

Hi Shipmates,

Please find below more snippets of information since circular #2017-06 went out on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017.

My thanks to MNA National Secretary, Pete Sinke's daily publication "Maasmond Maritime - Shipping News Clippings", Lloyds List, gCaptain, Maritime London, Flashlight and many others from the T'internet, not forgetting the items sent in by Readers and any other source I can access.

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***MNA Slop Chest, CLOSED***

**Change of Address????** *If any member has changed any of their contact details (Postal, E-mail or Telephone) it is important that you inform **ROY GLENCROSS** and copy in **Nigel***

**Whitaker, Tim Brant & myself.** *If informing by e-mail send to:-* [membership@mna.org.uk](mailto:membership@mna.org.uk), [mna.nat.sec@gmail.com](mailto:mna.nat.sec@gmail.com), [t.brant@talktalk.net](mailto:t.brant@talktalk.net), [R546060@aol.com](mailto:R546060@aol.com)



The MV **VENTURE SEA** of Secunda Canada is on contract serving the Sable Offshore Project for Exxon Mobil. Photo : John Attersley Quay Marine Associates Inc. ©

## **UK MERCHANT SEAFARING VETERANS - AN AGREED DEFINITION**

*A reminder to MNA Members and others in the seafaring community*

### **Introduction**

The Merchant Navy and UK fishing fleets have always been called upon to provide support to both the UK Armed Forces and the Nation during wartime, other hostilities and military operations. These actions, together with seafarers' personnel records of the ships in which they served, are well documented. There is already a broad consensus from all parties, including the MOD, that such seafarers should be regarded as veterans within the Armed Forces Community. However, the terms 'Merchant Navy Veteran' and 'Merchant Seafaring Veteran' continue to be used without understanding or a single clear definition. Consequently those civilian seafarers who are entitled to be regarded as veterans and therefore part of the Armed Forces Community occasionally have their status challenged or ignored altogether. It is considered that an officially endorsed definition would bring greater clarity to this sometimes confused area, as well as greater recognition to this often overlooked section of the UK seafaring community.

### **Aim**

The aim of this paper is to provide a common, agreed and endorsed definition of UK Merchant Seafarers who form part of the Armed Forces Community.

### **The Armed Forces Community**

The Armed Forces Community, as currently defined by the MOD, comprises individuals currently serving as members of HM Armed Forces, including the UK Reserve Forces; their families; widows/widowers; veterans and their dependants.

### **Qualification Criteria**

#### **Qualification by Conflict**

World Wars I & II. Although there are no known merchant seafarers now alive from World War I, their retrospective status as veterans may still be appreciated by their descendants. All merchant seafarers and fishermen serving aboard any UK vessel between the first and last day of World War II were deemed to be serving "Under Admiralty Charter" throughout the conflict. While their actual conditions of service differed, these personnel faced the same dangers and should, in terms of recognition, be treated as if they were Royal Navy personnel during the period of this service. WWII began on 3 September 1939 (when the first vessel SS "Athena" was sunk) and ended on VJ Day on 15 August 1945. During the conflict a large number of merchant seafarers and fishermen found themselves onboard ships that were requisitioned by the Royal Navy. Many of these men volunteered to remain onboard as crew, working alongside Royal Navy personnel. While they remained on their civilian pay and leave conditions, they were required to sign T124X or T124T agreements which placed them under the Naval Discipline Act and strengthened their case for similar recognition to their RN colleagues.

Other Conflicts post 1945. Those legally defined military operations recognised by the UK Government as those in which the Merchant fleet supported the military included, but are not limited to, Korea (1950-53), Suez (1956), South Atlantic (1982), Gulf (Kuwait Crisis) (1990-91) and Gulf (Iraq Invasion) (2003). Significantly all Merchant Navy seafarers who served in these zones are entitled to receive campaign medals following certain periods in theatre: for example, over 5000 such medals were awarded for the Falklands campaign alone. Under the Protection of Military Remains Act (PMRA), two merchant vessels (Storaa and Atlantic Conveyor) have so far been designated as protected places, in recognition of their status in supporting UK military operations.

**Non UK Conflicts.** A significant number of British merchant seafarers, in going about their lawful business, were required to sail into war zones not involving the UK. These include places such as Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf during the Iran/Iraq war. These were warlike areas and a number of British merchant seafarers were killed or injured as a result of armed actions. More recently, the concept of war zones and areas of warlike operations has been extended to include piracy hotspots with such areas being designated as “high risk” e.g. the UK Warlike Operations Area Committee has recently declared an area in the Gulf of Aden as “high risk”. Nonetheless, it is not intended to pursue official veteran status, which implies some form of service to the Nation, for these personnel, and they are not considered to be part of the Armed Forces Community.

#### **Proof of Service**

While mercantile marine records are not comparable with those held on behalf of the UK Armed Forces, British merchant seafarers normally have Discharge Books which contain details of the vessels in which they served including the dates. The names and dates of those ships that sailed into the operational zones are retained in the records held by the MCA’s Registry of Shipping and Seamen. The Royal Naval Historical Archive holds online records, and the Merchant Navy Association and the Federation of Merchant Mariners also keep an expanding database of those qualifying personnel who have been awarded the Merchant Navy Veterans badge. Ships’ Articles, crew lists and discharge books can also provide supporting evidence. Thus, proof of service is based on confirmation of the individual’s ship discharge record and that ship’s service in support of UK military operations.

#### **Royal Fleet Auxiliary**

RFA personnel are merchant seafarers employed by MOD (Navy) entirely to support the UK Armed Forces. All those with RFA service are already considered as HM Armed Forces Veterans in accordance with existing arrangements and as such will continue to apply to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency for the HM Armed Forces Veterans Badge.

#### **Conclusion**

It is therefore concluded that, exceptionally, those civilians forming part of the veterans element of the Armed Forces Community are those who have served in commercial vessels supporting the UK Armed Forces on legally defined military operations. The actual size of this community is presently unknown, but further studies will be undertaken by MN organisations to establish numbers more accurately. Given that the definition of an Armed Forces veteran is any person who has served in the Forces of the Crown and includes those with RFA service, it follows that a comparable definition for a UK civilian seafarer from either the Merchant Navy or the fishing fleets who is considered to be an Armed Forces veteran should be:

**‘Anyone who has served on a commercial vessel at a time when it was operated to facilitate legally defined UK military operations by HM Armed Forces’.**

**and these personnel be called “UK Merchant Seafaring Veterans”.**

#### **Recommendation**

The COBSEO Executive has agreed the above definition of a UK Merchant Seafaring Veteran, recognising that subsequent work is needed to identify the numbers of qualified seafarers entitled to such definition. It is recommended that the Ministry of Defence accepts that definition and endorses its official use.

Mike Bray Secretary COBSEO 1st December 2009

**HELP ALDEN PLOWS TO JOIN MERCY SHIPS** See article in issue 6 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb  
Hi Malcolm,

Just been reading it and it occurs to me that you might want to add the funding page for the young 3rd mate, it is <https://www.gofundme.com/africa-mercy-volunteer-officer>

cheers,  
Mike

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## Russian Arctic Convoy Project

RACMP <http://www.russianarcticconvoymuseum.org/> needs merchant navy veteran representation at our forthcoming LOCH EWE 75 anniversary events on 6-7 May. We have possibly two but need at least three more.

Would any Arctic Convoy veterans, or relatives etc, who would be interested in possibly attending this event please contact George at [chair@theracmproject.org](mailto:chair@theracmproject.org), for full details, assistance may be available.

Regards,  
George

*More on this event on page 8*

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## Derbyshire Submariners

**The On Line Version of Derbyshire Submariners newsletter is now on line on our Web Page on the following link** <http://www.godfreydykes.info/DD%202009%20Mar%202017.pdf>

All Derbyshire Submariners should receive a A5 envelope this week (**Posted out Monday 20 Feb**) which contains your AGM Pack and multi correspondence to all members, so please ensure you have checked the contents on receipt please? It is a months notice to allow all DS members who cannot get to the AGM to submit a proxy vote either for or against the four proposals to be discussed and make any suggestions or comments to be shared with members at the AGM. The one thing I can guarantee is you will all be able to read it faster than it took for the reports to be written and compiled for you!! If you have not received your envelope by snail mail please let me know

**DS Members** I hope it possible for you to attend **15th Anniversary** of the **Freedom of the City of Derby** to **HM Submarine Service Dinner** to be celebrated at 7pm on the Anniversary Date 28/4/17 at the Park in Chaddesden in the back private room. Details in AGM posting and newsletter above

**DS Members.** Our Trafalgar Dinner will be *frozen at last years prices* so it would be helpful if you would give me a heads-up to reserve you a place/s, but **only need name and numbers** at present no money. The Edale Room holds 40 so places are on first come first served. At least 20 places are already *reserved* so please let me know soonest

*Terry Hall*

**Terry Hall, Hon. Secretary/Treasurer, Derbyshire Submariners**  
[http://www.godfreydykes.info/derbyshire\\_submariners\\_page.html](http://www.godfreydykes.info/derbyshire_submariners_page.html)

**RBL PAO Stanley Rural Area HAE05,  
MOSVTrustee W5795 Bomber Memorial**

## **Chief Executive of Saga plc is Lance Batchelor**

Dear Malcolm,

You might wish to note that, further to the piece about the new Saga cruise liners, the Chief Executive of Saga plc is Lance Batchelor, a former submariner who left the RN as a Lieutenant.

(We served in HMS Brave together in 1986-87).

Regards,  
Lester

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## **Careers at Sea are looking for volunteers!**

‘Careers at Sea’ ([www.careersatsea.org](http://www.careersatsea.org)) is a website highlighting the opportunities available to people who wish to work within the Merchant Navy. With 95% of UK trade coming by sea, the Merchant Navy is valuable to the UK, but very few people know of its existence let alone the opportunities available to them within it.

Every year the Merchant Navy takes on cadets to train as Deck (Navigation), Engine or Electro-Technical Officers on board any ship, of any size, anywhere in the world. Cadets are sponsored by companies which means there are no tuition fees for the student but they gain professional qualifications, such as a Foundation Degree, at the end of their course. They also get a training allowance whilst they are learning and on top of the free qualifications, cadets travel the world and get generous amounts of time off depending on their work rotations. There are also positions available for ratings and currently there are a number of sector specific apprenticeships being developed. Careers at Sea are keen to make this information as accessible as possible to as many young people as possible.

Careers at Sea run a programme of volunteers who offer at least an hour of their time each year to attend schools and youth groups to promote the excellent career opportunities available in the Merchant Navy. These volunteers are known as ‘Careers at Sea Ambassadors’ and at the moment we have over 310 volunteers in our programme.

