



*a history of*  
International Registries, Inc.



International Registries, Inc. and its affiliates (IRI) provide  
administrative and technical support to the  
Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime and Corporate Registries.







*Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress*

*Edward R. Stettinius, Sr.*

Founder

Former United States Secretary of State

First United States Ambassador to the United Nations

IRI traces its origins to 1948 and the visionary leadership of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., the United States (US) Secretary of State during the latter part of World War II and the first US Ambassador to the United Nations (UN). The concept of a US-administered open registry had its earliest beginnings when President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Liberia in January 1943, shortly after the Roosevelt-Churchill conference at Casablanca. Mr. Stettinius, previously the president of US Steel, served as the US Lend-Lease Administrator for President Roosevelt during World War II, and was instrumental in the transfer of US-flagged ships to the Panamanian Registry two years prior to America entering the war, when the US Neutrality Acts were in force. Having witnessed the effect of these Neutrality Acts, which restricted the shipment of vital cargoes to British ports in US-registered vessels, Mr. Stettinius and his colleagues in the US Government saw the need for a future peacetime open registry system administered by a private company.

After retiring from a distinguished government career that included service under Presidents Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, Mr. Stettinius returned to his family farm in Virginia. Within a short time, he was asked to become a business partner and assist in establishing an office in New York City, to register ships and corporations under an open registry system. IRI's predecessor corporation, Liberian Services, Inc., was formed in New York on 4 February 1949; its attorney in the early years of its development was Allen W. Dulles, Esq., who subsequently became a partner at the prestigious international law firm, Sullivan & Cromwell, in New York City. On 11 March 1949, the first commercial vessel, the WORLD PEACE, owned by interests



The WORLD PEACE was built in 1949 at the Bethlehem Sparrows Point Shipyard, Inc. in Sparrows Point, Maryland, US. The WORLD PEACE was the first commercial vessel registered under the Liberian flag.



Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. signing the United Nations Charter, witnessed by President Harry S. Truman, San Francisco, 1945.



Allen W. Dulles, Esq.

controlled by Mr. Stavros Niarchos, and under charter to Getty Oil Company, was registered in New York under Liberian Maritime Law.

After the death of Mr. Stettinius in 1950, the ownership of Liberian Services, Inc. passed to the International Bank (IB), headquartered in Washington, DC. The IB, as it was known, was further developed through the efforts of Major General George H. Olmsted, US Army (Ret.), a man of much the same vision as that of Mr. Stettinius. The formative years of what became IRI were also guided by a number of prominent individuals, and the Liberian Registry grew to a size of 79 million gross tons in the 1970s. At the same time, the corporate formation program became a leading force in the financial services industry.

IRI was formed in 1990 as the parent corporation for its various affiliates, and entered into an agreement with the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to develop a new maritime and corporate program. In 1993, IRI became privately held, owned, and operated by its senior employees. As a result of the continued political instability of the Liberian Government, IRI parted ways with the Liberian Registry on 1 January 2000, and has since then solely provided administrative and technical support to the RMI Maritime and Corporate Registries. Since its formation, IRI has expanded quite rapidly and now the RMI Registry is one of the largest maritime registries in the world. The RMI Registry surpassed 100 million gross tons in February 2014, and has registered thousands of international business corporations, some of which are publicly traded primarily on stock exchanges in London and New York.



*At Yalta: Sir Winston L.S. Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt sit in front. Mr. Stettinius stands behind President Roosevelt.*



*Major General George Olmsted, US Army (Ret.).*

The RMI Maritime Registry (the “Registry”) is an open registry, which offers registration to shipowners from all nations and provides political neutrality, few restrictions concerning crew nationality and no restrictions on where a vessel is built or financed. The concept of open registration was developed in response to imbalances in taxation and operational costs, shortages of qualified seafarers, and the elimination of many barriers to free trade after World War II. As international trade continues to be an increasingly important part of the global economy, open registries play a vital role in the international shipping market by competing to offer shipowners the best tax and regulatory environment combined with efficient service, thus reducing costs and promoting innovation. Since the 1980s, open registries have represented more than 50% of the world’s shipping market.

### *Role of Ship Registration in World Trade*

The registration of ships is a centuries old and time-honored practice. It began principally as a means of controlling ships entitled to carry cargoes within the seaborne empires of Europe. Today, registration confers nationality on a ship and brings it within the jurisdiction of the law of the flag State.

