

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 036



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News reports received from readers and Internet News articles taken from various news sites.

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Binnenbaan 36 3161VB RHOON The Netherlands

Telephone: (+31)105018000
(+31) 105015440 (a.o.h.)

Fax : (+31)105013843

Internet & E-mail

www.vlierodam.nl

info@vlierodam.nl



**SMIT Canada's WESTMINSTER HYACK and PRIDE seen enroute their next assignment
Photo : Mike Zelt ©**

SMITWIJS TOWAGE B.V.



Westplein 5b
3016 BM Rotterdam
The Netherlands
Telephone: +31 10 412 6969
Telefax: +31 10 436 9587
E-mail: SmitWijs@SmitWijs.com

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The name **MAERSK LEADER** was removed from the vessel and a start was made with painting the funnel in the ITC colours, the AHTS will receive the name **BLIZZARD**

Photo : Joop Marechal ©

Another Niger Hostage

Nigerian gunmen abducted a Filipino oil contractor and killed at least one policeman escorting him on the road to Port Harcourt in the oil-producing Niger Delta on Tuesday (06 Feb), industry sources said.

The Philippines has ordered the labour department to block workers from going to Nigeria after 24 Filipino seamen were captured on Jan. 20 in the delta, where kidnappings for ransom are an almost daily event. The seamen are still in captivity.

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"One Filipino was abducted this morning close to Owerri airport on the road to Port Harcourt. Gunmen in a van blocked the expat, who had a mobile policeman in his car. They shot and killed the policeman and abducted the expat," said a security expert working for an oil major.

One other security expert from a different firm said two policemen were killed in the attack.

A source at Royal Dutch Shell said the Filipino was working for a Shell contractor, Netcodietmann, an oil services company that is a joint venture between the Nigerian state oil firm and a Monaco-based company.

The Shell source said he was not sure if any policeman had been killed.

Port Harcourt airport has been closed since last August so people travelling to the city by air fly to Owerri and drive from there. The drive takes two to three hours and most foreigners take a police escort.

Violence surged in the Niger Delta last year and it has worsened since the start of 2007. Tuesday's abduction brings to 30 the number of foreigners being held by different armed groups across the delta.

Some groups say they have political demands such as the release of jailed leaders from the delta or greater local control over oil wealth, but most abductions are resolved by the payment of ransoms. Copy-cat abductions have multiplied as kidnappers have made money from them.

A fifth of oil production capacity from Nigeria, the world's eighth-biggest exporter of crude, has been shut down for a year because of militant attacks on oil facilities.

The government is worried about instability in the delta in the build-up to landmark elections in April and about the security and economic impacts. Oil workers' unions have talked about a strike over insecurity and President Olusegun Obasanjo was due to meet union leaders on Tuesday to avert a strike.

Poverty and a complete breakdown in social services due to rampant corruption among government officials have contributed to the spiralling violence in the Niger Delta.

Residents resent the oil industry which has enriched foreign firms and faraway central governments that have neglected the delta. Oil workers and facilities have been targets for years, but now the violence has become indiscriminate.

Foreign telecoms and construction workers as well as seamen have been targeted. The 24 Filipinos were seized from a German-operated cargo ship on a river in the western delta.

Coast Guard Investigates Wilmington Crane Incident

The Coast Guard is investigating the collision between the **Zhen Hua 16**, carrying four new cranes, and the dredge **Cherokee**, in the Port of Wilmington. The incident occurred at about 5:15 p.m. Saturday as the **Zhen Hua 16**, a 788-ft. heavy lift vessel, was making final preparations to moor at the Port of Wilmington. As it passed the dredge Cherokee, the crane arms and the dredge collided; the cranes and dredge both sustained some damage. There were no reports of pollution or injuries.



Panama asks for 2008 audit for its ship fleet

Panama asked the International Maritime Organization on Monday for an audit of its 7,000 ships, the largest fleet in the world, to help it improve security and environmental controls.

"It is not enough that Panama has the most ships, it should also show a stance that esteems responsibility and resolve to better its shipping register," IMO secretary general Efthimios Mitropoulos told a news conference.

Mitropoulos said once the audit is carried out the IMO would produce a confidential report outlining the problems of Panama-flagged ships and suggestions to resolve them.

Carlos De la Lastra, an executive of the Panama Maritime Authority, said the audit would serve to improve controls.

