The IMRF presents at the IMO

“Working Together - Capacity Building in Maritime SAR”.

On Tuesday, 19 June 2018, at the 68th Session of the IMO Technical Cooperation Committee, held at IMO Headquarters in London, Captain Udo Helge Fox, Chairman of the IMRF, and Mohammed Drissi, IMRF Trustee, delivered a presentation to the plenary entitled “Working Together - Capacity Building in Maritime SAR”.

Captain Fox began by giving an overview of the global role of the IMRF in saving lives in the world’s waters. He said that the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that, globally, about 400,000 people drown every year. That is 40 people, every hour of every day, equivalent to 70% of the global death toll for malnutrition and 60% for that of malaria. The WHO also reports that Africa and Asia-Pacific account for almost 90% of world drowning deaths. Captain Fox described it as "a silent epidemic".

Mohammed Drissi, who is the IMRF Trustee with special responsibility for co-ordinating the IMRF’s work in Africa, then described how, since 2012, the IMRF, with the IMO Technical Cooperation Division, has been helping key African states to develop a well-functioning search and rescue (SAR) coordination capability. See ‘Slowing Africa’s Silent Killer’ on page 3.

This IMRF work complements IMO-funded initiatives, by working with Maritime Administrations and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres to identify development needs and provide specialist programmes of training, knowledge-sharing and international networking.

Since 2014 the IMRF has run 12 Regional SAR Development Meetings, organised 23 African SAR Training Courses and trained 294 people across Africa. Outcomes include Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres established or improved; national SAR plans adopted; ratification of SAR Conventions; introduction of new SAR technologies; increased competence and confidence of the trainees applying “best practice” when tasked with On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) responsibilities; the development of operational checklists, as a tool for participants handling SAR incidents in their own organisations; and reductions in incident response times, saving more lives.

The IMRF has a full programme of activities planned in Africa for the next twelve months, including Regional SAR Development Meetings and training courses.
Editorial

In the past few months I have been working on the European Regional Meeting which will also host the IMRF Awards and one of the topics we have been looking at for a potential workshop is ‘How to start from zero’, we want to look at how you go from an idea/need to a fully functioning rescue organisation.

Can you go from ‘Zero to Hero’?

The answer is complex but every organisation has to start somewhere and as our search for excellence in rescue operations comes to an end for 2018 it is clear that it is possible. With projects like Members Assisting Members, more and more organisations are benefiting from the sharing of knowledge, experience and equipment (see page 8)! All of the IMRF Award nominations are now being assessed by our judging panel and in the coming months we will share the stories of those that have been shortlisted. You can find out more about the Award ceremony and the European Regional Meeting on page 9.

In other Award news the IMRF Secretariat itself has been shortlisted for a Safety at Sea award in the category Shoreside Team of the Year recognising our work to prevent loss of life in the world’s waters. However, we would not have such an impact on global maritime SAR without our members and as always I would like to welcome our newest members to the IMRF Family:

- **Full Member**
  - Uruguayan Navy

- **Full Member**
  - Monrovia Regional MRCC-Liberia Maritime Authority

- **Associate Member**
  - Schnoor Industrieelektronik

Our global presence has also been highlighted by the amount of MRO conferences, workshops and exercises that have been held across the globe since May and these are also shown in the map above. The key to these workshops is that the participants go back to their organisations and start the conversation to raise awareness of the complications that an MRO can force upon an organisation.

Mass Rescue Operations... It's not if, but when!

Our next MRO Subject Matter Expert course will be held in Sweden this September and we look forward to welcoming the next group of delegates to this unique event.

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Dates for the Diary

- **Maritime MRO Subject-Matter Expert Course - 2018**
  4-6 September 2018, Chalmers University, Gothenburg, Sweden

- **IMRF Lifeboat Crew Exchange**
  22-29 September 2018, Europe

- **RESCUE 2018**
  12-14 October 2018, Reykjavik, Iceland - [www.rescue.is](http://www.rescue.is)

- **IMRF European Regional Development Meeting 2018**
  8-9 November 2018, hosted by the Norwegian Society for Sea Rescue (RS), at RS Noatun Langgrunn, Horten, Norway

- **IMRF Awards**
  8 November 2018, hosted by RS at RS Noatun Langgrunn, Horten, Norway - [www.imrfawards.org](http://www.imrfawards.org)

- **World Maritime Rescue Congress (WMRC) 2019**

For details of these events, and more, please go to [www.international-maritime-rescue.org/events](http://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.
Experience has working hard to make Africa less of a victim. Refers to drowning as a “leading global killer” and IMRF is looking ahead, IMRF will continue its work in Africa to make a real difference in the coastal and inland nations of Africa. Making a difference in the coastal and inland nations of Africa.

