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BSMARE  BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING

BSMTE  BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARINE TRANSPORTATION AND ENGINEERING

CENTER FOR ADVANCE MARITIME STUDIES

COURSES OFFERED:

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARINE TRANSPORTATION (MARINE SUPERINTENDENT)

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING (TECHNICAL SUPERINTENDENT)

TESTING ASSESSMENT CENTER OF TESDA

MAAP Profile

Geographic destiny has given the Filipino the innate talent to be an excellent seafarer. To enhance this natural skill, the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) was established on January 14, 1998. The Academy stands on a 103-hectare property in Kamaya Point, Mariveles, Bataan.

The Associated Marine Officer’s and Seamen’s Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) founded by the late Capt. Gregorio S. Oca, capitalized and developed the Academy. The new AMOSUP President, Dr. Conrado F. Oca, heads the Academy’s board of governors. The board is comprised of representatives from the private sector, the International Transport Workers Federation, the Filipino Association of Maritime Employers, the International Mariners Management Association of Japan, the Norwegian Seafarer’s Union, the International Maritime Employers’ Committee, the Danish Shipowners’ Association, the Norwegian Shipowners’ Association, and the Japan Shipowners’ Association.

MAAP conducts shipboard training aboard T/S Kapitan Felix Oca, a 5020 DWT dedicated training ship capable of accommodating 180 midshipmen and 9 instructors in 30 air-conditioned cabins and six berths.
Welcome. Gender equality and women empowerment remain the primary concerns that besiege women's participation across many industries. The UN consequently devotes a week or month each year to observe what has been done and what still needs to be done to achieve them.

In the male-dominated world of shipping and seafaring, women strive to push stakeholders to double their efforts in reducing the gender gap and quash existing policies that promote gender discrimination and other forms of biases like race and age.

This edition tackles the opportunities for women seafarers to get more shipboard employment as it is the only means our female officers and crew could be recognised in the industry and reduce the gender gap in seafaring.

Seafaring has always been a profession that is full of potential dangers that include the threat of heavy weather or rough seas, fire, and other hazards. Most ships provide how the crew must regularly train—this and more you will find on the fire drill feature that you will learn in this issue.

Relative to potential dangers, you will find that there is still much to be done to address the incidents of death at enclosed spaces on board ships caused by asphyxiation and oxygen-deficient atmospheres or explosions—incidents that saw a shocking increase over recent months.

We take another look at the state of seafarers' mental health as we pay attention to how seafarers feel with regard to their wellness and emotional wellbeing. In this focus, you’ll get updated with some of the key aspects that companies should consider to improve the mental health of seafarers not only at sea but ashore as well.

The upgrading of two of our hospital sections provides a level of improvement in servicing our female members and their dependents. You’ll find how the Maternity Ward catches up with increasing patients and corresponding paper requirements, while the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit builds up its technology in caring for the newborns, both for critically-ill and pre-matures.

As more women try to get into the men’s world of seafaring, having a club of their own will not be far behind. Women seafarers, as well as the men, now have a team to cheer for when the newest club in the Philippine Super Liga dedicated to represent maritime workers sees action in mid-June.

Finally, we continue our series of stories among our members.

Now in its ninth part, the segment comes with narratives that vary with specks of shortcomings, struggles and successes of our ship officers and crews in the pursuit of their profession.

Happy Sailing Forward!

Dr Conrado F Oca

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The great passage

Text by ANDY DALISAY
Photography by Captain NOEL GABRIDO

Like the idiom “water under the bridge”, which means bygones to be bygones, ship passage under this bridge literally brings memories worthy of some bygone events many seafarers could relate with.

Sailing under The Great Belt Bridge (pictured), for instance, conjures memories of both thrill and sorrow among sailors who have seen their ship in transit under the 19km long-fixed link in Storebaelt, Denmark. Sorrow for those whose vessel hit the bridge itself or collided with another vessel down the shipping lane. But it’s a thrill for those who have seen their ship making the tight squeeze with just a few inches to spare.

Like any other marine structure, the Great Belt Bridge, which connects the two major Danish islands of Funen and Zealand, is not spared from accidents. The flyover, which was constructed in 1988-98, has three different parts: the East Bridge for road transport, the East tunnel for rail, and the West Bridge for road and rail transport combined.

Danish official records showed the link on the western part (West Bridge) had been struck by sea traffic twice. The first was in 1993, when it was still under construction.

At the time, the ferry Romso drifted off course due to bad weather. The other incident was in March 2005, when the full Croatian-crowed cargo ship Karen Danielsen crashed into the West Bridge that killed the ship officer on the watch and injured 10 crewmembers including the captain. Just March last year, the 25,000 DWT containership Delphis Gdansk and the 37,000 DWT bulker BBC Neptune collided along the Great Belt.

Provisions about mandatory pilotage for certain ships like oil, gas and chemical tankers are imposed on harbours within its VTS (vessel traffic separation) area. The IMO in one of its resolutions also recommends: “ships of over 40,000 DWT, irrespective of size and draught, carrying radioactive materials when passing through the entrances to the Baltic Sea should participate in the ship reporting system operated by the government of Denmark.”

With the increasing size of modern ships, the Great Belt has become the most frequently used route for the passage of large vessels entering or leaving the Baltic Sea. But how does a big ship fit under the Great Belt Bridge, say, a modern cruise liner that sails as tall as the conduit above the waterline? This is the thrilling part, according to some.

The RCCL’s Allure of the Seas comes to mind, which has made a heart-stopping moment when the 225,282 GT cruise ship first squeezed under the bridge in 30th October 2010. The Allure master,
Captain Hernan Zini, said it was “the great excitement of the day.” The cruise line’s passage was well followed by international media as the then newly-built Allure sailed from a Finnish shipyard in Turku to Fort Lauderdale, Florida for its official naming ceremony.

According to Captain Zini, the normal height of the Allure from the water level to the top is about 73m (240ft). But the vessel couldn’t be higher than 65m (213ft) to safely cross under the bridge, he said. To avoid any incident, the crew lowered the ship’s twin funnels, adjusted the ballast so the ship would add weight (sitting low in the water) and boosted its speed.

“When you increase the speed in relatively confined waters the ship has a suction effect from the bottom and that actually makes the ship go a bit deeper into the water,” explained the shipmaster in a YouTube channel posted by Danish travel blogger Mogens Hallas.

The naval station monitoring the passage at the time said a 20inch clearance between the bridge and the top of the Allure was made after the ship lowered its telescopic smokestacks. But the swell and weather conditions brought that margin of error down to 1.5inch (4cm). So close, one could have jumped from the bridge onto the ship for a free cruise.

And the superliner safely cleared the Great Belt Bridge without a hitch, to the cheer and applause of passengers. The passage seemed on a low tide, but any sudden surge could have been a different story.

Like a fine art in Finnart

Facing the Finnart Oil Terminal, the charming landscape (pictured) provides a welcome respite among the ship’s officers and crews after many days at sea. The terminal connects two pipelines across the width of Scotland’s only crude oil refinery, the Grangemouth, on the east coast and extensive storage tanks sited into the hillside of the main road.

Any ship that docks overlooking its harbour in springtime could only make its men think of barbecue and beer while settled in the calmness of the Finnart. Talking of the perfect place for some seafarer’s wellness and wellbeing pursuits to soothe themselves of the stressful job and longing from home. And it serves a temporary therapy to the “men of steel.” But like a work of art hung up the wall, the magic of the peace and quiet portrays by the hilly lands of Finnart can stay forever.
AMOSUP Women tackles gender equality

The group hopes to break down barriers preventing women from working at sea and get rid of biased opinions including equal opportunity regardless of genders to work on board ships.

Women’s day or not, AMOSUP values the significant role women play in the maritime union both afloat and ashore.

But the recent International Women’s Day celebration further highlighted the opportunity to raise gender equality and the contribution of women all over the world to the shipping industry as the IMO’s theme for the 2019 International Day of the Seafarer is “Empowering women in the maritime community.”

At AMOSUP, the maritime union has “always believed in the exceptional capabilities and impressive strength of our women seafarers,” said President Dr Conrado Oca. The presence of its organisation, AMOSUP Women, which the union members formed in 2017 to advance the interest of their rights, is now their voices to be recognised and respected, he said.

“We applaud you for your achievements and continuous efforts to succeed despite the challenges you face and for that we are here to support, encourage and to empower you,” stated Dr Oca in a message VP Jesus Saile Jr read at the Women’s Day celebration at the AMOSUP Convention Hall last 08 March.

Women empowerment

AMOSUP Women marked the 2019 celebration dubbed as “Port Call at AMOSUP: Touching base with Women Maritime Professionals”. Alongside male seafarers, the theme was apt as women in this profession come ashore once in a while and now get the chance to muster members to encourage participation in a celebration with a prepared programme.

The occasion tackled the need for policy makers to push stakeholders to double their efforts in accelerating gender equality in seafaring. The gender gap in maritime sector has been serious, according to Professor Lucia Tangi of the Department of Journalism, University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication.

She said stakeholders like shipowners, crewing agents and the government must review existing industry policies that promote or perpetuate gender discrimination and other forms of biases as race and age. “They must have women empowerment programme and impose sanctions on members who discriminate women,” Prof Tangi told AMOSUP Women.

Prof Tangi, who conducted a study on women seafarers in the Philippines, said stakeholders should mind the gap and create an action plan to increase women’s participation in the industry. She suggested, for instance, a five percent spike in employment over the next five years from the current three percent share in female seafarers.
There were 17,101 women and 432,362 male seafarers working on board ship in 2017. The women seafarers comprised 3.8 percent of the 449,463 total seafarers. Out of the 17,101 women seafarers, 285 were officers, 105 Ratings and 16,711 non marine personnel, the study showed.