There are a variety of materials available to help Ambassadors with their Careers at Sea presentations and Ambassadors are asked to use their own experiences to make the presentations exciting for children and adapt them as they see fit. Frequent emails are sent to all Careers at Sea Ambassadors detailing the visit requests received from schools/ groups/ career fairs around the country that they may wish to attend. Alternatively, Ambassadors contact schools and groups that they already know and volunteer their time to talk to them. We are looking for people to sign up to the programme to

If you would like more information about the Careers at Sea Ambassador programme, our national careers campaign or would like to volunteer as an Ambassador, please contact Fena Boyle on:  
[Fena.boyle@mntb.org.uk](mailto:Fena.boyle@mntb.org.uk)

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## **Watch: Stricken ‘Tide Carrier’ Rockin’ and Rollin’ Off Norway**

[http://gcaptain.com/watch-stricken-tide-carrier-rockin-and-rollin-off-norway/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gcaptain.com%29](http://gcaptain.com/watch-stricken-tide-carrier-rockin-and-rollin-off-norway/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gcaptain.com%29)

**Update (Thursday, Feb 23):** Tugs have taken the stricken barge carrier Tide Carrier under tow and the ship is no longer in danger of grounding. The government response has been stood down, the Norwegian Coastal Administration reports. The tow commenced at approximately 7:15 a.m. Thursday.



Dear followers of CHIRP,

We are pleased to share with you our latest video. the fifth edition of Maritime Broadcast, this time we discuss extracts from Maritime FEEDBACK 45.

In this edition share the learning from reports on:

- CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH FERRY CROSSING TRAFFIC SEPARATION SCHEME
- UNCONTROLLED RELEASE OF A BLOCKED PIPE
- DANGEROUS SHIP DESIGNS

[CHIRP Maritime Bulletin 5](#)

This along with past videos and audio podcasts can be found on our web page

[www.chirpmaritime.org/videos](http://www.chirpmaritime.org/videos)

These are designed for public use and in particular for use by maritime training academies, ship managers and safety committees with the aim to assist a global audience of seafarers. Our thanks go to Warsash Maritime Academy for creating the simulation.

We hope you enjoy the presentations and take onboard the safety lessons learned in the video broadcasts and audio podcasts.

With regards

John Rose MNM

Director (Maritime)

*We are a Charitable Trust that survives only by the generosity of our the generosity of our sponsors. This video is sponsored by*

The Standard 

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## **Lifeboat called out twice in 12 hours in fierce weather conditions**

**A lifeboat was called out twice in 12 hours in fierce weather conditions off the Argyll coast.**

The volunteer crew of Oban RNLi Lifeboat, MORA EDITH MACDONALD, were first tasked on Tuesday by Stornoway Coastguard to respond to a commercial fishing vessel with a fouled propeller close to Inversanda Bay in Loch Linnhe. Due to the strengthening southerly winds the Coastguard transmitted a Pan Pan broadcast to request assistance from vessels in the area until the lifeboat arrived on scene. As the lifeboat was proceeding to the area a fish farm support vessel ORCADIA II responded to the broadcast and dispatched a workboat to assist the drifting vessel. The lifeboat arrived on scene at 1.50pm and quickly passed a tow line and drogue. The fishing vessel was then taken in tow to a mooring in the Sound of Shuna, where the vessel was secured shortly before 3pm. The second incident took place just a few hours later when the lifeboat was launched to help the Scottish Ambulance Service with the transfer of a 57-year-old man from the Isle of Mull, who was suffering from chest pains. The lifeboat departed Oban at 8:30pm and arrived at Craignure by 9pm where the paramedics transferred the patient to the lifeboat crew, who took the casualty to Oban where he was transferred to a waiting ambulance. The man was taken to Lorn and the Isles Hospital for treatment. His condition is unknown. **source:**

**pressandjournal**

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**ROLLDOCK STAR PASSING DUTCH COASTAL WATERS**



**Herman Ijsseling** in the plane of **Flying Focus** in action as seen by the crew onboard the **ROLLDOCK STAR** 25 nautical miles west south west off Den Helder and below seen the **ROLLDOCK STAR** by **Herman** from the plane



Photo : Flying Focus Aerial Photography [www.flyingfocus.nl](http://www.flyingfocus.nl) ©

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**UASC diverts containership call from congested Felixstowe to London Gateway**

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**DVLA "Scam" – And many others - beware !!!**

Overnight I received a text message saying:-

"URGENT :DVLA Swansea have been trying to contact you. click the link below for more information, <http://.tax-disc.gov.uk/etc.etc> (This is not the one sent, did not want to reproduce it).

It claims that I am owed a refund of £48 and that I need to claim it now. Please fill in the data on the attached form to allow them to make the refund. They want the usual stuff plus mother's maiden name, NI number, date of birth, bank and credit card details etc. Way more than they would need to make a refund! (They always send a cheque!)

I Googled "DVLA Refund scam" and got the following link...

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/scam-warning-for-dvla-customers>

Maybe everyone had heard about it except me".

It IS a SCAM and looks very authentic.

Andy Owler

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**NEW FISHING VESSEL FOR FALKLAND ISLANDS**



**CFL HUNTER** was launched by the Nodosa shipyard in Marin, Spain last week for Consolidated Fisheries Ltd. which is entirely owned by Falkland Islands inhabitants. Understood to be the first new fishing vessel built for the Falklands, she is 60m overall and is a longliner targeting Patagonian

Toothfish (mero). She has diesel-electric propulsion, an advanced refrigeration system to freeze and store the catch, accommodates 43 people in compliance with the latest International standards and is designed to cope with the notorious bad weather in the operational area. **Photo : Maurice Napier ©**

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**Chief Engineers Convicted in ‘Magic Pipe’ Pollution Case**

February 24, 2017 by [gCaptain](#)

A federal jury in Charleston, South Carolina convicted two chief engineers of the vessel, TV *Green Sky*, on pollution charges related to use of a ‘magic pipe’.

Herbert Julian, who served as chief engineer of the *Green Sky* from Aug. 3 to Sept. 4, 2015, was convicted of two felony counts under the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS) and for obstruction of justice. Panagiotis Koutoukakis, chief engineer from Feb. 1 to Aug. 3, 2015, was convicted of two felony counts, one for APPS and another for falsifying records.

Aegean Shipping Management, S.A., a foreign company with operations in Greece that acted as the *Green Sky*'s operator, previously pleaded guilty to a violation of the APPS and obstruction of justice. “This case involved egregious violations of U.S. and international laws that are key to protecting the oceans from pollution, and deliberate efforts to mislead Coast Guard officials about these criminal acts,”



said Acting Assistant Attorney General Jeff Wood of the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division. “Now these defendants have been held accountable under the law by a jury of their peers. The Department of Justice will continue to aggressively prosecute criminal acts that pollute the oceans.”

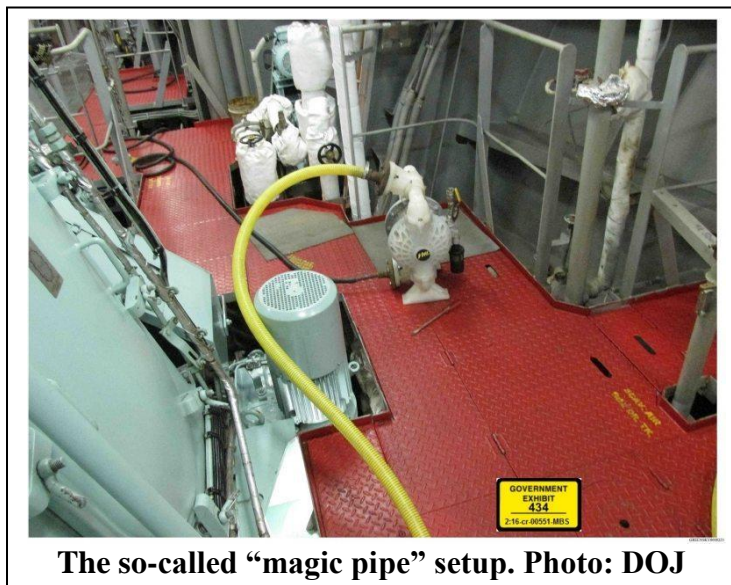


TV Green Sky. Photo provided by U.S. Dept. of Justice

The *Green Sky* is a large, oceangoing chemical tanker flagged in Liberia. The normal operation of marine vessels, like the *Green Sky*, generates large quantities of oil-contaminated waste water, which must pass through a filtration machine, known as an oil-water separator, before it is dumped overboard. But according to the Justice Dept., the *Green Sky*, built in just 2014, had unusual internal leaks that produced greater quantities of oily waste than a normal ship of its age and construction. Evidence presented to the jury showed that the *Green Sky* was regularly pumping this contaminated and oily water directly overboard, while failing to disclose the discharges on the vessel’s oil record book

as required. The illegal overboard discharges were falsified from February to August 2015. “Methods of falsification included omitting illegal bypass operations, claiming that the oil water separator

was used when it had not been, and a series of false entries regarding the levels of the bilge holding tank, which were designed to further the cover-up. While most of these discharges occurred in international waters, evidence at trial revealed that at least two of these discharges were within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States during the ship’s voyage from Pascagoula, Mississippi, to Houston, Texas in May 2015,” the Department of Justice said in a statement on Thursday. The evidence presented during the fifteen-day trial demonstrated that the chief engineers covered up illegal overboard discharges that took place through two systems of “magic” hoses and a separate “magic” valve system designed to bypass the ship’s oil water separator. Koutoukakis and Julian falsified the oil record book to hide their illegal discharges. The vessel arrived in Charleston, South Carolina on August 26, 2015, when the false record was presented to the U.S. Coast Guard during an inspection of the vessel. The U.S. Coast Guard was tipped off by three whistleblowers who came forward to report the crimes and ask for protection from U.S. authorities.



The so-called “magic pipe” setup. Photo: DOJ

By January 2016, it was determined that the former chief engineer Koutoukakis likely had information regarding the ongoing investigation into the *Green Sky*. Koutoukakis was later apprehended in Savannah, Georgia on a material witness warrant. Koutoukakis was subsequently indicted after further investigation revealed his substantial involvement in illegal discharges and records falsification. In addition, Julian was convicted of obstruction related to false statements that he made regarding the ship’s sounding log, which

is a document that can be used to check the veracity of the oil record book. Testimony at trial revealed that Julian hid the log prior to the *Green Sky*'s arrival in Charleston and then lied to the Coast Guard about the vessel having a sounding log.

“With Charleston serving as one of the largest ports on the Eastern seaboard, working vessel pollution cases with the Environmental Crimes Section is an important focus for our office,” said U.S. Attorney Beth Drake, District of South Carolina. “Through criminal charges, we can deter those who would dump oily wastes into the world’s oceans and use false documents to cover it up.”

Prior to the initiation of the trial, on November 22, 2016, the *Green Sky*'s operator, Aegean Shipping Management, S.A. pleaded guilty to one APPS count for the illegal discharges and one obstruction count based on misrepresentations made by the vessel’s captain to the U.S. Coast Guard during the August 2015 boarding. The corporate vessel operator had been indicted along with the individuals on July 15, 2016. The plea materials were previously sealed to protect the integrity of the jury and the witnesses in the trial against the individual defendants, but the unsealed documents revealed that the operating company agreed to pay a financial penalty of \$2 million, which includes a criminal fine and a smaller community service component directed toward the Gray’s Reef National Marine Sanctuary. The company will also be sentenced to probation and an environmental compliance plan.