Reducing deaths from drowning is a central pillar of the work currently being facilitated by the IMRF and the continent of Africa has become a recent focus of attention. Sadly, there is a close correlation between poverty, lack of education and high mortality rates and many African nations need help to address the many deaths that are attributed to drowning. Facilitating a greater awareness of the causes of drowning, coupled with assistance to enhance the management and practical capabilities of maritime search & rescue (SAR) activities in Africa, has been spearheaded by IMRF Trustee, Mohammed Drissi who is also head of the SAR bureau in Morocco.

IMRF’s work in Africa is funded by a range of partners including the Technical Cooperation Committee (TCC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Working hand-in-hand with IMO, IMRF’s aim is to create a sustainable difference. The first step, according to Drissi, is to help national authorities establish facilities that comply with IMO’s SAR plan and, in particular, the development of fully functional maritime rescue coordination centres (MRCCs). But sustainability is the key. Experience has taught IMRF that there is little point in running a handful of class sessions and hoping for the best. Locals must be given a hands-on opportunity to set up their systems and processes themselves. Interconnectivity is also a key to success and requires building communications, relationships and trust.

Fostering political will to operate a sustainable and efficient SAR capability is also essential if IMRF is to achieve workable results. As a United Nations Agency, IMO is also furthering achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the empowerment of women and girls, by working to increase the number of women operating in the maritime sector. IMRF members push hard for the inclusion of women in SAR trainings but, although the number of women SAR professionals is growing, local attitudes can sometimes be a challenge.

IMRF recognises that there is much work to be done to reduce the drowning statistics in Africa and the programme of work currently underway will significantly enhance the safety of the local population, as well as the transient maritime community. Thanks to the generosity of its funders and the expertise of its members, IMRF is making a real difference in the coastal and inland nations of Africa.

Looking ahead, IMRF will continue its work in Africa to build on current successes. The World Health Organisation refers to drowning as a “leading global killer” and IMRF is working hard to make Africa less of a victim.

Sri Lanka Introduces a National Policy for Drowning Prevention

Sri Lanka will be introducing a national policy for drowning prevention, the second most common cause of accidental death after traffic incidents in Sri Lanka. This effort is being led by the Office of the Chief of Defense Staff (OCDS) on the instructions provided by the President. The main task of the OCDS will be coordinating with the institutions involved in drowning prevention activities, who are currently working in isolation, and guiding them towards a holistic, national approach to address the issue.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) global report on drowning published in 2014, Sri Lanka stands at 12th out of 61 countries in terms of deaths recorded, and 10th out of 35 low and middle income nations. It is estimated that at least 850-1,000 die per year and these deaths are avoidable!

Among the institutions presently involved are Sri Lanka Life Saving (SLLS), Sri Lanka Police, Civil Defense Service, Coastguard, Army, Navy and Air force along with many other civil society organizations. Recent discussions clearly reflected that “What we require is to put them all together. Everybody in the country is well aware of why we need this so the idea is to pool resources and have a national action plan.”

One of the key activities would be to have awareness sessions that build a culture where people will be encouraged to swim between flags, to be aware of signage, educating them on how to do their own risk assessment before they get into water. They are further encouraged to look for a lifeguard if they are unfamiliar with the area. The rest of the activities would be; delivering swimming and water safety education, communicating and managing information pertaining to water safety, providing lifesaving and water safety services, conducting water safety research and development, maximising economic benefits for tourism through safe water-related or recreational activities and developing regulations for governance of water safety and drowning prevention.

To execute the above, a national governing entity for drowning prevention and water safety will be formed, a surveillance system will be developed, a risk profile for the country will be introduced, swim-for-safety curriculum will be further improved whilst harnessing pool and beach safety operations guidelines.

Since Sri Lanka has a huge and effective workforce from the defence sector, they will be used and provided with a rescue tube instead of a weapon. Besides, as they have a footprint across the country, it is expected that both monitoring and execution of activities could easily be undertaken by them.

“If we can train more and more lifesavers, more and more lives will be saved. We will not stop there. This has to be a tradition and way of life.”

