

DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2007 – 252



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The KWK PROVIDENCE seen anchored at Singapore roads

Photo : Hans Schaefer ©

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EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **MIGHTY SERVANT 1** seen anchored at Singapore Roads

Photo : Hans Schaefer ©

Sparrows Point recycler abandons ships

The Baltimore Sun reports that **North American Ship Recycling Inc.**, once heralded as the key to revitalizing the Sparrows Point shipyard, has disappeared, leaving behind in Maryland waters two rotting and possibly toxic government ships, the **Sphinx** and **Hoist**.

NASR was supposed to dismantle the ships under agreements made this year with the U.S. Maritime Administration. But in a filing in Baltimore U.S. District Court, Marad says it has been informed that "NASR has abandoned the [motor vessel] **Sphinx** and sold, in violation of the contract and the law, the [motor vessel] **Hoist**."

The Sun reports that a security guard said yesterday that NASR was no longer at the shipyard, and that he didn't know where the company had gone.

Its move appears to have come less than three weeks after a federal judge ordered NASR to pay \$750,000 owed to one of its contractors, Clean Venture Inc., says the newspaper. Source : MarineLog



The **WILLIAM C O'MALLEY** seen in West Africa – Photo : Jan Plug ©

US\$2b cocaine haul seized on ship flying SAR flag

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A container ship which was involved in Mexico's biggest cocaine bust is not registered in Hong Kong though it was flying the SAR flag when seized, police said on Friday. Mexican authorities have so far found **26 tonnes** of cocaine worth US\$2 billion (HK\$15.6 billion) onboard the **Esmeralda** after it arrived in the country from Colombia.

The head of the Hong Kong police narcotics bureau, chief superintendent Peter Else, said a check with the registry of shipping showed no record of a ship registered under the name of **Esmeralda**.

He said police were now seeking more information from their Mexican counterparts. Mexican authorities said they had seized 23.6 tonnes of cocaine from the ship in the port city of Manzanillo.

Police and marines discovered the first cache of **11 tonnes** of cocaine on Tuesday after the ship had arrived from Buenaventura in Colombia.

On Thursday, the navy, the attorney general's office and public safety and defense departments released a statement saying a second stash of cocaine had been discovered amid the ship's cargo, bringing the total seizure to 23.6 tonnes.

The statement said the cocaine was found in more than 21,000 packages and that authorities were still searching the vessel for more drugs. The Mexican government called it the largest drug seizure in the country's history.

The latest seizure appears to be one of the biggest anywhere in the world. Tony Garza, the US ambassador to Mexico, said the Manzanillo seizure was a sign of Mexican President Felipe Calderon's "commitment to cripple drug lords and bring them to justice."

It also underscores the urgency of approving funds for the Merida Initiative, a US initiative to fight narcotics-related crime, he said. The US Congress is yet to approve President George W Bush's request for an initial installment of US\$500 million for the plan. **Source : TheStandard**



Heerema's **HUSKY** seen performing a bollard pull test in Rotterdam-Caland canal

Photo : Wil Kik ©

Port Congestion now a global problem

It used to be that port congestion was regarded as something applicable to third world ports but in recent months ports in Europe and North America have become every bit as congested as their counterparts in less developed regions.

Shipping analysts are also casting a wary eye at ports in Asia and in particular China.

The reason is simple – too many containers and other types of cargo moving between continents as the global economy stays on the boil, and insufficient foresight or time on the part of harbour and port administrations to plan ahead.

As one ship owner put it rather succinctly, “we build new super-sized ships in a matter of months, but it takes years to expand a port.”

The same can be said for inland transportation links with the ports.

Some of the evidence indicating ongoing congestion can be seen with surcharges raised by shipping companies and this week a number in different parts of the world have been announced. For instance, inbound containers for discharge in the UK by member lines of the Far Eastern Freight Conference (FEFC) will be subject to a congestion surcharge of US \$ 145 per TEU as from 1 December.

According to the FEFC the growth in cargo carried by the conference into the UK for the first eight months of this year increased by almost 15 percent on the previous year.

“Together with substantial growth seen in other trades, this level of increase has created congestion not only at the major UK terminals, but has also caused congestion of the inland transport and delivery systems. On occasions, (shipping) lines have found it necessary to by-pass UK ports and feed cargo to the United Kingdom, and in some cases divert their vessels to non-scheduled ports and equalise the costs from these ports. This has created even more congestion for an infrastructure that is already overloaded. The infrastructure congestion has also made it very difficult to repatriate much needed empty containers to Asia.”

