



The Porthole

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The newsletter of
 the South Australian Branch of the Company of Master Mariners
 of Australia,
 PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015
 Branch Patron: His Excellency the Honorable Hieu Van Le AC



Branch Master's Comments

Good Day to all once again.

This month, so far, seems to have marked the end of the latest spate of SA bushfires, and our drought has even been replaced, in patches, by flooding, though not in my neck of the woods, with none of my dams more than half full, and the creek as dry as a bone. This is completely normal for the end of February.

We have had a burst of activity from the Federal Court, with a phone meeting being organised for the 28th of this month, and the AGM being finalised as a face-to-face meeting in Melbourne. To keep our costs to a minimum, we will be meeting in the Melbourne Seaman's Mission which has, from what I am told, been recently renovated, and is a far more salubrious venue now than in the 80's when I last visited. We will be put up in the Travelodge Docklands, which is just around the corner from the Flying Angel. Any member is welcome to attend and I, of course, will be representing the SA branch on the day. Should anybody have anything they wish raised at this meeting, please let me know either at the monthly meeting, or by e-mail. After many sporadic failures of our private telephone line, and many calls to service centres which all seem to be in exotic locations, my bride and I just got rid of the land line connection entirely. I only tell you this to save you from wondering why you can't contact me by phone these days...

Our next monthly meeting is next Wednesday 26th Feb at the Largs Pier Hotel at 1200, following the Branch Court Meeting,

Until then,
 Happy Sailing to all,

Bob W (SABM)

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Branch Members only

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There will be no Speaker.

The next Branch meeting will be held at the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay, on Wednesday, 26th February 2020, at 1145 for 1200. Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology before 1200 on Monday, 24th February 2020 with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)



The Company of Master Mariners of Australia Ltd. is a Company established to promote and further the efficiency of the Sea Service generally, and uphold the Status, Dignity and Prestige of Master Mariners in particular.

After 72 Years, Last Voyages of the *MV Astoria ex Stockholm*?

Posted: 04 Feb 2020 10:46 AM PST

Brittany Shammass of the Washington Post recently wrote that the ship originally built as *MV Stockholm*, just after World War II, is likely to be “nearing its final voyage.” The 72-year-old ship is one of the oldest cruise ships in service.



The ship has gone by many names. Including *MV Stockholm*, she has sailed as *Völkerfreundschaft*, *Volker*, *Fridtjof Nansen*, *Italia I*, *Italia Prima*, *Valtur Prima*, *Caribe*, *Athena*, and *Azores*. Since 2016 she has operated as *Astoria*, operated by Cruise and Maritime Voyages (CMV). CMV has announced that the 2020 season will be the old ship's last.

The *Stockholm* is most famous, or perhaps infamous, for the 1956 collision with the Italian passenger liner *Andrea Doria* off the island of Nantucket. A total of 51 people died in the collision, five on the *Stockholm* and 46 on the *Andrea Doria*. The collision took place in dense fog. The captains of both ships misinterpreted the intentions of the other. Both ships had radar and the accident is often referred to as the first serious radar-assisted collision. The *Stockholm's* bow struck the *Andrea Doria* near amidships. The *Stockholm* was seriously damaged while the *Andrea Doria* sank 11 hours after the collision. In all, 1,663 passengers and crew were rescued from *Andrea Doria*.

Ms. Shammass describes the ship's subsequent career. In the years that followed, the Swedish-built ship continued having brushes with history, becoming a kind of Forrest Gump of maritime vessels. It carried members of East Germany's Communist Party for pleasure cruises in the 1960s and '70s, and housed Middle Eastern refugees seeking asylum in Norway in the '80s. It was later converted to a cruise ship and has become one of the few remaining classic cruise ships still on the water, a “Love Boat” era vessel that sails out of the Mexican resort town of Puerto Peñasco under the name *Astoria*.

The last scheduled cruise for the *Astoria* is in October 2020.

The post “After 72 Years, Last Voyages of the *MV Astoria, ex Stockholm*?” appeared first on Old Salt Blog.