Page 3
Mass Rescue Operations-A Global Concern

The past few months have been busy for our Mass Rescue Operations team, with 3 workshops being held across the world in Malaysia, Bangladesh and Uruguay. We are also preparing for our next MRO Subject Matter Expert Course which will be held in Sweden in September. Not yet registered? There is limited space available. However, if you have missed the boat this time then you can still add your name to the waiting list at https://imrfmro.org/sme-course-2018-home

MRO Seminar held in Uruguay ends in an impromptu live SAR exercise

Here IMRF Trustee Jorge Diena talks about the Seminar that was held in Uruguay and which was followed by a live exercise onboard a Buquebus ferry.

In June we held a Mass Rescue Operation Seminar in Uruguay organised by the Uruguayan Navy with the assistance of the National Emergency System (SINAE), and facilitated by the IMRF. The location was the Naval Academy, and more than 150 participants enjoyed the hospitality of the Uruguayan Navy for two days. Many high ranking officers participated, demonstrating the importance that the seminar had for the Navy. Uruguay receives more than 200 passenger ships during the summer and there is also continuous ferry traffic between Montevideo and Buenos Aires, so the occurrence of a Mass Rescue Operation is entirely possible.

With much more people than originally planned, it was a chance to bring different organisations together that normally don’t have contact with each other. Among others, there were representatives from the Navy, Coast Guard, Police, Air Force, Army, Fire Department, Health System, maritime SAR Volunteers, Lifeguards, SINAE, Customs, Ministry of Transport, as well as international observers from Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay and many others. The problems arising, and the magnitude of them during a Mass Rescue Operation, were highlighted by Joel Morgado and Thomas Gorgol, two specialists from the US Coast Guard who were the presenters for the Seminar.

During those two days the participants learnt the variety of decisions that have to be taken in a very short time period, and that all available hands must be used to achieve a successful outcome. The table-top exercise was the highlight of the second day as it offered an opportunity to apply the lessons learned.

One of the participants was the Fleet Manager of Buquebus, the most important ferry company in the River Plate with a fleet of many fast and slow ferries. Once the seminar was over, he approached the organisers and made a very interesting offer...The company was holding a live drill of the evacuation system on one of their ferries, and he invited everyone to attend the drill. It was clear that it was a great opportunity to participate in a live exercise using the evacuation platform, but could be made even better by engaging the volunteer maritime SAR organization of Uruguay (ADES) and other organisations.

So two weeks after the seminar, with all the new concepts still very clear in everyone’s mind, the drill was made. Seventy-four ‘fake’ passengers from different organisations and crew members of the company acted as normal passengers and went onboard. The alarm began to sound, and the abandon ship procedure commenced under the guidance of a very well trained crew. To jump through the tunnel and on to the platform as well as the subsequent SAR part was a great experience. For most of us it was our first time in that situation, and although it was in protected waters with no waves, the thought of this situation by night with high waves made us shiver!

The biggest problem was communication, accounting for people and the traffic of SAR units offloading the ‘fake passengers’ on a small platform demonstrated that we have a lot to learn.

But now a suggestion to the SAR community:
If the evacuation systems of the ships must be tested periodically, why not use this as viable excuse and make live MRO exercises?

In our case it was the first time such an offer as been made and a great opportunity to test what we learned during the seminar. Now we are aiming higher and planning for a bigger exercise with the same company for November, when they have to test another evacuation system and the temperature in the southern hemisphere is nicer.

A big thank you to the IMRF, Uruguayan Navy, US Coast Guard, SINAE and Buquebus to make this a great Seminar that will improve Uruguay’s readiness for a Mass Rescue Operation.

IMRF Delivers Second MRO Workshop to Bangladesh Authorities

In May the IMRF delivered a high-level specialist workshop on Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) for more than 40 officials from a range of maritime emergency response organisations in Bangladesh. Held in partnership with the Bangladesh Coast Guard this was the second MRO workshop that the IMRF has delivered with this organisation.

The workshop offered the attendees an opportunity to focus on MRO issues with international experts in an interactive environment. The course was led by John Geel (Royal Netherlands Sea Rescue Institution, KNRM)
Funchal Mass Rescue Operations Live Exercise


This exercise was part of the planning cycle for preparing the response to high-level incidents in Madeira Islands.

One of the main objectives was to articulate procedures applicable to the immediate activation of the assets, as well as the adequate response to accidents involving the rescue of a large number of people at sea.