The FEFC says that these and other operational problems are incurring substantial extra costs for the lines, justifying the surcharge which will however be reviewed after 60 days.

Across the English Channel things are not that much better and shipping lines are known to be concerned at delays in a number of the North European ports, with overloaded transport infrastructure throughout Europe similarly overloaded.

Other factors apart from port congestion also play their part in raising transport costs and not the least at present is the soaring oil price, leading to bunker price adjustments.

Member lines forming the South Africa Europe Container Service (SAECS) began announcing yesterday what they term a ‘review’ of the applicable bunker surcharges. With effect from 1 December the revised bunker surcharge on the SAECS service will become \$ 370 per TEU for general purpose containerised cargo and \$ 525 per TEU for reefer cargo.

West Africa is seldom unaffected by congestion surcharges and member lines of the Europe West Africa Trade Agreement, known as EWATA, have raised their southbound congestion surcharges at a range of West African ports as from 21 November.

The new charges are as follows per port:

Luanda : € 250/500 per TEU/FEU

Tema: € 75/150

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Onne:

Containerised cargo € 75/150 per TEU/FEU

Conventional cargo €4 per frt

Cotonou: €100/200 per TEU/FEU

Dakar: € 75/150 per TEU/FEU

Pointe Noire:

Containerised cargo €100/200 per TEU/FEU

Conventional cargo € 5 per frt

Lome: € 50/100 per TEU/FEU

Surcharges at the ports of Lagos, Malabo, Matadi and Bata remain unchanged.

EWATA member lines consist of CSAV, Delmas, Hapag Lloyd, Libra, Maersk Line, NileDutch, OT Africa Line, and Safmarine. **Source : ports.co.za**



ITC 's **TYPHOON** seen in Angolian waters near the **Kizomba platform**

Photo : Jan Plug ©

Four million smuggled cigarettes seized

CUSTOMS officers have seized more than four million cigarettes smuggled into Australia from the Philippines.

When they examined a sea cargo container arriving at Port Botany in Sydney from Manila on Monday they found 440 cardboard cartons containing 4,400,000 cigarettes, Customs said. The contents had been falsely declared as assorted stickers, in an attempt to avoid duty of more than \$1 million.

Customs officers and NSW police followed the container when it was delivered to a self-storage depot at Tempe in Sydney's south and arrested four men as they were allegedly loading the cigarettes into a vehicle.

Two men from Lakemba, aged 67 and 61, a 35-year-old man from Wiley Park and a 24-year-old man from Bossley Park have been charged with smuggling, evasion of duty and possession of smuggled goods.

They have been granted conditional bail to appear in Sydney's Downing Centre Local Court on 27 November. Customs says it has intercepted 69 million smuggled cigarettes and 159 tonnes of smuggled tobacco so far this year.

Source : [theaustralian](#)

UK backs new European efforts to combat illegal fishing

UK Fisheries Minister Jonathan Shaw has backed new European Union moves to stamp out the global trade in illegal fish. Ministers meeting in Lisbon this week signed a declaration aimed at stopping illegal produce entering the food chain, calling for existing control and surveillance measures aimed at fishermen, processors and importers to be strengthened.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a worldwide organised crime that deprives poor communities of up to \$9 billion in lost income every year - \$1 billion of which is lost to Africa.

In April the UK government gave its backing to a new system to beat illegal fishing around the world by tracking fish from the moment they are caught to when they arrive on consumers' plates. Mr Shaw said: "Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a huge problem and a major threat to fish stocks and marine life globally. As the second biggest fish processor in Europe, the UK has to play its part.

"Illegal fishing will always exist where there is a weak link in the chain, where uneven enforcement fails to achieve a level playing field and fishermen and processors that abide by the rules are driven out of business.

"The private sector plays an essential role in the vanguard against the illegal fish trade, and we are working closely with our retail and processing industry to reduce the chance of illegal produce entering the UK." Source : [fishupdate](#)



Allseas **MANTA III** seen enroute Rotterdam

Photo : [Cornelis Kloppenburg](#) ©

Submarines - Drug Gangs Expand Their Fleet

In Colombia, police have captured two more submarines, used by drug gangs to transport cocaine past air and naval patrols. This makes nine such craft the Colombians have captured in the last two years. One of the recently captured

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subs was under construction and about 70 percent complete. The other was ready for use, a 56 foot craft capable of carrying five tons of cocaine.

