

# DAILY COLLECTION OF MARITIME PRESS CLIPPINGS 2005 – 235



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(+31) 105015440 (a.o.h.)

**Fax :** (+31)105013843

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[www.vlierodam.nl](http://www.vlierodam.nl)

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At the FERES SMIT shipyard along the Winschoterdiep the **TERSCHELLING** was launched  
**Photo : Pim Korver Film+Video ©**

## EVENTS, INCIDENTS & OPERATIONS



The **MULTRATUG 25** is the former URS tug **WESTHINDER** – Photo : Ricardo van Liere ©

### Coast Guard Aircrews Rescue Injured Cruise Ship Passenger

The crew of an **HH-65 Dolphin** helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans airlifted an injured cruise ship passenger today, approximately 150 miles south of Grand Isle, La.

The name of the injured man is being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

The Coast Guard received a call for assistance from the cruise ship **Galaxy** at 11:30 a.m. stating a 49-year-old Canadian man had fallen and sustained life-threatening injuries. The Coast Guard aircrew took flight shortly thereafter and the cruise ship diverted its course north to shorten the flight time. The Coast Guard crew airlifted the man from the ship and took him to Touro Hospital in New Orleans.

The crew of an **HU-25 Falcon** jetcrew from Coast Guard Aviation Training Center, Mobile, Ala., was also launched to provide support for the rescue mission.

The **Galaxy** was en route from Houston to the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico at the time of the emergency.

## Two stowaways found dead on ship bound for WA

Two Moroccan stowaways have been found dead on a bulk fertiliser carrier on its way to Western Australia.

It is understood four men had stowed away on the Panamanian registered ship before it left Morocco on Africa's north-west coast last month. Police are unsure how two of the men died.

Officers from the state and federal police will meet the ship when it docks at Kwinana on Monday night.

## Norwegian ship sinks trawler

The Scottish trawler "**Harvest**" was sunk after a collision with the supply vessel **MS "Strilmøy"** in the North Sea.



PHOTO: SIMON MØKSTER SHIPPING ©

The collision occurred east of the Shetland Islands at about 7 a.m. Friday morning.

The entire crew of the Scottish trawler was rescued aboard another ship before sinking. The "**Harvest**" was carrying six crew from the British zone in the North Sea, to Peterhead.

No one on either the "**Harvest**" or the MS "**Strilmøy**" was injured and the Norwegian ship suffered only minor damage.

"It is just a matter of minor damage to the bow," press contact Nils A. Liaaen at Simon Møkster Shipping, the MS "**Strilmøy**"'s operator, told Aftenposten.no. The Norwegian ship is on the way to Stavanger where it will be inspected by classification society Det Norske Veritas and the shipping company.

"There will eventually be a maritime inquiry. The captain and the others on board must give evidence," Liaaen said.

The MS "**Strilmøy**" is owned by Simon Møkster Rederi and operated by Simon Møkster Shipping in Stavanger.

## Greenpeace says sorry

Greenpeace on Friday apologised to the Philippines and Mother Nature for the damage caused by its flagship **Rainbow Warrior II** on a world heritage site coral reef that the environmental campaigners were supposed to protect.

The group was fined nearly \$7 000 earlier this week but blamed what it described as inaccurate navigational charts provided by the Philippine government after the 55-metre schooner ran aground at Tubbataha Reef Marine Park on Monday.

The ship caused damage on an area of some 160 square metres of coral, authorities said.

Greenpeace offered a belated and unconditional apology after the ship sailed into the port of Manila to continue an island-hopping tour across the Asia-Pacific to promote climate change awareness.



"Yes, we admit we are human too. We apologise that this thing happened," Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaign manager Von Hernandez told a news conference.

Left :  
**The Rainbow Warrior**  
Photo : Kevin Blair ©

He said it was Greenpeace's understanding that "that these things happen quite frequently" at Tubbataha, a spectacular 32 000-hectare coral formation in the Sulu Sea in the central Philippines that is listed by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation as a world

heritage site.

By paying the fine and making an act of contrition, "we hope we have set a positive example as far as this thing is concerned", Hernandez said.

Originally built in Britain in 1957 as a steam-powered fishing vessel, the **Rainbow Warrior II** replaced its namesake, which was sunk by French agents in 1985 in Auckland harbour on its way to block a French nuclear test in the South Pacific.

One crew member drowned and two French secret service agents were later jailed after pleading guilty to charges of manslaughter and wilful damage.

