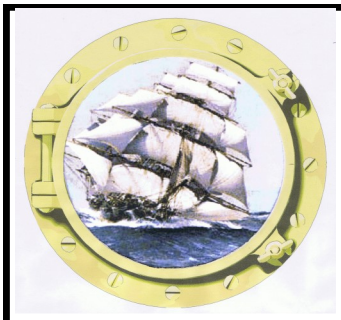

The Porthole

Volume 16 No.9
September 2016

The newsletter of the South Australian Branch of the Company of Master Mariners of Australia PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015
Branch Patron: His Excellency the Honorable Hieu Van Le AC

Branch Master's Comments

The recent Federal Court meeting brought some sad news from the Newcastle Branch, which will close after the scheduled meeting in March 2017. The closure is a majority decision by the branch membership. Branch meetings are scheduled until March 2017. Newcastle branch members will be invited to join the Sydney Branch.

One contributory reason for the impending closure is the lack of members prepared to take on supporting roles in the Branch Court. Currently there is a Branch Master / Secretary, which is unconstitutional, and a Treasurer, and the Branch Master is standing down at the end of the year.

We have only two more meetings before the end of this year. Although we have a strong Branch Court at present, at least one member will be standing down at the year end, therefore please give consideration to standing for Branch Court in 2017, else we could go the same way as Newcastle.

Another solution is to recruit new, younger members, so if you know any mariners who are not currently members invite them along to a branch meeting and try to persuade them to join. Don't forget that members of the Navy (Department of Defence) are eligible, either as full or associate members, depending on their service.

Best Wishes

Paul P

Branch Master

Speaker:

Ms Lindl Lawton, Senior Curator, South Australian Maritime Museum, who will talk about her career generally and the research, preparation and setting up of the current "The Art of Science : Nicolas Baudin's Voyages 1800 - 1804

The next Branch meeting will be held at the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 28th September 2016 at 1145 for 1200.

Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 26th September 2016 with

Ian Dickson (8396 1030)
or
Paul Phillips (0407 779 209)

The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity, and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

Inside this issue:

World War 1 Merchant Navy VCs

Talk by Capt Paul Phillips at Port Adelaide Branch meeting on 31 August 2016

2016 is the centenary year of the Battle of Jutland, and in May of this year an Anglo-German service was held in the Orkneys to commemorate the more than 8000 British and German sailors who lost their lives in that battle.

As an adjunct to those commemorations one of the two Victoria Crosses awarded to Merchant Navy personnel during World War 1 was on display at St. Magnus Cathedral, and later it was replaced by a replica now on permanent display.

The Victoria Cross was instituted by Royal Warrant of 29th January 1856 (**Original Warrant, Clause 5**:*Fifthly. It is ordained that the Cross shall only be awarded to those officers and men who have served us in the presence of the enemy, and shall have then performed some signal act of valour or devotion to their country.)* and backdated to 1854 to include the Crimean War. In 1858 the award was extended to include civilians following the Indian mutiny, but the condition "in the presence of the enemy" remained. Although there had been other Royal Warrants during the intervening years, it was not until the Royal Warrant of 22nd May 1920 that the Mercantile Marine was specifically declared to be eligible.

A Royal Warrant of 24 September 1940 established the George Cross which is the equivalent to the Victoria Cross, but is awarded for acts of valour in circumstances not involving the presence of the enemy. The awarding of a Victoria Cross or George Cross is not dependent on the degree of bravery of the recipient, only the circumstances, although there have been occasions where VCs have been awarded when there was no enemy presence, and occasions when GCs have been awarded for acts of valour in the presence of the enemy. Due to the VC being established before the GC, it is always awarded first at investitures. The two recipients of the Victoria Cross are Captain Frederick Daniel Parslow (14 April 1856, Islington, London – 04 July 1915, North Atlantic) and Captain Archibald Bissett-Smith (19 December 1879, Cults, Aberdeenshire – 10 March 1917, North Atlantic). Both men were given a posthumous temporary commission as a Lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve before being awarded the Victoria Cross on 23 May 1919.

Captain Frederick Daniel Parslow VC

The London Gazette dated 24th May 1919 records the following:- "For most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of the Horse Transport ANGO-CALIFORNIAN on the 4th July 1915. At 8am on 4th July 1915, a large submarine (U39) was sighted on the port beam at the distance of one mile. The ship, which was entirely unarmed, was immediately manoeuvred to bring the submarine astern; every effort was made to increase speed, and an S.O.S. call was sent out by wireless, an answer being received by a man-of war. At 9a.m. the submarine opened fire making occasional hits until 10.30a.m.; meanwhile Lieutenant Parslow constantly altered course and kept the submarine astern. At 10.30a.m. the enemy hoisted the signal to abandon the vessel as fast as possible, and, in order to save life Lt. Parslow decided to obey, and stopped engines to give as many of the crew as wished the opportunity to get away in the boats. On receiving a wireless message from a destroyer, however, urging him to hold on for as long as possible, he decided to get way on the ship again. The submarine then opened a heavy fire on the bridge and boats with guns and rifles wrecking the upper bridge, killing Lt. Parslow and carrying away one of the port davits, causing the boat to drop into the sea and throwing its occupants into the water. At about 11a.m. two destroyers arrived on the scene and the submarine dived. Throughout the attack Lt. Parslow remained on the bridge on which the enemy fire was concentrated entirely without protection and by his magnificent heroism succeeded, at the cost of his own life, in saving a valuable ship and cargo for his own country. He set a splendid example to the officers and men of the Mercantile Marine." (From the CWGC (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) website).

