



Company of Master Mariners of Canada

# From the Bridge

## The Newsletter of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada

[www.mastermariners.ca](http://www.mastermariners.ca)

May 2009

*The Company of Master Mariners of Canada is a corporation established to serve the shipping industry, further the efficiency of the sea service and uphold the status, dignity and prestige of Master Mariners.*

### FROM THE MASTER'S DESK

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a busy period of activity for the Company and the marine industry since the last issue of "From the Bridge". Piracy is still high on the list of phenomena, but also to be included are freight rates, ships being laid up, crew shortages, re-routing of cruise vessels and criminalisation. On the Company front, our Divisions have been busy with cadet recruiting, new members, conferences and seminars, and strategic planning. (Please remember to nominate a Divisional representative to the committee developing the Action Plans for the Strategic Plan!). Captain Wallace attended the Annual General Meeting of our sister organisation, Council of American Master Mariners (CAMM) <http://www.mastermariner.org/> in Galveston. I attended the Annual General Assembly of the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA) <http://www.ifsma.org/> in Rio de Janeiro. You can expect reports on the conferences and Meetings in the near future. I shall send my report to the Divisions and request it to be published on the web page.



Piracy took on a new dimension when the pirates from Somalia attempted to take a US registered vessel with a full crew of US citizens. The attempt on the *Maersk Alabama* has been a turning point in the piracy counter actions. The results of the attempt have been well publicised, but beyond the news media reports, the United Nations, European Union, Governments of maritime nations, and the Government of Somalia have spoken out against piracy; and various proposals have been put in hand. You may be aware that CAMM gave a press release suggesting various retaliatory processes, including the arming of merchant vessels, their crews, or employing mercenaries, and about which I wrote to the President of CAMM in an open letter. IFSMA has indicated it does not support arming merchant vessels, but cannot intercede in matters of national interest (US ship will full US Crew). I copy the following from IFSMA Newsletter No. 57:

*"But our shipmasters strongly oppose the idea of arming the ships either with weapons for seafarers to use or having an armed force on board."*

As of the middle of last month 18 vessels and about 300 crewmembers were being held by pirates in the waters off Somalia. This deplorable situation must be contained and controlled and the prospect of piracy anywhere in the world must be eliminated.

I had the pleasure of meeting with members of the Vancouver Island Division, the Victoria Branch of the Vancouver Division and the Vancouver Division in April. Captain Robert Osborne has recently stepped down as Divisional Master of the Island Division. Captain Osborne was elected to the position of Divisional Master when the Division was inaugurated, and I am sure you will join with me in thanking him for all his good work and wish him well in the future. Captain Geoffrey Vale is serving as interim Divisional Master, and I wish him success when he is confirmed at the Divisional AGM.

On 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April, the Maritimes Division in conjunction with the Marine Affairs Programme of Dalhousie University staged the third annual seminar "Arctic Shipping: Planning for Emergencies." The seminar was preceded by a half day table top exercise in which a passenger vessel sustained damage, and the roles were undertaken by the people who would be involved in a real situation. A report on this seminar and the exercise is being developed by Captain Angus McDonald. Attending these proceedings were the Secretary General of IFSMA, Rodger MacDonald, and the Chief Executive of the Nautical Institute, Philip Wake. In summing up, both congratulated the CMMC, Dalhousie and particularly the role playing participants. The seminar highlighted some shortfalls in the actions, as was intended, and urged those who may be involved in Arctic operations to continue the processes started by the seminar.

Captain Ratch Wallace attended the CAMM AGM in Galveston. CAMM is a sister organisation having similar interests to ours and similar positions about which the industry needs to be aware. I wrote to the President of CAMM and invited him to attend our AGM in Halifax. Captain Wallace will be making a more detailed report on the Proceedings.

The AGA of IFSMA took place in Rio de Janeiro on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> May. I had the pleasure of attending and presented a paper "*e-Navigation, Concepts and its Effects on Watchkeeping and Training*" (copy to be published on our web site). IFSMA members' positions and resolutions were debated and reflect the concerns of Master Mariners and Officers throughout the world. In particular, concerns about piracy, criminalisation, fatigue and operational safety, safe manning, environmental concerns including SOx and NOx, ballast water, marine wind farms, shortage of qualified officers, fair treatment of seafarers (ILO code) and SOLAS. In his report, Captain MacDonald, Secretary General of IFSMA, again praised the Maritimes Division for their informative seminar, recommended that a certification process should be considered for navigating officers in Arctic and Antarctic Waters, and supported the use of the role-playing exercises for other seminars.

IFSMA will be holding its AGA in 2010 in the Philippines, to coincide with the IMO STW sub-committee meetings taking place there. However, I was pleased to put in a bid for the AGA to take place in Halifax in 2011, and although it will not be confirmed until 2010, the presentation was well received.

After our long winter you can put the snow blower away and plant your garden. I wish you health and fine weather to enjoy the fruits of your labours.

Sincerely, Peter Turner, National Master.

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## CROSSED OVER THE BAR

**Captain Molly Kool – Molly Kool Carney: Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> 1916 – Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 2009.** North America's first registered female sea captain died February 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 at the age of 93 in a seniors' home in Bangor, Maine. "Although she was Master for just five years, her seafaring instincts never waned. On the 2003 maiden voyage of the *Molly Kool*, a St. Andrews-based sailing ship named in her honour, when the Captain had trouble lowering the sails, Kool told him what to do."

**Captain Molly Kool – by ALLISON BREWER.** November 7, 2000. Long before the Hollywood movie *The Perfect Storm*, and the adventures of the men on the *Andrea Gail*, women had begun to make an impact on life on the sea. Given the seafaring traditions of the Atlantic Provinces of Canada, it is perhaps fitting that the first North American woman to be a ticketed sea captain came from a small New Brunswick village in the Bay of Fundy.

