

DAILY SHIPPING NEWSLETTER 2003 – 030

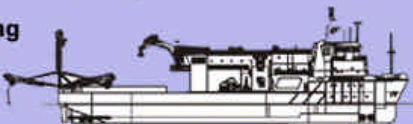


Number 030****DAILY SHIPPING NEWSLETTER*** Monday 10-03-2003

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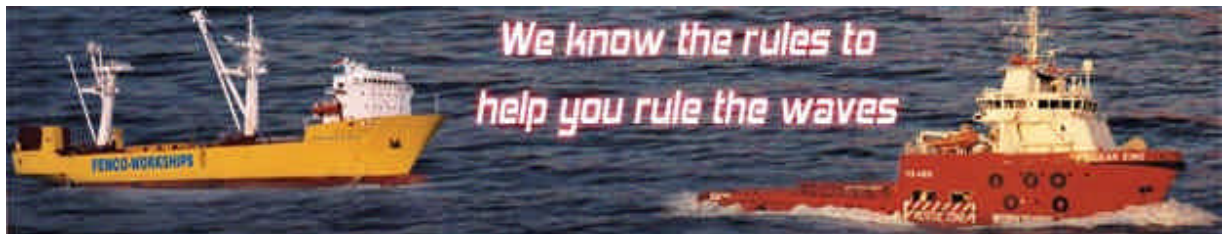
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American Eagle contract boosts NOL

NEPTUNE Orient Lines, which reported a \$330M loss for financial year 2003, has received a much-needed boost through a \$220M transport contract awarded to its subsidiary American Eagle Tankers. The seven-year contract with an option for a three-year extension has been awarded by PDVSA subsidiary Bitor to transport orimulsion, a bitumen-based fuel from Venezuela to Singapore power company Power Seraya. "A fleet of five VLCCs is needed to meet the customer's volume and quality requirements," NOL chairman Cheng Wai Keung said. American Eagle recently acquired two VLCC newbuildings from Hyundai Heavy Industries, both of which will be used to fulfil the initial requirements of the contract, AET president and chief executive Joseph Kwok said. Orders for another three VLCCs for delivery in late 2004 and early 2005 are to be placed at an Asian yard. NOL reiterated last week that it had kept open its option of selling AET.

Australia suffers third grounding

AUSTRALIAN salvor United Salvage will make an attempt early tomorrow to refloat the US-operated bulk carrier **Pactrader**, which ran aground at the weekend only 50 m from its berth at the South Australia port of Thevenard. The 28,426-DWT ship, operated by Lasco Shipping, grounded on March 1 shortly after departing with a cargo of gypsum. The cause of the incident is not known. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority said there had been no pollution, although there appears to be some hull damage. A salvage attempt will be made to coincide with a spring high tide at 01.30 hours local time. This is the third Australian grounding last week when an ANZDL operated ro-ro ran aground off Brisbane on February 27 and the Shell-chartered tanker **Hydra** experienced a similar fate off Townsville two days earlier.

SMIT BISON



Left : The **SMIT BISON** with some FLIPPER DELTA anchors on deck , the **SMIT BISON** is working at present together with the **RAMBIZ** at the large wreck removal project at the Westerschelde.

Photo's : Maarten Meeuwisse
(SMIT Transport)



Right :
The **SMIT BISON** running the anchors of the **RAMBIZ**



New Manila terminal receives QE2

MANILA South Harbor's new passenger terminal has started to generate cruise ship calls little more than a month after it opened. An official of Asian Terminals Inc, which manages and operates the new facility, said the visit last week of Cunard's Queen Elizabeth 2 proves the terminal can handle cruise ships and not just domestic ferries. Prior to the cruise ship's visit, the Chinese cruise vessel China Sea Discovery had also docked at the Eva Macapagal Super Terminal. Jardine port agency manager Rene Vargas, praised the design of the terminal building. "The size of the building was just right, providing sufficient ground area for operations," he said, adding that the level of security also put passengers at ease.