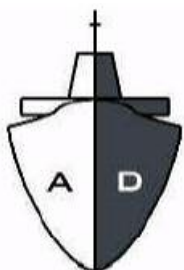
In late 2006, the U.S. Coast Guard spotted and seized a similar "submarine" off the coast of Costa Rica. They found the boat contained a crew of four, and 3.5 tons of cocaine. That cargo was worth about \$140 million dollars (wholesale price, when sold to dealers). Certainly worth the several hundred thousand dollars or so it cost to build the "submarine." Actually, these are not submarines in the true sense of the word, but "semi-submersibles". The fiberglass boats, powered by a diesel engine, have a small "conning tower" above the water, providing the crew, and engine, with fresh air, and permitting the crew to navigate the boat. A boat of this type is the only practical kind of "submarine" for drug smuggling. A real submarine would be much more difficult to build, although you can buy commercial subs for a million dollars or so. These, however, can carry only a few hundred pounds of cargo, and not for long distances.

The main problem with real subs is that they are not much more effective than the "semi-submersible" that was caught off Costa Rica. Others have been found in Colombia and Europe.

Submarines can only travel underwater, on battery power, for a short time. Otherwise, they are on the surface, or in a "semi-submersible" state, running on diesel power. So the drug gangs had the right idea, but their "sub" was not stealthy enough to avoid detection all the time. However, it appears that these "semi-submersibles" do work, because this was not the first one encountered. In addition to the nine found recently in Colombia, over a dozen have been encountered, mainly in South America, over the last decade. Most of them are apparently getting through. Delivery by sea is now the favored method for cocaine smugglers, because the United States has deployed military grade aircraft detection systems, and caught too many of the airborne drug shipments. The smugglers did their math, and realized that improvised "submarines" were a more cost-effective way to go. **Source : strategypage**

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Royal Navy to patrol Gulf in the spring (...summer ?)

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A Royal Navy aircraft carrier will be deployed in the Gulf next spring, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed.

Illustrious will sail for the highly sensitive waters near Iran accompanied by **Edinburgh**, a Type 42 destroyer whose main role is providing air defence, and **Westminster**, a Type 23 frigate.

Two minesweepers and three support vessels from the Royal Fleet Auxiliary will complete the deployment for **Operation Orion 08**. The ships will spend about six months in the Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

Their presence may coincide with a crucial period in the West's confrontation with Iran.

Observers believe that the spring is the last possible moment for President George W Bush to order military strikes against Iran's nuclear programme. The imminence of America's presidential election may make it impossible for Washington to carry out an attack any later.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said the deployment had been "planned for a while" and that British carriers were present in the Gulf last year and in 2005. "The idea is to demonstrate our commitment to maritime security in a strategically very important part of the world."

The warships will be handled by the Navy's permanent staff of 30 based in Bahrain's capital, Manama.

Source : Telegraph Media Group Limited

Longbow Enroute Toulon



The missile testing barge (semi submersible Pontoon) '**Longbow**' used for the Seawolf missile trials off Pembroke, Wales in the past and recently used as a trial batch for the new type 45 destroyers, departed September 27 from Portland bound for Toulon as can be seen at the photo, BMT (British Marine Technology) was contracted to oversee the re-activation of the barge, the **Longbow** is built as the **Ocean Servant 2** during 1976 under yard number 1038 at the Sumitomo Heavy Industries in Yokosuka, in 1984 the barge was renamed **Dynamic Servant** under which name she sailed for about 1 year, in 1985 she got her present name **Longbow**, the **Longbow** will be towed to Mediterranean and moored to a large buoy on the edge of the Banc du Magaud in waters up to 200m deep. With a turntable on the top, the buoy will permit **Longbow** to rotate around it, thus missile testing need not be delayed by the tide and weather. Live-firing trials of the **Aster 15** and the **Aster 30** anti-air missiles will commence in end-2007 and these will continue in to 2008. Upon completion of the PAAMS trials, BMT will decommission **Longbow** and the PAAMS equipment will be returned to MoD, some of which will then be fitted to **HMS Daring** or her sisters

Photo : Rod Smith ©

Navy's last steam warship sunk as dive attraction

The 37-year-old Leander class frigate, the former **HMNZS Canterbury**, was sunk at Deep Water Cove at Cape Brett, Bay of Islands, on Saturday November 3rd. The 3000-tonne warship took four minutes to sink in the calm waters after Opua teenager Lucy Hamnett thumped on a detonating device on the charter launch Acheron, moored 500m away



The **CANTERBURY** seen in 1993

For old navy man Norm Greenall it was a highly charged emotional sight. Mr Greenall, a navy shipwright who was at the launching of the warship in Scotland in 1970, has been in charge of stripping it of salvageable material and cleaning it so there was no risk of pollution in the bay.