Sentencing of the company and defendants Julian and Koutoukakis will take place at a date that will be set by the court.

At trial, the second engineer Nikolaos Bounovas was acquitted of all charges against him. The previously convicted Captain, Genaro Anciano, testified at the trial. His sentencing has yet to be scheduled.

“The Green Sky case stresses the vital importance of USCG environmental protection missions with regard to pollution from ships,” said Captain Gary L. Tomasulo, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Charleston. “We are extremely proud of our team of marine safety professionals and the Coast Guard Investigative Service which were an integral part of investigating these occurrences and referring them for enforcement action.”

The case was investigated by the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Charleston and the Coast Guard Investigative Service.

*WILL THEY NEVER LEARN? – The case continues.....*

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## RUSSIAN ARCTIC CONVOY PROJECT : LOCH EWE 75

**THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST ARCTIC CONVOYS BETWEEN LOCH EWE AND USSR IN WWII (1942 -1945)**

*During 2017 there will be a number of events taking place around Loch Ewe in Wester Ross to commemorate and celebrate this anniversary :*

**6 May : WWII FESTIVAL** Arrival of **Russian and UK veterans**, Consuls General from St. Petersburg and Edinburgh and other VIPs from both countries; all day **re-enactment group activities** representing all factions in WWII incl. life-size replicas of the **Spitfire and Messerschmitt aircraft, a T34 Russian tank (original)**, trucks and equipment; **boat trips**; an **evening dance** with swing band, featuring '**The D-Day Babes**', the hit singing trio with professional dancers;

**7 May : WWII FESTIVAL** **Official opening** of the new RACP Exhibition Centre; **Commemoration Service** at the Russian Arctic Convoy Club memorial stone at Rubha nan Sasan; **boat trips incl. tour of Inverewe House and Garden** (National Trust for Scotland); **illustrated talks** by eminent Arctic Convoy veterans and historians; **evening film – 'South Pacific'**

*The above are the draft details only*



## American Car Carrier Suffers Fire in English Channel

February 24, 2017 by [Mike Schuler](#)



An American car carrier with 21 crew members suffered a fire aboard while underway in the English Channel en route to Baltimore from Southampton.

The UK Coastguard says it was notified at around 3:45 a.m. on Friday of a fire on board the US-flagged roll-on/roll-off vehicle carrier *MV Honor*.

The Coastguard said the vessel's fixed firefighting systems were used to combat the fire and the cargo space has been sealed. The ship's crew continued to monitor the cargo area as the vessel headed back towards Southampton under its own power and with full maneuverability. The ship was planned to anchor to the South East of the Isle of Wight in

the Solent.

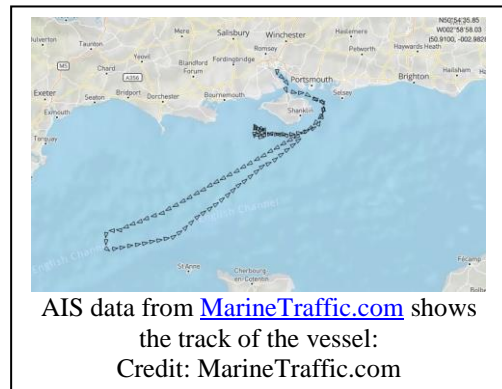
"UK Coastguard is monitoring the situation closely and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service has been notified of the incident," a media release by the UK Coastguard said. "A Fire and Rescue Marine Response team is to be airlifted on board the vessel by the UK Coastguard search and rescue helicopter based at Lee on Solent to further investigate the fire damage and determine whether or not it is safe for the vessel to return to Southampton Port. In addition, a pilot from Southampton Port and a MCA Marine Casualty Officer will be sent to the vessel to assist the assessment process prior to the vessel being allowed to return to Southampton."

The *MV Honor* is operated by American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier (ARC). The company said the fire has been extinguished, but the impacted and now-sealed cargo hold has not yet been inspected. The company confirmed there were no injuries among the 21 crew members onboard.

Andy Jenkins, Commander for the UK Coastguard said: "The 21 crew are still on board the vessel and they are safe and well. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as it develops." An update from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service said fire fighters have boarded the vessel by helicopter.

The *MV Honor* was built in 1997 and is 622 feet in length.

Back in January, another American car carrier, the *Alliance St. Louis*, suffered an [electrical fire in the engine room](#) while in Gulf of Mexico, causing the ship to lose propulsion power.



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## Not Forgotten Association

We have kindly received 10 places from the Not Forgotten Association. As promised, this year we gave preference to those who applied last year and did not get a place which has been done. If anyone wishes to be on the stand-by list for this year, in case we have a cancellation, please contact me.

The criteria for this year's event has changed a little whereby the eligibility will be for veterans with a disability or illness. Senior veterans will be considered.

Regards,

Tim

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**National Council Meetings**      Just a reminder of the dates for the meetings this year

The following 2017 meetings will be held at the Ladywood Social Club, Ladywood Middleway, Birmingham B16 8SY, starting at 11.30 hours

Saturday, 1 April - National Councillors' meeting in upstairs room.

Saturday, 8 July - National Councillors' meeting in upstairs room.

Saturday, 28 October - Annual General Meeting in large downstairs room.

Regards,  
Nigel

*MNA Members are invited to attend these meetings as observers but should notify the MNA National Secretary at [mna.nat.sec@gmail.com](mailto:mna.nat.sec@gmail.com) in advance to confirm their intentions and for catering purposes.*

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**Clyde ports' public wrangle over Arran ferry gets heated**

The war of words between Clyde ports vying for the Arran ferry service, intensified with claims that if shifted to Troon, a new £48.5m CalMac car ferry could be delayed by a year. But the operators of Troon harbour say this totally untrue. They could accommodate the new vessel now, as well considerably larger craft, and say it is Ardrossan that needs a massive building programme before the new ferry could dock at all. Associated British Ports (ABP) has made a bid to relocate the service from Ardrossan to Troon. APB recently lost the P&O service to Larne in Northern Ireland and has promised to invest £8m if the Arran service is transferred to the mothballed Troon port. The new CalMac ferry is scheduled to be introduced on the route in autumn 2018. Peel Ports operate Ardrossan Harbour, currently the mainland terminus for the ferry to Brodick, and claim that the timetable for the proposed facilities at Troon could delay completion until autumn 2019. This would leave a 12-month gap, with major uncertainty about the provision of ferry services to Arran in the interim. In December North Ayrshire Council and Peel Ports unveiled plans to invest £13 million to secure the ferry route, but now it could be more. Doug Coleman, Peel Ports' project director for Ardrossan Harbour, said: "The Arran Ferry has sailed from Ardrossan for 180 years, so we have a full range of existing facilities, including a passenger terminal, adjacent railway station and car parking, which will all be upgraded as part of a £15 million investment programme if the minister's decision goes our way. "It will be an intensive project to construct the modern passenger and marine infrastructure necessary to accommodate the new ferry, with very tight deadlines, but if our bid is successful, we'll definitely be ready to welcome the new ferry by the third quarter of 2018." Joe Cullinane, leader of North Ayrshire Council, Peel Ports' partners in the proposed redevelopment of Ardrossan Harbour described the situation as "the final nail in the coffin for Troon's bid". He said: "We've had our planners examine this situation and they are firmly of the opinion that Troon simply would not be able to have the facilities ready in time. It wouldn't even be close. "In the unlikely event that Troon wins the bid, you'd have a £48.5million ferry, which has been specifically designed for the existing Ardrossan to Brodick route, sitting idle for a year as ABP tries frantically to build its terminal. It's not a prospect that would fill anyone with confidence." He said "an overwhelmingly convincing case" had been made to the Transport Minister, to retain the ferry "on the shortest, fastest and cheapest route" to Ardrossan. But a spokesman for ABP said: "These claims are factually incorrect in every regard. The opposite is in fact true. Troon is ready to serve the ferry today and is already able to handle vessels considerably larger than those now under construction. The service will improve still further once the new passenger terminal is opened in 2018. "Peel Ports are running 'Project Fear'. We will not do that. Informed debate and true consultation are important. That's why we're going back to Arran next week to discuss the facts of our proposals with islanders. Getting a better deal for them and for the Scottish Government is our sole focus." **source: heraldscotland**

### **Vendee Globe - Heerema delayed by Biscay lows by Vendee Globe**

With 16 boats now finished, the eighth edition of the Vendée Globe becomes the race with greatest ever number of finishers. Until now it was the 2000-2001 edition, with 24 starters and 15 finishers, which saw the biggest number of starters reach the end of their race at the legendary South Nouch buoy. Two of this eighth edition's 29 starters are still racing at sea. Having been initially expected to arrive Monday, Dutch skipper **Pieter Heerema** has been forced into what is effectively a 'holding pattern' at the latitude of Lisbon. A series of tough low pressure systems are set to bring big winds and seas to the Bay of Biscay from Sunday onwards. Monday, when he would have been finishing, is forecast to bring 40kts winds and eight to nine metre seas on Biscay. In the open ocean on the race track this would be considered difficult conditions, worth avoiding, but the risks are so much greater in the shelving waters closer to the shores around Les Sables d'Olonne. Hence the skipper who should become the first Dutch sailor to finish the solo nonstop around the world race, has elected to remain at this safer latitude until a small window opens between two successive systems for a finish now expected to be Thursday or Friday. Meantime Heerema is in a 15-20kts SW'ly breeze which will actually shift to the NW and ease. The front with 35kts in it will cross north of him tomorrow reaching Les Sables d'Olonne in the afternoon. Pieter Heerema is expected to have to stay at these latitudes until Tuesday when there appears to be a window of opportunity to make the race north to the finish line, to complete a Vendée Globe which has been full of challenges, mental and physical, for the Vendée Globe rookie who had limited preparation and sea time with his boat before the start. For Sébastien Destremau (Techno First Face Ocean) this stage of a race which is already feeling too long, really is more like Groundhog Day, starboard tack close reaching, life on an angle and crashing into the waves. However he will see the breeze drop slightly today but in three days more will get into a high pressure ridge at the latitude of the Canaries.