Captain Gunderson of the Norwegian steamship, *Salamis*, had no idea what lay ahead that summer afternoon in 1938 as he steamed up the Petitcodiac River to the public wharf at Moncton. He wanted a berth before low tide forced him back down river, and the crusty old Norseman was accustomed to getting his way. A single bellow from the powerful whistle of his steamer was enough to send one of the two vessels docked at the wharf on its way. But the other, a small scow named the *Jean K*, her decks piled high with lumber, stood her ground. She was there first and there she intended to stay.

The steamer closed in and two sailors jumped aboard the *Jean K* intending to cast off her lines and be done with it. To their astonishment, they were met by a woman brandishing a stout piece of lumber, ordering them off the scow. The woman meant business, and the young men were sent scurrying back to their ship.

Although they didn't know it then, it turned out the seamen had tangled with **Molly Kool**, First Mate on her father's scow and soon to be the **first registered woman sea captain in North America; second in the world** (the first was a woman from Russia who was ticketed just a few months before Molly). Molly's story began in Alma, one of the small villages that line the coast on the New Brunswick side of the Bay of Fundy. It was there on April 19, 1939, that she received a telegram from the navigation school at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia containing the news she had passed the exam for her Master's Ticket, an accomplishment that would give her a certificate of competency as a Master Mariner. Her new status entitled her to command a steam or motor propelled vessel anywhere on the coast of North America. At the time, there were no provisions to reflect that women might ever acquire the experience and ability to command such a vessel, so the shipping laws of Canada had to be rewritten to include them.

Indeed, her wish to become a Master Mariner caused an uproar at the time. It was considered a joke that a woman would want to study navigation. The laughter, however, subsided when it became clear Molly was among the best students in the class.

Molly was born February 23, 1916, the daughter of Myrtle Anderson and Paul Kool. She was the second of five children – four girls and a boy. Her father came to Canada from Holland in 1912 and settled in Alma, where he built a small coastal freighter christened the *Jean K*, after his eldest daughter. But it was Molly who adapted the best to life on the Bay; a life aptly described by Francis Bowker at a dinner in Molly's honour in 1979, "The world she faced was a world of ships and men and a hard life of freighting lumber, logs, gravel or such freight as could earn a living on the cold waters of



the Bay of Fundy, in fog and snow, in gales and calms, ploughing through drift ice, fighting and working the greatest tides in the world and struggling to stay alongside a ship in rough weather as lumber was loaded aboard for other parts".

It was Molly's father who taught her the ways of the sea. Paul Kool was a stern but gentle father who never felt the need to go over the same lesson twice. Molly learned to do everything on the scow. She could repair the engine, run the winch, handle the lines and set the sails, but she was equally handy at cooking, sewing canvas or splicing rope as needed. Working a scow on the Bay of Fundy, one of the most unpredictable bodies of water in the world, could be treacherous. One time, the *Jean K* was run down by a steamer in dense fog. Molly, thrown overboard, then sucked under by thrashing propellers, managed to narrowly escape death by grabbing onto a floating timber. While passengers and crew on the steamer rained life rings around her, Molly yelled, "I'm already floating. Stop throwing useless stuff at me and send a boat!"

It was no wonder Molly captured the attention, if not the imagination, of the media during the 1940s, and they followed her career with some interest. Still, while newspaper accounts at the time portrayed her as pretty and frivolous, a girl adrift in a man's work, her action revealed she was a woman of courage, endurance and tenacity.

That is what the men on the *Salamis* found out. It seemed Captain Gunderson thought he could win a berth at the Moncton wharf by further bullying the small scow, so he used the force of his vessel to pry the *Jean K* loose. Molly and her deck mate jumped to safety just in time, and the *Jean K* drifted onto a mud flat. But Molly was still unwilling to back down, and after her lawyers finished with the hapless Captain Gunderson, the *Jean K* had been rewarded financially for her trouble and Molly's reputation as a force to be reckoned with was secure.

Molly sailed as a sea captain for five years before getting married to Ray Blaisdell of Bucksport, Maine, in 1944. She never went back to work on the sea, even though she would have qualified for any number of jobs aboard boats both Canadian and international. Blaisdell died, and she married John Carney of Orrington, Maine. They bought a boat to sail for pleasure. But Molly always worked, among other things selling Singer sewing machines for a living.

[http://section15.ca/features/people/2000/11/07/captain\\_molly\\_kool/](http://section15.ca/features/people/2000/11/07/captain_molly_kool/)

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#### **SHIPPING IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC: PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES**      **Capt. Angus McDonald, Maritimes.**

The Maritimes Division of the Company of Master Mariners of Canada held their 3<sup>rd</sup> Arctic Seminar in Halifax, Nova Scotia at Dalhousie University on April 22, 2009. About 120 attendees were welcomed by seminar chairman Capt. Jim Calvesbert and National Master, Capt. Peter Turner. A notable guest was the Hon. Willie Adams who represents the Arctic region of Nunavut in the Senate. Leaders in other nautical professional associations welcomed as guests were: Chief Executive Philip Wake, Nautical Institute, London and Capt. Rodger MacDonald, Secretary General of the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA) with headquarters also in London.

This year's seminar was preceded on April 21 by a Casualty Exercise Simulation prepared by Arctic experienced members Capt. Jack Gallagher and Capt. Anthony Potts, who were on the seminar committee. This exercise was set up similarly to the simulation exercises, entitled, "**The Master's Dilemma**" organized by the Vancouver Division in 2005 and by the Great Lakes Division in 2007. About 80 people attended the exercise.

