

# Tug Newsletter

all about tugs

*Ex U.R.S.,  
Bouchard  
and more . . .*



*LEOPARD arriving from Poland towing the hull of EL ALAMEIN 2 seen here on 12 August, 2021. LEOPARD is a regular visitor towing Damen hulls for completion at the Hardinxveld yard. LEOPARD is the former Belgian tug WIELINGEN*  
*photo: Nico Giltay*

*Leopard was built in 1969 at the Beliard-Murdoch Shipyard, Ostend, as Wielingen (yn C-202) for account of SARAH (Société de Remorquage à Hélice) (a.k.a. Gerling). Operated by U.R.S. – Union de Remorquage et Sauvetage / Unie van Redding en Sleepdienst, Antwerp, Belgium. In 1974 transferred to U.R.S. ownership. In 1996 sold - together with her sister - to Portuguese owner Reboques e Asstencia Naval Ltda. (Rebonave), Setubal and renamed Leopardo. Sister Jacques Letzer was renamed Jaguar. In 2004 Leopardo was sold to Leopard Shipping renamed Leopard and registered at Kingstown, St. Vincent & Grenadines. Also for some time flew the Slovakia flag with homeport Bratislava – at that time her bollard pull was advertised as 28 tbp. Manager Jan Stepniewski & Co., Gdansk,*

*Poland. Currently flying the Vanuatu flag homeported at Port Vila. IMO 6819697.*

*Dimensions are 33,33 (oa) / 30,13 (bp) x 8,70 (mld) / 9,20 (oa) x 4,60 m with a draught of 3,65 m max. 269 GT, 80 NT. Main engine single 4-stroke 8-cylinder Cockerill Ougree Providence 8TR-240-CO with an output of 1.650 bhp (1.214 kW) – later advertised as 2.400 hp - at 1.000 rpm driving via a Vulkan flexible coupling*

*and a Hindmarch-Messian 2-step reverse-reduction gear box a fixed-pitch propeller in steerable Kort nozzle. Bollard pull when new 25 tons, later 28 tons and 32 tons. Currently listed as 32,0 tonnes. Maximum speed 13 knots. When built fitted with a hydraulic single-drum Baensch winch with a single drum with 600, later 700 m x 4¾ inch (currently 750 m x 38 mm) towing wire and warp heads at both ends. Pull of the winch was 10 tonnes at 23 m/min with*



*LEOPARD seen her in her original guise as WIELINGEN in U.R.S. livery*

*photo: coll. Job van Eijk*





CONDOR on 4 August, 2021, running trials. This Voith-propelled tug / workboat was built by Neptune Marine and developed in cooperation with the owners, Belgian Verbeke Shipping. She will be delivered later this year

photo: R. & F. van der Hoek

a brake load of 50 tonnes. In addition a bridle winch with 35 m x 4 inch wire and a 30 t.swl (currently 40 t. swl) tow hook were fitted. A single fiifi water / foam monitor (since removed) was carried supplied by a separate fiifi pump with a capacity of 200 m<sup>3</sup>/hr.

The tugs were designed especially for the handling of large tankers in the Belgian ports but also with coastal towing and salvage work in mind. A technical magazine at the time – that incidentally listed the engine output at 2.000 bhp at 1.000 rpm – carried a description of the effectivity of the propulsion plant. The gearbox had two forward speeds of 169 resp 189 rpm with a single reverse speed of 170 rpm. Inefficient running of a tug's main engine at low speeds is a consequence of the power requirements within its operating window. Prolonged low speed negatively effects the lifespan of the bearings and causes the possible formation of engine deposits and contamination of the lubricating oil. This particular engine type, however, was extensively tested at speeds as low as 300 rpm and successfully combatted the negative effects over the full range between 300 and 1.000 rpm. Furthermore, quick response of the main engine is required in manoeuvring. During trials the drive train stopped the tug from full speed to dead in the water in two ship lengths or nearly 30 seconds. Maximum torque applied to the propeller - from zero -

was achieved in 12 seconds and with approximately 170 rpm of the prop. Output delivered by the main engine at that moment was 1.500 hp.

#### MedTug

Damen Shipyards has three tugs under construction for MedTug: *Med Pollux* (yn 513322), *Med Tegmine* (yn 513607) and *Med Vega* (yn 515016). The first two are under construction at Damen Song Cam, Vietnam. Delivery is planned for the end of the third respectively fourth quarter of 2021. The third tug is planned for delivery in 2022. All three are currently still listed with owner Damen Marine

Services. As yet it is unclear which ports they will be serving but it is likely that at least two will go to Antwerp as relief for the chartered *Med Polaris* and *Med Regulus* currently operating at Antwerp. *Med Polaris*, incidentally is registered as on charter to MedTug Rotterdam and not MedTug Antwerp.

