



THE AUXILIARIST

Vol. 6, 1992

"Lifetime Dedication To Safety"

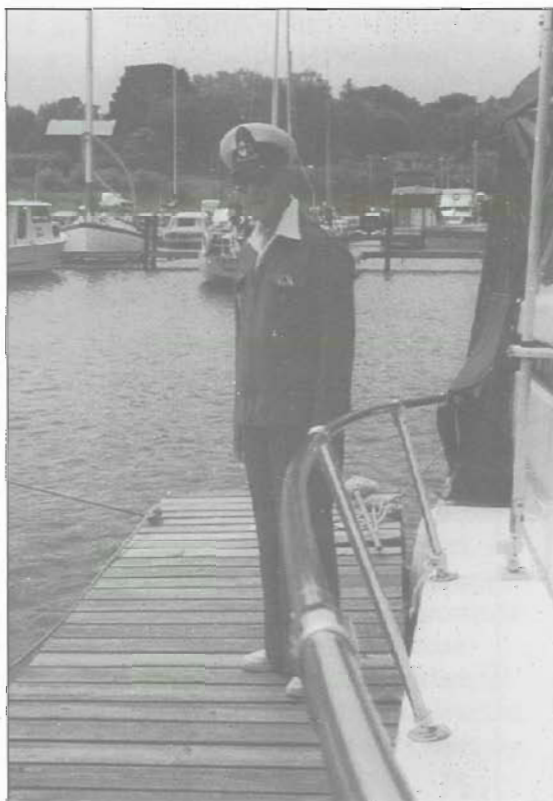
Editor, "The Auxiliarist":

While Operations receive most of the high profile attention, Prevention activities often go unrecognized. However, their importance should not be underestimated as they play a vital role in developing good safety practices amongst the marine population, which in time reduces the number of incidents to which we must respond.

One member who has distinguished himself in the area of Prevention is Mr. Sidney Turner of the Owen Sound Rescue Auxiliary in Central Region. Mr. Turner among other marine safety interests (Past Commodore Georgian Yacht Club, Past Commander Owen Sound Power & Sail Squadron, and many more well earned credits) started about 25 years ago as one of the founding members of the Search and Rescue Masters group in the Georgian Bay area. In 1964 and 1965 Mr. Turner worked closely with the crew of the *Spindrift*, the "S" Class cutter of the Coast Guard, under the direction of the late Captain Gordon Holder.

When Mr. Turner retired from operational duty after many years of service due to age restrictions, he turned his attention to Prevention and became a small vessel courtesy inspector.

Since the inspection system was launched, Mr. Turner has in all likelihood been credited with the most inspections of any Auxiliarist in Canada, with 160 inspections in 1990, and 155 inspections in 1991. Mr. Turner carries out so many inspections that local mariners get in line to make appointments.



It is therefore a pleasure to comment on the active inspection program made available to the Owen Sound and Bruce Peninsula area by Mr. Turner. This summer Mr. Turner, now in his 80's, will be carrying out his dedication with more inspections.

Donald J. Capel
Aux. Member #282
Owen Sound, Ontario



Letter To The Editor

Editor, "The Auxiliarist":

I am writing to express my appreciation for your newsletter "The Auxiliarist", which I have been receiving for the past few years. I was, for some time, a member of the CMRA while I was active in the fishing industry. At the present time, I am no longer in the fishing business, having sold out and am now working ashore.

I am convinced that the CMRA is doing excellent work, as I have seen evidence in my own area of Grand Manan Island, and have myself on occasion needed assistance while fishing. Members of this group have also provided valuable service to families of fishermen lost at sea, often

after dark. I believe the CMRA is providing an excellent service to fishermen, since these people are most familiar with the area they are operating in, and are a vital part of Search & Rescue.

Marvin A. Tate
Grand Harbour, N.B.

THE AUXILIARIST

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News items and photographs should be sent to:

Editor, The Auxiliarist
Canadian Coast Guard
Search and Rescue
344 Slater St., 7th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N7

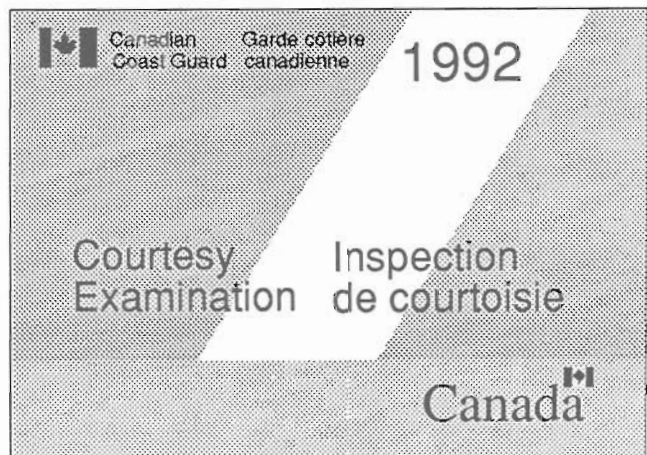
or FAX us at 613-996-8902

Opinions expressed are those of the author and may not always represent official TC/CCG policy.

