

Melbourne Branch

The Log
The Monthly Newsletter of the Melbourne Branch of
The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Limited
Hon. Secretary Rudy Rietwyk
email Melbourne@mastermariners.org.au



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*Hon. Editor Capt Ian French
Email icfrench@bigpond.com*

NEXT MEETING

1830 hrs 27th April 2022

Mail Exchange Hotel

Speaker

Maurie Hutchinson The Koolama Incident



Victorian Regional Channels
Authority

Melbourne Branch Master

COMMANDER GRAEME FURLONGER RAN

Graeme joined the Australian Naval Reserve in January 1983 as Recruit Seaman Furlonger in HMAS LONSDALE. He completed Recruit Training in HMAS Cerberus but was soon selected for Officer Training Course (OTC). He completed his OTC which included as assessment cruise in HMAS JERVIS BAY in 1985 and was recommended for a commission by the Promotions Board. He was promoted to Sub-Lieutenant in 1986.

Graeme's naval career continued in the Seaman Branch as he began navigation, watch keeping and seamanship training. This consisted of theory in HMAS LONSDALE and sea training firstly in HMAS BAYONET then in HMAS WARRNEMBOOL. He continued his training consolidating his skills in HMAS WARRNAMBOOL, HMAS DERWENT and HMAS TOBRUK. HE obtained his Bridge Watch-Keeping Certificate. The completion of navigation courses, task book and sea-time experience led to his promotion to LEUT in 1991.

Leut Furlonger was then recruited by Naval Intelligence Division.

He was awarded the Defence Long Service Medal (DLSM) in 1999, presented at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne. He now has three clasps to the DLSM in recognition of 30 years of service. Graeme was then posted to Mine Warfare Group 54, part of the Mine Warfare Clearance Diver Force Element Group. MWG 54 was based at HMAS CERBERUS. He joined as the teams Operation Officer, then Executive Officer and finally Officer in Charge. Graeme was promoted to Lieutenant Commander in 2001.

Graeme has participated in Exercise Bell Buoy (maritime trade operations) Shortscope and Dugong (both mine warfare) and Operation Safe Haven (Kosovar evacuees) and Acolyte (Department of Defence contribution to the Melbourne Commonwealth Games 2006) for which he received a Commanding Officer's Commendation.

Awarded the Australian Defence Medal in 2006 he was promoted to the rank of Commander in 2007.

CMDR Furlonger was posted to Ex TALISMAN SABRE 2011 based at NHQ Southern Queensland with responsibilities for ship visits to the Port of Brisbane and QLD regional ports for the duration of the exercise. Recently he provided support to Operation BUSH FIRE ASSIST 2020 at the reception arrival at Hastings for the civilian evacuees from Mallacoota.

His current posting is to the Office of Senior Naval Officer-Victoria as Visiting Ship Liaison Officer-Victoria.

Professionally, he is a Regular member of the Australian Naval Institute, Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers and an Ordinary member of the Company of Master Mariners of Australia.

Recreationally he is a member of the Royal Victorian Motor Yacht Club and is Senior VP of the Navy League of Australia Vic/Tas Division.

Graeme is married. His hobbies include photography, motor sport and simply messing about in their cota boat "Mischief" CB 65.



Change of Branch Master and Branch Secretary

By Captain Francis Castellino

At the recent Melbourne Branch AGM (held on 30 March 2022) our Branch Master Ian French announced that he would not stand for re-election. Ian joined the Company of Master Mariners in May 1996 and ever since has been the most regular attendee at Branch meetings and functions. Such was his diligence to the CoMMA that he nominated to Branch Court as a Warden in 2003. We are not sure whether he needed any further convincing but in 2003 he took over the Branch Treasurer role to which he served diligently and efficiently until 2014 when due to a combination of factors, the Branch Master function was more or less thrust upon him. Ian graciously accepted the responsibility and served as Branch Master until this 2022 AGM. As Branch Master, Ian also served as a Director on the Federal Court. In this time, he nurtured the Branch in his inimitable style, ensuring that the Branch (and CoMMA) remained relevant to its members. Such was his passion for the Branch that he even took on the role of Editor to the LOG, our monthly newsletter, in 2016 and to which he has volunteered to continue editing. We are immensely grateful to Ian for all that he has done to keep the Branch functioning vibrantly.

In a double-whammy to the Branch administration, our long serving (and probably suffering) Secretary Alexandra Evered also decided it was time for us to breed new blood into the Court. Alex (as she would like to be known) joined the Company in November 2004 and was an instant hit with Branch Court, due to her administrative and secretarial skills. Besides, she seemed to know everyone in the industry. Alex was appointed Branch Secretary in 2008 to which she served continuously and with distinction. In recognition of her outstanding service, the Branch honoured her with an honorary membership in March 2018. Through the years Alex has helped keep all the loose ends well tied up, looking after Branch business as well as organising the monthly meetings.