Not easy to be a woman

It’s not easy to be a woman in such a male dominated industry, according to Lena Dyring, the women representative of the ITF Seafarers’ Section. “You have followed your dream and done it anyway. You’re examples to follow and for other women looking to follow their dream and looking at seafaring as a career option for themselves,” she told in a video message to AMOSUP Women during the celebration. MS Dyring said she hopes barriers would break down preventing women from working at sea and get rid of biased opinions including equal opportunity for men and women to work on board. “AMOSUP Women are leading the way in this important job and what you’re doing today will make it easier for women to follow in your footsteps,” she added.

At the academic level, where men and women start to shape up their dreams, women have been told to find more employment. MAAP president, Vice Admiral Eduardo Santos, stressed, that women in maritime must have jobs to be successful.

“That’s going to be the basic issue. Let’s get more jobs. I want that to be the fighting motto for everyone,” he said. He has this advice for those working in the office and at sea: “If you’re already at sea, try to have another woman to replace you. If you’re in the office, try to convince the company or the bosses to hire more women.”

AMOSUP Women chair, Captain Jasmin Labarda, on the other hand, inspired members and those in attendance at the recent celebration. “The maritime industry is the place for women too. THIS IS OUR WORLD TOO,” she exclaimed. #ThisIsOurWorldToo is the ITF Women programme as its battle cry at the launch of the organisation in 2017.

“That means we have also our family, we also have loved ones to support too and we want to earn for our family. For almost 100 years the industry has been dominated by male,” Capt. Labarda added. Captain Labarda ended her speech with a powerful line about women as agents of change. “At AMOSUP Women, our focus is changing ourselves. Once we change the spectacle, the glass on how we view ourselves, everything else will change,” Capt. Labarda stressed. 

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More jobs for women seafarers

Vice Admiral Eduardo Santos, MAAP president, finds the way female seafarers can have more chances to work in the shipping industry.

How do we make sure that women get really accepted in the maritime industry?” That’s the question the chief of one of the country’s leading maritime academies has posed in recognising the importance of the female gender in the shipping sector.

“Get them more jobs” can be the simplest answer, according to Vice Admiral Eduardo M. Santos, President of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP). Since commencing more than 20 years ago, MAAP vowed to open its gates to both male and female students. MAAP founder Captain Gregorio Oca’s instruction then was there should be no discrimination in recruiting cadets for the academy, said Vice Admiral Santos. “We also promised that everybody that goes through MAAP gets a job when they graduate,” he added.

Women cadets from the academy have found jobs in cargo ships over the years despite the challenge from other companies whose culture disallows women aboard their ships.

This mission has been continuously brought into fruition. Women cadets from the academy have found jobs in cargo ships over the years despite the challenge from other companies whose culture disallows women aboard their ships. Hence, it has been an uphill battle for the academy to get them more jobs. However, there’s a beacon of hope that appears on the horizon. New doors have begun to open for a career at sea.

Newly established Virgin Voyages (formerly Virgin Cruises), for instance, plans to hire not only male, but also female seafarers from the Philippines for their fleet. Vice Admiral Santos disclosed that the cruise line wants to take in “50% male and 50% female” seafarers on its cruise ships.

The Plantation, Florida-based cruise line is to launch next year one of its newbuildings that will be part of four vessels in the fleet. In his recent talk with the cruise HR manager, the MAAP President has assured Virgin Voyages of lady officers who are on stand-by and those working ashore wishing to get back to sea to fill in the jobs.

Such was a result of his recent meeting with the Virgin officials. “I think their scheme of 10-week on and 10-week off (two-months and a half) is going to be very appropriate, comfortable for our women seafarers whether they are single or married,” he said. He is
hopeful that after the normal year-long shipboard training, they can be working with the cruise line.

Vice Admiral Santos advised the employers that shipping companies need to have a long-term career plan for their officers – both men and women in deck and engine departments – to preserve their loyalty with the company. “Women should also be included in the career path. If you think management will agree to have a lady captain, that should be a part of the career path to be followed.”

That way they will have more loyalty, he added.

He said the cruise line is a good opportunity for women seafarers to have jobs. “The cruise line will give women more hope for jobs, better life and equal treatment at work on board ships,” Vice Admiral Santos remarked.

He also advised female seafarers who work both on board and in the office: “If you’re already at sea, try to have another woman to replace you. If you’re in the office, try to convince the company or the bosses to hire more women.”

VAdm. Santos expressed his utmost support for women seafarers. “For women to be successful in maritime, they must have jobs,” he pointed out.

Whenever women do get jobs on board ships, they get into a lot of problems, according to Vice Admiral Santos. The MAAP president refers to female seafarers who have encountered bullying, harassment and sexual abuse on board, particularly on cargo ships. To address this, the academy has set up a hotline where its cadets or even officers encountering a problem could get an access for help.

Vice Admiral Santos likened the cargo ship to a “human zoo” for many when a female seafarer sets sail at sea. “Whenever you confine human beings in a restricted quarter, a lot of aberrant behaviour happens, meaning they won’t expect to do the usual thing. But it happens because of the environment. And if you’re alone female in a group of 18 males - that aberrant behaviour really comes out,” he said.

That’s the real-life situation onboard ships Vice Admiral Santos wants to preclude. He believes there’s comfort in number for women on board cruise lines. “If you’re alone on a cargo ship, you really have to fight it by yourself such as putting a chair on your door and lock it, for instance, so nobody can enter,” he said.

Vice Admiral Santos also shared he always tells female cadets at MAAP to always wear coveralls, no lipstick or any makeup on board their ships. According to him, he even advise female cadets to blend in, in terms of appearance. “I suggest to put (grease) oil on your face if you’re an engineer,” he said. “You have to resort on all these things because you’re dealing with the usual aberrant behaviour that happens, as in a ship,” VAdm. Santos added.
Women talk about their seafaring jobs

Thaddea Pearl Hangad: The Second Officer who wants to inspire young girls who had dreamt like her

As a female venturing into the world of men, many would ask me: why I chose this career. As a child it was never my dream to become a seafarer. I never had a vision of sailing the high seas or working on a ship. But things change as we grow. Sometimes, we must make a decision not just for ourselves but also for the people we care. And I decided to have this job.

Back in college, I was the first to be part of the prestigious award as one of the "Ten Outstanding Maritime Students in the Philippines", sponsored by Western Union. And I am for that. In that way, I inspired women like me to excel in this kind of industry dominated by men and chose other jobs we can excel in.

Most people say that we only live once. And at some point in my life, I also thought so. But through the years, I’ve learnt that we don’t.

We only die once but we live every day. We have so many chances in our lives, chances that aren’t 100% given. Sometimes they are 50%. The more effort we give, the closer we will be to a 100.

Since I was a child, I would say, I’ve always been a dreamer. I wanted to help my family in any way. So since then I knew that I should give more than what’s 50% required. I was always an honour student. I engaged myself in different activities in school and in the community. I guess in that way I could say I have really tried giving my best on whatever that came my way.

It’s been six years since I graduated college and started sailing as an officer on board ships. My sea-life has taught me so much more than I could ever imagine even at an early age. I got my management licence in 2017 and hopeful that someday, I could finally use it and inspire young girls with the same dream as I have; no matter how far you seem to be away from where you want to be, never stop believing that you will somehow make it so; be a dreamer and dream dreams you’ll appreciate because you’ve worked hard for it. Whatever it is, you choose.” – As told to AMOSUP Women on its Women’s day Celebration. SF
Chauldine Malapitan
Motorman
I chose to become a seafarer because this is a dynamic profession that demands constant upgrading of qualifications to be competent.

Alyannah Marie Flores
Deck Cadet
I chose to become a seafarer in order to challenge myself and to prove to myself that I am capable to achieve something.

Kristina Javellana
Master Mariner
I chose to become a seafarer because it suits my personality and my passion to conquer challenges at sea.

Angelika Secretaria
Deck Cadet
I have chosen this career because I know that there are thousands of great opportunities that I maybe able to get.
Jocel Guzman: When opportunity knocks for cruises

I started with an Asian cruise line, the Hongkong-based Star Cruises. Prior to that, my land-based experience was in an airline after I graduated with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Tourism. When an opportunity knocked that there was an available position for front desk officer on board I got a position as a front desk officer. But at the time the guest service officer position was not available. The crewing manager called me that there was a vacancy in housekeeping. But I have no patience to clean as my sense of smell is very sensitive. So I rejected it.

Despite declining it, I don’t want to be a failure especially that our crewing manager had given me the trust for that position. So when the second time the company called me, they offered a bus girl position, the lowest position in a restaurant onboard. You clean the table, carries the tray or assists the waiter. Though I don’t have the experience for the job I took the opportunity.

This is the second time that they have given me the trust. Let me prove to you that I will perform in the best of my ability. I performed it but in the course of my contract, they assigned me as a data input clerk for food and beverage as I knew computer. I became a secretary, assistant concierge, until I became a guest relation manager, handling the VIPs.

When the company deployed me to Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), I was given the assistant service manager. Since it was my first time in that company, ‘I don’t want to be a failure again.’ Instead, I decided to learn what the job requires,

“ I am very proud of myself being a woman. They don’t see the gender in me.

especially when facing international clients. I did a supervisory role in my first contract. I was fortunate that they’ve seen my ability. They asked me to relieve the assistant front office manager job. So I was performing dual roles.

I am very proud of myself being a woman. They don’t see the gender in me. They don’t see that it’s my first time in the company even without an experience, but they see my passion and dedication for the position given to me. Since then I was promoted as a front office manager for a period of time.

I started with NCL from 2002. In 2004 I became a front office manager. In my latest contract I began to step up higher. It is something I am proud of – not just being a woman – but as a Filipino. Discrimination arises and exists in many international companies, but at NCL there is equality and respect.
When I was young... there have always been noises: ‘Oh, she is a girl. She should act this way. She’s not going anywhere.’ I did not listen to those noises. The loudest sound I heard was my dream. The goal that I wanted to achieve. My love for my family.

Jasmin Labarda
Master Mariner

Women in maritime are extraordinarily brave and smart.

