Remembering the greatest loss

A little over thirty years ago, on 20 December 1987, the passenger ferry Doña Paz collided with the oil tanker Vector in the Philippines. Fire spread rapidly through the two ships and over the surrounding sea. At the time of the incident it was difficult to be certain how many people died because the ferry was grossly overloaded – people travelling to Manila for Christmas had been sold extra tickets illegally. But in January 1999 a presidential task force concluded that the total number of lives lost was 4,386. Only 24 passengers from Doña Paz and two of Vector’s crew survived.

To this day, it remains the worst maritime disaster to occur in peacetime.

We must never forget the Doña Paz.

Domestic ferry safety, particularly in relation to overcrowding and a lack of adequate emergency response capability, continues to be an issue in many parts of the world. Domestic ferries are not covered by international regulation. The IMRF exists primarily to help improve maritime search and rescue capability around the globe, but we are also supportive of those who work to improve maritime safety overall, including on domestic ferry services.

There is still a long way to go. That is why the IMRF will continue to work with, and on behalf of, its members to improve maritime safety and maritime emergency response around the world.

You can read more about the IMRF’s global SAR development work across our website at, www.international-maritime-rescue.org, and about our mass rescue operations project at www.imrfmro.org.
Welcome to the February 2018 edition of LIFE LINE and Happy New Year to you all.

LIFE LINE is focused on the sharing of Maritime SAR stories from across the world and as editor I am always delighted to received stories from within our membership. It is also nice to hear when members are not only assisting members such as on page 10 but also meeting up with other members on their travels!

Manfred Buttke, a volunteer from DGZRS, Seenotretter in Germany visted our members Citizens Rescue Organisation of Curaçao (CITRO) on the Island of Curacao. Of his visit to CITRO Manfred said: ‘There I found something really great: a coat of arms of IMRF.’ Which shows that even 5000 miles from your home station you can still find a maritime SAR connection.

Here is Manfred with Patrick Guttenberg, technical director of Curacao pointing to the IMRF plaque.

We are, at heart, a SAR family and this is invaluable to the sharing of knowledge, lessons learned and experience. We continue to expand both our membership and our global presence. We welcome the following new members who have joined in so far in 2018:

Dubai Police General Head Quarters: Full Member: United Arab Emirates
SOS Mediterranee: Full Member: France
Ghana Maritime Authority: Full Member: Ghana
Rafnar Ltd.: Associate: Iceland
WR Leading: Associate: China

Our global member coverage is shown below in blue and continues to grow.

This edition of LIFE LINE looks at how our global reach is being put to good use with the message from our MRO Subject Matter Experts course being delivered in Madeira and Associate members Inmarsat and CM Hammar assisting with our global projects.

Remembering The Greatest Loss
Editorial
Hurricane Irma: The Aftermath
IMRF and Inmarsat Deliver First ‘Train the Trainer’ GMDSS Course in Africa
The Vladimir Maksimov H.E.R.O. Award for Lifetime Achievement
Defining distress
Madeira Mass Rescue Operations Training
Calling all participants of G4 and/or the MRO Subject Matter Course
CM Hammar donates to the IMRF Mixed Migrants Safety Project
Sanchi Oil Tanker Rescue: China Rescue and Salvage Operation
Maritime SAR in the global news
Discussing SAR at the IMO

Dates for the Diary

IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search & Rescue (NCSR)
19-23 February 2018, London, United Kingdom

The 2018 Ferry Safety and Technology Conference
21-23 March 2018, New York, USA

The IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea - Closing Date www.international-maritime-rescue.org/events, 16 April 2018

Singapore Maritime Week - 2018
21-27 April 2018, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

TDN UK Maritime SAR Conference - Developing Capabilities for SAR Operations http://maritime-sar.com/
22nd - 24th May 2018, Helsinki, Finland

Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference
21-22 May 2018, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Australian & New Zealand Search & Rescue Conference - Resilience in Search and Rescue
23 May 2018, The Star Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

World Maritime Rescue Congress (WMRC) 2019
16-17 June 2019, Vancouver, Canada

For details of these events, and more, please go to www.international-maritime-rescue.org/events.
If you are planning a SAR event of international interest please send the details to news@imrf.org.uk.

