

## DAILY SHIPPING NEWSLETTER 2002 - 016



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### Operation Enduring Freedom

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



### TAKLIFT 7

In the Schiehaven in Rotterdam the **TAKLIFT 7** tested her longboom for an upcoming project.

The 175 mtr long boom was attached which gives the Taklift 7 a lifting height of 155 mtrs, the Taklift 7 is still able to lift 230 tons to this height.



The longboom was even clearly visible from the rooftop of the Smit office at the Zalmstraat just beside the Euromast.

Photo's : Piet Sinke ©



## Uno to be raised this week



The **UNO** which sank in the Kiel canal – **Photo via SMIT Salvage**

A SHIP'S engineer is still missing after the Danish coaster Uno sank in the Kiel Canal on July 11. The Uno sank near Hochdonn after a steering manoeuvre, possibly resulting from steering gear failure, led to its collision with an inland waterways tank barge. The barge sustained only minor damage. Efforts to raise the wreck will be led by Bugsier-Reederei of Hamburg with the assistance of Svitzer-Wijsmuller. Brunsbüttel-based towage company Hans Schramm is to discharge the steel cargo from the capsized vessel, which is lying near the canal bank. The wreck is to be raised using two Bugsier heavy-lift cranes, the first of which will reach the accident site this week. Navigational restrictions are likely to be imposed once the operation starts.

## Rice fraud ship may have been sold

THE Philippines inter-island trading ship involved in rice smuggling that disappeared at Cebu port last December might have been sold or had its name changed, according to the Maritime Industry Authority administrator Oscar M Sevilla. Last week the regional Ombudsman filed charges of graft against Customs officials and other individuals involved in the disappearance of the 1,851-DWT Great Faith, which was loaded with 18,000 sacks of rice confiscated under Customs care. The Ombudsman

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adopted the findings of a committee that found probable cause to indict customs officials, the shipper, the master and the president of Sampaguita Shipping, the Great Faith's owner. The vessel was seized in September 2001 because its cargo of rice, worth PhP18M (\$360,000), lacked papers. The vessel later docked in Mandaue, Cebu, but on December 24 it disappeared, with its cargo.

### NZ ro-ro saved from sinking

STRONG icy winds caused havoc in New Zealand's Cook Strait on Saturday night when one ship was holed and ferry services were cancelled. The hull of the ro-ro vessel **Kent** was ripped open when it hit two barges in Wellington Harbour on Saturday evening when trying to dock at the port's Glasgow Wharf. The 6,862-GT vessel, which is owned and operated by Strait Shipping, was saved from possibly sinking by the quick response of marine authorities and emergency services, according to NZ Press Association reports. In an interview on national radio, Wellington Regional Harbourmaster Mike Price said the vessel's ro-ro design meant it was particularly susceptible to flooding once holed but the speedy response prevented this. The ship was towed to the shelter of Wellington's overseas passenger terminal. The strong winds and high seas caused the cancellation of all Cook Strait ferry services overnight, leaving about 500 passengers stranded on both sides of the strait. A spokesman for the Maritime Safety Authority said an investigation into the incident would begin this morning.

### Court orders Victory crew payment

AN Indian court last week ordered Gulf Oil Co of Ajman, UAE, to pay \$6,977 to the crew of its abandoned tanker, **Arabian Victory**, who claim they have not been paid for ten months. The lower court at Cochin also granted permission for the ship to berth until further orders. The order was issued on a petition filed by Victory crew member Mohan Pillai and another seafarer seeking settlement of their wage dues. Other crew members and the master have filed similar petitions for recovery of nearly Rs5M (\$102,000). If the owner failed to make the payment, the crew members would be entitled to proceed against the company in accordance with the law under the Merchant Shipping Act, the court said. The local district collector has been asked to sell the ship and give the money from the sale to the crew if the owner fails to make payment.

### Icebreaker Nears Stranded Ship As Putin Sends Thanks to Mbeki for Rescue



THE powerful Argentinean naval icebreaker **Almirante Irizar** is close to the ice-bound German vessel **Magdalena Oldendorff** and could reach it today.

On Sunday, the 121-metre, 14 900-ton icebreaker was still 100 nautical miles (about 185 kilometres) away from its destination and smashing its way through a "10/10" icefield - solid ice - at a speed of about

four knots (about 7.5 km/h).

