



The Porthole

Volume 23 No. 01

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The newsletter of
the Company of Master Mariners of Australia,
South Australian Branch

PO Box 1, PORT ADELAIDE, SA 5015

Branch Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC



Branch Master's Comments

Good Day to all our readers, and before I forget, may I once more wish a very Happy New Year to you all.

As we embark on our journey through 2023, the infection rate of the Covid 19 bug seems to be easing locally - at least enough to give hope for the future easement of this pandemic.

As for the CoMMA, our next Federal meeting by on-line video link is slated for 11th Feb, providing most of us are available; also, we have made a tentative booking for a face-to-face AGM in Sydney this April, subject to the usual availability problems.

On the home front, the local AGM of the South Australian Branch is being held at our monthly meeting next Wednesday, and we have not been inundated with applications, or even inquiries, as to positions on the Branch Court. As you know, all positions on the Court are declared vacant at the AGM and people are sought to fill them. In the unlikely event of more than one person wanting a position, a vote of the members attending will be held. I reiterate, we would be very appreciative of anyone willing to assist, particularly as Branch Secretary. As far as any business from the Federal Court goes, all is quiet as the hand-over of the Federal Secretary's position proceeds. We were sent the latest IFSMA publication for our perusal. Anything else will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting next month.

I hope to see as many of you who can make it to the meetings next Wednesday, to be held at the usual venue of the Largs Pier Hotel at 1145 for 1200.

Until then

Happy Sailing

Bob W (SABM)

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The next Branch meeting will be held at
the Largs Pier Hotel, 198 The Esplanade, Largs Bay,
on Wednesday, 25th January, at 1145 for 1200.

The Branch AGM will be held at the conclusion of the Branch meeting
Please confirm your attendance at the lunch or register your apology
before 1200 on Monday, 23rd January 2023
with Bob Westley (0427 644 947) or Ian Dickson (0418 807 788)



A very preventable tragedy

By Michael Grey

There are some incidents which, for unknown reasons, lodge in the memory. It must have been thirty years ago when the Casualties columns in Lloyd's List reported the deaths of four crewmen aboard a bulk carrier northbound from the Plate with a cargo of soya. A couple of them had gone into the hold, for some quite legitimate reason, and while the cargo space was filled with cargo, there was a lack of oxygen in it. The two others dived in to rescue their shipmates, and, in turn, were similarly overcome. Twenty per cent of the ship's complement wiped out, just like that.

But what made that accident so memorable, to me, at least, was that just about five weeks earlier, the Casualty columns had reported an almost identical tragedy, on a bulker bound to Europe from the Plate, with the same cargo. The only differences were the flag of the ships and their owners. Same circumstances exactly. Same number of unnecessary deaths, in a hold depleted of oxygen by the otherwise innocuous cargo.

The second incident should have brought home the sad fact that, as an industry, we were just not very good at transmitting valuable safety information, not just within the national fleet or within a shipping company, but around the whole at-risk population. But if there was a more effective safety alerting system, would pre-occupied or ignorant people actually take any notice?

There has been no end of alerts, advice, regulations and appeals since then about the risks of enclosed spaces, but as was perfectly explained by InterManager, which has taken the trouble to collate these accidents, it is still clear that the message is not getting across.

There is something particularly awful about deaths which are so very preventable. This is not the fury of the seas or the violence of fire or explosion, but an unnecessary risk taken, a moment's thoughtlessness, a short cut which led to only one destination. Other accidents stick in the mind because they were so stupid and ...mundane. The AB who, with his chums, had been working in a hold the previous day but had carelessly left his broom at the bottom of the booby-hatch. He lifted the hatch and there was the blooming thing. It was the work of a short minute to shin down and retrieve it, lest he incur the wrath of the bosun. But the hatches had been on all night, sufficient for the cargo to reduce the level of oxygen to a non-breathable level.

There was the annoying clank in the chain locker of a supply boat which was keeping the crew awake. It was easily sorted, with a light line to bind the cables together; the only surprise was that the interior of the locker was lethal, as the corroding chain had "eaten" the oxygen and two who went in, never came out alive.

It underlined the fact that no enclosed space whatever should be treated in a cavalier fashion, and all had the potential to kill the unwary entrant, along with the unthinking shipmate(s) who rushed heroically to the rescue without getting hold of the breathing apparatus. Maybe we should think about those words "unwary" and "unthinking". A recent death reported by the excellent Marine Accident Investigation Branch Safety Digest was of an engineer on a trawler who had just popped into an empty refrigerated salt water tank to do some maintenance. What could possibly go wrong? He was found unconscious on the bottom some time later because freon refrigerant had leaked into the tank through a corroded pipe and when eventually brought out – after three fellow crew members had been similarly affected by the heavy gas when they had dived into help, the engineer could not be resuscitated.

A few years ago, there was a really excellent seminar on this miserable and recurring curse, run by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency, which gathered together so much of the information on the potential lethality of enclosed spaces and the need for real action on the problem. One of the "demos" was a glass bottle containing some rusty old bolts from which emerged a tube measuring the oxygen as the day progressed, gradually depleting to a level lower than that which would support life. The regulators preached the need for a disciplined approach to any entry into enclosed spaces, and I'm sure it was taken on board by the shipping company representatives who were present.

But these tragedies are still happening. Dockers, seafarers, repairers, surveyors – there seems no particular category of person who cannot be struck down by this killer. A seafarer writes: "On the topic of enclosed spaces we reached a dead end sometime ago. Our renewed efforts at managing this problem only add to paperwork and nothing else".

Is the equipment on board ship, designed to detect oxygen depletion, fit for purpose? The Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme director maritime Adam Parnell recently posed the question of whether poor design might be a contributor to any accident, and this may well be true with some enclosed space accidents. Our seafaring contributor points out that a "core issue" is "how to detect oxygen depletion in that remote corner", and how to refresh the space with 100% breathable air. The current tools for the job, he suggests, are not fit for purpose, offering the examples that the sampling pipe of the 4xgas detector cannot reach all the areas required, while the ventilating fan supplied is a "piddling toy". A technologically innovative product, he suggests, is needed. It is beyond my pay grade to know whether this will make a difference, but seafarers should not be anywhere near spaces that cannot be made safe for them to enter.