A ship may not trade in only one area of the world; therefore, it must carry documentation recognized by other nations that validates its right to engage in international commerce. A vessel’s credentials are established by its registration papers just as a passport establishes credentials for an individual. Thus, an RMI registered vessel is bound by RMI law, though the vessel may venture well outside the territorial limits of the country. At the same time, national law requires ownership of the RMI registered vessel through an RMI business entity such as a corporation, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability company, or foreign maritime entity.





IRI provides for the specialized needs of the shipping and financial services industries across a broad economic spectrum. IRI has 25 offices located in major shipping and financial centers throughout the world, including its headquarters in Reston, Virginia, with easy access to Washington, DC.

The RMI Registry program was initiated by the RMI Government in 1988. With the adoption of a new Maritime Act in 1990, the maritime laws of the RMI were brought in line with the many changes in ship registration, financing, and seafarers' licensing and documentation, which had occurred in the shipping industry. The RMI Registry is the third largest registry in the world. Vessel types include, but are not limited to: tank ships; liquid natural gas (LNG)/gas carriers; bulk carriers; container ships; offshore drilling, production, and service units; passenger vessels; and yachts.

The RMI Maritime and Corporate Registries provide many unique advantages for the investor, shipowner, and international business person that include a full range of services for forming a company, including both registrar and registered agent services. IRI's network of worldwide offices provides the ability to register a vessel or yacht, including those under construction, record a mortgage or financing charter, incorporate a company, issue a certificate of good standing, document seafarers, and service clientele. IRI prides itself on providing a superior level of service, economical pricing, and extensive industry experience.

### Maritime Services

A flag State establishes rules and requirements for vessels that fly its flag and also has the primary responsibility of ensuring that its vessels meet all established national and international laws and regulations. Major requirements may include crew nationality and ship building



The Trust Company of the Marshall Islands, Inc. located in Majuro, capital of the RMI.



IRI headquarters in Reston, Virginia, US.

#### 1529

Seeking a western route to the "Spice Islands," Spaniard Alvaro Saavedra becomes the first European to "discover" what is now known as the RMI.

#### 1788

The area now known as the RMI was given its name by British Naval Captain John William Marshall, who sailed through the area on the SCARBOROUGH while transporting convicts for New South Wales between Botany Bay and Cathay.

#### 1885-1886

The German Government annexes the Marshall Islands with compensation to Spain and establishes a protectorate over the Marshalls.

requirements, among others. Rapid technological advancements and a growing concern for the world's marine environment has resulted in ship replacement and system upgrades. Maritime accidents have led to stricter national and international regulation of shipping, which has further increased the demand for better trained crews and more sophisticated safety systems.

The RMI Maritime Administrator provides comprehensive maritime expertise and administrative services which include: issuing certificates of registry, seafarers' licensing and documentation, manning certificates and radio station licenses, conducting safety inspections, utilizing recognized Classification Societies to assist in monitoring vessel compliance with all national and international standards; and providing technical assistance, investigative services, and information on maritime regulations and port activities.

### *Corporate Services*

Thanks to its unparalleled customer service oriented philosophy and excellent reputation as a leading maritime registry, the RMI is the jurisdiction of choice for business professionals and international shipping companies around the world. In particular, the RMI is experiencing tremendous success as one of the leading jurisdictions for initial public offerings (IPOs) on major stock exchanges. A significant and growing number of RMI companies are publicly traded on financial exchanges in London and New York.



1914

The Marshall Islands are captured from Germany by Japan.

1945

Effective control of the Marshall Islands passes to the US at the end of World War II.

1946

The US begins its nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands. Bikini Atoll is evacuated for first tests under Operation Crossroads.

Shipping is the most international of the world's industries and vital to the global economy, as it is responsible for the movement of over 90% of the world's commodities. The ownership and subsequent management chain of any vessel are often comprised of many countries and nationalities, and the economic and physical life of a ship is spent moving between different jurisdictions, often far from the country of registry. Therefore, it is important that there are international standards and laws to regulate shipping which can be adopted and accepted by all nations.

The RMI Registry is fully engaged with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), thereby providing constructive input to the respective bodies in order to balance actual practice with regulation. The RMI ratifies important international conventions to ensure a proactive approach is taken with respect to marine safety, security, environmental protection and social responsibility. With an assigned permanent representative to the IMO, the RMI participates in all of the major committee and subcommittee meetings, and is in the vanguard of registries providing the IMO with active support.

