

### Headlines:

US & Marshall Islands – cruise ship fire investigation;  
Tampa Bay – fog safety zones;  
USCG – UTV fire detection system certification;  
USN – mechanical whale;  
House – bill introduced re USMMA;  
House – training ship replacements sought;  
House – bill introduced re aquatic nuisance species;  
Senate – bill introduced re aquatic nuisance species;  
Canada – poor communications led to grounding;  
Canada – RCN to limit alcohol consumption; and  
Loss of tanker Argo Merchant – 15 December 1976.

December 15, 2014



## Bryant's Maritime News

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### US & Marshall Islands – cruise ship fire investigation



The US Coast Guard issued a [news release](#) [located at <http://www.uscgnews.com/go/doc/4007/2435566/>] stating that a joint investigative team with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will investigate the engine room fire on the cruise ship Insignia in St. Lucia that claimed three lives. They will be joined by investigators from the ship's flag state, the Marshall Islands. (12/12/14).

## Tampa Bay – fog safety zones



The US Coast Guard promulgated a temporary rule, through 31 March 2015, establishing seven safety zones on waters of Tampa Bay to be enforced when visibility falls below one nautical mile due to fog. The rule enters into effect immediately. [79 Fed. Reg. 74028](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-15/pdf/2014-29357.pdf) [located at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-15/pdf/2014-29357.pdf>] (12/15/14).

## USCG – UTV fire detection system certification



The USCG Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise (TVNCE) posted a new [FAQ](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/TVNCOE/FAQS.asp#F) [located at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/TVNCOE/FAQS.asp#F>] regarding the requirement for fire detection system certification on uninspected towing vessels (UTVs) that hold SOLAS certificates. (12/12/14).

## USN – mechanical whale



The US Navy issued a [news release](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=84845) [located at [http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story\\_id=84845](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=84845)] stating that it has developed a mechanical whale. Actually, the Navy calls it the GhostSwimmer unmanned underwater vehicle. Powered by batteries, it is propelled by oscillating its tail back and forth, making it quieter than propeller-driven craft. About five feet in length and weighing about 100 pounds, it can dive to 300 feet below the surface. (12/12/14).

## House – bill introduced re USMMA



Representative Grimm (R-NY) introduced the [U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Improvement Act of 2014](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr5813ih/pdf/BILLS-113hr5813ih.pdf) (H.R. 5813) [located at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-113hr5813ih/pdf/BILLS-113hr5813ih.pdf>] to allow for a contract for operation of Melville Hall at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, after receipt of a gift from the United States Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc., for renovation of such hall and for other purposes. (12/9/14).

## House – training ship replacements sought



Representative Joe Crowley (D-NY) issued a [press release](#) [located at <http://crowley.house.gov/press-release/crowley-calls-new-training-vessel-suny-maritime-college-bronx> ] stating that a bipartisan group of 25 members of Congress sent a letter to the Department of Transportation urging development of a plan to design and replace the training ships used at the nation's six state maritime academies. (12/9/14).

## House – bill introduced re aquatic invasive species



Representative Camp (R-MI) introduced a bill (H.R. 5861) to control the spread of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes basin and the Mississippi River basin, and for other purposes. Official text of the bill is not yet available, but Representative Camp issued a [press release](#) explaining the measure. (12/11/14).

## Senate – bill introduced re aquatic invasive species



Senator Stabenow (D-MI) introduced a bill (S. 3002) to control the spread of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes basin and the Mississippi River basin, and for other purposes. Official text of the bill is not yet available, but Senator Stabenow issued a [press release](#) explaining the measure. (12/11/14).

## Canada – poor communications led to grounding



The Canadian Transportation Safety Board (TSB) released the report of its investigation into the striking and subsequent grounding of the general cargo ship Claude A. Desgagnes in the St. Lawrence Seaway near Iroquois, Ontario on 6 November 2013. Investigation revealed that, as the ship approached the lock, the master and pilot disagreed on maneuvers to use. Due to poor bridge communications, no order was given to reduce speed and the ship struck the upper approach wall and then grounded. [Marine Investigation Report M13C0071](#) [located at <http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/rapports-reports/marine/2013/M13C0071/M13C0071.pdf> ]

## Canada – RCN to limit alcohol consumption



The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) issued a [news release](#) [located at <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=914079> ] stating that an internal

review of personal conduct found that, while the vast majority of sailors conduct themselves appropriately, there is a need for more exacting guidance from leadership. Among other things, the RCN will modernize its alcohol policy and bring further limitations to an existing set of strict rules regarding alcohol consumption on board Canadian warships. (12/12/14). *Note: Not long ago, an RCN warship had to be recalled from an international naval exercise due to crew inebriation.*

### **Loss of tanker *Argo Merchant* – 15 December 1976**



On 15 December 1976, the oil tanker *Argo Merchant* grounded on Middle Rip Shoal in international waters approximately 25 nautical miles southeast of Nantucket Island. The tanker was en route from Venezuela to Boston carrying 7.7 million gallons of No. 6 fuel oil. The US Government refused to grant permission for the jettisoning of cargo in an attempt to lighten the ship. On 21 December, the *Argo Merchant* broke into two pieces, spilling all of its cargo and bunkers. The Coast Guard sank the bow of the ship with gunfire. The prevailing wind and current carried the oil offshore and away from rich fishing grounds nearby. The spill was the largest in US history to that date. Publicity surrounding the casualty resulted in Congress adopting the Port and Tanker Safety Act of 1978, giving the Coast Guard increased authority to inspect and regulate tank vessels, foreign and domestic, operating in US waters.

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