



# The Foghorn

Newsletter of the Maritimes Division of the  
Company of Master Mariners of Canada  
www.mastermariners.ca



May 2020

## From the Master Captain Marshall Dunbar

Good Day Everyone,  
Another month has gone by, COVID-19 still present and for most folks they are hunkered down, waiting for the Q Flag to be lowered. It really does seem like a long time and for too many people it is a time of hardship. No incomes, no visits with family or friends and for many seafarers they are wondering if they will be relieved at the end of their contract or if the next port will even permit crew changes. Things seem to be improving in some parts of the world, while others are preparing to expect the worst. As I write this I am onboard the MV Asterix having just left Halifax, headed to the US to load some fuel and then straight back to Halifax. An opportunity to get onboard and carry out some of the necessary work for done for ISM, ISO and other regulatory elements. Audits, inspections and ships visits, all a necessary part of the shipping business. Of course, once back in Halifax it will be another 14-day period of self isolation and working from home.

As the vessel has been alongside since the start of the pandemic we have made some changes on how the crews and shore personnel's health is monitored when joining the vessel. Pre-screening questionnaires are done, repeated when you come onboard and then twice daily temperature checks. There are also other protocols in place to ensure that the vessel continues to free of COVID-19 and all remain healthy. As we have seen from other locations, COVID-19 really can take control of a captive audience.

One of the first tasks at hand after dropping of the pilot is swinging of the magnetic compass. Due to late notification to sail, we did not arrange for an adjustor. So we are fortunate enough to use the services of our Chief Officer Sean Quinlan (NL Branch member) who is a certified compass adjustor. The Third Mate also assisted with the task and take the opportunity to see the job done. With that task completed it is FAOP.

For some regular MMC business Captain Alan Knight brought forward at the MMC's 217<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting (held by teleconference 23 April 2020) the suggestion of a scholarship in Captain Angus MacDonald's name for mariners who are

wanting to further their education as a means to transition from going to sea to working ashore. A great idea and details to follow.

Due to the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the MMC AGM to be hosted by the Great Lakes Division this fall will not be held this year. At least not in the traditional manner as it could go ahead using video conferencing methods. The planned symposium on Great Lakes Water levels will also be deferred and an alternate virtual symposium may be held. The plan is that Great Lakes Division will now host the 2021 AGM.

The Battle of the Atlantic ceremony, like all other planned events did not take place and we will see if this event can be performed at a later date.

Belated congratulations to Captain Adam Parsons for being named Harbour Master for the Port of Halifax.

May's professional monthly meeting won't be held in the normal fashion at the Maritime Museum. Is a virtual meeting using ZOOM or another format desirable to our members? Perhaps all who are reading this would send me a yes / no message to [agilesam@yahoo.com](mailto:agilesam@yahoo.com) on this matter, an informal poll, and a meeting could be held in May.

All for this month and many thanks  
Marshall



## Secretary's Position

Our Divisional Secretary plays a very important role in ensuring the recording of decisions, scheduling of meetings, assisting the Master (Vice President) with coordinating activities, and maintaining contact with the other divisions to make Master Mariners of Canada a truly national organization that "*Represents the interests of Shipmasters and senior deck officers in Canada and internationally through membership in the International Federation of Shipmasters Associations.*"

Jim Reddy filled this position for many years in a manner which responded to all of the above



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requirements and his performance will be a target to be achieved for our next Secretary.

If you have an interest in assisting us by filling this position, please contact the Master,  
Capt. Marshall Dunbar, at  
Marshall.dunbar@federalfleet.ca



## Speaker Coordinator

Our Master has done a wonderful job of finding guest speakers but it does take time and as one of us who still works full time, it does become burdensome.

If there is someone in our group who has some time to arrange speakers, it would be appreciated if you would let the Master know at marshall.dunbar@federalfleet.ca



## Thousands of Cruise Ship Crew Members Stranded at Sea

### COVID-19: Crews aboard cargo ships being denied shore leave for longer periods

HALIFAX — Though international shipping lanes and Canada's major ports remain open for business, the COVID-19 pandemic is making life miserable for many seafarers.

Under the latest rules, Canadian crews aboard most Canadian-flagged cargo vessels have agreed not to leave their ships when they arrive at their destinations, which means they can be restricted to their vessels for up to three months at a time.

The crews on some foreign-flagged ships, meanwhile, are being told they'll be stuck on their ships — without shore leave — for up to nine months.