At the time of the attack, one of Captain Parslow's sons, also Frederick Parslow, was either Chief or Second Officer of ANGLO-CALIFORNIAN and was at the wheel during the action, albeit lying on the deck. Frederick Parslow was given a temporary RNR commission as Sub-Lieutenant and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. The total crew was 95 of which nine were killed and eight more wounded. Of the cargo of 927 horses, 30 were killed. The raider MOEWE which sank the OTAKI (mentioned below) sank three horse transports during her two cruises; they were considered important targets due to the reliance placed on horses by WW1 armies.

Captain Frederick Daniel Parslow VC is buried at Cobh (previously Queenstown) Old Church Cemetery, Cobh, Ireland. A plaque commemorating Captain F D Parslow is incorporated into the War Memorial erected on Islington Green, Islington, London. The Thomas M. Hemy website states that in 2006 Captain Parslow's medal was in a private collection in Syracuse, New York State, and was believed to be for sale.

His son, Frederick Parslow DSC survived the war, but was Master of ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN in March 1938 when it vanished without trace after passing the Azores when on passage from Cardiff, Wales to Vancouver, British Colombia.

Soon after the action ANGLO-CALIFORNIAN was sold by her owners the Nitrate Producers S.S. Co. Ltd., often known as the Anglo Line, (managers Lawther, Latta & Co. Ltd. of London) to Cunard who renamed her VANDALIA. She was torpedoed and sunk in the St. George's Channel on 09 June 1918.

The attacking submarine, U39, was damaged by French aircraft while operating in the western Mediterranean in 1918. Unable to dive she reached Cartagena on May 18th, 1918, and was interned until the war's end and was scrapped in 1923.

Captain Archibald Bisset Smith VC

An extract from "The London Gazette," dated 24th May, 1919, records the following: For most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of the S.S. OTAKI, on the 10th March, 1917. "At about 2.30 p.m. on 10th March, 1917, the S.S.OTAKI, whose armament consisted of one 4.7 in. gun for defensive purposes, sighted the disguised German raider MOEWE, which was armed with four 5.9 in., one 4.1 in. and two 22 pdr. guns, and two torpedo tubes. The MOEWE kept the OTAKI under observation for some time and finally called upon her to stop. This Lieutenant Smith refused to do, and a duel ensued at ranges of 1,900 - 2,000 yards, and lasted for about 20 minutes. During this action the OTAKI scored several hits on the MOEWE, causing considerable damage, and starting a fire which lasted for three days. She sustained several casualties and received much damage herself, and was heavily on fire. Lieutenant Smith, therefore, gave orders for the boats to be lowered to allow the crew to be rescued. He remained on the ship himself and went down with her when she sank with the British colours still flying, after what was described in an enemy account as "a duel as gallant as naval history can relate." (From the CWGC (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) website).

Captain Bissett-Smith's Victoria Cross remained in his family until 1953 when it was donated to the New Zealand Shipping Company, and was displayed in the Officers' Saloon on the fourth OTAKI between 1953 to 1975 when she was sold out of the P&O Group. I saw it during my voyages on OTAKI in 1967 and 1968. It is currently held in the P&O Heritage Collection. It was couriered to the Orkneys and returned to the P&O Heritage Collection in the care of a former New Zealand Shipping Company engineer officer, and the current Lord Provost of the Orkneys is a former NZSCo engineer officer. Both men had sailed on OTAKI IV during their sea-going careers.

As a memorial to Captain Bissett-Smith, the New Zealand Shipping Company instituted the OTAKI Scholarship awarded annually to a student from Robert Gordon College, Aberdeen, Captain Smith's school, to travel to New Zealand. This was on a NZSCo ship, later OCL and P&O Nedlloyd and Maersk Line. This year's scholar has recently arrived in New Zealand.

MOEWE (Seagull) was built in 1914 as a banana-carrier before being leased to the Imperial German Navy for conversion to minelayer, and later to a commerce raider. She made two raiding voyages into the Atlantic and it was her second voyage that was prematurely ended due to damage inflicted by OTAKI. She was taken by the British under the War Repatriation programme and sailed as Elders and Fyffes GREEN-BRIAR until 1933 when she was sold to German owners. She served in the German Navy during World War II and was sunk by the RAF while sheltering in a fjord south of Bergen, Norway. Ten of her crew were killed during WW1, one in a coaling accident, the remaining nine in action against OTAKI.

Why commissions into the Royal Naval Reserve?

According to records in the UK National Archives, the Admiralty were in favour of awarding the Victoria Cross to members of the Mercantile Marine, as it was then, and it was King George V who was opposed to the awarding of this decoration to "civilians" and to the awards being posthumous. He did, after further correspondence, agree to confirm the award if both recipients were temporarily gazetted as officers in the Royal Naval Reserve and, under these circumstances, was prepared to make the awards posthumous. For this reason, Captain Parslow's headstone in Cobh refers to him as Lieutenant RNR.

As part of the centennial commemorations, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are honouring all 628 recipients of WWI VCs by including commemorative paving stones to be part of existing war memorials around the UK. The DCLG has accepted that, since Parslow and Smith fought and died in the Mercantile Marine, they should be so remembered, and their paving stones will share the distinction of referring to 'Master' and 'Mercantile Marine'.

Sources:
The National Archives, Indexing the Merchant Navy Crew Lists and Agreements.
The Durham Association
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website
Evening Standard 04 July 2015 (Rachel Blundy) "Heroic merchant navy captain who was the oldest recipient of Victoria Cross in WW1 is commemorated in former home of Islington."
The Orcadian Thursday June 9 2016 (Craig Taylor) "Holidaymakers drop into museum to view replica of their ancestor's Victoria Cross"
Sms Moewe website
The Irish Times Mon, May 30 2016 "English VC winner buried in Cobh honoured in London centenary ceremony"
Wikipedia

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Australia's Busiest Port Sold for A$9.7 Billion

September 19, 2016 by Reuters

By Cecile Lefort and Byron Kaye

SYDNEY, Sept 19 (Reuters) – A consortium of global and domestic funds, backed by investors including China Investment Corp, agreed to buy Australia's busiest port for a higher-than-expected A$9.7 billion ($7.3 billion), a sign that tough equity markets are helping fuel appetite for infrastructure.

