



The Bahamas FLAG

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAHAMAS MARITIME AUTHORITY

SPRING 2009 • ISSUE NO. 22

Pirates! All ships must register with EUHOA and UKMTO

Forewarned is forearmed is an old adage but it remains good advice in many situations, not least when confronted with today's modern maritime menace – piracy and armed robbery at sea. With modern and deadly armaments increasingly available on the black market, and the lawlessness of countries like Somalia, a seismic shift in attitude has been prompted, not only within the shipping industry but also among governments across the world.

At the time of printing, there are some 35 warships in the east Africa area, including the EU Horn of Africa Naval Force. They are in the frontline of defence against piracy and the BMA sends its heartfelt thanks. But there is a great deal that shipowners, managers, Masters and crew can do to protect themselves from crime on the high seas.

According to many experts, being prepared is half the battle. Before entering a high risk area, shipowners and Masters must register their passage plan, and any subsequent changes, with the EUHOA taskforce and with the UKMTO, Dubai. They should also conduct a risk assessment on the likelihood of an attack, based on the latest available information. Early awareness has been identified as one of the most significant factors in successfully evading or repelling an attack.

But there are many other considerations. Pirates tend to operate from small, fast craft, perhaps linked to a mother-ship. These small craft are unlikely to launch an attack in rough weather conditions. Darkness tends to limit pirate activity, as does the speed of the vessel under attack. High speeds make boarding ladders a high risk gamble, one to be avoided.

A cornerstone of any response to an attack will be the Ship Security Plan (SSP) as required by the ISPS Code. Realistic drills and exercises that anticipate and prepare for a likely sequence of events if pirates do manage to board ship, is also an essential factor in both preventing an attack and protecting the lives of crew members. In addition, there are many areas where preparation and enhanced security can make all the difference. From watchkeeping and additional lookouts to CCTV, from distinctive alarms and upper deck lighting to the secure storage of tools and equipment, there are many precautions that can be taken to protect lives and cargo.

The BMA has issued new guidance and instructions in Bulletin 119 available on the BMA website. The Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), in conjunction with other international maritime organisations, has also produced a free booklet - Piracy – The East Africa/Somalia Situation – that includes many practical measures to avoid, deter or delay piracy attacks. Copies can be obtained from the BMA or downloaded from the internet.



Bahamian ships attacked



Reproduced by courtesy of www.fotoflite.com

Bahamas-flagged *Capt Stefanos*, with 19 crew on board, was hijacked by armed Somali pirates while more than 250 miles off the Somali East Coast on 21 September last year, laden with a cargo of South African steam coal, destined for Italy. The 74,077dwt panamax bulk carrier is owned by Osmium Shipping Corporation and managed by Charterwell Maritime SA of Glyfada,

Greece and was the second Greek managed ship to be boarded by pirates in less than a week. None of the crew were harmed and the carrier was freed on 6 December 2008 and the voyage thereafter resumed with the cargo safely delivered. The Master and the majority of the crew were Filipino nationals and were able to be reunited with their families just in time for Christmas.

Director's message

Like most of us, shipowners have cause to be concerned these days what with the global economic downturn affecting world trade and piracy on the high seas posing a real threat to lives and cargo. And although the increase in piracy continues to be a problem, the increased Naval presence in the region, the establishment of the EU Horn of Africa Naval Force ([www.MSA\(HOA\)](http://www.MSA(HOA))) and ships now taking appropriate action to protect themselves means that we have seen a reduction in incidents. However, one of the more worrying trends affecting the shipping industry is the continuing inclination of national governments to criminalise seafarers.



Seafarers have always been subject to criminal law since they took to the seas. And, as we all know, shipping is a high risk industry that can cause serious damage to life, property and the environment. Seafarers cannot expect special treatment but unfortunately the application of criminal law by many coastal states has become much more severe in recent years and in too many cases, seafarers are being treated unfairly. Criminalisation of seafarers for incidents involving a collision, grounding or spill, whether the seafarer is at fault or not is an unfortunate repercussion of society's all pervasive culture of blame. In many cases, authorities find a scapegoat rather than uncovering the true cause of an incident.