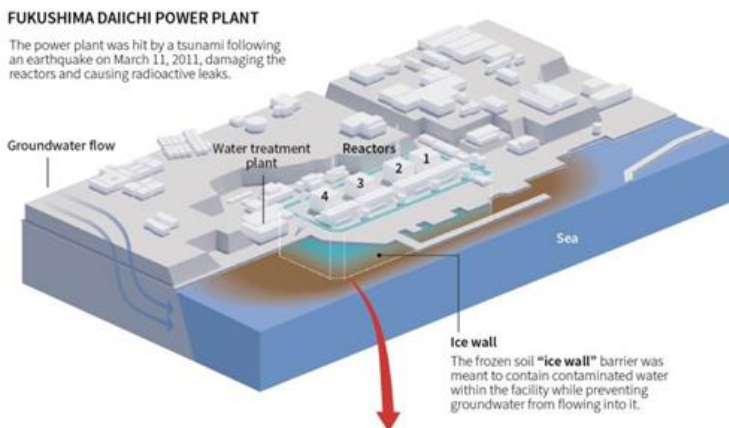
Source: The Pulse 200206

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Will Fukushima Waste Be Diluted and Dumped In The Pacific?

January 24, 2020 by Aaron Sheldrick (Reuters)

At the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant north of Tokyo, workers in protective suits are still removing radioactive material from reactors that melted down after an earthquake and tsunami knocked out its power and cooling nearly nine years ago.



On an exclusive tour of the plant, spread over 3.5 million square meters (865 acres), Reuters witnessed giant remote-controlled cranes dismantling an exhaust tower and other structures in a highly radioactive zone, while spent fuel was removed from a reactor.

Officials from Tokyo Electric, which owns the plant, also showed new tanks to hold increasing amounts of contaminated water.

About 4,000 workers are tackling the clean-up, many wearing protective gear, although more than 90% of the plant is deemed to have so little radioactivity that no extra precautions are needed. Photography was highly

restricted and no conversations were allowed with the workers.

Work to dismantle the plant has taken nearly a decade so far, but with Tokyo due to host the Olympics this summer – including some events less than 60 km (38 miles) from the power station – there has been renewed focus on safeguarding the venues.

“Tepco tries to disclose all information to the public as soon as possible. If something happens at the site, we let people know by email, for example,” said Kan Nihonyanagi, risk communicator at Fukushima, told Reuters in an interview at the site.

The build-up of contaminated water has been a sticking point in the clean-up, which is likely to last decades, and has alarmed neighbouring countries. In 2018, Tepco said it had not been able to remove all dangerous material from the water – and the site is running out of room for storage tanks.

Officials overseeing a panel of experts looking into the contaminated water issue said in December choices on disposal should be narrowed to two: either dilute the waste and dump it in the Pacific Ocean or allow it to evaporate.

The Japanese government may decide within months, and either process would take years to complete, experts say.

Source: gCaptain 200125

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The Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919

Posted: 15 Jan 2020 08:48 AM PST

We are having a relatively warm January with significantly fluctuating temperatures. Similar weather conditions 101 years ago, coupled with a shoddily built storage tank, caused the Great Boston Molasses Flood, which inundated Boston's North End sending a wall of molasses, killing 21 and injuring 150. A report about the tragedy.

The Purity Distilling Company built a large molasses storage tank on Commercial Street in Boston's North End to store molasses until it could be distilled into alcohol. In early January 1919, just a few days before the disaster, a ship had discharged a full load of molasses into the tank. When the cargo was discharged, the weather was cold, only around 4°F. Then on January 15th, the temperature rose suddenly to an unseasonably warm 40°.

The molasses began to expand, stressing the steel of the 54' high and 90' diameter tank. The tank groaned and wept molasses from the tank seams under the load. Then at around 12:30 in the afternoon, when the streets were occupied with workers from the distillery and local factories breaking for lunch, there was a sound like gunfire as the tank's rivets popped and the steel plates ripped open. The tank collapsed, dumping 2,300,000 US gallons of molasses in a 25' high wall of molasses, surging through the streets at a speed estimated to be 35 mph (56 km/h). Twenty-one died and 150 were injured.

As reported by Scientific American: The deluge crushed freight cars, tore Engine 31 firehouse from its foundation, and, when it reached an elevated railway on Atlantic Avenue, nearly lifted a train right off the tracks. A chest-deep river of molasses stretched from the base of the tank about 90 metres into the streets. From there, it thinned out into a coating one half to one meter deep. People, horses, and dogs caught in the mess struggled to escape, only sinking further.