Paperwork, tick boxes, procedures and regulations are the best we can do at present it seems. Is there more that can be done in training? You all know, from your first day at sea that you shouldn't step in a bight of rope, walk under a swinging load, or sit on the rail. But is it sufficiently ingrained into the seafarers' psyche that death lurks in any enclosed space? I only ask.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 819

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Nature notes

By Michael Grey

It's a new year and the world's wildlife is clearly striking back, from the mayhem being caused by the excursions of a walrus (allegedly named Thor, but it could equally have answered to the name of Jim) on the UK coast, to the depredations of wolves in

Germany. And across in Chesapeake Bay, the oysters have exacted an expensive revenge for last year's spectacular grounding of the *Ever Forward*, with Evergreen, which might have been considered an innocent party in the incident, being fined \$676,200 for mitigation of the natural resources which were disturbed by the ship's unfortunate diversion.

The Maryland Board of Public Works, which exercises sovereignty over that part of the bay, has been conducting extensive enquiries about the damage done to the wildlife, and has concluded that some 41 acres of oyster growing waters were impacted by the grounding and all the dredging necessary to re-float the ship. Curiously, the research revealed no discernible impact upon the oysters, although they were probably quite annoyed by the intrusion. Nevertheless, there must be financial penalties exacted for any disturbance to the natural resources of the United States, which has, over the years, become amazingly precise at its accounting for such impacts. Thus, the money which the ship owners will be billed can be employed in enhancing and re-seeding an equivalent area of oyster bars* in the extensively cultivated waters of the bay.

But the very place where the containership plunged into the shallows, as she failed to make the bend in the channel, was also a "favoured habitat" for the native blue crabs which, during the winter months, like to burrow deep into the glutinous silt which held the vessel in its vice-like grip for more than a month. And here, the researchers, with surgical precision, concluded that 423 of these crustacea were "impacted" – which possibly meant rather more than being irritated – by the 117,000gt of ship on top of them. However, they (the Maryland Board, not the crabs) seem to conclude that in terms of the whole population, it is a very small impact and the crabs will probably be back this year, although they might be cautioned to dig a bit deeper.

Of course, the US Coast Guard has also been digging more deeply into the causes of the grounding, and have concluded that it was largely contributed to by the inattention of the pilot, who seemed to have been conducting a series of conversations on his mobile phone, as the ship sped along the channel. His licence has been suspended. Mariners have understandably been issued with yet more warnings about the use of mobile phones and their impact upon good bridge management.

Mind you, it might take a certain degree of confidence for the master to sharply demand that the pilot pays full attention to his task in hand and switch off his b.... mobile. But that is what masters are paid for, especially when the channel is tricky and the ship very large. There has been no shortage of warnings about distraction from these instruments and no coincidence that it is a crime in several jurisdictions to use a mobile when driving a road vehicle. Why should ships be any different?

Intervention is not without its hazards. I recall the grounding some years ago in the Needles Channel of an inbound tanker when the master, who was supposed to be conning the ship, was bawling into his mobile phone at the agent, while the Second Officer was timidly trying to alert him to the imminent danger.

But let us return to wildlife. It only seems a very short time ago that a bulk carrier was refused a berth in New Zealand and packed off to sea after excessive fouling had been detected on her hull. The shipping world was initially aghast at the new problem being foisted on the industry as those worried about biofouling decided to demand clean bottoms in their waters, and, what is more, were determined to police their regulations. Firms offering underwater scrubbing services, primarily made available to lower resistance and save fuel, were delighted at this environmental turn of events and even in the last couple of years, have become ever more active.

So, there was a reminder last month that bio-fouling needs to be taken very seriously when a cruise ship was

"I found this in the sea chest and there is an eight foot octopus in the rudder trunk!"

told to go away from an Australian port and get cleaned up, on account of underwater fouling, probably as a result of a warning from the cousins across the Tasman. There might have been some surprise, as the upperworks of these ships are maintained in such a pristine condition, and the passengers were probably enraged, but doubtless the warning will have universally registered in the cruise ship community, that there may be a heavy bill for barnacles and no tolerance for tubeworms.

*In the US, oyster bars are where this delicious seafood is cultivated. In the UK, oyster bars are where they are eaten, with lemon and a sprinkling of tabasco.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

Source: Maritime Advocate 821

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Livestock Carrier Ordered Auctioned as Owner Abandons Ship and Crew

PUBLISHED DEC 23, 2022, 1:40 PM BY THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE

The Australian Federal Court is preparing to auction off the livestock carrier *Yangtze Fortune*, which it believes has been abandoned by its owners while the International Transport Workers' Federation is highlighting the ship as the latest example of owners mistreating their crews. The ITF is saying that it believes the livestock sector is in trouble with an increasing number of complaints and insolvencies.

Built in 2005 in China as a containership, the vessel has a checkered history, having at least five different names and a long list of



managers and registered owners. The 4,800 dwt ship operated carrying livestock between Australia and China with a crew of approximately 30. During its most recent trip, it was expected to load 5,200 head of cattle for transport to China.



Yangtze Fortune seen in Australia in 2018 has now been abandoned with 36 crew aboard (Bahnfrend photo - CC BY-SA 4.0)

The vessel has a long list of deficiencies identified during port state inspections dating back to 2013. However, it avoided detentions for the most part except in Australia briefly in 2020, and that was regarding its operating plan as opposed to structural issues. In July 2022, an initial inspection in Ningbo, China, however, found issues with the stowage of rescue boats and the launching arrangements for survival craft.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority reports the vessel arrived at Portland near Melbourne in southern Australia on September 28 and remained at anchor. AMSA reports it has been monitoring the situation with the vessel, which is registered in Liberia, paying attention to the crew welfare, and is now working with the Admiralty Marshall to ensure the crew welfare and entitlements are maintained now that the ves-

sel is in the hands of the court.

The court became involved when Australasian Global Exports Pty issued a writ against the ship in Western Australia, with claims of damages of US\$2.3 million plus A\$1 million for breach of a September booking. Dan-Bunkering moved to have the ship arrested for non-payment of bills and subsequently Singapore ship chandlers also filed against the ship.

The court reports that the vessel is deteriorating while no maintenance [*is being carried out*] and it has not received a reply from the owners. The Marshall ordered the ship moved to the dock and later paid for the purchase of fuel because the owners had not supplied fuel. Further, the Marshall reports that the vessel undertook a temporary repair for the crack in its hull, which appears to be holding at this time.