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.
Due to the high wind speed, one heavy metal rolling door and two other doors at our base blew away leaving our crews gear, including waterproof suits and jackets and Gecko Helmets, at the mercy of loose building insulation, rain, storm debris and mold. The gear that was useable was put to the test as our dedicated crew spent endless hours on the water post Irma, helping the Marines and Non-Governmental agencies shuttle personnel, bringing medical supplies, food and water to our sister islands and transporting those in need of medical assistance.

We've been actively fundraising through our social media platforms for the community, raising over $28,000 that has been donated directly to charities and organizations focused on the children of the BVI’s well-being as well as purchasing school supplies and rebuilding their kitchens.

With the needs of the greater community far greater than our own we haven’t been fundraising for ourselves, however now that we are getting “back to business” we are acutely aware that we need to restock our medical supplies and purchase new gear for our crew.

We have set a short-term goal of raising $10,000 to replace a minimum of 10 sets of gear, 2 rescue training manikins and various medical supplies with a long-term goal of replacing all 50 sets of crew gear and 10 sets of training gear.

If you’re able to help support us, please visit www.visar.org to donate. Every donation helps. You can also follow our rebuild progress on our website and social media sites on Facebook (VISAR) and Instagram (767visar). #BVISTRONG
Theresa Crossley, CEO, IMRF said: "This is the latest stage of our work in Africa to improve SAR knowledge and expertise, working with regional maritime rescue coordination centres to promulgate the latest information and expertise in the most efficient way possible – all with the objective of saving more lives at sea and in inland waters."

She continued "We thank Inmarsat for their support and for sharing their expertise and developing this valuable training. The feedback from the delegates has been very positive and encouraging."

John Dodd from Inmarsat added "The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is implementing a complete overhaul and modernisation of GMDSS, and it is vital that all stakeholders are fully briefed on the system on which seafarers rely in the last resort. This year, Inmarsat has also been rolling out SafetyNET II - a web-based version of the SafetyNET messaging platform that supports GMDSS and SAR, while an IMO Sub Committee agreed that both FleetBroadband and Fleet One should be considered for formal GMDSS approval."

One of the participants, Rabah Bechrouri from Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Rabat, had this to say: "We have learnt a lot during this week. We have received a great deal of new information about the latest and future technology for SAR. Overall, the course has been very beneficial for SAR in Africa."

The IMRF has been working to improve maritime SAR in Africa for the last five years, working in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization Technical Cooperation Committee. The IMRF has coordinated North and West Africa regional meetings for the IMO TCC, delivered training, helped to develop a regional SAR plan and has improved operational cooperation and governance. As a result of this success, the IMRF’s work has now spread to cover five African SAR regions.

Any company or organisation that wishes to support or get involved in future SAR training in Africa should contact Caroline Jupe on c.jupe@imrf.org.uk, or telephone: +44 (0) 1569 767405.

Inmarsat is an Associate Member of the IMRF and sponsored this event as a contribution to the IMRF’s Global SAR Development Project in Africa, which will help improve SAR capability across 29 African countries, with a focus on building the capability of Rescue Coordination Centres, Rescue Sub-Centres and SAR Mission Coordinators.

The seven course participants were keen to improve their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the GMDSS and advances in new satellite technologies, that will further enhance safety of life at sea. The training was designed to equip the delegates with the knowledge and confidence to pass on what they had learnt to their teams back in their respective regions.
The Vladimir Maksimov H.E.R.O. Award For Lifetime Achievement, 2017; The Story Continues

In 2017 the Association of Maritime and River Rescue in Uruguay (ADES) won the Vladimir Maksimov H.E.R.O. Award for Lifetime Achievement, with special recognition for two volunteers Captain Ramón Sagüés and Engineer Otto Vicente Muzzio who established and built the organisation into the esteemed institution it is today.

Sadly Ramón Sagüés had recently passed away, and Otto Vicente preferred not to undertake such long trip because of health reasons so Eduardo Tucci of ADES received the award on their behalf. Upon his return to Uruguay a ceremony was organised to celebrate their achievement. Here Eduardo explains the importance of this award and the impact it has had on ADES.

When the board of ADES considered applying for one of the IMRF H.E.R.O Awards presenting the names of Cap. Ramón Sagüés and Eng. Otto Vicente, we all believed that the life story of the candidates related to SAR was remarkable, but had some concerns that it was not enough for the prize. Captain Sagüés was our first President, and Vicente is the last active founding member of this 62 year old rescue institution located in Uruguay, South America.