Australian leaders will also hope the deal shows they still welcome Chinese investment in infrastructure. The federal government last month blocked the sale of the country's biggest power network, Ausgrid, to state-owned State Grid Corp of China and Hong Kong-listed Cheung Kong Infrastructure Holdings on security concerns.

A container ship is seen in the port in Melbourne June 2, 2010. REUTERS/Mick Tsikas/File Photo

The price tag for Port of Melbourne fell short of the country's largest privatisation deal on record, the A$10.8 billion sale of electricity grid company Transgrid to a global consortium in November 2015, but still ranks among its biggest.

It also smashes the target set by the government of Victoria state which previously said it hoped for A$5.8 billion for the container and multi-cargo port. In 2013, the two ports of larger city Sydney fetched A$5 billion.

Sovereign wealth funds and other asset managers are seeking long-term investment opportunities amid weaker returns from some equity markets and lower bond yields.

"Equity markets are starting to realise that they're going to live in an environment where returns are going to be lower for longer, and they're looking for secure investments," Victoria Treasurer Tim Pallas said in a telephone interview.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Australia began a free trade agreement with China in December but has been trying to ease diplomatic strains since the Ausgrid rejection. China's commerce ministry warned at the time that the move "seriously impacts the willingness of Chinese companies to invest in Australia".

On Monday, Pallas said Australia's sovereign wealth fund, The Future Fund, and Canada's Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System will each get a fifth of Port of Melbourne following the sale, which is packaged as a 50-year lease.

The government investment vehicle of Queensland state (QIC) and New York-based Global Infrastructure Partners are the other consortium partners.

China Investment Corp is a major investor in Global Infrastructure Partners. South Korean pension fund NPS is also an investor. QIC's investors include California Public Employees' Retirement System (CALPERS).

All foreign buyers have regulatory clearance, Pallas added. The deal is expected to close on Oct. 31, a statement from the consortium said. Gresham Partners and Credit Suisse acted as financial adviser to the consortium.

The sell-off is part of Australia's more than A$100 billion privatisation programme, where state and federal governments are trying to cut debt and bankroll capital works by selling "mature" infrastructure assets.

New South Wales state, which arranged the troubled Ausgrid sale, is again trying to offload that asset, and plans to dispose of another grid afterwards. Western Australia state meanwhile wants to sell ports, while the Federal government is selling the Australian Security and Investments Commission's registry arm.

($1 = 1.3278 Australian dollars) (Reporting by Byron Kaye and Cecile Lefort; Additional reporting by Denny Thomas; Editing by Stephen Coates and Edwina Gibbs)

(c) Copyright Thomson Reuters 2016.

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Signs of Good Intentions

Cocktail lounge, Norway:
LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR.

Budapest zoo:
PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS. IF YOU HAVE ANY SUITABLE FOOD, GIVE IT TO THE GUARD ON DUTY.

Doctor's office, Rome:
SPECIALIST IN WOMEN AND OTHER DISEASES.

The Tide Is Turning

By Andrew Wade 1st August 2015 12:00 am 16th December 2015 3:05 pm

Autonomous systems could revolutionise the shipping industry by reducing costs and improving efficiency.

Autonomous vehicles are slowly but surely infiltrating the world we inhabit. Google's work with driverless cars in California is well documented, with several big automotive names also showing an interest and investing heavily. For better or worse – unmanned aerial drones are now a major component of military operations, used to both gather intelligence and deliver airstrikes. When it comes to rail, metro systems around the globe are beginning to embrace automation, and a London Underground served by driverless trains in the near future is not difficult to envisage.

Autonomous ships could potentially convey cargo more efficiently than crewed vessels.

Up until now, however, shipping has tended to buck the trend somewhat. Research into autonomous ships is underway, but the same level of progress that we have seen across other modes of transport has yet to be realised. With over 90 per cent of world trade taking place via the oceans, autonomous systems represent an opportunity to revolutionise shipping, significantly reducing both its cost and environmental impact.

The industry is busy making strides to address the emissions issue, as rising fuel costs and stricter regulations governing Emission Control Areas (ECAs) force shipping companies to seek efficiencies and operate greener. Autonomous ships represent an opportunity for a big leap forward, with vessel redesigns potentially delivering hydrodynamic improvements that would improve fuel efficiency.

Besides fuel, the next biggest cost for shipping companies is labour. Unburdened by concerns over crew costs and on board facilities, unmanned vessels could spend longer at sea, reducing speeds and further improving fuel efficiency. It has been estimated that a 30 per cent drop in speed by a bulk carrier can lead to a 50 per cent reduction in fuel use. Combine this with the savings on crew salaries, as well as the overheads associated with maintaining a crew on board, and the scope for a much more efficient shipping industry becomes clear.

Despite the potential for these gains, there are plenty of legitimate concerns around the prospect of autonomous ships. Naturally, safety must be top of the agenda, and building intelligent unmanned vessels that can navigate the oceans with minimal oversight will not be easy. Robust communications systems will need to continuously deliver information from ships back to land-based operation centres. For ocean-going vessels, this means a satellite infrastructure capable of handling large amounts of traffic, with built-in redundancy and backup systems.

No crew on board also means no engineers to fix problems in engine rooms, or anywhere else throughout the ship for that matter. For this reason, reliability is a major concern. If an autonomous car senses an engine problem on the road, it can pull over and wait for assistance to arrive. A ship adrift in the middle of the ocean is an entirely different prospect. And what if that ship happens to be a fully loaded oil tanker off the horn of Africa, with pirates operating nearby? What if the threat is more remote – a team of hackers holding a ship to ransom as they threaten to steer it to disaster?