Moments after watching **Canterbury** settle beneath the surface, Mr Greenall struggled with his emotions. "This is big, this is as big as it gets, it has been a large part of my life," he said. The ship settled slightly by the bow when 8kg of explosives blew pre-cut plates out of the hull.

After a minute the ship settled stern first with a list to starboard. The last sight of the navy's last steam warship, described as one of the happiest ships in the navy, was the for'ard section of the bow

Within four minutes all that was left was a patch of disturbed white water. Police divers inspected the wreck to make sure there were no unexploded charges before it was opened to the public for recreational diving.

The sinking attracted a huge crowd of between 2000 to 2500 recreation boats of all sizes, commercial boats, charter boats, helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

The ship is expected to join two other navy ships, its sister ship **Waikato** and the former navy oceanographic ship **Tui**, both sunk near Tutukaka, and the Greenpeace ship **Rainbow Warrior** at Mātāuri Bay, as major international dive attractions.

NATO offers to help Kazakhstan over its Caspian navy

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is ready to help Kazakhstan in building its Caspian navy, reports from the Kazakh capital Astana quoted NATO's special envoy to the Caucasus and Central Asia as saying on Thursday.

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Robert F. Simmons, who is paying a working visit to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan from Oct. 26 to Nov. 2, said that NATO was ready to help in terms of budget planning and technological assistance, according to reports by the Kazakh Telegraph Agency.

Simmons was pleased with the smooth implementation of Kazakhstan's Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. Kazakhstan is the first Central Asian country to sign such an agreement with NATO.

In September, Kazakh Defense Minister Danial Akhmetov said he hoped to build a modern navy for the Caspian Sea because the region is highly significant for the economic development of Kazakhstan.

The country is planning to purchase warships with displacement ranging from 500 to 1000 tons. **Source : xinhuanet.**



The German guided missile patrol boat **P 6125 ZOBEL** visited Malta for bunkers
Photo : Lawrence Dalli – Malta Ship Photos ©

Canadian frigate leaves Halifax harbour for six-month deployment in Persian Gulf

A Canadian warship steamed out of Halifax harbour on Thursday to resume patrols in the Persian Gulf and gain intelligence on potential terrorist activity in the volatile region.



Hundreds of weeping family members lined the military dock as **HMCS Charlottetown** made its way out to sea to begin a six-month mission involving surveillance, boarding suspicious vessels and ensuring the safety of a waterway that's key to the international trade of oil.

Commander Patrick St-Denis said the ongoing naval presence is vital in the area despite criticisms that the Canadian contingent has apprehended few terrorists or acquired valuable intelligence since 2001.

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"If we were not there, do we want to see the results and consequences to Canada?" he said on the jetty moments before departing under clear skies and a stiff wind. "This could have a huge impact on oil prices as well as terrorist activities (affecting) Canada." The vessel, with 250 crew and a Sea King helicopter on board, will also visit several ports in the region to help build better relations with locals who could provide information on terror threats, St-Denis said.

"The focus has changed a little bit to gain the co-operation of the locals so we can gain more intelligence," he said.

The Halifax-class patrol frigate will be taking part in Operation Altair, part of Canada's contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom, the code-name for the American-led war on terror. Canada hasn't had a vessel there since last March when **HMCS Ottawa** returned from the Gulf where the frigate was part of a U.S. carrier strike group during a six-month tour.

St-Denis said it wasn't yet clear whether Canada will be called on next year to lead the multinational naval task force in the region, which it has done in the past. Over the last few years Ottawa has dispatched warships on an individual basis. It's unclear whether the Conservative government will be required to send more ships to meet the lead responsibility.

Families hugged and waved small Canadian flags as the ship prepared to depart, while small children called out for their fathers when the frigate pulled away from the jetty. Brenda Capilan watched as her husband held their seven-month-old daughter before stepping aboard the Charlottetown for a mission that will see him miss some important milestones. "It's going to be hard - her first birthday, her first Christmas," she said, a Canadian flag in her hand. "But this is what he does, this is his job and we're prepared for it." Since the first Gulf War in 1991, the navy has sent ships to the region more than 30 times. By far the biggest deployment came following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

Six warships and more than 1,500 sailors and aircrew joined U.S. and British warships to help hunt down al-Qaida suspects fleeing Afghanistan by sea. Since then the navy has rotated ships in and out of the volatile waters on an individual basis, but the pace - when combined with training, maintenance and regular coastal defence - has put a strain on resources. St-Denis said the frigate will continue searching for illegal weapons and cargo. "The main thing is we're going to be making sure the safety of vessels transiting in and out of the theatre of operations will be done," he said. **Source : canadianpress**

Britain sends navy ship for Caribbean hurricane relief

Britain has deployed a Royal Navy vessel and helicopters to the Caribbean to help with the Hurricane Noel relief operation, Foreign Secretary David Miliband said Friday.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship **Wave Knight** -- a fast tanker with helicopter support -- has been sent to the region.