Despite our concerns we still felt that given the prestige of the IMRF just submitting their names to the H.E.R.O Awards was itself a recognition of their dedication to SAR.

Only after presenting the relevant documentation did we inform them what we had done, and both, with emotion but with simplicity, expressed their surprise and happiness for a moment and then continued with their life as always. They didn’t even discuss it with their closest family!

Sometime later we received the invitation to participate in the Award ceremony, since our candidates had been shortlisted. Thanks to the generosity of the sponsors of this award, a member of our institution was able to fly to Poole, representing the nominees. Sadly Ramón Sagüés had recently passed away, and Otto Vicente preferred not to undertake such long trip because of health reasons.

We imagined the difficulty of the judges of all the categories to decide which of the nominees had enough merits to win the award. In a simple and emotional ceremony, it was with great joy that the ADES representative received the prize in the “The Vladimir Maksimov Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Maritime SAR Sector” category. The People’s Choice Award was given to ADES as we had secured the most Facebook ‘likes’ by 1700hrs GMT on Thursday 2 November 2017 following a week of promotion across the IMRF’s social media channels, and communications with members.

The representative of ADES in Poole received a third surprise, when the “Future Leaders 2016” program of the RNLI was awarded too, in which he had participated. Upon return to Uruguay we immediately began to think how to present both awards to the nominees, and to make this wonderful award known by the Uruguayan people.

A ceremony was organized in which the families of the honorees, ADES’s volunteers, collaborators, national authorities and friends participated. In this act, a brief account of the lives of the winners was made, a very nice video was shown, and the President of ADES, Guillermo Pérez Lavagnini, told the details of this award, and explained to all the importance of it.

The culminating moment shown above was when the prizes were given to Otto Vicente and the widow of Captain Ramón Sagüés by members of ADES’s Board and Jorge Diena, who was representing the IMRF.

Undoubtedly, personal values and dedication to the foundation and maintenance of ADES by Sagüés and Vicente have permeated our institution. The recognition of the IMRF fills us with pride and encourages us to continue on our course, because:

"We are what we are, because they were what they were"

For more information about the 2017 IMRF H.E.R.O. Award winners please go to www.imrhero.com. If you would like information about becoming a sponsor for the 2018 awards please email Caroline Jupe c.jupe@imrf.org.uk
SAR Matters: Defining Distress Continued...

In the August 2017 edition of LIFE LINE (see the newsletter archive at www.international-maritime-rescue.org) we asked “What is ‘distress’?” It’s an important question. People known to be in distress need to be rescued, of course – and the SAR community knows that this concept must also be extended to those believed to be in distress, and to those who, while not yet in distress, will become so if help is not provided to them in the meantime.

It’s an important question at the policy level too. LIFE LINE readers know that SAR can be difficult ‘at the sharp end’, out on the water. It can also be difficult at the policy end, where those responsible for providing SAR services face many calls on limited resources. Ancient tradition and modern international law require the rescue of those in distress at sea; but it is necessary to have a clear idea of the criteria. What does ‘distress’ mean? When does the law apply – and when might it not?

We noted in our August article that the International Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention requires almost all ships to help people in distress at sea, and we also noted the need in the last few years to defend the spirit of the rescue requirement as we SAR people understand it in the context of the migrant crisis in the Mediterranean.

“It would be better to be surer, though. Can we not define ‘distress’ better?”

In our August article we pointed out that ‘distress’ itself is not defined in the most relevant international instruments, including the SOLAS Convention.

What is defined – in the Maritime SAR Convention,
the Convention on International Civil Aviation and the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual – is the distress phase.

All three of these key texts define three phases of emergency – ‘distress’, ‘urgency’ and ‘uncertainty’ – and the providers of SAR services need to be ready to respond appropriately to each. But the three texts each define these phases differently; and this disparity is most important when it comes to deciding on whether someone is in distress.

The Maritime SAR Convention defines the distress phase as “a situation wherein there is reasonable certainty that a person, a vessel or other craft is threatened by grave and imminent danger and requires immediate assistance”. The Civil Aviation Convention and the IAMSAR Manual agree about “reasonable certainty”, “grave and imminent danger”, and requiring “immediate assistance”. But the Civil Aviation Convention currently mentions only “an aircraft and its occupants”, while the IAMSAR Manual has “a vessel or other craft, including an aircraft or a person”.