The exercise allowed consolidation of the incident response structure on a large scale, in order to guarantee activation, efficient and coordinated commitment of all available assets, as well as the adequate response to accidents involving the rescue of a large number of people at sea.

The operations were conducted in alignment with the IAMSAR guiding principles for Mass Rescue Operations, including the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) guidelines and Medical Response to Major Incidents (MRMI).

Successful Inter-Regional Asia Pacific MRO Workshop

This MRO event took place on 10-11 July in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia alongside the 7th International Search and Rescue Conference and Exhibition. It was delivered by United States Coast Guard Environmental Emergency Specialist George Butler and Robert Lee, U. S. Coast Guard Passenger Vessel Safety Specialist who also specialises in MRO Planning & Exercises.

Captain Udo Helge Fox, Chairman of the IMRF and Executive Director of the German Maritime Search and Rescue Service (DGzRS) also delivered some of the content and commented:

“I am very pleased to hear the extremely positive feedback from the MRO workshop participants. The workshop has clearly raised awareness of the many issues to be considered in such a scenario and the comments made show that there is an acknowledged need to further strengthen cooperation and improve SAR capabilities across this region.”

The Defence Attaché from the Korean Embassy also attended the workshop, along with representatives from the Malaysian Marine Department, St John’s Ambulance, NGO’s based in Algeria and Pakistan, Eaglestar Shipping Company and also Grand Benchmark Marine Services which is an IMRF Associate Member.

On the 23rd of May, IMRF Trustee Dean Lawrence represented the IMRF at the 4th Australian & New Zealand Search and Rescue Conference. This event was for the search and rescue community across all disciplines of air, land and sea. It offered delegates the chance to meet and network with a diverse range of skilled practitioners and volunteers.

The emphasis of this conference was on discussion, debate and ideas exchange and Dean’s presentation was based on the role of the IMRF with emphasis on the Mass Rescue Operations project.
An insight into the LYNCEUS2MARKET Project

The objective of the LYNCEUS2MARKET project is to improve and optimise current technologies and prototypes developed by the LYNCEUS consortium in order to deliver innovative wireless devices that can be easily integrated in new and existing passenger ship infrastructure providing a low-cost and robust safe evacuation system. This innovative system will enable on-board and overboard people localisation, person activity monitoring, real-time disaster monitoring and adaptive decision support.

Here Stein Solberg of the External Advisory Board/IMRF explains more.

A step forward for safer evacuation of large passenger ships.

IMRF are represented in the project’s “External Advisory Board”, together with Carnival Corporation, Cruise Lines International Association, Cyprus Maritime Administration, Malta Flag and Fincantieri.

The project started in June 2015 and the third meeting of the External Advisory Board took place in Limassol, Cyprus, on 8-9 May 2018, at the 36th meeting of the project consortium. After a project status report, the Board members provided their expert advice/feedback.

The LYNCEUS2MARKET project is an innovative people localisation system for safe evacuation of large passenger ships.

We know that a maritime incident involving passenger vessels could soon become a Mass Rescue Operation. Such an operation would be the ultimate challenge both for those handling the incident onboard and for the SAR services that have the obligation to coordinate assistance to those in distress.

The “LYNCEUS2MARKET project” a follow-up of the “LYNCEUS project” addresses this challenge through developing an operational system for safer evacuation based on locating and tracking of people onboard and for overboard search and rescue as well as for safe evacuation of ships during emergency. It is based on the results developed in the LYNCEUS project, where innovative technologies were tested in lab and in small scale pilots.

“LYNCEUS2MARKET” brings together cruise ship owners, operators, ship builders, maritime equipment manufacturers, a classification society, industry associations and important technology organizations with the aim to implement the first market replication of these technologies and products, as well as create significant impact by saving passenger lives during maritime accidents.

The system consists of:

- Life jackets that can provide passenger location in real-time during emergency
- Smart smoke detectors that also act as base stations of an on-board localisation system
- Innovative location emitting bracelets able to send activity data to the emergency management team
- Low-cost fire and flooding escalation monitoring sensor nodes
- Novel mustering hand-held devices for automatic identification and counting of passengers during evacuation
- Smart location emitting cabin key cards
- Intelligent decision support software able to integrate all locations, activity and disaster data to provide a real-time visualisation, passenger counting and evacuation decision support
- Innovative shore or ship-launched unmanned aerial vehicle for locating people in the sea in short time and assisting search and rescue operations when accident occurs in extreme weather, during the night or in a remote location

The project is in the final stage, focusing mainly on demonstration. A full scale (Large-scale) onboard system demonstration was successfully performed onboard the cruise ship Rhapsody of the Seas on May 23rd 2018. In addition, the project has submitted a first working draft to a new ISO standard on such systems.

