

## 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  
POSTPONED DUE TO  
COVID-19**

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# From the Branch Master

With a vaccine still over a year away the restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 continue to control much of our lives.

On 5<sup>th</sup> May the celebrations to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Captain Cook in Botany Bay had to be cancelled. The intention was for the replica of the “Endeavour” to enter Botany Bay and Captain Cooks’ landing at Kurnell to be re-enacted. The “Endeavour” was also to have undertaken a circumnavigation of Australia but this too has been cancelled,

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> May became a very low key affair. In the United Kingdom and Europe there were no parades and only a handful of dignitaries were able to attend the cenotaph and lay a wreath.

Two days later Mother’s Day for many became a very disappointing event.

Our Branch AGM which was to be held as part of the March monthly meeting had to be cancelled. As a result of the coronavirus restrictions communication methods such as ZOOM have become popular and we were able to use it to fulfil our obligation to hold an AGM.

At the AGM Patrick O’Sullivan stood down as Treasurer due to family and work commitments and has been replaced by Mario D’Souza. Rudy Rietwyk and Gordon Green have joined the Court as Wardens. There were no other changes to the Court.

ZOOM proved easy to use and it has been suggested that we look into the possibility of holding monthly meetings by this means until normal meetings can resume possibly at the end of the year.

# COVID-19 UPDATE

The repatriation of tens of thousands of crew members from unemployed cruise ships has been described as one of the biggest maritime operations in recent years. In the United States alone there are 102 ships either anchored at or near US ports or underway in US waters with about 70,000 crew on board.

20 ships including “Ruby Princess” are at anchor in Manila Bay. Their Pilipino crew members must undergo 14 days quarantine before they are allowed ashore.

Many countries have refused to allow crew to land for the purpose of going to the airport to catch a flight home. Some Caribbean cruise lines were using the Port of Miami and Port Everglades to repatriate crew home before the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Coast Guard put a stop to the practice.

To overcome this companies have started transferring crew from several ships onto one ship which then transports them to their home country.

The problem of crew changes and repatriation is not limited to cruise ships. There are about 1.6 million seafarers and each month about 150,000 seafarers need to be changed over. Due to COVID-19 restrictions many seafarers are having to extend their period on board ships by many months because of the continuing imposition of travel restrictions.

Now IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim has endorsed a series of protocols designed to address these issues. The protocols were developed in conjunction with many shipping organisations and unions and had input from the International Air Transport Association.

The protocols set out procedures on how governments can facilitate crew changes and resolve safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocols include recommendations to maritime administrations and other authorities such as health, customs, immigration, border control seaport and civil aviation authorities.

This initiative should improve the crew change arrangements for most ships with small crew numbers but administrations are very concerned about cruise ships. To date 40 cruise ships have been recorded as having confirmed cases of COVID-19. Large numbers of people in confined spaces are potential breeding grounds for the virus. These circumstances also occur on naval ships. The USN "Theodore Roosevelt" had over 1000 cases and one death and the destroyer USN "Kidd" recorded 230 positive tests for the virus. The French aircraft carrier "Charles De Gaulle" had 1000 of its crew infected with COVID -19.

A number of cruise line companies are reported to be in financial trouble.

Commentators suggest there will be some restructuring and possibly merges as a result of the disruption caused by the virus.

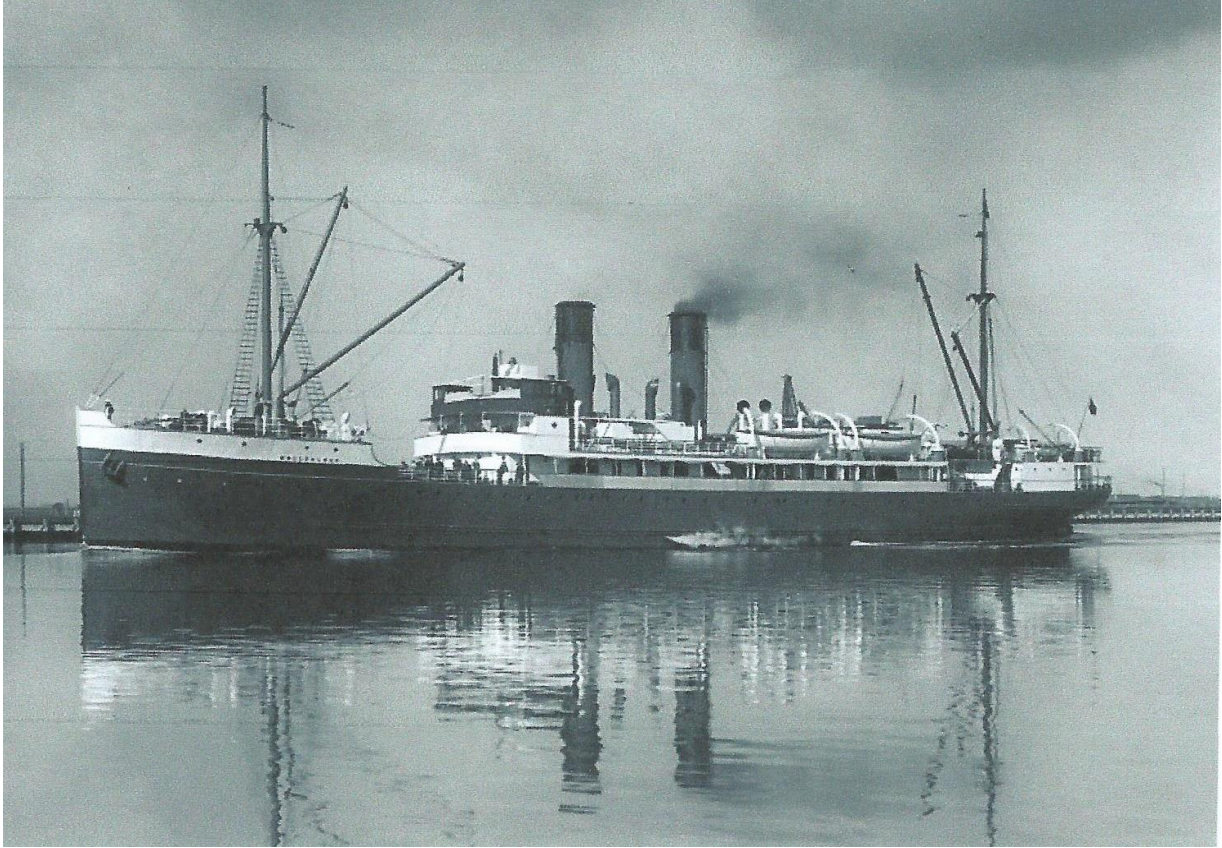
## Shut Down of DGPS Service

AMSA has announced that the Radio beacon Differential Global Positioning System will be shut down on 1 July 2020

The system was introduced in the 1990's to improve the accuracy of the publicly available GPS signal which was intentionally degraded resulting in position errors of up to 200 metres.

The intentional error was removed in 2000 and with other improvements there is no longer a need for the DGPS service.

# ss “Woollongbar”



The wreck of the ss ‘Woollongbar’ has been found off Crescent Head on the mid north coast of NSW.

The “Woollongbar” was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine I-180 on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1943. The ship was not carrying passengers due to the war but 32 crew members were killed and only 5 survived.

The ship was carrying thousands of cases of butter and much of this washed up along the coast. This led to a boom in cake making because butter was rationed at that time.

“Woollongbar” was owned by the North Coast Steam Navigation Company and had a gross tonnage of 2240 and a length of 286 feet.