Saying that the vessel is all but abandoned by the registered owners Soar Harmony Shipping of China, the judge concluded in a December 20 hearing, "Clearly, the vultures are circling. I see little to no prospect that the judicial sale of the vessel can be avoided." He noted that neither the shipowner nor any bareboat charterer or mortgagee has intervened to maintain the vessel. The court highlights that the clock is ticking as the Marshall reports from documentation provided by the master, that it appears that the vessel's marine hull and machinery insurance is set to expire on December 31, 2022. If that occurs, the judge said all claimants' security will be imperilled.

The International Labor Organization reports that it has also received an abandonment notice for the crew. The court reports that there are 36 crewmembers aboard but that it could be reduced to 16. The crew however is unwilling to leave the ship until they are paid their back wages.

According to inspectors from the ITF that boarded the ship and interviewed the crew, who are Philippine nationals, shipboard documentation shows the crew received only one-third of its wages in October. Several of the crew members have been aboard the ship for eight or nine months. The ITF reports it is providing support for the crew as their provisions run low, but it is concerned because collectively the crew is owed a quarter of a million dollars in unpaid wages. The crew cannot leave the ship because they would forfeit their claims, but faces few prospects of recovering all of their back pay.

The ITF reports that AMSA and the court are working together for the crew. The judge concluded after the December 20 hearing that "In the circumstances, I am satisfied that there should be orders for the sale of the vessel. I see no other available course," but ITF is concerned that the monies raised are unlikely to cover all the owner's debt, meaning the crew might still not get paid. They are also involving the flag state for its obligations to the crew and to provide for reparation if necessary.

The ITF Australian Inspectorate Coordinator, Ian Bray, however, said that he sees a broader problem in the livestock shipping industry. "We believe there is an epidemic of borderline insolvency amongst the operators of these livestock ships, as they repeatedly feature among the worst cases in our inspections around Australia and internationally," said Bray. The sector is the frequent target of activists that want the livestock trade ended and the maritime unions who also highlight the working conditions aboard the ships.

For now, the crew of the *Yangtze Fortune* remains in limbo. The court has directed the Marshall to proceed with the sale once the plaintiffs file the necessary paperwork.

Source: *Maritime Executive* 221224

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Chinese Clean Energy Giant Unveils World's Largest Wind Turbine

January 12, 2023

By Bloomberg News (Bloomberg)

Ming Yang Smart Energy Group Ltd. unveiled the world's largest wind turbine, an offshore behemoth whose more than 140-metre long blades will sweep across an area larger than nine soccer pitches.

The turbine will be able to generate 18 megawatts at peak capacity and produce enough electricity annually to provide power for 96,000 people, the Chinese manufacturer said in a press release. Using it in place of smaller models will reduce the number of



A 140-metre-long blade for the world's largest offshore wind turbine. Photo: Ming Yang Smart Energy Group

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Source: gCaptain 230113

turbines that need to be installed in a given project and lower costs, Ming Yang said.

The announcement comes just a week after China State Shipbuilding Corp announced its own record-breaking turbine. It's also designed to produce at 18 megawatts of capacity but has slightly smaller blades.

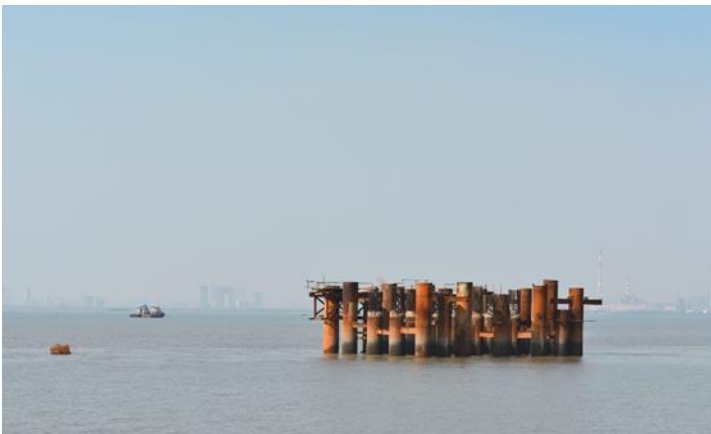
Ming Yang also unveiled its first 16-megawatt turbine on Tuesday, which was a record-breaking size when it was first announced in August 2021.

China is the world's largest wind power market, and the country's turbine manufacturers have used the strong demand to build bigger and better factories that can now rival European and American competitors such as Vestas Wind Systems A/S and General Electric Co.

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Here's Why 32,000+ Abandoned & Orphaned Offshore Wells Litter the Outer Continental Shelf

Sponsored



Sitting about 12 miles off the Louisiana coast near the mouth of the Mississippi River, an abandoned well has been spilling oil into the Gulf of Mexico for the past 18 years. This is the longest-running oil spill in U.S. history and is still ongoing at the time of this writing.

Left unchecked, it could continue to spill oil into the ocean for another 100 years.

It all started in 2004 when Hurricane Ivan struck the Gulf of Mexico, passing within about 62 miles of a fixed offshore platform owned by Taylor Energy. It hit as a Category 3 hurricane, bringing 145-mph winds and 70-foot ocean swells that caused an underwater mudslide—ultimately capsizing the rig and moving it about 560 feet before it was buried beneath 150 feet of mud on the ocean floor. At least 28 oil

wells were exposed.

Taylor Energy reported the leaks and attempted to stop them, but they were unsuccessful.

Six years passed.

The wells continued to leak into the Gulf.

Although the abandoned wells were spilling oil at an estimated 1,000 gallons a day, the public was largely unaware of the matter. It wasn't until 2010 that those monitoring the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill noticed a persistent sheen marring the water where the Taylor Energy platform once stood. This brought public attention to the spill and renewed clean-up efforts, but further attempts to plug the wells were futile.

Nine more years passed. Finally, in the spring of 2019, a complex underwater containment system was installed to siphon out and capture the oil as it spilled from the wells. The system was the first of its kind. It was the brainchild of the U.S. Coast Guard and a team of leading engineers determined to find a way to staunch the spill that had been polluting the Gulf of Mexico for the past decade-and-a-half. The wells were not fully decommissioned and plugged, but the oil is now being captured and contained.

In all, it's estimated that the Taylor Energy spill has released up to 140 million gallons of oil to date.

Not all stories of abandoned and orphaned offshore wells are like Taylor Energy's. Some have been decommissioned the right way, while others are long forgotten and pose unknown environmental and marine life risks. Inadequate records and limited monitoring have made it challenging to accurately track the number of abandoned wells and whether they've been adequately plugged.

