



mission ‘row around singapore island’ (rasi) 2015 – 7 days to the big maritime charity row for the mission to seafarers

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With only 7 days to go to the big Singapore charity row, the intrepid volunteer rowers from the maritime community of Singapore have been undertaking their final practice weekend at the Republic of Singapore Yacht Club.

The original concept for this ground-breaking non-stop endurance challenge was conceived and organised by three friends Iain Anderson of RPC, Lewis Hart of Willis and Ian Teare of Norton Rose Fulbright. It will take around 24 hours and the rowing teams will face busy seaways, strong currents and choppy offshore waters as they tackle the 140 km distance around Singapore. They will be rowing in 2 traditional Cornish Pilot Gigs – Singapore Spirit 1 & 2 – the design of which dates as far back as 1838 when Pilots would be ferried out to incoming cargo ships in the English West Country. This is no ordinary rowing event – a circumnavigation of this kind has never been attempted before.

The row is being endorsed at the highest international level, by The Mission to Seafarers’ President Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal of the United Kingdom and by President Tony Tan Keng Yam of the Republic of Singapore.

HRH The Princess Royal said: “For our volunteers from Singapore’s diverse and international maritime community, many of whom have never rowed before, to row around Singapore Island in 24 hours during Singapore’s Maritime week in the Republic’s Golden Anniversary Year is an audacious objective and I applaud the vision of those who proposed the concept.”

President Tony Tan Keng Yam said: “As a global hub port and leading international maritime centre, Singapore welcomes to our shores every day some 12,000 seafarers from all over the world. These seafarers form the backbone of the shipping industry, and play an essential role in supporting the global trade. Given the challenging nature of the work and the demanding conditions at sea, The Mission to Seafarers performs an important function in championing seafarer welfare, and offering support to these dedicated men and women in various areas of their need.

In connection with the SG50 celebrations in Singapore, Mission RASI will see a team of Singaporeans join hands with friends from overseas in a test of endurance and teamwork, to raise funds to further the Mission’s work in promoting good shipping practices and a safe working environment for seafarers. This commendable effort symbolises the spirit of Mission RASI, and pays tribute to the commitment and professionalism of seafarers worldwide.”

The team has now been narrowed down to 32 rowers – from an original selection squad of 60 men and women training from Republic of Singapore Yacht Club and this long journey to fitness and the challenge of a life-time.

The charity that will benefit from the row is global maritime welfare organisation The Mission to Seafarers which has a working branch based in Jurong Port and manages the seafarers’ international drop-in centre there.

Andrew Wright, Director General of The Mission to Seafarers, said: “We are moving towards the culmination of an extraordinary project – Mission RASI. Charity challenge events are very often, in my view, not real challenges at all – indeed they can be rather tame. Not so this one! For this fantastic team of rowers this will be a demanding physical test, and one that does not come without significant risk. Training has been intense and extensive and demonstrates an enormous commitment not just from the rowers but also from their families. We join in saluting the inspired creators of this project, the rowers themselves, all involved in every aspect of its organisation and, of course, all the many generous individuals and sponsors who are ensuring that this event raises so much money.

“The Mission to Seafarers is grateful beyond words for the being the beneficiary of this amazing team effort. The money raised will be used primarily for the Mission’s vital and expanding work for seafarers in Singapore. It will make a massive difference to their lives. This event will have a profound impact long after April 2015”

This venture has been organised by the RASI committee, has taken 18 months to organise and cost over GBP 50,000 to get off the ground; and is entirely self-funded by the rowers with seed funding donations from various companies such as RPC, Brookes Bell and NYK. They have the ambitious target of raising over S\$750,000 for The Mission to Seafarers.