To find out more go to: http://www.lynceus-project.eu
RYA SafeTrx: Designed to Improve Safety at Sea


IMRF Full Member, the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) have now joined forces with IMRF Associate member, SafeTrx, to reveal RYA SafeTrx as HM Coastguard’s new official voluntary safety identification scheme. As reported in previous editions of LIFE LINE maritime search and rescue agencies in Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Finland, Norway, Cyprus, South Africa and Australia have already adopted versions of this app which is also now freely available to any UK resident.

The world-leading RYA SafeTrx app is designed to improve safety at sea and potentially cut vital minutes off the time taken to pinpoint a casualty’s location. It monitors your boat journeys and alerts designated emergency contacts should you fail to arrive on time.

Using iPhone and Android smartphone technology, this free tracking and alerting system is easily accessible and ideal for everyone who enjoys being on the water – from kitesurfers and kayakers to dinghy sailors and powerboat users.

Notify the Coastguard at the touch of a button

The free RYA SafeTrx mobile app and website, is available to any UK resident and now supersedes the HM Coastguard CG66 scheme which was a voluntary safety identification scheme in the UK. It provides all recreational boat users with an accessible and simple-to-use way of automatically informing HM Coastguard of their voyage plans, vessel and crew information, incident data, dynamic location and even a direct 999 connection in the event of distress.

“When we receive an emergency call we need a huge amount of information fast. This app helps us access all your details, so that you can get a swifter response with the right resources,” says the MCA’s Director of Maritime Operations, Richard Parkes.

RYA Cruising Manager, Stuart Carruthers, added: ‘With the full support of the MCA, the RYA SafeTrx app promotes enjoyable boating, a safe mind set and good practice. The software consulting company behind the development of SafeTrx, 8 West Consulting, is striving to make this the default technology for keeping the ordinary seafarer safer at sea. With that goal in mind, it is vital that the product continues to adapt to new challenges and opportunities.’

For customers who do not wish to use the mobile app, there is an option to register their details online at https://safetrx.rya.org.uk/login.html.SafeTrx

IMRF Trustee Nominations

With the next World Maritime Rescue Congress (WMRC) rapidly approaching, it is also time to consider the forthcoming IMRF Quadrennial General Meeting (QGM). The QGM will be held on Tuesday 18 June 2019, immediately following the WMRC 2019 in Vancouver (15 – 17 June 2019). The QGM agenda will include a report of IMRF’s activities and financial performance since the last QGM in Bremen in 2015, as well as a presentation of future plans for the organisation. The QGM, which is only open to IMRF members, will also include the election of the IMRF Board of Trustees for the next four years.

A formal notice of the meeting and a call for nominations for Trustees will be issued early next year. All the details of how to submit nominations will also be made available at that time, but, in the meantime, please begin to consider if there is anyone who you might wish to nominate. Please note that only organisations who are fully paid up full members of the IMRF are permitted to nominate, and vote for, Trustees.

Trustees play a very important role in the governance of the IMRF. They are there to ensure that IMRF is carrying out its established aims, that the organisation’s resources are being managed responsibly and that we always comply with the law, as well as our own rules and regulations. Becoming a Trustee is a serious commitment and our Trustees need to devote time to IMRF business, in order to exercise their legal responsibilities properly. But, by supporting us as they do, our Trustees make a real contribution to the IMRF’s work on prevention of loss of life in the world’s waters. Please consider whether you, or someone else from your organisation, could help the IMRF continue this important work by becoming a Trustee.

Jill Greenlees
IMRF Company Secretary
Member Assisting Members - ADES and DGzRS

ADES (Honorary Maritime Lifeboat Association)
Uruguay has spent 62 years of its life fulfilling the purpose for which it was created: Safeguarding life at sea. Here they explain their journey and how the IMRF MAM program has helped them.

At the beginning, when a group of people with a love for the sea had the idea to found this institution, they observed international examples to achieve a high level of service, both in knowledge and in specific rescue equipment. The collaboration between institutions with a common goal proved in those years to be a successful way to extend safety at sea to areas where the incipient rescue institutions could not develop by their own means alone.