Courtesy Vessel Examinations

The busy summer season is now upon us, and the Coast Guard's Prevention program is in full gear. The Courtesy Vessel Examination Program plays a vital role in preventing many incidents by ensuring vessel owners/operators are carrying the required and recommended safety equipment. If you are inter-

ested in becoming a courtesy examiner, please contact your region's SAR Prevention and Auxiliary Coordinator for more information.



AGM News

CMRA-W's Annual General Meeting

Western Region's 1991/1992 Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary Annual General Meeting was held March 6-8th, 1992 in Nanaimo, British Columbia. Members may be interested in knowing that:

- Fred Switzer was re-elected President of CMRA(W), and Ralph Ashton became Vice President.
- Mr. Robert Redhead retired from the CMRA(W) Board of Directors in 1990. In recognition of his work and long-term commitment in making the CMRA an effective volunteer Search and Rescue organization, Mr. Redhead was awarded the Certificate of Merit for Volunteers by Mr. Art Mountain, Director, Search and Rescue, CCG.
- 1991 Statistical Highlights:
 - There are now 348 vessels involved in CMRA (W).
 - Members were involved in 537 incidents, approximately 25% of total Western Region incidents.
 - Answering 98 distress calls, CMRA members saved 170 lives, and assisted 1,094 others in 438 non-distress incidents.

CMRA-C Annual General Meeting

On the weekend of February 7-9th, 1992, the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary, Central Region Auxiliary held its 13th Annual General Meeting in Oshawa, Ontario. Following are some points of interest for members:

- Mr. Earl Taylor was re-elected President. In addition to his duties as President, Mr. Taylor will also be holding the position of CMRA National Council Chairman. The National Council, composed of the five CMRA Presidents, represents the Auxiliary in their common dealings with the Director Search and Rescue, Canadian Coast Guard.
- Mr. George Bush, past Director of Central Region CMRA's 8th District was elected Vice President.
- Mr. Ed Buckley of the Pickering Auxiliary Rescue Unit (PARU) was presented with the Director CCG SAR Certificate of Merit for Volunteers in appreciation of his unit's longtime dedication to SAR Operations and Prevention on Lake Ontario.
- Mr. Lawrence Swift, CCG Central Region Auxiliary Coordinator, unveiled the new Integrated Training Program for Auxiliary Members. There is a wide range of courses which offer members a logical progression based on their needs.
- 1991 Statistical Highlights:
 - CMRA members conducted 505 Small Vessel Courtesy Examinations.
 - 60 CMRA training courses were held, with over 500 members receiving training on a variety of topics.
 - CMRA units responded to 420 SAR taskings.
 - CMRA members conducted 65 public presentations/displays.

Past CMRA National Council Chairman Honoured

On April 1, 1992, Mr. Harry Strong, past Chairman of the CMRA National Council handed over the chairmanship of the Council to Mr. Earl Taylor, President of CMRA(C).

The strength and success of the organization he takes over can be primarily attributed to the efforts of individuals such as Mr. Strong. When the idea of forming an auxiliary was first conceived in the late seventies, it was people like Harry who saw the potential for the organization, and who were willing to give it the support it needed in its formative years. Today, the CMRA is a vital component of the Canadian Search and Rescue system.

Mr. Strong has been with the Auxiliary since its inception in 1978. He was President of CMRA (N) from 1981 to 1989, and took over the position of National Council Chairman in 1990.

In recognition of his longtime dedication, Mr. Strong has been awarded an honorary lifetime CMRA membership by Mr. Arthur Mountain, Director, Search and Rescue, Canadian Coast Guard.

IMO News - World Maritime Day

World Maritime Day is celebrated every year towards the end of September - the actual day is decided upon by the Governments of each member State.

Maritime Day provides an opportunity to focus attention on the International Marine Organization (IMO) in general, and on a particular aspect of the Organization's work. This year's (1991-92) theme is "Passenger and crew safety on board ships."

The United Nations adopted a convention in 1948 establishing the IMO, which entered into force in 1958, and for the first time the maritime world had a permanent forum where safety and other issues could be discussed.

The IMO's chief responsibilities upon its inception

included preventing pollution from ships and legal issues such as liability, compensation, and the facilitation of international maritime traffic. However, the IMO's greatest concern is the safety of life at sea.

The major source of statistical information for the IMO comes from Lloyd's Register of Shipping, which reveals that in 1989, the gross tonnage of shipping lost was at its lowest level since 1971; however, 688 people lost their lives at sea. The worst year for lives lost came in 1987, the year of the *Dona Paz* and the *Herald of Free Enterprise* disasters, with 3,841 fatalities.