## Crew airlifted from drifting ship

At 10:19 p.m. a 93 metre Dutch registered asphalt tanker '**Stella Rigel**' (2,456 grt), with a cargo of 3,100 tons of bitumen, reported she had broken down within The Smalls Traffic Separation Scheme, approximately 25 nautical miles West of St Davids. The weather on scene was reported as being, south westerly force 7 to force 8. The vessel had 11 crew on board.

The tug '**Anglegarth**' was tasked from Milford Haven, along with St Davids Coastguard Rescue team, St Davids RNLI Lifeboat and Rescue Helicopter 169 from RAF Chivenor.

Peter Mizen, Area Operations Manager, Western Region, says:

"The vessel was unable to be repaired by the crew and started drifting in a Southwesterly direction towards The Smalls. As a precaution and at the request of the Master, 7 non essential crew members were evacuated by helicopter and landed at St Davids. The present situation is that the tug '**Anglegarth**' is on scene and connecting a tow with the intention of towing the vessel to Swansea, where it will undergo repairs and inspection."

## **Socotra Oil Tanker Rescue Encounters Difficulties**

The salvage operation of an oil tanker stranded off Socotra Island is proceeding steadily, but slowly, according to Abdul-Rahman Al-Eryani, National Manager of the Socotra Conservation and Development Program (SCDP).

Efforts to save the island from serious environmental damage have been thus far successful, but fears remain that the remaining 250 tons of oil onboard may yet leak into the sea.

The oil vessel is the property of Aleysi Company and was carrying 1000 tones of fuel when it ran aground near Hullaf beach in Socotra on Monday October 24, missing the entrance to the port, named Jetty.

A rescue operation was launched shortly before low tide to force water out of the hull of the ship, a source told the Observer.

Al-Eryani believes that the remaining oil constitutes a threat, but said that there had been no serious leakage of oil so far. "We informed the authorities of the danger," he told the Observer. "We have also held the owner of the ship responsible for any environmental damage caused by leakage, especially since the rescue operation has slowed down."

The operation has encountered delays due to the lack of water pumps capable of coping with the quantities involved, and water reentering the vessel.

"The SCDP team and other rescuers have carried out a full diving survey to assess damage to the ship's hull, but were unable to ascertain the status of the vessel's stability, or locate the breaches through which seawater is entering," Al-Eryani added.

The ship's hull has scraped the sea-bed, possibly causing breaches in the hull Socotran tugboats are not sufficiently powerful to carry out a full operation for such a huge quantity of oil.

Supervised and guided by the SCDP team with the help of the army, the vessel began Wednesday discharging its oil cargo through 3-inch pipes into on-land oil reservoirs located 200 meters from the vessel.

"The plan now is to find the hole where the water is coming in and plug it," said Al-Eryani. "Then it will be safer to drag the vessel to the port and pump the rest of the fuel."

The Ministry of Water and Environment, the Ministry of Oil, the Aleysi company and other bodies are observing on the situation.

## **SHIPMASTERS EVALUATE ISPS CODE**



Hotel Breukelen, The Netherlands, was the scene for a symposium on Friday 28 October, where the Dutch Shipmasters' Association NVKK asked the question whether the ISPS code is still only a duty or already a way of life in ports and on board ships. It is indeed more than one year since the code was implemented and it is interesting

to know where we stand today. The audience consisted of a wide range of experts from the industry including of course shipmasters but also representatives from the Royal Dutch Navy and the Dutch Government.

During the symposium a wide range of causes, consequences, experiences, criticism and proposals for improvement were discussed. We have to cope with legislation which cannot be ignored, why not make the best of it. And if adaptations are necessary, this forum offered an excellent opportunity.

Presentations ranged from the view of the US Coastguard in Europe, a Dutch shipowner (Spliethoff B.V.) to a classification society (DNV), Dutch Port State Control, the Dutch Royal Navy and the Port of Rotterdam. Mr. Jaap Lems, Harbour Master of Rotterdam gave a splendid picture what has been done to make Rotterdam a secure port and not only in the trade with the USA. A virtual screen gives a total view of everything which is going on in the port and makes it possible to take action at any moment because all surrounding details are fully known by everyone in the control unit. The latest equipment deals with underwater survey as terrorists are known to also use this aspect for organising attacks. Also shipmasters were represented to give their remarks on the ISPS code. It is needless to say that these comments were not all completely positive, although there were some exceptions, which dealt with the overall daily life security on board, not only in connection with terrorists.