So for many years ADES Uruguay followed a course based on the experience of other successful models, receiving specific support such as training, equipment and lifeboats, whether donated or purchased at affordable prices.

All this support was given "on demand", where good relations and needs were often reflected in concrete actions.

In return, ADES has a good record of maintaining and caring for its rescue assets, keeping them in an operational condition for many years and always fulfilling the function for which they were built, maritime rescue. We also donated equipment and a rescue vessel to other smaller organisations to help them with their needs.

Today there is a program within the IMRF that facilitates these interactions between rescue institutions, the MAM "Members Assisting Members" Program. This program was established as a bridge to match the need of one organisation with the need to receive help, advice or support from another one.

Thus, given the need of ADES to cover new risk areas and the renovation of rescue units, the IMRF MAM Program connected ADES of Uruguay with Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Rettung Schiffbrüchiger (DGzRS) of Germany. The end result was a donation from DGzRS of two very versatile and cost-efficient 8.5 metre boats.

Both institutions made every effort to make this donation possible.

On the DGzRS’s side, they left the boats in excellent condition with a complete overhaul prior to their delivery, while in ADES we had to look for donors to collect the money necessary for the transport to Uruguay, something that took us almost a year to achieve and much effort. The Pilot Companies Sociedad de Prácticos del Puerto de Montevideo and Corporación Uruguaya de Prácticos del Río Uruguay helped us with that donation.

Finally, everything was done and the boats Karl Van Well and Cassen Knigge arrived in March 2018 at the Port of Montevideo.

We want to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the DGzRS, their volunteers and sponsors for this donation.
Theresa Crossley, CEO IMRF said: “We are very grateful to CM Hammar for their sponsorship of the IMRF Awards. Now in their third year, the IMRF Awards 2018 have again attracted interest and nominations from around the world, and we look forward to announcing the winners at the awards dinner in November.”

CM Hammar’s vision is to substantially reduce the loss of life 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/

IMRF Shortlisted for Prestigious Industry Award

The IMRF has been shortlisted in the category; Shoreside Team of the Year for The Safety at Sea Awards 2018.

These awards aim to promote safe and secure work practices across the commercial shipping industry and are organised by Safety at Sea, a leading publication for ship’s crew, with the goal of improving on board safety across the industry.

The nomination recognises the IMRF’s work to prevent loss of life on the world’s waters and provide relief from disaster at sea and inland waters. It acknowledges the work that the IMRF does to promote cooperation, exchange information, provide advice and consultancy and develop best practice between search and rescue organisations around the world.

The European Lifeboat Exchange was also pulled out as an example of the IMRF going above and beyond the call of duty, to ensure safe ship operations and the protection of seafarer’s safety and security.

The winners of the Safety at Sea Awards 2018 will be announced on 18 October 2018 in London.... until then, all our fingers are crossed for the IMRF to be successful in its award category!

Safety at Sea is a monthly magazine focussing on educating, entertaining and informing Seafarers, Designated Persons Ashore and Ship Operators about safety hazards, technological developments and training trends.
Members Assisting Members: A Canadian SAR Member’s experience in the Norwegian Arctic

Raymond Messier of Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCMSAR) explains how an enquiry to the IMRF proved fortuitous and resulted in the SAR trip of a lifetime.

As a university undergraduate student, I am used to sending formal emails. I often write them for academic guidance, coordinating projects and other activities. However, in December 2016, I had no idea that the email I drafted would have such a profound impact on my life going forward.

Arriving in late April, I began my journey in the capital city of Oslo, meeting the Staff at Headquarters and seeing what goes on behind the scenes to make the national operation tick was a fantastic context to frame the following weeks. From fundraising, to new builds, to operations, the Lysaker office made sure that the current and future prospects of the sea safety infrastructure on the Norwegian coast were well taken care of. Being invited to see their newest Staff Class vessel enter the fleet, I was lucky enough to see the countless hours of hard work create a functional Ferrari of a rescue vessel become reality. Shortly after the ceremonies concluded, I was invited aboard the RS Oscarsborg cutter to participate in taskings for the afternoon. Witnessing for the first time the strength and professionalism of the crews cruising the Oslofjord, I was amazed by the natural beauty of the capital from the sea.