Manasseh Disto
Fourth Engineer

I never had a vision of sailing the high seas or working on a ship. But things change as we grow. Sometimes, we must make a decision not just for ourselves but also for the people we care.

Thaddea Pearl Hangad
Second Officer

for women. I’m one of the Filipina that was given the higher post of assistant hotel director. I got it, not because that somebody I knew backed me up, but because I worked hard for it. There are people who have put trust in me, believing that I can do the job the same as a man does. That makes us proud to be a woman and a Filipino. Not everybody would expect that a Pinay would be able to excel that high. Filipinos are known that we are skillful.

Other nationalities may have that fear as it is very competitive to work with a Filipino and that is something we are very proud of. It’s not just that you liked the job. You have to love what you want to do and have the inspiration to do as such.

Opportunity knocks only once. Do not turn your back due to fear. Take the courage to face what it is. If men can do it, women can do it.” - As told to AMOSUP Women last Women’s Day celebration.
SAFETY TRAINING ON BOARD SHIPS

Seafaring is a profession full of potential dangers that include the threat of heavy weather and rough seas, fire, hull damage and other hazards that may cause loss of life. C/EMark Philip Laurilla tells how seafarers must regularly train to be prepared in case these life-threatening incidents happen aboard their ship.

Fire is one of the biggest threats that could ever happen on a ship. Although ships are made of metal, some vessels carry hundreds of tons of fuel in addition to the various combustible substances that are part of the ship or carried as cargo.

This is the reason why fire drills are held regularly. It provides the means for the crew to practice their designated role in case a fire breaks out on board. Each crew member has a specific role in a fire scenario—knowing exactly when and how to execute this role is vital in firefighting.

The ship is equipped with various firefighting equipment designed to combat different types of fire. In case the fire breaks out, crews are divided into teams, which have different tasks. But all of them are geared towards extinguishing the fire.

“Abandon ship drill. Abandon ship drill. All hands proceed to your boat station,” declares the PA announcing the start of the exercise. As with the fire drill, each crew member has a specific role during abandon-ship and must know how to perform this role for a quick and efficient escape from a sinking ship.

Abandoning the ship is the last resort in an emergency situation—an order that is only given when there is no more hope of saving the ship and if it is the only option to save the lives of the crew.

As they always say during basic safety training, the ship is still the best lifeboat. This means that everything possible should be done in order for the crew to return to the ship to ensure safe status. Being on board the big ship offers a better chance of survival and rescue at sea, as compared to a small lifeboat or life raft.

But if the crews’ lives are already in danger as the fire rages out of control or sinking is imminent, abandoning the ship will be the only option. Of course, when the ship is underway, the lifeboat is not
actually launched so mustering and boarding are practiced in addition to starting the lifeboat engine. The launching of the lifeboats and running on water is usually done when the ship is at anchor.

Launching of lifeboat and rescue boat is also done at regular intervals. This is to ensure that they are all in good working order and ready to deploy in case of an emergency. This is also a means to make sure crew members are familiar with their operation.

The rescue boat is primarily used to rescue people who fall overboard. Both the rescue boat and lifeboat are required to be periodically launched to ensure their seaworthiness and to practice the crew assigned to operate them.

In C/E Mark Philip Laurilla’s experience, he said the rescue boat was used to board the lifeboat.

“The ship is equipped with a freefall lifeboat. It is designed to launch quickly by sliding and falling into the water while the crew is inside. But for safety reasons, we decided to just lower the lifeboat into the water by using the davit. After which we manoeuvred the rescue boat alongside it in order for the crew to board and get inside the lifeboat,” C/E Laurilla shared.

“Of course, in case of an actual emergency, each and every one of us is ready to get inside, struck ourselves in and ride the free fall. But we rather saved that for when it is actually needed,” he added. Safety first, he said, as the whole point of the drill is keeping everyone safe.

The crew regularly go through a lot of other types of drills and training while working on board the ship. There are a lot of procedures and life-saving equipment that they need to familiarise themselves with to be effective in their assigned tasks during emergencies.

It gets very repetitive and oftentimes becomes very tedious. But the skills developed by these drills can never be underrated as they might mean all the difference when all hell breaks loose. Because whenever the ship is at sea, there is no one else that the crew could count on to save the ship and their own lives except themselves and each other.

Although ships are full of hazards, which could potentially lead to incidents such as fire, they also carry equipment that is specifically designed to detect and combat such situations. But these are just tools and the effectiveness of tools depend largely on the people using them. Skills are developed through constant practice, which is why drills will always be a part of shipboard life.
Survey reveals widespread concern at enclosed space deaths

A study by the trade association InterManager has made it clear that much still needs to be done to address the issues and to eradicate the risk to life. InterManager secretary general Captain Kuba Szymanski asserts “no-one should die while carrying out their daily work.”

The shipping industry’s lack of understanding of the risks involved and the “blame culture” being fostered by many incidents have been faulted in the increasing deaths of seafarers and dockworkers working in enclosed spaces on board ships.

These are the key factors that continually put the lives of today’s seafarers in peril, as dangerous time frames are imposed for hazardous tasks and safety improvements do not happen. This is because shipping industry investigations encourage a blame culture in many incidents, according to the ship management trade association InterManager.

Revealing the findings of its comprehensive industry survey into the problems of enclosed spaces on board, InterManager noted a large range of vessel operators, ship managers and crew that took part in the three-month industry-wide study. They included crew from almost 250 ships – representing more than 5,000 seafarers – who provided feedback.

The respondents’ key concerns include a perceived lack of improvement in the design of vessels with not enough consideration being given to access areas and the people working in them. Likewise being hard to reach, enclosed spaces are frequently impossible to properly ventilate or to measure the atmospheres within. Tight timeframes for cargo hold and tank preparation that are unworkable were likened to “bullying on an industrial scale” with seafarers calling on ship managers to shield them from unrealistic commercial time pressures.

InterManager said seafarers asked for more training, prioritisation of management-led safety cultures, and suggested methods using the “fear factor” to raise awareness of the dangers of working in enclosed spaces. “In fact, respondents recommended changing the phrase to ‘dangerous space’ or even ‘fatal space’ to hit the message home.” In addition, the survey revealed a widespread belief that a blame culture is deeply rooted within the shipping industry. Respondents felt that the majority of accident investigations stop at finding the “guilty party” and very rarely go further to discover why the accident occurred or the reasons for the actions of those killed or injured, according to InterManager.

The survey showed “a feeling that accident investigation results are inconsistent, indicating that the absence of a standard investigation format prevents a proper and thorough analysis of accidents and the ready identification of potential improvements.” In addition to outlining the problems, the survey asked recipients to identify potential solutions to avoid further deaths. Respondents called for clearer identification of hazardous spaces, suggesting access should be restricted by senior management on board or ashore.

InterManager secretary general, Captain Kuba Szymanski, said: “It is clear that much still needs to be done to address the issues of working in enclosed spaces and to eradicate the risk to life. No-one should die while carrying out their daily work.”

“Seafarers seem to believe that this unsafe environment is created by designers and enforced by manuals and procedures, and therefore cannot be disputed and has to be followed - even if it results in death,” he said in a statement.
Many seafarers responding to the InterManager survey expressed dismay at the situation. Capt. Szymanski commented: “It is rather sad to see so many seafarers losing hope that their situation will ever improve. As a result, the suggestions from those individuals do not stretch beyond improving training and procedures.”

Encouraging ship managers to take a lead on safety, Capt Szymanski remarked: “When I examined the results of the survey, I noticed that the most positive responses came from within companies where senior managers took a leading role on safety matters, where they engaged themselves and led from the front. I would especially like to thank those individuals, because it is them who are creating the company safety culture.”

Pledging further action, he concluded: “InterManager thanks all those who responded to our survey and promises to do all we can to raise awareness of these issues at the highest level.”

A need was identified for additional training to address lack of awareness and instill safe practices, while some seafarers said they would prefer to only access enclosed spaces while using safety equipment such as Emergency Escape Breathing Devices (EEBDs) or Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCABs). Some respondents believed that technology should be used to help with limiting the requirement for human access in enclosed spaces.

Focusing on vessel design, recipients advised that future newbuildings should avoid areas of enclosed space or restrict them to a minimum. In addition, any enclosed spaces should include provisions for:

- Adequate ventilation (whole space)
- Adequate fixed gas detection system
- Accessibility in order to perform search and rescue operations

Medical and dental health missions

A MOSUP Seaman’s Hospital Cebu, GASFI (Gig and the Amazing Sampaquinia Foundation) along with manning agencies and private donors have conducted a successful medical and dental missions in Bogo City.

At least 356 clients received medical treatment, 82 for dental and 114 for eye checkup rendered by participating doctors, nurses, ophthalmologists, dentists, pharmacists, and barangay healthcare workers. The medical and dental missions were carried out at SM Cares Village in Polombato, Bogo City last 28th February 2019.

Aside from the healthcare services, the activities also spearheaded a read-aloud pursuit, book donation and feeding programme to the children of the village in Bogo City. The activities, as well as the books and goodies they received, made the kids and parents delightful and grateful. Even one of the parents joined in the read-aloud activity that showcased a mockup for a 20-minute bedtime reading to a child in every Filipino household.

Sponsored companies of the medical and dental missions included JX Ocean Company and New Ocean Shipmanagement, Ponciano and Virginia Marquez Foundation, Rotary Club Cebu Port Center, and the City Health Office of Bogo City.
Risking lives or retaining jobs

Workers need a minimum of two things from the air in their workplace: that it’s safe to breathe and that it doesn’t explode and kill them.

Since January 2018, 16 dockers and 12 seafarers have died from asphyxiation or explosions in confined spaces - or from falls after passing out due to bad air. That’s a shocking spike in deaths in confined spaces, a workplace hazard long-familiar to the shipping industry.

To put the recent deaths in perspective, there have been a total of 145 in the past 20 years, and alarmingly 28 in the past 16 months.