The Master of any vessel, Bahamas registered or not, can, depending on the circumstances, find himself subject to a whole range of different legal requirements that will be applied in various ways subject to the jurisdiction in which he finds himself. IMO/ILO Guidelines that give advice on steps to be taken by all those who may be involved following an incident - the port or coastal State, the flag State, the seafarer's State, the shipowner and seafarers themselves - have been in place for some time now but we must all do everything we can to highlight the plight of individuals caught up in these situations and make sure that seafarers' rights are protected wherever in the world they sail. In this context I applaud the work of the Mission to Seafarers which we also feature in this issue of the Flag.

We recognise the challenges faced by seafarers when we think about the IMO "Go to Sea" campaign which aims to attract entrants to the shipping industry, especially officers, and retain them for as long as possible thereafter in the profession. Continuing the fight against piracy and removing the fear of criminalisation will do much to solve the manpower shortage situation. If any reader has thoughts on how we can improve the situation and contribute to the "Go to Sea" campaign, please get in touch with me.

Finally, we must all think of the seafarers incarcerated by pirates or governments and do as much as we can for both them and their families.

BMA's Chairman – vision for the future

It is now a year since Ian Fair was appointed Chairman of the BMA, and his vision for the future of the Authority is very largely due to his wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge of international banking as well as the financial services industry of The Bahamas.



Ten years ago, realising that the many and varied organisations that made up The Bahamas financial services industry were all operating within their own individual silos, Mr Fair was involved with setting up the Bahamas Financial Services Board (BFSB) and was its Founding Chairman. The Board is a joint venture between government and the private sector; an umbrella organisation that provides a forum for discussion and for sharing best practice - a win-win synergy that benefits all involved.

So how does this experience translate into a working model for the BMA?

"There are many, many facets to the maritime industry in The Bahamas," said Mr Fair, "from private yachts, to cruise ships, from containers to dry dock facilities, from the Bahamas Register to inter-island shipping and most of them operate in isolation. In addition there are a number of shipowners who complain that the country's business and financial institutions do not always understand their needs and as a consequence do not provide the services they require. The BFSB and the BMA have been working closely together for some time now to make

sure that the country's financial services are better tailored to shipping companies' needs, in particular those with Nassau registered vessels. So I think there would be enormous advantages in bringing the maritime and financial services industries closer together. Such an arrangement would not only strengthen links between these sectors but also provide value added to The Bahamas economy as a whole."

"And it needn't stop there." Mr Fair said. "If we could forge closer links between our educational establishments and the maritime industry, the employment potential would be enormous. And since Freeport enjoys world-wide appeal it is easy to see that the opportunities for young Bahamians would be hugely exciting. Our thinking is still at the embryonic stage and naturally we would need government support to develop these ideas further but I am encouraged by the fact that the Minister has high ambitions for the maritime industry. In addition, shipowners are now showing an interest in establishing a home-grown Maritime Institute. There is much work to be done but I am confident that the BMA will continue to contribute to strengthening our economy."

LRIT update - Bahamas Data Centre one of the first to be IMO compliant and fully operational

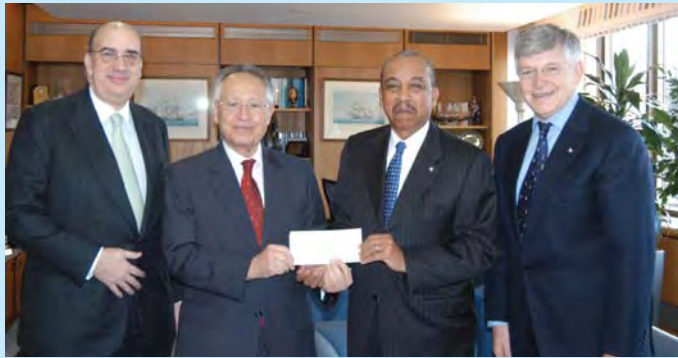
Recognising the fundamental aim of enhancing maritime security and the expanded scope of maritime safety and protection of the marine environment, the Bahamas Maritime Authority has continued to actively participate in IMO meetings about LRIT. The Bahamas was one of seven countries that participated in the prototype testing of the LRIT system and our efforts were formally recognised with the signing of the agreement on 5 December 2008 with the IMO (during the 85th MSC session) confirming that our LRIT Data Centre was fully compliant with international requirements.