Lofoten and Vesteral however were another story. Mountains shooting into the air from the ocean in jagged works of natural art. The fjords in which I stayed for my 3 weeks on the peninsula were as striking in beauty as they were dangerous. The seafarers that navigate these waters on the daily basis carry the visible strength and demeanour of their ancestors. As an ‘utlending’ (foreigner) visiting only for a short while, seeing both the rescue crews and local fisherman cruise purposefully beside hazards to navigation that would shake any other seafarer immediately demonstrated the quality required to conduct SAR ops in such an environment. Knowing that I had much to learn, the crews in Ballstad, Svolvaer and Myre took me under their wing to show me the lines in quick order. Organising a six week itinerary, booking flights and hotels and aligning stations for my visit, there wasn’t a single moment of my trip that fell through the cracks. The extreme attention to detail and professionalism I witnessed before I stepped foot on Norwegian soil was already astounding.

Members Assisting Members: A Canadian SAR Member’s experience in the Norwegian Arctic

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Arriving in late April, I began my journey in the capital city of Oslo, meeting the Staff at Headquarters and seeing what goes on behind the scenes to make the national operation tick was a fantastic context to frame the following weeks. From fundraising, to new builds, to operations, the Lysaker office made sure that the current and future prospects of the sea safety infrastructure on the Norwegian coast were well taken care of. Being invited to see their newest Staff Class vessel enter the fleet, I was lucky enough to see the countless hours of hard work create a functional Ferrari of a rescue vessel become reality. Shortly after the ceremonies concluded, I was invited aboard the RS Oscarsborg cutter to participate in taskings for the afternoon. Witnessing for the first time the strength and professionalism of the crews cruising the Oslofjord, I was amazed by the natural beauty of the capital from the sea.

Lofoten and Vesteral however were another story. Mountains shooting into the air from the ocean in jagged works of natural art. The fjords in which I stayed for my 3 weeks on the peninsula were as striking in beauty as they were dangerous. The seafarers that navigate these waters on the daily basis carry the visible strength and demeanour of their ancestors. As an ‘utlending’ (foreigner) visiting only for a short while, seeing both the rescue crews and local fisherman cruise purposefully beside hazards to navigation that would shake any other seafarer immediately demonstrated the quality required to conduct SAR ops in such an environment. Knowing that I had much to learn, the crews in Ballstad, Svolvaer and Myre took me under their wing to show me the lines in quick order. Organising a six week itinerary, booking flights and hotels and aligning stations for my visit, there wasn’t a single moment of my trip that fell through the cracks. The extreme attention to detail and professionalism I witnessed before I stepped foot on Norwegian soil was already astounding.
Arriving in Tromso, I was shown around a different type of office. The men and women in the high north office work tirelessly, serving to make sure that the taskings don’t come into rescue centre in the first place. Coordinating safe boating seminars, outreach programs and other events, this work is vital with cold temperatures and a marine lifestyle. Their hospitality was extended to the social sphere as well, including me in their fantastic 17. Mai Celebrations. Norwegian Constitution Day is an incredible experience, something I firmly believe anybody reading this should experience first hand. Starting early in the morning, the festivities differ to other national holidays because they are not dedicated to a leader or even to the government or military but rather to the people. Children’s primary school classes, hockey teams, dance clubs and sewing circles walk through the street in their distinct regional costumes. Multiple parades grace the main avenues of every town right into the evening.

For this experience and inclusion, I cannot thank my hosts enough.

Following my fantastic experiences in the north, I was sent south to experience life with the crewmembers in RS Arendal. From drydock maintenance to full damage control operations, the scope of taskings I was lucky enough to participate in were a highlight among highlights. Most notably was our participation in the NATO Exercise DYNAMIC MERCY, a multilateral SAREX meant to bring together Norwegian Military, Coast Guard, Sivilforsvaret (National Guard), RS and Red Cross with the Danish Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. Operating off the shores of Kristiansand, we were exposed to a range of casualties and scenarios to test our interoperability under stress. Handling blast victims in one moment to searching for lost fisherman in the next, as an outside observer, I can firmly say that the crews of RS147 passed the test.

Following my time in Arendal, I was exposed to another sort of international cooperation. This time in the shipyards of Swede Ship. This Tjorn based shipbuilder is currently producing the state of the art Ulstein Class vessel for RS. Seeing the attention to detail and cooperation between Knut Hveldig and the others associated with the process was astounding.

Every feature on these new vessels entering service has been agonised over and debated to ensure a high level of capability and crew comfort. Also, we travelled to Gothenburg to see the production of the RS specific Rescue Runner produced by Safe at Sea. These personal watercrafts are built to be beaten, battered and bruised but never break under the stresses of continuous SAR operations. Their purpose built designs such as a removable insert engine bay separate from the hull to their integrated Raymarine chart plotter display brings yet another amazing capability to the crews operating in austere environments. If anybody has a chance to observe these vessels in action I highly encourage them to do so.