To understand why a wave of molasses could do so much damage requires some science. Scientific American explains: A wave of molasses does not behave like a wave of water. Molasses is a non-Newtonian fluid, which means that its viscosity depends on the forces applied to it, as measured by shear rate. Consider non-Newtonian fluids such as toothpaste, ketchup, and whipped cream. In a stationary bottle, these fluids are thick and goopy and do not shift much if you tilt the container this way and that. When you squeeze or smack the bottle, however, applying stress and increasing the shear rate, the fluids suddenly flow. Because of this physical property, a wave of molasses is even more devastating than a typical tsunami. In 1919 the dense wall of syrup surging from its collapsed tank initially moved fast enough to sweep people up and demolish buildings, only to settle into a more gelatinous state that kept people trapped.

First to the scene were 116 cadets under the command of Lieutenant Commander H. J. Copeland from USS Nantucket, a training ship of the Massachusetts Nautical School (which is now the Massachusetts Maritime Academy), that was docked nearby. They were soon joined by Boston Police, Red Cross, Army and Navy personnel.

Clean-up crews used saltwater from a fireboat to wash the molasses away and used sand to try to absorb it. The harbour was brown with molasses until summer. The foot traffic of rescue workers, clean-up crews, and rubbernecks, spread the sticky mess around the city on people's shoes. In all, the clean-up effort required over 80,000 man-hours.

Local residents brought a class-action lawsuit against the United States Industrial Alcohol Company, the owner of Purity Distilling. The company blamed terrorists. Because some of the alcohol was used to make munitions, they said that the tank must have been blown up by Italian anarchists. The court-appointed auditor found that the tank had been shoddily built and awarded the victims' families \$628,000 in damages, or around \$9 million in current terms.

The tragic flood is memorialized in a song, **Black Tide, by Kites+Crows**. Source:- Old Salt Blog.

Source: *The Pulse* 200206

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Masterful control of the ship in a dangerous situation

On Jan 21, the 1997 built Hurtigruten Cruise AS operated ferry, *Nordnorge*, entered Bodo harbor, Norway, and was proceeding



to berth when, suddenly, the wind strengthened to some 65 knots, putting the ferry and her Master in a very difficult situation. Realising that he couldn't safely manoeuvre to abort berthing and wait until the wind moderated, the Master decided to dock, with onshore wind pushing the ferry towards the pier. He masterfully controlled the ship's positioning with propulsion and anchor, until the ship finally berthed alongside the pier, as smoothly as if assisted by tugs. **Thank God ships are still crewed by professionals, not by shipping industry CEOs and NGOs activists.** Source: Maritime Bulletin / Photo: VG TV

Source: *The Pulse* 200206

Japanese Warship Departs for Gulf of Oman to Patrol Oil Lifeline

February 3, 2020 by Mike Schuler

By Tim Kelly – YOKOSUKA, Feb 2 (Reuters)



Japan's Maritime Self-Defence Force destroyer "Takanami" leave for the Middle East from Yokosuka Naval Base in Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, Japan in this photo taken by Kyodo February 2, 2020. Mandatory credit Kyodo/via.

A Japanese destroyer left for the Gulf of Oman on Sunday, amid simmering Middle East tension, to guard sea lanes that supply nearly all the oil that powers the world's third-biggest economy.

"Thousands of Japanese ships ply those waters every year, including vessels carrying nine tenths of our oil. It is Japan's lifeline," Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the crew at Yokosuka naval base near Tokyo, before they cast off in a ceremony attended by 500 family members and representatives from the United States, European nations and Middle East.

Abe's government has said it is prepared to authorize force to protect ships in danger, a controversial decision because Japan's war-renouncing constitution forbids the use of military force in international disputes.

Tokyo has chosen to operate independently as it navigates disputes in the volatile region. Japan maintains cordial relations with Iran and other countries there, and Abe travelled to the region in January to brief Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman on the mission after earlier speaking with Iranian leaders.

Tension in the Middle East has heightened, as friction between Iran and the United States escalated, following U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to pull the United States out of a 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran and re-impose sanctions on it. The United States has blamed Iran for several attacks on international merchant vessels, including a Japanese-owned tanker, the *Kokuka Courageous*. Tehran denies the accusation.