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The air temperature was -22.2°C and the water temperature -5.5°C.

An expected report on the icebreaker's progress at midday yesterday had not materialised by late afternoon, said Gerald Hagemann, spokesman for the rescue mission's coordinators, the Cape Town-based Antarctic Logistics Centre International.

Meanwhile, the head of Russia's Antarctic expedition has blamed a German shipyard for the marooning of 78 Russians aboard the **Magdalena Oldendorff**, necessitating the rescue by South Africa's research and supply ship SA Agulhas.

The Agulhas returned to Cape Town last Wednesday, carrying the Russians and 11 non-essential crew. There are still 18 crew aboard the German ship, but they are in no danger and were resupplied by the Agulhas.

Valery Lukin told Reuters that his group had launched legal action against Motorenwerke Bremerhaven (MWD) AG for failing to repair an icebreaker, the Akademik Federov, which had been due to sail to Russia's Novolazarevskaya base in Antarctica. When the ship was not available, the Russians had chartered the Magdalena Oldendorff, which was in Cape Town at the time.

"The Akademik Federov was under repair at MWD Bremerhaven and was being readied to go to the Antarctic, but during tests (last November), its engine broke down and it couldn't leave port," Lukin said from his St Petersburg headquarters.

"We believe that specialists carrying out the repairs at the shipyard caused the damage to the vessel."

The case would come before a Stockholm-based international maritime arbitration panel.

But the shipyard has denied being responsible.

Hermann Klein, a member of MWD's board, said from Bremerhaven that after the repairs had been done, the crew had made operational mistakes and damaged the ship's engine.

"It is the shipping company's responsibility to get the ship repaired," he said.

In other developments around the rescue mission, Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a message of thanks to President Thabo Mbeki.

"This generous act is a striking illustration of the spirit of friendship and cooperation that characterises relations between our countries," Putin said.

When the first of the rescued Russians from the Magdalena Oldendorff arrived home in St Petersburg to tears and hugs from friends and relatives on Friday, they joked and said they had not been in any danger.

"Of course it was not very pleasant but it was OK.

Towards the end we just had problems finding cigarettes," station cook Vladimir Skochii told state television.



Another member of the party, Dmitry Serov, said the men had played dominoes and cards, basketball and other sports to pass the time.

## **Reddingsboten varen uit voor ongeval zeiler**

**ENKHUIZEN - Reddingsboten uit Andijk en Enkhuizen voeren zondag aan het eind van de middag uit nadat er een noodsignaal was binnengekomen over een ongeluk met een zeiler. De man raakte ernstig gewond aan zijn hoofd toen hij een klap kreeg met de giek.**

Het slachtoffer zeilde met twee andere opvarenden met het jacht Jildou op het IJsselmeer op vier kilometer ten noorden van Enkhuizen. De noodmelding kwam rond vijf uur binnen. Uit Andijk spoedde een boot van reddingsbrigade 't Span zich naar de plek des onheils. Ook de reddingsboot [De Richel](#) van het KNRM-station Enkhuizen voer direct uit.

KNRM-redder Rob Roosendaal verleende ter plaatse eerste hulp aan het slachtoffer. De gealarmeerde ambulance was binnen vijf minuten aanwezig bij de Compagnieshaven in Enkhuizen. Het ambulancepersoneel werd op volle snelheid met de reddingsboot Watersport van het Koninklijk Nederlands Watersportverbond naar het jacht gebracht.

De hulpverleners stabiliseerden de patiënt die per brancard werd overgebracht naar de reddingsboot Watersport. In de Compagnieshaven werd de gewonde man met de gereedstaande ambulance vervoerd naar het Westfries Gasthuis in Hoorn.

