



# SEATIMES

**The Newsletter of the Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada**  
(Society founded in 1995 by the British Columbia Branch of The Nautical Institute)



**September 2020**

**Following is an article that was featured in the July 2020 edition of Seaways,  
the Journal of The Nautical Institute.**

## **Supporting the next generation of mariners.**

*For 25 years, Canada's NPESC has worked with The Nautical Institute to support those going to sea – from finding berths to giving bursaries – and continues to do so today.*

'How do we fund berths for young people who want to go to sea?' is a frequent issue for those working closely with Cadets. Twenty-five years ago, The Nautical Professional Education Society of Canada, founded by The Nautical Institute of British Columbia, set out to answer that question. Today, while the mission of the Society has changed, it continues to work closely with the Marine Campus of the British Columbia Institute of Technology, Camosun College, the Western Maritime Institute and other Canadian educational institutions to support young mariners and the development of the maritime skillset.

**Why set up the NPESC?** In a pattern familiar to many 'traditional' seafaring nations, the post Second World War demise of the Canadian merchant fleet saw loss of jobs, career opportunities and deep-sea training. Many companies moved to offshore registries, and Canadians seeking nautical careers faced difficulties of access and global competition. Career progression through company contract manning was replaced by short-term placements through manning agencies. The loss of Canadian flag shipping also caused growing concern over the lack of younger, qualified, experienced replacement officers for management, regulatory and instruction positions in Canada.

Increasing concerns about the lack of training and development were raised by members of The Nautical Institute, British Columbia Branch, the Company of Master Mariners of Canada and the Canadian Institute of marine Engineering. Attempts by the Pacific Marine Training Institute (PMTI) to establish a three-year Maritime Studies Diploma Program leading to O.N.II and marine Engineer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class sadly stalled for lack of government support.

However, liberalisation of the Canadian Income Tax Act allowed offshore companies to relocate their operational headquarters to Canadian Maritime Centres with tax exemption for their offshore operations and income. The first to come was Teekay Shipping Ltd from Long Beach, California, and several Hong Kong companies followed suit. At the same time, some companies realising the shortcomings of manning agency crewing, re-considered cadet training and company career progression. One such company was Teekay, with commercial cadet training ships.

Meantime, under the existing programmes, Canadians became qualified to Watchkeeping Mates and marine Engineers 4<sup>th</sup> Class. They were basically coastal qualifications, creating a large pool of such officers who found their qualifications not accepted by international deep-sea owners and there were too few coastal positions to employ them. Consequently, some took the decision to sail as seamen and many were unemployed with seemingly nowhere to go: a logjam to be broken.

**Breaking the deadlock:** A study by members of The Nautical Institute, British Columbia Branch, and marine faculty of the P.M.T.I, including Captain Gavin Brown MNI, Captain John Swain MNI (Stolt Tankers), Mr. Barry Sheppard CIMarE, and Ms. Heather Hathorn CNI (Hathorn Agencies), resulted in the creation of working groups for funding a training scheme and positions. A Cadet Junior Officer Training Plan was proposed as a 4-year program including shore and sea phases, with costing for pay.



L to R: Founding member Captain Brian Silvester FNI and Captain David Whittaker FNI present Engineering Cadet Patrick Vipond with the 2007 BCIT Foundation Award. Also in the picture is Captain John Clarkson FNI, Associate Dean of the BCIT Marine Campus

The immediate problem, however, was the situation of un- or under-employed Watchkeeping Mates, who did not qualify for off-shore deployment due to lack of qualification and/or deepsea service specifications. The immediate solution lay in providing opportunities for the necessary 12 months watchkeeping sea-time, with assigned self-study to bring such trainees to the O.N.II level. This applied similarly to junior marine engineering officers.

A trial program was initiated by Captain Brown and Heather Hathorn to place four junior officers on offshore deepsea container and ro-ro ships operating in the Pacific and Caribbean. Members of The Nautical Institute, British Columbia Branch, raised funds to pay the trainees the equivalent that the company paid their Cadets for a 3-months trial period. The success of this trial, which resulted in two of the junior officers moving on to permanent positions, showed the value of such a programme.

**Expanding the programme:** The BC government was committing funding to job skills improvement programmes to combat general unemployment. Approaches to the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (the Ministry) by Captain Brian Silvester FNI showed the feasibility of applying for such funding for our programme.

As the scheme proposed was for deck and engineering officers, participation could not be limited to The Nautical Institute. It also required a society registered as a charitable organisation. To this end the British Columbia Branch directors and a couple of other venturesome members applied for incorporation as the Nautical Professional Education Society of British Columbia. The Society was incorporated on February 10<sup>th</sup> 1995 and became the directing organisation of the programme. Within a month The Nautical Institute, BC Branch, became an Affiliated Member of the Society and in due course, the Canadian Institute of Marine Engineering and the Company of Master Mariners of Canada also joined as affiliated members. At that point a change was made to the Society's name, replacing the words "British Columbia" with "Canada". And so, the NPESC was born.

Officers and directors of the Society, elected and confirmed at the inaugural meeting of the NPESC were: -

**Captain E.G. Monteiro MNI** Canadian Transport Company – President & Chairman

**Captain (N) J.K. Steele C.D. MNI** R.C.N. Retired – Secretary

**Captain A. Crowther MNI** Pacific Coast Shipping – Treasurer

**Captain D. Whitaker MNI** Fraser Surrey Docks – Director: Fund Raising

**Captain Janice Kenefick AMNI** P.M.T.I. – Director: Public Relations

**Ms. Heather Hathorn Comp. NI** Hathorn Agencies – Director: Placements

**Captain J. Arnott MNI** PMTI – Director: ex officio The Nautical Institute (British Columbia Branch)

**Lt.-Cdr. G.B. Stanford C.D. LL.B. FNI** – Honorary Counsel

A formal proposal to the Ministry through Camosun College by Captain Brian Silvester, as Head of Nautical Studies at the College, obtained approval for funds and the Provincial Government provided a grant of C\$72,000. The proposal took into account the Society's contribution in managing the scheme, and the contributions by the shipowner in provision of positions, accommodation and training, against funding providing grants to shipping companies to give monthly payments to the trainees. The funds to be paid or held through Camosun College, payable to the Society for its requirements on demand, providing a short term kick-start.

The companies signed on the trainees and paid related costs, for a six-months period or as further agreed, and so had an extra watchkeeping officer on board. Trainees were subject to supervision and training by the Master and officers, and completion of training sea requirements set by the Society and were required to read professional training publication programs such as The Nautical Institute's *Bridge Watchkeeping Guide*. The aim was to assist trainees to get their seetime required to sit for O.N.II or Marine Engineer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class certificates and develop them to a high standard of training and expertise to qualify them for further career progression in deep-sea shipping.

These initial aims were achieved. Individual applicants and the marine industry as a whole benefited from the foresight and generosity of the founding members.

**Next steps – a bursary programme:** With the passage of time, conditions in the marine industry changed. International operators recognized the quality of Canadian officers and employment opportunities and salaries in foreign flag vessels increased.

With the inception of the Cadet Program at the Marine Campus of The British Columbia Institute of Technology (formerly the PMTI) in 1998, the Executive and Board of Directors of the Society determined that the original focus of providing stipends and training positions was no longer appropriate. It was decided to transfer the remaining Society's funds to the BCIT Foundation and to the Vancouver Foundation and use them to establish a bursary programme. Since beginning the bursary programme in 2001, more than \$65,000 has been presented to marine students by the Society.

After our one Corporate Member announced they could no longer afford to support us, funding of the Society has relied upon the generosity of Branch members and donations from the Nautical Institute BC Branch and other maritime groups as well as private donors. Along with these donations, the interest generated by the two investment funds provides a number of bursaries each year.

Since 2009, awards made from monies derived from the Vancouver Foundation and other donations have been made available to students enrolled in any approved marine training course in Canada. The award made from monies derived from the BCIT Foundation remains dedicated to Cadets enrolled at BCIT Marine Campus.