These are issues that are real, but can all be addressed, says Oskar Levander, vice president of innovation, engineering & technology at Rolls Royce's marine division. The company recently announced that it is to lead a new €6.6 million project which hopes to pave the way for autonomous ships, in collaboration with a number of industry partners and academic institutions.

Known as the Advanced Autonomous Waterborne Applications Initiative, the project is being funded by Finnish technology agency Tekes, and will run until 2017. Its stated aim is to deliver specifications and preliminary designs for the next generation of advanced ship solutions. According to Levander, progress towards an autonomous future for shipping will be incremental, with individual flag states taking the first steps before the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) develops international agreements.

"The technology will be there before the regulations," he tells *The Engineer*. "But it's not only about the regulations, it's also about inter-national law: who is responsible for autonomous ships. Today it's easy – you have the captain. But if there is no captain on board, then who is responsible? Is it the owner, the programmer, the supplier?"

The relatively low speeds and big expanses of ocean involved in shipping mean that, in some respects, autonomous and remote controlled vessels should be a more straightforward prospect than other modes of transport, where higher speeds and less margins for error exist. But the communication challenges with autonomous shipping are entirely different, with reliable satellite connectivity essential.

"Whereas in a car you can maybe rely on land-based communications, with ships you need to have good enough satellite coverage in all weather conditions around the world," explains Levander. "You have it in certain places, but it's not really worldwide yet."

As a result, early adoption is likely to happen first on a local level, near to coastlines where communications are more reliable than in mid-ocean, and where human intervention is not too far away if required. Levander says the first unmanned vessels will most likely be ferries, harbour vessels, or coastal cargo ships, with individual countries legislating for their territorial waters.

“The first real unmanned ship applications that we will see will most likely be locally operated ships that are within one or two countries’ waters, because then that flag state can basically give permission to that ship’s operators before there are international regulations,” he says.

Regarding piracy, Levander is quick to point out that an unmanned ship is a less attractive prospect for pirates, as there is no crew to ransom. Vessel redesigns could also make it more difficult for pirates to board, as crew mobility would not have to be considered and gangways could be removed.

Nonetheless, Levander admits that boarding from pirates could not be ruled out completely. However, if the ship was being controlled remotely, the controls could be coded, so the only option left available to pirates would be to disable the vessel and potentially try to tow it. This of course presents its own difficulties, and would not escape the attention of the navy for very long. With no hostages for protection, a group of pirates towing a ship slowly across the ocean might find themselves in a very sticky situation.

“The problem is really IT security,” says Levander, “and making sure no one else takes control of the ship. But these things are of course already in place.”

He cites Rolls Royce’s experience in aviation, and the security protocols that already exist to prevent hackers gaining control of planes. Similar systems for ships could be easily applied, he says. Once the safety and reliability issues have been addressed, the business case for unmanned ships is strong. No crew means more space for cargo, reduces operating costs, and also potentially allows for dramatic vessel redesigns.

“When you really start thinking about it, a lot of the way a ship looks today – not only the deckhouse, but how it’s laid out – a lot of things are determined by the fact that you have crew that need to walk around and access things,” says Levander.

“There are also lots of functions on board a ship that are there basically only to provide for the crew. Functions like air-conditioning, water production, sewage treatment, refrigerators for food, the galley.”

“(Unmanned ships) will be simpler to build, less waste, less energy consumption and less cost. So we actually foresee that the unmanned ships might be cheaper than manned ships.”

A ship’s crew are also hungry energy consumers. Levander estimates that unmanned vessels could reduce fuel consumption by about 15 per cent purely through the crew’s absence. Optimum speed without a crew is also lower, allowing further savings to be made on fuel. Furthermore, Levander argues that unmanned vessels are inherently safer, with a lower level of risk and consequently lower insurance payments.

All this sounds like great news for shipping companies, but perhaps less so if you are currently employed at sea. Levander acknowledges that some unions are already expressing reservations about autonomous ships and the future livelihoods of seafarers, but he claims that the general reaction has been more positive than negative. He also notes that the shipping industry has been fixed on this course for a long time, with the number of crew required on board diminishing steadily for over a century.

“If you go back 150 years or so, you had 250 persons on board an ocean-going cargo vessel, and that has been coming down to where today you have maybe 50,” he says. “So it has been reducing, and it would be odd to say that you have reached the optimum now, and that we will not further improve the efficiency of ships.”

“Any other industry you get the same thing. A factory producing cars is trying to produce more with less people all the time, so why would you assume that shipping would not go in the same way. It’s a continuous drive to make things more efficient, and it will create some reactions, but I think it’s very hard to stop as well.”

Levander believes that when the autonomous revolution takes off, new jobs within the industry will be created. These will of course be different jobs than those that currently exist, so there will be an onus on those in the industry to evolve in order to survive.

“I think the winners are those that see the change and adapt to that,” he says. “Those that try to fight it to the end, those are the ones that lose.”

Being an early adopter is clearly part of Rolls Royce’s strategy, as it takes the lead on the Advanced Autonomous Waterborne Applications Initiative. It is a project that will see it work alongside other major players in the industry, some of whom are competitors. At this stage however, Levander believes that cooperation is a better strategy than competition to move forward with.

“It’s very clear that as a company we have a broad portfolio in the marine industry, but we can’t do this alone, and that’s also why we’ve been so public about it,” he explains.

One of the industry partners is DNV GL, the world’s largest classification society. These are NGOs that establish and maintain technical standards for the construction and operation of ships, and they play a vital role in the industry. British satcom giant Inmarsat is also involved, reinforcing how important satellite connectivity will be to the future of autonomous shipping. Remote control will be a key step in the path to autonomy, and will likely remain a key component even when full autonomy is achieved. According to Levander, this should greatly increase the amount of data that is shared over satellite systems.