## **SHIPYARD NEWS**

### **Schelde Groep maakt weer winst**

**VLISSINGEN - De Koninklijke Schelde Groep in Vlissingen maakt voor het eerst sinds jaren weer winst. Het bedrijf boekte vorig jaar een positief resultaat van 7,3 miljoen euro. Volgens directeur R. Berkvens is dat te danken aan een zuiniger bedrijfsvoering en een andere bedrijfsstructuur.**

Door bedrijfsonderdelen meer verantwoordelijkheden te geven en de holding te verkleinen, bespaart het concern volgens Berkvens veel kosten. Hij zei dat gisteren in toelichting op de jaarcijfers 2001. De KSG is gesplitst in zeven zelfstandige bedrijven: Schelde Marinebouw, Scheldepoort (reparatie en ombouw van schepen), AmelsSchelde (jachtbouw), Schelde Gears (tandwiel overbrengingen), Schelde Machinefabriek (machinale bewerkingen), Schelde Marine Services (handel in reserveonderdelen) en Schelde Exotech (speciale producten). Schelde Marinebouw droeg het meest bij aan de zwarte cijfers. Zorgenvind is tandwielkastenfabrikant Schelde Gears. Het KSG-onderdeel maakte enkele miljoenen euro's verlies en drukte het resultaat fors.

Schelde Exotech is op 1 januari van dit jaar verzelfstandigd en maakt sindsdien geen onderdeel meer uit van de KSG. In 2001 heeft het bedrijf 300.000 euro winst gemaakt en dat beïnvloedde het resultaat van de Groep slechts voor een klein deel.

De winst vloeit volledig naar het eigen vermogen, dat `slechts` ruim acht miljoen euro bedraagt.

Berkvens: „Het is hard nodig de eigen financiële positie te versterken. Daarom wordt dit jaar geen winstuitkering betaald aan de aandeelhouders. De bedoeling is dat volgend jaar wel te doen.`

De verwachtingen voor dit jaar zijn volgens Berkvens ook positief. De nieuwe structuur van de KSG levert het bedrijf blijvend financieel voordeel op. Hoe groot de winst in 2002 zal uitpakken, kan hij nog niet voorspellen. Dat heeft onder meer te maken met de wisselende marktposities van de bedrijven.

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### Minder opdrachten

Berkvens houdt daarentegen al wel rekening met een verlies voor de Machinefabriek, door het wegvallen van twee grote opdrachtgevers, waaronder motorenfabrikant Wärtsila in Zwolle. Bovendien heeft de fabriek minder opdrachten door het Enron-schandaal in de Verenigde Staten. Dat heeft geleid tot een terugval in de verkoop van turbines.

Van de zeven verzelfstandigde bedrijven blijven er nog vijf over. Na het vertrek van Exotech begin dit jaar, wordt nu Schelde Gears afgebouwd. Een zoektocht van anderhalf jaar leverde geen koper op. Berkvens sluit niet uit dat het bedrijfsonderdeel alsnog wordt verkocht.

In samenspraak met ondernemingsraad en vakbonden is een reorganisatieplan opgesteld. Voor driekwart van de 55 werknemers wordt een andere baan gezocht, in eerste instantie bij KSG of Damen Shipyards. De rest van het personeel blijft nog een aantal jaren in dienst om aan lopende onderhoudscontracten te kunnen voldoen.

De vier miljoen euro die KSG moet terugbetalen aan de Europese Commissie gaat niet ten koste van de winst. De onterecht verkregen staatssteun wordt betaald uit het eigen vermogen.

De Europese Commissie droeg Nederland in juni op vier miljoen van de 55,1 miljoen euro verstrekte overheidssteun terug te vorderen. Brussel eiste dat omdat de verkoop van De Schelde niet gepaard gaat met een inkrimping van de nieuwbouwcapaciteit. De Europese regels stellen dat wel als voorwaarde voor overheidssteun. Overigens overlegt de KSG nog met het ministerie van EZ of het tegen de Brusselse beslissing in beroep gaat.

## Brazilian shipyard to re-open

BRAZIL'S long-closed Ebin shipyard, formerly owned by Rio group Villela Guerra, is to re-open.

Techlador Engineering, Equipment and Services has been given approval to operate the Niteroi yard and will invest R20M (\$7M) in modernisation and inherited labour costs. According to local reports, the new Ebin will mostly repair and build support vessels for the oil industry, while a major R244M contract is to be signed with Petrobras transport arm Transpetro for the building of four tankers.

