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## Ari Afrizil: A Great Tsunami Survivor Story



**Ari Afrizil (inset) and his raft  
as seen from the ship that found him**



**Ari Afrizil's raft**

January 11, 2005

by Kevin Caruso

One of the greatest survival stories of the tsunami disaster is that of Ari Afrizil.

Afrizil,22, was working on a construction site on

December 26 in the province of Aceh, Indonesia, when the earthquake hit.

“The earthquake lasted about 15 minutes,” Afrizil said. “Then the waves came; big, big waves that slammed down hard on us.”

It was then that Afrizil and his co-workers were swept away by the tsunami.

Afrizil grabbed on to a piece of wood and held tight. But he kept getting pushed further and further out to sea.

"I prayed and prayed. I told God I don't want to die ... I worried about my elderly parents and asked for a chance to take care of them," he said. "As if my prayers were answered, a broken (boat) floated toward me a few days later."

On the fifth day, he spotted a large fishing raft and swam out to it hoping that there would be someone aboard; but there was no one.

However, he found some badly needed bottles of water.

As he floated along, he saw some coconuts on the water. Starving, he grabbed them, husked them with his teeth, and ate them.

The coconuts and the water kept him alive.

He saw ship after ship pass by as he frantically waved and yelled for help to them; but no one saw him.

Until a ship named the “Al Yamamah” passed by and spotted the raft.

“I did not expect to find any survivors,” said John R. Kennedy, the ship’s captain.

“We immediately went alongside the raft and threw a line to him,” said Kennedy. He also said Afrizil looked fine, besides his parched lips. He was even able to climb up onto the ship without help.

Afrizil was given a medical check-up and was in good health.

Amazingly, he survived his two-weeks at sea with no apparent negative health affects.

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