

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, JR.
AMVER AWARDS CEREMONY

JULY 3, 1992

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

Event: Brief remarks.

- Thank you very much, Vice Admiral Welling, for the invitation to be here this evening. I'd like to welcome our guests from across the state and across the seas. It's a pleasure to be in the same room with so many distinguished members of the maritime community.
- As the old saying goes -- "A man who is not afraid of the sea will soon be drowned." Having been in the Merchant Marine I can attest to the fact that the ocean is no place for complacency. Storms, reefs, and ship accidents can and do happen to the best of captains, and without timely assistance an emergency can turn into a tragedy. That's why maximum participation in the AMVER network is crucial.
- No doubt, if an AMVER vessel would have been around when the S. S. Minnow went aground, the Skipper and the others would have been rescued earlier from Gilligan's Island!

- AMVER, as you all know, uses a sophisticated data base to provide vital search and rescue information. However, these computers -- advanced as they are -- can only relay information.
- What really makes the system work is the commitment of vessel masters, radio officers, owners and others who turn that information into lifesaving action. By voluntarily joining AMVER you have shown your willingness to put human life above considerations of cargo, profit, or nationality.
- One of the best things about the AMVER network is its international character. The fury of the sea knows no flag or registry. And when your ship is sinking you don't ask the nationality of the person throwing you the life preserver.
- We have numerous examples of adversaries helping each other on the high seas. In fact, the first Severe Storm at Sea Rescue Award went to a Coast Guard Cutter crew which saved a number of Russian sailors.

- AMVER is truly a unique coupling of high technology with humanitarian principles. It is a prime example of turning swords into plowshares. In 1958 when the network was created, the Cold War was in full swing. Yet, there were visionaries who saw the potential for peaceful application of this technology -- who sought to sow the seeds of international cooperation through its wider application.
- If the AMVER system is going to continue to succeed, we need more international cooperation. More ships need to be registered. More captains and companies need to become involved. We need to see more ships flying the colored AMVER pennants -- especially the purple ones, which signify 10 years of service.
- We salute all of you who willingly became members of the lifesaving AMVER network. A network which has made a difference in the lives of many a stranded sailor on board a sinking ship.
- Keep up the good work.
- On that note I give you my good friend Admiral J. William Kime -- Commandant of the United States Coast Guard.

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