"We have improved our accident record, we were on the black list but we are now on the gray list and we are on top of this to avoid (accidents)," De la Lastra said.

Last year, Panama was removed from the IMO's so-called "black list" of countries with deficit shipping practices. The IMO is the United Nations' agency responsible for improving maritime safety and attacking pollution from ships.



UASC's **ALNOOF** seen at a cloudy Westerscheldt river enroute Antwerp. – Photo : Willem Kruit ©

Ice Escort Starts in Primorsk

On February 5 the icebreaker "**Yermak**" started to escort tankers to the oil terminal in Primorsk. Before this, tankers did not need assistance due to the warm weather.

The escorting distance makes currently some 15 miles with the ice edge located near the Seskar Isle in the Gulf of Finland.

Owners spend record US\$106b on fleets

Shipowners ordered a record US\$105.5 billion worth of new vessels in 2006, led by oil tankers, as companies rushed to upgrade fleets ahead of the ban on some ships in 2010, said Clarkson plc, the world's biggest shipbroker. Spending surged 37 per cent from 2005 levels and surpassed a previous record of US\$76.3 billion that owners spent in 2004, the London-based broker said in its monthly World Shipyard Monitor.

Operators of oil carriers boosted spending 122 per cent to US\$49.2 billion last year, giving a boost to shipbuilders including Hyundai Heavy Industries Co, the world's biggest. The largest increase in spending among tanker owners was on one-million-barrel ships, the biggest class of vessel to pass fully loaded through Egypt's Suez Canal.

Owners' spending on these so-called suezmaxes soared more than 10-fold to US\$5.6 billion, according to Clarkson. The International Maritime Organization will ban single-hull oil tankers from 2010.



The **Romi** 1192 2373 gt ex-**Arklow Faith** approached the Widnes-Runcorn bridge at Runcorn outward bound from Manchester having brought in a cargo of grain to Manchester a run always covered by Arklow ships.

Photo : Dan Cross ©

Salvage begins on Tristan da Cunha oil rig

Salvors are busy again with the decommissioned oil rig **A Turtle** (aka Petrobas XXI), firmly aground in Trypot Bay off the island of Tristan da Cunha.

Regular readers will recall that the rig got 'lost' for a considerable period while being towed from Brazil to Singapore, after she became detached from her tug **MIGHTY DELIVERER**. This was in May 2006 and later in June the rig was discovered firmly aground on the coast of South Atlantic island.

During the period in which the rig went 'walkabout' a second tug, **RUBY DELIVERER** was dispatched to help the search, to no avail, and it was left to some islanders, on their way to round up cattle ahead of the winter weather, to find the rig 'parked' neatly in one of their less used backyards.

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Smit Salvage was subsequently awarded the contract to refloat the rig and sent the chartered tug **ZOUROS HELLAS** from Cape Town to do the job. Also to no avail - adverse weather and conditions defeated all attempts to free the rig and eventually the salvage was called off, ostensibly 'until a stronger tug became available'.

Since then the rig has remained in the bay, firmly stuck on the seabed with its condition slowly deteriorating.

Since then the Governor of St Helena has issued a permit to the owners of the rig to have her removed, along with conditions for the removal. It appears likely however that during the time **A Turtle** has been aground off Tristan da Cunha her condition has deteriorated and the best that can be hoped for now is to pull her clear and have her scuttled in deep water, well away from the fishing grounds on which the island's economy largely depends.

An environmental survey is being undertaken to determine if the rig is carrying pollutants – a report says that although the rig was decommissioned before leaving Brazil it is possible that small quantities of pollutants remain on board.

A contract for the salvage has subsequently been awarded to the US company **Titan Maritime** of Fort Lauderdale, which is using Cape Town as the base from which to work. The tug **DE HONG** is already at the island where preliminary work is being undertaken. The Cape Town-based supply vessel **EDINBURGH** has also been chartered to carry supplies as has the vessel **KELSO** as an accommodation vessel and support base.

During January a quantity of scrap steel was removed from the rig to aid buoyancy.

It is thought that the spring tides of 18 February will present the best opportunity of freeing up the rig. If so she will be towed some 12 miles offshore and sunk.

