Welcome to the IMRF World Maritime Rescue Congress 2019

The first time lifeboat services presented themselves to a broader public was at the world trade shows initiated in the second half of the 19th century. It is known that rescue boats were displayed at the EXPO in Paris in 1867, for example.

At its hundredth anniversary in 1924 the RNLI invited lifesavers from around the world to the “International Conference on the World’s Life-Boat Service” in London. It was such a success that participants agreed to meet again every four years. The Second World War caused an interruption, but since 1947 the members of the informal International Lifeboat Federation and, from 2007 on, of the officially founded International Maritime Rescue Federation have been coming together every four years to share knowledge and ideas, learn about each other and, last but not least, get together with friends and supporters of the humanitarian spirit of saving lives on world’s waters. Since its establishment the IMRF has achieved a great deal – but it can seem like a few drops of water on a hot stone, and the results of our work are not always immediately visible to everybody. All our activities depend to a great extent on members willing to volunteer and on the financial support we receive.

WMRC 2019 in Vancouver is a great opportunity to attract new members and supporters. Our host, the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, has done a great job to make this event a success. The programme of the Congress is outstanding in quality and the range of issues covered. I am sure we all will leave from here taking with us ideas, facts, or inspiration but also with new friends and fond memories of this wonderful city, country and the hospitality received.

WMRC 2019 will also provide us with a newly elected board of Trustees. We will likely see some known, but also some new faces. Having had the privilege to serve IMRF right from its first day it is now time for me to step back myself. IMRF is still a “delicate plant” but I am optimistic that we will continue to progress if we keep motivation, momentum, growth in membership and raise more funds for improving maritime search and rescue capability worldwide.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Udo Helge Fox

IMRF Chair, 2015-2019
Welcome to Vancouver

From CEO Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCMSAR), Pat Quealey

On the occasion of the 4th World Maritime Rescue Congress, it is our great honour to welcome you to Vancouver. It seems a very short while ago that RCMSAR embarked on a journey with our colleagues at the IMRF to set the conditions for a memorable and productive Congress. Our team of over 1,000 volunteers along with our colleagues from partner marine safety agencies are thrilled to share the beauty of Canada’s Pacific Coast with you and hope that your brief stay with us creates rich memories of camaraderie and shared learning.

As Captain Fox describes in his welcome, the history of the Congress follows a long tradition of lifeboat services that transcend over three centuries. Here too, on Canada’s challenging western waters, the saving of lives has a rich history as the spirit of humanitarianism dates back thousands of years in the cultures of our Indigenous Peoples. We continue to learn and respect the value of these traditions at the same time as we are also keen students of the experience of our colleagues across the broader Federation.

RCMSAR is a relatively young organization that has its roots in the community marine rescue services that have existed here in British Columbia for generations. We honour that past but also recognize the need to strive to improve and evolve in the interest of best serving our communities. In our current form, in many ways, we are the product of the IMRF’s mentorship and the fine example of its member organizations.

The value of the IMRF’s influence in our development cannot be overstated. We are grateful to learn from all of you as your humble hosts while you visit our shores. Thank you for travelling great distances to join us in Vancouver. Along with our colleagues from the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Coast Guard, and other partner agencies we are truly at your service and hope that you will prosper in our shared learning and take the time to enjoy the welcoming spirit of Vancouver and its people.

IMRF Awards 2019- Nominations close 30th June!

To nominate a team, individual or innovation for an IMRF Award go to www.international-maritime-rescue.org/imrf-awards-nomination-form or come and visit the IMRF Secretariat at Booth 303 in the Exhibit Hall.
World Maritime Rescue Congress 2019 – it’s coming together!

The World Maritime Rescue Congress is all about the global SAR community coming together – to network, share and learn – and the IMRF secretariat team are happy to say that the Congress programme has come together nicely too.

The Congress begins with a day of SAR demonstrations and experiences, organised by our hosts, Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, together with their SAR partners. Saturday will close with a welcoming reception and the official opening of the Exhibit Hall.

Two full days of SAR conference follow. After welcomes, and a keynote address by Assistant Commissioner Roger Girouard of the Canadian Coast Guard, IMRF Chair Udo Helge Fox will introduce the conference proceedings. As is traditional at our Congresses, most presentations will be given in three streams of work running simultaneously, with subjects loosely divided among ‘SAR operations today’, ‘Sharing SAR lessons’, and ‘The future of SAR’. Congress attendees will be able to choose the sessions of most interest to them.