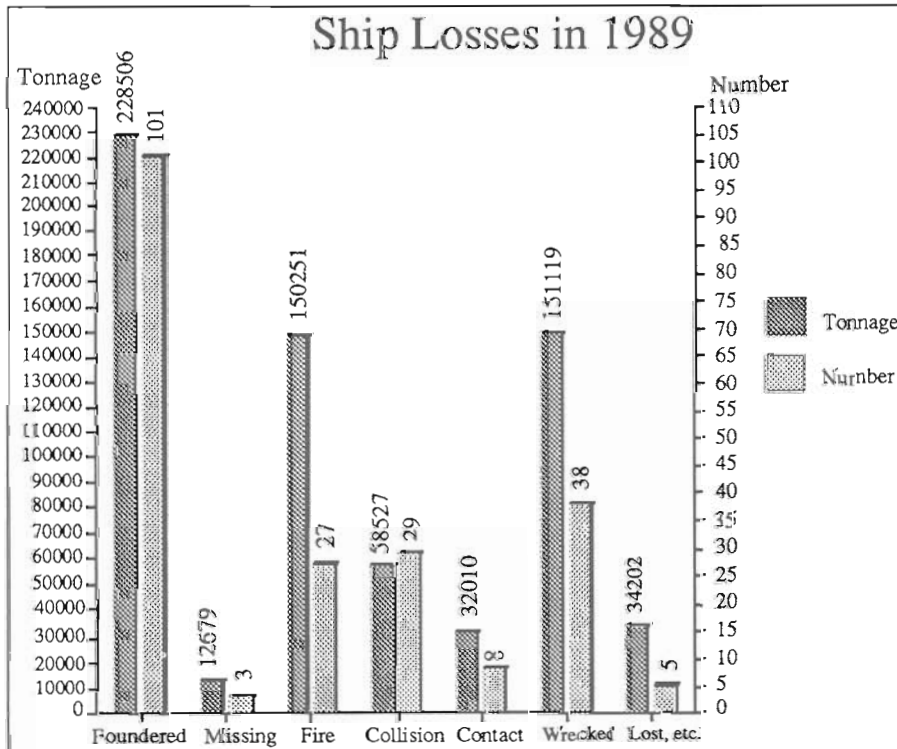
The IMO's most important function is to act as a forum where maritime nations can meet to discuss matters of mutual interest. Treaties or conventions are the most important legal

instruments for installing measures adopted by the IMO. Some of these have been accepted by over 100 countries and apply to more than 96 percent of the world's merchant ships.

Because shipping has changed so much during the last thirty years it is difficult to judge the IMO's full impact on marine safety; however, there has been a reduction in the percentage of ships lost at sea and the casualties associated with them. Conversely, in the last few years the improvement in the accident rate has slowed and even been reversed. In response, Mr. William O'Neill, Secretary General of the Maritime Safety Committee (IMO's senior technical body) has recommended the adoption of measures regarding the

survivability of RO-RO passenger ferries, which have a tendency to capsize suddenly on intake of water, that the safety level of older vessels be brought as far up-to-date as possible, and that new design requirements for tankers be adopted to better prevent cargo spillage.

The CCG applauds the IMO's efforts towards improving marine safety on a global scale, and given its paramount concern with marine safety, we will continue to be an active participant and contributor to the organization.



Source: Lloyd's Register

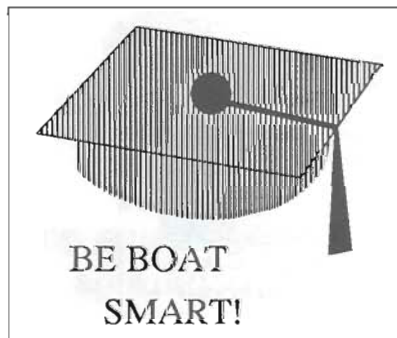
1992 Safe Boating Week

Safe Boating Week '92, aimed at pleasure craft operators who are involved in the majority of SAR incidents (56% in 1990), runs from June 7-13. Help spread the "BE BOAT SMART!" message around!

This year, the CCG will be focusing its efforts on the following issues:

- Wear a life jacket or PFD,
- Don't Drink and Boat,
- Take a Boating Safety Course.

By addressing these issues the CCG hopes to reduce the number of fatalities and the number of non-distress incidents such as breakdowns and navigational errors to which SAR resources must respond. Studies show that alcohol is involved in approximately one third of all incidents, and that roughly three quarters of all boating fatalities involve victims who were not wearing their life jackets or personal flotation devices. Furthermore, Coast Guard statistics for 1990 show that more than 50% of all incidents involve non-distress type mechanical breakdowns and navigational errors.