## Keppel to acquire Verolme Botlek

SINGAPORE conglomerate Keppel Corp has signed a preliminary agreement to acquire an 85 per cent interest Dutch offshore repair and conversion yard Verolme Botlek. The purchase, made through Keppel's rig-building subsidiary Keppel FELS, would cost euro18.3M (\$18.3M). "The acquisition of the shipyard in Rotterdam is in line with Keppel's near-market, near-customer strategy," Keppel said in a statement. The acquisition is also expected to give Keppel a stronger foothold in the North Sea and European offshore and marine markets. "With the acquisition... our strategic capability to service our customers who are prospecting and drilling in the North Sea will be further enhanced," said Choo Chiau Beng, executive director of Keppel Corp and chairman and chief executive of Keppel Offshore & Marine. Keppel already has 14 shipyards covering major oil and gas fields in the Gulf of Mexico, Brazil, West Africa, Central Asia, Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

## ROUTE, PORTS & SERVICES VOLVOX ASIA



Van Oord ACZ announced that the transfer of ownership of the trailing suction hopper Goryo Ho no. 5 to Van Oord ACZ has officially taken place. the vessel is renamed **"Volvox Asia"**.

The "Volvox Asia" is an important addition to our hopper dredger fleet. We will employ it on projects in the Far East.

**We wish the crew of the "Volvox Asia" a "behouden vaart" and many profitable projects.**

## **Norden forecast combats Torm bid**

D/S NORDEN, the listed Danish bulk shipping company under a take-over bid from D/S Torm, has more than doubled its 2002 profit forecast in an effort to fend off the bid. Norden now forecasts a whole-year pre-tax profit of about DK200M (\$27M) instead of the DK80-90M predicted at end-March, mainly as a weaker US dollar will increase the sum in Danish krone. Operating result is expected to remain largely unaffected. The news led to a DK10 increase in the Norden share price on Copenhagen Stock Exchange, bringing it to DK375 and close to 52-week high of DK380. The price clearly exceeds Torm's DK360 per share cash offer, but is still short of the DK383 net asset value as per March 31. Torm controls 27.7 per cent of the Norden stock and has effective control of 30.8 per cent, if Torm shares owned by Norden are included. Torm's offer runs until July 29.

## **Ho Chi Minh to bid for cruise ships**

HO Chi Minh city is to build a \$5M, four-hectare cruise ship terminal in an effort to boost tourism, the Saigon Times announced last week. The Saigontourist Corp was assigned the project – to be financed by Asian Development Bank and local loans – last year, but construction was delayed by site negotiations, says Gulf Agency Co, quoting the Vietnam newspaper. A plan for submission to the city government is now expected within two months if planning agreement is reached this week. Cruise ships currently berth at Vung Tau, on the Saigon river estuary 45 n-miles from Ho Chi Minh, or at other seaports. GAC said that with its own terminal the city could receive calls from about 80 cruise ships, each carrying up to 3,000 passengers, in 2005. Saigontourist, comprising a large number of travel, transport and hotel companies, has also earmarked VND4Bn (\$260,000) to upgrade a pier at Bach Dang Wharf for cruise ships.

## **Koreans hit out at Pan Canal hike**

KOREAN ship owners have conveyed their opposition to the Panama Canal Authority to the proposed Canal toll hike. Opposing the 13 per cent average increases in Canal tolls as the world economy and freight rates are still depressed, Korean owners say the actual hike would work out to be 15 per cent. The Korea Shipowners' Association has estimated that its members would have to pay \$6M more annually if the hike is implemented. According to the KSA, the ten Korean shipping companies whose ships traverse the Canal paid \$40M in Canal tolls in 2001. The association's demands include abolition of the security charge introduced recently as it is already reflected in the proposed toll hike. Meanwhile, the association has warned that higher prices charged by Korean bunker suppliers may

force Korean owners to import bunkers. Korean shipping companies, who buy 9M tonnes of ship fuel oil every year, may pool resources to jointly purchase bunkers from abroad, the KSA said.

## Containertrafiek Antwerpen stijgt met 13,7% in TEU in eerste halfjaar

De haven van Antwerpen behandelde in de eerste zes maanden van dit jaar een maritiem goederenvolume van 64,07 mln ton. Dat is 2,3% minder goed dan in de eerste zes maanden van vorig jaar, toen een volume van 65,59 mln ton werd gehaald. De lichte terugval is uitsluitend te wijten aan een daling bij het massagoed. Het stukgoed stijgt met 5,1% naar ongekende hoogten en haalt in de periode januari-juni 36,32 mln ton.