Photo : Ian Denton ©



Hurricane Noel on Friday churned over the Atlantic Ocean on a northerly track to Canada after battering the Caribbean where it killed at least 116 people in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Thousands of homes have been destroyed or damaged. Miliband said he was "deeply saddened" to hear about the devastation. "Our thoughts go out to all those affected and to those involved in relief

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operations. I hope the deployment of a Royal Navy vessel and helicopters will help their efforts," he said. The Royal Navy is experienced in being deployed on relief operation duties.

Source : [caribbeannetnews](#)

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One of Damen shipyards latest newbuildings, the **DMS Dunnock** is departed from the builder in Hardinxveld with destination Abu Dhabi.

Photo : Michel Kodde ©

General Dynamics NASSCO Lays Keel of Seventh T-AKE Ship

General Dynamics NASSCO, a wholly owned subsidiary of General Dynamics , laid the keel for the seventh dry cargo-ammunition ship in the U.S. Navy's T-AKE program and started construction of the eighth ship this week. Both ships will be delivered to the Navy in 2009. "Laying the keel of T-AKE 7 and starting construction of T-AKE 8 are the latest milestones in the successful Navy auxiliary ship program," said Frederick J. Harris, president of General Dynamics

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NASSCO. "These two events are evidence that the NASSCO team is building and delivering T-AKE ships efficiently. With one ship now deployed overseas and two other ships in service, the T-AKE class is already contributing to the Navy's forward presence posture."

The keel of T-AKE 7 was laid on November 2, while construction of T-AKE 8 began on October 31. Last week, NASSCO launched **USNS Robert E. Peary (T-AKE 5)** and successfully completed sea trials for **USNS Richard E. Byrd (T-AKE 4)**. Since June 2006, NASSCO has delivered three T-AKE ships to the Navy, and will soon deliver the Richard E. Byrd. The shipyard has contracts to build the first nine ships of the T-AKE class and recently reached an agreement to terms for ships 10 through 14.

Designed by NASSCO, the T-AKE class incorporates international marine technologies and commercial ship-design features, including an integrated electric-drive propulsion system, to minimize operating costs over its projected 40-year service life. The primary mission of T-AKE ships is to deliver as much as 10,000 tons of food, ammunition, fuel and other provisions to combat ships at sea.

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Above seen HAL's **Zaandam** last Thursday whilst at anchor off Puerto Vallarta Mexico.

Photo : Don Macleod ©

First order for new MAN Diesel 50ME-B engines

Copenhagen-based shipping company TORM and China's Guangzhou Shipyard Intl. Co. Ltd. have signed a deal for seven 50,500 dwt chemical/product tankers to be built at GSI's facilities in China. The 6S50ME-B engines for these vessels will be delivered by DMD Dalian Marine Diesel. MAN Diesel will supervise construction, shoptests, on-site installation and commissioning of the engines, as well as participate in subsequent sea-trials.

The MAN B&W S50ME-B8 engines are the first two-stroke engines to be delivered with TCA 66 turbochargers with variable nozzle rings technology (VTA), which facilitate the control of the scavenging-air pressure and thereby compression and cylinder maximum pressure. This gives a large degree of freedom to secure the optimal balance between NOx-emission and fuel-oil consumption.

MAN Diesel enhanced its 50 cm-bore, low-speed engine program earlier this year with the launch of its MAN B&W S50ME-B type engine series. This added to the existing, small-bore MAN B&W S35ME-B and S40ME-B engines that were introduced in mid-2006.

The new S50ME-B engine strengthens a 50 cm-bore range that also includes the S50 ME C/MC-C/MC engine series, and that has a combined total of over 3,000 engines in service.

MAN Diesel is using the ME-B series to broaden the application of the ME concept in its small-bore and medium sized, two-stroke engines using the electronic, fuel-injection control already introduced in its large-bore engines.

All S50ME-B engines are available in five- to nine-cylinder variants.

The ME-B design is based on that of the existing, mechanical MC-C range and represents an upgrade with electronic controls that provide improved, operational economy and flexibility, and manoeuvrability.

The S50ME-B7/8 will have the same output and installation data as the corresponding S50MC-C/ME-C versions.

Additionally, a lower-rpm version with a higher power concentration aimed at new ship designs has been added to the series under the S50ME-B9 designation.

