



# Environment Canada

## Canadian VOS Program Special Award

*Roland Kleer,  
PMO Canadian VOS Program*

In the Ontario Region of the VOS program, there are approximately 80 participating vessels in the Canadian VOS Program, and the Individual Observer Award is presented to the top 20 observers each year. In 2001, the top observer performed 1,198 voluntary observations.

The award changes from year to year. Each year the PMO office comes up with something unique. The award for 2001 is a hardcover book on Canadian Service ships, Coast Guard, etc. Inside each book is a personalized nameplate from the Government of Canada recognizing the voluntary work done by the observers. The observers look forward to the award each year and compete for the honour of receiving one, which in turn helps the VOS program because it means that there will be more observations reported.

The observers are never told in advance what the award will be for the year, so there is always some anticipation generated among the ships' crews.

If one were to look at the number of shipwrecks on the Great Lakes historically, the importance of these

voluntary observations becomes self evident. The Great Lakes can and do whip up some deadly storms, especially in the fall, so I like to hand out last year's award in mid to late summer, in order to encourage the observers to do even more observations for the next award. That is the reason we like to make the award something substantial, something of value.



**Roland Kleer PMO Ontario presenting the Individual Observer Award for the Ontario VOS region for the year 2000 to Quartermaster Steve O'Connell on the Canadian Ship Griffon.**

Over half the winners are "regulars," meaning they win an award almost every year. They spur each other on to do more observations, which in turn makes marine forecasting much easier.

It's a simple formula: more coverage and observations translates into more accurate forecasts.

Everybody wins. ↓