"It's a real stressful situation," Jim Given, president of the Seafarers' International Union of Canada, said in an interview Wednesday. "That outside contact is being lost for those seafarers. As a maritime community, we're going

to have to figure out how we handle this. Everybody is trying their best, but it's very difficult."

Helen Glenn, manager of the Mission of Seafarers, said her non-profit group is doing its best to help, even though the mission's building on the Halifax waterfront has been temporarily closed.

Glenn said she has been making arrangements through shipping agents to contact each ship's captain via cellphone or email to determine what crew members need before their ship arrives at the Port of Halifax.

At the top of every shopping list is a request for cellphone SIM cards, which give users access to long-distance calling and the internet.

"They would be unable to connect with their families without getting a data card or SIM card," Glenn said, adding that she and her volunteers no longer board the vessels. Instead, there's a brief exchange at the bottom of the gangway.

"We've given out numbers and our companies have employee-assistance programs set up so the members can call if they are feeling stressed or fatigued," he said, adding that talks are underway to determine if crews can work longer than three months at a time.

Some foreign shipping companies have already extended their crews' contracts by a month, and there are ongoing negotiations aimed at extending some contracts to a year.

"When you get to that length on board, it gets dangerous," Given says. "Fatigue sets in. There are stress factor that are enormous."

"It gives them the ability to make calls, send email, Skype and use FaceTime. Without these, they literally cannot reach their families."

Glenn said communication tools like Wi-Fi and satellite phones are often unavailable aboard cargo ships, which contributes to a sense of isolation.

"Mental health during this tumultuous time is of the utmost importance, and these guys can't even get off the vessel," she said. "Shore leave is critical to their mental health. This situation is very sad."



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However, Glenn said everyone in the shipping industry understands how important it is to keep commercial ships virus-free.

Given, whose union represents about 90 per cent of the Canadian-flagged fleet of cargo vessels, said federal and provincial rules regarding shore leave has been changing in recent weeks.

"Right now, it's a bit all over the map, and we're trying to get it pinned down," said Given, whose organization speaks for about 6,000 non-officers working aboard bulk carriers, oil tankers, passenger ferries and other commercial cargo ships.

Given said Canada's shipping companies and their unions have agreed that crew members should not have shore leave to ensure they do not get infected with COVID-19.

"We think that's the best way to keep our members safe and the economy rolling," he said in an interview from his home in St. Catharines, Ont.

"Not all of our members are happy about being restricted on board the ship. Some of them still want to get off. Our job is to make sure they are safe."

However, Given agreed that mental health becomes a key concern when there are long stretches without shore leave.

"We've given out numbers and our companies have employee-assistance programs set up so the members can call if they are feeling stressed or fatigued," he said, adding that talks are underway to determine if crews can work longer than three months at a time.

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"When you get to that length on board, it gets dangerous," Given says. "Fatigue sets in. There are stress factor that are enormous."

This report by The Canadian Press was first published April 8, 2020.



Photo: James Clarke @JimmyTheChord



## Does Canada Need a Merchant Marine?

(continued from the original messages  
Lantz/Darlington of early March)

----- Original message -----

From: Alan Knight <[knights@eastlink.ca](mailto:knights@eastlink.ca)>

Date: 2020-04-14 11:53 (GMT-05:00)

To: Jim Calvesbert

<[jim.calvesbert@gmail.com](mailto:jim.calvesbert@gmail.com)>

Cc: Ivan Lantz <[lantzivan@gmail.com](mailto:lantzivan@gmail.com)>

Subject: "Does Canada need a Merchant Marine?"; "Foghorn, April 2020"



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Jim:

I want to start by applauding Capt. Lantz for bringing up this important, and long-ignored issue, with the Royal United Service Institute. This issue has been neglected for far too long. A trading Nation which does not have the ability to carry a substantial portion of its exports and imports on ships which are owned and controlled within its own territory is a hostage to the vicissitudes of history

During the Second World War, the Republic of Ireland realised that its reliance on British ships to carry its cargoes was a dangerous mistake, as the British were too busy fighting a global war to worry about Irish food supply, which led to the Irish Republic having to purchase, and man, merchant ships in the midst of a war, when those ships were in dangerously short supply, and accordingly commanding very high prices.