PRINCIPAL ENGINE DATA			
MAN B&W S50ME-B			
Data at L1 point	Mark 7	Mark 8	Mark 9
Bore mm	500	500	500
Stroke mm	2000	2000	2214
MEP Bar	19	20	21
Speed r/min	127	127	117
Mean Piston Speed m/s	8.47	8.47	8.63
Power kW/cyl.	1580	1660	1780
SFOC g/kWh	163 - 170	170	169

The exhaust valve of the S50ME-B types is operated by a smaller camshaft than normal when compared with its MC-C counterpart.

The advanced, fuel-injection control is an efficient way of managing current and future environmental-emission requirements, with a fuel economy that is second to none in its class.

As with the larger MAN B&W ME-engines, the Alpha Lubricator comes as standard, ensuring a very low, cylinder lubricating-oil consumption as the advanced, electronic, user-friendly interface allows precise adjustment.

Source : MarineLog

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Seen above the 2007 built **CMA CGM SANTOS** in Rio Grande, the vessel measures DWT 23.896 ton and is having a capacity of 1674 TEU, owner of the vessel is Universal Marine in Rotterdam The Netherlands and the vessel is operated by CMA CGM, the liner sailed previous under the name **CARIBBEAN SEA**

Photo : Marcelo Vieira ©

UAE port giant floats 17 percent stake

Dubai port operator DP World on Sunday launched an initial public offering for 17 percent of its shares, one of the biggest IPOs in the region.

The company, one of the world's largest container-port operators, said at a news conference it was selling 2.822 billion shares, or 17 percent of its 16.6 billion shares, at an indicative price of one dollar to 1.30 dollar per share.

The offer, which could be expanded to up to 20 percent of the firm's shares, is open to citizens and residents of the United Arab Emirates and its Gulf Arab partners Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Shares will remain on sale until November 15. DP World, which is controlled by the government of the booming Gulf emirate of Dubai, a UAE member, became a top global port operator when it acquired Britain's Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Co in 2006 in a 6.9-billion-dollar deal.

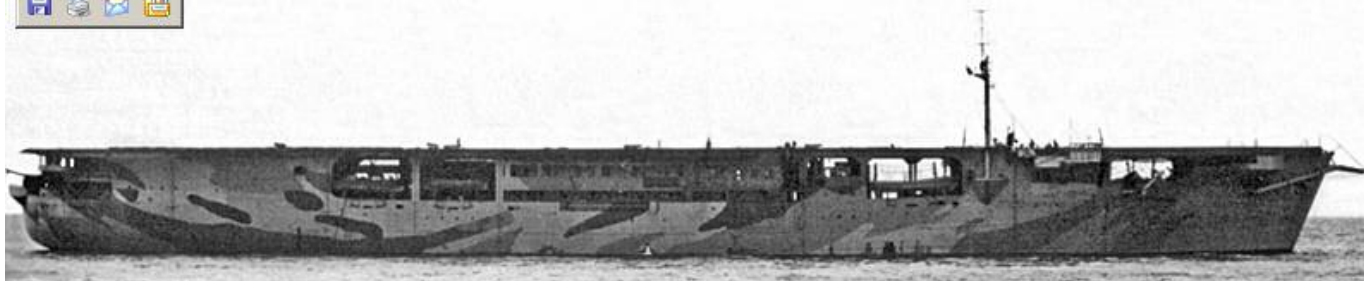
But the company had to relinquish the US part of the that acquisition following fierce congressional opposition to the deal on security grounds and despite having the support of President George W. Bush. Source : Turkish Press

U-boat hunters

by Dawn Collinson,

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HMS Audacity was the Royal Navy's first merchant aircraft carrier whose role was to protect convoys crossing the Atlantic with vital supplies for Britain during World War II.



Surprisingly, she started life as a German passenger ship, the **Hannover**, was launched 29 March 1939 being completed on 10 May 1939. She was caught outside home waters by the outbreak of war, and captured by the British light cruiser **HMS Dunedin** (Capt. C.E. Lambe, RN) and the Canadian destroyer **HMCS Assiniboine** (Cdr. E. Mainguy, RCN) in the West Indies on 8 March 1940 while trying to run the blockade.

Taken into the Royal Navy as **Sinbad**, then renamed **Empire Audacity** and commissioned as an Ocean Boarding Vessel 11 Nov 1940. Converted to escort carrier (MAC ship) by Blyth Shipbuilding from 22 Jan 1941, commissioned 20 June 1941. Renamed **Audacity** 30 July 1941.