The Bahamas LRIT Data Centre was integrated into the international LRIT system, making The Bahamas one of only

five of the 158 SOLAS contracting parties to have a fully operational LRIT Data Centre by the SOLAS compliance date of 31 December 2008. To date more than 25% of the Bahamas flagged fleet is integrated into the Bahamas LRIT Data Centre with our Owners taking the required measures to ensure that their vessels undergo the required LRIT conformance test by the due date of the vessel's radio related survey.

The BMA commends all parties who have contributed to the achievement of this milestone and, recognising the importance of technical co-operation, the Authority has offered its services to assist any SOLAS contracting party that is engaging in prototype testing of their LRIT Data Centre.

Bahamas presents £1.2million to IMO



l to r Peter Goulandris, Efthimios Mitropoulos, Paul H Farquharson, Ian Fair

On 29 January 2009, Bahamas High Commissioner, Paul H Farquharson, presented a cheque for £1,285,337 to IMO's Secretary General, Efthimios Mitropoulos, to settle the assessed budget contribution to IMO from The Bahamas Government for the coming year. Also present were Mr Ian Fair, Chairman of the Bahamas Maritime Authority and Peter Goulandris, BMA's Deputy Chairman.

New Deputy Chairman for BSA



Mr Chris Oliver, Vice President, Fleet Performance for Gearbulk, has been elected Deputy Chairman of the Bahamas Shipowners Association following the resignation of Mr Ken Engstrom. Mr Oliver has worked for Gearbulk since 1994 and has served on the Shipowners Committee as Gearbulk's representative since 1997.

Commenting on his appointment Mr Oliver said he was delighted to have been considered as an appropriate candidate by his peers for the role of Deputy Chairman. "I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with other members of the committee and with the BMA to achieve the goals of the Authority," he said, "including representing other Bahamian shipowners in the best possible manner."

Mr Oliver can be contacted by members at any time should they wish to raise issues for the committee to discuss.

BMA welcomes Miami COE



l to r Ken McLean, Rear Admiral James Watson, Stan Deno

The USCG established its first Cruise Ship Centre of Expertise (COE) in Miami in September last year and BMA's Ken McLean attended the

inauguration ceremony. Miami has long been considered the cruise ship capital of the world and the cruise ship industry is an important growth industry in the US, so it makes perfect sense for the first COE to be located in the city. The COE will be responsible for training Coast Guard cruise ship inspectors on examination requirements of cruise ships in the areas of safety, security and environmental protection. This is the first in a series of Centres of Expertise that will be located throughout the USA.

The COE concept is one of several initiatives in the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Performance Plan that takes a five-year forward view of what is required to keep pace with the maritime industry's growth and consequent needs. Prevention is the key for both the Coast Guard and the cruise ship industry. "We are always assessing our performance, making course corrections or charting new courses and we understand that our success depends on a strong foundation of partnership with our maritime stakeholders," said Rear Admiral James Watson, Coast Guard Director of Prevention Policy. Stan Deno, Director of Operations for the International Council of Cruise Lines said that the industry values the relationship with the Coast Guard.

The Bahamas congratulates the USCG on the inauguration of the Miami COE which recognises the USCG in the chain of responsibility for cruise ship safety.