The First Gulf War in the early 1990's provided a further example of this; freight rates increased astronomically. One elderly Canadian-owned 5-Hatch freighter which was laid-up in Halifax was offered U.S. \$25000/day PLUS free fuel, free lubes, free overtime and free canal transit, paid for by Uncle Sam! However, she had a contractual commitment to Artic re-supply and was not available. I was telephoned by one Ross C..... at the Pentagon, asking me to try to persuade the Canadian shipowner to "sign up"

The U.S. government found itself in the humiliating position of trying to re-activate 1940s-built ships which had been laid-up since the end of the Vietnam War. The maintenance of these laid-up ships had been contracted out to private companies, for whom maintenance was subordinate to minimum expenditure. However, the problems with the ships paled into insignificance when compared to the problems of finding experienced crews to sail them! It was quickly apparent that the U.S. A) did not know how many merchant seafarers it had, or B) where they lived! It became a farce; seafarers who did go off to war were forced to serve many months, as reliefs could not be found for them. Meanwhile U.S. seafarers looking for jobs could not find them

One of the Military Sea-Lift Command's SL-7 Ro-Ro/container ships was broken out of "lay-up" and staggered off to war with an 84 year old Chief Engineer, who had been "sprung" from a

Retirement Home in Florida, and who told my former colleague Chris Thompson (C/E of "ASL CYGNUS") that by his own admission, he could not actually get down the Engine Room stairs! But at least he had a Steam Chief's C.o.C.! The ship broke down before it reached Gibraltar, and had to be towed to war! The Nautical Institute magazine "Seaways" commented at the time that the anchorage at Gibraltar looked like a U.S. Navy scrap yard

Two Canadian-based merchant ships, the "ASL Cygnus", and the "Atlantic Freighter" were chartered by the U.S. military. When, before the departure of the ships for the Gulf, the CBC asked the Guild, and the SIU, "What are the rights of merchant seafarers in a war-zone?" neither organisation knew! (They are enshrined in Article IV of the Geneva Convention (III) of 1949. Merchant seafarers, Pilots, & Apprentices, have the same rights as members of the Armed Forces if taken prisoner; cannot be forced to do war-related work; and have rights of access to the Red Cross. They are only obliged to give their Captors their Name, Rank, and service number.

Things moved from farcical to sinister when it was revealed that at a time when the U.S. military and media were constantly talking about the threat of Saddam Hussein using chemical warfare against invaders, as he had already done against his own civilians, and the Canadian merchant seafarers asked the Charterer for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Warfare training and equipment, they were told "Merchant seamen don't need them", despite the fact that U.S. military personnel travelling on the "Canadian" ships were in possession of full NCB gear, and regularly conducting ship-board exercises in its use! The effect on the merchant seafarers' morale can be imagined!

A further unforeseen problem was that the Canadian crew of the "ASL CYGNUS" worked "Month on/Month off" schedules. When the ship sailed off to war it did not return to N. America for four months. When they arrived, they found that the "Off Duty" crew had exhausted their Leave entitlement, and were now working in Fort MacMurray, and earning a lot more money than they would by going to a War Zone! The "signing off" crew were asked if they would sign on for another trip to the War Zone. They expressed their reluctance to do so in the colourful language of the sea. When the crew



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change eventually happened, very few of the new crew had previously sailed on the ship; clearly undesirable in a War Zone

Canada does not have, and never has had since 1921, a "Merchant Marine". In the aftermath of the First World War, when it was drawn to the attention of His Majesty King George V that the casualty rate amongst merchant seamen was, percentage-wise, higher than that of any British military force, (principally because the Admiralty delayed the introduction of Convoys until 1917!) he approved an Order-in-Council on 13th December 1921 which stated that "The Merchant Navy is a Uniformed Imperial Service of the Crown". This Order-in-Council was re-enforced by the King's Charter of 18th August 1930, which, amongst other things, declared that the Prince of Wales was "Admiral of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets". Whilst I acknowledge that Britain no longer has an Empire, it is head of the Commonwealth, of which Canada is a member.

If the honour of calling ourselves a Merchant NAVY was removed from Canada by the Repatriation of the Constitution, I do not recall being so informed

Those of us with grey hair will remember that the former Canada Shipping Act, on which we were examined for our Certificates of Competency, had as its first words, "Every British ship shall....." So until the Canada Shipping Act (2001) came into force in 2007, there never was any such thing as a "Canadian merchant ship". There were, to be sure, Canadian-owned ships, but according to the "old" CSA, they were British ships.