According to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, however, more than 32,000 of the 55,000 offshore wells across the 10.9-million-acre Outer Continental Shelf are abandoned or orphaned.

But why? How can tens of thousands of oil wells sit out in the Atlantic, Arctic, and Pacific Oceans without demanding further attention or accountability?

Offshore wells are abandoned when they do not produce enough to offset operating costs. Some wells never produce at all. Some "dry up," their accessible reserves exhausted based on current extraction methods. Some of these wells are temporarily abandoned, with the idea or promise that the owner will return to attempt extraction sometime in the future. Yet, the average length of time since the 3,364 "temporarily" abandoned wells in the Outer Continental Shelf were last drilled is 38 years.

Wells are considered orphaned when they have no owner. Offshore oil wells are often orphaned if the companies that own and

operate them go bankrupt or close their doors for any other reason. With no known owner, orphaned wells present significant challenges when it comes to shutting in and decommissioning them.

Decommissioning an offshore well is expensive and difficult. In the case of the Taylor Energy oil spill, worker safety and environmental concerns stopped attempts to dredge the seafloor and access the wells, which lay about 500 feet below the surface. The state has already spent about \$64 million decommissioning Platform Holly off the coast of California, a cost the state must now bear after the platform's owner, Venoco, filed for bankruptcy. The total cost of decommissioning the platform is expected to reach about \$350 million. California is also shouldering the cost of decommissioning orphaned wells on the Rincon Pier after their operator filed for bankruptcy. The state has appropriated more than \$50 million in funding for the project thus far.

Offshore operators are supposed to put up surety bonds to cover the costs of decommissioning abandoned or orphaned wells. Still, these stand little chance of covering the full extent of the problem. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Department of the Interior held \$2.9 billion in bonds in 2015, but decommissioning liabilities reached \$39.9 billion that year—and that was just in the Gulf of Mexico.

Ideally, offshore companies would be held accountable for cleaning up their messes.

That includes appropriately decommissioning wells.

In March 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice reached a \$476.3 million settlement with Taylor Energy concerning the company's 18-year oil spill. \$432 million will be transferred to the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management to cover the costs of finally plugging the wells on the seafloor. All of Taylor Energy's remaining assets will be allocated as follows: \$12.8 million will go to the U.S. Coast Guard as reimbursement for past expenses, \$15 million will be paid as a civil penalty under the Clean Water Act, and \$16.5 million will be paid to Natural Resource Damages and used for local natural resource restoration projects.

This is a step in the right direction, but we still have a long way to go. Stricter regulations and better enforcement of existing offshore policies, as well as more funds allocated to well decommissioning and clean-up efforts, will be needed to make a real impact on the 32,000 abandoned and orphaned offshore wells littering our oceans—and ensuring they pose no additional risks to our planet and our people.

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Arnold & Itkin is a maritime law firm that has been representing offshore workers since 2004. The firm's trial attorneys have secured unmatched victories across their practice areas, setting and breaking records nationwide for the life-changing verdicts and settlements they've secured for their clients. The firm represented one-third of the Deepwater Horizon crew after the rig exploded in 2010, widows of El Faro crew members who were lost when the vessel went down in Hurricane Joaquin in 2015, and countless others who needed help after the worst injuries and losses. The firm will continue to fight for what's right. No matter what.

Source: gCaptain 221220

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DNV's Fleet Management Software Hit By Cyber Attack

Mike Schuler January 9, 2023

Classification society DNV is reporting that its "ShipManager" fleet management and operations software has been hit by a cyber attack, forcing it to shut down the software's servers.

The attack took place on the evening of Saturday, January 7, DNV confirmed in a statement.

"All users can still use the onboard, offline functionalities of the ShipManager software. At this point in time there are no indications that any other software or data by DNV is affected," the statement said.

DNV said it was working closely with its global IT security partners to investigate the incident and put in place a technical recovery plan to "ensure operations are online as soon as possible," indicating that the



Photo: Shutterstock/metamorworks

issues had not yet been resolved as of Monday.

DNV is also providing a 24/7 support hotline to assist affected customers.

According to DNV's website, more than 7,000 vessels owned by 300 customers use its ShipManager and Navigator port and crew management software solutions. The ShipManager platform contains modules providing customers with insight into technical, operational and compliance aspects of ship management data, including planned maintenance system (PMS), shipping procurement, ship safety management systems (QHSE), crew management system, hull integrity management, dry-docking and ship repair and shipping data analytics.

ShipManager is sold by DNV AS and therefore the company is in contact with Norwegian police.

"We apologize for the disruption and inconvenience this incident may have caused," DNV said.

Source: gCaptain 230110

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Welcoming wellness

By Michael Grey

There is not a great deal of reason to feel encouraged these days, after a 2022 which has seen so many things go badly wrong in the world. But one might be enthused by the signs of a more sympathetic attitude to the seafaring workforce, which has borne the brunt of so much during the miserable months, as the pandemic has raged around the globe.

There has, for a start, been some useful progress on the vexed problem of abandoned crews, something which has become something of a scandal, as the number of instances has grown steadily in recent years. It is something that rarely seems to reach the mainstream press; the ships tucked away in deserted parts of big ports or in remote anchorages, deteriorating beyond the hope of any gainful further employment, but with the crews clinging on to the ship upon which their unpaid wages might depend, when it is eventually sold. Debts increase, the lawyers argue, the certificates lapse, the crew becomes dependent on the goodness of volunteers and the welfare organisations, and the months pass.

In his Christmas letter, the secretary general of the Mission to Seafarers, the Revd. Canon Andrew Wright tells of a chaplain's visit to one of these abandoned seafarers who had been reunited with his family after 28 months stuck on one of these wretched ships. But he is just one of a worrying number of people left in limbo, after their ships had been arrested by creditors, or detained by regulators.

Just as an example, a few minutes before this was written I was reading about a crew of thirty Philippine seafarers marooned for several months on an abandoned livestock ship, stuck in the Australian port of Portland. The ship is to be auctioned, but as always, there remains huge doubts as to whether there will be enough left to pay the A\$1m owed to the crew. It doesn't exactly appear to be a vessel with many prospects for a purchaser. The crew might be a little better off than some because of the jurisdiction – others around the world are stuck in truly awful places, where the law will prove to be of little assistance to wronged individuals. So, any progress by the ILO-IMO-SRI to mitigate the miserable uncertainty of abandoned crews is a bit of seasonal good cheer.