**THE PLAY:** The scenario involved a small polar expedition cruise ship suffering ice damage in a side fuel tank and further hull damage with water ingress, while navigating Cardigan Strait with seven-tenths ice cover and a strong current. The owner of such a ship, Karlson Shipping of Halifax, allowed the scenario organizers to use their ship's drawings and Lloyd's Register arranged that a damage report and ship's data would be transmitted to the Ship Emergency Response Service (SERS) in London. Cardigan Strait is a narrow waterway in the territory of Nunavut. It lies between the eastern coast of Devon Island and the western coast of Ellesmere Island (80°N 79°W). Norwegian Bay opens to the north.

**THE PLAYERS:** The facilitator for the proceedings was Capt. Gallagher. "Players" included; Member, Capt. Colin Millar (who had been Chief Officer on Karlson's polar ship); Martin Karlson and George Myra, Karlson's Designated Person Ashore (DPA); Peter Timonin, Transport Canada, Northern; Wayne McCrae, Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC); Janet Twining, Coast Guard Emergency Response; Roger Percey, Environment Canada; Jack Scalia of GARD SA, Norway and New York (P&I/Insurance); Marcel Laroche, Lloyd's Register; Cdr. Alex Grant, Royal Canadian Navy; Dr. David Petrie, PRAXES Medical Emergency Specialists, Halifax; Capt. Pierre Murray, Marine Branch Manager, Transportation Safety Board (TSB). To set the scene, the proceedings opened with a short video showing Karlson's ship, *POLAR STAR*, cruising in the Antarctic. For the simulation, a chart of the area was projected on a big screen plus photos showing the topography of the area and also an ice chart, a note of weather conditions, current and tidal information. The nearest settlement was Grise Fjord (Pop: 146). The date was August 20, the time of the incident 2200. The ice-strengthened ship, built in 1969, was carrying 105 passengers, average age 55, and crew of 45, average age, 30.





**DREADED DRAMA** The scenario commenced with the OOW looking for leads, while some passengers were on deck looking for walrus. The vessel was doing about 3 knots when a bump was felt. The Master was called, the ship stopped and an inspection for damage carried out. Passengers and crew are ordered to muster at lifeboat stations while the Chief Officer and Chief Engineer are checking for damage. The Company's DPA was called and given a situation report including fuel leak. The ship was proceeding towards an anchorage about 20 miles distant. The DPA asked if the Master has contacted JRCC and CCG; reply, negative. The owner would assess the situation, gather his emergency response team; prepare to deal with authorities and the media while his marketing manager would speak with tour operators who have passengers on board. Owner is aware that some passengers with cell phones might call family (or their lawyers) and the media would be informed. Passengers see fuel leaking and are worried about the walrus herd. They plead with Master to do something for the walrus.

**WHO SHOULD BE CALLED:** The Master checks by radio for other vessels in his vicinity. The only reply is from the RCMP in Grise Fjord. The Chief Engineer reports water in No.6 tank as well as a fuel leak from No.4 tank. The owner advises Master to consult his Oil Pollution Emergency Plan and deal with the situation while the DPA calls Transport Canada (TC), JRCC, Flag State (Barbados) & P&I Club. TC called the Master for a situation report respecting passengers, ship condition and what are Master's intentions. JRCC, Trenton, has been informed by the RCMP. *HMCS TORONTO* is located off northeast Baffin Island but unable to proceed to casualty due to ice. JRCC responds by saying they are checking for ships or aircraft which could reach the casualty and preparing in case the situation deteriorates to one of distress.

CCG's Emergency Response person asks for status of oil spill and risks in the area and asked if the ship can contain and clean-up the spill. CCG informs owner that they will respond to the pollution and charge the owner. Environment Canada (EC) seeks information about spilled oil, type, amount spilled and direction of flow, apparently unaware of the concentration of ice in the area. EC agrees to cooperate with CCG and would call the Nunavut Emergency Measure Organization (EMO) in Iqaluit.

**ENTER - INSURANCE, CLASS, MEDIA AND MEDICS:** The owner decides to call P & I and Classification Society. Gard's New York office is represented in the scenario and responds with the advice that his office would prepare for the worst and be represented personally in an owner's office. They would set up a local account to get funds moving and have legal advice available as well as scientific advice on environmental impact of the oil spill. P&I's first concern is for life, then the environment, recognising that speed is of the essence and resources would be sought to minimize loss. The associate editor of the main newspaper in Halifax gives the media's reaction to the incident, stating that local radio stations would pick up on this newsworthy event and television stations might rent aircraft for photographic coverage. The Master does not have time for media interviews and would be concerned with his communications links being jammed by media calls so his owners should deal with them. The editor stated that media people are enterprising and persistent when they see a good story, especially where lives are at stake as in this case.

PRAXES Medical Emergency Services, informed that there is no doctor on board, seeks information on passengers and crew, especially elderly passengers who may suffer serious consequences of their traumatic experience. They would call JRCC re the availability of aircraft for a medevac and liaise with owner's emergency response team.

**COMPUTER AID:** The class society, LR, informs Master that they will call the SERS team in London for advice on stabilizing the ship's condition. SERS has 3,000 ships contracted, they are independent of class and they maintain an archive of computer models of ships with appropriate software as well as an advanced form of email service for quick communications. Participants and audience were able to see, projected on the screen, drawings, graphs and

calculations, taking in the results of shell damage, bending moments, shear force, effect on stability, list and trim. There was also a voice giving explanations. This was a very interesting feature of the Casualty Simulation which was good to see being acted out. For this exercise, SERS had pre-recorded their actions, having been provided with information and data. We have to thank LR for arranging it.

**THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY:** In the audience was Cdr. Ken Hansen of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University. He quickly canvassed a number of factors and built a simple simulation of the situation using stochastic modelling techniques (learned at the US Naval War College). The two basic questions were: (1) what is the probability that any lives will be lost and (2) what is the probability that an individual in the scenario would live or die. In his report, Cdr Hansen stated that the enormity of the Arctic places heavy emphasis on range, reliability and effectiveness of air responses to emergencies. Surface movements by land or sea, can be impeded seriously by ice conditions. Weather can be equally challenging and bad weather impedes air transport. Passengers and crew face serious consequences should they have to abandon ship for a barren shore-line, several miles distant through 7/10 ice cover and survive for an extended period to await aid kits being dropped by aircraft and subsequent rescue by helicopters or ship, a possibility dependent on weather. This quick analysis high-lighted how serious a threat to life can be a casualty in a remote area.

**CRITICS REVIEW:** After a coffee break, there was an open discussion on the scenario and an enthusiastic commentary on the casualty and how it was handled. Transport Canada's representative stated that they operate an aerial surveillance program and their aircraft could pick up aid kits/equipment and drop them on ship or shore; Natural Resources Canada has a major camp in the North and may be in range of their helicopters or twin Otters.

Senator Willie Adams from Nunavut observed that it is extremely important to consider the following potential difficulties when deciding to bring in twin Otter aircraft in that fjord area, to transport people to Resolute: (a) weather, fog; (b) limited capacity of aircraft, (c) only 25 communities in Nunavut might be able to accommodate a large number of survivors and (d) depending on time of year, regards the hours of daylight and darkness. In any case, one must depend upon the resources available in the North as too much time is needed to receive them from the South. As for the oil spilled, in ice infested water, containment and removal by conventional methods and equipment is not a practical solution.

**THE SEMINAR REPORT:** A full report on the Seminar of April 22 will be posted on the Company's web-site: [www.mastermariners.ca](http://www.mastermariners.ca) **Members are invited to comment on this Arctic Casualty Simulation including the reactions of the various parties involved and to communicate by e-mail to the Editor. This is a topic worthy of discussion among members of the Company. Now is your chance to be a critic, take it and HAVE YOUR SAY!**  
**The pictures were taken from the website of Polar Star Expeditions: <http://www.polarstarexpeditions.com/>**



**St. Lawrence Seaway hits 50.** Richard Corfe predicts major changes as the water route celebrates half a century of operation. By Nelson Wyatt THE CANADIAN PRESS Sun. Mar 29 2009

DIVERSIFICATION of cargo and more container traffic are among the things St. Lawrence Seaway president Richard Corfe sees in the international waterway's future as it celebrates its 50th birthday. Cargo navigating the 3,700-kilometre Seaway is now 90 per cent bulk — commodities such as grain and iron ore — and 10 per cent general, which includes finished products such as iron and steel from overseas. But Corfe expects those numbers to shift to 75 per cent bulk and 25 per cent general in the next few years. "I see a changing use of the seaway but I see it being very useful and very valuable," he said in a telephone interview.

The Seaway, which traverses parts of Canada and the United States, will kick off anniversary celebrations on March 31 when it opens for the 2009 season. Corfe said while it is tricky making predictions in the current recession, he's confident the economy will start turning around in 12 to 18 months. Cargo diversification has already started, he said, pointing to the shipping of windmill parts that end up in alternative energy installations. The rise in container traffic will also become more apparent as producing countries eventually ramp up to meet the needs of consuming nations like Canada and the United States, he said. Corfe said the Seaway was doing well until around last Thanksgiving when the bottom fell out of the economy. Even though traffic dropped by about five per cent from 2007 to 2008, Corfe said ships still moved about 40 million tonnes of cargo.

The water system is jointly administered by the U.S. government's *Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corp.* and the *St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp.*, a Canadian Crown entity. The Seaway provides access to and from the heart of North America through a series of 15 locks. The locks are each 233.5 metres long, 24.4 metres wide and 9.1 metres deep. It takes 45 minutes for a boat to pass through a lock.

The famous waterway was officially opened on June 26, 1959, with ceremonies presided over by then-U.S. president Dwight Eisenhower and Queen Elizabeth, who sailed through the St-Lambert and Cote-Ste-Catherine locks on the Royal Yacht Britannia. Ceremonies were held the next day in Massena, N.Y., with the Queen and then-vice-president Richard

Nixon. The United States originally was reluctant to join the project but signed on in 1954 when Canada said it would go it alone.

John Chalmers has seen a lot of the changes at the Seaway. The senior operations co-ordinator for the Welland Canal has worked there for 31 years, almost as many as his father before him.

"When I first started it was very exciting," recalled Chalmers, whose first job was helping to tie ships up at the docks. "We were dealing with ships and people from all over the world. It was 1978. The canal was extremely busy; it was pretty much at capacity at the time."

Things then were still being done much as they had been when the Welland Canal opened in 1932 and technology mostly consisted of push buttons and hand levers. The old operations centre had a room-sized computer and traffic was tracked using wooden ship models moving along a mock-up of the seaway. "The most technology we had was a few cameras," Chalmers said. "Back in those days we used Teletype to pass messages along — we still had typewriters." But traffic was heavy and some days there could be as many as 30 ships in the canal and another 70 waiting to enter. "We were constantly busy processing ships on the locks," he said. "There weren't many, if any, moments to catch your breath."

The 1980s, and changing traffic patterns, brought in innovations and more computers. The Seaway mock-up that was used to follow ship movement gave way to real-time satellite tracking and computerized traffic control. When the Seaway opens next week, it will boast the completion of a major renovation of the Welland Canal. "We've spent \$60 million on refurbishing all the mechanical equipment," Corfe said. He said all the mechanical rope-operated drum equipment has been switched over to hydraulic equipment to open the locks. Valves are now used to move the water in and out.