The uniquely global qualities of the maritime industry have conferred a special role on the IMO, whose chief task has been to provide an international mechanism to promote safety at sea through the development of a comprehensive regulatory framework. Established by means



1947

The Marshall Islands becomes 1 of 6 entities in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) established by the UN with the US as the Trustee.

1951

The US Department of the Interior assumes responsibility for the TTPI from the Department of the Navy.

1965

The Congress of Micronesia is formed, with representatives from all of the TTPI. It is created by the US in preparation for greater self-governance by Micronesians.

## *International Representation*

of a convention adopted in 1948, the IMO's mission today includes safety, environmental concerns, legal matters, technical cooperation, maritime security, and the efficiency of shipping.

The IMO adopts international shipping standards and regulations, but it is the responsibility of Member States to implement them. As a maritime leader, the RMI's commitment to maintaining a quality registry, in a time of rapid technological change, is reflected in the RMI Registry's areas of maritime expertise, including regulatory affairs, seafarers' documentation and licensing, investigations, technical, telecommunications, environmental and marine safety, and security.

In order to be competitive in the modern shipping industry, there are a number of factors that must be considered. One of the most important factors is that a flag State be a Member State of the IMO and ILO and is able to evaluate and adopt relevant resolutions and conventions put forward by these organizations. Secondly, a flag State should have an established maritime organization that is capable of enforcing all international and national regulations. Both of these conditions have been met by the RMI.

## *A Premier Quality Registry*

The RMI Registry is fully committed to the safety and security of personnel ashore and afloat, the Registry's vessels, and the global marine environment. Today, it is important for ship registries to balance commercial reality with an increasingly stringent worldwide regulatory regime. In order for a registry to balance its rights and responsibilities while working in partnership with the shipping community, it must maintain an open dialogue with industry participants, including shipowners, operators, regulatory officials, and Classification Societies, among others.



### **1978-1979**

The Government of the Marshall Islands is officially established with the signing of the constitution in 1978 thus becoming self-governing.

### **1982**

Official name changed to the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

### **1983**

Voters in the RMI approve the Compact of Free Association (Compact) with the US.

While the RMI Registry is one of the largest in the world, it continuously strives to reaffirm its position as the premier quality registry by providing timely and professional service to RMI Registry stakeholders. To achieve this, IRI has focused on enhancing and decentralizing the organizational infrastructure to include 24/7 worldwide contacts, maintaining an excellent port State control (PSC) record, updating procedures for vessel inspections and pre-registration vetting, providing timely post-registration services, and active representation at the IMO. IRI has a firm policy that the growth of the RMI Registry will not be achieved at the expense of quality standards.

The RMI maintains a comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework, which ensures the RMI Registry's full compliance with internationally agreed-upon standards. In addition, the Marshall Islands Quality Council (MIQC), an independent, consultative body consisting of diverse industry experts, meets formally two times per year and provides advice and guidance to the RMI Registry on topical issues, including issues being addressed at the IMO and ILO. The MIQC has also established three advisory groups which meet on an as-needed basis and specifically focus on topical issues with respect to the offshore energy, yacht, and blue water industry sectors.

In the international maritime community, a major grading system of the quality of a flag State is its PSC record. The three major PSC regimes are the US Coast Guard (USCG) and the Paris and Tokyo Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). The RMI Registry continues to maintain its White List status on both the Paris and Tokyo MoUs, as well as its listing on the USCG Qualship 21 program for nine consecutive years, which is unprecedented. The RMI has also met the flag criteria for a low risk ship under the Paris MoU's New Inspection Regime. These factors, in addition to IRI's commitment to decentralization and investment in people and their expertise, contribute to the overall reputation and growth of the RMI Registry.