Bad news for Euro cruise ship yards

EUROPEAN shipbuilders have been told the drought in cruise ship newbuilding orders is likely to continue. Speaking at the Seatrade Cruise Shipping Convention in Miami yesterday, Norwegian Cruise

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Line president and chief executive Colin Veitch said: "We will need more ships, but we may not need ships in 2005 or 2006. The position of the yards now reflects free market economics, where there are waves of investment followed by troughs." The current world orderbook, worth \$10Bn, is only half last year's level, with only a handful of newbuildings for 2004. The slowdown in placing orders has raised concerns that yards will be unable to maintain their technological base. Further problems had been created for US operators by the strength of the euro, said Royal Caribbean chairman and chief executive Richard Fain. Rival Carnival Corp said it would take a couple of years to digest new capacity. "We see a slowdown in new orders but I don't think we will see a stop," commented VP Howard Frank. "I don't think we'll see the same [ordering] levels as in the past ... it is very difficult to think about ordering new ships when you have difficulties filling your fleet."

HAPPY DOLPHIN TO BE SOLD



Top : The **HAPPY DOLPHIN** laid up at La Spezia (04-04-2002) – photo : Piet Sinke ©

The **HAPPY DOLPHIN** is to be sold by auction at La Spezia on 25 March, with a starting price of 224,000 Euros. Further details are on www.tribunaledilaspezia.net under "Beni mobili". She is registered in Madeira, but her certificates have been withdrawn, so scrapping may be a possibility. I remember her when she entered service from Swansea to Cork in 1969 as the **INNISFALLEN**, but didn't sail in her till 2001 from Bastia to La Spezia.

TIRANA TO BE SOLD



The ferry "**Tirana**" the former "**linda scarlett**" (1961) there has been laid up for some years now in Brindisi is once again for sale. The auction is to be held by Court of Brindisi (Italy) on 28 March. Starting from a base price of EURO 169.000. A previous auction effort by the same court on 10 July 2002 starting from a base price of EURO 211,000 gave no result.

Left : The **TIRANA** laid up in Brindisi during 2002 - Photo : M.Jensen ©

WRECK REMOVAL WESTERSCHELDE



The **RAMBIZ** seen here working close to Paviljoen **WESTKANT** in Terneuzen.
photo : Alain Dooms ©



Paviljoen Westkant al meer dan twaalf jaar het culinaire maritieme trefpunt aan de oevers van de drukbevaren Westerschelde.

Zweetvoeten taboe aan boord

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door Jacques Cats

Souvenirjagers hebben er nog geen vat op gekregen. De schroeven zitten kennelijk te vast. Bovendien heeft het bord aan de wand van de veerboot zulke afmetingen dat je wel een erg grote maat regenjas zou moeten hebben om het te kunnen wegmoffelen. Op het bord staat zakelijk genoteerd dat het vervoer van personen, zaken, dieren en voertuigen met schepen van de PSD-vloot geschiedt onder de voorwaarden zoals die zijn gedeponeerd bij de rechtbank.

Durfals als wij zijn, hebben wij nog nimmer bij de aanblik van deze tekst de neiging gehad rechtsomkeert te maken om op de rechtbank uit te vlooien wat je boven het hoofd hangt wanneer je onder de vlag van de provincie het ruime sop kiest. Maar nu de dienst voor het laatst de haven nadert, kan het op de valreep geen kwaad om alsnog na te gaan aan welke enge risico's we ons al die jaren hebben blootgesteld. De voorwaarden, die er meestal pas op worden nageslagen als er wat aan de knikker is geweest, zijn opgebouwd uit vele ge- en verboden, regels en richtlijnen.