In 2016 we were extremely pleased to team up with the B.C. Supercargoes Association who have been providing considerable funds to our Society on an annual basis allowing us to double the number of bursaries we have been able

to award to date. In addition to this we have also been able to provide additional funds for bursary awards thanks to generous private donations from Captain Harry Allen, a retired BC Coast Pilot.

Since 2013, in addition to these annual bursary awards, the Society has made regular book awards to students at Camosun, Western Maritime Institute and BCIT Marine Campus.

**The Society today:** Today, our Society is run with a small, dedicated group of individuals who are all passionate about what we are trying to achieve. We remain in close contact with all of the maritime schools in the area and attend in person at convocation and other ceremonies to make presentations to successful applicants for one of our awards. This gives us the opportunity to connect with the other students and staff to explain the benefits of The Nautical Institute, and encourage them to join. Indeed, one of the new programmes that we have instigated in the last year or two pays for the first year of membership in the NI for successful applicants.



From L to R: Captain Richard Smith, MNI (NPESC Chair), Cadets Andrew Kachkarov, Kory McSorley, Alex Holiove, Daniil Viryachev, Havill Leitch, Captain Terry Stuart (BC Supercargoes – President) and Captain Joachim Ruether, MNI (NPESC Secretary/Treasurer)

All bursary applications are vetted by a committee using scoring criteria that have been finely honed over the years. We have a strong emphasis on the career goals and aspirations of the applicants giving us with some excellent insights into what the future holds for our industry.

Students can apply for a bursary on-line at our website <http://npesc.ca> which also provides other industry related information. We also maintain an on-line presence on Linked-In, Twitter and Facebook. Of most importance is our quarterly publication *Seatimes* that is widely circulated amongst our members, students, schools, NI Branch members and a wide variety of other recipients scattered around the world. This newsletter is eagerly anticipated and we receive many letters of thanks and appreciation each time it is sent out.

I hope, like me, you see the great value in such a well-intentioned society that, at its core, wants to help promote training within our industry. After all, one of the main objectives of our Institute is to 'Encourage and promote a high standard of qualification, competence and knowledge'.

**Captain Richard Smith MNI. NPESC Chairman.**

**Prince Rupert Port Authority (PRPA):** In the months since COVID-19 restricted international travel, hundreds of thousands of merchant mariners have been stranded aboard vessels all over the world, unable to changeover crews or return to their homes. According to the United Nations International Maritime Organization, some sailors have been marooned at sea for 15 months, well beyond the limit set by international conventions. The constant pressure and uncertainty have put immense strain on these essential workers, who are responsible for transporting 80 percent of the world's goods.



This growing crisis motivated PRPA to sign the Port Authorities Roundtable Declaration on COVID-19, to show its support for the men and women who are keeping seaborne trade flowing and seek out ways to help while maintaining federal guidelines. Transport Canada has implemented regulations for seafarers onboard foreign vessels, limiting shore leave to four hours for essential purposes only (personal, family or medical emergency). Intent on providing direct help, particularly for those contributing to the success of the Prince Rupert Gateway, PRPA's marine operations team



has recently coordinated a way for seafarers to leave the confines of their ship for a well-earned rest, while complying with Transport Canada rules.

PRPA has developed a safe method to offer breaks to crew aboard the ships at anchor in Prince Rupert Harbour, allowing them to come ashore and maintain isolation. Seafarers are given full access to a secured space outside Northland Terminal, where PRPA staff set up tents, a grill, food and other supplies for them to use. So far, more than 30 seafarers have taken part in the shore break program, and have spent several hours relaxing, eating and accessing Wi-Fi to connect with their families and loved ones before being tendered back to their vessel. For many of these mariners, it was

their first time on dry land in several months.

"The Prince Rupert Port Authority is grateful to provide some relief to the crews operating the vessels visiting our Port. While the pandemic has impacted all our lives, seafarers are facing daily demands that go far beyond the normal call of duty," said Shaun Steveson, President and CEO of Prince Rupert Port Authority. "It is important to consider the plight of these essential workers, who are critical to our economy and global supply chain and do what we can to support them."

"Throughout the pandemic, seafarers have played a vital role in supporting trade for Canada but were unable to return to their homes and communities because of global restrictions on travel," said Robert Lewis-Manning, Chamber of Shipping President. "The efforts of the Prince Rupert Port Authority to provide short opportunities for seafarers to have a break off their ships while adhering to public health regulations is important and appreciated. Seafarers urgently need governments around the world to support the free movement of seafarers so that crew changes can resume. The health of seafarers must be addressed before it becomes a crisis and it is hoped that Canada takes a leadership role in facilitating dialogue globally."

JUNE 25, 2020. <https://www.rupertport.com/prince-rupert-port-authority-provides-relief-for-ships-crews/>

**Crew change crisis all at sea in search of a global solution: *Many crewmembers are anxious to return home at the earliest opportunity, but others may prefer the coronavirus-free environment of a ship***

**A technical manager, arranging for the replacement of a ship's entire crew, describes the 'nightmare' of trying to find a port where seafarers could disembark and catch flights home.**

SEAFARERS working for medium-sized or small companies may find themselves staying on board for months after their contracts expire, given that the crew change crisis shows no signs of being resolved any time soon.

Those companies with global networks and deep pockets are starting to find ways round the situation, even if that means chartering planes or using the company jet to fly seafarers home when no commercial airline services are available, having already determined which ports are the most amenable for crew changes in the current circumstances. Container lines, with their scheduled services, are probably in the best position of all.

Smaller owners, operators and managers, however, are struggling to navigate the myriad of immigration and quarantine demands that are constantly changing, and then can barely afford the onward travel costs for crew members who need to be repatriated.

"It was a nightmare," according to one source directly involved in the changeover of a ship's entire crew earlier this month. Speaking to Lloyd's List, the industry executive said the problem was made worse by the fact that all those on board had to leave the ship because of the appointment of a different technical manager following a new charter.

For the incoming crew, the procedure was relatively straightforward, as they were tested for coronavirus before they boarded the flight to join the ship, and then again just before getting on the vessel, to make sure they were 100% healthy. But arranging for a multinational crew to disembark, after up to six months at sea, and then fly home, was far more complicated.

"We tried Singapore, Hong Kong and even Cape Town," said the manager's representative, who requested anonymity, but flights back to the Philippines where most of the seafarers live, or other destinations, were few and far between.

Local rules only added to the confusion. In Singapore at the time, for example, a ship was not allowed to sail until the departing crew had all left Changi airport. That was to ensure that if a particular seafarer was unable to fly out for some reason, they would be able to return to the vessel. That requirement could delay a ship for a week or even much longer, depending on the next available flights for the homebound crew.

But the requirements covering ship personnel are changing all the time.

In the case of the ship in question, some of the crew were allowed to disembark in Busan, a process that went smoothly. For most of the others, the shipmanager was eventually able to charter a flight from Hong Kong to Manila. But with no small planes available, a large jet had to be hired, at a cost of around \$25,000. That represents a huge expense for a small owner or operator.

Even then, the process was not straightforward, as some of the senior officers stayed on the ship until it was handed over to the new technical manager in Singapore. There, the east European officers were able to leave and fly back to Germany, but for a while it looked as if an Indian officer would have to remain on board indefinitely because of the lack of flights to India. Finally, he was able to disembark in Singapore, catch a flight to Doha, and then another to India.

While the big shipmanagers are probably able to work together to consolidate crews on flights, and negotiate discounts from the charter airlines, this is far more difficult for the smaller players, the source said.

"Someone needs to take the lead," to find an industry-wide solution, he urged, while acknowledging that it was not easy to see where that leadership should come from.

In the meantime, small and medium-sized operators may just say to their crew: "We cannot get you off, so please stay on board."

And ironically, despite the very real concern about those stranded at sea, their mental well-being, and anxiety for their families, some may nevertheless be content to remain on their ships.