"In this regard, we see it as better to cooperate and work together to take this forward, because we think we can accomplish more if we work together than if we start competing at this point of the journey," he says.

After the project ends in 2017, a new 'proof of concept' phase will begin. Specific goals are in place for the current phase, but Levander is unable to share details at this stage. He is clear, however, that the aim of the project is to take genuine steps towards the introduction of unmanned vessels, and not just produce academic research. The hope is that those steps will see a gradual incorporation of remote control and autonomy, with crew numbers reducing slowly as less labour is required on board.

"It's important to note that it won't be happening overnight," says Levander. "What we will see is many different steps in this direction, and before we are there with unmanned ships we will have ships with reduced crew, ships where we move more and more functions ashore and do certain things on board by linking in remotely."

It is also important to remember that unmanned ships will not entirely bring an end to life at sea. While transporting cargo is well suited to an autonomous future, other types of ships will retain their crews for a variety of reasons, according to Levander.

"All ships will not be unmanned," he says. "Cruise ships and certain other ships are not really ideal for being unmanned, so we will still have manned ships in the future. We're not talking about a future with no people at sea at all.

Source: The Engineer.

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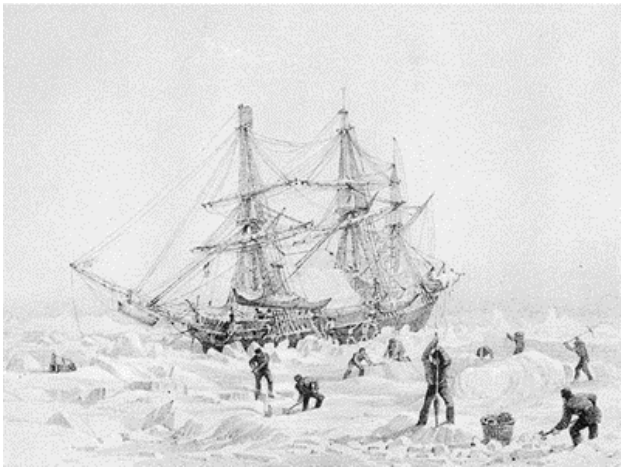
Canada Finds Second Ship from Doomed Franklin Voyage -Report

September 12, 2016 by Reuters



HMS Terror stuck in ice. Credit: Creative Commons

OTTAWA, Sept 12 (Reuters) – Explorers have found the wreck of HMS Terror, the second of two British ships lost in the disastrous 1845 Franklin expedition to Canada's Arctic Northwest Passage, Britain's Guardian newspaper said on Monday.

The Arctic Research Foundation, a private group that sent a vessel to help look for the ship, found it in pristine condition at the bottom of a bay earlier this month, a spokesman told the paper.

Sir John Franklin and his 128-member crew in the Terror and HMS Erebus all died after the vessels became stuck in ice during a search for the fabled Arctic passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The fate of the ships remained one of the great mysteries in Canadian history for almost 170 years until a team found the wreck of the Erebus in September 2014.

Canada's federal parks ministry – which is coordinating the search for the Terror – said it was working to verify the report. Reuters was not immediately able to contact the foundation.

The expedition has become part of Canadian folklore, in part because of the crew's appalling fate. Tales handed down from the aboriginal Inuit people describe cannibalism among the desperate seamen. (Reporting by David Ljunggren; Editing by Matthew Lewis)

(c) Copyright Thomson Reuters 2016.

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1845: Northwest Passage expedition.

Exploration of the Arctic coastal mainland after Franklin's second Arctic expedition had left less than 500 kilometres (31 mi) of unexplored Arctic coastline. The British decided to send a well-equipped Arctic expedition to complete the charting of the Northwest Passage. After Sir James Ross declined an offer to command the expedition, an invitation was extended to Franklin, who accepted despite his age (59). A younger man, Captain James Fitzjames, was given command of HMS *Erebus* and Franklin was named the expedition commander. Captain Francis Rawdon Moira Crozier, who had commanded HMS *Terror* during the Ross 1841–44 Antarctic expedition, was appointed executive officer and commander of HMS *Terror*. Franklin was given command on 7 February 1845, and received official instructions on 5 May 1845.

HMS *Erebus* at 370 long tons and HMS *Terror* at 340 long tons were sturdily built and were outfitted with recent inventions. These included steam engines from the London and Greenwich Railway that enabled the ships to make 4 knots on their own power, a unique combined steam-based heating and distillation system for the comfort of the crew and to provide large quantities of fresh water for the engine's boilers, a mechanism that enabled the iron rudder and propeller to be drawn into iron wells to protect them from damage, ships' libraries of more than 1,000 books, and three years' worth of conventionally preserved or tinned

Statue of Sir John Franklin I London.

preserved food supplies. Unfortunately, the latter was supplied from a cut-rate provisioner who was awarded the contract only a few months before the ships were to sail. Though his "patent process" was sound, the haste with which he had prepared thousands of cans of food led to sloppily-applied beads of solder on the cans' interior edges, allowing lead to leach into the food. Additionally, the water distillation system may have used lead piping and lead-soldered joints, which would have produced drinking water with a high lead content. Chosen by the Admiralty, most of the crew were Englishmen, many from the North of England with a small number of Irishmen and Scotsmen.

The Franklin Expedition set sail from Greenhithe, England, on 19 May 1845, with a crew of 24 officers and 110 men. The ships travelled north to Aberdeen and the Orkney Isles for supplies. From Scotland, the ships sailed to Greenland with HMS *Rattler* and a transport ship, *Barretto Junior*. After misjudging the location of Whitefish Bay, Disko Island, Greenland, the expedition backtracked and finally harboured in that far north outpost to prepare for the rest of their voyage. Five crew members were discharged and sent home on the *Rattler* and *Barretto Junior*, reducing the ships' final crew size to 129. The expedition was last seen by Europeans on 26 July 1845, when Captain Dannett of the whaler *Prince of Wales* encountered *Terror* and *Erebus* moored to an iceberg in Lancaster Sound.