Other innovations taking the seaway into the next 50 years are laser detection for vessels entering the locks, a sophisticated 3D navigation charting system and global positioning systems to alert the operations centre to a vessel's exact location. Both Corfe and Chalmers noted the Seaway has adapted to changing times not only through technology but also in retraining and reassigning workers to new jobs as needed. "That's helped avoid job cuts", Chalmers said.

"In light of all the technological changes that have taken place, you would expect to see a lot of downsizing," he said. "They've managed to keep us employed and to develop us to get the skills to meet the new challenges." That's one of the reasons Chalmers says he loves his job. "It's interesting, exciting, challenging — a lot of neat stuff happens here."



**WASHINGTON March 2009 — The U.S. Coast Guard** announced its ongoing actions to reduce processing time for mariner credentials. The National Maritime Center (NMC), the Coast Guard's new centralized mariner credentialing processing facility in Martinsburg, W.Va., receives mariners' applications and conducts detailed evaluations to ensure the mariners' meet applicable requirements for the credentials sought. All mariners are evaluated in three areas including a professional qualification evaluation, a safety and security evaluation, and a medical evaluation.

The NMC has achieved notable progress toward this end since it centralized, including:

- Increasing the number of credentials issued by 135%
- Decreasing the average inventory age of applications by 49%
- Reducing cycle time to conduct professional qualification and safety and security evaluations.
- Achieving compliance with ISO 9001.

However, the NMC has faced a challenge processing credentials since late fall. A significant portion of delays in processing is attributable to the complexity of completing the application, which requires follow-up communication with mariners to obtain correct or additional information. However, the NMC acknowledges that 16 percent of the delays in processing mariners' applications are the result of production bottlenecks in the medical evaluation stage of the credential evaluation process.

"Over the past six months the NMC has issued more than 36,000 credentials with 18,000 of those credentials issued in less than 30 days," said Capt. David Stalfort commanding officer of the Coast Guard's National Maritime Center. "Unfortunately, the NMC's average processing time of 80 days is not yet where the Coast Guard wants it to be and that is why we are taking action to remedy the problem and ensure it does not occur in the future."

For more information about the NMC's Mariner Licensing and Documentation program visit:

<http://www.uscg.mil/nmc> or the Homeport site at <http://homeport.uscg.mil> and select Merchant Mariners

*There was more to the report but of course it does not apply to most readers of this newsletter. However it did lead me to the following story. It's different but I am sure the concept will work.*

## The Future of the U.S. Coast Guard's Merchant Mariner Credentialing Program

[www.uscg.mil/nmc/Whats\\_new\\_to\\_NMC/MMC\\_Program\\_Future\\_State\\_Story.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/Whats_new_to_NMC/MMC_Program_Future_State_Story.pdf)

*Over the years, improvements in technology have made our lives simpler. Below is a story about the U.S. Coast Guard's "Mariner Licensing and Documentation" program written from the future. The story illustrates what the world will look like when the NMC achieves its goal. The story appeared in February 2008 and was written by Captain David Stalfort, Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard, National Maritime Centre.*

### **Onboard *m.v* Renewed Hope, Malacca Straits, Andaman Sea. August 14<sup>th</sup> 2015**

The liner business today was not what Captain Scott had dreamt of when he chose the sea going career. In some ways it was harder, lonelier and more complicated. In other ways it was a great time to be a U.S. Merchant Mariner sailing around the world. Captain Scott looked out over the water from the bridge. The traffic in the Malacca Straits always worried him. He preferred to be on the bridge even though the Second Mate was experienced and had piloted the Straits several times. Suddenly the PDA on his belt chimed with the arrival of an e-mail. Pulling it from his hip with a quick downward glance, a sudden anxiety came over him. "How could I have forgotten again?" he sighed.

The e-mail was an auto-generated message from the U.S. Coast Guard's Merchant Mariner Credentialing Program; in particular it was the system at the backbone of the program – Merchant Mariner Secure Electronic Application System, or MM-SEAS. It reminded him that his license was due to expire in the next two days.

He cursed himself when he remembered that a week before, while crossing the Suez Canal bound from Hamburg to Singapore, he had received another in a series of reminder e-mails. He had said to himself, "I will take care of it when we are clear of the canal. One issue at a time!" But once the Suez transit was over he was so relieved that the reminder had slipped his mind.

Now, a week later and heading into Singapore he had still not taken care of it. Just one day was scheduled in port and he knew there would be no extra time. Apart from the normal port work, drills, class and internal audits were scheduled. As Captain Scott piloted the Strait he reflected on the daily pressures of a Master. He cursed the container vessel's schedule which gave him no time to rest or go ashore. The vast amount of paperwork and pressure associated with Port State Control (PSC) inspections in each port didn't help.

The Captain heard the bridge door creak and was relieved to see that it was the Chief Engineer. The Chief looked around, cursed the poor visibility and said, "What a mess! The traffic's bad enough out there without the weather making things worse. How's it going Captain?"

"Still recovering from lack of sleep and the backlash of work. How are you doing Chief?"

The Chief expressed his concern about his expiring license, trying to figure out how he will go about renewing with all the time planned at sea. Immediately the Captain was reminded of his own predicament and that the time had finally come to take care of it. He told the Chief that his own license would expire in two days.

Concerned the Chief asked, "What are you going to do during the next PSC document review? I remember hearing about how long the U.S. takes to issue licenses".

Captain Scott explained with a smile that it was no problem because he could do it online. He told the Chief that he was right to worry when talking about the old Mariner Licensing & Documentation Program ten years ago. "But today it is different. It took a while but the U.S. Coast Guard finally figured out how to do it right".