"Do not assume every crew member is desperate to go home," the person said. "A ship is a safe place to be during the pandemic. Crew members are being paid, and they are not at risk [of catching] Covid-19 back home in the Philippines or India".



**Janet Porter Lloyds List. 27 Jul 2020**

<https://lloydslist.maritimeintelligence.informa.com/LL1133254/Crew-change-crisis-all-at-sea-in-search-of-a-global-solution>

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### **Sleepiness a red zone for watchkeepers: Three case studies - SAFETY4SEA**

Tiredness is a phenomenon to which all humans are prone and no one is exempt, especially in the workplace, but the magnitude of its consequences varies depending on the nature of the job. In shipping, which is characterized by long shift hours, falling asleep on the bridge could lead to extreme costs, environmental pollution or even fatalities.

Fatigue has been several times the red area of concern in maritime casualty investigations and was included at [NTSB's 2019 - 2020 Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements](#).

When safety of yourself and others depends on your alertness, preventing fatigue is vital. Let's take a look at three case studies from published investigations, where the crew responsible for watchkeeping fell asleep and what the consequences were: -

#### **Case study #1: Tug sinking and pollution after watchkeeper falls asleep**

In October 2016, an articulated tug-barge ran aground off British Columbia. The tug's hull was breached and approximately 110,000 L of diesel oil were released into the environment. The tug subsequently sank and separated from the barge.

The investigation determined that *the Second Mate*, serving as watchkeeper at the time, *had fallen asleep* and missed a planned course change. Specifically: -

- He was keeping watch alone on the bridge, contrary to Canadian regulations;
- For more than two days, he had been working a 6-on, 6-off shift schedule, alternating six hours of duty and six hours of rest.
- There was no prior discussion with the Master on the Second Mate's preparedness for the watch; and
- The watchkeeper was not aware of the sleep-conducive conditions he was facing on the bridge that night.

**Lesson learned:** This incident firstly identified that how the 6-on, 6-off shift schedule presents a number of challenges such as the difficulty in obtaining sufficient restorative rest during the off-duty periods, as shown by various studies internationally. The incident also highlighted the need for watchkeepers to receive mandatory education and awareness training to help identify and prevent the risks of fatigue. If watchkeepers have a better understanding of those factors, and the actions they can take to reduce the risks, then the maritime could see a reduction in the number of fatigue-related occurrences. Finally, the grounding identified the need for vessel owners to implement comprehensive fatigue-management plans, tailored specifically for their individual operations.

#### **Case study #2: Towing vessels collision after Pilot falls asleep.**

In March 2019, a towing vessel, pushing a partially loaded fuel barge through the Houston Ship Channel, struck another towing vessel and one of its barges, which were moored and preparing to discharge cargo in Pasadena, Texas.

The contact caused the second vessel and its tow to shift about 100 feet upriver, breaking the cargo hoses and mooring lines and damaging the facility, amounted to \$630,230. About a half-gallon of jet fuel also discharged into the water.

The investigation determined that: -

- The fatigued Pilot fell asleep near the end of his 12-hour watch while manoeuvring in the channel, resulting in the loss of control of the vessel.
- Contributing to the Pilot's fatigue was the extended length of duty through the night and early morning hours and his use of an over-the-counter antihistamine.

**Lesson learned:** The collision occurred at 0408, which, studies have concluded, is a time when the circadian rhythm is at a low. The Pilot did not recall making any sudden course change nor did he recall hearing the BNWAS alarm on the bridge. Although individuals vary in their requirements for sleep in a 24-hour period, cognitive function, alertness, and

performance are all affected by a circadian process that is optimal on a “day-oriented” schedule. As such, fatigue-related accidents are more likely to occur at the end of the night or during very early morning hours. Meanwhile, company policy stated that if the Pilot was feeling tired during his watch, he could have contacted the sleeping Captain to assist or called the company to provide a relief, but he did not. Self-reported (subjective) alertness, such as the Pilot stating that he felt alert and awake for his shift, is often deceptive, as individuals are often not able to judge their own levels of fatigue. Therefore, this incident showed that crewmembers should be encouraged to request assistance from other crewmembers if they feel fatigued and that companies should monitor the watch schedules of their crews to ensure that they are properly rested.

### Case study #3: Passenger vessel allision after Skipper falls asleep.

In 2018, a ferry was providing a regular service on a busy waterway and was on its third run of the day with 110 passengers onboard. After manoeuvring the ferry off the berth and heading for next stop, the Skipper sat back in his chair and closed his eyes. Moments later, he awoke to find the ferry heading straight for a pontoon only 50m ahead. He immediately set full thrust astern, but a heavy landing could not be avoided. The ferry struck the pontoon. Two passengers and two crew suffered minor injuries as a result. Damage to the ferry's port bow required it to be taken out of service for repair.

The Skipper was feeling tired and found it difficult to remain alert. The investigation found he had started work onboard at 0500 after finishing a night shift in a land-based occupation.

**Lesson learned:** Almost every bridge watchkeeper will have experienced the ‘rubber neck’ syndrome, either through fatigue or boredom. There are many things that can be done to help prevent this from happening, such as standing up, moving around, getting some fresh air and turning down the heating. However, if these don't work, another watchkeeper should be called either to assist or to take over. Looking after yourself, particularly if you have a responsibility to look after the safety of others, is a must.

MARITIME KNOWLEDGE | 30/07/20. <https://safety4sea.com/cm-sleepiness-a-red-zone-for-watchkeepers-three-case-studies/>

### **HMS Challenger: The voyage that birthed oceanography: The 3.5-year voyage to the furthest corners of the globe reshaped marine science and permanently changed our relationship with the planet's oceans.**

In the foyer of the **National Oceanography Centre** in Southampton, England, stands a ship's painted figurehead. It towers well above head height and depicts an armoured knight with a silver chest plate, a raised visor and a thick handlebar moustache. The knight's eyes have a faraway gaze in them – and well they might. This wooden statue is the sole remnant of a square-rigged ship that once embarked on a three-and-a-half-year voyage to the furthest corners of the globe, reshaping marine science, unearthing all manner of underwater oddities and permanently changing our relationship with the planet's oceans. The vessel's name was *HMS Challenger*.

The journey was no simple A-to-B cruise. Between December 1872 and May 1876, the figurehead on the ship's prow felt the salty spray of both the North and South Atlantic Oceans as well as vast swathes of the Pacific, even venturing below the Antarctic Circle. The circuitousness of its route paid off. At the voyage's conclusion, one of those on board, the prominent naturalist John Murray declared it “the greatest advance in the knowledge of our planet since the celebrated discoveries of the 15th and 16th Centuries”. It was some achievement for a ship that was only ever supposed to be a bit-part in a naval fleet.

Built in England's now-defunct Woolwich Dockyard and first launched in February 1858, *HMS Challenger* was constructed as a wooden, steam-assisted Royal Navy corvette. It measured some 61m in length. Just weeks earlier, the completion nearby in London of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's colossal **SS Great Eastern** – an iron-hulled steamship more than 210m long – had been reported across the globe.

The arrival of the *Challenger*, by contrast, made a relatively tiny splash. This wouldn't always be the case.

The story of its now-fabled world expedition began 150 years ago, in 1870, when an Edinburgh University professor and marine zoologist named Charles Wyville Thompson persuaded the Royal Society of London to support a lengthy voyage of exploration across the world's oceans. The idea was a novel one. This was a time when the high seas were considered little more than a hindrance to land-based trade and exploration. Life beneath the waves was largely a mystery. Even Charles Darwin, whose own trailblazing voyage on *HMS Beagle* had taken place around 40 years earlier, had referred to the oceans as “a tedious waste, a desert of water”.



*The HMS Challenger set sail from England in 1872 and changed the course of scientific history (Credit: North Wind Picture Archives/Alamy)*

Government approval for the voyage was sought and subsequently obtained. The Royal Navy lent the venture a strong, sturdy ship that had spent the first decade of its life on active duty: *HMS Challenger*. Preparations then began in earnest. Fifteen of the ship's 17 guns were removed to make space for on-board laboratories and workrooms. Storage



areas were created for the marine samples that would be collected on the trip. A crew was assembled, more than 200-strong and skippered by Captain George Nares, who in 1869 had been at the helm of the first vessel to pass through the newly opened Suez Canal. A team of six scientists, headed by Wyville Thompson himself, joined them.