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### **Wood Group PSN to pay penalties in connection with fatal offshore platform fire**

An oil industry services company will pay \$9.5 million in penalties for Gulf of Mexico safety violations and for pollution from a 2012 offshore platform fire that killed three workers. The penalties against Houston-based Wood Group PSN were announced Thursday by the U.S. Justice Department in Washington and U.S. attorneys in New Orleans and Lafayette, Louisiana, where civil and criminal cases have been playing out. The penalties followed plea agreements. Wood Group will pay \$7 million for falsely reporting that safety inspections were performed on Gulf of Mexico facilities over several years. Another \$1.8 million in penalties are for discharging oil into the gulf in the November 2012 explosion that killed three workers on a platform owned by Black Elk Energy Offshore Operations LLC. Wood Group also will pay \$700,000 for community service projects. "We deeply regret these incidents occurred and we cooperated fully with the government and relevant regulatory bodies throughout both investigations," Wood Group said in an emailed statement. The November 2012 explosion killed three workers on a platform owned by Black Elk Energy Offshore Operations LLC. A 2013 report by federal regulators identified a string of safety lapses that led to the blast, which killed Ellroy Corporal, Jerome Malagapo and Avelino Tajonera. Black Elk Energy's platform was about 17 miles (27 kilometers) from Grand Isle, Louisiana, in about 52 feet (15 meters) of water. It had been "shut in" and wasn't producing oil at the time of the explosion. Workers were on the platform preparing to resume production. On the morning of Nov. 16, 2012, a worker ignited oil vapors while welding pipe, triggering a chain reaction that caused oil tanks to explode. In 2015, a grand jury indicted Black Elk, Wood Group, Grand Isle Shipyards and some of the people who worked on the platform on a variety of charges. A judge threw out some of the most serious charges last April but prosecutors' appeals of that decision are pending. Black Elk and Grand Isle Shipyards remain charged with manslaughter. Black Elk also faces charges involving regulatory violations of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. **source: Fuelfix**

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### **Maritime Monday for February 27th, 2017: Spy Vs Spy**

[http://gcaptain.com/maritime-monday-feb-27-2017/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gcaptain.com%29](http://gcaptain.com/maritime-monday-feb-27-2017/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gcaptain.com%29)

### Victory and tickets home for Malaviya crew

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) is pleased to announce that the 12 strong crew of the **MALAVIYA TWENTY** – the ship abandoned in Great Yarmouth, UK in June last year – finally began their journey home last Tuesday, complete with all the wages they were owed. The **MALAVIYA**



The **MALAVIYA TWENTY** moored in Great Yarmouth  
Photo: David Tuttle ©

**TWENTY** is one of two Indian-owned and -flagged vessels that were effectively abandoned by their owners after they were detained in Aberdeen and Great Yarmouth. The ITF has assisted both ship's crews from the beginning – it was routine ITF inspections that first revealed problems with the vessels and that the crews were not paid.

ITF inspector Paul Keenan recounted the background to Tuesday's victory for the crew: "The ship arrived in Great

Yarmouth on June 2016. It was detained by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency primarily because of owed wages. The company initially paid some of the owed money and some of the crew were repatriated. Then nothing. So in December we arrested the vessel on the crew's behalf. The bank which owned the ship contacted us and sent a representative over to meet with the ITF in January. They agreed to pay all owed wages to the crew currently on the vessel and those who had left earlier. "The bulk of the wages were paid by bank transfer, and the rest was paid in cash on board the vessel last Friday. In all USD689.679 was paid to a total of 33 crew who were owed wages dating back to October 2015." He concluded: "Thanks to their determination, the support of the local community and port chaplain, organisations such as the MCA, and the ITF itself, the men have finally achieved justice. In the time when they were abandoned some had taken loans out so that their families could survive. One had taken five loans out at 16 per cent interest which he managed to pay off when he got his wages. One seafarer, whose son had to live with neighbours because the money lenders kept coming to the house for their money, has now paid off the loans and his son has moved back in. Another crew member, who found it difficult to speak to his son because he was so upset every time as he had to lie to him, telling him he would be home soon, told him last week he would be home this week. He was overcome with joy. He had also sponsored three children in his village to go to school, and had had to stop this when he didn't get paid. He has already started to sponsor them again and they are now back at school. It seems life is getting back to normal for them. They all said that what they need now is to spend some time with family and friends before they think about going back to sea." Meanwhile the crew of the detained sister ship the Malaviya Seven remain stranded in Aberdeen. The ITF is moving to arrest the vessel on the crew's behalf in order to secure for them the wages and tickets home to which they too are entitled.

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### Irish resident due in Italian court after wife went missing on cruise

An Irish resident was due to appear in court in Rome in connection with the disappearance of his wife during a Mediterranean cruise. The couple, who have lived in Dublin for several years, had gone on a Mediterranean cruise on the **MSC MAGNIFICA** with their two children earlier this month. When the ship docked back at the Italian port Civitavecchia it was discovered that the woman was missing. Police located the man and his two children at Rome's Ciampino airport where they were about to board a flight to Dublin. The man was then arrested. It is understood the couple's two young children are being cared for by social services in Italy. In a statement, MSC Cruises said that "an Irish guest failed to disembark" from one of their ships earlier this week and local authorities were alerted. It said they subsequently "boarded the ship to investigate the matter" and added that "the ship was released a few hours later". **source: RTE**

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### China opposes U.S. naval patrols in South China Sea

## **Fancy owning a naval ship? 'LÉ Aisling' to be auctioned**

**The ship was involved in some of the most dramatic events in Irish Naval history** The last Irish Naval Service ship to be built at Verolme Cork Dockyard is to go under the hammer at auction in Cork next month some nine months after it was decommissioned from service. The **LÉ AISLING** will be put up for auction at the Carrigaline Court Hotel on March 23rd where Cork auctioneer Dominic Daly will seek to obtain the best price for the State for the ship. One of four Irish Naval Services ships to be built at Verolme Cork Dockyard, the **LÉ AISLING** went into service in 1980 and was decommissioned last June after over 35 years of service. During that time, the **LÉ AISLING** was involved in some of the most dramatic episodes in the Naval Service's history including the apprehension of the **Marita Ann** with guns for the IRA in 1984. Together with her sister ships, **LÉ Emer** and **LÉ Deirdre**, the **LÉ AISLING**, under the command of Lt Cdr Jim Robinson, shadowed the trawler **Marita Ann** as she left her home port of Dingle. The three ships kept a discreet distance as they watched the **MARITA ANN** meet with the trawler **Valhalla**, which had brought a consignment of guns for the IRA from America. The **MARITA ANN** ignored warnings from the **LÉ Emer** to stop after collecting an arms consignment outside Irish territorial waters but the trawler stopped after **LÉ AISLING** fired off a few tracer rounds. The **MARITA ANN** gave up after the burst of gunfire and was boarded by gardaí and Naval Service personnel two miles inside the Irish territorial water limit where they found five men on board. Among these was future Sinn Féin TD, Martin Ferris who was arrested and subsequently jailed for ten years for his part in trying to smuggle seven tonnes of arms and ammunition into Ireland. A year later, the **LÉ AISLING** was one of the first ships to reach the scene of the Air India disaster off the Irish coast when all 329 passengers and crew on board the plane were killed in a bomb attack. The **LÉ AISLING** crew, under the command of **Capt Jim Robinson**, recovered 38 bodies littered among the wreckage of the aircraft, which was located 160km off the south-west coast. Capt Robinson, Petty Officer Muiris Mahon, Leading Seaman John McGrath and Able Seaman Terence Brown received Distinguished Service Medals for their role in the recovery of the bodies. Ten years later in 1995, the **LÉ AISLING** was involved in the prolonged search off the Donegal coast for the Greencastle based fishing vessel Carrickatine which disappeared with the loss of all six crew. And just a year later, in 1996, it assisted the Japanese tuna boat **Taisei Maru** after it lost five crew in a gas poisoning incident (386km) 240 miles off Galway and escorted the ship to Haulbowline in Cork Harbour. The **LÉ AISLING**, which has travelled **628,856 nautical miles**, the equivalent of travelling around the world more than 32 times, has been twinned with Galway for over 20 years. Last year at its decommissioning ceremony in Galway, the city's deputy mayor, Cllr Pearce Flannery suggested the ship could become a floating museum in Galway Harbour or off Salthill. Minister of State at the Dept of Defence, Paul Kehoe said: "The question of using the former **LÉ AISLING** as a visitor attraction in Galway City has been raised with me and is under consideration. "I am advised that given the age, size, structure and layout of Naval Service vessels that they are considered rather unsuitable for conversion to use as museums or visitor attractions." Next month's auction of the **LÉ AISLING** follows the sale of the **LÉ Emer** at auction in 2013 when it fetched €320,000 for the Exchequer when it was sold to a Nigerian businessman, Cyprian Imobhio. But in July 2014 the **LÉ Emer** was impounded by the Nigerian Navy because Mr Imobhio had failed to secure the necessary military approval before bringing the ship into Nigerian waters. On February 19th 2015 the **LÉ Emer**, which had been stripped of its armaments before being put up for sale, was commissioned into the Nigerian Navy as a training ship and renamed **NNS PROSPERITY**. **source: Irish Times**

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### **Link for Royal Mail postage rates from 27 March:**

<http://www.royalmail.com/sites/default/files/Royal-Mail-Our-Prices-March-2017.pdf>

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### **Cargo Ship Partially Sinks Off Ecuador**

[http://gcaptain.com/cargo-ship-partially-sinks-off-ecuador/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28Gcaptain.com%29](http://gcaptain.com/cargo-ship-partially-sinks-off-ecuador/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28Gcaptain.com%29)

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### **Sembawang starts interior refit onboard Dawn Princess**

Sembawang has started a multi-million-dollar refurbishment of P&O Cruises' **PACIFIC DAWN** at its yard in Singapore. While in dry dock, **PACIFIC DAWN** will be fitted with a new Mediterranean-inspired dining venue called Nic and Toni's, new seafood restaurant Shell & Bones and The Pantry, an international market place of fresh food outlets that will replace the traditional buffet. A water park with two slides will also be added to her top deck. Several of the ship's public spaces will be redesigned to mirror the contemporary interiors on the newer P&O ships. These areas will include the atrium, Charlie's cafe, The Orient and the Promenade Bar. **PACIFIC DAWN** will set sail from Singapore on 2 March, arriving in Brisbane on 16 March to begin her year-round season from the Australian port. Alongside sister ship **PACIFIC ARIA**, the newly refurbished **PACIFIC DAWN** will offer a record 108 cruises this year, an increase from 98 cruises in 2016. **source: Cruise and Ferry**

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### **Queen Mary and its role in history before, during and after the Second World War**

TV Channel 5, are making an exciting two-part documentary about Britain's most famous ships. The Queen Mary will be the focus of one of our episodes. They are looking for individuals who can share their memories and experiences of the Queen Mary.

A key chapter of the Queen Mary's history is its role during the Second World War as a troop transporter. They are looking to talk to anyone that has memories of their journeys aboard the Queen Mary. In particular, they want to talk to individuals who can recall the tragic sinking of the HMS Curacoa on the 2nd October 1942, Churchill's transatlantic journeys, or the presence of German Prisoners of War on board.

For more information please contact Josh Sykes on 07882 436225 or e-mail [Josh.Sykes@channel5.com](mailto:Josh.Sykes@channel5.com) or by post to Channel 5 Broadcasting Ltd, 17-19 Hawley Crescent, Camden Town London NW1 8TT

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### **U.S. Coast Guard imposes intervention on two bulk carriers on Columbia River**

The U.S. Coast Guard set in motion a detention of the Panama-flagged bulk carriers **ATLANTIC RUBY** and **AMBER L**, Feb. 23, 2017, after discovering substandard safety issues while conducting routine Port State Control exams onboard the vessels along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. The **Atlantic Ruby**, a 590-foot bulk carrier was boarded in Portland on Feb. 23, after Port State Control Officers detected the SOLAS deficiencies. Coast Guard inspectors found the fixed fire extinguishing system



was improperly serviced, with the time delays left disconnected. The time delay ensures personnel inside a room are able to escape before the fixed fire extinguishing agent is released.