## NAVY NEWS

### Philippines, US to start joint navy exercises



The Philippine and US navies will start on Wednesday an 11-day series of combined military exercises in the northern Philippine province of Pampanga.

Left : The **EMILIO JACINTO** moored at Puerto Princessa (Palawan)

Photo : Piet Sinke ©

The opening ceremony will take place at Subic Bay on

Wednesday, a former US navy base, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public information office said in a press statement released on Tuesday morning. The annual bilateral naval exercise, also known as the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) 2002, is a regularly-scheduled annual bilateral exercise between the two navies, and is now the eighth session.

A total of 18 combined military exercises were outlined as part of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the US and the Philippine military for the calendar year 2003, and 13 of those have already been completed. The five others will be executed before the year end, the statement said.

The training exercise is designed to promote interoperability between the US and Philippine forces in the areas of operational planning, command and control, tactics and community relations projects.

About 1,400 US soldiers, sailors, marines and coast guards, headed by Rear Admiral Jeff Cassias



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of the US Navy, will participate in the operation. A total of 1,396 Filipino servicemen composed of sailors, marines and coast guards will also join in.

A Philippine-US joint military exercise coded Balikatan 02-1 is still going on in the southern Philippines targeting the Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom group which is allegedly linked to the al-Qaeda international terror network. Around 1,000 US troops are being deployed for the exercise slated to wind down on July 31.

# Constellation Battle Group Kicks off COMPTUEX



Upon pulling away from the pier at Naval Air Station, North Island recently, **Constellation**, along with the entire Constellation Battle Group (CBG), began the next evolution in preparing for

war: Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX).

"This is the intermediate phase of the inter-deployment training cycle," said Cmdr. Carroll LeFon, Constellation's Operations Officer. "The real goal is to work on command and control through comms [communications] and data-links; to integrate with other ships. During TSTA we looked at the question, 'can Connie fight and defend itself?' For COMPTUEX, we're preparing for the advanced training phase, with JTFEX [Joint Task Force Exercise] coming up in October."

For the first time since returning from its last six-month Western Pacific deployment, CBG, made up of two cruisers, two submarines, a five-ship destroyer squadron and a replenishment ship, is sailing together. More than 10,000 servicemembers and civilians are a part of the exercise, which pits the battle group against countries Red and Orange. All of this is under the scrutinizing eye of Commander, Carrier Group One (CCG-1), a training command, which assesses the readiness of each Pacific Fleet carrier battle group.

"The battle group's initial goal is to prevent tensions from rising," said LeFon. "But we'll soon find tensions rising, and the last three days of COMPTUEX is a hot war, which is called the final battle problem."

## HMS NOTTINGHAM

## ACCURATE VERSION OF EVENTS

NOTTINGHAM sailed from Cairns on Thursday 4 July, and the ship was on passage to Wellington in New Zealand. Our passage took us down through the Great Barrier Reef, and included a couple of minor detours so that we could show the crew some of the remarkable sights in this part of the world. One was Fraser Island off the Queensland coast, the other was Lord Howe Island, an impressive volcanic outcrop in the middle of the Tasman Sea. We were due to pass Lord Howe just before dark on Sunday 7th.

That morning, we had a medical case who needed to be flown off to Lord Howe Island, the only place within helicopter range, so that he could be moved on to a hospital in Sydney. That evacuation went very smoothly thanks to some marvellous support from the Australian authorities on Lord Howe and in Sydney. He is in good hands and doing well.

The ship arrived off the island in mid afternoon, in perfect sunshine, and we put some people ashore to have a look round – we had some time in hand. We recovered them by helicopter, because the conditions on the beach made boat operations a more hazardous operation. As we left the island, and manoeuvred to recover and then stow the aircraft, we struck a rock.

Nobody was hurt, either in the collision, or in any of the action that followed as we fought to keep the water out of the forward end of the ship. We managed to get off the rock, and round into the lee of the island where we now lie at anchor. Initial operations to stem the flooding carried on throughout the night until first light on Monday. Since then, we have been extremely busy, recovering several compartments and restoring services. This process could take some time; we need to devise work-arounds, wait for supplies and the arrival of some specialist salvage equipment.