Er gaat een wereld open. Wie heeft er ooit bij stilgestaan dat je, volgens artikel 6, lid 4, als bezitter van een motorfiets bij het vehikel dient post te vatten onder weersomstandigheden `waarbij redelijkerwijs kan worden verwacht dat het schip heftig zal bewegen`. Een ander artikel laat weten dat het verboden is aan boord een beroep uit te oefenen. Voor het bootpersoneel wordt kennelijk een uitzondering gemaakt. De schilder die naar de overkant vaart, zal zich er dus van moeten weerhouden om, nu hij toch even niets anders om handen heeft, in de wachtsalon de wanden te sauzen. En de vertegenwoordiger die vanuit zijn auto op het dek met een klant belt dat het wat later wordt, gaat ernstig over de schreef. Een ander verbod betreft het maken van muziek aan boord. Daaruit blijkt dat de wakkere muziekgroep **Champagne Charlie** de regels aan de laars heeft gelapt door op de boot zo'n uitgebreid repertoire ten gehore te brengen dat daar een cd aan drie kanten mee is te vullen. Voorts mag je het schip alleen langs de aangewezen weg verlaten.

Dus niet als dat zo uitkomt via de schoorsteen, over de railing of langs het gat van de ankerketting. Om geld kaarten is eveneens uit den boze en wie wordt betrap op zwart varen moet het dubbele tarief dokken. Mocht iemand tijdens de reis de behoefte hebben even de knellende schoenen uit te schoppen, dan dient men te bedenken dat zweetvoeten niet worden getolereerd, ingevolge het verbod op `afkeerwekkende en of kwalijk ruikende zaken`.

Bovenal geldt dat reizigers onverwijld de aanwijzingen van het bootpersoneel moeten opvolgen. De chauffeur van een vrachtwagen met aanhanger had daar geen boodschap aan. Omdat zijn combinatie net iets langer was dan achttien meter, was hij in het dubbele tarief terechtgekomen. Op het oprijdek aangekomen liet de chauffeur een flinke tussenruimte over. Toen hem dringend werd gevraagd om aan te sluiten riep de chauffeur van boven uit de cabine: „Ik heb betaald voor 36 meter en nou néém ik ook 36 meter!``

PVZ wil behoud van een veerboot

De Partij voor Zeeland vindt dat de veerboot **Prinses Christina als Zeeuws cultuurmonument behouden moet blijven. Om die reden gaat de fractie het dagelijks provinciebestuur vragen die PSD-boot niet te verkopen.**

Een stichting, waarin enkele leden van de PvZ prominent aanwezig zijn, verwacht dat het Zeeuwse bedrijfsleven bereid is het benodigde geld over te maken voor aankoop.

PvZ-fractievoorzitter R. Stoffels vertelde gisteren dat hij voldoende signalen vanuit het bedrijfsleven heeft gekregen om met een gerust gevoel door te gaan.

Zo lijkt het Stoffels een prima idee om het informatiecentrum van de Westerscheldetunnel onder te brengen op de Christina. Culturele evenementen, toeristische activiteiten en feesten moeten volgens hem ook op de boot plaats kunnen vinden

CASUALTY REPORTING

SHIPYARD NEWS

Malaysian yard to build for Smedvig

Seabrokers reported in the latest issue of its monthly report Seabreeze that Smedvig has entered into an agreement with Malaysia Shipyard and Engineering Sdn Bhd in South Malaysia, for a new self-erecting tender rig.

The new unit is scheduled for delivery in the first quarter 2004, and capital expenditure is estimated to be approximately \$67 million, including the derrick equipment set.

The tender rig will be based on a new design developed by Smedvig, with enhanced drilling capabilities allowing for parallel activities, which will significantly increase drilling efficiency. The new unit will be particularly well suited for production drilling in shallow and deepwater areas in Southeast Asia, said Seabreeze.

EISA to build new AHTS

Fairplay (www.fairplay.co.uk), the weekly international shipping magazine has reported that EISA shipyard in Brazil has received an order from Brazilian owner Astromaritima Navegacao to build three offshore vessels that will be chartered to Petrobras.