Several parts of these definitions are vague, and the English in the Manual is tortured. But surely the three texts should agree? They could usefully begin by agreeing what can be in distress. Various craft are mentioned in the definitions; but inanimate objects are not our concern. Think of a ‘drone’. It can certainly crash, but no-one is in distress as a result unless they get hit by it. We are actually concerned about people aboard these craft. This is clearly what the Civil Aviation Convention means (“an aircraft and its occupants”), but this formulation omits other sorts of craft, or people who have not been in a ‘craft’ in the first place.

The IMRF has argued that craft are superfluous in this context, and that the common definition of the distress phase should be “A situation wherein there is a reasonable certainty that a person or persons are threatened by grave and imminent danger and require immediate assistance”. But this has caused concern among national policymakers, who (rightly) point out that it applies on land as well as in the air or on the water, and whose emergency response legislation may be based on the notion of a ‘craft’ being in difficulty. Response to emergencies on land are a national matter, not covered by the international Conventions; and administrators with tight budgets have to ensure that those budgets are spent correctly.

Some readers may feel that such arguments are insufficient. But that does not stop them being made; and this is why the question ‘What is distress?’ remains so important at the policy as well as the operational level.

A clear legal basis for organising rescue is, in its way, as important a part of the rescue itself as analysis of and response to actual situations by SAR people.

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The discussion is set to continue at the international level, and the IMRF will continue to fulfil our advocacy role in this respect. If you would like to contribute to the debate, let us know your thoughts by emailing news@imrf.org.uk.
Madeira Island Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) Plan Training

The IMRF held the first ‘mass rescue operations (MRO) subject-matter experts’ course in June 2017 (see the August 2017 edition of LIFE LINE). One of those who attended the course was Paulo Alexandre de Sousa Falé of the Portuguese Navy, from Região Autónoma da Madeira; the Madeira Islands. Our intention in setting up the course – and in our MRO project overall – is to encourage discussion of the issues involved in these rare but extremely challenging events, so that agreed local solutions can be found. Since returning home Paulo has been working with his colleagues across the islands’ emergency response agencies with these aims in mind. He has kindly sent us this report:

Madeira, officially known as Região Autónoma da Madeira, the Autonomous Region of Madeira, is a Portuguese territory endowed with political and administrative autonomy and it is located in the Macaronesia region.

The geographical, economical, climatic and meteorological conditions in the Madeira Islands permits the execution of diverse commercial activities, where a potential MRO could occur and over the course of 2017 three MRO workshops were held in Madeira.

First Madeiran Mass Rescue Operations Workshop – 25 of September 2017

The first Madeiran Mass Rescue Operations Workshop was conducted in September 2017, for a target audience of different stakeholders with responsibility in Major Incident Global Response. The workshop was presided by Dr Pedro Ramos who is the Madeiran health secretary.

The principal objectives were to increase the awareness and knowledge of Mass Rescue Operations.

The variety of the stakeholders in the workshop enabled not only the objectives to be fulfilled, but also to start the all important analysis process of the available resources for a Mass Rescue Operation if it were to occur. This process will help to ensure the safety of life at sea in Madeira, as well as mitigation of risk, coordination of operations and documenting of evidence.

All subjects were covered according to the IMRF guidelines learnt from the Mass Rescue Operations Subject Matter Expert course run at Chalmers University, Sweden in 2017.

The challenge of how to Recognise The Risk and the need to prepare to deal with it, however unlikely it may appear, was fully explained. For example this workshop highlighted the following:

- Funchal harbour statistics, refer to more than one million passengers between cruise ships and regular ro-ro ship (Lobo Marinho) in 2016.
- For the 2017 New Year fireworks ten cruise ships in Funchal bay were expected, this was in addition to the local navigation.

Hoping for the best is not a plan.

The interest in subjects covered in the workshop, allowed a discussion with stakeholders and resulted in the arrangement of the next Mass Rescue Operations Workshop for November 2017.

Mass Rescue Operations Workshop – 8-9 of November 2017

The second workshop was conducted according to the IMRF guidelines about Mass Rescue Operations with two delegates from the last IMRF Subject Matter Experts Course as facilitators.

This workshop focused on those involved with sea to shore operations. The workshop was once again attended by different stakeholders with responsibility for incident response in these areas and as in the IMRF Subject Matter Experts Course, the workshop used a group discussion structure to enable open dialogue between stakeholders.