By the end of 1872, the revamped *Challenger* was ready. The ship set sail from Sheerness on England's southeast coast, on Saturday 7 December. It was leaving behind one of the wettest British winters on record, heading south towards Lisbon and the Canary Islands. Over the following 42 months, the ship would cover around 127,600km on a journey that included no less than 362 stops – “at intervals as nearly uniform as possible,” according to Wyville Thompson – to scoop samples from the seabed with weighted nets, study marine life, gauge ocean depths and measure water temperatures.

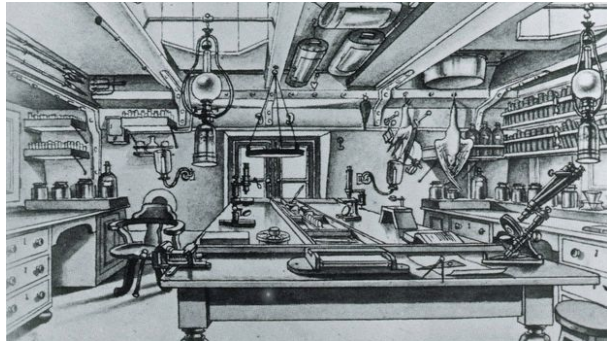
Thanks to the letters of a young steward's assistant, Joseph Matkin, who was just 19 when the *Challenger* set off, we have accounts of life on the ship. “All the Scientific Chaps are on board, and have been busy during the week stowing their gear away,” he wrote on embarkation. “There are some thousands of small air tight Bottles, and little boxes... packed in Iron Tanks for keeping specimens in, insects, butterflies, mosses, plants, etc. There is a photographic room on the main deck, also a dissecting room.”

On-board sustenance, meanwhile, fell some way short of his expectations. “I have never been so hungry,” Matkin wrote, just weeks after leaving Sheerness. “I will tell you what the routine for meals is now: at 6AM Breakfast of Cocoa & hard Biscuit... at 11.30, dinner; one day it is salt pork & pea soup – the next salt Beef & Plum duff, the next salt Pork again & the 4th – Preserved potatoes & Australian Beef in tins... if any one can get fat on that in 4 years they must eat more than their allowance.”

The findings of the voyage, however, were nothing short of bountiful. The results were later presented in a report that stretched to 50 volumes and 29,500 pages, which gives some idea of the amount of information that was gathered en route. Today, looking through the [online collection](#) of its 4,772 physical specimens reveals an extraordinary cornucopia of marine life: sea snails from the Azores; squid from the waters around Japan; tiny filter-feeders dredged from more than 300 fathoms (550m) below the Hawaiian Islands; shark teeth, crabs, sea pigs and snake eels.

These artefacts are today held by museums across the UK, Ireland and the US – among them the [Natural History Museum](#) in London and the [Royal Albert Memorial & Art Gallery](#) in Exeter, England – with various items still on display. Of just as much importance as the specimens, of course, were the thousands of scientific readings the ship was able to obtain by dangling its then state-of-the-art instruments and glass thermometers into the unexplored depths, using long lengths of hemp rope.

“The measurements of the *Challenger* expedition set the stage for all branches of oceanography,” explained Dr. Jake Gebbie, associate scientist at the [Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution](#), a renowned Massachusetts-based facility dedicated to ocean research. “They captured a moment in time that would have otherwise been lost. The report is still used in high-impact research today.”



The effect of climate change on water temperatures is just one area in which the voyage's findings have proved invaluable. “We are currently working on digitising the entire suite of temperature measurements from the *Challenger*,” Dr. Gebbie continued, adding that the institute is also seeking to understand the physics that control the ocean on these century-long timescales. “Without the *Challenger* data,” he said, “this line of research may not have been tractable.”

*The ship had an on-board laboratory, where specimens were examined, identified, dissected and drawn (Credit: Science History Images/Alamy)*

Among its countless other notable discoveries, the expedition was also the first to record the astonishing scale of the Mariana Trench, the Pacific chasm that stretches far deeper

than Mount Everest is tall. Indeed, the trench's lowest point – the 10,929m Challenger Deep, a dark abyss of algae-rich ooze and slow-moving flatfish – still bears the name of the ship. At the other extreme of human exploration, meanwhile, the ill-fated *Challenger* space shuttle was also named after the vessel.

The ship's journey included port stops everywhere from the Cape Verde Islands and Melbourne to Hong Kong and Yokohama. More often than not, however, its horizons were little more than a rolling, briny blue: a plumbless infinity to be registered and recorded. The voyage was almost inconceivably long, but by the time the *Challenger* finally arrived back in the UK, on a spring day in May 1876, it was carrying a cargo of scientific contributions that even today continues to shape our understanding of the seas.

But it was more than just a great leap for academia. In the long-term, it was also a voyage that celebrated the oceans and highlighted the rewards of patient sea travel. In his book *Endless Novelties of Extraordinary Interest: The Voyage of HMS Challenger and the Birth of Modern Oceanography*, author Doug MacDougall includes the writings of one of the ship's Sub-Lieutenants, George Campbell. They give an example of just why, perhaps, the *Challenger's* much-journeyed figurehead, now eternally marooned in Southampton, still stares ahead so intently:

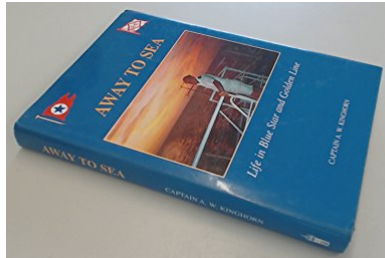
“On the night of the 14th the sea was most gloriously phosphorescent, to a degree unequalled in our experience. Astern of the ship glowed a broad band of blue, emerald-green light, myriads of yellow sparks which glittered and sparkled

against the brilliant cloud below... Ahead of the ship, where the old bluff bows of the *Challenger* went ploughing and churning through the sea, there was light enough to read the smallest print with ease. It was as if the Milky Way, as seen through a telescope, scattered in millions like glittering dust, had dropped down on the ocean, and we were sailing through it. **July 20<sup>th</sup> 2020**

<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20200719-hms-challenger-the-voyage-that-birthed-oceanography?referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.bbc.com%2Fnews>

**The Australia Star:** Captain Kinghorn stood by this vessel as Chief Officer while it was being built in Sunderland. The ship was the first Blue Star Line vessel to be air-conditioned, the first to have pneumatic bridge control of the engine and she was the first purpose-built heavy lifter. When built the ship had to go to Hamburg for the Stülcken posts and derrick to be installed. The derrick – able to serve two holds, forward of and abaft the masts – was always ready for use and needed no rigging or unrigging, practically no maintenance, and only three men to operate. Installation took a week and then the ship had to return to Britain, to the River Tyne, to load its first cargo, a 147-ton stator for Melbourne. The night before taking the heavy lift, the Captain suggested we should put the derrick through its paces, to make sure there were no hitches next day when a large party of interested spectators, invited by Blue Star Line, would be watching. “All went well”, said Captain Kinghorn, “until we tried to trip the lifting block through the huge derrick-head catapult ‘Y’ – to shift from No. 2 to No. 3 hatch. Nothing happened. Dead. Call the electrician. He fiddled around, getting nowhere – not surprisingly under the newness of our situation. In mounting concern the Captain told me to call Herr Sprengel\* who was staying at the Station Hotel before next day’s big demonstration. Dear old Willie came hot foot in a taxi, still in his pyjamas under a raincoat. ‘Have you a match, Herr Kinghorn?’ was his opening gambit. Well, we all smoked in those days and he probably

needed one as much as I did. But taking it, he entered the masthouse, which was filled with a long bank of switches and automatic cut-outs. Studying this immense array carefully, he poked my match in and said, ‘Now try’. The derrick worked and we marvelled – a 300-ton derrick worked by a single matchstick. The tip occasionally came in useful later on!”