#### Bouchard Transportation

Bouchard Transportation Company was established in 1918 by Capt. Frederick (Fred) E. Bouchard. Fred Bouchard first went to sea in 1885 serving as a cabin boy on a sailing vessel bound for China. Fast forward to 1915 when Fred Bouchard became the reportedly youngest tugboat Master in the Port of New York. In July 1916 he and his tug rescued two ships in the aftermath of the big explosion of a huge load of ammunition that rocked the New Jersey shore. His salvage reward he used to set up his own company. The first oil barge was acquired in 1931 for USD 100. Next he raised the vessel from the bottom and repaired and converted it to a hot-oil-system barge. Although unknown at the time oil was to become the company's main trade for the future.

Frederick Bouchard passed away in 1944 and was succeeded by his son Morton ("Buster") S. Bouchard Sr. It was he who started a significant expansion of the company by investing in three newbuild 20.000-barrel oil barges and their accompanying tugs. Morton S. Bouchard Jr. entered the business in 1955 and



MORTON S. BOUCHARD IV is one of the 6.140 bhp Bouchard 'pin' boats (ATB's) fitted with an Intercom connection system. She was built in 2004, seen here in November, 2006

photo: Tommy Bryceland



in 1974 took the reins over from his father. He entered into an important newbuilding program that extended the company's operations to the Gulf Coast, the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes. In 1992 Morton S. Bouchard III took the helm. Following the introduction of the Oil Pollution Act 1990 new double-hull barges were brought in as well as more powerful tugs. The company was now active on all four coasts of the U.S. In 2010 an investment was made in a major fleet expansion that included state-of-the-art ATB units.

In 2017 the tide began to turn. An explosion on one of its barges killed two of the crew. An investigation by the Transport & Safety Board (NTSB) concluded that the accident stemmed from a lack of effective maintenance and safety management. Later, the company got into a fight with another employee - the brother of one of the crew members killed in the explosion. It was found the company wrongfully dismissed the employee and ordered financial restitution. In 2020 the company faced allegations of non-payment of wages to its crews. Bouchard later announced the arranging of financing to repay all outstanding wages. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, only increased the financial problems and in September 2020 Bouchard filed for bankruptcy protection with a USD 230 million debt. This prevented the foreclosure sales of Bouchard vessels in Louisiana, Florida, Texas and New York while the company attempted a restructure.

In June 2021, the bankruptcy court approved the auction for the assets after the company had said it was seeking a

buyer. On 18 July, 2021, the auction was carried out. It was won by JMB Capital Partners gaining 29 vessels (12 barges and 17 tugs) for reportedly an amount of USD 115,3 million. JMB Capital specializes in distressed assets and bankruptcies, and also has provided debtor-in-possession financing in bankruptcy cases. Creditors, however, said there were issues with the auction and that a better option may be available. Bouchard claimed that the book value of the company stood at approximately USD 750 million with a fleet of 26 tugs and 25 tank barges.

### Seacor

On 13 August, 2021, **Seacor Holdings Inc.** announced it had completed the acquisition of **U.S. Shipping Corp**, a privately owned provider of long-haul marine transportation for chemical and petroleum cargoes in the U.S. coastwise trade, operating under the Jones Act.

Combining of the USSC fleet with that of Seacor subsidiary Seabulk creates one of the largest Jones Act tanker operators with a fleet of 15 coastwise vessels ranging in size from 150,000 to 330,000 barrels of capacity.

Seacor is a diversified holding company with interests in domestic and international transportation and logistics, crisis and emergency management, and clean fuel and power solutions. Seacor subsidiary **Seabulk** provides marine logistics, transportation, and infrastructure solutions, including port and terminal services, ocean transportation and vessel management. **Seabulk** operates a fleet of nine U.S.-flag tankers, including one ATB servicing the U.S. coastwise trade of crude oil,

petroleum, and chemical products. **U.S. Shipping Corp** operates a fleet of six U.S.-flagged vessels including one highly sophisticated parcel tanker, one product tanker, and four state-of-the-art ATB's.

Seabulk's **towage division** numbers 22 harbour tugs including one slated for offshore work and 8 terminal support tugs. In addition this division runs six bunker barges. The fleet operates in Port Arthur, Lake Charles, Mobile, Tampa Bay, Port Everglades, Miami, Freeport (Bahamas) and on St. Eustatius. The tug fleet includes twin screw, stern drive and tractor tugs, as well as three Ship Docking Modules and five Rotor Tugs.