As my trip drew to a close, I reflected on not only the extreme beauty of the landscapes I had experienced but also the beauty of the culture and hospitality that I was lucky enough to observe first hand.

What I am most astounded by is the unique insight this partnership has given a humble volunteer from Western Canada. The lessons and experiences operating in an unfamiliar environment with new crewmembers, in a different language and on different vessels challenged me far more than I could have imagined.

Luckily, the stations I was billeted with supported me every step of the way. I will be making every effort to demonstrate these experiences back to my crews back home to ensure continuity in the learning process. However, none of these dreams would have come to fruition without the unwavering support of the office staff and crews that took me in as one of their own to show me how they save lives at sea. As well, the amazing support from members of my station back home and the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue Leadership to allow me to chase this dream with official consent.

The value of this experience is immeasurable but I can guarantee that I have learned much to ensure that the hard learned lessons of RS are exported home – duty free I might add.

All Photo Credits go to Raymond Messier and the RS crew
Welcome to New Members MRCC Abidjan, Cote D’Ivoire.
Here one of our newest members, MRCC Abidjan, describes their SAR capability as well as the already established connection to the IMRF

MRCC Abidjan (Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre Abidjan) started officially in August 2010 and is operated by Côte d’Ivoire Maritime Authority-Directorate General of Port and Maritime Affairs (DGAMP). MRCC Abidjan coordinates maritime SAR emergencies in Côte d’Ivoire waters.

The MRCC monitors distress frequencies, relays distress messages, acknowledges distress calls and assists in SAR mission coordination. It is staffed full time to ensure prompt reception and dissemination of distress messages. According to the resolutions of the IMO conference held in Florence/Italy in 2000, MRCC Abidjan is one of the sub-centres of the Monrovia Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (zone 2), it also monitors and evaluates Maritime Safety Information and manages the reception and dissemination of Maritime Security Information.

Roles of MRCC Abidjan

Safety
The MRCC is the SAR focal point, it is open 24/7 and is responsible for coordinating search and rescue in Ivorian waters. In response to an alert, the MRCC undertakes a series of actions according to the established procedures, starting from the sharing of information with the Operational Center of the Ivorian Navy, until the determination of the required assistance.

Security
Security duties include the reception of alerts, the collection and broadcasting of security information. Since 2010, Abidjan MRCC has also become involved in security missions.

Resources
For most missions in Ivorian waters, MRCC Abidjan relies on the Navy and the rescue tugs of a towing company, IRES. MRCC Abidjan does not have command of the naval assets directly but requests them according to the type of assistance required to carry out a maritime mission. Thanks to the International Maritime Organization, Ivorian Government and US Department of Transportation the MRCC has the communication technology listed. With this equipment, the MRCC receives both ship and earth station alerts. These are sent to naval forces, and to other centres in the sub-region, in accordance with the multilateral agreement signed in Monrovia with Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2007.

Challenges
Despite progress since the installation of Abidjan MRCC, many challenges remain. These challenges can be expressed in terms of:
- Capacity building of the staff;
- Information sharing with other MRCCs and/or other Operational Centres (OCCs);
- Annual exercises;
- Budgets substantial enough for operations and for the financing of activities;
- Advanced equipment for the reinforcement of surveillance means (Radar, Rescue boats).

2017 Statistics

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Staff
There are 20 members of Staff.
- Each watch consists of:
  - 1 Officer (SAR Mission Co-ordinator)
  - 2 Watch Officers
  - 2 Radio Operators

Communication Technology

- GMDSS station (restructure in progress)
- MF / HF, VHF radio transceivers
- 2 INMARSAT terminals Mini- C (Text/data).
- 1 BGAN Explorer 700 (Inmarsat voice) with 2 Satellite phones
- Maritime Safety and Security Information System (MSSIS)
- Seavision (Web Satellite AIS)
- AIS coastal station

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00 870 772 226 507
MF/HF : 2182 kHz
VHF : Channel 16
Emergency Telephone Number: 140
(in installation in progress)

The staff that man the MRCC have received various training thanks to partners like IMRF which has supported the MRCC since 2014. Shown above is a training session held in December 2017 with the support of IMRF and the Kingdom of Morocco.