Beacon Blunder

At 2034 GMT on March 14th, 1992, the Canadian Mission Control Centre in Trenton, Ontario advised Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) Halifax that a 406 MHz EPIRB was active in a position 1310 nautical miles East of Halifax (Mid Atlantic). Another satellite pass confirmed the actual position was in the Halifax Search and Rescue Region and the image position was in Falmouth SRR. Unlike EPIRBs that operate on 121.5 MHz the 406 beacons send a coded message with a registration number and country of origin. This information can be used to obtain the name of the vessel and contact numbers so that rescue authorities can call the owner and obtain all available information on the vessel in distress. In most cases if the vessel is a commercial ship a simple call on INMARSAT or via a coastal radio station will verify if it is an accidental activation within minutes. However, in this case the subject was a yacht...

Calls were made to Italy where the yacht was registered to a corporation. There was no answer at either of the listed numbers due in part to the fact that it was early Saturday morning and it is unlikely that anyone was near the phone at this company. HMC G Falmouth contacted RCC Rome and tried to obtain information on the registered vessel. Unfortunately, the controllers in Rome could not provide information on the yacht until they could contact the marine registry later

in the day. Attempts to contact someone who could provide vital information were hampered due to all these factors.

Meanwhile United States Coast Guard RCC New York provided an AMVER (Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System) report, or surface picture, to RCC Halifax. These surpics provide a list of vessels within a given radius capable of being tasked to assist SAR. They consist of merchant vessels of all nationalities who voluntarily provide details of their voyages to the USCG who plot their positions by computer so that an RCC can obtain information on what vessels are in a given area capable of responding to a distress. Efforts to contact several of these vessels were successful. Five vessels diverted to assist the yacht (one vessel alone spent 19 hours on this incident). Three aircraft expended a total of 37 hours in the search. RCC Halifax primary SAR aircraft were obliged to remain overnight in the Azores before returning to Canada. This caused RCC Halifax to requisition another SAR aircraft from another Canadian RCC to hold "Stand By" in the Halifax region.

As it turned out the registered owner of the EPIRB had loaned it to a friend engaged in a transatlantic voyage on another yacht. At some time during the night this friend noticed that somehow the EPIRB had accidentally been activated and promptly turned it off, blissfully unaware that three aircraft and five ships were enroute to assist him. When RCC

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Beacon Blunder

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Halifax finally obtained confirmation that the EPIRB was on board another yacht, the only way we could verify its situation was via a HAM radio operator who was keeping a schedule with the yacht on a daily basis.

The moral of this case is simple: if your EPIRB is accidentally activated, switch it off and make every effort to advise the nearest RCC of the FREQUENCY (121.5/406 MHz), TIME and POSITION that you did this. Above all, take the time to learn how to arm or set your EPIRB properly and avoid causing false alarms. Remember that while these ships and aircraft are responding to a false alarm, they are not available for responding to the real thing. The expense and delay caused can only be estimated. A C130 Hercules costs in excess of three thousand dollars an hour to operate. It has been so long since I served on a merchant ship that I could not even guess at the costs incurred by the five ships. To make matters worse, we were searching for life rafts or survivors from the wrong yacht and not looking for a 50 ft sloop sailing at 10 knots in a NE direction. When the EPIRB was switched off the search had only just started, the aircraft and ships were still in transit to the scene. The fact that the signal went dead could mean that the EPIRB was consumed by fire, sank with the vessel, was malfunctioning or as in this case was switched off. Not gifted with second sight the searchers continued until the yacht was

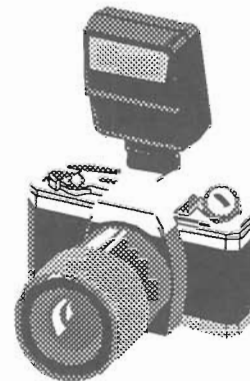
contacted and found safe.

Good seamanship means learning about your equipment and using it properly, failure to do so means the SAR system will be overloaded with false alarms. On an average day mission control centres handle 30 to 50 EPIRB cases worldwide. Only a small percentage of these are actual distress cases.

In Canada in 1991, the Sarsat system was responsible for the successful resolution of 53 actual distress cases. On the other hand accidentally activated EPIRBs accounted for 466 false alarms... food for thought?

David S. Lever MRIN
Marine Controller
RCC Halifax

CMRA Photo Contest



Members, send us a 5x7 colour photograph of your unit in action by July 2, 1992. Judges will decide on the winning picture and the winner will receive a "Smart Boaters" T-shirt with the popular "Noah's Ark" artwork as a prize! The top three pictures will appear in the next issue of "The Auxiliarist". Please submit your photos to Photo Contest, care of the Editor.



We lost our anchor in last night's storm. Can you make us a giant loaf of your banana nut bread?