

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited
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NEXT MEETING

1830 hrs 28th June 2023

Mail Exchange Hotel

Speaker

CMDR Greg Yorke

AUKUS Submarine Program



From The Branch Master

Welcome all

A short report for this month

Unfortunately my wife, Lili, tested + for COVID early in May. I then followed in her wake testing+. We had to cancel our week away at Kirra Beach, QLD. All good now. The May dinner was ably chaired by our Registrar, Capt Patrick O'Sullivan. Thank you Patrick.

Looking Forward to seeing you all at our next dinner meeting.

Fair Winds

Graeme

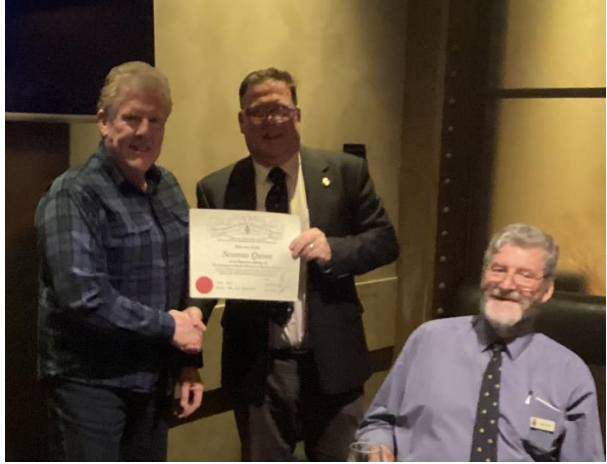
Next Meeting

At our next meeting on the 28th June the speaker will be Commodore Greg Yorke the Senior Naval Officer Victoria. He will speak about the AUKUS nuclear submarine program which will result in Australia being one of only seven countries that operate nuclear submarines.

An optimal pathway has been developed for the acquisition of the submarines which are expected to be based on a British design with US technology and systems.

CDRE Yorke will speak about various aspects of the program.

Branch News



Congratulations to Seamus Quinn, Lee-Anne Diano and Nekad Cama who received their membership certificates during the May meeting.

Book Review

The Ship Beneath The Ice The Discovery of Shackleton's Endurance By Mensun Bound

On 1st August 1914 the *Endurance* departed London with members of an expedition to the Antarctic under the leadership of Sir Ernest Shackleton. The aim of the expedition was to cross the Antarctic continent from sea to sea via the South Pole using dog sledges.

Endurance sailed from South Georgia on 5th December 1914 and on 18 January 1915 became trapped in the ice and drifted with it in the Weddell Sea for 10 months before the ship started to break up under the pressure from the ice and had to be abandoned. *Endurance* sank on 21st November 1915. The men camped on the ice as it continued to drift north until 9th April 1916 when there was enough open water for them to launch the lifeboats and row 346 miles to Elephant Island. Having established a camp on Elephant Island Shackleton and 5 others set off in one of the boats to sail the 800 miles to South Georgia to get help. Finally on 30 August 1916 Shackleton rescued the 22 men left on Elephant Island. The story became an epic of courage, determination and endurance. One of history's great adventures became the stuff of legend.

The book was written by Mensun Bound, the Director of Exploration on both the 2019 and 2022 expeditions to find the wreck of the *Endurance*. Mensun grew up with stories of Shackleton. He is a fifth generation Falkland Islander who became a marine archaeologist specialising in shipwrecks.

Both expeditions were conducted using the South African icebreaker *Agulhas II*. The 2019 expedition was mainly a scientific program to study the effects of climate change with some days at the end allocated to searching for the *Endurance*.

To conduct the search they had two sophisticated unmanned search submersibles. Unfortunately one had its electronic capsule implode during its first test dive and the second autonomous underwater search vehicle failed to return from its first dive to search for *Endurance*.