Loading Australia Star's first heavy cargo at Newcastle, December 1965  
– with the help of a matchstick!

***This may be difficult to do today. Who carries a box of matches anymore?***

\* The Stülcken derrick was the brainchild of Willie Sprengel, who “did good work during the war on the design of U-Boats”.

**From the book “Away to Sea” (ISBN 10:1872006124) by Captain Kinghorn.**

**Crew crisis is shipping’s ‘most acute problem’ in 50 years. According to several group executives, certain charterers have begun rejecting ships that has crew on board for excessive periods because of safety reasons. The founder of Greece’s Tsakos Group lashes ‘inhuman’ treatment of seafarers and says the blind eye shown to crew needs reveals that society ‘undervalues’ the industry.**

THE tens of thousands of seafarers left in limbo on board vessels because of port state restrictions provoked by the coronavirus pandemic has presented shipping with its worst crisis in the half-century, when one of Greece’s most prominent shipowners launched his career.

“We have always faced problems, but Greek and international shipping never had such an acute problem as this in all the years since we began,” said Captain Panagiotis Tsakos.

His group runs about 100 vessels across several sectors, including the tanker and liquefied natural gas carrier fleet of publicly listed Tsakos Energy Navigation and the privately owned fleet of Tsakos Shipping & Trading. The combined fleet is managed by Tsakos Columbia Shipmanagement, established in 2010 in a joint venture with Schoeller Holdings.

Captain Tsakos, who became a Master in the Greek merchant marine at 26 and launched his own company in 1970, warned that the damage being wrought on shipping is multi-faceted. Crews are reaching breaking point and the longer-term consequences are likely to include waning appetite for seafaring jobs even in those countries that continue to supply sea-going labour.



"There is an impending danger that the young men and women we have tried for so long to attract to the sea will be discouraged by seeing the inhuman way in which seafarers are being treated," he said. "If this happens, the dismantling of the web that now constitutes world trade and the world economy will begin. Cargoes will cease to be transported, raw materials will not be enough, industries will close, jobs will be lost and homes will starve.

"And all this because governments are reluctant to take measures that, by facilitating the movement of seafarers to and from their ships, would ensure the unimpeded flow of international trade and peoples' well-being."

Captain Tsakos was speaking at an event at which a number of Masters and Engineers provided personal testimony of hardships. Some spoke of many months since last stepping foot ashore, another fell seriously ill but was denied hospital treatment for weeks, while another Master reported that one of his crew lost both his parents within a matter of days, but had been unable to attend the funeral. The Master of the panamax product tanker *Andres* likened the situation on vessels to "a hand grenade that any moment can explode".

"For the sake of our seafarers, we must unite our efforts so that the return to 'normalcy' is not too late for them," Captain Tsakos said.

While insufficient concern was being given to crews trapped on board, no one had given much thought to the other half of the seafaring community that were being denied work that in some cases they had expected to begin months ago.

According to Harry Hajimichael, General Manager of Tsakos Shipping & Trading, Cadets being trained at maritime academies, including Tsakos' own nautical school in Chios, would also find their education disrupted as they are missing out on the required practical onboard experience.

"We are struggling to get regular people on board so obviously it is even harder for Cadets," he told Lloyd's List.

As shipowners we are doing what we can, but seafarers cannot remain trapped on their ships indefinitely. The situation is unsustainable and at a critical point," said Mr. Hajimichael. "If we cannot change our crews, then the ships will not be able to continue operating." He said that Tsakos and many other shipping companies were "willing to face the extra financial burden" by themselves although the additional expenses were difficult to calculate and changing all the time.

Airfares for repatriating crew had shot up, in some cases by multiples of seven or 10, because of the scarcity of flights, but even at such prices they were difficult to find.

"Even when we finally find the ticket, bureaucracy in the few ports open for crew prevents the repatriation of the seafarer because there are delays on the ships and the seafarer cannot immediately be put on the plane for a variety of reasons, with the result that the tickets are lost and repatriation is indefinitely postponed."

Mr. Hajimichael said that crew changes had been virtually impossible for ships in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, while in Europe there were some prospects.

Tsakos had been making "every effort" to route vessels through Greece where crew changes were "possible, under certain conditions" and there was just enough flexibility to allow non-Greek crews to get repatriation flights "sometimes even next day". The effort included sometimes accepting less remunerative charters, he said.

Mr. Hajimichael had strong words for charterers. "Charterers have not shown sensitivity," he said. "There have been cases when we have wanted to divert to change crew and have not been allowed. There has been no flexibility."

According to several group executives, certain charterers have begun rejecting ships that has crew on board for excessive periods because of safety concerns.

"They do not put it like that but they ask if you can comply with their matrix and with crews that have been trapped on board for so long. In some cases you can't," he said.

Lloyd's List. July 20<sup>th</sup> 2020

<https://lloydslist.maritimeintelligence.informa.com/LL1133127/Crew-crisis-is-shippings-most-acute-problem-in-50-years>



### Ship Safety Bulletins

**Subject: Protecting Killer Whales in the Waters of Southern British Columbia**

**Bulletin No.:** 19/2020

**Date:** 2020-08-06

**Link:** <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/marine-safety/ship-safety-bulletins/protecting-killer-whales-waters-southern-british-columbia-ssb-no-19-2020>

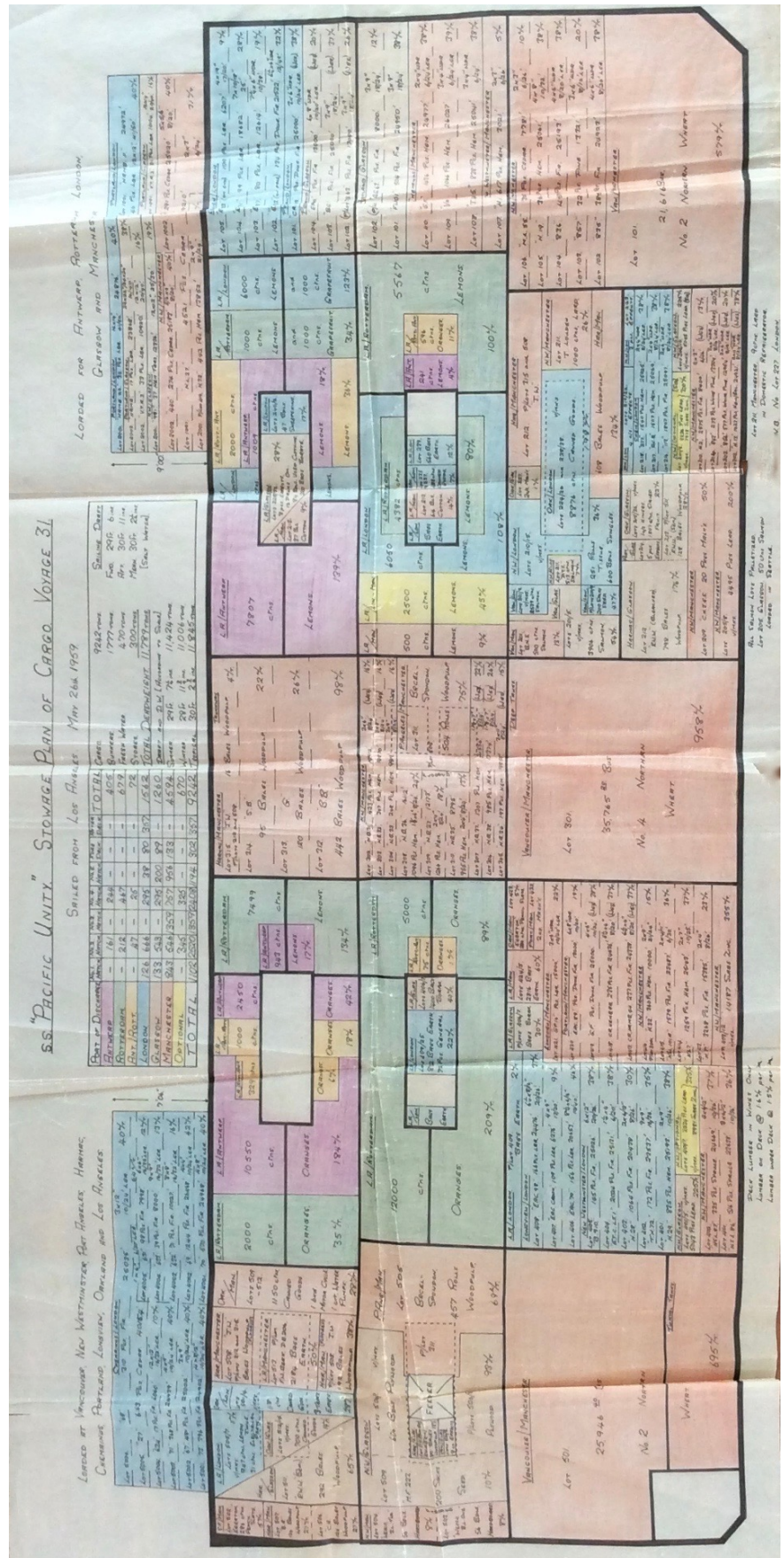
**Subject: Protecting the North Atlantic right whale: speed restriction measures in the Gulf of St. Lawrence – (modified July 30, 2020)**