The massive rise in fatalities says everything about the callousness of those running the shipping industry today. Companies that choose to save a dollar rather than train and equip workers to labour safely in confined spaces or invest in an onboard safety culture in which workers are free to take the time they need to vent cargo holds, ensure sufficient good air or question a risk they are facing.

We know that maritime workers are generally aware of the risks associated with entry into confined spaces, but they may not be aware of the details and extent of the varied dangers posed by forest products, coal, iron ore, grains, gases and other cargo.

It is not enough for a worker to rely on opening the hatches for 30 minutes and hoping for the best, or to do the best they can to protect themselves on their own. It is not enough for workers to take all available precautions but sometimes still be caught without sufficient protection by pockets of gases and lack of oxygen. And it is absolutely not enough that workers are left to cope with an inhume industry by doing what humans have always done for one another: risk their own lives to save their fallen colleagues.

Last November, two dockers died while unloading logs from the hold of a bulker in Montevideo, likely after exposure to an unexpected fumigant they were not told about. A crew member saw them in distress and entered the hold wearing a face mask, determined to rescue them. During his efforts, his mask was reportedly removed, and he passed out, eventually landing in hospital in an induced coma. A third dockers required medical help before the tragic incident was over.

Shipowners have a duty of care for their crew and dockers employed to carry out their cargo operations. Education and procedures are not optional. The negligence of shipowners who disregard standard procedures and cost workers their lives must be met with a punishment proportionate to the lives lost.

The International Maritime Solid Bulk (IMSBS) Cargoes Code governs the carriage of bulk cargo worldwide. The IMSBS Code:

- Identifies and groups cargoes based on hazard
- Provides guidelines for safe handling
- Sets procedures for testing

The ITF Dockers’ and ITF Seafarers’ sections will be at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) working with shipowners to ensure that the regulations governing confined space stand up and are strong enough to protect all maritime workers.

The ITF Dockers’ Section deplores operators who routinely force workers to choose between risking their lives or their jobs. We continue the fight against them and demand accountability.

We join our sisters and brothers from Australia and Canada and echo their call for industrial manslaughter laws for employers deliberately undermine safety and risk workers’ lives. SFT

- Confined Space Fatalities
- Explosion Fatalities
The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and its affiliated unions work together to fight for the rights of all seafarers around the world.

To support seafarers the ITF has a global network of more than 130 inspectors and contacts in 57 countries, who can be called upon to deal with any problems seafarers face. For those areas of the world where no inspector is available, the ITF Seafarers Support team based in the ITF Head Office in London can be contacted.

The Contact details are:

Email seafsupport@itf.org.uk
SMS +44 7984 356 573
WhatsApp/Viber +44 7523 515 097
Facebook www.facebook.com/itfseafarerssupport

Please remember that when contacting the ITF Seafarers Support team or the ITF Inspectors, you should provide the Name and Flag of the vessel, the IMO number, your current location and full details of the problem or problems you have.

In addition to these contact details the ITF has developed a FREE iOS and Android app called ITF Seafarers. Using this app you can look up vessel details taken directly from the ITF system, find and contact an ITF Inspector or ITF Maritime affiliated union plus much, much more.
Marinerang Pilipina sails on to Superliga

The Lady Skippers has beefed up its lineup of 14 regular and six reserve players after a two-day tryout held at the JSU Sports Complex in Malate.

As more women try to get into the men’s world of seafaring, it follows that they need to find a league of their own where they could cheer or root for at action-packed sports like volleyball.

The Marinerang Pilipina (Filipino women seafarers) has sailed as the newest team in the waters of the Philippine Superliga (PSL) as the league unfolded its All-Filipino Conference in mid-June.

Being the ninth team in the women’s club league, the Lady Skippers will fight it out with corporate contenders Foton, Cignal, Sta Lucia, Generika-Ayala, PLDT Home Fibr and United VC. Heavyweights Petron and F2 Logistics, which respectively settled as champion and runner-up in the Grand Prix, are expected to be the toughest to challenge.

The decision to field the Marinera team in the PSL aims to provide female seafarers some sort of entertainment so that they have something to look forward to following months of their grueling tasks on board their respective ships. Apart from having a club to root for, they’ll surely enjoy the growing popularity of the women’s volleyball in the country.

It’s also a way of promoting the increasing attractiveness of the maritime profession among female professionals who have chosen to embark on a career at sea. Like its Marineroong Pilipino counterpart in the D-League (PBA), which has been followed by their army of male seafaring fans, the Lady Skippers’ games are expected to be charted by its male followers for moral support.

The Lady Skippers has beefed up its lineup of 14 regular players and six reserve players following a two-day tryout held at the JSU Sports Complex in Malate last March. The latest PSL club saw around 40 players, currently active in the collegiate and commercial leagues, who turned up during the tryouts.

Though the team hasn’t acquired superstar players, it sees promising aces like Chiara Fermintilla, an open spiker from Adamson University, the Racraquins sisters Cesca and Daryl from San Beda College, and Judith Abil (another open spiker) from University of the East.

Champion coach Vilet Ponce-de Leon, who had steered Foton to a Grand Prix title in 2016, serves as the Skippers head coach. The team is managed by Jed Montero, a University of the Philippines stalwart who played in the RC Cola-Phi’s in the early years of PSL.

The first club volleyball league in the country, PSL aims to develop their high-level skills in a local setting that conforms to the international standard of the sport.
Where are we with mental health at sea?

The shipping industry is in an interesting position when it comes to the mental health of seafarers. As things currently stand, there has perhaps never been more attention given to the issue of how seafarers feel with regards to their wellness and emotional wellbeing. ISWAN provides some of the key answers.

If you search the term “Seafarer mental health” online, you get a fascinating list of headings. There is talk of the matter being “taboo”, there are a slew of guidelines including that of the International Seafarers’ Welfare Assistance and Assistance Network (ISWAN) guidance, an information repository and a series of ‘Dos and Don’ts’.

These have now been joined by the new Seafarers Mental Health and Wellbeing film from KVH Videotel, which we were very pleased to support and help to develop. This excellent resource can be accessed for free at www.videotel.com/seafarerswellbeing.

These all make for a very positive foundation on which to build our collective industry efforts. However, it is vital that all these efforts combine to ensure we are actually fixing the issues, not merely highlighting the problems. We need to be sure that any seafarer who is fatigued, depressed, suicidal, or who is feeling that they can’t cope can get the help they need.

Mitigate the risks

We also need to do all possible to try to mitigate the risks to mental health in the first place. The challenge now is to translate the attention and investment of effort into actually making sure life is better for seafarers, and that those who need help can get it.

The fact that there is so much information available on the issue, that there is so much guidance, and that so many organisations are involved in trying to find solutions is good. Anything that shows care and compassion for crews has to be positive.

It is now necessary for the industry to translate these concepts into workable solutions, management standards and means of ensuring that all shipping companies do the right thing by their seafarers.

Currently, as is the norm in shipping, it is a vanguard at the top of the industry who are trying to develop solutions and to help their people to manage their mental health. What are the lessons that other companies can learn and apply? What are the practical solutions to this very real problem?

What can seafarers do?

One of the key messages to seafarers is that they should try to...
break away from negativity. Doing enjoyable activities, building your sense of achievement and purpose, and getting quality rest, food and exercise will all help build a solid foundation for wellbeing.

The challenge now is to translate the attention and investment of effort into actually making sure life is better for seafarers, and that those who need help can get it.

It is important to remember that everyone on board has a responsibility to everyone else. It is important to recognise the signs of stress and anxiety in yourself and others – spotting the typical signs like people slowing down, getting irritable, or disengaging. Seeing the changes is vital, and then being able to rally around and provide support or direct those who may be suffering to the right help and support.

There are a whole host of steps which can be taken on board, and much of the focus of the current guidance is on that aspect. The key steps to encourage seafarers to act to improve their own mental health and wellbeing at sea would be to do the following:

1. Do more of what makes you happy
2. Keep learning new skills
3. Connect with people
4. Give to others
5. Be physically active

Company actions

It is not just at sea where the battle to improve mental health must be fought. It is vital that companies look at the way they conduct themselves and see where they can perhaps change or adapt to help seafarers. Amongst the guidance in the industry, here are some key aspects that companies should consider:

- Designate senior staff ashore to be responsible for the company mental health at sea policy
- Talk about mental health, ask questions, start a dialogue in the office ashore and at sea
- Review the various industry guidelines, and see which elements best fit the company and which will be likely to deliver the best results
- Develop positive company policies for mental health and wellbeing based on the guidance, or the parts which best apply
- Understand where the problems are, perhaps ask for honest, anonymous feedback from seafarers
- Appreciate that this is not solely about seafarers; there is a role for office staff too. They should be encouraged to think of mental health issues and not shy away from discussing them
- Act on the findings. Develop solutions. Commit to positive change - even if there is cost. Budget for better mental health!
- Make sure every seafarer knows who they can turn to. Ensure they have the contact details of SeafarerHelp and they can contact them to talk or ask for advice. See seafarerhelp.org for details
- Provide mental health and wellbeing training, advice and guidance
- Ensure that all seafarers know what they should do if they feel their own mental health suffering, or if they spot it in colleagues
- Give those with mental health issues support, and those who are worried reassurance
- Take away any stigma from the issue. Ensure that there is a culture of support, acceptance and assistance, and that jobs are not under threat if someone is suffering or feeling the signs of anxiety, negativity, depression or helplessness descending on them
- Understanding that there is no single problem or solution. Making sure that seafarers know the company view, that there is a team approach, and that any suffering or problems at sea will be supported
- Talking about the problem and about having an explicit policy of doing all possible to alleviate problems is vitally important
- Ensure that seafarers make their families aware of the problems of communicating at sea, and the need for them to try and insulate their seafaring loved ones from undue stress

Constant challenges

There are constant challenges on a ship. Ships are unique, it is not just a workplace, but a home too. It can be hard to separate the two, and so seafarers can experience loneliness and isolation. Being disconnected from home and families can take its toll.