There is also some reason to applaud the work that is being done by a number of agencies to give more prominence to what might be described as seafarers' "wellness" and welfare. In particular the recognition that seafarers are just like anyone ashore in their vulnerability to mental problems, which have been getting a lot of celebrity endorsements in recent times. It has been a long time coming, as attitudes to mental illness needed to experience something of an evolutionary change, but there are now many hopeful signs.

It took some determined work by committed individuals and organisations to shine a light on the incidence of mental breakdown and suicides of seafarers, something not exactly helped by the fragmented and inadequate methods of gathering data in an international workforce of a global industry. Seafarers, this itinerant, over-the-horizon workforce, had been expected to "just get on with it" as they always had been, even though their world was changing to smaller, often less cohesive crews, different attitudes to long tours along with the challenges of loneliness and a growing connectivity with their families that promised much, but often proved elusive or unaffordable.

There is a growing number of agencies that are providing practical help for troubled individuals, while senior officers and those who can influence crew welfare are now given useful information to recognise the first signs of stress. It is a good start.

Christmas, far from one's family, really can be a "challenging time", writes the CEO of Mental Health Support Solutions MHSS, which was established to provide support to mariners. It is, Jannik Grothues observes, "a time of year when people are more likely to feel undervalued" and he urges maritime employers to put additional effort into supporting their seagoing employees. He offers some suggestions for making the season rather more pleasant for those far from home, and you wouldn't argue with any of them. We shouldn't just think of it as "just another day", even if it is!

There are plenty of good employers of seafarers who recognise that the promotion of wellness among a happier workforce represents a good investment, which will head off manning crises and promote recruitment and retention. Some of the big ship managers have been exemplars in this sort of work, and as hard-nosed companies operating in a highly competitive market, they know it pays dividends. If employees, ashore or afloat, feel that they are valued, rather than being treated as assets to be "sweated", (to use a disgusting business college inspired term) it really makes a difference.

Let us hope that happiness afloat increases as we launch into the new year, and all the very best from this correspondent, for 2023.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List

Source: *Maritime Advocate* 820

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Report: China Faces a Dilemma in Recouping African Belt-and-Road Loans

PUBLISHED DEC 23, 2022, 5:35 PM BY THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE

Several African nations grappling with debt distress are faced with seizure of strategic assets like ports, railways and power networks if China decides to force repayment on defaulted loans, a UK-based think tank has said.

Chatham House notes that China has built a large stock of debt across the African continent, and it now faces the challenge of managing these investments amidst economic woes linked to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Both factors have heightened the prospects of default in some African nations. As of November 30, 22 out of 54 countries in Africa were either in debt



Kenya's Chinese-funded, under-utilized Standard Gauge Railway project (Mfwicky / CC BY SA 4.0)

distress or at high risk of debt distress. Public debt doubled on the continent over the past decade to reach 65% of gross domestic product (GDP).

With Chinese lenders accounting for 12% of Africa's private and public external debt, Beijing may be forced to become more demanding in extracting payment.

"This would be particularly detrimental if China resorted to appropriating significant assets such as ports, railways or power networks in response to defaults," states Chatham House researchers.

This unwanted outcome of Chinese "debt-trap diplomacy" is becoming a real possibility, but the report points to the strategic and political costs that this would bring for China.

Angola, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo and Zambia are the leading recipients of Chinese loans, which have been used to finance huge infrastructure projects like ports, railways, roads and energy development. In Zambia, which is in default, China is the biggest single creditor and holds roughly one-third of the country's total external debt. The country's total public debt to foreign and domestic lenders was just shy of \$34 billion at the end of 2021, around 133% of GDP.

"China faces a critical dilemma of how to protect the value of its investments in Africa, while simultaneously defending its strategic interests and maintaining its self-image as a partner, not a predator," notes the researchers.

The researchers reckon that the growing debt problem in Africa has forced China to cut down lending. New loans have dropped from a peak of \$28.4 billion in 2016 to \$8.2 billion in 2019, falling to just \$1.9 billion in 2020.

"China's approach to African debt is one of dynamic change, with patterns of Chinese infrastructure-linked lending in Africa moving from resource-backed profligacy to more calculated business or geostrategic decision-making," said the Chatham House researchers.

Source: Maritime Executive 221224

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Smart Sanctions: The West Finally Gets Clever About Russia

Editorial December 17, 2022

Robert Huish (The Conversation)--The European Union and the United States are now targeting maritime protection and indemnity (P&I) insurance clubs to limit Russian shipping capacity and cap the price of its oil, meaning we're finally beginning to see some smart sanctions for a stupid war.



Crude oil tanker Advantage Angel sails in the Bosphorus, on its way to the Mediterranean Sea, in Istanbul, Turkey December 12, 2022. REUTERS/Yoruk Isik

P&I clubs are maritime insurance groups that specialize in open-ended, large-risk claims. P&I insurance is a requirement for all heavy cargo and container vessels. Under the new sanctions, European P&I clubs can no longer offer insurance to a vessel carrying Russian oil at a price higher than \$60 a barrel.

Since February 2022, governments and the private sector have been imposing piecemeal sanctions against Moscow, including taking aim at the luxury items of oligarchs and Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle. Yachts and jets were highly symbolic, but sanctions against them weren't really useful.

Russia then lost access to the global SWIFT payment system. Only after some trade deals with India and China did Russia's currency

somewhat stabilize.

Then targeted sanctions were imposed on Russian companies and individuals. Roughly 537 firms, 276 legal entities, 1,637 organizations and 3,369 people faced some sort of coercive economic measure between February 2022 and June 2022.

Going easy on shipping capacity

Only 113 of 3,300 Russian maritime vessels, however, were subject to official sanctions.

Going easy on Russia's maritime capacity was a blunder for U.S. President Joe Biden's administration and its European counterparts. Ships can smuggle all sorts of trouble, even amid legitimate cargo.

For example, bananas are locally sourced from cocaine-producing countries, and since the fruit expires quickly, customs officials want to move shipments through borders as fast as possible. Eight tonnes of cocaine worth over US\$207 million was recently discovered in a banana shipment to Belgium.

If Russia needs something illicit for its war in Ukraine, it likely arrives by sea.

With coercive economic measures on only three per cent of Russia's entire merchant fleet in the first months of the war, these

sanctions were sloppy at best and harmful at worst.

Within days of sanctions being imposed on those 113 Russian-flagged vessels, 18 of them switched to “flags of convenience” by registering the ships in the Marshall Islands and St. Kitts.