Ambassador for Mission RASI and President of The Mission to Seafarers’ Singapore, Captain Lee Wai Pong, said: “On behalf of MTS Singapore, I thank all the leaders and volunteers involved in Mission RASI for devoting and donating a large part of their spare time to realize this challenging and ambitious adventure. Without the vision and inspiration of the leaders and the dedication and cooperation of the team members and volunteers spread over more than a year in preparation, Mission RASI could not have taken form nor substance. As the final preparations of Mission RASI get underway, I am encouraged by the outpouring of support and encouragement by so many members of our community, especially messages of support from the highest levels coming from President Tony Tan Keng Yam of the Republic of Singapore and from the President of The Mission to Seafarers, HRH The Princess Royal.

I wish all members of the rowing team God speed on the day of the event. Not everyone made it to the rowing team and that is not to forget the contributions from the quiet heroes who will be providing the necessary logistics and medical services on the various support boats as well as facilitating the transfer movements ashore at the causeway so that that the rowers can focus on their tasks at hand. To all of you who have joined hands to make light of your work, I thank you, salute you and I look forward to welcoming all of you at the finishing line as you row homeward bound.”

Norton Rose Fulbright, the international law firm, is a major sponsor for Mission RASI, and Ian Teare said: “So many of us here work in the maritime world, being at the heart of one of the great global shipping centres; and we rely on the 1.5 million hardy merchant seafarers who go to sea for many months at a time to bring all of us 90% of the goods we use every day. Being a seafarer these days is a hard and often lonely business, it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to come ashore during port calls to do simple things like contact their families. Even when things are going well, isolation and loneliness are an on-going challenge which is not to be underestimated. We all rely on seafarers; seafarers rely on the Mission.”

Team dietitian Alison Carpenter, one of only three women who have made the final selection and at age 57 is the oldest rower in the squad, said: “I believe the row will be a great success; the Mission RASI team, rowers and the support crew will make sure of it. Many people have put a lot of time and effort into making this happen. All the squad is focused, fit and ready and there is fantastic team camaraderie. What have I learnt from this great experience? If you believe you can do it, you can!”

The other main project sponsors include:, ASP Ship Management, AXA, BW Maritime, Centaurs Group, Catlin Insurance, Kukri Sports Singapore, Masterbulk, Smit Salvage, The Baltic Exchange, The Singapore Shipowners’ Association, Titan Salvage, 8ightplus Health and Marina Keppel Bay.

The row starts at Resorts World Sentosa at 11am on Wednesday 22 April and will be supported by a flotilla, led by the unique tall ship ‘Royal Albatross’ and supported by vessels from Lloyd Marine Yacht Charters and AZ Marine. They will be welcomed back again around 11am on 23 April.

Everyone is welcome to come down to see the boats leave with their fabulous support flotilla for the send off or the welcome home on the quayside by the Maritime Museum the next day. Tickets are available for the final celebration, which will be held by The British Club Singapore at 7pm on the 23rd April hosted by Pete Goss MBE.

You can also watch the flotilla live online at www.missiontoseafarers.org and www.missionrasi.com. See you there!

ENDS

Notes for editors

Mission RASI Committee

The row around Singapore Island is being managed and delivered in Singapore by the Mission RASI Committee. More about the row can be found here:

www.missionrasi.com

To watch a short 2 minute introductory video about Mission RASI go to The Mission to Seafarers’ YouTube Channel here:

<https://youtu.be/IVhBIF5xMvk>

The Mission to Seafarers



Founded in 1856, and entirely funded by voluntary donations, today’s Mission to Seafarers is a registered charity that offers emergency assistance, practical support, and a friendly welcome to crews visiting over 260 ports around the world in 71 countries.

Whether caring for victims of piracy or providing a lifeline to those stranded in foreign ports, we are there for the globe’s 1.5 million merchant seafarers of all ranks, nationalities and beliefs.

The Mission to Seafarers’ Patron is Her Majesty The Queen and our President is Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.

To find out how we help those facing shipwreck, abandonment, loneliness and danger, visit our website:

www.missiontoseafarers.org

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