We were soon joined by two New Zealand ships, the tanker ENDEAVOUR and the frigate TE MANA, both of whom we knew very well from earlier in the deployment. They have been brilliant, giving us extra manpower so that we can have a break, and a chance to relax onboard their ships away from the immediate action. The people of Lord Howe have also been extremely friendly and supportive – a couple of days of poor weather have hindered our ability to get boats into the beach, but the weather has improved and we have put some of the crew ashore for rest and recovery or 'legstretchers'.

The ingenuity, enthusiasm, guts and professionalism of every single man and woman onboard has been remarkable. Their response to the emergency on Sunday night was quite phenomenal, and their heroic efforts saved the ship. They continue to perform at full capacity, and the experts who have arrived in the last couple of days have all paid tribute to their stamina and achievements. The training and preparation of the last two years (which we all found hard) paid off – but leadership, teamwork and guts made the difference.

## MOVEMENTS

### Cargo ship safely towed to Salalah port

A Sao Tome-registered cargo ship which suffered an engine break-down in the territorial waters off Salalah was safely towed to Salalah Port by the Omani naval vessel "Al-Muzzer".

According to a Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) press release, the captain lost control of the ship "**Mohsin**" when its engines broke down 40 nautical miles in the territorial waters south-east of Salalah.

The ship was travelling to Somalia when the rough sea caused the ship to drift to Al Hallanyat Islands.

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The effort is part of the role being played by the RNO in carrying out search and rescue operations for distressed ships in the Sultanate's waters.

### BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS



The **BRILLIANCE of the SEAS** arrived again back in Amsterdam.

**Photo's :  
Pim de Goederen  
Smit Pioneer**

## AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS

# U.S. Helicopters Involved in Accident at Singapore Air Base



SINGAPORE (NNS) -- Two United States **Marine Corps CH-53 "Sea Stallion"** heavy lift helicopters struck rotor blades while taxiing after landing at Paya Lebar Air Base in Singapore Tuesday at approximately 1:40 p.m. local time.

The helicopters were at the airfield on a logistics resupply mission from Paya Lebar to the **USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3)**.

One of the helicopters was stationary but still turning its blades when the second helicopter taxied alongside resulting in the rotor tip contact.

One Singaporean, who was working in the vicinity, was struck by flying debris and seriously injured. The individual was transported to an area hospital, but later died as a result of his injuries. No crewmembers aboard the helicopters were injured.

The helicopters are part of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 166 (Reinforced), attached to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) based Camp Pendleton, Calif. and are currently embarked on Belleau Wood.



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The 11th MEU (SOC), comprised of approximately 2,200 Marines and Sailors, departed San Diego June 15 for a routine six-month deployment.

The Belleau Wood Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) is made up of the amphibious assault ship USS Belleau Wood (LHA 3), the amphibious transport ship USS Denver (LPD 9), and dock landing ship USS Mount Vernon (LSD 39), with the 11th MEU (SOC) embarked. The ships are homeported in San Diego.

The circumstances of the accident are under investigation.

# Five dead after helicopter crash



[The crashed helicopter is a Super Puma similar to this](#)

Five people have died and another six are missing after a helicopter crashed into the North Sea off the Norfolk coast.

The civilian Super Puma helicopter went down 25 miles north-east of Great Yarmouth on Tuesday night.

A massive search and rescue operation is continuing for the other people on board.

An MoD spokesman said: "An RAF Sea King from Wattisham in Suffolk was scrambled at 7.50pm as part of the rescue operation, which is ongoing."

He said coastguards have a vessel and lifeboat out looking for casualties.

A coastguard spokeswoman told BBC News Online that the helicopter was bringing workers from a North Sea gas field when it ditched.

The helicopter is believed to be owned by the firm Bristow and chartered by Shell Expro.



### Survival suits

The Met Office said weather conditions were good with light winds and temperatures around 15C.

All the people on board would also have been wearing survival suits - standard practice for travelling to the rigs.

But BBC correspondent Susie Fowler-Watt in Norwich said it was difficult to know what the conditions would be like if people were in the sea for some time.

The MoD spokesman said a rescue RAF Sea King helicopter from a military base in Wattisham, Suffolk was in the area along with the Cromer Lifeboat and other vessels.

The East Anglia Ambulance NHS Trust in Norfolk said they had senior officers at strategic points throughout the north of the county and were in touch with the coastguards.

A spokesman said the James Paget Hospital, in Gorleston, near Great Yarmouth, is on standby.