**Bulletin No.:** 11/2020

**Date:** 2020-04-29

**Link:** <https://tc.canada.ca/en/marine-transportation/marine-safety/ship-safety-bulletins/protecting-north-atlantic-right-whale-speed-restriction-measures-gulf-st-lawrence-ssb-no-11-2020-modified-july-30-2020>

**Stowage Plans such as this were drawn up on sheets of paper measuring 34' x 16". In this case it was started in British Columbia by the Supercargo, then added to by the Third Mate as the ship continued through the ports in the USA. After loading was completed in the final port it was taken ashore to be printed and copies were then airmailed to the Discharge Ports.**





## Piloting a Megaship: Record-Setting *MSC Anna* Arrives in San Francisco Bay

**By Captain George Livingstone** – In the last decade, one of the biggest challenges faced by mariners and especially ship pilots around the world has been the introduction of the Ultra Large Container Vessel (ULCV). I've written on this subject [before](#), it's a very big topic, literally. To say the ships are gigantic is an understatement and collectively mariners are proud of how seamlessly and safely we have incorporated these giants into daily operations. For the non-mariner, it may be difficult to understand just how big these ships are, let's try to explain.

**Panamax:** As recently as ten years ago, most container ships around the world were sized to enable them access to the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal locks are only so long and wide, the idea was to build a container ship that would fit. Ultimately an entire class of ship was designated Panamax Class (950' long, 106' wide). The weight of this class was about 50,000 Tons and Panamax became the standard for container ships worldwide.

**Sea Changes:** A sea change occurred in containerized shipping during the first decade of the 21st century. The idea of economy of scale came into its own, reduce per unit costs by making bigger ships, much much bigger. And so the ULCV came to be and nothing has been the same in container shipping since.

**Ultra and Ultra Large:** The [first](#) ULCV's that called at the Port of Oakland were about 1148' long X 138' wide, longer, wider and heavier than the Panamax Class. The significant challenge for the San Francisco Bar Pilots wasn't just adjusting to handling much bigger ships; it was doing so with little time. Through necessity, the class was introduced and put into service relatively quickly.

There just weren't any ports in the United States, excepting the Port of Long Beach (the only port in the country experienced with +400,000 ton ships) that could handle ULCV's at the time. It was just the beginning of what is still an ongoing process and several ports throughout the United States have made major capital improvements to accommodate ULCVs. And they keep getting bigger with a new class, Ultra Ultra Large (UULCV) now in production. These +1,300' UULCV's are now beginning to call at ports like the Ports of Oakland and Long Beach.

**Lightweight vs. Heavyweight:** The difference between 950', 1150' and +1300' may not, on initial consideration, seem like much, a matter of only two/three hundred feet. That's a football field; does the reader consider a football field long? That's exactly what we are talking about and length is not the primary difficulty, its weight. A 950' Panamax ship is about 50,000 Tons, a 1312' UULCV is 250,000 Tons. It would take five Panamax ships to match one UULCV in weight.

**MSC Anna (19,000 TEU):** In fact, the UULCV *MSC Anna* just called on the west coast of the United States establishing an all-time record for a container ship. At 1312' X 191', it is the biggest ship to ever call at the Port of Oakland. To put it in perspective, the tallest building on the west coast of the USA is the Salesforce.com tower in downtown San Francisco. The *MSC Anna* is a football field LONGER. Imagine that for a moment. The Empire State Building in NYC is 1250' tall from street level to the top of the roof line. *MSC Anna* is once again, 62' longer excluding the 200' tall antenna. The



weight of the Empire State Building clocks in at about 365,000 Tons, a 1320' loaded UULCV weighs in a close second at 250,000 Tons.

To pilot a ship like *MSC Anna* is equivalent to laying the Empire State Building on its side, then navigating through a 700'-900' channel with several turns added in for fun. It's the stuff of bad dreams! I think most of us have had those crazy dreams where you find yourself driving something like a Boeing 747 thru rush hour downtown city traffic, all the while trying to figure out how to avoid taking out the sides of buildings while navigating rush hour! Well, real-life met dream life when professional ship pilots had to start driving ships like *MSC Anna*.

Although the San Francisco Bar Pilots were ready and prepared for the *MSC Anna*, it was not a normal or average job. Piloting

ships like the *Anna* is the equivalent of extreme sports, expert professionals complete extremely difficult manoeuvres that few think possible. The sheer length, width, height and weight is a game-changer, not that it can't be done but that it must be done with more thought, collaboration, care and training than the already very good piloting systems in place.

The ship actually handled very well for its size/weight, the designers deserve some credit, but this was a leap up from any other ship I have piloted. It circles back to weight, on ships this big, speed is more critical than ever. All aspects of piloting have to be done slower, from route driving to docking. They are so heavy that any developed momentum, even in a turn, can pose problems if not precisely controlling the evolution. The takeaway? Don't try this at home folks! Leave it to the professionals! As to the professionals? Never be complacent, respect this class of ship, embrace new ideas and continue the successful collaboration with all stakeholders in this vital industry keeping the global supply chain functioning for a world that is in serious crisis.

**Captain George Livingstone GCaptain April 27<sup>th</sup> 2020**



**Captain George Livingstone** is a San Francisco Bar Pilot, co-author of 'Tug Use Offshore', contributing author of '[IMPA On Pilotage](#)' and a regular contributor to gCaptain. [Read more from Captain George Livingstone](#)  
[https://gcaptain.com/piloting-a-megaship-record-setting-msc-anna-arrives-in-san-francisco-bay/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gCaptain.com%29&goal=0\\_f50174ef03-131e03b325-169937937&mc\\_cid=131e03b325&mc\\_eid=35ccf165ad](https://gcaptain.com/piloting-a-megaship-record-setting-msc-anna-arrives-in-san-francisco-bay/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Gcaptain+%28gCaptain.com%29&goal=0_f50174ef03-131e03b325-169937937&mc_cid=131e03b325&mc_eid=35ccf165ad)

**Electronic Record Books under MARPOL:** One of the key elements of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) is the accurate record keeping of movements and/or discharges of shipboard substances and materials that are considered hazardous to the environment.

We would like to advise Members that from 1 October 2020, amendments to MARPOL Annex I, II, V, VI and the NOx Technical Code<sup>1</sup> will permit the use of electronic record books. These amendments follow resolutions<sup>2</sup> adopted by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) and are applicable to: -

Oil Record Book, parts I and II Cargo Record Book Garbage Record Book, parts I and II Ozone-depleting Substances Record Book Recording of the tier and on/off status of marine diesel engines Record of Fuel Oil Changeover; and Record Book of Engine Parameters.

