



AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE
OF MARINE SURVEYORS

Shipshape

June 2026



**AIMS HEADS WEST
SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE
IN FREMANTLE**

Merchant Navy commemoration service

THE Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors CEO Dr Eric Perez partnered with MNWMF Chairman and Master of Ceremonies Sean Barrett for laying of a wreath to remember the Merchant Navy sailors who have crossed the seas to return no more.

The one minute's silence ended with eight bells, rung by Garry Marks. "Who are they?" it whispered in mind of all. "Perhaps they are those that were not forgotten for the price that they paid for the nation."

Then Sean Barrett declared it was the 61st annual commemoration Merchant Navy War Memorial and Columbarium in Sydney. Then the Last Post was played by the bugler, a sound that brought out memories. David Young did it justice.

The Rouse sounded. The flag attendants, the McKenzie sisters, Callisto and Tanzin, were on duty and did not disappoint as the flags went from half-mast to the masthead.

The officiating clergy – Sister Mary Leahy, OAM, Chaplain Apostleship of the Sea and John Kewa, Lay Chaplain Missions to Seafarers – brought spiritual significance to the occasion, as Josh Clark, the Music Director, set the tone with "Abide with Me".

We were reminded that Jesus Christ did calm the sea, then beckoned the preacher to be a sea calmer for others, as Merrill Barker brought the gospel of Matthew 8: 23-27 to our attention.

Occasions of this nature will never end without a poem. It was in memory of the ones who crossed the bar since April 2025.



"Crossing the Bar" is a poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. "Sunset and Evening Star" was recited. The flags were not left out in the address, with an explanation how the Red Ensign, the Merchant Navy flag, keeps flying, and to maintain the course for the laying of the wreaths after Captain Mark McIntosh, RAN (Rtd), delivered the guest of honour 2026 Merchant Navy address.

Capt Bronswijk gave the ode, "Lest We Forget".

The Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors, represented by Chief Dr. Emmanuel Ezekiel-Hart, was called to lay the wreath for AIMS.

They went to sea but did not return, yet they died on national assignment, encountering wars and battles with courage to deliver supplies and recover

battles' essentials and casualties, their graves no family can visit or care for. Their hope for national recognition remains a pressure point as an issue still today. Who shall save the service and sacrifice of the Australian Merchant Navy seafarers. Remember o' nations that deployed the Merchant Navy, they died not with a gun in their hands but in the supply of war materials under the command of national assignment.

At the ceremony at the Merchant Navy War Memorial in Sydney, I reflected further about the meaning of the occasion with each step with the wreath.

It dawned on me that I am a Merchant Navy seafarer who returned to tell the story. We served as unsung heroes. Some of us did not return to our families, making the seas the last resting



as troops and the wounded. It is not too much to ask that the Merchant Navy emblem receive funding for fast installation on existing war memorials throughout Australia, along with equal recognition of the Merchant Navy Ensign on National Flag Day, and reinstatement of the Merchant Navy Flag on the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and on the Bridge pylons.

TherecognitionoftheMerchant Navy within the Australian War Memorial – with protocol for the Red Ensign to be flown with the Australian National Flag above the Australian War Memorial, and a Merchant Navy representative among those laying wreaths at the Last Post ceremony on September 3 – is not too much to ask for after a great service for the nation and the continuing death of seafarers on national assignment, even in the Strait of Hormuz. They shall be remembered when they go and return no more.

While I represented the Australasian Institute of Marine Surveyors, I recalled my service to the freedom and peace today in Liberia and Sierra Leone, supplying relief to the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peace-keeping mission as part of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

Our ship in Monrovia faced attack by rebel forces but was let go in time and sent offshore to Freetown before saying “bon voyage” to Lagos! I never was paid a cent for that sacrifice but I am happy that Liberia and Sierra Leone regained peace and freedom.

Professor Chief Emmanuel Tam Ezekiel-Hart

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place at the seabed or within a ship under the sea.

The nation may forget them because they did not

bear arms for the nation, yet they faced more dangers and risk to their lives supplying, receiving and transporting the necessities of war, as well