The Captain called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mate to keep watch and advised the Chief, who had a confused look on his face, to accompany him to the bridge wing as he went about renewing his license, 10 thousand miles away from the National Maritime Centre (NMC) located in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

The Captain sat in his chair and the wireless workstation established the Pacific satellite connection. Within moments he was online. The U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credentialing site (MMC) was in his "favourites" and made him smile as it opened – finally something easy and stress free.

As the page came up he said to the Chief, "We are in business!" He selected the "LOGIN" tab and entered his PIN followed by his password. The interactive program prompted him to place his right index finger on the biometric scanner located on the screen and to hit "SEND" when the print was captured. MM-SEAS instantly and securely verified his identity. His license details then flashed a red banner, "Renewal Due". He clicked "RENEW" and the initial screen immediately showed him what information had already been submitted to the NMC and what information was missing.

Captain Scott loved using the MMC website and he had, from time to time, logged into his personal account to keep up his sea service logs. The page showed him that his logs were up to date and already been reviewed and verified. "I still keep them by hand out of habit", he told the Chief with a grin. "But the funny thing is, I cannot tell you where they are in my cabin. But I know the ones I keep on line are perfectly accurate and secure".

Some of his STCW course renewals had been due when he was last on vacation so he had taken the opportunity to complete the training. Though he had hard copies of the certificates, the schools also sent the results electronically to the NMC using an automated service within MM-SEAS. The results were validated electronically. Though not surprised, he was relieved to see that his account had already been updated with the STCW refresher course results. Finally, someone he could count on.

No doubt from life as a Master, Captain Scott had battled hypertension over the past several years. His medication had helped immensely and, besides the fact that he had to take his pills daily and keep his prescription up to date, he sometimes forgot about it entirely. Years ago the NMC had issued him a waiver to sail with the medication and it had never been a problem since. With MM-SEAS online his primary care doctor was able, by using the website and electronic signatures, to validate that Scott's condition had not changed. Scott could see from the website that a few weeks ago the NMC had e-mailed his doctor to prompt him to go to the website and update the information from the

physical he had completed on Scott in Honolulu recently. He could also see that the doctor did not respond immediately so someone in West Virginia called him personally to remind him. The same day the doctor completed his part.

"What if all of that information wasn't already in the system?" asked the Chief.

"That is the great thing about the MMC Program," the Captain replied. "I receive periodic e-mails to remind me of my status and what is still needed. I always know where I stand and there is no more guess work about if and when I will receive my renewal."

The Captain continued, "Junior Officers can use the online wizards to see what they require for a raise in grade or endorsement. When I applied for my license years ago I had to read through the application packets and even some of the regulations to try to understand my options. In the end I had to go to Regional Examination Centre (REC) to try to figure it out. Not anymore! The website tells you what is needed in minutes as you step through the process. Now we just visit the RECs for certain examinations and if we need local licenses or pilotage endorsements."

The Captain and the Chief navigated the site for a few minutes marvelling at the ease at which the pages simplified the amazingly complex credentialing program. The Chief stared in stunned silence until finally he said, "I had no idea the US had so many variations of credentials. Do you realise that you have more inland credentials than most countries have total credentials?" With a chuckle they both realised why it has taken the Coast Guard so long to get to where they are today. "With the way they have streamlined credentialing I would not be surprised if simplifying the US Regulations is next," speculated the Captain.

Remembering the Malacca Straits Scott knew it was time to complete the transaction and get back to work. The final item in the "to do" list was the question, "How would you like to pay?" Scott pulled out a credit card and entered the details. "Processing" appeared on the screen and he waited. In seconds he was shown his confirmation and receipt with the option to e-mail them to himself. The next screen informed him the process was complete and the IMO database on mariners had been updated with the required information. He knew with certainty that the bar code on his passport-style combined merchant mariner credential would pass the scan in his next port of call.

"Guess you are done", said the Chief, turning to leave.

The Captain almost laughed out loud, "Not quite yet, Chief". In bold letters in the middle of the screen was the prompt: "Are there any other immediate interested parties who should be informed?" Scott uploaded the e-mail addresses of the agents in the next four ports, the Charterers, Owners and the PSC officials in the next two countries, including Singapore, and pressed "Send".

Total time to renew: 15 minutes, including surfing the NMC MMC website for fun.

Captain Scott had his renewed license and all parties were informed. He looked at the Chief who seemed impressed but not too cheerful. Surprised the Captain asked, "What's the matter?" "I need to go. I have to return to my cabin and complete the paperwork in preparation for the PSC inspection in Singapore. Perhaps one day PSC inspections will be as easy as renewing my license."

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Following the theme of the **Weird water stories** that appeared in the November 2008 edition, it seemed that I had another epic tale about objects assisting the monitoring of ocean currents. As you will see it was not so.

**Mammary Loss:** Early this year, we were devastated to hear of the loss of a shipment of 130,000 inflatable breasts en route to Australia. The breasts, worth US\$150,000 (if you are into that kind of thing), were intended to be a free gift in Ralph magazine - but vanished before arriving at their destination. The container reportedly left the docks in Beijing but turned up empty in Sydney...cue a reward for their discovery. Yes, you guessed, a kind of "booby" prize.

Anyway, the shipping authorities were alerted and they issued a Nav Warning for all mariners to be on the look out for 65,000 pairs of fake breasts bobbing around. The magazine's editor urged anyone with information to contact the magazine, saying: "If anyone finds any washed up on a beach, please let us know. We want our boobs back."

However, after a week of fretting, the chest consignment turned up in Melbourne, having been loaded onto the wrong ship. Hooray! So they didn't get stolen, or fall overboard after all, and thankfully the lucky Ralph readers have been reunited with their fake, plastic bosoms. Though quite what they are expected to do with them is another matter.