Lessons learnt from the symposium highlight the principle that maritime security should never endanger maritime safety in any way. It is to be criticised that safe manning schemes on board ships are not adapted since the ISPS code was introduced, as it involves an extra workload. These schemes are only intended to bring a vessel safely from A to B. Any additional workload endangers obligatory rest hours. The confidentiality of the Ship's Security Plan was discussed as well as the lack of uniformity in implementing the ISPS code in various ports in the world. Seafarers are considered potential terrorists in parts of the world. This should change as seafarers could form a potential ally in the struggle against terrorism. Some implementers of the ISPS code were suspected of not being capable to understand normal working procedures on board ships. Appointing the shipmaster as the Ship Security Officer (SSO) is seen by international shipmasters' organisations as undesirable as shipmasters are bound to be responsible in overall crisis management. Disturbing is that 65 percent of seafarers consider the implementation of the ISPS code as a negative influence on living standards on board ships.

## Patrouillevaartuigen goed voor de export

door René Schrier

Alleen al omdat de patrouillevaartuigen die bij De Schelde in Vlissingen worden gebouwd, exportpotentie hebben, zou het kabinet voor deze vaartuigen moeten kiezen. Dat betoogde het CDA Tweede Kamerlid R. Korstenhorst in Vlissingen.

Hij vond het een goede zaak dat de marine bij een bezinning op haar taken heeft gekozen voor een oriëntatie op de kust. Daar horen dan wel de passende apparatuur en schepen bij, voegde hij er aan toe.

Korstenhorst kondigde aan dat zijn fractie zich binnenkort bij de behandeling van de defensiebegroting sterk zal maken voor de patrouillevaartuigen van de Schelde. Met een bedrijf als Damen dat daar achter zit is ook de expertise in huis om zo'n product te exporteren, vond hij. Dat is goed voor de regionale economie en voor de marine, stelde Korstenhorst vast.

Het Kamerlid was te gast bij het ROC Zeeland om het startsein te geven voor de nieuwe mono-disciplinaire opleidingen van het maritiem instituut de Ruyter. Waar de zeevaartschool vroeger de mogelijkheid bood voor gecombineerde opleidingen, zoals stuurman en scheepswerktuigkundige, gaat de opleiding nu weer terug naar mbo-opleidingen voor alleen stuurman of alleen machinist. Overigens kunnen leerlingen nog wel de opleiding maritiem officier blijven volgen.

Nederland was samen met Denemarken en één zeevaartschool in Frankrijk nog de enige die gecombineerde opleidingen aanbood.

De rederijen hebben tegenwoordig weer liever mensen die ofwel in het één ofwel in het ander gespecialiseerd zijn. De enige manier om dan te kunnen concurreren met lagelonenlanden is het bieden van kwaliteit, gaf T. Nieboer van het maritiem instituut aan.

De opleiding in Vlissingen is nu de eerste in Nederland die voor dit concept heeft gekozen.

Bij wijze van openingshandeling was de Zaandam van het Vlissingse zeekadettenkorps gecharterd. Het schip voer met de genodigden voor de gebouwen van de zeevaartschool langs en nadat de scheepstoeter een signaal had afgegeven, gingen langs de gevel van het schoolgebouw vlaggen omhoog.

## **Pirates open fire on cruise ship off Somalia**

### **Vessel carrying Americans, Europeans changes course and speeds away**

Pirates in speed boats opened fire on a cruise liner carrying hundreds of tourists off the Somali coast on Saturday, but none of the holidaymakers were hurt, a shipping official and the ship's owners said.



"Gunmen in two or three speed boats opened fire on the **Seabourn Spirit** while it was about 70 nautical miles off Somalia," said Andrew Mwangura, program coordinator for the Seafarers' Association in neighboring Kenya.

"The captain managed to change the course of the vessel and speed away. Most of the passengers are believed to be Americans or Western Europeans. No one was hurt," Mwangura told Reuters.

The Indian Ocean waters off the Somali coast are classed as among the most

dangerous in the world.

The 10,000-ton Bahamas-registered **Seabourn Spirit** was believed to be carrying about 300 passengers and crew from Alexandria in Egypt to the Kenyan port of Mombassa.

Its owners, Miami-based Seabourn Cruise Line, said the vessel had been rerouted to the Seychelles after the attack. "Early this morning an attempt was made to gain access to the **Seabourn Spirit** while it was at sea," the company said in a statement. "The approach was successfully repelled."

A company official contacted in Britain gave no more details, but said all on board were safe. "It is heading for the Seychelles now," Piracy off Somalia threatens shipping and has sabotaged the delivery of food aid to more than half a million hungry people in the region, the United Nations said on Thursday.