Fairplay said the yard is to build an anchor-handling tug costing \$40 million and two harbour tugs that will cost \$4 million each, taking the total to \$48 million.

Fairplay said that as well as the three newbuildings, Astromaritima is hoping to upgrade two of its 18 offshore vessels costing \$9 million.

Suitors line up for struggling HDW

ONE Equity Partner, the US majority shareholder in German shipyard HDW, has confirmed that there are potential buyers for the struggling yard. However, addressing a meeting of yard employees on Friday, the bank's European spokesman did not mention rumours that Thyssen-Krupp was among the contenders. The gathering was called to inform the staff about the new business concept, which includes a reduction of the workforce from 3,400 to 2,650 and the end of production of sections for merchant ships. The proposals have already brought protests from workers, unions and regional politicians, with mass demonstrations by HDW employees. In a parliamentary debate, Schleswig-Holstein state prime minister Heide Simonis said the state would do everything it could to avoid redundancies on the planned scale. Such efforts were to include direct talks with the EC president, Romano Prodi.

Mitsui takes over Niigata builder

JAPANESE shipbuilder Mitsui Engineering & Shipbuilding is to acquire the vessel construction division of Niigata Engineering Group. It will be renamed Niigata Shipbuilding. Niigata Engineering Group entered protected receivership in January 2002, and sold its engine manufacturing operations to IHI Marine United in November. The yard on the Japan Sea coast has built ships of up to 7,000 DWT for export,

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but in recent years has concentrated on smaller ships such as fishing vessels and ferries for domestic service. MES will take full ownership of the yard from the start of the new fiscal year on April 1, and expects the acquisition to boost its annual revenues by ¥10Bn (\$84M).

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Finarge takes delivery of Moss 424 anchor handler

Finarge, which is 100 per cent owned by Rimorchiatori Riuniti, the well known and long-established Italian shipowner, has taken delivery of the **San Fruttuoso**, a new Moss 424 anchor handler built by Havyard Leirvik in Norway.

At 74.2m overall, with a length between perpendiculars of 64.29m, depth of 8.0m, and design draft of 5.50m, **San Fruttuoso** has a bollard pull of approximately 180 tonnes and maximum deadweight at design draft of 3,000 tonnes. The aft deck has a free area of some 560m². The ship's anchor-handling and towing gear includes a pair of tugger winches, each of 15 tonnes capacity; a single rope reel sufficient for 1,500m of 76mm-diameter rope with a pull of 7.5 tonnes; a secondary winch with 65-tonnes pull with capacity for 4,600m of 76mm rope; two declutchable anchor-handling/towing drums, with capacity for 1,880m of 77mm wire; and a declutchable anchor-handling drum with spooling device fitted, with capacity for 5,490m of 77mm-diameter wire.

Driven by a quartet of MaK 6M32C main engines, each rated at 2,880kW (and thus providing a total installed power of 11,520kW), **San Fruttuoso** has two tunnel thrusters plus an azimuthing thruster forward and a single tunnel thruster aft. Currently uncommitted, **San Fruttuoso** was due to enter the spot market in the North Sea in March, but is likely to end up on a long-term charter in West Africa, or in Brazil.

Seabulk International takes delivery of Seabulk Nilar

Seabulk International has taken delivery of **Seabulk Nilar**, a newbuild 3,900hp PSV built by Labroy Shipbuilding & Engineering PTE, Ltd of Indonesia. The vessel, which will be operated by the company's Seabulk Offshore subsidiary under a bareboat charter arrangement, is owned by the Labroy Group. It will work in Southeast Asia, where the company currently has a fleet of 10 vessels, and is chartered to the major international oil company, TotalFinaElf, under a three-year arrangement with