The last time this part of the anatomy caused a fuss in Aussie waters was during the 2000 Olympic Breast Stroke competition, when a blonde, brunette and redhead raced across Sydney Harbour. The brunette came in first, the redhead second. The blonde finally reached the shore completely exhausted. After being revived with blankets and a Fosters, she remarked, "I don't want to complain, but I'm pretty sure the other two girls used their arms".

<http://www.shiptalk.com/newsletter.html>

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#### **INCREASED RISK OF COLLISIONS OFF SINGAPORE April 2, 2009 <http://www.american-club.com/>**

Members (of the American Steamship Owners Mutual Protection and Indemnity Association, Inc.) whose vessels are transiting through, or anchoring in, the territorial waters of Singapore, including the Eastern and Western outer port limit (OPL) anchorages of Singapore, are urged to be especially careful in the avoidance of collisions with other ships. The Club's very recent experience of certain, happily only small, collision claims, together with more general comment obtained from other sources, point to an increased risk of collisions in this area where there has been a large accumulation of vessels lying at anchor.

It would appear that the most recent spate of collisions has occurred at the Eastern OPL anchorage, where a number of ships manoeuvring within the area have collided with vessels already at anchor.

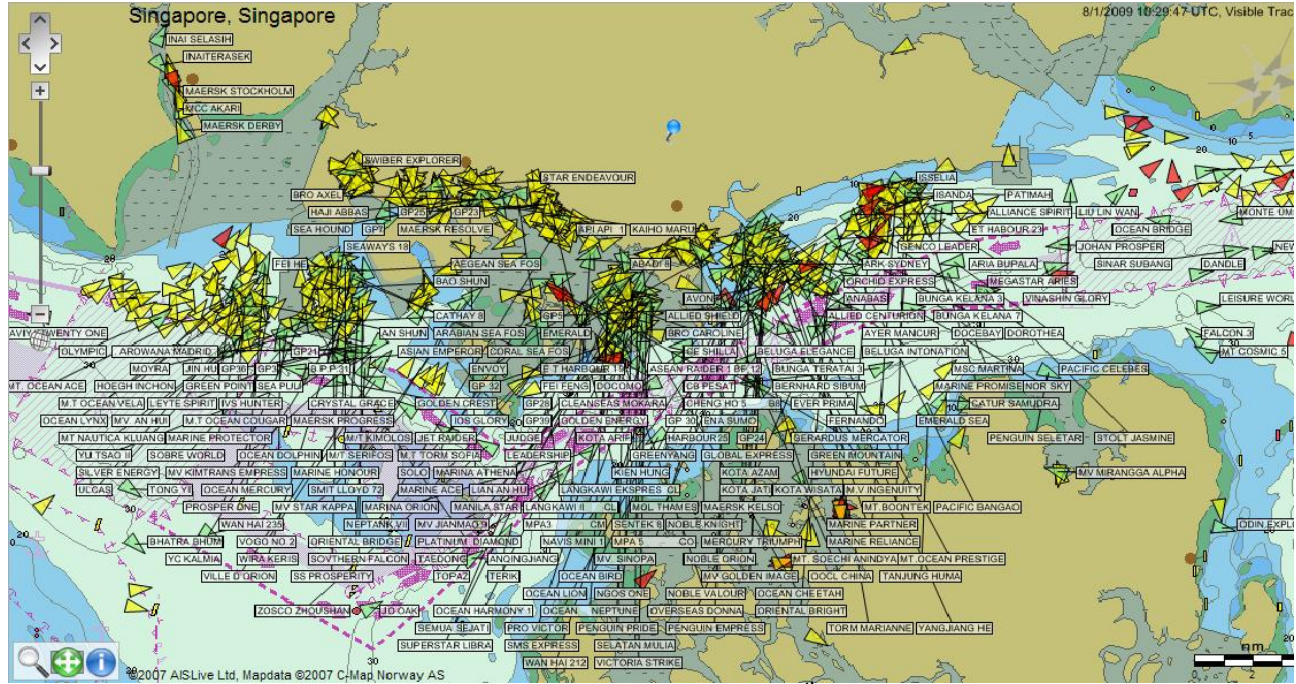
Evidence suggests that the collisions have for the most part occurred due to the manoeuvring vessel's failure to correctly estimate the strength and direction of the local tidal currents. In addition, in the case of unexpected weather changes involving thunderstorms etc., there have also been contacts between vessels already lying at anchor.

Experts familiar with these circumstances suggest that caution should be used in selecting a suitable location to anchor, with due regard to the proximity of other anchored vessels, the strength and direction of prevailing tidal currents and the speed and direction of the wind at the time manoeuvring takes place.

While a vessel is at anchor, it is advised that a full anchor watch should be maintained at all times, with the vessel's engines being kept in an appropriate state of readiness. It is also suggested that bridge watch keeper(s) should not be distracted from their duties by other work at that time.

The congestion at Singapore has become a matter of considerable anecdotal comment – not least for those flying into Changi Airport, on certain approaches, who are best able to see with their own eyes the multitude of vessels anchored in the areas in question!

Thanks are due to Messrs. London Offshore Consultants for their assistance in compiling the general observations contained herein.



**AIS Signals: Singapore January 8<sup>th</sup> 2009**

### "MAKE OFFICERS' SALARIES AND VESSEL MAINTENANCE LESS-MARKET DEPENDENT!"

Friday, 27 February 2009 <http://www.mglobal.com/news/dailystorydetails.cfm?storyid=9689&type=2>

**Anglo-Eastern CEO, Peter Cremers**, speaking at Marine Money's annual Ship Finance conference in Hamburg, Germany, stressed the need to maintain high safety standards in the face of current economic climate and to make officers' salaries and preventive maintenance costs less market dependent.