CASUALTY REPORTING



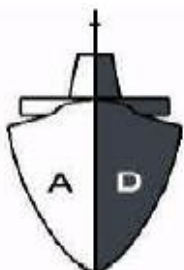
Above seen the MV **Eber** registered in Istanbul alongside in the Port of Durban at Pier 101, The vessel encountered engine problems and was towed back to port from a position 95 nautical miles south east of the port by the SMIT owned tug **Pentow Service**

Photo : Capt. Mike Skinner – master Pentow Service ©

NAVY NEWS

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ANGLO DUTCH SHIPBROKERS bvba



Waterstraat 16
2970 SCHILDE
BELGIUM
Tel : + 32 3 464 26 09
Fax : + 32 3 297 20 70
e-mail : anglodutch@pandora.be

Auditors hit defence body over ship defects

Critical fire safety checks were not done on the ship replacing **HMAS Westralia**, a navy oil tanker on which four sailors died in a fire in 1998.

An Australian National Audit Office report has found that fire-fighting equipment had not been tested when **HMAS Sirius** began operating in September. Inspectors did not see visible escape signs or first-aid equipment on board.

The report, which is deeply critical of the Defence Materiel Organisation's acquisition of the ship, also found that DMO staff mishandled Commonwealth money in leasing the vessel, and rushed the acquisition, meaning a slower ship that could make its fleet "vulnerable" was purchased.

Responding in the report, the DMO said a mandatory report on safety will be finished this month, yet rejected safety concerns as baseless.

"Defence regrets that it might be inferred from this report that there are shortcomings in the safety program. Any such suggestions have now been proven baseless," it said.

Plagued by cost blow-outs and delays in the past, the DMO hailed the acquisition as "the first time in most people's living memory" that a ship of such size had been delivered "ahead of schedule but ... under budget".

Yet the audit office report suggests that the procurement process was rushed and as a result the new ship is no more capable than the Westralia in terms of speed.

With a maximum speed of 16 knots, the **Westralia** was unable to provide oil and water to fleets operating at higher speeds. Defence officials viewed a target speed of 18 knots as optimal.

Yet it was replaced with a commercial ship capable of only 15 to 16 knot speeds, after the DMO revised its initial budget downwards.

SHIPYARD NEWS

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info@disamaritime.com
www.disamaritime.com

Ketelaarstraat 5c
B-2340 Beerse
Belgium

Tel : + 32 (0) 14 62 04 11
Fax : + 32 (0) 14 61 16 88



info@disacivil.com
www.disacivil.com



The new Stan Patrol 2005, named **RV 161** of the Koninklijke Marechaussee (Military Police / border guard) commenced her yard trials at the Haringvliet, the patrol vessel is built under yard number 548912 at the Damen shipyard.

Photo : Huib Trommel ©

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TOTAL VESSEL MANAGEMENT

K.P. van der Mandelelaan 34 - 3062 MB Rotterdam (Brainpark) - The Netherlands

Telephone : (31) 10 - 453 03 77

Fax : (31) 10 - 453 05 24

E-mail : mail@workships.nl

Website : www.workships.nl



The **SINE MAERSK** seen moored in the port of Los Angeles whilst 7 cranes working on the vessel

Photo : Paul Hopson ©

Cruise Industry Set to Increase Jobs in Europe

The growing popularity of cruise vacations and European shipyards' dominance of global cruise ship orders is set to have a major impact on jobs, wealth creation and inbound tourism in Europe, according to the results of a "European Cruise Contribution" report released at a major conference in Brussels. "This is the first time that figures have been available to demonstrate the full economic value and scale of the total cruise industry in Europe," said Mr Pier Luigi Foschi, chairman of the European Cruise Council (ECC) and chairman and chief executive officer of Costa Crociere SpA. The ECC commissioned the report together with Euroyards, MedCruise and Cruise Europe. "Cruise companies, shipbuilding yards and cruise passengers now account for €8.3 billion of direct expenditure in Europe and we expect this to increase by 50 per cent to €12.7 billion by 2010," said Mr Foschi. "We can also confirm that the cruise industry

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is already responsible for more than 180,000 jobs across Europe and our analysis shows that this could grow by more than 50,000 to top a quarter of a million jobs by 2010."

Europe's position as the world leader in cruise ship design and construction is helping to drive this growth. During 2005 the global cruise industry spent an estimated €3.1 billion on cruise ship construction and maintenance in Europe – over 35% of the total direct European cruise business expenditure. This is expected to rise by more than a billion euros to €4.4 billion by 2009. European shipyards are building ten large ships a year for the next two years and have orders for over 95 per cent of new cruise ship orders between now and 2010, worth more than €18 billion. Within Europe, 2.6 million cruise passengers embarked on their cruises from European ports in 2005, ninety per cent of whom were European nationals. On average, these passengers spent €100 at each embarkation port city and another €50 at each port visit on their cruise itinerary. Their holidays generated 13 million passenger visits to European ports.