As the first Escort carrier the design she had no space for a hangar or a lift, so her aircraft were parked on deck. Three arrestor wires and an open conning position on the starboard side were fitted, together with a minimal anti-aircraft armament. As the principal air threat was perceived to be Condor long-range reconnaissance aircraft, her aircraft were all fighters. Hurricanes were proposed but not available, while the Grumman Martlet was not only available but had been specifically designed for carrier operations. Eight aircraft were embarked.

HMS Audacity commenced her war service when she sailed with her first convoy in September 1941 to Gibraltar. On 21 September, one of her aircraft shot down a Focke-wulf Condor which had just been making a bomb run attack on the convoy rescue ship **Walmer Castle**. The ship carrying over 80 survivors was set on fire and had to be sunk by gunfire from a corvette.

HMS Audacity under command of **Cdr. Douglas William Mackendrick, (RN)** participated in two more convoys before being sunk at 21:37 hours on 21 December, after being hit by three torpedoes from the German submarine **U-751** about 500 miles west of Cape Finisterre in position 43°45'N, 19°54'W. The survivors were picked up by the British corvettes **HMS Convolvulus** (T/Lt. R.S. Connell, RNR), **HMS Marigold** (Lt. W.S. Macdonald, RNVR), and **HMS Pentstemon** (Lt.Cdr. J. Byron, RNR). Commanding officer Cdr. Douglas William Mackendrick, RN also lost his life during this attack.

There is a 1:300 scale model of the camouflaged **Audacity** in Merseyside Maritime Museum's Battle of the Atlantic gallery.

The need to close the 400-mile "air gap" in the mid-Atlantic led to the development of the MAC ships. Most were grain carriers or oil tankers fitted, while being built, with a basic flight deck for three or four Swordfish bi-planes.

The MAC ships not only provided air cover for convoys but also carried much-needed supplies of grain or oil for Britain.

From mid-1943 at least one MAC ship, crewed by the Merchant Navy and carrying aircraft and men of the 836 Squadron Fleet Air Arm, sailed with every north Atlantic convoy.

They were joined by new purpose-built British and US naval aircraft carriers. US Liberator bombers closed the "air gap" by late April 1943. At the same time, long-range British and American aircraft attacked U-boats in the Bay of Biscay near their French bases.

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Equipped with powerful searchlights for night operations, air-to-surface radar and increasingly effective weapons, these aircraft enjoyed many successes.

The fitting of highly-accurate centimetric radar on long-range aircraft was another major turning point in the anti-U-boat campaign. More U-boats were sunk by aircraft than by ships during the last two years of the war. The RAF Coastal Command played a decisive role in the Battle of the Atlantic, particularly from 1943 onwards. In all, it sank at least 155 U-boats in Atlantic waters.

RAF Coastal Command was a multi-national air force involving the RAF, Royal Navy Squadrons, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force, Czech and Polish Air Forces and US Navy and US Army Air Forces.

Other exhibits include a green-coloured 100 lb air-dropped anti-submarine bomb from about 1941 – the earliest of its type used by the British.

Merseyside Maritime Museum is open seven days a week, admission free.

Source : Liverpool Echo



The **CARNIVAL MIRACLE** seen in Fort Lauderdale
Photo : Kees van Schie ©

DP World buys Egyptian port operator for US\$670m

DP World Ltd, the Dubai-owned port operator with terminals from the UK to China, purchased Egyptian Container Handling Co for US\$670 million to gain Sokhna Port at the southern entrance to the Suez Canal.

DP World bought a 90 per cent stake in Egyptian Container, the majority shareholder in Sokhna Port Development Co, from investors led by Orascom Construction Industries. Sokhna Port chairman Ossama al-Sharif retains a 10 per cent stake through Amiral Holdings Ltd.

'Sokhna will further enhance DP World's ability to serve customers moving containerised and non-containerised cargo on the Egypt-Asia shipping routes and through the Suez Canal to Europe and the US,' Mohammed Sharaf, DP World's chief executive officer, said on Wednesday in an e-mailed statement.

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DP World, which last year bought London-based Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co for US\$6.8 billion to become the No. 4 port operator, plans an initial share sale next month that will be the biggest in the Middle East open to foreigners.

The company is a unit of Dubai World, the state investment group that on Oct 29 agreed to buy Singapore's Labroy Marine Ltd for US\$1.7 billion to gain vessels and repair yards as the emirate seeks to expand its influence over global cargo shipping.

Sokhna, which opened in 2003, is the closest container port to Cairo and will be able to handle 1.2 million standard 20-foot containers by the end of 2009, according to Wednesday's statement. It is DP World's first Egyptian port and its third on the Red Sea after Jeddah in Saudi Arabia and Djibouti, East Africa.