It was believed that the expedition wintered in 1845–46 on Beechey Island. *Terror* and *Erebus* became trapped in ice off King William Island in September 1846 and never sailed again. According to a note later found on that island, Franklin died there on 11 June 1847. To date, the exact location of his grave is unknown.

After two years and no word from the expedition, Franklin's wife urged the Admiralty to send a search party. Because the crew carried supplies for three years, the Admiralty waited another year before launching a search and offering a £20,000 reward for finding the expedition. The money and Franklin's fame led to many searches. At one point, ten British and two American ships, USS *Advance* and USS *Rescue*, headed for the Arctic. Eventually, more ships and men were lost looking for Franklin than in the expedition itself.

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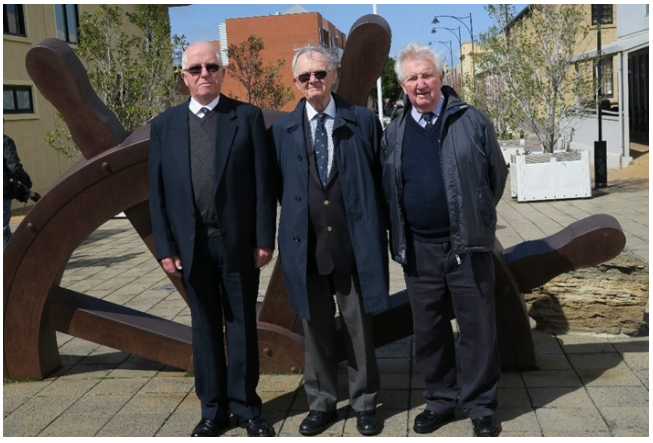
Port Adelaide Merchant Navy Day Commemorative Service, 3 September 2016.



At 10:00 on Merchant Navy Day, 3 September 2016, Paul Phillips, Bob Buchanan and Ian Dickson, representing the South Australian Branch of the Company of Master Mariners of Australia, joined the small crowd gathered outside the Port Adelaide Information Centre to take part in the service generally commemorating the war service and sacrifice of Merchant Seamen, and during the First and Second World Wars.

With rain threatening, the group walked behind a lone piper from the Black Diamond Corner to the Lighthouse and then along the Queens Wharf to the Merchant Navy Memorial in Timpson Street. There, in bright sunshine, a Naval Padre conducted a short memorial service, during which tributes were made by local dignitaries and wreaths were laid.

More Signs of Good Intentions

Hotel, Acapulco:
THE MANAGER HAS PERSONALLY PASSED ALL THE WATER SERVED HERE.

Using hotel air conditioner, Japan:
COOLES AND HEATES: IF YOU WANT CONDITION OF WARM AIR IN YOUR ROOM, PLEASE CONTROL YOURSELF.

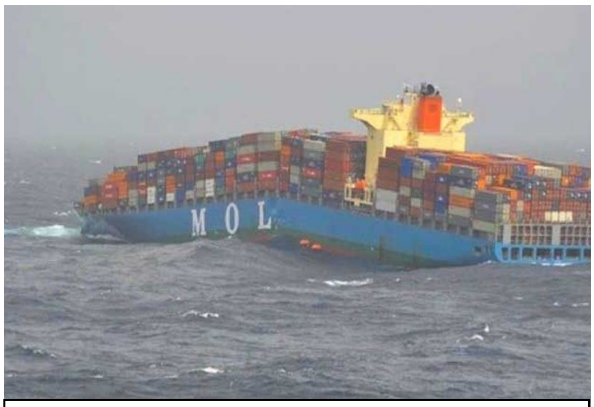
Car rental brochure, Tokyo:
WHEN PASSENGER OF FOOT HEAVE IN SIGHT, TOOTLE THE HORN. TRUMPET HIM MELODIOUSLY AT FIRST, BUT IF HE STILL OBSTACLE YOUR PASSAGE THEN TOOTLE HIM WITH VIGOUR.

On the grounds of a private school:
NO TRESPASSING WITHOUT PERMISSION.

On an Athi River highway:
TAKE NOTICE: WHEN THIS SIGN IS UNDER WATER, THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE.

ClassNK Calls for Upgraded Steel Plate Tolerance in Mega-Ship Construction

July 28, 2016 by Mike Wackett (The Loadstar).



The MV MOL Comfort seen June 17, 2013 breaking in half while underway in the Indian Ocean.

Japanese classification society ClassNK is claiming a "world-first" breakthrough finding in the required crack arrest toughness of steel plates used in the construction of ultra-large container vessels (ULCVs).

In response to the huge increases in containership sizes over the past decade and the need to ensure their structural reliability, in January 2013 the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) released its "Unified Requirements" for the use of extremely thick steel plates, outlining a minimum brittle crack arrest toughness value of 6,000 N/mm 3/2 at -10C, the minimum design temperature for commercial vessels. However, the IACS requirements only relate to steel plates with a thickness of 80mm or less, with the value for brittle crack arrest of steel plates in excess of this to be "specifically agreed" with each classification society.

ClassNK carried out extensive verification tests in a joint research and development project with the Japan Welding Engineering Society (JWES) on 100mm steel plates, used in the construction of 18,000 teu-plus vessels, on ultra-large-scale test specimens simulating the actual construction of the hatch side coaming and upper deck of an ULCV. It concluded that that the minimum brittle crack arrest toughness for 100mm steel plates used in the construction of the ULCVs must be 8,000 N/m 3/2 at -10C. Based on these findings, ClassNK said that "in principle" it would now require this minimum for its future ship classification approval of ULCVs. It added: "Furthermore, to enable the smooth use of extremely thick steel plates in the industry, it will endeavour to properly reflect the new finding onto the IACS Unified Requirements."