Seen above the **Sardinops**, this vessel managed by **Smit** on behalf of the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is due to be replaced by a brand new, state of the art vessel later this year

Photo : Glenn Kasner ©

GOLDEN OCEAN FIXES CAPE SIZE VESSELS

JOHN Fredriksen-controlled bulk carrier operator Golden Ocean Group says it has fixed out two out of four capesize vessels ordered last December from Daehan Shipbuilding, south Korea. A statement says: "At this stage Golden Ocean intends to keep the two first units for opportunistic trading." The company says that the vessels have fixed for a period of 5 years at a net rate of US\$36,800 per day to Goldbeam, guaranteed by Jinhui Shipping and Transportation. Golden Ocean CEO Herman Billung says: "We are very pleased with this deal. The combination of the lease and the charter gives us the opportunity to build fleet and create value for our shareholders with a limited financial risk. The deal will also strengthen our company's short and medium term cash position."

Simultaneously, Golden Ocean has sold the two vessels to Ship Finance International, also controlled by John Fredriksen, based on a total delivered price of US\$80 million. Upon delivery from the shipyard, the vessels will commence 15 year bareboat contracts to Golden Ocean with charter rates payable on a diminishing scale: years 1-5: US\$27,450 per day, years 6-10: US\$22,600 per day and years 11-15: US\$19,750 per day. Including operating expenses, Golden Ocean says that it expects an average break-even rate of around USD 31,750 per day during the initial five years period. It has fixed price purchase options for each of the vessels after 5, 10 and 15 years at US\$61m, US\$44m and US\$24m respectively. The company says: "The deal will boost Golden Ocean's cash position with US\$5.5m per vessel as of delivery. The charter out deal will further secure a free positive cash generation of approximately US\$1.8m per vessel per year."



The **BRO DELIVERER** seen during her first port call in Rotterdam

Photo : Anton de Krieger ©

New Tanker for Novoship

On February 5 a keel for a new Aframax tanker for Novoship was laid by Samsung Heavy Industries.

The 115,000 dwt "**NS Leader**" is scheduled for delivery on May 14, 2007. The ship is the first in a series of 4 Aframax tankers.

16 carriers plan to raise Europe-Asia rates from March

A P Moller Maersk, Mediterranean Shipping Co and 14 other shipping lines plan to raise their rates for moving waste paper, lumber and other products to Asia from Europe as global demand grows.

The 16 shipping companies, which form the Far Eastern Freight Conference, plan to increase rates for moving the products by up to US\$100 per container, the group said in a statement. The increases will start from March 1, it said.

Shipping lines expect rising demand for sea transport, which will allow them to stem a year-long fall in rates. The freight increase for the Asia-Europe route will last until May next year for some of the cargo.

The group, which handles about 60 per cent of trade between Asia and Europe, said in November that it will raise three-month contract rates for shipping goods to Europe from Asia, excluding Japan, by US\$200 per 20-foot standard containers from this month.

The other members of the Far Eastern Freight Conference include ANL Container Lines, Neptune Orient Lines's APL, CMA CGM SA, CSAV Norasia Liner Services, Egyptian International Shipping, Hapag-Lloyd, Hyundai Merchant Marine,

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, MISC Bhd, Mitsui OSK Lines, Nippon Yusen KK, Orient Overseas Container Line, Safmarine and Yang Ming Marine Transport

CMA CGM introduces new South America, Arabian Gulf, Indian South Africa service

CMA CGM, the French shipping line has announced the launch of a new service linking South America to the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea, Indian and South Africa.



The **CMA CGM MATISSE** seen passing Maassluis outward bound from Rotterdam
Photo : Henk van der Heijden ©

As of 13 February the new weekly service, operating under the name VASCO Express, will deploy eight ships of 1,700-TEU capacity and a reefer capacity of 350 reefer plugs.

The vessels will rotate between the ports of Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Paranagua, Itajai, Rio-Grande, Salalah, Khorfakkan, Nhava-Sheva, Port Louis, Durban, Rio de Janeiro with highly competitive transit times (20 days between Rio-Grande and Khorfakkan).