two option years. "Today's announcement is further evidence of our commitment to renew our international offshore fleet and provide our customers with the finest and most modern equipment available," commented Hubert E Thyssen, corporate vice president and senior vice president of marketing for Seabulk Offshore. "Earlier this month we celebrated the naming of the Seabulk Africa, the new flagship of our West African fleet. Today we welcome the **Seabulk Nilar**, a powerful and highly maneuverable vessel with sophisticated firefighting and anti-pollution equipment, to our Southeast Asia fleet. The **Seabulk Nilar** is the result of a unique, three-party arrangement among Seabulk Offshore, the Labroy Group and TotalFinaElf. Next month she will be joined by the **Seabulk Badamyar**, a newbuild anchor-handling tug/supply vessel, under an identical arrangement with Labroy and Total." "In this way we are showing our commitment to the international offshore markets and, at the same time, consolidating our position for the future," he concluded. Seabulk Offshore operates a fleet of 131 vessels in the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, South America, West Africa, Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Stolt Nielsen tumbles to \$100M loss



STOLT NIELSEN has reported a net loss of \$102.8M for 2002 (compared with a profit of \$23.7M in 2001), despite its core chemical tanker business recording a relatively strong year. Stolt-Nielsen Transportation Group (STNG) recorded a profit of \$68.1M for the year (2001: \$69.9M), however all other areas of the business including Stolt Offshore, were in the red. "After entering the year with high hopes, 2002 turned out to be a horrible year," commented chief executive Niels Stolt-Nielsen. Despite the gloomy results and the company currently facing anti-trust probes by European and US competition authorities, Stolt-Nielsen remained confident, stating that measures have been taken to stem the decline and 2003 promised better earnings. However, the company said it would not give full year earnings guidance for the coming year.

CSX Lines sale to Carlyle completed



CSX Lines has been sold by its parent company CSX Corp to the Washington-based private equity firm Carlyle Group for \$300M. The deal, initially announced in December last year, was final completed on February 27. CSX Lines, which will now be re-named **Horizon Lines**, operates 17 US-flag vessels serving the continental US, Alaska, Guam, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, and a string of terminals on those routes. As part of the transaction former CSX Lines president and chief executive Charles Raymond and his management team will continue to lead the new company for the Carlyle Group. Carlyle's other maritime holdings include Seabulk International, formerly Hvide Marine, which owns and operates ten Jones Act tankers in the Gulf of Mexico.

Antwerp revises dock concessions

ANTWERP has revised the concessions on its giant left-bank Deurganckdok – due to open in 2005 – after Mediterranean Shipping Co, the port's largest container client, finally decided to retain its Delwaide dock terminal on the right bank. P&O Ports has been given the entire eastern side of the Deurganckdok, a 2,450-m-long quay able to accommodate box ships up to 7,000 TEU. The operator already handled 1.1M TEU on the right bank last year. The western side of the Deurganckdok Phase I and II will go to PSA Corp's Hesse Noord Natie, giving it a 1,650-m quay. Sources say HNN had to refuse "a number of big names" in the past because of lack of space. Phase III of the western side, with 960 m of quay, has not yet been awarded. A number of operators, including Maersk Sealand, have shown interest in this facility, which can receive two 6,500-7,000 TEU container ships at the same time.

Lloyd Triestino eyes TMN stake



The **LT USODIMARE** – photo : Jan vd Klooster ©

LLOYD Triestino chairman Pier Luigi Minimsky is to meet Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra this week over the take-over of state-owned Thai Maritime Navigation. It is understood that Minimsky is not keen to discuss the matter with deputy transport minister Pichate Sathilachaval as he is currently being investigated by the Thai Constitution Court for not "properly declaring" his assets. However, Minimsky has sought Pichate's assistance in arranging a meeting with Thaksin. Thailand is ready to part with a majority stake, but the Italian line wants to tie the TMN deal with rights for exclusive use of a berth at Laem Chabang berth. The hitch appears to be Lloyd Triestino's demand of a throughput guarantee of 2,900 TEU a week or 150,000 TEU per annum. Negotiations are considered crucial for realising the objective of building a Thai national fleet. "It is now or never," Pichate said. Lloyd Triestino is wholly owned by Taiwanese operator Evergreen Marine.