How then, can we make life at sea enjoyable? It is not enough to subject mariners to merely bearable conditions. Seafarers need to thrive and flourish. It is vital to pay attention to health, happiness and the whole experience of living and working at sea.
NICU: Providing specialised delivery, care and management of newborns

Dr Jose Salazar, in-charge of the NICU, shares updates on technology and specialists needed in caring for the critically-ill neonates and pre-matures.

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital provides a highly specialised care for critical ill neonates and pre-matures for the dependents of the country's largest maritime union. Neonates refers to the first 28 days of life.

Infants born at less than 32 weeks gestational age and weight less than 1500 grams, as well as critically ill newborns of any gestational age and birth weight, are admitted to the NICU. There are about 100 high-risk neonates admitted annually to the NICU.

AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit is classified as Level 3—it performs comprehensive delivery of neonatal care and management of high-risk neonates requiring ventilator support, surgical care, resuscitation, as well as pre-matures.

The NICU is equipped with the technology needed to provide care for the critically ill neonates and pre-matures. A level 3 NICU is a neonatal intensive care unit that is capable of caring for very small or very sick newborn babies. It has a wide variety of staff, including neonatologists, neonatal nurses, and competent hospitalists.

The Department of Pediatrics NICU at Seamen's Hospital delivers specialised care to the sick neonates thru the support of the administration. As part of AMOSUP goal to modernize the Seamen's Hospital, the NICU facilities and equipment have recently been updated. It was also transferred to a new and more spacious area to meet the increasing number of admissions, and was furnished with the latest equipment for the delivery of intensive care.

The Department of Pediatrics goal to keep up with the demands of delivering comprehensive neonatal care requires the personnel to be in the know of the current trends on neonatal care. Hence, AMOSUP sends the hospital's staff to attend specialty conferences, conventions, seminars and workshops. In-house courses are also conducted for the consultants, hospitalists and the nursing staff.

AMOSUP Seamen's Hospital is an accredited Mother Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (MBFHI) health facility. Advocacies such as breastfeeding, Kangaroo Mother Care, newborn screening (NBS), hearing screening among others are provided.

The Department of Pediatrics Consultant Staff include members belonging to the academic and specialty hospitals. The Union's
hospital has members who are past presidents of their specialty societies, like Dr. Ruby N. Foronda, Past President of the Philippine Society of Pediatric Immunology and Allergy; Dr. Jose B. Salazar, Past President, Philippine Society of Newborn Medicine and the Perinatal Association of the Philippines; Dr. Juliet Balderas, Head, Division of Pediatric Cardiology, Philippine Heart Center; and Dr. Ana Ong Lim, Past President Pediatric Infectious Society of the Philippines and current member BOT, Philippine Pediatric Society. The Department of Pediatrics NICU collaborated with the Philippine Heart Center in doing a study on the use of the pulse oximeter in screening critical cardiac conditions in the neonates. 37

NICU’s subspecialists in areas of pediatric medicine, ophthalmology, surgery, and anesthesia are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Hospital</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesusa R. Godoy, MD</td>
<td>General Pediatrics</td>
<td>Makati Medical Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine B. Cinco, MD</td>
<td>General Pediatrics</td>
<td>St. Luke’s Medical Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felipe L. Fugoso, MD</td>
<td>General Pediatrics</td>
<td>Metropolitan Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Elena Q. Pile, MD</td>
<td>General Pediatrics</td>
<td>UERMMC / Philippine Heart Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tricia B. Santos, MD</td>
<td>General Pediatrics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juliet J. Balderas, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Cardiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cynthia C. Castro, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Hematology</td>
<td>UERMMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby N. Foronda, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Immunology and Allergology</td>
<td>UERMMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Lisa O. Lim, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Infectious Disease PGH</td>
<td>UERMMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma. Estrella I. Illustre, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Neurology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose B. Salszar, MD</td>
<td>Neonatology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose Modesto B. Abellera, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Surgery</td>
<td>National Children’s Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dexter S. Ason, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Surgery</td>
<td>Philippine Children's Medical Center</td>
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<td>Charleston T. Yeo, MD</td>
<td>Neurology</td>
<td>National Children’s Hospital</td>
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<td>Beverly Anne P. Portugal, MD</td>
<td>Pediatric Anesthesia</td>
<td>UERMMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>George C. Pile, MD</td>
<td>Retina Specialist</td>
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Maternity Ward gets upgraded. The Maternity Ward alongside the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital was renovated. The facilities and equipment have been improved to enhance the staff’s capabilities in delivering quality healthcare to the general membership, their families and dependents. A number of ship manning industry leaders led by AMOSUP president Dr Conrado Oca joined in the ceremonial ribbon cutting of the upgraded facilities last 11th March 2019. In photo from left are: JSU president Mr Yasumi Morita, Ms Monique Smith Robstad, ITF maritime coordinator Ms Jacqueline Smith, IMMAJ chairman Captain Koichi Akamine, and IMEC Philippine representative Michael Estaniel.

Maternity Section: Caring for mothers and addressing issues to keep up with changing times

Obstetrics and Gynecology Department Chairman Dr Lazarito Villamar shares how the hospital catches up with increasing patients and corresponding paper works.

The Maternity Section is important to the Seamen’s Hospital considering that it serves the wives, mothers and daughters of seafarers who are members of AMOSUP.

But the section has to grapple with manpower issue as it faces a spike in the number of patients and the corresponding paper works required by the state health insurance body Philhealth. It will be more burdensome for its medical staff when rotations of junior interns that take turns for their duties end.

Recruiting residents has also been a challenge for quite some time as the section faces stiff competition from government hospitals in terms of competitive salaries and other benefits. Moreover, there has been a great change in the practice of medicine, as graduates prefer less toxic duties, higher salaries and moonlighting. In all of this, the residents have to do overtime work for their patients, and it has become a great challenge for the OB-Gyne Department to keep the residents continue their training.

While the department is far advanced in terms of service and equipment, optimising the use of its facilities will be of good use in servicing thousands of the beneficiaries.

The department is currently serving some 30-60 OPD cases a day, with major surgery of one to four cases daily. All of these cases are regularly assisted by six residents who go on duty every three days.

In a study published in the American Journal of Gynecology in November 2016 titled “The Influence of hours worked prior to delivery on maternal and neonatal outcomes: A retrospective study”, doctors are advised to work 9-12 hours.

Number of hours already worked before undertaking unscheduled deliveries significantly influence the risk of certain adverse outcomes. The study’s findings suggest that fatigue may play a role in increasing the risk of adverse delivery outcomes later in shifts and that obstetric work patterns could be better designed to minimise the risk of adverse delivery outcomes.

The department actively participates and co-operates with other institutions through presentations, attending conventions, seminars and workshops for further knowledge and skills improvement.
Lashing work gets safe with dockers

The ITF insists it's time to put the job in safe hands by unbundling it off from the task of seafarers who are already overworked.

Lashing is dockers' work. They are the workers who are trained to do the job, seafarers are not. But unscrupulous shipowners, who refuse to acknowledge that lashing belongs to dockers, continually put seafarers' lives in peril.

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has documented a number of incidents where seafarers have been killed while performing lashing work over the last few months on ship-types like log carrier, ro-ro and containership. These are the latest tragic cases where seafarers have lost their lives doing dockers' work:

- At Rosslare Harbour, Ireland, on March 21, a Latvian seafarer – 22 and a father of two – was struck and killed while lashing on the ro-ro ferry at the Isle of Inishmore. Irish authorities and the operator, Irish Ferries, all refused to cooperate with the ITF Inspector or the trade union SIPTU. They even refused to release the victim's name, deriving his family the dignity of support in ensuring his final pay and death benefits were delivered.

- In Dublin, Ireland, on November 14, Filipino A/B Dennis Gomez Regana was killed while lashing containers aboard the Francop. He was sent into an unsafe position and crushed beneath two containers.

“Maritime insurance companies and port state agencies are increasingly concerned about crew lashing and unlashing while ship is underway,” said Peter Lahay, the ITF Canada national co-ordinator.

Writing for the Seafarers' Bulletin, Lahay underscored the economic pressure of tight time lines and slots which often require for crews to “drop the lashing at sea in stormy conditions so the vessel can be handled immediately on arrival.” This, he says, is not safe for seafarers as containers that are not properly secured sway with sea conditions and wind.

He said the practice can lead to that is known as “stack collapse,” where weakened container-corners break down and cause the entire stack to collapse.
“Shipowners force crew to lash for one reason, and one reason only: to save money. Profit is preferred over the safety and lives of their crews, with balance sheets that assign workers to the disposable side of the ledger.

We mourn all those who have been killed or injured at the hands of such shameful operators, and we pledge to continue the fight to have such practices stopped.”

If you are a crew member being forced to undertake this dangerous work, contact the union at seafsuppof@itf.org.uk.

**New CBA clause protects seafarers from carrying out lashing**

To clarify the position that lashing is dockers' work, the revised clause in the ITF collective agreement says:

“To ensure that neither seafarers nor anyone else on board whether in permanent or temporary employment by the Company shall carry out cargo handling services in a port, at a terminal or on board a vessel, where dock workers, who are members of an affiliated union, are providing the cargo handling services. Where there are not sufficient numbers of qualified dock workers available, the ship's crew may carry out the work provided that there is prior agreement of the ITF Dockers Union or ITF Unions concerned; and provided that the individual seafarers volunteer to carry out such duties; and those seafarers are qualified and adequately compensated for their work. For the purpose of this clause ‘cargo handling services’ may include but is not limited to: loading, unloading, lashing, unlash, checking and receiving.”

Though many flag states allow for unrealistic manning levels where crew, which Lahay laments as are often tired while standing watch on the bridge or in the engine room. "The crew's primary function is safe navigation and maintenance of the ship. Fatigue already leads to collisions and groundings and crushed arms, pinched limbs and fatal falls. The job of lashing should not be added to crew who are already overworked.”