"The new service will enable CMA CGM to meet the growing market demand for refrigerated containers between South America and the Middle East," says CMA CGM.

CMA CGM VASCO Express will use the port of Salalah to serve the Red Sea market with CMA CGM dedicated feeders.

The first ship will leave Brazil on 13 February with the **CMA CGM RIO-GRANDE**.

MOVEMENTS

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MULTRASHIP Towage & Salvage

Scheldekade 48

4531 EH Terneuzen

The Netherlands

Tel : + 31 – 115 645 000

Fax : + 31 – 115 645 001

Internet

commercial@multraship.com

<http://www.multraship.com>



The **EWL ROTTERDAM** and the **AIDAaura** seen moored in the port of Cartagena (Colombia)

Photo : Willem Kappert ©



The **HERCULES M** seen arriving in Sydney – Photo : Martin Grant ©

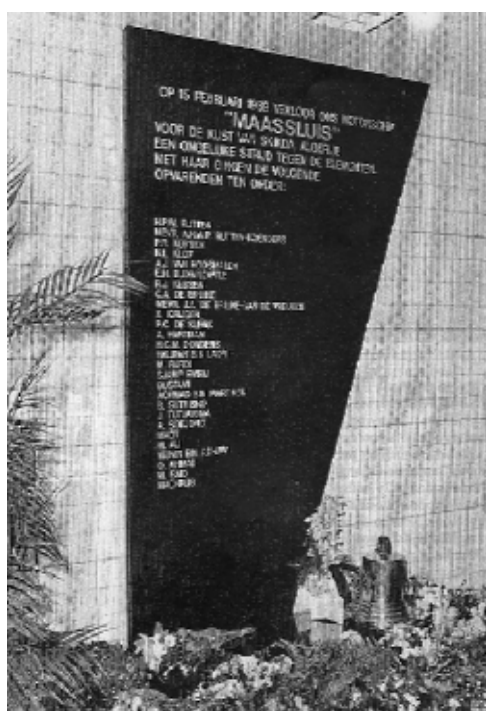
OLDIE – FROM THE SHOEBOX

DE SCHEEPSRAMP MET DE 'MAASSLUIS'

15 FEBRUARI 1989



Foto: coll. Jan Steehouwer



Het is deze maand 18 jaar geleden dat de **MAASSLUIS** van Rederij Nedlloyd verging in de Middellandse Zee. De in 1982 bij Van der Giessen-de Noord gebouwde chemicaliëntanker **MAASSLUIS** van rederij Nedlloyd kwam op dinsdagavond 14 februari 1989 aan op de rede van Skikda in Algerije.

Omdat de kapitein de volgende morgen vroeg de haven wilde binnenlopen ging het schip zo dicht mogelijk bij het havenhoofd voor anker. De bemanning van het schip bestond uit 29 mensen, waaronder de echtgenotes van de kapitein en de hoofdwerktuigkundige. Diezelfde avond rond 23.00 uur steekt er een zware storm op met hoge windsnelheden, die in korte tijd de zee opzweepten tot golven van 10 tot 12 meter. Hierdoor wordt het **MAASSLUIS** naar de pier gedreven terwijl de bemanning wanhopig probeert om los te komen van het anker en op volle kracht weg te varen. Helaas tevergeefs, want na enige tijd raakt het schip de pier en wordt de schroef beschadigd zodat het schip reddeloos verloren is. Het bonkt voortdurend op de pier en maakt slagzij naar de pier toe. De volgende morgen blijkt het gehele schip verzwolgen en zijn 27 van de 29 opvarenden omgekomen. Van 23 van hen zijn nooit enige resten teruggevonden.

Een gedenkteken voor de omgekomenen van de **MAASSLUIS** staat in de hal van de Willemswerf, het voormalige Nedlloyd gebouw aan de Boompjes in Rotterdam.

AIRCRAFT / AIRPORT NEWS

Sea Kings back to normal operations after safety check

A brief grounding of Canada's aging fleet of Sea King helicopters for all but essential life-saving missions has been lifted.

Late Friday, the Defence Department announced that the choppers had been placed on an operational pause after a recent study from the manufacturer indicated the lifespan of certain major components could be significantly less than guidelines the military had been using.



Photo : Mike Durning ©

The affected parts are in the main rotor head of the aircraft.

Early Sunday morning, the department announced that after extensive consultation between the Forces' technical and operational authorities, the helicopters would return to their normal operations.