NAVY NEWS

Indian navy to acquire three "Krivak"-class stealth frigates from Russia



Top : The **INS Talwar** under construction in St.Petersburg – photo : Coll Piet Sinke

The Indian navy will acquire the first of the three Krivak class stealth frigates by June.

The frigates will be acquired from Russia after a delay of over a year. Russia was to complete the delivery of all the three highly-sophisticated warships by the end of last year, but failure of the Shtil missiles during test-firing had delayed their induction into the Indian Navy.

Navy officers said that the Shtil ship-to-air missile was rectified and two successful test flights had been conducted. "After we receive the first of the warships, which we have named **INS Talwar**, the remaining two will be delivered within six months," said the officer.

HMS NEWCASTLE



HMS NEWCASTLE seen here arriving in Cardiff Saturday morning – photo: Ben Salter ©

Indian, Iranian navies plan war games

Close on the heels of recent bilateral visits, warships from India and Iran will carry out the first ever Joint Naval exercises in the Arabian sea from Monday.

Two Iranian warships "**Bandar Abas**", a fleet replenishment tanker, and "**Lavan**", a logistics support ship, for amphibious operations, have arrived in Mumbai this week on a five-day goodwill visit, a Naval spokesman said Saturday. "Towards the end of the visit on Monday, the two warships would carry out joint naval maneuvers with warships of Indian Western Naval fleet off the Mumbai coast," he said.

The port call by Iranian warships assumes significance as it follows the visit here by President Khatami and visit to Iran by Naval Chief Admiral Madhvendra Singh.

Singapore Begins Work On First Stealth Ship

Singapore started March 8th construction of its first locally-built frigate of the **Souverainite class** with stealth features, with four more scheduled, the Defence Ministry said Saturday.

Chief of Defence Forces Lt-Gen Lim Chuan Poh officiated at the keel-laying ceremony for the Republic Singapore Navy's frigate at the Singapore Technologies Marine in Jurong.

"The keel-laying of the first locally-built frigate marks a significant milestone for Singapore's defence industry," the ministry said in a statement. It said four more stealth frigates were scheduled for construction, bringing the total to five. It said a sixth frigate was being built in France by the firm Direction des Construction Navales under a defence cooperation programme. It is expected to sail to Singapore in 2005. The Singapore navy, it said, provided key operational inputs during the design phase of the ship, and was also involved in systems design and integration process to ensure they met operational requirements. The frigates, it said, were built to be stealthy, using the latest ship design and building technology.

Navy deploys 10 vessels in 6 areas

Responding to the present peace and order situation, the Philippine Navy deploys today 10 vessels to reinforce troops of the Armed Forces in Davao, Zamboanga, Palawan, Cebu, Southern Tagalog and Northern Luzon.



To be deployed are five gunboats — **BRP Florencio Iñigo (PG393)**, **BRP Felix Apolinario (PG395)**, **BRP Jose Andrada (PG370)**, **BRP Rafael Pargas (PG379)** and **BRP Salvador Abcede (PG114)**

Left : The **PS70 QUEZON**
Photo : Coll Piet Sinke

The minesweeper frigate **BRP Quezon (PS70)**, the logistic support vessel **BRP Dagupan City (LC551)**, oil tenders **BRP Lake**

Buhi (AF78) and **BRP Mangyan (AS71)**, and a riverine utility craft (**VU469**).

Cmdr. Geronimo Malabanan, Navy spokesman, said the 10 vessels will provide additional patrols, perform sealift capabilities, set up a naval blockade, provide fuel, support ground troops and transport civilians and troops in the six areas.