In addition to the Gulf of Oman, the *Takanami*, with 200 sailors and two helicopters, will patrol the northern Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden, but will not enter the Strait of Hormuz, a strategically important choke point between Iran and the Arabian peninsula. The Japanese destroyer will share water in the region with a growing number of warships from other countries, including vessels from the United States, France and Britain.

"Japanese merchant ships were attacked in June; other nations have increased patrols, so Japan too is acting to gather intelligence there," the mission commander, Captain Yosuke Inaba, told reporters before he departed. (Reporting by Tim Kelly; Editing by Christopher Cushing)

(c) Copyright Thomson Reuters 2019.

Source: gCaptain 200203

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Ships Are Skipping China and It's Causing Turmoil for Trade

February 16, 2020 by Alex Longley (Bloomberg)

February 2020 will come to be remembered as a period of historic disruption to physical supply chains the world over, as the coronavirus wrecks trade.



A foreman wearing a face mask works as a cargo ship docks at a container terminal of Qingdao port in Shandong province, China, while the country is hit by an outbreak of the new coronavirus, February 4, 2020. cnsphoto via REUTERS

Dozens of export sailings to ship China-made goods to consumers from the U.S. to Europe — think handbags, flat-screen TVs, and plastic toys — have been canned since the coronavirus crisis escalated last month. Those non-shipments are part of a much bigger picture in which every aspect of global shipping — from oil and gas through to dry-bulk commodities — has been upended.

The unprecedented gyrations, caused by the virus, matter because 90% of all trade moves by sea, and China has grown into the maritime industry's main source of cargoes. The disruptions have left toy makers like Hasbro Inc., and fashion houses like the owner of Michael Kors, Versace and Jimmy Choo struggling with their supply chains. Vessels are idling. And exporters to China face diversions as clients there use force majeure clauses in their contracts to walk away from commitments to buy cargoes.

"All the signs are that there has been a major dislocation in global supply chains and commodity trade as well," said Caroline Bain, chief commodities economist at Capital Economics. For some products "it's only going to get worse in February data."

Also see: How Virus Can Infect Global Supply Chains

Even at a most-basic level, shippers are struggling to sort out the necessary paperwork required for shipments involving China, snarling some trades in an industry where many transactions need physical documentation to accompany consignments.

All this has come about because the virus has led to hundreds of millions of people being told to stay away from work or education in China, squeezing output in the world's fastest-growing major economy.

Container vessels that routinely move goods worth hundreds of millions of dollars in single shipments are at the sharp end of the turmoil. The number of blank sailings — where ships don't load at a planned location — has jumped since the outbreak began. AP Moller-Maersk A/S, the world's largest shipper, has listed at least 27 blank sailings since Jan. 31 on its website.

Almost 600,000 20-foot boxes are currently out of action as a result of the virus, according to Alan Murphy, chief executive officer of container shipping analysis company Sea Intelligence, up from about half that amount just under a week earlier. Though rates can vary, using an estimate of \$1,000 per container, that means shippers had to stomach a hit of \$600 million this week. Ships may either be slowed down in the hope that demand improves in future weeks, or idled until things turn around, Murphy said.

Toy maker Hasbro said in earnings this week that the virus is disrupting its commercial operations in China — from where it had already been seeking to diversify its supply chain as a result of the trade war. Capri Holdings Ltd. — which owns Michael Kors, among other brands — said its outlook may be impacted by the outbreak as it wrestles with potential supply chain issues.

There's a knock-on effect for exporters in other nations too. Containers are typically used in U.S. and other regions to carry those countries' exports. The lack of liners hauling containers from Asia, may soon mean countries like the U.S. face a shortage. It's already getting a little more difficult to get empty ones in Canada, said Greg Northey, a spokesman for industry group Pulse Canada.

Nor is it just retailers. Last week, Hyundai Motor Co. temporarily halted some of its car production because of component shortages caused by the virus. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV is planning to halt operations at its assembly plant in Serbia due to a lack of parts from China because of the coronavirus, people familiar with the matter said.

The issues afflicting shippers of finished goods are also being felt in energy and commodity markets.

Traders of oil from West Africa, Latin America and the North Sea initially reported weaker demand from China, while some buyers of Saudi Arabia's barrels have asked to get less than they would normally take for March. There were signs that falling crude prices encouraged some refineries in the Asian country to accelerate purchases.