A separate Port State Control exam conducted in Kalama onboard the **AMBER L**, a 609-foot bulk carrier, identified several safety discrepancies. Inspectors found cooling water leaking from the main engine and multiple issues with the vessel's steering system. Through the Port State Control program, the Coast Guard verifies that foreign flagged vessels operating in U.S. waters comply with applicable international conventions, U.S. laws, and U.S. regulations. In an effort to reduce deaths and injuries; loss of or damage to property or the marine environment; and disruptions to maritime commerce, PSC exams focus on those vessels most likely to be substandard, based on identified risk factors. When vessels are identified as not being in substantial compliance with applicable laws or regulations, the Coast Guard imposes controls until the conditions have been rectified and the vessels are brought into compliance. The **ATLANTIC RUBY** and the **AMBER L** will remain in the Columbia River Captain of the Port zone until the discrepancies are corrected. **Source: USCG**



### **Celebrating 100 years: Seafarers UK**

Seafarers UK is a charity that helps people in the maritime community by providing vital support to seafarers in need and their families. The charity does this by giving grants to projects and organisations that make a real difference to people's lives, across the Merchant Navy, Fishing Fleets, Royal Navy and Royal Marines. In 2016 Seafarers UK gave grants totalling £2.5million to more than 70 maritime welfare charities.

This year, Seafarers UK is celebrating its 100 year anniversary. To mark this centenary the charity is holding a number of centenary celebration dinners around the country. The first dinner is in Liverpool this week, followed by events in London, Bristol and Glasgow. We often take for granted the importance of seafarers and the dependence we have on them. As an 'island nation' we depend on our seafarers to defend our shores, trade with other countries and import 95% of the things we take for granted in our daily lives. The job of a seafarer is therefore vital, but also demanding and hazardous with a much greater chance of injury than many other professions. A large number of those serving will be facing problems of different kinds; long periods of separation from family, extended periods of duty, fatigue, and working heavy machinery whilst being exposed to harsh weather. The funding provided by Seafarers UK enables seafarers access to advice, adapt to life on shore, re-train and find new employment. It also improves their quality of life by helping to provide the essentials of daily living that a small pension (or none) cannot cover. 24-30 June 2017 will mark Seafarers Awareness Week – the annual campaign to put the spotlight on our seafarers and maritime sector and their continued vital importance to the UK. Keep an eye on our website nearer the time for events and activities in Merseyside Maritime Museum that week. For more information on Seafarers UK and Seafarers Awareness Week, visit the [Seafarers Awareness website](#).

### **Self discharging bulk carrier Sterno sinking after running aground at Lilla Edet, Gota river, north of Gothenburg, Sweden** By John Stansfield



On Feb 24, 2017, the self discharging bulk carrier **STERNO** ran aground north of the locks in Lilla Edet, Gota River, north of Gothenburg, Sweden. The vessel hull was breached and the ship started taking on water. Sterno was laden with grain when it ran aground at 2 a.m. LT while heading south towards Gothenburg. The seven crew members have not been injured, and all have made it ashore. They were drug tested with negative results. The ship could be secured in the morning hours in situ, but had such a heavy list to port and

was partially flooded, that the alerted emergency services have not been able to start pumping out the water as it was deemed too unsafe to go aboard. The emergency services in Lilla Edet were working to try to save the ship from sinking completely. The water depth was seven meters at the accident site. In addition to the emergency services also staff from the Maritime Administration, the Canal Authority, the Transport Agency and S remediation firm were involved. There has been a minor oil spill that was drained. The oil leakages were limited and under control. The vessel had on board about 20 cbm fuel. Ship traffic past Lilla Edet was stopped for an uncertain time. **Source: Timsen/Vesseltracker**

**CHIRP**

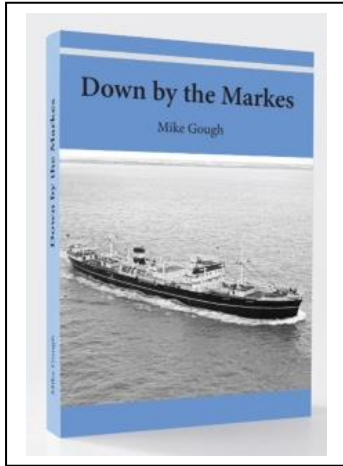


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## Book Review - Down by the Markes by Mike Gough



In the days before Health & Safety, an intrepid 13-year-old from Bridlington School was given an unbelievable opportunity. Mike Gough, embarked for three weeks on an Arctic bound Hull trawler. Inspired by this tough baptism, he joined shipping company Buries Markes Ltd. His head was full of dreams about being an officer in the Merchant Navy. In this first book, Mike tells the story of his exciting life at sea as an apprentice deck officer, the lowest of the low on board. The dream, like him nearly died, but eventually became a reality. The ultimate grounding in life afloat meant hours of blisteringly painful work and watch keeping. At the beck and call of all aboard, Mike and his fellow apprentices traverse the world. They experience places and people that landlubbers can only imagine. From the Humber to the Hooghly, from the Mersey to the Mississippi, they see the world and its inhabitants. The Merchant

Navy comes sharply into focus in this gripping warts and all story of life on the ocean wave.

Born in Kingston upon Hull, Mike Gough immediately came to the attention of a Mr Adolf Hitler, who flattened the family home. This caused a move to Guiseley, Leeds. After the war, the family moved back to the coast, where Bridlington School fostered a keen interest in the Naval section of the Combined Cadet Force. This lead Mike to follow his Captain father's footsteps into the Merchant Navy.

Down By The Markes is a record of Mike's first trip with Buries Markes Ltd on their *La Cordillera*. Like most 16 year olds, Mike ignored all warnings and thought things would be completely different from the "olden days" when Father served his Apprenticeship with Reardon Smith.

Mike went on from *La Cordillera* to a further 6 ships, *La Colina*, *La Falda*, *La Bahia*, *La Pradera*, *Montcalm* and *La Pampa*, before deciding to give shore life a chance.

*The book is also available on Amazon and Amazon Kindle, simply type in Down By The Markes in Amazon and it will come up.*

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## Have some respect! Dover Harbour expansion scheme threatens to dredge up war dead - THE remains of Battle of Britain war heroes and other servicemen and women who gave their lives protecting our shores will be dredged up if plans to extend Dover Harbour are given the go-ahead. By ARIANE SOHRABI-SHIRAZ

Protestors have attacked the plan to extend the busy harbour saying the area holds thousands of war graves. The plans put forward by The Dover Harbour Board, would use millions of tons of aggregate dug up from The Goodwin Sands to build a new cargo terminal and expand ferry traffic to and from Dover. But archaeologists say the 20 square mile area of sandbanks is a mass war grave and the last resting place of Second World War heroes and as such needs to be respected. The area also contains the remains of non-military vessels and crews which also need to be respected. The Dover Harbour Board has responded to the protests, denying it would cause problems, and saying it would respect other marine graveyards. They add that the area was selected because it would have the minimum environmental impact and avoid protected and charted wrecks. However, the protesters are concerned about the volume of sand, which they claim is so large that it will disturb many graves. Just weeks ago a dredger on the outer Thames Estuary unearthed a Second World War German aircraft. The Junkers JU 88 fighter bomber was shot down in 1943 by the RAF. The pilot parachuted to safety two other crew members perished. Ministers are later this year considering turning Goodwin Sands into a marine conservation zone, which would mean the area would be protected. This would prohibit the dredging of aggregate from the sandbanks. **Source: express**



Propeller/Rudder repairs carried out at Singapore Eastern Anchorage – **Photo : Luc Verley (c)**  
*This reminds me – takes me back, 29<sup>th</sup> January 19?? Off Malmö*  
*One of the good things about tankers – you can shift weights around easily.*

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### **50 new jobs up for grabs**

FIFTY new jobs are expected to be created in Bundaberg as the State Government calls for tenders on the dredging work of ex-**HMAS Tobruk**. Bundaberg MP Leanne Donaldson said local businesses had a fantastic opportunity to be a part of the massive project. "The transformation of **ex-HMAS Tobruk** into a dive site will support an estimated 50 new local jobs," she said. "This is one of the first opportunities for local business to become a part of this exciting project". National Parks Minister Steven Miles said the successful contractor would undertake maintenance dredging at the Bundaberg Port Marina to ensure there was sufficient depth to berth the vessel. "This job will involve the dredging of about 15,000 cubic metres of material and moving it ashore to a nearby disposal facility," he said. The dredging work will be done before the scuttling of **ex-HMAS Tobruk** to create an artificial reef and world-class dive site in waters off the Bundaberg coast. Dr Miles said the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing was being helped by the Department of Transport and Main Roads to call for interested parties to dredge the preparation berth. "The dredging works must be completed by April 30 to accommodate the mooring of the **ex-HMAS Tobruk**, which is scheduled to berth at this site in early May," he said. "Interested parties are encouraged to submit their interest via the Queensland Government website QTenders". The dive site will provide a unique experience for divers, attracting international tourists to the Fraser and Bundaberg coasts. For more information and to apply, visit [www.hpw.qld.gov.au/qtenders/](http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/qtenders/). Tenders close at 5pm on Friday, March 3. **source: newsmail**

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### **Royal Caribbean Adding Lifeguards to Cruise Ships by Ben Souza**

**starting this weekend and this new program will be rolled out to every ship in their fleet over the next few months.** The first **Royal Caribbean** cruise ship to receive lifeguards will be **Oasis of the Seas** this weekend. This program will be rolled out to all **Royal Caribbean** cruise ships with **Vision of the Seas** being the last to receive lifeguards in June Cruise Critic said that this is part of a new water safety program by **Royal Caribbean** that includes water safety instruction and signage through the ship. There will be one lifeguard stationed at every pool including the Solarium during all open hours. The licensed lifeguards will be trained by StarGuard Elite, a water risk prevention and training consulting company based in Florida. They will be hired specifically for this duty and will not serve in any other role on the ship. The cruise line will continue to offer swim vests for children and at least one parent or guardian must be present anytime a child 12 years or younger is in a pool. **Royal Caribbean** is joining **Disney Cruise Line** as the only cruise lines to offer lifeguards at the swimming pools on their ships. **source: Cruise Fever**

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**FATALITY PROBED:** the UK Marine Accident Investigation Branch has begun a new investigation following a fatal accident to a crew member on board the UK-registered bulk carrier **Graig Rotterdam** while discharging cargo at anchor off Alexandria, Egypt. **FLASHLIGHT – February 2017 Edition No 172**

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## Q-Flex LNG Carrier Damaged in Collision Off Fujairah

February 27, 2017 by [gCaptain](#)

One of the world's largest most advanced LNG carriers has suffered some serious damage after being involved in a collision with an oil tanker off Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.

Photos of the LNG carrier, revealed as the *Al Khattiya*, show the vessel was damaged to its port side from what looks like the bow of the tanker.

The 210,000 CBM Q-Flex LNG carrier *Al Khattiya* was delivered in

2009 by Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering in South Korea. The vessel is owned by the Qatari gas shipping company Nakilat and managed by Shell International Trading and Shipping Company (Stasco), a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell.