Before the conference divides into its three streams, and in recognition of Vancouver’s situation on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, we will have a plenary session on ‘SAR in the Pacific’. Speakers from that vast region will address SAR development issues, with a focus on how States with well-developed SAR systems can assist their less well-resourced neighbours.

There are eleven subject areas in the three streams that follow. Each work session will last one hour, with most subjects extending over several sessions.

‘Global SAR development’ will address one of the IMRF’s key functions, with presentations from Africa, South America, the Asia-Pacific region, the Aegean, the Caribbean and the Arctic. Speakers will also discuss specific development themes, and there will be an update on the IMRF’s recent work at the International Maritime Organization.

The ‘Case studies’ sessions will focus on some particular SAR cases, with a clear aim of identifying lessons and learning those lessons – two different processes!

‘Technical developments’, in the ‘Future of SAR’ stream, includes presentations on a wide range of technological aids to SAR. Several speakers will address the increasing number and capability of unmanned and autonomous systems, both aircraft and surface vessels. Other exciting technical innovations will also be presented and discussed during these sessions.

‘The Improvement Cycle’ will focus on consequence management and ensuring that lessons identified are reported and acted upon; and in ‘Funding and Messaging’ speakers will look at ways of finding the money needed for SAR, and on how to get the ‘message’ right, to attract that funding.

The ‘Pressure points’ sessions will take an honest look at some of the pressures being placed on SAR providers in today’s world – in particular the arguments over the rescue of migrants and asylum-seekers which have resulted from the Mediterranean crisis, and the always difficult question of what to do when SAR becomes body recovery.

‘Working the data’ picks up on a number of research themes; and ‘Future challenges’ will discuss a number of issues arising from global developments, both environmental and technical.

‘Mass rescue operations’ has been a major project for the IMRF in recent years – identifying common challenges and successful solutions in these rare but extremely difficult cases. These sessions will include a brief case study of the Viking Sky cruise ship emergency on the Norwegian coast in March; and a discussion of the question ‘why do we struggle with mass rescue planning?’

The ‘SAR people’ sessions will look at the training of our crews and support teams; assessment of their performance; and the need to look after them, especially when they are exposed to traumatic incidents.

‘Improving survival rates’ focuses on systems and programmes designed to better enable people to stay alive until they can be rescued – or to avoid the need for rescue altogether – and on how we can measure the effectiveness of such accident prevention and mitigation strategies.

Finally, the theme of World Maritime Day this year is ‘Empowering Women in the Maritime Community’ – and that, of course, includes the maritime SAR community. The Congress programme will therefore include an important networking session on ‘Women in SAR’, which we hope many of our colleagues attending the Congress (women and men) will take the opportunity to join in.

So – it’s all come together very nicely; and the IMRF hopes the global maritime SAR community coming together to discuss these many important matters will be of great benefit.

Which means the saving of more lives!

Join us at the WMRC Women in SAR networking lunch.
Monday 17th June at 1315 in the Exhibit Hall.
Supporting #WomenInSAR
www.international-maritime-rescue.org
Look Back and Look Forward
A 360 degree look at the IMRF by Theresa Crossley, CEO, IMRF.

This has been a very busy 4 years for the IMRF. We have consolidated our position as a source of expert advice on maritime SAR, particularly through our work on the revision of the IAMSAR manuals; we have continued to work with IMO and other delivery partners to improve maritime SAR capability around the world, especially in Africa; we have provided a platform for our members to exchange views, air challenges and share possible solutions: we have further disseminated our expertise in Mass Rescue Operations, through workshops and conferences; we have launched a new, easier to use website and I have joined as the new Chief Executive. We have also said goodbye to some long-standing members of the Secretariat and we are about to say “au revoir” to our Chairman and a long-standing supporter of the IMRF, Captain Udo Helge Fox of DGzRS.

Looking forward, we will have a new Board and a new Chair, who, together, will lead IMRF into the next quadrennium. We have plenty of plans: our work to improve global maritime SAR capability will continue; we will be supporting the IMO’s Empowering Women in Maritime programme with our own Women in SAR initiative; we want to reconfigure the way we do things, to put our members more at the centre of what we do and to develop more of a dialogue with them. So, we hope to see as many IMRF members as possible at our QGM on 18 June to share their views and ideas for the future of the IMRF.

Your support really matters to us!

Submit an Article for LIFE LINE
If you have a maritime SAR story that you would like included in future editions of LIFE LINE email us at news@imrf.org.uk.