If the right to call ourselves a Merchant Navy lapsed with the coming into force of the Canada Shipping Act 2001, it was never mentioned to me when I was National Master during the development of the CSA 2001.

We need clarification of this important point.

Yours aye  
Alan Knight

Good letter Alan!

Chris Hearn is in the process of building the next issue of FROM THE BRIDGE. Shall I send him your letter?

Your letter raises a few questions. Do we have in Canada the legislative authority to raise a raise a war-time fleet?

We definitely do not have a merchant navy and neither of seamen nor of ships. Would a 21st century war need seamen? If yes; we are SOL.

Have a great day

Ivan

- ---Original message---

An email response by Capt. Ivan Lantz, CMMC  
to Cdr (ret) Colin Darlington, RUSI-NS

Tue, Mar 17, 7:52 AM

Good Morning Colin,

Canada does not have any excess of ro-ro or troop-ship or ferry capacity that could be dispatched to war without compromising essential supply lines within Canada needed to bring supplies to port for any kind of war effort.

Canada has a significant fleet of large ferries but if any one of those goes out of service, the level of service is simply reduced since there are no spares to infill. BC Ferries has some - but very limited and mostly of smaller sizes. There are some small ships dedicated to Arctic resupply that lay-up for the winter but not large enough to support a 21st century war effort.

There was a time when the Canadian military had an emergency measures plan, outreach and dialogue with the commercial marine industry to strategize and measure maritime transportation options that could be commandeered for a war effort. I believe that no longer exists. There are plenty of planning options available to acquire capacity in an emergency but one must think globally rather than locally.

Sincerely,  
Ivan

On Mon, 16 Mar 2020 at 15:48, RUSI Nova Scotia <[rusinovascotia@gmail.com](mailto:rusinovascotia@gmail.com)> wrote:  
FYI, RUSI(NS) email to RCN contacts:

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We Built Her to Bring Them Over There": The  
Cruiser and Transport Force in the Great War



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<https://seahistory.org/we-built-her-to-bring-them-over-there-the-cruiser-and-transport-force-in-the-great-war/>

US but an interesting article for its writing on (re)naming ships. <retorical question> What sort of re-naming/rechristening ceremonies might have been held?

Also for its highlighting some national identifiers: US Army Transport (USAT) and US Army Chartered Transport (USACT). Brings to mind His Majesty's Transport Service (ships of the HMTS carried HMT - His Majesty's Transport - as identifier). <RQ> Does the US Army 'commission' ships?

I wonder what the Canadian Army Service Corp Water Transport Section (the Canadian Army had 14 vessels in the Second World War) used as an identifier.

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There are a number of recent articles about the US capability (or lack thereof) to move military forces overseas in an emergency using merchant ships. What is Canada's capability is another question.

Colin Darlington  
Commander, Royal Canadian Navy (retired)  
Vice-President, RUSI(NS)

Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia  
Web: <https://rusi-ns.ca>  
Twitter: @RUSI\_NS  
Facebook: Royal United Services Institute – NS

*(Editor: Want to weigh in with your comments? E-mail me at [jim.calvesbert@gmail.com](mailto:jim.calvesbert@gmail.com))*



**Mission to Seafarers, Halifax**  
**Helen Glenn, Manager**

First, I'd like to sincerely thank agents, Halifax Pilots and shipping line owners/managers who have been cooperating with me by sharing information on how I may most efficiently contact Masters of vessels coming to the Port of

Halifax. In our efforts to maintain social distancing yet not impede on the rights of seafarers, we are communicating virtually through FB messenger, email and telephone during these extraordinary times. I understand everyone has a lot on their agenda, but if you have the opportunity to share the attached information to ship Masters so they may contact me at [hglenn@bellaliant.com](mailto:hglenn@bellaliant.com) that would be of tremendous assistance. This enables the efficient delivery of SIM and TOP UP CARDS so that seafarers may contact their family when vessels come alongside. In some cases we have assisted with provisions as well.

If you are unable or do not feel comfortable sharing emails or phone numbers with me directly, where feasible we ask you to share our contact information so that we may do our best to grant crew the ability to contact their families with SIM and Top Up cards which we are able to deliver to them. Our hope is to continue to look after the requests of seafarers whilst keeping a safe distance.

To be clear, we are not BOARDING VESSELS. The intent, where possible is to deliver **requested** SIM CARDS/TOP UPS to bosun. We are asking that the bosun ensure the correct amount of money is placed in a ZIP LOCK BAG or envelope as payment, when requested delivery is made. The Mission will only be open selected hours depending on the ships in port and the requirements expressed. This is established on a day to day basis when ships are in the Port of Halifax.