In gas markets, one Chinese company declared *force majeure*, potentially allowing it to walk away from contractual commitments. The measure was rejected by Total SA and Royal Dutch Shell Plc. There are now 12 empty liquefied gas carriers sitting off the coast of Qatar, one of the world's biggest producers. While the precise reasons for the idling vessels aren't known, the timing coincides with ship diversions, cargo cancellations and reduced demand in Asia since the virus took hold. Oil tankers have been dawdling off China.

Chinese buyers of liquefied petroleum gas that's used in cooking and heating are re-offering and diverting cargoes elsewhere because of weakening demand.

On top of that, shippers of bulk commodities, like coal and iron ore, have been battered as the virus delayed the resumption of demand after the typically slow China Lunar New Year period. Day rates for giant freighters to move the two cargoes are earning less than \$2,500 a day — a fraction of what they need even to pay their crew.

"You obviously have lost demand that it's difficult to recapture," said Frode Morkedal, managing director of equity research at Clarksons Platou Securities AS, an investment banking unit of the world's biggest shipbroker. "You can't discharge your ship, you can't load as fast as you want, so it's impacting the global supply chain."

—With assistance from Sally Bakewell, Laura Yin and Demetrios Pogkas.

Source: *gCaptain* 200217

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World's third largest steelmaker to close 10% of capacity

February 14th, 2020 Sam Chambers



The world's third largest steelmaker, Nippon Steel, will shut nearly 10% of its production capacity to staunch losses amid falling demand.

Nippon Steel has announced it will close three blast furnaces in Japan as it braces to report a \$4bn loss for the current financial year.

Akio Migita, executive vice president of Nippon Steel, told a news conference last week: "We have been facing unprecedented harsh conditions with steel demand from the manufacturing industry declining and steel prices slumping amid the US-China trade war."

Source: *Splash247* 200214

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Storm Dennis: 'Ghost ship' washes up on Irish coast

A "ghost" cargo ship has washed up off the coast of County Cork, Ireland, brought in by the bad weather that lashed Europe in Storm Dennis.



The abandoned boat was spotted on the rocks of fishing village Ballycotton by a passer-by.

The vessel appears to have drifted thousands of miles over more than a year, from the south-east of Bermuda in 2018, across the Atlantic Ocean.

"This is one in a million," said local lifeboat chief John Tattan.

The head of Ballycotton's Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) told the Irish Examiner newspaper he had "never, ever seen anything abandoned like that before."

So, what's the story behind this mysterious ship without a crew?

The ship has been identified as the *Alta*, which has had numerous owners and names. Built in 1976, it most recently flew a Tanzanian flag.

Various authorities had become aware of its aimless drift around the world. It was last spotted in September 2019 by a British Royal Navy ship.

The saga that brought it to Ireland began in September 2018 when it was still crewed and sailing from Greece to Haiti.

Unidentified problems on board led to a power outage, and the *Alta* drifted at sea for 20 days around 1,300 miles (2,100km) SE of Bermuda, according to the US Coast Guard, which became aware of its struggles.

With just two days of food left on board for *Alta's* crew, the coast guard air-dropped food and other supplies.

As a hurricane approached, the coast guard decided to rescue the damaged ship's 10 crew members and take them to Puerto Rico.

"MV *Alta* remains adrift to the southeast of Bermuda as salvage attempts by owners continue," a Bermuda Maritime Operations Centre spokesperson said at the time.

What happened next?

Partly damaged and without a crew, the *Alta* was left to drift.

Then, one year later, in September 2019, the Royal Navy ice patrol ship *HMS Protector* spotted it in the mid-Atlantic.

Efforts may continue to recover her, but her future lies in the hands of others, *HMS Protector* tweeted, having ascertained that there were no crew on board.

Who is responsible for ghost ships?

Normally, damaged or sunken ships remain the property of their owners, who are responsible for securing a solution, the director of coastal operations for the Commissioners of Irish Lights, Robert McCabe, told BBC News.

However, if such a vessel is deemed a danger to shipping, local authorities might make efforts to tow it away.

"They've had a number of incidents in the Irish Sea like that - if there is no owner, the Commissioners of Irish Lights get involved," said Mr McCabe.

"To have a ship drifting around like that for 18 months is not common," he added. "For it to have been spotted just once since October 2018 just shows how vast the ocean is."