Fatigue is a constant reality for seafarers. “To then press these seafarers to perform lashing duties – handling steel rods, turnbuckles, chains and wire rope, all rigged under tension, all requiring gear they are not trained on – is unsafe for workers, and unsafe for the operation of the vessel,” the ITF said in a statement.
Threat to bulker, crew safety still persists

INTERCARGO says ship operators need to be especially cautious when loading during a wet season, as currently being experienced in certain parts of South East Asia.

Cargo liquefaction continues to pose a major threat to the life of seafarers working on board bulk carriers, according to an international association of bulk cargo shipping.

INTERCARGO (the International Association of Dry Cargo Bulk Shipowners) warned that cargo failure and liquefaction—a phenomenon in which a soil-like material is abruptly transformed from a solid dry form to an almost fluid state—remain to be a major concern for dry bulk shipping. Bulk cargoes such as iron ore, nickel ore and various mineral concentrates are examples of materials that may liquify.

INTERCARGO urges all stakeholders to remain vigilant over continuing threat in a recent edition of its Bulk Carriers Safety Report. The report, which classifies ships over 10,000 DWT, covers reported bulk carrier casualties from 2009 to 2018 and provides an analysis on statistics and trends over the last 10 years. Forty eight bulk carriers over 10,000 dwt have been identified as total losses over the 10-year period. There were nine casualties of suspected cargo failure among the 48, consisted of six bulk carriers carrying nickel ore from Indonesia, two vessels with laterite (clay) iron ore from India and one with bauxite from Malaysia. At least 101 lives lost associated with those nine casualties against a total of 188 lives for all the 48 casualties.

The importance of flag states’ timely submission of casualty investigation reports to IMO should be stressed, as a means for identifying the cause of incidents and enabling corrective actions to be taken,” it said.

The IMO GISIS database showed that by end January 2019, 23 investigation reports of 48 losses had not been submitted to IMO by their flag States. Some details further highlight the issue of slow reporting.

The highest loss of life has been attributed to cargo failure (liquefaction), totalling 101 lives lost from the nine casualties. Two investigation reports of those nine cases have not been submitted to IMO.

The most common reported cause of ship losses has been grounding, totalling 19 losses among the 48 cases. Six investigation reports of those 19 cases have not been submitted to IMO.

Six ships lost with unknown causes claimed 61 lives. Five investigation reports of those six cases have not been submitted to IMO. SF
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Maritime profession drives seafarer’s career, family better

Amidst the hazards and sacrifices of working away from families and friends, many seafarers have succeeded in their careers including the realisation of dreams for their next of kin. AMOSUP members share segments of their experiences in a series of interviews with Sailing Forward’s Andy Dalisay
Jasmin Labarda, Shipmaster: Inspiring women in merchant marine profession

She may have suffered a spell of sexual harassments and discriminations in her early years as a female junior officer on board. But such abuses never deterred this promising Master Mariner to pursue her chosen career and even drove her to inspire more women in the profession.

Today, Captain Jasmin Labarda is leading female seafarers to stand up for their rights and fight against sexual abuses. "I’ve got my experience full of discriminations," she revealed.

Jasmin, or Captain Jaz to friends and colleagues, said despite such challenges she realised that she must create small ripples of change. "I needed to push with my career because I wanted to make a difference. I believed then that we were professionals. So I pursued it," she stressed.

According to Jaz, she stood to be tougher, and because of her faith in God, she had overcome her fears and anxieties at work. "I even turned out to be a good person," she shared. She further said she never tolerated or allowed the same mistreatment by her senior officers to subordinates as she stepped up into senior management post.

Now the chair of AMOSUP Women, Jaz leads the group in advancing women seafarers’ rights. She started with the Union’s group in 2014 as the first representative of the Young Seafarers of AMOSUP to the International Transport Workers’ Federation. During the time, she became the ITF Women Committee head among the young workers. AMOSUP Women was formally formed and launched in 2018.

At the recent international women’s day in March, which AMOSUP Women celebrated, Jaz opened herself up bravely divulging incidents of sexual abuses she experienced in the past. It started when she was 17. "I was asleep and woke up ‘pini-finger na ako, hinihinan na ako nung kasama ko. (I felt my colleague was already fingering and touching me)" she stated.

She said she didn’t know what to do. "Tumalikod na lang ako.” (I just turned my back) While in tears, she continued: "Wala akong pinagsabihan. Sinabi ko lang yung tao na kaklas ko in 2005.” (I didn’t tell anybody. I only told one of my classmates in 2005).

Now the chair of AMOSUP Women, Jaz leads the group in advancing women seafarers’ rights.

When she was a third-year cadet on board a Maersk Line vessel, Jaz endured the burden of discrimination. "During that time pinapahirapan ako ng kapitan.” (the captain was giving me a hard time) Jaz claims she was always singled
out her superiors would keep an eye on her and magnify even her slightest mistake. In one instance, when she had to be inoculated: “Wale clay ang vaccine, pinapababa ako [ng barko], (I was told I had no vaccine and was asked to disembark the ship). But she knew she was only told to come down so that others could take over her duties.

When Jaz was a Third Officer at age 20, she dealt with another blow of sexual abuse. She was on duty at the bridge. “Kausap ko lang sya (a male officer), tapos yung sarli nya biglang nakadikit at kinikisik na nyny sa likod ko.” (I was just talking to him, then all of a sudden he was behind me rubbing himself on my back).

When she realised it (whether her co-officer was doing), she could not move and didn’t know what to do. However, she could sense others outside who seemed to be observing what was happening. She suspected they’re making it for fun, perhaps figuring what her reaction would be.

“I didn’t know how to confront him in that situation. We were trained to do the best as we can. Kung may mangarap sa ‘yo, alain mi ang gaganin mo. Pero kung pa friendly-friendly at wala kang support [papeano]? (We were trained to handle situations such as rape. But if the abuse was done in a friendly manner and nobody backs you up—how do you deal with that?)

Jaz wants to reach out to other women seafarers. She said she wants to be of help who have suffered the same experience of sexual abuse. “I will never stop giving you my hand. And I wish you help yourself too,” she reminds women seafarers.

Jaz is a seafarer’s daughter herself. She drifted into the maritime world when she went along with her mother one time for a medical check-up at the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital Manila. Her mom learned and told her about the AMOSUP scholarship being offered at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific. Jaz got curious and immediately looked into the opportunity through an advert. She said she still had no idea what course to take in college at the time so she decided to take the entrance test. “Dala din ng pangangaiangan”, (Out of necessity) she said. Jaz then found herself at the qualifying exam, which she passed. She entered the academy in 1999.

Four years later, Jaz embarked as a cadet on her first ship, the VLCC Elizabeth Maersk and followed by another VLCC Evelyn Maersk. “It’s either you’re a tomboy or malandika (you’re a flirt) were the usual stereotypes when I began working on board. Other women get jealous as their husbands, especially the officers, are with you at work,” she shared.

Jaz saw how OFWs, both seafarers and land-based women workers, are treated abroad. She said she experienced it herself. “Despite this, I continued working as a human being, believing in my faith, a loving and a normal person even if the job is hard,” she proudly remarked.

Jaz obtained her master mariner’s ticket in 2010 when she shifted career gears to offshore shipping. But she had to disembark as a trainee and to start from the bottom.

“It’s like you’re used to driving a car, then suddenly you’ll handle a 10-wheeler lorry,” Jaz explained of the process. Jaz has gained her sea-time offshore, attended the required training and received the corresponding certificates before getting promoted. She’s now working her way up to the peak of her career, yet she is already the highest ranking Filipino female officer in her company as a senior chief officer.

Since 2009 she has been working with the UK-based French offshore engineering service provider TechnipFMC, which provides complete project lifecycle services for the energy industry. She is happy with her current company, which has just bagged a contract to deliver and install a subsea production system in the Norwegian part of the North Sea. Professionally, Jaz has gone into different sectors of the maritime industry. Not many are able to do it, she said, “I’ve also achieved a lot in this profession. No other Asian has achieved the top position in our company (in the oil and gas) right now,” Jaz stressed.

Jaz is still in pursuit of her dreams. But she admits she currently doesn’t want any distraction when asked about her future partner in life. She says she still has to find someone who will support her dream.
Q and A with Captain Jasmin Labarda

What is your favourite role as a senior officer on board?

We have a lot of responsibilities on board, but enabling to train people is one of the roles I always want to do. That way we build a team work within.

How would you describe your first experience as a cadet on board?

Sadly I was shouted at by an Asian female Chief Officer apparently after I became a source of intrigue among the crew. She hated me for that. Then there was a Third Officer who became so jealous kaya pinapahiya nya rin ako (that’s why he also puts to shaming me out). Then there was a new Captain who had joined the ship who also got to use to shaming me. Prior to that a Chief Mate, whose wife had joined our ship in Korea, was courting me during our duty while his wife was on board.

What is your most memorable experience on board?

When we get appreciated for a job well done by the clients, pilots and others.

What is the major challenge you’ve faced in your career?

I am being confronted by the question of whether to continue working. And people might ask what my reasons are. Or should I move to another company. But I’m happy with my company. If you always go against the tide, it’s so nakakapagod din (so tiring too), battling strong winds, high waves.

We have a fixed rotation but with God’s grace I can still have the strength to continue. Being able to help people gives me the fuel to work.

What has the seafaring profession contributed to your life?

It has greatly helped my family. It has helped me personally. It has taught me a lot of lessons that I can’t trade for anything else as it has made me who I am today. That includes all the sadness, happiness and everything.

How could you encourage more women to join the profession?

Perhaps we need to have policies protecting not only women but every seafarer, proper recruitment system and do away with the “backer” system. Women are sometimes in their own class, but their competency is being neglected just because you have the generalisation or stereotyping that women are weak.