Hijackers have commandeered two vessels used by the U.N. World Food program this year and ship owners now demand armed escorts to travel in the waters, the agency said.

This week, the London-based International Maritime Bureau said it knew of 27 pirate attacks off Somalia since March. The attacks have highlighted insecurity in Somalia, which has had no government to enforce law and order since warlords ousted dictator Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991.

## **CASUALTY REPORT**

### **Ferry capsizes: 60 feared dead**

About 60 people died on Friday when their overloaded ferry capsized in the Arabian Sea off southern Pakistan, a navy spokesperson said.

The accident occurred near the remote coastal town of Kharo Chao, about 180km southeast of the port of Karachi, navy Lieutenant Commander Salman Ali said. "Divers from the Pakistan navy are looking for the bodies, but so far we only know that about 60 people have drowned," he said.

### **S. Korean ferry, freighter collide in Kammon Strait, no one injured**

A South Korean ferry carrying 347 passengers and crew members collided with a South Korean cargo ship early Thursday in the Kammon Strait between Japan's Honshu and Kyushu islands, Japan Coast Guard officials said.

No one was injured in the collision, which occurred about 700 meters east of the Kammon suspension bridge linking Shimonoseki, Yamaguchi Prefecture, and Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture. No oil leaks were found, they said.

According to the officials, the 2,603-ton freighter **Korex Incheon**, with 12 crew members aboard, smashed into the port side of the 9,690-ton **Panstar Dream** ferry, also carrying cargo, at around 5 a.m.

The collision made a 1-meter-long, 1.5-meter-wide hole in the ferry's stern but neither ship is in danger of sinking.

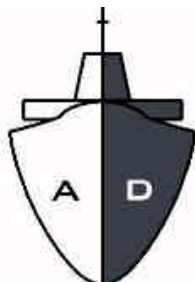
It was cloudy but the area offered an unobstructed view, according to the Japanese officials.

The **Panstar Dream**, whose passengers included six Japanese and 296 South Koreans, was heading to Busan, South Korea, after leaving the port of Osaka. The **Korex** had left the port of Mishima Kawanoe, Ehime Prefecture, also for Busan.

## **NAVY NEWS**

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### **ANGLO DUTCH SHIPBROKERS bvba**



Petrus Bogaertslaan 31  
2970 SCHILDE  
BELGIUM  
Tel : + 32 3 464 26 09  
Fax : + 32 3 297 20 70  
e-mail : [anglodutch@pandora.be](mailto:anglodutch@pandora.be)



## SA Navy receives first new submarine



The South African Navy took delivery in Germany on Thursday of the first of its three new, German-built diesel-electric submarines.

The 62-metre vessel, the **S 101**, is expected to be sailed by its own crew to South Africa once training is completed in Germany.

The submarine, packed with advanced equipment, is a Type 209, of which 63 are currently in service with various navies around the world. It requires a crew of 30 and South Africa aims to have a racial balance on board reflecting that within its society.

South Africa placed the order in 2000 with a consortium of three German companies, HDW, Nordseewerke Emden and MAN Ferrostaal. It was part of a major modernisation package for the navy including the retirement of its previous fleet of **Daphne** submarines two years ago.

D: 1,472 tons surf./1,594 tons sub. S: 11.0 kts surf./21.5 kts sub.

Dim: 62.00 × 6.20 (7.60 over stern planes) × 5.50

A: 8 bow 533-mm TT (14 torpedoes and/or mines)

Electronics:

Radar: . . . Sonar: STN Atlas Elektronik CSU-90 suite EW: Grintek . . .

M: 4 MTU 12V493 A280 AG diesels (800 bhp each), 4 405-kw generator sets, 1 Siemens electric motor; 1 prop; 5,000 shp

Range: 10,000/8 snorkel; 25/21.5, 230/8, 390/4 sub. Endurance: 45 days

Crew: 30 tot. + 5 trainees

## Frigate sinking will draw crowds to the coast

The former frigate **HMNZS Wellington** will be sunk off Houghton Bay on Saturday 12 November 2005, at 3pm, weather and sea conditions permitting.

Crowds of spectators are expected to head to the South Coast to watch the sinking (about 800m from land) and the Wellington City Council is warning that traffic congestion is likely.

Motorists are urged to park their vehicles away from the coastal road and take a bus to Houghton Bay. Houghton Bay School is providing a limited amount of parking in their grounds and at Houghton Bay Park as a fundraiser.

The Island Bay launching area and car park will be reserved for police and officials and closed to the public from 6am to 6pm on the day of the sinking. South Coast boat ramps are likely to be extremely busy and spectators should consider using other ramps.