Thank you very much for assisting in sharing communications in anyway you can. Blessings in abundance to all.  
Please use caution – be safe – stay well.

Kindest regards,

Helen Glenn  
Mission Manager  
Mission to Seafarers Halifax



**GAO Reports on U.S. Coast Guard Oversight Since El Faro Sinking**



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(Ed: Oh boy; here is another topic that is deserving of further discussion)



**BY THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE 04-08-2020 07:27:02**

After the October 2015 sinking of the *El Faro*, concerns raised over the ship's safety plan raised questions about how the U.S. Coast Guard ensures that commercial ships comply with safety regulations.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has now released a report into the changes implemented by the Coast Guard saying that it is too soon to assess the effectiveness of these efforts; however, the GAO believes they are positive steps toward enhancing the Coast Guard's oversight of Recognized Organizations (ROs).

The Coast Guard relies on ROs, third parties that the Coast Guard has authorized, to perform activities such as verifying that domestic commercial vessels comply with safety management system (SMS) requirements. In 2018, based in part on the recommendations in the *El Faro* investigation report, the Coast Guard introduced new measures including:

- establishing a new group within the Coast Guard to monitor ROs,
- developing new SMS-related guidance and

- work instructions,
- increasing direct observations of ROs performing SMS audits,
- developing key performance indicators for assessing ROs, and
- requesting internal investigations for certain RO deficiencies.

Additionally, the Coast Guard took steps to improve its management of the Alternate Compliance Program, including efforts to improve data reporting. For example, the Coast Guard revised its form for documenting deficiencies during annual vessel inspections. In particular, since March 2018, the Form 835V has included a checkbox to indicate if a deficiency is related to an SMS. According to the Coast Guard, this revision will allow for enhanced annual reporting of safety-related deficiencies identified during compliance activities.

The Coast Guard conducts approximately 1,200 inspections each year of vessels that are either required to maintain a Safety Management Certificate, or do so voluntarily. It issued between 70 and 130 SMS-related deficiencies in calendar year 2018 and between 183 and 212 in 2019. The American Bureau of Shipping and DNV GL collectively account for over 99 percent of the SMS certificates issued to U.S.-flagged vessels on the Coast Guard's behalf.

The GAO examined a sample of 12 SMS plans for U.S.-flagged vessels and found that they did not address the full range of emergency scenarios included in Coast Guard guidance, although they did address the broad, functional requirement to identify potential shipboard emergencies and applicable response procedures. In reviewing the SMS plans, the GAO examined the extent to which they address 21 different potential shipboard emergencies identified in the 2018 Coast Guard guidance related to the ISM Code. The number of unique, potential shipboard emergency scenarios addressed in the SMS plans ranged from five to 16. Ship routing procedures related to heavy weather, which is an emergency scenario highlighted in the *El Faro* investigative report, was clearly identified in five of the 12 SMS plans reviewed.

The most frequently addressed shipboard emergency scenarios are fire, collision, grounding, abandon ship and man overboard.

The 2018 Coast Guard guidance states that it is not a substitute for applicable legal



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requirements, nor is it itself a rule. According to RO officials questioned by the GAO, their auditors are provided the 2018 Coast Guard guidance to use as part of their SMS audit criteria. The officials noted, however, that their auditors may be limited to issuing an “observation” to the vessel operator if any potential shipboard emergency listed in Coast Guard guidance is not addressed in SMS plan. Under the ISM Code, an “observation” is not the same as an SMS “nonconformity,” which would require specific corrective action.

The GAO report is available [here](#).



*(The Foghorn continues on the next page)*





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## Blast from the Past - UPDATE CCMC's AGM from 1991 Capt. Rick Gates



L to R:

Seated: George Legge (Capital)    Alan Cabot (Vanc)                      Ian Marr (Capital)                      ??

2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Dick Wilson (Vanc)                      Angus McDonald (Maritimes)                      David Bremner (Vanc)                      ??  
            Rick Gates (St. John)                      Lloyd Smith (Hfx)                      Edgar Gold (Hfx)

Back Row: ??                      ??                      Janice Kennific

## *Still Looking for Some Names*

*F.W.E. for this edition  
Stay Safe Everyone  
Capt. Jim Calvesbert, Editor*