An electronic record book used as an alternative to an official hard copy record book is required to be assessed by the Flag Administration following which a written confirmation (Declaration of Marpol Electronic Record Book) will be issued. A copy of this declaration should be carried on board the ship.

In addition, Members should be reminded of [the importance of proper record keeping](#) and to ensure that all logs that are on board are maintained accurately and in a timely manner. Record books are an important document which not only exhibit regulatory compliance but also act as vital evidence in the unfortunate event of an incident. In the Club's own experience consequences of erroneous or missing entries may include detention of a ship by Port State Control or monetary fines.

The Club would like to draw particular attention to the following guidance with regard to ensuring these official documents are completed accurately: -

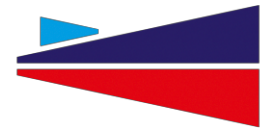
[IMO Guidance For The Recording Of Operations In The Oil Record Book Part I – Machinery Space Operations \(All Ships\)](#)

[INTERTANKO – A Guide for Correct Entries in the Oil Record Book \(Part I – Machinery Space Operations\)](#)

[INTERTANKO – A Guide for Correct Entries in the Oil Record Book \(Part II – Cargo/ballast operations\)](#)

For further information Members are also advised to refer to the Guidelines for the use of electronic record books under MARPOL, adopted by resolution MEPC.312(74).

<https://www.shipownersclub.com/electronic-record-books-under-marpol/>



**SHIPOWNERS**

### From logistical puzzle to conundrum — the V.Ships view of the crew crisis.

**The head of V.Ships crew management has applauded those shipowners who have cover the hugely inflated expense of repatriating seafarers. Crew managers are frustrated by chaotic procedures.**

V.Ships' Allan Falkenberg remains worried that crew-sourcing countries will continue to suffer from the effects relating to the coronavirus situation.

**The head of V.Ships crew management has applauded SHIPOWNERS who put their hand in their pocket to cover the inflated cost of repatriating seafarers. "We need to recognise that some shipowners are paying some pretty big bills to make this happen," Allan Falkenberg told Lloyd's List.**

Last week, V.Ships took advantage of Gibraltar opening for crew changes. "We had to get 11 Filipinos to Gibraltar to relieve crew on board our vessel," the chief executive says. "They had to fly via London. The cost of chartering a flight from London to Gibraltar for 11 seafarers was \$40,000. The ship owner paid for that trip — a year's travel budget on that one flight. "For the seafarers wanting to go home, they have to wait in a Gibraltar hotel for nine days for a connecting flight to Manila via London. The ship owner had to cover that cost as well."

When they arrive at Manila airport, the seafarers will be tested, with further quarantine for any found to be positive.

Between March 22 and July 13, V.Ships has achieved 15,246 crew movements — about 1,400 per week. Although Filipinos make up 27% of V.Ships' 44,000 seafarers, only 2,100 Filipinos have successfully been repatriated.

"Two nationalities have been extremely difficult to repatriate: Filipinos and Indians," Mr. Falkenberg said. "India, because the government still won't allow any commercial flights into or out of the country, which means you can still only use charter flights. That makes repatriation very hard, unless you can persuade the shipowner to divert to an Indian port for crew change.

"In the Philippines it is still the logistics of so few aircraft allowed to land. Seafarers need to be coronavirus tested in Manila before they go on to their province. There's still a limit on how many aircraft can carry passengers into the Philippines."

He stressed the challenges faced by crew management staff. “Even though we have teams still in many locations, we work across all time zones with ships sitting on the other side of the planet. It takes five times longer to arrange a crew change than under normal conditions.”

Getting seafarers home has become a logistical nightmare, he said. Customs authorities are changing the immigration rules day by day. Some will offer visas on arrival, others won’t; some demand coronavirus testing 48 hours before arrival at the airport; most need to know exactly which personnel are involved several days in advance.

Meanwhile, airlines must keep on checking countries’ requirements, which can change overnight.

“We have had crew arriving at the airport after everything has been arranged only to be turned away because the airline didn’t know the rules,” said Mr. Falkenberg.

His office staff have had to apologise to the Captain, explaining that even though his repatriation is three months overdue, “this has happened and that has happened — and you will not be going home, yet.”

The work has become frustrating. “My team has been working tirelessly for the last two weeks and then it falls apart because someone didn’t read the rules right,” he explained.

While it has been tough for seafarers stuck on their ships, with mental health becoming a concern, it has probably been even tougher for those seafarers stuck at home, he explained.

They are only paid when they work. Many seafarers went home for Christmas and were available again in March, but the pandemic ended travel to their ships. They have spent seven months without income, which often pays for medical and education expenses plus their home mortgage.

Last week’s crew crisis summit, led by the UK government, was a positive move. Some governments have been doing what they can — Mr. Falkenberg names Germany, the UK, and Singapore as seeking solutions, although more could be done to coordinate initiatives.

The role of the larger ship manager such as V.Ships has been underpinned in this crisis.

“We represent many ship owners with two, three, or four vessels,” he said. “It’s difficult for them to get their voice heard. V.Ships has 1,000 ships under full management or crew management; we represent 44,000 seafarers from many countries who need to go home. The ship manager can consolidate the voice of the seafarer and ship owner.”

Looking forward, Mr. Falkenberg admits he is concerned about the continuing impact of coronavirus on crew sourcing countries. “We might see an easing in terms of countries accepting visas on arrival, but we are likely to see more coronavirus cases in the Philippines. Then we’ll be stuck with a conundrum: Europe wants to allow crew changes because it’s on the political agenda. But the Philippines will question whether they want thousands of seafarers going through their airports. I’m worried,” he concludes.

**Richard Clayton. Lloyds List. July 14<sup>th</sup> 2020**

<https://lloydslist.maritimeintelligence.informa.com/LL1133064/From-logistical-puzzle-to-conundrum-the-VShips-view-of-the-crew-crisis>



### What life has been like aboard Great Lakes freighters during COVID-19!

**When the COVID-19 crisis began**, marooned passengers on virus-stricken cruise ships on the high seas grabbed the early headlines. Soon, that huge industry ground to a halt.

The worry quickly rippled out to others who make their living on the water, those who operate the freighters that ply the Great Lakes through Southwestern Ontario on a 3,700-kilometre marine highway linking the Atlantic Ocean to North America’s industrial heartland.

“That was the biggest fear of our members. If this (virus) gets on board, it’s going to run through us,” said James Given, President of the Seafarers International Union (SIU), which represents shipboard workers. “It was very important to keep our industry moving and COVID-free.”

The first ship through the Welland Canal this season made its way into the system just as Ontario moved to shut down its economy in late March to all but the most essential work. Four months later, no outbreaks have been reported on any Canadian freighters. But it’s been anything but smooth sailing for the industry.

Some ships have been idled in COVID-19’s fallout. Social distancing on them is tough, and until recently, when shore leave began to open up, crewmembers couldn’t leave the ships.

“It takes a special kind of person to be on 700-foot ship with 20 other people for three months,” Given said. “If you do that without being able to step foot on shore, that mentally is just tiring.”

**BATTENING DOWN – EARLY PRECAUTIONS:** Even before the March lockdowns began, steps were taken to prevent the virus on ships. The number of contractors aboard was limited, personal protective wear was provided, crews were isolated for 14 days before being allowed aboard and shore leave – often called a “sacred right” for ship workers – was halted. “It was pretty much a full-out lockdown on our ships,” Given said.

Another early policy, sailors filling out medical questionnaires and being temperature-checked before reporting for work, remains.

**OFF LIMITS – FORBIDDEN PORTS:** Most freighters have crews of 15 to 21. Sailors often work for three months at a time, then a month off. It’s tight aboard the ships, making physical distancing next to impossible.

The right to shore leave began to loosen about three weeks ago, with sailors allowed off ships in port cities where COVID-19 cases are low. There's still no shore leave in major cities such as Toronto, Windsor and Montreal, and absolutely none in the United States.