Motorists are being warned to watch for pedestrians between Princess Bay and Island Bay, park legally and keep off footpaths and areas of vegetation. No road closures are planned, but the Council will put up signs to warn residents to expect traffic delays.

A 600m vessel exclusion zone will be in place around the vessel from its arrival at the sink site (early Saturday morning), until approx two to

three hours after sinking. The exclusion zone will be clearly identified by buoys, and Maritime authorities, including police launch **Lady Elizabeth III** and two police inflatable boats, will be on the water to maintain safety zones during this time. The former frigate will be sunk in 26m of water and will come to rest 6m below sea level at low tide.

Boats attending the sinking are asked to anchor outside the exclusion zone and remain anchored until the vessel has been sunk. Please do not travel through the exclusion zone if leaving the area immediately after sinking. Police divers will complete clearance dives and report to the **F69 Trust** and its safety experts, who will make the decision to declare the ship open. The clearance dives could take several hours.

If weather or sea conditions are not suitable on 12 November, the sinking will be postponed until the next two clear days.

## Singapore navy purchases 2 submarines

Singapore Ministry of Defense (MINDEF) said in a statement on Friday that it has signed a contract with Kockums AB of Sweden to purchase two **Vastergotland-class** submarines.

MINDEF said that it "has evaluated these submarines to be a cost-effective opportunity buy to enhance the submarine capabilities of the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN)."



Left : 2 **VASTERGOTLAND** class submarines

**Photo : Coll. Piet Sinke**

The agreement also includes a logistics package and comprehensive training for the crews in Sweden.

The two submarines, which will be upgraded and converted for operations in

tropical waters before they are delivered to the RSN, are expected to enter service from 2010.

They will replace some of the navy's Challenger-class submarines which were also purchased from Sweden in the 1990s.

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MINDEF said that the RSN has had excellent cooperation with the Royal Swedish Navy in submarine training and operations, and will benefit from synergies in both crew training and logistics support

D: 990 tons light; 1,070 tons surf./1,143 tons sub.  
S: 11 kts surf./20 kts sub. Dim: 48.50 × 6.06 × 5.60 (surf.)  
A: 6 bow 533-mm TT (12 Tp 613 torpedoes); 3 bow 400-mm TT (6 Tp 422 or Tp 45 torpedoes); 22 mines in external portable containers

Electronics:  
Radar: 1 Terma . . . nav./surf. search  
Sonar: STN Atlas Elektronik CSU-83 suite; DBQS-21 active/passive; FAS 3-1 flank arrays; towed array  
EW: ArgoSystems AR-700-S5 intercept

M: 2 Hedemora V12A/15-Ub (VA 185) diesels (1,080 bhp each), 2 Jeumont-Schneider 760-kw generators, 1 ASEA electric motor; 1 5-bladed prop; 1,800 shp

Endurance: 45 days Crew: 5 officers, 15 enlisted (25 accomm.)

## SHIPYARD NEWS

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3920 EB Woudenberg  
The Netherlands  
Tel + 31 (0)33 461 4844  
Fax + 31 (0)33 461 2461  
E-Mail : [westmark@cablesafe.com](mailto:westmark@cablesafe.com)  
website : [www.cablesafe.com](http://www.cablesafe.com)  
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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

Telex : 24390 wosh nl

# Opening Dockwise Representative Office in Shanghai

Dockwise Shipping B.V., located in Breda, the Netherlands hereby announces that effective 25 October



2005 it has opened a representative office in Shanghai, China.

André Goedée, CEO Dockwise officially opened Dockwise Shanghai Office

"Our representation in Shanghai is a strategic step in the future of Dockwise to provide support to our international heavy marine transport services. Furthermore, we consider it of vital importance to improve and to intensify our communication with our clients or future clients in China"; according to Dockwise's CEO mr. André Goedée.

During the reception held on the occasion of the opening a lot of guests attended as well as high officials from Shanghai and Beijing. Amongst the guests we welcomed the deputy major of the city of Shanghai and the director-general of the Shanghai Port Authority.

Dockwise Shipping is located in Breda, the Netherlands and operates a fleet of 15 semi-submersible heavy transport vessels of various capacities and designs. Dockwise employs about 800 people worldwide. With a global network of three offices: in Breda, the Netherlands (head office), Houston, Texas, U.S.A. and in Shanghai, China as well as 8 representing agents, Dockwise is able to provide an extensive service to its clients. As a leading provider in its specialist field of marine transport services, Dockwise has the experience and the resources to meet complex ocean transportation requirements.