Stasco confirmed the incident in a [statement](#) to the media. The company said two of the LNG carrier's ballast tankers were breached in the collision, but the LNG cargo tanks are secure and there is no breach of the vessel's super cooled LNG containment system.

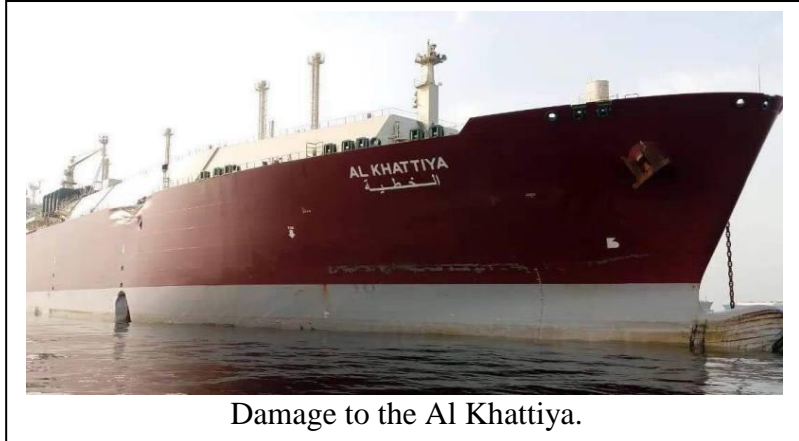
"Two of *Al Khattiya*'s ballast tanks were breached with a loss of some ballast water," Stasco said. "Cargo tank pressures are stable indicating that there is no loss of LNG containment from the cargo tanks on *Al Khattiya*."

No pollution or injuries have been reported.

The oil tanker involved in the incident is reported to be the *Jag Laadki*, operated by India's Great Eastern Shipping, however gCaptain has been unable to independently verify this information.

According to AIS data both the *Al Khattiya* and the *Jag Laadki* remained at anchor off Fujairah as of Monday.

Q-Flex LNG carriers are among the largest and most sophisticated LNG carriers in the world, with cargo capacity ranging from 210,000 cubic meters to 217,000 cubic meters in volume.



Damage to the *Al Khattiya*.

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## BBC Coral Detained in UK

The UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency has detained a flag of convenience ship after it was found to be in breach of the Maritime Labour Convention and crew members were ignoring enclosed space warnings. The Antigua & Barbuda-flagged general cargoship *BBC Coral* was detained in the port of Newcastle for two days last month after surveyors found problems including invalid MLC certification and insufficient charts for navigation.

Safety procedures were not all in place, the MCA said, and crew were observed in spaces in the hold marked 'Enclosed space, no entry'. Engineering staff admitted to entering the engine room void space and there was no permit to work in place, testing or rescue equipment.

Other deficiencies discovered subsequently included expired batteries on the voyage data recorder and inoperable quick-closing valves for thermal oil system tanks.

An additional safety management audit was required under the ISM Code before the ship could depart. According to the Equasis database, *BBC Coral* had been detained and had to undergo an additional safety management audit in Australia almost exactly a year ago, and MLC-related deficiencies were discovered in the ship's cold room during a port state control inspection in Swansea last April.

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Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself!  
(Don Robertson)

### **Captain Francesco Schettino, former master of the Costa Concordia**

**COSTA CONVICTION:** Captain Francesco Schettino, former master of the Costa Concordia cruiseship, has been convicted on charges of ‘destruction and defacement’ of the natural beauty of the isle of Giglio and for non-compliance with safety regulations. The court sentenced him to three months in jail for the violation of company safety rules, 15 days of house arrest for insufficient crew training and a €5,000 fine for ‘destruction and defacement’. **FLASHLIGHT – February 2017 Edition No 172**

*Unbelievable.*

AFP in Florence

Tuesday 31 May 2016 22.54 BST Last modified on Tuesday 31 May 2016 23.07 BST

**Florence’s appeals court has upheld the 16-year jail term for Francesco Schettino**, the captain of the [Costa Concordia](#) cruise ship, which sank off Italy in 2012 leaving 32 people dead.

Schettino was not in court when the verdict was read out by presiding judge Grazia D’Onofrio. **He will not be jailed immediately pending a possible further appeal and it is unlikely he will ever the complete sentence because of Italy’s crammed jails and generous parole system.**

Schettino was sentenced in February 2015 to 16 years and one month in prison after a judge ruled that his recklessness was to blame for the fate of the giant ship, which struck underwater rocks off the Tuscan island of Giglio.

He was convicted of multiple manslaughter, causing a maritime accident and [abandoning ship before all passengers and crew](#) had been evacuated, earning himself the nickname “Captain Coward” in the press. The violation of the ancient code of the sea which states a captain must be the last man off a sinking ship only accounted for one year of the sentence handed down by a three-judge panel in the Tuscan town of Grosseto.

During the first trial, lasting 19 months, Schettino was accused of showing off when he steered the ship too close to the island while entertaining a female friend. The ship had been carrying more than 4,200 people, including 3,200 tourists. The bodies of two of the victims have never been found.

Schettino’s lawyers insisted the accident and its deadly consequences were [primarily due to organisational failings](#) for which the ship’s owner, Costa Crociere, its Indonesian helmsman and the Italian coastguard should have shared the blame.

Costa Crociere avoided potential criminal charges by accepting partial responsibility and agreeing to pay a €1m (£769,000) fine. Five of its employees received non-custodial sentences after concluding plea bargains early in the investigation. They included the ship’s Indonesian helmsman, who could have averted the disaster but did not understand an order given by Schettino to change course just before the collision. The ex-captain’s lawyer said he would have liked the man at the helm to be questioned further “but he cannot be found, he has disappeared into thin air”.

Survivors who rejected Costa’s initial compensation offer and became civil parties in the Schettino case were awarded an average of €30,000 each. **Among those awarded a payout were Domnica Cemortan, the blonde Moldovan dancer with whom Schettino had dinner just before the ship hit the rocks.**

On top of his original prison term, Schettino was banned from public office from life and from working as a ship captain for five years.

*Looks like his 5 year suspension from working as a ship Captain expires this year...so if you know of anyone wanting to give an out of work experienced Master Mariner please feel free to pass this on.*

*Can’t understand why people call me a cynical B.....d.*

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**FATAL COLLISION:** an investigation has been launched after 11 people died when a 13,100TEU containership collided with a small passenger vessel off the coast of Peru last month. Twelve survivors were rescued from the water after the collision between the Panama-flagged MSC Regulus and the Ecuadorian vessel Don Gerado II. **FLASHLIGHT – February 2017 Edition No 172**

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### **Asian Gypsy Moths update May 2016**

<https://www.ukpandi.com/loss-prevention/article/asian-gypsy-moths-update-may-2016-135055/>



## SIX DAY WAR CREW SOUGHT

### Merseyside Museum commemorates Suez Canal anniversary

Merseyside Maritime Museum is looking for former seafarers who were on a stranded ship on the Suez Canal between June 1967 and June 1975 to attend a special 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion at **Merseyside Maritime Museum on Thursday 1 June.**



14 merchant ships were stranded in the Great Bitter Lake in the Suez Canal at the start of the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt in 1967. They were trapped there for eight years until Egypt reopened the canal in 1975. Four of the ships were British flagged, including three from Liverpool shipping lines: *MS Melampus* and *MS Agapenor* from Blue Funnel Line, and *MS Scottish Star* from Blue Star Line. The fourth British ship was *MS Port Invercargill* of the London-based Port Line.

Though the original trapped crews were replaced after a couple of months, over the years around 3,000 seafarers served on the

ships, helping to maintain them and their precious cargos, right in the middle of a war zone. The period was the height of the Cold War, the ships may have come from both sides of the Iron Curtain, but as Ben Whittaker, Curator of Maritime History and Technology explains, it didn't stop them forming their own 'United Nations'.

"The ships were going nowhere, over time camaraderie grew between the crews irrespective of their country of origin. Inspired by the part of the Suez Canal they were stuck in, they established what was to become a unique community; the Great Bitter Lake Association".

"They shared supplies and equipment, as well as created a full programme of sports fixtures and other social activities. The seafarers even produced their own hand-made stamps, which are now sought after collectors' items".

The move to appeal for ex-crew was inspired by author Cath Senker, whose forthcoming book on the subject features material from the Blue Funnel Line Archive which is held at the Museum, as well as images of objects from the museum collections related to the Great Bitter Lake Association. These include a commemorative plate and home-made trophies that were awarded to the winners of the competitions held on board the ships during the 8 year long saga.

Ben says; "We want former crew to get in touch and join us on 1 June to share their stories and reminisce. Many members remember their time in the Suez Canal as one



of the most significant of their entire lives. Through the internet, many of them have now renewed contact with each other, and interest in this unusual story has been revived. With Liverpool ships and men part of the story, Merseyside Maritime Museum is the right place to hold the reunion".

**If you or a family member were on one of the stranded ships on the Great Bitter Lake during the Six Day War and want to share your story and be part of the reunion, contact Ben. Telephone 0151 478 4401 or email [ben.whittaker@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](mailto:ben.whittaker@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk).**

**The Merchant Navy Association Immingham Branch presents a cheque for £300 to the Immingham Seafarers Centre.**



At the AGM of the Merchant Navy Association Immingham Branch 22<sup>nd</sup> February a cheque for £300 was presented to the Immingham Seafarers Centre.

The branch holds 4 or 5 of its meetings at the Seafarers Centre and visits pubs/restaurants on other occasions.

Left to right, Barbara Brown Chair of the Merchant Navy Association Immingham Branch, Steve Willows Apostleship of the Seas, Ros

Dezelski Manager Humber Seafarers Services, Bryony Watson Apostleship of the Seas, & Jake Pass, Mission to Seafarers.

**The killer in the cabin – makeshift electrical rig-ups**

A seafarer who retired to his sleeping quarters after supper was unaware that he had let a killer into the cabin.

The first sign that something was wrong came an hour later when smoke was seen billowing from a ventilation duct. The seat of the fire was identified as the crewman's cabin, and the source an electric fan heater being used to dry wet working gear.

The fire was extinguished and the crewman was pulled from his bunk. Despite efforts to resuscitate him, he was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. The investigation revealed the dead man's cabin and many other areas in the vessel were full of octopus connections and unsafe home-made electrical rig-ups, which had not been identified during weekly Master's inspections.