Although the 2019 expedition was a failure it was the first time under ice AUV operations had been attempted and many valuable lessons had been learned. The second expedition's emphasis was on finding the *Endurance*. It was equipped with two tethered submersibles and two helicopters. After a few teething problems the search went to plan and soon the submersible's sonar detected an anomaly that had the configuration of a wreck. Further examination showed it was not the *Endurance* but debris from it. The search continued and on 5th March 2022 with only three days left before they had to head back to Cape Town they detected the wreck by sonar. Visual inspection confirmed the find. *Endurance* was 3000 meters below the surface in cold water so there was very little deterioration. A full archaeological study of the wreck was made.

The book gives a very good account of how the search was conducted with all the hazards and difficulties the ice and weather presented. Interspersed with this was the story of Shackleton's expedition which explained why the search was so relevant.

The sections on the Captain of the *Endurance* were very interesting. Frank Worsley went to sea in 1888 as a Midshipman with the New Zealand Shipping Company. He had a great interest in navigation and became an expert in the subject. He had the ability to obtain a fix under the most difficult circumstances. Because time is required to determine longitude the *Endurance* departed London with 24 chronometers. During the voyage they were subjected to extremes of temperature and sometimes violent motion of the ship. Only three Worsley considered to be reliable and the best one he wore around his neck under his sweater to ensure an even temperature. He was able to determine the chronometer error while the ship was locked in the ice by observing lunar occultations. (the eclipse of stars by the moon) Without his positions the search would not have been possible.

The book is written in an easy to read style and contains photos of the two search expeditions and of Shackleton's expedition taken by the Australian photographer Frank Hurley. The book is available at all good Council libraries.

May Speakers Summary

The Speaker at the May meeting was Angela Gillham the CEO of Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL). Angela is experienced in shipping regulations and policy matters and has a strong interest in sustainability and decarbonisation. She spoke about the challenges facing the shipping industry including critical maritime skills shortages and the pressure to decarbonise.



MIAL supports the Government's policy to establish a strategic fleet that could provide supply chain security, be available to render assistance to Australia's interests and provide the maritime economy with strategic maritime skills.

The strategic fleet of up to 12 Australian flagged and crewed ships would be privately owned and operated on a commercial basis.

Angela is a member of the committee set up by the government to provide advice on the implementation and composition of the strategic fleet. The committee has to report to the government by the end of June on matters such as the type of vessels and the strategic commodities they would be able to carry.

The committee will also provide advice on how to overcome the large cost disadvantage of Australian ships by regulation and tax changes.

Angela spoke about the global shortage of seafarers particularly officers and said that at present we have no platform to train people and nothing to offer new entrants. She said there needs to be better coordination and management of training and that they hope to develop a proposal to put to government.

The problems associated with the shipping industry's role in reducing global warming by reducing carbon emissions at a time when the global economy is dependent on cheap shipping was the next area that Angela discussed.

The initial targets were to reduce carbon dioxide emission by 40% by 2030 and all greenhouse gasses by 50% by 2050. IMO's strategy will be reviewed this year and the likely result will be net zero by 2050.

Angela spoke about the alternative fuels currently being developed. Hydrogen, ammonia, methanol and bio fuels all have problems with supply, storage engineering and cost and in some cases large amounts of energy is required to produce them so unless that energy comes from a non-carbon source there is no net benefit. Some of these fuels may be suitable for small vessels that travel short distances such as ferries and tugs. Ocean going ships travel long distances and have high energy requirements. To keep bunkering frequency to reasonable limits high energy density fuels are required.

Angela gave a very interesting talk that was well received by the members.

A few weeks after Angela gave her talk on alternative fuels Maersk announced that OCI Global will supply green methanol to fuel the world's first dual fuel containership for its delivery voyage.

The 11,500 nautical mile voyage from the Hyundai shipyard in South Korea through the Suez Canal to Denmark is an important milestone in the journey to decarbonise the shipping industry. The as yet unnamed 2100 TEU ship will be used as a feeder ship on Maersk's Baltic routes.