Sokhna's four terminals provide loading and unloading services for containers, general cargo, fertiliser and bulk materials, according to the company's website.

'It was a fair price,' said Tarek Shahin, an analyst at Beltone Financial in Cairo.

Cairo-based Orascom Construction, the Middle East's biggest cement maker, raised US\$372 million from its 50 per cent stake in Egyptian Container, it said separately. Orascom chief executive officer Nassef Sawiris said in a September interview that Deutsche Bank AG had been hired to help sell the port company for about US\$1 billion.

DP World chairman Sultan bin Sulayem said on Oct 4 that Sokhna was 'one of the many ports' the Gulf company might buy.

With 42 container terminals in 22 countries, DP World has said it aims to increase capacity to the equivalent of 90 million 20-foot containers a year by 2017 from 48.6 million at the end of 2006. The company is trying to catch up with rivals Hutchison Port Holdings Ltd, AP Moller-Maersk Group's terminals unit and Singapore's PSA International Pte.

Source : **business times**

MOVEMENTS



Cruise liner **Rhapsody of the Seas** seen sailing from Lyttelton, New Zealand 03.11.07 bound for Wellington. The ship is based in Australia and New Zealand for the Southern Cruise season.

Photo : **Alan Calvert**

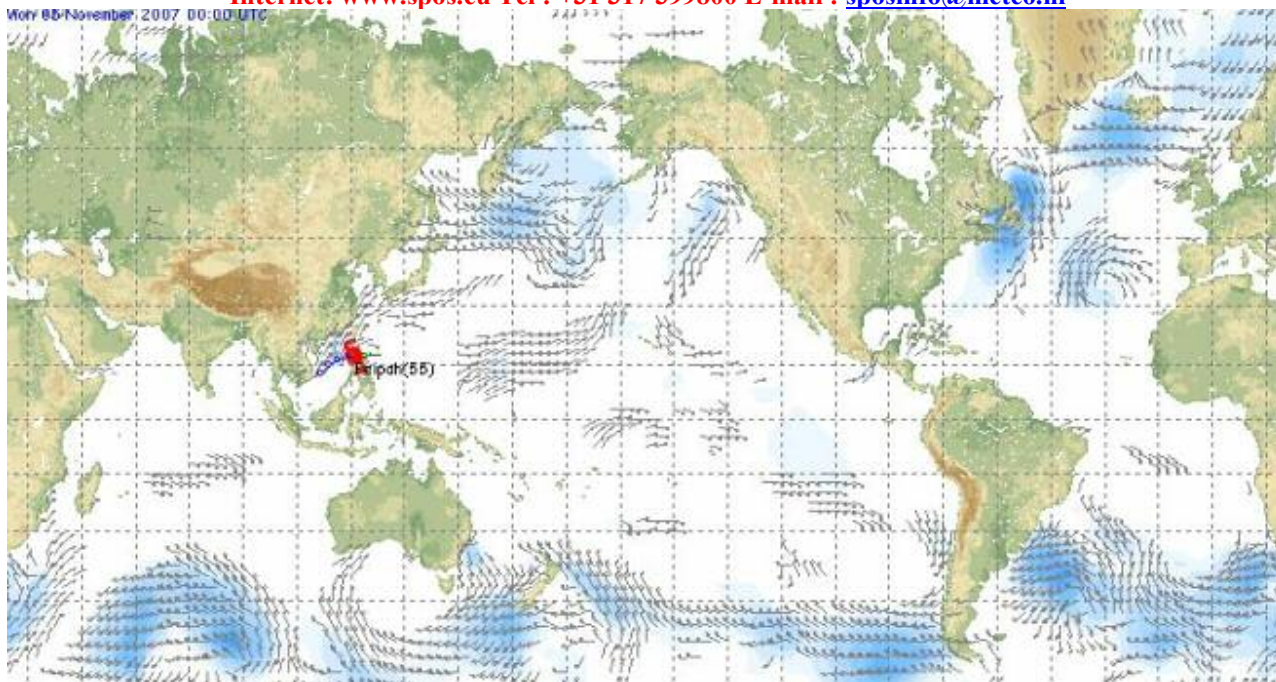
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Today's wind (+6Bft) and wave (+3m) chart. Created with SPOS, the onboard weather information & voyage optimisation system, used on over 1000 vessels today.

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



A busy Calandcanal in Rotterdam-Europoort, with some movements ongoing, not leaving too much space for the approaching 248 mtr long **SARPEN**

Photo : Rick van Marle ©

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