While we are sorry that they have not renominated to office, we are glad that Ian and Alex have agreed to stay on the Branch Court. Ian as an ex-officio member and Editor of the LOG, and Alex as a Warden. Their Knowledge of Branch History and past decisions as well as tempering words of wisdom will help guide us, as we try to consolidate what they started.

The Branch intends to hold a presentation to Ian and Alex at the next meeting (27 April 2022) to celebrate their contribution to the Company of Master Mariners. We are truly grateful to them for holding our Branch together.

Branch News

Following the election at the Branch AGM the Branch Court is now:

Branch Master	Commander Graeme Furlonger RAN
Deputy Branch Master	Capt. Francis Castellino
Branch Secretary	Mr Rudy Rietwyk
Branch Treasurer	Capt. Mario D'Souza
Branch Registrar	Capt. Peter Bosman
Editor of LOG	Capt. Ian French

Wardens Ms Alexandra Evered, Capt. Gordon Green, Capt. Chris Noon
 Capt. Patrick O'Sullivan Capt. Nigel Porteous Capt. Sheldon Rodrigues

The Speaker at the April Meeting will be Maurie Hutchinson a well-known maritime historian. He will speak about the bombing of the mv Koolama by Japanese aircraft and the efforts by the Captain to save the ship.

Federal AGM Summary

The Federal AGM was held on Saturday 9th April and following procedural matters the main issues discussed were:

The Federal Secretary Stuart Davey has resigned due to work and family commitments and suggested the role would suit someone who has recently retired. Captain Mark Pointon from W.A. will be the new Federal Secretary but some of his duties will be taken up by the Treasurer and others to reduce his workload.

In his report FedSec noted that ASIC will have to be updated on the change of FedSec, Melbourne Branch Master, Change of Company Address and contact details and changes to the constitution.

The last batch of membership certificates that were sent to the Governor General for signing took 4 months to be completed and returned so the FedSec suggested that having the GG sign the certificates be discontinued. The proposal was rejected by all the directors. There are currently nine Federal Members and it was agreed that their membership will be transferred to the most appropriate branch. The member would get the benefit of branch membership and it would reduce the FedSec workload.

The stock of ties that the Federal Court has maintained have been distributed to the branches. Melbourne received 40 ties.

The Registrar reported that membership has increased by 2 to 367. Losses due to death and resignation were outnumbered by 16 new members. Three new members were ratified including Ola Oladipupo from Melbourne.

The Treasurer reported that the combined assets of the Federal Court and the 5 branches is \$246,131. The Federal Levy was not collected last year and that gave a distorted impression of the wealth of the branches. The 2021 levy was paid this year. To assist the branches meet the increased cost of venues for their meetings the Federal Levy for 2022 will be reduced to \$35 per member. In future the Treasurer will issue all invoices and receipts instead of the FedSec.

A draft of the Master Mariner magazine is expected early June. No nominations for the Outstanding Achievement award have been received.

Changes to the constitution have not been implemented and the new FedSec is to progress it with ASIC. The minutes of the meeting will be available in due course.

March Speakers Summary

The Speakers at the March meeting were both from Ports Victoria. Stephen D'Souza is the manager of VTS and Sheldon Rodrigues is the Berth Allocation Manager. They spoke about the incident on 27th December 2020 when during very strong winds the car carrier "Florida Highway" was blown off its berth at Webb Dock and nearly struck the "Searoad Mersey 2" which was berthed on the other side of the dock.



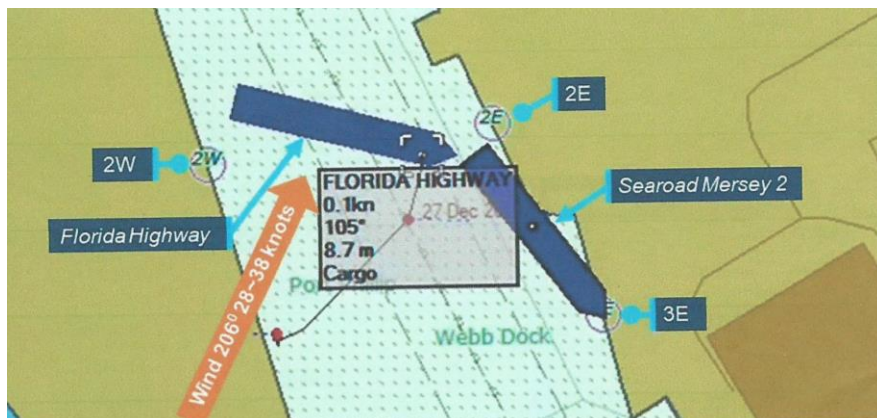
The "Florida Highway" was berthed starboard side to with its stern ramp lowered onto the wharf. During the afternoon the wind increased in strength. The ship was logging the weather hourly and the engines and bow thruster were kept on standby. By 1745 the wind was gusting at 50 knots and the ship requested tug assistance. The two tugs on duty were at Swanson Dock to attend to a ship departing. That ship's departure was cancelled and the tugs were sent to Webb Dock to assist "Florida Highway". Also at this time a tanker at Gellibrand was having trouble with its lines and a ship at the anchorage was dragging its anchor and was given permission to heave up and manoeuvre without a pilot on board.