This is nothing new for merchant fleets. Ship owners regularly register their vessels in countries that charge little tax and overlook poor labour conditions in exchange for payments to register a vessel under their flag.

This is why countries like Panama, Liberia and the Marshall Islands ship so much more cargo than countries like the United States and Canada. Most of the world’s cargo and crude are shipped under flags of convenience, making targeted sanctions on national vessels difficult and often futile.

Into the shipping shadows

The direct sanctions against a small number of Russian vessels just encouraged nationally flagged ships to go deeper into the shadows and join their buddies under flags of convenience. Should sanctions be levied at Liberia and the Marshall Islands?

Doing so would put the brakes on hundreds of millions of tonnes of seaborne cargo. The global economy couldn’t handle that, and it would require enormous scrutiny to enforce these measures on guilty vessels. This is why the latest round of sanctions targeting maritime protection and indemnity insurance companies is clever. P&I insurance is required for every ship to enter ports to offload goods. The insurance covers the worst calamities, such as loss of life, dock damage and oil spills.

The insured vessel pays into the risk-pooling clubs that can move hundreds of millions of dollars quickly to any country in order to cover the costs of the disaster. Thanks to modern tech, steady tug boats and good harbour pilots, claims on P&I pools are low. Still, every ship must have it, and the insurance entails massive, collective pots of money. If a sanctioned vessel is in the club, everyone in the club is at risk.

The clubs can also identify disingenuous vessels that might be hiding in their ranks. Data showing the history of flagging and ownership of any vessel is widely available. This allows the clubs to eject the questionable vessel immediately.

Past success

In 2012, the EU denied P&I insurance to Iran, effectively halting global Iranian energy exports within hours.

In 2017, I published research that pointed out that Kim Jong-un was acquiring nearly all of his most troublesome goods by sea and recommended targeted sanctions against P&I clubs with North Korean vessels in their ranks.

Within days of the U.S. and EU imposing such sanctions, North Korea’s activities ground to halt. The regime wound up engaging in high-risk, low-reward sea-to-sea transfers to try to make ends meet.

Now that similar sanctions are in effect against Russia, all 3,300 known Russian ships are grinding to a halt. Some are jamming up traffic around Turkey’s Bosphorus Strait and floating idly around Russia’s port city of Vladivostok.

Putin is scrambling to purchase a “shadow fleet” of about 100 vintage end-of-life tankers to try to get Russian oil to market. That won’t be enough to carry the Russian economy, but it could expose inroads to smuggling markets involving ports that overlook P&I insurance.

Keeping the \$60 price cap on Russian oil is risky. Tempting Putin to sell oil under \$60 will encourage oil smuggling in the shadows. A full P&I ban on all vessels thought to be Russian, however, would be devastating to Moscow.

Just like how tax evasion brought down Al Capone, it may be this insurance requirement that delivers a crushing economic blow to Putin.

It illustrates why governments and the private sector need to think smarter about sanctions. Don’t sanction the target. Sanction the environment in which they operate.

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Source: gCaptain 221219

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One Year After Volcanic Blast, Many Of Tonga’s Reefs Lay Silent

Reuters January 15, 2023

One year on from the massive eruption of an underwater volcano in the South Pacific, the island nation of Tonga is still dealing with the damage to its coastal waters.



Volcanic ash blankets the western side of Tongatapu island following the eruption of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai on January 15, 2022. Credit: Viliami T. Manu/handout via Reuters/File Photo

When Hunga-Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai went off, it sent a shockwave around the world, produced a plume of water and ash that soared higher into the atmosphere than any other on record, and waves that ricocheted across the region – slamming into the archipelago which lies southeast of Fiji.

Coral reefs were turned to rubble and many fish perished or migrated away.

The result has Tongans struggling, with more than 80% of Tongan families relying on subsistence reef fishing, according 2019 data from the World Bank. Following the eruption, the Tongan government said

it would seek \$240 million for recovery, including improving food security. In the immediate aftermath, the World Bank provided \$8 million.

“In terms of recovery plan ... we are waiting for funds to cover expenditure associated with small-scale fisheries along coastal communities,” said Poasi Ngaluafe, head of the science division of Tonga’s Ministry of Fisheries.

SILENT REEFS

The vast majority of Tongan territory is ocean, with its exclusive economic zone extending across nearly 700,000 square kilometres (270,271 square miles) of water. While commercial fisheries contribute only 2.3% to the national economy, subsistence fishing is considered crucial in making up a staple of the Tongan diet.

The U.N.’s Food and Agricultural Organization estimated in a November report that the eruption cost the country’s fisheries and aquaculture sector some \$7.4 million – a significant number for Tonga’s roughly \$500 million economy. The losses were largely due to damaged fishing vessels, with nearly half of that damage in the small-scale fisheries sector, though some commercial vessels were also affected.

Because the Tongan government does not closely track subsistence fishing, it is difficult to estimate the eruption’s impact on fish harvests.

But scientists say that, apart from some fish stocks likely being depleted, there are other troubling signs that suggest it could take a long time for fisheries to recover.

Young corals are failing to mature in the coastal waters around the eruption site, and many areas once home to healthy and abundant reefs are now barren, according to the government’s August survey.

It is likely volcanic ash smothered many reefs, depriving fish of feeding areas and spawning beds. The survey found that no marine life had survived near the volcano.

Meanwhile, the tsunami that swelled in the waters around the archipelago knocked over large boulder corals, creating fields of coral rubble. And while some reefs survived, the crackling, snapping and popping noises of foraging shrimp and fish, a sign of a healthy environment, were gone.

“The reefs in Tonga were silent,” the survey report found.

FARMING REPRIEVE

Agriculture has proved a lifeline to Tongans facing empty waters and damaged boats. Despite concerns that the volcanic ash, which blanketed 99% of the country, would make soils too toxic to grow crops, “food production has resumed with little impacts,” said Siosia Halavatu, a soil scientist speaking on behalf of the Tongan government.

Soil tests revealed that the fallen ash was not harmful for humans. And while yam and sweet potato plants perished during the eruption, and fruit trees were burned by falling ash, they began to recover once the ash was washed away.

“We have supported recovery works through land preparation, and planting backyard gardening and roots crops in the farms, as well as export crops like watermelon and squash,” Halavatu told Reuters.

But long-term monitoring will be critical, he said, and Tonga hopes to develop a national soil strategy and upgrade their soil testing laboratory to help farmers.