You can read the full MARS report, and the lessons learned from this incident,

[http://www.nautinst.org/en/forums/mars/mars-2017.cfm/201721?utm\\_source=NewZapp&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=NI-Enewsletter](http://www.nautinst.org/en/forums/mars/mars-2017.cfm/201721?utm_source=NewZapp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NI-Enewsletter)

. The Nautical Institute's free online MARS database is entirely supported by our [Nautical Affiliates](#). Please encourage your organisation to become a supporter of this vital resource **Source: Nautical Institute**

**Ghost ships: Why are World War II naval wrecks vanishing in Indonesia?**

Seventy-five years ago this month, Australia, the UK, US and the Netherlands suffered a series of disastrous naval defeats against Japan in the narrow straits and seas around Indonesia. The warship wrecks in the Java Sea and the Sunda Strait are the final resting place for thousands of Allied sailors. The sites are considered war graves by survivors and their descendants, following a long maritime tradition of respecting human remains on shipwrecks. So it was with shock and deep disappointment that an international team surveying the Java Sea wrecks in November 2016 found that at least four Dutch and British shipwrecks — and one American submarine whose entire crew was captured alive — had simply vanished from the seabed some 70 metres below. The ships were enormous — the **HMS EXETER**, for example, was a 175-metre heavy cruiser, longer than three Olympic-sized swimming pools. Other Allied ships in Indonesian waters have also been damaged. The evidence suggests that the missing ships were stolen, or salvaged, for the valuable metal now sitting on the sea floor. The recent desecration of the Java Sea naval wrecks was unsurprising to those familiar with the state of underwater cultural heritage in Indonesia. Last year, Inside Indonesia reported on measures being taken to mitigate damage to two other Allied wrecks in Indonesia: **HMAS PERTH** and **USS HOUSTON** in the Sunda Strait, west of Jakarta..... **source : abc net**

## Waking up to Fatigue

Seafarer fatigue is an issue that has been worrying the industry for a number of years, but less attention has been paid to the long-term psycho-social effects of fatigue and tiredness – until now. Project MARTHA is a joint study into the subject by InterManager and the UK's Warsash Maritime Academy. For more than two years, the project tracked 70 seafarers, from ratings to Captains, who wore 'actiwatches' that monitored their movements and sleep.

The results make fascinating reading in the March issue of The Nautical Institute's membership magazine, *Seaways*. For example, fatigue and stress tend to get worse as voyage length increases, while motivation decreases. Masters suffer more overall, and tend to experience more mental fatigue rather than the physical fatigue suffered by other crew members

Complaints about the paperwork burden are commonplace, but seafarers also said their levels of fatigue were increased by joining a new ship, more frequent inspections, new regulations and poor-quality accommodation. Not being relieved on time led to a loss of motivation, the study found.

Above all, Project MARTHA's researchers noted, both seafarers and shore management need to get behind a cultural change in the industry's attitude towards fatigue.

You can read the whole article and much more [here](http://www.nautinst.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/seaways/MARTHA.pdf?utm_source=NewZapp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NI-Enewsletter)  
[http://www.nautinst.org/filemanager/root/site\\_assets/seaways/MARTHA.pdf?utm\\_source=NewZapp&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=NI-Enewsletter](http://www.nautinst.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/seaways/MARTHA.pdf?utm_source=NewZapp&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NI-Enewsletter)

Source: Nautical Institute

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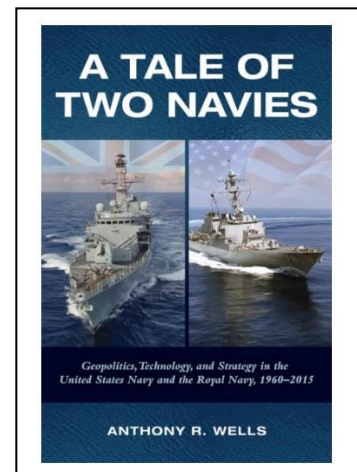
## A Tale of Two Navies - Geopolitics, Technology, and Strategy in the United States Navy and the Royal Navy, 1960-2015

I attended the launch of *A Tale of Two Navies - Geopolitics, Technology, and Strategy in the United States Navy and the Royal Navy, 1960-2015* by Anthony R Wells (Naval Institute Press, 2017 - Hardback, 288 pp - £35.50) at King's College London on St David's Day. The flyer states:

👛 Exclusive 20% Discount Available To claim your discount and free shipping, please visit

📖 [eurospanbookstore.com](http://eurospanbookstore.com) and enter the code NAVIES20 at the checkout. 👛

The author joined BRNC in 1966 and left the RN as a Commander (X). He worked in DC, for British Intelligence, the US Navy and US Intelligence and is a citizen of the United States.



It's certainly an interesting book, including chapters on the Six Day War, Cold War and Falklands War, the Walker spy ring, Intelligence and the Special Relationship, defence organisation, the present and future - and more. It's also available as an eBook.

It's part of the story of our lives in a blue suit. Disappointing that the mis-spelling of Henry Leech and Allen Turing were not corrected.

Regards,  
Lester May



**Skipper sets sail with just a iPad for navigation then crashes into a ferry when his wifi fails in a shipping lane**



A skipper has been fined £3,000 after he set sail in his Second World War

boat with just an iPad to navigate - and promptly crashed into a ferry when the wifi connection dropped. **David Carlin**, 34, accidentally navigated the 50ft wooden **PEGGOTTY** - which did not even have a compass - into the main shipping lane of the Humber Estuary during dense fog, where he collided with a cargo - ferry last May. His wooden vessel, which had faulty navigation lights and radar, sunk within half an hour and Mr Carlin, a pilot with Associated British Ports, was forced to put out a Mayday call. The DFDS Seaways cargo ferry, **PETUNIA SEAWAYS**, was 1,400 times bigger than the **PEGGOTTY** and its skipper did not even realise the collision had occurred - carrying on its journey to Gothenburg in Sweden. He was also fined £3,000 by Hull magistrates for breaching maritime laws. The Sun reports Mr Carlin and his wife Hannah Bowie had been planning on selling the boat, which is a former Royal Navy training vessel, and he was sailing it from Grimsby to Hull for a survey. **Mr Carlin** was not on duty at the time but remains suspended from his job. **Gwen Lancaster**, of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency's Hull Marine Office, said: 'I am surprised this collision, which could easily have resulted in far worse consequences, occurred in the first place. 'Both vessels were under the command of experienced professional captains who should have known better.' **source : Dailymail**



FPSO ARMADA OLOMBENDO (offshore Angola)  
Photo : Jennifer McCaul 2nd mate onboard Pacific Diligence. ©

## Woman claims she was ‘brutally’ raped on Miami-based luxury cruise line

BY CHABELI HERRERA

For one avid cruiser on the Miami-based luxury line SeaDream Yacht Club, the niche company’s small ships were a big part of the appeal. The North Carolina-based passenger knew she’d likely get to know many of the SEADREAM I’s 112 passengers and 95 crew members — including a Portuguese bartender, whom she had met on past sailings with the line and who was joining the ship in Dubrovnik, Croatia on the same day she was in June 2015. But on a choppy night in the Adriatic Sea four days into the seven-night journey, the ship’s familiarity and intimacy would turn on the 46-year-old woman in an unexpected way. In a suit filed Thursday in Miami district court, the woman, who has chosen not to give her name, alleges the bartender “brutally” raped her vaginally, anally and orally that night. She claims that SeaDream was negligent. The night of the alleged rape, June 24, 2015, the woman said in an interview, she had taken her usual sleeping tablet, a medication she had taken for four years at that point, along with a seasickness tablet handed to her by a concierge. That’s when she headed over to the piano bar, where the bartender worked. Accompanying her was a lifelong friend who was on the voyage with her. The bartender, whom she and her friend knew well from previous sailings on the line, gave her water to take the pill, a ginger drink to soothe the nausea and a glass of wine, she said. That’s where her memory starts to get fuzzy, she said, likely because of the combination of pills. In and out of consciousness, she remembers two things, she said: Her friend leaving her with the bartender, who promised to get her back to the room safely, and the bartender raping her behind the bar. The bartender, she alleges, closed the blinds surrounding the bar and “forcibly” raped her. “He was raping me in all areas possible and I was crying and I was asking him, ‘Why are you doing this to me? You are hurting me,’” she said in a phone interview arranged by her attorney. The woman was eventually dropped off in her room, where she said she stayed for almost the remaining time of the trip as she tried to cope with what had happened, she claims. As the ship neared its destination in Venice, Italy, she decided to call the ship’s doctor, who was unable to perform a full examination because there was no rape kit on board the SEADREAM I, she said. The captain, she alleges, didn’t come see her when she called for him. Instead, he asked her friend as they were disembarking the ship, “Does your friend intend to sue SeaDream?” she recalled in the phone interview. “At that point it wasn’t even a consideration,” she said. SeaDream declined to comment on this story, citing pending litigation. The woman has been deeply affected by the alleged rape, according to the lawsuit. “For a while I was in the depth of darkness,” she said in the phone interview. “If there is anyone that even slightly resembles the way that he looks, it takes my breathe away. If I’m in the bedroom, my husband has to let me know in advance before he walks in the door.” “I’m now a member of a club I didn’t wish to become a member of.” In the suit, the plaintiff is asking for \$25 million in damages from the cruise line, which she alleges was negligent in providing a reasonably safe environment for its passengers. Lawsuits involving rapes on cruise ships are typically settled, said the plaintiff’s attorney, Michael Winkleman, of Miami-based firm Lipcon, Margulies, Alsina & Winkleman. The firm, which specializes in maritime claims, handles dozens of sexual assault cases on cruise ships every year, he said. But the current volume of cases his firm sees is at “epidemic levels,” he said. “The vast majority of these cases resolve with confidentiality provisions and that of course is because the cruise lines have a very strong interest in keeping these types of tragedies quiet,” Winkleman said. Cases involving crew members raping passengers are fairly common, he said, but the severity of the SeaDream passenger’s case is “very rare.” In 2010, Congress passed the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act in response to a high number of sexual assault cases. Per the act, “sexual assault and physical assaults on cruise vessels were the leading crimes investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with regard to cruise vessel incidents” from 2005 to 2010. Under the law, cruise lines are now required to self-report criminal activity. Sexual assault is the No. 1 crime reported by the major cruise lines. Of 114 reported crimes between April 2015 and December 2016 from major lines, excluding SeaDream, more than 60 percent were sexual assault cases involving either passengers and crew members. Still, based on the volume of cases he sees, Winkleman said, “it’s our opinion that [sexual assaults] are dramatically underreported.” **Source: Miami herald**

## **UK maritime wages: exploitative or reasonable?**

**Calls are growing for the UK maritime industry to draw up a legislative timetable for ending pay discrimination. But just how bad is the problem?**

"We need to stop this exploitation," says Paul Keenan, an inspector with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). "There are people coming here on £2-3 an hour, which is outrageous." His upset is driven by his own experience and other reports of foreign seafarers – many of whom are from the Philippines and the Far East – being paid less than the national minimum wage (NMW). In the UK, the minimum wage varies based on age. Workers aged 25 or over are entitled to what is now known as the National Living Wage, which currently stands at £7.20 and is due to rise to £7.50 in April. Meanwhile, the minimum wage still applies to workers aged 24 and under, and gradually decreases the younger a worker is. For example, those aged 21-24 should get £6.95 per hour, rising to £7.05 in April. Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT) general secretary, Mick Cash, was scathing in his criticism, saying in January: "Ship owners cut their wage bill by getting rid of UK seafarers because they are able to discriminate against foreign seafarers by paying them less.