At 1749 the "Florida Highway's" headlines parted and the bow swung away from the wharf. The stern ramp became wedged on a bollard and with the stern lines holding the ship was held to the wharf. On instructions from VTS both anchors were dropped to arrest the swing.



VTS AIS plot of Florida Highway orientation at about 1758

“Searoad Mersey 2” seeing what was happening started its engines and moved along the wharf until its stern was clear of the car carrier. The tugs arrived and the “Florida Highway” was secured to its berth.



VTS AIS plot of Florida Highway and Searoad Mersey 2 orientation at about 1808
Source Melbourne VTS with annotations by Chief Investigator Transport Safety

The investigation into the incident found that the ship did not access local weather reporting services. Problems with the promulgation of weather warnings were identified.

As a result of the incident the Harbour Master issued “Operational Instructions 01/2021 for ships at berth when marine wind warnings are issued by the Bureau of Meteorology”

The ship’s operators issued additional guidance on obtaining local weather reports and on monitoring of mooring lines.

Marine Radio Victoria will ensure weather warnings will be broadcast immediately after receipt from the Bureau of Meteorology.

For their role in controlling the incident Melbourne VTS received the AMSA 2020-21 VTS Award.

Ports Legislation

The Minister for Ports and Freight, Melissa Horne, has introduced into parliament the ‘Transport Legislation Amendment (Ports Reform and other matters) Bill 2022.

The purpose of the Bill is to embed in legislation the main recommendations of the 2020 review which established Ports Victoria which absorbed VRCA and Victoria Ports Corporation.

It implements matters relating to port development strategies, Harbour Masters, towage and pilotage.

It updates the name and objects of the Port of Hastings Development Authority to reflect its current role and its future functions.

The Bill will give Ports Victoria greater control over the provision and licencing of towage and pilotage services. Harbour Masters not directly employed by Ports Victoria will be required to participate in training and safety programs, report marine incidents and provide information on operational safety performance.

The Minister said “These changes will make our port system more efficient, adaptable and ready to support growth and recovery.

Mediterranean Shipping Company

At the beginning of this year Mediterranean Shipping Company SA (MSC) overtook Maersk Line as the largest container shipping company in terms of TEU capacity. MSC's 4,284,728 TEU was 1,888 more than Maersk but 65% of MSC's capacity was on chartered ships compared to 42% of Maersk's.

The MSC fleet of 645 ships of which 260 are company owned call at 500 ports on more than 230 trade routes and annually transport more than 23 million TEU.



"Patricia"

MSC was founded by Captain Gianluigi Aponte a native of Sorrento Italy. He graduated from the Italian Maritime Academy and joined his family's business which operated passenger ferries in the Mediterranean. In 1970 after a short period in the banking industry he returned to the shipping industry and started his own business with one ship "Patricia" which he operated between the Mediterranean and Somalia. The following year he bought a second ship which he named after his wife "Rafaela" followed by a third ship "Ilse" in 1973. The company registered its head office in Geneva Switzerland in 1978.

MSC continued to expand through the purchase of second hand ships. It ordered its first new ship "Alexa" a 3475 TEU container ship in 1996.

In 2014 Captain Aponte handed over to his son Diego Aponte who became President while Gianluigi was named Group Executive Chairman.



"Monterey"

In 1988 MSC entered the Cruise Line Industry when it purchased the ex Matson Line ship "Monterey" and took over Lauro Line from Achille Lauro. Two more ships the "Rhapsody" and "Melody" were added and in 2003 MSC commenced a building program which so far has delivered 20 cruise ships. MSC will become the second largest cruise ship operator when ships currently under construction are delivered over the next two years.

MEC is currently examining the possibility of acquiring ITA Airways. When the Italian airline Alitalia got into financial troubles the Italian government spent billions restructuring and relaunching it as ITA Airways.

MSC is looking for an air freight and passenger business to dovetail with its sea cargo and cruise operations. MSC has teamed up with Lufthansa as a commercial operator and it has been reported that MEC is expected to bid 1.2 to 1.6 billion euros for ITA Airways.

The plan is for MSC to use its assets in logistics, ports, sea freight as well as its passenger cruise and travel businesses to create a platform to build on both the cargo and passenger aviation trades.