SKY WATER

Scientists are also now taking stock of the eruption’s impact on the atmosphere. While volcanic eruptions on land eject mostly ash and sulphur dioxide, underwater volcanos jettison far more water.

Tonga’s eruption was no different, with the blast’s white-greyish plume reaching 57 kilometres (35.4 miles) and injecting 146 million tonnes of water into the atmosphere.

Water vapor can linger in the atmosphere for up to a decade, trapping heat on Earth’s surface and leading to more overall warming. More atmospheric water vapor can also help deplete ozone, which shields the planet from harmful UV radiation.

“That one volcano increased the total amount of global water in the stratosphere by 10 percent,” said Paul Newman, chief scientist for earth sciences at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center. “We’re only now beginning to see the impact of that.”

(Reporting by Gloria Dickie in London; Additional reporting by Kirsty Needham; Editing by Katy Daigle and Tomasz Janowski)

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Source: gCaptain 230116

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Indonesia Sends Warship To Monitor Chinese Coast Guard Vessel

JAKARTA, Jan 14 (Reuters)

Indonesia has deployed a warship to its North Natuna Sea to monitor a Chinese coast guard vessel that has been active in a resource-rich maritime area, the country’s naval chief said on Saturday of an area that both countries claim as their own.

Ship tracking data shows the vessel, CCG 5901, has been sailing in the Natuna Sea, particularly near the Tuna Bloc gas field and the Vietnamese Chim Sao oil and gas field since Dec. 30, the Indonesian Ocean Justice Initiative told Reuters.

A warship, maritime patrol plane and drone had been deployed to monitor the vessel, Laksamana Muhammad Ali, the chief of the



Indonesian Navy ships are seen at the Tanjung Wangi port as the search continues for the sunken KRI Nanggala-402 submarine in Banyuwangi, East Java Province, Indonesia April 26, 2021, in this photo taken by Antara Foto/Zabur Karuru/via Reuters.

Indonesian navy, told Reuters.

“The Chinese vessel has not conducted any suspicious activities,” he said. “However, we need to monitor it as it has been in Indonesia’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for some time.”

A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Jakarta was not immediately available for comment.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) gives vessels navigation rights through an EEZ.

The activity comes after an EEZ agreement between Indonesia and Vietnam, and approval from Indonesia to develop the Tuna gas field in the Natuna Sea, with a total estimated investment of more than \$3 billion up to the start of production.

In 2021 vessels from Indonesia and China shadowed each other for months near a submersible oil rig that had been performing well appraisals in the Tuna block.

At the time, China urged Indonesia to stop drilling, saying the activities were happening in its territory.

Southeast Asia’s biggest nation says that under UNCLOS, the southern end of the South China Sea is its exclusive economic zone and named the area as the North Natuna Sea in 2017.

China rejects this, saying the maritime area is within its expansive territorial claim in the South China Sea marked by a U-shaped “nine-dash line,” a boundary the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague found to have no legal basis in 2016.

(Reporting by Ananda Teresia, Stanley Widiyanto, Kate Lamb and Fransiska Nangoy in Jakarta; Writing by Kate Lamb; Editing by Clarence Fernandez)

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Source: gCaptain 230116

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The burden on ships and crew of a world in turmoil – will it ever change?

Gard Insight 22 .Dec 2922

When you are enjoying the holiday season with your family spare a thought for those at sea. We are all well aware that



the sea is unpredictable, and that seafaring can be a dangerous and stressful occupation. There are some things such as bad weather or sea conditions that are difficult to avoid but the lives of crew members and ship-owning/management teams are also made far more stressful by situations caused by the failure of states to agree common policies or to implement them or treat seafarers with consideration and humanity. We will look at two of them with concrete examples of cases faced by our members.

Rescue at sea

It is a fact of life now that, due to turmoil in a number of countries, migrants undertake perilous journeys in unsuitable vessels to try to claim asylum in Europe or find other means to build a life here. When these vessels get into trouble at sea the obligation of ships in the vicinity is to render assistance. See for example Article 98 of the UN Convention of

the Law of the Sea 1982 regulation 33 of the SOLAS convention. A master must respond to “*information from any source that persons are in distress at sea... bound to proceed with all speed to their assistance...*”

Everyone agrees that vessels must rescue people at danger at sea, however, there is no agreement about what happens once they have been rescued. In fact, ships that comply with this duty and rescue migrants are rarely thanked other than by those in the maritime industry. There is no international agreement on who should accept and process asylum seekers, or indeed other people who are rescued. A resolution of the executive committee of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 1981 provides that the duty to accept asylum seekers should fall on the country of the next port of call but this is not binding.

We at Gard have first-hand experience of dealing with a number of these harrowing cases, one of which involved the *Maersk Etienne*.

Maersk Etienne

On 4 September 2020, the 37,000 DWT Danish flag tanker *Maersk Etienne* was on route to La Skhira, Tunisia, when she was requested by the Rescue Coordination Centre Malta to change course to assist a small migrant boat in distress. The boat with migrants was located outside Maltese waters closer to the Tunisian-Libyan border. The *Maersk Etienne* picked up the 27 migrants. Shortly thereafter, the small boat sank. The *Maersk Etienne* had honoured its obligations under SOLAS and saved the lives of the migrants but that was where the difficulty started for all on board.

The vessel proceeded towards Malta but was refused permission to enter Maltese waters. It then anchored outside Maltese waters to try to disembark those rescued in Malta or Tunisia. Despite considerable efforts including discussions on a high political level between Denmark and the two respective countries and a media campaign neither country could be convinced to accept the migrants.

As time went by, the migrants became more and more desperate to the point where three of them jumped overboard. Fortunately, they were safely rescued by the *Maersk Etienne* crew for the second time and re-joined the rest of the group.

The matter was only resolved on 11 October 2020 when the migrants were transferred to the migrant rescue ship *Mare Jonio*, operated by NGO Mediterranea, and were subsequently safely disembarked in Italy.

It is difficult to imagine the stress for everyone on board the vessel during the 37 day wait for a solution.