"Every day seafarers, including those working on vessels chartered as part of a public contract for services between UK ports, continue to be exploited by rates of pay well below the UK minimum." However, UK Chamber of Shipping policy director Tim Springett strikes a different tone: "By the standards of [some of] their countries of domicile, seafarers are handsomely remunerated for their work "Claims of pay discrimination are based on a misunderstanding of the fact that seafarers are paid at levels commensurate with the cost of living in their country of domicile. In fact it is practically unheard of for two persons performing similar roles on board a vessel to be paid at different rates." Is the language of discrimination and exploitation designed as a headline-grabbing exercise to further agendas, or something more indicative of the state of the UK maritime sector?

**Looking at the law** What can be said is that paying different rates is not illegal. "But it runs contrary to our conscience," says Charles Boyle, director of legal services at Nautilus, a trade union representing 22,000 seafarers in the UK, the Netherlands and Switzerland. "It's morally wrong. It exploits the workers and stops British seafarers from getting those jobs." Under British law, seafarers are covered by section 40 of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998, which states that seafarers will be considered to be working in the UK "when working on a ship registered in the UK" unless all the work takes place outside the UK or the seafarer is not normally resident in the UK.

Those seafarers working on a non-UK flagged ship can claim the NMW for work performed outside the country only if they "ordinarily work" in the UK. The criteria for considering this can include where the seafarer's tour of duty begins and ends, where the seafarer is subject to income tax, as well as the currency in which the seafarer is paid. That does mean in some cases that a different rate of pay will be applied. "It [can] make it difficult, for example, for Filipinos to meet [the conditions set out in NMW law], because they do not ordinarily reside in the UK," explains Boyle. "After several months on a ship they go back home to the Philippines."

**"We need to stop this exploitation."** When considering a complaint of underpayment, HM Revenue and Customs investigates the circumstances of employment to decide whether or not a seafarer has a sufficiently strong connection to the UK. There's also the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) which says that seafarers should be paid in full, in accordance with their employment agreements. It does not establish a mandatory minimum wage, but leaves this question to be dealt with under the national law of the flag states. However, the convention does include an international procedure for establishing a recommended minimum monthly basic wage for able seafarers. This is reviewed by the ILO Joint Maritime Commission on average every two years, and currently stands at \$614.

**But what is happening on the ground?** 'As little as £2 an hour, or no payment whatsoever'

In January, Hull East MP Karl Turner raised the issue of what he called the "scandalous" situation of P&O Ferries paying £4.70 an hour to Spanish and Portuguese seafarers on its Hull routes. "[But] £7.20 is the minimum wage. That is just scandalous in my view." A P&O spokesperson said at the time: "We comply fully with the requirements of employment legislation on all of our routes. Whilst the majority of

our seafarers are employed on UK contracts, we also have agency crew from other EU countries working in the North Sea sector.

"Our EU agency colleagues tend to be long-serving, some having been with us for many years, and they are employed at good rates of pay when compared to wage levels in their home countries." Reports also emerged late last year that some foreign sailors working in the North Sea were being paid as little as £2 an hour. There's also an issue of non-payment. As an inspector, Keenan has first-hand experience of the problem. Last year he assisted the crew on an Indian-owned vessel, the *Malaviya Twenty*, in the port of Great Yarmouth, after it became apparent that wages had not been paid.

"We got to an agreement where all crew would be paid up to their December wages by the end of January, via bank transfer," says Keenan. He makes clear, however, that it was a tough process; one that included arresting the ship. As of 8 February, it is still in Great Yarmouth. "Once the crew has received what's owed to them for January and February, and we know they are being repatriated, we will lift the arrest," explains Keenan. Is this a regular occurrence? "Oh yeah," affirms Keenan. "A colleague of mine in Southampton recently dealt with a tanker and he recovered wages that had not been paid. It's on a regular basis that ships come into the UK and seafarers have not been paid. Quite often we come across ships where people are owed smaller amounts; [that's] almost weekly." Keenan believes it happens because "it's easy not to pay them". When cash flows are tight, owners stop paying the crew, he adds.

**A decline in UK seafarers** There is fear that low wages could also price British seafarers out of jobs. "It's a big concern; cheap labour can be sourced from elsewhere," says Boyle. "The UK is increasingly becoming less and less a supplier of seafarers to the world's ships, even to UK ships." This is backed up by an Oxford Economics report commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT), published in November, which reveals that only 40% of officers in the UK shipping industry are UK nationals. The government's own statistics – published in January – show that in 2016, the total number of UK seafarers active at sea was estimated to be 23,060, compared to 33,670 in 1977. The number of UK certificated officers active at sea has now dropped to 10,650, a 22% decline over the last decade.

**"Shipping is a global industry, with a global workforce."** UK ratings (workers who are required to hold specific certificates, but who are not required to hold certificates of competency) stood at 8,880. In addition, the government predicts that the total supply of UK officers in 2026 could be 7% lower than in 2016, while the supply of deck and engine officers could fall by more than 30%. Springett is unconvinced that this can be attributed to firms employing non-UK seafarers on cheaper wages, instead contending that the main reasons are "that technological advances are enabling ships to sail with smaller crews". He adds: "Countries whose labour costs are lower than in the UK have become able to train competent seafarers to the highest levels. The trend is similar to the movement of manufacturing jobs from countries such as the UK to the Far East. "Shipping is a global industry, with a global workforce hailing from many different countries – each with different laws, economies and costs of living. It is [also] the only industry with a global 'bill of rights' for its workforce, which covers more than 90% of internationally trading ships and guarantees decent standards of work for seafarers irrespective of their nationality."

**Time to review** When asked to comment on the maritime labour numbers, a spokesperson for the DfT said: "We want a successful UK maritime industry so our nation is best placed to benefit from the expected doubling in world sea trade by 2030. "Our seafarers are rightly recognised for their training and expertise and we are launching a review to see how we can help the sector thrive." According to the DfT, this review into minimum wage rules will begin shortly. In a letter to *Nautilus*, shipping minister John Hayes said: "I am determined to see more UK seafarers employed and to be able to compete fairly for jobs, particularly for those jobs working on vessels operating out of UK ports or operating in UK waters." What are the chances that the review will recommend changes? "I'm cautious, but also hopefully optimistic," says Boyle. Springett is wary of "legislating to increase pay rates" as this will, he says, do nothing to add to UK seafarer numbers. "It will simply make the UK register unattractive to ship owners," he adds. Rather, he calls for more support for training programmes. "World trade in shipping has slumped," says Keenan. "We have ships sitting idle. And, pressure on costs then feeds through to pressure on wages. "My guess is that there will always be someone, somewhere, who is owed money." **source: ship-technology**

## **The Halifax Explosion 6<sup>th</sup> December 1917 – the Hundredth Anniversary**

At 9:05 a.m., in the harbour of Halifax in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, the most devastating manmade explosion in the pre-atomic age occurs when the *Mont Blanc*, a French munitions ship, explodes 20 minutes after colliding with another vessel.

As World War I raged in Europe, the port city of Halifax bustled with ships carrying troops, relief supplies, and munitions across the Atlantic Ocean. On the morning of December 6, the Norwegian vessel *Imo* left its mooring in Halifax harbour for New York City. At the same time, the French freighter *Mont Blanc*, its cargo hold packed with highly explosive munitions—2,300 tons of picric acid, 200 tons of TNT, 35 tons of high-octane gasoline, and 10 tons of gun cotton—was forging through the harbour's narrows to join a military convoy that would escort it across the Atlantic.

At approximately 8:45 a.m., the two ships collided, setting the picric acid ablaze. The *Mont Blanc* was propelled toward the shore by its collision with the *Imo*, and the crew rapidly abandoned the ship, attempting without success to alert the harbour of the peril of the burning ship. Spectators gathered along the waterfront to witness the spectacle of the blazing ship, and minutes later it brushed by a harbour pier, setting it ablaze. The Halifax Fire Department responded quickly and was positioning its engine next to the nearest hydrant when the *Mont Blanc* exploded at 9:05 a.m. in a blinding white flash.

The massive explosion killed more than 1,800 people, injured another 9,000—including blinding 200—and destroyed almost the entire north end of the city of Halifax, including more than 1,600 homes. The resulting shock wave shattered windows 50 miles away, and the sound of the explosion could be heard hundreds of miles away.

### **The event is remembered annually by the citizens of Halifax,**

It has been proposed by one of our members, *Derek Watson (Plymouth)*, that this year, being the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, that because the port, harbour and citizens of the City of Halifax played such an important strategic and supportive role for the transport of aid and munitions to Britain in both world wars it would show our appreciation if The Merchant Navy Association send a small delegation to attend this year's remembrance of this historic event.

**This is a call for anyone interested in possibly accompanying Derek to commemorate this historic event.**

**Will anyone interested in taking part in this proposed visit please initially contact myself, Malcolm Mathison, 01472 277 266 or [R546060@aol.com](mailto:R546060@aol.com)**

### **Why? You ask, is this event not more widely known?**

Because it was hushed up, for the same reason that the massive loss of life sustained by our retreating forces when the *Lancastria* was sunk during the evacuation of our troops from France – our enemies would have used the news to lower the morale of the British people and our allies.

I have carried out some research with regards to this event but so far have drawn a blank. Therefore, I was hoping that you could be of help, by putting me in touch with the right person or organisation that could help me and my association carry this matter forwards?

Take a look at;- <https://www.halifax.ca/halifaxexplosion/>

And

CBS News Almanac (2 mins- *after the ad*)

<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/almanac-the-halifax-explosion/>

Video - About 5 mins

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=halifax+explosion+video&view=detail&mid=93426CA5B94AA29BB72693426CA5B94AA29BB726&FORM=VIRE>

The Memorial - Folk Photographer (30 mins)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Halifax+Explosion+1917&&view=detail&mid=143F7F8F76221809CFEB143F7F8F76221809CFEB&FORM=VRDGAR>

The Halifax Explosion Documentary by History of Wars (48 minutes)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=halifax+explosion+video&view=detail&mid=F8E31E611550458A4A99F8E31E611550458A4A99&FORM=VIRE>

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## **Advancing Years**

Couple in their nineties are both having problems remembering things. During a check-up, the doctor tells them that they're physically okay, but they might want to start writing things down to help them remember ...

Later that night, while watching TV, the old man gets up from his chair. 'Want anything while I'm in the kitchen?' he asks.

'Will you get me a bowl of ice cream?'

'Sure.'

'Don't you think you should write it down so you can remember it?' she asks.

'No, I can remember it.'

'Well, I'd like some strawberries on top, too. Maybe you should write it down, so as not to forget it?'

He says, 'I can remember that. You want a bowl of ice cream with strawberries.'

'I'd also like whipped cream. I'm certain you'll forget that, write it down?' she asks.

Irritated, he says, 'I don't need to write it down, I can remember it! Ice cream with strawberries and whipped cream - I got it, for goodness sake!'

Then he toddles into the kitchen. After about 20 minutes, the old man returns from the kitchen and hands his wife a plate of bacon and eggs.

She stares at the plate for a moment then asks 'Where's the toast?'

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*That's all from me now folks.*

*Good Health, Fair Winds and Calm Seas. Take Care and "Keep your Finger on the Pulse".*

*Yours Aye,  
Malcolm*

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