All participants understood that a Mass Rescue Operation is more likely to be successful if individual responders
understand the ‘bigger picture’ as well as their own place within it.

There was enthusiasm to see the benefits achievable by training together, on a multi-agency basis. For the plan to be truly effective everyone who will have to put their part of the plan into effect should also ‘own’ it. That is, they should not only understand their tasks and responsibilities under the plan they should also agree to those tasks and responsibilities.

**Mass Rescue Operations Table Top Exercise**

The Mass Rescue Table Top Exercise was very important to transmit the difficulty in coordinating a large or complicated rescue operation. The discussion point was the planning and training of the Sea-to-Shore interface that must be established. The discussion highlighted the need for this training and the Madeira International Disaster Training Centre proposed that two Mass Rescue Exercises in Medical Response to Major Incidents courses were organised and the first was held in December 2017.

**Mass Rescue Operations in Medical Response to Major Incidents Course – 1-3 December 2017**

This opportunity to demonstrate an MRO exercise conducted both at sea, and with the Medical Response to Major Incidents at land, allowed to identify the vulnerabilities, and for the first time to conduct an exercise where the entire response chain was analysed and trained. This type of training increased the knowledge, articulation and efficiency of the Sea/Shore interface.

During 2018 Madeira workgroup will conduct more training exercises and one LIVEX exercise at Funchal harbour.

**Calling all participants of G4 and/or the MRO Subject Matter Course**

In June 2017 the IMRF’s fourth mass rescue operations (MRO) conference (‘G4’) and our first MRO Subject Matter Expert course (‘SME1’), were both held in Gothenburg, Sweden.

140 delegates from 25 countries attended the conference and the course attracted 40 senior personnel with emergency planning responsibilities from a total of 18 countries: Australia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Hong Kong, Iceland, Malaysia, the Maldives, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and the USA. The IMRF are still looking for feedback on both of these events. This is a very important part of the service we provide to the global search and rescue community, and any feedback you can give us will be of great value to us in continuing to provide this service.

The IMRF is a charity and our work - including our MRO project - is partly funded by grants from benefactors. We must ensure that these funds are spent in the best ways possible. We need your feedback to help us report back to our benefactors on our use of the funds they have provided, and to help us determine our future strategy.

Any information you can give us will be useful - and the more, the better!

Please note that all information you provide will be treated in strict confidence. It will be published in our reports, etc., anonymously, unless you give us specific permission to attribute it to you. You may have attended G4 or SME1 or both so please answer the questions in the questionnaire which are applicable to you, in as much detail as you can. You do not have to answer all the questions, but any information you can provide will be of help to us!

Please go to [www.imrfmro.org](http://www.imrfmro.org) or email us at [info@imrf.org.uk](mailto:info@imrf.org.uk)
Sanchi Oil Tanker Rescue: China Rescue and Salvage Operation

The Sanchi oil tanker collision occurred on 6 January 2018, 160 Nautical Miles off of Shanghai, China. The Panamanian-flagged, Iranian-owned tanker Sanchi, was sailing from Iran to South Korea and had a full natural-gas condensate cargo of 136,000 tonnes when the collision occurred with the Hong Kong-flagged cargo ship CF Crystal. The Sanchi caught fire shortly after the collision and after burning and drifting for over a week, it sank on 14 January 2018.

Reviewing the whole response process, the Chinese authorities took this maritime traffic accident very seriously and the competent departments responded swiftly with a dedicated search and rescue response. China Rescue and Salvage (CRS), member of the International Maritime Rescue Federation, played a crucial role in the rescue operation. The CRS rescuers bravely approached the burning vessel many times to carry out the search and rescue operation and to fight the fire at close range. Four rescuers managed to board the vessel and bring back two bodies and the voyage data recorder, before the explosions occurred.

When CRS rescue forces arrived at the scene they were faced with air filled with smoke and poisonous gas as well as constant explosions. This made the decision to board a very difficult choice for CRS commanders. However, saving lives is always a priority for CRS and, having assessed the situation thoroughly, four experienced rescuers were selected to carry out this mission. In order to reduce the risk to the search and rescue personnel, a great deal of observation and

CM Hammar donates to the IMRF Mixed Migrants Safety Project and our affiliate member Sea-Watch

CM Hammar, who for the past 160 years have been providing better solutions for safety at sea, have donated £1,500 to the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) Mixed Migrants Safety Project and to our affiliate member Sea-Watch, who are working to save lives in the Central Mediterranean.