The exponential growth in the size of containerships in the past ten years requires a constant review of classification minimum requirements and the findings of the ClassNK investigation is significant for the industry.

The total loss of the 8,100 teu MOL Comfort off the coast of Yemen in June 2013, is the biggest containership casualty in the industry's 50-year history. The ship, classed by ClassNK and carrying 4,382 containers, broke its back in heavy weather while in transit from Asia to Europe, sinking in 4,000 metres of water.

The final report from ClassNK concluded that a fracture originated in the bottom of the shell plates of number six cargo hold and progressed up the side shell plating of the ship

Immediately after the casualty, MOL Comfort's six sister ships were inspected and found to have buckling deformations on their bottom shell plates, in the centre of the mid-ship area. They were withdrawn from service and dry-docked to have their hulls reinforced.

Following the MOL Comfort sinking, IACS introduced a number of Unified Requirement revisions for its members on minimum structural strength and maximum hull stress levels for ships with a length of 290 metres or more.

Source: gCaptain

Details of the Loss

On 17 June 2013, *MOL Comfort* suffered a crack amidships in bad weather about 200 nautical miles (370 km; 230 mi) off the coast of Yemen and eventually broke into two. The vessel was underway from Singapore to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with a cargo of 4,382 containers equivalent to 7,041 teu. The crew of 26—11 Russians, one Ukrainian and 14 Filipinos—abandoned the ship and were rescued from two life rafts and a lifeboat by the German-flagged container ship *Yantian Express*, one of three vessels diverted to the site of incident by ICG Mumbai. After the structural failure, both sections remained afloat with the majority of the cargo intact and began drifting in an east-northeast direction. Smit Salvage Singapore was contracted to tow the sections to safety.

On 24 June, four oceangoing tugboats arrived at the scene and began towing the bow section to safety. However, before any salvage operations of the stern section could commence, water ingress was reported on 26 June. On the following day, the stern sank at 14°26'N 66°26'E to a depth of 4,000 metres (13,000 ft). Some of the approximately 1,700 containers on board were later confirmed floating near the site. While no major oil leak was reported, the stern section was said to contain about 1,500 tons of fuel.

On 2 July, the tow of the bow section broke free in bad weather but the towing line was reattached the next day. On 6 July a fire broke out in the rear part of the bow section. Unable to get the blaze under control in bad weather, the salvage vessels asked for help from an Indian Coast Guard patrol boat with external fire fighting equipment. By 10 July most of the 2,400 containers on board had been destroyed by fire. The damaged bow section sank the next night at to a depth of 3,000 metres (9,800 ft) with what remained of the cargo and 1,600 metric tons of fuel oil in the tanks. No spill apart from a thin oil film on the surface has been reported, but some containers were spotted floating around the sinking site. The cause of the fire remains unknown.

The exact cause of the accident is not known. On 4 July, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines appointed Lloyd's Register to support investigations into the cause of the incident. As a precaution, the sister ships of *MOL Comfort* were withdrawn from the same route and their hull structures will be upgraded to increase the longitudinal strength. In addition, operational changes will be carried out to reduce the stresses on the vessels' hulls.

The sinking of *MOL Comfort* cost the insurers between 300 and 400 million dollars in claims. The hull and machinery of the vessel were insured for $66 million. By December 2014, the insurers (Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co.) were among 100 companies, including Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Ltd., who had launched lawsuits against MHI, reportedly on the grounds that the accident and consequent loss of ship and cargo was caused by a design flaw in the freighter.

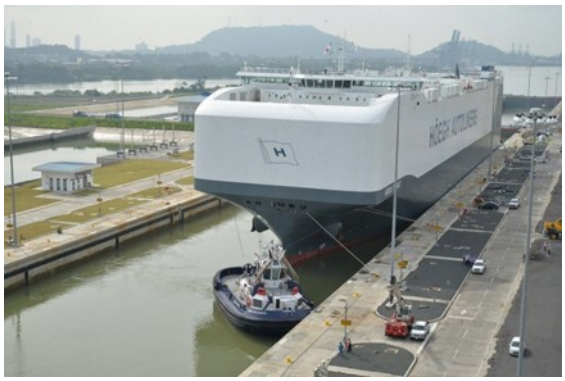
Source: Wikipedia.

—oo00oo—

World's Largest Pure Car and Truck Carrier, Höegh Target, Transits Expanded Panama Canal

September 8, 2016 by Mike Schuler

The world's largest Pure Car and Truck Carrier (PCTC) *Höegh Target* is transiting the new locks of the expanded Panama Canal on Thursday.



The vessel has a carrying capacity of 8,500 car equivalent units (ceu) with up to 6.5 meters of free deck height, 12 meters of ramp width, and capacity to take cargo weighing up to 375 tonnes. It measures 199.9 meters in length and 36.5 meters in breadth.

Höegh Autoliners is to take delivery of six of these Horizon-class vessels in 2015 and 2016.

—oo00oo—

Still More Signs of Good Intentions

In a cemetery:
PERSONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING FLOWERS FROM ANY BUT THEIR OWN GRAVES.
Hotel brochure, Italy:
THIS HOTEL IS RENOWNED FOR ITS PEACE AND SOLITUDE. IN FACT, CROWDS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD FLOCK HERE TO ENJOY ITS SOLITUDE.

Hotel lobby, Bucharest:
THE LIFT IS BEING FIXED FOR THE NEXT DAY. DURING THAT TIME WE REGRET THAT YOU WILL BE UNBEARABLE.