"That takes a toll", said Brooke Cameron, Fleet Personnel Manager with Algoma Central, Canada's largest Great Lakes fleet, with 30 vessels and 1,100 full- and part-time employees.

"Working onboard a vessel and being away from home . . . is already difficult and often stressful," said Cameron, so losing free shore liberty has only added to that strain.



The *Federal Dart*, a 655-foot (200m) Great Lakes freighter, bulls its way upstream in the St. Clair River reaching the Blue Water Bridge area at Point Edward. The ship dwarfs a smaller pleasure boat heading north to Lake Huron. (Mike Hensen/The London Free Press)



The *Algoma Guardian* docks in Port Colborne. Photo supplied by the Seafarers International Union.

**RIPPLE EFFECTS – AT HOME, RESTRICTIONS:** As the head of a team coordinating travel for Algoma's workers, Cameron has had to adapt to different provincial guidelines as she works to get crews to and from ships.

For some, especially those from the Maritime provinces, a mandatory 14-day isolation must be followed after they return home, which can eat into their 30 days off. Crewmembers understand, she said, since the priority is keeping the entire ship safe.

"Captains in our fleet have revealed a strong sense of pride in having kept their vessels free and clear of the COVID-19 virus, which could only be accomplished through the diligence of every crewmember."

#### **ONE SAILOR'S STORY – ON LAND, AN EYE-OPENER:**

Able Seaman Chris Derraugh had been aboard the *St. Laurent*, a Canada Steamship Line (CSL) vessel, for three months when he got his first taste of the "new normal" on land.

Cut off from the outside world for much of the pandemic, he'd been shipboard since March 21 until a few weeks ago.

"We were not used to the things ashore because we hadn't been ashore," he said from his home in Halifax. "When I got off to go home, everything seemed so weird." Derraugh flew home through Thunder Bay and Toronto. "Toronto airport was a bit of a shock; it was a ghost town," he said.

Aboard the ship, Derraugh rode out the first months of COVID-19 under conditions many landlubbers might find tough.

Most vessels provide private accommodation, but some are shared. A 10-foot by 10-foot room is considered large, typically furnished with a bed, locker and desk.

Limited Wi-Fi is available, and if you're lucky, satellite TV. Newer ships often have gyms, but those were shut down because of the pandemic.

"Land was no great relief when he finally made it there", Derraugh said. "What was there to go ashore for? Everything was closed, anyway." A four-decade veteran of the industry, Derraugh said the biggest challenge for workers is being away from home – despite phone and video links – amid worries about family safety.

Still, he's confident he and the industry will get through the COVID-19 crisis. "I worked my way right through three recessions and one depression, and I kept working anyway, so I guess I'm going to keep working through this one."

**FROM THE BRIDGE – A CAPTAIN'S VIEW:** Every task aboard now seems to take longer, with beefed-up sanitation to fight COVID-19, Derraugh said. Even something as simple as unpacking groceries take twice as long.

But beyond that, said Jim Ryan, Captain of the *CSL Assiniboine*, "work continues for us as normal."

Employers have gone above-and-beyond to provide crewmembers with personal items and special requests they may find hard to satisfy without leaving the ship. "It's not really scary once you're on board the ship," said Ryan, citing a benefit of being cut off from the outside world during a pandemic.

"Even the isolation factor begins to subside", he said from his ship, near Sault Ste. Marie. "I haven't had too much issue with the cabin fever part of things. I think most people realize that we're in the middle of a medical pandemic, and everybody wants to be safe."



**BIG PICTURE – TOUGHING IT OUT:** Since most of the world's freight moves on the water, shipping is sensitive to economic upheaval like that triggered by COVID-19.

Allister Paterson, Senior Vice-President of Canada Steamship Lines Group (CSL), said about 25 per cent of the company's Great Lakes fleet is idle. About 10 per cent less traffic is going through the St. Lawrence Seaway.

CSL operates 50 vessels around the world, with 15 on the Great Lakes. It employs 1,500 crewmembers and 250 shore workers.

"The marine industry has been impacted globally," Paterson said. "We've been very vocal about the fact that seafarers are frontline workers, they're keeping the world economy going and under extreme circumstances."

One silver lining for the industry internationally is that Canada is seeing increased demand for its grain products, something from which both CSL and Algoma are benefiting.



Crewmembers aboard the MV *Algoma Hansa* are adapting to updated safety and sanitation protocols on their vessels, such as mask-wearing and physical distancing. Photo supplied by Algoma Central.



A sailor aboard the CSL *Baie St. Paul* secures cargo holds. Photo supplied by the Seafarers International Union.

"Grain shipments are up dramatically as Europe and Northern Africa import more grain from Canada due to the COVID-19 pandemic keeping people home and eating more staple foods like bread and pasta," said Algoma's Cameron.

Oil refineries are also ramping up, boosting markets for transporting gasoline and jet fuel.

"We are starting to see some positive signs as restrictions are slowly lifted, and we are optimistic that things will get better as we move into the fall and into 2021."

<https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/covid-19-aboard-great-lakes-freighters-virus-free-status-has-meant-huge-sacrifice-from-all-crew>

**What do you know about the St. Lawrence River? Take a look at Clear Seas' New Blog:** This blog was released on August 18<sup>th</sup>. It is focused on the **St. Lawrence Marine Corridor** and explores the physical characteristics and piloting challenges of one of Canada's most storied rivers. The blog also provides an overview of the new technologies that contribute to making the St. Lawrence a "smarter" and more sustainable route. You can access the article here:

<https://clearseas.org/en/blog/navigating-the-st-lawrence-challenging-waters-rich-history-and-bright-future/>

**Have you seen the state of the Atlantic Ocean recently? Take a look at: -**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/science-environment-53827997>

**AGM:** The Society's AGM for 2020 was conducted with the help of "Zoom" on Saturday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. Good meeting! Thirteen members attended.

**Fifty years ago. August 2<sup>nd</sup> – A ferry tragedy: It was a tragic day on the B.C. Ferries on this day 1970.**

The *Queen of Victoria*, one of the newest bigger vessels in the fleet, was sailing from Tsawwassen to Schwartz Bay when it was involved in a deadly collision in Active Pass.

Carrying 500 passengers and 150 vehicles, the ferry was rammed on the port side by the Russian freighter *Sergey Yesenin*, killing three passengers, despite attempts to avoid the collision. It happened around 11 a.m. and reports from observers indicated visibility was good and the tide was nearly slack. The collision took place at the western end of Active Pass, between Mayne and Galiano Islands.

Sheila Taylor, 17, of Allendale, New Jersey was standing near the ferry's main deck when the Russian freighter knifed through the ferry's superstructure, crushing her to death. On a car deck, Mrs. George Hammond of Victoria had just stepped out of her Volkswagen car, carrying her seven-month-old son Peter, when they were killed.



The BC ferry *Queen of Victoria* is almost sliced in half as the freighter *Sergey Yesenin* runs into it while sailing through Active Pass on Aug. 2, 1970. Three people were killed. <http://www.vancouverisun.com/This+history+August+1970/7033111/story.html>

The *Optimist* at the time reported that Captain James Pollack, Master of the *Queen of Victoria*, said the two ships could not communicate by radio because they were on different frequencies.

One witness said, "They tried to veer away, you could tell by the smoke. I guess they were in reverse and everybody was trying to stop. But there was no way, they were coming too fast."

A spokesperson for the Department of Transport said pilots took freighters through Active Pass, but only if conditions were favourable.

The 523-foot *Yesenin* was carrying steel products and cars to Vancouver from Japan. It was virtually undamaged in the crash.

It was the first incident of deaths in a B.C. Ferries accident.

A shocked premier W.A.C. Bennet said, "I am convinced it was not an intentional accident."

Colour film footage is on the Internet today, showing the Russian ship speeding toward the ferry and slicing through it. <https://www.delta-optimist.com/news/delta-throwback-a-ferry-tragedy-1.23899862>

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