

Master's Report to the AGM of the New Zealand Company of Master Mariners, held in Wellington on the 11th August, 2021.

It has been my honour to have served a sixth year as Master of the Company. I expressed the opinion last year that my 5 year tenure may have been a record, and so again, I wonder if that might be the case for a 6 year term in office as Master. But unlike last year, I am sure that I have come to the end of it as, I am pleased to say, someone has at last put his hand up for the job.

While on the subject of tenure as Master, I believe that it is important for that office to be held, where possible, for a longer period than a year, because very little can be achieved of significance to the Company and profession in such a short period of time.

Personally, I have enjoyed added respect when introduced as Master of the Company, which no doubt carries some reflected glory from the Honourable Company, as well as from our own reputation.

RNZRSA

Our influence with this body has not been assisted one little bit by the Covid 19 pandemic. While still the delegate to RNZRSA on behalf of Affiliate Member NZCMM, I was registered to attend RSA's Annual Conference last October, ready with remit in hand, as reported to members in last year's Master's Report. However, the physical meeting was cancelled, and a zoom meeting held instead. The zoom meeting allowed only one or two remits to be presented, which number did not include ours. In damage control, I sent our arguments in writing to the Council. Copy of remit and arguments added as the last item in this report.

Commemorations

Accompanied by my wife Marie, I attended Her Excellency Dame Patsy Reddy, the Governor General's Garden Party at Government House, Wellington, on **Waitangi Day**. An account of the visit was adequately covered in the General Secretary's newsletter of mid February. Photo repeated here.



Waitangi Day was the only commemoration to which the Master of the Company was specifically invited this year. I did, however, attend other functions in Auckland on behalf of the Wellington based New Zealand Merchant Navy Association Incorporated, and these were –

Armistice Day on the 11th November last, in the company of Auckland Warden Capt Chris Barradale. It was in the Hall of Memories at the Auckland War memorial Museum, where we both laid poppy tributes, and **Anzac Day** on Sunday 25th April, where again, I laid a poppy tribute on behalf of the New Zealand Merchant Navy. In this case, the Merchant Navy was offered both the Dawn Service and the 11 a.m. Civic Service. I arranged with Capt. Gerry Wright that he would attend the Dawn Service, and I the Civic Service.

Other

Although not part of my duties as Master, but nevertheless on behalf of the Company and other maritime societies, I hosted, for the 10th and last time, the **Maritime Societies' Annual Dinner** at the Northern Club, on the 4th December 2020.



We had 109 persons attend, which I think was our largest gathering, and 20 were NZCMM members and partners. Our Guest of Honour was to be CPT Simon Rooke (HMNZS AOTEAROA), but in the event he had to take his ship to Marsden Point on the date of our dinner in order to take on fuel prior to scheduled strike action in the immediately following days. But CDR Larry Robbins saved the day, and gave us a short (but interesting) address on “Africa Mercy”, with screen projections. Larry is seen at the rostrum, standing between CDR David “Topsy” Turner, our Dining President (MC) and me.

At the far left of the top picture above (pre dinner drinks), you might spot our esteemed AKL Branch Secretary Capt John Frankland.

Council

Our thanks are due to the Wardens and Committees of the 4 Branches, and special thanks to the General and Branch Secretaries and Treasurers for actually doing the work.

Arrivals and Departures

These matters are covered in the reports of the Branch Wardens and the General Secretary. As Master of the Company, and colleague, I believe that I have attended most services for those Auckland Branch members who have, sadly, passed on.

Remit and Supporting Arguments to RNZRSA, on the Merchant Navy as a Service.

To: President and Officers of RNZRSA National Council 2020,
The New Zealand Company of Master Mariners (Incorporated) have submitted the following remit to NATIONAL COUNCIL 2020 (see **attached for submitted copy**):

*To add the following to the Second Schedule of the (National Association) Rules:
Eligibility for Admission as a Service Member of a Local Association.*

(f) Merchant Navy

Any person who has served or is serving as a member of the crew of merchant vessels of the New Zealand or Commonwealth Merchant Navies, and has had a minimum of 3 years sea service on such vessels as evidenced by certificates of discharge, and who does not possess the necessary qualifications for Returned membership.

Our delegate to the Council, Captain Edward Ewbank – the Master of the Company, will propose, and speak to, the motion.

After perusing the agenda provided for the online meeting, and having in mind the advice given that only such matters as election of officers would be considered at this meeting, it appears that our remit may not be tabled, and even if it were, that there would be little if any time to speak to it.

Therefore, assuming that the remit will not be heard, the following are some of the arguments that I intended to use to support it:

1. RNZRSA are well aware of the losses suffered by Commonwealth Merchant Seafarers in two world wars.

WW1, 7.8 million tons of shipping and 14,600 merchant seafarers.

WW2, Battle of the Atlantic 1940-1943 inclusive, 11.7 million tons of shipping and 32,000 merchant seafarers.

Horrible losses, and a higher rate of attrition than any of the military services over that 3 year period.

2. The Merchant "Navy" earned its name when King George V bestowed the title of "Merchant Navy" on the British merchant shipping fleets following their service in the First World War. (A number of other

nations have since adopted the title). Our name prior to that was Mercantile Marine

3. So what happens to the Merchant Navy between conflicts? Does it go into hibernation? No! It continues to actively train its personnel to do the very things that it was doing while its ships were being sunk, and its personnel being drowned or burned or blown up, i.e., the transportation of goods and people. And furthermore, in the event of major hostilities, governments will not hesitate to requisition merchant ships and their crews to carry military cargoes, and perhaps troops.

4. **However, RSA does not recognise the Merchant Navy as a Service.** We are called the Fourth Service, but only if we have faced, or are facing the enemy. That loss of status does not happen to military personnel who have never served in times of conflict.

5. An organisation enjoying the status of Service Membership of RSA, whose members are not serving or retired military, is the NZCF - good on them. Our remit suggests the same length of qualifying service criterion as theirs.

6. NZ has never been afraid to lead the world in recognising and enabling just causes.

In the event that our remit is not heard and spoken to, on Saturday 3rd October, we request that the Directors of RNZRSA take the above arguments on board for serious consideration.

Kind regards,

Ted Ewbank

National Master, the New Zealand Company of Master Mariners (Inc)

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