Disembarking of bodies during the pandemic

There were lockdowns in many countries during the pandemic, but international trade had to continue and in fact the demand for goods increased during this period. Given the fact that ports, even within one country, had different rates of infection and different regulations, it was inevitable that it would be more difficult to navigate these rules for shipping than land-based industries. There is no getting away from the fact that the owners/crews simply had to comply with the testing and quarantine regime in the ports they visited. This is understandable. However, regulations necessary to prevent the transmission of disease strayed into injustice and inhumanity when they were used to prevent the bodies of mariners who died from being put ashore. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) there was little or no risk of infection from dead bodies, and, in any event, it is much easier to limit risk in those circumstances. Nevertheless, in common with other P&I clubs, we had several cases where we were unable to disembark bodies from vessels for months. The lack of respect for the person who died, their family and the crew cannot be overestimated. We had a particularly difficult case that is worth considering.

Vantage Wave

In this case the master died on board. He was negative for covid when he signed on to the vessel from India on 11 April 2021. The vessel had finished loading at Paradip Port in India where the master boarded and it was bound for Huangpu New Port in Guangzhou China. He fell ill on 17 April 2021 and died on board on 19 April 2021, probably of a heart attack. There was no evidence that he or anyone else on board had covid.

The club and the owners tried to disembark his body in Indonesia where the replacement master came on board, but they were not permitted to do so. The vessel proceeded to China where things got much worse. The vessel arrived on 7 May 2021. The Chinese authorities refused to discharge the body but worse than that they did not even allow the vessel to proceed to berth to discharge. The vessel was kept one month at anchorage and was running out of supplies of food and water. By this time the case was attracting publicity around the plight of the crew and eventually the vessel was permitted to take on supplies and discharge the cargo but not to disembark the body. The vessel finally left China on 18 July. In the meantime, the authorities in the following countries had been contacted with a view to the vessel deviating to one of them to discharge the body: Taiwan, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Oman. The answer was always no. Finally, the UAE agreed to discharge the body on the basis of a negative PCR test on the late Master. Once this had been provided the vessel headed in ballast condition towards UAE. It arrived in Fujairah on 18 September and eventually the body was disembarked on 29 September.

The Master's body had been on board the vessel in refrigeration for five and a half months. It is difficult to imagine the stress the crew and the master's family endured.

As a result of these difficult cases Rule 31 was changed so that diversion costs to transfer a deceased person ashore for repatriation are expressly covered.

What can the shipping community do?

There has been a recent report by the UK House of Lords on human rights at sea which highlights a number of areas where there are gaps in legal coverage, including in relation to the obligation to rescue people in distress at sea. There would probably be difficulties in amending or renegotiating the UN Convention on the law of the sea since there would be a risk of backtracking on some principles that have already been accepted. However, there should surely be an attempt to negotiate a convention governing which coastal states should take people who are rescued at sea, at least in the first instance.

On the subject of better treatment for seafarers and acknowledgement of the vital role they play in the world's economic system perhaps the whole shipping industry could be a bit more vocal. We should all be lobbying for coastal states to treat crew members with consideration and humanity. There is no easy answer as to how to effect change, but these are problems that the shipping community will likely see more of in the future. The sooner nation states can be persuaded to discuss and agree solutions the better.

Marie Kelly leads Gard's London Defence team. She recently spoke on this topic at 40 years Institute of Maritime Law Conference at Southampton University.

Source: *Gard Insight* 221222

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Norway Naval Officer Goes On Trial Over Oil Tanker Collision

OSLO, Jan 16 (Reuters)

A Norwegian naval officer stands trial on Monday accused of negligence that led to the 2018 collision between a warship he commanded and an oil tanker, as a result of which the military vessel sank.



The Norwegian frigate KNM *Helge Ingstad*, which collided with a tank ship and went down in 2018, is seen at the quay at the Coast Center Base base at Agotnes, outside Bergen, Norway November 7, 2019. NTB Scanpix/Marit Hommedal via REUTERS

Building a replacement for the lost *Helge Ingstad* frigate would cost up to 13 billion crowns (\$1.3 billion), the armed forces estimated in a 2019 report.

The early-morning crash between the *Ingstad* and the fully loaded *Sola TS* crude carrier near a major North Sea oil export terminal also triggered shutdowns of parts of Norway's petroleum production. There was no leak from the oil tanker.

Members of the 137-strong *Ingstad* crew described waking up in the middle of the night as water poured into their cabins and alarms went off as they tried in vain to save the ship, although they suffered only minor injuries.

The defendant was the officer in charge on the bridge of the *Ingstad* at the time.

"He did not display caution and did not take the precautions that safe navigation requires," prosecutor Magne Kvamme Sylta said in the charges.

The defendant believes he was unfairly singled out for blame and will plead not guilty, his lawyer, Christian Lundin, told Norwegian news agency NTB.

Recordings of communication between the two vessels showed the slow-moving *Sola TS* several times asking the faster *Ingstad* to alter its course or face collision, but the request was declined by the navy ship, which feared getting too close to shore.

A commission investigating the collision later said the brightly lit *Sola TS* may have been difficult to distinguish from the nearby terminal from where it had set off, confusing the *Ingstad* crew.

A video recording from the tanker showed sparks flying as the two collided, tearing a gash in the side of the warship, which was later recycled as scrap metal. The tanker suffered only minor damage.

The collision exposed safety gaps in the Norwegian navy, including inadequate training and risk assessment systems. The defence ministry later paid a fine of 10 million crowns.

(Reporting by Terje Solsvik and Gwladys Fouche; Editing by Nick Macfie)

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Source: gCaptain 230116

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You have to Laugh!

(With thanks to Paul Dixon)

Pauly and Maury are having a drink at the local pub.

Pauly: "My wife has the worst memory I ever heard of."

Maury: "Forgets everything, eh?"

Pauly: "No, remembers everything."

As the passengers settled in on a West Coast commuter flight a flight attendant announced, "We'd like you folks to help us welcome our new co-pilot. He'll be performing his first commercial landing for us today, so be sure to give him a big round of applause when we come to a stop."

The plane made an extremely bumpy landing, bouncing hard two or three times before taxiing to a stop. Still, the passengers applauded.

Then the attendant's voice came over the intercom, "Thanks for flying with us. And don't forget to let our co-pilot know which landing you liked best."

While waiting for my first appointment in the reception room of a new dentist, I noticed his certificate, which bore his full name.

Suddenly, I remembered that a tall, handsome boy with the same name had been in my high school class almost 50 years ago.

Upon seeing him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, grey-haired man with the deeply lined face was too old to have been my classmate. After he had examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended the local high school.

"Yes," he replied.

"When did you graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1953."

"Why, you were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely and then asked, "What did you teach?"

Source: Maritime Advocate 821

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