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel:
YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT THE CEMETERY WHERE FAMOUS RUSSIAN COMPOSERS, ARTISTS, AND WRITERS ARE BURIED DAILY EXCEPT THURSDAY.

Hotel catering to skiers, Austria:
NOT TO PERAMBULATE THE CORRIDORS IN THE HOURS OF REPOSE IN THE BOOTS OF ASCENSION.

Supermarket, Hong Kong:
FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, WE RECOMMEND COURTEOUS, EFFICIENT SELF-SERVICE.

The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd., S.A. Branch.

Branch Meeting at the Largs Pier Hotel, on 31 August 2016 at 1200.
Minutes

1. Opening: Meeting opened at 1205. Branch Master welcomed members and guests.
2. Members and Guests present:

   Members: P. Phillips (Branch Master), R. Buchanan, E. Carr, I. Dickson, W. Ferrao, P. N. Ganesan, Hammond, M. Hehir, D. Kemp, M. Parsons, A.H. Pronk, R. Westley & A. Wynne.

   Guests: Mrs M. Dickson & Mrs C. Wynne.
3. Apologies: D. Bourne-Jones, M. Carrington, G. Carter, I. Fraser, H D Holmes, H. Jayasuriya, C. Marshall, Sir Eric Neal, R. Pearson, P. Rajagopalan and R. Ratnathurai.
4. Minutes of last business meeting 27 July 2016 (circulated in the Porthole): Capt Carr proposed that the minutes represented a true and correct record of proceedings. Seconded by Capt Hehir and carried.
5. Business arising from the minutes:

   a) Speakers: August: Capt Paul Phillips, whose talk will be about the only two Victoria Crosses awarded to British Merchant Navy personnel.
   September: To be advised.

   Visits: S.A. Maritime Museum - Baudin's Expedition to Australia Exhibition**:** Immediately prior to this meeting, six members and two guests enjoyed a tour of the exhibition conducted by Lindl Lawton, the Curator.
   Port Operations Centre, Outer Harbour Passenger Terminal: A visit has been arranged for 10:30 on Wednesday, 28 September 2016. For security reasons, members intending to participate in this visit must submit their names and driving licence number (or passport number, for persons not possessing a driver's licence) to the Branch Secretary by the preceding Friday, 23 September 2016.

   Suggestions: S.A. Health and Medical Research Institute.
   ABC Studios
   SA Maritime Museum tour of Quarantine Station, 18 September 2016: The Branch Secretary will circulate details

   b) Re-engraving of *One and All* bell. Capt Carr hopes to speak to the Trust representative tomorrow.
6. Treasurer's Report -

Westpac Balance 19/07/16	1,920.94	Bendigo Bank Deposit Balance at 19/07/16	2,454.59
Income	215.00	Interest	0.21
Expenditure	0.00	Bendigo Bank Deposit Balance at 22/08/16	**2,454.80**
Balance at 23/078/16	**2,135.94**		
		Bendigo Bank Term Deposit at 19/07/16	7,230.98
		Interest 1/08/16	140.83
		Bendigo Bank Term Deposit at 23/08/16	**7,371.81**
		Re-invested 1/08/16 for 2 years at 2.80%	
Treasurer reported that 4 members remained unfinancial. Mr Wynne proposed that the Treasurer's report be accepted. Seconded by Capt Parsons and carried.			

7. Correspondence summary 16/07/16 to 19/08/16: (Table Summary). Inwards correspondence received & outwards correspondence approved at the Branch Court meeting on 24/08/16.
8. Membership:

   Applications:

Applicant	Status sought	Branch	Master's Certificate			Occupation/ Position
			No.	Date	Place	
Ajith Murlidharan NAIR	Ordinary	Western Australia	IFOO-9307	9/07/08	Mumbai	Marine Surveyor, Braemar Technical Services, Perth. Ex MOL Master.
Geoffrey Russell HOWARD	Associate	Western Australia				43 years as Radio Officer. Founder member of Leeuwin Sail Training Foundation, & currently Chairman of Fremantle Branch of the World Ship Society.

Ratifications: Nil.

Branch Members:

Category / Number	Financial	Un-financial	Total
Members	4	4	8
Seagoing members (incl. tug crews & pilots)	1	2	3
Retired members	13	2	15
Associate member	2	1	3
Total paying members	20	9	29
Honorary members	4	0	4
Total Levied Members	24	9	33
Life Members			2
Total Branch Membership			35

9. Federal Matters: - No Federal phone hook-up currently planned.
10. Motions on Notice: Nil.
11. General Business:
    a) Articles for Master Mariner - Always required.
    b) An article on the proposed oil drilling in the Great Australian Bight was published in the Porthole for members' information and possible action.
    c) Capt Buchanan suggested that Lindl Lawton, convenor of the Baudin exhibition, be invited to speak at a Branch meeting.
    d) Capt Buchanan suggested that, with a view to expediting the recovery of original primary documents and pictures, Professor Gold, QC, a member of the Queensland Branch, be asked to write a stern letter to the ex-editor of the anniversary book. With the approval of the members present, the Branch Master is to pass on this suggestion to the Federal Secretary.
12. **The next Branch meeting will be held at 1145 for 1200 on Wednesday, 28 September 2016, at the Largs Pier Hotel, Largs Bay. The guest speaker will be Ms Lindl Lawton, Senior Curator, South Australian Maritime Museum, who will talk about. her career in general and the research, preparation and setting up the current exhibition at the museum.**
13. Closure: Business meeting closed at 1305.

After lunch the Branch Master spoke on the awarding of a Victoria Cross to two Merchant shipmasters as a result of actions during WW 1, the only occasions this decoration has been awarded to Master Mariners from the Mercantile Marine, as it was known then.

The meeting then closed at 1340 hrs.

—oo00oo—