He said, "As I know for sure, over the life span of a ship, correct and timely maintenance combined with a happy and professional, experienced crew, is the most economical way to run a ship".

He spoke of the benefits of 3rd party ship management, maximizing revenue, maintaining value and extending the life of ships through controlling expenses and managing preventive maintenance for ships.

"The economic downturn itself is not the only problem we are facing. I have two major concerns, both industry concerns, with both having the potential to escalate the financial problems most of us are already experiencing," he argued.

He asked, "Will our shipping industry have the maturity to maintain high technical and safety standards in spite of the downturn of the markets? "To my mind, the current manpower crisis has resulted in a dilution of the quality standards of the industry. There has been pressure to reduce technical costs like never before - and cost has become the main selling point for many players on both sides. Short-cuts in a highly technical industry like shipping do not bode well for preventive maintenance planning, training of officers and crew and generally, safety at sea".

He continued, "I am also a strong believer that we should move towards making both the salaries of crew as well as maintenance costs of ships, less market dependent. We need this moment to rethink the whole relationship we (the manager/owner) have with our staff at sea – and go back the full circle to the old days of seafarers being an integral part of the staff of a manager/owner. Can we make maintenance a bit more independent from the market cycles? Of course we can because basically, maintenance of a hull structure and its equipment is a technological problem."

"We have the technology and the know-how to design and construct a ship for a pre-defined life span and operational environment – and we have the know-how on how maintenance should be done consistent with the expected life span. There is a necessity, throughout the industry, to take a long-term view of the markets in planning and reacting to fluctuating market cycles and I am happy to discuss these with any owners, at their convenience." Mr Cremers concluded.

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**Anglo-Eastern Academy set up:** Hong Kong based ship manager Anglo-Eastern has set up a maritime academy in the Indian Port of Mumbai. <http://www.angloeasterngroup.com/home.aspx> "A long time dream come true," CEO Peter Cremers said of the Academy located in Karjat, about an hour's drive from Navi Mumbai. Anglo-Eastern already runs a training centre in the Mumbai suburb of Andheri and the new academy is fully funded by internal resources.

Intake of Cadets straight out of high school will commence from August 2009. Set on a 21ha site, the academy has hostel accommodation for 240 students. "Together with our present training centre, we will have the largest and most well-equipped training establishment in India", said Pradeep Chawla, Director of Quality Assurance and Training.

The group has close to 300 ships of different types under technical management and supplies crew to an additional 70 ships. It has a pool of nearly 11,000 seafarers employing 550 Cadets on board its fleet.

<http://www.fairplay.co.uk> March 24<sup>th</sup> 2009

To read about the experiences of two Anglo-Eastern Cadets go to [www.he-alert.org/documents/published/he00780.pdf](http://www.he-alert.org/documents/published/he00780.pdf)

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**Ottawa. April 21<sup>st</sup> 2009:** Ten citizens from Ontario were honoured today for their commitment and dedication to Veterans. The Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs, presented them with the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation during a ceremony in Ottawa. "Every year, the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation pays tribute to an exceptional group of people rich in their diversity and commitment, but who also share that wealth through service and leadership," said Minister Thompson. "They do so with quiet dignity, without asking for anything in return-much like Canada's Veterans." Included in the group was Captain Tom Brooks of the Capital Division shown on the right of this picture with the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs. The citation reads:-

*Mr. Brooks is an active member of the League of Merchant Mariner Veterans of Canada as well as the Company of Master Mariners of Canada. As a result, he is actively involved in all issues related to Merchant Navy Veterans. Mr. Brooks was a member of the negotiating committee which was successful in obtaining benefits for Merchant Navy Veterans. He has attended hearings and submitted briefs on behalf of Merchant Mariner Veterans before the Veterans Review and Appeal Board in Ottawa. Mr. Brooks is an asset to the Merchant Navy community and his advice and counsel are readily sought and much appreciated.*



All of this information, citation, photograph, etc can be seen on the Department of Veterans Affairs website at <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general> It is in the Press Room section under Archived News Releases for April 21.

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There is so much news of the maritime variety available via the Internet and I am sure that many of you find and read it. This newsletter could be filled over and over with nautical stories but there is not enough room for it all. Piracy, of course, appears in the news every day including an item that appeared this week suggesting "that pirate groups have well-placed informers in London who are in regular contact with control centres in Somalia where decisions on which vessels to attack are made. These London-based consultants help the pirates select targets, providing information on the ships' cargoes and courses". <http://www.shiptalk.com/>

Another headline this week says, "US President Barack Obama has announced he is scrapping the LORAN-C programme to achieve a saving of US\$35m in a year. A statement says: *This long-range, radio-navigation system has been made obsolete by GPS.*" <http://www.mglobal.com/>

And, while orders for new buildings of tankers and container ships are being cancelled, there comes this item: "The order books of the three leading European cruiseship builders, Germany's Meyer Werft, the Norwegian STX Europe group (formerly Aker Yards) and Italy's Fincantieri stretch into the back end of 2012. Collectively these three have 30 ships on order of which seven will be delivered this year". <http://www.maritimeneeds.com/> Amazing!

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**The next edition of "From the Bridge" will be published early in August. The deadline for submitting articles for that will be July 28<sup>th</sup> 2009. If I was unable to include your contribution this time I apologize. Don't forget to send comments about the Halifax Arctic Casualty Simulation. I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at:-**  
**13375 14A. Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V4A 7P9 or e-mail to [whitknit@shaw.ca](mailto:whitknit@shaw.ca) Sincerely, David Whitaker**