Håkan Skutberg, Managing Director, CM Hammar said: "When our company wanted to make a Christmas Gift to the IMRF it seemed natural to choose a project and organisation that was working in the Central Mediterranean.” CM Hammar are IMRF Associate Members, and have also contributed to the Swedish Sea Rescue Society and its Yellow Boat Project in the past.

Theresa Crossley, IMRF CEO says: "We are very grateful to C M Hammar for their donation to our Mixed Migrants Safety Project.”

Sea-Watch was founded as a non-governmental organisation on 19 May 2015, and has performed maritime SAR missions in the Mediterranean to fulfill their mission of saving lives. With their new ship, the Sea-Watch 2, they were able to assist the rescue of 20,000 people in 2016. https://sea-watch.org/en/

CM Hammar’s vision is to substantially reduce the loss of lives at sea by creating better solutions for safety at sea. CM Hammar does so through its commitment to quality, constant innovation and sensitivity to its customers’ needs. https://www.cmhammar.com/

if your company would like more information on the IMRF please get in touch with Caroline Jupe c.jupe@imrf.org.uk

IMRF Member China Rescue and Salvage explain about their involvement in the rescue efforts for the stricken tanker Sanchi off of the coast of Shanghai.
analysis work had to be undertaken including continuous on-site meteorological observation and analysis. With many years of search and rescue experience, CRS have developed detailed boarding and rescue plans, operating procedures and contingency plans. The four rescuers fully demonstrated their qualities during this search and rescue operation, recovering two bodies, as well as the navigational data recorders from the vessels, which will greatly assist the accident investigation.

The CRS rescue and salvage vessels continue to work at the scene, helping with the ongoing salvage and clean-up operations.

**Maritime SAR in the news**

*A look at other SAR news stories from across the globe.*

**Drone Rescues Swimmers in Australia (From The BBC)**

Two teenage boys were rescued by a brand new lifesaving drone in Australia while lifeguards were still training to use the device. The swimmers, aged 15-17, had got into difficulties off the coast of Lennox Head, New South Wales.

A member of the public spotted them struggling in heavy surf about 700m (2,300ft) offshore. Lifesavers instantly sent the drone to drop an inflatable rescue pod, and the pair made their way safely to shore. John Barilaro, the state’s deputy premier, praised the rescue as historic. "Never before has a drone fitted with a flotation device been used to rescue swimmers like this," he said. Lifeguard supervisor Jai Sheridan was piloting the device when the alarm was raised. He described the experience as "unreal".

"The Little Ripper UAV certainly proved itself today, it is an amazingly efficient piece of lifesaving equipment and a delight to fly," he told the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper. After grabbing the rescue pod the boys were able to swim back to shore - exhausted but otherwise unharmed.

Mr Sheridan said it took just a minute or two to launch the drone, fly it to the rescue site, and drop the pod. Any other day, reaching the teenagers could easily have taken three times as long.


**SAR for Dummies (From The Maritime Journal)**

Maritime search and rescue authorities worldwide will benefit from the Spanish coastal authority’s pioneering training methods using SPOT Trace satellite tracker units. Salvamento Maritimo attaches small SPOT Trace satellite units supplied by Globalstar, Inc to human-like dummies that are placed in the ocean to simulate emergency search and rescue situations.

By capturing and analysing the tracking data from SPOT Trace as the dummy moves in the water, Salvamento Maritimo can determine how far a person in water might drift due to ocean waves, currents and winds using the Search & Rescue Model and Response System (SARMAP) application.

By accurately predicting the movement of victims in the ocean, Salvamento Maritimo can refine and enhance its rescue procedures and life-saving operations.

Original Article from Maritime Journal www.maritimejournal.com

**Rescue wing receives prestigious German Maritime Search and Rescue award (From Air Force Reserve Command News)**

For the first time in 20 years, the German Maritime Search and Rescue Service awarded the Gold Medal of Honor for Rescue Missions at Sea in a special ceremony to the 920th Rescue Wing Jan. 26, 2018 at the German Maritime Museum.

The wing, based out of Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, was honoured for its rescue of two German citizens whose vessel caught fire approximately 500 nautical miles off the east coast of Cape Canaveral, Florida, July 7, 2017.