In many parts of the world women are respected. Because it’s all about respect. The Philippines being one of the largest source of seafarers, the country I think should improve its system, more decency in the job by removing politics and corruption.

Do you enjoy your leadership in the women sector of seafaring?

I’m loving it because that’s one of the purposes why I’m here, I’m playing the song of God. If much has been given, much will be required of you. So, if I’m receiving this much, the more I have to give.

What other advocacy you’ve been trying to promote?

I want to make sure that we can train people, share knowledge and skills among men and women on board and on shore when there’s an opportunity.

What are your plans over the next several years?

I still want to continue sailing as long as there is a job for me. I’ll go and enjoy it. I want to achieve more. It’s very difficult to share what your dreams are, though. I’d rather work to achieve them and continue to be happy.
Henry Dupa, Chief Officer: The safest ship in the merchant fleet

It's not his ambition to be a maritime professional. But when an opportunity came up for a college scholarship in marine transport, Henry Dupa did not make a second thought to grab it.

Even if it wasn’t his first choice, he said it was a great fulfillment. “I was very happy after I finished the course,” he said. Soon after he graduated, the manning agency where he applied as a cadet-trainee called up after seven months of waiting. Henry started as one of the “utility boys” in the agency’s office for six months before getting the chance to sign up as a cadet on board in one of its ships.

Henry joined a Bernhard Schulte-managed chemical/oil tanker. It was a taste of something different for a promising tanker officer when he boarded his first vessel. “When I joined the ship as a deck cadet I didn’t even know that a ship has plenty of pipes, valves and how dangerous a chemical tanker was. But later on, when I continued my shipping career, I found out that the safest vessel in the merchant marine is tanker,” he said.

As he went about his job, Henry noticed that their safety precaution was very high. “Before we do things at work, we do risk assessment, toolbox meeting and have to follow the company’s safety management manual,” he stressed.

Like other mariners who had just plunged in to a career at sea, Henry suffered bouts of loneliness and homesickness, which he said is the “hardest part” as he laboured into adjusting to the life on board his first vessel. “That’s when you think of your family back home. The work was okay but it’s hard when loneliness crept in. There was no internet then yet. We used satellite phone that costs $2 a minute.” Henry shared.

Henry became an O/S on his next ship. He then went down to sit for
the marine board exam after his first contract and became an officer in 2009. It took a while before he got promoted—four years of waiting before serving his sea time as a Third Officer.

On tankers “we have this matrix programme. You can’t serve as an officer when you don’t have enough sea service experience. You need to have enough experience,” Henry said. Today, he has already sailed on 15 ships on an average of a nine-month contract for each year since he began as a maritime professional 15 years ago.

He said he also found difficulties in cultural differences and saw cases of bullying and discrimination on ships he has sailed on. Though he never experienced any of it himself, he has seen some foreign officers who looked down on his “kababayans” (Filipino colleagues) at work.

Even full-Filipino-crewed ships were not an exemption, he stated, saying disagreements occurred among shipmates who hailed from different provinces. It sometimes sparked rifts and physical confrontations among the crews. However, he said Filipinos are one of the most obedient crew members. “Give them a job order and most of them will right away obey and finish the job on time,” Henry commented.

According to Henry, it is even more challenging during ship inspection by the oil major as everybody works along their respective duties and responsibilities. But he said the good thing is that the crew receives incentives every time the ship passes the inspection.

Henry became a Chief Officer in 2016 on board a ship managed by Berhnhard Schulte Shipmanagement (BSM), where he spent most of his professional life. He sees to level-up into Captain over the next two years. He said he has always admired the vision and mission of BSM including its stability, which probably has put him to a continuous working engagement on chem/oil tanker in particular.

Henry said he is grateful because the seafaring profession gave him financial stability. “I can buy what I want for my family and my children,” he shared. Henry has three children who all study in a private school. Through his job, Henry was also able to buy his family a home. He has also acquired a half-hectare of farmland in his hometown North Cotabato and started to save up for his children. In preparation for a new venture, Henry went into stock trading recently and invested in some of the blue chips in the stock market.

Being able to travel around the world is what motivates Henry apart from the financial aspect of the job. “I like the travel part, while the desire to earn is always there, he said. “Seafaring is better than any job ashore as long as one is fit to work,” he added.

Last May, Henry embarked on the Nordic Aqua, a 16,000 DWT ship chem/oil tanker, the type of ship in which he has worked in since he started in the company.
Agnes Duran, Cruise Public Area Attendant: Success is the best revenge

Many have pursued career goals to help their family, to save up for the future and to bring their dreams to life. Others push much as hard to the point of having to leave their families behind in pursuit of greener pasture overseas.

But apart from those motivating factors, Agnes Duran’s story may run deeper than any other OFW. She said she pursues the work to avenge herself from insults her former in-laws have thrown at her.

Agnes admitted getting upset each time her former live-in partner’s parents would look down on her because she didn’t have a nice job. “So I told myself that I will show them who I am. I can be. I will achieve a lot in the future,” Agnes recalled.

Driven to prove herself, Agnes left their home in Cagayan De Oro to work as a cleaner in a hospital in Qatar. Prior to working in the Middle East, the eldest of six siblings had already quit college to work odd jobs in a shopping mall to fend for the family financially after spending two years in college.

“It was difficult working in Qatar since the people speak a different language. They seldom speak English in the workplace,” Agnes said. After nearly three years, she decided to search for a new place to work when one of her friends invited her to try looking for a job on a cruise ship.

She never had any idea about working on board the ship. Nevertheless, she tried her luck. “I tried when a male friend convinced me to apply,” she said. Soon after her leap of faith, Agnes succeeded. She found a job at sea and started on her first ship, the Explorer of the Seas of Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines (RCCL), as a public area attendant on May 2015. Her experience in Qatar as a cleaner was indeed useful for her first cruise job.

Agnes shared she got excited upon joining the 137,308 GT ship in Southampton, UK. In the midst of a new life and job setting, Agnes found a rather flexible working routine. “Hindi maligang trabaho. (The job was not that hard.) There were many Filipino co-workers,” she said.

She easily adapted to the new environment on board, and found the cruise spa and restroom as her work zones. She would also assist guests during embarkation. “It was easy to interact with everyone as the guests speak good English,” Agnes shared, as she inevitably compared her “guests” from the job she left behind.

Last April, she joined her fourth RCCL ship, the Allure of the Seas. It is her second time on the same cruise in a row. Agnes said she never focused on her pain from the past, and instead used the hurt to propel herself into fulfilling a career. “Now I really have a job and can provide for my son without asking any help from my former partner’s parents,” Agnes stated proudly. “As they say, success is the best revenge,” she added.

At RCCL, she has been given the chance to do some cross-training that includes leadership, in preparation for supervisory position; in-house keeping, which gives her a chance to shift to other positions depending on job availability upon passing an exam. She aims to use her experiences and trainings to level-up her role in
the cruise lines. While on vacation, she also took basic electrical course that will lead her to an alternative job in the ship casino, such as the slot-machine maintenance role. "At least when there's a vacancy in the future, I can be available," she said.

sometimes along with a tip," Agnes shared, wittingly smiling.

But it's not all fun and pleasure after all. "Mahirap at masakit ang mawalay sa pamilya. Tulad ng birthday, Christmas and other celebrations. Hanggang tawag lang ang ginagawa ko sa eight-year-old kong anak. (It's hard and painful to be away from my family. Birthdays and Christmas - all I can do is call my eight-year-old son.)"

"I can provide the family's daily needs well now, such as food, education for the family."

During her second contract on board, she was chosen as the "Best employee of the month" on the Harmony of the Seas. She was also nominated as one of the best employees in her latest contract at the Allure cruise where she had disembarked. "They do appreciate if you perform well in your work," she said. "Because of this, the company really knows that we have the dedication at work," she added.

What she values most is when a guest praises her for a job well done. "Sometimes even on a three-four day cruise, for instance, guests will hug you for your help, investing some of her earnings into farming. She has contracted a startup, half-hectare area of land that grows falcata trees, which has a stable market among Mindanawo manufacturers for plywood and paper.

She is now in the process of saving up for the future. "I want my son to finish college. I also helped two of my siblings to study and another to go abroad for work. Lumalaki na ang anak ko at lumalaki na rin ang gastos sa pag aaral at iba pang pangailangan. (My son is growing up and educational cost and other expenses are rising.) I cannot say when I can stop working, I want to train more to achieve higher role," Agnes stressed.

Agnes first left him when he was 10 months old when she opted to work as an OFW in Qatar. "We seldom see each other in person. Now at eight years, he understands our situation a bit. Lagi ko syang naisip kaya tinatawag ko. (I always think of him so I always call him up) at least once in a week." Agnes' mother and her siblings in the province are currently taking care of her son.

According to Agnes, seafaring changed her life financially. "I can provide the family's daily needs well now, such as food, education for the family. We just renovated our house in CDO," she said. Apart from the family's needs, she has begun
Martin Bonbon, Chief Officer: Of age limit and other employment issues

Age limit has posed a great concern among seafarers, upsetting many shipboard personnel especially those who have reached their golden year or 50 years of age.

Yet many in the profession are not losing hope as long as they are fit to work and are able to keep track of their future plan. Like any other maritime professional, Martin Bonbon has long planned for his future in the maritime industry. Martin started sailing in the 1980s, and still wants to continue working on board merchant ships. However, he observes that he and many of his colleagues who are in their early 50s are taking longer to find new vessels for their next jobs.

Another thing is the increasing cost of hiring Filipinos, he added. Lately, he said he heard of shipmates who were repatriated after the shipowner shifted to Chinese, Burmese and Vietnamese seafarers for crews. Four of them contacted a lawyer and filed a case in the labour court (NLRC) upon their arrival in Manila. "Shipowners and shipmanagers still employ mariners below 50-years of age but above that "tagilid ka na" (you have a slimmer chance)," he said.