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Port call to Shanghai by Spanish naval training vessel



The Spanish naval training vessel, **Juan Sebastian De Elcano**, under the command of Captain Santiago Bolibar Pineiro, arrived in Shanghai Saturday morning for a five-day visit. Senior Colonel Jiang Zhongliang, deputy chief-of-staff of Shanghai Naval Base, held a welcome ceremony. After the arrival, Senior Colonel Jiang Weilie and Shanghai Vice Mayor Feng Guoqin met with the officers. During their stay in Shanghai, the officers will see a Chinese missile frigate, the city of Shanghai and will play football matches with Chinese seamen

ZEUS



The **AHT ZEUS** is at present working in the Gulf of Riga, no towing or anchor handling this time , but Icebreaking !!

Photo´s : Capt. Peter Jansen



VISBY



The brand new ferry **VISBY** visited Stockholm during last weekend – photo's : Micke Asklander ©



RIJNMOND WEATHER

Vooruitzichten van maandag t/m donderdag:

Af en toe zon en een enkele bui. Donderdag perioden met zon en droog. De temperatuur gaat geleidelijk naar beneden.

© Ed Aldus 2003	MA-10	DI-11	WO-12	DO-13
Maximumtemperatuur:	12	12	9	8
Minimumtemperatuur:	7	7	6	3
Zonnekans in %:	30	20	30	50
Neerslagkans in %:	20	40	30	10
Windrichting kracht:	ZW-4-5	ZW-4-6	WNW-4-5	O-3-5

.... STORY OF THE DAY

HORizontALE TANKSCHOTTEN IN ENKELWANDER VEILIGER '

Dubbelwander is vaak onveiliger

Volledig dubbelwandige tankers zijn in veel situaties onveiliger dan enkelwandige. Een dubbelwandige tanker die op de rotsen lek slaat, komt nooit meer los omdat de dubbele bodem volloopt, waardoor de tanker dieper komt te liggen. De kans op catastrofale schade is in zo'n geval veel groter dan bij een enkelwandige tanker, die bij hoog water kan worden vlotgetrokken', zegt de 52-jarige oud-kapitein Frits Makkee van Shell Tankers.

Dubbelwandige Prestige was ook gezonken '

Hij voer vanaf zijn negentiende op een groot aantal enkel- en dubbelwandige tankers, waaronder schepen van 300.000 ton. De keuze voor dubbelwandige tankers is politiek gemotiveerd, er is geen discussie meer over mogelijk. Maar bij veel scheepsrampen, zoals met de Amoco Cadiz, de Exxon Valdez en de Torrey Canyon, had dubbelwandigheid geen enkel verschil gemaakt. '

Ook de lekstabiliteit is bij dubbelwandige tankers slechter. Wanneer de dubbele bodem volloopt, verliest de tanker veel drijfvermogen. De voorkant verdwijnt daardoor onder water en dan is het zo gebeurd. 'Makkee pleit voor tankers met horizontale schotten in de tanks. De onderste tanks bevinden zich dan onder de waterlijn. Door de hydrostatische balans loopt bij bodemschade de olie niet of nauwelijks naar buiten. De druk van het buitenwater is immers hoger dan die van de olie in de onderste tanks. Olie heeft bovendien een lager soortelijk gewicht. 'De ventilatieopeningen moeten dan overigens wel sterk zijn en goed sluiten. Het water perst de olie anders mogelijk langs de bovenkant naar buiten, bij rampen met tankers een veel voorkomend fenomeen.

Ecotanker

Ingenieur Markus van der Laan promoveerde enige jaren geleden aan de TU Delft op het ontwerp van een Ecotanker 'met horizontale schotten en besprak de voordelen met Verkeer en Waterstaat.

