photo Courtesy of Maersk Marine Services

## Sailboat struck by whale sinks 400 nm North of Hawaii



On July 25, 2006 the United States Coast Guard's Four-

teenth District received notification that four people had abandoned their sailing vessel after it had been

struck by a whale and was sinking.

The Amver participating M/V MAERSK DARWIN was requested to divert and assist.

Fortunately, the MAERSK DARWIN located the four survivors in their lift raft and hoisted them to safety. They were transferred to a fishing vessel and taken back to Hawaii without further incident.



Photos courtesy of Zodiac Maritime Industries.

## Amver Contact Information Change

The United States Coast Guard, in keeping up with ever changing technology, has upgraded its email servers requiring a change in email addresses for the Amver staff in New York City. Benjamin Strong can now be reached at [benjamin.m.strong@uscg.mil](mailto:benjamin.m.strong@uscg.mil) and Beverly Howard can be reached at

[Beverly.a.howard@uscg.mil](mailto:Beverly.a.howard@uscg.mil). Please update your address books.

Companies should be aware that the proper email address for sail plans, position reports, diversion and arrival reports remains [amvermsg@amver.com](mailto:amvermsg@amver.com) or [amvermsg@amver.org](mailto:amvermsg@amver.org). Additional

information can be found in the Amver User's Manual available at <http://www.amver.com/manual.htm>

Please do not send Amver message traffic to USCG Rescue Coordination Centers.

# Amver vessel HUAL TRANSPORTER assists in evacuation of Beirut

On July 18, 2006 the Swedish Government chartered the Amver participant M/V HUAL TRANSPORTER to assist in the evacuation of approximately 1,000 people from the Port of Beirut.



Of the 1,000 people aboard, almost 200 were Americans. This use of commercial ships to evacuate large numbers of people in crisis should serve as a reminder of the importance of both commercial shipping and Amver. The Amver database was not used to query available ships in the area. It is, however, reassuring to know Amver vessels are available almost everywhere in the world, able to assist when necessary. Hoegh shipping demonstrated that commercial vessels are, sometimes, better suited than military vessels for these types of situations.

Hoegh shipping is commended for



their willingness to assist those in distress.

Photos courtesy of Hoegh Shipping.

# Cruise ship rescues migrants adrift off Cuban coast

July remained a busy month as the cruise ship CARNIVAL VALOR rescued 12 Cuban migrants adrift in a rustic vessel taking on water just off the Cuban coast.

This type of rescue has sparked some debate in the maritime community.

On June 1, 2006 the International Maritime Organization (IMO) released new amendments to two con-

ventions concerning the treatment of persons rescued at sea. These amendments can be found on the IMO's website at <http://www.imo.org/home.asp>.

Carnival Cruise lines is commended for its swift action and treatment of the survivors in this case.

Photos courtesy of Carnival Cruise Lines.



# Can you identify this picture Winner!

Captain Ben Edleman of Tybee Island, Georgia correctly identified this picture as the first Amver center in the old Customs House in New York City. The computer was an IBM RAMAC 305 system



and the people pictured are various shipping executives along with the first commander of Amver, Commander Paul Burhorst. Captain

Edleman (then a Petty Officer First Class) is pictured on the right working at the Amver center. Thanks to him for providing this photo!



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*Saving Lives at Sea since 1958*

Visit us on the web at  
[www.amver.com](http://www.amver.com)

*Amver, sponsored by the United States Coast Guard, is a unique computer based, and voluntary ship reporting system used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea. With Amver, rescue coordinators can identify participating ships in the area of distress and divert the best suited ship to respond.*

*Amver's mission is to quickly provide search and rescue authorities, on demand, accurate information on the positions and characteristics of vessels near a reported distress.*

## Notes from New York



As most of us swelter through an incredible heat wave the Amver message validation team in West Virginia is heating up

as well. July broke all records with over 6,000 Amver messages received in one day!

The increase in Amver traffic is good news. Despite recent changes at IMO requiring the implementation of some sort of mandatory vessel tracking scheme, Amver remains as relevant as ever.

I want to leave you with a picture taken by crew members of the M/V

MOL CALLAO upon rescuing Mr. Taoriti Atauea. The photo is from the gunwales of his vessel where he tracked his time adrift at sea.

Mr. Atauea had been adrift for 16 days. He survived on fish he caught and dried on the seat of his small boat. He fashioned a rain water collection device from a one gallon jug. The bottom line is that he survived, as marked on the sides of his tiny boat.

He was rescued because of a mariners willingness to help another mariner in distress.

This is what Amver is about and I hope it

serves as a reminder as to why we do what we do. I sincerely thank Andrew Weir shipping for providing this incredible photograph.

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