According to the Chief Officer, most seafarers are hoping owners would have crew deployment based on competition) with other Asian countries and Eastern Europe.

De Oro-based domestic carrier after finishing his course in BS Marine Transportation at Cagayan Capitol College (now Capitol University) in 1982.

He went into overseas ship as a mess man on board a container reefer belonging to Del Monte Shipping that was then active in the Mindanao-Japan fruits trade. "Mahirap ang trabaho. Pagsakay ko parang gusto ko nang umuwi (The work was hard. As soon as I set foot on the vessel, I felt like going home.)" Martin said, referring to his first experience as a crewmember. And since the ship had no O/S (ordinary seaman) when he joined the vessel, Martin had to subed to perform the role, too.

"I love my job that’s why I enjoy it and I don’t feel too exhausted at work."

Martin admits he has reached the so-called age limit too, but insists he is still fit to work. He has worked on about 30 ships since he became a seafarer in 1983. "Mahirap na ang sakyan sa ngayon. Bukod sa old age marami ng competition ang mga Pinoy (It’s hard to find a job on board nowadays. Apart from old age, Filipinos face tight the result of medical exams, and not merely considering the age. Merong mga may edad na pero fit to work pa rin at gusto pang sumakay. (There are those who are older but are still fit and committed to work.)

Martin started sailing on merchant shipping as a cadet in a Cagayan

While he’s in the galley, he would be tasked in cleaning cargo holds. Although he received an extra pay for the job, he and some crewmembers still had to work even on rough seas in time for the next port. "Kahit malakas ang alon, trabaho pa rin," he recalled.

Martin became an Able (A/B) Seafarer after three contracts and
was able to work with Del Monte for 10 years. He managed to be in ratings roles over a decade as he conceded to skip upgrading his career path.

“It took me so long to decide to review and sit for the marine board exam for so long,” Martin shared. He said he had been busy doing business on the side. While their ship was trading between Japan and the Philippines, Martin took the opportunity to make extra income by buying and selling Japanese products like TV sets for his “kababayans” (fellowmen) in Mindanao.

“Nawili akong magnegosyo (I became too fond of being an entrepreneur),” he said. But as he worried about what the future holds for his career.

But there were times he got worried—like the time when their ship was flooded by seawater while sailing in Europe sometime in 1995. He still recalls that incident when water seeped through the propeller to the main engine up to the generators. Though the ship was not in danger of capsizing, their Polish captain had to call and wait for tug assistance to tow the disabled ship to Gdansk for the drydock.

The officers and crew stayed in the Polish capital for three months while the ship was being repaired. “Nakakalaban naman kami (we were though they sported a lifejacket, it was quite a rousing experience for him.” Habang tumutulo na ang sipon mo, tuloy pa rin ang pain job sa gitna ng lamig.” (Even while I was having a runny nose in the cold weather, I went on to finish the paint job.)

Other problems he encountered onboard include shortage of food. For instance, they had to resort to fishing for their next meal while anchored in Canada. Once, they caught 10kg of fish, which was enough to sustain the crew’s meals for several days and even the captain would buy the catch for the crew.

All these colorful memories and experiences in Martin’s life as a seafarer started out when pal in high school, whose brother was a ship officer, convinced him to take a nautical course. Though it wasn’t his dream, they both went to the same college as the first batch of cadets when the university offered the course. “So I began to like the course even if it wasn’t my choice,” he said.

Martin became a chief officer last year on board one of the bulk carriers belonging to Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines [IRISL]. But he said he thinks he is now being haunted by age limit. He even plans to look for an alternative job in interisland shipping.

If he’s lucky enough, Martin said two more contracts overseas are enough before he retires. Kung wala ng kumah, tiyaga na lang sa domestic bilang option. (If there will no available job overseas for me, I will try entering domestic shipping.) He can be a Master in a domestic ship, he believes, and then pursue a new business thereafter. SP
James Clyde Ouano, Ship Bosun: Hitch to the path of a better career

He never became a cadet or a trainee after finishing his course like what most of his peers did, but rather headed straight out into the real world as he boarded his first ship.

Yet James Clyde Ouano didn’t mind the sudden transition that he now calls a hitch in his career. Now that he has reached the peak of the profession, he surmised he could have attained a better role, say a chief officer or a master, like some of his former classmates, had he not rushed into boarding a ship and undergone further training.

In 1994, the young Clyde began working on his first vessel aboard a Petrolift-owned domestic tanker as an ordinary seaman (O/S). Three years in the company, he enjoyed the experience working on one of the barge-type tankers supplying bunker fuel from outposts to the now shuttered Pandacan oil depot in Manila.

As Koreans dominated the ship officer roles, the language barrier became a problem for the Filipino rating. “Hirap na hirap akong intindihin ang mga sinasabi nila,” he said. (I found it very hard to understand what they’re saying.) But Clyde survived the two contracts in his first company.

Compared with interisland, Clyde found his duties in overseas rather stringent. “You have to follow the rules. Like going on a break, for example, from coffee time to rest period. At work, you have to comply with each chore to finish on time.”

He said making cargo holds clean was a key part of his duties. There were times when all the ship’s seven cargo holds had to be simultaneously cleaned so that the vessel could be handled on arrival. In one instance, they had to finish cleaning the cargo holds of coal in three days, from sunrise to sundown as the ship had to load grain cargo in the next port. Engine crew like

You have to follow the rules. Like going on a break, for example, from coffee time to rest period. At work, you have to comply with each chore to finish on time.

When he seemed to have enough experience, Clyde decided to leave for overseas ships. The Korean-owned bulk carrier Halla Endeavour gave him the chance to continue his O/S role in 1997. “Malaking adjustment at madaming pasensya ang ginawa ko sa hirap ng trabaho dito sa una.” (It was a huge adjustment and the job took a lot of patience. It was a tough first job), Clyde said, referring to his debut on an oceangoing ship.

When he seemed to have enough experience, Clyde decided to leave for overseas ships. The Korean-owned bulk carrier Halla Endeavour gave him the chance to continue his O/S role in 1997. “Malaking adjustment at madaming pasensya ang ginawa ko sa hirap ng trabaho dito sa una.” (It was a huge adjustment and the job took a lot of patience. It was a tough first job), Clyde said, referring to his debut on an oceangoing ship.
the oilers had to lend hands in the cleanup.

After a couple of contracts Clyde went to another Korean shipowner for a series of shipboard engagements. At Pan Ocean, he engaged in its two tankers and a bulker as he rose up to an A/B role. It was followed by a series of work with different owners. “I was determined to give a better life to my family so as my determination to finish every contract I signed up with. I think that’s the most important when you finished it without any hassle.”

Clyde’s saga as a seaman started when a neighbour who was a maritime professional inspired him. He said he admired him so he aspired to pursue a nautical course. He went to Iligan Capitol College (now Iligan Lyceum) where he finished his BS in Marine Transportation in 1992. He says: “Wala akong naiiisip o ambisyon noon, kaya ang pagbabarko ang tinalikhi ko.” (I can’t think of anything to pursue, nor did I have any ambition at the time, so I tried taking the path towards the seafaring profession.)

At work, Clyde said he is diligent, patient and very accommodating. Though he admits he sometimes gets into arguments with crewmembers, he stressed he never gets involved in a fight.

Clyde became a bosun in 2015 on his fifth vessel that was managed by his current employer, the Tokyo-based ship manager Toritec Company. As a boatswain, which mainly supervises the deck crew of the ship, he used to emphasise a sort of motto with the non-compliant: Kung ayaw mo hindi kita pipilitin, pero may responsibility tayo na dapat gawin. (If you don’t want to follow, I won’t force you to, but we have responsibilities we need to accomplish).

Clyde said he is thankful for everything he has learned as a maritime professional. His encounter with other nationals in various ships he finds memorable. But the most unforgettable experience for him was the time when their ship got damaged while underway – a deluge of strong currents cracked up the upside tank of their ship, compounded by a 2m crack to the ship’s main deck. The impairment occurred while they were sailing from Portland in the US to Korea sometime in 1999 as they encountered two low pressures in Alaska. “Natakot kami kasi lumana ang barko.” (We were terrified because the vessel was really old.)

He said the engines failed and the cargo got damaged. They had already mustered to launch the lifeboat, but fortunately, nothing tragic happened. However, the ship had to be repaired for five days.

Clyde plans to sail further over the next three years. The 52-year-old boatswain says he has secured lineups for his next postings.
“Whenever you confine human beings in a restricted quarter, a lot of aberrant behaviour happens, meaning they won’t expect to do the usual thing.”

MAAP president Vdm Eduardo Santos, on comparing the cargo ship to a “human zoo” for many when a female seafarer sets in at sea.

“When I was 22, I was a God. When I was 32, I was a guide. I don’t believe in only God. I believe in three G’s. God, Guide, and Goodness.”

Caterpillar employee, on the role of leadership.

“Opportunity knocks only once. Do not turn your back due to fear.”

NCL assistant service manager Jocel Guzman, on taking the courage as a woman to face a legitimate job offer.

The NICU is equipped with the technology needed to provide care for the critically-ill neonates and pre-matures.”

Georgetown’s Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in-charge Dr. Jose Secador, on the section’s capability of caring for very small or very sick newborn babies.

“I’m loving it because that’s one of the purposes why I’m here.”

AMOUP Women chairperson Capt. Jasmin Lubarda, on the question whether or not she enjoys her leadership in the women sector of seafaring.

“Seafarers seem to believe that this unsafe environment is created by designers and enforced by manuals and procedures, and therefore cannot be disputed and has to be followed — even if it results in death.”

InterManager secretary general Capt. Kuba Szymanski, on addressing the issues of working in enclosed spaces and to eradicate the risk to life.

“It was easy to interact with everyone as the guests speak good English.”

RCCL Cruises public areas attendant Agnes Duran, on how she had easily adapted to her new environment onboard upon joining her first vessel.
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