Probleem is, dat dubbelwandigheid een aardig verhaal is voor politici. Zij doen liever wat de anderen doen, dat is minder riskant wanneer zich een doemscenario voordoet. '

De Ecotanker heeft een enkelwandige bodem en dubbelwandige zijanten met voorzieningen voor kleine ballasttanks. Bij lekkage is de uitstroom tien tot twintig procent van die van een dubbelwandige tanker. Het is een oplossing voor grote tankers. '

Het grootste probleem bij alle tankers ligt volgens Van der Laan echter bij de inspectie. Een tanker, zeker een dubbelwandige, goed inspecteren kost veel tijd en geld. Het is een enorme klus, waarna je moet kiezen tussen opknappen of slopen. Ik heb zelf jonge dubbelwandige tankers geïnspecteerd. Delen van de ballasttanks waren niet gecoat. Na zeven jaar is het dan over. De ballasttanks zijn de helft van de tijd gevuld met zout water en de helft van de tijd met lucht en schoonmaken tussendoor lukt niet. '

Van der Laan verwacht dat dubbelwandige tankers daardoor na twaalf tot vijftien jaar al in problemen komen. Dubbelwandige tankers roesten sneller dan enkelwandige (die 25 jaar meegaan - red.), omdat het oppervlak van de ballasttanks twee keer zo groot is. Ik heb de videobeelden van de ramp met de Prestige nauwkeurig bestudeerd. De platen die loslieten waren de platen van de (dubbelwandige) ballasttanksectie. '

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Was de Prestige dubbelwandig geweest, dan was ze eveneens en waarschijnlijk zelfs eerder gezonken. Van der Laan hamerde na zijn afstuderen twee jaar lang op strengere eisen voor de langsstabiliteit van dubbelwandige tankers. De dwarsstabiliteit is voldoende, maar bij lekkage slaan ze over de kop, de boeg zakt weg. 'Van der Laan, die ook de carrouselrug uitvond, zegt geen tijd meer te hebben om zich in te zetten voor promotie van de tanker met horizontale schotten.

Ingenieur Ernst Vossnack, een autoriteit in de scheepsbouwkunde, zet vraagtekens bij de sterkte van dubbelwandige tankers. Bij een aanvaring komt de huid zeker vier meter naar binnen. De afstand tussen de wanden is dan helemaal niet voldoende. 'Zelf ontwierp hij een veilige tanker met een dubbele rij, verticaal boven het vlak geplaatste, cilindrische tanks waarvan de bovenkant door het dek steekt. De tanks staan vrij van elkaar en de scheepswand. De cilindrische tanks scheuren bij een aanvaring minder snel en kunnen bij een berging in hun geheel uit de tanker worden gelicht.

Vossnack wijst eveneens op de stabiliteitsproblemen. Daarnaast ziet hij de gross-tonnageregels als boosdoener voor de veiligheid. De grote schepen hebben daarom geen bak. Bij slecht weer stromen massa's groen water over het voorschip, dat volledig onder water verdwijnt. Dat zorgt voor grote torsiespanningen. Bulkcarriers en grote tankers komen daardoor bij slecht weer in problemen. '

Makkee zet eveneens vraagtekens bij de sterkte van de constructie. De bodemplaat, bij enkelwandige tankers 25 tot 35 millimeter dik, is nu nog maar de helft. Door de dubbelwandige constructie halen tankers soms met een bodemplaat van twaalf millimeter al de vereiste sterkte. De vraag is alleen wat daarvan na een aantal jaren nog over is. Wanneer we vroeger in een modderige rivier over de bodem schuurden, zeiden we: Fijn, de onderkant is weer schoon. 'Nu vraag je je bezorgd af hoeveel staal nog over is. De ruimte wordt bovendien gebruikt voor het zetten van ballast, wat leidt tot corrosie van binnenuit. En controleren is lastig, evenals gritten en schilderen. Controleren van de ladingtanks is tegenwoordig evenmin gebruikelijk. Gebruik van inert gas maakt betreding van de tanks lastig en doorspoelen kost een vermogen. '