### Bergen Engines

On 3 August, 2021, **Rolls-Royce** announced it had signed an agreement to sell its Bergen Engines medium speed liquid fuel and gas engines business to global engineering group Langley Holdings plc for an enterprise value of Euro 63m. The sale contributes towards RR's target to generate at least GBP 2bn from disposals.

The agreed sale includes the Bergen Engines factory, service workshop and foundry in Norway; engine and power plant design capability; and a global service network spanning more than seven countries. Bergen Engines employs more than 900 people worldwide including 650 in the main factory in Hordvikneset.

**Langley Holdings**, headquartered in the UK, was established in 1975 by Anthony Langley, Chairman and CEO. The Langley Group is financially independent and remains under family ownership. Bergen Engines will be operated by Langley



MORTON S. BOUCHARD JR, 6.000 bhp, built 2016, pushing BOUCHARD NO 210. The barge was built in 1995 and carries 110.000 barrels of clean oil. Seen here 31 May, 2016

photo: R. & F. van der Hoek





*Eurocarrier 2611 design TIDAL PIONEER seen 5 August, 2021, sailing Aalst, The Netherlands for Ponta Delgada. Operator is Sustainable Marine* *photo: Nico Giltay*

Group as a stand-alone business. It is a diverse, global, engineering group with its main operations in Germany, Italy, France and the U.K. with service subsidiaries across Europe, the Americas, the Far East and Australasia.

An earlier attempt to sell Bergen Engines failed when the Norwegian authorities vetoed a sale to a Russia-based buyer.

The agreement is subject to the satisfaction of certain closing conditions and effective completion is scheduled for the 31 December 2021. Bergen Engines' long-term relationship with Kongsberg Maritime, distributor of Bergen medium speed engines to the maritime market, is planned to continue as is.

### Going electric

The **Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore** (MPA) and the Singapore Maritime Institute (SMI) have awarded funding to three consortiums led by Keppel FELS Limited, SeaTech Solutions and Sembcorp Marine to research, design, build and operate a fully electric harbour craft over the next five years. These electrification pilot projects must demonstrate both commercial and technical viability of specific use cases. The project is part of Singapore's broader plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the maritime transport sector.

Currently, some 1.600 licensed diesel-powered service vessels operate in the port. These include, amongst others, ferries, water taxis, tugs, lighters and many other types.

Out of 16 proposals the Keppel FELS consortium will develop a solid state transformer-based shore charger and electric kit to retrofit an existing 30-pax ferry. The SeaTech Solutions consortium will develop a full electric

lighter craft while the SembCorp consortium will develop and build a full electric 200-pax ferry for a specific route.

### Kotug

Built by Cheoy Lee's Zhuhai Shipyard, China, *RT Imperieuse* and *RT Clerke* (yn 5184 / 399 and 5185 / 400 respectively) to the order of **Kotug Chartering BV**.

Per 1 August, 2021, **Kotug Australia Pty Ltd** and **Westug Pty Ltd** have amicably ended their cooperation providing towage services for **Pilbara Marine**, a subsidiary of Fortescue Metals Group in Port Hedland. The service includes the operation of nine Rotortugs at Port Hedland servicing Fortescue and other port users since the commencement of operations in 2019. Kotug will retain its existing agreement requiring the supply of tugs and to have overall responsibility for the delivery of Port Hedland towage services. They will now also take on the actual towing operations. To this end all Westug personnel will transfer to Kotug.

### Jenkins Marine

The Poole, U.K. based company announced the purchase – in July, 2021 – of *DMS Condor*, a **Damen** 2509 Shoalbuster design. Launched in 2001 as *Shoalworker*. Upon completion to Viegers, Andijk, as *Camperduin*. 2004 to Damen Marine Services. 2x Caterpillar total 1.947 bhp, 24,5 tbp. Jenkins Marine operates a fleet of workboats, barges and dredging working in the South of England, around the UK and in Europe.

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### Editor

Job van Eijk

### Co-editor

Cock Peterse

### Advertising

Frank van Gils

### DTP

Dtpplus - Spijkenisse

### Branding & Webdesign

Studio DBLY - Rotterdam

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### Editorial address

editor@tugezine.com

### Website

<https://www.tugezine.com>

### Contacts

#### TugDoc International

De Houtmanstraat 92  
3151 TE Hoek van Holland  
The Netherlands  
Email: [info@tugdoc.nl](mailto:info@tugdoc.nl)

#### Frank van Gils

Van Gils Promotions  
Tel: +31 (0) 653 888 26  
Email: [frank.van.gils@planet.nl](mailto:frank.van.gils@planet.nl)

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