New Maritime Institute for Bahamas

In November last year, Bahamas Minister of the Environment, Dr The Hon Earl D Deveaux, gave the opening address at the BSA AGM. He said that The Bahamas had positioned itself to remain competitive in the maritime industry especially given its geographical position and legal infrastructure. But he also highlighted a significant challenge – the shortage of trained Bahamian mariners. This affected both the BMA and Bahamas shipowners. He praised the vision and initiative of Mr Anthony Price for establishing the foundations of a world class Maritime Training Institute in The Bahamas.

"The Institute will train seafarers of all ranks," he said, "and talks are well advanced with the Government, the Grand Bahama Port Authority, the College of The Bahamas, soon to be the university, and the Ministry of Education, to establish this critical component for the industry."



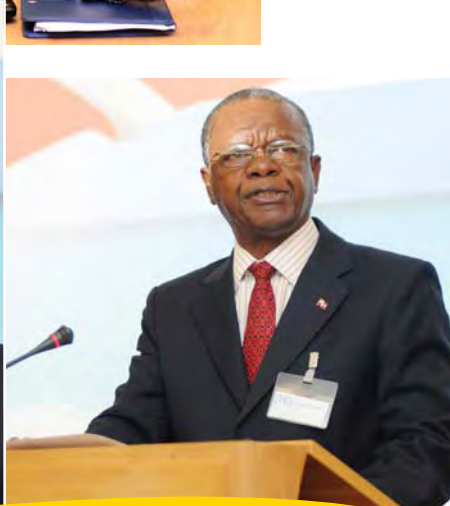
THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Revitalisation of Nassau

The Bahamas strategic location makes it a very popular cruise destination and according to Dr Deveau, "To further enhance this aspect of the Bahamian tourist industry, the Government of The Bahamas, in partnership with private sector stakeholders, has embarked on an initiative to revitalise the port and city of Nassau and to relocate commercial shipping from downtown Nassau to Arawak Cay."

The Nassau Harbour will be dredged and enlarged to accommodate the world's largest cruise ships by the end of 2009.



Mission for seafarers ready for new challenges

Back in 1837, John Ashley, a young Anglican clergyman, was horrified by the plight of seafarers in Bristol and the appalling conditions they had to endure both at sea and in port, with no organisation or individual to champion their cause or provide spiritual ministry. He renounced his parish and became their self-appointed chaplain. As a result, the Missions to Seamen was founded in 1856 and by 1956, 100 years later, it had established centres in 81 ports worldwide.

Now known as the Mission to Seafarers, it cares for the spiritual and practical welfare of seafarers worldwide, regardless of their gender, nationality or faith.

Over the years, the Mission has provided accommodation for seafarers to protect them from exploitation and poverty while they were in port. It has given support and understanding and it has helped seafarers get fair treatment from their managers and shipowners. It now runs centres in more than 100 ports worldwide. Last year alone, 72,000 ships were visited, 230,000 international calls were connected, seafarers were provided with 280,000 phone cards and 600 seafarers were visited in hospitals.

Today seafarers face ever-increasing physical, cultural and social isolation and set against the current economic climate, the Mission faces new challenges. "The shipping industry is in its worst slump for thirty years and already we have seen a rise in demand for our services from seafarers spending time on ships that have been laid up," said Bill Christianson, the Mission's Secretary General. "Whilst some ships aren't going anywhere, there are still skeleton crews onboard these vessels who require our care

and assistance. We believe that, because of the economic situation currently facing the world, demand for our services will be in greater demand in 2009 than in the last five years. Seafarers are uncertain about their future. They worry how they will continue to support their families back home and they need someone to confide in. Our chaplains are always on hand to provide whatever support is necessary to them and their families. "



families of captured crew and have worked with seafarers after their release to ease their transition back into society. And whilst we welcome the steps that the international community is taking to combat this seemingly growing problem – especially off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden – these attacks will continue, until the problems of

With piracy posing ever increasing risks, the Mission's chaplains are having to deal with an unprecedented situation. According to Bill Christianson, "Our chaplains have already been involved in providing care for the

lawlessness and social breakdown are combated, particularly in Somalia. 32 innocent seafarers lost their lives last year simply because they were doing their job. More needs to be done to combat this menace and to protect innocent men and women on whom world trade depends. Spending months away at sea is difficult enough without the added threat of piracy attacks."