**IMRF Associate Member, SafeTrx, expand to Cyprus (From The Irish Times)**

A tracking device inspired by an Irish businessman after he survived a mountaineering accident in the French Alps is now being used by search and rescue agencies in Scandinavia, several European states, South Africa and Australia. Some 10 per cent of lifeboat missions in Norway and the Netherlands in the past year are said to have been initiated in response to alerts from the SafeTrx device.

The SafeTrx app is aimed at outdoor enthusiasts and inshore vessels who are not generally users of technologies such as the automatic identification system (AIS), which is mandatory on all shipping over a certain tonnage. It does not seek to replace emergency position indicating radio beacons (EPIRBs) or personal locator beacons. It is designed with a monitoring console, which allows smartphone users to put in a sail or route plan initiated in response to alerts from the SafeTrx device.

If the cell signal is lost, the app will continue attempts to track and store location information drawn from the phone receiver, and the backlog is sent to the server. From this month, the Cyprus Joint Rescue Co-ordination Centre, which is part of the Cypriot defence ministry, is adopting the system.

Original article available at https://www.irishtimes.com
Discussing SAR at the IMO

The International Maritime Organization (IMO)’s Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation, Communications and SAR (NCSR) is the principal forum for the discussion of maritime SAR at the international, United Nations, level. It reports to IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee.

Much of NCSR’s work relates to navigational and communications issues not directly relevant to SAR. On the other hand, much of the detailed work on SAR and emergency communications is done for both IMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization by a Joint Working Group. This Group also acts as the editorial body for the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual. The Joint Working Group reports to IMO via NCSR.

IMRF’s policy on advocacy, as a “non-governmental organisation in consultative status” at the IMO, requires us to be represented at NCSR and Joint Working Group meetings. In recent years the IMRF has contributed significantly to the Joint Working Group’s work, and hence to that of NCSR – and so to the improvement of maritime SAR at the highest level.

Some of the issues to be discussed at NCSR’s February 2018 session are as follows.

IAMSAR amendments
We are now at the end of the three-year IAMSAR Manual editorial cycle. Amendments agreed by the Joint Working Group last October (see the November edition of LIFE LINE, in the newsletter archive at www.international-maritime-rescue.org) will be considered at NCSR this month and passed to the Maritime Safety Committee for formal approval prior to publication of the next edition of the Manual in 2019. There is a particularly heavy load of IAMSAR amendments on this occasion, and the IMRF has been deeply involved in their preparation.

Unsafe mixed migration
The Maritime Safety Committee noted the continuing problem of “unsafe mixed migration at sea” at its June 2017 meeting. Member States and international organizations reaffirmed their concerns and agreed that the way forward was to promote appropriate and effective action at the United Nations; which the IMO Secretary-General, Kitack Lim, is seeking to do. Maritime SAR is not a long-term solution to a humanitarian problem originating on land. The meeting also noted the paucity of formal reporting of such rescue cases at sea, which does not help in maintaining focus on this problem at the UN level. The IMRF supports IMO’s efforts to take further action on this appalling situation, and encourages proper reporting for the sake of all concerned – including the rescuers.

Revision of SOLAS chapters III & IV
The IMRF has been monitoring the modernisation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), intervening at earlier stages to make two main points:

1. Every effort should be made to minimise the cost of modernisation to RCCs and other SAR responders; and

2. The needs of small craft (artisanal fishermen, for example) should be borne in mind, as the GMDSS applies, and should continue to apply, to anyone in distress at sea.

We are co-sponsoring a paper prepared by France which aims to ensure that SAR communications are protected as Chapters III & IV of the SOLAS Convention are revised as part of the GMDSS modernisation process.

Definitions of the phases of emergency
The three emergency phases – distress, urgency & uncertainty – are each defined in IMO’s Maritime SAR Convention, the Convention on International Civil Aviation, and the IAMSAR Manual; and in each document they are defined differently. This mis-match should be resolved in the interests of clarity, with common definitions agreed, but efforts to do so have failed so far. The IMRF supports further work on this: see ‘Defining Distress’ on page 6 of this issue of LIFE LINE.

Sharing information to improve global SAR
The Joint Working Group has proposed that a reference to the IMRF as a SAR information source should be added to Volumes I & II of the IAMSAR Manual, in its forthcoming 2019 edition. The IMRF secretariat will be reviewing our procedures to ensure that our information-sharing resources are as user-friendly as possible.

We will include a report on this month’s meeting of NCSR in our next newsletter.