## Tribunal gives SA nod to shipping giants' merger

The Competition Tribunal has conditionally approved the merger of international shipping giants AP Moller-Maersk and P&O Nedlloyd, paving the way for the creation of the world's largest container shipping company. The global merger would see AP Moller-Maersk wholly acquiring P&O Nedlloyd for €2,3bn, and it has attracted competition authorities' attention in the European Union (EU), US, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Israel, New Zealand, Romania, South Korea and Turkey.

SA's decision to conditionally approve the deal follows the conditional acceptance given by the EU. The US approved the merger unconditionally. In terms of the global deal announced in May, AP Moller-Maersk would expand its capacity by a third.

Analysts said the merger was inspired by the undercapacity in the world container market, with world trade outstripping new shipbuilding. The AP Moller-Maersk fleet included 387 container vessels, tankers, car carriers, supply ships, special vessels and drilling rigs. The group was also involved in the exploration for and production of oil and gas, shipbuilding, aviation, industry and supermarkets.

In its submission to the Competition Commission, the company said the merger would result in about 1500 job losses or 5% of its workforce over five years. The tribunal modified the commission's recommendations that, within a confidential time frame, AP Moller-Maersk divest the P&O Nedlloyd shipping activities on the SA-Europe and SA-North America trade routes and both parties withdraw their memberships from the Indian Ocean Vessel Sharing Agreement liner-shipping consortium.

The new entity would not be allowed to acquire any interests or obligations to a consortium operating on the routes for an unspecified time and not retrench South African employees for a year.

## Hoverspeed schrapt lijn Calais-Dover

Scheepvaartmaatschappij Hoverspeed stopt de snelle catamaranverbinding tussen Calais en Dover. Dat heeft de moedermaatschappij Seacontainers bekendgemaakt.



Boven : The catamaran ferry **DIAMAND** aankomend in Calais – foto : Piet Sinke ©

Officieel wordt de verbinding pas vanaf volgend jaar stopgezet, maar de website van de maatschappij vermeldt dat de verbinding al vanaf maandag niet meer mogelijk is.

De redenen voor de stopzetting zijn de hoge brandstofprijzen, de concurrentie met goedkope vluchten en de Kanaaltunnel.

Door de beslissing verliezen 162 mensen hun baan in Dover en Calais. De verbinding Oostende-Dover werd twee jaar geleden al stopgezet.

## **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](mailto:commercial@multraship.com)

<http://www.multraship.com>

## **ATLANTIC HICKORY AROUND THE CAPE**

Last week the Canadian tug **ATLANTIC HICKORY** towing the loaded **BOABARGE 8** arrived off Cape Town, the **SMIT AMANDLA** took over the tow so the **ATLANTIC HICKORY** could go into port to load fuel and food stores,





After completion she hooked up again and both tugs carried on towing until the transport safely passed the unpredictable South African waters, close to Durban the **SMIT AMANDLA** let go her line and returned to Port.

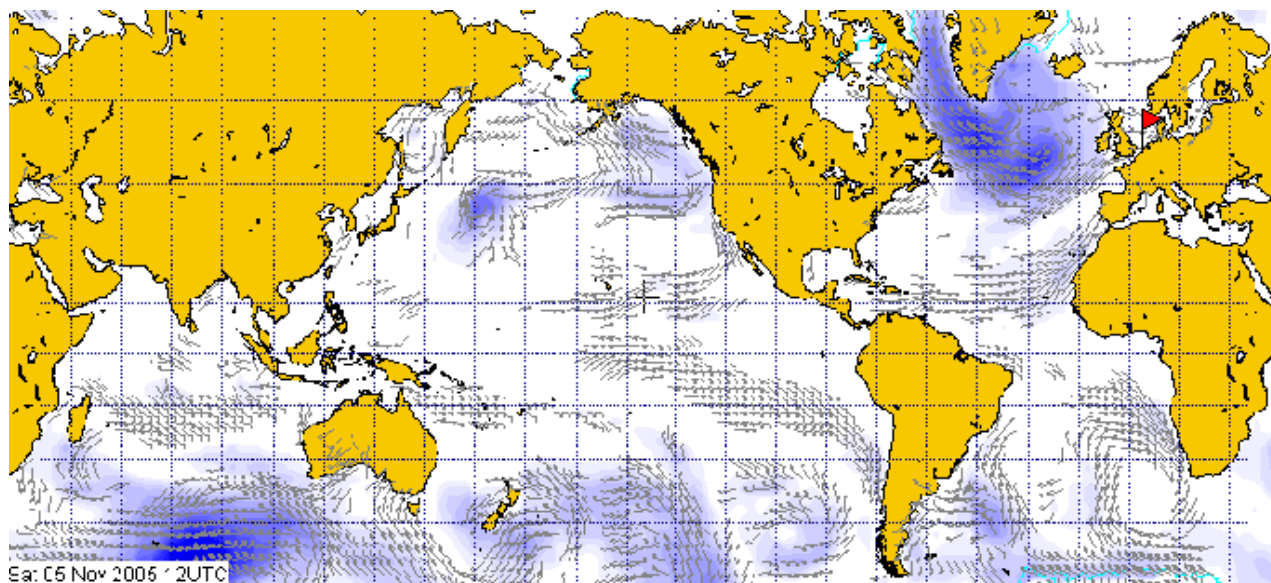
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South Africa ©