**1986**

*The US Congress approves the Compact that grants the RMI its independence as a sovereign nation and provides aid and US defense of the RMI in exchange for continued US military use of the missile testing range at Kwajalein Atoll.*

**1986**

*The UN Security Council terminates the RMI's Trusteeship status.*

**1990**

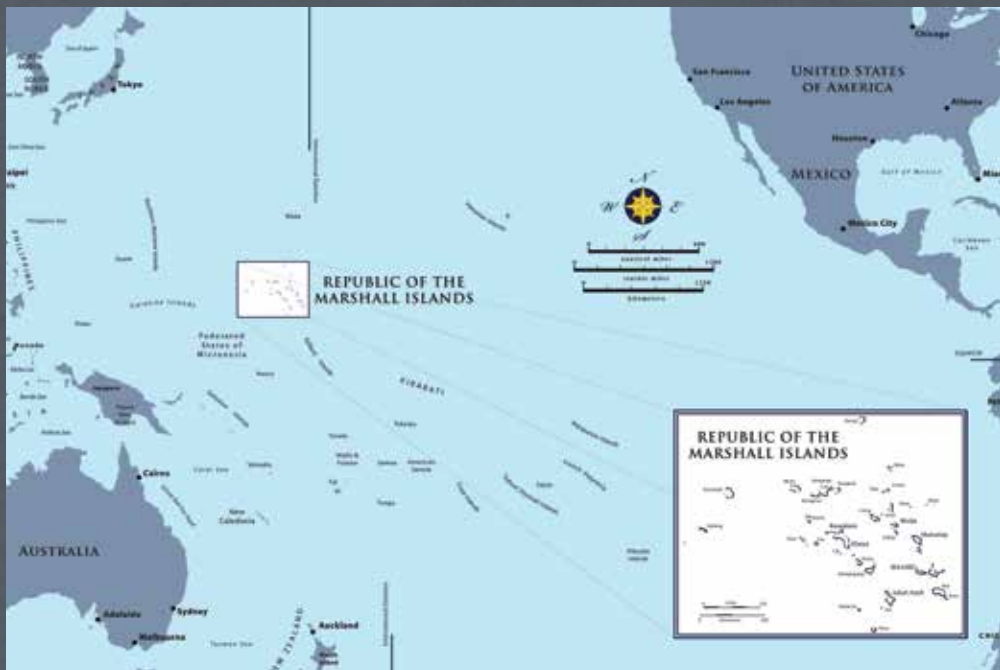
*Through a legislatively endorsed joint venture with the RMI, IRI begins to provide administrative and technical support to the RMI Maritime and Corporate Registries.*

The RMI is situated nearly midway between Hawaii and the Philippines, and is the easternmost island group in Micronesia. The country consists of two parallel chains of atolls and islands in the central Pacific Ocean, known as the Ratak (Sunrise) chain and Ralik (Sunset) chain. Together, the RMI is comprised of approximately 1,225 islands and islets, which spread across a sea area of over 1.9 million square kilometers.

British Naval Captain John William Marshall gave his name to the area in the 1700s. However, the islands have been under the control of various nations throughout the last few centuries. After World War II, the Marshall Islands became a part of the UN TTPI under US administration.

### *Government Organization*

The RMI Government was officially established in 1979 with the signing of the Constitution, which represents a blend of American and British models of government. The RMI gained its independence in 1986, after signing the Compact of Free Association with the US, ending



1991

RMI becomes a member of the UN.

1998

IMO Convention ratified by the RMI.

2003

RMI and the US renegotiate provisions of the Compact.

the UN-US Trusteeship Agreement, and establishing the national charter of independence of the island nation. The RMI maintains a politically stable, democratically elected parliamentary system of government, consisting of two legislative chambers which elect the President from among their members for a four-year term. In turn, the President appoints a Cabinet of 6-10 members and serves both as chief of State and head of Government. The RMI became a full member of the UN in 1991, and has since established diplomatic relations with most of the world's major maritime and industrial nations.

### *Significance of the RMI Flag*

The flag, designed by Emlain Kabua, a former First Lady of the RMI, was officially adopted 1 May 1979. The deep blue background represents the Pacific Ocean. The white and orange bands represent the Ratak (Sunrise) and Ralik (Sunset) chains, respectively. The customary symbolism of white as the color of peace, and orange as the color of bravery, are also recognized. The four main points represent the major centers of Majuro, Ebeye, Jaluit and Wotje, and the 24 points on the starburst represent the 24 electoral districts.



2007

*ILO Constitution deposited and entered into force by the RMI, 3 July 2007.*

2007

*Accession to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 on 25 September 2007.*

2014

*The RMI Registry reaches the milestone of 100 million gross tons in February 2014.*



For a complete list of offices and contact information, please visit:

[www.register-iri.com](http://www.register-iri.com)



International Registries, Inc. and its affiliates (IRI)

*in affiliation with*

*The Trust Company of the Marshall Islands, Inc. and  
Marshall Islands Maritime & Corporate Administrators, Inc.*