"A prudent approach was taken to ensure the safety of our personnel," Maj.-Gen. Charlie Bouchard, commander of 1 Canadian Air Division, said in a release. "I am now confident that this is a maintenance issue that can be quickly resolved."

The military has 27 Sea Kings based at 12 Wing Shearwater outside Dartmouth and at Patricia Bay on the West Coast.

"The Sea King remains the operational mainstay of Canada's shipboard and maritime helicopter capability," said Col. Alan Blair, commander of Shearwater, "and it continues to operate with an enviable safety record, due to the proactive and safety-conscious monitoring the Canadian Forces routinely undertakes."

The helicopters, purchased between 1963 and 1969, are some of the oldest and busiest military aircraft now in use, according to the Defence Department. Due to their age, they also require high levels of maintenance.

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The Sea Kings will be replaced with 28 Sikorsky-made S-92 Cyclones. The military is expected to take delivery of the first of those helicopters in January 2009.

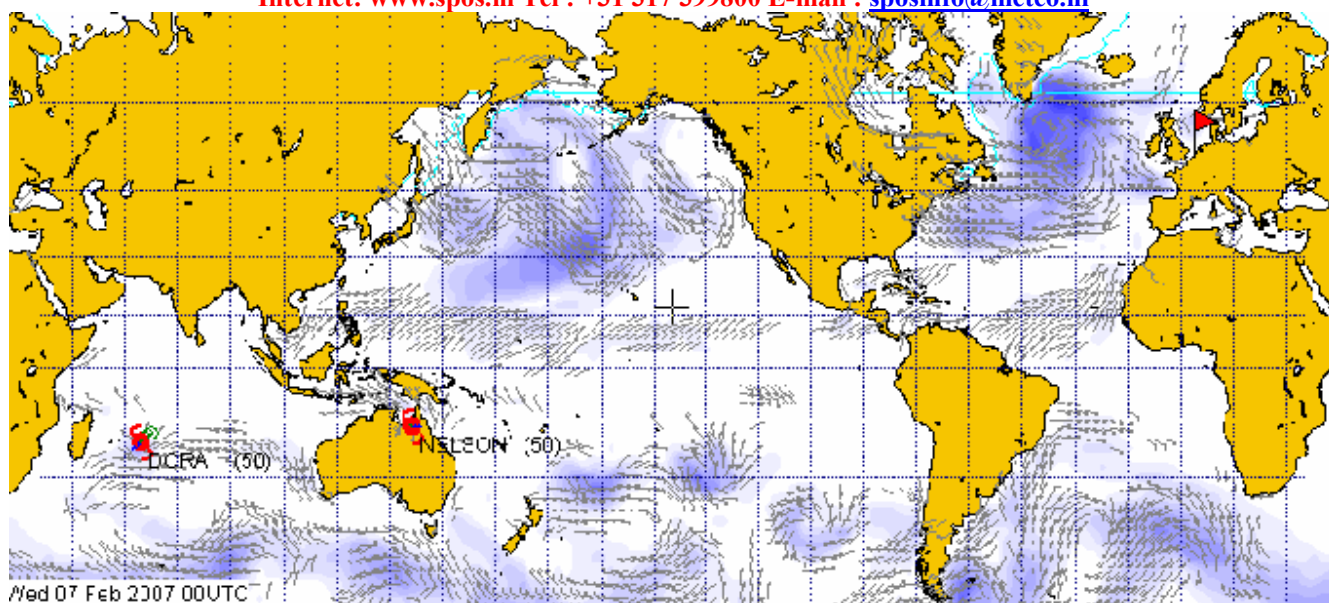
There have been two Sea King crashes in the past three years. The most recent happened just over a year ago when a helicopter ditched in the ocean off Denmark. All five crew members survived.

MARINE WEATHER

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Today's wind (+6Bft) and wave (+3m) chart. Created with SPOS, the onboard weather information & voyage optimisation system, used on over 500 vessels today.

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY

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The 6th of February Chemical/Oil products Tanker **ELBRUS** arrived at IJMUIDEN. With the help of two SvitzerWijsmuller tugs she entered the harbour. **ELBRUS** was built in 2004 and has a Gross Tonnage of 29.327t. **ELBRUS** IMO no is 9276030 and the tanker is owned by Cora Navigation at Malta.

Photo : Slotmaritimephoto ©

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