As with all charitable organisations, the Mission relies on donations. The current downturn is causing concern as charitable giving is down on previous years. "Our Christmas appeal saw more people giving to the Mission but, because of the recession, the amount given fell by 28 per cent." said Bill. "Obviously we understand that people are giving careful consideration to their own finances before making donations, however, the need for our services is greater in today's climate than in the times of plenty. Seafarers are looking to us for answers and assistance which we will continue to provide. But we can only do so when we are supported by passionate donors who want their contributions to make a difference to seafarers' lives. "



The Mission's flying angel logo is inspired by a verse from the Book of Revelation:

"Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth, to every nation and tribe, language and people"



Caring for seafarers around the world

Registered charity no: 212432 Scottish charity no: SC039211

Bahamas cadet programme – success story continues



The Bahamas Maritime Cadet programme was started in 2003 with the aim of introducing high school students to their historic maritime tradition and to open their eyes to the many and varied career opportunities available in the international shipping industry. The Bahamas Marine Cadet Corps (BMCC) conducts twice weekly after school classes for students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 from 25 local high schools. There they are taught navigation, rules of the road, seamanship, fire-fighting and vessel husbandry and before graduating they must undergo the basic STCW course at The Bahamas Defence Force Base.

Graduates are given advice on institutions of higher learning and are encouraged to pursue studies in Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering. Currently 200 students are enrolled in the programme and by June 2009 some 244 will have graduated.



Bahamas carrier rescues rowers

Bahamas registered bulk carrier *Island Ranger*, on passage from Brazil to Italy, was involved in a search and rescue mission on 15 January this year.

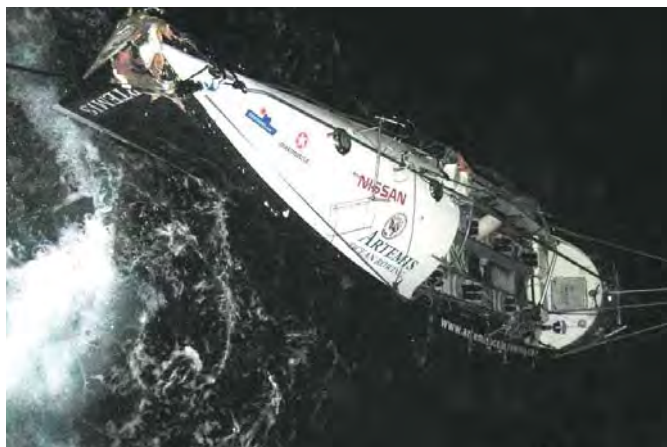


A 14-man crew on board the British ocean rowboat *La Mondiale*, was taking part in the "Trade Winds" Row from Gran Canaria to Barbados. They were attempting to break the current race record and raise £1 million for charity in the process. The race started well on Sunday 4 January and the crew, which consisted of several nationalities – Canadian, Irish, Scottish, British and Faroese - was making good progress. In fact they were three days ahead of the existing record, when disaster struck.

The crew discovered that the rudder had broken away – it may have been struck by a whale but because they didn't feel any impact they couldn't be sure. At first, the crew attempted to make a temporary

repair to the rudder and even hoisted a make-shift sail, but after 36 hours of manual steering and unfavourable weather conditions forecast for the next few days, it became clear that they would have to abandon the race.

Falmouth Maritime and Rescue Coordination Centre coordinated the search and rescue operation and all 14 crew members were safely rescued. The BMA would like to thank the Master of *Island Ranger*, Capt Leonid Panamaryov, and his crew for conducting such a professional and successful operation, which goes to the heart of being a seafarer.



Questions we're often asked...

Ship Security Officer (SSO) certification

Q Who needs a SSO certificate of proficiency ?

