

## 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 29th November 2017**

**Christmas Break Up**

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## From the Branch Master



In the May “LOG” I reported on the “Coastal Shipping Reforms” discussion paper issued by the Minister for Transport the Hon. Darren Chester.

The Minister received 67 submissions on the discussion paper from industry groups, unions and individuals. The unions feared it would lead to further reductions in the Australian fleet. Industry saw potential benefits for primary producers and manufacturers who wish to move cargo around the coast.

The proposed amendments to the Coastal Trading Act have now been put into the “Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Amendment Bill” which was introduced into Parliament in September. The Bill has been referred to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee with a reporting date of 4<sup>th</sup> December.

We will have to wait to see if the Bill is passed. We also wait to see what affect removing Ship’s Engineers, Officers and Masters from the list of approved occupations for a Temporary Skilled Worker Program Visa will have.

Our last meeting for the year will be the Christmas Break Up on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Meetings will resume next year on 28<sup>th</sup> February. Our Branch AGM will be in March and that will be followed by the Federal AGM in early April.

As this is the final edition of the “LOG” for this year I will take the opportunity to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Capt. Ian French*



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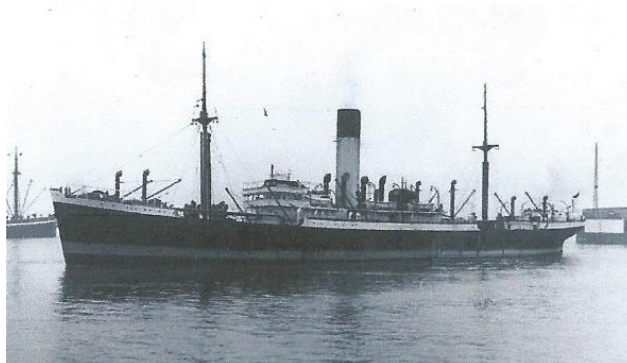
## October Speakers Summary

Cmdr. John Wilkins OAM RFD RANR Ret'd spoke to members about the ss "Automedon" incident in 1940 as part of a talk on Merchant Service Operations in the Far East during WW2.

With Britain fully engaged in the war with Germany and concerns that Japan would soon enter the war the British Defence Force Staff produced a Far East Appreciation paper on the state of defences in the Far East.

The paper showed that the combined UK, Dutch, Australian and New Zealand naval power was inadequate compared to Japans and that Singapore's defences were below recommended levels. Churchill ordered that a copy of the paper be sent to the Commander in Chief Far East , Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham at Singapore. Rather than risk sending it by air the paper was put on the 7,588 ton Blue Funnel Steamer "Automedon" (picture below) which sailed for Singapore in late September 1940

"Automedon" was 3 days from Singapore when it was intercepted by the German Auxiliary Cruiser "Atlantis" under the command of Captain Bernhard Rogge. The "Atlantis" was a 7,862 ton motor ship which was armed with heavy guns, torpedo tubes and mines and was disguised as a Netherlands East Indies ship. When "Automedon" realised "Atlantis" was a German surface raider they started transmitting the "we are under attack" signal. "Atlantis" immediately commenced shelling "Automedon" to stop the signal transmission. Most of those on the bridge including the Master were killed.





“Atlantis”

The Germans plundered the ship for much needed stores but did not look in the strong room having been told it was just a Bosun’s store. The “Automedon” surviving crew and passengers were transferred to “Atlantis”. Unfortunately one of the passengers, Mrs. Violet Ferguson, asked Captain Rogge if she could take her tea set with her. While looking for the tea set the strong room was opened and the Appreciation paper, Naval codes and other military information including the defense of Singapore was discovered. “Automedon” was sunk.

The captured papers were sent to Germany and a copy was given to the Japanese. It was only after hearing the story of how the papers were captured did the Japanese believe they were genuine and not a British subterfuge.

The information contained in the papers was used by the Japanese in planning their offensive in the Pacific. The fact that the papers were in German and Japanese hands was known to Churchill but was not passed on to Australia.

On 23 November 1941 while refueling a submarine “Atlantis” was attacked by HMS “Devonshire” and sunk. Capt. Rogge and the other survivors were rescued by the submarine and eventually returned to Germany. After the war Mrs. Fergusons tea set was returned to her from Germany.

Before closing Cmdr. Wilkins informed the gathering of the upcoming Creswell Oration 2018 to be presented by the Commander of the Australian Fleet Rear Admiral Jonathan Mead, on the State of the Fleet, On Friday 2 March 2018, 1200 for 1230 at William Angliss Institute Restaurant.



## The IMO Polar Code

In Recent years there has been an increasing number of ships, including passenger ships, entering into the polar regions. The IMO Polar Code which came into force on 1st January 2017, responds to the additional hazards to shipping caused by the extreme cold and ice and the need to protect the fragile polar environment.

The code recognises the difficulties involved in mounting rescue and clean up operations in the event of a casualty in these remote regions.

Amongst the provisions of the Code is a requirement for ships to carry a "Polar Water Operational Manual" containing information on the ship's operational capabilities and limitations including information on specific procedures to be followed in the event of an accident. Hydrographic, meteorological and navigational information is included.

The Code covers all aspects of the ship's structure, machinery, equipment and operations to ensure it can cope with the extreme conditions experienced in polar regions.

Ice accretion and snow build up can be a major issue. It can not only affect the ship's stability but cause problems for machinery and equipment and may block access doors and hatches. Provision must be made for its removal or to mitigate its effect.

There are additional requirements for life saving equipment including the number and type of survival suits and lifeboat equipment. Survivors of a casualty may have to wait some time for rescue.

The Master and Watchkeeping Officers of ships entering into ice areas are required to have completed an approved course in ice navigation. Operating with ice breakers is also covered by the Code.

Passage plans should take into account any limitations of the hydrographic information and aids to navigation, the availability of places of refuge and search and rescue capabilities. Routing systems and speed in areas with densities of marine mammals including seasonal migration areas must be considered.

The Code has strict rules applying to the discharge of oil, noxious liquids, sewage and garbage.



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