## 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



Smit Harbour towage THAMESBANK at the synchrolift in Rotterdam  
Photo : Marco Lugthart ©



## 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](mailto:SmitWijs@SmitWijs.com)

## Miracle-working surgeons float to Africa's poor

Hi-tech ships bring grace, healing to the 'unspeakably' disfigured



Mercy Ships 522-foot flagship [Anastasis](#) – Photo : Piet Sinke ©

The faith that 25 years ago enabled a volunteer youth mission to believe it could see a dilapidated ocean liner turned into a hi-tech floating hospital is the catalyst today behind even more remarkable transformations – in the bodies and spirits of the poorest of the world's poor.

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Specializing in the healing of horrific facial deformities in places where often little or no professional health care exists, Mercy Ships International's three vessels, staffed by thousands of volunteers, have provided more than 2 million services with a direct impact on 5.5 million people.

Following the 2,000 year-old model of Jesus – to make the blind see, the lame walk, the mute speak and proclaim good news – the Christian organization has performed more than 18,000 operations and surgical procedures, including cleft lip and palate, cataract removal, straightening of crossed-eyes and – in stunning fashion – orthopedic and facial reconstructions to bring healing from ghastly tumors that defy imagination.



Photojournalist Scott Harrison captured on film some of the remarkable transformations from life-threatening debilitations rarely seen in developed nations.

### Doctors aboard the Anastasia operate on Alfred Sossou (photo: Scott Harrison)

Alfred Sossou, from a small fishing village on Lake Aheme in Benin, West Africa, was 10 when his face began to morph into an image of unspeakable horror

from a cemento-ossifying fibroma – a rare rapidly growing facial tumor.

The Sossou family, living on less than a dollar a day in a mud hut without electricity or running water, sought village witchdoctors, who cut holes in the boy's face, sacrificed chickens, invoked idols and ancestors and performed dances, Harrison recalled.

But the tumor continued to grow, pushing Alfred's tongue back into his throat, eventually absorbing his teeth in his bottom jaw. Doctors in Benin's largest city could offer no treatment and advised the family to make another trip to the witchdoctors.

After a total of 15 witchdoctors had taken all the family's money, the tumor became monstrous, filling and then spilling out of his mouth, almost the size of a basketball.

"To eat, Alfred would force a hand between the oozing pink mass and the roof of his mouth, then shove food into an unspeakable void," Harrison wrote.

Slowly dying of starvation, he weighed only 44 pounds – five of those pounds were his tumor.

Then, a visiting pastor promised his church would pray for an answer and a cure. The next morning, Alfred said he'd been told in a dream that "his helper would come."

Three months later, the pastor returned to the house to tell Alfred and his family that a ship was coming to Benin, with a hospital and team of doctors who might be able to help.

Alfred's skeptical father was in no mood to risk more money, but his mother argued vehemently to trust the pastor, and the family pulled together the \$10 taxi fare.

Later, in an operating room aboard the Mercy Ship Anastasis, Alfred's tumor lay in a tray. Two accomplished British and German surgeons took two ribs and pieces of bone from the 14-year-old boy's hip and grafted them to the titanium plate that now formed his lower jaw.

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Eyes that once "revealed a soul wrought with such unspeakable horror one would be forced to turn away, reeling in shock, terror, and disbelief," Harrison wrote, are now "windows to a soul filled with grace."

Benin's president, Matthieu Kérékou, told Mercy Ships of his "deep gratitude for the love that you have for the population of Benin."

"To all of the ladies and gentlemen of the ship, I express my sincere congratulations for such an unflinching commitment on the side of the most vulnerable and poorest of third-world countries," he said.

Many other national leaders have thanked Mercy Ships for its work.

President Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh of Gambia, said, "Not only have you treated my people and taken care of them, but you have also taught them valuable lessons, the most important being love and respect and caring for each other irrespective of race and religion. ... We Gambians are very grateful to you."

Endorsing the ministry, Prime Minister Tony Blair says Mercy Ships' work "goes beyond healing and comforting the sick ... it provides a sense of hope that is badly needed in the places they work."

President Bush also has praised Mercy Ships, saying, "I have every hope you will continue to reach more and more patients in the years beyond. I know you will continue your mission of bringing hope and healing to those who need it most. May God continue to bless you in your important work."

### Resurrection

Mercy Ships – which has treated more than 300,000 people in village medical clinics and performed 110,000 dental treatments – began as a work of the international ministry Youth With a Mission, which trains and sends out thousands of short-term volunteers each year to supplement the efforts of permanent staff.

In 1978, Don Stephens, one of YWAM's original leaders, found an old, decrepit passenger liner in Venice, Italy, called the **Victoria**. YWAM, viewing the ship as confirmation of a vision by its founder, Loren Cunningham, bought the vessel and towed it to Greece where it was renovated and renamed **Anastasis**, the Greek word for resurrection. The ship was such a mess that the galley alone took 25 young people three weeks to clean.

Mercy Ships gradually established independence and officially separated from YWAM in 2002.

Today the **Anastasis** is the world's largest floating non-governmental hospital, with three fully-equipped operating theatres, a dental clinic, an X-ray unit, CT scanner and a laboratory. The ship employs new technology that enables pathologists in the UK to view images of tumors via satellite and make quick diagnoses.

The group's second ship, the **Caribbean Mercy**, operating in the Caribbean Sea and Central America, is in Mobile, Ala., where it serves as a command center to respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

In just one example of partnership there, ship staff came to the aid of the devastated fishing community of Bayou La Batre, Alabama – made famous by the 1994 film "Forrest Gump." Mercy Ships is working with churches of different denominations to help restore the lives of the Cambodian, Thai, Laotian and Vietnamese immigrant fisherman who make their living on local waters. The fisherman saw their homes flattened, their shrimp boats wrecked or pushed inland, and the processing plants that buy their fish all but wiped out.

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Last year, Mercy Ships rapidly responded to the Asian tsunami by shipping nearly \$400,000 worth of donated relief supplies within days of the disaster. As the scope of the devastation became clearer, Mercy Ships made a long-term commitment to the region, which included providing boats to the fishermen who lost more than 23,000 vessels.



**Left : The operating theatre onboard the Anastasis  
Photo : Piet Sinke ©**

The newest ship in organization's fleet, the **Africa Mercy**, is under renovation in the United Kingdom. When completed, it will be the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship.

Mercy Ships have served in Brazil, China, Cook Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Fiji, The Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Latvia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mexico, New Caledonia, New Guinea, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Pitcairn Island, Poland, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Korea, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Vanuatu.

The **Anastasis** now is in Liberia where it's partnering with local teachers, church leaders and other community members to help rebuild the West African nation after a 14-year civil war.

A team of 16 Mercy Ships staff members augmented by local volunteers is focusing on adult basic education, HIV/AIDS education, child development and training leaders for the community and churches.

"The drive is to be able to raise men and women who would sustain their own work," said a Liberian leading the team.

The ships' crew members, from some 40 countries, serve from two weeks to a lifetime, paying their way through crew fees to help offset the organization's expenses. Doctors and nurses volunteer for terms of several weeks to years. Hospitals often provide medical equipment and supplies; private companies contribute fuel and basic materials; and governments often waive port fees and related costs.

Lord Ian McColl, the former head surgeon at Guy's Hospital in London, gives up months of his time to perform operations aboard the Anastasis.

McColl told BBC News the simple gratitude of the patients makes up for the long hours of surgery on board ship

"While we were waiting to see one group this woman came up to me and flung her arms around me," he said. "She had been cured in an operation for a fistula the previous year and she had just come to thank me.

"That certainly did not happen in the waiting room at Guys."

McColl said there's a high morale on the ships and the atmosphere in the theatre is hilarious.

"You get withdrawal symptoms when you leave," he said.

The physician recalled the case of a man whose relatives had all been killed by rebels in Sierra Leone.

"They had taken an axe to the side of his head and we did extensive reconstructive surgery and he lived," he said. "But he had lost the will to live because of what had happened.

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McColl said the 5-year-old daughter of the captain of the ship went to see the man and gave him a Christmas card and then read to him every night, because he had no visitors.

**"She gave him back the will to live."**

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