A In accordance with STCW Regulation VI/5, all persons designated onboard as a SSO must have a SSO Certificate of Proficiency issued by a STCW party or an Administration /Organisation duly approved or authorised by an STCW party.

Q Is there a requirement for a flag state endorsement for a SSO ?

A No, there is no requirement for the flag state to issue an endorsement for an SSO. Persons with an SSO certificate issued by/on behalf/on approval of a STCW party recognised by the Bahamas (see Annex 3 of BMA Information Bulletin no. 108) will be deemed to satisfy the requirements of STCW Regulation VI/5.

Q What about certificate issued/training undertaken prior to the regulation coming into force?

A All training undertaken/certificate issued prior to 01 January 2008 will be accepted until 01 July 2009. After the 01 July 2009, the affected persons will have to obtain a SSO Certificate of Proficiency issued in accordance with STCW Regulation VI/5.

Q Will the BMA issue a Certificate for persons who have undergone training (e.g. in-house, etc) and issued certification (SSO/CSO) that has not been approved by a STCW party recognised by the BMA ?

A Yes, these persons should submit an application (form available for downloading from the BMA website), applicable documentary evidence and associated fees (currently US\$90) to the BMA London or Nassau Office.

Q What are the Bahamas requirements for SSO ?

A A BMA Information Bulletin 118 provides information and guidance on the Bahamas requirements. Any queries can be directed to the BMA at: stcw@bahamasmaritime.com



Your comments

If you have any comments about the Flag or need to tell us of a change of address please contact us.

edit@bahamasmaritime.com
120 Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1AR,
United Kingdom

News in brief...

New appointments

Paul Rolle



Assistant Superintendent Paul Rolle was appointed to the position of Police Liaison to the Bahamas Maritime Authority in 2008. He is attached to the Central Detective Unit (CDU) in Nassau, Bahamas. He has served in the Royal Bahamas Police Force for 26 years, 25 of them in the Central Detective Unit in various capacities.

Mr Rolle is responsible for ensuring a coordinated investigation into all crimes that occur on Bahamian registered ships throughout the world. He serves as a link between the BMA and other government agencies.

In addition to Mr Rolle's responsibilities for maritime affairs, he also serves as a member of the Bahamas Oil Spill Contingency Committee and the National Cyber Incident Response Team. He has a policing remit for the Cyber Crime Unit, Technical Support Services at CDU and the Sexual Offences Unit.

Mr Rolle holds a Diploma in Law, a degree in Public Administration from the College of The Bahamas, a Bachelor of Science degree in Professional Management from Nova Southeastern University and a Master of Science degree in Criminology from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom.

Constantina Tseretopoulos



Constantina joined the London office of the Bahamas Maritime Authority as a Registration Assistant in December 2008. Prior to taking up her appointment at the BMA, she attended Rollins College in Orlando, Florida where she graduated with a degree in Anthropology. She then went on to attain a degree in Law (LL.B) (Hons) from the University of Bristol, England.

Stephen Keenan



Mr Keenan was appointed to the Technical Section of the BMA in January 2009 as a Technical & Compliance Officer.

Mr Keenan completed a three-year accelerated cadetship, at South Tyneside College in 1991 and subsequently became a seagoing Engineer Officer with UK MoD. He then went on to work for the Esso Petroleum Company, London & Overseas

Freighters and Global Marine Systems (Cable & Wireless Marine). In 2000 Mr Keenan moved into ship management with Global Marine Systems. He has also worked for MOL Tankship Management, Sealion Shipping and, most recently, as Technical Manager at Clipper Marine Services Ltd in Southampton. He has experience of various vessel types including tankers and offshore vessels.

Mr Keenan holds a Class 1 Marine Engineer Certificate of Competency and a Higher National Diploma in Engineering and is currently studying for LLB(Hons) by distance learning. He is registered with the UK Engineering Council as an Incorporated Engineer and Incorporated Marine Engineer.