He said recent poor weather may have meant fewer ships were at sea and in a position to have noticed it.

What might happen next?

There is no visible pollution leaking from the ship, according to environmental scientists who visited Ballycotton on Monday, explained Cork County Council.

Cork County Council, the Irish Coastguard and the Receiver of Wrecks will decide what will happen to the ship, but Mr McCabe suggests that salvaging it would be expensive.

And there are still puzzles in the *Alta's* story that remain to be solved: who is its owner? And what was the cargo on board at the time it was abandoned? Answers may only be forthcoming once a decision on what to do with the *Alta* is reached.

Source: BBC Website 200217



Here's How They Plan to Cut Up and Remove the *Golden Ray*

February 5, 2020 by Mike Schuler

The Unified Command has released details of how they plan to cut up and remove the overturned *Golden Ray* car carrier in St. Simons Sound, Georgia.



Responders with the unified command reposition boom around the motor vessel *Golden Ray* Oct. 1, St. Simons Sound, Brunswick, Georgia. The barrier boom is maintained daily due to strong currents in the sound and skimming teams are conducting surface clean-up to recover oil product. Photo: St. Simons Sound Unified Command

“We recognize that the floating boom of the EPB alone will probably not be enough to contain surface pollution when we cut into the hull,” said Coast Guard Cmdr. Norm Witt, federal on scene coordinator for the response. “That’s why we’ll have crews and equipment, both inside the barrier and out, ready to respond.”

The 656-foot *Golden Ray* was carrying about 4,200 vehicles when it lost stability and grounded in St. Simons Bay as it departed Georgia’s Port of Brunswick on 8 September 2019. All the vehicles remain trapped inside the inaccessible cargo holds.

Officials say construction of the barrier is already permitted and expected to begin in about two weeks, with pile driving taking place during daylight hours. Cutting will follow, but the exact timing has not been finalized.

“Each individual large-section cut will take approximately 24 hours, and once a cut begins, must continue until that cut is complete,” said John Maddox, Georgia Department of Natural Resource state on scene coordinator. “That means noise through the night during some 24-hour periods. We do not yet know when the cutting will begin, but we will make announcements for cutting operations once they are scheduled.”

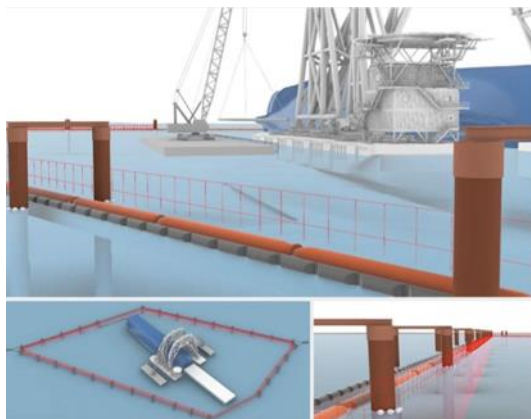


The plan calls for the use of Versabar’s unique VB-10,000 heavy lifting vessel equipped with a large, diamond-encrusted cutting chain that will cut the wreck into large sections for removal by barge. According to the Unified Command, the VB-10,000 will make seven cuts, splitting the ship into eight sections weighing 2,700 to 4,100 tons apiece. The vessel will then lift the sections onto a barge for transport to an off-site recycling facility.

The public should expect a lot of noise throughout the operation.

“There’s no way to remove the *Golden Ray* without making noise—there’s no way around it,” said Kevin Perry of Gallagher Marine Systems, incident commander for the responsible party. “The emergency pollution barrier construction noise will be limited to daylight hours. We appreciate everyone’s patience with the noise levels as we work to remove this wreck as quickly and safely as possible.”

Prior to the cutting operation, crews will construct a so-called “environmental protection barrier” that will have a large floating boom to help contain surface pollutants and double layer netting to contain subsurface debris. Environmental monitoring will also take place both inside and outside of the barrier.



The UC for the St. Simons Sound Incident Response is comprised of the Coast Guard as the federal on scene coordinator, the Georgia Department of Natural Resource (DNR) as the state on scene coordinator, and Gallagher Marine Services as the incident commander for the responsible party.

Built in 2010, the VB 10000 is a heavy lifting vessel designed for decommissioning and installation of off-

Source: gCaptain 200206